



PRESTWICK HOUSE

# Activity Pack

## LIFE OF PI

BY YANN MARTEL



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Item No. 303039

Written by Stephanie Polukis

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-Reading

### Word Usage

**Objective:** Analyzing the significance of slang

#### Activity

In the Author's Note, a preface to *Life of Pi*, the writer describes the restlessness that compelled him to make his first visit India in 1996. In preparation for his trip to the country, he asked a friend, who was familiar with India, to give him some useful tips. The writer's friend told him, "They speak a funny English in India. They like words like *bamboozle*."

While in India, Martel used the word *bamboozle* in a conversation with a train-station clerk and was pleased with the effect that it had on the conversation. It injected humor into what would have been a dry, ordinary exchange.

*Bamboozle* is a slang term that means to trick or cheat someone. The use of slang is common in many cultures and is an effective way for people to connect on an informal level. However, not all slang words are universally known; some are specific to various age groups, regions, organizations, etc.

On the following chart, list ten slang words you use or are familiar with. Then, write the meaning(s) of the words in the second column. The words you list must be appropriate for the classroom. The first one has been done for you, using the example of "bamboozle."

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 3****Journal Entry****Objective:** Writing from a character's point of view**Activity**

In Chapter 3, Pi goes into detail telling the reader about his friendship with Mr. Adirubasamy and his tri-weekly swimming lessons. Even though he says swimming practice was a “grueling” experience, it became a big part of his life.

As Pi, write a journal entry about a particular swimming lesson or practice session. Although there is a lot of information in the text to help you in your writing, feel free to be creative and invent material for your entry.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 8

### Researching Animal Cruelty

**Objective:** Comparing the novel to real life events

#### Activity

Mr. Patel, Pi's father, created an interesting and thought-provoking attraction at the zoo. On a wall near the ticket counter, he wrote in big, bright letters "Do you know which is the most dangerous animal at the zoo?" and drew an arrow to a small curtain. Visitors, expecting to see a vicious, horrifying beast behind the curtain, were disappointed to find only a mirror. The message is that humans are the most dangerous animals at the zoo.

Pi discusses several instances where animals in American and European zoos have been harmed by humans, both intentionally and unintentionally. The situations range from a person "kindly" feeding an animal something that is toxic or that the animal cannot digest, to people intentionally beating and killing animals.

Like the stories about zoos that Pi references in the novel, animal abuse occurs frequently and is a major problem. Several Agencies have been created to protect animals in captivity and the wild, such as the Society For the Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals (SPCA), the Humane Society, and People For the Ethical Treatment Of Animals (PETA). Crimes against animals are common, and they occur every day and everywhere.

Using the Internet, magazines, your local newspaper, or books from the library as resources, find an article describing a circumstance in which a person abused or mistreated an animal. Summarize your findings, making sure to answer the questions "Who?" "What?" "Where?" "When?" "How?" and "Why?"

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 17

### Dramatization

**Objective:** Transforming a narrative scene to a scene from a play

#### Activity

Pi describes a trip he and his family took to Munnar India and the interesting way he discovered Christianity. After spending a day watching a priest in his rectory office, longing to ask him questions about Christianity, but not entirely sure he would be welcome, Pi has a warm, friendly conversation with him (Father Martin) and develops a friendship with him.

Pi's discussion of Christianity with Father Martin was one of the most moving experiences of his life, but with the exception of Pi's reflections on the conversation and some minimal dialogue, not much is revealed about Father Martin's character. The only thing the audience knows about the priest is that he was kind, respectful, and generous.

Adapt the narrative of Chapter 17 into a scene in a play, writing the dialogue between Pi and Father Martin, and, in effect, developing Father Martin as a more complex character. You may use the limited dialogue in the chapter, but you must also create some of your own.

Your dramatization on the following page may begin in a way such as this:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapters 24-25

### Misunderstanding and Misinterpretation

**Objectives:** Comparing an event in the novel to a personal experience  
Analyzing motivation, intent, and the interpretation of actions

#### Activity

When Pi was a boy, he was extremely devout; however, he was unable to choose a single religious faith to practice. Pi attended services at a church, a mosque, and a mandir, and in addition to being ridiculed by his brother, he was chased from all three places by religious leaders who could not accept that Pi had more than one faith. Although Pi believed he was doing something good, he was being punished.

The problem at the core of Pi's situation was that the leaders of the religious orders did not agree with Pi that people could have more than one religion. It is possible they believed that, unlike the other worshippers, Pi did not take the religious service seriously and should not be allowed in the holy places.

Write an essay about a particular time in which you tried to do a good deed, but were punished for it. In your essay, answer the following questions:

- What was it that you did or attempted to do?
- What was the good intent behind your actions?
- Who punished you? What was the reason?
- What was the basic, underlying misunderstanding between you and the other person or people?
- What was the final outcome?

If you cannot remember a particular instance when you were punished for a good deed, write about someone you know who has been in that situation.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 32

### Researching Zoomorphism

**Objective:** Finding articles that are relevant to the text

#### Activity

Pi references a phenomenon called zoomorphism, a situation in which an animal believes that a human or an animal of a different species is one of its own kind. Pi cites several instances where zoomorphism has occurred: A golden agouti and a spotted paca became best friends and used to sleep cuddled next to each other; a rhinoceros in the zoo lived with a goat herd; dolphins sometimes save the lives of drowning sailors by pushing them to the surface of the water; a little brown mouse lived peacefully with a terrarium full of vipers.

Search for articles online or in the newspaper that exemplify zoomorphism. Read the article and then, summarize it in your own words.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters 37-40****Finding and Analyzing Literary Devices**

**Objective:** Identifying literary devices and explaining their functions

**Activity**

Literary devices help enhance the reading experience by making the text more creative, often and conveying abstract messages and ideas that cannot be related through ordinary description and narrative.

Several devices are used in *Life of Pi*. Find an example of simile, personification, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, and metaphor in Chapters 37-40, and record each in the chart that follows. Then, write the reason why each is an example of that particular literary device, and describe its function. One example of simile has been provided for you.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 46

### Family Tree

**Objectives:** Comparing the novel to personal experience  
Making a family tree

#### Activity

In the first days after the *Tsimtsum* sinks, Pi's attention is focused on survival and adjusting to the reality of his circumstances. During that time, something triggers the realization that his entire family is dead. Pi expresses the shock of this devastating loss in this way:

They were dead; I could no longer deny it. What a thing to acknowledge in your heart! To lose a brother is to lose someone with whom you can share the experience of growing old, who is supposed to bring you a sister-in-law and nieces and nephews, creatures to people the tree of your life and give it new branches. To lose your father is to lose the one whose guidance and help you seek, who supports you like a tree trunk supports its branches. To lose your mother, well, that is like losing the sun above you.

Consider the people in your family: parents or guardians, stepparents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Draw or find a picture of a tree on which you write the names of your relatives and their relation to you on the branches. Be creative, and enhance your family tree by adding pictures of your relatives or symbols of what they mean to you. For example, Pi uses the sun as a symbol of his mother because she provides energy and emotional warmth.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 50

### Diagramming the Lifeboat

**Objective:** Creating a diagram of Pi's lifeboat

#### Activity

Pi goes into extensive detail in describing the lifeboat. Taking Pi's details and transforming them into a diagram will be exceptionally helpful in understanding subsequent chapters of the novel.

Make a list of specific statements Pi makes about the boat. Then, use Pi's description to create a visual representation of the lifeboat. You may need to consult a dictionary to identify some of the nautical terms Pi uses.