
Activity 5:4 Ambrose Bierce: "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"

Directions: Read the story provided and complete the activity.

1. Describe the opening of the story. What is the man on the bridge like? What is his situation? What is about to happen to him? How do we know?

2. Explain how Farquhar gets into this trouble.

3. What keeps Farquhar from being hung? How does he escape his captors?

4. What actually happens to Farquhar at the end of the story?

Literary Style and Technique

1. One element that Bierce uses in this story is the use of time. While this story only takes place over a matter of minutes, Bierce makes the reader think that the time that passes is much greater. List instances where time is used in the story?

2. A **flashback** is a segment of a literary work that shows events that happened prior to the story. Authors use flashbacks to provide background information that is vital to the story. What was Bierce's purpose in providing a flashback in this story? What information is

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provided in this flashback? Why doesn't Bierce show the scene where Farquhar gets caught by the soldiers, or where he had actually attempted to sabotage the bridge?

3. **Naturalism** was a literary movement of the late 19th-century and early 20th-century that showed how characters lives were determined or caused by outside events that they are unable to control.
