

QualityCore™

English 10

Unit 1

**Introduction to English 10:
Practicing the Habits of a
Lifelong Learner**

ACT®

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Note

QualityCore™ instructional units illustrate how the rigorous, empirically researched course objectives can be incorporated into the classroom. For more information about how the instructional units fit into the QualityCore program, please see the *Educator's Guide* included with the other QualityCore materials.

ACT recognizes that, as you determine how best to serve your students, you will take into consideration your teaching style as well as the academic needs of your students; the standards and policies set by your state, district, and school; and the curricular materials and resources that are available to you.

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Practicing the Habits of a Lifelong Learner**

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Purpose

At the beginning of English 10, the goal is to introduce students to thinking, reading, and writing strategies, which they will develop throughout the course.

Overview

First, following the principles identified by Harry and Rosemary Wong in *The First Days of School* (2004), the teacher will explain the general classroom procedures to be followed during the school year as well as the class notebook. The syllabus will also be handed out and reviewed.

Next, students will complete an Academic Literacy Questionnaire, which will help them understand what is expected of them in school. Students will then create posters which describe in metaphors what reading and writing have been like for them.

During the second week, students will respond to Mary Oliver’s poem “The Journey.” Students will be introduced to Bloom’s Taxonomy, to metacognition, and to various strategies that will develop their skills as thinkers and readers.

The study of Greek and Latin derivatives and dictionary work will also be introduced to help increase students’ vocabularies. Students will study Seamus Heaney’s poem “Digging” and discuss how to use the different levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy to move from asking literal questions about a text to asking interpretive and evaluative questions, too. Students will practice writing questions after reading an excerpt from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

Finally, students will read Sandra Cisneros’ short story “Eleven” and conduct a Socratic Seminar that requires them to ask of each other literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions.

Time Frame

This unit requires approximately twelve 45–50 minute class periods.

The first week of school should stress large group organization and student procedures.

—Harry & Rosemary Wong (2004, p. 94)

Rigor is the goal of helping students develop the capacity to understand content that is complex, ambiguous, provocative, and personally or emotionally challenging.

—Richard W. Strong, Harvey Silver, & Matthew Perini (2001, p. 7)

Rigor is demanded, then, of the teacher as well as the student. But rigorous scrutiny of the work and the responses shouldn't obliterate the personal element of reading.

—Robert E. Probst (2004, p. 60)

UNIT 1

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH 10: PRACTICING THE HABITS OF A LIFELONG LEARNER

Prerequisites

- Ninth-grade English

Selected Course Objectives

The primary objectives, which represent the central focus of this unit, are listed below and highlight skills useful not only in English, but in other disciplines as well. Secondary objectives are listed in Appendix K.

A.1. Reading Across the Curriculum

- Read independently for a variety of purposes (e.g., for enjoyment, to gain information, to perform a task)
- Read increasingly challenging whole texts in a variety of literary (e.g., poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction) and nonliterary (e.g., textbooks, news articles, memoranda) forms

A.2. Reading Strategies

- Apply strategies before, during, and after reading to increase fluency and comprehension (e.g., adjusting purpose, previewing, scanning, making predictions, comparing, inferring, summarizing, using graphic organizers) with increasingly challenging texts
- Use metacognitive skills (i.e., monitor, regulate, and orchestrate one's understanding) when reading increasingly challenging texts, using the most appropriate "fix-up" strategies (e.g., rereading, reading on, changing rate of reading, subvocalizing)

- c. Demonstrate comprehension of increasingly challenging texts (both print and nonprint sources) by asking and answering literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions
- d. Use close-reading strategies (e.g., visualizing, annotating, questioning) in order to interpret increasingly challenging texts

D.2. Application

- c. Give impromptu and planned presentations (e.g., debates, formal meetings) that stay on topic and/or adhere to prepared notes
- g. Actively participate in small-group and large-group discussions, assuming various roles

E. Study Skills and Test Taking

- a. Apply active reading, listening, and viewing techniques by taking notes on classroom discussions, lectures, oral and/or video presentations, or assigned at-home reading, and by underlining key passages and writing comments in journals or in margins of texts, where permitted
- b. Demonstrate organizational skills such as keeping a daily calendar of assignments and activities and maintaining a notebook of class work

Research-Based Strategies

- Free or Sustained Silent Reading (pp. 6–7)
- Self-assessment (pp. 9–11)
 - Group Work (pp. 10, 12–13, 19–20, 23, 25–26)
 - Think-Pair-Share (pp. 10, 16)
 - Wait-Time (p. 10)

Essential Questions

1. Who am I as a reader, writer, student, and person?
2. What habits of mind does it take to succeed in school?
3. What have people said over time about the value of reading and writing?
4. What makes someone a good reader, writer, and overall good student?

Suggestions for Assessment

Except where otherwise noted, assessments can be given a point value or they can simply be marked as completed.

Preassessment

Worksheet—The Academic Literacy Questionnaire (pp. C-2–C-4) is a way for both student and teacher to evaluate both the student’s enculturation into the world of school and skills such as self-management, problem solving, and visualizing when reading. (Days 3 and 4)

Embedded Assessments

Journal Writing—Writing frequently in journals increases the fluency of students’ writing and helps them clarify their thinking. Journals can also be used as a means of assessing students’ understanding about a particular aspect

Tips for Teachers

The essential questions and the primary course objectives for this unit should be prominently displayed in the classroom.

of the class. They can be separate spiral notebooks placed into the three-ring binders that make up the students' class notebooks. They should be scored based on completion. (Days 1, 2, 4, 6)

Rubric—The Class Notebook rubric (p. B-2) should be used to assess students' notebooks. (Day 2)

Anecdotal Notes—As suggested by Randy Bomer (1995), take informal notes about students as they work in small groups or engage in classroom activities. (Days 5–6)

Poster and Presentation—Students create collages that express metaphorically the way they experience reading. Through writing, they also consider their literate identities. The Metaphors of Reading and Writing worksheet (pp. D-2–D-3), which is associated with the poster, will help students think out their relationships to reading and writing. Creating and presenting the poster also, and not incidentally, serves as a community-building exercise. Therefore, this work should only be assessed informally. (Days 5–7)

Writing—A monthly paper (Monthly Paper prompt, p. E-2) promotes both students' reading and interpretation of short texts and their fluency in writing. Use the Monthly Paper Rubric (p. E-3) to score the paper. (Day 7)

Checklist—The Metacognition worksheet (p. F-3) is a list of strategies that students can learn to help them think about the way they are thinking as they read. They should use it to determine the differences between strategies as they use them or as they watch the strategies being demonstrated. (Day 8)

Homework—Use the Annotation Rubric (p. F-7) to assess students' annotations when they read "Boulevard of Broken Dreams." (Day 8)

Worksheet—Identifying and answering literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions ("Digging" Questions, pp. G-7–G-8) about Seamus Heaney's poem "Digging" provides students with preparation for writing questions, a technique they will use in future classes. A suggested key is provided ("Digging" Questions Key, p. G-9). (Day 9)

Visual Representation—The Malcolm X Modified K-W-L worksheet (p. I-2) is a means of assessing students' understanding of "Learning to Read" by Alex Haley and Malcolm X. It is also a means of evaluating students' listening skills. (Day 11)

Unit Assessments

Response Paper—Having students write a one-page response to the short story "Eleven" allows them time and space to respond personally, not just analytically, to the text. The paper also helps students build skills they will use later in the year when they write formal literary analyses. Score the response with the Response Paper Rubric (p. I-5). (Day 11)

Group Discussion—Listening to students ask each other literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions is one way of assessing how much they have learned and understood about questions and how to write them. Students' questions and answers will also show how well they have read closely and interpreted a text. (Day 12)

Unit Description

Introduction

The first few weeks of Grade 10 are devoted to building a sense of classroom community, establishing class rituals and expectations, and

Tips for Teachers

Prior to the first day of school, use the following checklist (Wright, 1999) to identify tasks not yet accomplished or to spark new ways of starting off the school year.

- Am I energized to be enthusiastic about this class?
- Is the classroom arranged properly for the day's activities?
- Are my name, course title, and room number on the chalkboard?
- Do I have an icebreaker planned?
- Do I have a way to start learning names?
- Do I have a way to gather information on student backgrounds, interests, course expectations, questions, concerns?
- Is the syllabus complete and clear?
- Have I outlined how students will be evaluated?
- Do I have announcements of needed information for the day?
- Do I have a way of gathering student feedback?
- When the class is over, will students want to come back? Will I want to come back?
- Do I have the essential questions and unit objectives on display in the classroom?

beginning a year-long exploration into students' identities as readers and writers. The first day exercise and the Metaphors of Reading and Writing poster are intended to help you get to know your students and build trust. In *Time for Meaning: Crafting Literate Lives in Middle and High School*, Randy Bomer (1995, pp. 24–26), past president of the National Council of Teachers of English, suggests four ways to build classroom communities:

- **Relaxation:** Have students take a few minutes to close their eyes, listen to their breathing, and go on a teacher-led, calming, imagined journey. Speak in a soothing voice.
- **Concentration:** Have one brave soul face the class and slowly move his head, arms, legs, and torso; the other students in the class are to mirror all of his movements as they occur. This can be done in pairs, too.
- **Trust Walk:** Have one student lead another whose eyes are closed. The sighted student is to describe the things she asks her partner to touch: the wood of the desk, the smoothness of a computer screen.
- **Group Machine:** Have students create a machine of which each of them is a piece: each student adds movement or sound that works in rhythm with the rest.

Providing students with predictable routines, such as greeting them at the door and beginning the class with seat work, helps them feel secure; including warm-up and wrap-up activities in the daily presentation helps students prepare

for the experiences of the class and puts into larger context material studied each class period. Using a variety of ways of assessing students' learning during class—for example, journal assignments, quizzes, questions, and quick conversations about what they feel to be the “muddiest point” of the day—helps you gear your teaching to their needs.

Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures

Days 1–2

The teacher begins to create a warm class climate, shows students how they are to keep their class notebooks, and describes the major focus of the next two weeks. Students learn about the course syllabus, topics to be discussed in class this year, and how to organize a class notebook.

Tips for Teachers

Materials & Resources

- English 10 syllabus*
- Class notebook example*
- Class notebook Rubric (p. B-2)
- Class notebooks*

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

Greet each student at the door. This should become a daily ritual. Having work for students to complete at their desks as they enter the class should also become an expected and routine part of the classroom culture. Periodically asking students to verbalize the learning they have done in the class or an earlier class should become a regular classroom activity as well (Wong, & Wong, 2004).

On the first day, convey enthusiasm while explaining the essential questions and their relationship to the topics that will be studied during the introductory unit. Point out that the essential questions are posted around the room: this allows students to remind themselves of course goals at all times. The essential questions are designed to draw attention to the most important concepts of the unit, thereby avoiding lessons that present a random assortment of facts. According to Heidi Hayes Jacobs (1997, p. 26), “An essential question is at the heart of the curriculum. It is the essence of what you believe students should examine and know in the short time they have with you.” Essential questions are not designed to have one right answer, but to be explored by students and teachers alike. They are not necessarily questions with easy answers, but they are ones that, by the end of the unit, students should be closer to understanding. Using essential questions in the classroom will help students gradually see that they should value the quality and depth of their questions more than the correctness of their answers.

Let students know that, as a way of getting to know each other, and as a way of beginning to answer Essential Question 1, “Who am I as a reader, writer, student, and person?”, they will each create a chapter title that reveals how they feel about reading or writing. Suggest that students imagine that they are writing a book about their lives; one chapter of the book is to be about their relationship to reading. Talk to students a bit about what they think typical chapter titles require. Provide them with examples of chapter titles from famous novels, such as “I am born” (from *David Copperfield*) or “In which I end my hay-days and begin a new profession” (from the children’s book *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years*) or “Of the monstrous pictures of

Marzano, Norford, Paynter, Pickering, and Gaddy (2001, p. 128) created a list of eight statements for guiding educators’ analysis of their homework practices. Using a scale from zero to four, with zero being “not at all” and four being “to a great extent,” respond to the following statements. Your responses to these statements will identify whether your strategies are designed to make homework more effective or whether you need to improve in any of the eight areas.

1. I have a clearly articulated homework policy that describes my expectations for students and parents.
2. I clearly communicate my homework policy to students.
3. I clearly communicate my homework policy to parents.
4. I clearly communicate to students the knowledge they will be learning.
5. I have a specific purpose for the homework assignment.
6. My students are aware of the purpose of the homework assignment.
7. I provide feedback on the homework assignment.
8. Over time, I collect evidence about the effect of homework on my students’ learning.

Tips for Teachers

A research-based teaching strategy that should be used during early discussions is Think-Pair-Share (Lyman, 1981). It will help keep all students actively involved. Have students independently brainstorm ideas to answer the questions posed by the teacher, and then share those ideas with a partner or small group before reporting out to the entire class. This allows students to share what their group came up with and removes the pressure for being put on the spot to share ideas that are only theirs.

whales” (from *Moby-Dick*). Provide a few examples of titles that relate to reading and that you have made up yourself, such as “Nowhere,” for someone who doesn’t read at all; “Living Between the Pages,” for someone who loves to read; or “Saved,” which is what Alex Haley called the chapter about reading in the autobiography he ghost-wrote for Malcolm X. Ask students to write their ideas down and, once they have come up with a chapter title that pleases them, to try to justify to themselves why that title best expresses their feelings. Employing the Think-Pair-Share strategy (Lyman, 1981), ask them then to turn to the person next to them and share the title. Students should also use this time to interview their partners about why they titled their chapter as they did. Ensure that students know they’ll be asked to share parts of their conversation with the

entire class. Walk around the room and talk quietly with students as they work. After students have shared, ask for volunteers to introduce their partner’s titles. If time permits, repeat the exercise by asking students to write a chapter title about writing.

Begin to introduce students to your policies. Tell them that for the first couple of days you will probably be talking a lot, just to set the class up, but afterwards, students will do most of the talking.

During class students will often be engaged in sustained silent reading (SSR); they should always have a book available in class. Because research (McQuillan et al., 2001) shows that students who have greater access to books tend to read more, let them know that one purpose of the SSR program is to ensure that they have access to lots of books. As part of the SSR program, they will

- receive suggestions of books to read,
- go to the library as a class in order to check out books,
- give book talks for the rest of the class about the books they read, and
- be monitored periodically to ensure that they have brought books to read.

To facilitate a good SSR program, it’s a good idea to create a library in your classroom. This way you’ll have ample reading material available on days when students forget their books. You can buy books at very low prices at online bookstores; they can also be found cheaply at garage sales and secondhand bookstores. Look for books you think your students will find interesting, and include authors who write at different reading levels. There are several types of books that make good classroom libraries:

- Young adult fiction and nonfiction by writers such as Lois Duncan, Walter Dean Myers, Naomi Shihab Nye, Judith Ortiz Cofer, and Angela Johnson
- Popular books for adults by writers such as John Grisham, Walter Mosley, Mark Bowden, Maya Angelou, and Faye Kellerman
- Children’s books by writers such as Gary Soto, Francis Hodgson Burnett, Francisco Jimenez, and Judy Blume
- Nonfiction books on a variety of topics by writers such as David Quaman, Charles Seife, Mary Roach, and Steven Johnson
- Graphic novels by writers such as Art Spiegelman, Marianne Satrapi, and B.K. Vaughan

Tips for Teachers

- Fiction typically taught in high school classrooms by writers such as Khaled Hosseini, Tim O'Brien, Rudolfo Anaya, Barbara Tuchman, Brent Staples, Isabelle Allende, Jane Austen, and Ralph Ellison

It's wise to add new texts periodically into your classroom library; it's also wise to ask students to suggest new books to buy.

As a wrap-up, have students write one paragraph on one of the following prompts:

- If I were the teacher of this course . . .
- The thing I learned the hard way about school . . .
- What I didn't do this summer . . .

Tell students to analyze the situation and to support any assertions with evidence. Tell them also that the journal and homework assignment will be written in the same place on the board every day; they should become accustomed to looking for it. Before the bell rings, share with students your own response to one of the prompts. Doing so, you build classroom community by demonstrating your own willingness to share.

Greet students at the door on the second day. On their desks or in an easily accessible spot, have the course syllabus. If a textbook is being used, exhibit it and explain what makes it a good text. Give brief book talks on the novels that will be explored. Convey enthusiasm when you tell students about concepts, such as identity and culture and the hero's journey, that will be studied this year. Take time to talk about the syllabus, your grading policies, and your expectations.

Tell students that, in addition to the free reading book, they need to bring their class notebooks every day because it will be unusual not to take notes on some portion of the class. Explain the different sections that the notebook should contain. Let students know that you want them to keep all of their class notes, reading notes, and handouts in this notebook; they may not throw away any papers until June. This provides each student with a good record of his or her grades and allows you to monitor student progress throughout the year. One method of organizing the notebook follows:

- *Class notes:* Keep daily class notes. Each day's notes should be titled and dated. Notes should also be legible, numbered, and written on college-ruled paper.
- *Writing:* Keep handouts, rubrics that pertain specifically to writing, and a writer's log or journal in this section of the class notebook.
- *Grammar and Vocabulary:* Keep all grammar handouts, lists of vocabulary words, and returned vocabulary quizzes here.
- *Highlighted and Annotated Texts:* Keep all highlighted and annotated essays in this section. Students will be able to see how their annotations change over the course of the year.
- *Graded Papers, Tests, and Quizzes:* Keeping all graded papers, tests, and non-vocabulary quizzes in this section helps students monitor their own improvement in reading and writing. When a

Though most educators agree about the importance of providing time for students to read silently in school, there is some disagreement about how much time during the school week should be set aside for SSR. McQuillan et al. (2001, p. 75) writes that "fundamental to any Sustained Silent Reading program is, of course, a set amount of time a day during the first few weeks of the semester and building up to 20 or 30 minutes as students build stamina for reading. When Sustained Silent Reading is 20 minutes, it's almost impossible for students to do nothing." In *Reading for Understanding*, Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, and Hurwitz (1999, p. 65) suggest that students should read silently for 20–25 minutes at least twice a week. In *With Rigor for All*, high school English teacher Carol Jago (2000, p. 73) writes that she would prefer a class separate from the English class in which students could spend all of the class time reading books of their own choice.

All these writers do agree that, in order for an SSR program to work, there must be a set number of pages that students are required to read per semester or trimester so that students must read both inside and outside of class. Experts agree as well that there must be a method to keep students accountable for their reading, and that teachers must provide a model by silently reading books of their choice—not grading papers—during SSR time.

Tips for Teachers

English teacher Jim Burke (2003) calls the journals (or personal writers' logs) his students use "the petri dish of the mind." He asks his students to write every day when they first come into class. Often students respond to a photograph on the board, a question, a quotation, a text they read the day before, or a painting. Burke has explored, through journals with students, "the deep terrain of important ideas," such as what freedom might mean after the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Burke says that journals become a record of students' thinking and can be used by them to provide ideas for papers that they will write in class and to think out questions about who they are, where they plan to go in life, and what they most value. Burke uses journals in a variety of ways. In his classes students

- pair up and share different journal responses to the same text;
- write about the differences between a film version and a written version of the same text; and
- write letters to each other about a paragraph they have just read.

Periodically, Burke models journal writing to students, reading aloud his own journal entries about, for example, the novel *Bless Me, Ultima*, or his responses to the characters in *The Glass Menagerie*. He makes sure that students know that teachers are required to report anyone who tells them, via the journal, that they are being hurt or hurting themselves or others.

Burke argues that, in the English class, journals serve many purposes:

- Promote fluency of language and thus are never graded based on conventions
- Are used as a place to think out a subject or text to be discussed in class
- Promote experimentation as a means of learning to write without fear of judgment
- Belong to the student, and thus can be personalized
- Can be used as an informal way of assessing how much students are understanding a particular reading or topic

new essay is written, students will be expected to review past papers to avoid repeating the same usage and mechanics mistakes.

Students should also create a personal grade book, exactly like your grade book, in the front of their notebooks. They should be responsible for keeping track of all of their grades.

In some cases, as when the class reads Gustave Flaubert's novella *A Simple Heart*, there will be more specific descriptions of the kinds of notes students are to take; ensure that they know this. Distribute the Class Notebook Rubric (p. B-2). Students should keep this rubric in their notebooks and refer to it often. The class notebook will be graded periodically, and it will count for a portion of each student's class grade.

As a wrap-up of the day's activities, have students write at least three paragraphs in response to the prompt "What I learned this summer." Encourage students to synthesize their descriptions of events, draw conclusions, and evaluate that learning. The purpose of this assignment is to help you get a sense of the students' writing abilities. Let students know that although you will not grade journals in a conventional way—correcting grammar, usage, or sentence structure—they will receive credit for that work. Ensure that they know you will read and comment on their work. Students should finish their writing as homework.

Although students will hand in this journal entry tomorrow so that you can read and respond to their paragraphs, in general, journals should be collected weekly. It's a good idea, however, to stagger the dates on which you'll collect them so you don't have 150 journals to check over one weekend.

Day 3

Students take the Academic Literacy Questionnaire, which is useful as a way to discover their habits and attitudes. It also invites students to think about the skills they need to develop to become more successful students, readers, and writers.

Materials & Resources

- Academic Literacy Questionnaire (pp. C-2–C-4)

Greet each student at the door as you did on the first day. On the board write instructions that they are to begin reviewing the Academic Literacy Questionnaire (pp. C-2–C-4) that you have placed on each desk or in a designated location. The Academic Literacy Questionnaire was developed by Jim Burke (2006a) as an informal preassessment of students' habits of mind and reading. Once students are settled, read the directions aloud to ensure that everyone focuses and understands them. Then answer any questions they may have about directions or vocabulary—such as the meaning of the word *strategies*, used often on the questionnaire.

The questionnaire serves two purposes: first, it is a way for you to get to know students; second, it is a way for students to

- identify their own strengths and needs as students,
- think about habits necessary for success in school, and
- evaluate their progress throughout the course.

Reassure students that this questionnaire is a self-assessment; they will not be evaluated on their answers or compared to one another based on their responses. They will, however, be asked to share portions of the questionnaire they are most comfortable with. No one other than you and the individual student will see the completed questionnaires. However, their questionnaires will be returned to them occasionally. For example, during the next class period they will be asked to answer the evaluative questions at the bottom of the questionnaire. In addition, at the beginning of the next semester, they will complete the questionnaire again to see how they have progressed in their development of these academic skills. Tell students that the more they focus on and develop these skills, the more successful and enjoyable their school year will be. Ask students to think carefully about the questions as they answer them. Direct students to turn over their papers and look up when they have finished.

When all students are finished, ask them to turn to the person next to them and reveal one item on the questionnaire that they know they are really good at. If students seem to feel comfortable sharing beyond their pairs, encourage a wider conversation.

Tell students again that you're excited to get to know them. Collect the journals students completed the night before. Explain how you plan to use the journal entry and when you hope to return their journals.

As a wrap-up of the day's activities and to ensure that students have input into their experiences, ask them what they thought about the questionnaire. Are there skills or personal qualities necessary to academic learning in school that were not on the questionnaire, that they would suggest should be added? Provide students time to talk about the experiences that led them to complete the questionnaire the way they did. Then, dismiss the class.

Day 4

Students discuss a time they learned how to do something new and learn about important habits of mind.

Materials & Resources

- Academic Literacy Questionnaire
- Butcher paper*

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

Tips for Teachers

Students might be interested to know that there are tests that help employers determine what skills their employees possess. ACT's WorkKeys® assessment system is designed to help students compare the skills they have to the skills employers require. Find information about WorkKeys on ACT's website under "Workplace."

Again, greet students at the door. Have their Academic Literacy Questionnaires in a spot where students can easily retrieve them. As a warm-up for the day, ask them to spend time writing in their journals answers to any three of the prompts at the bottom of the questionnaire. When they are finished, collect the questionnaires.

In class, when you ask questions, it's a good idea to wait at least three seconds for students to respond (Rowe, 1986). This is called wait-time; it allows students added time to collect their thoughts. It also lets students know that you expect all of them to participate and that you will not move on too quickly if immediate responses are not

forthcoming. Appropriate wait-time is imperative for students when classroom expectations shift beyond factual memorization to higher cognitive thinking.

Ask students to think of a time when they learned something difficult after struggling with it significantly. Perhaps provide an example, unrelated to academics, from your life: a time you learned to skateboard, to ride a bike, to fish, to milk a cow, or to use a new software program. Describe to students the failures, the persistence, and the problem solving that learning this new skill required. Ask students to think of their own experiences with such learning and then ask them to pair up with a person nearby. The purposes of this "paired think-aloud" are for them to get to know each other and to practice listening. One student should describe to the other her learning experience. The other should record what his partner says. The recorder should then ask questions necessary in order to write the other's information correctly and to encourage the speaker to explain what she means. Finally, the pairs should switch roles, with the person who spoke first becoming the recorder.

The activity should take approximately twenty minutes. When the class reconvenes, encourage students to talk about some of the habits of mind that came up in their conversations. Ask a student to record on butcher paper the ideas that their peers describe, which may include any of the following habits of mind:

- Persisting
- Committing
- Noticing
- Trying another way
- Thinking about the way you are thinking
- Imitating or talking to someone else who has the skill
- Asking questions
- Striving for precision
- Gathering information

- Taking informed risks
- Practicing

Education researchers Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick have studied the habits of mind. Their work is summarized at greater length at their website *Habits of Mind* (2007).

Students will continue to need these habits of mind in order to learn or improve any skill—reading and writing just as much as skateboarding, playing chess, or fishing. Inform students that all of the reading they will be doing in the next two weeks will be about reading and writing. Wrap up and reinforce the day’s learning by connecting the habits of mind students have listed to the skills identified on the Academic Literacy Questionnaire.

For homework, ask students to bring to class materials (which can be cut up and put onto a poster, such as magazines, drawings, or artwork) that represent their thoughts about reading and writing.

Days 5–6

Students work in small groups to create posters that express metaphorically their experiences of reading and writing. Toward the end of Day 5, in order to practice presentation skills, each group present its poster to another group.

Materials & Resources

- Seating chart transparency*
- Metaphors of Reading and Writing worksheet (pp. D-2–D-3)
- Overhead projector*
- Scissors, magazines, poster board, markers, colored pencils, glue*
- Class notebooks*

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

Before class, select groups of four students and create a transparency that arranges the seating chart accordingly. In addition, gather the materials necessary for making collages, such as scissors, magazines, and poster board. Finally, place the Metaphors of Reading and Writing worksheet (pp. D-2–D-3) in a designated spot or on students' desks.

Greet students at the door. Once they are seated, explain that their task is to create, in small groups, a poster that expresses metaphorically what reading and writing means to them.

Individually students should write the answers to the questions on the Metaphors of Reading and Writing worksheet; then, they should assemble in their groups and talk about the metaphors they have listed. As a group, they will make one collage using all four students' metaphors.

The worksheet is designed to help students think about what reading and writing has been like for them. Before students begin filling it out, however, offer some possible metaphors as a model:

- Reading is a tall hill that is difficult to climb.
- Writing is like the popular Nike slogan: Just do it!
- Reading is coming upon a wonderful secret world.
- Writing is like riding a bicycle because you have to fall off a few times to learn how to pedal.

As students respond to the questions on the worksheet and come up with their own metaphors, they will think about who they are as readers and writers. They'll also increase their understanding of metaphors. Continuing to refer to the worksheet should help focus the conversations students have as they prepare their posters.

After students have worked independently for approximately 20 minutes, reveal their groups. Allow groups time to decide which metaphors they want to use to represent their individual members' relationships to and feelings about reading and writing. Then, pass out materials—scissors, magazines, poster board, markers, colored pencils, glue.

The purpose of the assignment is threefold: First, and most obviously, it's a way for students to get to know each other and create meaning through the conversations they have about their reading and writing experiences. Second, it's a way to help students express their reading and writing experiences nonverbally: school too often focuses purely on the verbal, and there are aspects of life that can be expressed better in art than in words. Third,

Tips for Teachers

it's a way to begin a conversation, which will continue throughout the semester, about who we all are as students, as observers of the world, as readers and writers, and as growing people living in the world today. After explaining these points, inform students that you will not be assessing their work formally, but that you will be taking informal notes as they work on the posters.

Students should spend most of Days 5 and 6 working. However, in the last 20 minutes of Day 6 they will present their posters to one other group in order to prepare for presenting their posters to the class on Day 7.

Cross the room as students work, asking questions when it seems appropriate and encouraging students who seem to need encouragement. Take quick notes on your clipboard about how students are working together.

As a warm-up for Day 6, show the class the posters their peers have begun: students who are struggling to represent their metaphors may gain helpful ideas. In the last 20 minutes, each group will practice their poster presentation. Presenting students should work out issues such as who will hold the poster and who will speak first. The listening groups should make only positive, constructive, comments about the presentations: the exercise is more for students to practice than it is for correction or advice. Listening students can help by timing the presentation or, perhaps, repeating what they heard, so that the presenters can see how well they communicate.

Wrap up and reinforce the learning and experiences of the past two days by asking students to complete in their journals one of the following prompts:

- I found creating this poster difficult because . . .
- I found creating this poster enjoyable but . . .
- Compared to some of my classmates, my experiences of reading and writing have been . . .

Each student should analyze his or her work and write a conclusion about the experience of working on the poster.

Bringing students together to reflect upon their experiences before the class ends should provide a respite from the noise and bustle of the previous two days.

Randy Bomer (1995) recommends keeping notes about students on a clipboard while in class. Bomer makes note of the situations in which each student seems comfortable or uncomfortable, areas of knowledge he or she might bring to the class, reading or other interests outside of school, what he or she says about school, or anything else that may help him know students better. Even though these notes are always imperfect and incomplete, they nevertheless provide a running history of the students' class experiences. Bomer explains to students that his notes are a form of valuing what they say. At the end of each week, Bomer places his notes into three-ring binders, one binder for each class.

Day 7

Each group of students formally presents its metaphor poster. Volunteers from among the listening students will describe something they liked about each group's poster or presentation.

Materials & Resources

- Computer with Internet access*
- Data show or projector*
- Monthly Paper prompt (p. E-2)
- Monthly Paper Rubric (p. E-3)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

In their small groups and standing in front of the class, students will explain their posters. Because a primary purpose for the activity is to create a sense of safety and community in the classroom, make the experience as unthreatening and enjoyable as possible. Listening to the presentations may in itself be affirming for students because they may hear their peers use metaphors or describe reading and writing experiences with which they identify.

You may want to inform the class that, after each group makes its presentation, you will ask listeners to describe aspects of the posters or presentations that they liked. Students should support their praise with specific evidence. After each presentation, students should also be encouraged to applaud. This is important both to help students feel comfortable around each other and to reinforce a positive and friendly atmosphere in the class.

Collect the posters at the end of the class. To emphasize the class as an affirmative environment, respond to the posters positively.

In order to wrap up and reinforce the learning so far, explain to students that they've begun to answer Essential Questions 1 and 2. In addition, by presenting their metaphors about who they are as readers and writers, they have begun to think about thinking and to consider their own identities as readers and writers.

Before class ends, explain the homework assignment. Use a computer to project onto a screen or blank wall Jim Burke's webpage Englishcompanion.com. Show students how to get from the home page to the section of the site called *The Weekly Reader*. Burke has collected an impressive digital anthology of short readings on a wide variety of subjects:

- Essays from the National Public Radio series, *This I Believe*
- Profiles of inventors from an MIT website
- Short articles about the ways teens can earn money
- Letters from Peace Corps volunteers
- Photographs from the Smithsonian Institution
- Biographies of people killed in the World Trade Center
- Descriptions of musicians in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Students should choose one of the many texts there to read and respond to in a one-page paper, as described in the Monthly Paper prompt (p. E-2). The assignment is the same as Burke's "Weekly Paper," but students' essays will be due monthly, not weekly. (It's a good idea to make the papers due on the same day of the week every month—the first Monday, for instance.) Use the

Monthly Paper Rubric (p. E-2) to grade their essays. They should use this rubric to assess their Monthly Paper before turning them in.

After explaining the Monthly Paper, remind students that, although you won't be grading their journals on writing errors such as correctness of grammar or sentencings, you'll periodically give mini-lessons on particular errors you see occurring often in their journals. Once you have taught a grammar mini-lesson on a particular error, they will be responsible for addressing that issue correctly in their Monthly Papers, which will be graded on correctness of grammar and sentencings.

Students should write their drafts on a computer; if you deem it reasonable, allow them to e-mail their Monthly Papers to you. Learning how to use computers to write drafts of their papers is a skill that will come in handy later in the year. Students who do not have access to a computer should speak to you after class so that arrangements can be made with the school library to use school computers during study halls or after school.

Day 8

Students read and discuss Mary Oliver’s poem “The Journey.” Reading strategies and annotation skills are also discussed.

Materials & Resources

- “The Journey” by Mary Oliver (p. F-2)
- Metacognition (p. F-3)
- Butcher paper*
- “The Journey” transparency (p. F-4)
- Overhead projector*
- Transparency markers*
- Annotation handout (p. F-5)
- “Boulevard of Broken Dreams” by Billie Joe Armstrong (p. F-6)
- Annotation Rubric (p. F-7)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

As you greet students at the door, direct them to read “The Journey” (p. F-2), a poem by Mary Oliver, which they will find on their desks or in an easily accessible spot. Let students know that most poems need to be read at least twice. Tell them not to worry about understanding the poem, but instead, this first time, to read it through and enjoy it (Burke, 2002, pp. 392–393).

Now, read the poem aloud. As you read, each student should underline the line he or she finds most important. Avoid defining the word *important*, however, even if students ask (Probst, 2004). Students will be forced to think about what the word means to them in the context of the poem.

Next, ask students to turn to the person next to them and identify which line they underlined and why they thought it was most important. Students should talk about what memories or associations were evoked by the most important line. If a student says he felt no line was important, ask him to talk about that—to explain his response to this poem. There is no one right answer: one of the exciting things about reading is that readers have different experiences that they bring to their understanding of a text. Emphasize, however, that there are incorrect readings (Probst, 2004), which can happen if a word is defined incorrectly, if the context of a text is misunderstood, or if portions of a text are skipped or not integrated into an understanding of the entire text.

As students discuss the poem’s important lines, listen, take notes, and occasionally ask questions of individual students. Give them five or ten minutes to finish their conversations. Finally, ask what they learned about each other and about reading from this experience (Probst, 2004).

Students have just responded to a poem. Explain that, even if they don’t fully understand a poem, it can be responded to. One of the subjects they will return to throughout the year is the idea that life is a journey; moreover, one thing the class will be investigating is the kinds of journeys people take.

In this class students will become practiced questioners. They will also sharpen their thinking, reading, and writing skills. Many students already use strategies in their school work, but they need to learn to use them consciously. Metacognition is the conscious use of those skills by monitoring, regulating, and orchestrating one’s understanding. However, the more difficult the



literature students read, the more conscientious they need to be in terms of their own understanding. One kind of strategy they will learn is to understand new vocabulary. Therefore, show students how to break the word *metacognition* into two parts, the prefix *meta-* and its root *cognition*, in order to understand its meaning.

Next, model a Think-Aloud with “The Journey.” A Think-Aloud is a teaching strategy in which you verbally walk through a text’s difficulties and model strategies to overcome them. The Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy (2003) maintains an excellent online tutorial for conducting a Think-Aloud in class. Provide students with the Metacognition worksheet (p. F-3). Make sure they understand what each strategy is. Tell students to mark off the different strategies they see you using as you “think-aloud” your way through the poem. As you read the poem, use phrases that indicate the strategies you are using:

- I predict . . .
- I think this next part . . .
- I imagine (or picture) . . .
- I’m reminded of . . .
- I’m confused . . .

Encourage students to join in and help interpret the poem in a spirit of playful inquiry. Afterwards, ask volunteers to write the strategies they heard you use on butcher paper. Later, post the list of reading strategies in the room so students can refer to it throughout the year as they read new texts.

Explain to students that some critics think that the reader creates the poem or story as much as the writer does. If a poem goes unread, for example, it is just type on a sheet of paper. Readers bring their own experiences to a poem. At best, reading is a conversation that readers have with the text being read. One way readers have that conversation is to make their responses visible by writing them down, either on the text itself or on a note. This is called annotating (Probst, 2004).

Place a transparency of “The Journey” (p. F-4) on the overhead projector and model your annotation of that poem by explaining out loud the marks you make. Once you have finished and feel students understand, distribute copies of the Annotation handout (p. F-5). Explain the different annotation marks again. Then, remind students to place the Annotation handout in their class notebooks. They will be using both the Metacognition worksheet and the Annotation handout frequently throughout the year.

Before class is over, as a wrap-up, ask students to turn to someone else in the class and tell them one strategy that they have used or would like to try in their reading.

For homework, assign students to annotate, using the marks they have just learned, “Boulevard of Broken Dreams” by Billie Joe Armstrong (p. F-6), the lead singer of Green Day. Distribute the Annotation Rubric (p. F-7) so they will know how you will score their homework. On the same page as the song lyrics, students should respond to the song title, to literary devices such as repetition or imagery, to the lines and stanzas on the page, and to any ideas the song suggests to them.

Day 9

Students will be given a list of literary terms that they are to learn during the year; they will also learn about Bloom's Taxonomy, the guide to levels of cognition. Then, students will read "Digging" by Seamus Heaney and practice asking questions about it.

Materials & Resources

- Glossary of Literary Terms (pp. G-2–G-4)
- Bloom's Taxonomy (p. G-5)
- "Digging" by Seamus Heaney (p. G-6)
- Sticky notes*
- "Digging" Questions (pp. G-7–G-8)
- "Digging" Questions Key (p. G-9)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

As you greet students at the door, remind them to turn in their homework. Then, direct their attention to the two handouts on their desks. One is a Glossary of Literary Terms (pp. G-2–G-4) that will be used throughout the year. The terms represent the language of the discipline, specialized terms that professionals use when discussing literature—just as, for example, doctors and lawyers have specialized terms to discuss their work. The other handout that students will find at their desks is Bloom's Taxonomy (p. G-5). Learning this taxonomy will help students become more aware of the levels of abstraction they are focusing on in any text.

When students are settled at their desks, explain that the taxonomy was devised in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom of the University of Chicago. It identifies the kinds of thinking students do in class. Each kind of thinking has levels of abstraction associated with it. Explain that the levels relate to the kinds of questions students should ask, and will be asked, in this course. Therefore, looking at and thinking about the taxonomy is one way of helping them think about their own thinking—in other words, to engage in metacognition. Then, ask students to turn to a neighbor and share what they learned from reading and hearing about Bloom's Taxonomy.

Building on the taxonomy, teach students to understand literature by asking questions of a text. As you hand out the poem, "Digging," by Seamus Heaney (p. G-6), remind students that one of the questions they are asking in this unit is what value others have found in reading and writing. Read "Digging" to students as they read it at their desks. Then ask them to read "Digging" again, silently. Ask them to annotate the poem by writing their comments on sticky notes. As students work, they should also identify two reading strategies—for example, skipping a word, accepting being confused about the text, visualizing the subject being described, breaking the poem into chunks—that they use as they read. When they have finished, each student should reveal to a neighbor his or her strategy, in what part of the poem it was used, and whether the strategy helped in understanding the text.

Then, reveal that there are other strategies that they will use throughout the course. One strategy is to retell the story in your own words; another is to write about the text; a third is to talk to someone about the text (Tovani, 2000). Direct students to tell their partner the story of "Digging" as they understand

it. After five minutes or so, extend these one-on-one conversations into a class discussion.

Because good readers ask questions of texts all the time, ask students to extend their earlier discussion by applying Bloom's Taxonomy to specific questions about "Digging." As you hand out the "Digging" Questions worksheet (pp. G-7–G-8), tell students that asking questions is essentially what a teacher does when she writes a study guide about a text. Explain that three kinds of questions related to Bloom's Taxonomy are literal, or "right-there" questions; interpretive, or "pulling-it-together" questions; and evaluative, or "author-and-me" and "on-my-own" questions. Each of these question types is included on the worksheet. Ask students to work with their neighbors to answer the questions about the poem and to label the questions. In the Justification column, they should explain why they've labeled each question as they have. Collect the worksheets to determine how well students understand the poem and Bloom's Taxonomy.

Wrap up by asking students to answer three more questions about "Digging." The questions, developed by Cris Tovani (2000), can be asked about any poem:

- What background knowledge do you have that helps you connect to what's happening in the poem?
- What picture do you see in your head when you think about the poem?
- What do you think the poem is about?

Conclude the class by asking students to identify whether the questions are *literal*, *interpretive*, or *evaluative*.

Tips for Teachers

Asking questions is one of the most important comprehension and interpretation strategies students can learn. Educator Taffy Raphael (as cited in Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999) has also created categories of questions that can be used with struggling students in place of the labels *literal*, *interpretive*, and *evaluative*. Raphael's categories include:

- *Right-there questions*, whose answers are easy to find in the text
- *Pulling-it-together questions*, whose answers are in the text, but must be pulled from different sections
- *Author-and-me questions*, in which the reader must supply some of his or her own background knowledge to answer.
- *On-my-own questions*, which have answers that are not in the text. The reader does not need to have read the text in order to answer this question, but the text helps the reader to more fully answer it.

Day 10

Students read, annotate, and write questions about a reading passage from the PLAN[®] assessment. Students also begin to learn how to use Greek and Latin roots and dictionaries to define words.

Materials & Resources

- Maya Angelou on Writing (p. H-2)
- Greek and Latin Roots handout (p. H-3)
- Overhead projector*
- Cartoons of Latin Derivatives transparency (p. H-4)
- Set of class dictionaries*
- Timer*
- "Learning to Read" by Alex Haley and Malcolm X (pp. H-5–H-10)

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

Direct students' attention to the reading Maya Angelou on Writing (p. H-2), which they will find at their desks when you greet them. Explain that it is a passage from a tenth-grade test, the PLAN reading test. Remind students that in addition to reading about reading and thinking about themselves as readers, they are reading about writing and thinking about themselves as writers. Giving students only the passage, without the questions that go with it, invites them to begin thinking of such passages without the pressure of a timed exam. Reading the passage also helps them experience the level of difficulty they should expect from the PLAN assessment. Encourage them to refer to the Annotation handout as they annotate the text. Their annotations will help you see how much they have retained from recent classes. After instructing students to write one interpretive question about the passage at the bottom of the page, give them 15 minutes to read and annotate.

Ask students what they thought about the passage as you collect their annotations, which should be scored with the Annotation Rubric. Then, wrap up the discussion by emphasizing what Angelou says in the passage: even people who write for a living don't always write well or have ideas to write about.

Distribute a list of some commonly used Greek and Latin roots (Greek and Latin Roots handout, p. H-3). Students will be learning to use Greek and Latin roots to help them guess the meanings of English words. Warn them, however, to beware of relying too heavily on roots. For example, one could easily assume that a pediatrician has something to do with feet if one believed its root were *ped* (from Latin, *pedalis*, or foot) rather than *pais* (Greek, for child). Returning to the word *metacognition*, help students explore its meaning again, but this time, focus on the exploration of its roots. *Metaphor* has the same root. Students should write the meanings of both words in their Glossary of Literary Terms, and they should place the Greek and Latin Roots handout in their class notebooks.

Continue the discussion by placing on an overhead projector the Cartoons of Latin Derivatives transparency (p. H-4). The cartoons come from *Latin is Fun* (Traupman, 1989). Students should be able to determine the meanings of the words on the transparency easily. Before moving on, assign students ten Greek and Latin roots to study in particular. Students should

expect quizzes over these roots, prefixes, and suffixes and how they are used in English.

Of course, another way to understand vocabulary is to consult the dictionary. Show students the dictionaries in the classroom. They will begin doing dictionary work now to discover how many words they know that are derived from Greek and Latin roots.

Divide the class into groups of four. Assign each group three roots from the Greek and Latin Roots handout and give the group five minutes to come up with as many words that use the roots as possible. When the timer goes off, provide each group with a dictionary and ask students to find more words they didn't think of.

Distribute "Learning to Read" (pp. H-5–H-10), which is an excerpt from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Tell students that the text they will read tomorrow is full of historical, biographical, and cultural references. Sometimes not having background knowledge makes reading difficult, which is one reason that the more you read, the easier reading becomes. Therefore, in preparation for "Learning to Read," ask students to scan the text. (Remind them that scanning a text is a very helpful reading strategy.) The purpose for scanning the text is to underline names, words, or phrases they do not understand or have never seen before. Once students have spent time underlining, they should call out what they have found. Another student should list the words on the board. Students will likely identify names, words, or phrases such as *Will Durant*, *Nat Turner*, *Herodotus*, *Opium Wars*, *Gandhi*, *Mendel*, *W.E.B. DuBois*, *Coptic Church*, *Adlai Stevenson*. Divide the list among the students and, for homework, assign each student to research essential information about the names, words, and phrases they've been assigned.

Tips for Teachers

Build the lists of roots, suffixes, and prefixes that students should study by turning to the dictionary. Begin at the beginning of the alphabet:

- *agog* (leader, as in *pedagogue*)
- *anthropo* (man, as in *anthropology*)
- *auto* (self, as in *autocraft*)
- *bibli* (book, as in *Bible*, *bibliomania*, and *bibliolater*)

Then, quiz students in a variety of ways:

- True/False quizzes that ask whether a word is used correctly in a sentence or not (for example, "Because she wanted everyone at the party to know who she was, she went incognito" would be false).
- Ask students to define a list of roots.
- Require students to match correct definitions with words.

Day 11

Students read and discuss “Learning to Read” from Malcolm X’s autobiography. They use a K-W-L chart before and after reading; write literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions about the text; and ask and answer those questions.

Materials & Resources

- Malcolm X Modified K-W-L worksheet (p. I-2)
- “Learning to Read” by Alex Haley and Malcolm X
- Class notebooks*
- Sticky notes*
- “Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros (pp. I-3–I-4)
- Response Paper Rubric (p. I-5)
- Timer*

*Materials or resources not included in the published unit

Place the Malcolm X Modified K-W-L worksheet (p. I-2) on students’ desks. As they enter the class, inform students that they are to fill in the “What I Know” and the “What I Think I Know” columns of the chart. They should write everything they know about Malcolm X, including what they learned during the previous night’s research.

After students have shared what they wrote on the K-W-L chart, correct any misconceptions, and, if they have not yet mentioned them, make sure students know the following facts about Malcolm X:

- He was an important political activist in the 1950s and 1960s.
- He inspired many African Americans with his stirring speeches.
- He was a member of the Nation of Islam.
- He preached that blacks should separate from whites.
- He used violent rhetoric—“the ballet or the bullet,” for example.
- He was assassinated in February, 1965.
- His life can be seen as the journey of a hero because of his movement from criminal to important political leader.

The *Official Web Site of Malcolm X* (2007) is a good resource for more biographical information about Malcolm X.

Next, ask students to fill in the “What I Want to Learn” section of the K-W-L chart. Have them call out some of the things they wrote. Finally, explain that *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, written by Alex Haley, tells Malcolm X’s story from his early days of crime through his time as a political activist. Prepare students for the fact that some of what they will read may be unsettling. Then, ask them to imagine what it would be like if they could not read and what effect that might have in their lives. It might spur

Tips for Teachers

Instead of using “Learning to Read,” you might choose to have students read and talk about other excerpts from other texts. Differentiate instruction by having different groups of students read different texts or provide students with a choice to read two or three passages. The more choice students have, the more likely they are to appreciate what they read. Texts that are more appropriate for advanced students have been marked with an asterisk:

- Rudolfo A. Anaya, “Seis,” from *Bless Me, Ultima*
- James Baldwin, “If Black English Isn’t a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?”
- Frederick Douglass, “Learning to Read and Write,” from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave**
- Alfred Kazin, “The Word Was My Agony,” from *A Walker in the City**
- Steven King, “What Writing Is,” from *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*
- Vladimir Nabokov, “Good Readers and Good Writers,” from *Lectures on Literature**
- Dai Sijie, Chapter 6 from *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*
- Richard Wright, “I Hungered For Books,” from *Black Boy*

Tips for Teachers

their thinking to know that “Learning to Read” is sometimes called “Saved.” Allow students to speculate about the different chapter titles. If they have difficulty connecting them to the unit theme of reading, begin to summarize the chapter’s plot: it begins when Malcolm X is languishing in jail. He discovers reading, and his life is forever changed. Students should quickly begin to make the connections. (Reveal, in the process, that interpreting the meaning and purpose of the title is another reading strategy.)

Give students ten minutes to read as much of “Learning to Read” as they can. Use a timer to indicate when time is up, and ask that each student share with another student any of the strategies they noticed themselves using. Encourage students to be specific about where, for example, they used each strategy, identifying the exact sentence they needed to reread, the word they skipped over, or the place where they guessed or made an association between their own experience and the text. Then, have them write questions in their journals:

- One literal question per page of reading
- Two interpretive questions
- Two evaluative questions

If you think students are not yet ready to label their questions as they write them, just have them write questions about the text on sticky notes; they can then decide which kind of question each question is and connect it to Bloom’s Taxonomy after the fact. The main point is to encourage students to ask their own questions about the text. Encourage students to ask each other any of the literal questions they have written down. Ask students whether talking about Malcolm X or having a reason for reading helped them to understand the text more easily. Then, direct students to continue reading. They should also continue to write literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions.

When students have finished the essay, encourage them to answer the rest of each other’s questions. Remind students to share what they learned from the homework, and encourage them to speculate about the ways this information influences their understanding of the essay. In case the discussion lags, have questions ready, and ask students to identify them as literal, interpretive, or evaluative as you ask them:

- How did the way Malcolm X learned to read differ from the ways people usually learn? (Literal)
- What does Malcolm X mean when he says he is “barely functional” as a reader? (Interpretive)
- What changes did Malcolm X notice in himself as the world of books opened to him? (Literal)
- How did you react to Malcolm X’s saying that he felt freer after he learned to read than he had ever felt in his life? (Evaluative)

Finally, have students complete the Malcolm X K-W-L worksheet by filling in the “Links Between” column. Ask one or two students to remind the class of some new things that they have learned about Malcolm X and about reading. Ask others if there are things they wanted to learn but didn’t. Encourage them to read the rest of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* for SSR and to conduct research to answer their questions. Collect students’ completed K-W-L charts before they leave.

Connect “Learning to Read” to the Greek and Latin Roots handout by identifying words, such as dormant, eloquent, genetics, or tentacled, all of which occur in the essay, that are Greek and Latin derivatives. Encourage students to look for other words from the essay that also are derived from the roots on the handout.

Tips for Teachers

One good resource for learning about Socratic Seminars is the Greece Central School District website (2004), which provides an overview of the thinking behind this teaching tool, sample questions you might use, suggestions for texts, and questions asked by students about the seminar concept.

During the next class, students will conduct what is sometimes called a Socratic Seminar. Explain that Socrates was a philosopher (469–399 B.C.) who believed that having disciplined conversations is the best way to learn. He understood that asking good questions is one of the best ways of seeking deeper understanding. As a teacher, Socrates would pretend not to understand what a student told him; instead he would ask questions so that he could draw information out of the student. His questions frequently spurred his students to new, more rigorous ways of thinking. Inform students that Socratic Seminars are not

that different from Literature Circles, which they may remember from ninth grade.

Distribute copies of the short story “Eleven” (pp. I-3–I-4) by Sandra Cisneros and the Response Paper Rubric (I-5). Students’ homework is to read the story and write in their journals:

- One sentence telling what they think the story is about
- An informal, one-page response to the story and
- Three questions they have about the short story.

Encourage students to write literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions and refer them to the Bloom’s Taxonomy handout while they are write their questions.

In addition, students should write a one-page response paper to “Eleven.” As you explain the assignment, emphasize that the task is not to interpret the story but to respond to it. Tell students that when they write their response papers they should write in their journals questions they have about the text, thoughts about its value or worth, memories or associations it brings to mind, speculations about the writer or the writer’s purpose in writing the story, and approval or disapproval of the text itself. They are not to take the text apart, find symbols, define words, or discuss what someone else thinks about it.

The purpose of providing this kind of direction is to help students realize what response to literature is. Some students are so intent on analyzing a story and interpreting it that they do not allow themselves to respond. To emphasize this purpose, when you do respond in writing to students’ papers, focus on asking questions that return students to the text itself: “What in the story makes you feel that way?” “Why do you think you like this character so much?” “What specifically is it about this story that bores you? Could it be that you prefer stories that have more action in the plot?” “Where’s the evidence for that statement?” These questions will help communicate your expectations for similar papers students will write in the future.

Day 12

Asking literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions about Sandra Cisneros' short story, "Eleven," students participate in a Socratic Seminar.

Materials & Resources

- "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros

Students will notice as you greet them that the chairs are arranged differently from usual. About half of the classroom chairs will be set up in an inner circle; the other chairs will be placed in two outer rows on opposite sides of the inner circle. (See Figure 1.)

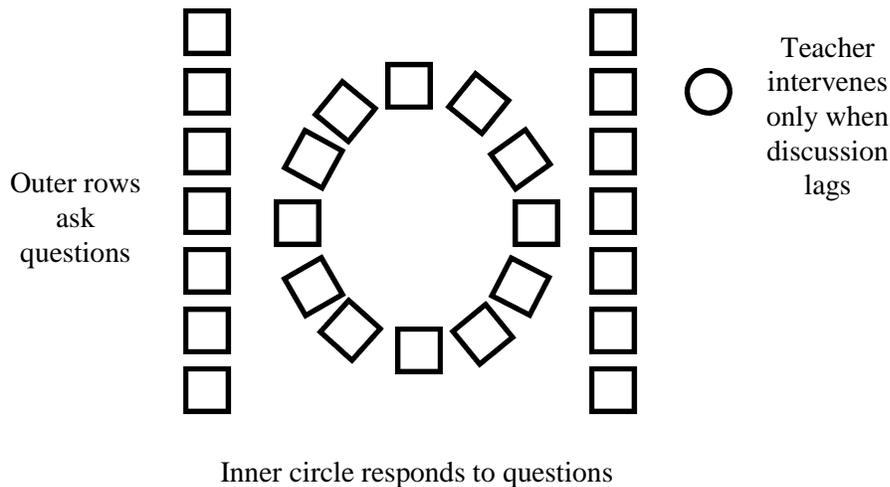


Figure 1

Tell students that part of the purpose of this Socratic Seminar is to encourage them to take over their learning about the reading. Too often in English class, the teacher asks questions while students must figure out answers that they think the teacher wants. In a Socratic Seminar, they will be asking questions instead; Asking questions of a text is still a new skill for all of them, so they shouldn't feel worried about making mistakes, which is part of the learning process. During the seminar, students sitting in the outer rows will ask students in the inner circle questions. Students in the inner circle will respond. Questions should not be asked of anyone in particular, so anyone in the inner circle who can reply, may. Students are not allowed to ask the same question twice. In the seminar, only students who sit in the outer rows ask questions. Therefore, only they receive points towards this part of the Socratic Seminar grade. Everyone will, however, at some point in the year, sit in their places and receive the same points. All students should hand in their written questions as well as their response papers at the end of the discussion for credit.

Tell students to find places in the inner circle and the outer two rows; you may want to ask specific students who you think will ask insightful questions to sit in the outer two rows this time, as they will model good behavior in the Socratic Seminar. In order to give the exercise some predictability for the students who are answering questions, allow them to turn

their questions over to the others. The first few times you conduct this kind of Socratic Seminar, guide the students. Suggest, for example, that literal questions be asked first. Once all of the literal questions are answered, invite students to ask interpretive questions and so on until all questions are answered. Encourage students, at first, to keep the text and notes and response papers in front of them as the seminar unfolds. This may help students feel secure about the work they do in this discussion. Meanwhile, stand outside of the outer rows. Refrain from adding to the discussion unless the discussion lags. The more students participate in Socratic Seminars, the less often you should need to intervene.

After the discussion is concluded, summarize the discussion and congratulate students on their completion of a Socratic Seminar. Periodically throughout the school year, students will be asked to use this questioning technique, and they will be required to lead the class in other, similar ways.

Wrap up by taking time to discuss what students have learned in this unit. Start by asking the essential questions:

1. Who am I as a reader, writer, student, and person?
2. What habits of mind does it take to succeed in school?
3. What have people said over time about the value of reading and writing?
4. What makes someone a good reader, writer, and overall good student?

Finally, collect students' one-page response papers. The responses to "Eleven" should be graded with the Response Paper Rubric and should include additional comments.

ENHANCING STUDENT LEARNING

Selected Course Objectives

A.2. Reading Strategies

- c. Demonstrate comprehension of increasingly challenging texts (both print and nonprint sources) by asking and answering literal, interpretive, and evaluative questions
- d. Use close-reading strategies (e.g., visualizing, annotating, questioning) in order to interpret increasingly challenging texts

A.3. Knowledge of Literary Forms

- b. Describe how the choice of form (e.g., film, novel, sculpture) affects the presentation of a work's theme or topic (e.g., comparing *Fahrenheit 451* to François Truffaut's film version)

E. Study Skills and Test Taking

- a. Apply active reading, listening, and viewing techniques by taking notes on classroom discussions, lectures, oral and/or video presentations, or assigned at-home reading, and by underlining key passages and writing comments in journals or in margins of texts, where permitted

Unit Extension

Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures

- "On Keeping a Notebook" by Joan Didion (pp. J-2–J-6)

Students might also be encouraged to read all or part of Joan Didion's essay, "On Keeping a Notebook" (pp. J-2–J-6). This is an essay in which the narrator describes how writing informally has and has not been valuable to her through the years. It is an essay of some difficulty, suitable for students who need additional challenge. Students can be encouraged to talk or write about the following aspects of the essay:

- What are the different reasons Didion keeps a notebook? (Literal)
- If, today, you could meet yourself as you were at nine, what would you say to yourself? (Evaluative) Write a letter to your former self.

Reteaching

Suggested Teaching Strategies/Procedures

- 'I Just Wanna Be Average' by Mike Rose (pp. J-7–J-15)

In order to reinforce students' learning about annotation of texts, students could read and mark up all or part of Mike Rose's essay, "I Just Wanna Be Average" (pp. J-7–J-15). It is another essay in which the narrator writes about the value of reading; it also implies a critique of school life. After reading and annotating the essay (based on the Annotation handout), students can pair up and show each other how they have annotated the text. In this way, students learn that different people respond differently to the same text; they also see

how other people annotate, and thus they are provided with new ideas for annotation.

Students can further be asked to compare Rose's experiences with reading to the experiences of Malcolm X. Encourage them to talk about the following aspects of the essay:

- What were Rose's different teachers like? (Literal)
- How does the placement of Rose into the vocational track of school change his experiences there? (Interpretive)
- What does the statement "students will float to the mark you set" mean? (Interpretive)
- What kind of educational system do you think would be best for all students? (Evaluative)

Students might want to write about the question above in their journals instead of, or prior to, discussing their ideas in class.

Reflecting on Classroom Practice

- Were students engaged with the texts they read? Why or why not?
- How often are students given the opportunity to encounter and critique a variety of print materials?
- How could the writing prompts be adapted to inspire students in your community?
- Do you encourage students to feel comfortable taking risks in their writing?

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Contents

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Unit Assignments and Assessments	A-3
Record Keeping	

Unit Assignments and Assessments

Name: _____ Period: _____ Unit 1: Introduction to English 10

Directions: Prior to starting the unit, complete the log on the next page according to the example below and distribute it to students as an organizational tool.

Day Assigned	Assignment/Assessment	In Class	Home-work	Date Due	Feedback (Completed/ Points)
1, 2, 4, & 6	Journal Writing	X	X		
3	Academic Literacy Questionnaire	X			
5-6	Poster and Presentation	X			
7	Monthly Paper		X		
8	Metacognition worksheet	X			
	“Boulevard of Broken Dreams” homework		X		
10	“Digging” Questions worksheet	X			
	Malcolm X Modified K-W-L worksheet	X			
12	Group Discussion and Response Paper		X		

Contents

Class Notebook Rubric	B-2
Rubric	

Class Notebook Rubric

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Points		Criteria
Available	Earned	
Class Notes		
35		Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is legible and coherent ■ Shows conscientious effort toward recording course material ■ Shows evidence of understanding by creating or exploring new ideas learned ■ Uses good note-taking strategies
25		Format <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes date of notes ■ Includes title of notes ■ Has numbered pages
Organization		
Required sections with appropriately filed materials		
5		Writing—handouts, rubrics, and writer’s log
10		Writer’s log completed for all writing assignments
5		Grammar and Vocabulary—grammar handouts, vocabulary lists, returned quizzes
5		Highlighted and Annotated Essays—record growing facility with annotation
5		Graded Papers, Tests, and Quizzes
10		Evidence that effort goes above and beyond (e.g., notes on reading beyond those required)
100		TOTAL POINTS

Additional Comments

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Academic Literacy Questionnaire	C-2
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Academic Literacy Questionnaire

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Overview: Some years ago the President’s Secretary of Labor asked people in all different fields of work to identify the skills they needed to be successful at work. One set of answers, called “Foundation Skills” offers a useful model of what students also need to know to be successful at school. The Secretary’s three main categories (Basic Skills, Thinking Skills, and Personal Qualities) were used to organize the academic “foundation skills” listed below. Before filling out the questionnaire, take a minute to consider the Secretary’s original Foundational Skills:

BASIC SKILLS: Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens, and speaks.

Reading: Locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules.

Writing: Communicates thoughts, ideas, information and messages in writing, and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts.

Arithmetic: Performs basic computations; uses basic numerical concepts such as whole numbers, etc.

Mathematics: Approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques.

Listening: Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues.

Speaking: Organizes ideas and communicates orally.

THINKING SKILLS: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, and knows how to learn and reason.

Creative Thinking: Generates new ideas.

Decision-Making: Specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternative.

Problem Solving: Recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action.

Seeing Things in the Mind’s Eye: Organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects, and other information.

Knowing How to Learn: Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills.

Reasoning: Discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem.

PERSONAL QUALITIES: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty.

Responsibility: Exerts a high level of effort and perseveres towards goal attainment.

Self-Esteem: Believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self.

Sociability: Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings.

Self-Management: Assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress, and exhibits self-control.

Integrity/Honesty: Chooses ethical courses of action.

Directions: Read each statement and place “1” (Never), “2” (Usually), or “3” (Always) in the first column to indicate your level of agreement with the statement.

Basic Skills: Reads, writes, listens, and speaks		
1.		I read actively, using a variety of strategies and asking questions to help me understand what I read.
2.		I identify the main idea and supporting details in informational, literary, and other types of texts.
3.		I use technology or other media to write, research, and/or present.
4.		I follow oral directions, using strategies to remember and/or comprehend them.

Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, visualizes, and knows how to learn and reason	
5.	I use a variety of strategies to help me do well on quizzes and tests.
6.	I use different strategies and techniques to help me remember information.
7.	I use a reading process to help me understand what I read.
8.	I use a variety of notemaking strategies to help me read, write, learn, and think.
9.	I consider what I learn from different perspectives to help me better understand it.
10.	I connect what I study now with what I know from experience and have learned in school.
11.	I know how I learn best and take advantage of this knowledge.
12.	I monitor my reading so I know how well I understand the text and which strategies to use.
13.	I engage in prereading strategies before I read the entire text and do the assignment.
14.	I use strategies to determine the quality and importance of information.
15.	I set a purpose before I read, write, speak, listen, design, or think.
16.	I formulate an argument/thesis and support it with details, examples, and quotations.
17.	I read the directions so I know what to do, how to do it, and the order in which things should be done.
18.	I use a variety of strategies to help me visualize what I read/learn.
19.	I use strategies to help me generate ideas when writing, reading, designing, planning, or thinking.
20.	I prepare myself to read, write, listen, watch, or learn.
21.	I find out the criteria by which my work will be graded before I begin.
22.	I learn from my errors, mistakes, and experiences.
23.	I consult other students for suggestions about how to succeed in a class or on an assignment.
24.	I tell my teachers what helps me learn and succeed.
25.	I prioritize my work according to time, difficulty, urgency, and resources needed.
26.	I dedicate a specific time for schoolwork each day.
27.	I study in a place that has no distractions; it also has those materials I need.
Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty	
28.	I write down all homework assignments in a planner or on a dedicated page in a binder.
29.	I keep track of my academic standing in each class.
30.	I bring my book and other materials to class every day.
31.	I have my library and school ID cards with me at all times.
32.	I arrive in class, take my seat, and get out my materials before the bell rings.
33.	I have the following school supplies: pens, pencils, paper, binders, calculator, sticky notes, dictionary.
34.	I ask others—friends, parents, teachers—to read, respond to, or check my work.
35.	I ask the teacher for help when I do not understand an assignment.
36.	I show my teacher and fellow classmates respect in the way I speak and act.
37.	I greet my teachers when I enter the class, and look them in the eye when I speak to them.

Personal Qualities (continued)	
38.	I have and seek adult allies and mentors who provide guidance and support when I need it.
39.	I use different strategies to help me overcome difficulties I encounter in school and outside school.
40.	I set and revise personal and academic goals for myself throughout the school year.
41.	I contribute to class by asking questions, helping others, and participating in class discussions.
42.	I set aside time for family and friends.
43.	I complete and submit all assigned work on time.
44.	I turn in original work (i.e., I do not plagiarize or cheat).
45.	I am able to work on assignments and projects independently.
46.	I make regular efforts to improve my academic and personal vocabulary.
47.	I read—books, magazines, or newspapers—on my own outside of school.
48.	I read the teacher’s comments to improve my performance and understand my grade.
49.	I study for quizzes and tests.
50.	I take notes when teachers lecture, even if they don’t require it.
TOTAL SCORE	

Prompts (To be addressed in your journal periodically throughout the course)

Use any of the following prompts to help you reflect on and synthesize what you learn from the self-evaluation above.

- I notice . . .
- I wonder . . .
- Obviously I need to improve in the area of . . .
- In order to change I must . . .
- One strategy that has helped me (e.g., stay organized) in the past is . . .
- I need to learn these different skills if . . .
- I have difficulties in the area of _____ because . . .
- I’d like to improve in the area of _____ so I can. . .

Adapted from Jim Burke, “ACCESS: Academic Literacy Foundation Skills.” ©2006 by Jim Burke.

Contents

Metaphors of Reading and Writing	D-2
Worksheet	

Metaphors of Reading and Writing

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Part I

Directions: Fill out the worksheet. Then, follow the remaining directions.

1. How did you feel, physically, the last time you read all or part of a book, magazine, or newspaper? Where were you? Were you comfortable? Did your back hurt, your teeth ache? Did you feel warm or cold? Do you recall it as a pleasant or unpleasant experience? What was the name of the book, magazine, or newspaper?
2. What kinds of reading are dangerous for you? Were you ever humiliated when reading, whether by an insensitive teacher or an obnoxious little brother? Do some kinds of reading put you in danger of looking dumb? Please explain.
3. What cozy and familiar childhood memories of reading do you have? List some of those memories here.
4. What has your life history as a writer been like?

Contents

Monthly Paper.....	E-2
Prompt	
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Rubric	

Monthly Paper

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Be sure your paper includes the following when you turn it in:

- A copy of the text/image from *The Weekly Reader* or its URL
- Proper citation format
- Any notes or drafts you may have

Overview

Both the reading and writing parts of this assignment have several important goals. Through this once-a-month assignment, you will:

- Read a variety of types of text (images, essays, films, articles, poems, stories, and multimedia productions)
- Improve your familiarity with how to use the Web and its resources
- Reinforce and extend your knowledge of how to write paragraphs that are focused, organized, and developed using examples and details
- Write about a subject of interest to you and your audience that demonstrates your ability to read a variety of texts with insight
- Write with an emphasis on clarity and correctness

Step One

Decide what you will read. Go to: <http://englishcompanion.com/room82/weeklyreader.html>. If you don't have much time, try one of the Quick Picks. If you have more time or the inclination, take time to investigate one of the other sites listed in *The Weekly Reader*.

Step Two

Read the text you choose. I say "text" because you might choose an image, a web-based documentary, a painting, a poem, or a video essay. Before you begin, jot down some questions about the text you chose, questions that will help you read it better. If you are not sure how to take your reading to the next step, go to englishcompanion.com and scroll down the main page to the list of How-To-Reads in the left-hand margin.

Step Three

Write a one-page paper that

- is double-spaced and typed; uses 12-point serif font and 1.25-inch margins.
- establishes a clear thesis in your opening paragraph.
- organizes itself into paragraphs, each with a main idea that relates to and builds on your thesis.
- includes examples and details from the text you read; these examples should maintain the focus, organization, and development of each paragraph.
- follows the prescribed format of the sample paper: headers, citation, recommendation, etc.
- is revised and is proofread.

Adapted from Jim Burke, "The Weekly Paper Guidelines." ©2007 by Jim Burke.

Monthly Paper Rubric

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Focus	1	3	5
Formatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does not follow specified requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Follows most specified requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Satisfies all specified requirements
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lacks a thesis or controlling idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes a basic thesis or controlling idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides a clear and compelling thesis
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sentences do not relate to the paragraph’s main idea. ■ Paragraphs do not clearly or effectively relate to the paper’s thesis or controlling idea; transitions are few or nonexistent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sentences mostly relate to the paragraph’s main idea. ■ Paragraphs generally, though not always, relate to the thesis or controlling idea; transitions sometimes appear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sentences clearly relate to the paragraph’s main idea. ■ Paragraphs clearly and effectively relate to and support the thesis; transitions are clear and effective.
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Examples are either lacking or ineffective (e.g., do not relate to the main idea in the paper or paragraph). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Examples are included, though not always; reader needs specific details or quotes that the writer does not provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Writer provides examples and quotes that answer the reader’s questions and add depth to the writer’s ideas.
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mistakes in grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation cause confusion and show lack of concern for quality of writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some mistakes in grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation, but they do not cause confusion; they suggest negligence, not indifference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No mistakes in grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation. The writing is clear, clean, and correct.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Idea(s) in the paper are irrelevant or not worthy of reader’s consideration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Idea(s) in the paper are mostly relevant and worthy of reader’s consideration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Idea(s) in the paper are compelling, even original; they are not obvious.
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Writing lacks strong verbs and sentence variation. ■ Writing might ramble; the paper is hastily done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Writing has some strong verbs and occasional sentence variation. ■ Writing might ramble; the paper is not carefully done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Writing contains strong verbs and effective sentence variation. ■ Writing does not ramble; the paper is not hastily done.

Comments

Adapted from Jim Burke, “Weekly Paper Rubric.” ©2007 by Jim Burke.

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The Journey

Mary Oliver

Mary Oliver, "The Journey." ©1986 by Mary Oliver.

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
5 their bad advice—
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
10 "Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
15 with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations—
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
20 enough, and a wild night
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
25 the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice,
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
30 that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do—determined to save
35 the only life you could save.

Metacognition

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Check off the strategies you see or hear me use as I perform a “think-aloud.” Write specific examples that you hear in the box to the right of each skill.

“✓”	Strategies	Examples
_____	Previewing	
_____	Rereading	
_____	Questioning	
_____	Skimming or Scanning	
_____	Summarizing	
_____	Skipping an Unknown Word	
_____	Living with Confusion	
_____	Breaking Down the Text or “Chunking”	
_____	Reading Closely	
_____	Imagining or Visualizing	
_____	Comparing Text to Real-Life Events	
_____	Other	

The Journey

Mary Oliver, "The Journey." ©1986 by Mary Oliver.

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
5 their bad advice—
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
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20 enough, and a wild night
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
25 the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice,
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
30 that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do—determined to save
35 the only life you could save.

Annotation

AnnotatingAnnotatingAnnotatingAnnotatingAnnotatingAnnotatingAnnotatingAnnotatingAnnotatingAnnotating

READ WITH THE PEN IN HAND

Be an *active reader* . . .

Think when you read . . .

Pause and *reflect* . . .

In the Margin

What It Means

?

I don't understand this.
This is new to me.

!

I'm surprised by this!
This is a shock!

underline

This is really important.
I need to know this.
The teacher repeated this and pointed it out more than once.

○

I don't know this word.
I need to get the meaning of this word.

*

This is the answer on the study guide.
This is the answer on the test.

3

I noticed these word patterns or repetitions.

#

This is a turning word, like "so" or "but."
This is a time word, like "when" or "next."

= =

This is an example of alliteration.

||

I think this could be an important symbol or metaphor.

Written notes about:

- Title
- Literary devices (e.g., repetition, imagery)
- Graphic elements (e.g., punctuation, line length)
- Interpretation or ideas that the text suggests (e.g., associations suggested by specific words)

Boulevard of Broken Dreams

Billie Joe Armstrong

Adapted from Billie Joe Armstrong, "Boulevard of Broken Dreams." ©2004 by Warner Bros. Records.

I walk a lonely road
The only one that I have ever known
Don't know where it goes
But it's home to me and I walk alone

5 I walk this empty street
On the Boulevard of Broken Dreams
Where the city sleeps
and I'm the only one and I walk alone

10 I walk alone
I walk alone
I walk alone
I walk a . . .

[Refrain]
My shadow's the only one that walks beside me
My shallow heart's the only thing that's beating
15 Sometimes I wish someone out there will find me
'Til then I walk alone

I'm walking down the line
That divides me somewhere in my mind
On the border line
20 Of the edge and where I walk alone

Read between the lines
What's messed up and everything's alright
Check my vital signs
To know I'm still alive and I walk alone

25 I walk alone
I walk alone
I walk alone
I walk a . . .

[Refrain]

30 I walk alone
I walk a . . .

I walk this empty street
On the Boulevard of Broken Dreams
Where the city sleeps
And I'm the only one and I walk a . . .

[Refrain]

Annotation Rubric

Points Available	Criteria
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrates conscientious and thorough understanding of the reading material as evidenced by annotating strategies that reveal thinking at the upper levels of cognition (see Bloom’s Taxonomy) ■ Annotates only the most important concepts within the text (evaluation) ■ Engages the text and exposes processes of active reading ■ Has approximately one significant annotation per stanza or paragraph that accomplishes the following goals: paraphrases the essential idea in the stanza or paragraph (application/analysis/evaluation in Bloom’s Taxonomy), defines an unfamiliar term in context (application), connects ideas to other reading (synthesis) or to other disciplines, makes a personal connection to ideas presented, or asks questions for clarification ■ Helps the reader process the material and would be useful later on when the reader needs to recall the material
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrates competence in understanding and engaging the material ■ Has many of the qualities of the annotations in the 90-99 point range but doesn’t push far enough to remain at the upper levels of cognition: Annotations may be more indiscriminate; annotations may be fewer or more superficial
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Relies primarily on generalities; reveals thinking processes that stay at lower levels of cognition (knowledge, comprehension, application), rather than moving into the upper levels (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remains primarily vague ■ Shows a minimal amount of effort, understanding, or active reading ■ Has notes that look exactly like those of a neighbor or few to no annotations at all ■ Would not be helpful to a reader who needs to recall the information
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indicates very minimal to complete lack of effort to understand the reading material

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Glossary of Literary Terms

Abstract—

Aesthetic—

Allusion—

Analogy—

Analysis—

Annotation—

Archetype—

Argument—

Autobiography—

Catalogue—

Close Reading—

Colloquial—

Connotation—

Context Clues—

Definitional Essay—

Descriptive—

Denotation—

Documentary—

Evaluative—

Evocative—

Expository—

Figurative Language—

Free Verse—

Graphic Organizer—

Gustatory—

Imagery—

Inference—

Interpretive—

Kinetic—

Literal—

Literary Analysis—

Loose/Periodic Sentence—

Memoir—

Metacognitive—

Metaphor—

Motif—

Myth—

Narrative—

Novella—

Olfactory—

Oral History—

Oxymoron—

Paradox—

Parallel Structure—

Paraphrase—

Personification—

Poetic—

Reflection—

Repetition—

Rhetoric—

Rubric—

Satiric—

Scholarly—

Simile—

Simple Sentence—

Stanza—

Summary—

Symbol—

Tactile—

Theme—

Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy defines the learning process by separating actions into distinct domains and categories. The cognitive domain, which is the category that emphasizes intellectual learning, is divided into six distinct categories. Knowing the keywords and the question cues associated with each category can help you study better.

Level 1: Knowledge

Exhibiting previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers.

- *Key Words:* who, what, why, when, where, which, choose, find, how, define, label, show, spell, list, match, name relate, tell call, select
- *Questions:* Who/what/when/where/why/how is . . . ? Who/what/when/where/why/how did _____ happen? How would you explain . . . ? How would you describe . . . ? Can you list . . . ?

Level 2: Comprehension

Demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas.

- *Key Words:* compare, contrast, demonstrate, interpret, explain, extend, illustrate, infer, outline, rephrase, translate, summarize, show, classify
- *Questions:* How would you classify . . . ? What facts or ideas show . . . ? What is the main idea of . . . ? Which is the best answer . . . ? How would you summarize . . . ?

Level 3: Application

Applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques, and rules in a different way.

- *Key Words:* apply, choose, construct, develop, interview, make use of, organize, experiment with, plan, select, solve, utilize, model, identify
- *Questions:* How would you use . . . ? What examples can you find to . . . ? How would you organize _____ to show . . . ? What would result if . . . ? What facts would you select to show . . . ?

Level 4: Analysis

Examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations.

- *Key Words:* analyze, classify, compare, contrast, discover, dissect, divide, examine, simplify, survey, take part in, test for, distinguish, list, distinction, theme, relationships, function, motive, inference
- *Questions:* How is _____ related to . . . ? Why do you think . . . ? What is the theme . . . ? What motive is there . . . ? What inference can you make . . . ? What conclusions can you draw . . . ? How would you classify . . . ? How would you categorize . . . ?

Level 5: Synthesis

Compiling information together in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.

- *Key Words:* combine, compile, compose, design, develop, estimate, formulate, imagine, invent, plan, predict, solve, suppose, discuss, modify, improve, adapt, minimize, maximize, theorize, elaborate, test
- *Questions:* What changes would you make to solve . . . ? How would you improve . . . ? What would happen if . . . ? Can you elaborate on the reason . . . ? Can you propose an alternative . . . ? Can you invent . . . ? How would you test . . . ?

Level 6: Evaluation

Presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas, or quality of work based on a set of criteria.

- *Key Words:* conclude, criticize, decide, defend, determine, evaluate, judge, justify, rate, recommend, select, agree, interpret, explain, prioritize, opinion, criteria, prove, disprove, assess, influence, estimate
- *Questions:* Do you agree with the actions/outcomes . . . ? What is your opinion of . . . ? How would you prove/disprove . . . ? What would you recommend . . . ? How would you rate . . . ? How could you determine . . . ?

Adapted from Barbara Fowler, "Bloom's Taxonomy and Critical Thinking." ©1996 by the Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum Project.

Digging Seamus Heaney

Seamus Heaney, "Digging." ©1967 by Seamus Heaney.

- Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun
- Under my window, a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground
5 My father, digging. I look down
Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging
- 10 The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly
He rooted out tall tops buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked.
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.
- 15 By God, the old man could handle a spade.
Just like his old man.
- My grandfather cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
20 Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
- Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, going down and down
For the good turf. Digging.
- 25 The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.
- Between my finger and my thumb
30 The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

“Digging” Questions

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Answer each question. Then label each question according to Bloom’s Taxonomy. Justify each label.

Question	Question Type	Justification
1. What is the significance of the poem’s title?		
2. What does <i>rasping</i> mean in the context of the poem?		
3. What is the father in the poem doing?		
4. What would it be like to be a potato farmer?		
5. What is the son in the poem doing?		

Question	Question Type	Justification
6. In what sense is the son “digging”?		
7. Would this poem be different if the characters in it were women?		
8. What is the effect of the poem beginning and ending with the description of the writer and his pen?		
9. In what ways do you want to continue the work of your parents or guardians?		
10. In what way do you want to do work that is different from what your parents or guardians do?		

“Digging” Questions Key

1. Interpretive (Comprehension, Application): A parallel is being made between the father’s digging in the ground and the son’s digging into his mind with words. The title emphasizes the metaphor the poem is built around.
2. Literal (Knowledge, Comprehension): *Rasping* refers to the sound that a spade makes when it digs into gravel or dirt. Its meaning is identified in the text: “Under my window, a clean rasping sound/When the spade sinks into gravelly ground/my father, digging.”
3. Literal (Knowledge, Comprehension): This is also identified in the text. The father is digging in flowerbeds.
4. Evaluative (Synthesis): Students should use their background knowledge of farming in order to write an imaginative answer to this question.
5. Literal (Knowledge, Comprehension): The answer is identified in the text, in the lines “under my window.” The son is watching his father, who is outside, under his window. The repeated words “between my finger and my thumb/The squat pen rests” suggest that the son is writing. We can infer (interpret) that he is writing poems because Seamus Heaney, who wrote this poem, is a poet.
6. Interpretive (Comprehension, Application): The son is “digging” into his mind to find words to write with.
7. Evaluative (Synthesis): Students should speculate on ways in which gender might change the kind of work that is being done in this poem. They might talk about other kinds of traditions handed down from mother to daughter. They might reference, for example, quilting, parenting, cooking, or gardening traditions that have been handed down and changed in their own families. They might also suggest that the poem would not be different at all if the characters were women by explaining why, if some nouns and pronouns were changed, the poem could be about mothers and daughters.
8. Interpretive (Comprehension, Application): This frames the poem. It also underlines the comparison between two kinds of “digging.”
9. Evaluative (Synthesis): A variety of answers, which connect the discussion about the similarities of the work the son and father are doing in the poem to the student’s own experiences, are possible.
10. Evaluative (Synthesis): Focusing, perhaps, on the differences between the work the son and the father in the poem do—the difference between two kinds of “digging”—is appropriate. Students should be thinking about the ways in which what they envision doing in their lives are similar to and different from what their parents or guardians do. A son who wants to be an engineer in part because his mother teaches writing to engineers, for example, could show how his mother’s career choices have influenced his own.

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Maya Angelou on Writing

HUMANITIES: This passage, in which Maya Angelou discusses her writing, is adapted from an interview conducted by Naomi Epel with Angelou that appears in *Writers Dreaming: 25 Writers Talk About Their Dreams and the Creative Process* (©1993 by Naomi Epel).

I am an autobiographer as opposed to a fiction writer. In my case I have to remember facts and try to use my talent or my art or my creativity to tell the truth about the facts. I submit that there's a world of difference between truth and fact. Fact tells us the data: the numbers, the places where, the people who, and the times when. But facts can obscure the truth. Because I write about a time when real people were alive—I mean, it's not as if that is a time which I can create out of the full complement of my imagination—I have to get back to get the facts. But then I have to do something else in order to tell the truth of the matter.

Sometimes one is obliged to take time out of time and to redefine, to set the time at another time. Or take things out of consequence, out of sequence. They become more consequential when you have the liberty to take them out of sequence.

I suppose I do get “blocked” sometimes but I don't like to call it that. That seems to give it more power than I want it to have. What I try to do is write. I may write for two weeks “the cat sat on the mat, that is that, not a rat,” you know. And it might just be the most boring and awful stuff. But I try. When I'm writing, I write. And then it's as if the muse is convinced that I'm serious and says, “Okay. Okay. I'll come.”

To write well, to write so that a reader thinks she's making up the book as she goes along, that's hard. To be in such control of language! First off, one has to

translate what one thinks into words, which is always impossible. And then into such gracious and graceful words that the reader can take it in, almost as a palliative, without even knowing, and be somehow increased as a result. That means that one is offering the reader something twice translated: The reader is going to translate it again. So, to write it so well that you can at least approximate what you mean to say, that's very hard. And to write so that it seems to leap off the page—

Maybe, if a writer is hesitant to get to a depth in a character, to admit that this fictional character does this, or thinks this, or has acted this way—or that an event was really this terrifying—the brain says, “Okay, you go on and go to sleep, I'll take care of it. I'll show you where that is.”

One sees that the brain allows the dreamer to be more bold than he or she ever would be in real time. The dream allows the person to do things, and think things, and go places, and be acted upon. The person, in real time, would never do those things. It may be that's a way the brain has of saying, “Well let me let you come on down and see what really is down here.”

There's a phrase in West Africa called “deep talk.” When a person is informed about a situation, an older person will often use a parable, an axiom, and then add the end of the axiom, “Take that as deep talk.” Meaning that you will never find the answer. You can continue to go down deeper and deeper. Dreams may be deep talk.

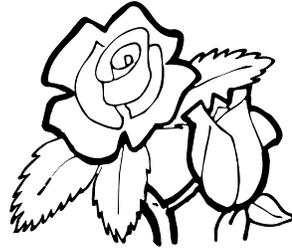
Greek and Latin Roots

Greek or Latin Root	Basic Meaning	Derivative Words
<i>anthrop</i>	human	philanthropy, anthropology, anthropomorphic
<i>chron</i>	time	chronology, chronic
<i>cred</i>	believe	credibility, discredit, street cred
<i>dem</i>	people	democracy, demographic
<i>dict</i>	say	dictate, dictionary, prediction
<i>duc</i>	to lead, bring	produce
<i>graph</i>	write	graphology, polygraph
<i>gress</i>	to walk	digress, progress, transgress
<i>ject</i>	to throw	eject, inject, project
<i>loc</i>	place	location
<i>morph</i>	form	morphology
<i>path</i>	feeling	pathetic, pathology
<i>ped</i>	foot	pedal, podiatrist
<i>pedo</i>	child	pediatrician
<i>pel</i>	to drive	compel, dispel, repel
<i>pend</i>	to hang	append, depend, pendulum
<i>philo</i>	having love for	philanthropy, philosophy, bibliophile
<i>phon</i>	sound	phonic, phonograph, phonetic
<i>photo</i>	light	photography
<i>port</i>	to carry	comport, deport, import
<i>rupt</i>	break	interrupt, disrupt, corrupt
<i>scrib</i>	to write	scribe, prescription, transcribe
<i>spec</i>	see	spectacles
<i>tract</i>	pull	tractor, contraction, distracted

Cartoons of Latin Derivatives



stomachus



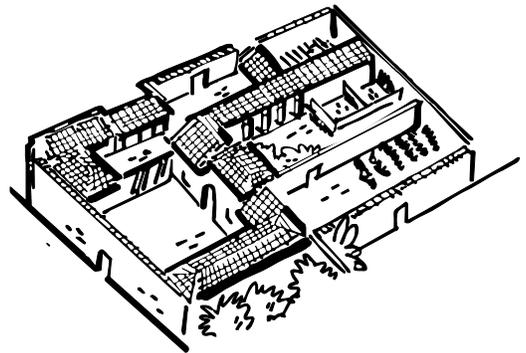
rosa



fēmina



schola



vīlla



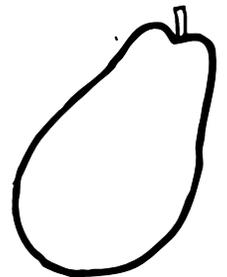
āthlēta



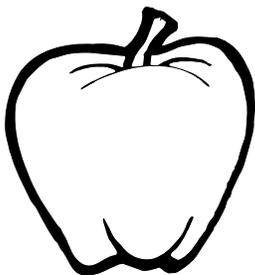
medicīna



stola



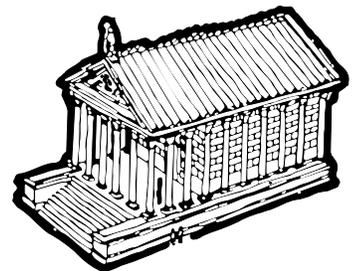
pirum



mālum



līlium



templum

From John C. Traupman, *Latin is Fun, Book I*. ©1989 by Amsco School Publications, Inc.

Learning to Read Alex Haley and Malcolm X

From Alex Haley and Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. ©1964 by Alex Haley and Malcolm X.

It was because of my letters that I happened to stumble upon starting to acquire some kind of a homemade education.

I became increasingly frustrated at not being able to express what I wanted to convey in letters that I wrote, especially those to Mr. Elijah Muhammad. In the street, I had been the most articulate hustler out there—I had commanded attention when I said something. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn't articulate, I wasn't even functional. How would I sound writing in slang, the way I would *say* it, something such as “Look, daddy, let me pull your coat about a cat, Elijah Muhammad—”

Many who today hear me somewhere in person, or on television, or those who read something I've said, will think I went to school far beyond the eighth grade. This impression is due entirely to my prison studies.

It had really begun back in the Charlestown Prison, when Bimbi first made me feel envy of his stock of knowledge. Bimbi had always taken charge of any conversation he was in, and I had tried to emulate him. But every book I picked up had few sentences which didn't contain anywhere from one to nearly all of the words that might as well have been in Chinese. When I just skipped those words, of course, I really ended up with little idea of what the book said. So I had come to the Norfolk Prison Colony still going through only book-reading motions. Pretty soon, I would have quit even these motions, unless I had received the motivation that I did.

I saw that the best thing I could do was get hold of a dictionary—to study, to learn some words. I was lucky enough to reason also that I should try to improve my penmanship. It was sad. I couldn't even write in a straight line. It was both ideas together that moved me to request a dictionary along with some tablets and pencils from the Norfolk Prison Colony school.

I spent two days just riffling uncertainly through the dictionary's pages. I'd never realized so many words existed! I didn't know which words I needed to learn. Finally, just to start some kind of action, I began copying.

In my slow, painstaking, ragged handwriting, I copied into my tablet everything printed on that first page, down to the punctuation marks.

I believe it took me a day. Then, aloud, I read back, to myself, everything I'd written on the tablet. Over and over, aloud, to myself, I read my own handwriting.

I woke up the next morning, thinking about those words—immensely proud to realize that not only had I written so much at one time, but I'd written words that I never knew were in the world. Moreover, with a little effort, I also could remember what many of these words meant. I reviewed the words whose meanings I didn't remember. Funny thing, from the dictionary first page right now, that “aardvark” springs to my mind. The dictionary had a picture of it, a long-tailed, long-eared, burrowing African mammal, which lives off termites caught by sticking out its tongue as an anteater does for ants.

I was so fascinated that I went on—I copied the dictionary's next page. And the same experience came when I studied that.

With every succeeding page, I also learned of people and places and events from history. Actually the dictionary is like a miniature encyclopedia. Finally the dictionary's A section had filled a whole tablet—and I went on into the Bs. That was the way I started copying what eventually became the entire dictionary. It went a lot faster after so much practice helped me to pick up handwriting speed. Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words.

I suppose it was inevitable that as my word-base broadened, I could for the first time pick up a book and read and now begin to understand what the book was saying. Anyone who has read a great deal can imagine the new world that opened. Let me tell you something: from then until I left that prison, in every free moment I had, if I was not reading in the library, I was reading on my bunk. You couldn't have gotten me out of books with a wedge. Between Mr. Muhammad's teachings, my correspondence, my visitors—usually Ella and Reginald—and my reading of books, months passed without my even thinking about being imprisoned. In fact, up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life.

The Norfolk Prison Colony's library was in the school building. A variety of classes was taught there by instructors who came from such places as Harvard and Boston universities. The weekly debates between inmate teams were also held in the school building. You would be astonished to know how worked up convict debaters and audiences would get over subjects like "Should Babies Be Fed Milk?"

Available on the prison library's shelves were books on just about every general subject. Much of the big private collection that Parkhurst had willed to the prison was still in crates and boxes in the back of the library—thousands of old books. Some of them looked ancient: covers faded, old-time parchment-looking

binding. Parkhurst, I've mentioned, seemed to have been principally interested in history and religion. He had the money and the special interest to have a lot of books that you wouldn't have in general circulation. Any college library would have been lucky to get that collection.

As you can imagine, especially in a prison where there was heavy emphasis on rehabilitation, an inmate was smiled upon if he demonstrated an unusually intense interest in books. There was a sizable number of well-read inmates, especially the popular debaters. Some were said by many to be practically walking encyclopedias. They were almost celebrities. No university would ask any student to devour literature as I did when this new world opened to me, of being able to read and *understand*.

I read more in my room than in the library itself. An inmate who was known to read a lot could check out more than the permitted maximum number of books. I preferred reading in the total isolation of my own room.

When I had progressed to really serious reading, every night at about ten P.M. I would be outraged with the "lights out." It always seemed to catch me right in the middle of something engrossing.

Fortunately, right outside my door was a corridor light that cast a glow into my room. The glow was enough to read by, once my eyes adjusted to it. So when "lights out" came, I would sit on the floor where I could continue reading in that glow.

At one-hour intervals the night guards paced past every room. Each time I heard the approaching footsteps, I jumped into bed and feigned sleep. And as soon as the guard passed, I got back out of bed onto the floor area of that light-glow, where I would read for another fifty-eight minutes—until the guard approached again. That went on until three or four every morning. Three or

four hours of sleep a night was enough for me. Often in the years in the streets I had slept less than that.

The teachings of Mr. Muhammad stressed how history had been “whitened”—when white men had written history books, the black man simply had been left out. Mr. Muhammad couldn’t have said anything that would have struck me much harder. I had never forgotten how when my class, me and all of those whites, had studied seventh-grade United States history back in Mason, the history of the Negro had been covered in one paragraph, and the teacher had gotten a big laugh with his joke, “Negroes’ feet are so big that when they walk, they leave a hole in the ground.”

This is one reason why Mr. Muhammad’s teachings spread so swiftly all over the United States, among *all* Negroes, whether or not they became followers of Mr. Muhammad. The teachings ring true—to every Negro. You can hardly show me a black adult in America—or a white one, for that matter—who knows from the history books anything like the truth about the black man’s role. In my own case, once I heard of the “glorious history of the black man,” I took special pains to hunt in the library for books that would inform me on details about black history.

I can remember accurately the very first set of books that really impressed me. I have since bought that set of books and have it at home for my children to read as they grow up. It’s called *Wonders of the World*. It’s full of pictures of archeological finds, statues that depict, usually, non-European people.

I found books like Will Durant’s *Story of Civilization*. I read H. G. Wells’ *Outline of History*. *Souls of Black, Folk* by W. E. B. Du Bois gave me a glimpse into the black people’s history before they came to this country. Carter G. Woodson’s *Negro*

History opened my eyes about black empires before the black slave was brought to the United States, and the early Negro struggles for freedom.

J. A. Rogers’ three volumes of *Sex and Race* told about race-mixing before Christ’s time; about Aesop being a black man who told fables; about Egypt’s Pharaohs; about the great Coptic Christian Empires; about Ethiopia, the earth’s oldest continuous black civilization, as China is the oldest continuous civilization.

Mr. Muhammad’s teaching about how the white man had been created led me to *Findings in Genetics* by Gregor Mendel. (The dictionary’s G section was where I had learned what “genetics” meant.) I really studied this book by the Austrian monk. Reading it over and over, especially certain sections, helped me to understand that if you started with a black man, a white man could be produced; but starting with a white man, you never could produce a black man—because the white chromosome is recessive. And since no one disputes that there was but one Original Man, the conclusion is clear.

During the last year or so, in the *New York Times*, Arnold Toynbee used the word “bleached” in describing the white man. (His words were: “White (i.e., bleached) human beings of North European origin. . . .”) Toynbee also referred to the European geographic area as only a peninsula of Asia. He said there is no such thing as Europe. And if you look at the globe, you will see for yourself that America is only an extension of Asia. (But at the same time Toynbee is among those who have helped to bleach history. He has written that Africa was the only continent that produced no history. He won’t write that again. Every day now, the truth is coming to light.)

I never will forget how shocked I was when I began reading about slavery’s total horror. It made such an impact upon me

that it later became one of my favorite subjects when I became a minister of Mr. Muhammad's. The world's most monstrous crime, the sin and the blood on the white man's hands, are almost impossible to believe. Books like the one by Frederick Olmstead opened my eyes to the horrors suffered when the slave was landed in the United States. The European woman, Fannie Kimball, who had married a Southern white slaveowner, described how human beings were degraded. Of course I read *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In fact, I believe that's the only novel I have ever read since I started serious reading.

Parkhurst's collection also contained some bound pamphlets of the Abolitionist Anti-Slavery Society of New England. I read descriptions of atrocities, saw those illustrations of black slave women tied up and flogged with whips; of black mothers watching their babies being dragged off, never to be seen by their mothers again; of dogs after slaves, and of the fugitive slave catchers, evil white men with whips and clubs and chains and guns. I read about the slave preacher Nat Turner, who put the fear of God into the white slavemaster. Nat Turner wasn't going around preaching pie-in-the-sky and "non-violent" freedom for the black man. There in Virginia one night in 1831, Nat and seven other slaves started out at his master's home and through the night they went from one plantation "big house" to the next, killing, until by the next morning 57 white people were dead and Nat had about 70 slaves following him. White people, terrified for their lives, fled from their homes, locked themselves up in public buildings, hid in the woods, and some even left the state. A small army of soldiers took two months to catch and hang Nat Turner. Somewhere I have read where Nat Turner's example is said to have inspired John Brown to invade Virginia and attack Harper's Ferry nearly thirty years later, with thirteen white men and five Negroes.

I read Herodotus, "the father of

History," or, rather, I read about him. And I read the histories of various nations, which opened my eyes gradually, then wider and wider, to how the whole world's white men had indeed acted like devils, pillaging and raping and bleeding and draining the whole world's non-white people. I remember, for instance, books such as Will Durant's story of Oriental civilization, and Mahatma Gandhi's accounts of the struggle to drive the British out of India.

Book after book showed me how the white man had brought upon the world's black, brown, red, and yellow peoples every variety of the sufferings of exploitation. I saw how since the sixteenth century, the so-called "Christian trader" white man began to ply the seas in his lust for Asian and African empires, and plunder, and power. I read, I saw, how the white man never has gone among the non-white peoples bearing the Cross in the true manner and spirit of Christ's teachings—meek, humble, and Christ-like.

I perceived, as I read, how the collective white man had been actually nothing but a piratical opportunist who used Faustian machinations to make his own Christianity his initial wedge in criminal conquests. First, always "religiously," he branded "heathen" and "pagan" labels upon ancient non-white cultures and civilizations. The stage thus set, he then turned upon his non-white victims his weapons of war.

I read how, entering India—half a *billion* deeply religious brown people—the British white man, by 1759, through promises, trickery and manipulations, controlled much of India through Great Britain's East India Company. The parasitical British administration kept tentacles out to half of the subcontinent. In 1857, some of the desperate people of India finally mutinied—and, excepting the African slave trade, nowhere has history recorded any more unnecessary bestial and ruthless human carnage than the British suppression of the non-white Indian people.

Over 115 million African blacks—close to the 1930s population of the United States—were murdered or enslaved during the slave trade. And I read how when the slave market was glutted, the cannibalistic white powers of Europe next carved up, as their colonies, the richest areas of the black continent. And Europe's chancelleries for the next century played a chess game of naked exploitation and power from Cape Horn to Cairo.

Ten guards and the warden couldn't have tom me out of those books. Not even Elijah Muhammad could have been more eloquent than those books were in providing indisputable proof that the collective white man had acted like a devil in virtually every contact he had with the world's collective non-white man. I listen today to the radio, and watch television, and read the headlines about the collective white man's fear and tension concerning China. When the white man professes ignorance about why the Chinese hate him so, my mind can't help flashing back to what I read, there in prison, about how the blood forebears of this same white man raped China at a time when China was trusting and helpless. Those original white "Christian traders" sent into China millions of pounds of opium. By 1839, so many of the Chinese were addicts that China's desperate government destroyed twenty thousand chests of opium. The first Opium War was promptly declared by the white man. Imagine! Declaring war upon someone who objects to being narcotized! The Chinese were severely beaten, with Chinese-invented gunpowder.

The Treaty of Nanking made China pay the British white man for the destroyed opium; forced open China's major ports to British trade; forced China to abandon Hong Kong; fixed China's import tariffs so low that cheap British articles soon flooded in, maiming China's industrial development.

After a second Opium War, the Tientsin Treaties legalized the ravaging opium trade, legalized a British-French-American control of China's customs. China tried delaying that Treaty's ratification; Peking was looted and burned.

"Kill the foreign white devils!" was the 1901 Chinese war cry in the Boxer Rebellion. Losing again, this time the Chinese were driven from Peking's choicest areas. The vicious, arrogant white man put up the famous signs, "Chinese and dogs not allowed."

Red China after World War II closed its doors to the Western white world. Massive Chinese agricultural, scientific, and industrial efforts are described in a book that *Life* magazine recently published. Some observers inside Red China have reported that the world never has known such a hate-white campaign as is now going on in this non-white country where, present birth-rates continuing, in fifty more years Chinese will be half the earth's population. And it seems that some Chinese chickens will soon come home to roost, with China's recent successful nuclear tests.

Let us face reality. We can see in the United Nations a new world order being shaped, along color lines—an alliance among the non-white nations. America's U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson complained not long ago that in the United Nations "a skin game" was being played. He was right. He was facing reality. A "skin game" *is* being played. But Ambassador Stevenson sounded like Jesse James accusing the marshal of carrying a gun. Because who in the world's history ever has played a worse "skin game" than the white man?

Mr. Muhammad, to whom I was writing daily, had no idea of what a new world had opened up to me through my efforts to document his teachings in books.

When I discovered philosophy, I tried to touch all the landmarks of philosophical development. Gradually, I read most of the old philosophers, Occidental and Oriental. The Oriental philosophers were the ones I came to prefer; finally, my impression was that most Occidental philosophy had largely been borrowed from the Oriental thinkers. Socrates, for instance, traveled in Egypt. Some sources even say that Socrates was initiated into some of the Egyptian mysteries. Obviously Socrates got some of his wisdom among the East's wise men.

I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive. I certainly wasn't seeking any degree, the way a college confers a status symbol upon its students. My homemade education gave me, with every additional book that I read, a little bit more sensitivity to the deafness, dumbness, and blindness that was afflicting the black race in America. Not long ago, an English writer telephoned me from London, asking questions. One was, "What's your alma mater?" I told him, "Books." You will never catch me with a free fifteen minutes in which I'm not studying something I feel might be able to help the black man.

Yesterday I spoke in London, and both ways on the plane across the Atlantic I was studying a document about how the United Nations proposes to insure the human rights of the oppressed minorities of the world. The American black man is the world's most shameful case of minority oppression. What makes the black man think of himself as only an internal United States issue is just a catch-phrase, two words, "civil rights." How is the black man going to get "civil rights" before first he wins his *human* rights? If the American black man will start thinking about his *human* rights, and then start thinking of himself as part of one of

the world's great peoples, he will see he has a case for the United Nations.

I can't think of a better case! Four hundred years of black blood and sweat invested here in America, and the white man still has the black man begging for what every immigrant fresh off the ship can take for granted the minute he walks down the gangplank.

But I'm digressing. I told the Englishman that my alma mater was books, a good library. Every time I catch a plane, I have with me a book that I want to read—and that's a lot of books these days. If I weren't out here every day battling the white man, I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity—because you can hardly mention anything I'm not curious about. I don't think anybody ever got more out of going to prison than I did. In fact, prison enabled me to study far more intensively than I would have if my life had gone differently and I had attended some college. I imagine that one of the biggest troubles with colleges is there are too many distractions, too much panty-raiding, fraternities, and boola-boola and all of that. Where else but in a prison could I have attacked my ignorance by being able to study intensely sometimes as much as fifteen hours a day?

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Malcolm X Modified K-W-L

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Fill in the first column with everything you are certain you know about Malcolm X. Fill in the second column with a list of things you *think* you know about Malcolm X. When I tell you to, complete the other two columns.

What I Know	What I Think I Know	What I Want to Learn	Links between Malcolm X and Other Things I Know

Write one assertion about Malcolm X here:

Eleven

Sandra Cisneros

Sandra Cisneros, "Eleven." ©1991 by Sandra Cisneros.

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five. And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box. Today I wish I was one hundred and two instead of eleven because if I was one hundred and two I'd have known what to say when Mrs. Price

put the red sweater on my desk. I would've known how to tell her it wasn't mine instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

"Whose is this?" Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. "Whose? It's been sitting in the coatroom for a month."

"Not mine," says everybody. "Not me."

"It has to belong to somebody," Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so.

Maybe because I'm skinny, maybe because she doesn't like me, that stupid Sylvia Saldivar says, "I think it belongs to Rachel." An ugly sweater like that, all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.

"That's not, I don't, your not . . . Not mine," I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

"Of course it's yours," Mrs. Price says. "I remember you wearing in once." Because she's older and the teacher, she's right and I'm not.

Not mine, not mine, not mine, but Mrs. Price is already turning to page thirty-two, and math problem number four. I don't know why but all of a sudden I'm feeling sick inside, like the part of me that's three wants to come out of my eyes, only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on

my teeth real hard and try to remember today I am eleven, eleven. Mama is making a cake for me tonight, and when Papa comes home everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you.

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater's still sitting there like a big red mountain. I move the red sweater to the corner of my desk with my ruler. I move my pencil and books and eraser as far from it as possible. I even move my chair a little to the right. Not mine, not mine, not mine.

In my head I'm thinking how long till lunchtime, how long till I can take the red sweater and throw it over the school yard fence, or even leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into a little ball and toss it in the alley. Except when math period ends Mrs. Price says loud and in front of everybody, "Now Rachel, that's enough," because she sees I've shoved the red sweater to the tippytip corner of my desk and it's hanging all over the edge like a waterfall, but I don't care.

"Rachel," Mrs. Price says. She says it like she's getting mad. "You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense."

"But it's not—"

"Now!" Mrs. Price says.

This is when I wish I wasn't eleven, because all the years inside of me—ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one—are pushing at the back of my eyes when I put one arm through one sleeve of the sweater that smells like cottage cheese, and then the other arm through the other and stand there with my arms apart like if the sweater hurts me and it does, all itchy and full of germs that aren't even mine.

That's when everything I've been holding in since this morning, since when

Mrs. Price put the sweater on my desk, finally lets go, and all of a sudden I'm crying in front of everybody. I wish I was invisible but I'm not. I'm eleven and it's my birthday today and I'm crying like I'm three in front of everybody. I put my head down on the desk and bury my face in my stupid clown-sweater arms. My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can't stop the little animal noises from coming out of me, until there aren't any more tears left in my eyes, and it's just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast.

But the worst part is right before the bell rings for lunch. That stupid Phyllis Lopez, who is even dumber than Sylvia Saldívar, says she remembers the red sweater is hers! I take it off right away and give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything's okay.

Today I'm eleven. There's cake Mama's making for tonight, and when Papa comes home from work we'll eat it. There'll be candles and presents and everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you, Rachel, only it's too late.

I'm eleven today. I'm eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two. I wish I was anything but eleven, because I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny *o* in the sky, so tiny-tiny you have to close your eyes to see it.

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On Keeping a Notebook

Joan Didion

Joan Didion, "On Keeping a Notebook."
©1966 by Joan Didion.

““That woman Estelle,”” the note reads, ““is partly the reason why George Sharp and I are separated today.’ *Dirty crepe-de-Chine wrapper, hotel bar, Wilmington RR, 9:45 a.m. August Monday morning.*”

Since the note is in my notebook, it presumably has some meaning to me. I study it for a long while. At first I have only the most general notion of what I was doing on an August Monday morning in the bar of the hotel across from the Pennsylvania Railroad station in Wilmington, Delaware (waiting for a train? missing one? 1960? 1961? why Wilmington?), but I do remember being there. The woman in the dirty crepe-de-Chine wrapper had come down from her room for a beer, and the bartender had heard before the reason why George Sharp and she were separated today. “Sure,” he said, and went on mopping the floor. “You told me.” At the other end of the bar is a girl. She is talking, pointedly, not to the man beside her but to a cat lying in the triangle of sunlight cast through the open door. She is wearing a plaid silk dress from Peck & Peck, and the hem is coming down.

Here is what it is: the girl has been on the Eastern Shore, and now she is going back to the city, leaving the man beside her, and all she can see ahead are the viscous summer sidewalks and the 3 a.m. long-distance calls that will make her lie awake and then sleep drugged through all the steaming mornings left in August (1960? 1961?). Because she must go directly from the train to lunch in New York, she wishes that she had a safety pin for the hem of the plaid silk dress, and she also wishes that she could forget about the hem and the lunch and stay in the cool bar that smells of disinfectant and malt and make friends with

the woman in the crepe-de-Chine wrapper. She is afflicted by a little self-pity, and she wants to compare Estelles. That is what that was all about.

Why did I write it down? In order to remember, of course, but exactly what was it I wanted to remember? How much of it actually happened? Did any of it? Why do I keep a notebook at all? It is easy to deceive oneself on all those scores. The impulse to write things down is a peculiarly compulsive one, inexplicable to those who do not share it, useful only accidentally, only secondarily, in the way that any compulsion tries to justify itself. I suppose that it begins or does not begin in the cradle. Although I have felt compelled to write things down since I was five years old, I doubt that my daughter ever will, for she is a singularly blessed and accepting child, delighted with life exactly as life presents itself to her, unafraid to go to sleep and unafraid to wake up. Keepers of private notebooks are a different breed altogether, lonely and resistant rearrangers of things, anxious malcontents, children afflicted apparently at birth with some presentiment of loss.

My first notebook was a Big Five tablet, given to me by my mother with the sensible suggestion that I stop whining and learn to amuse myself by writing down my thoughts. She returned the tablet to me a few years ago; the first entry is an account of a woman who believed herself to be freezing to death in the Arctic night, only to find, when day broke, that she had stumbled onto the Sahara Desert, where she would die of the heat before lunch. I have no idea what turn of a five-year-old’s mind could have prompted so insistently “ironic” and exotic a story, but it does reveal a certain predilection for the extreme which has dogged me into adult life; perhaps if I were analytically inclined I would find it a truer

story than any I might have told about Donald Johnson's birthday party or the day my cousin Brenda put Kitty Litter in the aquarium.

So the point of my keeping a notebook has never been, nor is it now, to have an accurate factual record of what I have been doing or thinking. That would be a different impulse entirely, an instinct for reality which I sometimes envy but do not possess. At no point have I ever been able successfully to keep a diary; my approach to daily life ranges from the grossly negligent to the merely absent, and on those few occasions when I have tried dutifully to record a day's events, boredom has so overcome me that the results are mysterious at best. What is this business about "shopping, typing piece, dinner with E depressed"? Shopping for what? Typing what piece? Who is E? Was this "E" depressed, or was I depressed? Who cares?

In fact I have abandoned altogether that kind of pointless entry; instead I tell what some would call lies. "That's simply not true," the members of my family frequently tell me when they come up against my memory of a shared event. "The party was *not* for you, the spider was *not* a black widow, *it wasn't that way at all.*" Very likely they are right, for not only have I always had trouble distinguishing between what happened and what merely might have happened, but I remain unconvinced that the distinction, for my purposes, matters. The cracked crab that I recall having for lunch the day my father came home from Detroit in 1945 must certainly be embroidery, worked into the day's pattern to lend verisimilitude; I was ten years old and would not now remember the cracked crab. The day's events did not turn on cracked crab. And yet it is precisely that fictitious crab that makes me see the afternoon all over again, a home movie run all too often, the father bearing gifts, the child weeping, an exercise in family love

and guilt. Or that is what it was to me. Similarly, perhaps it never did snow that August in Vermont; perhaps there never were flurries in the night wind, and maybe no one else felt the ground hardening and summer already dead even as we pretended to bask in it, but that was how it felt to me, and it might as well have snowed, could have snowed, did snow.

How it felt to me: that is getting closer to the truth about a notebook. I sometimes delude myself about why I keep a notebook, imagine that some thrifty virtue derives from preserving everything observed. See enough and write it down, I tell myself, and then some morning when the world seems drained of wonder, some day when I am only going through the motions of doing what I am supposed to do, which is write—on that bankrupt morning I will simply open my notebook and there it will all be, a forgotten account with accumulated interest, paid passage back to the world out there: dialogue overheard in hotels and elevators and at the hat-check counter in Pavillon (one middle-aged man shows his hat check to another and says, "That's my old football number"); impressions of Bettina Aptheker and Benjamin Sonnenberg and Teddy ("Mr. Acapulco") Stauffer; careful *aperçus* about tennis burns and failed fashion models and Greek shipping heiresses, one of whom taught me a significant lesson (a lesson I could have learned from F. Scott Fitzgerald, but perhaps we all must meet the very rich for ourselves) by asking, when I arrived to interview her in her orchid-filled sitting room on the second day of a paralyzing New York blizzard, whether it was snowing outside.

I imagine, in other words, that the notebook is about other people. But of course it is not. I have no real business with what one stranger said to another at the hat-check counter in Pavillon; in fact I suspect that the line "That's my old football number" touched not my own imagination at all, but merely some memory of

something once read, probably “The Eighty-Yard Run.” Nor is my concern with a woman in a dirty crepe-de-Chine wrapper in a Wilmington bar. My stake is always, of course, in the unmentioned girl in the plaid silk dress. *Remember what it was to be me:* that is always the point.

It is a difficult point to admit. We are brought up in the ethic that others, any others, all others, are by definition more interesting than ourselves; taught to be diffident, just this side of self-effacing. (“You’re the least important person in the room and don’t forget it,” Jessica Mitford’s governess would hiss in her ear on the advent of any social occasion; I copied that into my notebook because it is only recently that I have been able to enter a room without hearing some such phrase in my inner ear.) Only the very young and the very old may recount their dreams at breakfast, dwell upon self, interrupt with memories of beach picnics and favorite Liberty lawn dresses and the rainbow trout in a creek near Colorado Springs. The rest of us are expected, rightly, to affect absorption in other people’s favorite dresses, other people’s trout.

And so we do. But our notebooks give us away, for however dutifully we record what we see around us, the common denominator of all we see is always, transparently, shamelessly, the implacable “I.” We are not talking here about the kind of notebook that is patently for public consumption, a structural conceit for binding together a series of graceful *pensées*; we are talking about something private, about bits of the mind’s string too short to use, an indiscriminate and erratic assemblage with meaning only for its maker.

And sometimes even the maker has difficulty with the meaning. There does not seem to be, for example, any point in my knowing for the rest of my life that, during

1964, 720 tons of soot fell on every square mile of New York City, yet there it is in my notebook labeled “FACT.” Nor do I really need to remember that Ambrose Bierce liked to spell Leland Stanford’s name “£eland \$tanford” or that “smart women almost always wear black in Cuba,” a fashion hint without much potential for practical application. And does not the relevance of these notes seem marginal at best?:

In the basement museum of the Inyo County Courthouse in Independence, California, sign pinned to a mandarin coat: “This MANDARIN COAT was often worn by Mrs. Minnie S. Brooks when giving lectures on her TEAPOT COLLECTION.”

Redhead getting out of car in front of Beverly Wilshire Hotel, chinchilla stole, Vuitton bags with tags reading:

MRS LOU FOX
HOTEL SAHARA
VEGAS

Well, perhaps not entirely marginal. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Minnie S. Brooks and her MANDARIN COAT pull me back into my own childhood, for although I never knew Mrs. Brooks and did not visit Inyo County until I was thirty, I grew up in just such a world, in houses cluttered with Indian relics and bits of gold ore and ambergris and the souvenirs my Aunt Mercy Farnsworth brought back from the Orient. It is a long way from that world to Mrs. Lou Fox’s world, where we all live now, and is it not just as well to remember that? Might not Mrs. Minnie S. Brooks help me to remember what I am? Might not Mrs. Lou Fox help me to remember what I am not?

But sometimes the point is harder to discern. What exactly did I have in mind when I noted down that it cost the father of someone I know \$650 a month to light the place on the Hudson in which he lived before the Crash? What use was I planning to make of this line by Jimmy Hoffa: “I may have my faults, but being wrong ain’t one of them”? And although I think it interesting to know where the girls who

travel with the Syndicate have their hair done when they find themselves on the West Coast, will I ever make suitable use of it? Might I not be better off just passing it on to John O'Hara? What is a recipe for sauerkraut doing in my notebook? What kind of magpie keeps this notebook? "*He was born the night the Titanic went down.*" That seems a nice enough line, and I even recall who said it, but is it not really a better line in life than it could ever be in fiction?

But of course that is exactly it: not that I should ever use the line, but that I should remember the woman who said it and the afternoon I heard it. We were on her terrace by the sea, and we were finishing the wine left from lunch, trying to get what sun there was, a California winter sun. The woman whose husband was born the night the *Titanic* went down wanted to rent her house, wanted to go back to her children in Paris. I remember wishing that I could afford the house, which cost \$1,000 a month. "Some-day you will," she said lazily. "Someday it all comes." There in the sun on her terrace it seemed easy to believe in someday, but later I had a low-grade afternoon hangover and ran over a black snake on the way to the supermarket and was flooded with inexplicable fear when I heard the checkout clerk explaining to the man ahead of me why she was finally divorcing her husband. "He left me no choice," she said over and over as she punched the register. "He has a little seven-month-old baby by her, he left me no choice." I would like to believe that my dread then was for the human condition, but of course it was for me, because I wanted a baby and did not then have one and because I wanted to own the house that cost \$1,000 a month to rent and because I had a hangover.

It all comes back. Perhaps it is difficult to see the value in having one's self back in that kind of mood, but I do see it; I think we are well advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be whether we find them attractive company or not.

Otherwise they turn up unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 a.m. of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them, who betrayed them, who is going to make amends. We forget all too soon the things we thought we could never forget. We forget the loves and the betrayals alike, forget what we whispered and what we screamed, forget who we were. I have already lost touch with a couple of people I used to be; one of them, a seventeen-year-old, presents little threat, although it would be of some interest to me to know again what it feels like to sit on a river levee drinking vodka-and-orange-juice and listening to Les Paul and Mary Ford and their echoes sing "How High the Moon" on the car radio. (You see I still have the scenes, but I no longer perceive myself among those present, no longer could even improvise the dialogue.) The other one, a twenty-three-year-old, bothers me more. She was always a good deal of trouble, and I suspect she will reappear when I least want to see her, skirts too long, shy to the point of aggravation, always the injured party, full of recriminations and little hurts and stories I do not want to hear again, at once saddening me and angering me with her vulnerability and ignorance, an apparition all the more insistent for being so long banished.

It is a good idea, then, to keep in touch, and I suppose that keeping in touch is what notebooks are all about. And we are all on our own when it comes to keeping those lines open to ourselves: your notebook will never help me, nor mine you. "*So what's new in the whiskey business?*" What could that possibly mean to you? To me it means a blonde in a Pucci bathing suit sitting with a couple of fat men by the pool at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Another man approaches, and they all regard one another in silence for a while. "*So what's new in the whiskey business?*" one of the fat men finally says by way of welcome, and the blonde stands up, arches one foot and dips it in the pool, looking all the while at the cabaña where Baby Pignatari is talking on

the telephone. That is all there is to that, except that several years later I saw the blonde coming out of Saks Fifth Avenue in New York with her California complexion and a voluminous mink coat. In the harsh wind that day she looked old and irrevocably tired to me, and even the skins in the mink coat were not worked the way they were doing them that year, not the way she would have wanted them done, and there is the point of the story. For a while after that I did not like to look in the mirror, and my eyes would skim the newspapers and pick out only the deaths, the cancer victims, the premature coronaries, the suicides, and I stopped riding the Lexington Avenue IRT because I noticed for the first time that all the strangers I had seen for years—the man with the seeing-eye dog, the spinster who read the classified pages every day, the fat girl who always got off with me at Grand Central—looked older than they once had.

It all comes back. Even that recipe for sauerkraut: even that brings it back. I was on Fire Island when I first made that sauerkraut, and it was raining, and we drank a lot of bourbon and ate the sauerkraut and went to bed at ten, and I listened to the rain and the Atlantic and felt safe. I made the sauerkraut again last night and it did not make me feel any safer, but that is, as they say, another story.

“I Just Wanna Be Average” Mike Rose

Adapted from Mike Rose, “I Just Wanna Be Average.” ©1989 by Mike Rose.

It took two buses to get to Our Lady of Mercy. The first started deep in South Los Angeles and caught me at midpoint. The second drifted through neighborhoods with trees, parks, big lawns, and lots of flowers. The rides were long but were livened up by a group of South L.A. veterans whose parents also thought that Hope had set up shop in the west end of the county. There was Christy Biggars, who, at sixteen, was dealing and was, according to rumor, a pimp as well. There were Bill Cobb and Johnny Gonzales, grease-pencil artists’ extraordinaire, who left Nembutal-enhanced swirls of “Cobb” and “Johnny” on the corrugated walls of the bus. And then there was Tyrrell Wilson. Tyrrell was the coolest kid I knew. He ran the dozens like a metric halfback, laid down a rap that outrhymed and outpointed Cobb, whose rap was good but not great—the curse of a moderately soulful kid trapped in white skin. But it was Cobb who would sneak a radio onto the bus, and thus underwrote his patter with Little Richard, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, the Coasters, and Ernie K. Doe’s mother-in-law, an awful woman who was “sent from down below.” And so it was that Christy and Cobb and Johnny G. and Tyrrell and I and assorted others picked up along the way passed our days in the back of the bus, a funny mix brought together by geography and parental desire.

Entrance to school brings with it forms and releases and assessments. Mercy relied on a series of tests, mostly the Stanford-Binet, for placement, and somehow the results of my tests got confused with those of another student named Rose. The other Rose apparently didn’t do very well, for I was placed in the vocational track, a euphemism for the bottom level. Neither I nor my parents realized what this meant.

We had no sense that Business Math, Typing, and English—Level D were dead ends. The current spate of reports on the schools criticizes parents for not involving themselves in the education of their children. But how would someone like Tommy Rose, with his two years of Italian schooling, know what to ask? And what sort of pressure could an exhausted waitress apply? The error went undetected, and I remained in the vocational track for two years. What a place.

My homeroom was supervised by Brother Dill, a troubled and unstable man who also taught freshman English. When his class drifted away from him, which was often, his voice would rise in paranoid accusations, and occasionally he would lose control and shake or smack us. I hadn’t been there two months when one of his brisk, face-turning slaps had my glasses sliding down the aisle. Physical education was also pretty harsh. Our teacher was a stubby ex-lineman who had played old-time pro ball in the Midwest. He routinely had us grabbing our ankles to receive his stinging paddle across our butts. He did that, he said, to make men of us. “Rose,” he bellowed on our first encounter; me standing geeky in line in my baggy shorts. “‘Rose’? What the hell kind of name is that?”

“Italian, sir,” I squeaked.

“Italian! Ho. Rose, do you know the sound a bag of shit makes when it hits the wall?”

“No, sir.”

“Wop!”

Sophomore English was taught by Mr. Mitropetros. He was a large, bejeweled man who managed the parking lot at the Shrine Auditorium. He would crow and preen and

list for us the stars he'd brushed against. We'd ask questions and glance knowingly and snicker, and all that fueled the poor guy to brag some more. Parking cars was his night job. He had little training in English, so his lesson plan for his day work had us reading the district's required text, *Julius Caesar*, aloud for the semester. We'd finish the play way before the twenty weeks was up, so he'd have us switch parts again and again and start again: Dave Snyder, the fastest guy at Mercy, muscling through *Caesar* to the breathless squeals of Calpurnia, as interpreted by Steve Fusco, a surfer who owned the school's most envied paneled wagon. Week ten and Dave and Steve would take on new roles, as would we all, and render a water-logged Cassius and a Brutus that are beyond my powers of description.

Spanish I—taken in the second year—fell into the hands of a new recruit. Mr. Montez was a tiny man, slight, five foot six at the most, soft-spoken and delicate. Spanish was a particularly rowdy class, and Mr. Montez was as prepared for it as a doily maker at a hammer throw. He would tap his pencil to a room in which Steve Fusco was propelling spitballs from his heavy lips, in which Mike Dweetz was taunting Billy Hawk, a half-Indian, half-Spanish, reed-thin, quietly explosive boy. The vocational track at Our Lady of Mercy mixed kids traveling in from South L.A. with South Bay surfers and a few Slavs and Chicanos from the harbors of San Pedro. This was a dangerous miscellany: surfers and hodads and South-Central blacks all ablaze to the metronomic tapping of Hector Montez's pencil.

One day Billy lost it. Out of the corner of my eye I saw him strike out with his right arm and catch Dweetz across the neck. Quick as a spasm, Dweetz was out of his seat, scattering desks, cracking Billy on the side of the head, right behind the eye. Snyder and Fusco and others broke it up, but the room felt hot and close and naked. Mr. Montez's tenuous authority was finally

ripped to shreds, and I think everyone felt a little strange about that. The charade was over, and when it came down to it, I don't think any of the kids really wanted it to end this way. They had pushed and pushed and bullied their way into a freedom that both scared and embarrassed them.

Students will float to the mark you set. I and the others in the vocational classes were bobbing in pretty shallow water. Vocational education has aimed at increasing the economic opportunities of students who do not do well in our schools. Some serious programs succeed in doing that, and through exceptional teachers—like Mr. Gross in *Horace's Compromise*—students learn to develop hypotheses and troubleshoot, reason through a problem, and communicate effectively—the true job skills. The vocational track, however, is most often a place for those who are just not making it, a dumping ground for the disaffected. There were a few teachers who worked hard at education; young Brother Slattery, for example, combined a stern voice with weekly quizzes to try to pass along to us a skeletal outline of world history. But mostly the teachers had no idea of how to engage the imaginations of us kids who were scuttling along at the bottom of the pond.

And the teachers would have needed some inventiveness, for none of us was groomed for the classroom. It wasn't just that I didn't know things—didn't know how to simplify algebraic fractions, couldn't identify different kinds of clauses, bungled Spanish translations—but that I had developed various faulty and inadequate ways of doing algebra and making sense of Spanish. Worse yet, the years of defensive tuning out in elementary school had given me a way to escape quickly while seeming at least half alert. During my time in Voc. Ed., I developed further into a mediocre student and a somnambulant problem solver, and that

affected the subjects I did have the wherewithal to handle: I detested Shakespeare; I got bored with history. My attention flitted here and there. I fooled around in class and read my books indifferently—the intellectual equivalent of playing with your food. I did what I had to do to get by, and I did it with half a mind.

But I did learn things about people and eventually came into my own socially. I liked the guys in Voc. Ed. Growing up where I did, I understood and admired physical prowess, and there was an abundance of muscle here. There was Dave Snyder, a sprinter and halfback of true quality. Dave’s ability and his quick wit gave him a natural appeal, and he was welcome in any clique, though he always kept a little independent. He enjoyed acting the fool and could care less about studies, but he possessed a certain maturity and never caused the faculty much trouble. It was a testament to his independence that he included me among his friends—I eventually went out for track, but I was no jock. Owing to the Latin alphabet and a dearth of *R*s and *S*s, Snyder sat behind Rose, and we started exchanging one-liners and became friends.

There was Ted Richard, a much-touted Little League pitcher. He was chunky and had a baby face and came to Our Lady of Mercy as a seasoned street fighter. Ted was quick to laugh and he had a loud, jolly laugh, but when he got angry he’d smile a little smile, the kind that simply raises the corner of the mouth a quarter of an inch. For those who knew, it was an eerie signal. Those who didn’t found themselves in big trouble, for Ted was very quick. He loved to carry on what we would come to call philosophical discussions: What is courage? Does God exist? He also loved words, enjoyed picking up big ones like *salubrious* and *equivocal* and using them in our conversations—laughing at himself as the word hit a chuckhole rolling off his tongue. Ted didn’t do all that well in school—baseball and parties and testing the courage

he’d speculated about took up his time. His textbooks were *Argosy* and *Field and Stream*, whatever newspapers he’d find on the bus stop—from the *Daily Worker* to pornography—conversations with uncles or hobos or businessmen he’d meet in a coffee shop, *The Old Man and the Sea*. With hindsight, I can see that Ted was developing into one of those rough-hewn intellectuals whose sources are a mix of the learned and the apocryphal, whose discussions are both assured and sad.

And then there was Ken Harvey. Ken was good-looking in a puffy way and had a full and oily ducktail and was a car enthusiast . . . a hodad. One day in religion class, he said the sentence that turned out to be one of the most memorable of the hundreds of thousands I heard in those Voc. Ed. years. We were talking about the parable of the talents, about achievement, working hard, doing the best you can do, blah-blah-blah, when the teacher called on the restive Ken Harvey for an opinion. Ken thought about it, but just for a second, and said (with studied, minimal affect), “I just wanna be average.” That woke me up. Average?! Who wants to be average? Then the athletes chimed in with the clichés that make you want to laryngectomize them, and the exchange became a platitudinous melee. At the time, I thought Ken’s assertion was stupid, and I wrote him off. But his sentence has stayed with me all these years, and I think I am finally coming to understand it.

Ken Harvey was gasping for air. School can be a tremendously disorienting place. No matter how bad the school, you’re going encounter notions that don’t fit with the assumptions and beliefs that you grew up with—maybe you’ll hear these dissonant notions from teachers, maybe from the other students, and maybe you’ll read them. You’ll also be thrown in with all kinds of kids from all kinds of backgrounds, and that can be unsettling—this is especially true in places of rich ethnic and linguistic mix, like the L.A. basin. You’ll see a handful of

students far excel you in courses that sound exotic and that are only in the curriculum of the elite: French, physics, trigonometry. And all this is happening while you're trying to shape an identity, your body is changing, and your emotions are running wild. If you're a working-class kid in the vocational track, the options you'll have to deal with this will be constrained in certain ways: you're defined by your school as "slow"; you're placed in a curriculum that isn't designed to liberate you but to occupy you, or, if you're lucky, train you, though the training is for work the society does not esteem; other students are picking up the cues from your school and your curriculum and interacting with you in particular ways. If you're a kid like Ted Richard, you turn your back on all this and let your mind roam where it may. But youngsters like Ted are rare. What Ken and so many others is protect themselves from such suffocating madness by taking on with a vengeance the identity implied in the vocational track. Reject the confusion and frustration by openly defining yourself as the Common Joe. Champion the average. Rely on your own good sense. Fuck this bullshit. Bullshit, of course, is everything you—and the others—fear is beyond you: books, essays, tests, academic scrambling, complexity, scientific reasoning, philosophical inquiry.

The tragedy is that you have to twist the knife in your own gray matter to make this defense work. You'll have to shut down, have to reject intellectual stimuli or diffuse them with sarcasm, have to cultivate stupidity, have to convert boredom from a malady into a way of confronting the world. Keep your vocabulary simple, act stoned when you're not or act more stoned than you are, flaunt ignorance, materialize your dreams. It is a powerful and effective defense—it neutralizes the insult and the frustration of being a vocational kid and, when perfected, it drives teachers up the wall, a delightful secondary effect. But like all strong magic, it exacts a price.

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My own deliverance from the Voc. Ed. world began with sophomore biology. Every student, college prep to vocational, had to take biology, and unlike the other courses, the same person taught all sections. When teaching the vocational group, Brother Clint probably slowed down a bit or omitted a little of the fundamental biochemistry, but he used the same book and more or less the same syllabus across the board. If one class got tough, he could get tougher. He was young and powerful and very handsome, and looks and physical strength were high currency. No one gave him any trouble.

I was pretty bad at the dissecting table, but the lectures and the textbook were interesting: plastic overlays that, with each turned page, peeled away skin, then veins and muscle, then organs, down to the very bones that Brother Clint, pointer in hand, would tap out on our hanging skeleton. Dave Snyder was in big trouble, for the study of life—versus the living of it—was sticking in his craw. We worked out a code for our multiple-choice exams. He'd poke me in the back: once for the answer under *A*, twice for *B*, and so on; and when he'd hit the right one, I'd look up to the ceiling as though I were lost in thought. Poke: cytoplasm. Poke, poke: methane. Poke, poke, poke: William Harvey. Poke, poke, poke, poke: islets of Langerhans. This didn't work out perfectly, but Dave passed the course, and I mastered the dreamy look of a guy on a record jacket. And something else happened. Brother Clint puzzled over this Voc. Ed. kid who was racking up 98s and 99s on his tests. He checked the school's records and discovered the error. He recommended that I begin my junior year in the College Prep program. According to all I've read since, such a shift, as one report put it, is virtually impossible. Kids at that level rarely cross tracks. The telling thing is how chancy both my placement into and exit from Voc. Ed. was; neither I nor my parents had anything

to do with it. I lived in one world during spring semester, and when I came back to school in the fall, I was living in another.

Switching to College Prep was a mixed blessing. I was an erratic student. I was undisciplined. And I hadn't caught onto the rules of the game: why work hard in a class that didn't grab my fancy? I was also hopelessly behind in math. Chemistry was hard; toying with my chemistry set years before hadn't prepared me for the chemist's equations. Fortunately, the priest who taught both chemistry and second-year algebra was also the school's athletic director. Membership on the track team covered me; I knew I wouldn't get lower than a C. U.S. history was taught pretty well, and I did okay. But civics was taken over by a football coach who had trouble reading the textbook aloud—and reading aloud was the centerpiece of his pedagogy. College Prep at Mercy was certainly an improvement over the vocational program—at least it carried some status—but the social science curriculum was weak, and the mathematics and physical sciences were simply beyond me. I had a miserable quantitative background and ended up copying some assignments and finessing the rest as best I could. Let me try to explain how it feels to see again and again material you should once have learned but didn't.

You are given a problem. It requires you to simplify algebraic fractions or to multiply expressions containing square roots. You know this is pretty basic material because you've seen it for years. Once a teacher took some time with you, and you learned how to carry out these operations. Simple versions, anyway. But that was a year or two or more in the past, and these are more complex versions, and now you're not sure. And this, you keep telling yourself, is ninth- or even eighth-grade stuff.

Next it's a word problem. This is also old hat. The basic elements are as familiar

as story characters: trains speeding so many miles per hour or shadows of buildings angling so many degrees. Maybe you know enough, have sat through enough explanations, to be able to begin setting up the problem: “If one train is going this fast. . .” or “This shadow is really one line of a triangle. . .” Then: “Let's see. . .” “How did Jones do this?” “Hmmm.” “No.” “No, that won't work.” Your attention wavers. You wonder about other things: a football game, a dance, that cute new checker at the market. You try to focus on the problem again. You scribble on paper for a while, but the tension wins out and your attention flits elsewhere. You crumple the paper and begin daydreaming to ease the frustration.

The particulars will vary, but in essence this is what a number of students go through, especially those in so-called remedial classes. They open their textbooks and see once again the familiar and impenetrable formulas and diagrams and terms that have stumped them for years. There is no excitement here. *No* excitement. Regardless of what the teacher says, this is not a new challenge. There is, rather, embarrassment and frustration and, not surprisingly, some anger in being reminded once again of longstanding inadequacies. No wonder so many students finally attribute their difficulties to something inborn, organic: “That part of my brain just doesn't work.” Given the troubling histories many of these students have, it's miraculous that any of them can lift the shroud of hopelessness sufficiently to make deliverance from these classes possible.

Through this entire period, my father's health was deteriorating with cruel momentum. His arterio-sclerosis progressed to the point where a simple nick on his shin wouldn't heal. Eventually it ulcerated and widened. Lou Minton would come by daily to change the dressing. We tried renting an oscillating bed—which we placed in the front room—to force blood through the constricted arteries in my father's legs. The bed hummed through the night, moving in

place to ward off the inevitable. The ulcer continued to spread, and the doctors finally had to amputate. My grandfather had lost his leg in a stockyard accident. Now my father too was crippled. His convalescence was slow but steady, and the doctors placed him in the Santa Monica Rehabilitation Center, a sun-bleached building that opened out onto the warm spray of the Pacific. The place gave him some strength and some color and some training in walking with an artificial leg. He did pretty well for a year or so until he slipped and broke his hip. He was confined to a wheelchair after that, and the confinement contributed to the diminishing of his body and spirit.

I am holding a picture of him. He is sitting in his wheelchair and smiling at the camera. The smile appears forced, unsteady, seems to quaver, though it is frozen in silver nitrate. He is in his mid-sixties and looks eighty. Late in my junior year, he had a stroke and never came out of the resulting coma. After that, I would see him only in dreams, and to this day that is how I join him. Sometimes the dreams are sad and grisly and primal: my father lying in a bed soaked with his suppuration, holding me, rocking me. But sometimes the dreams bring him back to me healthy: him talking to me on an empty street, or buying some pictures to decorate our old house, or transformed somehow into someone strong and adept with tools and the physical.

Jack MacFarland couldn't have come into my life at a better time. My father was dead, and I had logged up too many years of scholastic indifference. Mr. MacFarland had a master's degree from Columbia and decided, at twenty-six, to find a little school and teach his heart out. He never took any credentialing courses, couldn't bear to, he said, so he had to find employment in a private system. He ended up at Our Lady of Mercy teaching five sections of senior English. He was a beatnik who was born too late. His teeth were stained, he tucked his sorry tie in between the third and fourth buttons of his shirt, and his pants were

chronically wrinkled. At first, we couldn't believe this guy, thought he slept in his car. But within no time, he had us so startled with work that we didn't much worry about where he slept or if he slept at all. We wrote three or four essays a month. We read a book every two to three weeks, starting with the *Iliad* and ending up with Hemingway. He gave us a quiz on the reading every other day. He brought a prep school curriculum to Mercy High.

MacFarland's lectures were crafted, and as he delivered them he would pace the room jiggling a piece of chalk in his cupped hand, using it to scribble on the board the names of all the writers and philosophers and plays and novels he was weaving into his discussion. He asked questions often, raised everything from Zeno's paradox to the repeated last line of Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." He slowly and carefully built up our knowledge of Western intellectual history—with facts, with connections, with speculations. We learned about Greek philosophy, about Dante, the Elizabethan worldview, the Age of Reason, existentialism. He analyzed poems with us, had us reading sections from John Ciardi's *How Does a Poem Mean?*, making a potentially difficult book accessible with his own explanations. We gave oral reports on poems Ciardi didn't cover. We imitated the styles of Conrad, Hemingway, and *Time* magazine. We wrote and talked, wrote and talked. The man immersed us in language.

Even MacFarland's barbs were literary. If Jim Fitzsimmons, hung over and irritable, tried to smart-ass him, he'd rejoin with a flourish that would spark the indomitable Skip Madison—who'd lost his front teeth in a hapless tackle—to flick his tongue through the gap and opine, "good chop," drawing out the single "o" in stinging indictment. Jack MacFarland, this tobacco-stained intellectual, brandished linguistic weapons of a kind I hadn't encountered before. Here was this *egghead*, for God's sake, keeping some pretty difficult people

in line. And from what I heard, Mike Dweetz and Steve Fusco and all the notorious Voc. Ed. crowd settled down as well when MacFarland took the podium. Though a lot of guys groused in the schoolyard, it just seemed that giving trouble to this particular teacher was a silly thing to do. Tomfoolery, not to mention assault, had no place in the world he was trying to create for us, and instinctively everyone knew that. If nothing else, we all recognized MacFarland’s considerable intelligence and respected the hours he put into his work. It came to this: The troublemaker would look foolish rather than daring. Even Jim Fitzsimmons was reading *On the Road* and turning his incipient alcoholism to literary ends.

There were some lives that were already beyond Jack MacFarland’s ministrations, but mine was not. I started reading again as I hadn’t since elementary school. I would go into our gloomy little bedroom or sit at the dinner table while, on the television, Danny McShane was paralyzing Mr. Moto with the atomic drop, and work slowly back through *Heart of Darkness*, trying to catch the words in Conrad’s sentences. I certainly was not MacFarland’s best student; most of the other guys in College Prep, even my fellow slackers, had better backgrounds than I did. But I worked very hard, for MacFarland had hooked me. He tapped my old interest in reading and creating stories. He gave me a way to feel special by using my mind. And he provided a role model that wasn’t shaped on physical prowess alone, and something inside me that I wasn’t quite aware of responded to that. Jack MacFarland established a literacy club, to borrow a phrase of Frank Smith’s, and invited me—invited all of us—to join.

There’s been a good deal of research and speculation suggesting that the acknowledgment of school performance with extrinsic rewards—smiling faces, stars, numbers, grades—diminishes the intrinsic satisfaction children experience by

engaging in reading or writing or problem solving. While it’s certainly true that we’ve created an educational system that encourages our best and brightest to become cynical grade collectors and, in general, have developed an obsession with evaluation and assessment, I must tell you that venal though it may have been, I loved getting good grades from MacFarland. I now know how subjective grades can be, but then they came tucked in the back of essays like bits of scientific data, some sort of spectroscopic readout that said, objectively and publicly, that I had made something of value. I suppose I’d been mediocre for too long and enjoyed a public re-definition. And I suppose the workings of my mind, such as they—were, had been private for too long. My linguistic play moved into the world; these papers with their circled, red B+pluses and A–minuses linked my mind to something outside it. I carried them around like a club emblem.

One day in the December of my senior year, Mr. MacFarland asked me where I was going to go to college. I hadn’t thought much about it. Many of the students I teach today spent their last year in high school with a physics text in one hand and the Stanford catalog in the other, but I wasn’t even aware of what “entrance requirements” were. My folks would say that they wanted me to go to college and be a doctor, but I don’t know how seriously I ever took that; it seemed a sweet thing to say, a bit of supportive family chatter, like telling a gangly daughter she’s graceful. The reality of higher education wasn’t in my scheme of things: no one in the family had gone to college; only two of my uncles had completed high school. I figured I’d get a night job and go to the local junior college because I knew that Snyder and Company were going there to play ball. But I hadn’t even prepared for that. When I finally said, “I don’t know,” MacFarland looked down at me—I was seated in his office—and said, “Listen, you can write.”

My grades stank. I had A’s in biology

and a handful of B's in a few English and social science classes. All the rest were C's—or worse. MacFarland said I would do well in his class and laid down the law about doing well in the others. Still, the record for my first three years wouldn't have been acceptable to any four-year school. To nobody's surprise, I was turned down flat by USC and UCLA. But Jack MacFarland was on the case. He had received his bachelor's degree from Loyola University, so he made calls to old professors and talked to somebody in admissions and wrote me a strong letter. Loyola finally accepted me as a probationary student. I would be on trial for the first year, and if I did okay, I would be granted regular status. MacFarland also intervened to get me a loan, for I could never have afforded a private college without it. Four more years of religion classes and four more years of boys at one school, girls at another. But at least I was going to college. Amazing.

In my last semester of high school, I elected a special English course fashioned by Mr. MacFarland, and it was through this elective that there arose at Mercy a fledgling literati. Art Mitz, the editor of the school newspaper and a very smart guy, was the kingpin. He was joined by me and by Mark Dever, a quiet boy who wrote beautifully and who would die before he was forty. MacFarland occasionally invited us to his apartment, and those visits became the high point of our apprenticeship: we'd clamp on our training wheels and drive to his salon.

He lived in a cramped and cluttered place near the airport, tucked away in the kind of building that architectural critic Reyner Banham calls a *dingbat*. Books were all over: stacked, piled, tossed, and crated, underlined and dog eared, well worn and new. Cigarette ashes crusted with coffee in saucers or spilling over the sides of motel ashtrays. The little bedroom had, along two of its walls, bricks and boards loaded with notes, magazines, and

oversized books. The kitchen joined the living room, and there was a stack of German newspapers under the sink. I had never seen anything like it: a great flophouse of language furnished by City Lights and Café le Metro. I read every title. I flipped through paperbacks and scanned jackets and memorized names: Gogol, *Finnegans Wake*, Djuna Barnes, Jackson Pollock, *A Coney Island of the Mind*, F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, all sorts of Freud, *Troubled Sleep*, Man Ray, *The Education of Henry Adams*, Richard Wright, *Film as Art*, William Butler Yeats, Marguerite Duras, *Redburn*, *A Season in Hell*, *Kapital*. On the cover of Alain-Fournier's *The Wanderer* was an Edward Gorey drawing of a young man on a road winding into dark trees. By the hotplate sat a strange Kafka novel called *Amerika*, in which an adolescent hero crosses the Atlantic to find the Nature Theater of Oklahoma. Art and Mark would be talking about a movie or the school newspaper, and I would be consuming my English teacher's library. It was heady stuff. I felt like a Pop Warner athlete on steroids.

Art, Mark, and I would buy stogies and triangulate from MacFarland's apartment to the Cinema, which now shows X-rated films but was then L.A.'s premier art theater, and then to the musty Cherokee Bookstore in Hollywood to hobnob with beatnik homosexuals—smoking, drinking bourbon and coffee, and trying out awkward phrases we'd gleaned from our mentor's bookshelves. I was happy and precocious and a little scared as well, for Hollywood Boulevard was thick with a kind of decadence that was foreign to the South Side. After the Cherokee, we would head back to the security of MacFarland's apartment, slaphappy with hipness.

Let me be the first to admit that there was a good deal of adolescent passion in this embrace of the avant-garde: self-absorption, sexually charged pedantry, an elevation of the odd and abandoned. Still it was a time during which I absorbed an

awful lot of information: long lists of titles, images from expressionist paintings, new wave shibboleths, snippets of philosophy, and names that read like Steve Fusco’s misspellings—Goethe, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard. Now this is hardly the stuff of deep understanding. But it was an introduction, a phrase book, a Baedeker to a vocabulary of ideas, and it felt good at the time to know all these words. With hindsight I realize how layered and important that knowledge was.

It enabled me to do things in the world. I could browse bohemian bookstores in far-off, mysterious Hollywood; I could go to the Cinema and see events through the lenses of European directors; and, most of all, I could share an evening, talk that talk, with Jack MacFarland, the man I most admired at the time. Knowledge was becoming a bonding agent. Within a year or two, the persona of the disaffected hipster would prove too cynical, too alienated to last. But for a time it was new and exciting: it provided a critical perspective on society, and it allowed me to act as though I were living beyond the limiting boundaries of South Vermont.

Secondary Course Objectives

A primary course objective

- is the central focus of the unit and
- is explicitly assessed in an embedded assessment and/or in the summative assessment.

A secondary course objective

- is less important to the focus of the unit, but is one that students need to know and use when completing activities for this unit and
- may or may not be explicitly assessed by the summative assessment or an embedded assessment.

Course objectives considered primary for this unit are listed on pages 1–2. Below is a list of secondary course objectives associated with this unit.

Selected Secondary Course Objectives

A.1. Reading Across the Curriculum

- a. Choose materials for independent reading on the basis of specific criteria (e.g., personal interest, own reading level, knowledge of authors and literary or nonliterary forms)

A.8. Words and Their History

- a. Apply knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon affixes, inflections, and roots to understand unfamiliar words and new subject area vocabulary in increasingly challenging texts (e.g., words in science, mathematics, and social studies)

B.2. Modes of Writing for Different Purposes and Audiences

- a. Craft first and final drafts of expressive, reflective, or creative texts (e.g., poetry, scripts) that use a range of literary devices (e.g., figurative language, sound devices, stage directions) to convey a specific effect

B.3. Organization, Unity, and Coherence

- a. Establish and develop a clear thesis statement for informational writing or a clear plan or outline for narrative writing
- b. Organize writing to create a coherent whole with effective, fully developed paragraphs, similar ideas grouped together for unity, and paragraphs arranged in a logical sequence
- c. Add important information and delete irrelevant information to more clearly establish a central idea

B.4. Sentence-Level Constructions

- a. Correct run-ons, fragments, and dangling and misplaced modifiers to improve clarity
- b. Combine phrases and clauses to create simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences and to coordinate or subordinate meaning for effect
- e. Use formal, informal, standard, and technical language effectively to meet the needs of audience and purpose

B.5. Conventions of Usage

- a. Correctly spell commonly misspelled/confused words
- b. Correctly choose verb forms in terms of tense, voice (i.e., active and passive), and mood for continuity
- c. Make subject and verb agree in number, even when there is some text between the subject and verb
- d. Use pronouns correctly (e.g., appropriate case, pronoun-antecedent agreement, clear pronoun reference)
- e. Correctly choose adjectives, adjective phrases, adjective clauses, adverbs, adverb phrases, and adverb clauses and their forms for logical connection to word(s) modified

B.6. Conventions of Punctuation

- a. Recognize that several correct punctuation choices create different effects (e.g., joining two independent clauses in a variety of ways)
- b. Use punctuation correctly within sentences and words
- c. Demonstrate correct use of capitalization

D.2. Application

- b. Use effective delivery skills (e.g., appropriate volume, inflection, articulation, gestures, eye contact, posture, facial expression)

Course Objectives Measured by Assessments

This table presents at a glance how the course objectives are employed throughout the entire unit. It identifies those objectives that are explicitly measured by the embedded and unit assessments. The first column lists course objectives by a three-character code (e.g., A.1.a.); columns 2–8 on this page and columns 2–4 on the next page list the assessments.

Coded Course Objectives	Embedded Assessments						
	Journal Writing	Class Notebook Rubric	Anecdotal Notes	Poster and Presentation	Monthly Paper	Metacognition	"Boulevard of Broken Dreams" Homework
A.1.a.						X	
A.1.b.							X
A.1.c.							
A.2.a.						X	
A.2.b.						X	
A.2.c.							
A.2.d.							X
B.2.a.					X		
B.3.a.					X		
B.3.b.					X		
B.3.c.					X		
B.4.a.					X		
B.4.b.					X		
B.4.e.	X				X		
B.5.a.					X		
B.5.b.					X		
B.5.c.					X		
B.5.d.					X		
B.5.e.					X		
B.6.a.					X		
B.6.b.					X		
B.6.c.					X		
D.2.b.				X			
D.2.c.				X			
D.2.g.			X	X			
E.a.	X	X					X
E.b.		X					

Coded Course Objectives	Embedded Assessments		Unit Assessments
	"Digging" Questions	Malcolm X Modified K-W-L	Group Discussion and Response Paper
A.1.a.			
A.1.b.		X	
A.1.c.	X		
A.2.a.		X	
A.2.b.			
A.2.c.	X		X
A.2.d.	X		
B.2.a.			X
B.3.a.			X
B.3.b.			X
B.3.c.			X
B.4.a.			X
B.4.b.			X
B.4.e.			X
B.5.a.			X
B.5.b.			X
B.5.c.			X
B.5.d.			X
B.5.e.			X
B.6.a.			X
B.6.b.			X
B.6.c.			X
D.2.b.			X
D.2.c.			X
D.2.g.			X
E.a.	X	X	
E.b.			