

5-12-2012

Integrating Social Emotional Learning with English Language Arts: Creating Relevancy to Reading and Writing

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**Integrating Social Emotional Learning with English Language Arts:
Creating Relevancy to Reading and Writing**

by

Claire E. Bateman
May 12, 2012

A project submitted to the
Department of Education and Human Development of the
State University of New York College at Brockport
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Education

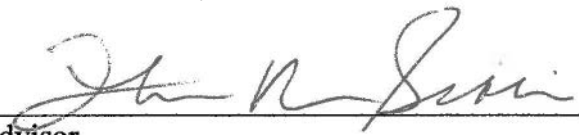
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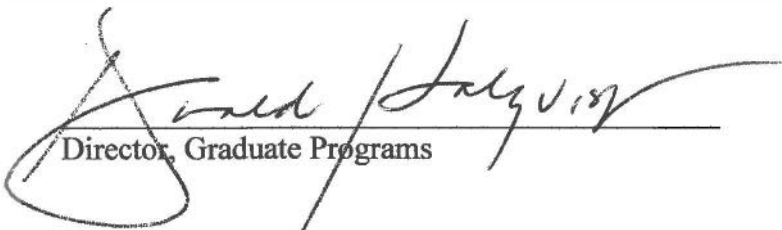
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

While emotions have not traditionally been addressed in English Language Arts curricula, there has been an acknowledgement that they play a significant part in learning and life success. A growing body of research, conducted over the past two decades, has indicated that social and emotional learning (SEL) initiatives have had a positive impact on classroom productivity and academic performance. A driving force behind the development of SEL programs is the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) which was founded in 1994 by Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence*, and educator/philanthropist Eileen Rockefeller Growald.

CASEL has identified five groups of inter-related core social and emotional competencies that SEL programming can promote: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Thus the short-term goals of SEL programming are to promote students' social-emotional skills and positive attitudes. In turn, this leads to improved adjustment and academic performance as reflected in more positive social behaviors, fewer conduct problems, less emotional distress, and better grades and achievement scores.

The universality of literature lends itself to the SEL initiative because it reflects the human condition and connects us to each other regardless of time or place. This approach can make reading more relevant and interesting to students by allowing them to access their own background and emotions thereby encouraging personal and intellectual growth. Recent research suggests that SEL programs can

improve children's success not only in school but in life as well. This project will look at the ways social and emotional learning initiatives can be incorporated into the study of literature while meeting New York State standards for English Language Arts.

Problem Statement and Significance of the Problem

Today's youth are facing deficits in their social and emotional skill sets due, in part, to the lack of solid support systems in their lives. Teachers are increasingly confronted with these deficiencies in ways such as students' inability to resolve conflict, bullying, and children's general lack of understanding of the causes and consequences of emotions. Concurrently, teachers must also focus on academic instruction in order to increase standardized tests scores to meet the requirements of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act. This dichotomy would be better addressed if the emotional education of children were also a requirement, as they are in some states, as "a massive survey of parents and teachers shows a worldwide trend for the present generation of children to be more troubled emotionally than the last: more lonely and depressed, more angry and unruly, more nervous and prone to worry, more impulsive and aggressive (Goleman xxiv)." There is tremendous opportunity for schools to educate children beyond academics if the appropriate attitudes and needed resources are made available.

The purpose of this project is to gain a greater understanding of the role emotions play in learning, to understand how social emotional learning concepts can be linked to curriculum, and to incorporate SEL concepts into an English Language

Arts (ELA) literature unit. Research over the past two decades has shown a direct correlation between the impact of social and emotional learning and academic performance. In classrooms where SEL is incorporated, productivity has increased as students have become more engaged in learning by accessing their own background and emotions. This is particularly relevant in ELA classes where, for example, literature offers an opportunity to discuss characters' pro- or anti-social behaviors and skills, as well as the way in which their feelings motivate their actions. The study of literature, and the ELA classroom, would appear to be central to increasing the emotional intelligence of today's students.

Rationale

I am pursuing the topic of social emotional learning through literature because I feel it is a critical pathway for engaging students on multiple levels. Whenever personal connections can be made to a subject, for example, through identification with literary characters and their emotions, the impact is far greater on the student than if the literature is presented for its own sake. Most literature involves conflict in which the resolution is an important part of the SEL lesson. "By using texts with strong characters with kids – not just adults – solving problems and taking on some big issues that may have cross-curricular applications, the kids not only connect to the stories but also really can learn a strategy that way, over time" (Vogel). These types of lessons are teaching literature and promoting emotional learning while, ideally, helping young people develop the skills they will need for life.

Summary

I am interested in creating greater relevancy to reading and writing for students, as they approach literature assignments, through the use of SEL initiatives. That relevancy will be constructed through awareness of social and emotional connections that they may have to the characters or situations in the text, while integrating these lessons with course work that promotes requirements of New York State standards. The hope is that greater interest is generated in the reading because personal connections are made to the text, social and emotional literacy is further developed, and a greater understanding of the literature's themes and author's intent is achieved. A literature-based unit plan that includes SEL competencies will be the focus of my project.

Definition of Terms

Affective development: Refers to the development of emotion or affect. This includes the development of emotion elicitation, emotional experience and the recognition of emotions in others. In particular the nature of feeling, mood, emotionally driven behavior, decision making, attention and self-regulation, as well as the underlying physiology and neuroscience of the emotions.

CASEL: The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is composed of a network of educators, scientists, policy makers, and concerned citizens that seeks to attain the following primary goals through research, scholarship, and advocacy: advance the science of Social Emotional Learning (SEL); translate scientific knowledge into effective school practices; disseminate information about scientifically sound SEL educational strategies and practices; enhance training so that educators effectively implement high-quality SEL programs; and increase coordination of SEL efforts among network.

Cognition: The mental process of knowing, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment; that which comes to be known, as through perception, reasoning, or intuition; knowledge.

Cognitive development: Cognitive development is the construction of thought processes, including remembering, problem solving, and decision-making, from childhood through adolescence to adulthood.

Flow: Flow is a state in which people become utterly absorbed in what they are doing, paying undivided attention to the task, their awareness merged with their actions.

Emotional Intelligence: The subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.

Self-efficacy: A person's estimate of his or her capacity to orchestrate performance on a specific task.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): A process for helping children and even adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. SEL teaches the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work, effectively and ethically. These skills include recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. They are the skills that allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

It is often assumed that if a child is an academic achiever, then there is a guarantee of future life success. Certainly academic success is a factor but equally, if not more, influential in determining life success is a person's ability to manage their emotions, make responsible decisions, and establish positive relationships with others. These are learned skills that research has shown to be effectively taught in the classrooms of primary and secondary schools. This literature review seeks to support the premise that there is significant value in building social-emotional skills in the academic realm, specifically through the use of literature in English Language Arts class.

Theories and Foundation for Implementing Social Emotional Learning Initiatives

Emotions play a powerful role in our decision-making processes and actions, an idea advanced by Daniel Goleman in his 1996 book *Emotional Intelligence*. He suggests that emotions may be more influential to life success than IQ. This is a result of the powerful effects that emotions have over the clarity of our thinking, our ability to make wise decisions, and the functioning of working memory. Emotions can immobilize rational thinking which stems from “eons of evolutionary advantage to having emotions and intuition guide our instantaneous response in situations where our lives are in peril – where pausing to think over what to do could cost us our lives (Goleman 9). In effect, there are two different types of intelligence, rational and emotional, that drive our thinking and behavior.

How well a child does in school is dependent upon many factors, but there is substantial research that indicates emotions play a significant role in their success or failure. Emotions can override the ability to think with rationality due to neural circuitry that is the same today as it was 10,000 years ago, the fight or flight response is an example. Strong emotion, such as anxiety and anger, can sabotage the ability of the brain to maintain working memory and we are unable to “think straight” when we are upset. This becomes a problem for children in school as “continual emotional distress can create deficits in a child’s intellectual abilities, crippling the capacity to learn” (Goleman 27). These children are then prone to loss of interest in school and friendships and susceptible to substance abuse or unlawful behavior since they are functioning in life with impaired emotional skills.

There is opportunity for educators to help children develop beyond the traditional standards of academic success. Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences proposes that there is a wide spectrum of intelligences that IQ tests do not address, such as those in the emotional domain. These other intelligences need to be recognized and developed to encourage success in realms of life that are as important, if not more fundamentally so, as academics. The personal intelligences, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, as defined by Gardner illustrate this assertion:

Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand other people: what motivates them, how they work, how to work cooperatively with them. Successful salespeople, politicians, teachers, clinicians, and religious leaders are all likely to be individuals with high degrees of interpersonal intelligence. *Intrapersonal intelligence* . . .

is a capacity to form an accurate, veridical model of oneself and to be able to use that model to operate effectively in life (Goleman 39).

Without a mastery of these intelligences, it is likely that poor life choices will be made. It is essential that these intelligences be cultivated in children in school.

The power of emotions, both negative and positive, have a tremendous impact on the way in which we function. Our emotions affect our ability to perform and can be the factor that determines success or failure in academics. Negative emotions can swamp the mind and impair the ability to think. As Goleman explains:

“The mental resources expended on one cognitive task – the worrying – simply detract from the resources available for processing other information; if we are preoccupied by worries that we’re going to flunk the test we’re taking, we have that much less attention to expend on figuring out the answers (84).

Likewise, positive feelings, such as enthusiasm and confidence, enhance the ability to think with clarity and can create success in both academics and life. “Good moods, while they last, enhance the ability to think flexibly and with more complexity, thus making it easier to find solutions to problems, whether intellectual or interpersonal (Goleman 85). These are aspects educators must be aware of in themselves and their students to maintain optimal functioning both in and out of the classroom.

Students who are hopeful and optimistic achieve greater academic success than those who are not. Emotional aptitude can influence achievement to as great an extent as intellectual aptitude, given the same range of intellectual abilities. A study done at the University of Kansas compared freshman students’ academic achievement

based on their levels of hope. The psychologist that performed the study found that those students who had high levels of hope had better first semester grades than those with low levels of hope. “Hope was a better predictor of their first-semester grades than were their scores on the SAT, a test supposedly able to predict how students will fare in college (and highly correlated with IQ)” (Goleman 86). Hopefulness and optimism bring motivation to keep going in the face of obstacles, facets that are not part of ability tests and not calculated in the equation of a student’s true potential. Fortunately, optimism and hope are dispositions that can be learned. “Developing a competency of any kind strengthens the sense of self-efficacy – the belief that one has mastery over the events of one’s life and can meet challenges as they come up – making a person more willing to take risks and seek out more demanding challenges” (Goleman 90).

Positive emotions can be assets in helping a student achieve academic success. If a child’s natural competencies can be identified, then it is likely that they will have a genuine interest in learning. In turn, there is the possibility that they can enter a state known as “flow” that will propel them to success. “Flow is a state in which people become utterly absorbed in what they are doing, paying undivided attention to the task, their awareness merged with their actions. Attention becomes so focused that people are aware only of the narrow range of perception related to the immediate task, losing track of time and space” (Goleman 91). A student who is in flow will achieve their academic potential because they are naturally drawn to the subject. Goleman suggests that this would be the ideal model for education as it harnesses

emotions in the service of performance and learning (90). Further, Howard Gardner “sees flow, and the positive state that typify it, as part of the healthiest way to teach children, motivating them from inside rather than by threat of promise or reward” (Goleman 94). The key, however, is identifying the student’s natural competencies and allowing spontaneous engagement in their learning.

The classroom is a social, as well as academic, setting for students and the teacher where the emotions of all interplay. We can exchange moods where, “just seeing someone express an emotion can evoke mood . . . This happens to us all the time – there’s a dance, a synchrony, a transmission of emotions. This mood synchrony determines whether you feel an interaction went well or not” (Goleman 116). Synchrony has powerful implications for teachers because they have the ability to set the mood in the classroom. If there is positive emotional rapport between teachers and students, the high level of synchrony will result in students feeling “happy, friendly, enthused, interested, and easygoing while interacting” (Goleman 116). These are the ideal characteristics of teacher-student interaction in a learning environment.

The emotional development of students also is a factor in their academic performance and social abilities. Children with high levels of ability to read nonverbal emotions operate at an advantage: “they were among the most popular in their schools and the most emotionally stable; they also did better in school, even though, on average, their IQs were not higher than those children who were less skilled at reading nonverbal messages – suggesting that mastering this empathic

ability smooths the way for classroom effectiveness” (Goleman 112). Conversely, students who do not have a high ability to read nonverbal emotions may not have the rapport with the teacher that the rest of the class does or be socially accepted by their peers. This can result in social isolation and academic struggle and is example where emotions can influence performance.

All stages of childhood, from early to late adolescence, create an individual’s emotional abilities that will be maintained throughout their life. Before children even begin their first day of formal education, their foundation for success may already be established. “A growing body of evidence showing that success in school depends, to a surprising extent, on emotional characteristics formed in the years before a child enters school” (Goleman 193). While emotional abilities continue to be acquired, those learned in the earliest years appear to be of greatest importance and are the essential foundation for all learning:

A report from the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs makes the point that school success is not predicted by a child’s fund of facts or precocious ability to read so much as by emotional and social measures: being self-assured and interested; knowing what kind of behavior is expected and how to rein in the impulse to misbehave; being able to wait, to follow directions, and to turn to teachers for help; and expressing needs while getting along with other children (Goleman 193).

A child’s readiness for school is highly dependent on their emotional abilities which result from their interactions with parents, caregivers, and pre-school teachers.

As students reach middle school and high school, their emotional development and abilities are of no less relevance to their functioning than in the

early childhood years. The areas of the brain develop at different rates throughout the span of childhood. “The onset of puberty marks one of the most sweeping periods of pruning throughout the brain. The frontal lobes – the seat of emotional self-control, understanding, and artful response – continue to develop into late adolescence until somewhere between sixteen and eighteen years of age” (Goleman 226). It is critical that this development not be hindered as the basic “wiring” of the brain is set and difficult to change later in life.

The emotional maladies of children beginning in the late twentieth century are caused, in large part, by the lack of solid support systems in their lives. Our society has become increasingly hectic and the inconsistency of daily family life has created instability in the lives of children. They are required to have coping skills that they are not emotionally equipped to handle, such as when both parents work long hours and they are left alone or left with an inept caregiver. As Goleman states, “there is doubling of divorce rate, a drop in parents’ time available to children and an increase in mobility. “You don’t grow up knowing your extended family much anymore. The losses of these stable forces of self-identification mean a greater susceptibility to depression” (Goleman 241). Depression, in turn, can interfere greatly with a child’s development and academic success: “depression interferes with their memory and concentration, making it harder to pay attention in class and retain what is taught. A child who feels no joy in anything will find it hard to marshal energy to master challenging lessons, let alone experience flow in learning (Goleman 243). This is

where there is opportunity for social emotional learning to positively impact a child, both academically and in life.

The value of incorporating social emotional learning is high as it educates children on their emotions and teaches them productive ways to deal with the challenges in their life. There are schools, such as The Nueva School, in San Francisco, that began classes in emotional education decades ago. “What a child learns in these classes is that moods like anxiety, sadness and anger don’t just descend on you without your having any control over them, but that you can change the way you feel by what you think” (Goleman 246). As Goleman points out, “bringing emotional literacy into school makes emotions and social life themselves topics, rather than treating these most compelling facets of a child’s day as irrelevant intrusions . . .” (263). Hence, emotional skills and abilities become as critical a learning competency as traditional academic subjects.

The Roots of Emotional Intelligence and Social Emotional Learning

Daniel Goleman’s work is based on the 1990 published findings of Peter Salovey, a psychologist at Yale University, and John Mayer, a psychologist at the University of New Hampshire, that they defined as “emotional intelligence.” Their definition of emotional intelligence consisted of three points: 1) understanding emotions: the ability to express emotions in self and understand emotions of others; 2) to regulate emotions in self and others; and 3) to use emotions in thinking, reasoning, problem solving and creativity.

In Daniel Goleman's video, "Emotional Intelligence: A New Vision for Educators," he describes how he expanded the three domains to five to help map them to what goes on in the classroom. These five domains are: 1) self-awareness; 2) managing your moods; 3) motivation; 4) empathy; and 5) social skills

"Strong longitudinal data shows that weaknesses in specific areas make children vulnerable to a number of problems " (EI: A New).

In his video, Goleman defines his five domains and reviews examples for each as they relate to children in a school environment:

1. Self-awareness – means knowing what you are feeling as you are feeling it. The example explained is of girls in 5th and 6th grade who literally confuse feeling anxiety, anger, boredom, and hunger. These girls are most at risk for developing eating disorders. If they are anxious or bored, they eat to soothe themselves and this sets them up for anorexia or bulimia in the future.
2. Managing your moods – the root meaning of emotion is "emot" which means "to move." To move is to want to do something, to have an impulse, and impulse control is the root skill of emotional intelligence.
3. Motivation – the ability to keep hopeful and optimistic despite setbacks. The example explained is of a pessimistic student whose thinking about his bad grade is that he is no good at this subject; an optimistic student whose thinking about his bad grade is that he just has to study harder, he can do something about the setback. Whether a child is pessimistic or optimistic is a predictor of that child developing depression.

4. Empathy – the ability to sense what other people are feeling and to respond accordingly. To be empathic means to “feel with.” If you cannot feel with others it suggests that you really do not care about them, and this is one of the most vital of human capacities.
5. Social skills – the ability to harmonize and to fit in with a group through cooperation, persuasion, or leadership. How adept a child is at joining a group is indicative of their social capabilities and imperative to their success in school. A child who is rejected in grammar school is three times more likely to drop out of school.

Social Emotional Learning Programs and Implications for Educators

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 pushed teachers to focus primarily on academics at the expense of time needed to help students also understand the social context of the subject matter. This compromises educators, however, because they “feel that they must choose between teaching content or teaching character; between engaging students in the study of great literature or nurturing great values; between preparing for high-stakes tests or preparing for the high-stakes tasks of learning to cooperate with peers, avoiding risk-taking behaviors, and engaging in positive civic activities (Devaney 107). There are clearly gaps in students’ grasp of life skills as discovered by a survey done in 2003 by the Search Institute which highlighted why we cannot afford to choose academics over social, emotional, and ethical development (Devaney 108):

- 29 percent feel that they think through consequences of their choices and plan ahead – but 71 percent do not.

- 35 percent say that they respect the values and beliefs of people from different races and cultures – but 65 percent do not.
- 24 percent report feeling that their teachers really care about them – but 76 percent do not.

The student populations of public schools are socio-economically and culturally diverse, as are student abilities, motivation, and engagement. Research indicates that many students become disengaged in the learning process as they progress from elementary to middle to high school. “It is estimated that 40 to 60 percent of urban, suburban, and rural high school students become chronically disengaged from school – not counting those who have already dropped out” (Payton 5). Further, approximately 30 percent of high school students participate in or experience high-risk behaviors (e.g., substance use, sex, violence, depression, attempted suicide) that interfere with school performance and jeopardize their potential for life success (Payton 5). These are frightening statistics that require action to prevent erosion of attitudes and behavior in the early to middle years of the educational process. Social and emotional learning programs are an effective way to improve attitude, behaviors, and academics when implemented properly.

A driving force behind the development of social emotional learning is the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, or CASEL, which was founded in 1994 by Daniel Goleman and educator/ philanthropist Eileen Rockefeller Growald. The goals of this organization are to “advance the science of social and emotional learning, expand coordinated, evidence-based SEL practice, and build a sustainable and collaborative organization to accomplish their mission” (Opengart 450).

What is social and emotional learning? Social and emotional learning is the process through which children and adults acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills to

(Payton 6):

- Recognize and manage their emotions.
- Set and achieve positive goals.
- Demonstrate caring and concern for others.
- Establish and maintain positive relationships.
- Make responsible decisions.
- Handle interpersonal situations effectively.

“These critical social-emotional competencies involve skills that enable children to calm themselves when angry, initiate friendships and resolve conflicts respectfully, make ethical and safe choices, and contribute constructively to their community”

(Payton 6).

CASEL has identified five groups of inter-related core social and emotional competencies that SEL programs should address (Payton 6):

- **Self-awareness:** accurately assessing one’s feelings, interests, values and strengths; maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence;
- **Self-management:** regulating one’s emotions to handle stress, controlling impulses, and persevering in addressing challenges; expressing emotions appropriately; and setting and monitoring progress toward personal and academic goals.
- **Social-awareness:** being able to take the perspective of and empathize with others; recognizing and making best use of family, school, and community resources.
- **Relationship skills:** establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation; resisting inappropriate social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict; and seeking help when needed; and
- **Responsible decision making:** making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions; applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations; and contributing to the well-being of one’s school and community.

Thus the short-term goals of SEL programming are to promote students' social-emotional skills and positive attitudes. These, in turn, lead to improved adjustment and academic performance as reflected in more positive social behaviors, fewer conduct problems, less emotional distress, and better grades and achievement scores.

English Language Arts Role in Promoting Social and Emotional Competencies

Literature lends itself well to the SEL initiative because it reflects the human condition and connects us regardless of time or place. It also evokes emotion, though not a subject traditionally associated with ELA teaching. With the past decades' "growing scholarly evidence of the impact of social and emotional learning on classroom productivity and academic performance, teachers have begun to weave such lessons into their literature segments" (Vogel). One teacher used the Young Adult book *The Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. The character Claudia tells her younger brother that, "I've picked you to accompany me on the greatest adventure of our mutual lives," referring to running away from home to take up residence in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. "This provides a starting point for discussion about community building, handling anger, listening, assertiveness, cooperation, mediation, celebrating differences, and countering bias" (Vogel). A key understanding of the value of incorporating SEL lessons into reading curriculum "can put students in touch with the universality of literature, its power to transport us to different experiences and to connect and even change human beings. After all, as Claudia says near the end of *From the Mixed Up Files*, "I didn't run away to come home the same" (Vogel).

SEL can be used effectively to teach literature regardless of the century it was written, as evidenced by a 9th-grade teacher at a high school in Bethesda, MD. Amy Corvino decided to give SEL a try as she taught *Romeo and Juliet* while still meeting the state's core learning goals for English. "Skills related to social awareness – perspective taking, empathy, appreciating diversity – were the very ones Romeo, as well as many of her students, struggled with daily. By linking appropriate experiences and prior knowledge, students might be better able to understand the book's themes and the author's intent.

The plan to integrate the SEL competency areas was well planned: Self-awareness and self-management, which include skills in identifying and managing emotions, goal setting, and coping with change and uncertainty, provided a good platform for exploring *Romeo and Juliet*. The competencies could also serve to increase the students' skills in comparing and contrasting, predicting, and finding evidence in the text. She could easily use many of the short stories in the new English textbook to address the remaining competency areas – relationship building and responsible decision making – and make the literature more relevant and interesting to students (Beland 19).

Since it is often difficult for people to discuss their emotions or emotional issues, Corvino also had to create a safe classroom environment for her students to feel comfortable and therefore more apt to express their thoughts and feelings about the literature. She found a way to integrate competencies with academic content through establishing with students both content and process:

Using a koosh ball to identify a speaker, students took turns defining emotional intelligence and its importance in life. They purposely said how they were "adding on" to one another's ideas or if and how they were "thinking differently" and suggesting a new idea. This

process helped them listen to what each person had to say, and made it safe to disagree. Rather than talking directly to the teacher in a question-and-answer format, students were encouraged to speak to one another in a classroom-wide conversation (Beland 20).

Corvino found that “providing opportunities for student voice and choice increases students’ motivation to learn in addition to improving classroom climate. Students actively build their understanding rather than passively receive information, and teachers facilitate learning rather than impart knowledge” (Beland 20). She found that her classes actually moved more quickly because students were coming to class better prepared and participating more in discussions. It was much clearer when they grasped material and were ready to proceed further with less time lost on addressing off-task student behavior.

Incorporating social emotional learning lessons into literature lessons can help students better understand the value of literature while helping them relate to it and learn from it. Illinois passed the Children’s Mental Health Act in 2003 “requiring the state board of education to develop SEL learning standards and all school districts to incorporate them into their educational plans” (Devaney 115). Ideally all states will eventually mandate SEL learning standards and teachers will be instructed on this process while still pursuing their certification. Research has found that, ultimately, academic performance, conduct issues, and student disposition will be enhanced by the investment of the incorporation of SEL concepts into their teaching. A key role of K-12 teachers is to prepare students for life beyond their primary and secondary schooling. SEL is a critical element in these efforts.

Chapter 3 – Application

Seedfolks Unit Plan Summary

This unit is based on the novel *Seedfolks*, a story about the richness of diversity, community, and the positive difference one person can make. This novel was chosen because it details the lives of thirteen different characters, told in first person narrative, and centers around a garden which serves as a metaphor for the growth and development of the individuals and the community. The challenges they encounter make this a fitting vehicle to incorporate SEL competencies, a key intent for this unit, hence the choice of this novel. There are five SEL competencies incorporated into the unit: social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Literature is the ideal place to integrate these competencies into academic content because we are able to connect to characters through their situations and emotions.

The overarching idea of this 15-lesson unit is that there is power in a diverse community. The essential questions addressed are:

1. How does diversity strengthen a community?
2. How can diversity weaken the community?
3. How can one person make a difference in a community?
4. How do individuals bring their own uniqueness to a community?
5. How does this novel relate to me?

It incorporates the standards of the New York State core curriculum but also integrates social emotional learning into five of the lessons as well.

The reading of the novel and majority of the learning activities will be done in class daily. The novel's short chapters will be read aloud by students for 10 to 15 minutes. While the chapters are brief, they are rich with detail about the character and their life. In addition to the reading, daily activities include: researching information on foreign countries, vocabulary word identification, answering comprehension questions, completing a character comparison chart, completing a character trait graphic organizer, and a journal prompt. Beyond these activities, there will also be lessons on one of the following on most days: social emotional learning, literary elements, and literary devices. Further, at the mid-point of reading the novel, there will be a stand-alone lesson on urban revitalization so that students can relate the novel to the real world. The culminating projects are comprised of writing about the characters of the novel to summarize learning and to further extend students' thinking about the issues addressed. It is my hope that this story about a garden that transforms a neighborhood leaves a lasting impression about the strength of diversity and the power of faith, rather than fear, in others.

Lesson Plan Outline

Daily Activities:

Pre-read:

1. Learning about character's country of origin
2. Vocabulary word exercise

Post-read or homework:

3. Comprehension questions
4. Character comparison chart
5. Character trait chart
6. Journal

Most days, one additional activity on either literary elements or devices or social emotional learning

Lesson 1: Building Background through Prereading Activities

This lesson will introduce the novel through a series of discussions and activities.

- Class discussion on what it means to be a neighbor and definition of community
- *Seedfolks* Picture Splash predicting activity
- Check Out the Framework – preview the book
- About the author – what do we learn about what we will be reading?
- Homework: learning about Vietnam – Kim's country of origin

Lesson 2: Chapter – Kim

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework – Kim's homeland map – Vietnam
- Vocabulary – have students work in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Kim (4 readers/2 paragraphs each)
- Character comparison chart – will need to retain throughout unit and fill in daily

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

SEL discussion and journaling

Journal prompt

Homework: Learning about Romania

Lesson 3: Chapter – Ana

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework – Ana's homeland map – Romania
- Vocabulary – have students work on in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Ana (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

Homework: Journal prompt on stereotyping

Lesson 4: Chapter – Wendell

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework
- Vocabulary – have students work in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Wendell (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

Literary Elements – Tone

Journal prompt regarding tragic experiences; discuss in groups of four – each share one experience

Homework: Learning about Guatemala

Lesson 5: Chapter – Gonzalo

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework – Gonzalo’s homeland map of Guatemala
- Frayer Model for vocabulary – have students work in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Gonzalo (4 readers)

Post reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

Literary elements: style – complete worksheet

Homework: Journal prompt regarding changing one’s opinion about others.

Lesson 6: Chapter – Leona

Prereading Activities:

- Vocabulary – have students work in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Leona (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

Literary Elements – Conflict

Literary Devices – Analogy and Point of View

Journal on importance of being heard.

Homework: Learning about Puerto Rico

Lesson 7: Chapter – Sam

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework – Royce’s homeland map of Puerto Rico
- Vocabulary – have students work on in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Sam (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Complete character trait “Open-Minded Portrait” and character comparison chart

SEL discussion and journaling

Homework: Learning about Haiti and journal prompt about people who are “connectors”

Lesson 8: *Seedfolks* & the “Mayor of Rust”

We will view a 7-minute video about Braddock, PA, a former steel town outside of Pittsburgh, that is being revitalized. This is being done through the initiatives of the town mayor, a Harvard graduate, who came to the town for an AmeriCorps assignment and decided to stay. The purpose of watching the video and reading a New York Times article about the town, is so students can connect the text to real life and gain a better understanding of the *Seedfolks* setting and challenges encountered in that environment.

Lesson 9: Chapter – Virgil

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework – Virgil’s homeland map - Haiti
- Vocabulary – have students work in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Virgil (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

Journal prompt on when students have failed at something important to them.

Homework: Learning about South Korea

Lesson 10: Chapter – Sae Young

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework – Sae Young’s homeland map – South Korea
- Vocabulary – words for this chapter covered in prior chapter (Virgil).

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Sae Young (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

Journal on sense of belonging (in class)

Lesson 11: Chapter – Curtis

Prereading Activities:

- Vocabulary – have students work in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Curtis (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

SEL discussion and journaling

Journal on how nature draws people together

Homework: Learning about England

Lesson 12: Chapter – Nora

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework – Nora’s homeland map – England
- Vocabulary – have students work in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Nora (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

Journal prompt on what made the garden a community.

Homework: Learning about Mexico

Lesson 13: Chapter – Maricela

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework – Maricela’s homeland map – Mexico
- Vocabulary – have students work in class and review

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Maricela (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

SEL discussion and journaling

Homework: Learning about Mexico and journal prompt on how setbacks can actually move us forward.

Lesson 14: Chapter – Amir

Prereading Activities:

- Review homework – Amir’s homeland map – India
- Vocabulary – have students work on during reading

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Amir (4 readers)

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

SEL discussion and journaling

Literary elements: theme – fill in worksheet

Homework: Journal prompt on breaking social rules.

Lesson 15: Chapter – Florence

Prereading Activities:

Reading the novel:

- Read Chapter: Florence (4 readers)
- Vocabulary – have students work on in class and review

Post-Reading:

- Answer comprehension questions
- Fill in character trait chart and character comparison chart

Literary elements: plot – fill in worksheet

Homework: Journal prompt

Culminating project

Lesson 1: Building Background - Prereading Activities

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the novel *Seedfolks*. This will be done through discussion and prereading activities.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- 24 Copies:
 - 1) *Seedfolks* novel
 - 2) Discussion about neighbors and communities - handout
 - 3) *Seedfolks* picture splash
 - 4) Check Out the Framework
 - 5) About the Author
 - 6) Homework: Vietnam questions for internet research
- PowerPoint slides picture splash and projector, overheads

Anticipatory Set or Activity

Begin unit with a discussion about neighbors and communities.

Lesson Activity

- Neighbors and community handout: discussion questions
- Picture splash activity: students will first be shown a PowerPoint slide of the pictures that will be used in this predicting activity. In small groups, students will discuss the meaning of the pictures and create three sentences that predict the relationship between the pictures and the book. The sentences will then be discussed by the class.
- Book discussion: students will be given a copy of the book and a handout with questions about it
- Discussion about the author and origins of this book.

Social Emotional Learning Competency

Lesson Focus: NA for this lesson.

Competency:

Skill(s):

Emotional Connection:

Integration Strategy - Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Assessment:

Assessment

The class discussions on neighbors and communities, the picture-splash predicting activity, and the book discussion will be indicative of understanding and readiness to begin this novel. Further, students will be asked if there are any questions or concerns about what they will be reading.

Closure

Ask students if pre-reading activities were helpful and interesting and if there are any questions relative to what we will be reading over the next three weeks.

Homework:

- Give students map of country of origin for Kim to research for next class.
- Let students know they will need three-ring binder for handouts and loose-leaf lined paper for journal section.

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

Discussion About Neighbors & Communities

1. **What does it mean to be a neighbor?**
2. **What are your relationships like with your neighbors?**
3. **What does community mean to you?**
4. **What is the dictionary definition of community?**
5. **What makes a neighborhood a community?**

***Seedfolks* Picture Splash**

- Students will be shown a PowerPoint slide with the pictures used for the picture splash predicting activity. The same pictures will be included on the worksheet that students are also given.
- In small groups, students will discuss what they think the pictures mean in regards to the book *Seedfolks*.
- In the same small groups, students will create 3 sentences that predict the relationship between the pictures and the book.
- Finally, as a whole class, we will discuss the sentences the students created.

Picture Splash

Students will work in small groups to generate complete statements that predict the relationship between the pictures presented and the topic of the book *Seedfolks*.



Based on the pictures above, work with your group to create 3 sentences predicting topics addressed in the book *Seedfolks*.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Source: <http://te845fs10.wiki.educ.msu.edu/Seedfolks+-+Curriculum+Projects>

Check Out the Framework

Items to Check Out	Record Information and/or Reaction
Title: Any predictions, questions, clues, or connections?	
Author: Are you familiar with the author? Is the author still living? Do you know any interesting facts about the author?	
Art Work on Cover: Any clues or guesses? What are your predictions?	
Blurb on the back: Any interesting facts? Any descriptive words that catch your attention? What are your predictions?	
Chapter titles and drawings on the first page: What is the significance?	

Source: <http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/checking%20out%20the%20framework.htm>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Paul Fleischman was born on September 5, in Monterey, California. His father was the award-winning author, Sid Fleischman. When Paul Fleischman was growing up, his father often read to him, giving him a life-long love of literature. The family owned a printing press, which inspired Paul to see his own work in print. As a child, he enjoyed listening to a short-wave radio, tuning into stations around the world. This helped develop his appreciation of different languages and cultures. Readers can see his love of foreign and native words in his poetry and his fiction. As an adult, Paul Fleischman attended college at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of New Mexico, majoring in English. He also traveled widely, gaining new insights and experiences. Before he became a professional writer, he worked as a bookstore clerk and proofreader. Paul Fleischman explains that his books involve a good deal of writing and re-writing by hand. Sometimes, he will spend an entire day working on one page of a manuscript. He explores many subjects in his writing, but is especially drawn to topics about history, nature, and personal growth. He has received many awards for his writing, including the Newberry Medal for a collection of poetry, *Joyful Noise*; the Silver Medal for *The Half-a-Moon Inn*; and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for *Saturnalia*.¹

Excerpts from: "From Seed to *Seedfolk*" by Paul Fleischman 2002²

I'm a word person. When I'm eating alone, I need to be reading something – anything. Mere chewing seems idleness. So it was that I found myself, five years ago, between books, with no ghost of an idea for the next, having lunch in a bagel shop that, astoundingly, offered no jam-stained, pre-owned copy of the San Francisco *Chronicle* for those with my affliction. Like the bagel, serendipity is one of my four

¹ *Seedfolks* Student Study Packet, <http://ncta.osu.edu/lessons/korea/lit/Draudt-Korea.pdf>

² Fleischman, Paul, "From Seed to *Seedfolks*" (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2002) p. 89.

food groups. It's usually closest at hand when farthest from my mind. In mild disgust, I resigned myself to a copy of a New Age tabloid – no sports section, no movie reviews – when something caught my eye: an article about a local psychotherapist who used gardening to help her clients. The story mentioned physicians in ancient Egypt prescribed garden walks for mentally ill patients. Both my heart and brain began to race. The seed for *Seedfolks* had been planted.

I brought home the newspaper, put the article in my file, and wrote a few notes in my idea notebook. But *Seedfolks* actually had its start many years before. My parents were both dedicated gardeners. In the summertime, in Santa Monica, California, I could pick plums, grapes, oranges, berries, loquats, apricots, figs, tangerines – and never leave my yard. Little by little, my parents had plowed under the front lawn in search of more planting space. We were – and still are – the only house in the neighborhood with a cornfield in the front yard.

My father, Sid Fleischman, is a writer of children's books as well. For him, gardening offered a recess break from his study, along with the pride and pleasure of growing one's own food. Often over dinner he would tally up the number of ingredients that had come from our soil. Writers, like gardeners, tend to be self-taught and value self-sufficiency.

I learned to write from my father, but I'm no less a product of my mother, who took her gardening skills into the community. When I was in high school, my mother volunteered at a therapeutic garden in a veterans' hospital, showing men who'd served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam how to raise vegetables and flowers, helping to heal damaged psyches in the process.

Lesson 2: Chapter - Kim

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the first chapter about Kim. Students will gain an understanding of her character, as well as an introduction to the literary elements of character and setting. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt. This lesson will also address the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competency of self-awareness.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Vocabulary words
 2. Comprehension Questions
 3. SEL – Kim’s self-awareness quotes
 4. Literary elements on characters
 5. Character Comparison Chart – passed out one time; kept for daily use
 6. Character Trait Organizer
 7. Daily journal prompt
 8. Romania map
- PowerPoint presentation, overheads, and projector

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- The class will open with a discussion on what it feels like when you do not feel like you belong – what do you do?
- The class will review and discuss the character’s country of origin map to gain an understanding of who they are in the context of their nationality.

Lesson Activity

1. As a prereading activity, students will complete the vocabulary words exercise to prepare for understanding the words in this chapter.
2. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the eight paragraphs among four students who would like to read.

3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions on their own, and then the class will engage in discussion about them.
4. SEL activity on self-awareness. Students will identify their own past feelings of isolation with Kim's isolation. See SEL section for activities.
5. Mini-lesson on literary elements of setting and characterization; give students "Character Comparison Chart" and "Character Trait" graphic organizer handouts for homework.
6. Have students answer daily journal prompt.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: Assessing Kim's situation and understanding her emotions.

Competency: Self-Awareness

Skill(s):

- Having a sense of identity
- Identifying feelings and emotions
- Responding appropriately and productively to feelings

Emotional Connection:

Kim feels a sense of isolation from her family since she does not have the same emotions about the loss of her father that they do. Further, she does not have a sense of belonging to her father since she never knew him and will never be able to meet him. She seeks validation from her father through the project she started in the vacant lot.

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

- Find quotes that support the ideas in the emotional connection section.
- Discuss what Kim was feeling and why.
- Discuss her actions relating to her feelings.

Student Reflection:

Journal response: Ask students to write about a time when they felt isolated. How did they feel? What did they do to change the way they felt? Were they productive? Could they have handled their situation differently and/or what did they learn from it?

Ask a few students to share if they are comfortable.

Assessment: A sense of understanding will be confirmed if students discuss Kim's self-awareness of her feelings and how she reacted to them with accuracy. They will also be able to recall their own similar experience to Kim and identify their feelings at the time.

Assessment

- Class review and discussion of the vocabulary words will ensure understanding of the difficult words in the chapter.
- Class discussion of the post-reading questions will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.

Closure

Ask the class how they liked the first chapter and if there are any questions about what was covered in class today. Also ask if there are any questions about the homework assignments.

Homework:

- Give students map of country of origin for Ana to research for next class.
- Character graphic organizers

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

Literary Elements PowerPoint Presentation:

http://members.tripod.com/dscorpio/images/literary_elements.ppt

Vocabulary Words

The following are sentences taken from the first chapter about Kim.

1. Guess the meaning of the **bold** words.
2. Look up the meaning of each **bold** word in the dictionary and choose the best meaning for the word; write it on the "Dictionary meaning" line.
3. Write a sentence with the word.

1. I stood before our family **altar**.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

2. I stared at my father's photograph – his thin face, **stern**, lips latched tight, his eyes **peering** permanently to the right.

Guess (stern) _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

Guess (peering) _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

3. The candles and the **incense** sticks, lit the day before to mark his death anniversary, had burned out.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

4. An icy wind **teetered** trash cans and turned my cheeks to marble.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

5. I walked half a block, then crossed the street and reached the **vacant** lot.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

6. I stood tall and **scouted**.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

7. I nearly stepped on two rats **gnawing** and frozen.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

8. And I **vowed** to myself that those beans would thrive.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

Questions - Kim

1. Why did Kim's family have an altar?
2. Describe the neighborhood that Kim lives in.
3. How does Kim feel about her father?
4. Why does she plant lima beans in a vacant lot?
5. What does she want from her father?

Literary Element: Characterization

Please fill in the character trait chart. Keep in mind the factors in analyzing characters: physical appearance, personality, personal history, motivation, relationships, conflict, does character change?

Please also fill in the character comparison chart to keep all the characters organized.

Mini-Lesson on Literary Elements

What parts make up a story?

Literary Elements

Characterization

Setting

Tone

Style

Conflict

Theme

Plot

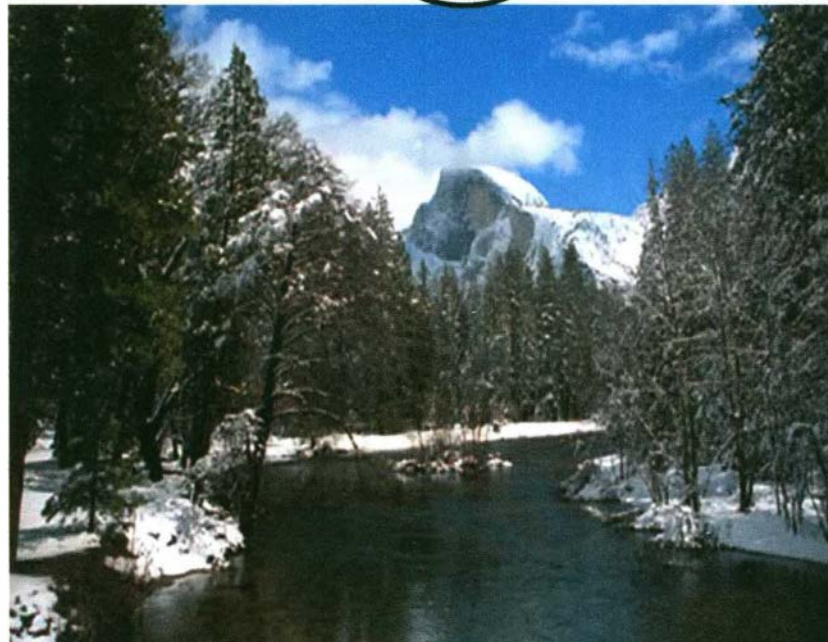


Setting

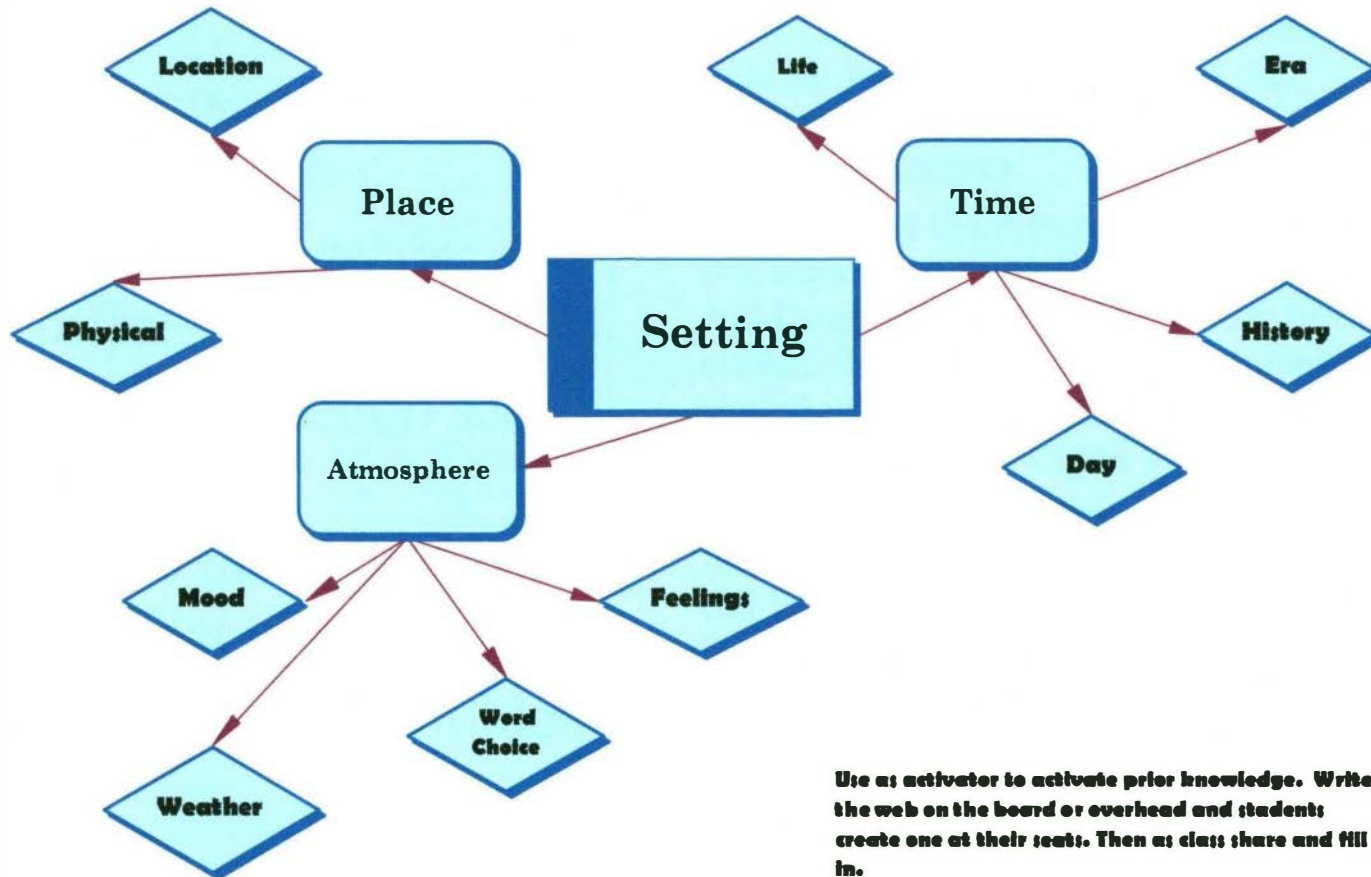
Time and place are where the action occurs

Details that describe:

- ✓ Scenery
- ✓ Customs
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ Dialects
- ✓ Weather
- ✓ Time of day
- ✓ Time of year



Elements of a Setting



Use as activator to activate prior knowledge. Write the web on the board or overhead and students create one at their seats. Then as class share and fill in.

Functions of a Setting

- To create a mood or atmosphere
- To show a reader a different way of life
- To make action seem more real
- To be the source of conflict or struggle
- To symbolize an idea

We left the home place behind, mile by slow mile, heading for the mountains, across the prairie where the wind blew forever.

At first there were four of us with one horse wagon and its skimpy load. Pa and I walked, because I was a big boy of eleven. My two little sisters romped and trotted until they got tired and had to be boosted up to the wagon bed.

That was no covered Conestoga, like Pa's folks came West in, but just an old farm wagon, drawn by one weary horse, creaking and rumbling westward to the mountains, toward the little woods town where Pa thought he had an old uncle who owned a little two-bit sawmill.

Excerpt from "The Day the Sun Came Out" by D. Johnson

Types of Characters

- **Protagonist** – Hero
- **Antagonist** – Adversary of the Hero
- **Foil** – Contrasts with the Protagonist
- **Stereotype** - a character with generalized traits (characteristics that make the character a group representative rather than an individual).
- **Round characters** — A major character in a work of fiction who encounters conflict and is changed by it.

Types of Characters

- **Flat characters** – A minor character in a work of fiction who does not undergo substantial change or growth in the course of a story; supporting role to main character.
- **Static** – Same as “flat” characters
- **Dynamic** – Undergoes change in the story

Characterization

- A writer reveals what a character is like and how the character changes throughout the story.

- Two primary methods of characterization:
 - ✓ Direct- writer tells what the character is like.

 - ✓ Indirect- writer shows what a character is like by describing what the character looks like, by telling what the character says and does, and by what other characters say about and do in response to the character.

Direct Characterization

...And I don't play the dozens or believe in standing around with somebody in my face doing a lot of talking. I much rather just knock you down and take my chances even if I'm a little girl with skinny arms and a squeaky voice, which is how I got the name Squeaky.

From "Raymond's Run" by T. Bambara

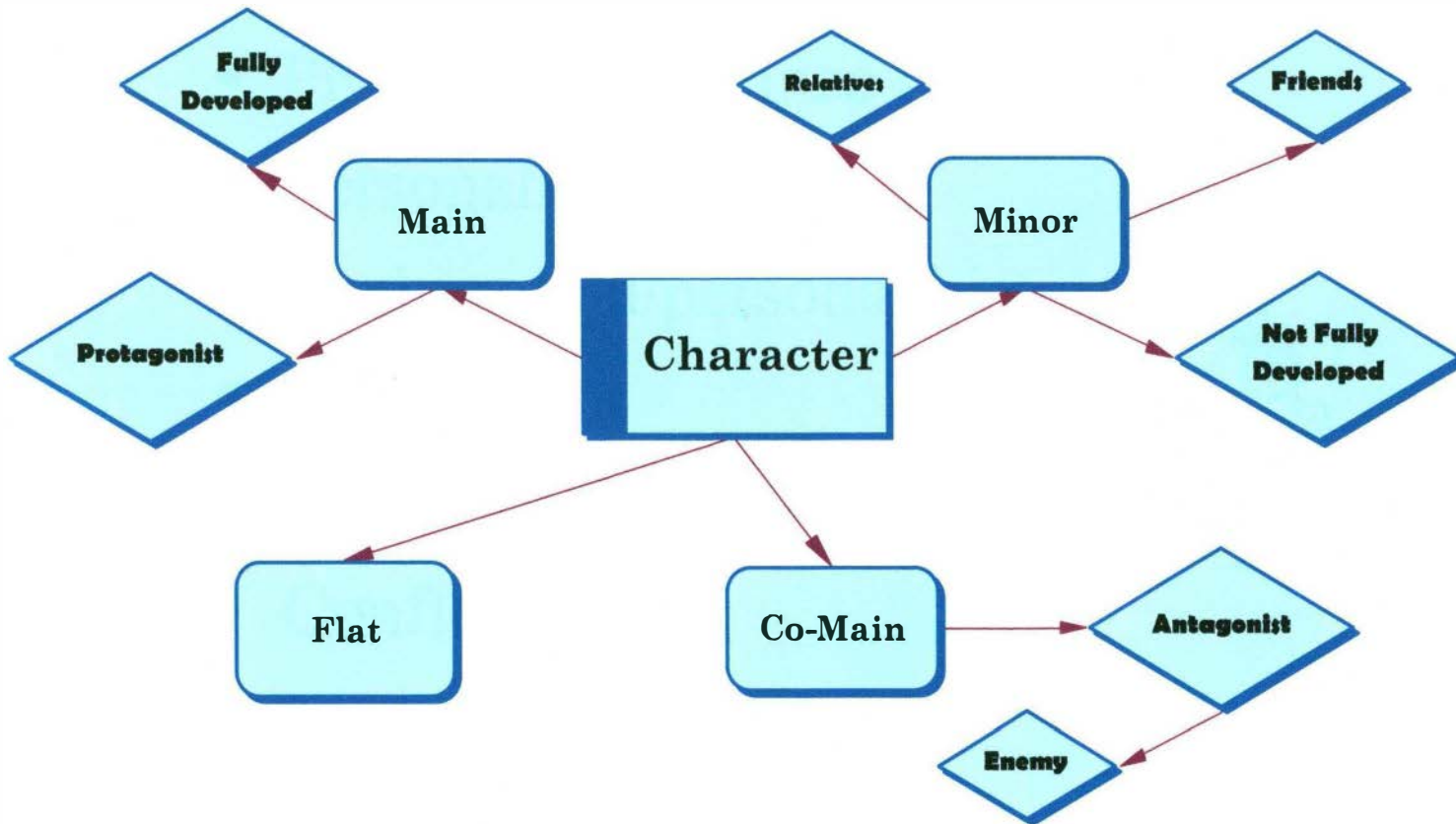
Indirect Characterization

The old man bowed to all of us in the room. Then he removed his hat and gloves, slowly and carefully. Chaplin once did that in a picture, in a bank--he was the janitor.

From “Gentleman of Rio en Medio” by J. Sedillo



Elements of Character



Factors in Analyzing Characters

- Physical appearance of character
- Personality
- Background/personal history
- Motivation
- Relationships
- Conflict
- Does character change?



Seedfolks Character Comparison Chart

Name	Ethnicity	What plant does this character choose to grow?	Why do they come to the garden? / What feelings do they show?	What does this character gain from being in the garden?	How does this individual impact his/her community?
Kim					
Ana					
Wendell					
Gonzalo					

Name	Ethnicity	What plant does this character choose to grow?	Why do they come to the garden? / What feelings do they show?	What does this character gain from being in the garden?	How does this individual impact his/her community?
Leona					
Sam					
Virgil					
Sae Young					

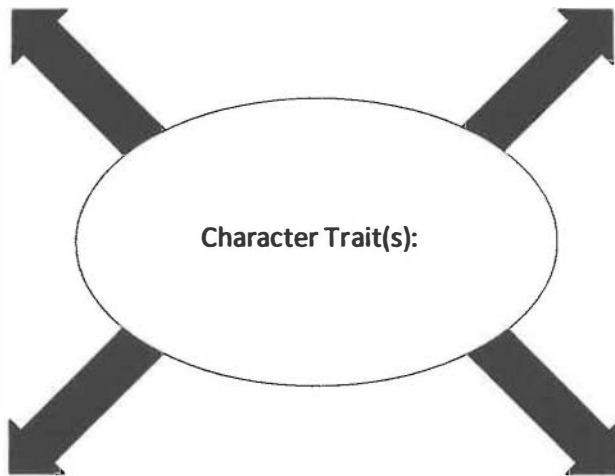
Name	Ethnicity	What plant does this character choose to grow?	Why do they come to the garden? / What feelings do they show?	What does this character gain from being in the garden?	How does this individual impact his/her community?
Curtis					
Nora					
Maricela					
Amir					
Florence					

Source: <http://9thlitcompgreene.pbworks.com/f/Seedfolks+Activities+for+9th+Grade.pdf>

Character Trait Chart

Character: Kim

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Directions: Write the character's personality trait(s) or attribute(s) in the center. Find four pieces of evidence in the text which reveal the trait or attribute. Write the evidence on the lines provided. (Include the page number on which you found the evidence.)

Lesson 3: Chapter - Ana

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the second chapter about Ana and complete the activities that will help gain an understanding of her character. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt. This lesson will also address the literary element of setting that was presented during yesterday's class.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Vocabulary words
 2. Comprehension Questions
 3. Character Trait Organizer
 4. Literary elements: **setting**
 5. Daily journal prompt
- Projector and overheads

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- The class will open with a brief review of Kim's chapter and a review of the character graphic organizers about Kim that were assigned for homework.
- The class will review and discuss Ana's country of origin map to gain an understanding of who she is in the context of her Romanian heritage and her family's immigration to Cleveland.

Lesson Activity

1. As a prereading activity, students will complete the vocabulary words exercise to prepare for understanding the words in this chapter and for the next chapter on Wendell (since there are only two challenging words in his chapter). We will review and discuss before reading.
2. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension

questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.

4. Have students work on the graphic organizers in pairs as well and then discuss as a class.
5. Have students work alone on Ana's setting on the "Literary Elements" worksheet. Discuss as a class.
6. Journal prompt on stereotyping will be homework.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: NA for this lesson

Competency:

Skill(s):

Emotional Connection:

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Journal response:

Assessment

Assessment

- Class review and discussion of the vocabulary words will ensure understanding of the difficult words in the chapter.
- Class discussion of the post-reading questions will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.
- Discussion of the character graphic organizer and setting question will imply that students understand these two elements.

Closure

Will ask the class what they have learned so far about this neighborhood in Cleveland and ask if anyone needs clarification on any topic. Also ask if there are questions about the homework assignments.

Homework:

- Complete the daily journal prompt on stereotyping for homework.

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

Ana's Country of Origin

Learning About Romania

Please use library resources (e.g., atlas, Internet) to answer the following questions:

1. What continent is the country on?
2. What is the largest body of water near this country?
3. What is the area of this country?
4. How many people live there?
5. What is the climate like?
6. What kind of government?
7. What do they export?
8. Draw a picture of this country's flag in the box provided.



Source: <http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Seedfolks-by-Paul-Fleischman-Literature-Unit-Keys>

Vocabulary Ana & Wendell

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. parole | a. To cut, notch, slice, chop, or sever (something) with or as with heavy, irregular blows. |
| 2. lad | b. To become limp and drooping, as a fading flower; wither. |
| 3. hobbled | c. An optical device consisting of two small telescopes fitted together side by side. |
| 4. hacked | d. To walk lamely; limp. |
| 5. binoculars | e. A boy or youth. |
| 6. wilted | f. The conditional release of a person from prison prior to the end of the maximum sentence imposed. |

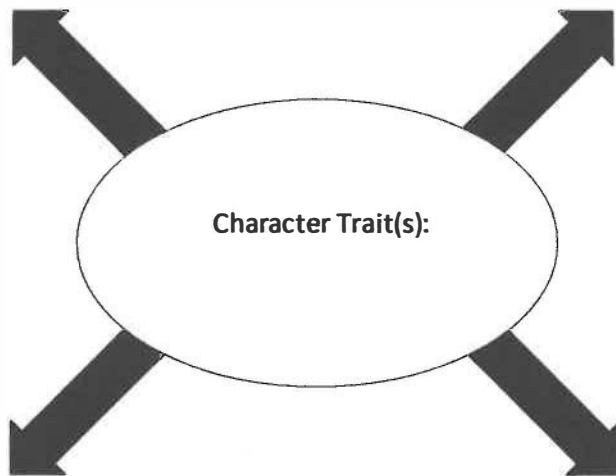
-
1. After I broke my leg, I had to _____ around with crutches.
 2. When I am in the country, I like to use my _____ to watch birds.
 3. Everybody felt relieved when _____ was denied for the burglar.
 4. I _____ through the brush with a stick when I was walking in the woods.
 5. I forgot to water the garden and the next day my flowers were _____.
 6. When I was a _____, my father used to take me fishing.

Questions – Ana

1. In what ways has Ana's neighborhood changed since she was a child?
2. Why was Ana suspicious of Kim?
3. How did Ana feel when she realized what Kim had buried?
4. Why did Ana buy binoculars?

Character Trait Chart

Character: Ana



Directions: Write the character's personality trait(s) or attribute(s) in the center. Find four pieces of evidence in the text which reveal the trait or attribute. Write the evidence on the lines provided. (Include the page number on which you found the evidence.)

Lesson 4: Chapter - Wendell

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the third chapter about Wendell and, through a series of activities, understand his character and situation. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, and completing a daily journal prompt. This lesson will also present tone as a literary element to further students' understanding of the writing process.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Comprehension Questions
 2. Character Trait Organizer
 3. Literary elements: tone
 4. Daily journal prompt
 5. Guatemala map
- Projector and PowerPoint presentation

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- The class will open with a brief review of the first two chapters.
- We will discuss the homework journal assignment on why stereotyping can be harmful to both the believer and the victim.

Lesson Activity

1. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
2. Vocabulary words were minimal and included with Ana's, so no review today.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. Have students work on the graphic organizers in pairs as well and then discuss as a class.
5. Have students work alone on the tone of Wendell's chapter on the "Literary

Elements” worksheet. Discuss as a class.

6. Journal prompt regarding tragic experiences. Discuss in small groups of four; each group shares one answer.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: NA for this lesson

Competency:

Skill(s):

Emotional Connection:

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Journal response:

Assessment

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading questions will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.
- Discussion of the character graphic organizer and tone question will ensure students’ understanding of these two elements.

Closure

Will ask the class what the connections are between Kim, Ana, and Wendell. Also ask if there are questions about the novel thus far.

Homework:

- Give students map of Guatemala to research for next class.

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

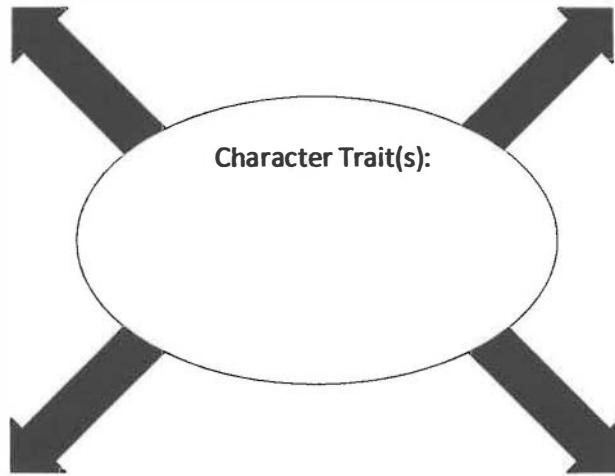
Questions – Wendell

1. Why does Wendell not like the phone to ring?
2. What do Ana and Wendell have in common?
3. Why was Wendell by Kim's planting, and what did Ana suggest he do?
4. What did the garden do for Wendell?

Character Trait Chart

Character: Wendell

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Directions: Write the character's personality trait(s) or attribute(s) in the center. Find four pieces of evidence in the text which reveal the trait or attribute. Write the evidence on the lines provided. (Include the page number on which you found the evidence.)

Source: <http://www.educationoasis.com>

Mini-Lesson on Literary Elements

What parts make up a story?

Literary Elements

Characterization

Setting

Tone

Style

Conflict

Theme

Plot



Tone

- Suggests an attitude toward the subject which is communicated by the words the author chooses.
- Part of the range of tone includes playful, somber, serious, casual, formal, ironic.
- Important because it designates the mood and effect of a work.

Lesson 5: Chapter - Gonzalo

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the fourth chapter about Gonzalo and gain an understanding of his character and situation. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt. This lesson will also present the literary element of style to further students' understanding of writing fiction (and other literary forms).

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Vocabulary – Frayer Model and word list
 2. Comprehension Questions
 3. Character Trait Organizer
 4. Literary elements PowerPoint presentation: style
 5. Daily journal prompt
- Projector and PowerPoint Presentation, overheads

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- The class will open with a question and answer about what has happened so far in the novel.
- We will discuss findings of Guatemala to give background on Gonzalo and his family.

Lesson Activity

1. Present the pre-read Frayer Model strategy to help students understand the challenging vocabulary words. Model how it is used. Have students share their answers.
2. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.

4. Have students work on the character graphic organizers in pairs and then discuss as a class.
5. Have students work alone on the style of Gonzalo's chapter on the "Literary Elements" worksheet. Discuss as a class.
6. Journal prompt regarding changing one's opinion about others; assign as homework.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: NA for this lesson

Competency:

Skill(s):

Emotional Connection:

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Journal response:

Assessment

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading questions will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.
- Discussion of the character graphic organizer and style question will ensure that students' understanding of these two elements is accurate.

Closure

Ask students how they like the novel so far and if any clarification is needed. Also ask if there are questions about the journal homework assignment.

Homework:

- Journal on when your opinion of someone changed over time. Why did that happen?

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

Frayer Model: educationoasis.com

Gonzalo's Country of Origin

Learning About Guatemala

Please use library resources (e.g., atlas, Internet) to answer the following questions:

1. What continent is the country on?
2. What is the largest body of water near this country?
3. What is the area of this country?
4. How many people live there?
5. What is the climate like?



6. What kind of government?
7. What do they export?
8. Draw a picture of this country's flag in the box provided.



Source: <http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Seedfolks-by-Paul-Fleischman-Literature-Unit-Keys>

Fruyer Model

A graphic organizer used for word analysis and vocabulary building. This four-square model prompts students to think about and describe the meaning of a word or concept by defining the term and describing its essential characteristics as well as providing examples and non-examples of ideas. This strategy stresses understanding words within the larger context of a reading selection by requiring students, first, to analyze the items (definitions and characteristics) and, second, to synthesize/apply this information by thinking of examples and non-examples.

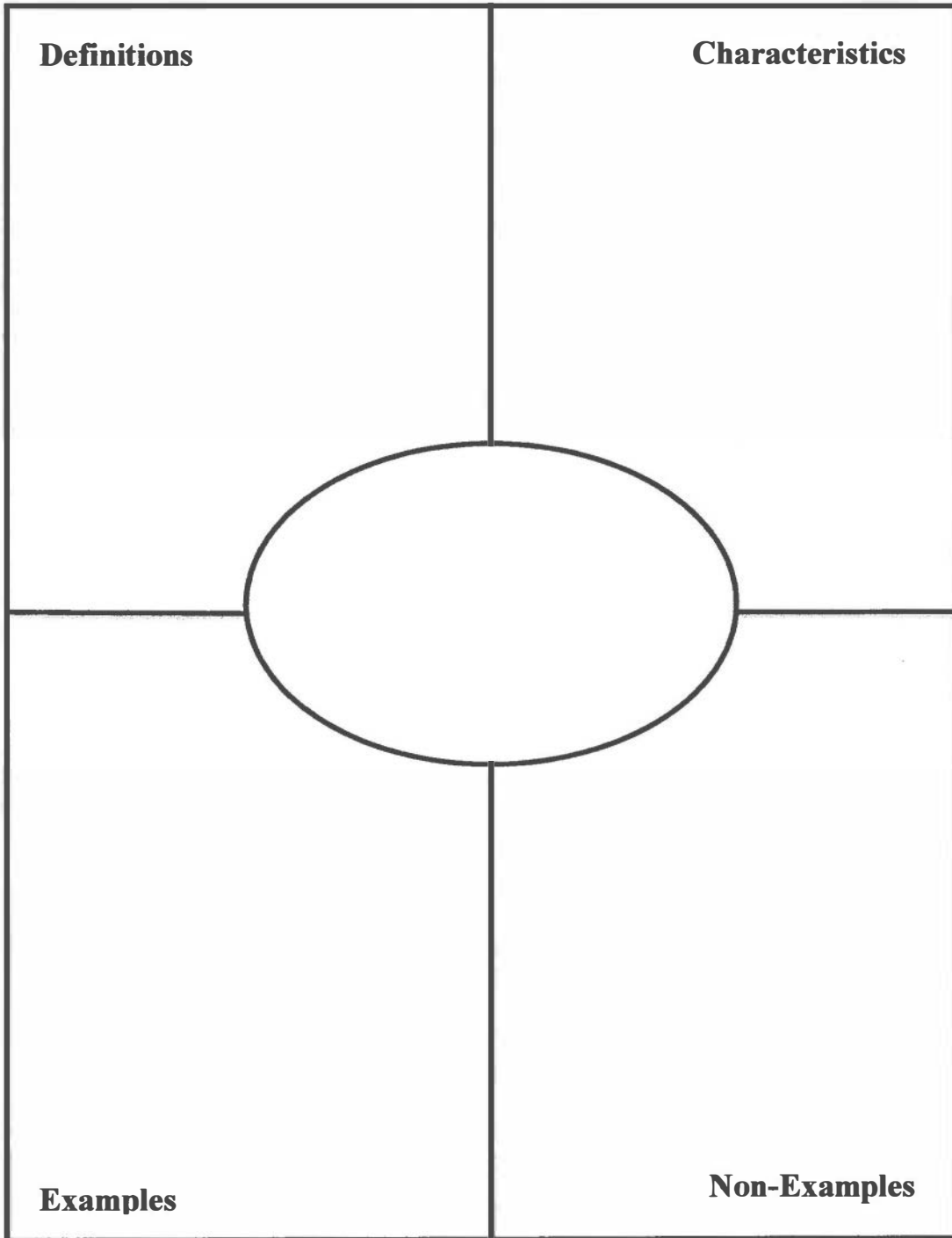
Procedure:

1. Explain the Fruyer model to the class. Use a common word to demonstrate the various components of the form. Model the type and quality of desired answers when giving this example.
2. Select a list of key concepts from a reading selection. Write this list on the board and review it with the class before students read the selection.
3. Divide the class into pairs. Assign each pair one of the key concepts and have them read the selection carefully to define this concept. Have these groups complete the four-square organizer for this concept.
4. Ask the student pairs to share their conclusions with the entire class. Use these presentations to review the entire list of key concepts.

Vocabulary Words for Gonzalo's Chapter:

Equation
Bodega – give students definition
Pueblo – give students definition
Plaza
Pawnshop
Gestures
Trowel
Troughs

Fruyer Model Diagram

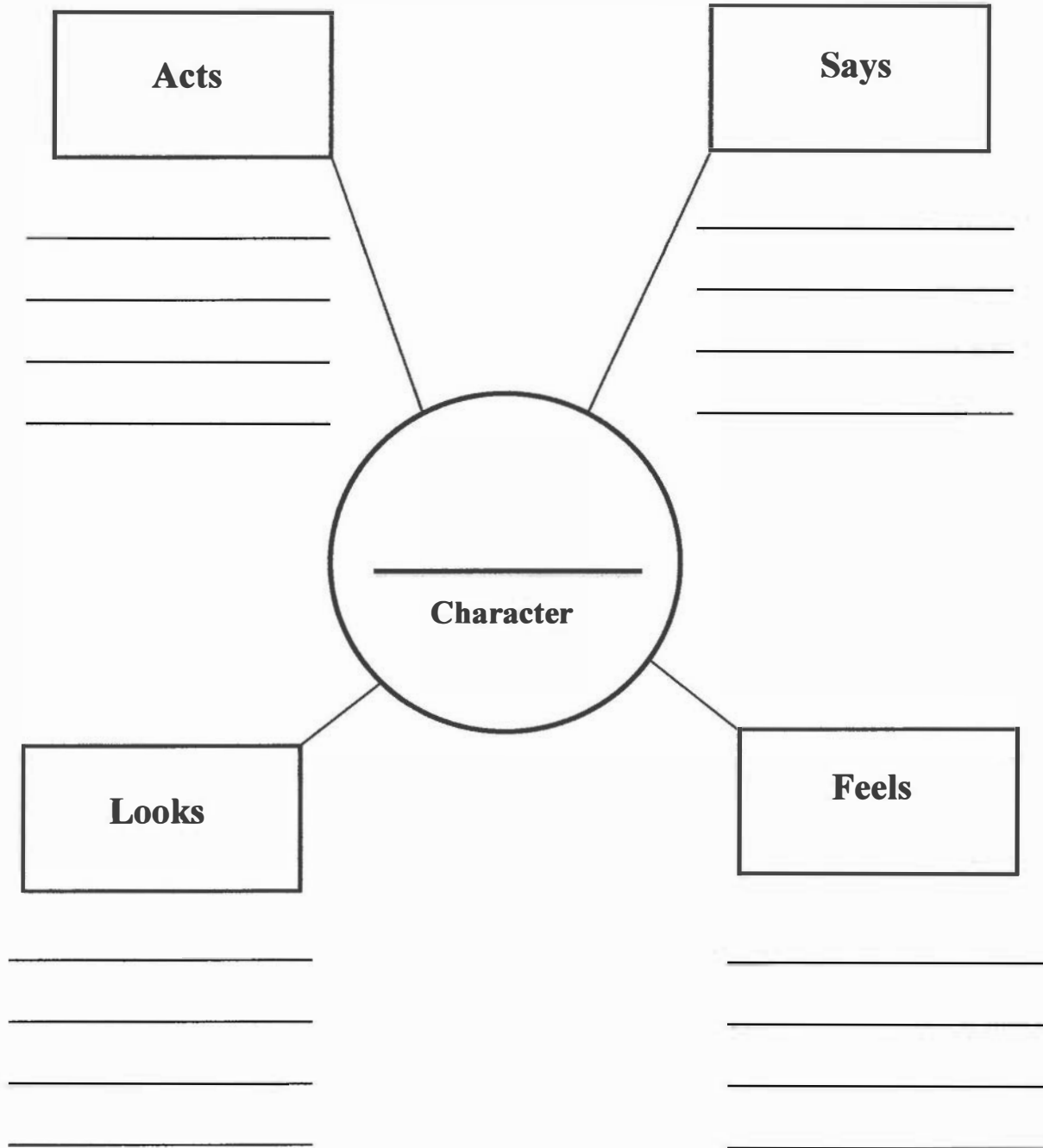


Questions – Gonzalo

1. What can Gonzalo do that the men in his family have difficulty with?
2. What are some of the tasks Gonzalo was asked to do in his family?
3. What did Gonzalo mean when he said, “The older you are, the younger you get when you move to the United States?”
4. How did the garden affect Tio Juan and why?
5. What caused Tio Juan “to change from a baby back into a man”?

Character Attribute Web - Gonzalo

Directions: The attribute web below will help you gather clues about Gonzalo. Fill in the blanks with words and phrases that tell how he acts and looks, as well as what he says and feels.



Mini-Lesson on Literary Elements

What parts make up a story?

Literary Elements

Characterization

Setting

Tone

Style

Conflict

Theme

Plot



Style

The manner of expression of a particular writer, produced by:

- Choice of words
- Grammatical structures
- Use of literary devices
- Use of all the possible parts of language

Some general styles might include scientific, ornate, plain, emotive. Most writers have their own particular styles.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/575/01/>

Lesson 6: Chapter - Leona

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the fifth chapter about Leona and gain an understanding of her character and relevance to the Gibbs Street garden. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt. This lesson will also present conflict as an element of fictional writing to further students' understanding of literature as well as an introduction to the literary devices of analogy and point of view.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Comprehension Questions
 2. Character Trait Organizer
 3. Literary elements PowerPoint presentation: conflict
 4. Literary elements worksheet
 5. Literary devices PowerPoint presentation
 6. Literary devices worksheet
 7. Daily journal prompt
 8. Map of Puerto Rico
- Projector and overheads

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- The class will open with a review of Gonzalo's chapter and a discussion of the journal assignment about when your opinion of someone changes over time.
- Check to see if there are any questions before we start the next chapter on Leona.

Lesson Activity

1. Discuss the three vocabulary words for which the definitions are provided. Ask students to take notes of any words they do not understand as we read through the chapter. There seemed to be few challenging words in this chapter.
2. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students

who would like to read.

3. The post-reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. Have students work on the graphic organizers in pairs as well and then discuss as a class.
5. Have students work alone on conflict in Leona's chapter on the "Literary Elements" worksheet. Discuss as a class.
6. Have students complete the "Literary Devices" worksheet and discuss as a class.
7. Homework: Students complete journal entry on the importance of being heard.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: NA for this lesson

Competency:

Skill(s):

Emotional Connection:

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Journal response:

Assessment

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading questions will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.
- Review answers for the character graphic organizer, conflict worksheet, POV and analogy worksheets; answer any questions.

Closure

Ask students what they think of Leona. Also ask if there are questions about the journal homework assignment.

Homework:

- Journal on the importance of being heard.
- Complete questions about Puerto Rico

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

Character Trait Chart: www.educationoasis.com

Literary Devices worksheet: www.ebookpp.com/se/seedfolks-studentstudy-guide-packet-technology-links.pdf.html

Character Trait Chart

Directions: In the left-hand column, write the character traits of Leona. In the right-hand column, list how the trait is revealed in the text.

- Traits can be revealed by events, actions, words, thoughts, attitudes, and feelings.

Character: _____

Trait	Revealed by ...

Character Traits Word Bank

adventurous, afraid, ambitious, arrogant, bad, bold, bossy, brainy, brave, brilliant, calm, careful, careless, charming, cheerful, childish, cowardly, cruel, curious, demanding, depressed, dishonest, eager, easygoing, energetic, evil, faithful, fearless, foolish, friendly, funny, gentle, giving, gloomy, graceful, greedy, guilty, happy, healthy, honest, hopeful, imaginative, impatient, impolite, innocent, inventive, intelligent, jealous, kind, lazy, lonely, loving, loyal, lucky, mature, mean, mysterious, nervous, nice, noisy, obedient, peaceful, pleasant, polite, poor, proud, quiet, responsible, rough, rowdy, rude, sad, scared, selfish, serious, shy, silly, sly, smart, sneaky, spoiled, strange, sweet, talented, thoughtful, thoughtless, trusting, trustworthy, unfriendly, unhappy, upset, warm, weak, wicked, wise, worried, zany

Mini-Lesson on Literary Elements

What parts make up a story?

Literary Elements

Characterization

Setting

Tone

Style

Conflict

Theme

Plot



Conflict

- Every story has a conflict - a struggle between two opposing forces.
- The conflict may be between two people or it may be between a person and some other force.
- Regardless, every story revolves around conflict. There are two types of conflict.

Types of Conflict

Internal Conflict

The struggle that occurs *within* the main character. This struggle happens within the character's own mind.

External Conflict

The struggle that the main character has *with another* character, with society, or with a natural force.

<http://edtech2.boisestate.edu/weltys/502/conceptmap.html/>

Mini-Lesson

Literary Devices

Literary Devices



Writers use literary devices to improve the effectiveness, clarity, and enjoyment of writing.

Authors of non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama use a variety of these tools to create emotional mood, an attitude, a setting, and characterization.

Examples of Literary Devices

Analogy – A comparison of two pairs which have the same relationship. The key is to discover the relationship between the first so you can choose the correct second pair.

Example:

Hot is to cold as fire is to ice

Examples of Literary Devices

Point of View– This refers to the person telling the story. This person is called the narrator. The narrator might be the author or a character in the story.

Literary Devices

Please review the first five chapters: Kim, Ana, Wendell, Gonzalo, and Leona.

Point of View

1. From whose point of view is each story told?

2. Why do you think the author keeps changing the point of view?

Analogy

An analogy is a comparison of two or more similar objects, which suggests that if they are alike in certain respects, they will probably be alike in other ways as well.

For example:

You ever watch a sax player close? They push down a key and way at the other end of the instrument something moves. That is what I was looking for – the key that would make that trash disappear.

3. Why did Leona make this comparison?

Lesson 7: Chapter - Sam

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the sixth chapter about Sam. Sam brings people together and this lesson will also address the SEL competency of social awareness through his character. Activities to interact with the text will include: in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Comprehension Questions
 2. Character Trait Organizer
 3. SEL - song lyrics and questions
 4. Daily journal prompt
 5. Map of Haiti
- Projector and overheads
- Flip chart pad of paper
- Colored markers – 12 sets

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- Check for any questions or concerns on what we have read so far.
- Review journal assignment on getting people to listen to you.
- Discuss the findings about Puerto Rico.

Lesson Activity

1. Vocabulary word detective assignment
2. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. Have students work in pairs on the character trait “open-minded portrait” for Sam. Give each team a piece of flip-chart paper. Each pair of students will present their

portrait.

5. SEL activity – see section

6. Homework: Students complete journal entry on people who bring others together.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: Understanding Sam and why his social awareness is so valuable.

Competency: Social Awareness

Skill(s):

- Being able to take the perspective of and empathize with others.
- Recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences.

Emotional Connection:

Sam is retired from his life's work of social activism through working for groups that promoted world government, setting up conferences on pacifism, raising money, etc. He sees his job now in life as being a bridge to people of other cultures to help them see that diverse people can live happily together. While he is initially excited about the garden, he is disappointed when he finds it is being sectioned off by nationality and fences are erected to protect the crops from thieves. Have you ever felt passionate about something in your community? Disappointed by the reality of something there as well?

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

Play the song “You’ve Got to be Carefully Taught” and “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing.” Give students a copy of the lyrics for each song along with questions. Give them 10 to 15 minutes to answer. Class discussion of student answers.

Student Reflection:

Journal response: Have you ever felt as though someone could not relate to you or let you know you were different from them? How did you react? How would you react if it happened again?

Ask a few students to share if they are comfortable.

Assessment: The attitude that students have about groups of people different from them will be evidence of their social awareness. This is a subject that comes up throughout most chapters of the book, so there will be numerous times to revisit and further discuss.

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading questions will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance

of the chapter is understood.

- Portraits of Sam will indicate how well they read and listened to class discussion about Sam.

Closure

Ask students what they think about Sam. Do they know anyone like him?
Ask if anyone needs clarification on anything and assign homework.

Homework:

- Students complete journal entry on people who bring others together.
- Give students map of Haiti to research for Vigil's family.

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

1. Word Detective: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/WordDetective.html>
2. SEL: adapted from <http://learningtogive.org/lessons/unit151/lesson1.html>

Learning About Puerto Rico

Please use library resources (e.g., atlas, Internet) to answer the following questions:

1. What continent is the country on?

2. What is the largest body of water near this country?

3. What is the area of this country?



4. How many people live there?

5. What is the climate like?

6. What kind of government?

7. What do they export?

8. Draw a picture of this country's flag in the box provided.



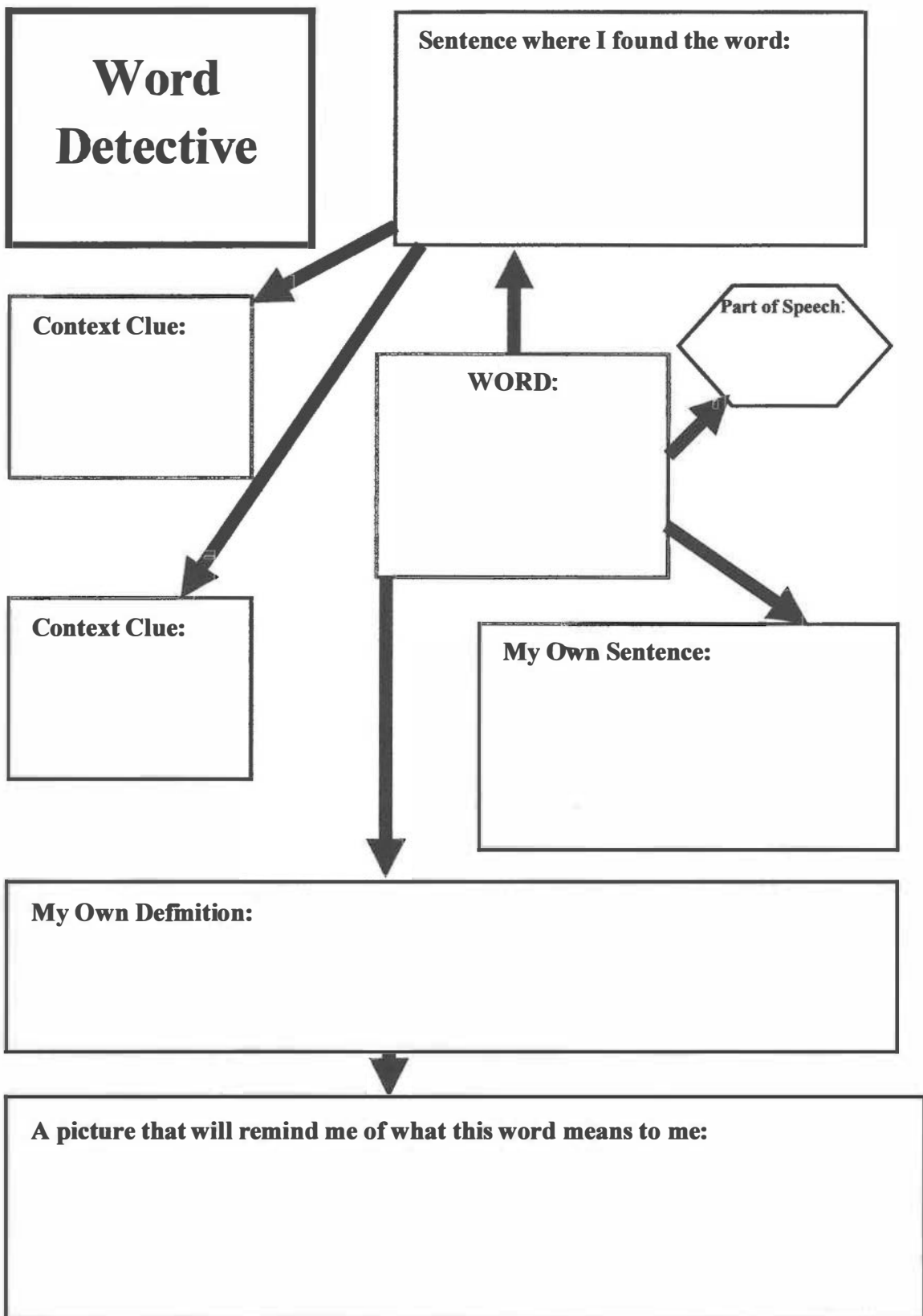
Source: <http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Seedfolks-by-Paul-Fleischman-Literature-Unit-Keys>

Vocabulary Words – Sam

Herring
Persian
Occupation
Pacifism
Spigot
Coolies
Crowning

Vocabulary Words – Sam

Herring
Persian
Occupation
Pacifism
Spigot
Coolies
Crowning



Questions

1. What does the vacant lot remind Sam of and why?
2. Describe Sam's occupation before he retired.
3. How is his current occupation similar to his old one?
4. Describe some of the problems in the garden that Sam identified.

Character Traits

Open-Minded Portrait:

Draw an outline of your character's face. Divide the picture into two parts. On one side, place words or symbols that represent what the character dislikes, fears, or worries about. On the other side, place words or symbols that represent what the character likes, enjoys, or looks forward to. Also, please incorporate any details about the character's physical appearance. Around the face, write phrases and words that illustrate what other characters think about your character.

I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing
(1971 Coca-Cola jingle)

I'd like to build the world a home
And furnish it with love
Grow apple trees and honey bees
And snow-white turtle doves

I'd like to teach the world to sing
In perfect harmony
I'd like to hold it in my arms
And keep it company

I'd like to see the world for once
All standing hand in hand
And hear them echo through the hills
Ah, peace throughout the land

(That's the song I hear)
(That the world sings today)
I'd like to teach the world to sing
In perfect harmony.

(That's the song I hear)
(That the world sings today)
(That's the song I hear)
(That the world sings today)

I'd like to build the world a home
And furnish it with love
Grow apple trees and honey bees
And snow-white turtle doves

I'd like to teach the world to sing
In perfect harmony
I'd like to hold it in my arms
And keep it company

You've Got to be Carefully Taught
(Song from *South Pacific*)

You've got to be taught
To hate and fear,
You've got to be taught
From year to year,
It's got to be drummed
In your dear little ear
You've got to be carefully taught.

You've got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a different shade,
You've got to be carefully taught.

You've got to be taught before it's too late,
Before you are six or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relative shade,
You've got to be carefully taught!

Lesson 8: *Seedfolks* & the “Mayor of Rust”

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to give students a real-world perspective on urban renewal. This will be done through viewing a 7-minute video about Braddock, PA, and then reading a New York Times article about the town. It is also intended to give a break to the routine of reading this book and completing learning activities. It may also generate renewed interest in the book since students can now relate the novel to a real-world scenario.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- PC, internet access, and projector for:
A Tale of One City: Examining Urban Decay and Renewal
<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/15/a-tale-of-one-city-examining-urban-decay-and-renewal/>
- 24 copies of the “Mayor of Rust”

Anticipatory Set or Activity

We are at the mid-point of *Seedfolks*. The intent of this lesson is to have students connect *Seedfolks* to a current urban renewal effort while gaining knowledge of what a revitalization effort entails. There is a former steel town outside of Pittsburgh, PA, that has gained notoriety due to its very unique mayor. Students hopefully will find this 7-minute video and newspaper article of interest.

Lesson Activity

1. Watch “A Tale of One City: . . .” to give background.
2. Read a New York Times article on John’s efforts to revitalize the town of Braddock.
3. This is a lengthy article that we will read as a class using the Popcorn strategy where I will call on a student to read until I feel we are ready for the next person to start where prior reader stopped.
4. Answer discussion questions as a class.
 - a. Tell me what Braddock and Cleveland (in *Seedfolks*) have in common.
 - b. What would you classify as the most pressing problems facing Braddock?
 - c. Which revitalization efforts seem the most promising?

d. What questions do you have about the article?

Social Emotional Learning

Overview & Objective: NA for this lesson

Competency:

Skill(s):

Integration Strategy and Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Assessment

Check for understanding as we read the article. Bring list of challenging vocabulary words to review as we read; either ask if they know the meaning or inform depending on time.

Closure

This lesson may run over class time due to the length of the article and ensuing discussion. It may be necessary to conclude at the next class. Ask if there are any questions and let them know we will conclude tomorrow, or ask if they liked reading about this town and if they need clarification on any points.

Source(s)

Halpern, Sue. "Mayor of Rust." The New York Times 13 Feb 2011: MM30.
See internet address in "Resources and Materials" section above.



FEBRUARY 15, 2011, 3:35 PM

A Tale of One City: Examining Urban Decay and Renewal

By SARAH KAVANAGH and HOLLY EPSTEIN OJALVO

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600px) height: 270, // optional (Default: 338px) autoStart: false, // optional
(Default: false) adxPagename: "learning.blogs.nytimes.com/video", // adx
pagename (targeting...) adxAdPositions: "VideoPlayerAd,ADX_CLIENTSIDE", //
adx ad positions playerType: 'blog', // web trends -- indicates type of player };
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bigAdContainer: (config.bigAdContainer) ? config.bigAdContainer : ", id:
(config.id) ? config.id : 'nytd_video_' + new Date().getMilliseconds(), publishId:
(config.publishId) ? config.publishId : '1749339200', playerId: (config.playerId) ?
config.playerId : '760102458001', videoId: (config.videoId) ? config.videoId : ",
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bannerWidth: (config.bannerWidth) ? config.bannerWidth : 300, bannerHeight:
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(config.adxPageName) ? config.adxPageName : ", connectOnLoad:
(config.connectOnLoad) ? config.connectOnLoad : true,
enableInitialBandwidthDetection: (config.enableInitialBandwidthDetection) ?
config.enableInitialBandwidthDetection : true, shareURL: (config.shareURL) ?
config.shareURL : " }; NYTD.Video.Factory.loadDependencies(function() {
NYTD.Video.Factory.create(cfg); });})(config); // ]>
```

[Go to related article »](#)

Overview | Why do some cities drastically lose their industries and populations? How can cities that have fallen on hard times be revitalized? In this lesson, students examine the plight and recent revitalization efforts of Braddock, Pa., and explore various urban renewal strategies implemented around the United States. They then

Economics

Teaching ideas based on
New York Times content.

- [See all in Economics »](#)
- [See all lesson plans »](#)

apply their learning to their own communities or put them into historical context.

Materials | Computers with Internet access and a projector

Warm-up | Show the video “Braddock Rises From the Ashes” (above). Tell students that, as they watch, they should take notes on the following:

- Problems facing Braddock
- Promising recent developments
- Ideas for future revitalization

Afterward, have students share what they wrote down, and record their ideas in three columns on the board. Note that the video is from January 2009. If you wish, show the clip of Mayor John Fetterman’s appearance on “The Colbert Report” from August 2010, to provide a brief update on the situation in his town.

Next, facilitate a discussion focused on the following questions: If you were a resident of Braddock, what changes do you think you would most want to see? Why? What types of businesses, attractions or services would need to exist in Braddock for you to consider moving there? Did anything you saw or heard in this clip remind you of our city or a place nearby? If so, what similarities — like vacant buildings or lots, lack of grocery stores, lack of jobs, high levels of crime or rapid depopulation — did you notice? What urban (or rural) renewal efforts do you know of that have taken place in or near our community? You might also ask: What do you think Mr. Fetterman meant when he said, “It all comes down to social justice. To give up on Braddock would be like giving up on a large part of the country”?

Related | The New York Times Magazine article “Mayor of Rust” examines the work of Mr. Fetterman and what has happened in Braddock over the past few years:

At the Aspen Ideas Festival in Colorado last July, John

Fetterman, the mayor of Braddock, a small Pennsylvania town 10 miles upriver from Pittsburgh, was introduced by Dana Gioia, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, as a man who demonstrates “how ideas can change the world.” It was four days into the weeklong festival, and Fetterman, a 41-year-old, 6-foot-8 white man with a shaved head, a fibrous black beard and tattoos up one arm and down the other, was presenting a slide show about how art could bring social change to a town where one-third of its 2,671 residents, a majority of whom are African-American and female, live in poverty. Fetterman projected pictures of old, bustling Braddock, which steel made until the middle of the 20th century and unmade throughout the rest. Its main street was packed with shoppers, its storefronts filled with wares. Then he turned to Braddock as it is today.

“We’ve lost 90 percent of our population and 90 percent of our buildings,” he said. “Ninety percent of our town is in a landfill. So we took a two-pronged approach. We created the first art gallery in the four-town region, with artists’ studios. We did public art installations. And, I don’t know if you consider it arts, exactly, but I consider growing organic vegetables in the shadow of a steel mill an art, and that has attracted homesteading.”

As a class, read the article using the questions below. (Note: As this is a lengthy article, you may want to choose a specific excerpt for students to read or to assign part of the reading for homework.) While reading, have students take notes using our [Problem-Solution Organizer \(PDF\)](#).

Questions | For discussion and reading comprehension:

- What would you classify as the most pressing problems facing Braddock, Pa., and why?
- Which revitalization efforts being employed in Braddock seems the most promising to you and why?

- What concerns have some voiced about Mayor Fetterman’s approach to revitalization?
- Is there anything about Braddock’s story that reminds you of our community or of another city you have heard about? If so, what and why?
- What questions do you have after reading this article?

Activity | Tell students to imagine that they have been asked to serve as a task force to educate the city or local government about potential revitalization opportunities. To do this, they will investigate various urban renewal approaches that have been employed in Braddock to discover how and where else these approaches have been employed and what the results have been.

Split the class into small “committees” and assign each one a specific tactic for urban renewal that has been tried in at least one other place in addition to Braddock. Try using the following list of approaches, places and resources:

What: Land banking

Where: Cleveland

Resource: Cleveland.com: “Cleveland, Land Bank and Others Get \$41 Million to Demolish, Rehab and Improve Neighborhoods”

What: Attracting artists

Where: Cincinnati

Resource: [Cincinnati CityBeat](http://CincinnatiCityBeat.com): “News: Art as Development: Covington Looks to Artists for Urban Renewal”

What: Urban agriculture

Where: Philadelphia

Resource: [New York Times](http://NewYorkTimes.com): “The Bright Side of Blight”

RELATED RESOURCES From The Learning Network

- Lesson: Onward and Upward? Documenting Local Economic Conditions
- Lesson: Home is Where the _____ Is
- Lesson: Public Land

From NYTimes.com

- Rock Bottom for Decades, But Showing Signs of Life
- Video: Rebuilding America’s Ghost Town
- Freakonomics: To Get America Growing Again, Unleash Our Cities

Around the Web

- [Urban Renewal in Chicago](http://UrbanRenewalChicago.com)
- [Now on PBS: A Town Revitalized?](http://NowonPBS.com)
- [Braddock, Pa.](http://BraddockPa.com)

What: Greening the economy

Where: the South Bronx, New York City

Resource: New York Times: “[The Green Power Broker](#)”

What: Embracing depopulation

Where: Pittsburgh

Resource: Newsweek: “[Cutting Down to Size](#)”

Tell each group that these resources are just a starting point, and that they should prepare to create a brief presentation on their assigned renewal approach. To guide their work, provide the groups with the following prompts:

- What problem does this approach aim to address?
- Describe and explain this approach in as much detail, and as clearly, as possible. How does it work? What resources are required? How small- or large-scale is it?
- What are the benefits of this approach? How might it help a community?
- What are the criticisms of this approach? What drawbacks might it have?

When the research is finished, have groups create either presentations – using [PowerPoint](#), [Glogster](#), [Prezi](#), [Google Documents](#) or a similar tool – or mini-Web sites, perhaps modeled on the [Braddock Web site](#), which carries the tag line “Reinvention is the only option.” Then hold a task force meeting in which each committee gives its presentation to “city officials,” played by the teacher and, if possible, other teachers or administrators.

Going further | Students conduct research in the community (perhaps using our lesson “[Onward and Upward? Documenting Local Economic Conditions](#)”) to identify a specific problem related to urban decline or economic hardship, like [acute unemployment](#) and [its effects](#).

They can document the problem by interviewing people and photographing affected sites, perhaps modeled on the interactive feature “[Portraits From a Job-Starved City](#).” If any of the renewal approaches they studied in class apply to the problem, they might

write letters to officials advocating the adoption of such initiatives.

In a United States or global history class, contemporary examples of urban decline and revitalization might be put into the historical context of urban development, decline and renewal, which is mentioned in “Mayor of Rust.”

Standards | This lesson is correlated to [McREL’s national standards](#) (it can also be aligned to the new [Common Core State Standards](#)):

Economics

1. Understands that scarcity of productive resources requires choices that generate opportunity costs
2. Understands characteristics of different economic systems, economic institutions and economic incentives
5. Understands unemployment, income and income distribution in a market economy
6. Understands the roles government plays in the United States economy

United States History

16. Understands how the rise of corporations, heavy industry and mechanized farming transformed American society
20. Understands how Progressives and others addressed problems of industrial capitalism, urbanization and political corruption
26. Understands the economic boom and social transformation of post-World War II United States
31. Understands economic, social and cultural developments in the contemporary United States

Civics

9. Understands the importance of Americans sharing and supporting certain values, beliefs and principles of American constitutional democracy
11. Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society

Behavioral Studies

2. Understands various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership and different ways that groups function

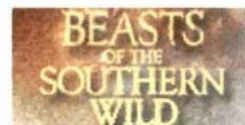
Geography

- 4. Understands the physical and human characteristics of place
- 9. Understands the nature, distribution and migration of human populations on earth's surface
- 12. Understands the patterns of human settlement and their causes
- 14. Understands how human actions modify the physical environment

Language Arts

- 1. Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process
- 8. Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning

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February 11, 2011

Mayor of Rust

By SUE HALPERN

At the Aspen Ideas Festival in Colorado last July, John Fetterman, the mayor of Braddock, a small Pennsylvania town 10 miles upriver from Pittsburgh, was introduced by Dana Gioia, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, as a man who demonstrates “how ideas can change the world.” It was four days into the weeklong festival, and Fetterman, a 41-year-old, 6-foot-8 white man with a shaved head, a fibrous black beard and tattoos up one arm and down the other, was presenting a slideshow about how art could bring social change to a town where one-third of its 2,671 residents, a majority of whom are African-American and female, live in poverty. Fetterman projected pictures of old, bustling Braddock, which steel made until the middle of the 20th century and unmade throughout the rest. Its main street was packed with shoppers, its storefronts filled with wares. Then he turned to Braddock as it is today.

“We’ve lost 90 percent of our population and 90 percent of our buildings,” he said. “Ninety percent of our town is in a landfill. So we took a two-pronged approach. We created the first art gallery in the four-town region, with artists’ studios. We did public art installations. And, I don’t know if you consider it arts, exactly, but I consider growing organic vegetables in the shadow of a steel mill an art, and that has attracted homesteading.”

Fetterman displayed a picture of a furniture store, which the nonprofit he founded bought in 2009 for \$15,000, and an abandoned church, which is being turned into a community center, and former building lots that are now green spaces, and an outdoor pizza oven, made with bricks from a demolished building, and a house belonging to two of the homesteaders who have moved to Braddock from “all over the country.”

“They bought this house for \$4,300,” Fetterman told the crowd, “and put in a lot of sweat equity, and now it looks like something you’d see in a magazine.”

The audience was enchanted. Here was a guy in biker boots bringing the Park Slope (Aspen, Marin, Portland, Santa Fe) ethos — organic produce, art installations, an outdoor bread oven — to the disenfranchised. “What was Braddock like before we took office? Braddock was a notorious community that was steeped in violence. But as of — knock on wood — today, we are now 27 months without a homicide.” The audience began to clap and didn’t stop for a long time.

As the event wound down, Gioia asked Fetterman to explain the numbers tattooed on his arms. “This one,” the mayor said, holding out his right forearm, “is the Braddock ZIP code, 15104. And this one,” he said, switching arms, “are the dates of the five people we lost to senseless violence in Braddock since I took office.” The audience clapped again. When the applause died out, people swarmed the mayor. A woman from a foundation in Dallas wanted to make a grant. “Whatever you’re interested in, we have projects up the wazoo,” he said. A sculptor offered one of her pieces. “We use art to combat the dark side of capitalism,” Fetterman replied. A man asked how many people had made the move to Braddock. “It’s the same as 4,000 people moving into Pittsburgh,” Fetterman said, not offering a real number. Then Lynn Goldsmith, a photographer known for her portraits of rock

stars, asked if she could take his picture, and in the shade of the building, the mayor struck a pose, unsmiling, arms out.

With appearances this past year or so on “The Colbert Report,” CBS News Sunday Morning, PBS and CNN, John Fetterman has become the face of Rust Belt renewal. He was dubbed America’s “coolest mayor” by The Guardian and the Mayor of Hell by Rolling Stone. The Atlantic put him in its “Brave New Thinkers” issue of 2009. In contrast to urban planners caught up in political wrangling, budget constraints and bureaucratic shambling, Fetterman embraces a do-it-yourself aesthetic and a tendency to put up his own money to move things along. He has turned a 13-block town into a sampling of urban renewal trends: land-banking (replacing vacant buildings with green space, as in Cleveland); urban agriculture (Detroit); championing the creative class to bring new energy to old places (an approach popularized by Richard Florida); “greening” the economy as a path out of poverty (as Majora Carter has worked to do in the South Bronx); embracing depopulation (like nearby Pittsburgh). Thrust into the national spotlight, Fetterman has become something of a folk hero, a Paul Bunyan of hipster urban revival, with his own Shepard Fairey block print — the Fetterman mien with the word “mayor” underneath. *This*, the poster suggests, is what a mayor should be.

I met Mayor John, as he likes to be called, for the first time on a warm summer day. We sat on the porch of a former convent, across the street from Andrew Carnegie’s first American steel mill, the Edgar Thomson Steel Works, which now employs fewer than one-tenth of the workers it used to and was sending a steady cloud of steam and particulates into a perfect blue sky. Next door, at a school-turned-gallery, two New York artists were taking down a show. Nearby, on a parcel of land called Braddock Farms run by the Pittsburgh nonprofit Grow Pittsburgh, a lone young man pulled weeds. Behind the convent, students from a charter school a couple of towns over were tending a

bee colony. Mayor John, who wore low-hanging jeans and a black T-shirt, said the bees were found in one of the town's many abandoned buildings and "repurposed."

Had I sat there all day, as the beekeepers and artists and farmer wandered in and out of view, listening to Fetterman explain how the population of Braddock had gone from 20,000 people crammed into houses built fast and cheap in 1920, to less than 2,700 now, and how, as the population dwindled, the stores all closed, too, and how he paid a guy out of his own pocket to drive around town giving out ice cream to poor kids because their town was "a food desert," and taken in his explanation that Braddock was gentrification-proof because "even if housing prices tripled, which they'd never do, a house would still only cost \$15,000," I might have been so convinced of the answer that I would have forgotten to ask the question: Is Braddock a model for bringing a Rust Belt town back to life?

Urban decline has been around just about as long as there have been cities, but the degeneration of America's industrial heartland, because it cuts across a wide swath of the country and is as much about jobs as it is about habitation, has seemed both intractable and inevitable. Earlier efforts to address it involved razing whole neighborhoods and erecting Robert Moses-inspired projects. But in places like Youngstown, Detroit and Pittsburgh, as well as satellites like Braddock, where urban blight was not just a matter of run-down neighborhoods but of manufacturing plants packing up and moving away, even such radical solutions offered little hope. It's one thing to replace substandard housing stock, quite another to reinvent an economy.

Typically, when John Fetterman talks about his town, he starts with the long list of businesses that once lined its main street. "In 2010," Fetterman then invariably says, "those numbers have dropped to zero."

It is a stunning, almost unfathomable decline, and it suggests why Braddock has become a favorite media stand-in for Rust Belt devastation, even if what Fetterman says is not precisely true. A medical clinic, auto garages, a florist, an optometrist, three markets, a preschool, a parochial school, a dollar store and Carnegie's first public library continue to do business alongside empty buildings wrapped in barbed wire.

John Fetterman showed up in Braddock in 2001. He had tried the family business, insurance, but it didn't take, and he ended up joining AmeriCorps and moving to Pittsburgh in the late '90s. After a two-year interlude at Harvard's Kennedy School studying education and social policy, Fetterman was hired to start a program for at-risk youth in Braddock, a town beset by violence. Two years later, Fetterman bought the church that was part of his Aspen slideshow, which he planned to turn into a community center. He squatted in the church for a while, then, entranced by the town's "malignant beauty," bought the warehouse next door and turned it into a Dwell-worthy loft, topped by two remodeled shipping containers for additional living space. Four years after arriving in town, he ran for mayor.

In Braddock, executive decisions are made by an elected six-person borough council, and day-to-day municipal affairs are run by a nonelected borough manager. The mayor, who works for a salary of \$150 a month, has two main functions: to break a tie and to oversee the police (he has veto power but can be overruled by a majority council vote). Fetterman knew this, of course, but he thought being mayor would give him a "bully pulpit." Fetterman made no attempt to hide his belief that most of the borough council members had little interest in furthering the fortunes of the town and were using their positions mainly to benefit themselves. The borough manager, Ella B. Jones (who was later charged with forgery and theft of \$178,000 of the town's money, a charge to which she pleaded not guilty), considered

Fetterman to be a wealthy interloper, the “great white hope” of Braddock, as Jones put it. “Council makes the laws,” Jones said in 2006. “They do it all. They have the vote. They make the rules. And he doesn’t.”

So Fetterman built a back door — he started a nonprofit organization called Braddock Redux, financed until recently primarily by family money. (His father is its largest individual donor.) Because Fetterman is the head of a nonprofit that uses Fetterman money, and because for the longest time it had only two other members, Jeb Feldman, a friend, and Helen Wachter, the head of the countywide KEYS-AmeriCorps program (which supplied volunteers to the nonprofit, including an assistant for Fetterman), Braddock Redux is known around town as John’s Nonprofit. Before it became part of Braddock Redux, the Fettermans put up the money for the church next to the mayor’s house, which is popularly called John’s Church. Braddock Redux owns the convent across the street from the steel mill, which is known as John’s Convent. Feldman has the title to the convent school, which is known as Jeb’s School. The church houses the county’s summer program, the Braddock Youth Project, among other things. The convent sometimes serves as a hostel for potential “urban pioneers,” and the middle school as a gallery and studio space. By heading a nonprofit that is a major property owner, the mayor was able to advance what he calls his “social-justice agenda” without having much political power, or the burden of it, either.

In 2009, when the Levi’s jeans company wanted to use Braddock to promote a line of work clothes, it approached Fetterman, not the borough council. The million and a half dollars Levi’s offered in exchange went to John’s Nonprofit, for John’s Church and community center, rather than the town’s coffers. It was a closed loop that didn’t sit well with some of the mayor’s constituents, even those who voted for him in the last election, in 2009, which he won, 294 to 103.

“I came back to Braddock because I was interested in what John was doing,” Pat Morgan, a church musician told me one evening after a borough council meeting. “But he doesn’t play well with others. He decides we need a youth center, and he’s going to put it here, but I never hear him come to one of these council meetings and say, ‘You know what, I’ve got some money, what should we do with it?’ If you’re casting yourself as the mayor who speaks for Braddock, we want him to at least pretend that we have a say in any of this.”

It was a sentiment I would hear numerous times, from longtime residents like the filmmaker Tony Buba (“John’s idea of grass roots is Astroturf”) as well as from transplants. Because he ran a nonprofit, Fetterman operated with limited public accountability. It was efficient — Braddock Redux could buy a building and get the H. J. Heinz Company Foundation to donate \$100,000 to put a green roof on it and bypass the pesky part where people debate the pros and cons. But as a consequence, no matter how sincere Fetterman’s “social justice agenda,” it is, in the end, often perceived as his.

“The key to urban reclamation is citizen participation,” David Lewis told me when I visited him in Homestead, another struggling Mon Valley borough across the river from Braddock. An architect and urban planner known for his emphasis on community participation, Lewis was instrumental in a massive redevelopment project there called the Waterfront. “You start with the people,” Lewis said.

Fetterman, who did convene a group of residents to plan the community center, likes to say that he won the last election 2 to 1. “The election was a referendum on the things I’ve done,” he said.

Levi’s Braddock ad campaign had its debut in movie theaters across the country on July 4 weekend. “We were taught how the pioneers went into the West. They opened their eyes and made up

what things could be,” a girl intoned. “A long time ago, things got broken here. People got sad and left. Maybe the world breaks on purpose so we can have work to do. People think there aren't frontiers anymore. They can't see how frontiers are all around us.”

That same weekend, billboards with Braddock, Pa., along the bottom appeared in Times Square and across the country. They featured portraits of some of the finer-looking denizens of the town, like Dave Rosenstrauss, whose company, Fossil Free Fuel, was the one new business in town (which recently spawned another, still with the same partners); Jack Samuel, a member of a straight-edge-vegan-punk-rock collective; and Deanne Dupree, whose boyfriend was the last homicide in town. They carried the affirming slogan “Everybody’s Work Is Equally Important,” which had a touch of irony in a place where so many people cannot find jobs.

The urban-pioneer motif in the Levi’s ads was part of the Braddock revival story from the beginning. One of the first things Fetterman did when he took office was offer free studio space to artists. “It’s hard to appreciate how big a leap of faith it was,” the mayor told me. “No way artists are going to come out to Braddock” from Pittsburgh “at nine at night for studio space. The perception was that it was too dangerous.” It was easy to segue from there to offering — or at least pointing to the availability of — cheap housing to anyone willing to make up what could be. Still, according to Fetterman, “we have never tried to bring people in. It’s just like media interest. They’ve just found us.”

That media interest was itself an invitation, and it began with a colorful spread in 2007 in the magazine *ReadyMade*. In the accompanying article, the mayor declared: “We need to get people excited about living in Braddock again. For D.I.Y.-ers, this town is a dream.” The article, which highlighted Fetterman’s own rugged homesteading experience, flew around the Internet and was picked up

by the mainstream media. The Daily Beast did a “live chat.” The New York Times published three separate articles. Japanese and Swiss television crews showed up. So did the curious, the adventurous, the idealistic. “Braddock would not be possible if it were not for the Internet,” Fetterman said. “To be able to type in ‘Braddock’ and pull up this wealth of information and you can draw your own beliefs on it — it’s impossible to overstate that.”

In Aspen, when Fetterman was asked how many “modern pioneers” had moved to Braddock, he framed his answer as an equivalence: it was like 4,000 people moving to Pittsburgh, he said, which sounded like a lot. The actual number is currently 23, in 10 households. Modern pioneering turns out to be harder than just fixing a wrecked house, which turns out to be hard enough. Gutting and renovating a structure that wasn’t built well the first time can easily compete with having a regular job. In Braddock, a successful modern pioneer typically requires family money, savings or another outside means of support, and even then it’s often a stretch.

And, for “urban pioneers” and longtime residents, it can be challenging to live in a place that is getting so much attention. They resent their town being cast as a wasteland. They resent hearing that it “broke on purpose.” They resent that some of the good things done by groups not affiliated with the mayor, like a new, state-of-the-art senior housing complex, or the 36 new homes and rental units built by the Mon Valley Initiative, which house 89 people and have brought an influx of working families to Braddock (most headed by women employed in a range of jobs in the area), rarely find their way into the prevailing narrative. And they resent that one man’s vision is represented as their collective vision, even while acknowledging that some of his actions, like planting fruit trees in abandoned lots, using Levi’s money to finance a children’s librarian and helping to get a new playground donated to the town make Braddock a more appealing, and most likely

safer, place.

“I get jealous reading those stories because I want to live in that place,” Jodi Morrison said. Morrison grew up a few towns over and moved to Braddock from Brooklyn in 2008 after learning about its progressive mayor. Morrison, who is 33, was showing me the colossal bank building she bought almost three years ago for \$125,000. At the time, Morrison wasn’t sure what she was going to do with it but figured it didn’t matter. She’d come to Braddock, and the spirit of the place would move her. Not long after that, the roof sprang a massive leak. “My life here has become reactionary,” Morrison said. “It’s whatever crisis has come up that week that I have to fix. I’m way overwhelmed. I don’t know how I am going to do this alone.”

A few blocks away, Morrison’s friends Jenny and Kevin Fremlin are not just overwhelmed; they’re angry. The couple, who are in their 30s, moved here from Juneau, Alaska, after an exploratory visit. They liked what they saw: arts groups working with kids, a potluck at a neighbor's house and the 17,000-square-foot former Chevy dealership that Fetterman’s sister, Kristin, and her partner, Joel Rice, were converting (for about \$250,000) into a magnificent furniture workshop, loft, greenhouse and textile studio. The Fremlins were eager to buy a \$5,000 house but agreed to manage John’s Convent in exchange for free housing on its third floor. By the time they arrived from Alaska, dog and possessions in tow, it had been declared uninhabitable.

Paradoxically, it can be difficult to find a home in Braddock. Many buildings are slated for demolition, and there is a relatively profitable Section 8 rental market for those that aren’t. Eventually, with the mayor’s help, the Fremlins found a house on one of the more crime-ridden streets.

That was more than two years ago. Their \$5,000 house has now cost

them nearly \$60,000, and they are broke. There was drive-by shooting out front. They own a shotgun because it is more intimidating than a handgun. “Most people come here because of the hype that you can get houses cheap and fulfill your dreams,” said Jenny, who runs an online communications design business. “We came here so we could work less and do the projects we wanted, and we’re working more than we ever did.”

Kevin, her husband, agreed. “We’ve spent every dime we had and then some,” he said. “It’s a hard pill to swallow when you realize you have squandered your nest egg. Squandered. It’s gone.”

Scale is a tricky variable when it pertains to turning around a city, especially one as small as Braddock. From 2000 to 2009, the population has declined by 241; about 600 jobs were lost last year alone when the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center closed the local hospital. Those are big numbers in a small place, and they represent a tide that even a personality as large as Fetterman’s is unable to hold back. Nonetheless, tearing down a single abandoned building and returning the lot to green space, or renovating a dilapidated house, has its own significance: it suggests something else is possible.

“We have made our lives here, started a family and support local events and fund-raisers, even if we aren’t always happy about living here and hope to move out,” Jenny Fremlin wrote in a recent e-mail. On their own, she and Jodi Morrison are starting a “friends of the library group” and hope someday to open a used bookstore in an unused part of the library.

For the mayor, though, fostering civic engagement is not a necessary corollary to urban homesteading. “If someone wants to buy a house and live their life and pay their taxes, that’s fine,” Fetterman said.

“Ninety percent of old Braddock walked away. That left a lot of chaos in town.”

Which raises the question: Is urban renewal just a matter of showing up?

On Wood Street, Jack Samuel, the 25-year-old straight-edge vegan punk rocker and Levi’s model, was hanging out in one of the two houses he and the six other members of the Some Ideas Collective bought last year. The group wanted an inexpensive “live-work” space where they could play music, write and work on bikes. They bought a house for \$6,000 from a filmmaker who was moving on. It was run-down, but for kids whose goal was to “make life cheap enough” so they could “binge work and then be free,” it was just fine.

“My goal is to build for myself a life that meets my needs most effectively,” Samuel explained last summer. “So that means the lowest possible overhead costs day to day. If you qualify for food stamps, that’s that much less money you have to make. I’ve been on food stamps for the last few months.”

Samuel and his collective did not move to Braddock with the intent of “fixing it.” That idea, he said, “is potentially very colonial or paternalistic.”

“I got a little blinded by the image of Braddock that has been portrayed by the media, that all this place is is an artist’s compound. And then getting here, it’s like, ‘Oh, there are just people who live here.’ This is home for a lot of people, a lot of low-income people in particular.”

James Smith, a 32-year-old Braddock native, often hangs out in the dollar-store parking lot with a group of friends. A graduate of the local high school, Smith can find only temp work, like cleaning Heinz Stadium after Steelers games. The weekly farmers’ market in Braddock

is O.K., Smith says, but even if he wanted to shop there, he couldn't afford it. Jobs and public transportation to get to them remain in short supply. Nothing that was happening in Braddock — not the green roof on the old furniture store, not the screen printing studio run by members of a socially-conscious arts collective, not beehives, not the Shepard Fairey art installation on a nearby wall, not the Levi's ad campaign — has changed the most essential facts of his life: he is poor and without prospects. "The mayor is doing good things for the kids, and that does matter most, the future," he told me. "But what about the future that was neglected? Our generation, the generation before us. There is nothing for us."

One afternoon at the mayor's house, the former warehouse he shares with his wife and young son, I asked him how having seven underemployed 20-somethings move to town was a strategy for change.

"What's better, having a group of kids like Jack buy a house, or waiting another six years till the buildings fall in on themselves?" the mayor asked.

A few weeks later I got an e-mail from Fetterman. "I know I am not Braddock's savior, never felt that way, and never will," he wrote. "There's no 'Rudy' style ending waiting for me where I get carried off the field and everything turns out O.K. for me or for Braddock," he continued, referring to the Notre Dame football legend.

I'd heard the mayor use that analogy a number of times before; it had seemed like a throwaway line. Reading it now, though, I realized that it went some way toward explaining why the mayor of such a small town had got so much attention. The Braddock story has the appeal of an inspirational sports movie: we want this guy to win the game against all odds. We want to believe that all it takes to fix a town is — to borrow

a phrase from Samuel and his friends —“some ideas.”

Sue Halpern is a scholar in residence at Middlebury. Her most recent book is “Can’t Remember What I Forgot: Your Memory, Your Mind, Your Future.”

Lesson 9: Chapter - Virgil

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the seventh chapter about Virgil and learn about his experience in the garden with his father. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt. There is also a mini-lesson on the literary devices of metaphor and simile.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Comprehension Questions
 2. Vocabulary / Analogies Activity
 3. Character Map
 4. Daily journal prompt
 5. Metaphor and Simile worksheets
 6. Map of South Korea
- Projector and overheads

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- Check for any questions or concerns on what we have read so far.
- Review journal assignment on people who bring others together.
- Discuss the findings about Haiti.

Lesson Activity

1. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
2. The vocabulary exercise also incorporates analogies as well as the vocabulary from the next chapter on Sae Young. Class discussion to review answers.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. Have students work in pairs on the character map for Virgil and the character

comparison chart.

5. Homework: Students complete journal entry on when they have failed at something significant to them.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: NA for this lesson.

Competency:

Skill(s):

Emotional Connection:

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Assessment:

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading activities will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.

Closure

Ask students what they think about Virgil and his father. Ask if anyone needs clarification on anything and assign homework.

Homework:

- Students complete journal entry on failing at something that meant a lot to them.
- Give students map of South Korea to research for Sae Young's country of origin.

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

Literary Devices and Vocabulary sheet: www.ebookpp.com/se/seedfolks-student-study-guide-packet-technology-links-pdf.html

Chapter – Virgil

Learning About Haiti

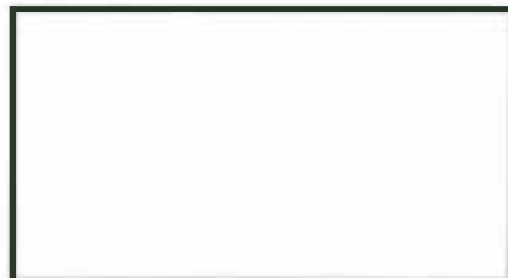
Please use library resources (e.g., atlas, Internet) to answer the following questions:

1. What continent is the country on?
2. What is the largest body of water near this country?
3. What is the area of this country?
4. How many people live there?



5. What is the climate like?
6. What kind of government?

7. What do they export?
8. Draw a picture of this country's flag in the box provided.



Source: <http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Seedfolks-by-Paul-Fleischman-Literature-Unit-Keys>

Questions

1. Virgil's father takes a larger than normal planting space in the garden. Why did he choose to do this?
2. How did Virgil feel about the size of their garden when talking with Miss Fleck? Why?
3. Virgil said their plants were "like a baby always crying for its milk." What did he mean by this?
4. While Virgil and his father were clearing their plot, Virgil found something in the garbage and kept it. What was it, and what did it signify for him at the end of the chapter?

Literary Devices & Vocabulary

Analogies

An analogy is the comparison of two pairs which have the same relationship. The key is to ascertain the relationship between the first so you can choose the correct second pair, e.g., part to whole, opposites, results of, are types of relationships you should find.

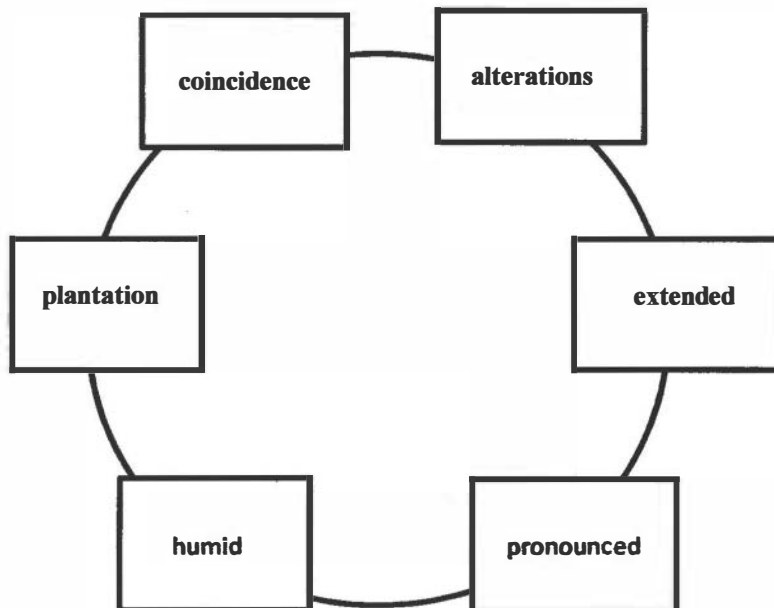
Here you will find two types of analogies:

1. **Synonym:** a word having the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the language, as happy, joyful, elated.
2. **Antonym:** a word opposite in meaning to another. Fast is an antonym of slow.

Example:

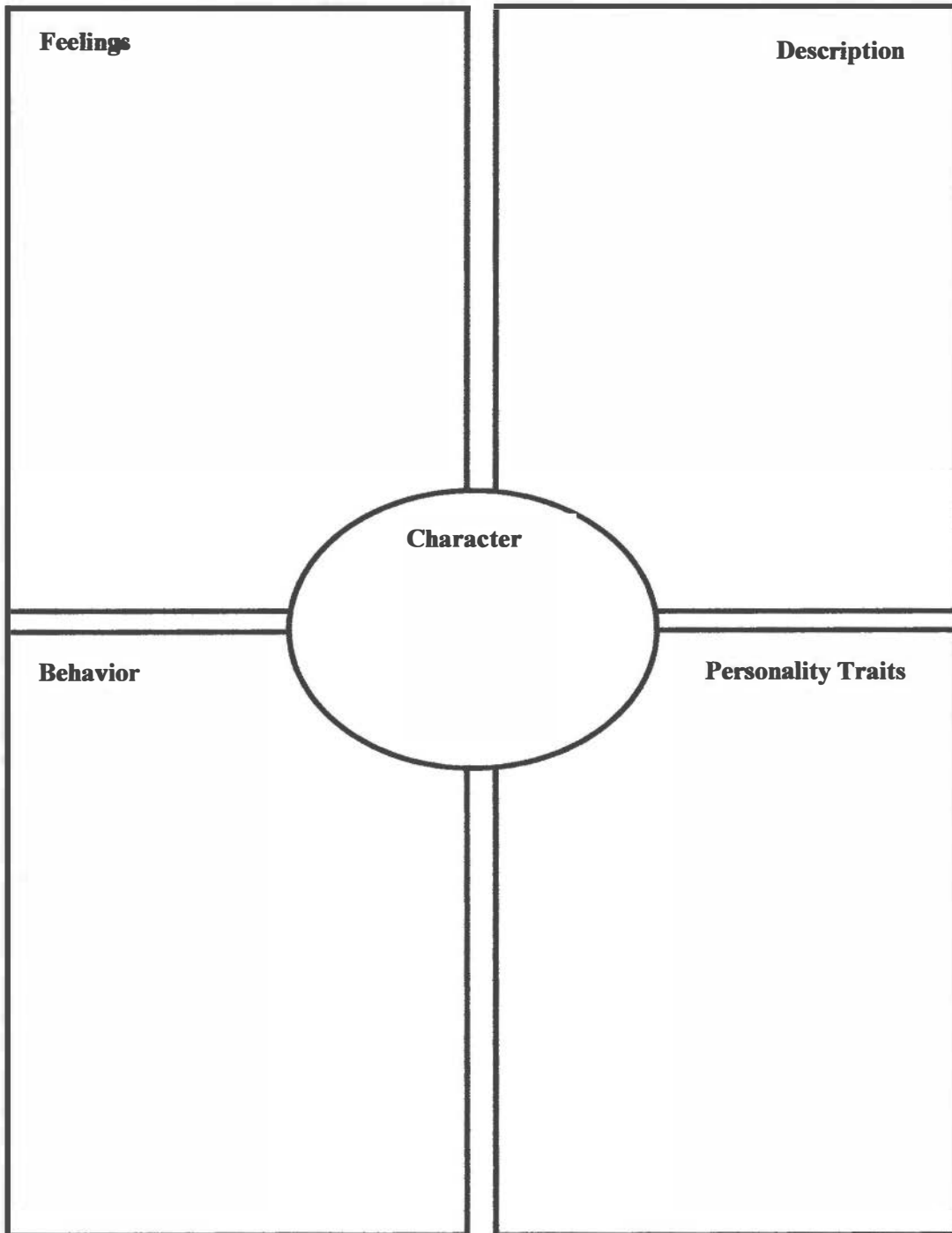
hot is to cold as fire is to ice OR hot:cold::fire:ice

Directions: Write dictionary definitions next to word box, and then create analogies with the correct word from Virgil's chapter.



1. Asked : Questioned :: Stated: _____
2. Watermelon : Fruit :: _____ : Farm
3. Retracted : _____ :: Raced : Wandered
4. _____ : Accident :: Contest : Competition
5. Desert : Dry :: Swamp : _____
6. Windy : Blustery :: Adjustment : _____

Character Map



Mini-Lesson

Literary Devices

Literary Devices

Writers use literary devices to improve the effectiveness, clarity, and enjoyment of writing.



Authors of non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama use a variety of these tools to create emotional mood, an attitude, a setting, and characterization.

Examples of Literary Devices

- **Metaphor** – A figure of speech that compares two things without using the word *like* or *as*.

Example:

My grandmother always told us that laughter is the best medicine.

Examples of Literary Devices

- **Simile** – A figure of speech that compares two things *usually* using the word *like* or *as*.

Example:

In the deserted cove, the water was as smooth as glass.

Literary Devices

Metaphor: A figure of speech that compares two things without using the word *like* or *as*. **Example:** America is a melting pot.

Simile: A figure of speech that compares two things *usually* using the word *like* or *as*. **Example:** Life is like an onion: You peel it off one layer at a time, and sometimes you weep

Instructions:

Find a metaphor and simile in the chapter about Virgil:

Metaphor

Simile

Lesson 10: Chapter – Sae Young

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the eighth chapter about Sae Young and understand the challenges she faced after coming to Cleveland. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Comprehension Questions
 2. Character Map on Feelings
 3. Daily journal prompt
- Projector and overheads

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- Check for any questions or concerns on what we have read so far.
- Review journal assignment on failing to attain something significant.
- Discuss the findings about South Korea.

Lesson Activity

1. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
2. Ask students about any vocabulary questions they may have from the reading. There were two challenging words included from this chapter in the prior lesson (Virgil).
3. The post-reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. Have students work in pairs on the character map focusing on feelings for Sae Young and character comparison chart. Class discussion as follow up.
5. Students complete journal entry on having a sense of belonging. Discuss as a class and have students share.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: NA for this lesson.

Competency:

Skill(s):

Emotional Connection:

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Assessment:

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading activities will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.

Closure

Ask if anyone needs clarification on Sae Young or any other part of the novel to this point.

Homework: None

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.
Character Trait Chart on Feelings: www.educationoasis.com

Chapter – Sae Young

Learning About South Korea

Please use library resources (e.g., atlas, Internet) to answer the following questions:

1. What continent is the country on?

2. What is the largest body of water near this country?

3. What is the area of this country?

4. How many people live there?

5. What is the climate like?

6. What kind of government?

7. What do they export?

8. Draw a picture of this country's flag in the box provided.



Source: <http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Seedfolks-by-Paul-Fleischman-Literature-Unit-Keys>

Questions

1. Sae Young's misfortunes resulted in her not being able to leave her home. How does she feel as a result of what happened to her? Please explain.
2. Explain how she feels when she is in the garden.
3. What character came over to meet Sae Young? What significant event did he initiate?
4. Sae Young purchased something for the garden. What was it and why was it important?

Character Map -- Feelings

Character's name and description of him/her in the beginning.	
Event #1	The character feels:
Event #2	The character feels:
Event #3	The character feels:
Event #4	The character feels:
Event #5	The character feels:
Describe the character at the end.	

Lesson 11: Chapter – Curtis

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the ninth chapter about Curtis and understand his reason for becoming part of the garden. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt. This lesson will also address the SEL competency of self-management.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Vocabulary activity
 2. Comprehension Questions
 3. Character Attribute Web
 4. Daily journal prompt
 5. Map of England
- Projector and overheads
- Index cards for SEL activity

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- Check for any questions or concerns on what we have read so far.
- Review journal assignment on having a sense of belonging.

Lesson Activity

1. Complete vocabulary activity prior to reading.
2. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. SEL activity – see below
5. Have students work in pairs on the character attribute web.
6. Homework: Students complete journal entry on how nature brings people together.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: Lesson Focus: Lateesha's anger towards Curtis and his response.

Competency: Self Management

Skill(s):

- Relating one's emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles
- Setting and monitoring progress toward personal and academic goals
- Expressing emotions appropriately

Emotional Connection:

Curtis mistreats his girlfriend and she ends the relationship with him. After he moves back from Cincinnati five years later, he sees her on the street but she turns her back on him. Has anyone ever refused to acknowledge you when they were mad at you? How did you feel?

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to take an index card and describe one hurtful incident that has happened to them. To make sure students in the class don't recognize themselves in the descriptions, tell students to try to keep the descriptions as general as possible. For example, instead of writing, "I was very hurt when I wasn't invited to the Valentine's Day party," have them write, "I felt very hurt when I was not invited to a party with many of my friends." Make sure that students do *not* put their names on their index cards.
2. Collect the index cards and read through the examples. While there will be much variation in the examples given, the types of behavior that students write about will probably include the following:
 - a. Verbal harassment, such as name-calling regarding a physical attribute (size, weight, wearing glasses) or taunting about a particular behavior (doesn't like sports or the perceived "teacher's pet")
 - b. Gossip, such as spreading rumors about a person
 - c. Exclusion from a desirable party, group, or activity
 - d. Unwanted physical contact. There may be examples that do not fit into these categories. Set them aside and see if there is a common thread among them.
3. Divide the students into four groups. Have each group focus on one category described in step two: verbal harassment, gossip, exclusion, or unwanted physical contact. If possible, give each group examples of behavior from those on the index cards. If there are no examples for a category, help students think of specific examples.
4. Give each group any cards for its category. Ask students to pick one situation from the examples. Then have each group brainstorm ways to handle that

situation. If students need help coming up with ideas, suggest the following strategies:

- a. *Verbal or physical aggression.* Avoid the person or persons who exhibit this behavior.
- b. *Gossip.* Consider confronting the person or persons who started the rumor. Bring an impartial person along to act as a moderator during the discussion. This technique is the basis of peer mediation. For more information about this strategy, students can visit the Web site [Peer Mediation](#).
- c. *Unpleasant behaviors.* Consider forming a committee to confront those engaged in such behaviors. The committee could present guidelines for acceptable ways to behave in school.
- d. *All categories.* Find a trusted adult with whom to discuss these issues. This adult could help students in a variety of ways. He or she could determine whether it is necessary to involve parents, serve as a sounding board to bounce off any hurt feelings, suggest ways to deal with a problem, or bring in the principal or other authorities to help resolve particularly difficult situations.
- e. Another way to deal with hurt feelings due to exclusion is for students to write the person a letter explaining their feelings. Sometimes it is easier to start a dialogue on paper because the individual is not being confronted directly, and both parties can take time to think about their responses without dealing with the other person's immediate reaction, such as anger or defensiveness.

Have each group share their resolution ideas with the class followed by open discussion.

Student Reflection:

Journal response: What do you think about Curtis's approach to winning Lateesha back? What else might he do to regain his credibility with her? Discuss a time when you had to gain someone's trust back. What did you learn?

Ask a few students to share if they are comfortable.

Assessment: The responses to the brainstorming activity will indicate how much of a grasp students have on resolving conflicts.

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading activities will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.

Closure

Ask if anyone has any questions about Curtis or any other part of the novel to this

point. Assign homework of journal prompt regarding how nature draws people together.

Homework:

- Journal prompt
- Give students map of England to research for Nora's country of origin.

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

1. SEL Lesson: <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/resolving-conflicts.cfm>
2. Character Attribute Web: www.readwritethink.org

Vocabulary Words

The following are sentences taken from the chapter about Curtis.

1. Guess the meaning of the bold words.
2. Look up the meaning of each bold word in the dictionary and choose the best meaning for the word; write it on the “Dictionary meaning” line.
3. Some words may not be in the dictionary, so you will have to guess from the context in which they are written.
4. Write a sentence with the word.

1. **Deltoids** -- awesome. Pecs – check ‘em out. Quads – now playing on a body near you.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

2. No chance for words. So I decided to give her some **deeds** instead.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

3. They liked to call me “field slave” and “**sharecropper.**”

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

4. Then someone else told me all their diseases. That got me worrying. What if all my plants started wilting? Or caught **blight** and died?

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

5. My **homies** all laughed to see me out there.

Guess _____

Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

6. Those tomatoes got big as **billiard** balls.

Guess _____

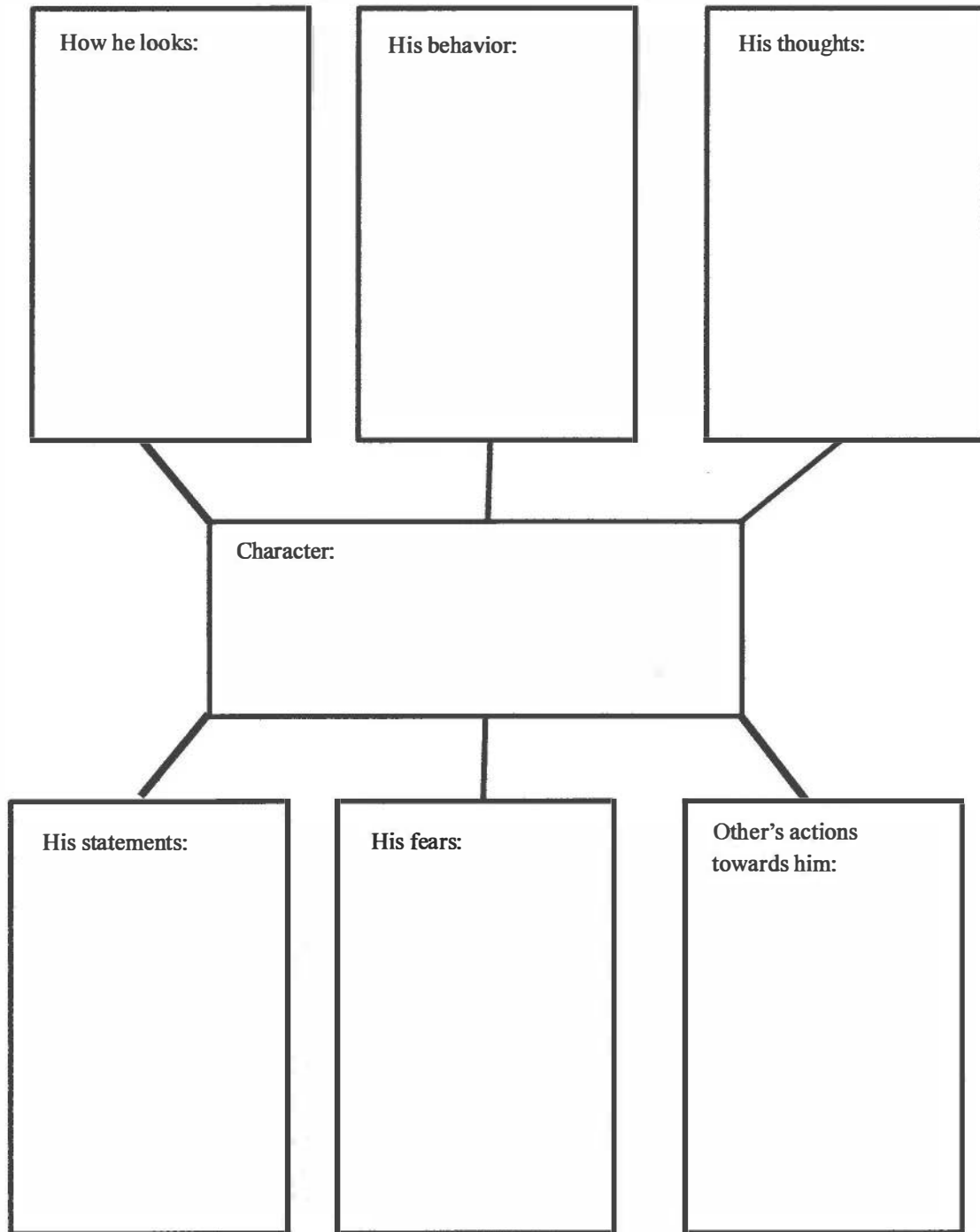
Dictionary meaning _____

Sentence _____

Questions

1. The priorities in Curtis's life changed. What were those changes and why did they take place?
2. Curtis and Royce developed a relationship. Please describe how they helped each other.
3. How did Curtis react to the comments that the men on the street and his friends made about the changes in him?
4. Why did Curtis plant the tomatoes? What did he hope they would do for him?

Character Attribute Web



Lesson 12: Chapter – Nora

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the tenth chapter about Nora to understand her importance to Mr. Myles and their place in the garden. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Vocabulary activity
 2. Comprehension Questions
 3. Character Traits and Textual Evidence
 4. Daily journal prompt
 5. Map of Mexico
- Projector and overheads

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- Check for any questions or concerns on what we have read so far.
- Review map of England
- Review journal assignment on how nature draws people together.

Lesson Activity

1. Complete vocabulary activity prior to reading.
2. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. Have students work in pairs on the character traits and textual evidence handout.
5. Students complete journal entry on what made the garden a community.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: NA for this chapter

Competency:

Skill(s):

Emotional Connection:

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Assessment:

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading activities will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.

Closure

Ask if anyone has any questions about Nora.

Homework:

- Give students map of Mexico to research for Maricela's country of origin.

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

Character Trait Chart: www.educationoasis.com

Chapter – Nora

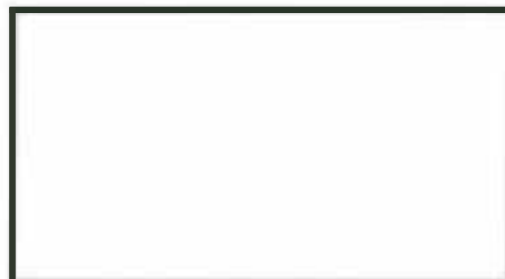
Learning About England

Please use library resources (e.g., atlas, Internet) to answer the following questions:

1. What continent is the country on?
2. What is the largest body of water near this country?
3. What is the area of this country?
4. How many people live there?
5. What is the climate like?
6. What kind of government?



7. What do they export?
8. Draw a picture of this country's flag in the box provided.



Vocabulary
Chapter – Nora

Prams
Obliged
Haphazard
Domestic
Entranced
Tremolo
Furrowed
Bobbed
Customary
Notion
Tenders



Vocabulary
Chapter – Nora

Prams
Obliged
Haphazard
Domestic
Entranced
Tremolo
Furrowed
Bobbed
Customary
Notion
Tenders

Word Map

4

Synonym (same)

5

Antonym (opposite)

3

1

Vocabulary Word
(page number)

6

Dictionary Definition

Other forms

2

Sentence or phrase from the text

8

Sentence I created with vocabulary word

7

My association, example, or sketch

Questions

1. Nora said, "We musn't stop living before our time." What did she mean by this?
2. Why didn't Nora know anything about Mr. Myles?
3. What happened to Mr. Myles on Gibb Street?
4. Discuss the mind-altering drug that Nora and Mr. Myles took each day.
5. What happened during the rainstorm?

Lesson 13: Chapter – Maricela

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the eleventh chapter about Maricela and gain an understanding of the challenges she faces as a pregnant teen. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt. This lesson will also address the SEL competency of self-management.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Vocabulary activity
 2. Comprehension Questions
 3. Characterization
 4. Daily journal prompt
 5. Map of India
- Projector and PowerPoint presentation

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- Check for any questions or concerns on what we have read so far.
- Review map of Mexico
- Review journal assignment on what made the garden a community.

Lesson Activity

1. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
2. Complete vocabulary activity during reading.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. Have students work in pairs on the characterization handout and character comparison chart.
5. SEL activity on teen pregnancy

6. Homework: Students will complete journal entry on how setbacks move us forward.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: Maricela's attitude toward herself and her pregnancy.

Competency: Responsible decision making

Skill(s):

- Making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions.
- Applying decision making skills to academic and social situations.
- Contributing to the well-being of one's school and community.

Emotional Connection:

Maricela becomes pregnant by her boyfriend and he then wants nothing to do with her. While she makes some disturbing comments about her unborn child, it is probably safe to say that they are words of misdirected anger towards herself. What stands out the most about Maricela is that she is frustrated by her predicament: being a "Mexican, pregnant, sixteen-year-old." Where she went astray was not thinking through, or paying attention to, the consequences of her actions by having unprotected sex with another teenager.

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

- View PowerPoint presentation on teen pregnancy
- Discussion Questions:
 1. Why do you think teenagers have sex? What are some reasons they don't use contraception?
 2. Society sends mixed messages about sex. How do the media and the entertainment industry influence teenagers' decisions about sex? Do you wish sex were treated differently in popular television shows and movies? If so, how?
 3. When a teenage girl gets pregnant, what role should the father of her child play? Do you think boys always play this role? Why or why not?

Student Reflection:

Journal response: How do you feel about Maricela's attitudes toward herself, her child, and her situation? How do you think you would feel if you were in her situation or if you were the father?

Ask a few students to share if they are comfortable.

Assessment:

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate how well students participate in class discussions on sensitive topics, understand the responsibilities associated with being a parent, and apply what they learned to their own lives.

- **Three points:** participated actively in class discussion; demonstrated above-average ability to discuss issues with maturity and insight; demonstrated good understanding of the responsibilities associated with being a parent; showed strong ability to apply what the student has learned to his or her own life.
- **Two points:** participated in class discussion; demonstrated ability to discuss issues with some maturity and insight; demonstrated average understanding of the responsibilities associated with being a parent; showed average ability to apply what the student has learned to his or her own life.
- **One point:** participated little in class discussion; had difficulty discussing topics with the class; demonstrated weak understanding of the responsibilities associated with being a parent; had difficulty applying what the student has learned to his or her own life.

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading activities will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.

Closure

Ask if anyone has any questions about Maricela.

Homework:

- Give students map of India to research for Amir's country of origin.
- Journal on setbacks.

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

SEL Lesson: <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/teen-pregnancy.cfm>

Vocabulary Words – Maricela

Chard
Decorum
Disgrace
Peel

Vocabulary Words – Maricela

Chard
Decorum
Disgrace
Peel

Vocabulary Words – Maricela

Chard
Decorum
Disgrace
Peel

Vocabulary Words – Maricela

Chard
Decorum
Disgrace
Peel

Vocabulary
(During reading)

<p>Vocabulary Word</p>	<p>Personal Association</p>
<p>Definition</p>	<p>A related word to help you remember it</p>

Questions

1. How does Maricela feel about her life? Explain..
2. What did the “Chain Gang” do in the garden? What did they all have in common?
3. What other gardeners did Maricela notice near her section?
4. How did Leona change Maricela’s feelings about her situation?

Characterization

Character: _____

Physical Appearance:

Action:

Thoughts and Words:

Other Characters Thoughts and Feelings:

Teen Pregnancy...

Journal Question

You are 17 and find out that you or your girlfriend is pregnant. How would you handle the situation?



Teen Pregnancy Pre-test (True or False)

- 1) Teen mothers are twice as likely to die in childbirth.
- 2) A child born to a teen mother is twice as likely to die before the age of one.
- 3) Teen mothers are twice as likely not to finish high school.

Teen Pregnancy Pre-test (True or False)

- 4) 20% of teen mothers are pregnant again before two years.
- 5) 82% of girls who gave birth at age 15 or younger were born to teen parents.
- 6) Most teen pregnancies happen by mistake – they were not planned.

Teen Pregnancy Pre-test (True or False)

- 7) If a boy has already made plans for further education after high school, he should not have to worry about marrying a girl, even if she is pregnant.
- 8) If a girl is pregnant, but the boy doesn't want her to have the baby, he is not responsible for supporting the child financially.
- 9) If the father wants custody and the mother doesn't, the father gets custody because it's his baby.

Teen Pregnancy Pre-test (True or False)

10. If a guy does not have a regular job, he will not be responsible for child support.
11. If a couple breaks up after the girl is pregnant, the guy has no responsibility for the child.
12. It's a girl's fault if she gets pregnant. It's not the guy's problem.
13. The divorce rate is greater for couples with a pre-marital pregnancy than for those who conceive after marriage.

Teen Pregnancy... So What?



<http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/>

The consequences of teen motherhood are many:

- Less likely to complete high school
- Dependence on public assistance
- Single parenthood
- More likely to have more children sooner on a limited income
- More likely to abuse or neglect the child



Risks to children of teen mothers:

- Growing up without a father
- Low birth weight and premature
- School failure
- Mental retardation
- Insufficient health care
- Abuse and neglect
- Poverty and dependency on public assistance



Why Wait?

- Of those that have had sex, more than one-half of teen boys (55%) and the overwhelming majority of teen girls (72%) said they wish they had waited longer to have sex.
- The majority of older teens (15-17 years old) surveyed also wish they had waited longer to have sex. Nearly six in ten older teens (58%) said they wish they waited longer to have sex.

Lesson 14: Chapter – Amir

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the twelfth chapter about Amir and gain an understanding of his character. This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, reviewing character country of origin, and completing a daily journal prompt. This lesson will also address the SEL competency of relationship skills. Further, the literary element of theme will be addressed.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Vocabulary activity
 2. Comprehension Questions
 3. Characterization
 4. SEL lesson – see section
 5. Literary element: theme - worksheet
 6. Daily journal prompt
 7. Map of India
- Projector and overheads

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- Check for any questions or concerns on what we have read so far.
- Review map of India
- Review journal assignment on breaking social rules.

Lesson Activity

1. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
2. Complete vocabulary activity during reading.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. Literary element – theme
5. SEL Activity – see section

6. Have students work in pairs on the characterization handout and character comparison chart.
7. Homework: Students will complete journal entry on when they have broken social rules.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus: Amir's views of the value of others and the significance of friendships.

Competency: Relationship skills

Skill(s):

- Establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation.
- Resisting inappropriate social pressure.
- Preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict.
- Seeking help when needed.

Emotional Connection: Amir's perception of America is that, unlike his native India, people do not like to get to know each other. He feels a sense of isolation that dissipates as he becomes involved in the garden. Have you ever felt like an outsider? What changed that feeling?

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

The Foundation of Friendship: Balancing Act worksheet. This exercise is to introduce students to the concepts of a healthy relationship based on honesty, fairness and trust. The colors indicate the balance of power in the relationship. Ideally the colors are balanced between the two sides. Class will discuss upon completion.

Student Reflection:

Journal: Amir says, "The object in America is to avoid contact, to treat all as foes unless they're known to be friends. Here you have a million crabs living in a million crevices." What does he mean by this? Describe a situation where you felt this way too.

Ask a few students to share if they are comfortable.

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading activities will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.

Closure

Ask if anyone has any questions about Amir.

Homework: Journal prompt on breaking social rules

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

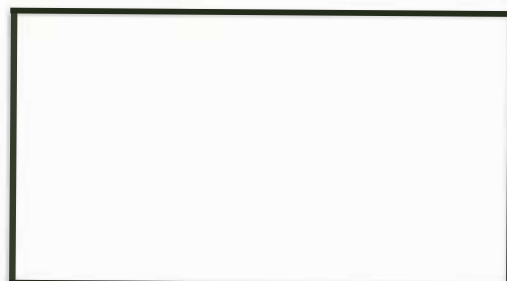
Learning About India

Please use library resources (e.g., atlas, Internet) to answer the following questions:

1. What continent is the country on?
2. What is the largest body of water near this country?
3. What is the area of this country?
4. How many people live there?
5. What is the climate like?



6. What kind of government?
7. What do they export?
8. Draw a picture of this country's flag in the box provided.



Source: <http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Seedfolks-by-Paul-Fleischman-Literature-Unit-Keys>

Vocabulary – Amir

Use the context to help you select the best meaning for each of the underlined words in the following sentences. Circle the answer you choose.

1. The Everglades is a vast area of Florida where many pythons live.

beautiful humid enormous populated

2. Sometimes a foe will operate in disguise.

friend enemy neighbor cashier

3. The stairs made an erie sound when we walked up them.

loud annoying universal scary

4. The student gave the speech despite her stutter.

clothing unpreparedness speech impediment glasses

5. Even though school had already started, the boy decided to roam the neighborhood.

walk study clean help

6. The man's exploit of wrestling the bear was legendary.

memory adventure problem frustration

7. You cannot have a pig roast without a spit to put on the grill.

charcoal rod cleanser match

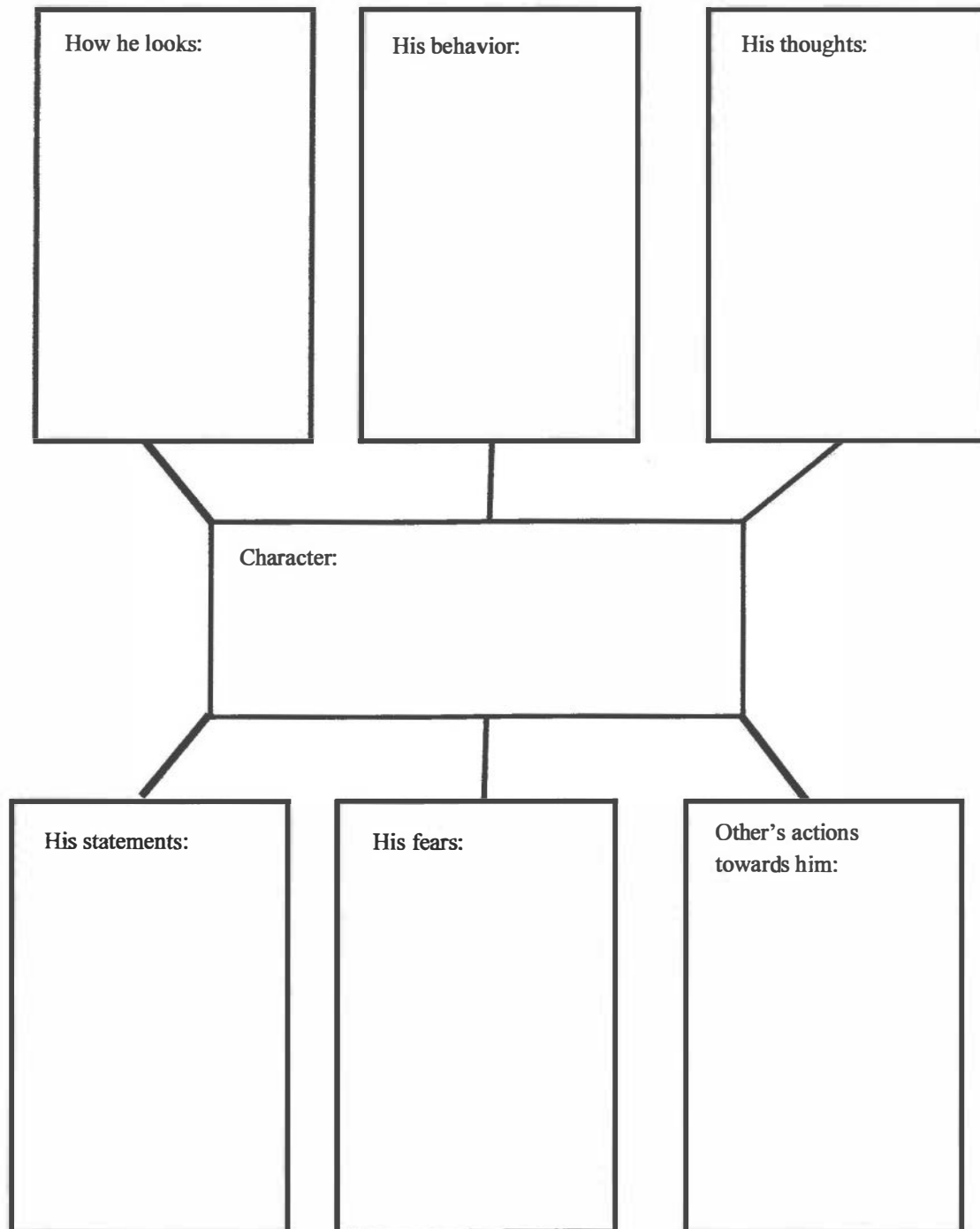
8. His particular interest in ships led him to join the navy.

old specific vague limited

Questions

1. What does Amir find so different about America from India?
2. How did the garden change Amir's opinion of Americans?
3. How did the Polish woman's carrot seedlings altar his stereotyped view of people from Poland?
4. What did the Italian woman mean when she said to Amir, "I didn't know it was *you* . . . "?

Character Attribute Web



Mini-Lesson on Literary Elements

What parts make up a story?

Literary Elements

Characterization

Setting

Tone

Style

Conflict

Theme

Plot



Theme

- A central message, concern, or insight into life expressed through a literary work
- Can be expressed by one or two sentence statement about human beings or about life
- May be stated directly or implied
- Interpretation uncovers the theme

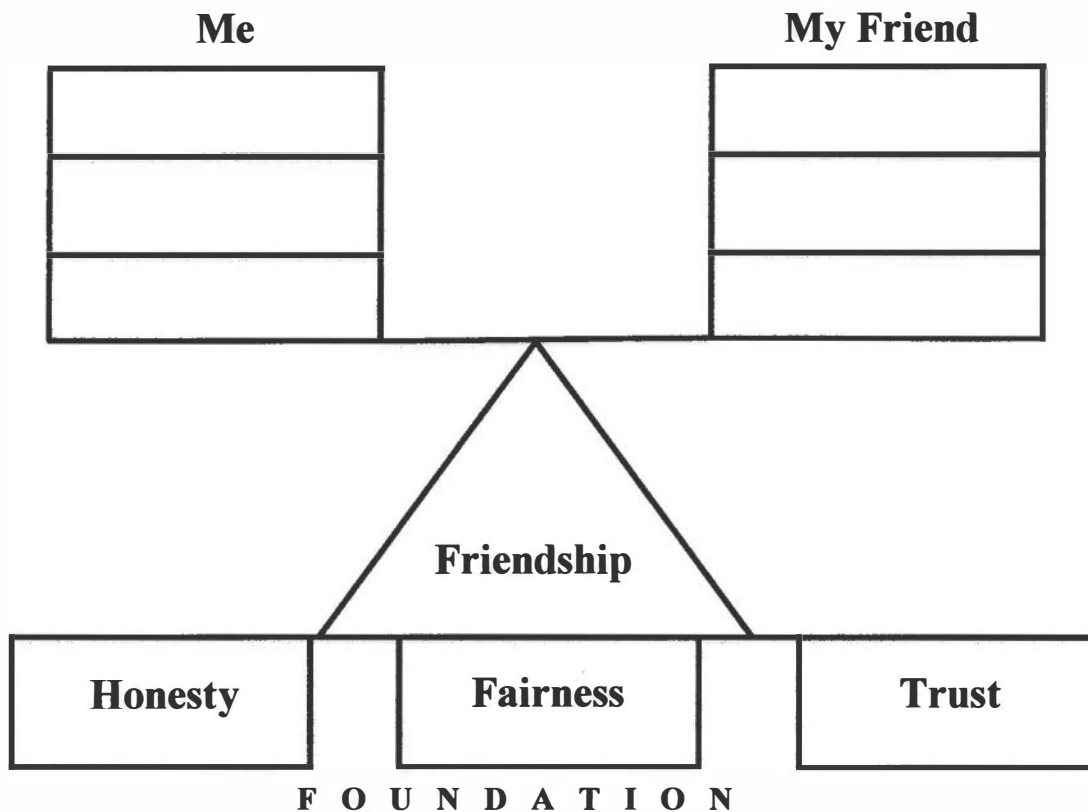
<http://edtech2.boisestate.edu/weltys/502/conceptmap.html/>

Example of Theme

“Every man needs to feel allegiance to his native country, whether he always appreciates that country or not.”

From “A Man Without a Country” by Edward Hale

Foundation of Friendship: Balancing Act



To be part of a healthy relationship, you have two parts, a strong foundation and a balance between yourself and your friends.

Foundation: Friendship is based upon honesty, fairness, and trust.

- Color each of the foundation boxes – Honesty, Fairness, and Trust – as follows about your friend:
 Green – always honest or fair or trustworthy
 Yellow – sometimes honest or fair or trustworthy
 No Color – not sure if he/she is honest or fair or trustworthy

Balance: To be a true friendship, and a healthy relationship, there has to be a balance between friends.

“Me” and “My Friend” Boxes – Fill the three rectangles within each box as follows:

Who is the boss in your group or friendship?	Always me-color a rectangle red in the “Me” box; Always my friend-color a rectangle blue in the “My Friend” box; Neither-color a rectangle green in the “Me” and “My Friend” box
My friend always listens to what I say.	Color a rectangle red in the “Me” box
My friend never listens to what I say.	Color a rectangle black in the “My Friend” box
I always listen to what my friend says.	Color a rectangle blue in the “My Friend” box
I never listen to what my friend says.	Color a box black in the “Me” box
I do whatever my friends tell me to do, even if it is wrong.	Color a rectangle black in the “My Friend” box

Lesson 15: Chapter – Florence

Overview & Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to read the thirteenth and final chapter about Florence to gain an understanding of her character and an understanding of the significance of “seedfolks.” This will be done through in-class reading, a vocabulary activity, answering comprehension questions, completing character traits graphic organizers, and completing a daily journal prompt. The literary element of plot will also be discussed.

New York State Standard Addressed

Students will read, write, listen and speak for:

1. Information and understanding
2. Critical analysis
3. Literary response and expression
4. Social interaction

Resources & Materials

- Handouts - 24 Copies:
 1. Vocabulary activity
 2. Comprehension Questions
 3. Characterization
 4. Literary element – plot worksheet
 5. Daily journal prompt
- Projector and overheads

Anticipatory Set or Activity

- Check for any questions or concerns on what we have read so far.
- Review journal assignment on how setbacks can often move us forward.

Lesson Activity

1. We will read the chapter as a class. Divide the paragraphs among four students who would like to read.
2. Complete vocabulary activity during reading.
3. The post reading activity will require students to answer the comprehension questions. Have them work in pairs to answer, and then the class will engage in discussion about the questions.
4. Have students work in pairs on the characterization handout.
5. Literary elements – plot worksheet
6. Homework: Students will complete journal entry on what made the garden a community.
7. Journal prompt: describe what the garden did for the community on Gibbs St.

Social Emotional Learning

Lesson Focus:

Competency:

Skill(s):

Emotional Connection:

Integration Strategy – Lesson Activity:

Student Reflection:

Assessment:

Assessment

- Class discussion of the post-reading activities will determine comprehension of the chapter. Questions will be answered to ensure the meaning and significance of the chapter is understood.

Closure

Ask if anyone has any questions about Amir.

Homework:

- Journal on effect of garden on Gibbs Street

Source(s)

Noted in this space and/or on lesson handouts and presentations.

- Elements of Plot PowerPoint presentation:
alex.state.al.us/.../Elements%20of%20a%20Plot%20Diagram%5D.ppt

Vocabulary Words

Homesteaded
Arthritis
Sampler
Glacier

Vocabulary Words

Homesteaded
Arthritis
Sampler
Glacier

Vocabulary Words

Homesteaded
Arthritis
Sampler
Glacier

Vocabulary Words

Homesteaded
Arthritis
Sampler
Glacier

PAVE Map

Sentence from the text:

Word

Predicted Definition:

One Good Sentence of My Own:

Verified Dictionary Definition:

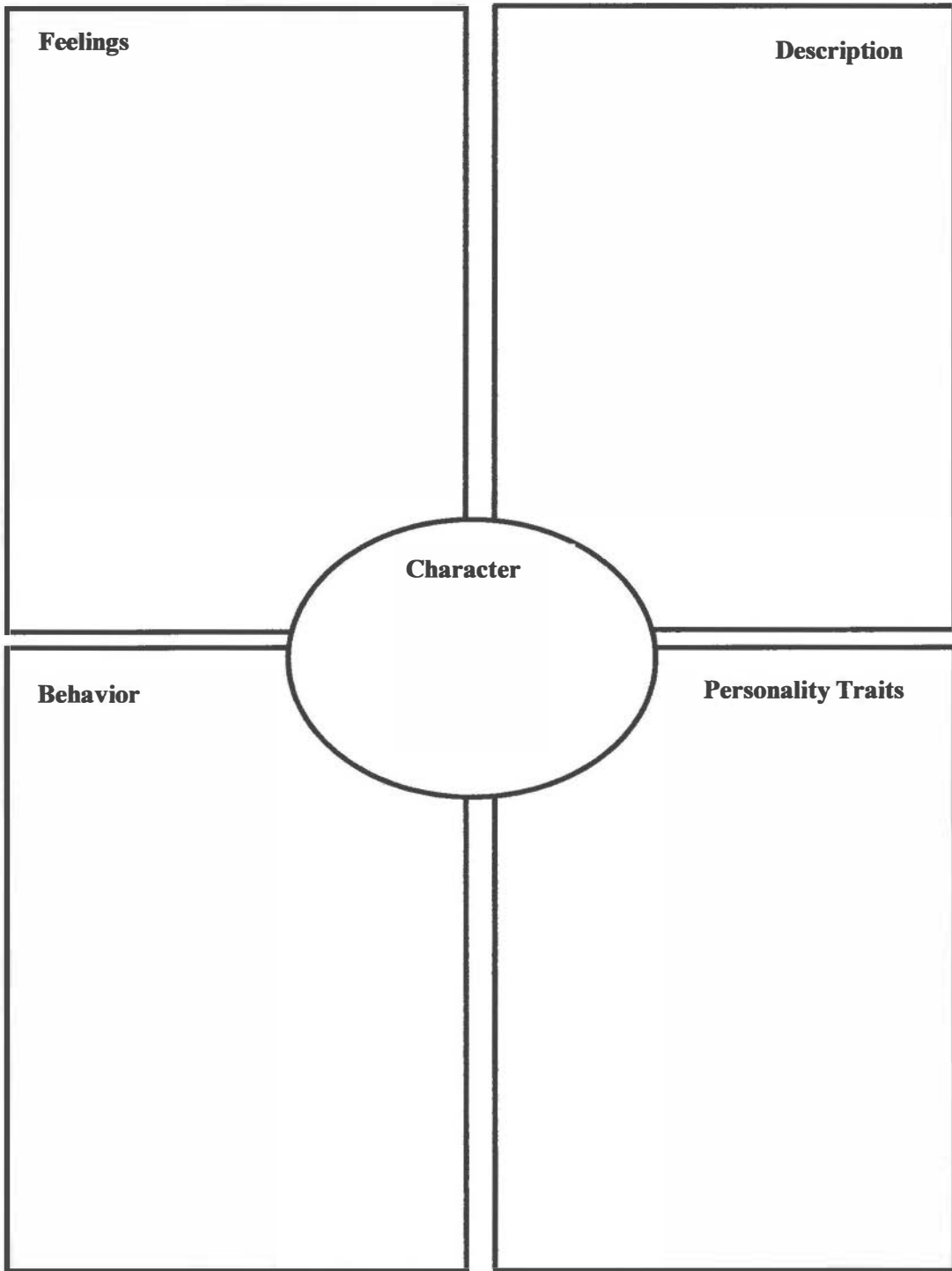
Another Good Sentence of My Own:

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/VocabularyStrategies.html>

Questions

1. What do the original planters of the Gibb Street garden have in common with Florence's great-great grandparents?
2. "I wasn't the only one. I'd see others on the fire escapes, or standing on the sidewalks like me." What were they all doing? Why was Florence not a part of the garden?
3. How did she feel about the garden in the winter?
4. What do Florence and the man in the rocker have in common?

Character Map



Mini-Lesson on Literary Elements

What parts make up a story?

Literary Elements

Characterization

Setting

Tone

Style

Conflict

Theme

Plot

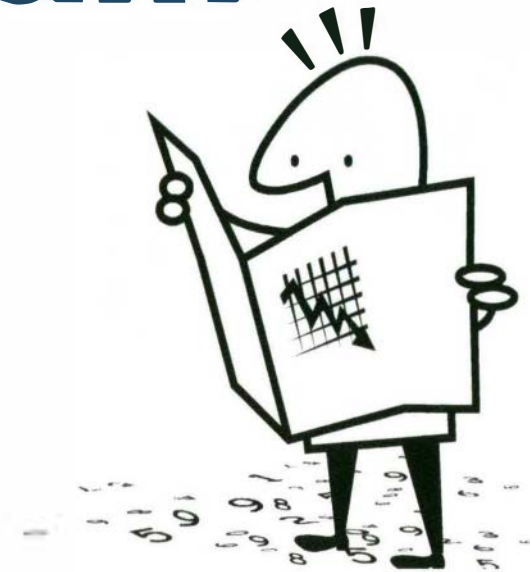


Plot

- Plot is what happens and how it happens in a narrative.
- A narrative is any work that tells a story, such as a short story, a novel, a drama, or a narrative poem.

Identifying the Elements of A Plot Diagram

Student Notes

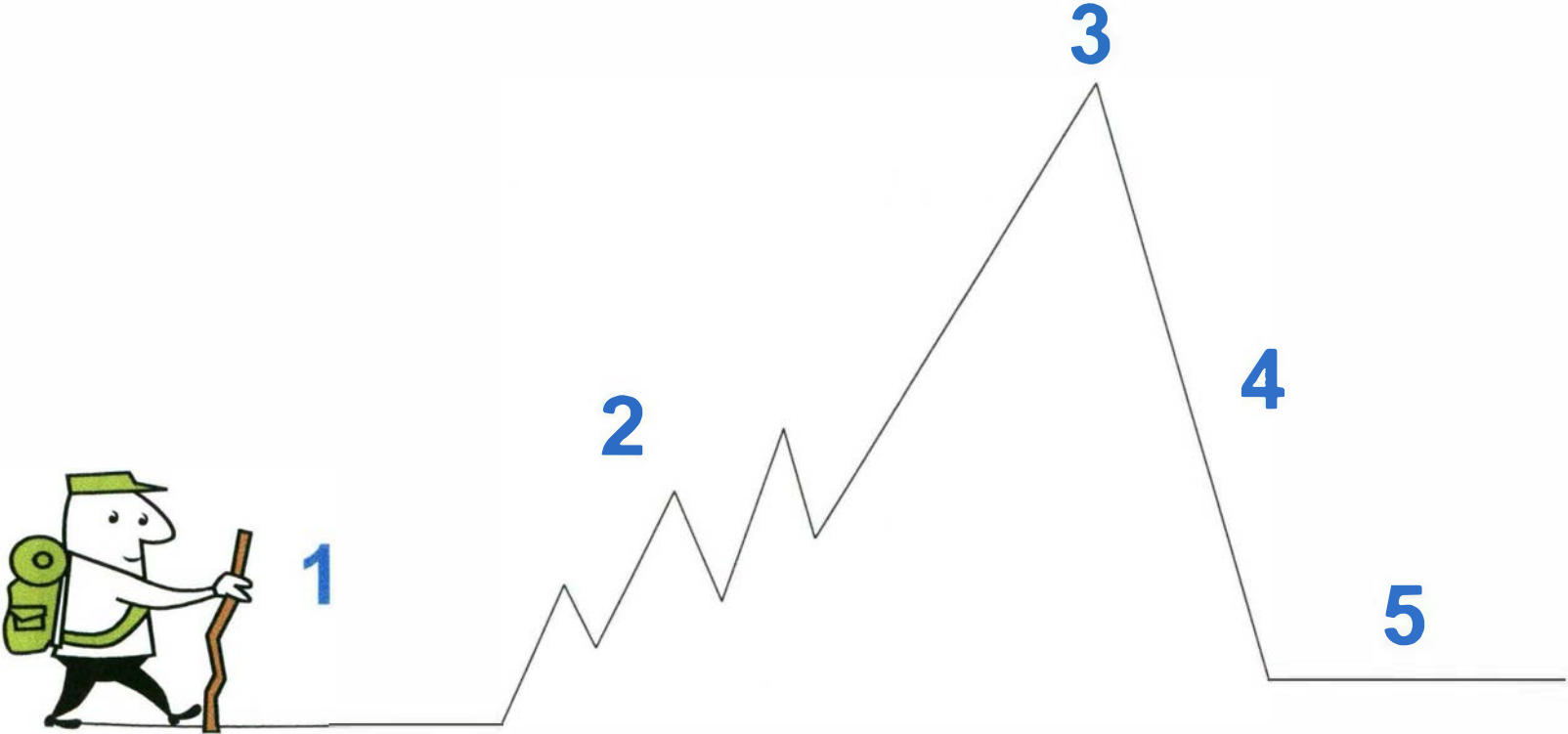


Plot

Plot is the organized pattern or sequence of events that make up a story. Every plot is made up of a series of incidents that are related to one another.

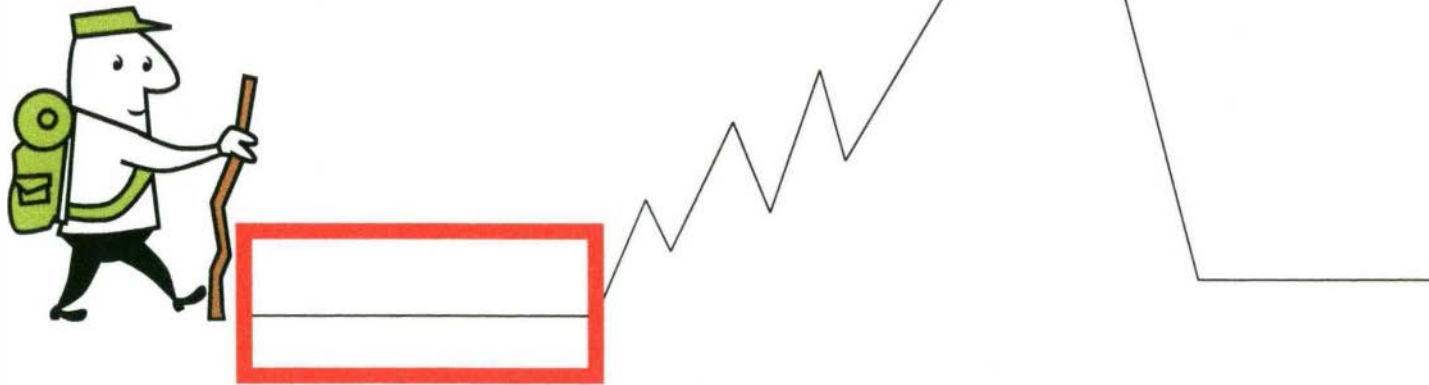


Plot Diagram



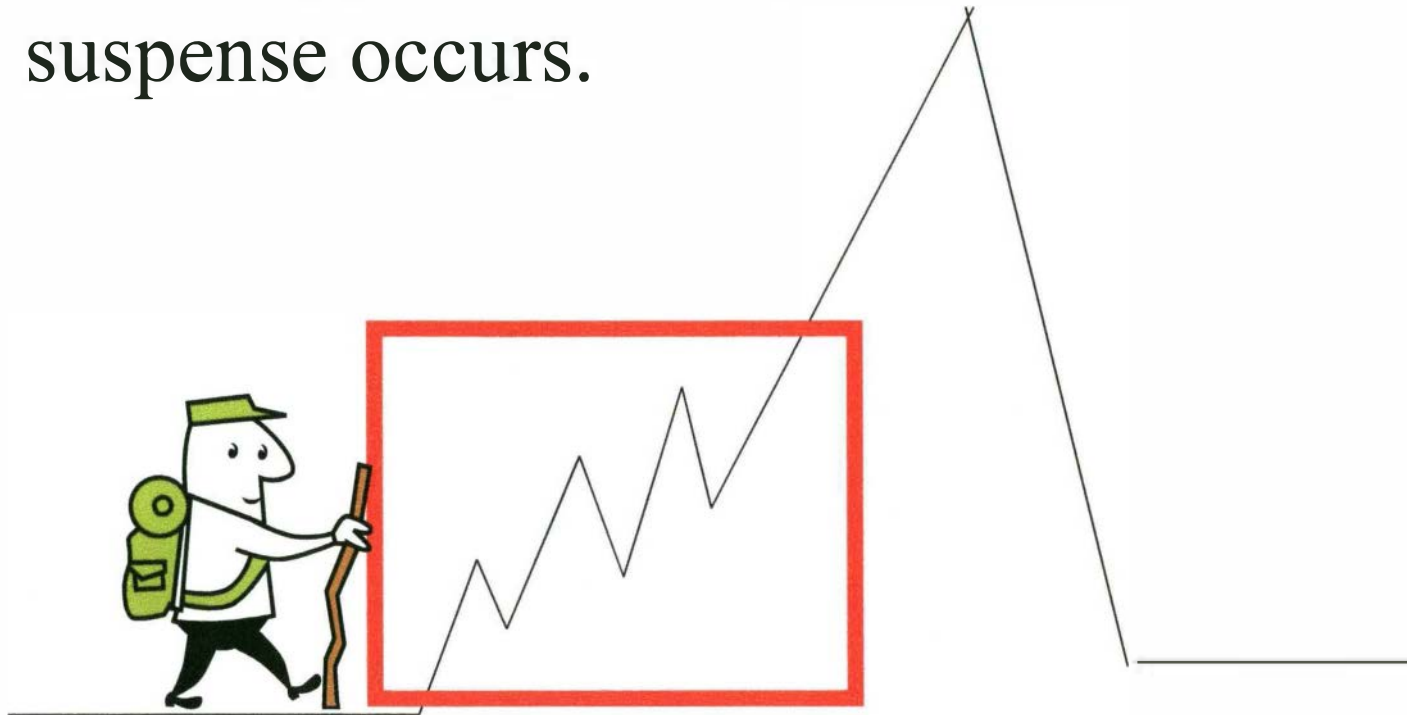
1. Exposition

This usually occurs at the beginning of a short story. Here the characters are introduced. We also learn about the setting of the story. Most importantly, we are introduced to the main conflict (main problem).



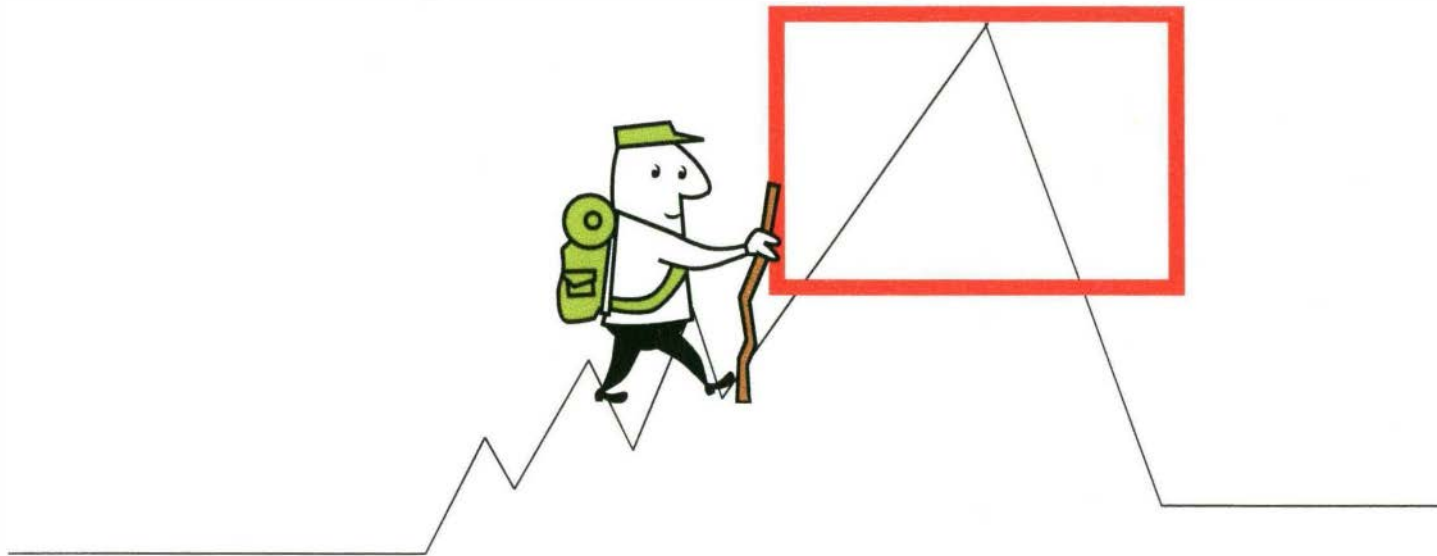
2. Rising Action

This part of the story begins to develop the conflict(s). A building of interest or suspense occurs.



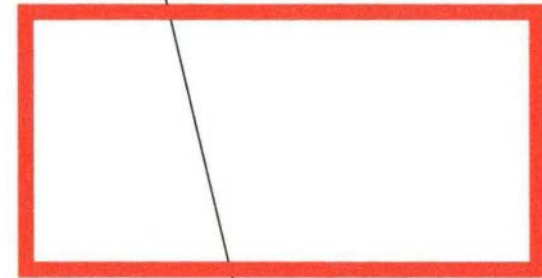
3. Climax

This is the turning point of the story. Usually the main character comes face to face with a conflict. The main character will change in some way.



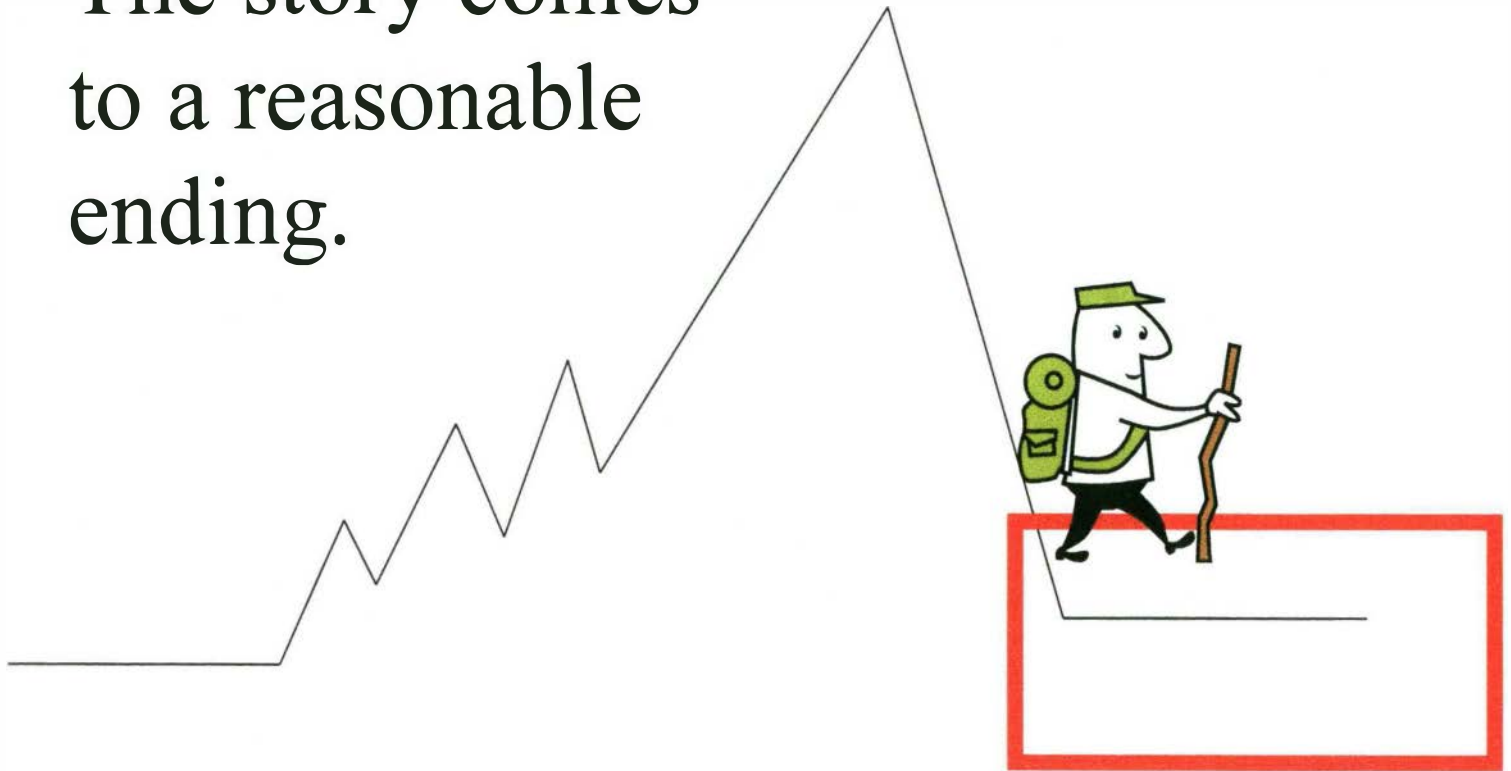
4. Falling Action

All loose ends of the plot are tied up. The conflict(s) and climax are resolved.

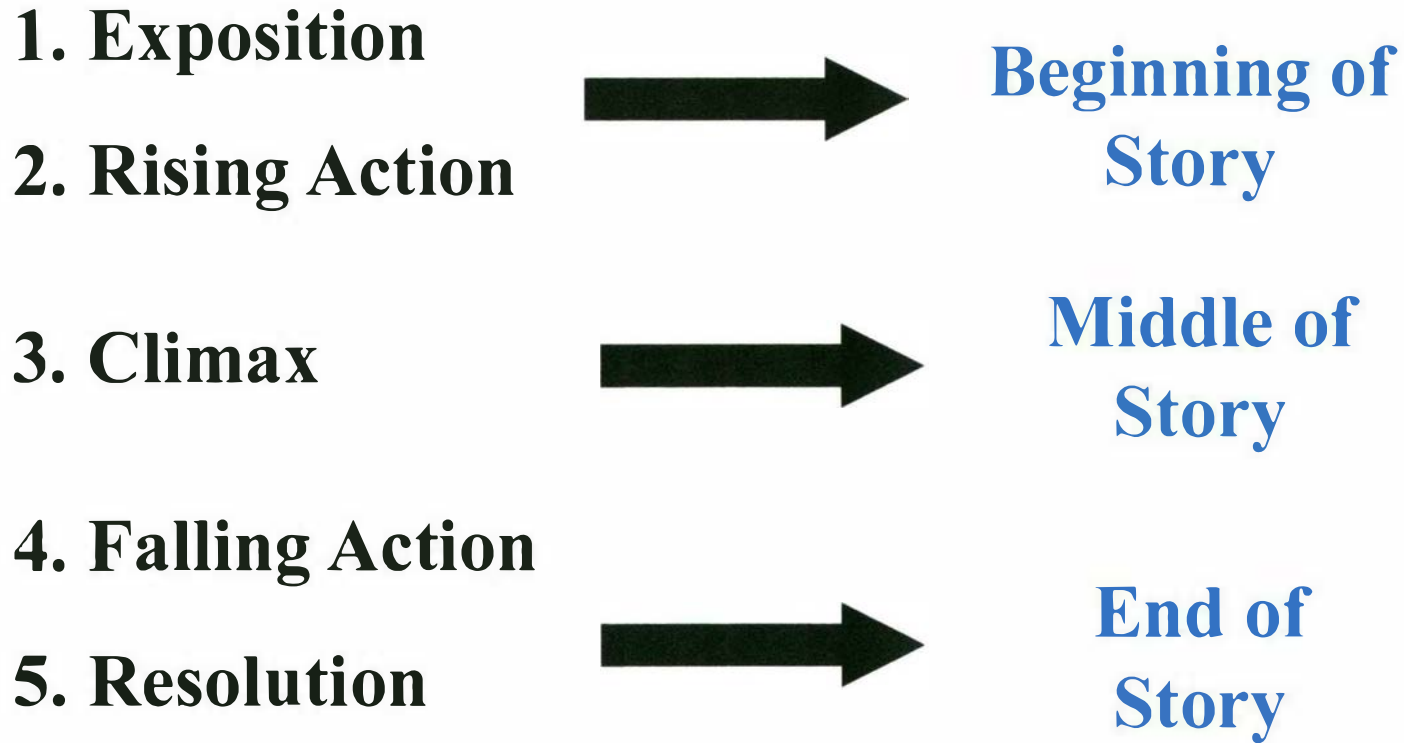


5. Resolution

The story comes to a reasonable ending.



Putting It All Together



Culminating Projects

Choose *one* of the following projects. Please use your characterization graphic organizers, character comparison chart, literary elements and devices, journals, notes, and any research you would like to do.

Write a Character Sketch

A character sketch informs you about the character in a book. When you write a character sketch, you want the reader to have a strong mental image of the person including how the person talks, acts, and thinks. It is important to include proof from the story to support what you are writing in the character sketch. If you cannot support it with something from the story, then it does not belong in your character sketch. Your paper should be three pages in length.

Continue the *Seedfolks* Story

You have completed character graphic organizers for all of the characters in the novel. Write another chapter to the story about what happens during the next growing season between some or all of them. Your paper should be three pages in length.

Diversity in the Garden

Describe how the characters helped the garden and the community grow. Did anything prevent the garden and community from growing? Your paper should be three pages in length.

Collage

Create a collage of one of the characters from the Gibbs Street garden. What is represented? Do a one- or two-page write up explaining your project.

Compare/Contrast

Compare and contrast two of the characters. Explain why you chose these characters and their significance as the *Seedfolks* of Gibbs Street. Your paper should be three pages in length.

Chapter 4 – Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this project was to examine ways in which social emotional learning initiatives are integrated into existing school curriculum, in particular, English Language Arts (ELA), and to create a literature-based unit plan to demonstrate these principles. I developed a 15-lesson unit using the novel *Seedfolks*, a story about a group of people who are different in age, race, culture, and circumstance, and how they transform a trash-laden vacant lot into a vibrant community garden. In the process, they transform themselves for the better as well. I created the unit using the core performance indicators common to all four ELA standards but also added the dimension of social emotional learning to incorporate those competencies into five of the lesson plans.

Literature is the ideal place to incorporate teaching competencies concerning emotions and feelings. Where else are we exposed so intimately to another person's interior than in literature? So often we can identify with the character's feelings from our own experiences or at least empathize with them. The thirteen characters in *Seedfolks* – Vietnamese, Eastern European, Caucasian, Haitian, Indian, English, African-American, Korean, Hispanic – remind us, despite our outward appearance, how similar we are from an emotional perspective. This novel is full of great examples of this, such as when fear rooted in stereotyping dissipated after the characters became friends rather than representatives of their race. This is illustrated when two of the characters, who got to know each other in the garden, recollected an ugly exchange they had the prior year when one made a derogatory comment about

the other's ethnicity. When the character who had been rudely spoken to reminded the other of what she had said, her reply was, "I didn't know it was *you*." This is a powerful example of how establishing a positive relationship can change a person's perspective of another.

Research indicates that SEL initiatives are worthwhile and make a positive difference in academic performance, as well as social and emotional competence. The psychologists, Salovey and Mayer, who defined emotional intelligence explained that emotion makes thinking more intelligent and that one thinks intelligently about emotions (Bar-On 5). Teaching students about emotions and enhancing social skills through CASEL's five competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making) has increased the quality of life and education in those schools that have been able to incorporate SEL programs.

While there are many positives to incorporating SEL programs, there are also challenges to successful implementation. My experience in creating a unit plan with a SEL component proved to be more demanding than when the focus has been solely on literacy skills. It required extra planning on how to best correlate SEL principles to the literature, as well as how to present those learning competencies in the most meaningful way. While this unit was not actually presented to students, I wonder if they would engage, i.e., take the SEL components seriously or question the validity of their presence in English class. For example, the SEL lesson on responsible decision-making used the character with the teen-pregnancy issue to illustrate the need to be

responsible about sex. Students might be interested in this issue or they might be apt to feel this is a subject better suited to health class.

There are other obstacles to implementing SEL programs in schools. There may be parental objection to someone outside of the family discussing emotional and social issues with their child. They may feel these are inappropriate topics to be integrated with academics. Additionally, there may be cultural or religious beliefs that create barriers to students' exposure to the topic, such as the one I used on teen pregnancy. From the school standpoint, there may not be funding available to implement these programs, faculty may not be interested and feel incorporating SEL principles is one more thing to do, and curriculum and training may be unavailable. There may also be opposition because it is difficult to measure the success of SEL programming since empirical evidence, though growing, is still limited.

Creating this unit and incorporating the social emotional learning competencies helped me reflect on the complexity and gravity of teaching. This unit encompassed teaching students literacy skills through reading comprehension activities, varying vocabulary strategies, the identification and use of literary elements and devices, relating the text to reality, and incorporating social and emotional skill building to help students develop skills they will need throughout their life. Ideally the case for teaching social and emotional skills will grow stronger in the future when more empirical evidence becomes available that connects these skills with academic and social outcomes. It is my hope that social emotional learning competencies will become a standard element of state core curriculum requirements. It is not just

academic skills children need for life, but the life skills they will gain through social emotional learning in the classroom as well.

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