

Guided Imagery for *Ethan Frome*

Purpose:

This strategy will let students imagine an experience from the novel *Ethan Frome*. They will be given the opportunity to place themselves in the cold northeast on a winter night. This activity will allow them to make a personal connection to the text, along with any personal insight or ideas that may come to them during the guided imagery. They will also be able to write in a more informal setting, simply recreating their own personal experience of the guided imagery.

Context:

This should be used before the students have read the passage about Ethan picking up Mattie from a town dance. The guided imagery prompt can be used at any point during the initial phases of the novel. By using it at that point, students will be able to conjure up images, sights, and feelings of the setting and story.

Directions:

The teacher should play soothing yet upbeat background music. The music should be strictly instrumental. The soundtrack from *Dr. Zhivago* would work nicely.

1. Instruct the students to relax at their desks and close their eyes. Tell them to take a deep breath and forget all of their concerns. Tell them to listen carefully to what you will read, and to use their imaginations to follow the directions.
2. Begin to read each line, pausing for fifteen seconds after each line (whole line, not just one sentence).
3. After you have read the lines, tell the students to open their eyes. Give them time (about ten minutes) to record their experiences.
4. Ask for volunteers to share what they have written.
5. Relate the activity back to *Ethan Frome's* setting. What is Ethan's environment? Is it a comfortable existence?
6. Ask students to record their predictions about the plot.

Assessment:

You have the option of collecting what they have written, but some students may be more comfortable writing if they know it is a personal activity, just for them.

Guided Imagery Prompt for *Ethan Frome*

Close your eyes and relax.

Imagine you are in a cozy room. A fire is roaring in the fireplace.

You are putting on your coat, your scarf, and your gloves.

For a moment, you stand in front of the fire. You watch the flames dance.

The heat warms your face.

Now you are moving towards a big, heavy wooden door.

You step into a clear night. The stars are infinite. The coldness bites your face and you begin walking along an old road.

Icy snow crunches under your feet. Your breath floats in front of you.

Forests surround you, still and quiet.

Eventually you see the outline of buildings in a clearing.

One building is glowing, as golden light shines from the windows.

You walk towards the building.

At the window, you look into the room.

People are dancing. Who are these people?

One of them notices you and bids you to come in.

You enter and begin to dance. What music is playing? Your body warms and you smile. Everyone is smiling.

The music stops and people gather their things to leave. Someone walks up to you and asks you to walk them home. Who is it? Or does no one come up to you?

Regardless, you step back into the cold, still night. You watch your feet as they begin to take you home.

Now open your eyes.

Take a moment to write about this experience.