

**ENGLISH 3353: Reading and Responding to Literature**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Polette
<b>Semester:</b>	Fall 2018
<b>Days &amp; Time:</b>	T/R 10:30 - 11:50 a.m.
<b>Classroom:</b>	Hudspeth Hall # 200
<b>Credits:</b>	3
<b>Office Hours:</b>	7:15-8:45 T/R, 12:00-1:20, p.m. T/R, Hudspeth 216
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**Required Texts:**

- *How to Read Literature like a Professor for Kids* by Thomas Foster
- *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen
- *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai
- *A Long Walk To Water* by Linda Sue Park
- *Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short Short Stories* edited by Christine Perkins-Hazuka, et al
- *How to Eat a Poem* edited by members of the *American Poetry & Literacy Project*

**NB:** Be sure to have all these texts by the first or second day of class. Failure to have secured a book is not an excuse for not turning in an assignment. If the UTEP bookstore does not have any of the above books for sale, you may want to purchase the book from a web site such as Amazon.com and have it shipped to you in one or two days.

**Purpose:**

This course is designed to help you become an independent and critical thinker, writer, & learner; gain a working knowledge of the various manners and modes of fiction and poetry for adolescent readers; discover ways to enable adolescent readers develop deeper comprehension skills, learn to understand and use the zone of proximal development, and learn to help adolescent readers respond critically and imaginatively to literary texts.

**Procedure:**

The texts will help you discover some important elements about teaching reading and writing. You should read each assignment at least twice: once to get a sense of the content, twice to reflect upon the content and to make discoveries, associations, and connections. Bring to class any questions you have about the texts. In addition, we will spend a good deal of time in small groups as group work will enable us to entertain multiple points of view as we construct knowledge and meaning.

It will be beneficial to you if you take clear and concise notes during each class meeting. Your notes should include what was covered during the class and what you learned in each class (i.e., your thoughts and conclusions).

**Supplies:**

Manila folders (at least 8), lined clean-edged paper, a blue or black ink pen, white-out, a notebook, a collegiate dictionary, a thesaurus, an e-mail account, access to a photocopying machine, and a typewriter or word processor.

**Assignments:**

3 connections/reflections assignments (100 pts. each.), 1 reflection assignment (30 points). Various writing activities (30 or more pts. each). 1 take-home exam (200 pts.).

**Scale:**

A=90-100% (excellent), B=80-89% (superior), C=70-79% (competent), D=60-69% (less than competent), F=0-59% (failing).

**Attendance:**

Because most of what you will learn in this course will result from your active involvement in each of class activity, you must attend every class. Please note that if you miss class 4 times, regardless of the reasons, you will lose 1 letter grade from your overall grade for the class unless you complete an outside assignment; if you miss 5 classes, you will lose 2 letter grades from your overall grade unless you complete 2 outside assignments.\* *If, however, you miss class 6 times, you will be unable to achieve a passing grade for this class, and a grade of "F" will be recorded for you.* If you miss **6 classes**, it is recommended that you drop this class. It is, moreover, your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet for each class.

**\*Outside assignment(s) for missing 4 or 5 classes:**

Go to the web site NPR.ORG, and choose a program from the TED Radio Hour. Write a 1 page summary of the program. Write a 3 page essay in which you discuss how the ideas in the program intersect with what you are learning in this class. **Hand in:** a print copy of the summary, the essay, and an assessment form. If you miss 4 classes, complete this activity for one TED Radio Hour program; if you miss 5 classes, complete this activity for two different TED Radio Hour programs. You must earn a grade of C or better on the assignment(s) for it (them) to ameliorate the loss of a letter grade or letter grades due to your absence(s) from class. **Outside assignments are due on MAY 3, 2018.**

- a) *It is your responsibility to keep track of the number of your absences and to complete and hand in requisite number of outside assignments (as outlined in the above paragraph) if you choose not to lose a letter grade or grades from your overall grade for this class. (You might want to circle the dates in the syllabus of any classes you miss.)*
- b) You do not need to call or e-mail me if you are going to be absent. There are no excused absences (with the exception of absences due to being required to attend an official UTEP function).
- c) If you experience a significant problem during the semester, one that will affect your attendance or grade, please let me know well before the end of the semester so that you and I can take steps to address the problem - especially if the problem will have a potentially adverse affect on your grade.
- d) If you attend every class without being late or leaving early, 20 points (not 20 percentage points) will be added to the individual points (not percentage points) you have accumulated by the end of the semester.

- e) Late arrivals or early departures disrupt the concentration of those of us who are working; please arrive on time and stay for the entire class. Chronic late attendance (and/or early departures) will result in the loss of points from your total accumulation of points. If you sign the attendance sheet and then leave class, half an absence will be recorded for you. *If you arrive 30 minutes after the class begins, a full absence will be recorded for you for that late arrival.* **Please arrive before 1:30 a.m.; class will begin promptly at 1:30.**
- f) If you have children and need a place for their care, please avail yourself of the UTEP child care center; please do not bring your children to class.
- g) Turn off, and put away, cell-phones, smart-phones, ipads, tablets, computers, and all other electronic devices before class begins. Do not use electronic devices, unless instructed to do so, during class. When you take notes during class, please use pen and paper.
- h) Do not leave class to make or receive a phone call; do not work on assignments for other classes during class. If you do text, make or receive a phone call, and/or work on other assignments, you may be asked to leave; half an absence will be recorded for you for that day.
- i) Attend to personal needs before or after class, not during class. *Do not bring food to class.*
- j) Because many discussions will take place during our class meetings, please be sure to listen (and please refrain from talking) when other people are discussing class-related issues.
- k) Do not work on assignments or activities for other classes during class.

**Plagiarism:**

If you obtain work from someone else and submit it as your own; if you use any material from another source in your work and do not give direct credit to your source; or if someone with whom you are working creates/writes any part of the work for you, you are plagiarizing. Acts of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are absolutely disallowed and will be dealt with swiftly according to UTEP's established policy.

**Assignments:**

- a) All out of class assignments must be typed: 12 point serif font, double-space, one inch margins. Also, make and keep a photo-copy of every assignment you hand in so that you will always have a copy.
- b) Place 2 copies of every assignment in a manila folder; put your name on the tab of the manila folder; include a copy of the appropriate assessment form.
- c) Failure to hand in 2 copies of an assignment will result in the loss of 1 letter grade; failure to hand in a copy of the correct assessment form will result in the loss of 1 letter grade.
- d) Keep all returned assignments until the end of the semester. This way you will always know what your grade is for this class: add all the points that you earned and divide by the sum of the total points possible.

**NB:** Before you hand in written work, take it to a qualified source for suggestions regarding revising and editing. *Pay careful attention to the grading criteria for standard academic writing and to the assessment forms for each assignment.*

Do not wait until the night before the assignments are due to print or assemble them. This point cannot be stressed enough. Assignments should be ready to be handed in at the start of class. There will be no time during class to assemble the assignments.

**Late Work:**

Late assignments 1 one letter grade per day (not per class meeting, but per day). An assignment is late if a hard copy is not in the class set of assignments that are with me when I leave campus. If you miss class the day an assignment is due, send it to class with someone else. An assignment that is late should not be put in my mailbox in the English Department Office in Hudspeth Hall or left outside my office door, but should be given directly to me. **NB:** *Late assignments will not be accepted after four days past the original due date.*

**Special Help:**

Because this is an upper-level English class, you should possess those writing skills that are necessary for you to express your thoughts, in English, in clear and effective language: you should be able to develop your thoughts in a written form that is clear and cohesive; should be able to support general assertions with facts, examples, and illustrations; should be able to create a sense of logical coherence in your writing; should be able to construct clear and concise sentences; should be able to connect your sentences by using transitional devices; and should be able to use standard punctuation, mechanical constructions, and spelling.

If you do not possess such skills, or if you are not sure how to construct academic prose (see the grading criteria), I strongly advise you to get assistance from a qualified source and to put together an immediate, proactive plan that will help you become a stronger writer.

I will be glad to help you during my office hours (or by appointment). You can also receive assistance from the Tutorial/Writing Center in the UTEP Library, either in person or online.

## CRITERIA FOR STANDARD ACADEMIC WRITING

### A: Development

1. Insightful, original, and general ideas and assertions are supported with facts, examples, illustrations, &/or explanations; facts, examples, illustrations, etc. are developed with explanations.
2. Only one idea per paragraph is asserted and developed.
3. Clear definitions are used where needed; especially for abstract words like “creativity,” “imagination,” “critical thinking,” “thinking skills,” “literacy,” etc.
4. All the directions for the assignment have been followed. NB: *Projects, assignments, and written products that do not correspond to the written directions will not receive a passing grade.*

### B: Organization

1. Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence.
2. Each topic sentence presents one idea to be developed.
3. Each paragraph contains facts, example(s), or an illustration that relates to the idea in the topic sentence.
4. Writing displays a clear sense of order among the sentences within each paragraph. There are no “idea or content gaps”; that is, ideas and facts are connected from sentence to sentence; transitional words and phrases are used where needed.
5. A clear and effective discussion relates the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Eg, each discussion describes the importance or purpose of each example.

### C: Wording

1. Simple, energetic language is used in sentences that are clear and direct. Figurative language is employed where appropriate.
2. No passive voice (unless there’s a reason).
3. Sentence variety is present (sentences are not constructed in the same way).
4. Important words and concepts are defined and are used consistently and clearly.

### D: Cohesion

1. Transitional words and phrases are used in and among paragraphs and sentences.
2. Parallel constructions are used correctly.
3. Pronouns are used correctly: every pronoun has a clear antecedent.
4. No shifts from past to present tense.
5. All quotations and outside material are introduced; page number and source are provided.

### E: Sentence Structure, Punctuation, and Spelling

1. No run-on sentences.
2. No sentence fragments.
3. No dangling modifiers or misplaced (or incorrectly used) phrases.
4. No convoluted sentences: sentences that contain too many disparate ideas, or sentences that are so long or uncoordinated that they fail to convey what they attempt to convey.
5. Proper punctuation: comma, semi-colon, apostrophe, quotation marks, etc. Words are spelled correctly.

### F: Manuscript Form

1. One inch margins; number the pages at the bottom (center).
2. Use double-spacing.
3. Use twelve point font. Use a font that has serifs. Eg, the font, **Times**, has serifs; the font **Arial** does **not** have serifs.
4. **Two copies** of the assignment have been turned in, along with the **assessment form** in a **manila folder** with your name on the tab.
5. The pages of the assignment have been stapled together.

## — SYLLABUS —

- This syllabus is subject to change at my discretion to meet instructional needs and/or to accommodate time constraints; changes may include additional assignments. Bring this syllabus to class every day; also bring the material you have read and written for the day. Quizzes, both announced and unannounced, may be given throughout the semester.
- The assignments for this course will require time, effort, thought, reflection, and revision. I strongly recommend that you read the directions and *scrutinize the examples* for each assignment, exam, and project, and that you allot yourself ample time to complete each assignment, exam, and project. In other words, if you wish to hand in work that has a greater potential for exhibiting insightful thoughts and for displaying the clear and cogent expression of those thoughts in well organized prose, do not wait until a night or two before an assignment, exam, or project is due to begin working on it. As such: the more thorough, well developed, and well organized your written products, the better.

**August**

- 28 Presentation of syllabus, introduction, approaches to reading & writing nonfiction
- 30 Fiction and comprehension; bring to class *Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short Short Stories*

**September**

- 4 Fiction and comprehension; bring to class *Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short Short Stories*
- 6 Fiction and comprehension; bring to class *Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short Short Stories*
- 11 Fiction and comprehension; bring to class *Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short Short Stories*
- 13 Fiction and comprehension; bring to class *Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short Short Stories*
- 18 Fiction and comprehension; bring to class *Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short Short Stories*
- 20 **Read:** *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Children*
- Hand in:** two important discoveries you made in each chapter (typed). Worth 30 points.
- 25 *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Children*
- 27 Bring *Hatchet* to class

***Check the number of your absences.***

**October**

- 2 Read chapters 1-7, *Hatchet*
- 4 Read chapters 7-14, *Hatchet*

- 9 Read chapters 15-Epilogue, *Hatchet*
- 11 Bring *Hatchet* and *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Kids* to class
- 16 Bring *Hatchet* and *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Kids* to class
- 18 **Hatchet/Foster Assignment Due.** Turn in two copies of the assignment and one copy of the grading form in a manila folder; put your name on the tab of the folder.
- 23 Bring *A Long Walk to Water* to class
- 25 Read: chapters 1-10, *A Long Walk to Water*
- 30 Read: chapters 11-18, *A Long Walk to Water*

*Check the number of your absences*

**November**

- 6 ***Hatchet / A Long Walk to Water Assignment due.*** Turn in two copies of the assignment and one copy of the grading form in a manila folder; put your name on the tab of the folder.
- 8 Bring *Inside Out and Back Again* to class
- 13 **Read:** chapters 1-69, *Inside Out and Back Again*
- 15 **Read:** chapters 73-111, *Inside Out and Back Again*
- 30 **Read:** chapters 115-260, *Inside Out and Back Again*
- 22 Thanksgiving
- 27 *Inside Out and Back Again*, discussion
- 29 ***Hatchet/Inside Out and Back Again Assignment Due.*** Turn in two copies of the assignment and one copy of the grading form in a manila folder; put your name on the tab of the folder.  
**Bring to class *How to Eat a Poem***

**December**

- 4 Read three poems, of your choice, from *How To Eat a Poem* and be prepared to discuss why the poems you have chosen are the three best poems in the book.
- 6 *How To Eat a Poem*  
**Assignments for Missed Class/Classes Due.**
- 13 **\*Take-Home Exam due: 10:00 p.m. (TBA)**

## THE ELEMENTS OF FICTION

### **Plot:**

the sequence of events, the actions—what happens; actions are nearly always motivated by preceding events and affect future events

### **Setting:**

where and when the story takes place—specific locale, season, and time

### **Character:**

the agents in the story—may be either 2 or 3 dimensional; we know characters by what they do, what they say, what others say about them, and the objects that we identify with them. The Protagonist is usually the main character, the one with whom we identify. The Antagonist is usually the character who opposes the protagonist. Most characters are driven by desire and fear. Most characters either initiate action or react to events. Most characters are either introverts or extraverts.

### **Conflict:**

the manifestation of oppositional forces—may be external and/or internal. Conflict is usually the basis for understanding character motivation and theme. Conflict is always set in motion by a triggering event. **Conflict:** person vs self, person vs person, person vs society, person vs nature, person vs supernatural, person vs technology (eg, *Terminator*, *Transformers*), person vs fate

### **Tone:**

the manner in which a writer relates to an audience, the “tone of voice” used to address readers. Tone maybe friendly, serious, distant, angry, cheerful, bitter, cynical, reverential, awe-struck, enthusiastic, morbid, resentful, warm, cold, remorseful, sad, playful, confused, curious, sarcastic, nostalgic, pleading, assertive, gloomy, etc. Tone results from the writer’s diction (word choice and use, or lack, of figurative language), sentence structure, and rhetorical design (i.e., the structure of the form of writing). Tone is also dependent upon the writer's purpose(s) and his/her explicit or implicit relation to his/her audience.

### **Vision:**

the scope of seeing, the philosophical outlook inherent in the story’s telling—often ambiguous, complex, ironic, subtle, indeterminate—thematic concerns often reside here

### **Point of View:**

the perspective from which the story is told: first person, third limited, or third omniscient

### **Style:**

the idea that is expressed and the individual manner in which that idea is expressed. To discover style, one must consider the diction, the tone, the use of figurative language, the use of concrete or abstract language, sentence length. Style may be, for instance, journalistic, scientific, rhythmic, pedestrian, sincere, artificial, dignified, comic, dull, vivid.

### **Image:**

the visual index produced by the language of the story—images carry emotional freight & thematic “meaning”

**Motifs:**

the objects, elements, or aspects of language that stand out or serve important functions in the story (may be character types, objects, actions, pieces of dialogue, and/or language patterns)

**Theme:**

Theme is an abstract concept made concrete through representation in person, action, image, and motif. Because theme implies a subject and a predicate, it is most often expressed in a sentence; thus:

- “Vice” is not a theme, but “Even though vice is often more alluring than virtue, it usually turns out to be destructive” is a theme;
- “Hunger” is not a theme, but “Wild hunger will devour those who cannot build strong defenses against it” is;
- “Fear” is not a theme, but “The ability to name what you fear will allow you to hold on to a new life” is.

**MonoMyth: Structural Principles**

(A synthesis of theories: Vladimir Propp & Joseph Campbell)

Nearly all heroic myths and stories are constructed with the following narrative materials. As such, these tales unfold in a stepwise manner, as a goal-directed process (one, however, that is not linear, but circular, and one that recognizes and accepts the irrational and the intuitive), as a pattern endowed with meaning. Moreover, heroic myths and “magical” fairy tales frequently contain six different kinds of characters: (1) the hero/heroine, (2) the donor/helper, (3) the sought-for-person (or the persons who need to be helped), (4) the dispatcher, (5) the false hero/heroine, and (6) the foe.

**The initial situation:** a state of insufficiency or a state of abundance in an atmosphere of tension (a state of abundance is usually followed by misfortune that results in a condition of lack or deprivation); these states reveal the essential conflict in all fairy tales: the conflict of polar opposites. The conflict of opposites also implies that many heroic myths and fairy tales occur in a state where things are “out of balance.”

**The call to action:** the hero/heroine (often of unacknowledged or “low” stature) leaves home to fill the insufficiency or to resolve the conflict that resulted from the loss of abundance. Heroes/heroines are usually one of two types: active or passive.

**The realm of adventure:** the hero/heroine move out of the social realm and into a “time-less, magical place.” Such a place is often “off limits” or completely unknown to the other members of the hero/heroine’s society.

**The initiation:** the hero/heroine must undergo a series of tests and be willing to make sacrifices, that is, to give up what he/she holds most dear (usually the sacrifice is symbolic of a giving up of an existing, self-centered attitude).

**The belly of the whale:** the hero/heroine must undergo a (symbolic) death-rebirth experience wherein his/her egocentric nature “dies” so that a more mature attitude may be born. (Tombs and enclosed places often signify this.)

**The donor:** the hero/heroine often receives help or some type of helpful object from an unlikely source (the donor often appears in a form that, at first glance, may seem to be less than helpful). For heroes, the donor is often a hag or a mysterious, beautiful female figure; for heroines, the donor is often a beggar or a mysterious, handsome male figure.

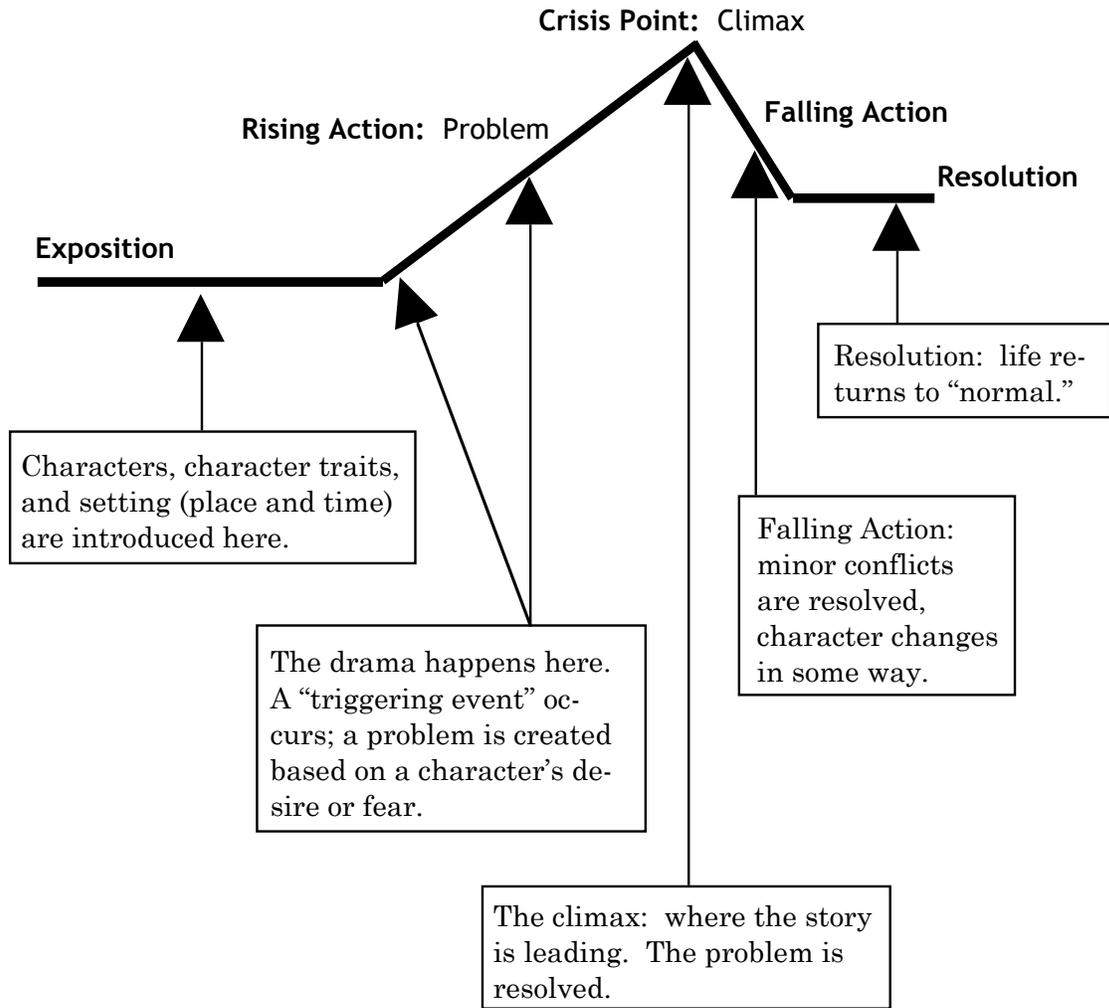
**Magic object:** the hero/heroine must often win or steal a magic object.

**The site of main deeds:** the hero/heroine finds him/herself in a place where he/she must confront his/her polar opposite. In the ensuing confrontation, the hero/heroine must overcome his/her opposite. When the opposite is overcome, balance is restored; however, the hero/heroine’s tasks are often not over. With new strength and a new attitude, the hero/heroine must perform other actions—nearly always in an attempt to help others.

**The return:** the hero/heroine returns home, but must often overcome yet another figure in the story, often a character who is a “false” family member; the family member must somehow be punished. When the “false” family member has been punished, the hero/heroine is recognized as such. The result of such recognition is often a marriage (symbolizing the merger of opposites and the final transformation of a one-sided attitude).

Many psychologists (Jung, Von Franz, Hillman) and literary scholars (Zipes, Cech, Cooper) argue that most, if not all stories, are “metaphors for life” because they dramatize (through narrative images) the steps necessary to move from one stage of life to another. When a hero/heroine overcomes a foe (a villain or beast), for instance, he/she is actually overcoming his/her own internal foe.

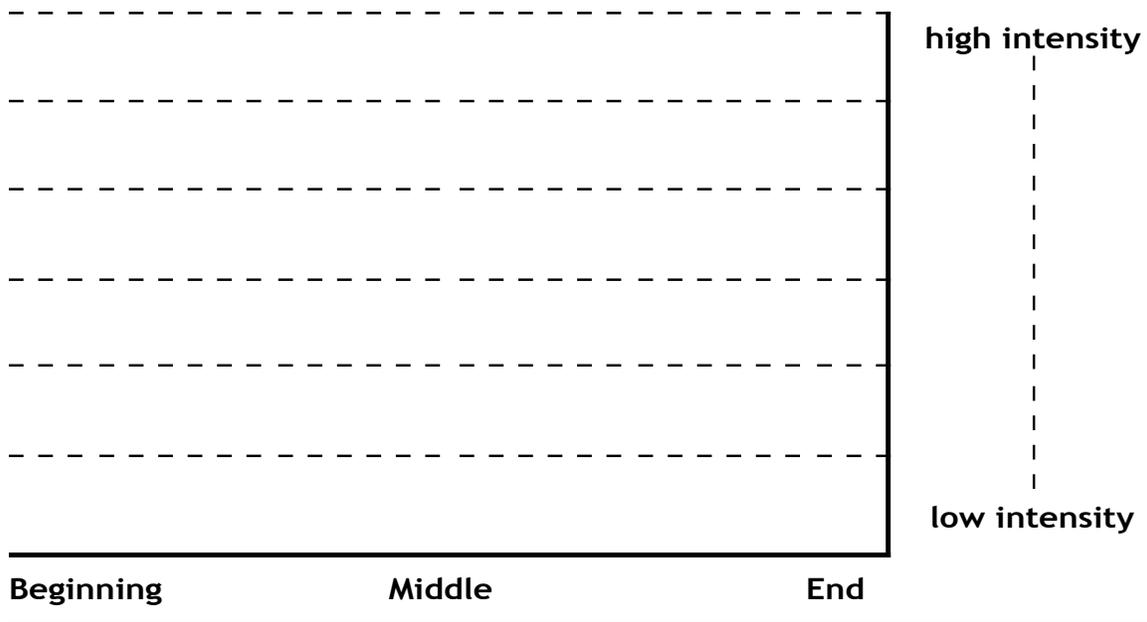
**A DIAGRAM OF TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE STRUCTURE:  
(also known as “Freytag’s Pyramid”)**



### CHARTING CHARACTER EMOTIONS

- Choose a character and an emotion that he/she experiences. Chart the rise and fall of the emotion throughout the story on the following graph:

*Character:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Emotion:* \_\_\_\_\_



#### Process

##### Step One: Prewriting

With a partner, choose a character; then make a list of emotions and choose one. Next, choose various situations in the story that exemplify the emotion. Decide if the emotion gets stronger or weaker in each situation.

##### Step Two: Drafting

Chart the emotion's fluctuation on the graph. Briefly describe each incident where the emotion changes in intensity and state why it does.

##### Step Three: Revising

Rework your graph and/or your explanations for greater clarity. (Use the revis checklist.)

##### Step Four: Editing

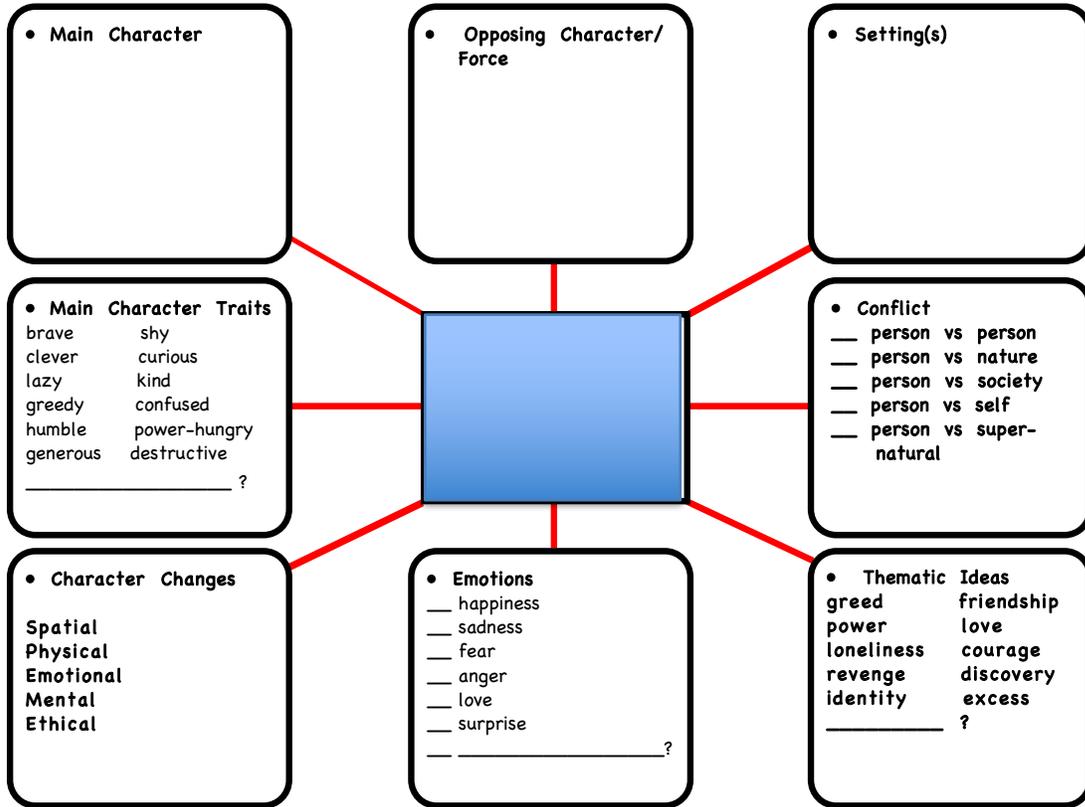
Check for mechanical matters.

##### Step Five: Publishing

Share your graph and explanations.

**DESCRIPTIVE WORDS**

confident	gentle	lucky	hardy
modern	open-minded	powerful	steady
firm	shy	zealous	tame
brilliant	important	influential	relaxed
knotted	innocent	dynamic	gallant
determined	daring	visionary	nostalgic
combative	fierce	obnoxious	obstinate
bullying	skillful	dreamy	analytical
inquisitive	intense	brave	cranky
alienated	rundown	discouraged	weary
clumsy	insecure	amiable	lenient
nervous	polite	disliked	genuine
jealous	angry	hopeful	liberal
conservative	mellow	shaky	envious
thrilled	vivacious	inferior	vulnerable
naive	pathetic	tragic	impatient
stingy	greedy	harsh	charming
deceitful	foolish	ignorant	unassuming
defeated	victorious	frantic	regretful
distrustful	forlorn	dangerous	virile
cautious	clever	resentful	spiteful
domineering	moody	unpredictable	humorous
cool	immovable	boring	corny
enigmatic	wise	arrogant	trustworthy
honest	touchy	puzzled	gloomy
<i>others:</i>	-----	-----	-----



**Assignment — Connecting quotations: worth 100 points.**

1. **Directions:** Choose 3 quotations from *Hatchet* (1 from the beginning, 1 from the middle, and 1 from the end), then choose 3 quotations *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (each quotation from the Foster text should be taken from a different chapter) each of which corresponds to the *Hatchet* quotations you have chosen. Explain how each quotation corresponds to, or exemplifies, an aspect of each *Hatchet* quotation you have chosen. Demonstrate/articulate how each Foster quotation exemplifies a central idea in each *Hatchet* quotation.
2. First, offer a quotation from *Hatchet*, then offer a corresponding quotation from the Foster text. Then explain, by quoting parts of the quotation from the novel and by quoting parts the quotation from the Foster text, how the Foster quotation helps you interpret the quotation from the novel.
3. **Use the following format.** *You will use this format 3 times:* each time you will connect a different quotation from the novel to a different quotation from the Foster text.

**Here is the format to follow for each story explication:**

**First,** provide a quotation from *Hatchet*. Provide the page number.

**Second,** provide a quotation from the Foster text that you will use to explicate the quotation from *Hatchet*. Provide the page number.

**Third,** explain how the Foster quotation exemplifies and amplifies — and thus opens up the meaning of the passage — the quotation from the story you have chosen.

**NB:** this assignment will **take time, thought, planning, reflection, and cognitive effort**. Please allot yourself enough time to complete this activity so that you do not rush through it. Moreover, **do NOT hand in your first draft**; rather take this assignment through multiple drafts in order to be able to create discourse that is clear, effective, cogent, well organized, well developed, and insightful.

**Example:**

Here is an example of one quotation from *Hatchet*, a quotation from the Foster text that corresponds to it, and an analytical explanation of how the Foster quotation serves to help this writer explicate and amplify the metaphorical meaning of the fictional text.

**I. Quotation from *Hatchet*:**

. . . and with the heat came clouds of insects — thick, swarming hordes of mosquitos that flocked to his body, made a living coat on his exposed skin, clogged his nostrils when he inhaled, poured into his mouth when he opened it to take a breath. . . . as soon as he killed them, more came, thick, whining buzzing masses of them. . . . All biting, chewing, taking from him (*Hatchet*, p. 34).

**II. Quotation from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*:**

[T]he vampire . . . announces itself again and again when someone [or something] grows in strength by weakening someone else. That's what the figure [of the vampire] really comes down to. Using other people to get what we want. Denying someone else's right to live. Placing our own desires, particularly our ugly ones, above the needs of someone else (*How to Read Literature like a Professor for Kids*, p. 21).

**III. Analysis & Connections** (note how the topic sentence in this paragraph serves as an organizing principle for the entire paragraph; also note how the paragraph uses bits of quotations from *Hatchet* and bits of quotations from the Foster text):

In the beginning of the novel, *Hatchet*, the protagonist, Brian, has his first *vampiric encounter* with nature (*topic sentence*). For example, just as Brian drags himself out of the lake after the plane crash — his difficult emergence from the water to the shore is itself a harsh rebirth symbol — he is suddenly and swiftly attacked by swarms of *vampiric* insects: ravenous mosquitoes and insatiable black flies. In the novel, Gary Paulsen uses vivid language to emphasize the pure totality of the insect attack: “thick, swarming hordes . . . made a living coat on his exposed skin,” and “more came, whining, buzzing masses . . . all biting, chewing.” By emphasizing the massiveness of the insect attack, Paulsen is implying that, at this point in the novel, Mother Nature is, in fact, the mother of *vampiric*, and she insures that Brian's first experience with her — with nature — is one that will cost him dearly. In this scene, which can be considered Brian's first initiation into the brutal and ravenous natural world, he is greeted by insects whose sole purpose is, *as Thomas Foster reminds us*, “to grow in strength by weakening” him, to “deny” his “right to live.” In other words, Mother Nature as *vampire* is communicating to Brian that only the strong and the intelligent survive in Her world, and that if he does not respond quickly and thoughtfully, she will suck the life out of him — just so that she, in the form of the mosquitos, may live.

**ASSESSMENT FORM FOR HATCHET/FOSTER ASSIGNMENT: 100 points**           90-100 — A

- Essay is clear, complete, well-organized, and contains examples/illustrations, are insightful.
- Each ¶ has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Topic sentence is followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is included. A cogent discussion and quotation relates the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each paragraph is clearly focused. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are connected, and the Hatchet quotation is thoroughly explicated and explained.
- Wording is clear in sentences that are precise. Abstract terms are defined and used effectively. Effective syntax throughout. Cohesion is clear; transitions are effective.
- No mechanical errors present; departures from convention appear intentional and are effective.

           80-89 — B

- Essay is generally clear, complete, well-organized, and contains examples/illustrations.
- Each ¶ has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Topic sentence is followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is included. A cogent discussion and quotation relates the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each paragraph is focused. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are connected, and the Hatchet quotation is fairly well explicated and explained.
- Wording is clear in sentences that are precise. Abstract terms are generally defined and used effectively. Effective syntax throughout. Cohesion is clear; transitions are effective.
- Very few mechanical errors present.

           70-79 — C

- Essay is not well-organized, contains a few examples/illustrations.
- Each ¶ has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Topic sentence is followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is included. A discussion may not effectively relate the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each paragraph is somewhat focused. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are connected, and the Hatchet basically explicated and explained — though further insight or deeper analysis would be beneficial.
- Wording is generally okay; sentence variety may not be present. Abstract terms are sometimes defined and used effectively. Syntax may need revision. Cohesion is in need of further work; transitions somewhat effective.
- Some mechanical errors present.

           60-69 — D

- Essay is in need of development.
- Each ¶ may be in need of a stronger topic sentence. Topic sentence is often not followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is generally not included. A discussion may be missing. Each paragraph needs revision. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are too loosely connected, and the Hatchet quotation is not thoroughly explicated and explained.
- Wording is generally okay; sentence variety may not be present. Abstract terms are not defined and are not used effectively. Syntax needs revision. Cohesion is in need of further work; transitions are missing.
- Many mechanical errors present.

           0-59 — F

- Essay is not clear and in need of significant development.
- Each ¶ needs topic sentence. Topic sentence is not followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is not included. A discussion may be missing. Each paragraph is needs substantial revision. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are not connected, and the Hatchet quotation is not at all thoroughly explicated and explained.
- Wording is not effective; sentence variety not present. Abstract terms are not defined and are not used effectively. Syntax needs revision. Cohesion is in need of further work; transitions are missing.
- Myriad mechanical errors present.

**Assignment: *Hatchet* and *A Long Walk To Water* - 100 points****Directions:**

- Find 12 significant (thematic, conception, textual) connections/similarities between *Hatchet* and *A Long Walk to Water*. Choose 12 quotations from each text as points of comparisons.
- Explain the connections. Precision, concision, and clarity are essential. (Sentences that are connected and sentences that show relation and cause/effect should be employed.)
- In your connections, be sure to use at least 6 ideas/quotations from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Kids*.

**Example** (between *Hatchet* and *The House on Mango Street*):1. **Quotations:**

“We didn’t always live on Mango street” (*The House on Mango Street*, p. 3).

“Brian Robinson stared out the window of the small plane at the endless green below” (*Hatchet*, p. 1).

**Connections:** Both quotations reveal that the characters in each novel are in transition.

Esperanza tells us that she “didn’t always live on Mango Street” and Brian is in a “small plane” flying over “endless green.” Esperanza locates herself in the present by explaining that she used to live somewhere else in the past, and Brian is both literally and metaphorically on a journey. Both characters find themselves in transitory situations that exemplify Thomas Foster’s notion that “Every trip is a quest.” Because both Esperanza and Brian are in a transition state, we can expect that their stories will be recounts of their journeys, journeys where they engage in a quest for (perhaps unconsciously) meaning, identity, or a new attitude.

**Assessment Form**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 90-100: 12 connections; connections are precise, concise, and clear. No mechanical errors. 6 ideas from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Kids* are used effectively.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 80-89: 12 connections; connections are generally precise, concise, and clear. 6 ideas from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Kids* are used fairly effectively. Few minor mechanical errors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 70-79: 12 connections; connections are somewhat precise, concise, and clear. 6 ideas from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Kids* are used somewhat effectively. Few minor mechanical errors. Some mechanical errors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 60-69: 12 (or fewer) connections; connections are not precise, concise, or clear. 6 ideas from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Kids* are not used effectively. Mechanical errors are present to a degree to be disruptive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 0-59: 12 (or fewer) connections; connections are not at all precise, concise, or clear. 6 ideas from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor for Kids* are used ineffectively or are not used. Myriad mechanical errors.

**What Song?**

After reading *Inside Out and Back Again*, connect it – character, plot, conflict – with two of your favorite songs. Explain the relationships between the novel and the songs. Be sure to summarize each song and to offer citations from the songs and the novel to support your assertions.

Begin with a clear thesis for an essay that is roughly six pages long; in the body of the essay, offer clear points of intersection, replete with citations and explanations; create a sense of underlying logic and unity; avoid mechanical errors.

**ASSESSMENT FORM FOR SONG ASSIGNMENT: 100 points**           90-100 — A

- Essay is clear, complete, well-organized, and contains examples/illustrations, are insightful.
- Each ¶ has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Topic sentence is followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is included. A cogent discussion and quotation relates the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each paragraph is clearly focused. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are connected, and the *Hatchet* quotation is thoroughly explicated and explained.
- Wording is clear in sentences that are precise. Abstract terms are defined and used effectively. Effective syntax throughout. Cohesion is clear; transitions are effective.
- No mechanical errors present; departures from convention appear intentional and are effective.

           80-89 — B

- Essay is generally clear, complete, well-organized, and contains examples/illustrations.
- Each ¶ has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Topic sentence is followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is included. A cogent discussion and quotation relates the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each paragraph is focused. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are connected, and the *Hatchet* quotation is fairly well explicated and explained.
- Wording is clear in sentences that are precise. Abstract terms are generally defined and used effectively. Effective syntax throughout. Cohesion is clear; transitions are effective.
- Very few mechanical errors present.

           70-79 — C

- Essay is not well-organized, contains a few examples/illustrations.
- Each ¶ has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Topic sentence is followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is included. A discussion may not effectively relate the example to the idea in the topic sentence. Each paragraph is somewhat focused. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are connected, and the *Hatchet* basically explicated and explained — though further insight or deeper analysis would be beneficial.
- Wording is generally okay; sentence variety may not be present. Abstract terms are sometimes defined and used effectively. Syntax may need revision. Cohesion is in need of further work; transitions somewhat effective.
- Some mechanical errors present.

           60-69 — D

- Essay is in need of development.
- Each ¶ may be in need of a stronger topic sentence. Topic sentence is often not followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is generally not included. A discussion may be missing. Each paragraph needs revision. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are too loosely connected, and the *Hatchet* quotation is not thoroughly explicated and explained.
- Wording is generally okay; sentence variety may not be present. Abstract terms are not defined and are not used effectively. Syntax needs revision. Cohesion is in need of further work; transitions are missing.
- Many mechanical errors present.

           0-59 — F

- Essay is not clear and in need of significant development.
- Each ¶ needs topic sentence. Topic sentence is not followed by a restriction/transition sentence(s). An example/illustration is not included. A discussion may be missing. Each paragraph is needs substantial revision. The *Hatchet* quotation and Foster quotation are not connected, and the *Hatchet* quotation is not at all thoroughly explicated and explained.
- Wording is not effective; sentence variety not present. Abstract terms are not defined and are not used effectively. Syntax needs revision. Cohesion is weak; transitions are missing.
- Myriad mechanical errors present.