

Ever-Changing Identities in Adolescent Literature: Essential Questions

“Who in the world am I? Ah, that's the great puzzle.”
— Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Week 1:

- 1. Where does our sense of identity come from?**
- 2. Why is it important to ask questions/make annotations when reading a text? Particularly for the first time?**
 - Instruct on how to take thorough notes when reading/analyzing literature, using W.D. Myers's *Bad Boy*
- 3. What are the elements of autobiographical genre?**
 - Discuss/instruct using W.D. Myers's memoir, *Bad Boy*

Week 2: same as week 1, plus:

- 1. How is listening to a text different from reading it?**
 - Compare silent reading to teacher/audio read alouds
- 2. How can I support my discussion and claims with textual evidence?**
 - Instruction on “quote weaving” by comparing an excerpt from *Bad Boy* to Langston Hughes's poem, “Final Curve”

Week 3: same as weeks 1 and 2, plus:

- 1. What is a memoir? And how do I compare different authors writing in the same genre?**
 - Compare W.D. Myers's chapter, “Roots” to Bethany Hamilton's chapter “Roots” in her memoir, *Soul Surfer*

Week 4: same as weeks 1-3, plus:

- 1. How does poetry enable us to give voice to our senses of self?**
- 2. What are poetic devices?**
- 3. What is vivid, figurative language—specifically: metaphor, simile, and alliteration?**
- 4. How does thinking about our sensory details help us write descriptive, poetic language?**
- 5. How does Lyons's use of metaphor in “Where I'm From” help us understand the genre, memoir?**
- 6. How does my background influence my decisions and me?**

7. How does writing my own “W.I.F.” poem help me understand the genre, memoir?

- Read George Ella Lyon’s “Where I’m From” poem
- Compare poetic devices here to Hughes’s “Final Curve” and, if time permits, his “A Dream Deferred”
- Write our own “W.I.F.” poetry, using sensory detail charts as guide

Week 5: same as weeks 1-4, plus:

1. How does the historical context of a text impact my reading/understanding of the content?

- Harlem Renaissance/Great Depression discussion via Discovery Channel, NYTimes vid, and webquest

2. How does knowing a bit about an author’s background help me understand his/her writing?

- Scopes magazine on Bethany Hamilton
- Webquest on W.D.M’s biography

Week 6: same as weeks 1-5, plus:

1. How is a film version of a text different from the print version?

2. How does point of view impact the way the reader understands and connects to the text?

3. How are identities and experiences connected?

Week 7: same as weeks 1-6, plus:

1. How can I use background knowledge and content to draw inferences from the text? Specifically to support my understanding of the text?

2. How does figurative language add depth to writing?

Weeks 8-9: same as the previous weeks, plus:

1. Where does our sense of identity come from?

2. How can I succeed on the assessment for this unit?

3. How can I effectively demonstrate what I have learned in this text study?