




GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING BY TRACY CEVALIER

This Student Booklet Belongs to:

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Reading Plan: Girl with a Pearl Earring 6A

Monday

When	What	Where
24 th Aug	Introduction in class, historical fiction, painting, characters	pp 3-13
31 st Aug	Bridges, threshold, vocabulary, metaphors, simile Written homework dossier: 2 Griet's New Life and 14. Figures of Speech	pp 14 - 32
7 th Sep	Reading, Mantle and Pearls, Gaze and the Gazers Written homework dossier: 3. Studio and the first glance at one of his paintings pp 33 - 40	pp 33 – 40
14 th Sep	Reading: Being able to retell the story	pp 40 - 54
21 st Sep	Betrayal, Plague, Expectations Choose your two projects, start working on them	pp 55 - 71
	High school graduation trip /  autumn holiday have fun	
19 th Oct	We will be reading in class: Frans, Factory and the Women Eyes of the Beholder, Thieves and Children,	pp 72- 92
26 th Oct	1665 Lies, a bitter Wind, True Blue, Written homework dossier: 4. Synthesis- CREATIVE PROJECT Girl with a Pearl Earring, start your project	pp 95 -110
2 nd Nov	Locked Away, Fooled, Fact Fiction Fantasy, Spinning Knife, Blood and Bone Written homework dossier: 5. Vocabulary in Context	PP 111 -125
9 th Nov	Another Griet, Mischief, Maid in Red, Girl with a Wineglass, Temptation, Pity Written homework dossier: 6. Contextual Background and its Affect in the Novel	126 - 140
16 th Nov	Smiling in the Dark, Art, Reputation, Cat in the Poultry House Written homework dossier: 7. Character Study- Girl with a Pearl Earring Understanding Characters	pp 141 - 158
23 rd Nov	Indebted, Gossip, Rabbits, Punishment, Procured with a Promise Written homework dossier: 8. Vocabulary and Plot Questions pp 150 -171	pp 159 - 180
30 th Nov	1666 Written homework dossier: 9 Themes	pp 182- 191
7 th Dec	The Artist, Guilt, Alone, Written homework dossier: 10: Structure and Style	pp 192 - 208
14 th Dec	Revealed, Ruined, Clove Oil, Piercing, Ownership, Bleeding Written homework dossier: 11. Motifs and Symbols	pp 209 - 222
	Christmas Holiday 🎄	
4 th Jan	Choices	pp 223 - 233
11 th Jan	1676 What a Maid Is Worth, Eight Pointed Star, Written homework dossier:12: Development of the Protagonist	pp 234 - 248
12 th Jan	Exam	

1. Knowledge- Girl with a Pearl Earring p. 3 - 13

1. Identify the characters in the story of the novel. Give some details about them. Add page numbers

Name	Details from the text
<u>Griet:</u>	
<u>Mother of Griet:</u>	
<u>Visitors:</u>	
<u>Agnese:</u>	
<u>Father:</u>	
<u>Johannes / Jan Vermeer:</u>	
<u>His wife:</u>	
<u>Frans:</u>	

2. Locate where the action of the novel takes place.

3. Why was Griet to become a maid?

4. What made it difficult for Griet to be working as a maid for the painter's family?

5. How did Griet communicate with her now blinded father? What is special about it? What did they discuss?

6. What did her mother add to the things Griet took with her to her new workplace?

7. Why had Griet been chosen to work for Johannes Vermeer?

8. Why was Agnese not happy with the new situation.

9. What did her father give Griet when he said goodbye to her? What did it mean to Griet?

Vocabulary

10. Collect vocabulary you would like to remember as you are reading. I have started the task for you. Add your own words.

1. tile

2. cobweb

3. apron

4. Kiln

5. to peer

6. pebbles

7. to gloat over sb misfortune

8. solemn

2: Griet's New Life pp 14 – 32

1. List Griet's duties as a maid for the Vermeer household?

2. Name the 10 people who were living now in Vermeer's household. Start with the most important person and end with the one with the least influence.

3. Describe the power structure within the Vermeer household.

4. Describe the behaviour of the girl with the bright red hair. What character traits are evident?

5. Who has a voice like a feather? Collect all similes you come across in the future.

6. "I stepped across the threshold "(p. 17) What is a threshold? In what ways is the crossing of the threshold comparable to Griet's crossing of the bridge?

7. Can you think of any circumstances today when the crossing of a threshold is treated ceremonial?

Tanneke pp 16-17 / The Milkmaid pp 39-40

Take notes to prepare a discussion.

1. Examine the way in which Chevalier introduces Tanneke: what are we as readers supposed to make of such a character? How are we supposed to react to Tanneke? What judgements about her are implicit in the description? Do you think that an unfavourable depiction of Tanneke-as-maid works as a literary foil to the favourable depiction of Griet-as-maid?

2. a) Examine Vermeer's 'Milkmaid'. Would you say that the intention of the painting is to convey grace and dignity in the duties of a maid? Or would you tend to say that the intention of the painting is to represent the servant as a coarse, unclean and ungainly person?

b) In view of your analysis, how does Chevalier's Tanneke compare with Vermeer's 'Milkmaid'?



The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer, 1658 – 1660, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

3: Studio and the first glance at one of his paintings pp 33 - 40

1. '... the room gave off a clean, sharp odour ...' What memories does the studio stir up in Griet? And from this, do you agree that the studio, from the start, is in contrast to the rest of the house, a more welcoming place, a refuge, as - - - - - y? Find quotes.

2. 'Catharina remained on the threshold.' What is the significance of this?

3. Griet captures something of a self-portrait in the wall-mirror: in what respects does her interpretation of the mirror-image resemble Vermeer's portrait, Girl with a Pearl Earring?

4. Examine Vermeer's painting of van Ruijven's wife, Woman with a Pearl Necklace. List those features in the painting that Griet comes across in her cleaning of the studio as well as those features that are noted in her appraisal of the painting. Your observations should provide interesting information on the painting itself.



5. 'I wanted to wear the mantle and the pearls. I wanted to know the man who painted her like that.' What might wanting to wear the mantle and pearls indicate about Griet, or about any other young maid? And what might the second sentence in the quotation indicate about Griet - what, precisely, does she want in relation to the man?

6. Analyse the reasons Griet is able to see as an artist.

7. Compare and contrast Griet's life with Catharina's life.

8. Griet was trapped by her gender and role as a maid – what were some consequences?

THE GAZE AND THE GAZERS pp. 40–42 (prepare for oral discussion)

1. '... was that not the best tongue ... ?' How does Griet interpret the question, and what reply does she make? And why do you think she would choose to reply in the manner that she does?

2. What aspect of Pieter the son does Griet find pleasing, and which particular aspect does she find disturbing?

3. How does Griet describe Pieter's eyes, and how does she perceive herself in this meeting? Discuss the imagery here.

4. 'I caught the glance that passed between father and son. Even then I knew somehow what it meant, and what it would mean for me.' Discuss this observation by Griet - what does the glance mean, what kind of a look passes between them, and in what way does this glance 'capture' Griet?

4: Synthesis- CREATIVE PROJECT Girl with a Pearl Earring

Choose TWO of the following

1. Compose a series of poems based on “The Girl with a Pearl Earring”.
2. Revise a section of the text and turn it into a scene to be acted out.
3. Research, find, copy and annotate 10 of Vermeer’s paintings.
4. Rewrite the ending of the book so that the outcome is different.
5. Plan and create a picture book of the story.
6. Present a talk on an aspect of the book to the class.
7. Who was Vermeer? Research and report a biography of Vermeer.
8. Write a newspaper article based on aspects of the novel.
9. Take a series of contemporary photographs inspired by Vermeer’s art.
10. Compose and /or find some music that represents key moments in the novel. Play them to the class and explain to the class your reason for choosing these pieces of music.
11. Choreograph a movement inspired by one or more key scenes in the novel.
Present a live performance to an audience or have someone video tape it.
12. Using any art medium (painting, sculpture, inks, pencil etc.), create one or more visual representations of the novel.
13. Write a short story of ‘The Girl with a Pearl Earring’.

Note: You have to present one of your chosen tasks to the class.

Name your choice:

- 1.
- 2.

5: Vocabulary in Context

Compose a sentence for the following words referring to the plot. Use at least 10 words per sentence. Choose your own three words and create the sentences for those as well.

Mantle	
chamber pot	
threshold	
lute	
haughtier	
apothecary	
deflect	
finicky	
cumbersome	
camera obscura	
quarantine	
chemise	

6: Contextual Background and its Affect in the Novel

Contextual background	How this may affect the novel...
The novel is set in the period of 1660s in the Netherlands.	
There was a large increase in the number of middle-class Dutch people, who enjoyed spending their money on paintings and other symbols of their newfound prosperity. This was a golden age for Dutch painting. Delft was a growing thriving city of Holland. Mostly democratic government, although not stable.	
There was politically based friction between Catholicism and Protestantism although both were tolerated.	
Jan Vermeer was a well-known Dutch painter with a wife Catharina and 14 children. He sold many paintings in his lifetime, but when he died, he left his family in debt. Not much biographical details survive about Vermeer.	
People were ranked in classes such as lower class, working class, middle class and upper class which reflected their social standing and wealth or lack of. It was understood and people 'knew their place'.	
Women in particular were confined within very specific and limited roles no matter which class they belonged to.	
Men held the balance of power in personal and public arenas.	

7: Character Study- Girl with a Pearl Earring Understanding Characters

Name	Action or Quote	Evidence/Quote?
Griet	Manages the tasks, children and different people well with shrewdness and intelligence.	
	Desires Vermeer and admires how he sees and paints the world.	
	Sexually matures and transforms from a girl to a young woman.	
Jan Vermeer	Art is everything and comes first.	
	Will not compromise his art in any way.	
Catharina	Is frustrated at not being 'close' to her husband's artistic world and resents Griet for being in the Studio and the attic.	
	Her role of mother is very demanding – she has 14 children! Always pregnant	
Cornelia	Oldest daughter is a junior Catharina- she spies and enjoys causing suffering to Griet. Also jealous and resentful towards Griet.	
Pieter	Loves and wants to marry Griet and considered a good prospect for her. Is patient and ignores the rumours around the place regarding Griet and Vermeer.	
Maria Thins	Catharina's mother who really runs the household and manages Vermeer's artistic career. Tries to hold everything together.	
Tanneke	The maid who has been with the family for many years and is favoured by the family. Seems content in her role as maid.	

8: Vocabulary and Plot Questions pp 150 -171

Vocabulary : Explain the following expressions

a) no need to **put on airs** with us

b) don't say such things to her, or any of the family, **even in jest**

c) Cornelia once again **trailing** behind her

d) Cornelia **lingering** behind her

e) While van Ruijven's wife and Maerte remained **oblivious**, van Leeuwenhoek noted everything

f) Pieter the father **scooped** up a handful of pigs' kidneys

g) She was a formidable woman, **astute** in business, certain of her place

Answer the following questions using your own language and quotes clearly marked as such.

1. Why was Catharina worried about leaving her jewellery box in the studio?

2. Why was it so important for Griet to assist Vermeer? What did it mean to her?

3. How did Cornelia switch the tortoiseshell combs?

4. "Well, girl," she said, leaning against the grinding table, "you have set the cat loose in the poultry house now". What does Maria Thins mean?

5. What is Maria Thins intention when she orders Griet to serve at the table when van Ruijven was invited?

6. Tanneke is very proud of her cooking the pheasant. How does she show it? Does she have a reason to be proud of?

7. As I was leaving I heard Catharina say in a **gay** voice, "What a fine idea! Like that painting with you and the maid in the red dress. Do you remember her?" What is Catharina referring to? Why does she say the words in a gay voice?

8. Why does Griet not want to sit for the painting?

9. Griet decides to talk to one single person about the gossip. To whom and why?

10. What does Pieter, the son offer Griet?

9: Themes- Girl with a Pearl Earring

THEME	EXPLANATION
SOCIAL STATUS	
THE ARTIST	
ART & REALITY	
FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	

10: Structure and Style

- First person narrative through Griet's eyes
- Divided into sections – years
- Straightforward, linear chronological plot 1664-1676
- Descriptive writing with detail which creates a still life of words
- Use of metaphors throughout adds to the 'painterly' writing
- Historical fiction based on the author's research into Vermeer's art and life laced liberally with imagination
- Understated tone recreating the silence and stillness of many of Vermeer's paintings
- Setting is a very realistic representation of Delft in the seventeenth century as the author immersed herself in Vermeer's paintings as she was writing the novel. Many of Vermeer's paintings were of domestic scenes and people, so Chevalier had much rich material from which to draw upon in creating descriptions.

In what ways does Chevalier's structure influence our reading of the text? Choose some of the above structure and style possibilities and describe how the author uses them in her text.

11: Motifs and Symbols

Symbol	What it stands for?
Camera obscura	
Griet's tile	
Griet's hair	
The Attic	
Blood	
The Star on the Market	
Pearl Earrings	

12: Development of the Protagonist

During the story the main character Griet changes a lot in her behaviour and attitude towards her environment. What do the quotes reveal about the characters? Fill in the information you learn.

Information	Page	Quote
	5	'No, Sir' I hesitated. I could not say why I had laid out the vegetables as I did. I simply set them as I felt they should be, but I was too frightened to say so to a gentleman' 'I did not want him to think I was idle'
	12	'The man poling the boat called out a greeting me. I merely nodded and lowered my head so that the edge of my cap hid my face'
	18	'When Catharina narrowed her eyes I realised she knew everything I was thinking. I turned my head so that my cap hid my face'
	32	'I could not imagine sleeping in the room with the painting. I wanted to take it down but did not dare'
	72	'I did not like her tone, nor what she said. 'Please wake him and tell him his sister is here.' I demanded. I sounded a bit like Catharina.'
	82	'I did not like to think of him in that way. With his wife and children. I preferred tot hink of him alone in his studio. Or not alone, but with only me'
	98	'My mother looked at me reproachfully. She knew when I lied. I was getting better at it, though'
	104	'One morning while I was cleaning he came in and asked me to stand in for the baker's daughter, who had taken ill and could not come. 'I want to look for a moment' He explained. 'Someone must stand there'
	105	'How much has changed since that morning, I thought. I had not even seen one of his paintings since then. Now I am standing in one'
	107	'I reluctantly set out the colours he asked for each morning. One day I put out a blue as well. The second time I laid it out he said to me: 'No ultramarine, Griet. Only the colours I asked for' 'Im sorry, Sir. 'When I am ready I will ask' My chest hurt. I did not want him to be angry with me.
	109	'He placed his hands over mine. The shock of his touch made me drop the muller, which rolled of the table and fell on the floor.'

	114	'Maria Thins each time gave me that sideways look when I made an excuse, but did not command. I began to get used to lying'
	115	'I grew used to being around him. Sometimes we stood side by side in the small room, me grinding white lead, him washing lapis.'
	116	'I did not mind the cold so much when he was there. When he stood close to me I could feel the warmth of his body'
	120	'Tanneke, I said, if you know what's best for you, you'll not disturb Catharina, you'll speak to Maria Thins. Alone, not in front of the girls'
	125	'I went up to Pieter. 'Why are you here?' Knowing I should be more polite. 'Helo Griet, no pleasant words for me?' 'Why are you here?'
	126	'Don't worry, Father. You are not losing me' 'We've already lost you Griet. We lost you the moment you became a maid.' I was glad he could not see the tears that pricked my eyes'
	127	'On those Sundays I felt very confused. When I should be listening to Pieter, I found myself thinking about my master'
	141	'Whenever I looked at the scene, my chest grew tight. As I lay in bed one night I decided I had to make the change myself.' <i>... and so she did</i>
	144	Vermeer: 'Tell me, Griet, why did you change the tablecloth?' 'There needs to be some disorder in the scene, to contrast with her tranquility. Something to tease the eye' <i>... She did not dare to do this in the beginning, when Vermeer asked her why she put the vegetables in a certain kind of rank.</i>
	146	'Working for them has turned your head. She interrupted. It has made you forget who you are and where you come from. We are a decent Protestant family whose needs are not ruled by riches or fashions'
	152	'If I could not work with the colours, if I could not be near him, I did not know how I could continue to work in that house'

	159	'Catharina's treatment to me was the greatest surprise. I had expected that she would be even more difficult than before, but instead she seemed to fear me. Maria Thins too changed towards me, treating me with more respect.
	167	'It seems you have a champion to defend your honour'
	180	'Now look at me' I turned my head and looked at him over my left shoulder. 'Griet' he said softly. It was all he had to say. My eyes filled with tears I did not shed. 'Yes, don't move'. I knew now. He was going to paint me.
	191	'I looked at him, his eyes were with me now. He was looking at me. As we gazed at each other a ripple of heat passed through my body.'
	192	'Your cap' he said. 'Take it off'. 'No, sir' 'No?'
	202	'May I look at the painting?' He gazed at me curiously. 'Perhaps I could help' I added, and then wished I had not. I was afraid I had become too bold.
	237	'For a long time I had thought I might still matter to him. After a while, though, I admitted to myself that he had always cared more for the painting of me than for me'
	246	'Catharina looked down at the letter, then glanced at van Leeuwenhoek, and then opened her jewellery box. 'He asked that you have these' She picked out the earrings and after a moment's hesitation laid them on the table'
	248	'Pieter would be pleased with the rest of the coins, the debt now settled. I would not have cost him anything. A maid came free'

13. Essay Questions- Girl with a Pearl Earring

1. For Vermeer, his art came before everything and everyone. Discuss
2. To what extent are all the characters in "Girl with a Pearl Earring" trapped?
3. To some extent, it is Pieter's willingness to marry Griet that saves her life. Without this outcome, Griet and her family would have been ruined. Discuss
4. Catharina's disliking of Griet reflects how disenchanted she feels about her own life. Discuss.
5. Art does not imitate life, art idealises life. Discuss.

Use the lines provided to brainstorm the essay questions.

14: Figures of Speech

Please collect similes and metaphors during the whole reading process and record the page number.

Simile vs Metaphor

A **simile** (/ˈsɪməli/) is a figure of speech that directly *compares* two things. Similes differ from metaphors by highlighting the similarities between two things using words such as "like", "as", or "than", while metaphors create an implicit comparison (i.e. saying something "is" something else

Similes

Metaphors

15: Book – Film Comparison