

## Teacher's Guide and Sample Project

### QTC Study Guide for *Alice Bliss*

by Penny Randolph



In order for a house to stand, it must be securely framed. Without that inner structure, the house would collapse. So too with a book. In order for a book to stay in our minds, to "become our own" as we carefully read and learn, we need to form a structure on which to build our understanding. QTC's are one method of forming that structure.

Quotes, Things (objects, like props in a play,) Characters: QTC's

As we read, making lists of QTC's builds our familiarity with the book until we feel "at home" and the book has become "ours." Using the method of QTC's helps reinforce the students highlighting and note-taking skills. I use the following steps to cover most English skills, steps which may, of course, be adapted however a teacher pleases.

Step 1:

Outside of class, students read the book all the way through once. Summer reading list, perhaps. Teacher may make up a brief fact quiz (graded or not) for the beginning of the study so that students remember the essentials of character, place, time, events.

## Step 2:

Reread slowly, dividing the book into sections (chapters, dated entries, etc.) to be assigned as homework.

I begin by reading the first sections out loud in class, stopping frequently to ask questions. Who/what/when/where/why? What CHARACTERS are introduced? Who are they? How does the author describe that character? What words are used? What's our impression of the character? What's going on? What's the setting? (Time/place/mood?) Are there specific THINGS (dance, stars, rafts, the Devil's Bathtub in the first section of *AB*) which might be important to highlight in that section? Do these things appear later? "Let's keep watch." Are there QUOTES that might be important? (p.1 "Come home when the dance is done." Who says that? To whom? Why might that be important to the book as a whole? Hint: Are there other dances? Compare and contrast.)

Often, I've found that students over-highlight, unsure at first how to catch information in single words rather than in whole paragraphs; therefore, I guide them, assuring them that their choice of QTC's might not be the same as others' but for the first few chapters, together we can choose what we think important. After each section, I ask students to pick a few of their highlighted words and copy them... and the page #s... as notes in the blank space margin at the beginning or end of that section: 2-3 Quotes, 2-3 Things, new Characters' names with one or two word descriptions.

These brief synoptic notes at beginning or end of sections help students recall and connect the development of the story and important symbols/leitmotifs and themes.

## Step 3:

After I've guided the students through the first few sections by reading aloud and highlighting in class, students prepare the next section at home (highlight/margin notes) and then individually take turns reading aloud and leading class discussion.

Step 4:

For the next few sections, students answer (by writing full sentences) a prepared question sheet based on the QTC's of that section. This sheet is given as homework before class discussion. At the beginning of that next class, these papers are turned in for grading on content and form so both teacher and student can assess students' progress in writing ability. Then the students can quiz each other (or the teacher) on the details they've discovered. Kids love this part! Together they choose which details to list in the margins. Choices may differ. YAY! The discussion reinforces learning.

Step 5:

Based on highlights, each student prepares a question sheet for each of a few more sections, with answers to those questions written on the back of the paper. In groups, students quiz each other on those questions. Perhaps students can practice peer editing on their writing before their papers are passed in.

Step 6:

Now they're on their own, highlighting and note-taking in the margins for the remainder of the sections. Class discussion guides awareness of the book's themes, referring to previous sections whenever applicable. I've found students' "AHA!" discoveries often teaching me!

Throughout the study, teachers may give quizzes and tests as needed. As a culminating activity, I assign a project due the day before the final test.

Students squawk until they realize the process of creating their project helps them study for the test which includes:

1. Short answer identification questions such as match the character with the action or who said a particular quote to whom. Usually, I give a list of characters to jog students' memories.
2. A list of events to put in chronological order
3. Students' choice of one or two Quotes or Things from the first part of the test as an essay to show the significance of the Q/T to the book as a whole.
4. IF I've actually managed to teach grammar based on sentences from the book, I might include a few grammar questions on identifying parts of speech from other sentences... or editing a short passage that I've purposely and egregiously rewritten.)

## Sample Project

Alice Bliss has 306 pages. I might divide these by length into monthly sections:

(for instance: ps.1-3, 3-13, 13-26, 27-50, 50-70 and so on.)

Name\_\_\_\_\_ ALICE BLISS project

Date due\_\_\_\_\_

In \_\_\_\_ separate parts, each part representing a specific section, design a project that visually portrays important QTC's and leitmotifs from our reading of *Alice Bliss*. Your project should include each of the following:

### Checklist:

1. \_\_\_\_book title (underlined or in italics) and author's name: 10 pts.
2. \_\_\_\_ # (however many the teacher has assigned)) distinct parts, each part representing a distinct chapter, in order. (part 1=first section of book, part 2=second section, etc.): 10 pts.
3. \_\_\_\_numbers on each of the parts: 5 pts.
4. \_\_\_\_ pictures, drawings, magazine photos, colorful representations of each chapter's important events: 20 pts.
5. \_\_\_\_important quotes with page #s for each quote: 10 pts.
6. \_\_\_\_careful proofreading for spelling and grammar: 20 pts.
7. \_\_\_\_use of Magic Markers, pens, computer, paints, feathers, glitter, glue, etc. but no pencil, please! ! 10 pts.
8. \_\_\_\_name of the artist (That's YOU!) clearly visible: 5 pts.
9. \_\_\_\_general neatness and organization. (Is your project easy to see, easy to read,easy to display?): 10 pts.

You may make a poster, mobile, or any other design, as long as all sections are clearly visible at a glance. Your project will be both outline and literary review, a visual summary to teach others what you have learned. Now it's your turn to become the teacher. Have fun!