



WELCOME TO PASSAGES TO SUSPENSE

THE PASSAGES PROGRAM

The *Passages* program is uniquely designed for secondary students who are reading below grade level. The novels in the *Passages* series offer relevant, high-interest plots based on mature themes of interest to most adolescents. In addition, the books have been carefully edited for readability while adhering to multicultural, nonsexist guidelines. And, just as important to the *Passages* reader, the stories reflect the lifestyles of secondary school students. The accompanying *Passages* workbooks/skills books teach and reinforce basic communication skills and encourage students to personally interact with the story.

THE COMPONENTS

THE PASSAGES TO SUSPENSE NOVELS

The five *Passages to Suspense* novels revolve around teens ensnared in weird and sometimes terrifying situations. The fast-moving tales hold students' attention while providing them with suspenseful situations sure to motivate even the most reluctant reader to "finish the book".

The novels are 100–150 pages long and are available in durable Cover Craft®. A plot summary for each *Passages to Suspense* novel is provided beginning on page 7 of this guide.

The five novels are divided into two reading levels as follows:

Third–fourth grade reading level:

A Deadly Obsession
The Frozen Face
Like Father, Like Son

Fifth–sixth grade reading level:

New Kid in Class
Rage of the Tiger

THE PASSAGES NOVELS

The seventeen *Passages* novels are typical young adult stories. The plots centre around teens caught up in the stresses of contemporary living. Characters work through problems such as child abuse, violence in the schools, xenophobia, ethnic identity crises, academic stress, substance abuse, troubled or broken families, low self-esteem, peer pressure and ostracism, and loss. Fast-moving plots keep students' attention, and upbeat endings suggest ways for students to cope.

The seventeen *Passages* novels, listed below by reading level, are approximately 100–120 pages long.

Third–fourth grade reading level:

An Alien Spring
Don't Blame the Children (Also available in Spanish)
Ghost Boy
The Haunting of Hawthorne
Please Don't Ask Me to Love You (Also available in Spanish)
The Power of the Rose (Sequel to *The Haunting of Hawthorne*)
Summer of Shame (Sequel to *An Alien Spring*)
To Slay the Dragon (Sequel to *Don't Blame the Children*)
The Vandal (Also available in Spanish)

Fifth–sixth grade reading level:

Bridge to the Moon (Sequel to *Maitland's Kid*)
The Darkest Secret
Maitland's Kid
The Shadow Man
The Shining Mark (Sequel to *When a Hero Dies*)
A Song to Sing (Also available in Spanish)
Sparrow's Treasure
When a Hero Dies (Also available in Spanish)



THE PASSAGES TO SUSPENSE SKILLS BOOKS

The five *Passages to Suspense* skills books use material from the companion *Passages to Suspense* novels to boost students' reading, thinking, word, and writing skills.

Each skills book divides a selected novel into five reading assignments of two chapters each. For each assignment, two reading, one thinking, two word, and one writing exercise are provided. Each exercise focuses on a single, clearly identified skill or strategy. The following is an example of how a typical section might be set up:

CHAPTERS 1 AND 2

Reading Skills: Checking Comprehension

Reading Skills: Recognising Suspense

Thinking Skills: Understanding Theme

Word Skills: Making Analogies

Word Skills: Determining Correct Usage

Writing Skills: Writing Objectively

READING SKILLS

Reading activities help hone skills in areas such as main idea, details, inferences, foreshadowing, and more. These strategies can transfer to books within this series and to other reading materials students might encounter.

In the reading activities, students often work with excerpts from the companion *Passages to Suspense* novels.

Here are the types of reading skills activities provided:

- Checking Comprehension
- Getting the Main Idea
- Determining Fact and Opinion
- Using Cloze Reading
- Recognising Suspense
- Recognising Foreshadowing
- Analysing the Main Character
- Understanding Idioms
- Revealing Character Traits
- Sequencing Events
- Determining Cause and Effect

THINKING SKILLS

Thinking activities provide students with practice in predicting, interpreting literary devices, evaluating, and more. These strategies encourage students to think critically and to interact with the text on a personal level.

In the thinking activities, as in the reading skills, students work with excerpts from the companion *Passages to Suspense* novel.

Following is a list of typical thinking skills activities offered:

- Predicting
- Determining Values
- Determining Conflict
- Thinking Critically
- Understanding Theme
- Understanding Character Motivation
- Determining Inferences

WORD SKILLS

Word activities allow students to increase their fluency with the English language by offering them a variety of exercises covering grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and usage.

Again, in the activities dealing with words, students work with excerpts or individual words or phrases taken directly from the companion novel in the *Passages to Suspense* series.

Some of the types of word activities students will be working with are:

- Making Analogies
- Recognising Prefixes
- Defining Words in Context
- Determining Correct Usage
- Recognising Adjectives
- Finding Root Words
- Determining Meanings
- Recognising Conjunctions
- Using Prepositions
- Recognising Synonyms
- Applying Spelling Rules



WRITING SKILLS

The writing activities in the *Passages to Suspense* skills books offer students the chance to review their skills in areas such as punctuation and sentence structure and to respond to various writing prompts based on the content of the companion *Passages to Suspense* novel.

For some activities, students work with excerpts from the companion novel. In others, students create their own compositions based on the prompts provided.

Some of the writing activities available for students are:

- Writing Objectively
- Using the Semicolon
- Rewriting Fragments into Sentences
- Writing a Persuasive Paragraph
- Writing an Epilogue
- Summarising
- Changing Point of View
- Explaining Feelings
- Writing a Journal Entry
- Using Brackets in Direct Quotations
- Using Slang
- Punctuating Dialogue

RESPONSE KEYS

The answers to *Passages to Suspense* exercises are provided beginning on page 16 of this guide. Teachers may wish to check all activities themselves, allow students to self-check, or have students cross-check. Permission is given to make copies of keys for use within the classroom.





USING THE PASSAGES TO SUSPENSE PROGRAM

The *Passages to Suspense* program can be used effectively with individual students or with an entire classroom. Either way, students can read their novels and complete the skills books independently.

Before students begin work, discuss the program and its goals. Talk about the skills taught and practiced in the program, using the information given in this guide. Ask students to read the introduction in their workbooks before they begin each exercise.

Help students establish a time frame for completing the parts of the *Passages* program. For those students who need a high degree of structure, set up a schedule for reading the novels and completing the skills exercises.

For students who can handle a more flexible approach—one in which they read the novels and complete the skills books at their own pace—determine a completion date and then let them work by themselves.

You may wish to schedule one or more teacher-student conferences to monitor students' progress. These sessions will give you an opportunity to help students share their thoughts about what they are reading and how it relates to their own lives. Conferences offer a chance to discuss the skills book activities as well.

Teacher and student can also assess whether or not preset goals have been achieved. In addition, conferences can serve as opportunities for goals to be clarified or reset.

Whether you use *Passages to Suspense* as an enrichment program with individual students or as a group activity for your entire class, your students can pace themselves. They can even check their own work if you provide them with a response key.

Prompt students to discuss their responses as they complete their skills books. As mentioned, teacher-student conferences can serve this purpose. Cooperative groups or partner work will allow readers to share reactions and discuss problems.

Whether your students finish just one novel and skills book or complete all ten components in the program, they will learn new skills to allow them to

- 1) better comprehend what they read;
- 2) think critically and interact with the text on a personal level;
- 3) increase their fluency in the English language; and
- 4) improve their writing skills.





JOURNAL OR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions are designed as post-reading journal or discussion questions.

A DEADLY OBSESSION

1. Have you ever wanted something so badly that you've risked danger to get it? If so, what was it and what did you risk? Looking back on it, would you do it again? Why or why not?
2. If it were possible for scientists to invent a stay-young pill, do you think they should? What would be some of the advantages of an all-young society? disadvantages? Explain your answers.
3. As you read the story, did you feel any sympathy toward Spencer Hoover? toward Quincy Martin? Why or why not?

THE FROZEN FACE

1. Who, if anyone, do you think is to blame for Elise Allen's breakdown? Do you think Joe Allen was right in sending her to the hospital in Crescentville? Do you think the doctors are right to limit visits from her family? Explain your answers.
2. Apply the statement 'Jealousy is love of self, not love of another' to Derek Mason. Supply details from the story to support your answer.
3. Why do you think Todd Smith appears to Laura instead of someone else? Who do you think would have been his second choice and why?

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

1. In the novel, several of the students decide that Mr Pike is not a fair teacher. Do you think students should have more say about who teaches them? Should students have the power to get a teacher fired? Examine both sides of the issue. Then give your answer and reasons for it.

2. Carlos and Tony Robles often fought about whether Tony should accept the football scholarship he was offered and go on to college. Do you think parents should be able to force their children to go to college? Why or why not?
3. Cheerleading was so important to Claudia that she attacked Mr Pike just to prevent him from keeping her off the squad. Have you ever wanted something so badly that you've hurt someone or ignored his or her feelings to get it? How did the other person feel? Looking back on it, would you do it again? Why or why not?

NEW KID IN CLASS

1. The girls at Hawksville High find James Olson very attractive. How important are looks to you? Have you ever been impressed by someone's appearance only to be disappointed by his or her personality? Explain your answers.
2. Put yourself in Nate Bennett's place. Why do you think he behaves as he does? Do you think the adults in Nate's life have helped him deal with his behaviour constructively? Explain.
3. Why do you think Mrs Blakely is so blind to James' faults? Do you think she is being fair to Sarah in the missing iguana incident? What would you do if you were Sarah?

RAGE OF THE TIGER

1. Nicki is beautiful. However, her behaviour is not always attractive. Make a list of unattractive character traits that Nicki exhibits. Explain what these traits tell you about her.
2. What do you admire about Dr Calhoun? What do you find disturbing? Would you like to work for him as Billy does? Explain.
3. Do you think Connie should have told the police about Alissa's film? How might the story have been different if she had?





CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

The following suggestions should work as post-reading activities for most of the *Passages to Suspense* novels and workbooks.

ART AND MUSIC

1. Try making a set of posters for the book or illustrating scenes of interest in the story. Make sure your artwork communicates character, action, and mood.
2. Create a timeline or map of the story action. Try using different colours to indicate the mood(s) or character(s) involved and the importance of the action.
3. Locate musical selections that would appeal to various characters in the novel. After you prepare a tape of the music, play it for the class and explain why each selection would appeal to a particular character. Invite your classmates to review the tape and discuss your choices with you.
4. Sketch plans or build models of sets from the novel. Indicate dimensions, entrances, windows, light sources, and furniture for interiors. If you pick an outdoor set, be sure to include details in the landscape.
5. Locate pictures of paintings, sculptures, photos, etc., that might reflect a character's personality or the novel's mood or meaning.
6. Create a poster to teach the meaning of vocabulary words or other significant words from the novel.
7. Compose music, lyrics, or both to sum up a scene or the entire book. Tape your product and present it to the class.
8. Make a collage or drawing of objects which could represent a character in the book. Include specific quotes by that character.
9. Record parts of different musical selections that capture the various suspenseful scenes in the book. You might want to intersperse the selections with readings of significant passages from the book.

10. With several students, pose for group photos of the characters in the novel. Choose the appropriate lighting and background for your photos. If possible, create costumes and 'personas' (how the character would stand, the expression on his or her face, and how the character would relate to others in the photo).
11. Create an interpretive dance to express the conflicts and personalities of the novel. (You may wish to view videos of recent musicals before tackling this activity.) If possible, add music and costumes to enhance the dance. Show a videotape of your performance or present it live.
12. Make a magazine spread to advertise the novel. In your ads, you might include photos, illustrations, quotes from the book, and recommendations from authors or readers.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

1. Pick an issue from the book, or a journal or discussion question from this guide. Debate the issue in small groups or as a class.
2. Hold impromptu interviews with characters from the book. Ask your teacher to call out a character's name; then 'interview' a student who volunteers to play that role.
3. Choose several suspenseful passages and read them aloud to the class. Be sure to add inflection when necessary. Consider adding some eerie music as background.
4. Decide which character in the novel you would most like to be. Explain your choice to the class and invite questions about your decision.
5. With a small group, stage dramatic readings of the book for the class.