

UNIT

# 3

## Lessons to Learn



### UNDERSTANDING THEME

- In Fiction
- In Poetry
- In Drama
- In Media

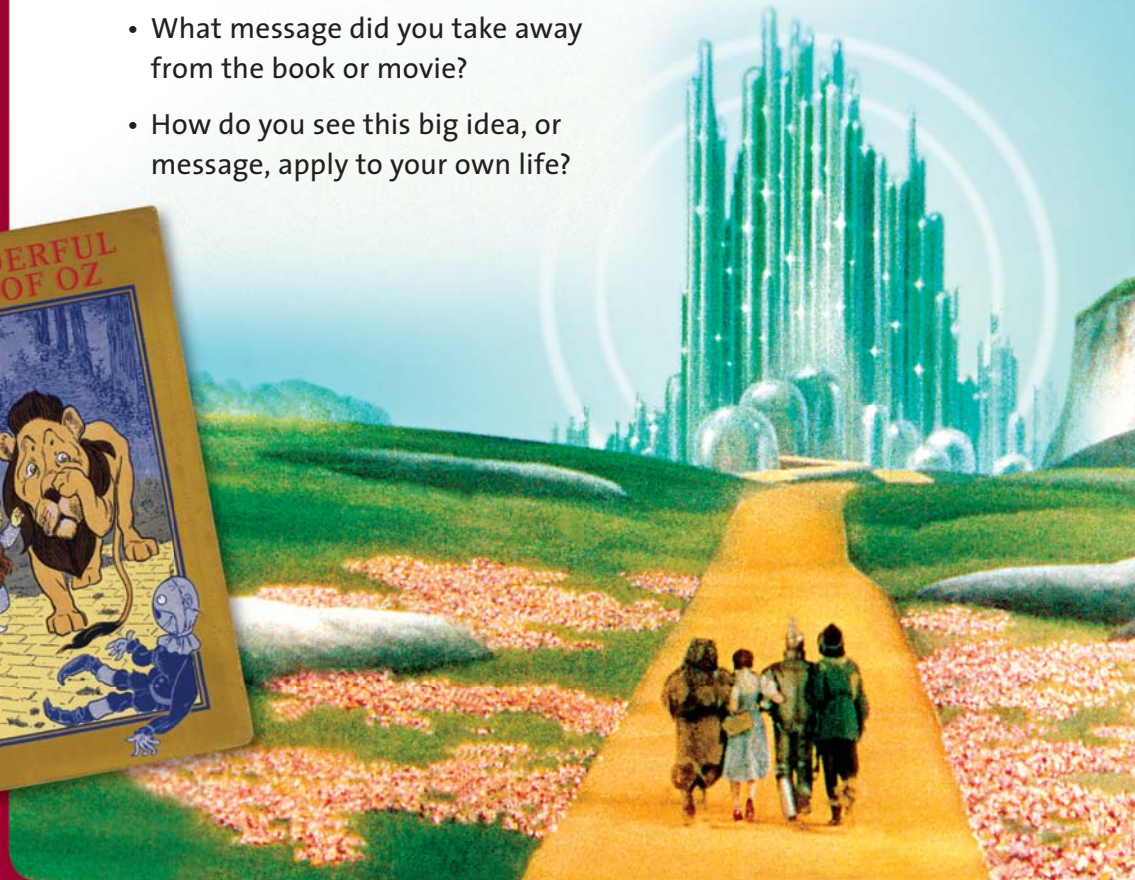
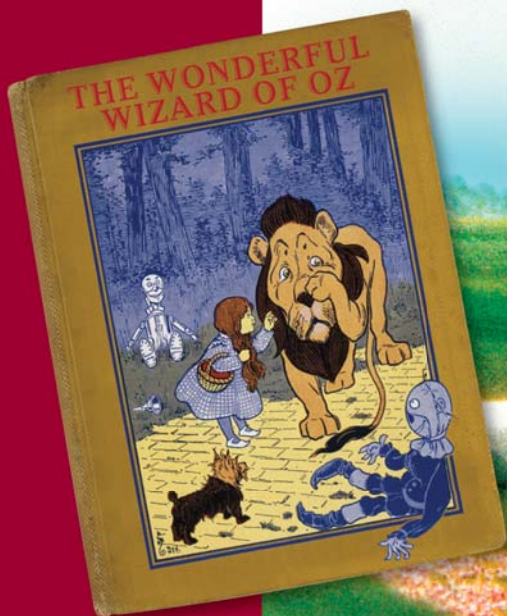


## *What's the* **BIG IDEA?**

“Things are not always what they seem.” “There’s no place like home.” These are examples of **themes**, or messages about life and human nature that writers convey to their readers. Often, these ideas are what remain with you long after you’ve read the last page.

**ACTIVITY** Pick two or three of your all-time favorite books or movies. For each, reflect on what message the writer or director is trying to express about life and human nature. Get together with a small group and talk about your choices and your responses to these questions:

- What lessons do the characters learn?
- What message did you take away from the book or movie?
- How do you see this big idea, or message, apply to your own life?





Included in this unit: R1.1, R1.2, R2.3, R2.4, R3.1, R3.2, R3.4, W1.1, W1.2, W1.7, W2.1, W2.2, LC1.2, LC1.3, LC1.4, LS1.7, LS2.1

CALIFORNIA

Preview Unit Goals

LITERARY ANALYSIS

- Distinguish topic from theme
- Identify theme, including recurring theme
- Compare and contrast themes and characters
- Identify and interpret symbols

READING

- Use reading strategies, including monitoring and setting a purpose for reading
- Make inferences
- Identify and analyze cause and effect and sequence
- Identify and analyze author's perspective

WRITING AND GRAMMAR

- Write a short story
- Use coordinating conjunctions to join sentences
- Combine dependent and independent clauses

SPEAKING, LISTENING, AND VIEWING

- Compare a film with a play
- Present a narrative

VOCABULARY

- Understand and use denotation and connotation of words
- Use general context clues to understand word meaning
- Use Latin roots and affixes to understand word meanings

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

- |          |                    |                        |
|----------|--------------------|------------------------|
| • topic  | • recurring theme  | • make inferences      |
| • theme  | • sequence         | • compare and contrast |
| • symbol | • cause and effect | • clauses              |

# Understanding Theme

Everyone likes a story with a good plot, but there is more to a story than what happens to the characters. Often there is a deeper meaning, or theme. A **theme** is a message about life or human nature that a writer wants you to understand. A story usually has at least one theme and sometimes more.

Some popular themes, such as those about loyalty and friendship, appear in many different stories. They are called **recurring themes**.

## Part 1: Themes in Literature

It's easy to confuse a story's theme with its topic. Here's a way to tell the difference: A topic can be summed up in a word or two, such as "taking risks." A theme, however, is a writer's message *about* a topic. It usually takes at least one complete sentence to express a theme—for example, "Life's biggest rewards come from taking risks."

Stories can mean different things to different people. Two people reading a story might describe its theme differently or find different themes.



**R3.4** Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

### EXAMPLES OF THEMES IN LITERATURE



#### *Thank You, M'am*

Unit 1  
pages 64–68

**PLOT SUMMARY**

Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones catches Roger trying to steal her purse. She drags him to her home, makes him wash up, and feeds him. Then she gives him the ten dollars he was trying to steal.

**TOPIC**

- Second chances

**POSSIBLE THEMES**

- Everyone deserves a second chance.
- An act of kindness can make a difference in a person's life.



#### *Casey at the Bat*

Unit 1  
pages 130–132

**PLOT SUMMARY**

When the hometown baseball hero Casey comes to bat, there are two outs and two men on base. Instead of winning the game with a home run, Casey strikes out, and his team loses.

**TOPIC**

- Baseball

**POSSIBLE THEMES**

- Even a hero can fail.
- Overconfidence can lead to failure.



### MODEL 1: THEME IN A STORY

Fables often convey themes about human nature through the actions of animal characters. What lesson can readers learn from this fable?

## The **LION** and the **MOUSE**

Fable by Aesop

A lion was idling in the sun, pretending to sleep, when he felt a tickle on his nose. He opened one eye and, with a swipe of his huge paw, caught a small mouse trying to run away. The lion roared angrily and tossed the mouse into the air. The mouse cried, “Please don’t hurt me! If only you will spare my life, I promise I will repay you.” Surprised and amused by the little creature’s earnest promise, the lion laughed and let the mouse go.

Time passed, and then one day the lion became ensnared in a trap. As he struggled to free himself, the ropes tightened around him until he couldn’t move. The little mouse was close by and heard the lion’s roars. She came and set the lion free by gnawing through the ropes. “When you kindly spared my life,” said the mouse, “you laughed at the idea that one day I would repay you.”

### Close Read

1. What does the lion decide to do after capturing the mouse? Explain how the mouse repays the lion.
2. What lesson can readers learn from the way the lion and the mouse treat each other?

### MODEL 2: THEME IN A POEM

In this poem, the writer presents a strong message about family.

## **Li**TTLE **Si**STER

Poem by Nikki Grimes

little sister  
holds on tight.  
My hands hurt  
from all that squeezing,  
5 but I don’t mind.  
She thinks no one will bother her  
when I’m around,  
and they won’t  
if I can help it.  
10 And even when I can’t  
I try  
'cause she believes in me.

### Close Read

1. How does the little sister rely on the speaker of the poem? Explain how the speaker feels about his or her sister.
2. Reread the boxed lines. Which statement best expresses the theme?
  - a. When family members believe in you, it makes you stronger.
  - b. Families should spend more time together.

## Part 2: A Closer Look at Theme

Sometimes the theme of a story is stated directly by the narrator or a character. Most often, though, a theme is implied—hinted at but not stated directly. In such a case, you need to **infer** the theme by finding clues in the text. This chart tells you where to look for those clues. Use the questions shown to help you uncover the theme of any story you read.

### CLUES TO THEME

#### TITLE



The title may reflect a story's topic, its theme, or both. Ask

- What does each word in the title mean?
- What ideas does the title emphasize?

#### PLOT



A story's plot often revolves around a conflict that is important to the theme. Ask

- What conflicts do the characters face?
- How are the conflicts resolved?

#### CHARACTERS



What characters do and learn can reflect a theme. Ask

- What are the main characters like?  
(Analyze their speech, thoughts, and actions.)
- How do the characters respond to the conflicts?
- How do the characters change?
- What lessons do the characters learn?

#### SETTING



A setting can suggest a theme because of what it means to the characters. Ask

- How does the setting influence the characters?
- How does the setting affect the conflicts?
- What might the setting represent?  
(For example, a character's childhood home might represent safety for him or her.)



## Part 3: Analyze the Literature

In this story, two brothers respond to a challenge by making very different choices. As you read, use the clues in the story to help you understand what the writer is saying about their choices.



# THE TWO BROTHERS

Short story by **Leo Tolstoy**

**T**wo brothers set out on a journey together. At noon they lay down in a forest to rest. When they woke up they saw a stone lying next to them. There was something written on the stone, and they tried to make out what it was.

- 5 “Whoever finds this stone,” they read, “let him go straight into the forest at sunrise. In the forest a river will appear; let him swim across the river to the other side. There he will find a she-bear and her cubs. Let him take the cubs from her and run up the mountain with them, without once looking back. On the top of the mountain
- 10 he will see a house, and in that house will he find happiness.”

### Close Read

1. The title of this story suggests that the two brothers are central to the theme. As you read, think about the differences in the brothers' outlooks on life.
2. What challenge do the brothers face? Predict how they might respond to the challenge.

When they had read what was written on the stone, the younger brother said:

15 “Let us go together. We can swim across the river, carry off the bear cubs, take them to the house on the mountain, and together find happiness.”

20 “I am not going into the forest after bear cubs,” said the elder brother, “and I advise you not to go. In the first place, no one can know whether what is written on this stone is the truth—perhaps it was written in jest. It is even possible that we have not read it correctly. In the second place, even if what is written here is the truth—

25 suppose we go into the forest and night comes, and we cannot find the river. We shall be lost. And if we do find the river, how are we going to swim across it? It may be broad and swift. In the third place, even if we swim across the river, do you think it is an easy thing to take her cubs away from a she-bear? She will seize us, and, instead of finding happiness, we shall perish, and all for nothing. In the fourth place, even if we succeeded in carrying off the bear cubs, we could not run up a mountain without stopping to rest.

30 And, most important of all, the stone does not tell us what kind of happiness we should find in that house. It may be that the happiness awaiting us there is not at all the sort of happiness we would want.”

35 “In my opinion,” said the younger brother, “you are wrong. What is written on the stone could not have been put there without reason. And it is all perfectly clear. In the first place, no harm will come to us if we try. In the second place, if we do not go, someone else will read the inscription on the stone and find happiness, and we shall have lost it all. In the third place: if you do not make an effort and try hard, nothing in the world will succeed. In the fourth place: I should not want it thought that I was afraid of anything.”

40 The elder brother answered him by saying: “The proverb says: ‘In seeking great happiness small pleasures may be lost.’ And also: ‘A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.’”

### Close Read

3. Reread the **boxed** text. The setting—the forest, the river, the bears, and the mountain—all represent danger to the elder brother. What does his reaction to the setting’s challenges tell you about him?
  
4. Reread lines 16–39. How are the brothers’ attitudes different? Describe each brother’s outlook on life.





## Amigo Brothers

Short Story by Piri Thomas

# *What happens when friends* **COMPETE?**



**R3.4** Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

Also included in this lesson: **R1.2** (p. 324), **W1.2** (p. 325), **LC1.4** (p. 325)

**KEY IDEA** We face **competition** all the time, whether we are competing for someone’s attention or for the best grade. And while some competitions are friendly and even fun, others can be brutal. In “Amigo Brothers,” best friends Antonio and Felix find out if their deep friendship can survive an explosive competition.

**QUICKWRITE** Jot down a list of times when you competed with one or more friends. When you are done, review your list. Decide which of those experiences helped or hurt your friendship. Reflect on one of those experiences in a journal entry.





● **LITERARY ANALYSIS: THEME VERSUS TOPIC**

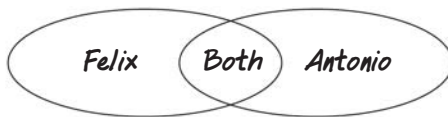
A story’s **theme** is a message about life or human nature that the writer wants readers to understand. Sometimes readers confuse the theme with the subject, or **topic**, of the story. One way to tell topic and theme apart is to remember that a topic can be stated in just one or two words. A theme is often expressed as a sentence.

	Length	Example
<b>Topic</b>	one or two words	growing up
<b>Theme</b>	sentence	Growing up brings new responsibilities.

One topic of “Amigo Brothers” is friendship. As you read the story, you’ll find a deeper message as its theme.

● **READING SKILL: COMPARE AND CONTRAST**

Comparing and contrasting characters can help you better understand a story. When you **compare** two or more people or things, you look for ways they are similar. When you **contrast** them, you look for ways they are different. As you read “Amigo Brothers,” note similarities and differences between Felix and Antonio in a Venn diagram like the one shown.



▲ **VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT**

The boldfaced terms help tell this story about **competition**. Restate each sentence, using a different word or words.

1. He received a **barrage** of criticism for his comments.
2. The report shows the **devastating** effects of the illness.
3. She considered the offer **pensively**.
4. The crowd burst into a **torrent** of laughter.
5. He can’t stand her **perpetual** complaining.
6. We were surprised at their **unbridled** enthusiasm.
7. They worked hard to **dispel** my concerns.
8. It was a noisy classroom, where **bedlam** reigned.
9. His arms began to **flail** as he lost his balance.
10. She has remarkable **clarity** for a person her age.

**A Troubled Beginning**

In the 1950s, Piri Thomas realized that he was getting into too much trouble with the law and needed to turn his life around.



Piri Thomas  
born 1928

He said to himself, “Man, where am

I at? I got a mind; let’s see if I can use it.” He says he then “jumped into books.” For him, writing became a tool to discover who he really was and to portray his Puerto Rican and African-American heritage.

**A Rich Heritage** Thomas’s writings are all set where he grew up, in New York City. He writes about neighborhoods that are heavily populated with Puerto Ricans and African Americans, such as Spanish Harlem and the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Thomas’s writing celebrates the strength and determination of the people in his community.

**MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
For more on Piri Thomas, visit the Literature Center at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

**Background**

**Golden Gloves** In this story, Felix and Antonio compete to participate in a Golden Gloves tournament, a famous amateur boxing competition. Past winners who went on to fame and fortune include Sugar Ray Robinson, George Foreman, and Muhammad Ali.

# Amigo BROTHERS

P I R I T H O M A S

**A**ntonio Cruz and Felix Vargas were both seventeen years old. They were so together in friendship that they felt themselves to be brothers. They had known each other since childhood, growing up on the lower east side of Manhattan in the same tenement building<sup>1</sup> on Fifth Street between Avenue A and Avenue B.

Antonio was fair, lean, and lanky, while Felix was dark, short, and husky. Antonio's hair was always falling over his eyes, while Felix wore his black hair in a natural Afro style.

Each youngster had a dream of someday becoming lightweight champion  
10 of the world. Every chance they had the boys worked out, sometimes at the Boys Club on 10th Street and Avenue A and sometimes at the pro's gym on 14th Street. Early morning sunrises would find them running along the East River Drive, wrapped in sweatshirts, short towels around their necks, and handkerchiefs Apache style around their foreheads. **A**

While some youngsters were into street negatives, Antonio and Felix slept, ate, rapped, and dreamt positive. Between them, they had a collection of *Fight* magazines second to none, plus a scrapbook filled with torn tickets to every boxing match they had ever attended and some  
20 clippings of their own. If asked a question about any given fighter, they would immediately zip out from their memory banks divisions,<sup>2</sup> weights, records of fights, knockouts, technical knockouts, and draws or losses.

Each had fought many bouts representing their community and had won two gold-plated medals plus a silver and bronze medallion. The difference was in their style. Antonio's lean form and long reach made him the better boxer, while Felix's short and muscular frame

## ANALYZE VISUALS

What do the colors in this painting make you think of?

## **A** COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Reread lines 1–14 and use your Venn diagram to note similarities and differences between the two boys. Add more notes to your diagram as you continue reading.

1. **tenement building:** a rundown apartment building in which mostly poor families live.

2. **divisions:** weight groups into which boxers are separated.







made him the better slugger. Whenever they had met in the ring for sparring sessions,<sup>3</sup> it had always been hot and heavy.

Now, after a series of elimination bouts,<sup>4</sup> they had been informed that they were to meet each other in the division finals that were scheduled for the seventh of August, two weeks away—the winner to represent the Boys Club in the Golden Gloves Championship Tournament.

The two boys continued to run together along the East River Drive. But even when joking with each other, they both sensed a wall rising between them.

One morning less than a week before their bout, they met as usual for their daily workout. They fooled around with a few jabs at the air, slapped skin, and then took off, running lightly along the dirty East River's edge.

Antonio glanced at Felix, who kept his eyes purposely straight ahead, pausing from time to time to do some fancy leg work while throwing one-twos followed by upper cuts to an imaginary jaw. Antonio then beat the air with a **barrage** of body blows and short **devastating** lefts with an overhand, jawbreaking right.

After a mile or so, Felix puffed and said, “Let’s stop for awhile, bro. I think we both got something to say to each other.”

Antonio nodded. It was not natural to be acting as though nothing unusual was happening when two ace boon buddies were going to be blasting each other within a few short days.

They rested their elbows on the railing separating them from the river. Antonio wiped his face with his short towel. The sunrise was now creating day.

Felix leaned heavily on the river’s railing and stared across to the shores of Brooklyn. Finally, he broke the silence.

“Man. I don’t know how to come out with it.”

Antonio helped. “It’s about our fight, right?”

“Yeah, right.” Felix’s eyes squinted at the rising orange sun.

“I’ve been thinking about it too, *panín*.<sup>5</sup> In fact, since we found out it was going to be me and you, I’ve been awake at night, pulling punches<sup>6</sup> on you, trying not to hurt you.”

“Same here. It ain’t natural not to think about the fight. I mean, we both are *cheverote*<sup>7</sup> fighters, and we both want to win. But only one of us can win. There ain’t no draws in the eliminations.”

## SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION



Antonio and Felix grew up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

**barrage** (bə-rāzh') *n.*  
a rapid, heavy attack

**devastating**  
(dēv'ə-stā'tīng) *adj.*  
very effective in causing pain or destruction  
**devastate** *v.*

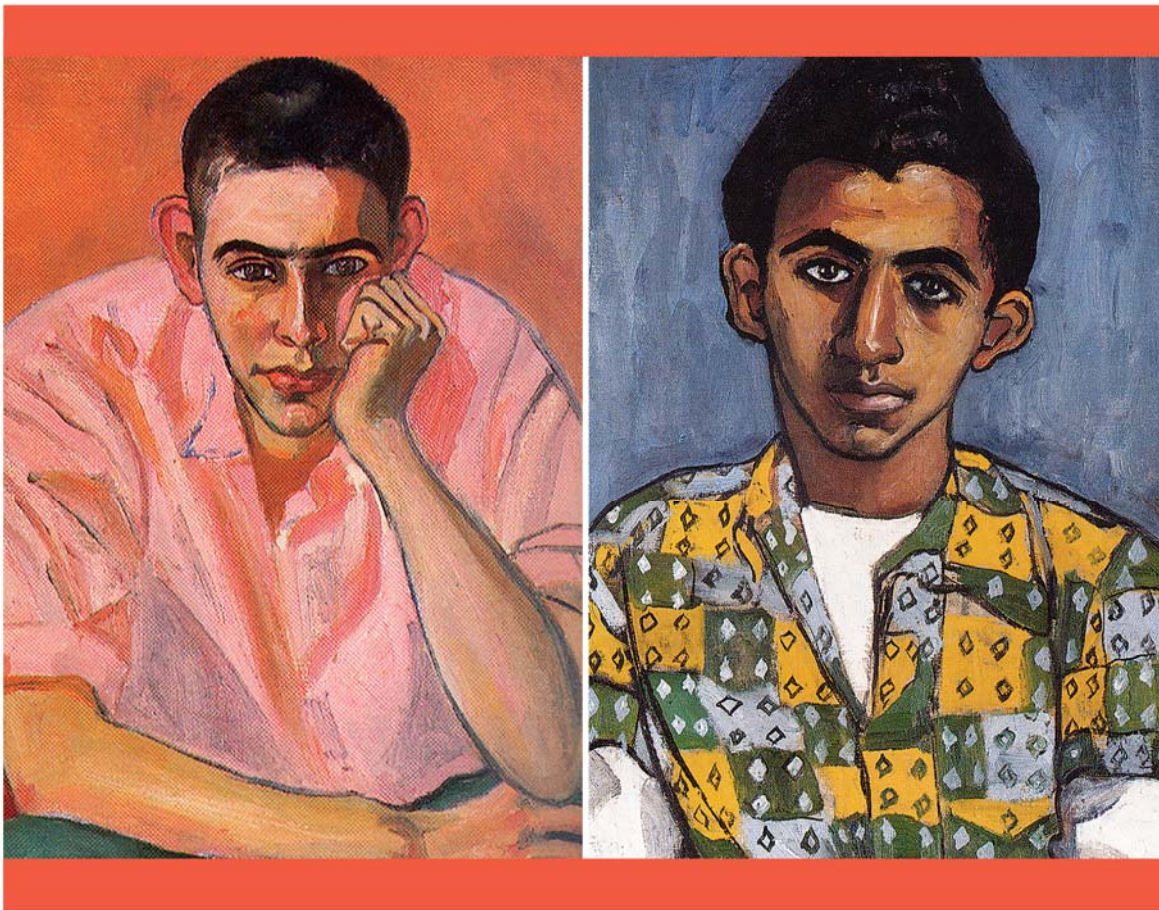
3. **sparring sessions**: practice boxing matches.

4. **elimination bouts**: matches to determine which boxers advance in a competition.

5. **panín** (pā-nēn') *American Spanish*: pal; buddy.

6. **pulling punches**: holding back in delivering blows.

7. **cheverote** (chě-vě-rô'tě) *American Spanish*: great or fantastic.



Left, *Moose* (1956), Alice Neel. © Estate of Alice Neel. Courtesy Robert Miller Gallery, New York. Right, *Call Me Joe* (1955), Alice Neel. Oil on canvas, 34" x 32". © Estate of Alice Neel. Courtesy Robert Miller Gallery, New York.

Felix tapped Antonio gently on the shoulder. “I don’t mean to sound like I’m bragging, bro. But I wanna win, fair and square.”

Antonio nodded quietly. “Yeah. We both know that in the ring the better man wins. Friend or no friend, brother or no . . .”

Felix finished it for him. “Brother. Tony, let’s promise something right here. Okay?”

“If it’s fair, *hermano*,<sup>8</sup> I’m for it.” Antonio admired the courage of a tugboat pulling a barge five times its welterweight<sup>9</sup> size.

70 “It’s fair, Tony. When we get into the ring, it’s gotta be like we never met. We gotta be like two heavy strangers that want the same thing, and only one can have it. You understand, don’tcha?” **B**

“Sí, I know.” Tony smiled. “No pulling punches. We go all the way.”

“Yeah, that’s right. Listen, Tony. Don’t you think it’s a good idea if we don’t see each other until the day of the fight? I’m going to stay with my Aunt Lucy in the Bronx.<sup>10</sup> I can use Gleason’s Gym for working out. My manager says he got some sparring partners with more or less your style.”

8. *hermano* (ě-r-mă’hô) *Spanish*: brother.

9. **welterweight**: one of boxing’s weight divisions, with a maximum weight of 147 pounds.

10. **the Bronx**: a borough of New York City, north of Manhattan.

### ANALYZE VISUALS

**Compare and contrast** these pictures with your own mental images of Felix and Antonio.

### **B** THEME

What **characters** say can offer clues about a story’s theme. What does the boys’ **dialogue**, or conversation, tell you about their friendship?



**pensively** (pĕn'siv-lē)  
adv. thoughtfully

Tony scratched his nose **pensively**. “Yeah, it would be better for our heads.” He held out his hand, palm upward. “Deal?”

80 “Deal.” Felix lightly slapped open skin.

“Ready for some more running?” Tony asked lamely.

“Naw, bro. Let’s cut it here. You go on. I kinda like to get things together in my head.”

“You ain’t worried, are you?” Tony asked.

“No way, man.” Felix laughed out loud. “I got too much smarts for that. I just think it’s cooler if we split right here. After the fight, we can get it together again like nothing ever happened.”

The *amigo*<sup>11</sup> brothers were not ashamed to hug each other tightly.

90 “Guess you’re right. Watch yourself, Felix. I hear there’s some pretty heavy dudes up in the Bronx. *Suavecito*,<sup>12</sup> okay?”

“Okay. You watch yourself too, *sabe*?”<sup>13</sup>

Tony jogged away. Felix watched his friend disappear from view, throwing rights and lefts. Both fighters had a lot of psyching up to do before the big fight.

The days in training passed much too slowly. Although they kept out of each other’s way, they were aware of each other’s progress via the ghetto grapevine.<sup>14</sup>

The evening before the big fight, Tony made his way to the roof of his tenement. In the quiet early dark, he peered over the ledge.

100 Six stories below, the lights of the city blinked, and the sounds of cars mingled with the curses and the laughter of children in the street.

He tried not to think of Felix, feeling he had succeeded in psyching his mind. But only in the ring would he really know. To spare Felix hurt, he would have to knock him out, early and quick. **C**

Up in the South Bronx, Felix decided to take in a movie in an effort to keep Antonio’s face away from his fists. The flick was *The Champion* with Kirk Douglas, the third time Felix was seeing it.

110 The champion was getting beat, his face being pounded into raw, wet hamburger. His eyes were cut, jagged, bleeding, one eye swollen, the other almost shut. He was saved only by the sound of the bell.

Felix became the champ and Tony the challenger.

The movie audience was going out of its head, roaring in blood lust at the butchery going on. The champ hunched his shoulders, grunting and sniffing red blood back into his broken nose. The challenger, confident that he had the championship in the bag, threw a left. The champ countered with a dynamite right that exploded into the challenger’s brains.

### **C** THEME

Understanding a story’s **conflict** can help you understand its theme. An **internal conflict** is a struggle within a character’s mind. Reread lines 102–104. What is Antonio’s internal conflict?

11. *amigo* (ä-mē'gō) *Spanish*: friend.

12. *Suavecito* (swā-vĕ-sĕ'tō) *American Spanish*: Take it easy.

13. *sabe* (sä'bĕ) *Spanish*: you know.

14. *ghetto grapevine*: the chain of gossip that spreads through the neighborhood.

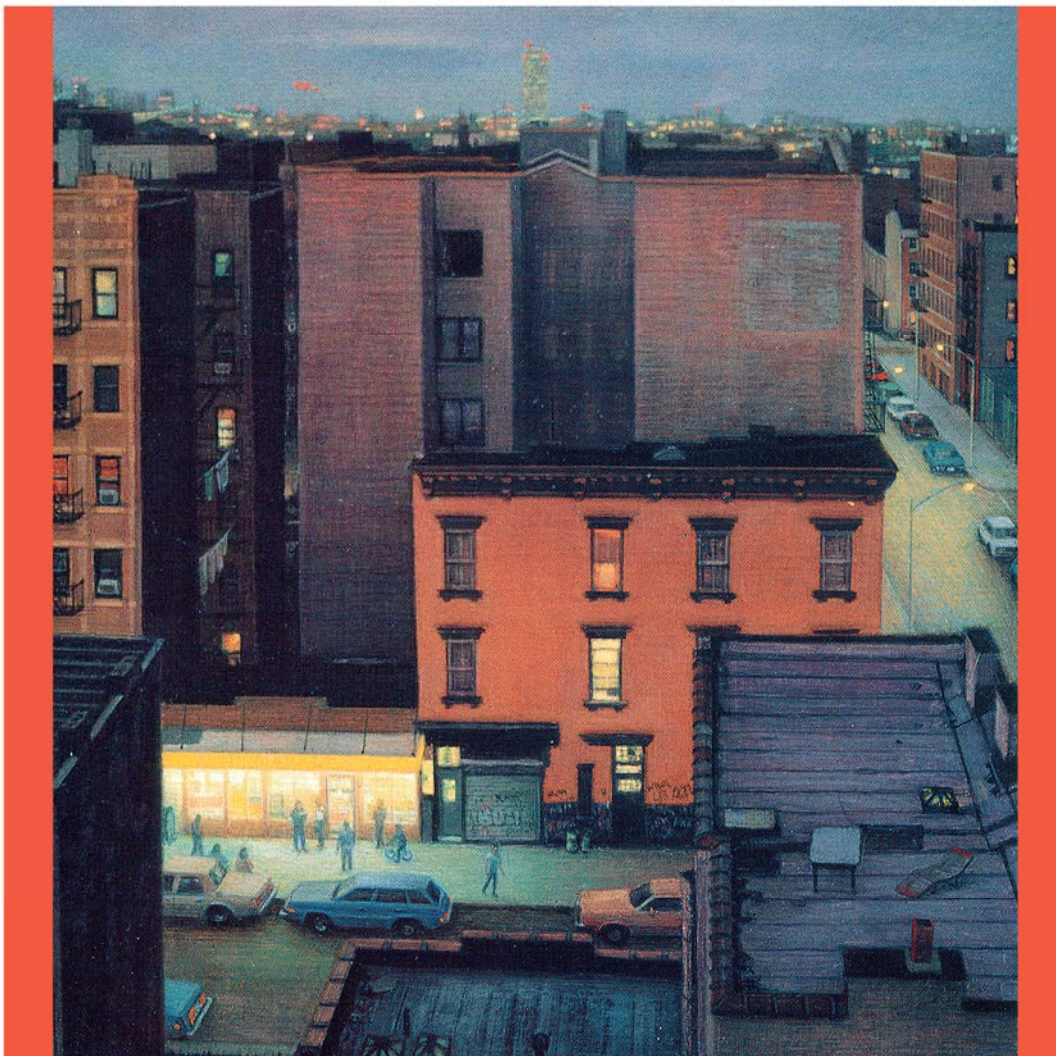
Felix's right arm felt the shock. Antonio's face, superimposed on the screen, was shattered and split apart by the awesome force of the killer blow. Felix saw himself in the ring, blasting Antonio against the ropes.  
120 The champ had to be forcibly restrained. The challenger was allowed to crumble slowly to the canvas, a broken, bloody mess.

When Felix finally left the theatre, he had figured out how to psyche himself for tomorrow's fight. It was Felix the Champion vs. Antonio the Challenger.

He walked up some dark streets, deserted except for small pockets of wary-looking kids wearing gang colors. Despite the fact that he was Puerto Rican like them, they eyed him as a stranger to their turf. Felix did a last shuffle, bobbing and weaving, while letting loose a **torrent** of blows that would demolish whatever got in its way. It seemed to  
130 impress the brothers, who went about their own business.

**torrent** (tôr'ənt) *n.* a violent, rushing stream

*Still Open* (1994), Douglas Safranek. Egg tempera on panel, 4 5/8' × 4'. © Museum of the City of New York.



#### **ANALYZE VISUALS**

How does this picture compare with the description of the **setting** given in lines 98–101?

Finding no takers, Felix decided to split to his aunt's. Walking the streets had not relaxed him, neither had the fight flick. All it had done was to stir him up. He let himself quietly into his Aunt Lucy's apartment and went straight to bed, falling into a fitful sleep with sounds of the gong for Round One.

Antonio was passing some heavy time on his rooftop. How would the fight tomorrow affect his relationship with Felix? After all, fighting was like any other profession. Friendship had nothing to do with it. A gnawing doubt crept in. He cut negative thinking real quick by doing  
140 some speedy fancy dance steps, bobbing and weaving like mercury. The night air was blurred with **perpetual** motions of left hooks and right crosses. Felix, his *amigo* brother, was not going to be Felix at all in the ring. Just an opponent with another face. Antonio went to sleep, hearing the opening bell for the first round. Like his friend in the South Bronx, he prayed for victory via a quick, clean knockout in the first round.

**perpetual**  
(pə-r-pĕch'ōō-əl) *adj.*  
continual; unending

Large posters plastered all over the walls of local shops announced the fight between Antonio Cruz and Felix Vargas as the main bout.

The fight had created great interest in the neighborhood. Antonio and Felix were well liked and respected. Each had his own loyal following.  
150 Betting fever was high and ranged from a bottle of Coke to cold, hard cash on the line.

Antonio's fans bet with **unbridled** faith in his boxing skills. On the other side, Felix's admirers bet on his dynamite-packed fists.

**unbridled** (ŭn-brīd'ld)  
*adj.* lacking restraint  
or control

Felix had returned to his apartment early in the morning of August 7th and stayed there, hoping to avoid seeing Antonio. He turned the radio on to salsa music sounds and then tried to read while waiting for word from his manager.

**T**he fight was scheduled to take place in Tompkins Square Park. It had been decided that the gymnasium of the Boys Club was not  
160 large enough to hold all the people who were sure to attend. In Tompkins Square Park, everyone who wanted could view the fight, whether from ringside or window fire escapes or tenement rooftops.

The morning of the fight, Tompkins Square was a beehive of activity with numerous workers setting up the ring, the seats, and the guest speakers' stand. The scheduled bouts began shortly after noon, and the park had begun filling up even earlier.

The local junior high school across from Tompkins Square Park served as the dressing room for all the fighters. Each was given a separate classroom, with desktops, covered with mats, serving as resting tables. Antonio  
170 thought he caught a glimpse of Felix waving to him from a room at the far end of the corridor. He waved back just in case it had been him. **D**

**D THEME**  
What can you **infer** about Antonio's attitude toward Felix on the day of the fight?



The fighters changed from their street clothes into fighting gear. Antonio wore white trunks, black socks, and black shoes. Felix wore sky blue trunks, red socks, and white boxing shoes. Each had dressing gowns to match their fighting trunks with their names neatly stitched on the back.

The loudspeakers blared into the open window of the school. There were speeches by dignitaries, community leaders, and great boxers of yesteryear. Some were well prepared, some improvised on the spot.

They all carried the same message of great pleasure and honor at being  
180 part of such a historic event. This great day was in the tradition of champions emerging from the streets of the lower east side.

Interwoven with the speeches were the sounds of the other boxing events. After the sixth bout, Felix was much relieved when his trainer, Charlie, said, “Time change. Quick knockout. This is it. We’re on.”

Waiting time was over. Felix was escorted from the classroom by a dozen fans in white T-shirts with the word FELIX across their fronts.

Antonio was escorted down a different stairwell and guided through a roped-off path.

As the two climbed into the ring, the crowd exploded with a roar.  
190 Antonio and Felix both bowed gracefully and then raised their arms in acknowledgment.

Antonio tried to be cool, but even as the roar was in its first birth, he turned slowly to meet Felix’s eyes looking directly into his. Felix nodded his head and Antonio responded. And both as one, just as quickly, turned away to face his own corner. **E**

Bong, bong, bong. The roar turned to stillness.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, *Señores y Señoras*.”<sup>15</sup>

The announcer spoke slowly, pleased at his bilingual efforts.

“Now the moment we have all been waiting for—the main event between  
200 two fine young Puerto Rican fighters, products of our lower east side.”

“*Loisaida*,”<sup>16</sup> called out a member of the audience.

“In this corner, weighing 131 pounds, Felix Vargas. And in this corner, weighing 133 pounds, Antonio Cruz. The winner will represent the Boys Club in the tournament of champions, the Golden Gloves. There will be no draw. May the best man win.”

The cheering of the crowd shook the windowpanes of the old buildings surrounding Tompkins Square Park. At the center of the ring, the referee was giving instructions to the youngsters.

“Keep your punches up. No low blows. No punching on the back  
210 of the head. Keep your heads up. Understand. Let’s have a clean fight. Now shake hands and come out fighting.”

**E THEME**

Reread lines 192–195. How do you think the boys feel at this moment?

15. *Señores y Señoras* (sě-nyô'rřes ě sě-nyô'räs) *Spanish*: Ladies and Gentlemen.

16. *Loisaida* (loi-sī'dä) *American Spanish*: Lower East Side.

Both youngsters touched gloves and nodded. They turned and danced quickly to their corners. Their head towels and dressing gowns were lifted neatly from their shoulders by their trainers' nimble fingers. Antonio crossed himself. Felix did the same.

BONG! BONG! ROUND ONE. Felix and Antonio turned and faced each other squarely in a fighting pose. Felix wasted no time. He came in fast, head low, half hunched toward his right shoulder, and lashed out with a straight left. He missed a right cross as Antonio slipped the punch and countered with one-two-three lefts that snapped Felix's head back, sending a mild shock coursing through him. If Felix had any small doubt about their friendship affecting their fight, it was being neatly **dispelled**.

Antonio danced, a joy to behold. His left hand was like a piston pumping jabs one right after another with seeming ease. Felix bobbed and weaved and never stopped boring in. He knew that at long range he was at a disadvantage. Antonio had too much reach on him. Only by coming in close could Felix hope to achieve the dreamed-of knockout. **F**

Antonio knew the dynamite that was stored in his *amigo* brother's fist. He ducked a short right and missed a left hook. Felix trapped him against the ropes just long enough to pour some punishing rights and lefts to Antonio's hard midsection. Antonio slipped away from Felix, crashing two lefts to his head, which set Felix's right ear to ringing.

*Bong!* Both *amigos* froze a punch well on its way, sending up a roar of approval for good sportsmanship.

**F**elix walked briskly back to his corner. His right ear had not stopped ringing. Antonio gracefully danced his way toward his stool none the worse, except for glowing glove burns, showing angry red against the whiteness of his midribs.

"Watch that right, Tony." His trainer talked into his ear. "Remember Felix always goes to the body. He'll want you to drop your hands for his overhand left or right. Got it?"

Antonio nodded, spraying water out between his teeth. He felt better as his sore midsection was being firmly rubbed.

Felix's corner was also busy.

"You gotta get in there, fella." Felix's trainer poured water over his curly Afro locks. "Get in there or he's gonna chop you up from way back."

*Bong! Bong!* Round two. Felix was off his stool and rushed Antonio like a bull, sending a hard right to his head. Beads of water exploded from Antonio's long hair.

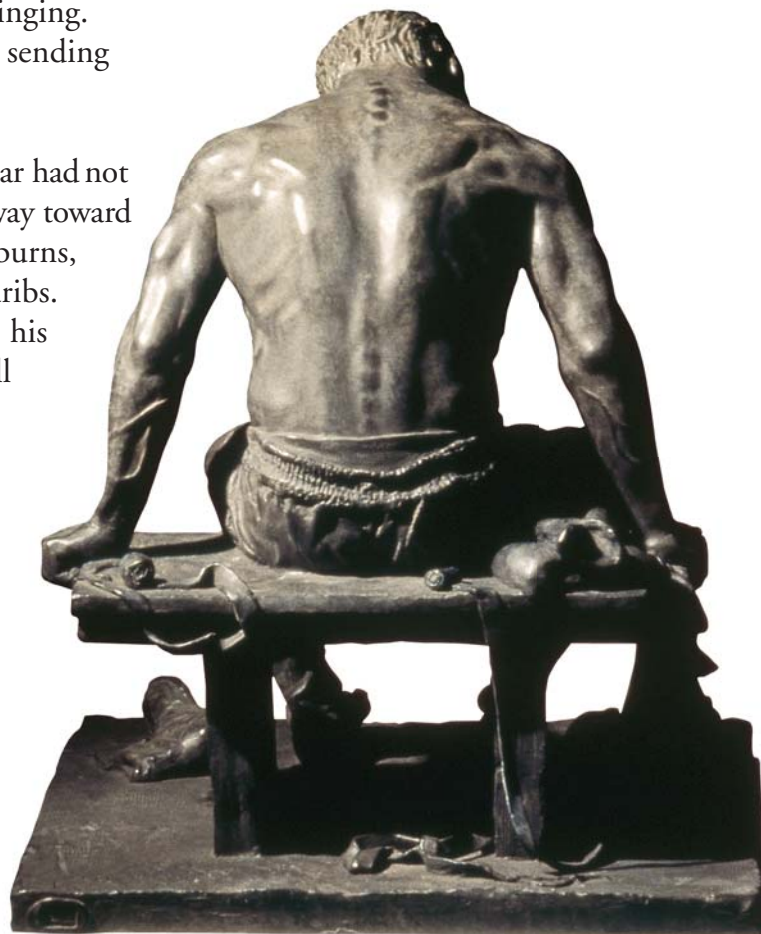
**dispel** (dĭ-spĕl') v.  
to get rid of

**F COMPARE AND CONTRAST**

Reread lines 223–227. Compare and contrast the boys' boxing styles.

**ANALYZE VISUALS**

Describe the feeling this sculpture conveys.



*Seated Fighter* (1985), Joseph Sheppard. Bronze, height 21".

Antonio, hurt, sent back a blurring barrage of lefts and rights that only meant pain to Felix, who returned with a short left to the head followed by a looping right to the body. Antonio countered<sup>17</sup> with his own flurry, forcing Felix to give ground. But not for long.

Felix bobbed and weaved, bobbed and weaved, occasionally punching his two gloves together.

260 Antonio waited for the rush that was sure to come. Felix closed in and fainted<sup>18</sup> with his left shoulder and threw his right instead. Lights suddenly exploded inside Felix's head as Antonio slipped the blow and hit him with a pistonlike left, catching him flush on the point of his chin.

**Bedlam** broke loose as Felix's legs momentarily buckled. He fought off a series of rights and lefts and came back with a strong right that taught Antonio respect.

**bedlam** (bĕd'ləm) *n.*  
a noisy confusion

Antonio danced in carefully. He knew Felix had the habit of playing possum when hurt, to sucker an opponent within reach of the powerful bombs he carried in each fist.

270 A right to the head slowed Antonio's pretty dancing. He answered with his own left at Felix's right eye that began puffing up within three seconds.

Antonio, a bit too eager, moved in too close, and Felix had him entangled into a rip-roaring, punching toe-to-toe slugfest that brought the whole Tompkins Square Park screaming to its feet.

Rights to the body. Lefts to the head. Neither fighter was giving an inch. Suddenly a short right caught Antonio squarely on the chin. His long legs turned to jelly, and his arms **flailed** out desperately. Felix, grunting like a bull, threw wild punches from every direction. Antonio, groggy, bobbed and weaved, evading most of the blows.

**flail** (flāil) *v.* to wave wildly

280 Suddenly his head cleared. His left flashed out hard and straight catching Felix on the bridge of his nose.

Felix lashed back with a haymaker,<sup>19</sup> right off the ghetto streets. At the same instant, his eye caught another left hook from Antonio. Felix swung out, trying to clear the pain. Only the frenzied screaming of those along ringside let him know that he had dropped Antonio. Fighting off the growing haze, Antonio struggled to his feet, got up, ducked, and threw a smashing right that dropped Felix flat on his back.

Felix got up as fast as he could in his own corner, groggy but still game.<sup>20</sup> He didn't even hear the count. In a fog, he heard the roaring of the crowd,  
290 who seemed to have gone insane. His head cleared to hear the bell sound at the end of the round. He was very glad. His trainer sat him down on the stool.

17. **countered**: gave a blow after receiving or blocking his opponent's blow.

18. **fainted**: made a pretend attack to draw attention from his real purpose.

19. **haymaker**: a powerful blow.

20. **groggy but still game**: unsteady and shaky but willing to proceed.



In his corner, Antonio was doing what all fighters do when they are hurt. They sit and smile at everyone.

The referee signaled the ring doctor to check the fighters out. He did so and then gave his okay. The cold-water sponges brought **clarity** to both *amigo* brothers. They were rubbed until their circulation ran free.

**clarity** (klär'ī-tē) *n.*  
clearness of mind

*Bong!* Round three—the final round. Up to now it had been tick-tack-toe, pretty much even. But everyone knew there could be  
300 no draw and that this round would decide the winner.

This time, to Felix's surprise, it was Antonio who came out fast, charging across the ring. Felix braced himself but couldn't ward off the barrage of punches. Antonio drove Felix hard against the ropes.

The crowd ate it up. Thus far the two had fought with *mucho corazón*.<sup>21</sup> Felix tapped his gloves and commenced his attack anew. Antonio, throwing boxer's caution to the winds, jumped in to meet him.

Both pounded away. Neither gave an inch, and neither fell to the canvas. Felix's left eye was tightly closed. Claret red blood poured from Antonio's nose. They fought toe-to-toe.

310 **T**he sounds of their blows were loud in contrast to the silence of a crowd gone completely mute. The referee was stunned by their savagery.

*Bong! Bong! Bong!* The bell sounded over and over again. Felix and Antonio were past hearing. Their blows continued to pound on each other like hailstones.


Finally the referee and the two trainers pried Felix and Antonio apart. Cold water was poured over them to bring them back to their senses. **G**

They looked around and then rushed toward each other. A cry of alarm surged through Tompkins Square Park. Was this a fight to the death  
320 instead of a boxing match?

The fear soon gave way to wave upon wave of cheering as the two *amigos* embraced.

No matter what the decision, they knew they would always be champions to each other.

*Bong! Bong! Bong!* "Ladies and Gentlemen. *Señores* and *Señoras*. The winner and representative to the Golden Gloves Tournament of Champions is . . ."

The announcer turned to point to the winner and found himself alone. Arm in arm, the champions had already left the ring. 

**G THEME**

Reread lines 313–317. Why do such good friends keep fighting after the bell rings?

21. *mucho corazón* (mōō'chō kō-rā-sōn') *Spanish*: a lot of heart; great courage.



**R1.1** Identify idioms, analogies, metaphors, and similes in prose and poetry.

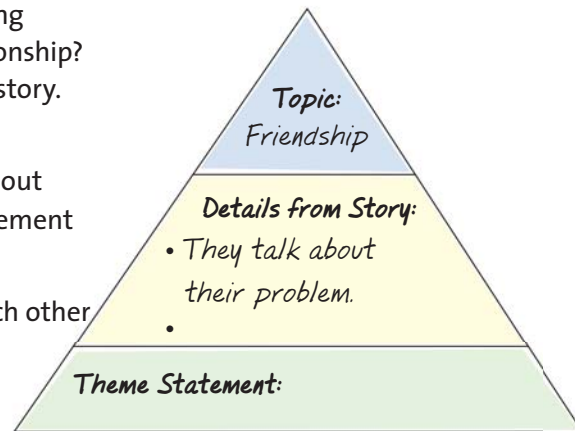
**R3.4** Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

## Comprehension

- 1. Recall** Why is this fight so important to Felix and Antonio?
- 2. Recall** What happens at the end of the fight?
- 3. Summarize** Describe how the two boys fight during the boxing match. What strengths does each boy demonstrate?

## Literary Analysis

- 4. Make Inferences** Felix draws an **analogy**, or point-by-point comparison, between *The Champion* and his upcoming fight with Antonio. How does this analogy help Felix deal with his **internal conflict**?
- 5. Compare and Contrast Characters** Look back at the Venn diagram you created as you read “Amigo Brothers.” Which are more important, the similarities or the differences? Why?
- 6. Draw Conclusions** What effect does the boxing competition have on Felix and Antonio’s relationship? Support your answer with examples from the story.
- 7. Identify Theme** Draw a graphic organizer like the one shown. Note details from the story about the boys’ **friendship**. Then write a theme statement about friendship.
- 8. Analyze Theme** Given that the boys know each other so well, do you think it is easier or harder for them to fight each other? Use examples from the story to support your answer.



## Extension and Challenge

- 9. Creative Project: Music** Filmmakers often use music to enhance a movie’s **theme**. Suppose you were asked to pick five songs for a film version of “Amigo Brothers.” What would they be? Present your list to the class. Explain how each song reflects a theme of the selection.
- 10. Inquiry and Research** Find out about the early life of a Golden Gloves champion who later became a professional boxer, such as Oscar de la Hoya or Muhammad Ali. How was the person you researched like Felix and Antonio? Present your findings to the class.



Oscar de la Hoya



### RESEARCH LINKS

For more on Golden Glove champions, visit the **Research Center at ClassZone.com**.

## Vocabulary in Context

### VOCABULARY PRACTICE

For each sentence, choose the vocabulary word that is similar in meaning to the boldfaced word or phrase.

1. In the ring, both fighters were **extremely good at causing pain**.
2. Felix was in **continual** motion on his feet.
3. Antonio's fans cheered with **uncontrolled** emotion.
4. The **noise** in the gym was so loud that Felix couldn't hear himself think.
5. The trainer sat **deep in thought**.
6. Antonio began to **wave his arms crazily** about.
7. Felix came at Antonio with a **concentrated attack** of punches.
8. Antonio responded with a **wild, never-ending stream** of blows.
9. At times, both fighters almost lost their **ability to think clearly**.
10. Felix was able to **get rid of** any doubts about his friend.



### VOCABULARY IN WRITING

Did the ending of this story surprise you? Write a paragraph explaining your reactions, using three or more of the vocabulary words. You might start like this.

#### EXAMPLE SENTENCE

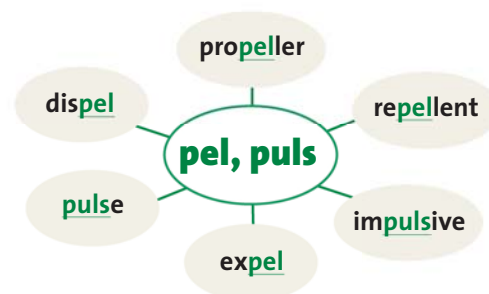
*I expected the ending to **dispel** the question of who the better fighter was.*

### VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE LATIN ROOT *pel*

The vocabulary word *dispel* contains the Latin root *pel*, which means “drive” or “push.” This root, which is sometimes spelled *puls*, is found in many English words. To understand the meaning of words with *pel* or *puls*, use context clues and your knowledge of the root’s meaning.

**PRACTICE** Choose the word from the web that best completes each sentence.

1. Use insect \_\_\_\_\_ before you hike through the woods.
2. A person who is \_\_\_\_\_ often doesn't think before acting.
3. She threatened to \_\_\_\_\_ any club member who missed more than two meetings.
4. A plane's \_\_\_\_\_ helps it move through the air.



**R1.2** Use knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon roots and affixes to understand content-area vocabulary.



#### VOCABULARY PRACTICE

For more practice, go to the **Vocabulary Center** at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).





**W1.2** Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

## Reading-Writing Connection

Increase your understanding of “Amigo Brothers” by responding to these prompts. Then complete the **Grammar and Writing** exercise.

WRITING PROMPTS	SELF-CHECK
<p><b>A. Short Response: Analyze the Message</b> Some people believe boxing is too brutal to be an appropriate sport for young people. Others disagree. Which side of this debate is presented in “Amigo Brothers”? Using details and examples from the story, write <b>one paragraph</b> explaining your response.</p>	<p><b>A strong response will . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include a clear opening statement</li> <li>• use specific details and examples from the story to support the statement</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Extended Response: Write Dialogue</b> What do you suppose Antonio and Felix talk about as they walk away from the boxing ring? Keep in mind the big question about <b>competition</b> on page 310 and what you know about the boys’ friendship. Write their conversation as a <b>one-page dialogue</b>.</p>	<p><b>An effective dialogue will . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate the nature of the boys’ friendship</li> <li>• include language that fits each character</li> </ul>

### GRAMMAR AND WRITING

**PUNCTUATE DIALOGUE CORRECTLY** Dialogue is a conversation between two or more speakers. If you don’t punctuate it correctly, readers might be confused about who is speaking. To avoid confusion, use **quotation marks** at the beginning and end of a speaker’s words. Place end marks, such as **periods**, inside closing quotation marks. Use **commas** to set off a speaker’s words from the rest of a sentence. Notice the placement of the comma and quotation marks in the revised sentence.

*Original:* Antonio said Felix, you will always be my *amigo* brother.

*Revised:* Antonio said, “Felix, you will always be my *amigo* brother.”

**PRACTICE** Fix the misplaced punctuation marks in the following dialogue and insert any missing marks.

1. Felix replied, Same here, bro. No way I would let anything come between us.
2. “So, I feel good about our decision”, Antonio said.
3. Felix shrugged and said Yeah. Me, too.
4. “Brother, boxing will never mean more to me than our friendship does”.

*For more help with punctuating dialogue, see page R50 in the Grammar Handbook.*



**LC1.4** Demonstrate the mechanics of writing (e.g., quotation marks, commas at end of dependent clauses) and appropriate English usage (e.g., pronoun reference).

## The War of the Wall

Short Story by Toni Cade Bambara

# What makes a COMMUNITY?



**R3.4** Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness). See page 335.

**KEY IDEA** Belonging to a **community** can give people feelings of identity and security. What things in the community help contribute to those feelings? In “The War of the Wall,” an “outsider” comes to a town and challenges its residents’ idea of what it means to be a community.

**DISCUSS** Think about the different communities, or groups, that you belong to, such as your school, your neighborhood, and your town. With a group of classmates, discuss how you would welcome someone new to your school or town.







### LITERARY ANALYSIS: THEME

By paying attention to a story's **theme**, or message, you can learn things about human nature that you might never get a chance to learn from experience. You can determine a story's main theme by

- noting the **setting** of the story and how it might relate to the theme
- making inferences about why the **narrator** and other **characters** say and do things and about how they feel
- noting what **conflicts** arise and how they are resolved

As you read "The War of the Wall," keep these tips in mind in order to identify the story's theme.

### READING STRATEGY: MONITOR

Active readers check, or **monitor**, their understanding as they read. One way to monitor your understanding is to pause occasionally and ask yourself questions. Sometimes you'll need to reread to find the answer. Other times you'll want to read on, because your question might be answered later in the story. Either way, asking questions will help you focus on and better understand what you are reading.

As you read "The War of the Wall," record questions and answers about what is happening and why characters act the way they do. Use a chart like the one shown.

<i>My Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
<i>What is the lady painting on the wall?</i>	

### VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The following phrases could be newspaper headlines for articles about the artist's painting in "The War of the Wall." Write a definition of each boldfaced word.

1. **Aroma** of Paint Was Promise of Future Beauty
2. Artist's **Masterpiece** Creates Sensation
3. Viewers in **Trance** over Splendid Work
4. Colors and Subject Matter **Beckon** to Wide Audience
5. **Inscription** on Mural Provides Dedication

### Creative Beginnings

Born Miltona Mirkin Cade, Toni Cade Bambara announced at five years old that she was changing her name to Toni. Her mother, who supported all of Bambara's creative efforts, agreed. Bambara



Toni Cade Bambara  
1939–1995

began writing as a child and never stopped. She went on to become an award-winning author, teacher, filmmaker, and a leading activist in the African-American community. Although set in a small town, "The War of the Wall" was inspired by Bambara's memories of growing up in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City.



#### MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more on Toni Cade Bambara, visit the Literature Center at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

### Background

**Murals** A mural is a large picture painted on an interior or exterior wall of a building. Many murals illustrate scenes from history or reflect the people of local communities. In the 1960s, African-American artists began a "wall of respect" movement. They painted murals as symbols of their respect for different groups. Walls of respect appeared everywhere from Eastern cities such as New York to Western cities such as Los Angeles. They were also painted in small Southern towns such as the one in which "The War of the Wall" takes place.



# THE WAR OF THE WALL

TONI CADE BAMBARA

**M**e and Lou had no time for courtesies. We were late for school. So we just flat out told the painter lady to quit messing with the wall. It was our wall, and she had no right coming into our neighborhood painting on it. Stirring in the paint bucket and not even looking at us, she mumbled something about Mr. Eubanks, the barber, giving her permission. That had nothing to do with it as far as we were concerned. We've been pitching pennies against that wall since we were little kids. Old folks have been dragging their chairs out to sit in the shade of the wall for years. Big kids have been playing handball against the wall since so-called integration<sup>1</sup> when the crazies 'cross town poured  
10 cement in our pool so we couldn't use it. I'd sprained my neck one time boosting my cousin Lou up to chisel Jimmy Lyons's name into the wall when we found out he was never coming home from the war in Vietnam to take us fishing. **A**

"If you lean close," Lou said, leaning hipshot against her beat-up car, "you'll get a whiff of bubble gum and kids' sweat. And that'll tell you something—that this wall belongs to the kids of Taliaferro Street." I thought Lou sounded very convincing. But the painter lady paid us no mind. She just snapped the brim of her straw hat down and  
20 hauled her bucket up the ladder.

"You're not even from around here," I hollered up after her. The license plates on her old piece of car said "New York." Lou dragged me away because I was about to grab hold of that ladder and shake it. And then we'd really be late for school.

**W**hen we came from school, the wall was slick with white. The painter lady was running string across the wall and taping it here and there. Me and Lou leaned against the gumball machine outside the pool hall and watched. She had strings up and down and back and forth. Then she began chalking them with a hunk of blue chalk.

## ANALYZE VISUALS

Look closely at this picture. What details of **setting** does it include?

## **A** THEME

After reading the first few lines of this story, what do you think the main **conflict** will be? As you continue reading, think about what message this conflict might communicate.

1. **since so-called integration:** from the time in the 1960s when segregation, the separation of the races in public places, was outlawed. The narrator is being sarcastic, suggesting that integration has not been successful.

*Harlem Street Scene* (1942), Jacob Lawrence. Gouache on paper, 21" × 20¾". Private collection. © 2008 The Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation, Seattle/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. © Art Resource, New York.





BAR AND GRILL

MEATS



30 The Morris twins crossed the street, hanging back at the curb next to the beat-up car. The twin with the red ribbons was hugging a jug of cloudy lemonade. The one with yellow ribbons was holding a plate of dinner away from her dress. The painter lady began snapping the strings. The blue chalk dust measured off halves and quarters up and down and sideways too. Lou was about to say how hip it all was, but I dropped my book satchel on his toes to remind him we were at war.

Some good **aromas** were drifting our way from the plate leaking pot likker<sup>2</sup> onto the Morris girl's white socks. I could tell from where I stood that under the tinfoil was baked ham, collard greens, and candied yams.

40 And knowing Mrs. Morris, who sometimes bakes for my mama's restaurant, a slab of buttered cornbread was probably up under there too, sopping up some of the pot likker. Me and Lou rolled our eyes, wishing somebody would send us some dinner. But the painter lady didn't even turn around. She was pulling the strings down and prying bits of tape loose.

Side Pocket came strolling out of the pool hall to see what Lou and me were studying so hard. He gave the painter lady the once-over, checking out her paint-spattered jeans, her chalky T-shirt, her floppy-brimmed straw hat. He hitched up his pants and glided over toward the painter lady, who kept right on with what she was doing.

50 "Whatcha got there, sweetheart?" he asked the twin with the plate. "Suppah," she said all soft and countrylike.

"For her," the one with the jug added, jerking her chin toward the painter lady's back.

Still she didn't turn around. She was rearing back on her heels, her hands jammed into her back pockets, her face squinched up like the **masterpiece** she had in mind was taking shape on the wall by magic. We could have been gophers crawled up into a rotten hollow for all she cared. She didn't even say hello to anybody. Lou was muttering something about how great her concentration was. I butt him with

60 my hip, and his elbow slid off the gum machine. **B**

"Good evening," Side Pocket said in his best ain't-I-fine voice. But the painter lady was moving from the milk crate to the step stool to the ladder, moving up and down fast, scribbling all over the wall like a crazy person. We looked at Side Pocket. He looked at the twins. The twins looked at us. The painter lady was giving a show. It was like those old-timey music movies where the dancer taps on the tabletop and then starts jumping all over the furniture, kicking chairs over and not skipping a beat. She didn't even look where she was stepping. And for a minute there, hanging on the ladder to reach a far spot, she looked like she was going

70 to tip right over.

**aroma** (ə-rō'mə) *n.*  
a smell; odor

**masterpiece**  
(mās'tər-pēs') *n.*  
a great work of art

### **B** MONITOR

Why do you think the **narrator** says, "We could have been gophers . . . for all she cared"? How is the narrator feeling?

---

2. **pot likker**: the broth or liquid in which meat or vegetables have been cooked.



“Ahh,” Side Pocket cleared his throat and moved fast to catch the ladder. “These young ladies here have brought you some supper.”

“Ma’am?” The twins stepped forward. Finally the painter turned around, her eyes “full of sky,” as my grandmama would say. Then she stepped down like she was in a **trance**. She wiped her hands on her jeans as the Morris twins offered up the plate and the jug. She rolled back the tinfoil, then wagged her head as though something terrible was on the plate.

“Thank your mother very much,” she said, sounding like her mouth was full of sky too. “I’ve brought my own dinner along.” And then, 80 without even excusing herself, she went back up the ladder, drawing on the wall in a wild way. Side Pocket whistled one of those oh-brother breathy whistles and went back into the pool hall. The Morris twins shifted their weight from one foot to the other, then crossed the street and went home. Lou had to drag me away, I was so mad. We couldn’t wait to get to the firehouse to tell my daddy all about this rude woman who’d stolen our wall.

**A**ll the way back to the block to help my mama out at the restaurant, me and Lou kept asking my daddy for ways to run the painter lady out of town. But my daddy was busy talking about the trip to the country 90 and telling Lou he could come too because Grandmama can always use an extra pair of hands on the farm.

Later that night, while me and Lou were in the back doing our chores, we found out that the painter lady was a liar. She came into the restaurant and leaned against the glass of the steam table, talking about how starved she was. I was scrubbing pots and Lou was chopping onions, but we could hear her through the service window. She was asking Mama was that a ham hock in the greens, and was that a neck bone in the pole beans, and were there any vegetables cooked without meat, especially pork.

“I don’t care who your spiritual leader is,” Mama said in that way of 100 hers. “If you eat in the community, sistuh, you gonna eat pig by-and-by, one way or t’other.”

Me and Lou were cracking up in the kitchen, and several customers at the counter were clearing their throats, waiting for Mama to really fix her wagon<sup>3</sup> for not speaking to the elders when she came in. The painter lady took a stool at the counter and went right on with her questions. Was there cheese in the baked macaroni, she wanted to know? Were there eggs in the salad? Was it honey or sugar in the iced tea? Mama was fixing Pop Johnson’s plate. And every time the painter lady asked a fool question, Mama would dump another spoonful of rice on the pile. She 110 was tapping her foot and heating up in a dangerous way. But Pop Johnson

**trance** (trāns) *n.*  
a condition of  
daydreaming or  
being unconscious  
of one’s surroundings

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3. **fix her wagon:** a slang expression meaning “put her in her place; bring about her downfall.”

was happy as he could be. Me and Lou peeked through the service window, wondering what planet the painter lady came from. Who ever heard of baked macaroni without cheese, or potato salad without eggs? **C**

“Do you have any bread made with unbleached flour?” the painter lady asked Mama. There was a long pause, as though everybody in the restaurant was holding their breath, wondering if Mama would dump the next spoonful on the painter lady’s head. She didn’t. But when she set Pop Johnson’s plate down, it came down with a bang.

When Mama finally took her order, the starving lady all of a sudden  
120 couldn’t make up her mind whether she wanted a vegetable plate or fish and a salad. She finally settled on the broiled trout and a tossed salad. But just when Mama reached for a plate to serve her, the painter lady leaned over the counter with her finger all up in the air.

“Excuse me,” she said. “One more thing.” Mama was holding the plate like a Frisbee, tapping that foot, one hand on her hip. “Can I get raw beets in that tossed salad?”

“You will get,” Mama said, leaning her face close to the painter lady’s, “whatever Lou back there tossed. Now sit down.” And the painter lady sat back down on her stool and shut right up. **D**

130 All the way to the country, me and Lou tried to get Mama to open fire on the painter lady. But Mama said that seeing as how she was from the North, you couldn’t expect her to have any manners. Then Mama said she was sorry she’d been so impatient with the woman because she seemed like a decent person and was simply trying to stick to a very strict diet. Me and Lou didn’t want to hear that. Who did that lady think she was, coming into our neighborhood and taking over our wall? **E**

“Welllllll,” Mama drawled, pulling into the filling station so Daddy could take the wheel, “it’s hard on an artist, ya know. They can’t always get people to look at their work. So she’s just doing her work in the open, that’s all.”

140 Me and Lou definitely did not want to hear that. Why couldn’t she set up an easel downtown or draw on the sidewalk in her own neighborhood? Mama told us to quit fussing so much; she was tired and wanted to rest. She climbed into the back seat and dropped down into the warm hollow Daddy had made in the pillow.

All weekend long, me and Lou tried to scheme up ways to recapture our wall. Daddy and Mama said they were sick of hearing about it. Grandmama turned up the TV to drown us out. On the late news was a story about the New York subways. When a train came roaring into the station all covered from top to bottom, windows too, with writings and drawings done with  
150 spray paint, me and Lou slapped five. Mama said it was too bad kids in New York had nothing better to do than spray paint all over the trains. Daddy said that in the cities, even grown-ups wrote all over the trains and buildings too. Daddy called it “graffiti.” Grandmama called it a shame.

### **C** THEME

Reread lines 96–113. How is the painter different from the people who live in the community?

### **D** MONITOR

What **questions** do you have about what is happening in this scene? Record them in your monitoring chart.

### **E** THEME

Reread lines 130–136. What does the **setting** have to do with the **conflict** between the community and the painter?

**W**e couldn't wait to get out of school on Monday. We couldn't find any black spray paint anywhere. But in a junky hardware store downtown we found a can of white epoxy<sup>4</sup> paint, the kind you touch up old refrigerators with when they get splotchy and peely. We spent our whole allowance on it. And because it was too late to use our bus passes, we had to walk all the way home lugging our book satchels and gym  
160 shoes, and the bag with the epoxy.

When we reached the corner of Taliaferro and Fifth, it looked like a block party or something. Half the neighborhood was gathered on the sidewalk in front of the wall. I looked at Lou, he looked at me. We both looked at the bag with the epoxy and wondered how we were going to work our scheme. The painter lady's car was nowhere in sight. But there were too many people standing around to do anything. Side Pocket and his buddies were leaning on their cue sticks, hunching each other. Daddy was there with a lineman<sup>5</sup> he catches a ride with on Mondays. Mrs. Morris had her arms flung around the shoulders of the twins on  
170 either side of her. Mama was talking with some of her customers, many of them with napkins still at the throat. Mr. Eubanks came out of the barbershop, followed by a man in a striped poncho, half his face shaved, the other half full of foam.

"She really did it, didn't she?" Mr. Eubanks huffed out his chest. Lots of folks answered right quick that she surely did when they saw the straight razor in his hand. **F**

Mama **beckoned** us over. And then we saw it. The wall. Reds, greens, figures outlined in black. Swirls of purple and orange. Storms of blues and yellows. It was something. I recognized some of the faces right off. There  
180 was Martin Luther King, Jr. And there was a man with glasses on and his mouth open like he was laying down a heavy rap. Daddy came up alongside and reminded us that that was Minister Malcolm X. The serious woman with a rifle I knew was Harriet Tubman because my grandmama has pictures

**F MONITOR**

Reread lines 171–176. Why do people agree with Mr. Eubanks so quickly?

**beckon** (bĕk'ən) v. to summon or call, usually by a gesture or nod

4. **epoxy** (ĭ-pŏk'sē): a plastic used in glues and paints.

5. **lineman**: a person who repairs telephone or power lines.





Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Harriet Tubman, and Fannie Lou Hamer (shown here) were all African Americans who fought for freedom and equality.

of her all over the house. And I knew Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer 'cause a signed photograph of her hangs in the restaurant next to the calendar.

Then I let my eyes follow what looked like a vine. It trailed past a man with a horn, a woman with a big white flower in her hair, a handsome dude in a tuxedo seated at a piano, and a man with a goatee holding a book. When I looked more closely, I realized that what had looked like  
190 flowers were really faces. One face with yellow petals looked just like Frieda Morris. One with red petals looked just like Hattie Morris. I could hardly believe my eyes.

“Notice,” Side Pocket said, stepping close to the wall with his cue stick like a classroom pointer. “These are the flags of liberation,” he said in a voice I’d never heard him use before. We all stepped closer while he pointed and spoke. “Red, black and green,” he said, his pointer falling on the leaflike flags of the vine. “Our liberation flag.<sup>6</sup> And here Ghana, there Tanzania. Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique.”<sup>7</sup> Side Pocket sounded very tall, as though he’d been waiting all his life to give this lesson.

200 Mama tapped us on the shoulder and pointed to a high section of the wall. There was a fierce-looking man with his arms crossed against his chest guarding a bunch of children. His muscles bulged, and he looked a lot like my daddy. One kid was looking at a row of books. Lou hunched me 'cause the kid looked like me. The one that looked like Lou was spinning a globe on the tip of his finger like a basketball. There were other kids there with microscopes and compasses. And the more I looked, the more it looked like the fierce man was not so much guarding the kids as defending their right to do what they were doing. **G**

Then Lou gasped and dropped the paint bag and ran forward, running  
210 his hands over a rainbow. He had to tiptoe and stretch to do it, it was so high. I couldn’t breathe either. The painter lady had found the chisel marks and had painted Jimmy Lyons’s name in a rainbow.

“Read the **inscription**, honey,” Mrs. Morris said, urging little Frieda forward. She didn’t have to urge much. Frieda marched right up, bent down, and in a loud voice that made everybody quit oohing and ahing and listen, she read,

*To the People of Taliaferro Street  
I Dedicate This Wall of Respect  
Painted in Memory of My Cousin  
Jimmy Lyons*

220

**G THEME**

Reread lines 200–208. Here you see the story’s main **characters** through the painter’s eyes. How does this show that she understands the community?

**inscription**

(ĭn-skrĭp’shen) *n.* something written, carved, or engraved on a surface

6. **Red, black and green . . . liberation flag:** a banner of red, black, and green horizontal stripes has been used in the United States as well as Africa to stand for the liberation, or freedom, sought by people of African heritage.

7. **Ghana . . . Tanzania. Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique** (mō’zəm-bēk’): countries in southern and western Africa.

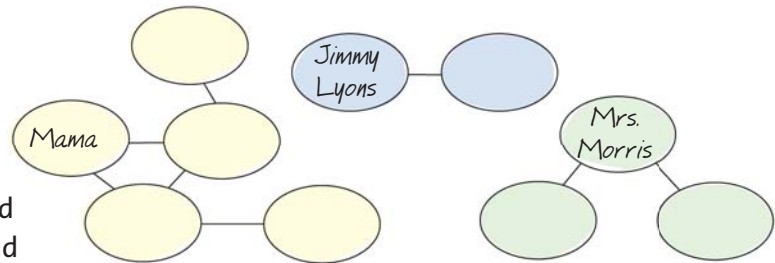




**R3.4 Identify and analyze recurring themes across works** (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

## Comprehension

- 1. Recall** Why is the wall special to the narrator and Lou?
- 2. Represent** Who is related to whom in this story? Use web diagrams to show the family relationships mentioned.
- 3. Clarify** Why don't Lou and the narrator carry out their plan to recapture the wall?



## Literary Analysis

- 4. Monitor** Review the chart you filled in as you read. Which questions and answers were most important for understanding the story? Why?
- 5. Make Inferences** Reread lines 209–220. How do you think the two boys feel about having bought paint once they read the inscription on the wall? Explain.
- 6. Analyze Characters** Mama's reaction to the painter seems to change over the course of the story. Her first impression of the painter seems to be negative. Why does she then defend the painter to the narrator and Lou?
- 7. Identify Theme** Given what the **characters** learn about themselves and the painter, what do you think is the main theme of the story?
- 8. Identify Recurring Theme** When the same theme appears in different stories, it is called a recurring theme. Look back at the story "Amigo Brothers" on page 312. Identify a recurring theme about friendship in "Amigo Brothers" and in "The War of the Wall." Explain your answer.
- 9. Evaluate** Was the painter an outsider or part of the **community**? Explain.

## Extension and Challenge

- 10. Readers' Circle** "The War of the Wall" is told from the **first-person point of view**. Everything we learn about the characters and plot comes from what the narrator chooses to tell us. For that reason, we don't know very much about the painter's thoughts and feelings. With a small group of classmates, talk about what the painter may have been thinking about the **community**. Support your responses with evidence from the story.
- 11. SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION** Read the article "Back to the Wall" on page 337 about artist Judith Baca's mural restoration project. Identify similarities and differences between Los Angeles's Great Wall and the mural in the story. Think about the subject of each mural and the way each was created.

# Vocabulary in Context

## VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose the letter of the situation that you would associate with each boldfaced vocabulary word.

1. **aroma:** (a) arguing with a friend, (b) writing a letter, (c) smelling a rose
2. **masterpiece:** (a) a game of catch, (b) a prize-winning play, (c) a stormy day
3. **trance:** (a) walking a dog, (b) snoring loudly, (c) not paying attention
4. **beckon:** (a) hailing a taxicab, (b) passing a test, (c) eating lunch
5. **inscription:** (a) military service, (b) words on a tombstone, (c) parts of a car



## VOCABULARY IN WRITING

What kind of person is the painter? Write a brief character description of her, using two or more vocabulary words. Here is an example of how you might begin.

### EXAMPLE SENTENCE

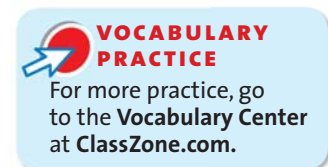
*The painter seems to know from the beginning that she is creating a **masterpiece**.*

## VOCABULARY STRATEGY: DENOTATIONS AND CONNOTATIONS

A word's **denotation** is its literal meaning—that is, the meaning found in a dictionary definition. A word's **connotation** comes from the shades of meaning it has beyond its definition. For example, a stubborn person could also be described as *strong-willed* or *pig-headed*. But *strong-willed* connotes “independent in thinking and acting,” while *pig-headed* connotes “inflexible.” Recognizing connotations can improve both your reading and your writing.

**PRACTICE** Choose the word in each pair that has a positive connotation. Then use the word in a sentence.

- |                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. gathering—mob   | 5. inquiring—prying        |
| 2. skinny—slender  | 6. gossip—chat             |
| 3. chuckle—snicker | 7. self-confident—arrogant |
| 4. petite—puny     | 8. immature—youthful       |



**MAGAZINE ARTICLE** In “The War of the Wall,” a woman paints a mural in a Southern town. In the following article, you’ll read about the real-life artist Judith Baca and the people who helped her create and restore a large mural in Los Angeles, California.



Judith F. Baca, “Triumph of the Hearts” from “World Wall: A Vision of The Future Without Fear,” 1986–present. © SPARC/www.sparcmurals.com.

## Back to the Wall

from People Weekly

**W**orking in a city known more for freeways than museums, Judith Baca may be the quintessential Los Angeles artist, painting not on canvas but on concrete. Since 1974 she has overseen the creation of roughly 550 murals in public spaces, providing summer work for inner-city kids while she brings color and life to highway underpasses and parks. “I want it to continue,” Baca, 58, says of her work. “I want future generations to see it.”

One of her most famous pieces is the 13-foot-high, half-mile-long Great Wall, which depicts world and L.A. history on a flood-channel wall. Some 400 youths—many from poor, crime-ridden

areas—worked on the mural, and 30 years later, some of their kids worked on its restoration. “People come first for Judy,” says Priscilla Becker, 40, who, as a teen from a poor family, worked with Baca for three summers. Now CEO of a software company, Becker adds, “From Judy I learned that dreams are not just dreams.”

Baca was teaching art in an inner-city park when she began planning murals to build bridges between rival gangs. She still wants her projects to meet the same goal. “All these people made the wall together,” she says. “That’s the story—what they made together.”



## What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?

Short Story by Avi

# *What is the cure for* **UNHAPPINESS?**

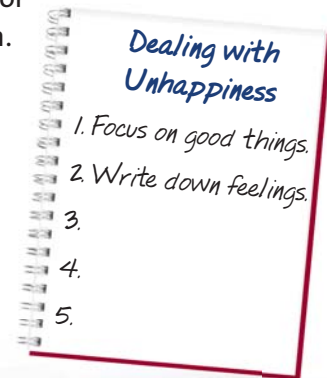


**R3.4 Identify and analyze** recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

Also included in this lesson: **W1.2** (p. 355), **LC1.4** (p. 355)

**KEY IDEA** What helps you through sad times? Is it talking to another person? Is it listening to music by yourself? Everyone deals with **unhappiness** in his or her own way. In “What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?” a young boy searches for a cure to the unhappiness he sees all around him.

**QUICKWRITE** With a partner or small group, brainstorm a list of strategies that can help people overcome unhappiness. You may use the list shown to get started. Then record the most effective strategies in your journal.



**LITERARY ANALYSIS: THEME AND SYMBOL**

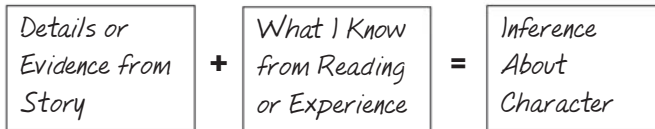
When you see a dove, do you think of peace? Many people do, because a dove is a well-known **symbol** for peace. A symbol is a person, place, or thing that stands for something beyond itself. To find symbols in a story, try the following:

- Look for people, places, things, or actions that the writer emphasizes or mentions over and over.
- Think about whether any repeated symbol might be a clue to identifying the overall **theme** of the story.
- Keep the title in mind as you read, because writers often provide clues there.

As you read “What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?” ask yourself what is being used as a symbol.

**READING SKILL: MAKE INFERENCES**

An **inference** is a logical guess based on clues in the text plus your own knowledge. Making inferences about characters, what they learn, and how they change will help you understand the message of the story. As you read the story, record each inference you make about the characters in an equation such as the one shown.



**Review:** Compare and Contrast

**VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT**

The words in column A help Avi tell his story about **unhappiness**. Match each word with the word in column B that is closest in meaning.

- | Column A       | Column B       |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. contemplate | a. unavoidably |
| 2. inevitably  | b. distracted  |
| 3. preoccupied | c. reply       |
| 4. retort      | d. necessity   |
| 5. threshold   | e. consider    |
| 6. urgency     | f. entrance    |

**Early Challenges**

Avi Wortis has written over 30 books for children and young adults, but he had to overcome a huge challenge to do so. As a boy, Avi had trouble spelling. But he loved reading—anything from comic books to histories. He later found out that he had a learning disability called dysgraphia, which caused him to reverse letters and misspell words. Although that affected his ability to write, Avi was determined to be a writer. He had no intention of giving up.



Avi  
born 1937

**Success!** Today, Avi is one of the most well-known and respected writers for young adults and has the awards to prove it. His advice to readers: “Don’t be satisfied with answers others give you. Don’t assume that because everyone believes a thing, it is right or wrong. Reason things out for yourself. Work to get answers on your own.” Avi includes this idea in “What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?”

**Homelessness** Avi’s parents worked to promote civil rights and other social justice issues. As an adult, Avi has shared their concerns. His writing often addresses social problems. In this story, a homeless man plays a positive role in a young boy’s life.

 **MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
For more on Avi, visit the Literature Center at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

# WHAT DO FISH HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?

AVI

Every day at three o'clock Mrs. Markham waited for her son, Willie, to come out of school. They walked home together. If asked why she did it, Mrs. Markham would say, "Parents need to watch their children."

As they left the schoolyard, Mrs. Markham **inevitably** asked, "How was school?"

Willie would begin to talk, then stop. He was never sure his mother was listening. She seemed **preoccupied** with her own thoughts. She had been like that ever since his dad had abandoned them six months ago. No one knew where he'd gone. Willie had the feeling that his mother  
10 was lost too. It made him feel lonely.

One Monday afternoon, as they approached the apartment building where they lived, she suddenly tugged at him. "Don't look that way," she said. "Where?"

"At that man over there."

Willie stole a look over his shoulder. A man, whom Willie had never seen before, was sitting on a red plastic milk crate near the curb. His matted, streaky gray hair hung like a ragged curtain over his dirty face. His shoes were torn. Rough hands lay upon his knees. One hand was palm up. No one seemed to pay him any mind. Willie was certain he  
20 had never seen a man so utterly alone. It was as if he were some spat-out piece of chewing gum on the pavement.

"What's the matter with him?" Willie asked his mother in a hushed voice.

Keeping her eyes straight ahead, Mrs. Markham said, "He's sick." She pulled Willie around. "Don't stare. It's rude."

"What kind of sick?"

## inevitably

(īn-ēv'ī-tə-blē) *adv.*

unavoidably; without fail

## preoccupied

(prē-ōk'yə-pīd') *adj.* lost

in thought; distracted

## ANALYZE VISUALS

What is the first thing you notice about this image? What sense does it give you about the person?

*Gregory, Los Angeles, March 31st, 1982, David Hockney. Composite Polaroid, 14 1/2" x 13 1/4". Photo © David Hockney/The David Hockney No. 1 U.S. Trust.*





Gregory.

Los Angeles.

March 31<sup>st</sup>

1982

G.T.

As Mrs. Markham searched for an answer, she began to walk faster.

“He’s unhappy,” she said.

“What’s he doing?”

“Come on, Willie, you know perfectly well. He’s begging.”

30 “Do you think anyone gave him anything?”

“I don’t know. Now, come on, don’t look.”

“Why don’t you give him anything?”

“We have nothing to spare.”

**W**hen they got home, Mrs. Markham removed a white cardboard box from the refrigerator. It contained pound cake. Using her thumb as a measure, she carefully cut a half-inch piece of cake and gave it to Willie on a clean plate. The plate lay on a plastic mat decorated with images of roses with diamondlike dewdrops. She also gave him a glass of milk and a folded napkin. She moved slowly.

40 Willie said, “Can I have a bigger piece of cake?”

Mrs. Markham picked up the cake box and ran a manicured pink fingernail along the nutrition information panel. “A half-inch piece is a portion, and a portion contains the following health requirements. Do you want to hear them?”

“No.”

“It’s on the box, so you can believe what it says. Scientists study people, then write these things. If you’re smart enough you could become a scientist. Like this.” Mrs. Markham tapped the box. “It pays well.”

Willie ate his cake and drank the milk. When he was done he took  
50 care to wipe the crumbs off his face as well as to blot his milk mustache with the napkin. His mother liked him to be neat.

His mother said, “Now go on and do your homework. Carefully. You’re in sixth grade. It’s important.” **A**

Willie gathered up his books that lay on the empty third chair. At the kitchen entrance he paused and looked back at his mother. She was staring sadly at the cake box, but he didn’t think she was seeing it. Her unhappiness made him think of the man on the street.

“What *kind* of unhappiness do you think he has?” he suddenly asked.

“Who’s that?”

60 “That man.”

Mrs. Markham looked puzzled.

“The begging man. The one on the street.”

“Oh, could be anything,” his mother said, vaguely. “A person can be unhappy for many reasons.” She turned to stare out the window, as if an answer might be there.

#### **A** MAKE INFERENCES

Reread lines 34–53. Judging by what Mrs. Markham says and does, how would you describe her?

“Is unhappiness a sickness you can cure?”

“I wish you wouldn’t ask such questions.”

“Why?”

After a moment she said, “Questions that have no answers shouldn’t  
70 be asked.”

“Can I go out?”

“Homework first.”

Willie turned to go again.

“Money,” Mrs. Markham suddenly said. “Money will cure a lot  
of unhappiness. That’s why that man was begging. A salesman once said  
to me, ‘Maybe you can’t buy happiness, but you can rent a lot of it.’  
You should remember that.”

“How much money do we have?”

“Not enough.”

80 “Is that why you’re unhappy?”

“Willie, do your homework.” **B**

Willie started to ask another question, but decided he would not get  
an answer. He left the kitchen.

The apartment had three rooms. The walls were painted mint green.  
Willie walked down the hallway to his room, which was at the front of  
the building. By climbing up on the windowsill and pressing against the  
glass he could see the sidewalk five stories below. The man was still there.

It was almost five when he went to tell his mother he had finished his  
school assignments. He found her in her dim bedroom, sleeping. Since  
90 she had begun working the night shift at a convenience store—two weeks  
now—she took naps in the late afternoon.

**F**or a while Willie stood on the **threshold**, hoping his mother would  
wake up. When she didn’t, he went to the front room and looked  
down on the street again. The begging man had not moved.

Willie returned to his mother’s room.

“I’m going out,” he announced—softly.

Willie waited a decent interval<sup>1</sup> for his mother to waken. When she did  
not, he made sure his keys were in his pocket. Then he left the apartment.

By standing just outside the building door, he could keep his eyes on  
100 the man. It appeared as if he had still not moved. Willie wondered how  
anyone could go without moving for so long in the chill October air.  
Was staying still part of the man’s sickness?

During the twenty minutes that Willie watched, no one who passed  
looked in the beggar’s direction. Willie wondered if they even saw the  
man. Certainly no one put any money into his open hand.

**B THEME AND SYMBOL**

What might money  
symbolize to Mrs.  
Markham?

**threshold** (thrěsh’öld’) *n.*  
a doorway or entrance

1. **interval**: amount of time.



A lady leading a dog by a leash went by. The dog strained in the direction of the man sitting on the crate. His tail wagged. The lady pulled the dog away. “Heel!” she commanded.

The dog—tail between his legs—scampered to the lady’s side. Even so,  
110 the dog twisted around to look back at the beggar.

Willie grinned. The dog had done exactly what Willie had done when his mother told him not to stare.

Pressing deep into his pocket, Willie found a nickel. It was warm and slippery. He wondered how much happiness you could rent for a nickel.

Squeezing the nickel between his fingers, Willie walked slowly toward the man. When he came before him, he stopped, suddenly nervous. The man, who appeared to be looking at the ground, did not move his eyes. He smelled bad.

“Here.” Willie stretched forward and dropped the coin into the man’s  
120 open right hand. **C**

“God bless you,” the man said hoarsely as he folded his fingers over the coin. His eyes, like high beams on a car, flashed up at Willie, then dropped.

Willie waited for a moment, then went back up to his room. From his window he looked down on the street. He thought he saw the coin in the man’s hand, but was not sure.

**A**fter supper Mrs. Markham readied herself to go to work, then kissed Willie good night. As she did every night, she said, “If you have regular problems, call Mrs. Murphy downstairs. What’s her number?”

“274-8676,” Willie said.

130 “Extra bad problems, call Grandma.”

“369-6754.”

“Super special problems, you can call me.”

“962-6743.”

“Emergency, the police.”

“911.”

“Lay out your morning clothing.”

“I will.”

“Don’t let anyone in the door.”

“I won’t.”

140 “No television past nine.”

“I know.”

“But you can read late.”

“You’re the one who’s going to be late,” Willie reminded her.

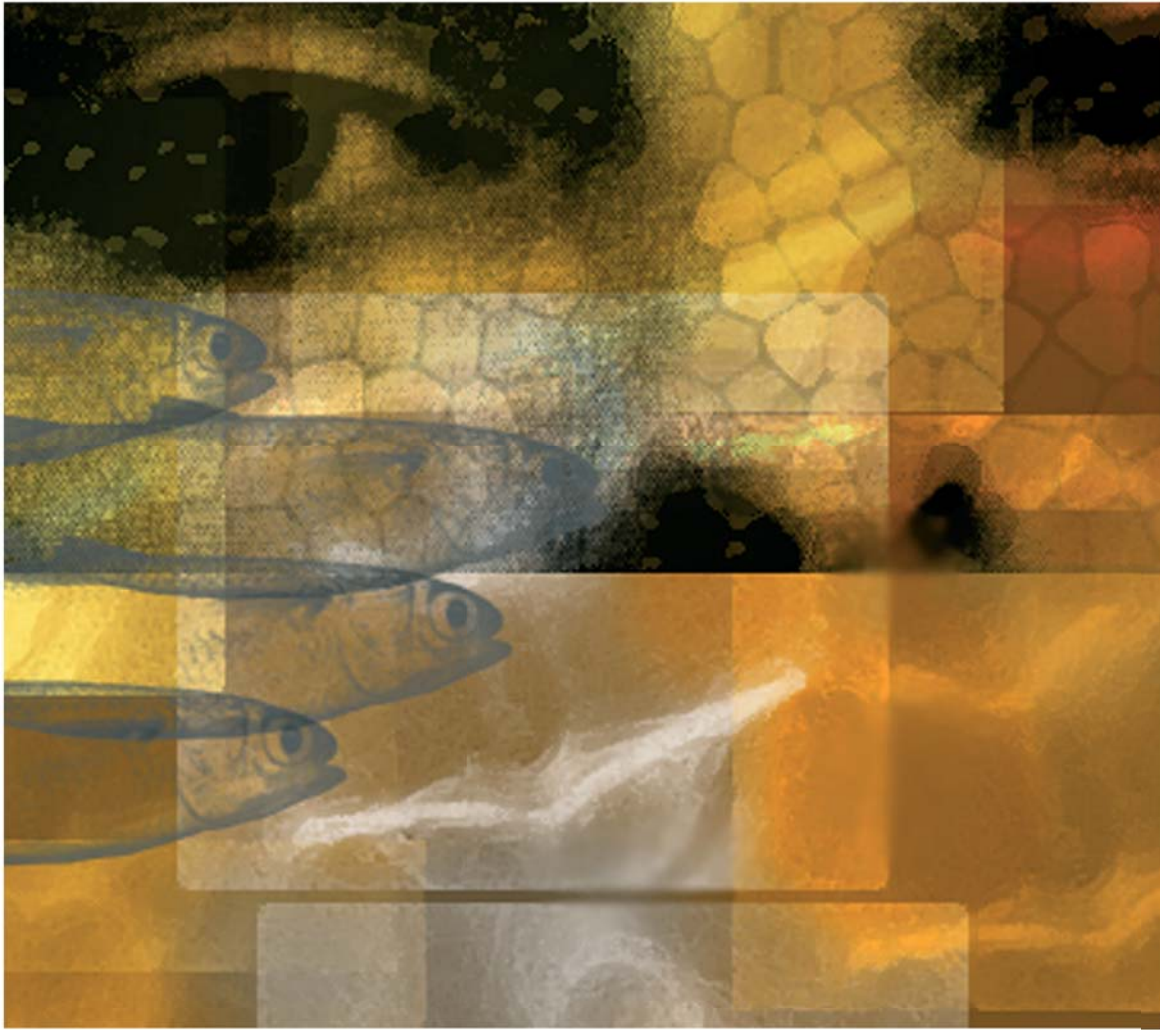
“I’m leaving,” Mrs. Markham said.

After she went, Willie stood for a long while in the hallway. The empty apartment felt like a cave that lay deep below the earth. That day in school Willie’s teacher had told the class about a kind of fish that lived

### **C** MAKE INFERENCES

Reread lines 113–120.

What does Willie’s action tell you about his **character**?



*At the Aquarium* (2003), Jim Macbeth. Digital collage. Photo © Jim Macbeth/SuperStock.

in caves. These fish could not see. They had no eyes. The teacher had said it was living in the dark cave that made them like that.

150 Willie had raised his hand and asked, “If they want to get out of the cave, can they?”

“I suppose.”

“Would their eyes come back?”

“Good question,” she said, but did not give an answer. **D**

Before he went to bed, Willie took another look out the window. In the pool of light cast by the street lamp, Willie saw the man.

On Tuesday morning when Willie went to school, the man was gone. But when he came home from school with his mother, he was there again.

“Please don’t look at him,” his mother whispered with some **urgency**.

160 During his snack, Willie said, “Why shouldn’t I look?”

“What are you talking about?”

### **ANALYZE VISUALS**

How do the details in this image connect with the story?

### **D THEME AND SYMBOL**

Reread lines 145–154. What makes Willie think of the story about the fish with no eyes?

**urgency** (ûr’jən-sē) *n.*  
a condition of pressing importance; necessity

“That man. On the street. Begging.”

“I told you. He’s sick. It’s better to act as if you never saw him. When people are that way they don’t wish to be looked at.”

“Why not?”

Mrs. Markham pondered for a little while. “People are ashamed of being unhappy.”

Willie looked thoughtfully at his mother. “Are you sure he’s unhappy?”

“You don’t have to ask if people are unhappy. They tell you all the time.”

170 “How?”

“The way they look.”

“Is that part of the sickness?”

“Oh, Willie, I don’t know. It’s just the way they are.”

Willie **contemplated** the half-inch slice of cake his mother had just given him. A year ago his parents seemed to be perfectly happy. For Willie, the world seemed easy, full of light. Then his father lost his job. He tried to get another but could not. For long hours he sat in dark rooms. Sometimes he drank. His parents began to argue a lot. One day, his father was gone.

180 For two weeks his mother kept to the dark. And wept.

Willie looked at his mother. “You’re unhappy,” he said.

“Are *you* ashamed?”

Mrs. Markham sighed and closed her eyes. “I wish you wouldn’t ask that.”

“Why?”

“It hurts me.”

“But are you ashamed?” Willie persisted.

He felt it was urgent that he know. So that he could do something.

She only shook her head.

Willie said, “Do you think Dad might come back?”

190 She hesitated before saying, “Yes, I think so.”

Willie wondered if that was what she really thought.

“Do you think Dad is unhappy?” Willie asked.

“Where do you get such questions?”

“They’re in my mind.”

“There’s much in the mind that need not be paid attention to.”

“Fish who live in caves have no eyes.”

“What are you talking about?”

“My teacher said it’s all that darkness. The fish forget how to see. So they lose their eyes.” **E**

200 “I doubt she said that.”

“She did.”

“Willie, you have too much imagination.”

**contemplate**

(kŏn'təm-plāt') v.

to consider carefully and at length

**E THEME AND SYMBOL**

Reread lines 189–199.

What is the connection between the questions Willie is asking his mother and the story about the fish?



**A**fter his mother went to work, Willie gazed down onto the street. The man was there. Willie thought of going down, but he knew he was not supposed to leave the building when his mother worked at night. He decided to speak to the man the next day.

That afternoon—Wednesday—Willie stood before the man. “I don’t have any money,” Willie said. “Can I still talk to you?”

The man lifted his face. It was a dirty face with very tired eyes.

210 He needed a shave.

“My mother,” Willie began, “said you were unhappy. Is that true?”

“Could be,” the man said.

“What are you unhappy about?”

The man’s eyes narrowed as he studied Willie intently. He said, “How come you want to know?”



#### **ANALYZE VISUALS**

**Compare** this man with how you picture the man in the story.

Willie shrugged.

“I think you should go home, kid.”

“I am home.” Willie gestured toward the apartment. “I live right here. Fifth floor. Where do you live?”

220 “Around.”

“*Are* you unhappy?” Willie persisted.

The man ran a tongue over his lips. His Adam’s apple bobbed. “A man has the right to remain silent,” he said, and closed his eyes.

Willie remained standing on the pavement for a while before retreating back to his apartment. Once inside he looked down from the window. The man was still there. For a moment Willie was certain the man was looking at the apartment building and the floor where Willie lived.

The next day, Thursday—after dropping a nickel in the man’s palm—Willie said, “I’ve never seen anyone look so unhappy as you do.

230 So I figure you must know a lot about it.”

The man took a deep breath. “Well, yeah, maybe.”

Willie said, “And I need to find a cure for it.”

“A *what?*”

“A cure for unhappiness.”

The man pursed his cracked lips and blew a silent whistle. Then he said, “Why?”

“My mother is unhappy.”

“Why’s that?”

“My dad went away.”

240 “How come?”

“I think because he was unhappy. Now my mother’s unhappy too—all the time. So if I found a cure for unhappiness, it would be a good thing, wouldn’t it?”

“I suppose. Hey, you don’t have anything to eat on you, do you?”

Willie shook his head, then said, “Would you like some cake?”

“What kind?”

“I don’t know. Cake.”

“Depends on the cake.”

On Friday Willie said to the man, “I found out what kind of cake it is.”

250 “Yeah?”

“Pound cake. But I don’t know why it’s called that.”

“Long as it’s cake it probably don’t matter.”

Neither spoke. Then Willie said, “In school my teacher said there are fish who live in caves and the caves are so dark the fish don’t have eyes. What do you think? Do you believe that?”

“Sure.”

“You do? How come?”

“Because you said so.”

“You mean, just because someone *said* it you believe it?”

260 “Not someone. You.” **F**

Willie was puzzled. “But, well, maybe it *isn't* true.”

The man grunted. “Hey, do you believe it?”

Willie nodded.

“Well, you’re not just anyone. You got eyes. You see. You ain’t no fish.”

“Oh.” Willie was pleased.

“What’s your name?” the man asked.

“Willie.”

“That’s a boy’s name. What’s your grown-up name?”

“William.”

270 “And that means another thing.”

“What?”

“I’ll take some of that cake.”

Willie started.<sup>2</sup> “You will?” he asked, surprised.

“Just said it, didn’t I?”

Willie suddenly felt excited. It was as if the man had given him a gift. Willie wasn’t sure what it was except that it was important and he was glad to have it. For a moment he just gazed at the man. He saw the lines on the man’s face, the way his lips curved, the small scar on the side of his chin, the shape of his eyes, which he now saw were blue. **G**

280 “I’ll get the cake,” Willie cried and ran back to the apartment. He snatched the box from the refrigerator as well as a knife, then hurried back down to the street. “I’ll cut you a piece,” he said, and he opened the box.

“Hey, that don’t look like a pound of cake,” the man said.

Willie, alarmed, looked up.

“But like I told you, it don’t matter.”

Willie held his thumb against the cake to make sure the portion was the right size. With a poke of the knife he made a small mark for the proper width.

Just as he was about to cut, the man said, “Hold it!”

290 Willie looked up. “What?”

“What were you doing there with your thumb?”

“I was measuring the size. The right portion. A person is supposed to get only one portion.”

“Where’d you learn that?”

“It says so on the box. You can see for yourself.” He held out the box.

The man studied the box then handed it back to Willie. “That’s just lies,” he said.

“How do you know?”

“William, how can a box say how much a person needs?”

## **F** COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Why do you think the man believes Willie but his own mother doesn’t? How are the man and the mother different?

## **G** MAKE INFERENCES

Reread lines 275–279. What “gift” has the man given Willie?

---

2. **started:** jumped or gave a sudden jerk in surprise.





Celia

Los Angeles,

April 10<sup>th</sup> 1982

Celia, Los Angeles, April 10th, 1982, David Hockney. Composite Polaroid, 18" x 30". Photo © David Hockney/The David Hockney No. 1 U.S. Trust.

300 “But it does. The scientists say so. They measured, so they know.  
Then they put it there.”

“Lies,” the man repeated.

Willie began to feel that this man knew many things. “Well, then, how much should I cut?” he asked.

The man said, “You have to look at me, then at the cake, and then you’re going to have to decide for yourself.”

“Oh.” Willie looked at the cake. The piece was about three inches wide. Willie looked up at the man. After a moment he cut the cake into two pieces, each an inch and a half wide. He gave one piece to the man  
310 and kept the other in the box.

“God bless you,” the man said as he took the piece and laid it in his left hand. He began to break off pieces with his right hand and put them in his mouth one by one. Each piece was chewed thoughtfully. Willie watched him eat.

When the man was done, he licked the crumbs on his fingers.

“Now I’ll give you something,” the man said.

“What?” Willie said, surprised.

“The cure for unhappiness.”

“You know it?” Willie asked, eyes wide.

320 The man nodded.

“What is it?”

“It’s this: What a person needs is always more than they say.”

“Who’s *they*?” Willie asked.

The man pointed to the cake box. “The people on the box,” he said.

In his mind Willie repeated what he had been told, then he gave the man the second piece of cake.

The man took it, saying, “Good man,” and he ate it.

Willie grinned.

330 **T**he next day was Saturday. Willie did not go to school. All morning he kept looking down from his window for the man, but it was raining and he did not appear. Willie wondered where he was, but could not imagine it.

Willie’s mother woke about noon. Willie sat with her while she ate her breakfast. “I found the cure for unhappiness,” he announced.

“Did you?” his mother said. She was reading a memo from the convenience store’s owner.

“It’s ‘What a person needs is always more than they say.’”

His mother put her papers down. “That’s nonsense. Where did you hear that?”

#### **ANALYZE VISUALS**

**Compare** the image on page 350 with the one on page 341. What similarities and differences do you see?

340 “That man.”  
“What man?”  
“On the street. The one who was begging. You said he was unhappy.  
So I asked him.”

“Willie, I told you I didn’t want you to even look at that man.”

“He’s a nice man. . . .”

“How do you know?”

“I’ve talked to him.”

“When? How much?”

Willie shrank down. “I did, that’s all.”

350 “Willie, I forbid you to talk to him. Do you understand me? Do you?  
Answer me!” She was shrill.

“Yes,” Willie said, but he’d already decided he would talk to the man one more time. He needed to explain why he could not talk to him anymore.

On Sunday, however, the man was not there. Nor was he there on Monday.

“That man is gone,” Willie said to his mother as they walked home from school.

“I saw. I’m not blind.”

“Where do you think he went?”

360 “I couldn’t care less. But you might as well know, I arranged for him to be gone.”

Willie stopped short. “What do you mean?”

“I called the police. We don’t need a nuisance<sup>3</sup> like that around here. Pestering kids.”

“He wasn’t pestering me.”

“Of course he was.”


“How do you know?”

“Willie, I have eyes. I can see.”

Willie glared at his mother. “No, you can’t. You’re a fish. You live  
370 in a cave.” **H**

“Fish?” **retorted** Mrs. Markham. “What do fish have to do with anything? Willie, don’t talk nonsense.”

“My name isn’t Willie. It’s William. And I know how to keep from being unhappy. I do!” He was yelling now. “What a person needs is always more than they say! *Always!*” **I**

He turned on his heel and walked back toward the school. At the corner he glanced back. His mother was following. He kept going. She kept following. 

### **H** THEME AND SYMBOL

Reread lines 356–370.  
Why does Willie compare his mother to the fish living in the cave?

**retort** (rĭ-tôrt') v.  
to reply sharply

### **I** MAKE INFERENCES

Reread lines 373–375.  
Why does Willie now insist that his name is William, not Willie?

3. **nuisance:** someone who is bothersome.





**R1.1** Identify idioms, analogies, metaphors, and similes in prose and poetry.

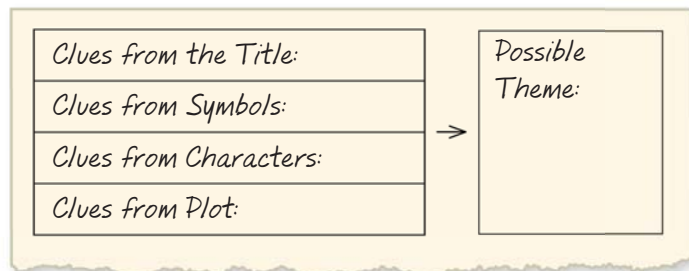
**R3.4** Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

## Comprehension

- 1. Recall** What do Willie and his class learn about a certain kind of fish that lives in caves?
- 2. Recall** What does Willie’s mother say is wrong with the homeless man?
- 3. Retell** Use your own words to retell how the story ends.

## Literary Analysis

- 4. Interpret Symbols** The type of fish with no eyes is mentioned many times in this story. What do you think it symbolizes? Now reread lines 34–48 and 286–310. What do you think the pound cake symbolizes?
- 5. Make Inferences** Look over the equations you created as you read. What inferences did you make about the **characters** in the story?
- 6. Compare and Contrast Characters** The two people in the story who have the greatest influence on Willie are his mom and the homeless man. Compare and contrast how these two characters try to help Willie.
- 7. Analyze Theme** Use a chart to help you identify clues the writer provides about the theme of the story. What do you think the theme is?
- 8. Evaluate** Willie’s mother says, “Parents need to watch their children.” Given what you know about her character, do you think she was right or wrong to call the police about the man?



## Extension and Challenge

- 9. Big Question Activity** Suppose Willie came to you for a cure for **unhappiness**. Using what you learned about Willie, what advice would you give him? Try giving him advice on specific areas in his life, such as his dad’s leaving or his mom’s lack of “seeing.” Use examples from the story to explain your suggestions. Present your advice to the class.
- 10. SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION** Find out about organizations and volunteer programs in your community or a nearby city that help people who are homeless or living in poverty. Call or write to one of these organizations to ask for more information about what they do and how young people can help.

## Vocabulary in Context

### VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose *true* or *false* for each statement.

1. If something happens **inevitably**, there is probably no way to avoid it.
2. A **preoccupied** person is one who lives in a house that was previously occupied.
3. A **threshold** can be found at the front of a house.
4. A person walking slowly communicates a feeling of **urgency**.
5. People who **contemplate** art tend to have little respect for culture.
6. If someone **retorts**, he or she is probably irritated or impatient.

### VOCABULARY IN WRITING

Using two or more vocabulary words, write a paragraph explaining how Willie came to know the man on the street. You might start like this.

#### EXAMPLE SENTENCE

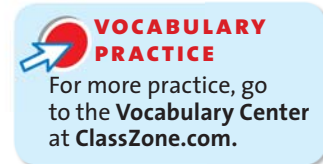
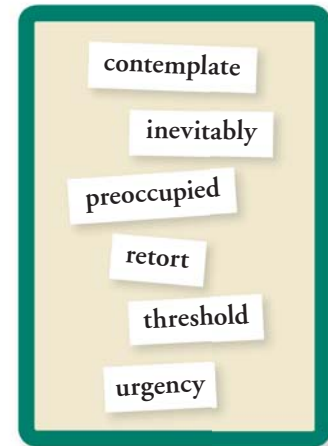
Willie began to **contemplate** the man's life while walking home.

### VOCABULARY STRATEGY: GENERAL CONTEXT CLUES

Sometimes you need to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word by reading what's around it. You might find **context clues** in the same sentence as the unfamiliar word or in one or more other sentences in the paragraph. For example, a clue to the meaning of *preoccupied* in this story comes in the previous sentence, which says that Willie "was never sure his mother was listening." From this, we know she is often lost in thought, or preoccupied.

**PRACTICE** Use context clues to determine the definition of each boldfaced word. Then write its definition.

1. Tossing about on their **skiff** in open waters, the passengers got drenched by the thunderstorm.
2. Lola actually made a mistake in counting the election results. She showed that she is **fallible** after all.
3. Mom could not **placate** Peter, no matter how hard she tried. He was determined to remain angry.
4. Wealthy **philanthropists** contribute large sums to charities.
5. Tobias became interested in **philately** once he saw my stamp collection.





W1.2 Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

## Reading-Writing Connection

Demonstrate your understanding of “What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?” by responding to these prompts. Then complete the **Grammar and Writing** exercise.

WRITING PROMPTS	SELF-CHECK
<p><b>A. Short Response: Write a Letter</b> Even though Willie might never see the homeless man again, their brief relationship has made a huge difference in Willie’s life. Write a <b>one-paragraph letter</b> in which Willie thanks the man for all he did for him.</p>	<p><b>A well-written letter will . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearly explain why Willie is thanking the man</li> <li>• use details from the story to clarify his reasons</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Extended Response: Evaluate a Symbol</b> On page 339, you learned that writers often use symbols to help them support ideas they want to share with their readers. Avi chose the fish with no eyes as his main symbol in this story. How does this symbol relate to the idea of <b>unhappiness</b>? Write a <b>two- or three-paragraph response</b>.</p>	<p><b>A strong response will . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include a clear position statement</li> <li>• use examples from the story to support this position</li> </ul>

### GRAMMAR AND WRITING

**COMBINE SENTENCES** You can avoid choppy writing by combining two or more short sentences into one. Use the **coordinating conjunction** *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *yet*, *so*, or *for* to join sentences that relate to the same topic. Remember to always put a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

*Original:* You were friendly. I liked talking to you.

*Revised:* You were friendly, **and** I liked talking to you.

**PRACTICE** Join these sentences by using the correct coordinating conjunctions.

1. You listened to me. You answered my questions.
2. My mom didn’t want me to talk to you. I did it anyway.
3. I wanted you to stick around. My mom sent you away.
4. You could come back to stay for good. You could just come for a visit.
5. I miss my conversations with you. I want you to come back.

*For more help with coordinating conjunctions, see page R47 in the Grammar Handbook.*



LC1.4 Demonstrate the mechanics of writing (e.g., quotation marks, commas at end of dependent clauses) and appropriate English usage (e.g., pronoun reference).



## Reading for Information

# Homeless

## Problem-Solution Essay

### What's the Connection?

In the short story you just read, a mother instructs her son not to look at a homeless man who is begging. In the problem-solution essay you are about to read, Anna Quindlen notes that this is often the way people react to “the homeless,” but she recommends a different response.

### Skill Focus: Identify Author's Perspective

Your view, or perspective, on a topic is influenced by your experiences, beliefs, and values. For example, if you've had dogs, you might think they're fun. If you haven't, you might be scared of them. Likewise, an **author's perspective**—that is, the way a writer looks at a topic—is influenced by his or her experiences, beliefs, and values.

Here's how to identify Quindlen's perspective on homelessness:

- Notice which parts of the topic Quindlen focuses on.
- Write down direct statements she makes about herself as well as the way she thinks or feels about the topic.
- Note words and details she uses to describe the topic.
- Think about what these elements of her essay tell you about her perspective on being homeless.

As you read Quindlen's essay, use these tips to help you complete a chart like the one started here.

<i>Direct Statements, Descriptive Words, and Other Details</i>	<i>What These Details Tell Me About Quindlen's Perspective</i>
<i>She introduces a homeless woman by name, emphasizing that this woman has a name and is a human being like any one of us.</i>	<i>She views this woman as an individual person first, homeless second.</i>
<i>"I've never been very good at looking at the big picture, taking the global view."</i>	



Use with “What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?” on page 340.



**R2.4** Identify and trace the development of an author's argument, point of view, or perspective in text.

**R3.1** Articulate the expressed purposes and characteristics of different forms of prose (e.g., short story, novel, novella, essay).

Also included in this lesson: **W1.2** (p. 361)



**F**OCUS ON FORM  
“Homeless” is a **problem-solution essay**, a short work of nonfiction in which a writer presents a problem and offers a reasonable solution.

# Homeless

by Anna Quindlen

Her name was Ann, and we met in the Port Authority Bus Terminal several Januarys ago. I was doing a story on homeless people. She said I was wasting my time talking to her; she was just passing through, although she'd been passing through for more than two weeks. To prove to me that this was true, she rummaged through a tote bag and a manila envelope and finally unfolded a

sheet of typing paper and brought out her photographs.

They were not pictures of family, or friends, or even a dog or cat, its eyes brown-red in the flashbulb's light. They were pictures of a house. It was like a thousand houses in a hundred towns, not suburb, not city, but somewhere in between, with aluminum siding and a chainlink fence, a narrow driveway running up to a one-car



garage and a patch of backyard. The house was yellow. I looked on the back for a date or a name, but neither was there. There was no need for discussion. I knew what she was trying to tell me, for it was something I had often felt. She was not adrift, alone, anonymous, although her bags and her raincoat with the grime shadowing its creases had made me believe she was. She had a house, or at least once upon a time had had one. Inside were curtains, a couch, a stove, potholders. You are where you live. She was somebody.

I've never been very good at looking at the big picture, taking the global view, and I've always been a person with an overactive sense of place, the legacy<sup>1</sup> of an Irish grandfather. So it is natural that the thing that seems most wrong with the world to me right now is that there are so many people with no homes. I'm not simply talking about shelter from the elements, or three square meals a day or a mailing address to which the welfare<sup>2</sup> people can send the check—although I know that all these are important for survival. I'm talking about a

1. **legacy** (lĕg'ə-sē): something handed down from an ancestor or from the past.

2. **welfare**: a program of financial aid provided by the government to people in need.



home, about precisely those kinds of feelings that have wound up in cross-stitch and French knots on samplers<sup>3</sup> over the years. **A**

Home is where the heart is. There's no place like it. I love my home with a ferocity totally out of proportion to its appearance or location. I love dumb things about it: the hot-water heater, the plastic rack you drain dishes in, the roof over my head, which occasionally leaks. And yet it is precisely those dumb things that make it what it is—a place of certainty, stability,<sup>4</sup> predictability, privacy, for me and for my family. It is where I live. What more can you say about a place than that? That is everything. **B**

Yet it is something that we have been edging away from gradually during my lifetime and the lifetimes of my parents and grandparents. There was a time when where you lived often was where you worked and where you grew the food you ate and even where you were buried. When that era passed, where you lived at least was where your parents had lived and where you would live with your children when you became enfeebled.<sup>5</sup> Then, suddenly, where you lived was where you lived for

three years, until you could move on to something else and something else again.

And so we have come to something else again, to children who do not understand what it means to go to their rooms because they have never had a room, to men and women whose fantasy is a wall they can paint a color of their own choosing, to old people reduced to sitting on molded plastic chairs, their skin blue-white in the lights of a bus station, who pull pictures of houses out of their bags. Homes have stopped being homes. Now they are real estate. **C**

People find it curious that those without homes would rather sleep sitting up on benches or huddled in doorways than go to shelters. Certainly some prefer to do so because they are emotionally ill, because they have been locked in before and they are damned if they will be locked in again. Others are afraid of the violence and trouble they may find there. But some seem to want something that is not available in shelters, and they will not compromise, not for a cot, or oatmeal, or a shower with special soap that kills the bugs. "One room," a woman with a baby who

**A AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE**

What does Quindlen think is most wrong in the world right now? Name two facts she shares about herself to help readers understand her perspective on this issue.

**B PROBLEM-SOLUTION ESSAY**

Restate the point that Quindlen makes in this paragraph.

**C AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE**

Reread lines 95–109. What does Quindlen say homes have become? What does she mean by this?

3. **in cross-stitch and French knots on samplers:** spelled out in fancy stitching and embroidered decorations.

4. **stability:** a condition of being reliable or permanent.

5. **enfeebled:** deprived of strength; made weak.

**D PROBLEM-SOLUTION  
ESSAY**

Reread lines 132–148.

How does Quindlen think most people “work around” the problem of homelessness?

**E PROBLEM-SOLUTION  
ESSAY**

What does Quindlen recommend that readers do to start addressing the problem she has introduced?

was sleeping on her sister’s floor, once told me, “painted blue.” That was the crux<sup>6</sup> of it; not size or  
130 location, but pride of ownership. Painted blue.

This is a difficult problem, and some wise and compassionate  
150 people are working hard at it. But in the main I think we work around it, just as we walk around it when it is lying on the sidewalk or sitting in the bus terminal—the problem, that is. It has been customary to  
140 take people’s pain and lessen our own participation in it by turning it into an issue, not a collection of human beings. We turn an adjective 160

into a noun: the poor, not poor people; the homeless, not Ann or the man who lives in the box or the woman who sleeps on the subway grate. **D**

Sometimes I think we would be better off if we forgot about the broad strokes and concentrated on the details. Here is a woman without a bureau. There is a man with no mirror, no wall to hang it on. They are not the homeless. They are people who have no homes. No drawer that holds the spoons. No window to look out upon the world. My God. That is everything. **E**

6. **crux**: the most important point or element.



## Comprehension

1. **Recall** In Quindlen’s opinion, what was Ann trying to tell her by sharing her carefully protected pictures of a house? Explain.
2. **Recall** What do some homeless people want that they cannot get at a shelter? Explain.

## Critical Analysis

3. **Analyze Author’s Perspective** Review the direct statements and details you noted in your chart. Then pick one and explain what it tells you about Quindlen’s perspective on homelessness.
4. **Evaluate a Problem-Solution Essay** A strong problem-solution essay does all of the following: gives a clear picture of the problem, explores its causes and effects, recommends a solution, and explains how to put the solution into effect. Would you say that this essay is a strong problem-solution essay? Why or why not?



**R2.4** Identify and trace the development of an author’s argument, point of view, or perspective in text.

**R3.1** Articulate the expressed purposes and characteristics of different forms of prose (e.g., short story, novel, novella, **essay**).

## Read for Information: Support an Opinion

### WRITING PROMPT

In “What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?” a homeless man tells the main character, “What a person needs is always more than they say” (line 322). Do you think Quindlen would agree with this statement? Why or why not? Support your opinion with evidence from “Homeless.”

To answer this prompt, first clarify what the man is saying. You might need to go back to the story to figure this out. Then do as follows:

1. Review your chart to see what you have learned about Quindlen’s perspective.
2. Then, keeping her perspective in mind, decide whether she would agree or disagree with the man’s statement.
3. Look for evidence in “Homeless” to support your conclusion. For example, you might check whether Quindlen in any way suggests that Ann or the woman with the baby needs more than “they” say.

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



Use evidence from “Homeless” to support your conclusion.



**W1.2** Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and **specific examples**.



## A Crush

Short Story by Cynthia Rylant

# What makes a GIFT special?



**R2.3** Analyze text that uses the cause-and-effect organizational pattern.

**R3.4** Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

Also included in this lesson: R1.2 (p. 373)

**KEY IDEA** Everyone loves presents, right? Receiving a special gift is always a treat, but sometimes giving a gift can be even more rewarding. In the story “A Crush,” simple but generous gifts bring about positive changes for both the recipients and the givers.

**DISCUSS** Gather in a small group to talk about gifts. Consider the following questions: What is the most special gift you have ever received? What is the most special gift you have ever given? How does gift giving make you feel? Do gifts have to cost a lot of money to be special? After your discussion, jot down one or two key points about gifts and giving.





### LITERARY ANALYSIS: THEME AND CHARACTER

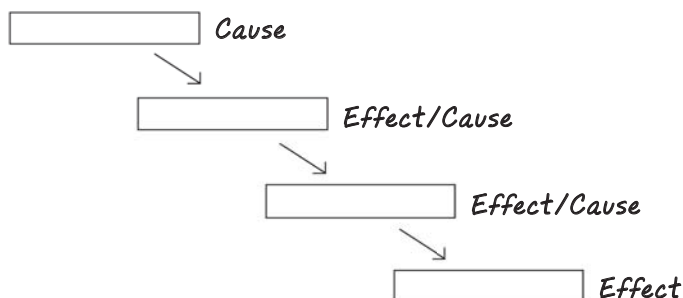
Paying attention to what **characters** say, do, think, and feel can help you identify a story's **theme**, or message about life. The following questions can guide you:

- What important statements are made by the characters or about the characters?
- What lessons do the characters learn?
- Do any characters change over the course of the story? If so, how do they change?

As you read "A Crush," keep these questions in mind to help you determine the story's theme.

### READING SKILL: IDENTIFY CAUSE AND EFFECT

Seeing how things are related can help you understand them. Events in a plot are often related to each other by **cause and effect**. Sometimes, an effect becomes the cause of another event, and so on until the end of the story. This is called a cause-and-effect chain. As you read "A Crush," record events in a chain graphic organizer like the one shown.



### VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The words in column A help tell Rylant's story about **giving**. For each word, choose the word or phrase in column B that is related in meaning.

- | Column A      | Column B          |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. cherish    | a. overflow       |
| 2. usher      | b. tall tale      |
| 3. improbable | c. Valentine card |
| 4. excess     | d. escort         |
| 5. taut       | e. barely noticed |
| 6. discreetly | f. strong knot    |

### Humble Beginnings

Award-winning author Cynthia Rylant grew up in the mountains of West Virginia. Rylant lived with her grandparents for four years while her mother was in nursing school. Her grandfather was a coal miner, and the family lived in a small house with no plumbing. When Rylant's mother finished school, she found an apartment for herself and her daughter. Rylant says she "felt rich" living there because the building had running water and an indoor bathroom.



Cynthia Rylant  
born 1954



#### MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more on Cynthia Rylant, visit the Literature Center at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

### Background

**Inspiration** In Kent, Ohio, where Cynthia Rylant once lived, a man sometimes brought flowers to the waitresses at a little diner. He was Rylant's inspiration for one of the main characters in "A Crush." Next to the diner was a hardware store. "That's where my imagination found Dolores," said Rylant, referring to another character in the story. Rylant says she enjoys taking "people who don't get any attention in the world and making them really valuable in my fiction—making them absolutely shine with their beauty!"

# A CRUSH

CYNTHIA RYLANT

When the windows of Stan's Hardware started filling up with flowers, everyone in town knew something had happened. **Excess** flowers usually mean death, but since these were all real flowers bearing the aroma of nature instead of floral preservative, and since they stood bunched in clear Mason jars<sup>1</sup> instead of impaled on Styrofoam crosses,<sup>2</sup> everyone knew nobody had died. So they all figured somebody had a crush and kept quiet. **A**

There wasn't really a Stan of Stan's Hardware. Dick Wilcox was the owner, and since he'd never liked his own name, he gave his store half the name of his childhood hero, Stan Laurel<sup>3</sup> in the movies. Dick had been married for twenty-seven years. Once, his wife, Helen, had dropped a German chocolate cake on his head at a Lion's Club dance, so Dick and Helen were not likely candidates for the honest expression of the flowers in those clear Mason jars lining the windows of Stan's Hardware, and speculation had to move on to Dolores.

Dolores was the assistant manager at Stan's and had worked there for twenty years, since high school. She knew the store like a mother knows her baby, so Dick—who had trouble keeping up with things like prices and new brands of drywall compound<sup>4</sup>—tried to keep himself busy in the back and give Dolores the run of the floor. This worked fine because the carpenters and plumbers and painters in town trusted Dolores and took her advice to heart. They also liked her tattoo.

**excess** (ĭk-sĕs') *adj.*  
too much or too many

## **A CAUSE AND EFFECT**

The first paragraph of this story presents a cause-and-effect relationship. What is the effect of the windows' filling up with flowers?

## **ANALYZE VISUALS**

Why do you think the artist used a "blurry" style for this image?

- 
1. **Mason jars:** glass jars with tight lids, used for canning or preserving foods.
  2. **impaled on Styrofoam crosses:** pinned onto crosses made of a lightweight plastic material.
  3. **Stan Laurel:** a comedian who with his partner, Oliver Hardy, made comedy films from the 1920s to the 1950s.
  4. **drywall compound:** a mixture used to install or repair wallboard, of which the interior walls of many houses are made.





DAVIS

S. BLADEN  
HARDWARE

DAVIS

221



W. H. R. 1915



Dolores was the only woman in town with a tattoo. On the days she went sleeveless, one could see it on the **taut** brown skin of her upper arm: “Howl at the Moon.” The picture was of a baying coyote, which must have been a dark gray in its early days but which had faded to the color of the spackling paste<sup>5</sup> Dolores stocked in the third aisle. Nobody had gotten out of Dolores the true story behind the tattoo. Some of the men who came in liked to show off their own, and they’d roll up their sleeves or pull open their shirts, exhibiting bald eagles and rattlesnakes and Confederate flags, and they’d try to coax out of Dolores the history of her coyote. All of the men had gotten their tattoos when they were in the service, drunk on weekend leave and full of the spitfire of young soldiers. Dolores had never been in the service, and she’d never seen weekend leave, and there wasn’t a tattoo parlor anywhere near. They couldn’t figure why or where any half-sober woman would have a howling coyote ground into the soft skin of her upper arm. But Dolores wasn’t telling.

**taut** (tôt) *adj.* not loose or flabby

**T**hat the flowers in Stan’s front window had anything to do with Dolores seemed completely **improbable**. As far as anyone knew, Dolores had never been in love, nor had anyone ever been in love with her. Some believed it was the tattoo, of course, or the fine dark hair coating Dolores’s upper lip which kept suitors away. Some felt it was because Dolores was just more of a man than most of the men in town, and fellows couldn’t figure out how to court someone who knew more about the carburetor of a car or the back side of a washing machine than they did. Others thought Dolores simply didn’t want love. This was a popular theory among the women in town who sold Avon and Mary Kay cosmetics. Whenever one of them ran into the hardware for a package of light bulbs or some batteries, she would mentally pluck every one of the black hairs above Dolores’s lip. Then she’d wash that grease out of Dolores’s hair, give her a good blunt cut, dress her in a decent silk-blend blouse with a nice Liz Claiborne skirt from the Sports line, and, finally, tone down that swarthy, longshoreman look<sup>6</sup> of Dolores’s with a concealing beige foundation,<sup>7</sup> some frosted peach lipstick, and a good gray liner for the eyes.

**improbable**  
(ĩm-prŏb’ə-bəl) *adj.*  
not likely

Dolores simply didn’t want love, the Avon lady would think as she walked back to her car carrying her little bag of batteries. If she did, she’d fix herself up.

---

5. **spackling paste**: a substance used to repair holes or cracks in plaster.

6. **swarthy, longshoreman look**: darkly tanned skin, like that of a worker who unloads ships all day.

7. **concealing beige foundation**: a liquid makeup that covers skin flaws.

The man who was in love with Dolores and who brought her  
60 zinnias and cornflowers and nasturtiums and marigolds and asters and  
four-o'clocks in clear Mason jars did not know any of this. He did not  
know that men showed Dolores their tattoos. He did not know that  
Dolores understood how to use and to sell a belt sander.<sup>8</sup> He did not  
know that Dolores needed some concealing beige foundation so she  
could get someone to love her. The man who brought flowers to Dolores  
on Wednesdays when the hardware opened its doors at 7:00 A.M. didn't  
care who Dolores had ever been or what anyone had ever thought of her.  
He loved her, and he wanted to bring her flowers. **B**

Ernie had lived in this town all of his life and had never before met  
70 Dolores. He was thirty-three years old, and for thirty-one of those years  
he had lived at home with his mother in a small dark house on the edge  
of town near Beckwith's Orchards. Ernie had been a beautiful baby, with  
a shock of shining black hair and large blue eyes and a round, wise face.  
But as he had grown, it had become clearer and clearer that though he  
was indeed a perfectly beautiful child, his mind had not developed with  
the same perfection. Ernie would not be able to speak in sentences until  
he was six years old. He would not be able to count the apples in a bowl  
until he was eight. By the time he was ten, he could sing a simple song.  
At age twelve, he understood what a joke was. And when he was twenty,  
80 something he saw on television made him cry.

Ernie's mother kept him in the house with her because it was easier,  
so Ernie knew nothing of the world except this house. They lived, the  
two of them, in tiny dark rooms always illuminated by the glow of a  
television set, Ernie's bags of Oreos and Nutter Butters littering the floor,  
his baseball cards scattered across the sofa, his heavy winter coat thrown  
over the arm of a chair so he could wear it whenever he wanted, and his  
box of Burpee<sup>9</sup> seed packages sitting in the middle of the kitchen table.

These Ernie **cherished**. The seeds had been delivered to his home by  
mistake. One day a woman wearing a brown uniform had pulled up in  
90 a brown truck, walked quickly to the front porch of Ernie's house, set  
a box down, and with a couple of toots of her horn, driven off again.  
Ernie had watched her through the curtains and, when she was gone,  
had ventured onto the porch and shyly, cautiously, picked up the box.  
His mother checked it when he carried it inside. The box didn't have their  
name on it, but the brown truck was gone, so whatever was in the box was  
theirs to keep. Ernie pulled off the heavy tape, his fingers trembling, and  
found inside the box more little packages of seeds than he could count. He  
lifted them out, one by one, and examined the beautiful photographs of

**B THEME AND CHARACTER**

How is the man who loves Dolores different from other people in town?

**cherish** (chĕr'ĭsh) v.  
to care for deeply

8. **belt sander**: a machine that uses a rough-textured moving belt to smooth surfaces.

9. **Burpee**: W. Atlee Burpee and Co. is the world's largest mail-order seed company.





flowers on each. His mother was not interested, had returned to the  
100 television, but Ernie sat down at the kitchen table and quietly looked  
at each package for a long time, his fingers running across the slick paper  
and outlining the shapes of zinnias and cornflowers and nasturtiums and  
marigolds and asters and four-o'clocks, his eyes drawing up their colors. **C**

**C THEME AND CHARACTER**

Reread lines 98–103.  
Why do you think the seeds are so interesting to Ernie?

**usher** (ŭsh'ər) *v.* to guide in a certain direction

**T**wo months later Ernie's mother died. A neighbor found her at the mailbox beside the road. People from the county courthouse came out to get Ernie, and as they **ushered** him from the home he would never see again, he picked up the box of seed packages from his kitchen table and passed through the doorway.

110 Eventually Ernie was moved to a large white house near the main street of town. This house was called a group home, because in it lived a group of people who, like Ernie, could not live on their own. There were six of them. Each had his own room. When Ernie was shown the room that would be his, he put the box of Burpee seeds—which he had kept with him since his mother's death—on the little table beside the bed, and then he sat down on the bed and cried.

Ernie cried every day for nearly a month. And then he stopped. He dried his tears, and he learned how to bake refrigerator biscuits and how to dust mop and what to do if the indoor plants looked brown. **D**

120 Ernie loved watering the indoor plants, and it was this pleasure which finally drew him outside. One of the young men who worked at the group home—a college student named Jack—grew a large garden in the back of the house. It was full of tomato vines and the large yellow blossoms of healthy squash. During his first summer at the house, Ernie would stand at the kitchen window, watching Jack and sometimes a resident of the home move among the vegetables. Ernie was curious but too afraid to go into the garden.

**D CAUSE AND EFFECT**

Reread lines 104–118.  
How does the death of Ernie's mother affect Ernie's life?

Then one day when Ernie was watching through the window, he noticed that Jack was ripping open several slick little packages and emptying them into the ground. Ernie panicked and ran to his room.

130 But the box of Burpee seeds was still there on his table, untouched. He grabbed it, slid it under his bed, then went back through the house and out into the garden as if he had done this every day of his life.

He stood beside Jack, watching him empty seed packages into the soft black soil, and as the packages were emptied, Ernie asked for them, holding out his hand, his eyes on the photographs of red radishes and purple eggplant. Jack handed the empty packages over with a smile and with that gesture became Ernie's first friend.

Jack tried to explain to Ernie that the seeds would grow into vegetables, but Ernie could not believe this until he saw it come true. And when  
140 it did, he looked all the more intently at the packages of zinnias and cornflowers and the rest hidden beneath his bed. He thought more deeply about them, but he could not carry them to the garden. He could not let the garden have his seeds.

That was the first year in the large white house.

The second year, Ernie saw Dolores, and after that he thought of nothing else but her and of the photographs of flowers beneath his bed.

**J**ack had decided to take Ernie downtown for breakfast every Wednesday morning to ease him into the world outside that of the group home. They left very early, at 5:45 A.M., so there would be few  
150 people and almost no traffic to frighten Ernie and make him beg for his room. Jack and Ernie drove to the Big Boy restaurant which sat across the street from Stan's Hardware. There they ate eggs and bacon and French toast among those whose work demanded rising before the sun: bus drivers, policemen, nurses, mill workers. Their first time in the Big Boy, Ernie was too nervous to eat. The second time, he could eat, but he couldn't look up. The third time, he not only ate everything on his plate, but he lifted his head and he looked out the window of the Big Boy restaurant toward Stan's Hardware across the street. There he saw a dark-haired woman in jeans and a black T-shirt unlocking the front door of  
160 the building, and that was the moment Ernie started loving Dolores and thinking about giving up his seeds to the soft black soil of Jack's garden.

Love is such a mystery, and when it strikes the heart of one as mysterious as Ernie himself, it can hardly be spoken of. Ernie could not explain to Jack why he went directly to his room later that morning, pulled the box of Burpee seeds from under his bed, then grabbed Jack's hand in the kitchen and walked with him to the garden, where Ernie

had come to believe things would grow. Ernie handed the packets of seeds one by one to Jack, who stood in silent admiration of the lovely photographs before asking Ernie several times, “Are you sure you want to plant these?” Ernie was sure. It didn’t take him very long, and when the seeds all lay under the moist black earth, Ernie carried his empty packages inside the house and spent the rest of the day spreading them across his bed in different arrangements. **E**

**T**hat was in June. For the next several Wednesdays at 7:00 A.M. Ernie watched every movement of the dark-haired woman behind the lighted windows of Stan’s Hardware. Jack watched Ernie watch Dolores and **discreetly** said nothing.

When Ernie’s flowers began growing in July, Ernie spent most of his time in the garden. He would watch the garden for hours, as if he expected it suddenly to move or to impress him with a quick trick. The fragile green stems of his flowers stood uncertainly in the soil, like baby colts on their first legs, but the young plants performed no magic for Ernie’s eyes. They saved their shows for the middle of the night and next day surprised Ernie with tender small blooms in all the colors the photographs had promised.

The flowers grew fast and hardy, and one early Wednesday morning when they looked as big and bright as their pictures on the empty packages, Ernie pulled a glass canning jar off a dusty shelf in the basement of his house. He washed the jar, half filled it with water, then carried it to the garden, where he placed in it one of every kind of flower he had grown. He met Jack at the car and rode off to the Big Boy with the jar of flowers held tight between his small hands. Jack told him it was a beautiful bouquet.

When they reached the door of the Big Boy, Ernie stopped and pulled at Jack’s arm, pointing to the building across the street. “OK,” Jack said, and he led Ernie to the front door of Stan’s Hardware. It was 6:00 A.M., and the building was still dark. Ernie set the clear Mason jar full of flowers under the sign that read “Closed,” then he smiled at Jack and followed him back across the street to get breakfast.

When Dolores arrived at seven and picked up the jar of zinnias and cornflowers and nasturtiums and marigolds and asters and four-o’clocks, Ernie and Jack were watching her from a booth in the Big Boy. Each had a wide smile on his face as Dolores put her nose to the flowers. Ernie giggled. They watched the lights of the hardware store come up and saw Dolores place the clear Mason jar on the ledge of the front window. They drove home still smiling.

### **E** THEME AND CHARACTER

Reread lines 162–173.

Why does Ernie suddenly want to grow flowers after he sees Dolores?

**discreetly** (dĭ-skrĕt’lĕ)

*adv.* in a manner that shows caution and good judgment

### VISUAL VOCABULARY



**Mason jar** *n.* a jar with a wide opening and a twist-on lid, used for canning and preserving foods



All the rest of that summer Ernie left a jar of flowers every Wednesday morning at the front door of Stan's Hardware. Neither Dick Wilcox nor Dolores could figure out why the flowers kept coming, and each of them assumed somebody had a crush on the other. But the flowers had an effect on them anyway. Dick started spending more time out on the floor making conversation with the customers, while Dolores stopped wearing T-shirts to work and instead wore crisp white blouses with the sleeves rolled back off her wrists. Occasionally she put on a bracelet. **F**

By summer's end Jack and Ernie had become very good friends, and when the flowers in the garden behind their house began to wither, and Ernie's face began to grow gray as he watched them, Jack brought home one bright day in late September a great long box. Ernie followed Jack as he carried it down to the basement and watched as Jack pulled a long glass tube from the box and attached this tube to the wall above a table. When Jack plugged in the tube's electric cord, a soft lavender light washed the room.

"Sunshine," said Jack. **G**

Then he went back to his car for a smaller box. He carried this down to the basement, where Ernie still stood staring at the strange light. Jack handed Ernie the small box, and when Ernie opened it, he found more little packages of seeds than he could count, with new kinds of photographs on the slick paper.

"Violets," Jack said, pointing to one of them.

Then he and Ernie went outside to get some dirt. 

**F CAUSE AND EFFECT**

Reread lines 207–214.  
What effect do the flowers have on Dick and Dolores?

**G THEME AND CHARACTER**

How is Jack's gift to Ernie like Ernie's gift to Dolores?

© Bill Firestone.





## Comprehension

- Recall** How is Ernie different from other people?
- Represent** Using stick figures with labels to represent **characters**, draw the scene in which Ernie first gets a crush on Dolores.
- Clarify** How does Jack help Ernie at the end of the story?

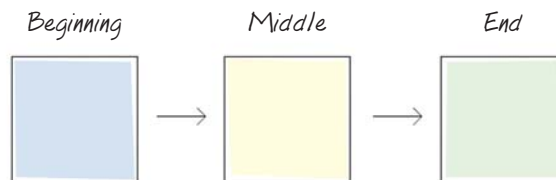
**R2.3** Analyze text that uses the cause-and-effect organizational pattern.

**R3.4** Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

## Literary Analysis

- Make Inferences** Reflect on Jack's character. What gifts does he give Ernie in addition to seeds and a light?
- Analyze Character** Ernie changes a great deal from the time he receives the box of seeds to the end of the story. Note details about significant changes in his life and his behavior in a diagram such as the one shown. Using your notes, analyze how Ernie's behavior changes.
- Analyze Cause and Effect** Look at the cause-and-effect chain you created as you read. On the basis of your notes, which event would you say had the most significant effect on Ernie's life? Why?
- Identify Theme** Review the questions you asked yourself as you read (see page 363). What did the characters learn in this story? Restate the lesson or lessons as a theme.
- Evaluate Point of View** This story is told from a **third-person omniscient point of view**, in which the narrator is an invisible observer who can get into the minds of all the characters. Why is that the best point of view for the author to use in "A Crush"?

Ernie's Changing Character



## Extension and Challenge

- Big Question Activity** Newspapers often include stories about local events like those that take place in this story. Write a newspaper article about how Dolores's life changes because of the anonymous gifts of flowers. Think about how she might answer the discussion questions on page 362, about what makes a **gift** special. Remember to include a catchy headline for your article!

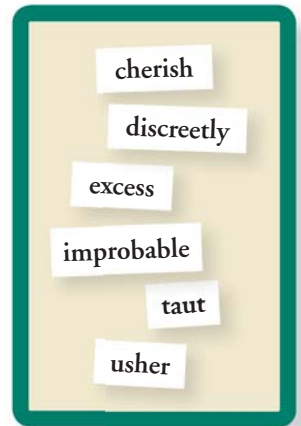


# Vocabulary in Context

## VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Use context clues to identify the vocabulary word that best completes each sentence.

1. Dolores was a hard-working woman with \_\_\_\_\_ muscles.
2. For Ernie to fall in love with Dolores at one glance might seem \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Nevertheless, he began to \_\_\_\_\_ her from the first day he saw her.
4. Jack kindly helped to \_\_\_\_\_ Ernie into the world of gardening.
5. Ernie made a large bouquet of flowers, but he still had \_\_\_\_\_ flowers in his garden.
6. Not wanting to be noticed, Ernie \_\_\_\_\_ delivered it early in the morning.



## VOCABULARY IN WRITING

How many people's lives do you think Ernie affected? Write a paragraph explaining your opinion, using two or more vocabulary words. Here is a sample opening sentence.

### EXAMPLE SENTENCE

The way that Ernie **cherished** Dolores affected several people.

## VOCABULARY STRATEGY: FORMS OF THE PREFIX *in-*

As you have learned, the prefix *in-* often means “not.” This prefix may have various spellings, depending on the letter that follows it.

- When added to words beginning with *b*, *m*, or *p*, it is spelled *im-*, as in the vocabulary word **improbable**.
- For words beginning with *l*, it is spelled *il-*, as in the word **illogical**.
- For words beginning with *r*, it is spelled *ir-*, as in the word **irreversible**.

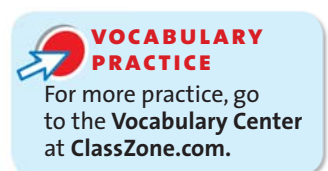
Learning to recognize this prefix with its various spellings can help you figure out the meanings of many words.

**PRACTICE** Choose the word in each group that contains a correctly spelled prefix meaning “not.” Then use the word in a sentence.

1. improper, imperfect, impossible
2. irresponsible, irrelevant, irregular
3. incapable, inhospitable, intolerant
4. immature, immobile, immortal
5. inadvisable, illegal, illogical
6. irreparable, irreplaceable, irresistible



**R1.2** Use knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon roots and affixes to understand content-area vocabulary.





# The Giver

Fantasy Novel by Lois Lowry



R3.1 Articulate the expressed purposes and characteristics of different forms of prose (e.g., short story, **novel**, novella, essay).



Lois Lowry  
born 1937

## Other Books by Lois Lowry

- *Anastasia Krupnik*
- *Gathering Blue*
- *Messenger*
- *Number the Stars*
- *Rabble Starkey*
- *A Summer to Die*

## Meet Lois Lowry

By the time she was three, Lois Lowry had already learned to read, so books played an important role in her childhood. “I was a solitary child who lived in the world of books and my own vivid imagination,” she says. “That is how I write—I go back to the child I was and see things through those eyes.”

Though she always loved reading and writing stories, Lowry didn’t begin writing full-time until after she went to college, married, and raised her four children. She is now the author of over 30 books and has won many awards for her work.

It’s no wonder people like Lowry’s books so much. To her, there are stories in the most ordinary of life’s events. Because of this Lowry’s readers find themselves able to identify with the characters she creates and the things that happen to them in her stories.

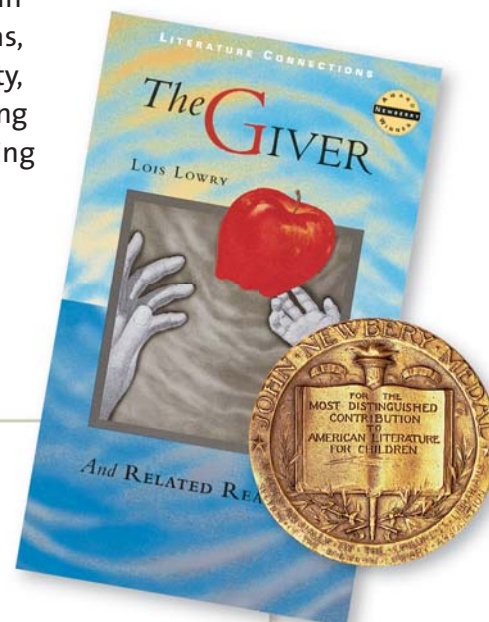
## Try a Fantasy Novel

Many of Lowry’s books are a type of literature called **fantasy**. In a fantasy novel, you can travel to a different world where you’ll find at least one element that is completely unreal and could exist only in the imagination. The setting might be strange, events might sound impossible, or you might read about characters with superhuman abilities.

## Read a Great Book

Lois Lowry puts her astonishing imagination to work in *The Giver*, a novel about a 12-year-old boy named Jonas, who lives in a world without fear of pain, hunger, poverty, or crime. Community leaders control everything, including what individuals are allowed to say and do. Upon turning 12, children are given specific roles in the community, based on their abilities.

In the following section from the book, the day of assignments has arrived. Jonas anxiously awaits the decision of the Elders.



### from the **Giver**

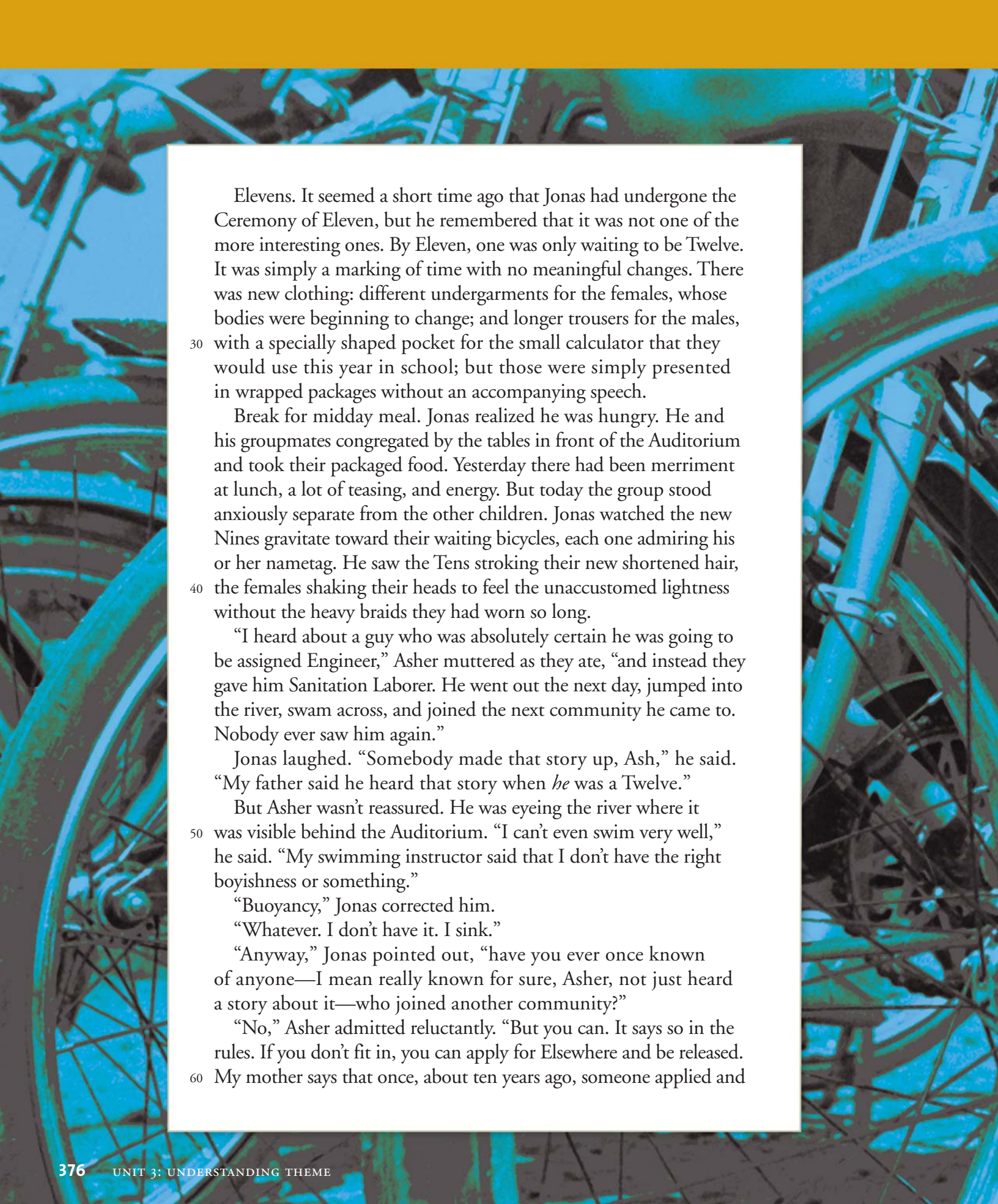
Now Father sat beside Mother in the audience. Jonas could see them applauding dutifully as the Nines, one by one, wheeled their new bicycles, each with its gleaming nametag attached to the back, from the stage. . . .

Finally the Nines were all resettled in their seats, each having wheeled a bicycle outside where it would be waiting for its owner at the end of the day. Everyone always chuckled and made small jokes when the Nines rode home for the first time. “Want me to show you how to ride?” older friends would call. “I know you’ve never  
10 been on a bike before!” But invariably the grinning Nines, who in technical violation of the rule had been practicing secretly for weeks, would mount and ride off in perfect balance, training wheels never touching the ground.

Then the Tens. Jonas never found the Ceremony of Ten particularly interesting—only time-consuming, as each child’s hair was snipped neatly into its distinguishing cut: females lost their braids at Ten, and males, too, relinquished their long childish hair and took on the more manly short style which exposed their ears.

Laborers moved quickly to the stage with brooms and swept away  
20 the mounds of discarded hair. Jonas could see the parents of the new Tens stir and murmur, and he knew that this evening, in many dwellings, they would be snipping and straightening the hastily done haircuts, trimming them into a neater line.





Elevens. It seemed a short time ago that Jonas had undergone the Ceremony of Eleven, but he remembered that it was not one of the more interesting ones. By Eleven, one was only waiting to be Twelve. It was simply a marking of time with no meaningful changes. There was new clothing: different undergarments for the females, whose bodies were beginning to change; and longer trousers for the males,  
30 with a specially shaped pocket for the small calculator that they would use this year in school; but those were simply presented in wrapped packages without an accompanying speech.

Break for midday meal. Jonas realized he was hungry. He and his groupmates congregated by the tables in front of the Auditorium and took their packaged food. Yesterday there had been merriment at lunch, a lot of teasing, and energy. But today the group stood anxiously separate from the other children. Jonas watched the new Nines gravitate toward their waiting bicycles, each one admiring his or her nametag. He saw the Tens stroking their new shortened hair,  
40 the females shaking their heads to feel the unaccustomed lightness without the heavy braids they had worn so long.

“I heard about a guy who was absolutely certain he was going to be assigned Engineer,” Asher muttered as they ate, “and instead they gave him Sanitation Laborer. He went out the next day, jumped into the river, swam across, and joined the next community he came to. Nobody ever saw him again.”

Jonas laughed. “Somebody made that story up, Ash,” he said. “My father said he heard that story when *he* was a Twelve.”

But Asher wasn't reassured. He was eyeing the river where it  
50 was visible behind the Auditorium. “I can't even swim very well,” he said. “My swimming instructor said that I don't have the right boyishness or something.”

“Buoyancy,” Jonas corrected him.

“Whatever. I don't have it. I sink.”

“Anyway,” Jonas pointed out, “have you ever once known of anyone—I mean really known for sure, Asher, not just heard a story about it—who joined another community?”

“No,” Asher admitted reluctantly. “But you can. It says so in the rules. If you don't fit in, you can apply for Elsewhere and be released.  
60 My mother says that once, about ten years ago, someone applied and



was gone the next day.” Then he chuckled. “She told me that because I was driving her crazy. She threatened to apply for Elsewhere.”

“She was joking.”

“I know. But it was true, what she said, that someone did that once. She said that it was really true. Here today and gone tomorrow. Never seen again. Not even a Ceremony of Release.”

Jonas shrugged. It didn’t worry him. How could someone not fit in? The community was so meticulously ordered, the choices so carefully made.

70 Even the Matching of Spouses was given such weighty consideration that sometimes an adult who applied to receive a spouse waited months or even *years* before a Match was approved and announced. All of the factors—disposition, energy level, intelligence, and interests—had to correspond and to interact perfectly. Jonas’s mother, for example, had a higher intelligence than his father, but his father had a calmer disposition. They balanced each other. Their match, which like all Matches had been monitored by the Committee of Elders for three years before they could apply for children, had always been a successful one.

80 Like the Matching of Spouses and the Naming and Placement of newchildren, the Assignments were scrupulously thought through by the Committee of Elders.

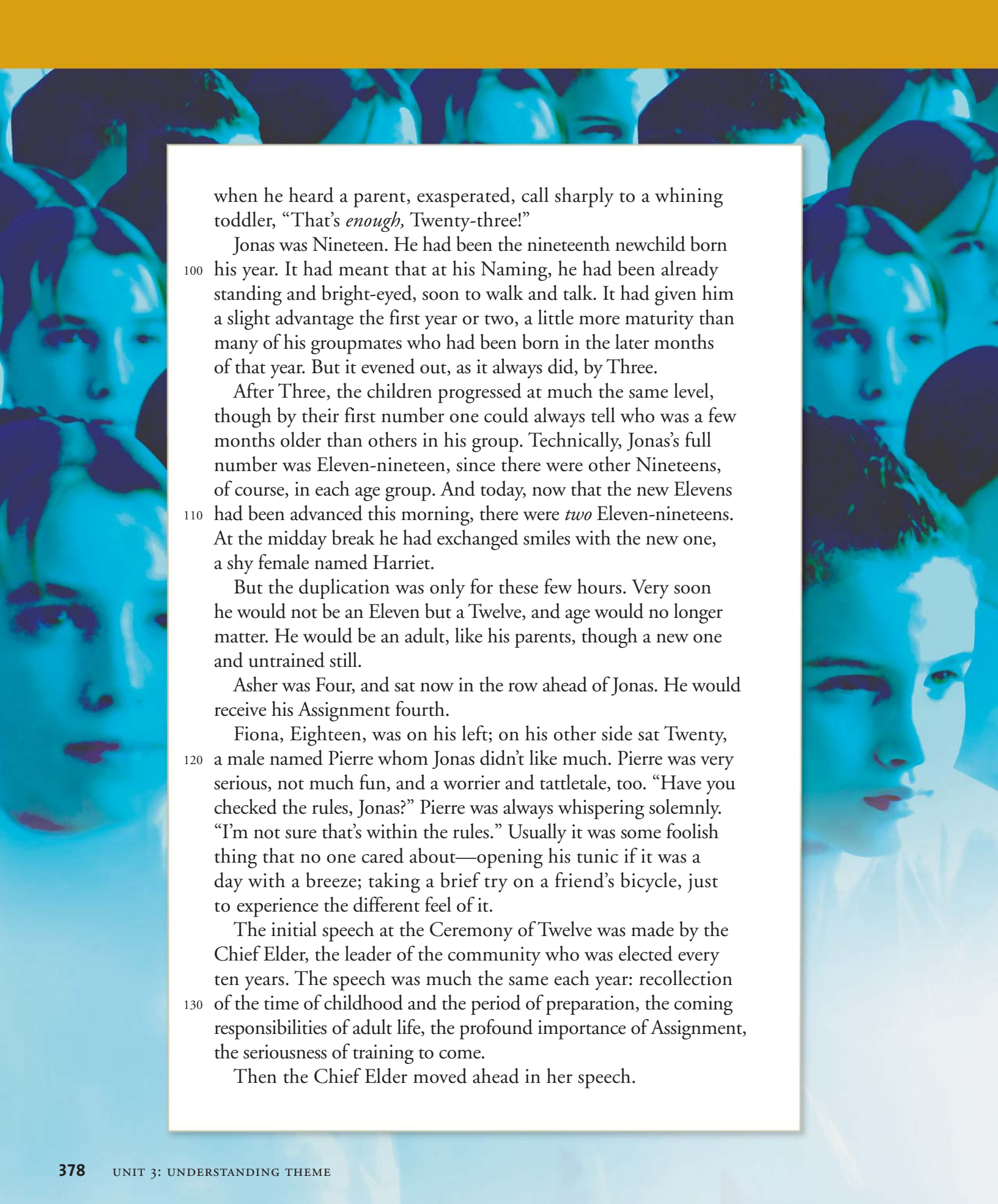
He was certain that his Assignment, whatever it was to be, and Asher’s too, would be the right one for them. He only wished that the midday break would conclude, that the audience would reenter the Auditorium, and the suspense would end.

As if in answer to his unspoken wish, the signal came and the crowd began to move toward the doors.



90 Now Jonas’s group had taken a new place in the Auditorium, trading with the new Elevens, so that they sat in the very front, immediately before the stage.

They were arranged by their original numbers, the numbers they had been given at birth. The numbers were rarely used after the Naming. But each child knew his number, of course. Sometimes parents used them in irritation at a child’s misbehavior, indicating that mischief made one unworthy of a name. Jonas always chuckled



when he heard a parent, exasperated, call sharply to a whining toddler, “That’s *enough*, Twenty-three!”

Jonas was Nineteen. He had been the nineteenth newchild born  
100 his year. It had meant that at his Naming, he had been already standing and bright-eyed, soon to walk and talk. It had given him a slight advantage the first year or two, a little more maturity than many of his groupmates who had been born in the later months of that year. But it evened out, as it always did, by Three.

After Three, the children progressed at much the same level, though by their first number one could always tell who was a few months older than others in his group. Technically, Jonas’s full number was Eleven-nineteen, since there were other Nineteens, of course, in each age group. And today, now that the new Elevens  
110 had been advanced this morning, there were *two* Eleven-nineteens. At the midday break he had exchanged smiles with the new one, a shy female named Harriet.

But the duplication was only for these few hours. Very soon he would not be an Eleven but a Twelve, and age would no longer matter. He would be an adult, like his parents, though a new one and untrained still.

Asher was Four, and sat now in the row ahead of Jonas. He would receive his Assignment fourth.

Fiona, Eighteen, was on his left; on his other side sat Twenty,  
120 a male named Pierre whom Jonas didn’t like much. Pierre was very serious, not much fun, and a worrier and tattletale, too. “Have you checked the rules, Jonas?” Pierre was always whispering solemnly. “I’m not sure that’s within the rules.” Usually it was some foolish thing that no one cared about—opening his tunic if it was a day with a breeze; taking a brief try on a friend’s bicycle, just to experience the different feel of it.

The initial speech at the Ceremony of Twelve was made by the Chief Elder, the leader of the community who was elected every ten years. The speech was much the same each year: recollection  
130 of the time of childhood and the period of preparation, the coming responsibilities of adult life, the profound importance of Assignment, the seriousness of training to come.

Then the Chief Elder moved ahead in her speech.



“This is the time,” she began, looking directly at them, “when we acknowledge differences. You Elevens have spent all your years till now learning to fit in, to standardize your behavior, to curb any impulse that might set you apart from the group.

“But today we honor your differences. They have determined your futures.”

140 She began to describe this year’s group and its variety of personalities, though she singled no one out by name. She mentioned that there was one who had singular skills at caretaking, another who loved newchildren, one with unusual scientific aptitude, and a fourth for whom physical labor was an obvious pleasure. Jonas shifted in his seat, trying to recognize each reference as one of his groupmates. The caretaking skills were no doubt those of Fiona, on his left; he remembered noticing the tenderness with which she had bathed the Old. Probably the one with scientific aptitude was Benjamin, the male who had devised new, important equipment  
150 for the Rehabilitation Center.

He heard nothing that he recognized as himself, Jonas.

Finally the Chief Elder paid tribute to the hard work of her committee, which had performed the observations so meticulously all year. The Committee of Elders stood and was acknowledged by applause. Jonas noticed Asher yawn slightly, covering his mouth politely with his hand.

Then, at last, the Chief Elder called number One to the stage, and the Assignments began. 🌀

## Keep Reading

You’ve just gotten a sense of the community Jonas lives in. What details about the group seemed strange to you? To learn more about this strange community, read more of *The Giver*. You’ll discover how Jonas is assigned to become the new Receiver of Memory for his community and begins training with a man known as The Giver. Once Jonas learns the truth about his society and how it compares to the larger world, he finds that he has some difficult choices to make.



## Comparing Themes

# Spring Harvest of Snow Peas

Poem by Maxine Hong Kingston

# Eating Alone

Poem by Li-Young Lee

## Can you be alone and not **LONELY**?

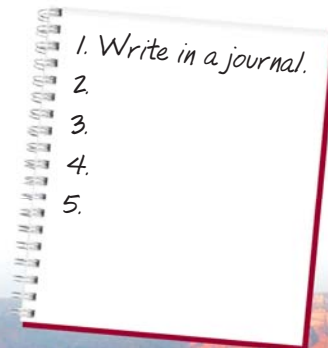


R3.4 Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

Also included in this lesson: W2.2abc (p. 385)

**KEY IDEA** Some people love to be alone. Others get bored or sad when no one else is around or feel **lonely** even when they are with other people. In the two poems you are about to read, the speakers share their thoughts and feelings about being alone.

**DISCUSS** What advice would you give to someone who is feeling lonely when alone? Work with a partner to list ways to overcome loneliness. Then share your insights with the class to come up with a master list of “loneliness busters.”





## LITERARY ANALYSIS: RECURRING THEME

How many stories and poems have you read that conveyed the message “Love is all you need” or “Growing up is difficult”? You’ve probably come across these themes fairly often. When the same theme is presented in more than one piece of literature, it is called a **recurring theme**.

The two poems you are about to read have a common theme, but the poets express it differently. As you read each poem, pay attention to the following elements. They will help you find the poems’ shared message.

- title
- subjects presented
- words and phrases that describe the speaker’s feelings
- **images**, or words and phrases that help you know how things look, feel, smell, sound, or taste

## READING STRATEGY: SET A PURPOSE FOR READING

Sometimes your purpose for reading might be to relax with a good book. At other times it might be to get information. In this lesson, your **purpose for reading** the two poems is to identify the recurring theme and compare the ways the poets communicate it.

After you’ve read “Spring Harvest of Snow Peas” and “Eating Alone,” read the poems again. This time, fill in a chart like the one shown. You will be asked to do more with this chart after you finish reading.

	<i>“Spring Harvest of Snow Peas”</i>	<i>“Eating Alone”</i>
<i>What idea is described in the title?</i>		
<i>What subjects are presented?</i>	<i>garden, mother, food</i>	<i>garden, father, food</i>
<i>How is the speaker feeling?</i>		
<i>What important images can you find?</i>		

### Maxine Hong Kingston: Lifelong Poet

Maxine Hong Kingston grew up listening to her mother’s bedtime stories and began writing poetry when she was in the fourth grade. She has since become one of the best-known Asian-American writers of nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. As the child of Chinese immigrants, Kingston often focuses her writing on her cultural heritage.



Maxine Hong Kingston  
born 1940

### Li-Young Lee: Master of Imagery

Li-Young Lee’s first language was Chinese. He didn’t speak English until he moved to the United States in 1964 with his parents. Yet Lee’s artistic mastery of English is clear in his award-winning poetry, which has been praised for its imagery and the “brave honesty” of its language.



Li-Young Lee  
born 1957



#### MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more on Maxine Hong Kingston and Li-Young Lee, visit the **Literature Center** at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).





Detail of *Birds XII* (2003), Barbara Weldon. Oil, gold leaf, and wax on canvas, 60" × 72".

# spring harvest of snow peas

Maxine Hong Kingston

Text not available.

Please refer to the text in the textbook.





Detail of *Birds III* (2002), Barbara Weldon. Oil, gold leaf, and wax on canvas, 40" × 40".

# EATING alone

Li-Young Lee

I've pulled the last of the year's young onions.  
 The garden is bare now. The ground is cold,  
 brown and old. What is left of the day flames  
 in the maples at the corner of my  
 5 eye. I turn, a cardinal vanishes.  
 By the cellar door, I wash the onions,  
 then drink from the icy metal spigot.

Once, years back, I walked beside my father  
 among the windfall pears. I can't recall  
 10 our words. We may have strolled in silence. But  
 I still see him bend that way—left hand braced  
 on knee, creaky—to lift and hold to my  
 eye a rotten pear. In it, a hornet  
 spun crazily, glazed in slow, glistening juice.

15 It was my father I saw this morning  
 waving to me from the trees. I almost  
 called to him, until I came close enough  
 to see the shovel, leaning where I had  
 left it, in the flickering, deep green shade. **B**

20 White rice steaming, almost done. Sweet green peas  
 fried in onions. Shrimp braised in sesame  
 oil and garlic. And my own loneliness.  
 What more could I, a young man, want.

**B THEME**

Reread lines 8–19.  
 Note what the speaker  
 remembers about  
 his father. Are they  
 positive memories?



R3.4 Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).

## Comprehension

- Recall** Where is the speaker in “Spring Harvest of Snow Peas”?
- Recall** What is one reason why the speaker in the second poem is eating alone?
- Clarify** How does the last stanza of “Eating Alone” connect with the first stanza?

## Literary Analysis

- Make Inferences** Reread lines 11–15 of “Spring Harvest of Snow Peas.” What do you learn about the speaker’s mother?
- Draw Conclusions** How do you think the speaker in “Eating Alone” feels about the meal he is fixing? Note the words or phrases that give you clues about his feelings.
- Identify Symbols** What does the food in each poem symbolize, or stand for beyond its usual meaning?
- Analyze** Note which season it is in each poem. How does the choice of season affect the meaning of each poem?

## Comparing Themes

Now that you’ve read both poems, finish filling in the chart. Then use the answers to the questions to help you identify the **recurring theme** in the poems.

	<i>“Spring Harvest of Snow Peas”</i>	<i>“Eating Alone”</i>
<i>What idea is described in the title?</i>		
<i>What subjects are presented?</i>	<i>garden, mother, food</i>	<i>garden, father, food</i>
<i>How is the speaker feeling?</i>		
<i>What important images can you find?</i>		
<i>What theme do the poems have in common?</i>		



## Writing for Assessment

### 1. READ THE PROMPT

In writing assessments, you will often be asked to compare selections that share a **recurring theme**.

#### PROMPT

While “Spring Harvest of Snow Peas” and “Eating Alone” share a recurring theme, Maxine Hong Kingston and Li-Young Lee express the theme differently. In four or five paragraphs, compare and contrast the ways the poets get the theme across. Support your response with details from the poems.

#### STRATEGIES IN ACTION

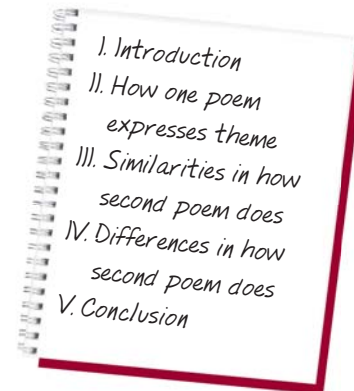
1. I have to make sure I understand what **message** the poems share.
2. I need to identify the **similarities and differences** in the ways the poets express the message.
3. I should include **details** from the poems to show what I mean.

### 2. PLAN YOUR WRITING

Using the chart you filled out for the poems, note how each poet develops the theme. Write a position statement that expresses the main similarities and differences you find in the poets’ methods. Then decide how you will set up your response.

- Do you want to focus on one poem first and then show how the other poem is similar and different, as shown in the sample outline?
- Do you want to compare each element—title, subject, feelings, and images—in a separate paragraph?

Once you have decided, put your ideas into outline form.



### 3. DRAFT YOUR RESPONSE

**Introduction** Include the titles and poets’ names for the poems you will be comparing, and state the theme that the poems share. Also include your position statement.

**Body Paragraphs** If using an outline like the one shown, explain everything you want to about the first poem. Then start a new paragraph before you discuss how the second poem is similar or different.

**Conclusion** Wrap up your response with a restatement of your main idea and a thought about why the theme might appeal to different poets.

**Revision** Check to see whether adding transitions such as *similarly*, *unlike*, or *however* can help you make your comparisons and contrasts clearer.



# A Christmas Carol

Novel by Charles Dickens

Dramatized by Frederick Gaines

## How important is MONEY?



R3.2 Identify events that advance the plot and determine how each event explains past or present action(s) or foreshadows future action(s).

Also included in this lesson: R3.4 (page 414), W1.2 (p. 415), LC1.3 (p. 415)

**KEY IDEA** People say, “Money makes the world go round,” “Show me the money,” and “Time is money.” But they also say, “You can’t buy happiness.” There are many sayings about what money can and can’t do, about what it is and what it isn’t. In *A Christmas Carol*, the main character’s opinion about what it means to be wealthy changes drastically by the end of the play.

**QUOTE IT** Read over the four sayings quoted in the previous paragraph. In a chart, jot down your ideas about what each saying means. Then write your own saying on the last line, expressing your thoughts about money.

Saying	What It Means
1	
2	
3	
4	
My Saying:	



## LITERARY ANALYSIS: THEME IN DRAMA

Just as short stories, novels, and poems communicate **themes**, so do dramas. To identify the message in a drama, you can use some of the same methods you use with other works: read closely and think about what larger meaning the writer is suggesting. Also pay special attention to

- descriptions of the setting, events, and characters in the **stage directions**
- **dialogue** between characters

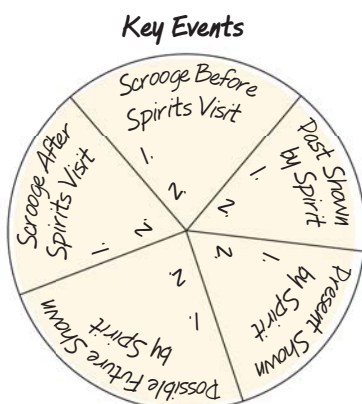
As you read *A Christmas Carol*, try to focus not only on what the characters say and do but also on how and why they say and do those things. Then ask yourself questions about what message the playwright is sharing.

## READING SKILL: UNDERSTAND SEQUENCE IN PLOT

Knowing the order of events in a work of literature helps you better understand the work's theme. Events are not always presented in the order in which they happen. The reader may be taken backward or forward in time.

In a drama, clues about the order, or **sequence**, of events often appear in the stage directions. The titles of the scenes also provide clues about the sequence of events.

As you read *A Christmas Carol*, use a sequence wheel to help you keep track of the unusual sequence of events.



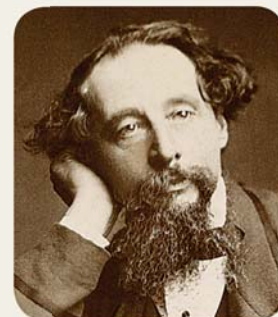
## VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The following words all help tell the story of a man who is too concerned with **money**. How many words can you match with their definition?

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. <b>accost</b>     | a. abrupt or blunt in speaking           |
| 2. <b>anonymous</b>  | b. made very angry                       |
| 3. <b>brusque</b>    | c. not having one's name known           |
| 4. <b>currency</b>   | d. to approach and speak unpleasantly to |
| 5. <b>incoherent</b> | e. money                                 |
| 6. <b>infuriated</b> | f. confused                              |

### Unhappy Childhood

Charles Dickens's childhood in England provided material for many of his stories. When Dickens was 12 and living with his family in London, his father was put in prison for not paying his debts. Young Dickens had to leave school to work in a rat-infested factory to help earn money for his family. The hopelessness and shame he felt there affected him deeply.



Charles Dickens  
1812–1870



#### MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more on Charles Dickens, visit the Literature Center at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

### Background

**A Plea for the Poor** When Frederick Gaines wrote the play you are about to read, he based it on a novel by the same name that Charles Dickens first published in 1843. At that time, about one-third of the people in London were living in poverty and hunger. The city was dirty and overcrowded, and jobs and houses were in short supply. Many children were forced to work instead of staying in school.

Charles Dickens wanted his novel *A Christmas Carol* to be “a plea for the poor.” The book was instantly and widely popular, and as Dickens had hoped, it and his other writings did affect how his readers felt about the social conditions of their time.



# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

**CHARLES DICKENS**  
DRAMATIZED BY FREDERICK GAINES

## CHARACTERS

**Carolers, Families, Dancers**

**First Boy**

**Second Boy**

**Third Boy**

**Girl with a doll**

**Ebenezer Scrooge**

**Bob Cratchit**, Scrooge's clerk

**Fred**, Scrooge's nephew

**Gentleman Visitor**

**Warder and Residents  
of the Poorhouse**

**Sparsit**, Scrooge's servant

**Cook**

**Charwoman**

**Jacob Marley**

**Priest**

**Leper**

**First Spirit**, the Spirit  
of Christmas Past

**Jack Walton**

**Ben Benjamin**

**Child Scrooge**

**Fan**, Scrooge's sister

**Fezziwig**

**Young Ebenezer**

**Dick Wilkins**

**Sweetheart of Young  
Ebenezer**

**Second Spirit**, the Spirit  
of Christmas Present

**Poorhouse Children**

**Mrs. Cratchit**

**Several Cratchit Children**

**Tiny Tim**

**Beggar Children**, Hunger  
and Ignorance

**Third Spirit**, the Spirit  
of Christmas Yet to Come

**Peter**, a Cratchit child

**Boy**

**Butcher**

**Coachman**





© Louisiana Tech University  
School of Performing Arts.

## PROLOGUE

*The play begins amid a swirl of street life in Victorian London. Happy groups pass; brightly costumed carolers and families call out to one another and sing “Joy to the World.” Three boys and a girl are grouped about a glowing mound of coal. As the carolers leave the stage, the lights dim and the focus shifts to the mound of coals, bright against the dark. Slowly, the children begin to respond to the warmth. A piano plays softly as the children talk.*

**First Boy.** I saw a horse in a window. (*pause*)  
A dapple . . . gray and white. And a saddle, too  
. . . red. And a strawberry mane down to here.  
All new. Golden stirrups. (*People pass by the  
children, muttering greetings to one another.*)

**Second Boy.** Christmas Eve.

**Third Boy.** Wish we could go.

**First Boy.** So do I.

**Third Boy.** I think I’d like it.

**First Boy.** Oh, wouldn’t I . . . wouldn’t I!

**Second Boy.** We’re going up onto the roof.  
(*The boys look at him quizzically.*) My father  
has a glass. Telescope. A brass one. It opens up

and it has twists on it and an eyepiece that you  
put up to look through. We can see all the way  
to the park with it.

**Third Boy.** Could I look through it?

**Second Boy.** Maybe . . . where would you look?  
(*The third boy points straight up.*) Why there?

**Third Boy.** I’d like to see the moon.  
(*The boys stand and look upward as the girl  
sings to her doll. One of the boys makes a snow  
angel on the ground.*)

**Girl** (*singing*).

Christ the King came down one day,  
Into this world of ours,  
And crying from a manger bed,  
Began the Christmas hour.

(*speaking*)

**Christ the King,** my pretty one,  
Sleep softly on my breast,  
**Christ the King,** my gentle one,  
Show us the way to rest.

(*She begins to sing the first verse again. As snow  
starts to fall on the boy making the snow angel, he  
stands up and reaches out to catch a single flake.*)

# SCENE I

## ~ SCROOGE IN HIS SHOP ~

*The percussion<sup>1</sup> thunders. Scrooge hurls himself through the descending snowflakes and sends the children scattering. They retreat, watching. Cratchit comes in. He takes some coal from the mound and puts it into a small bucket; as he carries it to a corner of the stage, the stage area is transformed from street to office. Scrooge's nephew Fred enters, talks with the children, gives them coins, and sends them away with*  
10 *a "Merry Christmas."*

**Fred.** A Merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

**Scrooge.** Bah! Humbug!

**Fred.** Christmas a humbug, Uncle? I hope that's meant as a joke.

**Scrooge.** Well, it's not. Come, come, what is it you want? Don't waste all the day, Nephew.

**Fred.** I only want to wish you a Merry Christmas, Uncle. Don't be cross.

**Scrooge.** What else can I be when I live in such  
20 a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out with Merry Christmas! What's Christmas to you but a time for paying bills without money, a time for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer. If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

**Fred.** Uncle!

**Scrooge.** Nephew, keep Christmas in your own  
30 way and let me keep it in mine.

**Fred.** But you don't keep it.

**Scrooge.** Let me leave it alone then. Much good may it do you. Much good it has ever done you.

**Fred.** There are many things from which I

might have derived good by which I have not profited, I daresay, Christmas among the rest. And though it has never put a scrap of gold in my pocket, I believe it has done me good and will do me good, and I say, God bless it!

40 **Scrooge.** Bah!

**Fred.** Don't be angry, Uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow.

**Scrooge.** I'll dine alone, thank you.

**Fred.** But why?

**Scrooge.** Why? Why did you get married?

**Fred.** Why, because I fell in love with a wonderful girl.

**Scrooge.** And I with solitude. Good afternoon.

**Fred.** Nay, Uncle, but you never came to  
50 see me before I was married. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?

**Scrooge.** Good afternoon.

**Fred.** I am sorry with all my heart to find you so determined; but I have made the attempt in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep that good spirit to the last. So, a Merry Christmas, Uncle.

**Scrooge.** Good afternoon!

**Fred.** And a Happy New Year!

**Scrooge.** Good afternoon! (Fred *hesitates as*  
60 *if to say something more. He sees that Scrooge has gone to get a volume down from the shelf, and so he starts to leave. As he leaves, the doorbell rings.*) Bells. Is it necessary to always have bells? (*The gentleman visitor enters, causing the doorbell to ring again.*) Cratchit!

**Cratchit.** Yes, sir?

**Scrooge.** The bell, fool! See to it!

**Cratchit.** Yes, sir. (*He goes to the entrance.*)

1. **percussion:** noise made by loudly striking objects, such as drums or cymbals.







**Scrooge** (*muttering*). Merry Christmas . . .  
70 Wolves howling and a Merry Christmas . . .

**Cratchit**. It's for you, sir.

**Scrooge**. Of course it's for me. You're not receiving callers, are you? Show them in.

**Cratchit**. Right this way, sir. (*The gentleman visitor approaches Scrooge.*)

**Scrooge**. Yes, yes?

**Gentleman Visitor**. Scrooge and Marley's, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

80 **Scrooge**. Marley's dead. Seven years tonight. What is it you want?

**Gentleman Visitor**. I have no doubt that his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner. Here, sir, my card. (*He hands Scrooge his business card.*)

**Scrooge**. Liberality? No doubt of it? All right, all right, I can read. What is it you want?  
(*He returns to his work.*)

**Gentleman Visitor**. At this festive season  
90 of the year . . .

**Scrooge**. It's winter and cold. (*He continues his work and ignores the gentleman visitor.*)

**Gentleman Visitor**. Yes . . . yes, it is, and the more reason for my visit. At this time of the year it is more than usually desirable to make some slight provision for the poor and destitute<sup>2</sup> who suffer greatly from the cold. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in  
100 want of common comforts, sir.

**Scrooge**. Are there no prisons?

**Gentleman Visitor**. Many, sir.

**Scrooge**. And the workhouse?<sup>3</sup> Is it still in operation?

**Gentleman Visitor**. It is; still, I wish I could say it was not.

**Scrooge**. The poor law is still in full vigor then?

**Gentleman Visitor**. Yes, sir.

**Scrooge**. I'm glad to hear it. From what  
110 you said, I was afraid someone had stopped its operation.

**Gentleman Visitor**. Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink and means of warmth. We choose this time because it is the time, of all others, when want is keenly felt and abundance rejoices.<sup>4</sup> May I put you down for  
120 something, sir?

**Scrooge** (*retreating into the darkness temporarily*). Nothing.

**Gentleman Visitor**. You wish to be **anonymous**?

**Scrooge**. I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, sir, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help support the establishments I have mentioned . . . they cost enough . . . and those who are poorly off  
130 must go there.

**Gentleman Visitor**. Many can't go there, and many would rather die.

**Scrooge**. If they would rather die, they had better do it and decrease the surplus population. That is not my affair. My business is. It occupies me constantly. (*He talks both to the gentleman visitor and to himself while he thumbs through his books.*) Ask a man to give up life and means . . . fine thing. What is it, I want to know? Charity?  
140 . . . (*His nose deep in his books, he vaguely hears the dinner bell being rung in the workhouse; he*

2. **destitute**: people lacking the necessities of life.

3. **workhouse**: an establishment in which poor people are housed and required to do work.

4. **abundance rejoices**: those with wealth are happy.

looks up as if he has heard it but never focuses on the actual scene. The warder of the poorhouse stands in a pool of light at the far left, slowly ringing a bell.)

**Warder.** Dinner. All right. Line up. (*The poorly clad, dirty residents of the poorhouse line up and file by to get their evening dish of gruel,<sup>5</sup> wordlessly accepting it and going back to eat listlessly in the gloom. Scrooge returns to the business of his office.*

150 *The procession continues for a moment, then the image of the poorhouse is obscured by darkness. The dejected gentleman visitor exits.*)

**Scrooge.** Latch the door, Cratchit. Firmly, firmly. Draft as cold as Christmas blowing in here. Charity! (*Cratchit goes to the door, starts to close it, then sees the little girl with the doll. She seems to beckon to him; he moves slowly toward her, and they dance together for a moment. Scrooge continues to work. Suddenly carolers appear on the*

160 *platform, and a few phrases of their carol, "Angels We Have Heard on High," are heard. Scrooge looks up.*) Cratchit! (*As soon as Scrooge shouts, the girl and the carolers vanish and Cratchit begins to close up the shop.*) Cratchit!

**Cratchit.** Yes, sir.

**Scrooge.** Well, to work then!

**Cratchit.** It's evening, sir.

**Scrooge.** Is it?

**Cratchit.** Christmas evening, sir.

170 **Scrooge.** Oh, you'll want all day tomorrow off, I suppose.

**Cratchit.** If it's quite convenient, sir.

**Scrooge.** It's not convenient, and it's not fair. If I was to deduct half a crown<sup>6</sup> from your salary for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, wouldn't you? Still you expect me to pay a day's wage for a day of no work.

**Cratchit.** It's only once a year, sir.

**Scrooge.** Be here all the earlier the next morning.

**Cratchit.** I will, sir.

180 **Scrooge.** Then off, off.

**Cratchit.** Yes, sir! Merry Christmas, sir!

**Scrooge.** Bah! (*As soon as Cratchit opens the door, the sounds of the street begin, very bright and loud. Cratchit is caught up in a swell of people hurrying through the street. Children pull him along to the top of an ice slide, and he runs and slides down it, disappearing in darkness as the stage suddenly is left almost empty. Scrooge goes around the room blowing out the candles, talking to himself.*) Christmas

190 *Eve. Carolers! Bah! There. Another day. (He opens his door and peers out.) Black, very black. Now where are they? (The children are heard singing carols for a moment.) Begging pennies for their songs, are they? Oh, boy! Here, boy! (The little girl emerges from the shadows. Scrooge hands her a dark lantern, and she holds it while he lights it with an ember from the pile of coals.)*



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5. **gruel:** a thin, watery food made by boiling ground grain in water or milk.

6. **half a crown:** until 1971, an amount of British money equal to one-eighth of a pound. The pound is the basic unit of British money.

# SCENE 2

## ~ SCROOGE GOES HOME ~

**Scrooge** (*talking to the little girl*). Hold it quiet! There. Off now. That's it. High. Black as pitch. Light the street, that's it. You're a bright lad! Good to see that. Earn your supper, boy. You'll not go hungry this night. Home. You know the way, do you? Yes, that's the way. The house of Ebenezer Scrooge. (*As the two find their way to Scrooge's house, the audience sees and hears a brief image of a cathedral interior with a living crèche<sup>7</sup> and a large choir singing "Amen!"*; the image ends in a blackout. The lights come up immediately, and Scrooge is at his door.) Hold the light up, boy, up. (*The girl with the lantern disappears.*) Where did he go? Boy? No matter. There's a penny saved. Lantern's gone out. No matter. A candle saved. Yes, here's the key. (*He turns with the key toward the door, and Marley's face swims out of the darkness. Scrooge watches, unable to speak. He fumbles for a match,* lights the lantern, and swings it toward the figure, which melts away. Pause. Scrooge fits the key in the lock and turns it as the door suddenly is opened from the inside by the porter, Sparsit. Scrooge is startled, then recovers.) Sparsit?

**Sparsit.** Yes, sir?

**Scrooge.** Hurry, hurry. The door . . . close it.

**Sparsit.** Did you knock, sir?

**Scrooge.** Knock? What matter? Here, light me up the stairs.

**Sparsit.** Yes, sir. (*He leads Scrooge up the stairs. They pass the cook on the way. Scrooge brushes by her, stops, looks back, and she leans toward him.*)

**Cook.** Something to warm you, sir? Porridge?

**Scrooge.** Wha . . . ? No. No, nothing.

**Cook** (*waiting for her Christmas coin*). Merry Christmas, sir. (*Scrooge ignores the request and the cook disappears. Mumbling, Scrooge follows Sparsit.*)

**Scrooge** (*looking back after the cook is gone*). Fright a man nearly out of his life . . . Merry Christmas . . . bah!

**Sparsit.** Your room, sir.

**Scrooge.** Hmmm? Oh, yes, yes. And good night.

**Sparsit** (*extending his hand for his coin*). Merry Christmas, sir.

**Scrooge.** Yes, yes . . . (*He sees the outstretched hand; he knows what Sparsit wants and is infuriated.*) Out! Out! (*He closes the door after Sparsit, turns toward his chamber, and discovers the charwoman directly behind him.*)

**Charwoman.** Warm your bed for you, sir?

**Scrooge.** What? Out! Out!

**Charwoman.** Aye, sir. (*She starts for the door. Marley's voice is heard mumbling something unintelligible.*)

**Scrooge.** What's that?

**Charwoman.** Me, sir? Not a thing, sir.

**Scrooge.** Then, good night.

**Charwoman.** Good night. (*She exits, and Scrooge pantomimes shutting the door behind her. The voice of Marley over an offstage microphone whispers and reverberates:*<sup>8</sup> "Merry Christmas, Scrooge!" Silence. Scrooge hears the voice but cannot account for it. He climbs up to open a window and looks down. A cathedral choir singing "O Come, All Ye Faithful" is heard in the distance. Scrooge listens a moment, shuts the window,

7. a cathedral interior with a living crèche: the inside of a large church in which real people pose for the Christmas manger scene.

8. reverberates (rĭ-vûr'bə-rāts'): echoes.





and prepares for bed. As soon as he has shut the sound out of his room, figures appear; they seem  
70 to be coming down the main aisle of a church, bearing gifts to the living crèche. The orchestra plays “O Come, All Ye Faithful” as the procession files out. Scrooge, ready for bed, warms himself before the heap of coals. As he pulls his nightcap from a chair, a small hand-bell tumbles off onto the floor. Startled, he picks it up and rings it for reassurance; an echo answers it. He turns and sees the little girl on the street; she is swinging her doll, which produces the echo of his bell. Scrooge  
80 escapes to his bed; the girl is swallowed up in the darkness. The bell sounds grow to a din, **incoherent** as in a dream, then suddenly fall silent. Scrooge sits up in bed, listens, and hears the chains of Marley coming up the stairs. Scrooge reaches for the bell pull to summon Sparsit. The bell responds with a gong, and Marley appears. He and Scrooge face one another.)

**Scrooge.** What do you want with me?

**Marley** (*in a ghostly, unreal voice*). Much.

90 **Scrooge.** Who are you?

**Marley.** Ask who I was.

**Scrooge.** Who were you?

**Marley.** In life, I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

**Scrooge.** He’s dead.

**Marley.** Seven years this night, Ebenezer Scrooge.

**Scrooge.** Why do you come here?

**Marley.** I must. It is commanded me. I must wander the world and see what I can no longer share, what I would not share when I walked  
100 where you do.

**Scrooge.** And must go thus?

**Marley.** The chain? Look at it, Ebenezer, study it. Locks and vaults and golden coins. I forged it, each link, each day when I sat in these chairs,

commanded these rooms. Greed, Ebenezer Scrooge, wealth. Feel them, know them. Yours was as heavy as this I wear seven years ago, and you have labored to build it since.

**Scrooge.** If you’re here to lecture, I have  
110 no time for it. It is late; the night is cold. I want comfort now.

**Marley.** I have none to give. I know not how you see me this night. I did not ask it. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day. I am commanded to bring you a chance, Ebenezer. Heed it!

**Scrooge.** Quickly then, quickly.

**Marley.** You will be haunted by three spirits.

**Scrooge** (*scoffing*). Is that the chance?

120 **Marley.** Mark it.

**Scrooge.** I do not choose to.

**Marley** (*ominously*). Then you will walk where I do, burdened by your riches, your greed.

**Scrooge.** Spirits mean nothing to me.

**Marley** (*slowly leaving*). Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one, the second on the next night at the same hour, the third upon the next night when the last stroke of twelve has ended. Look to see me no more.

130 I must wander. Look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us.

**Scrooge.** Jacob . . . Don’t leave me! . . . Jacob! Jacob!

**Marley.** Adieu,<sup>9</sup> Ebenezer. (*At Marley’s last words a funeral procession begins to move across the stage. A boy walks in front; a priest follows, swinging a censer;<sup>10</sup> sounds of mourning and the suggestion of church music are heard. Scrooge calls out, “Jacob, don’t leave me!” as if talking in the midst  
140 of a bad dream. At the end of the procession is the little girl, swinging her doll and singing softly.*)

9. **adieu** (ə-dyoo): farewell.

10. **censer**: a container in which incense is burned.





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**Girl.**

Hushabye, don't you cry,  
Go to sleep, little baby.  
When you wake, you shall have  
All the pretty little horses,  
Blacks and bays, dapples and grays,  
All the pretty little horses.

*(She stops singing and looks up at Scrooge; their eyes meet, and she solemnly rings the bell in greeting. Scrooge pulls shut the bed curtains, and the girl exits. The bell sounds are picked up by the bells of a leper<sup>11</sup> who enters, dragging himself along.)*

**Leper** *(calling out)*. Leper! Leper! Stay the way!  
Leper! Leper! Keep away! *(He exits and the clock*

*begins to chime, ringing the hours. Scrooge sits up in bed and begins to count the chimes.)*

**Scrooge.** Eight . . . nine . . . ten . . . eleven . . . it can't be . . . twelve. Midnight? No. Not twelve.  
160 It can't be. I haven't slept the whole day through. Twelve? Yes, yes, twelve noon. *(He hurries to the window and looks out.)* Black. Twelve midnight. *(pause)* I must get up. A day wasted. I must get down to the office. *(Two small chimes are heard.)* Quarter past. But it just rang twelve. Fifteen minutes haven't gone past, not so quickly. *(Again two small chimes are heard.)* A quarter to one. The spirit . . . It's to come at one. *(He hurries to his bed as the chimes ring again.)* One.

11. **leper**: a person who has leprosy, a skin disease once thought to be highly contagious.



# SCENE 3

## ~ THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST ~

*The hour is struck again by a large street clock, and the first spirit appears. It is a figure dressed to look like the little girl's doll.*

**Scrooge.** Are you the spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

**First Spirit.** I am.

**Scrooge.** Who and what are you?

**First Spirit.** I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

**Scrooge.** Long past?

10 **First Spirit.** Your past.

**Scrooge.** Why are you here?

**First Spirit.** Your welfare. Rise. Walk with me.

**Scrooge.** I am mortal still. I cannot pass through air.

**First Spirit.** My hand. (*Scrooge grasps the spirit's hand tightly, and the doll's bell rings softly. Scrooge remembers a scene from his past in which two boys greet each other in the street.*)

**First Voice.** Halloo, Jack!

20 **Second Voice.** Ben! Merry Christmas, Ben!

**Scrooge.** Jack Walton. Young Jack Walton. Spirits . . . ?

**First Voice.** Have a good holiday, Jack.

**Scrooge.** Yes, yes, I remember him. Both of them. Little Ben Benjamin. He used to . . .

**First Voice.** See you next term, Jack. Next . . . term . . .

**Scrooge.** They . . . they're off for the holidays and going home from school. It's Christmas  
30 time . . . all of the children off home now . . .  
No . . . no, not all . . . there was one . . .

*(The spirit motions for Scrooge to turn, and he sees a young boy playing with a teddy bear and talking to it.)* Yes . . . reading . . . poor boy.

**First Spirit.** What, I wonder?

**Scrooge.** Reading? Oh, it was nothing. Fancy, all fancy and make-believe and take-me-away. All of it. Yes, nonsense.

**Child Scrooge.** Ali Baba.<sup>12</sup>

40 **Scrooge.** Yes . . . that was it . . .

**Child Scrooge.** Yes, and remember . . . and remember . . . remember Robinson Crusoe?<sup>13</sup>

**Scrooge.** And the parrot!

**Child Scrooge.** Yes, the parrot! I love him best.

**Scrooge** (*imitating the parrot*). With his stripy green body and yellow tail drooping along and couldn't sing—awk—but could talk, and a thing like a lettuce growing out the top of his head . . . and he used to sit on the very top of the tree—up there.

50 **Child Scrooge.** And Robinson Crusoe sailed around the island, and he thought he had escaped the island, and the parrot said, the parrot said . . .

**Scrooge** (*imitating the parrot*). Robinson Crusoe, where you been? Awk! Robinson Crusoe, where you been?

**Child Scrooge.** And Robinson Crusoe looked up in the tree and saw the parrot and knew he hadn't escaped and he was still there, still all alone there.

60 **Scrooge.** Poor Robinson Crusoe.

**Child Scrooge** (*sadly replacing the teddy bear*). Poor Robinson Crusoe.

**Scrooge.** Poor child. Poor child.

**First Spirit.** Why poor?

**Scrooge.** Fancy . . . fancy . . . (*He tries to mask his feelings by being brusque.*) It's his way, a child's

12. **Ali Baba:** in the *Arabian Nights*, a poor woodcutter who discovers a treasure.

13. **Robinson Crusoe:** a shipwrecked sailor who survives for years on a small island in the novel *Robinson Crusoe*.



way to . . . to lose being alone in . . . in dreams,  
dreams . . . Never matter if they are all nonsense,  
yes, nonsense. But he'll be all right, grow out  
70 of it. Yes. Yes, he did outgrow it, the nonsense.  
Became a man and left there, and he became, yes,  
he became a man and . . . yes, successful . . . rich!  
(*The sadness returns.*) Never matter . . . never matter.  
(Fan *runs in and goes to* Child Scrooge.) Fan!

**Fan.** Brother, dear brother! (*She kisses* Child Scrooge.)

**Child Scrooge.** Dear, dear Fan.

**Fan.** I've come to bring you home, home for  
good and ever. Come with me, come now.  
(*She takes his hand, and they start to run off, but*  
80 *the spirit stops them and signals for the light on*  
*them to fade. They look at the spirit, aware of*  
*their role in the spirit's "education" of Scrooge.*)

**Scrooge.** Let me watch them go? Let them be happy  
for a moment! (*The spirit says nothing. Scrooge turns*  
*away from them, and the light goes out.*) A delicate,  
delicate child. A breath might have withered her.

**First Spirit.** She died a woman and had, as  
I remember, children.

**Scrooge.** One child.

90 **First Spirit.** Your nephew.

**Scrooge.** Yes, yes, Fred, my nephew. (*Scrooge*  
*pauses, then tries to bluster through.*) Well? Well,  
all of us have that, haven't we? Childhoods?  
Sadnesses? But we grow and we become men,  
masters of ourselves. (*The spirit gestures for music*  
*to begin. It is heard first as from a great distance,*  
*then Scrooge becomes aware of it.*) I've no time  
for it, Spirit. Music and all of your Christmas  
folderol.<sup>14</sup> Yes, yes, I've learnt what you have  
100 to show me. (*Fezziwig, Young Ebenezer, and*  
*Dick appear, busily preparing for a party.*)

**Fezziwig.** Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!

**Scrooge.** Fezziwig! It's old Fezziwig that  
I 'prenticed<sup>15</sup> under.

**First Spirit.** Your master?

**Scrooge.** Oh, aye, and the best that any boy  
could have. There's Dick Wilkins! Bless me.  
He was very much attached to me was Dick.  
Poor Dick. Dear, dear.

110 **Fezziwig.** Yo ho, my boys! No more work  
tonight. Christmas Eve, Dick! Christmas,  
Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters up before  
a man can say Jack Robinson! (*The music*  
*continues. Chandeliers are pulled into position,*  
*and mistletoe, holly, and ivy are draped over*  
*everything by bustling servants. Dancers fill*  
*the stage for Fezziwig's wonderful Christmas*  
*party. In the midst of the dancing and the gaiety*  
*servants pass back and forth through the crowd*  
120 *with huge platters of food. At a pause in the music,*  
*Young Ebenezer, who is dancing, calls out.*)

**Young Ebenezer.** Mr. Fezziwig, sir, you're  
a wonderful master!

**Scrooge and Young Ebenezer.** A wonderful master!

**Scrooge** (*echoing the phrase*). A wonderful  
master! (*The music changes suddenly, and*  
*the dancers jerk into distorted postures and*  
*then begin to move in slow motion. The*  
*celebrants slowly exit, performing a macabre*  
130 *dance to discordant sounds.*<sup>16</sup>)

**First Spirit.** Just because he gave a party?  
It was very small.

**Scrooge.** Small!

**First Spirit.** He spent a few pounds of your  
"mortal" money, three, four at the most.  
Is that so much that he deserves this praise?

**Scrooge.** But it wasn't the money. He had the  
power to make us happy, to make our service  
light or burdensome. The happiness he gives

14. **folderol** (fŏl'-də-rŏl'): foolishness; nonsense.

15. **'prenticed**: short for *apprenticed*, here meaning "learned  
a trade while working."

16. **macabre** (mə-kä'brə) **dance to discordant sounds**: a bizarre,  
ghastly dance with unharmonious music.



140 is quite as great as if it cost a fortune. That's what  
. . . a good master is.

**First Spirit.** Yes?

**Scrooge.** No, no, nothing.

**First Spirit.** Something, I think.

**Scrooge.** I should like to be able to say a word  
or two to my clerk just now, that's all.

**First Spirit.** But this is all past. Your clerk,  
Cratchit, couldn't be here.

**Scrooge.** No, no, of course not, an idle thought.

150 Are we done?

**First Spirit** (*motioning for the waltz music to  
begin*). Nearly.

**Scrooge** (*hearing the waltz and remembering it*). Surely  
it's enough. Haven't you tormented me enough?  
(*Young Ebenezer is seen waltzing with his Sweetheart.*)

**First Spirit.** I only show the past, what it  
promised you. Look. Another promise.

**Scrooge.** Oh. Oh, yes. I had forgotten . . . her.  
Don't they dance beautifully? So young, so

160 young. I would have married her if only . . .

**Sweetheart.** Can you love me, Ebenezer?  
I bring no dowry<sup>17</sup> to my marriage, only me,  
only love. It is no **currency** that you can buy  
and sell with, but we can live with it. Can you?  
(*She pauses, then returns the ring Scrooge gave  
her as his pledge.*) I release you, Ebenezer, for  
the love of the man you once were. Will that  
man win me again, now that he is free?

**Scrooge** (*trying to speak to her*). If only you had  
170 held me to it. You should not have let me go.  
I was young; I did love you.

**Sweetheart** (*speaking to Young Ebenezer*).  
We have never lied to one another. May you be  
happy in the life you have chosen. Good-bye.  
(*She runs out. Young Ebenezer slowly leaves.*)

**Scrooge.** No, no, it was not meant that way . . . !

**First Spirit.** You cannot change now what you  
would not change then. I am your mistakes,  
Ebenezer Scrooge, all of the things you could  
180 have done and did not.

**Scrooge.** Then leave me! I have done them. I  
shall live with them. As I have, as I do; as I will.

**First Spirit.** There is another Christmas, seven  
years ago, when Marley died.

**Scrooge.** No! I will not see it. I will not! He  
died. I could not prevent it. I did not choose  
for him to die on Christmas Day.

**First Spirit.** And when his day was chosen,  
what did you do then?

190 **Scrooge.** I looked after his affairs.

**First Spirit.** His business.

**Scrooge.** Yes! His business! Mine! It was all that  
I had, all that I could do in this world. I have  
nothing to do with the world to come after.

**First Spirit.** Then I will leave you.

**Scrooge.** Not yet! Don't leave me here! Tell me  
what I must do! What of the other spirits?

**First Spirit.** They will come.

**Scrooge.** And you? What of you?

200 **First Spirit.** I am always with you. (*The little girl  
appears with her doll; she takes Scrooge's hand and  
gently leads him to bed. Numbed, he follows her.  
She leans against the foot of the bed, ringing the  
doll and singing. The first spirit exits as she sings.*)

**Girl.**

When you wake, you shall have  
All the pretty little horses,  
Blacks and bays, dapples and grays,  
All the pretty little horses.

210 (*She rings the doll, and the ringing becomes the  
chiming of Scrooge's bell. The girl exits. Scrooge  
sits upright in bed as he hears the chimes.*)

**Scrooge.** A minute until one. No one here. No  
one's coming. (*A larger clock strikes one o'clock.*)

17. **dowry** (dou'rê): money or property brought by a bride  
to her husband when they marry.

## ~ THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT ~

*A light comes on. Scrooge becomes aware of it and goes slowly to it. He sees the second spirit, the Spirit of Christmas Present, who looks like Fezziwig.*

**Scrooge.** Fezziwig!

**Second Spirit.** Hello, Scrooge.

**Scrooge.** But you can't be . . . not Fezziwig.

**Second Spirit.** Do you see me as him?

**Scrooge.** I do.

10 **Second Spirit.** And hear me as him?

**Scrooge.** I do.

**Second Spirit.** I wish I were the gentleman, so as not to disappoint you.

**Scrooge.** But you're not . . . ?

**Second Spirit.** No, Mr. Scrooge. You have never seen the like of me before. I am the Ghost of Christmas Present.

**Scrooge.** But . . .

20 **Second Spirit.** You see what you will see, Scrooge, no more. Will you walk out with me this Christmas Eve?

**Scrooge.** But I am not yet dressed.

**Second Spirit.** Take my tails, dear boy, we're leaving.

**Scrooge.** Wait!

**Second Spirit.** What is it now?

**Scrooge.** Christmas Present, did you say?

**Second Spirit.** I did.

30 **Scrooge.** Then we are traveling here? In this town? London? Just down there?

**Second Spirit.** Yes, yes, of course.

**Scrooge.** Then we could walk? Your flying is . . . well, too sudden for an old man. Well?

**Second Spirit.** It's your Christmas, Scrooge; I am only the guide.

**Scrooge** (*puzzled*). Then we can walk? (*The spirit nods.*) Where are you guiding me to?

**Second Spirit.** Bob Cratchit's.

**Scrooge.** My clerk?

40 **Second Spirit.** You did want to talk to him? (*Scrooge pauses, uncertain how to answer.*) Don't worry, Scrooge, you won't have to.

**Scrooge** (*trying to change the subject, to cover his error*). Shouldn't be much of a trip. With fifteen bob<sup>18</sup> a week, how far off can it be?

**Second Spirit.** A world away, Scrooge, at least that far. (*Scrooge and the spirit start to step off a curb when a funeral procession enters with a child's coffin, followed by the poorhouse children, who are singing. Seated on top of the coffin is the little girl. She and Scrooge look at one another.*) That is the way to it, Scrooge. (*The procession follows the coffin offstage; Scrooge and the spirit exit after the procession. As they leave, the lights focus on Mrs. Cratchit and her children. Mrs. Cratchit sings as she puts Tiny Tim and the other children to bed, all in one bed. She pulls a dark blanket over them.*)

**Mrs. Cratchit** (*singing*).

60 When you wake, you shall have  
All the pretty little horses,  
Blacks and bays, dapples and grays,  
All the pretty little horses.  
To sleep now, all of you. Christmas tomorrow.  
(*She kisses them and goes to Bob Cratchit, who is by the hearth.*) How did our little Tiny Tim behave?

**Bob Cratchit.** As good as gold and better. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the

---

18. **bob:** a British slang term for shillings. (There were 20 shillings in a pound.)









people saw him in church because he was  
70 a cripple and it might be pleasant to them  
to remember upon Christmas Day who made  
the lame to walk and the blind to see.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** He's a good boy. (*The second spirit and Scrooge enter. Mrs. Cratchit feels a sudden draft.*) Oh, the wind. (*She gets up to shut the door.*)

**Second Spirit.** Hurry. (*He nudges Scrooge in before Mrs. Cratchit shuts the door.*)

**Scrooge.** Hardly hospitable is what I'd say.

**Second Spirit.** Oh, they'd say a great deal more,  
80 Scrooge, if they could see you.

**Scrooge.** Oh, they should, should they?

**Second Spirit.** Oh yes, I'd think they might.

**Scrooge.** Well, I might have a word for  
them . . .

**Second Spirit.** You're here to listen.

**Scrooge.** Oh. Oh yes, all right. By the fire?

**Second Spirit.** But not a word.

**Bob Cratchit** (*raising his glass*). My dear,  
to Mr. Scrooge. I give you Mr. Scrooge, the  
90 founder of the feast.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** The founder of the feast indeed!  
I wish I had him here! I'd give him a piece  
of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd  
have a good appetite for it.

**Bob Cratchit.** My dear, Christmas Eve.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** It should be Christmas Eve,  
I'm sure, when one drinks the health of such  
an odious,<sup>19</sup> stingy, hard, unfeeling man as  
Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert! Nobody  
100 knows it better than you do, poor dear.

**Bob Cratchit.** I only know one thing on  
Christmas: that one must be charitable.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** I'll drink to his health for your  
sake and the day's, not for his. Long life to  
him! A Merry Christmas and a Happy New

---

19. **odious** (ō'dē-əs): causing or deserving strong dislike.

Year. He'll be very merry and very happy,  
I have no doubt.

**Bob Cratchit.** If he cannot be, we must be happy  
for him. A song is what is needed. Tim!

110 **Mrs. Cratchit.** Shush! I've just gotten him down,  
and he needs all the sleep he can get.

**Bob Cratchit.** If he's asleep on Christmas Eve,  
I'll be much mistaken. Tim! He must sing, dear;  
there is nothing else that might make him well.

**Tiny Tim.** Yes, Father?

**Bob Cratchit.** Are you awake?

**Tiny Tim.** Just a little.

**Bob Cratchit.** A song then! (*The children awaken  
and, led by Tiny Tim, sit up to sing "What Child  
120 Is This?" As they sing, Scrooge speaks.*)

**Scrooge.** (*He holds up his hand; all stop sing-  
ing and look at him.*) I . . . I have seen enough.  
(*When the spirit signals to the children, they  
leave the stage, singing the carol quietly. Tiny  
Tim remains, covered completely by the dark  
blanket, disappearing against the black.*) Tiny  
Tim . . . will he live?

**Second Spirit.** He is very ill. Even song cannot  
keep him whole through a cold winter.

130 **Scrooge.** But you haven't told me!

**Second Spirit** (*imitating Scrooge*). If he be like to  
die, he had better do it and decrease the surplus  
population. (*Scrooge turns away.*) Erase, Scrooge,  
those words from your thoughts. You are not the  
judge. Do not judge, then. It may be that in the  
sight of heaven you are more worthless and less  
fit to live than millions like this poor man's child.  
Oh God! To hear an insect on a leaf pronouncing  
that there is too much life among his hungry  
140 brothers in the dust. Good-bye, Scrooge.

**Scrooge.** But is there no happiness in  
Christmas Present?

**Second Spirit.** There is.

**Scrooge.** Take me there.

**Second Spirit.** It is at the home of your  
nephew . . .

**Scrooge.** No!

**Second Spirit** (*disgusted with Scrooge*). Then  
there is none.

150 **Scrooge.** But that isn't enough . . . You must  
teach me!

**Second Spirit.** Would you have a teacher,  
Scrooge? Look at your own words.

**Scrooge.** But the first spirit gave me more . . . !

**Second Spirit.** He was Christmas Past. There  
was a lifetime he could choose from. I have  
only this day, one day, and you, Scrooge. I have  
nearly lived my fill of both. Christmas Present  
must be gone at midnight. That is near now.  
160 (*He speaks to two beggar children who pause  
shyly at the far side of the stage. The children are  
thin and wan; they are barefoot and wear filthy  
rags.*) Come. (*They go to him.*)

**Scrooge.** Is this the last spirit who is to come  
to me?

**Second Spirit.** They are no spirits. They are  
real. Hunger, Ignorance. Not spirits, Scrooge,  
passing dreams. They are real. They walk your  
streets, look to you for comfort. And you  
170 deny them. Deny them not too long, Scrooge.  
They will grow and multiply, and they will not  
remain children.

**Scrooge.** Have they no refuge, no resource?

**Second Spirit** (*again imitating Scrooge*). Are  
there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?  
(*tenderly to the children*) Come. It's Christmas  
180 Eve. (*He leads them offstage.*)

# SCENE 5

## ~ THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME ~

Scrooge is entirely alone for a long moment. He is frightened by the darkness and feels it approaching him. Suddenly he stops, senses the presence of the third spirit, turns toward him, and sees him. The spirit is bent and cloaked. No physical features are distinguishable.

**Scrooge.** You are the third. (*The spirit says nothing.*) The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. (*The spirit says nothing.*) Speak to me. Tell me what is to happen—to me, to all of us. (*The spirit says nothing.*) Then show me what I must see. (*The spirit points. Light illumines the shadowy recesses of Scrooge's house.*) I know it. I know it too well, cold and cheerless. It is mine. (*The cook and the charwoman are dimly visible in Scrooge's house.*) What is . . . ? There are . . . thieves! There are thieves in my rooms! (*He starts forward to accost them, but the spirit beckons for him to stop.*) I cannot. You cannot tell me that I must watch them and do nothing. I will not. It is mine still. (*He rushes into the house to claim his belongings and to protect them. The two women do not notice his presence.*)

**Cook.** He ain't about, is he? (*The charwoman laughs.*) Poor ol' Scrooge 'as met 'is end.<sup>20</sup> (*She laughs with the charwoman.*)

**Charwoman.** An' time for it, too; ain't been alive in deed for half his life.

**Cook.** But the Sparsit's nowhere, is he . . . ?

**Sparsit** (*emerging from the blackness*). Lookin' for someone, ladies? (*The cook shrieks, but the charwoman treats the matter more practically, anticipating competition from Sparsit.*)

**Charwoman.** There ain't enough but for the two of us!

**Sparsit.** More 'an enough . . . if you know where to look.

**Cook.** Hardly decent is what I'd say, hardly decent, the poor old fella hardly cold and you're thievin' his wardrobe.

**Sparsit.** You're here out of love, are ya?

**Charwoman.** There's no time for that. (*Sparsit acknowledges Scrooge for the first time, gesturing toward him as if the living Scrooge were the corpse. Scrooge stands as if rooted to the spot, held there by the power of the spirit.*)

**Sparsit.** He ain't about to bother us, is he?

**Charwoman.** Ain't he a picture?

**Cook.** If he is, it ain't a happy one. (*They laugh.*)

**Sparsit.** Ladies, shall we start? (*The three of them grin and advance on Scrooge.*) Cook?

**Cook** (*snatching the cuff links from the shirt Scrooge wears*). They're gold, ain't they?

**Sparsit.** The purest, madam.

**Charwoman.** I always had a fancy for that nightcap of his. My old man could use it. (*She takes the nightcap from Scrooge's head. Sparsit playfully removes Scrooge's outer garment, the coat or cloak that he has worn in the previous scenes.*)

**Sparsit.** Bein' a man of more practical tastes, I'll go for the worsted<sup>21</sup> and hope the smell ain't permanent. (*The three laugh.*) Cook, we go round again.

**Cook.** Do you think that little bell he's always ringing at me is silver enough to sell? (*The three of them move toward the nightstand, and Scrooge cries out.*)

20. 'as met 'is end: a dialect pronunciation of "has met his end."

21. worsted: a smooth woolen fabric.







**Scrooge.** No more! No more! (*As the spirit*  
70 *directs Scrooge's attention to the tableau*<sup>22</sup>  
*of the three thieves standing poised over the silver*  
*bell, Scrooge bursts out of the house, clad only*  
*in his nightshirt.*) I cannot. I cannot. The room  
is . . . too like a cheerless place that is familiar.  
I won't see it. Let us go from here. Anywhere.  
(*The spirit directs his attention to the Cratchit*  
*house; the children are sitting together near*  
*Mrs. Cratchit, who is sewing a coat. Peter reads*  
*by the light of the coals.*)

80 **Peter.** "And he took a child and set him in the  
midst of them."

**Mrs. Cratchit** (*putting her hand to her face*).  
The light tires my eyes so. (*pause*) They're  
better now. It makes them tired to try to see  
by firelight, and I wouldn't show reddened

eyes to your father when he comes home  
for the world. It must be near his time now.

**Peter.** Past it, I think, but he walks slower  
than he used to, these last few days, Mother.

90 **Mrs. Cratchit.** I have known him to walk  
with . . . I have known him to walk with  
Tiny Tim upon his shoulder very fast indeed.  
(*She catches herself, then hurries on.*) But he  
was very light to carry and his father loved  
him, so that it was no trouble, no trouble.  
(*She hears Bob Cratchit approaching.*)  
Smiles, everyone, smiles.

**Bob Cratchit** (*entering*). My dear, Peter . . .  
(*He greets the other children by their real*  
100 *names.*) How is it coming?

**Mrs. Cratchit** (*handing him the coat*).  
Nearly done.

---

22. **tableau** (täb'lō'): a portion of a play where the actors momentarily freeze in their positions for dramatic effect.



© Louisiana Tech University School of Performing Arts.

**Bob Cratchit.** Yes, good, I'm sure that it will be done long before Sunday.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** Sunday! You went today then, Robert?

**Bob Cratchit.** Yes. It's . . . it's all ready. Two o'clock. And a nice place. It would have done you good to see how green it is. But you'll see  
110 it often. I promised him that, that I would walk there on Sunday . . . often.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** We mustn't hurt ourselves for it, Robert.

**Bob Cratchit.** No. No, he wouldn't have wanted that. Come now. You won't guess who I've seen. Scrooge's nephew, Fred. And he asked after us and said he was heartily sorry and to give his respect to my good wife. How he ever knew that, I don't know.

120 **Mrs. Cratchit.** Knew what, my dear?

**Bob Cratchit.** Why, that you were a good wife.

**Peter.** Everybody knows that.

**Bob Cratchit.** I hope that they do. "Heartily sorry," he said, "for your good wife, and if I can be of service to you in any way—" and he gave me his card—"that's where I live"—and Peter, I shouldn't be at all surprised if he got you a position.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** Only hear that, Peter!

130 **Bob Cratchit.** And then you'll be keeping company with some young girl and setting up for yourself.

**Peter.** Oh, go on.

**Bob Cratchit.** Well, it will happen, one day, but remember, when that day does come—as it must—we must none of us forget poor Tiny Tim and this first parting in our family.

**Scrooge.** He died! No, no! (*He steps back and the scene disappears; he moves away from the spirit.*)



# SCENE 6

## ~ SCROOGE'S CONVERSION ~

**Scrooge.** Because he would not . . . no! You cannot tell me that he has died, for that Christmas has not come! I will not let it come! I will be there . . . It was me. Yes, yes, and I knew it and couldn't look. I won't be able to help. I won't. *(pause)* Spirit, hear me. I am not the man I was. I will not be that man that I have been for so many years. Why show me all of this if I am past all hope? Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me. Let the boy live! I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The spirits of all three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me that I am not too late! *(A single light focuses on the little girl, dressed in a blue cloak like that of the Virgin Mary. She looks up, and from above a dove is slowly lowered in silence to her; she takes it and encloses it within her cloak, covering it. As soon as she does this, a large choir is heard singing "Gloria!" and the bells begin to ring. Blackout. When the lights come up again, Scrooge is in bed. The third spirit and the figures in the church have disappeared. Scrooge awakens and looks around his room.)* The curtains! They are mine and they are real. They are not sold. They are here. I am here; the shadows to come may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will be. *(He dresses himself hurriedly.)* I don't know what to do. I'm as light as a feather, merry as a boy again. Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! A Happy New Year to all the world! Hello there! Whoop! Hallo! What day of the month is it? How long did the spirits keep me? Never mind. I don't care. *(He opens the window and calls to a boy in the street below.)* What's today?

**Boy.** Eh?

**Scrooge.** What's the day, my fine fellow?

**Boy.** Today? Why, Christmas Day!

**Scrooge.** It's Christmas Day! I haven't missed it! The spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can save Tim. Hallo, my fine fellow!

**Boy.** Hallo!

**Scrooge.** Do you know the poulterers<sup>23</sup> in the next street at the corner?

**Boy.** I should hope I do.

**Scrooge.** An intelligent boy. A remarkable boy. Do you know whether they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging up there? Not the little prize; the big one.

**Boy.** What, the one as big as me?

**Scrooge.** What a delightful boy! Yes, my bucko!

**Boy.** It's hanging there now.

**Scrooge.** It is? Go and buy it.

**Boy.** G'wan!

**Scrooge.** I'm in earnest! Go and buy it and tell 'em to bring it here that I may give them the direction where to take it. Come back with the butcher and I'll give you a shilling. Come back in less than two minutes and I'll give you half a crown!

**Boy.** Right, guv! *(He exits.)*

**Scrooge.** I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's. He shan't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim and such a Christmas dinner it will make. *(Carolers suddenly appear singing "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.")* Scrooge leans

23. **poulterers** (pōl'tēr-ərz): people who sell poultry, such as chickens and turkeys.





70 *out the window and joins them in the song.*)  
I must dress, I must. It's Christmas Day! I must  
be all in my best for such a day. Where is my  
China silk shirt? (*The boy and the butcher run  
in with the turkey.*) What? Back already? And  
such a turkey. Why, you can't carry that all the  
way to Cratchit's. Here, boy, here is your half  
a crown and here an address in Camden Town.  
See that it gets there. Here, money for the cab,  
for the turkey, and for you, good man! (*The  
80 boy and the butcher, delighted, catch the money  
and run out.* Scrooge sees the gentleman visitor  
*walking by the window.*) Halloo, sir!

**Gentleman Visitor** (*looking up sadly, less than  
festive*). Hello, sir.

**Scrooge**. My dear sir, how do you do? I hope  
you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of  
you to stop by to see me.

**Gentleman Visitor** (*in disbelief*). Mr. Scrooge?

**Scrooge**. Yes, that is my name, and I fear it may  
90 not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your  
pardon, and will you have the goodness to add  
this (*throwing him a purse*) to your good work!

**Gentleman Visitor**. Lord bless me! My dear  
Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?

**Scrooge**. If you please, not a penny less. A great  
many back payments are included in it, I assure  
you. Will you do me that favor?

**Gentleman Visitor**. My dear sir, I don't know  
what I can say to such generosity . . .

100 **Scrooge**. Say nothing! Accept it. Come and see  
me. Will you come and see me?

**Gentleman Visitor**. I will.

**Scrooge**. Thank 'ee. I am much obliged to you.  
I thank you fifty times. God bless you and  
Merry Christmas!

**Gentleman Visitor**. Merry Christmas to  
you, sir!

**Scrooge** (*running downstairs, out of his house,  
and onto the street*). Now which is the way  
110 to that nephew's house. Girl! Girl!

**Girl** (*appearing immediately*). Yes, sir?

**Scrooge**. Can you find me a taxi, miss?

**Girl**. I can, sir. (*She rings her doll, and a  
coachman appears.*)

**Scrooge** (*handing the coachman a card*).  
Can you show me the way to this home?

**Coachman**. I can, sir.

**Scrooge**. Good man. Come up, girl. (*They  
mount to the top of the taxi. This action may  
120 be stylistically suggested.*) Would you be  
an old man's guide to a Christmas dinner?

**Girl**. I would, sir, and God bless you!

**Scrooge**. Yes, God bless us every one! (*raising  
his voice almost in song*) Driver, to Christmas!  
(*They exit, all three singing "Joy to the World."  
Blackout. The lights come up for the finale<sup>24</sup>  
at Fred's house. The Cratchits are there with  
Tiny Tim. All stop moving and talking when  
they see Scrooge standing in the center,*

130 *embarrassed and humble.*) Well, I'm very glad  
to be here at my nephew's house! (*He starts  
to cry.*) Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

**All** (*softly*). Merry Christmas. (*They sing "Deck  
the Halls," greeting one another and exchanging  
gifts. Scrooge puts Tiny Tim on his shoulders.*)

**Tiny Tim** (*shouting as the carol ends*). God bless  
us every one!

**Scrooge** (*to the audience*). Oh, yes! God bless  
us every one!

---

24. **finale** (fə-nāl'ē): conclusion.



## Reading for Information

**ONLINE ARTICLE** In the play *A Christmas Carol*, you read about a man named Scrooge, who was stingy with his money. In the following article, you'll read about why Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* and how some real-life Scrooges took advantage of Dickens.

BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME PRINT



# Dickens and Too Many Scrooges

DICKENS BIOGRAPHY → BOOKS BY DICKENS → THE STORY BEHIND A CHRISTMAS CAROL

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Scrooge at his office with Bob Cratchit

Dickens' cherished little Christmas story, the best loved and most read of all of his books, began life as the result of the author's desperate need of money. In the fall of 1843 Dickens and his wife, Kate, were expecting their fifth child. Requests for money from his family, a large mortgage on his Devonshire Terrace home, and lagging sales from the monthly installments of *Martin Chuzzlewit* had left Dickens seriously short of cash.

As the idea for the story took shape and the writing began in earnest, Dickens became engrossed in the book. He wrote that as the tale unfolded he "wept and laughed, and wept again" and that he "walked about the black streets of London fifteen or twenty miles many a night when all sober folks had gone to bed."

At odds with his publishers, Dickens paid for the production costs of the book himself and insisted on a lavish design that included a gold-stamped cover and four hand-colored etchings. He also set the price at 5 shillings so that the book would be affordable to nearly everyone.

The book was published during the week before Christmas 1843 and was an instant sensation but, due to the high production costs, Dickens' earnings from the sales were lower than expected. In addition to the disappointing profit from the book, Dickens was enraged that the work was instantly the victim of pirated editions. Copyright laws in England were often loosely enforced, and a complete lack of international copyright law had been Dickens' theme during his trip to America the year before. He ended up spending more money fighting pirated editions of the book than he was making from the book itself.

Despite these early financial difficulties, Dickens' Christmas tale of human redemption has endured beyond even Dickens' own vivid imagination. It was a favorite during Dickens' public readings of his works late in his lifetime and is known today primarily due to the dozens of film versions and dramatizations which continue to be produced every year.

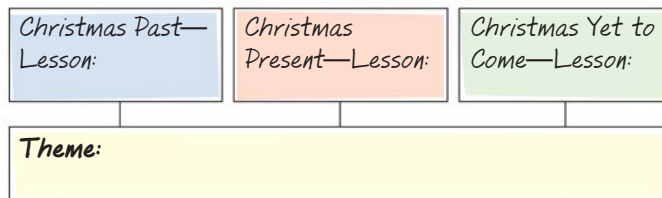
## Comprehension

- 1. Recall** Who was Jacob Marley, and why does his spirit visit Scrooge?
- 2. Recall** What does Scrooge do for the Cratchit family at the play's end?
- 3. Clarify** How does Scrooge's view of **money** change from the beginning of the play to the end?

## Literary Analysis

- 4. Understand Sequence in Plot** Review the sequence wheel you created as you read. Number the sections according to the order in which the time periods are presented in the play. Use your numbers to summarize the **sequence** of events in *A Christmas Carol*.
- 5. Make Inferences** What does the Spirit of Christmas Past mean by saying, "I am always with you"? Explain your answer.
- 6. Draw Conclusions** Why do you think Tiny Tim's death affects Scrooge so deeply?
- 7. Interpret Symbols** In the play there are a number of things used as symbols, such as the little girl with the doll, Marley's chains, and a dove. Reread lines 102–108 in Scene 2, lines 200–212 in Scene 3, and lines 18–22 in Scene 6. Choose one symbol and interpret its meaning.

- 8. Analyze Theme** Use a diagram like the one shown to describe the lesson each spirit teaches Scrooge. Based on these lessons, what do you think the **theme** of the play is?



## Extension and Challenge

- 9. Creative Project: Drama** With a small group, choose the scene or part of a scene that you feel best reflects Dickens's message. Act out the scene for the rest of the class. Then explain why your group chose it.
- 10. SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION** What was it like to live in Victorian England (1837–1901)? Find out by researching one element of the time period: the Poor Law of 1834, workhouses, prisons, leprosy, how wealthy people lived, or how poor people lived. Present your research to the class.



**R3.2** Identify events that advance the plot and determine how each event explains past or present action(s) or foreshadows future action(s).

**R3.4** Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).



### RESEARCH LINKS

For more on Victorian England, visit the **Research Center** at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).



**W1.2** Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

## Reading-Writing Connection

Demonstrate your understanding of *A Christmas Carol* by responding to these prompts. Then complete the **Grammar and Writing** exercise.

WRITING PROMPTS	SELF-CHECK
<p><b>A. Short Response: Write a Journal Entry</b> Return to the opening activity on page 386. How has reading the play affected your beliefs about the importance of <b>money</b>? Write a <b>one-paragraph journal entry</b> explaining how the play changed or supported your original ideas.</p>	<p><b>A well-written entry will . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• state your original ideas about money</li> <li>• tell whether your ideas changed and why or why not</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Extended Response: Evaluate a Statement</b> In lines 12–13 of Scene 6, Scrooge declares, “I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future.” In a <b>two- or three-paragraph response</b>, explain what Scrooge means by this statement. Also describe what steps he takes to accomplish his goal.</p>	<p><b>A strong response will . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show an understanding of the statement</li> <li>• use specific details or examples from the play</li> </ul>

## GRAMMAR AND WRITING

**COMBINE CLAUSES** A clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb. Clauses can be **independent** or **dependent** (also known as subordinate). An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand on its own as a sentence, but a dependent clause cannot. To help avoid sentence fragments, join dependent clauses to independent clauses. Here is an example, with the independent clause highlighted in yellow and the dependent clause highlighted in green.

*Original:* We can help people in need. Although we don’t have much money.

*Revised:* We can help people in need, although we don’t have much money.

**PRACTICE** Combine the following independent and dependent clauses.

1. I still like money. Although reading the play changed my mind a little.
2. While money can be important. Helping people is even more important.
3. Scrooge found that out. Even though it took him a long time.
4. After he discovered this. He became a better person.

For more help with independent and dependent clauses, see pages R63–R64 in the *Grammar Handbook*.



**LC1.3** Identify all parts of speech and types and structure of sentences.



## What's the MESSAGE?

**KEY IDEA** You've explored a play version of a timeless tale and have discovered its **themes**, or messages about life. Now experience the tale in a different way as you watch selected scenes from a classic movie version of *A Christmas Carol*.

### Background




**Classic Scrooge** The images throughout this lesson are taken from two different movie versions of *A Christmas Carol*. Many stage plays, movies, cartoons, and television specials have been based on the story. This may be because the public enjoys revisiting the tale's timeless themes. An even bigger attraction may be the simple pleasure of seeing Scrooge's personality change.

You'll see four clips from a movie that was filmed many decades ago in black and white and yet remains a popular holiday classic.

fpo

## Media Literacy: Theme in Movies

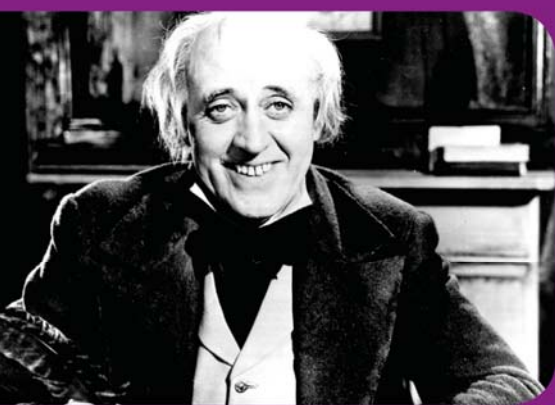
Characters need to grow up! As you know from your understanding of *A Christmas Carol* and the character Scrooge, themes are often conveyed through a character's growth and change. To discover a theme in a written story, you look at the words for clues. To identify the theme of a movie, you must focus on the images and sounds. Moviemakers—in particular, the director—use the following techniques to make sure you get the message.

THEME DELIVERY	STRATEGIES FOR VIEWING	
<p><b>The Director's Plan</b> A director makes basic decisions about how to transfer a well-known tale to the screen and what themes to portray.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware that a director usually presents the same <b>themes</b> that appeared in the original work.</li> <li>• Be prepared to find a theme expressed (or repeated) in the key scenes the director presents.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>The Director's Tools</b> In presenting certain images important to the theme, a director uses film techniques to highlight the message.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study the <b>camera shots</b> that show more than one character. These shots bring an audience close enough to see the ways characters react to each other.</li> <li>• The <b>lighting</b> of characters can reveal a theme in an indirect way. For example, soft lighting can represent goodness or warm moments between characters.</li> <li>• Listen for verbal clues. A director can state a theme directly through <b>dialogue</b>. You can also listen to the narration of a <b>voice-over</b>, the voice of an unseen narrator who provides important information about the story.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>The Actor's Performance</b> An actor can indicate a theme by showing changes in the behavior of his or her character.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice an actor's <b>body movements</b>. An actor can portray a character's personality change by using different <b>gestures</b> or <b>facial expressions</b>.</li> <li>• Focus on the <b>tone of voice</b> of the actors. Think of how a voice can change to show surprise, anger, or weariness.</li> </ul>	





- **Film Clip:** *A Christmas Carol*
- **Director:** Brian Desmond Hurst
- **Genre:** Fantasy/Drama
- **Running Time:** 12 minutes



## Viewing Guide for A Christmas Carol

Since you've read the play version of *A Christmas Carol*, you already know all that happens to Ebenezer Scrooge. Watch the four movie clips one at a time. Each clip focuses either on Scrooge or on others who are part of his life-changing experience. Try to spot the movie techniques and acting techniques that were carefully designed to deliver Charles Dickens's themes.

View each clip several times and take as much time as you need to observe the events that take place. Keep these questions in mind as you view.

### NOW VIEW

#### FIRST VIEWING: Comprehension

1. **Recall** At what point does Scrooge declare, "I am not the man I was"?
2. **Summarize** What happens to Tiny Tim, according to the voice-over narration at the end?

#### CLOSE VIEWING: Media Literacy

3. **Compare Lighting Techniques** The lighting in Scrooge's office in clip 1 is dark and dreary. The lighting of Scrooge's home when he awakes in clip 3 is bright and cheerful. What comparison do you think the director is making between Scrooge's old way of looking at the world and his new way?
4. **Interpret Acting** Scrooge goes from being cold-hearted to being softhearted. Beyond his dialogue, how do you know he has changed? Respond by using a chart like the one shown.

*Scrooge's Behavior*

	Clip 1	Clip 2	Clip 3	Clip 4
Facial expression				
Body movements				
Tone of voice				



## Write or Discuss

**Compare Play and Film Versions** You've read a play version of the Dickens tale and watched scenes from a movie version. What did you enjoy about reading the play as compared to watching the movie scenes? Use evidence from either version to support your answer. Think about

- the portrayal of the character Scrooge in both versions
- how well each version delivers Dickens's basic themes
- the details in the stage directions of the play and the visual representation of the scenes

## Produce Your Own Media

**Design a DVD Cover** Imagine you're part of a team promoting a new, up-to-date version of *A Christmas Carol*. Create a DVD cover that presents the highlights of this retelling. Follow the instructions on the Design Guide to help you position words and pictures on the DVD cover.

**HERE'S HOW** Use the Design Guide and these tips as you create the cover:

- Think of a modern-day setting and a basic story line that make it clear that this version happens in a very different time and place.
- Who's Scrooge? Brainstorm a cast list.
- Brainstorm what images to use on the cover, where to place them, and what colors to use.
- Write a blurb—a brief description of the version to appear on the back of the cover. Be sure to include within the blurb a statement that reflects a theme of the tale. Also create a rating and a critic's one-line comment about the version.

### DESIGN GUIDE

<p>Add a "quotation" that a critic might offer.</p> <p>Add photos of different scenes.</p> <p>Add movie information.</p> <p>Add a statement about the theme.</p>	<p>PUT YOUR TITLE HERE.</p>	<p><b>PUT YOUR TITLE HERE.</b></p> <p>Draw or attach a picture of your major character.</p> <p>Add color.</p>
<p>BACK COVER</p>		<p>FRONT COVER</p>

 **MEDIA TOOLS**

For help with designing a DVD cover, visit the **Media Center** at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

### Tech Tip

You can choose colored typefaces for your title and other text. Also, try arranging the elements in a unique way. For example, try your title at the bottom.

# Short Story

Did the stories and characters in this unit surprise you, make you think, or remind you of someone you know? Stories, sometimes called **narratives**, can draw you into other worlds. Use the **Writer's Road Map** to guide your creative journey as you invent a short story.

## WRITER'S ROAD MAP

### Short Story

#### WRITING PROMPT 1

**Writing a Fictional Narrative** Write a story that is set in an unusual time or location. Make sure that your story has a plot line, a conflict, characters, and suspense.

#### Settings to Consider

- an extreme environment, such as Antarctica or the Sahara
- another time, such as ancient Egypt or the distant future
- a place you have always wanted to visit, such as the Grand Canyon or the Great Wall of China

#### WRITING PROMPT 2

**Writing from Literature** Choose a “big question” from this unit that really made you think. Then write a short story related to that question. Create a plot, a conflict, a definite setting, and characters.

#### Questions to Make You Think

- What happens when friends compete? (“Amigo Brothers”)
- What is the cure for unhappiness? (“What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?”)
- How important is money? (*A Christmas Carol*)



#### WRITING TOOLS

For prewriting, revision, and editing tools, visit the **Writing Center** at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

#### KEY TRAITS

##### 1. IDEAS

- Has a **plot line** and complex major and minor **characters**
- Develops and resolves a **central conflict**

##### 2. ORGANIZATION

- **Introduces** the story in a way that gets a reader's attention
- Follows a clear **sequence of events**
- Resolves the conflict with a convincing **conclusion**

##### 3. VOICE

- Shows the writer's individual **style**

##### 4. WORD CHOICE

- Includes **descriptive details** that build suspense or reveal movements, gestures, or expressions

##### 5. SENTENCE FLUENCY

- Uses **dialogue** to show characters' personalities

##### 6. CONVENTIONS

- Uses **correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation**





## Part 1: Analyze a Student Model

Online

INTERACTIVE MODEL  
CLASSZONE.COM

Angela Tressler  
Jane Addams Middle School

### The Trap

Panic! That's what I was feeling. My friend Jack and I were riding bikes after school. After about an hour I realized that nothing looked familiar anymore.

"Hey, Jack? Any idea where we are?"

5 "Well," he answered, "it must be a new subdivision or something."

"Must be. Let's see if we can find our way out."

We kept riding. Soon it started getting dark. "Maybe we better ask someone where we are."

10 The first person we saw was a guy about our age. "Excuse me, how do we get out of this subdivision?" Jack asked him.

"Subdivision?" he asked us. "Funny, I haven't heard that one in a while." Then he started laughing and making fun of us.

15 Soon we came across this old lady sitting on her front porch with her cats. "Ma'am," I called out, "could you please tell us how to get out of here?"

"Child, you'll have to hurry. Once it gets dark, there's no way of ever leaving."

20 Suddenly, all the pieces started falling into place. Jack and I had ridden into the Time-To-Relive-Actuality-Permanently area, also called Time Trap for short.

I remember reading about this. As soon as you cross the border of our town, if you're going in the right direction, and the sun is about half set, you'll end up in the Time Trap. Once you're in, you can only get out before the sun sets completely the same day.

#### KEY TRAITS IN ACTION

Introduces two major characters in an attention-getting way.

Develops a central conflict (being lost).

Includes a minor character to help carry out the action of the story.

Has an interesting, unusual plot line.

Descriptive details add excitement and suspense.



25 “No way, lady, this can’t be happening.”

“Hush up, child. Only your believing me can save you now.

If you get out of here and back to your neighborhood before the sun disappears in the sky, you will have escaped the curse. If you don’t make it, every day will be identical for the rest of your immortal life.”

30 “So all we have to do is go back the way we came?” I asked.

“Not quite. You have to go back by going the exact opposite way you came. It sounds odd, I know, but trust me—it’s your only way home.”

“So what’s the opposite way?” Jack asked.

“Come in. I’ll show you on a map.”

35 We followed Yellow Mill to the creek just like she said, but we must have made a wrong turn after that, because we were nowhere near where we should’ve been. The sun had disappeared almost completely, and we knew that within a half-hour it would be dark.

After quite a while we started to see some familiar things, like  
40 the lady’s house. Sure enough, she was still sitting on her front porch.

“Quick, just tell us what to do after the creek!”

“You turn right, then left at the next stop.”

“OK, we’ve got it now. Come on, Jack, we can still make it!” I cried.

As we rode away, the old lady muttered, “The idiots—don’t they  
45 realize they’ve been doing the same thing for 15 years?”

Dialogue shows characters’ personalities. This writer’s **style** is fast-paced and dramatic.

Follows a clear **sequence of events**.

The writer resolves the conflict in a surprising **conclusion**.

## Part 2: Apply the Writing Process

### PREWRITING

#### What Should I Do?

##### 1. Brainstorm ideas.

Freewrite about places, people, or “big questions” that interest you. Then **circle** one or more ideas that might make a good story.

**TIP** Are you out of ideas? Choose a picture from a book or magazine and freewrite about the person, place, or event shown.

See page 426: Brainstorm Topics

#### What Does It Look Like?

My friends and I shoot hoops most days after school, and nothing happens.

We ride our bikes around a lot, and it's the same old neighborhood day after day.

What if we went back in time? Or to the future?

##### 2. Focus your ideas.

Identify your most important characters (called major characters) and your less important ones (minor characters). The writer of the student model decided to make herself a character in the story. She used **first-person point of view** (“That’s what I was feeling” rather than “That’s what she was feeling”).

Next, decide on your setting. Start to think through what happens to the characters—that is, jot down your first ideas about your **plot line**.

#### Characters

**Major:** me

**Major:** Jack,  
my friend

**Minor:** people  
we meet on  
our trip

#### Setting

a strange  
neighborhood,  
starting to  
get dark

#### Plot Line

We ride our bikes too far and end up getting lost, maybe going to another time or place? Ask the people there for help?

##### 3. Make a story map.

Don’t start to write your story until you have mapped out a plot that includes a **conflict** and events. You can make changes as you draft.

**TIP** Review the “Plot at a Glance” diagram on page 6. Make sure your story map includes each stage in the plot line.

We realize we're lost.



We ask for directions.



I know we're in the Time Trap.



We find our way out? Or we start over?



We have to rush to get out in time.



## DRAFTING

### What Should I Do?

#### 1. Start with a “hook.”

Right from the first sentence, get your readers’ attention. You can do this with **sensory language**, exciting **dialogue**, **descriptive details**, or a surprising statement.

### What Does It Look Like?

#### Sensory language

*My friend Jack and I rode down street after street, past old houses with peeling paint and some mutt yapping its head off.*

#### A surprising statement

*Panic! That’s what I was feeling.*

#### 2. Develop your characters.

Use **dialogue** to make the people in your story seem real. You can also add **movements** or **gestures** and **expressions**, such as “Jack scratched his head and frowned.”

*“Hey, Jack? Any idea where we are?”*

*“Well,” he answered, “it must be a new subdivision or something.”*

*“Must be. Let’s see if we can find our way out.”*

#### 3. Add effective transitions so the sequence of events is clear.

Use words and phrases such as *first*, *next*, *then*, *soon*, and *suddenly* to help your reader understand what happens when.

*The first person we saw was a guy about our age. . .*

*Soon we came across this old lady. . .*

*Suddenly, all the pieces started falling into place.*

#### 4. Craft a satisfying ending.

Bring your story to a satisfying close. The ending (sometimes called a denouement) can be happy, sad, or funny. It can teach a lesson. This writer used a surprise ending.

#### A dramatic finish

*When it was almost dark, the glowing yellow Time Trap gate appeared. As we rushed through, we heard the old lady yell, “Goodbye, and don’t come back!”*

**TIP** Before you revise, look back at the key traits on page 420. Also study the criteria and peer-reader questions on page 426.

#### A surprise ending

*As we rode away, the old lady muttered, “The idiots—don’t they realize they’ve been doing the same thing for 15 years?”*





## REVISING AND EDITING

### What Should I Do?

#### 1. Match the dialogue to the character.

- Ask a peer reader to **underline** dialogue that seems phony or unnatural.
- Revise to include contractions, slang, or exclamations that **match the character's age and personality**.

See page 426: Ask a Peer Reader

### What Does It Look Like?

~~"I cannot accept that this is happening."~~

"No way, lady, this can't be happening."

~~"Jack, it is time to go."~~

"Come on, Jack, we can still make it!"

#### 2. Improve organization and word choice.

- Read your draft aloud. Are there parts that don't make sense? Could the details be clearer?
- You may need to move sentences or paragraphs or add descriptive details so that your story has **clear, logical ideas** and **precise vocabulary**.

~~Soon we came across this old lady sitting on her front porch with her cats.~~

"Ma'am," I called out, "could you please tell us how to get out of here?"

~~We asked a lady we saw.~~

#### 3. Show your style.

- Dialogue and word choice are parts of a writer's style. Do you want your style to be fast paced or relaxed, formal or fun filled?
- This writer revised her story to make it more dramatic and suspenseful. She added colorful words and phrases (*hush up, save you*) and an important detail (*before the sun disappears in the sky*). You will learn more about style in Unit 4.

~~"If you get out of here, you will escape the curse."~~

"Hush up, child. Only your believing me can save you now. If you get out of here and back to your neighborhood before the sun disappears in the sky, you will have escaped the curse."

#### 4. Brainstorm the right title.

- Your title should interest a reader but not give away the whole story. If you wish, ask a peer reader for suggestions.
- This writer chose a simple, dramatic title.

~~Riding Around Forever~~

\*The Trap

~~Lost in Time~~

~~Saved Just in Time~~

# Preparing to Publish



## Short Story

### Consider the Criteria

Use this checklist to make sure your story is on track.

#### Ideas

- ✓ has a plot line as well as complex major and minor characters
- ✓ develops a central conflict and resolves that conflict

#### Organization

- ✓ introduces the story in an attention-getting way
- ✓ follows a clear sequence
- ✓ resolves the conflict with a convincing conclusion

#### Voice

- ✓ shows the writer's individual style

#### Word Choice

- ✓ includes descriptive details

#### Sentence Fluency

- ✓ uses dialogue to show characters' personalities

#### Conventions

- ✓ uses correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation

### Ask a Peer Reader

- What is the conflict in my story?
- How could I make the dialogue more convincing?
- What three words would you use to describe my style?
- What did you like or dislike about the story's ending?

### Brainstorm Topics

What if a disaster separated family members in a strange place?

What if a character slipped into another time or reality?

What if enemies had to work together to find their way out of a cave, a jungle, or a forest?

What if characters had to race against time to get to safety?

### Check Your Grammar

Make sure each pronoun matches its antecedent (the noun or pronoun to which it refers).

In this example, the pronoun *her* matches the antecedent *old lady*.

Soon we came across this old lady sitting  
*her*  
on <sup>^</sup>their front porch.

See page R52: Agreement with Antecedent

## Writing Online



### PUBLISHING OPTIONS

For publishing options, visit the **Writing Center** at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

### ASSESSMENT PREPARATION

For writing and grammar assessment practice, go to the **Assessment Center** at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING****Presenting a Narrative**

This is your chance to bring a story to life. Tell the story you wrote, “The Trap,” or another story from this unit to an audience.

**Planning the Presentation**

1. **Analyze the story.** You learned on page 26 that a plot line has a beginning, conflict, rising action, climax, and denouement. Identify each of these in the story you plan to tell.
2. **Write your script.** It should include the words of the story plus notes about how you will tell it. Your audience won’t be able to reread confusing parts, so consider adding information about the setting and the **context** (the circumstances surrounding the story, such as time period and location).
3. **Read your script aloud.** Try using different voices for the dialogue spoken by the various major and minor characters. Think about how you can present the conflict and climax dramatically by including movements, gestures, expressions, or suspenseful pauses.

*“Quick, tell us what to do after the creek!”* ← look up, sound panicked

*“You turn right, then left at the next stop.”* ← use “old lady” voice, gesture right, then left

4. **Rehearse in front of others.** Ask, Does the story make sense? Is the point of view consistent, or did I sometimes say “she” when I meant to say “I”?

**Making the Presentation**

1. **Tell the story.** Have a friend signal you if you need to speed up or slow down your tempo.
2. **Ask for feedback.** When you have finished, encourage audience members to tell you whether your story was coherent and logical and what impact it had on them. Provide the same kind of respectful feedback to your classmates after you hear their narrative presentations.

See page R79: Evaluate a Narrative Speech



## Assessment Practice

# Reading Comprehension

### ASSESS

The practice test items on the next few pages match skills listed on the Unit Goals page (page 303) and addressed throughout this unit. Taking this practice test will help you assess your knowledge of these skills and determine your readiness for the Unit Test.

### REVIEW

After you take the practice test, your teacher can help you identify any skills you need to review.

- Theme
- Symbol
- Make Inferences
- Cause and Effect
- Compare and Contrast
- Context Clues
- Connotation and Denotation
- Independent and Dependent Clauses
- Coordinating Conjunctions



For more assessment practice and test-taking tips, go to the **Assessment Center** at **ClassZone.com**.

**DIRECTIONS** Read the selection and answer the questions that follow.

## from *The Hummingbird That Lived Through Winter*

William Saroyan

There was a hummingbird once which in the wintertime did not leave our neighborhood in Fresno, California.

I'll tell you about it.

Across the street lived old Dikran, who was almost blind. He was past eighty and his wife was only a few years younger. They had a little house that was as neat inside as it was ordinary outside—except for old Dikran's garden, which was the best thing of its kind in the world. Plants, bushes, trees—all strong, in sweet black moist earth whose guardian was old Dikran. All things from the sky loved this spot in our poor neighborhood,  
10 and old Dikran loved *them*.

One freezing Sunday, in the dead of winter, as I came home from Sunday School I saw old Dikran standing in the middle of the street trying to distinguish what was in his hand. Instead of going into our house to the fire, as I had wanted to do, I stood on the steps of the front porch and watched the old man. He would turn around and look upward at his trees and then back to the palm of his hand. He stood in the street at least two minutes and then at last he came to me. He held his hand out, and in Armenian he said, "What is this in my hand?"

I looked.

20 "It is a hummingbird," I said half in English and half in Armenian. Hummingbird I said in English because I didn't know its name in Armenian.

"What is that?" old Dikran asked.

"The little bird," I said. "You know. The one that comes in the summer and stands in the air and then shoots away. The one with the wings that beat so fast you can't see them. It's in your hand. It's dying."

"Come with me," the old man said. "I can't see, and the old lady's at church. I can feel its heart beating. Is it in a bad way? Look again, once."

I looked again. It was a sad thing to behold. This wonderful little  
30 creature of summertime in the big rough hand of the old peasant. Here

it was in the cold of winter, absolutely helpless and pathetic, not suspended in a shaft of summer light, not the most alive thing in the world, but the most helpless and heartbreaking.

“It’s dying,” I said.

The old man lifted his hand to his mouth and blew warm breath on the little thing in his hand which he could not even see. “Stay now,” he said in Armenian. “It is not long till summer. Stay, swift and lovely.”

We went into the kitchen of his little house, and while he blew warm breath on the bird he told me what to do.

40 “Put a tablespoonful of honey over the gas fire and pour it into my hand, but be sure it is not too hot.”

This was done.

After a moment the hummingbird began to show signs of fresh life. The warmth of the room, the vapor of the warm honey—and, well, the will and love of the old man. Soon the old man could feel the change in his hand, and after a moment or two the hummingbird began to take little dabs of the honey.

“It will live,” the old man announced. “Stay and watch.”

The transformation was incredible. The old man kept his hand  
50 generously open, and I expected the helpless bird to shoot upward out of his hand, suspend itself in space, and scare the life out of me—which is exactly what happened. The new life of the little bird was magnificent. It spun about in the little kitchen, going to the window, coming back to the heat, suspending, circling as if it were summertime and it had never felt better in its whole life.

The old man sat on the plain chair, blind but attentive. He listened carefully and tried to see, but of course he couldn’t. He kept asking about the bird, how it seemed to be, whether it showed signs of weakening again, what its spirit was, and whether or not it appeared to be restless;  
60 and I kept describing the bird to him.

When the bird was restless and wanted to go, the old man said, “Open the window and let it go.”

“Will it live?” I asked.

“It is alive now and wants to go,” he said. “Open the window.”

I opened the window, the hummingbird stirred about here and there,



feeling the cold from the outside, suspended itself in the area of the open window, stirring this way and that, and then it was gone.

“Close the window,” the old man said.

We talked a minute or two and then I went home.

70 The old man claimed the hummingbird lived through that winter, but I never knew for sure. I saw hummingbirds again when summer came, but I couldn’t tell one from the other.

One day in the summer I asked the old man.

“Did it live?”

“The little bird?” he said.

“Yes,” I said. “That we gave the honey to. You remember. The little bird that was dying in the winter. Did it live?”

“Look about you,” the old man said. “Do you see the bird?”

“I see humming*birds*,” I said.

80 “Each of them is our bird,” the old man said. “Each of them, each of them,” he said swiftly and gently.

## Comprehension

**DIRECTIONS** *Answer the following questions about the selection.*

1. Dikran’s garden symbolizes
  - A the certainty of death
  - B his homeland of Armenia
  - C an escape from his house
  - D the abundance of nature
2. Seeing Dikran in the street causes the narrator to
  - A worry that a car will hit Dikran
  - B run to his own house to get warm by the fire
  - C watch Dikran to find out what he is doing
  - D look for birds suffering from the cold
3. Which action helps cause the hummingbird to revive?
  - A keeping the bird inside all winter
  - B asking questions about the bird
  - C opening the window
  - D feeding the bird warm honey
4. Compare and contrast the hummingbird’s behavior before and after Dikran takes it inside. Which of the following statements best describes the change in behavior?
  - A “It was a sad thing to behold.”
  - B “The transformation was incredible.”
  - C “I can feel its heart beating.”
  - D “I saw hummingbirds again. . . .”



5. Dikran lets the hummingbird go because he knows that
- A it will survive the winter now
  - B spring will come soon
  - C it is wild and needs to be free
  - D he can't take care of it
6. What can you infer about Dikran from the way he cares for the hummingbird?
- A He is unhappy that he can't see very well.
  - B He loves caring for living things.
  - C He wants to make the narrator feel good.
  - D He thinks that this bird is special.
7. What is the most important way in which the narrator and Dikran are similar?
- A They appreciate nature and life.
  - B They are Armenian.
  - C They live in the same poor neighborhood.
  - D They know a lot about nature.
8. What does the hummingbird symbolize to Dikran at the end of the story?
- A death
  - B life
  - C memories
  - D winter
9. Which of the following descriptions best shows what the hummingbird symbolizes?
- A "wonderful little creature of summertime"
  - B "absolutely helpless and pathetic"
  - C "the most alive thing in the world"
  - D "the one with the wings that beat so fast"
10. Which statement best describes a theme of the story?
- A The life force is powerful.
  - B Nature is very fragile.
  - C Elderly people deserve respect.
  - D Life is full of hardships.
11. Which lines from the story best demonstrate its theme?
- A "There was a hummingbird once which in the wintertime did not leave our neighborhood in Fresno, California."
  - B "He listened carefully and tried to see, but of course he couldn't."
  - C "I saw hummingbirds again when summer came, but I couldn't tell one from the other."
  - D "Each of them is our bird,' the old man said. 'Each of them, each of them,' he said swiftly and gently."

## Written Response

**SHORT RESPONSE** Write a short answer to the following question.

12. Name two things Dikran does to cause the hummingbird to revive.

**EXTENDED RESPONSE** Write one or two paragraphs to answer this question.

13. What theme does this story share with the poem "Eating Alone" (page 383)? Compare and contrast how the authors express this theme.



## Vocabulary

**DIRECTIONS** Use context clues to answer the following questions.

1. Which is the most likely meaning of *distinguish* in line 13?  
A hold  
B see  
C caress  
D save
2. Which is the most likely meaning of *pathetic* in line 31?  
A pitiful  
B lost  
C small  
D broken
3. Which is the most likely meaning of *suspend* in line 51?  
A disappear from sight  
B stop breathing for a short time  
C hang in the air without falling  
D spin out of control
4. Which is the most likely meaning of *spirit* as it is used in line 59?  
A a strong loyalty  
B the quality that sets something apart  
C an emotional tendency  
D the energy of a living thing

**DIRECTIONS** Use context clues and your knowledge of connotation and denotation to answer the following questions.

5. The denotation of *ordinary* in line 6 is “usual.” Which word below best describes its connotation?  
A poor  
B small  
C plain  
D deserted
6. The denotation of *sweet* in line 8 is “free of acid or acidity.” Which word below best describes its connotation?  
A tasty  
B good  
C cheap  
D perfumed
7. Which connotation does the word *peasant* have in line 30?  
A coarseness  
B vulgarity  
C hostility  
D rudeness

## Writing & Grammar

**DIRECTIONS** Read this passage and then answer the questions that follow.

(1) Last summer, our family drove to Mexico. (2) Where my mom was born. (3) We saw the places where she played as a little girl and visited her home. (4) Her old neighborhood has narrow streets. (5) That wind past the houses. (6) My mom remembered her friends, although she didn't find any of them living there anymore. (7) She looked for the anthill she had loved to watch as a child. (8) Like her friends, the anthill was gone. (9) Still, Mom was happy we went. (10) We'll probably go back again sometime.

1. Combine sentence 1 and fragment 2 to form one sentence with an independent clause and a dependent clause.
  - A Last summer, our family drove to Mexico and where my mom was born.
  - B Last summer, our family drove to Mexico, where my mom was born.
  - C Last summer, our family drove to Mexico; my mom was born there.
  - D Our family drove to Mexico last summer to my mom's birthplace.
  
2. Combine sentence 4 and fragment 5 to form one sentence with an independent clause and a dependent clause.
  - A Her old neighborhood has narrow streets; that wind past the houses.
  - B Her old neighborhood has narrow streets that wind past the houses.
  - C Her old neighborhood has narrow streets—and the streets wind past the houses.
  - D Her old neighborhood has narrow streets, and furthermore, these streets wind past the houses.
  
3. Choose the correct coordinating conjunction to combine sentences 7 and 8.
  - A so
  - B but
  - C for
  - D or
  
4. Choose the correct coordinating conjunction to combine sentences 9 and 10.
  - A for
  - B but
  - C yet
  - D and





## Ideas for Independent Reading

Which questions from Unit 3 made an impression on you? Continue exploring them with these books.

### *What happens when friends compete?*

#### **Wolf Shadows**

by *Mary Casanova*

As hunting season approaches, 12-year-old Seth finds himself disagreeing with his best friend, Matt, over the protection of wolves. On opening day, Matt wounds a wolf. Can Seth resolve his conflicting emotions before it's too late?

#### **Friends and Enemies**

by *LouAnn Gaeddert*

William and Jim are best friends. But when World War II breaks out, Jim refuses to support the war. Angered by his friend's stance, William joins classmates in attacking Jim. Will Jim ever forgive him?

#### **End of the Race**

by *Dean Hughes*

Two 12-year-olds find their friendship is tested when they represent their school in a track race. Jared feels he has to be the great athlete his dad was, while Davin, who is African American, considers their rivalry a racial conflict.

### *What is the cure for unhappiness?*

#### **Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry**

by *Mildred D. Taylor*

Cassie Logan, growing up in a loving family, has never had reason to suspect that anyone would wish her harm. All that changes when her community comes under constant threat from "night riders."

#### **Because of Winn-Dixie**

by *Kate DiCamillo*

If you were suddenly uprooted to a distant place, would you be able to adjust? India Opal Buloni's (pronounced "baloney") first summer in the little town of Naomi is action packed—all thanks to a big, ugly dog named Winn-Dixie.

#### **Mick Harte Was Here**

by *Barbara Park*

Can one ever feel happy after the death of a brother or sister? Thirteen-year-old Phoebe describes the stages of grief her family suffers after her brother Mick dies in an accident. Finally, she comes to terms with his death.

### *Can you be alone and not lonely?*

#### **Spider Boy**

by *Ralph Fletcher*

When Bobby Ballenger moves from the Midwest to New York, he has a difficult time adjusting. The cruelty of his classmates makes him long for his former friends. Will he face the bullies and earn a second chance?

#### **Spinners**

by *Donna Jo Napoli and Richard Tchen*

Napoli and Tchen retell a classic tale to give insights into the lives of Rumpelstiltskin and his daughter. Love, pride, avarice, and revenge are all a part of this delightful new version.

#### **The Fire Pony**

by *Rodman Philbrick*

Roy is happiest when he's with his older brother Joe, who has a fiery temper and a special gift for healing horses. All seems well when Joe rescues Roy from a foster home, but before long, Joe reveals a darker side.