

## Approved for use in English III

### Summary of the Work:

*Ethan Frome*, set in the barren, frozen world of Starkfield, Massachusetts, reflects similar barrenness in the lives of its characters. The title character, Ethan, an American tragic hero, is frozen in life by his tragic flaw of not being able to act on his hopes and dreams. Ethan tends to his cold, sickly wife Zenobia, yet recognizes warmth and vitality in their hired girl, Mattie Silver. Between his lack of ability to communicate and act on his feelings and his sense of morality, Ethan sees no societally acceptable escape from his dismal and barren life. His one attempt to change his life for the better ends tragically, and causes his life to become even more difficult and onerous.

### Rationale:

Recognized as a timeless classic, *Ethan Frome* fits well into the classical canon of American Literature. Because it is a relatively early work, written 1911 by a female author, the novel enriches and broadens the students' perspective of their national literature. The characters' struggles and conflicts mirror many themes listed in the junior curriculum, such as disillusionment, loneliness, alienation, and isolation. Wharton uses a number of symbols in the novel, the study of which helps students to recognize and interpret symbols and motifs in writing. The novel exemplifies literary realism in its setting, its characters, and its conflicts.

### Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

- \* Wilson's Senior High School 11/01/02
- \* Wilson's Fiction 04/01/01
- \* Edwards, Jacqueline. "Ethan Frome Audiobook Review." [Klatt](#) 37.6 (Nov 2003): 46(2). [General OneFile](#) Gale.
- \* Print resources are available from the library

media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

- \* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

### Readability

- Lexile Score: 1160
- Readability Level: 9

### Learning Resources Guidelines

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

### Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

### Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

### Notes on the Text:

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

The novel is written as a frame story that then flashes back to the past. This, combined with Wharton's use of limited third person point of view helps students to better understand both of these writing techniques.

### Connection to the Curriculum:

Wharton is noteworthy, both for her regional writing, and her novels of manners, reflecting the society in which she lived. Her realistic portrayal of setting, characters, emotions, conflicts, and choices make this a good choice to augment the literature anthology and to expose students to a longer piece of literature by an American female writer.

### Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*

A 1993 film, starring Liam Neeson as Ethan Frome which follows the text well is available. The novel is also available in audiobook form.