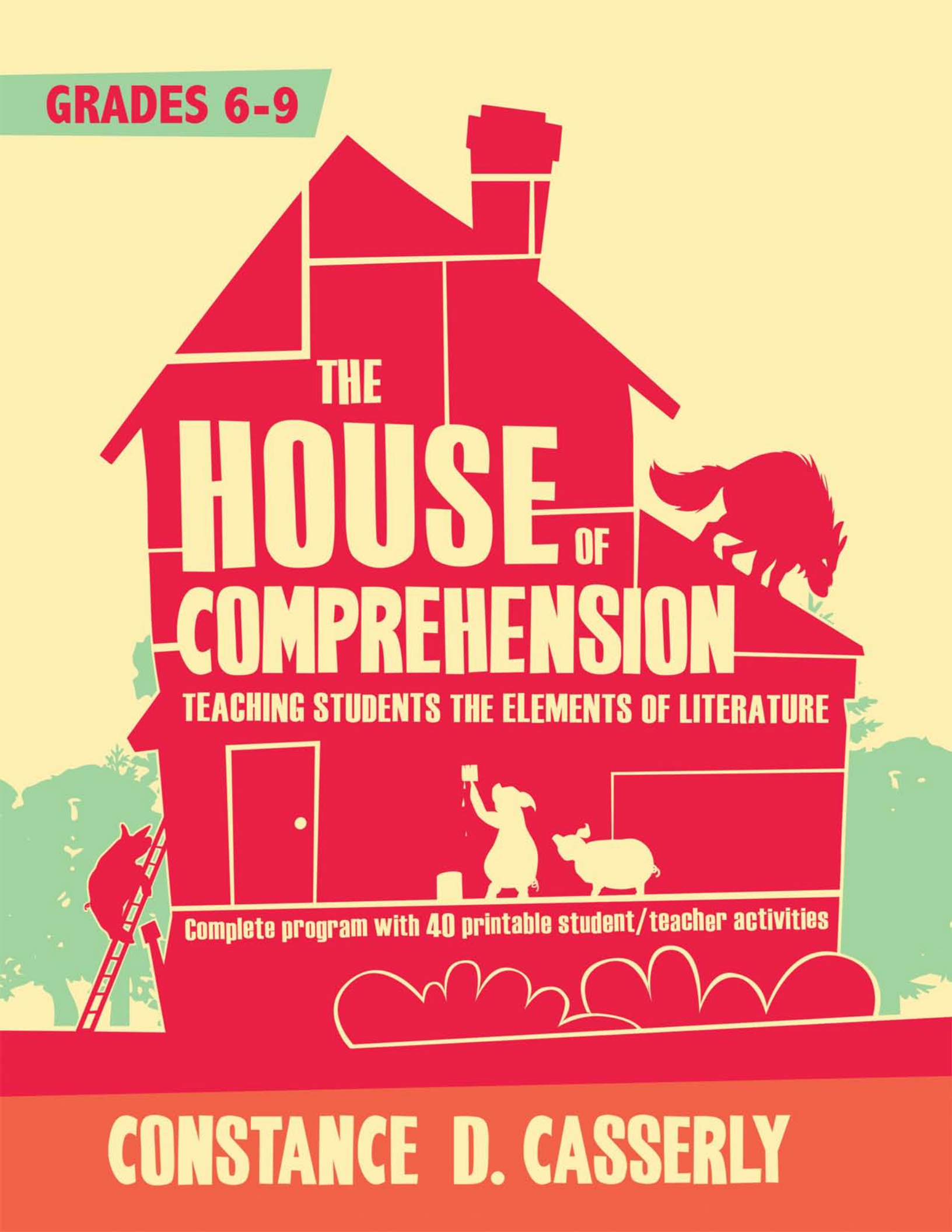


GRADES 6-9



THE HOUSE OF COMPREHENSION

TEACHING STUDENTS THE ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE

Complete program with 40 printable student/teacher activities

CONSTANCE D. CASSERLY

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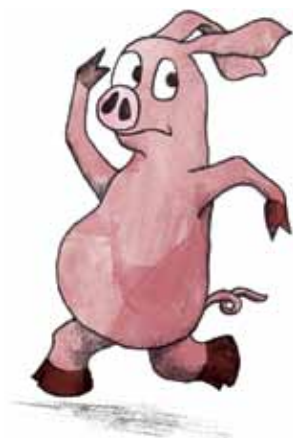
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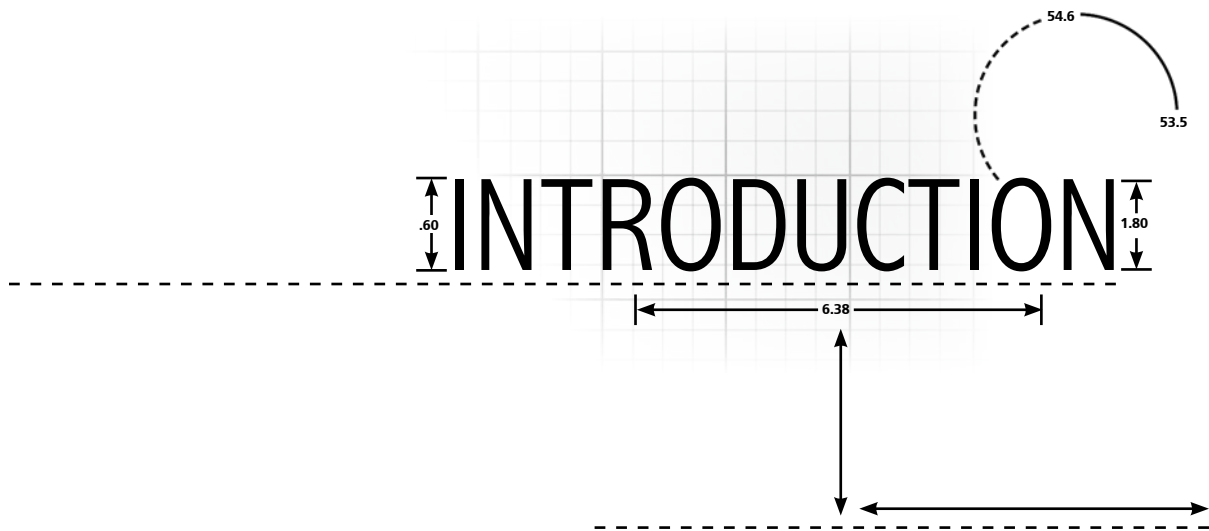
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Once upon a time, three pigs built separate houses. Pig A constructed his of straw. The Big Bad Wolf blew it down. Pig B erected his of twigs. Once again the Big Bad Wolf destroyed it with a few blusters of breath. Then Pig C tried his hand at building a house. He mortared brick on top of brick. This time, the Big Bad Wolf wasted his breath.

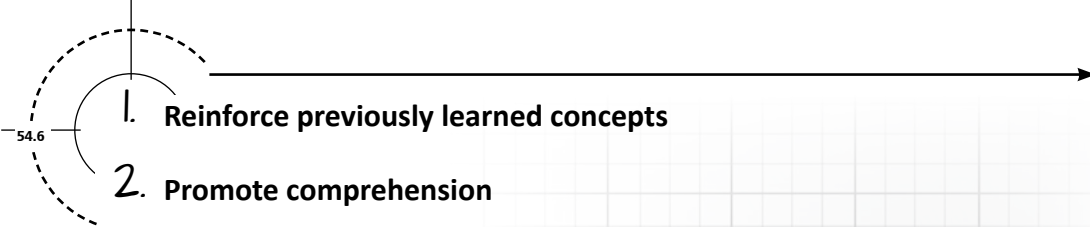
Pig C laughed and laughed, reveling in his understanding of structure, while the wolf collapsed in his front yard, his lungs as deflated as popped balloons. Pig C understood how *all* of the parts of a house join forces to create a substantial whole.

English Language Arts teachers work hard to help students understand structure in literature to build strong academic houses like Pig C's, not fragile ones like those of Pig A and Pig B. Durable houses of comprehension expand knowledge, enhance perception of the structure of texts, and develop strong reading skills that will last students a lifetime.

Think of the elements of literature—character, plot/conflict, setting, theme, symbols, point of view, and tone—as the framework of a house. What is the character of the house? Is it an A-frame, a two-story colonial, a thatched roof cottage, a mid-century ranch, or a Tudor

mansion? Evaluate the setting: is the house in the desert, a city, the prairie, or nestled on a mountainside? Does it have an oceanfront view, look out onto a suburban development, or is it shaded by maple trees in a small town? When you enter the house, you begin to see the plot—the floor plan. Is there a smooth flow to the rooms? Can the occupants grow and thrive? The details embellish the interior design. They create a tone, suggest a theme, and use symbols and point of view to round out the structure of the dwelling. After all, every house, like a story, does make a statement.

The House of Comprehension program helps teachers and students:

- 
- 1. Reinforce previously learned concepts**
 - 2. Promote comprehension**
 - 3. Instill inductive, deductive, critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills orally and in writing**
 - 4. Communicate specific objectives, assessments, and outcomes**
 - 5. Address every type of learner: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic**
 - 6. Insure that students are active intellectual participants in their education**
 - 7. Expose students to activities that are inspiring, interactive, and evocative**

Closing the achievement gap between students who work at or above grade level and those who perform below level is a key goal for educators. The activities in this book enable teachers to reach both proficient and non-proficient students and to help them all advance their skill levels. These lessons prove that learning can be invigorating. They never fail to initiate stimulating small and large group discussions and clear, focused writing.

Most states have adopted the Common Core Standards. The lessons in *The House of Comprehension* were created to insure that students meet or exceed the knowledge, skills, and understanding of the elements of literature and the writing proficiency that they must demonstrate. When teachers integrate these activities into their plans along with their own assignments and assessments, they can be assured that they are addressing the following Common Core Standards:

Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Text

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Writing Standards

- Text Types and Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

Language Standards

- Conventions of Standard English
- Knowledge of Language
- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Speaking & Listening Standards

- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Each one of the activities addresses one or more Common Core Standards. Together, they form a solid Common Core foundation by presenting students with multiple opportunities to advance their abilities, skills, and comprehension. Charts at the end of this section show all the activities that can be used to teach each Common Core Standard.

Using the elements of literature as building blocks, students and the teacher embrace the hierarchy of Bloom's Taxonomy. They *remember and understand* what they note, *apply* that understanding along with their prior knowledge by asking questions as well as by comparing and contrasting, *analyze* the various components they encounter, *evaluate* how each element connects to and enhances the others, and *synthesize* all of the information they gather. They understand that if the story is to provide a solid structure, it must contain *all* of the elements of literature.

Students will learn to distinguish between and understand the importance of every component. They will recognize that the story and the elements create a durable whole by working together. Incorporating each of these factors into the study of any book will enable students to explain, orally and in writing, whether any story creates a house of straw, of twigs, or of bricks.

The House of Comprehension offers teachers a practical, flexible, and complete program that enriches their students' education and enables learners to build resilient academic houses that will survive any Big Bad Wolf.

ACTIVITIES FOR COMMON CORE STANDARDS

READING.....p. 6

WRITING.....p. 8

SPEAKING & LISTENING.....p. 10

LANGUAGE.....p. 12

PREVIEW TEACHER NOTES

- The numbers of the Anchor Standards give a broad view, but each one corresponds with a grade-specific number. The Anchor Standards condense the information; i.e., R1 is a reduced version of RL1 and RI1.
- For the full-length versions, teachers can refer to each grade-specific Standard.
<http://www.corestandards.org/ela-literacy>



Key Ideas and Details

- R1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

<i>What Do I Know? How Do I Know It?</i> (p. 52)	<i>Green Light! Red Light!</i> (p. 96)
<i>Aha! So This Is What It's About!</i> (p. 55)	<i>Journal Response Letters</i> (p. 99)
<i>Time for Body Building</i> (p. 58)	<i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102)
<i>Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge</i> (p. 61)	<i>Author, Author, What's Your Purpose?</i> (p. 105)
<i>Let's Second That Emotion</i> (p. 64)	<i>What's In a Theme?</i> (p. 113)
<i>Why Did You Do That?</i> (p. 68)	<i>If the Theme Fits...Use It!</i> (p. 117)
<i>What's My Line: Protagonist or Antagonist?</i> (p. 70)	<i>Symbols Hold the Key</i> (p. 120)
<i>Plotting Along</i> (p. 74)	<i>Symbols: They Represent!</i> (p. 124)
<i>It's Complicated!</i> (p. 78)	<i>What's Your Point?</i> (p. 126)
<i>What's the Conflict?</i> (p. 80)	<i>Starring...ME!</i> (p. 132)
<i>It Is the Cause</i> (p. 83)	<i>Pairing Up</i> (p. 134)
<i>Gender Issues</i> (p. 85)	<i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137)
<i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87)	<i>Story Review</i> (p. 145)
<i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89)	

- R2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

<i>Aha! So This Is What It's About!</i> (p. 55)	<i>If the Theme Fits...Use It!</i> (p. 117)
<i>Green Light! Red Light!</i> (p. 96)	<i>Symbols Hold the Key</i> (p. 120)
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<i>What's In a Theme?</i> (p. 113)	<i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137)

- R3.** Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

<i>Time for Body Building</i> (p. 58)	<i>It Is the Cause</i> (p. 83)
<i>Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge</i> (p. 61)	<i>Gender Issues</i> (p. 85)
<i>Let's Second That Emotion</i> (p. 64)	<i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87)
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<i>It's Complicated!</i> (p. 78)	<i>Pairing Up</i> (p. 134)
<i>What's the Conflict?</i> (p. 80)	<i>Story Review</i> (p. 145)

Craft and Structure

- R4.** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Aha! So This Is What It's About! (p. 55)

Green Light! Red Light! (p. 96)

Journal Response Letters (p. 99)

What Was I Thinking? (p. 102)

Symbols Hold the Key (p. 120)

Symbols: They Represent! (p. 124)

Let's Tone Up (p. 137)

Story Review (p. 145)

- R5.** Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Green Light! Red Light! (p. 96)

Journal Response Letters (p. 99)

What Was I Thinking? (p. 102)

- R6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Green Light! Red Light! (p. 96)

Journal Response Letters (p. 99)

What's Your Point? (p. 126)

Starring...ME! (p. 132)

Let's Tone Up (p. 137)

Story Review (p. 145)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- R7.** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

If the Theme Fits... Use It! (p. 117)

- R8.** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Symbols: They Represent! (p. 124)

- R9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

What's In a Theme? (p. 113)

If the Theme Fits...Use It! (p. 117)

Symbols Hold the Key (p. 120)

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- R10.** Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

What's the Conflict? (p. 80)

What's In a Theme? (p. 113)

If the Theme Fits...Use It! (p. 117)

Symbols Hold the Key (p. 120)

Symbols: They Represent! (p. 124)

Starring...ME! (p. 132)

Let's Tone Up (p. 137)

Text Types and Purposes

W1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

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|--|---|
| <i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41) | <i>Green Light! Red Light!</i> (p. 96) |
| <i>What Do I Know? How Do I Know It?</i> (p. 52) | <i>Journal Response Letters</i> (p. 99) |
| <i>Aha! So This Is What It's About!</i> (p. 55) | <i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102) |
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| <i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87) | <i>Story Review Module</i> (p. 145) |
| <i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89) | |

W2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

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|--|---|
| <i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41) | <i>Journal Response Letters</i> (p. 99) |
| <i>Time for Body Building</i> (p. 58) | <i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102) |
| <i>Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge</i> (p. 61) | <i>Author, Author, What's Your Purpose?</i> (p. 105) |
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| <i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89) | <i>Story Review Module</i> (p. 145) |
| <i>Green Light! Red Light!</i> (p. 96) | |

W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

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|---|---|
| <i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41) | <i>Starring...ME!</i> (p. 132) |
| <i>What's Your Point?</i> (p. 126) | <i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137) |

Production and Distribution of Writing

W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

<i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41)	<i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89)
<i>What's My Line: Protagonist or Antagonist?</i> (p. 70)	<i>What's Your Point?</i> (p. 126)
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<i>Gender Issues</i> (p. 85)	<i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137)
<i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87)	<i>Story Review Module</i> (p. 145)

W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

<i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41)	<i>Starring...ME!</i> (p. 132)
<i>What's Your Point?</i> (p. 126)	<i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137)

W6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Story Review Module (p. [145](#))

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

If the Theme Fits...Use It! (p. [117](#))

W9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

<i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41)	<i>Starring...ME!</i> (p. 132)
<i>Symbols Hold the Key</i> (p. 120)	<i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137)
<i>Symbols: They Represent!</i> (p. 124)	

Range of Writing

W10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

<i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41)	<i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89)
<i>What Do I Know? How Do I Know It?</i> (p. 52)	<i>Green Light! Red Light!</i> (p. 96)
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<i>Gender Issues</i> (p. 85)	<i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137)
<i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87)	<i>Story Review Module</i> (p. 145)

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

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|---|--|
| <i>What Do I Know? How Do I Know It?</i> (p. 52) | <i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102) |
| <i>Aha! So This Is What It's About!</i> (p. 55) | <i>Author, Author, What's Your Purpose?</i> (p. 105) |
| <i>Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge</i> (p. 61) | <i>What's In a Theme?</i> (p. 113) |
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| <i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89) | |

SL2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>Aha! So This Is What It's About!</i> (p. 55) | <i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102) |
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| <i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87) | <i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137) |
| <i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89) | |

SL3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

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|---|--|
| <i>Let's Second That Emotion</i> (p. 64) | <i>Author, Author, What's Your Purpose?</i> (p. 105) |
| <i>Why Did You Do That?</i> (p. 68) | <i>What's In a Theme?</i> (p. 113) |
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| <i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102) | <i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137) |

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

<i>Time for Body Building</i> (p. 58)	<i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102)
<i>Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge</i> (p. 61)	<i>Author, Author, What's Your Purpose?</i> (p. 105)
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PREVIEW

Conventions of Standard English

L1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

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| <i>What's the Conflict?</i> (p. 80) | <i>Starring...ME!</i> (p. 132) |
| <i>It Is the Cause</i> (p. 83) | <i>Pairing Up</i> (p. 134) |
| <i>Gender Issues</i> (p. 85) | <i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137) |
| <i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87) | <i>Story Review Module</i> (p. 145) |

L2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41) | <i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89) |
| <i>What Do I Know? How Do I Know It?</i> (p. 52) | <i>Green Light! Red Light!</i> (p. 96) |
| <i>Aha! So This Is What It's About!</i> (p. 55) | <i>Journal Response Letters</i> (p. 99) |
| <i>Time for Body Building</i> (p. 58) | <i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102) |
| <i>Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge</i> (p. 61) | <i>Author, Author, What's Your Purpose?</i> (p. 105) |
| <i>Let's Second That Emotion</i> (p. 64) | <i>What's In a Theme?</i> (p. 113) |
| <i>Why Did You Do That?</i> (p. 68) | <i>If the Theme Fits...Use It!</i> (p. 117) |
| <i>What's My Line: Protagonist or Antagonist?</i> (p. 70) | <i>Symbols Hold the Key</i> (p. 120) |
| <i>Plotting Along</i> (p. 74) | <i>Symbols: They Represent!</i> (p. 124) |
| <i>It's Complicated!</i> (p. 78) | <i>What's Your Point?</i> (p. 126) |
| <i>What's the Conflict?</i> (p. 80) | <i>Starring...ME!</i> (p. 132) |
| <i>It Is the Cause</i> (p. 83) | <i>Pairing Up</i> (p. 134) |
| <i>Gender Issues</i> (p. 85) | <i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137) |
| <i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87) | <i>Story Review Module</i> (p. 145) |

Knowledge of Language

- L3.** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

<i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41)	<i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89)
<i>Aha! So This Is What It's About!</i> (p. 55)	<i>Journal Response Letters</i> (p. 99)
<i>Time for Body Building</i> (p. 58)	<i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102)
<i>Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge</i> (p. 61)	<i>Author, Author, What's Your Purpose?</i> (p. 105)
<i>Let's Second That Emotion</i> (p. 64)	<i>What's In a Theme?</i> (p. 113)
<i>Why Did You Do That?</i> (p. 68)	<i>If the Theme Fits...Use It!</i> (p. 117)
<i>What's My Line: Protagonist or Antagonist?</i> (p. 70)	<i>Symbols Hold the Key</i> (p. 120)
<i>It's Complicated!</i> (p. 78)	<i>Symbols: They Represent!</i> (p. 124)
<i>What's the Conflict?</i> (p. 80)	<i>What's Your Point?</i> (p. 126)
<i>It Is the Cause</i> (p. 83)	<i>Starring...ME!</i> (p. 132)
<i>Gender Issues</i> (p. 85)	<i>Pairing Up</i> (p. 134)
<i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87)	<i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137)

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- L4.** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

<i>Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge</i> (p. 61)	<i>Gender Issues</i> (p. 85)
<i>Let's Second That Emotion</i> (p. 64)	<i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87)
<i>Why Did You Do That?</i> (p. 68)	<i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89)
<i>What's My Line: Protagonist or Antagonist?</i> (p. 70)	<i>What Was I Thinking?</i> (p. 102)
<i>What's the Conflict?</i> (p. 80)	<i>Author, Author, What's Your Purpose?</i> (p. 105)
<i>It Is the Cause</i> (p. 83)	<i>Pairing Up</i> (p. 134)

- L5.** Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

Let's Tone Up (p. [137](#))

- L6.** Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

<i>Ten Sentence Format</i> (p. 41)	<i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i> (p. 89)
<i>Time for Body Building</i> (p. 58)	<i>What's In a Theme?</i> (p. 113)
<i>Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge</i> (p. 61)	<i>If the Theme Fits...Use It!</i> (p. 117)
<i>Let's Second That Emotion</i> (p. 64)	<i>Symbols Hold the Key</i> (p. 120)
<i>Why Did You Do That?</i> (p. 68)	<i>Symbols: They Represent!</i> (p. 124)
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<i>What's the Conflict?</i> (p. 80)	<i>Starring...ME!</i> (p. 132)
<i>It Is the Cause</i> (p. 83)	<i>Pairing Up</i> (p. 134)
<i>Gender Issues</i> (p. 85)	<i>Let's Tone Up</i> (p. 137)
<i>Conflict Connections</i> (p. 87)	

TIMING OF ACTIVITIES

The activities in *The House of Comprehension* are keyed to the timing as you work through a piece of literature. Some of the activities work best when you start teaching the new piece of literature, while others work better as students study the literature further. This list shows you when each activity in the book is appropriate for use.

Exposition

- What Do I Know? How Do I Know it?*.....Page 52
What's Your Point?.....Page 126

Inciting Moment

- Aha! So This Is What It's About!*.....Page 55

Rising Action

- Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge*.....Page 61
Let's Second That Emotion.....Page 64
Why Did You Do That?.....Page 68
What's My Line? Protagonist or Antagonist?.....Page 70
(Use this anytime between the latter part of the Rising Action and the Falling Action)
What's the Conflict?.....Page 80
What Was I Thinking?.....Page 102
Symbols Hold the Key.....Page 120
(Start this activity during the latter part of the Rising Action. Students can add to it through the Resolution.)
Starring...ME!.....Page 132
(Introduce this during the latter part of the Rising Action, but before the Climax.)

Climax

- Why Did You Do That?*.....Page 68
(Although this works well when students analyze the Rising Action situations, it is an excellent way for students to analyze the protagonist's choice in the climactic situation.)

Falling Action

- Let's Second That Emotion*.....Page 64
What's My Line? Protagonist or Antagonist?.....Page 70
Author, Author, What's Your Purpose?.....Page 105
What's In a Theme?.....Page 113
(Use this when enough information exists to analyze the story for theme—during the Falling Action or Resolution.)
If the Theme Fits...Use It.....Page 117
(Use this activity either in the Falling Action or during the Resolution, but AFTER the *What's In a Theme?* activity.)
Symbols: They Represent.....Page 124

Resolution

<i>What's the Conflict?</i>	Page 80
(This activity can be introduced during the Rising Action, but works better at the Resolution, as students have more information. Students can complete the activity during the Rising Action and do it again at the Resolution, and then compare their results.)	
<i>It Is the Cause</i>	Page 83
<i>Gender Issues</i>	Page 85
<i>ConflictConnections</i>	Page 87
<i>Setting It Up</i>	Page 94

Throughout the Piece of Literature

These activities can be used when teachers introduce an element, or whenever they want to check students' comprehension

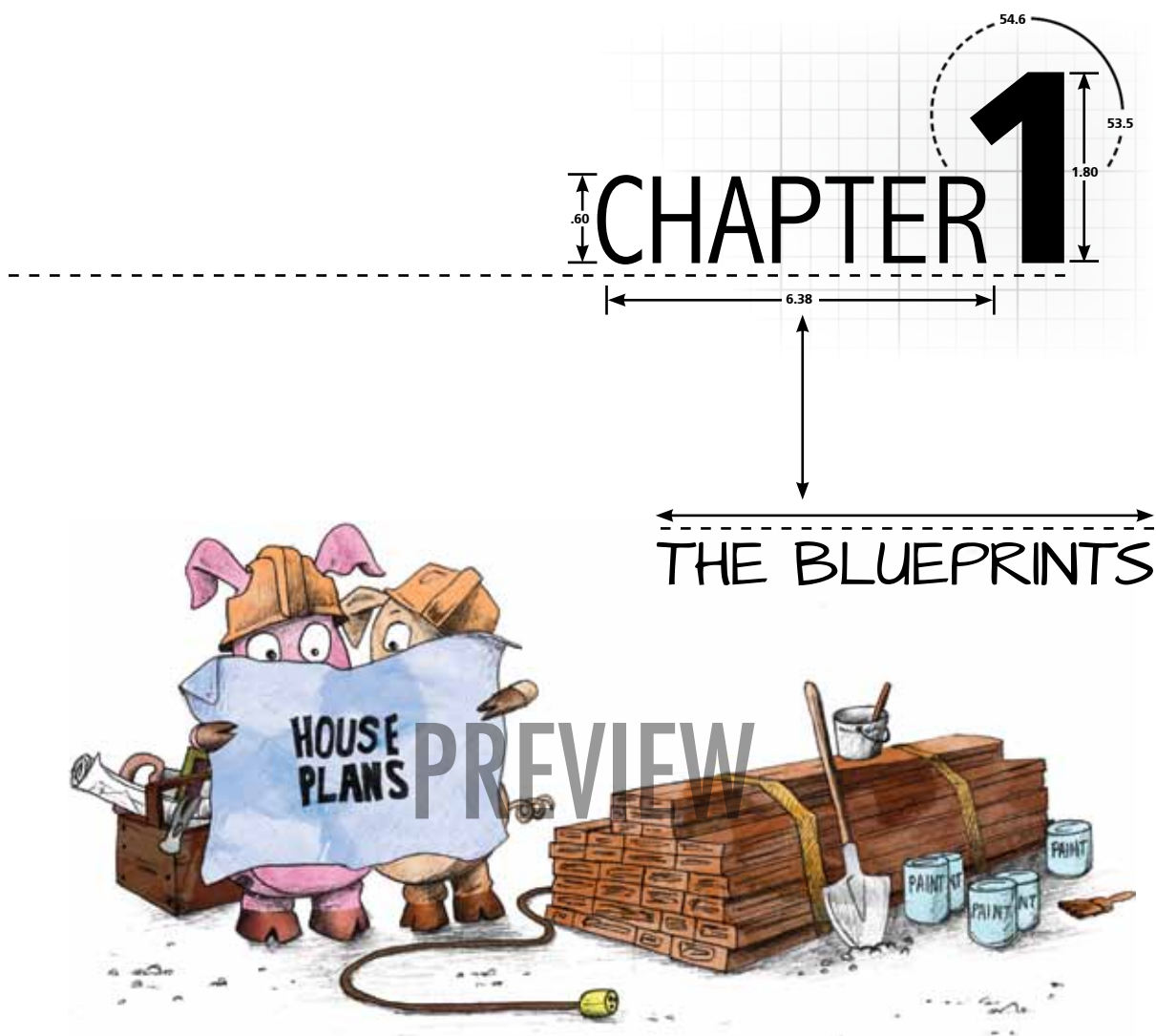
<i>Time for Body Building</i>	Page 58
<i>Plotting Along</i>	Page 74
<i>It's Complicated</i>	Page 78
(Use <i>Plotting Along</i> and <i>It's Complicated</i> together.)	
<i>What Kind of World Does the Author Create?</i>	Page 89
<i>Green Light! Red Light!</i>	Page 96
<i>Journal Response Letters</i>	Page 99
<i>Pairing Up</i>	Page 134
(This can be used any time after the first reading segment but prior to the Resolution.)	
<i>Let's Tone Up</i>	Page 137
(Students will fill out these activity sheets as they read the story.)	

After the Piece of Literature is Completed

<i>Character Collage</i>	Page 147
<i>Let the Music Live</i>	Page 148
<i>Analyze This!</i>	Page 28
<i>Comparing Books and Movies</i>	Page 151
<i>Class Project: Newspaper</i>	Page 153
<i>SCORE with the Literature Super Bowl</i>	Page 160

For Any Reading Selection at Any Time

<i>Taboo Words & Phrases</i>	Page 31
<i>Reel Them In!</i>	Page 36
<i>Ten-Sentence Format</i>	Page 41



Lesson plans that lead to success achieve a number of goals: they communicate specific assessments and outcomes, they include clear teacher-led and student-centered activities, and they offer the opportunity for students to accept ownership of their work.

When teachers create lesson plans for analyzing literature, they should think like architects. They are drawing the blueprints for each student's house of comprehension. There are two lesson-planning tools in this chapter that help teachers organize their instruction for each piece of literature they study throughout the year. Teachers should start the planning of every new literature unit using these two charts: **Unit Structure** and **Activities Plan**.

Lesson design must take into account local, state, and federal requirements, as well as the school district's literature program of studies. Literature lessons reinforce previously learned concepts, promote comprehension, and instill deductive, critical, and analytic thinking skills, both orally and in writing.

Teachers must consider student proficiency levels and learning styles as they plan. Every student will exhibit right, left, or whole-brain tendencies in how they learn, depending on the

subject area. Activities must address the issues of auditory, kinesthetic, and visual learners. Special Education children are often merged into mainstream classes, and their particular needs must also be addressed.

Teachers must also consider *how* they want to cover the facts and ideas they present. They need to offer activities where students can hear, read, think, write, speak, and do as often as possible. Studies have shown that within a week, students forget around 80 percent of the material taught if the class offers little student involvement besides reading and listening; on the other hand, students remember material in direct proportion to the number of activities that enable them to think, to write, and to speak. When teachers choose activities that incorporate all three actions, students retain around 90 percent of the information covered. The activities in *The House of Comprehension* are designed to actively engage students in the learning process.

Teachers need to know where they want to end up before they plan the first day. Schools in most states now expect teachers to build their lessons around the Common Core Standards. By choosing which objectives to pursue for each unit, teachers will know what they want their students to accomplish before they create their daily lesson plans. The backward planning concept popularized by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in their book, *Understanding by Design* (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998), is useful for planning literature units. It allows teachers to focus their ideas and desires for their students, clarifying what they will teach and how they will teach the material.

The **Unit Structure** chart ([page 20](#)) is the tool for planning each literature unit. First, the teacher notes the objectives of the unit. The Common Core Standards to be met are listed as objectives, as well as other district or state-mandated goals. Then the teacher completes the basic information for that unit:

The diagram illustrates the Unit Structure chart. It features a circular path with five main sections: **WHO** is learning (grade level, student needs, and learning styles), **WHAT** students will be studying (the piece of literature), **WHEN** (time frame), **WHY** (lesson goals), and **HOW** to teach the material. A horizontal timeline at the top right shows a path from 54.6 to 6.38, with an arrow pointing right.

The **Activities Plan** ([page 22](#)) expands the “How” section of the **Unit Structure** chart. Decide which activities in this book to use with each reading assignment and fill those in the chart, along with the element of literature being taught and the part of the book that relates to the activity. The **Activities Plan** chart is created for a book of approximately 200-300 pages; all of the rows do not need to be filled in for shorter texts, and more can be added for longer

books, or where teachers feel that more instruction on an element is needed.

Students who need more reinforcement in specific areas can complete more activities if necessary. Some activities can be assigned for warm-ups and homework to save class time for discussions about the book.

This method of planning works well in many ways: it is flexible, and it clarifies the tie-in between the desired objectives, the material to be studied, student needs and learning styles, and teaching methods.

Samples of each of these planning charts, **Unit Structure** ([page 20](#)) and the **Activities Plan** ([page 22](#)), are completed for the novel *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell.

The lesson planning charts are also very effective when teachers need to conference with administrators. They specifically show what objectives will frame the literature study as well as when and how teachers will address them. With some tweaking and explanations, the **Activities Plan** can be used to create substitute plans quickly when needed. The charts also allow for flexibility when a teacher prefers to have students work individually or in groups instead of participating in whole-class discussions, or vice versa.

PREVIEW

UNIT STRUCTURE

General Information

Notes

Objectives

Who

What

PREVIEW

When

Why

How

UNIT STRUCTURE

General Information

Notes

Objectives

Anchor Standards: R 1, 2, 3

Who

8th grade regular class

Includes 5 mainstreamed SPED students; all students show a general understanding of character, plot, setting, POV, tone, but need a more thorough study of conflict, theme, symbols. Comprehension needs to be checked periodically

What

Animal Farm (George Orwell)

When

October

12 85-minute block periods

Why

Meets POS objective for studying allegory, fable, and satire as well as how the elements of literature create story framework

How

Directed and Constructivist Lessons/activities, assignments

Lessons on allegory, fable, satire; essay format; student manifesto project; study packets (vocabulary, study questions, journal topics)

ACTIVITIES PLAN

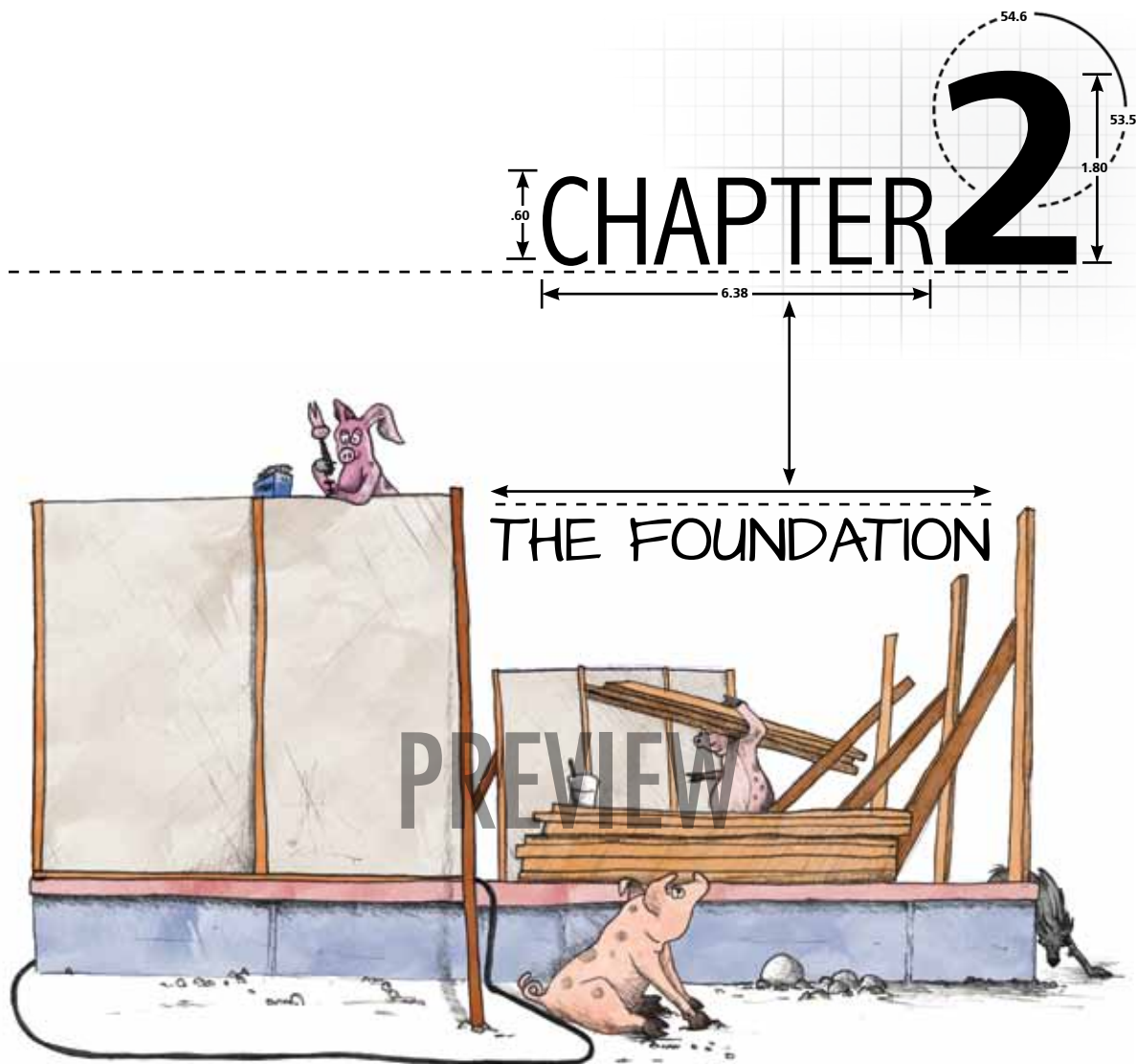
Novel: _____

Element of Literature	Chapters	Activities
	PREVIEW	

ACTIVITIES PLAN

Novel: Animal Farm

Element of Literature	Chapters	Activities
Pre-Reading	1	Aha! So This Is What It's About!
Comprehension	Whole Book	Journals: Response Letters
Character	Whole Book	Time for Body Building
Character	5	Let's Second That Emotion
Character	6	Why Did You Do That?
Character	7	Fact or Opinion? You Be the Judge
Plot/Conflict	Whole Book	Plotting Along
Plot/Conflict	Whole Book	What's the Conflict?
Theme	7	What's In a Theme?
Theme	8	If the Theme Fits... Use It!
Symbols	Whole Book	Symbols Hold the Key
Symbols	Whole Book	Symbols: They Represent!
Setting	Whole Book	What Kind of World Does the Author Create?
Point of View	Whole Book	Starring...ME!
Tone	Whole Book	Let's Tone Up
Novel Review (individual)	End of Book	Character Collage
Novel Review (whole class)	End of Book	SCORE with the Literature Super Bowl



Like building a house, learning starts with a strong foundation. What students already know about literature provides the foundation for the teacher to build on throughout the year. Before teachers can begin to show students how the structure of any text is composed of the elements of literature, they must assess what their students understand, and what depth of knowledge they have learned from previous teaching. By middle school, students should be familiar with all of the elements of literature in this book. Then each year, through high school, they will add complexity to their knowledge and understanding. These elements form the basis of every literature unit—short stories, books, fiction, and narrative nonfiction. Teachers can assess their students’ foundation of knowledge using the activities in the **Literature Review module** in this chapter.

Students need to be able to show their comprehension of the elements of literature through their writing. When they are able to write about what they read, as well as discuss the text, teachers are best able to assess their understanding of the relationship between the elements of literature and story structure. Also, writing about literature allows teachers to address the

Common Core Writing Standards and Language Standards. The **Writing module** in this chapter includes several writing activities that should be used throughout the study of all literature units.

Every day's instruction should end with some closure activity. This chapter includes an **Exit Pass** activity ([page 45](#)), an easy way to ensure that your students take away three ideas, concepts, and/or skills with them at the end of each day.

LITERATURE REVIEW MODULE

—Analyze This!

—Analyze This! Results

Teachers need to begin each year with a review of the elements of literature to assess what students know and what they need to know. The elements of literature must be reviewed by combining them with a piece of literature. Review these elements using **Analyze This!** ([page 28](#)). For this exercise, any short story a teacher chooses will work. This allows instructors to assess the students' understanding of these components. The results will enable teachers to select which elements need to be reinforced and which need to be taught thoroughly.

The **Analyze This! Results** chart helps teachers keep track of what the students know as their foundation in the elements of literature. The simple layout of the chart helps teachers see patterns in the class to determine the critical areas of focus.

Analyze This! is useful not only as a pre-reading assessment, but also as a post-reading review.

WRITING MODULE

—Taboo Words & Phrases

—15 Days to Lose the Taboos

—Reel Them In!

—Ten Sentence Format

Teachers can use the writing activities at any point in the year, but it's best to give the **Taboo Words & Phrases** ([page 32](#)) to students as early in the term as possible. Students should be required to use it for every draft revision. This list is crucial for helping them write clear, specific sentences instead of those with meaningless, vague word choices and structure. Use the activities in **15 Days to Lose the Taboos** ([page 34](#)) to reinforce the **Taboo Words & Phrases**.

Reel Them In! ([page 36](#)) lets students practice one of the most important elements of writing—engaging the reader with a hook. Teachers can introduce this handout in a mini-lesson and have students practice writing hooks before any type of writing assignment.

The **Ten Sentence Format** ([page 41](#)) is a basic building block for students as they practice formal writing skills. Before they can write organized, coherent, and unified essays, they need to master writing the basic parts of a paragraph: the introduction (the hook, the overview or introductory statement, and the thesis statement), the body (three main ideas, each with a supporting detail), and a conclusion.

Once students master these parts, they will learn how to expand the paragraph to a complete essay that includes the same three basics: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Each main idea can be developed with more supporting details that can be augmented with even more particulars. This elasticity is the beauty of the **Ten Sentence Format**. Whether teachers want to require a five-paragraph essay or one with unlimited paragraphs, this format insures that students' writing has a clear focus, includes the three basic writing elements, and is organized, coherent, and unified.

Teachers should use this format for the writing exercises included in the activities, for warm-ups, and even for essay pre-writing outlines.

Why is the **Ten Sentence Format** so important?

- It reinforces the elements of a paragraph
- It offers a quick check for reading comprehension anytime teachers want a prose explanation and not a bulleted list
- It shows students how they can expand the information from paragraph format into an essay

Besides writing practice, this is also an excellent format for a quick quiz. Teachers can use the **Ten Sentence Format** as a short answer assessment during a novel study when they want to check reading comprehension and students' understanding of the element of literature under study, as well as assess the students' writing progress. For these quizzes, leave out the hook and overview statement since they are geared more for essays.

A sample of the power of the **Ten Sentence Format** follows on [pages 43-44](#). The "Before" paragraph is an example of one students may write before they have used the activities in the writing module. The "After" example is a revision of that paragraph, using the **Ten Sentence Format** and incorporating ideas from the **15 Ways to Lose the Taboos** activity and the **Reel Them In!** activity. The writing topic in the **Ten Sentence Format** example is the follow-up exercise from the **Let's Second That Emotion** activity ([page 64](#)): *Select one of the situations you identified and choose an emotion that would have better served the character as he/she strove to reach his/her goal. Explain your choice and defend it with supporting textual information.*

By using these writing activities as often as possible, teachers will note marked progress in their students' writing, as well as in their comprehension of the literature studied.

CLOSURE

—Exit Pass

The **Exit Pass** ([page 45](#)) provides the closure on a lesson. Students complete the **Exit Pass** in the last five to ten minutes of class, to show what they learned that day. The **Exit Pass** lets teachers assess whether or not students are reaching the preset goals. If they are not, the teacher can question students for clarification and can modify lessons before the next class to keep students on track. It provides another way for teachers to regularly check the foundational knowledge of all the students.

ANALYZE THIS!

Novel/Short Story Review

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Address each of the following points with specific facts, details, and examples from the story. Your answers will show how well you know and understand what you read. On the day of the review, be sure to bring up any areas where you need clarification.

1. Who is the protagonist? The antagonist? Name and identify other important characters.

Protagonist: _____

Antagonist: _____

Other characters: _____

2. Describe the setting/locale:

3. What is the central conflict/problem that the protagonist is facing? Explain whether it is psychological, physical, emotional, spiritual, or a mixture of all of these issues.

4. Describe three ways in which the protagonist's and antagonist's personalities are revealed (actions, reactions, words, other character's words, etc).

Protagonist: _____

Antagonist: _____

5. Reveal the five stages of the plot:

Exposition: _____

Rising action (one complication per line): Just give the complication, not the main character's responses. _____

Climax: _____

Falling action (one event per line): _____

Resolution: _____

PREVIEW

6. Describe the tone/mood using a minimum of five specific adjectives or expressions:

7. Give three symbols and explain what they represent.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

8. State the theme—the universal message that the author imparted. Explain how you derived this idea. _____

THIS! RESULTS

Class/Period: _____ Date: _____

HP = Highly Proficient

P = Proficient

SP = Some Proficiency

NP = Not Proficient

[illegible]



TEACHER NOTES

Taboo Words & Phrases

1. The first day of school, hand out the **Taboo Words & Phrases** sheet to every student. They are to refer to it every time that they revise a draft of an essay, an original poem or fiction piece, or a narrative article. Even if students revise only for these particular words and phrases, their writing will dramatically improve.
2. When students use these weak and clichéd words and phrases, their writing is vague, emotionless, and *tells* instead of *shows*. No matter what type of writing, students should strive to create word pictures; to *show*, not *tell*, and to use concrete, specific nouns and adjectives.
3. Verbs are the backbone of writing, and should always show action and the emotion of the subject performing the action.
4. Repeat this information over and over to the students and address it on their final drafts. **Taboo Words & Phrases** also works as a poster to hang in the classroom. For a poster, add the following information:

Effective Writing:

- Shows instead of tells
- Creates word pictures
- Uses concrete, specific nouns and adjectives
- Uses strong verbs to form the writing's backbone; verbs must show action and emotion

NOTE: *As a visual activity and for reinforcement, have various students come into the room, and ask the rest of the class to choose a verb that shows not only how each person moved but also the emotion he/she expressed in his/her movements, i.e., sidled, strutted, slumped, etc.*

TABOO WORDS & PHRASES

Just say

NO

to the following words and phrases in your writing:


1. -Go, went, (have) gone, going
 -Get, got, (have) gotten
 -Walk, walked, (have) walked
 -Look, looked, (have) looked
 -See, saw, (have) seen

These verbs show no emotion and give weak and vague action. Say **NO** to them!

2. ... "Has been there for me" ... So cliché!
3. ... Starting sentences with *it* or *there* and a *to be* verb; these are wasted words that say nothing.
4. ... Second Person: *you* (except in dialogue); NEVER talk to the reader except to give instructions.
5. ... Overuse of *to be* verbs (*am, is, are, was, were*) as the main verb in a sentence/phrase.
6. ... *Thing*: Empty, empty word!
7. ... Indefinite pronouns (*any* or *some* plus *body* or *thing*, etc.).
8. ... Starting too many sentences with *I* and beginning any two consecutive sentences with the same word.

REMEMBER:

ONLY **YOU** CAN PREVENT DULL WRITING
THAT TELLS INSTEAD OF SHOWS!



TEACHER NOTES

15 Days to Lose the Taboos

1. Make sure students refer to the **Taboo Words & Phrases** chart while they complete the activities.
2. Have students complete one of the activities each day, using warm-ups or rough drafts of current pieces.
3. The time limit for Days 1 through 12 should be 10 to 15 minutes.
4. Allot 20 minutes for days 13 through 15.
5. The activities do not have to be finished in any specific order, but an effective start is often with the weak verbs.
6. When the lesson calls for word lists (days 1 through 5), instruct students to set aside a separate section in their notebooks for these and any other word lists they will create throughout the year. Note: students may also make 15-word lists for the five senses, for words that express various emotions (joy, sadness, anger, etc.), for colors, and many more.
7. This work can be checked in a variety of ways:
 - During the activity, teachers can walk around and check that students are on task, but have them turn in all of the revised work with the final draft of the assignment.
 - Students can keep all of the revisions in their notebooks, to turn in on an assigned day, and receive a grade separate from the essay, poem, fiction piece or article.
 - Each activity can be graded as a separate entity.

15 DAYS TO LOSE THE TABOOS

Revise warm-ups/rough drafts for the following Taboo Words & Phrases:

DAY 1: go, went, (have, has, had) gone, going

Make a list of 15 verbs that can replace this weak verb

DAY 2: get, got (have, has, had) gotten

Make a list of 15 verbs to replace this weak verb

DAY 3: walk, walked (have, has, had) walked

Make a list of 15 verbs to replace this weak verb

DAY 4: look, looked, (have has, had) looked

Make a list of 15 verbs to replace this weak verb

DAY 5: see, saw, (have, has, had) seen

Make a list of 15 verbs to replace this weak verb

DAY 5: "Has been there for me"

Make a list of 10 words to replace this horribly clichéd phrase

DAY 6: Starting sentences with *it* or *there* and a *to be* verb
(*am, is, are, was, were; have, has, had*)

Rewrite 5 sentences that previously began with *it/there* and a *to be* verb

DAY 7:

Same activity as Day 6.

DAY 8:

1. Replace any usage of second person *you*, except when it is used in dialogue
2. Rewrite 10 sentences, changing from second person to first or third

DAY 9:

1. Find 10 sentences using *am, is, are, was, were* as the main verb
2. Revise those sentences, replacing them with verbs that show action and emotion

DAY 10:

Same activity as Day 9.

DAY 11:

1. Vertically number a sheet of paper from 1 to 15.
2. Using a warm-up or a rough draft of a piece, write the first word of every sentence for 15 consecutive sentences.
3. Rewrite the sentences, making sure that each one begins with a different word.

DAY 12:

1. Using warm-ups or a rough draft, find 15 times where you used the word *thing* and circle it each time.
2. Revise the sentences, replacing the word *thing* with a concrete, specific noun.

DAY 13:

1. Revise a warm-up or rough draft, replacing any of the items on the Taboo Words & Phrases.
2. Label it with today's date and the word *revised*.

DAY 14 AND 15:

The same as Day 13.

PREVIEW



TEACHER NOTES

Reel Them In!

To reel in the reader, the writer must bait a “hook.” The writing must **be specific**.

Reel Them In! has 20 exercises where students can practice writing hooks and being specific. Teachers can use them in a variety of ways:

- A. For warm-ups:
 - Part 1: Choose an exercise, and give students 10 - 15 minutes to complete it.
 - Part 2: Give students 5 minutes to write a hook using their response from Part 1 (for exercises 1 - 4, they should choose one of their responses).
- B. Print the list of exercises. Let students pick one, write their response, and then write a hook using that response.
- C. Use these for practice every day or periodically, until you feel the students are proficient in writing hooks. They are always good to use as students finish tests and their peers are still working, or anytime there are a few minutes to fill.

For each response, let students choose the type of response (fiction, narrative non-fiction, personal essay, descriptive piece, expository essay, newspaper story, etc.) or assign the type of response they should write.

REEL THEM IN!

Good writers know that they must snag readers with the first few sentences. If they don't, chances are the piece will sink into oblivion. Think of the lead sentences as a fishing hook, and every word that forms each sentence as the bait. The hook has one main purpose: luring readers to the writer's world. Readers are more apt to keep reading if the writer grabs their attention.

TYPES OF HOOKS:

- **Anecdote:** relates an emotional or exciting part of a situation
The longer my fingertips wrapped themselves in the scarlet and gold cashmere scarf, the more my desire for it mushroomed. I closed my eyes, visualizing my neck decorated like October's maple trees. My yearning blocked any common sense from my brain. "Just this once," I argued to myself as my hands edged the treasure toward my jacket pocket.
- **Description of person, place or object:** paints a word picture
At eleven o'clock every day, Maude hobbled to the wooden bench in the loneliest corner of the park and slumped onto its splintery slats. After easing a wrinkled letter from its envelope, she would study it again and again as tears dripped from her faded blue eyes onto her tattered gray sweater.
- **Example:** Develops a specific instead of a general idea
Many factors can erode teenagers' academic success. Among these are lack of sleep, extra-curricular activities, and procrastination.
- **Stance on an issue:** clarifies the writer's opinion on a controversial point
Any high school that chooses to delay the start of school by an hour or more might as well have a funeral for interscholastic athletics.
- **Startling fact or statement:** to shock the readers
Four out of ten adolescent girls will be the victims of dating abuse.
- **Question:** this is an acceptable format, but is a very, very weak choice. The purpose of writing is to answer the readers' questions.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT WORDS:

- **Strong concrete nouns and adjectives:** help create clear mental pictures. They destroy haziness, erase questions, and incite emotional responses. The use of sensory imagery (sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing) lures readers. Every sentence should contain at least one sensory imagery appeal.
- **Vivid verbs:** Verbs are the backbone of writing. Without vivid verbs, writers' words will collapse. Verbs **MUST** combine the subject's **action** plus his/her **emotion** while performing this action.

EXAMPLES:

Weak noun:

car

Concrete noun:

Ferrari

Weak adjective:

nice

Strong adjective:

sleek

Weak verb:

drove

Vivid verb:

roared

Weak sentence:

The nice car drove into my driveway. It changed my life.

Strong sentence:

The sleek, red Ferrari roared into my driveway that golden fall afternoon, destroying my shy-girl image forever.

PREVIEW

REEL THEM IN!

Exercises

1. Revise the following clichéd expressions to create a fresh word picture:
A. a goofy guy C. a beautiful sight
B. a little pest D. frozen stiff
2. Write a sentence to describe:
A. what you'd hear in an earthquake
B. what you'd smell in a bakery
C. how a raw onion tastes
D. what you'd see at a circus
E. what sandpaper feels like
3. Create a new simile/metaphor:
A. pretty as a picture
B. mad as a wet hen
C. pleased as punch
D. down and out
E. big as all outdoors
4. Write 3 sentences to establish the setting for either:
A. a humorous story that takes place in school, or
B. a sports story mystery
5. Describe the quality of light in this classroom.
6. Begin with, "I Remember." Write as many small memories as you can in the time allotted. If you get stuck, repeat the phrase, "I remember," and keep writing. Let one memory flow into another.
7. Choose a color and list as many things you can think of that you saw today in that color.
8. Describe your morning (from when you woke up until you arrived at school) as specifically as possible.
9. Take Exercise 8, describing your morning, and write about it from a third person point of view.
10. Visualize a place where you feel serene. Write about it.

11. List the people that you have loved.
12. If you were an animal, what would you be? Explain how you fit the characteristics of this animal physically and emotionally.
13. What if: Cinderella didn't live happily ever after?
14. What if: Sleeping Beauty didn't eat the poisoned apple?
15. What if: a troll lived under a nearby bridge?
16. Describe a candy bar you have invented. Draw a picture of the wrapper.
17. If you could meet a fictional character, who would it be? Why?
18. Draw the floor plan of the first house where you remember living.
19. You are sitting in Starbucks, and Bugs Bunny sits down beside you. Write your conversation.
20. Define either pain, joy, jealousy, or sadness following the pattern below: (use at least 4 of the 5 senses)
 - Loneliness is gray.*
 - It sounds like a ringing vacuum.*
 - It smells like mothballs.*
 - It tastes like sawdust.*
 - Loneliness feels like cold, wet rain soaking my cheeks.*



TEACHER NOTES

Ten Sentence Format

Bloom's Taxonomy

- Remember/Understand: describe, discuss, explain, identify
- Apply: compose
- Analyze: infer, differentiate, examine, distinguish
- Evaluate: discuss, select, give your opinion, justify
- Create: hypothesize, imagine, compose

Common Core Standards

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, grades 6-9

Writing: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, W9, W10

Language: L1, L2, L3, L6

What: **Writing About Literature**

When: Use this along with any literature study—Short stories, novels, or narrative non-fiction

Why: The **Ten Sentence Format** activity is a basic building block for students as they practice formal writing skills. Before they can write organized and coherent essays, they need to master writing the basic parts of a paragraph: the introduction (the hook, the overview or introductory statement, and the thesis statement), the body (three main ideas, each with a supporting detail), and a conclusion.

How:

- Assign this activity as an in-class exercise for a warm-up or anytime in class when you want to check students' comprehension and writing skills. Are they able to write about what they read succinctly and coherently, yet with specific details?
- Allot 20 to 30 minutes for students to complete, depending on students' skills.
- Use this activity to assess students' comprehension skills as well as their understanding of paragraph format and structure.
- Optional—after teachers assess the students' writing, they can:
 1. Reinforce the elements of a paragraph through individual or group critique lessons where students exhibit clearer understanding in their revisions (addressing Speaking & Listening Standards), and/or
 2. Have students turn the paragraph into a full-length essay

TEN SENTENCE FORMAT

25 Point total (point value for each sentence in parentheses)

Situation: _____

Hook: _____

_____ (1)

Overview Statement: _____

_____ (1)

Thesis statement: _____

_____ (3)

Main Idea 1: _____

_____ (3)

Supporting Detail #1 w/example: _____

_____ (2)

Main Idea 2: _____

_____ (3)

Supporting Detail #2 w/example: _____

_____ (2)

Main Idea 3: _____

_____ (3)

Supporting Detail #3 w/example: _____

_____ (2)

Concluding Statement: _____

_____ (5)

PREVIEW

TEN SENTENCE FORMAT

From *Animal Farm* by George Orwell

ACTIVITY (from **Let's Second that Emotion!**):

Select one of the situations you identified and choose an emotion that would have better served the character as he/she strove to reach his/her goal. Explain your choice and defend it with supporting textual information.

BEFORE LEARNING THE TEN SENTENCE FORMAT:

Snowball thought that the windmill would make less work for the animals. He might have been smart enough to think up this idea and make great speeches, but he was stupid to trust Napoleon the bully. Bullies will never put up with anyone who has ideas that might push them out of power. When Snowball spread out his plans during a town meeting and tried to explain them, Napoleon peed on them. Then Napoleon had the dogs chase Snowball off of the farm. It was dumb of Snowball to trust him and think that Napoleon would be there for him because they were the power pigs. If Snowball had been more street-wise about his rival, he would have let Napoleon take credit for the idea and he would still be on the farm.

TEN SENTENCE FORMAT

Situation: Select one of the situations you identified and choose an emotion that would have better served the character as he/she strove to reach his/her goal. Explain your choice and defend it with supporting textual information.

Hook: If Snowball had been sharp enough to understand the saying, "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer," he might have remained the idea pig in "Animal Farm" by George Orwell. (1)

Overview Statement: Snowball's plan for the windmill stayed true to the beliefs of Animalism because it would have cut down on the animals' work. (1)

Thesis statement: If he had thought about his past disagreements with Napoleon on other farming issues, Snowball would have realized that his brains needed a dose of deceit if he were to match Napoleon's brawn in their struggle for power. (3)

Main Idea 1: Snowball naively believed that his brilliant speeches would win him fan support. (3)

Supporting Detail #1 w/example: The modern farming ideas that he had read about in Mr. Jones's magazines excited Snowball, but he loved his windmill plan since it would bring electricity to the farm and a three-day workweek to the animals. (2)

Main Idea 2: Napoleon's sneaky dealings were far more powerful. (3)

Supporting Detail #2 w/example: He encouraged the sheep to interrupt Snowball's speeches by bleating, "Four legs good, two legs bad," and trained the dogs to attack his rival on his command. (2)

Main Idea 3: The town meeting about the windmill proved to be the showdown between these two adversaries. (3)

Supporting Detail #3 w/example: When Snowball tried to present his windmill plans, the sheep caused a disturbance with their bleating, Napoleon urinated on the designs and then ordered the snarling dogs to chase Snowball from the farm forever. (2)

Concluding Statement: Snowball's gullibility about Napoleon's desire to be the top pig led to his defeat because he never understood that the lust for power will destroy alliances.

(5)



TEACHER NOTES

Exit Pass

Print multiple copies of the **Exit Pass** page and cut them into individual exit passes.

Begin this activity ten minutes before the end of the period. Allow the first five minutes for students to complete it. For the last five minutes, allow students to talk about any specific problems understanding or completing that day's work.

If teachers wish, they may use it as a daily grade. Example: Each **Exit Pass** is worth 1 point per day.

Teachers should review the Exit Passes before the next class and take notes on what worked and what didn't so they can tweak their lessons to meet student needs if necessary.

PREVIEW

EXIT PASS

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Three ideas, concepts, thoughts I learned today are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

EXIT PASS

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Three ideas, concepts, thoughts I learned today are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

EXIT PASS

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Three ideas, concepts, thoughts I learned today are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

THE HOUSE OF COMPREHENSION

The House of Comprehension is a complete program that helps English Language Arts teachers in grades 6 through 9 teach students how to fully understand literature. The book provides step-by-step instructions for teachers, and includes printable activity sheets for students. Each activity is aligned to the English Language Arts Common Core Standards, as well as Bloom's Taxonomy.

Here's how the book helps build a student's "House of Comprehension":

- The blueprints — Planning your lessons
- The foundation — Assessing your students' knowledge before starting the activities
- The framing — Character, plot/conflict, and setting
- The finish work — Theme, symbols, point of view, and tone
- The decorating — Bringing all the elements of literature together

Through this practical and flexible program, students learn the importance of every element of literature and recognize that the story and the elements work together to create a complete whole. Incorporating each of these factors into the study of any piece of literature enables students to explain, orally and in writing, whether the story creates a house of straw, of twigs, or of bricks!

"The House of Comprehension is a must-have text for teaching literature in grades 6-9. For new and experienced teachers, this student-tested manual will provide a solid foundation for teaching literature of all kinds."

—Megan Trow Garcia, Fulbright New Century Scholar and founder, The Galapagos Project

"Casserly takes the typical classroom and transforms it into a high-energy learning environment."

—Alex Hagerty, secondary English teacher

"Connie's genius is her ability to create lesson plans that engage not only a student's intellect but also the imagination."

—Kathi Hamilton, secondary English teacher

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Constance D. Casserly has over 30 years of experience as an English Language Arts teacher in middle and high schools. She has taught journalism, creative writing, and English. For thirteen years, she was responsible for her high school's award-winning literary and art magazine as well as the monthly high school newspaper.

Casserly is the author of the young adult novel, *A Fine Line*. She has had several unit plans published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). She blogs regularly about topics of interest to English teachers.



COMPASS

Compass Publishing
a division of Brigantine Media
www.compasspublishing.org

ISBN: 978-19384061-6-4



9 781938 406171

\$24.95

