

Course syllabus developed with funding from:

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Voices from Chernobyl worksheet. Translated by Keith Gessen. Read “Translator’s Preface” (pp. ix—xiii) and *Voices from Chernobyl* (in its entirety), (pp. 1—236). Address each of the following questions and bring to class for a discussion on _____. Support your answers with passages and page numbers.

Worksheet Rubric (do not mark, project begins at the bottom of this page)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
1. Answered all questions: (50 points possible)	_____	_____

(If yes, move to question #3)

1a. Number of questions skipped (worth 0.85 points each) _____

1b. Number of skipped pages. (worth 4 points each) _____

1c. Value of skipped question: _____

1d. Value of each skipped page: _____

2. Worksheet Score _____ **/50**

(Value of skipped questions and pages subtracted from total value) _____

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
3. All questions answered with <u>evidence</u> or an <u>extensive</u> response (Up to 10 points extra).	_____	_____ Stop. No extra credit

3a. Additional Worksheet Score
 Questions answered with evidence (up to 5 extra points) _____

3a. Additional Worksheet Score
 Questions answered with extensive responses (up to 5 extra points) _____

4. Total Worksheet Score _____ **/50**

BEGIN HERE

1. What is the difference in human life between the September 11, 2001 attacks and Chernobyl?

2. Why did the reactor fail?

3. How does politics change reactions to this nuclear catastrophe?

4. What is the difference in impact on Belarus between the Chernobyl disaster and the Nazi invasion?

5. Might the sarcophagus collapse?

6. Throughout this text, keep an eye out for who people blame for the Chernobyl disaster. Who or what is blamed?

7. Why is the method the firemen used to treat burning bitumen and graphite so horrifying?

8. What happens to a person dying from massive radiation exposure?

9. How is radiation exposure infectious?

10. When a hospital patient dies from radiation exposure, what happens to their room?

11. Despite the death brought by the failed reactor, people do not want to see it close down. Why?

13. Why don't people fear radiation? (mentioned numerous times throughout the text)

14. What does Chernobyl do to families?

15. Societies have a public image and a more nuanced, realistic image. For example, in Islam, alcohol is forbidden, yet there are Muslims who have drinking problems. Communist Russia was a society built on the concept of the community's benefit over that of the individual. What are examples of individual desires going counter to community benefit? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

16. Communist Russia emphasized the needs of the collective over the needs of the individual. What are examples of individuals' suppressing their needs for the benefit of the community? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

17. A number of times, people make comparisons between Chernobyl and Afghanistan. What comparisons or connections are made between the two? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

18. A number of times people make comparisons between Chernobyl and war (other than Afghanistan). What comparisons or connections are made between Chernobyl and war? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

19. What happens to the cultural landscape with the social collapse that follows the Chernobyl disaster? Cultural landscape means the human built environment, economics, housing, food activities, religion, etc. (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

20. What happens to relationships after the Chernobyl disaster? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

21. Considering that Communist Russia was often described as an atheist society, what is left of the religious lives of commoners? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

22. How do people respond to Chernobylites? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

23. What does radiation do to robots and how is their labor replaced? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

24. Why are no bugs no good?

25. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Tajikistan became an independent country. What happened to Russians living in Tajikistan?

Side note: Pamiris Tajiks began following Wahhabism, a puritanical form of Islam found in Saudi Arabia (Osama bin Laden followed Wahhabism), and began waging war on the Tajikistan government which was supported largely by Tajiks from Kulyab region.

26. What are the benefits of moving near Chernobyl? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

27. Why are people, especially in a group, frightening?

28. What are the attitudes and values of books because of the Chernobyl disaster? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

29. For many Russians, there is some nostalgia for the Communist era. What examples can be found in *Voices from Chernobyl* of people who might be wistful for the Communist regime? They do not come right-out and say they are nostalgic, so there is some reading between-the-lines necessary to answer this question. (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

30. What comes of a person's identity when their country ceases to exist?

31. Why are nutcases at Chernobyl?

32. What is an APC?

33. What is a Zhiguli?

34. Why is there a Soviet love of catastrophe? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

35. What happens to pets?

36. “If the Swedes hadn’t told, we’d be on the tractor, getting old.” (p. 97) What does this mean?

37. What are Chernobyl Hibakusha?

38. What does one’s loss of the sense of smell indicate?

39. Why are people not heroes?

40. What is the difference between scientists' estimation of how long before Chernobyl is safe and non-scientists' estimation?

41. Generals are often described as fighting the last war. How do the Russians react to Chernobyl in they way of fighting the last war (in Russia's case, this means WWII)? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

42. Who was Yuri Gagarin?

The god of war, money changer of dead bodies,
held the balance of his spear in the fighting,
and from the corpse-fires at Troy
sent to the dearest the dust
heavy and bitter with tears shed
packing smooth the urns with
ashes that once were men.

They praise them through their tears, how this man
knew well the craft of battle, how another
went down splendid in the slaughter:
and all for some strange woman.

Thus they mutter in secrecy,
and the slow anger creeps below their grief
at Atreus' sons and their quarrels.

There by the walls of Troy
the young men in their beauty keep
graves deep in the alien soil
they hated and they conquered.

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

43. How does this passage from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* apply to the victims of Chernobyl and their surviving loved ones?

44. How are victims of radiation exposure treated by the state?

45. What does Chernobyl do for sex and pregnancy? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)

46. How does Chernobyl undermine the authority of those in power? (examples found numerous times throughout the text)