

# LESSON OVERVIEW: UNIT INTRODUCTION

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

## Unit Overview

All humans call the same planet home. What is our relationship with and responsibility to that home? In this 360 Unit, students will explore humankind's complex relationship with the environment. They'll read both fiction and non-fiction texts that feature humans interacting with their environment. Students will consider both the impact we have on the environment and its impact on us. They'll analyze important messages about Mother Nature within poetry and consider the ways human actions can enrich and destroy the environment. Students will practice transferrable reading, writing, discussion, vocabulary, and grammar skills as they discuss and debate these valuable concepts.

## Unit Focus Standards

### Reading:

- Theme development [RL.9-10.2]
- Impact of word choice and figurative language [RL.9-10.4]
- Analysis of text structure [RL.9-10.5]
- Development of central idea [RI.9-10.2]
- Author's development of ideas or claims [RI.9-10.5]





### Writing

- Argument writing [W.9-10.1]
- Expository writing [W.9-10.2]
- Writing introductions [W.9-10.2.A]

## Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This lesson handout</li> <li>• Unit Intro Slide Deck (Optional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Introduction to Unit 2: Our Environment – Its Vulnerability and Power" (Student Copy)</li> <li>• Key Terms Reference Sheet (Optional)</li> </ul>

## 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	 <b>Exploring the Unit's Big Questions:</b> Students will rate how strongly they agree or disagree with five statements related to the unit's big ideas.	5 min
Part 2	 <b>Discussing the Unit's Big Questions:</b> Students will discuss their opinions from Part 1.	10 min
Part 3	 <b>What Will We Read?</b> Students will review a brief overview of the texts in the unit and discuss which texts seem most interesting.	5 min
Part 4	 <b>What Skills Will We Learn?</b> 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 2: People and the Environment

Essential Question: How do people and the environment affect each other?

*\*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. Sometimes it is ok to hurt the environment to make money.

*Strongly Disagree*

*Strongly Agree*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. One person's actions can make just as big of a difference as the actions of a large company.

*Strongly Disagree*

*Strongly Agree*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. Everyone thinks it's someone else's responsibility to worry about the environment.

*Strongly Disagree*

*Strongly Agree*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. For humans to survive, we must destroy nature.

*Strongly Disagree*

*Strongly Agree*

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. We are on track to leave the planet in good shape for future generations.

*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...
"Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" by Arlie Hochschild	<i>Narrative Non-fiction</i>	Why is it difficult to speak up when you see something wrong?
"He—y, Come on Ou—t!" by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones)	<i>Short Story</i>	How will our current actions impact our future?
"Song for the Turtles in the Gulf" by Linda Hogan	<i>Poem</i>	Why should we care about wild animals?
"Quiet Town" by Jason Gurley	<i>Short Story</i>	What do we do when an environmental problem threatens life as we know it?
"The Sea Also Rises" By Ron Cassie	<i>Narrative Non-fiction</i>	Which is more important: Enjoying the present or planning for the future?
"Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now" by Matthew Olzmann	<i>Poem</i>	How will Earth look fifty years from now?
"Trophic Cascade" by Camille T. Dungy	<i>Poem</i>	How are all living things connected?



**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

Mark the column that best matches your confidence level for each skill.	Not Confident	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1. I can analyze how an author uses specific words, sentences, and paragraphs to develop a theme or idea.			
2. I can determine the central idea of a non-fiction text.			
3. I can determine how figurative language develops a poem's theme.			
4. I can determine the theme of a short story.			

### Writing Skills

Mark the column that best matches your confidence level for each skill.	Not Confident	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1. I can write a strong argument that is clear, concise, and specific.			
2. I know how to provide context that introduces a quote.			
3. I can write explanations that explain what my evidence means and how it supports my argument.			
4. I can plan, organize, and write an essay about more than one text.			

## Term or Unit People and the Environment

<b>UNIT 2 KEY TERMS</b> <i>These terms will appear throughout the unit. Use this reference sheet as needed.</i>	
<b>Theme</b>	<p>A universal message that can apply to real life or other stories</p> <p>Example: A theme of <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> is that someone's home will always have special importance.</p>
<b>Central Idea</b>	<p>The main point an author makes in a non-fiction text (or a section of a nonfiction text)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texts can have more than one central idea</li> </ul>
<b>Allegory</b>	A story in which multiple characters, places, or events have symbolic meaning
<b>Anecdote</b>	<p>A short, interesting story about a real life event or person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used to emphasize a claim or help readers make personal connections</li> </ul>
<b>Flashback</b>	<p>A scene that flashes back or shows readers something that took place before the current moment in a narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memories or past moments used to build background or understanding about a character or event</li> </ul>
<b>Narrative Non-fiction</b>	A true story that reads like fiction with well-developed characters, setting, and dialogue
<b>Diction</b>	The careful selection of words a writer chooses to communicate their message
<b>Enjambment</b>	<p>In poetry, the continuation of a sentence without a pause or punctuation at the end of the line</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used to make the reader continue reading to the next line without stopping</li> </ul>
<b>Juxtaposition</b>	<p>When two things or ideas are placed next to each other to highlight their similarities and differences</p> <p>Example: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." Charles Dickens, <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i></p>
<b>Mood</b>	The atmosphere and the emotion in a text; refers to the emotion an author is trying to make their audience feel, like worry, fear, excitement, suspense, or joy
<b>Speaker</b>	The narrator of a poem
<b>Line</b>	In a poem, a group of words arranged in a row
<b>Line Break</b>	In a poem, the end of one line and the start of the next
<b>Stanza</b>	In a poem, a group of lines that are set off from other groups by a space
<b>Stanza Break</b>	In a poem, the end of one stanza and the start of the next
<b>Context</b>	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	
<b>Overall Score</b>	

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



Grade 6-10 Argumentative Writing Rubric					
4-Point Section					
Score	4	3	2	1	Not Scored
Analysis	Explanations/analysis <b>develop ideas and insight</b> in the essay, and support a <b>credible and convincing line of reasoning</b> .  Effectively uses a variety of <b>elaborative techniques</b> , such as making connections or comparisons, using analogies or anecdotes, etc.  Reflects <b>precise and carefully selected language</b> for clarity and effect  <b>Tone is clearly appropriate</b> for the task, audience, and purpose.	Explanations/analysis <b>develop ideas and make connections</b> , and support a <b>coherent line of reasoning</b> .  Adequately uses <b>some</b> elaborative techniques, such as making connections or comparisons, using analogies or anecdotes, etc.  Reflects use of language that is <b>functional and appropriate</b>  Tone is <b>generally appropriate</b> for the task, audience, and purpose.	Explanations/analysis <b>mostly summarize</b> or restate evidence, but the line of reasoning may be <b>difficult to follow or underdeveloped</b> .  Uses <b>weak or imbalanced</b> elaborative techniques.  Reflects <b>mostly simplistic</b> language  <b>Tone is uneven or somewhat ineffective</b> for the task, audience, and purpose.	Explanations/analysis <b>may be missing</b> or show a lack of understanding. <b>There is no line of reasoning</b> .  <b>Mostly appeals to emotions</b> instead of using elaborative techniques.  Language is <b>unclear or confusing</b>  <b>Tone is ineffective</b> for the task, audience, and purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insufficient (includes copied text)</li><li>Not written in English</li><li>Not aligned to the task and/or purpose</li></ul>
Grade 6-10 Argumentative Writing Rubric					
2-Point Section					
Score	2	1	Not Scored		
Writing Conventions	Reflects <b>adequate control of most writing conventions</b> ; contains occasional errors that <b>do not interfere with clarity or message</b>	Reflects <b>partial control</b> of writing conventions; contains errors that <b>interfere</b> with clarity or message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Insufficient (includes copied text)</li><li>Not written in English</li><li>Not aligned to the task and/or purpose</li></ul>		

## 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.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR INDEPENDENT READING WITH COMMONLIT 360

Independent reading provides a wealth of benefits to students. Students develop greater reading stamina, deepen their content and background knowledge, widen their vocabulary, and build new reading skills and habits. Dedicating classroom time to teaching students about what, why, and how to read is crucial to students becoming better readers. Providing students a space to actually put in the reading “road miles” will boost students’ academic achievement and help ensure equitable access to books.

## Best Practices for Building a Classroom Culture of Reading



**Provide frequent and consistent opportunities** for students to read self-selected texts in the classroom for a sustained amount of time—even 10-15 minutes makes a difference.

- Provide access to books on a wide range of reading levels, about a variety of topics, and that offer a range of diverse perspectives and experiences. (There are lots of ways to [build your classroom library on the cheap](#).)
- Provide class time for students to self-select their next book.



**Build a culture of enthusiasm** for reading books outside of class.

- Provide opportunities for students to write and read reviews about books.
- Promote authentic peer-to-peer conversations about books through book clubs or other collaborative routines.
- Build momentum by letting students take their books home, and trust them to bring the books back.



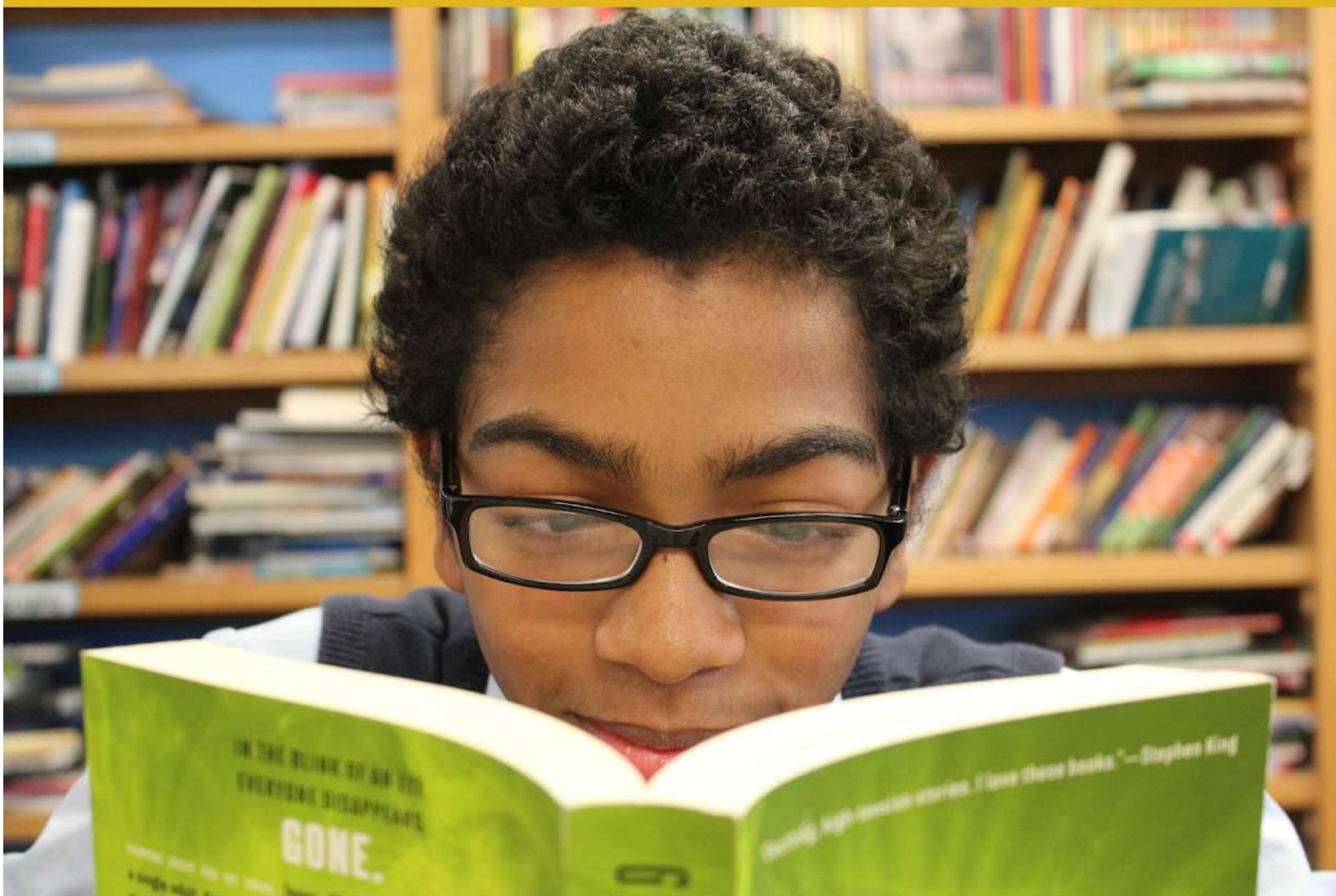
**Support readers** through accountable practices.

- Monitor and support readers during independent reading time through small-group and [1:1 conferences](#).
- Empower original student thought and writing fluency through accountable reading routines, such as reading responses.
- Encourage students to set goals, and praise them for meeting their goals.



COMMONLIT  
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CURRICULUM

# INDEPENDENT READING TEACHER GUIDE



UPDATED MARCH 2021

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## UNIT 2: PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### INDEPENDENT READING TEACHER GUIDE

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## 9TH GRADE UNIT 2: PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### SUGGESTED NOVEL LIST

This list includes high-interest fiction and nonfiction books with environmental concerns at the core. These novels feature a natural world in turmoil and characters who struggle to make their way through ecological disaster. The nonfiction titles break down complicated environmental topics with accessible, inspiring language. One way to use this list is to encourage students to self-select novels to read independently. Alternatively, you can use this list as inspiration to launch book clubs or other creative independent or whole-class reading options. We recommend that teachers preview these books and select texts that will meet the needs of their students and families; the key is to always provide access to a wide array of full-length books about topics of interest to your students and texts that offer multiple and diverse perspectives.

TITLE AND AUTHOR	DESCRIPTION	GENRE
FICTION SUITABLE FOR INDEPENDENT READING		
Balance of Fragile Things by Olivia Chadha	When Vic Singh finds a dead tropical butterfly in his cold, upstate New York village, he knows something is terribly amiss. Yet he is too busy dealing with typical teenager problems — the bully at his high school, his father's high expectations, the effort to reconcile his Sikh traditions with his American life, and his little sister Isabella's illness — to worry about a butterfly. Then his dad's Indian father and his mom's Latvian mother move into the family home, upending the delicate balance of this mixed-heritage family. As the environmental devastation foreshadowed by the dead butterflies arrives, can the family pull together to make it through?	Magical Realism
The Highest Tide by Jim Lynch	Miles O'Malley is just an average thirteen-year-old: he's got a crush on the girl next door, he's worried that his parents might be getting a divorce, he's obsessed with Rachel Carson and he often takes moonlit walks along the shores of his beloved Puget Sound. Well, maybe not totally average. But Miles's quiet life will change forever when he discovers a giant squid stranded on the beach. As the first person to see a giant squid alive, he finds himself wrapped in public adoration — and controversy. As the sea continues to offer up discoveries from its mysterious depths, Miles struggles to deal with the difficulties that attend the equally mysterious process of growing up.	Realistic Fiction
It's Getting Hot in Here: The Past, Present, and Future of Climate Change by Bridget Heos	Tackling the issue of global warming head-on for a teen audience, Bridget Heos examines the science behind it, the history of climate change on our planet, and the ways in which humans have affected the current crisis we face. <i>It's Getting Hot in Here</i> illustrates how interconnected we are not just with everyone else on the planet, but with the people who came before us and the ones who will inherit the planet after us. This eye-opening approach to one of today's most pressing issues focuses on past human influences, the current state of affairs, the grim picture for the future, and how young readers can help make a positive change.	Nonfiction; Science
No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference by Greta Thunberg	When fifteen-year-old Greta Thunberg decided not to go to school one day in 2018 in order to protest the climate crisis, she sounded a cry that has echoed around the world. Millions of students have followed her lead, and politicians and governments have heeded her call to action. Now students can read Greta's words for themselves. This volume collects speeches she made to the United Nations, on Capitol Hill, and at mass street protests around the world. This inspiring work reminds readers that they, too, have the power and responsibility to save our planet.	Speeches
Not a Drop to Drink by Mindy McGinnis	Lynn and her mother Lauren live on a small farm. They brave winter storms, coyotes, and even human invaders, all to protect their most precious possession: a pond of clean, drinkable water. In this frightening but all-too-plausible future, something has disrupted the water supply, and Lynn and Lauren's survival depends on keeping their small pond to themselves. But there will always be others desperate enough to fight them for survival. Lauren has taught her 16-year-old daughter well: if you want to live, you must be ready to kill. The first in a series, this novel introduces a tough, determined character who will do whatever it takes to protect her mother and herself.	Post-apocalyptic Thriller
Ship Breaker by Paolo Bacigalupi	Antarctica has melted. The planet's natural resources are exhausted. In what's left of America's Gulf Coast region, Nailer, a teenage boy, is just trying to survive. He scavenges the wrecks of oil tankers for valuable metals, which he sells to corporations that recycle them. Then one day, Nailer finds something infinitely more valuable: a nearly undamaged ship with one passenger, the heir to one of the richest, most powerful corporations in the world. Now he must decide what kind of man he wants to be. This gritty, high-stakes adventure is the first in a YA series by the acclaimed author of <i>The Windup Girl</i> and <i>The Water Knife</i> .	Post-apocalyptic Adventure

Skink: No Surrender by Carl Hiaasen	When Richard's cousin Malley runs off with some guy she met online to avoid being sent to boarding school, he's worried. And then she completely disappears. Richard pairs up with Skink, a ragged, one-eyed, ex-governor of Florida, who thinks he can track Malley down. In Carl Hiaasen's outrageous, hilarious novel, the two face blinding storms, crazed pigs, flying bullets, and giant gators to find the missing girl and, hopefully, get a little swamp justice.	Humor / Thriller
The Ward by Jordana Frankel	Sixteen-year-old Ren is trying to survive and care for her sister, Aven, in a future Manhattan that's been swallowed by the Atlantic and devastated by disease. When Aven is infected by a deadly virus, Ren is desperate to save her, so she accepts a secret mission for the powerful Governor: to search for a freshwater source in the Ward, with the hope of finding a cure. Along the way she finds a passionate young scientist and connects to a web of lives that will change everything she thinks she knows about life in the Ward. This is the first book in a high-octane series about a young woman who fights for the people she loves.	Dystopia / Adventure
Where Have All the Bees Gone?: Pollinators in Crisis by Rebecca E. Hirsch	Bees pollinate 75% of the fruits, vegetables, and nuts grown in the United States. Without bees, humans would face a drastically reduced diet. But bees are dying, and some bee species are teetering on the brink of extinction. Along with an introduction to the many bee species on Earth and their vital connection to flowering plants, this book answers the most important question: what can I do to help?	Science
Wolf Girl: Finding Myself in the Wild by Doniga Markegard	In <i>Wolf Girl</i> , Doniga Markegard, a leader in restorative and sustainable agriculture, takes readers on a journey through the youthful experiences that shaped and inspired her adult life. From the wilderness immersion school where she was taught by Indigenous elders; to hitchhiking across the Pacific Northwest; to Alaska, where she fell in love with tracking wolves, this book traces one person's journey to ecological awareness. This book will inspire teens to find — and fight for — what they love in the natural world.	Memoir



## TEACHER RESOURCE: READING RESPONSES

(adapted from [Reading with Presence by Marilyn Pryle 2018](#))

Students need to learn how to write and talk about what they read with increasing fluency and sophistication. In order to get there, students need to become skilled at sifting through their own thoughts about texts. They need to be told that it's okay, and even preferable, to have their own personal reactions to the books, stories, films, podcasts, news articles, and reviews that they read. We know that these reactions are the gateway to deeper analysis of texts. We should seek both to empower students to react to their reading and to model how to articulate something unique and important about the texts they encounter.

One way to give power to students' thoughts about texts is through Reading Responses. These paragraph-length reactions to texts provide students an opportunity to step away from teacher-led reading, to refine their own ideas about what they've just read, and to express their ideas with increasing fluency. They hold students accountable for thinking critically about texts through a simple protocol that Marilyn Pryle has outlined in her book *Reading with Presence*. Here is an adaptation of Pryle's protocol and Reading Response categories:

1. Say something original about the text.
2. Choose a reading response category.
3. Use and cite at least one quotation.
4. Write 5 sentences or more.

### Here's how to put this in motion in the classroom:

- At the end of students' independent reading time in class—or as homework—have students reflect on their reading using the Reading Response protocol.
- Model how to follow the protocol by using a text from your current unit or by using the Example Student Reading Response below (*"First, I choose a response category, then I write a short paragraph."*).
- Encourage students to maintain a running log of their reading responses in a personal notebook or journal. These notes can be used as jumping off points for book club discussions, small group conferences, or 1:1 conferences.

### Example Student Reading Response:

<b>Date:</b> 2/21/21	<b>Book:</b> <i>Inside Out</i>	<b>Author:</b> <i>Francisco Jimenez</i>
<b>Reading Response Category:</b> Capture the Conflict		
<p><b>Reading Response:</b></p> <p><i>In the story "Learning the Game," the main conflict that Francisco has is with this bully Carlos, who won't let Manuelito play kick the can with the rest of the kids. But then the conflict changes. Francisco sees how their boss, Mr. Diaz, is treating another worker named Gabriel, trying to make him plow the fields like an ox. When Gabriel refuses, Diaz says he'll fire him if he doesn't listen. It makes Francisco so mad that he goes home and stands up for Manuelito. He says, "Manuelito plays, or I'm not playing" (93). I think the deeper conflict is that Francisco sees that some people have power over others for no reason. He thinks that people shouldn't get to make others follow whatever rules they want, especially unfair ones.</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I wrote about an original idea.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I wrote about a reading response category.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I used and cited a quotation.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I wrote at least 5 sentences.</p>		

## MENU OF READING RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Students may choose from the list of reading response categories, or you may identify which categories they should write about. Presenting the entire menu of reading responses at once has the potential to overwhelm students who are new to the reading response process. Instead, consider presenting a few response categories at a time, or presenting one group of response categories at a time (e.g. first “reading responses for essential understandings in literary texts,” then “reading responses for nonfiction texts”).

### READING RESPONSES FOR ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS IN LITERARY TEXTS

**Ask a Question:** Your question can be about a part of the text that you don’t understand, or it can be about a larger idea that the text made you wonder about (e.g. life, literature, etc.). Your question must be specific, you must still quote from the text, and you must still write five sentences. You can do this by explaining your question or even by trying to answer it yourself.

**Connect to the Text:** Great texts remind us of other experiences, like other stories we’ve read, movies we’ve seen, or events we’ve experienced ourselves. Describe the connection you’ve noticed, and explain what is similar between the pairing.

**Spot the Setting:** Setting is not simply where and when a story takes place, but it is also the general spirit of a particular time and place. Highlight a place in the text where the setting is particularly strong. What does it tell you about the particular place, time, and community? What mood does it convey? Are there specific parts of the setting that stand out as symbols? Who could thrive and who could fail in this specific setting? Be sure to highlight the descriptive words and images that make this setting especially important.

**Character Description:** Explain what makes this particular character description important to the story. This can be a description of what the character says, does, thinks or feels, how the character looks, or the way other characters treat them. Explain what the description reveals about the character on a deeper level. Why might the author have chosen to represent the character in such a way?

**Mind the Motivation:** All characters have motives or desires that drive a story forward. Some characters have multiple motivations and even motivations that conflict with each other. Explain what motivates the character(s) and how the motivations influence other characters and the events of the story.

**Capture the Conflict:** What is the main problem that the character or characters seem to be facing and what is causing it? Explain how the problem is deeper than it seems or how it is linked to a character’s internal struggles.

**Identify the Climax:** Describe the part in the story that is the biggest turning point for the main character(s). What makes this event so significant, and how does it cause the plot to resolve?

## READING RESPONSES FOR NONFICTION TEXTS

**Cite the Claim:** Pull out the quotation that most directly states the author’s argument. Has the author convinced you? Why or why not?

**Impressive Intro:** Describe what about this particular introduction has grabbed your attention and kept you interested. You could point to images, narrative techniques, strong language—anything!—but you must be specific.

**Captivating Conclusion:** How did this particular author leave you wondering? How did they tie up their argument in a way that really affected you? Describe the parts of the conclusion that really stand out to you and explain what makes them meaningful.

## READING RESPONSES FOR MORE ADVANCED ANALYSIS

**Significant Passage:** Describe or quote from a passage that you feel is most important to the meaning of the whole text or a part of the text. Explain what makes this passage especially meaningful to the other parts of the text. Which words and phrases stand out as particularly important? Why might the author have chosen to include this passage, or particular words, phrases, and lines from the passage?

**Find Foreshadowing:** Notice where the author clues you in to what will happen or the topics that will be covered next in the text. If you haven’t yet read ahead, make a prediction: based on the breadcrumbs the author leaves you, what will happen next? If you have discovered what happened, trace the author’s masterful creation: how did the author clue you in to the big reveal all along? Why did the author choose those specific places in the text to give you clues?

**Mark the Mood:** The mood of a text is what you, the reader, feels while reading it. What is the mood? What is creating the mood? It could be the plot, setting, details about the characters, dialogue between characters, or even descriptive details. Explain why you think the author chose to create this particular mood.

**Trace the Theme:** What larger theme or themes is the author developing throughout the text? What details contribute to those deeper messages? Are there any places in the text that seem to contradict or conflict with those themes? Which characters, events, symbols, craft moves, or structures point to the theme?

**Track the Tone:** Tone is the author’s attitude toward a topic, character, or idea. What is the author’s tone in this text, and how does the author reveal it? Is it illustrated through events of the plot? Word choice? The structure of a passage? Choice of details? Your quote should reveal evidence of the tone. Why does the author feel this way?

**Locate Meaningful Language:** Identify language that stands out to you. This could be significant figurative language, repeated words or phrases, a certain character’s diction, a pattern you notice in the author’s word choice, or other language features. Describe the meaning and importance of the language you noticed. Why might the author have chosen to write in this specific way at this particular point in the text? What deeper meaning does the language illustrate?

## READING RESPONSES FOR UNIT-SPECIFIC CONNECTIONS

Make connections between your novel and the rest of our unit by selecting any of the following questions to answer in the form of a reading response.

1. How do the people in your book interact with nature? Are they protectors or destroyers of nature?
2. By the end of the book, do you think that people have learned to value the natural world? Why or why not?
3. Consider the characters or people in your book and those in the texts you have read throughout this unit. In what ways are the people in your book and the other texts similar? Which characters or people display the most similarities in their interactions with nature?
4. In your book, what role does the larger society play in protecting or destroying nature? Does this seem realistic to you? Do you think our society today is similar to the one portrayed in your book?
5. One woman interviewed for “The Sea Also Rises” said, “The truth is... I don’t want to think about it.” Based on the book you read, do you think humanity is ready to truly consider and change our relationship with nature? Why or why not?
6. Based on your book and the texts in this unit, what crucial change should humanity make to better care for our planet? Explain your answer using specific examples from your book.
7. After reading your book and the core texts in this unit, what do you think everyday life will be like in fifty years? Explain your answers.
8. How does your book answer our unit’s essential question: *How do people and the environment affect each other?*

## TEACHER RESOURCE: READING RESPONSE NOTEBOOK TEMPLATE

Use this notebook template to coach students in writing reading responses to their independent or book club reading. Consider modeling how to write responses or using strong student responses as models for the whole class.

Date:	Book:	Author:
Reading Response Category:		
Reading Response:		
<div><input type="checkbox"/> I wrote about an original idea.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I wrote about a reading response category.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I used and cited a quotation.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I wrote at least 5 sentences.</div>		

Date:	Book:	Author:
Reading Response Category:		
Reading Response:		
<div><input type="checkbox"/> I wrote about an original idea.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I wrote about a reading response category.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I used and cited a quotation.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I wrote at least 5 sentences.</div>		

Date:	Book:	Author:
Reading Response Category:		
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<div><input type="checkbox"/> I wrote about an original idea.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I wrote about a reading response category.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I used and cited a quotation.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I wrote at least 5 sentences.</div>		

## TEACHER RESOURCE: BOOKS I'VE READ TEMPLATE

DATE FINISHED	BOOK TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE	MY RATING (1 - 5) 5 = Best book I've read!
<i>EXAMPLE: January 5th</i>	<i>Percy Jackson &amp; the Olympians: the Lightning Thief</i>	<i>Rick Riordan</i>	<i>Fantasy</i>	<i>3</i>

## TEACHER RESOURCE: BOOKS I WANT TO READ TEMPLATE

[illegible]

## TEACHER RESOURCE: HOW TO RUN STUDENT BOOK CLUBS CONCURRENT WITH A COMMONLIT UNIT

There are vast benefits to having students read in book clubs. Book clubs motivate students to read, write, talk, and argue about complex texts with their peers; they allow students to socialize and to discuss meaningful, purposeful content at the same time with kids their own age. Because book clubs tend to be organized around students' similar skills, reading level, and/or interests, they are rich environments for student learning. Students develop a number of skills through their participation in book clubs. They learn how to:

- Set shared goals for reading
- Prepare for a discussion in advance
- Support their perspectives and analysis with strong textual evidence
- Consider perspectives different from their own and engage in academic debate
- Expand on and revise their own ideas throughout the course of a discussion
- Set and use group norms for entering and engaging in discussions
- Reflect on their collective and individual learning

A strong book club practice often involves running book clubs concurrent with the core readings of the current whole-class unit. This allows students to read self-selected books that are thematically or topically aligned to the unit of study. As a result, students are constantly making connections between their book club readings and the themes and content of the broader unit.

### Most book clubs follow a similar structure:

1. Teachers present book club options to students and allow students to rate their top book choices. Teachers group students into book clubs, paying special attention to student skill, reading level, group dynamics, and interest ratings.
2. Students meet initially in book clubs to set group norms and expectations, decide how much to read, what lens or strategy they will use in their independent book club reading, and/or what they intend to talk about when they come back together to discuss. Some student norms and expectations will need to be taught, so keep an eye out for what kinds of speaking and listening skills students will need explicit lessons on.
3. Students read their agreed-upon book club pages independently, gathering their ideas about the book and related text evidence as they go.
4. Students meet in book clubs to discuss their ideas and perspectives, debate opinions and analysis, and revise their thinking through evidence-based conversations. Teachers pop in to book club meetings to listen in, and teach into skills, strategies, or content as conversations necessitate.
5. Students reflect on their own learnings and set new goals for their shared and independent reading. Student groups alternate between independent reading time and book club discussions until they finish their reading and hold their culminating discussion.

### Example Book Club Schedule:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily unit instruction</li> <li>• Flex time: Book club meeting #1: goal setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily unit instruction</li> <li>• Flex time: Independent book club reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily unit instruction</li> <li>• Flex time: Book club meeting #2: discussion; goal setting for next meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily unit instruction</li> <li>• Flex time: Independent book club reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily unit instruction</li> <li>• Flex time: Book club meeting #3: discussion; goal setting for next meeting</li> </ul>



## TEACHER RESOURCE: NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR BOOK CLUBS

As members of book clubs, every student's goal is to develop as a reader, listener, speaker, and thinker. Allowing students to set the norms and expectations that will help them meet these goals is a powerful practice in creating empowered and accountable student communities. Based on your students' readiness, you may choose to use the sample norms and expectations below or allow students to create their own using the guiding questions that follow.

### SAMPLE NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS:

1. Read the agreed upon pages.
  2. Come to discussion prepared to share your thoughts.
  3. Bring your book, and follow along when someone shares a quotation.
  4. Keep conversations focused on the book. Use book club discussion questions and reading responses to kick off discussion and keep it going.
  5. Stay engaged in discussion.
  6. Honor everyone's voice and ideas.
  7. We may disagree. When we do, we disagree respectfully.
  8. At the end of each meeting, set page number and reading focus goals for the next meeting.
- 

### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT-CREATED BOOK CLUB NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS:

- What does it mean to be prepared for a book club meeting?
- How do we determine who should speak next?
- What should conversations look and sound like?
- How do we make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to share their ideas?
- What does listening look and sound like?
- What does respect look and sound like?
- What does disagreement look and sound like?
- What if I didn't read last night?
- What if someone in the group isn't doing their share?
- What does it look and sound like to be a leader in this book club?
- What roles will we take on (e.g. facilitator, scribe, time keeper, reporter), and how will they rotate?

### OUR BOOK CLUB NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS:

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.

## TEACHER RESOURCE: BOOK CLUB READING PLANS TEMPLATE

Book title:

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Author:

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Meeting number	Meeting date	Group roles	By the next meeting, read to page ____	Next meeting's reading focus <i>What reading strategy are we using?</i> <i>What reading response category will we respond to and discuss?</i>
1		<b>Examples:</b> <i>Facilitator:</i> <i>Scribe:</i> <i>Reporter:</i>		
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

## TEACHER RESOURCE

### UNIT 2: PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

#### Questions For Independent Reading Conferences Or Book Club Discussions

You may use these questions to kick off independent reading conferences with your students, or as discussion questions that students can use to get book club conversations up and running.

#### GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. What about the text confirmed something you knew or had heard before?
2. What about the text surprised you?
3. What about the text challenged your thinking?
4. What were some of your reading responses?
5. Who else wrote about the same idea that was just shared? What did you write about?
6. Did anyone write a reading response about that same category?
7. Why did you choose to write about that specific category?
8. Who has another example of the idea that was just shared?

#### UNIT-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

1. How do the people in your book interact with nature? Are they protectors or destroyers of nature?
2. By the end of the book, do you think that people have learned to value the natural world? Why or why not?
3. Consider the characters or people in your book and those in the texts you have read throughout this unit. In what ways are the people in your book and the other texts similar? Which characters or people display the most similarities in their interactions with nature?
4. In your book, what role does the larger society play in protecting or destroying nature? Does this seem realistic to you? Do you think our society today is similar to the one portrayed in your book?
5. One woman interviewed for “The Sea Also Rises” said, “The truth is... I don’t want to think about it.” Based on the book you read, do you think humanity is ready to truly consider and change our relationship with nature? Why or why not?
6. Based on your book and the texts in this unit, what crucial change should humanity make to better care for our planet? Explain your answer using specific examples from your book.
7. After reading your book and the core texts in this unit, what do you think everyday life will be like in fifty years? Explain your answers.
8. How does your book answer our unit’s essential question: *How do people and the environment affect each other?*

# LESSON OVERVIEW: “LEE SHERMAN AND THE TOXIC LOUISIANA BAYOU”

*(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	Reading Lesson 6	Reading Lesson 7
“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” by Arlie Hochschild (Narrative Non-fiction)	“He—y, Come on Ou—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) (Short Story)	“Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan (Poem)	“Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley (Short Story)	“The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie (Narrative Non-fiction)	“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann (Poem)	“Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy (Poem)
↑ You are here! ↑						




## This lesson’s skill focus

In this lesson, you’ll analyze how an author uses **specific sentences, paragraphs, or sections** of a text to **develop a claim**.  
[RI.9-10.5]

## About this Narrative Non-fiction

This narrative non-fiction text tells the real-life story of Lee Sherman, whose job at a company called PPG put his life and the environment around him in grave danger. For years, Sherman went along with the job until he could no longer live with the devastating impact his actions and the decisions of the company had on life in the Louisiana Bayou.

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"> <li>Use the <b>recommended reading modalities</b> (whole class, partner, independent)</li> <li>Pause to answer the <b>During Reading Questions</b> during reading.</li> </ul> <p>70 total minutes for this lesson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign <b>longer chunks of independent reading</b>.</li> <li>Skip some supportive During Reading Questions</li> <li>Instruct students to <b>take notes independently</b>: As you read, take notes on details that reveal the effect PPG had on its employees and the environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put students into <b>groups of 3-5</b></li> <li>Students answer the <b>During Reading Questions</b> and alternate readers to read sections aloud.</li> <li>Circulate to check for understanding</li> </ul>
↑ Recommended! ↑		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHER COPY: Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou

Arlie Hochschild

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

## About this text

Arlie Hochschild is a widely respected sociologist, someone who studies how our society is structured and how it works. In this article, Dr. Hochschild presents the story of Lee Sherman, a Louisiana man affected by pollution.

## Purpose for Reading

To learn about how the author used specific details to develop their central claim about the impact that the PPG company had on the environment.

## Vocabulary

**Let's pronounce these words together as a class:**

Contaminate [kuhn-**tam**-uh-neyt]  
Emission [ih-**mish**-uhn]  
Industry [**in**-duh-stree]  
Lethal [**lee**-thuhl]  
Livelihood [**lahyv**-lee-hood]  
Toxic [**tok**-sik]

## WHOLE CLASS READING

[1] There he is, seated on his wooden front porch overlooking a trim yard in suburban DeRidder, Louisiana, watching for my car. He rises from his chair, waving with one arm and steadying himself on his walker with the other. A large-chested, 6ft 3in man with a grey crewcut and blue eyes, Lee Sherman, age 82, gives me a welcoming smile. A player for the Dallas Texans football team (later renamed the Kansas City Chiefs) for two years, an honoree in Who's Who of American Motorsports, a NASCAR racer who drove at 200 miles an hour in a neck brace and fire suit, and the proud purchaser of a waterski boat once owned by TV's Wonder Woman, he shakes my hand, apologising, "I'm sorry to be on this thing," he points to his walker, "and not take you through the house properly." He doesn't feel like his old self, he says, but accepts his feeble legs good-naturedly. Given his dangerous work at the petrochemical<sup>1</sup> company, Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG), he is happy to be alive. "All my co-workers from back then are dead; most died young," he tells me.

[2] As a young man, Sherman trained as a coppersmith in the US naval shipyards outside Seattle, where his dad worked as an electrician. When travelling south for work in 1965, he was hired by PPG as a maintenance pipefitter<sup>2</sup> and soon earned a reputation as a mechanical genius.

## DURING READING QUESTIONS

### Paragraph 1

**Think & Share:** What does the reader learn about working at PPG?

- *It was extremely dangerous, and in some cases even lethal.*

<sup>1</sup> chemicals obtained from petroleum and natural gas; used for many household products such as glass, plastics, and detergents

<sup>2</sup> A pipefitter installs, maintains, and repairs piping systems.

[3] He was fearless and careful, a good fit for his hazardous job fitting and repairing pipes carrying **lethal** chemicals such as ethylene dichloride, mercury, lead, chromium, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and dioxins.

[4] At one point, Sherman narrowly escaped death, he tells me, taking a careful, long sip of coffee. One day while he was working, cold chlorine<sup>3</sup> was accidentally exposed to extreme heat, which instantly transformed the liquid to gas. Sixteen workers were in the plant at the time. Noting that the company was short of protective gear, Sherman's boss instructed him to leave. "Thirty minutes after I left," he says, "the plant blew up. Five of the 15 men I left behind were killed." The next afternoon, Sherman's boss asked him to help search for the bodies of the dead workers. Two were found, three were not. Acid had so decomposed<sup>4</sup> the body of one of the three victims that his remains came out in pieces in the sewer that drained into a nearby bayou.<sup>5</sup> "If someone hadn't found him," Sherman says, turning his head to look out of his dining room window, "that body would have ended up floating into Bayou d'Inde."

### Paragraphs 3-4

**Find Evidence:** Underline three details that illustrate the kind of setting Lee Sherman worked in.

- "hazardous job...lethal chemicals" (3)
- "narrowly escaped death" (4)
- "accidentally exposed to extreme heat" (4)
- "the company was short of protective gear" (4)
- "the plant blew up...were killed" (4)
- "acid had so decomposed the body" (4)

## INDEPENDENT READING

[5] In the 1960s, safety was at a minimum at PPG. "During safety meetings," Sherman tells me, "the supervisor just gave us paperwork to fill out. Working with the chemicals, we wore no protective facial masks. You learned how to hold your nose and breathe through your mouth."

[6] "The company didn't much warn us about dangers," he says, adding in a softer voice, "My co-workers did. They'd say, 'You can't stand in that stuff. Get out of it.' I wouldn't be alive today, if it weren't for my co-workers."

[7] The pipes Sherman worked on carried oxygen, hydrogen, and chlorine, and when a pipe sprung a leak, he explains, "I was the guy to fix it."

[8] "Did you use your bare hands?" I ask.

[9] "Oh, yeah, yeah."

[10] Eventually the general foreman<sup>6</sup> issued badges to the workers to record any overexposure<sup>7</sup> to dangerous chemicals, Sherman says, "but the foreman made fun of them. It's supposed to take two or three months before the gauge registers you've reached the limit. My badge did in three days. The foreman thought I'd stuck it inside a pipe!"

[11] Accidents happened. One day, Sherman was standing in a room, leaning over a large pipe to check a filter, when an operator in a distant control room mistakenly turned a knob, sending hot, almond-smelling, liquid chlorinated hydrocarbons<sup>8</sup> coursing through the pipe, drenching him. "It was hot and I got completely soaked," Sherman tells me. "I jumped into the safety shower and had the respirator<sup>9</sup> in my mouth, so I wasn't overcome. But the chemical was burning pretty bad. It really gets you worst underneath your arms, in between your legs, up your bottom." Despite the shower, he said, "The chemical ate off my shoes. It ate off my pants. It ate my shirt. My undershorts were gone. Only

## DURING READING QUESTIONS

### Paragraphs 5-10

**Write:** What was PPG's attitude toward its employees?

- *PPG didn't care about the safety of their employees.*

<sup>3</sup> a greenish-yellow toxic chemical

<sup>4</sup> **Decompose** (verb): to break down into small parts

<sup>5</sup> **Bayou** (noun): a marshy and slow-moving body of water

<sup>6</sup> **Foreman** (noun): a person in charge of a department

<sup>7</sup> **Overexposure** (adjective): too much contact with something

<sup>8</sup> toxic chemicals

<sup>9</sup> a mask that prevents a person from inhaling toxic substances

some elastic from my socks and my undershorts remained. It burned my clothes clean off me.”

[12] As a result of the things he suffered, saw, and was ordered to do as a pipefitter in the petrochemical plant, Sherman became an ardent environmentalist. Calcasieu Parish, in which he worked for 15 years at PPG, is among the 2% of American counties with the highest **toxic emissions** per capita. According to the American Cancer Society, Louisiana has the second-highest incidence of cancer for men and the fifth-highest male death rate from cancer in the nation.

[13] Lee Sherman’s work at PPG was a source of personal pride, but he clearly did not feel particularly loyal to the company. Still, he did as he was told. And one day in the late 1960s, after his acid bath, he was told to take on another ominous job. It was to be done twice a day, usually after dusk,<sup>10</sup> and always in secret. In order to do this job, Sherman had to wield an 8ft-long “tar buggy”,<sup>11</sup> propelled forwards on four wheels. Loaded on this buggy was an enormous steel tank that held “heavy bottoms” – the highly viscous tar residue of chlorinated hydrocarbon that had sunk to the bottom of kitchen-sized steel vessels. A layer of asbestos<sup>12</sup> surrounded the tank, to retain heat generated by a heater beneath the buggy. Copper coils were wound around its base. The hotter the tar, the less likely it was to solidify<sup>13</sup> before it was dumped.

[14] Working overtime in the evenings, under cover of dark, his respirator on, Sherman would tow the tar buggy down a path that led towards the Calcasieu Ship Channel in one direction and towards Bayou d’Inde in another.

[15] Sherman would look around “to make sure no one saw me” and check if the wind was blowing away from him, so as to avoid fumes blowing into his face. He backed the tar buggy up to the marsh. Then, he said, “I’d bend down and open the faucet.” Under the pressure of compressed air, the **toxins** would spurt out “20 or 30 feet” into the marsh. Sherman waited until the buggy was drained of the illegal **toxic** waste.

[16] “No one ever saw me,” he says.

#### AUTHOR’S CLAIM: Paragraphs 13-16

**A. Turn & Talk:** Summarize Lee Sherman’s nightly task for PPG.

- *Lee Sherman secretly dumped toxic chemicals from PPG into the Bayou d’Inde at night.*

**B. Find Evidence:** Underline three pieces of evidence that illustrate PPG’s awareness of its effects on the community.

- *“It was to be done twice a day, usually after dusk, and always in secret.” (13)*
- *“Copper coils were wound around its base. The hotter the tar, the less likely it was to solidify before it was dumped.” (13)*
- *“working overtime in the evenings, under cover of dark” (14)*
- *“Sherman would look around ‘to make sure no one saw me.’” (15)*

**C. Write:** What is the author suggesting about PPG through the details above?

- *PPG was aware of how they were harming their employees and the environment, but they did not care.*

#### PARTNER READING

[17] Sherman lingers over an event that occurred one day while he was alone on the bank with his secret. “While I was dumping the heavy bottoms in the canal, I saw a bird fly into the fumes and fall instantly into the water. It was like he’d been shot. I put two shovels out into the mud, so I could walk on them into the marsh without sinking too far down. I walked out and picked up the bird. Its wings and body didn’t move. It looked dead, but its heart was still beating. I grew up on a farm, and I know about birds. I walked back on the shovels to the bank with the bird. I held its head in my right hand and its wings and body in my left hand.”

[18] “I blew into its beak and worked it up and down. Then it started breathing again. Its eyes opened. But the rest of its body still didn’t move. I put it on the hood of my truck, which was warm. Then I left the bird to go check my tar buggy. But when I got back, the bird was gone. It had flown away. So that was one thing good.”

<sup>10</sup> **Dusk** (*noun*): the partial darkness just before night

<sup>11</sup> a small wagon

<sup>12</sup> Asbestos is a mineral known to cause cancer with too much exposure.

<sup>13</sup> to turn into a solid from a liquid or gas

#### DURING READING QUESTIONS

#### Paragraphs 17-18

**Turn & Talk:** What does this section convey about the effect of the heavy bottoms?

- *The chemicals that Sherman dumped were very harmful to animals.*



[19] During the afternoon, Sherman circles back to the story of the bird, alternating between it and the story of the tar buggy. “I knew what I did was wrong,” he repeats. “Toxins are a killer. And I’m very sorry I did it. My mama would not have wanted me to do it. I never told anybody this before, but I knew how not to get caught.” It was as if Sherman had performed the company’s crime and assumed<sup>14</sup> the company’s guilt as his own.

[20] But, like the bird, Sherman himself became a victim. He grew ill from his exposure to the chemicals. After his hydrocarbon burn, “My feet felt like clubs, and I couldn’t bend my legs and rise up, so the company doctor ordered me put on medical leave. I kept visiting the company doctor to see if I was ready to come back, but he kept saying I shouldn’t come back until I could do a deep knee bend.” Sherman took a medical leave of eight months and then returned to work. But not for long.

[21] In 1980, after 15 years of working at PPG, Sherman was summoned and found himself facing a seven-member termination committee.<sup>15</sup> “They didn’t want to pay my medical disability,” he explains. “So they fired me for absenteeism. They said I hadn’t worked enough hours! They didn’t count my overtime. They didn’t discount time I took off for my Army Reserve duty. So that’s what I got fired for – absenteeism. They handed me my pink slip. Two security guards escorted me to the parking lot.” Sherman slaps the table as if, decades later, he has just got fired again.

### Paragraphs 20-21

**Write:** Why does the author use the word “victim” to describe Sherman?

- *Just like the bird, Sherman was severely harmed by being exposed to chemicals while working for PPG.*
- *Sherman lost his job at PPG as a result of taking off work due to his injuries.*

## INDEPENDENT READING

[22] Seven years later, Sherman would meet a member of that termination committee once again. There had been an enormous fish kill in Bayou d’Inde, downstream from the spot where Sherman had dumped the **toxic** waste and rescued the overcome bird. A Calcasieu Advisory Task Force met to discuss the surrounding waterways, to describe them as “impaired”,<sup>16</sup> and to consider issuing a seafood advisory,<sup>17</sup> warning people to limit their consumption of local fish.

[23] Local waterways had long been **contaminated** from many sources. But in 1987, the state finally issued a seafood advisory for Bayou d’Inde, the Calcasieu Ship Channel, and the estuary to the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>18</sup> The warning was shocking, the first in memory, and it called for limits “due to low levels of chemical contamination”. No more than two meals with locally caught fish a month, it said. No swimming, water sports, or contact with bottom sediments. It was a very belated attempt by the state of Louisiana to warn the public of toxins in its waters.

[24] Instantly fishermen became alarmed. Would they be able to sell their fish? Would residents limit what they ate? Were people now being asked to look at fish, not with relish for a scrumptious gumbo, jambalaya,<sup>19</sup> or all-you-can-eat fish fry, but as dubious<sup>20</sup> carriers of **toxic** chemicals? The carefully cultivated notion of harmony between oil and fishing – all this was thrown into question, and not just in Louisiana. One-third of all seafood

## DURING READING QUESTIONS

### AUTHOR’S CLAIM: Paragraphs 22-25

**A. Write:** How do the details in this section develop the author’s claim about PPG?

- *By describing the negative effects of water contamination on the community, the author shows how harmful PPG’s actions truly were.*

**B. Find Evidence:** Underline three details in this section that best support the author’s claim.

- *“The state finally issued a seafood advisory for Bayou d’Inde, the Calcasieu Ship Channel, and the estuary to the Gulf of Mexico.” (23)*
- *“No more than two meals with locally caught fish a month.” (23)*
- *“No swimming, water sports, or contact with bottom sediments.” (23)*
- *“Instantly fishermen became alarmed. Would they be able to sell their fish?” (24)*
- *“Many livelihoods were at stake.” (25)*

<sup>14</sup> **Assume (verb):** to accept

<sup>15</sup> a group of people in charge of firing employees

<sup>16</sup> **Impaired (adjective):** damaged

<sup>17</sup> an announcement warning the public of something hazardous

<sup>18</sup> bodies of water near PPG’s factory in Louisiana

<sup>19</sup> Gumbo and jambalaya are popular seafood dishes in Louisiana culture.

<sup>20</sup> **Dubious (adjective):** suspicious



consumed across the US came from the Gulf of Mexico, and two-thirds of that from Louisiana itself.

[25] Many **livelihoods** were at stake.

[26] By 1987, several things had transpired that would affect the fishermen's response to the edict. For one thing, PPG was not alone. Other **industries** had been polluting so much that Louisiana had become the worst hazardous waste producer in the nation. For another thing, the US Congress had established the Environmental Protection Agency (1970), the Clean Air Act (1970), and the Clean Water Act (1972). In addition, many small grassroots environmental groups had sprung up throughout the state, led by homemakers, teachers, farmers, and others who were appalled<sup>21</sup> to discover **toxic** waste being dumped in their backyard, illness, and disease.

[27] In the meantime, the Louisiana Department of Health and Human Services posted warning signs about fishing and swimming, which were promptly riddled with bullets or stolen. Burton Coliseum, the largest public meeting place in Lake Charles at the time, was filled "with about a thousand angry fishermen and others in the fish **industry**." Sherman continues, "When the meeting was called to order, it was standing room only. I could hear murmuring in the crowd. Oh, they were ready to kill the government."

[28] A row of company officials, including two from PPG, company lawyers, and state officials, all sat behind a table on a stage in front of the crowd. A state official stood to explain the reason for the seafood advisory: the fish had been **contaminated**. Citizens had to be informed. What had caused it? The officials from PPG seated on the stage feigned<sup>22</sup> ignorance.

[29] The meeting went on for 20 or 30 minutes, with catcalls to the government officials rising from the crowd.

#### AUTHOR'S CLAIM: Paragraphs 26-29

**Write:** The author states that PPG officials "feigned ignorance" in the community meeting. How does this word choice develop the author's claim about PPG?

- *By saying that PPG officials had to "feign," or fake, their ignorance, the author reminds readers that PPG knew their toxic dumping had contaminated the water.*

#### WHOLE CLASS READING

[30] Then, to everyone's astonishment, uninvited, Lee Sherman – long since fired by PPG – climbed on stage. With his back to the officials, he faced the angry fishermen, lifted a large cardboard sign, and slowly walked from one side of the stage to the other, so all could read it: "I'M THE ONE WHO DUMPED IT IN THE BAYOU."

[31] The entire coliseum went silent.

[32] Officials tried to get Sherman to leave the stage. But a fisherman called out, "We want to hear him."

[33] "I talked for 36 minutes," Sherman recalls. "I told them I had followed my boss's orders. I told them the chemicals had made me sick. I told them I'd been fired for absenteeism."

[34] "The only thing I didn't tell them was that sitting behind the front table on stage was a member of the PPG termination committee that had fired me. That was the best part – the PPG guys had both hands over the backs of their heads."

#### DURING READING QUESTIONS

##### Paragraphs 30-35

**A. Think & Share:** Why did Lee Sherman make a surprise announcement at the meeting?

- *to show that PPG was responsible for the polluted bayou and the loss of the fishermen's jobs*
- *to get back at the company for making him sick and firing him*

**B. Turn & Talk:** Why does the author use the word "mere" in paragraph 35 to describe the amount of money each fisherman received from PPG?

- *It was a very small amount of money to receive compared to what they lost.*

<sup>21</sup> **Appalled** (adjective): horrified

<sup>22</sup> **Feign** (verb): to pretend, to fake

[35] Now the fishermen knew the fish were truly **contaminated**. Soon after the meeting, they filed a civil lawsuit against PPG and won an out-of-court settlement<sup>23</sup> that gave a mere<sup>24</sup> \$12,000 to each fisherman.

[36] Sherman had worked hard, unpleasant, dangerous jobs. He had loyally followed company orders to **contaminate** an estuary.<sup>25</sup> He had done his company's moral dirty work, taken its guilt as his own, and then been betrayed and discarded, like a form of waste. The most heroic act of Lee Sherman's life had been to reveal to the world a company's dirty secret, and to tell a thousand fishermen furious at the government that companies like PPG were to blame.

### Paragraph 36

**Poll the class:** Do you think Lee Sherman is "heroic"? Be prepared to defend your answer.

- A. Yes
- B. No

Excerpt from *Strangers in their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. Copyright © 2016 by Arlie Russell Hochschild. Reprinted by permission of The New Press. [www.thenewpress.com](http://www.thenewpress.com). The text has been modified with permission.

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<sup>23</sup> an agreement signed after a disagreement

<sup>24</sup> **Mere** (*adjective*): used to emphasize that something is not large or important

<sup>25</sup> the part of a river at the place where it joins the sea

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the multiple choice questions for “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou.” 5 minutes



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

1. Which detail *best* supports the idea that PPG knew their chemical dumping could have negative effects on the environment? **[RI.1]**
  - A. “The next afternoon, Sherman’s boss asked him to help search for the bodies of the dead workers.” (Paragraph 4)
  - B. “Eventually the general foreman issued badges to the workers to record any overexposure to dangerous chemicals, Sherman says, ‘but the foreman made fun of them.’” (Paragraph 10)
  - C. “He was told to take on another ominous job. It was to be done twice a day, usually after dusk, and always in secret.” (Paragraph 13)
  - D. “In 1980, after 15 years of working at PPG, Sherman was summoned and found himself facing a seven-member termination committee.” (Paragraph 21)
2. Which detail *best* supports the idea that environmental damage can affect an entire community? **[RI.1]**
  - A. “Acid had so decomposed the body of one of the three victims that his remains came out in pieces in the sewer that drained into a nearby bayou.” (Paragraph 4)
  - B. “As a result of the things he suffered, saw, and was ordered to do as a pipefitter in the petrochemical plant, Sherman became an ardent environmentalist.” (Paragraph 12)
  - C. “A Calcasieu Advisory Task Force met to discuss the surrounding waterways, to describe them as ‘impaired’, and to consider issuing a seafood advisory, warning people to limit their consumption of local fish.” (Paragraph 22)
  - D. “Burton Coliseum, the largest public meeting place in Lake Charles at the time, was filled ‘with about a thousand angry fishermen and others in the fish industry.’” (Paragraph 27)
3. How does paragraph 12 help develop the author’s claim? **[RI.5]**
  - A. by describing the typical health of a male PPG employee living in Calcasieu Parish compared to the average health of a male in the US
  - B. by citing data to suggest a relationship between PPG and the negative health of the surrounding community
  - C. by mentioning the statistics on rising cancer rates in America and connecting them to Lee Sherman’s health issues
  - D. by outlining Sherman’s work as an environmentalist in order to raise awareness about toxins
4. Which statement *best* describes how the author develops her claim in paragraphs 30-36? **[RI.5]**
  - A. by contrasting Lee Sherman’s brave admission with his details of PPG’s irresponsible actions
  - B. by describing the careful steps PPG took to repair the damage they caused in the bayou
  - C. by comparing the damage Sherman faced to the consequences the fishermen faced
  - D. by explaining how Sherman planned out his public takedown of PPG



## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the short response prompt for “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou.” 15 minutes

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

**PROMPT:** You have just read “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” by Arlie Hochschild. Describe how the incident with the bird in paragraphs 17-18 develops the author’s claim about PPG. **[RI.5]**

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 notes on both of your answers. Push yourselves to use formal language and evidence from the text. *5 minutes*



DISCUSSION SENTENCE STARTERS	
<p><b>Summarizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My point is this: ...</i></li> <li>• <i>Overall, I'd argue that...</i></li> <li>• <i>The evidence for this is strong when you consider that...</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Invite Peers to Refer to Text Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you see different or conflicting ideas in the text? If so, where?</i></li> <li>• <i>What evidence do you have that supports that idea?</i></li> <li>• <i>What's an example of that?</i></li> </ul>

1. Consider the various negative effects to the environment, PPG employees, and the surrounding community, all caused by PPG's **toxins**. Do you think the consequences that PPG faced were fair? If not, what consequences would have been more appropriate?

2. Should PPG employees who carried out the company's harmful demands and chose to stay silent about their **lethal** work environment also be held accountable? Explain your answer.

3. Paragraphs 20-21 outline Sherman's struggles with having to take time off of work for injuries. Who should be responsible for a person's **livelihood** if they get sick or are injured on the job? Why?

# LESSON OVERVIEW: INTRODUCING EVIDENCE WITH CONTEXT

(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)
Introducing Evidence With Context	Writing Explanations	Mid-Unit Writing Review	Unit 2 Essay: Planning	Writing Engaging Introductions	How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least two unit texts to support your response. [W.1, W.2]
↑ You are here! ↑					






## This lesson's skill focus

In this lesson, students will learn to <b>provide context</b> when <b>introducing evidence</b> . [W.9-10.2]
---

## Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This lesson handout</li> <li>"Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" (Teacher Copy)</li> <li>"Classroom Anchor Chart: Introducing Evidence With Context" (Optional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Introducing Evidence With Context" (Student Copy)</li> <li>"Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" (Student Copy)</li> <li>"Student Reference Sheet: Introducing Evidence With Context" (Optional)</li> </ul>

## How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	 <b>What Is Context and Why Does It Matter?</b> Students compare two student examples in order to identify how including context can improve their writing.	5 min
Part 2	 <b>When to Add Different Types of Context:</b> Students work in pairs or independently to learn when to add different types of context. They will answer three questions by reviewing a provided example and notes.	5 min
Part 3	 <b>Practice Adding Context:</b> Students reread an excerpt of "Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou" and provide context for two quotations.	10 min
Part 4	 <b>Independent Practice:</b> Students practice introducing evidence with context in their independent writing prompt.	15 min
Part 5	 <b>Check Your Work:</b> Students annotate their response to evaluate whether they successfully introduced their evidence with context.	5 min
~40 min total		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: Introducing Evidence With Context

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

<b>Today's Goal</b>
Learn how to provide context when introducing quotations so that your evidence is always clear. <b>[W.2]</b>
<b>Today's Prompt</b>
<b>PROMPT:</b> What matters more: Lee Sherman's attempt to do good or his contribution to the pollution?

### PART 1: What Is Context and Why Does It Matter?

**Directions:** Compare how two students introduced the same piece of evidence. Then, answer the questions. *5 minutes*



Student 1	Student 2
In the text it states, "Its wings and body didn't move. It looked dead but its heart was still beating" (17).	One day when Sherman was still working for PPG, he saw a bird fly over the polluted bayou and drop into the water. Sherman explained, "Its wings and body didn't move. It looked dead but its heart was still beating" (17).

1. *Context is information that clarifies what is happening in a moment or situation.*

Both students used the same piece of evidence. Which student provides context before their evidence?

- A. Student 1
- B. Student 2**

2. Based on these examples, why does using context before a quotation improve our writing?

*Using context makes what is happening in this moment more clear.*



## PART 2: When to Add Different Types of Context

**Directions:** Use the example and notes to answer the three questions. *5 minutes*

- Based on the example, what are four types of context you can include to make your evidence more clear.

- when it happens*
- where it happens*
- what is happening*
- who said it*

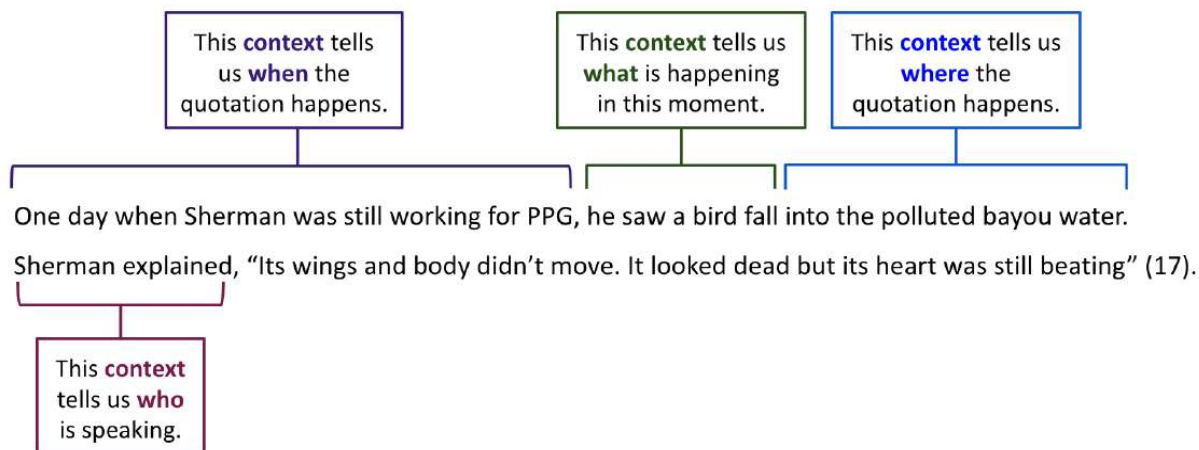
- Which type of context must **always** be clear?

- Context for who is speaking, thinking, or writing at this moment in the text must always be clear.*

- What three types of context do you **sometimes** include to make your evidence more clear?

- when the quotation happens in the text*
- what is happening at that moment*
- where something is happening*

### EXAMPLE WITH FOUR TYPES OF CONTEXT



### NOTES ON WHEN TO ADD CONTEXT

- It must always be clear **who** is speaking, thinking, or writing at this moment in the text.
- Sometimes add additional context if it makes your evidence more clear, such as:
  - when** it is happening
  - what** is happening at that moment
  - where** it is taking place



## PART 3: Practice Adding Context

**Directions:** Reread the excerpt from “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou.” Then, provide context to clarify the quotations. *10 minutes*



### “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” — Paragraph 4

One day while [Sherman] was working, cold chlorine was accidentally exposed to extreme heat, which instantly transformed the liquid to gas. Sixteen workers were in the plant at the time. Noting that the company was short of protective gear, Sherman’s boss instructed him to leave. “Thirty minutes after I left,” he says, “the plant blew up. Five of the 15 men I left behind were killed.” The next afternoon, Sherman’s boss asked him to help search for the bodies of the dead workers.

Excerpt from *Strangers in their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. Copyright © 2016 by Arlie Russell Hochschild. Used with permission by the author.

1. Provide context for the quotation below:

**Quotation:** “Thirty minutes after I left... the plant blew up. Five of the 15 men I left behind were killed” (4).

Hints:

- **When** did this occur?
- **Where** did it occur?
- **What** happened before the plant exploded?
- **Who** said the quote?

*Answers will vary:*

- *One day when Sherman was working at PPG, a dangerous situation arose. They didn’t have enough protective equipment, so Sherman was ordered to leave. Sherman explains, “Thirty minutes after I left... the plant blew up. Five of the 15 men I left behind were killed” (4).*

2. Provide context for the quotation below:

**Quotation:** “Sherman’s boss asked him to help search for the bodies of the dead workers” (4).

*Answers will vary:*

- *The day after the deadly explosion at the plant, the author writes, “Sherman’s boss asked him to help search for the bodies of the dead workers” (4).*



## PART 4: Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the short response prompt. *15 minutes*

**PROMPT:** What matters more: Lee Sherman's attempt to do good or his contribution to the pollution? **[RL.1]**

*Student responses will vary; a sample response is below:*

### SAMPLE STUDENT OUTLINE:

*Lee Sherman's attempt to do good matters more than his role in the pollution because he had a big role in stopping the pollution.*

- *"I told them I had followed my boss's orders. I told them the chemicals had made me sick. I told them I'd been fired for absenteeism." (33)*
- *"Now the fishermen knew the fish were truly contaminated. Soon after the meeting, they filed a civil lawsuit against PPG and won an out-of-court settlement that gave a mere \$12,000 to each fisherman." (35)*

### SAMPLE SHORT RESPONSE:

*Lee Sherman's attempt to do good matters more than his role in the pollution because he had a big role in stopping the pollution. At a large meeting full of angry fishermen, Sherman surprised the crowd when he got on stage. Sherman says, "I told them I had followed my boss's orders. I told them the chemicals had made me sick. I told them I'd been fired for absenteeism" (33). Sherman's confessions helped the local fishermen see that PPG was to blame for the **contamination** of the bayou, not the government. After the meeting, PPG had to face some consequences. The author explains, "they filed a civil lawsuit against PPG and won an out-of-court settlement that gave a mere \$12,000 to each fisherman" (35). Sherman's words helped the fishermen make PPG pay for their harmful actions.*

## PART 5: Check Your Work

**Directions:** Use the box below to check your work. *5 minutes*



### Check Your Work

[ ] Highlight your **FIRST PIECE OF EVIDENCE** in green.

Did you provide context for this evidence? Yes No I'm Not Sure

Would your evidence be clear to someone who never read the story? Yes No I'm Not Sure

[ ] Highlight your **SECOND PIECE OF EVIDENCE** in yellow.

Did you provide context for this evidence? Yes No I'm Not Sure

Would your evidence be clear to someone who never read the story? Yes No I'm Not Sure

**Go back and add any missing context.**

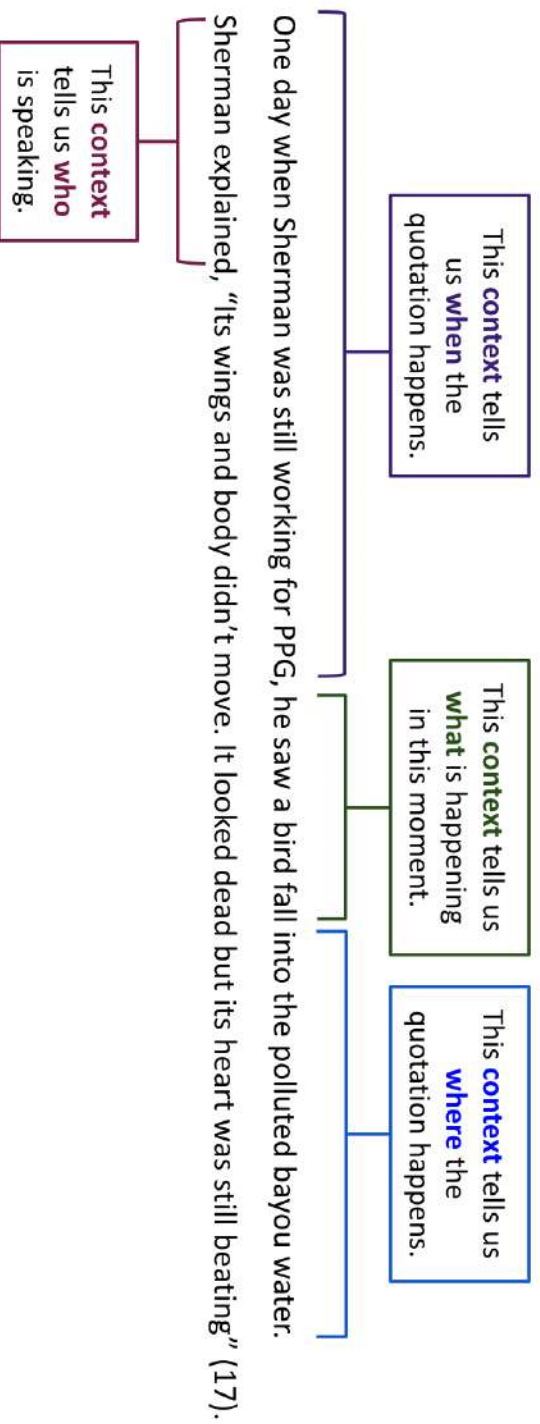
# Introducing Evidence With Context

**Context** is information that clarifies what is happening in a moment or situation.

## When introducing evidence:

- It must always be clear **who** is speaking, thinking, or writing at this moment in the text.
- Sometimes you need to add additional context to make your evidence more clear, such as **when** it is happening, **what** is happening in that moment, or **where** it is taking place.

## Example



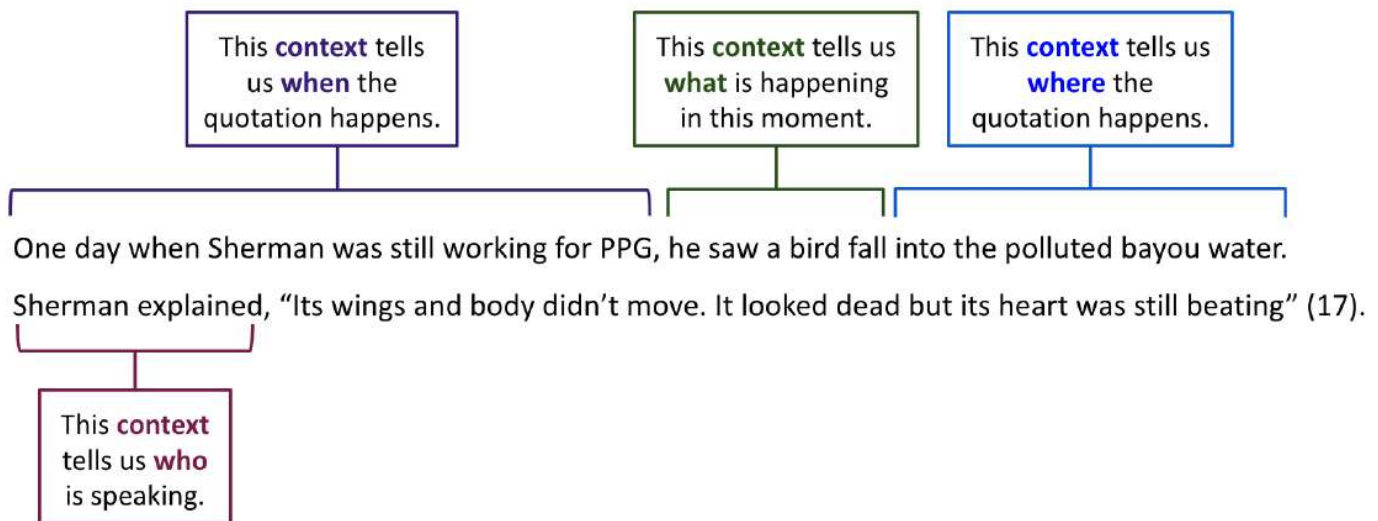
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## Example



### Sentence starters that introduce **who** is speaking:

- *The narrator states,*
- *The author writes,*
- *[Name] thinks,*
- *The speaker explains,*

### Sentence starters that introduce context about **when, what, or where**:

- *At the beginning of the story...*
- *At the end of the story...*
- *When...*
- *Before...*
- *After...*

## LESSON OVERVIEW: “HE—Y, COME ON OU—T!”

(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	Reading Lesson 6	Reading Lesson 7
“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” by Arlie Hochschild (Narrative Non-fiction)	“He—y, Come on Ou—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) (Short Story)	“Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan (Poem)	“Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley (Short Story)	“The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie (Narrative Non-fiction)	“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann (Poem)	“Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy (Poem)
	↑ You are here! ↑					

### This lesson’s skill focus




In this lesson, you’ll look at how the **structure** and **order of events** in a story create **mood** or **tension**. [RL.9-10.5]

**Note:** See 9th Grade Unit 1 for an optional stand-alone theme lesson that can be used as a scaffold for this lesson’s Independent Practice.

### About this Short Story

This allegorical short story by Japanese writer Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) tells the story of how one village handles the appearance of a strange hole in the ground by dumping all of their waste down it. Hoshi’s shocking ending will make readers think twice about the relationship between people and the environment.

### How do I facilitate this lesson?

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
 <b>Teacher-led, scaffolded and supportive</b>	 <b>Greater student independence</b>	 <b>Student-led, small groups</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the <b>recommended reading modalities</b> (whole class, partner, independent)</li> <li>Pause to answer the <b>During Reading Questions</b> during reading.</li> </ul> <p>75 total minutes for this lesson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign <b>longer chunks of independent reading</b>.</li> <li>Skip some supportive During Reading Questions</li> <li>Instruct students to <b>take notes independently</b>: As you read, take notes on details that create tension or suspense.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put students into <b>groups of 3-5</b></li> <li>Students answer the <b>During Reading Questions</b> and alternate readers to read sections aloud.</li> <li>Circulate to check for understanding</li> </ul>
↑ Recommended! ↑		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: He—y, Come on Ou—t!

Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones)

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

About this text	
Shinichi Hoshi, one of the pioneers of Japanese science fiction, is best known for writing more than 1000 “short-short” stories like this one. In “He—y, Come on Ou—t!”, the residents of a Japanese village discover a mysterious hole.	
Purpose for Reading	Vocabulary
To gain a new perspective on people and the environment by analyzing the way an author uses structure and order of events to create mood and tension.	<p><b>Let’s pronounce these words together as a class:</b></p> <p>Accumulate [uh-<b>kyoo</b>-myuh-leyt]            Contaminate [kuhn-<b>tam</b>-uh-neyt]            Dispose [dih-<b>spohz</b>]</p>

### WHOLE CLASS READING

- [1] The typhoon had passed and the sky was a gorgeous blue. Even a certain village not far from the city had suffered damage. A little distance from the village and near the mountains, a small shrine<sup>1</sup> had been swept away by a landslide.
- [2] “I wonder how long that shrine’s been here.”
- [3] “Well, in any case, it must have been here since an awfully long time ago.”
- [4] “We’ve got to rebuild it right away.”
- [5] While the villagers exchanged views, several more of their number came over.
- [6] “It sure was wrecked.”
- [7] “I think it used to be right here.”
- [8] “No, looks like it was a little more over there.”
- [9] Just then one of them raised his voice. “Hey what in the world is this hole?” Where they had all gathered there was a hole about a meter in diameter. They peered in, but it was so dark nothing could be seen. However, it gave one the feeling that it was so deep it went clear through to the center of the earth.
- [10] There was even one person who said, “I wonder if it’s a fox’s hole.”
- [11] “He—y, come on ou—t!” shouted a young man into the hole. There was no echo from the bottom. Next he picked up a pebble and was about to throw it in.

### DURING READING QUESTIONS

#### MOOD: Paragraphs 9-12

**A. Find Evidence:** Underline three things the villagers do to investigate the hole.

- “They peered in, but it was so dark nothing could be seen.” (9)
- “He—y, come on out—t!” shouted a young man into the hole.” (11)
- “The younger one energetically threw the pebble in.” (12)

**B. Write:** What mood do the actions of the villagers create?

- Their actions create a curious or mysterious mood because they make readers wonder what is in the hole.

<sup>1</sup> a place or building that is considered holy; a church or chapel

[12] “You might bring down a curse on us. Lay off,” warned an old man, but the younger one energetically threw the pebble in. As before, however, there was no answering response from the bottom. The villagers cut down some trees, tied them with rope and made a fence which they put around the hole. Then they repaired to the village.

### PARTNER READING

[13] “What do you suppose we ought to do?”

[14] “Shouldn’t we build the shrine up just as it was over the hole?”

[15] A day passed with no agreement. The news traveled fast, and a car from the newspaper company rushed over. In no time a scientist came out, and with an all-knowing expression on his face he went over to the hole. Next, a bunch of gawking curiosity seekers showed up; one could also pick out here and there men of shifty glances who appeared to be concessionaires.<sup>2</sup> Concerned that someone might fall into the hole, a policeman from the local substation kept a careful watch.

[16] One newspaper reporter tied a weight to the end of a long cord and lowered it into the hole. A long way down it went. The cord ran out, however, and he tried to pull it out, but it would not come back up. Two or three people helped out, but when they all pulled too hard, the cord parted at the edge of the hole.

[17] Another reporter, a camera in hand, who had been watching all of this, quietly untied a stout rope that had been wound around his waist.

[18] The scientist contacted people at his laboratory and had them bring out a high-powered bull horn, with which he was going to check out the echo from the hole’s bottom. He tried switching through various sounds, but there was no echo. The scientist was puzzled, but he could not very well give up with everyone watching him so intently. He put the bull horn right up to the hole, turned it to its highest volume, and let it sound continuously for a long time. It was a noise that would have carried several dozen kilometers above ground. But the hole just calmly swallowed up the sound.

[19] In his own mind the scientist was at a loss, but with a look of apparent composure he cut off the sound and, in a manner suggesting that the whole thing had a perfectly plausible<sup>3</sup> explanation, said simply, “Fill it in.”

[20] Safer to get rid of something one didn’t understand.

### DURING READING QUESTIONS

#### MOOD: Paragraphs 15-20

**A. Write:** How does this section build tension?

- *After different visitors try, the villagers still do not have answers about the hole, which makes the reader more confused and curious about the hole’s characteristics.*

**B. Turn & Talk:** Do you agree with the scientist’s recommendation that the villagers fill in the hole? Explain your answer.

- *Student answers will vary.*

### INDEPENDENT READING

[21] The onlookers, disappointed that this was all that was going to happen, prepared to disperse.<sup>4</sup> Just then one of the concessionaires, having broken through the throng and come forward, made a proposal.

[22] “Let me have that hole. I’ll fill it in for you.”

[23] “We’d be grateful to you for filling it in,” replied the mayor of the village, “but we can’t very well give you the hole. We have to build a shrine there.”

### DURING READING QUESTIONS

<sup>2</sup> a business person; a person who manages an area of land and the businesses that operate there

<sup>3</sup> **Plausible** (*adjective*): believable or reasonable

<sup>4</sup> **Disperse** (*verb*): to leave; to go in different directions



[24] “If it’s a shrine you want, I’ll build you a fine one later. Shall I make it with an attached meeting hall?”

[25] Before the mayor could answer, the people of the village all shouted out.

[26] “Really? Well, in that case, we ought to have it closer to the village.”

[27] “It’s just an old hole. We’ll give it to you!”

[28] So it was settled. And the mayor, of course, had no objection.

[29] The concessionaire was true to his promise. It was small, but closer to the village he did build for them a shrine with an attached meeting hall.

[30] About the time the autumn festival was held at the new shrine, the hole-filling company established by the concessionaire hung out its small shingle<sup>5</sup> at a shack near the hole.

[31] The concessionaire had his cohorts mount a loud campaign in the city. “We’ve got a fabulously deep hole!”

[32] “Scientists say it’s at least five thousand meters deep! Perfect for the **disposal** of such things as waste from nuclear reactors.”

[33] Government authorities granted permission. Nuclear power plants fought for contracts. The people of the village were a bit worried about this, but they consented<sup>6</sup> when it was explained that there would be absolutely no above-ground **contamination** for several thousand years and that they would share in the profits. Into the bargain, very shortly a magnificent road was built from the city to the village.

[34] Trucks rolled in over the road, transporting lead boxes. Above the hole the lids were opened, and the wastes from nuclear reactors tumbled away into the hole.

[35] From the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Agency boxes of unnecessary classified documents were brought for disposal. Officials who came to supervise the disposal held discussions on golf. The lesser functionaries,<sup>7</sup> as they threw in the papers, chatted about pinball.

[36] The hole showed no signs of filling up. It was awfully deep, thought some; or else it might be very spacious at the bottom. Little by little the hole-filling company expanded its business.

[37] Bodies of animals used in contagious disease experiments at the universities were brought out, and to these were added the unclaimed corpses of vagrants.<sup>8</sup> Better than dumping all of its garbage in the ocean, went the thinking in the city, and plans were made for a long pipe to carry it to the hole.

### Paragraphs 21-30

**Write:** What agreement do the mayor and the concessionaire make?

- *The mayor agrees to give the concessionaire the hole.*
- *The concessionaire agrees to rebuild the shrine closer to the village and with an attached meeting hall.*

### Paragraphs 31-33

**Write:** Why do the villagers agree to the nuclear waste disposal?

- *They want part of the profits.*
- *An authority figure assures them that there will be no toxic contamination above ground for a long time.*

### MOOD: Paragraphs 34-37

**Write:** How do the details in this section help to develop the tension about the hole?

- *As the villagers use the hole to dump all of their unwanted items, it makes the reader wonder if the hole will ever fill up and if there will be negative consequences.*

<sup>5</sup> a small sign, especially one found outside a business

<sup>6</sup> **Consent** (*verb*): to agree to something

<sup>7</sup> a public official

<sup>8</sup> a person who is homeless or who wanders from place to place



## WHOLE CLASS READING

[38] The hole gave peace of mind to the dwellers of the city. They concentrated solely on producing one thing after another. Everyone disliked thinking about the eventual consequences. People wanted only to work for production companies and sales corporations; they had no interest in becoming junk dealers. But, it was thought, these problems too would gradually be resolved by the hole.

[39] Young girls whose betrothals<sup>9</sup> had been arranged discarded old diaries in the hole. There were also those who were inaugurating new love affairs and threw into the hole old photographs of themselves taken with former sweethearts. The police felt comforted as they used the hole to get rid of **accumulations** of expertly done counterfeit<sup>10</sup> bills. Criminals breathed easier after throwing material evidence into the hole.

[40] Whatever one wished to discard, the hole accepted it all. The hole cleansed the city of its filth; the sea and sky seemed to have become a bit clearer than before.

[41] Aiming at the heavens, new buildings went on being constructed one after the other.

[42] One day, atop the high steel frame of a new building under construction, a workman was taking a break. Above his head he heard a voice shout:

[43] **“He—y, come on ou—t!”**

[44] But, in the sky to which he lifted his gaze there was nothing at all. A clear blue sky merely spread over all. He thought it must be his imagination. Then, as he resumed his former position, from the direction where the voice had come, a small pebble skimmed by him and fell on past.

[45] The man, however, was gazing in idle reverie<sup>11</sup> at the city’s skyline growing ever more beautiful, and he failed to notice.

“He—y, Come on Ou—t” by Shinichi Hoshi, translated by Stanleigh Jones. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

## DURING READING QUESTIONS

### Paragraphs 38-40

**Turn & Talk:** What does this section reveal about the city-dwellers’ attitudes toward production and waste?

- *Throwing away their waste made them feel better.*
- *They valued continued production over dealing with junk or waste.*

### Paragraphs 41-45

**A. Think & Share:** Think back to paragraphs 11-12. What were the first three things the villagers did to investigate the depth of the hole?

- *They peered inside the hole. (11)*
- *A young man shouted into the hole, “He—y, come on ou—t!” (11)*
- *A young man threw a pebble into the hole. (11-12)*

**B. Think & Share:** What does the story’s ending suggest about what will happen next to the city?

- *It suggests all the waste will fall on top of them.*

<sup>9</sup> engagement to be married

<sup>10</sup> **Counterfeit** (*adjective*): fake or imitation

<sup>11</sup> a saying that means to look lazily at something without thinking deeply

## Further Analysis Questions

**Directions:** Complete the questions with a partner or independently. Be prepared to discuss your answers with your class. *5 minutes*



- Remember this story is an **allegory**, which means that the events that take place in the story are symbolic of real-life events. What real-life actions does throwing the items in the hole symbolize?

- The city dwellers carelessly throwing trash and dangerous materials into the hole is symbolic of humans carelessly polluting the environment.*
- The city dwellers' decision to ignore the consequences and focus on the positive side of throwing the trash in the hole is symbolic of humans selfishly polluting the environment for financial gain or short-term convenience.*

- Consider the pebble that falls from the sky at the end of the story. What does this event symbolize in the real world?

- Humans' failure to consider the long-term consequences their actions will have on the environment that they depend on.*
- The eventual consequences that humans will face after destroying their own environment.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the multiple choice questions for “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” 5 minutes



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

1. How do paragraphs 32-34 contribute to the development of the theme? **[RL.2]**
  - A. They illustrate the cooperative way people can work with the government to solve problems.
  - B. They illustrate the selfish way people act without caring what their consequences might be.
  - C. They illustrate the generous way people in power can act when they care about a community.
  - D. They illustrate the strange way people behave when they know they are doing something wrong.
2. How do paragraphs 34-37 affect the mood of the story? **[RL.5]**
  - A. They build tension because the readers know that the items going into the hole are potentially lethal.
  - B. They build mystery because the readers are curious about how the villagers are not getting caught.
  - C. They build surprise because it is shocking that the village has so much waste to dispose of.
  - D. They build suspense because the readers want to know where the waste comes from.
3. How does the ending of the story help create a sense of surprise? (Paragraphs 41-45) **[RL.5]**
  - A. It reveals the destination of the people’s trash.
  - B. It illustrates the impact of the city’s development.
  - C. It reveals why the people disposed of trash in the hole.
  - D. It demonstrates the amount of damage the pebble caused.
4. How does the workman’s response develop the story’s theme in paragraphs 44-45? **[RL.3]**
  - A. It highlights the necessity of industry, even though it results in waste.
  - B. It highlights the beauty of the environment and how it can captivate humans.
  - C. It highlights the strength of the bond between humans and their environment.
  - D. It highlights the lack of awareness people have about the environment around them.



## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the short response prompt for “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” 15 minutes

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

**PROMPT:** You have just read “He—y, Come on Out—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi.  
How does the resolution develop the theme? **[RL.2]**

In your response be sure to:

- clarify what is happening at this moment in the story.
- state who is speaking, narrating, or being quoted for each piece of evidence.
- include when or where the action took place, if needed for clarification.

### CHECKLIST FOR INTRODUCING EVIDENCE:

- ☐ Highlight or bold each introduction of evidence.

Did you explain what is happening at this moment in the story?

- A. YES!  
B. No, I will go back and add that.

Did you state who is speaking, narrating, or being quoted?

- A. YES!  
B. No, I will go back and add that.

If needed, did you include when it happens or where it takes place?

- A. YES!  
B. No, I will go back and add that.

## Quick Partner Discussion

**Directions:** Discuss the questions with a partner. Record notes on both of your answers. Push yourselves to use formal language and evidence from the text. *5 minutes*



DISCUSSION SENTENCE STARTERS	
<p><b>Summarizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My point is this: ...</i></li> <li>• <i>Overall, I'd argue that...</i></li> <li>• <i>The evidence for this is strong when you consider that...</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Invite Peers to Refer to Text Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you see different or conflicting ideas in the text? If so, where?</i></li> <li>• <i>What evidence do you have that supports that idea?</i></li> <li>• <i>What's an example of that?</i></li> </ul>

1. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** Both “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” and “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” show people **disposing** of their waste in irresponsible ways. Do you think people are aware of the dangers of unsafe waste **disposal** and choose to ignore them, or do you think they are simply uninformed?

2. Many people make their **livelihoods** in the waste removal **industry** by helping people dispose of their garbage and recyclables. Is safe **disposal** the responsibility of the waste removal companies and their workers or of those who produce the waste?

3. Paragraph 20 reads, “Safer to get rid of something one didn’t understand.” What are some real-life examples of people acting on this mindset? What are the dangers and drawbacks of this mindset?

## LESSON OVERVIEW: WRITING EXPLANATIONS

*(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)
Introducing Evidence With Context	Writing Explanations	Mid-Unit Writing Review	Unit 2 Essay: Planning	Writing Engaging Introductions	How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least two unit texts to support your response. [W.1, W.2]
	↑ You are here! ↑				






### This lesson's skill focus

Students will practice <b>explaining</b> what their <b>evidence means</b> and how it <b>supports</b> their argument. [W.9-10.2]
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### Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This lesson packet</li> <li>"Classroom Anchor Chart: Writing Explanations" (Optional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Writing Explanations" (Student Copy)</li> <li>"Student Reference Sheet: Writing Explanations" (Optional)</li> </ul>

### How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	<p> <b>Free Writing Journal Prompt:</b> Students open class by free-writing about the Cuyahoga River, which famously caught on fire at least a dozen times. This activity helps connect students to the unit's theme while providing an opportunity for students to voice their opinions.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Consider showing this two-minute <a href="#">video summarizing the history of the river</a>.</p>	10 min
Part 2	<p> <b>Analyzing a Strong Explanation:</b> Students will read an exemplar explanation and answer two questions to reflect on what makes it strong. Note that the answers to the two questions directly align to the notes in Part 3.</p>	5 min
Part 3	<p> <b>Notes on Strong Explanations:</b> Students write notes on criteria for strong explanations. You may choose to provide the notes for students or have students try to name the criteria themselves.</p>	5 min
Part 4	<p> <b>Practice Writing Strong Explanations:</b> Students read a sample paragraph for a previous independent short response on Shinichi Hoshi's "He-y, Come on Ou-t!" Students then revise both explanations in the paragraph to make them stronger.</p>	10 min
Optional Revision Task	<p> <b>Optional Revision Task:</b> You may choose to have students revise their independent short responses from "He-y, Come on Ou-t!"</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Be sure to consider how to facilitate this task. For example, you may need to unsubmit digital assignments that students have completed.</p>	15 min
~30 to 45 min total		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: Writing Explanations

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

### Today's Goals

Learn about and practice writing strong explanations. [W.2]

### PART 1: Free Writing Journal Prompt

**Directions:** Read the background, then respond to the prompt. *10 minutes*



**Background:** For over a century, industries in Northeast Ohio dumped waste into the Cuyahoga River. Because of the pollution, the river caught on fire more than a dozen times—yes, you read that right: the river caught on fire! The first fire occurred in 1868, and the most famous fire, which helped spark the environmental movement in the United States, happened in 1969. Fifty years later, the organization *American Rivers* called the Cuyahoga a “national success story” and named it the “River of the Year” because of how much the water quality had improved.

**Prompt:** Write a journal response capturing your thoughts about the Cuyahoga River’s history:

In your journal response, consider any of the following:

- Does this connect to “He—y, Come on Ou—t!”? How?
- Do you believe people have learned their lesson about protecting the environment?
- Any other thoughts, ideas, or questions that come to mind.

*Student responses will vary.*



## PART 2: Analyzing a Strong Explanation

**Directions:** Review the prompt and example below. Then, answer the questions. *5 minutes*

**Prompt:** How do paragraphs 13-20 of “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” create suspense? [RL.5]

In paragraphs 13-20, the author creates suspense by creating mystery around the hole. When visitors inspect the hole, a scientist tries blasting a bull horn into the hole, but the narrator explains, “the hole just calmly swallowed up the sound” (18). The scientist expects to hear an echo, but because they don’t hear one, it suggests that the hole is either incredibly deep or maybe even goes on forever. Because we don’t get an answer, the mystery helps build suspense.

Part 1 of the Explanation

Part 2 of the Explanation

1. Based on the example, what is the purpose of “Part 1 of the Explanation”? What is the writer doing here?

- *The purpose is to explain why the evidence is important.*
- *The purpose is to explain why the sound being “swallowed up” matters in the story.*

2. What is the purpose of “Part 2 of the Explanation”?

- *The purpose is to connect the evidence back to the argument.*
- *The purpose is to explain how the evidence supports the argument.*

## PART 3: Notes on Strong Explanations

**Directions:** Complete the notes by adding the criteria for strong explanations. *5 minutes*



### STRONG EXPLANATIONS

*A Strong Explanation:*

- *Explains what the evidence means, represents, or implies*
- *Explains how the evidence connects to and supports the argument*





## PART 4: Practice Writing Strong Explanations

**Directions:** The sample response below includes two weak explanations. Revise both explanations. 10 minutes

STUDENT SAMPLE	
<p><b>Prompt:</b> You have just read “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi. How does the resolution develop the theme? [RL.2]</p>	
<p>The resolution of “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” develops the theme that humans’ harmful actions toward the environment will eventually come back to hurt them. At the end of the story, a man hears someone shout “He—y, Come on Ou—t” and then “a small pebble skimmed by him and fell on past” (44). <i>This shows that their actions will come back to hurt them.</i> This is important because earlier in the story people put everything they could into the hole, including “bodies of animals used in contagious disease experiments” (37) and “the wastes from nuclear reactors” (34). <i>This shows people hated the environment.</i></p>	<div style="border: 2px solid purple; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>Weak Explanation 1</b> </div> <div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>Weak Explanation 2</b> </div>

### 1. Revise “Weak Explanation 1.”

<p><i>This matches the first two things the villagers did when they found the hole, which reveals everything that they put into the hole will come back to them.</i></p>	<p><b>Checklist For Strong Explanations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explains what the evidence means, represents, or implies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explains how the evidence connects to and supports the argument</li> </ul>
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### 2. Revise “Weak Explanation 2.”

<p><i>Because of the resolution, we know that all of these terrible things will now come back to the town, which reveals the theme that people will eventually pay for abusing the environment.</i></p>	<p><b>Checklist For Strong Explanations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explains what the evidence means, represents, or implies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explains how the evidence connects to and supports the argument</li> </ul>
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# Writing Explanations

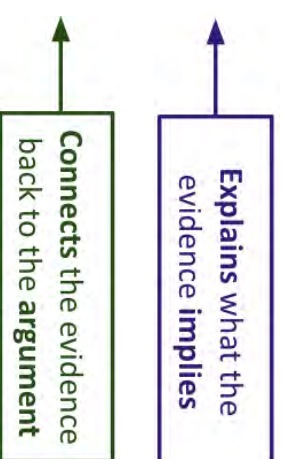
## A Strong Explanation:

- Explains what the evidence means, represents, or implies
- Explains how the evidence connects to and supports the argument

## Example

**Prompt:** How do paragraphs 13-20 of “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” create suspense? [RL.5]

In paragraphs 13-20, the author creates suspense by creating mystery around the hole. When visitors inspect the hole, a scientist tries blasting a bull horn into the hole, but the narrator explains, “the hole just calmly swallowed up the sound” (18). The scientist expects to hear an echo, but because they don’t hear one, it suggests that the hole is either incredibly deep or maybe even goes on forever. Because we don’t get an answer, the mystery helps build suspense.



## Sentence Starters to Explain

- *This means...*
- *In other words...*
- *Put another way...*

## Sentence Starters to Connect

- *This emphasizes...*
- *This suggests...*
- *This conveys the idea that...*

# Writing Explanations

## A Strong Explanation:

- Explains what the evidence means, represents, or implies
- Explains how the evidence connects to and supports the argument

## Weak Example

**Prompt:** How do paragraphs 13-20 of “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” create suspense? [RL.5]

In paragraphs 13-20, the author creates suspense by creating mystery around the hole. When visitors inspect the hole, a scientist tries blasting a bull horn into the hole, but the narrator explains, “the hole just calmly swallowed up the sound” (18). *This description creates suspense for the reader.*

**Weak Explanation**  
Does not explain how the evidence creates suspense

## Strong Example

**Prompt:** How do paragraphs 13-20 of “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” create suspense? [RL.5]

In paragraphs 13-20, the author creates suspense by creating mystery around the hole. When visitors inspect the hole, a scientist tries blasting a bull horn into the hole, but the narrator explains, “the hole just calmly swallowed up the sound” (18). *The scientist expects to hear an echo, but because they don’t hear one, it suggests that the hole is either incredibly deep or maybe even goes on forever. Because we don’t get an answer, the mystery helps build suspense.*

**Explains what the evidence implies**

**Connects the evidence back to the argument**

### Sentence Starters to Explain

- *This means...*
- *In other words...*
- *Put another way...*

### Sentence Starters to Connect

- *This emphasizes...*
- *This suggests...*
- *This conveys the idea that...*

# LESSON OVERVIEW: “SONG FOR THE TURTLES IN THE GULF”

(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	Reading Lesson 6	Reading Lesson 7
“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” by Arlie Hochschild (Narrative Non-fiction)	“He—y, Come on Ou—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) (Short Story)	“Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan (Poem)	“Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley (Short Story)	“The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie (Narrative Non-fiction)	“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann (Poem)	“Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy (Poem)
↑ You are here! ↑						

## This lesson's skill focus

In this lesson, you'll learn how <b>diction</b> develops the <b>theme</b> of a poem. [RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.4]
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## Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This lesson handout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” (Student Copy)</li> <li>“Student Reference Sheet: Poetry Terms” (Optional)</li> <li>“Student Reference Sheet: Quoting &amp; Citing Poetry” (Optional)</li> </ul>






## About this Poem

In this poem, the speaker admires the beauty of sea turtles and the deep sadness they feel at the harm the sea turtles suffer after an oil spill.
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## Optional Annotation Task

You may choose to instruct students to <b>take notes independently instead of, or in addition to, the second read questions</b> : As you read, take notes on the message conveyed through the speaker's diction.
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## How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
CommonLit 360 poetry lessons focus on a multi-read process for understanding and analyzing poems.		
First Read	 <b>Read for the Gist:</b> As a whole class, make predictions based on the title. Then, read the poem aloud. At the end of the poem, you may ask students for any initial noticings. Another best practice is to poll the class about how easy or difficult the poem seems.	5 min
Second Read	 <b>Read for Literal Understanding:</b> Students work independently or in pairs to re-read the poem and answer the questions in the margin to help them understand what is happening in the poem.	15 min
Third Read	 <b>Read for Deeper Meaning:</b> Have students work in pairs to discuss and analyze the deeper meaning of their annotations.	15 min
Independent Practice	 Students will complete four multiple choice questions and answer a final writing prompt about the poem.	20 min
Partner Discussion	 Students can complete this optional extension activity to further their ideas and interpretations of the poem.	5 min
~60 min total		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHER COPY: Song for the Turtles in the Gulf

Linda Hogan

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

## About this text

Linda Hogan is a world-renowned poet and finalist for the International Impact Award. Her writing is best known for its focus on environmental and Indigenous people's activism.

## Purpose for Reading

To analyze how the poet uses diction to develop a message about people and nature.

**FIRST READ (WHOLE CLASS):** *Read for the gist.*

**SECOND READ (WHOLE CLASS):**  
*Read for literal understanding.*

- [1] We had been together so very long,
- [2] you willing to swim with me
- [3] just last month, myself merely small
- [4] in the ocean of splendor and light,
- [5] the reflections and distortions of us,
- [6] and now when I see the man from British Petroleum
- [7] lift you up dead from the plastic
- [8] bin of death,
- [9] he with a smile, you burned
- [10] and covered with red-black oil, torched
- [11] and pained, all I can think is that I loved your life,
- [12] the very air you exhaled when you rose,
- [13] old great mother, the beautiful swimmer,
- [14] the mosaic growth of shell
- [15] so detailed, no part of you

### Lines 1-5

**Think & Share:** Based on the title and lines 1-5, who or what is the speaker talking to?

- *a turtle they swam with*

### Lines 6-12

**Turn & Talk:** Summarize what happens in lines 6-10.

- *The speaker sees a man lift up the dead turtle which is burned and covered in oil.*

[16] simple, meaningless,  
[17] or able to be created  
[18] by any human,  
[19] only destroyed.  
[20] How can they learn  
[21] the secret importance  
[22] of your beaten heart,  
[23] the eyes of another intelligence  
[24] than ours, maybe greater,  
[25] with claws, flippers, plastron<sup>1</sup>.  
[26] Forgive us for being thrown off true,  
[27] for our trespasses<sup>2</sup>,  
[28] in the eddies of the water  
[29] where we first walked.

**After the FIRST READ:** What do you *think* the poem is about?

*The speaker describes how humans have killed a beautiful turtle.*

#### Lines 14-19

**Write:** Rewrite lines 14-19 in your own words.

- *Humans cannot create such complex, meaningful creatures as turtles; we only have the power to destroy them.*

#### Lines 26-29

**Think & Share:** What is the speaker asking for?

- *forgiveness for the sins of humans*

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<sup>1</sup> the part of a turtle's shell that forms the underside

<sup>2</sup> trespasses is a synonym for sins; lines 26-27 allude to a Christian prayer that includes the line "forgive us our trespasses"

**THIRD READ (PARTNER OR INDEPENDENT):** *Read for deeper meaning.*

1. **Consider the entire poem.** Underline the two lines that *best* convey the speaker's feelings towards the turtle.

*Student answers will vary and may include:*

- *"all I can think is that I loved your life" (11)*
- *"old great mother the beautiful swimmer" (12)*
- *"the secret importance of your beaten heart" (21-22)*
- *"the eyes of another intelligence than ours, maybe greater" (23-24)*

2. **Lines 9-11:** The poet describes the turtle as "burned," "torched," and "pained." What does the poet's diction suggest about the relationship between people and nature?

- *People have violently destroyed nature.*
- *Human actions have caused painful and violent harm to nature.*

3. **Line 13:** What is the speaker suggesting when they call the turtle an "old great mother"?

- *Like an elder, the turtle is wise.*
- *Like a mother, the turtle is nurturing and gives life to others.*
- *Like an elderly mother, the speaker feels the turtle is worthy of respect.*

4. **Lines 20-25:** Why does the speaker refer to the turtle's "secret importance" and their "eyes of another intelligence"?

- *The speaker believes that humans do not fully understand the intelligence of nature.*
- *The speaker believes that humans do not seem to recognize or value nature.*

5. What messages does this poem express about humans' relationship to nature?

- *Most humans do not appreciate the beauty and importance of the nature they're destroying.*
- *When we destroy nature, we also destroy part of our past, our homes, and our lives.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the multiple choice questions for “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf.” 5 minutes



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

1. What does the speaker’s mention of the man from British Petroleum suggest about the relationship between humans and nature? (Lines 6-9) **[RL.4]**
  - A. Humans sometimes find nature amusing.
  - B. Humans believe nature is an inconvenience.
  - C. Humans may not care about the harm they do to nature.
  - D. Humans are embarrassed by how they have harmed nature.
2. Which lines from the poem *best* express the idea that the turtle cannot be replaced? **[RL.1]**
  - A. “We had been together so very long / you willing to swim with me” (Lines 1-2)
  - B. “and now when I see the man from British Petroleum / lift you up dead from the plastic” (Lines 6-7)
  - C. “no part of you / simple, meaningless / or able to be created / by any human” (Lines 16-18)
  - D. “in the eddies of the water / where we first walked.” (Lines 28-29)
3. How does the phrase “ocean of splendor and light” in line 4 contribute to the poem’s meaning? **[RL.4]**
  - A. It shows the speaker’s desire to keep the turtle safe.
  - B. It reinforces the speaker’s admiration for nature’s beauty.
  - C. It reveals the speaker’s negative feelings toward pollution.
  - D. It supports the speaker’s observation that the turtle was a beautiful swimmer.
4. The author creates a contrast by describing both the speaker’s swim with the turtle and the aftermath of the oil spill. How does this contrast add to the meaning of the poem? (Lines 1-11) **[RL.2]**
  - A. It emphasizes how dangerous oil is for swimmers.
  - B. It shows how differently humans move than turtles.
  - C. It highlights the sadness of losing something so beautiful.
  - D. It illustrates the loving relationship between humans and nature.



## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the short response prompt for “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf.” 15 minutes



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

**PROMPT:** In “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” how does Linda Hogan’s diction develop the theme? **[RL.4]**

In your response be sure to:

- explain what the evidence means or represents.
- explain how the evidence connects to and supports the argument.

### CHECKLIST FOR WRITING EXPLANATIONS:

- ☐ Highlight or bold each explanation.

Did you explain what the evidence means, represents, or implies without repeating it?

- A. YES!
- B. No, I will go back and add that.

Does your explanation connect the evidence to the paragraph’s 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 speaking with academic language by using the discussion sentence starters. *5 minutes*



DISCUSSION SENTENCE STARTERS	
<p><b>Summarizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My point is this: ...</i></li> <li>• <i>Overall, I'd argue that...</i></li> <li>• <i>The evidence for this is strong when you consider that...</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Invite Peers to Refer to Text Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you see different or conflicting ideas in the text? If so, where?</i></li> <li>• <i>What evidence do you have that supports that idea?</i></li> <li>• <i>What's an example of that?</i></li> </ul>

1. In the poem, the speaker says the turtle has “the eyes of another intelligence / than ours, maybe greater” (lines 23-24). What can we, as humans, learn from animals? What do we stand to lose when a species goes extinct?

2. Oil is the world’s largest source of energy: it fuels our cars and heats our homes. The oil **industry** also employs a large number of Americans and people worldwide. Do the benefits of oil outweigh the damage the industry does to nature? What other options do we have?

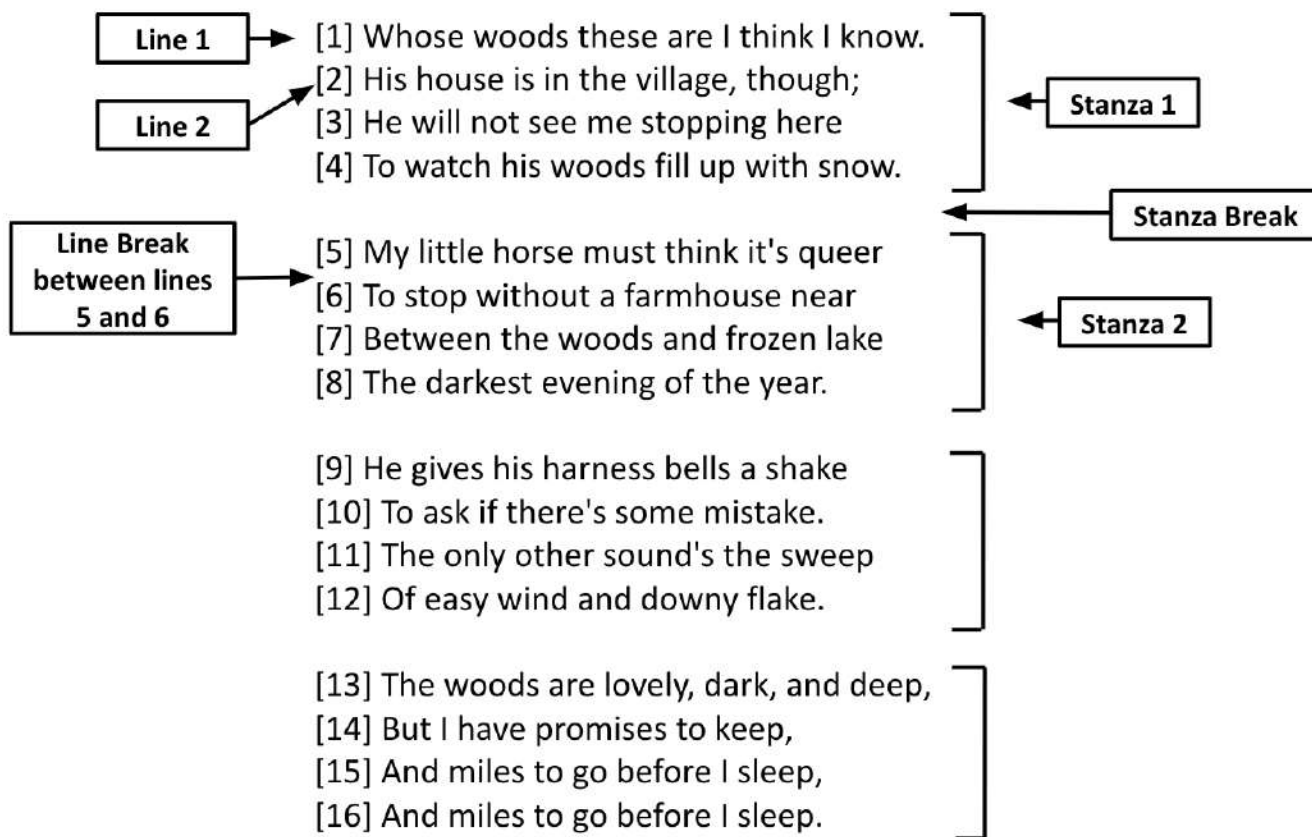
3. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** In “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” we read about how Pittsburgh Plate Glass dumped **toxic** waste into the bayou. In this poem, the British Petroleum oil spill caused harm to sea turtles. What rules or laws should be in place to make big companies responsible for the damage they cause? Who should be in charge of ensuring that companies follow those rules and laws? Refer to evidence from both texts to support your answer.

# Poetry Reference Sheet

## Definitions of Common Poetry Terms

- Poems are made up of **lines** and **stanzas**.
- A group of lines is called a **stanza**.
- A **line break** refers to the end of one line and the start of the next.
- A **stanza break** refers to the end of one stanza and the start of the next
- The **speaker** of a poem is like the narrator of a story. The **speaker** is the voice of the poem.

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"  
Robert Frost



"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost is in the public domain

# Quoting & Citing Poetry

## Notes and Example

Quoting poetry is slightly different from quoting a story or article.

When quoting poetry, you:

- Use a single slash (/) to represent a **line break**
- Use a double slash (//) to represent a **stanza break**
- Always **cite the author's last name and the line numbers** at the end of the quote

Below is an example of how to correctly quote poetry taken from a student essay.

*Begin and end your quotation with quotation marks (" ").*

*This single slash (/) shows a line break.*

The speaker describes his quiet surroundings, "The only other sound's the sweep / Of easy wind and downy flake. // The woods are lovely, dark, and deep" (Frost, lines 11-13).

*This double slash (//) shows a line break.*

*At the end of the quote, place the author's last name and the line numbers in parentheses.*










# LESSON OVERVIEW: Related Media Exploration

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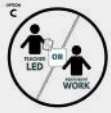
What is a “Related Media Exploration”, and how does it support the unit?

About Related Media Explorations	How Do People and the Environment Impact Each Other?
<p>This Related Media Exploration gives students a chance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with six videos</li> <li>Work collaboratively</li> <li>Reflect on the environment</li> <li>Discuss what they've learned</li> </ul>	<p>Students will build knowledge about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How human efforts have revitalized ecosystems</li> <li>The resilience of nature</li> <li>The impact of actively resisting the mindset that nothing can be done to change or reverse damage to the environment</li> </ul>

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. Some videos have been edited for video length and complexity.		
Introduction	 <b>Nature Is Speaking:</b> Students self-select and watch 1-2 of the “Nature Is Speaking” videos and reflect on nature’s message to humans. Students will also consider how the unit texts relate to the video’s message.	7 min
Part 1	 <b>Humans’ Responsibility to Nature:</b> Students will watch “Our Incredible Ocean: Now is the Time to Protect It” to consider humans’ ability and responsibility to help restore damaged and overused parts of nature.	8 min
Part 2	 <b>Strengthening Nature’s Roots:</b> Students will watch “One Man’s Mission to Revive the Last Redwood Forests” to learn about the ways that people are using new technology and science to restore old growth forests.	15 min
Part 3	 <b>Working With Mother Nature:</b> Students will watch “50 Years Ago, This Was a Wasteland. He Changed Everything   Short Film Showcase” to see an example of how individuals have the capacity to make decisions that can positively impact and restore a water supply, helping an environment spring back to life.	10 min
Part 4	 <b>Your Community. Your Choice:</b> Students will watch “ESSENCE Black Girl Magic: Meet The 20-Year-Old Environmentalist Fighting For Her Community” and learn about one young woman’s efforts to use active resistance to combat passive acceptance of the pollution and unhealthy air in her community.	13 min
Part 5	 <b>Environmental Changemakers:</b> Students will watch “Meet the 2020 Taking Nature Black Environmental Champions” and discover the actions and efforts that real people are taking to build awareness and show that they are willing to do what it takes to respect and restore Earth’s natural environment for all communities.	8 min
Part 6	 <b>Independent Reflection:</b> Students will reflect on the ideas they have explored by considering how these videos have changed or confirmed their perspective on the relationship between people and the environment.	10 min
Part 7	 <b>Whole Class Discussion:</b> Students have the opportunity to share what they have learned with their classmates. This section includes optional extension questions to keep the conversation going.	10 min
Part 8	 <b>Optional Extension Activity:</b> Students have the opportunity to write their own “Nature Is Speaking” monologue in the voice of one of the natural environments they have read about in the unit texts.	~20 min
~80 to 100 min total		

Facilitation options

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
 <b>Teacher-Led Exploration</b>	 <b>Partner Exploration</b>	 <b>Independent Exploration</b>	 <b>Blended Exploration</b>
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

### How Do People and the Environment Impact Each Other?

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

#### INTRODUCTION: Nature Is Speaking

**Directions:** Complete the Turn & Talk question below with your partner.



**Turn & Talk:** If nature could speak, what do you think it would say to people?

**Directions:** Select 1-2 of the “Nature Is Speaking” videos to watch. Then, answer questions 1-2.



<a href="#"><u>FOREST</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>SKY</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>MOUNTAIN</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>HOME</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>THE OCEAN</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>THE REDWOOD</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>WATER</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>CORAL REEF</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>FLOWER</u></a>

- Summarize your chosen video’s message(s) to humans.

*Student responses will vary.*

- Do any of the unit texts support or contradict the message in these videos? Explain your response.

*Student responses will vary.*

## PART 1: Humans' Responsibility to Nature

**Directions:** Watch "Our Incredible Ocean: Now is the Time to Protect It." Then answer questions 3-5.



3. Gaylord Nelson said about humans' ability to win the environmental war: "Are we able? Yes. Are we willing? That's the unanswered question." What message is he trying to convey?

- *He is trying to explain that people have the ability and knowledge needed to help nature. However, he is saying that it is unclear whether people will actually choose to use those skills to benefit nature and the environment.*

4. One person says, "The ocean has an extraordinary capacity to regenerate when it is protected." Paraphrase what he is suggesting about nature.

- *He is suggesting that the ocean and nature can heal and learn to thrive again when it is cared for and respected.*
- *He is suggesting that nature needs humans to respect it in order for it to grow and flourish.*

5. How could the messages in this video be used to encourage people to help protect the environment?

- *They could be used to encourage people because they provide hope that change can happen and that harm done to the environment in the past can be undone.*
- *They help to provide people with the understanding that we know what needs to be done to help the environment and it is just a matter of whether we make those choices.*
- *They help people see that it's within our power to make decisions that will help nature help itself.*

## PART 2: Strengthening Nature's Roots

**Directions:** Watch "One Man's Mission to Revive the Last Redwood Forests." Then answer question 6-8.



6. How does this video support the idea from Part 1 that nature has the ability to "regenerate when it is protected"?

- *It suggests that nature in general has the ability to regenerate and survive when cared for.*
- *The stumps of the Redwood trees that people thought were dead had actually been sprouting new trees from their stumps.*
- *When the people moved the trees to a climate they were more used to thriving in, it helped the trees to continue doing what they had been doing for hundreds/thousands of years: grow, thrive, and survive.*

7. Human technology is often viewed as contributing to nature's destruction. How does the way people use technology in this video challenge that idea?

- *It suggests that people can use human advancement to help repair damage done to nature.*
- *It suggests that people can use human progress and advancement to help nature find new places or ways to thrive and grow.*

8. Describe this man's motives for replanting the Redwoods.

- *He wants to help benefit future generations.*
- *He wants to preserve the trees' genetics so they are not lost to time.*
- *He is motivated by his own experience being called "dead" when he was not. He believes that life should not be ignored or assumed to be lost.*



## PART 3: Working With Mother Nature

**Directions:** Watch “50 Years Ago, This Was a Wasteland. He Changed Everything | Short Film Showcase.” Then answer questions 9-11.



9. How did Mr. Bamberger “work with Mother Nature instead of against her?”

- *He worked to restore the land by learning what it needed to thrive.*
- *When he learned that there was an empty and dry cavern under his land, he worked to figure out what the land needed to store water. This helped bring life back to the land.*

10. What were the different effects of introducing the native grass seeds to the land?

- *Rainfall began to be stored in the land.*
- *Water springs began to appear on the land.*
- *Animals and critters were supplied with water.*
- *This new water resource even helped to support people and families that lived nearby.*

11. Mr. Bamberger says, “We can’t expect the government to do it all anyway.” What is he suggesting about who should take responsibility for restoring nature?

- *He is suggesting that individual people need to take responsibility for helping nature. We can’t just rely on the laws or rules of the government. Individuals should seek out the decisions they can make that would have a positive impact on nature and their environment.*

## PART 4: Your Community. Your Choice.

**Directions:** Watch “ESSENCE Black Girl Magic: Meet The 20-Year-Old Environmentalist Fighting For Her Community.” Then answer questions 12-14.



12. Summarize how the “dumping ground mentality” harms people and nature.

- *This mentality harms people and nature because it makes people think that this situation is unchangeable. They don't think there is a way to have a healthier or cleaner environment.*
- *It harms nature because if people don't think anything can be done to make things better, they won't try to make change. This leads to nature's destruction getting overlooked or just accepted as something that is going to happen.*

13. What does this video suggest about the cost and consequences of being unaware of how man-made resources impact the environment?

- *It suggests that there is a human cost along with an environmental cost when people are left out of decisions and facts about the way something will impact the health and safety of their community. When people are not informed and aware, they don't have the ability to make decisions or fight to make decisions that would benefit themselves and nature.*

14. How does Destiny illustrate the impact that active resistance can have on a community and the environment?

- *She illustrates that active resistance can bring about change. It can give people a voice and prove that speaking up and taking a stand can create real and positive change. She was able to stop something from being built that would have been harmful to her community. This shows the power and change that results from active resistance.*



## PART 5: Environmental Changemakers

**Directions:** Watch “Meet the 2020 Taking Nature Black Environmental Champions.” Then answer questions 15-16.

15. How do the environmental champions in this video relate to the idea of “active resistance” in Part 4?

- *They relate to the idea of “active resistance” because they are not willing to accept pollution or trash or destruction of nature as something that “just is.” They are trying to find solutions and ways to reconnect with Mother Nature rather than fight against her or ignore her.*

16. Describe the mindset that these environmental champions all share.

- *They seem to share the mindset that change can happen. They seem to believe in the importance of preserving nature and making people aware of nature’s impact on their community.*

## PART 6: Independent Reflection

**Directions:** Respond to the prompt below by writing or typing in the box.



**PROMPT:** How did these videos change or confirm your perspective on the relationship between people and the environment? Summarize evidence from the videos in your response.

*Student responses will vary.*

## PART 7: Whole Class Discussion

**Directions:** Share your answer to the question from Part 6 with the class. Then, keep the conversation going by discussing the following optional questions.



- Which term would you use to describe Lee Sherman's actions: passive acceptance or active resistance? Explain your answer.
- How do the videos in this exploration support the idea that people thrive when nature thrives?
- How do you think the people in "He-y, Come On Ou-t!" would have reacted differently if someone had made them aware of the harmful effects their actions would have on their environment and community?
- How do you think hearing from more voices about the ways our choices impact the environment will change what people believe to be normal or acceptable?
- Do you agree with Destiny's belief that it is possible for people to progress and have modern resources while also living in healthy and unpolluted environments?

## PART 8: Optional Extension Activity

**Directions:** Complete the writing task below.



<u><a href="#">FOREST</a></u>	<u><a href="#">SKY</a></u>	<u><a href="#">MOUNTAIN</a></u>
<u><a href="#">HOME</a></u>	<u><a href="#">THE OCEAN</a></u>	<u><a href="#">THE REDWOOD</a></u>
<u><a href="#">WATER</a></u>	<u><a href="#">CORAL REEF</a></u>	<u><a href="#">FLOWER</a></u>

**PROMPT:** At the beginning of this lesson, you watched 1-2 “Nature Is Speaking” videos. Write your own “Nature Is Speaking” monologue from the perspective of one of the following:

- The Louisiana Bayou from “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou”
- The earth and soil from “He-y, Come on Ou-t!”
- The turtles from “Song for the Turtles in the Gulf”

Consider the message this piece of nature would want to send to humans. Use the “Nature Is Speaking” videos as examples. Also consider adding images, videos, or music to make your message more powerful.

*Student responses will vary.*

## LESSON OVERVIEW: “QUIET TOWN”

*(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	Reading Lesson 6	Reading Lesson 7
“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” by Arlie Hochschild (Narrative Non-fiction)	“He—y, Come on Ou—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) (Short Story)	“Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan (Poem)	“Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley (Short Story)	“The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie (Narrative Non-fiction)	“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann (Poem)	“Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy (Poem)
↑ You are here! ↑						




### This lesson’s skill focus

In this lesson, you’ll look at how the **structure** and **order of events** in a story create **mood** or **tension**. [RL.9-10.5]

### About this Short Story

This short story takes place in a town where almost all residents have left because of the threat of rising sea levels. When the threat becomes very real, one mother questions her decision to ignore warnings and remain in the town with her son.

### 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"> <li>Use the <b>recommended reading modalities</b> (whole class, partner, independent)</li> <li>Pause to answer the <b>During Reading Questions</b> during reading.</li> </ul> <p>65 total minutes for this lesson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign <b>longer chunks of independent reading</b>.</li> <li>Skip some supportive During Reading Questions</li> <li>Instruct students to <b>take notes independently</b>: As you read, take notes on details about the setting and the mood it creates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put students into <b>groups of 3-5</b></li> <li>Students answer the <b>During Reading Questions</b> and alternate readers to read sections aloud.</li> <li>Circulate to check for understanding</li> </ul>
↑ Recommended! ↑		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: Quiet Town

Jason Gurley

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

About this text	
Fantasy and science fiction writer Jason Gurley is known for his novels set in the <i>Silo</i> universe, as well as the fantasy novel <i>Eleanor</i> . In this story, Gurley imagines life in an American coastal town in the very near future.	
Purpose for Reading	Vocabulary
To learn about how the author structures and orders events to reveal tension between the characters and their environment.	<b>Let's pronounce these words together as a class:</b> Contaminate [kuhn-tam-uh-neyt] Displace [dis-pleys] Severe [suh-veer]

### WHOLE CLASS READING

[1] She was in the laundry room, bent over a basket of Benjamin's muddy trousers and grass-stained T-shirts and particularly odorous socks, when a rap sounded on the screen door. She didn't hear at first; she'd noticed, bent over there, a cluster of webbed, purplish veins just below her thigh, beside her knee. She didn't like seeing them there. They were like a slow-moving car wreck, those veins, a little darker, a little more **severe** each time she looked. They bothered her.

[2] The front porch creaked, and the screen door rattled on its hinges as the knock came again.

[3] Bev eased up to standing, still clutching a mound of laundry against her middle. She pinned the clothes with one hand, and with the other, looped the hair out of her eyes.

[4] "Yeah?" she called over her shoulder.

[5] "Me," the answer came.

[6] Bev took in a long breath, let it fill up her lungs and raise her voice to a tone one might reasonably mistake for pleasant.

[7] "Come on in, Ezze," she hollered. "Coffee cake on the table, you want some."

[8] The screen door complained a bit, and not for the first time Bev made a mental note to oil the d— thing. But she knew she'd forget between now and the next time Ezze hobbled over. The door banged shut, followed by the scuff of the dining chair being pulled out, the expulsion of breath as Ezze dropped, too heavily, onto it. The chair wouldn't take such abuse forever. Bev sometimes wished it would give out, and then felt guilty for thinking such things. Beneath her gravel and bluster, Ezze was just lonely.

### DURING READING QUESTIONS

#### Paragraphs 1-8

**Think & Share:** Describe the relationship between Bev and Ezze.

- *They are neighbors.*
- *Ezze is lonely and visits Bev often.*
- *Even though Bev is annoyed, she is still kind to Ezze.*

**INDEPENDENT READING**

[9] Bev stuffed the clothes into the wash and spun the old machine up. It rocked agreeably, knocking with a small clatter into the dryer beside it. Bev leaned against the wall, just for a second, just to take a few breaths before going in to the kitchen. The back door was open, its own screen door shut. Gray light spilled through the window, leaked through the uneven gaps in the doorjamb. She could see the pale, lumbering clouds that scraped the tops of the houses around hers. Most of those houses were empty now.

[10] Just me and Benji, Bev thought.

[11] From the kitchen, a smacking sound, the clink of a serving knife against the platter.

[12] Just me and Benji and Ezze, Bev corrected.

[13] She didn't like the wind out there today. The Aparicios had left laundry on the line when they moved out — in a hurry, like everybody these past few weeks — and almost all of it was scattered around the neighborhood now, T-shirts and pantyhose and thermal underwear caught up in bare tree branches, soaked and plastered in gutters. Almost all of it, except for the heavy quilt, heavier now from all the rain, that dragged the laundry line low. The wind caught even that, lifted it nearly horizontal, a cheerful, soggy flag.

[14] "A bit dry, dear," came Ezze's voice.

[15] Bev turned away from the screen door. Cold air breathed around it, pushing through the gaps, and Bev shivered. But she left the inner door open for Benjamin, and went into the kitchen.

[16] "How's the hip?" Bev asked, ignoring Ezze's comment.

[17] Ezze groaned theatrically. "I'd give anything for a new one," she said. "But who's got money for that?"

[18] Her gray cane rested against the table beside her, tipped up on two of its four stubby feet. The rubber nubs on the end of each were damp and clumped with gray earth and grit. Bev sighed and picked up the cane and carried it onto the porch. Ezze didn't say anything. Bev cranked the spigot<sup>1</sup> attached to the house. It choked and sputtered, coughing up a weak stream. Bev rinsed the cane, then propped it against the house, and went back inside.

[19] Ezze regarded her irritably as Bev spritzed a paper towel with Windex, then wiped up the mud the cane had left behind.

[20] "That's for windows, dear," Ezze said, watching Bev from beneath her glasses.

[21] Bev didn't say anything, just balled up the towel and dropped it into the wastebasket. The plastic lid swung twice, stopped.

[22] "That's why it's called Windex," Ezze went on. "Windows. Windex." She wrinkled her slug of a nose and squinted up at the ceiling thoughtfully. "Don't know where the ex part came from, though."

[23] Bev went into the kitchen, her hands searching for tasks. Perhaps if she appeared to be busy, Ezze would leave. But the countertops were tidy, the sink free of dishes.

<sup>1</sup> a faucet

**DURING READING QUESTIONS**
**MOOD: Paragraphs 9-13**

**Write:** How do the details in these paragraphs create a sense of mystery?

- *By telling the readers that people moved out in a hurry, it makes the reader wonder what could have caused them to move.*
- *By showing how Bev, Ezze, and Benjamin are some of the only ones left, it makes the reader curious about why they chose to stay.*

**Paragraphs 14-27**

**Write:** Based on the details in this section, what can readers infer about Bev and Ezze's financial status?

- *Because Ezze says she doesn't have money for a hip replacement and their houses have "cheap" linoleum, Bev and Ezze appear to be poor.*



[24] “Your linoleum’s<sup>2</sup> soft,” Ezze said. Bev looked up to see the woman bouncing lightly in the chair. Below her, the linoleum bowed. “It’s cheap stuff. I’ve got the same in my place.”

[25] “Well, stop making it worse,” Bev said.

[26] Ezze laughed as if this was funny. “You should see mine,” she said. “Sagging all over the place.”

[27] I wonder why, Bev thought but did not say.

[28] Ezze took another bite of coffee cake, then made a show of gagging on crumbs. “Water,” she croaked, putting one damp hand to the loose skin around her throat. “Water.”

[29] Bev filled a glass from the tap, then put it down in front of Ezze, who stared at it in horror, her stage act forgotten.

[30] “Dear,” Ezze said. “You’re not drinking it, are you? There’s a warning. It’s all over the TV.”

[31] “We don’t have a TV,” Bev said flatly. “What warning?”

[32] “**Contaminated** supply or something. I don’t know.” Ezze waved her hand about. “Real problem is what I came over to tell you about, though. You’re not going to believe it.”

[33] Bev took the glass of water away from Ezze, crossed back into the kitchen and dumped it aggressively into the sink. Then the fight faded from her, just as quickly as it seemed to have risen up. Ezze didn’t mean any harm, she reminded herself again. She was old; she was alone. It wasn’t her fault, none of it. Can’t fight age. Can’t make people stay.

### MOOD: Paragraphs 28-33

**Write:** How do the details in this section help create suspense?

- *It makes the reader wonder what is causing the water to be contaminated.*
- *It makes the reader wonder what the “real problem” Ezze comes to tell Bev about is.*

### WHOLE CLASS READING

[34] “What’s that?” Bev asked, brushing her hair back again. “Believe what?”

[35] The back screen door banged open then, and Benji clattered into the kitchen like a runaway shopping cart. He was out of breath, his pants rolled up to his knees. He held his tennis shoes in one hand, but whatever he’d gotten into, he’d taken them off too late. They were caked with gray mud, and his legs were splashed with it.

[36] Ezze looked at Benji, who gasped like a fish, trying to get some words out.

[37] “He knows,” Ezze said. “Don’t you, boy.”

[38] Bev looked wide-eyed at Ezze, then back at Benjamin. “Knows what? Benjamin, you’re filth —”

[39] Benjamin shook his head and held up a hand, working on just breathing.

[40] “Oh, fine,” Ezze said. “I’ll tell her.”

[41] “Tell me what?” Bev asked. “What the h— is going on?”

[42] Benjamin, cheeks strawberry-colored against his pale skin, said, “Water — water —”

[43] Bev turned to fill her glass again, but Benji lurched forward and grabbed her hand.

### DURING READING QUESTIONS

### MOOD: Paragraphs 35-36

**A. Find Evidence:** Underline three details about the way Benji arrives in the kitchen.

- *“clattered into the kitchen like a runaway shopping cart” (35)*
- *“out of breath, his pants rolled up to his knees.” (35)*
- *“They were caked with gray mud, and his legs were splashed with it.” (35)*
- *“gasped like a fish, trying to get some words out” (36)*

**B. Think & Share:** What mood do the details above create?

- *The details above create a tense mood because it seems like Benji is trying to tell them something urgent, but the reader does not know what it is yet.*

<sup>2</sup> a type of floor covering

[44] “No,” he said, chest heaving. “Water’s — the water —”

[45] “Oh, for Pete’s sake,” Ezze said. “The water’s here, Bev.”

• • • •

### Paragraphs 37-45

**Turn & Talk:** What are Benji and Ezze trying to tell Bev?

- *The sea water level has risen to meet the town.*

### PARTNER READING

[46] What was it Gordy had said?

[47] “When ice melts, the glass don’t spill over.”

[48] Bev had leaned against him in the porch swing, comforted by his disbelief, while he told her about a column he read when they were in college, by that brainy woman who answered people’s letters. Someone wrote in and asked the woman if you were to fill a glass with ice cubes, then run tap water right up to the rim of the glass, what would happen when the ice melted? And the brainy woman said something about melting ice cubes **displacing** the same amount of water as the frozen ice.

[49] It’s not my fault, Bev thought now. It’s his fault, not mine. His. She wasn’t the fool. It was him. He was.

[50] But that wasn’t fair. Gordy hadn’t taken the news seriously, but at the time, nobody had. They’d been on the porch, listening to the radio while the neighborhood noisily settled in for the night. Benjamin had been scrambling around in the front yard, kicking dried-out pinecones around like footballs.

[51] “You remember the oddest things,” Bev had said, and Gordy had laughed. There had been plenty of laughter in those days. Those days, that’s how Bev thought of them. As in: those days when life was good. Those days when there were still people around. When the sun blazed and they called it a nice summer day, not an ice-melter like everyone did now. Those days. When Gordy was still around.

[52] But Gordy had been wrong. The brainy woman had been wrong. The radio warning all those years ago, when Benji was small, had been wrong. Fifty years, they’d said. In fifty years, the coastlines will be different. Your homes will be underwater. Fifty years.

[53] They’d listened to the talk shows afterward, the pundits arguing that nobody knew what the next ten years would look like, much less the next fifty. It’s all a farce,<sup>3</sup> they argued. It’s a campaign strategy. A ploy.<sup>4</sup> Fifty years — ha!

[54] It had happened in five.

[55] Gordy went and died before it got serious, and on summer evenings, when the skies went purple and orange, Bev and Benjamin and sometimes Ezze, even, would wander down to the sea wall<sup>5</sup> with the rest of the town, and they’d all stand on the wall and look down at the water level. When they couldn’t see the high-water mark, somebody would motor out in a rubber boat and spray a new line of paint on the wall.

### DURING READING QUESTIONS

### Paragraphs 50-56

**A. Write:** What were most people’s initial attitudes toward the warnings on the radio?

- *They laughed at the warnings rather than take them seriously.*

**B. Write:** How does this section build an understanding of Bev’s current situation?

- *It makes the reader realize that Bev is unprepared because the sea levels rose much faster than the warnings originally said.*
- *It makes the reader realize that Bev could have taken precautions and/or left town, but she chose not to.*

<sup>3</sup> **Farce** (noun): a ridiculous event

<sup>4</sup> **Ploy** (noun): a tricky plan

<sup>5</sup> a thick wall that blocks the ocean from coming onto land

[56] Soon enough, someone could just lean over the rail and spray that new line. The water kept rising. When it was a few inches from the top of the wall, people started leaving town. In a month's time, the village had emptied.

• • • •

## INDEPENDENT READING

[57] Ezze scooped up her cane and went heavily down the porch steps. Benji tugged on Bev's hand. He held it tightly as they walked, following the older woman as she puffed along. Bev barely registered his grip until it was too tight, and she yelped.

[58] "Sorry, Mama," he said.

[59] She saw Gordy in Benji's eyes. They weren't a child's eyes anymore. Benji was nearly thirteen, and already his eyes were narrow slots. He and Gordy both had a Clint Eastwood squint, and she could see the boy's jawline, his cheekbones, sharpening. His hair was already drawing back on his head, though. She didn't dare break his heart by telling him now, but he'd lose most of it by twenty, probably, just like his father.

[60] The thought that he might not see twenty was a block of ice in her gut.

[61] "I knowed about it when Pippa came home with a crabshell in her mouth," Ezze said, huffing as she waddled ahead. "Came right on home with it. No place else she could've gotten it. Had to have washed up over the wall. Fresh, too. She'd pulled half the meat out, but I swear the thing was still twitching."

[62] The street was gritty under their feet. Bev padded along in her flip-flops, and as Ezze fell silent, Bev's shoes pock-pocked like tennis balls. There was a sound she hadn't heard in a long time.

[63] Used to be a court down by the high school, and on quiet days, you could hear the distant sound of rackets pocking the balls, back and forth, back and forth. The sharp shriek of tennis shoes on the clay, too. People grunting and shouting excitedly.

[64] Quiet town.

[65] "I saw your Rascal,"<sup>6</sup> Benji said. "I tried to fix it, but . . ."

[66] He trailed off.

[67] "Your Rascal?" Bev asked.

[68] Ezze stopped for a moment, breathing heavily. "Yeah," she admitted, bending over a bit, leaning on the cane. "I rode down there on it with Pippa to see for myself. Battery died right up at the wall. There were some boys putting down sandbags, and they tried to help me with it, but it's just dead. One of them walked me back home. Nice kid. I don't know whose kid. Not many left, you know."

[69] Benji said, "It's still where you left it. There's some seagull s— on it, but —"

[70] "Benjamin Howard Marsh," Bev said sharply.

[71] Benji sighed and muttered, "Yeah, okay. Sorry."

## DURING READING QUESTIONS

### Paragraphs 59-60

**Write:** What does the "block of ice" in Bev's gut suggest about her feelings?

- *Bev is fearful that her young son is now in danger because she did not act sooner.*

<sup>6</sup> a motorized scooter that helps with mobility

[72] “Never mind that,” Ezze said loudly. She pounded the rubber feet of her cane on the concrete. “Look.”

[73] They all looked down to see a thin ribbon of water. It cascaded between their feet, and they all watched in a hush as it passed them by, gathering up bits of leaves and fine gravel. The water kept going, making its way down the street until they couldn’t quite make out its leading edge. It was here now, Bev thought.

[74] “Oh, Jesus,” Ezze cried. She high-stepped around her cane as another rivulet ran through the yellowed grass on the shoulder of the road. And in the quiet then they could hear it: the water, its thousand narrow fingers, creeping through the dead lawns and over the bleached asphalt. They could see it, stream after stream of it moving across empty driveways, splitting around the stop sign post, and then the thousand fingers of it bled together until the water was a blue-gray sheet, rippling along beneath the darkening sky, claiming the land for its own.

[75] “Mama,” Benji said.

[76] The water spilled around their feet, thin but here.

[77] “Mama,” he said again, tugging Bev’s hand. She looked up at him, then at Ezze, whose stern features had folded into a new shape, a softer, more honest mask, a fearful one.

[78] “Mama, we gotta go,” Benjamin said.

[79] Such a fool, Bev thought to herself again. What would Gordy have done? But it didn’t matter what he would do now. It mattered what he had done then, and what he had done then was laugh, then die.

[80] We should’ve had a TV, she thought absurdly.

[81] She looked at Ezze. The fading sun caught the faint whiskers on Ezze’s cheeks, turning them into tiny glowing filaments. Benji stared at her, his narrow eyes still fierce with hope and promise, his skin rosy where it faced the sunset, and dusky purple on the opposite side, in shadow, as if he was already dead, and there was no way around it.

“Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley. Jason Gurley is the author of *Eleanor* and *Awake in the World*. “Quiet Town” first appeared in *Lightspeed Magazine*, and in the anthology *Loosed Upon the World*. Used with permission, all rights reserved.

### MOOD: Paragraphs 73-76

**Write:** How does the imagery of the water in this section develop the story’s mood?

- *The amount of water at their feet keeps growing quickly, which creates tension as readers worry that the characters might not make it out of the town.*

### MOOD: Paragraph 81

**A. Write:** What is the mood of this final section?

- *threatening, ominous, scary, menacing*

**B. Find Evidence:** Underline two details that help create the mood above.

- *“The fading sun caught the faint whiskers on Ezze’s cheeks.”*
- *“in shadow as if he was already dead”*
- *“there was no way around it”*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the multiple choice questions for “Quiet Town.” 5 minutes



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

1. How do paragraphs 28-32 contribute to the theme? **[RL.2]**
  - A. They demonstrate how the government has failed to keep the townspeople safe.
  - B. They demonstrate how changes in the environment can present dangers to one’s health.
  - C. They demonstrate that strong relationships can develop between neighbors in difficult times.
  - D. They demonstrate that the townspeople are unconcerned with what is happening to the environment.
2. Which detail *best* supports the idea that Bev had time to take action to save herself and Benji? **[RL.1]**
  - A. “Most of those houses were empty now. Just me and Benji, Bev thought.” (Paragraphs 9-10)
  - B. “He held his tennis shoes in one hand, but whatever he’d gotten into, he’d taken them off too late. They were caked with gray mud.” (Paragraph 35)
  - C. “The radio warning all those years ago, when Benji was small, had been wrong. Fifty years, they’d said.” (Paragraph 52)
  - D. “And in the quiet then they could hear it: the water, its thousand narrow fingers, creeping through the dead lawns and over the bleached asphalt.” (Paragraph 74)
3. What impact do the phrases “its thousand narrow fingers, creeping” and “claiming the land for its own” have on the story’s mood? (Paragraph 74) **[RL.4]**
  - A. They make the reader surprised at how deep the water is.
  - B. They make the reader tense about how cold the water must feel.
  - C. They make the reader anxious about how quickly the water is moving.
  - D. They make the reader confused about what the characters will do next.
4. How does the description of Benji’s face in paragraph 81 help build tension? **[RL.5]**
  - A. by drawing a connection between Benji and his father
  - B. by suggesting the unavoidable danger he is in
  - C. by revealing the anger he has for his mother
  - D. by illustrating Benji’s conflicting motives



## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the short response prompt for “Quiet Town.” 15 minutes

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

**PROMPT:** You have just read “Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley. How does the flashback in paragraphs 46-54 create tension? [RL.5]

In your response be sure to:

- clarify what is happening at this moment in the story.
- state who is speaking, narrating, or being quoted for each piece of evidence.
- include when or where the action took place, if needed for clarification.

### CHECKLIST FOR INTRODUCING EVIDENCE:

- ☐ Highlight or bold each introduction of evidence.

Did you explain what is happening at this moment in the story?

- A. YES!
- B. No, I will go back and add that.

Did you state who is speaking, narrating, or being quoted?

- A. YES!
- B. No, I will go back and add that.

If needed, did you include when it happens or where it takes place?

- A. YES!
- B. No, I will go back and add that.

## Quick Partner Discussion

**Directions:** Discuss the questions with a partner. Record notes on both of your answers. Push yourselves to use formal language and evidence from the text. *5 minutes*



DISCUSSION SENTENCE STARTERS	
<p><b>Summarizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My point is this: ...</i></li> <li>• <i>Overall, I'd argue that...</i></li> <li>• <i>The evidence for this is strong when you consider that...</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Invite Peers to Refer to Text Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you see different or conflicting ideas in the text? If so, where?</i></li> <li>• <i>What evidence do you have that supports that idea?</i></li> <li>• <i>What's an example of that?</i></li> </ul>

1. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** In “He—y, Come on Ou—t!” the author writes that “everyone disliked thinking about the eventual consequences.” How is Bev from “Quiet Town” similar to these villagers?

2. Why do you think Bev did not want to **displace** her family, despite the warnings about rising sea levels?

3. Explain the author’s choice to title the story “Quiet Town.” Is this an accurate title for the story? Why or why not?

## LESSON OVERVIEW: MID-UNIT WRITING REVIEW

*(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)
Introducing Evidence With Context	Writing Explanations	Mid-Unit Writing Review	Unit 2 Essay: Planning	Writing Engaging Introductions	How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least two unit texts to support your response. [W.1, W.2]
		↑ You are here! ↑			



### This lesson's skill focus

Students will <b>review</b> and practice <b>introducing evidence</b> with context and writing strong <b>explanations</b> . [W.9-10.2]
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### Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This lesson handout</li> <li>"Quiet Town" (Teacher Copy)</li> <li>Classroom Anchor Charts from previous writing lessons (Optional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Mid-Unit Writing Review" (Student Copy)</li> <li>"Quiet Town" (Student Copy)</li> <li>Student Reference Sheets from previous writing lessons (Optional)</li> </ul>

### How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	<p> <b>Reviewing a Strong Paragraph:</b> Students review a paragraph for the two major writing skills they have learned so far in this unit: introducing evidence with context and writing strong explanations.</p> <p>Note that this review also briefly touches upon arguments, which was a focus skill in unit one.</p>	10 min
Part 2	<p> <b>Independent Writing:</b> Students demonstrate their progress toward mastery of the unit's writing skills by responding to a prompt about Jason Gurley's story, "Quiet Town."</p>	15 min
~25 min total		



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: Mid-Unit Writing Review

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

### About this lesson

Strong paragraphs include clear arguments, evidence, and explanations. In this lesson, you will review a strong paragraph. Then, you will demonstrate your ability to use these skills in your own writing. **[W.2]**

### PART 1: Reviewing a Strong Paragraph

**Directions:** Read the prompt and sample response. Then, answer the questions that follow. *10 minutes*



**PROMPT:** You have just read “Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley. How does the flashback in paragraphs 46-54 create tension? **[RL.5]**

*The flashback creates tension because it shows how Bev realizes her mistakes after her family is already in danger. When Bev’s son Benjamin bursts into the house to tell her about the rising water, she thinks back to when her husband, Gordy, was alive. Bev remembers: “Gordy hadn’t taken the news seriously, but at the time, nobody had” (50). This line creates tension because readers do not know what news Bev is referring to, but it’s clear it was a mistake not to have taken it seriously. Then, the narrator reveals that the news projected that coastlines would be flooded in fifty years, but that it actually “had happened in five” (54). Because the flooding happened much faster than the news predicted, it reveals that Bev made a terrible mistake. Even though she now realizes her mistake, it is too late, and the danger she finds herself in creates tension.*

Argument

Context for the First Quotation

Final Explanation

1. Arguments should use academic language and clearly answer the prompt. Explain how this writer did both.

- *The writer used academic language from the prompt, like “flashback” and “tension.”*
- *The writer specifically explained how the flashback created tension.*

2. We learned about four types of context that writers can use to make a quotation clear: who, what, when, and where. Explain at least two types of context this writer used before her first quotation.

- *When in the story it is happening: when Benji has come to tell his mother about rising sea levels.*
- *What is happening in the moment: Bev is having a flashback to when Gordy was alive.*
- *Who is speaking, thinking or narrating: Bev is thinking to herself.*

3. Analyze the writer’s final explanation. What is the purpose of each sentence in this explanation?

- *The first sentence explains what the evidence means.*
- *The second sentence explains how the evidence supports the argument.*

## PART 2: Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the short response prompt about “Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley. 15 minutes.



**PROMPT:** You have read “Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley. How does the author’s description of the setting develop mood? [RL.5]

### SAMPLE STUDENT OUTLINE:

*The description of the setting in “Quiet Town” develops an ominous mood.*

- *“The front porch creaked, and the screen door rattled on its hinges as the knock came again.” (2)*
- *“She could see the pale, lumbering clouds that scraped the tops of the houses around hers. Most of those houses were empty now.” (9)*
- *“She didn’t like the wind out there today. The Aparicios had left laundry on the line when they moved out — in a hurry, like everybody these past few weeks — and almost all of it was scattered around the neighborhood now.” (13)*

### SAMPLE SHORT RESPONSE:

*The description of the setting in “Quiet Town” develops an ominous mood. At the beginning of the story, when Ezze first arrives to talk to Bev, the narrator says, “The front porch creaked, and the screen door rattled on its hinges as the knock came again” (2). The description of the old creaky door creates a tense mood. Then, when Bev looks outside, the narrator says, “She could see the pale, lumbering clouds that scraped the tops of the houses around hers. Most of those houses were empty now” (9). The low-hanging clouds and empty homes make it seem as if something bad will happen. The narrator also explains, “She didn’t like the wind out there today. The Aparicios had left laundry on the line when they moved out — in a hurry, like everybody these past few weeks — and almost all of it was scattered around the neighborhood now” (13). Bev sees how the strong wind has scattered her former neighbors’ laundry all over. This description supports the ominous mood because the scattered laundry and empty homes make it seem like something is very wrong in this town.*

## LESSON OVERVIEW: “THE SEA ALSO RISES”

*(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	Reading Lesson 6	Reading Lesson 7
“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” by Arlie Hochschild (Narrative Non-fiction)	“He—y, Come on Ou—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) (Short Story)	“Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan (Poem)	“Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley (Short Story)	“The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie (Narrative Non-fiction)	“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann (Poem)	“Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy (Poem)
				↑ You are here! ↑		



This lesson’s skill focus

In this lesson, you’ll analyze how an author uses **specific sentences, paragraphs, or sections** of a text to develop a **claim**.  
[RI.9-10.5]

About this Narrative Non-fiction

This text explores how different residents of Maryland’s Eastern Shore communities are handling the threat of rising sea levels. Through first hand accounts, anecdotes, and facts, readers will learn about the complex decision residents face as they are forced to choose between their homes and livelihoods and their future safety.

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"> <li>Use the <b>recommended reading modalities</b> (whole class, partner, independent)</li> <li>Pause to answer the <b>During Reading Questions</b> during reading.</li> </ul> <p>55 total minutes for this lesson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign <b>longer chunks of independent reading</b>.</li> <li>Skip some supportive During Reading Questions</li> <li>Instruct students to <b>take notes independently</b>: As you read, take notes on how rising sea levels are affecting people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put students into <b>groups of 3-5</b></li> <li>Students answer the <b>During Reading Questions</b> and alternate readers to read sections aloud.</li> <li>Circulate to check for understanding</li> </ul>
↑ Recommended! ↑		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: The Sea Also Rises

Ron Cassie

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

About this text	
Ron Cassie is a journalist and a senior editor at <i>Baltimore</i> magazine, where this piece was originally published. In this article, Cassie examines the effects of sea level rise on Maryland's Eastern Shore communities.	
Purpose for Reading	Vocabulary
To analyze specific details that develop an author's central claim about the impact rising sea levels are having on the residents of Maryland's Eastern Shore communities.	<b>Let's pronounce these words together as a class:</b> Erosion [ih-roh-zhuhn] Industry [in-duh-stree] Impact [im-pakt] Resident [rez-i-duhnt] Urgent [ur-juhnt] Vulnerable [vuhl-ner-uh-buhl]

### WHOLE CLASS READING

[1] The first thing you notice is the standing water in the roadside gullies, even though it hasn't rained in a week. Then, you notice the small houses and churches all teetering on concrete blocks or bricks four or five feet above the muddy, soft ground. But driving down Maryland Route 335 toward Hooper's Island, it's the trees that give you the deepest pause. Thousands of pine trees have been stripped bare of their needles, branches, and brown bark in this part of south Dorchester County. Ramrod straight, white as ghosts, the hollow trunks look like some kind of zombie deadwood, the staggering aftermath of an unfolding calamity.<sup>1</sup>

[2] Which, it turns out, is exactly what they are.

[3] The land here is sinking beneath a fast rising Chesapeake Bay and the pine trees can't survive the encroaching<sup>2</sup> saltwater. Look closer, says Shawn Riley, a local waterman who makes his living harvesting oysters and blue crabs, and you can see that the process has been picking up speed. "Out on the boat, you'll see trees leaning like this," Riley says, holding his arm at a 45-degree angle. "There are tons of stumps, too, in the water. We have to maneuver around 'em."

[4] Riley, 53, grew up in the nearby small town of Crocherson and has lived on Hooper's Island — the original home of the state's century-old, family-owned Phillips Seafood — for 20-plus years. Technically, he lives in Hoopersville, the middle of Hooper's string of three islands. Well, two islands now.

[5] Or maybe one and a half.

### DURING READING QUESTIONS

#### Paragraphs 1-6

**A. Think & Share:** How have the rising sea levels affected the Hooper's Island area?

- The rising water is killing the trees and drowning the islands.*

**B. Turn & Talk:** What is Riley's attitude about the rising sea levels?

- He knows it is happening, but feels he can't do much about it.*

<sup>1</sup> **Calamity** (noun): a serious event causing great suffering; a disaster

<sup>2</sup> **Encroaching** (adjective): to slowly move beyond the usual limits

[6] “I know those Arctic glaciers are melting and that water has to go somewhere,” Riley says, shrugging in his driveway on a recent, unseasonably warm afternoon. “I guess it’s coming here.”

### PARTNER READING

[7] It is not just Maryland’s Eastern Shore islands that are in danger of disappearing beneath the surface because of global climate change and rising sea levels. In truth, 13 of the lower bay’s charted islands, many of them once inhabited, are already gone. Even more alarming are stories foretold by the interactive displays at the visitor center at the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in nearby Cambridge. Those models show that by the end of the century more than half of Dorchester County, the third-largest county in the state in terms of land area, will be under water. Of course, much of the Eastern Shore — most **urgently**, the lower counties of Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester, which includes vacation haven Ocean City — is threatened by rising seas, **erosion**, tidal flooding, and storm surges.<sup>3</sup> So, too, are western shore small towns in Anne Arundel, Harford, and eastern Baltimore counties.

[8] Due to the region’s geology and Atlantic Ocean currents, sea levels in the Chesapeake Bay are rising twice as fast as the global average and are projected to jump by as much as two feet in the next 35 years, and up to five feet or more by the end of the century. That leaves the state’s two largest cities on the bay **vulnerable**: Baltimore, with its iconic waterfront and port, and the state capital, Annapolis, with its historic city dock, will be challenged like never before in the coming decades by near constant flooding. So-called “nuisance flooding,” when storm drains get overwhelmed and water pools two or three feet deep, has already become more commonplace here than anywhere else in the country. Floods have already increased by more than 900 percent in both cities since 1960. Some projections call for 225 or more such floods a year for Baltimore and, essentially, daily inundation<sup>4</sup> for Annapolis by 2045, according to a recent study based on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data.

[9] “The question really isn’t what will be lost anymore,” says Jim Titus, a Maryland **resident** and leading sea-level-rise official at the Environmental Protection Agency, “but what we will decide to save.”

[10] “By our estimate, we should prepare for a sea level that’s going to come up to our knees by 2050 and then chest-high by the end of the century. It’s no longer a question of ‘if’ sea levels will rise that high, but ‘how fast,’” says Donald Boesch, president of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

### DURING READING QUESTIONS

#### AUTHOR’S CLAIM: Paragraphs 7-10

**A. Write:** What claim does the author make about climate change along Maryland’s Eastern Shore?

- *Climate change has already severely impacted Maryland’s Eastern Shore and will continue to do so, more and more destructively.*

**B. Turn & Talk:** How does the author develop the claim above?

- *by offering scientific facts and data about what has already happened and what is predicted*
- *by quoting experts*

### INDEPENDENT READING

[11] Nothing in either the Climate Central or the Maryland Climate Change Commission report would come as a surprise to Mary McCoy, 60, who lives not on the bay, but about 90 feet up from the Chester River outside the small Eastern Shore town of Centreville in Queen Anne’s County. McCoy readily recalls the early morning hours of Sept. 19, 2003, when she and her husband decided to ride out Hurricane Isabel at home. When the winds finally quieted, they went downstairs, hoping damage to the home, previously owned by her

### DURING READING QUESTIONS

<sup>3</sup> an unusual rise in sea level caused by a storm

<sup>4</sup> **Inundation** (*noun*): flooding

grandparents, was minimal. That is, until McCoy looked out her first-floor windows. “The lawn was glistening in the dark,” she says. “The Chester River was in our front yard. We were moving the furniture as it began seeping through the floorboards. When it receded, there were jellyfish and sticks and things all over the grass.”

[12] Water entering the house was something that had never happened in the 80-year history of McCoy’s home. The ductwork in the basement needed to be replaced, and soon she and her husband, like certainly thousands more in the coming years, had to start making decisions about a future that they hadn’t considered previously. Initially, they discussed landscaping options, and then, later, sought a bid from a contractor to move the house further from the river. Ultimately, moving the home, though probably necessary in the long run, was too costly at the time. McCoy had hoped to pass the family home onto her younger cousins, but now she’s doubtful that will happen. “I ‘Googled’ and found a Maryland Department of Natural Resources map showing that the Chester River will eventually be lapping at the foundations of my house,” she says.

[13] Even more than the compelling data and science — the past year also recorded the warmest global temperatures since they began being measured in 1880 — such anecdotal<sup>5</sup> evidence, says Mike Tidwell, director of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, is at least helping Marylanders recognize that climate change is undeniable. The change in sea level may be imperceptible<sup>6</sup> year by year, but when a flood comes rushing in like never before, the message gets driven home, he says. “It’s something that is difficult to wrap your mind around when scientists talk about projections in 2050 or the end of the century,” Tidwell says. “But when you hear more people say, ‘That never happened before’ — and we’re hearing a lot of ‘that never happened before’ these days — people begin to connect the dots.”

#### AUTHOR’S CLAIM: Paragraphs 11-13

**Write:** Why does the author include the anecdote about the McCoy family in this section?

- *It illustrates that even though residents are becoming more aware of climate change, there is little they can do to save their way of life.*

#### PARTNER READING

[14] One recent “never before” was Superstorm Sandy 26 months ago, which flooded the Inner Harbor, but mostly spared Baltimore City. “Sandy completely changed the community’s consciousness around climate change,” says James Lane, a Crisfield minister and community historian. “People recognize that we are, and will be, consistently<sup>7</sup> challenged by rising sea levels now. And we will have hard choices to make. We lost a lot of people who moved after Sandy, elderly people who didn’t feel like they could deal with something like that again, as well as young families and newer **residents**, who don’t want to face these issues their whole lives. So, what do we do? Abandon and move? Those people become climate-change gypsies, as I call them, or refugees,”<sup>8</sup> Lane continues. “Then again, what about the people who can’t leave because they’re poor and have no place to go? We have a lot of folks who make a living on the water or in the maritime **industry**, struggling to get by as it is.”

[15] But so much climate change and sea-level rise is “baked into the cake” at this point, says Boesch, that in reality, any action taken in the next 40 years likely won’t make any major **impact** in Maryland until the next century. “There’s little we can do now to reduce sea-level rise by the middle of the

#### DURING READING QUESTIONS

##### Paragraph 14

**Turn & Talk:** What obstacles are stopping people from moving away from the Eastern Shore?

- *They have no money to move.*
- *They have nowhere to go.*
- *They make their living on the water.*

<sup>5</sup> **Anecdotal** (*adjective*): based on personal stories or experiences

<sup>6</sup> **Imperceptible** (*adjective*): unnoticeable

<sup>7</sup> **Consistently** (*adverb*): on a regular basis

<sup>8</sup> **Refugee** (*noun*): a person who has been forced to leave their home in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster

century, but we can potentially help by stabilizing<sup>9</sup> global temperatures and sea-levels by the end of the century, for the next century,” Boesch says. “I can tell you one anecdote about this that’s funny but also a little sad at the same time,” he continues. “There’s an elderly couple on the Eastern Shore that I visit from time to time. They used to always ask me, ‘How much longer is our house safe?’ Well, the last time I saw them, they didn’t ask about the house. They told me they’re going to be buried in Oxford, and they wanted to know if their graves would be safe. I told them, ‘Probably until the end of the century, I can’t make any promises after that.’”

### Paragraph 15

**Write:** What does the anecdote about the elderly couple reveal about residents’ attitudes toward climate change?

- *Residents are starting to realize they cannot stop climate change, so they are trying to protect their future in any way they can.*

## INDEPENDENT READING

[16] On Smith Island, where the official Maryland state dessert, Smith Island cake, is still made by local women at the Smith Island Baking Company right off the dock, the looming threat to home, community, and a way of life is never far from the minds of the remaining **residents**. A 45-minute boat ride from Crisfield, the island remains happily isolated from the harried pace of modern life and people here like the sunsets. It’s the last of Maryland’s inhabited lower bay islands not accessible by car.

[17] The post office is only open four hours a day and the public school, with 11 students, is the smallest in the state. Home to watermen, a few retired folks, and a couple of bed-and-breakfasts mostly catering to summer visitors, the island rallied after the state offered buyouts, turning them down and instead organizing a group called Smith Island United to fight for grants<sup>10</sup> to build badly needed sea walls and jetties to slow down **erosion**, and, at least, delay what is most likely its fate.

[18] Erin Pruitt, who grew up on nearby Tangier Island, on the Virginia side of the bay, is one of the bakers at the Smith Island Baking Company, and like all the women working in this friendly atmosphere, she doesn’t want to leave. Only 26, she lived in Ocean City for a while before falling in love with a young man and moving to Smith Island. She admits occasionally missing the convenience of living inland, but she cherishes the slower pace and strong sense of community here.

[19] “It’s the people here I love more than anything else, and if the island ever disappears, the culture and community will, too,” she says. “And that’s what I grew up with.”

[20] Lively and thoughtful, a white apron tied around her waist as she removes the nine-layer chocolate and coconut cakes from the baking racks, Pruitt pauses and looks down for a moment. “People ask, from time to time, ‘Do you think when you have kids and grandchildren that Smith Island will still be here?’” she says. “‘I hope so,’ I say.

[21] “But the truth is, and the reason it takes me a while to answer that question,” she continues, “is that I don’t want to think about it. That’s the harsh reality.”

## DURING READING QUESTIONS

### Paragraph 17

**Write:** What do the residents’ attempts to build sea walls reveal about their attitudes toward rising sea levels?

- *The residents would rather try to find ways to slow the effects of climate change than move to new homes.*

### Paragraphs 18-21

**Write:** Is Erin Pruitt helpless or irresponsible? Explain your answer.

- *Student answers will vary.*

“The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie. Copyright © 2015. Originally published in Baltimore magazine. Used with permission, all rights reserved.

<sup>9</sup> **Stabilize** (verb): to make something steady or unchanging

<sup>10</sup> **Grant** (noun): money given by an organization, especially a government, for a particular purpose



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the multiple choice questions for “The Sea Also Rises.” 5 minutes



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

1. Which of the following statements *best* expresses the central idea of “The Sea Also Rises”? **[RI.2]**
  - A. Rising sea levels have inflicted severe damage to historic landmarks along the Maryland Eastern Shore.
  - B. Rising sea levels threaten the livelihood of residents of Maryland's Eastern Shore, but they refuse to acknowledge the challenges ahead.
  - C. Rising sea levels caused by climate change have forced people on Maryland’s Eastern Shore to move inland due to fear of losing everything.
  - D. Rising sea levels caused by climate change will continue to have a devastating impact on humans and nature along Maryland’s Eastern Shore.
  
2. Which detail *best* supports the idea that sea level rise can no longer be prevented? **[RI.1]**
  - A. “Look closer, says Shawn Riley, a local waterman who makes his living harvesting oysters and blue crabs, and you can see that the process has been picking up speed.” (Paragraph 3)
  - B. “It is not just Maryland’s Eastern Shore islands that are in danger of disappearing beneath the surface because of global climate change and rising sea levels.” (Paragraph 7)
  - C. “‘It’s no longer a question of ‘if’ sea levels will rise that high, but ‘how fast,’ says Donald Boesch, president of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.” (Paragraph 10)
  - D. “The island rallied after the state offered buyouts, turning them down and instead organizing a group called Smith Island United to fight for grants to build badly needed sea walls and jetties to slow down erosion.” (Paragraph 16)
  
3. Which paragraph develops the author’s claim that people affected by rising sea levels have tough choices to make about their future? **[RI.5]**
  - A. Paragraph 11
  - B. Paragraph 14
  - C. Paragraph 17
  - D. Paragraph 21
  
4. Which of the following *best* describes how the article is organized? **[RI.5]**
  - A. The author alternates between anecdotes and facts throughout the article.
  - B. The author opens with discussing the effects of rising sea levels on animals and then on the environment.
  - C. The author alternates between interviews with people who have vastly different perspectives on climate change.
  - D. The author opens with discussing the impact of climate change on land and closes with discussing its impact on ocean life.





## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the short response prompt for “The Sea Also Rises.” 15 minutes

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

**PROMPT:** You have just read “The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie. The article ends with an anecdote about Erin Pruitt, a baker from Smith Island (Paragraphs 18-21). Imagine that Erin someday loses her home and business to rising sea levels. Is Erin to blame? Write a response defending your answer. **[RI.1]**

In your response be sure to:

- explain what the evidence means or represents.
- explain how the evidence connects to and supports the argument.

### CHECKLIST FOR WRITING EXPLANATIONS:

- ☐ Highlight or bold each explanation.

Did you explain what the evidence means, represents, or implies without repeating it?

- A. YES!
- B. No, I will go back and add that.

Does your explanation connect the evidence to the paragraph’s argument?

- A. YES!
- B. No, I will go back and add that.

## Quick Partner Discussion

**Directions:** Discuss the questions with a partner. Record notes on both of your answers. Push yourselves to use formal language and evidence from the text. *5 minutes*



DISCUSSION SENTENCE STARTERS	
<p><b>Summarizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My point is this: ...</i></li> <li>• <i>Overall, I'd argue that...</i></li> <li>• <i>The evidence for this is strong when you consider that...</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Invite Peers to Refer to Text Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you see different or conflicting ideas in the text? If so, where?</i></li> <li>• <i>What evidence do you have that supports that idea?</i></li> <li>• <i>What's an example of that?</i></li> </ul>

1. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** What similar attitudes about climate change do you see between Bev in “Quiet Town” and the real-life **residents** quoted in “The Sea Also Rises”? To what degree are they responsible for the situation they are in? To what degree are they helpless?

2. Many people seek to own homes on coastlines for the beautiful views and access to water. In your opinion, is it worth buying a home near water given how **vulnerable** the home might be to rising sea levels in the future?

3. In your opinion, what is the more **urgent** aspect of the Maryland Coastline that needs to be saved: homes or **livelihoods**? Explain your answer.

# 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 how to notice and use **parallel structure** in their writing.  
**[L.9-10.1.A]**

### Parallel Structure at a glance

Parallel structure is using the same pattern of words, phrases, and voice in a sentence to show that all parts of the sentence have equal importance.

- In sentences, **words and phrases** in a list should appear in the same grammatical form.
- To maintain parallel structure, **all clauses in a sentence** should maintain the same pattern of verb tense, phrasing, and voice.

## What activities are included?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	<b>Analyzing Structure:</b> This activity allows students to review examples of parallel structure and to discover how parallel structure can make a sentence more clear.	5 min
Part 2	<b>Notes on Parallel Structure:</b> Students review key points about parallel structure before applying this knowledge in practice activities. Students should refer to these notes throughout the remaining practice activities.	5 min
Part 3	<b>Parallel Structure with Words and Phrases Practice:</b> In this activity, students will fill in the blank with the correct word or phrase to maintain parallel structure in a sentence.	10 min
Part 4	<b>Parallel Structure with Clauses Practice 1:</b> In this activity, students will choose the correct clause to maintain parallel structure in a sentence.	10 min
Part 5	<b>Parallel Structure with Clauses Practice 2:</b> In this activity, students will write their own clauses to maintain parallel structure in a sentence.	10 min
Part 6	<b>Writing with Parallel Structure:</b> In this activity, students are instructed to include two sentences with parallel structure in a paragraph response. <b>Note:</b> This is similar to the Grammar and Usage Quiz for this unit.	15 min
~55 min total		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY:

### Grammar and Usage Activities: PARALLEL STRUCTURE

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

#### PART 1: Analyzing Structure

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the two sets of example sentences below. As you read, note the differences between version A and version B of each example. Then, answer the questions that follow.



	VERSION A	VERSION B
<b>EXAMPLE 1</b>	The resort offers visitors the chance <b>to</b> ski, snowshoe, or <b>to</b> snowboard.	The resort offers visitors the chance <b>to</b> ski, <b>to</b> snowshoe, or <b>to</b> snowboard.
<b>EXAMPLE 2</b>	Mr. Garcia asked his employees <b>that they come</b> to work on time, <b>that they meet</b> their call quotas, and <b>to clock out</b> for all breaks and lunches.	Mr. Garcia asked his employees <b>that they come</b> to work on time, <b>that they meet</b> their call quotas, and <b>that they clock out</b> for all breaks and lunches.

- How are the two versions of Example 1 different?

*Answers will vary, but may include:*

- In version B, the verb forms are all the same, but in version A one of the verbs is in a different form.*
- Version B has the word "to" in front of every verb, whereas in version A it is missing in front of one.*

- In Example 1, which version of the list is easier to understand, with each listed item written in a similar—or parallel—manner?

*Version B*

- Examine versions A and B for Example 2. In version B, what words do all of the items in the list have in common?

*"that they" and a present tense verb*

- In Example 2, which version of the list is easier to understand, with each listed item written in a similar—or parallel—manner?

*Version B*



## PART 2: Notes on Parallel Structure

**DIRECTIONS:** Review the key points about parallel structure below. Then, complete the practice exercises on the following pages.

### PARALLEL STRUCTURE

- Parallel structure is using the same pattern of words, phrases, and voice in a sentence to show that all parts of the sentence have equal importance.
- When a sentence has parallel structure, it follows the same grammatical structure throughout to make the sentence balanced and easier for the reader to understand. This helps the writer avoid grammatical errors.

### WORDS AND PHRASES

- In sentences, words and phrases in a list should appear in the same grammatical form.

#### Non-Example:

For his last week before school, Harvey decided he would go to the woods to do some **camping, hiking, and to fish**.

#### Corrected Example:

For his last week before school, Harvey decided he would go to the woods to do some **camping, hiking, and fishing**.

→ "Camping, hiking, and fishing" all maintain the same "-ing" ending.

### CLAUSES: MAINTAINING PATTERN

- To maintain parallel structure, all clauses in a sentence should maintain the same pattern of verb tense, phrasing, and voice.

#### Non-example of maintaining pattern with multiple clauses:

The teacher **told them to study** and **that they should practice** their words every night.

→ "To study" and "that they should practice" do not match and make the sentence clunky and unclear.

#### Example of maintaining pattern with multiple clauses:

The teacher told them **that they should study** and **that they should practice** their words every night.

→ "That they" before both verb phrases keeps the sentence balanced and easy to read.



## PART 3: Parallel Structure with Words and Phrases Practice

**DIRECTIONS:** Read each sentence below and select the correct **word or phrase** to maintain parallel structure within the sentence. Then, explain your answer. Refer to your notes on “Words and Phrases” in Part 2 for support.

**Example:**

My dog spends his days playing, running, and	<i>chasing</i>	cars.
--	----------------	-------

- A. chase
- B. chasing**
- C. to chase

Explain why you chose your answer.

*“Chasing” is the best answer because its structure matches “playing” and “running” in the first part of the sentence. All three use the gerund form of the word.*

<b>1</b>	To prepare dinner, I cleaned, chopped, and	<i>cooked</i>	the vegetables.
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- A. to cook
- B. cooking
- C. cooked**

Explain why you chose your answer.

*“Cooked” is the best answer because it is in the same past tense verb form as “cleaned” and “chopped.”*

<b>2</b>	The teacher asked that the students read,	<i>write,</i>	and speak during group work.
----------	---	---------------	------------------------------

- A. write,**
- B. writing,
- C. wrote,

Explain why you chose your answer.

*“Write” is the best answer because it is in the same present tense verb form as “read” and “speak.”*

<b>3</b>	Slowly, carefully, and	<i>quietly,</i>	I walked out of the sleeping baby’s room.
----------	------------------------	-----------------	---

- A. quiet,
- B. quietly,**
- C. in quietness,

Explain why you chose your answer.

*“Quietly” is the best answer because it matches the adverb form of “slowly” and “carefully” in the other parts of the sentence.*

4	My aunt is a dancer,	a singer,	and a great cook.
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- A. sings,
- B. Likes to sing,
- C. a singer,

Explain why you chose your answer.

*"A singer" is the best choice because it matches the noun form of "dancer" and "cook" in the other parts of the sentence.*

5	Tired,	bored,	and confused, Melvin sat down.
---	--------	--------	-----------------------------------

- A. bored,
- B. boring,
- C. in boredom,

Explain why you chose your answer.

*"Bored" is the best answer because it matches the part of speech of "tired" and "confused." They are all adjectives.*



## PART 4: Parallel Structure with Clauses Practice 1

**DIRECTIONS:** Read each sentence below and select the correct **clause** to maintain parallel structure within the sentence. Then, explain your answer. Refer to your notes on “Clauses: Maintaining Pattern” in Part 2 for support.

**Example:**

The doctor said that I should rest,	<i>that I should eat healthy foods,</i>	and that I should get plenty of exercise.
-------------------------------------	---	---

- A. that I am eating,
- B. to eat healthy foods,
- C. that I should eat healthy foods,**

Explain why you chose your answer.

*“That I should eat healthy foods” has the phrase “that I should” and is followed by the verb “eat.” This matches the structure and pattern of “that I should rest” and “that I should get.”*

<b>1</b>	Before the first day of school, Josephine’s mother assured her that she would make new friends,	<i>that she would learn new things,</i>	and that she would have fun.
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- A. that she would be learning new things,
- B. that new things would be learned,
- C. that she would learn new things,**

Explain why you chose your answer.

*“That she would learn new things” matches the structure of “that she would make new friends” and “that she would have fun.”*

<b>2</b>	I accidentally dropped the package,	tripped over it,	<i>and broke it.</i>
----------	-------------------------------------	------------------	----------------------

- A. and broke it.**
- B. and it got broken.
- C. and it breaks.

Explain why you chose your answer.

*“And broke it” is the best answer because “broke” maintains the same past tense verb structure as “dropped” and “tripped.”*



3	To prepare for the exam, it is important that you study your vocabulary,	that you reread your notes,	and that you have a full night's rest.
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- A. that your notes are read,
- B. **that you reread your notes,**
- C. spend some time rereading your notes,

Explain why you chose your answer.

*"That you reread your notes" is the best answer because it has the phrase "that you" from the other two clauses and "reread" is in the same present tense verb form as "study" and "have."*

4	The investigators visited the crime scene,	they viewed surveillance footage,	and they interrogated witnesses.
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- A. and witnesses were interrogated.
- B. and interrogate witnesses.
- C. **and they interrogated witnesses**

Explain why you chose your answer.

*"They interrogated witnesses" is the best answer because it maintains the phrasing "they" followed by a past tense verb.*

5	As the emcee played his warm-up music and	announced his name,	the all-star player rushed out of the locker room doors.
---	---	---------------------	--

- A. **announced his name,**
- B. his name was announced,
- C. was announcing his name,

Explain why you chose your answer.

*"Announced his name" is the best answer because it matches the past tense verb form followed by "his" in the previous clause.*



## PART 5: Parallel Structure with Clauses Practice 2

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete each sentence by adding a **clause** that maintains parallel structure throughout the sentence. Refer to your notes on “Clauses: Maintaining Pattern” in Part 2 for support.

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

EXAMPLE	
Beginning	End
The coach told the players that they should get a lot of sleep, that they should not eat much, and	<b><i>that they should drink lots of water.</i></b>

	Beginning	End
1.	Before I left school, I made sure I grabbed my backpack, I made sure I wrote down my homework, and	<i>Correct answers will include “I made sure I” and the past tense form of a verb. e.g. “I made sure I cleaned out my desk.”</i>
2.	At my family’s cookout, we will play lawn games, swim in the pool, and	<i>Correct answers will include the present tense of a verb. e.g. “eat hot dogs.”</i>
3.	In order to make it to my new job on time, I set my alarm five minutes early, got breakfast ready the night before, and	<i>Correct answers will include the past tense form of a verb. e.g. “chose my outfit ahead of time.”</i>
4.	The new principal promised the students that he would listen to student concerns, that he would change the uniform policy, and	<i>Correct answers will include “that he would” and the base form of a verb. e.g. “that he would improve the school lunches.”</i>
5.	Stranded on the side of the road, we had no water to keep us hydrated, no food to keep us energized, and	<i>Correct answers will include “no” and a noun followed by its purpose. e.g. “no map to show us the way.”</i>



## PART 6: Writing with Parallel Structure

**DIRECTIONS:** Write a short paragraph in which you list all of the things that you'd like to accomplish this weekend. Use at least two sentences that include a list with appropriate parallel structure.

*Student answers will vary.*

# LESSON OVERVIEW:

## “LETTER TO SOMEONE LIVING FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW”

*(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	Reading Lesson 6	Reading Lesson 7
“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” by Arlie Hochschild (Narrative Non-fiction)	“He—y, Come on Ou—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) (Short Story)	“Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan (Poem)	“Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley (Short Story)	“The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie (Narrative Non-fiction)	“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann (Poem)	“Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy (Poem)
					↑ You are here! ↑	

### This lesson’s skill focus

In this lesson, you’ll learn how <b>diction</b> develops the <b>theme</b> of a poem. [RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.4]
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### Materials needed






You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This lesson handout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” (Student Copy)</li> <li>“Student Reference Sheet: Poetry Terms” (Optional)</li> <li>“Student Reference Sheet: Quoting &amp; Citing Poetry” (Optional)</li> </ul>

### About this Poem

In this poem, the speaker explains how their generation destroyed Earth’s ecosystem. The poet’s diction creates tension by highlighting how people simultaneously abused and appreciated nature. Ultimately, the poet’s message emphasizes Earth’s vulnerability.	You may choose to instruct students to <b>take notes independently instead of, or in addition to, the second read questions:</b> As you read, take notes on the message conveyed through the speaker’s diction.
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### Optional Annotation Task

### How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
CommonLit 360 poetry lessons focus on a multi-read process for understanding and analyzing poems.		
First Read	 <b>Read for the Gist:</b> As a whole class, make predictions based on the title. Then, read the poem aloud. At the end of the poem, you may ask students for any initial noticings. Another best practice is to poll the class about how easy or difficult the poem seems.	5 min
Second Read	 <b>Read for Literal Understanding:</b> Students work independently or in pairs to re-read the poem and answer the questions in the margin to help them understand what is happening in the poem.	15 min
Third Read	 <b>Read for Deeper Meaning:</b> Have students work in pairs to discuss and analyze the deeper meaning of their annotations.	15 min
Independent Practice	 Students will complete four multiple choice questions and answer a final writing prompt about the poem.	20 min
Partner Discussion	 Students can complete this optional extension activity to further their ideas and interpretations of the poem.	5 min
~60 min total		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHER COPY: Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now

Matthew Olzmann

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

## About this text

Matthew Olzmann is the poetry editor of *The Collagist*. In this poem, he explores the relationship between people and the environment.

## Purpose for Reading

To analyze how the poet's use of diction develops a theme about people and the environment.

**FIRST READ (WHOLE CLASS):** *Read for the gist.*

**SECOND READ (WHOLE CLASS):**  
*Read for literal understanding.*

- [1] Most likely, you think we hated the elephant,  
[2] the golden toad, the thylacine<sup>1</sup> and all variations  
[3] of whale harpooned<sup>2</sup> or hacked into extinction.

- [4] It must seem like we sought<sup>3</sup> to leave you nothing  
[5] but benzene,<sup>4</sup> mercury, the stomachs  
[6] of seagulls rippled with jet fuel and plastic.

- [7] You probably doubt that we were capable of joy,  
[8] but I assure you we were.

- [9] We still had the night sky back then,  
[10] and like our ancestors, we admired  
[11] its illuminated doodles

**Title:**

**Think & Share:** Who is the speaker writing to?

- *They are writing to a person 50 years in the future.*

**Lines 1-6**

**A. Write:** What does the speaker imagine the world of the future will be like?

- *Many animals will be extinct.*
- *The air and water will be polluted.*

**B. Write:** What does line 4 reveal about what the person in the future most likely thinks?

- *Humans of the previous generation left the Earth destroyed on purpose.*

<sup>1</sup> A thylacine is a wolf-like marsupial native to Australia. Thylacines and golden toads are both believed to be extinct.

<sup>2</sup> to use a long spear to catch a whale or large fish

<sup>3</sup> attempted

<sup>4</sup> a toxic liquid used to make plastics. It is known to be harmful to humans through exposure.

[12] of scorpion outlines and upside-down ladles.<sup>5</sup>

[13] Absolutely, there were some forests left!

[14] Absolutely, we still had some lakes!

[15] I'm saying, it wasn't all lead paint<sup>6</sup> and sulfur dioxide.<sup>7</sup>

[16] There were bees back then, and they pollinated

[17] a euphoria<sup>8</sup> of flowers so we might

[18] contemplate the great mysteries and finally ask,

[19] "Hey guys, what's transcendence?"<sup>9</sup>

[20] And then all the bees were dead.

**After the FIRST READ:** What do you *think* the poem is about?

*The speaker is describing a future world in which the environment is destroyed.*

**Lines 9-14:**

**Write:** How does the speaker describe humans' attitude toward the environment in this section?

- *They enjoyed and admired it.*

**Lines 15-20:**

**A. Write:** How is line 20 different from other lines in the poem?

- *It stands alone.*

**B. Write:** What is the significance of the final line?

- *It suggests that the extinction of bees was a devastating event for Earth's ecosystem.*
- *It emphasizes how **vulnerable** planet Earth is.*

Copyright © 2017 by Matthew Olzmann. Originally published in Poem-a-Day on April 14, 2017, by the Academy of American Poets.

<sup>5</sup> a group of stars, or constellation, forming an imaginary outline or pattern such as a scorpion or inanimate object, like the Big Dipper

<sup>6</sup> a paint containing lead, a toxic metal known to cause serious health problems to humans through exposure

<sup>7</sup> a toxic gas produced by burning fossil fuels that is known to cause respiratory disease and premature death

<sup>8</sup> **Euphoria** (*noun*): a feeling of intense excitement and happiness

<sup>9</sup> **Transcendence** (*noun*): an existence or experience beyond the normal or physical level; the feeling of being transported to another world

**THIRD READ (PARTNER OR INDEPENDENT):** *Read for deeper meaning.*

1. **Lines 1-6:** What do the words “harpooned,” “hacked,” and “rippled” suggest about humanity’s relationship to nature?

- *The speaker sees human behavior toward nature as violent and destructive.*

2. **Lines 16-19:** The speaker claims that people of their generation “contemplate[d] the great mysteries” while experiencing a “euphoria of flowers.” What does this diction suggest about the speaker’s feelings toward nature?

- *The speaker feels like nature is mysterious and makes humans think deeply.*
- *The speaker views nature as a source of great joy.*

3. How does the juxtaposition of diction like “harpooned,” “hacked,” and “rippled” with phrases like “euphoria of flowers” develop a message about the relationship between people and nature?

- *Humans have a conflicting relationship with nature. While they love and admire it, they also fail to take care of it.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the multiple choice questions for “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now.” 5 minutes



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

1. Which of the following *best* describes a theme of the poem “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now”? **[RL.2]**
  - A. The natural world may die out, but humans will always remember it.
  - B. Through human interaction, we can replicate the joy nature brings.
  - C. Communication between generations will save nature.
  - D. Humans will regret destroying the natural world.
2. How do lines 5-6 develop the poem’s overall meaning? **[RL.4]**
  - A. It shows the destruction that human activity caused nature.
  - B. It illustrates how connected humans and nature used to be.
  - C. It reveals the different animals that used to exist on Earth.
  - D. It demonstrates the technology humans used on animals.
3. Why are the lines “and like our ancestors, we admired / its illuminated doodles” important to the development of the poem’s theme? (Lines 10-11) **[RL.2]**
  - A. They emphasize the speaker’s need to make sense of the stars.
  - B. They highlight the importance of communicating with future generations.
  - C. They suggest that humans in future generations will continue to admire the stars.
  - D. They reinforce the idea that many previous generations were able to enjoy the environment.
4. How do the phrases “lead paint” and “sulfur dioxide” in line 15 help the reader understand the speaker’s generation? **[RL.4]**
  - A. It shows how damaging the speaker’s generation was to nature.
  - B. It demonstrates the industries the speaker’s generation valued.
  - C. It reveals how dangerous life was for the speaker’s generation.
  - D. It emphasizes the activities the speaker’s generation enjoyed.





## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the short response prompt for “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now.” 15 minutes

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

**PROMPT:** You have just read “Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann. How does the poet’s diction develop the theme? **[RL.4]**

In your response be sure to:

- explain what the evidence means or represents.
- explain how the evidence connects to and supports the argument.

### CHECKLIST FOR WRITING EXPLANATIONS:

- ☐ Highlight or bold each explanation.

Did you explain what the evidence means, represents, or implies without repeating it?

- A. YES!
- B. No, I will go back and add that.

Does your explanation connect the evidence to the paragraph’s 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 speaking with academic language by using the discussion sentence starters. *5 minutes*



DISCUSSION SENTENCE STARTERS	
<p><b>Summarizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My point is this: ...</i></li> <li>• <i>Overall, I'd argue that...</i></li> <li>• <i>The evidence for this is strong when you consider that...</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Invite Peers to Refer to Text Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you see different or conflicting ideas in the text? If so, where?</i></li> <li>• <i>What evidence do you have that supports that idea?</i></li> <li>• <i>What's an example of that?</i></li> </ul>

1. If you could tell a future generation something about your current generation what would it be? Why might they need to know it?

2. Which lines in this poem *best* emphasize our planet's **vulnerability**? Explain.

3. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** Compare the speaker's views about nature with those of the speaker in "Song for the Turtles in the Gulf." How are they similar and/or different?

# LESSON OVERVIEW: “TROPHIC CASCADE”

(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	Reading Lesson 6	Reading Lesson 7
“Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” by Arlie Hochschild (Narrative Non-fiction)	“He—y, Come on Ou—t!” by Shinichi Hoshi (translated by Stanleigh Jones) (Short Story)	“Song for the Turtles in the Gulf” by Linda Hogan (Poem)	“Quiet Town” by Jason Gurley (Short Story)	“The Sea Also Rises” by Ron Cassie (Narrative Non-fiction)	“Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now” by Matthew Olzmann (Poem)	“Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy (Poem)
						↑ You are here! ↑

## This lesson's skill focus

In this lesson, students will learn how <b>structure</b> develops the <b>theme</b> of a poem. [RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.5]
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## Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This lesson handout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Trophic Cascade” (Student Copy)</li> <li>“Student Reference Sheet: Poetry Terms” (Optional)</li> <li>“Student Reference Sheet: Quoting &amp; Citing Poetry” (Optional)</li> </ul>






## About this Poem

In this poem, the speaker compares motherhood to the effects of a trophic cascade (a term for when a top predator is added or removed to an environment). The poet uses enjambment to connect each line of the poem, which emphasizes how one species is connected to the next.

## Optional Annotation Task

You may choose to instruct students to **take notes independently instead of, or in addition to, the second read questions**: As you read, take notes on the message conveyed through the images and ideas in the poem.

## How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
CommonLit 360 poetry lessons focus on a multi-read process for understanding and analyzing poems.		
First Read	 <b>Read for the Gist:</b> As a whole class, make predictions based on the title. Then, read the poem aloud. At the end of the poem, you may ask students for any initial noticings. Another best practice is to poll the class about how easy or difficult the poem seems.	5 min
Second Read	 <b>Read for Literal Understanding:</b> Students work independently or in pairs to re-read the poem and answer the questions in the margin to help them understand what is happening in the poem.	15 min
Third Read	 <b>Read for Deeper Meaning:</b> Have students work in pairs to discuss and analyze the deeper meaning of their annotations.	15 min
Independent Practice	 Students will complete four multiple choice questions and answer a final writing prompt about the poem.	20 min
Partner Discussion	 Students can complete this optional extension activity to further their ideas and interpretations of the poem.	5 min
~60 min total		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: Trophic Cascade

Camille T. Dungy

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

### About this text

Camille T. Dungy is an American poet known for her nature-themed works. She is the author of four collections of poetry and editor of *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry*, which was nominated for an NAACP Image Award.

### Purpose for Reading

To analyze how a poem's structure develops and reveals a message about nature.

**FIRST READ (WHOLE CLASS):** *Read for the gist.*

**SECOND READ (WHOLE CLASS):**  
*Read for literal understanding.*

After the reintroduction of gray wolves [1]  
to Yellowstone and, as anticipated, their culling<sup>1</sup> [2]  
of deer, trees grew beyond the deer stunt<sup>2</sup> [3]  
of the mid century. In their up reach [4]  
songbirds nested, who scattered [5]  
seed for underbrush, and in that cover [6]  
warren<sup>3</sup> snowshoe hare. Weasel and water shrew [7]  
returned, also vole, and came soon hawk [8]  
and falcon, bald eagle, kestrel, and with them [9]  
hawk shadow, falcon shadow. Eagle shade [10]  
and kestrel shade haunted newly-berried [11]  
runnels<sup>3</sup> where mule deer no longer rummaged<sup>4</sup>, cautious [12]  
as they were, now, of being surprised by wolves. Berries [13]

### Lines 1-4

**Write:** Paraphrase the first sentence of the poem.

- *After gray wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone Park, they killed a lot of deer as expected. Then, trees started growing since there weren't as many deer to overeat the new trees that started to grow.*

### Lines 4-9

**Write:** What do these lines suggest about how the reintroduction of the wolves impacted certain animal species?

- *Certain animals like birds, hares, weasels, and water shrew came back.*

<sup>1</sup> killing

<sup>2</sup> stopped from growing properly, in this case the deer ate the trees causing them to stop growing

<sup>3</sup> a very small stream

<sup>4</sup> hunting through

brought bear, while undergrowth and willows, growing [14]  
     now right down to the river, brought beavers, [15]  
 who dam. Muskrats came to the dams, and tadpoles. [16]  
     Came, too, the night song of the fathers [17]  
     of tadpoles. With water striders<sup>5</sup>, the dark [18]  
     gray American dipper bobbed in fresh pools [19]  
     of the river, and fish stayed, and the bear, who [20]  
 fished, also culled deer fawns and to their kill scraps [21]  
     came vulture and coyote, long gone in the region [22]  
     until now, and their scat<sup>6</sup> scattered seed, and more [23]  
     trees, brush, and berries grew up along the river [24]  
 that had run straight and so flooded but thus dammed, [25]  
 compelled to meander, is less prone<sup>7</sup> to overrun. Don't [26]  
     you tell me this is not the same as my story. All this [27]  
     life born from one hungry animal, this whole, [28]  
     new landscape, the course of the river changed, [29]  
 I know this. I reintroduced myself to myself, this time [30]  
     a mother. After which, nothing was ever the same. [31]

#### Lines 10-26

**Write:** What was the overall effect of reintroducing the wolves to Yellowstone?

- *Many plants and animals came back to the area.*
- *The amount of animal and plant species grew.*

#### Lines 26-29

**Write:** Paraphrase lines 26-29.

- *This is like my story, from just one animal comes so many new animals, plants, and change.*

#### Lines 30-31

**Write:** Why has the speaker "reintroduced" herself to herself?

- *She became a mother and her whole life changed.*

**After the FIRST READ:** What do you *think* the poem is about?

*A speaker describes many kinds of animals and plant life that grow in an area.*

"Trophic Cascade" from *Trophic Cascade* © 2017 by Camille Dungy. Published by Wesleyan University Press and reprinted with permission.

<sup>5</sup> a type of insect

<sup>6</sup> animal droppings

<sup>7</sup> likely

**THIRD READ (PARTNER OR INDEPENDENT):** *Read for deeper meaning.*

1. **Lines 1-4:** What does the phrase “as anticipated” reveal about the reintroduction of the wolves?

- *People expected wolves to kill the deer.*
- *People expected the reintroduction to cause many of the things described in the poem.*

2. **Lines 4-25:** In these lines, the poet uses the technique of enjambment, which forces the reader to connect one line to the next. How does this structure emphasize the meaning of the poem?

- *The enjambment connects one line to the next, just as one species is connected to another in nature.*

3. **Lines 26-31:** How does the poem shift in these lines?

- *The speaker shifts from describing the impact of the reintroduction of the wolves to Yellowstone to describing herself.*

4. **Lines 26-31:** Why does the speaker say that the reintroduction of the “one hungry animal” is “the same as my story”?

- *The wolves brought lots of life to Yellowstone, just like she brought life into the world when she became a mother.*
- *The landscape of Yellowstone changed after the reintroduction of the wolves, just like the speaker was “never the same” after becoming a mother.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the multiple choice questions for “Trophic Cascade.” 5 minutes



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

1. In lines 4-7, the speaker says, “In their up reach / songbirds nested, who scattered / seed for underbrush, and in that cover / warren’d snowshoe hare.” What do these lines reveal about the relationship between trees and animals? **[RL.4]**
  - A. When trees grow taller, they provide safety for birds from animals like hares.
  - B. When trees and animals can grow, both are beautiful parts of nature.
  - C. When trees can grow, more animal life is created around them.
  - D. When animals respect trees, they grow higher and healthier.
2. How does the phrase “All this / life born from one hungry animal” develop a theme of the poem? (Lines 27-28) **[RL.4]**
  - A. It reveals how nature is all connected.
  - B. It describes the way a wolf raises her young.
  - C. It illustrates how important food is for animals.
  - D. It highlights how important it is to protect animals.
3. What do lines 30-31 reveal about the speaker? **[RL.3]**
  - A. The speaker is very proud of her child.
  - B. The speaker finds motherhood difficult.
  - C. The speaker was transformed by motherhood.
  - D. The speaker is determined to become a mother.
4. Which lines from the poem *best* demonstrate how the speaker is similar to the environment she describes? **[RL.1]**
  - A. “In their up reach / songbirds nested, who scattered / seed for underbrush,” (Lines 4-6)
  - B. “Came, too, the night song of the fathers / of tadpoles.” (Lines 17-18)
  - C. “to their kill scraps / came vulture and coyote, long gone in the region” (Lines 21-22)
  - D. “this whole, / new landscape, the course of the river changed, / I know this.” (Lines 28-30)



## Independent Practice

**Directions:** Answer the short response prompt for “Trophic Cascade.” 15 minutes

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

**PROMPT:** You have just read “Trophic Cascade” by Camille T. Dungy. How does the poem’s structure emphasize the theme? **[RL.5]**

In your response be sure to:

- explain what the evidence means or represents.
- explain how the evidence connects to and supports the argument.

### CHECKLIST FOR WRITING EXPLANATIONS:

- ☐ Highlight or bold each explanation.

Did you explain what the evidence means, represents, or implies without repeating it?

- A. YES!
- B. No, I will go back and add that.

Does your explanation connect the evidence to the paragraph’s 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 speaking with academic language by using the discussion sentence starters. *5 minutes*



DISCUSSION SENTENCE STARTERS	
<p><b>Summarizing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My point is this: ...</i></li> <li>• <i>Overall, I'd argue that...</i></li> <li>• <i>The evidence for this is strong when you consider that...</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Invite Peers to Refer to Text Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you see different or conflicting ideas in the text? If so, where?</i></li> <li>• <i>What evidence do you have that supports that idea?</i></li> <li>• <i>What's an example of that?</i></li> </ul>

1. Is this poem more about wildlife or motherhood? Explain.

2. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** How is the human **impact** on nature different in this poem than in "Song for the Turtles in the Gulf"? Explain.

3. In this unit, you have explored texts which show how humans negatively impact the environment. In this poem, humans help restore some of the damage they have done. Do you believe humans are more likely to destroy or rebuild? Explain.

## 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 learn how to **summarize** points of **agreement and disagreement** during discussion. [SL.9-10.1.D]

### Discussion skill at a glance

**Statements that summarize points of agreement and disagreement:**

- *It sounds like we are agreeing that \_\_\_\_\_. I heard [student A] say...and I heard [student B] say...*
- *It sounds like we are disagreeing that \_\_\_\_\_. I heard [student A] say...but I heard [student B] say...*
- *We seem to be agreeing/disagreeing about \_\_\_\_\_. Let me summarize what I am hearing from the group...*

### What activities are included in this packet?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	 <b>Sample Discussion:</b> Students analyze the transcript of a sample student discussion to notice strong discussion moves.	8 min
Part 2	 <b>Summarizing Points of Agreement and Disagreement:</b> Students learn sentence frames they can use during a discussion to summarize points of agreement and disagreement.	7 min
~15 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:**

*Are people more impacted by the environment or is the environment more impacted by people?*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHER COPY: Summarizing Points of Agreement and Disagreement During Discussion

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

## PART 1: Sample Discussion

**Directions:** Read the excerpt from a student discussion about the text “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou.” As you read, pause to answer the questions beside the text.



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

### SAMPLE DISCUSSION PROMPT

**Who is to blame for the contamination of the Bayou d’Inde?**

#### SAMPLE DISCUSSION DIALOGUE

[1] **Lisa:** PPG is clearly responsible for contaminating the bayou. In the text, it’s shown that they released all sorts of **toxins** into the water. They knew it was illegal and dangerous — that’s why they made Lee Sherman do it “after dusk, and always in secret.” That’s from paragraph 13.

[2] **Amin:** But what about Lee Sherman himself? He has to take some of the blame for what happened. After all, paragraph 15 says, “Sherman would look around ‘to make sure no one saw me’ and check if the wind was blowing away from him, so as to avoid fumes blowing into his face.” He wouldn’t have done all that unless he knew how dangerous the chemicals were.

[3] **Lisa:** Yes, but PPG ordered him to do it. And later they pretended not to know about it. So, they dumped **toxins** into the bayou for years and then acted all innocent and confused about it.

[4] **Amin:** You’re talking about the public meeting with the fishermen in paragraph 30. In that scene, Sherman admits he’s responsible. His sign says, “I’M THE ONE WHO DUMPED IT IN THE BAYOU.” So, that just proves that he has to take some blame.

[5] **Roy:** It sounds like we’re disagreeing about whether PPG is solely responsible. I heard Lisa say that they ordered the dumping, made sure it was secret, and later pretended to be shocked by the contamination. Amin pointed out that Lee Sherman knew the **toxins** were dangerous while he was dumping them and later took responsibility for his role in it. Lisa and Amin, do you agree that there are moments in the story that challenge your thinking, and if so, how would you revise your thinking?

#### QUESTIONS

##### Paragraphs 1-4

**Write:** What are Lisa and Amin disagreeing about?

- *They are disagreeing about who is responsible for poisoning the bayou. Lisa thinks PPG is solely to blame, but Amin thinks Sherman has to take some of the blame.*

##### Paragraph 5

**A. Find Evidence:** Underline words or phrases that show that Roy is summarizing Lisa’s and Amin’s positions?

- *“I heard Lisa say that...”*
- *“Amin pointed out that...”*

**B. Discuss:** How do you think Roy’s efforts to summarize will affect the conversation? How do you think Lisa and Amin might revise their thinking?

*Student answers will vary; students may say:*

- *Roy’s summary will help Lisa and Amin see points they can agree on.*



## PART 2: Summarizing Points of Agreement and Disagreement

**Directions:** In our discussion, we are going to practice an important discussion strategy: how to respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives and summarize points of agreement and disagreement. With a partner or independently, read the examples and summarize two key points to remember about this skill.

Examples of how you can **respond thoughtfully** to your peers' diverse perspectives and **summarize points of agreement and disagreement**:

- *It sounds like we are agreeing that \_\_\_\_\_. I heard [student A] say...and I heard [student B] say...*
- *It sounds like we are disagreeing that \_\_\_\_\_. I heard [student A] say...but I heard [student B] say...*
- *We seem to be agreeing/disagreeing about \_\_\_\_\_. Let me summarize what I am hearing from the group...*

### Key Points

During a class discussion, remember to...

1. *Restate what you heard your peers say to clarify and make sure you understand them correctly.*
2. *Specifically name what you and your classmate(s) agree or disagree about.*
3. *Summarize the big ideas that are causing the agreement or disagreement to help move the discussion along in a productive and respectful way.*

## 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](http://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: UNIT 2 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)
Introducing Evidence With Context	Writing Explanations	Mid-Unit Writing Review	Unit 2 Essay: Planning	Writing Engaging Introductions	How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least two unit texts to support your response. [W.1, W.2]
			↑ You are here! ↑		







This lesson's skill focus

In this lesson, students will <b>plan for their Unit 2 Essay</b> and review the structure and parts of a well-written essay. [W.9-10.2]
---

Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This lesson handout</li> <li>Teacher copies of unit texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Unit 2 Essay: Planning" (Student Copy)</li> <li>Annotated copies of unit texts</li> </ul>

How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	 <b>Breaking Down the Essay Prompt:</b> Students read the Unit 2 Essay prompt and make a list of the prompt's requirements.	5 min
Part 2	 <b>Reviewing the Unit Texts:</b> Students complete a quick write to outline their perspective on people and the environment, then review unit texts to jot down which texts most impacted their perspective.	10 min
Part 3	 <b>Discussing Your Ideas:</b> Have students share their responses to the essay prompt. As they share, they should jot ideas to use in their essay.	10 min
Part 4	 <b>Finding Evidence:</b> Students select evidence from their chosen texts that best support their perspective about the relationship between people and the environment.	10 min
Part 5	 <b>Drafting Your Thesis:</b> Students will use a checklist for drafting a thesis. Encourage students to refer to the thesis from the example essay in Part 6 if they need a reference.	5 min
Part 6	 <b>What Does A Great Student Essay Look Like?</b> Students reflect on a strong student essay. This exemplar essay is a powerful tool for students to refer to throughout their essay drafting process. <b>Note:</b> The exemplar essay is about the thematic topic from 9G Unit 1: Following the Crowd; students do not need to be familiar with the content to be able to follow the structure of this well-written essay.	10 min
~50 min total		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: Unit 2 Essay: Planning

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

### Today's Goal

Prepare to write your essay by:

- Breaking down your final essay prompt
- Reviewing and discussing unit texts
- Planning your evidence
- Drafting your thesis
- Analyzing an exemplar essay

### PART 1: Breaking Down the Essay Prompt

**Directions:** Carefully read the prompt. Then, answer the question. *5 minutes*



### Unit 2 Essay Prompt

How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least **two** unit texts to support your response. **[W.1, W.2]**

1. What does this prompt require you to do?

1. *Explain how the texts in this unit changed or reinforced my perspective on the relationship between people and the environment.*
2. *Use at least two texts from the unit to support my response.*



## PART 2: Reviewing the Unit Texts

**Directions:** Respond to the quick write, then jot notes on how at least **three** of the unit texts informed your response. *10 minutes*

1. **Quick Write:** How has your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment changed or been reinforced?

*Student responses will vary.*

2. Consider the unit texts. Which of the following most impacted how you now view the relationship between people and the environment? Jot down notes about how at least **three** texts impacted your perspective.

Text Title	How has this text changed or reinforced your perspective?
"Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sample response: I realized that people need the environment to remain healthy and for their food and water supply to be safe.</i></li> </ul>
"Hey—y, Come on Ou—t!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sample response: I learned that harming the environment by dumping toxins into it will eventually be a problem for people.</i></li> </ul>
"Song for the Turtles in the Gulf"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sample response: I realized that even though some people admire the beauty of nature, others destroy it with careless actions.</i></li> </ul>
"Quiet Town"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sample response: I learned that people sometimes ignore issues about the environment because it could make their lives harder.</i></li> </ul>
"The Sea Also Rises"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sample response: I realized how people's livelihoods depend on a healthy environment.</i></li> </ul>
"Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sample response: I learned that planet Earth is more vulnerable than most people realize.</i></li> </ul>
"Trophic Cascade"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sample response: I understand how people can help the environment by reintroducing species to create more life in an ecosystem.</i></li> </ul>

## PART 3: Discussing Your Ideas

**Directions:** Discuss the essay prompt. Take notes on ideas from your classmates that could help you with your essay. *10 minutes*



**Discussion Question:** How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least **two** unit texts to support your response.

*Student responses will vary.*

## PART 4: Finding Evidence

**Directions:** Write the title and author of the **two** texts you will write about. Then, review the texts to find at least **two** pieces of evidence that changed or reinforced your perspective. *10 minutes*



Title and Author	Evidence that supports my perspective on the relationship between people and the environment (include paragraph # for evidence)
Text Title and Author #1	
Text Title and Author #2	



## PART 5: Drafting Your Thesis

**Directions:** Review the prompt and draft your thesis. *5 minutes*

### Unit 2 Essay Prompt

How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least **two** unit texts to support your response. **[W.1, W.2]**

### Thesis

*Student responses will vary.*

#### Your thesis should:

- ☐ Clearly answer the prompt
- ☐ Use literary terms and/or academic vocabulary
- ☐ Be 1-2 sentences long





## PART 6: What Does a Great Student Essay Look Like?

**Directions:** Below is an exemplar student essay about a theme from Unit 1, Following the Crowd. While the topic and texts are different, the question and essay format are similar to what you will write. Skim the essay and the teacher comments. Then, answer the reflection question. *10 minutes*

### Prompt:

How have the texts in the unit changed or reinforced your perspective on following the crowd? [W.1, W.2]

#### EXEMPLAR STUDENT ESSAY

#### TEACHER COMMENTS

[1] When I was in fourth grade, I was biking with some of my friends. One of my friends ran a red light, and everyone followed him. I was halfway across the road when I heard a blaring horn followed by screeching tires. I looked up just in time to see the speeding car barely miss the back of my bike. In “All Summer in a Day” by Ray Bradbury and “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, characters also blindly follow others. However, in these stories, the characters who follow others aren’t the ones who are harmed. These texts made me realize that blindly going along with what everyone else is doing can lead us to hurt people other than ourselves.

You definitely grabbed my attention. Great hook!

Strong thesis that captures your new perspective.

[2] In Ray Bradbury’s short story “All Summer in a Day,” a group of children follow the lead of one student and rob a girl of the only experience she wanted. The story is set on Venus, where the sun comes out just once every seven years. Margot, who lived on Earth for several years, is the only child who remembers the sun, and this makes her an outsider to the other children. The day the sun will appear, one student shouts that they should lock her in a closet, and the rest of the students “surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked the door” (43). Each one of the students followed the crowd, and because of this, Margot misses the one moment she had looked forward to for years. It is only after the rain returns and the sun disappears for another seven years that they realize how cruel they were, at which point, “They could not meet each other’s glances. Their faces were solemn and pale” (81). They are ashamed of how their actions hurt Margot, and it’s hard to believe that most of these children would have done this to Margot if they weren’t following a crowd.

Excellent job providing context for a complicated story.

[3] There is something about following a crowd that makes us capable of harming people who are different from us, but in “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, following a crowd leads to hurting someone who is part of the ingroup. In this village, people gather to carry out a violent tradition of stoning a person to death just because their name is selected from a

I love this transition. Great job linking your body paragraphs together while highlighting their key difference.

box, and the narrator explains, “The people had done it so many times that they only half listened to the directions; most of them were quiet, wetting their lips, not looking around” (20). Here, people are waiting to find out which of them will be killed, but they’ve done it so often they’re just going through the motions as if it were a boring event. A woman named Tessie is selected and the villagers gang up on her: “Old Man Warner was saying, ‘Come on, come on, everyone.’ Steve Adams was in the front of the crowd of villagers, with Mrs. Graves beside him” (78). *The villagers are so programmed to go along with this tradition that they don’t even stop to realize they’re killing someone they know. If everyone else is doing it, and if it’s something we’ve always done, then it must be right, right?*

Great explanation. The rhetorical question makes a strong point about following the crowd while connecting to your thesis.

[4] When we blindly follow the group, it’s not just ourselves that we might hurt. In “All Summer in a Day,” following a crowd leads to hurting someone because she is different. In “The Lottery,” following others leads to killing someone who is part of the group. Growing up, teenagers are constantly told that they shouldn’t follow the crowd because we might hurt ourselves. These stories reveal that there is another danger: by blindly following the actions of others, we might also do irreparable harm to someone else. In fourth grade, if I had been just a second slower when following my friends through an intersection, I would have been hurt badly, but the pain wouldn’t have just been my own: the driver who hit me would also have faced a lifetime of guilt for having hit a child on a bike.

I love how you connected this back to your hook. Well done!

1. **Reflect:** Based on 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.
- 3.

### 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 2 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

How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least **two** unit texts to support your response. [W.1, W.2]

### PART 2: Drafting Your Essay

**Directions:** Draft your essay in the space provided. If you completed any essay planning activities in a previous lesson, use them to help you draft your response.



**Note to Teachers:** The exemplar below is taken from the planning lesson in this unit and it is based on unit texts and themes from 9th Grade Unit 1, Following the Crowd. However, student essays for 9th Grade Unit 2 Our Environment — Its Vulnerability and Power should follow a similar structure for analysis and explanation.

*When I was in fourth grade, I was biking with some of my friends. One of my friends ran a red light, and everyone followed him. I was halfway across the road when I heard a blaring horn followed by screeching tires. I looked up just in time to see the speeding car barely miss the back of my bike. In “All Summer in a Day” by Ray Bradbury and “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, characters also blindly follow others. However, in these stories, the characters who follow others aren’t the ones who are harmed. These texts made me realize that blindly going along with what everyone else is doing can lead us to hurt people other than ourselves.*

*In Ray Bradbury’s short story “All Summer in a Day,” a group of children follow the lead of one student and rob a girl of the only experience she wanted. The story is set on Venus, where the sun comes out just once every seven years. Margot, who lived on Earth for several years, is the only child who remembers the sun, and this makes her an outsider to the other children. The day the sun will appear, one student shouts that they should lock her in a closet, and the rest of the students “surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked the door” (43). Each one of the students followed the crowd, and because of this, Margot misses the one moment she had looked forward to for years. It is only after the rain returns and the sun disappears for another seven years that they realize how cruel they were, at which point, “They could not meet each other’s glances. Their faces were solemn and pale” (81). They are ashamed of how their actions hurt Margot, and it’s hard to believe that most of these children would have done this to Margot if they weren’t following a crowd.*

*There is something about following a crowd that makes us capable of harming people who are different from us, but in “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, following a crowd leads to hurting someone who is part of the ingroup. In this village, people gather to carry out a violent tradition of stoning a person to death just because their name is selected from a box, and the narrator explains, “The people had done it so many times that they only half listened to the directions; most of them were quiet, wetting their lips, not looking around” (20). Here, people are waiting to find out which of them will be killed, but they’ve done it so often they’re just going through the motions as if it were a boring event. A woman named Tessie is selected and the villagers gang up on her: “Old Man Warner was saying, ‘Come on, come on, everyone.’ Steve Adams was in the front of the crowd of villagers, with Mrs. Graves beside him” (78). The villagers are so programmed to go along with this tradition that they don’t even stop to realize they’re killing someone they know. If everyone else is doing it, and if it’s something we’ve always done, then it must be right, right?*

*When we blindly follow the group, it’s not just ourselves that we might hurt. In “All Summer in a Day,” following a crowd leads to hurting someone because she is different. In “The Lottery,” following others leads to killing someone who is part of the group. Growing up, teenagers are constantly told that they shouldn’t follow the crowd because we might hurt ourselves. These stories reveal that there is another danger: by blindly following the actions of others, we might also do irreparable harm to someone else. In fourth grade, if I had been just a second slower when following my friends through an intersection, I would have been hurt badly, but the pain wouldn’t have just been my own: the driver who hit me would also have faced a lifetime of guilt for having hit a child on a bike.*

Analysis Essay Rubric				
Score	4	3	2	1
<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	<b>Provides an in-depth and accurate analysis</b> of what is stated in the text and/or what can be inferred from the text(s).	<b>Provides an accurate analysis</b> of what is stated in the text and/or what can be inferred from the text(s).	<b>Provides a somewhat accurate analysis</b> of what is stated in the text and/or can be inferred from the text(s).	<b>Provides a minimally accurate analysis</b> of what is stated in the text and/or what can be inferred from the text(s).
<b>Thesis</b>	<b>Thesis is clearly stated.</b> It is relevant to the task and specific. <b>Thesis demonstrates advanced features</b> by presenting multiple or conflicting ideas about a text.	<b>Thesis or claim is adequately stated.</b> It is relevant to the task, but may be general or broad.	<b>Thesis is attempted</b> , but may be somewhat confusing or ambiguous.	<b>Thesis is missing</b> or not relevant to the task.
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Demonstrates a clear, logical organizational structure</b> that supports the development of the thesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong introduction and conclusion that present original or significant ideas</li> <li>• Logical grouping and ordering of key points and evidence within body paragraphs</li> <li>• Strong transitions that demonstrate the relationship between ideas</li> </ul>	<b>Demonstrates a satisfactory organizational structure</b> that generally supports the thesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A recognizable introduction and conclusion</li> <li>• Logical grouping and ordering of key points and evidence within body paragraphs</li> <li>• Some effective transitions between ideas</li> </ul>	<b>Demonstrates a general organizational structure</b> which may lack a sense of direction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction or conclusion may be missing</li> <li>• Some key points and evidence that are not grouped logically</li> <li>• Some confusing transitions or connections between ideas</li> </ul>	<b>Demonstrates a weak organizational structure:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction or conclusion may be missing</li> <li>• Key points and evidence that are not grouped logically</li> <li>• Few transitions or connections between ideas</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	Includes <b>strongest, most relevant text evidence</b> to support thesis, reasons, and overall analysis of the text(s). <b>Evidence is introduced and contextualized, quoted, or paraphrased accurately.</b>	Includes <b>relevant text evidence</b> to support thesis, reasons, and overall analysis of the text(s). <b>Most evidence is introduced</b> and quoted or paraphrased accurately.	<b>Text evidence or supporting details</b> may be insufficient or only somewhat relevant, indicating basic comprehension of the text(s). <b>Evidence is introduced inconsistently.</b> Quotations or paraphrases may be incorrect or incomplete.	<b>Text evidence or supporting details</b> are largely missing, indicating limited comprehension of the text(s). If text evidence is present, it may consist of mostly summary or be <b>copied directly</b> from the text with no introduction or context provided.

Analysis	Explanations/analysis develop ideas and insight in the essay, extend thinking, and make connections.	Explanations/analysis develop ideas and make connections, but may also summarize rather than analyze.	Explanations/analysis mostly summarize or restate text evidence, without developing ideas or connections.	Explanations/analysis may be missing or show a lack of understanding.
Writing Conventions and Craft	Illustrates the use of effective and varied sentences and paragraphs.	Reflects a generally controlled writing style but may lack variety in sentence structure.	Uses some awkward constructions or demonstrates repeated use of a particular sentence structure.	Demonstrates the use of fragmented or run on sentences that make the essay difficult to read with understanding.
	Reflects precise and carefully selected word choice for clarity and effect.	Reflects use of language that is functional and appropriate.	Uses words that are often repetitions.	Demonstrates limited range of vocabulary, or includes words that are misused.
	Reflects exceptional control of conventions; errors are few and minor.	Reflects control of most writing conventions; contains occasional errors that do not interfere with clarity or message.	Reflects limited control of conventions; contains frequent errors that may begin to interfere with understanding.	Reflects numerous errors in conventions that make the text difficult to read.

# LESSON OVERVIEW: WRITING ENGAGING 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)
Introducing Evidence With Context	Writing Explanations	Mid-Unit Writing Review	Unit 2 Essay: Planning	Writing Engaging Introductions	How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least two unit texts to support your response. [W.1, W.2]
				↑ You are here! ↑	






## This lesson's skill focus

In this lesson, students will learn to write an <b>introduction</b> that hooks their reader by describing a scene using <b>imagery</b> and <b>strong diction</b> . [W.9-10.2.A]
---

## Materials needed

You will need	Your students will need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This handout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Writing Engaging Introductions" (Student Copy)</li> <li>"Essay Drafting Handout"</li> </ul>

## How do I facilitate this lesson?

Part	Lesson Activities	Time
Part 1	 <b>Analyzing a Professional Writer's Introduction:</b> Students read the introductory paragraph from "The Sea Also Rises" and analyze what makes it engaging.	5 min
Part 2	 <b>Analyzing a Student's Introduction:</b> Students read the introduction from this unit's exemplar essay. They revisit the upside-down triangle method from a previous unit and consider how the author uses the introduction to hook the reader's attention.	5 min
Part 3	 <b>Brainstorming Your Hook:</b> Students answer two questions to brainstorm how they can hook their reader's attention in their own essays. <b>Note:</b> Consider having students share out their ideas to generate better responses and to ensure that students' ideas for hooks align to their thesis statements.	5 min
Part 4	 <b>Draft Your Introduction:</b> Students draft an introduction for their essay using the upside-down triangle method. <b>Note:</b> Students should draft their introduction on the same document as their rough draft; we've provided space for this in the Essay Drafting Handout.	15 min
Part 5	 <b>Check Your Work:</b> Students review their introductions using a provided checklist.	5 min
~35 min total		



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: Writing Engaging Introductions

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

### Today's Goals

1. Complete a draft of your essay introduction.
2. Hook your reader's attention by describing a moment, setting, or scene using imagery and powerful diction. **[W.2.A]**

### PART 1: Analyzing a Professional Writer's Introduction

**Directions:** Read the introduction to "The Sea Also Rises" and answer the questions. *5 minutes*



#### Introduction from "The Sea Also Rises"

[1] The first thing you notice is the standing water in the roadside gullies, even though it hasn't rained in a week. Then, you notice the small houses and churches all teetering on concrete blocks or bricks four or five feet above the muddy, soft ground. But driving down Maryland Route 335 toward Hooper's Island, it's the trees that give you the deepest pause. Thousands of pine trees have been stripped bare of their needles, branches, and brown bark in this part of south Dorchester County. Ramrod straight, white as ghosts, the hollow trunks look like some kind of zombie deadwood, the staggering aftermath of an unfolding calamity.

"The Sea Also Rises" by Ron Cassie. Copyright © 2015. Originally published in Baltimore magazine. Used with permission, all rights reserved.

1. How does this introduction hook the reader's attention?

*Answers will vary:*

- *It begins to tell a surprising and mysterious story.*
- *It describes a setting in an eerie way.*
- *It creates an ominous mood.*

2. List two examples of imagery or strong diction in this introduction.

*Answers will vary:*

- *"Thousands of pine trees have been stripped bare of their needles."*
- *"ramrod straight, white as ghosts"*
- *"zombie deadwood"*

3. What similar types of details could you include to make your own essay introduction engaging?

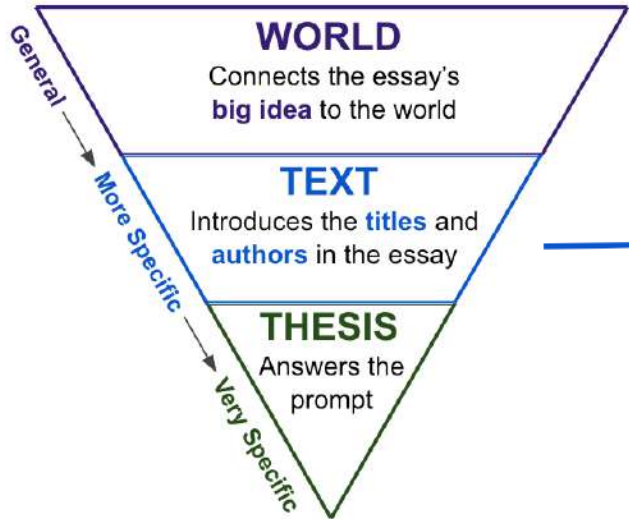
*Answers will vary.*



## PART 2: Analyzing a Student's Introduction

**Directions:** Read the sample student introduction and answer the questions. *5 minutes*



Student Example	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>An Upside-Down Triangle Introduction</b></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sample Introduction</b></p> <p>When I was in fourth grade, I was biking with some of my friends. One of my friends ran a red light, and everyone followed him. I was halfway across the road when I heard a blaring horn followed by screeching tires. I looked up just in time to see the speeding car barely miss the back of my bike. In “All Summer in a Day” by Ray Bradbury and “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, characters also blindly follow others. However, in these stories, the characters who follow others aren’t the ones who are harmed. These texts made me realize that blindly going along with what everyone else is doing can lead us to hurt people other than ourselves.</p>

1. Which part of the upside-down triangle is meant to hook the reader?

- A. the world statement
- B. the text statement
- C. the thesis statement

2. How does this writer try to hook the reader’s attention?

- *The introduction tells an interesting and exciting story that supports the thesis.*
- *It also uses vivid imagery, such as “blaring horn,” “screeching tires,” and “speeding car.”*

## PART 3: Brainstorming Your Hook

**Directions:** Read the essay prompt and brainstorm ideas to hook your reader's attention. *5 minutes*



### Unit 2 Essay Prompt

How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least **two** unit texts to support your response. **[W.1, W.2]**

1. Think about your answer to the essay prompt. What setting or event could you describe to hook your reader's attention and also connect to your essay's topic and thesis?

*Answers will vary.*

2. When describing the scene, how could you use imagery to bring the setting or event to life? Recall that imagery can be used to describe any of the five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

*Answers will vary.*

## PART 4: Draft Your Introduction

**Directions:** Apply what you have learned as you draft your essay introduction. When you have finished drafting your introduction, move on to Part 5 to check your work. *15 minutes*





## PART 5: 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 hook your reader's attention by describing a scene or event? 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.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER COPY: End-of-Unit Writing Options

**Note to Teachers:** Included here are four options for a culminating writing task in this unit. The reading and writing instruction in this unit aligns most closely to *Option 1: Essential Question Analysis Essay*; however, you may choose a prompt that best aligns to the needs and interests of your students.

### Option 1: Essential Question Analysis Essay (Recommended)

How have the texts in this unit changed or reinforced your perspective about the relationship between people and the environment? Use at least **two** unit texts to support your response. **[W.1, W.2]**

### Option 2: Personal Activity and Reflection Essay

Get involved! Volunteer to help the environment where you live. Then, write an essay describing your experience and explaining the environmental problem you were helping to fix. **[W.3]**

### Option 3: On Demand Literary Analysis Essay

Both “Lee Sherman and the Toxic Louisiana Bayou” and “The Sea Also Rises” discuss people and the environment. Write an essay in which you identify the similar purpose of the two texts and analyze how specific paragraphs or sections of each text help achieve that purpose. **[W.2]**

### Option 4: Write Your Own Poem

In this unit, you have read three poems that use figurative language to convey the speaker’s feelings about nature. Write your own poem that reveals your feelings about nature. It should include figurative language. **[W.4]**