

UNIT 1



Is conflict necessary?

UNIT PATHWAY

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- INTRODUCING THE BIG QUESTION
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- ONLINE TEXT SET





CLOSE READING TOOL

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Introducing the Big Question



Is conflict necessary?

A conflict is a struggle between opposing forces. A conflict might be as small as an argument between friends or as large as a war between nations. It might also involve just one person who faces a personal challenge or a hard decision. Conflicts occur frequently in literature and in life, but are they necessary? Conflicts can be difficult for the people involved in them, but can a conflict also have a positive outcome?



Exploring the Big Question

Collaboration: Group Discussion Start thinking about the Big Question by identifying different types of conflicts and the consequences they can have. Make a list of a variety of conflicts you have either read about or experienced. Describe one specific example of each of the following:

- An argument or a disagreement between friends
- A contest or competition between teams
- A struggle to make a decision
- A controversy in the news
- A problem that must be solved

Share your examples with a group. Talk about both the causes and the effects of each conflict. Consider the positive and negative effects that each conflict might have for each person involved.

Before you begin the discussion, establish rules that will allow you to manage conflicts within your own group. For example, agree upon specific goals you want to achieve, how you will handle disagreements, and timeframes for completing your objectives. Write down the rules and refer to them as needed as you conduct your discussion. As you contribute your ideas, use the conflict-related words listed on the page at right.

Connecting to the Literature Each reading in this unit will give you additional insight into the Big Question. After you read each selection, pause to consider the conflicts it presents. Decide how these conflicts affect the lives of the characters, and whether they could or should have been avoided.

Vocabulary

Acquire and Use Academic Vocabulary The term “academic vocabulary” refers to words you typically encounter in scholarly and literary texts and in technical and business writing. It is language that helps to express complex ideas. Review the definitions of these academic vocabulary words.

appreciate (ə prē´ shē āt) *v.* be aware of the value of something

argument (ār´ gyōō mēnt) *n.* discussion in which there is disagreement; dispute

articulate (ār tik´ yōō lāt) *v.* express clearly

compete (kəm pēt´) *v.* try to win against an opponent

competition (kām´ pē tish´ ən) *n.* contest or match; rivalry

controversy (kän´ trē vūr´sē) *n.* lengthy, often public discussion of a question in which opposing opinions clash

Gather Vocabulary Knowledge Additional words related to conflict are listed below. Categorize the words by deciding whether you know each one well, know it a little bit, or do not know it at all.

amicably

antagonize

cooperate

differences

equity

grievance

issue

mediate

survival

war/battle

Once you have sorted the words, complete the following steps:

1. Write the definitions of the words you know.
2. Use a print or an online dictionary to confirm each word’s meaning. If necessary, revise your original definitions.
3. Use the dictionary to look up the meanings of the words you do not know. Then, write the definitions.
4. If a word sounds familiar but you are not sure of its meaning, consult the dictionary. Then, record the word’s meaning.
5. Use all of the words in a paragraph about the necessity of conflict.

Close Reading Workshop

In this workshop, you will learn an approach to reading that will deepen your understanding of literature and will help you better appreciate the author's craft. The workshop includes models for the close reading, discussion, research, and writing activities you will complete as you study literature in this unit. After you have reviewed the strategies and models, practice your skills with the Independent Practice selection.

CLOSE READING: SHORT STORY

In Part 2 of this unit, you will focus on reading various short stories. Use these strategies as you read the texts:

Comprehension: Key Ideas and Details

- Read first to unlock basic meaning.
 - Use context clues to help you determine the meanings of unfamiliar words. Consult a dictionary, if necessary.
 - Identify unfamiliar details that you might need to clarify through research.
 - Distinguish between what is stated directly and what must be inferred.
- Ask yourself questions such as these:**
- Who are the main characters?
 - When and where does the action take place?
 - What problems do the characters face?

Text Analysis: Craft and Structure

- Think about the genre of the work and how the author presents ideas.
 - Analyze the features that contribute to the author's voice and style. Notice the author's diction (word choice), syntax (arrangement of words in sentences), and tone (attitude toward the audience and subject).
 - Take note of how the author uses language and literary elements to create memorable scenes or images.
 - Consider the story's narrative structure, including flashbacks, foreshadowing, or multiple points of view.
- Ask yourself questions such as these:**
- How does the narrator's point of view affect my understanding of and feelings about the story?
 - Why do the characters behave as they do? How do their actions advance the plot?
 - What is the central conflict, or struggle, that characters face?

Connections: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Look for relationships among key ideas. Identify causes and effects, and comparisons and contrasts.
 - Look for important images or symbols and consider their deeper meanings. Then, connect ideas to determine the theme or central insight expressed by the author.
 - Compare and contrast this work with other works you have read, either by the same author or different authors.
- Ask yourself questions such as these:**
- How has this work increased my knowledge of a subject, an author, or a literary movement?
 - In what ways is this story special, unique, or worthy of reading?

Read

As you read this short story, take note of the annotations that model ways to closely read the text.

Reading Model

“Old Man at the Bridge” by Ernest Hemingway

An old man¹ with steel rimmed spectacles² and very dusty clothes sat by the side of the road. There was a pontoon bridge³ across the river and carts, trucks, and men, women and children were crossing it. The mule-drawn carts staggered up the steep bank from the bridge with soldiers³ helping push against the spokes of the wheels. The trucks ground up and away heading out of it all and the peasants plodded along in the ankle deep dust.² But the old man sat there without moving. He was too tired to go any farther.

It was my business⁴ to cross the bridge, explore the bridgehead beyond and find out to what point the enemy had advanced. I did this and returned over the bridge. There were not so many carts now and very few people on foot, but the old man was still there.

“Where do you come from?” I asked him.

“From San Carlos,” he said, and smiled.

That was his native town and so it gave him pleasure to mention it and he smiled.⁵

“I was taking care of animals,” he explained.

“Oh,” I said, not quite understanding.

“Yes,” he said, “I stayed, you see, taking care of animals. I was the last one to leave the town of San Carlos.”⁵

He did not look like a shepherd nor a herdsman and I looked at his black dusty clothes and his gray dusty face and his steel rimmed spectacles and said, “What animals were they?”

“Various animals,” he said, and shook his head. “I had to leave them.”

I was watching the bridge and the African looking country of the Ebro Delta and wondering how long now it would be before we would see the enemy, and listening all the while for the first noises that would signal that ever mysterious event called contact, and the old man still sat there.⁶

“What animals were they?” I asked.

“There were three animals altogether,” he explained. “There were two goats and a cat and then there were four pairs of pigeons.”

“And you had to leave them?” I asked.

“Yes. Because of the artillery. The captain told me to go because of the artillery.”

Key Ideas and Details

1 The “old man” of the title is mentioned in the story’s first sentence. The pronoun *an* suggests that the narrator does not know exactly who the old man is.

Craft and Structure

2 Hemingway’s language is simple but poetic. The consonant sounds in the phrases *steel rimmed spectacles* and *peasants plodded along in the ankle deep dust* create strong rhythmic patterns and also convey vivid images.

Key Ideas and Details

3 You might consult a dictionary to determine that a *pontoon bridge* is a temporary floating bridge that is used by the military. The narrator also mentions *soldiers*, which may help you infer that the story takes place during wartime.

Craft and Structure

4 This phrase “It was my business” reveals that the narrator is telling the story in the first person. Further details in this sentence reveal the narrator’s task.

Key Ideas and Details

5 The old man’s smile and his words show that he was happy in San Carlos and did not want to leave. This fact might help you determine why he sits still while everyone around him is moving away.

Craft and Structure

6 This long sentence creates tension and reveals a conflict—the narrator expects that danger is approaching, but the old man will not move to safety.

"And you have no family?" I asked, watching the far end of the bridge where a few last carts were hurrying down the slope of the bank.

"No," he said, "only the animals I stated. The cat, of course, will be all right. A cat can look out for itself, but I cannot think what will become of the others."

"What politics have you?" I asked.

"I am without politics," he said.⁷ "I am seventy-six years old. I have come twelve kilometers now and I think now I can go no further."

"This is not a good place to stop," I said. "If you can make it, there are trucks up the road where it forks for Tortosa."

"I will wait a while," he said, "and then I will go. Where do the trucks go?"

"Towards Barcelona," I told him.

"I know no one in that direction," he said, "but thank you very much. Thank you again very much."

He looked at me very blankly and tiredly, and then said, having to share his worry with someone, "The cat will be all right, I am sure. There is no need to be unquiet about the cat. But the others. Now what do you think about the others?"⁸

"Why they'll probably come through it all right."

"You think so?"

"Why not," I said, watching the far bank where now there were no carts.

"But what will they do under the artillery when I was told to leave because of the artillery?"

"Did you leave the dove cage unlocked?" I asked.⁹

"Yes."

"Then they'll fly."

"Yes, certainly they'll fly. But the others. It's better not to think about the others," he said.

"If you are rested I would go," I urged. "Get up and try to walk now."

"Thank you," he said and got to his feet, swayed from side to side and then sat down backwards in the dust.

"I was taking care of animals," he said dully, but no longer to me. "I was only taking care of animals."

There was nothing to do about him. It was Easter Sunday and the Fascists were advancing toward the Ebro. It was a gray overcast day with a low ceiling so their planes were not up. That and the fact that cats know how to look after themselves was all the good luck that old man would ever have.¹⁰

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7 The old man's statement that he is "without politics" develops the theme: War affects even those who do not take sides.

Key Ideas and Details

8 These details show that the old man is dazed and tired. His unwavering concern for his animals suggests that he either does not understand or does not care about his own well-being; he has given up.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9 Earlier in the story, the birds were referred to as "pigeons," but now the narrator calls them "doves." The fact that doves often symbolize peace underscores Hemingway's message about the effects of war on innocent civilians.

Craft and Structure

10 The narrator has done his best, but he realizes he cannot save the old man. He reports details about the time, place, and situation in a seemingly detached manner. The final sentence suggests that he holds little hope for the old man's survival, yet Hemingway leaves the story's conflict unresolved.

Discuss

Sharing your own ideas and listening to the ideas of others can deepen your understanding of a text and help you look at a topic in a whole new way. As you participate in collaborative discussions, work to have a genuine exchange in which classmates build upon one another's ideas. Support your points with evidence and ask meaningful questions.

Discussion Model

Student 1: It's interesting that Hemingway doesn't use a battle as the location of the story's conflict. No bombs fall, and no one is injured. Instead, he focuses on a more subtle conflict: What is to become of ordinary people caught up in a war?

Student 2: That's true. It's also important that the old man says he is "without politics." He seems to be an innocent bystander. But is it possible to really be "without politics"? In any case he seems to be suffering.

Student 3: I agree. People are usually aware of the dangers soldiers face but may not realize what happens to those who aren't actually fighting. Do you think Hemingway is talking about one war in particular or about war in general?

Research

Targeted research can clarify unfamiliar details and shed light on various aspects of a text. Consider questions that arise in your mind as you read, and use those questions as the basis for research.

Research Model

Questions: *Is this story set during a specific war? If so, which one, and how did Hemingway know about it?*

Key Words for Internet Search: Hemingway + War

Result: National Archives, Hemingway Collection

What I Learned: Hemingway was a journalist during the Spanish Civil War. He wrote an account of the war that appeared in *The New York Times* on April 19, 1938. His experience seems to have inspired "Old Man at the Bridge."

Write

Writing about a text will deepen your understanding of it and will also allow you to share your ideas more formally with others. The following model essay evaluates Hemingway's style and cites evidence to support the main ideas.

Writing Model: Argument

Hemingway's Approach to Character in "Old Man at the Bridge"

Ernest Hemingway is known for his tightly controlled, minimal style. In "Old Man at the Bridge," this style is evident. What is remarkable is how much this style helps the author achieve in such a brief story. In particular, Hemingway does a masterful job of developing his characters, drawing a rich portrait of two people, the narrator and the old man of the title, in just 762 words.

Readers know the narrator best because he is their eyes and ears. Everything about the story's setting and action is relayed through this first-person narrator. As we read, we begin to know the narrator through the details he shares. Also, as the narrator begins to understand something about the old man, readers do, too.

The first layer of details the narrator gives us describes the setting. The old man is at first part of the setting, seen sitting "with steel rimmed spectacles and very dusty clothes" by the side of a road. There is a lot of traffic and confusion, and the narrator reports that as well. Details such as, "The mule-drawn carts staggered up the steep bank from the bridge with soldiers helping push..." bring the urgent scene to life. However, the narrator takes note of the old man first.

The narrator has a job to do, which is to scout the enemy's position. As he says, "It was my business to cross the bridge, explore the bridgehead beyond and find out to what point the enemy had advanced." He does his job, but does not tell readers what he found. Instead, when he returns from scouting, he simply states, "the old man was still there." The narrator spends more time relaying details about the old man than he does about the war or even his own mission. He does not say it directly, but the narrator is clearly concerned about the old man.

This quality of not stating things directly fits the "iceberg theory"—a term Hemingway used to describe his style. In his memoir *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway discusses how most of an iceberg sits below the water's surface. Only a small portion shows above. Hemingway felt that the meaning of a story should not be obvious. Instead, the writer should hint at it. In this story, he hints at but does not describe directly the old man's desperate situation.

Hemingway was a journalist as well as a fiction writer. His newspaper training taught him to work from facts and to observe. As he wrote in his memoir, "My aim is to put down on paper what I see and what I feel in the best and simplest way." He also would not turn away from difficult topics. Instead, he advised others to "write hard and clear about what hurts." That quality can be seen even in this very short story, which looks at an old man in a bad situation in a "hard and clear" way.

Strong critical writing presents and defends a writer's interpretation of a text. In this essay, the writer states a clear position in the first paragraph.

By defining the narrative structure of the story, the writer demonstrates understanding of the author's craft.

The writer supports claims with specific details from the story.

The writer seamlessly incorporates evidence from research to make an important connection.

As you read the following story, apply the close reading strategies you have learned. You may need to read the story multiple times.

The Jade Peony¹

by Wayson Choy

When Grandmama died at 83 our whole household held its breath. She had promised us a sign of her leaving, final proof that her present life had ended well. My parents knew that without any clear sign, our own family fortunes could be altered, threatened. My stepmother looked endlessly into the small cluttered room the ancient lady had occupied. Nothing was touched; nothing changed. My father, thinking that a sign should appear in Grandmama's garden, looked at the frost-killed shoots and cringed: *no, that could not be it.*

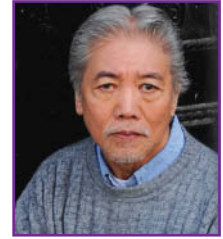
My two older teenage brothers and my sister, Liang, age 14, were embarrassed by my parents' behavior. What would all the white people in Vancouver² think of us? We were Canadians now, *Chinese-Canadians*, a hyphenated reality that my parents could never accept. So it seemed, for different reasons, we all held our breath waiting for *something*.

I was eight when she died. For days she had resisted going into the hospital . . . *a cold, just a cold* . . . and instead gave constant instruction to my stepmother and sister on the boiling of ginseng roots mixed with bitter extract. At night, between wracking coughs and deadly silences, Grandmama had her back and chest rubbed with heated camphor oil and sipped a bluish decoction of an herb called Peacock's Tail. When all these failed to abate her fever, she began to arrange the details of her will. This she did with my father, confessing finally: "I am too stubborn. The only cure for old age is to die."

My father wept to hear this. I stood beside her bed; she turned to me. Her round face looked darker, and the gentleness of her eyes, the thin, arching eyebrows, seemed weary. I brushed the few strands of gray, brittle hair from her face; she managed to smile at me. Being the youngest, I had spent nearly all my time with her and could not imagine that we would ever be parted. Yet when she spoke, and her voice hesitated, cracked, the somber shadows of her room chilled me. Her wrinkled brow grew wet with fever, and her small body seemed even more diminutive.

"I—I am going to the hospital, Grandson." Her hand reached out for mine. "You know, Little Son, whatever happens I will never leave you." Her palm felt plush and warm, the slender, old fingers boney and firm, so magically strong was her grip that I could not imagine how she could ever part from me. Ever.

Her hands *were* magical. My most vivid memories are of her hands: long, elegant fingers, with impeccable nails, a skein of fine, barely-seen veins,



Meet the Author

Award-winning novelist, memoirist, and short story writer **Wayson Choy** was born in 1939 in Vancouver, Canada. He spent his childhood in the city's Chinatown district, where he learned traditional Chinese myths and stories from his elders. These traditional tales inspired him to tell his own stories.

CLOSE READING TOOL



Read and respond to this selection online using the [Close Reading Tool](#).

- Jade Peony** (pě ē nē) jade is a hard, dense gemstone; a peony is a common garden flower, the Chinese variety of which produces large, single blossoms in early summer.
- Vancouver** (van koo' vər) large city in the province of British Columbia, Canada.

and wrinkled skin like light pine. Those hands were quick when she taught me, at six, simple tricks of juggling, learnt when she was a village girl in Southern Canton; a troupe of actors had stayed on her father's farm. One of them, "tall and pale as the whiteness of petals," fell in love with her, promising to return.

In her last years his image came back like a third being in our two lives. He had been magician, acrobat, juggler, and some of the things he taught her she had absorbed and passed on to me through her stories and games. But above all, without realizing it then, her hands conveyed to me the quality of their love.

Most marvelous for me was the quick-witted skill her hands revealed in making windchimes for our birthdays: windchimes in the likeness of her lost friend's only present to her, made of bits of string and scraps, in the center of which once hung a precious jade peony. This wondrous gift to her broke apart years ago, in China, but Grandmama kept the jade pendant in a tiny red silk envelope, and kept it always in her pocket, until her death.

These were not ordinary, carelessly made chimes, such as those you now find in our Chinatown stores, whose rattling noises drive you mad. But making her special ones caused **dissension** in our family, and some shame. Each one that she made was created from a treasure trove of glass fragments and castaway costume jewelry, in the same way that her first windchime had been made. The problem for the rest of the family was in the fact that Grandmama looked for these treasures wandering the back alleys of Keefer and Pender Streets, peering into our neighbors' garbage cans, chasing away hungry, nervous cats and shouting curses at them.

"All our friends are laughing at us!" Older Brother Jung said at last to my father, when Grandmama was away having tea at Mrs. Lim's.

"We are not poor," Oldest Brother Kiam declared, "Yet she and Sek-Lung poke through those awful things as if—" he shoved me in frustration and I stumbled against my sister, "—they were beggars!"

"She will make Little Brother crazy!" Sister Liang said. Without warning, she punched me sharply in the back; I jumped. "You see, look how *nervous* he is!"

I lifted my foot slightly, enough to swing it back and kick Liang in the shin. She yelled and pulled back her fist to punch me again. Jung made a menacing move towards me.

"Stop this, all of you!" My father shook his head in exasperation. How could he dare tell the Grand Old One, his aging mother, that what was somehow appropriate in a poor village in China, was an abomination here. How could he prevent me, his youngest, from accompanying her? If she went walking into those alleyways alone she could well be attacked by hoodlums. "She is not a beggar looking for food. She is searching for—for. . . ."

My stepmother attempted to speak, then fell silent. She, too, seemed perplexed and somewhat ashamed. They all loved Grandmama, but she was *inconvenient*, unsettling.

As for our neighbors, most understood Grandmama to be harmlessly crazy, others that she did indeed make lovely toys but for what purpose?

Vocabulary ►

dissension (di sen' shən)

n. disagreement;
difference of opinion

Why? they asked, and the stories she told me, of the juggler who smiled at her, flashed in my head.

Finally, by their cutting remarks, the family did exert enough pressure so that Grandmama and I no longer openly announced our expeditions. Instead, she took me with her on “shopping trips,” ostensibly for clothes or groceries, while in fact we spent most of our time exploring stranger and more distant neighborhoods, searching for splendid junk: jangling pieces of a vase, cranberry glass fragments embossed with leaves, discarded glass beads from Woolworth³ necklaces. . . . We would sneak them all home in brown rice sacks, folded into small parcels, and put them under her bed. During the day when the family was away at school or work, we brought them out and washed every item in a large black pot of boiling lye⁴ and water, dried them quickly, carefully, and returned them, sparkling, under her bed.

Our greatest excitement occurred when a fire gutted the large Chinese Presbyterian Church, three blocks from our house. Over the still-smoking ruins the next day, Grandmama and I rushed **precariously** over the blackened beams to pick out the stained glass that glittered in the sunlight. Small figure bent over, wrapped against the autumn cold in a dark blue quilted coat, happily gathering each piece like gold, she became my spiritual playmate: “There’s a good one! *There!*”

Hours later, soot-covered and smelling of smoke, we came home with a carton full of delicate fragments, still early enough to steal them all into the house and put the small box under her bed. “These are special pieces,” she said, giving the box a last push, “because they come from a sacred place.” She slowly got up and I saw, for the first time, her hand begin to shake. But then, in her joy, she embraced me. Both of our hearts were racing, as if we were two dreamers. I buried my face in her blue quilt, and for a moment, the whole world seemed silent.

“My juggler,” she said, “he never came back to me from Honan⁵. . . perhaps the **famine**. . . .” Her voice began to quake. “But I shall have my sacred windchime . . . I shall have it again.”

One evening, when the family was gathered in their usual places in the parlor, Grandmama gave me her secret nod: a slight wink of her eye and a flaring of her nostrils. There was *trouble* in the air. Supper had gone badly, school examinations were due, father had failed to meet an editorial deadline at the *Vancouver Chinese Times*. A huge sigh came from Sister Liang.

“But it is useless this Chinese they teach you!” she lamented, turning to Stepmother for support. Silence. Liang frowned, dejected, and went back to her Chinese book, bending the covers back.

“Father,” Oldest Brother Kiam began, waving his bamboo brush in the air, “you must realize that this Mandarin only confuses us. We are Cantonese⁶ speakers. . . .”

3. **Woolworth** variety store belonging to the chain founded by Frank Woolworth in 1879.

4. **lye** (li) *n.* substance derived from wood ashes, commonly used in making soap or for washing.

5. **Honan** (hōn nān) province in east central China.

6. **Mandarin** (mān də rin) . . . **Cantonese** (kān tə nēz) Mandarin is the most commonly spoken form of Chinese; Cantonese is a variety of Chinese spoken in some parts of China, including the cities of Canton and Hong Kong, and by most Chinese emigrants.

◀ **Vocabulary**

precariously

(prē ker' ē əs lē) *adv.* in a risky way; insecurely

◀ **Vocabulary**

famine (fam' in) *n.*

severe shortage of food

Vocabulary ►

reprieve (ri prēv') *n.*
temporary relief
or escape

“And you do not complain about Latin, French or German in your English school?” Father rattled his newspaper, a signal that his patience was ending.

“But, Father, those languages are *scientific*.” Kiam jabbed his brush in the air. “We are now in a scientific, logical world.”

Father was silent. We could all hear Grandmama’s rocker.

“What about Sek-Lung?” Older Brother Jung pointed angrily at me. “He was sick last year, but this year he should have at least started Chinese school, instead of picking over garbage cans!”

“He starts next year,” Father said, in a hard tone that immediately warned everyone to be silent. Liang slammed her book.

Grandmama went on rocking quietly in her chair. She complimented my mother on her knitting, made a remark about the “strong beauty” of Kiam’s brushstrokes which, in spite of himself, immensely pleased him. All this babbling noise was her family torn and confused in a strange land: everything here was so very foreign and scientific.

The truth was, I was sorry not to have started school the year before. In my innocence I had imagined going to school meant certain privileges worthy of all my brothers’ and sister’s complaints. The fact that my lung infection in my fifth and sixth years, mistakenly diagnosed as TB,⁷ earned me some **reprieve**, only made me long for school the more. Each member of the family took turns on Sunday, teaching me or annoying me. But it was the countless hours I spent with Grandmama that were my real education. Tapping me on my head she would say, “Come, Sek-Lung, we have *our* work,” and we would walk up the stairs to her small crowded room. There, in the midst of her antique shawls, the old ancestral calligraphy and multi-colored embroidered hangings, beneath the mysterious shelves of sweet herbs and bitter potions, we would continue doing what we had started that morning: the elaborate windchime for her death.

“I can’t last forever,” she declared, when she let me in on the secret of this one. “It will sing and dance and glitter,” her long fingers stretched into the air, pantomiming the waving motion of her ghost chimes; “My spirit will hear its sounds and see its light and return to this house and say goodbye to you.”

Deftly she reached into the carton she had placed on the chair beside me. She picked out a fish-shape amber piece, and with a long needle-like tool and a steel ruler, she scored⁸ it. Pressing the blade of a cleaver against the line, with the fingers of her other hand, she lifted up the glass until it cleanly *snapped* into the exact shape she required. Her hand began to tremble, the tips of her fingers to shiver, like rippling water.

“You see that, Little One?” She held her hand up. “That is my body fighting with Death. He is in this room now.”

My eyes darted in panic, but Grandmama remained calm, undisturbed, and went on with her work. Then I remembered the glue and uncorked the jar for her. Soon the graceful ritual movements of her hand returned

7. **TB** (tē' bē') *n.* abbreviation for *tuberculosis*, a contagious disease that begins in the lungs.

8. **scored** (skôrd) *v.* put a notch or groove in.

to her, and I became lost in the magic of her task: she dabbed a cabalistic⁹ mixture of glue on one end and skillfully dropped the braided end of a silk thread into it. This part always amazed me: the braiding would slowly, *very* slowly, *unknot*, fanning out like a prized fishtail. In a few seconds the clear, homemade glue began to harden as I blew lightly over it, welding to itself each separate silk strand.

Each jam-sized pot of glue was precious; each large cork had been wrapped with a fragment of pink silk. I remember this part vividly, because each cork was treated to a special rite. First we went shopping in the best silk stores in Chinatown for the perfect square of silk she required. It had to be a deep pink, a shade of color blushing toward red. And the tone had to match—as closely as possible—her precious jade carving, the small peony of white and light-red jade, her most lucky possession. In the center of this semi-translucent carving, no more than an inch wide, was a pool of pink light, its veins swirling out into the petals of the flower.

“This color is the color of my spirit,” she said, holding it up to the window so I could see the delicate pastel against the broad strokes of sunlight. She dropped her voice, and I held my breath at the wonder of the color. “This was given to me by the young actor who taught me how to juggle. He had four of them, and each one had a center of this rare color, the color of Good Fortune.” The pendant seemed to pulse as she turned it: “Oh, Sek-Lung! He had white hair and white skin to *his toes!* It’s *true*, I saw him bathing.” She laughed and blushed, her eyes softened at the memory. The silk had to match the pink heart of her pendant: the color was magical for her, to hold the unraveling strands of her memory. . . .

It was just six months before she died that we really began to work on her last windchime. Three thin bamboo sticks were steamed and bent into circlets; 30 exact lengths of silk thread, the strongest kind, were cut and braided at both ends and glued to stained glass. Her hands worked on their own command, each hand racing with a life of its own: cutting, snapping, braiding, knotting. . . .

Sometimes she breathed heavily and her small body, growing thinner, sagged against me. *Death*, I thought, *He is in this room*, and I would work harder alongside her. For months Grandmama and I did this every other evening, a half dozen pieces each time. The shaking in her hand grew worse, but we said nothing. Finally, after discarding hundreds, she told me she had the necessary 30 pieces. But this time, because it was a sacred chime, I would not be permitted to help her tie it up or have the joy of raising it. “Once tied,” she said, holding me against my disappointment, “not even I can raise it. Not a sound must it make until I have died.”

“What will happen?”

“Your father will then take the center braided strand and raise it. He will hang it against my bedroom window so that my ghost may see it, and hear it, and return. I must say goodbye to this world properly or wander in this foreign land forever.”

9. **cabalistic** (kab' ə lis' tik) *adj.* relating to a secret or mystical belief or practice.

"You can take the streetcar!" I blurted, suddenly shocked that she actually meant to leave me. I thought I could hear the clear-chromatic chimes, see the shimmering colors on the wall: I fell against her and cried, and there in my crying I knew that she would die. I can still remember the touch of her hand on my head, and the smell of her thick woolen sweater pressed against my face. "I will always be with you, Little Sek-Lung, but in a different way . . . you'll see."

Months went by, and nothing happened. Then one late September evening, when I had just come home from Chinese School, Grandmama was preparing supper when she looked out our kitchen window and saw a cat—a long, lean white cat—jump into our garbage pail and knock it over. She ran out to chase it away, shouting curses at it. She did not have her thick sweater on and when she came back into the house, a chill gripped her. She leaned against the door: "That was not a cat," she said, and the odd tone of her voice caused my father to look with alarm at her. "I can not take back my curses. It is too late." She took hold of my father's arm: "It was all white and had pink eyes like sacred fire."

My father started at this, and they both looked pale. My brothers and sister, clearing the table, froze in their gestures.

"The fog has confused you," Stepmother said. "It was just a cat."

But Grandmama shook her head, for she knew it was a sign. "I will not live forever," she said. "I am prepared."

The next morning she was confined to her bed with a severe cold. Sitting by her, playing with some of my toys, I asked her about the cat: "Why did father jump at the cat with the pink eyes? He didn't see it, you did."

"But he and your mother know what it means."

"What?"

"My friend, the juggler, the magician, was as pale as white jade, and he had pink eyes." I thought she would begin to tell me one of her stories, a tale of enchantment or of a wondrous adventure, but she only paused to swallow; her eyes glittered, lost in memory. She took my hand, gently opening and closing her fingers over it. "Sek-Lung," she sighed, "*he* has come back to me."

Then Grandmama sank back into her pillow and the embroidered flowers lifted to frame her wrinkled face. I saw her hand over my own, and my own began to tremble. I fell fitfully asleep by her side. When I woke up it was dark and her bed was empty. She had been taken to the hospital and I was not permitted to visit.

A few days after that she died of the complications of pneumonia. Immediately after her death my father came home and said nothing to us, but walked up the stairs to her room, pulled aside the drawn lace curtains of her window and lifted the windchimes to the sky.

I began to cry and quickly put my hand in my pocket for a handkerchief. Instead, caught between my fingers, was the small, round firmness of the jade peony. In my mind's eye I saw Grandmama smile and heard, softly, the pink center beat like a beautiful, cramped heart.

Read

Comprehension: **Key Idea and Details**

- (a)** Citing details from the story, explain who gave the grandmother her first wind chime. **(b) Analyze Cause and Effect:** Using this information, explain why the making of wind chimes is so important to the grandmother in her later years.
- (a)** What is the main conflict between the grandmother and her family? **(b) Interpret:** How is this conflict resolved?
- (a) Compare and Contrast:** How do Sek-Lung's reactions to his grandmother's activities differ from those of other family members? **(b) Analyze:** How do you account for these differences? Cite details from the story to support your ideas.
- Summarize:** Write a brief, objective summary of the story. Describe the important characters, events, and details but do not state your opinion.

Text Analysis: **Craft and Structure**

- (a)** Who is the narrator of this story? **(b) Analyze:** How does the narrator's point of view shape what you, the reader, learn about the characters and events? Explain, citing specific passages from the story.
- (a) Describe:** How does the narrator describe the grandmother's physical appearance? Cite specific details. **(b) Interpret:** How does the physical description of the grandmother contribute to your understanding of her character?
- (a) Describe:** How does the narrator describe aspects of the setting, such as the grandmother's bedroom? Cite specific details. **(b) Interpret:** In what ways do details in the setting help to develop the characters?
- (a)** At what points in the story does the author introduce flashbacks? **(b) Distinguish:** Identify the mechanism—such as a memory or a dream—the author uses to introduce each flashback. **(c) Analyze:** What information does each flashback provide?

Connections: **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas****Discuss**

Conduct a **small-group discussion** about the use of symbols in this story. For example, consider the symbolic meanings of the jade peony or the white cat.

Research

Wayson Choy was influenced by the traditional Chinese tales he heard as a boy. Briefly research the types of stories Choy probably heard as he grew up. In particular, consider the following story elements:

- attitudes toward elders and children
- beliefs about death
- presence of magical animals or objects


Take notes as you perform your research. Then, write a brief **explanation** of ways in which qualities typical of Chinese traditional tales are also found in "The Jade Peony."

Write

A good story will often express more than one theme. For example, one theme of "The Jade Peony" relates to mortality while another addresses the power of love. Write an **essay** in which you identify a key theme expressed in this story and explain how that theme is developed throughout the text. Cite details from the story to support your analysis.

**Is conflict necessary?**

Consider the conflict between cultures that is portrayed in "The Jade Peony." Does the narrator, Sek-Lung, grow from the challenges these conflicts present? Explain your answer.



"Cut quarrels out of literature, and you will have **very little** history or drama or fiction or **epic poetry left.**"

—Robert Lynd

PART 2

TEXT ANALYSIS GUIDED EXPLORATION

FACING CONFLICT

Conflict is the fuel that starts the engine of a plot and keeps it going. In the selections that follow, some characters face life or death struggles, while others face subtler problems. The ways in which characters respond to conflicts reveal what they feel, think, want, and value. Those responses also suggest whether the character will learn and grow or remain the same. As you read, consider the conflicts these literary works explore and decide whether each one leads to characters' change or growth. In what ways do these selections answer the Big Question for this unit: **Is conflict necessary?**

- ◀ **CRITICAL VIEWING** What story could you tell to accompany this image? Is the illustration and the story it suggests more or less compelling because it depicts a quarrel? Explain.

READINGS IN PART 2



SHORT STORY The Most Dangerous Game

Richard Connell (p. 24)



EXEMPLAR TEXT

SHORT STORY The Gift of the Magi

O. Henry (p. 52)



EXEMPLAR TEXT

SHORT STORY Rules of the Game

Amy Tan (p. 64)



SHORT STORY The Cask of Amontillado

Edgar Allan Poe (p. 82)

CLOSE READING TOOL



Use the **Close Reading Tool** to practice the strategies you learn in this unit.

Focus on Craft and Structure

Elements of a Short Story

In a short story, **characters**, **setting**, **plot**, and **conflict** combine to create a unified impression, or **main effect**.

Short stories are brief fictional narratives intended to be read in a single sitting. Because of a short story's length, the narration and character portrayals must be focused and compressed, adding a special energy and depth to the form. As a result, a good short story leaves the reader with a unified, strong impression—its **main effect**. Each element of a story can contribute to this effect.

Characters The **characters** are the people or animals who take part in the action of the story. Details in the story help readers understand characters' **traits**, or qualities, and **motives**, or reasons for acting. The main effect of a story often involves a change or revelation that a character experiences.

Setting The **setting** of a story is the time and place of its action. Often, a short story takes place in a single, unified setting. The setting often contributes to a story's **mood**—the general feeling the story conveys.

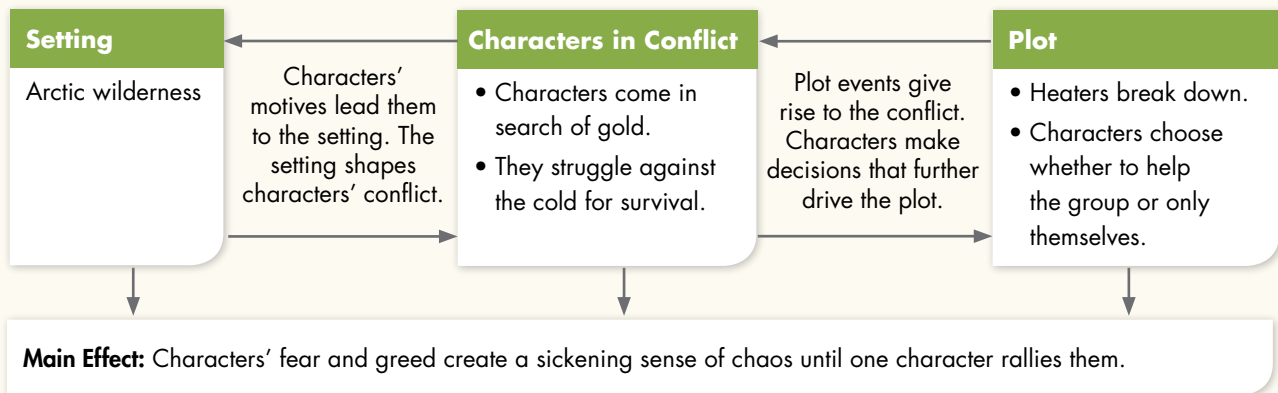
Plot The **plot** of a story is the sequence of events it tells. Plot often contributes to the unified effect of a story by building toward a **climax**, or turning point, in which a character reaches an insight or undergoes a change.

Conflict A plot is driven by a **conflict**, or struggle between two opposing forces. Short stories usually focus on one central conflict.

- An **internal conflict** takes place in the mind of a character. The character struggles to make a decision or overcome feelings.
- An **external conflict** takes place between a character and an outside force, such as another character or a force of nature.

Theme and Symbols As the elements of a story combine to create a unified effect, they also suggest a **theme**, or insight into life. Most often, readers come to understand the theme by making inferences from key elements, including symbols. A **symbol** is an object or a story element that stands for a larger meaning.

The elements of a short story are interrelated and contribute to a unified effect.



Plot Structure in a Short Story

Most stories share a basic plot structure. Understanding this structure can help you appreciate how a short story builds to a satisfying conclusion.

In the section of the plot called the **exposition**, the author introduces the setting and the characters. This section often includes an **inciting incident**—an event that establishes the **conflict**, or struggle between opposing forces, that drives the story. Types of conflicts include:

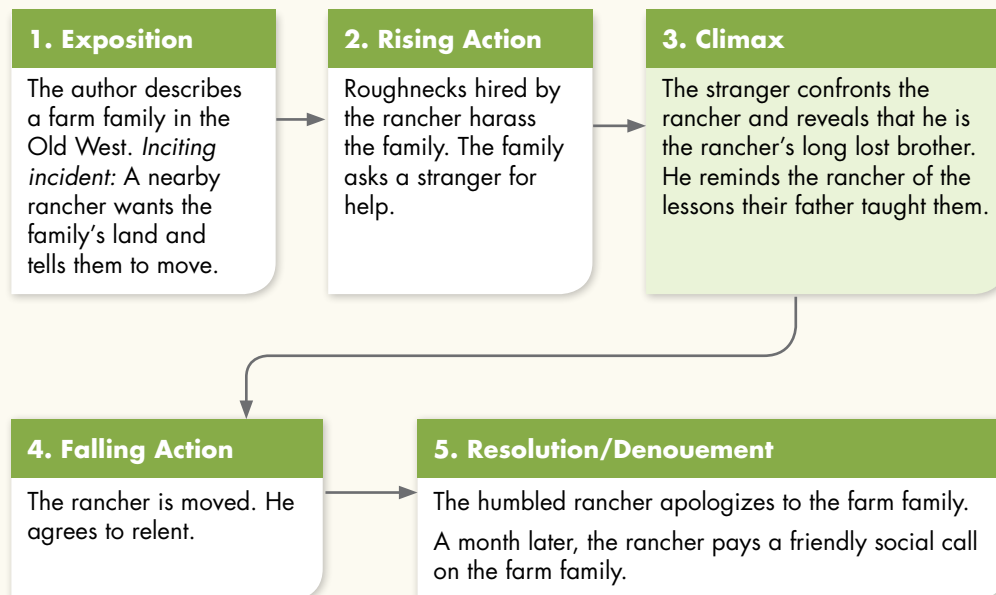
- a struggle between two characters;
- a struggle between a character and an outside force, such as nature;
- a struggle within the mind of a character, such as a battle with guilt.

The next part of a typical plot is the **rising action**, which includes events and complications that intensify the

conflict. The rising action leads to the **climax**, which is the turning point in the story—the moment of highest tension or suspense. The climax is the part of the story that makes readers want to read on to find out what happens next.

The **falling action** sets up the story's ending. The intensity of the conflict lessens and events wind down, leading to the **resolution**, or **denouement**, which shows the outcome of the conflict. In some stories, the conflict is settled, meaning that the central problem is solved; in other stories, the conflict may be left unsettled. In still other stories, the ending may revisit the characters after time has passed to show how the situation changes after the conflict is resolved. Look at the example in the chart below.

Example: Plot Structure



Analyzing Character, Structure, and Theme

An author develops **characters** in ways that advance a story's **plot** and **structures** a story in ways that create interest and help develop the **theme**.

Developing Complex Characters

In the best short stories, the main characters are interesting and **complex**, or well-rounded. Complex characters share these qualities:

- They show multiple or even contradictory **traits**, or qualities.
- They struggle with conflicting **motivations**, or reasons for acting as they do.
- They may change by the end of the story.

Example: Complex Character

Contradictory Traits Bob's ability to organize ideas leads the debate team to victory—but his room is a mess.

Conflicting Motives After high school, Bob wants to stay near his friends; he also wants to go to the best college he can.

Change After making a new friend on a trip, Bob decides he will move away for college.

How Characters Advance a Story

Characters Advance the Plot As characters interact with one another and struggle to overcome problems, their choices move the story along. A character's action—or decision *not* to take action—can lead to new plot developments and may intensify the conflict, heightening tension or suspense in the story.

Example: Intensified Conflict

Conflict Cindy is friendly with Matilda. Cindy's friends Staci and Ashley do not like Matilda and put pressure on Cindy to shun her.

Characters' Interactions Cindy decides that Staci and Ashley are being unfair and makes a point of attending a school game with Matilda.

Result: Intensified Conflict Staci and Ashley invite everyone to their party except Cindy.

Characterization To create and **develop** a character, a writer will use techniques of **characterization**.

- In **direct characterization**, the narrator makes direct statements about a character's personality: *Afshin focused on just one thing at a time, but the depth of his focus was remarkable. Before a race, his single-minded trance could only be broken by the sound of the starter's whistle.*
- In **indirect characterization**, readers learn what characters are like by analyzing what they say and do as well as how other characters respond to them: *Summer or winter, in sun, wind, or rain, Jess rose before dawn and jogged the two-mile loop around the reservoir. After a quick shower and two chocolate donuts, she always felt ready to face the day.*

Characters Develop Theme As in real life, a character's struggles with a situation can teach a general lesson. In this way, characters help develop a story's **theme**—the central insight that it conveys. As you read a short story, pay close attention to the ways that characters change and to the lessons that they learn. These details will point you toward the story's theme.

Example: Theme

Character's Experience After struggling to please her friends, Cindy realizes that they are shallow and decides to let them go.

Theme As people grow, they may outgrow their friendships with others.

Structuring a Text For Effect

The way in which an author structures or organizes information in a story can create effects like tension, mystery, and surprise.

Plot Structure Authors make decisions about the order in which to present information as well as the pacing of events.

- **Openings** The opening establishes the general feeling of a story.

Examples of Some Story Openings

Focus on Setting: *The hospital waiting room was empty at that hour of the night. It was so quiet I could hear the second hand on the large wall clock toll each passing second.*

Focus on Character: *I'll never forget my grandfather. He was the most charming man I ever met.*

in medias res (Latin for “in the middle of things”): *“Someone call for help!” shouted a man at the side of the road.*

- **Sequence** Narrators tell plot events mainly in **chronological order**—the order in which events occurred. However, they may break from chronological order for effect. **Flashbacks** are sections of a narrative that describe a time before the present time of the story. A flashback might give insight into a character’s motivations. **Foreshadowing** gives readers hints about what will happen later in the story, as when a narrator says, “That would be the last time they spoke.” Foreshadowing can create **suspense**, or a reader’s feeling of anxious uncertainty about the outcome.
- **Pacing** refers to the “speed” with which a narrator relates events. For example, by

describing a scene at length and giving many descriptive details, the narrator “slows down” the pace. This effect can be used to heighten suspense, as in the following example:

Example: Slow Pace

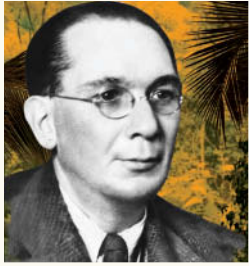
Beads of sweat stood out on Agent Vole’s forehead. As he struggled with the ropes that bound him, he could hear each beat of his heart, rapid but distinct. Ba-dum, ba-dum. With each beat, the second hand on the timing device clicked one notch closer to catastrophe.

- A narrative can also create a sensation of “speed” and excitement by moving quickly from one idea to another in a scene that is loaded with tension.

Point of View The **point of view**, or narrative perspective, from which a story is told determines the information an author includes. There are three main points of view:

- **Third-person omniscient:** The narrator is outside the events of the story and tells the thoughts and feelings of all characters.
- **Third-person limited:** The narrator is outside the story but tells the thoughts and feelings of only one character.
- **First-person:** The narrator is a character in the story and uses the pronouns *I* and *me*.

Point of view can be used to achieve striking effects. For example, if the first-person narrator is naive, or unsophisticated, the reader may know more about what is going on than the narrator, creating an effect known as **dramatic irony**.



Meet the Author

Richard Connell (1893–1949) seemed destined to become a writer: he was a sports reporter at the age of ten! At sixteen, he was editing his father's newspaper, the *Poughkeepsie News-Press*, in upstate New York. Connell attended Harvard University, where he worked on the *Daily Crimson* and the *Lampoon*, an early version of the humor magazine *National Lampoon*. During World War I, Connell edited his army division's newspaper.



Is conflict necessary?

Explore the Big Question as you read "The Most Dangerous Game." Take notes on ways in which the story explores the nature of conflict.

CLOSE READING FOCUS

Key Ideas and Details: **Make Inferences**

Inferences are logical guesses a reader makes about information that is not directly stated in a text. When you make inferences, you use details from a text as clues to develop ideas about unstated information. To make inferences as you read a story, for example, you might ask questions such as the following:

- What does this detail suggest about the reasons for a character's thoughts, actions, or words?
- What does this detail suggest about the nature of the relationship between two characters?
- What does this passage say about the character's unstated feelings?

As you read this story, make inferences by paying attention to even small details and noting the larger ideas they suggest.

Craft and Structure: **Conflict**

Conflict is a struggle between opposing forces. It is the engine that drives the plot of all stories.

- **Internal conflict** occurs when a character grapples with his or her own opposing feelings, beliefs, needs, or desires.
- **External conflict** occurs when a character clashes with an outside force, such as another character, society, or nature.

In most stories, the ending of a conflict comes at the end in the section of the plot called the *resolution*.

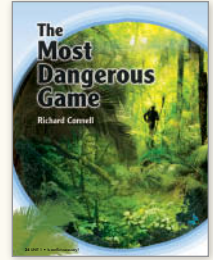
Vocabulary

You will encounter the following words in this story. Decide whether you know each word well, know it a little bit, or do not know it at all. After you have read the selection, see how your knowledge of each word has increased.

palpable
scruples

indolently
grotesque

naive
futile



CLOSE READING MODEL

The passage below is from Richard Connell's short story "The Most Dangerous Game." The annotations to the right of the passage show ways in which you can use close reading skills to make inferences and analyze conflict.

from "The Most Dangerous Game"

"Off there to the right—somewhere—is a large island," said Whitney. "It's rather a **mystery**¹ —"

"What island is it?" Rainsford asked.

"The old charts call it 'Ship-Trap Island,'"² Whitney replied. "A suggestive name, isn't it? Sailors have a **curious dread**¹ of the place. I don't know why. Some **superstition**¹—"

"Can't see it," remarked Rainsford, trying to peer through the **dank tropical night**³ that was palpable as it pressed its thick warm blackness in upon the **yacht**.³

"You've good eyes," said Whitney, with a laugh, "and I've seen you pick off a **moose** moving in the **brown fall bush**⁴ at four hundred yards, but even you can't see four miles or so through a moonless Caribbean night."

"Not four yards," admitted Rainsford. "Ugh! It's like moist black velvet."

"It will be light in Rio," promised Whitney. "We should make it in a few days. I hope the jaguar guns have come from Purdey's. We should have some good hunting up the Amazon. Great sport, hunting."

"The best sport in the world," agreed Rainsford.

Make Inferences

1 Whitney uses the words *mystery*, *curious dread*, and *superstition* to describe an island. You can infer from these word choices that the island has a dark, or sinister, history.

Conflict

2 The text reveals that the island is named "Ship-Trap Island," and that sailors dread the place. This information raises questions that may be related to the conflict: How did the island earn this name? Who or what trapped the ships?

Conflict

3 The setting is a yacht on a dank and dark tropical night. The men are having trouble seeing where they are going. These potentially dangerous conditions may lead to a larger conflict.

Make Inferences

4 Whitney has seen Rainsford "pick off a moose in the brown fall bush." Since a moose is brown, it would be very hard to see against brown foliage. This detail suggests that Rainsford is an excellent hunter.

The image features a circular frame with a light blue border. Inside the frame is a vibrant, sunlit jungle scene. A person is seen from behind, walking through a dense thicket of green plants and ferns. The sunlight filters through the trees, creating a bright, hazy atmosphere. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of green, from deep forest greens to bright, almost yellow-green highlights from the sunlight.

The Most Dangerous Game

Richard Connell



“Off there to the right—

somewhere— is a large island,” said Whitney. “It’s rather a mystery —”

“What island is it?” Rainsford asked.

“The old charts call it ‘Ship-Trap Island,’” Whitney replied. “A suggestive name, isn’t it? Sailors have a curious dread of the place. I don’t know why. Some superstition—”

“Can’t see it,” remarked Rainsford, trying to peer through the dank tropical night that was **palpable** as it pressed its thick warm blackness in upon the yacht.

“You’ve good eyes,” said Whitney, with a laugh, “and I’ve seen you pick off a moose moving in the brown fall bush at four hundred yards, but even you can’t see four miles or so through a moonless Caribbean¹ night.”

“Not four yards,” admitted Rainsford. “Ugh! It’s like moist black velvet.”

“It will be light in Rio,” promised Whitney. “We should make it in a few days. I hope the jaguar guns have come from Purdey’s. We should have some good hunting up the Amazon. Great sport, hunting.”

“The best sport in the world,” agreed Rainsford.

“For the hunter,” amended Whitney. “Not for the jaguar.”

“Don’t talk rot, Whitney,” said Rainsford. “You’re a big-game hunter, not a philosopher. Who cares how a jaguar feels?”

◀ Critical Viewing

Based on the details in this image, what do you think this story will be about?

◀ Vocabulary

palpable (pal’ pə bəl)

adj. able to be felt; easily perceived

Comprehension

What do Rainsford and Whitney see from the ship?

1. **Caribbean** (kar’ ə bē’ ən) the Caribbean Sea, a part of the Atlantic Ocean, bounded by the north coast of South America, Central America, and the West Indies.

Conflict

How does Rainsford's attitude about hunting differ from Whitney's?

Critical Viewing ▼

In what ways does this image differ from the Caribbean Sea as it is described in the story? In what ways is it similar?

“Perhaps the jaguar does,” observed Whitney.

“Bah! They’ve no understanding.”

“Even so, I rather think they understand one thing—fear. The fear of pain and the fear of death.”

“Nonsense,” laughed Rainsford. “This hot weather is making you soft, Whitney. Be a realist. The world is made up of two classes—the hunters and the huntees. Luckily, you and I are the hunters. Do you think we’ve passed that island yet?”

“I can’t tell in the dark. I hope so.”

“Why?” asked Rainsford.

“The place has a reputation—a bad one.”

“Cannibals?” suggested Rainsford.

“Hardly. Even cannibals wouldn’t live in such a God-forsaken place. But it’s gotten into sailor lore, somehow. Didn’t you notice that the crew’s nerves seemed a bit jumpy today?”

“They were a bit strange, now you mention it. Even Captain Nielsen—”

“Yes, even that tough-minded old Swede, who’d go up to the devil himself and ask him for a light. Those fishy blue eyes held a look I never saw there before. All I could get out of him was: ‘This place has an evil name among sea-faring men, sir.’ Then he said to me, very gravely: ‘Don’t you feel anything?’—as if the air about us was actually poisonous. Now, you mustn’t laugh when I tell you this—I did feel something like a sudden chill.

“There was no breeze. The sea was as flat as a plate-glass window. We were drawing near the island then. What I felt was a— a mental chill; a sort of sudden dread.”

“Pure imagination,” said Rainsford. “One superstitious sailor can taint the whole ship’s company with his fear.”



“Maybe. But sometimes I think sailors have an extra sense that tells them when they are in danger. Sometimes I think evil is a tangible thing—with wave lengths, just as sound and light have. An evil place can, so to speak, broadcast vibrations of evil. Anyhow, I’m glad we’re getting out of this zone. Well, I think I’ll turn in now, Rainsford.”

“I’m not sleepy,” said Rainsford. “I’m going to smoke another pipe on the afterdeck.”

“Good night, then, Rainsford. See you at breakfast.”

“Right. Good night, Whitney.” •

There was no sound in the night as Rainsford sat there, but the muffled throb of the engine that drove the yacht swiftly through the darkness, and the swish and ripple of the wash of the propeller.

Rainsford, reclining in a steamer chair, **indolently** puffed on his favorite brier. The sensuous drowsiness of the night was on him. “It’s so dark,” he thought, “that I could sleep without closing my eyes; the night would be my eyelids—”

An abrupt sound startled him. Off to the right he heard it, and his ears, expert in such matters, could not be mistaken. Again he heard the sound, and again. Somewhere, off in the blackness, someone had fired a gun three times.

Rainsford sprang up and moved quickly to the rail, mystified. He strained his eyes in the direction from which the reports had come, but it was like trying to see through a blanket. He leaped upon the rail and balanced himself there, to get greater elevation; his pipe, striking a rope, was knocked from his mouth. He lunged for it; a short, hoarse cry came from his lips as he realized he had reached too far and had lost his balance. The cry was pinched off short as the blood-warm waters of the Caribbean Sea closed over his head.

◀ **Vocabulary**

indolently (in’ də lənt lē) *adv.* lazily; idly

Comprehension

What “two classes” does Rainsford believe make up the world?



Conflict

With what external conflict is Rainsford suddenly confronted?

He struggled up to the surface and tried to cry out, but the wash from the speeding yacht slapped him in the face and the salt water in his open mouth made him gag and strangle. Desperately he struck out with strong strokes after the receding lights of the yacht, but he stopped before he had swum fifty feet. A certain cool-headedness had come to him; it was not the first time he had been in a tight place. There was a chance that his cries could be heard by someone aboard the yacht, but that chance was slender, and grew more slender as the yacht raced on. He wrestled himself out of his clothes, and shouted with all his power. The lights of the yacht became faint and ever-vanishing fireflies; then they were blotted out entirely by the night.

Rainsford remembered the shots. They had come from the right, and doggedly he swam in that direction, swimming with slow, deliberate strokes, conserving his strength. For a seemingly endless time he fought the sea. He began to count his strokes; he could do possibly a hundred more and then—

Rainsford heard a sound. It came out of the darkness, a high screaming sound, the sound of an animal in an extremity of anguish and terror.

He did not recognize the animal that made the sound; he did not try to; with fresh vitality he swam toward the sound. He heard it again; then it was cut short by another noise, crisp, staccato.

“Pistol shot,” muttered Rainsford, swimming on.

Ten minutes of determined effort brought another sound to his ears—the most welcome he had ever heard—the muttering and growling of the sea breaking on a rocky shore. He was almost on the rocks before he saw them; on a night less calm he would have been shattered against them. With his remaining strength he dragged himself from the swirling waters. Jagged crags appeared to jut into the opaqueness, he forced himself upward, hand over hand. Gasping, his hands raw, he reached a flat place at the top. Dense jungle came down to the very edge of the cliffs. What perils that tangle of trees and underbrush might hold for him did not concern Rainsford just then. All he knew was that he was safe from his enemy, the sea, and that utter weariness was on him. He flung himself down at the jungle edge and tumbled headlong into the deepest sleep of his life. ●

When he opened his eyes he knew from the position of the sun that it was late in the afternoon. Sleep had given him new vigor; a sharp hunger was picking at him. He looked about him, almost cheerfully.

“Where there are pistol shots, there are men. Where there are men, there is food,” he thought. But what kind of men, he

Critical Viewing ►

What does the wildness of the island in the picture tell you about the island itself?

wondered, in so forbidding a place? An unbroken front of snarled and ragged jungle fringed the shore.

He saw no sign of a trail through the closely knit web of weeds and trees; it was easier to go along the shore, and Rainsford floundered along by the water. Not far from where he had landed, he stopped.

Some wounded thing, by the evidence a large animal, had thrashed about in the underbrush; the jungle weeds were crushed down and the moss was lacerated; one patch of weeds was stained crimson. A small, glittering object not far away caught Rainsford's eye and he picked it up. It was an empty cartridge.

"A twenty-two," he remarked. "That's odd. It must have been a fairly large animal too. The hunter had his nerve with him to tackle it with a light gun. It's clear that the brute put up a fight. I suppose the first three shots I heard was when the hunter flushed his quarry and wounded it. The last shot was when he trailed it here and finished it."

Make Inferences

What inferences does Rainsford make based on the evidence of pistol shots?

Comprehension

As Rainsford swims for shore, what sounds does he hear coming out of the darkness?



He examined the ground closely and found what he had hoped to find—the print of hunting boots. They pointed along the cliff in the direction he had been going. Eagerly he hurried along, now slipping on a rotten log or a loose stone, but making headway; night was beginning to settle down on the island.

Bleak darkness was blacking out the sea and jungle when Rainsford sighted the lights. He came upon them as he turned a crook in the coast line, and his first thought was that he had come upon a village, for there were many lights. But as he forged along he saw to his great astonishment that all the lights were in one enormous building—a lofty structure with pointed towers plunging upward into the gloom. His eyes made out the shadowy outlines of a palatial *château*;² it was set on a high bluff, and on three sides of it cliffs dived down to where the sea licked greedy lips in the shadows.

“Mirage,” thought Rainsford. But it was no mirage, he found, when he opened the tall spiked iron gate. The stone steps were real enough; the massive door with a leering gargoyle³ for a knocker was real enough; yet about it all hung an air of unreality.

He lifted the knocker, and it creaked up stiffly, as if it had never before been used. He let it fall, and it startled him with its booming loudness. He thought he heard steps within; the door remained closed. Again Rainsford lifted the heavy knocker, and let it fall. The door opened then, opened as suddenly as if it were on a spring, and Rainsford stood blinking in the river of glaring gold light that poured out. The first thing Rainsford’s eyes discerned was the largest man Rainsford had ever seen—a gigantic creature, solidly made and black-bearded to the waist. In his hand the man held a long-barreled revolver, and he was pointing it straight at Rainsford’s heart.

Out of the snarl of beard two small eyes regarded Rainsford.

“Don’t be alarmed,” said Rainsford, with a smile which he hoped was disarming. “I’m no robber. I fell off a yacht. My name is Sanger Rainsford of New York City.”

The menacing look in the eyes did not change. The revolver pointed as rigidly as if the giant were a statue. He gave no sign that he understood Rainsford’s words, or that he had even heard them. He was dressed in uniform, a black uniform trimmed with gray astrakhan.⁴

“I’m Sanger Rainsford of New York,” Rainsford began again. “I fell off a yacht. I am hungry.”

The man’s only answer was to raise with his thumb the hammer of his revolver. Then Rainsford saw the man’s free hand go to his forehead in a military salute, and he saw him click his heels together and stand at attention. Another man was coming down

Make Inferences

Which details here lead you to infer that the two men Rainsford meets have a shared military past? Explain.

2. **palatial** (pə lā´ shəl) **château** (sha tō´) a mansion as luxurious as a palace.

3. **gargoyle** (gār´ gōil´) *n.* distorted animal sculpture projecting from a building.

4. **astrakhan** (as´ trə kən) *n.* loosely curled fur made from the skins of very young lambs.

History Connection

Cossacks

Ivan and Zaroff are Cossacks, members of a people from southern Russia who also made up a special Russian military unit. As a group, Cossacks were famous for their fierceness, and the soldiers enjoyed a privileged status. Because of their elite position, these soldiers were also fiercely independent. When the czar—the ruler of Russia—was overthrown in the Russian Revolution of 1917, Cossacks like Zaroff were executed or forced into exile. As a Cossack, Zaroff is unwilling to acknowledge that the rules of ordinary people apply to him.

Connect to the Literature

What traits does Zaroff exhibit that might be due, in part, to his having been a Cossack?



◀ **Czar Nicholas II**, overthrown in the Russian Revolution of 1917

the broad marble steps, an erect, slender man in evening clothes. He advanced to Rainsford and held out his hand.

In a cultivated voice marked by a slight accent that gave it added precision and deliberateness, he said: “It is a very great pleasure and honor to welcome Mr. Sanger Rainsford, the celebrated hunter, to my home.”

Automatically Rainsford shook the man’s hand.

“I’ve read your book about hunting snow leopards in Tibet, you see,” explained the man. “I am General Zaroff.”

Rainsford’s first impression was that the man was singularly handsome; his second was that there was an original, almost bizarre quality about the general’s face. He was a tall man past middle age, for his hair was a vivid white; but his thick eyebrows and pointed military mustache were as black as the night from which Rainsford had come. His eyes, too, were black and very bright. He had high cheek bones, a sharp-cut nose, a spare, dark face, the face of a man used to giving orders, the face of an aristocrat. Turning to the giant in uniform, the general made a sign. The giant put away his pistol, saluted, withdrew.

“Ivan is an incredibly strong fellow,” remarked the general, “but he has the misfortune to be deaf and dumb. A simple fellow, but, I’m afraid, like all his race, a bit of a savage.”

“Is he Russian?”

“He is a Cossack,” said the general, and his smile showed red lips and pointed teeth. “So am I.”

“Come,” he said, “we shouldn’t be chatting here. We can talk later. Now you want clothes, food, rest. You shall have them. This is a most restful spot.”

Ivan had reappeared, and the general spoke to him with lips that moved but gave forth no sound.

“Follow Ivan, if you please, Mr. Rainsford,” said the general. “I was about to have my dinner when you came. I’ll wait for you. You’ll find that my clothes will fit you, I think.”

It was to a huge, beam-ceilinged bedroom with a canopied bed big enough for six men that Rainsford followed the silent giant. Ivan laid out an evening suit, and Rainsford, as he put it on, noticed that it came from a London tailor who ordinarily cut and sewed for none below the rank of duke.

The dining room to which Ivan conducted him was in many ways remarkable. There was a medieval magnificence about it; it suggested a baronial hall of feudal times with its oaken panels,

Comprehension

What type of building does Rainsford encounter on the island he reaches?

its high ceiling, its vast refectory table where twoscore men could sit down to eat. About the hall were the mounted heads of many animals—lions, tigers, elephants, moose, bears; larger or more perfect specimens Rainsford had never seen. At the great table the general was sitting, alone.

“You’ll have a cocktail, Mr. Rainsford,” he suggested. The cocktail was surpassingly good; and, Rainsford noted, the table appointments were of the finest—the linen, the crystal, the silver, the china.

They were eating *borsch*, the rich, red soup with whipped cream so dear to Russian palates. Half apologetically General Zaroff said: “We do our best to preserve the amenities of civilization here. Please forgive any lapses. We are well off the beaten track, you know. Do you think the champagne has suffered from its long ocean trip?”

“Not in the least,” declared Rainsford. He was finding the general a most thoughtful and affable host, a true cosmopolite.⁵ But there was one small trait of the general’s that made Rainsford uncomfortable. Whenever he looked up from his plate he found the general studying him, appraising him narrowly.

“Perhaps,” said General Zaroff, “you were surprised that I recognized your name. You see, I read all books on hunting published in English, French, and Russian. I have but one passion in my life, Mr. Rainsford, and it is the hunt.”

“You have some wonderful heads here,” said Rainsford as he ate a particularly well cooked filet mignon. “That Cape buffalo is the largest I ever saw.”

“Oh, that fellow. Yes, he was a monster.”

“Did he charge you?”

“Hurled me against a tree,” said the general. “Fractured my skull. But I got the brute.”

“I’ve always thought,” said Rainsford, “that the Cape buffalo is the most dangerous of all big game.”

For a moment the general did not reply; he was smiling his curious red-lipped smile. Then he said slowly: “No. You are wrong, sir. The Cape buffalo is not the most dangerous big game.” He sipped his wine. “Here in my preserve on this island,” he said in the same slow tone, “I hunt more dangerous game.”

Rainsford expressed his surprise. “Is there big game on this island?”

The general nodded. “The biggest.”

“Really?”

“Oh, it isn’t here naturally, of course. I have to stock the island.”

“What have you imported, general?” Rainsford asked. “Tigers?”

Conflict

Explain how Rainsford’s discomfort in this passage is both an internal and an external conflict.

5. **cosmopolite** (káz mǎp’ ə lit’) *n.* person at home in all parts of the world.

The general smiled. “No,” he said. “Hunting tigers ceased to interest me some years ago. I exhausted their possibilities, you see. No thrill left in tigers, no real danger. I live for danger, Mr. Rainsford.”

The general took from his pocket a gold cigarette case and offered his guest a long black cigarette with a silver tip; it was perfumed and gave off a smell like incense.

“We will have some capital hunting, you and I,” said the general. “I shall be most glad to have your society.”

“But what game—” began Rainsford.

“I’ll tell you,” said the general. “You will be amused, I know. I think I may say, in all modesty, that I have done a rare thing. I have invented a new sensation. May I pour you another glass of port, Mr. Rainsford?”

“Thank you, general.”

The general filled both glasses, and said: “God makes some men poets. Some He makes kings, some beggars. Me He made a hunter. My hand was made for the trigger, my father said. He was a very rich man with a quarter of a million acres in the Crimea,⁶ and he was an ardent sportsman. When I was only five years old he gave me a little gun, specially made in Moscow for me, to shoot sparrows with. When I shot some of his prize turkeys with it, he did not punish me; he complimented me on my marksmanship. I killed my first bear in the Caucasus⁷ when I was ten. My whole life has been one prolonged hunt. I went into the army—it was expected of noblemen’s sons—and for a time commanded a division of Cossack cavalry, but my real interest was always the hunt. I have hunted every kind of game in every land. It would be impossible for me to tell you how many animals I have killed.”

The general puffed at his cigarette.

“After the debacle⁸ in Russia I left the country, for it was imprudent for an officer of the Czar to stay there. Many noble Russians lost everything. I, luckily, had invested heavily in American securities, so I shall never have to open a tea room in Monte Carlo or drive a taxi in Paris. Naturally, I continued to hunt—grizzlies in your Rockies, crocodiles in the Ganges, rhinoceroses in East Africa. It was in Africa that the Cape buffalo hit me and laid me up for six months. As soon as I recovered I started for the Amazon to hunt jaguars, for I had heard they were unusually cunning. They weren’t.” The Cossack sighed. “They were no match at all for a hunter with his wits about him, and a high-

“Here in my preserve on this island,” he said in the same slow tone, “I hunt more dangerous game.”

Make Inferences

How do the details about Zaroff’s life support the inference that he feels neither guilt nor fear concerning hunting?

Comprehension

Why does Zaroff recognize Rainsford’s name?

6. **Crimea** (krī mē’ ə) region in southwestern Ukraine extending into the Black Sea.

7. **Caucasus** (kō’ kə səz) mountain range between the Black and Caspian seas.

8. **debacle** (di bǎ’ kəl) *n.* bad defeat (Zaroff is referring to the Russian Revolution of 1917, a defeat for upper-class Russians like himself).



Conflict

How was the “tragic moment” Zaroff refers to the sign of an internal conflict?

powered rifle. I was bitterly disappointed. I was lying in my tent with a splitting headache one night when a terrible thought pushed its way into my mind. Hunting was beginning to bore me! And hunting, remember, had been my life. I have heard that in America business men often go to pieces when they give up the business that has been their life.”

“Yes, that’s so,” said Rainsford.

The general smiled. “I had no wish to go to pieces,” he said. “I must do something. Now, mine is an analytical mind, Mr. Rainsford. Doubtless that is why I enjoy the problems of the chase.”

“No doubt, General Zaroff.”

“So,” continued the general, “I asked myself why the hunt no longer fascinated me. You are much younger than I am, Mr. Rainsford, and have not hunted as much, but you perhaps can guess the answer.”

“What was it?”

“Simply this: hunting had ceased to be what you call ‘a sporting proposition.’ It had become too easy. I always got my quarry. Always. There is no greater bore than perfection.”

The general lit a fresh cigarette.

“No animal had a chance with me any more. That is no boast; it is a mathematical certainty. The animal had nothing but his legs and his instinct. Instinct is no match for reason. When I thought of this it was a tragic moment for me, I can tell you.”

Rainsford leaned across the table, absorbed in what his host was saying.

“It came to me as an inspiration what I must do,” the general went on.

“And that was?”

The general smiled the quiet smile of one who has faced an obstacle and surmounted it with success. “I had to invent a new animal to hunt,” he said. ●

“A new animal? You’re joking.”

“Not at all,” said the general. “I never joke about hunting. I needed a new animal. I found one. So I bought this island, built this house, and here I do my hunting. The island is perfect for my purpose—there are jungles with a maze of trails in them, hills, swamps—”

“But the animal, General Zaroff?”

“Oh,” said the general, “it supplies me with the most exciting hunting in the world. No other hunting compares with it for an instant. Every day I hunt, and I never grow bored now, for I have a quarry with which I can match my wits.”

Rainsford’s bewilderment showed in his face.

“I wanted the ideal animal to hunt,” explained the general. “So I said: ‘What are the attributes of an ideal quarry?’ And the answer was, of course: ‘It must have courage, cunning, and, above all, it must be able to reason.’”

“But no animal can reason,” objected Rainsford.

“My dear fellow,” said the general, “there is one that can.”

“But you can’t mean—” gasped Rainsford.

“And why not?”

“I can’t believe you are serious, General Zaroff. This is a grisly joke.”

“Why should I not be serious? I am speaking of hunting.”

“Hunting? General Zaroff, what you speak of is murder.”

The general laughed with entire good nature. He regarded Rainsford quizzically. “I refuse to believe that so modern and civilized a young man as you seem to be harbors romantic ideas about the value of human life. Surely your experiences in the war—”

“Did not make me condone cold-blooded murder,” finished Rainsford stiffly.

Laughter shook the general. “How extraordinarily droll you are!” he said. “One does not expect nowadays to find a young man of the educated class, even in America, with such a **naive**, and, if I may say so, mid-Victorian point of view.⁹ It’s like finding a snuff-box in a limousine. Ah, well, doubtless you had Puritan ancestors. So many Americans appear to have had. I’ll wager you’ll forget your notions when you go hunting with me. You’ve a genuine new thrill in store for you, Mr. Rainsford.”

“Thank you, I’m a hunter, not a murderer.”

“Dear me,” said the general, quite unruffled, “again that unpleasant word. But I think I can show you that your **scruples** are quite ill founded.”

“Yes?”

“Life is for the strong, to be lived by the strong, and, if need be, taken by the strong. The weak of the world were put here to give the strong pleasure. I am strong. Why should I not use my gift? If I wish to hunt, why should I not? I hunt the scum of the earth—sailors from tramp ships—lascars,¹⁰ blacks, Chinese, whites, mongrels—a thoroughbred horse or hound is worth more than a score of them.”

“But they are men,” said Rainsford hotly.

“Precisely,” said the general. “That is why I use them. It gives me pleasure. They can reason, after a fashion. So they are dangerous.”

“But where do you get them?”

The general’s left eyelid fluttered down in a wink. “This island is called Ship-Trap,” he answered. “Sometimes an angry god of the

Conflict

What does Rainsford suddenly understand about Zaroff?

◀ Vocabulary

naive (nä ēv′) *adj.*
unsophisticated

scruples (skrōō′
pəlz) *n.* misgivings
about something
one feels is wrong

Comprehension

What does Zaroff do to ease his boredom with hunting?

9. **mid-Victorian point of view** a point of view emphasizing proper behavior and associated with the time of Queen Victoria of England (1819–1901).

10. **lascars** (las′ kərz) *n.* Indian or East Indian sailors, employed on European ships.

Make Inferences

Based on this description, what can you infer about the method Zaroff uses to lure his quarry to the island?

Conflict

Is Zaroff's statement that his captives do not have to participate in the hunt true? Explain.

high seas sends them to me. Sometimes, when Providence is not so kind, I help Providence a bit. Come to the window with me."

Rainsford went to the window and looked out toward the sea.

"Watch! Out there!" exclaimed the general, pointing into the night. Rainsford's eyes saw only blackness, and then, as the general pressed a button, far out to sea Rainsford saw the flash of lights.

The general chuckled. "They indicate a channel," he said, "where there's none: giant rocks with razor edges crouch like a sea monster with wide-open jaws. They can crush a ship as easily as I crush this nut." He dropped a walnut on the hardwood floor and brought his heel grinding down on it. "Oh, yes," he said, casually, as if in answer to a question, "I have electricity. We try to be civilized here."

"Civilized? And you shoot down men?"

A trace of anger was in the general's black eyes, but it was there for but a second, and he said, in his most pleasant manner: "Dear me, what a righteous young man you are! I assure you I do not do the thing you suggest. That would be barbarous. I treat these visitors with every consideration. They get plenty of good food and exercise. They get into splendid physical condition. You shall see for yourself tomorrow."

"What do you mean?"

"We'll visit my training school," smiled the general. "It's in the cellar. I have about a dozen pupils down there now. They're from the Spanish bark San Lucar that had the bad luck to go on the rocks out there. A very inferior lot, I regret to say. Poor specimens and more accustomed to the deck than to the jungle."

He raised his hand, and Ivan, who served as waiter, brought thick Turkish coffee. Rainsford, with an effort, held his tongue in check.

"It's a game, you see," pursued the general blandly. "I suggest to one of them that we go hunting. I give him a supply of food and an excellent hunting knife. I give him three hours' start. I am to follow, armed only with a pistol of the smallest caliber and range. If my quarry eludes me for three whole days, he wins the game. If I find him"—the general smiled—"he loses."

"Suppose he refuses to be hunted?"

"Oh," said the general, "I give him his option, of course. He need not play the game if he doesn't wish to. If he does not wish to hunt, I turn him over to Ivan. Ivan once had the honor of serving as official knouter¹¹ to the Great White Czar, and he has his own ideas of sport. Invariably, Mr. Rainsford, invariably they choose the hunt."

"And if they win?"

The smile on the general's face widened. "To date I have not lost," he said.

11. **knouter** (nouf' er) *n.* someone who beats criminals with a leather whip, or knout.

Then he added, hastily: “I don’t wish you to think me a braggart, Mr. Rainsford. Many of them afford only the most elementary sort of problem. Occasionally I strike a tartar.¹² One almost did win. I eventually had to use the dogs.”

“The dogs?”

“This way, please. I’ll show you.”

The general steered Rainsford to a window. The lights from the windows sent a flickering illumination that made **grotesque** patterns on the courtyard below, and Rainsford could see moving about there a dozen or so huge black shapes; as they turned toward him, their eyes glittered greenly.

“A rather good lot, I think,” observed the general. “They are let out at seven every night. If anyone should try to get into my house—or out of it—something extremely regrettable would occur to him.” He hummed a snatch of song from the *Folies Bergère*.¹³

“And now,” said the general, “I want to show you my new collection of heads. Will you come with me to the library?”

“I hope,” said Rainsford, “that you will excuse me tonight, General Zaroff. I’m really not feeling at all well.”

“Ah, indeed?” the general inquired solicitously. “Well, I suppose that’s only natural, after your long swim. You need a good, restful night’s sleep. Tomorrow you’ll feel like a new man, I’ll wager. Then we’ll hunt, eh? I’ve one rather promising prospect—”

Rainsford was hurrying from the room.

“Sorry you can’t go with me tonight,” called the general. “I expect rather fair sport—a big, strong black. He looks resourceful—Well, good night, Mr. Rainsford; I hope you have a good night’s rest.”

The bed was good, and the pajamas of the softest silk, and he was tired in every fiber of his being, but nevertheless Rainsford could not quiet his brain with the opiate of sleep. He lay, eyes wide open. Once he thought he heard stealthy steps in the corridor outside his room. He sought to throw open the door; it would not

12. **tartar** (tärt’ ər) *n.* stubborn, violent person.
13. **Folies** (fô’ lē) **Bergère** (ber zher’) musical theater in Paris.

Critical Viewing ▼

Why might Zaroff have used dogs like these on his hunts?

◀ Vocabulary

grotesque (grō tesk’)

adj. having a strange, bizarre design; shocking or offensive

Make Inferences

What kind of heads do you think Zaroff wants to show Rainsford? Explain.

Comprehension

Who are the “pupils” in Zaroff’s cellar?



open. He went to the window and looked out. His room was high up in one of the towers. The lights of the château were out now, and it was dark and silent, but there was a fragment of sallow moon, and by its wan light he could see, dimly, the courtyard; there, weaving in and out in the pattern of shadow, were black, noiseless forms; the hounds heard him at the window and looked up, expectantly, with their green eyes. Rainsford went back to the bed and lay down. By many methods he tried to put himself to sleep. He had achieved a doze when, just as morning began to come, he heard, far off in the jungle, the faint report of a pistol. •

General Zaroff did not appear until luncheon. He was dressed faultlessly in the tweeds of a country squire. He was solicitous about the state of Rainsford's health.

"As for me," sighed the general, "I do not feel so well. I am worried, Mr. Rainsford. Last night I detected traces of my old complaint."

To Rainsford's questioning glance the general said: "Ennui. Boredom."

Then, taking a second helping of crêpes suzette, the general explained: "The hunting was not good last night. The fellow lost his head. He made a straight trail that offered no problems at all. That's the trouble with these sailors; they have dull brains to begin with, and they do not know how to get about in the woods. They do excessively stupid and obvious things. It's most annoying. Will you have another glass of Chablis, Mr. Rainsford?"

"General," said Rainsford firmly, "I wish to leave this island at once."

The general raised his thickets of eyebrows; he seemed hurt. "But, my dear fellow," the general protested, "you've only just come. You've had no hunting—"

"I wish to go today," said Rainsford. He saw the dead black eyes of the general on him, studying him. General Zaroff's face suddenly brightened.

He filled Rainsford's glass with venerable Chablis from a dusty bottle.

"Tonight," said the general, "we will hunt—you and I."

Rainsford shook his head. "No, general," he said. "I will not hunt."

The general shrugged his shoulders and delicately ate a hothouse grape. "As you wish, my friend," he said. "The choice rests entirely with you. But may I not venture to suggest that you will find my idea of sport more diverting than Ivan's?"

He nodded toward the corner to where the giant stood, scowling, his thick arms crossed on his hogshead of chest.

"You don't mean—" cried Rainsford.

Conflict

How does Rainsford's statement about wishing to leave make his internal conflict an external one?

Make Inferences

What inference can you make about the hunting trip Zaroff is suggesting?

“My dear fellow,” said the general, “have I not told you I always mean what I say about hunting? This is really an inspiration. I drink to a foeman worthy of my steel—at last.”

The general raised his glass, but Rainsford sat staring at him.

“You’ll find this game worth playing,” the general said enthusiastically. “Your brain against mine. Your woodcraft against mine. Your strength and stamina against mine. Outdoor chess! And the stake is not without value, eh?”

“And if I win—” began Rainsford huskily.

“I’ll cheerfully acknowledge myself defeated if I do not find you by midnight of the third day,” said General Zaroff. “My sloop will place you on the mainland near a town.”

The general read what Rainsford was thinking.

“Oh, you can trust me,” said the Cossack. “I will give you my word as a gentleman and a sportsman. Of course you, in turn, must agree to say nothing of your visit here.”

“I’ll agree to nothing of the kind,” said Rainsford.

“Oh,” said the general, “in that case— But why discuss that now? Three days hence we can discuss it over a bottle of Veuve Cliquot, unless—”

The general sipped his wine.

Then a businesslike air animated him. “Ivan,” he said to Rainsford, “will supply you with hunting clothes, food, a knife. I suggest you wear moccasins; they leave a poorer trail. I suggest too that you avoid the big swamp in the southeast corner of the island. We call it Death Swamp. There’s quicksand there. One foolish fellow tried it. The deplorable part of it was that Lazarus followed him. You can imagine my feelings, Mr. Rainsford. I loved Lazarus; he was the finest hound in my pack. Well, I must beg you to excuse me now. I always take a siesta after lunch. You’ll hardly have time for a nap, I fear. You’ll want to start, no doubt. I shall not follow till dusk. Hunting at night is so much more exciting than by day, don’t you think? *Au revoir*,¹⁴ Mr. Rainsford, *au revoir*.”

General Zaroff, with a deep, courtly bow, strolled from the room.

From another door came Ivan. Under one arm he carried khaki hunting clothes, a haversack of food, a leather sheath containing a long-bladed hunting knife; his right hand rested on a cocked revolver thrust in the crimson sash about his waist. . . .

Rainsford had fought his way through the bush for two hours. “I must keep my nerve. I must keep my nerve,” he said through tight teeth.

“My dear fellow,”
said the general,
“have I not told
you I always mean
what I say about
hunting?”



Comprehension

What two suggestions does Zaroff give Rainsford before they begin the hunt?

14. **Au** (ō) **revoir** (rə vwä'r) French for “until we meet again.”

He had not been entirely clear-headed when the château gates snapped shut behind him.

His whole idea at first was to put distance between himself and General Zaroff, and, to this end, he had plunged along, spurred on by the sharp rowels of something very like panic. Now he had got a grip on himself, had stopped, and was taking stock of himself and the situation.

Vocabulary ▶

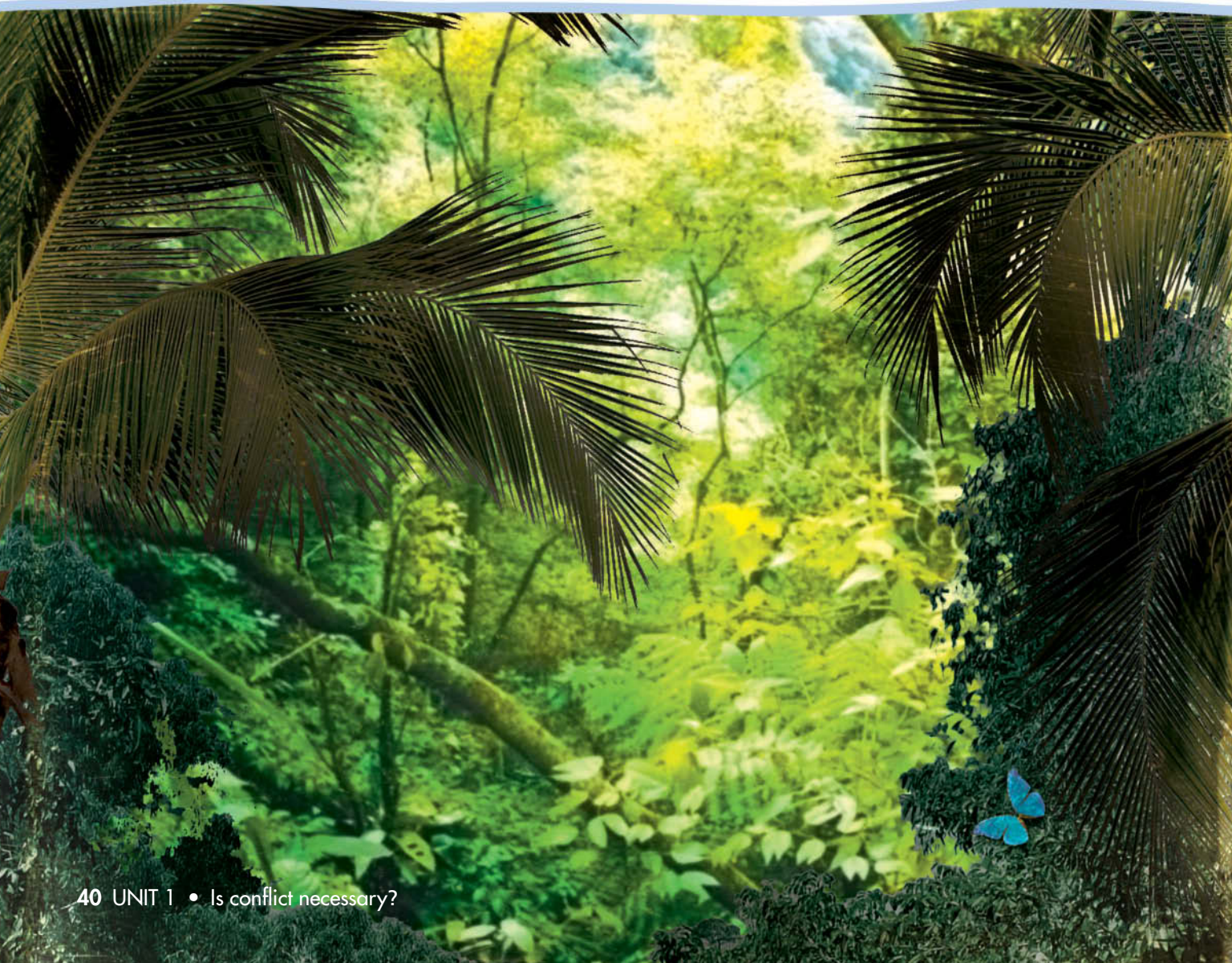
futile (fyōōt' 'l) *adj.*
useless; hopeless

Critical Viewing ▼

How does this picture support Rainsford's thought that straight flight through the jungle is futile?

He saw that straight flight was **futile**; inevitably it would bring him face to face with the sea. He was in a picture with a frame of water, and his operations, clearly, must take place within that frame.

"I'll give him a trail to follow," muttered Rainsford, and he struck off from the rude paths he had been following into the trackless wilderness. He executed a series of intricate loops; he doubled on his trail again and again, recalling all the lore of the fox hunt, and all the dodges of the fox. Night found him leg-weary, with his hands



and face lashed by the branches, on a thickly wooded ridge. He knew it would be insane to blunder on through the dark, even if he had the strength. His need for rest was imperative and he thought: "I have played the fox, now I must play the cat of the fable." A big tree with a thick trunk and outspread branches was nearby, and, taking care to leave not the slightest mark, he climbed up into the crotch, and stretching out on one of the broad limbs, after a fashion, rested. Rest brought him new confidence and almost a feeling of security. Even so zealous a hunter as General Zaroff could not trace him there, he told himself; only the devil himself could follow that complicated trail through the jungle after dark. But, perhaps, the general was a devil—

An apprehensive night crawled slowly by like a wounded snake, and sleep did not visit Rainsford, although the silence of a dead world was on the jungle. Toward morning when a dingy gray was varnishing the sky, the cry of some startled bird focused Rainsford's attention in that direction. Something was coming through the bush, coming slowly, carefully, coming by the same winding way Rainsford had come. He flattened himself down on the limb, and through a screen of leaves almost as thick as tapestry, he watched. The thing that was approaching was a man.

It was General Zaroff. He made his way along with his eyes fixed in utmost concentration on the ground before him. He paused, almost beneath the tree, dropped to his knees and studied the ground. Rainsford's impulse was to hurl himself down like a panther, but he saw the general's right hand held something metallic—a small automatic pistol.

The hunter shook his head several times, as if he were puzzled. Then he straightened up and took from his case one of his black cigarettes; its pungent incense-like smoke floated up to Rainsford's nostrils.

Rainsford held his breath. The general's eyes had left the ground and were traveling inch by inch up the tree. Rainsford froze there, every muscle tensed for a spring. But the sharp eyes of the hunter stopped before they reached the limb where Rainsford lay; a smile spread over his brown face. Very deliberately he blew a smoke ring into the air; then he turned his back on the tree and walked carelessly away, back along the trail he had come. The swish of the underbrush against his hunting boots grew fainter and fainter.

The pent-up air burst hotly from Rainsford's lungs. His first thought made him feel sick and numb. The general could follow a trail through the woods at night; he could follow an extremely difficult trail; he must have uncanny powers; only by the merest chance had the Cossack failed to see his quarry.

Spiral Review

PACING The author shows Rainsford resting and waiting. How does the slower pace of this scene help to create tension in the story?

Make Inferences

Which details in the description of Zaroff's searching the tree suggest that he knows Rainsford is there?

Comprehension

On the first night of the hunt, where does Rainsford attempt to hide from Zaroff?

Rainsford's second thought was even more terrible. It sent a shudder of cold horror through his whole being. Why had the general smiled? Why had he turned back?

Rainsford did not want to believe what his reason told him was true, but the truth was as evident as the sun that had by now pushed through the morning mists. The general was playing with him! The general was saving him for another day's sport! The Cossack was the cat; he was the mouse. Then it was that Rainsford knew the full meaning of terror.

"I will not lose my nerve. I will not."

He slid down from the tree, and struck off again into the woods. His face was set and he forced the machinery of his mind to function. Three hundred yards from his hiding place he stopped where a huge dead tree leaned precariously on a smaller, living one. Throwing off his sack of food, Rainsford took his knife from its sheath and began to work with all his energy.

The job was finished at last, and he threw himself down behind a fallen log a hundred feet away. He did not have to wait long. The cat was coming again to play with the mouse. ●

Following the trail with the sureness of a bloodhound, came General Zaroff. Nothing escaped those searching black eyes, no crushed blade of grass, no bent twig, no mark, no matter how faint, in the moss. So intent was the Cossack on his stalking that he was upon the thing Rainsford had made before he saw it. His foot touched the protruding bough that was the trigger. Even as he touched it, the general sensed his danger and leaped back with the agility of an ape. But he was not quite quick enough; the dead tree, delicately adjusted to rest on the cut living one, crashed down and struck the general a glancing blow on the shoulder as it fell; but for his alertness, he must have been smashed beneath it. He staggered, but he did not fall; nor did he drop his revolver. He stood there, rubbing his injured shoulder, and Rainsford, with fear again gripping his heart, heard the general's mocking laugh ring through the jungle.

"Rainsford," called the general, "if you are within the sound of my voice, as I suppose you are, let me congratulate you. Not many men know how to make a Malay mancatcher. Luckily, for me, I too have hunted in Malacca. You are proving interesting, Mr. Rainsford. I am going now to have my wound dressed; it's only a slight one. But I shall be back. I shall be back."

When the general, nursing his bruised shoulder, had gone, Rainsford took up his flight again. It was flight now, a desperate, hopeless flight, that carried him on for some hours. Dusk came, then darkness, and still he pressed on. The ground grew softer

Conflict

Who seems to be winning the conflict at this point in the story? Explain.

LITERATURE IN CONTEXT

History Connection

World War I Trenches

When Rainsford digs himself in, he is drawing on his experiences as a soldier. During World War I (1914–1918), European armies on both sides dug hundreds of miles of deep, narrow ditches. The soldiers lived in these trenches, from where they would charge the enemy's trenches.

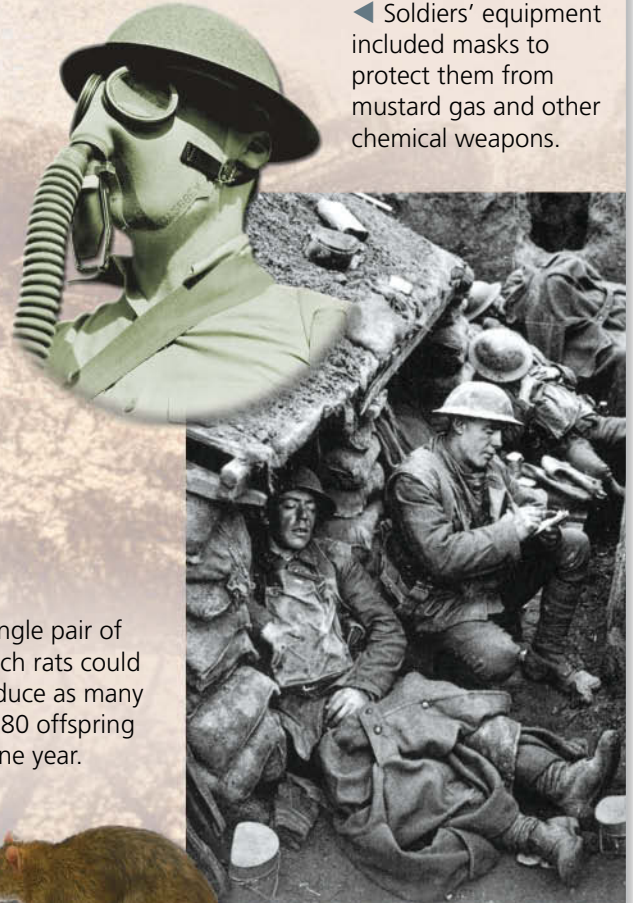
LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

- Throughout the war, approximately seven thousand British soldiers were killed, wounded, or disabled every day while serving in the trenches.
- Soldiers living in trenches were plagued by lice, rats, beetles, and frogs.
- The trenches smelled terrible due to dead bodies, overflowing latrines, and unwashed men.

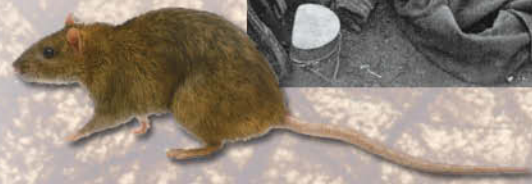
Connect to the Literature

Rainsford says his time in the trenches was “placid” compared to his experience on the island. How does this information about trenches clarify his fear?

◀ Soldiers' equipment included masks to protect them from mustard gas and other chemical weapons.



A single pair of trench rats could produce as many as 880 offspring in one year.



under his moccasins; the vegetation grew ranker, denser; insects bit him savagely. Then, as he stepped forward, his foot sank into the ooze. He tried to wrench it back, but the muck sucked viciously at his foot as if it were a giant leech. With a violent effort, he tore his foot loose. He knew where he was now. Death Swamp and its quicksand.

His hands were tight closed as if his nerve were something tangible that someone in the darkness was trying to tear from his grip. The softness of the earth had given him an idea. He stepped back from the quicksand a dozen feet or so, and, like some huge prehistoric beaver, he began to dig.

Rainsford had dug himself in in France when a second's delay meant death. That had been a placid pastime compared to his digging now. The pit grew deeper; when it was above his shoulders, he climbed out and from some hard saplings cut stakes and

Comprehension

What toll does Rainsford's trap take on Zaroff?



sharpened them to a fine point. These stakes he planted in the bottom of the pit with the points sticking up. With flying fingers he wove a rough carpet of weeds and branches and with it he covered the mouth of the pit. Then, wet with sweat and aching with tiredness, he crouched behind the stump of a lightning-charred tree.

He knew his pursuer was coming; he heard the padding sound of feet on the soft earth, and the night breeze brought him the perfume of the general's cigarette. It seemed to Rainsford that the general was coming with unusual swiftness; he was not feeling his way along, foot by foot. Rainsford, crouching there, could not see the general, nor could he see the pit. He lived a year in a minute. Then he felt an impulse to cry aloud with joy, for he heard the sharp crackle of the breaking branches as the cover of the pit gave way; he heard the sharp scream of pain as the pointed stakes found their mark. He leaped up from his place of concealment. Then he covered back. Three feet from the pit a man was standing, with an electric torch in his hand.

“You’ve done well, Rainsford,” the voice of the general called. “Your Burmese tiger pit has claimed one of my best dogs. Again you score. I think, Mr. Rainsford, I’ll see what you can do against my whole pack. I’m going home for a rest now. Thank you for a most amusing evening.”

At daybreak Rainsford, lying near the swamp, was awakened by a sound that made him know that he had new things to learn about fear. It was a distant sound, faint and wavering, but he knew it. It was the baying of a pack of hounds.

Rainsford knew he could do one of two things. He could stay where he was and wait. That was suicide. He could flee. That was postponing the inevitable. For a moment he stood there, thinking. An idea that held a wild chance came to him, and, tightening his belt, he headed away from the swamp.

The baying of the hounds drew nearer, then still nearer, nearer, ever nearer. On a ridge Rainsford climbed a tree. Down a watercourse, not a quarter of a mile away, he could see the bush moving. Straining his eyes, he saw the lean figure of General Zaroff; just ahead of him Rainsford made out another figure whose wide shoulders surged through the tall jungle weeds; it was the giant Ivan, and he seemed pulled forward by some unseen force; Rainsford knew that Ivan must be holding the pack in leash.

They would be on him any minute now. His mind worked frantically. He thought of a native trick he had learned in Uganda. He slid down the tree. He caught hold of a springy young sapling and to it he fastened his hunting knife, with the blade pointing down the trail; with a bit of wild grapevine he tied back the sapling. Then he ran for his life. The hounds raised their voices as they hit the fresh scent. Rainsford knew now how an animal at bay feels. ●

He had to stop to get his breath. The baying of the hounds stopped abruptly, and Rainsford's heart stopped too. They must have reached the knife.

He shinned excitedly up a tree and looked back. His pursuers had stopped. But the hope that was in Rainsford's brain when he climbed died, for he saw in the shallow valley that General Zaroff was still on his feet. But Ivan was not. The knife, driven by the recoil of the springing tree, had not wholly failed.

"Nerve, nerve, nerve!" he panted, as he dashed along. A blue gap showed between the trees dead ahead. Ever nearer drew the hounds. Rainsford forced himself on toward that gap. He reached it. It was the shore of the sea. Across a cove he could see the gloomy gray stone of the château. Twenty feet below him the sea rumbled and hissed. Rainsford hesitated. He heard the hounds. Then he leaped far out into the sea. . . .

When the general and his pack reached the place by the sea, the Cossack stopped. For some minutes he stood regarding the blue-green expanse of water. He shrugged his shoulders. Then he sat down, took a drink of brandy from a silver flask, lit a perfumed cigarette, and hummed a bit from *Madame Butterfly*.¹⁵

General Zaroff had an exceedingly good dinner in his great paneled dining hall that evening. With it he had a bottle of Pol Roger and half a bottle of Chambertin. Two slight annoyances kept him from perfect enjoyment. One was the thought that it would be difficult to replace Ivan; the other was that his quarry had escaped him; of course the American hadn't played the game—so thought the general as he tasted his after-dinner liqueur. In his library he

Conflict

What new internal conflict does the sound of the baying dogs create for Rainsford?

Comprehension

What does Rainsford do when he reaches the edge of the cliff?

15. *Madame Butterfly* an opera by Giacomo Puccini.

read, to soothe himself, from the works of Marcus Aurelius.¹⁶ At ten he went up to his bedroom. He was deliciously tired, he said to himself, as he locked himself in. There was a little moonlight, so, before turning on his light, he went to the window and looked down at the courtyard. He could see the great hounds, and he called: "Better luck another time," to them. Then he switched on the light.

A man, who had been hiding in the curtain of the bed, was standing there.

"Rainsford!" screamed the general. "How in God's name did you get here?"

"Swam," said Rainsford. "I found it quicker than walking through the jungle."

The general sucked in his breath and smiled. "I congratulate you," he said. "You have won the game."

Rainsford did not smile. "I am still a beast at bay," he said, in a low, hoarse voice. "Get ready, General Zaroff."

The general made one of his deepest bows. "I see," he said. "Splendid! One of us is to furnish a repast for the hounds. The other will sleep in this very excellent bed. On guard, Rainsford. . . ."

He had never slept in a better bed, Rainsford decided.

16. **Marcus Aurelius** (ô rē' lē əs) Roman emperor and philosopher (A.D. 121–180).

Language Study

Vocabulary The words listed below appear in "The Most Dangerous Game." Choose one word from the list to fill in the blank in each sentence. Then, identify the context clues in each sentence that helped you.

palpable **indolently** **naive** **scruples** **futile**

1. His cheating at the game demonstrated a lack of _____.
2. At the wedding, the joy in the air seemed _____.
3. She tried to climb, but her high heels made her efforts _____.
4. The lazy sloth hung _____ from the tree branch.
5. Only a very _____ person would believe in the Tooth Fairy.

WORD STUDY

The **Latin suffix -esque**, means "in the style or manner of." In this story, Rainsford sees **grotesque** things that remind him of death. *Grotesque* is related to *grotto*, a word that once meant "burial vault."

Word Study

Part A Explain how the **Latin suffix -esque** contributes to the words *statuesque* and *Lincolnesque*. Consult a dictionary if necessary.

Part B Use the context of the sentences and your knowledge of the Latin suffix *-esque* to explain your answer to each question.

1. Why do people like to visit *picturesque* places?
2. If a film is called *Disneysque*, whose movies does it resemble?

Literary Analysis

Key Ideas and Details

- (a)** According to Zaroff, what is the most dangerous game?
(b) Define: In Zaroff's point of view, what makes this creature so dangerous?
- Make Inferences (a)** Near the story's end, with what words does Zaroff congratulate Rainsford? **(b)** What action does Rainsford then take? Explain the details that support your inference.
- Make Inferences (a)** Describe two inferences you made about Whitney. **(b)** Based on your ideas, discuss how the story would be different if it had been Whitney rather than Rainsford on the island with Zaroff. Cite textual details to support your response.

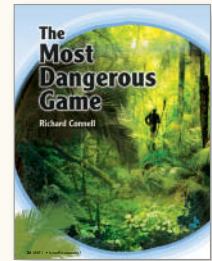
Craft and Structure

- Conflict (a)** What is the central conflict in this story? Explain.
(b) What is the ending, or resolution, to the story's central conflict?
- Conflict (a)** In addition to the central conflict, what external conflicts does Rainsford experience? **(b)** What internal conflicts does Rainsford experience? **(c)** Use a chart like the one shown to cite specific details from the story that support your answers.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Zaroff tells Rainsford that he tries to maintain the "amenities of civilization" on the island. **(a) Synthesize:** What other details in the description of Zaroff's appearance, home, and habits suggest his concern with living in a civilized manner? **(b) Make a Judgment:** Is Zaroff civilized? Explain your position.
- (a)** At the beginning of the story, what does Rainsford believe about the "two classes" that make up the world? **(b) Compare and Contrast:** Explain how Rainsford's initial beliefs compare to Zaroff's statement: "Life is for the strong, to be lived by the strong; and, if need be, taken by the strong."
- Analyze:** Does Rainsford's attitude toward the world's "two classes" change by the end of the story? Explain your position.

- THE BIG ?** **Is conflict necessary?** With a small group, discuss the following questions: **(a)** In what sense is conflict a "necessary" part of the hunting experience? **(b)** Does this story condemn Rainsford's original attitude toward hunting, or does it uphold some aspect of that position? **(c)** What relationship between civilization and conflict does this story suggest is appropriate?



Conflicts Rainsford Experiences

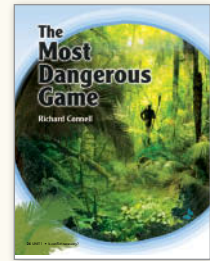
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Supporting Textual Details

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

As you write and speak about "The Most Dangerous Game," use the words related to conflict that you explored on page 3.

Conventions: Parts of Speech



Part of speech is the term used to describe the category into which a word can be placed according to its function in a sentence. There are eight parts of speech in English: **nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions,** and **interjections.**

This sentence contains six parts of speech that are explained in the chart below: *Rainsford indolently puffed on his favorite brier.*

| Word | Part of Speech | Function |
|------------|---|---|
| brier | Noun: names a person, place, or thing | identifies an object |
| Rainsford | Proper Noun: names a specific person, place, or thing; begins with a capital letter | identifies a specific person who is the subject of the sentence |
| puffed | Verb: names an action | tells what Rainsford did |
| his | Pronoun: a word such as <i>I, our, he, or their</i> , that substitutes for a noun or another pronoun | substitutes for "Rainsford's" |
| favorite | Adjective: modifies a noun or pronoun | tells which "brier" |
| indolently | Adverb: modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb | tells how Rainsford "puffed" |
| on | Preposition: clarifies relationships of time, place, or direction between words | shows relationship of place between "puffed" and "brier" |

Practice A

Identify the parts of speech in each sentence below. (Do not identify articles, such as "the" or "a.")

- Rainsford discovers a remote island.
- He struggles briefly in the jungle.
- The magnificent castle rests atop a mountain.
- Bravely, he traverses the difficult terrain.

Reading Application Select two sentences from "The Most Dangerous Game." Underline the nouns and pronouns and circle all the verbs.

Practice B

Label each underlined word as *adverb* or *adjective*.

- Zaroff behaved evasively when asked about his mysterious past.
- The island has an evil name among sea-faring men.
- He gave a short cry as he suddenly lost balance.
- As he lazily dozed, an abrupt sound startled him.

Writing Application Write a paragraph summarizing "The Most Dangerous Game." Use at least three adjectives and three adverbs.

Writing to Sources

Explanatory Text In “The Most Dangerous Game,” three characters—Whitney, Rainsford, and Zaroff—present three different views of the relationship between people and nature. Write a **comparison-and-contrast essay** analyzing the characters’ views. Consider the following questions:

- How do Whitney’s views about hunting and animals differ from Rainsford’s? What does Rainsford feel about Whitney’s ideas?
- How are Rainsford’s views of hunting both similar to and different from Zaroff’s? Are Zaroff’s views essentially the same as Rainsford’s but taken to an extreme? Or are they fundamentally different?
- At the end of the story, what has Rainsford done? Do you think he has “become” Zaroff?

As you write, support your ideas with specific details from the text. Cite passages precisely and integrate them smoothly into your analysis.

Grammar Application As you write, use adjectives and adverbs to make your writing more interesting and precise.

Speaking and Listening

Presentation of Ideas In a group, research and prepare an **oral presentation** about two or three of the big game species mentioned in “The Most Dangerous Game.” Use both print and non-print media sources. Include key facts about each species you research.

Follow these steps to research and write your presentation:

- Brainstorm for a list of questions to answer through research.
- Gather reliable data from varied sources. As you work, capture information you will later need to cite sources thoroughly and accurately.
- Organize the information and consider whether you have fully answered your list of questions. You may need to do additional research to supplement what you already have.
- Write an introduction that grabs the audience’s attention and establishes your central idea. Write a conclusion that summarizes your central idea and supporting points in a memorable way.
- Gather images that illustrate your ideas and integrate them into the presentation so that they maintain audience interest, clarify points, and do not distract from the focus of the presentation.



Meet the Author

O. Henry (1862–1910) is the pen name of William Sydney Porter. In 1882, Porter left his home in North Carolina to seek his fortune in Texas. He worked on a ranch, at a bank, and then became a reporter, columnist, and cartoonist for the *Houston Post*. In 1896, Porter was jailed for his involvement in a bank scandal. While in prison, he began writing stories. After he was released, Porter moved to New York City, began publishing stories under the name O. Henry, and developed into one of America's most celebrated writers of short fiction.



Is conflict necessary?

Explore the Big Question as you read “The Gift of the Magi.” Take notes on ways in which the story explores the surprising nature of conflict.

CLOSE READING FOCUS

Key Ideas and Details: **Make Inferences**

An **inference** is a logical guess a reader makes based on details in a text. The author may state some information directly, but most of the ideas in a story are suggested through details.

- When reading short stories, notice important details in the text.
- Draw on your own knowledge by looking for ways in which the characters and situations resemble those you have read about, observed, or experienced.
- Apply your knowledge to the details in the text to make meaningful inferences.

Craft and Structure: **Situational Irony**

Irony is a contradiction between appearance and reality. **Situational irony** occurs when an action or event in a story contradicts the expectations of a character or the reader. For example, a runner who trains hard would be expected to do well in a race. It would be ironic if she trained so hard that she overslept and missed the race.

Surprise endings often present situational irony because they involve a sudden turn of events that contradicts what the reader has been led to expect. When such endings are effective, it is because the writer has built clues into the text that make the surprise logical. Ironies and surprise endings usually help convey a story's *theme*, or meaning.

As you read, look for clues in the text that set up your expectations about the story's outcome.

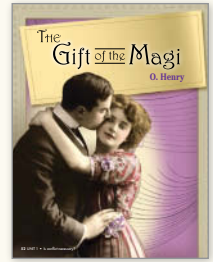
Vocabulary

The words below are critical to understanding the story that follows. Copy the words into your notebook. Which one is a synonym for *provokes*?

instigates
faltered

depreciate
prudence

cascade
discreet



CLOSE READING MODEL

The passage below is from O. Henry's short story "The Gift of the Magi." The annotations to the right of the passage show ways in which you can use close reading skills to make inferences and analyze irony.

from "The Gift of the Magi"

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the queen of Sheba¹ lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon¹ been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her.² And then she did it up again nervously³ and quickly. Once she faltered³ for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.³

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes,³ she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Situational Irony

1 The narrator mentions legendary figures—the queen of Sheba and King Solomon—rather than just any queen and king. These details tell you that Della's hair and Jim's watch are rare and splendid. They also hint that the characters' pride in those items matters more than anything else.

Situational Irony

2 The narrator describes Della's hair as though it is a river or waterfall—it is "rippling," "shining," and "like a cascade." These details reinforce the idea that Della's hair is dramatic and, like a force of nature, permanent.

Make Inferences

3 The words *nervously* and *faltered* suggest that Della is anxious and sad. She sheds "a tear or two." In the next paragraph her eyes have a "brilliant sparkle" and she leaves in "a whirl of skirts." You can infer that Della's mood has abruptly changed, as though she has made a decision and is taking action.

THE Gift of the Magi

O. Henry





ne dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony¹ that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which **instigates** the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description,² but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.³

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy

◀ Vocabulary

instigates (in' stə gätz)
v. urges on; stirs up

Make Inferences

Based on this paragraph, what can you infer about Jim and the kind of person he would like to be?

Comprehension

How much money does Della have to buy a present for Jim?

1. **imputation** (im' pyōō tā' shən) of **parsimony** (pār' sə mō' nē) accusation of stinginess.
2. **beggar description** make description seem inadequate or useless.
3. **it certainly . . . mendicancy** (men' di kən' sē) **squad** it would have been noticed by the police who arrest beggars.



▲ Critical Viewing

How do you think Della felt in a street like this one as she approached Madame Sofronie's shop?

Vocabulary ►

depreciate (dē prē' shē āt') *v.* reduce in value

cascade (kas kād') *n.* small steep waterfall; anything suggesting such a waterfall

faltered (fôl' tərđ) *v.* acted hesitantly; showed uncertainty

Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its

color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to **depreciate** Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a **cascade** of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she **faltered** for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

“Will you buy my hair?” asked Della.

“I buy hair,” said Madame. “Take yer hat off and let’s have a sight at the looks of it.”

Down rippled the brown cascade.

“Twenty dollars,” said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

“Give it to me quick,” said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim’s present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of *The Watch*. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim’s. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain. •

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to **prudence** and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.



LITERATURE IN CONTEXT

Cultural Connection

Watch Fob Chain

A fob chain is central to the plot of “The Gift of the Magi.” The word *fob* probably entered the English language from the German dialect word *fuppe*, meaning “pocket.” Before the wristwatch became common, a man would carry a pocket watch that fit in a special vest pocket. To keep the watch from falling or becoming lost, it was fastened to the vest by means of a strap or chain (sometimes with an ornament, or a fob, at the end) that was attached to a pin with a locking clasp, making it secure. Sometimes, as pictured here, a chain’s finely detailed metalwork elevated the piece to a work of art.

Connect to the Literature

A pocket watch was often handed down from father to son, as was Jim Young’s in O. Henry’s story. Why might this fact alone make a fob chain and watch precious to its owner despite its modest cash value?

◀ Vocabulary

prudence (prōō’ dēns)
n. sensible and careful attitude that makes you avoid some risks

Comprehension

What does Della sell for twenty dollars?

“If Jim doesn’t kill me,” she said to herself, “before he takes a second look at me, he’ll say I look like a Coney Island⁴ chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?”

At 7 o’clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying

little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: “Please God, make him think I am still pretty.”

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor

disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

“Jim, darling,” she cried, “don’t look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn’t have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It’ll grow out again—you won’t mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say ‘Merry Christmas!’ Jim, and let’s be happy. You don’t know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I’ve got for you.”

“You’ve cut off your hair?” asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

“Cut it off and sold it,” said Della. “Don’t you like me just as well, anyhow? I’m me without my hair, ain’t I?”

Jim looked about the room curiously.

“You say your hair is gone?” he said, with an air almost of idiocy.



“...I couldn’t have
lived through
Christmas without
giving you a present.”

4. **Coney** (kō' nē) **Island** beach and amusement park in Brooklyn, New York.

“You needn’t look for it,” said Della. “It’s sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It’s Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered,” she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, “but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?”

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with **discreet** scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The Magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

“Don’t make any mistake, Dell,” he said, “about me. I don’t think there’s anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you’ll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first.”

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jeweled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: “My hair grows so fast, Jim!”

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, “Oh, oh!”

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

◀ Vocabulary

discreet (di skrēt') *adj.*
careful about what one says or does



Irony

In what way does Jim’s gift to Della create an ironic situation?

Comprehension

How does Jim react to Della’s newly cut hair?

Surprise Ending

Explain why Jim's response to his gift is a surprise to both Della and the reader.

Spiral Review

NARRATOR Based on this final paragraph, how would you describe the narrator's attitude toward both the characters and the reader? Explain.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

Language Study

Vocabulary The words listed below appear in "The Gift of the Magi." Using your knowledge of these words, explain why each statement below is either usually true or usually false.

instigates **cascade** **faltered** **prudence** **discreet**

1. One who *instigates* conflict might be called a "problem solver."
2. Only a *discreet* person should be trusted with a secret.
3. It is a sign of *prudence* to drive a car before you have your license.
4. In a fireworks display, a shell might create a sparkling *cascade*.
5. The horse *faltered* in the home stretch and won as a result.

WORD STUDY

The **Latin prefix de-** has various meanings, including "down." In this story, Della's hair is said to **depreciate** a queen's treasures. Her hair is so lovely that, by comparison, it brings down the value of jewels.

Word Study

Part A Explain how the **Latin prefix de-** contributes to the meanings of *descend*, *decline*, and *depose*. Consult a dictionary if necessary.

Part B Use the context of the sentences and what you know about the Latin prefix *de-* to explain your answer to each question.

1. If you were to *depress* a friend, would he feel better?
2. What happens to food when people *devour* it?

Literary Analysis

Key Ideas and Details

- 1. Make Inferences (a)** What does Della do to get money for Jim's present? **(b)** What do Della's actions suggest about her character?
- 2. (a)** After he arrives at home, how does Jim react when he first sees Della? **(b) Interpret:** Why does he react in this way? **(c) Connect:** Why does Della misunderstand Jim's reaction? Cite details from the story to support your responses.
- 3. Make Inferences** What do you understand about Jim and Della's relationship based on Jim's final speech at the end of the story? Cite details to support your response.

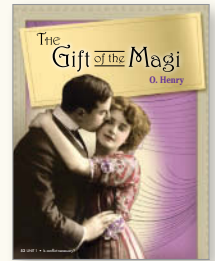
Craft and Structure

- 4. Situational Irony (a)** Use a chart like the one shown to examine irony in the story. In the top section, cite details that explain what the characters expect as they plan their gifts. In the bottom section, note what actually happens. **(b)** Which details earlier in the text make this surprise ending logical even though it is startling?
- 5.** In the final paragraph, the narrator describes Jim and Della's story as "uneventful." **(a)** Identify other negative adjectives the narrator uses to describe the characters or their story. **(b)** Does the narrator really mean that Jim and Della's story is unimportant? Explain, citing story details.
- 6. Connect:** Explain the relationship between the story's title, characters and events, and final paragraph.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 7. Draw Conclusions:** At the end of the story, the narrator says of Jim and Della that these "two foolish children" were "the wisest." How does the narrator define wisdom? Cite details from the story in your answer.
- 8. Make a Judgment:** After Della and Jim exchange gifts, are they richer, poorer, or the same as they were at the beginning of the story? Use details from the text to support your answer.

- 9. THE BIG ?** **Is conflict necessary? (a)** Citing details from the text, explain one internal conflict that Jim experiences and one that Della experiences. **(b)** Do you think each of these conflicts is necessary? Explain your position.



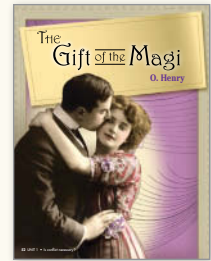
Characters' Expectations

Actual Events

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

As you write and speak about "The Gift of the Magi," use the words related to conflict that you explored on page 3 of this textbook.

Conventions: Simple and Perfect Tenses



A **verb** indicates an action or a state of being. Verbs have **tenses**, or different forms, that tell when something happens or exists.

In standard English, verbs have six tenses: present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect.

- **Present** indicates an action that happens regularly or states a general truth: *The Tigers play often.*
- **Past** indicates an action that has already happened: *Last week they played on Tuesday and Friday.*
- **Future** indicates an action that will happen: *They will play their final game next week.*
- **Present perfect** indicates an action that happened at some time in the past or an action that happened in the past and is still happening now: *We have played on this field for two years.*
- **Past perfect** indicates an action that was completed before another action in the past: *We had played on the old field until the new field was built.*
- **Future perfect** indicates an action that will have been completed before another: *We will have played twenty-six games before the season ends.*

Inconsistent verb tense occurs when a sentence begins in one tense and incorrectly switches to another.

Incorrect: Before we *played* in yesterday's game, the coach *gives* us a pep talk.

Correct: Before we *played* in yesterday's game, the coach *gave* us a pep talk.

Practice A

Identify the tense of each underlined verb.

1. Jim had cleaned his watch before he left.
2. Della will have combed her hair over a thousand times before she next has it cut.
3. Della will cook chops for dinner.
4. Della selected a beautiful watch fob for Jim.

Reading Application Choose three sentences from "The Gift of the Magi" that show different verb tenses. Identify the verb tense in each sentence.

Practice B

Revise each sentence, changing the verb tense to the one identified in parentheses.

1. O. Henry creates surprise endings. (past)
2. She has looked at the combs in the window. (future)
3. Jim will have purchased Della's gift by now. (past perfect)
4. Her hair will glow brighter than jewels. (present)

Writing Application Write four sentences about Jim and Della's gifts. Use four different verb tenses. Identify the tense in each sentence.

Writing to Sources

Narrative Write a **news report** about Jim and Della. Explain who they are, what they did, and how their actions resulted in irony.

- Reread the story, gathering facts by answering the questions *Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?*
- Create a list of story events that follow a logical order.
- Write an opening paragraph that summarizes events and grabs the reader's interest. Add several more paragraphs that provide in-depth details.
- As you draft, follow the sequence of events from your original list. If necessary, revise the order to make sure the connections among events are clear. Write a strong conclusion in which you reflect on Jim and Della's story, sharing your insights and observations.
- Use quotations from the story to show characters' reactions. Choose logical points at which to integrate the quotations smoothly.

Grammar Application As you write, use verb tenses correctly to show the order of actions as they occur in time.

Speaking and Listening

Presentation of Ideas With a group of classmates, present a **debate** on whether sacrifice is the best expression of love. Use the characters and events from "The Gift of the Magi" as part of your supporting evidence. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:

- Take a clear position, one that can be stated in a single sentence.
- Sequence your ideas logically and choose strong evidence from the story to support each one.
- Conduct research to locate additional evidence, such as findings from scientific studies or quotations from experts. Make sure that the additional material logically supports your claim.
- Anticipate opposing arguments. Consider how the other side may counter your position. Be ready with a response and with supporting information.
- Use a serious speaking style and manner so that your audience is not distracted by language or gestures that are not on point.

After the debate, ask the audience to evaluate the presentation and decide which team's argument was more persuasive.



Meet the Author

Amy Tan (b. 1952) did not imagine that she would become a successful novelist. Her parents, who had emigrated from China, wanted her to become a doctor. Doubting her abilities in science, Tan instead majored in English in college. She went on to become a successful business writer. Then, in her mid-thirties, Tan began writing stories. While she was surprised by the pleasure of writing fiction, she was even more surprised by the content of her work. Tan had previously tried to play down her ethnicity but in her fiction, she found herself exploring the experiences of Chinese American women.



Is conflict necessary?

Explore the Big Question as you read “Rules of the Game.” Take notes on the story’s portrayal of conflict between generations.

CLOSE READING FOCUS

Key Ideas and Details: **Analyze Cause and Effect**

A **cause** is an event, action, or feeling that produces a result. An **effect** is the result produced. A single cause may produce several effects. For example, a poor student starts to do well in school. Her success results in greater self-esteem. Effects, in turn, may become causes: the student’s new confidence leads her to audition for a play. As you read the story, ask questions like these to analyze cause and effect:

- What happened? Why did it happen?
- What occurs as a result?
- Does that result cause something else to happen?

Craft and Structure: **Characterization**

A **character** is a person, animal, or even an object that participates in the action and experiences the events of a literary work. Writers develop a character’s traits and personality through these **characterization** techniques:

- **Direct Characterization:** The writer (speaking through a narrator) simply tells readers about a character: “Seated across from me was an American man, about the same age as Lau Po, maybe fifty.”
- **Indirect Characterization:** The writer suggests what a character is like through *dialogue*, or spoken words, and through descriptions of his or her actions, thoughts, and appearance. The writer may also show other characters’ reactions: “I remember that his sweaty brow seemed to weep at my every move.”

Vocabulary

The words below appear in the text that follows. Which is a synonym for *kindly*?

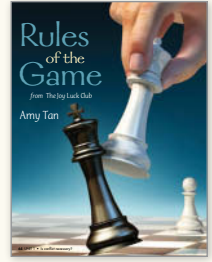
pungent
prodigy

benevolently
malodorous

retort
concessions

CLOSE READING MODEL

The passage below is from Amy Tan's short story "Rules of the Game." The annotations to the right of the passage show ways in which you can use close reading skills to analyze cause and effect and characterization.



from "Rules of the Game"

Vincent got the chess set, which would have been a very decent present to get at a church Christmas party except it was obviously used and, as we discovered later, it was missing a black pawn and a white knight.¹ My mother graciously thanked the unknown benefactor, saying, "Too good. Cost too much."² At which point, an old lady with fine white, wispy hair³ nodded toward our family and said with a whistling whisper,³ "Merry, merry Christmas."

When we got home, my mother told Vincent to throw the chess set away.¹ "She not want it. We not want it," she said, tossing her head stiffly to the side with a tight, proud smile.² My brothers had deaf ears. They were already lining up the chess pieces and reading from the dog-eared instruction book.⁴

I watched Vincent and Winston play during Christmas week. The chess board seemed to hold elaborate secrets waiting to be untangled. The chessmen were more powerful than Old Li's magic herbs that cured ancestral curses.

Cause and Effect

1 The chess set is missing two pieces and had been used, so its value as a gift is questionable. As a result, the mother is insulted and later tells Vincent to throw the set away.

Characterization

2 The author uses dialogue and description to show that the mother puts up a public face to hide her private feelings. She "graciously thanked" the gift-giver but later reveals with "a tight, proud smile" how she truly feels: "She not want it. We not want it."

Characterization

3 Details portray the old woman as pale and fragile. Her hair is "white, wispy" and she speaks "with a whistling whisper." The repetition of the *w* sound adds to the sense that the woman has a soft, breathy manner.

Cause and Effect

4 Vincent and Winston are kids and do not care about the game's condition. As a result, the boys ignore the mother's instructions.

Rules of the Game

from The Joy Luck Club

Amy Tan





I was six when my mother taught me the art of invisible strength. It was a strategy for winning arguments, respect from others, and eventually, though neither of us knew it at the time, chess games.

“Bite back your tongue,” scolded my mother when I cried loudly, yanking her hand toward the store that sold bags of salted plums. At home, she said, “Wise guy, he not go against wind. In Chinese we say, Come from South, blow with wind—poom!—North will follow. Strongest wind cannot be seen.”

The next week I bit back my tongue as we entered the store with the forbidden candies. When my mother finished her shopping, she quietly plucked a small bag of plums from the rack and put it on the counter with the rest of the items.

My mother imparted her daily truths so she could help my older brothers and me rise above our circumstances. We lived in San Francisco’s Chinatown. Like most of the other Chinese children who played in the back alleys of restaurants and curio shops, I didn’t think we were poor. My bowl was always full, three five-course meals every day, beginning with a soup full of mysterious things I didn’t want to know the names of.

We lived on Waverly Place, in a warm, clean, two-bedroom flat that sat above a small Chinese bakery specializing in steamed pastries and dim sum. In the early morning, when the alley was still quiet, I could

smell fragrant red beans as they were cooked down to a pasty sweetness. By daybreak, our flat was heavy with the odor of fried sesame balls and sweet curried chicken crescents. From my bed, I would listen as my father got ready for work, then locked the door behind him, one-two-three clicks.

At the end of our two-block alley was a small sandlot playground with swings and slides well-shined down the middle with use. The play area was bordered by wood-slat benches where old-country people sat cracking roasted watermelon seeds with their golden teeth and scattering the husks to an impatient gathering of gurgling pigeons. The best playground, however, was the dark alley itself. It was crammed with daily mysteries and adventures. My brothers and I would peer into the medicinal herb shop, watching old Li dole out onto a stiff sheet of white paper the right amount of insect shells, saffron-colored seeds, and **pungent** leaves for his ailing customers. It was said that he once cured a woman dying of an ancestral curse that had eluded the best of American doctors. Next to the pharmacy was a printer who specialized in gold-embossed wedding invitations and festive red banners.

Farther down the street was Ping Yuen Fish Market. The front window displayed a tank crowded with doomed fish and turtles struggling to gain footing on the slimy green-tiled sides. A hand-written sign informed tourists, “Within this store, is all for food, not for pet.” Inside, the butchers with their bloodstained white smocks deftly gutted the fish while customers cried out their orders and shouted, “Give me your freshest,” to which the butchers always protested, “All are freshest.” On less crowded market days, we would inspect the crates of live frogs and crabs which we were warned not to poke, boxes of dried cuttlefish, and row upon row of iced prawns, squid, and slippery fish. The sanddabs made me shiver each time; their eyes lay on one flattened side and reminded me of my mother’s story of a careless girl who ran into a crowded street and was crushed by a cab. “Was smash flat,” reported my mother.

At the corner of the alley was Hong Sing’s, a four-table cafe with a recessed stairwell in front that led to a door marked “Tradesmen.” My brothers and I believed the bad people emerged from this door at night. Tourists never went to Hong Sing’s,

Vocabulary ►

pungent (pun’ jənt) *adj.*
producing a sharp smell

Spiral Review

SETTING What do details tell you about the cultural environment in which the narrator grew up?

Characterization

What does this quotation reveal about the narrator’s mother?



since the menu was printed only in Chinese. A Caucasian man with a big camera once posed me and my playmates in front of the restaurant. He had us move to the side of the picture window so the photo would capture the roasted duck with its head dangling from a juice-covered rope. After he took the picture, I told him he should go into Hong Sing's and eat dinner. When he smiled and asked me what they served, I shouted, "Guts and duck's feet and octopus gizzards!" Then I ran off with my friends, shrieking with laughter as we scampered across the alley and hid in the entryway grotto of the China Gem Company, my heart pounding with hope that he would chase us.

My mother named me after the street that we lived on: Waverly Place Jong, my official name for important American documents. But my family called me Meimei [mā' mā'], "Little Sister." I was the youngest, the only daughter. Each morning before school, my mother would twist and yank on my thick black hair until she had formed two tightly wound pigtails. One day, as she struggled to weave a hard-toothed comb through my disobedient hair, I had a sly thought.

I asked her, "Ma, what is Chinese torture?" My mother shook her head. A bobby pin was wedged between her lips. She wetted her palm and smoothed the hair above my ear, then pushed the pin in so that it nicked sharply against my scalp.

"Who say this word?" she asked without a trace of knowing how wicked I was being. I shrugged my shoulders and said, "Some boy in my class said Chinese people do Chinese torture."

"Chinese people do many things," she said simply. "Chinese people do business, do medicine, do painting. Not lazy like American people. We do torture. Best torture." ●

My older brother Vincent was the one who actually got the chess set. We had gone to the annual Christmas party held at the First Chinese Baptist Church at the end of the alley. The missionary ladies had put together a Santa bag of gifts donated by members of another church. None of the gifts had names on them. There were separate sacks for boys and girls of different ages.

One of the Chinese parishioners had donned a Santa Claus costume and a stiff paper beard with cotton balls glued to it. I think the only children who thought he was the real thing were too young to know that Santa Claus was not Chinese. When my turn came up, the Santa man asked me how old I was. I thought it was a trick question; I was seven according to the American formula and eight by the Chinese calendar. I said I was born on March 17, 1951. That seemed to satisfy him. He then solemnly asked if I had been a very,

Characterization

What does Mrs. Jong's response to the accusation that Chinese people do torture reveal about her personality?

Comprehension

What gift does Vincent receive at the Christmas party?

Characterization

What does Waverly's thought process in this paragraph reveal indirectly about her character?

very good girl this year and did I believe in Jesus Christ and obey my parents. I knew the only answer to that. I nodded back with equal solemnity.

Having watched the other children opening their gifts, I already knew that the big gifts were not necessarily the nicest ones. One girl my age got a large coloring book of biblical characters, while a less greedy girl who selected a small box received a glass vial of lavender toilet water. The sound of the box was also important. A ten-year-old boy had chosen a box that jangled when he shook it. It was a tin globe of the world with a slit for inserting money. He must have thought it was full of dimes and nickels, because when he saw that it had just ten pennies, his face fell with such undisguised disappointment that his mother slapped the side of his head and led him out of the church hall, apologizing to the crowd for her son who had such bad manners he couldn't appreciate such a fine gift.

As I peered into the sack, I quickly fingered the remaining presents, testing their weight, imagining what they contained. I chose a heavy, compact one that was wrapped in shiny silver foil and a red satin ribbon. It was a twelve-pack of Life Savers and I spent the rest of the party arranging and rearranging the candy tubes in the order of my favorites. My brother Winston chose wisely as well. His present turned out to be a box of intricate plastic parts; the instructions on the box proclaimed that when they were properly assembled he would have an authentic miniature replica of a World War II submarine.

Vincent got the chess set, which would have been a very decent present to get at a church Christmas party except it was obviously used and, as we discovered later, it was missing a black pawn and a white knight. My mother graciously thanked the unknown benefactor, saying, "Too good. Cost too much." At which point, an old lady with fine white, wispy hair nodded toward our family and said with a whistling whisper, "Merry, merry Christmas."

When we got home, my mother told Vincent to throw the chess set away. "She not want it. We not want it," she said, tossing her head stiffly to the side with a tight, proud smile. My brothers had deaf ears. They were already lining up the chess pieces and reading from the dog-eared instruction book. ●

I watched Vincent and Winston play during Christmas week. The chess board seemed to hold elaborate secrets waiting to be untangled. The chessmen were more powerful than Old Li's magic herbs that cured ancestral curses. And my brothers wore such serious faces that I was sure something was at stake that was greater than avoiding the tradesmen's door to Hong Sing's.

Cause and Effect

What effect does the gift of the chess board have on Waverly?

“Let me! Let me!” I begged between games when one brother or the other would sit back with a deep sigh of relief and victory, the other annoyed, unable to let go of the outcome. Vincent at first refused to let me play, but when I offered my Life Savers as replacements for the buttons that filled in for the missing pieces, he relented. He chose the flavors: wild cherry for the black pawn and peppermint for the white knight. Winner could eat both. As our mother sprinkled flour and rolled out small doughy circles for the steamed dumplings that would be our dinner that night, Vincent explained the rules, pointing to each piece. “You have sixteen pieces and so do I. One king and queen, two bishops, two knights, two castles, and eight pawns. The pawns can only move forward one step, except on the first move. Then they can move two. But they can only take men by moving crossways like this, except in the beginning, when you can move ahead and take another pawn.”

“Why?” I asked as I moved my pawn.

“Why can’t they move more steps?”

“Because they’re pawns,” he said.

“But why do they go crossways to take other men? Why aren’t there any women and children?”

“Why is the sky blue? Why must you always ask stupid questions?” asked Vincent. “This is a game. These are the rules. I didn’t make them up. See. Here. In the book.” He jabbed a page with a pawn in his hand. “Pawn. P-A-W-N. Pawn. Read it yourself.”

My mother patted the flour off her hands. “Let me see book,” she said quietly. She scanned the pages quickly, not reading the foreign English symbols, seeming to search deliberately for nothing in particular.

“This American rules,” she concluded at last. “Every time people come out from foreign country, must know rules. You not know, judge say, Too bad, go back. They not telling you why so you can use their way go forward. They say, Don’t know why, you find out yourself. But they knowing all the time. Better you take it, find out why yourself.” She tossed her head back with a satisfied smile.

I found out about all the whys later. I read the rules and looked up all the big words in a dictionary. I borrowed books from the Chinatown library. I studied each chess piece, trying to absorb the power each contained.



He chose the flavors:
wild cherry for the black
pawn and peppermint
for the white knight.



Characterization

What do you learn about Vincent based on this conversation?

Comprehension

How does Waverly convince Vincent to let her play chess?

LITERATURE IN CONTEXT

Cultural Connection

Endgame

Endgame describes a tense period in a chess game when the end seems close at hand. With fewer pieces left, lines of attack and defense become clearer to both players. Mistakes are magnified in an endgame, when victory and defeat can be determined by a single ill-considered move. In this story, Waverly develops a keen awareness of the strategies needed to secure a victory in the endgame.

Connect to the Literature

Why might it be difficult for a young beginning chess player like Waverly to master the endgame?



Vocabulary ►

benevolently (bənev' ələnt lē) *adv.* in a well-meaning way

retort (ri tōrt') *n.* sharp or clever reply

I learned about opening moves and why it's important to control the center early on; the shortest distance between two points is straight down the middle. I learned about the middle game and why tactics between two adversaries are like clashing ideas; the one who plays better has the clearest plans for both attacking and getting out of traps. I learned why it is essential in the endgame to have foresight, a mathematical understanding of all possible moves, and patience; all weaknesses and advantages become evident to a strong adversary and are obscured to a tiring opponent. I discovered that for the whole game one must gather invisible strengths and see the endgame before the game begins.

I also found out why I should never reveal “why” to others. A little knowledge withheld is a great advantage one should store for future use. That is the power of chess. It is a game of secrets in which one must show and never tell.

I loved the secrets I found within the sixty-four black and white squares. I carefully drew a handmade chessboard and pinned it to the wall next to my bed, where at night I would stare for hours at imaginary battles. Soon I no longer lost any games or Life Savers, but I lost my adversaries. Winston and Vincent decided they were more interested in roaming the streets after school in their Hopalong Cassidy cowboy hats. •

On a cold spring afternoon, while walking home from school, I detoured through the playground at the end of our alley. I saw a group of old men, two seated across a folding table playing a game of chess, others smoking pipes, eating peanuts, and watching. I ran home and grabbed Vincent's chess set, which was bound in a cardboard box with rubber bands. I also carefully selected two prized rolls of Life Savers. I came back to the park and approached a man who was observing the game.

“Want to play?” I asked him. His face widened with surprise and he grinned as he looked at the box under my arm.

“Little sister, been a long time since I play with dolls,” he said, smiling **benevolently**. I quickly put the box down next to him on the bench and displayed my **retort**.

Lau Po, as he allowed me to call him, turned out to be a much better player than my brothers. I lost many games and many Life

Savers. But over the weeks, with each diminishing roll of candies, I added new secrets. Lau Po gave me the names. The Double Attack from the East and West Shores. Throwing Stones on the Drowning Man. The Sudden Meeting of the Clan. The Surprise from the Sleeping Guard. The Humble Servant Who Kills the King. Sand in the Eyes of Advancing Forces. A Double Killing Without Blood.

There were also the fine points of chess etiquette. Keep captured men in neat rows, as well-tended prisoners. Never announce “Check” with vanity, lest someone with an unseen sword slit your throat. Never hurl pieces into the sandbox after you have lost a game, because then you must find them again, by yourself, after apologizing to all around you. By the end of the summer, Lau Po had taught me all he knew, and I had become a better chess player.

A small weekend crowd of Chinese people and tourists would gather as I played and defeated my opponents one by one. My mother would join the crowds during these outdoor exhibition games. She sat proudly on the bench, telling my admirers with proper Chinese humility, “Is luck.”

A man who watched me play in the park suggested that my mother allow me to play in local chess tournaments. My mother smiled graciously, an answer that meant nothing. I desperately wanted to go, but I bit back my tongue. I knew she would not let me play among strangers. So as we walked home I said in a small voice that I didn’t want to play in the local tournament. They would have American rules. If I lost, I would bring shame on my family.

“Is shame you fall down nobody push you,” said my mother.

During my first tournament, my mother sat with me in the front row as I waited for my turn. I frequently bounced my legs to unstick them from the cold metal seat of the folding chair. When my name was called, I leapt up. My mother unwrapped something in her lap. It was her *chang*, a small tablet of red jade which held the sun’s fire. “Is luck,” she whispered, and tucked it into my dress pocket. I turned to my opponent, a fifteen-year-old boy from Oakland. He looked at me, wrinkling his nose.



By the end of summer,
Lau Po had taught me
all he knew . . .



Cause and Effect

What does Waverly anticipate would be the effect of her expressing her desire to play in local chess tournaments?

Comprehension

How does Waverly’s mother respond to Waverly’s admirers in the park?

Cause and Effect

How does Waverly's mindset affect the outcome of the match?

As I began to play, the boy disappeared, the color ran out of the room, and I saw only my white pieces and his black ones waiting on the other side. A light wind began blowing past my ears. It whispered secrets only I could hear.

"Blow from the South," it murmured. "The wind leaves no trail." I saw a clear path, the traps to avoid. The crowd rustled. "Shhh! Shhh!" said the corners of the room. The wind blew stronger. "Throw sand from the East to distract him." The knight came forward ready for the sacrifice. The wind hissed, louder and louder. "Blow, blow, blow. He cannot see. He is blind now. Make him lean away from the wind so he is easier to knock down."

"Check," I said, as the wind roared with laughter. The wind died down to little puffs, my own breath. ●

My mother placed my first trophy next to a new plastic chess set that the neighborhood Tao society had given to me. As she wiped each piece with a soft cloth, she said, "Next time win more, lose less."

"Ma, it's not how many pieces you lose," I said. "Sometimes you need to lose pieces to get ahead."

"Better to lose less, see if you really need."

At the next tournament, I won again, but it was my mother who wore the triumphant grin.

"Lost eight piece this time. Last time was eleven. What I tell you? Better off lose less!" I was annoyed, but I couldn't say anything.

I attended more tournaments, each one farther away from home. I won all games, in all divisions. The Chinese bakery downstairs from our flat displayed my growing collection of trophies in its window, amidst the dust-covered cakes that were never picked up. The day after I won an important regional tournament, the window encased a fresh sheet cake with whipped-cream frosting and red script saying, "Congratulations, Waverly Jong, Chinatown Chess Champion." Soon after that, a flower shop, headstone engraver, and funeral parlor offered to sponsor me in national tournaments. That's when my mother decided I no longer had to do the dishes. Winston and Vincent had to do my chores.

"Why does she get to play and we do all the work," complained Vincent.

"Is new American rules," said my mother. "Meimei play, squeeze all her brains out for win chess. You play, worth squeeze towel."

By my ninth birthday, I was a national chess champion. I was still some 429 points away from grand-master status, but I was touted as the Great American Hope, a child **prodigy** and a girl to boot. They ran a photo of me in *Life* magazine next to a quote in

Characterization

What do Waverly's mother's comments here reveal indirectly about her ambitions for Waverly?

Vocabulary ►

prodigy (prăd' ə jē)

n. person, especially a child, of extraordinary talent or ability

which Bobby Fischer¹ said, “There will never be a woman grand master.” “Your move, Bobby,” said the caption.

The day they took the magazine picture I wore neatly plaited braids clipped with plastic barrettes trimmed with rhinestones. I was playing in a large high school auditorium that echoed with phlegmy coughs and the squeaky rubber knobs of chair legs sliding across freshly waxed wooden floors. Seated across from me was an American man, about the same age as Lau Po, maybe fifty. I remember that his sweaty brow seemed to weep at my every move. He wore a dark, **malodorous** suit. One of his pockets was stuffed with a great white kerchief on which he wiped his palm before sweeping his hand over the chosen chess piece with great flourish.

In my crisp pink-and-white dress with scratchy lace at the neck, one of two my mother had sewn for these special occasions, I would clasp my hands under my chin, the delicate points of my elbows poised lightly on the table in the manner my mother had shown me for posing for the press. I would swing my patent leather shoes back and forth like an impatient child riding on a school bus. Then I would pause, suck in my lips, twirl my chosen piece in midair as if undecided, and then firmly plant it in its new threatening place, with a triumphant smile thrown back at my opponent for good measure.

1. **Bobby Fischer** (1943–2008), this American chess prodigy attained the top rank of grandmaster in 1958.

◀ **Vocabulary**

malodorous

(mal ō´ dər əs) *adj.*
having a bad smell

Comprehension

Why does Waverly no longer have to do her chores?





I no longer played in the alley of Waverly Place. I never visited the playground where the pigeons and old men gathered. I went to school, then directly home to learn new chess secrets, cleverly concealed advantages, more escape routes.

But I found it difficult to concentrate at home. My mother had a habit of standing over me while I plotted out my games. I think she thought of herself as my protective ally. Her lips would be sealed tight, and after each move I made, a soft “Hmmpmph” would escape from her nose.

“Ma, I can’t practice when you stand there like that,” I said one day. She retreated to the kitchen and made loud noises with the pots and pans. When the crashing stopped, I could see out of the corner of my eye that she was standing in the doorway. “Hmmpmph!” Only this one came out of her tight throat.

My parents made many **concessions** to allow me to practice. One time I complained that the bedroom I shared was so noisy that I couldn’t think. Thereafter, my brothers slept in a bed in the living room facing the street. I said I couldn’t finish my rice; my head didn’t work right when my stomach was too full. I left the table with half-finished bowls and nobody complained. But there was one duty I couldn’t avoid. I had to accompany my mother on Saturday market days when I had no tournament to play. My mother would proudly walk with me, visiting many shops, buying very little. “This my daughter Wave-ly Jong,” she said to whoever looked her way.

One day, after we left a shop I said under my breath, “I wish you wouldn’t do that, telling everybody I’m your daughter.” My mother stopped walking. Crowds of people with heavy bags pushed past us on the sidewalk, bumping into first one shoulder, then another.

“Aiii-ya. So shame be with mother?” She grasped my hand even tighter as she glared at me.

I looked down. “It’s not that, it’s just so obvious. It’s just so embarrassing.”

“Embarrass you be my daughter?” Her voice was cracking with anger.

“That’s not what I meant. That’s not what I said.”

“What you say?”

I knew it was a mistake to say anything more, but I heard my voice speaking. “Why do you have to use me to show off? If you

Vocabulary ►

concessions (kən sesh’ ənz) *n.* things given or granted as privileges

Cause and Effect

In what ways does Waverly’s success at chess affect her family life? Explain.

want to show off, then why don't you learn to play chess.”

My mother's eyes turned into dangerous black slits. She had no words for me, just sharp silence.

I felt the wind rushing around my hot ears. I jerked my hand out of my mother's tight grasp and spun around, knocking into an old woman. Her bag of groceries spilled to the ground.

“Aii-ya! Stupid girl!” my mother and the woman cried. Oranges and tin cans careened down the sidewalk. As my mother stooped to help the old woman pick up the escaping food, I took off.

I raced down the street, dashing between people, not looking back as my mother screamed shrilly, “Meimei! Meimei!” I fled down an alley, past dark curtained shops and merchants washing the grime off their windows. I sped into the sunlight, into a large street crowded with tourists examining trinkets and souvenirs. I ducked into another dark alley, down another street, up another alley. I ran until it hurt and I realized I had nowhere to go, that I was not running from anything. The alleys contained no escape routes.

My breath came out like angry smoke. It was cold. I sat down on an upturned plastic pail next to a stack of empty boxes, cupping my chin with my hands, thinking hard. I imagined my mother, first walking briskly down one street or another looking for me, then giving up and returning home to await my arrival. After two hours, I stood up on creaking legs and slowly walked home.

The alley was quiet and I could see the yellow lights shining from our flat like two tiger's eyes in the night. I climbed the sixteen steps to the door, advancing quietly up each so as not to make any warning sounds. I turned the knob; the door was locked. I heard a chair moving, quick steps, the locks turning—click! click! click!—and then the door opened.

“About time you got home,” said Vincent. “Boy, are you in trouble.”

He slid back to the dinner table. On a platter were the remains of a large fish, its fleshy head still connected to bones swimming upstream in vain escape. Standing there waiting for my punishment, I heard my mother speak in a dry voice.

“We not concerning this girl. This girl not have concerning for us.”

Nobody looked at me. Bone chopsticks clinked against the insides of bowls being emptied into hungry mouths.

I walked into my room, closed the door, and lay down on my bed. The room was dark, the ceiling filled with shadows from the dinnertime lights of neighboring flats.

My mother had
a habit of standing
over me while I plotted
out my games.



Comprehension

What do Waverly and her mother argue about at the market?

Cause and Effect

Why do you think Waverly and her mother stop speaking to each other?

In my head, I saw a chessboard with sixty-four black and white squares. Opposite me was my opponent, two angry black slits. She wore a triumphant smile. “Strongest wind cannot be seen,” she said.

Her black men advanced across the plane, slowly marching to each successive level as a single unit. My white pieces screamed as they scurried and fell off the board one by one. As her men drew closer to my edge, I felt myself growing light. I rose up into the air and flew out the window. Higher and higher, above the alley, over the tops of tiled roofs, where I was gathered up by the wind and pushed up toward the night sky until everything below me disappeared and I was alone.

I closed my eyes and pondered my next move.

Language Study

Vocabulary The words listed below appear in “Rules of the Game.” Using your knowledge of these words, tell whether each sentence below makes sense. Use the meaning of the italicized vocabulary word to explain your answer.

pungent **retort** **prodigy** **malodorous** **concessions**

1. During play rehearsals, Mom made some *concessions* regarding my homework.
2. The *pungent* smell of chopped onions filled the kitchen.
3. He gave his wife a bottle of expensive, *malodorous* perfume.
4. The audience was bored by the comedian’s brilliant *retort*.
5. With his average talent, the violin *prodigy* amazed no one.

WORD STUDY

The **Latin root -bene-** means “good or well.” In this story, an elderly man smiles **benevolently** at Waverly. His smile shows that he wishes her well.

Word Study

Part A Explain how the **Latin root -bene-** contributes to the meanings of *beneficial*, *benediction*, and *beneficiary*. Consult a dictionary if necessary.

Part B Use the context of the sentences and what you know about the Latin root *-bene-* to explain your answer to each question.

1. Would you appreciate what a *benefactor* would do for you?
2. What are some of the *benefits* of exercise?

Literary Analysis

Key Ideas and Details

- Analyze Cause and Effect (a)** Early in the story, what happens when Waverly cries to get a bag of salted plums? **(b)** What happens when she changes her behavior? **(c)** How does Waverly later apply that strategy to her desire to play chess competitively?
- Analyze Cause and Effect** Use a chart like the one shown to analyze cause and effect in this story. **(a)** Note two causes for Waverly's success with chess. **(b)** List three effects of her success.
- Analyze Cause and Effect (a)** Why does Mrs. Jong give Waverly special privileges? **(b)** How do these privileges affect Waverly and her relationship with her mother? Use details from the text in your response.

Craft and Structure

- Characterization** Describe the character of Waverly. Support your response with examples of her actions, behavior, words, and thoughts, along with details about the effects she has on other people.
- Characterization (a)** Is the conversation in which Waverly, Vincent, and Mrs. Jong discuss the rules of chess an example of direct or indirect characterization? Explain your response. **(b)** What do you learn about Mrs. Jong's character from this exchange? Cite story details in your answer.
- Characterization (a)** What is Lau Po's reaction to Waverly's request to play chess? **(b)** How does the author reveal Lau Po's reaction? **(c)** Through the spring and summer, Lau Po teaches Waverly. What does this show the reader about his character? Explain.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Compare and Contrast: (a)** How would you describe Waverly's behavior at her first tournament? **(b)** How was her behavior different in later tournaments? **(c)** What do you think caused this change? Use text details to support your responses.
- Speculate:** Who do you think will "win" the game between Waverly and her mother? Use details from the text to explain your response.

- THE BIG ?** **Is conflict necessary? (a)** Is it necessary for Waverly to oppose her mother at the market? Explain. **(b)** How do their personal and cultural differences make it somehow necessary for Waverly to see her mother on the other side of the chessboard? Use details from the story to support your ideas.



Causes of Waverly's Success

- 1.
- 2.

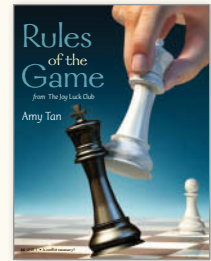
Effects of Waverly's Success

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

As you write and speak about "Rules of the Game," use the words related to conflict that you explored on page 3 of this book.

Conventions: Subjects and Predicates



The **simple subject** tells whom or what a sentence is about. The **complete subject** includes all the words that tell whom or what a sentence is about. The **simple predicate** is the verb that tells what the subject of a sentence does or is. The **complete predicate** includes the verb and all the words that modify or complete it.

A complete sentence needs both a subject and a predicate. The chart below shows the complete subjects and the complete predicates of three example sentences. In each sentence, the simple subjects and predicates are underlined.

| Complete Subject | Complete Predicate |
|--|---|
| <u>Conflict</u> between family members | <u>is</u> not unusual. |
| A <u>group</u> of old men | <u>gathered</u> in the park to play chess. |
| <u>Waverly</u> | <u>argues</u> dramatically with her mother in the market. |

Practice A

Add a subject or predicate to complete each sentence. Identify the subject and predicate in each completed sentence.

- _____ watched Vincent and Winston's chess games.
- The book of rules _____.
- Her interest in the game _____.
- _____ soon made Waverly a skillful player.

Writing Application Write four new sentences by changing either the subject or the predicate of this example sentence: *Chess has been my favorite game for years.*

Practice B

Identify the complete subject and complete predicate in each sentence.

- Waverly's family lives in San Francisco.
- One of her brothers received a used chess set as a Christmas present.
- Some pieces from the chess set were missing.
- This did not stop Waverly from becoming an expert at the game.

Reading Application Choose two sentences from "Rules of the Game" that each contain just one complete subject and one complete verb. Identify the complete subject and predicate in each sentence.

Writing to Sources

Informative Text In “Rules of the Game,” both Waverly and her mother learn a variety of lessons. Think about another lesson you could teach either character. Create a **written presentation** that details your ideas.

- Make notes about an issue that Waverly or Mrs. Jong faces. Use your notes to consider the lesson you might teach and how best to convey your ideas. Weave details from the text into your presentation to support your reasons for teaching this lesson.
- Consider your purpose, point of view as an outsider, and your audience of Waverly or Mrs. Jong. Use this information to choose the most effective genre, structure, and style for your presentation. For example, you might write a formal expository essay, an informal personal narrative, or a story with a moral.
- Check that your work is organized logically and your ideas are fully developed. Add transitions and vary your sentences for meaning, interest, and style.

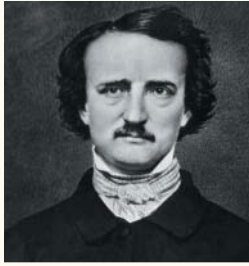
As you write, support your ideas with details from the text. Cite passages precisely and integrate them smoothly into your analysis.

Grammar Application As you revise your sentences to add variety, check that they each contain a complete subject and a complete predicate.

Research and Technology

Build and Present Knowledge Although “Rules of the Game” is a short story, the author incorporates facts about the game of chess in order to clarify events and add authenticity. With a small group, create an **informational brochure** about the history, rules, and strategies of chess. Follow these steps to research and write your brochure:

- Collect information about chess from library and reliable Internet sources and take accurate notes. Develop clear questions to help you gather details from a variety of trustworthy sources.
- Organize the information logically into sections for a brochure.
- Decide whether to use illustrations to convey information. For example, you might include a diagram showing how chess pieces move.
- Design the brochure. As you do so, consider how you will be sharing it. For example, you may print it as a traditional paper brochure, or present it on a blog, Web site, or mobile device. Make sure the design will work in the format you choose.



Meet the Author

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) is one of the first great American storytellers. He led a full but short and tragic life. Orphaned at the age of three, Poe was raised by foster parents, the Allans, from whom he took his middle name. The Allans gave Poe an education, but he left college when his foster father refused to pay Poe’s gambling debts. Poe found happiness when he married Virginia Clemm, but he became increasingly withdrawn after her death from tuberculosis in 1847. In 1849, Poe was found delirious on a Baltimore street, and three days later he died.



Is conflict necessary?

Explore the Big Question as you read “The Cask of Amontillado.” Take notes about the story’s portrayal of conflict and revenge.

CLOSE READING FOCUS

Key Ideas and Details: **Make Predictions**

A **prediction** is an idea you develop about what will happen later in a story. As you read, notice details that may hint at, or foreshadow, future events. Next, make predictions based on those details, and then read ahead to verify your predictions. If a prediction turns out to be wrong, evaluate your reasoning by asking yourself questions like these:

- Did I misread details?
- Did the author purposely create false expectations in order to surprise me later in the story?

Craft and Structure: **Plot**

Plot is the sequence of related events in a narrative. A plot is driven by a conflict, or problem, and follows a specific structure:

- **Exposition:** the characters and setting are introduced
- **Rising Action:** the central conflict begins and develops
- **Climax:** the high point of intensity in the conflict is reached
- **Falling Action:** the conflict’s intensity lessens
- **Resolution:** the conflict concludes and loose ends are tied up

Writers use a variety of techniques, or *stylistic devices*, to keep readers interested in the plot. One of these devices, **foreshadowing**, is the use of clues to hint at later events. Foreshadowing also helps to create **suspense**, a feeling of tension that keeps readers wondering what will happen next. As you read, look for clues in the text that alert you to what might happen later.

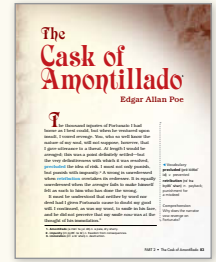
Vocabulary

The words below are critical to understanding the text that follows. Copy the words into your notebook. Which are verbs? Explain how you know.

precluded
retribution

afflicted
explicit

recoiling
subsided



CLOSE READING MODEL

The passage below is from Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Cask of Amontillado." The annotations to the right of the passage show ways in which you can use close reading skills to make predictions and analyze plot.

from "The Cask of Amontillado"

The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge.¹ You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled²—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved, precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.³

Plot

1 The exposition introduces the characters and provides background information about their relationship: The narrator feels that Fortunato has insulted him and deserves punishment. This passage sets the conflict in motion.

Make Predictions

2 The narrator reveals that he is plotting against Fortunato, thus deepening the conflict. These sentences also show the narrator to be devious. Instead of acting rashly, he will take his revenge "at length." You may well predict that Fortunato is on a doomed path.

Plot

3 As the rising action continues, the narrator describes friendly behavior that masks evil intentions. He shows "good will" and "smile[s] in his [Fortunato's] face." However, the word *immolation* refers to death, which suggests the narrator's plans for Fortunato are quite grim.



The Cask of Amontillado¹

Edgar Allan Poe

The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved, **precluded** the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity.² A wrong is unredressed when **retribution** overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.³

-
1. **Amontillado** (ə mən' tē yá' dō) *n.* a pale, dry sherry.
 2. **impunity** (im pyōō' nē tē) *n.* freedom from consequences.
 3. **immolation** (im' ə lā' shən) *n.* destruction.

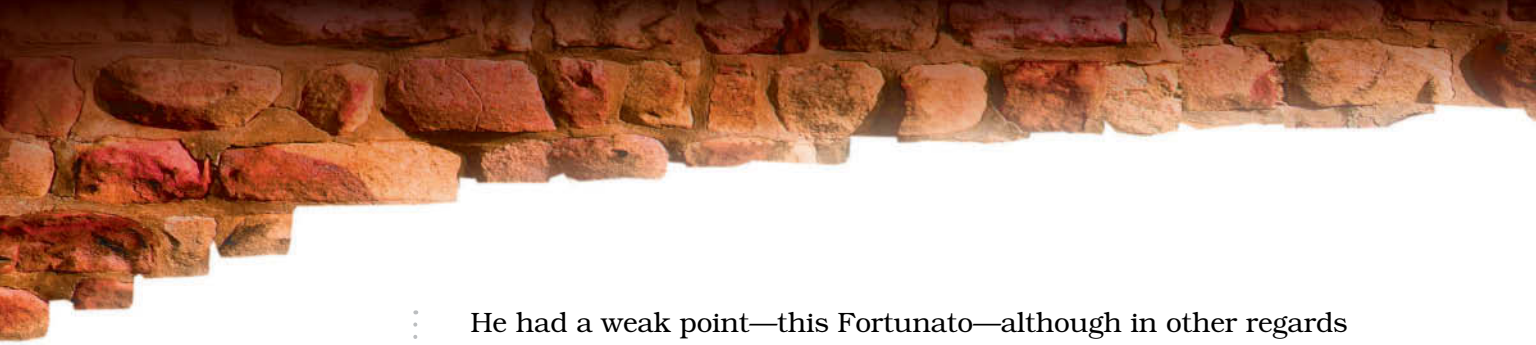
◀ Vocabulary

precluded (prē klōōd' id) *v.* prevented

retribution (re' trē byōō' shən) *n.* payback; punishment for a misdeed

Comprehension

Why does the narrator vow revenge on Fortunato?



Make Predictions

What role do you predict Fortunato's "weak point" will play in the narrator's revenge?

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship⁴ in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso⁵ spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian *millionaires*. In painting and gemmery, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially; I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley.⁶ He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him, "My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking today. But I have received a pipe⁷ of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me—"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

4. **connoisseurship** (kăn' ə sūr' ship) *n.* expert judgment.

5. **virtuoso** (vur' chōō ō' sō) *adj.* masterly skill in a particular field.

6. **motley** (măt' lē) *n.* a clown's multicolored costume.

7. **pipe** (pīp) *n.* large barrel, holding approximately 126 gallons.

“Whither?”

“To your vaults.”

“My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi—”

“I have no engagement—come.”

“My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are **afflicted**. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with niter.”

“Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado.”

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a *roquelaure*⁸ closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them **explicit** orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

“The pipe,” he said.

“It is farther on,” said I; “but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls.”

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

“Niter?” he asked, at length.

“Niter,” I replied. “How long have you had that cough?”

◀ **Vocabulary**

afflicted (ə flikt' əd) *v.* suffering or sickened

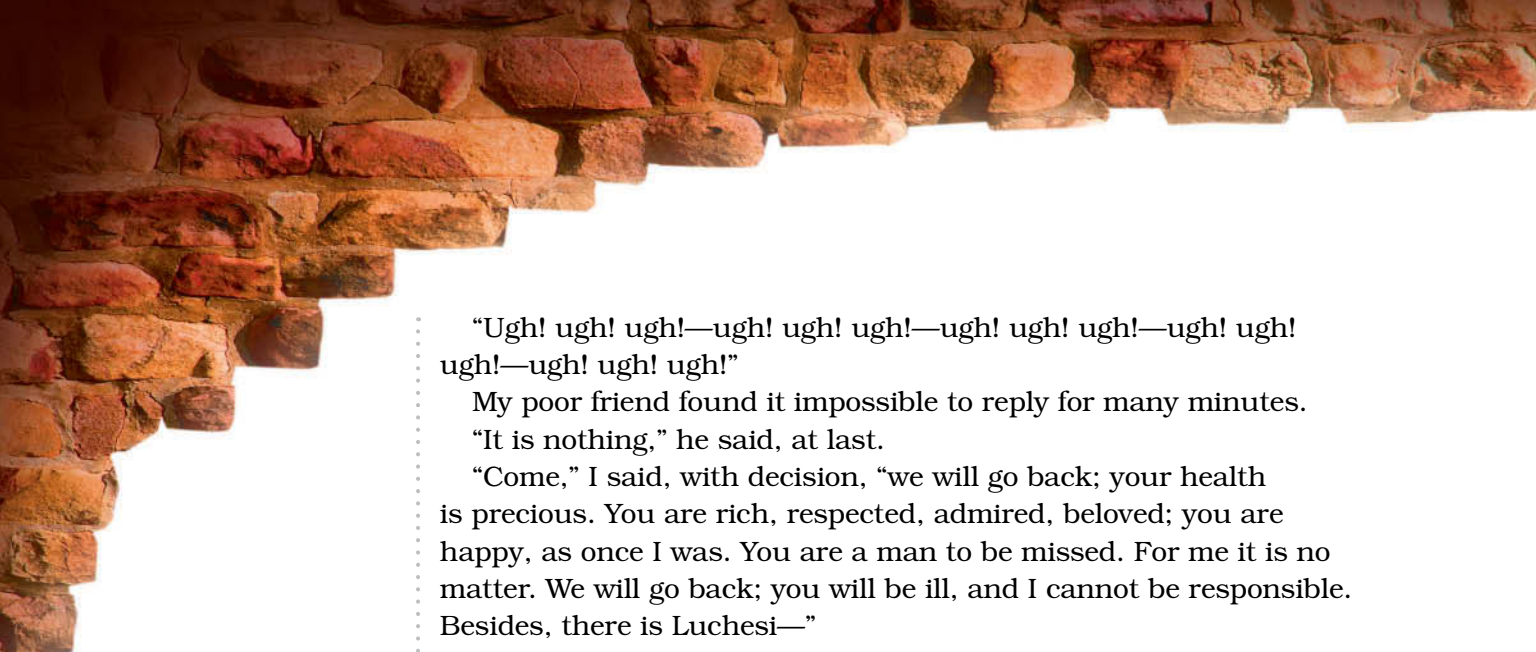
◀ **Vocabulary**

explicit (eks plis' it) *adj.* clearly and directly stated

Comprehension

What common interest does the narrator share with Fortunato?

8. *roquelaure* (räk' ə lôr) *n.* knee-length cloak.



Plot

What fate does this conversation foreshadow for Fortunato?

“Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!”

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

“It is nothing,” he said, at last.

“Come,” I said, with decision, “we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi—”

“Enough,” he said; “the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough.”

“True—true,” I replied; “and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily—but you should use all proper caution. A draft of this Médoc will defend us from the damp.”

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mold.

“Drink,” I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

“I drink,” he said “to the buried that repose around us.”

“And I to your long life.”

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

“These vaults,” he said, “are extensive.”

“The Montresors,” I replied, “were a great and numerous family.”

“I forget your arms.”

“A huge human foot d’or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel.”

“And the motto?”

“*Nemo me impune lacessit.*”⁹

“Good!” he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Médoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons¹⁰ intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

9. *Nemo me impune lacessit* Latin for “No one attacks me with impunity.”

10. *puncheons* (pun´chenz) *n.* large barrels.

Literature Connection

Poe and the Gothic Tradition

The literary genre known as gothic fiction emerged in England in the late 1700s in works like *Castle of Otranto* (1765) by Horace Walpole and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Ann Radcliffe. The word *gothic* was originally used to describe a style of building that was common in the late Middle Ages. To writers in the eighteenth century, the cold chambers and secret passages of such buildings suggested mystery and dark tales of vengeance and passion.

Edgar Allan Poe translated the imagery and atmosphere of British gothic fiction to an American landscape, pioneering an American gothic tradition. Contemporary writers like Stephen King and Anne Rice, as well as countless filmmakers, carry on that tradition today.

Connect to the Literature

What qualities of gothic fiction do you find in “The Cask of Amontillado”? Explain.

“The niter!” I said; “see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river’s bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—”

“It is nothing,” he said; “let us go on. But first, another draft of the Médoc.”

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

“You do not comprehend?” he said.

“Not I,” I replied.

“Then you are not of the brotherhood.”

“How?”

“You are not of the masons.”¹¹

“Yes, yes,” I said; “yes, yes.”

“You? Impossible! A mason?”

“A mason,” I replied.

“A sign,” he said, “a sign.”

“It is this,” I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my *roquelaure* a trowel.

“You jest,” he exclaimed, **recoiling** a few paces. “But let us proceed to the Amontillado.”

“Be it so,” I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains,

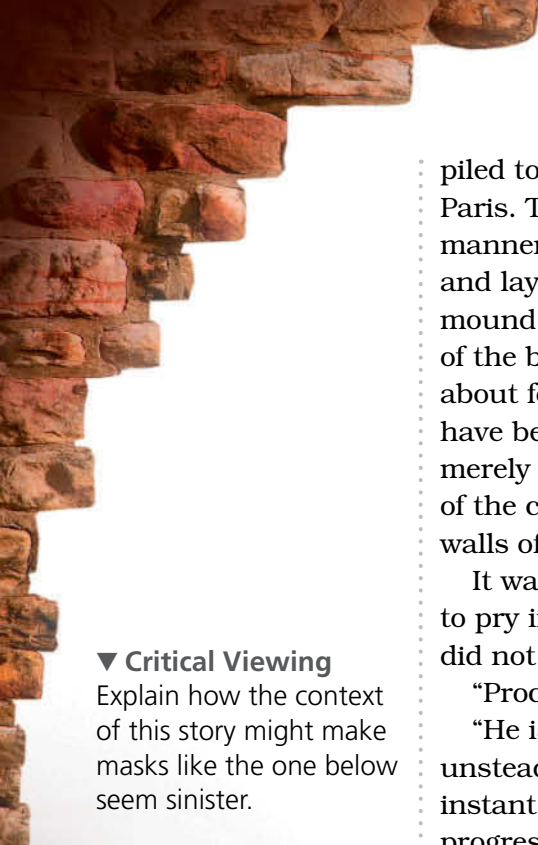
11. **masons** *n.* the Freemasons, an international secret society.

◀ **Vocabulary**

recoiling (ri koiġ in) *v.*
staggering back

Comprehension

Where does Montresor bring Fortunato?



▼ **Critical Viewing**

Explain how the context of this story might make masks like the one below seem sinister.

piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the *interval* between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

“Proceed,” I said: “herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi—”

“He is an ignoramus,” interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

“Pass your hand,” I said, “over the wall; you cannot help feeling the niter. Indeed, it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power.”

“The Amontillado!” ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

“True,” I replied; “the Amontillado.”

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate

silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking **subsided**, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the masonwork, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I reechoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

“Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—a very good joke, indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!”

“The Amontillado!” I said.

“He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone.”

“Yes,” I said, “let us be gone.”

“For the love of God, Montresor!”

◀ Vocabulary

subsided (səb sīd' əd) *v.*
settled down; became less active or intense

Make Predictions

Does this scene in which Montresor imprisons Fortunato verify your earlier predictions? Explain.

Comprehension

How does Fortunato become locked in the chains so easily?

Spiral Review

THEME How many years have passed since Montresor took revenge on Fortunato? What insight into revenge does this detail suggest? Explain.

“Yes,” I said, “for the love of God!”

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

“Fortunato!”

No answer. I called again—

“Fortunato!”

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I reerected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*¹²

12. *In pace requiescat!* Latin for “May he rest in peace!”

Language Study

Vocabulary An **analogy** shows the relationship between pairs of words. The words printed in blue below appear in “The Cask of Amontillado.” Choose a word from the list to complete each analogy. Your choice should create a word pair that matches the relationship between the first two words.

precluded **afflicted** **explicit** **recoiling** **subsided**

1. harmed : helped :: _____ : allowed
2. delicious : food :: _____ : instructions
3. graceful : awkward :: _____ : increased
4. humor : laughing :: disgust : _____
5. enormous : gigantic :: troubled : _____

WORD STUDY

The **Latin suffix -tion** means “the act of.” In this story, the narrator seeks **retribution**. A synonym for *revenge*, this word literally means “the act of retributing,” or of paying someone back. Another, less formal synonym for *revenge* is *payback*.

Word Study

Part A The **Latin suffix -tion** often indicates that a word is a noun. For each of the following verbs, identify a related noun that uses the suffix *-tion*: *compensate*, *irritate*, *inflate*, *prevent*.

Part B Use the context of the sentences and what you know about the Latin suffix *-tion* to explain your answer to each question.

1. What is audience *participation*?
2. If you make a *contribution* to a cause, what have you done?

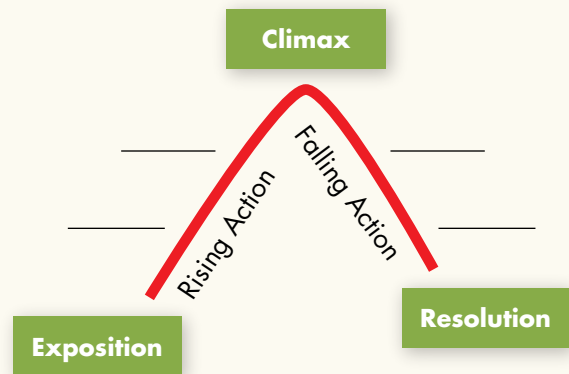
Literary Analysis

Key Ideas and Details

- (a)** How does Montresor describe Fortunato's strengths and weaknesses early in the story? **(b) Analyze:** Which of these character traits make Fortunato easy prey for Montresor? Explain.
- (a)** What steps does Montresor take to ensure that his plan works? Explain. **(b) Interpret:** Why do you think Montresor keeps urging Fortunato to turn back? Cite details from the story in your response.
- Make Predictions (a)** What prediction did you make after reading about Montresor's and Fortunato's shared interest in wine? **(b)** What details from the text helped you make your prediction? **(c)** Was your prediction verified? Explain, citing details from the story in your answer.

Craft and Structure

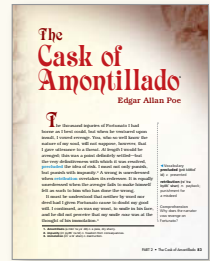
- Plot (a)** Identify a passage that foreshadows Fortunato's fate at the hands of Montresor. **(b)** In what ways does foreshadowing help create suspense in this story? Use details from the story to support your answer.
- Plot (a)** Fill out a plot diagram like the one shown. Identify two key events in the rising action of the story, the event that marks the climax, and one event that is part of the falling action. **(b)** Citing details from the text, explain the plot's resolution.



Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Draw Conclusions:** At the end of the story, Montresor describes the final moments of his act of revenge on Fortunato. How does Montresor feel about what he did? Cite details from the text to support your response.
- Make a Judgment:** Montresor acts as both victim and judge in the story. Do you think that Montresor sees the situation between himself and Fortunato accurately and then acts appropriately? Use details from the text to support your answer.

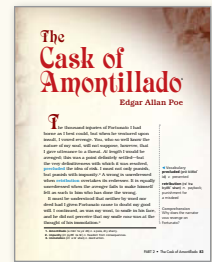
- THE BIG ?** **Is conflict necessary? (a)** Does Montresor ever question whether the punishment he exacts on Fortunato is fair, just, or rational? Explain. **(b)** What view of human nature and the need for conflict does this story present? Explain, citing story details.



ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

As you write and speak about "The Cask of Amontillado," use the words related to conflict that you explored on page 3 of this book.

Conventions: Active and Passive Voice



A verb in the **active voice** expresses an action done *by* its subject.
 A verb in the **passive voice** expresses an action done *to* its subject.

The “voice” of a verb tells whether the subject *performs* an action (active voice) or *receives* an action (passive voice).

| Active Voice | Passive Voice |
|---|---|
| Poe has written stories about horrific events. (The subject, <i>Poe</i> , performs the action of the verb, <i>has written</i> .) | Stories about horrific events have been written by Poe. (The subject, <i>stories</i> , receives the action of the verb, <i>have been written</i> .) |

Use the active voice to make your writing more lively and direct. Use the passive voice when the performer of the action is unknown or you wish to de-emphasize the performer. In order to change the passive voice to active voice, identify the noun that is performing the action and make it the subject of the sentence. Then, place the verb after the subject.

Passive voice: Fortunato was trapped by Montresor.

Active voice: Montresor trapped Fortunato.

Practice A

Identify the verb or verb phrase in each sentence. State whether the writer has used the active or the passive voice.

1. Fortunato has insulted Montresor.
2. Montresor plots against Fortunato.
3. The wine bottles were stacked in the crypt.
4. The trowel was used by Montresor to bury Fortunato.

Writing Application Rewrite the sentences in Practice A. If the verb is in the active voice, use the passive voice. If the verb is in the passive voice, use the active voice.

Practice B

Rewrite the following sentences using the active voice. You may need to add or change words to indicate who performed the action.

1. The detective story was invented by Edgar Allan Poe.
2. The servants were told not to leave the house.
3. Fortunato’s cap was placed at a jaunty angle.
4. The stones and mortar had been covered with bones.

Speaking Application Write four sentences that describe Montresor’s act of revenge against Fortunato, using the active voice twice and the passive voice twice. With a partner, discuss which sentences are more effective and why.

Writing to Sources

Argument In “The Cask of Amontillado,” readers encounter a compelling, if disturbing, plot. Write a **critique** in which you analyze both the suspense of the story and the effectiveness of its ending. Present a clear claim, or position, and defend it with evidence from the text.

- Before you draft, list the qualities that you think a suspenseful story should have. Then, list the qualities that make an ending satisfactory.
- Use your lists to evaluate both the suspense and the ending of the story. Consider whether the author’s use of foreshadowing adds to the suspense and makes the ending more or less effective. Note specific details from the story that demonstrate your ideas.
- Clearly state your claim early in the critique and develop at least three points that support it. Make sure to include details from the text as evidence to illustrate each point.

Grammar Application As you write, thoughtfully consider your use of active or passive voice. Use active voice when the subject performs the action. Use passive voice to express action done to the subject.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration With a partner, **retell** “The Cask of Amontillado” from another point of view. You may choose to retell the story from Fortunato’s point of view or from that of a hidden onlooker. Refresh your memory by rereading the selection. Then, follow these steps to complete the assignment.

- Identify your audience and the type of information they will need to understand the characters’ backgrounds and motivations.
- Choose language that is appropriate for the audience and the story. Use words and expressions that are consistent with the character of the narrator you have chosen.
- As you speak, use facial expressions and body movements that help to convey the narrator’s personality.
- Make eye contact with your audience to engage them in the story.
- Vary your intonation to reflect the emotions of the narrator.

After you and your partner have presented your work, invite questions from the audience about the choices you made in retelling the story. Answer with thoughtful, well-reasoned responses.

Comparing Texts



Is conflict necessary?

Explore the Big Question as you read these stories. Take notes on the ways in which each story portrays conflict. Then, compare and contrast the nature of the conflicts the two works explore.

READING TO COMPARE POINTS OF VIEW

Authors Cynthia Rylant and Ama Ata Aidoo use different points of view in these two stories. As you read each story, notice how the point of view controls what you are able to learn about the characters. Consider how this affects your understanding of their feelings, thoughts, and actions. After you have read both stories, compare the types of information a reader is able to learn through the use of first- and third-person points of view.



“Checkouts”

Cynthia Rylant (b. 1945)

Cynthia Rylant spent four years as a child living with her grandparents in a small town in West Virginia. With no public library and little money to buy books, she started reading comic books. Once in college, she discovered great literature, but she did not consider becoming a writer until she took a job as a librarian and began reading children’s books. To date, she has written many award-winning stories, poems, and novels.



“The Girl Who Can”

Ama Ata Aidoo (b. 1942)

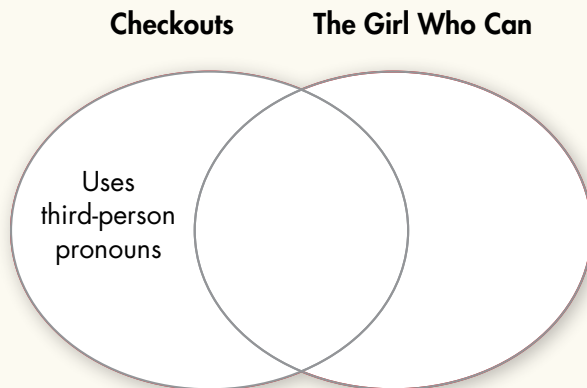
Ama Ata Aidoo was born in Ghana, Africa, where her father was a village chief. Aidoo was educated in Ghana and in the United States, and later taught at universities in both countries. She has written plays, short stories, poetry, and novels. Her fiction, written in English, often explores the conflicts between Western and African cultures and the roles of women in modern society.

Comparing Points of View

Narrative point of view is the perspective from which a story is narrated, or told.

- **First-person point of view:** The narrator is a character who participates in the action and uses the first-person pronouns *I* and *me*.
- **Third-person point of view:** The narrator is not a character in the story but a voice outside it. The narrator uses the third-person pronouns *he*, *she*, *him*, *her*, *they*, and *them* to refer to all characters. There are two kinds of third-person point of view. In the **third-person omniscient point of view**, the narrator knows everything, including the thoughts of all the characters. In the **third-person limited point of view**, the narrator sees and reports things through one character's eyes.

These selections are written using different points of view. As you read, complete a Venn diagram like the one shown to compare and contrast how the point of view affects the way you understand the characters and the plot of each story.



Cultural perspective is another aspect of many literary works. It is sometimes referred to as *cultural point of view* but should not be confused with narrative point of view as described above. The cultural perspective of a story refers to the customs, beliefs, and values of the place and time in which it is set. For example, these two stories are set in different countries that observe very different customs and have different expectations for young women. As you read, notice how the two main characters' conflicts and insights reflect their culture's ideas and attitudes about the roles of women.

Checkouts

Cynthia Rylant



Her parents had moved her to Cincinnati, to a large house with beveled glass¹ windows and several porches and the *history* her mother liked to emphasize. You'll love the house, they said. You'll be lonely at first, they admitted, but you're so nice you'll make friends fast. And as an impulse tore at her to lie on the floor, to hold to their ankles and tell them she felt she was dying, to offer anything, anything at all, so they might allow her to finish growing up in the town of her childhood, they firmed their mouths and spoke from their chests and they said, It's decided.

They moved her to Cincinnati, where for a month she spent the greater part of every day in a room full of beveled glass windows, sifting through photographs of the life she'd lived and left behind. But it is difficult work, suffering, and in its own way a kind of art, and finally she didn't have the energy for it anymore, so she emerged from the beautiful house and fell in love with a bag boy at the supermarket. Of course, this didn't happen all at once, just like that, but in the sequence of things that's exactly the way it happened.

She liked to grocery shop. She loved it in the way some people love to drive long country roads, because doing it she could think and relax and wander. Her parents wrote up the list and handed it to her and off she went without complaint to perform what they regarded as a great sacrifice of her time and a sign that she was indeed a very nice girl. She had never told them how much she loved grocery shopping, only that she was "willing" to do it. She had an intuition which told her that her parents were not safe for sharing such strong, important facts about herself. Let them think they knew her.

Point of View

How does the use of pronouns in this paragraph show that this story is being told from the third-person point of view?

1. **beveled** (bev' əld) **glass** *n.* glass having angled or slanted edges.

Once inside the supermarket, her hands firmly around the handle of the cart, she would lapse into a kind of **reverie** and wheel toward the produce. Like a Tibetan monk in solitary meditation, she calmed to a point of deep, deep happiness; this feeling came to her, reliably, if strangely, only in the supermarket.

Then one day the bag boy dropped her jar of mayonnaise and that is how she fell in love.

He was nervous—first day on the job—and along had come this fascinating girl, standing in the checkout line with the unfocused stare one often sees in young children, her face turned enough away that he might take several full looks at her as he packed sturdy bags full of food and the goods of modern life. She interested him because her hair was red and thick, and in it she had placed a huge orange bow, nearly the size of a small hat. That was enough to distract him, and when finally it was her groceries he was packing, she looked at him and smiled and he could respond only by busting her jar of mayonnaise on the floor, shards of glass and oozing cream decorating the area around his feet.

She loved him at exactly that moment, and if he'd known this perhaps he wouldn't have fallen into the brown depression he fell into, which lasted the rest of his shift. He believed he must have looked the fool in her eyes, and he envied the sureness of everyone around him: the cocky cashier at the register, the grim and harried store manager, the bland butcher, and the brazen bag boys who smoked in the warehouse on their breaks. He wanted a second chance. Another chance to be confident and say witty things to her as he threw tin cans into her bags, persuading her to allow him to help her to her car so he might learn just a little about her, check out the floor of the

◀ **Vocabulary**
reverie (rev' ə rē)
n. dreamy thinking
and imagining

Point of View
Whose thoughts and feelings are expressed in this paragraph?

Comprehension
At first, why does the girl fascinate the boy?

Then one day the bag boy
dropped her jar of
mayonnaise and that is
how she fell in love.



Point of View

What does the narrator reveal about the boy's regrets?

Vocabulary ►

dishevelment

(di shev' əl ment) *n.*
disorder; messiness

Point of View

Which details in this paragraph suggest the story is told from the omniscient point of view? Explain.

car for signs of hobbies or fetishes and the bumpers for clues as to beliefs and loyalties.

But he busted her jar of mayonnaise and nothing else worked out for the rest of the day.

Strange, how attractive clumsiness can be. She left the supermarket with stars in her eyes, for she had loved the way his long nervous fingers moved from the conveyor belt to the bags, how deftly (until the mayonnaise) they had picked up her items and placed them in her bags. She had loved the way the hair kept falling into his eyes as he leaned over to grab a box or a tin. And the tattered brown shoes he wore with no socks. And the left side of his collar turned in rather than out.

The bag boy seemed a wonderful contrast to the perfectly beautiful house she had been forced to accept as her home, to the *history* she hated, to the loneliness she had become used to, and she couldn't wait to come back for more of his awkwardness and **dishevelment**.

Incredibly, it was another four weeks before they saw each other again. As fate would have it, her visits to the supermarket never coincided with his schedule to bag. Each time she went to the store, her eyes scanned the checkouts at once, her heart in her mouth. And each hour he worked, the bag boy kept one eye on the door, watching for the red-haired girl with the big orange bow.

Yet in their disappointment these weeks there was a kind of ecstasy. It is reason enough to be alive, the hope you may see again some face which has meant something to you. The anticipation of meeting the bag boy eased the girl's painful transition into her new and jarring life in Cincinnati. It provided for her an anchor amid all that was impersonal and unfamiliar, and she spent less time on thoughts of what she had left behind as she concentrated on what might lie ahead. And for the boy, the long and often tedious hours at the supermarket which provided no challenge other than that of showing up the following workday . . . these hours became possibilities of mystery and romance for him as he watched the electric doors for the girl in the orange bow.

And when finally they did meet up again, neither offered a clue to the other that he, or she, had been the object of obsessive thought for weeks. She spotted him as soon as she came into the store, but she kept her eyes strictly in front of her as she pulled out a cart and wheeled it toward the produce. And he, too, knew the instant she came through the door—though the orange bow was gone, replaced by a small but bright yellow flower instead—and he never once turned his head in her direction but watched her from the corner of his vision as he tried to swallow back the fear in his throat.

It is odd how we sometimes deny ourselves the very pleasure we have longed for and which is finally within our reach. For some **perverse** reason she would not have been able to articulate, the girl did not bring her cart up to the bag boy's checkout when her shopping was done. And the bag boy let her leave the store, pretending no notice of her.

This is often the way of children, when they truly want a thing, to pretend that they don't. And then they grow angry when no one tried harder to give them this thing they so casually rejected, and they soon find themselves in a rage simply because they cannot say yes when they mean yes. Humans are very complicated. (And perhaps cats, who have been known to react in the same way, though the resulting rage can only be guessed at.)

The girl hated herself for not checking out at the boy's line, and the boy hated himself for not catching her eye and saying hello, and they most sincerely hated each other without having ever exchanged even two minutes of conversation.

Eventually—in fact, within the week—a kind and intelligent boy who lived very near her beautiful house asked the girl to a movie and she gave up her fancy for the bag boy at the supermarket. And the bag boy himself grew so bored with his job that he made a desperate search for something better and ended up in a bookstore where scores of fascinating girls lingered like honeybees about a hive. Some months later the bag boy and the girl with the orange bow again crossed paths, standing in line with their dates at a movie theater, and, glancing toward the other, each smiled slightly, then looked away, as strangers on public buses often do, when one is moving off the bus and the other is moving on.

◀ Vocabulary

perverse (pər vɜːrs) *adj.*
different from what is considered right or reasonable

Point of View

Which details in this paragraph might be omitted if the story were told from the third-person limited point of view? Explain.



Critical Thinking

- 1. Key Ideas and Details:** (a) What do the boy and girl think about while they are apart? (b) **Speculate:** How do you think the two characters feel when they see each other at the movie theater? Which story details support your answer?
- 2. Key Ideas and Details:** Does the experience described in the story seem like a missed opportunity or a necessary outcome? Explain.
- 3. Key Ideas and Details:** (a) Why do the boy and girl never act on their feelings? (b) **Make a Judgment:** Do you agree that “humans are very complicated”? Explain, using details from the story.
- 4. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** (a) Is the situation described in this story a common conflict for American teenagers? Explain. (b) **Speculate:** How might the story be different if either the bag boy or the girl had handled the conflict differently? [*Connect to the Big Question: Is conflict necessary?*]

A close-up portrait of Ama Ata Aidoo, a young Black woman with short, dark hair, smiling gently. She is wearing a light blue halter-neck top with a white floral pattern. The background is a vibrant, textured green. On the left side, there is a purple rectangular box containing the title and author's name.

The GIRL WHO CAN

Ama Ata Aidoo

They say that I was born in Hasodzi; and it is a very big village in the central region of our country, Ghana. They also say that when all of Africa is not choking under a drought, Hasodzi lies in a very **fertile** lowland in a district known for its good soil. Maybe that is why any time I don't finish eating my food, Nana says, "You Adjoa, you don't know what life is about . . . you don't know what problems there are in this life . . ."

As far as I could see, there was only one problem. And it had nothing to do with what I knew Nana considered as "problems," or what Maami thinks of as "the problem." Maami is my mother. Nana is my mother's mother. And they say I am seven years old. And my problem is that at this seven years of age, there are things I can think in my head, but which, maybe, I do not have the proper language to speak them out with. And that, I think, is a very serious problem because it is always difficult to decide whether to keep quiet and not say any of the things that come into my head, or say them and get laughed at. Not that it is easy to get any grown-up to listen to you, even when you decide to take the risk and say something serious to them.

Take Nana. First, I have to struggle to catch her attention. Then I tell her something I had taken a long time to figure out. And then you know what always happens? She would at once stop whatever she is doing and, mouth open, stare at me for a very long time. Then, bending and turning her head slightly, so that one ear comes down towards me, she'll say in that voice: "Adjoa, you say what?" After I have repeated whatever I had said, she would either, still in that voice, ask me "never, never, but NEVER to repeat THAT," or she would immediately burst out laughing. She would laugh and laugh and laugh, until tears run down her cheeks and she would stop whatever she is doing and wipe away the tears with the hanging edges of her cloth. And she would continue laughing until she is completely tired. But then, as soon as another person comes by, just to make sure she doesn't forget whatever it was I had said, she would repeat it to her. And then, of course, there would be two old people laughing and screaming with tears running down their faces. Sometimes this show continues until there are three, four or even more of such laughing and screaming tear-faced grownups. And all that performance for whatever I'd said? I find something

◀ Critical Viewing

Describe the feelings the girl in the photograph expresses.

◀ Vocabulary

fertile (fɜrt' 'l) *adj.*

rich in nutrients that promote growth

Point of View

Which pronouns in this paragraph show that this story is being told from the first-person point of view?

Comprehension

What does the narrator say is her problem?

quite confusing in all this. That is, no one ever explains to me why sometimes I shouldn't repeat some things I say; while at other times, some other things I say would not only be all right, but would be considered so funny they would be repeated so many times for so many people's enjoyment. You see how neither way of hearing me out can encourage me to express my thoughts too often?

Like all this business to do with my legs. I have always wanted to tell them not to worry. I mean Nana and my mother. It did not have to be an issue for my two favorite people to fight over. I didn't want to be told not to repeat it or for it to be considered so funny that anyone would laugh at me until they cried. After all, they were my legs . . . When I think back on it now, those two, Nana and my mother must have been discussing my legs from the day I was born. What I am sure of is that when I came out of the land of sweet, soft silence into the world of noise and **comprehension**, the first topic I met was my legs.

That discussion was repeated very regularly.

Nana: "Ah, ah, you know, Kaya, I thank my God that your very first child is female. But Kaya, I am not sure about her legs. Hm . . . hm . . . hm . . ."

And Nana would shake her head.

Maami: "Mother, why are you always complaining about Adjoa's legs? If you ask me . . ."

Nana: "They are too thin. And I am not asking you!"

Nana has many voices. There is a special one she uses to shut everyone up.

"Some people have no legs at all," my mother would try again with all her small courage.

"But Adjoa has legs," Nana would insist; "except that they are too thin. And also too long for a woman. Kaya, listen. Once in a while, but only once in a very long while, somebody decides—nature, a child's spirit mother, an accident happens, and somebody gets born without arms, or legs, or both sets of limbs. And then let me touch wood; it is a sad business. And you know, such things are not for talking about every day. But if any female child decides to come into this world with legs, then they might as well be legs."

"What kind of legs?" And always at that point, I knew from her voice that my mother was weeping

**Vocabulary ►
comprehension**

(kām' prē hen' shen) *n.*
understanding

When I think back
on it now, those
two, Nana and my
mother must have
been discussing my
legs from the day
I was born.

inside. Nana never heard such inside weeping. Not that it would have stopped Nana even if she had heard it. Which always surprised me. Because, about almost everything else apart from my legs, Nana is such a good grown-up. In any case, what do I know about good grown-ups and bad grown-ups? How could Nana be a good grown-up when she carried on so about my legs? All I want to say is that I really liked Nana except for that.

Nana: “As I keep saying, if any woman decides to come into this world with her two legs, then she should select legs that have meat on them: with good calves. Because you are sure such legs would support solid hips. And a woman must have solid hips to be able to have children.”

“Oh, Mother.” That’s how my mother would answer. Very, very quietly. And the discussion would end or they would move on to something else.

Sometimes, Nana would pull in something about my father:

How, “Looking at such a man, we have to be **humble** and admit that after all, God’s children are many . . .”

How, “After one’s only daughter had insisted on marrying a man like that, you still have to thank your God that the biggest problem you got later was having a granddaughter with spindly legs that are too long for a woman, and too thin to be of any use.”

The way she always added that bit about my father under her breath, she probably thought I didn’t hear it. But I always heard it. Plus, that is what always shut my mother up for good, so that even if I had not actually heard the words, once my mother looked like even her little courage was finished, I could always guess what Nana had added to the argument.

“Legs that have meat on them with good calves to support solid hips . . . to be able to have children.”

So I wished that one day I would see, for myself, the legs of any woman who had had children. But in our village, that is not easy. The older women wear long wrap-arounds¹ all the time. Perhaps if they let me go bathe in the river in the evening, I could have checked. But I never had the chance. It took a lot of begging just to get my mother and Nana to let me go splash around in the shallow end of the river with my friends, who were other little girls like me. For proper baths, we used the small bathhouse behind our hut. Therefore, the only naked female legs I have ever really seen are those of other little girls like me, or older girls in the school. And those of my mother and Nana: two pairs of legs which must surely belong to the approved kind; because Nana gave birth to my mother

Point of View

What do we learn about the narrator’s inner feelings from the words in this paragraph?

◀ Vocabulary

humble (hum’ bəl)

adj. modest;
having humility

Comprehension

According to the narrator, which topic makes the mother weep inside?

1. **wrap-arounds** (rap’ ə roundz’) *n.* a type of garment that is open down the side and is wrapped around the body.

and my mother gave birth to me. In my eyes, all my friends have got legs that look like legs, but whether the legs have got meat on them to support the kind of hips that . . . that I don't know.

According to the older boys and girls, the distance between our little village and the small town is about five kilometers. I don't know what five kilometers mean. They always complain about how long it is to walk to school and back. But to me, we live in our village, and walking those kilometers didn't matter. School is nice.

School is another thing Nana and my mother discussed often and appeared to have different ideas about. Nana thought it would be a waste of time. I never understood what she meant. My mother seemed to know—and disagreed. She kept telling Nana that she—that is, my mother—felt she was locked into some kind of darkness because she didn't go to school. So that if I, her daughter, could learn to write and read my own name and a little besides—perhaps be able to calculate some things on paper—that would be good. I could always marry later and maybe . . .

Nana would just laugh. “Ah, maybe with legs like hers, she might as well go to school.”

Running with our classmates on our small sports field and winning first place each time never seemed to me to be anything about which to tell anyone at home. This time it was different. I don't know how the teachers decided to let me run for the junior section of our school in the district games. But they did.

When I went home to tell my mother and Nana, they had not believed it at first. So Nana had taken it upon herself to go and “ask into it properly.” She came home to tell my mother that it was really true. I was one of my school's runners.

“Is that so?” exclaimed my mother. I know her. Her mouth moved as though she was going to tell Nana, that, after all, there was a secret about me she couldn't be expected to share with anyone. But then Nana herself looked so pleased, out of surprise, my mother shut her mouth up. In any case, since the first time they heard the news, I have often caught Nana staring at my legs with a strange look on her face, but still pretending like she was not looking. All this week, she has been washing my school uniform herself. That is a big surprise. And she didn't stop at that,

▼ Critical Viewing

How does your mental image of the narrator compare to the girls in this photograph?



LITERATURE IN CONTEXT

Social Studies Connection

Country Profile: Ghana

Location: southern coast of West Africa bordering the Atlantic Ocean

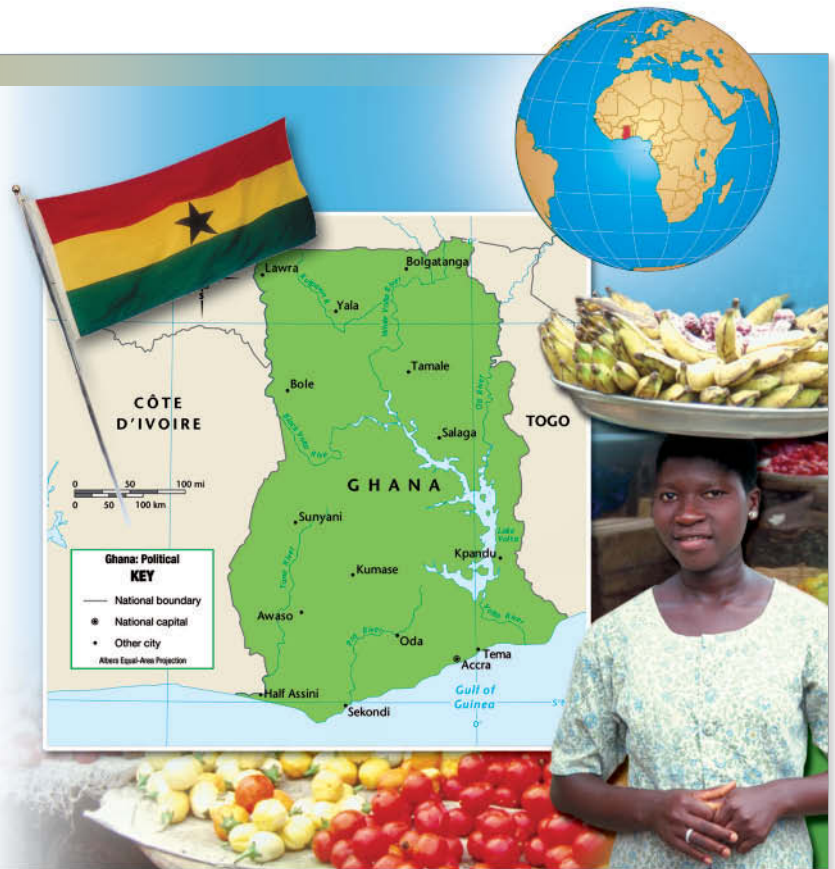
Climate: tropical; wet in the south and dry in the north

Terrain: low fertile plains and plateaus

Population: 25 million

Connect to the Literature

Adjoa says that she lives in a fertile lowland of central Ghana. What benefits and challenges might this region's climate and terrain present for a runner like Adjoa?



she even went to Mr. Mensah's house and borrowed his charcoal pressing iron. Each time she came back home with it and ironed and ironed and ironed the uniform, until, if I had been the uniform, I would have said aloud that I had had enough.

Wearing my school uniform this week has been very nice. At the parade, on the first afternoon, its sheen caught the rays of the sun and shone brighter than anybody else's uniform. I'm sure Nana saw that too, and must have liked it. Yes, she has been coming into town with us every afternoon of this district sports week. Each afternoon, she has pulled one set of fresh old cloth from the big brass bowl to wear. And those old clothes are always so stiffly starched, you can hear the cloth creak when she passes by. But she walks way behind us schoolchildren. As though she was on her own way to some place else.

Yes, I have won every race I ran for my school, and I have won the cup for the best all-round junior athlete. Yes, Nana said that she didn't care if such things are not done. She would do it. You know what she did? She carried the gleaming cup on her back. Like they do with babies, and other very precious things. And this time, not taking the trouble to walk by herself.

Spiral Review

THEME How does Nana's behavior toward Adjoa connect to a possible theme?

Comprehension

After learning about her running talent, what does Nana do with the narrator's uniform?

Oh,
grown-ups are
so strange.

When we arrived in our village, she entered our compound to show the cup to my mother before going to give it back to the headmaster.

Oh, grown-ups are so strange. Nana is right now carrying me on her knee, and crying softly. Muttering, muttering, muttering that: “saa, thin legs can also be useful . . . thin legs can also be useful . . .” that “even though some legs don’t have much meat on them, to carry hips . . . they can run. Thin legs can run . . . then who knows? . . .”

I don’t know too much about such things. But that’s how I was feeling and thinking all along. That surely, one should be able to do other things with legs as well as have them because they can support hips that make babies. Except that I was afraid of saying that sort of thing aloud. Because someone would have told me never, never, but NEVER to repeat such words. Or else, they would have laughed so much at what I’d said, they would have cried.

It’s much better this way. To have acted it out to show them, although I could not have planned it.

As for my mother, she has been speechless as usual.

Critical Thinking

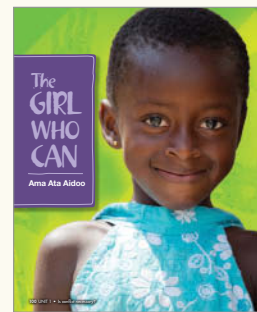
- 1. Key Ideas and Details: (a)** Why does Nana criticize the narrator’s legs? **(b) Draw Conclusions:** How does this criticism reveal Nana’s fears for the narrator’s future? Explain.
- 2. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: (a)** What are Nana’s feelings about the narrator’s going to school? **(b) Compare and Contrast:** How do the mother’s feelings about school differ from Nana’s? **(c) Generalize:** Based on these details, what kind of lives do you think many women in Ghana are expected to lead?
- 3. Key Ideas and Details: (a)** After Adjoa is chosen for the district games, why does Nana keep staring at her legs? **(b) Draw Conclusions:** Why does Nana iron Adjoa’s school uniform so carefully?
- 4. Key Ideas and Details: (a)** At the end of the story, Adjoa says it was much better to “have acted it out to show them.” What has she acted out? **(b) Evaluate:** Was it “better,” as Adjoa says? Explain.
- 5. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** What lesson does Adjoa’s family learn as they face conflicts over her legs? Could they have learned those lessons without those conflicts? Use details from the story to support your answer. [*Connect to the Big Question: Is conflict necessary?*]

Comparing Points of View

1. Key Ideas and Details Use a chart like the one shown to note the actions, thoughts, and feelings of the listed characters in both stories.

| Checkouts | Actions | Thoughts | Feelings |
|------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Girl | | | |
| Boy | | | |
| The Girl Who Can | Actions | Thoughts | Feelings |
| Nana | | | |
| Adjoa | | | |

2. Craft and Structure (a) Which details from your chart show that the **third-person omniscient point of view** in “Checkouts” gives readers insight into the inner lives of all the characters? Explain. **(b)** Which details show that the **first-person point of view** in “The Girl Who Can” lets the reader understand the narrator best of all? Explain.



Timed Writing

Explanatory Text: Essay

Compare and contrast the main character in “Checkouts” with the narrator in “The Girl Who Can.” In an essay, analyze the way in which the development of each character is shaped by the narrative point of view. Also, consider the cultural perspectives that contribute to the portrayal of each character. **(30 minutes)**

5-Minute Planner

1. Read the prompt carefully and completely.
2. Organize your ideas to make important connections by answering these questions:
 - Who are the narrators in the two stories?
 - How do you know what each girl is thinking?
 - Do both narrators seem equally reliable? Why or why not?
 - How does each girl’s culture influence her perspective?
3. Reread the prompt, and then draft your essay.

USE ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

As you write, use academic language, including the following words or their related forms:

- character**
- context**
- differentiate**
- perspective**

For more information about academic vocabulary, see page xlvi.

Using a Dictionary and Thesaurus

A **dictionary** is a resource that provides different kinds of information to help readers, writers, and speakers use words correctly. Consult a dictionary to find a word's pronunciation, its part of speech, and its history, or etymology. Look at this dictionary entry for the word *poet*.

Dictionary

poet (pō'ət) *n.* [ME < OFr. *poete* < L *poeta* < Gr *poiētes*, one who makes, poet < *poiein*, to make: see POEM] **1.** a person who writes poems or verses **2.** a person who displays imaginative power and beauty of thought, language, etc. (— pō et'ik *adj.* — pō et'i kəl *adj.* — pō et'i kəl lē *adv.*)

The pronunciation, set in parentheses right after the entry, uses letters, symbols, and accent marks to show how the word is pronounced. A key to these letters and symbols usually appears at the bottom of the dictionary page or in the front of the dictionary. The key includes a common word to show how the symbols are pronounced.

Many dictionaries also provide information about the related forms of words. Related forms are new words created by adding prefixes or suffixes to a base word. For example, the entry above shows that the adjectives *poetic* and *poetical*, and the adverb *poetically* can be formed from the noun *poet*.

A **thesaurus** is a book of synonyms. Use it to find the exact word to fit your meaning and to vary word selection to avoid repetition. A thesaurus can also help you locate words that share **denotations**, or dictionary definitions, but have different **connotations**, or shades of meaning.

Thesaurus

teaching *n.* teaching, education, schooling, instruction, tuition, coaching, tutoring *v.* teach, educate, instruct, give information, give lessons in, school, edify

Many types of dictionaries and thesauri can be found in the reference section of your library. You may also find them online and provided as mobile applications.

Practice A

Look up each word in a dictionary. Write the part of speech and the first definition for each word.

1. eminent
2. misconstrue
3. anecdote
4. illiterate
5. diversion
6. perceive

Practice B

Use a dictionary to answer questions 1 through 8.

1. Which syllable receives the heaviest accent in the word *integrity*?
2. Can *wane* be properly used as a noun? If so, what does it mean?
3. What word can be used to replace *agitate* in this sentence?
"Jonathan began to *agitate* the fish tank."
4. What is the adverb form of the word *dire*? Which suffix is used to create the adverb form?
5. What part of speech is *expire*? Note two words that are related to *expire*. Define each one and identify its part of speech.
6. Does the vowel sound in *fray* sound like the vowel in *at*, *ate*, or *car*?
7. Which syllable of *upheaval* receives the heaviest accent?
8. **(a)** Note two words with similar denotations you might use to replace *melancholy* in this sentence. "At the end of her vacation, Alice felt melancholy." **(b)** For each word, explain how the connotations of the replacement words change the overall meaning of the sentence.

Activity Form a small group with classmates. Write a sentence about a story that you know. Then, pass your sentence to another student. That student should change the sentence that he or she receives by replacing one word with a synonym. See how long your group can keep passing the sentence on and coming up with new words while maintaining the meaning of the original sentence. Group members may refer to a thesaurus for help.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> | For Fortunato, the catacombs were a terrifying place to die. |
| | For Fortunato, the catacombs were a frightening place to die. |
| | For Fortunato, the catacombs were a frightening place to perish. |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Comprehension and Collaboration

How do you pronounce these words: *feint*, *insignia*, *valise*? Look up each word in a dictionary, study the pronunciation, and practice saying it out loud. Then, compare your pronunciations of the words with those of three other students. If you disagree, review the pronunciation key and decide which of you is correct.

Speaking and Listening

Evaluating a Speech

When you listen to any type of speech, strive to be active and attentive. Assess the credibility of the message and the effectiveness of the speaker's delivery. Learning how to evaluate a speech will make you a critical listener, allow you to judge the value of what you hear, and give you a solid basis for improving your own oral presentations.

Learn the Skills

Create a context. When listening to a speech or an informal talk, consider the following questions:

- What is the speaker's purpose?
- What knowledge of the subject does the speaker have?
- What traditional, cultural, or historical influences shape the message?
- As a listener, what prior knowledge do you bring to the topic?

Evaluate the development of arguments. A good speaker presents arguments that are clearly and logically stated and fully supported with evidence in the form of facts, statistics, anecdotes, and expert opinions. As you listen, ask yourself whether the speaker's information is accurate, complete, and relevant. Is important information deliberately or unintentionally excluded? Does the speaker have a point of view—the perspective from which he or she speaks—that might lead to bias, or a focus on only one side of an argument? Assess whether the speaker's use of facts is fair and thorough. Try to anticipate weaknesses in certain types of arguments.

Note the speaker's choice of language. Listen for the speaker's use of words and phrases with positive or negative connotations, or associations. Note repetition of key words or stress given to certain phrases. Be alert to the fact that some speakers, as a substitute for good evidence or logical argument, may rely on emotionally "loaded" language.

Note the speaker's technique. A speech is more than words. Use the following questions to analyze nonverbal elements:

- Is the speaker's tone of voice, word choice, and rate of speaking appropriate for the audience, subject, and occasion?
- What is the effect of the speaker's nonverbal signals, such as eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures?
- When and why does the speaker pause, speak more loudly or softly, or speak more rapidly or slowly?

| Type of Argument | Potential Flaw |
|--|--|
| Analogy: compares one situation to another | Are the two situations really alike? |
| Authority: cites the opinion of an expert | Is the expert knowledgeable and unbiased? |
| Emotion: appeals to the audience's feelings | Is the full argument balanced between logic and emotion? |
| Causation: shows a cause-and-effect relationship | Does the speaker oversimplify his or her arguments? |

Practice the Skills

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas Use what you have learned in this workshop to perform the following task.

ACTIVITY: Evaluate a Speech

As a class, view a political speech or a televised editorial. As you watch the speech, use an evaluation checklist like the one shown below. Assess the content (including point of view, use of supporting details, and word choice), and the speaker's delivery technique (including tone, stresses, pauses, and gestures).

Comprehension and Collaboration After you have watched the delivery of the speech or editorial, form small groups and discuss your findings. State your opinion of the speech in general, and identify which aspects you thought were the strongest and which were the weakest. As you listen to classmates, take notes on one another's views. Then, referring to your completed checklist and your discussion notes, write a two-paragraph evaluation of the speech or editorial.

Evaluation Checklist

Rate the speaker's content on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) for each of these items. Explain your ratings.

| Speech Content | Rating |
|---|-----------|
| met the needs of the audience | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| achieved its purpose | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| was appropriate to the occasion | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| used effective main and supporting ideas | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| included convincing facts and expert opinions | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| demonstrated command of the conventions of standard written English | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Rate the speaker's delivery on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) for each of these items. Explain your ratings.

| Speech Delivery | Rating |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| appropriate level of formality | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| eye contact | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| effective speaking rate | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| pauses for effect | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| appropriate volume | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| enunciation | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| appropriate gestures | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| conventions of language | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Write an Argument

Response to Literature

Defining the Form A formal **response to literature** gives you an opportunity to present and defend your interpretation of a literary work. Like any argument, a response to literature requires you to develop a logical line of reasoning and to support your ideas with strong, persuasive evidence. You will use elements of argumentative writing in nearly every subject you study in school, as well as in many careers.

Assignment Write a response to a work of literature that engages you as a reader. Include these elements:

- ✓ an *analysis* of the work, including its content, organization, and style
- ✓ a *thesis statement* or precise *claim* that expresses your interpretation of the work
- ✓ inclusion of a *counterclaim*, or alternate interpretation, and a discussion of why it is less convincing than yours
- ✓ *textual evidence* that supports your interpretation
- ✓ a logical organization, including a *conclusion* that follows from and supports your claim
- ✓ a *formal style and objective tone* appropriate for an academic purpose and audience
- ✓ error-free grammar, including correct use of colons when introducing lists or quotations

To preview the criteria on which your response to literature may be judged, see the rubric on page 119.

FOCUS ON RESEARCH

When you write a response to literature, you might perform research to

- find other works by the same author to perform a comparison.
- find criticism written by the author to learn about his or her opinions on writing.
- locate critical writings about the author to gain additional insights.

Be sure to note all resources you use in your research, and credit those sources in your final drafts. See the Citing Sources pages in the Introductory Unit of this textbook for additional guidance.

READING-WRITING CONNECTION

To get a feel for responses to literature, read the excerpt from *Nothing to Fear: Lessons in Leadership from FDR* by Alan Axelrod on page 294.

Prewriting/Planning Strategies

Make a top-ten list. Think of stories, poems, or other works of literature that you found memorable. Create a top-ten list of these titles and authors. Next to each entry, briefly note your reactions to the work and ideas you might want to share about it. Review your list and choose one work as your topic.

Clarify your purpose and focus. Choose a focus for your response. For example, you may want to prove that your chosen text is the best work by its author or examine the choices made by a character in a short story. Write a statement of purpose for your essay. Use both the title and the author's name in your statement:

- **Example Statement of Purpose:** *In this essay, I will analyze the character of General Zaroff in Richard Connell's short story "The Most Dangerous Game." I will argue that his elegant manner serves to make his cruelty more rather than less evident.*

Identify types of details you will need. Your purpose and focus determine the kinds of details you need to include. Consider these tips:

- **To analyze,** support your ideas with evidence from the selection as well as other outside resources.
- **To refute,** identify other interpretations of a passage or the text as a whole. Gather details from the text that support your interpretation.
- **To explain a personal response,** show how the work connects to your own experiences, observations, and ideas.

Find supporting evidence. Return to the work you have selected to find passages that relate to your purpose and focus. Prepare a series of index cards, using one card for every piece of evidence that supports your claim. Write your main point or idea across the top of each card. Underneath, write your notes on the details you gathered from the text to support that point or idea. Use another set of cards to record details that support alternate interpretations.

Organizing your evidence in this way will help you present your ideas clearly. It will also help you defend your claim against other interpretations.

Identifying Supporting Evidence

Thesis: What I want to prove:

General Zaroff's civilized exterior conceals a ruthless, heartless murderer.

How I can prove it:

His elegant castle is also a prison.

Explain in detail:

Zaroff makes Rainsford comfortable in the castle in order to make him healthy and, therefore, the hunt more intriguing.

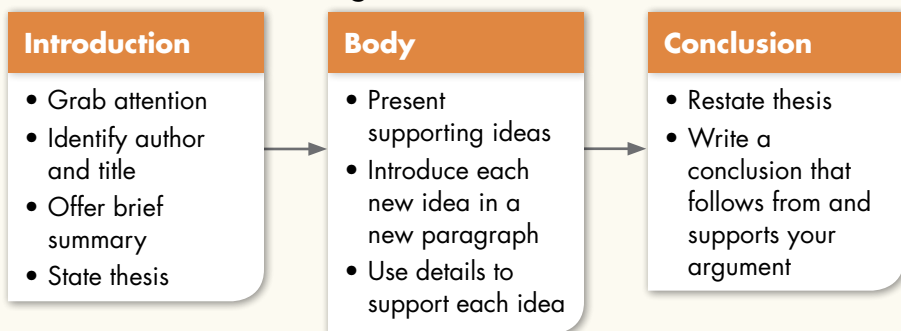
Drafting Strategies

State your thesis or claim. Your essay should have a clear thesis statement that you develop logically and support with strong evidence. Review your notes to draft a single sentence that combines the statement of purpose you wrote earlier with the ideas and evidence you gathered. This statement will direct the choices you make as you write.

Example Thesis Statement: *In Richard Connell's short story "The Most Dangerous Game," the characterization of General Zaroff reveals a murderous mind that lurks behind an illusion of refinement.*

Organize your ideas. Fill out the details in an organizational chart like the one shown. Your introduction should include your thesis, and every body paragraph should provide its support.

Organize Your Ideas



Consider your audience. Judge your audience's familiarity with the work and use that judgment to determine how much background information to include.

Address counterclaims. As you write, consider other ways to read the text that may conflict with your views but are not without merit. Introduce these alternate claims and refute them with logic and evidence.

Example Address of a Counterclaim: *Some readers might say Zaroff is sophisticated because he is elegant and clever, but I disagree since elegance and cleverness are just surface traits.*

If your position changes as you work, be prepared to reflect this in your writing and even to modify your thesis statement.

Provide supporting details. Include evidence from the literary work for every claim you make in your essay. **Exact quotations** can illustrate a character's attitude, a writer's word choice, or an essayist's opinion.

Examples of a character's actions or of a specific literary element can enhance your analysis. **Paraphrases**, or restatements in your own words, can help you clarify key ideas. Paraphrases must accurately reflect the original text.

Perfecting Your Word Choice

Word choice is the language a writer uses in order to create a specific impression. Finding exactly the right words can help you clarify your thinking as you write. If your word choice is strong and precise, it is likely that your thinking is, as well. The right words, carefully chosen, can transform an argument from weak to convincing.

Using Formal Language An essay written in response to a literary work should present ideas in a serious and thoughtful way. Review your draft to be sure the language you have chosen is appropriate to this purpose. Circle any words that are chatty or informal and replace them with more academic, precise language.

Informal: Rainsford does some cool things to trick Zaroff.

Formal: Rainsford employs many cunning tricks to fool Zaroff.

Choosing Specific Words As you write a first draft, you might use general words to simply get your ideas down. Go back through your draft, circling vague or dull word choices. Consider replacements that sharpen the point you are making and drive it home. Also, consider adding descriptors to enhance your argument. You can use a thesaurus to gather ideas for alternative word choices.

| Vague | Specific |
|------------------------------|--|
| Zaroff is <i>evil</i> . | Zaroff is <i>calculating</i> and <i>devious</i> . |
| The castle is <i>fancy</i> . | The castle is <i>opulent</i> and <i>decadent</i> . |
| Zaroff <i>likes</i> hunting. | Zaroff <i>relishes</i> hunting. |

Using Figurative Language Consider using similes and metaphors to clarify your ideas.

A **simile** is a comparison of two unlike things using *like* or *as*.

During the storm, the wind tore through the tree branches like a power saw.

A **metaphor** describes one thing in terms of another.

Tree trunks were matchsticks as they snapped in the wind.

Being Precise Choosing strong words does not mean using a lot of words or using a lot of long and complicated words. Rather, it means choosing words that say exactly what you mean.

Revising Strategies

Revise to eliminate unnecessary information. Reread your draft, looking for any words or phrases that are either not precise or not essential. Identify instances in which the details you provide do not support your main idea because they are either not relevant or you have not clearly explained the connections. To do so, follow these steps:

- Underline your thesis or claim and the main idea of each paragraph.
- Highlight sentences that do not support your thesis.
- Consider adding or revising details to make a tighter connection to your main idea.
- Eliminate any paragraphs or details that do not clearly contribute to your analysis.

Check words of praise or criticism. Review your response to literature, making sure your word choices are precise and that they accurately reflect your purpose, your audience, and your interpretation of the literary work.

Vague: This *factual* account of the author's life is *interesting*.

Precise: This *honest* account of the author's life *captures* the reader's attention.

In addition, pay close attention to the degree, or form, of the adjectives you use, especially when making comparisons. Use the degree that accurately reflects your meaning. The **comparative** degree, which is usually formed by adding *-er* to the adjective or by using the word *more*, is used to compare two items. The **superlative** degree, which is usually formed by adding *-est* to the adjective or by using the word *most*, is used to compare more than two items.

Comparative degree: Zaroff is a *more disagreeable* character than Rainsford. (*Compares two items*)

Superlative degree: Zaroff is the *most disagreeable* character in the story. (*Compares more than two items*)

Peer Review

Exchange drafts with a partner. Review each other's work, circling words that convey approval or criticism. Underline words that express degrees of comparison. Determine whether you have used these words correctly and whether they are precise or vague. Then, revise your draft, replacing vague, dull, or incorrect language with choices that pinpoint your meaning. As you revise, be sure to maintain a consistency in style and tone throughout your work.

Using Quotations

Direct quotations are passages taken word for word from a work of literature. Indirect quotations are paraphrases, or restated passages, of the ideas in a text.

Setting and Punctuating Direct Quotations All direct quotations in the running text must be enclosed in quotation marks. A direct quotation is usually preceded by a comma and sometimes by a colon. It is followed by its corresponding page number enclosed in parentheses. Place the period or comma that is part of the quotation after the parenthesis. See the example below.

Example of Direct Quotations in Running Text:

Rainsford is horrified when he realizes the truth of his situation: "The Cossack was the cat; he was the mouse" (232).

When you quote a passage that is four lines or longer, set it apart from the paragraph and indent it by ten spaces. Do not use quotation marks. This type of quotation is often preceded by a colon. In addition, set the end punctuation for the quotation before the page number citation.

Example of Block Indented Quotations:

Huddled in the jungle, Rainsford breathes a sigh of relief when Zaroff leaves. Then, the horror of the situation hits him:

Rainsford did not want to believe what his reason told him was true, but the truth was as evident as the sun that had by now pushed through the morning mists. The general was playing with him! The general was saving him for another day's sport! (231)

Zaroff's true character becomes apparent to Rainsford in this moment.

Punctuating Indirect Quotations Because indirect quotations are paraphrases of the text, you should not put them in quotation marks.

Example of Indirect Quotation in Running Text:

When Rainsford realizes that Zaroff is playing a game of cat and mouse, he is horrified.

Grammar in Your Writing

Scan your essay to identify any direct quotations. Make sure you have set quotation marks at the beginning and end of a direct quotation that you included in the running text of your paragraph. Make sure you have correctly set off and indented longer passages. Revise punctuation that is incorrect.

STUDENT MODEL: Jeff Rutherford, Broken Arrow, OK

Characterization of General Zaroff

What lies at the heart of a refined man? In Richard Connell's short story "The Most Dangerous Game," the deranged, yet cunning and elegant General Zaroff shares his taste for hunting with an unsuspecting visitor. Although he is civilized in his dress and habits, Zaroff's beliefs reveal a murderous mind behind the illusion of a charming, charismatic man.

When we first encounter General Zaroff, our initial reaction is one of delight and admiration for his wealth and charm. Zaroff lives in a massive castle, feasts on the finest delicacies, and wears expensive clothes. His luxurious surroundings and lifestyle reflect a highly civilized, eloquent, and proper gentleman. As readers soon learn, however, there is more to Zaroff than food and elegance.

Beneath Zaroff's fine qualities lies an overwhelming attitude of arrogance. This attitude comes from his firm belief that his way of thinking is superior to that of the average person. Zaroff also fancies himself a phenomenal hunter: "My hand was made for the trigger," he claims. It is this deadly mixture of arrogance, superior hunting skills, and belief that it is natural for the strong to prevail over the weak that makes him disregard the value of human life.

Zaroff's extreme beliefs lead him to conclude that only the intelligent mind of a human being can provide him with the dangerous game he desires. Rationalizing that "the weak were created to please the strong," he chooses to hunt humans instead of animals. Unfortunately, Rainsford steps into this situation. The major conflicts in "The Most Dangerous Game" demonstrate what happens during such an inhumane hunt.

However, the general's arrogance and disregard for human life blind him to the fear and desperation of his prey. His attitude leads to his own demise at the hands of Rainsford, his prey. The characterization of Zaroff as a murderer hiding behind a mask of civility shows that beneath even the most beautiful rose can lie a sharp and deadly thorn.

The title indicates that the essay will focus on a single character.

Jeff uses vivid language to state his thesis clearly.

Direct quotations provide evidence for this understanding of Zaroff.

Jeff concludes his response with an illuminating analogy that neatly summarizes his analysis.

Editing and Proofreading

Review your draft to correct errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Correcting Common Usage Problems *Among* and *between* are not interchangeable. *Among* always implies three or more elements, whereas *between* is generally used with only two elements. *Like*, *as*, *as if*, and *as though* are not interchangeable. *Like* is a preposition meaning “similar to” or “such as.” It should not be used in place of *as*, *as if*, or *as though*, which are conjunctions that introduce clauses

Publishing and Presenting

Consider one of the following ways to share your writing:

Deliver an oral presentation. Read your response to literature aloud. Have a copy of the literary work on hand in the event that your classmates wish to read or review it. Make sure your work is neatly presented and legible.

Publish a collection of responses to literature. Gather the essays of several of your classmates. Organize them in a binder and make the collection available in the school library.

Reflecting on Your Writing

Writer’s Journal Jot down your answer to this question:

How did writing about the work help you to better understand it?

Spiral Review

Earlier in this unit, you learned about **verb tenses** (p. 60). Check your response to literature to be sure you have used consistent verb tenses in your writing.

Self-Evaluation Rubric

Use the following criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of your response to literature.

| Criteria | Rating Scale |
|---|---|
| Purpose/Focus Introduces a precise claim and distinguishes the claim from opposing claims; provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented. | not very very 1 2 3 4 |
| Organization Establishes a logical organization; uses words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships between ideas and evidence. | 1 2 3 4 |
| Development of Ideas/Elaboration Develops the claim and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both. | 1 2 3 4 |
| Language Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone. | 1 2 3 4 |
| Conventions Attends to the norms and conventions of the discipline. | 1 2 3 4 |

SELECTED RESPONSE

I. Reading Literature

Directions: Read the excerpt from “The Golden Kite, the Silver Wind,” a short story by Ray Bradbury. Then, answer each question that follows.

Background: Leaders of two neighboring towns have directed workers to rebuild their city walls in competing shapes.

“Oh, Emperor,” cried the messenger, “Kwan-Si has rebuilt their walls to resemble a mouth with which to drink all our lake!”

“Then,” said the Emperor, standing very close to his silken screen, “build our walls like a needle to sew up that mouth!”

“Emperor!” screamed the messenger. “They make their walls like a sword to break your needle!”

The Emperor held, trembling, to the silken screen. “Then shift the stones to form a scabbard to sheathe that sword!”

“Mercy,” wept the messenger the following morn, “they have worked all night and shaped their walls like lightning which will explode and destroy that sheath!”

Sickness spread in the city like a pack of evil dogs. Shops closed. The population, working now steadily for endless months upon the changing of the walls, resembled Death himself, clattering his white bones like musical instruments in the wind. Funerals began to appear in the streets, though it was the middle of summer, a time when all should be tending and harvesting. The Mandarin fell so ill that he had his bed drawn up by the silken screen and there he lay, miserably giving his architectural orders. The voice behind the screen was weak now, too, and faint, like the wind in the eaves.

“Kwan-Si is an eagle. Then our walls must be a net for that eagle. They are a sun to burn our net. Then we build a moon to eclipse their sun!”

Like a rusted machine, the city ground to a halt.

At last the whisper behind the screen cried out:

“In the name of the gods, send for Kwan-Si!”

Upon the last day of summer the Mandarin Kwan-Si, very ill and withered away, was carried into our Mandarin’s courtroom by four starving footmen. The two mandarins were propped up, facing each other. Their breaths fluttered like winter winds in their mouths. A voice said:

“Let us put an end to this.”

The old men nodded.

1. **Part A** What central **conflict** contributes to characters' actions in this excerpt?
- A. Two mandarins compete to build the more symbolically powerful city.
 - B. The citizens of two towns fight over land.
 - C. A population struggles to control a disease.
 - D. The people of a town defy their leader.

Part B Which detail from the excerpt best captures that conflict?

- A. "Kwan-Si is an eagle. Then our walls must be a net for that eagle. They are a sun to burn our net. Then we build a moon to eclipse their sun!"
 - B. "Funerals began to appear in the streets..."
 - C. "The population, working now steadily for endless months upon the changing of the walls, resembled Death himself..."
 - D. "Like a rusted machine, the city ground to a halt."
2. **Part A** Which answer choice states the most probable **resolution** to the story?
- A. The mandarins begin a war between their towns.
 - B. The mandarins do nothing and both towns die out.
 - C. The people rebel and choose new leaders.
 - D. The mandarins negotiate an agreement.

Part B Which detail from the excerpt best supports this **prediction**?

- A. "Sickness spread in the city like a pack of evil dogs."
 - B. "Their breaths fluttered like winter winds in their mouths."
 - C. "'Let us put an end to this.' The old men nodded."
 - D. "The Mandarin fell so ill that he had his bed drawn up by the silken screen..."
3. **Part A** How do the townspeople most likely feel about the Emperor's demands?
- A. They enjoy rebuilding the walls over and over.
 - B. They find their situation funny.
 - C. They are hostile and refuse to do the work.
 - D. They are obedient and suffer in silence.

Part B Which detail from the excerpt best supports that **inference**?

- A. "The population, working now steadily for endless months upon the changing walls, resembled Death himself..."
 - B. "The Emperor held, trembling, to the silken screen."
 - C. "The Mandarin fell so ill that he had his bed drawn up by the silken screen..."
 - D. "Like a rusted machine, the city ground to a halt."
4. In the example below, which techniques does the author use to indirectly **characterize** the messenger?

"Emperor!" screamed the messenger. "They make their walls like a sword to break your needle!"

- A. description of actions only
 - B. dialogue and description of behavior
 - C. dialogue and description of thoughts
 - D. description of thoughts only
5. Which of the following answer choices best defines the literary concept of **situational irony**?
- A. a character's struggle to overcome a challenge
 - B. a contradiction between appearance and reality
 - C. a story outcome that contradicts expectations
 - D. description of a character in a specific situation
6. What is the meaning of the underlined word *clattering* as it is used in the passage?
- A. breaking
 - B. shimmering
 - C. dissolving
 - D. rattling



Timed Writing

7. Write a brief **cause-and-effect essay** in which you discuss the actions and reactions of the two mandarins in the excerpt. Explain how the chain of cause and effect moves the story forward.

GO ON 

II. Reading Informational Text

Directions: Read the passage. Then, answer each question that follows.

History of the Bicycle

The earliest known version of the bicycle was invented by Baron Karl Drais in 1817. This wooden, two-wheeled device lacked pedals or brakes and quickly faded from popularity. In 1819, British inventor Denis Johnson introduced a design that also lacked pedals but was easier to steer. The steps that then led from these early devices to today's sleek bicycles are shrouded in mystery.

The Nineteenth Century

The bicycles of the mid- to late-nineteenth century had iron frames and iron wheels. The front wheel was larger than the back wheel, which added to the bumpy ride. Hence, these models were nicknamed “boneshakers.” Like their forerunners, these early bicycles lacked pedals. In the 1860s, inventors added pedals.

During the 1870s, bicycle design continued to improve. The British introduced the “ordinary,” a bicycle with solid rubber tires, a large front wheel, and a small back wheel. The ordinary proved to be hazardous. When an ordinary struck ruts or had its brakes applied hard, riders ran the risk of “taking a header”—being pitched forward off the bicycle head-first. By 1885, the “safety,” with wheels of equal size, was invented. Balanced wheels created a more stable ride. As a result, bicycling increased in popularity all over the world.

The Twentieth Century

In the early 1900s, the automobile was introduced and mass transit improved, giving the bicycle a second-class status. However, innovations in design, including the banana seat in the 1960s, led to a resurgence of the bicycle's popularity. Additional innovations, such as the 10-speed in the 1970s, and mountain bikes in the 1980s and 1990s, made bicycles even more popular.

Bicycling Today

Some of the most predominant styles today are the mountain bike, the racing bike, and the hybrid (a cross between the two). Bicycling has reached new heights of popularity.

1. Which of the following words best describes the “ordinary” bicycle?
 - A. boring
 - B. uncomfortable
 - C. dangerous
 - D. slow
2. Which answer choice best states the central idea of the passage?
 - A. Since the 1800s, the bicycle has evolved and increased in popularity.
 - B. Safer designs have made bicycling popular.
 - C. The full history of the bicycle is unknown.
 - D. Today, people enjoy mountain bikes, racing bikes, and hybrid bikes.

III. Writing and Language Conventions

Directions: Read the passage. Then, answer each question that follows.

(1) Jeff's face felt hot as the redness crawled up her cheeks. (2) Every time she introduced herself, she heard, "Isn't Jeff a boy's name?" (3) It was worse when she was little. (4) Everyone thought she is a boy. (5) Now it was just embarrassing. (6) As she struggled through the crowd in the cafeteria, she noticed that Joe, the attractive boy from her English class, was there. (7) She wanted to introduce herself to him. (8) Then, his friend had to ask the question she dreaded: What's your name? (9) Joe's friends chuckled, but he smiled kindly. (10) When lunch was over, Jeff walk away brokenhearted. (11) She would never talk to Joe again. (12) Suddenly, a tap was felt on her shoulder. (13) "Jeff is a great name. It makes you special," said Joe. (14) A smile spread across Jeff's face. (15) Maybe she needed to be proud of being different.

- Which of the following revisions *best* corrects the inconsistent **verb tense** in sentence 4?
 - Change *is* to *were*.
 - Change *is* to *was*.
 - Change *is* to *will be*.
 - Leave as is.
- Which words in the passage should be placed in **quotation marks**?
 - What's your name?
 - Then, his friend had to ask the question she dreaded
 - but he smiled kindly
 - Joe said
- Which revision shows the *best* way to correct the use of **passive voice** in sentence 12?
 - Suddenly, she tapped on her shoulder.
 - Suddenly, on her shoulder a tap was felt by Jeff.
 - Suddenly, a tap is felt by Jeff on her shoulder.
 - Suddenly, she felt a tap on her shoulder.
- Identify the complete subject and complete predicate in sentence 11.
 - Complete subject:* She would *Complete predicate:* never talk to Joe again
 - Complete subject:* She *Complete predicate:* would never talk
 - Complete subject:* She *Complete predicate:* would never talk to Joe again
 - Complete subject:* Joe *Complete predicate:* She would never talk to
- Which of the following revisions is the *best* way to correct the **verb tense** shift in sentence 10?
 - Change *was* to *is*.
 - Change *walk* to *walks*.
 - Change *walk* to *walked*.
 - Change *walk* to *will walk*.
- In sentence 9, which word is an adverb?
 - Joe's
 - chuckled
 - smiled
 - kindly



CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE

Directions: Follow the instructions to complete the tasks below as required by your teacher.

As you work on each task, incorporate both general academic vocabulary and literary terms you learned in Parts 1 and 2 of this unit.

Writing

TASK 1 Literature

Analyze Situational Irony

Analyze how an author's use of situational irony in a story from Part 2 of this unit creates surprise.

- State which story you chose and briefly summarize its plot.
- Explain what is ironic about the plot by describing what happens that contradicts the expectations of characters or the reader.
- Explain how the irony or surprise ending makes sense and fits with details or ideas from earlier in the work.
- Provide specific examples from the text to support your analysis.
- Use active rather than passive voice whenever possible.

TASK 2 Literature

Make and Support Inferences About a Main Character

Write an essay in which you explain how making inferences about a main character affected your understanding of a story from Part 2 of this unit.

- Introduce the story's characters, setting, and plot, and explain the main character's role in the story.
- Identify three inferences you made about the main character while reading this story. Cite specific details you used to make them.

- Show how making inferences led you to an understanding of the main character. For example, you might show how specific details suggest a character's personality traits, such as kindness, or help you predict the character's actions.

TASK 3 Literature

Analyze Plot Structure

Write an essay in which you analyze how events in a story from Part 2 of this unit are ordered by cause-and-effect relationships.

Part 1

- Review and evaluate a story from Part 2 of this unit in which cause-and-effect relationships play a key role.
- Summarize the story's plot.
- Answer the following question: How are causes and effects introduced and developed in the different stages of the plot—the exposition, rising action, climax, and resolution?

Part 2

- Write an essay in which you explain how one event causes or influences another and how events lead to the story's resolution or to a character's epiphany, or growth.
- Cite details and examples from the story that clearly support your ideas.

Speaking and Listening

TASK 4 Literature

Analyze Techniques of Characterization

Deliver an oral presentation in which you analyze how an author develops a character in a story from Part 2 of this unit.

- Choose one character to describe. Explain his or her traits, focusing on three that are most distinctive.
- Cite specific passages from the story that reveal each of the three main traits you chose. For each passage, explain the technique the author uses to communicate those traits. Categorize each technique as either direct or indirect characterization.
- Make sure the literary terms you use are familiar to your audience. For example, define the two types of characterization.
- Present information clearly, concisely, and logically so that listeners can follow your reasoning.

TASK 5 Literature

Analyze Conflicts

Deliver an oral presentation in which you compare the conflicts in two short stories from Part 2 of this unit.

- Identify two short stories from Part 2 that you feel have interesting conflicts.
- Outline the plot points of each story and explain whether the main conflicts are external, internal, or both.
- Draw meaningful comparisons and contrasts between the conflicts explored in the two stories. Explain how characters, dialogue, and settings contribute to the conflicts and to their resolutions.
- Use visual aids to help present your analysis to the class. For example, you might create plot diagrams on poster board to help your listeners follow your ideas.
- After your presentation, invite questions from the audience. Answer questions thoughtfully, using correct academic language and literary terms.

Research

TASK 6 Literature



Is conflict necessary?

In Part 2 of this unit, you have read literature that explores different kinds of conflicts. Now, conduct a short research project on a conflict that affects your peers, school, or community. Use both the literature you have read in Part 2 and your research to reflect on and write about this unit's Big Question. Review the following guidelines before you begin your research:

- Choose a conflict you feel comfortable exploring.
- Gather information from at least two reliable sources. Your sources may be print or digital.
- Represent all sides of the conflict evenly and fairly.
- Take notes as you investigate the conflict.
- Cite your sources.

When you have completed your research, write an essay in response to the Big Question. Discuss how your initial ideas have changed or been reinforced. Support your response with examples from both the literature you have read and the research you have conducted.



“One dog barks
at something, and
a hundred bark
at the bark.”

—Chinese Proverb

PART 3

TEXT SET DEVELOPING INSIGHT

CONFORMITY

Conflicts often arise because of differences, whether real or just perceived, among people. These differences may involve physical appearance, language, belief, culture, or some other quality. Are conflicts based on such differences inevitable—must they always happen? Conversely, is a world in which everyone conforms always conflict-free? The selections that follow explore the idea of conformity. As you read each one, decide what it suggests about the relationship between conformity and conflict. Then, think about the answer each text provides to the Big Question for this unit: **Is conflict necessary?**

◀ **CRITICAL VIEWING** Is group behavior, whether that of dogs like these or of people, about conformity or is it about shared goals and leadership? Explain your position.

CLOSE READING TOOL



Use the **Close Reading Tool** to practice the strategies you learn in this unit.

READINGS IN PART 3

ANCHOR TEXT



SHORT STORY

The Scarlet Ibis

James Hurst (p. 128)



POEM

Much Madness is divinest Sense—

Emily Dickinson (p. 144)



PERSONAL ESSAY

My English

Julia Alvarez (p. 146)



MAGAZINE ARTICLE

The Case for Fitting In

David Berreby (p. 156)



PERSUASIVE ESSAY

from The Geeks Shall Inherit the Earth

Alexandra Robbins (p. 162)



MEMOIR

from Blue Nines and Red Words

Daniel Tammet (p. 168)



CARTOON

from The New Yorker

(p. 178)



The
Scarlet Ibis

James Hurst

It was in the clove of seasons, summer was dead but autumn had not yet been born, that the ibis lit in the bleeding tree. The flower garden was stained with rotting brown magnolia petals and ironweeds grew rank amid the purple phlox. The five o'clocks by the chimney still marked time, but the oriole nest in the elm was untenanted and rocked back and forth like an empty cradle. The last graveyard flowers were blooming, and their smell drifted across the cotton field and through every room of our house, speaking softly the names of our dead.

It's strange that all this is still so clear to me, now that the summer has long since fled and time has had its way. A grindstone stands where the bleeding tree stood, just outside the kitchen door, and now if an oriole sings in the elm, its song seems to die up in the leaves, a silvery dust. The flower garden is prim, the house a gleaming white, and the pale fence across the yard stands straight and spruce. But sometimes (like right now), as I sit in the cool, green-draped parlor, the grindstone begins to turn, and time with all its changes is ground away—and I remember Doodle.

Doodle was just about the craziest brother a boy ever had. Of course, he wasn't a crazy crazy like old Miss Leedie, who was in love with President Wilson and wrote him a letter every day, but was a nice crazy, like someone you meet in your dreams. He was born when I was six and was, from the outset, a disappointment. He seemed all head, with a tiny body which was red and shriveled like an old man's. Everybody thought he was going to die—everybody except Aunt Nicey, who had delivered him. She said he would live because he was born in a caul¹ and cauls were made from Jesus' nightgown. Daddy had Mr. Heath, the carpenter, build a little mahogany coffin for him. But he didn't die, and when he was three months old Mama and Daddy decided they might as well name him. They named him William Armstrong, which was like tying a big tail on a small kite. Such a name sounds good only on a tombstone.

I thought myself pretty smart at many things, like holding my breath, running, jumping, or climbing the vines in Old Woman Swamp, and I wanted more than anything else someone to race to Horsehead Landing, someone to box with, and someone to perch

1. **caul** (kôl) *n.* membrane enclosing a baby at birth.

with in the top fork of the great pine behind the barn, where across the fields and swamps you could see the sea. I wanted a brother. But Mama, crying, told me that even if William Armstrong lived, he would never do these things with me. He might not, she sobbed, even be “all there.” He might, as long as he lived, lie on the rubber sheet in the center of the bed in the front bedroom where the white marquissette curtains billowed out in the afternoon sea breeze, rustling like palmetto fronds.²

It was bad enough having an invalid brother, but having one who possibly was not all there was unbearable, so I began to make plans to kill him by smothering him with a pillow. However, one afternoon as I watched him, my head poked between the iron posts of the foot of the bed, he looked straight at me and grinned. I skipped through the rooms, down the echoing halls, shouting, “Mama, he smiled. He’s all there! He’s all there!” and he was.

When he was two, if you laid him on his stomach, he began to try to move himself, straining terribly. The doctor said that with his weak heart this strain would probably kill him, but it didn’t. Trembling, he’d push himself up, turning first red, then a soft purple, and finally collapse back onto the bed like an old worn-out doll. I can still see Mama watching him, her hand pressed tight across her mouth, her eyes wide and unblinking. But he learned to crawl (it was his third winter), and we brought him out of the front bedroom, putting him on the rug before the fireplace. For the first time he became one of us.

As long as he lay all the time in bed, we called him William Armstrong, even though it was formal and sounded as if we were referring to one of our ancestors, but with his creeping around on the deerskin rug and beginning to talk, something had to be done about his name. It was I who renamed him. When he crawled, he crawled backwards, as if he were in reverse and couldn’t change gears. If you called him, he’d turn around as if he were going in the other direction, then he’d back right up to you to be picked up. Crawling backward made him look like a doodle-bug, so I began to call him Doodle, and in time even Mama and Daddy thought it was a better name than William Armstrong. Only Aunt Nicey disagreed. She said caul babies should be treated with special respect since they might turn out to be saints. Renaming my brother was perhaps the kindest thing I ever did for him, because nobody expects much from someone called Doodle.

Although Doodle learned to crawl, he showed no signs of walking, but he wasn’t idle. He talked so much that we all quit listening to what he said. It was about this time that Daddy built him a go-cart

2. **palmetto** (pal met’ ō) **fronds** (frändz) *n.* palm leaves.

and I had to pull him around. At first I just paraded him up and down the piazza, but then he started crying to be taken out into the yard and it ended up by my having to lug him wherever I went. If I so much as picked up my cap, he'd start crying to go with me and Mama would call from wherever she was, "Take Doodle with you."

He was a burden in many ways. The doctor had said that he mustn't get too excited, too hot, too cold, or too tired and that he must always be treated gently. A long list of don'ts went with him, all of which I ignored once we got out of the house. To discourage his coming with me, I'd run with him across the ends of the cotton rows and careen him around corners on two wheels. Sometimes I accidentally turned him over, but he never told Mama. His skin was very sensitive, and he had to wear a big straw hat whenever he went out. When the going got rough and he had to cling to the sides of the go-cart, the hat slipped all the way down over his ears. He was a sight. Finally, I could see I was licked. Doodle was my brother and he was going to cling to me forever, no matter what I did, so I dragged him across the burning cotton field to share with him the only beauty I knew, Old Woman Swamp. I pulled the go-cart through the saw-tooth fern, down into the green dimness where the palmetto fronds whispered by the stream. I lifted him out and set him down in the soft rubber grass beside a tall pine. His eyes were round with wonder as he gazed about him, and his little hands began to stroke the rubber grass. Then he began to cry.

"For heaven's sake, what's the matter?" I asked, annoyed.

"It's so pretty," he said. "So pretty, pretty, pretty."

After that day Doodle and I often went down into Old Woman Swamp. I would gather wildflowers, wild violets, honeysuckle, yellow jasmine, snakeflowers, and water lilies, and with wire grass we'd weave them into necklaces and crowns. We'd bedeck ourselves with our handiwork and loll about thus beautified, beyond the touch of the everyday world. Then when the slanted rays of the sun burned orange in the tops of the pines, we'd drop our jewels into the stream and watch them float away toward the sea.

There is within me (and with sadness I have watched it in others) a knot of cruelty borne by the stream of love, much as our blood sometimes bears the seed of our destruction, and at times I was mean to Doodle. One day I took him up to the barn loft and showed him his casket, telling him how we all had believed he would die. It was covered with a film of Paris green³ sprinkled to kill the rats, and screech owls had built a nest inside it.

Although Doodle learned to crawl, he showed no signs of walking, but he wasn't idle.



3. **Paris green** poisonous green powder used chiefly as an insecticide.

Doodle studied the mahogany box for a long time, then said, "It's not mine."

"It is," I said. "And before I'll help you down from the loft, you're going to have to touch it."

"I won't touch it," he said sullenly.

"Then I'll leave you here by yourself," I threatened, and made as if I were going down.

Doodle was frightened of being left. "Don't go leave me, Brother," he cried, and he leaned toward the coffin. His hand, trembling, reached out, and when he touched the casket he screamed. A screech owl flapped out of the box into our faces, scaring us and covering us with Paris green. Doodle was paralyzed, so I put him on my shoulder and carried him down the ladder, and even when we were outside in the bright sunshine, he clung to me, crying, "Don't leave me. Don't leave me."

When Doodle was five years old, I was embarrassed at having a brother of that age who couldn't walk, so I set out to teach him. We were down in Old Woman Swamp and it was spring and the sick-sweet smell of bay flowers hung everywhere like a mournful song. "I'm going to teach you to walk, Doodle," I said.

He was sitting comfortably on the soft grass, leaning back against the pine. "Why?" he asked.

I hadn't expected such an answer. "So I won't have to haul you around all the time."

"I can't walk, Brother," he said.

"Who says so?" I demanded.

"Mama, the doctor—everybody."

"Oh, you can walk," I said, and I took him by the arms and stood him up. He collapsed onto the grass like a half-empty flour sack. It was as if he had no bones in his little legs.

"Don't hurt me, Brother," he warned.

"Shut up. I'm not going to hurt you. I'm going to teach you to walk." I heaved him up again, and again he collapsed.

This time he did not lift his face up out of the rubber grass. "I just can't do it. Let's make honeysuckle wreaths."

"Oh yes you can, Doodle," I said. "All you got to do is try. Now come on," and I hauled him up once more.

It seemed so hopeless from the beginning that it's a miracle I didn't give up. But all of us must have something or someone to be proud of, and Doodle had become mine. I did not know then that pride is a wonderful, terrible thing, a seed that bears two vines, life and death. Every day that summer we went to the pine beside the stream of Old Woman Swamp, and I put him on his feet at least a hundred times each afternoon. Occasionally I too became discouraged because it

didn't seem as if he was trying, and I would say, "Doodle, don't you want to learn to walk?"

He'd nod his head, and I'd say, "Well, if you don't keep trying, you'll never learn." Then I'd paint for him a picture of us as old men, white-haired, him with a long white beard and me still pulling him around in the go-cart. This never failed to make him try again.

Finally one day, after many weeks of practicing, he stood alone for a few seconds. When he fell, I grabbed him in my arms and hugged him, our laughter pealing through the swamp like a ringing bell. Now we knew it could be done. Hope no longer hid in the dark palmetto thicket but perched like a cardinal in the lacy toothbrush tree, brilliantly visible. "Yes, yes," I cried, and he cried it too, and the grass beneath us was soft and the smell of the swamp was sweet.

With success so **imminent**, we decided not to tell anyone until he could actually walk. Each day, barring rain, we sneaked into Old Woman Swamp, and by cotton-picking time Doodle was ready to show what he could do. He still wasn't able to walk far, but we could wait no longer. Keeping a nice secret is very hard to do, like holding your breath. We chose to reveal all on October eighth, Doodle's sixth birthday, and for weeks ahead we mooned around the house, promising everybody a most spectacular surprise. Aunt Nicey said that, after so much talk, if we produced anything less tremendous than the Resurrection,⁴ she was going to be disappointed.

At breakfast on our chosen day, when Mama, Daddy, and Aunt Nicey were in the dining room, I brought Doodle to the door in the go-cart just as usual and had them turn their backs, making them cross their hearts and hope to die if they peeked. I helped Doodle up, and when he was standing alone I let them look. There wasn't a sound as Doodle walked slowly across the room and sat down at his place at the table. Then Mama began to cry and ran over to him, hugging him and kissing him. Daddy hugged him too, so I went to Aunt Nicey, who was thanks praying in the doorway, and began to waltz her around. We danced together quite well until she came down on my big toe with her brogans, hurting me so badly I thought I was crippled for life.

Doodle told them it was I who had taught him to walk, so everyone wanted to hug me, and I began to cry.

"What are you crying for?" asked Daddy, but I couldn't answer. They did not know that I did it for myself; that pride, whose slave I was, spoke to me louder than all their voices, and that Doodle walked only because I was ashamed of having a crippled brother.

Within a few months Doodle had learned to walk well and his

◀ **imminent**
(im' ə nɒnt) *adj.* likely
to happen soon

4. **the Resurrection** (rez' ə rek' shən) the rising of Jesus Christ from the dead after his death and burial.

go-cart was put up in the barn loft (it's still there) beside his little mahogany coffin. Now, when we roamed off together, resting often, we never turned back until our destination had been reached, and to help pass the time, we took up lying. From the beginning Doodle was a terrible liar and he got me in the habit. Had anyone stopped to listen to us, we would have been sent off to Dix Hill.

My lies were scary, involved, and usually pointless, but Doodle's were twice as crazy. People in his stories all had wings and flew wherever they wanted to go. His favorite lie was about a boy named Peter who had a pet peacock with a ten-foot tail. Peter wore a golden robe that glittered so brightly that when he walked through the sunflowers they turned away from the sun to face him. When Peter was ready to go to sleep, the peacock spread his magnificent tail, enfolding the boy gently like a closing go-to-sleep flower, burying him in the gloriously iridescent, rustling vortex.⁵ Yes, I must admit it. Doodle could beat me lying.

Doodle and I spent lots of time thinking about our future. We decided that when we were grown we'd live in Old Woman Swamp and pick dog-tongue for a living. Beside the stream, he planned, we'd build us a house of whispering leaves and the swamp birds would be our chickens. All day long (when we weren't gathering dog-tongue) we'd swing through the cypresses on the rope vines, and if it rained we'd huddle beneath an umbrella tree and play stickfrog. Mama and Daddy could come and live with us if they wanted to. He even came up with the idea that he could marry Mama and I could marry Daddy. Of course, I was old enough to know this wouldn't work out, but the picture he painted was so beautiful and serene that all I could do was whisper Yes, yes.

Once I had succeeded in teaching Doodle to walk, I began to believe in my own **infallibility** and I prepared a terrific development program for him, unknown to Mama and Daddy, of course. I would teach him to run, to swim, to climb trees, and to fight. He, too, now believed in my infallibility, so we set the deadline for these accomplishments less than a year away, when, it had been decided, Doodle could start to school.

That winter we didn't make much progress, for I was in school and Doodle suffered from one bad cold after another. But when spring came, rich and warm, we raised our sights again. Success lay at the end of summer like a pot of gold, and our campaign got off to a good start. On hot days, Doodle and I went down to Horsehead Landing and I gave him swimming lessons or showed him how to row a boat. Sometimes we descended into the cool greenness of Old Woman

5. **vortex** (vôṛ' teks') *n.* rushing whirl, drawing in all that surrounds it.

infallibility ►
(in fal' ə bil' ə tē) *n.*
condition of being
unlikely to fail

Swamp and climbed the rope vines or boxed scientifically beneath the pine where he had learned to walk. Promise hung about us like the leaves, and wherever we looked, ferns unfurled and birds broke into song.

That summer, the summer of 1918, was blighted. In May and June there was no rain and the crops withered, curled up, then died under the thirsty sun. One morning in July a hurricane came out of the east, tipping over the oaks in the yard and splitting the limbs of the elm trees. That afternoon it roared back out of the west, blew the fallen oaks around, snapping their roots and tearing them out of the earth like a hawk at the entrails of a chicken. Cotton bolls were wrenched from the stalks and lay like green walnuts in the valleys between the rows, while the cornfield leaned over uniformly so that the tassels touched the ground. Doodle and I followed Daddy out into the cotton field, where he stood, shoulders sagging, surveying the ruin. When his chin sank down onto his chest, we were frightened, and Doodle slipped his hand into mine. Suddenly Daddy straightened his shoulders, raised a giant knuckly fist, and with a voice that seemed to rumble out of the earth itself began cursing heaven, hell, the weather, and the Republican Party. Doodle and I, prodding each other and giggling, went back to the house, knowing that everything would be all right.

And during that summer, strange names were heard through the house: Chateau-Thierry, Amiens, Soissons, and in her blessing at the supper table, Mama once said, “And bless the Pearsons, whose boy Joe was lost at Belleau Wood.”⁶

So we came to that clove of seasons. School was only a few weeks away, and Doodle was far behind schedule. He could barely clear the ground when climbing up the rope vines and his swimming was certainly not passable. We decided to double our efforts, to make that last drive and reach our pot of gold. I made him swim until he turned blue and row until he couldn’t lift an oar. Wherever we went, I purposely walked fast, and although he kept up, his face turned red and his eyes became glazed. Once, he could go no further, so he collapsed on the ground and began to cry.

“Aw, come on, Doodle,” I urged. “You can do it. Do you want to be different from everybody else when you start school?”

“Does it make any difference?”

“It certainly does,” I said. “Now, come on,” and I helped him up.

As we slipped through dog days, Doodle began to look feverish,

Success lay
at the end of
summer like a
pot of gold...



6. **Chateau-Thierry** (sha' tō' tē er' ē), **Amiens** (à myan'), **Soissons** (swā sōn'), . . . **Belleau** (be lō') **Wood** places in France where battles were fought during World War I.

and Mama felt his forehead, asking him if he felt ill. At night he didn't sleep well, and sometimes he had nightmares, crying out until I touched him and said, "Wake up, Doodle. Wake up."

It was Saturday noon, just a few days before school was to start. I should have already admitted defeat, but my pride wouldn't let me. The excitement of our program had now been gone for weeks, but still we kept on with a tired doggedness. It was too late to turn back, for we had both wandered too far into a net of expectations and had left no crumbs behind.

Daddy, Mama, Doodle, and I were seated at the dining-room table having lunch. It was a hot day, with all the windows and doors open in case a breeze should come. In the kitchen Aunt Nicey was humming softly. After a long silence, Daddy spoke. "It's so calm, I wouldn't be surprised if we had a storm this afternoon."

"I haven't heard a rain frog," said Mama, who believed in signs, as she served the bread around the table.

"I did," declared Doodle. "Down in the swamp."

"He didn't," I said contrarily.

"You did, eh?" said Daddy, ignoring my denial.

"I certainly did," Doodle reiterated, scowling at me over the top of his iced-tea glass, and we were quiet again.

Suddenly, from out in the yard, came a strange croaking noise. Doodle stopped eating, with a piece of bread poised ready for his mouth, his eyes popped round like two blue buttons. "What's that?" he whispered.

I jumped up, knocking over my chair, and had reached the door when Mama called, "Pick up the chair, sit down again, and say excuse me."

By the time I had done this, Doodle had excused himself and had slipped out into the yard. He was looking up into the bleeding tree. "It's a great big red bird!" he called.

The bird croaked loudly again, and Mama and Daddy came out into the yard. We shaded our eyes with our hands against the hazy glare of the sun and peered up through the still leaves. On the topmost branch a bird the size of a chicken, with scarlet feathers and long legs, was perched **precariously**. Its wings hung down loosely, and as we watched, a feather dropped away and floated slowly down through the green leaves.

"It's not even frightened of us," Mama said.

"It looks tired," Daddy added. "Or maybe sick."

Doodle's hands were clasped at his throat, and I had never seen him stand still so long. "What is it?" he asked.

Daddy shook his head. "I don't know, maybe it's—"

At that moment the bird began to flutter, but the wings were

precariously ►

(pri ker' ē əs lē)

adv. insecurely

uncoordinated, and amid much flapping and a spray of flying feathers, it tumbled down, bumping through the limbs of the bleeding tree and landing at our feet with a thud. Its long, graceful neck jerked twice into an S, then straightened out, and the bird was still. A white veil came over the eyes and the long white beak unhinged. Its legs were crossed and its clawlike feet were delicately curved at rest. Even death did not mar its grace, for it lay on the earth like a broken vase of red flowers, and we stood around it, awed by its exotic beauty.

“It’s dead,” Mama said.

“What is it?” Doodle repeated.

“Go bring me the bird book,” said Daddy.

I ran into the house and brought back the bird book. As we watched, Daddy thumbed through its pages. “It’s a scarlet ibis,” he said, pointing to a picture. “It lives in the tropics—South America to Florida. A storm must have brought it here.”

Sadly, we all looked back at the bird. A scarlet ibis! How many miles it had traveled to die like this, in our yard, beneath the bleeding tree.

“Let’s finish lunch,” Mama said, nudging us back toward the dining room.

“I’m not hungry,” said Doodle, and he knelt down beside the ibis.

“We’ve got peach cobbler for dessert,” Mama tempted from the doorway.

Doodle remained kneeling. “I’m going to bury him.”

“Don’t you dare touch him,” Mama warned. “There’s no telling what disease he might have had.”

“All right,” said Doodle. “I won’t.”

Daddy, Mama, and I went back to the dining-room table, but we watched Doodle through the open door. He took out a piece of string from his pocket and, without touching the ibis, looped one end around its neck. Slowly, while singing softly “Shall We Gather at the River,” he carried the bird around to the front yard and dug a hole in the flower garden, next to the petunia bed. Now we were watching him through the front window, but he didn’t know it. His awkwardness at digging the hole with a shovel whose handle was twice as long as he was made us laugh, and we covered our mouths with our hands so he wouldn’t hear.

When Doodle came into the dining room, he found us seriously eating our cobbler. He was pale and lingered just inside the screen door. “Did you get the scarlet ibis buried?” asked Daddy.

Doodle didn’t speak but nodded his head.

“Go wash your hands, and then you can have some peach cobbler,” said Mama.

“I’m not hungry,” he said.

“Dead birds is bad luck,” said Aunt Nicey, poking her head from the kitchen door. “Specially red dead birds!”

As soon as I had finished eating, Doodle and I hurried off to Horsehead Landing. Time was short, and Doodle still had a long way to go if he was going to keep up with the other boys when he started school. The sun, gilded with the yellow cast of autumn, still burned fiercely, but the dark green woods through which we passed were shady and cool. When we reached the landing, Doodle said he was too tired to swim, so we got into a skiff and floated down the creek with the tide. Far off in the marsh a rail was scolding, and over on the beach locusts were singing in the myrtle trees. Doodle did not speak and kept his head turned away, letting one hand trail limply in the water.

After we had drifted a long way, I put the oars in place and made Doodle row back against the tide. Black clouds began to gather in the southwest, and he kept watching them, trying to pull the oars a little faster. When we reached Horsehead Landing, lightning was playing across half the sky and thunder roared out, hiding even the sound of the sea. The sun disappeared and darkness descended, almost like night. Flocks of marsh crows flew by, heading inland to their roosting trees, and two egrets, squawking, arose from the oyster-rock shallows and careened away.

Doodle was both tired and frightened, and when he stepped from the skiff he collapsed onto the mud, sending an armada of fiddler crabs rustling off into the marsh grass. I helped him up, and as he wiped the mud off his trousers, he smiled at me ashamedly. He had failed and we both knew it, so we started back home, racing the storm. We never spoke (What are the words that can solder cracked pride?), but I knew he was watching me, watching for a sign of mercy. The lightning was near now, and from fear he walked so close behind me he kept stepping on my heels. The faster I walked, the faster he walked, so I began to run. The rain was coming, roaring through the pines, and then, like a bursting Roman candle, a gum tree ahead of us was shattered by a bolt of lightning. When the deafening peal of thunder had died, and in the moment before the rain arrived, I heard Doodle, who had fallen behind, cry out, “Brother, Brother, don’t leave me! Don’t leave me!”



Two Boys in a Punt, 1915—Cover Illustration, Popular Magazine, N.C. Wyeth (1882–1945), Private Collection, Photography courtesy of Brandywine River Museum.

The knowledge that Doodle's and my plans had come to naught was bitter, and that streak of cruelty within me awakened. I ran as fast as I could, leaving him far behind with a wall of rain dividing us. The drops stung my face like nettles, and the wind flared the wet glistening leaves of the bordering trees. Soon I could hear his voice no more.

I hadn't run too far before I became tired, and the flood of childish spite evanesced as well. I stopped and waited for Doodle. The sound of rain was everywhere, but the wind had died and it fell straight down in parallel paths like ropes hanging from the sky. As I waited, I peered through the downpour, but no one came. Finally I went back and found him huddled beneath a red nightshade bush beside the road. He was sitting on the ground, his face buried in his arms, which were resting on his drawn-up knees. "Let's go, Doodle," I said.

He didn't answer, so I placed my hand on his forehead and lifted his head. Limply, he fell backwards onto the earth. He had been bleeding from the mouth, and his neck and the front of his shirt were stained a brilliant red.

"Doodle! Doodle!" I cried, shaking him, but there was no answer but the rosy rain. He lay very awkwardly, with his head thrown far back, making his vermilion neck appear unusually long and slim. His little legs, bent sharply at the knees, had never before seemed so fragile, so thin.

I began to weep, and the tear-blurred vision in red before me looked very familiar. "Doodle!" I screamed above the pounding storm and threw my body to the earth above his. For a long long time, it seemed forever, I lay there crying, sheltering my fallen scarlet ibis from the heresy⁷ of rain.

7. **heresy** (her' ə sē) *n.* idea opposed to the beliefs of a religion or philosophy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Hurst (b. 1922)

James Hurst grew up along the coast of North Carolina, a place of quiet landscapes and violent storms. After studying chemical engineering and opera and serving in the army during World War II, Hurst took a job at a New York bank. For thirty-four years, he worked as a banker and spent his evenings writing stories. "The Scarlet Ibis," published in 1960, is Hurst's best-known story.

Close Reading Activities

READ

Comprehension

Reread all or part of the text to help you answer the following questions.

1. What is different about Doodle?
2. What surprise do the brothers present to their parents?
3. What plan does the narrator make for Doodle's future?
4. What does Doodle find in the bleeding tree?
5. What happens to Doodle at the story's end?

Research: Clarify Details This story may include references that are unfamiliar to you. Choose at least one unfamiliar detail, and briefly research it. Then, explain how the information you learned from research sheds light on an aspect of the story.

Summarize Write an objective summary of the story. Remember that an objective summary is free from opinion and evaluation.

Language Study

Selection Vocabulary The following sentences appear in "The Scarlet Ibis." Define each boldface word, and use the word in a sentence of your own.

- With success so **imminent**, we decided not to tell anyone until he could actually walk.
- I began to believe in my own **infallibility** and I prepared a terrific development program for him, unknown to Mama and Daddy, of course.
- On the topmost branch a bird the size of a chicken, with scarlet feathers and long legs, was perched **precariously**.

Diction and Style Study the first sentence of the story, which appears below. Then, answer the questions that follow.

It was in the clove of seasons, summer was dead but autumn had not yet been born, that the ibis lit in the bleeding tree.

1. (a) What does *clove* mean in this sentence?
(b) What other meaning does *clove* have?
2. (a) What is the meaning of *lit*, as used in this sentence? (b) For what longer word does *lit* stand?
(c) Why do you think the author chose to use the word *lit* instead of a synonym?

Conventions Read this passage from the story. Identify the tenses of the underlined verbs and verb phrases as present, past, or past perfect. Then, explain how the author's use of varied verb tenses clarifies the meaning of the passage.

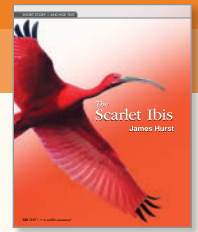
Within a few months Doodle had learned to walk well and his go-cart was put up in the barn loft (it's still there) beside his little mahogany coffin. Now, when we roamed off together, resting often, we never turned back until our destination had been reached, and to help pass the time, we took up lying.

Academic Vocabulary

The following words appear in blue in the instructions and questions on the facing page.

effective **detract** **pervade**

Categorize the words by deciding whether you know each one well, know it a little bit, or do not know it at all. Then, use a print or an online dictionary to look up the definitions of the words you are unsure of or do not know at all.



Literary Analysis

Reread the identified passages. Then, respond to the questions that follow.

Focus Passage 1 (p. 129)

Doodle was just about ... on a tombstone.

Key Ideas and Details

- (a) Interpret:** According to the narrator, what kind of “crazy” is Doodle? **(b) Analyze:** How does the reference to “dreams” hint at the role Doodle plays in the narrator’s life? Explain.
- Infer:** What can you infer from the statement that “Mama and Daddy decided they might as well name him”? Explain.

Craft and Structure

- (a) Interpret:** Why is Doodle’s official name, William Armstrong, “like tying a big tail on a small kite”? **(b) Connect:** What point does the narrator make with this simile? Explain.
- Analyze:** What clues to the story’s ending are revealed with the use of the past tense and the comment about the tombstone? Explain.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- (a) Compare and Contrast:** How does Aunt Nicey’s opinion of Doodle differ from that of the rest of the family? **(b) Infer:** What does her comment about the caul suggest about Doodle’s character?

Symbolism

A **symbol** is anything—an object, person, animal, place, or image—that represents something else. A symbol has its own meaning, but it also stands for something more important, often an abstract idea. Reread the story, and take notes on ways in which the author uses symbolism.

- (a)** What qualities does the ibis exhibit? **(b)** In what ways does Doodle share those qualities? **(c)** Why do you think Hurst chose to title this work “The Scarlet Ibis”?
- (a)** What symbols of death **pervade** the text? **(b)** How do those symbols lend meaning to the story? Cite examples from the text in your response.

Focus Passage 2 (pp. 132–133)

It seemed so hopeless ... swamp was sweet.

Key Ideas and Details

- Interpret:** What does the first sentence of this passage reveal about the narrator? Explain.
- (a) Distinguish:** What words does the narrator use to describe hope? **(b) Evaluate:** Do you find the description **effective**? Why or why not?

Craft and Structure

- Explain:** Explain the use of parallelism, or matching grammatical structures, in the third sentence. How does the use of this grammatical pattern affect the meaning?
- (a) Describe:** Describe the use of alliteration in the final sentence of the passage. **(b) Evaluate:** Does the use of this sound device add to or **deduct** from the literal meaning of the sentence? Explain.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Analyze:** In what ways is the narrator’s description of pride similar to the description of the season in the first two paragraphs of the story? Explain.

- Conformity:** What do you think Hurst is suggesting about conformity through the story elements of the ibis and Doodle? Explain, citing details and examples from the text.

DISCUSS

From Text to Topic **Group Discussion**

Discuss the following passage with a group of classmates. Take notes during the discussion. Contribute your own ideas, and support them with examples from the text.

Once, he could go no further, so he collapsed on the ground and began to cry.
“Aw, come on, Doodle,” I urged. “You can do it. Do you want to be different from everybody else when you start school?”
“Does it make any difference?”
“It certainly does,” I said.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why do you think the narrator wants to change Doodle?
2. Should Doodle try to be the same as other children? Why or why not?
3. What motivates Doodle to try to change?

WRITE

Writing to Sources **Informative Text**

Assignment

Write a **comparison-and-contrast essay** in which you analyze the two main characters in “The Scarlet Ibis”—the narrator and Doodle. In particular, consider each character’s attitude toward fitting in.

Prewriting and Planning Reread the story, looking for details that describe each character’s appearance and behavior as well as his thoughts, feelings, and motivations. Record your notes in a two-column chart or a Venn diagram.

Drafting Select an organizational structure. Most comparison-and-contrast writing follows either a block or point-by-point organization.

- **Block Method** Present all the details about one of your subjects, then all the details about the other subject.
- **Point-by-Point Method** Discuss one feature of both subjects, then another feature of both subjects. Continue this process until you have covered all the features.

In your draft, cite specific examples from the story to support your points.

Revising Reread your essay, making sure you have clearly explained comparisons and contrasts. Clarify your meaning by using transitional words or phrases, such as the ones shown below, to connect your ideas.

in contrast *at the same time* *by the same token* *likewise*
in the same way *on the contrary* *on the other hand* *nevertheless*

Editing and Proofreading Make sure the transitional expressions you have used clarify comparison and contrast relationships among your ideas. In addition, make sure you have correctly used semicolons to separate two independent clauses that are joined by a transitional word or phrase.

CONVENTIONS

An independent clause has a subject and verb and can stand alone as a sentence. When you join two such clauses with a transitional word or phrase, use a semicolon before the transition and a comma after it.



RESEARCH

Research Investigate the Topic

Cultural Attitudes Toward Conformity Most of Doodle's family members treat him gently because of his physical differences. His brother, however, treats him as if he is no different from anyone else. Attitudes toward physical or mental differences vary over time and across cultures. For example, in the United States, left-handedness was once considered to be a problem that needed correction. In some cultures, however, left-handedness is considered to be a sign of wisdom.

Assignment

Conduct research to find out how people born with physical or mental differences have been treated in various cultures or eras. Consult firsthand accounts, such as diaries and memoirs. Take clear notes and carefully identify your sources so that you can easily access the information later. Share your findings in an **informal speech or presentation** for the class.

PREPARATION FOR ESSAY

You may use the knowledge you gain during this research assignment to support your claims in an essay you will write at the end of this section.

Gather Sources Locate authoritative print and electronic sources. Primary sources, such as letters, journals, diaries, or memoirs, provide authentic firsthand information. These types of sources convey the writers' experiences and feelings in a direct and immediate way. You may also want to use secondary sources, such as news articles. Look for sources that feature expert authors and up-to-date information.

Take Notes Take notes on each source, either electronically or on note cards. Use an organized note-taking strategy.

- Label each note with its main idea. You may have several notes per main idea.
- You will probably want to quote directly from primary sources in order to capture the writers' attitudes. Remember to use quotation marks in those instances.
- Record source information to use in citations.

Synthesize Multiple Sources Assemble data from your sources and organize it into a cohesive presentation. If you mainly consulted primary sources, use what you learned from those particular writers to draw conclusions about how their cultures view physical and mental differences. Use your notes to construct an outline for your presentation. Create a Works Cited list to distribute at the end of your presentation. See the Citing Sources pages in the Introductory Unit of this textbook for additional guidance.

Organize and Present Ideas Review your outline and practice delivering your presentation. Be ready to take questions from your audience.

Much Madness is divinest Sense—

Emily Dickinson



discerning ►

(di surn' in) *adj.* having good judgment or understanding

prevail ►

(pre vail') *v.* gain the advantage or mastery; be victorious; triumph

Much Madness is divinest Sense—

To a **discerning** Eye—

Much Sense—the starkest Madness—

'Tis the Majority

⁵ In this, as All, **prevail**—

Assent¹—and you are sane—

Demur²—you're straightway dangerous—

And handled with a Chain—

1. **assent** (ə sent') *v.* agree.

2. **demur** (dē mur') *v.* hesitate because of doubts or objections.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

Despite her quiet, outward behavior, Emily Dickinson's inner life overflowed with energy. She produced at least 1,775 poems. Dickinson looked deeply into simple subjects—a fly buzzing, a bird on a walk, the changing seasons. She also made profound explorations of love, death, and the relationship between the human and the divine. She remains unquestionably one of America's finest poets.



READ • WRITE

Comprehension

Reread the poem. Then, answer the following questions.

1. **(a)** According to the speaker, what is often incorrectly seen as “madness”?
(b) What is often wrongly regarded as “sense”?
2. **(a)** According to the speaker, who determines what is sense and what is madness? **(b)** What happens to those who disagree with those viewpoints? Explain.

Language Study

Selection Vocabulary The following lines appear in the poem. For each boldface word, remove the suffix, add a suffix, or change the existing suffix to create a new, related word. Define each new word and identify its part of speech.

- Much Madness is divinest Sense— / To a **discerning** Eye—
- ‘Tis the Majority / In this, as All, **prevail**—

Literary Analysis

Key Ideas and Details

1. **(a) Interpret:** What does the speaker mean by the statement, “‘Tis the majority / In this, as All, prevail”? **(b) Analyze:** How do the poet’s capitalization and punctuation choices **emphasize** this meaning? Explain.

Craft and Structure

2. **(a) Analyze:** How do the sounds of the words in the first three lines differ from those in the rest of the poem? **(b) Interpret:** In what ways do the sounds in the first three lines add to their meaning and effect?
3. **Analyze:** What is the effect of the poet’s word choice in the seventh line? Be sure to discuss “demur” and “straightway” in your response.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

4. A paradox is a statement or idea that seems **contradictory** but actually expresses a truth. **(a) Synthesize:** What is the main paradox of this poem? **(b) Connect:** Is the poem’s main paradox also its theme? Explain, citing details from the poem in your response.

Writing to Sources Argument

Write a brief **response** to the poem. Explain whether you agree or disagree with the speaker’s central point. Cite details from the poem to support your ideas.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Academic terms appear in blue on these pages. If these words are not familiar to you, use a dictionary to find their definitions. Then, use them as you speak and write about the text.

My English

Julia Alvarez



Mami and Papi used to speak it when they had a secret they wanted to keep from us children. We lived then in the Dominican Republic, and the family as a whole spoke only Spanish at home, until my sisters and I started attending the Carol Morgan School, and we became a **bilingual** family. Spanish had its many tongues as well. There was the castellano¹ of Padre² Joaquín from Spain, whose lisp we all loved to imitate. Then the educated español my parents' families spoke, aunts and uncles who were always correcting us children, for we spent most of the day with the maids and so had picked up their “bad Spanish.” Campesinas,³ they spoke a lilting, animated campuno,⁴ ss swallowed, endings chopped off, funny turns of phrases. This campuno was my true mother tongue, not the Spanish of Calderón de la Barca or Cervantes or even Neruda,⁵ but of Chucha and Iluminada and Gladys and Ursulina from Juncalito and Licey and Boca de Yuma and San Juan de la Maguana.⁶ Those women yakked as they cooked, they storytold, they gossiped, they sang—boleros, merengues, canciones, salves.⁷ Theirs were the voices that belonged to the rain and the wind and the teeny, teeny stars even a small child could blot out with her thumb.

◀ **bilingual**
(bī lin' gwəl) *adj.*
using two languages

Besides all these versions of Spanish, every once in a while another strange tongue emerged from my papi's mouth or my mami's lips. What I first recognized was not a language, but a tone of voice, serious, urgent, something important and top secret being said, some uncle in trouble, someone divorcing, someone dead. *Say it in English so the children won't understand.* I would listen, straining

-
- 1. castellano** (că' stā yă' nō) Spanish for “Castilian,” the most widely spoken dialect of the Spanish language.
 - 2. Padre** (pă' drā) “Father” (Spanish), a form of address for a Roman Catholic priest.
 - 3. Campesinas** (cām pā sē' nās) simple rural women; peasant women (Spanish).
 - 4. campuno** (cām pōō' nō) Spanish dialect spoken in rural areas of the Dominican Republic.
 - 5. Calderón de la Barca** (cāl de rōn' dā lă bār' cā) . . . **Cervantes** (ser vān' tes) . . . **Neruda** (nā rōō' dā) important literary figures.
 - 6. Juncalito** (hōōŋ cā lē' tō) . . . **Licey** . . . **Boca de Yuma** (bō' cā dā yōō' mā) . . . **San Juan de la Maguana** (sān hwān' dā lă mā gwă' nā) small rural villages in the Dominican Republic.
 - 7. boleros** (bō ler' ōs) . . . **merengues** (mæ ren' gās) . . . **canciones** (cān sē' ō' nes) . . . **salves** (sāl' ves) Spanish and Latin American songs and dances.

to understand, thinking that this was not a different language but just another and harder version of Spanish. *Say it in English so the children won't understand.* From the beginning, English was the sound of worry and secrets, the sound of being left out.

I could make no sense of this “harder Spanish,” and so I tried by other means to find out what was going on. I knew my mother’s face by heart. When the little lines on the corners of her eyes crinkled, she was amused. When her nostrils flared and she bit her lips, she was trying hard not to laugh. She held her head down, eyes glancing up, when she thought I was lying. Whenever she spoke that gibberish English, I translated the general content by watching the Spanish expressions on her face.

Soon, I began to learn more English, at the Carol Morgan School. That is, when I had stopped gawking. The teacher and some of the American children had the strangest coloration: light hair, light eyes, light skin, as if Ursulina had soaked them in bleach too long, to’ deteñío.⁸ I did have some blond cousins, but they had deeply tanned skin, and as they grew older, their hair darkened, so their earlier paleness seemed a phase of their acquiring normal color. Just as strange was the little girl in my reader who had a *cat* and a *dog*, that looked just like un gatito y un perrito. Her mami was *Mother* and her papi *Father*. Why have a whole new language for school and for books with a teacher who could speak it teaching you double the amount of words you really needed?

Butter, butter, butter, butter. All day, one English word that had particularly struck me would go round and round in my mouth and weave through all the Spanish in my head until by the end of the day, the word did sound like just another Spanish word. And so I would say, “Mami, please pass la mantequilla.” She would scowl and say in English, “I’m sorry, I don’t understand. But would you be needing some butter on your bread?”

Why my parents didn’t first educate us in our native language by enrolling us in a Dominican school, I don’t know. Part of it was that Mami’s family had a tradition of sending the boys to the States to boarding school and college, and she had been one of the first girls to be allowed to join her brothers. At Abbot Academy,⁹ whose school song was our lullaby as babies (“Although Columbus and Cabot¹⁰ never heard of Abbot, it’s quite the place for you and me”), she had

8. to’ deteñío (tō dā tān yē’ ō) all washed out; completely colorless (Spanish).

9. **Abbot Academy** boarding school for girls in Andover, Massachusetts; merged in 1973 with the neighboring boys’ school, Phillips Academy.

10. **Cabot** (kab’ et) John Cabot (1450–1499), Italian explorer who sailed in the service of England and was the first European to discover the coast of North America in 1497.

become quite Americanized. It was very important, she kept saying, that we learn our English. She always used the possessive pronoun: *your* English, an inheritance we had come into and must wisely use. Unfortunately, my English became all mixed up with our Spanish.

Mix-up, or what's now called Spanglish, was the language we spoke for several years. There wasn't a sentence that wasn't colonized by an English word. At school, a Spanish word would suddenly slide into my English like someone butting into line. Teacher, whose face I was learning to read as minutely as my mother's, would scowl but no smile played on her lips. Her pale skin made her strange countenance hard to read, so that I often misjudged how much I could get away with. Whenever I made a mistake, Teacher would shake her head slowly, "In English, YU-LEE-AH, there's no such word as *columpio*. Do you mean a *swing*?"

I would bow my head, humiliated by the smiles and snickers of the American children around me. I grew insecure about Spanish. My native tongue was not quite as good as English, as if words like *columpio* were illegal immigrants trying to cross a border into another language. But Teacher's discerning grammar-and-vocabulary-patrol ears could tell and send them back.

Soon, I was talking up an English storm. "Did you eat English parrot?" my grandfather asked one Sunday. I had just enlisted yet one more patient servant to listen to my rendition of "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers" at breakneck pace. "Huh?" I asked impolitely in English, putting him in his place. *Cat got your tongue? No big deal! So there! Take that! Holy Toledo!* (Our teacher's favorite "curse word.") *Go jump in the lake! Really dumb. Golly. Gosh.* Slang, clichés, sayings, hotshot language that our teacher called, ponderously, idiomatic expressions. Riddles, jokes, puns, conundrums. *What is yellow and goes click-click? Why did the chicken cross the road? See you later, alligator.* How wonderful to call someone an alligator and not be scolded for being disrespectful. In fact, they were supposed to say back, *In a while, crocodile.*

There was also a neat little trick I wanted to try on an English-speaking adult at home. I had learned it from Elizabeth, my smart-alecky friend in fourth grade, whom I alternately worshiped and



resented. I'd ask her a question that required an explanation, and she'd answer, "Because . . ." "Elizabeth, how come you didn't go to Isabel's birthday party?" "Because . . ." "Why didn't you put your name in your reader?" "Because . . ." I thought that such a cool way to get around having to come up with answers. So, I practiced saying it under my breath, planning for the day I could use it on an unsuspecting English-speaking adult.

One Sunday at our extended family dinner, my grandfather sat down at the children's table to chat with us. He was famous, in fact, for the way he could carry on adult conversations with his grandchildren. He often spoke to us in English so that we could practice speaking it outside the classroom. He was a Cornell¹¹ man, a United Nations representative from our country. He gave speeches in English. Perfect English, my mother's phrase. That Sunday, he asked me a question. I can't even remember what it was because I wasn't really listening but lying in wait for my chance. "Because . . .," I answered him. Papito waited a second for the rest of my sentence and then gave me a thumbnail grammar lesson, "*Because* has to be followed by a clause."

"Why's that?" I asked, nonplussed.¹²

"Because," he winked. "Just because."

11. **Cornell** Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

12. **nonplussed** (nän plüst') *adj.* confused; baffled.



A beginning wordsmith, I had so much left to learn; sometimes it was disheartening. Once Tío¹³ Gus, the family intellectual, put a speck of salt on my grandparents' big dining table during Sunday dinner. He said, "Imagine this whole table is the human brain. Then this teensy grain is all we ever use of our intelligence!" He **enumerated** geniuses who had perhaps used two grains, maybe three: Einstein, Michelangelo, da Vinci, Beethoven. We children believed him. It was the kind of impossible fact we thrived on, proving as it did that the world out there was not drastically different from the one we were making up in our heads.

Later, at home, Mami said that you had to take what her younger brother said "with a grain of salt." I thought she was still referring to Tío Gus's demonstration, and I tried to puzzle out what she was saying. Finally, I asked what she meant. "Taking what someone says with a grain of salt is an idiomatic expression in English," she explained. It was pure voodoo is what it was—what later I learned poetry could also do: a grain of salt could symbolize both the human brain and a condiment for human nonsense. And it could be itself, too: a grain of salt to flavor a bland plate of American food.

When we arrived in New York, I was shocked. A country where everyone spoke English! These people must be smarter, I thought. Maids, waiters, taxi drivers, doormen, bums on the street, all spoke this difficult language. It took some time before I understood that Americans were not necessarily a smarter, superior race. It was as natural for them to learn their mother tongue as it was for a little Dominican baby to learn Spanish. It came with "mother's milk," my mother explained, and for a while I thought a mother tongue was a mother tongue because you got it from your mother's milk along with proteins and vitamins.

13. Tío (tē' o) "Uncle" (Spanish).

◀ **enumerated**

(ē nōō' mēr āt id) v.
named one by one;
specified, as in a list



Soon it wasn't so strange that everyone was speaking in English instead of Spanish. I learned not to hear it as English, but as sense. I no longer strained to understand, I understood. I relaxed in this second language. Only when someone with a heavy southern or British accent spoke in a movie, or at church when the priest droned his sermon—only then did I experience that little catch of anxiety. I

worried that I would not be able to understand, that I wouldn't be able to “keep up” with the voice speaking in this acquired language. I would be like those people from the Bible we had studied in religion class, whom I imagined standing at the foot of an enormous tower¹⁴ that looked just like the skyscrapers around me. They had been punished for their pride by being made to speak different languages so that they didn't understand what anyone was saying.

But at the foot of those towering New York skyscrapers, I began to understand more and more—not less and less—English. In sixth grade, I had one of the first in a lucky line of great English teachers who began to nurture in me a love of language, a love that had been there since my childhood of listening closely to words. Sister Maria Generosa did not make our class interminably diagram sentences from a workbook or learn a catechism¹⁵ of grammar rules. Instead, she asked us to write little stories imagining we were snowflakes, birds, pianos, a stone in the pavement, a star in the sky. What would it feel like

to be a flower with roots in the ground? If the clouds could talk, what would they say? She had an expressive, dreamy look that was **accentuated** by the wimple¹⁶ that framed her face.

Supposing, just supposing . . . My mind would take off, soaring into possibilities, a flower with roots, a star in the sky, a cloud full of sad, sad tears, a piano crying out each time its back was tapped, music only to our ears.

Sister Maria stood at the chalkboard. Her chalk was always snapping in two because she wrote with such energy, her whole habit¹⁷ shaking with the swing of her arm, her hand tap-tap-tapping on the board. “Here's a simple sentence: “The snow fell.”” Sister

I worried that I would not be able to understand, that I wouldn't be able to “keep up”...

accentuated ►
(ak sen' chōō āt id)
v. emphasized;
heightened the
effect of

14. **enormous tower** a reference to the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1–9. According to Genesis, early Babylonians tried to build a tower to heaven, but they were thwarted when God caused them to speak many languages rather than one.

15. **catechism** (kat' ə kiz' əm) *n.* short book written in question-and-answer format.

16. **wimple** (wim' pəl) *n.* cloth worn around the head, neck, and chin by some nuns.

17. **habit** (hab' it) *n.* robe or dress worn by some nuns.

pointed with her chalk, her eyebrows lifted, her wimple poked up. Sometimes I could see wisps of gray hair that strayed from under her headdress. “But watch what happens if we put an adverb at the beginning and a prepositional phrase at the end: ‘Gently, the snow fell on the bare hills.’”

I thought about the snow. I saw how it might fall on the hills, tapping lightly on the bare branches of trees. Softly, it would fall on the cold, bare fields. On toys children had left out in the yard, and on cars and on little birds and on people out late walking on the streets. Sister Marie filled the chalkboard with snowy print, on and on, handling and shaping and moving the language, scribbling all over the board until English, those verbal gadgets, those tricks and turns of phrases, those little fixed units and counters, became a charged, fluid mass that carried me in its great fluent waves, rolling and moving onward, to deposit me on the shores of my new homeland. I was no longer a foreigner with no ground to stand on. I had landed in the English language.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julia Alvarez (b. 1950)

Julia Alvarez, the author of “My English,” was born in New York but grew up in the Dominican Republic, a small Caribbean nation. An independent state since 1844, the Dominican Republic has often struggled with foreign conquest, political unrest, and dictatorship. Alvarez’s family was forced to return to New York in 1960 because her father had participated in a movement against the brutal Dominican dictator Raphael Trujillo.

When her family fled the Dominican Republic and returned to New York, Julia Alvarez was ten years old, and Spanish was her primary language. Painfully aware of not fitting in, Julia took refuge in reading and making up stories. She says, “I landed, not in the United States, but in the English language. That became my new home.”

Alvarez attended Middlebury College, where she won several poetry awards. She later earned a master’s degree in creative writing from Syracuse University. Alvarez says that writing is “a way to understand yourself.” Her writing has been praised for its humor, sensitivity, and insight.



Close Reading Activities

READ

Comprehension

Reread all or part of the text to help you answer the following questions.

1. What types of conversations did the author's parents have in English rather than Spanish?
2. At what point in her life does the author begin to understand English without difficulty?
3. How does Sister Maria Generosa change the author's attitude toward English?

Research: Clarify Details This essay may include references that are unfamiliar to you. Choose at least one unfamiliar detail, and briefly research it. Then, explain how the information you learned from research sheds light on an aspect of the essay.

Summarize Write an objective summary of the essay. Remember that an objective summary is free from opinion and evaluation.

Language Study

Selection Vocabulary The following passages appear in the essay. Identify the root of each boldface word. For each, explain what the root means and how that meaning is evident in the word.

- We lived then in the Dominican Republic, and the family as a whole spoke only Spanish at home, until

my sisters and I started attending the Carol Morgan School, and we became a **bilingual** family.

- He **enumerated** geniuses who had perhaps used two grains...
- She had an expressive, dreamy look that was **accentuated** by the wimple that framed her face.

Literary Analysis

Reread the identified passage. Then, respond to the questions that follow.

Focus Passage (p. 148)

Soon I began ... on your bread?

Key Ideas and Details

1. **(a) Interpret:** What does *la mantequilla* mean in English? **(b) Draw Conclusions:** How does the author use this word to **illustrate** her early experiences learning English?

Craft and Structure

2. **Interpret:** In this passage, how does the author communicate her confusion between English and Spanish through visual aspects of the text, word choice, and sentence structure? Cite examples.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

3. **(a) Compare and Contrast:** How does the author's attitude toward English at the end of the essay compare to the one she describes in this passage? **(b) Support:** Cite examples from the text that show the author's changed feelings toward English.

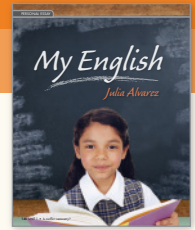
Voice

Word choice, attitude, and syntax (sentence structure), contribute to an author's **voice**, his or her unique sound or personality. Reread the essay, and take notes on details that reveal Alvarez's voice.

1. **(a)** Identify one passage in the essay in which the word choice, attitude, and sentence structures

seem especially **noteworthy**. **(b)** Using this example, describe Alvarez's voice.

2. **Conformity:** By making English part of both her life and voice as a writer, did Alvarez conform? Explain your position, citing details from the text.



DISCUSS • RESEARCH • WRITE

From Text to Topic **Partner Discussion**

Discuss the following passage with a partner. Take notes during the discussion. Contribute your own ideas, and support them with examples from the text.

I would bow my head, humiliated by the smiles and snickers of the American children around me. I grew insecure about Spanish. My native tongue was not quite as good as English, as if words like *columpio* were illegal immigrants trying to cross a border into another language. But Teacher's discerning grammar-and-vocabulary-patrol ears could tell and send them back.

Research **Investigate the Topic**

Learning English Some children who immigrate to the United States first learn English in school. Unlike Julia Alvarez, many of these children do not have the help of bilingual parents.

Assignment

Conduct research on the language **barrier** faced by some immigrants coming to the United States. Find memoirs, articles, or essays by people who immigrated as children and learned English once they arrived. Summarize your research in a **journal or blog entry** about individuality and conformity as it relates to the language one speaks.

Writing to Sources **Informative Text**

In "My English," Alvarez uses idioms to explain her growth as an English speaker. Idioms can be difficult for non-native speakers in any language.

Assignment

Write an **essay** in which you discuss Alvarez's understanding of idioms as she learned English and explain why English learners may struggle with these types of expressions. Include the following elements:

- a definition of idioms
- an explanation of Alvarez's feelings about idioms as she learned English
- conclusions about why idioms are often challenging for language learners

Use details from "My English" to support your ideas. In your conclusion, make connections between your analysis and Alvarez's experiences.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think Alvarez uses law-enforcement terms in this passage?
2. What does this passage say about the power of language to bring people together or to divide them?

PREPARATION FOR ESSAY

You may use the results of this research in an essay you will write at the end of this section.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Academic terms appear in blue on these pages. If these words are not familiar to you, use a dictionary to find their definitions. Then, use them as you speak and write about the text.



The Case for Fitting In

David Berreby

Americans have a **prejudice** in favor of lone wolves. Moral superiority, we like to think, belongs to the person who stands alone.

Until recently, social science went along with this idea. Lab-based research supposedly furnished slam-dunk evidence that, as the social psychologist Solomon Asch put it, “the social process is polluted” by “the dominance of conformity.” That research, though, was rooted in its time and place: The United States in the aftermath of World War II, when psychologists and sociologists focused on the conformity that made millions give in to totalitarian regimes.¹

Lately, however, some researchers have been dissenting from the textbook version. Where an earlier generation saw only a contemptible urge to go along, revisionists see normal people balancing their self-respect against their equally valuable respect for other people, and for human relationships. For evidence, revisionists say, look no further than those very experiments that supposedly proved the evils of conformity.

The psychologists Bert Hodges and Anne Geyer recently took a new look at a well-known experiment devised by Asch in the 1950s. Asch’s subjects were asked to look at a line printed on a white card and then tell which of three similar lines was the same length. The answer was obvious, but the catch was that each volunteer was sitting in a small group whose other members were actually in on the experiment. Asch found that when those other people all agreed on the wrong answer, many of the subjects went along with the group, against the evidence of their own senses.

But the question (*Which of these lines matches the one on the card?*) was not posed just once. Each subject saw 18 sets of lines, and the group answer was wrong for 12 of them. Examining all the data, Hodges and Geyer found that many people were varying their answers, sometimes agreeing with the group, more often sticking up for their own view. (The average participant gave in to the group three times out of 12.)

◀ **prejudice**
(prej'ə dis) *n.* strong opinion, often formed without good reason

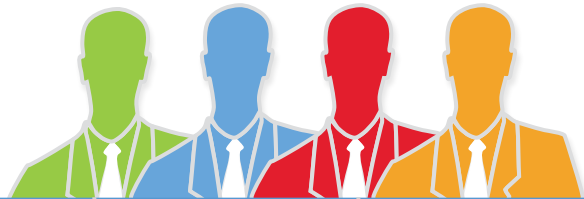
1. **totalitarian regimes** forms of government based on total control of all aspects of public life.

solidarity▶

(sāl'ə dar'ə tē) n. unity based on common interests or purpose

This means that the subjects in the most famous “people are sheep” experiment were not sheep at all—they were human beings who largely stuck to their guns, but now and then went along with the group. Why? Because in getting along with other people, most decent people know, as Hodges and Geyer put it, the “importance of cooperation, tact and social **solidarity** in situations that are tense or difficult.”

The table below shows the results of the Asch conformity studies that are discussed in this article.



Majority Responses to Standard and Comparison Lines on Successive Trials*

| Trial | Length of standard (in inches) | Length of standard (in inches) | | | Length of comparison lines (in inches) | Majority error (in inches) |
|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-------|--|----------------------------|
| a** | 10 | 8 3/4 | 10 | 8 | 0 | |
| b** | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 1/2 | 0 | |
| 1 | 3 | 3 3/4 | 4 1/4 | 3 | + 3/4 | Moderate |
| 2 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 1/2 | - 1 | Moderate |
| c** | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 0 | |
| 3 | 3 | 3 3/4 | 4 1/4 | 3 | + 1 1/4 | Extreme |
| 4 | 8 | 6 1/4 | 8 | 6 3/4 | - 1 1/4 | Moderate |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 1/2 | + 1 1/2 | Extreme |
| 6 | 8 | 6 1/4 | 8 | 6 3/4 | - 1 3/4 | Extreme |
| d** | 10 | 8 3/4 | 10 | 8 | 0 | |
| e** | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 1/2 | 0 | |
| 7 | 3 | 3 3/4 | 4 1/4 | 3 | + 3/4 | Moderate |
| 8 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 1/2 | - 1 | Moderate |
| f** | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 0 | |
| 9 | 3 | 3 3/4 | 4 1/4 | 3 | + 1 1/4 | Extreme |
| 10 | 8 | 6 1/4 | 8 | 6 3/4 | - 1 1/4 | Moderate |
| 11 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 1/2 | + 1 1/2 | Extreme |
| 12 | 8 | 6 1/4 | 8 | 6 3/4 | - 1 3/4 | Extreme |

* from *Studies of Independence and Conformity: A Minority of One Against a Unanimous Majority* by Solomon Asch

** Letters of the first column designate “neutral” trials, or trials to which the majority responded correctly. The numbered trials were “critical,” i.e., the majority responded incorrectly.

Bold face figures designate the incorrect majority responses.

Trials d to 12 are identical with trials a to 6; they followed each other without pause.

In a similar spirit, others have taken a new look at the famous experiments on “obedience to authority” conducted by Asch’s student Stanley Milgram. Milgram’s subjects, assuming they were part of a memory test, were asked to administer what they thought were increasingly strong electric shocks to another person (who was, in reality, another experimenter pretending to be pained). Encouraged only by an occasional “Please go on” and the like, every one went well beyond “Very Strong Shock,” and the majority went to the 450-volt end of the scale, which was two notches above the one labeled “Danger: Severe Shock.”

Horrifying, in most retellings. But, as the University of Chicago law professor Cass Sunstein has argued, Milgram’s “subjects were not simply obeying a leader, but responding to someone whose **credentials** and good faith they thought they could trust.” Without that kind of trust society would fall apart tomorrow, because most of what we know about the world comes to us from other people. Milgram’s experiment, then, doesn’t prove that people are inclined to obey any nut job in a white coat. It shows instead that in difficult situations, when they wrestle with the line between trust and skepticism, trust often wins. Much of the time, that’s a good thing.

◀ **credentials**
(kri den’shəlz) *n.*
documents showing one’s right to exercise power; qualifications

In other words, the interesting data in the Asch and Milgram studies have been distorted into a simple takeaway: “Call it like you see it”; never mind others’ feelings, opinions, or traditions. Of course, no society should ask for knee-jerk obedience to any command. But, as the dissenters point out, there are dangers in a knee-jerk refusal to get in line. For example, in a version of the Milgram experiment in which the dupe is seated in a group of three, he will defy the “experimenter” and behave humanely—if the other two people refuse to inflict further shocks. That kind of conformity is, to put it mildly, desirable.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Berreby (b. 1958)

David Berreby is a science journalist who often writes about human behavior. His articles have been published in numerous magazines, both print and electronic, including *Nature*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Slate*. He is the author of *Us and Them: The Science of Identity*.

Close Reading Activities

READ

Comprehension

Reread all or part of the text to help you answer the following questions.

1. Describe Solomon Asch's conformity experiment.
2. What did Hodges and Geyer find in their review of Asch's study?
3. How did Stanley Milgram test conformity?

Research: Clarify Details Choose an unfamiliar detail from this article and briefly research it. Then, explain how the information you learned sheds light on an aspect of the article.

Summarize Write an objective summary of the article, one that is free from opinion and evaluation.

Language Study

Selection Vocabulary The following passages appear in "The Case for Fitting In." Define each boldfaced word. Then, use the word in a new sentence.

- Americans have a **prejudice** in favor of lone wolves.
- Because in getting along with other people,

most decent people know...the "importance of cooperation, tact and social **solidarity**...."

- Milgram's "subjects were not simply obeying a leader, but responding to someone whose **credentials** and good faith they thought they could trust."

Literary Analysis

Reread the identified passage. Then, respond to the questions that follow.

Focus Passage (p. 159)

In a similar spirit ... a good thing.

Key Ideas and Details

1. (a) What **distinction** between Milgram's researchers and other leaders does the quotation by Cass Sunstein point out? (b) **Analyze:** Why is this distinction so important?
2. **Interpret:** According to the author, is the reality of the Milgram study as "horrifying" as most people think? Explain, citing details from the text.

Craft and Structure

3. (a) What facts does the author present in the first paragraph? (b) **Connect:** How does the second paragraph relate to the first? Explain.
4. (a) **Distinguish:** Identify one example of slang and one sentence fragment in this passage. (b) **Analyze:** What tone, or attitude, do these choices help to create? Explain.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

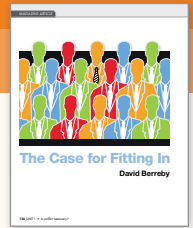
5. (a) **Connect:** According to Berreby, why is trust in leaders so **critical** to the social fabric? (b) **Evaluate:** Do you agree with this idea? Explain why or why not.

Supporting Evidence

Supporting **evidence** is the proof used in an argument. It can include facts, examples, statistics, and expert testimony. Reread the article, and take notes on the author's use of evidence.

1. (a) Find two different kinds of evidence in the article. (b) What idea does each one support?

2. **Conformity:** Berreby includes a quote from Solomon Asch: "The social process is polluted by the dominance of conformity." Do you think Berreby's evidence proves his argument against Asch's views? Cite details from the article in your response.



DISCUSS • RESEARCH • WRITE

From Text to Topic **Partner Discussion**

Discuss the following passage with a partner. As you exchange ideas, support them with details from the text and take notes. Then, summarize your ideas and share them with the class as a whole.

This means that the subjects in the most famous “people are sheep” experiment were not sheep at all—they were human beings who largely stuck to their guns, but now and then went along with the group. Why? Because in getting along with other people, most decent people know, as Hodges and Geyer put it, the “importance of cooperation, tact and social solidarity in situations that are tense or difficult.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think Berreby includes the expressions “people are sheep” and “stuck to their guns”?
2. Is following others for the purposes of cooperation or solidarity the same thing as conformity?

Research **Investigate the Topic**

Ethics Psychology studies, like the ones Berreby describes, must be ethical, or morally right. Any study that hurts people emotionally or physically is unethical.

Assignment

Conduct research on the ethical controversy surrounding Stanley Milgram’s experiments and methods. **Consult** psychology journals and magazines to include the opinions of experts. Take careful notes and identify your sources. Share your findings in an **informal presentation**.

PREPARATION FOR ESSAY

You may use the results of this research in an essay you will write at the end of this section.

Writing to Sources **Argument**

In “The Case for Fitting In,” David Berreby makes the following observation: “Americans have a prejudice in favor of lone wolves. Moral superiority, we like to think, belongs to the person who stands alone.”

Assignment

Write an **argumentative essay** in which you take a position about Berreby’s observation. Do you agree or disagree that Americans are biased in favor of “lone wolves,” or those who refuse to conform? Follow these steps to draft your essay:

- Consider the types of people Americans admire. Identify politicians, military leaders, characters from movies and TV, and other types of heroes.
- Choose two to three of these figures and analyze the qualities they present that Americans admire. Do all of these figures stand alone?
- Organize your ideas logically and include strong supporting evidence for each main point. Clearly state whether you agree or disagree with Berreby’s point and why.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Academic terms appear in blue on these pages. If these words are not familiar to you, use a dictionary to find their definitions. Then, use them as you speak and write about the text.

from
THE
GEEKS
SHALL INHERIT
THE EARTH

Alexandra Robbins

In the decade I've spent examining various microcosms¹ of life in U.S. schools—from the multitude of students pressured to succeed in school and sports to the twenty-something products of this educational Rube Goldberg machine²—a disturbing pattern has emerged. Young people are trying frantically to force themselves into an unbending mold of expectations, convinced that they live in a two-tiered system in which they are either a resounding success or they have already failed. And the more they try to squeeze themselves into that shrinking, **allegedly** normative space, the faster the walls close in.

The students outside these walls are the kids who typically are not considered part of the in crowd, the ones who are excluded, blatantly or subtly, from the premier table in the lunchroom. I refer to them as “cafeteria fringe.” Whether alone or in groups, these geeks, loners, punks, floaters, nerds, freaks, dorks, gamers, bandies, art kids, theater geeks, choir kids, Goths, weirdos, indies, scenes, emos, skaters, and various types of racial and other minorities are often relegated to subordinate social status simply because they are, or seem to be, even the slightest bit different.

Students alone did not create these boundaries. The No Child Left Behind law, a disproportionate emphasis on SATs, APs, and other standardized tests, and a suffocating homogenization³ of the U.S. education system have all contributed to a rabidly conformist atmosphere that stifles unique people, ideas, and expression. The methods that schools and government officials claimed would

◀ **allegedly**
(ə lej' id lē) *adv.*
questionably
true; supposed

-
1. **microcosms** (mī'krō kā'zəmz) *n.* small communities representative of a larger whole
 2. **Rube Goldberg machine** a comical machine that makes a simple process needlessly complicated
 3. **homogenization** (hə māj' ə niz ā' shun) *n.* blended into an even mixture

improve America’s “progress” are the same methods that hold back the students who are most likely to further that progress.

In precisely the years that we should be embracing differences among students, urging them to pursue their divergent interests at full throttle, we’re instead forcing them into a skyline of sameness, muffling their voices, grounding their dreams. The result? As a Midwestern senior told me for my book *The Overachievers*, high schoolers view life as “a conveyor belt,” making **monotonous** scheduled stops at high school, college, graduate school, and a series of jobs until death. Middle schools in North America have been called “the Bermuda triangle of education.” Only 22 percent of U.S. youth socialize with people of another race. U.S. students have some of the highest rates of emotional problems and the most negative views of peer culture among countries surveyed by the World Health Organization.

monotonous ▶
(mə năt’ n əs) *adj.*
unvarying; dull
and uniform

Too many students are losing hope because of exclusion or bullying that they believe they’re doomed to experience for the rest of their lives. It is unacceptable that the system we rely on to develop children into well-adjusted, learned, cultured adults allows drones to dominate and increasingly devalues freethinkers. In 1957, theologian Paul Tillich told a graduating university class, “We hope for nonconformists among you, for your sake, for the sake of the nation, for the sake of humanity.” More than half a century later, schools, students, and sometimes parents treat these nonconformists like second-class citizens, **squelching** that hope. There is too much pressure on children to conform to a narrowing in-crowd image, when we should be nurturing the outsiders who reject that image. In large part, those are the individuals who will turn out to be the kinds of interesting, admired, and inspiring adults who earn respect and attention for their impact on their community or the world.

squelching ▶
(skwelch’ in) *v.*
suppressing; silencing

Or even the celebrisphere. ...

Musician Bruce Springsteen was so unpopular in high school that, “other people didn’t even know I was there,” he has said. He started a band because “I was on the outside looking in.”

Television host Tim Gunn, who identified himself as “a classic nerd” in school, was “crazy about making things: I was addicted to my Lincoln Logs, Erector Set, and especially my Legos,” he has said. “Between my stutter and my fetishizing of Lego textures, I was taunted and teased.” Now Gunn is a fashion world icon precisely because of his eye toward “making things”—and his catchphrase, “Make it work,” has become famous.

All of these people exemplify what I call **quirk theory**.

QUIRK THEORY:

Many of the differences that cause a student to be excluded in school are the same traits or real-world skills that others will value, love, respect, or find compelling about that person in adulthood and outside of the school setting.

Quirk theory suggests that popularity in school is not a key to success and satisfaction in adulthood. Conventional notions of popularity are wrong. What if popularity is not the same thing as social success? What if students who are considered outsiders aren't really socially inadequate at all? Being an outsider doesn't necessarily indicate any sort of social failing. We do not view a tuba player as musically challenged if he cannot play the violin. He's just a different kind of musician. A sprinter is still considered an athlete even if she can't play basketball. She's a different kind of athlete. Rather than view the cafeteria fringe as less socially successful than the popular crowd, we could simply accept that they are a different kind of social.



Musician Bruce Springsteen was so unpopular in high school that, "other people didn't even know I was there," he has said. He started a band because "I was on the outside looking in."



To date, musician Bruce Springsteen (shown on the left in his 1967 high school senior yearbook photo and on the right in performance) has won a total of twenty Grammy Awards.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexandra Robbins (b. 1976)

Best-selling author Alexandra Robbins has made a career out of writing about teenagers, college students, and recent graduates. After graduating from Yale University, she worked for *The New Yorker* magazine and wrote her first book. While researching her book about secret societies at Yale, Robbins found Yale graduate and former president George W. Bush's high school transcript and SAT scores. When published, the story made the young journalist famous. When not writing, Robbins speaks at schools about cliques, popularity, and bullying. In 2007, she won the Heartsongs Award for positive contributions to the mental health of children and young adults.

Close Reading Activities

READ

Comprehension

Reread all or part of the text to help you answer the following questions.

1. Name two factors that, according to Robbins, contribute to a conformist atmosphere in schools.
2. According to Robbins, what types of people are “freethinkers”?
3. What is “quirk theory”?

Research: Clarify Details Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from this essay and briefly research it. Then, explain how the information you learned sheds light on an aspect of the text.

Summarize Write an objective summary of the text. Remember that an objective summary is free from opinion and evaluation.

Language Study

Selection Vocabulary The following passages appear in the essay. Identify at least one synonym and one antonym for each boldfaced word. Then, use each word in a sentence of your own.

- And the more they try to squeeze themselves into that shrinking, **allegedly** normative space, the faster the walls close in.

- ...high schoolers view life as “a conveyor belt,” making **monotonous** scheduled stops ...
- ...students, and sometimes parents treat these nonconformists like second-class citizens, **snuffing** that hope.

Literary Analysis

Reread the identified passage. Then, respond to the questions that follow.

Focus Passage (p. 164)

Too many students ... community or the world.

Key Ideas and Details

1. **(a) Infer:** What is “the system” to which Robbins refers? **(b) Analyze:** What main problem does she see in this system?

Craft and Structure

2. **(a) Distinguish:** What words does the author use

to identify or describe nonconformist students when they are young? **(b) Distinguish:** What words does she use to **characterize** those same students after they have become adults?

(c) Analyze: How do these word choices help to emphasize the author’s central ideas? Explain.

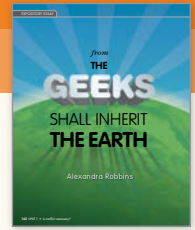
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

3. **Draw Conclusions:** In Robbins’s view, what is the cost of conformity for both individuals and society as a whole? Cite details from the passage in your answer.

Diction

Diction, or word choice, is a key part of a writer’s style. Diction may be formal, informal, plain, ornate, technical, old-fashioned, or even slangy. Reread the essay and take notes on the author’s diction.

1. **(a)** Identify two examples of slang in the essay. **(b)** What effect does the use of slang have?
2. **Conformity: (a)** Describe Robbins’s overall diction in this essay. **(b)** How does this diction support her central idea about nonconformity?



DISCUSS • RESEARCH • WRITE

From Text to Topic **Group Discussion**

Discuss the following passage with a group of classmates. Take notes during the discussion. Contribute your own ideas, and support them with examples from the text.

The students outside ... slightest bit different. (p. 163)

Research **Investigate the Topic**

Nonconformist Achievers Robbins claims nonconformists often become “interesting, admired, and inspired adults” and that young people who are different should be encouraged and allowed to flourish.

Assignment

Conduct research on a person who was considered unconventional in his or her youth but later made a great contribution to society. Consult encyclopedias and accounts from primary sources. Take notes and keep a list of all sources you use. Write a **short biography** of this person in which you **analyze** his or her contributions and consider how being different may have contributed to those achievements.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What does the list of “cafeteria fringe” students suggest about the group?
2. Should the students on this list be encouraged to conform? Why or why not?

PREPARATION FOR ESSAY

You may use the results of this research in an essay you will write at the end of this section.

Writing to Sources **Argument**

In her essay, Robbins writes, “Conventional notions of popularity are wrong. What if popularity is not the same thing as social success?”

Assignment

Write a brief **position paper** in which you agree or disagree with Robbins’s statement based on the **evidence** she presents in the essay. Follow these steps:

- Analyze Robbins’s central idea in the essay.
- Evaluate her interpretation of popularity.
- Decide whether you agree with Robbins entirely, partially, or not at all. Clearly state your position.
- Use details from the text to support your claims.
- Provide a conclusion in which you make connections between your analysis of popularity and Robbins’s interpretation.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Academic terms appear in blue on these pages. Use a dictionary to find their definitions. Then, use them as you speak and write about the text.

from **Blue Nines**
and **Red Words**

from Born on a Blue Day



Daniel Tammet



I was born on January 31, 1979—a Wednesday. I know it was a Wednesday, because the date is blue in my mind and Wednesdays are always blue, like the number 9 or the sound of loud voices arguing. I like my birth date, because of the way I’m able to visualize most of the numbers in it as smooth and round shapes, similar to pebbles on a beach. That’s because they are prime numbers: 31, 19, 197, 97, 79, and 1979 are all divisible only by themselves and 1.

I can recognize every prime up to 9,973 by their “pebble-like” quality. It’s just the way my brain works.

I have a rare condition known as savant syndrome, little known before its portrayal by actor Dustin Hoffman in the Oscar-winning 1988 film *Rain Man*. Like Hoffman’s character, Raymond Babbitt, I have an almost obsessive need for order and routine which affects virtually every aspect of my life. For example, I eat exactly 45 grams of porridge for breakfast each morning; I weigh the bowl with an electronic scale to make sure. Then I count the number of items of clothing I’m wearing before I leave my house. I get anxious if I can’t drink my cups of tea at the same time each day. Whenever I become too stressed and I can’t breathe properly, I close my eyes and count. Thinking of numbers helps me to become calm again.

Numbers are my friends, and they are always around me. Each one is unique and has its own personality. The number 11 is friendly and 5 is loud, whereas 4 is both shy and quiet—it's my favorite number, perhaps because it reminds me of myself. Some are big—23, 667, 1,179—while others are small: 6, 13, 581. Some are beautiful, like 333, and some are ugly, like 289. To me, every number is special.

No matter where I go or what I'm doing, numbers are never far from my thoughts. In an interview with talk show host David Letterman in New York, I told David he looked like the number 117—tall and lanky. Later outside, in the appropriately numerically named Times Square, I gazed up at the towering skyscrapers and felt surrounded by 9s—the number I most associate with feelings of immensity.

Scientists call my visual, emotional experience of numbers synesthesia, a rare neurological¹ mixing of the senses, which most commonly results in the ability to see alphabetical letters and/or numbers in color. Mine is an unusual and complex type, through which I see numbers as shapes, colors, textures and motions. The number 1, for example, is a brilliant and bright white, like someone shining a flashlight into my eyes. Five is a clap of thunder or the sound of waves crashing against rocks. Thirty-seven is lumpy like porridge, while 89 reminds me of falling snow.

Probably the most famous case of synesthesia was the one written up over a period of thirty years from the 1920s by the Russian psychologist A. R. Luria of a journalist called Shereshevsky with a prodigious memory. “S,” as Luria called him in his notes for the book *The Mind of a Mnemonist*, had a highly visual memory which allowed him to “see” words and numbers as different shapes and colors. “S” was able to remember a matrix of 50 digits after studying it for three minutes, both immediately afterwards and many years later. Luria credited Shereshevsky's synesthetic experiences as the basis for his remarkable short- and long-term memory.

Using my own synesthetic experiences since early childhood, I have grown up with the ability to handle and calculate huge numbers in my head without any conscious effort, just like the Raymond Babbitt character. In fact, this is a talent common

1. **neurological** (noor'ə läj'i kəl) *adj.* occurring in the brain.

No matter where
I go or what I'm
doing, numbers
are never far from
my thoughts.

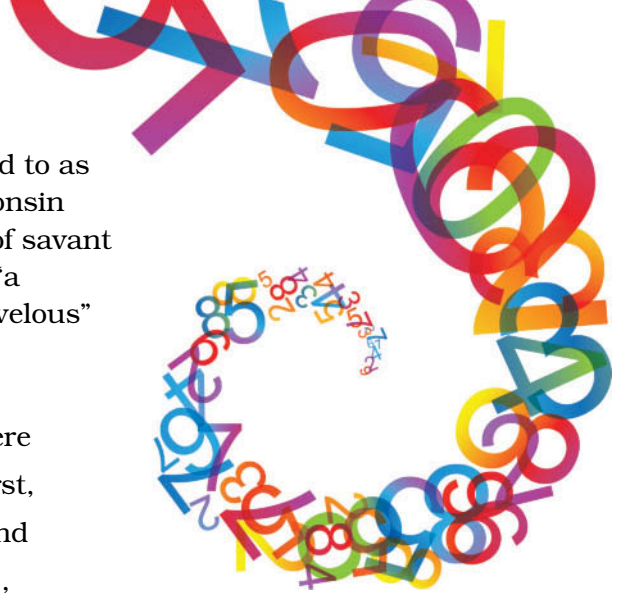
to several other real-life savants (sometimes referred to as “lightning calculators”). Dr. Darold Treffert, a Wisconsin physician and the leading researcher in the study of savant syndrome, gives one example, of a blind man with “a faculty of **calculating** to a degree little short of marvelous” in his book *Extraordinary People*:

When he was asked how many grains of corn there would be in any one of 64 boxes, with 1 in the first, 2 in the second, 4 in the third, 8 in the fourth, and so on, he gave answers for the fourteenth (8,192), for the eighteenth (131,072) and the twenty-fourth (8,388,608) instantaneously, and he gave the figures for the forty-eighth box (140,737,488,355,328) in six seconds. He also gave the total in all 64 boxes correctly (18,446,744,073,709,551,616) in forty-five seconds.

My favorite kind of calculation is power multiplication, which means multiplying a number by itself a specified number of times. Multiplying a number by itself is called squaring; for example, the square of 72 is $72 \times 72 = 5,184$. Squares are always **symmetrical** shapes in my mind, which makes them especially beautiful to me. Multiplying the same number three times over is called cubing or “raising” to the third power. The cube, or third power, of 51 is equivalent to $51 \times 51 \times 51 = 132,651$. I see each result of a power multiplication as a distinctive visual pattern in my head. As the sums and their results grow, so the mental shapes and colors I experience become increasingly more complex. I see 37’s fifth power— $37 \times 37 \times 37 \times 37 \times 37 = 69,343,957$ —as a large circle composed of smaller circles running clockwise from the top around.

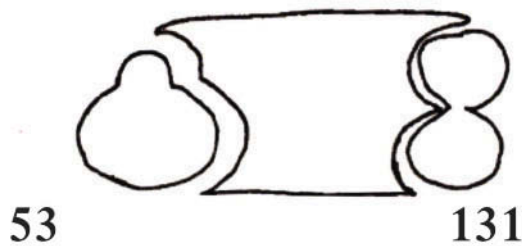
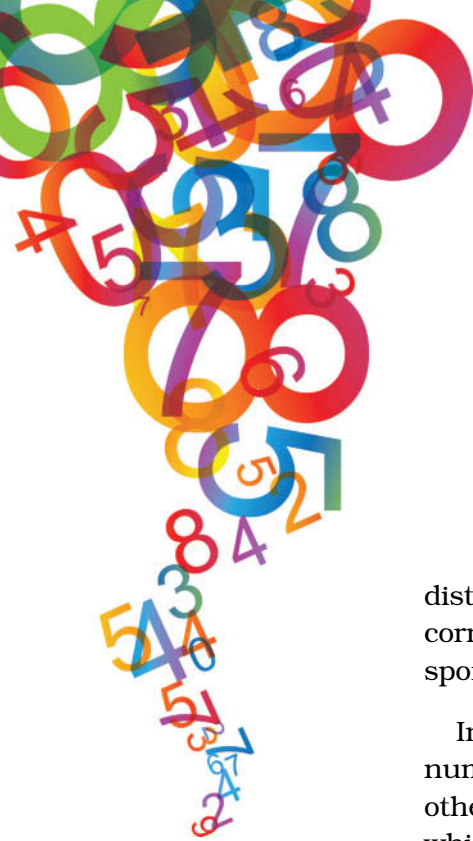
When I divide one number by another, in my head I see a spiral rotating downwards in larger and larger loops, which seem to warp and curve. Different divisions produce different sizes of spirals with varying curves. From my mental imagery I’m able to calculate a sum like $13 \div 97$ (0.1340206 . . .) to almost a hundred decimal places.

I never write anything down when I’m calculating, because I’ve always been able to do the sums in my head, and it’s much easier for me to visualize the answer using my synesthetic shapes than to try to follow the “carry the one” techniques taught in the textbooks we are given at school. When multiplying, I see the two numbers as



◀ **calculating**
(kal' kyōō lāt' in)
v. determining by using mathematics

◀ **symmetrical**
(si mē' tri kəl)
adj. capable of being divided into identical halves



distinct shapes. The image changes and a third shape emerges—the correct answer. The process takes a matter of seconds and happens spontaneously. It’s like doing math without having to think.

In the illustration above I’m multiplying 53 by 131. I see both numbers as a unique shape and locate each spatially opposite the other. The space created between the two shapes creates a third, which I perceive as a new number: 6,943, the solution to the sum.

Different tasks involve different shapes, and I also have various sensations or emotions for certain numbers. Whenever I multiply with 11 I always experience a feeling of the digits tumbling downwards in my head. I find 6s hardest to remember of all the numbers, because I experience them as tiny black dots, without any distinctive shape or texture. I would describe them as like little gaps or holes. I have visual and sometimes emotional responses to every number up to 10,000, like having my own visual, numerical vocabulary. And just like a poet’s choice of words, I find some combinations of numbers more beautiful than others: ones go well with darker numbers like 8s and 9s, but not so well with 6s. A telephone number with the sequence 189 is much more beautiful to me than one with a sequence like 116.

This aesthetic² dimension to my synesthesia is something that has its ups and downs. If I see a number I experience as particularly beautiful on a shop sign or a car license plate, there’s a shiver of excitement and pleasure. On the other hand, if the numbers don’t match my experience of them—if, for example, a shop sign’s price has “99 pence” in red or green (instead of blue)—then I find that uncomfortable and irritating.

It is not known how many savants have synesthetic experiences to help them in the areas they excel in. One reason for this is that, like

2. **aesthetic** (es thet'ik) *adj.* pleasing in appearance; artistic.

Raymond Babbitt, many suffer profound disability, preventing them from explaining to others how they do the things that they do. I am fortunate not to suffer from any of the most severe impairments that often come with abilities such as mine.

Like most individuals with savant syndrome, I am also on the autistic spectrum. I have Asperger's syndrome, a relatively mild and high-functioning form of autism that affects around 1 in every 300 people in the United Kingdom. According to a 2001 study by the U.K.'s National Autistic Society, nearly half of all adults with Asperger's syndrome are not diagnosed until after the age of sixteen. I was finally diagnosed at age twenty-five following tests and an interview at the Autism Research Centre in Cambridge.

Autism, including Asperger's syndrome, is defined by the presence of impairments affecting social interaction, communication, and imagination (problems with abstract or flexible thought and empathy, for example). Diagnosis is not easy and cannot be made by a blood test or brain scan; doctors have to observe behavior and study the individual's developmental history from infancy.

People with Asperger's often have good language skills and are able to lead relatively normal lives. Many have above-average IQs and excel in areas that involve logical or visual thinking. Like other forms of autism, Asperger's is a condition affecting many more men than women (around 80 percent of autistics and 90 percent of those diagnosed with Asperger's are men). Single-mindedness is a defining characteristic, as is a strong drive to analyze detail and identify rules and patterns in systems. Specialized skills involving memory, numbers, and mathematics are common. It is not known for certain what causes someone to have Asperger's, though it is something you are born with.

For as long as I can remember, I have experienced numbers in the visual, synesthetic way that I do. Numbers are my first language, one I often think and feel in. Emotions can be hard for me to understand or know how to react to, so I often use numbers to help me. If a friend says they feel sad or depressed, I picture myself sitting in the dark hollowness of number 6 to help me experience the same sort of feeling and understand it. If I read in an article that a person felt intimidated by something, I imagine myself standing next to the

And just like a poet's choice of words, I find some combinations of numbers more beautiful than others.



number 9. Whenever someone describes visiting a beautiful place, I recall my numerical landscapes and how happy they make me feel inside. By doing this, numbers actually help me get closer to understanding other people.

Sometimes people I meet for the first time remind me of a particular number and this helps me to be comfortable around them. They might be very tall and remind me of the number 9, or round and remind me of the number 3. If I feel unhappy or anxious or in a situation I have no previous experience of (when I'm much more likely to feel stressed and uncomfortable), I count to myself. When I count, the numbers form pictures and patterns in my mind that are consistent and reassuring to me. Then I can relax and interact with whatever situation I'm in.

Thinking of calendars always makes me feel good, all those numbers and patterns in one place. Different days of the week elicit different colors and emotions in my head: Tuesdays are a warm color while Thursdays are fuzzy. Calendrical calculation—the ability to tell what day of the week a particular date fell or will fall on—is common to many savants. I think this is probably due to the fact that the numbers in calendars are predictable and form patterns between the different days and months. For example, the thirteenth day in a month is always two days before whatever day the first falls on, excepting leap years, while several of the months mimic the behavior of others, like January and October, September and December, and February and March (the first day of February is the same as the first day of March). So if the first of February is a fuzzy texture in my mind (Thursday) for a given year, the thirteenth of March will be a warm color (Tuesday).

In his book *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, writer and neurologist Oliver Sacks mentions the case of severely autistic twins John and Michael as an example of how far some savants are able to take calendrical calculations. Though unable to care for themselves (they had been in various institutions since the age of seven), the twins were capable of calculating the day of the week for any date over a 40,000-year span.

Sacks also describes John and Michael as playing a game that involved swapping **prime** numbers with each other for hours at a time. Like the twins, I have always been fascinated by prime numbers. I see each prime as a smooth-textured shape, distinct from composite numbers (non-primes) that are grittier and less distinctive.

Tuesdays are
a warm color,
while Thursdays
are fuzzy.

prime ▶
(prīm) *adj.* referring to
any number greater
than 1 that is not
evenly divisible by
any number other
than 1 and itself

Whenever I identify a number as prime, I get a rush of feeling in my head (in the front center) which is hard to put into words. It's a special feeling, like the sudden sensation of pins and needles.

Sometimes I close my eyes and imagine the first thirty, fifty, hundred numbers as I experience them spatially, synesthetically. Then I can see in my mind's eye just how beautiful and special the primes are by the way they stand out so sharply from the other number shapes. It's exactly for this reason that I look and look and look at them; each one is so different from the one before and the one after. Their loneliness among the other numbers makes them so conspicuous and interesting to me.

There are moments, as I'm falling into sleep at night, that my mind fills suddenly with bright light and all I can see are numbers—hundreds, thousands of them—swimming rapidly over my eyes. The experience is beautiful and soothing to me. Some nights, when I'm having difficulty falling asleep, I imagine myself walking around my numerical landscapes. Then I feel safe and happy. I never feel lost, because the prime number shapes act as signposts.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Tammet (b. 1979)

Daniel Tammet was raised in a suburb of London, England. He has a condition called savant syndrome, which gives him extraordinary mental abilities, especially in math. Since childhood, he has had a love of counting and has been able to visualize numbers. In 2004, he recited the number π to 22,514 decimal places from memory. The feat took more than 5 hours and set a European record.



Tammet's first book, *Born on a Blue Day*, was a best seller in both the United States and Great Britain and has been translated into more than twenty languages. Tammet says he wrote the book "to show that such a journey is possible from profound isolation and sadness to achievement and happiness, to real happiness. Not just the happiness that comes from giving yourself up to the trends and expectations of others, but the real happiness that can only come from finding what it is that is unique about you and having the courage to live that out." Tammet has written two additional books, *Embracing the Wide Sky* and *Thinking in Numbers*. He lives in France.

Close Reading Activities

READ

Comprehension

Reread all or part of the text to help you answer the following questions.

1. What is synesthesia?
2. What characterizes Asperger's syndrome?
3. How do numbers help the author relate to other people and to stressful situations?

Research: Clarify Details Choose one unfamiliar detail from this text and briefly research it. Then, explain how the information helps you better understand an aspect of the text.

Summarize Write an objective summary of the text, one that is free from opinion and evaluation.

Language Study

Selection Vocabulary: Mathematics The following passages appear in the memoir. State the mathematical meaning of each boldfaced word. Then, identify at least one general meaning for each word. Use a dictionary as needed.

- I see each **prime** as a smooth-textured shape, distinct from composite numbers...

- Dr. Darold Treffert...gives one example, of a blind man with "a faculty of **calculating** to a degree little short of marvelous..."
- Squares are always **symmetrical** shapes in my mind, which makes them especially beautiful to me.

Literary Analysis

Reread the identified passage. Then, respond to the questions that follow.

Focus Passage (pp. 173–174)

For as long as I can remember ... situation I'm in.

Key Ideas and Details

1. **Interpret:** How does Tammet use numbers to understand other people's emotions? Cite textual details to support your answer.

Craft and Structure

2. **(a) Interpret:** How does Tammet see the number 6? **(b) Infer:** What can you infer

about the visual images he sees for the numbers 9 and 3? Cite details from the text that support your inference.

3. **Analyze:** For most people, Tammet's image of the number 6 would be an example of figurative language. Is that true for Tammet? Explain.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

4. **(a) Analyze:** What does the author mean when he says numbers are his "first language"? **(b) Speculate:** What kinds of communication might be a second "language" for Tammet? Explain.

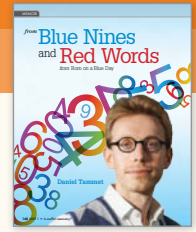
Description

Description is the use of sensory details to create a word picture for readers. Reread the excerpt and take notes on how Tammet uses description.

1. **(a)** Find two examples of description in the text. **(b)** How does Tammet's use of

description help readers understand his unique perceptions?

2. **Conformity:** Do Tammet's descriptions emphasize his differences from or his similarities to other people? Explain.



DISCUSS • RESEARCH • WRITE

From Text to Topic **Group Discussion**

Discuss the following passage with a group of classmates. Listen carefully as your fellow students speak and build on one another's ideas. Support your contributions with details from the text.

If I see a number I experience as particularly beautiful on a shop sign or a car license plate, there's a shiver of excitement and pleasure. On the other hand, if the numbers don't match my experience of them—if, for example, a shop sign's price has "99 pence" in red or green (instead of blue)—then I find that uncomfortable and irritating.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is Tammet's life both similar to and different from that of most people?
2. Is Tammet's inability to conform a burden, a benefit, both, or neither?

Research **Investigate the Topic**

Prodigies Savants possess one type of exceptional intelligence, but there are also other types. For example, a prodigy is a person, who develops remarkable abilities at an unusually young age.

Assignment

Conduct research to find out what makes someone a prodigy and how being one can affect someone's life. Include at least two examples of famous prodigies. Take careful notes and identify your sources. Share your **findings** in an **informal speech or presentation**.

PREPARATION FOR ESSAY

You may use the results of this research in an essay you will write at the end of this section.

Writing to Sources **Narrative**

"Blue Nines and Red Words" focuses on Daniel Tammet's extraordinary way of seeing the world. While Tammet is unique, everyone's view of life is shaped by his or her particular traits and experiences.

Assignment

Write an **autobiographical narrative** in which you describe how a special trait of your own has either set you apart from others or helped you fit in. Follow these steps:

- Introduce a problem or conflict.
- Create a smooth **progression** of events that build on one another.
- Use description to convey a **vivid** picture of people, events, and ideas.
- Provide a conclusion in which you reflect on your story and make connections between your experience and Daniel Tammet's.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Academic terms appear in blue on these pages. If these words are not familiar to you, use a dictionary to find their definitions. Then, use them as you speak and write about the text.

from *The New Yorker*



“Sorry, we’re all cat people. The dog people are in that boat over there.”

READ • DISCUSS • WRITE

Comprehension

Look at the cartoon again and reread the caption. Then, answer the questions that follow.

1. **(a)** What is the purpose of the boats with people in them? **(b)** Which details reveal that information?
2. **(a)** What is the person in the water hoping for? **(b)** What response does he get from the people in the boat?

Critical Analysis

Key Ideas and Details

1. **(a) Infer:** What inference can you make about what happened just prior to the scene shown in the cartoon? **(b) Support:** Which details in the drawing lead you to make that inference?
2. **(a)** What **literal** message is conveyed by the caption? **(b) Interpret:** What **implied** message is conveyed?

Craft and Structure

3. **Analyze:** The cartoon **depicts** a serious situation in an amusing way. What qualities in both the drawing and the caption make it lighthearted and funny rather than serious and scary? Explain.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

4. **Apply:** What does this cartoon suggest about the power of humor to deal with serious topics? Refer to details from the cartoon in your answer.

From Text to Topic **Class Discussion**

Discuss the cartoon with classmates. Use the following questions to focus your conversation.

1. If the man in the water were a “cat person” do you think he would be allowed to board the boat? Explain.
2. Could a scenario like the one in this cartoon ever come true?

Writing to Sources **Narrative**

Write a **short story** in which you describe the events that might have led up to the scene depicted in the cartoon. Establish a conflict and use dialogue and description to develop characters and events.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Academic terms appear in blue on these pages. If these words are not familiar to you, use a dictionary to find their definitions. Then, use them as you speak and write about the text.

Assessment: Synthesis

Speaking and Listening: Group Discussion

Conformity and Conflict The texts in this section vary in genre, length, style, and perspective. However, all of them comment in some way on human difference and on whether people should conform to an accepted norm or should maximize their uniqueness. The issue of conformity, and the conflicts it creates for individuals and for society as a whole, is fundamentally related to the Big Question addressed in this unit: **Is conflict necessary?**

Assignment

Conduct discussions. With a small group of classmates, conduct a discussion about issues of conformity and conflict. Refer to the texts in this section, other texts you have read, and your personal experience and knowledge to support your ideas. Begin your discussion by addressing the following questions:

- Why do differences between people cause conflicts?
- Is conformity always negative?
- Do conflicts over conformity ever have positive results or benefits? If so, under what circumstances, and for whom?
- Are the conflicts caused by pressures to conform—or to avoid conforming—always necessary, sometimes necessary, or never necessary?

Summarize and present your ideas. After you have fully explored the topic, summarize your discussion and present your findings to the class as a whole.



▲ Refer to the selections you read in Part 3 as you complete the activities on this assessment.

Criteria for Success

✓ Organizes the group effectively

Appoint a group leader and a timekeeper. The group leader should present the discussion questions. The timekeeper should make sure the discussion takes no longer than 20 minutes.

✓ Maintains focus of discussion

As a group, stay on topic and avoid straying into other subject areas.

✓ Involves all participants equally and fully

No one person should monopolize the conversation. Rather, everyone should take turns speaking and contributing ideas.

✓ Follows the rules for collegial discussion

As each group member speaks, others should listen carefully. Build on one another's ideas and support viewpoints and opinions with sound reasoning and evidence. Express disagreement respectfully.

USE NEW VOCABULARY

As you speak and share ideas, work to use the vocabulary words you have learned in this unit. The more you use new words, the more you will “own” them.

Writing: Narrative

Conformity and Conflict Conflict is the engine that drives every story, whether it is a true-life adventure or an imagined tale. Likewise, all of us face conflicts in our own lives. Many of these conflicts relate to issues of individuality and conformity.

Assignment

Write an **autobiographical narrative**, or true story about your own life, in which you discuss a conflict you experienced that was driven either by the pressure to conform or to resist conforming. Note that an effective autobiographical narrative explores the significance of a related series of events in the writer's life. As you draft your narrative, make connections between your experiences, details in the texts you have read in this section, and the related research you have conducted. These connections will make your narrative richer.

Criteria for Success

Purpose/Focus

- ✓ **Connects specific incidents with larger ideas**
Make meaningful connections between your experiences and the texts you have read in this section.
- ✓ **Clearly conveys the significance of the story**
Provide a conclusion in which you reflect on what you experienced.

Organization

- ✓ **Sequences events logically**
Structure your narrative so that individual events build on one another to create a coherent whole.

Development of Ideas/Elaboration

- ✓ **Supports insights**
Include both personal examples and details from the texts you have read in this section.
- ✓ **Uses narrative techniques effectively**
Even though an autobiographical narrative is nonfiction, it may include storytelling elements like those found in fiction. Consider using dialogue to help readers “hear” how characters sound.

Language

- ✓ **Uses description effectively**
Use descriptive details to paint word pictures that help readers see settings and characters.

Conventions

- ✓ **Does not have errors**
Check your narrative to eliminate errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

WRITE TO EXPLORE

Writing is a way to clarify what you feel and think. This means that you may change your mind or get new ideas as you work. Allowing for this will improve your final draft.

Writing to Sources: Argument

Conformity and Conflict The related readings in this section present a range of ideas about conformity and difference. They raise questions, such as the following, about the values of individuality and community:

- What does it mean to be an individual?
- How important is it to be like other people or part of a larger group?
- Is it the need to be an individual or the need to conform that most often leads to conflict? Why?
- Is conformity ever positive? If so, under what circumstances?

Focus on the question that intrigues you the most, and then complete the following assignment.

Assignment

Write an **argumentative essay** in which you state and defend a claim about the values of individuality or conformity. Build evidence for your claim by analyzing the presentation of individuality and conformity in two or more texts from this section. Clearly present, develop, and support your ideas with examples and details from the texts.

INCORPORATE RESEARCH

The research you have done in this section may provide support for your position. Review the notes you took and incorporate any relevant facts or details into your essay.

Prewriting and Planning

Choose texts. Review the texts in the section to determine which ones you will cite in your essay. Select at least two that will provide strong material to support your argument.

Gather details and craft a working thesis, or claim. Use a chart like the one shown to develop your claim. Though you may refine or change your ideas as you write, the working version will establish a clear direction.

Focus Question: How important is it to be like other people?

| Text | Passage | Notes |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| "The Scarlet Ibis" | It was bad enough having an invalid brother, but [a mentally deficient one] was unbearable, so I began to make plans to kill him. | narrator places huge importance on conformity and shows a childish lack of compassion |
| from "Blue Nines and Red Words" | Thinking of calendars always makes me feel good, all those numbers and patterns in one place. | positive feelings come from author's differences |

Example Claim: It takes more maturity to accept individuality than it does to demand conformity.

Prepare counterarguments. For each point you intend to make to support your claim, note a possible objection to it. Plan to include the strongest of these counterclaims in your essay: introduce and supply evidence to refute them.

Drafting

Sequence your ideas and evidence. Present your ideas in a logical sequence.

Use details from your chart to support each point you present. Make sure the evidence you select relates directly to the ideas you want to express.

Address counterclaims. Strong argumentation takes differing ideas into account and addresses them directly. As you order your ideas, build in sections in which you explain opposing opinions or differing interpretations. Then, write a thoughtful, well-supported response to those counterclaims.

Frame and connect ideas. Write an introduction that will grab the reader's attention. Consider beginning with a compelling quotation or a detail. Then, write a strong conclusion that ends your essay with a clear statement. Use transitional words and phrases to link the sections of your essay in a way that clarifies relationships among your ideas and evidence.

Revising and Editing

Review content. Make sure that your claim is clearly stated and that you have supported it with convincing evidence from the texts. Underline main ideas in your essay and confirm that each one is supported. Add more proof as needed.

Review style. Revise to cut wordy language. Check that you have found the clearest, simplest way to communicate your ideas. Omit unnecessary words and replace vague words with better choices that clearly state what you mean.

CITE RESEARCH CORRECTLY

Follow accepted conventions to cite all sources you use in your essay. See the Citing Sources pages in the Introductory Unit for additional guidance.

Self-Evaluation Rubric

Use the following criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of your essay.

| Criteria | Rating Scale |
|---|---|
| PURPOSE/FOCUS Introduces a precise claim and distinguishes the claim from (implied) alternate or opposing claims; provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument presented | <i>not very</i> <i>very</i> 1 2 3 4 |
| ORGANIZATION Establishes a logical organization; uses words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships among claims, reasons, and evidence, and between claims and counterclaims | 1 2 3 4 |
| DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS/ELABORATION Develops the claim and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both | 1 2 3 4 |
| LANGUAGE Establishes and maintains a formal style and an objective tone | 1 2 3 4 |
| CONVENTIONS Attends to the norms and conventions of the discipline | 1 2 3 4 |

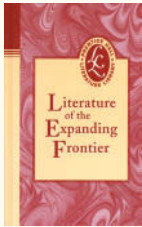
Independent Reading

Titles for Extended Reading

In this unit, you have read texts in a variety of genres. Continue to read on your own. Select works that you enjoy, but challenge yourself to explore new authors and works of increasing depth and complexity. The titles suggested below will help you get started.

INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

Literature of the Expanding Frontier



As pioneers spread across the Western frontier, they brought with them their passion for life and their hope for the future. This collection of **stories, poems, songs, and personal accounts** captures the spirits of everyone from Chinese immigrants building the nation's railroads to Native Americans dealing with the influx of new people as they all face the challenges of living together in the wilderness.

I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings

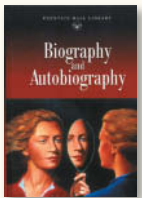
by Maya Angelou

EXEMPLAR TEXT



Maya Angelou's **memoir** of her Arkansas childhood is a classic of twentieth-century literature. This coming-of-age story reveals the author's strength and resilience in the face of racism, trauma, and poverty.

Biography and Autobiography



From Doris Kearns Goodwin's recollections of how television revolutionized her neighborhood to Stephen Hawking's story of how he overcame physical limitations, these **biographical and autobiographical narratives** give readers fresh perspectives on famous lives.

Black Like Me

by John Howard Griffin

In this fascinating **nonfiction** account, a white journalist passing as an African American man chronicles his experiences traveling by Greyhound bus through segregated states over a period of six weeks in 1959. This book provides an eye-opening window into strained race relations in America in the early years of the civil rights movement.

LITERATURE

The Tragedy of Macbeth

by William Shakespeare

EXEMPLAR TEXT



This spine-tingling **drama** is one of William Shakespeare's most popular plays. *The Tragedy of Macbeth* explores the dangers of unrestrained ambition as Macbeth and his scheming wife Lady Macbeth murder his competitors in a plot to seize the throne of Scotland.

Stories by O. Henry

by O. Henry

EXEMPLAR TEXT



O. Henry is considered one of America's greatest short story writers, famous for his colorful characters and surprise endings. This collection of **short stories** includes "The Gift of the Magi" and other famous tales.

The Joy Luck Club

by Amy Tan

EXEMPLAR TEXT



Amy Tan's best-selling **novel** explores the lives of Chinese American families who meet to play games and share meals. Told from the perspective of several female family members, the novel explores parent-child relationships and the dynamics of immigrant families.

ONLINE TEXT SET



POEM

All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace Richard Brautigan

SCIENCE ARTICLE

Careers in Robotics NASA Robotic Education Project

SCIENCE ARTICLE

Team Builds "Sociable" Robot Elizabeth A. Thompson

Preparing to Read Complex Texts

Attentive Reading As you read literature on your own, bring your imagination and questions to the text. The questions shown below and others that you ask as you read will help you learn and enjoy literature even more.

When reading narratives, ask yourself...

Comprehension: Key Ideas and Details

- Who is the story's main character? Who are the other characters and how do they relate to the main character?
- What problems do the characters face? How do they react to these problems?
- Which characters do I like or admire? Which do I dislike? How do my reactions to the characters make me feel about the work as a whole?
- Is the setting of the story—the place, time, and society—believable and interesting? Why or why not?
- What happens in the story? Why do these events happen?

Text Analysis: Craft and Structure

- Who is the narrator? Is this voice part of the story or is it an outside observer?
- Do I find the narrator's voice interesting and engaging? Why or why not?
- Is there anything different or unusual in the way the work is structured? Do I find that structure interesting or distracting?
- Are there any passages that I find especially strong or beautiful?
- Do I understand why characters act and feel as they do? Do their thoughts and actions seem real? Why or why not?

Connections: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- What does this story mean to me? Does it convey a theme or insight that I find important and true? Why or why not?
- Does the work remind me of others I have read? If so, how?
- Have I gained new knowledge from reading this story? If so, what have I learned?
- Would I recommend this work to others? If so, to whom?
- Would I like to read other fiction by this author? Why or why not?