

LESSON OVERVIEW: UNIT INTRODUCTION

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Unit Overview

How do we determine what is right and wrong? Do the ends ever justify the means? In this 360 Unit, students will read stories with characters who come face to face with moral dilemmas. They will meet a couple faced with choosing between their own wealth and happiness and a stranger's life. They will meet characters who must decide between seeking revenge or acting with integrity. They'll learn about the stages of moral development and reflect on their own decision making. While examining these interesting concepts, they'll practice key reading skills such as analyzing character interactions and perspectives, and learn about how techniques like situational and dramatic irony impact readers.

Unit Focus Standards

Reading:

- Theme development [RL.8.2]
- Dialogue and events that propel action, reveal character, or provoke a decision [RL.8.3]
- Different points of view that create dramatic irony, suspense, and humor [RL.8.6]





Writing

- Expository writing [W.8.2]

Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This lesson handout • Unit Intro Slide Deck (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Introduction to Unit 1: Bad Behavior" (Student Copy) • Key Terms Reference Sheet (Optional)

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
<i>This lesson is intended to introduce students to key ideas within the unit while generating interest and excitement. The paired slide deck supports facilitation.</i>		
Part 1	 Exploring the Unit's Big Questions: Students will rate how strongly they agree or disagree with five statements related to the unit's big ideas.	5 min
Part 2	 Discussing the Unit's Big Questions: Students will discuss their opinions from Part 1.	10 min
Part 3	 What Will We Read? Students will review a brief overview of the texts in the unit and discuss which texts seem most interesting.	5 min
Part 4	 What Skills Will We Learn? Students will complete a self-assessment gauging their familiarity with the unit skills.	5 min
~25 min total		

Name _____

Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Introduction to Unit 1: Bad Behavior

Essential Question: How do we know what is right?

Why do people choose to do wrong?

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

About this lesson

This lesson will introduce you to the ideas, texts, and skills we will explore throughout the unit.

PART 1: Exploring the Unit's Big Questions

Directions: Below are several ideas that we will explore in this unit. Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. *5 minutes*



1. With any action, there is always a right thing to do and a wrong thing to do.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

2. Punishments should be more severe than the crime itself.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

3. Greed is the most common reason people do terrible things.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

4. Sometimes it is better to lie than to confess to a huge mistake.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

5. Some people are evil.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

PART 2: Discussing the Unit's Big Questions

Directions: As you discuss the statements from Part 1 with your classmates, use the space below to capture interesting ideas you hear! *10 minutes*



NOTES CATCHER

PART 3: What Will We Read?

Directions: Read the overview of unit texts. *5 minutes*



Title & Author	Genre	As you read, you will think about...
"Ruthless" by William Demille	<i>Short Story</i>	Should we ever take justice into our own hands?
"How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?" by Anne Marie-Reidy	<i>Informational Text</i>	Where does your understanding of right and wrong come from?
"Button, Button" by Richard Matheson	<i>Short Story</i>	Would the promise of money lead you to do something terrible?
"Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl	<i>Short Story</i>	If you accidentally commit a crime, should you be punished?
"Lather and Nothing Else" By Hernando Téllez	<i>Short Story</i>	Is it right to hurt people who do bad things?



Turn & Talk: Which texts sound most interesting to you? Why?

PART 4: What Skills Will We Learn?

Directions: Rate your confidence level for each of the unit skills listed below. *5 minutes*



Reading Skills

<i>Mark the column that best matches your confidence level for each skill.</i>	<i>Not Confident</i>	<i>Somewhat Confident</i>	<i>Extremely Confident</i>
1. I can identify the theme of a text.			
2. I can compare and contrast characters' different points of view.			
3. I can identify situational irony and dramatic irony in a text.			
4. I can explain how an author creates suspense in a text.			

Writing Skills

<i>Mark the column that best matches your confidence level for each skill.</i>	<i>Not Confident</i>	<i>Somewhat Confident</i>	<i>Extremely Confident</i>
1. I can write a strong body paragraph that includes multiple pieces of evidence.			
2. I can write a strong argument that is clear, concise, and specific.			
3. I can write an essay about multiple short stories.			
4. I can write a strong introduction for an essay.			
5. I can write a strong conclusion for an essay.			

Key Terms for Unit 1: Bad Behavior

UNIT 1 KEY TERMS <i>These terms will appear throughout the unit. Use this reference sheet as needed.</i>	
Theme	A universal message that can apply to real life or other stories Example: A theme of <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> is that someone's home will always have special importance.
Central Idea	The main point an author makes in a nonfiction text (or a section of a nonfiction text) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts can have more than one central idea.
Point of View	A person or character's perspective on a topic
Narrative Point of View	The viewpoint a story is told from
Suspense	A feeling of excitement, anxiety, or uncertainty about an event
Irony	A contradiction or contrast in a literary text that often involves an unexpected situation or outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creates suspense, humor, or surprise
Situational Irony	Refers to an event that is the opposite from what a character or audience expects
Dramatic Irony	When the audience knows something that one or more characters in a story do not
Argument	A claim that a writer is defending in a paragraph or short response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually the first sentence of a paragraph
Thesis	A claim that a writer is defending in an essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually appears at the end of an essay's introduction
Context	Information that clarifies what is happening in a moment or situation

Writing Baseline Assessment Goal-Setting Tool

Name _____ Class _____

Writing is an important skill that prepares you to succeed in school, work, and life. It helps you communicate your ideas well and express your creativity. It helps you become a stronger reader and a better thinker. None of us is born a strong writer, but we become strong writers through regular, intentional practice. Use this goal-setting tool to help you reflect on your writing skills and plan for a year of big achievements.

Part 1: Share your perceptions about writing

Directions: Rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements about writing. Then, respond to the short answer questions that follow. This will help you prepare for a writing conference with your teacher.



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoy writing.	1	2	3	4	5
I practiced writing every day in school last year.	1	2	3	4	5
I am comfortable sharing my writing with others.	1	2	3	4	5
I try to imitate the techniques of other writers.	1	2	3	4	5
I know how to improve my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy revising my writing to make it better.	1	2	3	4	5
I will continue to revise a writing assignment until it is my best work.	1	2	3	4	5

1. What kind of writing do you enjoy most?

2. If you could write about one thing all year long, what would it be?

3. What is hard for you as a writer?



Part 2: Reflect on your Writing Baseline Assessment scores

Directions: A baseline assessment is a test at the beginning of the year that helps your teacher understand how to help you improve. Your teacher has scored your Writing Baseline Assessment. Use the scores and teacher comments on your Student Feedback Form to answer the reflection questions.

4. Write the scores you received for each writing category:

Writing Category	My score
Thesis	
Organization	
Evidence	
Analysis	
Writing Conventions	
Overall Score	

5. What were the greatest areas of strength in your writing?

6. What were the areas of writing that needed the most improvement?

Part 3: Set Goals

Directions: Answer the questions below.



7. List at least **three** ways that you would like to improve in your writing between now and the end of the school year.

- Goal 1:

- Goal 2:

- Goal 3:

8. How can your teacher help you meet these goals?

GRADE 6-10 ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING RUBRIC

Directions: Use this rubric to score students' Writing Baseline Assessment and plan instructional next steps.

Grade 6-10 Argumentative Writing Rubric 4-Point Section					
Score	4	3	2	1	Not Scored
Thesis	Thesis or claim is clearly stated. It is specific and relevant to the task and purpose.	Thesis or claim is adequately stated . It responds to the prompt but may be general or broad.	Thesis or claim is attempted , but may be somewhat confusing or ambiguously related to the task and purpose.	Thesis or claim is missing or not relevant to the task and purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient (includes copied text) • Not written in English • Not aligned to the task and/or purpose
Organization	Demonstrates a clear, logical organizational structure that supports the development of the thesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong introduction and conclusion • Logical and coherent grouping and ordering of key points and evidence within and across body paragraphs • Strong transitions that demonstrate the relationship between ideas • Clearly addresses alternate or opposing arguments (beginning at 7th grade) 	Demonstrates a satisfactory organizational structure that generally supports the thesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adequate introduction and conclusion • Logical grouping and ordering of key points and evidence within and across body paragraphs • Some effective transitions between ideas • Adequately addresses alternate or opposing arguments (beginning at 7th grade) 	Demonstrates a general organizational structure which may lack a sense of direction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction or conclusion is weak • Some key points and evidence that are not grouped or ordered logically • Some confusing transitions or connections between ideas • Addresses alternate or opposing arguments in a confusing or unclear way (beginning at 7th grade) 	Demonstrates a weak organizational structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and conclusion may be weak or missing • Key points and evidence that are not grouped or ordered logically • Few transitions or connections between ideas • Does not address alternate or opposing arguments (beginning at 7th grade) 	
Evidence	Includes strong and relevant evidence to support thesis/claim, key points, and overall argument All evidence is contextualized with attention to information intended readers may need.	Includes relevant evidence to support thesis/claim, key points, and overall argument Most evidence is contextualized with attention to information intended readers may need.	Evidence or supporting details may be insufficient or only somewhat relevant . Evidence is inconsistently contextualized with attention to information intended readers may need.	Evidence or supporting details are largely missing . If evidence is present, no context is provided.	

Grade 6-10 Argumentative Writing Rubric 4-Point Section

Score	4	3	2	1	Not Scored
Analysis	<p>Explanations/analysis develop ideas and insight in the essay, and support a credible and convincing line of reasoning.</p> <p>Effectively uses a variety of elaborative techniques, such as making connections or comparisons, using analogies or anecdotes, etc.</p> <p>Reflects precise and carefully selected language for clarity and effect</p> <p>Tone is clearly appropriate for the task, audience, and purpose.</p>	<p>Explanations/analysis develop ideas and make connections, and support a coherent line of reasoning.</p> <p>Adequately uses some elaborative techniques, such as making connections or comparisons, using analogies or anecdotes, etc.</p> <p>Reflects use of language that is functional and appropriate</p> <p>Tone is generally appropriate for the task, audience, and purpose.</p>	<p>Explanations/analysis mostly summarize or restate evidence, but the line of reasoning may be difficult to follow or underdeveloped.</p> <p>Uses weak or imbalanced elaborative techniques.</p> <p>Reflects mostly simplistic language</p> <p>Tone is uneven or somewhat ineffective for the task, audience, and purpose.</p>	<p>Explanations/analysis may be missing or show a lack of understanding. There is no line of reasoning.</p> <p>Mostly appeals to emotions instead of using elaborative techniques.</p> <p>Language is unclear or confusing</p> <p>Tone is ineffective for the task, audience, and purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient (includes copied text) • Not written in English • Not aligned to the task and/or purpose

Grade 6-10 Argumentative Writing Rubric 2-Point Section

Score	2	1	Not Scored
Writing Conventions	<p>Reflects adequate control of most writing conventions; contains occasional errors that do not interfere with clarity or message</p>	<p>Reflects partial control of writing conventions; contains errors that interfere with clarity or message</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient (includes copied text) • Not written in English • Not aligned to the task and/or purpose

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

Directions: Fill out this form based on the scores you gave students on the Grade 6-10 Argumentative Writing Rubric. Then, share this synthesis of your feedback with students to help them [reflect on](#) and improve their writing.

Writing category	Student score	Total points possible	Teacher comments
Thesis		/4	
Organization		/4	
Evidence		/4	
Analysis		/4	
Writing Conventions		/2	
Overall Score		/18	

Using CommonLit's Supplemental Text Sets

What is the supplemental text set?

Each CommonLit unit is accompanied by a set of supplemental texts. These texts range in both their complexity and thematic links to the unit. Each text is available digitally and prepared with an annotation task, Guided Reading Mode multiple choice questions, and Assessment multiple choice and short-answer questions.

Why use supplemental texts?

Because the texts vary in complexity, teachers can use the texts to support and challenge a wide range of learners. The texts provide an opportunity for remediation and extension within each unit.

Here are a few suggestions on how to implement the supplemental texts:

- **Independent, In-Class reading:** Provide a text to students to read independently in class. This provides students with an opportunity for sustained silent reading. During this time, the teacher can also pull a group of students to read with.
- **Small Group or Partner In-Class Reading:** Provide a text to students to read in partners or small groups in class. This provides students with a chance to collaborate on content connected to the theme of the unit. During this time, the teacher can also pull a group of students to read with.
- **Homework:** Provide students with a text to read independently at home. The teacher can choose to assign the Assessment Questions and/or Guided Reading Mode questions to all or some students.
- **Student Choice:** Use the text set as an opportunity to have students pull from a supplemental “library.” Keep in mind that you will want to be transparent about the complexity of each text so students can make the best choice about a text that meets their learning needs.

LESSON OVERVIEW: “RUTHLESS”

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the unit?

Reading Lesson 1	Reading Lesson 2	Reading Lesson 3	Reading Lesson 4	Reading Lesson 5
“Ruthless” by William DeMille (Short Story)	“How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?” by Anne-Marie Reidy (Informational Text)	“Button, Button” by Richard Matheson (Short Story)	“Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl (Short Story)	“Lather and Nothing Else” by Hernando Téllez (Short Story)
↑ You are here! ↑				




This lesson’s skill focus

In this lesson, students will analyze how authors use different **points of view** and **situational irony** to affect readers. [RL.8.6]

About this Short Story

In this short story, Judson Webb sets a deadly trap to get revenge on a suspected thief. However, in an unexpected twist, Judson becomes the victim of his own ruthless plan.

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
 <p>Teacher-led, scaffolded and supportive</p>	 <p>Greater student independence</p>	 <p>Student-led, small groups</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the recommended reading modalities (whole class, partner, independent) Pause to answer the During Reading Questions during reading. <p>60 total minutes for this lesson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign longer chunks of independent reading. Skip some supportive During Reading Questions Instruct students to take notes independently: As you read, take notes on Judson’s and Marcia’s different points of view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put students into groups of 3-5 Students answer the During Reading Questions and alternate readers to read sections aloud. Circulate to check for understanding
↑ Recommended! ↑		

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Ruthless

William DeMille

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

About this text	
William DeMille (1878-1955) was an American writer, most well-known for screenwriting and film directing. In this short story, a man sets a trap for a suspected thief at his summer vacation home.	
Purpose for Reading	Vocabulary
To understand how different points of view between characters create tension. To learn about how authors use situational irony to affect readers.	<p>Let's pronounce these words together as a class:</p> <p>Genial [jee-nee-uhl] Ruthless [rooth-lis] Vindictive [vin-dik-tiv]</p>

WHOLE CLASS READING

[1] Outside, the woods lay basking in clear October sunlight; trees a riot of color, air full of Autumn's tang¹ and the sharp, exciting smell of moist, leaf-covered earth.

[2] Inside, a man smiled grimly as he turned from the bathroom cabinet, entered the expensively primitive living room of his mountain camp, and crossed to a closet set in the pine wall. It was his special closet, with a spring lock and in it he kept guns, ammunition, fishing-rods, tackle² and liquor. Not even his wife was allowed to have a key, for Judson Webb loved his personal possessions and felt a sense of deep outrage if they were touched by any hand but his own. The closet door stood open; he had been packing his things away for the Winter, and in a few minutes would be driving back to civilization.

[3] As he looked at the shelf on which the liquor stood his smile was not attractive. All the bottles were unopened except one quart of Bourbon which was placed invitingly in front, a whiskey glass by its side. This bottle was less than half full. As he took it from the shelf his wife spoke from the adjoining bedroom:

[4] "I'm all packed, Judson," she said. "Hasn't Alec come to turn the water off and get the keys?"

[5] Alec lived about a mile down the road and acted as a caretaker for the city folks when they were away.

[6] "He's down at the lake taking the boats out of water. Said he'd be back in half an hour."

DURING READING QUESTIONS

POINT OF VIEW: Paragraph 2

Think & Share: How does Judson feel about his belongings?

- *He is very protective of his things. He won't let anyone else touch them, not even his wife.*

¹ **Tang** (noun): a strong taste, flavor, or smell

² the equipment required for a task or sport; in this case, for fishing

[7] Marcia came into the room carrying her suitcase. But she paused in surprise as she saw the bottle in her husband's hand.

[8] "Judson!" she exclaimed, "you're not taking a drink at ten o'clock in the morning?"

[9] "You wrong me, my dear," he chuckled, "I'm not taking anything out of this bottle: I am merely putting a little kick into it."

[10] His closed hand opened and he put upon the table two tiny white pellets³ as he started to uncork the whiskey. Her eyes narrowed as she watched him. She had learned to dread that tone of his voice; it was the tone he used when he was planning to "put something over"⁴ in a business deal.

[11] "Whoever broke into my closet last Winter and stole my liquor will probably try it again once we are out of here," he went on, "only this time he'll wish he hadn't."

[12] She caught her breath at the cruel **vindictiveness** of his manner as one by one he dropped the tablets into the bottle and held it up to watch them dissolve.

[13] "What are they?" she asked, "something to make him sick?"

[14] "And how!" He seemed fascinated as he saw the **genial** Bourbon change into a lethal dose: "At least no one has found an antidote:⁵ once it's down it's curtains."⁶ He corked his bottled vengeance and set it back on the shelf alongside the little whiskey glass.

[15] "Everything nice and handy," he remarked approvingly. "Now, Mr. Thief, when you break in, drink hearty; I won't begrudge⁷ you this one."

[16] The woman's face was pale. "Don't do it, Judson," she gasped. "It's horrible — it's murder."

POINT OF VIEW: Paragraphs 9-10

Turn & Talk: What does Marcia's reaction reveal about Judson's personality?

- *He is sometimes dishonest and frightening.*

Paragraphs 11-16

A. Write: Summarize Judson's actions with the whiskey.

- *Judson is poisoning the whiskey to kill anyone who breaks into his cabin to steal his liquor.*

B. Poll the Class: If someone dies from Judson's plan, does that make Judson a murderer? Be prepared to defend your response.

- Yes
- No

PARTNER READING

[17] "The law doesn't call it murder if I shoot a thief who is entering my house by force," he said harshly. "Also, the use of rat poison is quite legal. The only way any rat can get into this closet is to break in. What happens then is his affair, not mine."

[18] "Don't do it, Judson," she begged. "The law doesn't punish burglary by death; so what right have you—"

[19] "When it comes to protecting my property I make my own laws." His deep voice suggested a big dog growling at threatened loss of a bone.

[20] "But all they did was to steal a little liquor," she pleaded. "Probably some boys off on a lark.⁸ They didn't do any real damage."

[21] "That's not the point," he said. "If a man holds me up and robs me of five dollars it makes me just as sore as if he took a hundred. A thief's a thief."

DURING READING QUESTIONS

POINT OF VIEW: Paragraphs 17-23

A. Write: What is Judson's opinion about which crimes deserve punishment?

- *He views all crimes as equally bad and they deserve the same harsh punishment.*

B. Write: How is Marcia's point of view different from Judson's?

- *She believes that punishments should fit the crime.*
- *She does not believe that burglary should be punished by death.*

³ a small hard ball or tube-shaped piece of any substance

⁴ to trick or deceive someone

⁵ a medicine taken to stop the effects of a certain poison

⁶ the end, as in when the curtain closes over a stage at the end of a play

⁷ **Begrudge** (*verb*): to give reluctantly or with displeasure

⁸ just having fun

[22] She made one last effort. “We won’t be here till next spring. I can’t bear to think of that deathtrap waiting there all the time. Suppose something happens to us — and no one knows — ”

[23] He chuckled once more at her words. “We’ll take a chance on that,” he said. “I’ve made my pile⁹ by taking chances. If I should die, you can do as you please. The stuff will be yours.”

WHOLE CLASS READING

[24] It was useless to argue, she knew. He had always been **ruthless** in business and whenever anything crossed him. Things had to be done his way. She turned toward the outer door with a sigh of defeat. “I’ll walk down the road and say goodbye at the farmhouse,” she said quietly. “You can pick me up there.” She had made up her mind to tell Alec’s wife. Someone had to know.

[25] “Okay, my dear,” he smiled **genially**, “and don’t worry about your poor, abused little burglar. No one is going to get hurt who hasn’t got it coming to him.”

[26] As she went down the path he started to close the closet door; then paused as he remembered his hunting boots drying outside on the porch. They belonged in the closet, so leaving the door open he went to fetch them from the heavy, rustic table on which they stood, along with his bag and top coat.

[27] Alec was coming up from the lake and waved to him from a distance. A chipmunk, hearing Judson’s heavy tread, abandoned the acorn he was about to add to his store within the cabin wall and disappeared, like an electric bulb burning out. Judson, reaching for his boots, stepped fairly upon the acorn, his foot slid from under him and his head struck the massive table as he fell.

[28] Several minutes later he began to regain his senses. Alec’s strong arm was supporting his head as he lay on the porch and a kindly voice was saying: “‘Twarn’t¹⁰ much of a fall, Mr. Webb. You aren’t cut none; jest knocked out for a minute. Here, take this; it’ll pull you together.”

[29] A small whiskey glass was pressed to his lips. Dazed and half-conscious, he drank.

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraph 24

Write: Why does Marcia decide to leave the house?

- *She is frightened that someone will die as a result of what Judson has done and feels she needs to warn someone.*
- *She believes it’s pointless to argue with him, so she goes to tell Alec’s wife about the poison.*

Paragraphs 28-29

A. Turn & Talk: Based on the last line, what will happen to Judson?

- *He is going to die from the poison he put in the whiskey.*

B. Turn & Talk: Who or what is to blame for the ending?

Student answers may vary; students may say:

- *Judson or his vindictiveness*
- *Alec and his decision to give Judson whiskey*
- *Judson’s fall*

*“Ruthless” by William deMille, from the anthology *50 Short Stories: An Omnibus of Short Stories*, edited by Mary Anne Howard (1945), is in the public domain.

⁹ got rich
¹⁰ it wasn’t

Further Analysis Questions

Directions: “Ruthless” is a great example of a literary technique called situational irony. Read the definition of situational irony. Then answer the questions. *10 minutes*



Situational irony refers to an event that is the opposite from what a character or audience expects. Authors use situational irony to create surprise, suspense, or humor.

Example: A firehouse burning down.

1. Why is the resolution of “Ruthless” an example of situational irony?

The resolution of “Ruthless” is an example of situational irony because Judson intends to kill a thief, but he kills himself instead.

2. **Turn & Talk:** After you know how the story ends, many of Judson’s comments become ironic. Analyze the two quotes below. Why are they ironic?

- “What happens then is his affair, not mine.” (17)
- “No one is going to get hurt who hasn’t got it coming to him.” (25)
- *Both quotes are ironic because what happens is the opposite of what Judson expects. He expects the thief will get hurt, but Judson is the one who is hurt in the end.*

Name _____ Class _____

Independent Practice

Directions: Answer the multiple choice questions for “Ruthless.” 5 minutes



Note: To ensure test security, answers to the following assessment items are viewable only on commonlit.org for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the Answer Key tab on the text page to gain access.

1. Which event sets the story into motion? **[RL.3]**
 - A. the theft of Judson's liquor
 - B. Judson's decision to have a drink
 - C. Judson's reluctance to return to the city
 - D. an argument between Judson and Marcia
2. Which detail from the text *best* reveals Judson's belief about crime and punishment? **[RL.1]**
 - A. “He corked his bottled vengeance and set it back on the shelf alongside the little whiskey glass.” (Paragraph 14)
 - B. “Also, the use of rat poison is quite legal. The only way any rat can get into this closet is to break in.” (Paragraph 17)
 - C. “We won't be here till next spring. I can't bear to think of that deathtrap waiting there all the time.” (Paragraph 22)
 - D. ““and don't worry about your poor, abused little burglar. No one is going to get hurt who hasn't got it coming to him.”” (Paragraph 25)
3. Which statement *best* describes Marcia's view about crime and punishment? **[RL.6]**
 - A. Marcia believes that she has the right to harm anyone who steals from her family.
 - B. Marcia believes that a punishment should match the severity of the crime.
 - C. Marcia believes that every crime should receive the same punishment.
 - D. Marcia believes that most criminals are actually good people.
4. How does Alec's arrival at the cabin affect the events of the story? **[RL.3]**
 - A. It leads to Marcia leaving her husband.
 - B. It leads to Judson drinking poisoned whiskey.
 - C. It leads to the theft of some of Judson's liquor.
 - D. It leads to an argument between Judson and Marcia.
5. Which statement expresses the main theme of the story? **[RL.2]**
 - A. No crime is bad enough to warrant another person's death.
 - B. It is unfair to punish people for crimes they did not commit.
 - C. It's important to take the opinions of loved ones into consideration.
 - D. There will be consequences if people take justice into their own hands.

Quick Partner Discussion

Directions: Discuss the questions with a partner. Record both of your answers to the questions. Practice referring to text evidence by using the discussion sentence starters. *5 minutes*



Examples of how you can **refer to text evidence**:

- *In paragraph/line [X], the narrator/character/speaker says...*
- *For example, in the text it says that...*
- *One moment that illustrates this is...*
- *Remember in the story we read that...*
- *I can prove this because...*
- *Look at...*

1. Do you think **“Ruthless”** is an appropriate title for this story? Why or why not?

My answer	My partner's answer

2. **ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** After reading “Ruthless,” how would you explain why people choose to do bad things?

My answer	My partner's answer

3. Judson says “No one is going to get hurt who hasn’t got it coming to him.” Did Judson deserve what happened to him?

My answer	My partner's answer

LESSON OVERVIEW: EXEMPLAR PARAGRAPH

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the arc of writing for the unit?

Writing Lesson 1	Writing Lesson 2	Writing Lesson 3	Writing Lesson 4	Writing Lesson 5	Final Unit Writing Prompt (Recommended)
Exemplary Paragraph	Writing a Strong Argument	Unit 1 Essay: Planning	Writing Introductions	Writing Conclusions	What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least two of the following texts to support your answer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Ruthless" - "Button, Button" - "Lamb to the Slaughter" [W.2]
↑ You are here! ↑					




This lesson's skill focus

In this lesson, students will practice writing a strong paragraph that includes an argument, evidence, and explanations. [W.8.2]

Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This lesson handout • "Ruthless" (Teacher Copy) • Think-Aloud Slide Deck (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Exemplar Paragraph" (Student Copy) • "Ruthless" (Student Copy) • Student Reference Sheet: Exemplar Paragraph (Optional)

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	<p>What Does a Model Paragraph Look Like? Students review a model paragraph and answer two reflection questions. The model paragraph is intended to highlight what exemplary writing looks like; it is not an expectation of skills students already possess.</p> <p> Note: Our recommendation is that students read the model paragraph, and then watch the linked video that explains some of the qualities that make the paragraph exemplary. Teachers may also choose to teach into the paragraphs themselves. We have included the slide deck from the video for this purpose.</p>	10 min
Part 2	<p> Independent Writing: Students write a paragraph response using the model paragraph as a guide for exemplary writing.</p>	20 min
Part 3	<p> Check Your Work: Students use the provided checklist to review and revise any missing parts of their paragraph.</p>	5 min
~35 min total		

Name _____

Class _____

TEACHER COPY: EXEMPLAR PARAGRAPH

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

Today's Goals

You will write a complete paragraph that includes an argument, two pieces of evidence, and two explanations. [W.2]

PART 1: What Does a Model Paragraph Look Like?

Directions: Read the paragraph below and follow this [link](#) to watch a three-minute video that explains what makes it strong. Then, answer the questions. 10 minutes



Prompt: Why is the resolution of William Demille's "Ruthless" situational irony? [RL.6]

The resolution of William Demille's short story, "Ruthless," is an example of situational irony because the ending is the opposite of what the protagonist expects. Judson, the story's main character, is vindictive about a thief who broke into his cabin and stole some of his whiskey. To get revenge, Judson poisons the whiskey, noting that, "No one is going to get hurt who hasn't got it coming to him" (25). Judson believes the thief deserves to be killed, and he intends to kill him, but his plan backfires. After poisoning the whiskey, Judson trips and loses consciousness. His neighbor sees he is hurt and helps him by offering him a sip of the poisoned whiskey, which "dazed and half-conscious, he drank" (29). Judson intended to kill the thief, but in this final scene he becomes the victim of his own ruthless plan. Therefore, this is situational irony.

1. What makes this a strong paragraph?

Student answers will vary. Students may note any number of qualities, such as the strong argument, the use of context, the clear transitions, or the use of academic vocabulary.

2. Based on this model paragraph, what is something you can practice in your writing today?

Student answers will vary.



PART 2: Independent Writing

Directions: Answer the short response prompt for “Ruthless.” 15 minutes

TODAY’S WRITING PROMPT

In William Demille’s “Ruthless,” who or what killed Judson? Support your opinion with evidence from the text. [RL.1]

When writing your response, look back at the model paragraph to see how to:

- start with an argument that clearly answers the prompt
- include two pieces of evidence that support your argument
- explain how your evidence supports your argument

SAMPLE STUDENT OUTLINE:

Judson’s ruthless desire for revenge is most responsible for his death.

- *“‘Whoever broke into my closet last Winter and stole my liquor will probably try it again once we are out of here,’ he went on, ‘only this time he’ll wish he hadn’t.’” (11)*
- *“When it comes to protecting my property I make my own laws.” (19)*
- *“If a man holds me up and robs me of five dollars it makes me just as sore as if he took a hundred. A thief’s a thief.” (21)*

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSE:

*Judson’s **ruthless** desire for revenge is most responsible for his death. The story begins by introducing readers to Judson’s **vindictive** plan to get revenge on the person who stole from him the previous winter. Judson explains to his wife that he is setting a deadly and tempting trap of poisoned whiskey and that he hopes the thief returns because “this time he’ll wish he hadn’t” (11). Judson’s focus on getting revenge at all costs makes him ignore his wife’s worries and concerns. He **justifies** his plan for revenge by explaining, “when it comes to protecting my property I make my own laws.” (19). His **ruthlessness** causes him to claim that “a thief’s a thief” as a way to suggest that his plot to get revenge is reasonable (21). Judson’s belief that being **ruthless** and **vindictive** was **justified** and right is what ultimately leads to his own death.*



PART 3: Check Your Work

Directions: Use the box below to check your work. *10 minutes*

Check Your Work

- [] Highlight your **ARGUMENT** in green.

Does your argument clearly answer all parts of the prompt? Yes No I'm Not Sure

- [] Highlight your **EVIDENCE** in yellow.

Do you have two pieces of strong evidence? Yes No I'm Not Sure

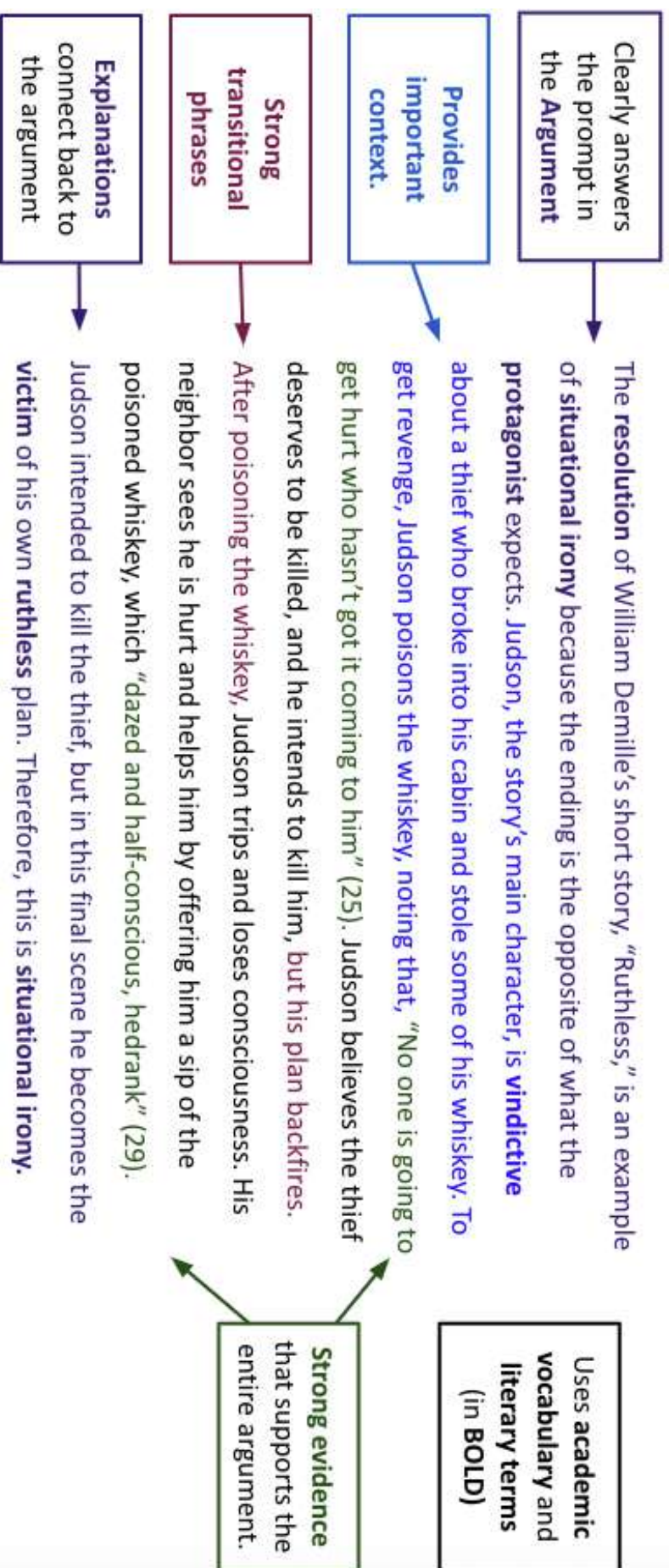
- [] Highlight your **EXPLANATIONS** in red.

Do your explanations connect your evidence to your argument? Yes No I'm Not Sure

Go back and add any missing parts of your paragraph.

EXEMPLAR PARAGRAPH

Prompt: Why is the resolution of William Demille’s “Ruthless” situational irony? [RL.6]



LESSON OVERVIEW: “HOW DO WE TELL RIGHT FROM WRONG?”

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the unit?

Reading Lesson 1	Reading Lesson 2	Reading Lesson 3	Reading Lesson 4	Reading Lesson 5
“Ruthless” by William DeMille (Short Story)	“How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?” by Anne-Marie Reidy (Informational Text)	“Button, Button” by Richard Matheson (Short Story)	“Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl (Short Story)	“Lather and Nothing Else” by Hernando Téllez (Short Story)
	↑ You are here! ↑			




This lesson’s skill focus

In this lesson, students will trace how a **central idea is developed** over the course of a text. [RI.8.2]

About this Informational Text

This informational text introduces students to the work of Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg, an American psychologist. This text describes Kohlberg's theory about the three stages of moral development that he determined most people progress through.

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
 <p>Teacher-led, scaffolded and supportive</p>	 <p>Greater student independence</p>	 <p>Student-led, small groups</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the recommended reading modalities (whole class, partner, independent) Pause to answer the During Reading Questions during reading. <p>50 total minutes for this lesson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign longer chunks of independent reading. Skip some supportive During Reading Questions Instruct students to take notes independently: As you read, take notes on key details about each level of moral development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put students into groups of 3-5 Students answer the During Reading Questions and alternate readers to read sections aloud. Circulate to check for understanding
↑ Recommended! ↑		

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Anne-Marie Reidy

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

About this text

Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) was an American psychologist best known for his research into moral development. Through his work, Kohlberg created a new field in psychology, in which researchers try to understand how humans make moral choices.

Purpose for Reading

To learn about the levels of moral development to build our understanding of how people decide what is right and wrong.

Vocabulary

Let's pronounce these words together as a class:

Moral [mor-uhl]

WHOLE CLASS READING

Decisions, Decisions

[1] *Joe and his best friend Kim stop at a convenience store on their walk home from school. Joe sees Kim take a candy bar and slip it into her bag. Then Kim walks quickly out the door without paying. The store owner, who knows Joe from the neighborhood, asks him, "Joe, did that girl steal something from me?" Joe has been taught that it's wrong to steal or lie — but he also thinks it's right to protect his friends. What should Joe do?*

[2] We make thousands of decisions a day, large and small. Some decisions are harder than others, especially when a person has to choose between right and wrong. A person in that situation may consider many things: rules and laws, possible punishments for breaking the laws, what other people will think of them, and even what they will think of themselves. This kind of thinking — often called ethical¹ thinking — is difficult, and different people can come to different conclusions about what behavior is right. The American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg wanted to study how people reach these conclusions. He wanted to know: how do we tell right from wrong?

Kohlberg's Research

[3] To answer this question, Kohlberg performed research by interviewing a group of boys about their **moral** decision-making. He first interviewed them when they were between ages 10 and 16, and then interviewed each boy again several times over the next 12 to 20 years. Kohlberg developed several scenarios — or made-up situations — about a character who has a difficult **moral** decision to make. Kohlberg and his team of interviewers presented the scenarios to each boy one at

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraph 1

Write: What should Joe do? Why?

- *Student answers will vary.*

Paragraph 3

Write: How did Kohlberg conduct his research?

- *He interviewed a group of boys when they were between 10 and 16 years old, and then several more times over their lives.*
- *He presented them with moral dilemmas and asked what they thought was right.*

¹ **Ethical (adjective):** involving questions of right and wrong actions

a time and asked if the boy thought the character had done the right thing. This is one of the scenarios Kohlberg used in his interviews:

Heinz Steals the Drug

A woman was dying of a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist had recently discovered. The druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should the husband have done that? (Kohlberg, 1963, p. 19)

[4] Kohlberg was less interested in whether the interview subject² said "yes" or "no" to this question than in the reasoning behind the answer. The interviewer would ask new questions to better understand the subject's thinking. For example, the interviewer would ask if Heinz had a right to steal the drug and what sentence the judge should give him once he was caught. Then, the interviewer would give more scenarios to get a sense of how the subject generally decided between right and wrong. Kohlberg noticed that most of the interview subjects developed new ways of thinking about ethics over the years. As men, they made decisions very differently than they had as boys.

[5] Using this research, Kohlberg came up with a theory to describe the different ways that human beings make **moral** choices. His theory also describes how he believed our decision-making changes from childhood to adulthood. Kohlberg called this his *theory of moral development*.

Paragraphs 4-5

Write: What was Kohlberg *most* interested in finding out from his interview subjects?

- *How they decided what was right*

PARTNER READING

DURING READING QUESTIONS

The Stages of Moral Development

[6] In his theory, Kohlberg identified three levels of **moral** reasoning, which is the thinking process behind whether an idea is right or wrong. The three levels are:

1. Pre-conventional
2. Conventional
3. Post-conventional

Level 1: Preconventional

[7] Kohlberg found that very young children make **moral** decisions that depend on how their actions will be punished or rewarded. They tend to follow the rules that their parents and teachers make because they are thinking about getting something good or not getting in trouble. This level is the simplest way of thinking about right and wrong. It is made up of two stages:

Stage 1: Obedience and Punishment

[8] Stage 1 focuses on the child's desire to avoid punishments by obeying the rules. For example, they see an action as **morally** wrong because the person who did it is punished; the harsher the punishment, the worse they think the

Paragraph 7

Write: What does a person at the preconventional level think is most important?

- *Punishments and rewards*

² a person who responds to questions during an interview

action is. In the situation at the beginning of this article, Joe would display Stage 1 thinking if he decided to tell the store owner about Kim's theft because he was afraid of getting punished later if he didn't.

Stage 2: Self-Interest

[9] In Stage 2, a child asks, "What's in it for me?" The child defines right behavior as whatever is in their best interest. Any concern they show for others is not based on true loyalty or respect, but on a "you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours" mentality. For example, if a parent asks a child to do a chore, the child asks "What's in it for me?" and the parents motivate the child by giving them an allowance. Joe knows that Kim will share the candy bar with him, so, if he is a Stage 2 thinker, he might decide that he will benefit himself by not telling the store owner about the theft.

Level 2: Conventional

[10] When something is *conventional*, that means that most members of a community consider it acceptable or polite. People at the conventional level are motivated by society's rules and expectations. They continue to accept the rules of authority figures but now believe that this will support positive relationships and order in society. Children — and even adults — at this level tend to follow rules without question, and they rarely ask whether a rule is fair.

Stage 3: Good Boy, Nice Girl

[11] In Stage 3, people want the approval of others and act in ways that will make others like them. They focus on good behavior and people being "nice" to others. Like most of us, Joe has been taught that "nice kids" tell the truth, so if he's at Stage 3 of moral development, he will tell the store owner about Kim's theft in order to win the store owner's approval.

Stage 4: Law and Order

[12] In Stage 4, people tend to accept rules and conventions because they are important in society. They see rules as being the same for everyone, and they think it is important and valuable to do what one is "supposed" to do. If one person breaks a law, perhaps everyone would — so there is a duty to follow laws and rules. Most people remain at stage 4 for life, basing their **morality** on standards set by others. Since stealing is against the law, Stage 4 thinking would say that Joe must tell the store owner the truth about Kim's theft.

Paragraphs 8-9

Write: How do people at Stage 1 think differently than people at Stage 2?

- *Stage 1 thinkers are focused on not getting punished.*
- *Stage 2 thinkers are focused on getting good things (rewards) for themselves.*

Paragraph 10

Write: What does a person at the conventional level think is most important?

- *Society's rules and expectations*

Paragraphs 11-12

Write: How do people at Stage 3 think differently than people at Stage 4?

- *Stage 3 thinkers follow rules so that other people will like them.*
- *Stage 4 thinkers follow rules because they believe the rules themselves are important.*

WHOLE CLASS READING

Level 3: Postconventional

[13] At the postconventional level, a person bases their sense of **morality** on their own beliefs and values. They believe that some laws are unfair and should be changed or eliminated. They also believe that individuals may break rules that go against their own values.

Stage 5: Social Contract

[14] Someone at Stage 5 believes that people should respect the rights and opinions of others. They see laws as agreements between members of a community instead of unchangeable rules. If a law does not make things better for the community in general, the community should change it to create the greatest good for the greatest number of people. The community does this by working together to make decisions; sometimes this work is done through elected representatives. The U.S. government and other

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraph 13

Write: What does a person at the postconventional level think is most important?

- *Their own beliefs and values*
- *Doing what is right, even if it is against the rules*

democratic governments are based on Stage 5 reasoning. In Joe's case, Stage 5 thinking shows that stealing from the convenience store could cause the store to close or leave the neighborhood, thereby hurting the community as a whole. For this reason, Joe would choose to turn Kim in, since this would hurt one person but benefit many others.

Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principles

[15] Someone at Stage 6 will base their **moral** decision-making on universal³ ethical principles such as equality or respect. They believe that only laws based on justice are valid, so people must disobey unjust laws. If a person at Stage 6 goes against their own beliefs, they feel guilty. The Stage 6 thinker acts because they believe it is **morally** right to do so, in spite of punishment, their own self-interest, or the law. Although Kohlberg insisted that Stage 6 exists, he found few people who made decisions at that level all the time. In Joe's case, a Stage 6 decision would depend on his personal beliefs. If Joe believes that telling the truth is the highest moral obligation, he will do so, even though it hurts his friend. However, if he believes that loyalty to one's friends is a more important moral obligation than telling the truth, he will lie and cover up what Kim did.

What Is the Right Thing to Do?

[16] As you can see, people with different ways of thinking about ethics can come to different conclusions about what is right. Kohlberg found that people's ways of making decisions tend to change over their lifetime, and that a person will rarely go backwards through the levels of moral development. Once a person begins to think in a Stage 5 way about what benefits the community as a whole, they will almost never go back to a Stage 2 level of looking out for themselves first. You may notice these changes in yourself over the next several years, as you learn more about the world and develop new ways of thinking. When you consider your own actions, ask yourself: how do I tell right from wrong?

Paragraphs 14-15

Write: How do people at Stage 5 think differently than people at Stage 6?

- *Stage 5 thinkers do what they think is best for the community.*
- *Stage 6 thinkers do what they think is right, regardless of consequences.*

Paragraph 16

A. Turn & Talk: According to Kohlberg, do people become more or less selfish as they age?

- *People become less selfish. The preconventional level is focused on self-benefit, but the postconventional level is focused on community and higher ideals.*

B. Think & Share: Look back at your answer to the question for Paragraph 1. Which of Kohlberg's stages did you demonstrate in your answer? Explain your reasoning.

- *Student answers will vary.*

"How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?" by Anne-Marie Reidy. Copyright © 2019 by CommonLit, Inc. This text is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

³ **Universal (adjective):** general; existing in all places and at all times

Name _____ Class _____

Independent Practice

Directions: Answer the multiple choice questions for “How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?” 5 minutes



Note: To ensure test security, answers to the following assessment items are viewable only on commonlit.org for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the Answer Key tab on the text page to gain access.

1. Which statement *best* states a central idea of the article? **[RI.2]**
 - A. Lawrence Kohlberg interviewed a group of young men about moral decision making.
 - B. Lawrence Kohlberg realized that people make decisions the same way their entire lives.
 - C. Lawrence Kohlberg concluded that people’s moral decision making develops as they age.
 - D. Lawrence Kohlberg found that young children make decisions based on avoiding punishment.
2. Which statement *best* describes the difference between preconventional reasoning and postconventional reasoning? **[RI.3]**
 - A. Preconventional reasoning is based on community norms, but postconventional reasoning is based on religious beliefs.
 - B. Preconventional reasoning is based on avoiding punishment, but postconventional reasoning is based on earning rewards.
 - C. Preconventional reasoning is based on benefiting oneself, but postconventional reasoning is based on one’s personal morals and values.
 - D. Preconventional reasoning is based on following one’s moral principles, but postconventional reasoning is based on doing what is best for oneself.
3. According to Kohlberg, how does Stage 4 moral reasoning represent a greater concern for society than Stage 3 reasoning? **[RI.3]**
 - A. Stage 4 moral reasoning is concerned about society’s laws instead of a desire for approval.
 - B. Stage 4 moral reasoning is concerned about society’s approval instead of what is morally right.
 - C. Stage 4 moral reasoning is concerned about other people’s approval instead of personal rewards.
 - D. Stage 4 moral reasoning is concerned about other people’s success instead of avoiding punishment.
4. Which quotation below *best* supports the idea that the common good becomes more important to people as they age? **[RI.1]**
 - A. “Kohlberg came up with a theory to describe the different ways that human beings make moral choices.” (Paragraph 5)
 - B. “They tend to follow the rules that their parents and teachers make because they are thinking about getting something good or not getting in trouble.” (Paragraph 7)
 - C. “They see rules as being the same for everyone, and they think it is important and valuable to do what one is ‘supposed’ to do.” (Paragraph 12)
 - D. “Once a person begins to think in a Stage 5 way about what benefits the community as a whole, they will almost never go back to a Stage 2 level of looking out for themselves first.” (Paragraph 16)



Independent Practice

Directions: Answer the short response prompt for “How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?” 15 minutes

Note: To ensure test security, a sample answer to the following short response item is viewable only on commonlit.org for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the Answer Key tab on the text page to access it.

PROMPT: Read the scenario below. Explain what Camilla might do if she was at Level 2 (conventional) of her moral development. Use evidence from the text and your own life to support your answer. **[RI.1]**

Scenario: *At the local farmer’s market, Camilla witnesses a person stealing food from different food stands. Camilla then notices that the person gives the stolen food to someone who appears to be in need. Camilla could report the theft, but that might cause the person receiving the food to go hungry. What should Camilla do?*

Make sure your paragraph is complete by:

- starting with an argument that clearly answers the prompt
- including two pieces of evidence that support your argument
- explaining how your evidence supports your argument

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A COMPLETE PARAGRAPH:

- ☐ Did you begin with an argument that clearly answers the prompt?
 - a. YES!
 - b. No, I will go back and add that.
- ☐ Did you include at least **two** pieces of evidence that support your argument?
 - a. YES!
 - b. No, I will go back and add that.
- ☐ Did you explain how each piece of evidence supports your argument?
 - a. YES!
 - b. No, I will go back and add that.

Quick Partner Discussion

Directions: Discuss the questions with a partner. Record both of your answers to the questions. Practice referring to text evidence by using the discussion sentence starters. *5 minutes*



Examples of how you can **refer to text evidence**:

- *In paragraph/line [X], the narrator/character/speaker says...*
- *For example, in the text it says that...*
- *One moment that illustrates this is...*
- *Remember in the story we read that...*
- *I can prove this because...*
- *Look at...*

1. Which stage of **moral** development do you think students at your school display most often? Why?

My answer	My partner's answer

2. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** Consider Judson and Marcia's positions on crime and punishment in the story "Ruthless." Which level of **moral** development best describes Judson's point of view? Which level of **moral** development best describes Marcia's point of view? Explain your answer.

My answer	My partner's answer

LESSON OVERVIEW: “BUTTON, BUTTON”

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the unit?

Reading Lesson 1	Reading Lesson 2	Reading Lesson 3	Reading Lesson 4	Reading Lesson 5
“Ruthless” by William DeMille (Short Story)	“How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?” by Anne-Marie Reidy (Informational Text)	“Button, Button” by Richard Matheson (Short Story)	“Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl (Short Story)	“Lather and Nothing Else” by Hernando Téllez (Short Story)
↑ You are here! ↑				




This lesson’s skill focus

In this lesson, students will analyze how an author builds **suspense** through characters’ different **points of view**. [RL.8.6]

About this Short Story

This short story explores what happens when a couple is presented with a mysterious red button and a tempting offer. While pushing the button could bring them great joy, it would also cause someone else great pain which leads the couple to question their individual morals.

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
 <p>Teacher-led, scaffolded and supportive</p>	 <p>Greater student independence</p>	 <p>Student-led, small groups</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the recommended reading modalities (whole class, partner, independent) Pause to answer the During Reading Questions during reading. <p>70 total minutes for this lesson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign longer chunks of independent reading. Skip some supportive During Reading Questions Instruct students to take notes independently: As you read, take notes on Norma and Arthur’s differing points of view of the red button. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put students into groups of 3-5 Students answer the During Reading Questions and alternate readers to read sections aloud. Circulate to check for understanding
↑ Recommended! ↑		

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Button, Button

Richard Matheson

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

About this text

Richard Matheson (1926-2013) was an American author known for his fantasy, horror, and science fiction stories. He wrote 16 episodes of the classic television show *The Twilight Zone*, and seven of his novels and short stories (including this one) have been turned into movies.

Purpose for Reading

To learn about how authors build suspense through different characters' points of view and consider what those perspectives reveal about how we make decisions.

Vocabulary

Let's pronounce these words together as a class:

Immoral [ih-**mor**-uhl]

Intrigue [in-**treeg**]

Offensive[uh-**fen**-siv]

WHOLE CLASS READING

DURING READING QUESTIONS

[1] The package was lying by the front door — a cube-shaped carton sealed with tape, their name and address printed by hand: "Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lewis, 217 E. Thirty-seventh Street, New York, New York 10016." Norma picked it up, unlocked the door, and went into the apartment. It was just getting dark.

[2] After she put the lamb chops in the broiler, she sat down to open the package.

[3] Inside the carton was a push-button unit fastened to a small wooden box. A glass dome covered the button. Norma tried to lift it off, but it was locked in place. She turned the unit over and saw a folded piece of paper Scotch-taped to the bottom of the box. She pulled it off: "Mr. Steward will call on you at 8:00 P.M."

[4] Norma put the button unit beside her on the couch. She reread the typed note, smiling.

[5] A few moments later, she went back into the kitchen to make the salad.

[6] The doorbell rang at eight o'clock. "I'll get it," Norma called from the kitchen. Arthur was in the living room, reading.

[7] There was a small man in the hallway. He removed his hat as Norma opened the door. "Mrs. Lewis?" he inquired politely.

[8] "Yes?"

[9] "I'm Mr. Steward."

[10] "Oh, yes." Norma repressed¹ a smile. She was sure now it was a sales pitch.

¹ **Repress** (verb): to stop oneself from doing

- [11] "May I come in?" asked Mr. Steward.
- [12] "I'm rather busy," Norma said, "I'll get you your whatchamacallit, though." She started to turn.
- [13] "Don't you want to know what it is?"
- [14] Norma turned back. Mr. Steward's tone had been **offensive**. "No, I don't think so," she replied.
- [15] "It could prove very valuable," he told her.
- [16] "*Monetarily?*" she challenged.
- [17] Mr. Steward nodded. "Monetarily," he said.
- [18] Norma frowned. She didn't like his attitude. "What are you trying to sell?" she asked.
- [19] "I'm not selling anything," he answered.
- [20] Arthur came out of the living room. "Something wrong?"
- [21] Mr. Steward introduced himself.
- [22] "*Oh*, the — " Arthur pointed toward the living room and smiled. "What is that gadget anyway?"
- [23] "It won't take long to explain," replied Mr. Steward. "May I come in?"
- [24] "If you're selling something — ," Arthur said.
- [25] Mr. Steward shook his head. "I'm not."
- [26] Arthur looked at Norma. "Up to you," she said.
- [27] He hesitated. "Well, why not?" he said.

- [28] They went into the living room and Mr. Steward sat in Norma's chair. He reached into an inside coat pocket and withdrew a small sealed envelope. "Inside here is a key to the bell-unit dome," he said. He set the envelope on the chair-side table. "The bell is connected to our office."
- [29] "What's it for?" asked Arthur.
- [30] "If you push the button," Mr. Steward told him, "somewhere in the world someone you don't know will die. In return for which you will receive a payment of \$50,000."
- [31] Norma stared at the small man. He was smiling.
- [32] "What are you talking about?" Arthur asked him.
- [33] Mr. Steward looked surprised. "But I've just explained," he said.
- [34] "Is this a practical joke?" asked Arthur.
- [35] "Not at all. The offer is completely genuine."²
- [36] "You aren't making sense," Arthur said. "You expect us to believe — "
- [37] "Whom do you represent?" demanded Norma.

² **Genuine** (*adjective*): real or actual; authentic

Paragraphs 8-14

Think & Share: What is Norma's attitude toward the button box and Mr. Steward when he first arrives?

- *She is busy and uninterested in the button box.*
- *She thinks Mr. Steward is just trying to sell her something.*

Paragraphs 15-17

Turn & Talk: When does Norma first become intrigued by Mr. Steward?

- *He says it could help them acquire money, so Norma becomes interested.*

[38] Mr. Steward looked embarrassed. "I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to tell you that," he said. "However, I assure you, the organization is of international scope."³

[39] "I think you'd better leave," Arthur said, standing.

[40] Mr. Steward rose. "Of course."

[41] "And take your button unit with you."

[42] "Are you sure you wouldn't care to think about it for a day or so?"

[43] Arthur picked up the button unit and the envelope and thrust them into Mr. Steward's hands. He walked into the hall and pulled open the door.

[44] "I'll leave my card," said Mr. Steward. He placed it on the table by the door.

[45] When he was gone, Arthur tore it in half and tossed the pieces onto the table.

[46] Norma was still sitting on the sofa. "What do you think it was?" she asked.

[47] "I don't care to know," he answered.

[48] She tried to smile but couldn't. "Aren't you curious at all?"

[49] "No." He shook his head.

[50] After Arthur returned to his book, Norma went back to the kitchen and finished washing the dishes.

[51] "Why won't you talk about it?" Norma asked.

[52] Arthur's eyes shifted as he brushed his teeth. He looked at his reflection in the bathroom mirror.

[53] "Doesn't it **intrigue** you?"

[54] "It **offends** me," Arthur said.

[55] "I know, but" — Norma rolled another curler in her hair — "doesn't it **intrigue** you, too?"

[56] "You think it's a practical joke?" she asked as they went into the bedroom.

[57] "If it is, it's a sick one."

[58] Norma sat on her bed and took off her slippers. "Maybe it's some kind of psychological research."⁴

[59] Arthur shrugged. "Could be."

[60] "Maybe some eccentric⁵ millionaire is doing it."

[61] "Maybe."

[62] "Wouldn't you like to know?"

[63] Arthur shook his head.

[64] "Why?"

[65] "Because it's **immoral**," he told her.

Paragraphs 30-50

Write: Summarize Norma and Arthur's different attitudes toward the button unit.

- *Arthur is angered and offended by the button unit, but Norma is intrigued by what Mr. Steward said.*

POINT OF VIEW: Paragraphs 51-69

A. Find Evidence: Underline three details that reveal Arthur and Norma's different points of view.

- *"It **offends** me," Arthur said." (54)*
- *"Because it's immoral," he told her." (65)*
- *"Norma slid beneath the covers. 'Well, I think it's intriguing,' she said." (66)*
- *"Norma closed her eyes. Fifty thousand dollars, she thought." (69)*

B. Write: What could Norma and Arthur decide to do about the button unit?

- *They could decide to press the button and get the money or they could decide to throw away the button unit.*

³ reach or size

⁴ Psychological research refers to doctors who study human behaviors, sometimes by presenting people with a strange situation and seeing how they react.

⁵ **Eccentric** (adjective): strange or unusual

[66] Norma slid beneath the covers. "Well, I think it's **intriguing**," she said.

[67] Arthur turned off the lamp and leaned over to kiss her. "Good night," he said.

[68] "Good night." She patted his back.

[69] Norma closed her eyes. Fifty thousand dollars, she thought.

INDEPENDENT READING

[70] In the morning, as she left the apartment, Norma saw the card halves on the table. Impulsively,⁶ she dropped them into her purse. She locked the front door and joined Arthur in the elevator.

[71] While she was on her coffee break, she took the card halves from her purse and held the torn edges together. Only Mr. Steward's name and telephone number were printed on the card.

[72] After lunch, she took the card halves from her purse again and Scotch-taped the edges together. "Why am I doing this?" she thought.

[73] Just before five, she dialed the number. "Good afternoon," said Mr. Steward's voice.

[74] Norma almost hung up but restrained herself. She cleared her throat. "This is Mrs. Lewis," she said.

[75] "Yes, Mrs. Lewis," Mr. Steward sounded pleased.

[76] "I'm curious."

[77] "That's natural," Mr. Steward said.

[78] "Not that I believe a word of what you told us."

[79] "Oh, it's quite authentic,"⁷ Mr. Steward answered.

[80] "Well, whatever — " Norma swallowed. "When you said someone in the world would die, what did you mean?"

[81] "Exactly that," he answered. "It could be anyone. All we guarantee is that you don't know them. And, of course, that you wouldn't have to watch them die."

[82] "For \$50,000," Norma said.

[83] "That is correct."

[84] She made a scoffing sound. "That's crazy."

[85] "Nonetheless, that is the proposition,"⁸ Mr. Steward said. "Would you like me to return the button unit?"

[86] Norma stiffened. "*Certainly not.*" She hung up angrily.

[87] The package was lying by the front door; Norma saw it as she left the elevator. Well, of all the nerve, she thought. She glared at the carton as she

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraphs 70-89

Find Evidence: Underline three details that show Norma's interest in the button unit.

- "After lunch, she took the card halves from her purse again and Scotch-taped the edges together. 'Why am I doing this?' she thought." (72)
- "Opening the door, she picked up the package and carried it into the kitchen, leaving it on the table." (88)
- "She put the package in a bottom cabinet." (89)

⁶ **Impulsive** (*adjective*): acting or done without thinking

⁷ **Authentic** (*adjective*): real or actual; genuine

⁸ **Proposition** (*noun*): an offer or a plan

unlocked the door. I just won't take it in, she thought. She went inside and started dinner.

[88] Later, she went into the front hall. Opening the door, she picked up the package and carried it into the kitchen, leaving it on the table.

[89] She sat in the living room, looking out the window. After a while, she went back into the kitchen to turn the cutlets in the broiler. She put the package in a bottom cabinet. She'd throw it out in the morning.

PARTNER READING

[90] "Maybe some eccentric millionaire is playing games with people," she said.

[91] Arthur looked up from his dinner. "I don't understand you."

[92] "What does *that* mean?"

[93] "*Let it go*," he told her.

[94] Norma ate in silence. Suddenly, she put her fork down. "Suppose it's a genuine offer?" she said.

[95] Arthur stared at her.

[96] "Suppose it's a genuine offer?"

[97] "All right, suppose it is?" He looked incredulous. "What would you like to do? Get the button back and push it? *Murder* someone?"

[98] Norma looked disgusted. "*Murder*."

[99] "How would you define it?"

[100] "If you don't even *know* the person?" Norma said.

[101] Arthur looked astounded. "Are you saying what I think you are?"

[102] "If it's some old Chinese peasant ten thousand miles away? Some diseased native in the Congo?"⁹

[103] "How about a baby boy in Pennsylvania?" Arthur countered. "Some beautiful little girl on the next block?"

[104] "Now you're loading things."

[105] "The point is, Norma," he continued, "what's the difference whom you kill? It's still murder."

[106] "The point *is*," Norma broke in, "if it's someone you've never seen in your life and never *will* see, someone whose death you don't even have to *know* about, you *still* wouldn't push the button?"

[107] Arthur stared at her, appalled. "You mean *you would*?"

[108] "Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur."

[109] "What has the amount — "

DURING READING QUESTIONS

POINT OF VIEW: Paragraphs 94-116

A. Find Evidence: Underline three details that show how Norma tries to persuade Arthur that they should press the button.

- "*Suppose it's a genuine offer?*" (94, 96)
- "*If it's someone you've never seen in your life and never will see, someone whose death you don't even have to know about, you still wouldn't push the button?*" (106)
- "*A chance to take that trip to Europe we've always talked about.*" (110)

B. Write: How does Arthur respond to Norma's attempts to persuade him?

- *He tries to make her see that it is **morally** wrong to kill someone, even if that person is a stranger.*

C. Turn & Talk: Who do you think will win the argument over the red button?

- *Student answers will vary.*

⁹ a region and country in central Africa

[110] *"Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur,"* Norma interrupted. "A chance to take that trip to Europe we've always talked about."

[111] "Norma, no."

[112] "A chance to buy that cottage on the island."

[113] "Norma, *no*." His face was white.

[114] She shuddered. "All right, take it easy," she said. "Why are you getting so upset? It's only talk."

[115] After dinner, Arthur went into the living room. Before he left the table, he said, "I'd rather not discuss it anymore, if you don't mind."

[116] Norma shrugged. "Fine with me."

WHOLE CLASS READING

DURING READING QUESTIONS

[117] She got up earlier than usual to make pancakes, eggs, and bacon for Arthur's breakfast.

[118] "What's the occasion?" he asked with a smile.

[119] "No occasion." Norma looked **offended**. "I wanted to do it, that's all."

[120] "Good," he said. "I'm glad you did."

[121] She refilled his cup. "Wanted to show you I'm not — " She shrugged.

[122] "Not what?"

[123] "Selfish."

[124] "Did I say you were?"

[125] "Well" — she gestured vaguely — "last night..."

[126] Arthur didn't speak.

[127] "All that talk about the button," Norma said. "I think you — well, misunderstood me."

[128] "In what way?" His voice was guarded.

[129] "I think you felt" — she gestured again — "that I was only thinking of myself."

[130] "Oh."

[131] "I wasn't."

[132] "Norma — "

[133] "Well, I *wasn't*. When I talked about Europe, a cottage on the island — "

[134] "Norma, why are we getting so involved in this?"

[135] "I'm not involved at all." She drew in a shaking breath. "I'm simply trying to indicate that — "

[136] "*What?*"

[137] “That I'd like for *us* to go to Europe. Like for *us* to have a cottage on the island. Like for *us* to have a nicer apartment, nicer furniture, nicer clothes, a car. Like for *us* to finally have a *baby*, for that matter.”

[138] “Norma, we will,” he said.

[139] “*When?*”

[140] He stared at her in dismay. “Norma — ”

[141] “*When?*”

[142] “Are you” — he seemed to draw back slightly — “are you really saying — ”

[143] “I'm saying that they're probably doing it for some research project!” she cut him off. “That they want to know what average people would do under such a circumstance! That they're just *saying* someone would die, in order to study reactions, see if there'd be guilt, anxiety, whatever! You don't think they'd *kill* somebody, do you?!”

[144] Arthur didn't answer. She saw his hands trembling. After a while, he got up and left.

[145] When he'd gone to work, Norma remained at the table, staring into her coffee. I'm going to be late, she thought. She shrugged. What difference did it make? She should be home, anyway, not working in an office.

[146] While she was stacking dishes, she turned abruptly, dried her hands, and took the package from the bottom cabinet. Opening it, she set the button unit on the table. She stared at it for a long time before taking the key from its envelope and removing the glass dome. She stared at the button. How ridiculous, she thought. All this furor over a meaningless button.

[147] Reaching out, she pressed it down. For *us*, she thought angrily.

[148] She shuddered. Was it *happening*? A chill of horror swept across her.

[149] In a moment, it had passed. She made a contemptuous¹⁰ noise. *Ridiculous*, she thought. To get so worked up over nothing.

[150] She threw the button unit, dome, and key into the wastebasket and hurried to dress for work.

[151] She had just turned over the supper steaks when the telephone rang. She picked up the receiver. “Hello?”

[152] “Mrs. Lewis?”

[153] “Yes?”

[154] “This is the Lenox Hill Hospital.”

[155] She felt unreal as the voice informed her of the subway accident — the shoving crowd, Arthur pushed from the platform in front of the train. She was conscious of shaking her head but couldn't stop.

Paragraphs 134-145

A. Write: In paragraph 137, why does Norma use “us” over and over again?

- *to convince Arthur that she is thinking about how the money from the button unit could benefit both of them*
- *to show Arthur that she is not selfish*

B. Turn & Talk: Summarize Norma's reasons for wanting to use the button unit.

- *She wants to travel, have a vacation home, nicer things, and a family.*
- *She believes that she should not have to work outside the home.*

Paragraphs 151-157

A. Find Evidence: Underline two surprising things that happened after Norma pushes the red button.

- *“She felt unreal as the voice informed her of the subway accident — the shoving crowd, Arthur pushed from the platform in front of the train.” (155)*
- *“As she hung up, she remembered Arthur's life-insurance policy for \$25,000, with double indemnity for —”(156)*

¹⁰ **Contempt** (noun): disrespect or disgust

[156] As she hung up, she remembered Arthur's life-insurance policy for \$25,000, with double indemnity¹¹ for —

[157] “No.” She couldn't seem to breathe. She struggled to her feet and walked into the kitchen numbly. Something cold pressed at her skull as she removed the button unit from the wastebasket. There were no nails or screws visible. She couldn't see how it was put together.

[158] Abruptly, she began to smash it on the sink edge, pounding it harder and harder, until the wood split. She pulled the sides apart, cutting her fingers without noticing. There were no transistors in the box, no wires or tubes.

[159] The box was empty.

[160] She whirled with a gasp as the telephone rang. Stumbling into the living room, she picked up the receiver.

[161] “Mrs. Lewis?” Mr. Steward asked.

[162] It wasn't her voice shrieking so; it couldn't be. “*You said I wouldn't know the one that died!*”

[163] “My dear lady,” Mr. Steward said. “Do you really think you knew your husband?”

B. Write: How is this an example of situational irony?

- *Norma expected someone she had never met to die, not her husband.*
- *Norma expected the money to come from Mr. Steward, not her husband's life insurance policy.*

Paragraph 163

A. Write: What does Mr. Steward mean when he asks if Norma really “knew [her] husband”?

- *Norma's disagreement with Arthur over the button unit shows how little they understood each other.*
- *Norma's disagreement with Arthur over the button unit shows that they don't share the same values or morals.*

B. Poll the Class: Who is more to blame for Arthur's death: Norma or Mr. Steward? Be prepared to defend your response.

- A. Norma
- B. Mr. Steward

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¹¹ Double indemnity is a common offering of life insurance policies. In the case of accidental death of the insured person, the insurance company will pay the survivors twice the face value of the policy.

Name _____ Class _____

Independent Practice

Directions: Answer the multiple choice questions for “Button, Button.” 5 minutes



Note: To ensure test security, answers to the following assessment items are viewable only on commonlit.org for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the Answer Key tab on the text page to gain access.

1. Mr. Steward returns the button unit to the Lewis home after his phone conversation with Norma. How does this action affect the Lewises? **[RL.3]**
 - A. It encourages Norma to consider using the button unit.
 - B. It makes Arthur think about the advantages of the button unit.
 - C. It makes Norma and Arthur suspect that Mr. Steward is a criminal.
 - D. It encourages Norma and Arthur to think of ways to improve their life.
2. Which piece of evidence *best* reveals Norma’s curiosity toward Mr. Steward’s offer? **[RL.1]**
 - A. “Norma put the button unit beside her on the couch. She reread the typed note, smiling.” (Paragraph 4)
 - B. ““You think it’s a practical joke?” she asked as they went into the bedroom.” (Paragraph 56)
 - C. “Norma closed her eyes. Fifty thousand dollars, she thought.” (Paragraph 69)
 - D. “While she was stacking dishes, she turned abruptly, dried her hands, and took the package from the bottom cabinet.” (Paragraph 146)
3. What do paragraphs 97-106 reveal about Norma’s view of the world? **[RL.3]**
 - A. She believes that there are some things one should not do for money.
 - B. She believes people all over the world are essentially the same.
 - C. She believes it is every person’s job to care for others.
 - D. She believes some lives are worth more than others.
4. In paragraphs 129-145, what does the dialogue reveal about Norma’s motivations for pushing the button? **[RL.3]**
 - A. She is tired of arguing with Arthur.
 - B. She believes she deserves a better life.
 - C. She wants to become a more adventurous person.
 - D. She wants to be part of a psychological experiment.
5. Which statement *best* expresses a theme of the story? **[RL.2]**
 - A. Money provides people with interesting opportunities.
 - B. Being selfish gives people what they want in life.
 - C. Staying true to good morals causes death.
 - D. Greed leads to self destruction.

Independent Practice

Directions: Answer the short response prompt for “Button, Button.” 15 minutes



Note: To ensure test security, a sample answer to the following short response item is viewable only on commonlit.org for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the Answer Key tab on the text page to access it.

PROMPT: You have just read “Button, Button” by Richard Matheson. How does the author build suspense? [RL.6]

Make sure your paragraph is complete by:

- starting with an argument that clearly answers the prompt
- including two pieces of evidence that support your argument
- explaining how your evidence supports your argument

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A COMPLETE PARAGRAPH:

- ☐ Did you begin with an argument that clearly answers the prompt?
 - a. YES!
 - b. No, I will go back and add that.
- ☐ Did you include at least **two** pieces of evidence that support your argument?
 - a. YES!
 - b. No, I will go back and add that.
- ☐ Did you explain how each piece of evidence supports your argument?
 - a. YES!
 - b. No, I will go back and add that.

Quick Partner Discussion

Directions: Discuss the questions with a partner. Record both of your answers to the questions. Practice referring to text evidence by using the discussion sentence starters. *5 minutes*



Examples of how you can **refer to text evidence**:

- *In paragraph/line [X], the narrator/character/speaker says...*
- *For example, in the text it says that...*
- *One moment that illustrates this is...*
- *Remember in the story we read that...*
- *I can prove this because...*
- *Look at...*

1. **CROSS TEXTUAL:** Compare the **morals** of the main characters in “Ruthless” to the main characters in “Button, Button.” Which character from “Ruthless” is most **morally** similar to Norma? Which character from “Ruthless” is most **morally** similar to Arthur? Explain your answers.

My answer	My partner's answer

2. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** Using Kohlberg's stages of **moral** development, at which level(s) would you place Norma and Arthur? Explain which stage best fits the reasoning and actions of each character.

My answer	My partner's answer

3. In paragraphs 90-116, Norma tries to ignore the human suffering that would have to happen in order for her to **acquire** the \$50,000. What do you think the author is saying about the way greed affects people?

My answer	My partner's answer

LESSON OVERVIEW: WRITING A STRONG ARGUMENT

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the arc of writing for the unit?

Writing Lesson 1	Writing Lesson 2	Writing Lesson 3	Writing Lesson 4	Writing Lesson 5	Final Unit Writing Prompt (Recommended)
Exemplary Paragraph	Writing a Strong Argument	Unit 1 Essay: Planning	Writing Introductions	Writing Conclusions	What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least two of the following texts to support your answer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Ruthless" - "Button, Button" - "Lamb to the Slaughter" [W.2]
	↑ You are here! ↑				




This lesson's skill focus

Write clear, specific, and concise arguments that respond to a prompt. [W.8.2]
--

Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This lesson handout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Writing a Strong Argument" (Student Copy) • Student Reference Sheet: Strong Arguments

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	 Common Problems with Arguments: Students warm up by examining three sample arguments and identifying common errors that students often make.	5 min
Part 2	 Practice Writing Strong Arguments: After reviewing the definition and example of a strong argument, students practice writing arguments for two sample prompts about "Button, Button." A checklist is included for students to evaluate their work. Note: Students should not need copies of "Button, Button" to answer the prompts.	10 min
Optional Revision Task	 Optional Revision Task: Teachers may choose to have students revise their independent practice from "Button, Button" using what they have learned in this lesson. Note: Be sure to consider how to facilitate this if you choose to have students revise their previous assignment.	10 min
~15 to 25 min total		

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Writing a Strong Argument

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

About this Lesson

The first sentence in a short written response is called an argument (sometimes it's also called a claim or topic sentence). In this lesson, you will analyze three common mistakes students make when writing arguments and learn how to write a strong argument. [W.2]

PART 1: Common Problems with Arguments

Directions: Read the sample prompt. Then, evaluate the three arguments. (5 minutes)



PROMPT: You have just read “Button, Button” by Richard Matheson. How does the author build suspense?

Argument 1: In “Button, Button,” Richard Matheson builds suspense.

- a. This argument summarizes too much.
- b. This argument just restates the prompt.**
- c. This argument skips right to the evidence.

Argument 2: In “Button, Button,” Norma and Arthur are two characters who argue about a red button. Mr. Steward brought them the red button and told them that if they push it someone they don’t know will die and they will receive \$50,000. Norma really wants the money but Arthur doesn’t want to kill anyone, and this builds suspense.

- a. This argument summarizes too much.**
- b. This argument just restates the prompt.
- c. This argument skips right to the evidence.

Argument 3: In “Button, Button,” Richard Matheson builds suspense because in paragraph 100 it says, “Arthur looked astounded.”

- a. This argument summarizes too much.
- b. This argument just restates the prompt.
- c. This argument skips right to the evidence.**



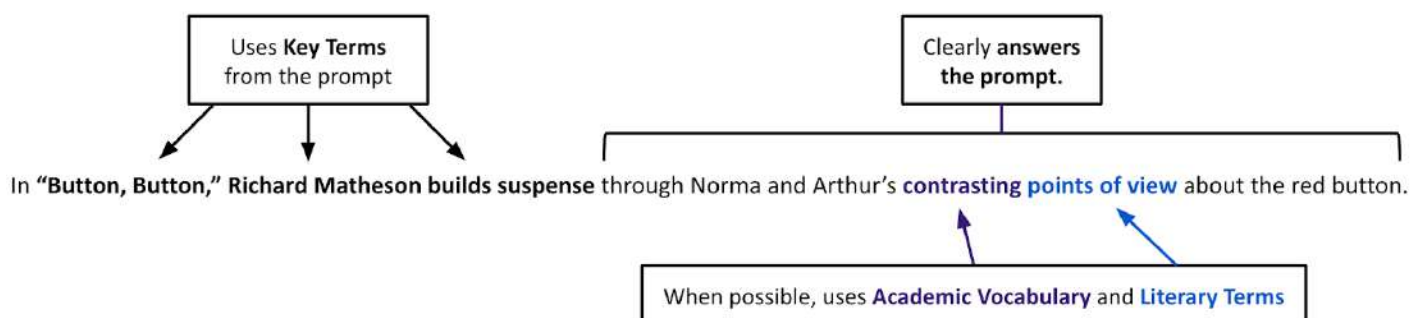
PART 2: Practice Writing Strong Arguments

Directions: Review the definition and example of a strong argument. Then, write two arguments using the example as a guide. (10 minutes)

Strong Arguments clearly answer the prompt using academic vocabulary and literary terms.

Example:

Prompt: You have just read “Button, Button” by Richard Matheson. How does the author build suspense?



1. **Practice Prompt:** In “Button, Button” by Richard Matheson, what does Arthur’s reaction to the red button suggest about his character?

In “Button, Button,” Arthur’s reaction to pushing the red button suggests that he has strong morals and is an unselfish person.

Checklist For Strong Arguments:

- ☐ Clearly answers the prompt
- ☐ Uses key words from the prompt
- ☐ Uses academic vocabulary
- ☐ Uses literary terms

2. **Practice Prompt:** What does the resolution of “Button, Button” by Richard Matheson reveal about Norma?

The ending of “Button, Button” reveals that Norma values her own desires over the lives of others.

Checklist For Strong Arguments:

- ☐ Clearly answers the prompt
- ☐ Uses key words from the prompt
- ☐ Uses academic vocabulary
- ☐ Uses literary terms

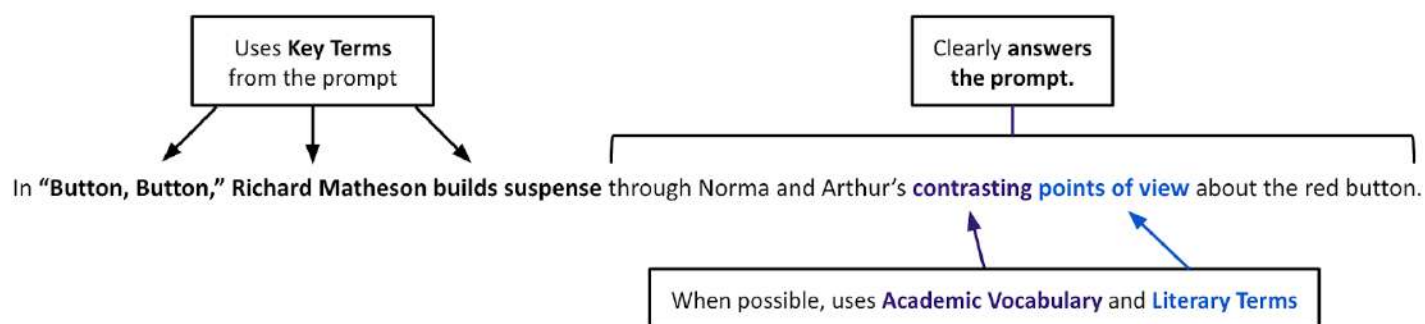
WRITING ARGUMENTS

Strong Arguments

Strong arguments clearly answer the prompt using academic vocabulary and literary terms.

Example of a strong argument:

PROMPT: You have just read “Button, Button” by Richard Matheson. How does the author build suspense?



Weak Arguments

Weak arguments only restate the prompt, summarize too much information, or include evidence in the argument.

- **Weak example that restates the prompt:**
 - *In “Button, Button,” Richard Matheson builds suspense.*
- **Weak example that summarizes too much information in the argument:**
 - *In “Button, Button,” Norma and Arthur are two characters who argue about a red button. Mr. Steward brought them the red button and told them that if they push it someone they don’t know will die and they will receive \$50,000. Norma really wants the money but Arthur doesn’t want to kill anyone, and this builds suspense.*
- **Weak example that includes evidence in the argument:**
 - *In “Button, Button,” Richard Matheson builds suspense because in paragraph 100 it says, “Arthur looked astounded.”*

LESSON OVERVIEW: Discussion Skill Lesson

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How should I use this discussion skill lesson?

Research shows that students in language-rich environments retain more content knowledge and are more engaged in their learning. We also believe discussion is important because it allows students to develop their ideas in conversation with others. That's why every CommonLit 360 unit includes explicit instruction on essential speaking and listening skills for academic discussions. This lesson gives students a chance to analyze a sample discussion between students and learn powerful discussion moves that they can apply across content areas.

This lesson's skill focus




Students will receive explicit instruction on how to **use evidence to build on or challenge others' ideas** [SL.8.1]

Discussion skill at a glance

Statements that Build On or Challenge Others' Ideas:

- *I agree with _____, and I want to add...*
- *I found another example of what _____ brought up on page _____ ...*
- *I see it slightly differently because on page _____ ...*
- *I can see your point, but...*

What activities are included in this packet?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	 Discussion Expectations: Students work independently or with a partner to brainstorm expectations for successful class discussions. Teachers then share out their expectations for the class.	5 min
Part 2	 Sample Discussion: Students analyze the transcript of a sample student discussion to notice strong discussion moves.	8 min
Part 3	 Using Evidence to Build On or Challenge Others' Ideas: Students learn prompts that can help them use evidence to build on or challenge others' ideas.	7 min
~20 min total		

Looking ahead in the unit: upcoming class discussion

In the following lesson, students will participate in a discussion, applying the skills they learned in this skill lesson.

DISCUSSION PROMPT:

In "Ruthless," Judson's plan to punish a thief leads to his own death. In "Button, Button," Norma's desire for a better life leads to her husband's death.

***In these stories, do you think people get what they deserve?
Why or why not?***

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Using Evidence to Build On or Challenge Others' Ideas

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

PART 1: Discussion Expectations

Directions: Independently or with a partner, use the space below to answer the following question. Then, add to your notes as your teacher reviews a set of discussion expectations.



What Expectations Should We Follow To Have Strong Class Discussions?

1. *Prepare by reading or brainstorming ideas.*
2. *Wait until someone has finished speaking before you share your thoughts.*
3. *Respect each other's ideas.*
4. *Talk to your classmates, not just your teacher.*
5. *Use a strong, confident voice.*

Note to Teachers: Ask students to share the expectations they come up with. If students do not mention the expectations listed above, have students add to their notes. Also, teachers may wish to use other expectations they have created for class discussions.



PART 2: Sample Discussion

Directions: Read the excerpt from a student discussion about the text “Button, Button.” As you read, pause to answer the questions beside the text.

Note to Teachers: Consider having four students perform the “Sample Discussion Dialogue” while their classmates listen and answer the questions.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION PROMPT

Who is more to blame for Arthur’s death: Norma or Mr. Steward?

SAMPLE DISCUSSION DIALOGUE

[1] **Pam:** It’s so clear that Mr. Steward is responsible for Arthur’s death. He is the one who presented the button unit to Norma and Arthur in the first place! One moment in the text that illustrates this is in paragraph 15, when Mr. Steward comes to their house and tempts them with the button unit by saying “it could prove very valuable.” Only later does he tell them that using it will kill someone they don’t know.

[2] **Adrienne:** I agree with Pam, and I want to add on to that. Not only does Mr. Steward come to their house once, he is persistent after Arthur turns him away the first time. In paragraph 87, when Norma sees that “the package was lying by the front door,” it’s clear that Mr. Steward has left the package there again. And Mr. Steward leaving it there is what leads to everything else that happens in the story.

[3] **Devin:** Adrienne, I respectfully disagree with you because Norma had a choice about what to do with the button unit. She is definitely more to blame.

[4] **Adrienne:** Can you say more about what you mean, Devin?

[5] **Devin:** Yes. Remember in the story when Norma and Arthur are arguing about the button unit? In paragraph 106, she defends using it when she asks Arthur, “If it’s someone... whose death you don’t even have to *know* about, you *still* wouldn’t push the button?” She’s trying to justify it. She could choose not to use it, but she clearly wants to.

[6] **Josh:** I found another example of what Devin is saying near the end of the story in paragraph 148. As Norma pushes the button, she thinks, “Was it *happening?*” and it says that “a chill of horror swept across her.” She clearly knows what she is doing and she could have chosen not to, so she is the person at fault.

QUESTIONS

Paragraphs 1-6

A. Find Evidence: Underline three examples of how students lead into presenting evidence to their classmates.

- *One moment in the text that illustrates this is in paragraph 15... (1)*
- *In paragraph 87, when Norma sees that... (2)*
- *Remember in the story when... (5)*
- *I found another example of what Devin is saying near the end of the story... (6)*

B. Write: How do Adrienne and Devin use evidence in different ways?

- *Adrienne uses evidence to build on the idea of another classmate, whom she agrees with.*
- *Devin uses evidence to show that he disagrees with another classmate’s idea.*

C. Think & Share: How do the students’ use of evidence improve the conversation?

- *It gives support for their ideas.*
- *It helps students build on others’ ideas with specific examples.*
- *It helps students disagree by providing support for a different point of view.*



PART 3: Using Evidence to Build On or Challenge Others' Ideas

Directions: In our discussion, we are going to practice an important discussion strategy: how to use evidence to build on or challenge others' ideas. With a partner or independently, read the examples and summarize two key points to remember about this skill.

Examples of how you can **refer to text evidence to build on or challenge others' ideas**:

- *I agree with _____, and I want to add...*
- *I found another example of what _____ brought up on page _____ ...*
- *I see it slightly differently because on page _____ ...*
- *I can see your point, but...*

Key Points

During a class discussion, remember to...

1. *build on someone else's idea by sharing additional evidence that supports their point.*
2. *respectfully challenge someone else's idea by presenting evidence that supports a different point of view.*

5 Ways to Have a Great Class Discussion

Preparing for A Class Discussion

Below are five different ways to conduct classroom discussions. Read over the options and select the one that best fits the needs and personality of your classroom. Before starting any discussion, give students time to prepare talking points with their student-facing brainstorming handouts.

1. Silent Discussion (Distance Learning Option)

In this type of discussion, students write their answer to the discussion question on a piece of paper. Then they pass the paper to a classmate, who reads the answer and responds. This discussion is done on paper or a digital discussion board.

How to:

1. The teacher gives each student a paper with the discussion question at the top.
2. Students respond to the question by writing their answer down. Students should be given about 2 minutes to write.
3. Students pass their paper (and response) to another person. Then they respond to the comment on the new paper they were just handed.
4. Students continue passing the papers and responding. As this activity progresses, students will need to read all of the comments on the paper they were handed, so they may need more than two minutes.
5. Students should support their claims with text evidence and use the discussion sentence starters that were taught before the discussion started.
6. This type of discussion typically lasts between 10 and 15 minutes. Students should respond 5-10 times on different papers.

Preparation considerations:

- How will you have students pass the discussion papers?
- What will your noise expectations be? We recommend complete silence.
- How will you grade student participation?
- How will you share examples of successful “discussions” once writing is over?

Variations:

- Have a variety of discussion questions being passed around the room at the same time. For example, half the students have one discussion question and the other half have a different discussion question.

Distance Learning Option:

- Have students respond digitally. If you use Google Classroom, here’s a short [tutorial](#) on how to post a question that students can respond to.

2. Concentric Circles

In this type of discussion, students stand in concentric circles, facing a partner. Students have short discussions with a variety of partners as the concentric circles shift one person to the right or left.

How to:

1. Students form concentric circles and face a partner. Each student should have one partner.
2. Teacher poses the first discussion question and gives a time limit for discussion (no more than 2 minutes). Pairs begin the conversation. Each partner in the duo should share their thoughts on the discussion question.
3. Students should support their claims with text evidence and use the discussion strategy that was taught before the discussion started.
4. After the time limit has been reached, the teacher instructs one of the circles to shift one student to the left or the right.
5. New pairs are formed and begin discussing the discussion question again.
6. The teacher shifts the circles again and may pose new discussion questions as needed.
7. This type of discussion typically lasts between 10 and 15 minutes.

Preparation considerations:

- How will you arrange your classroom so everyone can stand in concentric circles?
- What should students take with them to the discussion? Paper? Pencil? Texts?
- How will you grade student participation?
- How long should each partner discussion last?
- How will you quiet the class down when the discussion time limit has been reached?

Variations:

- Have students stand in lines facing each other, instead of circles.

3. Conversation Stations

In this type of discussion, students begin discussion in groups of 4-6, then 2 of those students rotate to a new group as the teacher poses a new discussion question.

How to:

1. Students are arranged in groups of 4-6.
2. Teacher poses the first discussion question and gives a time limit for discussion (no more than four minutes).
3. Groups begin the conversation. Each student in the group should share their thoughts on the discussion question.
4. Students should support their claims with text evidence and use the discussion skill that was taught before the discussion started.
5. After the time limit has been reached, the teacher instructs two of the students from each group to join a new group.
6. The teacher poses a new discussion question and again allows 3-4 minutes for discussion. This process is repeated until the time for discussion is over and/or all discussion questions have been answered.
7. This type of discussion typically lasts between 15-20 minutes.

Preparation considerations:

- How will you arrange your classroom so everyone can be in a group of 4-6 students?
- How will you decide which students should rotate? Should the same students rotate each time?
- What should students take with them to the discussion? Paper? Pencil? Texts?
- How will you grade student participation?
- How long should each group discussion last?
- How will you quiet the class down when the discussion time limit has been reached?

Variations:

- Have more or less than two students change groups for each discussion question.
- Have the same students change groups each time.
- Have different students change groups each time.

4. Fishbowl

In this type of discussion, one pair of students have a discussion while the rest of the class observes. There are many variations of this discussion protocol that can get all students talking to one another.

How to:

1. Two students sit facing each other. The rest of the class forms a circle around them.
2. Teacher poses the first discussion question and gives a time limit for discussion (2-4 minutes, but the time limit depends on the age of your students and their ability to maintain a conversation).
3. The pair begin the conversation. Both students should share their thoughts on the discussion question.
4. Students should support their claims with text evidence and use the discussion strategy that was taught before the discussion started.
5. After the time limit has been reached, the teacher has a couple options: pose a new question to the same students, sub in a new student for one of the original students in the pair, or sub in two new students.
6. This process is repeated until the time for discussion is over and/or all discussion questions have been answered.
7. This type of discussion typically lasts between 15-30 minutes.

Preparation considerations:

- Which two students should be the first pair in the fishbowl?
- Will you have other students enter the center of the fishbowl?
- What will students who are observing be instructed to do? Take notes? Grade the discussion?
- What should students take with them to the discussion? Paper? Pencil? Texts?
- How will you grade student participation?
- How long should each group discussion last?

Variations:

See step 5 in “How to” for several options.

5. Socratic Seminar

In this type of discussion, students sit in a circle and have a free-flowing discussion about an open-ended question that is related to texts they've read.

How to:

1. All students sit in a circle.
2. Teacher poses the discussion question.
3. Students begin the conversation. All students are encouraged to talk, and they don't need to raise their hands to participate.
4. Students should support their claims with textual evidence and use the discussion skill (i.e. acknowledging their peer's idea) that was taught before the discussion started.
5. If the conversation stalls, the teacher may allow for silence or pose another open-ended discussion.
6. Socratic Seminars typically last between 10 and 30 minutes, depending on students' experience participating in discussions, students' ages, and the number of questions posed.

Preparation considerations:

- How will you arrange the desks in your classroom so everyone can sit in a circle?
- What should students take with them to the discussion? Paper? Pencil? Texts?
- How will you grade student participation?
- How long should the discussion last?
- What are the additional open-ended questions that you will ask students when the conversation stalls?

Variations:

- Half of the students sit in an inner circle, while the other half observe from an outer circle. Reverse roles half-way through the discussion. Students should be taking notes on their discussion handout.
- Another option is to allow individual students from the outer circle to join the conversation as the discussion progresses.

Note: Inspiration for this list of discussion protocols came from www.cultofpedagogy.com. "Conversation Stations" is based on the work of Sarah Brown Wessling.

During Discussion: Student Voice Tracker

Note to Teachers: Use this resource to capture notes on student participation during discussion.

Focus Discussion Skill: _____

Student Name	Tally the # of times the student has spoken	Tally the # of times student has used this unit's focus discussion skill	Additional Notes

LESSON OVERVIEW: “LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER”

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the unit?

Reading Lesson 1	Reading Lesson 2	Reading Lesson 3	Reading Lesson 4	Reading Lesson 5
“Ruthless” by William DeMille (Short Story)	“How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?” by Anne-Marie Reidy (Informational Text)	“Button, Button” by Richard Matheson (Short Story)	“Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl (Short Story)	“Lather and Nothing Else” by Hernando Téllez (Short Story)
			↑ You are here! ↑	




This lesson’s skill focus

In this lesson, students will analyze how an author builds **suspense** through **dramatic irony**. [RL.8.6]

About this Short Story

Is it truly possible to get away with murder? In this suspenseful short story, Roald Dahl describes the shocking way a woman reacts to her husband’s betrayal. Through the use of dramatic irony, readers know the truth and are held in suspense about whether others will learn it as well.

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
 <p>Teacher-led, scaffolded and supportive</p>	 <p>Greater student independence</p>	 <p>Student-led, small groups</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the recommended reading modalities (whole class, partner, independent) Pause to answer the During Reading Questions during reading. <p><i>80 total minutes for this lesson</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign longer chunks of independent reading. Skip some supportive During Reading Questions Instruct students to take notes independently: As you read, take notes on what you, the reader, know that other characters do not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put students into groups of 3-5 Students answer the During Reading Questions and alternate readers to read sections aloud. Circulate to check for understanding
↑ Recommended! ↑		

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Lamb to the Slaughter

Roald Dahl

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

About this text

Roald Dahl (1916-1990) was a British novelist, short story writer, and poet. Dahl's books and stories are known for their unexpected endings and often darkly comic themes. In this short story, Dahl describes a woman's reaction when her husband comes home with surprising news.

Purpose for Reading

To understand how authors build suspense through the use of dramatic irony and different points of view.

Vocabulary

Let's pronounce these words together as a class:

Acquire [uh-kwahyuh r]
Bliss [blis]
Console [kuh n-sohl]
Exasperate [ig-zas-puh-reyt]
Hospitality [hos-pi-tal-i-tee]

WHOLE CLASS READING

[1] The room was warm and clean, the curtains drawn, the two table lamps alight — hers and the one by the empty chair opposite. On the sideboard behind her, two tall glasses, soda water, whiskey. Fresh ice cubes in the Thermos bucket.

[2] Mary Maloney was waiting for her husband to come home from work.

[3] Now and again she would glance up at the clock, but without anxiety, merely to please herself with the thought that each minute gone by made it nearer the time when he would come. There was a slow smiling air about her, and about everything she did. The drop of a head as she bent over her sewing was curiously tranquil. Her skin — for this was her sixth month with child — had **acquired** a wonderful translucent¹ quality, the mouth was soft, and the eyes, with their new placid² look, seemed larger and darker than before. When the clock said ten minutes to five, she began to listen, and a few moments later, punctually as always, she heard the tires on the gravel outside, and the car door slamming, the footsteps passing the window, the key turning in the lock. She laid aside her sewing, stood up, and went forward to kiss him as he came in.

[4] "Hullo darling," she said.

[5] "Hullo darling," he answered.

[6] She took his coat and hung it in the closet. Then she walked over and made the drinks, a strongish one for him, a weak one for herself; and soon she was back

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraph 3

Find Evidence: Underline three details that describe Mary's attitude and feelings as she waits for her husband.

- *"to please herself with the thought that each minute gone by made it nearer the time when he could come." (3)*
- *"slow smiling air about her" (3)*
- *"curiously tranquil" (3)*

¹ clear or see-through

² **Placid** (adjective): not easily upset or excited; easygoing

again in her chair with the sewing, and he in the other, opposite, holding the tall glass with both hands, rocking it so the ice cubes tinkled against the side.

[7] For her, this was always a **blissful** time of day. She knew he didn't want to speak much until the first drink was finished, and she, on her side, was content to sit quietly, enjoying his company after the long hours alone in the house. She loved to luxuriate³ in the presence of this man, and to feel — almost as a sunbather feels the sun — that warm male glow that came out of him to her when they were alone together. She loved him for the way he sat loosely in a chair, for the way he came in a door, or moved slowly across the room with long strides. She loved the intent, far look in his eyes when they rested on her, the funny shape of the mouth, and especially the way he remained silent about his tiredness, sitting still with himself until the whiskey had taken some of it away.

Paragraphs 3-7

Turn & Talk: How does Mary feel about her husband?

- *She enjoys his company and loves simply being around him.*

INDEPENDENT READING

[8] "Tired darling?"

[9] "Yes," he said. "I'm tired," And as he spoke, he did an unusual thing. He lifted his glass and drained it in one swallow although there was still half of it, at least half of it left. She wasn't really watching him, but she knew what he had done because she heard the ice cubes falling back against the bottom of the empty glass when he lowered his arm. He paused a moment, leaning forward in the chair, then he got up and went slowly over to fetch himself another.

[10] "I'll get it!" she cried, jumping up.

[11] "Sit down," he said.

[12] When he came back, she noticed that the new drink was dark amber with the quantity of whiskey in it.

[13] "Darling, shall I get your slippers?"

[14] "No."

[15] She watched him as he began to sip the dark yellow drink, and she could see little oily swirls in the liquid because it was so strong.

[16] "I think it's a shame," she said, "that when a policeman gets to be as senior as you, they keep him walking about on his feet all day long."

[17] He didn't answer, so she bent her head again and went on with her sewing; but each time he lifted the drink to his lips, she heard the ice cubes clinking against the side of the glass.

[18] "Darling," she said. "Would you like me to get you some cheese? I haven't made any supper because it's Thursday."

[19] "No," he said.

[20] "If you're too tired to eat out," she went on, "it's still not too late. There's plenty of meat and stuff in the freezer, and you can have it right here and not even move out of the chair."

[21] Her eyes waited on him for an answer, a smile, a little nod, but he made no sign.

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraphs 10-23

Write: How do Mary and her husband act differently toward one another?

- *Mary wants to make her husband comfortable and satisfy his every need.*
- *Mary's husband barely speaks to her and rejects every offer she makes.*

³ delight or take pleasure in

[22] “Anyway,” she went on, “I’ll get you some cheese and crackers first.”

[23] “I don’t want it,” he said.

[24] She moved uneasily in her chair, the large eyes still watching his face. “But you must eat! I’ll fix it anyway, and then you can have it or not, as you like.”

[25] She stood up and placed her sewing on the table by the lamp.

[26] “Sit down,” he said. “Just for a minute, sit down.”

[27] It wasn’t till then that she began to get frightened.

[28] “Go on,” he said. “Sit down.”

[29] She lowered herself back slowly into the chair, watching him all the time with those large, bewildered⁴ eyes. He had finished the second drink and was staring down into the glass, frowning.

Paragraphs 24-29

Write: How has the conversation between Mary and her husband affected her?

- *She has become worried and afraid.*

WHOLE CLASS READING

[30] “Listen,” he said. “I’ve got something to tell you.”

[31] “What is it, darling? What’s the matter?”

[32] He had now become absolutely motionless, and he kept his head down so that the light from the lamp beside him fell across the upper part of his face, leaving the chin and mouth in shadow. She noticed there was a little muscle moving near the corner of his left eye.

[33] “This is going to be a bit of a shock to you, I’m afraid,” he said. “But I’ve thought about it a good deal and I’ve decided the only thing to do is tell you right away. I hope you won’t blame me too much.”

[34] And he told her. It didn’t take long, four or five minutes at most, and she sat very still through it all, watching him with a kind of dazed horror as he went further and further away from her with each word.

[35] “So there it is,” he added. “And I know it’s kind of a bad time to be telling you, but there simply wasn’t any other way. Of course I’ll give you money and see you’re looked after. But there needn’t really be any fuss. I hope not anyway. It wouldn’t be very good for my job.”

[36] Her first instinct⁵ was not to believe any of it, to reject it all. It occurred to her that perhaps he hadn’t even spoken, that she herself had imagined the whole thing. Maybe, if she went about her business and acted as though she hadn’t been listening, then later, when she sort of woke up again, she might find none of it had ever happened.

[37] “I’ll get the supper,” she managed to whisper, and this time he didn’t stop her.

[38] When she walked across the room she couldn’t feel her feet touching the floor. She couldn’t feel anything at all — except a slight nausea and a desire to vomit. Everything was automatic now — down the steps to the cellar, the light switch, the deep freeze, the hand inside the cabinet taking hold of the first object it met. She lifted it out, and looked at it. It was wrapped in paper, so she took off the paper and looked at it again.

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraphs 33-35

A. Turn & Talk: What do you think Mary’s husband has told her?

- *Her husband is leaving her.*

B. Find Evidence: Underline three details that support your conclusion.

- *“‘This is going to be a bit of a shock to you’” (33)*
- *“‘... watching him with a kind of dazed horror as he went further and further and further away from her ...’” (34)*
- *“‘Of course I’ll give you money and see you’re looked after.’” (35)*

⁴ **Bewilder** (verb): to confuse completely

⁵ **Instinct** (noun): a way of behaving or feeling that is natural, not learned

[39] A leg of lamb.

[40] All right then, they would have lamb for supper. She carried it upstairs, holding the thin bone-end of it with both her hands, and as she went through the living-room, she saw him standing over by the window with his back to her, and she stopped.

[41] "For God's sake," he said, hearing her, but not turning round. "Don't make supper for me. I'm going out."

[42] At that point, Mary Maloney simply walked up behind him and without any pause she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head.

[43] She might just as well have hit him with a steel club.

[44] She stepped back a pace, waiting, and the funny thing was that he remained standing there for at least four or five seconds, gently swaying. Then he crashed to the carpet.

[45] The violence of the crash, the noise, the small table overturning, helped bring her out of the shock. She came out slowly, feeling cold and surprised, and she stood for a while blinking at the body, still holding the ridiculous piece of meat tight with both hands.

[46] All right, she told herself. So I've killed him.

Paragraphs 40-46

Poll the Class: Who is more responsible for the murder: Mary or Patrick? Be prepared to defend your response.

- A. Mary
- B. Patrick

INDEPENDENT READING

[47] It was extraordinary, now, how clear her mind became all of a sudden. She began thinking very fast. As the wife of a detective, she knew quite well what the penalty would be. That was fine. It made no difference to her. In fact, it would be a relief. On the other hand, what about the child? What were the laws about murderers with unborn children? Did they kill them both — mother and child? Or did the wait until the tenth month? What did they do?

[48] Mary Maloney didn't know. And she certainly wasn't prepared to take a chance.

[49] She carried the meat into the kitchen, placed it in a pan, turned the oven on high, and shoved it inside. Then she washed her hands and ran upstairs to the bedroom. She sat down before the mirror, tidied her hair, touched up her lips and face. She tried a smile. It came out rather peculiar.⁶ She tried again.

[50] "Hullo Sam," she said brightly, aloud.

[51] The voice sounded peculiar too.

[52] "I want some potatoes please, Sam. Yes, and I think a can of peas."

[53] That was better. Both the smile and the voice were coming out better now. She rehearsed it several times more. Then she ran downstairs, took her coat, went out the back door, down the garden, into the street.

[54] It wasn't six o'clock yet and the lights were still on in the grocery shop.

[55] "Hullo Sam," she said brightly, smiling at the man behind the counter.

[56] "Why, good evening, Mrs. Maloney. How're you?"

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraphs 49-55

Find Evidence: Underline three details that show the actions Mary takes after she murders her husband.

- *"She carried the meat into the kitchen, placed it in a pan, turned the oven on high, and shoved it inside." (49)*
- *"She rehearsed it several times more. Then she ran downstairs, took her coat, went out the back door, down the garden, into the street." (53)*
- *"'Hullo Sam,' she said brightly, smiling at the man behind the counter." (55)*

⁶ **Peculiar** (adjective): unusual or not normal

[57] "I want some potatoes please, Sam. Yes, and I think a can of peas."

[58] The man turned and reached up behind him on the shelf for the peas.

[59] "Patrick's decided he's tired and doesn't want to eat out tonight," she told him. "We usually go out Thursdays, you know, and now he's caught me without any vegetables in the house."

[60] "Then how about meat, Mrs. Maloney?"

[61] "No, I've got meat, thanks. I got a nice leg of lamb from the freezer."

[62] "Oh."

[63] "I don't much like cooking it frozen, Sam, but I'm taking a chance on it this time. You think it'll be all right?"

[64] "Personally," the grocer said, "I don't believe it makes any difference. You want these Idaho potatoes?"

[65] "Oh yes, that'll be fine. Two of those."

[66] "Anything else?" The grocer cocked his head on one side, looking at her pleasantly. "How about afterwards? What you going to give him for afterwards?"

[67] "Well — what would you suggest, Sam?"

[68] The man glanced around his shop. "How about a nice big slice of cheesecake? I know he likes that."

[69] "Perfect," she said. "He loves it."

[70] And when it was all wrapped and she had paid, she put on her brightest smile and said, "Thank you, Sam. Goodnight."

[71] "Goodnight, Mrs. Maloney. And thank you."

DRAMATIC IRONY: Paragraphs 59-71

A. Write: During their conversation, Mary says to Sam, "Patrick's decided he's tired and doesn't want to eat out tonight" (59). What do Mary and the reader know that Sam does not?

- *Mary knows that Patrick is dead and that she killed him, but Sam thinks Patrick is alive and waiting for Mary at home.*

B. Write: How does this dramatic irony impact the reader?

- *It builds suspense because the readers wonder what Mary will do next to cover up the murder.*

PARTNER READING

[72] And now, she told herself as she hurried back, all she was doing now, she was returning home to her husband and he was waiting for his supper; and she must cook it good, and make it as tasty as possible because the poor man was tired; and if, when she entered the house, she happened to find anything unusual, or tragic, or terrible, then naturally it would be a shock and she'd become frantic⁷ with grief and horror. Mind you, she wasn't expecting to find anything. She was just going home with the vegetables. Mrs. Patrick Maloney going home with the vegetables on Thursday evening to cook supper for her husband.

[73] That's the way, she told herself. Do everything right and natural. Keep things absolutely natural and there'll be no need for any acting at all.

[74] Therefore, when she entered the kitchen by the back door, she was humming a little tune to herself and smiling.

[75] "Patrick!" she called. "How are you, darling?"

[76] She put the parcel⁸ down on the table and went through into the living room; and when she saw him lying there on the floor with his legs doubled up and one arm twisted back underneath his body, it really was rather a shock. All the old love

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraphs 72-82

Write: What is the motive behind Mary's actions?

- *to pretend she did not kill her husband because she was at the grocery store*
- *to try and act natural to make it seem like she doesn't know what happened*

⁷ **Frantic** (adjective): upset with fear of anxiety; acting in a hurried way

⁸ a package or collection of things wrapped in paper

and longing for him welled up⁹ inside her, and she ran over to him, knelt down beside him, and began to cry her heart out. It was easy. No acting was necessary.

[77] A few minutes later she got up and went to the phone. She knew the number of the police station, and when the man at the other end answered, she cried to him, “Quick! Come quick! Patrick’s dead!”

[78] “Who’s speaking?”

[79] “Mrs. Maloney. Mrs. Patrick Maloney.”

[80] “You mean Patrick Maloney’s dead?”

[81] “I think so,” she sobbed. “He’s lying on the floor and I think he’s dead.”

[82] “Be right over,” the man said.

WHOLE CLASS READING

[83] The car came very quickly, and when she opened the front door, two policemen walked in. She knew them both — she knew nearly all the men at that precinct¹⁰ — and she fell right into a chair, then went over to join the other one, who was called O’Malley, kneeling by the body.

[84] “Is he dead?” she cried.

[85] “I’m afraid he is. What happened?”

[86] Briefly, she told her story about going out to the grocer and coming back to find him on the floor. While she was talking, crying and talking, Noonan discovered a small patch of congealed¹¹ blood on the dead man’s head. He showed it to O’Malley who got up at once and hurried to the phone.

[87] Soon, other men began to come into the house. First a doctor, then two detectives, one of whom she knew by name. Later, a police photographer arrived and took pictures, and a man who knew about fingerprints. There was a great deal of whispering and muttering beside the corpse,¹² and the detectives kept asking her a lot of questions. But they always treated her kindly. She told her story again, this time right from the beginning, when Patrick had come in, and she was sewing, and he was tired, so tired he hadn’t wanted to go out for supper. She told how she’d put the meat in the oven — “it’s there now, cooking” — and how she’d slipped out to the grocer for vegetables, and come back to find him lying on the floor.

[88] “Which grocer?” one of the detectives asked.

[89] She told him, and he turned and whispered something to the other detective who immediately went outside into the street.

[90] In fifteen minutes he was back with a page of notes, and there was more whispering, and through her sobbing she heard a few of the whispered phrases — “...acted quite normal... very cheerful... wanted to give him a good supper... peas... cheesecake... impossible that she...”

[91] After a while, the photographer and the doctor departed and two other men came in and took the corpse away on a stretcher. Then the fingerprint man went

DURING READING QUESTIONS

DRAMATIC IRONY: Paragraphs 87-89

A. Think & Share: What do Mary and the readers know about “the meat in the oven” that the detectives do not?

- *They know the meat is the murder weapon.*

B. Write: How does this dramatic irony build suspense?

- *It builds suspense because we wonder if the detectives will discover the murder weapon, since Mary just mentioned it.*

Paragraphs 88-91

A. Think & Share: Why do the detectives need to know the grocer that Mary visited?

- *To check her alibi and make sure her story is true*

⁹ increased or became more intense

¹⁰ a police station in a specific district

¹¹ **Congeeal** (verb): solidify, especially because of cooling

¹² **Corpse** (noun): a dead body

away. The two detectives remained, and so did the two policemen. They were exceptionally nice to her, and Jack Noonan asked if she wouldn't rather go somewhere else, to her sister's house perhaps, or to his own wife who would take care of her and put her up for the night.

[92] No, she said. She didn't feel she could move even a yard at the moment. Would they mind awfully if she stayed just where she was until she felt better. She didn't feel too good at the moment, she really didn't.

[93] Then hadn't she better lie down on the bed? Jack Noonan asked.

[94] No, she said. She'd like to stay right where she was, in this chair. A little later, perhaps, when she felt better, she would move.

[95] So they left her there while they went about their business, searching the house. Occasionally one of the detectives asked her another question. Sometimes Jack Noonan spoke at her gently as he passed by. Her husband, he told her, had been killed by a blow on the back of the head administered with a heavy blunt instrument, almost certainly a large piece of metal. They were looking for the weapon. The murderer may have taken it with him, but on the other hand he may have thrown it away or hidden it somewhere on the premises.¹³

[96] "It's the old story," he said. "Get the weapon, and you've got the man."

[97] Later, one of the detectives came up and sat beside her. Did she know, he asked, of anything in the house that could've been used as the weapon? Would she mind having a look around to see if anything was missing — a very big spanner,¹⁴ for example, or a heavy metal vase.

[98] They didn't have any heavy metal vases, she said.

[99] "Or a big spanner?"

[100] She didn't think they had a big spanner. But there might be some things like that in the garage.

B. Think & Share: How does the visit to the grocer change the detectives' behaviors toward Mary?

- *They learn that Mary was acting normal so they do not think of her as a suspect.*

DRAMATIC IRONY: Paragraphs 96-100

A. Write: How is this section an example of dramatic irony?

- *Mary and the reader know that the weapon is cooking in the oven, but the detectives do not know this.*

B. Turn & Talk: When the detective Jack Noonan says, "Get the weapon, and you've got the man," what does this make the reader think might happen?

- *It makes the reader think that the detectives might realize the leg of lamb was the weapon and that Mary is the murderer.*

WHOLE CLASS READING

[101] The search went on. She knew that there were other policemen in the garden all around the house. She could hear their footsteps on the gravel outside, and sometimes she saw a flash of a torch through a chink in the curtains. It began to get late, nearly nine she noticed by the clock on the mantle. The four men searching the rooms seemed to be growing weary,¹⁵ a trifle **exasperated**.

[102] "Jack," she said, the next time Sergeant Noonan went by. "Would you mind giving me a drink?"

[103] "Sure I'll give you a drink. You mean this whiskey?"

[104] "Yes please. But just a small one. It might make me feel better."

[105] He handed her the glass.

[106] "Why don't you have one yourself," she said. "You must be awfully tired. Please do. You've been very good to me."

DURING READING QUESTIONS

¹³ a piece of land or property

¹⁴ a wrench

¹⁵ **Weary** (adjective): feeling or showing tiredness

[107] “Well,” he answered. “It’s not strictly allowed, but I might take just a drop to keep me going.”

[108] One by one the others came in and were persuaded to take a little nip of whiskey. They stood around rather awkwardly with the drinks in their hands, uncomfortable in her presence, trying to say **consoling** things to her. Sergeant Noonan wandered into the kitchen, came out quickly and said, “Look, Mrs. Maloney. You know that oven of yours is still on, and the meat is still inside.”

[109] “Oh dear me!” she cried. “So it is!”

[110] “I better turn it off for you, hadn’t I?”

[111] “Will you do that, Jack. Thank you so much.”

[112] When the sergeant returned the second time, she looked at him with her large, dark tearful eyes. “Jack Noonan,” she said.

[113] “Yes?”

[114] “Would you do me a small favor — you and these others?”

[115] “We can try, Mrs. Maloney.”

[116] “Well,” she said. “Here you all are, and good friends of dear Patrick’s too, and helping to catch the man who killed him. You must be terrible hungry by now because it’s long past your suppertime, and I know Patrick would never forgive me, God bless his soul, if I allowed you to remain in his house without offering you decent **hospitality**. Why don’t you eat up that lamb that’s in the oven. It’ll be cooked just right by now.”

[117] “Wouldn’t dream of it,” Sergeant Noonan said.

[118] “Please,” she begged. “Please eat it. Personally I couldn’t touch a thing, certainly not what’s been in the house when he was here. But it’s all right for you. It’d be a favor to me if you’d eat it up. Then you can go on with your work again afterwards.”

[119] There was a good deal of hesitating among the four policemen, but they were clearly hungry, and in the end they were persuaded to go into the kitchen and help themselves. The woman stayed where she was, listening to them speaking among themselves, their voices thick and sloppy because their mouths were full of meat.

[120] “Have some more, Charlie?”

[121] “No. Better not finish it.”

[122] “She wants us to finish it. She said so. Be doing her a favor.”

[123] “Okay then. Give me some more.”

[124] “That’s a hell of a big club the guy must’ve used to hit poor Patrick,” one of them was saying. “The doc says his skull was smashed all to pieces just like from a sledgehammer.”

[125] “That’s why it ought to be easy to find.”

[126] “Exactly what I say.”

[127] “Whoever done it, they’re not going to be carrying a thing like that around with them longer than they need.”

[128] One of them belched.

Paragraphs 101-118

A. Write: Why do you think Mary is really being **hospitable** to the police officers by offering them food and drink?

- *She wants to distract the detectives from their search for the murder weapon.*
- *She wants to get rid of the murder weapon.*

B. Write: How do Mary’s offers to the police officers build suspense?

- *Readers know that Mary is putting the murder weapon right in front of the police.*
- *Readers don’t know if Mary will successfully trick the police into eating the murder weapon.*

[129] "Personally, I think it's right here on the premises."

[130] "Probably right under our very noses. What you think, Jack?"

[131] And in the other room, Mary Maloney began to giggle.

DRAMATIC IRONY: Paragraphs 124-130

A. Find Evidence: Underline three details that reveal the detectives' beliefs about the murder weapon.

- *"it ought to be easy to find" (125)*
- *"I think it's right here on the premises" (129)*
- *"Probably right under our very noses" (130)*

B. Write: Explain why this is dramatic irony.

- *It's dramatic irony because Mary and the readers know that the weapon is right under their noses because they are eating it.*

Paragraph 131

Poll the Class: Do you agree that Mary should have gotten away with her crime? Be prepared to defend your response.

- A. No
- B. Yes

*"Lamb to the Slaughter" from *The Best of Roald Dahl*, © 1953, David Hingham Associates Limited. Reprinted with permission, all rights reserved.

Name _____ Class _____

Independent Practice

Directions: Answer the multiple choice questions for “Lamb to the Slaughter.” 5 minutes



Note: To ensure test security, answers to the following assessment items are viewable only on commonlit.org for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the Answer Key tab on the text page to gain access.

1. What is the meaning of “tranquil” as it is used in paragraph 3? **[RL.4]**
 - A. annoyed
 - B. relaxed
 - C. excited
 - D. dull
2. How does paragraph 34 build suspense for the reader? **[RL.6]**
 - A. Readers are curious about why Mary continues to make dinner for Patrick.
 - B. Readers are curious about the details of Patrick’s announcement.
 - C. Readers are curious about why Mary goes to the grocery store.
 - D. Readers are curious about the details of Patrick’s murder.
3. Which statement describes Mary’s motivation for covering up her crime? (Paragraphs 46-48) **[RL.3]**
 - A. She wants to protect her unborn child.
 - B. She thinks she did nothing wrong.
 - C. She is afraid of life in prison.
 - D. She does not want to die.
4. How does the detective’s conversation with the grocer affect the outcome of the story? (Paragraphs 88-90) **[RL.3]**
 - A. The police no longer suspect Mary of murdering her husband.
 - B. The police give up on finding the murder weapon near Mary’s home.
 - C. The police wonder why Mary was acting so strangely while shopping.
 - D. The police decide to ask Mary to help them solve her husband’s murder.
5. How does Detective Noonan’s comment about the murder weapon affect Mary’s actions? (Paragraph 96) **[RL.3]**
 - A. It causes Mary to feel guilty about fooling the detectives.
 - B. It causes Mary to act naturally when the detectives question her.
 - C. It causes Mary to pretend that she and her husband were getting along well.
 - D. It causes Mary to distract the detectives from their search for the murder weapon.



Independent Practice

Directions: Answer the short response prompt for “Lamb to the Slaughter.” 15 minutes

Note: To ensure test security, a sample answer to the following short response item is viewable only on commonlit.org for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the Answer Key tab on the text page to access it.

PROMPT: Explain how the dramatic irony in “Lamb to the Slaughter” impacts the reader. [RL.6]

In your argument, make sure to:

- clearly answer the prompt
- use key words from the prompt
- use academic vocabulary
- use literary terms

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A STRONG ARGUMENT:

- ☐ Highlight or bold your argument.

Did you clearly answer the prompt?

- a. YES!
- b. No, I will go back and do that.

Did you use key words from the prompt?

- a. YES!
- b. No, I will go back and add those.

Did you use academic vocabulary and/or literary terms to answer the prompt?

- a. YES!
- b. No, I will go back and add those.



Quick Partner Discussion

Directions: Discuss the questions with a partner. Record both of your answers to the questions. Practice referring to text evidence to build on or challenge others' ideas by using the discussion sentence starters. *5 minutes*

Examples of how you can **refer to text evidence to build on or challenge others' ideas**:

- *I agree with _____, and I want to add...*
- *I found another example of what _____ brought up on page _____ ...*
- *I see it slightly differently because on page _____ ...*
- *I can see your point, but...*

1. The idiom "lamb to the slaughter" refers to someone who innocently or unsuspectingly becomes a victim. In your opinion, is Mary a symbolic "lamb" or victim for whom we should have empathy, or is she a cold-blooded, **vindictive** killer who gets away with murder?

My answer	My partner's answer

2. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** Compare and contrast Judson's reasoning and actions in "Ruthless" with Mary's. Whose actions do you think are more **offensive**? Why?

My answer	My partner's answer

3. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** At which of Kohlberg's stages of **moral** development would you place Mary? Explain your answer.

My answer	My partner's answer

LESSON OVERVIEW: “LATHER AND NOTHING ELSE”

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the unit?

Reading Lesson 1	Reading Lesson 2	Reading Lesson 3	Reading Lesson 4	Reading Lesson 5
“Ruthless” by William DeMille (Short Story)	“How Do We Tell Right From Wrong?” by Anne-Marie Reidy (Informational Text)	“Button, Button” by Richard Matheson (Short Story)	“Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl (Short Story)	“Lather and Nothing Else” by Hernando Téllez (Short Story)
				↑ You are here! ↑




This lesson’s skill focus

In this lesson, students will determine how an author uses **internal conflict** to develop a **theme**. [RL.8.2, RL.8.3]

About this Short Story

In this short story a barber has the chance to easily kill a brutal military captain. The barber’s intense internal conflict will leave readers on the edge of their seat wondering: is it better to do the right thing or get vengeance?

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
 <p>Teacher-led, scaffolded and supportive</p>	 <p>Greater student independence</p>	 <p>Student-led, small groups</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the recommended reading modalities (whole class, partner, independent) Pause to answer the During Reading Questions during reading. <p><i>55 total minutes for this lesson</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign longer chunks of independent reading. Skip some supportive During Reading Questions Instruct students to take notes independently: As you read, take notes on the narrator’s internal conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put students into groups of 3-5 Students answer the During Reading Questions and alternate readers to read sections aloud. Circulate to check for understanding
↑ Recommended! ↑		

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Lather and Nothing Else

Hernando Téllez

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

About this text	
Hernando Téllez (1908-1966) was a Colombian journalist and author. This short story takes place in Colombia, where a civil war is taking place between ordinary citizens and the military that controls the country.	
Purpose for Reading	Vocabulary
To practice analyzing how internal conflict can reveal theme and continue exploring how people make choices between right and wrong.	<p>Let's pronounce these words together as a class:</p> <p>Diligence [dil-i-juh ns] Feign [feyn] Integrity [in-teg-ri-tee]</p>

WHOLE CLASS READING	DURING READING QUESTIONS
<p>[1] He didn't greet anyone when he came in. I was sharpening my best razor. And when I saw him I began to tremble. But he didn't notice. I continued to sharpen the razor to hide my alarm. Then I tested it against the tip of my thumb and held it up to the light again. He was removing his bandolier¹, with its holster dangling. He hung it on one of the nails in the wardrobe and placed his kepi² on top. He turned around to address me and, undoing his tie, said "It's hot as hell. Give me a shave." And he sat in the chair.</p> <p>[2] I estimated it had been four days since he had last shaved. The four days the latest expedition to hunt down our people had lasted. His face appeared sunburned, hardened by the sun. I prepared the foam meticulously.³ I cut a few slices off the bar of soap and let them fall into the bowl. I added a little warm water and stirred it with the brush. It soon began to lather.</p> <p>[3] "The troops must need a shave as bad as I do."</p> <p>[4] I kept on beating the lather.</p> <p>[5] "But you know what? It was a success. We got the leaders. Some we brought back dead, some are still alive. But soon they'll all be dead."</p> <p>[6] "How many did you get?" I asked.</p> <p>[7] "Fourteen. We had to go in pretty far to find them. But they're paying for it now. And not one of them will come out alive, not one."</p>	<p>Paragraphs 1-2 Think & Share: What is the narrator's occupation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barber <p>Paragraphs 1-7 Find Evidence: <u>Underline</u> three details that reveal what the customer has been doing for the past four days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "his bandolier, with its holster dangling" (1) "hunt down our people" (2) "The troops must need a shave as bad as I do." (3) "We got the leaders. Some we brought back dead, some are still alive. But soon they'll all be dead." (5)

¹ a shoulder-belt with loops or pockets for ammunition

² a military cap with a flat top and horizontal brim

³ **Meticulous** (adjective): showing careful and great attention to detail

[8] He leaned back in the chair when he saw I was holding up the shaving brush, full of lather. I still hadn't put the sheet on him.

[9] That's how disoriented⁴ I was. I took a sheet out of the drawer and tied it around my client's neck. He didn't stop talking. He took for granted⁵ that I was on the side of the new order.

[10] "The town has learned its lesson from what happened the other day," he said.

[11] "Yes," I replied, as I finished tying the knot on his dark, sweaty, neck.

[12] "That was pretty good, wasn't it?"

[13] "Very good," I answered, as I picked up the brush again.

[14] The man closed his eyes, sighing with fatigue, and waited for the cool caress of the soap. I had never had him so close. The day he ordered the townspeople to gather in the schoolyard to see the four rebels hanging there, I caught a glimpse of him. But the sight of the mutilated⁶ bodies kept my eyes from lingering on the face of the man who was responsible for it all, the man whose face I was now going to take in my hands. It wasn't an unpleasant face, for sure. And his beard, though it made him appear older, looked good on him. His name was Torres. Captain Torres. A man with a good imagination; after all, it hadn't occurred to anyone before him to string up the rebels naked and use various parts of their bodies for target practice.

Paragraphs 10-14

Write: What do the narrator's memories of "the other day" reveal about Captain Torres?

- *He is a cruel and violent leader.*
- *He is a murderer.*

PARTNER READING

[15] I started to apply the first layer of soap. His eyes were still closed.

[16] "What I wouldn't do for a little sleep," he said. "But there's a lot of work to be done this afternoon."

[17] I lifted the brush, and, **feigning** casual unconcern, asked, "Firing squad?"

[18] "Something like that, but slower," he replied.

[19] "All of them?"

[20] "No. Just a few."

[21] I returned to the task of lathering his beard. My hands began to shake. The man couldn't have noticed, which was a relief. But I wished he hadn't come. Many of our people had probably seen him come in. And having the enemy on your home turf imposes certain conditions. I'd have to shave that beard like any other, with the greatest care and as if he were my best customer, making sure that not one drop of blood emerged from his pores. Making sure that the razor would not get caught in the little clumps of hair. Making sure that his skin would come out clean, taut⁷, and smooth, and that when I brushed the back of my hand against it, not one hair could be felt on its surface. Yes. I was a clandestine⁸ revolutionary,⁹ but I was also a barber of **integrity**, proud of the **diligence** with which I practiced my profession. And that four-day-old beard needed a lot of work.

DURING READING QUESTIONS

Paragraphs 15-20

Write: What does the line "**feigning** casual unconcern" reveal about the narrator's feelings?

- *He is acting like Torres' violence does not bother him, but he actually feels frightened and worried.*

Paragraphs 21-22

Write: How does the narrator's belief that he is "a barber of **integrity**" affect the way he treats Captain Torres?

- *He tries to "do things right" and give Torres the best shave possible.*

⁴ **Disoriented** (*adjective*): unsure about what to do

⁵ to assume that something is true without questioning it

⁶ **Mutilate** (*verb*): to injure or harm by removing or damaging parts

⁷ **Taut** (*adjective*): stretched or pulled tight

⁸ **Clandestine** (*adjective*): kept secret in order to deceive someone

⁹ a person who takes part in a revolution or uprising against the government

[22] I picked up the razor, opened the two handles at an angle, opened the blade, and began my task, heading downward from one of his temples. The blade responded impeccably. His beard was stubborn and hard, not very long, but dense. Little by little, his skin began to appear. The blade emitted its usual sound, and lumps of soap mixed with little hairs accumulated on it. I paused to clean and then sharpen it because I'm a barber who does things right. The man had been keeping his eyes shut. Now he opened them, lifted his hand from underneath the sheet, touched the part of his face that had become free of soap, and said, "Come to the school at six this evening."

[23] "The same as the other day?" I asked, horrified.

[24] "It might be even better," he replied.

[25] "What are you planning on doing?"

[26] "I don't know yet, but it'll be fun." He leaned back again and closed his eyes. I approached the razor poised.

[27] "Do you plan on punishing all of them?" I ventured timidly.¹⁰

[28] "All of them."

Paragraphs 23-28

Write: How do the narrator's internal thoughts differ from his outward actions?

- *Internally, the narrator disagrees with Torres and is his enemy, but externally he makes Torres believe he agrees and is on his side.*

WHOLE CLASS READING

[29] The soap on his face was drying. I had to get started. I looked onto the street through the mirror. The same as always: the corner store and two or three customers inside. Then I looked at the clock: 2:20 p.m. The blade continued its descent. Now the other temple and down the cheek. A dark beard, thick. He should let it grow, like some poets and priests do. It would look good on him. Many people wouldn't recognize him. And that would be in his best interests, I thought, as I gingerly moved the blade up his neck. That's where I had to be most careful, since the growth, although still in its early stages, was clumping. A curly beard. The tiny pores could open and release their pearls of blood. The pride of a good barber like me hinges on not letting this happen to any client. And this was an important client. How many of our people had he ordered killed? How many had he ordered mutilated? Better not to think about it. Torres didn't know that I was his enemy. He didn't know and neither did the others. It was a secret known to very few, precisely so that I could inform the revolutionaries about what Torres was up to in the town, and what he planned on doing each time he set out on an incursion¹¹ to hunt them down. Needless to say, it was going to be very difficult to explain how I had had him at my mercy and then let him go, alive and shaved.

[30] The beard had almost completely disappeared. He looked younger, as if years had been taken off since he came in. I suppose this is what always happens to men when they've been to the barber's. Torres was rejuvenated at the stroke of my razor, yes, because I'm a good barber, the best in this town, and I don't say this out of vanity. A little more soap here, under the chin, over the Adam's apple, on that major artery.¹²

[31] It's so hot! Torres must be sweating too. But he's not afraid. He's serene, not even worried about what he's going to do with the prisoners this afternoon. I, on the other hand, with this razor in my hand, scraping and scraping this skin, making sure that blood doesn't spill from those pores, wary of each stroke, cannot think

DURING READING QUESTIONS

INTERNAL CONFLICT: Paragraph 29

Write: The narrator says, "the pride of a good barber like me hinges on not letting this happen to any client." What does this reveal about the narrator's values?

- *It reveals that he values integrity over revenge because he thinks it is more important to act honestly and live up to his status as a good barber.*

¹⁰ **Timid** (adjective): fearful, nervous, or shy

¹¹ an invasion or attack

¹² a tube-shaped vessel that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body

calmly. D— him for coming; I am a revolutionary but I am not a murderer. And to think how easy it would be to kill him. And he deserves it.

[32] Does he? No; what the h—! No one is worth the sacrifice of becoming a murderer. What could be gained from it? Nothing. Others come along, and then others, and the first ones kill the second ones and they kill the third group, and it goes on and on until everything is a sea of blood. I could cut his neck like this: Jab! Jab! I wouldn't give him time to protest and since his eyes are closed he wouldn't see the glint¹³ of the blade or the glint in my eyes. But I'm shaking like a real murderer. From that neck, a torrent¹⁴ of blood would spurt onto the sheet, onto the chair, onto my hands, onto the floor. I'd have to shut the door. And the blood would be flowing along the floor, warm indelible,¹⁵ uncontrollable, out into the street like a thin, scarlet stream. I am sure that a hard jab, a deep incision, would be painless. He wouldn't suffer. And what would I do with the body? Where could I hide it? I'd have to flee, leave all of this, take refuge far away, very far. But they'd hunt me until they found me. "The man who murdered Captain Torres. He slit his throat while giving him a shave. A coward." Or, "The man who avenged our people. A name to remember (fill in my name). He was the town barber. No one knew that he supported our cause..."

[33] So which is it? Murderer or hero? My destiny hinges on the blade of this razor. I can push down a little more on my hand, lean like silk, like rubber, like sheepskin. There is nothing more tender than a man's skin and the blood is always there, ready to flow. A razor like this does not let you down. It's my best razor. But I don't want to be a murderer, no sir. You came for a shave. And I will do my duty honorably... I don't want to be stained with blood. By lather, and nothing else. You're an executioner and I'm only a barber. Each in his place. That's it. Each in his place.

[34] His face was now clean, smooth, and taut. The man sat up to look at himself in the mirror. He rubbed his skin with his hands and felt it fresh and like new.

[35] "Thank you," he said. He headed toward the wardrobe to get his belt, gun, and kepi. I must have been very pale and my shirt felt soaked. Torres buckled his belt, put his gun back in its holster, ran a hand over his hair mechanically, and put on his kepi. He took a few coins out of his pocket to pay me for my services. Then he started to walk toward the door. He paused in the doorway for a moment, turned around, and spoke.

[36] "They told me that you'd kill me. I came to find out for myself. But killing isn't easy. I know what I'm talking about."

[37] And he headed down the street.

INTERNAL CONFLICT: Paragraph 31-32

Find Evidence: Underline three details that show the narrator's struggle between **integrity** and **revenge**.

- "I am a revolutionary but I am not a murderer." (31)
- "And to think how easy it would be to kill him. And he deserves it." (31)
- "No one is worth the sacrifice of becoming a murderer." (32)
- "Others come along, and then others, and the first ones kill the second ones and they kill the third group, and it goes on and on until everything is a sea of blood." (32)
- "I could cut his neck like this: Jab! Jab!" (32)

INTERNAL CONFLICT: Paragraph 33

Write: How does the narrator believe he is different from Torres?

- He sees himself as a respectable man, not a murderer like Torres.

THEME: Paragraphs 33-37

A. Write: What does the narrator's ultimate decision suggest about the choice between integrity and revenge?

- It reveals that people have the power and the choice to act with integrity or seek revenge.

B. Poll the Class: If the narrator had killed Torres, would you have viewed him as a murderer or a hero? Be prepared to defend your response.

- Murderer
- Hero

*Jennifer Edwards (Translator). *The Flight of the Condor*. Copyright © 2007 by Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. Reprinted courtesy of The University of Wisconsin Press.

¹³ a tiny, quick flash of light

¹⁴ a strong and fast-moving stream of water or other liquid

¹⁵ making marks that cannot be eliminated, forgotten or changed

Name _____ Class _____

Independent Practice

Directions: Answer the multiple choice questions for “Lather and Nothing Else.” 5 minutes



Note: To ensure test security, answers to the following assessment items are viewable only on commonlit.org for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the Answer Key tab on the text page to gain access.

1. Which of the following describes the narrator’s feelings about his profession? **[RL.3]**
 - A. He is concerned that he may become distracted and accidentally harm a customer.
 - B. He believes it is unfair for him to have to work for people he does not agree with.
 - C. He feels responsible for helping the town’s men stay groomed and presentable.
 - D. He takes pride in his reputation as a good and trustworthy barber.
2. In paragraph 33, what does the line “I don’t want to be stained with blood” suggest about how the barber thinks murdering Torres would affect him? **[RL.3]**
 - A. He thinks he would be viewed as the hero and savior of the town.
 - B. He thinks he would be forever haunted by his choice to take another man’s life.
 - C. He thinks his business would suffer and he would no longer be able to be a barber.
 - D. He thinks he would eventually view his decision to murder Torres as the correct choice.
3. Throughout the story, why does the narrator repeatedly tell himself that he is a good barber? **[RL.3]**
 - A. He is trying to bribe Captain Torres to be forgiving and kind to the captured rebels.
 - B. He is trying to make sure that he does not give in to the temptation to harm Torres.
 - C. He is trying to act natural so that Captain Torres is distracted from the rebels’ surprise attack.
 - D. He is trying to impress Captain Torres so that Torres forgives him for his part in the revolution.
4. Which piece of evidence *best* reveals the narrator’s internal conflict? **[RL.1]**
 - A. “Torres didn’t know that I was his enemy. He didn’t know and neither did the others.” (Paragraph 29)
 - B. “The pride of a good barber like me hinges on not letting this happen to any client. And this was an important client.” (Paragraph 29)
 - C. “I am a revolutionary but I am not a murderer. And to think how easy it would be to kill him. And he deserves it.” (Paragraphs 31)
 - D. “You came for a shave. And I will do my duty honorably... I don’t want to be stained with blood. By lather, and nothing else.” (Paragraph 33)
5. Which of the following *best* expresses a summary of “Lather and Nothing Else”? **[RL.2]**
 - A. A barber struggles to decide between torturing his neighbors or becoming a victim himself.
 - B. A barber struggles to decide between harming his enemy or doing what is expected of him.
 - C. A barber struggles to decide between joining forces with the enemy or continuing his work as a spy.
 - D. A barber struggles to decide between turning himself in to his enemy or supporting his enemy’s goals.



Independent Practice

Directions: Answer the short response prompt for “Lather and Nothing Else.” 15 minutes

Note: To ensure test security, a sample answer to the following short response item is viewable only on commonlit.org for verified teacher accounts. Navigate to the Answer Key tab on the text page to access it.

PROMPT: In “Lather and Nothing Else” by Hernando Téllez, how does the narrator’s internal conflict reveal theme? **[RL.2]**

In your argument, make sure to:

- clearly answer the prompt
- use key words from the prompt
- use academic vocabulary
- use literary terms

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A STRONG ARGUMENT:

- ☐ Highlight or bold your argument.

Did you clearly answer the prompt?

- a. YES!
- b. No, I will go back and do that.

Did you use key words from the prompt?

- a. YES!
- b. No, I will go back and add those.

Did you use academic vocabulary and/or literary terms to answer the prompt?

- a. YES!
- b. No, I will go back and add those.

Quick Partner Discussion

Directions: Discuss the questions with a partner. Record both of your answers to the questions. Practice referring to text evidence to build on or challenge others' ideas by using the discussion sentence starters. *5 minutes*



Examples of how you can **refer to text evidence to build on or challenge others' ideas**:

- *I agree with _____, and I want to add...*
- *I found another example of what _____ brought up on page _____ ...*
- *I see it slightly differently because on page _____ ...*
- *I can see your point, but...*

1. Do you think it is easy or difficult to act with **integrity**? Explain your answer.

My answer	My partner's answer

2. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** Norma in "Button, Button" and the barber in "Lather and Nothing Else" are both faced with a **moral** problem. Imagine that Norma and the barber have a conversation before they make their final decisions. What advice do you think each character would give to the other? Why?

My answer	My partner's answer

LESSON OVERVIEW: DETERMINING A THEME

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

When and why should I teach this lesson?

This optional theme lesson is designed to be used after any short story or novel. Determining theme is an important reading skill that is challenging for many students. Providing explicit instruction on this essential skill gives students a transferable strategy for determining theme that they can use throughout their academic careers.



This lesson's skill focus

Students will determine the **theme** of a story by examining key moments that often reveal theme. [RL.8.2]

Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Determining a Theme" (Teacher Copy) • Classroom Anchor Chart: Theme (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Determining a Theme" (Student Copy) • Student Reference Sheet: Theme

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Note: Students must have access to the student reference sheet on theme to complete this lesson.		
Part 1	 Reviewing the Theme Reference Sheet: Students answer four questions about theme by examining the student reference sheet on theme.	10 min
Part 2	 Determining a Theme: Students follow guided steps to determine the theme for a story they have recently finished reading.	10 min
~ 20 min total		

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Determining a Theme

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

Today's Goal

You will be able to identify the theme of a story that you recently read.

PART 1: Reviewing The Theme Reference Sheet

Directions: Use your reference sheet on theme to answer the four questions below. *10 minutes*



1. What is the definition of **theme**?

- *The universal message in a story, poem, or text*

2. Review the theme statement about *The Wizard of Oz* on the student reference sheet. What are two things to remember when writing theme statements?

- *Theme statements are a complete thought (not just one word)*
- *Themes are universal (they don't use character names or plot details)*

3. Review the section titled "How Do You Determine Theme?" In one sentence, describe the process for determining theme.

First, review the key details of the story, then identify big ideas and use them to write a theme statement.

4. According to the reference sheet, what are three ways authors often reveal the theme?

1. *Through characterization (especially character change)*
2. *Through conflict and resolution*
3. *Through literary devices like symbols, metaphors, and repetition*



PART 2: Determining a Theme

Directions: Write the title of the text you are analyzing in the space provided. Then complete the guided steps to help you determine a theme for that text. *10 minutes*

Text Title	
-------------------	--

Step 1: Review Key Details From the Story

*To determine a theme, start by considering the ways authors often reveal theme, such as through **characterization**, the **resolution**, and **literary devices**.*

1. Did any **characters change** in the story? How?

2. How was the **conflict** in the story resolved?

3. Did you notice any important **literary devices**, such as symbols, metaphor, or repetition?

Step 2: Identify the Big Ideas

Identify 2-3 important big ideas in the story.

Courage	Friendship	Family	Prejudice	Persistence
Love	Differences	Self-Acceptance	Struggle	Challenge
Forgiveness	Loss	Failure	Community	Greed
Nature	Commitment	Hope	Outsiders	[Your own big idea]

Step 3: Write the Theme Statement

What is the author's message about the big ideas? Try combining more than one big idea in your theme statement.

Answers will vary

Theme Checklist:

- ☐ My theme is a complete thought
- ☐ My theme does not use characters' names or describe the plot

What is a THEME?

- A theme is the **universal message** in a story, poem or text.
- Example:

Themes must be a complete thought or message. They are never just one word.

One theme in *The Wizard of Oz* is that **home is more important to people than they often realize.**

Themes use words like “people” to make the message universal. They never use character names or describe plot.

How to Determine a Theme

Step 1	Review Key Details from the text <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Consider the ways authors often reveal theme:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Through characterization (especially character change)</i>○ <i>through the conflict and resolution</i>○ <i>through literary devices (such as symbols, metaphors and repetition)</i>
Step 2	Identify Big Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Big ideas are the larger topics that a story is about</i>● <i>Identify at least two big ideas found in the text</i>
Step 3	Write the Theme Statement <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Ask yourself, “What is the author’s message about the big ideas?”</i>● <i>Combining more than one big idea often makes a stronger, more complex theme statement</i>

BIG IDEAS IN LITERATURE

Courage	Friendship	Family
Prejudice	Persistence	Love
Differences	Self-Acceptance	Struggle
Challenges	Forgiveness	Loss
Failure	Community	Greed
Nature	Commitment	Hope
Outsiders	Freedom	Beauty

LESSON OVERVIEW: GRAMMAR AND USAGE ACTIVITIES

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How should I use these grammar and usage activities?

In CommonLit 360, grammar and usage activities can be used flexibly according to the needs of your classroom and students. They can be used as warm-up activities, homework, or short, whole-class practice. Students can work independently or in groups as needed. Reviewing the answers as a class will reinforce grammar and usage skills and ensure that students apply these skills to their writing.

Skill Focus

Students will learn the three types of **verb forms** and practice correctly using them in sentences. [L.8.1.A]

Verb Forms at a glance

A verb form (or verbal) is a word that is formed from a verb but is being used as a noun, adjective, or adverb.

There are 3 main verb forms:

- **Gerunds**
 - Ends in “ing”
 - A verb that is used as a noun
- **Participles**
 - Ends in “ing,” “ed,” or “en”
 - A verb that is used as an adjective
- **Infinitives**
 - Begins with the word “to” followed by a verb
 - A verb that is used as either a noun, adjective, or adverb

What activities are included?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	Examining Verb Forms: This activity allows students to notice the characteristics of different verb forms.	5 min
Part 2	Notes on Verb Forms: Students review key points about the three main types of verb forms and examples of each.	5 min
Part 3	Using Verb Forms Correctly in a Sentence: In this activity, students will fill in the blank with the correct verb form and explain their answers.	10 min
Part 4	Varying Verb Forms in a Sentence: In this activity, students revise sentences by changing the verb form while maintaining meaning.	10 min
Part 5	Writing Sentences with Verb Forms: Students will write original sentences using the provided verbs and verb forms.	15 min
~45 min total		

Name _____ Class _____

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Grammar and Usage Activities: VERB FORMS

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

PART 1: Examining Verb Forms

DIRECTIONS: Read the two sets of sentences below. Then, answer the questions that follow.



SET A	SET B
Exercising always makes me feel more calm and in control of my life.	I exercise because it always makes me feel more calm and in control of my life.
The painted walls make the whole house seem new.	He paints the walls, which makes the whole house seem new.
It is essential for me to complete the extra credit assignment because I want to earn at least a B+.	I complete the extra credit assignment because I want to earn at least a B+.

REFLECTION:

- How are the verb forms different in each set of examples?

Answers will vary, but may include:

- In Set A, there is more variety in the verb forms that are used. One ends in -ing, one ends in -ed, and another comes after "to."*
- In Set B, the verb forms are all in the present tense.*

- In Set A, "exercising" describes an activity that "makes the writer more calm." What part of speech do we use to name an activity or thing?

Noun

- In Set A, "painted" is used to describe the walls. What part of speech do we use to describe something?

Adjective



PART 2: Notes on Verb Forms

DIRECTIONS: As your teacher reviews the information, take notes in the spaces below.

VERB FORMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A word that is formed from a verb but can be used as a noun, adjective, or adverb. ➤ There are 3 main verb forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gerunds ○ Participles ○ Infinitives

GERUND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ends in “ing” ○ A verb that is used as a noun
<p>Example: <u>Fishing</u> is a great way to spend time outdoors. → “Fishing” is an activity. Therefore, it is a noun.</p>

PARTICIPLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ends in “ing,” “ed,” or “en” ○ A verb that is used as an adjective
<p>Examples: She took the <u>boiling</u> water off the stove. → “Boiling” describes the water. Therefore it is an adjective. The <u>completed</u> assignment was of high quality. → “Completed” describes the assignment. Therefore, it is an adjective.</p>

INFINITIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begins with the word “to” followed by a verb ○ A verb that is used as either a noun, adjective, or adverb
<p>Example: She didn’t want <u>to walk</u> all the way to her grandmother’s house. → “To walk” is the thing she didn’t want to do. Therefore, it is used as a noun in the sentence.</p>



PART 3: Using Verb Forms Correctly in a Sentence

DIRECTIONS: Read each sentence. Fill in the blank with the correct verb form. Then, explain why you chose each answer.

Example:

Though I don't like baseball, I do love	<i>sprinting</i>	because I love moving fast.
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- A. **sprinting**
- B. sprinted
- C. sprint

Explain why you chose your answer.

"Sprinting" is the best choice because it is the activity or thing the person loves. In this sentence, it is a noun.

1	The window was	broken	after Josh and Jeremiah decided to play ball in the house.
----------	----------------	---------------	--

- A. break
- B. broke
- C. **broken**

Explain why you chose your answer.

"Broken" is the best choice because it describes the window. In this sentence, it is an adjective.

2	Lyla began	to sing	with her team, inspired by their amazing win.
----------	------------	----------------	---

- A. sing
- B. **to sing**
- C. sung

Explain why you chose your answer.

"To sing" is the best choice because it comes after another verb and explains the thing that Lyla "began" to do. In this sentence, this infinitive verb is used as a noun.

3	The	grilled	hamburgers smelled delicious.
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- A. grill
- B. grilling
- C. **grilled**

Explain why you chose your answer.

"Grilled" is the best choice because it describes the hamburger. In this sentence, it is an adjective.

4	I have always hoped	to live	near the beach.
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- A. living
- B. live
- C. **to live**

Explain why you chose your answer.

"To live" is the best choice because it comes after another verb and explains what the person "hoped" for. In this sentence, this infinitive verb is used as a noun.

5	Skating	is forbidden on the bike path.
---	---------	--------------------------------

- A. **skating**
- B. to skate
- C. skated

Explain why you chose your answer.

Skating is the best choice because it is the activity that is forbidden. In this sentence, it is a noun.



PART 4: Varying Verb Forms in a Sentence

DIRECTIONS: Read each sentence with an underlined verb. Then, write a revised sentence with similar meaning, using a different verb form.

Note to Teachers: Sample answers are included, but student answers will vary.

EXAMPLE		
Original	Verb Form	Revised
We came to the library. We <u>helped</u> you with your homework.	infinitive	We came to the library <u>to help</u> you with your homework.

	Original	Verb Form	Revised
1.	I <u>cracked</u> the glass. Water slowly leaked out of the glass.	participle	Water slowly leaked out of the <u>cracked</u> glass.
2.	The cat <u>slept</u> in the sun. The cat enjoyed his nap.	participle	The <u>sleeping</u> cat enjoyed his nap in the sun.
3.	Ricardo <u>skis</u> . Ricardo competes against other athletes.	gerund	Ricardo competes against other athletes in the sport of <u>skiing</u> .
4.	He went to the store. He <u>bought</u> groceries for a special dinner.	infinitive	He went to the store <u>to buy</u> groceries for a special dinner.
5.	Jasmine <u>laughs</u> at the joke. Jasmine says goodbye to her friend.	participle	<u>Laughing</u> at the joke, Jasmine says goodbye to her friend.
6.	I trained hard. I <u>won</u> the Olympic Gold Medal.	infinitive	I trained hard in order <u>to win</u> the Olympic Gold Medal.



PART 5: Writing Sentences with Verb Forms

DIRECTIONS: Write original sentences using the verbs and verb form provided.

Note to Teachers: Sample answers are included, but student answers will vary.

EXAMPLE:

Verb Form	Verb	Sentence
gerund	jump	Grace was so good at <u>jumping</u> that she signed up to compete in track and field.
participle	jump	The <u>jumping</u> rabbit was quicker than I had imagined.
infinitive	jump	Because he knew how <u>to jump</u> well, Xavier was a very successful athlete.

	Verb Form	Verb	Sentence
1	gerund	write	<u>Writing</u> has always been my favorite hobby.
	participle	write	The words <u>written</u> on the sidewalk in chalk led the group to the next clue.
	infinitive	write	While I've always excelled in math, I struggle when it is time <u>to write</u> long essays.

	Verb Form	Verb	Sentence
2	gerund	believe	<u>Believing</u> in myself has changed my outlook on who I am.
	participle	believe	The previously <u>believed</u> idea was proven false.
	infinitive	believe	It is important <u>to believe</u> in an idea that motivates you.

	Verb Form	Verb	Sentence
3	gerund	fly	<u>Flying</u> is the superpower I would choose if I could have just one.
	participle	fly	The <u>flying</u> insect buzzed right past the monkey bars.
	infinitive	fly	When I was 5, I believed that if I studied birds I could learn <u>to fly</u> .







LESSON OVERVIEW: Related Media Exploration

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)





What is a “Related Media Exploration”, and how does it support the unit?

About Related Media Explorations	Exploration Title: Where do moral dilemmas show up in everyday life?
This Related Media Exploration gives students a chance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with two videos Work collaboratively Reflect on their lives Discuss what they’ve learned 	Students will build knowledge about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How people make decisions when faced with moral dilemmas How moral dilemmas are relevant to their world

How do I facilitate this Related Media Exploration?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Use the paired slide deck to guide students through the handout. Videos are linked in the slide deck.		
Part 1	 What Would You Do? Scenario 1: Students will watch the first 1:17 minutes of “The Brain with David Eagleman” to reflect on how they would respond to one moral dilemma scenario.	5 min
Part 2	 What Would You Do? Scenario 2: Students will watch from 1:17 to 2:09 of “The Brain with David Eagleman” to reflect on how they would respond if the moral dilemma required them to take a more active role in harming another person.	5 min
Part 3	 What Influences Our Response to a Moral Dilemma? Students will watch the final minute and a half of “The Brain with David Eagleman” and reflect on what impacts people’s reasoning when faced with difficult decisions.	5 min
Part 4	 Why Does The Trolley Problem Matter? Students will watch “Would you sacrifice one person to save five?” and consider why this question is relevant today.	5 min
Part 5	 Independent Reflection: Students will reflect on the ideas they have explored by considering how they think people should respond to a new moral dilemma situation.	10 min
Part 6	 Whole Class Discussion: Students have the opportunity to share what they have learned with their classmates.	5 min
~35 min total		

Facilitation options

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
 Teacher-Led Exploration	 Partner Exploration	 Independent Exploration	 Blended Exploration
The teacher leads the lesson whole class.	Students explore in pairs.	Students explore independently (with headphones if possible).	The teacher uses a blend of options 1, 2, and 3.
↑ Recommended! ↑			

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Related Media Exploration

Where do moral dilemmas show up in everyday life?

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

PART 1: What Would You Do? Scenario 1

Directions: Watch the first 1:17 minutes of “The Brain with David Eagleman.” Then, answer questions 1-2.



1. Complete the sentence: In this scenario, someone has to choose between...

- *Allowing a train to kill four people or pulling a lever to change the train's direction and kill only one person.*

2. Would you pull the lever, killing one worker but saving the other four? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary; students may say:

- *Four lives are worth more than one, so I would pull the lever.*
- *It is not our place to interfere or make life and death decisions for others, so I would not pull the lever.*

PART 2: What Would You Do? Scenario 2

Directions: Watch from 1:17 to 2:09 of “The Brain with David Eagleman.” Then, answer questions 3-5.



3. Complete the sentence: In this scenario, someone has to choose between...

- *Allowing a train to kill four people or making the choice to push another person in front of the train to stop it from killing those four people.*

4. Would you push the man, killing him but saving the four workers? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary; students may say:

- *I would push the man because four lives are more valuable than one. This is no different than pushing the lever.*
- *I would not push the man since it requires more physical and direct involvement with the death of another person.*

5. Which option feels more wrong to you? The options in this second scenario or the options in the first one? Why?

Student responses will vary; students may say:

- *The options in the second scenario feel more wrong because you have to physically push a man to his death.*
- *The options in both scenarios feel equally wrong because they each require you to make a choice about which lives are more important.*



Turn & Talk: How would the barber from “Lather and Nothing Else” react in the second scenario of the trolley problem: Would he push the man or not? Why?

PART 3: What Influences Our Response To A Moral Dilemma?

Directions: Watch from 2:09 to the end of “The Brain with David Eagleman.” Then, answer questions 6-8.



6. Compare the two scenarios. What is similar about each scenario? What is different about each scenario?

Student responses will vary; students may say:

- *Each scenario involves a difficult choice where a person must decide the value between one life versus four lives.*
- *Each scenario is different because in the first scenario a person could cause someone’s death by pulling a lever, but in the second scenario a person could cause someone’s death by pushing them to their death.*
- *While the result of pulling the lever or pushing the man is the same, one involves closer proximity and perhaps creates a feeling of greater responsibility.*

7. Why do people react differently to the first and second scenarios?

- *People feel more personally responsible when they physically push another person in front of the train than when they pull the lever.*

8. What does this reveal or imply about the way people make tough decisions?

Student responses will vary; students may say:

- *People spend more time thinking about decisions that require emotions.*
- *It reveals that it is easier for people to make difficult choices if they feel less personally responsible.*

Turn & Talk



Consider Norma’s reasoning in paragraph 106 of “Button, Button” —

“‘The point is,’ Norma broke in, ‘if it’s someone you’ve never seen in your life and never will see, someone whose death you don’t even have to know about, you still wouldn’t push the button?’”

Based on Norma’s reasoning, what is she more likely to do:
Pull the lever or push the man? Why?

PART 4: Why Does The Trolley Problem Matter?

Directions: Watch from 3:31 to 4:37 of “Would you sacrifice one person to save five?” Then, answer questions 9-11.



9. How is the moral dilemma of the fictional trolley problem relevant to our world?

Student responses will vary; students may say:

- *It is relevant to our world because scientists often have to make ethical decisions when building machines that act with artificial intelligence.*

10. Why are philosophers and researchers teaming up?

- *They are teaming up because researchers want to create technology that does the least amount of harm. They need the help of philosophers to understand how these decisions are made.*

11. Do you agree that the trolley problem is too unrealistic to teach us anything? Why?

Student responses will vary.

PART 5: Independent Reflection

Directions: Read the scenario below and respond to the prompt by writing or typing in the box.



Scenario: Scientists are programming an Amtrak train to be driverless. Scientists need to decide how to program the train when it quickly approaches an intersection where crossing cars do not seem to be stopping. Here are the two methods they are considering:

Method A: Program the train to continue moving through the intersection, likely harming or killing people in their cars.

Method B: Program the train to abruptly stop, likely causing the speeding train to crash off the side of the tracks, harming or killing people on board.

Prompt: How should the scientists program the train: Method A or Method B? Why?

Summarize evidence from the scenario and videos to support your response.

Student responses may vary; students may say:

- *Scientists should use method A to program the train because it would likely cause harm to fewer people than if the whole train were forced to stop abruptly and went off the rails. This Amtrak train dilemma is similar to the option of pulling the lever in the trolley problem, since pulling the lever would cause the fewest deaths.*

PART 6: Whole Class Discussion

Directions: Share your answer to the question from Part 5 with the class.



LESSON OVERVIEW: UNIT 1 ESSAY: PLANNING

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the arc of writing for the unit?

Writing Lesson 1	Writing Lesson 2	Writing Lesson 3	Writing Lesson 4	Writing Lesson 5	Final Unit Writing Prompt (Recommended)
Exemplary Paragraph	Writing a Strong Argument	Unit 1 Essay: Planning	Writing Introductions	Writing Conclusions	What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least two of the following texts to support your answer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Ruthless" - "Button, Button" - "Lamb to the Slaughter" [W.2]
		↑ You are here! ↑			







This lesson's skill focus

In this lesson, students will plan for their Unit 1 Essay and review the structure and parts of a well-written essay . [W.8.2]
--

Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This lesson handout • Teacher Copy of "Ruthless," "Button, Button," and "Lamb to the Slaughter" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Unit 1 Essay: Planning" (Student Copy) • Annotated copies of "Ruthless," "Button, Button," and "Lamb to the Slaughter"

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	 Breaking Down the Essay Prompt: Students read the Unit 1 Essay prompt and make a list of the prompt's requirements.	5 min
Part 2	 Finding Evidence of Character Motivations: Students can work independently or in partners to review key scenes from unit texts and choose evidence that reveals character's motivation for bad behavior.	15 min
Part 3	 Drafting An Initial Thesis: This part has a built-in scaffold—a table of "motivation" words—students can use to describe what their evidence reveals. Using these words and their knowledge of how to write an argument, they will draft a thesis that will be revised in Part 5.	5 min
Part 4	 Refine Your Ideas Through Discussion: Students often write their best essays when they've had a chance to discuss and listen to ideas from their peers. Here, students engage in a discussion about the essay prompt using evidence and the motivation words to land on the most precise motivations and evidence for each text.	10 min
Part 5	 Revising Your Thesis: Using the strong ideas from the class discussion, students will revise their thesis from Part 3 and complete a checklist to ensure their thesis is strong.	5 min
Part 6	 What Does A Great Student Essay Look Like? Students reflect on a strong student essay. This exemplar essay is a powerful tool for students to refer to throughout their essay drafting process.	10 min
~50 min total		

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Unit 1 Essay: Planning

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

Today's Goal	Other Materials Needed
Prepare to write your essay by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking down your final essay prompt • Finding evidence for your essay • Discussing your ideas • Drafting your thesis • Analyzing an exemplar essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotated copies of "Ruthless," "Button, Button," and "Lamb to the Slaughter"

PART 1: Breaking Down The Essay Prompt

Directions: Carefully read the prompt. Then, answer the question. *5 minutes*



Unit 1 Essay Prompt
<p>PROMPT: What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least two of the following texts to support your answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Ruthless" - "Button, Button" - "Lamb to the Slaughter" <p>[W.2]</p>

1. What are the two main things the prompt asks you to do?

1. *Answer the question: What motivates people to do bad things?*
2. *Prove my argument using evidence from at least two of the texts listed.*

PART 2: Finding Evidence of Character Motivations

Directions: Review the suggested paragraphs for **two** of the listed texts. For each story, identify 1-2 pieces of evidence that reveals character motivation(s) for bad behavior. *15 minutes*



Key Scenes		
Title	Paragraphs to Review	Evidence
"Ruthless"	Paragraphs: 8-14 and 17-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "'At least no one has found an antidote: once it's down it's curtains.' He corked his bottled vengeance and set it back on the shelf alongside the little whiskey glass." (14) "'The law doesn't call it murder if I shoot a thief who is entering my house by force,' he said harshly." (17) "When it comes to protecting my property I make my own laws." (19)
"Button, Button"	Paragraphs: 97-114 and 134-145	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "if it's someone you've never seen in your life and never will see, someone whose death you don't even have to know about, you still wouldn't push the button?" (106) "That I'd like for us to go to Europe. Like for us to have a cottage on the island. Like for us to have a nicer apartment, nicer furniture, nicer clothes, a car. Like for us to finally have a baby, for that matter." (137)
"Lamb to the Slaughter"	Paragraphs: 30-42 and 47-48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "she sat very still through it all, watching him with a kind of dazed horror as he went further and further away from her with each word." (34) "When she walked across the room she couldn't feel her feet touching the floor. She couldn't feel anything at all — except a slight nausea and a desire to vomit." (38) "As the wife of a detective, she knew quite well what the penalty would be. That was fine. It made no difference to her. In fact, it would be a relief. On the other hand, what about the child? What were the laws about murderers with unborn children? Did they kill them both — mother and child?" (47)



PART 3: Drafting An Initial Thesis

Directions: Follow the steps to draft an initial thesis. *5 minutes*

1. Highlight at least **two** words that best describe the motive for the characters' bad behavior in the stories you reviewed.

greed	anxiety	laziness	vengeance
anger	shock	jealousy	selfishness
self-protection	love	desperation	ignorance

2. Reread the prompt and jot your initial thesis in the space below.

PROMPT: What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least **two** of the following texts to support your answer:

- "Ruthless"
- "Button, Button"
- "Lamb to the Slaughter"

[W.2]

Draft Thesis

PART 4: Refine Your Ideas Through Discussion

Directions: Review the discussion goals. Then, discuss the question and take notes. *10 minutes*



Discussion Goals:

1. Identify better words to describe what motivated characters to do bad things
2. Identify key lines and paragraphs you can use for evidence
3. Strengthen the thesis you wrote in Part 3

Discussion Question: Based on the texts in this unit, what motivates people to do bad things?

"Ruthless"	"Button, Button"	"Lamb to the Slaughter"

PART 5: Revising Your Thesis

Directions: Revise your thesis based on the ideas from the class discussion. Then, complete the checklist. *5 minutes*



Revised Thesis	
<p><i>Student responses will vary.</i></p>	<p>Your thesis should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Answer the prompt with the two best motivation words that match the texts you will write about <input type="checkbox"/> Use key words and phrases from the prompt <input type="checkbox"/> Be concise



PART 6: What Does a Great Student Essay Look Like?

Directions: Below is an exemplar student essay. Skim the essay and the teacher comments. Then, answer the reflection question. *10 minutes*

Prompt: What motivates people to do the right thing? Use the following **two** texts to support your answer:

- "Button, Button"
- "Lather and Nothing Else"

[W.2]

EXEMPLAR STUDENT ESSAY

[1] We hear it over and over again: do the right thing! But what does it actually mean to do the right thing? In "Button, Button" by Richard Matheson, Arthur does not want to push a mysterious red button and have someone killed even if it means he would get \$50,000. In "Lather and Nothing Else" by Hernando Téllez, the narrator decides not to kill an evil man even though he has an easy chance to do it. Both texts reveal that people can be motivated to do the right thing by compassion and integrity.

[2] Not wanting to harm others can motivate people to make the right choice. In "Button, Button," Arthur knows it is **immoral** to push the red button and kill someone for \$50,000 but his wife, Norma, can't stop thinking about it. When Norma brings the topic up again to Arthur he says, "What would you like to do? Get the button back and push it? Murder someone?" (97). This shows that Arthur sees pushing the button the same as committing murder. When she says they wouldn't even know the person they would kill, Arthur says, "what's the difference whom you kill? It's still murder" (105). This reveals that Arthur is thinking about the innocent person who would die, not himself. Arthur is able to resist the red button because he is motivated to do the right thing out of his compassion for others.

TEACHER COMMENTS

Great job opening your essay with a quick connection to the world.

Your thesis statement is specific and concise, includes the key word "motivated," and answers the prompt! Well done!

This is a great example of a complete paragraph! You include important context and explanations that connect to the argument!

[3] People are also motivated to do the right thing by their **integrity**. In “Lather and Nothing Else,” the main character is a barber who has to shave the beard of Captain Torres, a cruel and violent leader. When he realizes how easily he could kill Torres, the narrator says, “Yes. I was a clandestine revolutionary, but I was also a barber of integrity, proud of the diligence with which I practiced my profession” (21). This reveals that the narrator is aware he is on the other side, but his **integrity** is more important to him. When he finally decides not to kill Torres he thinks “I don’t want to be a murderer, no sir. You came for a shave. And I will do my duty honorably... I don’t want to be stained with blood” (33). The narrator chooses to act with **integrity** because he believes murder is **immoral**, even if it is the murder of a bad man. Sometimes people are motivated to do the right thing to maintain their honor.

[4] Compassion and integrity are powerful motivators that help people make the right choices in life. In “Button, Button,” Arthur thinks of others before himself, which is why he won’t push the red button. In “Lather and Nothing Else,” the narrator values his integrity above everything else and decides against murdering someone. It isn’t always easy to do the right thing, but in the end it is always better to make the good and fair choice.

← Your argument uses key words from the prompt and connects to the thesis!

Strong use of unit vocabulary in this paragraph!

← You have done a nice job restating your thesis to begin your conclusion!

← Smart, quick summary of each text’s “bad behavior”!

1. **Reflect:** Based off of the exemplar student essay and the teacher comments, write 2-3 things you want to accomplish in your own essay.

1. *Student answers will vary.*
- 2.

Tips For Using This Student Exemplar

- When you have time, read the essay closely. Pay attention to writing moves you can make in your own essay.
- When you feel stuck with your own essay, return to the exemplar to see how this student dealt with the challenge you are facing.
- Identify the things you like most about this essay, and then do them in your own writing!

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Unit 1 Essay

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

PART 1: Essay Prompt

Directions: Read the essay prompt.



PROMPT

What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least **two** of the following texts to support your answer:

- "Ruthless"
- "Button, Button"
- "Lamb to the Slaughter"

[W.2]

PART 2: Drafting Your Essay

Directions: Draft your essay in the space provided. If you created an outline for this essay in a previous lesson, use it to help you draft. As you draft your essay, be sure to apply the skills you've practiced in writing lessons throughout this unit.



People do bad things for many different reasons. In "Ruthless," by William DeMille, Judson wants to hurt someone who stole from him. In "Button, Button," by Richard Matheson, Norma is willing to kill someone to get money. As these stories show, revenge and greed can motivate people to do bad things.

*Revenge can make someone want to hurt others. In "Ruthless," Judson wants to punish a thief by putting poison in a whiskey bottle and hoping they drink it. When his wife tries to convince him that it is murder, Judson says, "The law doesn't call it murder if I shoot a thief who is entering my house by force" (17). Judson is so **vindictive** that he doesn't care that what he is doing could actually kill the thief. Finally he tells his wife, "When it comes to protecting my property I make my own laws" (19). This reveals that Judson is **ruthless** with his revenge because he feels like he's protecting his own stuff. Even when people know what they are doing is bad, sometimes the need for revenge is too strong of a motivation.*

*Greed is another powerful motivation to do harm to others. In "Button, Button," if Norma pushes a mysterious red button, someone dies, but she gets \$50,000. Even though her husband tells her it is **immoral** to push the button and kill someone, Norma asks, "if it's someone you've never seen in your life and never will see, someone whose death you don't even have to know about, you still wouldn't push the button?" (106) Norma is so greedy that she is willing to let someone she doesn't know die to get the money she wants. Then she says, "I'd like for us to go to Europe. Like for us to have a cottage on the island. Like for us to have a nicer apartment, nicer furniture, nicer clothes, a car. Like for us to finally have a baby, for that matter" (137). Norma reveals that she is only thinking of what she and her husband will*

gain by pushing the button, not what someone else will lose. In the end, Norma's greed wins and she pushes the button.

Greed and revenge can be powerful forces as the stories "Ruthless" and "Button, Button" show. In "Ruthless" the need for revenge makes Judson want to kill someone just for stealing whiskey, and in "Button, Button" Norma is willing to kill someone to get \$50,000. In the end, even if there is a choice between right and wrong, there are powerful motivators that encourage people to do bad things.

Literary Analysis Essay Rubric				
Score	4	3	2	1
Reading Comprehension	Provides an in-depth and accurate analysis of what is stated in the text and/or what can be inferred from the text(s).	Provides an accurate analysis of what is stated in the text and/or what can be inferred from the text(s).	Provides a somewhat accurate analysis of what is stated in the text and/or can be inferred from the text(s).	Provides a minimally accurate analysis of what is stated in the text and/or what can be inferred from the text(s).
Thesis	Thesis is clearly stated and uses compound or complex sentence structure appropriate to the grade-level. Thesis is relevant to the task and specific.	Thesis is adequately stated and uses compound or complex sentence structure appropriate to the grade-level. Thesis is relevant to the task, but may be general or broad.	Thesis is attempted , but may be somewhat confusing or ambiguous.	Thesis is missing or not relevant to the task.
Organization	Demonstrates a logical and clear organizational structure that supports the development of the thesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong introduction and conclusion that make connections between the claim, text, and broader world • Logical grouping and ordering of key points and evidence within body paragraphs • Strong transitions that show how claim, key points and evidence connect 	Demonstrates a satisfactory organizational structure that generally supports the thesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recognizable introduction and conclusion • Solid grouping and ordering of key points and evidence within body paragraphs • Some transitions that clearly connect ideas 	Demonstrates a general organizational structure which may lack a sense of direction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction or conclusion may be missing • Some key points and evidence are not grouped logically • Some confusing transitions or connections between ideas 	Demonstrates a weak organizational structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction or conclusion may be missing • Key points and evidence are not grouped logically • Few transitions or connections between ideas

Evidence	Includes strongest, most relevant text evidence to support thesis and overall analysis of the text(s). Evidence is introduced and contextualized, quoted, or paraphrased accurately.	Includes relevant text evidence to support thesis and overall analysis of the text(s). Most evidence is introduced and quoted or paraphrased accurately.	Text evidence or supporting details may be insufficient or only somewhat relevant, indicating basic comprehension of the text(s). Evidence is introduced inconsistently. Quotations or paraphrases may be incorrect or incomplete.	Text evidence or supporting details are largely missing, indicating limited comprehension of the text(s). If text evidence is present, it may be copied directly from the text with no introduction or context provided.
Analysis	Explanations draw connections between thesis and evidence.	Explanations attempt to draw connections, but may also summarize.	Explanations mostly summarize or restate text evidence, without drawing connections between ideas.	Explanations may be missing or show a lack of understanding.
Writing Conventions and Craft	Illustrates the use of effective and varied sentence patterns. Includes carefully selected academic and domain-specific words and phrases Reflects exceptional control of conventions; errors are few and minor	Reflects a generally controlled writing style but may lack variety in sentence patterns Includes academic and domain-specific words and phrases, but some usage may be incorrect or awkward Reflects control of most writing conventions; contains occasional errors that do not interfere with clarity or message	Uses some awkward constructions or demonstrates repeated use of a particular sentence pattern Uses common words and phrases that are often repetitious Reflects limited control of conventions; contains frequent errors that may begin to interfere with understanding	Demonstrates the use of fragmented or run on sentences that make the essay difficult to read with understanding Demonstrates limited range of vocabulary, or includes words that are misused Reflects numerous errors in conventions that make the text difficult to read

LESSON OVERVIEW: WRITING INTRODUCTIONS

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the arc of writing for the unit?

Writing Lesson 1	Writing Lesson 2	Writing Lesson 3	Writing Lesson 4	Writing Lesson 5	Final Unit Writing Prompt (Recommended)
Exemplary Paragraph	Writing a Strong Argument	Unit 1 Essay: Planning	Writing Introductions	Writing Conclusions	What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least two of the following texts to support your answer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Ruthless" - "Button, Button" - "Lamb to the Slaughter" [W.2]

↑ You are here! ↑





This lesson's skill focus

In this lesson, students will learn to begin their essays by clearly introducing the topic and stating their thesis. [W.8.2.A]

Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Writing Introductions" (Teacher Copy) • Classroom Anchor Chart: Introductions (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Writing Introductions" (Student Copy) • "Essay Drafting Handout" • Student Reference Sheet: Introductions & Conclusions (Optional)

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	 The Upside-Down Triangle: Students watch a 3-minute video on how to write introductions using the upside-down triangle method. If students do not have video access, they can review the notes independently or the teacher can review the notes. Afterwards, students answer two questions.	10 min
Part 2	 Partner Discussion: Students discuss a set of questions to prepare them to write the introduction for their essay. Note that this activity is aligned to the recommended final essay prompt.	5 min
Part 3	 Draft Your Introduction: Students draft an introduction for their essay using the upside-down triangle strategy. Note that students will not draft their introduction in this set of materials.	10 min
Part 4	 Check Your Work: Students review their introductions using a provided checklist.	5 min
~30 min total		

Name _____

Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Writing Introductions

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

Today's Goal

1. You will learn the upside-down triangle method for writing strong introductions.
2. You will draft the introduction for your essay.

PART 1: The Upside-Down Triangle

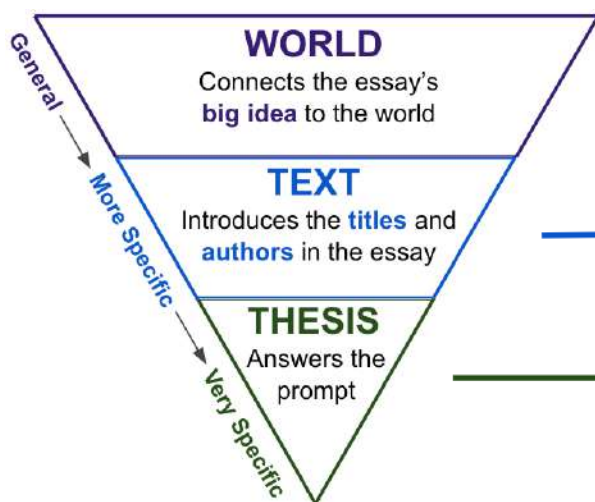
Directions: Follow the link and watch a three-minute [video](#) that explains the notes below. Then, answer the questions. *10 minutes*



How to Write an Introduction

Many writers use **the upside-down triangle strategy** to write strong introductions.

An Upside-Down Triangle Introduction



Sample Introduction

We hear it over and over again: do the right thing! But what does it actually mean to do the right thing? In "Button, Button" by Richard Matheson, Arthur does not want to push a mysterious red button and have someone killed even if it means he would get \$50,000. In "Lather and Nothing Else" by Hernando Téllez, the narrator decides not to kill an evil man even though he has an easy chance to do it. Both texts reveal that people can be motivated to do the right thing by compassion and integrity.

1. In your own words, explain how to write an upside-down triangle introduction.

To write an upside-down triangle introduction, you start with a general connection to the world, then introduce the stories and authors, and end with a thesis.

2. Why do you think writers often start essays with a statement about the world?

Answers will vary, but students may note that by connecting to the world, it helps grab the reader's attention and highlights why the essay matters.

PART 2: Partner Discussion

Directions: To prepare to write your introduction, reread your essay prompt. Then discuss each of the partner discussion questions. There is space to jot down notes. *5 minutes*



Essay Prompt
<p>What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least two of the following texts to support your answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Ruthless" - "Button, Button" - "Lamb to the Slaughter" <p>[W.2]</p>

	Partner Discussion Questions	Notes
WORLD	Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What big ideas is your essay about? • Why do your essay's big ideas matter in the world? 	
TEXT	Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stories are you writing about? • Who are the authors? • How do the big ideas in your essay appear in the story? 	
THESIS	Question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your thesis? 	

PART 3: Draft Your Introduction

Directions: Apply what you have learned when drafting the introduction of your essay. When you have written your introduction, move on to Part 4. *10 minutes*





PART 4: Check Your Work

Directions: Use the Check Your Work box to review your introduction. *5 minutes*

Check Your Work

- [] Highlight your **World** statement in green.

Did you begin by stating how the big ideas in your essay matter in the world? Yes No I'm Not Sure

- [] Highlight your **Text** statement in yellow.

Did you identify the titles and authors of the texts you are writing about? Yes No I'm Not Sure

- [] Highlight your **Thesis** in red.

Did you answer the prompt? Yes No I'm Not Sure

Go back and add to any weak areas of your introduction.

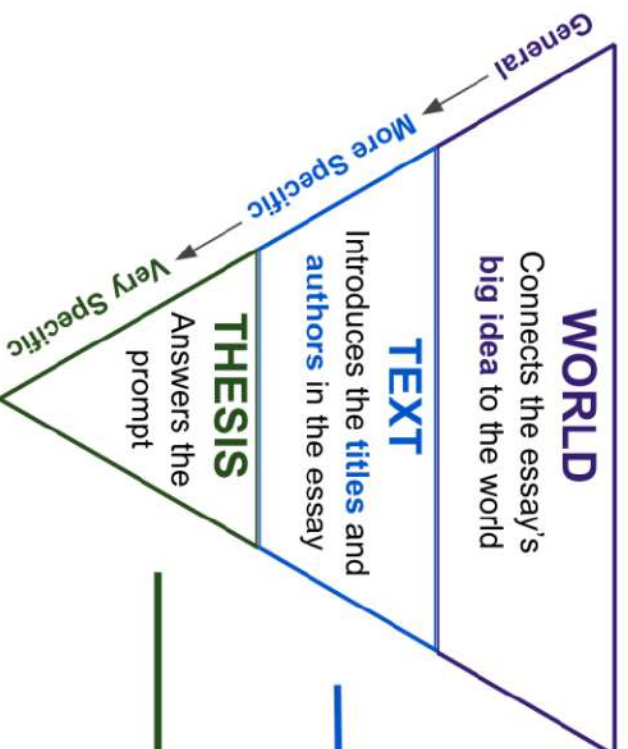
INTRODUCTIONS

The purpose of an introduction is to:

- Hook your reader's attention
- Clearly introduce your essay topic

Example

An Upside-Down Triangle Introduction



Sample Introduction

We hear it over and over again: do the right thing! But what does it actually mean to do the right thing? In "Button, Button" by Richard Matheson, Arthur does not want to push a mysterious red button and have someone killed even if it means he would get \$50,000. In "Lather and Nothing Else" by Hernando Téllez, the narrator decides not to kill an evil man even though he has an easy chance to do it. Both texts reveal that people can be motivated to do the right thing by compassion and integrity.

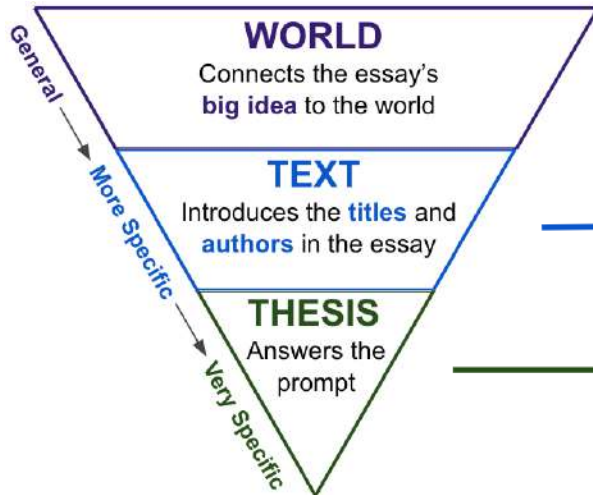
Introductions & Conclusions

INTRODUCTIONS

The purpose of an introduction is to:

- Hook your reader's attention
- Clearly introduce your essay topic

An Upside-Down Triangle Introduction



Sample Introduction

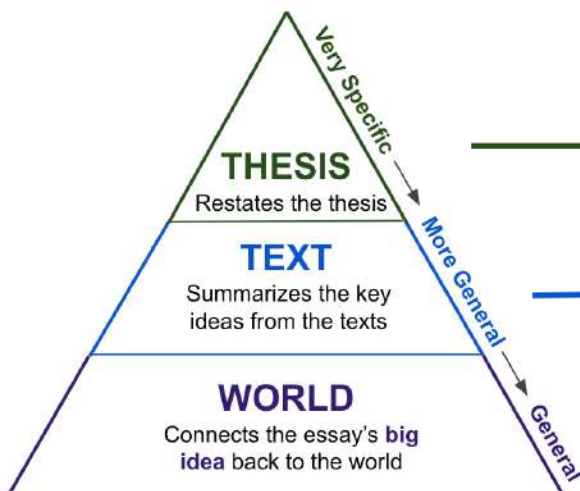
We hear it over and over again: do the right thing! But what does it actually mean to do the right thing? In “Button, Button” by Richard Matheson, Arthur does not want to push a mysterious red button and have someone killed even if it means he would get \$50,000. In “Lather and Nothing Else” by Hernando Téllez, the narrator decides not to kill an evil man even though he has an easy chance to do it. Both texts reveal that people can be motivated to do the right thing by compassion and integrity.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of a conclusion is to:

- Restate your thesis
- Restate how you supported your argument
- Explain why the essay matters

Sample Conclusion



Compassion and integrity are powerful motivators that help people make the right choices in life. In “Button, Button,” Arthur thinks of others before himself, which is why he won’t push the red button. In “Lather and Nothing Else,” the narrator values his integrity above everything else and decides against murdering someone. It isn’t always easy to do the right thing, but in the end it is always better to make the good and fair choice.

LESSON OVERVIEW: WRITING CONCLUSIONS

(This page does not appear on the student copy.)

How does this lesson fit into the arc of writing for the unit?

Writing Lesson 1	Writing Lesson 2	Writing Lesson 3	Writing Lesson 4	Writing Lesson 5	Final Unit Writing Prompt (Recommended)
Exemplary Paragraph	Writing a Strong Argument	Unit 1 Essay: Planning	Writing Introductions	Writing Conclusions	What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least two of the following texts to support your answer: - "Ruthless" - "Button, Button" - "Lamb to the Slaughter" [W.2]
				↑ You are here! ↑	





This lesson's skill focus

In this lesson, students will learn to write a conclusion that supports their thesis. [W.8.2.F]

Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Writing Conclusions" (Teacher Copy) • Classroom Anchor Chart: Conclusions (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Writing Conclusions" (Student Copy) • "Essay Drafting Handout" • Student Reference Sheet: Introductions & Conclusions (Optional)

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	 The Triangle Conclusion: Students review the triangle strategy for writing conclusions and answer check-for-understanding questions.	5 min
Part 2	 Partner Discussion: Students discuss a set of questions to prepare them to write the conclusion for their essay.	5 min
Part 3	 Draft Your Conclusion: Students draft or revise their conclusions for their essay using the triangle strategy. Note that students will not draft their conclusions in this set of materials.	10 min
Part 4	 Check Your Work: Students review their conclusions using a checklist.	5 min
~25 min total		

Name _____ Class _____

TEACHER COPY: Writing Conclusions

Answers in blue. To help us ensure assessment security, please do not post or circulate these answers online.

Today's Goal

1. You will learn the triangle method for writing strong conclusions.
2. You will draft or revise the conclusion for your essay.

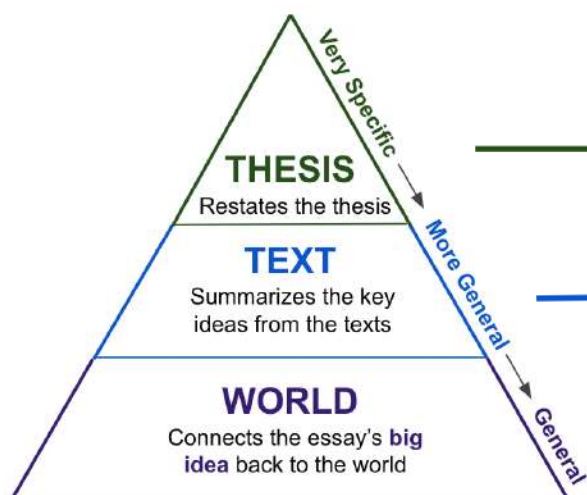
PART 1: The Triangle Conclusion

Directions: Review the information on conclusions. Then, answer the questions. *5 minutes*



How To Write A Conclusion

Many writers use **the triangle strategy** to write strong conclusions.



Sample Conclusion

Compassion and integrity are powerful motivators that help people make the right choices in life. In "Button, Button," Arthur thinks of others before himself, which is why he won't push the red button. In "Lather and Nothing Else," the narrator values his integrity above everything else and decides against murdering someone. It isn't always easy to do the right thing, but in the end it is always better to make the good and fair choice.

1. How is a conclusion similar to an introduction?

Conclusions use the same information as the introduction - world, text, thesis.

2. How is a conclusion different from an introduction?

Conclusions use the same information as the introduction, but the information is in the opposite order. Introductions start very general and get more specific, but conclusions do the opposite.

PART 2: Partner Discussion

Directions: Turn and talk about each of the questions below. This will help you prepare to write your conclusion. *5 minutes*



1. **Turn & Talk:** How can you restate your thesis using slightly different words?
2. **Turn & Talk:** What key details from the **texts** helped you prove your thesis?
3. **Turn & Talk:** Why do the ideas in your essay matter in the **world**?

PART 3: Draft Your Conclusion

Directions: Apply what you have learned when drafting or revising the conclusion of your essay. When you have written your conclusion, move on to Part 4. *10 minutes*



PART 4: Check Your Work

Directions: Use the Check Your Work box to review your conclusion. *5 minutes*



Check Your Work

[] Highlight your **Thesis** in green.

Did you restate your thesis using slightly different language? Yes No I'm Not Sure

[] Highlight your **Text** statement in yellow.

Did you summarize key ideas from the text that helped support your thesis? Yes No I'm Not Sure

[] Highlight your **World** statement in red.

Did you end by stating how the ideas in your essay matter in the real world? Yes No I'm Not Sure

Go back and revise any weak areas of your conclusion.

CONCLUSIONS

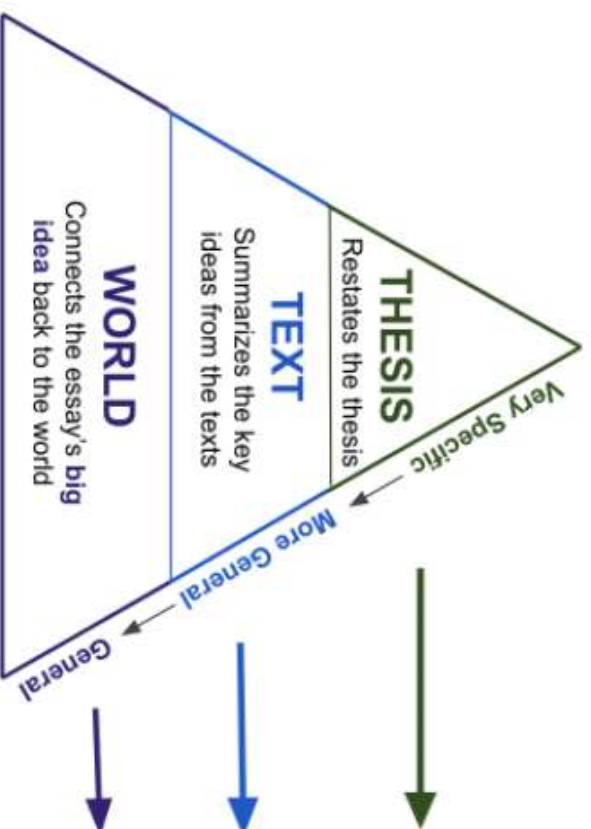
The purpose of a conclusion is to:

- Restate your thesis
- Restate how you supported your argument
- Explain why the essay matters

Example

Sample Conclusion

Compassion and integrity are powerful motivators that help people make the right choices in life. In “Button, Button,” Arthur thinks of others before himself, which is why he won’t push the red button. In “Lather and Nothing Else,” the narrator values his integrity above everything else and decides against murdering someone. It isn’t always easy to do the right thing, but in the end it is always better to make the good and fair choice.



Name _____ Class _____

End-of-Unit Writing Options

Option 1: Essential Question Reflection (Recommended)

What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least **two** of the following texts to support your answer:

- "Ruthless"
- "Button, Button"
- "Lamb to the Slaughter"

[W.2]

Option 2: Personal Reflection Essay

Write an essay in which you reflect on a time when you made a decision or acted in a way that you regret. What caused you to make the decision and what did you learn from it? [W.3]

Option 3: On Demand Essay

In this unit, you have read several texts in which the author builds suspense. Choose **two** of the listed unit texts and write an essay that compares how each author builds suspense. Refer to evidence from multiple places in the texts.

[W.2]

- "Ruthless"
- "Lamb to the Slaughter"
- "Lather and Nothing Else"

Consider the ways authors build suspense:

- Dramatic irony
- Point of view
- Situational irony
- Foreshadowing

Option 4: Creative Letter to a Character

In this unit we have met several characters who have “bad behavior.” Write a letter to one of them convincing them to act in a different way or make a different decision than they did. In your letter, offer reasons why they should change their ways.

Consider the following characters and behaviors:

- Judson poisoning the whiskey bottle in “Ruthless”
- Norma pushing the red button in “Button, Button”
- Mary covering up her husband’s murder in “Lamb to the Slaughter”

[W.1, W.2]