January 2015

Designing Fiction-Based Close Reading Experiences For The High School English Language Arts Classroom

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DESIGNING FICTION-BASED CLOSE READING EXPERIENCES FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of North Dakota, 2011
Master of Science, University of North Dakota, 2015

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Science

Grand Forks, North Dakota
August
2015

This thesis, submitted by Aubrey McNary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Reading Education from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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Aubrey McNary
8 August 2015

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the members of my advisory committee for their guidance and support during my time in the master's program at the University of North Dakota. Never did I anticipate my graduate studies taking place in three different states, on two separate continents, and across thirteen different time zones. Thank you for accommodating me and supporting me as you both encouraged and allowed me to become the global aware, educationally diverse learner I have desired to be.

To my family, my teachers, and my students.
Thank you for pushing me always—To be better a better teacher, to always be a student,
and to never forget the power of wonder and the beauty of learning.

ABSTRACT

The Common Core State Standards are forcing educational professional to develop high-level literacy skills and habits in a student population that is indisputable diverse and generally ill prepared for the demands of the secondary classroom. The practice of close reading is a means of literacy instruction that continually pushes students back into the text to answer text-dependent questions of varying, yet higher, levels of thinking. A variety of lesson plans and text-dependent questions were generated for three pivotal novels to demonstrate close reading as a means of achieving CCSS-level reading and thinking in the general secondary ELA classroom.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

With the recent implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) throughout the United States, education professionals are facing the challenge of developing high-level literacy skills and habits in a student population that is indisputably diverse and generally ill prepared for the demands of the secondary classroom (Alberti, 2012/2013, Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehmann, 2012; Lapp, Grant, Moss, & Johnson, 2013). Wilhelm, Baker, and Hackett (2001) assert that:

> America's declining achievement…could also be due at least in part to these factors: (1) students are actively taught to read in elementary school and then are expected to read without further support once they enter middle school; and (2) reading is seen as the ability to decode words, and students are not provided further assistance in understanding or meeting the more sophisticated requirements of particular text structures. (p. 39)

Whatever the reason(s) for declining student achievement, the CCSS are the culminating product of a massive effort to ensure that all students will be capably literate at the college- and career-levels upon graduation from high school (Beers & Probst, 2013; Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013; Calkins, et al., 2012; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Hinchman & Moore, 2013; Lapp, Moss, Johnson, & Grant, 2013; National Governors

Association Center [NGA], 2010a, p. 3). Through the development of the CCSS, all students in grades K-12 are being asked to perform at more sophisticated levels than ever before and teachers are feeling an increased pressure to equip students for success on various standardized assessments and accountability measures (Alberti, 2012/2013; Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013; Brown & Kappes, 2012; Calkins, et al., 2012; Collier, 2013; Lapp, et al., 2013).

While the CCSS provide a common set of goals and expectations for all students in the states that have adopted the standards, they do not dictate how "teachers should teach" (NGA, 2010a, p. 6). The standards, however, do imply a mandatory change of instructional methods if students are to effectively meet benchmarks that require "Reading, writing, and speaking *grounded in evidence from texts*, both literary and informational (NGA, 2015, para. 8). While the implementation of CCSS is being left to individual states and school districts, the fact remains that students will need "regular practice *with complex texts* and their academic language" as well as literary nonfiction (NGA, 2015, para. 3). The types of texts brought to the forefront of pupil instruction as well as the purposes and tasks students are being equipped to accomplish through the use of these texts varies greatly from previously established state standards (Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013; Brown & Kappes, 2012; Calkins, et al., 2012; Hinchman & Moore, 2013). Specifically, the CCSS call for students to perform a smaller number of skills at a higher level (Alberti, 2012/2013, p. 27) by dedicating themselves to reading complex texts closely, with focus and intention—a practice termed close reading (Brown & Kappes, 2012; Calkins, et al., 2012; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Fisher & Frey, 2014a;

Hinchman & Moore, 2013; Pennell, 2014/2015; Serafini, 2013; Shanahan, Fisher, & Frey, 2012).

Philosophical Underpinnings of Close Reading

According to Fang and Pace (2013), "[t]he term *close reading* has its genesis in literary criticism… and, as a teaching method, it held sway in literature classrooms for much of the 20th century" (p. 106). Ironically, though, most teachers who teach from a New Critic orientation have no idea they are doing so (Wilhelm, et al., 2001, p. 35). Moreover, "[t]he concept of 'close reading' permeates the CCSS and suggests a particular way of reading and responding to texts" (Serafini, 2013, p. 299). As Calkins, et al. (2012) explain, "…[t]he Common Core marks a return to the kind of reading that was promoted in the thirties and forties through New Criticism. New Criticism put the text at the center and equated reading with close analysis of the text" (p. 26).

For New Critics, the text is the single source of meaning and readers must do "close readings" of said text in order to understand the "single best meaning" of the text (Wilhelm, et al., 2011, p. 35). Coleman (2011) calls this determination of text meaning from the text alone operating within "the four corners of the text" (Calkins, et al., 2012, p. 39). New Criticism "suggests that meaning is discovered by the reader through careful analysis of what is directly stated in the text and thus is not created by the reader through personal connections and interactions (Pennell, 2014/2015, p. 251). As such, the feeling emerges that a text holds a single correct meaning to be discovered by the reader (Beers & Probst, 2013; Hinchman & Moore, 2013; Pennell, 2014/2015; Serafini, 2013). Building on Coleman's notion of the four corners of the text and an objectively correct meaning, the CCSS, as observed by Coleman and Pimentel (2012) utilize the text as

"context-free and positioned in a fixed state with the intent to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge" (Pennell, 2014/2015, p. 256).

Conversely, Beers and Probst (2013) contend that "[m]eaning is created not purely and simply from the words on the page, but from the transaction with those words that takes place in the reader's mind" (p. 35). In response to the rigid New Critics of the majority of the century, "in the last part of the twentieth century and first part of the twenty-first century, a new focus in teaching literature, often called reader response, emerged" (Beers & Probst, 2013, p. 42). Although reader-response theory still expects that certain conventions will be followed in the practice of reading (Wilhelm, et al., 2001, p. 39), it is "the interaction…between the reader and the text" (Beers & Probst, 2013, p. 3), based on "interest and motivation" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, pp. 6-7), that creates an environment for personally relevant "discussion" and "interpretation" (Hinchman & Moore, 2013, p. 447) that "not only creates meaning but creates the reason to read" (Beers & Probst, 2013, p. 3). As Gallagher (2014) suggests:

> A person who reads the same title at the age of fifteen, again at the age of thirty, and again at sixty will see the book differently each time…In essence, a person who reads the same book at three different stages of life will have read three different books. (p. 37)

Within the frame of reader response, the "text is considered fluid, not fixed, due to the various lenses and socially informed practices that readers use to transact with it" (Pennell, 2014/2015, p. 256).

Finally, however, are the thoughts of leading reader-response theorist Louise Rosenblatt who "viewed reading as both an affective and cognitive act in which the lived

experiences of the reader cannot be severed from the textual interpretation" (Pennell, 2014/2015, p. 252). Ed Farrell (2005) continues in Beers and Probst (2013):

> In *The Reader, The Text, The Poem*, [Rosenblatt] posited two criteria for validity of interpretation: that no interpretation can be valid (1) if it has no verbal basis in the text or (2) if it can clearly be refuted by the text (68). Rosenblatt would never encourage teaching that ignores the text itself. (pp. 42-43)

As Calkins et al. (2012) clarify, "Reader response approaches to reading suggest that even if your claim that themes reside within the corners of the text, the variation in the readers' experience and preoccupation releases meanings differently" (p. 26). Rosenblatt (2005) wrote in her final manuscript, "Meaning—whether scientific or aesthetic, whether a poem or a scientific report—happens during the interplay between particular signs and a particular reader at a particular time and place" (p. xxxiii). She believed that a text's meaning could not exist devoid of reader experience, but that a reader's response to the text must undeniably be founded in the text itself (Beers & Probst, 2013; Fountas & Pinnell, 2006; Pennell, 2014/2015; Serafini, 2013; Wilhelm, et al., 2001).

Research Questions

With the demand for increased student productivity and numerous approaches to literary instruction, one is left to determine the most effective instructional practices that simultaneously meet the demands of CCSS, cause students to turn back to the text for evidence of understanding and learning, and allow for student engagement with the text. Teachers are left to consider the following:

- What do students have to *do* to participate in close reading? What does that look like in the classroom?

- What do close reading interactions look like? What is the content of those interactions?
- What do close reading lesson plans look and sound like, considering analytic and transactional approaches to reading?

Resulting Products

In an effort to best answer the above research questions, a selection of fifteen passages will be prepared for close reading in the secondary ELA classroom. Of the fifteen passages, five each will emerge from three different novels. Also, a formal lesson plan that demonstrates a complete close reading interaction will be developed for each novel. As a result, a variety of close reading experiences will be made available for each novel and a better understanding of the CCSS demands of close reading on text should emerge. As Daniels and Zemelman (2004) state, "[t]eenagers should not be 'getting ready' to be lifelong learners—but should be acting like them **right now**" (p. 2) and an examination of close reading across three separate novels will be a means by which to mold classrooms of students into the lifelong learners teachers, administrators, and CCSS desire them to be.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although the focus of this research is on secondary ELA instruction, professional literature concerning recommended practices in general reading instruction for kindergarten through grade 12 was reviewed. Within the parameters of general reading instruction, this review of literature focuses on suggested reading practices specific to reading instruction at the high school level and descriptions of practices associated particularly with close reading instruction. Literature was obtained primarily through database retrievals, specifically EBSCO and Academic Search Premier. Multiple search descriptors were used including close reading, CCSS, reading comprehension, secondary literary education, reading skills, and benefits of close reading. Hand searches were also done for relevant literature from the entirety of the curriculum read for this Master's degree. Likewise, textbooks and instructional books were obtained from previous courses, instructor recommendation, and reviews of resource lists from various sources.

Definitions of Close Reading

Coinciding with CCSS implementation, close reading has risen rapidly to prominence as a way to align ELA instruction and learning. Brown and Kappes (2012) define close reading in this way:

> Close reading of text involves an investigation of a short piece of text, with multiple readings done over multiple instructional lessons. Through text-based

> questions and discussion, students are guided to deeply analyze and appreciate various aspects of the text, such as key vocabulary and how its meaning is shaped by context; attention to form, tone, imagery, and/or rhetorical devices; the significance of word choice and syntax; and the discovery of different levels of meaning as passages are read multiple times. (p. 278)

The practice of close reading does not carry any single, official practical definition and, as such, multiple definitions have been put forth for the practice, each varying according to specific theory and research. As a mean of textual analysis and comprehension, definitions and considerations of close reading range from strictly analytic, within "the four corners of the text" (Calkins, et al., 2012, p. 39) to overtly transactional in which each reader relies on his or her own unique, individual experience to bring meaning to the text.

David Coleman and Susan Pimentel, credited as two main authors of the prominent CCSS, do not formally define close reading in either the CCSS or their "Revised Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3-12." Aligning with the ideology of the New Critics through the CCSS, Coleman and Pimentel (2012) suggest a very skills-based approach to literacy instruction that is focused on the text itself. Specifically, the researchers call for teachers to plan instruction that develops "…students' prowess at drawing knowledge from the text itself… Student knowledge drawn from the text is demonstrated when the student uses evidence from the text to support a claim about the text" (p.1).

Conversely, Kylene Beers and Robert E. Probst (2013) describe close reading as a means of instruction by which students:

> Observe carefully what the author [of a text] has presented to [the reader]; avoid wandering from the experience in the text to think only about experience of [the reader]…; [and] avoid parroting judgments and interpretations of others for [the reader's] own assessment of the text. (p. 34)

Louise Rosenblatt, leading authority in reader-response theory, "viewed reading as both an affective and cognitive act in which the lived experience of the reader cannot be severed from textual interpretation" (Pennell, 2014/2015, p. 252). Rosenblatt (2004) (as cited in Pennell 2014/2015) holds that a text and its interpretation are inseparable: "The teaching of reading and writing at any developmental level should have as its first concern the creation of environments and activities in which students are motivated and encouraged to draw on their own resources to make 'live meanings'" (p. 257-258).

The fundamental difference between analytical and transactional close reading is the means by which a reader derives meaning from a text. As seen in Pennell (2014/2015), analytical close readings focus on developing literal and, ideally identical, meaning from dissecting what is directly stated in a text. Specifically, as seen in the CCSS, the text is independent of outside influence and exists as an unchanging manuscript with the purpose of furthering the attainment of knowledge (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012). In contrast, transactional close readings consider the text to be "fluid, not fixed, due to the various lenses and socially informed practices that readers [use] to transact with it" (Pennell, 2014/2015, p. 256). Simply stated, an analytic close reading separates personal connection from the act of constructing meaning and, in turn, comprehension within a text (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012) whereas a transactional close

reading utilizes personal connection as the lens by which meaning is constructed and comprehension occurs (Beers & Probst, 2013).

Analysis of Close Reading Practices

As the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (as cited in Boyles, 2012/2013) makes clear:

> A significant body of research links the close reading of complex text—whether the student is a struggling reader or advanced—to significant gains in reading proficiency and finds close reading to be a key component of college and career readiness. (p. 36)

Daniels and Zemelman (2004) explain, "To meet state mandates and pass standardized tests in any subject area, as well as to find personal meaning in a field, young people must be able to read key materials fluently, skillfully, strategically, and critically" (p. 17). As such, Dalton (2013) directly justifies the practice of close reading in that "[t]he Common Core State Standards' (NGA, 2010a) emphasis on analytic reading and the use of text-based evidence to develop interpretations and make arguments has resulted in renewed attention to 'close reading' of challenging texts" (pp. 642-643). Because student learning and knowledge is demonstrated as they take information from the text to support and give meaning to the understanding and interpretation of the text (Coleman and Pimentel, 2012; Lapp, et al., 2013), close reading is a legitimate cornerstone upon which classroom instruction can be based. Regardless of what text is used or how close reading is implemented as a practice within the classroom, the text and student interaction with the text dictates learning and knowledge retention.

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (as cited in Boyles, 2012/2013) delineates:

> …With Common Core Standards in mind: Close analytic reading stresses engaging with a text of sufficient complexity directly and examining meaning thoroughly and methodically, encouraging students to read and reread deliberately. Directing student attention on the text itself empowers students to understand central ideas and key supporting details. It also enables students to reflect on the meanings of individual words and sentences; the order in which sentences unfold; and the development of ideas over the course of the text, which ultimately leads students to arrive at an understanding of the text as a whole. (p. 36)

While exact instruction remains to be determined by an individual teacher (Coleman & Pimentel 2012; Frey & Fisher, 2013), Coleman and Pimentel (2012) call for close readings which include "[h]igh-quality sequences of text-dependent questions [that] elicit sustained attention to the specifics of a text and their impact," and "[q]uestions and tasks [that] require the use of textual evidence, including supporting valid inferences from the text," and "[m]aterials [that] provide opportunities for students to build knowledge through close reading of specific texts" (p. 7). Comparably, Beers and Probst (2013) desire close reading to prepare students "to *notice* those elements of the text that are, for example, surprising or confusing or contradictory, so that then we pause to take *note*, think carefully, reread, analyze—read closely" (p. 37).

Regardless of philosophical allegiance, overt instruction of high-level comprehension skills and strategies is, ultimately, what will equip students to perform at

the higher reading level demanded by the CCSS (Calkins, et al., 2012). "The Common Core's emphasis on high-level comprehension skills calls for a reversal of NCLB's focus on decoding and low-level literacy skills" (Calkins, et al., 2012, p. 29), but, "[u]nfortunately, students often see reading as an all-or-nothing proposition- they think that readers either get it immediately or they don't" (Gallagher, 2014, p. 62). Reading comprehension is a "recursive process" (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004, p. 28) of "layers" (Boyles, 2012/2013, p. 36; Dalton, 2013, p. 643) during which students attach new knowledge and understanding to that which they already possess (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004; Hinchman & Moore, 2013). Reading comprehension is not a skill taught at a single level but is instead an ability that is developed at each grade level as students progress through their educations (Calkins, et al., 2012; Frey & Fisher, 2013). As Brown and Kappes (2012) clarify:

> …A comprehensive literacy framework [organized around the gradual release of responsibility] serves as a road map to assure teachers provide all students opportunities for modeling, guided practice, and independent practice necessary to acquire the new and higher-level skills that will allow them to master grade-level text. (p. 4)

But, encouragingly, Gallagher (2004) provides Sheridan Blau's argument "that recognizing when we are confused [as readers] is actually a sign of increased comprehension and that as readers we should welcome and embrace confusion" (p. 63). Confusion is not the point at which to stop on the journey of close reading, but it is a natural point on the journey with complex text and should even be embraced on the journey to become a more skilled reader of complex text.

By definition, complex text is not easy. As Beers and Probst (2013) point out, CliffsNotes, assumedly along with SparkNotes and the like, were created because readers came to recognize they their time was better spent reading an analysis of the text than the text itself (p. 40). However, Fang and Pace (2013) suggest that, "Close reading, as part of a more comprehensive pedagogy that promotes disciplinary literacy, sets up rich opportunities for teachers and students to work together to tackle challenging, complex texts" (p. 107). Brown and Kappes (2012) continue:

> Close reading, as a multifaceted strategy for teaching reading, should be situated within a broader, comprehensive literacy framework. The teaching of reading is a complex, multilayered effort that requires the orchestration of a myriad of intentional instructional decisions and a variety of instructional techniques. (pp. 3-4)

So what then, are the means of instruction by which the comprehension of complex texts should be taught? Frey and Fisher (2013) provide "five access points… accomplished through intentional instruction":

1. Establishing purpose for reading a complex text and modeling how an expert reader [the teacher] makes meaning
2. Providing scaffolded and close reading instruction to guide students through complex texts
3. Creating opportunities for collaborative conversations with peers to refine their understanding
4. Moving them forward through independent reading of increasingly complex texts

5. Using formative assessment opportunities so [the teacher] and reader know what is known, and what is not yet known (p. xviii)

Gallagher (2004) echoes the establishing of a purpose which he calls a "focus point" as a means to "give [students] confidence to approach a work they might otherwise shun" (p. 55).

Gallagher (2004) extends his instruction for comprehension when he moves his students:

> *Beyond* the text [to] consider its implications to them as human beings who live in the world today… [The students] must get to what the story means to [human beings] *now*… [Teachers] must ask students to reflect on their reading—to consider the book in a contemporary context. (p. 20)

But, as Calkins, et al. (2012) remind teachers:

> If anyone tries a 'This reminds me of… [or a 'this makes me think…'] detour and you want your work to be aligned to the Common Core, steer the discussion right back to the text… Linger on the literal details of the text before jumping to ideas. (p. 57)

Ultimately, "[t]he focus of close reading has caused many of us to reflect on how we teach children to respond to and analyze text" (p. 642) which means teachers must be aware of the students whom they teach, the corresponding needs of those students, and the demands of the text they are working through as a literary team in their ELA studies.

Although close reading is not the only way to foster reading independence, it feeds well into the school's and teacher's desire to equip students for independent, self-capable learning (Beers & Probst, 2013; Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013; Boyles,

2012/2013; Collier, 2013; Frey & Fisher, 2013; Gallagher, 2004; Serafini, 2013). Nevertheless, the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading RL.10 states that students should "[r]ead and comprehend complex literary…texts independently and proficiently" (NGA, 2010a, p. 35) which both supports and increases accountability for individual student capability and proficiency. Beers and Probst (2013) define independent reading as:

> [T]he ability to read a text on one's own with deep engagement…Independent readers are not only able to read without depending on the teacher to help them make sense of the text, but are also able to stand independent of the text itself, choosing on their own, with evidence from the text to justify the decision, to agree or disagree, to accept the author's vision and thinking or reject it. (p. 6)

Utilizing a gradual release of responsibility (Brown & Kappes, 2012; Frey & Fisher, 2013), Moore, Moore, Cunningham, and Cunningham (2011) suggest a student's literacy is developed in situations in which they are challenged in their abilities, but are supported in their efforts and, in turn, experience the satisfaction of stretching themselves to the next level and still achieving success (as cited in Hinchman & Moore, 2013). Ultimately, Calkins et al. (2012) advocate:

> Get[ting] great books into kids' hands, show[ing] them how to do higher-level reading work, and [in doing so] you'll find that adolescent readers who are taught how to delve deeper into texts come to love The Hunger Games, and Harry Potter, for the [literary] secrets that unfold as much as for what happens. (p. 73)

In close reading, Coleman and Pimentel (2012) believe effective instructional design will promote student interest and engagement with complex texts and as Beers and

Probst (2013) so aptly declare, “The essential element of rigor is engagement” (p. 22). Hinchman and Moore submit they:

> Find much promise in having students learn to slow their reading purposefully to meticulously analyze what authors have written. [They] argue that close reading can be a valuable part of youths’ literacy repertoires, deserving a place among the range of 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, information literacy, flexibility, and collaboration as advocated by the National Research Council (2012). (p. 444)

Close reading equips students to comprehend complex text well and as an individual which, in turn, will allow them to be college and career ready—the very goal of the CCSS.

Elements of Close Reading Lessons

Text

The CCSS are designed to provide teachers a mandate for the concepts to teach and not the procedures to teach them (Calkins, et al., 2012, p. 13); as such, they provide two guidelines by which instructors choose and implement texts. First, “[t]he CCSS call for students to critically read increasingly complex texts across content areas with the expectation that by high school graduation they will be able to read college or career-related texts.” (Lapp, et al., 2013, pp. 110-11) Second, “[t]he [CCSS] standards focus on students reading closely to draw evidence and knowledge from the text and require students to read texts of adequate range and complexity” (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012, p. 1).

As Coleman and Pimentel (2012) explain, "To become college and career ready, students must grapple with a range of works that span many genres, cultures, and eras and model the kinds of thinking and writing students should aspire to in their own work" (p. 5). Both fiction and nonfiction texts are valued by the CCSS including literature such as stories, drama, poetry, and informational text like literary nonfiction (NGA, 2010a, p. 57). Boyles (2012/2013) continues, "[m]any kinds of traditional literature—folktales, legends, myths, fables, as well as short stories, poetry, and scenes from plays—enable and reward close reading" (p. 37). Furthermore, "[e]xposure to a range of informational text types is essential… because discourse forms differ within specific disciplines" (Lapp et al., 2013, p. 110). Frey and Fisher (2013) further clarify that "*[l]iterary and informational texts* include a wide range of genres and text types, both digital and print" (p. 3).

Frey and Fisher (2013) continue, "The first assumption behind the practice of close reading is that the text is worthy; not everything we read requires this kind of inspection" (pp. 13-14). That is to say, "If all students are to be ready for college and career by the end of high school, it is not sufficient to address literacy skills; we must also consider the texts to which students apply these skills" (Alberti, 2012/2013, p. 25). However, as Beers and Probst (2013) clarify, "If we infer, from the Common Core State Standards' call for the teaching of more complex texts at all grades that we simply need to teacher harder books, we will make a serious mistake" (p. 20). The texts—and passages of texts—used for close reading must allow readers to reflect on their own terms with the text (Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Gallagher, 2004), extend their thoughts to the experiences of others (Gallagher, 2004; Shanahan, et

al., 2013), gain a greater understanding of the world around them (Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013; Gallagher, 2004), and/or problem solve issues of relevance and urgency (Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013; Shanahan, et al., 2012).

With the implementation of CCSS, students are being required to make a significant jump from their current texts to those deemed appropriate to attain college and career readiness (Brown & Kappes, 2012; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Collier, 2013; Frey & Fisher, 2013; Hinchman & Moore, 2013). As seen in Appendix A, the CCSS's commitment to text complexity arose from ACT's 2006 report *Reading Between the Lines* which showed that students who were unable to meet reading benchmarks could not do so because the level of reading passages upon which they were tested was too high (NGA, 2010b, p.2). The CCSS provide a three-part model for determining the difficulty of a text:

> *(1) Qualitative dimensions of text complexity*…such as levels of meaning or purpose; structure, language conventionality and clarity; and knowledge demands.
>
> *(2) Quantitative dimensions of text complexity*…such as word length or frequency, sentence length, and text cohesions…
>
> *(3) Reader and task considerations*...such as variables specific to particular readers and to particular tasks in light of determining whether a text is appropriate for a given student. (NGA, 2010b, p. 4).

Ultimately, the classroom teacher is left to make the final judgment for a text's use in his or her classroom, understanding that knowledge of the students who will be reading the books could, at times, be more influential than either qualitative or quantitative dimensions of complexity (Calkins, et al., 2012; Collier, 2013; Shanahan, et al., 2012).

As Brown and Kappes (2013) assert, “Text complexity plays an integral role in the planning and execution of the Close Reading strategy” (p. 4).

Directly coinciding with the complexity of a text in a close reading lesson is the text’s length. Coleman and Pimentel (2012) provide the following recommendation regarding text length, “The study of short texts is particularly useful to enable students at a wide range of reading levels to participate in the close analysis of more demanding text” (p. 4). Boyles (2012/2013) clarifies, “It could take weeks or even months to read through a 100-page novel… A short text of a page or two can be digested in one lesson” (p. 37). And, as Beers and Probst (2013) confirm, “[Close reading] works with a short passage…Ideally, this passage is identified by the students themselves…but at times the teacher will want to call attention to passages…” (p. 37). The amount of text consumed as part of a close reading lesson depends on both the complexity of the text itself and the purpose of the lesson at hand. Arguably, any text of an appropriate complexity could be properly utilized and implemented within the secondary ELA classroom as part of a suitable close reading experience.

Finally, taking text type, worthiness, complexity, and length into consideration, what remains is the task of matching a reader with an appropriate text (Beers & Probst, 2013; Calkins, et al., 2012; Collier, 2013; Fountas & Pinnell, 2006; Gallagher, 2004; Hinchman & Moore, 2013). The CCSS explain in Appendix B (2010c) that the text samples provided “…should serve as useful guideposts in helping educators select texts of similar complexity, quality and range for their own classrooms,” but “[t]hey expressly do not represent a partial or complete reading list” (p. 2). For example, the CCSS (NGA, 2010c) list such titles as Homer’s *The Odyssey*, John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*,

Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, John Donne's "Song," and Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" as Grades 9-10 Exemplars (pp. 9-10). Comparably, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, Arthur Miller's *The Death of a Salesman*, and Emily Dickinson's "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" are Grades 11-CCR Text Exemplars (NGA, 2010c, pp. 10-11). Hinchman and Moore (2013) clarify, "Educators can incorporate their knowledge of what their students find relevant into concerns for appropriate text complexity and quality when selecting texts" (p. 445). Finally, as Brown & Kappes (2012) repeat, "…it is essential that all students engage in close reading of complex text that meet grade-level expectations established by the Common Core" (p. 3). With those two directives in mind, teachers are left to rifle through a plethora of titles of valid literature, including both the canonical titles of yore (Hinchman & Moore, 2013, p. 445) and the young adult literature that is so popular today (Calkins, et al., 2012, p. 70).

Interactions and Content

Because the essence of a close reading experience is a reader's interaction with the text, the center of classroom interactions and content is the text itself. Text-dependent questions (Dalton, 2013; Fisher & Frey, 2014a; Fisher & Frey, 2014b) and annotations (Fisher & Frey, 2014a; Fisher & Frey, 2014b; Hedin & Conderman, 2010) are used as supports for working through the text of a close reading lesson. Fisher and Frey (2014b) bring unity to the practices of close reading, asking text-dependent questions, and using annotations when they provide this observation: "Annotation facilitates repeated readings and students' use of evidence in their responses to text-dependent questions" (p. 312).

Simply stated, a text-dependent question is one that can be answered by referring to the text itself and does not require research or support from any additional text or outside source (Beers & Probst, 2013; Brown & Kappes, 2012; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Gallagher, 2004; Hinchman & Moore, 2013). While driving students back into the close reading passage, text-dependent questions should move students from basic and literal understanding of the text (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Fisher & Frey, 2014a) to a deeper, more complex, inferentially sound interpretation of the same. (Alberti, 2012/2013; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Fisher & Frey, 2014a; Fisher & Frey, 2014b; Lapp et al., 2012). Text-dependent questions can be placed at any point in a reading at which a student or teacher may choose to draw extra attention to a text (Beers & Probst, 2013; Calkins, et al., 2012) and should constitute the majority of questions used in a CCSS-based close reading lesson (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Fisher & Frey, 2014b). "The best questions will motivate students to dig in and explore further—just as texts should be worth reading, so should questions be worth answering" (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012, p. 8). Using these questions, or ones like them, as a framework for close reading will allow students to continually dig deeper into a text and pursue a continually richer reading experience independent of grade level or text genre.

Like text-dependent questions, annotations serve multiple purposes (Collier, 2013; Fisher & Frey, 2014a; Hedin & Conderman, 2010; Lapp, et al., 2013) in the process of close reading and should move students along a gradient of deeper thinking (Fisher & Frey, 2014a; Gallagher, 2004). Whether or not students are able to mark on the text itself (Fisher & Frey, 2014b; Lapp, et al., 2013), "…one way to promote rereading is to teach students how to create their own text enhancements" (Hedin & Conderman,

2010, p. 563). Ultimately, as Fisher and Frey (2014a) have observed, "…[student] responses have really improved because it's not just about the evidence they find [through close reading], it's also about their thinking about the evidence that [the teacher] is looking for" (p. 281).

Teacher and Student Roles in Close Reading

While the teacher is the classroom leader of the close reading lesson, he or she is not the sole owner of information and knowledge utilized in the learning experience. The teacher is responsible for choosing the text (Brown & Kappes, 2012; Calkins, et al., 2012; Lapp, et al, 2013; Wilhelm, et al., 2001), identifying the purpose(s) for the close reading lesson (Lapp, et al., 2013), preparing text for classroom use (Lapp, et al., 2013), modeling appropriate reading behaviors and strategies (Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013; Calkins, et al., 2012; Collier, 2013; Daniels & Zemelman, 2004; Gallagher, 2004; Hedin & Conderman, 2010; Serafini, 2013; Wilhelm, et al., 2001), equipping students to annotate appropriately (Lapp, et al., 2013), generating text-dependent questions (Brown & Kappes, 2012; Lapp, et al., 2013), and encouraging and monitoring student engagement and retention of the text (Beers & Probst, 2013; Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013; Calkins, et al., 2012; Gallagher, 2004; Fisher & Frey, 2014a; Frey & Fisher, 2013; Hinchman & Moore, 2013; Serafini, 2013; Wilhelm, et al., 2001).

Likewise the student works from and responds to the teacher's lesson, but is responsible for engaging with and responding to the text in a way that is suitable for his or her own learning experience. Students can work as either an individual or as a group member (Collier, 2013) as they read the text multiple times at one sitting (Frey & Fisher, 2013; Hinchman & Moore, 2013) to master an effective comprehension of the text placed

before them (Beers & Probst, 2013; Brown & Kappes, 2012; Calkins, et al., 2012; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Gallagher, 2004; Shanahan, et al., 2012). That is to say, the student follows the teacher's lead but utilizes the reading material in a way that facilitates a unique learning experience, specific to each separate member of the classroom as the teacher works to equip each student to succeed independently (Calkins, et al., 2012; Collier, 2013; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Gallagher, 2004; Lapp, et al., 2013; Wilhelm, et al., 2001).

Features of Close Reading Lesson Plans

Common Core State Standards

"The Common Core initiative calls for implementing fewer, tougher standards for literacy instruction" (Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013, p. 68). As Calkins, et al. (2012) explain:

> Some people who are close to the Common Core have likened the reading standards to a ladder, with Standards 1 and 10 as the crucial struts that form the two sides of the ladder, and the other reading standards as the rungs of the ladder. (p. 33)

Frey and Fisher (2013) clarify:

> [Anchor Standards 1 and 10] serve as bookends for the remaining reading standards, which describe the facets of reading comprehension that are essential for higher-order thinking and critical analysis. The intention is to drive students deeper into the text, and not simply draw on the surface comprehension many have grown accustomed to in classrooms. (pp. 12-13)

In short, RL.1 calls for students to read text closely to allow for interpretation, RL.2-9 detail for teachers which elements should be analyzed within a complex text, and RL.10 calls for students to be regularly exposed to complex text appropriate to the grade level (Frey & Fisher, 2013, pp. 12,15).

Situation of a Close Reading Lesson

A close reading lesson acts as a tool within the classroom to equip students, ultimately, to comprehend complex texts at a deep level through multiple readings (Brown & Kappes, 2012; Calkins, et al., 2012; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 2006; Frey & Fisher, 2013; Hedin & Conderman, 2010; Hinchman & Moore, 2013; Lapp, et al., 2012; Serafini, 2013). Brown and Kappes (2012) explain, "A close reading lesson is typically situated within a longer unit of study and might be employed once or twice during the unit, for two to four days at a time" (p. 5). Coleman and Pimentel (2012) also explain, "Materials should be design opportunities for close reading of selected passages or texts and create a series of questions that demonstrate how careful attention to those readings allows students to gather evidence and build knowledge" (p. 8).

Expected Teaching Moves and Outcomes

After a text has been chosen, purposed, and prepared for classroom use (Lapp et al., 2013, p. 112), the teacher can then begin instruction at large group, small group, or individual levels. Close reading instruction includes the same teaching practices as general reading instruction (i.e., modeling, inferencing, observing, analyzing, etc.) and, as such, close reading teaching moves may not appear to be exceptional in any way (Boyles,

2012/2013; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Daniels & Zemelman, 2004; Fountas & Pinnell, 2006; Shanahan, et al., 2012; Wilhelm, et al., 2001).

Unique Teaching Procedures

Text-dependent questions, annotations, and background knowledge are all unique instructional practices in the teaching of close reading. A text-dependent question is one that can be answered by referring to the text itself and does not require research or support from any additional text or outside source (Beers & Probst, 2013; Brown & Kappes, 2012; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Gallagher, 2004; Hinchman & Moore, 2013). Annotating is the practice of marking the text to cause students to notice specifics of the text (Collier, 2013; Fisher & Frey, 2014a; Hedin & Conderman, 2010; Lapp, et al., 2012). Background knowledge, also know as "knowledge demands," is "the experience and knowledge necessary to deal with the text" (Beers & Probst, 2013, p. 55).

The role of background knowledge, the result of "frontloading" (Fisher & Frey, 2014a; Wilhelm, et al., 2001) and prior knowledge, is contested within the practice of close reading (Brown & Kappes, 2012, p. 1) due to the CCSS' desire for students to draw all knowledge directly and solely from the text (Calkins, et al., 2012; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Serafini, 2013) and previous practice of providing so much background knowledge that reading the text itself was rendered unnecessary (Shanahan, et al., 2012, p. 62). The general consensus, though, is that teachers should provide enough frontloading instruction to fill any student gaps, but still force students to create meaning and understanding by utilizing the text itself (Brown & Kappes, 2012; Calkins, et al., 2012; Collier, 2013; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Gallagher, 2004; Hinchman & Moore, 2013).

Assessment of Student Performance

Ultimately, the assessment of knowledge is discerned by the use of text in student demonstration of learning (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012, p. 1). As with general reading instruction, assessment of student performance in close reading can be demonstrated through formative and summative assessment, both formal and informal. Annotations are a means of formative assessment, though not unique, and are well-suited for close reading instruction (Fisher & Frey, 2014a, p. 285) because they directly reflect student engagement with a specific text and provide the teacher with something of the thought process of an individual reader. Likewise, the use of writing is a way to "elicit…active engagement" with a text as it provides students with opportunities to "clarify, examine, and organize their own thinking" (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012, p. 18) through "the use of text-based evidence to develop interpretations and make arguments" (Dalton, 2013, pp. 642-643).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Text selection and close reading-specific lesson plan procedures (i.e., instructional practices) constitute effective CCSS-based, close reading instruction.

Elements of Close Reading Instruction

Text Selection

As Gallagher (2004) posits, "Literature enables students to experience a safe 'practice run' through the great issues confronting [human beings], and having students reflect on their reading by connecting it to a contemporary point of view is essential" (p. 20). The text(s) utilized in a close reading lesson "should be complex enough to support multiple readings and discussions" (Fisher & Frey, 2014a, p. 285) and "…allow readers to reflect on themselves and their actions; invite them into worlds of others; understand the biological, social, or physical world; or solve problems that are timely and important" (Fisher & Frey, 2012, p. 2); thus, the texts allow for a reading experience that is both analytical and transactional. A text can be either literary or informational in nature (Lapp, et al., 2013, p. 110) and should be short enough to allow for multiple readings during the same sitting of a single instructional period (Boyles, 2012/2013, p. 37; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012, p. 4; Dalton, 2013, p. 644; Frey and Fisher, 2013, p. 3; Lapp et al., 2013, p. 110; NGA, 2010a, p. 57). As Hinchman and Moore (2013) note, "Curriculum writers

are likely to include these [text exemplar] canonical texts in their instructional designs, noting the selections' historical values, and the assurance that they are suitable for CCSS

purposes" (p. 445). The CCSS does show a strong inclination towards classic text but actual text choice and implementation is left to individual teachers.

Lesson Plan Structure

Lesson Opening. Students need to be given a purpose and an objective for every close reading activity. Whether the reading experience involves a literary or an informational text and is meant for individual reflection or whole class instruction, students need to be made aware of why they are being asked to complete the reading task at hand. As Coleman and Pimentel (2012) delineate, "The Common Core State Standards require students not only to show that they can analyze and synthesize sources but also to present careful analysis, well-defended claims, and clear information through their writing" (p. 11). Serafini (2013) echoes simply, "Close reading entails the formulation of arguments and the presentation of evidence to support one's claims" (p. 300). Calkins et al. (2012) outline the objectives of the CCSS as follows:

> The work of standard 2 is to determine central ideas and theme, and the work of standard 3 invites students to determine how events, characters, and ideas are connected across the text… Anchor standards [4-6] ask readers to investigate the effect of author's decisions—about language, structure, point of view, voice, style—on the meaning of texts…The final anchor standards [7-9] will help [mobilize readers] to read texts… that 'go together' and to think across those texts, making connections and comparisons. (pp. 57-62)

As Brown and Kappes (2012) affirm:

> …A comprehensive literacy framework [organized around the gradual release of responsibility] serves as a road map to assure teachers provide all students opportunities for modeling, guided practice, and independent practice necessary to acquire the new and higher-level skills that will allow them to master grade-level text. (p. 4)

A close reading lesson tied to the anchor standards of CCSS will anchor a learning experience in which students will be provided those higher-level comprehension and analysis skills called for when reading complex texts.

Lesson Procedures. Repeated, "close" reading of a specific text, or portion of text, and utilizing text-dependent questions are the hallmarks of a close reading lesson. Supplementary instructional moves made by the teacher include such strategies as rereading, annotating, discussing, modeling, prompting and cueing, and both formally and informally assessing student progress. Throughout the close reading lesson, each student must have access to a copy of the text to be analyzed.

The core of any close reading lesson are the text-dependent questions which the students use for their textual analysis. Fisher and Frey (2014a) offer the following questions as examples of appropriate text-based questions for the children's story *Tops and Bottoms* (1995) by Janet Stevens:

- How would you describe Bear in the story? What is your evidence from the text and illustrations?
- Retell the story in the correct sequence. What happens in beginning/middle/end?

- Who is working harder in the story? In what ways?
- How do the illustrations show how Hare's family changes from the beginning to the end?
- Why would Hare and Bear never become business partners again?
- What are the lessons to be learned from this story? (p. 280)

Similarly, Boyles (2012/2013) provides the following text-based questions for Chapters 6 and 7 of Kate DiCamillo's novel *Because of Winn-Dixie* (2000):

- Why was Miss Franny so scared by Winn-Dixie? Why was she "acting all embarrassed"?
- What were Opal's feelings whens she realized how Miss Franny felt?
- In these chapters, the author repeats a few phrases, like, "My daddy was a rich man, a very rich man." Why does the author do this? Find more repeated phrases. What effect do these have on the meaning of the story?
- In Chapter 7, Miss Franny Block tells Opal the story of the bear from long ago. Why do you think the author stops the action of the story to go back in time like this? What might not have happened if Franny Block hadn't told this story?
- What is Franny Block's point of view about Winn-Dixie by the end of Chapter 7? What is the evidence? Where does her point of view change? (pp. 37-38)

As Fisher and Frey (2014a) both establish and clarify, "It was clear in each observation that teachers had a lot of questions ready and that they did not use them all" (p. 279).

The use of annotations to generate textual evidence does not have a single best or recommended means of practice but, instead, depends on teacher and/or student preference, instructional purpose, text type, and other such factors (Collier, 2013; Fisher & Frey, 2014a; Hedin & Conderman, 2010; Lapp, et al., 2013). Fisher and Frey (2014a) created one example of an "Annotation Checklist" as students progress through a text (p. 285):

_____ Includes targeted annotation symbols/marks
[_____] Writes numbers to track the sequence of ideas/events
[_____] Circles keywords/phrases that are confusing
[_____] Attempts to use context clues and/or word parts for resolving conflicting words or phrases
[_____] Underlines the central idea or major points
[_____] Places symbols in the margin to note key ideas, questions, or summaries
[_____] Writes page numbers to show where related ideas can be found
_____ Includes margin notes that explain the meaning of the symbols/marks
_____ Includes margin notes that indicate use of comprehension strategies
_____ Includes margin notes that reveal personal comments/questions
_____ Includes revised or new annotations based on rereading and/or collaborative conversations
_____ Annotations are legible and useful for future oral or written tasks
Comments:

Figure 1. Fisher & Frey's (2014a) Annotation Checklist. "Designed to provide students with feedback about their annotations and for teachers to look for trends across their students." (p. 285)

Whatever means of instruction is expended within the classroom, it is imperative, as Coleman and Pimentel (2012) state, "…that questions, tasks, and activities be designed to ensure that all students are actively engaged in reading" (p. 9).

Lesson Closing. A close reading lesson is closed according to the purpose of the lesson itself. Thus, a lesson could end many different ways. A close reading lesson of an analytical nature would ask students to reflect upon the one shared meaning of the text. For example, a student could address final text-dependent questions such as *In your own*

words, what is the author's message? What is the evidence to support this message? Conversely, a close reading lesson of a transactional nature would ask students to reflect upon his or her personal response to the story. In this case, a student could address final text-dependent questions such as *Where do you see yourself in the story? What evidence do you find to support your position? What questions remain for you?* Regardless, an effective means of close reading follow-up is writing, either formal or informal, depending upon purpose and needs of assessment (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Dalton, 2013).

Chosen Text

Upon the identification of instructional practices deemed central to close reading instruction, instructional materials were developed to familiarize the general ELA teacher with the practice of close reading. The materials were designed for general classroom instruction with specific applications of modeling for students the overall discipline of close reading and individual reading practices that feed into the greater CCSS practice of independent reading. Finally, various model lessons were composed for the possible inclusion in an overall unit plan in a classroom already acclimated to and utilizing close reading as an instructional practice.

Three pieces of literature were chosen to complete the instructional objectives: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak, and *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. All three texts were selected due to their concurrent appearances on Beers and Probst's (2013) list of "The Twenty-Five Most Commonly Taught Novels, Grades 9-10" (p. 5) and the CCSS Text Exemplars (2010c) for Grades 9-10 (p. 10) and 11-CCR (p. 11). The books were all examined from a traditional

instructional perspective and then explored from a critical reader-response perspective using both analytic and transactional means of instruction.

Perhaps the most widely recognized of all American literature, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) provides students with an opportunity to explore literature of their own country but in the context of the entire human experience. The challenges and dilemmas faced by the novel's main characters are not exclusive to either time or culture and their situations allow students to apply experiences familiar to themselves in the context of literary criticism and evaluation. That is to say, an individual may easily identify on a personal level with the various situations of the characters found throughout the text, but a close reading of the book itself will force a reader to look beyond his or her own thoughts, feelings, and experiences back into the text to find textual evidence for the folks of Maycomb. It will not be enough for students to draw upon personal knowledge and reaction in response to their readings, but they will have to, instead, evaluate and utilize the text for evidence that will provide meaning, proof, and fulfillment of understanding.

A more recent but well-received text, Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* (2005) offers multiple facets of interesting study including, but not limited to, World War II, the Holocaust, death, human abandonment, and the spirit of survival. Not unlike *To Kill a Mockingbird*, these topics may be familiar to students, especially with the close correlation between the history, social studies, and ELA content areas, but a focused study based on the practices of the aforementioned literary scholars will allow students to incorporate their prior knowledge and personal experience with textual evidence and proof.

Finally, timeless in its own right, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1998) is a tale of sin versus guilt, personal pride versus public shame, and the enduring nature of the human spirit. Hawthorne's novel is one of the many available complex texts the CCSS demand as part of their increasingly rigorous curriculum. The pre-twentieth century text provides students with the opportunity to experience language outside of their general comfort zones while also experience a renowned work of American literature. *The Scarlet Letter* will also give students ample opportunity to dive into a complex text for answers provided by the author but also make inferences outside explicit textual evidence.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The textual analyses and corresponding lesson plans that follow reflect both analytic and transactional reading perspectives and are based on principles derived from literature on close reading. As Frey and Fisher (2013) describe:

> Some have warned that the Core Standards retreat to a rigid approach of text explication and objective analysis that marked secondary English instruction in the mid-20th century. But the more progressive notion of including the reader when determining text complexity offers a counterpoint to that concern. This idea is drawn from Louise Rosenblatt's (2003) research on reader response theory. (pp. 10-11)

Still, as Hinchman and Moore (2013) highlight, "Youths do well when they read what they find interesting and valuable and when they can connect what they are reading with their personal lives, other texts, and their knowledge of the world" (p. 445).

The "Big Questions" are not text-dependent questions and are not a practice specific to close reading but, instead, specific to effective academic practice (Burke, 2010). As Burke (2010) imparts:

> Questions are the Swiss Army knife of an active, disciplined mind trying to understand texts or concepts and communicate that understanding to others…Students need an intellectual flexibility that allows them to generate a

range of questions as well as possible answers, to evaluate a subject from multiple perspectives. (p. 3)

Thus, in this case, the "Big Questions" work to frame the novel within the classroom instruction and the text-dependent questions corresponding to each passage are designed to follow the discipline of close reading.

To Kill a Mockingbird

Text Analysis for Teaching Close Reading Lessons

A variety of possible text-dependent questions can be found in Appendix A. The themes of human equality, coming-of-age, and heroism are prominent and debatable throughout the entirety of the novel. Examining Scout's first day of school (Lee, 1960, pp. 22-24) gives a reader a glimpse into the innocence of a child, the inner workings of Maycomb society, and the mistakenness of Scout's understanding of Atticus' role as her father. Scout's first day of school does not pan out as Miss Caroline seems intent on foiling Scout's pursuit of an education. But a deeper reading of the text shows the strained interactions of two mistaken individuals. Likewise, a closer reading of the conversation between the Finch brothers concerning Atticus' choice to defend Tom Robinson (Lee, 1960, pp. 116-117) continues to explore the inner workings of a child's mind, small town politics and a father's understanding of what is best for his child. Scout's first concern as she begins to eavesdrop is that her uncle will betray her confidence to her father. Instead, Scout is given her father's reasoning for choosing to undertake the defense of an essentially condemned man. Scout's final line, "…It was not until many years later that I realized [Atticus] wanted me to hear every word he said," (Lee, 1960, p. 117) pushes readers to make an informed inference as to why Atticus

would have allowed his child to listen to a conversation of such burden. This higher-order thinking skill of making informed inferences is exactly the type of work the CCSS demands of students in the high school classroom (Calkins, et al., 2012).

Calpurnia is a central figure in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and an incredibly complex character. Using two contrasting poems by Langston Hughes (1922/1926/2008, p. 2265; 1925/1959/2008, p. 2266) establishes Calpurnia as a character outside of the novel. Her experiences as a black woman in Maycomb County are unique and Hughes' poetry helps to extend her experiences for the readers. More specifically, examining Calpurnia's experience with the children at church (Lee, 1960, pp. 167-168) helps to further exploit Calpurnia's role as a black member of a white household in Maycomb county, her role as a woman in Maycomb society, and the unique culture of the blacks within Maycomb county.

In a way, Atticus indirectly affirms Calpurnia's existence when he delivered his closing address at Tom Robinson's trial (Lee, 1960, pp. 273-275). Atticus' appeal to the equality of man extended beyond the jury box, outside the doors of the courthouse, beyond the city limits of Maycomb, and beyond the state borders of Alabama. Atticus was speaking beyond skin color and economic opportunity in his closing argument, but he was speaking directly within the confines of the American law because Atticus understood that for any real change to be made in society, precedence would first need to be established in the court of law.

Finally, the death of Bob Ewell (Lee, 1960, pp. 369-370) brings resolution to Scout's childhood innocence, the workings of Maycomb county, and the equality of man. Although the fact of the matter is Boo Radley murdered Bob Ewell, Atticus, Scout, and

Heck Tate all understand that holding Boo accountable for his actions would cause more detriment than benefit. Atticus allows himself to accept that while Tom Robinson's life will have always ended unfairly, Bob Ewell's death, in a way, provides restitution for Tom. In that way, the men were treated equally, albeit outside of the court of law. Heck Tate knows the citizens of Maycomb will never truly understand that implications of Bob Ewell's death, but for himself and those advocating for Tom Robinson and equality for all mankind, it provides a closure as best as they are able to obtain it. Scout realizes that their continual harassment of Boo as well as any attention Maycomb may give him for his actions would only hurt Boo because Boo has only helped people as best as he knew how.

Lesson Plan

The following is a sample close reading lesson plan:

Standards:

RL.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL.9-10.2	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.
RL.9-10.7	Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*).
RL.9-10.10	By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize each of the pieces of text.

2. Students will be able to compare and contrast the experiences of the speakers in each poem to those of Calpurnia in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Materials:
Passage #3, 1 copy per student
"Mother to Son," 1 copy per student
"I, Too," 1 copy per student

Procedure:
Lesson Opening: Post objectives for student observation. Distribute one copy of each document to each student. Divide students into small groups of no more than three (3) students each.
Lesson Procedure: Each student must read his or her novel passage and respective poem once before conferring with his or her group members. As the student reads the novel passage, he or she should mark any place Calpurnia speaks as well as any language found to be confusing and compose a three sentence summary of the events of the passage. As the student reads his or her respective poem, he or she should write a five word "retelling" every two lines to help track what is happening in the poem as well as mark any language found to be confusing. Once the student has read his or her texts independently, group work can begin. As a group, the students must again re-read the novel passage, this time marking the text for any evidence to answer the question:

> What is unique about Scout and Jem's worship experience at Calpurnia's church?

As a group, the students must again re-read their respective poem and mark the text for any evidence to answer the appropriate question:

- How is Calpurnia's experience as a black woman of Maycomb County similar to that of the speaker in "Mother to Son?"
- How is Calpurnia's experience as a black woman of Maycomb County similar to that of the speaker in "I, Too?" How is it different?

Lesson Closing: Either individually or as a group, students must answer the following questions:

> How does Calpurnia's decision to *"talk nigger-talk" (p. 167) with her contemporaries illustrate her unique position in the society of Maycomb County? That is to say, how does Calpurnia's use of colloquial language liken her to the speakers each of "Mother to Son" and "I, Too?"

Student responses should be five (5) to seven (7) sentences in length and cite specific examples from the text to support their answers.

Figure 2. *To Kill a Mockingbird* Lesson Plan. A close reading lesson plan using text-dependent questions from Passage 3. *Teachers must practice discretion and prepare students appropriately before discussing such sensitive content in class.

This lesson allows students to study two separate texts by two different authors in two varying genres. The lesson asks students to consider point of view from multiple perspectives as portrayed through the texts.

The Book Thief

Text Analysis for Teaching Close Reading Lessons

A variety of possible text-dependent questions can be found in Appendix B. Humans, death, words, selfishness, and courage tell the story of a small German girl and her male Jewish friend during World War II. Death's perspective as the narrator provides a unique perspective to the many and diverse events of Hitler's reign. Almost immediately, Death makes known his distaste for his job (Zusak, 2005, pp. 4-5). In the current American culture where death is either trite and commonplace or dreaded and feared, the notion that Death is afraid of humans causes the reader to consider the existence of the conflict between mortality and the human race. In the same way, death plagued the Jewish people to an extraneous extent while Hitler was in power. While some Jews died of disease and other reasonable causes, vast numbers of the race died at the hands of a people who had been taught to disregard their human worth. As such, Max Vandenburg's conflict as to his worth in the Hubermann household is multi-faceted. Not only is Max regulating his own will to live with the reality of the circumstances around him, he is also working to reconcile his role as the recipient of a favor promised to his father in the first World War with his position as a Jew being illegally housed by Germans who are inconveniencing themselves for his gain as much as their own (Zusak, 2005, p. 207).

Max's will to live continues when he meets Adolf Hitler in the boxing ring of his own mind (Zusak, 2005, pp. 254-255). The dialogue of Max's mind is an excellent exemplification of the threat human beings can be to each other. Max gives the readers a speech by Hitler, though it be narrative, of the falsehoods Hitler fed the German people to turn them against the Jewish people. Max also illustrated his internal conflict, though, as he works to battle against Hitler's words, but struggles to remember what is true. Then he emerges once again to the reality of the situation when Liesel offers him the only gift she can—a blank crossword—to help him pass the time of his unjust exile.

Death continues to bemoan his role in the world when he exposes his audience to the events of Cologne on May 30 (Zusak, 2005, pp. 336-338). Death raises the validity of concern of the human race's threat against themselves. He brings the readers to a scene where children are so desensitized to the destruction of war that they are able to speak casually of the potential dropping of a dead body and ask permission to make playthings of falling debris. Readers are left of make sense of the conflict of humans being concerned of the material things of earthly destruction while Death is the one concerned about ushering souls into eternal existence with as much dignity and grace as he is able.

However, neither Death nor readers are left entirely without resolution as Death is able to speak with Liesel Meminger before he "takes her away" (Zusak, 2005, pp. 549-550). Between the two of them, Death and Liesel seem to be able to reach a mutual respect after the atrocities each has seen in the world, but Death is still unable to eradicate his uneasy feeling of the human race. His final words, "I am haunted by humans," (Zusak, 2005, p. 550) also leave readers with an uneasy feeling. That is, if death, the one force that is considered able to conquer the human race, is left in fear, should not the

human race also be shaken by each other? It is a question left for the reader to determine within the text as well as beyond the pages of the book.

Lesson Plan

The following is a sample close reading lesson plan:

Standards:

RL.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL.9-10.2	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.
RL.9-10.3	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.
RL.9-10.10	By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to critique the roles of death and humans in suffering and anguish.

Materials:

Passage #4, 1 copy per student

Procedure:

Lesson Opening: Post objectives for student observation. Distribute one copy of the novel passage to each student.

Lesson Procedure: Each student must read his or her novel passage. As the student reads the novel passage, he or she should mark any place where the speaker changes as well as any language found to be confusing and compose a three sentence summary of the events of the passage. As the student rereads the passage again, he or she should mark the text each time something happens that is unexpected or not as it should be and also mark the text for any evidence to answer the question:

> What is the tone of this passage? How does Death show that tone through his narration?

Then, each student must read the passage again and mark the text for any evidence to answer the appropriate question:

- What are the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, etc. of May 30's events as seen by the residents of Cologne? What does this show about what war has done, in this case, to human existence?
- What are the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, etc. of May 30's events as seen by Death himself? As a result, what does Death think of the human race?

Lesson Closing: In a partner share, each student should share his or her responses to each of the above questions and then choose one question to develop into a short five (5) to seven (7) sentence response that includes specific citations from the text to support the response.

Figure 3. *The Book Thief* Lesson Plan. A close reading lesson plan using text-dependent questions from Passage 4.

This lesson allows students to focus on one passage from the novel and asks students to consider Death's tone in light of events in the story and general perception of what is expected to take place under such circumstances. That is to say, students are asked to examine the irony of this scene although irony as an element of literature is not an objective of study.

The Scarlet Letter

Text Analysis for Teaching Close Reading Lessons

A variety of possible text-dependent questions can be found in Appendix A. Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel is a complex text for many reasons. The language in which the narrative is written, the social nuances that sustain the conflict throughout the story, and the story-within-a-story with subtle differences in the author, narrator, and speaker create a very high level piece of literature.

The Custom-House chapter is a very dense passage of text. As Calkins, et al. (2012) assert:

> Nothing actually happens [in the text of *The Scarlet Letter*]; the plot unfolds before Chapter One. There is an adulterous affair, an illicit child, a shunning, and a public act of humiliation, but that all happens before the book begins. From then on, the book is about *repressed* desires of love and vengeance, and all the language is metaphoric." (p. 61)

If readers are to succeed in comprehending the remainder of the novel, they must first make sense of the introductory material. The narrative structure of "The Custom-House" is not typical with its tedious sentence structure and unfamiliar vocabulary; plus, the progression of people, places, and events discussed throughout its pages leaves much for the reader to trace (Hawthorne & Harding, 1998, pp. 31-33). A pre-20th century reading passage such as that which would arise from this novel is excellent ground on which to utilize annotations for reasons other than textual evidence.

The strict religious and moral codes upon which Hester Prynne's Puritan society were founded cannot be separated from the character of Prynne herself. From her first introduction, Hester is made to be a pariah of society and is cast out from general interaction. A closer investigation of the text, however, reveals that while Hester committed a moral sin, she is not the atrocious monstrosity people make her out to be (Hawthorne & Harding, 1998, pp. 52-54; Proverbs 31:10-31 [New International Version]). Hester is an industrious woman who minds her child as well as she can and serves those around her who find themselves in need. Because she has been marked in her sin by means of a child as well as the letter upon her breast, she is easily set apart from her peers and kept at a distance because her differences are always held at the forefront of her social existence.

The role of religion in Puritan society served to ground people in reality but it also pushed them to delirium. A simple meteor in the sky drove Mr. Dimmesdale to the brink of insanity as he worked to reconcile the guilt of his sin with his occupation as a religious authority in society (Hawthorne & Harding, 1998, pp. 154-156). However, the implications of the religious code also come to affect the readers when they consider the appearances of Chillingworth and Pearl at such an auspicious time in Dimmesdale's life. Pearl's paternity has not been revealed at this point in the story, so the presence of both Dimmesdale and Chillingworth in such close proximity to each other further drives the conflict of parenthood, personal responsibility, and moral obligation with no real resolution in sight.

Dimmesdale continues in his struggle for personal retribution for both Hester and Pearl (Hawthorne & Harding, 1998, pp. 191-192). Hester, the person who has had to bear the entirety of the burden of two people's sin, offers consolation to the man who has caused her so much grief. Dimmesdale does carry something of a double burden as he is held to a higher standard in Puritan society due to his role as a minister. Edwards' sermon (1741/2008) helps to enlighten a reader to what Dimmesdale was teaching people from the pulpit and the standard to which is also held himself. The notion of personal accountability is one to which Dimmesdale holds very tightly throughout the novel and is truly beginning to break him at this point in his life.

After Dimmesdale's sin finally resolves itself and Chillingworth is no longer a factor in Hester's life, she is able to find her own solace. Although the reader is left to make a final inference, Pearl leaves her mother to live on her own as an adult and Hester returns to assert herself as a lasting member of her home society (Hawthorne & Harding,

1998, pp. 262-263). A final evaluation of Hester's character against the Biblical standard to which she has always been held (Proverbs 31:10-31 [New International Version]) shows that she has always been the Biblical woman her society expected her to be—her sin was just more visible than other people's and, because of that, people missed her true character entirely. The text does not reveal any sort of change in Hester that would suggest repentance or a return to her religious upbringing because the fact of the matter is that she never departed from it. Hester continues to don the scarlet letter as a symbol of her identity no longer because society forces her to, but, ironically enough, because she refuses to allow society to define who she is. Hester continues to be the person she has known herself to be, mistaken as she has been by those around her.

Lesson Plan

The following is a sample close reading lesson plan:

Standards:

RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
RL.11-12.10	By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to explain the circumstances under which *The Scarlet Letter* came to exist.

Materials:
Passage #1, 1 copy per student

Procedure:
Lesson Opening: Post objectives for student observation. Distribute one copy of the novel passage to each student.
Lesson Procedure: Each student must read his or her novel passage. As the student reads the novel passage, he or she should mark each new sentence with a number as well as any language found to be confusing. As the student rereads the passage again, he or she should write a quick five word summary for each sentence and write a short three to five sentence summary of the entire passage. Finally, each student must read the passage again and mark the text for any appropriate evidence to answer the following questions:

- What did the narrator find that led him to learn about Hester Prynne?
- Describe the scarlet letter. What is distinctive about the letter according to the narrator?
- What is the time frame given for when Hester Prynne lived? What do we know about America and its society at the time?

Lesson Closing: Working in a partner share, each pair of students should create a K-W-L chart of what they know to expect of the novel from this passage and what they want to throughout the novel as a result of this passage. On the chart, students must cite specific examples from the text to support their answers.

Figure 3. *The Scarlet Letter* Lesson Plan. A close reading lesson plan using text-dependent questions from Passage 1.

This lesson allows students to study one specific passage of complex text for the content of the text. Because this lesson comes at the beginning of the novel, it may appear simplistic or superficial in nature, but an overarching purpose of a lesson such as this one is allow students to experience success in comprehending and making meaning of a text at a higher level of complexity.

CHAPTER V

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In my own regard, I believe close reading will be a significant liberator within my classroom. As I have begun my own teaching journey and work to establish consistent practices within my classroom, I am continually overwhelmed with the amount of materials available for my use. So much of that material, though, amounts to nothing more than comprehension assessment questions that could be correctly answered by a cursory glance at any one of the numerous summaries available on the Internet. My desire is to effectively instruct my students to engage deeply and authentically with a text and to think beyond at a level deeper than basic factual recall.

I believe close reading will equip students to achieve reading success at a higher level because of the nature of instruction. Not only am I as a teacher forced to be a more active means of instruction, but students are forced to be more active agents of learning. The use of a gradual release of responsibility forces me to be more connected with my students as they progress through the daily routine of reading. Similarly, the use of annotations and evidence-based answers to demonstrate learning causes students to take initiative for engagement with the text—no longer can they simply read SparkNotes or watch a movie to answer the chapter questions and write the essay upon the conclusion of the unit. I aspire for my students to walk away from my classroom being more capable, aware, and authentic consumers of literature who are able to independently and genuinely

interact with any text of their choice, outside of my classroom and away from my instruction.

While this research was not extended to the classroom to record actual student interaction, the development of multiple text-dependent questions per passage provides the basis of content for a close reading interaction. The interactions that occur during a close reading lesson will be unique and dependent upon the particular classroom in which the lesson is taking place. But the point remains that the basis of any close reading interaction is the use of text-dependent questions as the basis of content for close reading interaction. As such, a generous variety of content for possible close reading lessons for each of the novels discussed has been created through close reading research.

Close reading is a practice that will benefit teachers of all content areas, not just ELA (Lapp, et al., 2013, p. 111). Because a student's secondary education is inherently cross-curricular, it would behoove teachers of all content areas to be skilled in the practice of close reading. The practice of close reading can easily seem overwhelming, but the habit of pushing students back into the text for evidence of learning and supporting their understanding with evidence from the text is not a novel one. Instruction in the practice of close reading could help teachers of social studies, science, mathematics, foreign languages, fine arts, and the like feel more comfortable and equipped as teachers of reading and, in turn, extend a successful, productive reading experience outside the walls of the ELA classroom.

The CCSS calls for students to read and write at levels higher than what are currently achieved. But, asking non-ELA content area teachers to teach reading because their class uses a textbook is not unlike asking an ELA teacher to teach calculus because

it is a field of math with letters—teachers are not provided training of that nature. However, equipping all teachers to be competent and efficient instructors of close reading would provide the means for non-ELA teachers to help improve the general student's literacy deficit while also making their own content more accessible and relevant. The use of close reading outside the ELA classroom and across content areas will also foster a focus on fewer concepts completed at a higher level of competency, a theme carried over directly from the CCSS (Billings & Roberts, 2012/2013, p. 68).

As American teachers work to close their students' lacking levels of literacy, Calkins, et al. (2012) offer the following thought:

> In *Outliers*, his study of conditions that lead to extraordinary success, Malcolm Gladwell (2008) talks about the theory that expertise requires an investment of ten thousand hours…Readers, too, become great when they have many hours of practice. (p. 31)

The fact of the matter is that students who read at a higher level score better on virtually every test (Calkins, et al., p. 70). If we want our students to improve as readers, we must get them reading text at a higher volume and with greater skill and efficiency.

For ELA teachers specifically, close reading will provide a means by which instruction can be streamlined and maximized for optimal instruction. The amount of resources available to ELA teachers is staggering and overwhelming, to say the least. Adopting the practice of close reading will help ELA teachers focus the practice of reading instruction within the classroom so that students will learn to engage with a text while approaching it in an academically responsible manner. That is to say, students will learn to work with a text in ways that meet the demands of CCSS but will not drive them

solely towards regurgitation and assessment. Students will be allowed, albeit encouraged, to devote themselves to the text and what it has to say as opposed to being concerned with working their way through an obligatory list of superficial and predetermined checks for comprehension.

In short, I believe students need consistency across the curriculum and close reading could provide that similar instruction across content areas. Likewise, students need to be equipped with a skill set that will allow them to work independently and outside of teacher instruction—close reading teaches students how to dig back into the text for the evidence and answers that demonstrate their learning and acquisition of knowledge. Like Calkins et al. (2012) share:

> The old mission for America's schools—providing universal access to basic education and then providing a small elite with access to university education—may have fit the world of yesterday, where most jobs required low literacy skills, but children who leave school today without strong literacy skills will not find a job. (p. 9)

Because close reading is a practice that is applicable with any text at any time at any place, it can act as a catalyst that will lead students to become equipped and capable life-long learners in an ever-changing and increasingly demanding global society.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

To Kill a Mockingbird

Sample Passages with Text-Dependent Questions

Big Questions:

Are all men created equal?
Is coming-of-age inherently beneficial? Inherently challenging?
What makes a human being admirable?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.2 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.

RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to analyze and defend the coming-of-age theme as seen in the passage.
3. Students will be able to predict how the children's behavior in this passage illustrates their interactions in the remainder of the novel.

Materials:

Novel passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #1 **Chapters 1-6 (pp. 1-76)**

I [Scout] suppose she [Miss Caroline] chose me because she knew my name; as I

1 read the alphabet a faint line appeared between her eyebrows, and after making me

read most of *My First Reader* and the stock-market quotations from *The Mobile*

Register aloud, she discovered that I was literate and looked at me with more than faint distaste. Miss Caroline told me to tell my father not to teach me anymore, it would interfere with my reading.

"Teach me?" I said in surprise. "He hasn't taught me anything, Miss Caroline. Atticus ain't got time to teach me anything," I added, when Miss Caroline smiled

2 and shook her head. "Why, he's so tired at night he just sits in the livingroom and reads."

"If he didn't teach you, who did?" Miss Caroline asked good-naturedly.

3 "Somebody did. You weren't born reading *The Mobile Register*.

"Jem says I was. He read in a book were I was a Bullfinch instead of a Finch. Jem says my name's really Jean Louise Bullfinch, that I got swapped when I was

4 born and I'm really a—"

Miss Caroline apparently thought I was lying. "Let's not let our imaginations run away with us, dear," she said. "Now you tell your father not to teach you any more.

5 It's best to begin reading with a fresh mind. You tell him I'll take over from here and try to undo the damage—"

6 "Ma'am?"

7 "Your father does not know how to teach. You can have a seat now."

I mumbled that I was sorry and retired meditating upon my crime. I never deliberately learned to read, but somehow I had been wallowing illicitly in the daily

8 papers. In the long hours of church—was it then that I learned? I could not remember not being able to read hymns. Now that I was compelled to think about it,

reading was something that just came to me, as learning to fasten the seat of my union suit without looking around, or achieving two bows from a snarl of shoelaces. I could not remember when the lines about Atticus's moving finger separated into words, but I had stared at them all the evenings in my memory, listening to the news of the day, Bills to Be Enacted into Laws, the diaries of Lorenzo Dow—anything Atticus happened to be reading when I crawled into his lap every night. Until I feared I would lose it, I never loved to read. One does not love breathing.

I knew I had annoyed Miss Caroline, so I let well enough alone and stared out the window until recess when Jem cut me from the covey of first-graders in the schoolyard. He asked how I was getting along. I told him.

9

"If I didn't have to stay I'd leave. Jem, that damn lady says Atticus's been teaching me to read and for him to stop it—"

10

"Don't worry, Scout," Jem comforted me. "Our teacher says Miss Caroline's introducing a new way of teaching. She learned about it in college. It'll be in all the grades soon. You don't have to learn much out of books that way—it's like if you wanta learn about cows, you go milk one, see?"

11

"Yeah, Jem, but I don't wanta study cows, I—"

12

"Sure you do. You hafta know about cows, they're a big part of life in Maycomb County."

13

I contented myself with asking Jem if he'd lost his mind.

14

"I'm just trying to tell you the new way they're teachin' the first grade, stubborn. It's the Dewey Decimal System."

15

(Lee, 1960, pp. 22-24)

Text- Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the events of this passage, paying specific attention to the circumstances under which they are taking place.
2. In this passage, what evidence do we have of Scout growing up? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. What is ironic about Scout's perception of her education thus far in life?
4. How does Scout's tone as a narrator support or defy her understanding of her education? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. Why may Miss Caroline be reacting as she is to Scout's literacy? Consider Miss Caroline's own use of tone and language. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. How does Jem's response to Scout's reaction to her personal experiences in school demonstrate both a maturity and mistakenness in his own understanding of life? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. What, really, is the Dewey Decimal System? How does this play into Scout's narrative of the day? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. How do Miss Caroline and Scout's selfish tendencies influence their interactions with each other? Is one more justified in her reactions than the other? Why or why not? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. Atticus is not physically present in this scene, yet he plays a large role. Explain his role and interaction with Scout and Miss Caroline respectively. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
10. How do you think the children's behavior in this passage illustrates their interactions with each other, their father, other community members, etc. in the remainder of the novel? Cite specific examples from the text to support your predictions.

Big Questions:
Are all men created equal?
Is coming-of-age inherently beneficial? Inherently challenging?
What makes a human being admirable?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.3 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.

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:
1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to analyze and defend the coming-of-age theme as seen in the passage.
3. Students will be able to analyze and defend how Atticus' choice to defend Tom Robinson affects himself, his children, and his community.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #2 Chapters 7-11 (pp. 77-149)

"Atticus, how bad is this going to be? You haven't had too much chance to

1 discuss it."

"It couldn't be worse, Jack. The only thing we've got is a black man's word against the Ewells'. The evidence boils down to you-did—I-didn't. The jury

2 couldn't possibly be expected to take Tom Robinson's word against the Ewells'—are you acquainted with the Ewells?"

3 Uncle Jack said yes, he remembered them. He described them to Atticus, but

Atticus said, “You’re a generation off. The present ones are the same, though.”

4 “What are you going to do, then?”

“Before I’m through, I intend to jar the jury a bit—I think we’ll have a reasonable chance on appeal, though. I really can’t tell at this stage, Jack. You know, I’d hoped

5 to get through life without a case of this kind, but John Taylor pointed at me and said, ‘You’re It.’”

6 “Let this cup pass from you, eh?”

“Right. But do you think I could face my children otherwise? You know what’s going to happen as well as I do, Jack, and I hope and pray I can get Jem and Scout through it without bitterness, and most of all, without catching Maycomb’s usual

7 disease. Why reasonable people go stark raving mad when anything involving a Negro comes up, is something I don’t pretend to understand… I just hope that Jem and Scout come to me for their answers instead of listening to the town. I hope they trust me enough…. Jean Louise?”

8 My scalp jumped. I stuck my head around the corner. “Sir?”

9 “Go to bed.”

I scurried to my room and went to bed. Uncle Jack was a prince of a fellow not to

10 let me down. But I never figured out how Atticus knew I was listening, and it was not until many years later that I realized he wanted me to hear every word he said.

(Lee, 1960, pp. 116-117)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the events of this passage, paying specific attention to the circumstances under which they are taking place.
2. Why is Atticus’ decision to represent Tom Robinson so powerful? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

3. What is the atmosphere surrounding Atticus' and Jack's discussion? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. What makes the Ewells such a repulsive family? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. How is Atticus' choice to defend Tom beneficial to Tom? How could it harm Tom? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. How does Atticus' choice to defend Tom Robinson affect himself positively? Negatively? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. How does Atticus' choice to defend Tom Robinson affect his children positively? Negatively? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. How does Atticus' choice to defend Tom Robinson affect his community positively? Negatively? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. How will coming to an understanding of her father's decision to defend Tom Robinson affect Scout in her growing up process? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
10. Not unlike Scout, how does Atticus' decision affect the "growing up" of Maycomb itself? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Big Questions:
Are all men created equal?
Is coming-of-age inherently beneficial? Inherently challenging?
What makes a human being admirable?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.2 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.

RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

RL.9-10.7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*).

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:
1. Students will be able to summarize each of the pieces of text.
2. Students will be able to analyze and defend the equality of man theme as seen in the passages.
3. Students will be able to compare and contrast the experiences of the speakers in each poem to those of Calpurnia in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student
Poems, 1 copy per poem per student

Passage #3 Chapters 12-16 (pp. 150-221)

"Cal," I asked, "why do you talk nigger-talk to the—to your folks when you

1 know it's not right?"

"Well, in the first place I'm black—"

"That doesn't mean you hafta talk that way when you know better," said Jem.

Calpurnia tilted her hat and scratched her head, then pressed her hat down carefully over her ears. "It's right hard to say," she said. "Suppose you and Scout talked colored-folks' talk at home it'd be out of place, wouldn't it? Now what if I talked white-folks' talk at church, and with my neighbors? They'd think I was puttin' on airs to beat Moses."

"But Cal, you know better," I said.

"It's not necessary to tell all you know. It's not ladylike—in the second place, folks don't like to have somebody around knowin' more than they do. It aggravates 'em. You're not gonna change any of them by talkin' right, they've got to want to learn themselves, and when they don't want to learn there's nothing you can do but keep your mouth shut or talk their language."

"Cal, can I come to see you sometimes?"

She looked down at me. "See me, honey? You see me every day."

"Out to your house," I said. "Sometimes after work? Atticus can get me."

"Any time you want to," she said. "We'd be glad to have you."

(Lee, 1960, pp. 167-168)

"Mother to Son"

Well, son, I'll tell you:

Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

It's had tacks in it,

And splinters,

And boards torn up,

And places with no carpet on the floor—

Bare.

But all the time

I'se been a-climbin' on,

And reachin' landin's,

And turnin' corners,

And sometimes going' in the dark

Where there ain't been no light.

So boy, don't you turn back.

Don't you set down on the steps

'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.

Don't you fall now—

For I'se still goin', honey,

I'se still climbin',

And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

1922, 1926

(Hughes, 1922/1926/2008, p. 2265)

"I, Too"

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I'll be at the table

When company comes.

Nobody'll dare

Say to me,

"Eat in the kitchen,"

Then.

Besides,

They'll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

1925, 1959

(Hughes, 1925/1959/2008, p. 2266)

Text- Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize each of these passages, paying specific attention to the voice and word choice in each.

2. Who is the speaker in each of these passages? Cite examples from each text to support your answer.
3. When comparing the speaker of "Mother to Son" to the speaker of "I, Too," what are the differences between the speakers and, in turn, the poems? What can be understood about each speaker as a result? Cite examples from each text to support your answer.
4. How does Calpurnia's decision to "talk nigger-talk" (p. 167) with her contemporaries illustrate her unique position in the society of Maycomb County? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. Likewise, how is Calpurnia's experience as a black woman of Maycomb County similar to that of the speaker in "Mother to Son?" How is it different? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. How does Atticus' choice to defend Tom Robinson put his children in a comparable situation to the son in "Mother to Son?" How does that same choice place Atticus in the role of the mother? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. Even though the Cunninghams are white, how does their life experience compare to that of the people in "Mother to Son?" Why is life this way for the Cunninghams? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. How does Calpurnia's experience as a black woman of Maycomb County similar to that of the speaker in "I, Too?" How is it different? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. Does Calpurnia embody the same attitude as the speaker of "I, Too?" How do we see that? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
10. Analyze and defend whether Calpurnia is more similar to the speaker of "Mother and Son" or the speaker of "I, Too." Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.

Big Questions:
Are all men created equal?
Is coming-of-age inherently beneficial? Inherently challenging?
What makes a human being admirable?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.3 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.

RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to analyze the rhetoric of Atticus' speech and relate it to a variety of audiences.
3. Students will be able to analyze and defend the equality of men theme as seen in the passage.
4. Students will be able to analyze and defend the admirability of a human being as seen in the passage.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #4 Chapters 17-23 (pp. 222-304)

"One more thing, gentlemen, before I quit. Thomas Jefferson once said that all men are created equal, a phrase that the Yankees and the distaff side of the

1 Executive branch in Washington are fond of hurling at us. There is a tendency in this year of grace, 1935, for certain people to use this phrase out of context, to satisfy all

conditions. The most ridiculous example I can think of is that the people who run public education promote the stupid and idle along with the industrious—because all men are created equal, educators will gravely tell you, the children left behind suffer terrible feelings of inferiority. We know all men are not created equal in the sense some people would have us believe—some people are smarter than others, some people have more opportunity because they're born with it, some men make more money than others, some ladies make better cakes than others—some people are born gifted beyond the normal scope of most men.

"But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal—there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein, and the ignorant man the equal of any college president.

2 That institution, gentlemen, is a court. It can be the Supreme Court of the United States or the humblest J.P. court in the land, or this honorable court which you serve. Our courts have their faults, as does any human institution, but in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts all men are created equal.

"I'm no idealist to believe firmly in the integrity of our courts and in the jury system—that is no ideal to me, it is a living, working reality. Gentlemen, a court is no better than each man of you sitting before me on this jury. A court is only as

3 sound as its jury, and a jury is only as sound as the men who make it up. I am confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you have heard, come to a decision, and restore this defendant to his family. In the name of God, do your duty."

(Lee, 1960, pp. 273-275)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the content of this passage, paying specific attention to the circumstances under which it occurs.
2. Why did Atticus call 1935 "a year of grace" (p. 274)? Consider events at the state, national, and global levels.
3. What, really, does Atticus mean by "all men mean are created equal" (p. 273)? What are the literal meaning of his words? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. To whom is Atticus actually speaking? Think specifically of the audience demographics in regards to the task placed before them. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. Consider the ethos, pathos, and logos of Atticus' speech. How strong is Atticus' ethos in this discourse? How would his word appeal to his black audience? To his white audience? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. Consider the ethos, pathos, and logos of Atticus' speech. How does Atticus utilize pathos when delivering his words? How would his speech appeal to his black audience? To his white audience? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. Consider the ethos, pathos, and logos of Atticus' speech. Is Atticus' logos appropriate for the situation? Consider the audience he is forced to address versus the audience who may be most invested in his words. How does the logos of this passage appeal differently to each of this audiences? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. Looking at the trial and its audience, does Tom Robinson's trial support the idea that all men are created equal? Based on Atticus' speech, could one group of people be considered "more equal" than another? Could groups of people be equal in different ways? Consider people outside of the text but also cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. Based on the court proceedings, is anybody particularly admirable in this situation? What causes you to think such? Cite specific references from the text to support your answer.
10. Looking at everybody we have read about thus far in the novel, who do you consider to be the most admirable person in Maycomb County? What causes you to think such? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Big Questions:
Are all men created equal?
Is coming-of-age inherently beneficial? Inherently challenging?
What makes a human being admirable?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.2 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.

RL.9-10.3 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.

RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to analyze and defend the equality of man theme as seen in the passage.
3. Students will be able to analyze and defend the coming-of-age theme as seen in the passage.
4. Students will be able to analyze and defend the admirability of human beings as seen in the passage.
5. Students will be able to analyze and critique the author's use of time within the novel.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #5 Chapters 24-31 (pp. 305-376)

"…There's a black boy dead for no reason, and the man responsible for it's dead.

1 Let the dead bury the dead this time, Mr. Finch. Let the dead bury the dead."

Mr. Tate went to the swing and picked up his hat. It was lying beside Atticus. Mr.

2 Tate pushed back his hair and put his hat on.

"I've never heard tell that it's against the law for a citizen to do his utmost to prevent a crime from being committed, which is exactly what he did, but maybe you'll say it's my duty to tell the town all about it and not hush it up. Know what'd happen then? All the ladies in Maycomb includin' my wife'd be knocking on his

3 door bringing angel food cakes. To my way of thinkin', Mr. Finch, taking the one man who's done you and this town a great service an' draggin' him with his shy ways into the limelight—to me, that's a sin. It's a sin and I'm not about to have it on my head. If it was any other man it'd be different. But not this man, Mr. Finch."

Mr. Tate was trying to dig a hole in the floor with the toe of his boot. He pulled

4 his nose, then he massaged his left arm. "I may not be much, Mr. Finch, but I'm still sheriff of Maycomb County and Bob Ewell fell on his knife. Good night, sir."

Mr. Tate stamped off the porch and strode across the front yard. His car door

5 slammed and he drove away.

Atticus sat looking at the floor for a long time. Finally he raised his head.

6 "Scout," he said, "Mr. Ewell fell on his knife. Can you possibly understand?"

Atticus looked like he needed cheering up. I ran to him and hugged him and

7 kissed him with all my might. "Yes sir, I understand," I reassured him. "Mr. Tate

was right."

8 Atticus disengaged himself and looked at me. "What do you mean?"

9 "Well, it'd be sort of like shootin' a mockingbird, wouldn't it?"

Atticus put his face in my hair and rubbed it. When he got up and walked across the porch into the shadows, his youthful step had returned. Before he went inside the

10 house, he stopped in front of Boo Radley. "Thank you for my children, Arthur," he said.

(Lee, 1960, pp. 369-370)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the events of the passage.
2. What is the tone Heck Tate uses as he talks with Atticus? What is Tate really telling Atticus? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. What conflict is Atticus experiencing while on the porch? Consider how we have seen him interact with the various members of the Maycomb community as well as his motivations in dealing with various people. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. Why has a "youthful step" come back to Atticus as he heads back into the house for the evening?
5. Consider this adult conversation from Scout's point of view. How does her synthesis of events show an adult understanding of events but with a childlike purity? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. How does Tate's order to Atticus to "Let the dead bury the dead," (p. 369) support the novel's theme that all men are created equal? Is this a fair interpretation of the idea? Why or why not? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. How does Scout's declaration that outing Boo Radley would "be sort of like shootin' a mockingbird…" (p. 370) support her coming-of-age journey we have seen throughout the novel? How has Scout's growing up made her a better human being? How has growing up hurt her? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. Do Heck Tate, Atticus Finch, and/or Boo Radley emerge as particularly admirable in this scene? Why or why not? Consider also each character's behavior throughout the novel in relation to his actions in these finals pages. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. How does the author's choice to structure the novel as she does propel the reader forward through the story? Consider also the effect of her choice of opening two paragraphs (p. 3) with these closing events (pp. 350-370). How does the unfolding

of events seem natural for the story? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

10. Who is the mockingbird? Why do you believe such to be true? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Appendix B

The Book Thief

Sample Passages and Text-Dependent Questions

Big Questions:

What is a greater threat to humans: death or people themselves?
What makes words (spoken, written, etc.) so powerful?
Are selfishness and selflessness, courage and cowardice, really all that different?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.2 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.

RL.9-10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

RL.9-10.7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*).

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to analyze death from multiple media.
3. Students will be able to relate differing perspectives of death to their personal beliefs.

Materials:

Novel passage, 1 copy per student
"How the Grim Reaper Works", 1 copy per student
Self-Portrait with Death Playing the Fiddle, 1 copy per class
Khan Academy "Böcklin, Self-Portrait with Death Playing the Fiddle" Video, 1 per class
Video transcript, 1 copy per student

Passage #1 **"Prologue"-"Part Two, 100 Percent Pure German Sweat" (pp. 3-113)**

As I've been alluding to, my one saving grace is distraction. It keeps me sane. It helps me cope, considering the length of time I've been performing this job. The trouble is, who could ever replace me? Who could step in while I take a break in your stock-standard resort-style vacation destination, whether it be tropical or of the ski trip variety? The answer, of course, is nobody, which has prompted me to make a conscious, deliberate decision—to make distraction my vacation. Needles to say, I vacation in increments. In colors.

1

Still, it's possible that you might be asking, why does he even need a vacation? What does he need distraction *from?*

2

Which brings me to my next point.

3

It's the leftover humans.

4

The survivors.

5

They're the ones I can't stand to look at, although on many occasions I still fail. I deliberately seek out the colors to keep my mind off them, but now and then, I witness the ones who are left behind, crumbling among the jigsaw puzzle of realization, despair, and surprise. They have punctured hearts. They have beaten lungs.

6

Which in turn brings me to the subject I am telling you about tonight, or today, or whatever the hour and color. It's the story of one of those perpetual survivors—an expert at being left behind.

7

It's just a small story really, about, among other things:

8

*A girl

*Some words

*An accordionist

*Some fanatical Germans

*A Jewish fist fighter

*And quite a lot of thievery

9 I saw the book thief three times.

(Zusak, 2005, pp. 4-5)

How the Grim Reaper Works

by William Harris
Browse the article **How the Grim Reaper Works**

The Grim Reaper is one of the most recognizable figures around, but that doesn't mean anyone is happy to see him when he noiselessly appears.

Introduction to How the Grim Reaper Works

As the saying goes, nothing in life is certain except death and taxes. We know taxes well. There are forms, rates and codes. We circle April 15 on our calendars in bold, red strokes, making the day stand out like a swollen thumb. And, of course, in the United States, there's the Internal Revenue Service, which collected more than $2.4 trillion in revenue and processed more than 235 million tax returns in 2007 alone [source: Internal Revenue Service].

But what about death? For most of us, the other certainty of being human is not nearly so concrete. According to biologists, death is the total cessation of life processes that eventually occurs in all living things. Unfortunately, that definition doesn't paint a vivid picture. It doesn't tell us what it's like to die. What will it feel like? What will we see? What will we do? Where will we go?

Enter the **Grim Reaper**, the black-cloaked, scythe-wielding personification of death. We all know exactly who he is and what he wants. He comes for every person, hourglass in hand, waiting for the last grain of sand to fall. When it does, he collects the soul with a well-practiced cut of his razor-sharp blade. It may not be a pleasant image, but it is clear and unmistakable.

Ultimately, this is the "job" of the Grim Reaper -- to put a human face on the concept of death. But why did humans feel compelled to make the Grim Reaper, well, so grim? Why not make him a friendly and helpful guide to the underworld? And why, for that matter, does he have to be a guy?

We'll address all of these questions on the next few pages. We'll look at the origin of the Grim Reaper, the symbolism associated with his form and figure, and how he's represented in other cultures. We'll also examine how painters, writers and filmmakers have portrayed the Reaper in their works. When we're done, you'll know who the Grim Reaper is (should you spy him lurking by your deathbed), how he works and, most important, why he exists at all.

As Lewis Carroll once said, it's best to begin at the beginning. And for the Grim Reaper, the beginning can be found in the creation myths present in all cultures.

Not everyone's afraid of the Grim Reaper. A small religious sect that worships death is now fighting the Mexican government for recognition.

AP Photo/Marco Ugarte

Accepting Our Own Mortality

Before you can have the Grim Reaper -- a personification of death -- you have to have death itself. In almost all cultures and religions, humans were first created as immortal beings who fell from their state of perfection. The fall of Adam and Eve is the classic example, chronicled in the Bible. According to the Book of Genesis, God created Adam and Eve to take care of the world He had created and to populate the Earth. The first man and woman lived in the Garden of Eden, a perfect place. God told Adam to take care of the garden and harvest fruit from any tree -- except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Unfortunately, Satan, speaking through a serpent, tricked Eve into eating the fruit. She then took the fruit to Adam, who also ate it even though he knew it was wrong. As their punishment for disobeying God, Adam and Eve experienced both spiritual and physical death.

In other religions, humans were created as mortals who tried, but failed, to achieve immortality. The Epic of Gilgamesh tells this story. A product of Mesopotamian literature, Gilgamesh was the son of a goddess and a human king. Gilgamesh, however, remained just as mortal as any other man, including his best friend Enkidu. When Enkidu dies, the great hero becomes haunted by the prospect of death and sets out on a quest for immortality. His travels bring him to Utnapishtim, a human who has been allowed by the gods to live forever. Utnapishtim promises to grant

Gilgamesh immortality if the hero can stay awake for a week. Gilgamesh eventually falls asleep, but Utnapishtim still rewards him with a plant that has the power to rejuvenate its owner. On the journey home, a hungry snake devours the plant, ending any hope Gilgamesh has of becoming immortal.

In Mesopotamian legend, Gilgamesh returns home and happily accepts his life as a mortal man. Most humans, however, aren't so easygoing. We're troubled by the idea of our own mortality. Death is a constant shadow hanging over everything we do. Research bears this out. A 2007 survey found that 20 percent of Americans aged 50 and older become frightened when they think about what happens to them when they die. Fifty-three percent believe in the existence of spirits or ghosts; 73 percent in life after death [source: AARP].

Clearly, what happens as we die, as well as what happens after we die, is a major concern, as it has been for thousands of years. To make sense of dying and mortality, humans rely on a tried-and-true method: They give death a form they recognize. This turns an abstract, invisible phenomenon into something real and tangible. If you look at death and see a familiar face, you can understand it. If you look at death and see a kind, gentle face, even better -- you can put aside your fears.

Of course, it can work the other way. You can find a terrifying countenance when you look upon death. As we'll see in the next section, the frightening face of the Grim Reaper evolved after a particularly difficult time in human history.

PSYCHOPOMPS

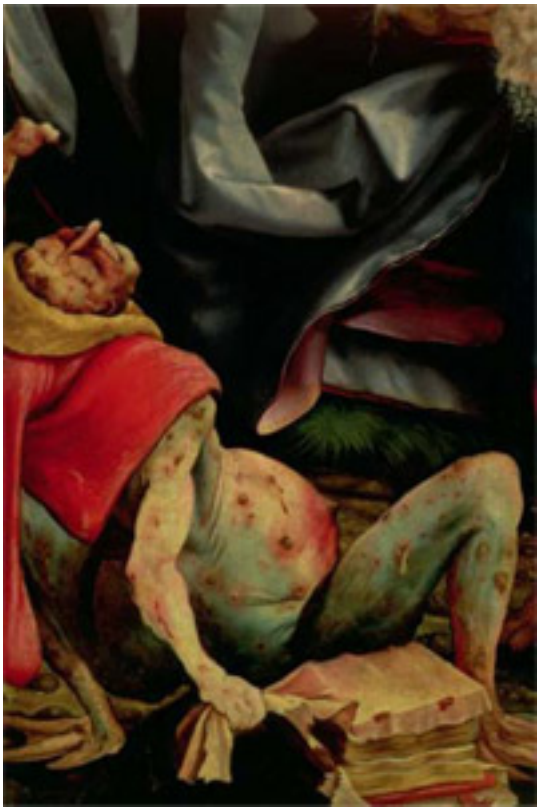
Sometimes, the task of escorting recently deceased souls to the afterlife falls not to human forms, but to animals known as psychopomps. Certain species of birds -- owls, sparrows, crows and whip-poor-wills -- appear frequently as psychopomps. "The Crow," a comic book story adapted into a 1994 film starring Brandon Lee, uses this concept to great effect.

Origin of the Grim Reaper

If you're going to give death a human face, why not make it friendly? That was the approach taken by the Greeks, who named death Thanatos. Thanatos was the twin brother of Hypnos, the god of sleep, and both were portrayed as young, pleasant men. In some illustrations, Thanatos appears with wings and an extinguishedflame. His job was to accompany the departed to Hades, the Greek underworld. There, Thanatos would deliver the souls to Charon, the ferryman on the River Styx. In this version, death isn't ugly and frightening, but attractive and helpful.

Feminine versions of death also occur. In Norse mythology, the Valkyries were beautiful young women who served both as Odin's messengers and as escorts to the souls of warriors killed in battle. In fact, Valkyries means "choosers of the slain." During battle, they would ride upon winged horses and, surveying the field, select brave warriors to die. Then they would transport these souls to Valhalla, Odin's hall. Once in the afterlife, the brave souls were enlisted to fight in the battle of Ragnarok, an apocalyptic conflict signaling the end of the world.

The Valkyries are reminiscent of angels, the spiritual intermediaries between God and humans. In some stories, angels carry messages to mortals or protect them from harm. In other stories, they



interact with the deceased, tormenting those who have sinned. The Angel of Death -- a spirit that extracts one's soul from the body at the moment of death -- appears in many religions and cultures. The archangels Michael and Gabriel have acted as angels of death in Judeo-Christian religion. Azrael is the Islamic Angel of Death, who sometimes appears as a horrifying spirit with eyes and tongues covering his entire body. Azrael maintains a massive ledger in which he records and erases the birth and death, respectively, of every soul in the world.

An artist's illustration of a man suffering from buboes and splotches during the medieval-era plague epidemic

Matthias Grunewald/Bridgeman Art Library/Getty Images

Friends for Life: The Grim Reaper and the Plague

Conceptually, the Angel of Death was firmly entrenched in European religion and culture by the time of the Middle Ages. But an epidemiological event occurred in the late 14th century that would forever change how the average person viewed, and responded to, death. That event was the medieval-era plague, one of the deadliest pandemics in human history. At least 25 million people died in the initial outbreak of the plague, and millions more continued to die in outbreaks that flared up for centuries [source: National Geographic]. Fear -- of dying, of the unknown pestilence, of the pain associated with the late stage of the disease, when the skin on a victim's extremities turned black and gangrenous -- gripped the entire continent. A general mood of morbidity hung over all activities and influenced writers and painters of the time.

Not surprisingly, death began to appear as a skeleton in artwork from this era. In fact, most artists portrayed the skeletal form of death in similar ways. He was often shown holding a dart, crossbow or some other weapon. Eventually, these implements would be replaced with a scythe, a mowing tool composed of a long curving blade fastened at an angle to a long handle. Many paintings showed death swinging the scythe through a crowd of people, mowing down souls as if they were grain. Sometimes, a young woman stood at death's side as a reminder of the link existing between life and death. Another popular notion was that death could interact with the living and tempt them to the grave. Hence the **Dance of Death**, or Danse Macabre, in which skeletons are shown dancing and cavorting with people from all walks of life.

The Grim Reaper was born from these post-plague visions of death. On the next page, we'll look at the meaning behind his form and figure.

Symbolism of the Grim Reaper

Everything about the Grim Reaper is imbued with meaning. The objects he carries, even the clothes he wears, tell us something about his nature and his intentions when he finally arrives. Let's look at some of the symbolism, item by item.

- **Skulls and skeletons**. As the plague swept through Europe and Asia, it wasn't uncommon to see stacks of rotting corpses. In the Great Plague of London, an outbreak that occurred between 1665 and 1666, one in five residents succumbed [source: National Geographic]. With death and dying such an integral part of daily life, it makes sense that artists and illustrators began to depict death as a corpse or a skeleton. The skeletal figure represents the decay of the earthly flesh, what's left after worms and maggots have done their work. It also reinforces one of the great human fears: the fear of obliteration.
- **Black cloak**. Black has long been associated with death and mourning. People wear black to funerals and transport the dead in black hearses. But black is also often the color of evil forces. The black cloak also gives the Reaper an air of mystery and menace. The things we can't see frighten us as much as the things we can see, so the Reaper hides within the shadows of his cloak, playing off our fears of the unknown.
- **Scythe**. In early renderings, the Reaper is shown holding arrows, darts, spears or crossbows. These are the weapons he uses to strike down his victim. Over time, a scythe came to replace these other instruments of death. A scythe was a tool used to reap, or cut, grain or grass. Bringing this imagery to death was a natural extension of an agrarian society in which harvesting, done in the fall, represented the death of another year. Just as we harvest our crops, so does death harvest souls for their journey into the afterlife.
- **Hourglass**. The classic hourglass has two glass bulbs containing sand that takes an hour to pour from the upper to the lower bulb. It's such a strong symbol for time and its passage that it has survived to the digital age, telling us to wait as our computer loads a Web page or performs a command. The Grim Reaper clutches an hourglass, too, letting us know that our days are numbered. When the sand runs out, our time is up. We can only hope that we have more than an hour left to live.

This image of the Grim Reaper was so pervasive that it even appeared in religious texts. The best example comes from the Bible's Book of Revelation. In Revelation 6:1-8, four horsemen appear to usher in calamities signaling the end of the world. The horsemen are Pestilence, War, Famine and Death. Of the four, only Death is explicitly named. He rides a pale horse, which is often interpreted as pale green, the color of disease and decay. In most depictions, Death is shown as the Reaper himself, black cloak framing a grinning skull and scythe held ready for the grisly work ahead.

Today, the Grim Reaper remains fertile ground for storytellers. In the next section, we'll look at some examples of how the Reaper appears in popular culture.

Protesters often don a Grim Reaper costume to make a point. This one is demonstrating against the presence of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank during a rally in the Philippines in October 2004.

AP Photo/Bullit Marquez

The Grim Reaper in Popular Culture

No doubt, the Grim Reaper makes a great character, which is why he has appeared in stories and legends for centuries. One archetypal story -- the "cheating death" story -- tells of a person trying to trick the Reaper in an effort to escape death. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "The Legend of Rabbi Ben Levi" is a classic example. In Longfellow's poem, death comes for the holy man with a grim announcement: "Lo! the time draws near/When thou must die." The rabbi asks if he can hold death's sword. Death hands the weapon to the rabbi, who quickly runs and hides until God can intervene on his behalf. God appears and spares Ben Levi's life, but tells the rabbi to return the sword to its rightful owner.

Other seminal works have solidified our modern view of the Reaper, such as the Danse Macabre, or Dance of Death, a type of play that emerged in the wake of the Black Death. The purpose of these plays was to prepare churchgoers for the inevitability of death. The play usually took place in a cemetery or churchyard and dramatized a victim's meeting with death, personified as a skeleton. The victim provides several arguments why his life should be spared, but these are found insufficient and death, accompanied by an entourage of other skeletal figures, finally leads him away. The scenes of this play became popular subjects for several German engravers, including Bernt Notke and Hans Holbein. The prints of these artists showed skeletons dancing

among persons from all walks of life -- a lesson that no one, not even royalty, could escape death.

In the modern era, "The Seventh Seal" by Ingmar Bergman has been just as influential. The 1957 film tells of Antonius Block (played by Max von Sydow), a knight who returns from the Crusades to find that the plague has killed many of his countrymen. Death (played by Bengt Ekerot) waits for Block, as well. Stalling, the knight challenges Death to a chess match, which Block eventually loses. Although the story is haunting, it is the image of Ekerot's Death -- ominous white face hidden beneath a black cloak -- that endures so vividly.

The Grim Reaper also plays a key role in the following works:

- "(Don't Fear) The Reaper," a song released by Blue Öyster Cult in 1976 and now regarded as a rock classic
- "Because I could not stop for Death," a poem by Emily Dickinson, in which the narrator shares a carriage ride with Death
- "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens, in which the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, cloaked and skeletal, appears to show Scrooge how he will die
- The Discworld novels by Terry Pratchett, which feature Death as an ally of mankind
- The Sandman by Neil Gaiman, a groundbreaking series of comic books in which Death appears as a girl
- "Death Takes a Holiday," a 1934 film about Death's decision to take a break from his normal business to see what it's like being mortal; a 1998 remake, "Meet Joe Black," starred Brad Pitt in the role of Death.
- "Scream," a 1996 homage to slasher flicks in which a murderous teen stalks his victims in a Reaper-like costume
- "Dead Like Me," a Showtime series that explores the lives (or afterlives) of a group of grim reapers who walk among the living

Funny or scary, man or woman, the Grim Reaper will likely remain a staple of our pop culture diets. But even if storytellers grow tired of dealing with death and dying, the Reaper will wait patiently in the shadows -- and come for each of us in the end.

Lots More Information

Related HowStuffWorks Articles

- How Dying Works
- Can you really scare someone to death?
- What makes graveyards scary?
- Is there a worst way to die?
- Has science explained life after death?
- 10 Worst Epidemics

- How the Black Death Worked
- How Plague Works
- How Near-death Experiences Work
- How Ghosts Work
- How Exorcism Works
- How Autopsies Work

More Great Links

- Death: The Last Taboo
- End of Life on AARP
- Grim Reaper on Urban Dictionary
- Encyclopedia of Death and Dying

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(Harris, 2009)

Khan Academy "Böcklin, Self-Portrait with Death Playing the Fiddle" Transcript

0:00 (piano music playing)

0:05 Steven: Usually, when you look at a self-portrait

0:07 you see an artist staring directly at himself in a mirror,

0:10 but in Self-Portrait with Death by Böcklin,

0:12 he seems not so much to be looking, as listening.

0:16 Female: That menacing figure of death is

0:19 not only playing the violin,

0:20 but seems to be whispering something in his ear.

0:23 Steven: He seems ecstatic, where you can see clearly

0:26 the skull, with all of its teeth, that seems to be smiling demonically.

0:29 Female: Grinning, I would say.

0:30 Steven: Yeah, eager and rather excited.

0:33 We see that claw-like hand of bones

0:36 that clutches the bow.

0:37 and the violin is being played,

0:39 but it's being played on a single remaining string,

0:42 as if Böcklin has only that one string to go.

0:45 It seems so final.

0:47 Female: Death knows he's won here.

0:50 Steven: Art outlasts the life of the artist

0:52 and so there's something very self-conscious about

0:54 the act of making a work of art and especially about

0:57 making a self-portrait.

0:59 Female: That sense of death is present in portraits,

1:02 generally, not just in self-portraits.

1:05 Portraits can make the dead alive,

1:09 so I think often when we look at portraits,

1:11 we have a sense of going back in time

1:13 of looking at someone who has lived.

1:16 But you're right, it's certainly more poignant

1:18 in self-portraits, especially in the way that Böcklin

1:22 has collapsed the space here.

1:24 Steven: The personification of death, that skeleton,

1:27 is so intimate. It's so close.

1:29 You said "whispering in his ear",

1:31 it's almost as if Böcklin can literally feel his breath,

1:34 if there was such a thing.

1:35 Female: The artist, himself, is very close to us.

1:38 His palette is half in our space.

1:40 Steven: And you see the raw paint,

1:42 it's a depiction of paint made of itself,

1:45 that speaks to the lie of painting.

1:47 The raw materials that make up this painting

1:49 are made present.

1:51 Female: Made honest.

1:52 Steven: Made honest. That's right.

1:54 Stripping away the veils of our life, the veils of society.

1:58 The palette and the raw depiction of the paint

2:00 is a kind of reminder of the essential.

2:03 Böcklin is showing us both the flesh and blood

2:06 representation of the artist of the man

2:08 clothed in the fashions of his day,

2:11 but then he also shows us this skeleton,

2:13 in a sense this essence of what he will become.

2:16 The painting as a whole is beautifully manipulated

2:19 to show us the illusion of these figures,

2:21 but then it's also laid bare.

2:24 Female: The idea of man returning to dust,

2:27 from which he was created.

2:28 That's what I was reminded of when you

2:30 talked about the materiality of the paint.

2:33 Steven: He's holding a rag under his thumb.

2:35 Female: To wipe his brush.

2:36 Steven: To wipe his brush,

2:37 but the way that death wipes us all away.

2:39 There is this wonderful way in which

2:42 the act of painting is echoed by the way in which

2:45

death transforms us.

2:47 (piano music playing)

(Harris & Zucker, 2015)

Corresponding video: Smarthistory, 2012

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* of each of these passages.
2. Does the narrator of *The Book Thief* ever explicitly identify himself in this passage? How do we come to understand who(what) the narrator actually is? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. What is unexpected, or contradictory, to what we would expect from the narrator of *The Book Thief*? Consider thoughts, understandings, behaviors, etc. and cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. What does the narrator mean by "perpetual survivors—an expert at being left behind" (p. 5)? What is the narrator implying is his ultimate goal? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. Does the personification of Death in Böcklin's painting accurately represent the narrator of Zusak's novel? Why or why not? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. Böcklin is a symbolist painter meaning that he paints to portray mythological figures with classical, realistic elements to create a strange combination of reality and fantasy. How can we see this movement present within *Self-Portrait with Death Playing the Fiddle*? Make specific references to the painting to support your answer.
7. Looking at the mystery and story surrounding the Grim Reaper, what makes death such a scary prospect for people? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. Each of these different texts comes from a different culture. Markus Zusak is an Australian author, the Grim Reaper emerges from a Christian European mindset, and Arnold Böcklin is a painter from Switzerland. What does each of these three perspectives on death have in common? Cite specific examples from the respective works to support your answer.
9. Each of these different texts comes from a different culture. Markus Zusak is an Australian author, the Grim Reaper emerges from a Christian European mindset, and Arnold Böcklin is a painter from Switzerland. How does each of these three perspectives on death differ from another? Cite specific examples from the respective works to support your answer.
10. What is your personal understanding of death and how it affects the human race? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Big Questions:
What is a greater threat to humans: death or people themselves?
What makes words (spoken, written, etc.) so powerful?
Are selfishness and selflessness, courage and cowardice, really all that different?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.2 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.

RL.9-10.3 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.

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to differentiate the perspectives of each of the characters when examining Max's arrival to the Hubermann household.
3. Students will be able to explain how each of the characters is affected by Max's presence.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student

***Passage #2* "Part Two, The Gates of Thievery"-**
"Part Four, The Swapping of Nightmares (pp. 114-222)

Max Vandenburg promised that he would never sleep in Liesel's room again. What

1 was he thinking that first night? The very idea of it mortified him.

He rationalized that he was so bewildered upon his arrival that he allowed such a

2 thing. The basement was the only place for him as far as he was concerned. Forget the cold and the loneliness. He was a Jew, and if there was one place he was

destined to exist, it was a basement or any other such hidden venue of survival.

"I'm sorry," he confessed to Hans and Rosa on the basement steps. "From now

3 on I will stay down here. You will not hear from me. I will not make a sound."

Hans and Rosa, both steeped in the despair of the predicament, made no argument, not even in regard to the cold. They heaved blankets down and topped up

4 the kerosene lamp. Rosa admitted that there could not be much food, to which Max fervently asked her to bring only scraps, and only when they were not wanted by anyone else.

5 "Na, na," Rosa assured him. "You will be fed, as best I can."

They also took the mattress down, from the spare bed in Liesel's room, replacing

6 it with drop sheets—an excellent trade.

(Zusak, 2005, p. 207)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the events of the passage, paying specific attention to the circumstances under which they are taking place.
2. *The basement was the only place for him as far as he was concerned. Forget the cold and the loneliness. He was a Jew, and if there was one place he was destined to exist, it was a basement or any other such hidden venue of survival.* (p. 207) What are two potential meanings for "exist" (p. 207) as used in this passage? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. Based on the interpretations of "exist" (p. 207) from above, which interpretation do you think is held by Hans and Rosa? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. Conversely, which interpretation of "exist" (p. 207) do you think is held by Max? Cite specific examples from text to support your answer.
5. What does Max's arrival to his house mean for Hans Hubermann? Consider his role as a husband and father, business owner, and German. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. What does Max's arrival to her house mean for Rosa Hubermann? Consider her role as a wife and mother, homemaker, and German. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

7. What does Max's arrival to the Hubermann house mean for Max himself? Consider his role as an unmarried man, houseguest, and Jew. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. Although she is not explicitly mentioned in this passage, Liesel is profoundly affected by Max's arrival to her home. What does his arrival mean for Liesel? Consider her role as a daughter, child, and German. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. Both division and unity are present in this scene from the Hubermann household. Although division and unity may be considered only contradictory, they are actually both quite related. How do we see division and unity complementing each other in this scene with Hans, Rosa, and Max? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
10. Words, though they be Hitler's, put Max into this compromising situation. How do Max's own words demonstrate an understanding of his current position in German society, but also a will to overcome and survive? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Big Questions:
What is a greater threat to humans: death or people themselves?
What makes words (spoken, written, etc.) so powerful?
Are selfishness and selflessness, courage and cowardice, really all that different?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.3 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.

RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to describe the impact of the boxing match on the external understanding of Max and his development as a character.
3. Students will be able to explain the rhetoric and resulting impact of Hitler's monologue on the reader's understanding of Max and his development as a character.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #3 **"Part Four, Pages from the Basement"- "Part Six, Fresh Air, An Old Nightmare, and What to Do with a Jewish Corpse (pp. 223-335)**

"He's given up," someone whispered, but within moments, Adolf Hitler was

1 standing on the ropes, and he was addressing the arena.

"My fellow Germans," he called, "you can see something here tonight, can't you?" Bare-chested, victory-eyed, he pointed over at Max. "You can see that what

2 we face is something far more sinister and powerful than we ever imagined. Can you see that?"

3 They answered. "Yes, *Führer*."

"Can you see that this enemy has found its ways—its despicable ways—through our armor, and that clearly, I cannot stand up here alone and fight him?" The words were visible. They dropped from his mouth like jewels. "Look at him! Take a good look." They looked. At the bloodied Max Vandenburg. "As we speak, he is plotting his way into your neighborhood. He's moving in next door. He's infesting you with his family and he's about to take you over. He—" Hitler glanced at him a moment, with disgust. "He will soon own you, until it is he who stands not at the counter of

4 your grocery shop, but sits in the back, smoking his pipe. Before you know it, you'll be working for him at minimum wage while he can hardly walk from the weight in his pockets. Will you simply stand there and let him do this? Will you stand by as your leaders did in the past, whey they gave your land to everybody else, when they sold your country for the price of a few signatures? Will you stand out there, powerless? Or"—and now he stepped one rung higher—"will you climb up into this ring with me?"

5 Max shook. Horror stuttered in his stomach.

Adolf admonished him. "Will you climb in here so that we can defeat this enemy

6 together?"

In the basement of 33 Himmel Street, Max Vandenburg could feel the fists of an entire nation. One by one they climbed into the ring and beat him down. They made
7 him bleed. They let him suffer. Millions of them—until one last time, when he gathered himself to his feet…

He watched the next person climb through the ropes. It was a girl, and as she
8 slowly crossed the canvas, he noticed a tear torn down her left cheek. In her right hand was a newspaper.

9 "The crossword," she gently said, "is empty," as she held it out to him.

10 Dark.

11 Nothing but dark now.

12 Just basement. Just Jew.

(Zusak, 2005, pp. 254-255)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the passage, paying specific attention to the location of events.
2. Describe the tone of this passage. How does the tone affect the reader's understanding of the setting? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. Distinguish which parts of this scene would be able to be observed by another person and which parts of this scene would be able to be seen only by Max. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. Does this scene make Max seem like a stronger person or a weaker person? Why? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. What does being able to see this boxing experience do for the readers? How does it help us to better understand Max and his struggles as a character in *The Book Thief*? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. Hitler's speech makes incredibly strong appeals to the pathos of its audience. Max is the sole member of this audience. How does Hitler's speech affect him as a young man? As a Jew? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. Conversely, Hitler's speech would also have a strong appeal to the pathos of a German audience. Although they did not directly observe this particular speech, how would the Hubermanns react to Hitler's words? Would their reaction be the

same as other Germans? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

8. Understanding both Max's and the Hubermanns' responses to Hitler's speech, should the Hubermanns be commended or shamed for their choice to hide Max? Consider their responsibility as citizens of Germany as well as members of the human race. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. How is Liesel's crossword a literal gift of words for Max? What will the crossword allow him to do? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
10. The scene closes with the following words:

    "Nothing but dark now.
    Just basement. Just Jew." (p. 255)

    How do these words simultaneously bring closure to both Max and the reader as well as propel each of them forward to the rest of the story? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Big Questions:
What is a greater threat to humans: death or people themselves?
What makes words (spoken, written, etc.) so powerful?
Are selfishness and selflessness, courage and cowardice, really all that different?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.2 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.

RL.9-10.3 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.

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By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast Death's perspective with the humans' perspectives and explain the implications of each.
3. Students will be able to critique the roles of death and humans in suffering and anguish.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #4 "Part Six, Death's Diary: Cologne"- "Part Eight, The Bread Eaters (pp. 336-441)

1 The fallen hours of May 30.

I'm sure Liesel Meminger was fast asleep when more than a thousand bomber planes flew toward a place known as Köln. For me, the result was five hundred

2 people or thereabouts. Fifty thousand others ambled homelessly around the ghostly piles of rubble, trying to work out which way was which, and which slabs of broken

home belonged to whom.

3 Five hundred souls.

I carried them in my fingers, like suitcases. Or I'd throw them over my shoulder.

4 It was only the children I carried in my arms.

By the time I was finished, the sky was yellow, like burning newspaper. If I looked closely, I could see the words, reporting headlines, commentating on the progress of

5 the war and so forth. How I'd have loved to pull it all down, to screw up the newspaper sky and toss it away. My arms ached and I couldn't afford to burn my fingers. There was still so much work to be done.

As you might expect, many people died instantly. Others took a while longer. There were several more places to go, skies to meet and souls to collect, and when I came

6 back to Cologne later on, not long after the final planes, I managed to notice a most unique thing.

I was carrying the charred soul of a teenager when I looked gravely up at what

7 was now a sulfuric sky. A group of ten-year-old girls was close by. One of them called out.

8 "What's that?"

Her arm extended and her finger pointed out the black, slow object, falling from

9 above. It began as a black feather, lilting, floating. Or a piece of ash. Then it grew larger. The same girl—a redhead with period freckles—spoke once again, this time

more emphatically. “What *is* that?”

“It’s a body,” another girl suggested. Black hair, pigtails, and a crooked part
10 down the center.

“It’s another bomb!”
11

It was too slow to be a bomb.
12

With the adolescent spirit still burning lightly in my arms, I walked a few hundred meters with the rest of them. Like the girls, I remained focused on the sky.
13 The last thing I wanted was to look down at the stranded face of my teenager. A pretty girl. Her whole death was now ahead of her.

Like the rest of them, I was taken aback when a voice lunged out. It was a
14 disgruntled father, ordering his kids inside. The redhead reacted. Her freckles lengthened into commas. “But, Papa, look.”

The man took several small steps and soon figured out what it was. “It’s the
15 fuel,” he said.

“What do you mean?”
16

“The fuel,” he repeated. “The tank.” He was a bald man in disrupted bedclothes.
17 “They used up all their fuel in that one and got rid of the empty container. Look, there’s another one over there.”

“And there!”
18

Kids being kids, they all searched frantically at that point, trying to find an empty
19 fuel container floating to the ground.

The first one landed with a hollow thud.
20

21 “Can we keep it, Papa?”

“No.” He was bombed and shocked, this papa, and clearly not in the mood. “We

22 cannot keep it.”

23 “Why not?”

24 “I’m going to ask my papa if *I* can have it,” said another of the girls.

25 “Me too.”

Just past the rubble of Cologne, a group of kids collected empty fuel containers,

26 dropped by their enemies. As usual, I collected humans. I was tired. And the year wasn’t even halfway over yet.

(Zusak, 2005, pp.336-338)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the events of the passage, paying specific attention to the circumstances under which it is taking place.
2. What is the tone of this passage? How does Death show that through his narration? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. What are the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, etc. of May 30’s events as seen by the residents of Cologne? What does this show about what war has done, in this case, to human existence? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. What are the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, etc. of May 30’s events as seen by Death himself? As a result, what does Death think of the human race? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. What is shown about the children when they are seeking to use the fuel tanks as their toys? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. Why does Death treat the souls differently? What does this show about his character? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. Focusing on this specific passage, who are the “good guys” and who are the “bad guys” in the war? Can “good” and “bad” be objectively defined in this case? What about in the larger context of the war? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. Who is suffering the most in this passage? How? Why? What about in the entirety of the novel? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

9. As the narrator, has Death shown himself to be more courageous or cowardice? How does this complement or contradict what we would expect from him as the narrator? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
10. Based on this passage and what we have read so far in the novel, what is the greater threat to humans: death or ourselves? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Big Questions:
What is a greater threat to humans: death or people themselves?
What makes words (spoken, written, etc.) so powerful?
Are selfishness and selflessness, courage and cowardice, really all that different?

Standards:

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text.

RL.9-10.2 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.

RL.9-10.3 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.

RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to determine and defend whether death or people are greater threats to the human race.
3. Students will be able to defend the courage and/or cowardice and selfishness and/or selflessness of the main characters as they appear at the end of the novel.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #5 "Part Eight, The Hidden Sketchbook"- "Epilogue, The Handover Man (pp. 442-550)

Yes, I have seen a great many things in this world. I attend the greatest disasters and

1 work for the greatest villains.

2 But then there are other moments.

There's a multitude of stories (a mere handful, as I have previously suggested) that I allow to distract me as I work, just as the colors do. I pick them up in the
3 unluckiest, unlikeliest places and I make sure to remember them as I go about my work. *The Book Thief* is one such story.

When I traveled to Sydney and took Liesel away, I was finally able to do something
4 I'd be waiting on for a long time. I put her down and we walked along Anzac Avenue, near the soccer field, and I pulled a dusty black book from my pocket.

The old woman was astonished. She took it in her hand and said, "Is this really
5 it?"

6 I nodded.

With great trepidation, she opened *The Book Thief* and turned the pages. "I can't believe…" Even though the text had faded, she was able to read her words. The
7 fingers of her soul touched the story that was written so long ago in her Himmel Street basement.

8 She sat down on the curb, and I joined her.

"Did you read it?" she asked, but she did not look at me. Her eyes were fixed to
9 the words.

10 I nodded. "Many times."

11 "Could you understand it?"

12 And at that point, there was a great pause.

13 A few cars drove by, each way. Their drivers were Hitlers and Hubermanns, and

Maxes, killers, Dillers, and Steiners….

I wanted to tell the book thief many things, about beauty and brutality. But what could I tell her about those things that she didn't already know? I wanted to explain

14 that I am constantly overestimating and underestimating the human race—that rarely do I ever simply *estimate* it. I wanted to ask her how the same thing could be so ugly and so glorious, and its words and stories so damning and brilliant.

15 None of those things, however, came out of my mouth.

All I was able to do was turn to Liesel Meminger and tell her the only truth I truly

16 know. I said it to the book thief and I say it now to you.

*****A LAST NOTE FROM YOUR NARRATOR*****

17

I am haunted by humans.

(Zusak, 2005, pp. 549-550)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the events of the passage, paying specific attention to the circumstances under which they are taking place.
2. What is the tone of this passage? How does the narrator use specific works to evoke such a feeling in the reader? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. How does the author's choice to end the story with this specific scene both bring closure to the story as well as propel the reader forward, past the boundaries of the novel?
4. Ultimately, did Hans Hubermann display courage and/or cowardice as well as selfishness and/or selflessness in his life? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. Ultimately, did Rosa Hubermann display courage and/or cowardice as well as selfishness and/or selflessness in her life? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. Ultimately, did Liesel Hubermann display courage and/or cowardice as well as selfishness and/or selflessness in her life? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

7. Ultimately, did Max Vandenburg display courage and/or cowardice as well as selfishness and/or selflessness in her life? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. Ultimately, did Death display courage and/or cowardice as well as selfishness and/or selflessness in his life? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. Conclude why Death is haunted by humans. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
10. After reading the entirety of the novel, what is the greater threat to humans: death or ourselves? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Appendix C

The Scarlet Letter

Sample Passages and Text-Dependent Questions

Big Questions:

Who has influence over individual identity?
Can a hero have shortcomings and/or faults?
Why can human beings be harder on themselves than others are on them?

Standards:

RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to explain the circumstances under which *The Scarlet Letter* came to exist.
3. Students will be able to analyze the author's ethos based on the circumstances under which *The Scarlet Letter* was written.

Materials:

Novel passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #1 The Custom-House (pp. 3-45)

But the object that most drew my attention, in the mysterious package, was a certain affair of fine red cloth, much worn and faded. There were traces about it of gold embroidery, which, however, was greatly frayed and defaced; so that none, or very little, of the glitter was left. It had been wrought, as was easy to perceive, with wonderful skill of needlework; and the stitch (as I am assured by ladies conversant

1

with such mysteries) gives evidence of a now forgotten art, not to be recovered even by the process of picking out the threads. This rag of scarlet cloth,–for time, and wear, and a sacrilegious moth, had reduced it to little other than a rag,–on careful examination, assumed the shape of a letter. It was the capital letter A. By an accurate measurement, each limb proved to be precisely three inches and a quarter in length. It had been intended, there could be no doubt, as an ornamental article of dress; but how it was to be worn, or what rank, honor, and dignity, in by-past times, were signified by it, was a riddle which (so evanescent are the fashions of the world in these particulars) I saw little hope of solving. And yet it strangely interested me. My eyes fastened themselves upon the old scarlet letter, and would not be turned aside. Certainly, there was some deep meaning in it, most worthy of interpretation, and which, as it were, streamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of mind.

While thus perplexed,–and cogitating, among other hypotheses, whether the letter might not have been one of those decorations which the white men used to contrive, in order to take the eyes of Indians,–I happened to place it on my breast. It seemed to

2 me,–the reader may smile, but must not doubt my word,–it seemed to me, then, that I experienced a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of burning heat; and as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron. I shuddered, and involuntarily let it fall upon the floor.

In the absorbing contemplation of the scarlet letter, I had hitherto neglected to

3 examine a small roll of dingy paper, around which it had been twisted. This I now

opened, and had the satisfaction to find, recorded by the old Surveyor's pen, a reasonably complete explanation of the whole affair. There were several foolscap sheets, containing many particulars respecting the life and conversation of one Hester Prynne, who appeared to have been rather a noteworthy personage in the view of our ancestors. She had flourished during a period between the early days of Massachusetts and the close of the seventeenth century. Aged persons, alive in the time of Mr. Surveyor Pue, and from whose oral testimony he had made up his narrative, remembered her, in their youth, as a very old, but not decrepit woman, of a stately and solemn aspect. It had been her habit, from an almost immemorial date, to go about the country as a kind of voluntary nurse, and doing whatever miscellaneous good she might; taking upon herself, likewise, to give advice in all matters, especially those of the heart; by which means, as a person of such propensities inevitably must, she gained from many people the reverence due to an angel, but, I should imagine, was looked upon by others as an intruder and a nuisance. Prying farther into the manuscript, I found the record of other doings and sufferings of this singular woman, for most of which the reader is referred to the story entitled "THE SCARLET LETTER"; and it should be borne carefully in mind, that the main facts of that story are authorized and authenticated by the document of Mr. Surveyor Pue. The original papers, together with the scarlet letter itself,–a most curious relic,–are still in my possession, and shall be freely exhibited to whomsoever, induced by the great interest of the narrative, may desire a sight of them. I must not be understood as affirming, that, in the dressing up of the tale, and imagining the motives and

modes of passion that influenced the characters who figure in it, I have invariably confined myself within the limits of the old Surveyor's half a dozen sheets of foolscap. On the contrary, I have allowed myself, as to such points, nearly or altogether as much license as if the facts had been entirely of my own invention. What I contend for is the authenticity of the outline.

This incident recalled my mind, in some degree, to its old track. There seemed to

4 be here the groundwork of a tale…

(Hawthorne & Harding, 1998, pp. 31-33)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the passage.
2. Who is the narrator of this novel? Is he the same as the author? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer
3. What did the narrator find that led him to learn about Hester Prynne? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. Describe the scarlet letter. What is distinctive about the letter according to the narrator? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. Who is Hester Prynne? Was she a real woman? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. Consider the Hester Prynne as described in the text. What is she known for in her community? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. What is the time frame given for when Hester Prynne lived? What do we know about America and its society at that time? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. Who is Surveyor Pue? What role does he play in this story? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. Is the narrator protective of his novel's documentation or is he wiling to share it with others? How could this affect the author's ethos? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
10. Is *The Scarlet Letter* fact or fiction? Explain how the narrator came to write the story. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Big Questions:
Who has influence over individual identity?
Can a hero have shortcomings and/or faults?
Why can human beings be harder on themselves than others are on them?

Standards:

RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where the story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passages.
2. Students will be able to analyze Hester as a character in the novel as well as a Biblical woman.
3. Students will be able to justify the author's choice to portray Hester in such an intimate manner so early in the book.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student
Scriptural passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #2 Chapters I-VII (pp. 47-107)

When the young woman—the mother of this child—stood fully revealed before the crowd, it seemed to be her first impulse to clasp the infant closely to her bosom;

1 not so much by an impulse of motherly affection, as that she might thereby conceal a certain token, which was wrought or fastened into her dress. In a moment, however,

wisely judging that one token of her shame would but poorly serve to hide another, she took the baby on her arm, and, with a burning blush, and yet a haughty smile, and a glance that would not be abashed, looked around at her townspeople and neighbours. On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore; and which was of a splendor in accordance with the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony.

The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance, on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes. She was lady-like, too, after the manner of the feminine gentility of those days; characterized by a certain state and dignity, rather than by the delicate, evanescent, and indescribable grace, which is now recognized as its indication. And never had Hester Prynne appeared more lady-like, in the antique interpretation of the term, than as she issued from the prison. Those who had before known her, and had expected to behold her dimmed and obscured by a disastrous cloud, were astonished, and even startled, to perceive how her beauty shone out, and made a halo of the misfortune and ignominy in which she was enveloped. It may be true, that, to a sensitive observer, there was something exquisitely painful in it. Her attire, which,

2

indeed, she had wrought for the occasion, in prison, and had modelled much after her own fancy, seemed to express the attitude of her spirit, the desperate recklessness of her mood, by its wild and picturesque peculiarity. But the point which drew all eyes, and, as it were, transfigured by the wearer,—so that both men and women, who had been familiarly acquainted with Hester Prynne, were not impressed as if they beheld her for the first time,—was that SCARLET LETTER, so fantastically embroidered and illuminated upon her bosom. It had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and inclosing her in a sphere by herself.

(Hawthorne & Harding, 1998, pp. 52-54)

"Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character"

10 A wife of noble character who can
find?
She is worth far more than rubies.

11 Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.

12 She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.

13 She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.

14 She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.

15 She gets up while it is still dark;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her servant girls.

16 She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earning she plants a
vineyard.

17 She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.

18 She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at
night.

19 In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her
fingers.

20 She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.

21 When it snows, she has no fear for her
household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

22 She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and
purple.

23 Her husband is respected at the city
gate,
where he takes his seat among the
elders of the land.

24 She makes linen garments and sells
them,
and supplies the merchants with sashes.

25 She is clothed with strength and
dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.

26 She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her
tongue.

27 She watches over the affairs of her
household
and does not eat the bread of
idleness.

28 Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:

29 "Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all."

30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is
fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is
to be praised.

31 Give her the reward she has earned,
and let her works bring her praise at
the city gate.

(Proverbs 31:10-31 [New International Version])

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize each of these passages, paying specific attention to the circumstances under which each exists.
2. How does the excerpt from *The Scarlet Letter* relate to the text from Proverbs 31? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
3. Why would the author choose to focus on Hester so intensely at this point in the novel?
4. What are the specific descriptions and attributes we are given of Hester in this piece of text? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. How does Proverbs 31 identify a noble wife? What are some of the characteristics and actions that deem her as such? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. Although the character of Hester is still being revealed and established within the novel, how does Hester so far complement the ideal of a Biblical wife? How does she refute the notion? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
7. The text speaks of Hester, "…wisely judging that one token of her shame would be poorly serve to hide another…" (p. 52), having her sin revealed to the community in a very public way. Should one of her "tokens of shame" (p. 52) bring more disgrace than the other? Why or why not? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. What does the Puritan society assign to Hester as her identity? How does Hester behave towards the label placed upon her? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
9. How is society exerting influence over Hester's identity for the reader? How does that effect his or her perception of Hester? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
10. How does the setting of this scene influence the reader's perception and understanding of Hester? How could a change of scenery (i.e., a church or a

home) effect a reader's reaction to an identical description of character, circumstances, etc.? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Big Questions:
Who has influence over individual identity?
Can a hero have shortcomings and/or faults?
Why can human beings be harder on themselves than others are on them?

Standards:

RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2 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.

RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:
1. Students will be able to summarize the passage.
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast the ideas of personal guilt and societal expectations in terms of manifestation and representation in various characters' behaviors, specifically Mr. Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth.
3. Students will be able to describe how the setting of this specific scene affects the story aesthetically.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #3 Chapters VIII-XII (pp. 108-158)

Nothing was more common, in those days, than to interpret all meteoric

appearances, and other natural phenomena, that occurred with less regularity than

1 the rise and set of sun and moon, as so many revelations from a supernatural

source…

We impute it, therefore, solely to the disease in his own eye and heart, that the minister, looking upward to the zenith, beheld there the appearance of an immense letter,—the letter A,—marked out in lines of dull red light. Not but the meteor may
2 have shown itself at that point, burning duskily through a veil of cloud; but with no such shape as his guilty imagination gave it; or, at least, with so little definiteness, that another's guilt might have seen another symbol in it.

There was a singular circumstance that characterized Mr. Dimmesdale's psychological state, at this moment. All the time that he gazed upward to the zenith, he was, nevertheless, perfectly aware that little Pearl was pointing her finger towards old Roger Chillingworth, who stood at no great distance from the scaffold. The minister appeared to see him, with the same glance that discerned the miraculous letter. To his features, as to all other objects, the meteoric light imparted a new expression; or it might well be that the physician was not careful then, as at all other
3 times, to hide the malevolence with which he looked upon his victim. Certainly, if the meteor kindled up the sky, and disclosed the earth, with an awfulness that admonished Hester Prynne and the clergyman of the day of judgment, then might Roger Chillingworth have passed with them for the arch-fiend, standing there, with a smile and a scowl, to claim his own. So vivid was the expression, or so intense the minister's perception of it, that it seemed still to remain painted on the darkness, after the meteor had vanished, with an effect as if the street and all things else were at once annihilated.

(Hawthorne & Harding, 1998, pp. 154-156)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize the passage. Consider especially the setting and circumstances of the passage.
2. How does Mr. Dimmesdale's reaction to the meteor support the general understanding of natural phenomena during his day? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. What really was the cause of Mr. Dimmesdale seeing things as he did? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. What do Pearl's actions during this time suggest about Mr. Dimmesdale's behavior and reaction? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. What is appropriate about Roger Chillingworth's appearance in this scene, especially the way by which he comes to interact with the other characters? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. How do both the time and place of this scene affect a reader's reaction to the situation? Consider also the recent death in the community and how this could have affected the individual characters. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. Roger Chillingworth holds a double investment in this situation. Explain his connections to the situation and how this specific scene brings him resolution in his pursuits. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
8. Mr. Dimmesdale's personal guilt has taken a heavy toll on him, especially in regards to his health. In what way(s) is this particular evening the climax of his guilt? Does he find release from his personal burden or does it come to weigh even more heavily upon him? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
9. Is Mr. Dimmesdale's burden one that society has placed upon him at all or has he placed it entirely upon himself? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
10. What role does Roger Chillingworth play in Mr. Dimmesdale's situation as an individual? Even though Chillingworth is only one person, he also maintains influence as part of the greater society. Explore both notions, citing specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Big Questions:
Who has influence over individual identity?
Can a hero have shortcomings and/or faults?
Why can human beings be harder on themselves than others are on them?

Standards:

RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2 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.

RL.11-12.9 Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

RL.11-12.10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:
1. Students will be able to summarize the passages.
2. Students will be able to explain the role of individual sin in the novel and the sermon, respectively.
3. Students will be able to explain Dimmesdale's response to sin as a Puritan, as a minister, and as a Christian, using both texts as references.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student
Sermon passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #4 Chapters XIII-XIX (pp. 159-213)

"The people reverence thee," said Hester. "And surely thou workest good among

1 them! Doth this bring thee no comfort?"

"More misery, Hester!—only the more misery!" answered the clergyman, with a

2 bitter smile. "As concerns the good which I may appear to do, I have no faith in it. It

must needs be a delusion. What can a ruined soul, like mine, effect towards the redemption of other souls?—or a polluted soul, towards their purification? And as for the people's reverence, would that it were turned to scorn and hatred! Canst thou deem it, Hester, a consolation, that I must stand up in my pulpit, and meet so many eyes turned upward to my face, as if the light of heaven were beaming from it!—must see my flock hungry for the truth, and listening to my words as if a tongue of Pentecost were speaking!—and then look inward, and discern the black reality of what they idolize? I have laughed, in bitterness and agony of heart, at the contrast between what I seem and what I am! And Satan laughs at it!"

"You wrong yourself in this," said Hester, gently. "You have deeply and sorely repented. Your sin is left behind you, in the days long past. Your present life is not
3 less holy, in very truth, than it seems in people's eyes. Is there no reality in the penitence thus sealed and witnessed by good works? And wherefore should it not bring you peace?

"No, Hester, no!" replied the clergyman. "There is no substance in it! It is cold and dead, and can do nothing for me! Of penance I have had enough! Of penitence there has been none! Else, I should long ago have thrown off these garments of mock holiness, and have shown myself to mankind as they will see me at the
4 judgment-seat. Happy are you, Hester, that wear the scarlet letter openly upon your bosom! Mine burns in secret! Thou little knowest what a relief it is, after the torment of seven years' cheat, to look into an eye that recognizes me for what I am! Had I one friend,—or were it my worst enemy!—to whom, when sickened with the praises

of all other men, I could daily betake myself, and be known as the vilest of all sinners, methinks my soul might keep itself alive thereby. Even thus much of truth would save me! But, now, it is all falsehood!—all emptiness!—all death!"

(Hawthorne & Harding, 1998, pp. 191-192)

"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

3. The misery you are now exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that He might show what that wrath of Jehovah is. God hath had it on His heart to show to angels and men both how excellent His love is, and also how terrible His wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that would provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego; and accordingly gave orders that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it.[4] But the great God is also willing to show His wrath, and magnify His awful majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of His enemies. Romans 9.22: "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" And seeing this is His design, and what He has determined, even to show how terrible the restrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is, He will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed His awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually

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suffering the infinite weight and power of His indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. Isaiah 33.12-14: "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites," etc.

4. See Daniel 3.1-30.

(Edwards, 1741/2008, p. 202)

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize each of these passages, paying specific attention to the time period and customs under which each exists.
2. According to Edwards, what is God's role in human sin? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. Explain Hester and Dimmesdale's differing perspectives on his sin. Consider especially Hester's perspective in light of her own experience. Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. Why may Dimmesdale be having the strong reaction that he is? Do you think he is justified in his reaction? Why or why not? Cite specific examples from the text(s) to support your answer.
5. As seen in his writing, would Edwards have had any different reaction to Hester's sin than Dimmesdale's? Why or why not? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
6. To whom did Edwards direct his sermon? How would this audience compare to the society members of the novel? Would they have valued what Edwards had to say? Why or why not? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
7. How does Dimmesdale's reaction compare to what Edwards has written in his sermon? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
8. Would Jonathan Edwards argue that Arthur Dimmesdale is being too hard on himself? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
9. Aside from the obvious theme of sin, how does each of these passages deal with the idea of personal accountability? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.
10. Although Edwards writes of "earthly kinds" showing "how terrible their wrath is" (p. 202), he is speaking in terms of how people treat each other. How do you think Edwards would have justified the way Dimmesdale treated his own self? Cite specific examples from the texts to support your answer.

Big Questions:
Who has influence over individual identity?
Can a hero have shortcomings and/or faults?
Why can human beings be harder on themselves than others are on them?

Standards:

RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where the story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to summarize the passages.
2. Students will be able to interpret and explain Hester as a character in the novel as well as a Biblical woman.
3. Students will be able to analyze and defend the author's choice to portray Hester in such an intimate manner at the end of the book.

Materials:
Novel passage, 1 copy per student
Scriptural passage, 1 copy per student

Passage #5 Chapters XX-XXIV (pp. 214-264)

But there was a more real life for Hester Prynne, here, in New England, than in that unknown region where Pearl had found home. Here had been her sin; here, her

1 sorrow; and here was yet to be her penitence. She had returned, therefore, and resumed,—of her own free will, for not the sternest magistrate of that iron period

would have imposed it,—resumed the symbol of which we have related so dark a tale. Never afterwards did it quit her bosom. But, in the lapse of the toilsome, thoughtful, and self-devoted years that made up Hester's life, the scarlet letter ceased to be a stigma which attracted the world's scorn and bitterness, and became a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, yet with reverence too. And, as Hester Prynne had no selfish ends, nor lived in any measure for her own profit and enjoyment, people brought all their sorrows and perplexities, and besought her counsel, as one who had herself gone through a mighty trouble. Women, more especially,—in the continually recurring trials of wounded, wasted, wronged, misplaced, or erring and sinful passion,—or with the dreary burden of a heart unyielded, because unvalued and unsought,—came to Hester's cottage, demanding why they were so wretched, and what the remedy! Hester comforted and counselled them, as best she might. She assured them, too, of her firm belief, that, at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness. Earlier in life, Hester had vainly imagined that she herself might be the destined prophetess, but had long since recognized the impossibility that any mission of divine and mysterious truth should be confided to a woman stained with sin, bowed down with shame, or even burdened with a life-long sorrow. The angel and apostle of the coming revelation must be a woman, indeed, but lofty, pure, and beautiful; and wise, moreover, not through dusky grief, but the ethereal medium of joy; and showing

how sacred love should make us happy, by the truest test of a life successful to such an end!

(Hawthorne & Harding, 1998, pp. 262-263)

"Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character"

10 A wife of noble character who can
find?
She is worth far more than rubies.

11 Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.

12 She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.

13 She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.

14 She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.

15 She gets up while it is still dark;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her servant girls.

16 She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earning she plants a
vineyard.

17 She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.

18 She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at
night.

19 In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her
fingers.

20 She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.

21 When it snows, she has no fear for her
household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

22 She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and
purple.

23 Her husband is respected at the city
gate,
where he takes his seat among the
elders of the land.

24 She makes linen garments and sells
them,
and supplies the merchants with
sashes.

25 She is clothed with strength and
dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.

26 She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her
tongue.

27 She watches over the affairs of her
household
and does not eat the bread of
idleness.

28 Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:

29 "Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all."

30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is
fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is
to be praised.

31 Give her the reward she has earned,
and let her works bring her praise at
the city gate.

(Proverbs 31:10-31 [New International Version])

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. Summarize each of these passages, paying specific attention to the circumstances under which each exists.
2. Why would Hester have taken Pearl away to a new place? What benefit would that have been to Pearl? To Hester? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
3. What would be the reason for Hester to return to New England once Pearl had grown up? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
4. Why would Hester choose to "[resume] the symbol" (p. 263) once she returned? What role does the scarlet A play in Hester's identity? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
5. What would have been the potential societal benefits of Hester choosing to continue to wear the letter? The potential drawbacks? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.
6. Who won, per se, in the wearing of the scarlet letter? Did Hester win? Did society? Cite specific references to the text to support your answer.
7. After reading her entire story, is Hester more like or unlike the Biblical woman her Puritan society so highly values? Cite specific references to the text(s) to support your answer.
8. Could Hester be considered a hero under any circumstances? Do her faults strengthen her character or do they weaken it? Cite specific references to the text(s) to support your answer.
9. Compare Hester's handling of her personal sin in regards to Dimmesdale's handling of his sin. Did Hester manage herself appropriately or should she have done things differently? Cite specific references to the text(s) to support your answer.
10. Consider and explain some modern day "scarlet letters" that exist in society. How do we label the sinners, per se? What do we expect of them as reactions to their sins? How is their social identity influenced by their actions? Cite specific references to the text(s) in supporting your answer.

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