

## ***The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka**

### **Objectives:**

### **Common Core Standards:**

1. This unit is aligned with the Common Core Standards as written in the Standards for English Language Arts (Common Core Standards)  
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2. Because this unit can be used by various grade level teachers, and because of the variety of reading, writing and speaking skills that can be demonstrated by students after they complete the handouts their teachers choose, I did not copy all of the goals here. I did plan the work included in these pages to fit these standards.

**Level:** Grade 11, 12

**Time Frame:** This novel will take 10 days following a 90 minute block schedule, utilizing 60 minutes per class for discussion. If following a 55-minute daily period, this unit will take 20 days, using 30-45 minutes per day for discussion.

### **Assessments:**

Openers	50 points
Worksheets	Teacher's choice of those offered; worksheets should be 25, 50 or 100 points, depending on the depth of work needed to complete the assignment.
Quizzes	50 points (one after Part I and the next after Part 2. Use the Ten Sentence Quiz Format (p.34). The topic should be a question from each section's Study Questions.
Essay	100 points
Test	60 points

### **Openers: *The Metamorphosis***

Teachers: write one of these openers on the board on the days specified in the agenda as a warm-up exercise.

- #1 Why does the reader have more sympathy for Gregor than for his parents?
- #2 In what way is Gregor similar to the Beast in "Beauty and the Beast"?
- #3 What metamorphosis does Grete undergo in Part II?
- #4 What metamorphosis does Mr. Samsa undergo in Part II?
- #5 The boarders seem to be caricatures of real people. What is Kafka suggesting about people who conform?



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## Literary Terms: The Metamorphosis

**Directions:** The definitions are offered for each of these literary terms. Find two examples of each by the end of the story and be able to explain your choices. Give the page numbers where you found your examples.

\*(all definitions are taken from the Encarta Dictionary: English or Wikipedia.)

1. **Surrealism:** a movement in art and literature where reality mixes with the bizarre and imaginary.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Kafkaesque:** relating to the writing of Franz Kafka, where people and their lives show their alienation from society and are seemingly pointless and lack personal relationships.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Animalism:** where humans are driven by their physical appetites and not their spiritual needs.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Allegory:** a work in which the characters and events represent other things and symbolically express a deeper, often spiritual, moral, or political meaning.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Metaphor:** the comparison of two unlike objects, or a person with an object, without using like or as.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
6. **Symbolism:** an object, action, or idea that represents something other than itself.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
7. **Magical Realism:** a literary genre where magic blends with realism.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
8. **Irony:** something is said or written that suggests the opposite than the literal meaning. Irony can be verbal, written or dramatic.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
9. **Gallows Humor:** humor that arises from stressful, traumatic or life-threatening situations.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
10. **Anagnorisis** (tragic hero): the point in the plot at which the protagonist recognizes his or her true identity or discovers the true nature of his or her own situation.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## Study Questions

Note: most of the questions for this worksheet were taken from the Teacher Edition of the *World Literature* anthology published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1993.

### *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka

#### Part I Worksheet

Who?

1. ( Main character):
  2. (Supporting Characters):
2. What? (Main Incident/Plot):
3. When?
4. Where? (Setting):
5. Why? (Motivation):

#### Discussion Questions

1. What does Gregor's plan to go back to sleep "forgetting all this nonsense" suggest about him?
2. How might Gregor's unhappiness with his job relate to his sudden, unexpected metamorphosis?
3. Explain whether or not you feel Gregor's boss would really fire him for being late.
4. Despite his amazing change, Gregor is only concerned with going to work. What does this tell the reader about him?
5. Theme: the individual is alienated or cut off from others. How does Gregor's strange, chirping voice support this theme?
6. Why is Gregor having so much difficulty getting out of bed? Describe this scene. What finally enables him to get out of bed?
7. Outside the Samsa's apartment, fog shrouds everything. Why is this element of the setting appropriate?
8. Why is Gregor a bit happy with having to ask for help?
9. Which details does Kafka use to create a stifling, claustrophobic mood in this section?
10. Considering that a job he hates consumes Gregor, what is Kafka suggesting about the effects of commerce and materialism on people?
11. What does the manager suggest about Gregor's recent job performance?



### **Essay Topics: *The Metamorphosis***

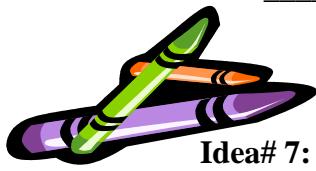
Choose one of the following topics and develop it into a composition following the Write Right format. In grading, emphasis will be placed on the clarity and focus of your thesis statement and on the specific and concrete details chosen to explain and prove this statement.

1. Critics categorize this story, in part, as an allegory. Explain how Gregor's metamorphosis as a symbol for the alienation of humans in the modern world.
2. What statement is Kafka making about the effects of a capitalist-industrial society on its members? Who are the exploiters and who are their victims? How does Kafka characterize each group? How do the events that unfold transform the members of each group mentally and emotionally? Use characters in the story to stand for the types of exploiters and victims in contemporary society.
3. Did Gregor undergo a physical transformation or an emotional and mental one? Make a case for your stance using specific examples from the story to prove your theory.
4. Could Kafka be making a point about how society treats the mentally ill? If so, what is he saying? How does Gregor illustrate his point?



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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



### Fact or Opinion? You be the Judge

**Idea# 7: Directions:** In groups of three, analyze your assigned character by writing everything you know about that person: Appearance, personality, beliefs, friends, enemies, conflicts, his/her driving wish, and anything else you want to include. Use a different color crayon or marker for each category. Organize the chart however your group chooses to. Beside each word, phrase or statement, write an F if it is a fact and O if it is an opinion. Make the chart visually pleasing. The Concluding Statement should be focused, strong and show the character.

Character: \_\_\_\_\_

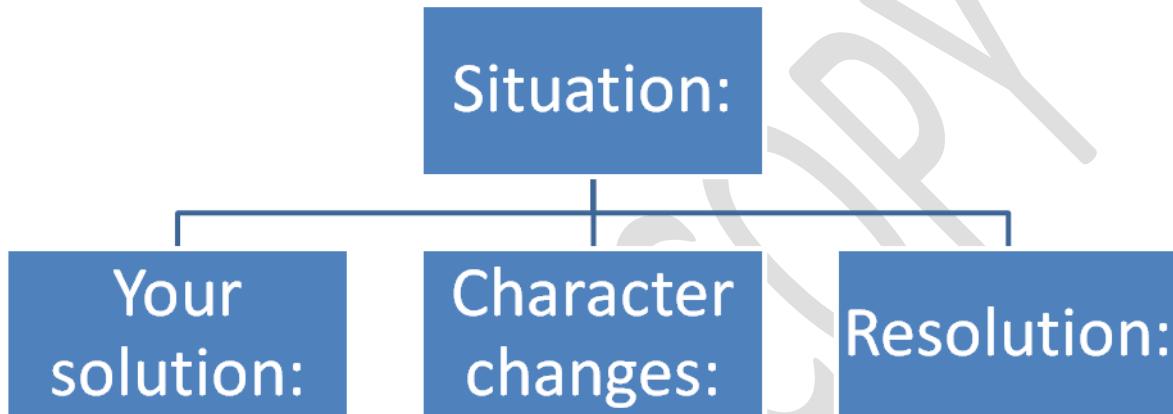
Appearance	Personality	Beliefs
Friends	Enemies	Conflicts
Driving Wish	<b><i>Group's Choice</i></b>	<b><i>Group's Choice</i></b>

Concluding Statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Why Did You Do That?

**Directions:** Choose a character in the book and summarize how he/she handled a situation. Next, discuss how you would have liked the character to have resolved the circumstance. Finally, be sure to address the following points: *How would the character have to change to handle the event this way? How would these changes affect the book's resolution?* Use the graphic to take notes before writing your explanations.



Situation Analysis (What the character did and why):

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Your Solution:

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How the character would have to change:

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How the new solution would affect the resolution:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### It is the Cause

“It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul...” (*Othello* V.ii).



**Directions:** When Othello said this to Desdemona right before he killed her (*Othello* William Shakespeare), he couldn't bring himself to state the actual cause of his despair or the reason behind his decision to strangle his beloved wife. For this worksheet, you have to be stronger than Othello. First, choose three situations (one each from the beginning, the middle and the end) of the book that you are reading. Next, explain the following in the space provided:

1. Describe the cause of the situation/conflict.
2. Identify the reason(s) behind its occurrence.
3. Detail the given effect.
4. Discuss your desired outcome.
5. Analyze the changes necessary for the optional outcome to occur.

When you are finished with the chart, compare and contrast the book's given resolution with your optional outcome. End by explaining which resolution fits the book the best. Justify your points with textual citations, using the back of this paper, if necessary.

	Cause	Reason(s)	Effect	Desired Outcome	Necessary Changes for optional outcome
Situation (beginning)					
Situation (middle)					
Situation (end)					

#### Compare and Contrast Resolutions:

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