Disability Awareness
Through English and
Language Arts

Resources for
Middle and High School

2015

FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.
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Disability Awareness Through English and Language Arts

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2015

FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.
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INTRODUCTION

INCLUSION: A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Full inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities, into their schools and communities, is the cornerstone of a good and safe quality of life. By developing meaningful relationships with friends, peers, families, and fellow citizens, individuals with developmental disabilities will live a full and rewarding life.

(Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.)

Youth come into contact with people with disabilities every day. They develop attitudes and feelings toward individuals with disabilities by observing and listening to family members, teachers, peers, and people in the community. They also pay close attention to the way people with disabilities are depicted in the media—movies, television, books, and online. The home and the classroom are ideal places to increase young people’s understanding of disabilities and to teach them how to relate and interact in positive, accepting, and productive ways. Explorations and discussions of the meaning and
experience of disabilities need to be incorporated into the curriculum for all students (Ferguson, 2006).

Inclusive schools provide rich opportunities for all students to work and play together. When students don’t understand why people are different, they may make fun of and tease or even bully them. Dr. Amy Milsom suggests that the most effective way to change behavior and reduce harassment and other negative experiences is through specific activities and experiences that are intentionally designed to increase knowledge of and improve attitudes toward persons with disabilities (2006). Parents and teachers can make sure that these activities occur frequently throughout the year. In addition, students in Florida can participate in their school district’s celebration of “Disability History and Awareness Week” each October.

*Disability Awareness Through English and Language Arts: Resources for Middle and High School* has been created for educators and families. Through this resource students can develop respect and acceptance for individual differences by engaging in English and language arts activities that focus on disability awareness. The primary objectives include:

- Promote positive attitudes toward and facilitate successful inclusion of students with disabilities
- Increase respect for and acceptance of individual differences
- Increase understanding of disabilities and related social issues
- Facilitate the development of English and language arts skills through activities that foster disability awareness.

**References**


Shared experiences are built from access to and involvement in life’s activities. Understanding how differently abled persons access life’s activities promotes opportunities for involvement, shared experiences, and ultimately, meaningful relationships.

(Bennett Buckles, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System)

Disability awareness is an important part of young people’s social development. Youth who are able to understand and express their feelings, participate in activities in the school and community, develop friendships, and show that they care for others are more likely to be successful in school and later in adult life. Cognitively, adolescents shift from being concrete thinkers to being able to think more abstractly and analyze situations in terms of cause-and-effect and generalizations. Emotional development in adolescents is generally associated with the changing sense of their own identity (self-concept and self-esteem). Adolescents must acquire the emotional skills to deal with
stress and be sensitive and effective in relating to other people (empathy and cooperation). Social development results from a broadening context of influence, from family to peers, school, work, and community. Peer influence becomes stronger as adolescents strive to gain independence from their parents (American Psychological Association, 2002). As teens develop, increased knowledge and refinement of skills will contribute to their ability to form and maintain supportive relationships with all kinds of people, including persons with disabilities (Rintoul, B., et al., 1998; Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2010).

This section includes a wide range of information about topics related to disability awareness, including increasing knowledge about disabilities: the conditions, the causes, and necessary supports. Young people also need to know about appropriate etiquette and ways to communicate using person-first language. They should understand why self-determination and self-advocacy are essential for persons with disabilities, as well as learning how to deal with discrimination and bullying. Disability awareness also includes an understanding of inclusive practices in secondary schools and possible careers that are involved in support and advocacy for individuals with disabilities.

**Important Information about Disabilities**

Middle and high school students need as much accurate information about the different types of disabilities as they can handle. It’s important to present information in a straightforward and sensitive manner. Students may still have worries and misconceptions about people with disabilities.

**Misconceptions about Disabilities**

- **A disability is contagious.** A disability is not an infectious disease. People don’t become disabled simply by coming into contact with persons with disabilities.
- **Having a disability is a punishment.** People don’t have a disability because they have been bad, nor does the disability make them bad people. Sometimes the media and books project this notion.
- **People who have disabilities must be cared for all the time.** People who have disabilities can lead very independent and productive lives.
- **People with disabilities want to keep to themselves.** Nothing can be further from the truth. People with disabilities enjoy having close relationships with friends and family members. They like many of the same things and want to participate in the same activities.
Disability Resources

Definitions of and explanations about disabilities may differ depending on the sponsoring agency. In Florida, definitions used in the public school programs are based on rules adopted by the State Board of Education. Definitions used by other agencies and organizations vary according to their purpose and services that they offer.

The following websites provide information on disabilities that may be helpful to educators, families, and students in middle and high school. More websites are described in the last section of this book, “Additional Resources.”

The Center for Parent Information and Resources offers brief but detailed fact sheets in both English and Spanish on specific disabilities. Much of the content on this website was previously on the website for The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (also called NICHCY). For more information, see description in the last “Additional Resources” of this document. Website: http://www.parentcenterhub.org

The National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities provides information on people with disabilities, including articles and podcasts. Website: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/Index.html

Contributions of Individuals with Disabilities

On many levels, individuals with disabilities have made significant contributions to our lives. Many well-known individuals have accomplished a great deal. Stephen Hawking is a scientist who has a neurological disorder, known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Ludwig van Beethoven was a brilliant composer in spite of the fact he was deaf. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States, was physically impaired as a result of polio. Helen Keller, who was deaf and blind, became a strong advocate for the disabled. Many websites are devoted to sharing information about people with disabilities who are politicians, celebrities, and athletes.

Disabled World presents a list of well-known people with disabilities and medical conditions, including actors, politicians, and writers who have contributed to society. Website: http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article_0060.shtml

At the local level, individuals with disabilities make many contributions in the workplace, in schools, in the community, and as family members. Organizations such as
the Florida Youth Council, Parent to Parent, the Family Network on Disabilities, Very Special Arts, the Council for Exceptional Children, and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council can provide information and assistance to help you identify contributions by individuals with disabilities in your community.

**Disability History**

Since ancient times, the way society has regarded persons with disabilities has greatly evolved. Having a disability was seen as a mark of inferiority in many cultures. Children who were born deaf, blind, or otherwise impaired were often persecuted or abandoned. Individuals with disabilities were cared for by their families, housed in institutions and asylums, or left on their own. As public awareness of disabilities increased and the collective desire to support and assist such persons grew, medical doctors and educational experts took on the tasks of explaining, diagnosing, and treating physical and intellectual differences.

In the United States in the early 1800s, specialized institutions like the American Asylum for the Deaf and the Perkins School for the Blind were established. Training schools or institutions were also created for children with intellectual disabilities, then labeled as “feeble-minded.” Unfortunately, many of these institutions provided only custodial care. The early 1900s marked the beginnings of compulsory education and emergence of special education. Teachers became aware of the increasing numbers of students with learning difficulties who were labeled “backward” and called for special classes and teachers to educate them.

Frustrated with poor living conditions and lack of services for people with disabilities in the 1930s through the early 1950s, advocacy groups began to organize to demand better community services and educational and employment opportunities. During the 1960s and 1970s, the parents’ movement worked on improving conditions in state institutions, creating community services, and initiating legislation. These advocacy groups challenged the conventional wisdom that persons with disabilities could not be helped (Neilsen, 2012).

Federal legislation, including the Social Security Act first passed in 1935, provides public assistance to persons who are determined to be permanently disabled. The Rehabilitation Act passed in 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any agency receiving federal assistance, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990, 2008) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local

Currently efforts to improve the quality of lives of individuals with disabilities and their families include a focus on education and early intervention initiatives and inclusive education practices. Services for adults promote self-sufficiency and productivity in the community and the workforce, optimization of health care, and the application of principles and practices of self-determination and self-advocacy (Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc., 2015).

**Resources for Disability History**


**EveryBody: An Artifact History of Disability in America**, is a Web exhibit of the Smithsonian Institute. It features images and descriptions of the ways disability has affected the lives of people, places where they live and work, the use of technology and rights and responsibilities as citizens. Website: [http://everybody.si.edu](http://everybody.si.edu)

**Disability History Museum** hosts a virtual, searchable library with letters, memoirs, photos, and cartoons; and education programs on disability history. These programs are designed to foster research and study about the historical experiences of people with disabilities and their communities. Website: [http://www.disabilitymuseum.org](http://www.disabilitymuseum.org)

**Museum of DisABILITY History** in Buffalo, NY, provides a virtual museum featuring media, medicine, society, education, advocacy, and information specifically about New York. Website: [http://museumofdisability.org/](http://museumofdisability.org/)
Disability Etiquette and Communication

One of the main purposes of efforts to promote disability awareness in middle and high school is to help students continue to develop positive attitudes toward people with disabilities. These positive attitudes can result in friendships and productive relationships. Teens may feel uncomfortable when they meet a person with a disability for the first time. They may not know what to say or how to act. Disability etiquette provides guidelines on how to behave with persons with disabilities.

When interacting with persons who have a disability, it makes sense to follow generally accepted rules of etiquette and good manners. Specific issues may arise and require special considerations. *Disability History and Awareness: A Resource Guide* (Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2010) includes general guidelines, ways to show sensitivity to individuals with visual impairments, and suggestions for interacting with people who have speech disabilities. It general, it makes sense to treat any person with a disability the way you want to be treated and to not be afraid to ask questions when you’re not sure what to do.

Students can use the following guidelines for disability etiquette to learn how to interact with persons with disabilities. When teaching about disability etiquette, it’s important that adults serve as positive role models.

**Guidelines for Disability Etiquette**

- **Don’t make assumptions.** People with disabilities are the best judge about what they can and cannot do. Invite persons with disabilities to join you in daily activities and special occasions and don’t decide in advance whether or not they would like to participate.

- **Ask before you help.** Just because someone has a disability, don’t assume he or she needs help. Offer assistance only if the person appears to need it. And if the person does want help, ask how before you act. If you have trouble understanding what the person said, don’t pretend that you understood. Ask him or her to repeat it or say it a different way. Smiling or nodding when you have no idea what the person said is embarrassing to both parties. Instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.

- **Be sensitive about physical contact.** Some people with disabilities have difficulty maintaining balance. Touching them, even if you intend to help, might cause them
to fall. Holding on or touching a person’s wheelchair, scooter, or cane is just like
leaning on that person’s body and usually is considered to be very annoying. Never
pet or play with service dogs or other service animals. The animals should not be
distracted from the job they are doing.

• **Think before you speak.** Always speak directly to persons with a disability, even if
they have an interpreter or companion. You can ask about their disability, but
remember, they may not wish to talk about it. They may feel like you are treating
them as a disability, not a human being. Idioms and common expressions that
might relate to a person’s disability are not taken literally, such as telling a person
who is blind that you will see him or her later or asking a person who uses a
wheelchair if he or she wants to take a walk (Cohen, undated).

**Person-First Language**

“Person-first” language changes the way people describe someone who has a disability.
In the past, it was common to say: “I know a blind boy,” or “She teaches autistic
children.” In the 1980s, advocacy groups urged the public to use person-first language
instead. That means you should say: “He’s a boy who is blind,” or “She teaches children
who are autistic.”

Person-first language reflects the belief that we put individuals before their disability.
This is something that students can learn at a very early age. The language we use
reflects our attitudes and influences our actions. Person-first language helps people
place attention on what the individual does, not his or her disability.

People sometimes use words that refer to a disability in derogatory comments about a
person or an action. Such comments may include outdated terms that have crept back
into common usage. These words are often used to poke fun or anger at a person who is
having difficulty: “That sounds so retarded.” “Are you deaf?” Be careful to avoid using
words and phrases that are offensive to a person with a disability.

An excellent resource for materials on person-first language is the website developed by
Kathie Snow. She is frequently quoted as saying, “People-First Language puts the person
before the disability and describes what a person has, not what a person is.” For more
information, see Kathie Snow’s website: [http://www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com).
Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

Self-determination means making things happen in one’s own life, instead of having others do things for you. For persons with disabilities, self-determination represents a dramatic change in the way society has treated them. In the past, persons with disabilities were thought to be unable to make effective choices about what they wanted, where they wanted to live, and how they wanted to spend their time. Often, families, teachers, and well-meaning adults tried to protect young people with disabilities from making mistakes and often discouraged them from discussing effects of their disabilities (Bremer, Kachgal, & Schoeller, 2003). Now supported by provisions in legislation, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) and the Developmental Disabilities Act, self-determination activities in school and the community help students with disabilities learn how to communicate and make personal decisions. By age 14, students with disabilities can participate in determining their transition services needs. They later will set goals for employment and adult living and identify the services they will need. As adults, individuals with disabilities can and should exercise control over the services, supports and assistance they receive. Through training in self-advocacy, individuals with disabilities can also learn how to participate in organizations and coalitions to influence policy makers (Calkins, Jackson, & Beckman, 2011).

Florida Resources for Self-Advocacy

The Florida Self-Advocacy Alliance serves as a bridge of information and resources for self-advocates across the state. Headquarters are in Kissimmee, Florida. Website: [http://www.flsaa.org](http://www.flsaa.org)

The Florida Center for Inclusive Communities (FCIC) at the University of South Florida was established in October 2005 through a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The center provides training, technical assistance, research, and dissemination activities focused on supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to make informed decisions about their lives, receive needed support and services, and achieve full inclusion and participate in society. Website: [http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/](http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/)
Bullying and Discrimination

The damaging effects of bullying and harassment of students in schools have received increased attention in Florida and throughout the United States. Students with disabilities, especially those with visible disabilities, are more often bullied than their non-disabled peers. Research has shown that the incidence of being bullied is two to three times higher among students with developmental disabilities than among students without disabilities (PACER, 2012).

Bullying can take a number of forms, including name-calling, teasing, and physical threats and attacks. Social bullying involves spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, demanding money or property, or intimidation. Cyberbullying involves the use of texting, social media websites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and email for the purpose of humiliation.

Section 1006.147(3) in the Florida Statutes defines bullying as “systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students” and harassment as “any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that 1) places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; 2) has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or 3) has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.”

Being bullied affects individual students in different ways. Some may avoid going to school, get lower grades, or drop out completely. Others find it difficult to concentrate, exhibit a change in eating or drinking habits, and show signs of depression, loneliness, and anxiety. When there is evidence of physical altercation, the students being bullied may try to cover it up or lie about how and where they were harmed.

Some misconduct that falls under the anti-bullying and harassment policy may trigger the school’s responsibility under federal anti-discrimination laws—Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Disability harassment may take many forms. Harassment may include “verbal acts and name-calling, as well as nonverbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. ...When disability harassment limits or denies a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational institution’s programs or activities, the institution must respond effectively. Where the institution learns that
disability harassment may have occurred, the institution must investigate the incident(s) promptly and respond appropriately” (Office for Civil Rights, July 25, 2000). In a later correspondence, the Office for Civil Rights clarified that the responsibilities of schools related to anti-discrimination includes prohibition of bullying and harassment, identifying behaviors expected of students and staff, specifying consequences for committing an act of bullying or harassment, and procedures for reporting, investigating, notifying parents, and referring victims and perpetrators of bullying or harassment for counseling or other appropriate follow-up activities (Office for Civil Rights, October 26, 2010).

Resources for Bullying Prevention

**PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center** actively leads social change to help ensure that bullying is no longer considered to be an accepted childhood rite of passage. The center recognizes bullying as a serious community issue that impacts education, physical and emotional health, and the safety and well-being of students. PACER offers digital-based resources for parents, schools, teens and youth, including:

Website: [http://PACER.org/Bullying](http://PACER.org/Bullying) This is the portal page for parents and educators to access bullying resources, which include educational toolkits, awareness toolkits, contest ideas, promotional products and more.

Website: [http://PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org](http://PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org) This website is a place for middle and high school students to find ways to address bullying, to take action, to be heard, and to own an important social cause.

**Stopbullying** is a website managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It provides extensive resources about bullying, including cyberbullying; who is at risk; how to prevent bullying; how to respond to bullying; and how to get help. Links to state policies and laws are available along with resources, videos images, and a blog.

Website: [http://www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

Special considerations are necessary when addressing bullying and youth with disabilities. There are resources to help kids with disabilities who are bullied or who bully others. Youth with disabilities often have individualized educational plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans that can be useful in crafting specialized approaches or identifying additional services to help the student prevent and respond to bullying. Additionally, civil rights laws protect students with disabilities against harassment.

Website: [http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/special-needs/index.html](http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/special-needs/index.html)
Inclusive Practices in Secondary Schools

In Florida, “inclusion” is defined in state law to mean that a student with a disability receives education in a general education classroom in the core academic curriculum or special areas. The law further specifies that the student with a disability is a valued member of the classroom and school community, and the teachers and administrators have the necessary knowledge and support available to effectively teach all students (Section 1003.57(1)(a)2, Florida Statutes). Inclusive school environments are set up to ensure that all students’ needs, including students with disabilities, are met socially, emotionally, behaviorally, and academically. At the secondary level, inclusive practices face challenges due to the increased diversity in student achievement, cognitive processing, social interaction, self-management skills, and motivation. Inclusive practices are also impacted by the demands of the secondary curriculum with increased complexity and sophistication of content area instruction, high stakes testing, and requirements for highly qualified teachers.

At the heart of inclusive practices is the overall school climate, that is “the quality and character of school life as it relates to norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, and organizational processes and structures. School climate sets the tone for all the learning and teaching done in the school environment and, as research proves, it is predictive of students’ ability to learn and develop in healthy ways” (National School Climate Center, 2014). The core values reflect a willingness of staff to find solutions for challenges that individual students encounter, and recognize that students and their families have a voice in their education and understand their own strengths and needs (Florida Inclusion Network, 2013; Dieker & Powell, 2012).

Effective Structures for Inclusion

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a data-based problem-solving process that matches the intensity of support for academic and behavioral instruction with student needs to most efficiently allocate resources to improve learning and behavior for all students, including students with disabilities, in Florida. The levels of support are
identified as three tiers: Tier One is core, universal instruction; Tier Two is supplemental intervention; and Tier Three is intensive intervention. The problem-solving process is used to determine needs at district, school, grade, and classroom levels, as well as for subgroups of students and individual students, including students with disabilities. At the school level, teams of educators meet on a regular basis to review data and follow a systematic problem-solving process to analyze factors involving curriculum, instruction, environmental, and learner variables that may impede progress. At the secondary level the teams may be aligned by content area or grade level and educators and support personnel who work with students with disabilities are integrated into the teams (Florida Department of Education, 2011).

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** is a set of principles and practices that address learner variability by suggesting flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments that empower educators to meet the varied needs of students. Optimally, curricula created with UDL principles is designed from the outset to meet the needs of all learners. Three primary principles guide UDL:

- **Principle I: Provide Multiple Means of Representation** (the “what” of learning). Learners differ in the ways that they perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them. Some learners may simply grasp information quicker or more efficiently through visual or auditory means rather than printed text. Also, learning, and transfer of learning, occurs when multiple representations, because it allows students to make connections within, as well as between, concepts.

- **Principle II: Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression** (the “how” of learning). Learners differ in the ways that they can navigate a learning environment and express what they know. For example, some learners may be able to express themselves well in written text but not speech.

- **Principle III: Provide Multiple Means of Engagement** (the “why” of learning). Affect represents a crucial element to learning, and learners differ markedly in the ways in which they can be engaged or motivated to learn. Some learners are highly engaged by spontaneity and novelty while other are disengaged, even frightened, by those aspects, preferring strict routine. Some learners might like to work alone, while others prefer to work with their peers. (CAST, 2011)

Middle and high school students and staff may use a broad array of technology to facilitate inclusive education. For some students, this may include the use of specialized assistive technology and augmentative alternative communication devices. Schools
must provide students with disabilities with the tools that they use to meet their unique needs to become successful independent learners. An important consideration is ongoing training and technical assistance for the students, their families, and educators (CAST, 2011; Florida Inclusion Network, 2013).

**Collaborative teaching** is an important aspect of an inclusive secondary school. Educators, specialists, therapists, and support personnel work together in classrooms in collaborative arrangements to provide ready access to expertise needed to determine and respond to student learning needs. Different approaches to collaborative teaching include consultation where support personnel provide advisement to the educator or co-teaching where the educators work with the whole group, small groups, or individual students (Florida Inclusion Network, 2013; Villa, et al, 2005).

**Opportunities for positive relationships** among all students are facilitated when students with disabilities are instructed in general education settings and can access all parts of the school environment. Cooperative learning or peer support groups engage students in learning. Inclusive settings can help students with disabilities become prepared for self-determination and self-advocacy by working on choice making, decision making, problem solving, goal setting and attainment, and expanded self-knowledge (Dieker & Powell, 2012; Villa, et al., 2005).

Students learn their own responsibilities and limits to ensure safety through a schoolwide discipline system and instruction in pro-social communication skills and impulse control. Some students may require the support of a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (Florida Inclusion Network, 2013; Villa, et al., 2005).

**Participation in extracurricular activities** is an important component of educational programs, particularly at the secondary level. If a student with a disability meets the required level of skill or ability for an athletic program or a club, for example, the student should be able to participate, even if supplemental supports and services are necessary. Sometimes students with disabilities are excluded from an activity because of preconceived notions or stereotyping that they may not be able to play a sport or participate in the club’s activities. It is crucial that the school consider participation on an individual basis (Florida Inclusion Network, 2013).
The Natural Supports Project (2014) offers the following strategies for developing inclusive extracurricular activities:

- Make extracurricular activities welcoming for youth with disabilities. Encourage students and staff to personally invite youth with disabilities to join.
- Develop networks of support for students with disabilities. Use activities that allow for frequent rotation of peers so students can meet and get to know more people.
- Build service learning opportunities and career education experiences into extracurricular activities.
- Incorporate inclusive strategies into recreational activities. These strategies include maximizing cooperative activities, identifying roles to ensure engagement, and minimizing competitive or independent activities.
- Plan on natural proportions of youth with disabilities in organizations, rather than guiding students with disabilities to join particular clubs or groups.

Resource for Inclusive Education

Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) is based on evidence-based practices, and a review of research and current literature. This self-assessment tool provides a way for districts to review their policies and practices and then create an action plan to improve areas in need of improvement. The indicators address three domains: Leadership and Decision Making, Instruction and Student Achievement, and Communication and Collaboration (Florida Inclusion Network, 2013). Website: http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/best-practices-for-inclusive-education/

Careers Related to Disability Services and Advocacy

Many career options are available for people who wish to work toward the improvement of the lives of persons with disabilities. This section provides brief information about possible jobs in the areas of education, intervention, employment, direct personal care, mental health services, and medical services.

Specialized professionals, including special education teachers and applied behavior analysts, work with specific populations in schools or other settings. Early intervention programs are provided for young children, ages birth through five. Specially trained teachers, paraprofessionals, and related services personnel may work directly with children, with their family members, and through collaborative team efforts. At the
elementary and secondary level, special education teachers, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and behavior analysts provide educational services through co-teaching and consultation with teachers in general education classrooms and in resource rooms or self-contained classrooms.

Resources for Information about Careers in Special Education


**National Center to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel for Children with Disabilities** provides information about 18 different careers as well as a database of personnel preparation programs. It also provides information about financial aid for personnel preparation programs and information about state certification websites.

Website: [http://www.personnelcenter.org/choose.cfm](http://www.personnelcenter.org/choose.cfm)

**Florida’s Personnel Development: Supporting Exceptional Student Education** provides information about educators, including certification and endorsements, highly qualified teacher requirements, state and national resources, post-secondary coursework opportunities and financial assistance, and professional development opportunities.


Employment specialists provide career counseling and guidance, job placement, job modification, and adaptive technology services, as well as job training and coaching. In Florida, assistance in preparing for careers and developing employment skills begins in the public schools for students with disabilities by age 14, when transition planning and goal setting are addressed through the individual educational plan (IEP) process. Within the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is a federal and state program that helps people who have physical or mental disabilities get or keep a job, and the Division of Blind Services provides individuals who are blind...
or visually impaired with assistance as they prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

Direct personal care workers may help persons with disabilities with activities of daily living in supportive residential settings, such as group homes, or in the homes or apartments where they live. These people may be employed directly or contracted by governmental agencies, such as the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (Florida Department of Children and Families), and the Division of Blind Services and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (FDOE).

Mental health professionals, like social workers, counselors, psychiatrists and psychologists, work in all types of settings to help people with disabilities live full lives. Medical professionals, including nurses and doctors, therapists, and medical technicians, also provide medical and therapeutic care.

Advocacy organizations typically employ advocates and lawyers, administrators, and support staff in a variety of positions to help their organizations accomplish their particular missions. Some organizations require communication specialists, marketing managers, technical advisors and conference or special events managers. Many agencies rely on volunteers to serve on a board of advisors and to work on special projects and events.

**Florida Resources for Advocacy Organizations**

**Disability Rights Florida**, formerly the Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities, Inc., is a non-profit organization providing protection and advocacy services in the State of Florida. Their mission is to advance the dignity, equality, self-determination and expressed choices of individuals with disabilities.
Website: [http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org](http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org)

**The Arc of Florida** promotes the opportunity for people with cognitive disabilities and developmental disabilities to choose and realize their goals of where and how they learn, live, work and access leisure activities. The state organization supports the activities of 31 affiliate organizations throughout Florida. Website: [http://arcflorida.org](http://arcflorida.org)

The **Florida Disabled Outdoors Association** provides information for sports enthusiasts who have disabilities on hunting, fishing, boating, and a range of other adapted recreational activities. Website: [http://fdao.org](http://fdao.org)
References


Stories share and dispel the mysteries of life. In a perfect world, a book might change a person’s perspective, develop awareness, and initiate conversation to knock down walls and bridge the gap between misfortune and misconception. (Follos, 2013, p. xiii)

Reading high quality works of literature that include characters who have disabilities can help young people learn about disabilities as well as how to respect and accept individual differences. Literature provides an effective vehicle for interweaving disability awareness and character education into existing curriculum to address problems in everyday life. Stories of the daily lives of people with disabilities can show students what it is like to experience and overcome barriers of exclusion and discrimination. Reading about disabilities may also facilitate the successful inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms and the community. For the
instruction to be effective, students should experience the following elements (Parker & Ackerman, 2007):

- **Identification.** The reader should be able to identify with the main characters and the events in the story.
- **Involvement.** The reader should be able to relate to the situation and feel emotional ties with the main characters.
- **Insight.** The reader should analyze the main characters and situation and explore possible new ways to replace inappropriate behaviors.

**Featured Books**

This section provides information about 28 featured books, including a variety of novels (fantasy, mystery, science fiction, and others), as well as biographies, a play and even personal journals. All of these books include characters with developmental disabilities (intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, physical disabilities, cerebral palsy) and sensory impairments (visual impairment, hearing impairment). The stories target interests of students in grade levels six through twelve. In this section, books are listed alphabetically by title for each grade level. Lists of books by categorized by disability and theme are included in Appendix B and C. The following information is provided for each book:

**Title, Author, Publisher, Copyright Date**

**ISBN:** International Standard Book Number

**Themes:** Disability, Major content themes

**Story Summary:** Brief synopsis of story or content

**Notes:** Notation if content includes strong language, violence, sex, or use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs

**Readability:** Lexile rating and grade level correspondence

**Awards:** Recognition and awards, such as Newbery, William Printz, American Library Association (ALA) Schneider Family Book Award, Edgar, and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Dolly Gray Award for Children's Literature

**Format:** Available formats (hardcover, paperback, eBook, audiobook) and number of pages

**Unit Plan:** Page number reference, if featured in one of the unit plans in this guide
Lexile® Rating

The Lexile text measure is used to reflect text complexity based on two predictors of how difficult a text is to comprehend: word frequency and sentence length. The Lexile measure is shown as a number with an "L" after it — 880L is 880 Lexile. The chart below describes the typical Lexile text range for grade levels defined through studies related to the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts. However, there are other factors considered in targeting a book for a grade level, including content, age-appropriateness, reader interests, and suitability of the text (MetaMetrics, Inc., 2014a, 2014b). Due to these factors, books in this resource may be designated as appropriate for a grade higher than indicated by the Lexile measure and grade correlation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexile Text Range</th>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>190L–530L</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420L–650L</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>520L–820L</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>740L–940L</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>830L–1010L</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>925L–1070L</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>970L–1120L</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1010L–1185L</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1050L–1260L</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1080L–1335L</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1185L–1385L</td>
<td>11 and 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Book Selection Criteria

To ensure that the books include accurate and appropriate characterization of disabilities, the criteria in Disability Awareness Through Language Arts and Literacy: Resources for Prekindergarten and Elementary School (Beech, 2012) was adapted for this resource. Each book was reviewed using the following criteria:
### Criteria For Reviewing Literature with Characters with Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustrations and Appearance</th>
<th>Uses quality artwork, layout, and design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme: Overall ideas and Author’s intent</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge of persons with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provides accurate depiction of the disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Addresses abilities and disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promotes positive images of persons with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Intent goes beyond teaching about disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward persons with disabilities</td>
<td>• Promotes empathy, not pity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates acceptance and respect for persons with disabilities, not ridicule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characterization: Character Roles and Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Characters with disabilities more like typical characters than they are different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Persons with disabilities play major or support roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Achievements are based on intelligence/effort (strengths); not the disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is a clear balance of roles; reciprocal relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plot: Problem, Resolution, and Standard for Success</strong></td>
<td>Characters with disabilities participate in solving the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Characters with disabilities positively influence others and outcomes in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting</strong></td>
<td>There is an accurate portrayal of the time and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literary Style: Choice of Words, Sentence Structure, Figures of Speech</strong></td>
<td>Language stresses a person-first, disability-second philosophy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loaded words, such as slang and slurs, are not used, unless explained in the context of the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possible concerns about strong language, violence, sex, and alcohol, tobacco, or drug use are noted in book description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
<td>Credible background and perspective of author</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Books for Grade 6

*Autism, The Invisible Cord: A Sibling’s Diary*

*Barbara Cain, Author*

*Magination Press, American Psychological Association, 750 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20002*

*Copyright: 2013*


*Themes*: Autism Spectrum Disorder; Bullying, Siblings,

*Summary*: Jenny confides in her diary about the problems she has living with Ezra, her younger brother who has autism. She must deal with school bullies, rude classmates, and fragile friendships. She finds the courage to write about bullying in a term paper and then publishes excerpts in the school newspaper to launch a schoolwide anti-bullying campaign.

*Readability*: 770L, Grades 3–4

*Format*: Hardcover, Paperback; 112 pages

*My Louisiana Sky*

*Kimberly Willis Holt, Author*

*Square Fish, Henry Holt and Company, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010*

*Copyright: 1988*


*Themes*: Intellectual Disabilities; Coming of Age, Family Relationships

*Summary*: In the late 1950s, Tiger Ann Parker is a twelve-year-old girl who struggles to accept her grandmother’s death, the fact that her parents have intellectual disabilities, and the changing world around her. She spends the summer with Aunt Dorie Kay and when she returns home, she is surprised how much she missed her home and family.

*Awards*: Boston Globe-Horn Book Award Honor for Fiction, ALA Notable Book for Children, ALA Best Book for Young Adults

*Readability*: 770L, Grades 3–4

*Format*: Hardcover, Paperback, eBook; 200 pages
Books for Grade 6, Continued

**A Single Shard**

*Linda Sue Park, Author*

*Sandpiper, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co., 215 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003*

*Copyright: 2001*


**Themes:** Physical Disabilities; Determination and Perseverance, Loyalty

**Summary:** Tree-ear is an orphan living in a Korean potters’ village in the 12th-century. He lives under a bridge with Crane-man, who uses a stick to help him get around. Crane-man advises Tree-ear as he goes on a journey to become an adult and become a master potter.

**Readability:** 920L, Grades 4–5

**Awards:** Newbery Medal, ALA Notable Book for Young Children, ALA Best Book for Young Adults

**Format:** Hardcover, Paperback, eBook, Audiobook; 148 pages

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**Tru Confessions**

*Janet Tashjian, Author*

*Square Fish Books, Holtzbrinck Publishers, LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010*

*Copyright: 2007*


**Themes:** Developmental Disabilities; Acceptance, Achieving Goals, Siblings

**Summary:** Twelve-year-old Tru uses her computer diary to tell the story of her big dreams and goals. She is determined to find a cure for her twin brother who is developmentally delayed and to have her own television show. Tru learns how differently her family, friends, and community think about her brother.

**Readability:** 920L, Grades 4–5

**Award:** Dolly Gray Award for Children’s Literature (CEC)

**Format:** Paperback; 176 pages

**Unit Plan:** Pages 43–61
Books for Grade 7

**Anything but Typical**

_Nora Baskin, Author_

*Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020*

*Copyright: 2009*


**Themes:** Autism Spectrum Disorder; Coming of Age, Feelings and Emotions, Overcoming Challenges and Obstacles, Self-Awareness

**Summary:** Jason Blake is twelve-years-old with autism. He copes with misunderstandings everyday. He meets Phoenix Bird (Rebecca) on an online writing site. Jason is terrified to meet her at a writers’ convention because he is afraid of what Rebecca will think of him. They find they have much in common.

**Readability:** 640L, Grades 2–3

**Award:** ALA Schneider Family Book Award

**Format:** Paperback, eBook; 195 pages

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**Hurt Go Happy**

_Ginny Robby, Author_

*Starscape, Tom Doherty Assoc., LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010*

*Copyright: 2006*

*ISBN: 978-0-7653-5304-7 (paperback)*

**Themes:** Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing; Character and Values; Sign Language,

**Summary:** Joey Willis (age 13) has been deaf since the age of six. Her mother insists she rely on lipreading when communicating. Joey gets to know Dr. Charles Mansell and his chimpanzee, Sukari, who use sign language. Joey decides to learn how to use sign language. After Dr. Mansell dies, Joey must help Sukari find a good place to live.

**Note:** Contains references to child abuse and use of animals for experiments

**Readability:** 870L, Grades 4–5

**Awards:** ALA Schneider Family Book Award, Sunshine State Young Reader Award

**Format:** Hardcover, Paperback, eBook; 261 pages
Books for Grade 7, Continued

**Petey**

*Ben Mikaelson, Author*

*Disney, Hyperion Books, 114 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011*

*Copyright: 1998*

*ISBN-978-1-4231-3174-8*

**Themes:** Cerebral Palsy, Intellectual Disabilities; Bullying, Disability History, Friendship, Institutionalization

**Summary:** In 1922 Petey was born with cerebral palsy, misdiagnosed, and placed in an institution. Through determination and with the support of others, Petey finds a way to communicate. In his sixties, Petey also finds a wonderful friendship with Trevor, who is in the eighth grade.

**Readability:** 740L, Grades 3–4

**Award:** ALA Best Books for Young Adults

**Format:** Hardcover, Paperback, Audiobook; 280 pages

**Unit Plan:** Pages 62–82

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**Willowood**

*Cecilia Galante, Author*

*Aladdin, Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing Division, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020*

*Copyright: 2010*

*ISBN-978-1-4169-8022-3*

**Themes:** Down Syndrome; Bullying, Family Relationships

**Summary:** Lily Sinclair doesn’t like her new life in the city. She misses her best friend and she has made an enemy of Amanda, the class bully. When Mrs. Hiller takes care of Lily after school, she introduces her to the owner of the Pet Palace and his adult son, Nate, who has Down syndrome. Lily helps out at the store, and becomes friends with Nate. She learns that they have important things in common.

**Note:** Contains one instance of strong language

**Readability:** 630L, Grades 2–3

**Format:** Hardcover, eBook; 265 pages
Books for Grade 8

Alchemy and Meggy Swann

Karen Cushman, Author


Copyright: 2010

ISBN: 978-0-547-23184-6; 978-0-547-57712-8

Themes: Physical Disabilities; Disability History, Independence, Self-Esteem

Summary: In 1573, Meggy Swann was a young girl with a physical disability. She was destitute and had great difficulty getting around. She went to London to find her father, an impoverished alchemist. Meggy was very resourceful and found that she had many strengths.

Readability: 810L, Grades 3–4

Format: Hardcover, Paperback, eBook, Audiobook; 159 pages

Freak the Mighty

Rodman Philbrick, Author

Scholastic, Inc., 577 Broadway, New York, NY 10012

Copyright: 1993


Themes: Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities; Appearance vs. Reality, Bullying, Dealing with Death, Family Relationships, Friendship, Self-Concept

Summary: Max stays to himself because he is so big and can’t read. He makes friends with Kevin (aka Freak), who has a birth defect that affected his body but not his brilliant mind. Combining forces, these boys make a powerful team and become best friends. Max learns how to deal with a great loss when Kevin dies.

Note: Contains violence.

Readability: 1000L, Grades 5–7

Awards: ALA Best Books for Young Adults, ALA Recommended Books for Reluctant Readers

Format: Hardcover, Paperback, eBook, Audiobook; 169 pages

Unit Plan: Pages 83–107
Books for Grade 8, Continued

Gathering Blue

Lois Lowry, Author

Graphia, Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 215 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003

Copyright: 2000


Themes: Physical Disabilities; Family Relationships, Friendship, Loyalty (Fantasy)

Summary: Kira’s neighbors tell her she should die because she has physical disabilities and is suddenly orphaned. She lives with other special craftsmen in the Council Edifice and uses her gifts as a weaver to mend the Story Robe. She must do only what the Guardians require, which becomes a dilemma when her father unexpectedly returns.

Readability: 680L, Grade 3

Format: Hardcover, Paperback, eBook, Audiobook; 195 pages

Mockingbird (mok’ing-bûrd)

Kathryn Erskine, Author

Puffin Books, Penguin, 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014

Copyright: 2010

ISBN-978-0-14-241775-1

Themes: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Asperger’s Syndrome, Dealing with Death, Siblings

Summary: Due to her Asperger's syndrome, Caitlin sees her world as black and white. Caitlin used to rely on her older brother, Devon, for help, but he was killed in a school shooting. Caitlin wants everything to go back to the way things were. As she searches for closure, she discovers that the world is not black and white.

Note: Contains violence.

Readability: 630L, Grades 2–3

Awards: National Book Award, Dolly Gray Award for Children's Literature (CEC)

Format: Hardcover, Paperback, eBook; 235 pages
Books for Grade 9

Colin Fischer

*Ashley Edward Miller and Zack Stentz, Authors*
*Razorbill, Penguin Group, Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014*
*Copyright: 2012*
*ISBN: 978-0-59514-578-9*
*Themes*: Autism Spectrum Disorder; Bullying, Friendship, Overcoming Challenges and Obstacles, Self-Awareness
*Summary*: Colin Fischer is a ninth grader who is usually a target of the school bullies. He is very aware of the characteristics of his autism. Colin becomes a detective when one of his frequent tormentors, Wayne, is accused of firing a shot in the school cafeteria. Colin knows Wayne couldn’t have done it.
*Note*: Contains strong language and some violence.
*Readability*: 650L, Grades 2–3
*Format*: Hardcover, eBook, Audiobook; 229 pages

Fighting for Dontae

*Mike Castan, Author*
*Holiday House, 425 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017*
*Copyright: 2012*
*ISBN: 978-0-8234-2348-4*
*Themes*: Disabilities; Empathy, Family Relationships, Inclusion, Overcoming Challenges and Obstacles, Peer Pressure
*Summary*: Javier only wanted to be known as a gang member in his community. When assigned to assist in a special education class at school, he was afraid that would ruin his reputation. However, Javier’s relationship with students with disabilities, like Dontae and Neva, taught him how much more he has to offer.
*Note*: Contains strong language, violence, gangs, and use of drugs.
*Readability*: 750L, Grades 3–4
*Format*: Hardcover; 150 pages
Books for Grade 9, Continued

**The Miracle Worker**

*William Gibson, Playwright*

*Scribner, Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020*

*Copyright: 1988*


**Themes:** Deaf and Blind; Family Relationships, Independence (Play)

**Summary:** This play is based on the true story of Helen Keller, who was blind, deaf, and mute, and her teacher Annie Sullivan. As a child Helen was frustrated and violent because she couldn’t communicate. In desperation, her parents sought help from the Perkins Institute, which sent Annie Sullivan to tutor their daughter. Through persistence, love, and sheer stubbornness, Annie broke through Helen’s walls of silence and taught her to communicate.

**Readability:** 990L, Grades 5–7

**Format:** Hardcover, Paperback, eBook; 112 pages

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**The Running Dream**

*Wendelin Van Draanen, Author*

*Ember, Random House Children’s Books, 1745 Broadway, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10019*

*Copyright: 2011*


**Themes:** Physical Disabilities, Cerebral Palsy; Dealing with Death, Determination and Perseverance, Friendship, Overcoming Challenges and Obstacles

**Summary:** When an accident leaves 16-year-old Jessica an amputee, she has to cope with the loss of her dreams of running. Rosa, a student who has cerebral palsy, helps Jessica in school, and they find inspiration for reaching their goals in life.

**Readability:** 650L, Grades 2–3

**Award:** ALA Schneider Family Book Award

**Format:** Hardcover, Paperback, eBook, Audiobook; 332 pages

**Unit Plan:** Pages 108–139
Books for Grade 10

Owning It: Stories about Teens with Disabilities
Don Gallo, Editor
Candlewick Press, 99 Dover Street, Somerville, MA 02344
Copyright: 2010
Themes: Disabilities; Overcoming Obstacles and Challenges
Summary: This book contains ten original stories about teens with disabilities, including attention deficit disorder, physical disabilities, Tourette’s syndrome, and visual impairment. The characters in these stories deal with a range of successes and challenges in life with humor, intelligence, and courage.
Note: Some stories contain strong language.
Readability: 560L, Grades 2–3
Format: Hardcover, Paperback; 214 pages

Pinned
Sharon Flake, Author
Scholastic Press, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012
Copyright: 2012
Themes: Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities; Bullying, Determination and Perseverance, Friendship, Self-Esteem
Summary: Adonis is smart and born without legs, and Autumn is a great wrestler and barely able to read. In time, both Autumn and Adonis discover their own inner strengths and what it means to have a friend.
Note: Contains strong language, kissing, and violence.
Readability: 460L, Grades 1–2
Format: Hardcover, Paperback, eBook, Audiobook; 228 pages
Books for Grade 10, Continued

**Show Me No Mercy: A Compelling Story of Remarkable Courage**

*Robert Perske, Author*

*Abingdon Press, 201 Eighth Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37203*

*Copyright: 1984*

*ISBN: 0-687-38435-4*

**Themes:** Down Syndrome; Determination and Perseverance, Family Relationships, Institutionalization

**Summary:** Andy Banks has a teenage son, Ben, who has Down syndrome. Andy is severely injured and paralyzed in a car accident that kills his wife and daughter, Andy Banks must strive to get back on his feet and struggles to keep Ben from being institutionalized.

**Readability:** 710L, Grade 3

**Format:** Paperback; 144 pages

**Things That Are**

*Andrew Clements, Author*

*Philomel Books, Penguin Young Readers Group, 345 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014*

*Copyright: 2008*

*ISBN: 978-0-399-24691-3*

**Themes:** Visual Impairment; Determination and Perseverance, Independence, Overcoming Challenges and Obstacles, Self-Awareness (Science Fiction)

**Summary:** Alicia is an 18-year-old girl and is blind. She is working hard to become more independent using the special skills she learned at the school for the blind. Alicia works with her friend, Bobby, and their dads to solve the mystery of a stranger named William who is an elusive fugitive and needs their help.

**Note:** Contains one instance of strong language.

**Readability:** 660L, Grade 3

**Format:** Hardcover, eBook, Audiobook; 167 pages

**Unit Plan:** Pages 140–173
Books for Grade 11

**Med Head: My Knock-Down, Drag-Out, Drugged-Up Battle with My Brain**

*James Patterson and Hal Friedman, Authors*

*Little, Brown, and Co., Hatchette Book Group, 237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017*

*Copyright: 2008*

*ISBN-978-0-316-07617-3*

**Themes**: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Tourette Syndrome; Overcoming Challenges and Obstacles, Self-Awareness (Biography)

**Summary**: This is the true story of Cory Friedman and his struggle to deal with Tourette’s syndrome and obsessive compulsive disorder. Cory was prescribed drugs to suppress the behaviors, but side effects were often unbearable. Cory found help at a wilderness camp in Wyoming where he began to come to terms with himself.

**Note**: Contains strong language, and use of alcohol and tobacco.

**Readability**: 850L, Grades 4–5

**Format**: Hardcover, Paperback, eBook; 299 pages

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**Now Is the Time for Running**

*Michael Williams, Author*

*Little Brown and Company, Hatchette Book Group, 237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017*

*Copyright: 2009*


**Themes**: Intellectual Disabilities; Family Relationships, Overcoming Obstacles and Challenges, Refugees

**Summary**: When soldiers attack a village in Zimbabwe, Deo goes on the run with Innocent, his older brother, who has intellectual disabilities. The brothers face homelessness, prejudice, poverty, and tragedy. Soccer and the memory of Innocent give Deo hope and strength to become a successful person.

**Note**: Contains strong language, violence, and use of drugs.

**Readability**: 650L, Grades 2–3

**Format**: Hardcover, Paperback, eBook; 234 pages
Books for Grade 11, Continued

**Waiting for No One**
*Beverley Brenna, Author*

*Red Deer Press, Fitzhenry and Whiteside Company, 195 Allstate Parkway, Markham, ON L3R 4T8*

*Copyright: 2010*

*ISBN-978-0-88995-437-3*

**Themes:** Autism Spectrum Disorder, Asperger’s Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Cerebral Palsy; Coming of Age, Independence

**Summary:** *Waiting for No One* is a sequel to Brenna’s *Wild Orchid*. Taylor Jane Simon describes her continuing struggles for independence and self-control as she takes a job. Taylor offers a new friend insight about giving a real voice to his brother, Martin, who has cerebral palsy and is unable to speak.

**Note:** Contains strong language.

**Award:** Dolly Gray Award for Children’s Literature (CEC)

**Readability:** 960L, Grades 5–6

**Format:** Paperback; 175 pages

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**Wild Orchid**
*Beverley Brenna, Author*

*Red Deer Press, Fitzhenry & Whiteside Company, 195 Allstate Parkway, Markham, ON L3R 4T8*

*Copyright: 2005*

*ISBN: 0-88995-330-9*

**Themes:** Autism Spectrum Disorder, Asperger’s Syndrome; Coming of Age, Independence, Self-Awareness

**Summary:** Taylor Jane Simon, an 18-year-old girl with autism spectrum disorder, must go to Waskesiu Lake when her mother takes a new job. Taylor gets a part-time job and learns to how deal with her increased independence and new relationships.

**Note:** Contains reference to kissing.

**Readability:** 880L, Grades 4–5

**Format:** Paperback; 156 pages

**Unit Plan:** Pages 174–197
Books for Grade 12

**Imperfect: An Improbable Life**

*Jim Abbott and Tim Brown, Authors*

*Ballantine Books Trade Paperbacks, Random House, Inc., 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10012*

*Copyright: 2012*

*ISBN: 978-0-345-52326-6; 978-0-345-52327-3*

*Themes*: Physical Disabilities; Empathy, Overcoming Obstacles and Challenges (Biography)

*Summary*: Jim Abbott describes the insecurities he faced first as a child with a physical disability, then in his quest to become a professional baseball player. Throughout his life, he found time to inspire children with disabilities.

*Note*: Contains strong language, and use of alcohol and tobacco.

*Readability*: 1120L, Grades 7–10

*Formats*: Paperback, eBook, Audiobook; 294 pages

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**Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger’s**

*John Elder Robinson, Author*

*Broadway Paperbacks, Crown Publishing Group, Random House, Inc., New York, NY*

*Copyright: 2007, 2008*

*ISBN: 978-0-307-39618-1*

*Themes*: Asperger’s Syndrome; Overcoming Challenges and Obstacles, Self-Awareness (Autobiography)

*Summary*: John Elder Robinson tells his own story of growing up in a dysfunctional family and dealing with his own traits of Asperger’s syndrome, long before there was any formal diagnosis. He describes how he learned to become socially acceptable and successful in both his personal and professional life.

*Note*: Contains strong language, and use of alcohol and drugs.

*Readability*: 810L, Grades 3–4

*Format*: Paperback, eBook, Audiobook; 288 pages
**Of Sound Mind**

*Jean Ferris, Author*

*Sunburst, Farrar Straus Giroux, MacMillan Publishing, 18 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011*

*Copyright: 2001*

*ISBN: 978-0-374-45584-2*

**Themes:** Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing; Character and Values, Coming of Age, Deaf Community, Family Relationships, Responsibilities, Sign Language

**Summary:** Theo, a hearing son, is tired of interpreting for his family members who are deaf and resents their reliance on him. He finds inspiration from Ivy, a new friend, as he faces the challenges of his father’s recent stroke and death and his mother’s dependence on him.

**Readability:** 730L, Grade 3

**Award:** ALA Best Book for Young Adults

**Format:** Hardcover, Paperback; 215 pages

**Unit Plan:** Pages 198–223

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**The Silence of Murder**

*Dandi Daley Mackall, Author*

*Ember, Random House Books, 1748 Broadway, New York, NY 10012*

*Copyright: 2011*


**Themes:** Asperger’s Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Mutism; Family Relationships, Friendship (Mystery)

**Summary:** Sixteen-year-old Hope must defend her brother, Jeremy, who has autism and selective mutism. Jeremy is on trial for murdering Coach Carter. Hope finds the most important evidence for the trial in Jeremy’s collection of empty jars.

**Note:** Contains references to kissing, use of alcohol and tobacco, and violence.

**Award:** Edgar Award (Mystery Writers of America)

**Readability:** 660L, Grade 3

**Format:** Hardcover, Paperback, eBook, Audiobook; 323 pages
It’s such an opportunity to read about challenges that someone has. … If we can see how a character copes, rises above, solves the problem in the books that we are reading, it really can move and impact the reader. That’s a very powerful thing.

(Barbara Krakower, Florida Inclusion Network)

The unit plans in this section provide examples of ways teachers and families can use literature to promote disability awareness.

Grade 6
Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish

Grade 7
Petey: Overcoming Adversity

Grade 8
Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes

Grade 9
The Running Dream: We Both Win!

Grade 10
Things That Are: Making Choices

Grade 11
Wild Orchid: Coming of Age

Grade 12
Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future
What’s in the Unit Plans?

Each unit plan includes components from the General Lesson Plan Template from CPALMS, a website sponsored by the Florida Department of Education (http://www.CPALMS.org). All unit plans in this guide are available in the Resources database on CPALMS. Each unit plan includes the following components:

**Short Summary:** The summary describes the theme of the unit and major learning outcomes.

**Estimated Time:** The time describes the number of learning sessions in each unit with an estimate of the total time.

**Standards and Learning Objectives:** The standards listed for each unit reflect the Language Arts Florida Standards, Grades 6 through 12. Learning objectives for language arts and disability awareness are included in each unit.

**Materials:** The featured book is listed along with the author’s name, publication date, and publisher. More information about each book is provided in the third section of this resource. Worksheets for students and rubrics are listed and included at the end of each unit with an answer key.

**Assessments:** Formative and summative assessments measure the language arts and disability awareness learning objectives.

**Guiding Questions:** The guiding questions target language arts skills and disability awareness concepts and themes of the book.

**Prior Knowledge:** The prior knowledge section lists the knowledge and skills students will need to be able to complete the activities in the unit.

**Teaching Phase; Guided Practice; Independent Practice; Closure:** These are the primary phases of the unit. The phases incorporate language arts instructional activities, assessments, and follow-up. Student worksheets with answer keys and assessment rubrics are provided at the end of each unit.

**Extensions:** Optional activities are designed to expand students’ understanding of the disability awareness concepts and the content of the featured book.

**Accommodations:** Suggestions for ways to accommodate needs of students with disabilities are provided.

Additional information available in this resource is noted along with the link for downloading a complete copy of the unit plan from CPALMS.org.
Unit Plans for Selected Books

Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish

Grade 6

Short Summary

*Tru Confessions* is the story of Tru, a teenager whose brother Eddie has special needs. Tru writes in her journal about her wish to find a cure for Eddie and to have her own television show. In this unit, students will examine factors that influence how families, classmates, and people in the community perceive and interact with children with developmental disabilities as they work to summarize key details and events from the text, analyze ways in which the author unfolds the plot, and explain how the author develops the point of view of the narrator and discuss how the text’s characters change.

Estimated Time

12 sessions  
7 hours

Language Arts Florida Standards

LAFS.6.RL.1.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

LAFS.6.RL.1.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

LAFS.6.RL.2.6 Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

LAFS.6.W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to convey ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

a. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

c. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

e. Establish and maintain a formal style.

f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
**Unit Plan: Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish, Continued**

**Learning Objectives**

Students will be able to describe how the plot unfolds in a series of episodes.

Students will be able to summarize key details and events from the story.

Students will be able to explain how the main character changes throughout the story.

Students will be able to explain how the author develops the point of view of the narrator in the story.

Students will be able to explain how certain factors influence the main character.

Students will be able to write informative/explanatory pieces to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**Disability Awareness Learning Objectives**

Students will be able to explain the importance of understanding what students with disabilities are able to do, rather than the effects of their disabilities.

Students will be able to describe positive ways of interacting with students with disabilities in school and in the community.

Students will be able to describe proactive ways to react when you find a student with a disability being bullied.

**Materials**


Reading Guide for *Tru Confessions*

Writing Summaries

Reading Guide for *Tru Confessions* with Answer Key

Reflections for *Tru Confessions* with Answer Key

Grade Six Writing Explanatory Text Rubric for *Tru Confessions*

**Formative Assessments**

**Anticipatory Set**

Students are asked to respond to two questions: 1) *What do you know about developmental disabilities?* 2) *How should you interact with students with disabilities who are in your class?* The teacher will be able to determine how much knowledge students have regarding developmental disabilities and how students view other students with disabilities in their classroom.
Unit Plan: Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish, Continued

**Teaching Phase**

**Introducing the Story.** The teacher introduces the story by describing the main characters, including one who has a developmental disability. The teacher can provide additional background knowledge or scaffolding as relevant concepts and events are addressed in the story.

**Understanding Point of View.** The teacher explains that the story is written in the format of a personal journal. The main character, Tru, is the narrator. As the teacher shows the examples of lists, pictures, single statements, one sided conversations, and epilogue used in the journal, the students will explain what they think Tru really means and what messages she is trying to convey (point of view). When students encounter these elements in the story, the teacher will check for understanding and reteach as necessary. Students may also be asked to compare whether the other characters (her mother, Eddie, her friends) would agree with Tru's messages.

**Guided Practice**

**Understanding the Story.** Through this activity, the teacher can gather information about students' learning. Specifically, the teacher can assess students' basic comprehension of the story's events, their ability to select relevant textual evidence (key events and ideas), and their understanding of how the plot is unfolded in a series of episodes. In addition, students will describe what each episode shows about Tru's character (characteristics and traits). Students will turn in their summaries for review and feedback from the teacher, using the following criteria to evaluate student responses:

- Includes key events and ideas in summary
- Describes relevant characteristics and traits of main character

**Reflections.** Students are asked work in small groups to reflect on specific events in the story that reveal more about the main character. The questions are designed to have students better understand Tru's point of view as it is represented in her thoughts, words, and actions. The teacher will circulate and observe responses, checking for students' inclusion of specific evidence from the story that supports their opinions. The teacher will be able to check for understanding, clarify and/or re-teach before students begin the independent practice.

**Summative Assessments**

**Independent Practice.** Students will write a 2-3 page essay discussing “Tru’s Confessions,” to respond to the following prompt:

*What did Tru want to confess? What did she include in her journal that showed how she changed or developed throughout the story?*
**Unit Plan: Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish, Continued**

**Independent Practice, Continued.** *What factors contributed to those changes?*  
Students may use the elements in the writing rubric to plan their response.  
Teacher will use the Tru Confessions Rubric included at the end of this unit plan to evaluate how well students met the expectations of the learning objectives.

**Closure**

**Application.** To end the unit, the teacher asks the students the following questions to determine how well students are able to apply and generalize what they have learned about disability awareness in this story.  
*What changes would you like to see in the way students with disabilities are treated by other students?*  
*What should you do when you observe a student being bullied or treated unfairly?*  
*What new insights do you have about students with disabilities, particularly those with developmental disabilities?*  
Students are expected to increase their awareness of positive ways of interacting with students with disabilities in school and in the community and their knowledge of proactive ways to react when they find a student with a disability being bullied.

**Guiding Questions**

What do you know about developmental disabilities?  
How should students interact with students with disabilities?  
Why do students sometimes bully students with disabilities or treat them unfairly?  
What should you do when you are concerned about the way a student with a disability is acting?  
How is the plot of a story revealed through a series of episodes?  
Why is it important to summarize key details and events from a story?  
What techniques can an author use to develop the point of view of the narrator in a story?  
Why is it important to understand how the main character is influenced by different factors in a story?  
How can you write informative/explanatory pieces to examine complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content?

**Prior Knowledge**

Students need to understand how authors develop point of view in a story.  
Students need to be able to present a summary of the episodes in a story.  
Students need to understand how the plot unfolds in a story through a series of episodes.
### 2. Teaching Phase

**Introducing the Story.** Introduce the main character, Trudy Walker. Her family and best friend, Denise, call her “Tru.” Have students read the back cover of the novel to identify Tru’s three wishes: 1) to have her own TV show, 2) for Eddie (her twin brother) to be “unhandicapped,” and 3) maybe to go out with Billy Meier. Explain that Tru’s twin brother, Eddie, has special needs resulting from asphyxia (lack of oxygen [p. 3]) when he was born. Tru says her brother has a developmental disability. He has intellectual challenges or mental handicaps. (Note: These are older terms; they are now referred to as cognitive or intellectual disabilities). Tru would like to find a cure, but it is more important for others to know what a great brother she has.

**Background Knowledge.** Students will need to have a common understanding of Eddie’s special needs. Eddie has a developmental disability that resulted from problems during his birth. He learns more slowly than typical students, enjoys being with his family, but sometimes displays inappropriate behaviors. For more information on developmental disabilities, students may use information from the Centers for Disease Control to locate free materials on different disorders and prepare a brief presentation for class. Website: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/)

The teacher may also find useful information at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Website: [http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/idds/conditioninfo/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/idds/conditioninfo/Pages/default.aspx)

Ask students to think about Eddie’s special needs and how he should be treated by others. Have students describe positive ways of interacting with students with disabilities and how to respond when others are not acting appropriately. Tell students to watch for instances of unfair treatment or bullying of Eddie and how his family reacts in the story.

**Understanding Point of View.**

Ask: *What techniques can an author use to develop the point of view of the narrator in a story?*

The author uses the literary device, known as point of view, to allow readers to know what is going on in the story. When a character narrates the story, a first person point of view is used and much of the story is told using words like “I”, “me”, and “my”. This allows the reader to have a direct connection with what the character feels, says, and does. However, the narrator is also the source of information about other characters and events. The reader sometimes has to go...
Unit Plan: *Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish, Continued*

**Understanding Point of View, Continued**

Beyond what the narrator says to understand the meaning. A story told with a second person point of view uses words like “you” and “your” to make the reader a participant in the story. A third person point of view is told from an outsider looking in and uses words like “he”, “she”, “it”, and “they”. This is the most common way stories are told.

Tell students that Tru, the main character, is the narrator of the story, *Tru Confessions*. The story is presented through a series of entries into Tru’s personal journal on her computer. Discuss how the author uses the first person point of view to tell the story. Have students read aloud selections and discuss how the author uses different kinds of elements in Tru’s journal: narratives (pp. 8–12), lists (p. 13), pictures (p. 25), single statements (p. 26), on-line conversations (pp. 145–148), and an epilogue (p. 167).

**3. Guided Practice**

**Understanding the Story.**

Ask: *How does the author use episodes in the story to develop the plot?*

*What do the episodes reveal about the way the main character changes in the story?*

The Reading Guide for *Tru Confessions* worksheet included at the end of this unit divides the novel into ten sections. Ask students to read the assigned pages and write a brief summary for each section. Model how to write a summary after reading the first few pages aloud. First create a bulleted list of key events and ideas, then restate the key events and ideas in paragraph form. Students will also describe what each episode reveals about Tru’s character as it develops in the story.

If students have difficulty locating key events and ideas, have them annotate sticky notes to mark the pages as they read. Students can use the graphic organizer for Writing Summaries included at the end of this unit and write a list of events and ideas before creating the summary for each section. An answer key is provided at the end of this unit.

After reading each section of the book, have a discussion with the students. Have them point out evidence in the passages (or entries) in Tru’s journal that helps them to understand how her character changes. Ask students to share their summaries and tell what each episode shows about Tru’s character. This could be accomplished as a whole group activity for the first section, and then have students discuss the remaining sections with a partner or in small groups. Use the following criteria to evaluate student responses: 1) includes key events and ideas in summary; and 2) describes how characteristics and traits of the main character have changed.
**Unit Plan: Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish, Continued**

**Reflections.** Have students establish a clear purpose for the reflections activity.

Ask: *What techniques can an author use to develop the point of view of the narrator in a story?*

*Why is it important to determine how the main character is influenced by different factors in a story? Discuss.*

**4. Independent Practice**

Ask: *Why is it important to understand how the main character is influenced by different factors in the story? Discuss.*

Ask: *Why do you think the author titled this story, Tru Confessions?*

*What did Tru want to confess?*

Discuss the meaning of confession. Confession means admitting to something that a person would rather keep hidden. It can be simply an admission of feelings or feelings of guilt or wrongdoing about something a person has done or believes.

For the summative assessment, have students write a two-three page essay about "Tru's Confessions." Present the following prompt:

*What did Tru want to confess? What did she include in her journal that showed how she changed or developed throughout the story? What factors contributed to those changes?*

Review the expectations of Grade Six Writing Explanatory Text Rubric before students begin writing. Students may use the following list to plan their essay.

- Introduce the character and briefly describe how she changed
- Describe how you will organize the evidence to support your explanation
- Use relevant evidence and details from the text
- Use words, phrases, or clauses to create cohesion and clarify relationships among the main points
- Use correct grammar and spelling

Use the Grade Six Writing Explanatory Text Rubric for *Tru Confessions* (included at the end of this unit) to evaluate the students’ essays. Provide additional written feedback to reflect how well the students used evidence from the story to support their explanation, and how well their description of Tru reflected their understanding of the way she developed and changed throughout the story.
Unit Plan: Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish, Continued

5. Closure

Use the Guiding Questions for this unit to structure a sharing session in which students identify insights gained by reading Tru Confessions.

- How should students interact with students with disabilities?
- Why do students sometimes bully students with disabilities or treat them unfairly?
- What should you do when you are concerned about the way a student with disabilities is acting?

As a follow-up to this unit, it is important to discuss why Tru’s mother hid her identity as Deedee when she emailed Tru. When this novel was written in 1997, communicating with people you didn’t know by email was generally considered to be safe. In today’s world, children should not reply to emails from strangers because it may be dangerous. For more tips on dealing with strangers online: [http://nobullying.com/teaching-kids-about-strangers-online/](http://nobullying.com/teaching-kids-about-strangers-online/).

6. Extensions

Have students give a presentation on appropriate ways to interact with students with disabilities. Students may create scenarios and include short videos, photos, or clip art to illustrate appropriate communication techniques.

Accommodations

- Provide alternate formats (audio, braille, large print) for students who have difficulty reading the book or handouts independently
- Provide specially-formatted paper or a word processor, or allow dictation of responses if students have difficulty with handwriting

You will find more information on disability etiquette and communication and bullying and discrimination in the Disability Awareness section and information about writing in the Language Arts and Literacy section of this resource.

The entire unit plan can be downloaded from CPALMS.org: [http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121539](http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121539)
Reading Guide for *Tru Confessions*

Name: ____________________________     Date: _______________________________

Read each section of the novel, making a list of key events and ideas, and write a brief summary on a separate sheet of paper. In your summary, briefly describe what each episode reveals about Tru’s character. Make a note of any reactions or questions you have. Be ready to discuss your summary with the whole class after reading each section.

**Sections**

1. Pages 1–15: Tru and Her Wishes
2. Pages 16–35: More about Eddie
3. Pages 36–56: A Contest
4. Pages 57–68: A Start
5. Pages 69–88: Shooting the Video
6. Pages 89–100: Eddie’s Problems
7. Pages 101–113: Tru’s Problems
8. Pages 114–142: A Winner
9. Pages 143–166: The Meaning
10. Page 167: The Epilogue
**Writing Summaries**

Use this graphic organizer to identify and organize the events and ideas in each section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Events</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
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**What this episode reveals about Tru’s character**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Events</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What this episode reveals about Tru’s character**
Reading Guide for *Tru Confessions* /Answer Key—Page 1 of 3

1. Pages 1–15: Tru and Her Wishes

**Summary:** Tru is a teenager whose twin brother, Eddie, has special needs resulting from birth trauma. Tru’s mom works on a computer from home as a freelance graphic designer, and her father left several years ago to join the Peace Corps. Tru has two goals: to have her own TV show and for Eddie to be “unhandicapped.” She wants to find a cure for Eddie and already has ideas for her own television show.

**What this episode reveals about Tru’s character changes**

*Self-Motivated:* At the beginning of the story, we can see that Tru is a caring sister. She is also very self-motivated and determined to accomplish many important things in her life.

2. Pages 16–35: More About Eddie

**Summary:** Tru loves taking videos with her twin brother Eddie. She says he is developmentally disabled, has special needs and is intellectually challenged, which means he has difficulty learning. He goes to the same school as Tru, but is included in a different sixth-grade class. She likes the way Eddie does what she wants and is always there for her. She doesn’t like when he repeats things and has meltdowns. In response to an email message asking if anyone knows of a cure for someone like her brother, she gets a message from someone named Deedee that makes a lot of sense to her.

**What this episode reveals about Tru’s character**

*Understanding:* As Tru thinks about her brother, she reflects on what she knows about Eddie’s disability. She especially appreciates what he is able to do. She is willing to reach out for help.

3. Pages 36–56: A Contest

**Summary:** Tru thinks her dream has come true when she finds out that a local cable company wants to offer shows created by and for teens. She works many nights to submit a proposal with a demo tape. This causes her to turn homework in late, and she has a hard time concentrating in class.

**What this episode reveals about Tru’s character**

*Motivation:* As indicated in the beginning of the story, Tru is a hard worker. However she has trouble managing her responsibilities and doesn’t take care of some important jobs in her life.

4. Pages 57–68: A Start

**Summary:** Tru puts together some video footage including an interview with her pediatrician talking about Eddie’s condition, along with some shots from Special Olympics. Tru’s friend Denise tells her it’s boring, and Tru decides to start over. She focuses on what’s good about Eddie, especially when she’s playing soccer with him.

**What this episode reveals about Tru’s character**

*Determination:* Tru continues to show that she is capable of hard work and wants to do a good job. She is open to suggestions and will listen to feedback from others.
5. Pages 69-88: Shooting the Video

Summary: When Mrs. Hannah comes to stay with Tru and Eddie when their mother is away, they talk her into playing their favorite game, Monkey Man. Tru records the whole thing with the video camera, as she often does. During the night, she gets an idea to use the footage in her proposal. Tru asks Mrs. Hannah to sign a release form so she can use it in the show. Tru puts this episode together with other video she has already captured of Eddie.

Sometimes Tru feels guilty or embarrassed about Eddie. Once she joined her friend Marlene making fun of him and imitating his behavior, but she didn’t say anything about it. She admits that she got Eddie to take things from stores without paying for them.

Tru writes about her mixed feelings about having a brother like Eddie. When she heard about the way baby sharks devoured each other in the womb, she was afraid that this is what happened to Eddie. She thought maybe she had caused his problems.

What this episode reveals about Tru’s character

Mixed Feelings about Eddie: Tru lets peer pressure get to her. She knew she shouldn’t have joined her friend who was making fun of Eddie. She was embarrassed by Eddie’s behavior and she was afraid her friends wouldn’t like her.

Guilt: Tru doesn’t really understand why Eddie was born with a disability. She feels guilty that maybe she was the cause.

6. Pages 89–100: Eddie’s Problems

Summary: Tru, Eddie, and their mom go to a festival. Tru is surprised to see Eddie wearing Billy Meier’s hat. When she tries to return the hat, Billy says, “It’s Be-Kind-to-Retards Week, isn’t it?” and makes a mean comment to her. He also tells her that his friends peed on it. Tru gets really mad and pushes Billy off the bench he was walking on. Billy isn’t hurt, but her mother insists that she apologize. Tru reflects that when people pick on Eddie, her mom always steps in and tells them that they are wrong.

What this episode reveals about Tru’s character

Protective: Tru was upset about the way Billy teased Eddie. She was angry when she pushed him. However, she wished she had handled it better, like her mom does.

7. Pages 101–113: Tru’s Problems

Summary: Tru tells her friend Denise that her father is away in Africa. Her mother corrects her and explains that he left for many reasons, not because of Eddie. Tru doesn’t like the men her mother dates, and she gets Eddie to act out when they are there. One day Tru loses Eddie at the mall, and he panics. When she finds him, he tells her that he doesn’t want to be different. He wants to be just like her. For the first time she realizes that Eddie is aware of his condition.

What this episode reveals about Tru’s character

Concerned: Tru is unhappy that her parents are not together anymore and she doesn’t want anybody to replace her father. She thought she understood Eddie’s feelings, but she is surprised by his insight and awareness of his own condition.
8. Pages 114–142: A Winner

**Summary:** Tru feels like it is taking forever to get a response about her proposal from the cable company. Tru finally finds out she won the contest. She is very nervous and glad to say “yes“ when her email friend, Deedee, asks if she wants to have a live chat on the net on Saturday.

On the day Tru's video is to be aired, Mrs. Hannah and Tru's grandfather come to watch it with the family. It is a great success, and even the school principal calls to congratulate Tru and Eddie. Tru really wonders why the people who used to avoid Eddie and her are suddenly so nice.

**What this episode reveals about Tru's character**

*Pride and Insecurity:* Tru is really proud of winning the contest. However, she is still worried about the way others really feel about Eddie.

9. Pages 143–166: The Meaning

**Summary:** Deedee and Tru have a chat online. Tru expresses her surprise that she now sees Eddie as a person with special needs. He's not going to get better. She thinks that maybe she is afraid of growing up and leaving him behind. Deedee tells her how important it is that she is Eddie’s friend.

Tru thinks she has figured out that Deedee is her mother, but her mother denies it. The story ends with a family trip to Super World. On this trip, Tru can see the future when she goes with Eddie ride the ducky ride, she realizes that some things will change. They will have separate futures, and that’s OK.

**What this episode reveals about Tru's character**

*Insight:* At the beginning of the story, Tru felt she would be able to find a “cure” for Eddie. She wanted him to be more like her. At the end Tru finally realizes that there isn’t a cure and her relationship with Eddie will change in the future.

10. Page 167: The Epilogue

**Summary:** The epilogue predicts a very successful future for Trudy Walker as a filmmaker and Eddie Walker as an artist.

**What this episode reveals about Tru's character**

*Motivation and Determination:* Tru shows that her character traits don’t change. She keeps on accomplishing her goals.
Reflections about *Tru Confessions*

Name: ____________________________________ Date: _____________________

In your group, review the assigned section of the novel and write the answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to cite evidence from the story to support your answers. Make a note of any reactions or questions you have. Be ready to discuss your answers with the whole class.

**Pages 1–35: Tru and Her Wishes**
1. How does Tru’s wish to have a television show reflect her current interests?
2. What does Tru feel about having a twin brother like Eddie?
3. How does her wish for a cure reflect her current point of view about his disability?
4. What does she like about the response to her email request from Deedee?

**Pages 36–74: A Contest**
5. What do you learn about Tru from her journal entries as she describes her attempts at developing the proposal for the TV station (pp. 36–56)?
6. What does she learn from the criticism of the first video she put together for the proposal?
7. What factors does she consider as she tries to come up with a new idea for the video?

**Pages 75–113: Eddie Has Problems and So Does Tru**
8. What makes Tru feel guilty about her reaction to Marlene’s imitation of Eddie and the way she got Eddie to take the CD and earrings from the store?
9. How does Tru decide what to include in the video about Eddie? What point of view does she want to show about Eddie?
10. How does Tru react when she confronts Billie Meier about the hat he gave to Eddie?
11. Why do you think Tru told Denise that her father was still in Africa? What really worries her about her mother’s dating?
12. When Tru is shopping, she realizes that Eddie is missing. What surprises Tru as she and Eddie wait for their mother to pick them up? How does her point of view about Eddie change as a result?

**Pages 114–167: A Winner Now and Later**
13. How does Tru handle waiting for the results of the contest?
14. Even after Tru knows that she won the contest, why is she still worried?
15. How does the online conversation with Deedee help Tru better understand her brother, Eddie?
16. How does Tru’s going with Eddie on the ducky ride at the end of their trip to Super World affect her point of view for the future?
Reflections about *Tru Confessions*/Answer Key—Page 1 of 3

Pages 1–35: Tru and Her Wishes

1. How does Tru’s wish to have a television show reflect her current interests?
   
   *Tru has always wanted to be on TV. Her favorite toy as a kid was a microphone. One of the things she enjoys doing with her brother, Eddie, is to make home movies. She took an afterschool class from her science teacher last year and learned how to edit film and add music to videos.*

2. What does Tru feel about having a twin brother like Eddie?
   
   *Tru’s twin brother has special needs as a result of asphyxia during his birth. She writes that the technical terms, such as Developmentally Delayed, Special Needs, Intellectually Challenged, and Mentally Handicapped, or labels like Autistic or Down Syndrome, don’t give a true picture of Eddie. She thinks he looks like any kid his age. He can ride a bike, play soccer, and use a knife and fork as well as she can. But, when you talk to him, you become aware of his differences. However, she really wants to find a cure for him.*

3. How does her wish for a cure reflect her current point of view about his disability?
   
   *Tru’s current point of view is optimistic. She hopes that she will find some kind of help for Eddie. Maybe there will be drugs, an operation, or even acupuncture. She has surfed the Internet and left an email message asking if anyone knew of a recent cure for someone like Eddie. Tru doesn’t really understand that Eddie can’t be cured. His disability will affect him his whole life.*

4. What does she like about the response to her email request from Deedee?
   
   *None of the anonymous people that respond to her email have anything helpful to say. Deedee tells her to never stop hoping and searching for answers. Tru feels encouraged.*

Pages 36–74: A Contest

5. What do you learn about Tru from her journal entries as she describes her attempts at developing the proposal for the TV station (pp. 36–56)?
   
   *Tru is very motivated and excited about the contest. She also has a great imagination as she thinks about what people would say about her (pp. 40–41). She has many different ideas and shows that she is organized when she makes a list of what she needs to do. You can tell that she really loves being with Eddie as she remembers their private time together before they go to bed.*

6. What does she learn from the criticism of the first video she put together for the proposal?
   
   *Tru says that the purpose of her video is to give everyone information about Eddie’s condition so they can understand him better, but Denise and her mother suggest that it is boring or not everyone will like it. Tru is really trying to better understand Eddie’s condition.*
7. What factors does she consider as she tries to come up with a new idea for the video?

*Tru asks Eddie for ideas and thinks about having a talk show or a game show like Jeopardy. She decides to stop trying so hard and enjoys playing soccer with Eddie on the weekend. When Mrs. Hannah comes to stay with Tru and Eddie because her mother goes on a business trip, Tru has an idea. On the first night, Eddie wants to play Monkey Man, and Mrs. Hannah joins in while Tru films them. That night, she has an idea to use this tape in her video and asks Mrs. Hannah to sign a release form. As Tru thinks more about it, she remembers all of the footage she had stored and decides she can use that and add to it.*

Pages 75–113: Eddie Has Problems and So Does Tru

8. What makes Tru feel guilty about her reaction to Marlene’s imitation of Eddie and the way she got Eddie to take the CD and earrings from the store?

*Tru describes times when she has acted like she didn’t care about Eddie. One time she just smiled when her friend, Marlene, imitated him and Tru even imitated him herself. She also set Eddie up to take a pair of earrings out of a store, then yelled at him when the manager came after him. She sometimes wishes he weren’t her brother.

Tru is worried that other kids her age won’t like her because of Eddie. She wishes she could just be herself, without always having to worry about Eddie.*

9. How does Tru decide what to include in the video about Eddie? What point of view does she want to show about Eddie?

*Tru decides to tape Eddie everywhere. She carries the video camera with her so she won’t miss a shot. She wants to show that he can do everyday things like brush his teeth and play soccer and be with his class at recess. She wants to show he is just like everyone else.*

10. How does Tru react when she confronts Billie Meier about the hat he gave to Eddie?

*When Tru sees Eddie with a New York Yankees hat, she wants to know where he got it. Eddie told her that some guy gave it to him. Eddie points out Billy Meier, and Tru hands Billy back his hat. Unfortunately, Billy teases, “It’s Be-Kind-to-Retards Week” and “who wants a hat the three of us peed on?” (p. 90). Tru is angry and tells Billy that he makes her sick. Billy continues to taunt her, and Tru runs to the bench and pushes him off. She is not happy when her mother makes her apologize to Billy.*

11. Why do you think Tru told Denise that her father was still in Africa? What really worries her about her mother’s dating?

*Tru wants to think the best of her dad. She’s afraid Denise might not like her if she knows that her dad is really in Rhode Island. Her mother tells her that he left for a lot of reasons, not just because of Eddie. Tru worries that the men dating her mother will not treat her mother right. She doesn’t really want her mother to have a boyfriend.*
Reflections about *Tru Confessions*/Answer Key—Page 3 of 3

12. When Tru is shopping, she realizes that Eddie is missing. What surprises Tru as she and Eddie wait for their mother to pick them up? How does her point of view about Eddie change as a result?

*Eddie says, “I don’t want to be different. I want to be the same. Same as everybody else” (p. 111).* Tru realizes that she thought Eddie never questioned who he was, and that he always seemed to be happy with the way things were. She feels sorry for him, because she knows there isn’t anything that she can do. She doesn’t want him to be unhappy. She tells Eddie that everyone is different.

Pages 114–167: A Winner Now and Later

13. How does Tru handle waiting for the results of the contest?

*Tru thinks about trying to contact her father, but doesn’t follow through. She calls the cable company fourteen times, a few times using fake voices trying to find out when they’ll be finished reviewing the applications. She gets upset when Eddie bugs her about getting her own show.*

14. Even after Tru knows that she won the contest, why is she still worried?

*Tru is nervous that people won’t like her show or her brother, Eddie. She plays the possibilities over and over in her head.*

15. How does the online conversation with Deedee help Tru better understand her brother, Eddie?

*After the show, she has an online conversation with Deedee and tells her how well the show went. But she hesitates and says that when she watched the show this time, it made her see Eddie in a different way. She could tell he has special needs and he will stay that way. She asks herself why she thought she could cure him and why did she want to change him. Tru is worried about growing up and leaving Eddie behind.*

16. How does Tru’s going with Eddie on the ducky ride at the end of their trip to Super World affect her point of view for the future?

*Tru realizes that even when Eddie grows up, some things about him will stay the same. She hopes he will continue to be as happy as possible.*
## Grade Six Writing Explanatory Text Rubric for *Tru Confessions*—Page 1 of 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose/ Focus/Organization</strong></td>
<td>Does not introduce the character/changes. Details presented are not logically organized or belong to a different character from the text. Little to no attempt is made to acknowledge the task</td>
<td>Introduces the character/changes, but traits presented are not relevant or logically organized. Does not adequately connect to the task</td>
<td>Clearly introduces character, providing relevant details related to the character’s development in a logical order. Introduction sets the tone and connects to the task</td>
<td>Clearly introduces character, providing multiple relevant details using logical sequencing to develop a vivid picture of how the character changes. Introduction begins with a “hook” that grabs the reader’s attention and connects to the task</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Support/ Evidence | Does not include relevant support for character development or link factors that contribute most to the change. Does not allow for conclusions to be made regarding the character | Includes little relevant support for character development, linking factors that contribute most to the change. Few conclusions regarding the character can be inferred with thorough reading | Develops key traits with details/examples describing factors that contribute most to the character’s change. Some conclusions regarding the character can be drawn. Readers get the sense they vaguely know the character/changes that take place throughout the text | Fully develops key traits with details/examples describing factors that contribute most to the character’s change. Clear conclusions regarding the character are easily drawn. Readers get the sense they know the character/what impacts the character most throughout the text |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language/Style</strong></td>
<td>Response lacks cohesion between main points and details; style is informal</td>
<td>Uses some words, phrases, or clauses to create cohesion, but relationship between main points and details is vague in places; uses a formal style in much of the written piece</td>
<td>Uses basic words, phrases, and clauses throughout the writing to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among main points and details; establishes and maintains a formal style</td>
<td>Uses effective and higher-level words, phrases, and clauses throughout the writing to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among main points and details; consistently establishes and maintains a formal style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>Contains many errors in conventions (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) and grammar (complete sentences with varied sentence structures), impeding the ability to understand the written work</td>
<td>Contains several errors in grade-appropriate conventions (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) and grammar (complete sentences with varied sentence structures)</td>
<td>Contains few errors in grade-appropriate conventions (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) and grammar (complete sentences with varied sentence structures)</td>
<td>Contains no errors in grade-appropriate conventions (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) and grammar (complete sentences with varied sentence structures)</td>
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**Petey: Overcoming Adversity**  
*Grade 7*

**Short Summary**

*Petey* is the story of a man who was born with cerebral palsy in 1922 and lived in institutions his entire life. In this unit, students will learn about important challenges individuals with severe disabilities may face and the importance of regarding persons with disabilities with respect and dignity as they cite textual evidence to support analysis of the text, analyze how particular elements of a story interact, and write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and evidence.

**Estimated Time**

| 13 sessions | 6 hours |

**Language Arts Florida Standards**

LAFS.7.RL.1.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

LAFS.7.RL.1.3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

LAFS.7.W.1.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

  a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
  b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
  c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
  d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
  e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

**Learning Objectives**

Students will be able to cite textual evidence to support the analysis of what the text says explicitly.

Students will be able to cite textual evidence to support the analysis of what can be inferred from the text.

Students will be able to analyze how elements (setting, characters, and plot) of the story interact.

Students will be able to write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
Unit Plan: Petey: Overcoming Adversity, Continued

Disability Awareness Learning Objectives

Students will be able to describe major changes in the ways individuals with disabilities lived and were supported in the United States from the early 1900s to the present time. Students will be able to explain the importance of regarding persons with disabilities with respect and dignity in all aspects of their lives.

Materials

Reading Guide for Petey with Answer Key
Character Study for Petey with Answer Key
Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric for Petey
Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Frame for Petey with Answer Keys

Formative Assessments

Anticipatory Set. This activity is designed to set the stage for the unit and link to students' background knowledge about individuals with disabilities. Students are asked to respond to three questions: 1) What were living conditions like for persons with disabilities in this country in the 1920s? 2) How do persons with disabilities live in the community today? and 3) Why must we treat persons with disabilities with respect and dignity? Students may have limited knowledge of the way persons with disabilities were treated in the 1920s, except what they may have learned from the media or their family. As students share their knowledge about (and experiences with) persons with disabilities, the teacher can assess the accuracy and depth of knowledge to determine how much additional information will need to be presented. The teacher can also determine students’ attitudes and feelings about persons with disabilities and identify possible misconceptions or misunderstandings.

Teaching Phase

Introducing the Story. Through the introduction, the teacher provides more information about the main characters, Petey and Trevor. Students are asked to describe what is depicted about the characters on the cover. The teacher can build on the students’ descriptions to help students better understand the characters and the setting.

Understanding the Setting. The teacher presents several short videos and a brief explanation of how our society has changed regarding persons with disabilities. The teacher can respond to spontaneous questions or comments from the students. The
Unit Plan: Petey: Overcoming Adversity, Continued

Understanding the Setting, Continued

"Yes/No" activity asks students to think about statements regarding the treatment of persons with disabilities as well as the language arts skills addressed in this unit. Students will explain why they agree or disagree with each statement. Through observations of the students’ responses and explanations, the teacher will determine if additional background information is needed and reteach.

Guided Practice

Reading the Story. Students will read the sections of the novel independently and respond to questions on the Reading Guide for Petey in writing and in whole class discussions. The teacher can assess the accuracy and understanding reflected in students’ oral discussion of the responses to the questions. Individual written responses can also be assessed for completeness and use of textual evidence for support of explicitly stated points and inferences.

Character Study. Students will work with a partner to analyze how the characters, setting, and plot interact in the story. They will locate evidence from the story illustrating the way Petey is treated at the different institutions where he lives and how Petey is able to communicate and show that he really understands what is happening. The teacher can circulate to assess the accuracy and understanding of the evidence the students cite. In a whole class discussion, students will orally share their insights and respond to questions that ask students to infer how Petey was affected by the way he was treated at the different settings and how he affected others. To assess student understanding, the teacher can evaluate the depth of understanding reflected in the students’ comments and provide any additional scaffolding or information to help students understand how the elements of the story interact.

Summative Assessment

Independent Practice. Students will write an argument supporting their interpretation of one of the statements about the way persons with disabilities should be treated. This will reflect their understanding of the central messages of this story. Students are expected to provide at least three reasons with relevant evidence from the story to support their claim. Students may use the Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claim Frame for Petey to plan their response. Teachers will use the Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric for Petey to evaluate how well students mastered the learning objective for writing.

Guiding Questions

How have feelings and beliefs about persons with disabilities in our country changed since the 1920’s?
Unit Plan: *Petey: Overcoming Adversity*, Continued

**Guiding Questions, Continued**

Why do all persons with disabilities deserve to be treated with respect and dignity?

Why is it important to cite textual knowledge to support an analysis of what the text says?

What is the difference between an explicit statement and what can be inferred in text?

How can you analyze how particular elements (characters, setting, and plot) of a story interact?

How can you share your opinion by writing an argument that is supported by clear reasons and relevant evidence?

**Prior Knowledge**

Students need to know how to cite textual evidence to support the analysis of what the text says explicitly and what can be inferred.

Students need to be able to analyze how particular elements (setting, characters, and plot) of a story interact.

Students need to know how to write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

**1. Anticipatory Set**

To determine the extent of understanding that students have about the characters and setting of this story, ask:

- *What were living conditions like for most persons with disabilities in our country in the 1920s?*
- *Where do most persons with disabilities live today?*
- *Why must we treat persons with disabilities with respect and dignity?*

**2. Teaching Phase**

**Introducing the Story.** Introduce the novel, *Petey*, using the cover illustration of the two main characters, Petey and Trevor. Ask students to discuss what the characters are doing in the picture. The cover shows a silhouette of Petey sitting in a wheelchair and Trevor standing on a dock with a fishing rod. Explain that Petey has cerebral palsy and is unable to walk. Although Trevor is in the eighth grade, he has formed a friendship with Petey.

Tell students that the story actually begins in 1922 when Petey was born in Bozeman, Montana. The illustration on the cover reflects life for Petey more than sixty years later in the 1980s. *Petey* is based on the real life story of Clyde Cothern who was born with
Unit Plan: Petey: Overcoming Adversity, Continued

Introducing the Story, Continued
cerebral palsy. Provide a brief description of how cerebral palsy can affect a person if students are unfamiliar with the term. Additional background information is included at the end of this unit plan.

Teachers may wish to send a letter home to parents, describing the story in the novel and introducing topics for family discussion about treating persons with disabilities with respect and how to deal with bullying to reinforce what is being taught in school.

Understanding the Setting. It is important to help students understand that this story begins in the 1920s when attitudes and services for persons with disabilities were much different from today.

Present these two brief videos that highlight disability history:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO-NTQouI8Q (5.21 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ek1qXHpz-Zs (5.03 minutes)

Explain to students that the treatment of individuals with intellectual disabilities (formerly called mental retardation) really reflects more general changes in our society. In the past, persons with intellectual disabilities were officially referred to as “idiots” or “feebleminded.” Because these words often take on negative connotations, terms used to identify intellectual disabilities have changed over the years.

Disabilities are also categorized as mild, moderate, and severe, reflecting the amount of support and services required by the person. Individuals with severe disabilities were often subjected to unnecessary institutionalization (or having to live their lives in institutions instead of their family’s home or their own home). In the 1970s, a movement toward deinstitutionalization (removing persons from institutions and providing support in the community so they can live more independently) reflected a growing concern for civil rights of people with disabilities. This movement was supported by parent groups and other advocates who worked with government, social welfare, and other agencies to change laws and policies. Today, most people with severe disabilities live independently, with their families, or in group homes.

Thinking about the Story. To help students start to think more deeply about the story and the learning objectives for this unit, post the following statements:

- Feelings and beliefs about people with disabilities have changed in our country.
- People with disabilities must be treated with respect and dignity.
- People who don’t have a disability have much to gain from being friends with those who do.
Thinking about the Story, Continued

- It’s important to cite relevant textual evidence to support what is stated explicitly and what can be inferred from the text.
- To understand a story, you must analyze how particular elements of a story, like characters, setting, and plot, interact.
- When presenting an argument to support your claim, include clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Ask students to indicate whether they agree or disagree with each statement using a Yes/No response card. Have students explain why they agree or disagree with each statement. Record key ideas shared in students’ explanations on an “Agree/Disagree chart” for each statement. If all students have the same response, ask them to predict why someone might have felt the other way. Invite students to think about these statements as they read the novel about Petey and see how their thinking evolves.

3. Guided Practice

Reading the Story. Students will use the Reading Guide for Petey worksheet included at the end of this unit as they work their way through the novel. The teacher can assign students to read sections of the story independently and write responses to the questions included on the Reading Guide. It may be necessary to review how to distinguish explicitly stated points in the story from those that must be inferred, and how to locate textual evidence that supports the answers. After each section, have students discuss their responses to the questions in a whole group discussion. The teacher may evaluate the written responses for completeness and accuracy in the use of textual evidence. The teacher should also respond to any concerns and clarify misunderstandings.

Character Study.

Ask: How can you analyze how particular elements (characters, setting, and plot) interact in a story?

Explain that one way to better understand what a story is about is to think about the character’s thoughts and actions at particular times or places during the story and how the character changes as the plot evolves. Students may be surprised about the way Petey was treated when he was young. They may also reflect on the ways Petey communicated and how that changed as he grew older. To better understand the character, Petey, students will complete a character analysis chart in pairs. To model the task, create a copy of a three-column chart with three rows on the board and provide copies of the blank chart, Character Study for Petey for each student. An answer key is provided at the end of this unit. Citations for page numbers are included as a reference.
Unit Plan: Petey: Overcoming Adversity, Continued

Character Study, Continued

Have students work with a partner to complete the worksheet, Character Study for Petey. Ask each pair to share their completed worksheet with another pair of students. In groups of four, students will compare the worksheets and identify how their charts are the same or different. Have students discuss how the information recorded in the chart changes as Petey grows older. In a whole class discussion, ask students to share what they discovered. Pose the following questions to help students summarize their findings:

- What can be inferred from the way Petey changed?
- How was Petey affected by the way others treated him?
- How did Petey affect the others in the story, such as the staff at Warm Springs and the nursing home?
- How did Petey affect Trevor?

4. Independent Practice

Ask: How can we share our opinions about a story by writing an argument that is supported by clear reasons and relevant evidence?

Discuss the Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric:

- Introduce your claim about the statement
- Acknowledge alternate or opposing claims
- Describe how you will organize the reasons to support your claim
- Support the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence
- Use credible sources, demonstrating an understanding of the topic
- Use language that creates cohesion and clarifies the relationship among the claims and reasons
- Provide a concluding statement or section that supports your claim
- Use a formal style with correct grammar and spelling

Review the following statements about people with disabilities from the unit introduction (Understanding the Setting), reminding students of their initial reactions.

- Feelings and beliefs about persons with disabilities have changed in our country.
- People with disabilities must be treated with respect and dignity.
- People who don’t have a disability have much to gain from being friends with those who do.

Have students select one of the above statements and write an argument that supports its meaning. The argument should include a clear description of the claim they are
Unit Plan: *Petey: Overcoming Adversity*, Continued

**Independent Practice, Continued**

making about the statement, at least three reasons with relevant evidence from the story why their claim is correct, and a conclusion that restates their position and summarizes the main idea. Use the Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric for *Petey* included at the end of this unit to evaluate student mastery of the learning objective. Students may use the Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Frame for *Petey* to plan their writing. Completed frames are included for each of the above statements at the end of this unit plan as an answer key and guide for appropriate responses.

**5. Closure**

Ask students to think about the following questions. Have them discuss what they believe is the most important thing they learned.

- *How has the quality of life of individuals with disabilities and their families improved in our country?*
- *What should I do if I see others who don’t treat persons with disabilities with respect?*

**6. Extensions**

One of the main themes in this novel is friendship. Have students write an acrostic poem in which the first letter of each line of the poem spells out the word, “Friendship”. In the poem, describe how Petey made friends and why friendship is important.

**Additional Background Information**

**Disability History.** To learn more about disability history, have students review the following websites:

The Disability History Museum hosts a virtual, searchable library with letters, memoirs, photos and cartoons; and education programs on disability history.

Website: [http://www.disabilitymuseum.org](http://www.disabilitymuseum.org)

The Museum of DisABILITY History provides a virtual museum featuring media, medicine, society, education, advocacy, and information specifically about New York.

Website: [http://museumofdisability.org](http://museumofdisability.org)

**Cerebral Palsy.** Petey, the central character, is based on the real life story of Clyde Cothern who was born with cerebral palsy. For more information, see the Author’s Note on page 282 in the novel for a brief explanation, as well as Ben Mikaelsen’s description on his website: [http://www.benmikaelsen.com/books_petey.html#!petey/ccqx](http://www.benmikaelsen.com/books_petey.html#!petey/ccqx)
Unit Plan: *Petey: Overcoming Adversity, Continued*

**Cerebral Palsy, Continued**

Cerebral palsy is a disorder of the brain and affects people in different ways depending on what parts of the brain are involved. Cerebral palsy affects a person’s muscle tone and the ability to control movements. A person may not be able to walk, talk, eat, or move the way most people do. For information, encourage students to review *Cerebral Palsy* on the Nemours Foundation Kid’s Health website: [http://kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/cerebral_palsy.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/cerebral_palsy.html)

For a version appropriate for teenagers, see *Cerebral Palsy* on the Nemours Foundation Teens Health website: [http://kidshealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/brain_nervous/story_cerebral_palsy.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/brain_nervous/story_cerebral_palsy.html)

You may also wish to invite a person who has cerebral palsy or a professional who works with individuals with severe/profound disabilities to talk to the students and help them understand more about the disabilities.

**Accommodations**

- Provide alternate formats (audio, braille, large print) for students who have difficulty reading the book or handouts independently.
- Provide specially-formatted paper or a word processor, or allow dictation of responses for students who have difficulty with handwriting.
- Provide a Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Frame to write their claim, reasons and relevant evidence as a list, then develop their ideas into complete sentences and paragraphs.

You will find more information in this resource on disability etiquette, disability history, and bullying and discrimination in the Disability Awareness section; information about reading guides, character analysis, themes, and writing arguments in the English and Language Arts Activities section; and inviting guest speakers in the Additional Resources section.

The entire unit plan can be downloaded from CPALMS.org: [http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121543](http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121543)
Reading Guide for Petey—Page 1 of 2

Name: ____________________________     Date: _______________________________

Read each section of the novel and write answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to cite evidence from the story to support your answers when reflecting explicit ideas or making inferences from the text. Make a note of any other reactions or questions you have. Be ready to discuss your answers.

Chapters 1-4, Pages 1-36

1. Why do you think Petey was first classified as an “idiot” (p. 5)? Do you think he should have been called this? What were the signs that he was not an “idiot?” Today Petey would be described as having an intellectual disability.

2. Why do you think Petey’s parents felt they had to let him live in an institution when he was so young?

3. How was Petey treated when he lived in the infant ward at the institution? How were things different after he was moved to the adult wing?

Chapters 5-7, Pages 37-64

4. What did Petey notice about the mice who came each night? Why do you think Petey pretended to be asleep after the attendant found the mouse droppings? What can be inferred about Petey?

5. How was Calvin important in this story?

Chapters 8-11, Pages 65-107

6. Describe the relationship between Petey and his attendant, Joe.

7. The nurse, Cassie, told Petey that all people need a purpose for living. What do you think was Petey’s purpose?

Chapters 12-14, Pages 108-142

8. When Owen came to the institution to work, he wanted to help people. How did he help Petey?

9. When Owen left, Petey showed he had feelings. How did he cope with the loss?
10. Describe the incident when Trevor and Petey confronted the bullies. What motivated Trevor to step in?

11. Trevor and Petey have some interesting things in common. Make a chart like the one below that shows how they are similar and how they are different. How have Trevor and Petey learned to cope with their situations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trevor</th>
<th>Trevor and Petey</th>
<th>Petey</th>
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12. How did Petey and Trevor both benefit from their relationship?

13. What did Trevor learn when he decided to get Petey a new wheelchair?

14. What did Trevor learn by helping Petey reconnect with Calvin and Owen?

15. How did Trevor teach his parents about respect for persons with disabilities and treating them with dignity?

16. When Petey told Trevor to “go fishing,” what did he want Trevor to infer?
1. Why do you think Petey was first classified as an “idiot” (p. 5)? Do you think he should have been called this? What were the signs that he was not an “idiot?” Today Petey would be described as having an intellectual disability. 

When Petey was evaluated in Butte, Montana, the doctor said it was a severe case of feeblemindedness (intellectual disability). Petey was labeled as an “idiot” (intellectually disabled), with no capacity for even minimal sensory appreciation. This meant that the doctor thought he couldn’t receive or understand different types of sensory input, like words, sounds, sights, and other sensations. The doctor felt there was no way to rehabilitate or to treat him. Petey also had seizures, and saliva usually leaked from his mouth. His muscles had spasticity, which caused his arms and legs to be stiff. 

There were signs that Petey wasn’t an “idiot” (intellectually disabled). First, his eyes started to focus on things around him. He began to smile when the attendant picked him up after dropping him in the tub. He also smiled when Esteban approached his crib. Esteban got Petey to show that he wanted chocolate by nodding his head up and down.

2. Why do you think Petey’s parents felt they had to let him live in an institution when he was so young?

In 1922 Petey’s mother was told her baby was born with deficiencies, and she was afraid he was not alright. The doctors felt that he would never respond to treatment. When she saw how misshapen he was, she was frightened, but wanted to care for him. Petey had many seizures, and his parents decided they couldn’t keep him at home.

3. How was Petey treated when he lived at the infant ward at the institution? How were things different after he was moved to the adult wing?

Petey was kept alive in the institution. In the infant ward he was fed and changed, but he stayed in a crib all the time. In the adult wing, he was given minimal care. The attendants fed him, but often Petey gagged and would drop crumbs and bits of food on the sheet that covered him. He had only had contact with others at mealtimes. Petey was left lying in his waste without being cleaned up on a regular basis.

4. What did Petey notice about the mice who came each night? Why do you think Petey pretended to be asleep after the attendant found the mouse droppings? What can be inferred about Petey?

Petey noticed that the same mice would come each night to eat the crumbs of food left on his sheet. He watched them, gave names to each of the rats, and made sure they had food. He heard the attendant talk about getting rat poison, and he knew what that meant. He wanted to be sure the mice didn’t get the poison. This behavior showed that Petey was very aware of what was going on and could do something to try to solve the problem.
5. What evidence in the text shows how Calvin was important in this story?

*Calvin was nine years old when he was moved into the adult wing. He got the nurses to move his bed so he could be near Petey. He could understand what Petey wanted, and they learned how to communicate with each other. Calvin could figure out the words Petey used. Calvin was Petey’s first real friend.*

Chapters 8-11, Pages 65-107

6. Describe the relationship between Petey and his attendant, Joe, based on evidence in the text.

*Joe was like a father to Petey. He was the attendant who responded to Petey’s scream when Calvin was hurt. He recognized that Petey did not have intellectual disabilities. Joe explained things that happened in the movies they watched together. When Petey got sick, Joe made sure he got the care he needed.*

7. The nurse, Cassie, told Petey that all people need a purpose for living. What do you think was Petey’s purpose?

*Answers will vary, may include references to thinking of others, being friends with his attendants (Esteban, Joe, and Cassie) and Calvin.*

Chapters 12-14, Pages 108-142

8. When Owen came to the institution to work, he wanted to help people. How did Owen help Petey?

*Owen decided to get Petey and Calvin involved in more activities. He fixed an old wheelchair so he could take Petey outside of the ward to attend activities like movies and dancing.*

9. When Owen left, Petey showed he had feelings. How did Petey cope with the loss of Owen?

*When Owen left, Petey said goodbye and “hugged” him with his emotions. Petey then withdrew and felt empty even after he had a visit from Owen.*

Chapters 15-18, Pages 143–188

10. Describe the incident when Trevor and Petey confronted the bullies. What motivated Trevor to step in?

*Trevor saw three eighth-grade bullies throwing snowballs at someone in a wheelchair near the nursing home on his way home from school. He wanted to stop the boys from bothering that man, who was Petey. Trevor knew how it felt to be alone.*

11. Trevor and Petey have some interesting things in common. Make a chart like the one below that shows how they are similar and how they are different. How have Trevor and Petey learned to cope with their situations?
Reading Guide for Petey/Answer Key—Page 3 of 3

Question 11, Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trevor</th>
<th>Trevor and Petey</th>
<th>Petey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teenager</td>
<td>Scared to make new friends</td>
<td>Old man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated easily</td>
<td>Could stand up to bullies</td>
<td>Needed total care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liked to do things with friends</td>
<td>Communicated with difficulty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At first both Petey and Trevor kept to themselves when in new situations. After Trevor decided to be friends with Petey, he took him on walks and went fishing. They coped with their situations the same way. They reached out to each other and found that they liked spending time together.

Chapters 19-23, Pages 188-234

12. How did Petey and Trevor both benefit from their relationship?

Trevor made it possible for Petey to have fun outside of the nursing home. Trevor wanted to do something to help Petey get a better wheelchair. Petey found that he could have a friend again. Both enjoyed doing things together.

13. What did Trevor learn when he decided to get Petey a new wheelchair?

Trevor learned that some people, like the administrator at the nursing home, didn’t see Petey the same way as he did. The administrator thought Petey was too old and too handicapped to benefit from a new wheelchair. Trevor learned that it took a lot of planning and hard work to raise enough money to purchase a new wheelchair. He needed the help of the reporter and the physical therapist.

14. What did Trevor learn by helping Petey reconnect with Calvin and Owen?

Trevor learned that he could not get personal information about someone without permission, unless he was a family member. He learned that people can remain friends even if they haven’t seen each other for a long time.

Chapters 24-27, Pages 235-280

15. How did Trevor teach his parents about respect for persons with disabilities and treating them with dignity?

Trevor insisted that Calvin be allowed to stay overnight at their house when he was visiting Petey. Calvin showed Trevor’s parents that he could take care of himself.

16. When Petey told Trevor to “go fishing,” what did he want Trevor to infer?

Petey wanted Trevor to live his own life and do things that he enjoyed.
**Character Study for Petey**

Name: ____________________________     Date: _______________________________

Throughout this story, Petey was not always treated with respect and dignity. However, he continued to develop and showed others how smart he was.

Work with a partner to locate evidence in the text that shows how Petey was treated and how he responded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Petey’s Placement</th>
<th>List examples of how Petey was treated</th>
<th>List examples of how Petey communicated and showed that he understood what was going on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant Ward at Warm Springs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Ward at Warm Springs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Home in Bozeman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Character Study for Petey/Answer Key—Page 1 of 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Petey's Placement</th>
<th>How Petey was treated</th>
<th>How Petey communicated that he understood what was happening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infant Ward at Warm Springs</strong></td>
<td>Petey experienced monotony each day (daybreak, sunset) (p. 15). He was given physical care (bath) (p. 17). He had to stay in a crib (p. 21). Esteban talked to Petey as a normal child (p. 21). Esteban brought chocolate (p. 23). Nurse watched and said “What you are seeing is conditioned behavior” (p. 25).</td>
<td>Petey noticed the patterns of events (pp. 15–16). His eyes began to focus (p. 16). He smiled when the nurse picked him up after being dropped (pp. 16–17). He smiled at Esteban (p. 21). He let Esteban know that he wanted the chocolate, especially the day when Esteban forgot (pp. 23–25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult Ward at Warm Springs</strong></td>
<td>Petey was tied with a sheet onto a wheelchair to move into adult ward (p. 2). Except for a shirt and being covered by a sheet, Petey was placed naked in a wheelchair during the day (p. 34). He was fed lying on his back (p. 36). He laid alone in own waste for hours during Christmas (p. 41). He was wheeled to dayroom at breakfast (p. 48). He stopped being fed when he choked and gagged (p. 49). The caretaker took his blanket off and rolled him over for cleaning (p. 52). His nurse read letters from Joe (p. 86). Cassie, a nurse, becomes Petey’s friend and takes him outside (p. 89). Petey spends many days in bed (p. 113). Owen gave Calvin and Petey candy as Christmas presents and started to talk with Petey (p. 119). Mrs. Marsh said severely retarded patients don’t have special privileges (p. 125). Owen fixed an old wheelchair and took Petey outside (p. 129).</td>
<td>Petey noticed small food droppings on his sheet (p. 36). He named the mice and followed their activities each night (p. 37). He watched the mice as they came for food (pp. 38–39). He stayed awake to chase the mice away from the rat poison (p. 57). He worked out a way to utter words using his throat, “Aeee, Oooo, Guuu” (p. 61). Petey learned to predict mealtimes by watching the long and short levers on round glass thing on the wall (p. 62). He let out a scream to alert attendants when Calvin fell from his wheelchair (p. 66). He got Joe to explain what movies were (p. 70). Petey understood what Christmas and presents meant (p. 79). He understood that Cassie must move away, and he will miss her (p. 107). He greeted Mrs. Marsh when he was outside with Owen (p. 130).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petey’s Placement</td>
<td>How Petey was treated</td>
<td>How Petey communicated that he understood what was happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Home in Bozeman</td>
<td>Petey could go outside, and the attendant took care of his needs (p. 148). Sissy (nurse) encouraged Trevor to visit Petey (p. 151). Sissy greeted all of the residents (p. 154). Sissy made sure Petey would be taken care of when out with Trevor (jacket, sunglasses, cleaning routine, photo album) (pp. 179–180).</td>
<td>Petey showed concern for Trevor. Is he OK? (p. 157) He noticed every sound and movement when outside (p. 167). At Trevor’s urging, Petey faked a seizure to scare the bullies (p. 171). Petey urged Trevor to tell him why he likes to be with him (p. 175). Petey wanted to know the names of things in the store (p. 192). Petey and Calvin have a good reunion (p. 232). Petey is embarrassed to be cleaned up when he is out with Trevor (p. 238). He tells Trevor to go fishing (p. 263).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric for Petey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose/Focus/Organization</strong></td>
<td>No introduction or pattern of organization</td>
<td>Introduces claim about statement and organization of reasons and evidence</td>
<td>Introduces claim about statement and organizes reasons and evidence clearly</td>
<td>Introduces claim about statement, acknowledges alternate claim, and organizes reasons and evidence logically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support/Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Supports some reasons with evidence</td>
<td>Supports most reasons with relevant evidence</td>
<td>Supports all reasons with clear and relevant evidence</td>
<td>Supports claim with logical reasons and accurate, relevant evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>No clear conclusion is present</td>
<td>Includes a concluding statement</td>
<td>Includes a concluding section describing the argument</td>
<td>Includes a concluding section that follows from and supports the argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language/Style</strong></td>
<td>Response lacks cohesion between main points and details; style is informal</td>
<td>Uses some words, phrases, or clauses to create cohesion, but relationship between main points and details is vague in places; uses a formal style in much of the written piece</td>
<td>Uses basic words, phrases, and clauses throughout the writing to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among main points and details; establishes and maintains a formal style</td>
<td>Uses effective and higher-level words, phrases, and clauses throughout the writing to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among main points and details; consistently establishes and maintains a formal style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>Contains many errors in conventions and grammar, impeding the ability to understand the written work</td>
<td>Contains several errors in grade-appropriate conventions and grammar</td>
<td>Contains few errors in grade-appropriate conventions and grammar</td>
<td>Contains no errors in grade-appropriate conventions and grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Frame for Petey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate or Opposing Claim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restate claim, summarize ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Frame for Petey/Answer Keys—Page 1 of 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th><strong>Feelings and beliefs about persons with disabilities have changed in our country.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>Today, stories like Petey help to show that people feel more positively about persons with disabilities than they did in the 1920s. Petey had a difficult time as an infant and youth, but he benefitted from positive interactions of caring staff and residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate or Opposing Claim</td>
<td>People haven’t really changed their feelings or beliefs about persons with disabilities. They have low expectations and think that persons with disabilities should be kept away from others. In Petey, the boys from Trevor’s school still bullied and teased Petey when they saw him outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Impact of the different places where Petey lived and how Petey was changed by the people who interacted with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support—Reason and evidence</td>
<td>When Petey was born, his parents were told he was an idiot and would never be able to learn. They were convinced that he needed to live in an institution (Warm Springs). In the infant ward, he was cared for physically, but he had to stay in his crib.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td>When he moved to the adult ward, a nurse and one of the attendants took special interest in him and he was able to do more things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td>At the nursing home in Bozeman, Petey was able to go outside. Sissy, one of the staff, encouraged Trevor to come back and visit him. Petey and Trevor became friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion—Restate claim, summarize ideas</td>
<td>As Petey grew up, his life changed from one of isolation to acceptance. Through the people who cared about him, he learned how to communicate and share with others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th><strong>People with disabilities must be treated with respect and dignity.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>People with disabilities deserve respect and dignity because they are people, first. Petey helps us understand why this is so important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate or Opposing Claim</td>
<td>It doesn’t matter how you treat a person with a disability, because they don’t understand what is going on and can’t do anything about it. Petey shows us that some people with disabilities will never be able to accomplish as much as others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>The effect of the interactions and support of the people who took care of him from the time he was a small boy until he was in his 60s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support—Reason and evidence</td>
<td>In the infant ward, Esteban talked to Petey as if he were a normal child. Petey smiled and communicated that he wanted chocolate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade Seven Writing Arguments and Claims Frame for Petey/Answer Keys—Page 2 of 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>People with disabilities must be treated with respect and dignity, Continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td>In the adult ward, Petey got attention from Joe who took him to movies. Cassie—took Petey outside. Owen—fixed wheelchair so he could go outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td>In the nursing home, Sissy encouraged Trevor to visit Petey and helped set up outings. Petey and Trevor became friends and helped each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion—Restate claim, summarize ideas</td>
<td>Petey provides many examples of how a person with a disability can be positively affected when treated with respect and dignity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>People who don’t have a disability have much to gain from being friends with those who do.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>You can have a lot of fun with persons with disabilities. Petey showed how a person with disabilities can be a good friend and how a teen can benefit from that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate or Opposing Claim</td>
<td>You should not be friends with a person with disabilities because they don’t know what to do or they might get hurt. Petey included examples of how persons with disabilities sometimes have difficulty communicating or having a seizure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Examples of interactions of Petey and Trevor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support—Reason and evidence</td>
<td>In the story, at first Trevor wanted to protect Petey from the bullies because he knew how it felt to have no friends. But after they took a walk, Trevor realized how much Petey appreciated it. Trevor had fun when he and Petey scared the bullies by having Petey fake a seizure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td>Trevor continued to have fun with Petey. They talked about many things, like bullying, hurt, life, and friendship. Trevor realized why he needed a friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td>Trevor asked Petey to go fishing and it was very successful. When they got back to the nursing home, Petey asked when they could go shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion—Restate claim, summarize ideas</td>
<td>It can be fun to have a friend who has a disability, because you can talk about things that matter, do things together, and learn a lot about each other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes

## Short Summary

*Freak the Mighty* is the story of a friendship between Max, who is big for his age and has learning disabilities, and Kevin, who is a genius, but is short and unable to walk on his own. In this unit, students explore how expectations for students with disabilities are influenced by appearances, behaviors, and stereotypes as they cite textual evidence that supports an analysis of what the text says, determine/analyze the text’s theme, and engage effectively in collaborative small-group discussions.

### Estimated Time

7 sessions

7 Hours

## Language Arts Florida Standards

- LAFS.8.RL.1.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- LAFS.8.RL.1.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- LAFS.8.W.1.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
  - a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
  - b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
  - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
  - d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- LAFS.8.SL.1.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
  - a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
  - b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
  - c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others’ questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
**Unit Plan: Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes, Continued**

**Language Arts Florida Standards, Continued**

LAFS.8.SL.1.1

d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

**Learning Objectives**

Students will be able to cite textual evidence that strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly and from inferences drawn from the text.

Students will be able to determine the theme and analyze its development over the course of the story, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.

Students will be able to engage effectively in collaborative discussions in small groups, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**Disability Awareness Learning Objective**

Students will be able to explain how appearances and behaviors influence perceptions of individuals with disabilities.

**Materials**

Freak the Mighty, by Rodman Philbrick (1993). Scholastic, Inc.

Reading Guide for Freak the Mighty with Answer Key

Exploring a Theme of Freak the Mighty with Answer Key

Grade Eight Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric for Freak the Mighty

Grade Eight Writing Arguments and Claims Frame for Freak the Mighty with Answer Keys

**Formative Assessments**

**Anticipatory Set.** This activity is designed to set the stage for the unit and link to students' background knowledge about individuals with disabilities. As students share their knowledge about (and experiences with) persons with disabilities, the teacher can assess the accuracy and depth of knowledge to determine if additional information needs to be presented. The teacher can also determine students’ attitudes and feelings about persons with disabilities to identify possible misconceptions or misunderstandings.
Unit Plan: *Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes*, Continued

**Teaching Phase**

**Introducing the Story.** Through the introduction, the teacher provides more information about the disabilities of the two main characters. Students are asked to answer questions and make predictions about the story. The questions are designed to help students begin to think more deeply about the main characters and their families. The teacher can build on the students’ predictions and help students better understand the plot and underlying themes.

**Guided Practice**

**Understanding the Story.** Students will independently read and provide a written response to the questions for the five sections of the story. The teacher can assess students’ accuracy and understanding of the characters and the plot reflected in their answers. Through the whole class discussion, the teacher can clarify possible misunderstandings and determine how well students are able to distinguish between questions that ask for explicitly stated points or inferences and whether the textual evidence cited strongly supports the students’ answers.

**Theme Development.** To help students consider the themes, the teacher asks students to identify how the characters, setting, or plot of *Freak the Mighty* convey themes of friendship, family relationships, self-concept, bullying, and dealing with death. The teacher can assess how well the students are able to connect elements of the story with each theme. If students have difficulty understanding the theme or elements, the teacher can reteach or provide additional scaffolding.

**Appearance vs. Reality.** This activity focuses on a central theme of the story, appearance vs. reality. Students will independently complete the Exploring a Theme, *Freak the Mighty* worksheet and participate in a small group activity to collaboratively share their ideas. The teacher can assess the depth of students’ understanding of the theme, the accuracy of their descriptions of the characters, plot, and setting, and the insight reflected in how the theme applies to students’ own interactions with persons with disabilities.

To assess student participation in the small group activity, the teacher can circulate during the activity and observe how well students engage in discussions, build on other’s responses, and ask questions for clarity. The teacher will evaluate comments made by the students in their self-assessment of participation in this activity.

**Summative Assessments**

**Independent Practice**

**Analyzing a Theme.** Students will write a two–three page reflection to respond to the following prompt: *Which theme in Freak the Mighty is most compelling to you? How do the characters, setting, and plot contribute to this theme? How is this message important to you and your peers?* Students will use an argument/claim text structure.
Unit Plan: *Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes, Continued*

**Analyzing a Theme, Continued**

and the elements in the Grade Eight Arguments and Claims Rubric for *Freak the Mighty* to plan their reflection. The teacher will use the rubric to evaluate how well students met the expectations of the learning objective for writing.

**Closure**

The teacher can assess the students’ oral responses to the guiding questions to determine how well the students are able to generalize their knowledge and attitudes about persons with disabilities.

**Guiding Questions**

Who is the real hero in *Freak the Mighty*?
How can friendships help teens with disabilities deal with their problems and conflicts?
How do appearances influence other’s perceptions of individuals with disabilities?
Why is it important to cite textual evidence that strongly supports an analysis of the text?
What is the difference between an inference and an explicitly stated point in a text?
How does the theme develop over the course of the story?
How do themes of a story relate to the characters, setting, and plot?
How can students engage effectively in collaborative discussions in small groups?

**Prior Knowledge**

Students need to understand how appearances and behaviors influence perceptions of individuals with disabilities.
Students need to understand how to determine the theme in a text.
Students need to understand how the theme develops over the course of a story.
Students need to determine how a theme is related to the characters, setting and plot of a story.
Students need to be able to cite textual evidence that strongly supports an analysis of what a text says explicitly and through inferences.
Students need to know how to engage in collaborative discussions with small groups.

**1. Anticipatory Set**

Invite students to share their own knowledge about and experiences with persons who have disabilities. Students may be familiar with Stephen Hawking, a well-known cosmologist who has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), which affects the motor
Unit Plan: *Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes, Continued*

**Anticipatory Set, Continued**

neurons, or Christy Brown, an Irish artist who has cerebral palsy. If more examples are needed, go to http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article_0060.shtml for a list of famous and well-known people with disabilities who have contributed to society.

Ask:

*Why do some people react negatively to a person with a disability whose appearance is disfigured or whose behaviors are unusual?*
*Why is it important to discover the real capabilities and strengths of people with disabilities?*
Discuss.

**2. Teaching Phase**

**Introducing the Story.** Introduce the novel by discussing its title, *Freak the Mighty.* The story focuses on the friendship and courage of two boys, Max and Kevin (a.k.a., Freak). Read the back cover as a preview, asking for comments about the statements.


“I never had a brain until Freak came along. ...”

*That’s what Max thought. All his life he’d been called stupid. Dumb. Slow. It didn’t help that his body seemed to be growing faster than his mind. It didn’t help that people were afraid of him. So Max learned how to be alone. At least until Freak came along.*

*Freak was weird, too. He had a little body—and a really big brain. Together Max and Freak were unstoppable.*

*Together, they were Freak the Mighty.*

Optional: Use the following booktalk to introduce the story: http://www.nancykeane.com/booktalks/philbrick_freak.htm

Describe each of the main characters in the story.

Kevin (also known as Freak in the story) was born with Morquio syndrome, which is transmitted genetically. He has a short stature and his body is twisted. He must use leg braces and crutches to walk, although he also uses a wheelchair. In this story, Kevin is portrayed as a genius, which is not associated with Morquio syndrome. For more information on Morquio syndrome, search this term on the National Institutes of Health MedlinePlus website: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001206.htm.

Max, has learning disabilities and extreme difficulty with reading and writing. Students with learning disabilities have average or above-average intelligence but struggle to
Unit Plan: *Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes, Continued*

**Introducing the Story, Continued**

acquire skills that impact their performance in many situations. The Florida Department of Education provides information about specific learning disabilities on its website: [http://fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/ese-eligibility/specific-learning-disabilities-sld](http://fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/ese-eligibility/specific-learning-disabilities-sld)

Determine what students understand about the disabilities reflected in the characters of this story. Students may also work in small groups to gather information about these disabilities and give a presentation to the class.

The plot of the story follows the challenges the boys face and the antics of Max and Kevin’s quests. Max tells the story, but the reason that he came to write this story about *Freak the Mighty* is saved for the last page of the novel. The disabilities of the main characters play an important role in the story because their individual strengths and challenges actually complement each other. Have students make predictions about the story using the following questions:

- What makes Max and Kevin an unlikely pair?
- What problems do Max and Kevin have in common?
- How do Max and Kevin’s families help or hurt them?

Student predictions should be recorded so they can be verified as students read the story.

3. Guided Practice

**Understanding the Story.** Students will use the Reading Guide for *Freak the Mighty* worksheet included at the end of this unit to follow the events of the story as they read the five sections of the novel.

Ask: What is the difference between an inference and an explicitly stated point in a text?

Why is it important to cite textual evidence that strongly supports an analysis of the text? Discuss. Point out to the students that the questions on the reading guide require them to distinguish between inferences and explicitly stated points. Students will need to make this important distinction when citing textual evidence to support their responses to the questions.

The Reading Guide for *Freak the Mighty* breaks the story into five sections, each approximately 30 pages long. Have students read each section independently and write answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. When students complete each section of the story, discuss the responses to the questions with the whole class. To reinforce reading skill development, select two or three questions and have students identify whether they ask for explicit or inferential information. Have students explain
Unit Plan: *Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes*, Continued

**Understanding the Story, Continued**

why they selected the particular textual evidence to support their answers. In addition, review the predictions students made and compare them with what actually happened in the story in each section.

*What makes Max and Kevin an unlikely pair?*
*What problems do Max and Kevin have in common?*
*How do Max and Kevin’s families help or hurt them?*

Selected words are bolded in the questions to indicate vocabulary that should be addressed in the context of the story. If students have difficulty with other words, encourage them to use Freak’s Dictionary included in the book at the end of the story.

**Theme Development.**

Ask: *How does the theme develop over the course of the story?*

*How do themes of a story relate to the characters, setting, and plot?*

Discuss. The themes of a story are central messages that the author wishes to convey through the characters, setting, and plot of the story. *Freak the Mighty* explores a number of themes related to family, friendships, self-reliance, appearance vs. reality, bullying, and dealing with death. Students will analyze the theme of appearance vs. reality in the next activity. Ask students to identify how the characters, setting, or plot convey each of these other themes.

Examples:

* Friendship: Max and Kevin play with the ornithopter and have many adventures; Kevin helps Max learn to read.
* Family Relationships: Kevin has positive relationship with his mother. Max has cautious interactions with his grandparents and is afraid of his father.
* Self-Reliance: Max thinks he is dumb. Kevin feels he can conquer anything.
* Bullying: Both Max and Kevin are subject to bullying from Tony D. Max’s dad (Kenny Kane) kidnaps Max, ties him up and tells him that he didn’t kill Max’s mother. Kevin helps Max trick Tony D. and Max’s dad to get away from them.
* Dealing with Death: Kevin knows he has a short time to live, and he keeps it from Max by telling him he is going to get a new body. Max is devastated when he learns that Kevin has died, but he is motivated to tell their story.
Unit Plan: *Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes, Continued*

**Appearance vs. Reality.** This activity is designed to help students focus on a central theme in this story: appearance vs. reality. Students will use the Exploring a Theme of *Freak the Mighty* worksheet and a collaborative small group activity to share their ideas about how this theme is expressed in the novel.

Ask: *What do students need to do to engage effectively in collaborative discussions with small groups?*

Discuss expectations for engaging in collaborative discussions. Students will need to express their own ideas clearly, build on other’s ideas, and ask questions for clarification.

Organize the students into groups of four to discuss how they will apply what they have learned about the theme, appearance vs. reality, to their own interactions with students with disabilities. Students can refer to their completed copies of the Exploring a Theme of *Freak the Mighty* worksheet.

Provide the following directions:

1. Students will place their worksheets top-side down on the table or floor.
2. They will select one paper and **read only the last statement**. Tell students to use a thumbs-up, thumbs-down, or thumbs-side gesture to indicate if they agree or disagree with, or are not sure about the statement that was read. Ask volunteers to explain.
3. Continue with the remaining papers.

Finally, ask students to stop and think, before they respond to this final statement as it relates to students with disabilities:

> **Appearances can be deceiving.**

Have student share their responses.

After the group activity, have students self-assess their participation in the collaborative group discussion orally or in writing. How well did they express their ideas, build on the ideas of others, and ask questions for clarification?

**4. Independent Practice**

**Analyzing a Theme.** For the summative assessment, have students select one of the other themes (friendship, family relationships, bullying, or self-reliance) and discuss how the characters, setting, and plot helped to develop this theme throughout the story. Students will write a two-three page essay. Present the following prompt:

> **Which theme in Freak the Mighty is most compelling to you? How do the characters, setting, and plot contribute to this theme? How is this message important to you and your peers?**
Unit Plan: *Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes*, Continued

**Analyzing a Theme.**

Students will use an argument/claim text structure to respond to the prompt. Review the Grade Eight Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric before students begin writing. Students may use the following list or the Grade Eight Writing Arguments and Claims Frame also included to plan their reflection.

- Introduce the theme and state your claim about why it was compelling
- Distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims
- Describe how you will organize the arguments to logically support your claim
- Provide relevant textual details to support the arguments
- Include a conclusion section that ties together your claim and arguments
- Use words, phrases, or clauses to create cohesion and clarify relationships among the main points
- Use a formal style with correct grammar and spelling

Use the Grade Eight Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric (included at the end of this unit) to evaluate the students’ essays. Provide additional written feedback to reflect how well the students used evidence from the story to support their claim about the theme and how this theme is important to their peers. Completed frames are included for several themes (friendship, family relationships, bullying, and self-reliance) at the end of this unit plan for the teacher to use as a guide for appropriate responses.

**5. Closure**

**Reflection.** Have students review the comments they made about the story at the beginning of Teaching Phase when they read the statements on the back of the cover. Were their comments accurate? How did the story change their thinking?

Have students apply what they have learned from this story by revisiting these guiding questions:

- *Who is the real hero in* Freak the Mighty?*
- *How does friendship help teens with disabilities deal with their problems and conflicts?*
- *How do appearances influence other’s perceptions of individuals with disabilities?*

**6. Extensions**

Unit Plan: *Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes, Continued*

**Movie, Continued**

How closely does the movie follow the novel? Have the students use a chart or graphic organizer to note the similarities and differences between the book and the movie. Have students discuss how and why movies sometimes differ from the novels they are based on.

“If I were Kevin or Max…” Invite students to pretend they are Kevin or Max and create two journal entries that their chosen character might have written. Students may write the entries using the first person voice and make direct references to the novel.

**Accommodations**

- Provide alternate formats (audio, braille, large print) for students who have difficulty reading the book or handouts independently.
- Provide specially-formatted paper, a word processor, or dictate responses for students who have difficulty with handwriting.
- Place students in groups using a buddy system. A buddy can help the student follow instructions and stay on task, for students who have difficulty working in small groups.
- Provide a checklist of assignments with due dates to help keep their work organized for students who have difficulty keeping track of assignments.

For additional information, see important information about disabilities in the Disability Awareness section, and reading guides and themes in the English and Language Arts Activities section of this resource.

The entire unit plan can be downloaded from CPALMS.org:
http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121544
Reading Guide for Freak the Mighty—Page 1 of 2

Name: ____________________________     Date: _______________________________

Read each section of the novel and write the answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to cite evidence from the story to support your answers. Make a note of any reactions or questions you have. Be ready to discuss your answers.

Chapters 1–5—Max and Kevin (a.k.a., Freak) (Pages 1–27)
1. Max says, “I never had a brain until Freak came along and let me borrow it. That’s the truth, the whole truth. The unvanquished truth is how Freak would say it” (p. 1). What does Max mean? How can truth be unvanquished?
2. Why does Max spend so much time “downunder”? How does Freak (Kevin) handle the effects of his own disability—his small size and lack of mobility?
3. What does Max learn about Kevin as they play with the ornithopter and when Kevin talks about knights and quests in King Arthur’s time? What do you think Kevin learns about Max?
4. Max calls his grandparents Grim and Gram. Kevin says that nickname must be based on his demeanor. What does Kevin mean?
5. What startles Kevin’s mother when she sees Max for the first time? What evidence in the text tells you that her feelings change after they have dinner and get acquainted?

Chapters 6–10—Freak the Mighty (Pages 28–62)
6. When Max and Freak meet up with Tony D. at the fireworks, what happens to make them both end up laughing? Why does Freak call Tony D. a cretin? What does this tell Max about Freak?
7. How do Freak and Max avoid Tony D. the next time they see him at the pond? How is Freak the Mighty created?
8. How does the friendship with Max and Freak develop over the summer? What would Max be doing if he hadn’t found Freak?
9. How does “Freak the Mighty” come to life? Why do you think Max and Freak would take such a dangerous risk as retrieving something from the storm drain?
Reading Guide for Freak the Mighty—Page 2 of 2

Chapters 11–15—Max and Freak (Pages 63–99)
6. What goes wrong when Max and Freak try to return the purse they rescued from the storm drain?
7. Why do you think Max was placed in Freak’s classes the next school year? What evidence is presented in the text that this is a good idea or bad idea? Why do you think Freak the Mighty was brought to life in Mrs. Donelli’s class?
8. Friday the thirteenth is a bad day for Max because two things happen. Why do these two events worry him?
9. Why is Freak’s Christmas gift of the pyramid box with the handwritten dictionary so important to Max?

Chapters 16–20—Max Confronts Kane (Pages 100–134)
14. When his father is telling Max his sad tale, Kane starts crying and saying how cruel people can be. Max sees the tears but thinks to himself, “There’s no crying in his voice” (p. 112). Why do you think Max sees right through his dad’s story?
15. Why does Loretta try to save Max? What can be inferred about her character?
16. Why do you think Max has the courage to tell Kane what he knows about his mother?
17. What makes the scene with Freak and the squirt gun funny? Does Freak recognize the humor? Does Max? What evidence in the text supports your answers to these questions?

Chapters 21–25—Max Faces Changes (Pages 135–160)
18. How does Max’s life change with Gram and Grim and the kids at school after the incident with Kane is resolved?
19. With whom is Max angry when he realizes that Kevin is dead? Why? What helps him get over his anger?
Reading Guide for *Freak the Mighty*/Answer Key—Page 1 of 4

Chapters 1–5 Max and Kevin (a.k.a., Freak)

1. Max says, “I never had a brain until Freak came along and let me borrow it. That’s the truth, the whole truth. The **unvanquished** truth is how Freak would say it” (p. 1). What does Max mean? How can truth be unvanquished?

   *Max remembers the names he has been called and says he is a butthead and his brain is vacant (p. 6). He tells the reader he is LD (has a learning disability) and has trouble reading (p. 19). Unvanquished means that no one can defeat or deny that statement.*

2. Why does Max spend so much time “downunder”? How does Freak (Kevin) handle the effects of his own disability—his small size and lack of mobility?

   “Downunder” is what Max calls the room in the basement where he stays in his grandparents’ house. He hides out there. He is afraid of what other people think of him (pp. 5–6).

   *Freak isn’t kept back by his disability. Even though he can’t walk on his own, he moves as well as he can even if it involves crawling or waving his crutches. When he was in preschool, Freak pretended that he was a robot and his leg braces had motors in them.*

3. What does Max learn about Kevin as they play with the ornithopter and when Kevin talks about knights and quests in King Arthur’s time? What do you think Kevin learns about Max?

   *Max learns how smart Kevin is. Max first helps him retrieve the ornithopter (a mechanical bird) caught in a tree. Max has difficulty understanding everything Kevin tells him, but he thinks it’s cool. When Kevin tells him about King Arthur, Max continues to listen, adding a few comments to show he is interested. Kevin offers to lend him some books (pp. 17–19). Kevin probably thinks Max could be his friend because Max is interested in what he (Kevin) is doing and talking about.*

4. Max calls his grandparents Grim and Gram. Kevin says that nickname must be based on his **demeanor**. What does Kevin mean?

   *Kevin means that his grandfather’s manner or way of dealing with him feels unpleasant or very firm.*

5. What startles Kevin’s mother when she sees Max for the first time? What evidence in the text tells you that her feelings change after they have dinner and get acquainted?

   *Kevin’s mother, Gwen, is startled by Max’s large size. She puts Kevin in the wagon and rushes home (p. 20). After they have dinner together, she says she is glad that Kevin and Max have become friends. Max no longer frightens her (p. 27).*

Chapters 6–10—Freak the Mighty

6. When Max and Freak meet up with Tony D. at the fireworks, what happens to make them both end up laughing? Why does Freak call Tony D. a cretin? What does this tell Max about Freak?
Reading Guide for *Freak the Mighty*/Answer Key—Page 2 of 4

**Question 6, Continued**

Tony D. calls both of them names and tries to make them hand over any fireworks they have. Freak says, “Ignore the cretin,” and Max is afraid Tony D. is going to fight. But just in time, the police car comes with its siren blaring, and Tony D. and his punksters run away. Freak and Max laugh, because Max admits he couldn’t beat up Tony D. after Freak called him names. They were saved when the police car pulled up and Tony D., and the gang ran away (pp. 29–33).

7. How do Freak and Max avoid Tony D. the next time they see him at the pond? How is Freak the Mighty created?

Freak rides on Max’s shoulders, so they can travel together easily. The next time they see Tony D. and are threatened by his knife, Freak tells Max to head into the millpond. Tony D. follows but is afraid and begins to throw rocks at them. Freak hears a police car and whistles for help from the police. The police help the boys out of the pond. After that, “Freak the Mighty” is created (pp. 34–40). The boys decide to work as a pair, “slaying dragons and fools and walking high above the world” (p. 40).

8. How does the friendship with Max and Freak develop over the summer? What would Max be doing if he hadn’t found Freak?

After the encounter with Tony D., Grim and Gram are thankful for Freak. Freak comes over every day. Max says he would just vegetate (do nothing), if it hadn’t been for Freak.

9. How does “Freak the Mighty” come to life? Why do you think Max and Freak would take such a dangerous risk as retrieving something from a storm drain?

Every morning, Freak comes over to Max’s, and they go on adventures they call quests. Freak rides on Max’s shoulders steering him with his feet and making up the adventures as they go along in the neighborhood. One day Freak tells Max that he is going to get a bionic body, and Max believes him (pp. 52–53).

Possible answers about risks: Max trusts Freak and would probably do whatever he told him. Freak knows that life is dangerous, but he believes that Max can safely get the treasure out of the drain.

Chapters 11–15—Max and Freak (Pages 63–99)

10. What goes wrong when Max and Freak try to return the purse they rescued from the storm drain?

The ID in the purse identifies the owner as living in the New Tenements, a bad part of town. Iggy, the boyfriend of the woman who owns the purse, recognizes Max as the son of Kenny Kane. Max knows that Iggy is the boss of a motorcycle gang (pp. 63–71).

11. Why do you think Max was placed in Freak’s classes the next school year? What evidence is presented in the text that this is a good idea or bad idea? Why do you think Freak the Mighty was brought to life in Mrs. Donelli’s class?
Question 11, Continued

Possible answer: Freak’s mother urged the administrators at school to place them in classes together because Max could help Freak get around (p. 75). This may be a good idea, because Max wasn’t making any progress in the special class. Freak could explain things Max doesn’t understand.

When Mrs. Donelli asks Max what he did over the summer, the other students tease him. Freak stands on the desk and yells, “Order in the court. Let justice be heard.” Freak says that he and Max were nine feet tall, fought gangs, and found treasure. Freak got Max to move about the classroom, calling, “Freak the Mighty! Freak the Mighty!” The boys end up in the principal’s office. Freak is able to convince Mrs. Addison that this all really happened (pp. 76–79).

12. Friday the thirteenth is a bad day for Max because two things happen. Why do these two events worry him?

On Friday the thirteenth, Mrs. Addison calls Max into the office to tell him that the school has received a request from his father. Max covers his ears and says he doesn’t want to hear it. Mrs. Addison assures him he won’t have to do anything he doesn’t want to. Max is worried because he is afraid of his father and he might have to go with him.

In the cafeteria, when Max brings back some more food for Freak, he finds Freak all red and having difficulty breathing. They call the ambulance and take Freak to the hospital. Max is worried because he is afraid Freak won’t get well (pp. 82–87).

13. Why is Freak’s Christmas gift of the pyramid box with the handwritten dictionary so important to Max?

Freak makes the pyramid box and writes the dictionary so that Max will have all of his words in alphabetical order. It will be easy for him to use and remember all of the things Freak told him (pp. 97–98).

Chapters 16–20—Max Confronts Kane (Pages 100–134)

14. When his father is telling Max his sad tale, Kane starts crying and saying how cruel people can be. Max sees the tears but thinks to himself, “There’s no crying in his voice” (p. 112). Why do you think Max sees right through his dad’s story?

Max doesn’t trust his father. He heard Grim, his grandfather, talk about getting a gun to protect the family if Kane comes back. Max thinks his father might come back, and he is scared.

Kane takes Max to the New Tenements where Iggy and Loretta are staying. Kane ties up Max to make sure he won’t run away (p. 110). After a brief sleep, Kane wants to set Max straight about things. Kane appears to be crying and even puts his hand on the Bible when he tells Max that he did not murder “this boy’s mother.” Max says he is satisfied, but keeps thinking about things he doesn’t want to remember (p. 114). Then Kane takes Max to a burned-out building and gags him (p. 123).
15. Why does Loretta try to save Max? What can be inferred about her character?

Loretta doesn’t like the way Kane was treating Max. She says that Kane has changed and shouldn’t have tied up Max. This shows she is worried about Max and doesn’t want him to get hurt. Unfortunately, Kane comes back and starts to choke Loretta (p. 127).

16. Why do you think Max has the courage to tell Kane what he knows about his mother?

When Iggy first comes into the room where Kane and Max are staying, he says that a cop came to their place looking for Max. Iggy says he spotted the little midget (Freak) in the car. Max knows that Freak is trying to find him (pp. 119–121).

After Max sees Kane trying to kill Loretta, Max tries to shake him loose by falling on top of him. Max remembers that he saw Kane doing the same thing to his mother. Max says, “I saw you kill mother” (p. 129).

17. What makes the scene with Freak and the squirt gun funny? Does Freak recognize the humor? Does Max? What evidence in the text supports your answers to these questions?

When Kane tries to choke Max and Max almost passes out, Freak appears in the doorway holding a blaster squirt gun. Kane says he knows it’s not a real gun, but Freak convinces him that this squirt gun has sulfuric acid that he got out of a chemistry set. Freak recognizes the humor because the solution of soap, vinegar, and curry powder stops Kane right away. Things are happening so fast, Max barely has time to think about anything. He’s worried about Loretta, who fortunately is recovering from the attack (pp. 131–134).

Chapters 21–25—Max Faces Changes (Pages 135–160)

18. How does Max’s life change with Gram and Grim and the kids at school after the incident with Kane is resolved?

Gram and Grim are more concerned about Max and how he is feeling. The kids at school are even jealous that Freak and Max got their pictures in the paper (pp. 135–140).

19. With whom is Max angry when he realizes that Kevin is dead? Why? What helps him get over his anger?

At first Max is angry with the hospital staff. He really thought Kevin was getting a new bionic body, like he told him. Then Max is mad at people who felt sorry for him. He begins to get over his anger when he runs into Loretta again and decides to tell the story of Freak the Mighty, the one thing that Kevin asked him to do (pp. 158–160).
**Exploring a Theme of *Freak the Mighty***

Name:_______________________________    Date:____________________________

The story in *Freak the Mighty* conveys a theme or central message about appearance vs. reality, particularly as it relates to persons with disabilities. Use the chart below to brainstorm aspects of the story that relate to this theme. Then write one or more generalized statements about the theme of the story, and describe how you will apply what you have learned to your own interactions with persons with disabilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Appearance vs. Reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characters (looks and behaviors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the central message or theme? How do you know it?

How will you apply this message to your own interactions with persons with disabilities?
Exploring a Theme of *Freak the Mighty*/Answer Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters (looks and behaviors)</th>
<th>Plot: Events and Conflicts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Max  
*Big for age, has learning disabilities, thinks he is dumb, is a fighter* | *Max remembers Kevin from preschool. Max and Kevin escape Tony D. and the gang. Max and Kevin become friends and have adventures as *Freak the Mighty*. Max and Kevin retrieve a purse and try to return it to Loretta Lynn. Iggy recognizes Max as Kane’s son; Kane kidnaps Max and takes him to the New Tenements, where he ties him up. Loretta tries to save Max, but is attacked by Kane. Max describes how Kane killed his mother; Freak points a giant squirt gun at Kane and rescues Max.* |
| Kevin  
*Small for age, has physical disabilities, has difficulty getting around, is very smart, has a good imagination* | *Kevin has treatments at the hospital and dies after having a seizure. At first Max is angry that Kevin died, but later decides to tell the story of *Freak the Mighty*.>* |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Neighborhood and homes where Max and Kevin live, park, school, New Tenements when Kane is staying | *What is the central message or theme? How do you know it? Answers will vary.*  
*Example: Appearances can be misleading. Max was big, but had trouble learning and making friends. Kevin was small and had difficulty moving, but he was a genius and easily made friends with Max.* |

<p>| How will you apply this theme to your own interactions with persons with disabilities? Answers will vary. |  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate or Opposing Claim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support—Reason and evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion—Restate claim, summarize ideas to support argument</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Grade Eight Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric for *Freak the Mighty*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose/Focus/Organization</strong></td>
<td>Introduces theme and claim with no organization of the reasons and evidence</td>
<td>Introduces theme and claim with unclear organization of reasons and evidence</td>
<td>Introduces theme and claim, acknowledges alternate claims, and organizes the reasons and evidence</td>
<td>Introduces theme and claim, distinguishes from alternate claims, and organizes the reasons and evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support/Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Supports claim with irrelevant evidence from the story</td>
<td>Supports claim with some evidence from the story</td>
<td>Supports claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using credible evidence from the story</td>
<td>Supports claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible evidence from the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>No clear conclusion is present</td>
<td>Includes a concluding statement</td>
<td>Includes a concluding section that describes the argument and indicates personal relevance for the author</td>
<td>Includes a concluding section that supports the argument and indicates personal relevance for the author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language/Style</strong></td>
<td>Response lacks cohesion between main points and details; style is informal</td>
<td>Uses some words, phrases, or clauses to create cohesion, but relationship between main points and details is vague in places; uses a formal style in much of the written piece</td>
<td>Uses basic words, phrases, and clauses throughout the writing to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among main points and details; establishes and maintains a formal style</td>
<td>Uses effective and higher-level words, phrases, and clauses throughout the writing to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among main points and details; consistently establishes and maintains a formal style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>Contains many errors in conventions and grammar, impeding the ability to understand the written work</td>
<td>Contains several errors in grade-appropriate conventions and grammar</td>
<td>Contains few errors in grade-appropriate conventions and grammar</td>
<td>Contains no errors in grade-appropriate conventions and grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade Eight Writing Arguments and Claims Frame for *Freak the Mighty*/
Answer Keys—Page 1 of 6

### Friendship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Most compelling theme in <em>Freak the Mighty</em> is the power of friendship.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>Friendships help you find strength to rise above bad situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate or Opposing Claim</td>
<td>Friendships make you weak, because you only do what your friends tell you to do and you don't make up your own mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Description of events that show how friendship helps Max and Freak deal with difficulties in their lives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Support—Reason and evidence

- **Max** has a bad temper, like his dad. He spends his free time alone in his room in the basement. He calls it his private downunder (p. 5). He goes outside when he is bored and ends up helping Kevin retrieve his ornithopter (a mechanical bird) caught in a tree. Max has difficulty understanding everything Kevin tells him, but thinks it's cool. When Kevin tells him about King Arthur, Max continues to listen, adding a few comments to show Kevin he is interested. After Max is invited to dinner with Kevin and his mom, he thinks, “Everything is great, just like Gwen says, except when I lie down on my bed, it hits me, boom, and I'm crying like a baby. And the really weird thing is, I'm happy” (p. 24).

- **Max** learns how smart Kevin is. Freak comes over every day. Max says he would just vegetate (do nothing), if it hadn't been for Freak (p. 44). Every morning, Freak goes over to Max’s, and they have adventures they call quests. Freak rides on Max’s shoulders steering him with his feet and making up the adventures as they go along in the neighborhood.

- **Kevin** helps Max deal with the threat of his father. When Kane tries to choke Max and Max almost passes out, Freak appears in the doorway holding a blaster squirt gun. Kane says he knows it isn’t a real gun, but Freak convinces him that this squirt gun has sulfuric acid that he got out from his chemistry set. Freak used a solution of soap, vinegar, and curry powder that stopped Kane (pp. 131–134).

- **Kevin** helps Max learn how to read too. Kevin makes a dictionary of his special words and gives him a blank book, which eventually inspires Max to write their story. After Kevin dies, Max pulls out the pyramid box, retrieves the empty book and “wrote the unvanquished truth stuff down and then kept on going, for months and months until it was spring again, and the world was really and truly green all over” (p. 160).

#### Conclusion—Restate claim, summarize ideas to support argument

**Friendships help you find strength to rise above bad situations.**

Max’s friendship with Kevin helps him to get out of the downunder and experience more of life as Freak the Mighty. Kevin helps Max deal with the potential threats of his father. Max helps Kevin deal with the short time he has left to live. He hopes Max would tell their story.
## Grade Eight Writing Arguments and Claims Frame for *Freak the Mighty*

**Family Relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Most compelling message in <em>Freak the Mighty</em> is about family relationships.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>Families can sometimes be a blessing or a curse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate or Opposing Claim</td>
<td>Families always have your best interests at heart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Two blessings and a curse: Descriptions of relationship with families (Kevin and his mother, Max and Grim and Gram; Max and his father, Kenny Kane)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Support—Reason and evidence**

**Blessing:** Kevin’s mother, Gwen, is protective of Kevin but respects his needs to be independent as possible.

When Kevin first goes to visit Max, Gwen is afraid and takes him away. But when she realizes they were becoming friends, she invites Max to come for dinner (pp. 19–27).

When Kevin insists, Gwen gets the people at school to allow Max to be in Kevin’s classes. They agree it would be good for Kevin to have someone to help him get around (p. 75).

**Reason and evidence**

**Blessing:** Gram and Grim take care of Max after his mother is killed. After the incident with his father and when Kevin dies, they are very worried about Max’s feelings.

Gram and Grim show Max how proud they are after he and Freak escape the bullying of Tony D. and the gang. They help Max get cleaned up, offer him coffee to show that they think he has grown up, and even call him “son” (pp. 41–44).

Gram takes him shopping for new clothes for school and allows him to be in the same classes as Kevin (pp. 74-75).

After Max’s dad returns, Grim thinks about purchasing a gun so they will be safe. When he tells Max what is going on, he asks him not to tell Gram and makes Max promise to stay inside (pp. 91–92).

**Reason and evidence**

**Curse:** Max’s father returns from prison and wants to take back Max. He is worried that Max could tell the truth about what happened to his mother.

On Friday the thirteenth, Mrs. Addison calls Max into the office to tell him that the school has received a request from his father. Max covers his ears and says he doesn’t want to hear it. Mrs. Addison assures him he won’t have to do anything he doesn’t want to. Max is worried because he is afraid of his father and he might have to go with him (pp. 84-85).

Max doesn’t trust his father (Kenny Kane). He hears Grim, his grandfather, talk about getting a gun to protect the family if Kane comes back. Max thinks his father might come back, and he is scared (pp. 91–92).

On Christmas, Kane kidnaps Max and takes him to the New Tenements where Iggy and Loretta are staying. Kane ties up Max to make sure he won’t run away (p. 110). After a brief sleep, Kane wants to set Max straight.
### Family Relationships, Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason and Evidence, Continued</th>
<th>Kane appears to be crying and even puts his hand on the Bible when he tells Max that he did not murder “this boy’s mother.” Max says he is satisfied, but keeps thinking about things he doesn’t want to remember (p. 114). Kane then takes Max to a burned-out building and gags him (p. 123). When Loretta comes to free Max, Kane grabs her and attempts to strangle her. Max tries to shake him loose by falling on top of him. Max remembers that he saw Kane doing the same thing to his mother. Max tells him, “I saw you kill mother” (p. 129). Kane is sure Max was too little to remember, but Max is able to describe what Kane was wearing at the time.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion—Restate claim, summarize ideas to support argument</td>
<td>Families can sometimes be a blessing or a curse. Both Max and Kevin are blessed by having family members who take care of them. Max has Grim and Gram, and Kevin has his mother, Gwen. Max’s father is a curse for him. He wants to keep him from telling the truth about his mother.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Self-Reliance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Most compelling message in <em>Freak the Mighty</em> is about self-reliance. Self-reliance means that a person has self-confidence, self-assurance, resourcefulness, self-sufficiency, and independence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>Difficult situations bring out self-reliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate or Opposing Claim</td>
<td>Self-reliance comes from dealing with difficult situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Compare and contrast the ways that Max and Kevin are self-reliant when they deal with difficult situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support—Reason and evidence</td>
<td>Max shows he has self-assurance when Kane kidnaps him. After Max sees Kane trying to strangle Loretta, Max tries to shake him loose by falling on top of him. Max remembers that he saw Kane doing the same thing to his mother. Max tells him, “I saw you kill mother” (p. 129). Kane is sure Max was too little to remember, but Max is able to describe what Kane was wearing. Max draws on his physical and emotional inner strength and his belief in right and wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td>Freak shows he is resourceful when he rescues Max from Kane. When Kane tries to choke Max and Max almost passes out, Freak appears in the doorway holding a blaster squirt gun. Kane says he knows it isn’t a real gun, but Freak convinces him that this squirt gun has sulfuric acid that he got out from his chemistry set. Freak uses a solution of soap, vinegar, and curry powder that stops Kane (pp. 131–134). Kevin draws on his knowledge of chemistry. He is sure Kane would fall for his trick.</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and evidence</td>
<td>Max ultimately shows that he has self-confidence when he decides to write about his adventures with Freak the Mighty. After Kevin dies, Max hides in the downunder for days and days. “…for a long time I felt like I was a balloon and somebody had let the air out of me. I didn’t care if I ever got the air back, because what does it really matter if we’re all going to die in the end?”(p. 158). When he sees Loretta, she asks what he is doing. He tells her that he is doing nothing. Her response, “Nothing is a drag, kid” gets him to thinking. He pulls out the pyramid box and retrieves the empty book that Freak had given him and “wrote the unvanquished truth stuff down and then kept on going, for months and months until it was spring again, and the world was really and truly green all over” (p. 160).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion—Restate claim, summarize ideas to support argument</td>
<td>Both Kevin and Max show that they have a great deal of self-reliance when facing difficult situations. Max comes out of the difficult situation with his father because of his self-assurance and with the resourcefulness of Kevin. Max also shows that he has the self-confidence to tell the story of Freak the Mighty after Kevin dies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Grade Eight Writing Arguments and Claims Frame for *Freak the Mighty*/
### Answer Keys—Page 5 of 5

**Bullying**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Most compelling message in <em>Freak the Mighty</em> is about dealing with bullying.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>You can respond to bullying effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate or Opposing Claim</td>
<td>There is nothing you can do about bullying. You just have to take it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Ways of effectively dealing with bullying that are used in the story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Support—Reason and evidence**

- **Try not to show anger or fear, use humor.**

  *At the July Fourth fireworks display, Tony D. calls out to them. “Hey you! Mutt and Jeff! Frankenstein and Igor! Don’t look around. I’m talkin’ to you, boneheads. What is this, a freak show?”* (p. 29). He tries to make them hand over any fireworks they have. Max knows that the best way to deal with Tony D. and his gang is to avoid them. But Freak says, “Ignore the cretin,” and when Blade (one of the gang) says ‘want to say that again, little freak man,’ Freak says, ‘Cretin. C-R-E-T-I-N. Defined as someone who suffers from mental deficiency.’” (p. 31). Max is afraid Tony D. is going to fight. But just in time, the police car comes with its siren blaring, and Tony D. and his punksters run away. Freak and Max laugh, because Max admits he couldn’t beat up Tony D. after Freak called him names. They were saved when the police car pulls up, and Tony D. and the gang run away (pp. 29–33).

- **Get away from the situation.**

  *Freak rides on Max’s shoulders, and they travel together easily. When they see Tony D. the next time and are threatened by his knife, Freak tells Max to head into the millpond. Tony D. follows but is afraid and begins to throw rocks at them* (p. 38).

- **Tell trusted adults (police).**

  *Freak hears a police car and whistles for help from the police. The police help the boys out of the pond* (p. 39).

**Conclusion—Restate claim, summarize ideas to support argument**

- **By working together, Max and Freak show how you can respond to bullying effectively.**
  - Use humor or not showing fear
  - Get away from situation
  - Tell trusted adults
  - *Freak the Mighty is created when the boys decide to work as a pair, “slaying dragons and fools and walking high above the world”* (p. 40).
The Running Dream: We Both Win!  

**Short Summary**

*The Running Dream* is the story of Jessica, a 16-year-old star runner who loses her leg in a bus accident. She learns to look beyond the disability and discover the real person inside when she becomes friends with Rosa, who has cerebral palsy. In this unit, students examine the issues and challenges of coping with a disability and its effect on relationships and self-esteem as they analyze how complex characters develop over the course of the story, and write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas.

**Estimated Time**

9 Sessions  
8 hours

**Language Arts Florida Standards**

LAFS.910.RL.1.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

LAFS.910.RL.1.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

LAFS.910.W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
Unit Plan: The Running Dream: We Both Win! Continued

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support their analysis of what the text says explicitly and by inference.

Students will be able to analyze how complex characters develop over the course of the story, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Students will be able to write informative/explanatory pieces to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Disability Awareness Learning Objective

Students will be able to explain how one’s attitudes and expectations affect interactions with persons with disabilities.

Materials


Children’s Books

Reading Guide for The Running Dream with Answer Key

Character Analysis for The Running Dream with Answer Key

Grades Nine/Ten Explanatory/Informative Writing Rubric

Sample Essay for Summative Assessment of The Running Dream

Formative Assessments

Anticipatory Set. This activity sets the stage for the unit and links to students’ background knowledge about individuals with disabilities. As students share their responses to the guiding questions, the teacher can determine students’ attitudes and feelings about persons with disabilities to identify and correct possible misconceptions or misunderstandings.

Teaching Phase

Introducing the Story. Through the introduction, the teacher provides information about the disabilities of the two main characters, Jessica and Rosa, along with a video by the author. Students respond to questions and make predictions about the challenges each of the characters are likely to face in the story. The questions are designed to help students begin to think more deeply about the main characters. The teacher can prompt students to elaborate their predictions to help students better understand the characters.
Unit Plan: The Running Dream: We Both Win! Continued

Guided Practice

**Reading the Novel.** Students will independently read and write responses to the questions for the seven sections of the novel. The teacher can evaluate the accuracy and insight reflected in the written responses as well as the use of relevant evidence from the text to support the answers. Through whole class discussion that follows the reading of each section, the teacher can clarify possible misunderstandings.

**Character Analysis.** Students may work individually or with a partner to locate specific evidence in the text of Jessica’s acceptance of disabilities and how she is influenced by her friendship with Rosa. In addition, students will synthesize the main ideas expressed in each key event to reveal how the relationship of the two main characters develops the theme of the story. The teacher will review the depth of understanding reflected in the students’ charts and provide any additional scaffolding or information to help students understand how the elements of the story interact.

Summative Assessment

**Independent Practice.** Students will write an explanatory essay that examines how the theme of the story is advanced by the interactions of the two main characters. They will be able to use the Character Analysis to plan their essays. The following questions will provide the prompt: 1) How is Jessica’s acceptance of her own disability influenced by her friendship with Rosa? and 2) What can you learn from The Running Dream that relates to your own attitudes about disabilities? The teacher will use the Grades Nine/Ten Informative/Explanatory Writing Rubric for The Running Dream included at the end of this lesson to evaluate whether students have mastered the learning objective. A sample essay is provided at the end of this unit.

Guiding Questions

How do our attitudes and expectations affect the way we interact with persons with disabilities?

How do misconceptions negatively affect what we feel about persons with disabilities?

What challenges do you think Jessica and Rosa have to face as a result of their disabilities?

Why is it important to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the story says?

How can we analyze how complex characters develop the theme of a story?

How can we write an explanatory or informative piece with a clear introduction and organization, well-chosen and sufficient details, and concluding section using appropriate transitions, precise language, and an objective tone and formal style?
**Unit Plan: The Running Dream: We Both Win! Continued**

**Prior Knowledge**

Students need to know how to identify and cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the story says.

Students need understand how to determine the theme of a text.

Students need to understand how to analyze characters and their relationships in a story.

Students need to know how to write explanatory/informative text with a clear introduction and organization, well-chosen and sufficient details, and concluding section using appropriate transitions, precise language, and an objective tone and formal style.

**1. Anticipatory Set**

Invite students to share their own knowledge about and experiences with persons who have disabilities.

- *How can our attitudes and expectations affect the way we interact with persons with disabilities?*

- *How do misconceptions negatively affect what we feel about persons with disabilities?*

Discuss.

**2. Teaching Phase**

**Introducing the Story.** In this novel, two of the characters have disabilities. Jessica lost the lower part of her leg in an accident and Rosa, who has cerebral palsy, uses a motorized wheelchair to get around.

Show the following video of the author telling about her inspiration for the novel:

When introducing the story, the teacher may need to provide additional background knowledge so that students will be able to understand the characters with disabilities. Additional resources are listed below.

Jessica, the main character, was a star runner on the school track team. She recently lost the lower part of her leg in a bus accident. She uses a variety of assistive devices including a wheelchair and crutches, and eventually is fitted with a regular **prosthesis** and a special prosthesis for running. These devices help her adapt to her new way of life.
Introducing the Story.

For more information, see Prosthesis at the National Institutes of Health MedlinePlus website:

For pictures and news stories with runners using the same type of prosthesis described in the novel, go to: http://amputeebladerunners.com

Rosa was born with cerebral palsy. It impacts her mobility and speech, but not her intelligence.

For more information, go to the Cerebral Palsy Information Page on the website of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS):

Have students think about the challenges that both Jessica and Rosa are likely to face that result from their disabilities.

Ask: What challenges do you think Jessica will face after her accident? What challenges do you think Rosa has to face every day?

Encourage students to consider both the physical challenges and the emotional challenges Jessica and Rosa might face with their family, friends, classmates, and their teachers.

Post a list of predictions in the classroom so students can refer to them as they read the novel. Discuss why these challenges might arise and what could be done to avoid any resulting problems.

3. Guided Practice

Reading the Novel. Students will use the Reading Guide for The Running Dream worksheet included at the end of this unit to follow the events of the story as they read the novel.

Ask: Why is it important to cite thorough and strong textual evidence to support your analysis of what the text says explicitly and by inference?

Discuss. Review expected formatting of direct quotations and citations expected in student responses, as necessary.

Have students read each section independently and write their answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Students may also enter their responses and additional questions on an online blog set up for this purpose. Have a whole class discussion with the students after each section of the story. The teacher will review and provide feedback on the written responses. An answer key is included at the end of this unit.
Unit Plan: The Running Dream: We Both Win! Continued

Character Analysis.

Ask: How can we analyze the way the main character (Jessica) develops over the course of the story, interacts with other characters (Rosa), and develops the theme (acceptance of disabilities)? Discuss.

The theme of this story reflects Jessica’s acceptance of disabilities, focusing on her own disability. Acceptance of disabilities (or persons with disabilities) means that you view the person positively and don’t prejudge what he or she can do. Jessica’s acceptance of her own disability is largely influenced by her relationship with Rosa, a student in her math class. The chart in the Character Analysis for The Running Dream worksheet included at the end of this unit will help students explore how Jessica’s acceptance of her disability and the relationship between these two characters develop in this story. The chart provides three columns: 1) Key Events, 2) Jessica’s Acceptance of Disabilities, and 3) Jessica’s Relationship with Rosa. Tell students to review each event and gather textual evidence by paraphrasing or using direct quotations with citations and a statement that synthesizes the main ideas that are expressed for each event as they complete the chart. An answer key is provided at the end of this unit in which the main ideas are in bold font.

This activity may be completed individually by students or with a partner, based on teacher preference. However, students will need individual copies of their analysis to plan their essay for the summative assessment in the Independent Practice section. When students have completed this activity, briefly discuss their findings and clarify any misconceptions or questions that students still have regarding this novel. Students may wish to discuss how other characters felt about people with disabilities and how they influenced (positively or negatively) Jessica’s acceptance of her own disability.

4. Independent Practice

Ask: How can we write an explanatory piece that analyzes how Jessica’s acceptance of her own disability is influenced by the friendship between Jessica and Rosa in The Running Dream? Discuss.

Tell students to use the Character Analysis previously completed to plan their essay. They should be encouraged to select the strongest and most relevant details to support their ideas. If necessary, review the elements of exploratory and informative writing, based on the Grades Nine/Ten Explanatory/Informative Writing Rubric.
Unit Plan: The Running Dream: We Both Win! Continued

Independent Practice, Continued.

- Introduce the topic and organization of complex ideas, concepts, and information
- Use well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient details, quotations, and examples to develop the topic
- Use appropriate transitions to link the sections, create cohesion, and clarify relationships
- Use precise language to manage the complexity
- Provide a concluding section that follows from and supports the significance of the information
- Use a formal style and objective tone

Present the following questions as the prompt for the final essay.

How is Jessica’s acceptance of her own disability influenced by her friendship with Rosa?
What can you learn from The Running Dream that relates to your own attitudes about disabilities?

The teacher will use the Grades Nine/Ten Informative/Explanatory Writing Rubric for The Running Dream included at the end of this unit to evaluate whether students have mastered the learning objective. A sample essay is provided at the end of this lesson.

5. Closure

Ask students to revisit their predictions and discuss the following questions for this unit:

What challenges did we correctly predict for Jessica and Rosa? What did we miss?
Why do people sometimes treat persons with disabilities as if they are invisible?
Why is Rosa’s wish, “That people would see me, and not my condition,” such an important idea?

6. Extensions

Learn about Team Hoyt, a father and son who have run, biked, and swum together in more than 1000 events, including 255 triathlons. Rick, the son, is a quadriplegic with cerebral palsy and cannot run or speak. Website: http://www.teamhoyt.com

A special report featuring Dick and Rick Hoyt was included in Segment 164 of Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel, broadcast on November 23, 2010 on HBO.
Unit Plan: The Running Dream: We Both Win! Continued

**Accommodations**

- Provide alternate formats (audio, braille, large print) for students who have difficulty reading the book or handouts independently.
- Provide specially-formatted paper or a word processor, or allow dictation of responses for students who have difficulty with handwriting.
- Have students use an expository writing frame for planning to identify the elements and organize the details and evidence.

For additional information about anticipation guides, reading guides, character analysis, and writing infomatory and explanatory pieces, refer to the English and Language Arts Activities section of this resource.

The entire unit plan can be downloaded from CPALMS.org:
http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121546
Reading Guide for *The Running Dream*—Page 1 of 3

Name: ____________________________    Date: _______________________________

Read each section of the novel and write the answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper, citing strong and thorough textual evidence in your responses. Make a note of any other reactions or questions you have. Be ready to discuss your answers.

**Part I. Finish Line**
**Chapters 1–12, Pages 3–28**

1. What kinds of emotions does Jessica go through the first few days in the hospital as she comes to grips with her accident? What do these reactions reveal about her character?

2. How do the doctor, her mom and dad, and her best friend, Fiona, react to her amputation and try to comfort Jessica at this time?

3. How does Jessica initially deal with the knowledge of Lucy’s death, another student on the bus? How does Jessica’s reaction reflect her feelings about her own loss?

**Chapters 13–26, Pages 29–60**

4. How does Jessica show that she is beginning to accept her loss?

5. What is Jessica really saying when she says, “I know it’s selfish, but I can’t help thinking that Lucy is the lucky one“ (p. 38)?

6. How do Jessica’s parents help her once she comes home from the hospital? What do they want for Jessica?

7. Why do you think Jessica’s dad said, “We’re through with these (p. 55),” when he saw that there were only two pills left in the bottle of her pain medication. Was he right to do that? What does this episode reveal about Jessica’s character?

**Part II. Headwind**
**Chapters 1–8, Pages 63–91**

8. What character traits are revealed as Jessica prepares herself physically and mentally to return to school?

9. Why is Jessica so reluctant to return to school?
Reading Guide for *The Running Dream*—Page 2 of 3

**Chapters 9–15, Pages 92–119**

10. How does Jessica respond to the way Fiona, her principal, teachers, and coach welcome her back to school?

11. Why do you think Mrs. Rucker treats Jessica’s return differently than the other teachers? Why did she ask Jessica if she wants to sit in the back of the classroom with Rosa, who is in a motorized wheelchair? Why does this worry Jessica?

12. How did Jessica’s feelings about Rosa change in the short time on the day she sat near her when she came back to class?

13. Why is Jessica upset about the insurance problems?

**Part III. Straightaway**

**Chapters 1–8, Pages 123–150**

14. Why is Jessica encouraged after her appointment with Dr. Wells? How has she changed since the accident?

15. Why does Jessica keep dreaming about running? Why do you think Jessica sees a mermaid fountain and Rosa waving from her porch in her running dream this time? How have Jessica’s attitudes about Rosa changed?

16. How does Jessica react when Coach Kyro shows her videos of amputees who are runners?

17. Why are her parents skeptical about the success of the “Help Jessica Run” campaign?

**Chapters 9–14, Pages 151–174**

18. How does Jessica feel about running? Why is it so important to her, now that she has lost her leg?

19. Why is Jessica surprised to talk with Vanessa Steele’s mother when she goes to the Liberty track meet with Langston?

20. Why do you think Vanessa lodges a complaint stating that Jessica was planted on the sidelines as a distraction?

**Chapters 15–24, Pages 175–205**

21. When Mrs. Rucker asks Jessica to move back to her regular seat in math class, she chooses to stay next to Rosa. How has Jessica’s friendship with Rosa evolved since Jessica first came back to school?

22. How does Jessica react to her new prosthesis?

23. How does Jessica respond to the “Help Jessica Run” campaign and the coverage in the news?
Part IV. Adjusting the Blocks
Chapters 1–10, Pages 209–242
24. In the morning when Jessica first attempts to go out with her dog, Sherlock, she is disappointed that she can't really run with her new prosthesis. When she decides to keep walking, she sees the mermaid fountain and Rosa wrapped in a blanket on the porch. What does this conversation between Jessica and Rosa reveal about their characters?
25. What new insights does Jessica have when her Dad tells her what's really going on with the insurance companies?
26. How does the coverage on television continue to help the “Help Jessica Run” campaign?
27. Why does Jessica’s relationship with Gavin change? How does he show he is a real friend?

Chapters 11–18, Pages 243–274
28. Why do you think Jessica’s mom was surprised that Jessica didn’t tell her that Rosa has cerebral palsy? How have Rosa’s notes helped Jessica?
29. What happens that makes Jessica know that Gavin is really interested in her?
30. How does Jessica’s life get back to normal over the summer? What has helped her to show such strength of character?

Part V. Starting Line
Chapters 1–15, Pages 277–336
31. How does Jessica know that her running dream is finally a reality?
32. Why does Jessica insist that the focus of the River Run be on Rosa? How does Rosa feel about this? What does this reveal about Jessica’s character?
33. Why did Jessica stop at Lucy's gravestone when she was training for the River Run?
34. How does seeing Mrs. Rucker competing in the River Run Race tie up some loose ends for Jessica?
35. How does Jessica view the finish line when she crosses it in the River Run Race?
Reading Guide for *The Running Dream* | Answer Key—Page 1 of 8

**Part I. Finish Line**

**Chapters 1–12, Pages 3–28**

1. What kinds of emotions does Jessica go through the first few days in the hospital as she comes to grips with her accident? What do these reactions reveal about her character?

At first Jessica feels her life is over when she awakens. Her leg is gone and she can’t face this reality (p. 3). She believes she’ll never run again (pp. 5–6). She still dreams of racing (pp. 9–11). Jessica also experiences anger when she first tries to use her crutches to get to the bathroom. She doesn’t like that it takes so long to go just a few feet and that she is so weak. She relates her feelings to “Rigor Mortis Bend” in racing where your body is aching and you don’t feel like you can go on (pp. 16–17). These feelings of grief, anger, and hope show that her character is reacting in the way most people do when they first face a loss. She feels sad and angry, and as she begins to accept her loss, but she is beginning to have hope that things will be all right.

2. How do the doctor, her mom and dad, and her best friend, Fiona, react to her amputation and try to comfort Jessica at this time?

The doctor is optimistic and tells Jessica that her surgery went well. He tells her to focus on the positive (p. 5). Her father is very practical. He looks up things on the Internet and tries to keep Jessica informed about what is going on (pp. 12–13). Her mother is her cheerleader. She is very encouraging as Jessica attempts to use her crutches for the first time. But Jessica can tell that her mother is worried because she sees the fear in her eyes (pp. 14–15). Her best friend, Fiona, tries to make her feel better. She brings a stuffed bear and hugs her. Fiona says, “I’m so sorry, Jess. I don’t know what to say. I don’t know what to do. I’ve been so scared. I miss you so much” (pp. 22–23). Fiona encourages Jessica and tells her that she can do this (p. 26).

3. How does Jessica initially deal with the knowledge of Lucy’s death, another student on the bus? How does Jessica’s reaction reflect her feelings about her own loss?

Fiona slips and tells Jessica that Lucy died in the same accident on the bus. This triggers the memory of the accident for Jessica. She vaguely recalls the accident (p. 23–24). Fiona tells her that only Lucy and the guy who hit the bus were killed. Jessica felt like the whole room was spinning when she heard the news. Her reaction reflects her disbelief about her own loss (p. 25).

**Chapters 13–26, Pages 29–60**

4. How does Jessica show that she is beginning to accept her loss?

Jessica participates in physical therapy with some encouragement (pp. 29–30), gets her appetite back when her mom brings her favorite lasagna from Angelo’s (p. 31), and has that dream about running again, this time with her dog Sherlock by her side (pp. 33–34).

5. What is Jessica really saying when she says, “I know it’s selfish, but I can’t help thinking that Lucy is the lucky one” (p. 38)?

It is likely that Jessica feels envious of Lucy, because she doesn’t have to face the pain and rehabilitation that Jessica does. Jessica has feelings of anger and self-revulsion, meaning that she hates what she has become (p. 38).
Reading Guide for *The Running Dream/Answer Key*—Page 2 of 8

6. How do Jessica’s parents help her once she comes home from the hospital? What do they want for Jessica?

Jessica’s parents help her adjust to her surroundings and figure out how to get around. Her dad builds a ramp up the stairs and adds a guardrail (pp. 47–48). He removes the automatic closer from the front door of the house to make it easier for her to get inside (p. 48). They also move her bedroom to the family room on the first floor (p. 52). They want her to be as independent as possible and ultimately be able cope with her disability.

7. Why do you think Jessica’s dad said, “We’re through with these (p. 55),” when he saw that there were only two pills left in the bottle of her pain medication. Was he right to do that? What does this episode reveal about Jessica’s character?

Her dad is worried that Jessica is taking too many pain medications and may become addicted (pp. 54–55). Yes, he is right to take away her medications. Jessica is nauseous, shaky, hot and cold, and in pain as she goes through withdrawal. She knows her dad was right to take them away (p. 56). This episode shows that Jessica was trying to cope with her loss by getting rid of the pain. She wasn’t thinking about possible addiction and harm that could come from taking too many pain pills. However, she agrees with what her dad did. This shows that she has confidence in herself, and she understands why he did it.

Part II. Headwind

Chapters 1–8, Pages 63–91

8. What character traits are revealed as Jessica prepares herself physically and mentally to return to school?

At first Jessica is still angry and grieving her loss, and she keeps to herself. She is grumpy, but she gets up to play ball with Sherlock on the front porch (pp. 63–65). Physically she takes care of her stump, but doesn’t keep up with washing her hair because the shower is upstairs. One day she is motivated and decides to go upstairs on her own, and she succeeds. She can take a shower and wash her hair. This makes her feel really good about herself. She even goes out to lunch with Fiona (pp. 67–73).

9. Why is Jessica so reluctant to return to school?

Jessica is worried that she will never be ready to go back to school and that people will stare at her or ignore her. She thinks Fiona is the only one who really cares about her (pp. 80–82). Jessica is also worried about getting the homework done that has piled up, but Fiona suggests that she work with each teacher to determine what part she really needs to do (pp. 84–85). Jessica is afraid she won’t be able to make up all the work she missed and that she might not succeed in school.
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Chapters 9–15, Pages 92–119

10. How does Jessica respond to the way Fiona, her principal, teachers, and coach welcome her back to school?

   
   Fiona surprises Jessica with a welcome back banner. She pushes Jessica’s wheelchair up the ramp to her first class and asks Mrs. Aloi to work something out with Jessica’s homework (pp. 92–98). The science teacher, Mr. Vedder, is happy to see her and gives her an alternate assignment to make up the homework (pp. 99–100). Jessica and Fiona eat a special lunch in Coach Kyro’s classroom with a group of runners and friends. Jessica realizes how much she missed everyone (pp. 101–103). In math, Jessica is on her own. Mrs. Rucker accepts Jessica’s offer to do the odd-numbered problems for homework (pp. 104–105). Everyone welcomes Jessica back to school and appears to be willing to help her.

11. Why do you think Mrs. Rucker treats Jessica’s return differently than the other teachers? Why did she ask Jessica if she wants to sit in the back of the classroom with Rosa, who in a motorized wheelchair? Why does this worry Jessica?

   Mrs. Rucker may not be as friendly with the students as the other teachers. She probably asked Jessica to sit in the back of the classroom because it seemed like a logical place for Jessica’s wheelchair. Jessica is worried that if she starts sitting near special-needs kids, people will think that she has special needs, too (pp. 104–106).

12. How did Jessica’s feelings about Rosa change in the short time on the day she sat near her when she came back to class?

   Jessica says that she was aware of the girl who sat in the back of the classroom in a motorized wheelchair and couldn’t talk very well, but she didn’t even know her name was Rosa. She wonders if Rosa feels as uncomfortable as she does. She admits that she has totally overlooked Rosa and acted like she wasn’t there. After she exchanges notes with Rosa, she learns about her disability and what she likes to do. Rosa invites Jessica to have lunch with her. When Rosa tells her how lucky she is, Jessica recognizes that she is right. Jessica will someday get rid of her wheelchair (pp. 105–107).

13. Why is Jessica upset about the insurance issue?

   At lunch, Jessica asked Coach why her dad was mad at him. Jessica hadn’t even thought about payment for her treatment, and her parents didn’t want her worrying about that (pp. 112–113). Jessica’s mom is angry that Coach told her about this, but Jessica wants to know the details. Her mom told her that the driver who hit the bus didn’t have any insurance and that the school district didn’t own the busses.

   Jessica also finds out that her family has had to drop their insurance on everyone except her dad because of the high cost (pp. 114–115). Now she can understand why she hasn’t seen much of her dad since she got out of the hospital (p. 116).
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Part III. Straightaway
Chapters 1–8, Pages 123–150

14. Why is Jessica encouraged after her appointment with Dr. Wells? How has she changed since the accident?

After the examination, Dr. Wells gives Jessica a prescription for her prosthesis (p. 124). Her mother then makes an appointment with Hank Gruber, the same prosthetist Jessica saw when she was in the hospital. The receptionist, Chloe, assures Jessica that Hank will have her walking in no time. Chloe makes a special point to talk with Jessica because she is also an amputee (p. 127). After Hank evaluates her, he says will have the socket ready in a week (pp. 129–131).

Jessica now appears to be very hopeful. She no longer feels sorry for herself. She is inspired by how easily Chloe can walk with her prosthesis, and she is ready to move on (pp. 128, 131).

15. Why does Jessica keep dreaming about running? Why do you think Jessica sees a mermaid fountain and Rosa waving from her porch in her running dream this time? How have Jessica’s attitudes about Rosa changed?

Jessica has had the running dream many times since her accident. The running dream represents her feelings about a time when she was a successful runner and she felt good about herself.

The mermaid fountain and Rosa waving from her front porch represent a new influence in Jessica’s life. At first Jessica felt that Rosa was a threat. Jessica was afraid she was going to be viewed as having special needs, like Rosa. After Rosa offers her friendship and help with math, Jessica sees Rosa in a different way. Rosa lets her know that they live near each other and she has seen her out with her dog many times (p. 138). Jessica realizes that Rosa is strong and important to her. She remembers how close she is to Rosa (pp. 139–140).

16. How does Jessica react when Coach Kyro shows her videos of amputees who are runners?

At first Jessica feels that the running prosthesis will make her look like a freak. But when she finds out what it can help her accomplish, she is eager to try one (pp. 141–145).

17. Why are her parents skeptical about the success of the “Help Jessica Run” campaign?

Her parents are still trying to resolve the issues about the accident with the insurance companies. They don’t know how they can afford to pay for the regular medical bills, let alone $20,000 for a running prosthesis (pp. 146–148).

Chapters 9–14, Pages 151–174

18. How does Jessica feel about running? Why is it so important to her, now that she has lost her leg?

Jessica has always loved running. She reflects on how strong runners have to be, both in body and mind to be willing to run in any weather. Her mother says she was born a runner. Running is something Jessica always has done and without it, she is miserable. She is proud of the team spirit and that the track teams at Liberty High are so successful. She feels hopeful about getting back to normal when Coach Kryo showed her films of amputees running (pp. 155–157).
19. Why is Jessica surprised to talk with Vanessa Steele’s mother when she goes to the Liberty track meet with Langston?

*Vanessa Steele is Jessica’s biggest rival on the track team. Jessica has never talked to Vanessa’s mother before. Jessica is surprised that her mother would want to talk to her. After the 400-meter race, Mrs. Steele apologizes to Jessica when her daughter Vanessa practically ignores her (pp. 162–164).*

20. Why do you think Vanessa lodges a complaint stating that Jessica was planted on the sidelines as a distraction?

*Vanessa was in the lead in the race, but caught her foot on the second hurdle and fell. She was furious. Vanessa is probably jealous about the attention Jessica is getting after her return to school and at the track meets. Vanessa says that Jessica was planted as a distraction, and she won’t take responsibility for missing her hurdle (pp. 172–173).*

21. When Mrs. Rucker asks Jessica to move back to her regular seat in math class, she chooses to stay next to Rosa. How has Jessica’s friendship with Rosa evolved since Jessica first came back to school?

*At first Jessica didn’t want to have anything to do with Rosa. To her, Rosa was just a special needs student, and Jessica worried that others would think that she (Jessica) was the same. Rosa reached out to her by writing notes and invited her to have lunch in her classroom. Rosa also offered to help Jessica keep up with her math. Jessica realizes how smart Rosa is and that she is really a nice person. Jessica wants to continue to be friends with her (pp. 175–176).*

22. How does Jessica react to her new prosthesis?

*Jessica is able to walk right away with the temporary leg, although it feels too long. Hank adjusts the leg and she tries again. Jessica asks, “Is it supposed to feel like my foot is there?” Hank tells her that her brain is wired to her having feet and when her body’s nerves sends signals her brain reacts making her feel like her foot is still there or sometimes with phantom pain. Jessica can’t walk in exactly the same way she did in the past, but Hank assures her she will get used to it. He gives her a cane to steady herself (pp. 177–183).*

23. How does Jessica respond to the “Help Jessica Run” campaign and the coverage in the news?

*Jessica goes to the car wash fundraiser, but is too embarrassed to wear her track shorts and singlet. Instead she covers them up with the new sweat pants her mother bought on the way home from the prosthetist. Jessica is very happy and proud to be there (pp. 187–189). When encouraged by her former teammates, she takes off her sweat pants, holds up a sign that says “I WANT TO RUN AGAIN,” and stands on the sidewalk to help attract attention. She is upset when Gavin brings the cameraman from the newspaper to take pictures without telling her in advance (pp. 190–195). When she sees Gavin’s article and photo in the newspaper the next day, she is not really mad, but in shock over all of the*
Reading Guide for The Running Dream/Answer Key—Page 6 of 8

Question 23, Continued

attention (pp. 197–200). When Coach Kryo tells her that the newspaper campaign only brought in $40, she is very discouraged. She writes to Rosa, “The running leg’s a pipe dream” (p. 202). Jessica feels that her hope is dissolving when she says how fragile it feels.

Part IV. Adjusting the Blocks

Chapters 1–10, Pages 209–242

24. In the morning when Jessica first attempts to go out with her dog Sherlock, she is disappointed that she can’t really run with her new prosthesis. When she decides to keep walking, she sees the mermaid fountain and Rosa wrapped in a blanket on the porch. What does this conversation between Jessica and Rosa reveal about their characters?

At first, Jessica feels like she is having her same running dream, but this one is real. Rosa encourages Jessica to keep going. When Rosa asks her why she likes running, Jessica doesn’t know how to tell her. Jessica says running feels like freedom and lets your mind travel to places where it doesn’t normally go. She loves the feeling of the air on her face when she is running (pp. 210–214).

When Rosa asks about going over the finish line when racing, Jessica says that it is wonderful when you’re the first one. But Jessica is taken aback when Rosa tells her that going over the finish line means you made it. Rosa reflects, “It’s symbolic…Because it’s also the starting line” (p. 214). This idea gives Jessica a strange feeling. She had never thought of it that way. When Rosa asks her to choose, “running or racing,” Jessica finally realizes that her joy is in the running. Rosa’s philosophical outlook on running and racing challenges Jessica to think about what is really important to her. Jessica realizes that Rosa is thinking about running, too—something she will never be able to do (p. 215).

25. What new insights does Jessica have when her Dad tells her what’s really going on with the insurance companies?

Jessica is upset at first when she sees her dad talking to the television reporter about the insurance issues. She wants to keep things focused on the positive. Her dad tells her that the school district’s obligation to cover her medical needs is part of the story. He is working overtime to keep the family afloat and pay the medical bills. Her parents even take out a second mortgage on their house. Jessica’s dad wants to make sure that Jessica is covered by insurance in the years ahead. She realizes how much that this accident has not only impacted her and her future plans, but also her family (pp. 225–228).

26. How does the coverage on television continue to help the “Help Jessica Run” campaign?

The coverage on television shares the story with a broader audience. It includes information about making donations to the special fund for Jessica’s prosthesis. The reporter also includes information about the medical bills and insurance gridlock (pp. 238–242).
27. **Why does Jessica’s relationship with Gavin change? How does he show he is a real friend?**

At first, Jessica thought Gavin was paying attention to her just to get a story for the school newspaper. She is attracted to him, but thinks she doesn’t have a chance because Gavin is dating Merryl. Later, Gavin got more involved in the track meets and shared lunch with Jessica, Fiona, and Rosa (pp. 232–235).

### Chapters 11–18, Pages 243–274

28. **Why do you think Jessica’s mom was surprised that Jessica didn’t tell her that Rosa has cerebral palsy? How have Rosa’s notes helped Jessica?**

Jessica’s mom probably thinks that Rosa’s disability was the most important thing to know about her. Jessica says that she was going to, but she didn’t want to mention it. Jessica tells her mom that Rosa’s notes have opened her eyes. For example, when Rosa asked, “if you could change one thing, what would it be?” Jessica said that she wanted to run again. But when she asked Rosa the same question, Rosa wrote “that people would see me, not my condition.” Jessica says that now she does see Rosa (pp. 247–248).

29. **What happens that makes Jessica know that Gavin is really interested in her?**

Gavin and Fiona accompany Jessica to the prosthetist. This embarrasses Jessica at first, but she says okay after Fiona and Rosa encourage her (p. 250). Gavin tells her that he has seen her running with her dog. However Jessica is sure that Gavin likes Fiona and will ask her to the prom. When Fiona said that Mario asked her to the prom, she assures Jessica that Gavin came because he is her friend (pp. 257–258).

30. **How does Jessica’s life get back to normal over the summer? What has helped her to show such strength of character?**

After Jessica learns that the fundraiser was a success ($15,000 raised, plus $10,000 from an anonymous donor), she realizes that her work has just begun (pp. 262–264). She waits until the end of June to get her permanent prosthesis when her leg is stabilized and the flex foot is finished. It is July before she can try out her new dynamic leg (pp. 265–270). When she goes to work with Fiona at the Tremont Theater, she is surprised when Coach Kryo, Hank, teammates, and her family present her with her running leg (pp. 272–274).

### Part V. Starting Line

### Chapters 1–15, Pages 277–336

31. **How does Jessica know that her running dream is finally a reality?**

When she works on getting used to the running leg, Jessica realizes she can finally run. But she also realizes how out of shape she is, and she is not sure if she’ll be able to race again (pp. 277–279).

When Jessica says she has the running dream again, she is running with Sherlock over Aggery Bridge and back to the house. This time it’s not a dream, and there is no shock for her. The running dream is real (pp. 230–231).
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32. Why does Jessica insist that the focus of the River Run be on Rosa? How does Rosa feel about this? What does this reveal about Jessica’s character?

Jessica knows that Rosa is still invisible to many people. She thinks about the fact that Rosa wasn’t invited to the surprise party for Jessica and that Rosa finds out about parties after they are over (pp. 282–283).

Jessica doesn’t want Rosa to fade into her past. She has an idea to run a race with Rosa, and she begins to train by pushing a wheelchair weighted with potting soil. When she meets Gavin while training, she tells him about her idea to run with Rosa in the River Run in November (pp. 289–290).

When Jessica’s dad sees her running with the wheelchair, he offers to modify it so that it will roll more smoothly (p. 293). When Jessica asks Rosa if she wants to run the race, Rosa says, “Yes, I absolutely want to.” Rosa won’t wear the helmet when her mother insists, because she wants to feel the wind. Jessica wants this race to be a coming-out party for Rosa. She wants people to see her, not her condition (pp. 296–304). When Marla, the television reporter, asks to do a story, Jessica insists it be about Rosa. Marla’s story introduces people to Rosa and gives information about her condition. Jessica tells how much Rosa has helped her (pp. 306–309).

33. Why did Jessica stop at Lucy’s gravestone when she was training for the River Run?

It is likely that Lucy is still in her thoughts. She sees the graveyard every day when she is training. Today she is thinking about Lucy and stops to talk to her grave. She says how sorry she is and feels guilty that she is now recovered and happy. Jessica is surprised to find Mrs. Sanders, Lucy’s mother, there. She learns that Jessica’s father has helped the family get a settlement and that they set up a scholarship fund (pp. 310–312).

34. How does seeing Mrs. Rucker competing in the River Run Race tie up some loose ends for Jessica?

Jessica can now understand why Mrs. Rucker was interested in her recovery. She is pleased to see her smiling and wearing the Run for Rosa t-shirt (pp. 321–322).

35. How does Jessica view the finish line when she crosses it in the River Run Race?

She now understands that it represents the starting line for the rest of her life. The race has made her believe that there is nothing she can’t do (p. 332).
Character Analysis for *The Running Dream*—Page 1 of 2

Analyze the main character, Jessica, focusing on how Jessica’s acceptance of her own disability is influenced by her evolving friendship with Rosa. Use the following chart to gather evidence for your analysis. Paraphrase textual evidence and use direct quotations with citations to complete the chart. As you consider the evidence you have gathered, summarize the main ideas that are expressed in the row below each event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Events</th>
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<td>Jessica has the running dream again, but this time she remembers a mermaid fountain (pp. 139–140).</td>
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<td>Fiona and Gavin follow Jessica to see Rosa in Room 402 (pp. 233–234). Jessica tells her mom about Rosa’s notes (pp. 246–248).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main Ideas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica reflects on her feelings about Rosa (pp. 282–283).</td>
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<td><strong>Main Ideas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica decides to train for the River Run with Rosa (pp. 284–332).</td>
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## Character Analysis for *The Running Dream* Answer Key—Page 1 of 6

<table>
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| Jessica recovers in the hospital and at home from the accident (pp. 3–59). | She doesn’t know how to cope with her own newly acquired disability.  
Says her life is over, can’t face this reality. “I’m not sick. I’m crippled. Disabled” (pp. 18–19).  
When she recovers at home, she stays downstairs; eventually she wants to have a shower, so she pulls herself up the stairs. “I look down at the run of stairs and feel an overwhelming sense of triumph” (p. 70).  
Even getting in and out of the shower is a problem. “I can’t figure how to get over this hurdle, and it makes me mad” (p. 71).  
When Jessica goes back to school, some people welcome her back, but others pretend she is not there.  
“Everywhere I go, I feel like the elephant in the room. A lot of people do say hi and welcome me back, but a lot don’t.  
Fiona notices it too, whispering, ‘Maturity check!’ in my ear when people pretend I’m not there…  
This is not easy for me. And it seems backward. But I don’t want to be treated like I’m invisible, so I try” (p. 99). | Jessica doesn’t know Rosa, yet. |
| **Main Ideas** | Jessica is afraid and angry about having a disability. | Not relevant |
| Jessica meets Rosa in math class (pp. 104–106). | Mrs. Rucker asks Jessica if she’ll be sitting in the rear of the classroom with Rosa.  
“Then I realize she means the special-needs girl who sits in the back of the classroom.  
The girl in the motorized wheelchair. The girl rarely talks and, when she does, is hard to understand” (p. 105). | Rosa has cerebral palsy.  
“I didn’t even know her name was Rosa” (p. 105). |
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<tr>
<td>Rosa in math class (pp. 104–106), Continued</td>
<td>“Yes, I’m missing a leg, but the rest of me is…well, it’s normal… “But…but if I start sitting with special-needs kids, that is what people will think” (p.106). “No, the truth is I’ve totally acted like she wasn’t there.” (p. 106) “I think about my terror in returning to school. Feeling like a freak. Is that how Rosa feels?” (p. 106).</td>
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<tr>
<th>Main Ideas</th>
<th>Jessica has a negative view of students with disabilities (special-needs).</th>
<th>Jessica is willing to sit with Rosa at a table in the back of the math class, but she doesn’t really know her.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessica and Rosa get to know each other (p. 107).</td>
<td>Rosa writes: “When do you get your leg? ...Already? WOW! Congratulations! You are SO LUCKY! My eyes sting when I read that, and it makes something in me break. Or connect. Or just change, somehow. I suddenly really get that I am lucky…I will stand on my own again. This wheelchair won’t be with me everyday of my life (p. 107).</td>
<td>Jessica exchanges notes with Rosa, finds out about her disability (cerebral palsy), and what she likes to do. Rosa describes her disability as a fact of life. She welcomes Jessica. “After several exchanges Rosa’s told me that she has been in wheelchair her whole life, that she can walk but only with arm crutches, and that she was born with cerebral palsy. I also find out that she’s only a freshman, loves sushi, thinks math is easy, and eats lunch in Room 402. You can join us, she writes, We’re fun!” (p. 107).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosa offers to help Jessica with her math (pp. 132–138).</td>
<td>Jessica thinks mainly about what she can’t do because of the loss of her leg. “I want to scream. Because I missed a month of school…because I just about died, that’s why! Because everything I do is hard now, that’s why!” (p. 134).</td>
<td>Jessica needs math help, which Rosa is happy to provide. Rosa writes, “I can help you after school“ (p. 134). Jessica is hesitant and says her mom is picking her up. “Call me if you want” (p. 134), and gives her the phone number.</td>
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# Character Analysis for *The Running Dream*/Answer Key—Page 3 of 6

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<td>Rosa offers to help Jessica with her math (pp. 132–138), Continued</td>
<td><em>Rosa tells her that she lives nearby, but Jessica hesitates, wondering how in the world that would work. (Rosa coming to her house). She is thinking that Rosa isn’t as capable of getting around.</em></td>
<td>The next day, Jessica stops in Room 402. Rosa invites her in and they work on the homework. “See? You’re getting it! ...I can help you anytime” (p. 137). Jessica knows she’ll take her up on it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Ideas</th>
<th>Jessica still believes that having a disability means people are not able to do many things.</th>
<th>Rosa helps Jessica with math when she comes back to school.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessica has the running dream again, but this time she remembers a mermaid fountain (p. 139–140).</td>
<td>Jessica has the running dream again, although this time there’s a mermaid fountain and Rosa waving from the porch (p. 139). “In the dream I don’t really see her. I don’t turn my head and look. She’s a ghost on the porch, a cloudy vapor to my right. But I know she’s there. I know it’s her” (p. 139) “It crosses my mind that after I get my leg, I could walk him (Sherlock) over to Rosa’s. The thought, in its own small way, makes me feel better” (p. 140).</td>
<td>Jessica begins to accept Rosa as her friend.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Ideas</th>
<th>Not relevant</th>
<th>Jessica is receptive to advice from Rosa. Jessica and Rosa are friends. Mrs. Rucker asks, “Jessica, when are you planning to return to your regular seat?” (p. 175). “But days ago I (Jessica) decided—I am staying at Rosa’s table. Even when I’m walking again, I’m staying” (p. 175).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Rucker asks Jessica if she will return to her regular seat (pp. 175–176).</td>
<td><em>Rosa encourages her and provides good advice.</em> When fundraising for running leg is disappointing, Jessica writes, “The running leg’s a pipe dream” (p. 202). Rosa replies, “So was walking…Don’t look so far ahead” (p. 202).</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Jessica’s Attitudes about Disabilities</td>
<td>Jessica’s Relationship with Rosa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Rucker asks Jessica… (pp. 175–176), Continued</td>
<td>“No,” Rosa says… “I like her here” (p. 176). Mrs. Rucker says, “Then the note writing has to stop” (p. 176).</td>
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### Main Ideas

**Jessica still is upset about her disability.**

Jessica sees Rosa the first morning she tries to run with her prosthesis and they talk about running and racing (pp. 209–215).

- Rosa says, “Tell me about running. Why do you like it?” (p. 213).
- Jessica responds, “Because it feels like freedom… And your mind travels places where it doesn’t normally go… Like dreaming in real time?” (p. 213).
- “I love the morning air on my face…” Rosa sighs and says, “I wish I could feel that” (p. 213).
- When Rosa asks about racing, Jessica tells her, “It’s electric…every cell of your body is charged” (p. 214).
- Rosa says, “Going over the finish line must be wonderful” and Jessica laughs, “Especially if you’re the first one there” (p. 214).
- Jessica wonders when Rosa points out that the finish line and the starting line are the same.
- “So the thought that they’re the same line really the same gives me a very strange feeling. A sort of uncomfortable feeling. Like discovering someone very close to you has been leading a secret double life” (p. 214).

Jessica is outside trying to run with her new prosthesis. She passes by Rosa’s house and talks to her. Rosa tells her she has seen Jessica running. Rosa has a house with a mermaid fountain. “I turn, and it’s like I’m thrown into a dream. There’s a mermaid fountain in the middle of the yard and, beyond it, a girl sitting on the porch wrapped in a white blanket” (p. 212).

“I actually wanted to see if I could run’ I eye her and add, ‘Which I can’t.’ Rosa says, you will, though. I put that article on my bedroom wall” (p. 212).

**Jessica realizes that Rosa is an important part of her life.**

Jessica still feels incapable because of her disability, but she more fully understands how a disability can affect a person.

Jessica makes her first move to visit with Rosa outside of school.
### Character Analysis for *The Running Dream*/Answer Key—Page 5 of 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Jessica’s Attitudes about Disabilities</th>
<th>Jessica’s Relationship with Rosa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiona and Gavin follow Jessica to see Rosa in Room 402 (pp. 233–234).</td>
<td>Jessica recognizes the importance of Rosa’s friendship but is afraid to tell her mom that Rosa has cerebral palsy when she tells her that she wants to go to Rosa’s house after school. Jessica tells her that Rosa loves Sherlock and she’s a math genius.</td>
<td>Jessica tells Fiona, “I want to see how Rosa’s doing.” Gavin asks, “Who’s Rosa?” Jessica says that she’s a freshman, but Fiona adds she has cerebral palsy. Jessica emphasizes that she’s her friend and a math genius (pp. 233-234).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica tells her mom about Rosa’s notes (pp. 246–248).</td>
<td>When Jessica gets home, her mom asks, “Why didn’t you tell me that Rosa has cerebral palsy?” “I was going to.” “But why didn’t you?” I don’t really know where to begin on this. It’s been a feeling more than a rational thing. But it’s true. I haven’t wanted to mention it (p. 247). “So… I didn’t talk to her at all before I lost my leg. I ignored her…” “It’s like she opens my eyes” (p. 247). Jessica explained that Rosa asked her if you could change one thing, what would it be? Jessica replied, “That I could run again. But when I asked her the same thing—I turn to the note (written by Rosa)—That people would see me, not my condition” (p. 248).</td>
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</table>

### Main Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jessica feels uncomfortable telling others about Rosa’s disability.</th>
<th>Jessica tells others about her friendship with Rosa.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessica reflects on her feelings about Rosa (pp. 282–283).</td>
<td>“Rosa is… invisible. She finds out about parties after they’re over. “She didn’t pout or try to make me feel bad about the party—she was congratulatory and happy for me” (p. 283).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica recognizes that Rosa is not accepted by most people, and she lives her life virtually. “Some mornings I see Rosa when I run… We talk about her online friends, and the summer courses she’s been taking online, and the places she’s seen online that she dreams about going someday” (p. 283).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Jessica’s Attitudes about Disabilities</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica reflects on her feelings about Rosa (pp. 282–283), Continued</td>
<td><em>I start to see the Internet…is the place where people see her, not her condition</em> (p. 283).</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Main Ideas**

Jessica is aware of how negatively others view people with disabilities.

Jessica realizes that she could lose Rosa as a friend because she is moving back to her old life. She doesn’t want that to happen.

| Jessica decides to train for the River Run with Rosa (pp. 284–332) | Jessica agrees to talk to the news reporter. “…The focus needs to be on Rosa…Don’t sum up the person based on what you see, or what you don’t understand; get to know them” (pp. 306–307). | Jessica goes back to running. Jessica gets the idea to run with Rosa in the River Run Race. Her mother says, “I’m going to get you’re a helmet. ‘No helmet.’…I don’t want to be the weird kid in the helmet…And I want to feel the wind” (p. 299). “It’s a run about Rosa. You know…like a coming-out party?” (p. 304). |

**Main Ideas**

Jessica no longer views disability as what defines a person.

Jessica fully accepts Rosa as her friend and wants to help her.
# Grades Nine/Ten Informative/Explanatory Writing Rubric for The Running Dream

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction and Organization</strong></td>
<td>Introduces the characters without organizing ideas; does not adequately connect to the task</td>
<td>Introduces the characters and disabilities; organizes ideas, and information into categories</td>
<td>Introduces the characters, their relationship, and attitudes about disabilities and connects ideas, and information by organizing into categories</td>
<td>Clearly introduces the characters with relevant details about changes in their relationship, attitudes toward disabilities, and the author's personal attitudes, using logical organization to convey ideas, and information and make connections clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development with Facts, Details, Quotations</strong></td>
<td>Provides only a few details and examples; may include support is irrelevant to the topic</td>
<td>Develops the analysis with details, quotations, or other information</td>
<td>Develops the analysis with relevant and sufficient facts, details, quotations, and examples</td>
<td>Develops the analysis thoroughly by selecting the most relevant facts, details, quotations, or other examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitions</strong></td>
<td>Response lacks cohesion among the ideas</td>
<td>Uses some transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas</td>
<td>Uses appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text and clarify complex ideas and concepts</td>
<td>Uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among the ideas and concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language and Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Uses imprecise language</td>
<td>Uses appropriate language to explain the analysis</td>
<td>Uses precise language and accurate vocabulary to clearly convey the points in the analysis</td>
<td>Uses precise language, accurate vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor or simile to convey key ideas</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# Grades Nine/Ten Informative/Explanatory Writing Rubric for

*The Running Dream*— Page 2 of 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>Provides a concluding statement, but does not follow from the explanation presented</td>
<td>Provides a concluding section that follows from the explanation presented</td>
<td>Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the explanation presented</td>
<td>Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the explanation presented and explains the personal significance or implications of the findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style and Conventions</strong></td>
<td>Maintains an informal style with minimal attention to conventions and some errors</td>
<td>Maintains a formal style using conventions with few errors</td>
<td>Maintains a formal style and objective tone, using appropriate conventions</td>
<td>Maintains a formal style and objective tone reflecting norms and conventions of literary analysis</td>
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</table>
Sample Essay for Summative Assessment for *The Running Dream*—Page 1 of 3

**Prompt**

*How is Jessica’s acceptance of her own disability influenced by her friendship with Rosa?*

*What can you learn from *The Running Dream* that relates to your own attitudes about disabilities?*

The Running Dream tells the story of Jessica’s acceptance of her own disability and the influence by her friendship with Rosa. Jessica is a former high school track star, who was seriously injured in a bus accident and had the bottom portion of her leg amputated. She finds both friendship and inspiration from Rosa as she learns how to accept her own disability. Rosa is in her math class, and Jessica didn’t really get to know her until they shared the table in the back of the classroom because they were both in wheelchairs.

When Jessica woke up in the hospital after the accident, she felt that her life was over, and she couldn’t face the new reality of being disabled. Her life changed even at home, where her bed is moved to the first floor and her dad installs a ramp up the stairs to the front door. As Jessica recovers, she finds she can’t do normal things independently, like taking a shower and washing her hair in the upstairs bathroom. Even though she can “feel an overwhelming sense of triumph” (p. 70) when she pulls herself up the stairs, getting in and out of the shower is a problem. “I can’t figure out how to get over this hurdle, and it makes me mad” (p. 71). She is angry and overwhelmed by the changes in her life that result from her disability.

Going back to school Jessica faces mixed reactions from the students and teachers. Some welcome her back, while others pretend she is not there. “Everywhere I go, I feel like an elephant in the room. A lot of people do say hi and welcome me back, but a lot don’t…This is not easy for me…But I don’t want to be treated like I’m invisible, so I try” (p. 99). She experiences the isolation often felt by people with disabilities. Many are uncomfortable around people with a disability. They don’t know what to say or do.

Jessica goes back to school in a wheelchair. Mrs. Rucker, her math teacher, asks if she’ll be sitting in the back of the room with Rosa. Jessica thinks, “Then I realize she means the special needs girl who sits in the back of the classroom. The girl in the motorized wheelchair. The girl rarely talks and when she does, is hard to understand. I didn’t even know her name was Rosa” (p. 105). Even though Jessica finally says, “Sure, I’ll be happy to sit with Rosa” (p. 106), she is worried about the other students. Jessica wonders if they will think that she has special needs because she is sitting with the special needs kids. Jessica feels like a freak and wonders if Rosa feels the same way because she has a disability.

In the first few moments, Rosa writes notes to Jessica and tells her that she has cerebral palsy and has been in a wheelchair her whole life. Rosa is pleased to have Jessica sit with her and passes her a note, *When do you get your leg? Congratulations! You are SO LUCKY*” (p. 107). This makes Jessica stop and think. She realizes that she is lucky and will be able to stand on her own again. She won’t be in the wheelchair forever. Jessica’s acceptance of her own disability has started to change. She’s beginning to think about the future.

Jessica is having difficulty with math because she has missed a lot of school, and she is still angry about losing her leg. She says her trouble in math is “because I missed a month of
Sample Essay for Summative Assessment for The Running Dream—Page 2 of 3

school...because I just about died, that’s why! Because everything I do is hard now, that’s why” (p. 134). When Rosa offers to help her after school and says she can come over anytime, Jessica wonders how that would work. Jessica assumes that Rosa’s disability would keep her from coming to her house. When Rosa tells Jessica that she knows her dog, Sherlock, and has seen her running by her house with the mermaid fountain, Jessica remembers the house. However, Jessica still feels uncomfortable having Rosa as a friend.

Jessica’s recovery is reflected in the running dream she keeps having. In this dream, Jessica runs through the places she loves: the road, the river, and the bridge. The next time she has the running dream after going back to school, she sees a mermaid fountain and Rosa waving from the porch. “In the dream I don’t really see her. ...She’s a ghost on the porch. ...I know it’s her (p. 139). At first Jessica wonders why Rosa is appearing in her dream, but she thinks about making a friendly gesture toward Rosa and taking her dog to visit her. Her attitudes toward Rosa are changing.

After Jessica no longer needs the wheelchair, Mrs. Rucker asks her when she’ll move back to her regular seat in math class. Jessica has now made friends with Rosa and decides she wants to stay there. Rosa continues to help Jessica with her math and encourages her through the notes they pass back and forth. For example, when a fund raiser for a special running prosthesis for Jessica gets off to a slow start, Jessica writes: The running leg’s a pipe dream. Rosa replies, So was walking. Don’t look so far ahead (p. 202). Rosa’s notes help Jessica to work through the difficulties she encounters because of her disability. She realizes having a disability doesn’t mean you can’t do anything. Persons with disabilities can do things in different ways.

Jessica’s real insight about accepting her own disability comes when she stops by Rosa’s house when she resumes her running practice. Rosa asks her to tell her about running. “Why do you like it?” (p. 213). Jessica tells her about how running makes her feel the morning air on her face. Rosa also asks her about racing, and Jessica tells her she likes crossing the finish line, especially when she is first. Rosa’s observation that the finish line is also the starting line makes Jessica stop and feel a little uncomfortable. “Like discovering someone very close to you has been leading a secret double life” (p. 214). Jessica is beginning to understand that Rosa also feels unsure about herself, like she does.

Jessica is still uncomfortable telling others about Rosa’s disability. When her mom picks her up from a study session at Rosa’s house, she asks Jessica why she didn’t tell her that Rosa had cerebral palsy. She said, “I haven’t wanted to mention it”...“I didn’t talk to her at all before I lost my leg, I ignored her. ...She asked me, If you could change one thing, what would it be? ...I could run again. But when I asked her the same thing, she said...that people would see me and not my condition” (p. 247–248). Jessica explained that she doesn’t just see Rosa’s condition any more. “I feel good because now I do” (p. 248). Jessica now understands that accepting a person with a disability really means feeling positive about the person, not the disability.

Jessica recognizes that most people in school do not accept or feel positively about Rosa and she lives a lot of her life virtually. For example, Jessica learned that Rosa first found out about the fundraiser for Jessica’s running prosthesis in the newspaper and even posted the article in her bedroom. Rosa wasn’t invited when the track team had a party to celebrate, although
Sample Essay for Summative Assessment for The Running Dream—Page 3 of 3

Jessica noted that Rosa was happy for her. But Jessica could see “momentum pulling me out of her life…It wouldn’t be hard for her to fade into my past” (p. 283). She understood the importance of their friendship.

The climax of the story comes when Jessica gets the idea to run the 10-mile River Run Race with Rosa. She works hard to gain the endurance and stamina she needs to push Rosa in a wheelchair on the route. With a lot of help from her family and friends, Jessica and Rosa are able to compete in the race. At the end, when Jessica talks to a news reporter, she shows that she no longer views disability as what defines a person. “The focus needs to be on Rosa. …Don’t sum up the person based on what you see, or what you don’t understand; get to know them” (pp. 306–307).

This book made me stop and think about how I really feel when I am around people with disabilities. This weekend, I was having dinner next to a man seated in a motorized wheelchair. He told me that he didn’t like to go to parties where people were standing around talking, because it was so lonely. He told me that many people wouldn’t even say “hi” to him because he was not on their eye level. I realized that I had seen this man many times, but this was the first time I had had a real conversation with him. It was because I was sitting across from him—on his level. I wondered if I was also guilty of only seeing his condition. I hope to become more aware of my own feelings and act more proactively around people with disabilities to make sure they feel part of any group I am in.
**Things That Are: Making Choices**  

**Short Summary**

*Things That Are* features a mystery: How can a 17-year-old girl who is blind and learning how to deal with her disability help an elusive fugitive wanted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)? In this unit, students learn how this teen manages her own life, including finding her way in the community, keeping on top of school work, and, more importantly, nurturing a special relationship, as they work to cite textual evidence to support text analysis, participate in collaborative discussions to determine and analyze its theme and how complex characters are developed, and give a presentation of their findings and supporting evidence.

**Estimated Time**  
6 lessons  
6 hours

**Language Arts Florida Standards**

LAFS.910.RL.1.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

LAFS.910.RL.1.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

LAFS.910.RL.1.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

LAFS.910.SL.1.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, small groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

  a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from text and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a reasoned exchange of ideas.
  b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
  c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
  d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
**Unit Plan: Things that Are: Making Choices, Continued**

**Language Arts Florida Standards, Continued**
LAFS.910.SL.2.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

**Learning Objectives**
Students will be able to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferences drawn from the text.
Students will be able to determine the theme or central idea of a text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details over the course of the text.
Students will be able to analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a story, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Students will be able to participate effectively in a collaborative discussion with a small group to analyze character development and explore the emerging theme of the story, building on each other’s ideas and expressing their own ideas clearly and persuasively.
Students will be able to present the theme statement and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

**Disability Awareness Learning Objective**
Students will be able to describe the tools and strategies individuals who are blind or visually impaired use to function independently in school and in the community.

**Materials**
Reading Guide for *Things That Are* with Answer Key
Grades Nine/Ten Collaborative Discussion Rubric
Plot Summary and Events for *Things That Are* with Answer Key
Character Analysis for *Things That Are* with Answer Key
Exploring the Theme of *Things That Are* with Answer Key
Grades Nine/Ten Presentation Rubric for *Things That Are*
Unit Plan: *Things that Are: Making Choices*, Continued

**Formative Assessments**

**Teaching Phase**

**Background Information.** This activity provides students with a basic understanding of the various tools and methods used by people who are blind or visually impaired to be able to function in daily life. These are the tools and techniques used by Alicia, the main character in the novel. The teacher can informally assess student understanding to determine if additional information is needed.

**Introducing the Story.** The introduction sets the stage for the story and presents information about the mystery genre. The teacher discusses Alicia’s response to her blindness and information about the mystery genre. The teacher can build on the students’ responses to questions and their inquiries to help them better understand the story.

**Guided Practice**

**Reading the Novel.** Students will read the four sections of the text independently and respond to the questions provided in the Reading Guide for *Things That Are*. The teacher can assess students’ accuracy and understanding of the elements of the story reflected in their written answers. Through the whole class discussion, the teacher can clarify possible misunderstandings and determine how well students are able to distinguish between questions that ask for explicitly stated points or inferences and whether the textual evidence cited strongly supports the students’ answers.

**Working in a Collaborative Group.** The students will work in small groups to collaboratively discuss character analysis and explore the theme of the novel, as well as to create a group presentation. To support student use of this format, the teacher will discuss expectations for effective participation, including preparation, guidelines, conversations, and responding. The teacher will facilitate the small group sessions by circulating among the groups, assisting with the group effort for collaboration and completion of the assigned tasks. Following each of the small group activities, students will self-assess the performance of their group using the Grades Nine/Ten Collaborative Discussion Rubric included with this unit.

**Character Analysis.** To set the stage for analyzing the main character, students will order the events of the plot. The teacher may assess this activity by reviewing the results of each group or by distributing copies of the answer key so students can self-correct.
Unit Plan: *Things that Are: Making Choices*, Continued

**Character Analysis, Continued**

To complete the character analysis, students work in small groups to analyze her motives and actions and interactions with the other characters, primarily Bobby, William (James), and their parents. Students will paraphrase or quote textual evidence as they analyze how Alicia’s character develops over the course of the story. The teacher can facilitate this activity by circulating among groups to assist with locating textual evidence and clarify misunderstandings. The teacher can also evaluate the accuracy and insight reflected in written responses as well as the use of relevant evidence from the text to support the answers provided by the group.

**Summative Assessments**

**Independent Practice**

**Exploring the Theme.** Students will work in small groups to collaboratively discuss the emerging theme of *Things That Are*. They will use a structured worksheet to guide their efforts, including identifying text-dependent questions, recurring topics, emerging theme statements, and supporting textual evidence. The teacher can observe the group process and the written responses to the structured worksheet to evaluate student understanding of the theme and the supporting evidence provided in the novel.

Each group will create and make a presentation of their final theme statement and supporting evidence to the whole class. The teacher will assess the presentation of the group (as a whole) based on its completeness, clarity, and organization using the Grades Nine/Ten Presentation Rubric provided at the end of this unit.

**Working in a Collaborative Group.** At the end of the unit, the teacher will have students reflect on what went well during their small group work sessions to determine possible needs for instruction.

**Guiding Questions:**

How can people who are blind or visually impaired become more independent?
How can people offer assistance to people who are blind or visually impaired?
How can people who are blind or visually impaired learn to trust what they cannot see?
Why is it important to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and through inferences drawn from the text?
What can you learn about the theme by analyzing how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details?
How can you analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a story, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme?
Unit Plan: Things that Are: Making Choices, Continued

Guiding Questions, Continued
How can you participate effectively in a collaborative discussion with a small group to analyze characters and discuss the emerging theme of the story, building on each other’s ideas and expressing your own ideas clearly and persuasively?
How can you present the theme statement and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task?

Prior Knowledge
Students need to identify and cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support their analysis of what the text says, both explicitly and by inference.
Students need to know how to determine the theme or central idea of a story and analyze how it is developed.
Students need to be able to determine how the theme or central idea of a story is shaped by specific details over the course of the text.
Students need to know how to analyze how a complex character develops over the course of the story by interacting with other characters and advancing the plot.
Students need to know how to participate in a collaborative discussion with a small group of students by building on each other’s ideas and expressing their own ideas clearly and persuasively.
Students need to know how to present an idea and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

1. Anticipatory Set
Ask: How are students who are blind or visually impaired able to function at home and in school? What special tools and assistive devices can they use to travel about the community?
Teachers may have students use a KWL chart to make notes about what they Know about aids and assistance used by people who are blind or visually impaired, what they Want to know/expect to learn during the unit, and, after they read the novel, what they have Learned.
Unit Plan: Things that Are: Making Choices, Continued

2. Teaching Phase

**Background Information.** Things That Are focuses on Alicia, a teenager who became blind several years before this story begins. The story includes detailed descriptions of the devices and techniques Alicia uses to travel about the community and take care of everyday tasks.

As students will learn in the story, people who are blind make choices when it comes to traveling. They may travel using a human guide (holding onto someone’s arm). They may also use a long, white cane to identify and avoid obstacles or elevation changes. Alicia uses a guide dog, Gertie (p. 10) that has been specially trained. She uses special optical or electronic aids, like the audible GPS. Sometimes people who are blind travel without aids, especially in familiar settings. The person might count the steps to identify a particular location (p. 49). For more information about Accessible Pedestrian Signals, Travel Tools, and Techniques of People Who are Blind or Who Have Low Vision, visit: [http://www.apsguide.org/chapter2_travel.cfm](http://www.apsguide.org/chapter2_travel.cfm).

Alicia uses other special tools to assist her. She has a vibrating phone that uses Morse code to signal caller identification (p. 1) and her wristwatch has a vibrating signal that tells the time (p. 24). She uses a braille reader, braillewriter, screen reader and audio books for her classwork. For additional information about reading and writing tools for people who are blind or who have low vision, visit: [http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/using-technology/reading-and-writing/123](http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/using-technology/reading-and-writing/123).

If possible, invite a local specialist (educator, travel trainer, etc.) to give a brief presentation or demonstration about accommodations and services for people who are blind and visually impaired. For additional information, visit the American Foundation for the Blind Website: [http://www.afb.org/default.aspx](http://www.afb.org/default.aspx).

**Introducing the Story.** Things That Are features Alicia and how she comes to terms with her blindness and her relationship with her friend, Bobby. Have students describe the types of problems they think Alicia may encounter because she is blind.

On page 6 in the novel, Alicia reflects on her own struggle and acceptance of her blindness. Have students explain what they think Alicia really means by the following statements:

*Before I met Bobby, I had lost most of my hopes, my plans, my dreams. I had lost my view of the future. The blindness had its hooks in deep....*

*What changed me was being able to help someone. I know that if I hadn’t helped Bobby two years ago, he wouldn’t have found his way back from his own temporary disability, his own brand of blindness. Helping him made me see I could do more to help myself....*
# Unit Plan: Things that Are: Making Choices, Continued

## Introducing the Story, Continued

*Because a moment came when I had to choose whether or not I was going to be blind or not, and I chose. And now I’m not blind. I still can’t see, but I’m not blind. And I keep making that choice. Every day (p. 6).*

This novel is a sequel to *Things Not Seen* and *Things Hoped For*, also written by Andrew Clements. *Things Not Seen* tells the story of Alicia and her friend Bobby, who finds himself invisible. Bobby, his parents, and Alicia try to figure out what caused him to become invisible and how to reverse this condition. *Things Hoped For* tells about Bobby’s audition for a top music school in New York City and how he tries to solve the mystery of a friend’s dead grandfather. In this story, Bobby becomes aware of William, another person who is invisible.

This story is told as a mystery. In a mystery, the main plot focuses on the crime or problem that needs solving. The central character functions as a detective, and the rest of the characters are often the suspects. The detective works to solve the mystery and often finds himself (or herself) in danger. Each suspect and possible motives are examined to solve the crime. Most mysteries contain the following elements:

- A puzzle to be solved usually revealed by an inciting action
- Main character who wants to solve the mystery/puzzle
- Suspects and their motives
- Clues involving overt signs (direct), hidden evidence, and red herring (misleading)
- Inference gaps and suspense that must be figured out by the reader
- Foreshadowing or hints about what is to come.

In *Things That Are*, the plot involves solving the mystery of the character first known as William, who is invisible. The story reveals how Alicia addresses the challenges brought on by her blindness and how she handles issues of her own lack of trust—of Bobby, her parents, and the stranger (William) who has followed Bobby back from New York.


## 3. Guided Practice

**Reading the Novel.** Have students read the four sections of the novel and complete the Reading Guide for *Things That Are* worksheet. The worksheet provides guiding questions to help students identify elements in the mystery that move the plot. Students will respond to each question in writing, citing evidence from the text to support their answer. After students read each section, they will discuss their answers with the whole class.
Unit Plan: *Things that Are: Making Choices*, Continued

**Working in a Collaborative Group.** Explain that students will work in small groups to complete the remaining activities for this unit.

Ask: *How can we engage effectively in collaborative discussions with small groups?*

Discuss the following expectations for engaging in collaborative discussions:

- Come to discussions prepared having read the material closely to ensure understanding.
- Work with students in the group to set expectations for discussions and decision-making (consensus, alternate views).
- Keep conversations moving by posing and responding to questions, incorporating others into the discussion, and clarifying, verifying, or challenging ideas and conclusions.
- Respond to diverse perspectives, summarizing points and, when warranted, qualifying or justifying views and understanding, and making new connections.

After each group activity, the students will self-assess participation in the collaborative group discussion orally or in writing using the Grades Nine/Ten Collaborative Discussion Rubric included at the end of this unit plan. This evaluation should be based on the effective performance of all of the members of the group. How well did group members prepare, set expectations, engage in discussions and decision making, express their ideas, build on the ideas of others, and ask questions for clarification? Discuss the importance of shared responsibility for participation.

**Character Analysis.** Have students establish a clear purpose for the character analysis activity.

Ask: *How can we analyze how the main character develops over the course of the story and interacts with other characters to advance the plot?*

The activity begins by having students review the key events that make up the plot. If needed, describe the five elements of a plot: 1) exposition, 2) rising action, 3) climax, 4) falling action, and 5) resolution, and have students recall at least one event from the story for each element.

Then have students work in their small group to order the key events for each element of the plot, using the blank Plot Summary and Events for *Things That Are* worksheet (included at the end of this unit with the answer key). To carry out this activity, duplicate a copy of the worksheet with the key events cut apart and placed in an envelope for each group. Students will place the events in the correct sequence in the story. The teacher may review the results of the completed activity for each group or provide an answer key so the group can self-correct.
**Unit Plan: Things that Are: Making Choices, Continued**

**Character Analysis, Continued**

The students will continue working in their small group, describing the characters’ motives and actions and locating relevant textual evidence for the events included on the Character Analysis for Things That Are worksheet (included at the end of this unit with an answer key). The teacher can move from group to group to clarify ideas, advance the small group collaborative discussions, and assist with locating relevant textual evidence. Have students paraphrase or quote textual evidence and cite the page numbers of the source.

Optional: Because the author uses a variety of literary devices in the story to portray the characters, the teacher may wish to review the terms and help students locate examples.

**Verbal irony** is used to express key concepts.

> And now I’m not blind. I still can’t see, but I’m not blind. And I keep making that choice. Every day (p. 6).

Alicia serves as the narrator of the story, but she also has an “inner bossy voice” that lets you know what else she is thinking. This **internal voice** serves as her conscience and reminds her to keep focused on things as they are.

> That bossy little voice in my head has been speaking up a lot in the past few weeks. Very Annoying.

> But I’m glad she doesn’t let me kid myself. And she’s so persistent. And observant (p. 27).

Alicia says she loves **sarcasm**.

> So I guess I hate logic this morning. And irony.

> But I love sarcasm. Except I sort of hate that I love it (p. 14).

She can detect a certain **tone** in people’s voices.

> Talking with Bobby about the cell phone call. “No,” I say. “I just heard a little—enough to catch the tone, that’s all” (p. 33).

Because the story is written as a mystery, **foreshadowing** is frequently used.

> “It’s a guy talking, someone I don’t know, and his voice sounds odd” (p. 2). [William]

> Because launching a fleet of invisible agents would be like making everyone else blind—to their presence, their movements, their activities (p. 15). [raises importance, potential of government involvement]

Have students self-assess their group’s participation in the collaborative discussion orally or in writing using the Grades Nine/Ten Collaborative Discussion Rubric included at the end of this unit plan.
**Unit Plan: Things that Are: Making Choices, Continued**

4. **Independent Practice**

**Exploring the Theme.** Have students establish a clear purpose for exploring the theme. Ask: *How does the theme of Things That Are emerge and how is it shaped and refined by specific details?* Discuss. The teacher will facilitate the independent practice as students continue to engage in collaborative discussions in their small group to explore the emerging theme of the story, identify how it is shaped by specific details, and locate relevant textual evidence. A structured worksheet, Exploring the Theme of Things That Are and an answer key is provided at the end of this unit plan.

The teacher can provide guidance to the groups using the following explanations and scaffolding to help the students complete the components of the worksheet.

- What makes a good **theme statement**? Good theme statements apply to people in general, not just to the specific characters in the text. Provide examples if necessary: Growing up means taking responsibility to help others in need.

- How to develop an **emerging theme statement**?
  - Identify the **topic**. The topic is the subject of the story. The topic is simply what the story is about. Stories often include more than one topic.
    
    Recurring topics in *Things That Are*—Blindness, Invisibility, Trust, Independence, Honesty, Control
  
  - The **theme** is the main message of a work of literature that provides an insight about life or human nature. It answers the question, “So what?”
    
    **Stated theme:** The idea is expressed directly. The book jacket of *Things That Are* states: “here is a novel full of adventure, romance, and mystery, a story about learning to trust the things we know but cannot see.”
    
    **Implied theme:** The author reveals the message gradually through literary techniques such as plot, character, setting, point of view, or irony.
    
    Taking charge of your life includes learning to accept things as they are.
    
    Trust your own knowledge.

Students should begin their discussion of the emerging theme by developing text-dependent questions related to identifying the recurring topics, emerging theme, and details supported by relevant textual evidence. Examples of the questions are included on the worksheet. Students should be encouraged to refer back to the text to locate specific textual evidence and list the relevant page numbers on the worksheet for later use. They may also refer to the details and textual evidence they gathered in the character analysis as they work to create an emerging theme statement for *Things That Are.*
Exploring the Theme, Continued

Ask: How can you present the theme statement and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow your line of reasoning, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task?

After completing the worksheet, each group will make a 5-minute presentation of their theme statement to the whole class, describing the strongest evidence that supports their statement, and explaining how they think the theme statement applies to others. Each group will need time to plan and create their presentation. Review the Grades Nine/Ten Presentation Rubric included at the end of this unit to help students plan their presentation.

Upon completion of these activities, each group will also self-assess their group’s participation in the collaborative discussion orally or in writing using the Grades Nine/Ten Collaborative Discussion Rubric. The teacher will also have students reflect on their small group collaborative discussion sessions to determine possible needs for future instruction.

5. Closure

Discuss the key quotation below from the novel using the following questions:

In the beginning of the story, Alicia says, “And now I’m not blind. I still can’t see, but I’m not blind. And I keep making that choice. Every day” (p. 6).

How does this quotation apply to your own life? How do people who can see sometimes choose to be blind? Give an example.

6. Extensions

Read the first two novels in this series by Andrew Clements, Things Not Seen and Things Hoped For. Compare the portrayal of Alicia in the three novels. How does the author develop her character? How important is her disability (blindness) in each of the novels? How well does the author provide a realistic picture of a person who is blind, even though this is a science fiction novel?

Accommodations

- Provide alternate formats (audio, braille, large print) for students who have difficulty reading the book or handouts independently.
- Provide specially-formatted paper or a word processor, or allow dictation of responses for students who have difficulty with handwriting.
- Have students first write notes to answer each question, use an explanatory writing frame to organize the details (introduction, body, conclusion), then develop into paragraphs and a report.
Unit Plan: *Things that Are: Making Choices, Continued*

The theme exploration activity in this unit is adapted from a CPALMS original lesson plan by Rebecca Calvert: “Show Me a Hero, and I Will Write You a Tragedy—F. Scott Fitzgerald—Part 1”, available at: [http://www.CPALMS.org](http://www.CPALMS.org).

For additional information, see self-determination and self-advocacy in the Disability Awareness section, and reading guides, and themes in the English and Language Arts Activities section of this resource.

The entire unit plan can be downloaded from CPALMS.org: [http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121547](http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121547)
**Reading Guide for Things That Are—Page 1 of 2**

Name: ____________________________     Date: _____________________________

Read each section of the novel and write your answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to include textual support, citing the page number(s) for sources. Note any other reactions or questions you have. Be ready to discuss your answers with the whole class.

### Chapters 1–3, Pages 1–29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inciting Action</td>
<td>How does the mysterious cell phone call in the middle of the night get the mystery started?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Main Character | What are Alicia’s main concerns, now that she is in regular high school?  
What tools and skills does she now use to accommodate her blindness? |
| Suspects | What happened to Bobby that is still troubling Alicia?  
Why do you think their dads are back working together? Provide evidence from the text to support your response. |
| Clues | Why do you think Bobby told Gwen about his being invisible? |

### Chapters 4–7, Pages 30–58

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Main Character | What is the role of the bossy little voice inside Alicia’s head?  
How does Alicia cope with what she calls “blindtime” (p. 36)?  
What kind of relationship does Alicia hope to have with Bobby? |
| Suspects | Who is the character with the British accent? How does he know Bobby? |
| Clues | Why does Bobby appear suspicious when Alicia asks him about the late night cell phone call?  
Why is Alicia concerned about Gertie’s growling (p. 38)?  
What worries Alicia when the FBI comes looking for her parents? |

### Chapters 8–14, Pages 59–110

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Character</td>
<td>How do Alicia and Bobby show that they trust each other?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Suspects | What does Alicia learn about William from Bobby?  
How does William try to convince Alicia and Bobby that he is not from the FBI? |
| Clues | Why are Bobby and Alicia worried about what they find in the back room?  
Why does Alicia’s dad need to get rid of the mice?  
Why does Alicia secretly hide William in her basement? How does this action contribute to the suspense of the mystery? |
### Reading Guide for *Things That Are*—Page 2 of 2

**Chapters 15–21, Pages 111–167**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Character</td>
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<td>Why does she bring up Sheila?</td>
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<td>Clues</td>
<td>Why does Alicia lie to her parents?</td>
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<td>Why does William give Gertie sleeping pills?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How does the mystery end for William? For Alicia and Bobby?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Reading Guide for *Things That Are* / Answer Key — Page 1 of 4

**Chapters 1–3, Pages 1–29**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Inciting Action** | How does the mysterious cell phone call in the middle of the night get the mystery started?  
Alicia is awakened by the phone vibrating—dash, dot, dot, dot, which stands for B—and she thinks the call is from her friend, Bobby. Her phone number was accidentally connected, and she finds herself eavesdropping on a conversation in New York City between Bobby and someone pressing him for help. Bobby sounds angry (voice is hard and flat). When the phone call is disconnected, Alicia wants to call Bobby to find out what is going on, but she doesn't want him to think she is worried about him. She wants to talk to him about it when she sees him on Thursday (pp. 1–3).  
This call sets up the mystery by establishing a problem involving Bobby and the caller. Bobby doesn't want to be involved. We know that Alicia is Bobby's friend, but she is worried about appearing too concerned. |
| **Main Character** | What are Alicia’s main concerns, now that she is in regular high school? What tools and skills does she now use to accommodate her blindness?  
One of Alicia’s main concerns is to learn to deal with her blindness. She can read and write braille. She will get an audible GPS so she will know where she is. She uses audible books and a screen reader. She values the freedom her blindness gives her, including freedom from distractions, freedom to be alone, and freedom from cliques and gossip and comparisons. She has made great progress in high school with high SAT scores, and is in the top three percent of her class. She has a guide dog, Gertie (pp. 6–11).  
She says that blindness tends to make everything disappear—friends, family, life, self (p. 12). She must create her own images of reality. |
| **Suspects** | What happened to Bobby that is still troubling Alicia?  
When Alicia first met Bobby, he told her that he was invisible because his body was no longer reflecting light. With the help of their dads who are both scientists, they tried to figure out how to reverse the process. Alicia said she used intuition, insight, and her words to solve the problem (pp. 12–15).  
Why do you think their dads are back working together? Provide evidence from the text to support your response.  
Alicia wonders why Bobby’s father keeps coming to the house. In the past two months, their dads have spent a lot of time in the back study. They hadn’t done that for almost two years. She also notices that her mom and dad went suddenly silent when she came into the kitchen for dinner last night. Maybe it relates to the process that changed Bobby back to being visible (p. 18). |
| **Clues** | Why do you think Bobby told Gwen about his being invisible?  
It is unclear. Alicia says that Bobby told her he had to tell Gwen about being invisible, but didn’t explain why (p. 16). |
### Reading Guide for Things That Are/Answer Key—Page 2 of 4

**Chapters 4–7, Pages 30–58**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Main Character    | What is the role of the bossy little voice inside Alicia’s head?  
*This internal voice appears to be Alicia’s conscience or voice of reason. The voice challenges Alicia to be honest with herself, especially about her feelings about Bobby (pp. 30–31, 32, 34, 41).*  
How does Alicia cope with what she calls “blindtime” (p. 36)?  
*Alicia says that “blindtime” is when she feels that a darkness is closing in on her, something like a premature burial. She may be feeling depressed. She makes herself sit still and concentrates on her breathing and her heart. She thinks her heart knows deep things and that light is real. This time for reflection helps her know what to do, which in this case is to go ahead and call Bobby (pp. 36–37).*  
What kind of relationship does Alicia hope to have with Bobby?  
*Alicia wants a lasting relationship with Bobby. She is very happy that he is her friend, but she wants more than this.* |
| Suspects          | Who is the character with the British accent? How does he know Bobby?  
*This is William who approached Alicia outside the library. He told her that her friend (Bobby) may be in danger. He was also the person who was on the phone when Alicia was connected accidentally on her cellphone.*  
*Bobby told Alicia about a man he met in New York who had the same experience of becoming invisible. Alicia knows that William is that man. He, like Bobby, is worried about telling others about his condition or experience. He is afraid it could be used for wrong purposes (pp. 38–41).* |
| Clues             | Why does Bobby appear suspicious when Alicia asks him about the late night cell phone call?  
*Alicia tells Bobby she heard him arguing with a guy on the phone last night. He says she was eavesdropping. He laughs it off and says she needs to get more sleep (pp. 32–33).*  
Why is Alicia concerned about Gertie’s growling (p. 38)?  
*A man (William) approaches Alicia at the library and asks her if he can speak with her. Gertie stands up and leans against Alicia and growls. Gertie never growls. This person seems friendly, but Alicia is scared by the way he whispers. She doesn’t trust this person. She recognizes his voice from the late night phone call with Bobby (pp. 38–41).*  
What worries Alicia when the FBI comes looking for her parents?  
*She is worried because the man from the FBI says he wants to talk with her and her parents and that they are being investigated. She imagines they want to talk to Bobby, too (pp. 55–57).* |
### Reading Guide for *Things That Are* / Answer Key—Page 3 of 4

**Chapters 8–14, Pages 59–110**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Main Character** | How do Alicia and Bobby show that they trust each other?  
*Bobby tells Alicia about noticing William in New York. Bobby got the police involved because he was afraid that William might start hurting someone or take hostages. Alicia tells Bobby about her meeting with William. She takes Bobby back into the study in her house where their dads have been working (pp. 59–64).* |
| **Suspects** | What does Alicia learn about William from Bobby?  
*When Bobby spotted William’s shadow in a store and just stared at him, William figured out that Bobby knew he was invisible. William followed Bobby and Gwen back to Gwen’s apartment because he thought Bobby might be able to help him. Bobby was frightened (p. 64).*  
How does William try to convince Alicia and Bobby that he is not from the FBI?  
*William says that the FBI wants to put him in jail. He also tells them how he figured out Alicia’s last name by looking at her signature on the sign-up sheet for study rooms at the library and then using the phone book. He also used GoogleMaps to find out where she lived. He says that the men from the FBI are after him and they are following Robert (pp. 108–110).* |
| **Clues** | Why are Bobby and Alicia worried about what they find in the back room?  
*The cages, glass aquariums, wood shavings and poop indicate that there are experiments going on with mice. They can hear the claws and squeaks, but don’t see any mice. Bobby says that the mice are invisible (pp. 64–66).*  
Why does Alicia’s dad need to get rid of the mice?  
*Alicia’s dad discovers Bobby and Alicia in his study and learns what is going on with William. He realizes that the mice might be used as evidence against them. He doesn’t believe that the government is ready to deal with the possibility that living things can become invisible. Her dad is afraid this discovery could be misused, much like what happened with nuclear weapons after World War II (pp. 72–74).*  
Why does Alicia secretly hide William in her basement? How does this action contribute to the suspense of the mystery?  
*She believes that William would be harmed if he were caught by the police or FBI. She believes William is in real danger and wants to try to help him (pp. 89–91). If William is discovered by her parents or the FBI, Alicia could be in more trouble for aiding a suspect.* |
### Reading Guide for *Things That Are* / Answer Key—Page 4 of 4

**Chapters 15–21, Pages 111–167**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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</table>
| Main Character | How does Alicia convince Bobby to help William?  
*Alicia is sure that William doesn’t trust the FBI or the police, but he does trust Bobby and Alicia. She appeals to Bobby’s sympathy by reminding him how he felt when he was invisible and so dependent on others. Bobby thought things would never get back to normal (pp. 113–114).*  
Why does she bring up Sheila?  
*Bobby and Alicia learned about Sheila two years ago. She had also become invisible, but decided to stay that way to escape from her old life. By talking with her and comparing experiences, they were able to figure out what was going on in Bobby’s case. After his readjustment, Bobby sent Sheila the electric blanket so she could become visible again. But Sheila returned the things to Alicia because Alicia’s name and phone number was in the box. Alicia still has the box, but never opened it (pp. 117–119). This could be the solution for William.*  
What do Alicia, Bobby, and William have in common?  
*William understands what it is like to be invisible to others and not able to talk to them. He feels helpless. Bobby said he felt this way when he was invisible. Alicia said she had the same feeling when she first became blind. Alicia remembers it felt strange that people liked to talk with her just because she was blind (pp. 141–144).* |
| Suspects       | How do Bobby and Alicia deal with William?  
*Bobby and Alicia listen to what William has to say and decide to try to help him. They realize that he might respond to the same reversal process as Bobby. They retrieve the old electric blanket that Bobby used from the box that Sheila returned to Alicia (pp. 138–145).* |
| Clues          | Why does Alicia lie to her parents?  
*She wants to stay at Bobby’s house overnight so she and Bobby can try to help William. William will need to be under the electric blanket for at least five hours to experience the reversal process. Alicia tells her parents she is sleeping at her friend Nancy’s house (p. 132).*  
Why does William give Gertie sleeping pills?  
*William isn’t sure if he can really trust Bobby and Alicia, so he takes some sleeping pills from Alicia’s mother just in case. He thinks the reversal process with the electric blanket will wake Gertie, so he decides to give the chicken bits with the pills to Gertie so he can get away (pp. 162–163).*  
How does the mystery end for William? For Alicia and Bobby?  
*William (aka James) leaves a cassette recording for Alicia and Bobby explaining what he did and why he gave Gertie the sleeping pills. He leaves money to pay for the clothes he took from Robert and says he is returning to Montreal to be with his wife and daughter (p. 163).*  
*Alicia and Bobby care for each other. Alicia is ready to make future plans (p. 165).* |
## Elements of Plot for *Things That Are*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rising Action</td>
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<td>Climax</td>
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<td>Falling Action</td>
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<td>Resolution</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key Events for *Things That Are*

Cut apart the strips for students to place in sequential order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the morning when they wake up, William has disappeared and Bobby and Alicia find that her guide dog, Gertie has been drugged. Alicia is very angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia sees Bobby at the library and meets William for the first time before she goes home. The FBI come to her door wanting to interview her and her parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia and Bobby go into her dad’s study and find that their fathers had been conducting research. When her father comes home, he tells them that they are conducting research to find a replicable way to reverse invisibility in living tissue. Her father is very worried when he learns about William. He doesn’t want the government to be involved. Bobby returns to his house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia thinks that it would be best if she could forget the whole thing about invisibility, but her inner voice reminds her to deal with things as they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Bobby visits Alicia at home, she tells him about William and the FBI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Alicia gets ready to go to school, she finds a briefcase with the blanket and clothing and a cassette tape with William’s explanation on her doorstep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia overhears Bobby’s cell phone argument with a person speaking with an accent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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### Elements of Plot for *Things That Are/Answer Key*

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<td>Rising Action</td>
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<td>Resolution</td>
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### Character Analysis for *Things That Are*—Page 1 of 3

Group Members: _____________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________ Date: ________________

Locate textual evidence that shows how the main character (Alicia) develops and interacts with other characters during each key event over the course of the story. Paraphrase or use direct quotations, citing the relevant page number(s) of the source.

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<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Alicia overhears Bobby’s cell phone argument with a person speaking with an accent.</td>
<td>Alicia is puzzled by the strange voice and harsh tone. But she can wait and goes back to sleep (pp. 1–3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alicia reflects on her feelings about becoming blind and her relationship with Bobby.</td>
<td>Since Alicia became blind in eighth grade, she has learned to use tools, devices, and her guide dog to cope with her blindness. She vows to accept things as they are (pp. 4–8).                                                                                                                  “Because the moment came when I had to choose whether I was going to be blind or not, and I chose. And now I’m not blind. I still can’t see, but I’m not blind. And I keep making that choice. Every day” (p. 6). Bobby’s friendship and her ability to help him made Alicia see she can help herself (p. 6). When she met Bobby, he was invisible. She and Bobby figured out how to reverse the condition with help of their fathers who are scientists (pp. 12–13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising Action</td>
<td>When lost on the way to the library, Alicia gets directions but won’t let the young man walk with her.</td>
<td>Alicia says she is really antisocial – Voice in her head tells her to stop avoiding people and let them get to know you (p. 26). This relates to the insecurity she expresses about her relationship with Bobby.</td>
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<td>Alicia sees Bobby at the library and meets William for the first time before she goes home. The FBI comes to her door wanting to interview her and her parents.</td>
<td>Alicia is really happy to see Bobby again, but she is afraid to ask him how he feels about her. She’s worried that Gwen is his new girlfriend in New York. Her internal voice scolds her, tells her she doesn’t want to be wounded. Again (pp. 30–31). She recognizes William’s voice when he warns her that Robert may be in danger. He explains that he is invisible and being hunted by the police. She touches him and realizes he is naked, just the way Bobby was when she first met him (pp. 38–44). “But disembodied voices are nothing new to me. I understand William is invisible, but I can only imagine how others can’t see him” (p. 47).</td>
</tr>
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## Character Analysis for *Things That Are*/Answer Key—Page 2 of 4

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<td><strong>Rising Action, Continued</strong></td>
<td>As she walks home and reflects on things, she does get worried and doesn’t trust William. He could be dangerous (pp. 50–51). Alicia acts very calm when the FBI come and ask for her parents (pp. 55–56).</td>
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<tr>
<td>When Bobby visits Alicia at home, she tells him about William and the FBI.</td>
<td>Alicia is anxious to talk things over with Bobby. Bobby explained that in New York, he had seen Williams shadow and he thought he was a pyscho. He reported him to the police (pp. 62–64). Alicia is gathering information so she can understand what is really going on with Bobby and William.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Alicia and Bobby go into her dad’s study and find that their fathers had been conducting research. When her father comes home, he tells them that they are conducting research to find a replicable way to reverse invisibility in living tissue. Her father is very worried when he learns about William. He doesn’t want the government to be involved. Bobby returns to his house.</td>
<td>Alicia hadn’t noticed the cages in her dad’s study but she is aware of changes in his behaviors and wants to know why. Bobby’s father had been spending a lot more time with him (pp. 65–71). When her dad explains and destroys the mice, Alicia feels that everything is over now because the secret about invisibility is out. She wishes it would all go away. Alicia’s internal voice says that it’s not the end of the world (p. 75). Is this an escape for Alicia? –to wish everything uncertain would go away, so things can get back to normal, whatever that is? Alicia is sensitive to William’s desperation, while Bobby is fearful.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>William appears at Alicia’s house and she lets him hide in the basement. The FBI return, and Alicia and her parents answer questions about Bobby but do not reveal anything about William.</td>
<td>Alicia uses a take-charge tone when she talks to William (p. 89). She doesn’t tell her parents. Following her dad’s advice, she answers the FBI’s questions about Bobby, but doesn’t admit to knowing William (pp. 91–96).</td>
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| Rising Action, Continued | Alicia’s afraid, but feels in control.  
“I’m not going to fall apart, I’m not. No matter how surreal things get, I’m still me. I know that. Who I am and what I am does not change, does not disappear, does not fade away. I know that. I’ve had to prove that. I’m Alicia. It’s me” (p. 99).  
She thinks everyone wants her to be afraid and not rock the boat. But she reflects that Mom and Dad don’t know the whole situation, neither does Bobby (p. 100). This foreshadows Sheila. |  
Bobby comes back for dinner and he and Alicia try to figure out what to do. Alicia remembers Sheila who was invisible and how her experience helped them to figure out that the electric blanket would reverse Bobby’s invisibility. Sheila returned the blanket to Alicia because she had her name and phone number.  
Alicia is willing to take a risk and help William. She has already thought of a way to do it, but she knows she has to convince Bobby. She taps into his previous feelings that are the same as hers.  
Bobby is skeptical. He says William could be working for the FBI (p. 113).  
“Alicia I know you remember how it feels to be that way, to have so little hope that thing can ever get back to normal. To feel completely dependent on others, to feel caught by forces beyond your control, to feel alone, to feel… feel completely dependent on others, to feel caught by forces beyond your control, to feel alone, to feel…” (p. 113). |
|  | Alicia and Bobby decide to try using the electric blanket on William. They move William to Bobby’s house and tell him he can use the electric blanket when he goes to sleep. Alicia talks with William and is sympathetic to what happened to him. She finally kisses Bobby. | Alicia convinces Bobby to try using the blanket with William. She insists on helping. She’s not afraid and wants to do this together. Like it was at the very beginning of their relationship (p. 120).  
Alicia works out a plan (she will tell her parents she’s spending the night with her friend Janet). She tells Bobby to pretend to be Mrs. Hamlin when he talks to Alicia’s mom (pp. 131–133). |
### Character Analysis for *Things That Are/Answer Key*—Page 4 of 4

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<td>It appears that Alicia and Bobby weren’t sure they could trust their dads to help. They are fearful of their overreacting. Alicia worries about lying to her dad. “Because sooner or later, reality does occur, and when it does, all the lies show up. Like blood on the snow” (p. 133). Alicia spends some time talking to William. He explains what happened and how he took care of things in New York. When he tells her his real name is James, she is grateful (pp. 141–145). She realizes, that she can understand what he did. Alicia’s wishes come true when they are together in the living room and Bobby kisses her (p. 151).</td>
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<td>3) Climax</td>
<td>In the morning when they wake up, William has disappeared and Bobby and Alicia find that her guide dog, Gertie has been drugged. Alicia is very angry. Alicia is angry at William for disappearing. Bobby is still afraid. Bobby still thinks William went to the FBI (p. 153–155).</td>
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<td>Falling Action</td>
<td>When Alicia gets ready to go to school, she finds a briefcase with the blanket and clothing and a cassette tape with William’s explanation on her doorstep. Alicia thinks that it would be best if she could forget the whole thing about invisibility, but her inner voice reminds her to deal with things as they are. Alicia is still angry at William for drugging Gertie. “I can still feel the hot range bubble up at the thought of his name” (p. 156). “About all the lying. Bobby and I are not lying at all, nor more, either of us....And we’re sticking to the truth from now on” (p. 160). Alicia wants to put all this behind her and destroy everything connected with it. “I’ll get back to planning my future. Because it’s my future. No future, no past, only now....But when you get there, guess what? It’s still going to be now” (p. 165).</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Resolution</td>
<td>Alicia decides keeps the blanket in case Sheila changes her mind. She also looks at herself and likes what she sees. “And I like what I see. It’s me. I’m Alicia” (p. 167).</td>
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Exploring the Theme of *Things That Are*

Group Members: _____________________________________________________________  
_________________________________________________________________________  Date: ______________________

After reading *Things That Are* and completing the Character Analysis chart, use this worksheet to structure your table discussions based on your own text-dependent questions to create a theme statement.

**Sample Questions:** What is the topic? What common theme is emerging about blindness and invisibility? What textual evidence supports the emerging theme? How does the title of this novel, *Things That Are*, relate to the theme?

Question:
Question:
Question:

**Central Idea/Recurring Topics:**

**Emerging Theme Statement:**

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Page | 168
Exploring the Theme of Things That Are/Answer Key—Page 1 of 3

Sample Questions: What is the topic? What common theme is emerging about blindness and invisibility? What textual evidence supports the emerging theme? How does the title of this novel, Things That Are, relate to the theme?

Question: Questions should be focused on creating an expression of the theme.

Question:

Question:

Central Idea/Recurring Topics: blindness, invisibility, insight, trust, control, things as they are

Emerging Theme Statement:
Taking charge of your life means learning to accept things as they are.
Trust yourself and your own knowledge.
Learning to trust the things we know, but cannot see.

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<td>Negative impact of blindness and invisibility</td>
<td>Alicia felt lost. She lost her hopes, plans, and dreams (pp. 5–6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feelings of isolation</td>
<td>Blindness tries to make everything disappear—friends, family, life, self (p. 12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling like you don’t belong</td>
<td>Being blind can make you feel like you are walking on the edge of a cliff (p. 21).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Feelings of hopelessness and dependency</td>
<td>Alicia says she is really antisocial—Internal voice tells her to stop avoiding people and let them get to know her (p. 26).</td>
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<td>• Fear of unknown (what you can’t see)</td>
<td>Alicia is very insecure about how her friend Bobby really feels about her.</td>
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<td>“Bobby I know you remember how it feels to be that way, to have so little hope that thing can ever get back to normal. To feel completely dependent on others, to feel caught by forces beyond your control, to feel alone, to feel…feel completely dependent on others, to feel caught by forces beyond your control, to feel alone, to feel…” (p. 113).</td>
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<td>Accept things as they are</td>
<td>Alicia has learned to use the tools/devices for the blind that allow her to read and write, and travel independently (pp. 4–8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make the choice to see/understand</td>
<td>Alicia: What changed me was being able to help someone…Helping him made me see I could do more to help myself (p. 6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gather information</td>
<td>And now I’m not blind. I still can’t see, but I’m not blind. And I keep making that choice. Every day” (p. 6).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Don’t obsess about the future</td>
<td>And I’ve used my new sensitivities, used the strange freedoms my blindness has given me. Freedom from distractions. Freedom to be alone. Freedom from clique and gossip and comparisons (p. 7).</td>
</tr>
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Alicia: I made the connection that helped Bobby readjust his body. I helped him find some courage. Because stepping into the unknown is always a risk. But physics turned him invisible (pp. 12-13).  

Alicia: Because I’m not wishing or hoping or dreaming. About anything, I’m facing things as they are (p. 19).  

Because I can adjust for those things. I can address those things because I can see them. It’s the things I can’t see. Especially the invisibility business.  

It’s stirring up again, I know it is. Why else would Bobby’s father keep dropping by? He’s come over a lot in the past two months, and….Dr. Phillips and my dad haven’t spent that kind of time together for almost two years (p. 19).
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<td><strong>Bossy voice in Alicia’s head</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make the choice to see/understand</td>
<td>She doesn’t let me kid myself. And she’s so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gather information</td>
<td>persistent. So observant. There’s now. You have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t obsess about the future,</td>
<td>to deal with things as they are: Inner voice:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued</td>
<td>You’re Alicia (p. 27).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Alicia was fearful when she first met William,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>but she said that he didn’t sound that creepy,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>but instead desperate and scared (pp. 60–62).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>She tells Bobby, but not her parents or the FBI,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>about William.</td>
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<td>She reflects that Mom and Dad don’t know the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>whole situation, neither does Bobby (p. 100).</td>
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<td>Like blood on the snow” (p. 133).</td>
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<td><strong>Trust in yourself</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alicia gathers information so she can</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Base your decisions on knowledge</td>
<td>understand what is really going on with Bobby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rely on your own insight</td>
<td>and William—She talks to Bobby, William, and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>her dad.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>She wants to know why Bobby’s father was</td>
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<td>spending a lot more time with him (pp. 65–71).</td>
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<td>Alicia’s afraid, but feels in control.</td>
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<td>No matter how surreal things get, I’m still me.</td>
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<td>I know that. Who I am and what I am does not</td>
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<td>change, does not disappear, does not fade</td>
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<td></td>
<td>away.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I know that. I’ve had to prove that.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I’m Alicia. It’s me” (p. 99).</td>
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Grades Nine/Ten Collaborative Discussion Rubric

<table>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Come to discussions prepared having read and analyzed the material closely to ensure understanding</td>
<td>Poorly prepared</td>
<td>Minimally prepared</td>
<td>Well prepared</td>
<td>Thoroughly prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with group to set guidelines for discussions and decision-making (consensus, alternate views)</td>
<td>Does not follow guidelines</td>
<td>Acknowledges guidelines, but often does not follow</td>
<td>Sets guidelines and generally follows them</td>
<td>Shows leadership or reminds group of guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep conversations moving by: • Posing and responding to questions • Incorporating others into the discussion • Clarifying, verifying, or challenging ideas and conclusions</td>
<td>Generally one-sided conversations without questioning</td>
<td>Rarely takes turns or encourages further discussion</td>
<td>Somewhat balanced discussion and logical conclusion</td>
<td>Balanced participation by all members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respond to diverse perspectives • Summarize points • When warranted, qualify or justify views and understanding, and make new connections</td>
<td>Refuses to work together or is off topic</td>
<td>Mostly listens to comments with no response</td>
<td>Listens with minimal responses</td>
<td>Consistently responds with respect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Grades Nine/Ten Presentation Rubric for *Things That Are*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Idea/Topic</strong></td>
<td>Little or no focus on theme statement or text</td>
<td>Attempts to focus on a theme statement</td>
<td>Conveys a theme statement</td>
<td>Maintains sharp focus on a theme statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme Statement and Supporting Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Provides insufficient support or unrelated details</td>
<td>Provides relevant details without elaboration</td>
<td>Provides relevant details with some elaboration</td>
<td>Provides relevant details with elaboration and justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>No apparent organization or sequence; lacks introduction or conclusion</td>
<td>Includes minimal introduction or conclusion and uses some transitions</td>
<td>Includes introduction or conclusion and uses appropriate transitions</td>
<td>Includes attention-grabbing introduction and a clear conclusion that ties back to the introduction; uses transitions that enhance the flow of the presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>Contains a high degree of questionable or inappropriate language or word choice based on the purpose or audience</td>
<td>Contains some questionable or inappropriate language or word choice based on the purpose or audience</td>
<td>Contains appropriate language and word choice for the purpose and audience</td>
<td>Contains effective language and word choice based on the purpose and audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wild Orchid: Coming of Age

Short Summary

In this unit, students will examine the challenges of transitioning into adulthood faced by Taylor, who is an 18-year-old girl with autism. Taylor must go to Lake Waskesiu for the summer because her mother has a new job. *Wild Orchid* explores how Taylor learns to apply the coping strategies she has been taught when she finds herself in a new environment. She learns that she can be independent and think for herself. Through this Unit Plan, students will work to determine two or more themes of a text, analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding the elements of a story, and write arguments to support claims with valid reasoning and sufficient evidence in response to questions.

Estimated Time: 6 sessions

Language Arts Florida Standards:

LAFS.1112.RL.1.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

LAFS.1112.RL.1.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

LAFS.1112.RL.1.3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

LAFS.1112.W.1.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

   a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

   b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

   c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
Unit Plan: Wild Orchid: Coming of Age, Continued

LAFS.1112.W.1.1, continued

d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the
   norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the
   argument presented.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of
what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including
determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Students will be able to determine multiple themes or central ideas of a text and analyze
their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on
one another to produce a complex account.

Students will be able to analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to
develop and relate elements of the story.

Students will be able to write an argument to support claims in an analysis of themes in
a text, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Disability Awareness Learning Objective

Students will be able to explain how the transition into new roles and responsibilities of
adult life can be both an opportunity and a challenge for students with disabilities.

Materials

Reading Guide for Wild Orchid with Answer Key
Exploring Themes of Wild Orchid with Answer Key
Grades Eleven/Twelve Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric for Wild Orchid
Sample Essay

Formative Assessments

Teaching Phase

Anticipatory Set and Introducing the Story. Students are provided a brief
introduction to the main character. The discussion questions at the beginning are
intended to help students relate with the issues of becoming an adult that the main
character faces in Wild Orchid. The teacher can provide additional information or
scaffolding to ensure that students have a basic understanding of opportunities and
challenges any student has when they leave high school.
Unit Plan: Wild Orchid: Coming of Age, Continued

Understanding Taylor’s Disability. Students will write a journal entry that describes their current understanding of Asperger’s syndrome (a form of autism spectrum disorder). By reviewing these responses, the teacher can identify any misunderstandings and provide additional information or resources for students. After listening to the text read aloud by the teacher, students will review these pages to locate specific details that describe the main character. The teacher will observe the accuracy and relevance of student responses to this activity.

Guided Practice.

Reading the Novel. Students will independently read and write responses to the questions for the five sections of the novel. The teacher can evaluate the accuracy and insight reflected in the written responses as well as the use of relevant evidence from the text to support the answers that are explicitly stated in the text, those that are based on inferences, and those where the text is unclear. Through whole class discussion that follows the reading of each section, the teacher can elaborate and clarify any misunderstandings students may have about the characters, setting, and plot of the story.

Exploring the Themes. Students will use a structured worksheet to guide their efforts, including identifying text-dependent questions, recurring topics, emerging theme statements, and supporting textual evidence. The teacher can evaluate the written responses to the structured worksheet to evaluate student understanding of the themes and connections among them and the supporting evidence provided in the novel. The teacher can also assess student understanding of the themes through student contributions and elaboration about possible theme statements and supporting evidence.

Summative Assessment

Independent Practice

Students will write a two-page essay in response to the following prompt: How does the author use the play, The Birthday Party, to convey the theme of the story? Students will use an argument/claim text structure for their essay. The teacher will use the rubric to evaluate how well students met the expectations of the learning objectives. A sample essay is included at the end of this unit plan.

Guiding Questions

What makes becoming an adult challenging for teens with disabilities?
How can we support teens with disabilities who are transitioning to adulthood?
Unit Plan: Wild Orchid: Coming of Age, Continued

Guiding Questions, Continued
Why is important to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain?
How can you determine multiple themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text?
How do themes of a story interact and build on one another?
How can you analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of the story?
How can you write arguments to support claims in an analysis multiple themes of a text, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient textual evidence?

Prior Knowledge
Students need to understand how to determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how themes of a story interact and build on one another.
Students need to know how to provide an objective summary of a text that relates its themes.
Students need to analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story.
Students need to write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

1. Anticipatory Set
Invite students to share their own knowledge about and experiences with transitioning to the adult world.

What challenges and opportunities do teens have as they prepare to leave high school and move into the adult world?
How are these challenges and opportunities the same as those of teens with disabilities?
How are they different?
Discuss.

2. Teaching Phase
Introducing the Story. At age 18, most teens are getting ready to transition from high school to a job or college. Discuss the opportunities and challenges this brings for any student.
Unit Plan: *Wild Orchid: Coming of Age*, Continued

**Introducing the Story, Continued**

Ask: What is exciting? What is frightening? How can young people prepare to be successful?

Author Beverley Brenna wrote *The Wild Orchid* about an eighteen-year-old girl living in Canada. As a result of her disability, Taylor is not yet able to live on her own. However, she can explore places and meet new people on her own.

For students with disabilities, this can be overwhelming. In schools in Florida, planning for this transition begins by age 14. Students, their parents, and exceptional student education staff work together to provide the services and supports students need to make a successful transition to adult life. These services and supports may include academics, career training, and other related services. Invite a transition specialist from your school or district to share with your class what is being done in regard to transition.

**Understanding Taylor’s Disability.** The main character, Taylor Jane Simon, has a form of autism spectrum disorder known as Asperger’s syndrome. In the course of the story, the author provides many brief descriptions of Taylor’s condition, including her diagnosis, her treatments and supports, and examples of behaviors that are impacted by her disability.

Help students become aware of unique characteristics of Taylor’s communication patterns and how she interprets the language of others, including her reliance on literal meanings and difficulty with idioms by reading aloud pp. 7–18.

Have students review these pages to identify what the author tells them about Taylor. If desired, display two main headings from the outline below and ask students to locate specific details in the text that support these headings.

**Taylor’s problems**

- Doesn’t like new things or new routines (pp. 7-9)
- Afraid she won’t come back (p. 7)
- Had traumatic stress and meltdowns and was treated with medication when she was eight after her father left (p. 14)
- Interprets language very literally (e.g., on a final exam, she was told to draw conclusions, so she drew pictures all over the page (p. 11); when her mother told her she would meet new people at Lake Waskesiu, Taylor said that she didn’t care about new people, because new people would refer to babies and she would prefer a boyfriend her own age (pp. 17–18).
- Has meltdowns and swears when she gets upset (has a lock on her laptop to keep her from writing swear words) (p. 12)
Unit Plan: *Wild Orchid: Coming of Age*, Continued

Understanding Taylor’s Disability, Continued

Taylor’s coping strategies

- Counts (p. 14, 15)
- Plays Baroque music (p. 10)
- Writes in her journal (p. 10)
- Can read her social stories (p. 16) (Note: Social stories are brief explanations about routines and social situations that are written to help individual students with autism or Asperger’s syndrome know what to expect. Taylor kept hers in a binder when she was in school.)

If desired, the teacher or the students can obtain more information from the following websites:

Autism Speaks, Inc., *Asperger Syndrome*
http://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/asperger-syndrome

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, *Asperger Syndrome Fact Sheet*

Have students reflect on their current understanding of autism spectrum disorder/Asperger syndrome by writing a journal entry.

Example

*Today I found out we are going to read a novel about an 18-year-old girl with Asperger syndrome, a form of autism spectrum disorder. I don’t know a lot about Asperger’s but I have heard of it before. I think that the Sheldon character on Bing Bang Theory sometimes acts like he has Asperger’s. I heard that Asperger’s syndrome affects the way a person’s brain works. In *Wild Orchid*, Taylor says she doesn’t like changes. She seems to have trouble understanding what people say to her and takes things very literally. I hope to learn more about the condition as we read this novel.*

3. Guided Practice

**Reading the Novel.** Students will use the Reading Guide for *Wild Orchid* worksheet included at the end of this unit to follow the events of the story as they read this novel.

Ask: *Why is it important to cite thorough and strong textual evidence to support your analysis of what the text says explicitly and by inference, and where the text leaves things uncertain?* Discuss. Review formatting of direct quotations and citations expected in student responses, as necessary.
**Unit Plan: Wild Orchid: Coming of Age, Continued**

**Reading the Novel, Continued**

Have students read each section independently and write answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Remind students to include textual support in their answers. Conduct a whole class discussion with students after each section of the story. The teacher will review and provide feedback on the written responses. An answer key is included at the end of this unit.

Note: Before students begin reading the second section, June 30–July 5, pp. 38–81, point out that the author uses the play, *The Birthday Party*, as a literary device in this story. *The Birthday Party* is a unique look at social interaction by Nobel prize-winning playwright, Harold Pinter. Brenna provides enough details about the play in *Wild Orchid* so the reader is able to understand the issues presented in the play that appeal to Taylor.

**Exploring the Themes.** Have students establish a clear purpose of the theme activity. Ask: *How can we determine multiple themes of a story and analyze their development over the course of the text? How do these themes interact and build on one another?*

Discuss what makes a good theme statement: The statement applies to people in general, not just to the specific characters in the text and provide insight about life or human nature. Provide examples if necessary. Many works of literature convey more than one theme. The themes answer the question, “So what?”

**How to Determine the Theme(s).**

1. Identify theme topics addressed in the story. Create phrases that briefly describe different aspects of the topic in the story.
2. Locate specific text evidence that supports the theme topics. Refine topics or descriptors if needed. Make a note of connections among the topics in the evidence. Eliminate unnecessary details or irrelevant categories.
3. Create a statement of the theme(s). The statement should be a complete sentence that reveals your interpretation of the author’s message.

Students will use the Explore the Themes of *Wild Orchid* structured worksheet to guide their analysis of the topics and themes expressed in this story. This activity may be completed independently or in small groups. Have students share their theme statements and describe how they reached their conclusions. Encourage students to provide feedback and ask questions to clarify, verify, or challenge the proposed theme statements.
Unit Plan: *Wild Orchid: Coming of Age*, Continued

**4. Independent Practice**

Have students establish clear purposes for the summative assessment.

Ask: *How can we analyze the impact of the author’s choice to include Harold Pinter’s play, The Birthday Party on elements of the story?*

Taylor said she strongly connected to Harold Pinter’s play, *The Birthday Party*. She didn’t understand much after seeing it the first time, “but the parts I did understand sent chills down my spine…I sat almost shaking in my seat—that’s how good it was” (p. 73).

In a whole class discussion, have students suggest and briefly respond text-dependent questions that they can use to explore the impact of the play on the story.

Sample questions: *What is the purpose of the play? How does the play impact the main character? How does the character’s response to the play relate to the themes of the story?*

Have students write a two-page essay to respond to the following prompt:

*How does the author use the play, The Birthday Party, to convey the themes of the story?*

Students may use their Exploring Themes of Wild Orchid structured worksheet to plan their essay.

Ask: *How can you write arguments to support claims in an analysis of multiple themes of a text, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient textual evidence?*

Review the elements of argument and claims writing, based on the Grades Eleven/Twelve Arguments and Claims Writing Rubric for *Wild Orchid* included at the end of this unit plan.

- Introduce the claim, distinguish counterclaims, and create a logical organization of claim, counterclaim, reasons and evidence
- Use well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient evidence to develop the claim and counterclaim
- Use clear language and syntax to link the sections and clarify relationship between claims, reasons, and evidence
- Provide a concluding section that follows from and supports the arguments presented
- Maintain a formal style and objective tone

The teacher will use the Grades Eleven/Twelve Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric to evaluate how well the students mastered the learning objective. A sample essay is included at the end of this unit.
Unit Plan: Wild Orchid: Coming of Age, Continued

5. Closure
Ask students to reflect on their personal connections to this novel.

How were Taylor’s challenges in becoming an adult similar to what you have experienced or heard about?
What impressed you about the way Taylor responded to those challenges?
How have you been affected by a specific work of literature?
What new insights do you have about teens with disabilities?

6. Extensions
Wild Orchid is the first of three novels written by Beverley Brenna. Waiting for No One (2010) follows Taylor Jane Simon as she enters the university and applies for a job, and in The White Bicycle (2012) she goes to France to work for the summer. Read all three novels to see how the author develops Taylor’s character.

To learn more about transition planning for students with disabilities, see the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Project 10: Transition Education Network website: http://www.project10.info.
To learn more about “School to Work Transition,” see the Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation website: http://www.rehabworks.org/stw.shtml.

Accommodations
- Provide alternate formats (audio, braille, large print) for students who have difficulty reading the book or handouts independently.
- Provide specially-formatted paper or a word processor, or allow dictation of responses for students who have difficulty with handwriting.
- Provide a writing arguments and claim frame for students who have difficulty writing essays.

The theme exploration activity in this unit is adapted from a CPALMS original lesson plan by Rebecca Calvert: “Show Me a Hero, and I Will Write You a Tragedy—F. Scott Fitzgerald—Part 1”, available at: http://www.CPALMS.org.

In this resource, additional information about self-determination and self-advocacy is available in the Disability Awareness section, and suggestions for using reading guides and teaching about themes are included in the English and Language Arts Activities section.

The entire unit plan can be downloaded from CPALMS.org: http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121548
Reading Guide for *Wild Orchid*

Name: ____________________________     Date: ____________________________

Read each section of the novel and write your answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to include textual support for your answers. Note any concerns you may have. Be ready to discuss your answers.

**Saturday June 29—Pages 7–37**
1. *Wild Orchid* begins with a conflict between Taylor Jane, an 18-year-old girl, and her mother about plans for the summer. What is the root of the conflict? Why do you think her mom reminds Taylor of her social story about being independent? What do you learn about Taylor from her journal entry?
2. What connections can you make with Taylor’s conflict with her mother, the way she adjusts to the new situation, and her wish to meet a boy?

**Sunday June 30—Friday July 5—Pages 38–81**
3. Taylor exhibits some confused thinking in her journal entry for July 1 about meeting a boy. What parts of this might be related to her Asperger syndrome? What is common to many teens?
4. How do Taylor and her mother differ on their perspectives of how to recognize boyfriends? What does this indicate about Taylor’s ability to make friends? (See Taylor’s journal entry for July 2.)
5. Describe how Taylor’s relationship with Paul develops.
6. Is Kody the kind of boyfriend Taylor had in mind? Why did she think it was important to have a boyfriend?
7. What did Taylor say about the play by Harold Pinter after she saw it the first time?

**Saturday July 6—Tuesday July 9—Pages 82–104**
8. How does Taylor continue to refer to the play, *The Birthday Party*, in her journal? Why is this important to the story?
9. What does Paul’s wife, June, think of Taylor? How does she view Taylor differently from Paul?
10. How are Paul and Taylor alike? How are they different?

**Friday July 12—Saturday July 27—Pages 105–126**
11. How did getting a job give Taylor the courage to open her father’s letter and make a plan for the fall? What surprised her?
12. Why is Taylor so devastated about moving back to Saskatoon?

**Sunday July 28—Friday August 2—Pages 127–156**
13. What do you identify as the climax and resolution of this novel?
14. How have Paul’s actions changed what you think about him?
15. How well does this ending fit the story? What can you suggest as an alternative?
Reading Guide for *Wild Orchid*/Answer Key—Page 1 of 4

Saturday June 29—Pages 7–37

1. *Wild Orchid* begins with a conflict between Taylor Jane, an 18-year-old girl, and her mother about plans for the summer. What is the root of the conflict? Why do you think her mom reminds Taylor of her social story about being independent? What do you learn about Taylor Jane from her journal entry?

   This is the day that Taylor Jane leaves for the summer to go to Lake Waskesiu because her mother has a job at her boyfriend’s restaurant. Taylor doesn’t want to go because she doesn’t like changes or new routines. She likes to listen to Baroque music and write in her journal. She understands the importance of contracts and has her mother sign a contract that they will come home at the end of the summer (pp. 7–12).

   Taylor’s mom wanted Taylor to know how important this summer was to her, and that she wanted Taylor to be independent. They had created a social story to help Taylor remember how to react when she finds herself in a new situation that is scary. Her mom probably thought this would make Taylor feel better about going to Lake Waskesiu because she would know what to do.

   Taylor says she has some difficulties. She doesn’t name what they are, but states that she used to take medication that made her feel awful. When she was younger, she kept having meltdowns and preferred to stay in an empty computer box (p. 14). Later, she says she has a form of autism called Asperger’s syndrome. She was diagnosed at age ten, and her mother told her about it when she was eleven (p.31).

   Taylor frequently uses counting to organize her thinking. She keeps track of how long things take and how many times she does something. She particularly likes sevens and nines (pp. 14–15). Taylor interprets the comments people make very literally. For example, when her mother says, “Put your best foot forward,” Taylor thinks, “This is a perplexing request. As far as I can tell, my feet are identical under any circumstances requiring evaluation” (p. 18).

   She is very observant and recalls even the smallest details. When she goes into the nature center, she describes the two workers, one girl unpacking boxes and a man transplanting small plants into the aquarium. She watches a film on orchids (pp. 33–36).

2. What connections can you make with Taylor’s conflict with her mother, the way she adjusts to the new situation, and her wish to meet a boy?

   Answers will vary and should address all three ideas.

Sunday June 30–Friday July 5—Pages 38–81

3. Taylor exhibits some confused thinking in her journal entry for July 1 about her meeting a boy (pp. 43–44). What parts of this confused thinking might be related to her Asperger syndrome? What is common to many teens?

   Taylor’s response to the boy’s greeting, “Hey, you’re new around here” is an indication of literal thinking characteristic of autism. Taylor thinks she isn’t really new because this is her third day. She says that she and her mother arrived on Friday.
Question 3, Continued

Taylor’s thinking about his inquiry “You?” after he tells her that he comes every weekend might be a common way for teens to respond. Taylor didn’t say anything because she couldn’t exactly figure out what he meant. In her journal, she says she should have told him where she is staying.

She responds to his invitation, “Do you want to go walking?” by saying, “I am walking” and keeps on going. This is another instance of Taylor’s literal thinking.

Taylor’s literal thinking is probably related to her autism. However many teens are awkward and have poor social skills.

4. How do Taylor and her mother differ on their perspectives of recognizing boyfriends? What does this indicate about Taylor’s ability to make friends? (See Taylor’s journal entry for July 2.)

Taylor wasn’t sure if she would recognize the boy she talked to the previous day or if she would know him. She doesn’t know which features she should concentrate on. She thought maybe his golf shirt. Taylor has difficulty remembering faces, and this makes it difficult for her to try to strike up a conversation or make small talk when she sees the person again.

Taylor’s mother says it was easy to recognize boyfriends by concentrating on their unique features, such as the twinkle in their eye or a dimple in their cheek.

5. Describe how Taylor’s relationship with Paul develops.

Taylor likes to go to the Nature Center each day. She feels comfortable talking with Paul because he listens and doesn’t rush her. She is able to talk with him about many different things, and he doesn’t get upset when she keeps talking about the same thing (like gerbils). He seems to like having Taylor at the center and asks her to help out when the center gets busy.

6. Is Kody the kind of boyfriend Taylor had in mind? Why did she think it was important to have a boyfriend?

Kody is the boy who first talked with Taylor at the park who later waved at her when she was on a walk with the nature center staff. One day when she came back from the nature center to the restaurant for lunch, Kody ran into her again. Taylor asked, “Do you want to be my boyfriend?” He just laughed and invited her to have lunch with him. She agreed, and he bought some hamburgers and took her back to the cabin where he was staying. When Kody kissed her, Taylor wiped her face with her sleeve because she didn’t like the germs. She got mad and kept talking about Lady Slipper plants. She wouldn’t eat the hamburger he bought, and she left.

Kody wasn’t the type of boyfriend she had in mind. Taylor felt that having a date (and a boyfriend) was part of growing up (p. 27), but she probably didn’t know what was really involved. She had heard other girls talking about it and her mother had a boyfriend, so she thought that she should have one, too (pp. 66-71).
7. What did Taylor say about the play by Harold Pinter after she saw it the first time?

Taylor went to a play by Harold Pinter on July 5. She saw a poster about the Pinter Festival when she was walking on the beach. The first time she saw the play, she said she didn’t understand much of the story, but the parts she did understand sent chills down her spine. She noticed how the characters talked with each other. They often repeated what the other had said and changed the conversation when the topic was completed. She also appreciated the way they would wait (pause) between talking because it gave her time to process what they were saying. The play made Taylor think about the things her aide Shauna taught her about keeping a conversation going. Taylor could also relate to the part where Stanley said he couldn’t sleep (pp. 72–74).

Saturday July 6–Tuesday July 9—Pages 82–104

8. How does Taylor continue to refer to the play, The Birthday Party, in her journal? Why is this important to the story?

Taylor writes about going to see The Birthday Party for the second time in her entry on Monday July 8. This time she said she understood it better. The main character, Stanley, was afraid of things other people don’t think he should be afraid of. She thinks Stanley is a lot like her.

She also thinks about what she would tell Stanley, if she could—that even when you are afraid of something, you just have to go ahead without acting like you are afraid. She reflects on what other people had to say about the play. “Pinter is the master of the pause” (p. 87). She noticed the pauses, too. She considers one of the lines in the play, “Is the number 846 possible or necessary” (p. 87)? In the play, Stanley replied that it is neither, and Taylor wondered about the right answer. She reasoned that the number 846 was both possible and necessary and extended this idea to her having a boyfriend.

In her entry on July 9, Taylor describes more ideas about how she and Stanley are alike. Stanley didn’t want to have a birthday party and neither did Taylor. Taylor is afraid the kids who came to her party might want to stay, and there wasn’t enough room in her house. On another birthday, Taylor remembers when her mom threw out her dad’s possessions and made him leave. Taylor said that in the play, she didn’t like when McCann and Goldberg were yelling at Stanley. It was just like when Taylor was on the playground and the kids were yelling at her and calling her Lion King because she had a lunchbox with that picture. She was afraid they had changed her name to Lion King.

Saturday July 6–Tuesday July 9—Pages 82–104, Continued

9. What does Paul’s wife, June, think of Taylor? How does she view Taylor differently from Paul?

Taylor sees Paul and June when she goes walking on the pier. June is in a wheelchair, and she doesn’t say much when Taylor tries to talk to her. Taylor talks about her gerbil, the cat, and the play, The Birthday Party. However, June just asks Paul to take her home. June may think that Taylor is a teen who likes to talk, but doesn’t make much sense. Paul likes to listen to Taylor and thinks she has some good ideas about her life.
Reading Guide for *Wild Orchid*/Answer Key—Page 4 of 4

10. How are Paul and Taylor alike? How are they different?

*Paul and Taylor are both interested in nature. They like to observe the plants and animals and talk about them. They also like talking to each other and aren’t afraid how the other will react.*

*Both have lost their fathers; Paul’s father died by suicide and Taylor’s father moved out of her house. Taylor thinks she caused her father to leave. Taylor has received letters from her father, but she doesn’t open them. She didn’t know what he would say, so she just threw them away. Paul wishes he had something from his father to let him know he was cared about.*

**Friday July 12—Saturday July 27—Pages 105–26**

11. How did getting a job give Taylor the courage to open her father’s letter and make a plan for the fall? What surprised her?

*Taylor gets a job in the bookstore at the nature center when Mandy quits. Her mother is very excited. Getting a job gives Taylor the courage to open a letter from her father. She expects him to congratulate her on getting a job. But after she thinks about it, she realizes he wouldn’t have known about her job. Her father invites her to come visit at Thanksgiving, and Taylor says she will think about it. Taylor also forms a plan for the fall when she talks about taking a biology class and getting a job in a bookstore in Saskatoon.*

12. Why is Taylor so devastated about moving back to Saskatoon?

*In her entry for July 25, Taylor describes the walk she takes with her mother where her mother asks her if she wants to leave Lake Waskesiu early. But what her mother really means is that she broke up with her boyfriend, Danny, and quit her job; and they are leaving for Saskatoon tomorrow (Friday, July 26). Taylor wants to stay so she can work through August.*

**Sunday July 28—Friday August 2—Pages 127–156**

13. What do you identify as the climax and resolution of this novel?

*When Taylor asks Danny if she could stay the rest of the summer and spends the night in the woods is the beginning of the climax. Her encounter with Paul and his kissing her are points in the story where the conflict begins to be resolved. Taylor’s mother is angry with her for staying away all night, and she is also angry at Paul for kissing Taylor. Taylor describes the moment as a Pinter pause. Taylor and her mother have lunch and talk about what happened. Taylor is able to convince her mom that nothing had happened with Paul. When Taylor goes back to the store, Paul apologizes.*

14. How have Paul’s actions changed what you think about him?

*Answers will vary.*

15. How well does this ending fit the story? What can you suggest as an alternative?

*This ending emphasizes how much Taylor has matured over the summer. She is better able to understand her mother’s needs and make plans for her own future. Answers about alternative endings will vary.*
Exploring the Themes of *Wild Orchid*

Group Members: _____________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________ Date: ________________

After reading *Wild Orchid*, use this worksheet to structure your thinking based on your own text-dependent questions to create a theme statement.

**Sample Questions:** What are the recurring topics? What textual evidence supports each topic? What connections among the topics are revealed in the evidence? What common theme is revealed about relationships, coming of age, and self-awareness?

Question
Question
Question

**Identify Recurring Theme Topics and Connections:**

**Emerging Theme Statement:**
This book: *Wild Orchid*
is about:
and reveals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recurring Theme Topics That Support the Theme</th>
<th>Textual Evidence (Paraphrase or Quotation)</th>
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</table>
Exploring the Themes of *Wild Orchid/Answer Key*—Page 1 of 6

**Sample Questions:** What are the recurring topics? What textual evidence supports each topic? What connections among the topics are revealed in the evidence? What common theme(s) is revealed about the topics?

**Identify Recurring Topics and Connections:** Relationships, Coming of Age, Self-Awareness

**This book:** *Wild Orchid*

**is about:** an 18-year-old girl with Asperger syndrome who wants to have a boyfriend and become an independent adult

**Emerging Theme Statements:** The book reveals

- *In spite of the worries and fears you may have about becoming an adult, you just have to go on.*
- *Becoming an adult requires being open to many opportunities and challenges.*
- *A boyfriend is someone who really cares about what you think and how you feel.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recurring Topics That Support the Theme</th>
<th>Textual Evidence (Paraphrase or Quotation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Taylor feels she needs to have a boyfriend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to recognize a real boyfriend</td>
<td>One of my goals this summer is to have a boyfriend (p. 17).</td>
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<td>“I’ll meet a boy and this boy will find something about me to like. People have told me that I am quite a good-looking girl” (p. 26).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Note to self: Boyfriend is defined as a person’s regular male companion or lover. I have not crossed over and achieved this goal, but I think I’m on my way” (p. 51).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Taylor reflects that her mom always picks the same type of men to date. She finds her mom’s first dates to be very disconcerting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Feeling this way makes me nervous about how I will manage my first date if I ever have one. …that is part of growing up” (p. 27).—links to coming of age</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Taylor is concerned about the way others see her.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“All the boys I know are from my high school…none of them are boyfriend material because they think of me as someone who has special needs” (p. 27).—links to self-awareness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>She asks her mom for support.</td>
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<td>“….I asked my mother for techniques for finding a new boyfriend….She said, ‘All in good time.’…I think my mother doesn’t want me to have a boyfriend because this will mean I’m growing up, and she doesn’t want me to cross over the line and be an adult” (p. 39).—links to coming of age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                        | “I asked my mom at breakfast how she goes about recognizing her boyfriends, and she laughed and said it was easy. …
Exploring the Themes of *Wild Orchid/Answer Key*—Page 2 of 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships, Continued</th>
<th>‘The twinkle in their eye, maybe, or the way they have a dimple in their cheek. You’ve got to scan a person’s face and put it all together in a picture, the same way you do other things you look at’” (pp. 51–52).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What not to do | In her encounters with Kody, Taylor first ignores him and brushes him off. When she decides to approach him, they go to his aunt and uncle’s cabin. He kisses her and she rejects him. He gets angry and she leaves.  
“I’m also worrying what I should have done when the boy whistled at me. … Should I have whistled back?” (p. 37).  
“Do you want to go for a walk?” he asked from behind me.  
‘I am walking,’ I said and kept on going. … He didn’t follow” (p. 44).  
“Do you want to be my boyfriend?” and he laughed. … I felt really good that he wanted to have lunch just with me.  
“Why don’t you ever look at me when I talk to you?” he said.  
‘Why would I look at you when I know where you are?’—she replies (p. 69). —link to self-awareness  
…(At the cabin) he said ‘Do you want to eat now or just hang out first?’  
…Then he moved over and kissed me on the mouth. I jumped back. People have lots of germs in their saliva” (p. 69). |
| What is important in a relationship | When Taylor goes into the Nature Center, she interacts with Paul. He tells her about the specimens and tells her about a film and hikes offered at the center. Taylor loves the detailed information and remembers the man she met there. Her encounters with Paul involve shared interests, listening, and having empathy.  
“Funny, though, that what I remember most about today is not the orchids. It’s the man who was replanting the bog specimens” (p. 37).  
(Next day) “I liked how he (Paul) listened and didn’t try to rush me” (p. 46).  
They talk about the things in the center and their families. Taylor tells him that her father doesn’t live with her anymore. Paul told her that his father died from suicide.  
“Oh,’ I said, ‘Being dead is just as bad as being away.’  
‘Depends on your perspective,’ said Paul, grinning” (p. 47)  
On the way back from the outdoor theater, Paul asks her about her boyfriend and Taylor asks Paul about his wife, June (pp.64–65).  
On the day when Taylor finds Kody at the Nature Center, Paul notices she is upset and takes her outside, but she just gets angry and swears. She tells him she is mad because Kody wants to be the other girl’s boyfriend (p. 80).  
“One line from the play keeps coming back to me. ‘Is the number 846 possible or necessary?’ … First Stanley says, ‘Neither,’ and then he says, ‘Both.’ I wonder what the right answer is…. I wonder what Paul thinks” (p. 87). |
### Exploring the Themes of *Wild Orchid*/Answer Key—Page 3 of 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is important in a relationship</th>
<th>“Having a boyfriend is both possible and necessary. It is possible because there are boys out there. It is necessary because once it’s a person needs to grow up and conduct themselves with adult behavior” (p. 88)—links to Coming of Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Try to understand the other person, Continued</td>
<td>Taylor runs into Paul and his wife, June, when walking on the pier. They have an awkward conversation, and June says they should be going. The next time at the Nature Center, he apologizes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“It’s funny talking to Paul. I can have whole conversations and not worry about making the right choices in terms of what I say. I can say anything to him, and he just listens and answers back” (p. 98).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Paul shares some of his frustration with his wife, and Taylor tells him she thinks she is afraid. He also tells her that he thinks his father gave up and that he wished he had something to let him know that his father cared about him, like a letter (pp. 97–101).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>When Taylor finds her way back after being lost, she goes to the Nature Center. Paul says he was worried and takes her outside.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The words kept tumbling out and Paul put his arm around me and it felt nice and then he touched my cheek where I had some bites and he asked if they hurt and I said no. And then he kissed me and that was nice, too. I didn’t think about germs at all” (pp. 136–137).</td>
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<td>“I figured that Mom still thought Paul was a bastard, and she was trying to collect evidence, like maybe that he had tried to have sex with me or something” (p. 141).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Paul hasn’t done anything wrong. He’s just been my friend. He hasn’t touched me or hurt me in any way, and all he’s done is listen to me when I talk and sometimes talk back. Talk back in a good way, I mean”” (p. 142).</td>
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<td>“Then I decided that while he was kissing me, Paul had been my boyfriend, even if it lasted only a few seconds. I laughed to myself. My first boyfriend. I have crossed over the line. And once you cross over, it’s permanent” (p. 156).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with her father</td>
<td>“When I started doing well at some things, like writing and math, my dad let me come to Cody, Wyoming to visit him. I don’t think that’s right, to wait until your kids do well and then invite them to visit. I think you should be a parent whether the kids do well or not” (p. 31).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with death/separation</td>
<td>Taylor visited her father at Christmas, but had to come home early. She doesn’t open his letters.</td>
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<td>“The postmark on the letters he sends says Cody, Wyoming. That’s the only thing I read from the letters. I never actually open any of the envelopes. It’s easier not to open them because I don’t know what they are going to say. … I got a letter from my father today and I put it in the other sandal, the one that isn’t holding the social story Mom wrote about going to the movies.</td>
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### Exploring the Themes of *Wild Orchid/Answer Key*—Page 4 of 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship with her father</th>
<th>I’ve had a feeling since this last Christmas, when I came home early, that I won’t be going back anytime soon” (p. 95). After seeing the Pinter play for the second time, Taylor reflects about her own birthday party when she was eight. “After my eighth birthday party, he and Mom had a big fight and then later Mom threw a lot of his things out of the upstairs window” (p. 94). After getting the job, Taylor decides to open her father’s letter. He wants her to come this fall, but not during Christmas because that can be stressful. “Even though it’s in The Future, I will think about it anyway. I do not want to end up like Stanley, stuck in his room. Dormant” (p. 111).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with death/separation Continued</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coming of Age</strong></td>
<td>Taylor is reluctant to spend the summer in Lake Waskesiu where her mother has a job with a new boyfriend. “The problem is that I am not familiar with where we would be going. Also, I know that when people go away, it’s possible that they don’t come back” (p. 7). — Link to Relationship with her father “It might be one thing for you, but it’s at least twenty things for me. Twenty new things…” (p. 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>—Dealing with immediate future: fear of the unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Developing independence</strong></td>
<td>Mom says that Taylor will need to be independent in Lake Waskesiu, because she will be busy. Taylor quotes from a social story and insists she can take care of herself. — Link to self-awareness “Remember the social story we made about being independent?” “Sometimes new situations can be scary. When I’m in new situations I can drink water from my bottle. I can make lists of what I needed to do…” (pp. 15–16). When Taylor is walking with Paul, she spots a bear and goes running into the lake. Paul assures her it was her survival instinct. Later, back at the nature center, she has the courage to ask Julie how she got the scar on her arm. When Taylor’s mom tells her that they will be leaving right away, Taylor is angry. She decides to ask Danny if she can stay with him and pay rent. When her mom refuses, Taylor runs out. She ends up staying all night because she is lost (pp. 127–137). “It was the blackness of The Future, empty again, coming out of my ears and eyes and slithering around my head” (p. 131). “…I’m the boss of myself. And I’m eighteen and a half and you can’t make me…” (p. 142).</td>
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Exploring the Themes of *Wild Orchid/Answer Key*—Page 5 of 6

| Exploring opportunities | Taylor goes to Nature Center and talks with Paul about gerbils. When things get busy he asks her to help find puppets for the kids. She also answers questions for some of the other visitors (pp. 55–56). She helps out the next day and Paul invites her to bike over to the outdoor theater where she might find wild orchids.  
When Mandy leaves her job at the Nature Center, Taylor is asked to help out for four days. She can stock inventory, sell goods, and greet customers. Her mom is very proud (pp. 106-110). Taylor understands why they have to go back to Saskatoon, and goes to the Nature Center to give her notice. |
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<tr>
<td>Offering to help and getting a job</td>
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</table>
| Dealing with future | Taylor is on a trail hike with other visitors and Paul shares some history about the name of the trail.  
“…but I don’t like thinking about the future coming. The Future. I can see myself standing on the edge of a cliff that drops off into night” (p. 59).  
“I need to see something once before I can get a picture in my head. That’s why thinking about The Future is so scary for me—because I really can’t imagine it at all. In the fall I will have all these empty days stretching out, and I am supposed to fill them up. I can’t go back to high school because I have finished all my courses” (p. 62).  
“I know lots of people my age are getting summer jobs. I am too afraid to apply for a job” (p. 63).  
When Taylor goes to see another Pinter play, Paul comes and sits next to her. After, they have a Coke and talk.  
“You should go into biology,’ Paul said” (p. 114).  
“So that is what makes me think that in the fall I will take one biology class. I might also try to find a job in a bookstore” (p. 115). |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Self-Image, Self-Awareness</th>
<th>Taylor thinks about Shauna, her teacher associate, and the lessons she taught her about conversations and social interactions.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding effects of autism</td>
<td>“Shauna taught me so many things. I like to think of her as a translator. …sometimes I think the English I speak is a different language from everyone else’s English. …Shauna could help me tune into the right signal” (p. 42).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>The evening after she had the encounter with Kody, Taylor went for a walk by herself. She decided to see play by Harold Pinter.</td>
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<td>Social interactions</td>
<td>“The main character’s name was Stanley. I didn’t understand much of the story, but the parts I did understand sent chills down my spine… I sat almost shaking in my seat—that’s how good it was” (p. 73).</td>
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<td>“I could see the lessons Shauna taught me about conversations right up there on the stage. For one thing, people repeated what each other said” (p. 74).</td>
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<td>“…the actors waited, sometimes for quite a while, after someone spoke…. The pauses in the play gave me a chance to process what was being said” (p. 74).</td>
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<td>“There were other times that people changed the topic during a conversation, too; it’s okay to do this, as long as you think the first topic is finished. …I wonder if I do this?” (p. 74).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>She saw Paul after the play. He was alone and they talked briefly (p. 75).</td>
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<td>Taylor goes to see the Pinter play a second time.</td>
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<td>“It’s a play about Stanley who’s afraid of things that other people don’t expect him to be afraid of. …As I watched the play, I started thinking that maybe Stanley is a lot like me. He wants to go off on his own, but he can’t function without Meg. She looks like him like a parent. He wants to go and get a job, but he can’t because he’s afraid. I started thinking that maybe the secret is that you can worry all you like, but you just have to go ahead without letting on that you’re afraid. That’s what I want to tell Stanley. Just go on” (pp. 86–87).</td>
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Grades Eleven/Twelve Writing Arguments and Claims Rubric for *Wild Orchid*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction and Claims</strong></td>
<td>Introduces claim about the play in the story and lists some reasons and evidence</td>
<td>Introduces claim about the role of the play in the story, acknowledges alternate claim, and organizes the reasons and evidence logically</td>
<td>Introduces clear claim about the role of the play in the story, distinguishes from alternate or opposing claims, and creates organization that establishes the relationships among the claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence</td>
<td>Introduces precise, knowledgeable claim about the role of the play in the story, distinguishes claim from alternate or opposing claims, and creates a logical organization that logically sequences the claim, counterclaim, reasons and evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development of Claims and Counterclaims</strong></td>
<td>Supports claim with vague reasons and some evidence</td>
<td>Supports claim with reasons and relevant evidence, demonstrating an understanding of the theme</td>
<td>Develops claim and counterclaim, supplying evidence for each</td>
<td>Develops claim and counterclaim thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language and Organization</strong></td>
<td>Uses vague language without expressing the relationship of the claim and the reasons</td>
<td>Uses appropriate language that expresses the relationship among the reasons</td>
<td>Uses language that links the sections of the text and clarifies the relationship among the claim, reasons, and evidence</td>
<td>Uses clear language and varied syntax to link the sections of the text and clarify relationship between claim, reasons, and evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>Provides no clear conclusion</td>
<td>Provides a vague concluding statement or section</td>
<td>Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.</td>
<td>Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style and Tone</strong></td>
<td>No clear style or tone is conveyed.</td>
<td>Generally uses a formal style</td>
<td>Generally maintains a formal style and objective tone</td>
<td>Consistently maintains a formal style and objective tone</td>
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Sample Essay for Summative Assessment for Wild Orchid—Page 1 of 2

Prompt

How does the author use the play, The Birthday Party, to convey the theme of the story?

Wild Orchid is a story about an 18-year-old girl, Taylor Jane Simon, who has Asperger syndrome. She faces many challenges and opportunities the first summer after she graduates from high school. The story reveals an important message for all teens:

…maybe the secret is that you can worry all you like, but you just have to go ahead without letting on that you’re afraid. That’s what I want to tell Stanley. Just to go on (p. 87).

Beverley Brenna uses Pinter’s play, The Birthday Party, as a stimulus for Taylor to recognize and reflect on her own worries and fears. In the story, the play was much more than a way for Taylor to fill the empty hours at night when her mother was at work. Taylor finds connections with things she learned in high school, reflections of her own fears of the unknown and the future, and insights into her relationships and struggles with becoming an adult.

After a bad experience with a so-called boy friend, Taylor took a walk and decided to see the play, The Birthday Party. The play was short, but complicated. When it was over Taylor knew the main character’s name was Stanley, but she didn’t understand much of the story. However, she was strongly affected by the play. “…but the parts I did understand sent chills down my spine…I sat almost shaking in my seat—that’s how good it was” (p. 73).

Taylor recognized the lessons about communication she learned in high school from her special education teacher associate, Shauna. She noticed that the actors often repeated what each other said. They also changed topics in the conversation when they were done talking about something. Most important to Taylor was the fact that the actors waited before talking after someone spoke. They paused. She thought this gave you a chance to process what is being said (p.74). She later learns that this is known as the famous “Pinter Pause.”

After Taylor watched the play a second time, she wrote, “I started thinking that Stanley is a lot like me. He wants to go off on his own, but he can’t function without Meg. She looks after him like a parent. He wants to go and get a job, but he can’t because he’s afraid. Stanley is afraid of lots of things. In the play, he was afraid of a van coming. He couldn’t predict who would be in the van. Most people would say, ‘Don’t be silly, it’s just a van and some people are coming in it.’ It’s useless when people tell you not to worry though—there’s plenty to worry about in this world” (pp. 86–87).

Earlier, Taylor wrote that she wasn’t good at thinking about things she has never seen. She couldn’t imagine what she would do now that she finished high school. Her mother suggested she go to the university, but Taylor felt sure she would get lost. She was afraid to apply for a job because she didn’t know the questions she would be asked and what exactly what you would be doing (pp. 62–63). Her fears of being on her own and getting a job are just like Stanley’s.

The author has Taylor reflect on more ways that she and Stanley are alike. Stanley didn’t want to have a birthday party and neither did Taylor. Taylor was afraid the kids who came to her party might want to stay, and there wasn’t enough room in her house. On another birthday, Taylor remembers when her mom threw out her dad’s possessions and made him leave. Taylor said that she didn’t like when McCann and Goldberg were yelling at Stanley in the play.
Sample Essay for Summative Assessment for Wild Orchid—Page 2 of 2

It was just like when Taylor was on the playground and the kids were yelling at her and calling her Lion King because she had a lunchbox with that picture. She was afraid they had changed her name to Lion King.

An important connection with the play was how the author used this setting to provide an opportunity for Taylor to interact socially with Paul, who worked at the Nature Center where she liked to spend time. Paul was at the play the same night as Taylor. Taylor decided to take a chance and talk to him. They exchanged thoughts about the play, and Taylor asked about Paul’s wife—why wasn’t she at the play with him. On the days that follow, Taylor and Paul have many other conversations. Later she reflects, “It’s funny talking to Paul. I can have whole conversations and not worry about making the right choices in terms of what I say. I can say anything to him, and he just listens and answers back” (p. 98). Taylor began to think of Paul as a real friend, although not a boy friend.

Taylor was especially struck by a line in the play, “Is the number 846 possible or necessary?” She was able to figure why Stanley first says, neither and then says, both. Taylor decided it all depended on the circumstances. But she couldn’t understand the Goldberg’s answer, that it might be necessary but not possible (p. 87). Taylor goes on to think about how this relates to having a boyfriend, and that it is both possible and necessary. But the lesson she has really learned is that “Once it’s possible, a person needs to grow up and conduct themselves with adult behavior” (p. 88).

The Birthday Party provides a vehicle for Taylor to recognize and begin to resolve her own worries and fears as she learns what it means to be an adult and take responsibility for herself. When she says that she wants to tell Stanley just to go on, she is really admonishing herself. This is the central message the author conveys through the story, “You can worry all you like, but you just have to go ahead without letting on that you’re afraid” (p. 87).
### Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future

**Grade 12**

#### Short Summary

*Of Sound Mind* tells the story of the frustrations, anxiety, and sorrow experienced by Theo, who is the only hearing son in a family that is deaf. Theo is torn between helping his family and planning for his future. Students investigate issues of family responsibility, maturity, and deafness in this unit as they cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says, work to analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding elements of the story, and write informative/explanatory texts to convey complex ideas clearly.

**Estimated Time:** 6 Sessions 5 hours

#### Language Arts Florida Standards

LAFS.1112.RL.1.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

LAFS.1112.RL.1.3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate the elements of a story or drama (e.g., where the story is set, how the action is offered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

LAFS.1112.W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
Unit Plan: Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future, Continued

LAFS.1112.W.1.1.1, Continued
  f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

Learning Objectives
Students will be able to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, inferences drawn from the text, as well as where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Students will be able to analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how elements of the story are developed and related (e.g., where the story is set, how the action is offered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Students will be able to write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection of relevant details and examples, organization of ideas, and analysis of content.

Disability Awareness Learning Objectives
Students will be able to describe common responsibilities of family members when assisting their parents or siblings who have disabilities.

Students will be able to describe the roles of the deaf community in the lives of persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Students will be able to explain ways that attitudes about deafness and American Sign Language affect the expectations and interactions of persons who are hearing and persons who are deaf.

Materials
Reading Guide for Of Sound Mind with Answer Key
Character Web for Of Sound Mind with Answer Key
Examining the Social and Cultural Context of the Setting in Of Sound Mind with Answer Key
Grades Eleven/Twelve Explanatory/Informative Text Writing Rubric for Of Sound Mind
Sample Essay for Summative Assessment for Of Sound Mind (included)
**Unit Plan: Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future, Continued**

**Formative Assessments**

**Anticipatory Set and Teaching Phase**

**Anticipatory Set and Introducing the Story.** Students are provided a brief introduction to the key issues in the story, deafness, and family responsibilities. The discussion questions are intended to help students think about their own experiences with these issues. The teacher can provide additional information to ensure that students have a basic understanding of the context of the story.

**Understanding Deafness.** After the teacher presents additional information about deafness and challenges of family responsibilities, students will discuss two questions from the point of view of Theo, the main character in the story. The teacher will observe the accuracy and relevance of student responses to these questions, providing supporting information, as necessary.

**Using Textual Evidence.** To ensure that students are able to distinguish textual evidence that supports what the text says explicitly from inferences drawn from the text, or where the text leaves matters uncertain, students will locate examples in the text. The teacher will assess the appropriateness of student examples and provide additional instruction, as needed.

**Guided Practice**

**Reading the Story.** Students will independently read and write responses to the questions for the four sections of the novel. The teacher can evaluate the accuracy and insight reflected in the written responses as well as the use of relevant evidence from the text to support answers that are explicitly stated in the text, those that are based on inferences, and those where the text is unclear. Through whole-class discussion that follows the reading of each section, the teacher can elaborate and clarify any misunderstandings students may have about the characters, setting, and plot of the story.

**Analyzing the Author’s Choices.** Students will provide descriptions and examples of the author’s choices in the plot structure, characterization, and setting of the story. The teacher will evaluate the accuracy of the descriptions and examples, and clarify misunderstandings.

**Characterization.** Students will use the Character Web for Of Sound Mind to structure their analysis of how the author introduced and developed the main characters, Theo and Ivy. Students will also respond to questions about the differences in family relationships represented in the story and the development of the character of Palma, Theo’s mother. The teacher will evaluate the depth of understanding reflected in the students’ responses and discussion, providing additional scaffolding and information to help students understand the characters.
Unit Plan: Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future, Continued

Social and Cultural Context in the Setting. Students will analyze examples of the author’s choices regarding the social and cultural context of the setting reflected in quotations from the novel and discuss their interpretation in a whole class discussion. The teacher will assess the insight and understanding that is reflected in the students’ responses and provide additional scaffolding and information to help students understand the setting.

Summative Assessment

Independent Practice

Students will write a two-page essay using an explanatory/informative text structure to respond to the following prompt: Write an essay that explains the impact of the author’s decisions about attitudes toward deafness, the use of American Sign Language, and the role of deaf community on the introduction and development of the characters in Of Sound Mind. Teachers will use the Grades Eleven/Twelve Writing Explanatory/Informative Text Writing Rubric for Of Sound Mind to evaluate how well students met the expectations of the learning objectives. A sample essay is included at the end of this unit plan.

Guiding Questions

What kinds of responsibilities do family members have when it comes to assisting a parent or sibling with disabilities?

What does it mean when a person says he or she belongs to the deaf culture or the deaf community?

Why is it important to cite evidence from the story when analyzing what the text says explicitly, through inferences, and where the text leaves matters uncertain?

How can you analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how elements of the story are developed and related (e.g., where the story is set, how the action is offered, how the characters are introduced and developed)?

How can you examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately by the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content when you are writing informative/explanatory pieces?

Prior Knowledge

Students need to know how to cite evidence from the story when analyzing what the text says explicitly, through inferences, and where the text leaves matters uncertain. Students need to know how to analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how elements of a story are developed and related.
Unit Plan: Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future, Continued

Prior Knowledge, Continued
Students need to write informative/explanatory texts that examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the introduction of the topic, organization of the content, selection of the most significant and relevant details and examples, use of appropriate and varied syntax/transition/precise language, formal style/tone, and a conclusion that follows from and supports the explanation presented.

1. Anticipatory Set
Invite students to share their own knowledge about and experiences with family responsibilities and deafness.
Ask: What kinds of responsibilities do family members have when it comes to assisting a parent or sibling with disabilities? What does it mean when a person says he or she belongs to the deaf community? Discuss.

2. Teaching Phase
Introducing the Story. Having responsibilities for regular jobs or chores at home is something almost every child experiences. Ask students to describe tasks that many teens are responsible for in a family. Discuss the following questions:

• How do family responsibilities change as you get older?
• How will your family responsibilities change as your parents get older?
• What if one or both your parents have a disability?

Introduce the novel, Of Sound Mind. This is the story of Theo, a high school senior, who is the only member of his family who can hear and use spoken language. His parents and his younger brother, Jeremy, are deaf and use American Sign Language to communicate. Theo knows sign language.

Understanding Deafness. To better understand the setting and characters in this novel, students will need background knowledge about deaf culture and the deaf community, which exists as a linguistic subculture in the United States and throughout the world. In deaf culture, American Sign Language is the primary mode of communication. People who are deaf have created social, religious, athletic, and academic organizations to address the needs of persons who are deaf. For example, the National Theatre of the Deaf, Gallaudet University, and the National Association of the Deaf are among these many important organizations.
Unit Plan: Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future, Continued

Understanding Deafness, Continued
If possible, invite a teacher of deaf and hard-of-hearing students or a knowledgeable community member to make a presentation to the class about deafness and deaf culture. The links below also provide brief explanations of deaf culture:

- Deaf Culture, History and Importance, Oregon Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services: http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/odhhs/Pages/tadoc/deaf7.aspx

This story reflects common challenges typically faced by hearing children of parents who are deaf. Hearing children are often asked to serve as interpreters for their parents and become their link to the hearing world. Have students discuss these questions from the main character’s point of view:

- Why do you think Theo is sometimes frustrated by having to be his family’s interpreter?
- What do you think might worry Theo as he looks toward the future?

Using Textual Evidence. Have students set a clear purpose for providing textual evidence when analyzing a story.

Ask: Why is it important to cite evidence from the story when analyzing what the story says explicitly as well as inferentially? What do you do when the evidence in the story is unclear?

Describe and provide examples of the techniques the author uses to convey background knowledge about deafness and deaf culture. Have students scan the first two chapters to locate additional examples.

**Bold font** to represent communication by American Sign Language

“**The gallery. They don’t answer their e-mail. I need to know everything got there all right. I need to know the l-u-c-i-t-e—she fingerspelled the word—pedestals are the right height**” (p. 6).

Additional examples: Chapter 1, p. 5—Exchange between Theo and Palma; p. 9—Conversation about family members; Chapter 2, pp. 15–16—Conversation about tattoos

Explicit textual evidence

“He [Theo] noticed that he began to mutter with his hands, an impulse that came automatically to those, like him, who had learned American Sign Language as a first language” (p. 3)—Use of American Sign Language
Explicit Textual Evidence, Continued

“Palma [Theo’s mother] leaned over Jeremy’s shoulders and took his hands in hers, folded them across his chest, and patted them firmly, shutting him up as surely as if she’d put her hand over a speaker’s mouth. It was about the rudest thing one signer could do to another” (p. 5)—Use of American Sign Language

Additional examples: Chapter 1, pp. 10–11—Gallaudet (college); Chapter 2, p. 13—Services for persons who are deaf, Deaf Services Library and subtitles; pp. 16–17—Use of telephone with screen displaying text

Inferential textual evidence

“Jeremy laughed, the slightly unearthly sounds of someone who’d never heard his own voice, and signed, You said something bad. Are you mad at Palma?” (pp. 8–9)—Oral communication by persons who are deaf

Additional examples: Chapter 1, pp. 3–4—Theo’s resentment of Palma; Chapter 2, p. 18—Theo’s respect for his father

Unclear textual evidence

“But Theo, who was bilingual, easily saw the advantages and disadvantages of both languages, sign and English.

Having two languages was supposed to be an advantage. He knew that. But what it felt like to him was a suspension, leaving him hanging between two lives. He wasn’t deaf, but he didn’t seem fully hearing either” (p. 8)—Theo’s self-image

Additional examples: Chapter 1, p. 14—Theo thinks the girl on the bus is deaf; Chapter 2, pp. 16–17—Thomas’ feelings about Palma

3. Guided Practice

Reading the Story. Students will use the Reading Guide for Of Sound Mind worksheet at the end of this unit to follow the events of the story as they read the four sections of this novel. Have students read each section independently and write answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Remind students to use textual support with their answers. Review formatting of direct quotations and citations expected in student responses. Discuss the text with students after each section.

Analyzing the Author’s Choices. Have students establish clear purposes for analyzing the impact of author’s choices regarding how elements of the story are developed and related.

Ask: How can we analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how elements of the story are developed and related (e.g., setting, plot, characters)?
## Analyzing the Author's Choices, Continued

The author uses narrative devices to create specific effects within their story, including plot structure, characterization, and setting. Have students provide descriptions and examples of how these devices are used in *Of Sound Mind*.

Note: If students need additional instruction, have them complete the student tutorial: “How Story Elements Can Affect the Meaning of a Text” (Florida Department of Education: 2015) available at:

http://www.floridastudents.org/PreviewResource/StudentResource/121784

### Plot Structure:

- Theo has to help his mother, Palma, and his brother, Jeremy.
- Ivy lives with her dad and prepares meals for her older neighbors.
- Theo and Ivy become friends.
- When Thomas has a stroke, Palma becomes helpless.
- Theo applies to college.

### Characterization:

Theo Dennison—high school senior, only hearing member in family that is deaf, resents mother’s demands for assistance, excellent student, feels trapped

Palma Dennison—Theo’s mother, deaf, very successful artist, very demanding, insecure about her capabilities

Thomas Dennison—Theo’s father, deaf, furniture maker, satisfied with his family, neglects his health, stroke victim

Ivy Roper—new high school student, hearing, resourceful and helpful, angry, feels abandoned

Ben Roper—Ivy’s father, deaf, successful in computer industry, takes care of himself, isolated

Hazel and Harry—elderly neighbors, helpful and friendly, interested in helping others

### Setting:

Location—Neighborhood in Philadelphia; homes of the Dennison’s, Roper’s, and Hazel and Harold; school; and bus

Time—Current, although no date is mentioned; school is in session

Social and Cultural Context—Attitudes about deafness, use of American Sign Language, deaf community
**Unit Plan: Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future, Continued**

**Characterization**

Ask: *How does the author develop and relate the characters? Discuss*

**Theo and Ivy.** Have students analyze how the author uses the events of the story to develop and relate the two main characters, Theo and Ivy.

Display the Character Web for *Of Sound Mind* worksheet included at the end of this unit to guide a group discussion analyzing how the author introduces and develops the characters, Theo and Ivy.

Ask: *Why do Theo and Ivy deal with having parents who are deaf in such different ways?*

Have students describe how they might feel about being responsible for assisting or caring for their parents, if their parents were deaf or had another type of disability.

**Palma.** Ask students to describe how their views of Theo’s mother, Palma, changed throughout the story.

Ask: *How does the author portray Palma at the beginning of the story? How does she change? How does the author appeal to the reader’s sympathy for her character?*

The teacher may wish to use reader’s theater and role playing activities in which students develop scripts, perform in groups, and practice using their voice to depict the characters from this novel to help gain more in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by Theo and Ivy.

**Social and Cultural Context in the Setting.**

Ask: *How does the author develop and relate the social and cultural context (attitudes about deafness, use of American Sign Language, and the deaf community) in the meaning of the story?*

The social and cultural context of the story influences characters’ values, social and family roles, and their emotional responses. The author, Jean Ferris, incorporates information about deafness, American Sign Language, and the deaf community into the story, although she is the first to tell the reader that this is “a fictional narrative, not a factual discussion of the complexities of deafness” (Author’s Note).

Students will use the Examining the Social and Cultural Context in *Of Sound Mind* worksheet to guide their analysis of the evidence expressed in this story. Students will interpret what selected quotations reveal about the meaning of the story. This activity may be completed independently or in small groups. Have students share their interpretations and describe how they reached their conclusions. Encourage students to provide feedback and ask clarification questions. A copy of the worksheet and answer key is included at the end of this unit plan.
Unit Plan: Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future, Continued

4. Independent Practice
Have students establish a purpose for the summative assessment.
Ask: How can you write an explanatory text that examines and conveys complex ideas about the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate the social and cultural context of a story?

Review the elements of explanatory writing, based on the Grades Eleven/Twelve Explanatory/Informative Text Writing Rubric for Of Sound Mind included at the end of this unit plan.

• Introduce the topic, organize complex ideas and information to create a unified whole (include formatting when useful)
• Select the most-significant and relevant facts, details, quotations, and examples
• Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link sections of text, and clarify relationships among ideas and concepts
• Use precise language, vocabulary, and techniques to manage complexity
• Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone
• Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the explanation presented

In a whole-class discussion, have students suggest text dependent questions that they can use to analyze the impact of the author’s decisions about the social and cultural context. Post the questions for student use as they draft their essays:
Examples: What role does deafness serve in the story? What feelings and beliefs do the main characters express about deafness and the deaf community? How do the characters’ responses to the use of American Sign Language relate to the meaning of the story?

Have students write a two-page essay to respond to the following prompt:

Write an essay that explains the impact of the author’s decisions about attitudes toward deafness, the use of American Sign Language, and the role of deaf community on the introduction and development of the characters in Of Sound Mind.

Use the Grades Eleven/Twelve Explanatory/Informative Writing Rubric for Of Sound Mind and the sample essay included at the end of this unit plan to evaluate student work.

5. Closure
Hand out blank 3”x5” index cards for students to write a message to Theo that describes what he did that was inspiring or helpful in reading and thinking about his story.
Unit Plan: Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future, Continued

6. Extensions
Invite students to use the following websites to learn more about American deaf culture and American Sign Language:

**About American Deaf Culture**, Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, Gallaudet University Website:
http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center/information_and_resources/info_to_go/education_children_(3_to_21)/resources_for_mainstream_programs/effective_inclusion/including_deaf_culture/about_american_deaf_culture.html

**American Sign Language**, National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders Website:

Accommodations

- Provide alternate formats (audio, braille, large print) for students who have difficulty reading the book or handouts independently.
- Provide specially-formatted paper or a word processor, or allow dictation of responses for students who have difficulty with handwriting.
- Provide a writing explanatory/informative text frame for students who have difficulty planning and writing essays.

For additional information, see reading guides and character analysis in the English and Language Arts Activities section of this resource.

The entire unit plan can be downloaded from CPALMS.org:
http://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewResourceUpload/Preview/121550
Reading Guide for *Of Sound Mind*

Name: ____________________________     Date: _______________________________

Read each section of the novel and write answers that include textual support for the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Note the information the author provides about sign language and deafness from the perspectives of the characters who are deaf and characters who are hearing. Be ready to discuss your answers.

**Chapters 1–5, Pages 3–50**
1. Describe Theo and his family. How has deafness affected the relationship of the parents and the two sons?
2. How is Ivy’s relationship with her dad affected by his deafness?
3. Why do Theo and Ivy have such different feelings about being the only hearing member of their respective families?

**Chapters 6–9, Pages 51–101**
4. Why does Theo resent the demands of his mother, Palma?
5. Why is Theo upset with Hazel and Harry when they want to learn a few signs? What does Theo mean when he realizes, “Why couldn’t he remember that not all problems in deaf families could be blamed on deafness?” (p. 73).
6. How does the relationship with Ivy change the way Theo feels about himself and his family members?
7. How do Ivy’s issues with her mother influence her behavior and actions?

**Chapters 10–14, Pages 102–148**
8. Why did the phone call at Adele and Rochelle’s house surprise Theo?
9. Why does Palma refuse to care for Thomas when he is in the hospital after he has a stroke?
10. Why does Theo gasp when Palma signs, “You’re better at it than I am. You’re better. You can hear” (p. 144)?

**Chapters 15–20, Pages 149–215**
11. How does Palma react to having Hazel and Harry care for Thomas?
12. How does Palma confront her own insecurities about caring for Thomas and managing her own business?
13. How does Theo resolve the conflict he feels between family obligations and his own future?
Reading Guide for *Of Sound Mind*/Answer Key—Page 1 of 4

Chapters 1–5, Pages 3–50

1. Describe Theo and his family. How has deafness affected the relationship of the parents and the two sons?

   Theo is a senior in high school. He lives with his mother, Palma, father, Thomas, and younger brother, Jeremy. Everyone in his family is deaf, except Theo, who is hearing. They all communicate using American Sign Language (pp. 3, 8).

   Theo’s mother, Palma, is an artist who works from home. She is very demanding, especially when it comes to Theo. Theo is often called upon to be a sign language interpreter for his mother. She has him make phone calls and help her with her business and personal needs. Theo resents having to help Palma all the time (pp. 3–7, 10). Palma insists on Theo’s help even when it requires him to miss school. When they were buying a new house, eleven-year-old Theo felt really uncomfortable when he had to help negotiate with the buyer and seller and arrange the bank loan (p. 28).

   Theo helps his brother Jeremy with homework. He feels this is important because many people don’t expect much from children who are deaf (p. 4).

   Thomas, Theo’s father, had already learned to read and write before he became deaf as a result of an illness, meningitis. He grew up in a hearing world and was the only student who was deaf in his school. He taught himself sign language before going to college at Gallaudet where he met his wife, Palma. Thomas was a successful furniture maker (pp. 11–12). Unlike Palma, Thomas is reluctant to ask Theo for help. For example, he wouldn’t let Theo accompany him to a doctor appointment and didn’t want to take the medication he was prescribed (pp. 29–30).

2. How is Ivy’s relationship with her dad affected by his deafness?

   Ivy uses sign language with her dad. She said her dad doesn’t mind that he is deaf and can’t do all the things that people who are hearing can do. Her dad can take care of himself. Ivy says she doesn’t do anything special for him because he is deaf. She does recognize that deafness can be a social problem, because her dad has a hard time communicating with people who don’t sign (p. 42–43).

3. Why do Theo and Ivy have such different feelings about being the only hearing member of their respective families?

   Everyone in Theo’s family is deaf, except for Theo. He knows how important he is to his family because he can use sign language and often is the key connection to the hearing world. But he is not totally comfortable in the hearing world. “He didn’t seem fully hearing either” (p. 8). Like most teenagers, Theo doesn’t want to be seen as different from his peers. He was afraid that his friends thought that knowing how to sign and deafness were weird (p. 43).

   Ivy’s father was deaf, but she didn’t really think much about it. She thought that maybe her mother left the family because of his deafness. “I’m guessing maybe she was embarrassed about him—that somebody who looked like him could be so—so…well, what she apparently considered to be limited” (p. 25). Ivy’s feelings about deafness are confounded by her mother’s leaving. She didn’t understand why her mother left and thought she had done something terrible (pp. 24–25).
Reading Guide for Of Sound Mind/Answer Key—Page 2 of 4

Chapters 6–9, Pages 51–101

4. Why does Theo resent the demands of his mother, Palma?

Palma is a well-known sculptor. She always insists that Theo take care of her needs. He feels that he is sometimes asked to do things that are uncomfortable for him. Palma won’t hire interpreters because she doesn’t like explaining herself to a different person each time. Even if she hires an interpreter, it’s not likely he will come back a second time (pp. 60–61). Theo feels that Palma could take care of herself, but she finds it easier to rely on him.

5. Why is Theo upset with Hazel and Harry when they want to learn a few signs? What does Theo mean when he realizes, “Why couldn’t he remember that not all problems in deaf families could be blamed on deafness?” (p. 73).

Theo may feel that Hazel and Harry are trying to intrude in his life (p. 71). He thinks of sign language as a way of communicating for people who are deaf. He describes a few examples when sign language doesn’t work for people who are deaf, such as when you call for a person who is in another room or if the room is dark. Ivy reminds him that when she called for her mother (who was hearing), nothing happened. This makes Theo think more deeply about the problems in his family and helps him realize that they don’t all have to do with deafness (p. 73).

6. How does the relationship with Ivy change the way Theo feels about himself and his family members?

Theo begins to spend more time away from home to be with Ivy. He doesn’t want to have to rush home to take care of Palma’s needs (p. 75). Ivy didn’t hesitate when Theo asked if he could bring Jeremy. Jeremy loved working with Ivy’s father on model airplanes. Thomas also invited Dr. Roper (Ivy’s father) to go with him to Deaf Club.

In Ivy, Theo sees a person who can work very intensely and creatively without all the drama and turmoil that he observes from Palma. After helping Ivy serve her dinners, Theo begins to think about his future and where he might go to college. This was a first, because Theo always thought he would have to stay at home to help Palma and Jeremy (p. 83). Ivy challenges him to think about doing what is best for him.

7. How do Ivy’s issues with her mother influence her behavior and actions?

Ivy has outbursts from time to time in response to things that are said or done. She got upset and angry when trying to convince Theo. She asked, “Who’s helping you get what’s best for you?” (p. 84). But Ivy doesn’t really want to talk about it. She feels like she is the reason her mother went away. Her feelings about abandonment might have caused her to want to be a caregiver for others, which she accomplishes by preparing the food for people like Hazel and Harry (pp. 97–100).

Chapters 10–14, Pages 102–148

8. Why did the phone call at Adele and Rochelle’s house surprise Theo?

The call was from Ivy’s dad, Dr. Roper. He called to tell Theo that his father was taken to the hospital by ambulance and his mother was on her way. His father collapsed and possibly had a stroke, and Jeremy was staying with Dr. Roper (pp. 107–108).
9. Why did the phone call at Adele and Rochelle’s house surprise Theo?

The call was from Ivy’s dad, Dr. Roper. He called to tell Theo that his father was taken to the hospital by ambulance, and his mother was on her way. His father collapsed and possibly had a stroke, and Jeremy was staying with Dr. Roper (pp. 107–108).

10. Why does Palma refuse to care for Thomas after he has a stroke?

Palma is scared. She can’t talk to the doctors at the hospital (pp. 109–110). After Thomas comes home, she alternates between hovering and hiding in her studio. Palma doesn’t think she can talk to the therapist. She is afraid to be alone with Thomas because she doesn’t know what to do for him (pp. 128–131). Palma tries hiring companions for Thomas, but that doesn’t work because she can’t easily communicate with them. She is used to doing her own work and not helping others. This makes her very uncomfortable. Palma feels she can’t do anything without Thomas (p. 144).

11. Why does Theo gasp when Palma signs, “You’re better at it than I am. You’re better. You can hear” (p. 144)?

Palma had always said that deafness was a blessing, not a curse. She said it elevated people and made them more observant, more appreciative. Theo is shocked that Palma now says that Theo is better because he can hear. It really means that she feels she is not as capable, and she feels she isn’t able to help her husband (pp. 144–145).

12. How does Palma react to having Hazel and Harry care for Thomas?

At first Palma insists that Theo take care of Thomas. She even keeps Jeremy out of school to take care of him. Ivy suggests that Hazel and Harry could be the caregivers. This works well for Thomas and Jeremy, but Palma doesn’t like it. She is afraid to allow outsiders into her house. Palma makes herself scarce when they are there. Having Hazel and Harry come works for about two weeks, but Palma insists that they stop coming after they invite other people to the house on Saturday night (pp. 161–168).

13. How does Palma confront her own insecurity about caring for Thomas and managing her own business?

Palma misses the support that Thomas used to provide to her. She doesn’t believe the praise she gets from others; she says it is because she is a novelty. She feels she can only believe Thomas because he is deaf like her (p. 171). She has an argument with Theo and insists he stay home to take care of Thomas, but Theo refuses. The next morning, Palma tells Theo to stay home and tell Hazel and Harry not to come. However, Theo tells Palma that it is her responsibility to contact Hazel and Harry, and she wouldn’t do it (p. 185).

When Thomas goes back to work part-time, Palma begins producing works of art and schedules a small show. She asks Hazel to be her assistant and make contacts for her (pp. 191–192).
14. How does Theo resolve the conflict he feels between family obligations and his own future?

Theo lets Palma know that he can’t be home all the time to take care of her and the family (pp. 173–174). When he talks it over with Ivy, she tells him that he doesn’t need to feel that he is the only one who can take care of his family. Ivy asks him to think about what he is going to do with the rest of his life. Theo is upset because he needs time to think about it. As time goes on, the arrangement with Harry and Hazel is successful, and the family burden is lifted from Theo. After the funeral for Thomas, Ivy and Theo talk about their losses. Ivy encourages Theo not to worry so much about his family, to go ahead and send in his college applications and to plan for his future, which he does (p. 210).
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<th>Theo</th>
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<td>What were Theo and Ivy like at the beginning of the story?</td>
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<td>How did Theo and Ivy change?</td>
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<td>Why did Theo and Ivy change?</td>
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Character Web, Of Sound Mind/Answer Key

Theo
What were the characters like at the beginning of the story?

- Frustrated by having to do so many things for his family, especially his mother
- Thought having parents and a brother who are deaf was weird

What were the characters like at the end of the story?

- Looking forward to going to college and his future after he graduates from high school
- Better understands how he can help his family
- Became more independent and self-confident
- Developed a better understanding how to balance his own needs with needs of his family

How did the characters change?

Ivy

What were the characters like at the end of the story?

- Busy taking care of people in the neighborhood by preparing meals.
- Angry because her mother left the family and didn’t take her

Still preparing meals and caring for others
- Likes to help Theo think about his future

Why did the characters change?

- Developed a better understanding of her feelings about her mother’s leaving
- Developed a better understanding about her father’s needs

Theo changed because he met Ivy, who gave him advice and a new perspective on his family obligations, deafness, and his future.
Ivy changed because Theo helped her to understand that she wasn’t the cause of her mother’s leaving.
Examining the Social and Cultural Context of the Setting in *Of Sound Mind*—
Page 1 of 2

Name: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Directions: What do the following quotations reveal about the impact of the social and cultural context on the meaning of the story?

**Attitudes about Deafness**

**Theo**

“But Theo, who was bilingual, easily saw the advantages and disadvantages of both languages, sign and English.

Having two languages was supposed to be an advantage. He knew that. But what it felt like to him was suspension leaving him hanging between two lives. He wasn’t deaf, but he didn’t seem fully hearing either…” (p. 8).

“Knowing how to sign is just weird. Because there’s a weird reason why it’s your first language—not just that you were born somewhere else” (p. 43).

**Ivy**

“‘Don’t you know that everybody feels other in some way?’…”

‘Not as other as we are.’

She looked at him straight in the face. ‘I feel more other because of moving so much, not because Dad’s deaf. He takes care of himself. I don’t help him any more than family members should help each other. … So don’t go trashing deaf people to me, please, I’m not interested’” (p. 48).

**Palma**

“You can take care of things, she signed. You’re better at it than I am. You’re better. You can hear.”

Theo almost gasped. Palma’s position had always been that deafness elevated people, made them more sensitive and attentive, more observant, more appreciative” (p. 144).

**Jeremy**

“No matter how much help he (Jeremy) had, nobody at his school expected much from a deaf kid, even in his special classes” (p. 4).
American Sign Language

“It’s about Harry and Hazel wanting to learn to sign, isn’t it?’ (Ivy)…
‘It’s not a game! It’s somebody’s life!’… (Theo)
He let out a long breath. ‘I don’t know. Signing just seems more important. More…more integral’ (p. 72).

“It’s not just a language. It’s much more personal. When you think of all the other things you do with your hands, it such an extension of—oh, I don’t know how to describe why signing’s different from other kinds of language. It just is’” (p. 73). (Theo)

Deaf Community

“Theo knew the story of their courtship, but still didn’t really get what brought them together. Maybe it was just the fact that deaf people mostly married other deaf people, which gave them a smaller pool of potential spouses to choose from” (p. 10).

“Although Thomas went to the Deaf Club meetings and outings, it wasn’t often hat he got together with one other man just to do guy things. Theo knew he must feel isolated at work, where he was the only deaf person” (p. 93).
Examining the Social and Cultural Context of the Setting in *Of Sound Mind*/Answer Key—Page 1 of 2

Attitudes about Deafness

**Theo**

“But Theo, who was bilingual, easily saw the advantages and disadvantages of both languages, sign and English. Having two languages was supposed to be an advantage. He knew that. But what it felt like to him was suspension leaving him hanging between two lives. He wasn’t deaf, but he didn’t seem fully hearing either…” (p. 8).

“Knowing how to sign is just weird. Because there’s a weird reason why it’s your first language—not just that you were born somewhere else” (p. 43).

*Reflects negative feelings about deafness*

*Character is struggling to establish his own identity*

**Ivy**

“Don’t you know that everybody feels *other* in some way?”…

‘Not as other as we are.’

She looked at him straight in the face. ‘I feel more other because of moving so much, not because Dad’s deaf. He takes care of himself. I don’t help him any more than family members *should* help each other. … So don’t go trashing deaf people to me, please, I’m not interested’” (p. 48).

*Reflects acceptance of father’s deafness*

**Palma**

“*You can take care of things*, she signed. *You’re better at it than I am. You’re better. You can hear.*

Theo almost gasped. Palma’s position had always been that deafness elevated people, made them more sensitive and attentive, more observant, more appreciative” (p. 144).

*Reflects character’s personal insecurities and stereotypes*

**Jeremy**

“No matter how much help he (Jeremy) had, nobody at his school expected much from a deaf kid, even in his special classes” (p. 4).

*Reflects general attitude in society about low achievement of students who are deaf*
Examining the Social and Cultural Context of the Setting in *Of Sound Mind*/
Answer Key—Page 2 of 2

**American Sign Language**

“It’s about Harry and Hazel wanting to learn to sign, isn’t it?’ (Ivy)...

“It’s not a game! It’s somebody’s life!’… (Theo)

He let out a long breath. ‘I don’t know. Signing just seems more important. More...more integral’ (p. 72).

“It’s not just a language. It’s much more personal. When you think of all the other things you do with your hands, it such an extension of—oh, I don’t know how to describe why signing's different from other kinds of language. It just is’” (p. 73). (Theo)

*Reflects personal feelings about using sign language, reluctant to share*

**Deaf Community**

“Theo knew the story of their courtship, but still didn’t really get what brought them together. Maybe it was just the fact that deaf people mostly married other deaf people, which gave them a smaller pool of potential spouses to choose from” (p. 10).

“Although Thomas went to the Deaf Club meetings and outings, it wasn’t often that he got together with one other man just to do guy things. Theo knew he must feel isolated at work, where he was the only deaf person” (p. 93).

*Reflects possible concerns about parents’ relationship and restrictiveness of deaf community*
### Grades 11-12 Explanatory/Informative Text Writing Rubric for *Of Sound Mind*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction, Topic, and Organization</strong></td>
<td>Introduces the topic and lists the categories</td>
<td>Introduces topic, organizes ideas into categories; includes formatting when useful</td>
<td>Introduces topic, organizes complex ideas to make important connections; includes formatting when useful</td>
<td>Introduces topic, organizes complex ideas to create a unified whole; includes formatting when useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development of Claims and Counterclaims</strong></td>
<td>Develops topic with some details</td>
<td>Develops topic, selecting details and examples</td>
<td>Develops topic, selecting relevant details, quotations, and examples</td>
<td>Develops topic, selecting the most significant and relevant details, quotations, information, and examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitions</strong></td>
<td>Uses vague language without expressing the relationship of ideas and concepts</td>
<td>Uses transitions to link the sections of the text and clarify relationships among ideas</td>
<td>Uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the sections of the text and clarify relationships among ideas</td>
<td>Uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships among ideas and concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language and Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Uses vague language and basic vocabulary</td>
<td>Uses clear language and vocabulary</td>
<td>Uses precise language and vocabulary to manage complexity of the topic</td>
<td>Uses precise language and vocabulary and techniques to manage complexity of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style and Tone</strong></td>
<td>No clear style or tone is conveyed; many errors are present.</td>
<td>Attempts a formal style with some errors in conventions</td>
<td>Generally maintains a formal style and objective tone with almost no errors in conventions</td>
<td>Consistently maintains a formal style and objective tone with no errors in conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>Provides a general statement or vague conclusion</td>
<td>Provides a concluding statement that relates to the explanation</td>
<td>Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the explanation</td>
<td>Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the explanation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Essay for Summative Assessment for Of Sound Mind—Page 1 of 3

Prompt
Write an essay that explains the impact of the author's decisions about attitudes toward deafness, the use of American Sign Language, and the role of deaf community on the introduction and development of the characters in Of Sound Mind.

Introduction
Of Sound Mind portrays the struggles of Theo, a teenager who is trying to balance his family responsibilities, a special relationship, and future opportunities; all complicated by the fact that he is the only hearing member in a family that is deaf. The author, Jean Ferris, provides a glimpse into attitudes about deafness, the use of American Sign Language, and the culture the deaf community, through the narrative and dialogue used throughout the story to convey the social and cultural context.

Attitudes about Deafness
In Of Sound Mind, the author includes information and examples that demonstrate how attitudes about deafness are affected by personal experiences and societal expectations. For example, when reflecting on why he didn’t mind helping his brother Jeremy, Theo felt that “No matter how much help he (Jeremy) had, nobody at his school expected much from a deaf kid, even in his special classes” (p. 4).

Theo said that both of his parents, Thomas and Palma, were suspicious of “hearies,” that is, people who can hear. This is a common concern among people who are deaf. Palma felt that “hearies” were out to sabotage her, especially as she prepared to show her sculptures. Thomas often questioned his doctor’s diagnoses. Theo said that some deaf people thought “hearies” knew more than they did, and were always ready to con people who are deaf, or to make them look foolish (p. 31). When Palma told Theo, “‘You can take care of things,’ she signed, ‘You’re better at it than I am. You’re better. You can hear’” (p. 144), she was expressing her own insecurity about being deaf.

Negative attitudes about deafness reflect some people’s feelings that being different from the general population is not a positive attribute. Theo has difficulty figuring out what his real identity is. He tells Ivy, “Knowing how to sign is just weird. Because there’s a weird reason why it’s your first language—not just that you were born somewhere else” (p. 43).

In her explanation about why her mother left the family, Ivy suggests, “I’m guessing maybe she was embarrassed about him—that somebody who looked like him could be so—so…well, what she apparently considered to be limited (p. 25).

Both Theo and Ivy agree, “It is weird being the kid of a deaf person…And no matter how much you tell yourself that every member in every family is supposed to care for the other members, and look out for them, there are still times, when having to do things for deaf parents goes above and beyond that” (p. 59).
**Sample Essay for Summative Assessment Of Sound Mind—Page 2 of 3**

**Use of American Sign Language**

The author uses American Sign Language as the initial point of contact with the two main characters in the story. Riding home on the bus, Theo was attracted to the new girl with the purple hair (Ivy). She had noticed that he was signing to himself. When Theo spots Ivy doing the same thing and they later interact, they both assume each other is deaf. They are happy to find out they had something else in common, they were the only hearing member of their respective families.

Theo has mixed feelings about being able to use sign language. He thinks using sign language makes him appear weird to the rest of the world, especially the students in school. As the only hearing member of his family, he is their primary interpreter. While he resents being on call, he wants to do a good job so his family won’t appear dull or slow. Theo also feels uncomfortable with Ivy’s teaching Harry and Hazel how to sign. He says, “‘It’s not just a language. It’s much more personal. When you think of all the other things you do with your hands, it such an extension of— oh, I don’t know how to describe why signing’s different from other kinds of language. It just is’” (p. 73).

To provide the reader information of how sign language functions as a way of communicating, the author inserts the following narratives from Theo as well as conversations that involve sign language.

1. “...he began to mutter with his hands, an impulse that came automatically to those, like him, who had learned American Sign Language as a first language” (p. 3).
2. “Wow, he signed unconsciously. **Who is she?**” (p. 4).
3. “Palma...took his hands in hers, folded them across his chest, and patted them firmly, shutting him up as surely as if she’d put her hand over a speaker’s mouth. It was about the rudest thing one signer could do to another,” (p. 5).
4. “**I can’t do everything like that. You have to help me.** Her hand smacked into her chest in the sign for me”. (p. 6).
5. “**I need to know the l-u-c-i-t-e**—she fingerspelled the word—**pedestals are the right height**” (p. 6).
6. “Once again Theo was aware of how complicated communicating by sign was. Palma couldn’t do it while she hugged him. ... She couldn’t do it if nobody would look at her, or if it was dark, or if her arms were full. ...But Theo who was bilingual, easily saw the advantages and disadvantages of both languages, sign and English” (p. 8).
7. “It was a habit signers had, watching others intently, alert to every facial alteration, every change of body position, all of which carried meaning. Looking away was seen as rude and uninterested, while unbroken eye contact, regarded as ill-mannered and insolent by hearing people, was considered courteous” (p. 24).
8. “No one seemed to understand what strenuous work interpreting was—not just physically, though there was that, having one’s arms in motion all the time—but mentally, too. ... The grammar and syntax of American Sign Language were completely different from those of English and switching back and forth, searching for the most precise sign, the most exact word, was taxing and sometimes impossible” (p. 36).
9. Harry and Hazel were signing in the equivalent of baby talk—slow and awkward and simple, but they were able to communicate in a very basic way” (p. 88).
Participation in the Deaf Community

Membership in the deaf community is not limited to individuals who are deaf. Family members who are hearing are considered part of this group. Individuals who are deaf often like to gather and interact at events where American Sign Language is the preferred mode of communication. The deaf community provides a network of academic, social and other types of organizations providing numerous opportunities for members of this community (Oregon Department of Human Services, no date).

The author indicates that Theo’s family has strong connections with the deaf community. Palma has been deaf since birth. Both her parents were deaf and so were three of her grandparents. She went to Gallaudet, a university for persons who are deaf (p. 11). It is inferred Palma has been involved the deaf community all of her life. Her strong association with the deaf community may have resulted in isolation contributed to her fear of outsiders and her overreliance on her husband, Thomas and her sons, Theo and Jeremy.

Thomas became deaf as a child after he had meningitis. He was the only child who was deaf in his school before he went to Gallaudet. It does not appear that his family participated in the deaf community, as they never learned to sign (p. 10). It is inferred that Thomas was not as isolated as his wife and had more experience with individuals who are hearing. However, Thomas was so grateful to be able to attend Gallaudet and as an adult, he liked to socialize at the Deaf Club.

Ivy has no experience with the deaf community and says she doesn’t know much about people who are deaf. Her dad does not participate in the deaf community. He prefers building model planes and staying at home when he has free time.

Theo has mixed feelings about the deaf community. He has gone to the Deaf Club, but isn’t sure how he fits in. He met other hearing children of deaf parents there. “Their slogan was ‘I don’t know you, but I know you.’…He didn’t know her (Ivy), but he knew her. Maybe it was like discovering you were members of the same rare religious sect, or had the same unusual disease” (p. 24). This is the author’s way of saying that people in the deaf community whether hearing or deaf share common issues and concerns.

Conclusion

Jean Ferris portrays the complexities of the social and cultural context of deafness in her coming-of-age novel, Of Sound Mind. The characters express both positive and negative attitudes about deafness and its effect on expectations, interactions, and respect of individuals and society. She also shows how American Sign Language and the deaf community can sometimes connect or exclude hearing people from interactions with people who are deaf. Theo’s growing understanding of these complexities help him to resolve his personal conflicts with the responsibilities he feels for the well-being of his family members and his desire to go on to college after he graduates from high school.

Reference

Literature offers the way to have a situation presented to students that they don’t have to be directly involved in. It’s like a safe way to experiment with something that’s new and different.

Andrea Swift (Broward County Schools)

English and language arts activities target the skills learners can use to understand and communicate their insights and knowledge about disability awareness. Many activities are incorporated into the Unit Plans included in this resource. Descriptions are provided to help teachers and families conduct the activities, along with tips for differentiated instruction, and resources for more information.

- **Reading Comprehension Strategies**
  - Directed Reading-Thinking Activity
  - Anticipation Guides
  - Double-Entry Journal
  - Reading Guides
- **Literary Analysis**
  - Story Elements
  - Character Analysis
  - Themes
- **Writing Strategies**
  - RAFT Writing
  - Writing Arguments
  - Writing Informative and Explanatory Pieces
  - Writing Narratives
Reading Comprehension Strategies

Students are expected to independently use reading to learn in middle and high school. Comprehension strategies can help students think about what they are reading.

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA)

DR-TA is a comprehension strategy that encourages students to ask questions about what they are reading, predict the answers, and then read to confirm or refute their predictions. This strategy encourages students be active readers and relate what they are reading to what they already know. It also helps students monitor their own understanding and strengthen critical thinking skills.

Introduce the DR-TA strategy by modeling how to ask questions about a story, predict the answers, and read to locate evidence in the text that confirms the predictions. You should be ready to assist with questions, prompts, and support until students are able to use the strategy on their own. Although many secondary students expect the teacher to ask the questions and take the lead, students need to learn how to independently use the DR-TA comprehension strategy to pursue meaning on their own from any text they read.

To prepare a lesson using DR-TA, first select the specific part of the book on which students will focus. Locate stopping points where students are asked to predict what will happen next or how the character will react to a particular event. Here is more information about each step of DR-TA:

**D = Direct.** Direct and activate student’s thinking before reading the story by reviewing the title, back cover, and chapter titles. Ask open-ended questions that direct the students as they make predictions: What do you think this story will be about? What do you think will happen to the main character in the first part of the story? Invite students to make predictions. Encourage students not to read ahead before they make a prediction. Record questions and predictions for review by students after reading.

**R = Reading.** Have students read to the first stopping point. Remind them of the questions and their predictions. Ask them to evaluate their predictions and refine them, if necessary, based on what they have read. Continue this process for each section of the story.
**T = Thinking.** At the end of each section, have students look back at the text and think about their predictions. You may ask: What did you read that proved your prediction? What evidence did you find in the text that made you change your prediction?

At first, students may be reluctant to make a prediction about something they haven’t read. The DR-TA encourages students to speculate about possible interpretations. You may need to offer two or three predictions and have students explain their choices among them.

**Anticipation Guides**

An anticipation guide is used as a “before reading” strategy to stimulate curiosity and interest in the reading and help students activate their prior knowledge about the topic, theme, or specific elements of the story. The anticipation guide contains statements that support or challenge a student’s ideas or preconceived notions and asks students to make predictions about what they expect to read in the text. Reasons for using anticipation guides include:

- Relating student’s prior knowledge to new information
- Creating interest to stimulate discussion about the story
- Creating possibilities for integrating reading and writing instruction.

To construct an anticipation guide, identify the themes, key ideas, or events presented in the story that will create student interest or cause them to reflect on prior knowledge. You will also need to consider beliefs students may have about the themes, key ideas, or events. Write general statements about the themes, ideas, or events to challenge your students’ beliefs. You may also find that idioms and quotations from the story work well in an anticipation guide.

Before reading the story, have students respond to the statements with a positive or negative response (agree/disagree) and add comments or questions. Students may work individually or in small groups to complete an anticipation guide. Discuss students’ responses and highlight possible conflicts between their beliefs and the story.

After reading the story, ask students to review their responses to the anticipation guide. They can mark a + or − to indicate whether or not their belief was supported by the text and is consistent with the author’s intent. Invite students to explain what they discovered, identifying specific evidence from the story. How did their thinking about the statements change as a result of reading the story?
**Double-Entry Journal**

Students can use a double-entry journal to record notes and responses to specific passages or statements as they read. They should copy phrases or sentences or use their own words along with the page number to reference the text and express their thoughts about those statements.

To help students get started, provide a double-entry journal worksheet with three-columns. Students can use sticky notes to first mark the statements without writing in the books. They can record their thoughts in the journal when they come to a natural pause in the reading. Personal responses may include a comment, a question, a reminder of a connection, or an interpretation or analysis. Students should then be encouraged to discuss their selections and responses with the whole group.

**Reading Guides**

Reading guides include a set of questions and perhaps a graphic organizer designed to help students as they read literary works, such as short stories or novels. To create a reading guide, identify major sections in a book. Determining the number of pages in a section will depend on students’ reading proficiency and familiarity with content in the story. For example, for middle school students, begin with sections that are 15–20 pages long, increasing the number of pages as the story continues. Try to separate the sections into natural stopping points. Reading group guides provided by the publisher or other resources may be useful for this purpose.

Questions should highlight the most important events or aspects in each section of the story. Teachers may ask students to simply make notes of their answers to the questions or require them to write complete sentences or paragraphs. It is important that students have the opportunity to discuss answers to the questions and address any confusion or misunderstanding they have encountered while reading.

When teachers introduce the reading guide for the first time, it is important that students understand what the guide includes and why it was created. Teachers may need to demonstrate by going over one or two questions in the guide and modeling how students are expected to respond. As students become more independent, teachers can simply monitor their use of the guide. Ultimately students can design their own reading guides and support each other.
The following are examples of types of questions that can be used in a reading guide:

- What do you think this story/novel is about?
- What kind of challenge or conflict does the main character encounter?
- How did the characters change over the course of the book?
- Which events were most important in shaping the story?
- How effective are literary devices, such as imagery, point-of-view, and metaphor?
- What do you think the author is trying to say?
- What do you think was the author’s purpose for writing this book?
- What have you learned from the book?

**Tips for Differentiated Instruction**

- Adjust the amount of reading to fit the purpose and difficulty of the text and the abilities of individual readers.
- For students who aren’t able to read standard print, provide the book in an alternate format, such as large print, braille, audio recording, or digitized speech.
- Have students dictate, write, or type responses to questions.

**For More Information**


Literary Analysis

As students move into secondary school, they will learn about the techniques an author uses to create effective works of literature. This may involve looking carefully at the way the story elements work together to create meaning.

Story Elements

Story elements include the characters, the setting, the plot, and conflicts. A story map or graphic organizer can be used to help students identify the specific elements. The story map can also help students integrate and summarize the details of the story.

Characters. Characters are the people, animals, machines, or animated devices that carry out the plot in the story. The author portrays the characters by describing their characteristics, actions, and communications. Students may be asked to think about how the appearance, actions, and intentions of characters affect the plot.

Setting. The setting includes the location, the conditions, and the time of the story. Sometimes the author provides clues about the setting through the language and dialect the characters use.

Plot. The plot involves major events of the story. The sequence or pattern of the events forms the structure of the story. In many stories the plot contains an introduction (exposition) that establishes the characters and setting. A series of events (rising action) follows the introduction, often conveying a complex set of interactions among the characters. The main point of the plot (climax) is the turning point when the problems are resolved, and the ending (resolution) of the story is the final result or reflection.

Conflict. Central conflicts are generally present within a story. The characters may have a conflict with themselves (internal) or with others, society, or nature (external).

Point of View. The point of view from which the story is told may be one of the characters (first person) or a narrator (third person). A narrator can be more objective and have varying degrees of knowledge and insight about the characters.

Theme. The theme is the central message or overall idea the author wants to convey through the story. Most literary works have multiple themes.

Understanding the elements of the story helps the reader to follow the story line. Many stories introduce the plot as a series of problems for the characters to solve. The reader follows the characters as they attempt to solve the problems and reach a culminating
solution at the end of the story. Sometimes conflicts arise that make it difficult for the characters to solve the problems. As stories get more complex and include many events, story mapping is a good way to help students follow the order of events and make sense of the story.

**Character Analysis**

One of the best ways to get into the meaning of a story is to study the characters. At first readers will focus on characters’ traits—physical qualities, language, abilities, and attitudes—and their actions. Readers may also interpret and analyze the characters’ feelings and thoughts and the intent of their actions. In the Florida Standards for English Language Arts for middle and high school, character analysis involves:

- How the characters respond or change (Grade 6)
- How setting shapes the characters (Grade 7)
- The relation of the characters to theme and how lines of dialogue and incidents reveal aspects of a character (Grade 8)
- How complex characters evolve and interact, advance the plot, and develop the theme (Grades 9–10)
- The impact of the author’s choices regarding how characters are introduced and developed (Grades 11–12).

Comparing how characters change as a result of specific events or problems and conflicts in the story helps students determine the underlying meaning and purpose of the story. Questions may include:

- What were the characters like at the beginning of the story?
- What were the characters like at the end of the story?
- How did the characters change?
- How did the main character affect the other characters?
- Why did the characters change?

Frequently, students are asked to write a character analysis, describing how the character is portrayed. The essay generally includes a section on character traits, describing the strengths and weaknesses that constitute his or her personality. In addition, the teacher may require that the analysis describe or reveal the relationships of the character with self and others, as well as how the character develops and changes over time. Students are required to provide evidence, such as specific examples and quotations that support the claims they are making throughout the character analysis.
Themes

The themes of a story or novel are the central messages or overall ideas the author wants to convey to the readers. Themes are not stated directly; they are revealed by the characters, plot, and setting of the story. A theme is sometimes thought of as the moral of the story or the underlying truth. For example, many stories that appeal to middle and high school students are about these themes:

- Coming of age
- Appearances vs. reality
- Overcoming obstacles and challenges
- Family relationships
- Friendship
- Self-awareness.

To identify the themes of a story, have students review the basic story elements, including plot, characters, conflicts, and resolution. Have them look for patterns and repetitions in relation to what the characters say; how they act and change; and how they relate to themselves, each other, and society. Some authors use an object as a symbol that stands for something else and reflects the theme, such as water means life and birds represent freedom.

You may encourage students to continually ask and answer questions to track the theme in the story.

- With whom do you sympathize in the story?
- What are the symbols presented in this novel? (Or, what images or words appear again and again?)
- What are the major turning points in the story (mood, plot, characterization)?
- Does the narrator or main character learn anything through his/her experience?
- Does he or she change as a result?
- Does the author’s life have any connections with the story?
- Are there ideas presented in the story that the author might be criticizing or praising?
**Tips for Differentiated Instruction**

- Provide written prompts for each section on the story map. For example, who are the main characters? Where does the story take place? What happened first?

- Use graphic organizers to analyze characters, such as a three-column chart to list the character’s appearance, actions, and reactions of others; character webs to describe actions and related character traits.

- Provide a list of possible themes. Students can explain and provide evidence that justifies their choices.

- Use a graphic organizer or chart to identify specific story elements.

**For More Information**


Writing Strategies

Reading and writing go hand-in-hand. Writing activities are intended to provide a means for students to think more intentionally and critically about what they have read. The process of writing can help students think about connections with other books they have read, previous experiences, or relevant information or ideas.

RAFT Writing

RAFT is a general writing strategy that helps students understand their role as writers, the audience they will address, the formats for writing, and the topic. Using this strategy, students can learn to write clearly, to think about a topic from a new perspective, and to write for different audiences. The RAFT writing strategy includes the following prompts:

Role of the Writer: Who or what are you as the writer? A student? An expert?

Audience: To whom are you writing? A friend? Your teacher?

Format: In what format are you writing? A letter? An essay? A speech?

Topic and Strong Verb: What are you writing about? Why? What’s the subject or the point? An event? An accomplishment?

Introduce this strategy using the RAFT prompts. Explain the purpose of each prompt and demonstrate how to use it to plan for sharing information about a topic. Keep it simple and concise. Students may work together in cooperative groups or as a whole class to respond to each prompt. A blank template or form may be useful to structure the planning process when writing.

Writing Arguments

When students are asked to write about the theme of a literary work, they may write an argument, detailed statement, or claim about their view of the theme. The statement is followed by support for their claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence. This is a sophisticated writing technique that evolves from the types of opinion or persuasive writing required in elementary school. Expressing arguments/claims requires students to formulate reasons and justify their ideas with relevant evidence from the text. It requires students to be careful in their word choice, use logical arguments, and include a clear summary.
Teachers may find the following suggestions helpful if they find students have difficulty writing arguments and supporting their claims:

- Have students listen to or read examples of argumentative expression. This may include material like literary reviews and critiques. Help them identify words, phrases, and techniques used to persuade the reader.
- Provide practice using argumentative expression with something that is important and interesting to the students. For example, have students develop a statement explaining their choice of the most meaningful movie. Help them create at least three good reasons to support their argument.
- Finally, have students summarize their position. A good beginning is to paraphrase the initial statement of the argument and list the reasons used as support.

**Writing Informative and Explanatory Pieces**

Students may be interested or required to learn more about a topic and share it as a follow-up to reading a literary work. For example, students may want to learn more about the nature and causes of developmental disabilities and birth defects described in the book, *Tru Confessions*, by Janet Tashijian.

Students use informative and explanatory writing to examine a topic or idea and convey information, concepts, and inferences. This type of writing is also called expository writing. At the secondary level, students are expected to select, organize, and analyze relevant content to include in an essay or report as well as in responses to open-ended questions used in instruction and assessment activities.

An informative or explanatory essay or report typically contains an introduction, body (details), and conclusion. Students can use graphic organizers that lay out these components visually to help them organize their thoughts, identify missing information or components, and see how their ideas fit together.

**Writing Narratives**

Telling a story—actually retelling a story—is a great way teens can share books that they love with others. Retelling can range from detailing what actually happened in the story to creating more embellished versions in which students use their imagination and incorporate additional or different events or characters.
Here’s how to get started. Select one of the books. Talk about the characters and events in the story, using questions like these:

- What happened in the beginning of the story?
- Who are the characters? What do you like about them?
- Where does the story take place?
- What was the most difficult conflict or problem in the story? How did it get resolved?
- What do you think about the ending? How well did it connect with the events in the story?

Explore ways the story can be changed. Think about what would happen if you added a new character that helped or hindered the solution to the problem. How would changing the location require the characters to seek new solutions? Because the length of most adolescent novels prohibits rewriting the whole story, students could write about the impact of their proposed changes on the story. Students may be able to write a short piece that illustrates their proposed changes.

Students can personalize the story by putting themselves as a character. This can be a powerful way to encourage students to reflect on the messages and themes of the stories they are reading. Students will be challenged to figure out what they would do in a similar situation and how they would react.

**Tips for Differentiated Instruction**

- Have students dictate their thoughts and ideas when writing.
- Encourage students to work with a partner or in a small group to develop first drafts.
- Modify the RAFT strategy so students learn the role, the audience, format, and topic separately. Have students review the concept and assignment orally first.
- Use a graphic organizer or outlining program to identify the basic components of the essays, reports, or responses to open-ended questions.
- Have students use sequence charts or story maps to create their own main ideas, characters, setting, and plot for a revised story.
For More Information


INTENTIONALLY BLANK
As students move from childhood and begin to become independent thinkers and then move into adulthood, giving them things to think about and shape how they treat one another is a gift.

(April Katine, Florida Department of Education)

This section provides information about a variety of additional resources for disability awareness. As appropriate, links to websites are included.

- Follow-Up Activities
- Guest Speakers
- Multimedia Resources
- Information Resources
Follow-Up Activities

This section offers suggestions for activities that young people and their families can do together to increase disability awareness.

Learn from Friends and Family

Get together with a family member, friend, or other person you know who has a disability and is willing to talk with your family about it. Have them tell about things they enjoy doing. Ask them to describe how they work around any limitations that result from their disability.

Participate in Community Events

Watch for and participate in events in your community, such as the Special Olympics: Project UNIFY in which young people develop school communities where students work to promote respect and dignity for individuals with intellectual disabilities. This project supports partners’ clubs and mentoring programs. The “Get Into It” program provides lesson plans and resources for service learning with web-based interactivity: http://www.specialolympics.org/Sections/What_We_Do/Project_Unify/Project_Unify.aspx.

Explore Parks and Recreation Facilities

Go to nearby parks and recreation facilities and explore ways persons with disabilities can take advantage of the opportunities for fun. Talk with your youth ahead of time about what to look for when they go to the park or playground. Afterwards, discuss what they saw and felt. Be sure to answer any questions.

Check out information about accessibility in Florida’s state parks on the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks website: https://www.floridastateparks.org/access-for-all/accessible-facilities

The Florida Disabled Outdoors Association provides a free Recreation Resource Referral Network. You can search for accessible inclusive programs and services, products, destinations, and events throughout Florida at http://www.fdoa.org/rrd.

Investigate Accessibility in the Community

Take your family on a walk and look for ways the buildings, roads, and sidewalks are designed with accessibility in mind. This walk can easily be turned into a scavenger hunt by making a list of different accessibility features, such as ramps, automatic doors, etc.
As a follow-up, discuss any locations that might present challenges and how to make the community more accessible for persons with disabilities.

In Florida, architecture accessibility standards comply with the Americans with Disabilities Architectural Standards. These standards apply to new and remodeled facilities, including public accommodations and commercial facilities. Architectural transportation barriers are also addressed in Florida law (Miami-Dade Building Department, 2007). Here are a few examples of things to look for:

- Curb cuts or sidewalk ramps
- Specially marked parking spaces
- Automatic door openers
- Braille numbers and letters in an elevator or on signs
- Auditory signals that accompany traffic light changes
- Ramps in addition to stairs
- Levers on doors instead of round door knobs
- Buses or vans that accommodate wheelchairs.

**Watch a Movie**

Watching movies and documentaries like *I’m Tyler* or *Blindsight* can be a great way to learn about disabilities. (See pages 175–178 for more information.) Before the movie begins, talk about the featured persons or characters who have disabilities. Point out the things the individuals with disabilities can accomplish. After the movie is over, ask your students what they thought or have them use a journal to respond to questions, such as:

- What are your own personal experience(s) with people with disabilities in school or in your community? What was the situation? Explain how and why you did or did not interact with the person. What were your initial feelings or thoughts about the interaction? How do you think the person with a disability felt?
- After watching the movie, have you changed your thoughts or feelings about people with disabilities? Why or why not?
- What are several key concepts that you took away after viewing the movie?

The Autism Society has teamed up with the AMC movie theaters to offer special showings once a month in a safe and accepting environment with the "Sensory Friendly Films" program. Selected theaters will have their lights on and the sound turned down. Families can bring in their own snacks, and no previews or advertisements will be shown before the movie. Audience members are welcome to get up and move around and sing if
they like. For more information, see http://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/events/sensory-friendly-films/.

**Read Books Together**

You can find the books described in this resource at your local library or bookstore. Read them together and discuss key ideas and themes during family time. Suggest these books to your local book group and lead the discussion.

**Guest Speakers**

**Preparation**

You may wish to invite a teenager or adult with a disability or someone who works with persons with disabilities to talk with your students. The first thing to do is to determine your goals. Do you want the speaker to talk about his or her own experiences with disability? Do you want him or her to show or demonstrate special equipment or adaptive devices? Do you want the speaker to help your students learn ways to include others with disabilities in their classroom activities and everyday life?

Before the speaker arrives, tell the students about him or her and what they can expect. You might have them identify some questions to ask. You could give a list of questions to the speaker before beginning so he or she will be sure to address them. Leave time at the end of the session so the students can ask any other questions they may have. Be sure to have the students compose a thank-you note to the speaker.

**Resources for Guest Speakers (listed alphabetically)**

**Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)**

CARD comprises seven regional projects funded by the Florida Department of Education that provide information and consultation to individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders and related disabilities and their families in Florida. CARD offers supports within the natural contexts of homes, residences, childcare programs, schools, and communities at no charge. Website: http://florida-card.org

**Central Florida Parent Center**

The Central Florida Parent Center is one of three regional Parent Training and Information (PTI) centers serving Florida and funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The center provides information and resources for parents of children with disabilities, along with strategies for developing and maintaining collaborative partnerships with school personnel. The staff includes a
Youth Liaison who designs special programs for teens and young adults. The center serves 30 counties in Florida with headquarters in Palm Harbor, Florida. Website: http://centralfloridaparentcenter.org/

**Family Care Council of Florida**

The Family Care Council of Florida advises and partners with Florida’s Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to help advocate for, educate, and empower individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Fourteen Family Care Councils are active in their local regions. Website: http://www.fccflorida.org/

**Family Network on Disabilities, Inc. (FND)**

FND is a national network of individuals who may be at-risk, have disabilities, or have special needs; it also includes their families, professionals, and concerned citizens. The Network sponsors a wide range of local, state and national programs primarily aimed at providing information and training for parents and youth and young adults with disabilities who are transitioning to independent living and employment in Florida. Headquarters are located in Dunedin, Florida. Website: http://fndfl.org

**Florida Council for Exceptional Children (FCEC)**

FCEC has 17 local chapters and is a member of the international professional organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities. Website: http://www.floridacec.org/

**Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)**

FDLRS provides diagnostic, instructional, and technology support services to district exceptional education programs and families of students with disabilities. Service centers include 19 centers that directly serve school districts in the areas of Child Find, Parent Services, Human Resource Development, and Technology. In addition, the FDLRS Network also includes five multi-disciplinary centers that focus on in-depth evaluations and several statewide projects offering specialized services. Contact your local FDLRS Associate Center for information on resources in local areas. Website: http://www.fdlrs.org

**Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)**

FIN collaborates with all districts and schools to provide customized services and supports ensuring all students with disabilities have the same educational, social, and future opportunities as their peers. In partnership with districts, FIN facilitates the implementation of inclusive best practices through: 1) data-driven, student-focused planning and problem-solving across districts and schools; 2) data-driven professional
development and technical assistance to increase knowledge and skills of district and school personnel; and 3) coaching and resources for district and school personnel to sustain inclusive best practices, and information to build collaborative relationships among families, schools, and districts. Website: http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/

**Florida PTA**

Florida PTA is a statewide volunteer organization working on behalf of all children and youth and is made up of approximately 1,400 local units. The Florida Diversity and Inclusion Plan helps to provide local organizations with the tools and resources necessary to provide services and support to diverse populations and to identify and mentor local leaders to strengthen the diversity within the association. Website: http://floridapta.org

**Florida Youth Council**

The Florida Youth Council, sponsored by the Family Café, is a group of youth (ages 15–17) and emerging leaders (ages 18–30) with disabilities or special health care needs who are involved in self-advocacy, peer monitoring, and other activities to improve their quality of life. The Florida Youth Council supports the Annual Youth Summit at The Family Café Annual Conference. The council also publishes a newsletter and sponsors an online outreach program through social networking. Website: http://www.floridayouthcouncil.com/

**Parent Education Network Project (PEN)**

PEN is one of three regional Parent and Training Information (PTI) centers serving Florida and funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Special Education Programs. PEN provides services to nine counties of Florida—Lee, Collier, Hendry, Palm Beach, Broward, Dade, Monroe, Martin, and Glades. The services help to ensure that parents of children with disabilities, ages birth through 26, have the training and information they need to prepare their children for school as well as to be able to lead healthy, productive lives. The project headquarters are located in the Family Network on Disabilities, Inc., in Dunedin, Florida. Website: http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/pen/

**Parents of the Panhandle Information Network (POPIN)**

POPIN is one of three regional Parent and Training Information (PTI) centers serving Florida and funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Special Education Programs. POPIN provides services in the panhandle of Florida, from Escambia to
Alachua County. The services help to ensure that parents of children with disabilities, ages birth through 26, have the training and information they need to prepare their children for school as well as to be able to lead healthy, productive lives. The project headquarters are located in the Family Network on Disabilities, Inc., in Dunedin, Florida. Website: http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/popin/

**Parent-to-Parent of Miami**

Parent-to-Parent of Miami is a Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC) funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs serving Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. The center provides information, educational training and support to families who have children and adults with disabilities and/or special needs. The center headquarters are in Miami, Florida. Website: http://www.ptopmiami.org/

**Youth Leadership Forum**

The Youth Leadership Forum is an annual career and leadership-training program sponsored by The Able Trust for rising high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. Website: http://www.abletrust.org/ylf/

**Multimedia Resources**

This section provides information about selected documentary films that can be used in activities for disability awareness.

**ARTS: A Film about Possibilities, Disabilities, and the Arts**

*2000; Keri Bowers, Normal Films*

Website: http://normalfilms.com

This documentary examines how a number of men and women with disabilities turn to painting, music, writing, and other art forms to enrich and improve their lives. This film features artists such as Temple Grandin, professor of animal science and writer; Geri Jewell, comedian and actress; and Calvin Nye, cartoonist.

Available for purchase on DVD.
**Best Man**

*1997; An Only Child Special Production*

Website: [http://bestboythemovie.com/best-man](http://bestboythemovie.com/best-man)

Ira Wohl captured the story of “Philly,” his cousin with a cognitive impairment who struggled to carve out independence from his home with his parents. Twenty years later, Wohl tells the story of Philly, now in his sixties, living in a group home in Queens, NY. The film tells the story of Philly’s travels to Los Angeles to visit his cousin Ira and complete his bar mitzvah.

Not rated. Available for purchase on DVD.

**Blindsight**

*2006; Lucy Walker, Director; Robson Entertainment*

Website: [http://www.blindsightthemovie.com](http://www.blindsightthemovie.com)

A dangerous journey becomes a seemingly impossible challenge and remarkable by the fact that the teenagers are blind. Sabriye Tenberken is an educator who established the first school for the blind in Lhasa. Believed by many Tibetans to be possessed by demons, such children were shunned by their parents, scorned by their villages and rejected by society. The students invite the famous mountain climber Erik Weihenmayer, who is blind, to visit their school. Erik inspires Sabriye and her students to take a three-week mountain-climbing journey.

Available for purchase on DVD.

**Emanuel’s Gift**

*2005; Lookalike Productions, LLC*

Website: [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0447016/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0447016/)

Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah is a 27-year-old Ghanan who was born with a severely deformed right leg. With the help of a prosthetic leg, Yeboah was able to walk and care for himself. Yeboah contacted an American organization called the Challenged Athletes Foundation and learned to ride a racing bike and then ride it across Ghana. *Emanuel’s Gift* is a documentary that chronicles Yeboah’s remarkable life, as well as the impact it had on his family and on people with disabilities throughout the African continent. Oprah Winfrey is the narrator.

G Rating UPC: 687797111791 Available for purchase on DVD.
**Hawking**

2003; Dorlow Smithson Productions, Ltd.
Website: [http://www.pbs.org/program/hawking/](http://www.pbs.org/program/hawking/)

*Hawking*, the first autobiographical documentary about physicist Stephen Hawking, offers insights into Hawking’s life, past and present. The documentary tracks the physicist’s life story, told largely in his own words. It includes accounts of his life from childhood through university; and footage of Hawking today, including his home routine and work life at the University of Cambridge. Computer-generated imagery illustrates some of Hawking’s remarkable discoveries.

Available for purchase on DVD.

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**I’m Tyler**

Website: [http://www.imtyler.org/](http://www.imtyler.org/)

Tyler is a typical high school student who happens to have cerebral palsy and some other challenges. His mission is to educate the world about ability awareness. Tyler believes that what a person, any person, CAN do is much more important than what he or she can’t do. (12.15 minutes)

View on website or purchase on DVD.

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**Through Deaf Eyes**

2007; WETA, Washington DC
Website: [http://www.pbs.org/weta/throughdeafeyes/](http://www.pbs.org/weta/throughdeafeyes/)

*Through Deaf Eyes* is a documentary that chronicles the history of deaf culture in America from the 19th century to the present day. Interviews with Marlee Matlin, community leaders and other Americans who are deaf provide diverse perspective of the deaf culture. Short films created by artists who are deaf are featured.

Not rated. Available for purchase on DVD.

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**Information Resources**

This section provides a list of agencies and organizations in Florida and across the nation with information related to disability awareness.
Florida Resources (listed alphabetically)

**The AbleTrust**
Website: [http://www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org)

The Able Trust supports a diversity of projects, including on-the-job coaching, supported employment, job skills training, job development, employer outreach, Americans with Disabilities Act facility compliance, skills evaluation, and programs leading to employment. The Able Trust is part of the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation.

**Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)**
Website: [http://apd.myflorida.com/about](http://apd.myflorida.com/about)

The APD works in partnership with local communities and private providers to assist people who have developmental disabilities and their families. APD also provides assistance in identifying the needs of people with developmental disabilities for supports and services.

**Disability Rights of Florida**
Website: [http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org](http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org)

Disability Rights of Florida is the designated protection and advocacy system for individuals with disabilities in Florida. It is a non-profit organization funded with federal grants.

**Family Network on Disabilities of Florida (FND)**
Website: [http://fndfl.org](http://fndfl.org)

FND is a national organization of families and individuals who may be at risk, have disabilities, or have special needs; it also includes family members, professionals, and concerned citizens. The Network sponsors a wide range of local, state, and national programs primarily aimed at providing information and training for parents and youth and young adults with disabilities who are transitioning to independent living and employment in Florida.
**Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (FAAST)**

Website: [http://www.faast.org](http://www.faast.org)

FAAST serves Floridians with disabilities by providing free access to information, referral services, educational programs, and publications in accessible formats on topics such as disability rights, laws, and policies. It also provides assistive technology device loans and funding opportunities.

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**Florida Department of Education (FDOE)**

Website: [http://fldoe.org](http://fldoe.org)

FDOE provides administration, leadership, and support for public education in the state, including Florida’s school districts, state and community colleges, and universities. Its website provides a wide range of information about schools and educational programming.

The **Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)** administers programs for students with disabilities and gifted education, coordinates student services in the state, and participates in multiple interagency efforts.

Website: [http://fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/](http://fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/)

**Career and Adult Education** serves students, business and industry, school districts, Florida colleges, community-based organizations, and correctional institutions to improve Florida’s workforce. Career and Adult Education is delivered through a network of service providers, which include District Technical Centers, Adult Education Providers and Florida colleges.

Website: [http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/](http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/)

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**Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Continued**

The **Division of Blind Services** helps blind and visually impaired individuals live their lives with as much independence and self-direction as possible. The Division provides programs for babies and children, transition, independent living, employer services, and vocational rehabilitation; a rehabilitation program for blind and visually impaired, and braille and talking books library.

Website: [http://dbs.myflorida.com/](http://dbs.myflorida.com/)
Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Continued

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a federal-state program that helps people who have physical or mental disabilities get or keep a job. VR provides services, such as medical and psychological assessment, vocational evaluation and planning, job-site assessment and accommodations, on-the-job training, supported employment, and assistive technology and devices.
Website: http://www.rehabworks.org

CPALMS provides a searchable database of the Florida Standards, the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, Florida Course Descriptions, and related instructional and professional development resources for educators.
Website: http://CPALMS.org

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC)
Website: http://www.fddc.org

FDDC advocates and promotes meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities. The Council provides information about developmental disabilities on its website.

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)
Website: http://www.fdlrs.org

FDLRS provides diagnostic, instructional, and technology support services to district exceptional education programs and families of students with disabilities. Service centers include 19 centers that directly serve school districts in the areas of Child Find, Parent Services, Human Resource Development, and Technology. In addition, the FDLRS Network also includes five multi-disciplinary centers that focus on in-depth evaluations and several statewide projects offering specialized services.
Contact the local FDLRS Associate Center for information on resources in local areas.
**Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)**
Website: [http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/](http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/)

FIN collaborates with all districts and schools to provide customized services and supports ensuring all students with disabilities have the same educational, social, and future opportunities as their peers. In partnership with districts, FIN facilitates the implementation of inclusive best practices through: 1) data-driven, student-focused planning and problem-solving across districts and schools; 2) data-driven professional development and technical assistance to increase knowledge and skills of district and school personnel; and 3) coaching and resources for district and school personnel to sustain inclusive best practices, and information to build collaborative relationships among families, schools, and districts.

**Project 10: Transition Education Network**
Website: [http://www.project10.info](http://www.project10.info)

Project 10 is the Transition Education Network funded by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education. Its mission is to assist Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

**Very Special Arts: Florida (VSAFL)**
Website: [http://www.vsafl.org/](http://www.vsafl.org/)

VSAFL, the state’s premier organization on arts and disability, provides, supports, and champions arts education and cultural experiences for and by people with disabilities. Headquartered at the University of South Florida in the College of Education, VSA Florida advocates the arts as a way of communication, a means to unite people of all abilities, and a pathway to opportunities. In 2013, VSA Florida served more than 100,000 individuals with disabilities through artist in residency programs, transition programs, community art classes, exhibitions, professional development and inclusive cultural events.
National Resources (listed alphabetically)

**Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)**
Website: [http://www.parentcenterhub.org/](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/)

CPIR is a central source of information on disabilities in infants, toddlers, children, and youth. Every State has at least one Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) to offer families this information. Many States also have a Community Resource Center (CPRC) that offers the same type of support and training to parents of children with disabilities. For more information on PTIs and CPRCs: [http://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo_items/bp3.pdf](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo_items/bp3.pdf)

**PTIs in Florida**
- Central Florida Parent Center
  Website: [http://centralfloridaparentcenter.org](http://centralfloridaparentcenter.org)
- Parent Education Network Project
  Website: [http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/pen/](http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/pen/)
- Parents of the Panhandle Information Network
  Website: [http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/popin/](http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/popin/)

**CPRC in Florida**
- Parent-to-Parent in Miami, Inc.
  Website: [http://www.ptopmiami.org](http://www.ptopmiami.org)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
Website: [http://www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

The Centers for Disease Control collaborate to create expertise, information, and tools that people and communities need to protect their health—through health promotion; prevention of disease, injury and disability; and preparedness for new health threats. The National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities focuses on human development and disabilities, birth defects and developmental disabilities, and blood disorders.
**Kennedy Center, VSA and Accessibility Center**  
**Resources for Educators and Parents**  
Website: [http://www.vsaarts.org/education/vsa/resources/edu_parents.cfm](http://www.vsaarts.org/education/vsa/resources/edu_parents.cfm)

The Center’s resources are designed to help educators and parents gain information on the relationship of arts, education, and disabilities, especially for children with disabilities. The website provides suggestions for creating inclusive educational environments, with lessons, creative writing, and ideas for young children at home.

**United Cerebral Palsy (UCP)**  
Website: [http://ucp.org](http://ucp.org)

UCP educates, advocates and provides support services for people with a spectrum of disabilities. UCP works to advance the independence, productivity and full citizenship of people with disabilities through an affiliate network, including eight organizations throughout Florida.

**United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Related Services—Office of Special Programs (OSEP)**  
Website: [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html)

This branch of the federal government is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities by providing leadership and support to states and local school districts. OSEP administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA authorizes formula grants to states, and discretionary grants to institutions of higher education and other nonprofit organizations to support research, demonstrations, technical assistance and dissemination, technology and personnel development and parent-training and information centers. These programs are intended to ensure that the rights of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their parents are protected.
APPENDICES

The appendices include a chart, **Standards Addressed in Unit Plans** listing the relevant Language Arts Florida Standards for Grades 6 through 12 with the books and unit plans in which the standards are addressed.

The **List of Books by Disability** and **List of Books by Theme** provide a topical listing of books according to the disability and theme included in each story.

The **Feedback, Please** section includes questions for students and a survey for parents and educators to solicit feedback about this resource.
## Language Arts Florida Standards Addressed in Unit Plans

**Grade Six**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Literature</th>
<th>Key Ideas and Details</th>
<th>Unit Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.6.RL.1.2</td>
<td>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</td>
<td><em>Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.6.RL.1.3</td>
<td>Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.</td>
<td><em>Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish</em></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Literature</th>
<th>Craft and Structure</th>
<th>Unit Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.6.RL.2.6</td>
<td>Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.</td>
<td><em>Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Text Types and Purposes</th>
<th>Unit Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.6.W.1.2</td>
<td>Write informative/explanatory texts to convey ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</td>
<td><em>Tru Confessions: Two Wishes to Accomplish</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e. Establish and maintain a formal style.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Grade Seven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Literature</th>
<th>Key Ideas and Details</th>
<th>Unit Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.7.RL.1.1</td>
<td>Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
<td>Petey: Overcoming Adversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAFS.7.RL.1.3</td>
<td>Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).</td>
<td>Petey: Overcoming Adversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAFS.7.W.1.1</td>
<td>Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</td>
<td>Petey: Overcoming Adversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Establish and maintain a formal style.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.</td>
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## Grade Eight

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<th>Key Ideas and Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>LAFS.8.RL.1.1</td>
<td>Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
<td>Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAFS.8.RL.1.2</td>
<td>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
<td>Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Text Types and Purposes</td>
<td>Unit Plans</td>
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</table>
| LAFS.8.W.1.1 | Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.  
| | a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.  
| | b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.  
| | c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.  
| | d. Establish and maintain a formal style.  
| | e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. | *Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes* |

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<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
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<th>Unit Plans</th>
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</table>
| LAFS.8.SL.1.1 | Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics and texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.  
| | a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.  
| | b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.  
| | c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others’ questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.  
<p>| | d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented. | <em>Freak the Mighty: Heroes Come in All Sizes</em> |</p>
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<tr>
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<th>Key Ideas and Details</th>
<th>Unit Plans</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.910.RL.1.1</td>
<td>Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
<td>The Running Dream: We Both Win!</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Things That Are: Making Choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.910.RL.1.2</td>
<td>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
<td>Things That Are: Making Choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.910.RL.1.3</td>
<td>Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.</td>
<td>The Running Dream: We Both Win!</td>
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<td>Things That Are: Making Choices</td>
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<th>Text Types and Purposes</th>
<th>Unit Plans</th>
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<td>LAFS.910.W.1.2</td>
<td>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</td>
<td>The Running Dream: We Both Win!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.</td>
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</table>
LAFS.910.W.1.2, Continued

e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

### Speaking and Listening

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>LAFS.910.SL.1.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, small groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</td>
<td>Things That Are: Making Choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from text and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a reasoned exchange of ideas.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.</td>
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### Speaking and Listening

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<tr>
<td>LAFS.910.SL.2.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.</td>
<td>Things That Are: Making Choices</td>
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<td>Reading Literature</td>
<td>Key Ideas and Details</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.1112.RL.1.1</td>
<td>Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.1112.RL.1.2</td>
<td>Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.1112.RL.1.3</td>
<td>Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Text Types and Purposes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>LAFS.1112.W.1.1</td>
<td>Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| LAFS.1112.W.1.1, Continued | d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. | *Wild Orchid: Coming of Age*

|  | e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. |  |

| LAFS.1112.W.1.2 | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. | *Of Sound Mind: Looking Toward the Future*

|  | a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. |  |

|  | b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic. |  |

|  | c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. |  |

|  | d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic. |  |

|  | e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. |  |
## List of Books by Disability

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<td><em>Autism, The Invisible Cord: A Sibling’s Diary</em></td>
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<td><em>Colin Fischer</em></td>
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<td><em>Mockingbird (mok’ing-bûrd)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Independence</strong></td>
<td><em>Alchemy and Meggy Swann</em></td>
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<td><em>The Miracle Worker</em></td>
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<td><em>Waiting for No One</em></td>
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<td><em>Wild Orchid</em></td>
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<td><strong>Institutionalization</strong></td>
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<td><em>Show Me No Mercy: A Compelling Story of Remarkable Courage</em></td>
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<td><strong>Loyalty</strong></td>
<td><em>Gathering Blue</em></td>
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<td><strong>Overcoming Challenges and Obstacles</strong></td>
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<td><em>Colin Fischer</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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| Overcoming Challenges and Obstacles, Continued | Fighting for Dontae  
Imperfect: An Improbable Life  
Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's  
Med Head: My Knock-Down, Drag-Out, Drugged-Up Battle with My Brain  
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Feedback, Please

The Federal Developmental Disabilities Act of 2000 requires all Developmental Disabilities Councils to report on customer satisfaction with council-supported activities. The information that you provide in these surveys will be incorporated into an annual report that is submitted to the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. We value your appraisal of this activity. Your feedback is important.

Feedback from the Students

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council wants to know what students have learned from the books featured in this resource. Simply make a copy of the appropriate set of questions and ask the students to provide their responses. Please summarize their answers and submit their responses online using the following link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Student_DA_Survey.

Questions for Students

1. Before reading this book, what did you think about people with disabilities?

2. After reading this book, are you more likely to be friends with individuals who have disabilities?

3. Did this book make you feel more comfortable asking your parents or teachers about disabilities?

4. Will you be more likely to speak to persons with disabilities now that you have learned about disabilities?

5. What is the most important thing you learned from this book?

6. Other comments you wish to share:
Feedback from Parents and Educators

Please rate your agreement with each of the following statements about this book, 
*Disability Awareness Through English and Language Arts: Resources for Middle and High School*, by circling the letters that reflect your rating. You may fax a copy of your survey to the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council at (850) 922-6702 or take the survey online: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ParentsandEducators](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ParentsandEducators).

**Rating Scale**

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<th>SA</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
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1. The information in this resource will help students increase their respect for and acceptance of individual differences.
   - SA A N D SD NA

2. The activities in this resource will help students understand disabilities and related social issues.
   - SA A N D SD NA

3. The books featured in this resource promote positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities and facilitate successful inclusion practices in our schools and community.
   - SA A N D SD NA

4. The unit plans support the development of English and language arts skills through activities about disability awareness.
   - SA A N D SD NA

5. The additional resources include many useful activities and websites that will help families and educators promote disability awareness for students.
   - SA A N D SD NA

6. After reading this resource, I plan to read the books and use the activities and unit plans with students.
   - SA A N D SD NA

Thank you for taking time to provide us feedback on *Disability Awareness Through English and Language Arts: Resources for Middle and High School*. Your feedback is important to us. It helps us know how to produce materials that support you.

Your Florida Developmental Disabilities Council