



## **Literary Analysis: Understanding of Character through the Elements of Literature and the World Around Us**

Curriculum Unit 10.02.09  
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### **Introduction**

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"There is not much point in writing a novel unless you can show the possibility of moral transformation, or an increase in wisdom, operating in your chief character or characters."  
Anthony Burgess.

As Anthony Burgess insists they should, so many stories contain lessons that the main character learns and grows from. It is important for students not only to recognize these transformations, but also to understand how the story's events affected the characters. In accordance with the National Language Arts Content Standards as well as state of Connecticut standards, students are expected to use what they know to identify or infer important characters, settings, themes, events, ideas, relationships, or details within a work and draw conclusions about the author's purpose. I teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Nathan Hale School in New Haven, CT. My 6<sup>th</sup> grade class is in an urban district and is composed of a diverse, multicultural community of learners that embodies a wide range of achievements, interests, learning, and social needs. It is a school that has a strong neighborhood support structure; therefore the majority of the students enrolled are from the neighborhood.

Students between the ages of eleven and twelve are transitioning from a concrete way of thinking to a more analytical thinking process. According to Piaget's theories of cognitive development, moving from the concrete stage of development to the formal operational stage of development, individuals become able to think abstractly, reason logically, and draw conclusions. This unit will strengthen students' ability to recognize and identify aspects of literature that will allow them to analyze characters more deeply.

As a teacher I am constantly being observed, evaluated, criticized, and interpreted - by my students. Twenty-seven children enter my classroom each year with a strongly formulated opinion of me. Some of these opinions are loosely based on fact, while others are formed from a combination of observations of isolated

events and hearsay and rumors from other students. Even as the school year progresses the scrutiny continues. Students "learn" facial expressions, body language, and the tone of my voice to determine my mood or demands daily. This occurs without any formal lessons or instructions - pure human nature. This is especially true in a middle school setting. My students rely on these observations and inferences to "survive" sixth grade. I am not the only one being observed so closely. They are equally hard on their peers. While all of this happens so instinctively, I find myself wondering why these judgments, inferences, and conclusions are so difficult for my students to make in regard to characters in a text.

## **Rationale and Selection of Text**

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Students will be able to reflect upon a written work and compare/contrast specific aspects of that piece in an analytical way. Through this unit students will recognize the importance of character and traits we ascribe to a character due to the events and experiences that character undergoes.

This six week unit is on Character Analysis: Understanding of Character Through the Elements of Literature. This unit is intended to help launch genre -based peer supported learning groups in September/October. At this point in the school year, students will need the organized scaffolding of the teacher to prepare them to be able to work in cooperative learning groups for the remainder of the year. These cooperative learning groups are an essential component of New Haven's Reading Curriculum. They will also benefit the students across the curriculum as well as through multiple genres of reading and writing. The skills and strategies introduced through this unit will allow the students to hone their critical reading skills and the unit will serve as the foundation for the remainder of their reading instruction. Meeting the objectives of this unit will enable the students to work successfully in peer groups run by themselves.

The four weeks of lessons will be centered around our whole group, "core novel", *No More Dead Dogs* by Gordon Korman. This book comes from the City of New Haven's Reading program called "Plugged -In". This program refers to a "core novel" , which is a book read to the whole class by the teacher. The students learn strategies in these whole group sessions and then apply them while in their cooperative learning groups. The fifth and sixth weeks of the unit will be the culmination of the book and students will be drafting, editing, revising, and publishing their written analyses. The goals and objectives for this unit can be met by using any fiction text that the teacher deems appropriate. I have chosen to use the novel *No More Dead Dogs* by Gordon Korman both because of its content and because of its formal features.

The book *No More Dead Dogs* by Gordon Korman, is so typical of the language, ideas, and actions of middle school students. There are a lot of underlying issues or themes in this text that are relevant to the lives of middle school students. This book is about a middle school football star named Wallace Wallace who, for personal reasons, has chosen to never tell a lie. He chooses to always be honest, brutally honest at times, and this causes him to get into some difficulty. His often harsh honesty has earned him a reputation that is hard to get rid of. Wallace, the athlete, is forced to spend time with the drama club while he is serving multiple detentions. Wallace goes into this punishment with preconceived notions about "drama kids", but as he gets to know them and understands his "real friends", Wallace realizes he may have been wrong. This book approaches issues of honesty, bullying, popularity, stereotyping, and relationships. My students get to experience these issues through the characters in the story. Because these issues are so relevant to the students, this book offers many opportunities for the teacher to either reinforce strategies or to introduce new

skills and strategies with relevant teachable moments. It is easy to introduce a skill or a strategy to the students when it is coupled with real life understanding.

I find that the experiences the characters in the book go through are typical of all middle school aged children. *No More Dead Dogs* opens with a struggle between complete honesty -vs.- lying to protect people's feelings. The students relate very well to this and discussion is rich and helps to set the purpose for reading. When these issues arise in the story I take advantage of that by pointing out to my students similar situations that they may have been involved in. For example, when my students form opinions about teachers based on what they have heard, I point out how Wallace does the same to the drama club, thus making connections. Other topics that arise and are relevant to all children are the importance of popularity and the stereotyping that goes along with that. Obviously children at this age are directly affected by these issues and are able to analyze the effects of them. The book includes characters that are involved in various school related activities that all students can relate to. As we get to know the characters throughout the story, my students are better able to make more accurate predictions, connections, and inferences in regard to the characters and events. We get plenty of practice strengthening the skills and strategies that tie directly to this novel and my unit.

The structure of the book itself also provides opportunities to expand upon. The book is organized by multiple points of view. Each chapter is written from a particular perspective. The students quickly gravitate towards a "favorite" character based on the events and experiences of that character. The story also has an element of suspense to it, so as the students get to know each character, they naturally form predictions in regard to the ongoing mystery. When the students make these predictions and identify characters that they like and dislike, it is all being done based on inference. I point out to them that they are forming opinions based on events that the characters were directly involved in, just as I would be able to "infer" that a student does not care about his/her grades because they do not do their work. I am taking events that I have observed and I am forming an opinion about that person due to his or her actions. Inferring and connecting are very difficult strategies for my students to implement. The events in this book, combined with real life experiences, provide a natural scaffold that allows my students to strengthen skills in regard to these strategies.

In addition to being written from multiple perspectives, *No More Dead Dogs* is a multi genre text. Within the book there are examples of letter writing, newspaper articles, journal entries, and use of play dialogue. The use of the newspaper articles in this story allows me to introduce the idea of media influence and the effects it has on our opinions of people and events. Each of these writing styles, along with the term "multi genre", allows for either introductory or review lessons. For the purposes of my unit, I use these feature to teach my students about author's craft and purpose. We, as a class, notice how and when the author implements these into the text and we analyze why the author would choose to do so. This really helps the students to become more critical readers. My students do not often consider why an author organizes a book a certain way or why he/she uses certain words. This book very easily helps them to begin to do that.

Another important aspect of teaching author's craft is Korman's use of humor in *No More Dead Dogs*. Teaching students to identify the tone of a book is difficult. This book includes a lot of idioms, hyperbole, satire, sarcasm, and figurative language. This style of writing is often laborious for my students because they are very literal. We often have to stop and decipher the meaning of some of these figurative phrases. Doing this helps my students to broaden their vocabulary, as well as identify the humorous tone of this story. One character in particular uses idioms inaccurately and these are referred to as "Rickisms". The students have a lot of fun with these and also get to learn the actual idiom and its meaning. Through teaching these I realized that this style of writing and often our use of language is not cross cultural. Many of my students had never heard of these phrases, though they are so familiar to me. These quickly became ongoing teachable moments

and we would log them in our journals as we came across them in the text. It also allowed the students to practice using context clues and what they know about the character and events to determine the meaning of the figurative language on their own. The word choice, use of figurative language, and the multi genre/multi perspective organization of the text really allows the students to deeply understand the concepts of author's craft/purpose. This awareness is transferred over to other texts and further strengthens their overall reading experience.

## Goals

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Reading is an active process, not a passive one. There is no proper reading of a text which reveals the text's true meaning. My students need to understand that the meanings they get from a text may not be the same as mine or those of their peers. We always read within a specific context and this affects what we notice and what seems to matter. We always have a purpose in reading and this shapes how we approach the text. My students need to understand that texts are very different and recognizing this provides them with the beginnings of a critical approach to reading.

It is my goal that through this I unit will strengthen students' skills in interpretation of text to derive a deeper meaning, as well as developing the skills of synthesis by building connections within one text, across several texts, or between a text and a reader's life. The students will be able to apply these skills while in peer supported learning groups and their independent reading. Another objective of this unit is to improve students' ability to write analytically. All of my students have difficulty expressing themselves through writing. Often, their responses to a text are very weak and are just a mere recounting of basic plot details. Their responses often lack evidence of deeper understanding. They are unable to write critically. Throughout this unit, students will develop an understanding of critical analysis of the author's craft and characterization.

I have many goals and objectives for this unit. I have organized them into three broad and bold categories; analysis, interpretation, and synthesis. Each category consists of a number of specific goals that the students should achieve.

Analysis refers to the ability to separate a whole into parts and determining their essential features and their relations. Students are often able to tell what happens in a text rather than analyzing the text. That is, they may give an accurate summary of the character and what happens in the text, instead of providing some insight into the events of the text:

- What are the ideas that lie at the center of the text?
- How are these ideas presented in the text (through metaphor, symbolism, dialogue, etc..)?

The goals associated with this category require the students to "pick apart" the book. They will identify multiple genres within the text. For many of my students the term "genre" will be new and this book offers many examples to help solidify the meaning of genre. Learning the term genre and then being able to identify and understand the definition, should allow the students to internalize the concept more easily. The students will also examine the characters through multiple points of view. The book is organized in this manner and the

students are forced to consider other perspectives when forming their own opinions. Often times my students read books that are written with a single narrator and they conform to the ideas and views of that perspective. This structure will allow them to consider other viewpoints, as well as learn a new form of writing. Examining the structure of the text will enable the students to consider the author's purpose. Once they are aware of specific text structures, they can begin to question why an author would choose to do things one way or another. The hope is for the students to then approach their own writing with a sense of purpose. Offering them a variety of texts where they can see multiple structures and features will broaden their knowledge base and offer them more to apply to their own writing techniques.

Interpretation requires the students to be able to explain or translate certain features and/or structures of the text. When interpreting a text, it is important for the students to try to understand the conditions of the world as it is set up and depicted within the text. Sometimes, students can get distracted into making judgments about characters' actions, basing their argument on the values and conditions of the time and place of the world in which they live. In interpreting a text, it is important to keep in mind that the world of the text may be different from the world of the reader. A major goal of this unit is to get the students to think more deeply. The students need to learn to "dig deeper" , beyond what is directly stated in the text. Once they are able to develop reasons and understandings for actions and events in a text, and provide support for their thinking, they will then be able to interpret a text. Specifically, the students will be able to identify and understand tone, theme, and make connections to the characters and events in the story.

Synthesis requires the students to take all of the "pieces" they have learned and apply them to the "whole", the "whole" being their understanding of the text. For the purposes of this unit, the students will be able to gather a variety of evidence from the text to form more global ideas about the characters, the world, and themselves. They will also be expected to take notice of all of the events a character experiences and be able to identify how, when, and why the character changes. An important goal for my students to achieve is being able to infer. Making inferences is often difficult, yet it is required on a variety of city and state assessments. The ability to apply text information to make inferences will help to make the students overall, more successful readers.

In this six week unit, students will begin to read literature more critically and to make inferences that come from both the stated and implied features of the texts they read. Through various activities and texts students will explore the use of multiple strategies that will enable them to interact with the text more deeply. Bringing their attention to the text elements such as theme, tone, point of view and characterization, I will be able to help the students see the author's craft more clearly. As I help students to "notice" elements and aspects of the text and to verbalize our connections and inferences together, my hope is that their comprehension should deepen and their discourse and writing about the text should become more sophisticated.

## Overview

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### *Weeks One and Two*

In week one and two, the class will be introduced to the concepts of theme, tone, point of view, and author's purpose. Over that time a variety of texts will be used to show different tones or voices, as well as purposes of individual texts. Students will understand that every piece of writing is written with a specific purpose in mind.

That idea will be carried over to their own writing. The idea of theme will also be introduced to help the class identify messages that are woven throughout a text. To introduce theme and tone, picture books and music are appropriate and often easy for students to identify with.

Tone will be defined as a way of expressing feelings or attitudes that will influence how the reader feels about character, events, and outcomes of the story. The distinction will be made that writers only have words to use to express tone, while speakers have voice tone and gestures. It is helpful to provide examples of both voice tone and gestures. Once the students see this modeled, they can then begin to consider how this could be translated into writing. Brainstorming possibilities as a group and then looking for examples in the text helps to make this difficult concept more approachable. While we read our text, students keep an on going log of phrases, focusing on word choice, that help them to identify specific examples of tone.

Theme will be defined as the main idea, or message of an essay, paragraph, or a book. The message(s) may be about life, society, or human nature. Themes may be implied rather than stated explicitly. To introduce the concept of theme I use picture books because they are shorter and contain many themes. Using music is also an effective way to practice identifying themes. Students in the middle grades love music and they relate to it easily. Little do they know that what they are actually relating to are the themes within the lyrical story. I will play a song and also have the students bring in their favorite songs to play for the class and as a whole group we identify themes within the songs. Using something they can relate to and enjoy helps them to "buy in" to the concepts more easily. Again, it is a fun and relevant way to introduce a concept that is difficult. After these activities with music and picture books, we can begin to identify themes and tone within our core novel.

We will also look at point of view and analyze who is telling a story and how things would be changed by a different point of view. Connecting point of view to author's purpose should help solidify these major elements for the class. If the students begin to consider why an author might choose to write a story from a specific point of view, their understanding of the plot events should deepen from taking a more analytical approach. Point of view will be easy to examine in *No More Dead Dogs* because of its structure. This structure is evident as soon as you begin reading the text. We can discuss how these multiple view points affect our understanding of the story. As a class we can discuss why Gordon Korman might have chosen this structure for the book. The students need to understand that the author had a purpose and it is our job to try and figure that out. Another higher level thinking activity for this book is to have the students consider how the book would be different if it was not structured with multiple points of view. I have the students take random chapters and briefly write or discuss how those chapters would change if they were from another point of view.

Weeks one and two contain a lot of big concepts, but introducing them with mini-lessons prior to the reading of the core novel will really help the students to be able to best understand the text. Once these concepts are introduced, preferably in these engaging ways, they should not have to be revisited as often. I found that these approaches enabled the students to really internalize the concepts and they were successful.

### *Weeks Three and Four*

During these weeks students will analyze characterization, make inferences, and make connections to text, self and the world around them. The first thing that needs to be done in regard to traits is differentiating between a trait and a feeling. Students need to understand that traits describe the "type" of person someone is, whereas feelings portray a mood at a given time that is not consistent. I always use the example of how I may feel sad one day but that does not make me a sad person. If this distinction is not made, the students will invariably assign traits such as, happy, mad, etc., to characters. We look carefully at traits and we transfer

what we know about traits and how we assign traits to people in the real world and to characters in a text. In order to develop an understanding of character, the class will assign traits to characters, also providing support from the text. It is important that the students know that they have to provide evidence for the traits they assign. They will keep track of these traits and support in the Reader's Notebooks (or any other system you have in place) and as the story progresses they are able to monitor change among the characters.

Along with character and traits, students will need to focus on making inferences. The class will be able to differentiate between what is explicitly stated and what is implied and then be able to form supported opinions and conclusions based on that information. Students will need to learn how to question the text and then come up with their own answers based on what they have read in the text. They will ask questions such as, "what is the author really trying to tell us about this character?" or "What do his or her actions say about who the character really is?" It is helpful to probe these sorts of questions to the class at first. After analyzing some actions of the characters I will ask the class, "What type of person would do this?" This really leads to rich discussions about reputations and stereotypes. The students see that the actions of the character lead to theories about the character.

This segues nicely into making connections. Being that *No More Dead Dogs* takes place in a middle school setting, it is very easy for the students to make general connections and that is a great way to introduce connections. As the book progresses the goal becomes making deeper connections to the character as a person. Often my students make very weak connections, focusing solely on events and experiences that they can directly share with a character. Throughout the story I have them keep a chart of instances where they connected with a character. As a group we analyze and share these examples until they are able to deepen the connections that they make. Unlike our study of traits, when connecting I do have the students focus on the feelings of the character. Better connections are made when the students can relate to how the character feels instead of what the character has done. Being that I work in an inner city, it is often difficult for my students to directly relate to the experiences of characters in most stories. The students will initially claim that they can not connect to the characters because they haven't "done" the same things. This is why it is important to preface with the idea of connecting to the characters feelings about events, situations and experiences. They are also encouraged to make connections to the world around them and with other texts.

### *Weeks Five and Six*

These weeks will be spent choosing the culminating activity of their choice and following specific rubrics to complete the assignments successfully. Over the course of these two weeks, students will draft, edit, revise, and publish a final piece of work. Depending on the needs of the students this process could take more time.

During these final two weeks of the unit, students will be asked to apply the skills they have learned to complete a written analysis of a character. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The students can choose a compare/contrast essay, in which they compare/contrast either two different characters or two different novels focusing on character. Students can also choose to complete a character sketch on a main character from a novel. Finally, students can choose to write about how a story would be different if the point of view were changed. In each choice students will be required to include support and examples from the text, as well as provide their own inferences. I feel it is important to provide students with a variety of options, for them to be able to pick an assignment that they feel they can be successful with.

## Unit Lesson Plans

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This is a suggested pacing guide for the lessons. It may be modified according to the students' needs.

### WEEK 1

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#### *Lesson 1 : Mini-lesson on tone*

- Define the word tone: tone is a way of expressing feelings or attitudes that will influence how
- the reader feels about characters, events, and outcomes of the story. Writers only have words to use to express tone, while speakers have voice tone and gestures.
- Give examples of tone in conversation. Example: How someone will say "no" when they are angry, vs. how they would say "no" in an emergency situation.
- Discuss how tone affects meaning and brainstorm about how an author could convey meaning using tone.

#### *Lesson 2: Identifying tone in text*

- Choose passages that illustrate how a writer uses tone to convey meaning. Make overhead copies of passages, and read/discuss with the class.
- Ask students what tools the author used to show tone.  
Write student responses on board or chart paper: Images: words, pictures; Details: facts,
- important to what is included; Language: slang, jargon, etc; Sentence structure: short and long sentences, punctuation.

#### *Lesson 3: Theme mini-lesson*

- Use Think - Pair - Share (Lyman, 1981).
- Have the students think individually about a definition for theme (THINK).
- Have the students pair with partners to discuss their definition and come up with one definition for the pair. (PAIR).
- Have the students share their definition with the class (SHARE).  
Define the word "theme": main idea, or message, of an essay, paragraph, or a book. The
- message may be about life, society, or human nature. Themes may be implied rather than stated explicitly.

#### *Lesson 4: Identifying theme in a text*



- Read a selection aloud to the students. I usually read "Smoky Night" by Eve Bunting.
- Demonstrate how to determine the theme by identifying the general topic from the text. Once they give some basic responses such as "rioting" or "crime", I begin to push them toward some more ideas presented in the text. Once they arrive at some more abstract ideas such as "segregation" or "prejudices" we compile a list from the entire class.
- Put students into groups and give each group a picture book or poem and have them identify themes and share with the class.

## Week 2

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### *Lesson 1: Point of View*

- Show two sample passages: one written in first person point of view and one written in third person point of view.
- Instruct students to identify points of view by identifying pronouns used by the author. Provide definitions for point of view: the perspective from which the story is told.
- Discuss why one point of view would be more effective than the other.
- Have students decide what point of view "No More Dead Dogs" is written in and why.

### *Lesson 2: Using text to analyze point of view.*

- Read "Snow White in New York" by Fiona French and "The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig" by Eugene Trivizas.
- Connect to stereotypes and discuss the story's point of view. Stereotypes are very relevant to "No More Dead Dogs". Discuss how "No More Dead Dogs" would be different if it had not been told from the point of view of so many different characters.

### *Lesson 3: Author's Purpose*

- Brainstorm a list of reasons an author may write a book.
- Explain that there are three reasons: Persuade, Inform, Entertain (PIE). Describe what each of these terms mean and share an example of a book, part of a book, that would fall under each.
- Look back at the brainstorm list and see if you can fit any of their ideas under the pie ideas.

### *Lesson 4: Identifying point of view in the newspaper*

- Have the students use a newspaper to find all the different types of author's purpose (persuade, inform, entertain).
- Have them cut out each artifact, identify what type it is, and explain what makes it that way.
- Have students share their work and ideas.

## Week 3

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### *Lesson 1: Analyze character traits, mini-lesson*

- Explain to the students that an author tries to paint a mental picture of a character. The author reveals the character's traits through the character's thoughts, words, and actions. Tell students that these traits are sometimes stated and sometimes implied by the author. Readers often have to draw their own conclusions based on the author's description.
- Brainstorm a list of character traits, pertaining to no one in particular, but making clear distinction between "feeling" words. The students need to understand that traits have more to do with what "kind of person" someone is, rather than a mood that the character/person is experiencing. For example, just because a character may experience a sad event that causes them to display some emotion, it does not mean we would refer to them as a sad person. We may refer to them as a sensitive or emotional person.
- Pick a character from a familiar book and compile a list of traits that are appropriate to that character.

### *Lesson 2: Analyze character traits - activity*

- Create a "Character Tie" for a character of choice in the book we are reading.
- Students will pick six traits that are significant to a character of their choice.
- For each trait they choose they need to provide support from the text and draw a symbol to represent that trait.
- They will then draw the six symbols on a tie, and create a "Character Tie" for their character.

### *Lesson 3: Inference*

- Discuss that inference is combining prior knowledge with clues provided in the text to form a new idea.
- Place a transparency of a graphic on the overhead. Write the following key questions on the board and discuss them as a class (in reference to the graphic).
- What information in the graphic is directly stated?
- What can we infer from this information?

- What are some facts that could have been omitted from the graphic that could change what we infer?

#### *Lesson 4: Inference*

- Place students in groups of 3 or 4. Give each group a transparency of a graphic that is challenging to their ability level.
- Give each group a piece of chart paper and a marker. Groups are to analyze the graphic and answer the same questions from lesson 3.
- Each group presents its findings by placing the transparency on the overhead for the rest of the class see and discussing the findings written on the chart paper.

## **Week 4**

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#### *Lesson 1: Connections : Text to Self*

- Choose a book that you can make personal connections to, and also a book the students should be able to connect with as well.  
Introduce the lesson by telling the students that good readers think about how books relate to their own life and that this helps good readers understand books better. Tell them that these connections are Text to Self connections.  
Read text of choice aloud, stopping to share connections you can make to model for the students. For example, when I read "Thank You Mr. Falker" by Patricia Polacco, I explain that the character in the book does not like to go to school because she thinks that she is dumb and the other children tease her. I show them that I can connect to this character because I can remember feeling so nervous about going to a meeting and giving a speech that I did not want to go. I focus on how I am able to relate to this character as a person, rather than trying to identify an event that we both experienced exactly the same way.
- I will also explain how this helps me to understand the character better even though we have different personalities and have experienced different situations.
- When the book is completed, have the students share any connections that they can make.  
While reading " No More Dead Dogs" have students use sticky notes to mark areas where they made connections while reading. Also, have them keep an on going list in their Reader's Notebooks.

#### *Lesson 2: Connections : Text to World*

Explain Text to World connections to students. Good readers not only make connections to themselves and other texts, but they also make connections to the world or to other people.

- When we read and learn new things it might remind us of something we heard on the radio, seen on T.V., heard about in our communities etc..

- One of the underlying issues in "No More Dead Dogs" has to do with assumptions made about people because of things they have done or ways they have behaved. Often times these assumptions are unjust. These can be great moments to make Text to World connections.

- Ask students to focus on: "What does this remind me of in the real world?" "How is this text similar to things that happen in the real world?" "How is this different from things that happen in the real world?" " How did that part relate to the world around me?"

### *Lesson 3 : Connections: Text to Text*

- Explain Text to Text connections to the students. Sometimes when we read, we are reminded of other texts we have read. Encourage students to consider a variety of texts they have experienced which will help them understand the current text.

- Specifically for " No More Dead Dogs": pointing out texts that contain numerous narrators throughout a text, multi-genre texts, and other texts by Gordon Korman would be helpful.

- Ask students to focus on: "What does this remind me of in another book I've read?" " How is this text similar to other things I have read?" "How is this different from other books I've read?" "Have I read something like this before?"

- To culminate these three types of connections have students create a "double-entry journal" in their Reader's Notebooks. The first column will be for them to list quotations or situations from the text that they can relate to. The second column will record their reaction to this quotation or situation. Reinforce the fact that these reactions should make a connection between the text and themselves, another text or the world.

- Use chart paper or an overhead to model the process so that all students can see your reactions and follow along as you create the double journal entry.

- As the reading continues stop every so often to have students record reactions in their double entry journals. When necessary have the students share their responses.

## **Week 5**

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During this week students will choose a compare/contrast essay, character sketch or a write about how the story would be different if the point of view were changed. Which ever activity they choose, they will spend the week drafting according to a rubric. Here is a brief description of each assignment:

Character sketch: When you write a character sketch, you are trying to introduce the reader to someone. You want the reader to have a strong mental image of the person, to know how the person talks, to know the person's characteristic ways of doing things, to know something about the person's values. A character sketch is just a snap shot of a person's life; therefore, -- you should not try to write the history of that person. As you work on this paper, you should decide what kind of emotional reaction you want the reader to have in relation to this person. What kind of details can you select to create that reaction? Avoid making broad, characterizing statements; instead, let the details you give suggest general characteristics. Allow the reader to draw his/her own conclusions.

Compare/Contrast Essay: The most important thing to remember in writing this essay is structure. It would be best completed if the structure were to follow a five paragraph essay -- format, with an introduction, body & conclusion. The rubric will specify a number of options in regard to the body portion of the essay.

Point of View activity: Students will have to analyze how the story would have changed if the -- author chose to write from one point of view rather than multiple points of view. After supporting their analysis with evidence from the text, they will attempt to write a "next chapter" from a different point of view.

## Week 6

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This week will be spent taking the activity from week 5 through the writing process to a -- published piece of work. Regardless of the activity chosen , each option requires the students to draw from the lessons covered over the past 4 weeks to strengthen their work.

## Resources:

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## Teacher Resources:

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Allen, Janet, Plugged In to Reading, Recorded Books, LLC, Maryland, 2008.

Bunting, Eve, Smoky night, Voyager Books, Harcourt Brace and Company, New York, 1994.

French, Fiona, Snow White in New York, Aladdin Paperbacks, New York, 1993.

Korman, Gordon, No More Dead Dogs, Hyperion Books for Children, New York, 2000.

Polacco, Patricia, Thank You Mr. Falker, Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, New York, 1998.

Trivizas, Eugene, Three Little Wolves and The Big Bad Pig, Aladdin Paperbacks, New York, 1993.

## Web Resources:

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[www.proteacher.org](http://www.proteacher.org)

[www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)

[www.teachers.net](http://www.teachers.net)

## Student Resources:

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Korman, Gordon, No More Dead Dogs, Hyperion Books for Children, New York, 2000.

A variety of picture books to be used in a number of lessons

Access to newspapers and/or magazine articles

Plugged In to Reading materials and resources found in program guides

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