

Word Sort Anticipation Activity

Students look at key words from a reading selection—provided by the teacher. Students will identify the meaning and properties of each word and then "sort" the words into any categories they see similarities between. This "sorting" process links students' prior knowledge and builds anticipation.

Teacher Directions: There's a couple ways you can do this.

Option A: You can write each word on their own individual index card and then put them in a ziplock bag. Repeat this process so you have at least 5 ziplock bags of words (one for every group). Tell your students the expectations, separate your students into 5 groups, and give one bag to each group.

Option B: The same as option A, but have students create the index cards *for* you and reuse the bags for your other classes.

Option C: Put students into groups and then give each group one worksheet to write their answers on. (Worksheet on the next page.)

Option D: Write the list on the board for everyone to see and make this an independent activity.

This word sort is a fun, simple way for students to work collaboratively. It allows students to associate the following words with one another and make connections to their deeper meanings. Students will wonder how in the world can all of these words go together in one story (cat, cancer, operation), hence building anticipation before you read "We Ate the Children Last."

Cancer	Operation	Pig	Restaurants
Camp	Colon	Diet	Pancreas
Chimpanzees	Kitchen	Babies	Blood pressure
Trash	Army	Poverty	Cats

Word Sort
Anticipation Activity

Directions: In your groups, consider how the words below are related. Put them into different categories by creating lists. How you sort the words are up to you.

Cancer	Operation	Pig	Restaurants
Camp	Colon	Diet	Pancreas
Chimpanzees	Kitchen	Babies	Blood pressure
Trash	Army	Poverty	Cats

Name:

Date:

**“We Ate the Children Last” by Yann Martel
Vocabulary**

Vocabulary	Part of Speech	Definition
redress	<i>noun</i>	
vindicated	<i>verb</i>	
evasive	<i>adjective</i>	
barren	<i>adjective</i>	
putrid	<i>adjective</i>	
paragons	<i>noun</i>	
opprobrium	<i>noun</i>	
retrograde	<i>adjective</i>	
deplorable	<i>adjective</i>	
heady	<i>adjective</i>	
unscrupulous	<i>adjective</i>	
brute	<i>noun</i>	

Name:

Date:

**"We Ate the Children Last" by Yann Martel
Vocabulary Answers**

Vocabulary	Part of Speech	Definition
redress	noun	remedy or compensation for a wrong or grievance
vindicated	verb	clear (someone) of blame or wrongdoing
evasive	adjective	describes someone trying to avoid giving a direct answer
barren	adjective	empty and bleak
putrid	adjective	rotting, very unpleasant; repulsive
paragons	noun	a person or thing regarded as a perfect example of a particular quality
opprobrium	noun	harsh criticism or censure; disgrace
retrograde	adjective	directed or moving backward
deplorable	adjective	shockingly bad in quality
heady	adjective	having a strong exciting and exhilarating effect
unscrupulous	adjective	having or showing no moral principles; not honest or fair
brute	noun	a savagely violent person or animal

Name:

Date:

"We Ate the Children Last" by Yann Martel
Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Who is Patient D?

PREVIEW

2. What surgery does Patient D undergo? What are the side effects?

3. What do the French physicians find when they visit Patient D's apartment three months post operation?

PREVIEW

4. Why isn't the medical team worried?

5. What suggestion does Les Bons Samaritains make?

6. Why did everyone want this new surgery?

PREVIEW

7. How was the meaning of wealth changing?

8. What was the badge of honor?

PREVIEW

9. What dark turn occurred in society?

10. What shocking activities were happening in the internment camps?

11. What can you infer about Jean Proti, the very last prisoner?

12. Who is the narrator?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

Discussion Questions

1. Who is responsible for this societal collapse?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

2. Do you think the people in the internment camps were sent there to die? Why or why not?

3. Why does no one talk about what happened?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

4. Why would children be the last ones eaten?

5. What ethics were most violated in this story? Explain.

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

6. What would have happened if people did not become cannibals? Would this society have worked for much longer, why or why not?

Name:

Date:

**"We Ate the Children Last" by Yann Martel
Reading Comprehension Questions**

1. Who is Patient D?

A 56-year-old man, single, childless, and suffering from colon cancer.

2. What surgery does Patient D undergo? What are the side effects?

He gets a transplant from a pig's digestive system. He no longer likes sweet dishes, spicy foods, or cooked foods, and then he starts eating flowers.

3. What do the French physicians find when they visit Patient D's apartment three months post operation?

They see he has sold all of his kitchen appliances and his cupboards are empty.

4. Why isn't the medical team worried?

Patient D's hemoglobin count was excellent, his blood pressure was ideal; everything pointed to good health.

5. What suggestion does Les Bons Samaritains make?

The operation should be made available to those receiving social assistance (can't afford food).

6. Why did everyone want this new surgery?

It would end starvation and help a lot of people in poverty who can't afford to eat. It became a trend in society that cut food budgets to almost nothing. It was the self-righteous thing to do and so people began to jump on the bandwagon to appear holier-than-thou.

7. How was the meaning of wealth changing?

The meaning of wealth was no longer who could afford expensive dinners and meals; now those who were wealthy, got the elective surgery and were able to live just by eating garbage.

8. What was the badge of honor?

The mark of the procedure was a scar at the base of the throat.

9. What dark turn occurred in society?

First people starting eating stray dogs and cats. Then, old people were vanishing. Then, people were kidnapping babies right out of their strollers. Society became cannibalistic and the government/military had to get involved.

10. What shocking activities were happening in the internment camps?

They were not given any food, so as to be expected, the prisoners all started eating one another. Even the last prisoner got so hungry, he started eating himself.

11. What can you infer about Jean Proti, the very last prisoner?

He was an "exceptional brute." He was very strong because he was able to fight off every single person in the camps; no one could kill him or eat him.

12. Who is the narrator?

The narrator is a survivor of the atrocity. He somehow managed to escape even though he had the surgery.

Discussion Questions

1. Who is responsible for this societal collapse?

Answers will vary.

2. Do you think the people in the internment camps were sent there to die? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

3. Why does no one talk about what happened?

Answers will vary.

4. Why would children be the last ones eaten?

Answers will vary.

5. What ethics were most violated in this story? Explain.

Answers will vary.

6. What would have happened if people did not become cannibals? Would this society have worked for much longer, why or why not?

Answers will vary.

Name:

Date:

“We Ate the Children Last” by Yann Martel
Literary Analysis

Directions: Fill out the following chart by finding a quote from the text that demonstrates each literary element. Use the explanation box to show how the quote you chose exemplifies that literary element. An example has been done for you.

Literary Element	Quote from Text	Explanation
Foreshadowing	The first human trial was on Patient D, a 56-year-old male, single and childless, who was suffering from colon cancer.	This foreshadows that there will be more human trials because Patient D was only the first.
	The title: “We Ate the Children Last”	The title foreshadows cannibalism.
Point of view		
Setting		
Tone		
Irony		

Dystopia		
Satire		
Internal conflict		
External conflict		
Resolution		

ANSWER WILL VARY
“We Ate the Children Last” by Yann Martel
Literary Analysis

Literary Element	Quote from Text	Explanation
Foreshadowing	The first human trial was on Patient D, a 56-year-old male, single and childless, who was suffering from colon cancer.	This foreshadows that there will be more human trials because Patient D was only the first.
	The title: “We Ate the Children Last”	The title foreshadows cannibalism.
Point of view	I escaped. I still have a good appetite, but there is a moral rot in this country that even I can't digest.	First person point of view from the perspective of a survivor.
Setting	The French medical team felt vindicated.	France sometime in the future because it's dystopian and they have found the “cure” for cancer.
Tone	To this day everyone knows. But no one talks about it and no one is guilty. I must live with that.	Optimistic at first, then dark and terrifying. It ends with anguish and remorse.
Irony	In short order, the restaurant became a retrograde institution, and the eating of prepared food a sign of attachment to deplorable worldly values.	Eating trash was classy and stood on moral high ground whereas eating at a restaurant was deplorable.
		Overall, the entire story is ironic. A surgery meant to lead to greater health instead leads to countless deaths.
Dystopia	There were terrible scenes during the round-up: neighbours denouncing neighbours, children being separated from their families, men, women and children being stripped in public to look for telling scars, summary executions of people who tried to escape.	Dystopia is an imagined state or society in which there is great suffering, and this shows society where an advanced medical treatment goes wrong and people need to be put into internment camps.
Satire	Garbage became a sought-after commodity. Unscrupulous racketeers began selling it. Dumps became dangerous places. Garbage collectors were assaulted. The less fortunate resorted to eating grass	This dark humor exaggerates the ridiculousness that this medical procedure has caused. People are lusting after garbage.
Internal conflict	There is a moral rot in this country that even I can't digest... ...I must live with that.	the public still has not learned the importance of being informed and how it could have prevented the deaths of many.
External conflict	Mothers who had turned away momentarily were finding their baby carriages empty.	People were kidnapping babies and physically killing one another to eat.
Resolution	Everyone knew what happened, and how and where. To this day everyone knows. But no one talks about it and no one is guilty.	The crisis has passed, but no one talks about the tragedy. No one is held responsible for what happened.

Name:

Date:

“We Ate the Children Last” by Yann Martel
Themes

What message does author, Yann Martel, send to readers about these themes?

Impulsivity	Trusting authority
Mob Mentality	Science

Constructed Response

Consider the themes in “We Ate the Children Last.” How do two or more themes build on another to produce a complex story? Use textual evidence and write your answer in at least one fully developed paragraph.

Name:

Date:

“We Ate the Children Last” by Yann Martel
Themes

What message does author, Yann Martel, send to readers about these themes?

Impulsivity You should not accept new technological advances and innovations without being sufficiently informed about the possible consequences.	Trusting authority Be careful who you listen to (media, government, etc.) because they are pushing their own agenda. Never fully trust established corporations and groups because they don't have your best interest in mind.
Mob Mentality Succumbing to social pressure and the desire to fit in can lead you down a dangerous path. Make your own decisions.	Science Manipulating life or DNA is unethical. Just because you have the science and technology to do something, doesn't mean you should.

Constructed Response

Consider the themes in “We Ate the Children Last”. What message does author, Yann Martel, send to readers about these themes? How do these two themes build on another to produce a complex story? Use textual evidence and write your answer in at least one fully developed paragraph.

Answers will vary.

Name:

Date:

**“We Ate the Children Last” by Yann Martel
Summarizing Literature**

Part A: Write an objective summary of the text.

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

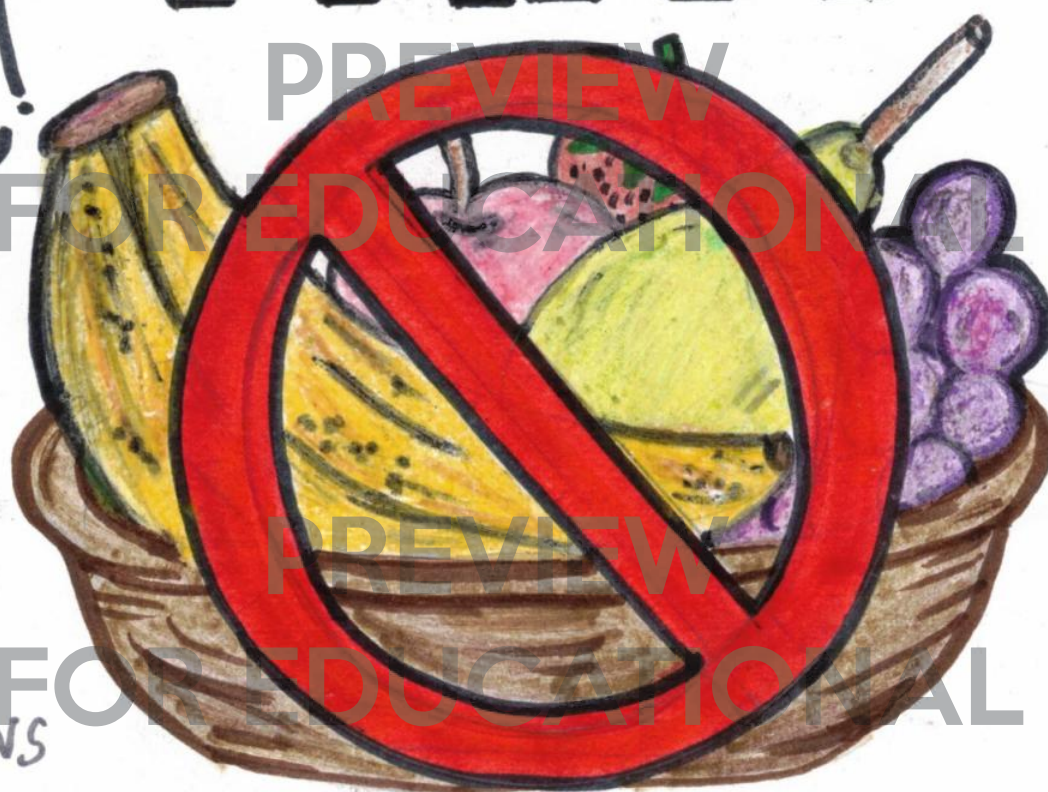
Part B: Pick one option below to complete.

1) On a 8.5X11 piece of paper, create a propaganda poster advertising the transplant surgery. Consider how your advertisement would convince hundreds of people to undergo unnecessary surgery. Be persuasive! Use text and colored images.

2) On a 8.5X11 piece of paper, create a sign that someone would use at an anti-operation rally (before society even turned cannibalistic). Consider what people would say to protest the surgery and get others to join them. Make it impactful. Use text and colored images.

DO YOUR PART

*Eat
Trash!*



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TO END STARVATION

Name:

Date:

“We Ate the Children Last” by Yann Martel Media Comparison

Directions: identify and evaluate the differences between the short story and the movie version of “We Ate the Children Last.”

Short Story	Movie
PREVIEW	PREVIEW
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE	NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE
PREVIEW	PREVIEW
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE	NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

1. How did the film's portrayal of the story most differ from the text? What was the difference in impact?

2. Which did you prefer: the short story or film? Explain.

Name:

Date:

**“We Ate the Children Last” by Yann Martel
Media Comparison**

<https://vimeo.com/27633865> = Link to film

Directions: identify and evaluate the differences between the short story and the movie version of “We Ate the Children Last.”

Short Story	Movie
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrator is unknown• Set in the future in France• Operation is nameless• Only known side effect is increased appetite for garbage and other living things• Advertised as saving society by ending hunger• Anonymous French medical team behind the surgery• Narrator tells of bizarre deaths and readers must infer why people are going missing• Leaves out the other side; people who oppose the operation• Patients are put into internment camps• Leaves readers wondering how the narrator escaped	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrator is Patient D• Set in the past• Procedure is called “Porsicure”• Prevents cancer• Other side effects listed: Insomnia and hemorrhaging• Advertised as saving your own life• Displays more media involvement (news, paparazzi, interviews, magazines, celebrity endorsement)• Thomas Henning Kraus is responsible• Detectives/Police inform public of murders and arrest killers on news• Shows protesters and those who oppose the procedure• Highlights the obvious divide in society• Shows execution of those who have been operated on• Shows how Patient D escapes

1. How did the film’s portrayal of the story most differ from the text? What was the difference in impact?

Answers will vary.

2. Which did you prefer: the short story or film? Explain.

Answers will vary.