

# ***Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton (Published by McDougal Littell)**

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts III and Communication Arts III

## **Summary**

*Ethan Frome* is a poignant look at a solitary man and his struggle to find love and acceptance while living in a small New England community. Although he is disfigured and dejected at the beginning of the story, through the literary device of flashback, the reader learns that he has not always been so unhappy and that he was once in love with a young woman. His dejected spirit resulted from a “smash up” that left him injured and changed the course of his life.

## **Connection to the Curriculum**

Ethan Frome, the main character, is a recurring character type in many genres of literature. He is a loner and an outsider. Examining Ethan Frome through literature gives the reader a chance to observe his interactions with the world around him and to learn from the mistakes and victories that he has in life. Thematically, the story can be viewed from a student’s perspective as what can result from good or bad moral choices. Satisfaction and self-respect are two important ideas that stem from making good decisions. In addition to being of thematic value, *Ethan Frome* is of great literary value. Specifically, the novel uses foreshadowing, irony, symbolism and character development extensively. Many other literary devices are used throughout the novel which makes it a great choice for an overview of several literary terms. This time period is a piece of the American canon examined by juniors in CAIII and AP CAIII.

## **Standards**

### **Course Objectives (Benchmarks)**

**Reading:** 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

**Literature:** 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text.

**Writing:** 3.6- The students use effective word choice.

### **Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)**

#### **Reading:**

1.3.2- The student determines meanings of words or phrases using context clues from sentences or paragraphs.

1.3.5- The student identifies, interprets, and analyzes the use of figurative language including similes, metaphors, analogies, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, personification, idioms, imagery, and symbolism.

1.4.17- The student analyzes and evaluates how an author’s style (word choice, sentence structure) and use of literary devices (foreshadowing, flashback, irony, symbolism, tone, mood, satire, imagery, point of view, allusion, overstatement, paradox) work together to achieve his or her purpose for writing text.

#### **Literature:**

2.1.1- The student identifies and describes different types of characters (protagonist, antagonist, round, flat, static, dynamic) and analyzes the development of characters.

2.1.3- The student analyzes and evaluates how the author uses various plot elements (conflict, crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution, rising action, falling action, subplots, parallel episodes) to advance the plot and make connections between events.

#### **Writing:**

3.6.17- The student uses action verbs that energize the writing and precise nouns and modifiers that create images in the reader’s mind.

**A Note on the Text:** (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

*Ethan Frome is the story of a man (trapped in a life where he has given up on his dreams) who falls in love with his wife’s cousin. Although they do not have an affair, Ethan attempts a double suicide. This attempt fails, and readers are able to see the tragic results of poor decisions.*

## **AP Connections**

*Ethan Frome*, in addition to serving its place in the American canon, is excellent for examining literary terms and devices for comparison with other novels. Wharton is an author who has appeared on the AP exams in the past.

## **Additional Unit Design Connections**

Coming soon