And Then There Were None
by Agatha Christie
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Teacher Edition

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Note: The student worksheets can be found on pages 17–31. Teachers can make copies of these pages to distribute to students.
Welcome to Amplify ELA’s Novel Guides

We created a series of Novel Guides to provide you with a flexible resource for the books you most want to teach. Some of the titles are in the digital library while others will need to be accessed through your school, public, or classroom libraries. We selected one strong aspect of each novel and are having students focus on this element as they explore and analyze a key theme.

Rather than fully built-out lessons, these guides offer lean, targeted instruction that follows Amplify ELA’s pedagogy as students explore great literature. Each Novel Guide provides activities and questions with sample answers for the Teacher Edition, including:

- A complete close reading session, including the text excerpt
- Connected excerpts to extend reading and skill practice
- Guiding questions and activities to support reading the whole book
- An introduction to the book and the author
- Activities that focus on a range of literacy skills
- Project-based learning
- Discussion questions
- Writing Prompts
- Exploration of Writer’s Craft
- Role-playing opportunities
- Collaborative learning
- Social-emotional learning discussion questions, Writing Prompts, or activities
- Standards alignment

The diverse selection of books we chose comprises a range of genres from mystery to non-fiction, and themes from social justice to identity and courage. Students explore classics and contemporary award winners, expand their literacy skills, and discover the rewards that come with close reading compelling texts. The guides are designed to be used flexibly and offer suggestions for implementation.

All the guides are housed in the Amplify Library as downloadable, printable PDFs. They include student worksheets and instructions for the teacher that will take students through a close reading of a passage all the way to the end of the novel.
Part 1

Introduction

About the story

*And Then There Were None* is a gripping suspense novel written by acclaimed author Agatha Christie. The novel takes place on a private island off the coast of England during the 1930s and centers around the poem, “Ten Little Soldier Boys.” It involves a diverse group of guests, some who were invited to the island for an exclusive getaway, and some who were offered employment by the island’s owners. Each character comes from a different socioeconomic background with various levels of criminal histories. Point of view and perspective are each a central focus of this novel, with a strong emphasis on motivation for different characters.

Themes that align with this guide

Agatha Christie’s original UK publication in 1939 and the US edition published in 1940 contained racial epithets and insulting language. While modern publications have reduced these occurrences, some of the characters still express antisemitic views. Teachers may want to lead a discussion with students on the language and era of the book.

This tale is riddled with twists, turns, clues, and distractors. Christie craftily uses third person limited in each chapter to create robust characters for the reader. The activities in the novel guide offer instruction on analyzing different points of view and understanding how the characters’ reactions affect the suspense of the novel.

About the author

Agatha Christie was a British author, born in Torquay, Devon, England in 1890. She is one of the best-selling novelists of all time, known for her 66 novels, multiple short stories, and her play *The Mousetrap*, which had one of the longest theatrical runs in history. Agatha Christie died in 1976 at the age of 85.
When and how to use the Novel Guide

Amplify’s Novel Guides can provide flexible teaching options. They can be used at any point in the year or paired with thematically related core units, before or after teaching the units. Or, if you would like to build out lessons, the guides can be used as the foundation for a more fully developed curriculum, based on the titles.

The And Then There Were None Novel Guide aligns with the following core units:

7D: Poetry & Poe
Sub-Unit 3: "The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allan Poe
The narrator confidently describes and executes his plot for revenge on an unsuspecting foe.

8D: Shakespeare’s Romeo & Juliet
Sub-Unit 1: Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare
Shakespeare’s play demonstrates the use of rich imagery and a variety of potential individuals responsible for the lovers’ fate.
Part 2

Text Excerpt and Close Reading Activities

Excerpt: And Then There Were None
Chapter 1, paragraphs 89–119

89 Mr. Blore was in the slow train from Plymouth. There was only one other person in his carriage, an elderly seafaring gentleman with a bleary eye. At the present moment he had dropped off to sleep.

90 Mr. Blore was writing carefully in a little notebook.

91 “That’s the lot,” he muttered to himself. “Emily Brent, Vera Claythorne, Dr. Armstrong, Anthony Marston, old Justice Wargrave, Philip Lombard, General Macarthur, C.M.G., D.S.O. Manservant and wife: Mr. and Mrs. Rogers.”

92 He closed the notebook and put it back in his pocket. He glanced over at the corner and the slumbering man.

93 “Had one over the eight,” diagnosed Mr. Blore accurately.

94 He went over things carefully and conscientiously in his mind.

95 “Job ought to be easy enough,” he ruminated. “Don’t see how I can slip up on it. Hope I look all right.”

96 He stood up and scrutinized himself anxiously in the glass. The face reflected there was of a slightly military cast with a moustache. There was very little expression in it. The eyes were grey and set rather close together.

97 “Might be a Major,” said Mr. Blore. “No, I forgot. There’s that old military gent. He’d spot me at once.”

98 “South Africa,” said Mr. Blore, “that’s my line! None of these people have anything to do with South Africa, and I’ve just been reading that travel folder so I can talk about it all right.”

99 Fortunately there were all sorts and types of colonials. As a man of means from South Africa, Mr. Blore felt that he could enter into any society unchallenged.
Soldier Island. He remembered Soldier Island as a boy . . . Smelly sort of rock covered with gulls—stood about a mile from the coast.

Funny idea to go and build a house on it! Awful in bad weather! But millionaires were full of whims!

The old man in the corner woke up and said:

“You can’t never tell at sea—never!”

Mr. Blore said soothingly, “That’s right. You can’t.”

The old man hiccupped twice and said plaintively:

“There’s a squall coming.”

Mr. Blore said:

“No, no, mate, it’s a lovely day.”

The old man said angrily:

“There’s a squall ahead. I can smell it.”

“Maybe you’re right,” said Mr. Blore pacifically.

The train stopped at a station and the old fellow rose unsteadily.

“Thish where I get out.” He fumbled with the window. Mr. Blore helped him.

The old man stood in the doorway. He raised a solemn hand and blinked his bleary eyes.

“Watch and pray,” he said. “Watch and pray. The day of judgment is at hand.”

He collapsed through the doorway on to the platform. From a recumbent position he looked up at Mr. Blore and said with immense dignity:

“I’m talking to you, young man. The day of judgment is very close at hand.”

Subsiding on to his seat Mr. Blore thought to himself: He’s nearer the day of judgment than I am!

But there, as it happens, he was wrong . . .
Step 1: Close Reading Activity (with sample responses)

1. Highlight words or phrases where you notice Blore’s attention to detail.

   **Sample response:** 
   
   "...an elderly seafaring gentleman with a bleary eye"; "Mr. Blore was writing carefully..."; "'Had one over the eight,' diagnosed Mr. Blore accurately."; "He went over things carefully and conscientiously..."; "He stood up and scrutinized himself anxiously in the glass."; "Smelly sort of rock covered with gulls—stood about a mile from the coast."; "He's nearer the day of judgment than I am!"

2. What do you think Blore's plans are?

   **Sample response:** 
   
   Blore knows the other characters, he’s planning on creating an identity, he has been to Soldier Island, and he seems to want to be correct when talking to the old man. I think Blore has a job involving spying or hurting the other guests.

3. Highlight words or phrases where you believe the characters seem to know something that you don’t.

   **Sample response:** 
   
   "'Job ought to be easy enough,' he ruminated. 'Don’t see how I can slip up on it.‘"; "'Watch and pray,' he said. 'Watch and pray. The day of judgment is at hand.'"; "'There’s a squall coming.'"; "Subsiding on to his seat Mr. Blore thought to himself: He’s nearer the day of judgment than I am!"

4. Highlight words or phrases where you believe the author seems to know something you don’t.

   **Sample response:** 
   
   "But there, as it happens, he was wrong. . . ."

5. How do the characters’ or the author’s points of view create a feeling of suspense?

   **Sample response:** 
   
   Blore creates a feeling of suspense because we know that he is going to the island to complete a job, but we don’t know exactly what he plans to do. The old man creates suspense because he delivers a creepy warning to Blore about the day of judgment. The author ends the passage by hinting that Blore is wrong when he thinks the old man’s day of judgment is closer than his.
Step 2: Connected Excerpts to Continue Close Reading

Continue your work with analyzing how differences in point of view create suspense. Use the same steps as above when close reading these paragraphs.

- **Chapter 5, paragraphs 47–70:** The guests’ first night on Soldier Island.
- **Chapter 8, paragraphs 89–145:** Vera Claythorne speaks with General Macarthur.
- **Chapter 9, paragraphs 109–128:** The guests are sitting around the dining table.
- **Chapter 11, paragraphs 52–84:** When Vera notices a missing soldier figurine.
- **Chapter 13, paragraphs 1–40:** The five remaining guests sit in the drawing room.
- **Chapter 16, paragraphs 18–74:** Vera Claythorne and Philip Lombard talk on the beach.

Step 3: Writing Prompt

**Analytical:**

In Christie’s book, point of view shifts back and forth between each of the ten characters. As a consequence, the reader discovers different information from each character’s point of view. Choose two characters that provided you with an important piece of information that you needed to understand a part of the mystery. What did you learn from each character and what did you discover when you brought the information from these two characters together?
Part 3

Additional Guiding Questions and Projects

Step 4: Guiding Questions to Read the Whole Book (with sample responses)

Use the discussion questions below to guide reading throughout the whole book. Students should come prepared to discuss their answers by referring to evidence from the text. Students should also be prepared to respond to comments made by classmates.

1. **Chapters 1–2:** How does Agatha Christie use the character descriptions to foreshadow that something bad will happen?

   Sample response: The author uses words and phrases that have an eerie or dark connotation to describe characters or their situation. For example, Vera Claythorne says the man sitting across from her has “an arrogant, almost cruel mouth.” Phillip Lombard states, “There wasn’t much he drew the line at really.…” “Subsiding on to his seat Mr. Blore thought to himself: He’s nearer the day of judgment than I am! But there, as it happens, he was wrong.…”

2. **Chapters 3–6:** What effect does being accused of murder have on the characters’ interactions in each chapter?

   Sample response: Some characters are in total denial and behave as if the news does not affect them. Other characters are visibly shaken that something in their past is being revealed around strangers.

3. **Chapters 7–10:** What is the significance of the diverse gender and class distinctions in the group of characters? What does this tell us about the murderer’s motives and outlook on the concept of justice?

   Sample response: The diversity demonstrates that there is a more complex plan to the selection of guests than a simple one. The murderer’s selection of people shows that no one is exempt from punishment because of their status.
4. **Chapters 11–14:** How do the characters’ personalities develop as members of the house are killed?

   Sample response: The characters paired up with someone they trusted during chapters 3–6. During chapters 11–14, the characters are moving around in pairs or large groups for safety vs. trust reasons. During this time, readers will get to notice the guests becoming increasingly suspicious and distrusting of one another.

5. **Chapters 15–17:** How does the author use the structure of the nursery rhyme? What do you notice about the contrast of the nursery rhyme with the reality of the situation?

   Sample response: The nursery rhyme indicated that all the guests would die. The reader is still left in anticipation of what will happen as they try to determine the order in which the guests will be killed and who could be responsible.

6. **Epilogue-Manuscript sent to Scotland Yard:** What are the distinctions between the narration of the story, the narration of the epilogue, and the manuscript that was sent to Scotland Yard? Why do you think Christie made this decision when writing the novel?

   Sample response: The distinction between the three sections is the point of view. The third-person limited story transitions to third-person in the epilogue and ends with a manuscript written in the first person. Christie’s move to write with multiple points of view distanced the murderer from the reader and held on to moments of suspense until the very end.

**Step 5: Extended Discussion Questions**

1. Every inhabitant on Soldier Island first received an invitation requesting their presence, either for pleasure or work. Trace the decisions that led each character to accept the letter writer’s offer.
   - What other decisions could the characters have made instead of going to the island?
   - Explain a time where you made a decision you later regretted or felt guilty about.
2. Throughout the novel, the characters experience the emotions of fear and anger. Reflect on a moment when you were experiencing one or both of those emotions.
   » Did your actions at that time reflect the emotions you were feeling?
   » Did those emotions affect others? Why or why not?

3. Vera Claythorne and General Macarthur were each in a relationship that seemed to strongly affect their ability to make rational decisions.
   » What could these characters have done differently?
   » What advice would you give to someone in a similar situation?

Step 6: Writer’s Craft (with sample responses)

Establishing Suspense

One way that Agatha Christie finds success with her gripping narratives is her insertion of foreshadowing or a cliffhanger at the end of a chapter or sub-chapter.

Foreshadowing is when a writer provides some advance hints or clues about what will happen next in a text.

A cliffhanger occurs when a writer creates uncertainty at the end of a scene about what will happen next in a text.

- **Example 1: Foreshadowing**  
  Chapter Five, sub-chapter V, paragraph 132:

  » “He knew, suddenly, that he didn’t want to leave the island,” foreshadows the fate of General Macarthur.

- **Example 2: Cliffhanger**  
  Chapter Twelve, sub-chapter IV, paragraphs 154–157:

  » “They went along the corridor to Lombard’s room. Philip strode across to the bed table and jerked open the drawer. Then he recoiled with an oath. The drawer of the bed table was empty.”

  » The guests and the reader discover that Philip Lombard’s revolver is missing.

Find and write down at least three other moments in the novel where the author inserts a cliffhanger or foreshadowing at the end of a chapter or sub-chapter to establish suspense.
Summative Projects

Step 7: Writing Prompt

Should the guests on Soldier Island be punished by U.N. Owen? Use evidence from the novel to support your claim.

Step 8: Final Project

Option 1:

The novel *And Then There Were None* has piqued the interest of many people over the years, including those in the film industry. Begin this activity with a web search for the following movie trailers.

1. *And Then There Were None* (1945)—Directed by René Clair
2. *And Then There Were None* (2015, TV Mini-Series)—Directed by Craig Viveiros

Watch the two film trailers as a class.

Discussion questions or writing prompts:

1. Compare and contrast the 1945 film trailer to the trailer for the 2015 mini-series. Which elements are similar and which are different?
   
   **Sample response:** The 1945 trailer seems dark and scary. There are clips of a storm and the music creates a feeling of fear. In the 2015 mini-series, there are bright colors, but the director quickly flashes from scene to scene. The characters in the mini-series seem to show more emotion than the characters in the 1945 film.

2. Watch both trailers again, and compare the actors' behaviors to the behavior of the characters in the novel. How do the trailers contribute to your understanding of the text?
   
   **Sample response:** The trailers show calm characters in the beginning clips, similar to the novel. In the 2015 mini-series, the ending of the trailer matches the erratic behavior the characters experience by the conclusion of the novel. The trailer portrays visual information about the setting and possible character interactions occurring in separate rooms at the same time.
3. What choices made by the film directors or the actors would you use to create a present-day film while remaining faithful to the novel? Why?

Sample response:

» Lighting—choosing bright backgrounds or darker colors and lower lighting.

» Clothing—simple designs vs. more detailed attire for all the actors.

» Actors—strong female lead or quiet heroine.

4. Optional: Create a storyboard or video clip debuting the newest trailer of *And Then There Were None*, being directed by you, the student. Develop your work by using elements from the previous trailers and the novel.

**Option 2:**

Congratulations! You are the new realtor appointed to sell Soldier Island. Now that the bodies have been removed, the property needs to be sold.

1. Identify words and phrases used in the novel to describe the qualities and features of the house on Soldier Island. Consider the number of rooms, the space available on the island, etc.

   **Sample response:** The house was there facing south—low and square and modern looking with rounded windows letting in all the light. (Chapter 2, paragraph 114)

2. Browse the Internet for current island prices and compare the qualities and features of that to Soldier Island. Create a list of comparable homes to add to your brochure.

3. Create a real estate brochure or visual pamphlet that will attract potential buyers and sell the island.

   » Determine your audience, selling price, feature highlights, and images you will use to make the property appealing to potential buyers.

   » Include specific words and phrases that will create interest for clients even though tragedy has happened on the island.
Step 9: Challenge

In Chapter 15, Vera Claythorne says, “Don’t you see? We’re the Zoo...Last night, we were hardly human anymore. We’re the Zoo...” Determine how true Vera Claythorne’s statement is by researching the criteria for an establishment to be labeled a zoo.

- Typically where are zoos located?
- Does the establishment have to have a minimum number of animals? Maximum?
- What are the criteria for taking care of the animals?

Then, return to *And Then There Were None* and answer the following questions.

1. Compare and contrast the features of a zoo from your research to how the characters are treated, or how they treat themselves, on Soldier Island. Based on your research, how true was Vera Claythorne’s statement?

2. Throughout the novel Christie describes the characters in animalistic terms. What is the significance of this? What does this convey to readers?

Step 10: Extra

Agatha Christie used a nursery rhyme as the foundation of her novel *And Then There Were None*. Today you will do the same by creating a short story of your own.

Read the nursery rhyme "A Man of Words and Not of Deeds," and think about a few moves the author makes:

- How does the author use the nursery rhyme to tell the story of a man of words and not of deeds?
- What images are created during each couplet?
• How do these images help to develop the story in this nursery rhyme?

Create a short story with the characters using the imagery you identified in the nursery rhyme.

When writing your short story, remember to include:

• A place and time your story is occurring
• At least one character other than the "man of words"
• A theme or central idea
• A conclusion that mirrors the end of the nursery rhyme

A Man of Words and Not of Deeds
(original author may be John Fletcher, 1579–1625)

A man of words and not of deeds
Is like a garden full of weeds;
And when the weeds begin to grow,
It's like a garden full of snow:
And when the snow begins to fall,
It's like a bird upon the wall;
And when the bird away does fly,
It's like an eagle in the sky;
And when the sky begins to roar,
It's like a lion at the door;
And when the door begins to crack,
It's like a stick across your back;
And when your back begins to smart,
It's like a penknife in your heart;
And when your heart begins to bleed,
You're dead, and dead, and dead indeed.
Step 11: Extended Reading

- *The Mystery of Drear House* by Virginia Hamilton (Amplify Library)
- *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* by G.K. Chesterton (Amplify Library)
- "The Purloined Letter" by Edgar Allan Poe (Amplify Library)
- *The Red House Mystery* by A.A. Milne (Amplify Library)
- *The Sign of the Four* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Amplify Library)
- *We Were Liars* by E. Lockhart
- *Truly Devious* by Maureen Johnson
- *Wilder Girls* by Rory Power