



With Six Words, Tell a Life

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Seventh grade English/ Language Arts Honors and Standard Plus

Keywords: writing, characterization, six-word memoir, character analysis writing test, novel study, Instagram, reading jobs, *Forged by Fire*, *And Then There Were None*

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: This unit is created around a novel study that we complete in October. The unit was completed by the students as I was writing it. They will read *Forged by Fire* for standard plus classes and *And Then There Were None* for honors students. Students struggle with the characterization of character in a novel. They understand direct characterization because the narrator or author is telling us everything about the character, but they struggle with indirect characterization. Throughout this unit, I have come up with steps to help students figure out the characterization of a student selected character. Students will focus on finding the main idea and relating it back to the character. They will also complete a character bubble map showing the direct and indirect characterization of a self-selected character. Students will complete a character analysis writing test. To complete the unit, student will create a six-word memoir through the eyes of the character that they have been focusing on for the unit.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year in to 137 students in honors and standard plus seventh grade English/Language Arts.

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Jennifer M. Ladanyi

Rationale

As a child, writing came easy to me. So much so, I even thought about becoming a writer. I liked to write stories about dragons, horses, mermaids, and vampires. I'd like to think my specialty was write short stories. I thought I was so good that I joined a writing club where we would compete against other writers from other schools. After my first writing club competition, I learned that I was not the best writer in our school. In fact, it was probably a good chance that I was the worst on the team.

Yes, my ideas were imaginative but it is safe to say they were too imaginative. They were so creative that grammar and spelling went out the window and not to mention the writing we had to generate was timed. Timed? Oh for the love of god! How can a creative person, or any person, create a masterpiece in 20 to 30 minutes? Thinking we were being judged on creativity of the ideas and not mechanics, I knew when I received my scores, I was done. I just didn't realize how bad the comments from the judges would be. This was something that stuck with me for a long time.

My perception of what a good writer was dramatically changed from that point on. I became a very technical writer and used little imagination. I thought that is what teachers wanted and it seemed to work. I understood the ever changing MLA format and used it to my advantage. For some reason, I had a grasp of MLA very quickly, I don't know why. I just did. It wasn't until I was in college that I relearned how to write again. My professor took the time to help me understand that it is okay to use my creative ideas combine with formal writing, in fact that was what a good writer does. We spent many office hours together to break what my high school English teachers taught me.

The reason why I decided to take the seminar, *Writing with Power: No Fear Here*, is because I did not want my students to go through the same thing I went through. If I can help one student understand how to combine both creativity and formal writing, then I helped them to be a better writer for the future.

Background

I teach seventh grade English/Language Arts at Bailey Middle School in Cornelius, North Carolina. Our school is a part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District which is located in Mecklenburg County in the city of Charlotte. We are one of the largest and fastest growing middle schools in the area. We have a growing population of around 1, 600 students with 77% being Caucasian, 10% African-American, 15% Hispanic, 3% two or more races, 2% Asian, .5% Native American and .5% Pacific Islander.ⁱ

Bailey Middle School has exceed high growth for the 2015-2016 school year. Our school performance grade was a score of 82.5 %, which is an A in letter grade.ⁱⁱ Our school district has the same literacy goal that is embedded at every school in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School

District. The program is entitled North Star Literacy which means literacy for every child in every subject. Other than English/Language Arts, all core subjects must include literacy in their daily lessons. Myself with the other English/Language Arts teachers work together with the Social Studies team to include and support each other with different reading strategies and writing assignments, such as research papers and the research process.

My daily schedule consists of two honors and two standard plus classes. The honors classes consist students who are primarily at or above grade level. The honors students typically score a four or five on the End of Grade (EOG) test. Many of these students are reading at a high school level and are taking honors math or math I classes. The standard plus classes consist of a mixture of students who are at or below grade level. These students are taking standard math classes. In each of my standard plus classes, I have two or three 504 plan students. In one standard plus class, I have ten ESL and ELL students. I have one student from Saudi Arabia but may have lived in the United Kingdom for some time. I have another student from France who can speak some English but is still learning English. I have five Hispanic students who range from proficient English speakers and reader to no English at all. I also have two Russian students who speak English but struggle with putting their thought into English. My Vietnamese ESL student struggles some with English because many English words we use are not in Vietnamese, which is same problem with my other ESL students. I do have an ESL teacher that comes in once a week to help the ESL and ELL students.

Content Background

Many students have a fear of writing, and it's not a hidden secret. Whether it is a short story or research essay, students freeze up, develop writer's block, and procrastinate even longer to do it. Then, time's up, the writing assignment is due, and students are now faced with a decision. They need to decide not completing the assignment, turning in late or submitting something that is not their best work. With the textbook that we use, I try to help the students understand that writing is a living thing. Meaning that it is okay to change their essay, poem, or whatever you are writing. Writing is similar to being a human. People change and make mistakes which is why we complete many rough drafts. We do the same thing with our writing. We change topics and make mistakes and revise to make it better. Just as in life, we try something, like running, either we like it and continue to do it, not like and stop doing it, or we kind of like it and figure out a way to like it. With this unit, I want to help students get over some of that fear of writing and have them realize that they can write well too.

So, how are we going to take the fear out of writing? Is there a way to do that? I like to give the students examples of writers talking about how they did not like writing at first. In our seminar, we read an article entitled "To Write a Great Essay, Think and Care Deeply." This essay opened up my eyes to some ways on how to take that fear out of writing. The author, Joe Fassler, worked with a nonfiction writer, Lucas Mann, to discuss the topic of an essayist worrying about if he has anything interesting to say. That is one of the fears my students have with their writing. They think what they have to say is not interesting enough or funny enough. Fassler states, "When he struggles with self-doubt, questioning the literary value of his own, lived experience, Mann turns to J.R. Ackerley's *My Dog Tulip*, an unabashed, lyric tribute to a well-loved German Shepard."ⁱⁱⁱ The fear in this is the self-doubt and questioning the value of what the author has to say. This is something all writers face and fear on a regular basis. As we

discussed this essay in seminar, people are afraid of their own truths that may come out and do not want to be judged by them. Many admitted that they feel like their life examples are not good enough. That is a tough fear to break in general!

Again, we come back to the question how do we break that fear? Before we start the lessons and activities in this unit, the students will write a personal narrative essay. They are given a quote by Eleanor Roosevelt that deals with the idea of a choice in their life. Kids like to talk about themselves. So, one would think this is an easy assessment of their knowledge of writing and being able to make a connection with a quote. The students, however, struggle with this. They come up with every excuse on why they cannot write the personal narrative. The first draft the students write is for themselves.^{iv} This a chance for them to get all that they have to say about the choice they made out on their paper. Then, students work with different parts of their personal narrative essay to edit and revise. We take it section by section to revise and edit. With this, some students begin to see it is fine to make mistakes and change things in their essay. Then comes the second draft where students begin to focus on the audience. The second draft is now for other people.^v This is where the fear starts to come back. Is what I wrote interesting? Will people like after they read my personal narrative? Lucas Mann discusses this fear in relationship to *My Dog Tulip*. With the topic choice for the students, he had a fear that write nonfiction wasn't good enough. He thought people will question and criticize the fact that he is writing boring nonfiction instead of fun fiction.^{vi} Even though his focus is different than my students, the feelings are still mutual. Here again is where we talk about writing being a living organism that is always changing.

Even if we treat writing as living and breathing thing, people still fear writing. In our seventh grade curriculum, we complete many different types of essays. We start off the year with a personal narrative. Students are given a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt that deals with a choice made they have had to make in their life. This is where we really hit the writing process. We work through the drafting process, revising and editing, and finally publication. We use an excerpt from a memoir by Walter Dean Meyers, an excerpt from an autobiography by Zora Neale Hurston, an excerpt from a novel by Chris Crutcher, and a student example of a personal narrative. With each excerpt, we focus on a different part of the writing process. To explore what a personal narrative is we read *from Staying Fat for Sarah Brynes* by Chris Crutcher. Even though this example is from a fictional novel, Crutcher likes to place his characters in realistic situations where the characters have to make realistic choices about their life.^{vii} As we read the excerpt, students are reflecting on their own personal narrative. They are looking their selected situation and choice in that situation. Some students decide to change their personal narrative at this point because either they have thought of a better choice they had to make or their situation and choice do not make sense. Even with the example, so students are afraid to make any changes to their narrative. They think it is fine the way it is, which is fine. But the reality is they are afraid to make changes and show their insecurities about writing.

We move into the excerpt *from Dust Tracks on the Road* by Zora Neale Hurston. With this autobiography, we focus on the incident, response and reflection.^{viii} After finishing reading and annotating the excerpt, the students go back into their own personal narrative and look at the incident. Then they focus on how they responded to it. Lastly, the students try to make sense of their reflection. For many of them, they skipped this part. With standard plus students, this is where they begin to understand that this is the part where they talk about what they learned from their choices that they made. Honors students are so to the point on what they learned from their choice that they do not feel like they need to explain themselves. They think they did reflected in the response which they may have. So for them, they have to go back into their essay and separate the response from the reflection. Then expand on the reflection.

Before we started *from Bad Boy*, we discussed the difference between an autobiography and memoir. We discussed that an autobiography is about the whole life of a person and that they wrote it themselves. We talked about how a memoir is about a moment in time, but only one moment or memory and nothing else more. Like an autobiography, a memoir is written by the person with that memory. Then we related it to the personal narratives that the students wrote because they wrote about a specific choice that they made and how they handled it in their life.

Next, we shift into how language is used and how it can transform the writer and reader. This is where we use *from Bad Boy* by Walter Dean Myers. This is an excerpt from his memoir by the same title. Walter Dean Myers takes us back to a time from when he was in sixth grade struggling to be a good student.^{ix} We focused on the figurative language and sensory details that he uses in this memoir. Again, this is where the students struggle. We identify and analyze how he uses it in the text then we apply it to our own personal narrative. I have students pull out a tell line out of their personal narratives. Then I have them turn it into a show paragraph using figurative language and sensory details.

The last thing that we read is a student example of a personal narrative. With this, we use it re-enforce how write an introduction, conclusion, and how the incident, response, reflection should flow in their personal narrative. We even go through and grade each part. I also have the students try to revise the parts that they gave the lowest grade too. This helps them to see not only what I am looking for but how revising helps their own papers.

The reason why I like to start with a personal narrative is because helps with teaching the writing process, but because of the way it helps students to lose some of that fear of writing. That fear always seems to come back though. My goal with the six-word unit is help students understand that they can say so much with so few words, the transformation the characters go through when you read and write about them, and to lessen that fear of writing.

A six-word memoir is basically a memoir but only using six words total. The story of how a six-word memoir came to be was during an interview, a reporter gave Ernest Hemingway a challenge. He asked Hemingway if he can a memoir in six words. Hemingway accepted the challenge. He wrote, "For Sale: Baby Shoes, Never Worn."^x The final product for this unit will be the students writing a six-word memoir based off one the characters from their novel study using the novel *Forged by Fire* or *And Then There Were None*. The students will step into the shoes of a character from the novel. They will examine internal and external characteristics to come up with six words that would describe the character.

With both novels, students will select a character to focus on. They will examine the transformation of that character through the novel. With the standard plus classes, their novel only has six characters, and one dies fairly early in the novel. I will assign students a character to analyze. I will also use data from the previous writing assignment, personal narrative essay, and MAP testing data to form the character groups. For the honors classes, I will let them pick the character they would like to analyze because there are many characters, but we will have to double up on all the characters and triple up on a few of them because my honors class size is very large.

As we read the novels, the students will focus on the transformation each character goes through in the novel. Plus, they will relate it to how they have transformed so far in their life. Student will annotate the characterization of their character. Students will not focus on the physical characteristics of their character, even though I know those can change too, but that's not going to help them to understand how a write creates an internal transformation in their character. Students will focus on if it is a round, flat, dynamic or static character. They will look at the dialogue that their selected character has with others in the story, as well as what others say about them.

As we start wrapping up the last few chapters of the novel, students will begin writing their character analysis of their novel character. The question I want them to focus on is how has your changed character throughout the novel? So here again, the fear is back. So, again as a teacher, how do we get rid of that fear? And if we can't get rid of it, how do we lessen the fear of writing?

This unit will focus on seventh grade, standard plus and honors English/Language Arts students. It can be adapted for honors students and many other grade levels. It can also work social studies, history, art, music, and science. If a teacher is studying an individuals or a group of individuals, this unit may work for that. Students will write a six-word memoir based on the characterization of a character from the novel *Forged by Fire* by Sharon Draper for standard plus students and *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie.

Teaching Strategies

As I stated before, I teach English/Language Arts all day, every day. I have the same students all year. I plan on teaching this unit in October when we start our novel studies with the students. The overall theme of our *Spring Board* textbook for seventh grade is Choices. For this unit, I want to incorporate the theme of choices with the characters in the novels because every character has made a choice that has affected the outcome of their life. We will look at what kinds of choices do people and how it transformed.

One of the reading skills that students have been struggling with is making inferences. We started off very different this year than in the past. As a seventh grade English/Language Arts team, we began with reciprocal reading and annotating the text. Using these two strategies repetitively, has begun to help students with making inferences to fiction and nonfiction text.

Another literary skill that students are struggling with this year is vocabulary and context clues. According to MAP testing data, the lowest scoring category that the students were tested was vocabulary. Our school uses MAP testing three times a year to measure improvement in skills or see what skills our students are still having a hard time with. The way the MAP test works is that it is an online, reading comprehension test. After the students answer a few questions in a row correctly, the questions and the reading passages get harder. The results from the test give us a good idea on what skills the students are struggling with. We use this to form small groups for remediation, specific literary skills mini lessons, seating charts, and reading/writing partners. So to help with vocabulary and context clues, I have started to include identifying unfamiliar words when we annotate a text. After the word has been identified as unfamiliar, then go back and use the text to come up with a meaning of that word. Once we are done annotating, the students and I go back to the identified unfamiliar words and look up the meaning of the word. We compare our definition to the dictionary and see how close we are. Sometimes, we are right on, but other times we are off.

This year, to support other core subject areas, the seventh grade English/Language Arts team has devoted one day to nonfiction text. Students are provided with an article from the week that they have to annotate and answer questions about the article. Many of our article come Vale Middle School. We used the Kelly Gallagher strategy of annotating and questioning the text. In the upcoming quarters, students will be given the task to find their own articles, bring them in, and lead the class discuss on their topic. My hope is that down the road students will use

annotating strategies for the rest of their educational careers and become better nonfiction readers.

Another skills that we work on is making connections between text to text and text to current events. In September, my students completed some notes and a foldable on the elements of fiction. In the honors classes, we talked about how we take effective notes. In the standard plus classes, they were provided with guided notes. Guided notes provide the student with all the notes, but key words are missing. As the students are following along with the notes, they are writing in the key words form the presentation. All classes did a wonderful job with the notes. But then it came time for them to add in some examples to characterization, point of view, and conflict, the students struggled. Either they couldn't think of examples from texts or movies, or they just wanted to share out examples even though they were wrong. Many students, especially standard plus classes, do not read a lot so it's for them to provide a text to text example. With this unit, to help improve this skill, we will read a text then part of their homework will be to find a current event or another piece of fiction that relates to the topic of discussion.

The strategies that I will use to facilitate instructions and learning include but are not limited to:

- Flipped Classroom
- Annotating text
- Cornell notes (honors)
- Guided notes (standard plus)
- Web quest or blend space
- Venn diagram
- Chunking the text
- Gallery Walk
- TAG –peer editing and revising
- Analyzing literary elements
- SOAPStone and THIEVES
- Socratic seminar
- Bubble mapping
- Think-pair-share^{xi}

Students in my class use a three ring interactive binder to help keep their notes, vocabulary, and classwork organized. Most of the work in their binders is completed individually and a few things are completed with a partner. Their binders are set up in five sections: warm ups, vocabulary, notes and reference, classwork and homework, and test and quizzes. The goal with the binder is to help the students gain organization skills. Many students lack the organizational

skills needed for seventh grade. So I like to give them little steps that will help them write throughout the school year. This year we are creating inactive binders to give students a more hands on learning approach with the writing that they will be doing in this unit.

Objectives/Standards

Bailey Middle School English/Language Arts teachers follow the North Carolina Common Core Standards. The common core standards that are implementing in this unit are from the reading standards for Literature, informal text and writing. The reading common core standards that are used as follows:

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text. (RL1.1 and RI1.1)
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. (RL1.2 and RI1.2)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. (RL2.4 and RI2.4)
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. (RL2.5)
- Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events. (RI1.3)
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. (RI2.6)
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums. (RI3.7)

The writing common core standards used are as follow:

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (W1.2)
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sentences. (W2.3)
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W3.4)
- Develop and strength writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or typing a new approach. (W3.5)
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others. (W3.6)
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (W4.9)^{xii}

Materials students will need in order to be successful in this unit

- Copies of the novel *Forged by Fire* by Sharon Draper or *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie
- Copies of varies excerpts from Springboard textbook or online access of the textbook
- Butcher paper, makers, post its, highlighters, 3x5 note cards, pens or pencils

- Instagram template
- Reading log hand out
- Chromebooks (any laptop computer or iPad is fine)
- Varies suggested online videos

Activities

Day one- For a warm up, students will define novel vocabulary words. I gave them a list of 16 words to define. Students will put the definitions in their own words. Then we will begin the novel unit by previewing the novel. Students will examine the front and back covers of the book. They will make predictions based on what they see from the covers. Then students will read a few pages from the first chapter. They will make a prediction on what will happen to the main character based on what they read in those first few chapters. The students will add on to their predictions from the covers. This will be done in their classwork section of their binders. After students have made their predictions, they will talk to their shoulder buddy about their predictions. While students are talking to their shoulder buddies, students will have the option to add to their original predictions or leave it as is. After talking to their shoulder buddies, we will view a novel trailer. Students will compare their predictions to the novel trailer. Then I will ask students to volunteer to share their predictions with the class. We will have a discussion on the shared predictions and discuss how the novel covers and first few pages helped students to come up with their predictions.

Next, we will begin reading the first chapter of the novel as a class. Personally, I like to read the first chapter of the novel with the students. The reason why I like to read the first chapter or two to the students is so the students can hear the pronunciation of the character names, hear the writing style of the author, and be able to have a conversation about the very serious issues that present themselves in chapter one, especially with *Forged by Fire*. The serious issues in chapter one of *Forged by Fire* include: Gerald's mother drug abuse, the relationships his mother has, and how she raises Gerald.¹ As a class, we have a discussion on how serious the problems are that Gerald is facing at three years old. We start this novel around the same time the health classes are talking about drug and alcohol abuse, and luckily this year, when we started the novel, the health classes had police officers in their classes talking about drug and alcohol abuse and the effects of it. So, the students already knew that severity of the subject matter.

As we read the chapter, I have the student highlight things that are repeated, or archetypes. As we begin highlighting our archetypes, students want to highlight names or objects that the narrator is using or describing. So we stop on a couple of phrases that are repeated, highlight the phrase each time we read it, then discuss the importance of the archetype and why the author would repeat it.

¹ Draper, Sharon. *Forged by Fire*.

Before class wraps up for the day, I share with the students their reading calendar for the novel and their nightly reading and reading log assignment. The reading of the novel is done at primarily at home. Thursdays and Fridays are devoted to the novel in class.

Day two- I will introduce an Instagram reading log for the week. It will be due on Friday. For this assignment, we will focus on the main idea of each chapter. One of the standards that the students struggled with this year was the main idea of a text and finding textual evidence to support the reason of the main idea in a text. We were able to get this data from a recent MAP assessment that was given before we started the novel.

The purpose of this assignment is to help students explain the main idea and show how the main idea relates to the main characters of the novel. I gave the students an Instagram template that I found online through a Google search.^{xiii} Since we read chapter one together, we will complete chapter one main idea Instagram together. Students will draw the main idea of the chapter and then create a hashtag of the chapter's main idea. A hashtag is very short statement about the picture. It is like a caption for a picture but it has a number sign in front of the caption and no spaces between the words. It usually relates to something that is trending in the social media.

Before we start drawing and discussing the main idea of chapter one, I gave them a writing prompt. The writing prompt is what the main idea of the first chapter is and what examples from the novel support the main idea. I gave the students ten minutes to write their responses in the warm up section of their binders. After students have completed their writing prompt, I gave them three minutes to discuss their answers in their small groups. Then we come back together as a class and discuss what the main idea of the chapter is. Many students said that the main idea of the first chapter was Gerald likes to play with the lighter, likes fire, or Gerald starts a fire. Those are not the main idea, but those events support the main idea. So, we go back and look at what those events have in common and the one thing that they have in common is Monique leaves Gerald alone at home when he does these things. So then we come up with don't leave a child home alone.

Next, the students find a scene in the book that supports the main idea. The scene that they picked Gerald hiding behind the couch as the curtain is on fire. To model what they need to do on their Instagram template, I drew the scene that the students told on the board. Then I created a hashtag from the main idea that they told me. Here is the hashtag #dontleavekidshomealone. Then students had to create two more hashtags that support the relationship of the main idea to the main character. After students completed chapter one, they moved onto completing a main idea Instagram for chapter two. They read chapter two for homework the night before. They complete six more main idea Instagrams that will be due at the end of the week. The students will complete two chapters of reading and two main idea Instagrams each night for the rest of the week.

Day three and four- Students will continue to read their novels at home and complete their Instagrams. Standard plus students are reading two chapters a night because their chapters are

shorter. Honors students will read one chapter a night and complete one main idea Instagram a night.

Day five- For a warm up, students will write a sentence using the novel vocabulary words. They will complete sentences for the first eight vocabulary words. Before students turn in their main idea Instagrams, they will share one of their favorite main idea Instagrams that they created with their small groups. Then the students will turn it in.

Students will receive a character analysis chart to complete as they read the novel. The purpose of the character analysis chart is to help students keep the characters in order and to use a review for their character analysis writing test. The top of the character chart analysis list all the characters from the novel. On the left side of the character chart, students have to examine and record their responses for the following questions or statements: dislikes and likes of each character, what does he/she do, what is in his/her heart, how does he/she feel, what does he/she think about, and what is his/her motto. Students are focusing on the indirect and direct characterization of each character. I explain to the students that indirect characterization are things that the character, narrator, or author does not directly come out and say. As a student, you have to be a detective and make inferences on what the characters emotions and true thoughts are. Using what the students have read for the week, I model how to find indirect characterization using their novels. I go over with them the question of what is in his/her heart and how does he/she feel because those questions deal with indirect characterization. For *Forged by Fire*, we begin with Aunt Queen. We know that Aunt Queen loves Gerald even though it is not directly stated. So as a class, we look for clues that help us to infer how she feels about Gerald. We came up with she feels sorry for Gerald and Angel, and she wants desperately to help and love them. So the students fill in the chart with the answer.

Then we move onto direct characterization. I explain to the students that direct characterization is something that is directly stated by the author, narrator, or the character themselves. For direct characterization on their character chart, we look at dislikes/likes for Aunt Queen. As a class, we go back into the novel and pull out things that the narrator states that she likes. Aunt Queen loves Gerald and helping others. Then we look at what she dislikes. Aunt Queen dislikes how Monique treats Gerald and she dislikes Jordan. Again, the students write the answers in their character analysis chart. I give the students the rest of the class period to work on their character analysis chart. The only row I tell students not to work on is what his /her motto is. As we continue onward in the unit, they will need to learn more about the characters before they can come up with a motto that describes the characters. The motto will be the six-word memoir.

Day six- Students receive their new reading chapters for the week. We also begin a new reading log. The reading calendar informs the students on what chapters they need to read each night for their literature circle jobs. I have students complete a signpost job. This comes from *Notice and Note* by Kylene Beers and Robert Probst. The jobs are aha moments, contrast and contradiction, memory moments, tough questions, words of the wiser, and again and again.^{xiv} After the literature circle groups are assigned, I give the students their signpost jobs to start. We will walk through how to pick out the details that would go on each signpost. Next, we do a quick power

point on what the signpost are. We complete one signpost job with a chapter from last week so students can see what I am looking and how the signpost are supposed to be completed. Each student focuses on their assigned job for the practice signpost. Then with the last ten minutes of class, students talk about what they found from completing their signpost, or reading job. They do this in their small groups.

Day seven, eight, and nine- students will continue to read at home and work on their signpost or reading jobs.

Day ten- Students will have a ten question quiz over what they read for the past two weeks for a warm up. It is a short answer quiz. Once students have turned in the quiz, they will log into Google Classroom and complete a bubble map on a character from the novel. The students may select any character from the novel to complete the activity. This activity also helps the students to focus on one character as oppose to five or more depending on the novel that they are reading. The bubble map has some of the same questions as the character analysis chart but adds in the question of what do others say about the character. For the bubble map, students must use direct quotes and/or paraphrases from the novel. They must also cite what page and chapter they found them on.

Once students have completed the quiz, started working on the bubble map, or completed the bubble map and quiz, we will move into a lesson on how to have a conversation using the novel and any type of writing. I will introduce the first skill of conversation as elaborating and clarifying. As a class, we discuss what it means to elaborate on something and what it means to clarify something. Then I give them a list of response starters. The ones that I used are: "I think it means," "In other words," "More specifically it is ...because...", "An analogy might be," "It is important because," and "It affects us by." I also give them a list of question starters that students can use to ask questions about the reading or something that they are confused on. I explained to them that these question starters can be used with anything. For example, if they are confused on a set of directions that I give them, then they can use one these question starters to ask a question. The question starters are: "Can you elaborate on," "What do you mean by," "Can you clarify the part about," "Tell me more about," "How is it that important," "I understand the point about...but I want to know more about," and "Can you be more specific."

The next thing we do is I model for the students how the conversations with the novel should look and sound like. I ask for a volunteer to read me one of their chapters from their reading job for the week. The student reads me their reading job, for example again and again. After they are done reading their response to the reading job, I then ask them a question about their response using the provided question and response starters. For example, can you elaborate on why you think the author used that symbol again and again? They use a response starter to answer the question. Then I would ask them another question using the question starters and they would reply back using a response starter.

After watching the modeling of the assignment, I ask if there is anything that needs to be elaborated on or clarified. If not, then the students begin their conversations about the novel. This

will take about 15 minutes. To wrap up the class, students pick new reading jobs for the next week. They also write a self-reflection on novel conversation.

Day eleven, twelve, and thirteen- students continue reading their class novel and working on their reading job.

Day fourteen- Students will focus on characterization of their selected character from their bubble map. Students will create a character collage. The character collage will help students to see who their character is. This will also help them to pull out textual evidence from the novel that will help them on their character analysis test and their six-word memoir of their selected character.

In the character collage, students will again focus on direct and indirect characterization, plus they will focus on static and dynamic characterization, symbols that represent the selected character, and three adjectives that describe the character in the beginning, middle, and end of the novel. The students will create this without using technology. They may look up pictures to help them draw, but the assignment is to be completed on paper and be neat and colorful. For the indirect and direct characterization, students must cite where they found the examples and include a picture. Using the three adjectives that they selected for their character, they will determine if their selected character is static or dynamic. Then they will explain why the character is static or dynamic. I will explain to them that static characters do not change throughout the novel. They stay the same. But dynamic characters change throughout the novel. So their adjectives must reflect if their selected character is static or dynamic. This will take the students one class period and a half to complete.

Day fifteen- Students will be given 20 minutes to complete and turn in their character collages. Then we will move into conversation skills. We review the skill from the previous week which was elaborate and clarify. Then we move into our discussion on the conversation skill of support ideas with examples. In their writing and speaking, this is something that the students struggle with and it shows in their assessments. We start our conversation about the skill on how you may see response starters and question starters in other classes like social studies when they are looking at primary and secondary texts and in language arts with everything that they read. Just like in day ten, I give them a list of response starters and questions starters. Then I model with the students how to use the conversation skill of supporting ideas with examples. For the next 15 minutes, students have a conversation using their reading jobs to help guide them. At the end of the discussion, students select their new reading jobs for the last week of reading the novel.

Day sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen- Students will wrap up reading the novel and complete their reading jobs.

Day nineteen- Review for writing test. I will give student the test question ahead of time. Students will write down quotes and paraphrases to help them answer the test question. They will be given a 3 x 5 card that they can write their information down and use on the test. The test question will be: What choices did you selected character make throughout the novel? Is this character static or dynamic? Round or flat? Is this character an archetype or much more complex and unique? How does the use of direct and indirect characterization help us to see the changes

in your selected character? Overall, what is the author's purpose for creating this precise character for the novel, such as developing a theme or presenting a life lesson? Students will be given an outline template for the test. I will go through how to pull out examples, explain the examples, and how to fill out the outline. For the standard plus students, I will provide sentence starters that why they can focus on providing good examples and explanations. The students must use an example in each body paragraph to explain the answers to the questions. Also for the standard plus students, I will give students an example of a particularly completed outline. Students can find it in Google Classroom.

Day twenty and twenty-one- To wrap up our novel study, students will write a six-word memoir based of the characterization of their selected character from the start of this unit. Before we write a six-word memoir, students will view a two-three minutes video created by Smith Magazine.^{xv} The video gives examples on how to write a six-word memoir. Students will then refer back to their character analysis chart that they have been adding to as they read the novel. Students can also view their character collages to help them as well. Next, we will view a video entitled *Tips for Writing a 6 Word Memoir*. As students view the video on how to start writing a six-word memoir, I will stop the video and allow them time to complete the steps of the memoir writing process. I will also complete each step on the board so together we can talk through the process. Students will jot down words or phrases that describe the character. Then from those words students will narrow it down to ten. Then narrow it down again to six.^{xvi} From those six words, students will need to come up with a memoir that describes the character. For example for Angel from *Forged by Fire*, her six-word memoir is dance and music is the world. The two things that Angel loves the most in her world are dance and music. So for Angel, the student can take the two things that mean the world to her come up with a memoir that describes her.

Appendix 1: North Carolina Common Core Standards

Reading Common Core Standards

The reading common core standards are used in this unit. We used RL 1.1 to cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. This will be used in the annotating of the text. Students will determine a theme or central idea of the text and analyze its development over the course of the text. RL1.2 and RI1.2 is used to support analyzing illustrations and dialogue within the text.

With the added use of vocabulary, RL2.4 and RI2.4, students will determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices with meaning and tone.

As students read the novel, an article and a poem, students will compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. By using the standard RL2.5, students will create an Instagram between characters, tone, mood, and setting.

Again as students read the novel, article and poem, students will analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events. With this standard, RI1.3, students will be making connections with current events.

In order to complete the unit, students will determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. By using standard RI2.6, students will be able to write dialogue and create illustrations from a different point of view.

With incorporating RI3.7, students will evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums. Students will reflect on using traditional text and use different strategies to close read the novel, article and poem.

Writing Common Core Standards

The writing common core standards used are to support the development of the unit. Students will use W1.2 to write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. The activity for this will include Instagram, article responses, and code of ethics for heroes writing assessment, and the writing process.

The use of quick writes will support W2.3 where students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sentences.

This standard, W3.4, supports the students in producing a clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. This will be done in the code of ethics for heroes writing assessment.

With the use of standard W3.5, students will develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and trying a new approach. Again this will be used code of ethics for heroes writing assessment.

This standard, W3.6, will use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others. This will be used with the Instagram assignment and code of ethics for heroes writing assessment.

As we read the novel, article and poem, students will use W4.9. They will draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research in all their writing and class discussions.

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Notes

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