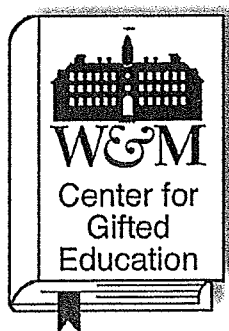


Utopia



CENTER FOR GIFTED EDUCATION
The College of William & Mary

INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIT

Studying a history of man's search for a perfect world or community offers students the chance to compare and contrast their own lives and communities with those of others. This unit looks at the social and historical issues of utopia. Students will examine novels, short stories, poetry, art, and music in this unit, and they will conduct a problem-based learning activity that will lead them through a community service component that will better their own community. Students will be given numerous opportunities for reading, writing, conducting research, listening, and speaking.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

This unit on utopia attempts to give an overview of utopian ideas from various individuals, groups, and countries. This study will also allow the students an opportunity to examine why, over time, man's ideas about utopia evolve. Through classroom activities and the study of literature, students will learn about mankind's search through the ages for utopia and the struggles to grasp and maintain it on both personal and societal levels. The historical perspective on utopias will help understand some of the human race's ever-changing ideas of the ideal. Exploring utopia through their own personal dreams and goals will allow students to analyze the literature read throughout this unit more effectively.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

CONTENT GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Goal 1 To develop analytical and interpretive skills in literature

Students will be able to

1. Describe what a selected literary passage means;
2. Cite similarities and differences in meaning among selected works of literature;
3. Make inferences based on information in given passage;
4. Create a title for a reading selection and provide a rationale to justify it;
5. Understand and employ literary terms and concepts in analysis and writing.

Goal 2 To develop creative, persuasive, and expository writing skills

Students will be able to

1. Develop a written persuasive essay (thesis statement, supporting reasons, and conclusion), given a topic;
2. Develop a creative short story;
3. Compare and contrast various works of literature, using an expository writing format;
4. Complete various pieces of writing using a three-phase revision process based on peer review, teacher feedback, and self-evaluation.

Goal 3 To develop linguistic competency

Students will be able to

1. Analyze the form and function of words in a given context;
2. Develop vocabulary power commensurate with reading;
3. Apply standard English usage in written and oral contexts;
4. Evaluate effective use of words, sentences, and paragraphs in context.



GOALS

CONTENT

- 1 To develop analytical and interpretive skills in literature
- 2 To develop creative, persuasive, and expository writing skills
- 3 To develop linguistic competency
- 4 To develop listening/oral communication skills

PROCESS

- 5 To develop in the language arts reasoning skills

CONCEPT

- 6 To develop an understanding of the concept of utopia in the language arts

Goal 4 To develop listening/oral communication skills

Students will be able to

1. Discriminate between informative and persuasive messages;
2. Evaluate an oral presentation;
3. Develop skills of argument formulation;
4. Organize oral presentations, using elements of reasoning as the basis.

PROCESS GOAL AND OUTCOMES

Goal 5 To develop reasoning skills in the language arts

Students will be able to

1. State a purpose for all models of communication, their own as well as those of others;
2. Define a problem, given ill-structured, complex, or technical information;
3. Formulate multiple perspectives (at least two) on a given issue;
4. State assumptions behind a line of reasoning in oral and written form;
5. Apply linguistic and literary concepts appropriately;
6. Provide evidence and data to support a claim, issue, or thesis statement;
7. Make inferences, based on evidence.
8. Draw implications for policy development or enactment based on the available data.

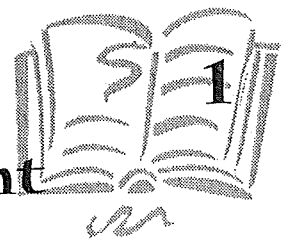
CONCEPT GOAL AND OUTCOMES

Goal 6 To understand the concept of utopia in the language arts

Students will be able to

1. Understand the meaning of utopia and man's changing ideas of the ideal;
2. Apply the concept of utopia to a wide variety of genres;
3. Categorize and evaluate types of utopia in evidence in various works.

Introduction and Pre-Assessment



CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6
X	X	X		X	X

INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSE

- ▼ To administer and discuss unit pre-assessments for literature interpretation and persuasive writing
- ▼ To develop skills in literary analysis and interpretation
- ▼ To explore new vocabulary words

ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS

1. Have students silently read *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* by Ursula K. LeGuin and take the **Pre-Assessment for Literature** (Handout 1A).
2. Have students keep their papers and the story to discuss the pre-assessment questions. Guide the discussion further with additional questions such as the following:

Literary Response and Interpretation Questions

- ❑ What is ironic in the choices the Omelas make to have no guilt and utter happiness in their city?
- ❑ How does the author establish the story's time and place?
- ❑ What is the purpose of the Festival of Summer?
- ❑ How do the citizens of Omelas respond to daily life?
- ❑ What is the social structure of Omelas like?
- ❑ Examine how the image of the child in the basement cell impacts a reader. How does the author create such a powerful image?
- ❑ Why are the "ones who walk away" different? What can we infer about these people based on their choices?

Reasoning Questions

- ❑ What hints does the author provide that the city of Omelas may not be so perfect as it seems?
- ❑ What do you think was the author's purpose in writing this story?

MATERIALS

- ✓ *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* by Ursula K. LeGuin
- ✓ Pre-Assessment for Literature (Handout 1A)
- ✓ Literary Analysis and Interpretation Scoring Rubric
- ✓ Sample Student Responses: Pre-Assessment for Literature
- ✓ Pre-Assessment for Writing (Handout 1B)
- ✓ Persuasive Writing Scoring Rubric
- ✓ Sample Student Responses: Pre-Assessment for Writing
- ✓ Vocabulary Web (Handout 1C)
- ✓ Dictionaries (Recommended Dictionary: *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (4th ed.). (2000). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.)
- ✓ Copies of *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
- ✓ Independent Reading Assignment (Handout 1D)
- ✓ Vocabulary from *Animal Farm* (Handout 1E)

- ❑ How does the concept of community apply to this story? How does the story reflect the idea of an individual's importance to society?
- ❑ Explain the statement that there is no guilt in Omelas.
- ❑ Why does the author say that the people of Omelas are not free?
- ❑ What does the author say that makes Omelas seem real or unreal to you?
- ❑ Why do you think the author titled the story the way she did? What message does the title give you about the overall story?

Utopia Questions

- ❑ What makes the city of Omelas perfect?
- ❑ How does the author develop the sense of an ideal city?
- ❑ Is achieving happiness for the majority worth the suffering of one? What message does the story give about this question?
- ❑ The author describes "strict and absolute" terms that are "the terrible justice of reality." Explain the meaning of these words.

3. Collect the **Pre-Assessment for Literature**.
4. Distribute the **Pre-Assessment for Writing** (Handout 1B). Have students complete the pre-assessment, then discuss the question. After the discussion, collect the papers.
5. Explain to students that an understanding of vocabulary is very important for an understanding of literature, as well as for one's own writing. Introduce a **Vocabulary Web**. Put students in groups of no more than four, with a dictionary available as a resource in each group. Distribute copies of a blank Vocabulary Web (Handout 1C) and ask students to write the word *exuberance* in the center. Ask students to locate the word in *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and write the sentence in which the word appears in the "Source" cell of the Vocabulary Web.
6. Have students locate the definition of *exuberance* in the dictionary and write it in the "Definition" cell. Have them use the dictionary and/or thesaurus to find synonyms and antonyms for the word to write into the appropriate cells. They may also use slang terms as synonyms. They should then add the word's part of speech to the appropriate cell.
7. Have students work through the different parts of the "Analysis" section of the web. Encourage them to use the dictionary to help them to think about the *stems* of the word, or the smaller words and pieces of words from which the larger word is made, and fill them into the appropriate cell. (This includes prefixes, suffixes, root words, etc.) Then have students locate the origin of the word (Latin, French, Greek, etc.) in the definition. For the "Word Families" cell, ask students to think of other words which use one or more of the same stems as *exuberance*.

8. Ask student groups to develop their own sentences, analogies, or other types of examples using the word for the "Example" cell.
9. Have students work in groups to complete a second web for one of the following words from *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*: *vast, archaic, dulcet, pedants, treason, banality, naïve, puritanical, languor, arcane, magnanimous, amiable, benign, rapt, imperious, melancholy, abominable, impotence, wither, paradox, brood, sniveling, vapid.*
10. Introduce students to the first Learning Centers for the unit:

LANGUAGE STUDY CENTER

This Learning Center is intended to provide students with additional opportunities to study language. A set of teacher-made task cards should be kept at the learning center with short tasks or projects for students, and the students should keep a record in a notebook or folder of task card responses. Task cards may include several activities varying in difficulty, and points or scores may be assigned accordingly if the teacher chooses. In addition, students will be working on a literary terms project that will align with the **Language Study Center**; this project will be introduced in Lesson 4. Several sample task cards are listed below:

Card 1:

Anagrams are word pairs that use all the same letters in different orders (Example: stain/satin; wolves/vowels). Make a list of ten anagram pairs, using words that are at least five letters long. Then write a sentence in which you use both words in a pair (Example: She avoided eating for the whole party, for fear of getting a stain on her satin gown.).

Card 2:

There are a few words whose multiple meanings cause the words to be, in a way, their own antonyms (Example: commencement, cleave). How many words like this can you find? Can you use both meanings of a word within a single sentence?

Card 3:

When a British speaker uses the following words, what does each word mean? Use each correctly in a sentence:

- ▼ queue
- ▼ jumper
- ▼ nappies

Find at least five other words that are used in British English but not in American English or that have different meanings in British and American English. Define the words and use them in sentences.

Card 4:

Find out what the rules are for using the words *affect* and *effect*. Select the preferred word in each of these sentences and explain your reasoning:

- ▼ One important _____ of the new class schedule was that the cafeteria was less crowded during the lunch periods.
- ▼ The governor was concerned about how the drought would _____ the state's farming community.

UNIT VOCABULARY CENTER

At this Learning Center, a list of new vocabulary words from the unit readings should be kept and regularly updated. Dictionaries and blank copies of the Vocabulary Web should be kept at the Center, as well as copies of student readings. Students visiting the Center may work alone or in small groups to develop Vocabulary Webs from unit words, either compiling individual notebooks of webs or a class notebook. This Center allows students to gain more practice with the Vocabulary Web, as regular class time will not allow all of the new words to be studied in depth.

11. Explain to students that during the unit, they will be reading some literature pieces in class and others on their own. Distribute copies of *Animal Farm* and tell students they are to read the book in time for a discussion in Lesson 7. Give students the **Independent Reading Assignment** (Handout 1D) and discuss the parts of the assignment. Distribute copies of **Vocabulary from *Animal Farm*** (Handout 1E), so that students may begin working on the vocabulary as they read. (NOTE: This vocabulary list could also be divided into two parts, with the first twenty words assigned as students read the first half of the novel, and the last twenty words as students move into the second half.)



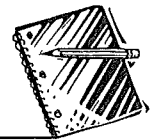
NOTES TO TEACHER

- ▼ Please send home the **Letter to Parents** with each student who is engaged in the unit.
- ▼ The pre-assessments in literature and persuasive writing serve multiple purposes. Performance on the pre-assessment should establish a baseline against which performance on the post-assessment may be compared. In addition, teachers may use information obtained from the pre-assessments to aid instructional planning, as strengths and weaknesses of students become apparent. Rubrics are provided for the scoring of the pre- and post-assessments.
- ▼ Teachers should be aware of the sensitive nature of the issues covered in many of the literature pieces of the unit. Teachers should consider their own knowledge of their students and community as they present the material of the unit.

- ▼ The Vocabulary Web model is also explained in the Implementation section of the unit, with a sample completed web. Teachers should examine vocabulary words to be assigned in order to assist students with the Vocabulary Web. Some cells of the web may not be appropriate for some words. Encourage students to keep a vocabulary section in their unit notebooks in which they may write unfamiliar words as they encounter them. They should be responsible for locating definitions for these words to help them in their understanding of reading, and they may be asked to complete Vocabulary Webs for some of the words they find. You may also find additional words throughout the unit that you wish to assign.
- ▼ You may choose to distribute all of the books students will have to read independently at the start of the unit, or stagger them throughout. The lessons which address the independent readings are Lessons 7, 10, 14, and 18. Each of those lessons contains key handouts and activities to accompany the readings, including vocabulary lists (with the exception of *Animal Farm*, for which the list is presented in this lesson), study guide questions, and special projects.

HOMework

1. In your **Response Journal**, respond to the following: Examine a time you wanted to escape a situation but ended up glad that you had to experience it.



(The **Response Journal** may be created in a variety of ways. One suggestion is to have students simply use a three ring notebook or pocket folder with notebook paper. Students may want to draw a line one-third of the way from the left edge, in order to provide room for the teacher to respond to them. A second way of handling the response journal is to use the simple composition journals that are readily available in most office supply or discount stores. Students may cut out interesting pictures, words, or phrases to decorate the cover and some inside pages to make their journals more personal. Some students may wish to cut out interesting letters to form their names to put on the cover. Using clear contact paper on the cover will make the journals last much longer. Finally, a third way to use the response journals is to make an interesting template (including the questions) from which you can copy sheets and three-hole punch them for students to keep until they are turned into the teacher for response.)

2. Begin reading *Animal Farm*.

EXTENSION

Read Shirley Jackson's story "The Lottery." Compare and contrast it with *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* according to how each story reflects ideas about utopia.

Name _____

Date _____

HANDOUT 1A



Pre-Assessment for Literature

Read the story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* carefully and answer the questions below.

1. State and explain an important theme of the story.
2. Use your own words to explain what you think the author means by the following: "They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come to see it, others are content merely to know it is there. They all know that it has to be there."
3. What does the story tell us about the concept of utopia? Use details from the story to support your response.
4. Create a new title for the story. Give support from the reading for your new title.

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LITERARY ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION SCORING RUBRIC

1. State and explain an important theme of the story.
 - 0 provides no response or a response inappropriate to the task demand
 - 2 limited, vague, inaccurate, confusing, only quotes from reading
 - 4 simplistic, literal statement; uses only part of main idea; creates title rather than main idea
 - 6 *meets expectations*: response that addresses the theme and offers support
 - 8 *exceeds expectations*: insightful response that offers fluent, substantial support

2. Use your own words to explain the meaning and significance of . . .
 - 0 provides no response or a response inappropriate to the task demand
 - 2 limited, vague, inaccurate; rewording only
 - 4 accurate but literal response or limited interpretation
 - 6 *meets expectations*: interpretive response and offers support
 - 8 *exceeds expectations*: insightful response with substantial support

3. What does the piece tell us about the concept of utopia? Use details from the story to support your response.
 - 0 provides no response or a response inappropriate to the task demand
 - 2 limited, vague, inaccurate; only quotes from story
 - 4 literal description of an example in the story or a generalization about the concept made without support from the text
 - 6 *meets expectations*: valid generalization about utopia is provided and supported with details from the text
 - 8 *exceeds expectations*: provides at least one generalization about utopia with multiple applications from text and/or with analogies to real life.

4. Create a new title for the story. Give support from the reading for your new title.
 - 0 provides no response or a response inappropriate to the task demand
 - 2 limited, vague, or title given without reasons
 - 4 appropriate but literal response with an attempt to support
 - 6 *meets expectations*: meaningful title given with appropriate support
 - 8 *exceeds expectations*: insightful title given with multiple applications from text

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

PRE-ASSESSMENT FOR LITERATURE

1. State and explain an important theme of the story.

Sample 2-point response:

- ▼ *People in Omelas keep a kid locked up.*

Sample 4-point response:

- ▼ *It's about how a city, Omelas, tries to keep their joy going by punishing a child, but not everyone understands why.*

Sample 6-point response:

- ▼ *The story shows a utopian society that doesn't really understand how cruel it is. In order to have happiness for everyone, one child has to suffer. As long as the child is in bondage, the city prospers.*

Sample 8-point response:

- ▼ *The story is about the price of being happy and perfect and whether happiness for a lot of people is worth causing the suffering of one. By talking about the child hidden in the basement and the people who go away because they can't stand the thought of it, the story is showing that accepting that kind of suffering and not taking responsibility or guilt for it is probably too high a price to pay, even for utopia. It's also saying that maybe there's no such thing as a true utopia because there will always be someone who suffers for others' happiness.*

2. Use your own words to explain what you think the author means by the following: "They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come to see it, others are content merely to know it is there. They all know that it has to be there."

Sample 2-point response:

- ▼ *Everyone knows the child is being held captive.*

Sample 4-point response:

- ▼ *The people in the town react in different ways to knowing that the child is held in the cell. Though they all know about it, some of them visit and some don't.*

Sample 6-point response:

- ▼ *All of the people in Omelas know about the child suffering. Some react by coming to see it and reminding themselves that this is keeping their lives happy, while others ignore it as long as they have their individual happiness. Everyone knows that the suffering child is the price the city pays for its joy and standard of living.*

Sample 8-point response:

- ▼ *Everyone in the town understands that the child's suffering is the cost of their utopia. Knowing about it helps to reassure them that they will keep their happiness. Some of them need to come and see it to remind themselves, even though it mostly disgusts them and they have to turn away. Others of them don't bother to come see the child because they know as long as they're happy and everything's great in town, the child must still be there. The people react in different ways, but even though they all know the child is their price, the only ones who feel responsibility are the ones who decide it's too high a price and walk away.*

3. What does the story tell us about the idea of utopia? Support with details.

Sample 2-point response:

- ▼ *The people all have a good style of living, except for the one kid.*

Sample 4-point response:

- ▼ *The people of Omelas accept the hardships of one as the price for their own personal happiness. That way they are all happy and satisfied, except for the one child.*

Sample 6-point response:

- ▼ *In order for some people to achieve what they think is a utopia or perfect society, there may end up being suffering for someone. Personal happiness is a big part of what utopia is for people, and many people will "go along" with the majority as long as they will achieve their own vision of happiness, as they did in this story.*

Sample 8-point response:

- ▼ *The story showed that there is always a price for happiness, and there is no such thing as achieving perfection without a cost. The people in Omelas didn't have anything bad happen to them, they even had victory without soldiers and without war, but there was a dark side too, the child that was hidden away. It shows that nothing in life can ever really be as easy as our ideals of utopia make it seem, and this story showed some extremes of the tragedies people are willing to accept and the prices they are willing to pay to make their own lives better.*

4. Create a title for this story. Give support from the reading for your new title.

Sample 2-point response:

- ▼ *The City of Deception.*

Sample 4-point response:

- ▼ *"The Misery Below" would be an interesting title. I think it fits the story because the people ignore what is hidden underneath the surface.*

Sample 6-point response:

- ▼ *I think a good title would be "Too High a Price?" It's a good title because it asks a question just like the story leaves a question in your mind about whether it's fair or okay to let one child suffer so that many people can be happy. It also is the question the ones who walk away are asking themselves.*

Sample 8-point response:

- ▼ *"Beneath Our Joy" would make a fitting title for the story. This hints that there is something behind the happiness of the people of Omelas. This title would also give a reference to the poor little child who is suffering so that all the other people could be happy. The title is also more mysterious and even ominous, because it makes you wonder sort of nervously about what will turn out to be beneath the wonderful images of the first part of the story.*

Name _____

Date _____



Pre-Assessment for Writing

Write a persuasive response to the question below. State your point of view, give at least three reasons with explanation to support your point of view, and write a conclusion.

Do you think the story, "The One's Who Walk Away from Omelas," should be required reading for all students in your grade?



PERSUASIVE WRITING SCORING RUBRIC

CLAIM OR OPINION

- 0 No clear position exists on the writer's assertion, preference, or view, and context does not help to clarify it.
- 2 Yes/no alone or writer's position is poorly formulated, but reader is reasonably sure what the paper is about based on context.
- 4 *meets expectations*: A clear topic sentence exists, and the reader is reasonably sure what the paper is about, based on the strength of the topic sentence alone.
- 6 *exceeds expectations*: A very clear, concise position is given, and position is elaborated with reference to reasons; multiple sentences are used to form the claim. Must include details that explain the context.

DATA OR SUPPORTING POINTS

- 0 No reasons are offered that are relevant to the claim.
- 2 One or two weak reasons are offered; the reasons are relevant to the claim.
- 4 At least two strong reasons are offered that are relevant to the claim.
- 6 *meets expectations*: At least three reasons are offered that are relevant to the claim.
- 8 *exceeds expectations*: At least three reasons are offered that are also accurate, convincing, and distinct.

ELABORATION

- 0 No elaboration is provided.
- 2 An attempt is made to elaborate at least one reason.
- 4 More than one reason is supported with relevant details.
- 6 *meets expectations*: Each of the three or more reasons provided is supported with relevant information that is clearly connected to the claim.
- 8 *exceeds expectations*: The writer explains all reasons in an effective, convincing, multi-paragraph structure.

CONCLUSION

- 0 No conclusion/closing sentence is provided.
- 2 A conclusion/closing sentence is provided.
- 4 *meets expectations*: A conclusion is provided that revisits the main ideas.
- 6 *exceeds expectations*: A strong concluding paragraph is provided that revisits and summarizes main ideas.

(Adapted from N. Burkhalter, 1995)

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES PRE-ASSESSMENT FOR WRITING

SAMPLE 1

Yes, I think it should because it's a very interesting story and people our age like that kind of thing when they read because it makes it more enjoyable. It also has some good new vocabulary for kids to learn. That's why our grade should all read this.

Score: Claim = 2 Total Score = 8
 Data = 2
 Warrant = 2
 Conclusion = 2

SAMPLE 2

No, I don't think The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas should be required reading. It's a story that has a very uncomfortable idea about the little kid being held in the cell. It also has no details of why the people in Omelas do this, other than they want their happiness. There are some people who believe this idea and could get into trouble if they tried to carry it out in real life. I also don't like science fiction stories like this.

Score: Claim = 4 Total Score = 12
 Data = 4
 Warrant = 4
 Conclusion = 0

SAMPLE 3

I think the story The Ones Who Walk Away from Omela should be read by everyone in my grade. This story really makes a person think about the price of happiness. Should one person be prepared to suffer for the good of everyone else? The story also made me learn some new ideas on writing. The author proposes questions instead of filling in all the details about this city of Omelas. This made the story intriguing and a bit tough to figure out. People my age might like trying to figure out why the people designed their city the way they did. This story would be good because it made me think about how fragile happiness can be. That's why I think that people in my grade should read this story.

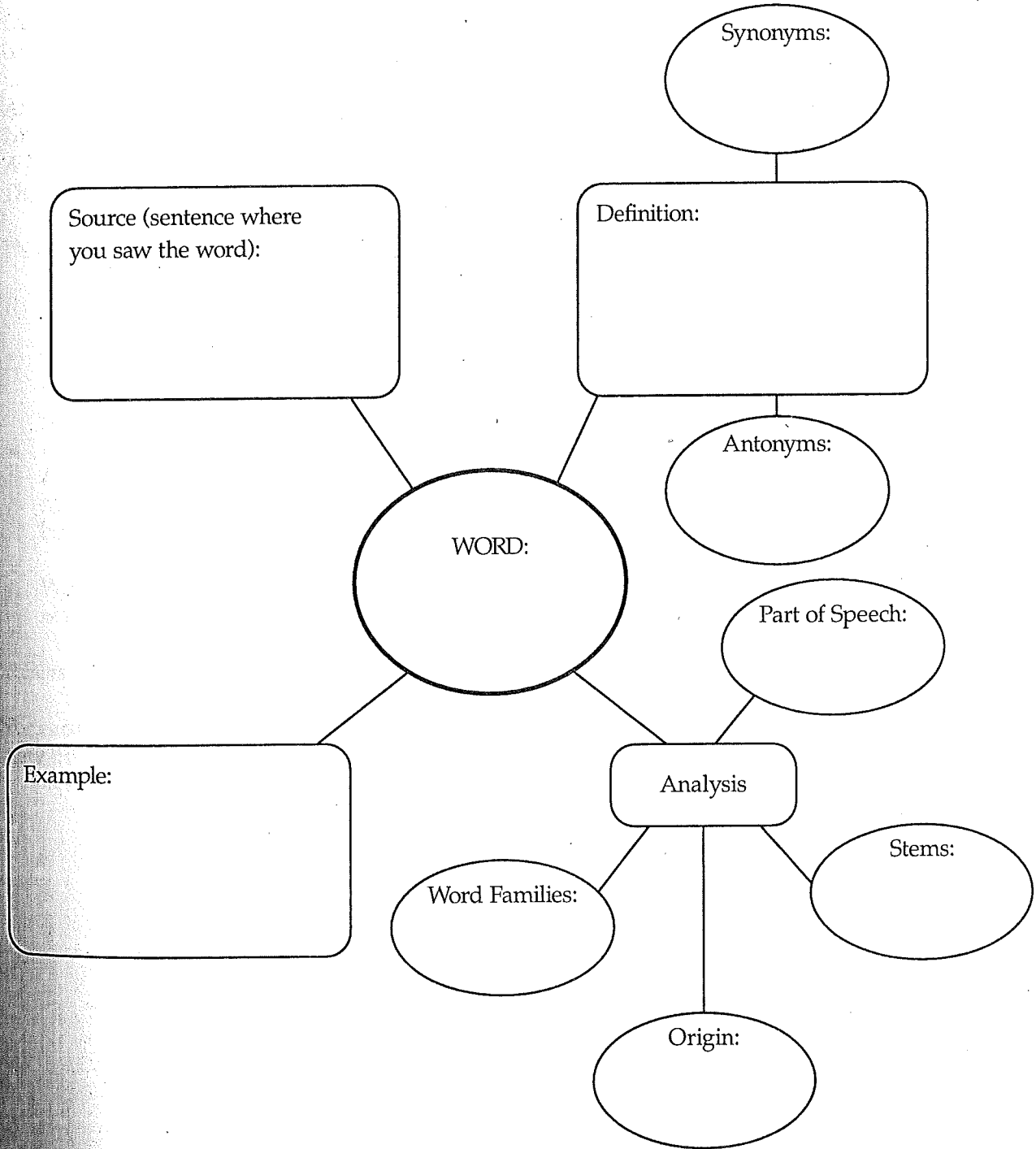
Score: Claim = 4 Total Score = 16
 Data = 6
 Warrant = 4
 Conclusion = 2

Name _____

Date _____



Vocabulary Web



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Name _____

Date _____

Independent Reading Assignment



During the unit, you will be reading several books independently and completing some activities to bring to a class discussion of the books. The books to be read independently are listed below:

- Animal Farm* by George Orwell
- Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare
- The Giver* by Lois Lowry

Please complete the following activities for each of the books you read:

1. Complete a **Literature Web** for the book (Literature Webs will be introduced in Lesson 4).
2. You will be given a list of vocabulary words that are in each work. Mark or keep a list of vocabulary words in the book which are new words for you. Make **Vocabulary Webs** for at least two of the words.
3. After approximately every 30 to 50 pages you read, stop and write an entry in a reading journal, sharing your reactions to what you are reading and your thoughts about the issues raised in the book.
4. When you have completed the book, write a synopsis of no more than 100 words that would tell a reader interested in the book why you think they should or should not read it.

Extension:

For each book, create some kind of advertisement to persuade someone to read it. You might create a new book jacket, design a newspaper advertisement, or write a review of the book.



Name _____

Date _____

HANDOUT 1E

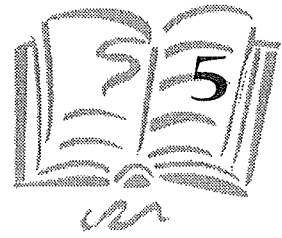


Vocabulary from *Animal Farm*

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. enmity | 21. indefatigable |
| 2. vivacious | 22. tractable |
| 3. benevolent | 23. ratify |
| 4. maxim | 24. innovation |
| 5. ignominious | 25. procure |
| 6. posthumously | 26. articulate |
| 7. seclusion | 27. repose |
| 8. pretext | 28. imposing |
| 9. aloof | 29. accord |
| 10. sordid | 30. unscathed |
| 11. capitulate | 31. impending |
| 12. incite | 32. censure |
| 13. conciliatory | 33. diligent |
| 14. taciturn | 34. intimate (v.) |
| 15. frugal | 35. malignant |
| 16. cynical | 36. morose |
| 17. tyranny | 37. tumult |
| 18. eminent/preeminent | 38. collaborate |
| 19. apathy | 39. countenance |
| 20. obstinate | 40. contemplate |



Community Service



CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6
	X		X	X	X

INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSE

- ▼ To identify and analyze a community need or problem
- ▼ To develop reasoning skills
- ▼ To develop research skills

ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS

1. Ask students to think about the reasoning behind striving for utopia. Why do people want to make their community into some kind of ideal? What are the possible positive consequences of community improvement? How does community improvement and involvement relate to the idea of utopia? Introduce Problem-Based Learning (PBL) to the students. Use Handouts 5A and 5B to develop a **Community Service Project** for your class to carry out as they work through the unit. You may wish to post this quote by Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever does."
 - ▼ As you begin PBL, compose yourself to be enthusiastic and excited about working on a real world community issue. Keep in mind that in problem-based learning, problems by nature are ill-structured and do not immediately present all the information needed to solve or respond to them. First work on an agreed upon objective that this project will go beyond fund-raising of some sort and work to allow the students to be active participants in bettering their community.
 - ▼ Set up a **Need-to-Know Board** (Handout 5C). Ask students to bring in newspaper or magazine articles of problems they see in their local community. Some students may talk with youth leaders, shelter managers, or local service agencies to obtain information of problems; these may be written on large notecards and posted as well. (Reading newspapers, contacting shelters and churches, and calling social service agencies in your town will

MATERIALS

- ✓ Community Service Project (Handout 5A)
- ✓ Structure of Problem-Based Learning (Handout 5B)
- ✓ Need-to-Know Board (Handout 5C)
- ✓ Elements of Reasoning (Handout 5D)
- ✓ Standards of Reasoning (Handout 5E)

yield a wealth of opportunities for the students to explore as a possible project.) These problems or issues can be posted in the "What We Know" column of the poster or bulletin board.

- ▼ Have students work in small groups to further explore one issue. This becomes the catalyst for the "What We Need to Know" column. Students will formulate a list of questions to post there. The next step is to find the person or people or group that holds the answer or part of the answer to those questions.
 - ▼ Continuing to work in their small groups, students explore and research to obtain answers to their questions. Students then share their problem, questions, and answers with the class. Use **Community Service Project** (Handout 5A) and **Structure of Problem-Based Learning** (Handout 5B). Encourage students to monitor their work using the following questions:
 - ❑ *Do we have enough information?*
 - ❑ *Is the information reliable?*
 - ❑ *Where does this information lead us?*
 - ❑ *What's a solution?*
 - ❑ *What solution fits best?*
 - ▼ After examining the presentations, students will discuss the ramifications of each solution and their ability to implement it. As a whole class, students will brainstorm ways in which they can carry out a community service project to work towards a solution. A plan of action should be devised and carried out, along with a timeline.
 - ▼ Remember to design an evaluation tool to assess the project upon its completion. Lesson 21 will revisit the project and allow for group evaluation of the effort.
2. Explain to students that as we approach problems in our personal lives and in the world at large, we must use our reasoning skills to think through the problem and possible solutions and implications. Introduce students to the Reasoning Model using the **Elements of Reasoning** (Handout 5D). This reasoning model is used for questioning and also will help you in completing your writing and community service. Work through an example of how the elements of reasoning can be used to analyze the following situation: *You want to set up a recycling program at your school.*
- ▼ **Purpose or Goal:** What is your purpose in setting up this program? (Examples: *to help keep landfills from filling up; to conserve raw materials such as trees.*) What is your goal in the recycling program? (Examples: *to recycle all aluminum cans generated by the soda machines; to recycle 10% of the waste products generated by the school.*)
 - ▼ **Issue or Problem:** What is the issue or problem that you are dealing with? (Example: *the school does not participate in recy-*

cling and you are concerned with the larger problem of conserving natural resources.)

- ▼ **Point of View:** What would each of the people involved think about the problem? (Examples: *You think a recycling program is important. Perhaps other students do not think it is worth the work that it will entail. Perhaps the janitors don't want to bother with separate containers for trash and recycling.*)
- ▼ **Experiences, Data, or Evidence:** What are the facts that will help you make your decision? (Examples: *How many containers will need to be purchased to collect recyclables? What will the costs be of implementing and maintaining the program? When schools in a neighboring district started recycling, they reduced their trash collection costs by 15%.*)
- ▼ **Concepts or Ideas:** What ideas are involved in this problem? (Example: *conservation of resources.*)
- ▼ **Assumptions:** What assumptions might you make? (Examples: *that recycling paper will save trees; that conservation of the environment is an important goal; that all members of the school will cooperate with recycling guidelines.*)
- ▼ **Inferences (or small conclusions):** What are the small conclusions that you make in the decision-making process based on the facts that you have? (Example: *Since other schools have experienced lower trash collection costs when recycling was started, your school can expect to see the same kinds of savings.*)
- ▼ **Implications and Consequences:** What are the consequences of recycling? (Examples: *satisfying an ethical obligation of students to help the environment; saving space in landfills.*) What are the consequences of not recycling? (Example: *all of the recyclables from the school will continue to go into landfills; they cannot be retrieved later.*)

3. Find an editorial in the newspaper. Critique it using the questions for **Standards of Reasoning** (Handout 5E).

NOTES TO TEACHER

- ▼ A variety of community service projects have worked with students. Upon reading of a woman with ten foster and adopted children losing her home to a devastating fire, students devised a plan of action to (a) gather clothing, books, toys, household items, etc. for the family; (b) hold a pitch-in dinner party with entertainment, with an admission fee of either food items, clothing, furniture, or money; (c) make encouraging cards, letters, poems, etc. throughout the school year to send the family.

Another project involved a local homeless shelter. Students learned that many of the people at the shelter needed backpacks, personal toiletry items, etc. They donated backpacks, small blankets, Ziploc bags of snacks, toiletries, socks, etc. In addition, they learned that the



shelter needed to be painted inside. They earned the money to buy the paint and supplies, plus they asked for permission to design and paint large murals in the waiting area to comfort the clientele. They obtained the permission and interviewed the director, the people at the shelter, and the families the shelter served to find out what type of mural they desired. The students then designed the murals and painted them on the walls. As a wrap-up activity, after observing that most of the food at the shelter was rather bland cafeteria food, the students interviewed residents about their favorite foods and hosted a pitch-in dinner; they served all of the people, entertained them with a program, and cleaned up the day room and kitchen as well.

A final project involved making goody bags for residents of a local nursing home, then hosting a bingo game there with prizes they had donated or gathered.

Keep in mind that the project may be very limited in time or continue throughout the unit.

- ▼ The **Elements and Standards of Reasoning** introduced in this lesson, based on Paul (1992), are also explained in the Implementation section, with a graphic organizer you may wish students to use as they work through the model around a given issue. You may wish to introduce the elements to students as a whole model or in pieces across the study of several issues.

Name _____

Date _____

HANDOUT 5A



Community Service Project

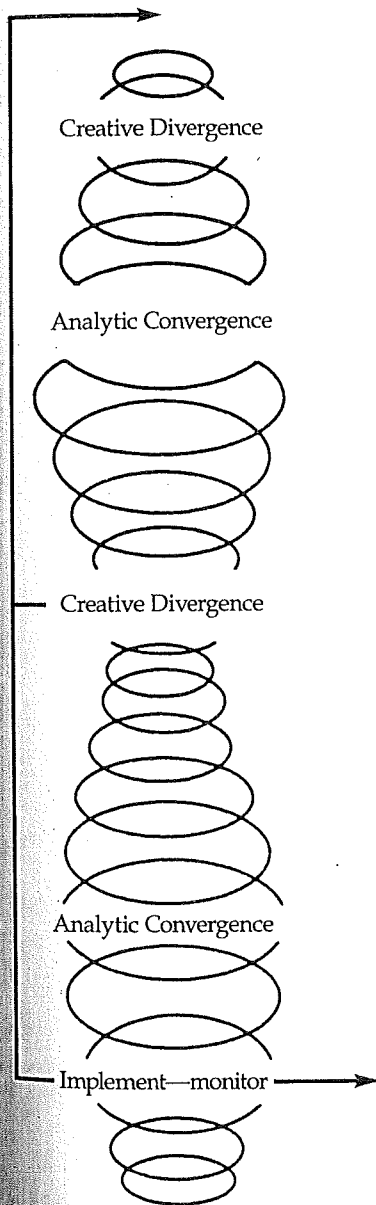
- A. Search for a problem in your community. Brainstorm ways to better the situation or solve the problem.
- B. Examine the situation and effect of implementing your solution. Keep in mind roadblocks, costs (time and money), and impact. Create a solution and formulate goals for what you hope the project will achieve.
- C. Plan out your community service project with a timeline. Design an assessment tool that matches your goals.
- D. Carry out your project.
- E. Evaluate.





Structure of Problem-Based Learning

Figure 1 Structure of Problem Movement in Problem-Based Learning: Problem Diagnosis and Solution Building.



Ill-structured problem is presented

- ▼ What is going on?
- ▼ What do we know?
- ▼ How can we find out?
- ▼ Where does the information lead us?
- ▼ Do we have enough information?
- ▼ Is the information reliable?
- ▼ What's the problem?

Problem is represented

Problem is presented

- ▼ What should we know about it?
- ▼ What do we know?
- ▼ What do we need to know?
- ▼ How can we find out?
- ▼ Do we have enough information?
- ▼ Is the information reliable?
- ▼ Where does the information lead us?
- ▼ What's a solution?

Solution(s) is/are represented

- ▼ What solution fits best?

Name _____

Date _____



Need-to-Know Board

What Do We Know?	What Do We Need to Know?	How Can We Find Out?

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Elements of Reasoning

1. Purpose or Goal

When we speak or write, it should be for a purpose. That purpose should be clear, achievable, and realistic. For example, it might be to inform, to persuade, to entertain, or to inspire.

2. Issue or Problem

When we reason, there must be some issue or question that needs to be resolved. As part of the reasoning process, we should be able to formulate the question to be answered or the issue to be addressed.

3. Point of View

We must reason from some point of view or frame of reference. If the point of view is too narrow, it may be restricted or unfair. The consideration of other points of view may sharpen or broaden our thinking.

4. Experiences, Data, or Evidence

We must have data, evidence, or experiences on which to base reasoning. Evidence is important, in order to distinguish opinions from reasons or to create a reasoned judgment. It needs to be accurate, fair, and clear to ensure good reasoning.

5. Concepts or Ideas

All reasoning uses some ideas, terms, principles, and rules. When we read and listen, we can ask ourselves, "What are the key ideas presented?" When we write and speak, we can examine and organize our thoughts around the substance of concepts and ideas.

6. Assumptions

We take some things for granted when we reason. We need to be aware of the assumptions we have made and the assumptions of others. Incorrect assumptions can be the source of faulty reasoning.

7. Inferences or Interpretations

Reasoning proceeds by steps called inferences. An inference is a small step of the mind, in which a person concludes that something is so because of something else being so or seeming to be so. We need to distinguish between the raw data of our experiences and our interpretations of those experiences (inferences). The inferences we make are heavily influenced by our points of view and our assumptions.

8. Implications and Consequences

When we reason in a certain direction, we need to consider the consequences of that direction.

When we argue and support a certain point of view, solid reasoning requires that we consider what the implications are of following that path. The ability to reason well is measured in part by an ability to understand and identify the implications and consequences of the reasoning.

Reference: Paul, R. (1992). *Critical Thinking: What Every Person Needs to Survive in a Rapidly Changing World*. Rohnert Park, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking.

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Name _____

Date _____



Standards of Reasoning

- ▼ Are the reasons *clear*?
- ▼ Is the evidence provided *correct* or *right*?
- ▼ Are *specific* reasons or examples rather than vague generalizations provided?
- ▼ Are the reasons *relevant* to the issue?
- ▼ Are the arguments and reasons *strong* and *important*?
- ▼ Does the argument adequately address *multiple points of view*?
- ▼ Is the thinking *logical*?

