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### A Guide for Best Practices in English 9 Essentials: Literature Strand

Marlene Y. Daly  
*Regis University*

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A GUIDE FOR BEST PRACTICES  
IN ENGLISH 9 ESSENTIALS:  
LITERATURE STRAND

by

Marlene Y. Daly

A Research Project in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

REGIS UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT

### A Guide for Best Practices in English 9 Essentials:

#### Literature Strand

This project provides an overview of the English 9 Essentials program and examines that program through the lens of best practices for each strand of the curriculum. Once the English 9 Essentials program was reviewed, it was determined that the curriculum should be enhanced by the addition of a literature strand using the principles of *The Parallel Curriculum Model* (Tomlinson et al., 2002) [PMC] and *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) [UbD]. The tenants of PMC and UbD were explained and evaluated. These two design methodologies were then applied to creating an overview for the literature strand of English 9 Essentials. Using a template adapted from UbD, a single unit of literature curriculum was prepared as a prototype and peer evaluated.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the English 9 Essentials classroom, specialized, remedial instruction is provided to ninth grade students who read at least two grades below grade level at the beginning of high school as determined by their scores on the Nelson-Denny Reading Assessment (Brown, Fishco, & Hanna, 1993). The curriculum of the class has been aligned, as closely as possible, with the content knowledge and skills taught to typical ninth grade students reading at and above grade level. This curriculum includes strands in grammar, writing, literary terminology, research, and literature. In addition, English 9 Essentials students are provided with mandated differentiation and basic literacy remediation. The overall goals of the English 9 Essentials program are: (a) to strengthen basic literacy skills; (b) to improve weak skills in language arts; (c) to prepare students to perform at the next level of language arts instruction; and (d) to support the transition, for eligible students, to the grade level English class (Wood et al., 2005).

#### Statement of the Problem

English 9 Essentials students are instructed according to, and held accountable for, the same content knowledge scope and sequence as students matriculating in the grade level and honors ninth grade English classes. This scope and sequence includes strands in grammar, writing, literary terminology, and research (see Table 1). Along with the skill strands, English 9 Essentials students must read four required novels from the

Table 1

*Grandview High School Scope and Sequence—9th Grade Skills*

Grammar	Writing	Terminology	Research
<b><i>Quarter 1</i></b>  <b>Throughout the year students should work with grammar and punctuation skills as they appear on the CSAP.</b>  Review 8 Parts of Speech: Nouns Verbs Adjectives Interjections Prepositions Conjunctions Pronouns  Subject/Verb Identification Subject/Verb Agreement Fragments/Run-ons	<b>Throughout the year students will be writing short constructed responses as well as expressive and imaginative pieces. Include in-class and out-of-class assignments.</b>  Thesis Quotes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selecting</li> <li>Embedding</li> <li>Supporting</li> </ul> Summary Writing  Rhetoric Mode: Persuasive  Common Assessment: SCR	Elements of Literature: Plot: <i>Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Solution/Resolution</i>  Foreshadowing Flashback Character: Static/Dynamic Protagonist/Antagonist Conflict: Internal/External Setting Theme Mood Point of View <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Omniscient</li> <li>Limited Omniscient</li> <li>First-Person</li> <li>Objective</li> </ul> Author's Purpose	<b>Throughout the year students will use <i>In Grand Style</i> for correct research format.</b>  Main Idea Summarizing Paraphrasing Creating a Thesis Statement  End Product: Development of a paragraph that is informational or argumentative
<b><i>Quarter 2</i></b>  Commas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Series</li> <li>Adjective</li> <li>Independent Clauses</li> <li>Compound Sentences</li> <li>Nonessentials</li> <li>Clauses/Phrases</li> <li>Introductory Elements</li> <li>Interrupters</li> <li>Letter Writing</li> <li>Dialogue</li> </ul> Semicolons Apostrophes	Rhetoric Mode: Persuasive  Use of graphic organizers  Common Assessment: Essay	Additional Elements of Literature: Allusion Symbolism  Elements of Style: Connotation/Denotation Dialect Alliteration Imagery Simile Metaphor Personification Tone, including humorous and satirical	Plagiarism Fact vs. Opinion Common Knowledge vs. Original Information Works Cited vs. Bibliography Citation: Application & Practice Parenthetical Documentation: Application & Practice Author's Bias  End Product: Development of a documented research paragraph
<b><i>Quarter 3</i></b>  CSAP Prep. Review fragments and run-ons. Pronoun Case Agreement Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement Capitalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proper Adjectives</li> <li>Nouns</li> <li>Compass Points</li> </ul> Titles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quotation Marks</li> <li>Italics</li> <li>Underlining</li> </ul> Common Usage Problems	Non-literature based Persuasive Essay  Common Assessment: Cause/Effect SCR (literature based)	Additional Elements of Literature: Exaggeration/Hyperbole Onomatopoeia Oxymoron/Paradox Pun  Additional Elements of Style: Irony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic</li> <li>Situational</li> <li>Verbal</li> </ul> Elements of Poetry: <i>Free Verse, Rhyme, Speaker, Stanza</i>	Note taking (note cards) Organizing (note cards) Outlining Synthesizing with multiple sources

<b>Grammar</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Terminology</b>	<b>Research</b>
<p><i>Quarter 4</i></p> <p>Modifiers: Adjectives vs. Adverbs</p> <p>Review of skills students have not mastered</p>	<p>Rhetoric Mode: Compare/Contrast</p> <p>Common Assessment: Essay</p>	<p>Review all terms need for cumulative test</p> <p>Elements of Drama: <i>Act, Scene, Aside, Comic Relief, Soliloquy, Dialogue, Tragedy, Comedy</i></p>	<p>Library: Lesson on Literary Criticism</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Synthesis of information on 1-2 Literary Criticisms</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> End Product: Development of a multi-paragraph paper using literary criticism</p>

English 9 Essentials block of the *Grandview High School English Department Reading List* (see Table 2). In addition to the required novels, the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005) provides a list of optional novels and short stories to round out the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum (see Table 3).

These lists of required and optional readings provide minimal guidance in the literature strand for teachers of English 9 Essentials. A number of experts in research-based best practices for literature instruction in the secondary English classroom (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand & Gamoran, 2003; Atwell, 2007; Ayers & Crawford, 2004; Burke, 2003; Griffeth & Horton, 2001; Jago, 2001; Langer, 1998; Smith & Wilhelm, 2006; Tomlinson et al., 2002; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) recommend the use of theme-based inquiry units, using major novels as anchor texts, to deeply engage students' critical thinking skills and to "help students develop complex understandings" (Wilhelm & Smith, 2005, p. 56).

The English 9 Essentials program as presently constituted could be enhanced by the addition of a comprehensive literature strand composed of inquiry units specifically designed to entice the reluctant reader to engage with and comprehend the required literature. According to Wilhelm (as quoted by Flanagan, 2008, p. 8) "the most effective method teachers can use to engage young readers is to reframe the text as a form of inquiry."

Nilsen and Donelson (2001) define a thematic unit in literature study as a unit that "binds together many elements of English while centering on a theme or motif that runs

Table 2

## Grandview High School English Department—Reading List

Essentials 9 (4 Works)	Regular 9 ( 6 Works)	Honors 9 (9 Works + Summer Reading)	
<i>Of Mice and Men</i> <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> <i>Night</i> <i>To Kill A Mockingbird</i>  Optional: <i>Hiroshima, Inherit the Wind, Romeo and Juliet, The Old Man and the Sea, Speak</i>	<i>Inherit the Wind/A Raisin in the Sun</i> <i>Of Mice and Men</i> <i>The Old Man and the Sea/Night</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>To Kill A Mockingbird</i>  Optional: <i>Hiroshima, The Odyssey</i> To be piloted: <i>The Call of the Wild</i>	<i>A Separate Peace</i> (summer reading) <i>Antigone</i> <i>Brave New World</i> <i>Julius Caesar</i> <i>Lord of the Flies</i> <i>Night</i> <i>Of Mice and Men</i> <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i> <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>  Optional: <i>Hiroshima, Inherit the Wind, Odyssey</i>	
Essentials 10 (4 Works)	Regular 10 (6 Works)	Honors 10 (6 Required Works + Summer Reading)	
<i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> <i>Antigone/Ellen Foster</i> <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> <i>The Journal of Patrick Seamus</i> <i>Julius Caesar</i> <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Lord of the Flies</i>	<i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> <i>Antigone/Oedipus Rex</i> <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> <i>The Glass Menagerie/Fences</i> <i>Julius Caesar/Macbeth</i> <i>Lord of the Flies</i> <i>A Lesson Before Dying</i>  Optional: <i>The Bean Trees, Brave New World, A Separate Peace, Things Fall Apart, The Things They Carried</i>	<i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> (summer reading) <i>Death of a Salesman</i> <i>Ethan Frome</i> <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> <i>The Great Gatsby</i> <i>Macbeth</i> <i>Tale of Two Cities</i>  Optional: <i>As I Lay Dying, The Catcher in the Rye, The Glass Menagerie, Oedipus, Things Fall Apart</i>	
Essentials 11 (4 Works)	American Literature (7 Works)	AP Language	Survey of American Literature
<i>The Bluest Eye</i> <i>The Crucible</i> <i>Ethan Frome</i> <i>Fallen Angels</i> <i>The Great Gatsby</i>  Optional: <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Our Town, The Bean Trees, The Things They Carried</i>	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> <i>The Crucible</i> <i>Ethan Frome</i> <i>The Great Gatsby</i> <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>  Optional: <i>As I Lay Dying, The Bluest Eye, Death of a Salesman, Our Town, The Red Badge of Courage, The Scarlet Letter,</i>  To be piloted: <i>The Natural, Tortilla Curtain</i>	<i>Elements of Style</i> (summer reading) <i>Autobiography of Frederick Douglass</i> (summer reading) <i>The Awakening/ Pride and Prejudice</i> <i>The Bluest Eye/Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> <i>Frankenstein/The Scarlet Letter</i> <i>Hamlet</i> <i>The Plague</i>  Optional: <i>A Doll's House, Medea</i>	<i>Autobiography of Frederick Douglass</i> <i>The Awakening</i> <i>The Crucible</i> <i>Fences</i> <i>Our Town</i> <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i> <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>  Optional: <i>The Bluest Eye</i>  To be piloted: <i>The Chosen</i>
British Literature (4 Works)	Multicultural Literature (4 Works)	Survey of Shakespeare (4 Works)	World Literature (4 Works)
<i>Beowulf</i> <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> <i>Frankenstein</i> <i>Macbeth/Henry IV, Part 1</i> <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> <i>Pygmalion</i> <i>Wuthering Heights</i> <i>The Turn of the Screw</i>	<i>Ceremony</i> <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i> <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> <i>Kaffir Boy</i> <i>Obasan</i> <i>Reservation Blues</i> <i>Love Medicine</i> <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>	<i>Henry V</i> <i>King Lear</i> <i>Measure for Measure</i> <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> <i>Othello</i> <i>Shakespeare's Sonnets</i>	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i> <i>Dante's Inferno</i> <i>A Doll's House</i> <i>Hamlet</i> <i>Oedipus Rex</i> <i>Siddhartha</i> <i>The Tempest</i> <i>The Metamorphosis</i> <i>Obasan</i>

<b>AP Literature</b>			
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (summer reading) <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (summer reading) <i>Candide</i> <i>Ceremony</i> <i>Crime and Punishment</i> <i>Heart of Darkness</i> <i>Invisible Man</i> <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>	<i>Metamorphosis</i> <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> <i>Wuthering Heights</i> <i>The Zoo Story</i> <i>King Lear</i>  Optional: <i>Light in August</i> , <i>The Stranger</i> , <i>The Tempest</i> , <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i> , <i>Dante's Inferno</i> , <i>Waiting for Godot</i>		

Table 3

*English 9 Essentials Reading Selections*

Genre	Titles
Required Novels	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> <i>Of Mice and Men</i> <i>Night</i> <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i>
Optional Novels	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>Hiroshima</i> <i>Inherit the Wind</i>
Required Short Stories	"The Scarlet Ibis"
(located in the ninth grade anthology)	"The Most Dangerous Game" "The Cask of Amontillado" "The Necklace" "The Birds"
Optional Short Stories	"Sniper" "The Ransom of Red Chief"
Poetry	Selections from the ninth grade literature anthology

through a body of literature" (p. 385). Nilsen and Donelson (2001) describe the following criteria for determining the viability of a thematic literary unit:

1. The theme needs to appeal to kids. If it is too easy or too hard or too boring, the teacher will lose the students' interest and attention.
2. The theme needs to be worth doing—in other words, intellectually and emotionally respectable for these particular kids at this particular time of their development and at this time of year.
3. There must be lots of easily located literature on the theme.
4. The theme needs to appeal to the teacher, if the teacher is not excited about it, the kids won't be either. (p. 386)

Smith and Wilhelm (2006) offer three simple steps to creating inquiry units:

1. Start with a big, essential question that is debated in the world as is used by practitioners of the discipline being studied (historians, ethicists, et al.) to organize their work and conversations.
2. Identify a real-world task that involves "meaningful making," a constructed response to the question, that is, a knowledge artifact or social action that will "do work" to explore and address the problem at hand.
3. Plan backwards from the "meaningful making" by figuring out what activities will help students conceptualize understandings and abilities essential to address the question and create a meaningful response to it. Create a sequence of such instructional activities that start with students' current needs, interests, and abilities and build from there to develop the needed expertise. (p. 56)

Smith and Wilhelm's steps are fundamentally grounded in the work of several educational experts (Tomlinson, et al., 2002; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) who recommend the use of essential questions and backward planning to facilitate the creation of engaging inquiry units. The planning strategies of these experts form the basis of this project.



## Purpose of the Project

While a program of study for the English 9 Essentials program exists, the literature strand lacked specific guidance for the teacher of English 9 Essentials beyond lists of required texts and suggested readings (see Tables 2 and 3). As previously stated, all students, but particularly struggling and reluctant readers, benefit from the design and implementation of theme-based inquiry units. Therefore, the English 9 Essentials curriculum was redesigned for the benefit of the students it serves. The overarching aim of this project was to augment the current English 9 Essentials curriculum with the addition of several theme-based inquiry units featuring engaging themes as described by Nilson and Donelson (2001). These units closely aligned those themes with the required literary works and used those works as anchor texts.

The purposes of this project included: a) the examination of current research-based best practices in each strand of the curriculum as described on the scope and sequence (see Table 1) including grammar, literary terms, writing, research, and literature; b) the review of the processes and benefits of two highly regarded methods of curriculum design: *Understanding by Design* (UbD) (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) and *The Parallel Curriculum Model* (PCM) (Tomlinson et al., 2002); and c) the implementation of UbD and PCM in formulating a plan to augment the current English 9 Essentials curriculum with an enhanced literature strand.

## Chapter Summary

In summary, it was determined, after a thorough review of the current English 9 Essentials curriculum, that this curriculum should be redesigned using UbD and PMC to implement the inclusion of an overview of specific theme-based inquiry units and one prototype complete unit into the literature strand. The primary aims of the English 9 Essentials program include engaging student interest in "understanding literature as a record of human experience" as mandated by the *Colorado Model Content Standards: Reading and Writing* (Colorado Department of Education [CDE], 1995) and preparing students to successfully navigate the stories, ideas, and themes embedded in the required literary works. These aims would be more effectively accomplished with the incorporation into the current English 9 Essentials curriculum of theme-based inquiry units using curriculum design processes demonstrated to be most effective in successfully engaging students' interest in the study of literary arts.

Chapter 2, Review of Literature, a) defined the English 9 Essentials program and discussed the scope and sequence of that program as currently constituted; b) introduced and reviewed the processes and benefits of UbD and TMC in the design and implementation of theme-based inquiry units in the English 9 Essentials classroom; c) examined the research-based best practices in each strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum; and d) delineated the utilization of UbD and TMC in formulating a plan to augment the current English 9 Essentials curriculum with an enhanced literature strand. Chapter 3, Methods, outlined the goals, procedures, and methods of the applied project which consisted of a comprehensive overview of the theme-based inquiry units to be included in the English 9 Essentials curriculum using each of the required novels as

anchor texts and one prototype complete unit using *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck as the anchor text.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In 2005, a group of dedicated literacy teachers at Grandview High School in the Cherry Creek School District drafted the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al.), in order to more closely align the English department scope and sequence for 9th grade (see Table 1) with the components and goals of the English Essentials program. This manual was designed to “bring consistency” (p. 2) to the English Essentials classroom. The purpose of the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* was to: (a) identify the typical English Essentials student, (b) establish the criteria for admission into the program, (c) delineate the salient components of the English Essentials classroom, (d) catalogue and describe the pertinent literacy strategies necessary for reading success, (e) describe the scope and sequence of content material, (f) list the required reading selections, (g) present the year long vocabulary program, and (h) outline the typical instructional day.

Since one of the primary goals of the English 9 Essentials program is to nurture and advance the emerging literacy skills of students who have been identified as struggling or reluctant learners (Wood et al., 2005), it is important to implement a curriculum model that is focused on the advancement of student learning. The *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005) included comprehensive directions in the various strands of the English 9 Essentials program. The manual contained specific guidance in reading and writing strategies considered best practices in literacy instruction

for below grade level readers. A complete, year-long vocabulary program, featuring instruction in word roots, prefixes, and suffixes to strengthen word recognition skills, was also included. Since the reading and vocabulary strands of the English 9 Essentials curriculum are fairly complete within the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual*, these two strands will not be addressed within the scope of this Review of Literature. At this point, other strands of the English 9 Essentials curriculum (i.e., grammar, writing, poetry and literary terminology, research, and literature) appear in the manual simply as lists of skills, concepts, terms, and texts to be covered (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). Enhancement of any of these strands would constitute a helpful addition to the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual*, particularly for teachers new to the English 9 Essentials program.

#### Purpose and Intention

The purpose of this Review of Literature is to: a) define the English 9 Essentials program, b) discuss the scope and sequence of the various strands of the English 9 Essentials program as currently constituted, c) introduce and review the processes and benefits of the Parallel Curriculum Model (PMC) (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and Understanding by Design (UbD) (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), d) examine the research-based best practices in each strand of the English 9 Essentials program that has not been full addressed in the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood, et al., 2005), e) explain how the procedures of the PMC and UbD were utilized to design an enhanced literature strand for the English 9 Essentials classroom.

The ultimate intention of the applied project was to create an inclusive curriculum for the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum. This curriculum augmented the provided list of required texts and was designed to more closely match

what occurs in the English 9 Essentials learning environment with current best practices in literature instruction. Use of the parallel curriculum model (PCM), as developed by Tomlinson et al. (2002), coupled with theories explored in Understanding by Design (UbD), the work of Wiggins and McTighe (2005), provided pertinent queries and effective templates for the evaluation and enhancement of the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum with the objective being to effectively improve student learning and understanding.

The PCM was founded upon the work of multiple researchers in the field of curriculum and instruction theory (i.e., Ausubel (1968), Bandura (1977), Bloom (1956), Bruner (1960, 1966), Gagne and Briggs (1979), Phenix (1964), and Taba (1962), all cited in Tomlinson et al., 2002). The Understanding by Design model (UbD) conceptualized by Wiggins and McTighe (2005) should not be considered an educational philosophy, but rather an approach to curriculum design intended to be compatible with various methodologies designed to promote student understanding including the PCM (Tomlinson et al., 2002). These two theories of curriculum design, when considered in tandem, provided a solid framework of considerations for the development of the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum to enhance the learning and the teaching experience for both students and teachers.

After a year of teaching English 9 Essentials, it was this author's opinion that the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum needed to be augmented by a reconsideration of the required literary texts through the lenses of the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) in regard to student learning and

understanding. Additional curricular enhancement to the literature strand was drawn from authors of journal articles and books in literature instruction.

## Overview of the Current English 9 Essentials Program

### *Definitions and Criteria*

The Essentials of English program in the Cherry Creek School District is a leveled strand of the high school English curriculum specifically intended to boost language arts knowledge and skills in students reading below grade level. Typically, an Essentials English class is offered at every grade level: 9th through 12th grade. At Grandview High School, there are clear criteria to qualify students for the English 9 Essentials classroom. According to the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005), "the traditional Essentials student is one who is typically a concrete thinker who has aspirations to attend college" (p. 2). The English Essentials student must have a documented reading and/or writing deficiency, as identified by the *Nelson Denney Reading Assessment* (Brown, Fishco, & Hanna, 1993). Although Perkins (1984) questioned the validity of this test as an adequate diagnostic tool for individuals, the Grandview High School faculty uses this test as both a qualifier for admission to the English 9 Essentials program and as a year end assessment to gauge individual growth. Counselors and literacy specialists also rely on additional standardized test scores and assessments, including past performance in English classes, to support placement in the English Essentials classroom. In general, the English Essentials student lags behind typical peers by at least two grade levels in reading and/or writing skills (Wood et al.).

The English 9 Essentials curriculum consists of instruction in both literacy skills and typical ninth grade English content knowledge as outlined in the scope and sequence

(see Table 1). In the English 9 Essentials program, an attempt was made to align the goals and purposes of the Essentials program with components designed to improve student learning and performance. The goal of this project was to augment the current instructional model by alignment of the English 9 Essentials curriculum with the addition of a literature strand created using planning considerations suggested in PCM (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) to augment the resources already in place.

### *Goals of the English 9 Essentials Program*

The goals of the English 9 Essentials Program, as outlined in the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005), are:

1. To offer the concrete thinker rich opportunities to move into the realm of critical and creative thinking as provided by positive encounters with high quality literature, poetry, and research experiences.
2. To support the high school student who reads and/or writes below grade level in his/her desire to advance personal literacy skills in preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities.
3. To provide the English Essentials student with federally mandated accommodations as provided for by IEPs; and
4. To encourage the English Essentials students to continually strive for academic success by providing a variety of learning modes and literacy strategies designed to enhance literacy skills. (p. 2)

### *Strands of the English 9 Essentials Program*

The English 9 Essentials program consists of several interwoven strands (see Table 1) which are organized to support the learning goals of the English Essentials student (Wood et al., 2005). These strands are: a) grammar, b) writing, c) poetry and literary terminology, d) research, e) vocabulary, and f) literature. Table 1 provides an example of the scope and sequence of four of the strands. Tables 2 and 3 delineate the literature strand by listing required and optional literary text for consideration in the



English 9 Essentials classroom. The reading instruction and vocabulary strands are described in the Essentials of English Instructor's Manual as separate programs that were not considered nor exhibited, explained, or discussed in any detail within the scope of this Review of Literature.

It is this author's opinion that while the scope and sequence charts (see Tables 1, 2, and 3) offer necessary help and guidance to the English 9 Essentials teacher, these guidelines could be expanded to include comprehensive curriculum in literature instruction for English 9 Essentials, founded on the principles defined by Tomlinson et al. (2002) and Wiggins & McTighe (2005). It is this author's intention to determine, from a review of the literature, those practices, specifically in the literature area, most closely identified as having a positive impact on effective student learning, particularly for reluctant and/or struggling adolescent students.

#### Best Practices in Secondary Literacy Instruction

In consideration of the best practices in literacy instruction, curricular design should be grounded in teaching the content knowledge and skills embedded in the *Colorado Model Content Standards: Reading and Writing* (Colorado Department of Education [CDE], 1995). As already stated, the design of excellent curriculum to promote the advancement of student learning can be founded on the template provided by the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). An excellent curriculum might also be enhanced by effective instructional techniques supported by the work of other learning experts, including Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock (2001), who have specifically targeted best practices in literacy instruction. These additional resources include the position of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE;

2004, 2006); the recommendations of Simpson, Stahl, and Francis (2004); and recommendations of the U. S. Department of Education (2003b) to determine the viability and effectiveness of particular instructional strategies and techniques in literature instruction.

### *The Parallel Curriculum Model*

The Tomlinson et al. (2002) PCM offers curricular designers a thoughtful and deliberate approach to curriculum design. The PMC, based upon a strong foundation of instructional theories, is a curricular model that features “four parallel ways of thinking about course content” (p. 19). The four parallel curricular approaches found in the PMC are:

1. Core Curriculum—a curriculum that consists of the essential skills, practices, and concepts of a discipline as experts perceive and practice that discipline.
2. Curriculum of Connections—a curriculum which directs students to build connections across lines of culture, discipline, time, and settings.
3. Curriculum of Practice—a curriculum designed to help students increase in the knowledge and skills of a particular discipline so as to be able to practice it as experts in the field practice said discipline.
4. Curriculum of Identity—a curriculum that focuses on helping students view themselves within the context of a particular discipline with the intention of evaluating their own skills in the emerging practice of that discipline along a continuum from novice to expert. (p. 18)

Also in the PMC model, there is a comprehensive process for the creation and/or redesign of existing curriculum. This step by step plan consists of the following:

1. Consult national, state, and local curriculum frameworks;
2. Compare textbook objectives with state and local standards;
3. Design assessments that embed the targeted knowledge and contain the desired level of understanding;
4. Establish clear learning objectives that build state and local learning and consider the learning needs of students;
5. Develop an aligned set of introductory activities;

6. Select teaching methods that align with the content and students' learning needs;
7. Determine the learning activities and align them with the teaching activities;
8. Consider possible grouping formats;
9. Target a variety of student products that align the learning goals to assess student progress;
10. Identify and locate resources;
11. Consider possible extension activities; and
12. Consider modifications, including ascending intellectual demand, for students as they advance toward expertise. (p. 68)

These recommendations formulate only the steps for an initial creation or reformation of existing curriculum, the beginning of what should be an ongoing process to redesign the literature curriculum for the English 9 Essentials classroom. For the purposes of this project, the curriculum design process was focused on the goals and insights found in the PMC Core Curriculum parallel. In discussion of the process of curricular redesign, Tomlinson et al. stated that the "goal is not to 'finish' writing the unit but, rather, to learn more about teaching each time [the unit is used]" (p. 80). Also, the authors of the PMC "encourage teachers and other curriculum designers to think about their current curriculum and consider additional ways in which the parallels can help them make that curriculum more coherent, compelling, relevant, and memorable" (p. 252). These challenges make it clear that the continued evaluation and remodeling of the English 9 Essentials curriculum is an exciting, ongoing, and dynamic practice.

Marzano et al. (2001) and other experts (Banner & Cannon, 1997; Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Readance, Bean, & Baldwin, 2004, Saphier & Gower, 1997; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) emphasized the validity of well designed curriculum and the role of deliberate planning in granting teachers the power to positively impact student learning. These resources, coupled with the curriculum design process identified by both

Tomlinson et al., (2002) and Wiggins and McTighe (2005), greatly contributed to the quality of the English 9 Essentials remodeled literature curriculum. The PMC (Tomlinson, et al., 2002) along with UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) formed the basis of the design process used to create the English 9 Essentials literature curriculum.

### *Understanding by Design*

Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, (2005) can be considered an approach to curriculum design with a primary focus on student understanding. UbD departs from the step-by-step curriculum planning guide found in the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) to offer "a conceptual framework, many entry points, a design template, various tools and methods, and an accompanying set of design standards" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 7) can be used to enhance any process of curriculum design. At the core of UbD are six facets of understanding. These six facets of understanding have been termed and defined by Wiggins and McTighe (2005) as:

1. Explanation: the knowledge to offer sophisticated and apt theories and illustrations which provide knowledgeable and justified accounts of events, actions and ideas (p. 85).
2. Interpretation: the tendency to draw upon interpretations, narratives, and translations that provide meaning (p. 88).
3. Application: the ability to use knowledge effectively in new situations and diverse realistic contexts (p. 92).
4. Perspective: the recognition that any answer to a complex question typically involves a point of view (p. 95).
5. Empathy: the ability to get inside another person's feelings and world view (p. 98).
6. Self-Knowledge: the wisdom to know one's ignorance and how one's patterns of thought and action inform as well as prejudice understanding (p. 100).

Planning curriculum based upon these six facets of understanding implies that such curriculum and the learning experiences and assessments embedded within that

curriculum will lead students beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge and skills to an ability to establish meaning with the facts and skills acquired. This ability to make meaning is fundamental to engaging the interest of secondary language arts students, particularly those students who struggle with basic literacy skills (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006, p. 64-66).

That ability to "make meaning" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 104) is facilitated by the formulation of essential questions, the utilization of authentic assessments, and the implementation of "backward design" (p. 13), all features of the UbD approach to curriculum formation, that, by nature, infuse curriculum with rich possibilities toward the goal of increased understanding. Essential questions drive learner inquiry to the core of a particular field of study (p. 107). These questions are open-ended and engaging. Clusters of both overarching and topical essential questions generate the foundation of the theme based inquiry units that Wilhelm and Smith (2006) and other researchers have found so important making the study of literature engaging in the language arts classroom.

In UbD, Wiggins & McTighe (2005) extol the use of authentic assessments to determine whether or not students have achieved true understanding of the subject matter at hand. Types of authentic assessments include: a) performance tasks, b) academic prompts, c) quiz and test items, and d) informal checks for understanding (p. 153). These assessment tasks are used not only to gauge student mastery of content material but also to formulate curriculum in the first place. The use of the authentic assessment to drive curriculum creation forms a foundational principle of the "backward design" process unique to UbD (p. 13). According to Wiggins and McTighe, "Our lessons, units, and

courses should be logically inferred from the results sought, not derived from the methods, books, and activities with which we are most comfortable. Curriculum should lay out the most effective ways of achieving specific results" (p. 14).

The six facets of understanding and the use of essential questions and authentic assessments coupled with the backward design process was utilized to create rich learning possibilities within the enhance literature strand of the English 9 Essentials literature strand.

In anticipation of the preparation of a redesigned curriculum for the English 9 Essentials classroom, each component of the English 9 Essentials curriculum is examined by: (a) definition of the standards and content within the framework of state, district, department, and program goals; (b) exploration of the current best practices available for consideration in an enhanced program; and (c) recommendation for additional processes and practices.

#### *Best Practices in Grammar Instruction*

According to Standard 3 of the Colorado Content Standards (CDE, 1995), students should know and be able to use conventional grammar and sentence structure with appropriate: (a) punctuation, (b) capitalization, and (c) spelling. By the time students have reached high school, they should be able: (a) to use pronouns correctly, (b) to utilize phrases and clauses appropriately in sentence construction, (c) to use capitalization and punctuation to meet rhetorical needs, (d) to apply specific manuscript forms, and (e) to refine grammatical skills and become a self-evaluator of their own writing and speaking as well as the work of others.

This represents a fundamental list of grammar principles that students at the high school level should be able to apply to writing tasks. In conjunction with these general goals, faculty of both the Cherry Creek School District and the Grandview High School English Department have focused on and refined the issues and skills that students are expected to master. In the scope and sequence (see Table 1), this requisite knowledge is divided into lists of topics and tasks to be mastered during each of four academic quarters.

Bowen, Madsen, and Hilerty (1985, as cited in Hassan, 2001) defined grammar as “the rules by which we put together meaningful words and parts of words of a language to communicate messages that are comprehensible” (p. 5). The staff of the NCTE (2002) addressed the vital importance of grammar instruction: “knowing basic grammar terminology. . . provide[s] students with a tool for thinking about and discussing sentences” (p. 2).

Grammar skills form the basis for any educated person to be able to perform necessary writing skills with adeptness and precision in an increasingly competitive society (NCTE, 2002). The English 9 Essentials program, as constituted, incorporates little or no direct pedagogical methodology in grammar instruction aside from the scope and sequence (see Table 1). The current goal for the English 9 Essentials classroom instruction in grammar is to incorporate grammar concepts into writing instruction. According to grammatical specialists (Anderson, 2005; Noden, 1999; Weaver, 1998), students do best when grammar principles are incorporated into authentic writing tasks. Thus, in theory, the English 9 Essentials program goals are aligned with currently supported research based best practices. However, what is lacking within the parameters

of the English 9 Essentials program, as it currently exists, are tangible lesson ideas to incorporate the requisite grammar skills evaluated by the department quarterly common assessment into a context based writing program.

In a comprehensive survey of literature, Hudson (2001) refuted the claim that traditional grammar instruction is an ineffective method to teach the principles and practices of good grammar as a means to improve student writing. Hudson cited numerous sources (Bryant et al., 1997; Klotz, 1996; Mason & Mason, 1997; McCleary, 1995; Williams, 1995) and asserted that direct grammar instruction can have a positive effect on student writing, in particular the enhancement of grammatical awareness. The NCTE Guidelines (2002) are concurrent with Hudson's assertion:

Knowing basic grammar terminology. . . provide[s] students with a tool for thinking about and discussing sentences. And lots of discussion of language, along with lots of reading and lots of writing, are the three ingredients for helping students write in accordance with the conventions of standard English. (p. 2)

Also, in the NCTE staff (2002) delineates specific activities that are the most effective at strengthening student skill in grammar and helping student writers to craft not only more correct sentences, but also more “expressive” ones (p. 3). These practices can be identified as: (a) sentence combining, (b) imitation of sentence models, and (c) use of subordinated constructions.

Finally, the NCTE staff (2004) described a set of skills that effective teachers of grammar and conventions have internalized. These skills provide important and helpful considerations for all teachers who strive to be excellent at teaching grammar and conventions to students, but these skills are fundamentally most pertinent for teachers



whose students struggle with basic concepts such as those students who are enrolled in English 9 Essentials classes.

While Hudson (2001) cautioned that further research is needed in the area of grammar instruction, it seems prudent to base the grammar instruction for the English 9 Essentials program on those specific practices such as: (a) teaching grammar in context; (b) sentence combining; (c) sentence models; and (d) instruction in subordinate construction that have, thus far, proven effective. While some writing tasks will be embedded in the new literature strand for English 9 Essentials, a possibility for extension of the current *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* would be to enhance the existing English 9 Essentials program with grammar instruction curriculum taught in the context of the mandated writing modes as listed on the scope and sequence (see Table 1). This instruction would be based upon the work of experts (Anderson, 2005, 2006; Noden, 1999) whose ideas are focused on teaching grammar in context with an emphasis on the utilization of appropriate grammar terminology. In addition, reference materials that detail the specific grammar skills addressed in each quarterly common assessment would be added in order to insure that teachers have a common basis to teach grammar rules.

#### *Best Practices in Writing Instruction*

One learning expert, Levine, (2005) suggested that writing is the single most demanding and complex task required of students during their school careers. "It is the skill that integrates the most diverse collection of brain processes, including motor function, language, the generation of ideas, attention, memory (for spelling, rules, and vocabulary) and organization" (p. 230). Also, the NCTE (2004) members stated that "everyone has the capacity to write, writing can be taught, and teachers can help students

become better writers" (p. 1). As already stated, successful writing involves the seamless coordination of a multitude of tasks and processes; therefore, teaching writing effectively is a formidable responsibility at best. Writing is as a major aspect in three of the six Colorado Content Standards (CDE, 1995). Along with the knowledge of how to use appropriate grammar and conventions in writing, students are expected to apply thinking skills to their writing and to write in a variety of genres in order to focus on specific writing purposes and audiences. The preparation of students for successful postsecondary writing tasks extends the standards to include an ability to successfully edit and revise writing products which encompasses knowing when and when not to trust spell check and grammar check on the computer (Conley, 2005).

In the scope and sequence (see Table 1) the specific writing products and genres that students should be able to successfully navigate by the end of the ninth grade are identified. At the beginning of the school year, English 9 Essentials students begin to craft thesis statements, move to short constructed response paragraphs and, by the end of the school year, should be experienced enough to write a three to five paragraph research paper with parenthetical documentation and a works cited page. In the scope and sequence it is suggested that ninth grade students become familiar with several rhetorical strategies that include: (a) persuasion, (b) cause/effect, and (c) compare/contrast. These are common strategies, the knowledge of which prepares students to address the demands of: (a) out of class, (b) in class, and (c) standardized assessment tasks (Gere, Christenbury, & Sassi, 2005).

It is important for teachers of writing at the secondary level to balance the necessary scaffolding in writing instruction to supply students with the appropriate

rhetorical and organizational support seeking to move beyond the formulaic. It is valuable to approach writing instruction, and the strategies taught, as steps along a spectrum of successful writing practice that continues well beyond the secondary classroom (Duncan, 2007).

There are no explicitly stated goals for the English 9 Essentials writing program. The implied goals are imbedded within the scope and sequence (see Table 1) which makes it clear that students in English 9 Essentials should write daily and craft organized pieces of writing on a weekly basis and in conjunction with each novel unit. Also, in the scope and sequence, a progression is suggested in regard to the length and breadth of writing pieces that moves from the development of basic thesis statements during first quarter to ultimately being able to write three to five paragraph essays with documentation by the end of the school year. Since the overarching goal of the Essentials program is to prepare students for regular level English classes, the writing instruction in the English 9 Essentials classroom should be sufficiently rigorous to assist students in the mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary to write successfully at grade level.

The *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005) offers some support in the teaching of writing for the English 9 Essentials classroom. In addition to the recommended knowledge, skills, and tasks listed on the scope and sequence (see Table 1), the writing component of the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al.) includes primarily supplementary materials composed of charts, rubrics, and graphic organizers that are focused on the crafting of short constructed responses drawn from the popular Step Up to Writing (Auman, 2006) approach. These resources offer a

foundation for writing instruction in the English 9 Essentials classroom, but Manzo (2006) and Marzano et al. (2001) indicated that several other elements of writing instruction could be successfully integrated into the curriculum to increase effectiveness in teaching student writers. This mandate offers another possibility for the future expansion of the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (2005)

Both Manzo (2006) and Marzano et al. (2001) cited the watershed meta-analysis of writing instruction practices conducted by Hillocks (1986, as cited in Manzo (2006) and Marzano (2001)). Hillocks found that the use of one basic approach and several writing focus areas had a notable impact on the effectiveness of writing instruction. Hillocks prescribed a focused practice approach to writing instruction which can be defined as teacher designed writing experiences that pinpoint specific writing skills. Hillocks found that the practices of: (a) sentence combining, (b) the use of models and rubrics, and (c) the analysis of concrete data to help students to derive writing topics were the most effective writing strategies in terms of improvement in student writing achievement. More recently, Graham and Perin (2006, as cited in Manzo) reported that, in addition to sentence combining, product goals, models, and inquiry, students should be taught strategies to: (a) manage the writing process, (b) help with prewriting experiences designed to engender and organize critical ideas for writing, and (c) provide opportunities in a writing workshop setting to collaborate with peers on writing tasks. These processes, strategies, and activities could be effectively incorporated into the English 9 Essentials classroom.

*Best Practices in Poetry Instruction and Mastery of Literary Terminology*

Poetry is an important part of any literature based curriculum. Rosenblatt (2005) stated that poetry is "a happening, an event, in which the listener or reader draws on images and feelings and ideas stirred up by the words of the text; out of these is shaped the lived-through experience" (p. 96). Skelton (2006) argued for the value of poetry in the everyday culture of the English classroom:

Developing a sense of place and feeling connected are essential to a person's well-being. Poetry in the classroom has the potential to spark connections and create a dynamic learning environment, resulting in students who are able to live well no matter where they are. (p. 29)

In addition, Kooser (2005) said, "Poetry is communication. . . Poetry's purpose is to reach other people and touch their hearts" (p. xi). Collins (n.d.) felt so strongly that poetry needed to be in the heads and hearts of high school students that he created *Poetry 180*, a 180 day collection of poetry designed with the interests of high school students in mind. Collins wrote: "Poetry can and should be an important part of our daily lives. Poems can inspire and make us think about what it means to be a member of the human race" (p. 1). These sentiments coincide with the Colorado Content Standards (CDE, 1995) that suggest that students should understand literature as a record of human experience. According to the benchmarks found under Standard 6 of the Colorado Content Standards (CDE), students are expected to be able to read, respond to, and discuss poetry. In regard to the utilization of the literary terminology that high school students are expected to master, poetry is an effective vehicle for teaching. By taking advantage of the concision, vivid imagery, and rich language inherent in this literary art form, students can understand and apply literary terminology accurately.

In the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005) there is no guidance in specific poetry instruction for the English 9 Essentials classroom nor is there any instructional guidance for the treatment of literary terminology beyond a mandated list of terms. It is this author's opinion that students in English 9 Essentials would benefit greatly if a daily practice of reading and responding to poetry were established and consistently followed. Poetry and the application of literary terminology can be demystified in the English 9 Essentials classroom if it is used as an ordinary part of the classroom routine.

For example, as an enhancement to the current English 9 Essentials program, poetry can be added to the class curriculum as a daily routine with the use of *Poetry 180* (Collins, n.d.) as a foundational source and to supplement that sources of daily poems with: (a) works from the department approved literature anthology, (b) other poetry anthologies, and (c) original student poems. Student responses to poetry would function as an element in writing instruction and would be in the form of: (a) Quickwrite response prompts, (b) Most Important Word (Beers, 1998) responses, (c) multiple choice analytical responses, and (d) informal discussions.

Also, thematically related poetry was incorporated into the theme based inquiry literature units for close classroom study in order to give students opportunities to further explore related literary texts. Additionally, students could have the opportunity for more intense study of poetry by the process of comparing deliberately chosen verse with other thematically linked literary pieces. Along with using poetry to introduce and apply the required literary terminology, poetry was incorporated into the theme-based inquiry units

for English 9 Essentials as part of the development of a literature strand for the applied project.

### *Best Practices in Research Instruction*

Standard 5 of the Colorado Content Standards (CDE, 1995) addresses the topic of and benchmarks are set for, the mastery of research skills. Students in Colorado classrooms are expected to: (a) understand how to select and process information, (b) give appropriate credit for information cited, and (c) produce quality end products as a result of information searches. Learning to conduct competent and relevant research is not only one of the most salient educational skills a student can master but, also, it can be a legitimate means to engage students in their own learning (Kaszycza & Kreuger, 1994). By the time students reach high school, their skill in the evaluation, presentation, and documentation of researched information from both print and electronic sources should be well developed. Also, before students reach high school, research experiences across grade levels and content areas should have provided them with the opportunity to develop a set of fledgling research strategies in order to: (a) gather information, (b) organize sources, and (c) present newly gained knowledge in a useful format. In the scope and sequence (see Table 1), students are required to learn, practice, and move toward competency in the acquisition of research skills as evidenced by the production of documented essays on literary topics, including literary analysis and theory. Since, as Moffett and Wagner (1976, as cited in Pfaffinger, 2006) postulated, learning and understanding become evident in student writing, the value of a research unit and its attendant end product is a helpful tool, for both teaching and assessment.

Competence in research methodology is paramount for the college bound student. Since, according to Conley (2005), research skills are requisite to college success, these skills should be thoughtfully incorporated into the English 9 Essentials classroom and might include the: (a) formulation of research questions; (b) use of research to support personal opinion; (c) identification of which claims require outside support; (d) derivation of a thesis from collected information; (e) differentiation between primary and secondary sources; (f) selection and incorporation of relevant sources; and (g) evaluation of the quality of sources, evidence, and arguments.

It is important to realize that this level of research skill is gained in process over time and through numerous experiences in various circumstances. Such skill may not be fully mastered by the time students leave high school. Nevertheless, familiarity with the research abilities that are expected in high school and beyond helps teachers to be able to plan and execute research units and incorporate research elements into other units.

As the students progress through English 9 Essentials, the required research tasks become increasingly more demanding. Initially, students learn to distinguish truth from fiction and fact from opinion. It is important at the outset of any formative discussions on the research process to include instruction on the identification and avoidance of plagiarism. As students gain competence in the research process, instruction is given in appropriate documentation. Faculty at Grandview High School prepared a style manual and students are instructed to use this manual as a reference during any research project they may be assigned during high school. The end product expectations for the research component of the English 9 Essentials curriculum range from a short constructed response during the beginning phases of research instruction to a three to five paragraph



essay that includes: (a) a cover page, (b) in text documentation, and (c) a works cited page by the end of the ninth grade year.

However, very little is mentioned in the Essentials of English Instructor's Manual (Wood et al., 2005) to specifically guide the teacher of English 9 Essentials in the method or manner to incorporate a research component into the curriculum of the class. This is an area where suggested projects, perhaps linked to anchor novels, could be included. While the research strand of the scope and sequence for English 9 Essentials was not the focus of this review of literature or the applied project, a research component was incorporated into the literature strand to teach rudimentary skills in using literary analysis.

In recent years, many high school English teachers and even undergraduate college instructors have turned to a research method devised and promoted by Macrorie (1988, as cited in Wilson & Castner, 1999) called the I-Search paper. The NCTE (n.d.) members endorsed the I-Search as a viable method to teach research: (a) skills, (b) strategies, and (c) methods at any grade level. Romano (2000) favored a multi-genre approach to research, which incorporated not only research on a specific topic, but creative elements as well. Both of these types of alternative projects are good possibilities to provide English 9 Essentials students with experience with the research process in a user friendly format.

In regard to both of these options to the traditional research paper method, it is this author's opinion that students in English 9 Essentials would benefit from the inclusion of an I-Search project (NCTE, n.d.; Wilson & Castner, 1999) and several smaller research projects into the curriculum at various times during the school year.

Pfaffinger (2006) successfully taught the research paper to high school students by concentrating a focus on a set of three salient skills: (a) identify sources, (b) take notes, and (c) synthesize information. Then, initially, students are taught to apply those skills to a teacher directed research paper. Subsequently, students move on to a larger, more student driven independent research project later in the year. Both the scaffolded research paper approach and the I-Search method could be blended to create a research component linked to a theme based, novel anchored unit in the English 9 Essentials curriculum designed to help students master the skills needed for college level research.

### *Best Practices in Literature Instruction*

Literature functions as the foundation of English instruction at the secondary level and enhancement of the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum constitutes the focus of the applied project. In spite of marked resistance from struggling and reluctant readers, in the Colorado Content Standards (CDE, 1995) it is mandated that students in Colorado become fluent readers. Along with Standards 1 and 4, which address general reading skills and practices, Standard 6 is focused most pointedly on the role that literature plays in the English classroom, and it is stated, as an overarching purpose of reading, that "students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience" (p. 15). In conjunction with that standard are benchmarks which require that students master the following knowledge and skills:

(a) know and use literary terminology; (b) read literature to investigate common issues and interests; (c) read literature to understand places, people, events, and vocabulary, both familiar and unfamiliar; (d) read literature that reflects the uniqueness and integrity of the American experience; (e) read classic and contemporary literature, representing various cultural and ethnic traditions

from throughout the world; and (f) read classic and contemporary literature of the United States about the experiences and traditions of diverse ethnic groups. (p. 15)

In addition to these basic standards, Conley (2005) maintained that students, when they enter freshman English classes at the university level, should be able to understand:

(a) common literary types, (b) archetypes, (c) themes, (d) genres, and (e) devices; also, they should be prepared to articulate those understandings coherently. Conley stated that:

In English, the intellectually coherent college preparation curriculum should consist of a set of texts that are explored in depth and a broad collection of readings designed to expose young people to a variety of styles and genres. The core texts should be read for deep comprehension of author intent, style, voice, and use of literary devices. Students should develop progressively greater insight into and mastery of the analytical processes used to comprehend text and create personal meaning. In the process, they should learn how to use effectively such skills as annotations and close reading. They become adept at identifying an author's basic beliefs and perspectives, point of view, attitudes, and values. As they read works from different historical periods, they are able to place them into a historical context and explain how that context influenced the author's assumptions and goals in the work. (p. 79)

These standards represent a formidable challenge for both the typical English 9 Essentials student, who may have accrued years of resistance to literature instruction, and his/her teacher. However, Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, and Gamoran (2003) found the use of rigorous academic demands effective in helping low track students surpass their previous performance.

The English 9 Essentials class is founded on the same reading selections as the regular and honors ninth grade classes (see Table 2). Students are expected to read a minimum of: (a) four novels, (b) three short stories, and (c) one drama selection from the scope and sequence (see Table 2 and 3). Suggested activities for teaching the required literature are included in the English Essentials Manual (Wood et al., 2005).

The goals of the English 9 Essentials program, as indicated in the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005), are focused on these important, but basic, goals: (a) read the novel; (b) define literary terminology; (c) point out the use of literary techniques; and (d) write brief, prompted responses. Often, the reading of the novel takes place aloud in class in one of several formats: (a) teacher read-aloud, (b) class read aloud, (c) small group read aloud, and (d) class or small group listen to a recording of the book. While these reading formats may be effective to help students through the book, more attention should be expended to help English 9 Essentials students acquire literary understanding and pleasure in reading as prescribed by researchers (Atwell, 2007; Burke, 2003; Jago, 2001; Langer, 1998).

One roadblock that is encountered often with the instruction of literature in the English 9 Essentials classroom is motivation. "The question of motivation presents one of the most perplexing issues of adolescent literacy. Many students, who are able to read and write choose not to, rendering many forms of instruction ineffectual" (NCTE, 2006, p. 6). The NCTE staff recommended several effective, research based practices designed to enhance motivation even for reluctant readers: (a) strategy instruction, (b) experience with a variety of texts, and (c) student self-selection of texts. These practices have been incorporated into the enhanced literature strand that forms the basis for the applied project.

### *Enhancing the Literature Strand*

The enhancement of the literature strand for the English 9 Essentials classroom forms the basis for the applied project. Since the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood, et al., 2005) offers nothing beyond a list of required and suggested

readings, it was determined that the students in the English 9 Essentials classroom would benefit from the addition of an enhanced literature strand to the English 9 Essentials curriculum.

The enhanced literature strand was designed using the curriculum design approaches described in the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). This literature strand was founded upon Colorado Model Content Standard 6 (CDE, 1995) which proposes that "students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience" (p. 15). The development of an overarching set of essential questions related to the motif of journeys in literature was formulated and each required text was reevaluated for its possibilities as an anchor text in a theme based inquiry unit that explored some aspect of the journey as a human experience.

Once the themes and essential questions for each unit were formulated, knowledge and understanding benchmarks and critical outcomes for each unit were identified as prescribed by both the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Authentic assessment tasks that accurately demonstrated acquisition of proposed learning and understanding targets were then attached to each unit. After the themes, essentials questions, and assessment tasks were in place, the design of individual units using backward design commenced. The curriculum creation process drew upon considerations of both the PMC and UbD to derive the pertinent daily learning activities for each unit. Each proposed unit plan offers: a) a theme; b) a set of essential questions, formulated to provoke inquiry into some aspect of the journey as an essential human experience; c) an anchor text from the English 9 Essentials list of required readings (see Tables 2 and 3); d) related readings for each unit in various genres, including poetry,

fiction, and non-fiction; e) a group of assessment tools; and f) an abbreviated sketch of the progression of daily literature lesson activities that could be further enhanced by the individual teacher.

### Chapter Summary

This review of literature described the English 9 Essentials program, its goals and aims, typical students, and curriculum as currently constituted. Based upon a thorough understanding of the program, the need for redesign of the curriculum becomes evident as each of the major components of the program was carefully examined. The PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), two curricular designs, which offer methods and considerations for deep and deliberate review of curriculum, were briefly explored and explained. In the examination of each major component of the curriculum (e.g., grammar, writing, poetry and literary terminology, research, and literature), consideration has been given to the Colorado Content Standard (CDE, 1995) in each area along with the district and department mandates prescribed specifically for the English 9 Essentials program. Effort has been made to compare what is currently in place in each component area, with what has been recommended by researchers and expert teachers as best practices in that area. In each area, recommendations for what should be added or altered to strengthen the curriculum were explored. While the curriculum as currently configured incorporates solid, research based best practices to encourage and teach the struggling readers in English 9 Essentials, there are several vital elements that should be added to this curriculum to enhance its effectiveness and insure that the overarching goals of the program are achieved and that student learning is enhanced. The purpose of this project is to enhance the literature strand of the English 9

Essentials curriculum and, as such, a streamlined, theme based inquiry unit plan focused on each required reading formed the basis of the applied project. The use of the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) in the design of the literature curriculum was discussed.

Chapter 3, Methods, describes the method for the redesign of the curriculum for the English 9 Essentials class and identifies the target audience for this project. The goals and procedures for the accomplishment of the curricular redesign are discussed. Also, the process for the peer assessment of the completed project is described. Chapter 3 concludes with a summary and an overview of Chapters 4 and 5.

## Chapter 3

### METHOD

The purpose of this project was to conduct a thorough review of the English 9 Essentials program as it is currently constituted. From that perspective, the curriculum of the English 9 Essentials class was reviewed through the lens of the Parallel Curriculum Model ([PMC]; Tomlinson et al., 2002) and Understanding by Design ([UbD]; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) with the intention of redesigning the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum to better facilitate student learning and enduring understanding. The English 9 Essentials program, as it now exists, offers many researched based practices to help the struggling and/or reluctant reader to become more competent with literacy skills. After teaching the English 9 Essentials class for 1 school year, it was this author's opinion that the literature strand of the curriculum should be enhanced with the addition of theme based inquiry units featuring the required readings as anchor texts. The intention of the applied project was to make the curriculum plan more user friendly for a new teacher while, at the same time, improve student learning.

### Target Audience

The target audience for this project was teachers of the English 9 Essentials program. The addition of a literature strand would be particularly helpful to any teacher assigned to teach English 9 Essentials for the first time. Also, this guide might serve as an example of a curriculum created with use of the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and



UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) as templates to redesign other aspects of the English 9 Essentials curriculum in the future with enhancement of student understanding as a primary intention. The purpose of this project was not intended to be a final product for the English 9 Essentials curriculum. In the PMC, Tomlinson et al. challenged and encouraged teachers to review curriculum often. The PMC, with its four curriculum parallels, offers the diligent teacher several alternatives to evaluate curriculum, and these parallels can make the refinement of the English 9 Essentials curriculum an exciting, challenging, and ongoing process.

### Goals and Procedures

The goal of this project was to redesign the literature strand of the curriculum of the English 9 Essentials program as it is currently taught at Grandview High School through the compatible lenses of the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) by providing an overview of theme based inquiry units for the entire school year and preparing one prototypical literature unit using *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck as the anchor text. Both the PMC and UbD methodologies offer specific procedures for reconsidering and planning particular curriculum. The original components of the English 9 Essentials curriculum were reviewed and an overview of the literature strand was added. This literature strand was composed of theme based inquiry unit plans that emerge after a careful consideration of the PMC and UbD. The prototypical unit plan features an anchor text from the required list along with a supplementary text set of related literary and expository works, grammar, vocabulary, short constructed response assignments, assessments, and a research component.

## Peer Assessment

This curriculum was reviewed by three colleagues who are closely associated with the English 9 Essentials program. Assessment of this curriculum guide was given by means of a formal questionnaire which invited evaluation of specific areas of the curriculum guide and solicited suggestions for improvement and for further additions and implementation. Each reviewer was provided with an individual copy of the guide upon which to provide written comments and suggestions.

## Chapter Summary

Even though a comprehensive guide for the teaching of English 9 Essentials is now in use at Grandview High School, review of that guide suggests that elements including a comprehensive guide for teaching the literature strand could be added in order to enhance student learning and understanding. Through a thorough process of research and curriculum planning the addition of the literature strand was made to the existing curriculum to increase its effectiveness for both teacher use and student consumption. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the remodeled literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum and one prototypical unit plan. The overview includes materials already in use, along with pertinent additions that should further improve what is being taught to ninth-grade reluctant readers. Chapter 5, Discussion, discusses the results of the overall project and offers reflections on those elements that future English 9 Essentials teachers can continue to examine and improve in an ongoing attempt to refine the curriculum for the English 9 Essentials classroom.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

The purpose of this project was to design an overview (see Table 4) for the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials program as it is currently taught at Grandview High School and to supplement that overview with one detailed unit to be used as a prototype. The overview guide was created using the curriculum design processes described in the Parallel Curriculum Model [PMC] (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and Understanding by Design [UbD] (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). These compatible design methodologies offer specific formats and procedures for consideration in planning curriculum to enhance student learning and understanding. The detailed unit plan was designed using the processes and templates provided in UbD. For consistency and ease of implementation, the template provided by UbD was modified to provide the format for presenting the theme-based inquiry unit. Each unit in the overview was based upon a single anchor text from the required list of literature provided by the Grandview High School English Department (see Table 3). The overview for each unit plan includes:

- a) essential questions linked to a central essential question; b) anchor texts; c) summative assessment performance tasks related to the essential questions; d) knowledge and skill targets in the areas of literary analysis, reading strategies, writing and grammar, speaking, listening and viewing, vocabulary, and academic terminology. These knowledge targets are based on the *Colorado Model Content Standards in Reading and Writing* (1995) and the Grandview High School Scope and Sequence (see Table 1).

The next section includes a detailed prototype of one theme based inquiry unit entitled "The Journey from Marginalization to Self-Actualization" *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck as the anchor text. This model unit includes a) a detailed list of daily activities, b) a calendar for implementing those activities, and c) models of several of the activities and assignments.

Since the intention of this project was to provide a general overview for a number of inquiry units, the day-by-day lesson plans as presented here remain relatively generalized for the majority of the units. Effort has been made to include instructions for implementing several ongoing classroom routines: a) the learning journal, b) daily discussion protocols, c) ideas for annotating text, d) daily checks for understanding, and e) writing rubrics. Teachers wishing to implement this plan would be able to modify it to fit a variety of situations and school schedules, including the alternating 90 minute block schedule currently in use at Grandview High School. The suggested curriculum guidelines provided herein were designed specifically to supplement the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005). While use of these unit plans by individual teachers in conjunction with that manual is granted, these plans may not be reproduced for use by others without this author's consent.

#### Inquiry based Unit Plan

The following inquiry based unit plan overview has been formatted to constitute the literature curriculum for an entire school year, particularly when considering the use of supplementary text suggestions that would accompany each plan. No attempt has been made to include either the actual anchor texts or supplementary texts within the overview or prototype. In the model unit plan each text has been fully referenced so that it can be

easily obtained from either library or Internet sources. Order of use of each unit plan in the overview is merely suggested and individual teachers could teach the units in any order that seems prudent and meets the parameters of a particular class and school year. Supplementary materials supporting the prototypical plan have been integrated within the unit plan. Ideas for ongoing class routines have been included in separate appendices.

ENGLISH 9 ESSENTIALS:  
LITERATURE STRAND  
A Curriculum Overview and Prototypical  
Unit Plan  
by  
Marlene Y. Daly

## English 9 Essentials Curriculum Overview—Literature

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Quarter	Essential Questions	Anchor Texts	Summative Assessments	Literary Analysis	Reading Strategies	Writing & Grammar	Speaking, Listening, & Viewing	Vocab	Academic Terminology
	tion to redemption and why are some willing to do it?				<p>character development.</p> <p>6. Develop prior and context knowledge.</p> <p>7. Use various strategies to improve fluency, comprehension, stamina</p> <p>8. Self-evaluate reading weaknesses.</p> <p>9. Manage attention while reading</p>				<p>Simile</p> <p>Metaphor</p> <p>Personification</p> <p>Tone (humorous, satirical)</p> <p><b>Elements of Film</b></p> <p>shot, framing, long shot, close-up, medium, soft focus, rock focus, deep focus, low angle, high angle, eye level, Dutch angle, camera movement, pan, tilt, zoom, dolly shot, lighting, low-key, high-key, neutral lighting, bottom/side lighting, front lighting, diegetic sound, editing, mise-en-scene</p>
3	<p>How do people demonstrate courage?</p> <p>In what ways does empathy temper justice?</p>	<u>To Kill a Mockingbird</u> by Harper Lee	Create and storyboard a thematically significant scene from the novel	<p><b>Logic Stage Reading</b></p> <p>1. Setting</p> <p>2. Character development</p> <p>3. Author's Style</p> <p>4. Reading &amp; Appreciating short and long narratives</p>	<p>1. Use the language of literary analysis</p> <p>2. Analyze author's style</p> <p>3. Make inferences about deeper meaning</p> <p>4. Participate in small group discussions</p> <p>5. Participate in class discussions</p> <p>6. Learn Literacy Quickwrites</p>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>Non-literature persuasive</p> <p>Cause/Effect</p> <p>SCR</p> <p>Poetry</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p><b>Grammar</b></p> <p>Pronoun Case Agreement</p> <p>Pronoun</p> <p>Antecedent Agreement</p> <p>Capitalization</p> <p>Titles</p> <p>Common Usage</p> <p>Problems</p>	<p>Fluency Reading</p> <p>Poetry Presentation</p> <p>Film and Reading Strategies</p> <p>(various film clips)</p>	<p>Lessons 9-16</p> <p>Word study notebook</p>	<p><b>Elements of Literature</b></p> <p>Exaggeration/Hyperbole</p> <p>Onomatopoeia</p> <p>Oxymoron/Pun</p> <p><b>Elements of Poetry</b></p> <p>free verse, rhyme, speaker, stanza</p> <p><b>Elements of Style</b></p> <p>Irony</p> <p>dramatic, situational, verbal</p>



Quarter	Essential Questions	Anchor Texts	Summative Assessments	Literary Analysis	Reading Strategies	Writing & Grammar	Speaking, Listening, & Viewing	Vocab	Academic Terminology
4	<p>What is the value of family and community?</p> <p>How is the hero's journey a pattern for many kinds of human experiences?</p>	<p><i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> by Lorraine Hansberry</p> <p>Independent Novel (from a teacher generated list)</p>	<p>Newspaper review comparing two filmed versions of the play and performing a scene</p> <p>I-Search portfolio—preparing for book group discussion</p>	<p><b>Rhetorical Stage Reading</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Theme</li> <li>2. Reading &amp; Appreciating Drama and Film</li> <li>3. Becoming a Literary Scholar</li> <li>4. Reading &amp; Appreciating Independent Choice Books</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make connections</li> <li>2. Analyze an author's argument</li> <li>3. Examine multiple perspectives</li> <li>4. Examine the structure of the text</li> <li>5. Ask questions about what you read</li> </ol>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>Compare/Contrast Essay</p> <p>I-Search Paper</p> <p><b>Grammar</b></p> <p>Modifiers: Adverbs/Adjectives</p> <p>Review of previous skills</p>	<p>Fluency Reading</p> <p>Dramatic Reading</p> <p>Oral presentation of I-Search Paper</p> <p>Film and Literary Analysis</p> <p><i>A Raisin in the Sun</i></p>	<p>Lessons 17-21</p> <p>Word study notebook</p>	<p>Review terms</p> <p><b>Elements of Drama</b></p> <p>Act, scene, aside, comic relief, soliloquy, dialogue, tragedy, comedy</p>

ENGLISH 9 ESSENTIALS:

LITERATURE STRAND

UNIT 2

THE JOURNEY FROM MARGINALIZATION

TO SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

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Marginalization to Self-Actualization

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Literature

Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

UNIT COVER PAGE

(Template adapted from Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)

Unit Title: *The Journey from Marginalization to Self-Actualization*

Grade Level: 9

Subject/Topic Area: English 9 Essentials—Literature Strand

Key Words: hero, journey, marginalization, self-realization, description, compare/contrast

Designed by: Marlene Daly

Time Frame: 15 class periods

School District: Cherry Creek School District

School: Grandview High School

Brief Summary of Unit (including curricular context and unit goals):

This unit looks at the human journey from alienation to self-realization using the anchor text of John Steinbeck's novella *Of Mice and Men* (1937) to explore the experiences of marginalized people in society. This is the second unit in the literature strand of the year-long curriculum for English 9 Essentials students. This unit has been designed to reinforce the basic reading strategies, knowledge of literary elements, and literary analysis skills presented and taught in Unit 1 with the aim of further developing the appreciation of literary narrative and poetry.

Additionally, the reading of supplementary texts, including poems, short stories, and articles, intends to enhance student understanding of the themes explored in Steinbeck's text. A number of these supplementary works would also stand as mentor texts for the writing tasks which include learning to describe place and using comparison as a rhetorical strategy in persuasive writing.

During this unit students will become acquainted with the skills inherent in producing a quality research paper including sources, avoiding plagiarism, distinguishing between fact and opinion, note-taking, and synthesizing information to produce a quality product.

The final performance task requires that students research one group that has traditionally been marginalized in mainstream American society, discuss the implications of marginalization, the steps that have been taken to remedy marginalization, and, then, make a proposal to further increase equitable treatment for this group.

Unit design status: ☐ Completed template pages—Stages 1, 2, and 3

☐ Completed blueprint for each performance task

☐ Completed rubric

☐ Directions to students and teachers

☐ Materials and resources listed

☐ Suggested accommodations

☐ Suggested extension

Status: ☐ Initial draft (date \_\_\_\_\_)

☐ Revised draft (date \_\_\_\_\_)

☐ Peer reviewed

☐ Content reviewed

☐ Field tested

☐ Validated

☐ Anchored

Suggestions for Improvement:

Literature

Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

STAGE 1—IDENTIFY DESIRED RESULTS

Established Goals (Standards): (G)

- Standard 1: Students use a full range of strategies to comprehend essays,...novels, short stories, and poems.
- Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes...such as telling stories...and persuading and using fictional, dramatic, and poetic techniques in writing.
- Standard 2: Students write to support an opinion using various forms of persuasion (factual or emotional) in speaking and writing.
- Standard 2: Students use fictional, dramatic, and poetic techniques in writing.
- Standard 4: Students recognize an author's point of view, purpose, and historical and cultural context.
- Standard 6: Students use literary terminology accurately.
- Standard 6: Students read literature to investigate common issues and interests
- Standard 6: Students identify recurrent themes in United States literature

What essential questions will be considered? (Q)

What understandings are desired? (U)

Students will understand that...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do people face and overcome the stigma of marginalization?</li> <li>What groups of people have traditionally been marginalized and prevented from enjoying equality and full rights in American society? Why?</li> <li>Is this marginalization justified?</li> <li>How is marginalization successfully overcome?</li> <li>What is self-actualization?</li> <li>In what ways does overcoming societal marginalization lead to the possibility of self-actualization?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various groups of people and individuals have been systematically marginalized from fully enjoying the rights and powers allotted to American citizens</li> <li>Marginalization denies people the attainment of self-actualization</li> <li>Overcoming stigmas, societal marginalization and moral dilemmas are ways people can move from marginalization toward self-actualization.</li> <li>Reading literature can be used to investigate common issues inherent in human experience</li> </ul>
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What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?

Students will know... (K)

Students will be able to...(S)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>definitions of the primary elements of literature: plot, character, conflict, setting, theme, point of view, mood, author's style, author's purpose</li> <li>academic terminology used for literary analysis and how to identify literary elements in narrative and poetic texts</li> <li>definitions of thematic terms: marginalization, self-realization</li> <li>biographical and historical background knowledge on John Steinbeck and <i>Of Mice and Men</i></li> <li>essential elements of the novel <i>Of Mice and Men</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>set, track, and achieve reading goals.</li> <li>set and keep a schedule for reading homework</li> <li>develop and utilize a purpose question for reading homework</li> <li>take notes from literature and annotate text</li> <li>keep a learning journal and utilize notes and reflections in various discussion formats</li> <li>identify author's purpose in various texts including the anchor text and use that knowledge to reflect upon the essential questions</li> <li>conduct basic research and use that research to produce a quality product</li> </ul>
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## Literature

## Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

## STAGE 2—DETERMINE ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE

## Performance Task: (T)

For this unit students will conduct a mini research project (Borsheim & Petrone, 2006; Pfaffinger, 2006) to examine the historical treatment of a traditionally marginalized group in American society (e.g. handicapped, women, the elderly, or mentally challenged people). This research paper will be guided and completed in class as described by Pfaffinger (2006). This research project will require that students identify a marginalized group, research the historical treatment of that group (during the period of the novel—1930s), research the steps toward equality this group has attained since the 1930s, examine how the group is treated today, and propose one further change that needs to be made to ensure this group enjoys fair treatment under the law and the full possibility of self-actualization.

What other evidence needs to be collected in light of Stage 1 desired results?

## Other Evidence: (E)

(e.g. tests, quizzes, prompts, work samples, observations)

## Ongoing Class Routine Assessments

- learning journal checks
- daily checks for understanding
- partner, group, class discussions
- reading quizzes
- prompted short constructed responses

## Unit Specific Assessments

- written descriptive essay (Essay of Place)
- compare/contrast literary essay
- final close reading passage analysis test

## Student Self-Assessment and Reflection:

1. Daily checks for understanding (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)
2. Self-assess City Council position paper
3. Reflect in learning journal the extent to which you understand how marginalization affects the possibility for humans to enjoy self-actualization.



Literature

Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

STAGE 2—DETERMINE ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE (continued)  
ASSESSMENT TASK BLUEPRINT

What understandings or goals will be assessed through this task?

The performance task assesses the ability to investigate and understand that certain groups of people have traditionally been marginalized and denied the rights and privileges of mainstream society. This task demonstrates the ability to gather and synthesize outside research on a common problem of human experience presented in the literature, present that problem, and propose a possible solution. The criteria of the project require that students present the material in a specific format which assesses the ability to produce a quality project from research.

What criteria are implied in the standards and understandings regardless of the task specifics? What qualities must student work demonstrate to signify that standards were met?

The criteria that are implied in the standards and understandings of the performance task include: 1) gathering and synthesizing researched material, 2) utilizing that material in both an informative and persuasive way to meet the purpose of the project, 3) producing a high quality product that demonstrates the ability to consider information and make it one's own.

Through what authentic performance task will students demonstrate understanding?

Task Overview:

See attached GRASPS Task Design Template.

What student products and performances will provide evidence of desired understandings?

Each student will present a carefully researched position paper on the treatment of a traditionally marginalized group of people and a proposed change that would grant that marginalized group greater access to the rights and freedoms inherent in American society. The position paper will demonstrate that the student understands how to identify a traditionally marginalized group and that the student can draw upon research to both inform and persuade the designated audience that proposed changes need to be made. Since the specified audience (in this case the City Council) would require the presentation of this material in an official format, students will need to demonstrate the ability to synthesize research and use it to meet the purposes of both persuading and informing a specific audience.

By what criteria will student products and performances be evaluated?

Student products will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. ability to identify a disenfranchised group and **inform** the audience regarding the traditional marginalization of this group;
2. ability to utilize researched material to effectively **persuade** the audience that the proposed change is both necessary and reasonable
3. ability to present both information and position in the specified format to produce a high quality product

Literature

Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

STAGE 3—PLAN LEARNING EXPERIENCES

What sequence of teaching and learning experiences will equip students to engage with, develop, and demonstrate the desired understandings? Use the following sheet to list the key teaching and learning activities in sequence. Code each entry with the appropriate initials of the WHERETO elements.

**W**=Where is the work headed Why is the work headed there? What are the final performance obligations? What are the criteria by which student work will be judged for understanding?

**H**=Hook the student through engaging and provocative entry points

**E**=Explore and equip. Engage the students in learning experiences that allow them to explore the big ideas and essential questions; that cause them to pursue leads or hunches, research and test ideas, try things out. Equip students for the final performances through guided instruction and coaching on needed skills and knowledge. Have them experience the ideas to make them real.

**R**=Rethink and revise. Guide students in self-assessment and self-judgment.

**E-2**=Evaluate understanding

**T**=Tailor (personalize) the work to maximize interest and achievement

**O**=Organize and sequence the learning for maximal engagement and effectiveness, given the desired results.

1. Transition from unit 1, *The Hero's Journey*, to a new unit by reminding students that we will now be looking at narrative and trying to identify the hero's journey pattern in the narratives we read (see Handout 1).
2. Quickwrite (see Handout 2)—Think about and identify a group of people who are "left out" in society. List the reasons this group has been denied equality and evaluate whether that treatment is fair or not. Discuss the idea of marginalization (being left out) by creating an inner/outer circle diagram and having students share ideas from their quickwrites and identify who's in and who's out in the world, in our society, at school. As a class, create a diagram on the board or overhead (see Handout 3). Tell students that we are going to consider the human journey from being marginalized to enjoying self-actualization as we read the literature for this unit.
3. Have students take notes in their learning journals (see Appendix 1) on the definitions of marginalization and self-actualization. Have students read the quote from *The Declaration of Independence* noting that the framers of our government felt it was important to mention that all men are created equal and entitled to rights (see Handout 4). Ask students to consider if they believe all men (people) are indeed treated equally in American society.
4. Read "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst (short story, Probst et al., 1997, pp. 315-323) using learning journals to note characters, plot summary, and reader's responses. Discuss the story as a class using "Inviting Initial Understandings" ideas (Langer, 2001) (see Appendix 2). Ask the students to consider what, if anything, this story may be suggesting about marginalized people in general or a specific group of marginalized people in particular.
5. Use K-W-L (see Handout 5) to have students assess what they know, want to know, and learn about the author John Steinbeck and the historical context of the novel *Of Mice and Men*.
6. Distribute novels, reader's purpose bookmarks (see Handout 6), and study guide questions (Collins, 1996) (see Handout 7).
7. Show beginning clip of the film version of *Of Mice and Men* starring Gary Sinise and John Malkovich. Ask students to reflect on what they notice immediately about the characters and the setting. Tell the students that in the course of reading this novel we are going to look for how the hero's journey fits with the plot of the novel. We are also going to consider the moral dilemma George faces as Lennie's friend and caretaker. Students will create two graphic organizers in their learning journals: 1) Fiction Organizer (see Appendix 3); 2) reading sheets for each chapter (see Appendix 4).
8. Assign students to read Chapter 1 noting and collecting quotations that focus on Steinbeck's description of place (see Handout 8).
9. Read "The Peace of wild Things" by Wendell Berry (poem) and help students generate ideas for writing an Essay of Place (Schutze, n.d.) (see Handout 8)
10. Using "Session Two: Essay of Place" from ReadWriteThink Lesson Plan: Reader Response in Hypertext: Making Connections to Literature and Handout 8, have students write a rough draft of a Description of Place about the place they envisioned while reading Berry's poem.
11. Complete K-W-L organizer (see Handout 5) to give students background knowledge on John Steinbeck and the historical context of the novel *Of Mice and Men* (see Handout 9).
12. Using notes from learning journal discuss Chapter 1. Take reading quiz on Chapter 1 (see Handout 10). Assign Chapter 2. Have students read to evaluate Steinbeck's style. Present close reading questions, reading sheets and demonstrate how the sheets are to be used to do close analysis of selected passages. Students should come to class with a

Literature

Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

completed reading sheet (see Appendix 4) including one passage analyzed using close reading questions for class discussion.

13. Discuss Chapter 2, take passage analysis quiz (see Handout 11).

14. Introduce Chapter 3. Ask students to read to identify the moral dilemma faced by the characters and evaluate each character's position on that dilemma.

15. Discuss Chapter 3 using poetry and activities from "Poetry as Mediator and Authority: Connecting Poems to *Of Mice and Men* (Wenk, 2008) (see Handout 12). (The song project is optional or may be used as an extension activity for some students.) Discuss the moral dilemma presented in Chapter 3 in terms of the hero's journey. Do a check for understanding (see Appendix 5).

16. Assign Chapter 4. Have students read to determine which characters have been marginalized. How have these characters been marginalized? Are these characters representative of traditionally marginalized groups in American society? Based upon how these characters act, treat one another, and are treated by others what might Steinbeck be saying about the journey from marginalization to self-actualization. Students may need to refer back to their notes for clear definitions of marginalization and self-actualization (see Handout 4). Students will choose from the traditionally marginalized groups in Steinbeck's novel (mentally handicapped, women, African Americans, and the elderly) to write the position paper performance project at the end of the unit.

17. Discuss Chapter 4 and write a short constructed response (SCR) identifying the marginalization of one character and how the treatment of that character speaks to the marginalization of a group of people in American society (see Handout 13). Score short constructed responses based upon the class SCR rubric (see Appendix 6).

18. Assign Chapter 5. Have students make a prediction about what might happen to each character as we near the end of the novel and the climax of the story. Can they discern any events (before they read Chapter 5) that might function as foreshadowing. Have the students note their predictions and possibilities in their learning journals. Make sure students continue to record chapter summaries, keep character lists current, identify a significant passage for close reading, and write a reflection at the end of each chapter in their learning journals. Have students read to discern what previous happenings in the novel foreshadow the tragic event at the end of Chapter 5.

19. Discuss Chapter 5 using "Some Strategies that Support Struggling Readers" (Langer, 2001) (see Appendix 2). Students could be divided into small groups for initial discussions and questions. Each small group then determines the issues to be discussed by the entire class. Complete Chapter 5 Reading Quiz (see Handout 14).

20. Predict what will happen in Chapter 6. Read Chapter 6 aloud as a class. Use "Inviting Initial Understandings" ideas (Langer, 2001) (see Appendix 2).

21. Prepare for final test and assign final out-of-class essay (see Handout 15) for *Of Mice and Men*. Final essays will be scored using the Grandview Interdisciplinary Writing Rubric and Essay (see Appendix 7) and SCR grading scales (see Appendix 8).

22. Out-of-class essay due (see handout 15). Take the final test on *Of Mice and Men* (see Handout 16).

23. Read "Poison" by Roald Dahl (short story, Probst et al., 1997, pp. 77-85) or "American History" by Judith Ortiz Cofer (short story, Probst et al., 1997, pp. 291-297) and discuss the story. Have students identify the marginalized person. Review the quickwrites (see Handout 2) and inner/outer circle class exercise (see Handout 3) students wrote at the beginning of the unit. Students should identify a traditionally marginalized group from the groups we discussed from the novel for the mini-research project (see Handout 17).

24. Position Paper Day 1—Notetaking and Plagiarism Lesson—Review policies on plagiarism, discuss note-taking strategies. Students use in-class sources to gather information on note-cards for their position papers. Check for understanding

25. Position Paper Day 2—Paraphrasing—using sample paragraphs, have students identify plagiarized and acceptable texts. Students paraphrase their own notes and begin to formulate their position papers. Get peer review and teacher approval. Check for understanding.

26. Position Paper Day 3—Summarizing—using sample source materials, have students practice summarizing from sources. Students summarize their own notes and continue to flesh out their position papers. Check for understanding

27. Position Paper Day 4—MLA citation and Works Cited—Teach students appropriate MLA citation and works cited methods. Students continue to work on position papers in class. Check for understanding.

28. Position Paper Day 5—Finish and turn in completed position papers. Write final reflection on the essential questions of the unit regarding marginalized people and the human quest for self-actualization. Check for understanding.

29. Collect, evaluate, grade and return Position Papers.

30. Transition to Unit 3, "The Journey from Inhumanity to Redemption" feature *Night* by Elie Wiesel as anchor text.

Literature

Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

STAGE 3—PLAN LEARNING EXPERIENCES (continued)

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<p>Transition from Unit 1</p> <p>"The Hero's Journey (anchor text: <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i>)</p> <p>Look for Hero's Journey pattern in the narratives we read using Hero's Journey template</p> <p>Set reading goals and establish a reading schedule</p> <p>Lesson-Setting a purpose for reading</p> <p>Check for understanding</p>	<p>Present essential question</p> <p>How do people face and overcome the stigma of marginalization?</p> <p>Quickwrite on marginalized peoples</p> <p>Inner/Outer circle activity</p> <p>Readings and notes on the definitions of marginalization and self-realization</p> <p>Learning Journal</p> <p>Reflection</p>	<p>Read "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst</p> <p>Read the story using learning journals to note Elements of Literature</p> <p>Discuss the story in terms of marginalization using "inviting Initial Understandings" (Langer, 2001)</p>	<p>K-W-L on Steinbeck and OMSGM</p> <p>Introduce the novel with a film clip</p> <p>Distribute bookmarks, study guide questions, graphic organizer samples</p> <p>Assign OMSGM 1</p> <p>Purpose: Read to identify characters and begin completing Elements of Literature organizer</p> <p>Begin reading novel</p>	<p>Biographical &amp;</p> <p>Historical info on the novel to complete K-W-L chart</p> <p>Discuss OMSGM 1</p> <p>Assign OMSGM 2</p> <p>Purpose: Read to evaluate Steinbeck's style</p> <p>Read "The Peace of Wild Things"</p> <p>Begin Essay of Place</p>
Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
<p>Discuss OMSGM 2</p> <p>Close passage analysis quiz</p> <p>Assign OMSGM 3</p> <p>Purpose: Read to identify the moral dilemma faced by the characters and each character's position on that dilemma</p> <p>Revise and turn in Essay of Place</p>	<p>Discuss OMSGM 3 using poetry</p> <p>Assign OMSGM 4</p> <p>Purpose: Identify marginalized groups</p>	<p>Discuss OMSGM 4</p> <p>Write SCR</p> <p>Introduce OMSGM 5</p> <p>Predict what might happen to each character</p> <p>Purpose: Read to find out if reader predictions come true</p>	<p>Discuss OMSGM 5</p> <p>Predict outcome</p> <p>Read OMSGM 6</p> <p>Assign final essay</p> <p>Prepare for final test</p>	<p>Final essay on <i>Of Mice and Men</i> due</p> <p>Take final novel test</p> <p>Read "Poison" or "American History"</p> <p>Review inner/outer circle and initial quickwrites to identify marginalized group</p>
Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15
<p>Position Paper Day 1</p> <p>Lesson—Sources and Notetaking</p> <p>Check for understanding</p> <p>Students begin work on position papers</p>	<p>Position Paper Day 2</p> <p>Lesson—Paraphrasing</p> <p>Check for understanding</p> <p>Students work on position papers</p>	<p>Position Paper Day 3</p> <p>Lesson—Summarizing</p> <p>Check for understanding</p> <p>Students work on position papers</p>	<p>Position Paper Day 4</p> <p>Lesson—MLA Citation and Works Cited</p> <p>Check for understanding</p> <p>Students work on position papers and peer edit</p>	<p>Position Paper Day 5</p> <p>Position Paper Due</p> <p>Transition to Unit 3</p> <p>"The Journey from Inhumanity to Redemption"</p>

Literature

Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

**Materials Needed:**

Hero's Journey Pattern (Handout 1)\*  
 Quickwrite prompt on marginalization (Handout 2)  
 Inner/Outer Circle Transparency (Handout 3)\*  
 Vis-à-vis markers  
 Notes on marginalization (Handout 4)\*  
 Student Learning Journals (Appendix 1)  
 Elements of Literature: Third Course  
 (Probst, et al., 1997)  
*Of Mice and Men* DVD (Sinise, 1992)  
 Elements of Language: Third Course  
 (Odell, Vacca, Hobbs, & Warriner, 2007)  
 Discussion protocols (Appendix 2)  
 K-W-L graphic organizer (Handout 5)\*  
*Of Mice and Men* novels  
 Reading bookmarks (Handout 6)\*  
 Study Guide Questions (Handout 7)\*  
 "How to Read a Novel" (Appendix 8)

Fiction Organizer (Appendix 3)  
 Reading Sheet and Scoring Guide (Appendix 4)  
 Description of Place assignment (Handout 8)\*  
 Biographical/Historical Background (Handout 9)\*  
 Chapter 1 Reading Quiz (Handout 10)\*  
 Chapter 2 Reading Quiz (Handout 11)\*  
 Poetry Analysis Activity (Handout 12)\*  
 Check for Understanding (Appendix 5)  
 Chapter 4 SCR (Handout 13)\*  
 Holistic Writing Rubric for SCRs (Appendix 6)  
 Chapter 5 Reading Quiz (Handout 14)\*  
 Final essay assignment (Handout 15)\*  
 Interdisciplinary Writing Rubric (Appendix 7)  
 Scoring Scale (Appendix 7)  
 Final Test (Handout 16)\*  
 Research resources for position paper  
 Mini Research/Position paper Assignment (Handout 17)\*  
 \*Elements provided within this unit plan

**THEME-BASED SUPPLEMENTARY TEXT SET**

**Anchor Text—***Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck (novel, 1937)

**Supplementary Texts—**

- *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson (novel, 1999)  
 This award-winning young adult novel features a first person narration and serves well to help students grasp the elements of fiction and the rudiments of literary analysis using engaging characters and an intriguing story. *Speak* tells the story of hapless Melinda Sordino and the difficult alienation from her friends she faces as she begins high school after being sexually assaulted at a summer party. This novel pairs nicely with *Of Mice and Men* in discussions on the theme of alienation.
- "Poison" by Roald Dahl (short story, Probst et al., 1997, pp. 77-85)  
 Students enjoy this gripping short story set in colonial India about a man trapped in his bed with a poisonous snake. Subtle, but pointed racism between the British official and the Indian doctor offer another view of alienation.
- "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst (short story, Probst et al., 1997, pp. 315-323)  
 This poignant short story, told in first-person narration, relates the tale of a young boy and his efforts to help his crippled brother Doodle overcome his handicap with tragic results.
- "Snow" by Julia Alvarez (personal narrative, Probst, et al., 1997, pp. 215-217)  
 Julia Alvarez offers the reader her perspective on what it feels like to be an immigrant child in this brief fictionalized first person narrative. Yolanda García, newly arrived in the United States from the Dominican Republic, mistakes the harmless phenomenon of falling snow for the much more sinister threat of nuclear fall out. Yolanda's point of view helps readers understand what it feels like to be an outsider.
- "American History" by Judith Ortiz Cofer (short story, Probst et al., 1997, pp. 291-297)

Literature

Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

In this short story, set during the days surrounding the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Judith Ortiz Cofer explores the internal conflict faced by a young Hispanic girl who befriends her white next-door-neighbor, only to be shunned by his mother.

- "Do Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night" by Dylan Thomas (poem, 1952, Meyer, pp. 922-923)
- "The Early Purges" by Seamus Heaney (poem, n.d., available online)

Curriculum specialist Michael Wenk (2005) suggests the pairing of "Do Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night" and "The Early Purges" with Chapter 3 of *Of Mice and Men* to fully explore varying perspectives on the moral dilemma of life and death faced in both the novel and the poems. Both poems offer rich possibilities for thinking and discussing the ideas in *Of Mice and Men* at a deeper level.

- "The Peace of Wild Things" by Wendell Berry (poem, 1985, available online)

This poem offers a good segue into the idea of place and can be used to springboard the description of place essay. After reading the poem which describes the poet's quest to find a place of tranquility, students can be invited to describe the place they go to seek peace.

- *Of Mice and Men* (motion picture, Sinise, 1992)

This fine film adaptation of John Steinbeck's novella, starring Gary Sinise as George and John Malkovich as Lennie, introduces students to the period and setting of the book in an honest and vivid way. The film could be shown in clips to help students visualize certain aspects of the story or shown in its entirety.

References and Resources

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Literature

Unit #2

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

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ENGLISH 9 ESSENTIALS:

LITERATURE STRAND

UNIT 2

THE JOURNEY FROM MARGINALIZATION

TO SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

HANDOUTS



## THE HERO'S JOURNEY

### A Pattern of Human Experience



The hero's journey is a pattern in literature that readers can use to look at many stories. As you read John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* try to find elements of the hero's journey.

Steps on the Hero's Journey	Definition	Evidence from <i>Of Mice and Men</i>
1. The Call	The Call invites the hero into an adventure and offers an opportunity to test one's wits and face the unknown.	
2. The Threshold (with guardians, helpers, & mentor)	The Threshold is the jumping off point for the hero's adventure or test of strength and character. At the threshold, the hero may encounter guardians who block the passage into the adventure. There may also be helpers at the threshold who assist the hero or provide direction. The most important helper is the mentor who keeps the hero focused on the goal. Helpers and guides may show up at any time, and they may point the way, but they cannot take the journey for the hero.	
3. The Challenges	On the journey the hero encounters a series of challenges or temptations that test him/her at his/her greatest points of weakness and vulnerability. Successfully facing these challenges builds strength, skill, maturity, and confidence helping the hero to discover his true identity.	
4. The Abyss	The greatest challenge or trial of the journey.	
5. The Transformation	As the hero conquers the Abyss and overcomes his/her fears, the transformation becomes complete. The final step in the process is a moment of death and rebirth: a part of the hero must die so that a new part can be born and realized.	
6. The Revelation	The Revelation is a sudden, dramatic change in the way the hero views life. This change of viewpoint often occurs during or after the Abyss.	
7. The Atonement (return to the known world)	The Atonement represents the point when the hero is "at one" with his/her new self and returns to everyday life a changed person.	
8. The Return with a Gift (to assume a new role in life)	Upon the return to the known world, the hero discovers his/her gift and begins to use this gift to contribute to society.	

(adapted from Harris, R. (2008). The hero's journey: Life's great adventure. [Electronic version]. Retrieved June 25, 2008 from [http:// www.yourheroicjourney.com](http://www.yourheroicjourney.com))

### QUICKWRITE

Have you ever felt left out? What does it mean to be left out? Think about and identify a group of people who are "left out" in society. In your Learning Journal list the reasons this group has been denied equality and evaluate whether or not that treatment is fair.

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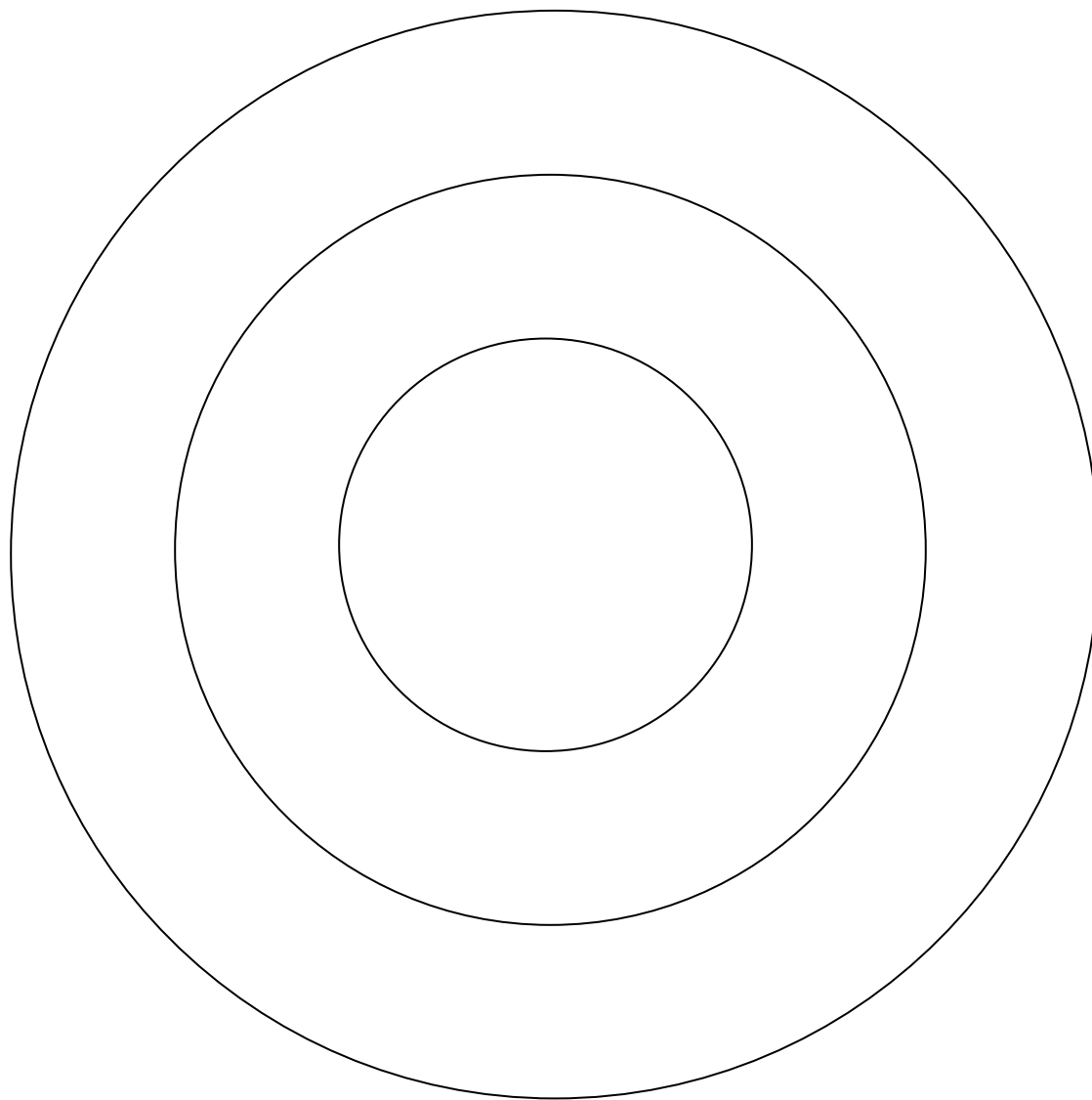
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## WHO'S IN? WHO'S OUT? Society's Circles



**Marginalization** is the social process of becoming or being made marginal (to relegate or confine to a lower social standing or outer limit or edge, as of social standing); "the marginalization of the underclass"; "marginalization of literature" and many other are some examples. Marginalization involves people being denied degrees of power. Marginalization has the potential to result in severe material deprivation, and in its most extreme form can exterminate groups. (Mullaly, 2007).

Material deprivation is the most common result of marginalization when looking at how unfairly material resources (such as food and shelter) are dispersed in society. Along with material deprivation, marginalized individuals are also excluded from services, programs, and policies (Young, 2000).

Marginalization can be understood within three levels: individual, community, and global-structural / policies. Although examples are listed within these three specific levels, one must recognize the intersecting nature of marginalization and its capacity to overlap within each. (Wikipedia, n.d. Retrieved on July 12, 2008 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marginalization>)

The term **Self-Actualization** was later used by Abraham Maslow in his article, *A Theory of Human Motivation*. Maslow explicitly defines self-actualization to be "the desire for self-fulfillment, namely the tendency for him [the individual] to become actualized in what he is potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming." Maslow used the term self-actualization to describe a desire, not a driving force, that could lead to realizing one's capabilities. Maslow did not feel that self-actualization determined one's life; rather, he felt that it gave the individual a desire, or motivation to achieve budding ambitions. Maslow's usage of the term is now popular in modern psychology when discussing personality from the humanistic approach.

A basic definition from a typical college text book defines self-actualization according to Maslow simply as "the full realization of one's potential" without any mention of antiquated Goldstein.

A more explicit definition of self-actualization according to Maslow is "intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism, or more accurately of what is the organism itse...self-actualization is growth-motivated rather than deficiency-motivated." This explanation emphasizes the fact that self-actualization can not normally be reached until other lower order necessities of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are satisfied. While Goldstein defined self-actualization as a driving force, Maslow uses the term to describe personal growth that takes place once lower order needs have been met.

People that have reached self-actualization are characterized by certain behaviors. Common traits amongst people that have reached self-actualization are as follows:

- They embrace reality and facts rather than denying truth.
- They are spontaneous.
- They are interested in solving problems which may include personal problems or the emotional conflicts of others.
- They are accepting of themselves and others and lack prejudice.

For Goldstein it was a motive and for Maslow it was a level of development; for both, however, roughly the same kinds of qualities were expressed: independence, autonomy, a tendency to form few but deep friendships, a "philosophical" sense of humor, a tendency to resist outside pressures and a general transcendence of the environment rather than a simple "coping" with it. (Wikipedia, n.d. Retrieved July 12, 2008 from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self\\_actualization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self_actualization).

from *The Declaration of Independence*

A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled, July 4, 1776

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

K-W-L ORGANIZER  
 JOHN STEINBECK AND *OF MICE AND MEN*

WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I WANT TO KNOW	WHAT I LEARNED

Possible Categories for Information

SUMMARY/RESPONSE/STILL NEED TO KNOW

*OF MICE AND MEN* (1937)

by John Steinbeck (1902-1968)

\*\*\*

READING ASSIGNMENTS

**Reading #1**

Chapter 1 (1-16)

Purpose: Notice and evaluate how Steinbeck describes the setting.

**Reading #2**

Chapter 2 (17-37)

Purpose: Begin to evaluate Steinbeck's style

**Reading #3**

Chapter 3 (38-65)

Purpose: Identify and analyze the moral dilemma faced by the characters.

**Reading #4**

Chapter 4 (66-83)

Purpose: Which characters have been marginalized? Do they represent groups of people in American society?

**Reading #5**

Chapter 5 (84-98)

Purpose: Predict the fate of each major character. Read to find out what really happens.

**Reading #6**

Chapter 6 (99-107)

Purpose: What do you think will be the final outcome of the novel? Does the ending surprise you?

*OF MICE AND MEN* (1937)

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**Reading #6**

Chapter 6 (99-107)

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### Chapter One Study Guide Questions

1. Identify and give a physical description of Lennie and George.
2. What is George's first complaint to Lennie?
3. What trouble did George and Lennie have in Weed?
4. What is in Lennie's pocket? Why does he have it?
5. At one point in the chapter, George bursts into a long speech about what he could do if he were alone. What things would George like to do?
6. Lennie offers to go away and live in a cave. What is George's response?
7. Why are George and Lennie different from other "guys like us that work on ranches"?
8. What are George and Lennie going to do someday?
9. What two things does George want Lennie to remember?
10. Why did George want to camp overnight instead of going another quarter of a mile to the ranch?
11. Identify several quotes where Steinbeck's description of place seems especially vivid.

### Chapter Two Study Guide Questions

1. What is George's response when the boss accuses him of trying to pull something over?
2. Identify and describe Curley.
3. Candy, the swamper, says, "Seems like Curley ain't given nobody a chance." Explain this comment.
4. What advice does George give Lennie after Curley and the swamper leave?
5. Identify and describe Slim and Carlson.
6. What does Slim have that Lennie wants?
7. Identify several instances where Steinbeck's use of literary techniques (figurative language, diction, irony, tone, imagery, or literary devices) seem particularly well-done.

### Chapter Three Study Guide Questions

1. Slim and George have a long conversation. Slim says it's funny that George and Lennie pal around together. What is George's response?
2. Identify and describe Candy.
3. What did Carlson do with his Luger pistol? Why?
4. What card game does George play?
5. Describe Curley's wife. What seems to be the problem with her?
6. What will Lennie's job be when he and George get their little place?
7. What does Candy want when he hears about George and Lennie's plans? What is Candy willing to contribute to the plans?
8. Why did Curley fight with Lennie? What was the result?
9. What moral dilemma do the characters face and how do they handle it?

### Chapter Four Study Guide Questions

1. Identify and describe Crooks.
2. Lennie tells Crooks about the land that the little place that Lennie and George hope to have someday. What is Crooks' initial response?
3. What does Crooks want to do when he finally believes that the plans about the little place might really come true?
4. Why does Curley's wife come to the barn?
5. Why does Crooks change his mind about going to the new place after Curley's wife leaves?
6. What might be significant about the four characters who gather in Crooks' room?

### Chapter Five Study Guide Questions

1. What happens to Lennie's puppy? What is Lennie's reaction?
2. Why did Curley's wife come to see Lennie in the barn?
3. What did Curley's wife reveal to Lennie? Describe her story in detail.
4. What did Lennie do to Curley's wife and why?
5. What is George's reaction when he discovers what Lennie has done?
6. What is Curley's reaction to Lennie's deed?
7. What are your predictions about the fate of each character in this chapter? What is the basis for your prediction? After reading the chapter, evaluate how accurate your predictions were.

### Chapter Six Study Guide Questions

1. What does George do to Lennie and why?
2. Who is the only character that really seems to understand what George did?
3. Will George ever get the piece of land and the little place he and Lennie dreamed of?
4. What did you think of the ending of the novel?

(adapted from Collins, M. B. (1997). *Of mice and men: A unit plan* (2nd ed). Teacher's Pet Publications.)

ENGLISH 9 ESSENTIALS UNIT TEMPLATE  
Literature  
Performance Task Design Prompt  
Unit #2 Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck  
GRASPS TASK DESIGN PROMPTS  
(for designing authentic assessment products/performances)

Assessment: Essay of Place Assignment

Goal

- Your task is to create a description of a setting as part of a fictional narrative
- Your goal is to create a description that through presentation and organization of details evokes a specific mood and tone and demonstrates an easily identifiable dominant impression.
- The problem or challenge is selecting the setting and determining which details to feature, how to organize those details, and what words will be used to describe those details.
- The obstacles to overcome are coming up with ideas, not going into too much detail, overusing adjectives and figurative details, figuring out how to organize the presentation of the details to best advantage.

Role

- You are a world famous novelist whose latest book has been rejected by the publisher.
- You have been asked to add three paragraphs of description to the beginning of the novel.
- Your job is to write a detailed description of the setting of your new novel in three paragraphs (350 words) that evoke a particular mood and tone and feature a dominant impression that can be easily discerned by the reading public.

Audience

- Your clients are your editor and publishers.
- The target audience is the reading public.
- You need to convince your editor and publishers that your new description adds adequate detail appropriately organized to evoke a specific mood and tone.

Situation

- The context you find yourself in is that you are a world-famous novelist so expectations are high. You need to write a description of the place where your (imaginary) novel takes place from a provided photograph sufficient so that your editor and publishers will agree to publish your latest novel.
- The challenge involves dealing with how to present and organize details to accomplish effectively the mood, tone, and dominant impression you desire

Product, Performance, Purpose

- You will create a three paragraph description using the first three paragraphs of the novel *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck as a model
- In order to evoke a specific mood, tone, and dominant impression that you decide reflects the (imaginary) novel you have already written and accurately describes the setting as it appears in the provided photograph.
- You need to develop a description with vivid details
- so that the reading public will be drawn in to your novel.

Standards and Criteria for Success

- Your performance needs to evoke a specific mood, tone, and dominant impression.
- Your work will be judged by your peers, and your editor (teacher).
- Your product/performance must meet the following challenges as delineated in the attached scoring sheet.



## DESCRIPTION OF PLACE WRITING ASSIGNMENT—PART I

# The Peace of Wild Things

BY WENDELL BERRY

When despair for the world grows in me  
 and I wake in the night at the least sound  
 in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
 I go and lie down where the wood drake  
 rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
 I come into the peace of wild things  
 who do not tax their lives with forethought  
 of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
 And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
 waiting with their light. For a time  
 I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry, "The Peace of Wild Things" from *The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry*. Copyright © 1998. Published and reprinted by arrangement with Counterpoint Press, a member of the Perseus Books Group ([www.perseusbooks.com](http://www.perseusbooks.com)). All rights reserved.

Source: *Collected Poems, 1957-1982* (1985).

Assignment: After reading Wendell Berry's poem "The Peace of Wild Things" use the chart below to make a list of the details Berry uses to describe the place he goes when he feels stressed out. Next to each detail you select, identify what makes the detail significant (i.e. Is it specific? Does it suggest particular sensory imagery? Is it depicted in a fresh way? Is it associated with figurative language? Would you classify the detail as sensory, factual, or figurative?) Note how that detail contributes to the mood and tone of the poem. (The first one is done for you.) After evaluating your list of details, try to state a dominant impression.

DETAIL	SIGNIFICANCE	MOOD	TONE
"wood drake"	specificity	the image of a water bird adds to the peaceful atmosphere of the poem—especially with the further detail that the bird is resting on the water	that the poet uses the actual name of the bird suggest a respectful, even reverent tone—the author appreciates the bird and the tranquility the bird embodies

Create a similar chart on this page by capturing and analyzing at least TEN details from the first two chapters of *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck.

### from *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees—willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the tree the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

There is a path through the willows and among the sycamores, a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool, and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highway in the evening to jungle-up near water. In front of the low horizontal limb of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fire; the limb is worn smooth by men who have sat on it.

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up the hills toward the top. On the sand banks the rabbits sat quietly as little gray, sculptured stones. And then from the direction of the state highway came the sound of footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves. The rabbits hurried noiselessly for cover. A stilted heron labored up into the air and pounded down river. For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.

DETAIL	SIGNIFICANCE	MOOD	TONE

Can you state a dominant impression from Steinbeck's description?

## DESCRIPTION OF PLACE WRITING ASSIGNMENT—PART II

(adapted in part from Odell, L., Vacca, R., Hobbs, R. & Warriner, J. E. (2007). "Writing a description of a place."  
*Elements of language: Third course*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, pp. 29-43.)

Assignment Prompt: **You are a world famous author**, but your latest manuscript has just been returned to you from your publisher. The editor suggests that you **add three paragraphs at the beginning of the novel describing the setting in greater detail**. (The photograph you received with this assignment is a picture of your setting.) After studying both the poem by Wendell Berry and the first three paragraphs of *Of Mice and Men*, you should be prepared to write a **350 word description** of the location shown in the photo that **evokes a certain mood, reveals a particular tone, and suggests an implied main idea or dominant impression**. Use Steinbeck's writing as your model, but don't be constrained by it. Notice what he does and use those techniques to serve your purpose.

Your work will be judged on the **details you chose to include, how you organize those details, how easy it is to identify the dominant impression of the piece, and how well those details contribute to the overall tone and mood of the piece**. You must include with your finished description a brief author's memo telling your editor what you were trying to achieve with your finished writing.

Rhetorical Stance: Think about the following issues as you begin the prewriting process.

- ❖ **Consider your Purpose, Audience, and Tone**—Remember that for this project you are writing for the general reading public, but you must impress your editor and publishers. Your purpose is not only to describe a place, but to share thoughts and feelings about it with your readers. Your feelings about the setting will help you decide on the tone (the attitude with which you address your readers), the mood (atmosphere) you want to portray, and the dominant impression (central observation) about the place you are describing.
- ❖ **Think About Details**—In your analysis of both Berry's and Steinbeck's writing you determined what made the details those writers used stand out. Now, it's your turn—will you use specific or general details? Will you choose sensory details (details that appeal to the five senses); factual details (names, dates, numbers, quotations, facts, true statements); and/or figurative details (similes, metaphors, hyperboles, personifications)
- ❖ **Take Time to Observe**—Look closely at the photograph you have been given, gather details from the picture that would contribute to your overall purpose.
- ❖ **State Your Dominant Impression**—Your choice of details and the way you express those details lead to a central observation or dominant impression of your description. Look for ways that the details you selected to include relate to one another. Write a sentence that clearly states one or more of the descriptive threads that seem to link the details in your piece.
- ❖ **Organize Your Details**—Return to the models, particularly to Steinbeck. How does he organize the details in the first three paragraphs of *Of Mice and Men*? You should arrange your details in a logical order that makes sense to the reader. You can think about a couple of organizational plans for descriptive writing: spatial order (organized by how things are arranged in space) and order of importance (start with the least important details and work up to the most important). How would you classify Steinbeck's organization? What does he accomplish with organization? What organizational pattern will you use for presenting details?

Follow these steps to write an excellent description:

1. Analyze the task using SOAPS and the information in the Assignment Prompt and Rhetorical Stance sections above. Take notes and ask questions if necessary. Be sure you understand the task at hand.
2. Study the photograph and list the details you would like to include. Try to decide on a dominant impression, mood, and tone.
3. Do a twenty minute freewrite based on your notes and reflections. Don't stop to reread anything, just write. Create an outline or framework for presenting your description. You can use Steinbeck as a model, or you can look at the framework on page 36 of the grammar textbook (Odell, L., Vacca, R., Hobbs, R., & Warriner, J. E. (2007). *Elements of language: Third course*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.)
4. Review your outline and make any changes. You might want to consider having someone else check your outline.
5. Write a first draft of your 350-word, three paragraph description in one sitting.
6. Use the following review questions to evaluate your first draft:
  - Does the introduction include a statement that hints at the dominant impression? Can you state it?

- Does the description include a variety of details (sensory, factual, and figurative)?
  - Does the description include details about the writer's thoughts and feelings?
  - Is the paper clearly organized using either spatial order, order of importance, or some other organizational pattern?
  - Does the conclusion include a statement that wraps up your description?
7. Make a revision plan using the tips and revision techniques listed on page 39 of the grammar textbook (Odell et al. (2007)). Implement your revision plan to create a second draft of your description.
  8. Read your paper aloud, noting and continuing to improve weak areas, particularly in grammar.
  9. Have a peer read your paper and evaluate it according to the revision questions.
  10. Make final revision. Compare your assignment to the scoring sheet. Have you met all of the requirements?
  11. Write a brief (one paragraph) author's memo identifying your purpose, the dominant impression you were trying to get across, the mood and tone of the piece, and any problems you had writing it.
  12. Submit your finished description with the photo, drafts, scoring sheet, final draft (in ink) and author's memo. Finished final draft of submission must be neatly written in ink on lined notebook paper and double-spaced.
    - Does the introduction include a statement that hints at the dominant impression? Can you state it?
    - Does the description include a variety of details (sensory, factual, and figurative)?
    - Does the description include details about the writer's thoughts and feelings?
    - Is the paper clearly organized using either spatial order, order of importance, or some other organizational pattern?
    - Does the conclusion include a statement that wraps up your description?

-----Detach this section and submit with your completed assignment-----

**Description of a Place Scoring Sheet**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Block \_\_\_\_\_

Total Points: \_\_\_\_/50

____/5	Presentation of the assignment meets criteria	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)
____/5	Punctuation, Grammar, and Spelling Correctness make this piece ready for publication	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)
____/5	Assignment includes all required parts (photo, drafts, scoring sheet, author's memo, final draft in ink)	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)
____/5	Description includes a variety of well chosen details	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)
____/5	Details are presented in a variety of ways (sensory, factual, and figurative) to meet the author's purpose.	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)
____/5	A dominant impression is evident	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)
____/5	Reader can identify the mood of the piece by the use of specific details	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)
____/5	Reader can identify the tone of the piece by the use of specific details	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)
____/5	Description follows a logical progression of ideas	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)
____/5	Peer review and efforts at revision are evident	Poor (1)	Mediocre (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)

Comments and Recommendations:

## *OF MICE AND MEN* (1937) BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### JOHN STEINBECK

- born in Salinas, California on February 27, 1902
- raised in the Central Valley of California—an important agricultural region, Steinbeck worked as a farm hand
- from boyhood Steinbeck dreamed of being a writer, this was a goal that shaped his life, he wrote everyday even as a boy
- attended Stanford University, but never graduated
- most of his books were written in the 1930s and 1940s, set in California, deal with the problems of the working poor (i.e. migrant workers, immigrants, poor farmers)
- he wrote his most successful novels during his ten year marriage to Carol Henning
- his drive as a writer was "to make people understand each other"
- he published *Of Mice and Men* in 1937
- he won a Pulitzer Prize in 1939 for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*—the story of a family who moves to California to try and make a better life for themselves following the Oklahoma Dust Bowl
- his later novels never enjoyed the same success as those he wrote in the 1930s and 1940s but he kept writing
- *East of Eden* (1952) and *The Winter of our Discontent* (1961) mark a return to his former glory days as a writer
- he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962
- John Steinbeck died in 1968

### THE SETTING OF *OF MICE AND MEN*

- the novel opens with a physical description of the Central Valley of California
- the novel takes place "a few miles south of Soledad, California"
- Soledad is southeast of Salinas (Steinbeck's birthplace) on the Salinas River. The town of Weed is nearby.
- the novel takes place during the Great Depression when thousands of migrant farm workers worked on large collective farms in the Salinas Valley

### MIGRANT FARM WORKERS

- huge numbers of men traveled around the country between 1880s and 1930s harvesting crops
- they earned between \$2-\$3 per day plus room (usually in a bunkhouse) and board
- George and Lennie represent some of the last of these workers
- during the Great Depression terrible unemployment problems forced the government to create agencies to send farm workers where needed. George and Lennie get work cards from Murray and Ready's—one of those agencies.
- "Agriculture as a working culture was undergoing an historic change. In 1938, about half the nation's grain was harvested by mechanical combines that enabled five men to do the work that had previously required 350. Only a short time before, thousands of itinerant single men had roamed the western states following the harvests. Their labor was essential to the success of the large farms. By 1900, about 125,000 migrants traveled along a route from Minnesota west to Washington State. Many traveled by rail in the empty boxcars that were later used to transport grain" (MAXnotes for *Of Mice and Men*. (2006).
- during these years the thousands of white migrant workers, called "bindle-stiffs", were usually single men who followed the harvest, they had no union representation, conditions were grim and difficult

### THE AMERICAN DREAM

- America was founded on the notion that a better life is available here if one is willing to work for it
- for many The American Dream ended with the stock market crash in 1929 that started the Great Depression
- even though times were tough many seeking work made their way to California in hopes of finding a better life
- George and Lennie share the dream of having a little place of their own/Curley's wife dreamed of the movies

### THE NOVEL'S TITLE

- The novel's title comes from a poem by the Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796)
- "The best laid schemes o'mice and men/Often go awry/And leave us nought but grief and pain/For promised joy!"

### References

MAXnotes for *Of Mice and Men*. (2006). Research and Educational Association (REA). Available at <http://www.enotes.com>

*Of Mice and Men* Factsheet. (1999). Retrieved July 3, 2006 from

<http://www.newi.ac.uk/englishresources/workunits/ks4/fiction/ofmicemen/llshort/factsheet>

*OF MICE AND MEN* (1937)  
Chapter 1 Reading Quiz  
30 points

Part 1—Plot Summary

Organize the following events in the correct order.

1. a. George discovers Lennie has a dead mouse in his pocket and throws it away.
2. b. George promises Lennie a puppy.
3. c. George gets angry and tells Lennie, "If I was alone I could live so easy."
4. d. George and Lennie show up at the clearing by the river.
5. e. George tells Lennie to remember the clearing and to come there if he has any trouble on the ranch.
6. ab. George and Lennie eat cans of beans for supper and Lennie wishes he had ketchup.
7. ac. George describes the dream of having a little place and letting Lennie tend the rabbits.
8. ad. Lennie goes in search of wood for a fire and comes back with the dead mouse.
9. ae. Lennie offers to go off and live in a cave
10. bc. Lennie drinks from the pool and George chides him because the water might be bad.

Part 2—Character Development

Match each statement to the character it applies to. a=George b=Lennie

11. "small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp strong features"
12. has three cans of beans in his bindle
13. Aunt Clara's nephew
14. gets angry that the bus driver wouldn't stop at the ranch gate
15. "a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, with wide sloping shoulders"
16. feels ashamed for getting angry
17. gets the pair in trouble in Weed because he wanted to touch a girl's dress
18. carries the work cards from Murray and Ready's
19. he "remembers about the rabbits" but doesn't remember much else
20. "drinks with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse"

Part 3—Passage Analysis

Read the following passages and choose the BEST answer for each question.

**Passage 1**

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up the hills toward the top. On the sand banks the rabbits sat as quietly as little gray, sculptured stones. And then from the direction of the state highway came the sound of footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves. The rabbits hurried noiselessly for cover. A stilted heron labored up into the air and pounded down river. For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.

21. Which of these lines contains a simile?
  - a. The shade climbed up the hills toward the top.
  - b. The rabbits sat as quietly as little gray, sculptured stones.
  - c. A stilted heron labored up into the air and pounded down the river.
  - d. For a moment the place was lifeless.
22. Which of these questions is answered in the passage?
  - a. What is the nearest town?
  - b. Who are the two men who come down the path?
  - c. How far have the men traveled?
  - d. What time of day is it?
23. What causes the rabbits and the heron to leave the clearing by the pool?

- a. the little wind
  - b. the sound of footsteps
  - c. the shade
  - d. the heat
24. The main purpose of this passage is to
- a. introduce the main characters of the novel
  - b. inform the reader that rabbits are part of the novel
  - c. describe the wildlife in the setting
  - d. show the difference between humans and animals
25. In the sentence "A *stilted* heron labored up into the air and pounded down the river" the word *stilted* most likely means
- a. artificially formal
  - b. to raise up as on stilts
  - c. long-legged wading bird
  - d. long slender poles used as a support

**Passage 2**

The flame of the sunset lifted from the mountaintops and dusk came into the valley, and a half darkness came in among the willows and the sycamores. A big carp rose to the surface of the pool, gulped air and then sank mysteriously into the dark water again, leaving widening rings on the water. Overhead the leaves whisked again and little pugs of willow cotton blew down and landed on the pool's surface.

26. Which of these questions is NOT answered in the passage?
- a. What types of trees border the pool?
  - b. What time of day is being described?
  - c. Have George and Lennie come to the clearing?
  - d. What effect does the jumping carp have on the surface of the pool?
27. The details in the passage contribute to a mood that could be characterized as
- a. gleeful
  - b. tranquil
  - c. gloomy
  - d. suspenseful
28. Which detail could be considered sensory?
- a. a big carp,
  - b. mountaintops
  - c. dusk came into the valley
  - d. the leaves whisked
29. This passage come right after George and Lennie remember Aunt Clara and right before Lennie goes for more wood and George starts a fire. The placement of this paragraph of pure description best serves to
- a. remind the reader of the peacefulness of this natural setting
  - b. inform the reader of the flora and fauna of the clearing
  - c. tell the reader the time of day
  - d. mirror the darkening and sinister nature of George and Lennie's relationship
30. Words like flame, gulped, mysteriously, whisked, and pugs suggest that the author's tone (attitude toward subject he's describing) could be characterized as
- a. disgust
  - b. amusement
  - c. appreciation
  - d. indifference

*OF MICE AND MEN* (1937)  
Chapter 2 Reading Quiz  
30 points

Part I—Questions 1-10 ask you to remember biographical facts about John Steinbeck and test your knowledge of the historical context of the novel. Select the best answer for each question.

1. John Steinbeck was born in 1902 in which of the following towns in California's Central Valley?
  - a. Weed
  - b. Soledad
  - c. Salinas
  - d. River's Bend
2. John Steinbeck's most important novels were written during which decades?
  - a. the 1960s and 1970s
  - b. the 1930s and 1940s
  - c. the 1940s and 1950s
  - d. the 1920s and 1930s
3. John Steinbeck won which two important literary prizes?
  - a. The National Book Award and the Newberry Award
  - b. The Booker Prize and the Nobel Prize
  - c. The Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Prize
  - d. The Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award
4. *Of Mice and Men* takes place during which important historical era in the United States?
  - a. the Great Depression
  - b. World War II
  - c. World War I
  - d. the Civil War
5. George and Lennie were white migrant farm workers known as "bindle-stiffs". Which of the following characteristics describe the conditions of the thousands of itinerant men who roamed the western states at harvest during the period the novel takes place? (Choose and indicate ALL that apply.)
  - a. they earned between \$2 and \$3 per day
  - b. they traveled by rail in empty boxcars
  - c. they had strong union representation and often went on strike
  - d. they usually traveled together in pairs or as teams
6. What was the reason that itinerant workers such George and Lennie had to get work cards from an agency like Murray and Ready's?
  - a. to track statistics about migrant farm workers
  - b. to control the influx of migrant farm workers from foreign countries
  - c. to keep American workers from looking for employment in foreign countries
  - d. to help ensure that laborers were sent where needed during a time of high unemployment
7. The American Dream was founded upon what notion?
  - a. that a better life is available for anyone willing to work for it
  - b. that only American workers should get American jobs
  - c. that "bindle-stiffs" should be willing to work for low wages so others can become rich
  - d. that each person deserves his own little place in the country
8. What event essentially ended the American Dream for many people?
  - a. the beginning of the Great War in 1914
  - b. the end of World War II in 1946
  - c. the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941
  - d. the stock market crash in 1929



9. George and Lennie want their own slice of the American Dream, what do they wish for?
- to stay on the ranch and put together a small stake of \$100
  - to have a little place and raise rabbits
  - to become jerkline skimmers on Curley's ranch
  - to get along easy and have a good time riding the rails all over California
10. The title of the novel *Of Mice and Men* is a literary allusion to what source?
- a sonnet by Shakespeare
  - a poem by Robert Burns
  - a verse from the Bible
  - a Greek myth

Part II—Questions 11-20 ask you to match each character to the correct descriptor.

- |                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 11. missing a hand.           | a. Curley             |
| 12. the jerkline skinner.     | b. Carlson            |
| 13. has a dog with new pups   | c. Curley's wife      |
| 14. "jailbait"                | d. Candy, the swamper |
| 15. "pretty handy"            | e. Slim               |
| 16. wears high heeled boots   |                       |
| 17. "the prince of the ranch" |                       |
| 18. hates the old dog         |                       |
| 19. "a tart"                  |                       |
| 20. "hates big guys"          |                       |

Part III—Questions 21-30 ask you to read this brief passage from Chapter 2 and analyze the author's style based upon what your comprehension and what know about the terms of literary analysis. Consider each passage carefully and choose the best answer.

The old man came slowly into the room. He had his broom in his hand. And at his heels there walked a dragfooted sheep dog, gray of muzzle, and with pale, blind old eyes. The dog struggled lamely to the side of the room and lay down, grunting softly to himself and licking his grizzled, moth-eaten coat. The swamper watched him until he was settled. "I wasn't listenin'. I was jus' now finished swampin' out the wash house."

"You was pokin' your big ears into our business," George said. "I don't like nobody to get nosey."

The old man looked uneasily from George to Lennie, and then back. "I jus' come there," he said. "I didn't hear nothing you was sayin'. A guy on a ranch don't never listen nor he don't ast no questions."

"Damn right he don't," said George, slightly mollified, "not if he wants to stay workin' long." But he was reassured by the swamper's defense. "Come on in and set down a minute," he said. "That's a hell of an old dog."

21. What has George just said to Lennie that he may not want Candy or others on the ranch to know?
- that George lied about being Lennie's cousin
  - that George and Lennie plan on staying on the ranch only long enough to make \$100
  - that George hates Curley's guts
  - that Lennie likes Curley's wife
22. What can be inferred from the passage about the old man's feelings for the dog?
- He thinks the dog stinks and is worried others will see the dog in the bunkhouse.
  - He couldn't care less about the old dog and hardly notices the animal.
  - He thinks the dog is in his way as he tries to sweep the bunk house.
  - He values the dog's companionship and shows concern for the dog's comfort.
23. What has the old man done previously that might make George think the old man is nosey?
- The old man made fun of Lennie.
  - The old man told the boss why George and Lennie were late to the ranch.
  - The old man told Curley that Curley's wife was flirting with Slim.
  - The old man gossiped about the boss and Crooks to George and Lennie.

24. Based on word choice, how would you characterize the author's tone in this passage?
- derogatory
  - playful
  - matter-of-fact
  - indifferent
25. What literary quality characterizes the dialogue in the passage?
- formality
  - dialect
  - hyperbole
  - personification
26. In the passage, what does the word *mollified* most likely indicate about George's feelings toward Candy?
- His attitude toward Candy has softened.
  - He is embarrassed about accusing Candy.
  - He is impatient with Candy's defense.
  - His attitude toward Candy is indifferent.

Read the following brief passages and give the best answer for each question.

"He built four clubs on his ace pile. The sun square was on the floor now, and flies whipped through it like sparks."

27. This passage contains which type of literary device?
- personification
  - hyperbole
  - simile
  - metaphor

"[Curley] stiffened and went into a slight crouch. His glance was at once calculating and pugnacious."

28. In this passage what does the word *pugnacious* most likely mean?
- heartless
  - friendly
  - quarrelsome
  - indifferent

"A sound of jingling harness and the croak of heavy-laden axles sounded from outside."

29. The sensory imagery in this sentence appeals mostly to what sense?
- sight
  - touch
  - hearing
  - smell
30. As George and Lennie meet each of the characters on the ranch, it becomes evident that a major conflict will probably emerge between which two characters?
- Carlson and Lennie
  - George and Curley
  - Slim and Curley's wife
  - Slim and George

## CONNECTING POEMS TO *OF MICE AND MEN* THE MORAL DILEMMA

What is a moral dilemma?

What would you identify as a major moral dilemma in Chapter 3 of the novel *Of Mice and Men*?

To compare some perspectives on this moral dilemma, read the following poem "Do Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night" by Dylan Thomas and after your initial reading note any questions you would like answered to clarify your understanding of the poem.

### **Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night (1951)**

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on that sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

### **Dylan Thomas**

(Retrieved July 21, 2008 from <http://poemhunter.com/poem/do-not-go-gentle-into-that-good-night>)

What is your initial reaction to this poem?

Questions?

What do you think this poem means?

Reread the poem.

How would you identify the main idea of "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"?

Read the following poem "The Early Purges" by Seamus Heaney. Again, after your initial reading, note any questions you have that might help you understand the poem.

**The Early Purges**

I was six when I first saw kittens drown.  
Dan Taggart pitched them, 'the scraggy wee shits',  
Into a bucket; a frail metal sound,

Soft paws scraping like mad. But their tiny din  
Was soon soused. They were slung on the snout  
Of the pump and the water pumped in.

'Sure, isn't it better for them now?' Dan said.  
Like wet gloves they bobbed and shone till he sluiced  
Them out on the dunghill, glossy and dead.

Suddenly frightened, for days I sadly hung  
Round the yard, watching the three sogged remains  
Turn mealy and crisp as old summer dung

Until I forgot them. But the fear came back  
When Dan trapped big rats, snared rabbits, shot crows  
Or, with a sickening tug, pulled old hens' necks.

Still, living displaces false sentiments  
And now, when shrill pups are prodded to drown  
I just shrug, 'Bloody pups'. It makes sense:

'Prevention of cruelty' talk cuts ice in town  
Where they consider death unnatural  
But on well-run farms pests have to be kept down.

**Seamus Heaney**

(Retrieved July 12, 2008 from <http://thepoemhunter.com/poem/the-early-purges>)

What is your initial reaction to this poem?

Questions?

What do you think this poem means?

Reread the poem.

What do you think is the main idea of "The Early Purges"?

One way to determine the poet's main idea is to identify the most important word. After rereading both poems choose what you consider to be the most important word in each. Then, complete the following statements for each poem on the lines provided below.

"Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" by Dylan Thomas

1. The most important word in "Do Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night" is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. List several reasons for choosing this word. Be sure that you support your reasons with examples from the poem.  
I chose this word because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Using the most important word I chose, I think the main idea of "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" is \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

"The Early Purges" by Seamus Heaney

1. The most important word in "The Early Purges" by Seamus Heaney is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. List several reasons for choosing this word. Be sure that you support your reasons with examples from the poem.  
I chose this word because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Using the most important word I chose, I think the main idea of "The Early Purges" is \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Discuss your ideas about ONE poem with a partner or in a small group. After your discussion complete the statements on your own.

1. After my group's discussion, I chose \_\_\_\_\_ as my most important word in "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"/"The Early Purges" (circle one).
2. I changed/didn't change my mind because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. After group discussion, I now think that the main idea of the poem we discussed is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

COMPARING THE POEMS

Once you establish the main idea and perspectives of both poems you are ready to compare how those ideas relate to the moral dilemma presented in each poem. Complete the chart below.

Good Reasons for the Perspective in "Do Not Go Gentle"	Good Reasons For Both	Good Reasons for the Perspective in "The Early Purges"

After analyzing the perspectives of each poem and comparing the good reasons for each point of view, consider Chapter 3 in *Of Mice and Men*. Select one character from Chapter 3 and determine which poem perspective that character would favor based upon his actions in Chapter 3. Complete the following sentences to link your synthesis of the poetry with the character in the novel.

- 4.

Evidence of Character's Perspective	

5. My perspective on this moral dilemma \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

(adapted from Wenk, M. (2008, Summer). Poetry as mediator and authority: Connecting poems to Of Mice and Men. *Statement: The Journal of the Colorado Language Arts Society*, 44(3), pp. 8-9 and Beers, K. (n.d.). Reading strategies handbook for high school. Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp. 90-94).

Choose one of these characters and write a short constructed response identifying why this character was left out and how this character may represent a group in society that is also marginalized. Use specific details from the text to support your claims.



*OF MICE AND MEN* (1937)

Chapter 5 Reading Quiz

30 points

Part I

Questions 1-10 are matching questions designed to assess how much you know about what happens to the main characters in Chapter 5. Please read each statement and then match the statement with the appropriate character's name. Character names may be used more than once.

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 1. will be mad that the puppy is dead                        | a. Lennie        |
| 2. disappointed that George no longer wants the little place | b. George        |
| 3. gets neck broken and dies                                 | c. Slim          |
| 4. tells everyone he's going to shoot Lennie in the guts     | d. Candy         |
| 5. his Luger gets stolen                                     | e. Curley's wife |
| 6. checks to see if Curley's wife is actually dead           | ab. Curley       |
| 7. tells the men Lennie went south                           | ac. Carlson      |
| 8. discovers Curley's dead wife in the barn                  |                  |
| 9. could have been in the movies                             |                  |
| 10. buries the puppy in the hay                              |                  |

Part II

Questions 11-20 are designed to assess your understanding of the plot in Chapter 5. Place the ten events in correct order as they happen in the chapter.

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 11. | a. Curley tells Carlson to get Crooks's shotgun and aim for Lennie's guts.                            |
| 12. | b. Lennie covers Curley's wife with hay, takes the dead puppy and leaves the barn.                    |
| 13. | c. Curley's wife tells Lennie to stroke her hair when she learns he likes soft things.                |
| 14. | d. Candy finds Curley's wife in the quiet barn and thinks she's asleep.                               |
| 15. | e. The men leave the ranch to search for Lennie.  |
| 16. | ab. After seeing Curley's wife, George asks Candy to tell the men while George goes to the bunkhouse. |
| 17. | ac. Curley's wife tells Lennie she doesn't like Curley.   |
| 18. | ad. Candy stays behind with Curley's wife's dead body.  |
| 19. | ae. Lennie shakes Curley's wife to make her stop screaming and ends up breaking her neck.             |
| 20. | bc. Lennie buries the dead puppy in the hay.  |

Part III

Questions 21-30 are designed to assess your ability to read, comprehend, and analyze passages found in Chapter 5. Please read the questions carefully and choose the best answer for each one.

In Chapter 5, Steinbeck sets up several contrasts in the setting to highlight the mood he is trying to create. For questions 21-23, read the passages and decide which statement best characterizes the contrast the author creates.

21. "From the outside came the clang of horseshoes on the playing peg and the shouts of men, playing, encouraging, jeering. But in the barn it was quiet and humming and lazy and warm."

The contrast in these lines can BEST be identified as

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| a. | the difference between playfulness and laziness  |
| b. | the difference between inside and outside  |
| c. | the difference between joy of belonging and the stifling tension of isolation          |
| d. | the difference between the carefree Sunday afternoon and the needs of the farm animals |

22. "Now the light was lifting as the sun went down, and the sun streaks climbed up the wall and fell over the feeding racks and over the heads of the horses."

The contrast in these lines can BEST be described as:

- a. the difference between light and darkness
- b. the difference between the feeding racks and the horses
- c. the difference between the action of the story so far and the darkness of events to follow
- d. the difference between the friendship of the characters and the death of Curley's wife

23. "As happens sometimes, a moment settled and hovered and remained for much more than a moment. And sound stopped and movement stopped for much, much more than a moment.

"Then gradually time awakened again and moved sluggishly on. The horses stamped on the other side of the feeding racks and the halter chains clinked. Outside, the men's voices became louder and clearer."

The contrast in these lines can BEST be characterized as:

- a. the difference between the moment of not knowing of Curley's wife's death and the men finding out
- b. the difference evident in the mystery between day and night
- c. the difference between carelessness and concern
- d. the difference between Candy's disappointment and Curley's anger

Read the following passages and choose the BEST answer for each question.

She struggled violently under his hands. Her feet battered on the hay and she writhed to be free; and from under Lennie's hand came a muffled screaming. Lennie began to cry with fright. "Oh! Please don't do none of that," he begged. "George gonna say I done a bad thing. He ain't gonna let me tend no rabbits." He moved his hand a little and her hoarse cry came out. Then Lennie grew angry. "Now don't," he said. "I don't want you to yell. You gonna get me in trouble jus' like George says you will. Now don't do that." And she continued to struggle, and her eyes were wild with terror. He shook her then, and he was angry with her. "Don't you go yellin'," he said, and he shook her; and her body flopped like a fish. And then she was still, for Lennie had broken her neck.

24. What literary device is evident in the line "her body flopped like a fish"?

- a. personification
- b. simile
- c. hyperbole
- d. symbolism

25. What happened to cause Lennie to violently attempt to silence the screams of Curley's wife?

- a. Curley's wife told Lennie that George was going to leave him and never come back.
- b. Curley's wife accused Lennie of breaking Curley's hand and said she would report him.
- c. Curley's wife invited Lennie to stroke the softness of her hair and he got too rough.
- d. Curley's wife shouted at Lennie for killing the little puppy.

26. Which of these events foreshadow the killing of Curley's wife?

- a. the boss's anger at George and Lennie when they first arrive at the ranch
- b. Slim giving Lennie a puppy
- c. Lennie spending one evening with Crooks
- d. Carlson killing Candy's dog

From around the end of the last stall old Candy's voice came. "Lennie," he called. "Oh, Lennie! You in here? I been figuring some more. Tell you what we can do, Lennie." Old Candy appeared around the end of the last stall. "Oh, Lennie!" he called again; and then he stopped, and his body stiffened. He rubbed his smooth wrist on his white stubble whiskers. "I didn't know you was here," he said the Curley's wife.

When she didn't answer, he stepped nearer. "You oughten t" to sleep here," he said disapprovingly; and then he was beside her and—"Oh....He looked about helplessly, and he rubbed his beard. And then he jumped up and went quickly out of the barn.

But the barn was alive now. The horses stamped and snorted, and they chewed the straw of their bedding and they clashed the chains of their halters. In a moment Candy came back, and George was with him.

27. What does Candy want to talk to Lennie about?

- a. He wants to warn Lennie not to hurt the puppy.
- b. He wants to warn Lennie to watch out for Curley's wife.
- c. He wants to tell Lennie another idea about the little place.
- d. He wants to help Lennie run away from the ranch.

28. Why does Candy quickly leave the barn?

- a. He thinks Curley's wife will ridicule him.
- b. He realizes Curley's wife is dead.
- c. He's hurt when Curley's wife doesn't speak to him.
- d. He is afraid he has interrupted a private moment and that Curley will be angry.

29. Which of these questions is answered **in the passage**?

- a. Where is Lennie at this point in the story?
- b. What are all the men doing at the ranch?
- c. Who is with Candy when he comes back into the barn?
- d. What is Curley's reaction when he sees his wife?

30. What poetic device is evident in the line: "The horses stamped and snorted, and they chewed the straw of their bedding and they clashed the chains of their halters."

- a. hyperbole
- b. metaphor
- c. alliteration
- d. rhyme

The New York Times once said of John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* that it is "a thriller, a gripping tale...that you will not set down until it is finished." Some people will agree with this reviewer's assessment, others find Steinbeck's novella difficult to read. Since this story was written in the late 1930s during the American Depression, many would argue that the setting, theme, conflicts, and characters have little or nothing to do with current societal concerns.

You have been asked to express your opinion about the relevance of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* to the **9th grade students of today**.

In a well written, **multi-paragraph letter**, please **persuade your English teacher, Mrs. Daly**, that *Of Mice and Men* should remain part of the **9th grade English curriculum**. Your letter should be written in a **formal letter format** and **must discuss** the following elements: **conflict, thematic idea, theme statement, characters, setting, and the importance of the author**. Your body paragraphs should include at least three (3) properly cited quotations from the book. Remember that a quotation is any words you include in your letter that come directly from the novel. You should support your statements using **specific** incidents and quotes from the novella to back up your claims.

To properly cite text please use the following format: To introduce a quote begin with your own words: i.e., When George and Lennie arrived on the ranch, they were provided with only the most meager living conditions. Steinbeck states, "the bunkhouse was a long, rectangular building" (17) suggesting that the place where George and Lennie lived featured little or no comfort or luxury.

Note that the words taken directly from the book are enclosed in quotation marks. Since the overall sentence is your own, do not put a period BEFORE closing the quotation marks. Following the quotation marks, put only the page number in parentheses. Then put a period at the end of your sentence. This citation method works when you are referring to only one source, in this case John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

**Sample Template**—You can use this template as an overall plan for your letter.

Date

Dear Mrs. Daly,

In *Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck explores the idea of (thematic idea). Specifically, (aspects of the story, i.e. conflict, characters, and setting) suggest that (thematic message) is a major theme of this novella. Because this thematic message is an important aspect of the human experience, I believe that *Of Mice and Men* remains relevant for today's ninth grade students. **(this statement is your thesis—you are going to use evidence about setting, character, conflict and John Steinbeck to prove this thesis.)**

The setting in *Of Mice and Men* is described most vividly.... The setting is important to the overall thematic message because....

The most interesting character in *Of Mice and Men* is....This character's most intriguing characteristic is....We see this characteristic most clearly when (character's name) says and/or does....These words/actions contribute to the author's thematic message by....

(Primary conflict) is a major conflict in *Of Mice and Men*. This conflict is evident when....The conflict helps support John Steinbeck's thematic message....

John Steinbeck remains significant writer because...

Overall, I believe that *Of Mice and Men* remains a significant reading experience for the high school students of today because...

(Very truly yours)/(Sincerely)/(Regards),

*Your Signature*

Print your Name

Please read and save the attached rubric to determine how this letter will be scored.

*OF MICE AND MEN* (1937)

Final Test

100 points

Part I—Plot Summary

Questions 1-15 are designed to assess your knowledge of the plot of *Of Mice and Men*. Carefully consider the events listed and then place each event in the chronological order in which it occurred in the story. Keep in mind that George is making a journey from marginalization to self-realization. Viewing the events as steps on a hero's journey might help you recall the storyline.

1. a. Slim befriends George and invites him to go get a drink.
2. b. Curley threatens Lennie in the bunkhouse because he thinks Lennie is laughing at him.
3. c. George and Lennie eat beans for supper and then stay the night by the river.
4. d. Curley's wife gets killed.
5. e. George and Lennie are forced to leave Weed after Lennie gets in trouble for touching a girl's dress.
6. f. Lennie spends the evening in Crooks' room in the stable while George goes to town.
7. ab. Lennie's baby puppy gets killed.
8. ac. Carlson shoots Candy's old dog.
9. ad. Curley's wife enters the barn to talk to Lennie and learns that Lennie has killed the puppy.
10. ae. George and Lennie arrive late at the ranch to begin new jobs.
11. bc. Candy shows George and Lennie their new bunks in the bunkhouse.
12. bd. The men have a horseshoe tournament on Sunday. George plays, Lennie does not.
13. be. Lennie breaks Curley's hand and the men agree to say that Curley caught his hand in a machine.
14. cd. George once again tells Lennie their dream and then shoots him in the head.
15. ce. Slim gives Lennie a baby puppy.

Part II—Passage Analysis A

Read the following passage closely. Questions 16-25 are designed to test your skill at analysis and inference. Choose the BEST answer for each question.

**George sighed. "You give me a good whore house every time," he said. "A guy can go in an' get drunk and get ever'thing outa his system all at once, an' no messes. And he knows how much it's gonna set him back. These here jail baits is just set on the trigger of the hoosegow.**

**Lennie followed his words admiringly, and moved his lips a little to keep up. George continued, "You remember Andy Cushman, Lennie? Went to grammar school?**

**"The one that his old lady use to make hot cakes for the kids?" Lennie asked.**

**"Yeah. That's the one. You can remember anything if there's anything to eat in it." George looked carefully at the solitaire hand. He put an ace up on his scoring rack and piled a two, three and four of diamonds on it. Andy's in San Quentin right now on account of a tart," said George.**

**Lennie drummed on the table with his fingers.**

**"George?"**

**"Huh?"**

**"George, how long's it gonna be till we get that little place an' live on the fatta the lan'—an' rabbits? (56)**

16. What is the most likely definition of the word *hoosegow*?
- a. a type of gun
  - b. a jail or prison
  - c. a gate or fence
  - d. an animal enclosure

17. Which of these questions is answered in the passage?
- Who is Andy Cushman?
  - Which character does George consider "jail bait"?
  - What recent event led up to George talking about avoiding "messes"?
  - Where are George and Lennie during this conversation?
18. Based upon your understanding of the story, which line in the passage might indicate that Lennie and George have known each other since childhood?
- "He knows how much it's gonna set him back."
  - "The one that his old lady use to make hot cakes for the kids?"
  - "You remember Andy Cushman, Lennie? Went to grammar school?"
  - "You can remember anything if there's anything to eat in it."
19. What literary device does Steinbeck use in the dialogue to make it more realistic?
- hyperbole
  - simile
  - alliteration
  - dialect
20. Which detail indicates that Lennie may not completely understand what George is talking about?
- Lennie asks what "jail bait" is.
  - Lennie moves his lips a little to keep up.
  - Lennie remembers who Andy Cushman is.
  - Lennie ignores George and puts an ace on the scoring rack.
21. Which of these questions is NOT answered in the passage?
- Where is Andy Cushman?
  - What card game is being played?
  - Why would George rather go to a whore house?
  - What had Lennie been doing with the new puppy?
22. Which word in the passage indicates how Lennie really feels about George?
- admiringly
  - drummed
  - carefully
  - followed
23. Which statement most closely defines a **main purpose** of this passage?
- This passage describes George's love of solitaire.
  - This passage infers the contrast between what George really wants and what Lennie wants.
  - This passage identifies the major character Andy Cushman.
  - This passage flashes back to a significant memory about hot cakes.
24. What does the idiom "live on the fatta the lan" mean within the context of the passage?
- It means that Lennie wants to get fat living on the ranch.
  - It means that George and Lennie want to live comfortably without having to work so hard.
  - It means that George and Lennie want to always have enough to eat.
  - It means that Lennie only remembers things when there is food associated with it.

25. In the sentence "'Andy's in San Quentin right now on account of a tart,' said George" which meaning of the word *tart* is mostly likely indicated?

- a. something that tastes sour
- b. a small fruit pie
- c. a promiscuous woman
- d. a type of sweet hard candy

Part III—The Hero's Journey—Questions 26-40 will assess your understanding of the steps on the hero's journey. Recall what each step on the hero's journey means and then consider each plot point again. Determine which step on the hero's journey is represented by each event. Label the events:

- a. The Call
- b. The Threshold
- c. The Challenges
- d. The Abyss
- e. The Transformation

The steps on the hero's journey may be used more than once.

- 26. Slim befriends George and invites him to go get a drink.
- 27. Curley threatens Lennie in the bunkhouse because he thinks Lennie is laughing at him.
- 28. George and Lennie eat beans for supper and then stay the night by the river.
- 29. Curley's wife gets killed.
- 30. George and Lennie are forced to leave Weed after Lennie gets in trouble for touching a girl's dress.
- 31. Lennie spends the evening in Crooks' room in the stable.
- 32. Lennie's baby puppy gets killed.
- 33. Carlson shoots Candy's old dog.
- 34. Curley's wife enters the barn to talk to Lennie.
- 35. George and Lennie arrive late at the ranch to begin new jobs.
- 36. Candy shows George and Lennie their new bunks in the bunkhouse.
- 37. The men have a horseshoe tournament on Sunday. George plays, Lennie does not.
- 38. Lennie breaks Curley's hand and the men agree to say that Curley caught his hand in a machine.
- 39. George once again tells Lennie their dream and then shoots him in the head.
- 40. Slim gives Lennie a baby puppy.

#### Part IV—Passage Analysis B

Read the following passage closely. Questions 41-50 are designed to test your skill at analysis and inference. Choose the BEST answer for each question.

**The old man came slowly into the room. He had his broom in his hand. And at his heels there walked a dragfooted sheep dog, gray of muzzle, and with pale, blind old eyes. The dog struggled lamely to the side of the room and lay down, grunting softly to himself and licking his grizzled, moth-eaten coat. The swamper watched him until he was settled. "I wasn't listening'. I was jus' standin' in the shade a minute scratchin' my dog. I jus' now finished swampin' out the wash house."**

**"You was pokin' your big ears into our business," George said. "I don't like nobody to get nosey."**

**The old man looked uneasily from George to Lennie, and then back. "I jus' come there, he said. "I didn't hear nothing you guys was sayin'. I ain't interested in nothin' you was sayin'. A guy on a ranch don't never listen nor he don't ast no questions."**

**"Damn right he don't," said George, slightly mollified, "not if he wants to stay workin' long." But he was reassured by the swamper's defense. "Come on in and set down a minute," he said. "That's a hell of an old dog." (24)**

41. After reading the passage, what is the **most important** assumption you can make about Candy?
- that Candy loves his old dog
  - that Candy's defense changed George's feelings about him
  - that Candy is a nosey old man
  - that Candy feels threatened by George's accusation
42. What does the word *mollified* most likely mean in the passage?
- softened
  - dulled
  - angered
  - embittered
43. Which one of these questions is answered in the passage?
- Which job does George perform on the ranch?
  - What is Candy's dog's name?
  - What does Candy do on the ranch?
  - What business does George think Candy overheard?
44. Which of these elements from the passage does Steinbeck use as a symbol of marginalization?
- the broom
  - Candy's dog
  - the wash house
  - the ranch
45. Which phrase best describes the flow of emotion in the passage?
- from friendly to relaxed
  - from tense to friendly
  - from scared to enthusiastic
  - from helpless to happy
46. Which element in the passage suggests that Steinbeck's style is realistic and informal?
- The passage is composed primarily of complicated sentences.
  - Steinbeck uses many multisyllabic words.
  - The characters speak in an authentic dialect.
  - The nouns in the passage refer primarily to ideas.
47. Just prior to the passage, George and Lennie are having a discussion. What is George concerned that Candy overheard?
- that George lied to the boss
  - that George and Lennie want to get a little place and raise rabbits
  - that Lennie got in trouble in Weed
  - that Carlson wants to shoot Candy's dog
48. What has the old man done previously that might make George think the old man is nosey?
- The old man made fun of Lennie.
  - The old man told the boss why George and Lennie were late to the ranch.
  - The old man told Curley that Curley's wife was flirting with Slim.
  - The old man gossiped about the boss and Crooks to George and Lennie.



49. Which of the following details about Candy's dog is NOT mentioned in the passage?
- the dog is a sheep dog
  - the dog is blind
  - the dog is old and lame
  - the dog is deaf
50. Which line from the passage supports the argument that the migrant ranch hands were a marginalized group?
- "The swamper watched him until he was settled."
  - "A guy on a ranch don't never listen nor he don't ast no questions."
  - "He had is broom in his hand."
  - "I don't like nobody to get nosey."

Part V—Biographical and Historical Background Knowledge—Questions 51-65 assess your knowledge of the biographical and historical background of the novel *Of Mice and Men*. Use the word bank below to complete each sentence. Each answer will be used only once.

- The Declaration of Independence guarantees all citizens of the United States "certain unalienable \_\_\_\_\_."
- The huge number of men who traveled up and down the West Coast harvesting crops were called \_\_\_\_\_.
- The idea that a better life is available for anyone who wants to work for it is called the \_\_\_\_\_.
- John Steinbeck was the recipient of the coveted \_\_\_\_\_ Prize for Literature in 1962.
- John Steinbeck was born in \_\_\_\_\_, California.
- John Steinbeck was born on February 2, \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_, a Welsh poet, wrote the poem "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night".
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the process of relegating a person or group to a lower social standing or outer limit of a group.
- Men, like Candy, who clean up around the ranch were called \_\_\_\_\_.
- In 1929, the stock market crash started the \_\_\_\_\_.
- The town of \_\_\_\_\_, where Lennie gets in trouble, is a real town in the Central Valley of California.
- John Steinbeck won the \_\_\_\_\_ Prize in 1939 for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.
- The novel's title is an allusion to a poem by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Of Mice and Men* was published in \_\_\_\_\_.
- The term \_\_\_\_\_ means the desire for self-fulfillment.

- |                       |                  |                    |                     |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| a. marginalization    | b. rights        | c. Nobel           | d. Great Depression |
| e. self-actualization | ab. Robert Burns | ac. Salinas        | ad. 1902            |
| ae. Dylan Thomas      | bc. Pulitzer     | bd. American Dream | be. swampers        |
| cd. 1937              | ce. Weed         | de. bindle-stiffs  |                     |

#### Part VI—Passage Analysis C

Read the following passage closely. Questions 66-75 are designed to test your skill at analysis and inference. Choose the BEST answer for each question.

**Candy rubbed his cheek angrily. "You \*\*\*damn right we're gonna do it. George says we are. We got the money right now."**

**"Yeah?" said Crooks. "An' where's George now? In town in a whore house. That's where your money's goin'. \*\*\*\*\*, I seen it happen too many times. I seen too many guys with land in their head. They never get none under their hand."**

**Candy cried, "Sure they all want it. Everybody want a little bit of land, not much. Jus' som'thin' that was his. Somethin' he could live on and there couldn't nobody throw him off of it. I never had none. I planted crops for damn near ever'body in this state, but they wasn't my crops, and when I harvested 'em, it wasn't none of my harvest. But we gonna do it now, and don't make no mistake about that. George ain't got the money in town. that money's in the bank. Me an' Lennie an' George. We**

**gonna have a room to ourself. We're gonna have a dog an' rabbits an' chickens. We're gonna have green corn an' maybe a cow or a goat." He stopped, overwhelmed with his picture.**

**Crooks asked, "You say you got the money?"**

**"Damn right. We got most of it. Just a little bit more to get. Have it all in one month. George got the land all picked out, too."**

**Crooks reached around and explored his spine with his hand. "I never seen a guy really do it," he said. "I seen guys nearly crazy with loneliness for land, but ever' time a whore house or a blackjack game took what it takes." He hesitated. "...If you...guys would want a hand to work for nothing—just his keep, why I'd come an' lend a hand. I ain't so crippled I can't work like a son-of-a-bitch if I want to."(75-76)**

66. What new detail do we learn about Candy from the passage?
- that he has planted and harvested crops all over the state
  - that he has the money for a little place saved in a box under his bunk
  - that he's scared George is going to squander the money in town
  - that he once owned a little place of his own
67. Which of the following quotes aligns most closely with the traditional ideals of the American Dream?
- "Just a little bit more to get. Have it all in one month."
  - "Everybody wants a little bit of land, not much. Jus' som'thin' that was his."
  - "I never seen a guy really do it."
  - "...If you...guys would want a hand to work for nothing—just his keep, why I'd come an' lend a hand."
68. Which statement best describes a main purpose of the passage?
- to plant doubt in Lennie and Candy about the feasibility of getting their own place
  - to reveal that George is spending all the money in town
  - to show that the dream is enticing to everyone by having Crooks eventually buy into it
  - to give the reader more of Candy's back story
69. Who comes into Crooks' room immediately following this passage?
- Curley
  - Curley's wife
  - Slim
  - George
70. According to the passage, what factor about himself causes Crooks to hesitate before expressing his desire to "lend a hand" on the little place?
- he's only a stable buck
  - he's crippled
  - he likes books
  - he's black
71. In the sentence "He stopped, overwhelmed with his picture." what does the word *picture* most likely connote?
- that Candy has seen the little place in a dream
  - that the men have an actual photograph of the little place
  - that the dream is becoming more and more tangible or real as they talk about it
  - that the little place is only a dream

72. How does Candy convince Crooks that the dream is a real possibility?
- Candy tells Crooks that they've got most of the money and George has picked out the land.
  - Candy tells Crooks that everyone gets a room to himself.
  - Candy tells Crooks that he, George, and Lennie are buying the place together.
  - Candy tells Crooks that they are going to have a dog, rabbits, and a cow or goat.
73. Why has Candy come into Crooks' room?
- Candy came to Crooks' room to brag to Crooks about getting the little place.
  - Candy came to Crooks' room looking for Slim.
  - Candy came to Crooks' room searching for Lennie.
  - Candy came to Crooks' room because he and Crooks' usually hung out.
74. Which of these questions is answered in the passage?
- How did Crooks injure his back?
  - How does Crooks' attitude change from the beginning to the end of the passage?
  - What does Lennie want to do once they have moved to the little place?
  - How have the men managed to collect most of the money needed to buy the little place?
75. Which line from the passage represents the strongest evidence that Steinbeck believes some people will never achieve the American Dream?
- "I've seen too many guys with land in their head. They never get none under their hand."
  - "Just somethin' that was his."
  - "That's where your money is goin'".
  - "George ain't got the money in town."

#### Part VII—Character Matching

Questions 76-85 are designed to assess your knowledge of the characters in *Of Mice and Men*. Read each statement and match the descriptors to the correct character. Characters may be used more than once.

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 76. offers to take George for a drink after Lennie's death                                  |            |
| 77. owned a Luger and shot Candy's dog  | a. Lennie  |
| 78. lived in the stable and could leave his things about                                    | b. George  |
| 79. sees an hallucination of a giant rabbit   | c. Crooks  |
| 80. wears a glove full of Vaseline  | d. Slim    |
| 81. tells Curley he should stay with his wife's body after they find her dead in the stable | e. Carlson |
| 82. a real skinner who looks out for his team   | ab. Curley |
| 83. the last person to recite the dream of the little place                                 |            |
| 84. wants to shoot Lennie in the guts   |            |
| 85. tries to upset Lennie by telling him George got hurt in town                            |            |

#### Part VIII—Passage Analysis D

Read the following passage closely. Questions 86-95 are designed to test your skill at analysis and inference. Choose the BEST answer for each question.

**The green pool of the Salinas River was still in the late afternoon. Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Gabilan mountains, and the hilltops were rosy in the sun. But by the pool among the mottled sycamores, a pleasant shade had fallen.**

**A water snake glided smoothly up the pool, twisting its periscope head from side to side; and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows. A silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by the head, and the beak swallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically.**

**A far rush of wind sounded and a gust drove through the tops of the trees like a wave. The sycamore leaves turned up their silver sides, the brown, dry leaves on the ground scudded a few feet. And row on row of tiny wind waves flowed up the pool's green surface.**

**As quickly as it had come, the wind died, and the clearing was quiet again. The heron stood in the shallows, motionless and waiting. Another little water snake swam up the pool, turning its periscope head from side to side.**

**Suddenly... (100).**

86. What happens immediately after the word "suddenly"?
- Curley finds his dead wife.
  - George finds Lennie in the clearing.
  - Lennie comes quietly into the clearing after leaving the ranch.
  - George and Lennie come to the clearing on their way to the ranch.
87. Read the sentence "Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Gabilan mountains." What literary device is present?
- simile
  - onomatopoeia
  - personification
  - alliteration
88. What is the best definition for the word *mottled* as it appears in the passage?
- stunted
  - marked by a variegated pattern
  - diseased
  - spotched with brilliant color
89. What event in the passage best alludes to Lennie's fate at the end of the novel?
- "a pleasant had fallen"
  - "the beak swallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically"
  - "the heron stands in the shallows, motionless and waiting"
  - "the sun had left the valley"
90. What is the mood of the passage?
- excited
  - calm
  - lazy
  - gloomy
91. How would the material in the passage most likely be described in terms of its contribution to the narrative?
- The passage contains mostly exposition.
  - The passage contains the climax.
  - The passage contains mostly description.
  - The passage contains mostly dialogue.
92. Which of the following questions is NOT answered by information in the passage?
- Where is this place located geographically?
  - What species of trees and wildlife might one find at this locale?
  - What state in the United States is this place located?
  - What time of day is the passage taking place?
93. The description of the wind that reads: "A far rush of wind sounded and a gust drove through the tops of the trees like a wave" contains an example of what literary device?

- a. simile
- b. metaphor
- c. alliteration
- d. personification

94. Which detail in the passage most likely suggests that this might be the scene of "The Abyss" on the hero's journey?

- a. "among the mottled sycamores, a pleasant shade had fallen"
- b. "a water snake glided smoothly up the pool"
- c. "a far rush of wind sounded and a gust drove through the tops of the trees"
- d. "the heron stood in the shallows, motionless and waiting"

95. This setting appears at the very beginning of the novel. Why has the narrator returned to the clearing by the pool on the banks of the Salinas River at the end of the story?

- a. This is where George told Lennie to go if he got in trouble.
- b. This is where George and Lennie hide after the incident in Weed.
- c. This is where Carlson shot Candy's dog.
- d. This is where Curley knew Lennie would hide.

#### Part IX—Literary Devices

Questions 96-100 assess your ability to identify literary devices in the text. Read each brief quotation and choose the best description for the literary device present in each sentence.

- a. metaphor
- b. simile
- c. personification
- d. sensory imagery

96. "Slowly, like a terrier who doesn't want to bring a ball to its master, Lennie approached, drew back, approached again" (9).

97. "On his head was a soiled brown Stetson hat, and he wore high-heeled boots and spurs to prove he was not a laboring man" (20).

98. "Suddenly a triangle began to ring outside, slowly at first, and then faster and faster until the beat of it disappeared into one ringing sound" (37).

99. "Another little water snake swam up the pool, turning its periscope head from side to side" (100).

100. "...and from out of Lennie's head there came a gigantic rabbit. It sat on its haunches in front of him and it wagged its ears and crinkled its nose at him. And it spoke in Lennie's voice too" (102).

ENGLISH 9 ESSENTIALS UNIT TEMPLATE

Literature

Unit #2 Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* (1937) by John Steinbeck

GRASPS TASK DESIGN PROMPT

(for designing authentic assessment products/performances)

Assessment: Final Performance Task—Mini Research Paper on a Marginalized Group  
Goal

- Your task is to prepare a position paper for the City Council in your town regarding the marginalization of certain groups and what further political or social changes need to be enacted to guarantee that all groups enjoy equitable treatment in your area.
- Your goal is to use the research you obtain to produce a high quality informative and persuasive proposal appropriate for presentation to the City Council.
- The problem or challenge is identifying an appropriate group, gathering and presenting relevant information, synthesizing the information to make a reasonable proposal for further change.
- The obstacles to overcome are learning how to gather, organize, and synthesize information, avoid plagiarism, use information to present an informed proposal, and present information in an informative and persuasive way utilizing a specific format

Role

- You are a member of the City Council Advisory Board for the Equitable Treatment of Citizens
- You have been asked to research the marginalization of a particular group and prepare a position statement for the City Council to consider in determining further changes the city needs to make toward equality for all citizens.
- Your job is identify a traditionally marginalized group, research the historical treatment of that group, examine the inroads toward equality for that group that have already been enacted, discuss the current status of that group, propose one change you determine still needs to be made to further guarantee equitable treatment for that group.

Audience

- Your clients are the City Council Advisory Board for the Equitable Treatment of Citizens.
- The target audience is the City Council in your town.
- You need to convince the City Council that the group you have identified deserves fair treatment and that the proposed change you suggest deserves the council's consideration.

Situation

- The context you find yourself in as a member of the Advisory Board is to propose a reasonable and needed change, that you determine after research, will improve the lives of a marginalized/disenfranchised group in your town.
- The challenge involves dealing with a disenfranchised group you may not be a member of and representing their needs informatively, fairly, and persuasively to the City Council.

Product, Performance, Purpose

- You will create a researched position paper.
- In order to inform the City Council about the historic and current marginalization of a group in your town and persuade the Council that further change is needed to ensure equitable treatment for all citizens.
- You need to develop a researched position paper in the specific format demanded by the City Council
- so that your suggested change will be legitimately considered.

Standards and Criteria for Success

- Your performance needs to be thoroughly researched, avoid plagiarism, present the issues informatively, fairly, and persuasively.
- Your work will be judged by the City Council Advisory Board and the City Council.
- Your product/performance must meet the following challenges: 1) it must be accurately researched, 2) it must fairly present the current situation of the marginalized group, 3) it must avoid plagiarism, 4) it must propose a reasonable change to further ensure equality for the marginalized group, 5) it must strictly follow the defined format for position papers eligible for consideration by the City Council.

ENGLISH 9 ESSENTIALS:

LITERATURE STRAND

UNIT 2

THE JOURNEY FROM MARGINALIZATION

TO SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Anchor Text: *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

APPENDICES

"The journal used for self-education should model itself after [the]...commonplace book [of old]. It is neither an unadorned collection of facts, nor an entirely inward account of what's going on in your heart and soul. Rather the journal is the place where the reader takes external information and records it (through the use of quotes, as in the commonplace book); appropriates it through a summary, written in the reader's own words; and then evaluates it through reflection and personal thought. As you read, you should follow this three-part process: jot down specific phrases, sentences, and paragraphs as you come across them; when you've finished your reading, go back and write a brief summary about what you've learned; and then write your own reactions, questions, and thoughts"

(Bauer, S. W. (2003). *The well-educated mind: A guide to the classical education you never had*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, p. 36).

**Assignment:** As part of your study of the literature for this unit you will keep a learning journal to record your notes, ideas, and reflections from the texts we read both in and out of class. You are responsible to keep your journal organized and up-to-date. As you collect materials in your journal it will become both a record of your learning and a resource for writing and test taking. It is important that you take the learning journal assignment seriously. You should plan to make entries in your learning journal every time you read. Reading Homework=45 minutes per night

**Materials Needed:**

- 1 1-inch three-ring binder (any color) dedicated to English 9 Essentials that can be stored in the classroom
- 7 8-1/2"x11" tabbed dividers
- 100 sheets college ruled loose-leaf paper
- 1 clear, three-hole pencil pouch with zipper
- 1 standard paper punch
- 5-10 plastic sheet protectors
- 2 #2 pencils with erasers (mechanical okay)
- 1 blue or black ink pen
- 1 colored ink pen
- 2 highlighters (any color)
- 1 tablet sticky notes (your choice)

**Setting up Your Learning Journal Notebook:** (adapted from Bauer, S. W. & Wise, J. (2004). *The well-trained mind: A guide to classical education at home*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, pp. 474, 486-489).

1. Use a permanent marker (e.g. Sharpie) to label the notebook with your full name, class, and class period both on the front cover and on the spine.
2. Put the pencils, pens, highlighters, paper punch, and sticky notes in the clear pencil pouch and place the pencil pouch around the rings in the notebook.
3. Label the dividers with the following titles (one title per divider): *Context, Book Notes, Compositions, Words, Grammar, Principles of Reading, and Principles of Writing*. The dividers labeled *Context, Book Notes and Reflections, Compositions, and Words* will be used extensively with the Literature Strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum.
4. Install the dividers in the notebook, placing several sheets of loose-leaf paper behind each divider. Put the remaining extra paper in the back of the notebook.
5. Place sheet protectors in the very back of the notebook. These will be used to preserve important classroom information such as the class syllabus, general guidelines, and rubrics you will use throughout the school year.
6. You are responsible for having this notebook in class with you each class period. You are also responsible for keeping the notebook organized and up-to-date. Maintaining well-organized and current notebook in which you record class notes and reader reflections will help you be a successful English 9 Essential student and will make the work we do in class more meaningful and memorable for you.

**Ideas for Using Your Learning Journal to Respond to Reading Homework:** (adapted from Burke, J. (2000). *Reading reminders: Tools, tips, and techniques*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.)

- Create and use *The Elements of Literature Graphic Organizer* to track how these elements are developed as you read
- Create and use *Reading Sheets* to track specific responses to each reading assignment
- Answer study guide questions
- You may be assigned to write reflections using prompts such as:
  - I wonder...
  - I like the idea of...
  - I was surprised...
  - Why did...
  - I noticed...
  - I predict that...



## ENGLISH 9 ESSENTIALS DISCUSSION PROTOCOL IDEAS

### STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT ENVISIONMENT\* BUILDING (LANGER, 2001)

\*Literary Envisionments—thoughts about what is being read or discussed for the moment and thoughts about the whole (e.g. themes, meanings, eventualities) that constantly inform a reader's sense of what a text is about.

#### Small Group Discussions

1. Have students focus their concerns as well as their understandings about the literature selection by bringing questions and journal reflections for discussion to group meetings.
2. Have students work together to share envisionments and prepare for whole class discussion.
3. Provide teacher-designed guides to focus small group discussions.
4. Gradually removed scaffolding (e.g. teacher-designed guides) as students assume more responsibility for moving discussions forward.
5. Encourage students to bring questions and concerns from small group discussions to large group discussions.
6. Teacher should move from group to group, providing assistance and guidance, nudging students to think more deeply or broadly when appropriate. Help them to explore the horizons of possibility.

#### Full Class Discussions

1. Make understanding the literary work the heart of the discussion.
2. Teacher should come to class prepared with possible questions to discuss but make students' questions, concerns, and growing ideas the focus of the discussion.
3. Expect students to come to class prepared to discuss their ideas, questions, and concerns.
4. Require students to support their responses using text, experiences, research, etc.

#### Writing Activities That Support Discussion

1. Ask students to write before sharing their thinking aloud.
2. Ask students to write during the discussion to explore, rethink, and expand their envisionments.
3. Ask students to write after a discussion to reflect on ideas and to reconsider possibilities for changed or new understandings.
4. Encourage students to use talk as a way to try out ideas and sharpen thoughts for writing.

### QUESTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS MOVE THROUGH ENVISIONMENTS

1. What do you think this story will be about? (before reading)
2. What questions do you have?
3. What do you wonder about?
4. What would you like to discuss?
5. What were you thinking as you were reading?
6. How did your understanding of the characters/plot change during or after reading/discussion?
7. What did this remind you of in your own life?
8. What do you have to say about the author's style?
9. What would you ask the author if you had a chance?
10. How might others interpret this piece of writing?
11. What other pieces of literature does this remind you of?
12. Can you see this piece of writing from a different perspective?

#### QUESTIONS THAT INVITE INITIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Jot down what you were thinking as you finished reading (the passage, section, page, assignment),
2. List the questions we need to talk about.
3. Write about what bothered (concerned, interested, delighted) you at the end of the story and/or tell your partner about the parts of the story that stand out for you.
4. Draw a picture of what you see.
5. Circle words or phrases that seem important or puzzling.

#### STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT STRUGGLING READERS

1. Involve all readers in all aspects of the discussion.
2. Help students focus on ideas by providing guided questions that deepen the discussion such as:  
What might you do in a similar situation?  
Why do you think the character did it this way?  
What is the character feeling?  
How does the setting help you understand the character's feelings?  
If you were telling this story, how might you end it? Why?  
How would the story be different if it happened in another time period?
3. Provide direct instructional scaffolding with guided activities that help students develop envisionments.
  - Paired readings
  - Note taking to capture ideas
  - Journal writing
  - Quickwrites at crucial points
  - Provide alternative ways to access the text
  - Ask questions that help students make connections to the text
  - Encourage students to listen to and respond to the ideas of others
  - Provide opportunities for students to engage in related activities in multiple formats
  - Provide individual copies of guiding questions (e.g. bookmarks, study guides)

(adapted from Langer, J. A., & Close, E. (2001). *Improving literary understanding through classroom discussion*. Retrieved April 24, 2007 from <http://cela.albany.edu>)

#### LITERATURE CIRCLES: OVERVIEW OF ROLES

- Discussion Director—identify important aspects of the text and develop questions for the group to discuss
- Illuminator—Find illuminating, memorable, puzzling, or funny passages your group would like to/should hear read aloud.
- Illustrator—Draw what you read. Develop a picture, map, storyboard, or important scene for the group
- Connector—Connect what you are reading to the world outside of class. Connect the story to events in the world, in your school, or in your own life.
- Word Watcher—While reading you watch for words worth knowing and clarify meanings and connotations.
- Summarizer—Prepare a brief summary of the day's reading. Identify the important events in the section and why these events are important.

(adapted from Burke, J. (2007). *Tools and texts for 50 essential lessons*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, p. 42).

# UNDERSTANDING THE ELEMENTS OF A NOVEL FICTION ORGANIZER

Using the definitions on the other side of this chart, complete each section for the novel you are reading.

Look for ways that the elements of the novel contribute to the theme of the story.

(adapted from Burke, J., Klemp, R. & Schwartz, W. (2002). Reader's handbook: A student guide for reading and learning. Wilmington, MA: Great Source, p. 293.)

<div>POINT OF VIEW</div>	<div>CHARACTERS</div>	<div>SETTING</div>
<div>PLOT</div>	<div>TITLE</div>	<div>STYLE</div>
<div>THEME</div>		

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ AUTHOR \_\_\_\_\_  
Reading Assignment# \_\_\_\_\_ Pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

## READING SHEET

READING PURPOSE:

CHARACTER LIST=Identify main characters

STORY SUMMARY=Write a summary of the major events

**SIGNIFICANT QUOTES**=Identify **three (3)** significant passages for close reading. **Analyze each quote on a separate sheet by answering the close reading questions.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### VOCABULARY and REFERENCES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

### CLOSE READING QUESTIONS--Answer for each SQ

1. **Diction**--Determine the meanings of unfamiliar words and references. List these in the Vocabulary box.
2. **Irony**--Does irony operate in the passage, if so in what way?
3. **Tone**--What is the speaker's attitude toward the experience?
4. **Imagery**--What sort of imagery is invoked? How does this imagery contribute to the author's purposes?
5. **Literary Devices**--Note particularly interesting metaphors, similes, images, symbols especially ones that recur in the passage or seem important throughout the text. How does the author's use of these devices contribute to his purposes?
6. **Theme**--Relate all of these details to possible themes or lessons the author appears to be exploring or relating.

### PERSONAL REFLECTION

NAME:  
ASSIGNMENT:

DATE:

TOTAL POINTS: /16

READING PURPOSE

(1) States a specific purpose for reading the assignment that refers to the reading itself  
Determine a particular aspect of the text you want to focus your reading on. You may want to look at the questions on the Lit Notes sheet and decide whether you are reading for plot, for meaning, and/or for ideas (rhetoric).

CHARACTER LIST

(1) Identifies the major characters and any minor characters involved in the assigned reading  
(1) Includes an identifying statement about each character delineating relationship or role in story

STORY SUMMARY

(1) Lists the major events of each chapter or section in the assigned reading

SIGNIFICANT QUOTES:

(1) Briefly and properly (MLA) cites three SIGNIFICANT quotes from the assigned reading including page numbers

CLOSE READING:

(9) Carefully analyzes each of the three SIGNIFICANT quotes according to the Close Reading questions.  
Analyze each quote using the close reading questions listed on the sheet. Your analysis should include your thoughts on word choice, your commentary on tone (the author's attitude about the subject of the text), identification of any imagery and literary devices with analysis on how these contribute to the significance of the quote, and a statement about how the quote relates to the overall theme of the text and/or your reading purpose.

VOCAB & REF

(1) Lists any unfamiliar words or references and the appropriate definition or identifier

PERSONAL REFLECTION

(1) One statement, question, reflection, prediction that links the SIGNIFICANT QUOTES to the reading purpose

READING SHEET SCORING RUBRIC

NAME:  
ASSIGNMENT:

DATE:

TOTAL POINTS: /16

READING PURPOSE

(1) States a specific purpose for reading the assignment that refers to the reading itself  
Determine a particular aspect of the text you want to focus your reading on. You may want to look at the questions on the Lit Notes sheet and decide whether you are reading for plot, for meaning, and/or for ideas (rhetoric).

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Analyze each quote using the close reading questions listed on the sheet. Your analysis should include your thoughts on word choice, your commentary on tone (the author's attitude about the subject of the text), identification of any imagery and literary devices with analysis on how these contribute to the significance of the quote, and a statement about how the quote relates to the overall theme of the text and/or your reading purpose.

VOCAB & REF

(1) Lists any unfamiliar words or references and the appropriate definition or identifier

PERSONAL REFLECTION

(1) One statement, question, reflection, prediction that links the SIGNIFICANT QUOTES to the reading purpose

## DAILY CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING IDEAS

(adapted from Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, pp. 248-249.)

1. **Index Card Summaries/Questions**  
Periodically, distribute index cards and ask students to write on both sides, with these instructions:  
(Side 1) Based upon our study of (unit topic), list a big idea that you understand and word it in the form of a summary statement.  
(Side 2) Identify something about (unit topic) that you do not yet fully understand and word it as a statement or questions.
2. **Hand Signals**  
Ask students to display designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific topic, concept, principle, or process:
3. **One-Minute Essay**  
At the conclusion of a lesson or reading, ask students to write a brief (one-minute) essay summarizing their understanding of key ideas.
4. **Question Box or Board**  
Establish a location where students can place or post questions and concerns they do not understand.
5. **Analogy Prompt**  
Periodically, present students with an analogy prompt:  
(Designated concept, principle, process) is like \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
6. **Visual Representation**  
Ask students to create a visual representation of the concept, principle, process
7. **Oral Questioning**  
Ask questions such as:  
How is \_\_\_\_\_ different than/same as \_\_\_\_\_.  
What ideas/details can you add to \_\_\_\_\_.  
What might happen if \_\_\_\_\_.  
What evidence supports \_\_\_\_\_.  
Give an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. **Follow-Up Probes**
  - Why
  - How do you know?
  - Explain.
  - Do you agree?
  - What do you mean by...
  - Could you give an example of...
9. **Misconception Check**  
Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a designated topic, concept, principle, or process. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and have them explain their responses.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Class \_\_\_\_\_  
Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

## Holistic Writing Rubric for Short-Constructed Response

*Adapted from the Colorado Department of Education*

SCORE LEVEL	CONTENT	ORGANIZATION	SENTENCE FLUENCY	CONVENTIONS	STYLE
8-9	*Defines and develops topic thoroughly *Uses specific details *Delineates main idea from details with clear distinction	8Uses logical and organized approach *Connects ideas to purpose	*Varies sentence structure	*Is readable, neat, and nearly error free	*Uses accurate, specific, and appropriate words *May use figurative language, imagery, and striking word choice
6-7	*Defines topic but does not thoroughly develop it *Uses limited, overly general, or less important details *Provides observations without details or doesn't delineate main idea from details	*Falters in logic or organization *Ties ideas to the topic implicitly rather than explicitly	*Uses simple but accurate sentences	*Is mostly readable and neat with some errors in language usage, spelling, and mechanics	*Contains mostly accurate and specific words *Is age-appropriate but lacks precision
4-5	*Does not clearly address the topic; no central idea emerges *Uses minimal or irrelevant supporting details *Fails to distinguish between main idea and details	*Does not organize ideas logically (perhaps list-like) *Does not tie ideas to purpose	*Uses choppy and repetitive sentences	*Is readable but somewhat sloppy *Contains multiple errors that impede communication of ideas	*Contains words that are not always accurate, specific, or appropriate *Uses repetitive word choice
2-3	*Does not define topic *Does not use supporting details	*No clear organizational pattern *Presents ideas in a fragmented manner *Ideas are not connected to purpose	*Uses simple, repetitive structures *Contains multiple sentence fragments	*Has some unreadable portions *Has errors that severely impede communication of ideas	*Uses inappropriate word choice *Contains many repetitions
0-1	*The writing is off topic *Fails to meet the parameters of the prompt	*The writing is unreadable	*The piece has not identifiable sentence structure	*Mechanics, spelling errors render the piece unintelligible	*Inappropriate word choice impedes meaning

Score \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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## Grandview Interdisciplinary Writing Rubric

	9-8 (Advanced)	7-6 (Adv-Proficient)	5 (Proficient)	4-3 (Partially Proficient)	2-1 Unsatisfactory
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The stated purpose asserts a specific argument or point beyond the obvious.</li> <li>*The writing addresses the stated purpose with clarity and focus.</li> <li>*The writing is a fully developed response to the stated purpose.</li> <li>*The writing addresses all parts of the prompt.</li> <li>*Critical thinking is evident, through data, analysis, discussion, and elaboration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The stated purpose asserts a specific argument or point beyond the obvious.</li> <li>*The writing addresses the stated purpose with clarity and focus.</li> <li>*The writing may lack a fully developed response.</li> <li>*The writing addresses all parts of the prompt.</li> <li>*Some critical thinking is evident through data, analysis, discussion, and elaboration, although it lacks the thorough development of an upper range paper.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The stated purpose states the obvious point.</li> <li>*The writing addresses the stated purpose, in part, with clarity and focus.</li> <li>*The response to the stated problem may be uneven or lack full development.</li> <li>*The writing does not address all parts of the prompt.</li> <li>*Critical thinking is lacking as shown through insufficient data, analysis, discussion, and elaboration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The stated purpose states the obvious point.</li> <li>*The writing addresses the stated purpose without clarity and focus.</li> <li>*The response to the stated problem is uneven or lacks full development.</li> <li>*The writing does not address all parts of the prompt.</li> <li>*Critical thinking is lacking as shown through insufficient data, analysis, discussion, and elaboration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*There is not stated purpose present.</li> <li>*The topic has not been developed.</li> <li>*The writing relies on paraphrase or summary.</li> <li>*The concept has been misinterpreted.</li> <li>*The writing is too short to address the prompt effectively.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The organization is clear and effective.</li> <li>*The sequence is logical, cohesive, and has no digressions.</li> <li>The analysis is specific rather than general.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The organization is clear but may lack cohesion.</li> <li>*The organization may have slight digression.</li> <li>*The analysis is more general than specific.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The organization is clear.</li> <li>*The organization may have slight digression.</li> <li>*The analysis is general.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The organization is clear.</li> <li>*The organization may have slight digression.</li> <li>*The analysis is general.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*There is no identifiable organization.</li> <li>*The writing wanders excessively.</li> </ul>
<b>Word Choice/Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Word choice and/or vocabulary are appropriate and demonstrate signs of sophistication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Word choice and/or vocabulary are appropriate and avoid overly informal language below grade level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Word choice and/or vocabulary are appropriate but may contain some informal language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Word choice and/or vocabulary may convey meaning inappropriate for the purpose of the writing piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Word choice and/or vocabulary are confusing, distracting, or weak.</li> </ul>
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Sentence structures are varied and demonstrate sophistication appropriate to grade level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Sentence structures are varied and may demonstrate sophistication appropriate to grade level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Sentence structures may be simplistic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Sentence structures may be simplistic, awkward, or incomplete.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Sentence structures may be simplistic, awkward, or incomplete.</li> </ul>
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The writer uses correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.</li> <li>*There may be occasional errors but they are few.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The writer uses correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.</li> <li>*There may be occasional errors, but they are few.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The writer generally uses correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.</li> <li>*There may be occasional errors, but they are not distracting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The writer has errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar that are distracting to the writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The writer has errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar that are distracting to the writing.</li> </ul>



## Essay and SCR Grading Scales

Score	Proficiency	Percentage/ Grade	100 pt	75 pt	50pt	30pt	25pt	20pt
9	High Advanced	100/A+	100	75	50	30	25	20
8	Low Advanced	95/A	95	71	47	28	24	19
7	High High Proficient	90/A-	90	67	45	27	23	18
6	Low High Proficient	85/B	85	63	43	26	21	17
5	<b>PROFICIENT</b>	80/B-	80	60	40	24	20	16
4	High Partially Proficient	75/C	75	56	38	23	19	15
3	Low Partially Proficient	70/C-	70	53	35	21	18	14
2	High Unsatisfactory	65/D	65	49	33	20	16	13
1	Low Unsatisfactory	60/D-	60	45	30	18	15	12

## HOW TO READ A NOVEL

(adapted from Bauer, S. W. (2003). *The well-educated mind: A guide to the classical education you never had*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, pp. 68-84)

"Like any other skill, thinking critically about a novel becomes simpler with practice."

### The First Level of Inquiry: Grammar-Stage Reading

- The first time you read a novel, you should look for answers to three very simple questions:
  - Who are these people?
  - What happens to them?
  - How are they different afterward?
- Look at the title, cover, and table of contents. Read the biographical sketch of the author.
- Keep a list of characters as you read. Note their names, positions, relationships. Create a genealogical tale if the novel deals with a family.
- Briefly note the main event of each chapter. These sentences help you grasp the book's overall flow – not to mention making it easier to pick your reading back up after an interruption.
- Make initial notes on passages that seem to be interesting and mark pages where something significant seems to be happening. These should NOT be long reflections on the book's content.
- When you finish reading the book, reread your chapter summaries. Do they provide you with a clear, coherent outline of what happened in the book?
- Ask yourself:
  - Who is the central character in this book?
  - What is the book's most important event?
  - Is there some point in the story where the characters change?
  - Does something happen that makes everyone behave differently?
  - Which character is most affected by the change?
- Give the book a title that mentions the main character and a subtitle that describes how that character was affected by the book's main event.

### The Second Level of Inquiry: Logic-Stage Reading

- In your journal, write down answers to the following questions. Not all of these questions will apply to every novel and remember, there are not, necessarily, right answers to these questions.
- Whenever you write down an answer in your journal, quote directly from the novel in order to support your answer. This will keep you focused on the book. Using direct quotes prevents you from making general – and thus meaningless – assertions.
- Is this novel and "fable" or a "chronicle"?
  - Is this narrative taking place in a world governed by the same rules that govern my existence? Or are there fantastic events in the book that don't square with reality as I know it?
  - If the novel is set in our world – a chronicle – how does the writer show us reality? Does he/she try to convince us that his/her fictional world is real through the careful presentation of physical detail – the meals people eat, the cut and color of their clothes, the landscape that surrounds them? Or does he/she focus instead on the psychological detail: the processes of the mind, the rise and fall of emotions, the slow discovery of motivations?

- If the writer presents a fantastic world, what is his/her intent? Is he/she writing allegorically? (In an allegory, the writer establishes a one-to-one correspondence between some part of the story – a character, an event, a place – and some other, literal reality. In the absence of allegory, is the writer of fables speculating?)
  - Is the novel primarily realistic, but with a few fantastic elements? Is the writer illustrating a real phenomenon that is too powerful to be described in realistic terms? Can you identify this phenomenon?
- What does the central character want?
  - Look for the deeper, more essential need or want that lies beneath the protagonist's surface desire.
- What is standing in his/her way?
  - Is a person keeping the protagonist from achieving his/her deepest wants? If so, is this person a villain in the classic sense? Or is the villain simply another character in the novel with a deep want of his own that happens to be at cross-purposes with the protagonist's needs?
  - Remember, the block in the protagonist's way doesn't need to be a person. A collection of circumstances, a malign force that constantly pushes him/her in the wrong direction, an impersonal set of events that have united to complicate her life – these can keep a character from getting what she wants.
- And what strategy does he/she pursue in order to overcome this block?
  - Does he/she bulldoze his/her way through the opposition, using strength or wealth to overcome his/her difficulties? Does he/she manipulate, scheme, or plan? Does he/she exercise intelligence? Grit his teeth and keep on going? Buckle under pressure, wilt and die? **This strategy produces the plot of the novel.**
- Who is telling the story? What point of view does the author adopt?
  - **First-person** – gives immediate, but limited perspective. Is the first-person narrator reliable?
  - **Second-person** – uncommon, generally used only in experimental works
  - **Third-person limited** (or subjective) tells the story from the point of view of one particular character, delving into that character's mind, but using third-person pronouns. This perspective allows the writer to gain some distance from the story, but still limits the writer to those events that the viewpoint character can see. A variation is the third-person multiple, which allows the writer to use the viewpoints of several different characters, jumping from the inside of one character to the inside of another to give multiple perspectives.
  - **Third-person objective** – tells the story from a removed, distant perspective. The narrator sees everything that is happening, as though he were hovering in space above the scene, but can't look into the heart or mind of any character. The author who employs this point of view gains a sort of scientific, dispassionate perspective, but loses the ability to tell us what the characters are thinking or feeling. This is the film-maker's perspective.
  - **Omniscient point of view** – most popular until the nineteenth century – puts the writer in the place of God. He can see and explain everything. This point of view allows the author to moralize, to record his own personal ideas about the events of the book, and to address the reader directly.
  - What does the author gain or lose through the point of view he/she uses?
  - Think about telling the story using another point of view. How does this change the story?
- Where is the story set?
  - Is this place natural? Or human constructed?

- If natural, do the woods and fields and sky reflect the emotions and problems of the characters? Or is nature unresponsive to the human plight? The answer to this question will offer insight on how the author views the human relationship to the physical world?
  - If man-made, do the human constructions reflect the inner life of the characters?
  - After reviewing several passages of description, ask yourself: Who is present in the scene? What are his/her surroundings like? How does he/she sense them? What does this say about his/her state of mind?
- What style does the writer employ?
  - What vocabulary does the author use?
  - What is the general length of the sentences? Are they short and terse? Or complex containing many clauses and subordinate ideas?
  - To detect if an author is using formal or informal prose use the following simple mechanical devices:
    - Choose one long paragraph and count the words in each sentence. What's the shortest sentence? The longest? What's the average number of words in a sentence?
    - In the same paragraph, count the number of nouns and verbs which have three or more syllables.
    - How many nouns in the paragraph refer to concrete things and how many refer to abstract ideas?
    - How many verbs describe physical activity and how many describe mental activity?
  - Consider the author's tone and mood.
    - **Mood** – the emotional-intellectual attitude of the author toward his subject
    - **Tone** – author's attitude toward the subject and toward the audience implied in a literary work. Also, the musical quality of the language.
  - Look at characters' dialogue. Do all the characters talk alike? Or do their patterns of speech reflect the fact that they have different backgrounds, different jobs, different lives? How does the author employ dialect?
- What images and metaphors are used?
  - Is any particular image repeated again and again?
  - Does a certain color occur more than once?
  - Look for patterns of repeated images. Ask, is this a metaphor, and if so, what does this represent?
    - **Allegory** – a set of related metaphors in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. An allegory involves a one-to-one correspondence between the different story elements and the realities for which they stand.
    - **Metaphor** – A metaphor is a physical object that acts or stands for something else – an attitude, a situation, a truth. An analogy identifies one object with another and ascribes to the first object one or more of the qualities of the second.
    - **Motif** – A simple element that serves as a basis for expanded narrative; or, less strictly, a conventional situation, device, interest or incident. In literature, recurrent images, words, objects, phrases, or actions that tend to unify the work are called motives.
    - **Pattern** – the recurrence of elements suggesting a meaning beyond the actual element itself.

- **Symbol**—A symbol is something that stands for itself and also stands for something else. A symbol is an image that evokes an objective, concrete reality and prompts that reality to suggest another level of meaning.
- What sort of beginning and ending does the novel have?
  - Does the beginning of the novel draw you immediately into the central problem of the novel?
  - How does the author invite the reader into the world of the novel and what does that initial action suggest about the author's purpose and theme?
  - What sort of ending does the novel have?
    - Resolution—no further event can take place
    - Logical exhaustion—more events might follow, but those events will all express the same thing in a pattern of infinite repetition.
    - Each type of ending demonstrates a certain philosophy about the nature of human life. Do you agree with the philosophy the novel's ending suggests?

### The Third Level of Inquiry: Rhetoric-Stage Reading

Remember that your rhetoric-stage examination of a novel should take place in partnership with another reader. Rhetoric is the art of clear, persuasive communication, and persuasion always involves two people. The book is communicating an idea to you, persuading you of something. But for you to articulate your own ideas clearly back to the book, you need to bring someone else into the process. A good reader bases his opinion on intelligent analysis, not mere unthinking reaction.

- Your answers to the logic-stage questions should begin to reveal the ideas at the core of the novel. During the rhetoric stage, you'll try to decide whether you agree with those ideas or not. The ideas you'll discuss at the rhetoric stage of novel reading have to do with the nature of human experience.
- Is this book an accurate portrayal of life? Is it true?
- Do you sympathize with the characters? Which ones, and why?
- Can you find a point of empathy (emotional or intellectual identification) with each major character? Try to identify the character quality that allows you to sympathize with each character.
- Does the writer's technique give you a clue as to his/her "argument"—his/her take on the human condition?
- Is the novel self-reflective?
- Did the writer's time affect him/her?
- Is there an argument in this book? What exactly is the author telling you?
- Do you agree? Is this work true?

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

#### Project Summary

The purpose of this applied project was to create a literature strand overview for the English 9 Essentials class as it is currently taught at Grandview High School and to complement that overview with one prototype unit to demonstrate the curriculum design methodologies described in *The Parallel Curriculum Model* (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005) [Manual] contains various curricular materials in the areas of study to be addressed in the English 9 Essentials classroom. Following a careful review of the teaching materials in the Manual in the areas of a) grammar, b) writing, c) poetry and literary terminology, d) research, and e) literature, and perusal of the current research based best practices in these areas, it was decided that the Manual (2005) for English 9 Essentials could be enhanced by the addition of a literature strand using the literature outlined in the *Grandview High School Scope and Sequence* (Table 1), the *Grandview High School Reading Lists* (see Table 2), and the *English 9 Essentials Reading Selections* (see Table 3). The literature strand of the curriculum as it currently appears in the manual contained only the *Grandview High School Reading List* (see Table 2) and the *English 9 Essentials Reading Selections* (see Table 3). It was thought that the Manual could be improved by the addition of a literature strand overview. It was also decided that providing one prototypical unit based upon the design protocols of PMC

and UbD would be helpful in demonstrating how a literature unit might be prepared and used effectively to enrich student understanding and learning.

### Resolution of the Original Problem

According Wilhelm and Smith (2006) and other experts in literacy instruction (e.g Applebee, Langer, Nystrand & Gamoran, 2003; Atwell, 2007; Ayers & Crawford, 2004; Burke, 2003; Griffeth & Horton, 2001; Jago, 2001; Langer, 1998; Tomlinson et al, 2002; and Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), all students, and particularly struggling readers such as those found in English 9 Essentials, benefit greatly from thoughtfully prepared theme based inquiry units founded on big ideas and essentials questions. The intention of this project was to ground the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum in an essential question and then use that inquiry as the impetus for exploration into the required reading. The essential question formulated for the literature strand of this English 9 Essentials curriculum was "In what ways is the hero's journey motif a pattern of human experience?"

The Manual (Wood et al., 2005) lists the required text, therefore effort was made to organize those texts into theme-based inquiry units grounded in some aspect of the hero's journey motif as it related to one of the required anchor texts. Each unit was designed to include the requisite skills and content knowledge outlined in the *Grandview High School English Department Scope and Sequence* (see Table 1) coupled with essential understandings related to the hero's journey. The hero's journey motif was chosen because it fulfilled the criteria outlined by Nilsen and Donelson (2001) for determining the viability of a thematic literary unit; namely: a) the hero's journey is appealing to students and teachers, b) it is worth doing, and c) there is plenty of

accessible literature on the topic. It was determined that the hero's journey provided an especially rich opportunity for exploration into various aspects of the human experience within a common framework.

Once the overview for the literature strand was completed, one prototypical unit was prepared using the design considerations found in the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) and UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). These curriculum planning models are closely aligned with ideas proposed by Wilhelm and Smith (2006) that formed the original impetus for this project. The sample unit entitled "The Journey from Marginalization to Self-Actualization" uses one of the English 9 Essentials required novels, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) as the anchor text. This prototypical unit includes all of the design considerations, handouts, and appendices necessary to use the unit as intended. The curriculum overview and the prototypical unit form the basis of a fundamental literature strand for the English 9 Essentials program.

#### Contribution of the Project

Since no planned curriculum for the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials program was in place, this project provided a significant initial contribution to enhance the Manual (Wood et al., 2005). This project added an overview of one possible approach to the literature for English 9 Essentials using the hero's journey motif as a platform for exploration and inquiry into all of the required literature. The overview also showed how other strands in the curriculum could be incorporated as segments of complete theme based inquiry units planned for the entire school year.

The prototypical unit plan is very thorough and shows other teachers how the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002), and more particularly, the UbD (Wiggins & McTighe,



2005) methodology can be used to create a literature curriculum that enhances student understanding and learning. The handouts, assessments, activities, and performance tasks were conceived to engage student interest and enrich possibilities of learning and comprehension. Other theme-based inquiry units could be devised using the overview as a guide and the prototypical unit plan as a model.

#### Limitations to the Project

This project, of necessity, was limited in scope to the production of a year long overview and one complete unit. The creation of other units based upon the overview could be completed as part of an ongoing refinement of the English 9 Essentials curriculum.

Another limitation in the preparation of this project was the markedly limited use of the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) in actually planning the prototypical unit. Upon further study, it was determined that the design approach described in UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) was more useful for the scope of this project. While design ideas from the PMC were used, that curriculum model appears to lend itself more readily to curriculum redesign. For future use, with the continuing reassessment and refinement of the literature strand of the English 9 Essentials curriculum, the various aspects of the PMC would prove helpful in expanding the application of this literature strand even beyond the English 9 Essentials classroom.

This project was also limited in that it has yet to be tested with real students in the actual classroom. While every effort was made to ensure that the learning activities, assessments, and assignments would accomplish the stated goals in an engaging and effective manner, until the unit is used in the classroom, it will be impossible to assess the

viability and effectiveness of this approach with English 9 Essentials students. One of the most valuable aspects of the UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) design model is the mandate for field testing and peer review of unit plans. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) advise curriculum designers not only "to try something, see how it works, and make adjustments" but also to "aggressively seek feedback as you work" (p. 271). Thus far, the peer feedback offered for this project has been helpful in determining avenues for further review, research, preparation, and study.

#### Peer Evaluation Feedback

Peer review feedback was sought and obtained from three English teachers at Grandview High School. All three teachers bring years of classroom experience to the table. Two of the peer reviewers are experienced English 9 Essentials teachers and literacy experts. One of the teachers is new to high school teaching, but has experience with middle school students and with teaching summer school to 9th grade remedial readers. All three teachers completed a questionnaire prepared by this author (see Appendix 1) and all three teachers were provided with individual copies of the literature strand overview (see Table 4) and the prototypical unit plan for Unit 2 "The Journey from Marginalization to Self-Actualization" using *Of Mice and Men* (Steinbeck, 1937) as the anchor text. All three teachers are familiar with and have taught both the anchor text and the recommended supplementary texts suggested for this unit.

All three reviewers responded favorably to the unit plan as written. One reviewer mentioned that the vocabulary may provide a difficult and challenging obstacle for the English 9 Essentials student, yet she advised not changing it but working with students to clarify complex diction and ideas.

All three reviewers felt that the overarching theme of journeys was relevant to English 9 Essentials students. While one reviewer remarked that overcoming the stigma marginalization is something many young people have faced, another reviewer cautioned that continuous clarification and connection with students will be required to assist English 9 Essentials students in engaging with the various aspects of the essential question and big ideas.

All three reviewers observed that the prototypical unit plan appeared to support the standards based goals encompassed within the framework of the learning activities and assessments. All reviewers noted that the unit plan offered more than enough materials for teachers to pick and chose appropriate activities, and that the supplementary text set complemented the anchor text and enhanced the overall unit plan. One reviewer stated: "The supplementary materials are a thorough and extensive assortment of thematically connected pieces which offer opportunities for extending the learning outside the novel. These text-to-text connections are engaging and diverse."

While all three reviewers found the performance tasks to be legitimate instruments of assessment, one reviewer cautioned that the writing tasks may be somewhat lengthy and that the rigor of the overall unit will, in part, depend upon what an individual teacher accepts as "adequate student performance." This reviewer's criticism is wisely noted and further reflection on these issues should be made as the unit is field tested with English 9 Essentials students.

All three reviewers responded favorable to the unit as written with each reviewer expressing concern at the length of the unit. All three felt it may be ambitious to cover the material described in the prototypical unit in the scheduled 15 class periods. As one

reviewer put it, "There are so many great activities that seem relevant and essential, it seems it may be difficult to fit everything into 15 class periods." Another reviewer expressed the same concern and reiterated the value of field testing the unit: "I think the time-frame for reading is ambitious—I do think the unit format is excellent. Modification will come after practice and student response."

Seeking and responding to initial peer review for this unit and for other units prepared in conjunction with this literature strand overview was helpful, and it is an activity that should continue as part of the ongoing curriculum design process.

#### Recommendations for Future Research and Study

Even though this literature strand curriculum overview and prototypical unit made a significant initial contribution to the Manual (Wood et al., 2005) and received favorable peer evaluation, there are many avenues for further research and study. Even as this project was being completed, new ideas about teaching to enhance student understanding and nurture student literacy came to light such as can be found in the most recent issue of *English Journal* where editor Rick VanDeWeghe observed that "Teachers waste an extraordinary amount of literacy instruction time on activities that have marginal effect on students' literacy development. Excellent, authentic literacy instruction can be provided across the disciplines...through straightforward literacy instruction—that is, by having students read many interesting texts, create arguments based on evidence from those texts, and write to explore understandings, refine interpretations, and bolster arguments" (VanDeWeghe, 2008, p. 106). This statement encompassed the vision and the intentions forming the foundation of this project, and it also offered a far-reaching

mandate for what effective literacy instruction should provide for students. English 9 Essentials students are those that need this kind of well-founded instruction.

The most important future research and study for the improvement of this project will be field testing it in the classroom. Wiggins & McTighe (2005) encourage teachers to seek evaluation and feedback from students as well as peers. It will be helpful to field test this unit and determine how viable and effective the activities and assessments actually are for English 9 Essentials students with the intention of consistent refinement to the unit overview and prototypical plan.

Another avenue of future research and study would be to prepare full unit plans for each of the anchor texts discussed in the overview. This effort would make the contribution to the Manual (Wood et al., 2005) more substantial and comprehensive. Adding fully complete units to the Manual would make it possible for the English 9 Essentials literature strand to be taught with consistency and would also provide a springboard for melding the literature strands of the other English Essentials classes.

Finally, a further research and study goal with this overview and unit plan would be the continuing redesign of both as indicated by future peer and student feedback. At the point of unit redesign, the curriculum models of the PMC (Tomlinson et al., 2002) including: a) the Curriculum of Connections Parallel, b) the Curriculum of Practice Parallel, and c) the Curriculum of Identity Parallel would prove valuable. Each of these redesign models meshes nicely with the elements of understanding presented in the UbD (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Relying on the PMC to redesign this curriculum opens up the possibility of using the curriculum in both regular and honors English 9 in addition to its original application for English 9 Essentials.

## Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 of this applied project reflects on the viability and effectiveness of this project as a solution to the problem originally presented in Chapter 1: the lack of a specifically delineated literature curriculum for the English 9 Essentials class. This chapter looks at how this newly created literature strand effectively addresses that problem, and to what degree. This chapter also reviews the contribution the project makes to the *Essentials of English Instructor's Manual* (Wood et al., 2005). Finally, this chapter examines the limitations of the project and makes an assessment of the peer evaluation feedback in order to determine future possibilities for further research and study.

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## APPENDIX

### Peer Review Questionnaire

## PEER REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Please respond to the following questions:

1. How long have you been teaching high school English?
2. Have you taught English 9 Essentials?
3. Does the literature strand for English 9 Essentials contained herein appear to be appropriate for the typical English 9 Essentials student? Please explain.
4. Does the overarching theme of journeys and the way in which this theme is interwoven throughout the entire unit support the intention of providing an engaging, theme-based inquiry unit for English 9 Essentials students? Please explain.
5. Do the stated understandings and essentials questions represent the likelihood of engaging English 9 Essentials students in higher level critical thinking about the literature? Do these big ideas support the intention of helping students want to improve their reading and writing skills? Please explain.
6. Does the text set of supplementary materials appear to complement the anchor text and support the understandings and essentials questions? Does this supplementary materials reflect an engaging mix of various genres and interest levels? Please elaborate.

7. Do the knowledge and skill targets appear to reflect the intended standards-based goals?
8. Do the assessment performance tasks appear to be tools that will legitimately reflect student understanding in the critical thinking, knowledge, skill, and understanding targets?
9. Does this unit provide enough materials for the English 9 Essentials teacher to select those ideas, materials, activities, and assessment best suited to his/her class?
10. Do these unit plans represent the rigor appropriate for a high-achieving high school? Please explain.
11. Are there ways that this curriculum could be more closely aligned with the stated goals, understandings, essentials questions, and targets? Please elaborate.
12. What other suggestions do you have for improving these curriculum units?