

Structure

This set of activities will encourage students to reflect upon the structure of the novel and it can be a starting point to unlock the techniques used by the author to present the story.

Como agua para chocolate (novel)

Laura Esquivel's first novel is an acclaimed and accessible text which has proved very popular amongst centres. It is a leading example of "magical realism" and a fantastic introduction to Latin American literature, history and culture. It is structured in 12 chapters relating to each month of the year. Each chapter starts with a recipe which reflects the mood and feelings of the characters within the story. Como Agua para Chocolate has been described as a bittersweet comedy of love and frustration.

Activities are graded and are of increasing levels of challenge. All of the resources are self-contained and can be used in any order for any level, according to the teacher's judgement.

Activity	Skills covered	Ideas for use
<p>Activity 1</p>	<p>Key ideas relating to the characters are explored, as an introduction to understand how they fit into the structure of the novel.</p> <p>Students will develop vocabulary, writing and reading skills which they can use to talk and write about this novel, or understand written/audio texts and passages on related themes.</p>	<p>This activity is a drag and drop game. Students have to drop the correct answer to the question posed in each bubble of the mind map.</p> <p>Once checked, the mind map can be printed off for further study.</p> <p>Similar mind maps can be created by the learner about other central characters in the story.</p>
<p>Activity 2</p>	<p>This activity helps students to develop their vocabulary and ideas when talking, reading and writing about <i>Como agua para chocolate</i>. This moves from the character level in the first activity to reading and understanding key events in the structure of the novel.</p>	<p>There are ten key events which students have to drag and drop into the correct column taking as a reference point the extract on the first screen. There is scope for individual, group or whole class work.</p>

<p>Activity 3</p>	<p>Students have opportunities to develop their analysis, creativity, assimilation and writing skills.</p>	<p>For this exercise, a key event was chosen from the book. I.e. Tita eventually confronts Mama Elena's tyranny and hides in the attic where she spends days without food and not talking. Students need to read the extract and write a short piece reflecting upon the significance of this event within the structure of the novel.</p> <p>A printing tool is available whereby students can submit their work to the teacher for feedback.</p>
<p>Activity 4</p>	<p>This activity provides opportunities for further development of analysis and understanding of the effect of a specific event on different characters within the plot.</p>	<p>Students will consider the event in the question and type their reflections in the mind map bubbles. Once checked by the teacher and corrected, this print-out can be a very effective tool for further discussion, study or revision.</p>
<p>Activity 5</p>	<p>Taking one of the central characters in the novel, Dr Brown, students will evaluate his impact on different characters, the structure and timeline of the novel. Reading, writing and analytical skills are developed with this exercise.</p>	<p>Students have to read the additional information provided by clicking on the "i" button (top right). Then, they select a character and write a short piece explaining the influence of Dr Brown on each of the chosen characters.</p> <p>This activity can be easily adapted and developed further by teachers, by choosing a different central character.</p> <p>Once checked by the teacher and corrected, this print-out can be a very effective tool for further discussion, study or revision.</p>

Activity 6

This activity will develop the students analytical, reading and writing skills by attempting to briefly answer an analysis question. This can be used as a plenary where students can show what they have learnt so far.

The final activity for this book is a writing task.

Students read the commentary on the role of Mama Elena and then write a creative, balanced and credible answer as to how the story would have been different had Mama Elena not been there.

This activity can be easily adapted and developed further by teachers, by choosing a different central character.

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