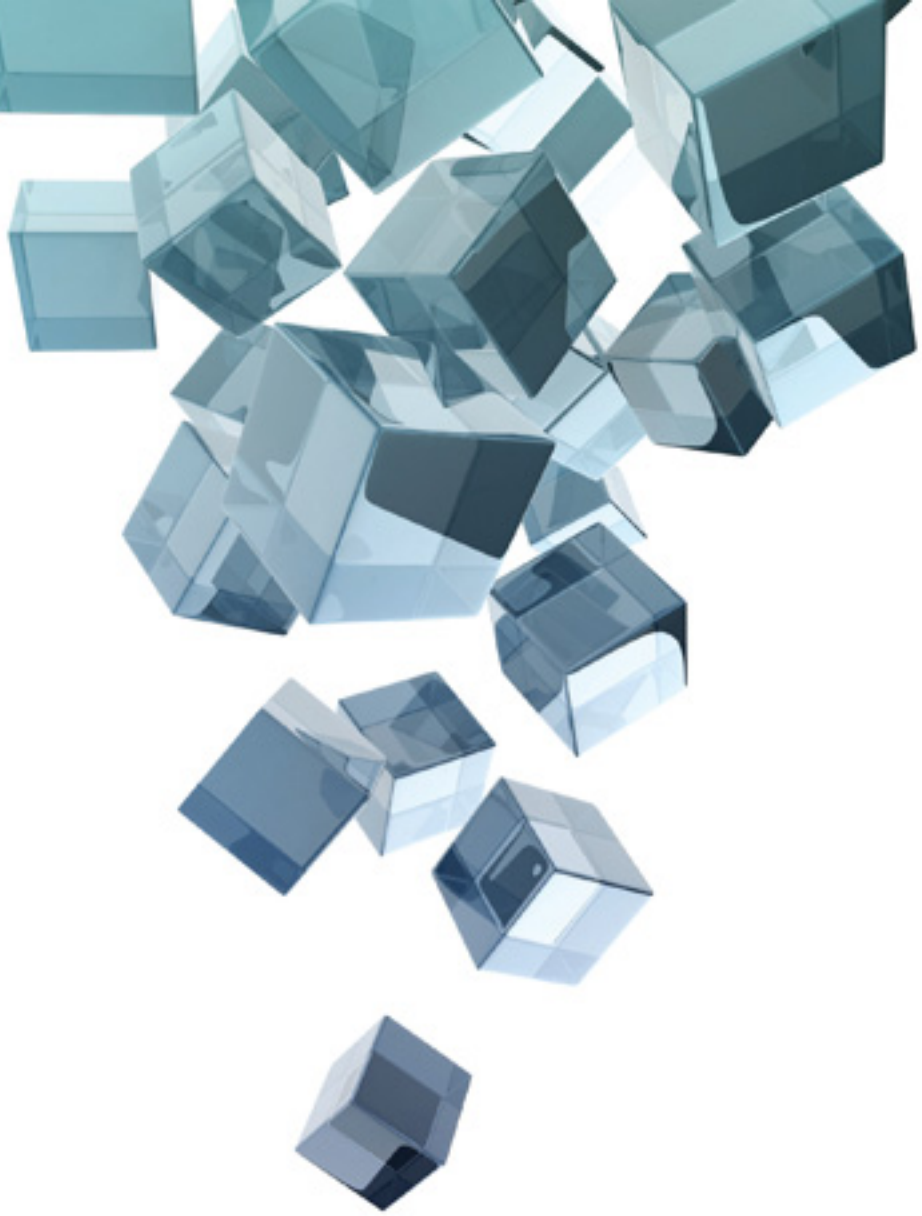

Advanced Placement English

Focus on Nonfiction and Writing

TheCenterforLearning

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English
Focus on Nonfiction and Writing

Mary Anne Kovacs

TheCenterforLearning

v1.0

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Introduction

Like most introductory college English courses, this unit for Advanced Placement high school students focuses on writing—especially on exposition, analysis, and argumentation. A basic premise is the importance of two key factors in any piece of writing: purpose and audience. For effective writing, focused attention on both is critical. When writers lose control of their central purpose, the results tend to be ambiguous and formless. If a writer's answer to the question, "What are you trying to do in this piece?" is "I don't know," the writer needs to step back and start over. Audience awareness is also key as it shapes diction, syntax, and supportive content.

The unit also stresses that writing is a process, a kind of journey in which the product may never quite be final. Writing has to begin with generation of ideas and feelings; the first draft is seldom the final piece. Writers revisit their work, seek responses from others, and make changes to accomplish their central purposes better. Sometimes pieces of writing have to be tabled temporarily or permanently because they just do not accomplish their purposes. This happens in the practical world of college courses and in business and professional worlds as well.

People are not born knowing how to write. We learn by doing and by reading other writers. This unit emphasizes English nonfiction writings past and present and focuses on ways the authors demonstrate a sure grasp of awareness of both purpose and audience, as well as the diverse ways they go about developing ideas. In the real world of writing, the five-paragraph formula is seldom or never helpful. The paint-by-numbers approach generally just yields tedium.

You will want to fill out your Advanced Placement program with in-class writing and with selected major works. In preparation for the Advanced Placement Examination in Language and Composition, these works are generally nonfiction and can include narratives as well as analysis, exposition, and argumentation. They can go back as far as *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, *Walden*, or *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*; they can also be as recent as *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot or *The Places in Between* by Rory Stewart. Attention to reviews in publications like the *New York Times* and to nominees for and winners of Pulitzer Prizes and National Book Awards can keep you abreast of the newest bright lights in the world of nonfiction and help you to keep your course fresh and new.

Teacher Notes

This unit suggests a framework for a course in honors and Advanced Placement language and writing which ideally culminates with students taking the Advanced Placement exam administered by the College Board. The emphasis throughout is on writing, and workshops are incorporated to facilitate the process elements that lead to effective pieces. Every lesson includes some kind of writing, either brief or extended. Several evaluation rubrics are also included.

For many students, the first step is to transcend formulaic approaches such as the legendary five-paragraph essay, which more often than not is a redundant and dull piece at best. Students focus on four types of writing: narration, description, exposition, and argumentation, but lessons also emphasize that they are not discrete, but rather are often used in combination with one another.

Most if not all writers learn from other writers. This is the reason for the outstanding success of conferences such as those at the University of Iowa and Middlebury College. Writing workshops enable students to learn from each other. The great majority of writings examined in this unit come from the rich and varied world of nonfiction.

To round out your course, you will also need to assign full-length books for independent reading and group discussion. While the number of texts will depend on your students' aspirations and limitations, it is usually more effective to study four or five works in depth than to rush through ten. The books are sure to demonstrate that, in real writing, narration, description, exposition, and, often, argumentation, work hand-in-hand.

As the College Board points out in its description of the Examination in Language and Composition, basic-level college English courses vary greatly in terms of course content. They do, however, share a focus on writing and readiness for the types of writing required in college classes and in business contexts. Exposition and argumentation prevail, but not unmixed with narration and description. The lessons in this unit share that focus.

It is in a sense impossible to "teach to" the Advanced Placement exam, since the content can vary greatly from year to year. It is possible, however, to prepare students to use the English language effectively to achieve their purposes and to recognize the achievements of other writers in doing the same thing.

Answers to handouts will vary unless otherwise indicated. Students may need additional paper to complete some handouts.

Recommended Major Works

The following list is far from exhaustive; it is intended to suggest only some of the many possibilities for an Advanced Placement course focused on nonfiction and writing.

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Franklin

A rags-to-riches story, the book began as a gift for Franklin's son and describes Franklin's journey from childhood in Boston to prominence in Philadelphia. The book is easy to read and clearly relates to American history.

Hiroshima, John Hersey

Often viewed as one of the greatest works of journalism ever written, *Hiroshima* focuses on six survivors of the atomic bomb. Hersey maintains an objective style that does not intrude on the reader's response to the narrative. The content is challenging, but the reading level manageable.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

This moving and thought-provoking autobiography describes the author's life from childhood to young adulthood. The style is memorable, and the reading level makes this work accessible to nearly all students.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot

Published in 2010, this book explores the history of medical research, primarily from 1950 to the present, and faces but does not try to resolve many controversial topics. At the center of it is a young black woman who died from cancer and whose cells enabled researchers to revolutionize modern medicine, but with no benefit to the family she left behind. The book is an especially strong choice for students with an interest in science.

In the Garden of Beasts, Erik Larson

The book reads like a novel but tells the true story of life in Berlin during the 1930s, early in Adolf Hitler's ascendency, as experienced by American ambassador William Dodd and his family. It also shows how political uncertainty and maneuvering prevented the rest of the world from intervening against Nazism. The book is both fascinating and challenging—an especially good choice for students who are also taking an Advanced Placement history exam.

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Frederick Douglass

First published in 1845, this is the slave narrative par excellence. The book is eminently readable and provides an up-close view of a great man who grew up in slavery, escaped from it, and became an abolition leader. It vividly portrays a key period in American history.

Night, Elie Wiesel

This haunting memoir tells the story of a Jewish teenager, Wiesel himself, who experienced the horrors of Auschwitz firsthand. The book makes clear the devastation the Holocaust worked on survivors as well as on those who perished. The original French was translated into English by Wiesel's wife.

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, Annie Dillard

Winner of the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction, this book includes a naturalist's observations about plant and animal life in the Virginia mountains, as well as reflections about what it means to really see and about the certainty of death. Although the book is often compared to *Walden*, there is nothing romantic in Dillard's perceptions of nature.

The Places in Between, Rory Stewart

This remarkable book is a memoir, a travelogue, and a portrait of modern Afghanistan. Stewart describes his experiences during an exhausting trek on foot across Afghanistan not long after the bombing of the World Trade Center and the ousting of the Taliban. Stewart presents the real Afghan people he met along the way.

The Prince, Niccolò Machiavelli

From the Italian Renaissance comes an explanation of traits necessary for a ruler to successfully stay in power. One drawback is that students need to read the work in translation, but it is eminently worth their time, as they are sure to encounter the relevance of Machiavelli's ideas in future studies of both literature and history.

A Room of One's Own, Virginia Woolf

Always a superb stylist, Woolf reflects on what it meant during her time to be a woman and a writer. The book is not a long or a difficult read and is of special value for students with an interest in feminist studies.

The Souls of Black Folk, W. E. B. DuBois

DuBois spent a lifetime thinking about the facts and consequences of the enslavement of black people in America. This remarkable book explains some of his insights; the reading level tends to be challenging.

Up from Slavery, Booker T. Washington

This autobiography tells about the life of Booker T. Washington, African-American leader and the founder of Tuskegee Institute. Because he is often contrasted with W. E. B. DuBois, it can be interesting to study both men's books in tandem.

Walden, Henry David Thoreau

Thoreau's account of his experiment in simple living near Walden Pond is a masterpiece of American transcendentalism. High school students sometimes find it difficult to make their way through the entire book but certainly need to encounter at least parts of it.

The Way to Rainy Mountain, N. Scott Momaday

This unusual little book, beautifully illustrated by Momaday's father, is both a memoir and an exploration of Kiowa myths and legends. It shows how autobiography and social history can mesh into one artistic masterpiece.

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts, Maxine Hong Kingston

In this autobiographical piece, the author describes growing up in California as the daughter of Chinese immigrants. This is a sophisticated book, but not a terribly long one, and it shows the difficulty in taking the bridge from traditional Chinese culture to ways of life in the United States.

The Year of Magical Thinking, Joan Didion

This book, winner of the 2005 National Book Award for nonfiction, deals with Didion's experiences, thoughts, and feelings during a year that began with her husband's abrupt death from a heart attack and her newly married daughter's struggle with catastrophic illness. Didion is universally praised for her superb writing style. This book is a wonderful and not extremely long read.

Lesson 1

Getting Past the Five-Paragraph Essay

Objectives

- To recognize limitations of the formulaic approach of the five-paragraph essay
- To generate structures that lead to authentic writing

Notes to the Teacher

The good thing about the five-paragraph essay approach is that it helps students get past the terror of the blank page so that they can actually get something down on paper in some kind of organized way. The bad thing is that the result is nearly always stilted, artificial, uninteresting, and unconvincing. The end result of a paint-by-numbers kit will not be eligible to win an art contest; the five-paragraph approach seldom results in effective writing in college or in business and professional contexts.

This lesson emphasizes the importance of letting writing develop in an organic way, not by following an artificial plan. Sometimes students balk at this and say something like, "Why can't you teachers make up your minds?" Having mastered what they were taught as much younger learners, they feel reluctant to move on to more challenging but also more authentic structures.

The lesson also introduces the importance of audience awareness. Effective writing requires a firm focus on both audience and purpose. There are two key questions: To whom are you talking? What are you trying to accomplish? The writer who does not know the answers is likely to flounder.

The lesson begins with discussion of differences between using a formula and genuine originality. Students then read and analyze an essay by Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803–1873). Finally, they write and deliver short speeches intended for an audience of fourteen-year-olds.

Procedure

1. Point out that, in taking an Advanced Placement course, students are moving into an arena of intellectual discourse beyond the usual world of high school education. This will affect both their participation in classroom discussion and the qualities of the writings they submit.

2. Distribute **Handout 1**, and have students complete the exercise. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

Part A.

1. Luke is not an artist, although he might have learned quite a lot about colors and painting in the course of finishing the project. He had nothing to do with creating the original concept and determining how to bring it to fruition.
2. Sherri is not a woodworker; she just put the pieces together according to the directions. She did not design the piece, prepare the wood, or select the tools necessary to put together the furniture. She probably learned a lot, though.
3. Taylor followed directions for a simple project, got the expected results, and followed the format for a good lab report. Taylor is a science student, but not a chemist. As a scientist, she would create hypotheses and conduct experiments without knowing the outcome in advance.

Part B.

1. The scenarios demonstrate the differences between originality and imitation. Real artists, woodworkers, and chemists need extensive knowledge and skills.
2. No, all three got good results and doubtless learned a lot.
3. Real writers—like real artists, woodworkers, and chemists—need knowledge and skill. They cannot just be copiers.

3. Ask students whether they are familiar with the term *five-paragraph essay*. (The essay begins with an introduction that includes a thesis statement; the fifth paragraph concludes the essay and reiterates the thesis. Each of the three paragraphs in between begins with a topic sentence that connects to the thesis in the first paragraph.) Point out that many beginning writers learn this formula; however, one can read professional writers' work for months and find not a single one that follows this pattern, which tends to be dull, predictable, and repetitive. This course will stress moving beyond that approach to writing.
4. Explain that much of the reading in this course will involve nonfiction and that students will be reading and responding to works from a variety of literary periods.
5. Distribute **Handout 2**, and ask students to read the essay and determine the intended audience (young men studying at a university). Emphasize that this audience awareness is one of the most important characteristics of effective writers.

6. Distribute **Handout 3**, and conduct a discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The opening metaphor compares reading to walking and suggests that effective reading is not an aimless, lazy activity; for it to do any good, it must involve effort. The metaphors in the closing sentence indicate that more benefit is gained in reading one book carefully than in flitting from title to title.
2. The author advises moderation in study and feels that doing intense work over an extended time is counterproductive for both the short and the long term.
3. The author provides this advice: Establish regular study times. Do not procrastinate. Remember to think for yourself. Think beyond the text. Pay attention to details.
4. Invention involves original creative work.
5. For those who see the big picture, contradictions are not troubling; they are part of the big picture.
6. While it is important to be a person of feelings, it is equally important not to display feelings too openly—very Victorian advice!
7. The many are the masses, the general public, whose taste is often superficial and fleeting. The few are people of genuine wisdom and taste.
8. Bulwer-Lytton's view was that the scientists and writers who win acclaim during their own time are probably not the ones that the future will acclaim as great.

7. Tell students to imagine that they have been asked to deliver a one-minute speech of advice to young people about to graduate from the eighth grade and move on to high school. Direct the class to write those speeches, to incorporate metaphors, and to prepare to deliver the speeches to the class as a whole.
8. As students present speeches, point out effective figurative language and evidence of attention to the audience being addressed—e.g., word choices and topics of interest.

A Copier or a Creator?

Part A.

Directions: Read the scenarios, and answer the questions.

1. Luke acquired a paint-by-numbers kit and followed the directions carefully. The result is a picture of a lovely garden with stones, flowering trees, a river, and a delightful white gazebo. His family has framed it and displayed it in the living room. Does that make Luke an artist?

2. Sherri bought a kit to assemble a large maple rolltop desk with side drawers to the left, a large work area, and cubbyholes for assorted items. The desk is gorgeous, and guests always comment on it. Is Sherri now a woodworker?

3. Taylor successfully completed a chemistry experiment showing how quickly Alka-Seltzer creates gas and wrote a fabulous lab report that earned an A+. Is Taylor now a chemist?

Part B.

Directions: Use the following questions as a basis for discussion.

1. What does a person need to be a real painter, woodworker, or chemist?

2. Were Luke, Sherri, and Taylor just wasting their time?

3. How can you apply these principles to the art of writing?

Advice from a Victorian Writer

Directions: Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803–1873) wrote both novels and nonfiction. Read the following essay, and try to determine his target audience.

Readers and Writers

Reading without purpose is sauntering, not exercise. More is got from one book on which the thought settles for a definite end in knowledge, than from libraries skimmed over by a wandering eye. A cottage flower gives honey to the bee, a king's garden none to the butterfly.

Youths who are destined for active careers, or ambitious of distinction in such forms of literature as require freshness of invention or originality of thought, should avoid the habit of intense study for many hours at a stretch. There is a point in all tension of the intellect beyond which effort is only waste of strength. Fresh ideas do not readily spring up within a weary brain; and whatever exhausts the mind not only enfeebles its power, but narrows its scope. We often see men who have over-read at college entering upon life as languidly as if they were about to leave it. They have not the vigour to cope with their own generation; for their own generation is young, and they have wasted the nervous energy which supplies the sinews of war to youth in its contests for fame or fortune.

Study with regularity, at settled hours. Those in the forenoon are the best, if they can be secured. The man who has acquired the habit of study, though for only one hour every day in the year, and keeps to the one thing studied till it is mastered, will be startled to see the way he has made at the end of a twelvemonth.

He is seldom over-worked who can contrive to be in advance of his work. If you have three weeks before you to learn something which a man of average quickness could learn in a week, learn it the first week, and not the third. Business despatched is business well done, but business hurried is business ill done.

In learning what others have thought, it is well to keep in practice the power to think for one's self: when an author has added to your knowledge, pause and consider if you can add nothing to his.

Be not contented to have learned a problem by heart; try and deduce from it a corollary not in the book.

Spare no pains in collecting details before you generalise; but it is only when details are generalised that a truth is grasped. The tendency to generalise is universal with all men who achieve great success, whether in art, literature, or action. The habit of generalising, though at first gained with care and caution, secures, by practice, a comprehensiveness of judgment, and a promptitude of decision, which seem to the crowd like the intuitions of genius. And, indeed, nothing more distinguishes the man of genius from the mere man of talent, than the facility of generalising the various details, each of which demands the aptitude of a special talent; but all of which can be only gathered into a single whole by the grasp of a mind which may have no special aptitude for any.

Invention implies the power of generalisation, for an invention is but the combining of many details known before, into a new whole, and for new results.

Upon any given point, contradictory evidence seldom puzzles the man who has mastered the laws of evidence; but he knows little of the laws of evidence who has not studied the unwritten law of the human heart. And without this last knowledge a man of action will not attain to the practical, nor will a poet achieve the ideal.

He who has no sympathy never knows the human heart; but the obtrusive parade of sympathy is incompatible with dignity of character in a man, or with dignity of style in a writer. Of all the virtues necessary to the completion of the perfect man, there is none to be more delicately implied and less ostentatiously vaunted than that of exquisite feeling or universal benevolence.

In science, address the few; in literature, the many. In science, the few must dictate opinion to the many; in literature, the many, sooner or later, force their judgment on the few. But the few and the many are not necessarily the few and the many of the passing time: for discoverers in science have not unoften, in their own day, had the few against them; and writers the most permanently popular not unfrequently found, in their own day, a frigid reception from the many. By the few, I mean those who must ever remain the few, from whose dicta we, the multitude, take fame upon trust; by the many, I mean those who constitute the multitude in the long-run. We take the fame of a Harvey or a Newton upon trust, from the verdict of the few in successive generations; but the few could never persuade us to take poets and novelists on trust. We, the many, judge for ourselves of Shakespeare and Cervantes.

He who addresses the abstract reason, addresses an audience that must for ever be limited to the few; he who addresses the passions, the feelings, the humours, which we all have in common, addresses an audience that must for ever compose the many. But either writer, in proportion to his ultimate renown, embodies some new truth, and new truths require new generations for cordial welcome. This much I would say meanwhile, Doubt the permanent fame of any work of science which makes immediate reputation with the ignorant multitude; doubt the permanent fame of any work of imagination which is at once applauded by a conventional clique that styles itself "the critical few."

Analyzing Edward Bulwer-Lytton's Essay

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. Identify and explain the figures of speech in the opening paragraph. What seems to be the main point?

2. What is the main point of the second paragraph? Is it surprising?

3. The next five paragraphs provide advice. What does the author suggest to his readers?

4. What does Bulwer-Lytton mean by the term *invention*?

5. What does he say about contradictory evidence?

6. What does he advise about sympathy?

7. Who are the "many" and the "few"?

8. Explain the meaning of the closing sentences.

Lesson 2

Writer and Audience

Objectives

- To recognize the imperative of audience awareness in all writing
- To experience writing for a variety of audiences

Notes to the Teacher

It can hardly be repeated too often that effective writing requires unwavering attention to two key realities: the audience and the purpose. This lesson focuses on audience awareness, which shapes both content and choices of diction and syntax. For example, an autobiographical essay written as part of the college application process has a clear audience: admissions office personnel. The writing should include accomplishments and learning experiences; this is not the place to describe first loves or run-ins with the legal system. Correct language usage and spelling are important; this is not the place for slang.

Nowhere is audience awareness more important than in the world of advertising, both in print and in visual media. The fast-food restaurant ad targeting parents will have very different emphases from the one directed at grade-schoolers.

In this lesson, students first work in groups to create advertisements directed at various audiences. They discuss the impact of the audience on the written word. They then focus on the challenge of writing an effective essay as part of an application for college admission or for a scholarship.

Procedure

1. Point out that most people adjust diction and syntax depending on context. Think of the common question, "How are you?" Responses to a boss, a coworker, and an old friend are likely to be quite different.
2. Distribute **Handout 4**, and review the directions. Point out that advertising campaigns consider both groups and subgroups. For example, media promotion for a university can be aimed at the general group of high school juniors and seniors, but it can also aim at more limited audiences such as athletes, musicians, future doctors, and students trying to avoid incurring excessive expenses for tuition, room, and board.
3. Direct small groups to complete the handout. Follow with group sharing and discussion, and highlight ways that diction and syntax vary depending on the audience.

4. Point out that most college and work-world writings are directed toward educated adult audiences. Political speeches always reflect audience awareness. Even the television weather forecaster's word choices will reflect awareness of the audience's desires—for example, words to describe an imminent thunderstorm will probably be very different if it has rained for ten successive days than if the area has experienced a six-month drought.
5. Point out that applications for admission to college and for scholarships often involve essays, and the essay topics and length requirements can vary widely. Distribute **Handout 5**, and have students review the topics and begin work on the assigned essay. If students have access to essay topics assigned by colleges to which they are applying, allow substitutions for the ones on the handout.
6. Have students work with partners or in groups of three to peer conference regarding the essays. Direct them to share spontaneous reactions, as well as to address the following points.
   - Are the content and the language appropriate for the representatives of the college admissions department?
   - Does the essay respond directly and concisely to the prompt?
   - Is the essay safely adjusted to the prescribed word limit?
   - Does the voice in the essay represent a person the college would definitely want in its incoming freshman class?
7. Direct students to revise the essays, and assign a date for them to submit final drafts. Encourage use of the pieces in real-life application processes.
8. Explain that audience awareness is important in all types of writing, including poetry. Distribute **Handout 6**, and ask students to read and analyze the poem. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

Part A.

The speaker, who is going off to war, is addressing his girlfriend or wife in an effort to convince her that he has to go, that not to go would be a failure in his manhood. In the first stanza, he uses the endearment "Sweet" and compliments her moral virtue and her calm personality. The second stanza acknowledges that she resents the fact that he is leaving and sees the lure of battle as a rival for his affections. In the third stanza, the speaker indicates that his sense of responsibility and duty is a core part of his character and is part of the basis of the love between them. Because of this, in a way, she will actually be glad that he is doing what he must do.

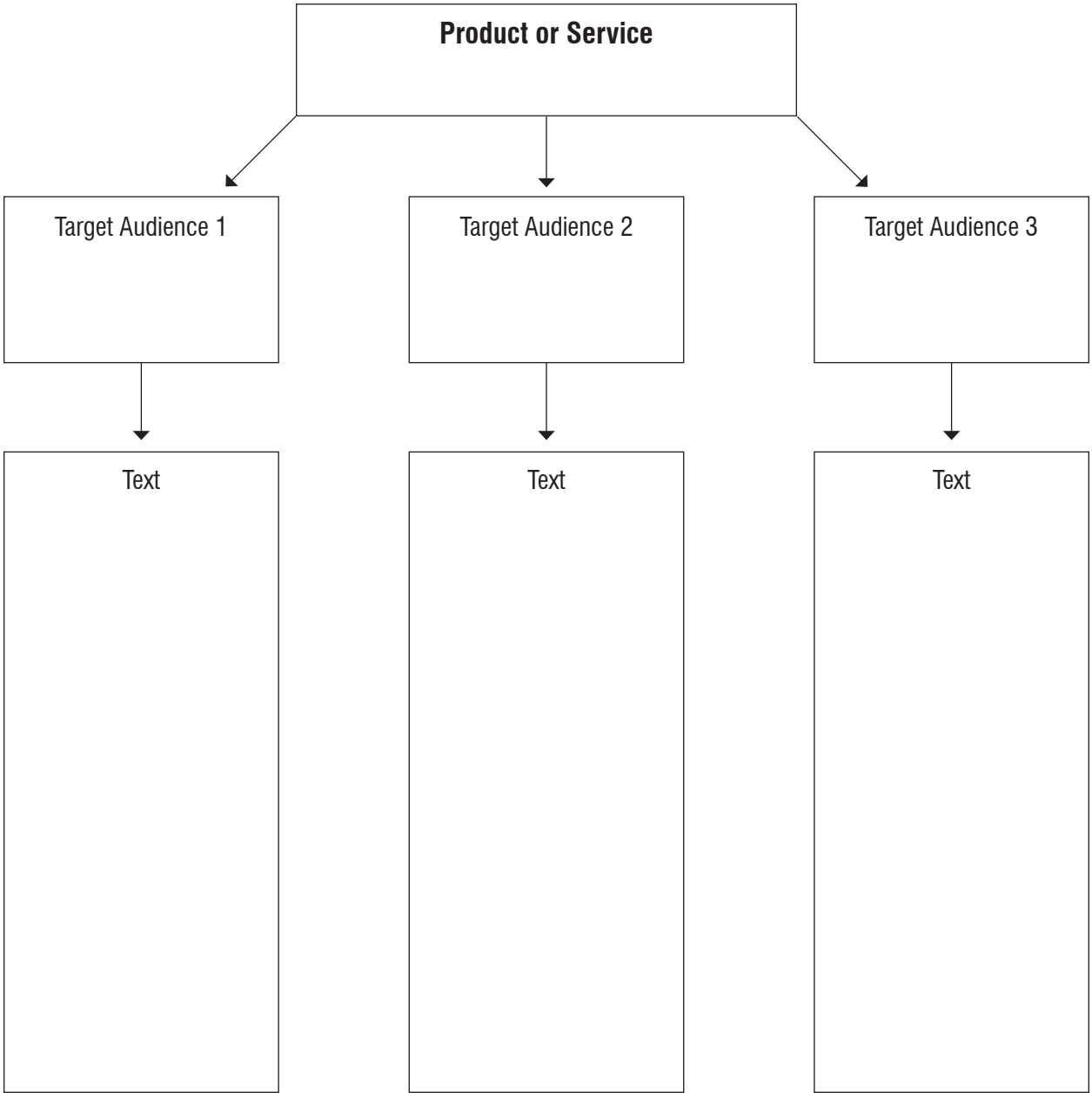
Part B.

1. The term *nunnery* emphasizes that Lucinda is chaste; their relationship is not just a casual love affair.
2. War seems to be luring him away the way another woman might.
3. The speaker is a man who places a top value on honor, which in this case demands that he go to war.
4. At the end of the poem, he assures Lucasta of his love for her.

Name:

Targeting the Audience

Directions: Select a product or service for which you are the advertising manager, and identify three target audiences for your next campaign. Then write the text for radio ads directed at those groups.



Writing an Essay for a College Application

Directions: Essays required in applications to colleges or for scholarships can vary widely. Below are some samples. Choose one, and draft an essay in response.

1. XYZ University is a diverse and vibrant learning community located in an urban area. In an essay of no more than 250 words, explain what you believe you can offer to enhance this community.

2. Typically, XYZ University can accept only about 10 percent of the students who apply to enter the freshman class. Most of the applicants have excellent academic records and impressive admissions test scores. What makes you stand out for attention in this highly competitive environment? Respond in 250–300 words.

3. XYZ University offers a junior year semester abroad in France, England, Germany, Japan, or Switzerland. Given a chance, which option would you select? In an essay of about 300 words, identify your choice, and explain your reasons.

4. XYZ University aims to produce graduates who will contribute to make the world a better place. In an essay of no more than 250 words, describe how you have already provided services to improve the world around you.

The Poet and His Audience

Part A.

Directions: Carefully read the following poem, and make notations regarding the poet's intended audience and ways which the poet manifests his continual awareness of that audience.

To Lucasta, Going to the Wars

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As thou too shalt adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honour more.

—Richard Lovelace

Part B.

Directions: Answer the following questions about the poem.

1. Why does the speaker describe Lucasta's mind as a "nunnery"?

2. Why does he refer to war as a mistress?

3. Why does the speaker feel that he must go to battle?

4. How does he reassure Lucasta at the end of the poem?

Lesson 3

Writer and Purpose

Objectives

- To recognize the central importance of purpose in any piece of writing
- To distinguish among several purposes: to describe, to explain, to analyze, and to persuade

Notes to the Teacher

It is impossible to overstate the importance of clarity of purpose in any piece of writing, and purposes can take many specific forms: to compare and contrast, to trace a line of causation, to describe, to amuse, to explain, to analyze, to convince. A good question in conferencing is often, "What are you trying to do here?" If the answer is, "I don't know," the writer needs to retrace his or her steps in the writing process.

This does not mean that purposes are mutually exclusive. The writer who aims to tell a story often includes descriptive passages. Exposition and analysis often overlap. An argumentation might also include a narrative and an analysis of chronology. What matters is that every aspect of the writing helps to fulfill the central purpose; sentences and paragraphs irrelevant to the purpose need to be omitted.

In this lesson, students first consider a variety of purposes and devise ways to achieve them. They then read several passages and identify central purposes and methods used to accomplish those purposes. Finally, students write short comparison-contrast pieces.

Procedure

1. Discuss the importance of purpose in everyday life. If we want to drive from Chicago to Miami, it does not make sense to head toward Seattle. If we want to earn overtime this week, we do not take three vacation days. If we want to attend Duke University, we have to follow the application process. Explain that purpose is also key in writing.
2. Distribute **Handout 7**, and ask students to complete the exercises. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. This writing should abound with imagery—especially visual images to describe the lake, the sky, and the surrounding terrain. The writer would probably not dwell on things like the roar of traffic on a nearby highway.

2. The directions should come in spatial order and include names of roads, highway numbers, significant landmarks, and approximate driving times. This is not the place to deal with sites not to miss in the capital.
3. The writing could stress negative physical results of smoking and the financial benefits of quitting. It could also include details like avoiding the annoyance of having to slip outside frequently. This is probably not the place to deal with the discomforts that will result in the immediate aftermath of quitting.
4. The essay would emphasize the musician's specific characteristics and hit songs, as well as information about his or her personality. Maybe it would include quotations from fans. It would not deal in detail with a recent failed marriage or lawsuit.
5. The writer would include details to describe the artwork and specific traits associated with romanticism and realism. The essay would not focus on how the work was created and probably would not go into detail about the artist's life.
6. The narrative would include, probably in chronological order, all of the details that made the experience scary. The writer would not dwell on details that were present but had nothing to do with the terror he or she felt.

3. Distribute **Handout 8**, and have a volunteer read the passage aloud. Conduct a discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The narrator is curious, brave, and observant. He has a sense of humor, and he recognizes the possible consequences of risking dangerous situations.
2. Rory Stewart assumes that readers are interested in his experiences in Afghanistan—a fair assumption, since otherwise they probably would not be reading this book.
3. Stewart's word choices do not force readers to dictionaries. Sentences vary in both length and structure. The very short last sentence is especially effective, sort of like "whew" after a really close call.
4. The writer aims to have readers share vicariously in this experience and uses many images to describe the event in detail.
5. Details include the decaying circular staircase, the absence of light, the banged-up head and badly scraped hands, and the very cautious effort to reascend the stairs.

4. Distribute **Handout 9**, and ask small groups to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. Natural selection means that those species survive that are best adapted to their environment. A green insect on a leaf is less likely to be seen and plucked away by a hungry bird than a brown insect on the same leaf.
2. Charles Darwin seems to have assumed an educated audience with an interest in and knowledge about the creatures and processes of the natural world.
3. Darwin's purpose was to demonstrate that natural selection is at work all around us and determines the survival or extinction of species.

5. Direct students to complete short writings in which they use either the excerpt in **Handout 8** or the one in **Handout 9** as a model. Students should choose different central topics but imitate the author's choices regarding sentence structure. If necessary, clarify by providing examples of ways to begin: after parking my car around the corner from the bank; tossing my backpack over the cliff into the river; it has been said that cleanliness is next to godliness; it may be said that every young person would benefit from time spent in military service. Collect writings as tickets out of class.

 Name:

Achieving Purposes in Writing

Directions: Indicate how you might go about achieving the following purposes in pieces of writing. Also indicate distractions you would want to avoid.

Purpose	Methods	Things to Avoid
1. To describe a sunset over the western shore of a lake		
2. To provide directions for a drive from Niagara Falls to Washington, D.C.		
3. To convince someone to quit smoking cigarettes		
4. To explain the popularity of a specific musician		
5. To determine whether an artwork is realistic or romantic		
6. To portray a terrifying experience		

A Moment of Fear in Afghanistan

Directions: In his best-selling book *The Places in Between*, Scottish writer Rory Stewart describes his 2002 journey on foot through Afghanistan, accompanied part of the time by a mastiff he called Babur. En route, he came across an ancient two-hundred-foot-high tower and decided to explore. Read the following passage, and answer the questions.

> Leaving Babur to sniff around the base, I clambered into a hole four feet from the ground and dropped into a circular staircase. Narrow skylights had been worked into the design above, but here it was dark and the steps were steep, worn, and narrow. I had not climbed far when I slipped and came accelerating down in the darkness, cracking my head against the staircase and grabbing at bricks to try to stop myself. I tore the skin from my palms, bricks came away in my hands, and the tower seemed to shake as I hit the outer wall. For a moment I wondered if I would be remembered as the man who died while knocking down the last Ghorid masterpiece. Then I came to a halt and the tower was still. It was quiet at the bottom of the stairwell and cold. When I started to climb again, I did so slowly, pressing my hands against both brick walls. My right leg was shaking.[1]

1. What does the passage reveal about the personality of the writer?

2. What does Rory Stewart seem to assume about his reading audience?

3. Describe the diction and syntax in the paragraph.

4. How would you describe the writer's purpose?

5. What details contribute to the accomplishment of that purpose?

[1]Rory Stewart, *The Places in Between* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2004), 150.

Darwin on Natural Selection

Directions: The nineteenth-century British scientist Charles Darwin revolutionized ways of looking at life with his 1859 publication of *On the Origin of Species*. Read the following excerpt from the fourth chapter, and answer the questions.

> It may metaphorically be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising, throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life. We see nothing of these slow changes in progress, until the hand of time has marked the long lapses of ages, and then so imperfect is our view into long past geological ages, that we only see that the forms of life are now different from what they formerly were.
>
> Although natural selection can act only through and for the good of each being, yet characters and structures, which we are apt to consider as of very trifling importance, may thus be acted on. When we see leaf-eating insects green, and bark-feeders mottled-grey; the alpine ptarmigan white in winter, the red-grouse the colour of heather, and the black-grouse that of peaty earth, we must believe that these tints are of service to these birds and insects in preserving them from danger. Grouse, if not destroyed at some period of their lives, would increase in countless numbers; they are known to suffer largely from birds of prey; and hawks are guided by eyesight to their prey—so much so, that on parts of the Continent persons are warned not to keep white pigeons, as being the most liable to destruction. Hence I can see no reason to doubt that natural selection might be most effective in giving the proper colour to each kind of grouse, and in keeping that colour, when once acquired, true and constant.

1. What is natural selection?

2. What reading audience do you think Charles Darwin had in mind?

3. What was Darwin's purpose in writing these words?

Lesson 4

Storytelling: The Art of Narrative

Objectives

- To understand the meaning of the word *narrative*
- To recognize various ways to structure a narrative
- To begin work on an original biographical, autobiographical, or fictional narrative

Notes to the Teacher

The urge to create and listen to stories is ubiquitous. Epic tales and legends from around the world provide ample evidence that storytelling is as old as humankind. Children like to hear bedtime stories, and few people can resist the urge to amuse coworkers with a story about an amazing sight on the way to work in the morning.

Narratives always describe events and feature characters. Sometimes they are fictions, stories created out of the writers' imaginations. Students have no doubt experienced many of these during their school years and may share memories of middle school encounters with books like *The Outsiders*, *Holes*, and *Walk Two Moons*. Some narratives are autobiographical or semi-autobiographical. Students may, for example, be familiar with Elie Wiesel's *Night* or Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*. There are also factual stories that tell about other people's lives, for example, John Hersey's *Hiroshima* and the many hundreds of books that can be found in the biography sections of libraries and bookstores.

In this lesson, students discuss the nature of narrative. They then begin to draft original narratives as part of a long-term assignment. For the closing procedures, you will need to provide copies of John Cheever's short story "Reunion." It is available in his *Collected Stories* and on the Internet.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 10**, and review the terms with the class. Point out that the list is just a starting point, not an exhaustive treatment of terms associated with narrative writing. Expand definitions based on your own experience and insights, and suggest or ask students to suggest specific examples.

Suggested Responses

1. If a writing does not include events, it is not a narrative. For example, an essay about the reasons someone wants to join the U.S. Marines is not a narrative.

2. A fiction can include factual elements, but it is largely a creation of the author's imagination. Parafictions are somewhere between fiction and nonfiction.
3. Autobiographers have to be selective, and some events are necessarily omitted. What is included must be factual; an autobiographer can get in trouble, for example, for describing a close friend named George if critics can prove that the writer's friend was actually named Peter.
4. Biographers have to do research to get information about the subject's life. They have to cross-reference sources to verify facts.
5. A writer must be aware of chronology but need not present events in chronological order. An anachronism is a detail in the story that could not possibly fit in the time and place setting.
6. Famous frame stories include *The Canterbury Tales*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
7. Flashbacks often occur when the narrator suddenly remembers something.
8. Foreshadowing is the opposite of flashback.
9. In most cases, it is preferable to identify the main character as the protagonist rather than as the hero.
10. Stream of consciousness immerses readers in the mind, feelings, and actions of the main character. At its most extreme, it can be impenetrable.

2. Distribute **Handout 11**, and use it to explain the narrative writing assignment. Emphasize that students are free to develop their own ideas and that events need not be presented in chronological order. Allow time for students to brainstorm and share ideas in an informal context. Set a day for students to bring in drafts of narratives.
3. Have the class read John Cheever's short story "Reunion." Then distribute **Handout 12**, and conduct a discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. There is something wistful in the tone, but, at first, we do not know if the narrator is now anticipating a new meeting with the father.
2. Instead of answering the letter, the father had his secretary send a response—not a warm response from a loving parent.
3. Charlie longs for a relationship with his father; he feels a real kinship with him and obviously has missed having a close father-son relationship.

4. Charlie could smell whiskey on his father, and, in the restaurant, the father behaves in an extremely boisterous and patronizing way. He has arrived at the noon meeting already well under the influence. We can only conjecture about the reasons for this. The waiter, offended, suggests that father and son move on to another restaurant.
5. The father gets belligerent when the waiter balks at the idea of giving young Charlie another drink.
6. The father appears to be drunk enough to get his words mixed up.
7. The father must be notorious in the neighborhood for boisterous bad manners.
8. Charlie calls his father "Daddy," which is a child's term of endearment. The closing line is wistful but perhaps also accepting.
9. The target audience included John Cheever's contemporaries, ordinary Americans. The purpose seems to be to show a kind of dysfunction and its effect on a young man. We sympathize with Charlie, and we hope that he will not grow up to be like his father.
10. Events would include the meeting at Grand Central Station, the first restaurant, the second restaurant, the third restaurant, the fourth restaurant, and the return to Grand Central Station.

Focus on Narratives

Directions: Read the terms and their definitions.

1. Narrative
   A narrative is a story; it must involve events and characters.
2. Fiction
   A fiction is a narrative created from an author's imagination.
3. Autobiography
   An autobiography is a story that a person tells about his or her own life. A memoir is a form of autobiography.
4. Biography
   In a biography, a person writes about another person's life.
5. Chronology
   When events are presented in the sequence in which they occurred, they are in chronological order.
6. Frame Story
   In a frame story, one general narrative includes one or more additional stories. Many great works of literature display the frame story at work.
7. Flashback
   A flashback occurs when the narrator breaks chronology to describe something that happened in the past.
8. Foreshadowing
   With foreshadowing, the narrator states or hints at something to come in the future.
9. Protagonist
   The protagonist is the main character, sometimes referred to as the hero, although the protagonist may lack heroic traits. The antagonist is the force(s) opposed to the main character.
10. Stream of Consciousness
    In stream of consciousness, events are presented as they come into the narrator's mind, not necessarily in the order in which they occurred.

Narrative Writing Assignment

Directions: Write a three- to-five-page narrative with a target audience of your classmates. Choose one of the following prompts, or devise an original idea. Then use the graphic organizer to brainstorm specific events.

Autobiographical Narrative

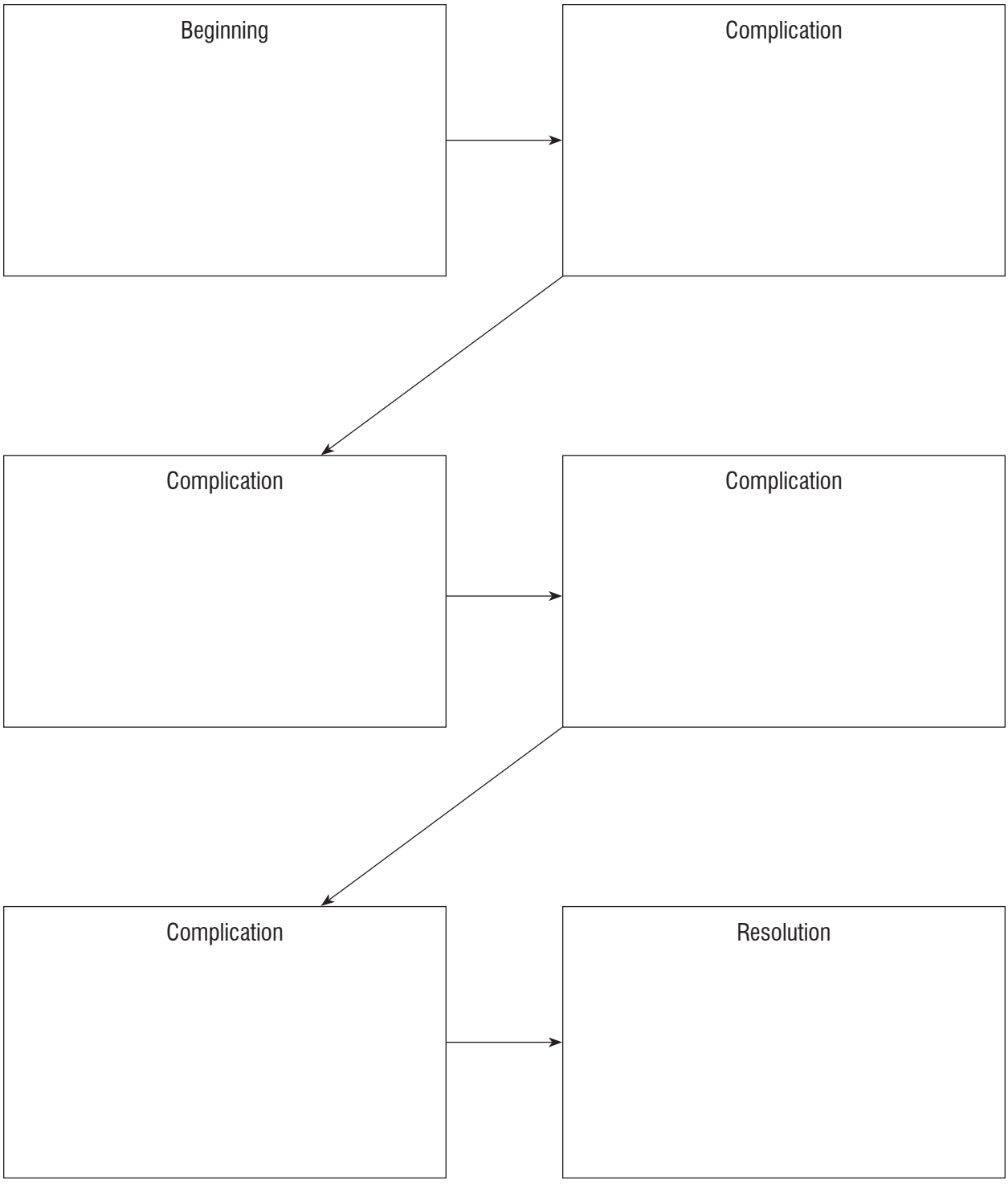
1. Describe a series of events that had a decisive impact on what your life is today or on your plans for the future.
2. Tell about an experience you had in traveling away from your home, and include how that journey affected you.
3. Write about a memory of an elementary school experience that impacted your present in high school and your future in college.
4. Describe an event that made you feel like an outstanding success—or one that made you feel like an abysmal failure.

Biographical Narrative

1. Conduct oral interviews to discover and write the story about how one of your ancestors came to live in the United States.
2. Select an acquaintance whose accomplishments (or lack of accomplishments) interest you. Conduct a series of interviews with that person, and write about what made him or her such a success or nonsuccess.
3. Interview a teacher, and write the story of how he or she came to teach a specific subject.

Fictional Narrative

1. Imagine a story about a young man or woman encountering death for the very first time.
2. Create a story about a person whose postsurgical medication led to an addiction to painkillers.
3. Write a story about a young person experiencing a first day on the job in a specific place and performing specific tasks.



John Cheever's "Reunion"

Directions: Read the fictional narrative, and answer the questions.

1. Describe the impact of the first sentence.

2. What detail in the first paragraph gives an initial warning about the father's character?

3. What does the second paragraph show about Charlie's attitudes toward his father?

4. What causes the situation in the first restaurant?

5. At first, things go better in the second restaurant. Then what happens?

6. What causes the waiter in the third restaurant to smile?

7. What does the incident in the Italian restaurant show?

8. How would you describe the tone of the end of the story?

9. Identify the author's intended audience and purpose.

10. If John Cheever created a chronology of events before writing this story, what would he have listed?

Lesson 5

Ben Franklin's Autobiography

Objectives

- To consider factors that prompt people to write full-length autobiographies
- To recognize the amazing array of Benjamin Franklin's achievements
- To read and analyze a section of his autobiography

Notes to the Teacher

Most people never consider writing and publishing full-length autobiographies, at least in part because we cannot imagine anyone else wanting to read them. The exceptions come with individuals who have acquired some sort of fame, either positive or negative, resulting in a significant audience of readers eager to learn all about what made those famous or infamous people what they became. Many political leaders, including Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, have written and published best-selling autobiographies. So have famous writers, musicians, actors, and criminals. Readers are usually drawn to the books by curiosity about the subjects.

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) actually intended his autobiography for his son. The writing was interrupted several times, and Franklin never completed it. It was obvious, however, that the book was of more than just family interest, so, shortly after his death, the autobiography was published for all the world to read.

In all full-length autobiographies and biographies, the key question is what to include and what to leave out. For Franklin, this must have been a tough decision. He lived a long life during remarkable political times. He was a printer, an author, a politician, a postmaster, an inventor, a scientist, and a diplomat. The first fire station and lending library were his ideas. From an impoverished childhood as one of seventeen children of a Boston shopkeeper, he went on to become one of the Founding Fathers of a new nation.

In this lesson, students consider the challenges of autobiography, and they catalog achievements of Benjamin Franklin. They then read and analyze a section of his autobiography. They conclude by writing brief accounts of slices of their own lives.

Procedure

1. Point out that famous people often write their autobiographies and sometimes make quite a lot of money for doing so. Best-seller lists often include memoirs by political figures, entertainment celebrities,

athletes, and even criminals. Ask students what challenges these autobiographers face. (They cannot include everything that ever happened or that they ever did; they want to avoid lawsuits by other people they include; there may be some events that they wish to keep entirely private; they have to decide what really matters and what is incidental.)

2. Distribute **Handout 13**, and have students work with partners to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. Delaney's topic choice reveals a lot about her. She likes to be a member of a team, and she is capable of disciplined work and cooperation over a period of time. She is probably in excellent physical condition, and she places a high value on competition and on winning.
2. Phil is an outdoorsman who likes spending time alone and testing his survival skills. He values physical endurance and does not fear predators he might meet in the wild. He probably appreciates and knows about forest flora and fauna.
3. Christina is a self-confident person who is interested in her family's cultural background. She is not shy, and she must be in a position that she could take the entire summer off as a holiday and not have to work to earn money. She can probably speak Hungarian.
4. Kevin is a compassionate and reflective person; he loves his brother and is probably unselfish and aware that disappointing events can have surprising results.

3. Have students brainstorm and use the Internet to discuss the many achievements of Benjamin Franklin. (See Notes to the Teacher.) Point out specific accomplishments such as the popularity of *Poor Richard's Almanack*, the invention of the Franklin stove and bifocal lenses, his notorious experiment with lightning, and his long experience as a diplomat.
4. Explain that Franklin's autobiography, unlike those of other Founding Fathers, does not emphasize his involvement in bringing about the American Revolution. He wrote it intending to share his story with his son, but it was soon evident that the work would interest more than just a private audience.
5. Distribute **Handout 14**, and ask students to read the excerpt and make marginal annotations. Then ask the class to pool insights and responses.

6. Distribute **Handout 15**, and ask small groups to discuss the questions. Follow with whole-class discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. Boston and Philadelphia in those days seemed very far apart and had different customs.
2. Franklin was eating one big roll and carrying two others, one under each arm.
3. The woman and child were probably hungry and were waiting to continue their journey. Franklin was kind to them. He did not decide to keep the rolls in case he himself got hungry again later. Perhaps he did not want the trouble of carting the rolls around.
4. Philadelphia was essentially a Quaker town, and Quakers generally have a reputation for honesty and sobriety.
5. Franklin had extensive experience working as a printer, and he needed to find employment in Philadelphia.
6. As a boy, Franklin was independent and self-confident; he observed people carefully and made keen judgments. Surrounded by strangers, he was not fearful and was able to present himself as skilled and competent. Looking back as an older man, he saw the humor in the situation. The excerpt shows that he placed a high value on self-reliance, honesty, and business success. He probably believed that, with common sense and effort, anyone who wanted to succeed could succeed.
7. The autobiography is written in the diction and syntax of an educated adult, but it is also conversational, as if Franklin were sitting back in an easy chair and telling friends or relatives a story about his youth.

7. Ask students to write paragraphs in which they relate a childhood event that reveals personality and character traits (e.g., shyness, love for animals, attachment to a parent, an adventurous spirit, curiosity) but does not state them directly.
8. Allow time for sharing in small groups, and collect the drafts as tickets out of class.

 Name:

Reading between and beyond the Lines

Directions: When people talk about their lives, they reveal much more than what the words say. Complete the chart.

Autobiography	Literal Information	Inferences
1. Delaney wrote in her autobiography about her pride and joy when, after months of practice, her team won a national cheerleading competition.	She works hard at cheerleading; her team won a national championship.	
2. Phil described his month alone hiking the northernmost areas of the Appalachian Trail.	Phil is an experienced hiker who knows firsthand the part of the trail in Maine.	
3. Christina wrote about flying alone from Pittsburgh to Hungary to meet and stay for the summer with relatives she had never seen before.	Christina has Hungarian roots, lives in America, and has traveled in Europe.	
4. Kevin wrote about the birth of his younger brother, who has Down syndrome, and the impact Danny has had in bringing the family as a whole closer together.	Kevin has a younger sibling with Down syndrome.	

Benjamin Franklin Arrives in Philadelphia

Directions: *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* was a great success when it was first published, and it continues to be widely read today. It tells about the life of one of the Founding Fathers, a rags-to-riches story, and it provides a glimpse of life in eighteenth-century America. The following excerpt describes young Ben's first arrival in Philadelphia after he ran away at the age of seventeen from his apprenticeship to his brother, a Boston printer. Read it carefully, and make annotations about your observations.

Then I walked up the street, gazing about till near the market-house I met a boy with bread. I had made many a meal on bread, and, inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to, in Second-street, and ask'd for bisket, intending such as we had in Boston; but they, it seems, were not made in Philadelphia. Then I asked for a three-penny loaf, and was told they had none such. So not considering or knowing the difference of money, and the greater cheapness nor the names of his bread, I bade him give me three-penny worth of any sort. He gave me, accordingly, three great puffy rolls. I was surpriz'd at the quantity, but took it, and, having no room in my pockets, walk'd off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up Market-street as far as Fourth-street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, as I certainly did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut-street and part of Walnut-street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again at Market-street wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of the river water; and, being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther.

Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and, after looking round awhile and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy thro' labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continu'd so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was, therefore, the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia.

Walking down again toward the river, and, looking in the faces of people, I met a young Quaker man whose countenance I lik'd, and, accosting him, requested he would tell me where a stranger could get lodging. We were then near the sign of the Three Mariners. "Here," says he, "is one place that entertains strangers, but it is not a reputable house; if thee wilt walk with me, I'll show thee a better." He brought me to the Crooked Billet in Water-street. Here I got a dinner, and, while I was eating it, several sly questions were asked me, as it seemed to be suspected, from my youth and appearance, that I might be some runaway.

After dinner, my sleepiness return'd, and being shown to a bed, I lay down without undressing, and slept till six in the evening; was call'd to supper, went to bed again very early, and slept soundly till next morning. Then I made myself as tidy as I could, and went to Andrew Bradford the printer's. I found in the shop the old man, his father, whom I had seen in New York, and who, travelling on horseback, had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduc'd me to his son, who receiv'd me civilly, gave me a breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a hand, being lately suppli'd with one; but there was another printer in town, lately set up, one Keimer, who, perhaps, might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work to do now and then till fuller business should offer.

The old gentleman said he would go with me to the new printer; and when we found him, "Neighbor," says Bradford, "I have brought to see you a young man of your business; perhaps you may want such a one." He ask'd me a few questions, put a composing stick in my hand to see how I work'd, and then said he would employ me soon, though he had just then nothing for me to do; and, taking old Bradford, whom he had never seen before, to be one of the town's people that had a good will for him, enter'd into a conversation on his present undertaking and projects; while Bradford, not discovering that he was the other printer's father, on Keimer's saying he expected soon to get the greatest part of the business into his own hands, drew him on by artful questions and starting little doubts, to explain all his views, what interest he reli'd on, and in what manner he intended to proceed. I, who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one of them was a crafty old sophister, and the other a mere novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surpris'd when I told him who the old man was.

Keimer's printing-house, I found, consisted of an old shatter'd press, and one small, worn-out font of English, which he was then using himself, composing an *Elegy on Aquila Rose*, before mentioned, an ingenious young man, of excellent character, much respected in the town, clerk of the Assembly, and a pretty poet. Keimer made verses too, but very indifferently. He could not be said to write them, for his manner was to compose them in the types directly out of his head. So there being no copy, but one pair of cases, and the *Elegy* likely to require all the "letter," no one could help him. I endeavor'd to put his press (which he had not yet us'd, and of which he understood nothing) into order fit to be work'd with; and, promising to come and print off his *Elegy* as soon as he should have got it ready, I return'd to Bradford's, who gave me a little job to do for the present, and there I lodged and dieted. A few days after, Keimer sent for me to print off the *Elegy*. And now he had got another pair of cases, and a pamphlet to reprint, on which he set me to work.

Young Ben Franklin: A Discussion

Directions: Use the following questions to discuss Benjamin Franklin's experiences when he first arrived in Philadelphia.

1. How would you explain the confusion in the bakery?

2. Why did Franklin believe that he looked ridiculous when he left the bakery?

3. Why did he give away two rolls?

4. Why would Franklin have had a preference for Quaker establishments?

5. Why did Franklin include so much about printers?

6. Based on the excerpt from Franklin's autobiography, what can you deduce about his character and personality, both as a youth and later when he wrote the account?

7. How would you describe his writing style?

Lesson 6

Frederick Douglass—Autobiographer and Abolitionist

Objectives

- To understand key components of the beliefs of Frederick Douglass
- To recognize that autobiography can serve the purpose of argumentation
- To recognize the powers of parallel structures

Notes to the Teacher

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland early in the nineteenth century. During his earliest years, he was raised by his grandmother, and, at age eight, he was sent to the city of Baltimore, where he learned to read. This was the source of his strong belief that literacy and freedom are interconnected. At fifteen, he was sent back to the plantation as a field worker. When he was twenty, he managed to escape to the North, and he began his work in support of the abolition of slavery in the United States. Douglass wrote three autobiographies; of these, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, is generally considered the classic.

Certainly, Douglass was a great and influential man, independent, forceful, and extremely articulate. Few people have the personal qualities to rise from the degradation of slavery to become a New England orator and champion of the people. His autobiography, however, is more than just the story of how one man became successful and famous. Its real intent was to elicit support for the abolitionist cause, a goal at which it succeeded.

In this lesson, students first learn the basics of the life of Frederick Douglass and about the abolition movement that was instrumental in prompting the American Civil War. They then read and analyze an excerpt from Douglass's autobiography. Finally, they write brief personal responses.

Procedure

1. Tell students the following story.

   > In 1818, an African-American baby was born on a plantation in Maryland; his mother, whom he met only a few times in his life, was a slave, and his father was an unidentified white man. His grandmother took care of him until he was about six years old and then abandoned him. When he was eight, he was sent to be a

house slave for a family in the city of Baltimore. There his owner found it amusing to begin to teach him to read. When she stopped, he pursued opportunities to learn more whenever possible. After about seven years, he was sent back to the plantation to be a field slave, and when he was twenty, he escaped to the North.

Ask students what they would expect to be the future of this man. Then explain that he was Frederick Douglass, one of the great leaders of the abolition movement, a writer, and a powerful orator.

2. Point out that prior to the Civil War, abolition was a highly controversial topic, and civil rights continued to be a hot topic all the way to the 1960s, a century after the war. Ask students what motivated Southerners, Christians with an otherwise strong sense of right and wrong, to defend the cause of slavery. (This was a traditional way of life, and it is always hard for people to see generally accepted customs as wrong. The notion of white supremacy was prevalent; without slavery, the plantation economy was certain to collapse, and with it an entire way of life.) Ask students what spurred antislavery sentiments elsewhere in the country. (Slavery is only possible when one group of people manages to see another as not really human. The more people were forced to recognize the slaves and freed slaves in the country as human, as brothers and sisters and not aliens, the more sentiments turned against slavery. Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* exerted a massive impact on readers.)
3. Distribute **Handout 16**, and ask students to complete the exercise. (The intended audience was primarily white readers, and the purpose was to convince them that slavery was evil and led to terrible cruelty and great injustice.)
4. Distribute **Handout 17**, and conduct a discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. Frederick Douglass states that Mr. Gore was proud, ambitious, determined, clever, mean, stubborn, and careful to display subservience to the estate owner.
2. The slaves feared and, when possible, avoided Mr. Gore.
3. The closing sentence clinches it; Mr. Gore was cold, humorless, and rigid. He hardly seemed like a human being.
4. While the first two paragraphs consist primarily of generalizations, the third one presents a vivid example in the story of poor Demby, whose killing seems an act of almost unbelievable violence.
5. Although everyone thought Mr. Gore's action was horrifying, he managed to talk his way out of it and experienced no punishment at all.

6. The fifth paragraph is on the same subject—the potential of cruel and murderous behavior of authorities against slaves. Mr. Gore was not an anomaly.
7. The sixth paragraph shows that abusive treatment of slaves was not confined to men. Mrs. Hicks carried out an equally appalling action, and, like the men, experienced no consequences for her actions.
8. Slavery put the slaves into helpless and powerless positions; absolute subservience was necessary, and slaves were easy victims of violence. Slavery also turned the oppressors into terrible people who lost any sense of decency they might once have had. This is a common theme in writing about the institution of slavery—that it was terribly destructive to people on both sides.

5. Tell students that Julius Caesar is famous for his boast: "Veni, Vidi, Vici," meaning, "I came. I saw. I conquered." Explain that this is an example of parallel structure, a device often used in both speeches and writing. If necessary, provide additional examples. (After the surgery, I wanted to sing, to laugh, to dance again. There is no obstacle, no enemy, no frustration that I will not brave for you.) Distribute **Handout 18**, and ask students to complete the exercise individually or with partners.

Suggested Responses

1. "To be accused was to be convicted, and to be convicted was to be punished." "He was cruel enough to inflict the severest punishment, artful enough to descend to the lowest trickery, and obdurate enough to be insensible to the voice of a reproving conscience."
2. The two parts of the compound sentence are identical, except for a reversal of the positions of "words" and "looks."
3. Parallel structures demonstrate perfect language control. The killing of Demby was and is a shocking event, so control is less appropriate.
4. "He is now, as he was then . . ."
5. The parallels are less studied, complicated, and deliberate—for example, "either by the courts or the community." Again, the atrocities are suited by less parallel language.

6. Ask students to write one-paragraph responses to the excerpt from Frederick Douglass. Instruct students to use parallel structures in their responses. Direct them to underline the examples of parallelism, and collect the paragraphs as tickets out of class.

Frederick Douglass on the Evils of Slavery

Directions: In *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Frederick Douglass describes some of his experiences as a field slave on a Maryland plantation. The following excerpt comes from the fourth chapter. Read it carefully, and write a sentence in which you identify both the audience and the purpose of the writing.

Mr. Gore was proud, ambitious, and persevering. He was artful, cruel, and obdurate. He was just the man for such a place, and it was just the place for such a man. It afforded scope for the full exercise of all his powers, and he seemed to be perfectly at home in it. He was one of those who could torture the slightest look, word, or gesture, on the part of the slave, into impudence, and would treat it accordingly. There must be no answering back to him; no explanation was allowed a slave, showing himself to have been wrongfully accused. Mr. Gore acted fully up to the maxim laid down by slaveholders,— "It is better that a dozen slaves should suffer under the lash, than that the overseer should be convicted, in the presence of the slaves, of having been at fault." No matter how innocent a slave might be—it availed him nothing, when accused by Mr. Gore of any misdemeanor. To be accused was to be convicted, and to be convicted was to be punished; the one always following the other with immutable certainty. To escape punishment was to escape accusation; and few slaves had the fortune to do either, under the overseership of Mr. Gore. He was just proud enough to demand the most debasing homage of the slave, and quite servile enough to crouch himself at the feet of the master. He was ambitious enough to be contented with nothing short of the highest rank of overseers, and persevering enough to reach the height of his ambition. He was cruel enough to inflict the severest punishment, artful enough to descend to the lowest trickery, and obdurate enough to be insensible to the voice of a reproving conscience. He was, of all the overseers, the most dreaded by the slaves. His presence was painful; his eye flashed confusion; and seldom was his sharp, shrill voice heard, without producing horror and trembling in their ranks.

Mr. Gore was a grave man, and, though a young man, he indulged in no jokes, said no funny words, seldom smiled. His words were in perfect keeping with his looks, and his looks were in perfect keeping with his words. Overseers will sometimes indulge in a witty word, even with the slaves; not so with Mr. Gore. He spoke but to command, and commanded but to be obeyed; he dealt sparingly with his words, and bountifully with his whip, never using the former where the latter would answer as well. When he whipped, he seemed to do so from a sense of duty, and feared no consequences. He did nothing reluctantly, no matter how disagreeable; always at his post, never inconsistent. He never promised but to fulfil. He was, in a word, a man of the most inflexible firmness and stone-like coolness.

His savage barbarity was equalled only by the consummate coolness with which he committed the grossest and most savage deeds upon the slaves under his charge. Mr. Gore once undertook to whip one of Colonel Lloyd's slaves, by the name of Demby. He had given Demby but few stripes, when, to get rid of the scourging, he ran and plunged himself into a creek, and stood there at the depth of his shoulders, refusing to come out. Mr. Gore told him that he would give him three calls, and that if he did not come out at the third call, he would shoot him. The first call was given. Demby made no response, but stood his ground. The second and third calls were given with the same result. Mr. Gore then, without consultation or deliberation with any one, not even giving Demby an additional call, raised his musket to his face, taking deadly aim at his standing victim, and in an instant poor Demby was no more; his mangled body sank out of sight, and blood and brains marked the water where he had stood.

A thrill of horror flashed through every soul upon the plantation, excepting Mr. Gore. He alone seemed cool and collected. He was asked by Colonel Lloyd and my old master, why he resorted to this extraordinary expedient. His reply was, (as well as I can remember,) that Demby had become unmanageable. He was setting a dangerous example to the other slaves,—one which, if suffered to pass without some such demonstration on his part, would finally lead to the total subversion of all rule and order upon the plantation. He argued that if one slave refused to be corrected, and escaped with his life, the other slaves would soon copy the example; the result of which would be, the freedom of the slaves, and the enslavement of the whites. Mr. Gore's defence was satisfactory. He was continued in his station as overseer upon the home plantation. His fame as an overseer went abroad. His horrid crime was not even submitted to judicial investigation. It was committed in the presence of slaves, and they of course could neither institute a suit, nor testify against him; and thus the guilty perpetrator of one of the bloodiest and most foul murders goes unwhipped of justice, and uncensured by the community in which he lives. Mr. Gore lived in St. Michael's, Talbot county, Maryland, when I left there; and if he is still alive, he very probably lives there now; and if so, he is now, as he was then, as highly esteemed and as much respected as though his guilty soul had not been stained with his brother's blood.

I speak advisedly when I say this,—that killing a slave, or any colored person, in Talbot county, Maryland, is not treated as a crime, either by the courts or the community. Mr. Thomas Lanman, of St. Michael's, killed two slaves, one of whom he killed with a hatchet, by knocking his brains out. He used to boast of the commission of the awful and bloody deed. I have heard him do so laughingly, saying, among other things, that he was the only benefactor of his country in the company, and that when others would do as much as he had done, we should be relieved of "the d——d niggers."

The wife of Mr. Giles Hicks, living but a short distance from where I used to live, murdered my wife's cousin, a young girl between fifteen and sixteen years of age, mangling her person in the most horrible manner, breaking her nose and breastbone with a stick, so that the poor girl expired in a few hours afterward. She was immediately buried, but had not been in her untimely grave but a few hours, before she was taken up and examined by the coroner, who decided that she had come to her death by severe beating. The offence for which this girl was thus murdered was this:—She had been set that night to mind Mrs. Hicks's baby, and during the night she fell asleep, and the baby cried. She, having lost her rest for several nights previous, did not hear the crying. They were both in the room with Mrs. Hicks. Mrs. Hicks, finding the girl slow to move, jumped from her bed, seized an oak stick of wood by the fireplace, and with it broke the girl's nose and breastbone, and thus ended her life. I will not say that this most horrid murder produced no sensation in the community. It did produce sensation, but not enough to bring the murderess to punishment. There was a warrant issued for her arrest, but it was never served. Thus, she escaped not only punishment, but even the pain of being arraigned before a court for her horrid crime.

Focus on Frederick Douglass

Directions: Use the following questions to discuss Frederick Douglass's descriptions of treatments of slaves in the South.

1. In the first paragraph, what generalizations does Douglass make about Mr. Gore?

2. How did the slaves in general feel about Mr. Gore?

3. What is the main point of the second paragraph?

4. How does the third paragraph connect with the first two? Is it effective?

5. What happened to Mr. Gore after he killed Demby?

6. Does the fifth paragraph change the subject?

7. What does the sixth paragraph add?

8. What arguments against slavery does the passage inspire?

The Power of Parallel Structure

Directions: Parallel structure is a powerful tool for both speakers and writers. The structures can be brief, such as a series of prepositional phrases, or they can be more extensive. For example, in the excerpt from Frederick Douglass on **Handout 16**, the first two sentences present parallel adjectives. The third presents parallel clauses. Parallel structure exhibits a writer's stylistic control.

1. Find two additional examples of parallel structure in the first paragraph.

2. How does the second sentence in the second paragraph demonstrate parallel structure?

3. The third paragraph places less emphasis on parallel structure. Why?

4. Find an example of parallelism in the fourth paragraph.

5. Are there parallel structures in the last two paragraphs?

Lesson 7

Writing Workshop: Refining a Narrative

Objectives

- To appreciate the variety of possibilities available in narrative writing
- To generate ideas for a final revision

Notes to the Teacher

The concept of a "final revision" is actually an oxymoron. Many writers and artists will argue that a piece is never really done—there is always something more that can be done to make it better. On the other hand, too much overworking can make a work seem artificial or stilted, and reality usually demands that we move on to another project.

Prior to this lesson, students need to have completed drafts of narratives. Usually, students genuinely enjoy hearing the stories written by others in the class, and the results generally range from truly hilarious to heartbreaking. You may find a certain degree of reluctance to suggest changes, resulting from respect for the personal experiences related in the narratives.

In this lesson, students first review a number of devices often used in narrative writing. They then spend time reading or listening to narratives and offering responses and suggestions, and they examine a rubric for evaluation of the narratives. Finally, students read and analyze an excerpt from Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 19**, review it with the class, and answer any questions. Use the following comments to clarify items on the handout.
   - *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a good example of use of dialogue that includes dialect; so also, in a more minor way, is *Wuthering Heights*. Some authors use idiosyncratic ways of presenting dialogue, but the convention involves use of quotation marks.
   - *Heart of Darkness* is a frame story; *Things Fall Apart* is not. A frame story lets readers know in advance that the narrator survived the experiences he or she is about to describe.
   - The title of a book like *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* demonstrates foreshadowing.

- Flashbacks can give depth to a story and provide new insights into the narrator and/or other characters.
- Sometimes indirect characterization seems to belie what the narrator says directly; narrators can make erroneous judgments.
- It is often effective for themes to be implicit, but sometimes characters articulate them (for example, in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*).
- Dream analysis is a big part of psychotherapy and has had a huge impact on literary analysis, but authors have often used dreams over the centuries. One example is Catherine Earnshaw's dream that she died and went to heaven in *Wuthering Heights*.
- These details can add depth and texture to a story.

2. Allow time for students to share and respond to one another's narratives in an unstructured way. Encourage writers to ask for suggestions, not just for compliments. Encourage readers to focus on compliments rather than criticisms.
3. Distribute **Handout 20**, and review the rubric for evaluation.
4. Establish a due date for the revised writings; you might want to have students also submit the drafts they worked with in class today, as well as completed rubrics.
5. Explain that in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou tells the story of her childhood and adolescence. She describes the effect that a woman named Mrs. Flowers had on her when she was deeply depressed. Distribute **Handout 21**, and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The speaker is describing events that happened long ago, and, even after long thought, she finds it hard to explain why Mrs. Flowers had such a profound effect on her life. Although she cannot pin the reasons down, the magic of the effect is still there.
2. She was not reading easy pieces. She mentions *Beowulf*, *Oliver Twist*, and famous lines from *A Tale of Two Cities*—challenging reading.
3. Answers will vary. Encourage students to explore reasons why some books can have profound effects on readers. You might want to mention that a children's book named *Black Beauty* revolutionized attitudes toward horses, and even President Abraham Lincoln reportedly acknowledged *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as the cause of the Civil War.

4. It seems that the store, which was home, was not a place where she felt she could display her newfound freedom of spirit. Perhaps it was an unhappy and stifling place.
5. Mrs. Flowers made Marguerite feel that someone liked and respected her—a feeling long absent and much needed. The story points out that a child's life can be saved by the actions of a wise and caring adult. Angelou expresses the theme quite directly.

6. Ask students to examine the diction and syntax in the excerpt from Angelou. Point out compound and complex sentence structures. The narrator is remembering a childhood experience, but the language reflects the voice of a highly literate adult.

Pointers for Writing Narratives

Directions: Review the following information, and focus on ways it can affect the final revision of your narrative.

1. Most narratives include dialogue. The diction and syntax in the dialogue should be appropriate for the speakers. If a dialect is used, some writers attempt to reproduce the sound through the ways the words are spelled. In writing dialogue, start a new paragraph each time the speaker shifts. Use quotation marks, and place punctuation inside the quotation marks.

   Mel peered cautiously into the old barn and saw that it was filled with rusty old farm machinery. "I'm afraid to go in there," she gasped.

   "Me, too," I said, "but we can't stand out here with all of this thunder and lightning. Just be careful where you put your feet, and don't lean on anything."

2. If you write a frame story, make sure the opening and closing mirror each other so that you actually have a frame, but they do not have to be exactly the same. For example, a narrative could start with a grandfather lowering himself into an easy chair prior to beginning a story; the conclusion could have him rise from the easy chair to go to the kitchen for milk and cookies.

3. Foreshadowing can be a useful tool to keep readers interested and to prepare for what is coming ahead, but it should be used sparingly so that the writing does not sound overly contrived.

   If I had known what we would find in there, I would have run straight back to the car right then.

4. In a short narrative, flashbacks are necessarily short too.

   Then I remembered something my grandmother told me a long time ago. I was only three or four years old at the time, but it has stuck with me ever since. "Terri, if other people are capable of doing something, you are too. Don't ever forget that."

5. Stories should use both direct and indirect characterization. The writer or narrator can tell the audience some things about the characters, but readers and listeners should also be able to infer insights based on what the characters do and say. For example, the writer could say that one member of the team was malicious and vindictive, but it is also important to show that character in action.

6. The story should not leave readers thinking, "So what?" This means that it should have a theme and share some insight into human nature or life. The theme can be directly stated, or it can be implied. The reader, for example, can see that a story points out that setbacks do not have to be final, but the narrator does not have to say that explicitly.

7. Sometimes narratives include dreams. Usually, these are included for symbolic purposes or to provide foreshadowing.

   I woke up from a terrible dream that I was sinking into quicksand and no one would help me. Instead, everyone was pointing at me, applauding, and laughing.

8. Narratives can also use letters and references to news stories.

   That was the morning the headlines all shouted that Osama bin Laden was dead.

Narrative Writing Rubric

Directions: Use the following rubric as a tool to evaluate narratives.

Type of narrative (circle one): Autobiography Biography Fiction

Element	5	3	1
Story	The narrative tells an interesting story with a beginning, a middle, and an end.	The story is clear, but the author could do more to sustain readers' interest.	The story line seems incoherent.
Diction and Syntax	The diction and syntax are appropriate for and consistent with the story's audience and purpose.	There are no major problems with diction and syntax.	The writer seems to have paid little attention to diction and syntax.
Dialogue	The story includes effective dialogue and punctuates it correctly.	The story needs more attention to dialogue.	There is no dialogue, or the dialogue is presented incorrectly.
Meaning	The story conveys meaningful insight into human nature or life.	The story's meaning could be expressed more clearly.	The story seems somewhat meaningless, making readers think, "So what?"
Craftsmanship	The story reflects effective efforts to use devices such as figurative language and narrative techniques to enhance its texture.	The story still seems somewhat unfinished and superficial.	The story demonstrates no attention to literary language or narrative devices.

The Voice from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Directions: In the following passage from Maya Angelou's book, the narrator, Marguerite, who had lapsed into deep depression and silence, describes the effect a friend, Mrs. Flowers, had on her through the sharing of poems and stories. Read the passage, and answer the questions.

> I have tried often to search behind the sophistication of years for the enchantment I so easily found in those gifts. The essence escapes but its aura remains. To be allowed, no, invited, into the private lives of strangers, and to share their joys and fears, was a chance to exchange the Southern bitter wormwood for a cup of mead with Beowulf or a hot cup of tea and milk with Oliver Twist. When I said aloud, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done . . ." tears of love filled my eyes at my selflessness.
>
> On that first day, I ran down the hill and into the road (few cars ever came along it) and had the good sense to stop running before I reached the Store.
>
> I was liked, and what a difference it made. I was respected not as Mrs. Henderson's grandchild or Bailey's sister but for just being Marguerite Johnson.
>
> Childhood's logic never asks to be proved (all conclusions are absolute). I didn't question why Mrs. Flowers had singled me out for attention, nor did it occur to me that Momma might have asked her to give me a little talking to. All I cared about was that she had made tea cookies for *me* and read to *me* from her favorite book. It was enough to prove that she liked me.[1]

1. What does the narrator mean by the first two sentences?

2. Explain the allusions in the first paragraph. Why are they included?

3. Have any books made a change in your life? Explain.

4. Why did Marguerite slow down before she got home?

5. In the end, how does the narrator explain Mrs. Flowers's effect on her?

[1]Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (New York: Random House, 1969), 98.

Lesson 8

Focus on Description

Objectives

- To understand the nature and purpose of description
- To recognize the importance of vivid word choices in descriptive writing

Notes to the Teacher

Descriptive writing aims to make readers feel as if they can actually see, hear, smell, taste, or touch the subject being described. The main tools are imagery and, sometimes, figurative language, and specific word choices are vitally important. While sometimes description exists on its own, more often it is integrated with other purposes such as narration or argumentation.

In this lesson, students begin by examining two paintings—Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893) and Henri Matisse's *Woman Reading* (1894)—both of which are readily available on the Internet; copies can also be purchased from a variety of art print vendors. Both paintings are masterpieces, but they contrast powerfully in color choices and in mood. If students seem to enjoy this activity, you might want to continue the process with other significant works of art that you find interesting.

Students then focus on specific choices in words and phrases, and they go on to analyze descriptive passages from Charles Dickens and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Procedure

1. Project an image of Edvard Munch's impressionist painting *The Scream*, or show students a large print. Ask students to examine it carefully and to write descriptions of what they see. Then ask volunteers to brainstorm details to include in an essay describing the painting (the shrieking and distorted figure in the foreground; the separations between the people; the straight lines of the wooden bridge and railing; the curves that dominate the rest of the picture; the angry-looking blood-red sky; the deep blue water). Explain that in 2012 one version of the painting sold for almost $120 million. Ask students what feelings the picture conveys. (The person in front, with hands clasped to head, seems completely overwhelmed with tension and horror, and the colors, although vivid, do not seem natural. The overall feelings include terror, frustration, and loneliness.)

2. Share the picture of Henri Matisse's painting *Woman Reading*. Ask students to describe what they see, including the feelings conveyed by the picture. (The colors are subdued and gentle; the woman seems to be in nineteenth-century dress; the cabinet's surface is cluttered and somewhat disarranged; the seated woman appears relaxed and has turned her back to everything and everyone else, but the overall feeling is calm and reflective, a marked contrast to the emotions conveyed by *The Scream*.)
3. Explain that descriptions use images and sometimes figures of speech to enable readers to feel as if they are actually experiencing the thing being described. Choices of vivid diction are extremely important. As a color, *red* is vague; *blood-red* is more specific, as is *scarlet*. A person does not just run; rather he or she bolts or careens.
4. Distribute **Handout 22**, and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The horse could be bitter chocolate brown with a black mane and tail; it could be galloping; maybe the field is dotted with clover and buttercups.
2. Perhaps a Mercedes is wrapped around an old Dodge Neon. Was this a fender bender, or were the cars totaled and the drivers severely injured?
3. Maybe the woman is rail-thin and slightly bent over; the sheets could be blue, and maybe they are flapping in the chilly breeze.
4. The runner is probably drenched in sweat; he or she might be smiling in triumph or grimacing in pain.
5. Is the tattoo a tiny flower on someone's shoulder, or a huge snake slithering up someone's arm? Is the tattoo artist's forehead creased in concentration?
6. There would probably be the feel of a feeble but warm winter sun and the sound of melting snow dropping from tree limbs and eaves. The carrot nose and stick arms might slide off.
7. The tawny brown of the desert and dull, spiky plants, perhaps with flowers, some leaning toward each other, might be stressed.
8. Windows might twinkle with light, and neon signs might flash in various colors. Headlights and taillights of passing cars and trucks might be visible.
9. There would be a variety of colors of attire, and there would be people both skiing stiffly and sprawled on the ground with poles off to the side. The sounds might range from shouts of glee to cries of frustration.
10. Is the lake choppy or calm, large or small? What color is the boat, and is it moving or still? Is it alone or part of a regatta?

5. Point out that descriptive passages appear in all kinds of writing, both fiction and nonfiction. Distribute **Handout 23**, and ask students to read the description from *Great Expectations*. Follow with discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. Pip seems to have been curious and amazed, but not particularly fearful; the reader understands that this was a loathsome and eerie room badly in need of a good cleaning and airing out. The spiders, mice, and beetles lead to shudders for many people, but often not for little boys.
2. He describes things in the order in which he noticed them—first the oppressive and cold air; the very dim and flickering light; the dust and mold-covered table; the cobweb-covered, fungus-like centerpiece; the spiders, mice, and beetles. Most of the images appeal to (or repel) the sense of sight, but there are also tactile, olfactory, and auditory images. Pip looked from the grate to the table, and then back to the grate.
3. There are many possibilities: "wintry branches of candles," "faintly troubled the darkness," "like a black fungus," "speckle-legged spiders with blotchy bodies," "rattling behind the panels," "groped about in the hearth."

6. Point out that descriptions often aim to convey a specific impression or opinion. A description of a room might emphasize its cozy, welcoming atmosphere; a description of a person might stress his or her irascibility. Ask students what main impression the description from *Great Expectations* conveys. (The room exemplifies decay and arouses feelings of both fascination and repugnance.)
7. Distribute **Handout 24**, and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The room is full of air and movement, but it also seems quiet and serene. The description contrasts dramatically with the one from Dickens.
2. There is a lot of white, the dark red rug, and the vivid green of the grass, which is also reflected in the windows.
3. Until Tom Buchanan slams the windows shut, there is something almost magical about the scene, as if the objects and people are not quite real. One somehow wants those windows to be open again.

8. Assign students to write descriptions, and set a date for conferencing about drafts. Explain that the subject can be a place, an object, or a person, and emphasize that the writings should incorporate strong imagery. (Note: You might want to limit students to no more than a page and a half.)

 Name:

Description: Considerations about Syntax

Directions: Identify word and phrase choices that would be effective in describing the following topics. Use the exercise as a tool to reflect on the power of specific word choices.

Topic	Stronger Words and Phrases
1. a brown horse running across a green field	
2. the collision of two cars at an intersection	
3. an old woman hanging sheets on a clothesline	
4. a runner crossing the finish line at a track meet	
5. a tattoo artist putting the finishing touches on someone's arm	

 Name:

Topic	Stronger Words and Phrases
6. a snowman melting away in afternoon sunshine	
7. cactus plants growing in a desert	
8. the skyline of a city at night	
9. beginning skiers on the bunny hill	
10. a sailboat on a lake	

A Description from Charles Dickens

Directions: In the following passage from chapter 11 of *Great Expectations*, Pip, the narrator, describes a room he saw when he was a young boy. Read the description carefully, and underline words and phrases that you find particularly effective in immersing you in the experience. Then answer the questions.

> I crossed the staircase landing, and entered the room she indicated. From that room, too, the daylight was completely excluded, and it had an airless smell that was oppressive. A fire had been lately kindled in the damp old-fashioned grate, and it was more disposed to go out than to burn up, and the reluctant smoke which hung in the room seemed colder than the clearer air—like our own marsh mist. Certain wintry branches of candles on the high chimneypiece faintly lighted the chamber; or, it would be more expressive to say, faintly troubled its darkness. It was spacious, and I dare say had once been handsome, but every discernible thing in it was covered with dust and mould, and dropping to pieces. The most prominent object was a long table with a tablecloth spread on it, as if a feast had been in preparation when the house and the clocks all stopped together. An épergne or centre-piece of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it was so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form was quite undistinguishable; and, as I looked along the yellow expanse out of which I remember its seeming to grow, like a black fungus, I saw speckled-legged spiders with blotchy bodies running home to it, and running out from it, as if some circumstance of the greatest public importance had just transpired in the spider community.
>
> I heard the mice too, rattling behind the panels, as if the same occurrence were important to their interests. But, the blackbeetles took no notice of the agitation, and groped about the hearth in a ponderous elderly way, as if they were shortsighted and hard of hearing, and not on terms with one another.

1. How does the narrator seem to have responded to this sight? Do readers respond the same way? Why or why not?

2. How has the narrator organized the description?

3. Identify three words or phrases that you find particularly effective, and explain your choices.

A Description from F. Scott Fitzgerald

Directions: In the following passage from chapter 1 of *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator, Nick Carraway, describes walking into a house with his host, Tom Buchanan. Read the paragraphs, underline key details, and answer the questions.

> We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, fragilely bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding-cake of the ceiling, and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.
>
> The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room, and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.

1. What is your main impression of the room before the rear windows are closed? Is the atmosphere positive or negative?

2. What colors dominate the scene?

3. How does the concluding sentence affect the reader?

Lesson 9

Henry David Thoreau's Keen Ear and Eye

Objectives

- To understand the context in which Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*
- To analyze a passage in which Thoreau describes his observations of animals during winter

Notes to the Teacher

Henry David Thoreau's experiment in simple living at Walden Pond from 1845 to 1847 started with his determination to write a book, and he did write *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers* while he was there. Later, after the experiment was over, he wrote *Walden*, gave lectures, and did various jobs to earn a living. He died young, before his forty-fifth birthday, but his is a legendary presence in American history and letters. A friend and sometimes disciple of Ralph Waldo Emerson, a teacher to Louisa May Alcott, and a man who went to prison to protest a war in which he did not believe, Thoreau remains a fascinating figure.

In this lesson, students learn about the experience at Walden, and they respond to the idea of an opportunity to conduct a similar experiment of their own. They then read and analyze a passage from *Walden* that demonstrates Thoreau the naturalist at work. For procedure 3, you will need pictures and audio clips of assorted birds. Both are readily available on the Internet.

Procedure

1. Allow students about ten minutes to use the Internet to learn about Thoreau's life in the cabin at Walden Pond. Pool results in an open-ended discussion. Lead the class to see him as a writer; his main purpose was to write a book, and he accomplished that purpose during his two years at Walden; unfortunately, the book was not a success at the time. He was also a philosopher who believed in self-reliance, independence, and freedom of thought and speech. He advocated the benefits of a simple lifestyle. In addition, he was a naturalist, a person who liked to observe and study wildlife in its natural habitat.
2. Point out that Thoreau lived in his hand-built cabin at Walden for more than two years, so he experienced all kinds of weather there, including summer heat, spring rains, and winter snow. He was not a

hermit, as he could and did easily walk into town to visit and make purchases; however, his life there was not just one big vacation.

3. Ask students to imagine themselves as naturalists sent to a remote cabin in the woods to study and write about the wildlife they see and hear, especially birds. Show pictures of a variety of birds, and have students listen to birdcalls. Ask the class to write descriptions based on what they see and hear. (They will see that it is exceedingly hard to describe birdcalls; "tweet" just does not do it.)
4. Distribute **Handout 25**, and ask students to read the excerpt from *Walden*. Then allow open-ended discussion of observations.
5. Distribute **Handout 26**, and conduct a discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The opening paragraphs focus on sounds because the topic is night, when little is visible in the woods.
2. The first paragraph focuses on owls and geese. The paragraph includes imagery, similes, onomatopoeia, and personification.
3. The paragraph continues to deal with sound but switches the topic to the sounds of ice. Thoreau compares the pond to a restless sleeper and the sound of the ground cracking to something crashing into his door.
4. The third paragraph continues to deal with sounds, but now the topic is foxes. Thoreau then goes on to say that the animals seem almost like human beings.
5. By the fourth paragraph, it is daylight, which means that the sense of sight can come into play.
6. Thoreau deals mainly with the amusing antics of squirrels, which he personifies and clearly likes.
7. Thoreau presents the jays as thieves, the squirrels as rightful owners.
8. Thoreau's purpose is to depict sights and sounds during winter at Walden Pond; his audience would be educated people interested in natural phenomena.

6. Ask students to imagine themselves in a familiar place at night and, as Thoreau did in the first three paragraphs on the handout, to write descriptions centering on sounds. If necessary, suggest possibilities: trying to sleep in a hammock on the porch on a hot August night; waiting in a tree stand on the first day of hunting season; lying in bed as a storm passes and interrupts electric service; walking home from the late shift at a fast-food restaurant. Have small groups share results, and collect writings as tickets out of class.

Winter at Walden Pond

Directions: The following excerpt from chapter 15 of *Walden* focuses on Henry David Thoreau as a naturalist, keenly aware of the wildlife around him. Read the passage carefully, and watch for descriptive elements.

For sounds in winter nights, and often in winter days, I heard the forlorn but melodious note of a hooting owl indefinitely far; such a sound as the frozen earth would yield if struck with a suitable plectrum, the very *lingua vernacula* of Walden Wood, and quite familiar to me at last, though I never saw the bird while it was making it. I seldom opened my door in a winter evening without hearing it; *Hoo hoo hoo, hoorer hoo*, sounded sonorously, and the first three syllables accented somewhat like *how der do*; or sometimes *hoo hoo* only. One night in the beginning of winter, before the pond froze over, about nine o'clock, I was startled by the loud honking of a goose, and, stepping to the door, heard the sound of their wings like a tempest in the woods as they flew low over my house. They passed over the pond toward Fair-Haven, seemingly deterred from settling by my light, their commodore honking all the while with a regular beat. Suddenly an unmistakable cat-owl from very near me, with the most harsh and tremendous voice I ever heard from any inhabitant of the woods, responded at regular intervals to the goose, as if determined to expose and disgrace this intruder from Hudson's Bay by exhibiting a greater compass and volume of voice in a native, and *boo-hoo* him out of Concord horizon. What do you mean by alarming the citadel at this time of night consecrated to me? Do you think I am ever caught napping at such an hour, and that I have not got lungs and a larynx as well as yourself? *Boo-hoo, boo-hoo, boo-hoo!* It was one of the most thrilling discords I ever heard. And yet, if you had a discriminating ear, there were in it the elements of a concord such as these plains never saw nor heard.

I also heard the whooping of the ice in the pond, my great bed-fellow in that part of Concord, as if it were restless in its bed and would fain turn over, were troubled with flatulency and bad dreams; or I was waked by the cracking of the ground by the frost, as if some one had driven a team against my door, and in the morning would find a crack in the earth a quarter of a mile long and a third of an inch wide.

Sometimes I heard the foxes as they ranged over the snow crust, in moonlight nights, in search of a partridge or other game, barking raggedly and demoniacally like forest dogs, as if laboring with some anxiety, or seeking expression, struggling for light and to be dogs outright and run freely in the streets; for if we take the ages into our account, may there not be a civilization going on among brutes as well as men? They seemed to me to be rudimental, burrowing men, still standing on their defence, awaiting their transformation. Sometimes one came near to my window, attracted by my light, barked a vulpine curse at me, and then retreated.

Usually the red squirrel (*Sciurus Hudsonius*) waked me in the dawn, coursing over the roof and up and down the sides of the house, as if sent out of the woods for this purpose. In the course of the winter I threw out half a bushel of ears of sweet-corn, which had not got ripe, on to the snow crust by my door, and was amused by watching the motions of the various animals which were baited by it. In the twilight and the night the rabbits came regularly and made a hearty meal. All day long the red squirrels came and went, and afforded me much entertainment by their manoeuvres. One would approach at first warily through the shrub-oaks, running over the snow crust by fits and starts like a leaf blown by the wind, now a few paces this way, with wonderful speed and waste of energy, making inconceivable haste with his "trotters," as if it were for a wager, and now as many paces that way, but never getting on more than half a rod at a time; and then suddenly pausing

with a ludicrous expression and a gratuitous somerset, as if all the eyes in the universe were eyed on him,—for all the motions of a squirrel, even in the most solitary recesses of the forest, imply spectators as much as those of a dancing girl,—wasting more time in delay and circumspection than would have sufficed to walk the whole distance,—I never saw one walk,—and then suddenly, before you could say Jack Robinson, he would be in the top of a young pitch-pine, winding up his clock and chiding all imaginary spectators, soliloquizing and talking to all the universe at the same time,—for no reason that I could ever detect, or he himself was aware of, I suspect. At length he would reach the corn, and selecting a suitable ear, brisk about in the same uncertain trigonometrical way to the topmost stick of my wood-pile, before my window, where he looked me in the face, and there sit for hours, supplying himself with a new ear from time to time, nibbling at first voraciously and throwing the half-naked cobs about; till at length he grew more dainty still and played with his food, tasting only the inside of the kernel, and the ear, which was held balanced over the stick by one paw, slipped from his careless grasp and fell to the ground, when he would look over at it with a ludicrous expression of uncertainty, as if suspecting that it had life, with a mind not made up whether to get it again, or a new one, or be off; now thinking of corn, then listening to hear what was in the wind. So the little impudent fellow would waste many an ear in a forenoon; till at last, seizing some longer and plumper one, considerably bigger than himself, and skilfully balancing it, he would set out with it to the woods, like a tiger with a buffalo, by the same zigzag course and frequent pauses, scratching along with it as if it were too heavy for him and falling all the while, making its fall a diagonal between a perpendicular and horizontal, being determined to put it through at any rate;—a singularly frivolous and whimsical fellow;—and so he would get off with it to where he lived, perhaps carry it to the top of a pine tree forty or fifty rods distant, and I would afterwards find the cobs strewed about the woods in various directions.

At length the jays arrive, whose discordant screams were heard long before, as they were warily making their approach an eighth of a mile off, and in a stealthy and sneaking manner they flit from tree to tree, nearer and nearer, and pick up the kernels which the squirrels have dropped. Then, sitting on a pitch-pine bough, they attempt to swallow in their haste a kernel which is too big for their throats and chokes them; and after great labor they disgorge it, and spend an hour in the endeavor to crack it by repeated blows with their bills. They were manifestly thieves, and I had not much respect for them; but the squirrels, though at first shy, went to work as if they were taking what was their own.

Thoreau's Description of Winter at Walden Pond

Directions: Use the following questions as springboards to analyze the excerpt on **Handout 25**.

1. Why do the first three paragraphs emphasize sounds?

2. What does the first paragraph focus on? What literary devices does Thoreau use?

3. How does the second paragraph change the focus?

4. How does the third paragraph connect with the first two? What surprising shift does it take?

5. What change occurs in the fourth paragraph?

6. Describe Thoreau's attitude toward the red squirrels. What tools does he use to describe them?

7. How does Thoreau portray the jays in contrast to the squirrels?

8. Based on the excerpt, how would you describe Thoreau's intended audience and purpose?

Lesson 10

A Look at Annie Dillard and Tinker Creek

Objectives

- To analyze a passage from Annie Dillard's Pulitzer Prize–winning book
- To become a naturalist and write about specific observations

Notes to the Teacher

In 1975, Annie Dillard was awarded the Pulitzer nonfiction award for *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek,* which describes her experiences observing the natural world around her cabin in the Virginia mountains, as well as her thoughts in response to those observations. At the time, Dillard was just reaching her thirtieth birthday, and the award launched her into fame and a career as a college teacher and writer of nonfiction, poetry, and fiction.

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek often leads to comparisons of Dillard to Henry David Thoreau—a solitary and simple life focused on observation and reflection. In fact, Dillard's master's degree thesis dealt with *Walden*, and her admiration for Thoreau is evident. Also evident is her extensive reading on a variety of topics and her ability to connect her readings with her own experiences. Dillard does not romanticize nature, but she does celebrate its raw power.

In this lesson, students read and analyze several brief excerpts from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. They then participate in an experience of observing and writing about nature. A field trip to a nature preserve or aquarium may be feasible, or you could have the class look at a tropical fish tank or video. Alternatively, students could choose individual locations near their homes. The idea is to sit still, to watch, and then to write observations and reflections. This lesson can be a great opportunity for cross-curricular work with a science class.

Procedure

1. Point out that naturalists carefully observe nature and then write about what they see. This can be on a big scale, such as focusing on the life of a whale pod, or it can involve careful study of tiny creatures like fruit flies. The naturalist has to find a position to be still, quiet, and unobtrusive and then simply observe. The results can be astoundingly beautiful—for instance, a monarch butterfly emerging from its cocoon, unfurling its wings, and flying gracefully from flower to flower. The results can just as likely be chilling—for instance, a female praying mantis devouring her mate.

2. Distribute **Handout 27**, and ask students to read the passages and complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. Annie Dillard saw the little frog die a particularly appalling death. Besides images, she also uses figurative language, comparing the frog's body to a toppling tent, an airless football, and a broken balloon.
2. A sight like this one can and perhaps did lead to nightmares. It is also a reminder that death can strike unexpectedly at any time, and creatures are helpless before it.
3. The description is accurate. Giant water bugs use this method to capture their prey—insects and small water creatures—and to feed. Giant water bugs are not lethal to large animals or humans, but their bite is nasty and painful. The precise diction used in the second excerpt makes the giant water bug sound like the insect version of Dracula.
4. In nature, much of life is about eating and being eaten. This is not a romantic view of nature as a delightful source of inspiration, but a portrait of a voracious and pitiless universe.
5. The muskrat was swimming idly down the creek, floating on its back.
6. Here, nature is amusing and delightful, full of surprises.
7. Once we miss seeing something, the moment cannot be reclaimed, and the wisdom it could have taught is lost. Later in the book, Dillard stresses that to really see what is around us, we need to completely discard self-consciousness, which distorts perception.
8. "Pilgrim" is an important word choice. Dillard identifies herself not as a visitor or a tourist, but as a pilgrim. People on pilgrimages seek not just new sights, but opportunities to touch the sacred, sublime, or mysterious. Tinker Creek was a source of inspiration.

3. Distribute **Handout 28**, and review it with the class. Emphasize that the assignment involves intense and focused observation. If necessary, provide an example. Someone might sit on the floor in a darkened room and gaze into an aquarium with fish, some brightly colored, some a silvery grey. The observation might last for about an hour. Images would include the gurgling of the aquarium's aeration system, the colors of the fish and water plants, and a faint smell of water. The observer would note that the fish kept swimming around and sometimes disappeared momentarily behind a rock or a plant. They did not appear to be looking for anything; they effortlessly avoided

running into one another, but there also was no sign of social interaction. Feelings might range from admiration to boredom to sleepiness. The experience might lead to reflections that in some ways people are like those fish, everyone going his or her own way and completely oblivious to the interests and needs of other individuals.

4. Direct students to write essays based on their experiences as naturalists.

Observations at Tinker Creek

Directions: In 1975, a young writer named Annie Dillard received the Pulitzer Prize in nonfiction for her book *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. In it, she describes her observations and reflections about nature in the rural Virginia mountains, where she lived alone in a cabin and spent a great deal of time observing the nature that surrounded her, including birds, fish, frogs, and insects. Read the following passages, and answer the questions.

Excerpt 1

> He was a very small frog with wide, dull eyes. And just as I looked at him, he slowly crumpled and began to sag. The spirit vanished from his eyes as if snuffed. His skin emptied and drooped; his very skull seemed to collapse and settle like a kicked tent. He was shrinking before my eyes like a deflating football. I watched the taut, glistening skin on his shoulders ruck, and rumple, and fall. Soon, part of his skin, formless as a pricked balloon, lay in floating folds like bright scum on top of the water: it was a monstrous and terrifying thing. I gaped bewildered, appalled. An oval shadow hung in the water behind the drained frog; then the shadow glided away.[1]

Excerpt 2

> [The giant water bug] seizes a victim with these legs, hugs it tight, and paralyzes it with enzymes injected during a vicious bite. That one bite is the only bite it ever takes. Through the puncture shoot the poisons that dissolve the victim's muscles and bone and organs—all but the skin—and through it the giant water bug sucks out the victim's body, reduced to a juice.[2]

Excerpt 3

> . . . [A] young muskrat had appeared on top of the water, floating on its back. Its forelegs were folded langorously across its chest, the sun shone on its upturned belly. Its youthfulness and rodent grin coupled with its ridiculous method of locomotion, which consisted of a lazy wag of the tail assisted by an occasional dabble of a webbed hind foot, made it an enchanting picture of decadence, dissipation, and summer sloth.[3]

1. What did the author see while she observed the little frog? What descriptive tools does she use?

2. The author mentions this incident quite often later in the book. How do you think this observation affected her?

[1]Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2007), 7–8.
[2]Ibid., 8.
[3]Ibid., 193.

3. How does the author explain this event? Use reliable Internet sites to assess whether her explanation is correct.

4. What general truth about nature does the incident with the frog reveal?

5. What did the author see while she observed the muskrat?

6. How did this sight affect her?

7. Throughout the book, Annie Dillard stresses the importance of seeing, of being wide awake and alert. Why does this matter?

8. How would you interpret the title of the book?

Becoming a Naturalist

Directions: Use the following questions to record information about your experiences as a naturalist.

1. Where and how did you position yourself for your observation?

2. What were you looking at? How long did you look at it?

3. What images—sounds, sights, smells, tastes, tactile sensations—were present?

4. What happened?

5. How did you feel while you were observing?

6. What thoughts did your observations evoke?

Lesson 11

Writing Workshop: Intensifying Descriptions

Objectives

- To focus on effective diction and varied syntax
- To practice skills involved in effective revision and editing

Notes to the Teacher

Prior to this lesson, students need to have drafted descriptive essays; most often a length of about one page is effective for this type of writing. Topics can vary widely: people; animals or plants; places; objects. You will want to emphasize that a description is often like a snapshot: a depiction of the subject at one specific place and time (for example, a child putting together a puzzle at the kitchen table or the backyard after a seventeen-inch snowfall).

The lesson first involves students in reading and responding to one another's descriptions, focusing on overall effectiveness. Next, the class works with the issue of effective syntax, and students give attention to revising sentences in the essays. The lesson also includes a rubric to evaluate the essays.

Procedure

1. Have students work in small groups to read and respond to descriptive essays. Volunteer yourself as a reader-reactor too. Encourage students to approach the task from their own unique perspectives as readers and writers, focusing on what they really like and what just does not seem right.
2. Remind students of the value of varied sentence structures, including dependent clauses and appositives. Distribute **Handout 29**, and ask students to read the paragraphs and focus on improving syntax. Follow with discussion of both content and syntax.

Suggested Responses

1. The subject is a specific object at one place and time—a truck suspended for work in a garage. The crippled bird simile is a nice touch, and there are a variety of effective images. The sentences all follow a subject-verb format, though; this is easy to remedy. For example, the paragraph might begin as follows: Suspended on the rack above me, my silver truck looked like a crippled bird.

2. This paragraph has the opposite problem, as none of the sentences begin with the subject itself. The second sentence, for example, could read as follows: Red and white roses lay on top of the coffin. The second-last one could begin like this: The ground felt squishy under my feet. The moment being described is clear, and the writer gave attention to imagery appealing to the senses of sight, sound, and touch.

3. Allow some time for students to focus on the syntax in their own writings and to make notes regarding revision possibilities.

4. Distribute **Handout 30**, and remind students that specific word choices also contribute to the effectiveness of descriptions. Ask students to complete the exercise individually. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. Word choices might change to *strode, scarlet, jet-black,* and *stilettos*.
2. The hands might clutch the steering wheel, and *trembling* is more precise than *shaking*.
3. Maybe the officers raced or charged up the stairs.
4. The eyes may have seemed to glare or stare. They might be glass eyes.
5. Maybe the foul odor seemed to clog the air.
6. They may have been icy blue eyes.
7. Maybe the arm throbbed, something warm and sticky may have been oozing across the forehead.
8. It makes a big difference if the snowboard crashed into or danced off the mogul.
9. Perhaps the cubs tumbled down the hill.
10. Was the accent a drawl or a twang?

5. Distribute **Handout 31**, and review the rubric. Set a date for submission of final drafts. You might want to ask students to hand in the drafts they worked with during this lesson, along with completed rubrics.

Description: Focus on Syntax

Directions: Below are two paragraphs from descriptive essays. Revise them for more effective and varied sentence structure.

1. My silver truck was suspended on the rack above me. It looked like a crippled bird. The doors were hanging open, the tailgate was down, and the hood was up. The wheels turned listlessly. Spots of rust were evident in afternoon sunshine that managed to make its way through the shop's dirty windows. The radio was on too, but the mechanic must have changed the station. Country music was blaring out. The smell of my pine air freshener drifted weakly through the air. All eyes were focused on the huge dent in the door on the passenger's side.

2. At the cemetery that afternoon, friends and relatives surrounded the casket as the minister said a few closing words and began to pray. On top of the coffin lay red and white roses, gently placed as the mourners knelt and wiped tears away. Perhaps surprisingly, there were no sobs and no hysterics; the only sounds besides the minister's voice were a distant lawn mower and a family of robins nested in an evergreen tree. Under my feet, the ground felt squishy; my eyes felt pretty squishy too. Leaning to one side, I found my mother's hand and gripped it tightly.

Description: Focus on Diction

Directions: Improve the word choices in the following descriptive sentences.

1. Midge drew gasps as she walked into the room in a very short red skirt, a black top, and six-inch heels.

2. The hands on the steering wheel seemed to be shaking.

3. The police officers went up the steps toward the yellow crime-scene tape.

4. The dead stag's eyes seemed to look accusingly at me.

5. The smell of cigarette smoke filled the air.

6. I gazed long and hard into her blue eyes.

7. My arm hurt, and I could feel something sticky on my forehead.

8. My snowboard hit the mogul, and suddenly I was airborne.

9. The bear cubs followed their mother down the hill.

10. Their accent was so strong that we could not understand a word they said.

Descriptive Writing Rubric

Directions: Use the following rubric as a tool to evaluate descriptions.

Element	5	3	1
Description	The essay vividly describes a specific person, place, or object.	The essay focuses on a single topic and describes it.	The essay makes no attempt at description.
Imagery and Figurative Language	The essay uses effective imagery and figurative language.	The essay includes some images and/or figures of speech.	Imagery and figurative language are noticeably missing.
Attitude	The essay conveys a clear impression of the writer's attitude toward the topic under discussion.	The author's attitude toward the topic could be clearer.	The writer's attitude is entirely murky and unreadable.
Diction and Syntax	The writing uses vivid diction and varied syntax, and there are no language errors.	The writing reflects attention to diction and syntax and has no serious language errors.	The writing is in serious need of editing.

Lesson 12
Analyzing Style

Objectives

- To describe what is meant by the phrase *writing style*
- To analyze the styles in several passages

Notes to the Teacher

Style is often easier to perceive than it is to describe. It includes everything an author or a literary work characteristically includes, such as topics, imagery, tone, figurative language, and choices of diction and syntax. It is immediately evident that J. D. Salinger's style differs from that of Charles Dickens; the same is often true for nonfiction writers. We describe some as witty, others as matter-of-fact, poetic, conversational, or scholarly.

This lesson involves students in the analysis of brief excerpts from famous writers. Students consider general impressions, as well as diction, syntax, and literary devices. Furthermore, they discuss the ways these elements connect with the two basics: the writer's intended audience and purpose. Students conclude the lesson with short writings in response to an essay by Francis Bacon.

Procedure

1. Engage students in a general discussion of the word *style*. You might include music, dress, and other familiar topics; for example, there are formal shoes, casual shoes, work boots, and athletic footwear. Explain that in discussing writing, we use the word *style* to mean all of an author's characteristic choices. We might speak of a blunt and outspoken style, a lyrical style, a conversational style, or an academic style.
2. Distribute **Handout 32**, and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The first sentence has shock value; most people have been programmed to say that money is not "the most important thing in the world"—that love is, or happiness, or truth, or some other value. The sentence is outrageous, and it is an attention-grabber.
2. Money is very concrete, but most of the rest of the excerpt emphasizes abstractions. The excerpt focuses on abstractions connected with a concrete reality.

3. The opening sentence, which states George Bernard Shaw's main point, is simple and short. It is followed by two longer sentences that reflect parallelism. In the second sentence, the five nouns in the first clause parallel and contrast with the five nouns in the second clause. The third sentence parallels money's effects on good and bad people.
4. Balance is attained with the parallel structures. Shaw sounds like a patient teacher trying to convince reluctant pupils that he is, after all, right—as always.
5. The excerpt is pretty convincing. With no money, people cannot get medical help or donate money to worthy causes; they cannot get nice clothing and grooming supplies. They cannot obtain a car so that they can get to work to earn money. Without money, people are trapped.

3. Ask students to write short paragraphs in which they imitate Shaw, but to identify something else as "the most important thing in the world." When they have finished the writings, ask students to share results in small groups; then collect the paragraphs.
4. Distribute **Handout 33**, and have small groups complete the exercise. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

- The passage from Dylan Thomas is reminiscent, even nostalgic, and laden with imagery. The sentences are long and complex, and they ramble somewhat, as memories do. The long stream of hyphenated modifiers for "Christmas" provides gentle humor. They are also carefully structured—two with two words, three with three words, and one culminating with four words. The prose is highly poetic, with strong winter imagery and sound devices, including alliteration.
- James Baldwin's style seems tense and excited, like the church service he describes. The first sentence is very short and abstract. The next two are longer, and the passage concludes with concrete images in a crescendo of language. The many *–ing* words seem to sing out and reinforce the enthusiastic tone. The third sentence demonstrates parallelism. Like Thomas, Baldwin reflects on the past, but while Thomas's style is reflective and quiet, Baldwin's is electric with energy.

5. Distribute **Handout 34**, and ask students to complete the exercise individually. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. The style is serious, scholarly, authoritative, and somewhat abstract. Francis Bacon was clearly writing for an educated audience.
2. The first sentence is very short, the second extremely long and complicated, and the third and fourth are moderately long. Parenthetical comments are included, and the diction is that of a highly educated person.
3. This is a very interesting metaphor. Every person encounters and interprets reality based on the limits of his or her own life. It is as if all of us build caves that surround us and shape, as well as limit, understanding.
4. Balance is created by many compound phrases and parallels (for example, the infinitives in the second sentence).

6. Direct students to reexamine the second sentence and the idea that each person has an individual cave. Point out the words *refracts* and *discolors*. Bacon says that what we see is shaped by our character, education, people with whom we talk, things we read, and people we admire. What we see is always a distorted version of the reality.
7. Ask students to write short essays based on the idea of having caves of their own. The essays should discuss factors that refract the light and affect the way individuals see things, as well as consequences of those limitations.

Words from George Bernard Shaw

Directions: The following quotation comes from George Bernard Shaw's preface to his play *Major Barbara*. Read it, and answer the questions that follow.

> . . . Money is the most important thing in the world. It represents health, strength, honor, generosity and beauty as conspicuously and undeniably as the want of it represents illness, weakness, disgrace, meanness and ugliness. Not the least of its virtues is that it destroys base people as certainly as it fortifies and dignifies noble people.

1. What do you see as the purpose of the first sentence?

2. Does the language tend to be more concrete or abstract?

3. How complicated are the sentence structures?

4. What rhetorical devices are present?

5. Does Shaw present evidence that money is indeed "the most important thing in the world"? Explain.

Contrasting Styles

Directions: The following excerpts both focus on description, but they have quite different styles. Read them, describe the style of each, and indicate how the styles differ.

Excerpt 1

From "Memories of Christmas" by Dylan Thomas

> And I remember that on the afternoon of Christmas Day, when the others sat round the fire and told each other that this was nothing, no, nothing, to the great snowbound and turkeyproud yulelog-crackling holly-berry-bedizened and kissing-under-the-mistletoe Christmas when *they* were children, I would go out, schoolcapped and gloved and mufflered, with my bright new boots squeaking, into the white world, on to the seaward hill, to call on Jim and Dan and Jack and to walk with them through the silent snowscape of our town.[1]

Excerpt 2

From *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin

> The church was very exciting. It took a long time for me to disengage myself from this excitement, and on the blindest, most visceral level, I never really have, and never will. There is no music like that music, no drama like the drama of the saints rejoicing, the sinners moaning, the tambourines racing, and all those voices coming together and crying holy unto the Lord.[2]

[1]Dylan Thomas, "Memories of Christmas," in *On the Air with Dylan Thomas: The Broadcasts*, ed. Ralph Maud (New York: New Directions, 1992), 25.
[2]James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 33.

Insights from Francis Bacon

Directions: Francis Bacon (1561–1626) was an English scientist, lawyer, and philosopher. He was also one of the earliest English essayists. Read the following passage from *The New Organon*, and answer the questions.

> The Idols of the Cave are the idols of the individual man. For every one (besides the errors common to human nature in general) has a cave or den of his own, which refracts and discolours the light of nature; owing either to his own proper and peculiar nature; or to his education and conversation with others; or to the reading of books, and the authority of those whom he esteems and admires; or to the differences of impressions, accordingly as they take place in a mind preoccupied and predisposed or in a mind indifferent and settled; or the like. So that the spirit of man (according as it is meted out to different individuals) is in fact a thing variable and full of perturbation, and governed as it were by chance. Whence it was well observed by Heraclitus that men look for sciences in their own lesser worlds, and not in the greater or common world.

1. What general words would you use to describe the style?

2. Describe the passage's diction and syntax.

3. In what sense does every person have a personal cave or den?

4. How does Bacon keep his prose balanced, even in the very lengthy second sentence?

Lesson 13

The Nature of Exposition and Analysis

Objectives

- To recognize that much nonfiction writing has the main purpose of explaining something
- To understand the purposes of exposition and analysis

Notes to the Teacher

In college classes as well as in business and professional life, writers often aim to explain something to an audience of educated peers. The exposition may include narrative and descriptive elements, but the driving purpose is explanation: how the polio vaccine was developed, why Mary Surratt was executed in 1865, how Ponzi schemes work, what Hamlet's first soliloquy means.

With this kind of writing, students sometimes tend to resort to the old five-paragraph formula, so you will have to encourage them to seek more lively and effective ways of writing explanations. Thesis statements can be explicit or implied, and they do not necessarily come in the first paragraph. The best mode of development is usually not three paragraphs that begin with parallel topic sentences. Sometimes exposition is based on personal experience; on other occasions, it requires research, sometimes extensive research involving years of investigation.

In this lesson, students first review the main modes of writing. They then define *exposition,* and they examine several pieces of writing.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 35**, use it to review the modes of writing, and have students complete the short writing assignments. Follow with discussion. (For example, the description could focus on kites in a clear blue sky or on mannequins in a store window. The narration might tell about a soccer victory. The expository piece could explain how to tie a hitch knot. The argument might emphasize reasons to vote for a particular candidate.)
2. Point out that much of the writing students do in school and adults do on the job is expository in nature. In a library, most of those many books from philosophy to history are intended to provide readers with information. Emphasize that, for the writers, both audience and purpose are key elements to keep in mind.

3. Distribute **Handout 36**, and ask students to read the information and the excerpt. Then lead a discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The paragraph provides a description of a cell's structure and functions.
2. The audience is not scientists but ordinary people to whom science, including molecular biology, might seem obscure and far from understandable.
3. The fried egg image immediately puts the reader at ease; everyone knows exactly what a fried egg looks like. This is not a simile but a statement of literal fact.
4. After the comparison to the fried egg, the paragraph deals first with the roles of cytoplasm, then with the role of the nucleus.
5. The author uses reader-friendly language: "looks a lot like a fried egg"; "buzzes like a New York City street"; "work 24/7, cranking out"; "the brains of the operation." The sentences are well crafted without difficult diction, and the paragraph goes from a homey comparison to a direct and more scientific statement about the cell at work.

4. Distribute **Handout 37**, and have small groups complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. It is paradoxical to say that the blind come to see the cave. The paradox conveys the idea that one must "see" the cave with other senses and be aware of sounds, smells, and textures.
2. Without artificial light, the complete darkness of the cave in effect makes everyone blind and aware that sight is only one of our senses.
3. Being in the cave is obviously an awesome experience and one unlike any available on the surface of the earth. There is something primordial about it.
4. The cave reminded the author of death and the dark remoteness of the grave, untouched by any events in the land of the living. He describes the thoughts as "sepulchral," but they are philosophical rather than maudlin.
5. The Indians relate to the timelessness of Mammoth Cave, which preserves things that would disappear in daylight.
6. The audience appears to be educated readers, as the diction and syntax are those of a highly educated person. The essay seems to aim to present Mammoth Cave as an awe-inspiring and, in a way, terrible place; it might even lure readers to arrange trips to experience it for themselves.

5. Ask students to write short essays in which they explain one of the following: the custom of flying a flag at half-mast; the practice of checking out Punxsutawney Phil every February on Groundhog Day; the process by which jurors are selected for a trial. Allow access to the Internet for information, and direct students to record the URLs of helpful sites. Ask students to specify an audience and a purpose for the writings.

Modes of Writing

Directions: Read the descriptions of the modes of writing, and write an original paragraph that reflects each mode.

1. Description
   Description emphasizes sensory language so that the reader can clearly imagine the sights, sounds, and other stimuli associated with a person, place, or object.

2. Narration
   Narration aims to tell a story of events involving characters.

3. Exposition
   Exposition strives to provide information, to explain, or to analyze.

4. Argumentation
   Argumentation works to convince the reader of the writer's viewpoint.

What Is a Cell?

Directions: In *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, Rebecca Skloot tells the story of a woman who died of cancer in 1951, but whose cells continue to live on in medical research and have played vital roles in outcomes such as a successful polio vaccine. Read the following paragraph from the book, and answer the questions.

> Under the microscope, a cell looks a lot like a fried egg: It has a white (the *cytoplasm*) that's full of water and proteins to keep it fed, and a yolk (the *nucleus*) that holds all of the genetic information that makes you *you*. The cytoplasm buzzes like a New York City street. It's crammed full of molecules and vessels endlessly shuttling enzymes and sugars from one part of the cell to another, pumping water, nutrients, and oxygen in and out of the cell. All the while, little cytoplasmic factories work 24/7, cranking out sugars, fats, proteins, and energy to keep the whole thing running and feed the nucleus. The nucleus is the brains of the operation; inside every nucleus within each cell in your body, there's an identical copy of your entire genome. That genome tells cells when to grow and divide and makes sure they do their jobs, whether that's controlling your heartbeat or helping your brain to understand the words on this page.[1]

1. What is the paragraph's purpose?

2. What can you surmise about the intended audience?

3. What is the effect of the opening comparison? Is it literal or figurative?

4. How is the paragraph organized?

5. How does the author make difficult scientific information palatable to the general reader?

[1]Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010), 3.

A Visit to Mammoth Cave

Directions: John Burroughs (1837–1921) was a naturalist, a journalist, and a prolific essay writer on many subjects. The following paragraphs open an 1894 essay about Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. Read the excerpt, and answer the questions.

> Some idea of the impression which Mammoth Cave makes upon the senses, irrespective even of sight, may be had from the fact that blind people go there to see it, and are greatly struck with it. I was assured that this is a fact. The blind seem as much impressed by it as those who have their sight. When the guide pauses at the more interesting point, or lights the scene up with a great torch or with Bengal lights, and points out the more striking features, the blind exclaim, "How wonderful! how beautiful!" They can feel it, if they cannot see it. They get some idea of the spaciousness when words are uttered. The voice goes forth in these colossal chambers like a bird. When no word is spoken, the silence is of a kind never experienced on the surface of the earth, it is so profound and abysmal. This, and the absolute darkness, to a person with eyes makes him feel as if he were face to face with the primordial nothingness. The objective universe is gone; only the subjective remains; the sense of hearing is inverted, and reports only the murmurs from within. The blind miss much, but much remains to them. The great cave is not merely a spectacle to the eye; it is a wonder to the ear, a strangeness to the smell and to the touch. The body feels the presence of unusual conditions through every pore.
>
> For my part, my thoughts took a decidedly sepulchral turn; I thought of my dead and of all the dead of the earth, and said to myself, the darkness and the silence of their last resting-place is like this; to this we must all come at last. No vicissitudes of earth, no changes of seasons, no sound of storm or thunder penetrate here; winter and summer, day and night, peace or war, it is all one; a world beyond the reach of change, because beyond the reach of life. What peace, what repose, what desolation! The marks and relics of the Indian, which disappear so quickly from the light of day above, are here beyond the reach of natural change. The imprint of his moccasin in the dust might remain undisturbed for a thousand years. At one point the guide reaches his arm beneath the rocks that strew the floor and pulls out the burnt ends of canes, which were used, probably, when filled with oil or grease, by the natives to light their way into the cave doubtless centuries ago.

1. Identify and explain the paradox in the first sentence.

2. How does the cave place the blind and the seeing on equal footing?

3. In the first paragraph, what main impressions does Burroughs convey about Mammoth Cave?

4. What thoughts did the experience of the cave evoke in the author's mind? Were those thoughts positive or negative?

5. What is the significance of the mention of Indians at the end?

6. Describe the purpose and intended audience of this essay.

Lesson 14

The Research Paper

Objectives

- To review characteristics of formal research papers and projects
- To evolve a promising topic for a research paper

Notes to the Teacher

The research paper is a staple of introductory college English courses and thus a necessity in high school Advanced Placement courses leading to the examination in language and composition. Assessment and use of sources are involved in the document-based section of the test. At this level, the main challenge is to go beyond the perfunctory school report to an actual investigation that leads to a meaningful piece of writing.

This lesson assumes that students have had some previous experience with writing based on research. You will want to decide whether you wish students to use the MLA or APA style of documentation and provide them with relevant Web sites showing sample citations. Many online resources are available, and they are usually carefully updated to reflect changes in documentation styles.

In this lesson, students first consider the nature and characteristics of research papers. They then discuss a process of selecting an effective topic and review an evaluation rubric. They also discuss the importance of assessing source reliability. It is a good idea to schedule some class time during which students research and write under your supervision; this helps to protect the integrity of the assignment.

Procedure

1. Explain that the research paper is one type of expository essay. Although the writer may have some personal experience of the subject matter, the essay also involves using other sources and integrating information in a coherent publication. Ask students to identify the main distinguishing characteristics of research papers (information documentation within the text and a bibliography). Emphasize that there is more than one format available. For writing regarding science and social studies, the style of the American Psychological Association is preferred. For writing about literature or the arts, people usually use the format of the Modern Language Association. Rather than interrupting the text with information about sources, some writers now include an ending section called "Notes" to provide information. Some writers work the source of information into the text itself.

2. Establish your requirements, and give students time to investigate format so that they know exactly what information they need regarding sources and information. Stress the preference for paraphrase except when an author's phrasing is particularly impactful or interesting. Also stress that this kind of writing requires careful documentation; it is not enough, for example, to assert that Robert E. Lee said or did something; one also has to provide proof that the information is accurate.
3. Establish length parameters and a time line for note-taking, conferencing, and submission of final drafts.
4. Point out that the first challenge is to derive an effective topic that invites intensive research and synthesis of information rather than a general summary or report. Distribute **Handout 38**, and review it with the students. Allow time for general research. Set a date for students to submit their completed handout.
5. Remind students to record information about sources as they do their research. These sources must be cited in the final paper, and there is nothing more frustrating than realizing toward the end of the writing process that this information is missing and must be sought out all over again.
6. Distribute **Handout 39**, and review the evaluation rubric.
7. Emphasize that the Internet can be a wonderful source for information, but some Web sites are not reliable. Ask students to brainstorm strategies to assess reliability (qualifications of the source of the site; effective or poor graphic organization; correct use of language; logical information; citation of sources). Point out that some popular sites have come under serious criticism because of their indiscriminate borrowing of information, which sometimes results in errors. Use a Web site such as the notorious one about the tree octopus to share a source that looks reputable but is not. Researchers compare and contrast the information in various sources to sort out fact from fiction.

Developing a Strong Research Topic

Directions: Once you select a general subject area, ask lots of questions to lead to a limited topic for in-depth research and writing. Do not just settle on your first idea. Read the following tips.

1. The general fields that you could focus on are innumerable. Among them are historical persons and events, medical advances, art movements, scientific expeditions, political changes, and effects of technological advancement. Select a general topic that you would like to investigate.

2. Write what you already know about the subject, and do some general reading to get oriented. Look for ways to narrow the topic to one appropriate for a comparatively short piece of writing.

3. Continue to research the topic, and make a note of associated people, places, and events about which you know little or nothing.

4. Identify interesting detours that come up in your research—topics that might offer more potential than your original idea.

5. Settle on a limited topic—one that will enable you to do in-depth research rather than a broad general review. Create a research question that will help you to develop a thesis later on.

6. Until now, the Internet has probably been enough. The problem is that some sites are transient, and most are very general. Some are erroneous. For most subjects you need books and primary source documents on your subject. Find them, and list the information you will need for documentation at the end of your paper.

7. Think of yourself as an investigator; take notes and record information about sources. Use sticky notes to mark particular pages. Make a special note of anecdotes and quotations that can be useful in your paper.

8. You may not want a formal outline, but you will need a road map for your research paper—an indication of what should come where in your development.

9. Create a graphic organizer to demonstrate the following planning stages: general topic; possible more limited topics; chosen area of research; road map for the paper as a whole.

Research Paper Evaluation Rubric

Directions: Use the following rubric as a tool to evaluate the research paper.

Element	5	3	1
Content	The paper presents an in-depth investigation of a specific subject.	The content is a little too broad, making the paper's content rather general.	The content is unfocused and, at best, superficial.
Interest	Overall, the paper is an interesting, informative, and well-organized piece of writing.	While the content is appropriate, the writing tends to be rather dull.	The paper's content evokes little or no interest from the reader.
Sources	The paper cites an appropriate number of reputable sources of information.	The paper relies on only a few sources, or some of those sources may be weak.	The paper provides few or no citations.
Documentation	Information in the text of the paper is documented thoroughly and correctly, according to the assigned format.	Citation of sources could be more thorough.	Information within the paper is not documented or is documented incorrectly.
Audience and Purpose	The paper's diction and syntax reflect a keen awareness of both audience and purpose.	Both purpose and audience seem to be a bit ambiguous.	The language is inappropriate for the purpose and audience.
Quality	The paper reflects attention to all phases of the writing process and was submitted on time.	The paper could manifest more evidence of effective revision, careful editing, and attention to the quality of the final product.	The final product appears incomplete or haphazard, or it was submitted late.

Lesson 15

When Primary Source Documents Do Not Agree

Objectives

- To examine primary source documents that express conflicting views
- To write a cogent piece dealing with those sources

Notes to the Teacher

Book reviews constitute one form of nonfiction writing and inevitably reflect the tastes and values of their authors. As primary source documents, they can reflect perspectives no longer characteristic of twenty-first-century thinking. This lesson involves students in the examination of three writings from 1852 publications about Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was published in serial form in *National Era* from June 1851 to April 1852. The entire book was first published in March 1852.

A native New Englander, Harriet Beecher Stowe lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, from 1832 to 1850. Because of the city's position on the Ohio River right across from Kentucky, a slave state, she could not help but be aware of the reality of slaves escaping on the Underground Railroad and efforts of Southern slave owners to recapture the escapees. In 1850, Stowe and her family moved to Maine, where her husband was hired at Bowdoin College. There she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was a huge publishing success, but one that evoked controversy. In 1853, Stowe published *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* in an effort to provide documentation to support the views depicted in the novel.

In this lesson, students encounter three reviews published shortly after the novel's publication. They focus on audience, purpose, and literary devices and recognize that conflicting sources can be helpful in writing a research-based paper. The lesson concludes with a short writing exercise.

Procedure

1. Point out that researchers often find that their sources seem to conflict. Sometimes one source is right and another wrong, but often the issues are more complex than simple accuracy. In students' own research-based writing, they are likely to find sources with very different viewpoints, and it is helpful to be able to integrate them effectively into the final product.

2. Have students brainstorm what they know about *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. (The book was written in the decade before the Civil War and is deeply antislavery. It was a huge popular success often seen as a contributing factor for the war itself. Now it is most often classified as children's literature, but, at the time, it had a huge reading audience of adults.)
3. Distribute **Handout 40**, and have small groups complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The writer clearly assumed that the audience was devoutly Christian and associated Harriet Beecher Stowe with biblical figures such as angels, prophets, and the mother of Jesus.
2. The first paragraph includes a planting-reaping metaphor, the second deals with light, and the third with blossoming flowers. The metaphors express the writer's enthusiasm about *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
3. The big thing is the book's power as an antislavery voice that could win increasing numbers to the side of abolition. Students may note that, as the magazine that first published the novel in serial form, *National Era* from the start was in favor of the publication and probably should not be considered a source of an objective opinion.
4. Although the author acknowledges not having done a complete literary analysis, the review praises Stowe's plot, characterization, realism, humor, pathos, imagery, logic, ideas, and style.
5. The essay from *The Southern Literary Messenger* also assumes a religious audience, as well as one that consists primarily of Southerners.
6. The author seems to have seen the novel's view as unrealistic and romantic. He insisted that slave owners endeavored not to break families apart but that, in the real world, many factors do separate families and these factors are unavoidable. Compared to working classes in poverty-stricken countries, the author wrote, American slaves had a good situation.
7. The novel had such great popularity when it was written that the writer thought he had to address what he claimed was a jaundiced portrait of the South; the author also recognized the undesirable possibility of war in the future.
8. The author seems to have been motivated totally by a desire to defend the Southern way of life, including slavery, against attack by Northern abolitionists. The essay is concerned not with literary elements, but with the novel's propaganda effects. Just seeing the name of the publication readies the audience for a negative attitude toward *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

9. The writer indicated several times that Harriet Beecher Stowe fairly presented the views of both the slaves and the slaveholders. This review insists that the novel was intended as an antislavery piece.
10. The writer thought that the novel's story line is too dense with dire happenings—that so many bad things could not possibly happen in so short a time.
11. The writer was trying to "straddle both sides of the fence." Several times the language reveals racist tendencies, and the writer clearly did not want to see a polarized North and South.
12. The review expresses high praise for the novel's literary qualities, even describing it as "fiction which can scarcely be excelled." The writer mentions humor, pathos, brilliant characterization, stylistic elegance, and a balanced theme.

4. Explain that a research paper focusing on the effects of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on the United States in the decade before the Civil War might well use all three of these documents as sources. Also point out that the Advanced Placement Examination in Language and Composition involves a document-based question that requires test candidates to relate and respond to a variety of pieces dealing with a central topic. Thus the DBQ is like a mini–research paper.
5. Ask students to write short papers addressing the following prompt: What factors affected 1850s readers' responses to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? (Responses should include sympathies toward abolition or toward the traditional Southern plantation system, attitudes toward a polarized North and South, racial biases, the book's obvious popularity, perceptions of exaggeration, and recognition of deft characterization and other literary elements. For ordinary readers in the North, the book most typically evoked antislavery sympathies. For ordinary Southerners, the book generally evoked defensive responses.)

Reviews of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Directions: Read the following documents, and answer the questions.

Document 1

The following unsigned review appeared in *National Era*, the magazine that first published *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in serial form, on April 22, 1852.

> We have not here the space in which to say all we think and feel regarding this wonderful work. It was a noble effort—it is a splendid success. The God of Freedom inspired the thought—the spirit of his love and wisdom guided the pen of the writer, so her words shall sink into the softened and repentant heart of the wrong-doer, and spring up into a harvest of good, for the poor and the oppressed.
>
> This beautiful new evangel of freedom—for so the book seems to us—does not suddenly flash the intolerable light of God's truth upon souls benighted in error, but softly drops veil after veil till they stand in mid-day brightness, wondering and remorseful.
>
> There are two characters in this work which will live as long as our literature—*Tom* and little *Eva*—the ebony statue of Christlike patience—the rose of love blossoming with immortal sweetness at its base. No human heart can receive these two visitants, and none can refuse them when they come, without taking in with them the pleading, sorrowing Spirit of humanity, and the stern Angel of justice.
>
> We have undertaken nothing like a critique of this book; but we must be allowed to say, even in this circumscribed notice, that the work to us gives evidence of greater power, of deeper and more various resources, than any other novel of the time. It displays rare dramatic genius, its characters are strongly drawn, refreshingly peculiar and original, yet wondrously true to nature and to many a reader's experience of life. It abounds alike with quaint, delicious humor, and the most heart-searching pathos; with the vividest word-painting, in the way of description, with argument, philosophy, eloquence, and poetry. And straight and pure through all—through characterization, conversation, description, and narrative, sweeps the continuous moral—the one deep thought, flowing ceaselessly from the soul of the writer, and fed by "under-springs of silent deity."
>
> So great and good a thing has Mrs. Stowe here accomplished for humanity, for freedom, for God, that we cannot refrain from applying to her sacred words, and exclaiming, "Blessed art thou among women!"

1. What did the author assume about the reading audience?

2. What metaphors are included? What effect do they have?

3. What is at the root of the writer's enthusiasm about the novel?

4. What qualities of literary excellence does the writer praise in Harriet Beecher Stowe's work?

Document 2

An extensive essay in the October 1852 edition of *The Southern Literary Messenger* ends with the following paragraphs.

> The sundering of family ties among the negroes is undoubtedly a dreadful thing as represented by Abolition pamphleteers. Nor have we any desire to close our eyes to the fact that occasionally there do occur instances of compulsory separation involving peculiar hardship. But we have shown that in the very State which Mrs. Stowe has chosen for her most painful incident of this character, there are statutory regulations mitigating very much the severity of this condition of affairs, and we may add that every where the salutary influence of an enlightened public opinion enforces the sale of near relatives in such manner as that they may be kept as much as possible together. We are of the opinion too that heart-rending separations are much less frequent under the institution of slavery than in countries where poverty rules the working classes with despotic sway. But admit the hardship to its full extent, and what does it prove? Evils are inseparable from all forms of society and this giant evil (if you will call it so) is more than counterbalanced by the advantages the negro enjoys. Ever since the day that St. Paul bid adieu to the little flock at Miletum, who followed him down to the ship, "sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more"—there have been mournful partings and sobbing farewells. The English soldier ordered to the distant coast of India, with a high probability that he will die there of a fever, weeps above his wife and children before he marches off to the tap of the drum; and yet is no argument for the disbanding of the English army that family ties are rent by its stern and undiscriminating discipline.
>
> There are some who will think that we have taken upon ourselves an unnecessary trouble in exposing the inconsistencies and false assertions of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." It is urged by such persons that in devoting so much attention to Abolition attacks we give them an importance to which they are not entitled. This may be true in general. But let it be borne in mind that this slanderous work has found its way to every section of our country, and has crossed the water to Great Britain, filling the minds of all who know nothing of slavery with hatred for that institution and those who uphold it. Justice to ourselves would seem to demand that it should not be suffered to circulate longer without the brand of falsehood upon it. Let it be recollected, too, that the importance Mrs. Stowe will derive from Southern criticism will be one of infamy. Indeed she is only entitled to criticism at all, as the mouthpiece of a large and dangerous faction which if we do not put down with the pen, we may be compelled one day (God grant that day may never come!) to repel with the bayonet. There are questions that underlie the story of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of far deeper significance than any mere false coloring of Southern society, and our readers will probably see the work discussed, in other points of view, in the next number of the Messenger, by a far-abler and more scholar-like hand than our own. Our editorial task is now ended and in dismissing the disagreeable subject, we beg to make a single suggestion to Mrs. Stowe—that, as she is fond of referring to the bible, she will turn over, before writing her next work of fiction, to the twentieth chapter of Exodus and there read these words—"THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR."

5. What does the writer assume about the audience?

6. What logical argument does the writer use against the viewpoint expressed in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

7. Why did the writer feel that he had to write in this publication about the novel?

8. What is the writer's main objection to the novel?

Document 3

The following review, signed W. B. S., appeared in Boston's *The Morning Post* on May 3, 1852.

SINCE "Jane Eyre," no book has had so sudden and so great a success on this side of the Atlantic as "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Everybody has read it, is reading, or is about to read it. And certainly it is one of the most remarkable literary productions of the time—an evident result of some of the highest attributes of the novel writer.

As all the world knows, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" purports to be a picture of slavery as it now exists in the Southern States. It is an attempt to present the accidental and inevitable evils of slavery side by side with the practical advantages of the system in its paternal care of a long depressed, if not actually inferior race. It paints both slaveholder and slave, and none can doubt the intention of the author to deal justly with both, nothing extenuating and setting down naught in malice. The incidents are stated to be drawn from the personal experience of the writer or her most immediate friends, and we believe it is universally admitted that as a mere story the book is of intense interest.

But we would here remark that some portions are very highly colored. The main facts stated, also, may have occurred somewhere or other, and at distant intervals of time; but the aggregation of so many rare horrors into two small volumes, produces a picture which we are happy to believe does not do justice to practical slavery in our southern states. In a word the effect of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," as a whole, is grossly to exaggerate the actual evils of negro slavery in this country. As a didactic work, therefore, it should be swallowed with a considerable dose of allowance.

But it is not as an instructive work, chiefly, that we now desire to regard it. As chroniclers of the literature of the day, we have much more to do with the conception and execution of books, as merely literary works, than with their sentiment or effect, although these latter may be all that make them practically important. Suffice it to say, then, that "Uncle Tom's Cabin," even with our dose of allowance, is the finest picture yet painted of the abominable horrors of slavery, (bad enough at the best, and *inevitably*,) and that it is likely to do more for the cause of liberal abolitionism, than all that has been preached, said and sung, for a long time.

But throwing aside the design or effect of the book under notice, and looking at it as a literary work merely, it must be confessed that if the incidents be exaggerated in themselves, or if they be so unduly crowded as to create an erroneous impression—admitting all this, we say—it must be owned that the incidents are treated artistically and with a master hand. The whole is truth-seeming if not true, and the whole book reads naturally and probably. It has nothing forced or awkward in its conduct.

And yet the management of the tale is among its lesser interests. Both in dialogue and in character Mrs. Stowe has produced a fiction which can scarcely be excelled, in its peculiar line. To be sure, her negroes often pronounce a word properly, while a few sentences later on they mangle it horribly by the same people. But such inaccuracies are of little consequence, and are soon lost in the tide of humor, pathos and oddity that flows from the lips of the queer children of Africa. The dialogue, both of the whites and blacks, is naturalness itself, having nothing either of books or the theatre in its composition.

And in respect to character-painting, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" may compare with any fiction of the day, English or American. It does not contain a figure that is not so vigorously sketched as to be fully individualized, and well able to stand alone. Every slave differs from his fellows in some essential features, and runs no risk of being mistaken for a sooty brother. Mrs. Shelby's "Sam," for instance, though visible in but a single scene, is as well drawn as if he were the sole hero of the fiction. Chloe the cook is not Dinah the cook, and neither of the young quadroon slaves of St. Clare could be mistaken for the quadroon George or his wife Eliza. The Quakers, also, who appear but once, are very nicely sketched, and Mrs. Shelby, who is scarcely seen but in a few chapters, at

the beginning, is as perfect a portrait of an intelligent and right-hearted lady as we have lately seen. Topsy is a gem. Indeed, whether as regards black or white, everybody is hit off properly, and is nobody else but himself.

But coming to the principal characters, we must say that Uncle Tom himself, St. Clare, Marie, Eva and Miss Ophelia are given with a truth to nature that fairly astonished us, in our utter ignorance that a female author lived who was capable of such painting. Eva, indeed, is not to be criticized. She stands with Little Nell and Little Paul—unnatural, it may be, as a child of man, but a creation of exquisite beauty, tenderness, intelligence and affection—an embodiment, in baby form, of all that is highest, holiest, and best in human nature.

We hope the book in hand will be noticed by our leading reviews. As an American novel, merely, it deserves an elaborate critique, and we feel that our limited space does not do it justice.

We should like to sustain our praise by several extracts, but are obliged to refer our readers to the glowing pages themselves.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin," as much as any novel we know of, is stamped on every page with genius. The author cannot touch a single incident without showing that she bears the sacred fire. How strong and wide may be the blaze we know not, but taking the present novel as the first effort in this line of writing, it is a wonderful composition, emanating from true genius, and produced with a nice tact and ingenuity, and a thorough knowledge of human nature, &c. The scene at Senator Bird's, the flight across the Ohio, the interview of George with the manufacturer, at the road side inn, the night-scene in the steamer—nay, many other passages—are not prominent portions of the work, but they are given in a masterly manner. Not one word in the book suggests mediocrity, whether the pictures of slavery please or displease. And the death of Eva! We have said that some chapters are beyond criticism—the reader will find them so. And with all the pathos and intensity of most of the story, there is no jot of dulness—no harping on one string. A vein of humor and drollery meanders through it, and one is often laughing with wet eyes.

But brilliant as is "Uncle Tom's Cabin" as a literary work, it is yet more creditable to the author in another point of view. It proves that unlike most women and very many men, Mrs. Stowe has the high ability of looking on both sides of one question. With feelings and principles equally opposed to slavery, for its unavoidable evils as well as its accidental abuses, she is yet able to paint the slaveholder as he lives and moves, with no touch of bigotry or fanaticism. No southerner need be ashamed of the noble, kind and generous St. Clare, or the angel-child, his daughter.

More than this, Mrs. Stowe has fairly presented the various arguments in favor of slavery, and the various feelings which exist in the mind of the south, in reference to this terrible evil. And, indeed, were it not for the incidental remarks in the book, one would be rather puzzled to say, from the dialogue alone, what were Mrs. Stowe's real sentiments. Both sides are presented with heart, soul and strength.

The entire fiction is filled with instances of this peculiar power of the author to look on both sides of a question at once, and this (so called) masculine quality of mind is sustained by an exceeding ease in the management of details and the handling of masculine facts of all sorts. One wonders, indeed, where a lady could pick up so much stuff, and how she could acquire such free and easy manners in disposing of it. Everything is fish that comes to her net, and she is equally at home with saint or sinner, black or white, high or low. She never suffers any mock modesty, reverence or respect for any world prejudice whatever to stand in the way of truth of portraiture or naturalness of dialogue.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin," we believe, was first published in chapters, in the National Era. It there became known to a sufficient number of readers to give it a large circulation, when it appeared in book-form. Latterly, however, it has had an extraordinary run, and last week its sale had reached the large quantity of 3000 copies.

9. How does this article's point of view differ from the views in the other two reviews?

10. What problem did the author see in the book's plot line?

11. To what extent does the writing express ambivalence about the novel?

12. What literary qualities did the writer see in the book?

Lesson 16

Using Visual Information Sources

Objectives

- To glean information from political cartoons
- To analyze data from various kinds of charts and graphs

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson assumes that students are in the process of working on research assignments. In gathering information for exposition and argumentation, writers often encounter sources other than the written word. A map can show the movements of troops during a war; a pie chart can reveal the ethnographic makeup of a community; a bar graph can display contrasting results in a series of elections. Sometimes students, especially those not strong in math and science, find these visual documents difficult, but charts, graphs, cartoons, and other visual sources can be powerful sources of information and often play a role in the Document-Based Question (DBQ) in the spring examination.

In this lesson, students examine and respond to a variety of visual documents, beginning with editorial cartoons and moving on to charts and graphs. You will want to be prepared to show the class some of Thomas Nast's drawings from the nineteenth century; you can find many online. The lesson refers specifically to three from the 1860s: "Emancipation Proclamation," "Compromise with the South," and "Uncle Sam's Thanksgiving Dinner."

Procedure

1. Explain that as students gather information for research papers, they should be aware of the value of visual sources. One type, the editorial or political cartoon, can be particularly helpful for topics with historical connections. Explain that Thomas Nast was an important cartoonist of the second half of the nineteenth century and was frequently published in an influential magazine, *Harper's Weekly*.
2. Show students Nast's "Emancipation Proclamation" from the January 24, 1863, issue of *Harper's Weekly*, and ask them to examine this complex drawing. Point out that anyone writing anything related to the Civil War could find this drawing useful, as its centerpiece is an idyllic image of a free and prosperous black family, safely separated from the history of slavery behind them. The drawing captures the idealism of the movement to abolish slavery, while the more shadowy background images are reminders of the abuses of the past.

3. Show students "Compromise with the South" (*Harper's Weekly*, September 3, 1864). Explain that this drawing is also connected with the Civil War. Ask students to examine it and to describe what they see and think. (By autumn 1864, people were tired of the war, and many in the North advocated the idea of a compromise. The drawing reflects Nast's opposition to this movement. In his view, a compromise would make the South the victor and all of the death and suffering of Union soldiers would have been in vain. The American flag hangs upside down, while the flag of the South flies triumphant, and the spirit of democracy weeps at a grave of the Union dead.)
4. Show students "Uncle Sam's Thanksgiving Dinner," and explain that it came a little later (*Harper's Weekly*, November 20, 1869). Point out that a reference to this drawing could be useful in papers dealing with attitudes toward immigration and suffrage in America. Ask students what the picture depicts. (We see people of diverse ages and ethnic backgrounds gathered around a large dining room table; the centerpiece is suffrage, and the corner inscription welcomes everyone. In the background, we see pictures of both Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, as well as Columbia, the spirit of the nation. The drawing is idealistic and reflects the same sentiments as the inscription on the Statue of Liberty.)
5. Encourage students, as they research information, to look for artistic connections that can add depth of perspective to their writings. Point out that citations for such works are similar to citations for books. Students need to record the artist's name, the title (if applicable), the publishing information, and, if applicable, the URL of the Web site at which they found the image.
6. Explain that various kinds of graphs and diagrams can also be helpful, and, for them, one needs to cite the same information: source, title, publication data, and URL.
7. Distribute **Handout 41**, and ask small groups to complete the exercise. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

Part A.

1. The graph deals with Mexican workers in the United States during the ten-year period from 1989 to 1998. It shows that Mexicans during those years formed the majority of crop workers in the country and that their number increased during that period.
2. More startling is the rise from virtually no illegal workers in 1989 to half of all the Mexican workers being illegal at the end of that period. The researcher would look for statistics after

2000 to see if the trend has continued. In addition, he or she would need to see if something changed in U.S. immigration policies or in Mexico to drive more people over the border as illegal aliens after 1989. The sources are reliable, so there is no reason to distrust the information.

Part B.

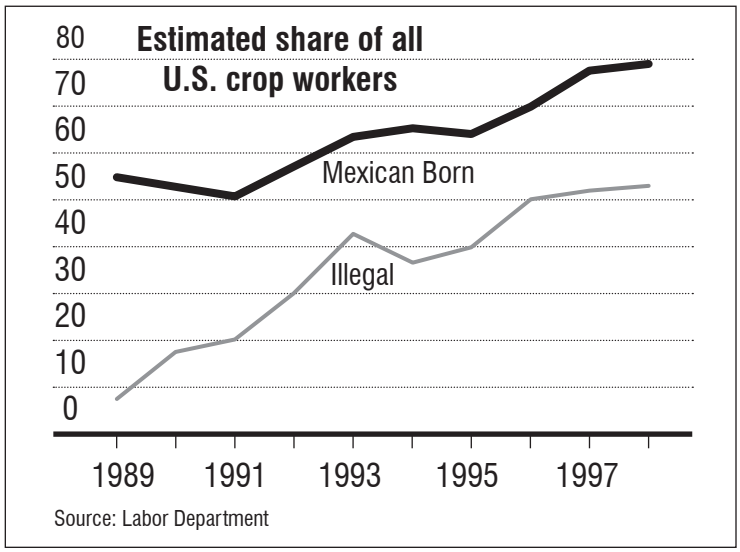
1. A little more than one out of ten thousand people get pancreatic cancer, so it is not terribly common, but not rare either.
2. The source for the information appears to be reliable. Further research might lead to investigation of the causes of this kind of cancer and why women are less likely than men to be afflicted by it. Another would be why black men and women are significantly more likely to get pancreatic cancer and Asians are significantly less likely to get it.

8. Ask students to define the term *pie chart*. (A pie chart is a circle that is divided into sections representing parts of a whole. For example, pie charts can be very useful in ethnographic studies. One such chart might show the religious denominations in the group.) Ask students to define the term *bar graph*. (Bar graphs consist of vertical columns intended to show comparisons and contrasts. For example, bar graphs could be used to study a school's record of achievement in Advanced Placement examinations over the past ten years.)
9. Divide the class into small groups, and assign students to create a pie chart or a bar graph related to the people in their class or in a larger group within the school. Students will need to decide on a topic, poll the people involved, and create the charts or graphs. Monitor progress to make sure that the groups work with diverse topics.
10. Have groups exchange charts or graphs, interpret each other's work, and provide feedback. When they have finished, have groups share results with the class as a whole, including responses from the other students.

Using Charts and Graphs

Part A.

Directions: Research on immigration patterns in the United States might surface the following graph. Examine it carefully, and answer the questions.



1. How would you summarize the graph's content?

2. What questions does the graph evoke in your mind?

Part B.

Directions: Research on pancreatic cancer leads to the following chart based on research for 2005 to 2009. Study the chart, and answer the questions.

Incidence Rates of Pancreatic Cancer by Race, 2005–2009

Race/Ethnicity	Male	Female
All Races	13.8 per 100,000 men	10.8 per 100,000 women
White	13.7 per 100,000 men	10.6 per 100,000 women
Black	17.7 per 100,000 men	14.4 per 100,000 women
Asian/Pacific Islander	10.5 per 100,000 men	8.8 per 100,000 women
American Indian/ Alaska Native	11.5 per 100,000 men	10.3 per 100,000 women
Hispanic	11.6 per 100,000 men	10.3 per 100,000 women

1. How common is pancreatic cancer?

2. What questions does the chart lead you to ask?

Source: Table 22.15, "Cancer of the Pancreas (Invasive)—SEER Incidence and U.S. Mortality Age-Adjusted Rates and Trends by Race/ Ethnicity and Sex," in *SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975–2009 (Vintage 2009 Populations)*, ed. N. Howlader, et al. (Bethesda, Md.: National Cancer Institute, 2012). Internal footnotes omitted.

Lesson 17

The Nature of Definition

Objectives

- To understand the requirements of a definition
- To read an example of a definition by John Henry Newman
- To write an original definition

Notes to the Teacher

An effective definition includes two characteristics: general category and differentiating characteristics. The general category is often easy to identify: a dog is a four-legged animal; a pencil is a writing device; hatred is a strong emotion. Differentiating characteristics are more complex. How does a dog differ from a sheep or a cat? What distinguishes a pencil from a pen? How does hatred differ from jealousy?

One type of expository essay is the extended definition, which most often includes both objective facts and the writer's subjective opinions. This type of writing shows up all over the place dealing with topics such as beauty, patriotism, friendship, love, success, and innumerable other abstractions.

In this lesson, students first consider the nature of definitions. They then read and analyze John Henry Newman's "A Definition of a Gentleman." Finally, they write original definitions.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 42**, and use it to explain the nature of definition.

Suggested Responses

1. Anthropology is a science that studies all aspects of human beings, including anatomy and culture, past and present.
2. Basketball is a team sport in which two teams on a court attempt to outscore each other in tossing a large ball through a hoop with a net.
3. A comedy is a story with a happy ending and one which often evokes laughter from the audience.
4. A violin is a medium-sized string instrument that is placed between the shoulder and the chin and played with a bow.
5. Lace is a fabric formed by intertwining strings or threads in intricate patterns and includes many holes.

6. A winch is a device that wraps rope, chain, or some other material around a circular form and uses tension to raise or lower items.

2. Distribute **Handout 43**, and ask students to read the essay. Then have them meet in small groups to discuss the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. As always, parallel structure creates a pleasing rhythm and a sense of the writer/speaker's easy control of language and concepts. Examples include the following: "tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd"; "too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice"; "he submits to pain because it is inevitable, to bereavement, because it is irreparable, and to death, because it is his destiny."
2. The first sentence states the main point very simply. The rest of the piece emphasizes the many areas in which a gentleman refuses to inflict pain on individuals or groups and in fact aims to make everyone comfortable.
3. Like an easy chair in front of a cozy fireplace, a gentleman makes people feel safe and at ease.
4. A gentleman may or may not be overtly religious, but he respects the beliefs and institutions revered by others and obviously has his own coherent sense of values.
5. Of course, the piece reflects Victorian ideals of gentlemanly control and maintaining a good appearance. The value of not purposely inflicting unnecessary pain transcends particular times and places. Students might note that Newman's definition suggests that a true gentleman will never disturb the status quo but that sometimes that is exactly what is necessitated by justice and/or progress.
6. Answers will vary but might include the ideas that a gentleman does not make disparaging comments about or act crudely toward women, does not mistreat children or animals, is true to his word, and extends a helping hand when one is needed.

3. Distribute **Handout 44**, and ask students to read the passage. Follow with discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. Jensen is correct. Five dollars buys much less in Manhattan than it does in Marietta, Ohio. In addition, people's needs vary depending on location; people in Key West have less need for warm winter clothing than those in Wisconsin.

2. Poverty is a condition, one that is long-lasting and that weakens people. In this, it sounds like a serious physical illness.
3. Unlike an illness, which might have a single cause such as a virus or bacteria, poverty has multiple causes that work together and deplete the entire person.
4. Next, he would define the six types of poverty and show how they differ from each other.

4. Explain the logical fallacy known as a *circular definition*. Circular definitions are useless because they fail to provide the audience with information. Provide examples of circular definitions: A compressor is a machine that compresses things. Perjury occurs when a witness perjures himself or herself. The orientation day is intended to orient students to the way we do things at this university.
5. Assign students to write definition essays on topics of their own choosing: What is an enemy? a friend? loyalty? success? self-confidence? good sportsmanship? Encourage students to seek opportunities for others to read and respond to their work. Establish parameters regarding length and a date to submit manuscripts.

 Name:

What Is a Definition?

Directions: Read the information, and complete the chart.

A definition must first place the topic in a general category; it then presents characteristics that distinguish the topic from others in the same category.

Topic	General Category	Distinguishing Characteristics
1. Anthropology		
2. Basketball		
3. Comedy		
4. Violin		
5. Lace		
6. Winch		

John Henry Newman's Idea of a Gentleman

Directions: John Henry Newman was a Victorian clergyman, scholar, and writer who was associated with several colleges, but especially with Oxford University. Read his essay describing a gentleman. Then answer the questions.

A Definition of a Gentleman

. . . [I]t is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain. This description is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature: like an easy chair or a good fire, which do their part in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast;—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favours while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets every thing for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long-sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults, he is too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned, on philosophical principles; he submits to pain, because it is inevitable, to bereavement, because it is irreparable, and to death, because it is his destiny. If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, perhaps, but less educated minds; who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust; he is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candour, consideration, indulgence: he throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits. If he be an unbeliever, he will be too profound and large-minded to ridicule religion or to act against it; he is too wise to be a dogmatist or fanatic in his infidelity. He respects piety and devotion; he even supports institutions as venerable, beautiful, or useful, to which he does not assent; he honours the ministers of religion, and it contents him to decline its mysteries without assailing or denouncing them. He is a friend of religious toleration, and that, not only because his philosophy has taught him to look on all forms of faith with an impartial eye, but also from the gentleness and effeminacy of feeling, which is the attendant on civilization.

> Not that he may not hold a religion too, in his own way, even when he is not a Christian. In that case his religion is one of imagination and sentiment; it is the embodiment of those ideas of the sublime, majestic, and beautiful, without which there can be no large philosophy. Sometimes he acknowledges the being of God, sometimes he invests an unknown principle or quality with the attributes of perfection. And this deduction of his reason, or creation of his fancy, he makes the occasion of such excellent thoughts, and the starting-point of so varied and systematic a teaching, that he even seems like a disciple of Christianity itself. From the very accuracy and steadiness of his logical powers, he is able to see what sentiments are consistent in those who hold any religious doctrine at all, and he appears to others to feel and to hold a whole circle of theological truths, which exist in his mind no otherwise than as a number of deductions.

1. Newman uses many parallel structures. Cite three examples, and explain their effects.

2. How does the first sentence relate to the rest of the essay?

3. Explain the reference to the easy chair and fireplace in the first paragraph.

4. How, according to Newman, does being a gentleman relate to being religious?

5. To what extent does the essay reflect Victorian rather than universal values?

6. How might a writer today describe a gentleman?

What Does It Mean to Be Poor?

Directions: In 2009, Eric Jensen published his book *Teaching with Poverty in Mind*, which aims to help teachers do a better job with students from impoverished families. Near the beginning of the book, he provides a definition of *poverty*. Read it, and answer the questions.

> The word *poverty* provokes strong emotions and many questions. In the United States, the official poverty thresholds are set by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Persons with income less than that deemed sufficient to purchase basic needs—food, shelter, clothing, and other essentials—are designated as poor. In reality, the cost of living varies dramatically based on geography; for example, people classified as poor in San Francisco might not feel as poor if they lived in Clay County, Kentucky. I define poverty as *a chronic and debilitating condition that results from multiple adverse synergistic risk factors and affects the mind, body, and soul*. However you define it, poverty is complex; it does not mean the same thing for all people. For the purposes of this book, we can identify six types of poverty: situational, generational, absolute, relative, urban, and rural.[1]

1. Do you believe that Jensen is correct in seeing poverty as a relative state, dependent on factors such as geographical location? Explain.

2. Into what general category does Jensen place poverty?

3. What differentiating characteristics does he present?

4. What would you expect to find next in his book?

[1]Eric Jensen, *Teaching with Poverty in Mind* (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2009), 5–6.

Lesson 18

Historical Nonfiction

Objectives

- To understand characteristics of historical fiction
- To recognize the challenges involved in nonfiction about historical events
- To analyze excerpts from historical nonfiction

Notes to the Teacher

Historical fiction has the power to illuminate people, places, and events of the past—to make readers feel that they know exactly what it was like to live in a different time and place. The writer has some serious knowledge to acquire, but also has a lot of room for creative license. The setting has to be accurate, and events should not contradict historical facts, but characters and many events can be entirely imaginary. The story is, after all, a fiction.

The nonfiction writer who focuses on history does not have the luxury of just making things up. Meticulous research is essential, and information must be documented. This kind of expository writing leads to personal interviews and investigation of hard-to-find documents—letters, journals, out-of-print books—as well as to the study of other books, both fiction and nonfiction, on the topic. Perhaps most important of all, the writer seeks a new way to approach an old subject, in effect to shake out the mothballs and wrinkles and make the fabric of a piece of history vivid and alive once again.

A well-written and thoroughly documented account of an event in history often accentuates that people are more complex and events more complicated than we previously imagined. Heroes have clay feet, and villains did not get that way by accident.

In this lesson, students consider the nature of historical nonfiction. They then read and analyze passages from John Hersey's *Hiroshima* and Erik Larson's *In the Garden of Beasts*. They also become acquainted with the seventeenth-century diary of Samuel Pepys.

Procedure

1. Ask students to imagine that they have been asked to write nonfiction accounts of a major event such as the 1995 bombing of a federal office building in Oklahoma City, the 2001 destruction of the Twin Towers in New York City, or the impact of Hurricane Irene on the East Coast in 2011. Lead students to see that the task would most likely involve travel, extensive reading, and efforts to locate people able to present eyewitness accounts, either oral or written. It would be necessary to

select a focal point (for example, a real person who experienced and survived the event). Nothing purely imaginary could be presented as factual.

2. Point out that this kind of writing is often undertaken by journalists, and the results can be compelling and as widely read as any best-selling novel.
3. Distribute **Handout 45**, and ask students to read the background information and the excerpt. Follow with whole-class discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. The saving factors were the two men's distance from the center of the bombing and the fact that both were able to seek some kind of protective cover immediately.
2. The main sense impression at first was intense light, then a feeling of pressure. People at a distance heard a loud roar, but Hersey says that those actually in Hiroshima report hearing nothing. This could have been a result of shock.
3. The diction and syntax are simple and respectful. Hersey deliberately kept emotion out of his own voice as he wrote the stories of the people he interviewed.
4. Hersey's intended audience were his own contemporary Americans, and he aimed to report on the results of the bombing of Hiroshima. Clearly, he intended the audience to see the people in Hiroshima as fellow humans, not just part of an amorphous enemy.

4. Point out that extensive interviews formed a major portion of John Hersey's research in preparation for writing *Hiroshima*. Explain that writing nonfiction about history also often involves reading letters, journal entries, and newspaper articles from the past.
5. Distribute **Handout 46**, and review the directions with the class. Explain that the last name is pronounced "peeps." Then ask students to complete the exercise. (The fire started either late Saturday night [September 1] or in the very early morning hours of Sunday. It was an accident that began in a baker's house; the fire spread very quickly, burning hundreds of houses in the first few hours. London had been in a state of drought, so the wood houses were very dry, and high winds fanned the blaze. Perhaps because the magnitude of the fire made efforts to stop it seem futile, people appeared to be mostly concerned about salvaging possessions. People and pigeons alike were very reluctant to leave their burning abodes. The king used Pepys as a messenger for an order to tear down houses in an effort to create a fire break.) Point out that the diary is a major source of information about this event in history, and descriptions of it invariably reflect this information gleaned from Pepys.

6. Ask students to brainstorm historical events and people that seem to draw people's attention again and again and cause people, decades or even centuries later, to reflect about both answered and unanswered questions. (Possibilities could include revolutions such as those that occurred in the United States, France, and Russia; assassinations of people like Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Mohandas Gandhi; the bombing of Pearl Harbor; the Holocaust.)
7. Focus on the Holocaust, and ask why so many books, both fiction and nonfiction, have been written about it. (It is hard to explain why a civilized and educated nation like Germany could become so enamored of Adolf Hitler, so callous about the value of human life, and so wantonly cruel. Today tourists in Europe often take time for pilgrimages to one or more of the World War II concentration camps; it seems imperative to remember so that we do not allow history to repeat itself.)
8. Distribute **Handout 47**, and ask students to complete the activity.

Suggested Responses

1. The quotes reflect the author's meticulous research and enable readers to hear the voices of William Dodd and Adolf Hitler.
2. In contrast to Dodd's maintenance of a calm demeanor, Hitler allowed himself to indulge in angry outbursts. Hitler demonstrated no effort to keep the encounter a mannerly event; Dodd was busy trying to manage the situation in a professional way.
3. The passage provides a glimpse of Hitler as he presented himself in the 1930s, before war actually began and before the mass deportation of Jews and other Holocaust victims. We perceive that Hitler was capable of frightening and unpredictable behavior.
4. The syntax includes a nice variety of sentence lengths and structures. Larson does not indulge in a lot of imagery or figurative language. He presents a historical event in a matter-of-fact way, but he also reflects his agreement with Dodd's dismay at Hitler's behavior.
5. Hitler's vindictive attitude toward Jewish people led to the atrocities of the Holocaust. The statement about wanting peace was a lie, but Germany needed time to muster together the armed strength it would need for the war to come. The idea that Hitler respected other nations' boundaries is laughable. We feel, reading the passage, that Hitler's rants and ravings were completely within his control, and he used them to his own advantage.

9. Ask students to write short essays in response to the following prompt: Who is a historical figure that you would find it interesting to research and write about? Why does that person interest you? What primary sources could you search out for information?

John Hersey on Hiroshima

Directions: During the year after the bombing of Hiroshima near the end of World War II, American journalist John Hersey traveled to Japan to report firsthand on what he could find about survivors. The May 31, 1946, edition of the *New Yorker* published the resulting piece of writing in its entirety. In *Hiroshima*, Hersey tells the story by focusing on the experiences of six people who survived. Read the following excerpt, and use the questions to respond to the reading.

> Then a tremendous flash of light cut across the sky. Mr. Tanimoto has a distinct recollection that it travelled from east to west, from the city toward the hills. It seemed a sheet of sun. Both he and Mr. Matsuo reacted in terror—and both had time to react (for they were 3,500 yards, or two miles, from the center of the explosion). Mr. Matsuo dashed up the front steps into the house and dived among the bedrolls and buried himself there. Mr. Tanimoto took four or five steps and threw himself between two big rocks in the garden. He bellied up very hard against one of them. As his face was against the stone, he did not see what happened. He felt a sudden pressure, and then splinters and pieces of board and fragments of tile fell on him. He heard no roar. (Almost no one in Hiroshima recalls hearing any noise of the bomb. But a fisherman in his sampan on the Inland Sea near Tsuzu, the man with whom Mr. Tanimoto's mother-in-law and sister-in-law were living, saw the flash and heard a tremendous explosion; he was nearly twenty miles from Hiroshima, but the thunder was greater than when the B-29s hit Iwakuni, only five miles away.)[1]

1. What circumstances enabled the two men to live through the event?

2. What senses does the paragraph emphasize? How did those senses function?

3. How would you describe John Hersey's style in this paragraph, which is representative of the rest of the text?

4. What were Hersey's intended audience and purpose?

5. How do you think his account differs from what one would read in a history textbook?

[1]John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 8–9.

Samuel Pepys and the Great Fire of London

Directions: Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) was a well-educated Londoner who kept a diary in which he wrote about various events and people. Read the following excerpt from Pepys's diary. The entry is dated September 2, 1666, and Pepys indicated that this was a Sunday. Summarize the information that you could use in writing about one of the fires that devastated London during the seventeenth century.

Some of our mayds sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast to-day, Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose and slipped on my night-gowne, and went to her window, and thought it to be on the back-side of Marke-lane at the farthest; but, being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off; and so went to bed again and to sleep. About seven rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window, and saw the fire not so much as it was and further off. So to my closett to set things to rights after yesterday's cleaning. By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. So down, with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding-lane, and that it hath burned St. Magnus's Church and most part of Fish-street already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the Old Swan, already burned that way, and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the Steele-yard, while I was there. Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys till they were, some of them burned, their wings, and fell down. Having staid, and in an hour's time seen the fire rage every way, and nobody, to my sight, endeavouring to quench it, but to remove their goods, and leave all to the fire, and having seen it get as far as the Steele-yard, and the wind mighty high and driving it into the City; and every thing, after so long a drought, proving combustible, even the very stones of churches, and among other things the poor steeple by which pretty Mrs. ——lives, and whereof my old schoolfellow Elborough is parson, taken fire in the very top, an there burned till it fell down: I to White Hall (with a gentleman with me who desired to go off from the Tower, to see the fire, in my boat); to White Hall, and there up to the Kings closett in the Chappell, where people come about me, and I did give them an account dismayed them all, and word was carried in to the King. So I was called for, and did tell the King and Duke of Yorke what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor [Sir Thomas Bludworth] from him, and command him to spare no houses, but to pull down before the fire every way. The Duke of York bid me tell him that if he would have any more soldiers he shall; and so did my Lord Arlington afterwards, as a great secret.

A Glimpse into Nazi Germany

Directions: Read the background information and the excerpt, and answer the questions.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president of the United States in 1932, he faced enormous challenges; the one at the forefront of attention was the economic disaster that was the Great Depression. He also had to maintain relationships with foreign countries; this involved naming ambassadors and other delegates. In 1933, he sent a new ambassador, William Dodd, to Germany, a country in which Adolf Hitler was just emerging into power and one in which a great nationalistic movement was in full swing.

Erik Larson's 2011 book *In the Garden of Beasts* focuses on the Dodd family in Berlin and provides a unique vantage on the Third Reich. The following conversation between Dodd and Hitler took place in 1934 just before the ambassador was taking a short leave to return to the United States. Dodd hoped in a diplomatic way to suggest a more moderate policy regarding Jewish people.

> . . . More furious now than ever, Hitler proclaimed, "If they continue their activity, we shall make a complete end to all of them in this country."
>
> It was a strange moment. Here was Dodd, the humble Jeffersonian, schooled to view statesmen as rational creatures, seated before the leader of one of Europe's great nations as that leader grew nearly hysterical with fury and threatened to destroy a portion of his own population. It was extraordinary, utterly alien to his experience.
>
> Dodd calmly turned the conversation back to American perceptions and told Hitler "that public opinion in the United States is firmly convinced that the German people, if not their Government, are militaristic, if not actually warlike" and that "most people of the United States have the feeling that Germany is aiming one day to go to war." Dodd asked, "Is there any real basis for that?"
>
> "There is absolutely no basis," Hitler said. His rage seemed to subside. "Germany wants peace and will do everything in her power to keep the peace; but Germany demands and will have equality of rights in the matter of armaments."
>
> Dodd cautioned that Roosevelt placed high importance on respect for existing national boundaries.
>
> On that score, Hitler said, Roosevelt's attitude matched his own, and for that he professed to be "very grateful."
>
> Well then, Dodd asked, would Germany consider taking part in a new international disarmament conference?
>
> Hitler waved off the question and again attacked the Jews.[1]

1. Erik Larson obtained the quotations in the passage from Ambassador Dodd's diary and from official reports. Why did he choose to include direct quotes?

[1]Erik Larson, *In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin* (New York: Crown, 2011), 236–37.

2. Describe the contrast the passage depicts between Dodd and Hitler.

3. What do you see as Larson's purpose in this passage?

4. What are the main characteristics of Larson's diction and syntax?

5. Looking back with the advantage of hindsight, what do you see in this excerpt from the book?

Lesson 19

Philosophical and Reflective, Meditative Writing

Objectives

- To recognize the key issues involved in studies such as philosophy and theology
- To read and analyze a piece of reflective writing from Joan Didion
- To write an original piece of reflection or meditation

Notes to the Teacher

One type of expository writing is concerned not so much with factual information as with interpretation or understanding. People, confronting their own experiences and those in the world around them, are led to timeless questions: What is real, and what is illusion? Where did everything come from? Where is everything going? Is life worth living? Why must we suffer and die? Is it better to be idealistic or pragmatic? How can we be happy? Is there a God? When we die, is it all over for us?

Since nonfiction writers seem invariably to be voracious readers, the works often include references to other books and articles on the subject at hand. Part of the thought process involves engaging with the ideas others, both past and present, have expressed.

In this lesson, students first consider the nature of philosophy. They read and analyze Benjamin Franklin's famous story about paying too much for a whistle. They then read and analyze a passage from Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking*, which was published in 2005 and won a National Book Award. In it, Didion writes about the sudden death of her husband, the critical illness of her grown-up daughter, and her own responses to and thoughts about these events. Students then write their own philosophies of life.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 48**, and ask students to complete it individually. Follow with brief open-ended discussion. Point out that when we think about topics like the ones on the handout, we are thinking about philosophy and sometimes about theology. Life can force us to step back and think about the meaning of things; some events lead us to change our minds.

2. Explain that some expository writings focus on philosophical issues; they are more concerned with meaning than with facts. Distribute **Handout 49**, and ask small groups to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. Franklin begins with an anecdote about his seven-year-old self. His use of all of his money to buy the whistle became a valuable learning experience.
2. The teasing by his family made him think about all of the things he could have bought with the extra money and also made him feel foolish; he remembers that he was in tears.
3. "Paying too much for the whistle" has come to mean putting more resources or effort into something than it is worth.
4. Franklin mentions people who put all of their efforts into political success, popularity, accumulating wealth, enjoyment of pleasure, looking good, and an unfortunate marriage.
5. People make their lives miserable when they do not make sure that their outlay in material wealth, energy, or time is appropriate to what they are trying to attain. Prudence can enable us to avoid "paying too much for the whistle." Franklin seems to say that before we try to attain something, we should think carefully about whether we really want or need it, whether it is worth the price.
6. Answers can range from the very concrete, such as paying more for a car or a bicycle than it was worth, to more abstract issues like putting so much effort into success on the track team that there was no time available to do what was necessary to pass one's courses.

3. Point out that Franklin's essay has a somewhat humorous tone but also shows how a painful event can lead to reflection and new wisdom.
4. Point out that death is something that impacts everyone. It is unavoidable, and sooner or later we have to deal with it. It has been the subject of much writing from many cultures over the centuries.
5. Distribute **Handout 50**, and ask students to read the information and the excerpt. Follow with discussion. (The long first paragraph describes the process of packing up and giving away clothes that the deceased person will no longer need. It includes memories elicited by the clothing, but the tone is calm, as the speaker describes doing what must be done. The next paragraphs are very short, stopping the reader as the writer's thoughts abruptly stopped her. She knows her husband John cannot return, much as she wants him to, but she cannot abide the thought of him being shoeless if he should come back. The passage conveys the dynamics of grief; it seems to be intended

for a broad reading audience. We clearly see the dogged effort to do what must be done and the effects of grief. The images referring to clothing are familiar to most Americans. There is a staccato in the short paragraphs: "I stopped . . . , I could not. . . , I stood there," words of someone temporarily immobilized by mourning. The paragraphs reflect on the nature of grief and mourning without ever using the words.)

6. Ask students to write short reflective pieces that deal somehow with philosophical issues. If necessary, suggest topics. Is everyone always essentially alone? What happens if we neglect to think before we act? How can we be happy in an imperfect world? Establish a deadline, and encourage students to make opportunities to conference with one another.

Philosophical Perspectives

Directions: Philosophies are concerned with beliefs about human nature, life, death, and reality. When we ask basic questions about meaning, we are engaging in philosophical thought. Experiences often shape and modify our views. To start to think about your current philosophy of life, indicate your response to each of the following statements.

Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Statement
			1. We cannot really know the reality around us; we just know what we think we see.
			2. We do not find happiness; we either create it or miss it.
			3. Knowledge is power; the best way to keep people under control is to limit their access to knowledge.
			4. Death is just the gateway to a better life.
			5. If you do not love yourself, you cannot love anyone else.
			6. It is impossible to be happy without money.
			7. The universe is too complicated to have happened all by itself; there has to be a creator.
			8. All human beings are intrinsically equal.
			9. Every time we deliberately hurt another living thing, we hurt ourselves even more.
			10. No good deed goes unpunished.
			11. What goes around sooner or later comes around.
			12. Too much planning is dangerous; it is better to be spontaneous.
			13. If you are not having fun, there is something wrong with the way you are living.
			14. A person's top priority must be his or her responsibilities; everything else takes second or third place.
			15. For everything that happens, there is a meaning and a purpose.

Paying Too Much for the Whistle

Directions: Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) included the following frequently quoted story in a letter. Read it, and discuss the questions.

When I was a child of seven years old, my friends, on a holiday, filled my pocket with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and being charmed with the sound of a *whistle*, that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my *whistle*, but disturbing all the family. My brothers, and sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money; and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the *whistle* gave me pleasure.

This, however, was afterwards of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind; so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, *Don't give too much for the whistle*; and I saved my money.

As I grew up, came into the world, and observed the actions of men, I thought I met with many, very many, who *gave too much for the whistle*.

When I saw one too ambitious of court favor, sacrificing his time in attendance on levees, his repose, his liberty, his virtue, and perhaps his friends, to attain it, I have said to myself, *This man gives too much for his whistle*.

When I saw another fond of popularity, constantly employing himself in political bustles, neglecting his own affairs, and ruining them by that neglect, *He pays, indeed*, said I, *too much for his whistle*.

If I knew a miser, who gave up every kind of comfortable living, all the pleasure of doing good to others, all the esteem of his fellow-citizens, and the joys of benevolent friendship, for the sake of accumulating wealth, *Poor man*, said I, *you pay too much for your whistle*.

When I met with a man of pleasure, sacrificing every laudable improvement of the mind, or of his fortune, to mere corporeal sensations, and ruining his health in their pursuit, *Mistaken man*, said I, *you are providing pain for yourself, instead of pleasure; you give too much for your whistle*.

If I see one fond of appearance, or fine clothes, fine houses, fine furniture, fine equipages, all above his fortune, for which he contracts debts, and ends his career in a prison, *Alas!* say I, *he has paid dear, very dear, for his whistle*.

When I see a beautiful sweet-tempered girl married to an ill-natured brute of a husband, *What a pity*, say I, *that she should pay so much for a whistle!*

In short, I conceive that great part of the miseries of mankind are brought upon them by the false estimates they have made of the value of things, and by their *giving too much for their whistles*.

1. What device did Franklin use to start this little essay?

2. As a child, how did Franklin come to feel about his purchase of the whistle? Why did his feelings about it change?

3. What does it mean to pay too much for the whistle?

4. What examples did Franklin cite?

5. Articulate the philosophy of life in this piece of writing.

6. Did you ever "pay too much for the whistle"?

Death and Grief

Directions: Read the background information and the excerpt. Then identify the intended audience, the author's purpose, and the tools used to achieve that purpose.

Joan Didion has often been described as one of the most accomplished stylists in American writing. Her 2005 book, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and received a National Book Award. The subject is the year that spanned from December 2003 to December 2004, a time when Didion faced two extreme stresses—the sudden death of her husband and the serious health emergency of her adult daughter. In the following excerpt, she describes the necessary task of giving away a deceased person's possessions.

> I began. I cleared a shelf on which John had stacked sweatshirts, T-shirts, the clothes he wore when we walked in Central Park in the early morning. We walked every morning. We did not always walk together because we liked different routes but we would keep the other's route in mind and intersect before we left the park. The clothes on this shelf were as familiar to me as my own. I closed my mind to this. I set aside certain things (a faded sweatshirt I particularly remembered him wearing, a Canyon Ranch T-shirt Quintana had brought him from Arizona), but I put most of what was on this shelf into bags and took the bags across the street to St. James' Episcopal Church. Emboldened, I opened a closet and filled more bags: New Balance sneakers, all-weather shoes, Brooks Brothers shorts, bag after bag of socks. I took the bags to St. James'. One day a few weeks later I gathered up more bags and took them to John's office, where he had kept his clothes. I was not yet prepared to address the suits and shirts and jackets but I thought I could handle what remained of the shoes, a start.
>
> I stopped at the door to the room.
>
> I could not give away the rest of his shoes.
>
> I stood there for a moment, then realized why: he would need shoes if he was to return.
>
> The recognition of this thought by no means eradicated the thought.[1]

[1]Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 36–37.

Lesson 20

The Nature of Argumentation

Objectives

- To understand the purpose of argumentation
- To recognize that argumentation and persuasion sometimes use propaganda techniques
- To become familiar with logical fallacies

Notes to the Teacher

Sometimes people distinguish argumentation from persuasion, but the two have much in common and differ from other modes of writing in one key way: they seek to convince readers and/or listeners to act or think in a specific way. Political speeches are nearly always arguments: vote for me! Advertisements, too, are arguments. Every attorney's courtroom task involves argument. In academic and work contexts, argument often prevails.

The nature of argument focuses on logical thinking, while persuasion tends to focus on emotions; usually the two work in tandem. Propaganda is a type of argument that cares little about logical connections and much about what the audience chooses to do or think. We all run into propaganda devices every day; they can be amusing, but they can also lead the unwary into trouble.

In this lesson, students first distinguish argumentation from other types of discourse. They then consider basics of induction and deduction, logical fallacies, and propaganda devices in action.

Procedure

1. Remind students that writings can have various purposes.
   - Description aims to use images to make readers feel that they can actually share an experience.
   - Narration tells a story.
   - Exposition makes an explanation.
   - Argument strives to convince a reader or listener to act or think in a certain way.

   Provide several examples of different approaches to the same topic.
   - A book about Franklin D. Roosevelt might explain the major aspects of his New Deal Program (exposition), or it might try to convince the reader that he was the greatest of all U.S. presidents (argumentation).

- A book about organ donation might describe ways that doctors can use donated organs to improve people's lives in various ways (exposition), or it could go beyond basic information to provide reasons why the reader should make provisions for organ donation (argumentation).
- A book might provide information that substantiates the idea of global warming (exposition), or the author could urge support for actions and policies to halt or even reverse global warming (argumentation).

2. Point out that arguments involve logical thinking. Distribute **Handout 51**, and have students complete part A. Follow with discussion.
3. Work through part B of the handout with the class.

Suggested Responses

1. The hypothesis does not state that only criminals revisit the scene of a crime. While Todd's reappearance may arouse suspicion, much more investigation would be necessary in order to determine whether that is a sign of guilt. Perhaps his business requires frequent bank visits; perhaps he simply forgot to complete a transaction the previous day.
2. This example shows the mistaken assumption that newer necessarily means better. The sales clerk uses a kind of bandwagon approach to urge Mel to buy the top-of-the-line model. Perhaps this new product is still largely untested with many bugs yet to be ironed out.
3. The senator's comment reflects a logical fallacy referred to as an appeal to common practice; the fact that a lot of people perform an action has nothing to do with whether or not it is morally acceptable. A more effective conclusion might be the need for policies to prevent fraud among political figures.

4. Explain that there are many types of logical fallacies, but all of them involve mistaken assumptions about a hypothesis or about connections between or among specific observations.
5. Distribute **Handout 52**, and have small groups complete the exercise. Follow with whole-class discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. a. The document is clearly opposed to capital punishment and seeks to convince readers that the death penalty violates basic principles and values of the United States. The key concepts are the ideas that capital punishment violates basic human rights and that it is not used in an equitable way.

b. Word choices weigh in with heavy connotations: *premeditation, arbitrary, discriminatory, uncivilized, inequitable, barbarous, brutalizing*. The reference to "fundamental values of our democratic system" is a kind of rallying cry.

2. a. Eisenhower wanted to be elected president of the United States. He emphasized the importance of foreign policy.

   b. The first paragraph seems to suggest that his opponent, Adlai Stevenson, was a paper-pusher, in contrast to Eisenhower himself, a career soldier. He emphasized the importance of the coming election and the key role of the people in choosing their own leaders.

   c. The diction and syntax are not overly complicated, and there are many instances of parallel structures. There are many appealing turns of phrase: "the bewilderment of all tyrants," "the people sit in judgment upon the leaders," "the bar of public decision," "a debate for the dead past," "majestic responsibility," "sure purpose and firm will," "a capital offense against freedom," "the greatest cause of my life." There are a number of examples of alliteration and assonance, indicating attention to the sound as well as the sense of the speech.

3. a. Roosevelt's purpose was to reassure a nation reeling with shock that steady leadership was at the helm and that sure action steps were being taken. There was no need to argue with isolationists, since Japan's action made that position untenable.

   b. The first paragraph stresses national unity and wisdom. Roosevelt used words to stress Japan's hostility: *onslaught, premeditated, invasion*. The paragraphs are very brief, so it is easy to understand exactly what he was saying, and he expressed firm confidence in the future of the country.

6. Point out that advertising is a form of argumentative writing, and one that often uses devices intended to spur the public to buy specific products and services, whether or not they are needed. Ask small groups to collaborate to create original advertisements. Have groups share results, and point out examples of propaganda devices such as bandwagon, name-calling, plain folks, and testimonials.

Logical and Illogical Thinking

Part A.

Directions: Read the following information about inductive and deductive thinking. Then give examples of several situations in which you have used inductive and deductive thinking.

Inductive thinking goes from specifics to generalizations, while deductive thinking goes in the opposite direction, from generalizations to specifics. They are not really opposites, though; together they form a kind of system or cycle. In one, we go from observations to a hypothesis, in the other from a hypothesis to specifics that either confirm the hypothesis or force us to modify it.

Induction

- A clerk in a store sees four separate customers lower umbrellas as they enter. The clerk concludes that it is raining outside.
- A guest speaker notices that all of the students in the health class are wearing khaki pants. The speaker concludes that the school dress code mandates khaki pants.

Deduction

- An archaeologist knows that the site being excavated was inhabited by a Stone Age culture; when iron tools are found there, the archaeologist believes that they are not relics of the original inhabitants.
- We know that all senior students at a specific college are required to take the Graduate Record Examination. Since Taylor and Terry are not required to take the test, we can conclude that they are not seniors.

Part B.

Directions: Identify the failures in logic in the following scenarios.

1. Lieutenant Molina knows that criminals nearly always revisit the scenes of their crimes. Todd was at the bank yesterday just before the robbery, and the lieutenant sees Todd once again at the bank today. To the police officer, the conclusion seems obvious: Todd must have been involved in the robbery.

2. Shopping for a new cell phone, Mel sees a variety of sizes and colors that vary quite widely in price. The sales clerk approaches to point out one and proudly announces that it is absolutely the newest and top-of-the-line model, so Mel, of course, chooses that one.

3. Investigators have discovered that a prominent public official has engaged in tax fraud. When newspaper reporters come to interview the official, they record the following words: "Look, folks, I have not done anything that every other senator and congressional representative in this state has not also done. The idea that I should be punished is ridiculous."

Argumentation at Work

Directions: Read the background information and the excerpts, and answer the questions.

1. Capital punishment is a highly controversial topic with passionate proponents on both sides. The following excerpt comes from a statement by the American Civil Liberties Union.

> The American Civil Liberties Union believes the death penalty inherently violates the constitutional ban against cruel and unusual punishment and the guarantees of due process of law and of equal protection under the law. Furthermore, we believe that the state should not give itself the right to kill human beings—especially when it kills with premeditation and ceremony, in the name of the law or in the name of its people, or when it does so in an arbitrary and discriminatory fashion.
>
> Capital punishment is an intolerable denial of civil liberties and is inconsistent with the fundamental values of our democratic system. The death penalty is uncivilized in theory and unfair and inequitable in practice. Through litigation, legislation, and advocacy against this barbarous and brutalizing institution, we strive to prevent executions and seek the abolition of capital punishment.

   a. What is the purpose of the writing?

   b. How do the paragraphs appeal to both readers' intellects and their emotions?

2. In 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower, a World War II hero, was running for president of the United States; the nation was involved in the war in Korea. Here is an excerpt from one of his speeches.

> A nation's foreign policy is a much graver matter than rustling papers and bustling conferences. It is much more than diplomatic decisions and trade treaties and military arrangements.
>
> A foreign policy is the face and voice of a whole people. It is all that the world sees and hears and understands about a single nation. It expresses the character and the faith and the will of that nation. In this, a nation is like any individual of our personal acquaintance; the simplest gesture can betray hesitation or weakness, the merest inflection of voice can reveal doubt or fear.
>
> It is in this deep sense that our foreign policy has faltered and failed.
>
> For a democracy, a great election, such as this, signifies a most solemn trial. It is the time when—to the bewilderment of all tyrants—the people sit in judgment upon the leaders. It is the time when these leaders are summoned before the bar of public decision. There they must give evidence both to justify their actions and explain their intentions.
>
> In the great trial of this election, the judges—the people—must not be deceived into believing that the choice is between isolationism and internationalism. That is a debate of the dead past. The vast majority of Americans of both parties know that to keep their own nation free, they bear a majestic responsibility for freedom through all the world. As practical people, Americans also know the critical necessity of unimpaired access to raw materials on other continents for our own economic and military strength.
>
> Today the choice—the real choice—lies between policies that assume that responsibility awkwardly and fearfully—and policies that accept that responsibility with sure purpose and firm will. The choice is between foresight and blindness, between doing and apologizing, between planning and improvising.
>
> In rendering their verdict, the people must judge with courage and with wisdom. For—at this date—any faltering in America's leadership is a capital offense against freedom.
>
> In this trial, my testimony, of a personal kind, is quite simple. A soldier all my life, I have enlisted in the greatest cause of my life—the cause of peace.

a. What were Eisenhower's purposes?

b. Do you see any connection between the first and last paragraphs?

c. What choices in diction seem particularly important in achieving Eisenhower's purpose?

3. While World War II was engulfing Europe, most Americans wanted nothing more than to stay out of it. Then, on December 7, 1941, Japanese forces bombed Pearl Harbor, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt had to move into action. Here is an excerpt from the speech he delivered the next day.

> Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.
>
> As commander in chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense. But always will our whole nation remember the character of the onslaught against us.
>
> No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.
>
> Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.
>
> With confidence in our armed forces—with the unbounding determination of our people—we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God.
>
> I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire.

a. What was Roosevelt's purpose?

b. What tools did he use to achieve that purpose?

Lesson 21

An Argument from Ambrose Bierce

Objectives

- To read and respond to Ambrose Bierce's essay "Christmas and the New Year"
- To identify persuasive elements such as the use of humor which lead to the success of the essay

Notes to the Teacher

Many people think of Ambrose Bierce as primarily a writer of short fiction about the Civil War, but he was also a journalist and the author of numerous articles about diverse subject matter. In "Christmas and the New Year," he takes aim at the foolishness, greed, and hypocrisy that often dominate the holiday season.

Bierce's general attitude is clear from the first sentence; much of what we associate with the end-of-the-year holiday season is absurd and provides ample evidence that we are fools. We endlessly insist that Christmas be merry, and we blow New Year's paper horns as if we still believed that could chase evil spirits away. The essay is not unrelievedly bitter, though; the phrasing is often brilliant, and the wit in some passages is bound to evoke at least a chuckle, if not outright laughter.

In this lesson, students first reflect on the role of Christmas and New Year celebrations in American culture. Although both have origins far away and long ago, including religious associations, they are largely secular events. Students then read Bierce's essay and analyze it. Finally, students write their own reflections on a holiday of their choice.

Procedure

1. Ask students to take about ten minutes to write about the end-of-the-year holiday season that includes Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and New Year's Eve. Point out that Christmas decorations of various types dominate store aisles from the minute Halloween ends. There is no denying the importance this time of year has in our culture.
2. Ask each student to read aloud the first sentence of his or her writing, and keep a tally of positive, negative, and neutral tones.
3. Explain that in 2001 popular novelist John Grisham published a novel entitled *Skipping Christmas*, which is about a couple that decides to skip Christmas entirely one year—no holiday decorations or parties,

no shopping for gifts, no family get-togethers. Ask students why anyone would want to do that. (In an ideal world, the holidays are full of joy; they can also be hectic and pressure-filled.)

4. Distribute **Handout 53**, and have students read Bierce's essay and underline words and phrases that convey his tone (*absurd, meaningless, false, hollow, stupidity, idiocy, deception*).
5. Distribute **Handout 54**, and have small groups discuss the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. Bierce claims that Americans have blindly accepted and fostered traditions that have no real relevance to American culture.
2. The phrase is ironic and humorous in a biting sort of way. Of course, all children like to get gifts, but, as the essay goes on to say later, Christmas can have negative effects on young people.
3. Bierce quickly makes it clear that he has no problem with the event behind Christmas.
4. Bierce goes on to mock our mindless repetition of "merry" and "happy" in wishes regarding the two holidays.
5. Christmas gives children reason to see their parents and other adults as fools and liars and is likely to train them to develop "an elastic standard of truth."
6. The irony that pervades the essay here become sarcasm. Many people, it seems, would rather die or be seriously injured than have to endure Christmas traditions.
7. The paragraph switches topics but nicely links with the previous five paragraphs with the reference to people who actually survived Christmas with some energy intact.
8. He says what many people know from personal experience: we are powerless in our attempts to reform our lives.
9. He closes with a reference to the New Year's custom of a piñata and reaffirms the uselessness of our holiday traditions.
10. Bierce's voice in this essay is heavily ironic, wryly humorous, critical, superior, and educated. He seems to assume that any intelligent reader will agree with him.

6. Ask students to examine the structures of the sentences that begin the paragraphs. Follow with discussion to emphasize variety in syntax. (The first sentence opens with a double prepositional phrase and is otherwise a simple declaration with the little qualifier "no doubt." The second paragraph begins with a very long and very complex sentence. In the third paragraph, Bierce begins with a dependent clause,

includes a parenthetical comment, and ends with a linking verb and modifiers. The short sentence beginning the fourth paragraph starts with a prepositional phrase, and the fifth paragraph begins with the subject and continues with a passive verb. A lengthy complex sentence beginning with a dependent clause starts the sixth paragraph. The seventh paragraph starts with a noun modified by a prepositional phrase and has a compound verb.)

7. Emphasize that Ambrose Bierce did not use a formulaic approach such as the five-paragraph plan to structure his essay. Instead, he used a wide variety of sentence structures, some short and some long, as well as a highly educated vocabulary.
8. Point out that many people from grade school through old age have written about the holiday season with totally different attitudes than those expressed by Bierce. Ask students to suggest other possible tones. (For example, a writer could express nostalgia about Christmases long ago or enthusiasm about the holiday season on the horizon.)
9. Point out that people celebrate a variety of days during the year (for example, Martin Luther King Day, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Halloween, and Thanksgiving). Assign students to write essays in which they discuss the reasons for and customs regarding such a day and to address the essays to an educated audience. Remind them to focus on achieving a clear purpose. Distribute **Handout 55**, and have students use it to generate ideas for essays. Point out that the actual essays might not include all of the ideas that first come to mind. Establish a date for students to bring drafts to class for conferencing.

A Holiday Essay

Directions: Carefully read the essay by Ambrose Bierce, and underline words that convey the author's tone.

Christmas and the New Year

In our manner of observing Christmas there is much, no doubt, that is absurd. Christmas is to some extent a day of meaningless ceremonies, false sentiment and hollow compliments endlessly iterated and misapplied. The observances "appropriate to the day" had, many of them, their origin in an age with which our own has little in common and in countries whose social and religious characteristics were unlike those obtaining here. As in so many other matters, America has in this been content to take her heritage without inquiry and without alteration, sacredly preserving much that once had a meaning now lost, much that is now an anachronism, a mere "survival." Even to the Christmas vocabulary we have added little. St. Nicholas himself, the patron saint of deceived children, still masquerades under the Spanish feminine title of "Santa" and the German nickname of "Claus." The back of our American coal grate is still idealized as a "yule log," and the English "holly" is supposed in most cases fitly to be shadowed forth by a cedar bough, while a comparatively innocuous but equally inedible indigenous comestible figures as the fatal English "plum pudding." Nearly all our Christmas literature is, *longo intervallo*, European in spirit and Dickensish in form. In short, we have Christmas merely because we were in the line of succession. We have taken it as it was transmitted, and we try to make the worst of it.

The approach of the season is apparent in the manner of the friend or relative whose orbs furtively explore your own, seeking a sign of what you are going to give him; in the irrepressible solicitations of babes and cloutlings; in wild cascades of such literature as *Greenleaf on Evidence, for Boys* ("Boot-Leg" series), *The Little Girls' Illustrated Differential Calculus* and *Aunt Hetty's Rabelais*, in words of one syllable. Most clearly is the advent of the blessed anniversary manifest in maddening iteration of the greeting wherein, with a precision that never by any chance mistakes its adjective, you are wished a "merry" Christmas by the same person who a week later will be making ninety-nine "happies" out of a possible hundred in New Year greetings similarly insincere and similarly insufferable. It is unknown to me why a Christmas should be always merry but never happy, and why the happiness appropriate to the New Year should not be expressed in merriment. These be mysteries in whose penetration abundance of human stupidity might be disclosed. By the time that one has been wished a "merry Christmas" or a "happy New Year" some scores of times in the course of a morning walk, by persons who he knows care nothing about either his merriment or his happiness, he is disposed, if he is a person of right feeling, to take a pessimist view of the "compliments of the season" and of the season of compliments. He cherishes, according to disposition, a bitter animosity or a tolerant contempt toward his race. He relinquishes for another year his hope of meeting some day a brilliant genius or inspired idiot who will have the intrepidity to vary the adjective and wish him a "happy Christmas" or a "merry New Year"; or with an even more captivating originality, keep his mouth shut.

As to the sum of sincerity and genuine good will that utters itself in making and accepting gifts (the other distinctive feature of holiday time) statistics, unhappily, are wanting and estimates untrustworthy. It may reasonably be assumed that the custom, though largely a survival—gifts having originally been given in a propitiatory way by the weak to the powerful—is something more; the present of a goggle-eyed doll from a man six feet high to a baby twenty-nine inches long not being lucidly explainable by assumption of an interested motive.

To the children the day is delightful and instructive. It enables them to see their elders in all the various stages of interesting idiocy, and teaches them by means of the Santa Claus deception that exceedingly hard liars may be good mothers and fathers and miscellaneous relatives—thus habituating the infant mind to charitable judgment and establishing an elastic standard of truth that will be useful in their later life.

The annual recurrence of the "carnival of crime" at Christmas has been variously accounted for by different authorities. By some it is supposed to be a providential dispensation intended to heighten the holiday joys of those who are fortunate enough to escape with their lives. Others attribute it to the lax morality consequent upon the demand for presents, and still others to the remorse inspired by consciousness of ruinous purchases. It is affirmed by some that persons deliberately and with malice aforethought put themselves in the way of being killed, in order to avert the tiresome iteration of Christmas greetings. If this is correct, the annual Christmas "holocaust" is not an evil demanding abatement, but a blessing to be received in a spirit of devout and pious gratitude.

When the earth in its eternal circumgression arrives at the point where it was at the same time the year before, the sentimentalist whom Christmas has not exhausted of his essence squeezes out his pitiful dreg of emotion to baptize the New Year withal. He dusts and polishes his aspirations, and reërects his resolve, extracting these well-worn properties from the cobwebby corners of his moral lumber-room, whither they were relegated three hundred and sixty-four days before. He "swears off." In short, he sets the centuries at defiance, breaks the sequence of cause and effect, repeals the laws of nature and makes himself a new disposition from a bit of nothing left over at the creation of the universe. He can not add an inch to his stature, but thinks he can add a virtue to his character. He can not shed his nails, but believes he can renounce his vices. Unable to eradicate a freckle from his skin, he is confident he can decree a habit out of his conduct. An improvident friend of mine writes upon his mirror with a bit of soap the cabalistic word, AFAHMASP. This is the *fiat lux* to create the shining virtue of thrift, for it means, A Fool And His Money Are Soon Parted. What need have we of morality's countless ministries; the complicated machinery of the church; recurrent suasions of precept and unceasing counsel of example; pursuing din of homily; still, small voice of solicitude and inaudible argument of surroundings—if one may make of himself what he will with a mirror and a bit of soap? But (it may be urged) if one can not reform himself, how can he reform others? Dear reader, let us have a frank understanding. He can not.

The practice of inflating the midnight steam-shrieker and belaboring the nocturnal ding-dong to frighten the encroaching New Year is obviously ineffectual, and might profitably be discontinued. It is no whit more sensible and dignified than the custom of savages who beat their sounding dogs to scare away an eclipse. If one elect to live with barbarians, one must endure the barbarous noises of their barbarous superstitions, but the disagreeable simpleton who sits up till midnight to ring a bell or fire a gun because the earth has arrived at a given point in its orbit should nevertheless be deprecated as an enemy to his race. He is a sore trial to the feelings, an affliction almost too sharp for endurance. If he and his sentimental abettors might be melted and cast into a great bell, every right-minded man would derive an innocent delight from pounding it, not only on January first but all the year long.

Analyzing Ambrose Bierce's Style

Directions: Use the following questions to discuss the effectiveness of "Christmas and the New Year."

1. In the first paragraph, what is Bierce's main complaint about America's Christmas traditions?

2. How did you respond to the phrase, "the patron saint of deceived children"? Explain.

3. In the second paragraph, what is the effect of "blessed anniversary"?

4. What is Bierce's main target in the second paragraph?

5. In the third and fourth paragraphs, what does he say about the effects of our Christmas traditions on children?

6. Describe the tone of the fifth paragraph. Give evidence to support your view.

7. How does the author transition into the sixth paragraph?

8. What does he say about the custom of New Year's resolutions?

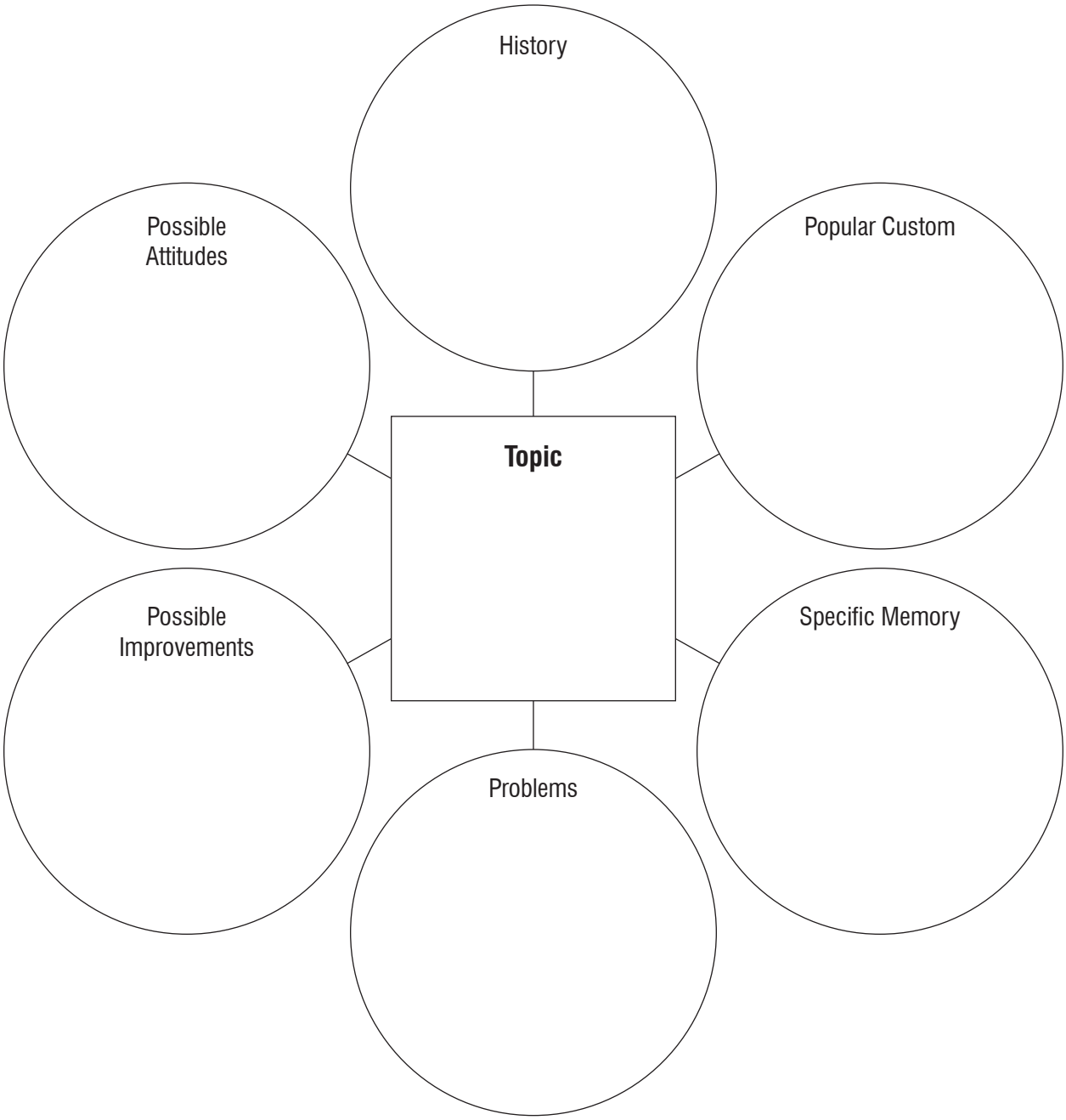
9. How does he achieve closure in the seventh paragraph?

10. What words would you use to describe Bierce's voice throughout the essay?

 Name:

Using a Web to Plan

Directions: Use the graphic organizer to generate ideas for your essay about a holiday or other day of celebration.



Lesson 22

Writing Workshop: Celebrations

Objectives

- To conference with peers and the instructor regarding essay revision
- To focus on clarity of tone and variety of sentence structure

Notes to the Teacher

Prior to this lesson, students need to have drafted essays regarding a holiday or day of celebration with which they are familiar. They should also have been instructed about the need to go beyond formulaic structures such as the five-paragraph plan. You will want to have students collaborate with one another, as well as to make yourself available to read essays and respond to ideas. Emphasize that students are reading and responding to working drafts, not finished pieces, so constructive criticism is very helpful at this stage.

The lesson begins with a look at three drafts of opening paragraphs for essays. This is followed by time for conferencing, and students review a rubric for evaluation. You will want to emphasize that the rubric suggests things to watch for, and you will want to warn against using it as yet another artificial blueprint for writing. Students then read and discuss Frank Church's famous "Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus," which affirms the value of a traditional myth. If students have read Ambrose Bierce's essay on Christmas (from Lesson 21), they will notice a definite contrast in tones.

Procedure

1. Ask students to indicate what topics they chose for their essays and to volunteer observations about how difficult or easy they found the writing itself. Explain that this lesson is intended to provide feedback to help in revision and editing before submission of final drafts.
2. Distribute **Handout 56**, and have partners complete it together.

Suggested Responses

1. It would be good to vary the sentence structure rather than beginning each directly with the subject. The writer might want to include a saccharine passage from a typical greeting card as an example. The writer's purpose might need to be refined. Is the goal to abolish Sweetest Day or to reinvent its charitable origins?

2. The writer might want to vary the sentence structure by including one or two brief declarative statements. The two "unlike" sentences could be connected with a semicolon. The closing sentence seems irrelevant and introduces what seems to be a shift in tone.
3. The writer might want to include that this holiday benefits only school children and government employees, a very limited audience. This means that most people in the country will not even think of Martin Luther King on the day named in his memory. Attention should also be paid to word choices (for example, "dumb").

3. Have students work in small groups of three or four to read and respond to essay drafts. Encourage and model both compliments and constructive criticism.
4. Distribute **Handout 57**, and review the rubric. Set a date for submission of both the final drafts and the drafts shared during this lesson.
5. Distribute **Handout 58**, and ask students to read the article. Follow with discussion based on the following questions.
   - What was Frank Church's audience for this writing? (On one level, he was writing to an eight-year-old child; on another, he was addressing everyone reading the paper.)
   - What was Church's purpose? (He wanted to assure the child that there is a Santa Claus; he also wanted to point out to readers that there is more to life than scientific facts and data. To Church, Santa represents important spiritual and emotional values that are essential to a meaningful life and cannot be measured.)
   - What does the writing say about human intelligence? (All people are too limited to grasp the full reality of the universe around them. Most people tend to overestimate the capacity of their own intelligence.)
   - There are five paragraphs in this little essay, but it is not a five-paragraph essay. Explain. (This essay does not follow a humdrum pattern but moves smoothly from thought to thought and paragraph to paragraph.)
   - What do you think Church would say in an essay about Christmas? (In a way, this is an essay about Christmas. He would probably say that Christmas is about love, generosity, faith, poetry, fun, wonder, and childlike gladness.)
6. Point out that many writers find it easy to adopt a cynical and even sarcastic tone which can amuse the audience and also demonstrate the writer's cleverness and wit. Church's writing, on the other hand, is idealistic and, in some parts, philosophical.

Practice in Revising

Directions: Read the following drafts of paragraphs about days of celebration, and make suggestions for improvement.

1. Sweetest Day started nearly a century ago as an effort to extend kindness to forgotten and underprivileged people. It has degenerated to a second-class Valentine's Day and a marketing device. Malls and corner drug stores post alerts about the importance of purchasing cards, flowers, candy, and other nice things to nurture romance. The cards are juvenile and naïve, the flowers soon die, and the candy is, well, fattening. Ironically, Sweetest Day today neglects the very people it was originally intended to help: elderly in nursing homes, shut-ins, orphans, and poor families.

2. When the early Pilgrims celebrated the first Thanksgiving centuries ago, they could have had no idea that twenty-first-century Americans would continue the tradition to create the best holiday of all. Unlike Christmas, which caters to greed, Thanksgiving gestures outward to gratitude for what already is. Unlike the noise and flash of the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving tends to settle snugly at home with family, friends, and, perhaps, football games. Smells of turkey, gravy, and pumpkin pie fill the air. For at least twenty-four hours, no one has to rush off to work, shop, or see the dentist.

3. Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the greatest and most influential men in U.S. history. Without his leadership, the civil rights movement would most likely have blown up into widespread violence and destruction with no end in sight. After his assassination in 1968, it was right for the country to recognize his achievements in a long-lasting and public way. What was dumb was the decision to do this by creating a national holiday in his name. There would have been so many other ways to honor a man committed to energetic pursuit of equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Evaluation Rubric

Directions: Use the following rubric as a tool to revise and evaluate essays.

Element	5	3	1
Attitude	The essay expresses a clear attitude toward a specific day of celebration.	The attitude is somewhat ambiguous.	Both the topic and the attitude are subjects of confusion.
Organization/ Framework	The paragraphs are connected in skillful, logical, and nonrepetitive ways.	The organization is effective, but attention should be paid to transitions between paragraphs.	The writing is limited to the framework of a five-paragraph composition.
Opening Paragraph	The opening paragraph awakens the reader's interest.	The opening paragraph is clear but not particularly engaging.	The opening paragraph repels the reader from wanting to read the rest of the essay.
Closing Paragraph	The closing paragraph clinches the main point in an engaging way.	The last paragraph affirms the writer's attitude but does not achieve closure.	The last paragraph reflects no awareness of purpose or audience.
Sentence Structure/ Diction	The writer correctly uses varied sentence structures and college-level diction.	There are no language errors, but more attention should be paid to sentence variety and word choices.	The essay is flawed with weak diction and syntax.
Final Draft	The final draft reflects a definite effort to improve clarity of thought, syntax, and diction.	The final draft includes improvement in thought content and language usage.	The final draft reflects no attention to suggestions made by peers or the instructor.

Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus

Directions: In 1897, an eight-year-old girl wrote a letter to the *New York Sun*, asking about the existence of Santa Claus. Some friends had told her that Santa was a myth. Frank Church, the paper's editor, wrote the following piece in reply. Read it carefully, and prepare for discussion.

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Lesson 23

An Argument from America's First African-American Congresswoman

Objectives

- To recognize passionate commitment as an essential element of effective arguments
- To analyze Shirley Chisholm's address to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1969

Notes to the Teacher

Shirley Chisholm (1924–2005) was the first African-American woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress, and New Yorkers elected her to that position for seven terms. She ran unsuccessfully for president; she was a political activist, a teacher, and a popular speaker on lecture tours.

In this lesson, students focus on her 1969 address to Congress, an effort to reintroduce the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), so long debated and never ratified. Speaking as both a woman and an African American, she urged congressmen to recognize women's equality with men and, therefore, the right to equal treatment, including payment for work. Chisholm's language is clear and direct; there is no mistaking what she means, and her passionate commitment is evident.

This passionate commitment is the heart of any argumentative writing. If a writer really does not care about the topic, then the written piece—whether an ad, an essay, or an entire book—is certain to fall flat.

Procedure

1. Ask students to select one of the following topics for a short written argument.
   - Why NASA should plan another mission for astronauts to walk on the moon
   - Why the state flower should be changed
   - Why a local company should not outsource jobs to other countries

   (You will probably note a pronounced lack of excitement about these writings.) Ask students to describe their responses to the assignment. (Students will probably note that they really do not care one way or another about another moon walk, the state flower, or outsourcing.)

2. Emphasize that, in argumentation, the key ingredient is passionate commitment. A political candidate who does not care whether or not he or she wins the election is unlikely to be a dynamic speaker. Sometimes public figures have to work up an appearance of passionate commitment in order to represent the wishes of their constituents.
3. Distribute **Handout 59**, and ask students to read the information and make marginal notations. Then ask students to identify Chisholm's audience (her fellow members of the U.S. House of Representatives) and purpose (to persuade them to reconsider the Equal Rights Amendment).
4. Distribute **Handout 60**, and ask small groups to discuss the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The first paragraph aimed to get listeners' attention and to provoke smiles as the vast majority of representatives reflected that no one's first question was, "Do you type?"
2. In the second paragraph, Chisholm's voice becomes deliberate, firm, and even angry as she gets closer to her main point.
3. There is no logical answer to that question, so none is expected. (Emphasize that speakers frequently use rhetorical questions.)
4. Chisholm's own experience enabled her to speak from the perspective of a woman and an African American; she did not have to imagine either role, and she was able to state that she had experienced more prejudice as a woman than as an African American, a statement with a certain amount of shock value.
5. Women are still underrepresented in power positions, but the numbers are not as miniscule as they were in Chisholm's time.
6. Everything before paragraph 10 is introductory in nature. In this paragraph, Chisholm directly stated her purpose of reintroducing the Equal Rights Amendment, something that may have elicited voiced or silent groans from her listeners.
7. Chisholm addressed two main arguments against the ERA. One was that the amendment would be redundant and therefore was unnecessary; her answer was that men and women in fact did not have equal rights. The second was that it would cause the end of legislation that protected women's rights. To this, she said that women had no more need for protection than men; she saw the idea that women needed protection as another vestige of the concept of male superiority. Recognizing the opponents' arguments is a key factor in most debates and political speeches.

8. There seems to be a wry smile in the first sentences of the final paragraph. Then the tone becomes determined and deliberate; Chisholm sounds like a woman on a crusade.

5. Point out that argumentative writing is closely related to rhetoric and shares its devices. Distribute **Handout 61**, and review the terms with the class. Offer the following examples to clarify, or elicit examples from the students.

   Allusion—"When Abraham Lincoln entered Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865, he could not know that he was on the brink of death." The speaker or writer might go on to warn of the certainty and unpredictability of death.

   Analogy—"Like a beach ball tossed about in the surf, Americans flounder in the political uncertainties around them." The piece might describe the ball bobbing about helplessly and without purpose and go on to advocate the importance of an informed citizenry.

   Anecdote—An essay about the importance of personal responsibility might begin with a story about someone experiencing the consequences of being irresponsible.

   Figurative language—"At this point, no one wants to talk about or even look at the gorilla in the corner." The piece might go on to assert the importance of facing an issue straight on.

   Hyperbole—"As children, we had to walk five miles to school, uphill both ways." Maybe the speech or writing would argue that young people today have awfully easy lives.

   Imagery—An argument against fast-food eating might stress unpleasant visual, olfactory, auditory, and gustatory aspects of the ubiquitous restaurants.

   Irony—"There is no reason to vote for Z—unless, of course, you want an improved economy and a safer nation." Obviously, the speaker thinks everyone should vote for Z.

   Parallelism—"Constant texting leaves young people exhausted, jaded, and overstimulated."

   Rhetorical question—"Why should we kill thousands of trees to read news that differs little from the headlines of yesterday and that we will toss in the trash the next day?" The piece would go on to argue against traditional daily newspapers.

   Sound devices—"The meeting between the two ambassadors amounted to nothing less than a close call with catastrophe." Sound devices, used wisely, can be a nice touch; overused, they can make an argument laughable.

6. Assign students to write essays of argumentation, and set a date for in-class peer conferencing.

Shirley Chisholm on Women's Rights

Directions: Shirley Chisholm (1924–2005) was the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Congress, in which she served seven terms as a representative from New York. Read the following speech, which was delivered early in her political career, and make annotations regarding her purpose and the tools she used to accomplish that purpose.

Equal Rights for Women

1 Mr. Speaker, when a young woman graduates from college and starts looking for a job, she is likely to have a frustrating and even demeaning experience ahead of her. If she walks into an office for an interview, the first question she will be asked is, "Do you type?"

2 There is a calculated system of prejudice that lies unspoken behind that question. Why is it acceptable for women to be secretaries, librarians, and teachers, but totally unacceptable for them to be managers, administrators, doctors, lawyers, and Members of Congress?

3 The unspoken assumption is that women are different. They do not have executive ability orderly minds, stability, leadership skills, and they are too emotional.

4 It has been observed before, that society for a long time, discriminated against another minority, the blacks, on the same basis—that they were different and inferior. The happy little homemaker and the contented "old darkey" on the plantation were both produced by prejudice.

5 As a black person, I am no stranger to race prejudice. But the truth is that in the political world I have been far oftener discriminated against because I am a woman than because I am black.

6 Prejudice against blacks is becoming unacceptable although it will take years to eliminate it. But it is doomed because, slowly, white America is beginning to admit that it exists. Prejudice against women is still acceptable. There is very little understanding yet of the immorality involved in double pay scales and the classification of most of the better jobs as "for men only."

7 More than half of the population of the United States is female. But women occupy only 2 percent of the managerial positions. They have not even reached the level of tokenism yet. No women sit on the AFL-CIO council or Supreme Court. There have been only two women who have held Cabinet rank, and at present there are none. Only two women now hold ambassadorial rank in the diplomatic corps. In Congress, we are down to one Senator and 10 Representatives.

8 Considering that there are about 3 ½ million more women in the United States than men, this situation is outrageous.

9 It is true that part of the problem has been that women have not been aggressive in demanding their rights. This was also true of the black population for many years. They submitted to oppression and even cooperated with it. Women have done the same thing. But now there is an awareness of this situation particularly among the younger segment of the population.

10 As in the field of equal rights for blacks, Spanish-Americans, the Indians, and other groups, laws will not change such deep-seated problems overnight. But they can be used to provide protection for those who are most abused, and to begin the process of evolutionary change by compelling the insensitive majority to reexamine its unconscious attitudes.

11 It is for this reason that I wish to introduce today a proposal that has been before every Congress for the last 40 years and that sooner or later must become part of the basic law of the land —the equal rights amendment.

12 Let me note and try to refute two of the commonest arguments that are offered against this amendment. One is that women are already protected under the law and do not need legislation. Existing laws are not adequate to secure equal rights for women. Sufficient proof of this is the concentration of women in lower paying, menial, unrewarding jobs and their incredible scarcity in the upper level jobs. If women are already equal, why is it such an event whenever one happens to be elected to Congress?

13 It is obvious that discrimination exists. Women do not have the opportunities that men do. And women that do not conform to the system, who try to break with the accepted patterns, are stigmatized as "odd" and "unfeminine." The fact is that a woman who aspires to be chairman of the board, or a Member of the House, does so for exactly the same reasons as any man. Basically, these are that she thinks she can do the job and she wants to try.

14 A second argument often heard against the equal rights amendment is that it would eliminate legislation that many States and the Federal Government have enacted giving special protection to women and that it would throw the marriage and divorce laws into chaos.

15 As for the marriage laws, they are due for a sweeping reform, and an excellent beginning would be to wipe the existing ones off the books. Regarding special protection for working women, I cannot understand why it should be needed. Women need no protection that men do not need. What we need are laws to protect working people, to guarantee them fair pay, safe working conditions, protection against sickness and layoffs, and provision for dignified, comfortable retirement. Men and women need these things equally. That one sex needs protection more than the other is a male supremacist myth as ridiculous and unworthy of respect as the white supremacist myths that society is trying to cure itself of at this time.

Analyzing Shirley Chisholm's Speech on Women's Rights

Directions: Answer the following questions, and be prepared for class discussion.

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph?

2. How does the tone shift in the second paragraph?

3. The second paragraph ends with a rhetorical question. Why?

4. How did Shirley Chisholm make use of her own identity as an African-American woman?

5. Reexamine paragraph 7. Are things very different now than they were in 1969?

6. What does paragraph 10 accomplish?

7. What two arguments against the Equal Rights Amendment did Chisholm address? Why did she address them?

8. Describe the shift in tone in the last paragraph.

Rhetorical Devices

Directions: Dictionaries of rhetorical devices use dozens of terms, many of which sound quite alien to us today. Here, in plain English, are some that appear most often in argumentative writing and oratory. Study the following terms and their definitions.

Allusion—a reference to a work of literature or art or to a historical event or person

Analogy—an extended comparison of two essentially unlike things that nonetheless have similarities

Anecdote—a brief story to engage audience interest or to make a point

Figurative language—similes, metaphors, personifications, and other poetic devices

Hyperbole—deliberate exaggeration to make a point; the opposite of understatement, another device

Imagery—language evoking senses of sight, smell, sound, taste, or touch

Parallelism—use of similar patterns of words, phrases, and sentences; a balancing device

Rhetorical question—inquiry for which the speaker neither expects nor wants an answer

Sound devices—rhymes, alliterations, assonances, and onomatopoeias

Verbal irony—saying the opposite of what one means; sometimes sarcasm

Lesson 24

Writing Workshop: Essays of Argumentation

Objectives

- To obtain and provide feedback and suggestions regarding revision and editing
- To review elements of the evaluation rubric
- To analyze the argument sent by scientists to President Harry Truman regarding the atomic bomb

Notes to the Teacher

Prior to this lesson, students need to draft essays of argumentation. You will want to stress the importance of audience awareness and purpose, as well as the value of selecting topics about which the writers have strong convictions. In addition, students need to give attention to effective diction; much of the persuasive power of an argumentative piece comes from words' connotative value.

Students first consider three sample introductory paragraphs. They then read and respond to one another's work, and they examine an evaluation rubric. If you did not use **Handout 61** in Lesson 23, you might want to distribute it along with **Handout 63**. Finally, students examine a real-world argument, the letter in which scientists involved in the Manhattan Project urged President Harry Truman not to use their invention, the atomic bomb, in the war against Japan.

Procedure

1. Remind students of the fundamental importance of focusing on audience and purpose. Provide several examples. (An essay or letter to public officials advocating the practice of closing schools after nights of very heavy snowfall will probably not be effective if it stresses the joys of sleeping in and sledding in the afternoon. One arguing that the person playing Santa at the mall should continue to say, "Ho, ho, ho," would have to express sensitivity to political correctness.)
2. Distribute **Handout 62**, and ask students to examine the sample paragraphs. Follow with discussion of strengths and weaknesses.

Suggested Responses

1. The writer avoided a run-of-the-mill topic and opened with a little anecdote. The paragraph uses complex sentence structures; the writer might want to break them up with one or two short sentences, just for variety. The "and" in the second sentence is not necessary. The alliteration in the final sentence is a nice touch. Maybe instead of a general reference to "conveniences," the writer should consider being more specific. Clearly, the piece will go on to indicate specific lessons the Amish could teach the rest of us, probably including anecdotal elements about both cultures.
2. Maybe the paragraph should start with a reference to the world, not just to America. The examples are all immediately recognizable but could perhaps be diversified a little more. Conservationists would certainly agree with the writer, but perhaps he or she should be more specific about the natural resources being wasted and the consequence of the wastage. For example, paper comes from trees; what happens to the habitat when many trees are removed?
3. The paragraph clearly calls for individual freedom without governmental control, and the allusion to Thoreau is nice. The writer might get into trouble with the idea of individual choices that do not harm others; perhaps that cigarette smoked in the basement sends harmful elements into the air upstairs, and that text message might contribute to a fender bender when the car ahead is forced to stop abruptly. The last sentence sounds a bit naïve and probably needs attention. During the course of the argument, the writer will have to walk a careful path.

3. Allow time for students to read and respond to each other's work, and offer yourself for additional reader-responses.
4. Distribute **Handout 63**; review the evaluation rubric. Ask students to submit both the current and the final drafts of their essays, as well as a completed rubric, and establish a due date.
5. Distribute **Handout 64**, and ask students to complete the exercise. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. The petition is very polite and several times refers to the president's role as commander in chief, perhaps wanting him not to be swayed by the advice of other military officials. The scientists were obviously aware of the extent of Truman's responsibility.

2. The scientists clearly wanted Truman to avoid using the atomic bombs against Japan.
3. The scientists felt the bombs should be used only if Japan knew the danger ahead and still refused to end the war.
4. The most important repetitions are *destruction* and *obligation*. The scientists knew better than anyone else the destructive force that would be unleashed if the bombs were used. The petition emphasizes the president's responsibilities for both immediate and long-term consequences of his decision.
5. The bombs were created only because of anticipation that Germany was trying to create and planned to use such a weapon. The defeat of Germany ended that concern. The bomb was bound in time to proliferate; some kind of control would have to be developed. The nation that set the precedent of using the first atomic bomb could be responsible for future horrors. The United States might be forced to try to become like a police force for the world. Use of the bomb could put a moral blot on the nation.
6. This can only be a matter of conjecture. Some of President Truman's comments indicate that he would gladly continue bombing Japan as long as necessary to bring the country into submission. If military forces were exerting a lot of pressure to use the bomb, the scientists' petition might have helped Truman to exercise restraint.

6. Point out that the petition is an example of argumentation in the real world of politics and international relationships. The scientists aimed to encourage the commander in chief not to use atomic bombs against Japan; their main tools are appeals to reason rather than to emotions.

Focus on Writing

Directions: Read and respond to the following paragraphs. Include suggestions for revision and editing.

1. "You always wave at the Amish," my father used to say as we drove down country roads, and so I did, and they nearly always waved back. We seemed to come from different worlds, Dad and I in an extended-cab pickup truck, and the Amish in horse-drawn vehicles or on foot. I could not understand how people could live and be happy without the electric or battery-operated conveniences so central to my own life. Only recently has it become crystal clear to me that the mainstream culture has much to learn from our countercultural neighbors and that the lessons they have to teach us are vital to our health.

2. America is on the brink of smothering in packaging. Recently, I bought tuna fish at the grocery store. Three aluminum cans were not enough; they were also encased in cardboard and glossy decorative paper. The fast-food salad I bought last evening came in a plastic bag and was enclosed in a plastic container. The container included plastic divisions to separate the ingredients, and the salad dressing came in its own little container. When I invested in new shoes, I came home with a lidded box with shoes, yes, but also crammed with paper that served no useful purpose. It is time to stop this useless waste of natural resources.

3. "That government is best which governs least." Thoreau wrote that many years ago. He was right then; he is right now. What we have is the opposite, a government that governs most. It is no exaggeration to say that the law has become very intrusive, like a nosy neighbor who cannot stop prying into everyone's business. Why do the police have to get involved if Jennie sneaks a cigarette in the basement at work, if Tim sends a text message as he is driving home from school, or if Don and Juanita share a little illegal substance in the privacy of their own home? We should all stand up and shout, "Why are you picking on us?" It is time for all Americans to demand the right to make their own choices, as long as those choices do not harm or endanger others.

Argumentative Rubric Writing

Directions: Use the following rubric as a tool to evaluate essays.

Element	5	3	1
Audience and Purpose	The essay has an engaging topic, a clear purpose, and a definite audience.	The essay argues a point but seems vague about both purpose and audience.	The essay seems to ramble in a rather pointless and uninteresting manner.
Syntax	The essay demonstrates effective syntax, including varied sentence structures.	The sentences are grammatically correct but need attention to style.	The writing includes a significant number of language errors.
Diction	The essay includes effective diction and makes use of connotative values of words and phrases.	While the word choices are adequate, the author should give attention to more impactful diction.	The word choices are at best elementary and sometimes erroneous.
Organization	The author develops ideas in a logical and interesting piece that avoids the monotony of the five-paragraph formula.	The essay reflects logical thinking but needs attention to overall structure.	The essay lacks logic, and the paragraphs are weakly organized.
Rhetorical Devices	The writer incorporated rhetorical devices such as figurative language, rhetorical questions, allusions, and other tools characteristic of rhetoric.	The writer made occasional attempts to use rhetorical devices.	There is no evidence that the writer was aware of rhetorical devices.

Scientists Petition President Truman

Directions: In July 1945, seventy scientists associated with the creation of the atomic bomb sent the following petition to President Harry Truman. Read it carefully, and answer the questions.

A Petition to the President of the United States

Discoveries of which the people of the United States are not aware may affect the welfare of this nation in the near future. The liberation of atomic power which has been achieved places atomic bombs in the hands of the Army. It places in your hands, as Commander-in-Chief, the fateful decision whether or not to sanction the use of such bombs in the present phase of the war against Japan.

We, the undersigned scientists, have been working in the field of atomic power. Until recently, we have had to fear that the United States might be attacked by atomic bombs during this war and that her only defense might lie in a counterattack by the same means. Today, with the defeat of Germany, this danger is averted and we feel impelled to say what follows:

The war has to be brought speedily to a successful conclusion and attacks by atomic bombs may very well be an effective method of warfare. We feel, however, that such attacks on Japan could not be justified, at least not unless the terms which will be imposed after the war on Japan were made public in detail and Japan were given an opportunity to surrender.

If such public announcement gave assurance to the Japanese that they could look forward to a life devoted to peaceful pursuits in their homeland and if Japan still refused to surrender our nation might then, in certain circumstances, find itself forced to resort to the use of atomic bombs. Such a step, however, ought not to be made at any time without seriously considering the moral responsibilities which are involved.

The development of atomic power will provide the nations with new means of destruction. The atomic bombs at our disposal represent only the first step in this direction, and there is almost no limit to the destructive power which will become available in the course of their future development. Thus a nation which sets the precedent of using these newly liberated forces of nature for purposes of destruction may have to bear the responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an unimaginable scale.

If after this war a situation is allowed to develop in the world which permits rival powers to be in uncontrolled possession of these new means of destruction, the cities of the United States as well as the cities of other nations will be in continuous danger of sudden annihilation. All the resources of the United States, moral and material, may have to be mobilized to prevent the advent of such a world situation. Its prevention is at present the solemn responsibility of the United States—singled out by virtue of her lead in the field of atomic power.

The added material strength which this lead gives to the United States brings with it the obligation of restraint and if we were to violate this obligation our moral position would be weakened in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes. It would then be more difficult for us to live up to our responsibility of bringing the unloosened forces of destruction under control.

In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition: first, that you exercise your power as Commander-in-Chief, to rule that the United States shall not resort to the use of atomic bombs in this war unless the terms which will be imposed upon Japan have been made public in detail and Japan knowing these terms has refused to surrender; second, that in such an event the question whether or not to use atomic bombs be decided by you in light of the considerations presented in this petition as well as all the other moral responsibilities which are involved.

1. What evidence suggests that the writers were very aware of their audience?

2. What is the purpose of the petition?

3. Under what circumstances might the scientists have conceded that the bomb should be used?

4. What word repetitions are particularly important?

5. What are the main points in their argument against using the atomic bomb against Japan?

6. President Truman did not receive this petition until it was too late. If he had received it earlier, do you think the scientists' petition would have made a difference in his decision? Why or why not?

Lesson 25

Jonathan Swift: Eighteenth-Century Satirist

Objectives

- To recognize contrasts between eighteenth-century prose and today's typical writing styles
- To read and analyze "A Modest Proposal"

Notes to the Teacher

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) was an Irish Anglican priest and writer and is today best known for his novel *Gulliver's Travels*, which was first published in 1726. He is almost as well known for the essay "A Modest Proposal" (1729), a bitterly satirical piece dealing with the problem of poverty in Ireland. Swift, of course, was being ironic when he suggested fattening up poor Irish babies for the food market.

In this lesson, students first consider Swift's style by looking at sentences excerpted from the essay. They then discuss the nature of satire and irony, and they analyze "A Modest Proposal." Finally, they devise subjects for contemporary satirical pieces. Prior to the lesson, students need to read "A Modest Proposal." Because the essay is fairly lengthy, it works best to have students read it online or in a textbook rather than to print copies for the class.

A word of warning: Sometimes students who miss Swift's satirical tone and take the essay literally are horrified and even sickened by it. This presents an excellent opportunity to stress the importance of recognizing tone.

Procedure

1. Ask students to give their initial responses to "A Modest Proposal." Then point out that the essay is a satire and the tone is ironic; readers who mistake Swift's tone miss his meaning. Also point out that the essay was written centuries ago and reflects some of the ways that prose changes over time.
2. Distribute **Handout 65**, and ask small groups to complete the exercise. Follow with whole-class discussion in which you extend the activity by asking students to write original sentences modeled on the ones by Swift.

Suggested Responses

1. The essay begins with a perfectly reasonable statement with which virtually everyone would agree. The sight of such hopeless poverty is distressing, and commentators note that Swift was constantly dismayed both by England's policies in Ireland and by the apparent passivity of the Irish Catholics who were among the most poverty-stricken. With this first sentence, Swift secures the reader's agreement. The sentence is long and complex, beginning with a simple statement and going on to several dependent clauses and modifying phrases. The following is a sample sentence: It is a sad experience for people driving through our city when they see so many streets lined with empty stores, walls covered with graffiti, and parking lots littered with refuse, all perfectly good but totally unused pieces of retail property.
2. In this sentence, Swift seems to establish himself as an authority on the subject, not just an idle commentator. He has both thought about and researched the issue at hand, and he found that no one offered a workable solution. The sentence begins with a prepositional phrase, which is followed by a compound participial phrase; it concludes with the main clause and a prepositional phrase. The following is a sample sentence: As for me, having already vacationed in Hawaii and cruised the Alaskan shoreline, I have always thought eager tourists mistaken about their first impressions.
3. Here again we hear Swift the expert, and the ironical tone is clear as he writes about the expert who agrees with his modest proposal. The sentence is shorter than the first two; the opening subject is followed by an appositive phrase and a relative clause and goes on to linking verb and adjective; it concludes with a prepositional phrase and an infinitive phrase. The following is a sample sentence: A very wise teacher, a true lover of the arts and someone whose advice I value, was recently happy in commenting on the plan to suggest several improvements.
4. This sentence begins with its main subject and goes on to dependent clauses. Here we have Swift, the poker-faced satirist. The following is a sample sentence: I think the value of my idea is perfectly clear as well as totally economical.
5. Swift offers a little false humility and invites the reader to think of a better proposal. The sentence begins with a transitional phrase, goes on to the subject and linking verb and an infinitive phrase, and concludes with a dependent clause with

parallel adjectives. The following is a sample sentence: To be sure, I am not so determined to have my own way as to reject alternatives that are just as clever, original, economical, and enjoyable.

6. If we missed the irony up to this point, surely we would hear it in this closing sentence. If we could see Swift, surely we would observe a wink at this point as he reveals that his modest proposal did not spring from his own desire for financial gains. The sentence opens with a declarative sentence and goes on to a dependent clause modified by a phrase. Swift used a semicolon where we would now simply use a comma. The following is a sample sentence: I expect no personal benefits from the construction of a new school, my children having grown up and not yet parents themselves.

3. Ask students to describe Swift's diction and syntax. (The essay tends to fairly long sentences and to complex constructions. It uses the language of a highly educated person.)
4. Ask students which form of discourse this essay most closely resembles. ("A Modest Proposal" is an argument, albeit a satirical one.)
5. Distribute **Handout 66**, and ask students to complete the exercise. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. The essay's lengthy introduction lures the reader to agree with Swift that the poverty in Ireland was a serious problem and that that the Irish Catholics had way too many children who had no prospects of success. Swift's voice is knowledgeable and thoughtful, and the reader is prepared to listen to ideas to improve the situation.
2. The ninth paragraph suggests that young human children could become valuable foodstuffs.
3. Swift takes the matter-of-fact approach of comparing people to animals raised for food; this effectively removes emotion and sentimentality from the discussion.
4. Swift itemizes six advantages to his plan: reduced population; financial help for the poor; increased national wealth; less burden of responsibility on parents; better food in taverns; stronger marriages. He goes on to mention additional advantages related to the food supply.
5. This is satire, and, throughout the piece, Swift maintains an educated, reasonable, practical tone that encourages readers not to respond sentimentally, but to be practical.

6. Swift's audience included educated people in England and Ireland. These people were aware that Ireland was not an independent country and that poverty was endemic, especially for the Catholic population. Swift himself was not Catholic, and he was not poor. He seems to have been exasperated by the severity of the problem and the fact that no one was doing anything about it. In this view, people who object to the solution in " A Modest Proposal" emerge as hypocrites because they are also unwilling or unable to do anything to help the living poor.
7. The fame of "A Modest Proposal" derives partly from the outrageous nature of the proffered solution, but also from the universality of the subject matter. The central issue is the value or lack of value of human life.

6. Explain that satire always exaggerates to make a point. The first half of the eighteenth century is often seen as a kind of golden age of satire, with Swift and Alexander Pope as two of the leading voices. Swift's contemporary readers were accustomed to the satiric perspective and tended to be less alarmed by "A Modest Proposal" than some readers are today.
7. Ask small groups to collaborate to list five interesting topics for satires that might be written today (for example, a proclivity toward fast-food restaurants, constant texting, dress codes, graduation ceremonies for kindergarteners). If time allows, encourage students to try their hands at satire.

Focus on Jonathan Swift's Style

Directions: Analyze the meaning and structure of each of the following sentences from "A Modest Proposal."

1. It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags and importuning every passenger for an alms.

2. As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of other projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in the computation.

3. A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased in discoursing on this matter to offer a refinement upon my scheme.

4. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

5. After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion as to reject any offer proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual.

6. I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

Analysis of "A Modest Proposal"

Directions: Use the following questions to analyze Jonathan Swift's satirical argument.

1. What is the purpose of the first eight paragraphs taken as a whole? Of what does Swift convince the reader?

2. At what point does Swift reveal the nature of his "modest proposal"?

3. What analogy does Swift develop in the tenth paragraph?

4. What six advantages of the proposal does the essay cite?

5. Of course, Swift's proposal is completely outrageous, but, along the way, he comes up with ways to justify it. What are some of them?

6. Go back to the basics of writing, and identify both Swift's audience and his purpose.

7. Why is "A Modest Proposal" one of the most well-known satires ever written?

Lesson 26

Alice Meynell on Childhood

Objectives

- To read and analyze an essay from the late Victorian period
- To recognize that essays can focus on ordinary life

Notes to the Teacher

In this lesson, students analyze an essay from late-nineteenth-century England. Alice Meynell's name does not seem to come up in high school classrooms today, but, during her own time, she was an influential and popular writer. Meynell (1847–1922), a poet, journalist, wife, mother of eight, and suffragette, was a frequent columnist in publications such as *The Spectator* and *The Saturday Review*. In 1901, she visited the United States and gave lectures in cities like New York, Chicago, and Indianapolis. Among her friends were writers Francis Thompson, Coventry Patmore, and George Meredith.

"Under the Early Stars" first appeared in 1897 in Meynell's essay collection *The Children*. In it, she reflects on the nature of children, a subject she knew well from personal experience. The voice in the essay is decidedly British and conversational as she reflects on the tired determination of adults to put children to bed early, just when play seems most attractive and natural, and on behaviors associated with children's bedtimes.

In preparation for the lesson, ask students to find and bring to class the work of a columnist in a major city newspaper. This can be a contemporary piece or one from the past, but it should be an essay that the student finds interesting. You may find it necessary to clarify the distinction between news stories and regular columns, which are opinion pieces.

Procedure

1. Point out that a great many essays originate as columns in newspapers and magazines. These writings include investigative reports, features, commentaries, and editorials. They can be accusatory, appreciative, nostalgic, or celebratory.
2. Ask small groups to meet to share newspaper essays. Then have each group select one to share with the class as a whole. Point out that topics vary widely but share the same audience: readers of large daily newspapers. The purpose is often to inform or to convince. Topics can vary widely: a response to a political scandal, praise for someone's heroic action, an investigation into human trafficking, an effort to

feed and house homeless people, a parent's joy and relief at the end of summer vacation. The very nature of the essays, designed for a single newspaper column, limits their length.

3. Provide a little background about Alice Meynell, and distribute **Handout 67**. Ask students to read the essay.
4. Ask students to identify the central topic (childhood and adults' ways of coping with it). Then ask students to identify the audience and purpose. (The audience seems to be adult British readers, and the purpose is to criticize typical ways of trying to manage children.)
5. Distribute **Handout 68**, and ask small groups to discuss the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The reference to ocean tides suggests that children's days have natural ebb and flow rhythms. Meynell believed that early nightfall is a natural time of high energy and not a good time to be forced to go to bed.
2. The practice of putting children to bed at an early hour is actually cruel.
3. The surge of energy in children as night falls is evident throughout nature. As evening arrives, predators come out of hiding, full of energy.
4. While children experience new bursts of energy, adults are tired at the end of the day and tend to see the children's natural liveliness as rebellion.
5. The fourth paragraph introduces an idea but does not fully develop it. One immediately thinks of the contrast between an adult eager to get going in the morning and a sleepy-eyed youngster unable or unwilling to budge out of bed. The "jaunts of the poor" seems ambiguous to today's readers and perhaps was equally ambiguous to readers then.
6. One has to smile at the small child's renaming of the card game.
7. Those are heavily loaded words. Meynell sees something archetypal in children's bedtimes and the indistinct boundary between being awake and sleeping. The pattern of telling stories or singing to children just before they go to sleep reaches back to prehistoric times.
8. "As distant as the day of Abraham" exaggerates the distance between the almost sleeping child and the lullaby being sung.
9. Meynell writes of parents who leave childcare, at least at bedtime, to servants. She muses on the effects of falling asleep listening to the rhythms of Asia or Africa rather than to English or French lullabies.

6. Point out that Alice Meynell's essay focuses on something very ordinary, a part of every parent's everyday life. She seems to have agreed with the original view of an essay as an attempt more than as a product. She selected a topic, turned it over in her mind, and shared her thoughts with readers in a conversational way.
7. Ask students to select another very ordinary topic and to write essays in which they reflect on it. If necessary, provide sample topics: an extended vacation in the summer; the fact that stop lights are red; eating the major meal of the day in the evening; reading the morning newspaper; recess in elementary schools. Encourage students to seek peer conferencing, and set a due date for the papers.

An Essay from Alice Meynell

Directions: Alice Meynell was a British poet and essayist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Carefully read and annotate the following essay, which was published in 1897.

Under the Early Stars

Play is not for every hour of the day, or for any hour taken at random. There is a tide in the affairs of children. Civilization is cruel in sending them to bed at the most stimulating time of dusk. Summer dusk, especially, is the frolic moment for children, baffle them how you may. They may have been in a pottering mood all day, intent upon all kinds of close industries, breathing hard over choppings and poundings. But when late twilight comes, there comes also the punctual wildness. The children will run and pursue, and laugh for the mere movement—it does so jolt their spirits.

What remembrances does this imply of the hunt, what of the predatory dark? The kitten grows alert at the same hour, and hunts for moths and crickets in the grass. It comes like an imp, leaping on all fours. The children lie in ambush and fall upon one another in the mimicry of hunting.

The sudden outbreak of action is complained of as a defiance and a rebellion. Their entertainers are tired, and the children are to go home. But, with more or less of life and fire, the children strike some blow for liberty. It may be the impotent revolt of the ineffectual child, or the stroke of the conqueror; but something, something is done for freedom under the early stars.

This is not the only time when the energy of children is in conflict with the weariness of men. But it is less tolerable that the energy of men should be at odds with the weariness of children, which happens at some time of their jaunts together, especially, alas! in the jaunts of the poor.

Of games for the summer dusk when it rains, cards are most beloved by children. Three tiny girls were to be taught "old maid" to beguile the time. One of them, a nut-brown child of five, was persuading another to play. "Oh come," she said, "and play with me at new maid."

The time of falling asleep is a child's immemorial and incalculable hour. It is full of traditions, and beset by antique habits. The habit of prehistoric races has been cited as the only explanation of the fixity of some customs in mankind. But if the inquirers who appeal to that beginning remembered better their own infancy, they would seek no further. See the habits in falling to sleep which have children in their thralldom. Try to overcome them in any child, and his own conviction of their high antiquity weakens your hand.

Childhood is antiquity, and with the sense of time and the sense of mystery is connected for ever the hearing of a lullaby. The French sleep-song is the most romantic. There is in it such a sound of history as must inspire any imaginative child, falling to sleep, with a sense of the incalculable; and the songs themselves are old. "Le Bon Roi Dagobert" has been sung over French cradles since the legend was fresh. The nurse knows nothing more sleepy than the tune and the verse that she herself slept to when a child. The gaiety of the thirteenth century, in "Le Pont d'Avignon," is put mysteriously to sleep, away in the *tête à tête* of child and nurse, in a thousand little sequestered rooms at night. "Malbrook" would be comparatively modern, were not all things that are sung to a drowsing child as distant as the day of Abraham.

If English children are not rocked to many such aged lullabies, some of them are put to sleep to strange cradle-songs. The affectionate races that are brought into subjection sing the primitive lullaby to the white child. Asiatic voices and African persuade him to sleep in the tropical night. His closing eyes are filled with alien images.

A Closer Look at Alice Meynell

Directions: Use the following questions to analyze "Under the Early Stars."

1. What is the meaning of the metaphor in the second sentence of the first paragraph?

2. What is Meynell's main point in the first paragraph?

3. What connection does Meynell make in the second paragraph?

4. According to the third paragraph, how and why are adults and children at odds in the evening?

5. What digression does the fourth paragraph seem to make?

6. Explain the humor in the fifth paragraph.

7. Why is bedtime for a child "immemorial and incalculable"?

8. Explain the hyperbole at the end of the seventh paragraph.

9. What ideas does the last paragraph introduce?

Lesson 27

John Clellon Holmes on the Beat Generation

Objectives

- To read and analyze an essay from 1950s America
- To write a description of today's generation of youth

Notes to the Teacher

Looking back from the vantage point of the twenty-first century, students are often both amazed and fascinated by the Beat Generation of the 1950s and the beatniks and hippies who followed during the turbulent 1960s. It was post–World War II America, and while adults had clear memories of the Great Depression, young people did not. Much later, in 1998, Tom Brokaw published *The Greatest Generation*, a book about the American men and women who fought in World War II and those who bravely kept things together on the home front. There was often a great gap between the thinking of young men and women of the 1950s and 1960s and the experiences and thoughts of their parents and grandparents.

The November 16, 1952, edition of the *New York Times Magazine* published an article entitled "This Is the Beat Generation" by John Clellon Holmes. Holmes attended Columbia, which was essentially the birthplace of the Beat movement, with writers like Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, and he met both of them. In the article, he attempted to define the Beat Generation, and his tone is clearly positive. The essay includes narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative elements.

Holmes presents himself as someone who is not just dabbling in ideas and idle observations. His is the voice of an educated person who has read and understood writers like T. S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Sinclair Lewis. He has thought about the Lost Generation and about the Russian Revolution, and he himself was part of the Beat Generation dealing with the facts of life in post–World War II America.

Because the essay is relatively long, it is best to have students locate and read it on the Internet before you teach this lesson. It is available at several sites. After discussing the essay, students think and write about characteristics of their own generation.

Procedure

1. Point out that it has become popular to give generations names—for example, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers—and to try to describe their general characteristics. Explain that when John Clellon Holmes wrote his article in 1952, he was not just buying into a cliché. His essay introduced Americans and even people across the world to a new social phenomenon.
2. Ask students to take a few minutes to write descriptions of their understanding of and responses to "This Is the Beat Generation." Then ask them to put the writings aside until later in the lesson.
3. Distribute **Handout 69**, and ask small groups to use the questions as springboards to discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. The first two paragraphs focus on individual members of the Beat Generation and convey the idea that although the young people are very diverse, they share a sense that all of the old rules no longer apply. The reader is intrigued and sometimes appalled by the specific examples.
2. To Holmes, the generation is Beat because it has been pushed to the point of desperation by the experiences that have dominated their young lives.
3. The immediate historical background of the Great Depression and World War II were the formative influences.
4. The allusion is the first of many that establish Holmes as a well-read and intellectual person. A waste land is one devoid of merit, good only as a dumping ground. If the modern world is a waste land, what should and can people do to make life bearable?
5. Both generations followed the horror of world war. In Holmes's view, the Lost Generation tended to dramatize itself and seemed enamored of a sense of meaninglessness, while the Beat Generation, although manifesting similar self-destructive behaviors, was bent on meaning.
6. Arden alludes to the world of Shakespearean comedy, where things always come right in the end. Babbitt is the title character in Sinclair Lewis's novel and epitomizes the modern person's essential materialism and conformity.
7. Like all of the allusions in the essay, they convince the reader of the author's intellectual acumen. They also suggest a warning. Decades after the comment from Dostoyevsky, the Russian Revolution erupted. The essay suggests that the future could

bring a similar eruption in the United States. The ensuing decades in fact brought riots in cities, the civil rights movement, and widespread resistance to the role of the United States in Vietnam.

8. Throughout the essay, Holmes refers to clear and open eyes, which he presents as great and endearing aspects of the Beat Generation. The basic attitude is positive, and, despite extremes, the eyes are a clear sign of hope.

4. Distribute **Handout 70**, and ask students to read the information and record observations about style. Follow with discussion. (The language is eminently readable but far from simple. Holmes used complex sentences; note, for example, the very first sentence in the excerpt on the handout. He also used parallel structures, as in the second sentence. The "but" at the beginning of the last paragraph is important and deliberate to accent the essentially positive position of the essay. There is synecdoche at the end.)
5. Read aloud the first twenty-four lines of the final section of *The Waste Land*, "What the Thunder Said." Ask students to describe the landscape. (It is utterly barren—all rock with no water anywhere. Unlike the desert crossing of the Israelites in the Bible story, here there is no Moses to strike rock and find water. Everything seems hopeless; one can only plod onward. The poem expresses the angst of the Lost Generation. Holmes felt that the Beat Generation would not settle for this sterility, that they were characterized by a "craving to believe.")
6. Have students retrieve their writing from the beginning of the lesson and add a paragraph or two about their thoughts following discussion. Collect the results.
7. Point out that Holmes was writing about his own generation as he saw it then, without the benefit of hindsight. Ask students to work in small groups to brainstorm characteristics of their own generation and the events or circumstances that helped to foster those characteristics. (Results may vary greatly depending on your location, but one commonality is likely to be technology—the ability to be constantly tuned in to sound and available for phone calls, texts, and e-mails at all hours of day and night.)
8. Assign students to write descriptions of their generation; these can be as short as a paragraph or as long as a full-blown essay. Set a due date.

Analysis of "This Is the Beat Generation"

Directions: Use the following questions to analyze and respond to the essay by John Clellon Holmes.

1. How does Holmes introduce the essay? What effect does the introduction have on the reader?

2. Most people attribute the term *beat* as a description for a whole generation to Jack Kerouac, best known for his novel *On the Road*. How does Holmes define the term?

3. According to Holmes, what caused the evolution of the Beat Generation?

4. What does the allusion to T. S. Eliot contribute to the essay?

5. According to Holmes, how did the Lost Generation differ from the Beat Generation?

6. Explain the allusions to Arden and Babbitt.

7. What do the allusions to Dostoyevsky and Russian history suggest about the Beat Generation?

8. Describe the impact of the concluding paragraph. What is the author's dominant attitude toward the Beat Generation?

Style in "This Is the Beat Generation"

Directions: Read the commentary and the excerpts, and record annotations about the author's style.

In "This Is the Beat Generation," John Clellon Holmes comments about the Beat Generation's variety and tendency to extremes.

> The variety and the extremity of their solutions are only a final indication that for today's young people there is not as yet a single external pivot around which they can, as a generation, group their observations and their aspirations. There is no single philosophy, no single party, no single attitude. The failure of most orthodox moral and social concepts to reflect fully the life they have known is probably the reason for this, but because of it each person becomes a walking, self-contained unit, compelled to meet, or at least endure, the problem of being young in a seemingly helpless world in his own way.

Holmes concludes with thoughts about the future, but also with a positive view of the generation that was, after all, his own.

> This generation may make no bombs; it will probably be asked to drop some, and have some dropped on it, however, and this fact is never far from its mind. It is one of the pressures which created it and will play a large part in what will happen to it. There are those who believe that in generations such as this there is always the constant possibility of a great new moral idea, conceived in desperation, coming to life. Others note the self-indulgence, the waste, the apparent social irresponsibility, and disagree.
>
> But its ability to keep its eyes open, and yet avoid cynicism; its ever-increasing conviction that the problem of modern life is essentially a spiritual problem; and that capacity for sudden wisdom which people who live hard and go far possess, are assets and bear watching. And, anyway, the clear, challenging faces are worth it.[1]

[1]John Clellon Holmes, "This Is the Beat Generation," *New York Times Magazine* (November 16, 1952).

Lesson 28

Closing Seminar on Nonfiction Writing

Objectives

- To analyze a well-written piece of nonfiction that is of high personal interest
- To participate in discussion of nonfiction pieces selected by classmates

Notes to the Teacher

The world of nonfiction is huge, embracing books and essays on every subject imaginable. It includes some great writers, some good writers, and some whose work is not worth the reader's time; in it, we find biography and autobiography, history, letters, treatises, news reports, commentaries, meditations, and visuals such as political cartoons. Hopefully, students have encountered a variety of works, both short and lengthy, representing diverse geographical places and times in history. Hopefully, reading those works and writing their own short and long pieces have honed students' writing styles. During this lesson, which will take much more than one class day, students are asked to select a nonfiction essay or chapter of a book that they find deeply interesting, to share the piece with the class as a whole, and to analyze its content and writing style, including target audience and purpose.

The first challenge students will face is settling on a topic and a writer. You may want to allow them to spend the class period on the Internet or in a library as they search for possibilities, and you will definitely want to provide guidance to make sure that the selections are both worthwhile and appropriate for classroom discussion.

Depending on time constraints, you will want students to share their selections with the class and lead discussions of both content and the writing style. You may also want to ask students to write analytical papers and/or less formal reviews about the writings. The conclusion of the lesson suggests the use of Ellen Goodman's final piece when she retired as a widely syndicated columnist at the beginning of 2010. The article is available on the Internet; you will need to provide copies for students, read it aloud to them, or refer them to an online source.

Procedure

1. Point out that in the past weeks students have read many pieces, primarily nonfiction, and have completed a variety of writings. Explain that students are now ready to complete independent projects and prepare class presentations.
2. Distribute **Handout 71**, and ask students to complete the exercise individually. Allow students time to surf the Internet or survey a library regarding topics and authors. Emphasize that choices are by no means limited to those listed on the handout.
3. Share Web sites for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Awards, and point out that the sites identify nonfiction writers whose works have won or almost won these prestigious prizes.
4. Tell students that their task is to find an essay, article, or excerpt from a nonfiction book to share with the class as a whole—a piece of nonfiction writing that they find deeply interesting because of its topic and impressive because of the author's writing style. Identify all facets of the project as you intend it for your class (for instance, handouts of the writing, discussion questions, multimedia presentation, formal essay, etc.). Establish a schedule for presentations.
5. Explain that the term *soft news* designates articles and reports that deal with ordinary aspects of life, not with major events like shootings in schools, politicians being tried for illegal activities, human trafficking, and unfair hiring practices. Inform students that in 1980 Ellen Goodman, a columnist with the *Boston Globe*, received a Pulitzer Prize for commentary. During the ensuing decades, her columns were syndicated to more than four hundred newspapers, making her one of the most read writers in America.
6. Have students read or listen to her final column, printed January 1, 2010. Then distribute **Handout 72**, and conduct a discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. At first, it seems that Ellen Goodman should have published her last column on the last day of the old year. That way the new year could begin in a new way.
2. The Roman god Janus had two faces looking in opposite directions, aware simultaneously of both the past and the future. Goodman used the allusion with ease, and she, too, was looking both at the past and at her future.
3. We often associate rites of passage with youth, but they are characteristic of all ages when people move from one stage of life to another.

4. In common parlance, "letting herself go" usually meant putting on weight and giving little attention to grooming or dress. Goodman is reinventing the phrase to associate it with attainment of a kind of freedom, like unleashing a pet or uncaging a bird.
5. There is satisfaction, even pride, in being part of this generation that experienced so much.
6. If people have more time, what are they supposed to accomplish with it? What is its purpose?
7. Goodman wrote about ordinary events in her own life and in the lives of people across the nation, as well as about news and public figures.
8. One gets the feeling that writers never really stop writing, that Goodman wanted to enjoy some leisure, and that she would become involved in some causes.
9. Goodman wrote those words thirty years ago, when she could only imagine retirement.
10. Goodman plays with the "letting herself go" theme and ends with the energy of being determined to "go for it." The conclusion expresses optimism and happiness.

7. Conclude with discussion based on the following questions.
   - What was Ellen Goodman's intended audience? (She wrote for readers in general, especially for those who regularly read her newspaper columns.)
   - What was her purpose? (The article is a farewell, but it also aims to convey key insights. One is that there is a time to let go, and one can do so gracefully. Another is that every ending is also a beginning, and one that should be approached with energy and optimism.)
8. Point out that Goodman's is a gentle essay on an everyday topic that was far from everyday to the writer. Most adult readers see retirement as a goal far in the future or as a subject of some ambivalence looming just ahead. In addition, Goodman's regular readers would feel nostalgic at seeing her columns stop. The article accomplishes its purposes very nicely.
9. If you wish, distribute **Handout 73**, and review the rubric with the class.

I'd Like to Read . . .

Part A.

Directions: Circle the topics that seem interesting to you.

Hiking the Appalachian Trail
U.S. Civil War
Colonial America
Development of the polio vaccine
Watergate
Life of Helen Keller
South Africa and apartheid
Dalai Lama
Muckrakers
Treatments for cancer
Human trafficking
Endangered species
Rain forests
Campaign financing
Educational reforms
Impressionist art
Hippies in the 1960s
Conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War
The 9/11 disaster
Assassination of President John F. Kennedy
Civil rights movement
Changing rights of women
Benefits and requirements of home schooling
The grieving process
Characteristics of jazz

Part B.

Directions: Circle the names of authors whose works you would like to explore.

Maya Angelou
James Baldwin
William Buckley
Charles Darwin
Joan Didion
Annie Dillard
Frederick Douglass
W.E.B. DuBois
Loren Eiseley
Ralph Waldo Emerson
Ellen Goodman
John Hersey
George Kennan
Martin Luther King Jr.
Margaret Mead
Thomas Paine
Carl Sagan
J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur
Henry David Thoreau
George Will

A Farewell from Ellen Goodman

Directions: In 1980, *Boston Globe* columnist and editor Ellen Goodman received a Pulitzer Prize in journalism. For decades after that, she continued to write, and her column appeared in more than four hundred newspapers, making her one of the most widely read writers in the country for three decades. Use the following questions to discuss Goodman's column published on New Year's Day 2010.

1. Where is the surprise in the opening sentence?

2. Explain the allusion to Janus. What does it say about the writer?

3. In what sense is retirement a rite of passage?

4. How does Goodman toy with the phrase "letting herself go"?

5. What seems to be the tone in Goodman's comments about her generation?

6. Faced with a longer lifespan than previous generations, Goodman poses a question. What is it?

7. What were some of the topics in Goodman's columns?

8. What does she suggest that she will be doing in the future?

9. What is the source of the quotation near the end of the article?

10. Explain the conclusion.

Presentation Rubric

Directions: Use the following rubric as a tool to evaluate the presentation about a self-selected piece of nonfiction.

Element	5	3	1
Audience and Purpose	The selection reflects attention to the presenter's own audience of classmates.	The selection has merit, but it was of little interest to the class.	The selection reflects no attention to audience or purpose.
Attitude	The student demonstrated enthusiasm about and commitment to the writing.	The student seemed passive or unengaged about the writing.	The student was clearly just fulfilling an assignment and expressed no respect for the writing.
Presentation of Information	The student presented relevant information about the author and subject matter.	The amount of information about the writer and/or topic was insufficient to prepare readers for the writing.	The student presented no background, or the background was erroneous.
Focus of Discussion	The discussion addressed the key concepts of audience and purpose, as well as the writer's main points.	The discussion focused only on knowledge and understanding.	The discussion seemed unfocused and amorphous.
Discussion of Style	The discussion addressed stylistic aspects, including but not limited to figures of speech, imagery, allusions, diction, and syntax.	The discussion mentioned but did not delve into style.	The discussion paid no attention to the writer's craft.

Index of Authors and Works