



***Who is Father Time?
Introducing Time as a Character
In The Night Circus***

by M. Amanda Soesbee, 2018 CTI Fellow
North Mecklenburg High School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
English II Honors/IBMYP
(International Baccalaureate - Middle Years Programme)

Keywords: critical analysis, literary analysis, reading comprehension, character/characterization, personification, point of view, perception, perspective, author's purpose, fantasy, archetype, setting

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

Synopsis: In 10th grade English (English II), the major focus as outlined by the state curriculum is the End of Course Test, which requires students to call upon advanced reading comprehension skills. The test includes informational texts, poetry, and fiction, and most questions are based on literary elements. Students have to know how to apply the literary skills they have learned, often in combination, to a variety of texts. In the MYP (International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme, which consists of years 4 & 5, or grades 9 & 10) curriculum, we also have an important global aspect in each of our units of study. Students are encouraged to think about how the texts, characters, themes, etc. that they study influence and are influenced by the world in which they live. In simpler terms, we encourage the study of literature to extend beyond the classroom, cross-curricularly and globally. In the CTI seminar "It's About Time," we are exploring how time is depicted through science, culture, and creative works as well as how time is connected to and moves through space. In this curriculum unit, I will introduce to students the idea of Time being personified as a "living" character in various literary works, including the novel The Night Circus, and ask them to examine how changing Time could alter the work itself.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 25 students in English II MYP (IB Middle Years Program).

I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

“The way we perceive time shapes how we perceive the world around us.”

~Dr. Matthew DeForrest

“The most difficult thing to read is time...maybe because it changes so many things.”

~Isobel, The Night Circus

Introduction

Rationale

Because of the state-mandated focus on the End-of-Course (EOC) test for 10th grade English, it isn't often that teachers of that course get to veer far from the state objectives or go beyond what the boundaries of the test allow. We have to find innovative ways to introduce topics that are related to the subject matter but may not be specifically part of the written state standards. The focus in an EOC course, as in many data-driven courses, is not only for students to reach proficiency, but also to raise the growth level of each student. While always a necessary challenge, this can be especially daunting for teachers of higher level courses where students are already measuring higher than the “average” or “normal” curve for their grade level. Growth still needs to happen in order to benefit the students and give them the best education possible. Teachers of academically gifted students in English classes should purposefully and carefully choose rich texts, should plan with vertical alignment in mind, should consistently ask high level questions, and should strive to stretch their curriculum for the students. I like to ask my students, “What next,” or “Why,” or “So what,” even if they've provided a correct response. In this unit on Time as a character, that's what I'm hoping to help students do for themselves while reading. It's already part of the curriculum that, for instance, students analyze a character and the character's affect on the text as a whole. But, what if the character is imaginary? What if Time becomes a character who challenges students to experience the text in a different way? My end goal is for students not only to confidently analyze or review a text, but also to think of it in a different realm completely.

I've chosen The Night Circus as the main text for this unit for several reasons. One, it's not commonly taught in most curriculums and therefore will provide an academic work will be new for most students, providing a “cold read,” whether you choose to use an excerpt or the whole novel. Two, the plot structure, setting, and characters of The Night Circus are all complicated, which will help provide challenging, rigorous text study for students. Three, because there is a dominant, complex clock in the setting of the circus, this novel fits well with my unit topic of Time showing itself as a feature character.

Background

North Mecklenburg, a Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District high school, is situated in northern Mecklenburg county in Huntersville, NC. It is a 66 year old school steeped in tradition and rich in history. However, most students who attend North Meck for the past four or five years are from the nearby north Charlotte area as the CMS boundary lines dictate. North Meck families are predominantly from low to middle class socioeconomic backgrounds, and our free and reduced lunch rate is approximately 55%. North Meck also houses three magnet programs: International Baccalaureate, Career and Technical Education, and World Languages. Our school

follows the Common Core State Standards and the NC Department of Instruction standards. New standards for ELA were adopted for the 2018-2019 school year. Student population is approximately 2300, grades 9-12. My English II MYP class is comprised of 24 students and meets during the second instructional block of the day on alternating (A/B) days. Students are African-American, Caucasian, Middle Eastern, and Hispanic.

Last year, North Meck was reported as having a score of C in the state of NC's rankings. According to my test students' scores from 2017-2018 and according to the new formula designed by the state, I demonstrated -.02% growth but exceeded expectations in achieving proficiency. My English II team intends to demonstrate forward momentum this year with a school-wide focus on data-driven instruction and writing via the program ThinkCERCA, adopted by CMS. Our school-wide goal is to increase the growth measure across the board by 10%. This particular curriculum unit I am presenting here is less driven by data than the ones our English II team currently uses, but it is in line with the IB/MYP curriculum and therefore appropriate for MYP classes.

Structure

Within the English II IB/MYP curriculum, we teach four major units, one per quarter, each based on an overarching key concept. Within those, we design mini-units and daily lessons around related ideas within each key concept. My unit will be worked into the key concepts of units one and two; I'll teach the idea of Time being an influential character with several works throughout both units, using The Night Circus as a transitional text from unit one to unit two. This unit plan will show texts for both of my major units for quarters one and two, but will only have specific lessons for the texts leading up to and including The Night Circus.

Quarter 1

Key Concept: Ethics

Related Concepts: purpose, theme, character, setting

Texts:

Novels - (Summer Reading - student choice) Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe or The Queen of Water by Laura Resau and Maria Virginia Farinango; banned book (novel that has been challenged or banned in the US – student choice)

Short Stories - "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell; "An Ethical Dilemma of a Sandwich Down the Pants" by Kelly Shriver; "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut; "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hearst

Nonfiction - "If Not Threats of War or Sanctions Then What?" by Alan Greenblatt (from CommonLit)

Poems - "Traveling Through the Dark" by William Stafford; "The Second Coming" by William Butler Yeats

*novel - The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern

Quarter 2

Key Concept: Global Perspectives

Related Concepts: point of view, character, conflict

Texts:

Novel - (continuation of banned book – student choice); continuation of The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern

Short Stories: “The Sniper” by Liam O’Flaherty; “Desiree’s Baby” by Kate Chopin; “The Interlopers” by Saki

Nonfiction: excerpts from The Fabric of the Cosmos by Brian Greene (parts II & V)

Poems - “There Will Come Soft Rains” by Ray Bradbury; “This is Just to Say” by William Carlos Williams

Supplemental Readings

The texts listed here provide extra reading related to the unit content in some way. Anyone teaching this unit can use these as needed in daily lessons, for homework, for accelerated learners, or for extra practice. In English II, the EOC test includes fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Many of the supplemental texts I’ve included are non-fiction, which is often under-emphasized in our curriculum. A link to each text is provided at the end of this unit.

1. “A Kingdom on Wheels: The Hidden World That Made the Circus Happen” by Camila Domonoske for NPR. (nonfiction, informational text)
2. “Types of Watch Movements” from Wixon Jewelers (nonfiction, informational text)
3. “Sonnet VII: How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth” by John Milton (poetry, sonnet)
 - a. Analysis of Milton’s “Sonnet VII”
4. “On Time” by John Milton (poetry)
5. “Beating Time (Father, That Is)” by John Rockwell for the NY Times (nonfiction, human interest)
6. “The Economic Case for Letting Teenagers Sleep a Little Later” by Aaron E. Carroll for the NY Times. (nonfiction, argumentative/persuasive)
7. “Why Space and Time Might Be an Illusion” by George Musser for Huffington Post (science, opinion piece)

State Objectives

I have selected one strand from the Common Core State standards: English Language Arts Standards for Writing from which to pull my unit objectives. The major activity of my mini-unit will use, alone or in combination, these standards to give focus to the lessons.

READING - Key Ideas and Details:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](#)

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

READING - Craft and Structure:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6](#)

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

READING - Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7](#)

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

International Baccalaureate Objectives

In the next few years, North Meck is moving towards a whole-school International Baccalaureate model. Therefore, I'm relying heavily on the IB/MYP style of unit planning for this unit. It is a big part of my teaching philosophy that the IB/MYP way of teaching is not only appropriate but also quite beneficial for all students. An MYP curriculum unit is designed around a key concept, and students should see how each lesson within the unit is reflective of the unit's Statement of Inquiry.

Unit 1: Ethics: An awareness of characters' points of view and settings shape an understanding of an individual's purpose and theme and guide a reader to recognize how differences impact fair, ethical decisions.

Unit 2: Global Perspectives: Differences in perspectives can be reflected in conflict between characters.

Based on these, my unit will have an Inquiry Statement as well: *Time, whether chronological or circular, intertwines with a text as if it were a character and therefore influences how a reader views and accepts the text as a whole.*

International Baccalaureate Assessment Guide:

From the IB/MYP Language and Literature guide, four criterion are used as end goal guiding objectives for unit planning. They are: A-Analyzing, B-Organizing, C-Producing Text, and D-Using Language. From these criterion, I have selected the following strands for this unit:

A - Analyzing: Through the study of language and literature, students are enabled to deconstruct texts in order to identify their essential elements and their meaning. Analyzing involves demonstrating an understanding of the creator's choices, the relationships between the various components of a text and between texts, and making inferences about how an audience responds to a text (strand i), as well as the creator's purpose for producing text (strand ii). Students should be able to use the text to support their personal responses and ideas (strand iii). Literacy and critical literacy are lifelong skills; engaging with texts requires students to think critically and show awareness of, and an ability to reflect on, different perspectives through their interpretations of the text (strand iv).

- i. analyse the content, context, language, structure, technique and style of text(s) and the relationship among texts
- ii. analyse the effects of the creator's choices on an audience
- iii. justify opinions and ideas, using examples, explanations and terminology
- iv. evaluate similarities and differences by connecting features across and within genres and texts.

C - Producing Texts: Students will produce written and spoken text, focusing on the creative process itself and on the understanding of the connection between the creator *of visual and written texts* and their audience. In exploring and appreciating new and changing perspectives and ideas, they will develop the ability to make choices aimed at producing texts that affect both the creator and the audience.

- i. produce texts that demonstrate insight, imagination and sensitivity while exploring and reflecting critically on new perspectives and ideas arising from personal engagement with the creative process
- ii. make stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating awareness of impact on an audience
- iii. select relevant details and examples to develop ideas.

These strands best exemplify the goals I'm trying to help students reach throughout this unit. The language for students will be from the IB/MYP curriculum as I will also use rubrics from that curriculum to assess student work.

Essential Questions

EQs are prevalent in most lesson plan formats because they drive inquiry in the daily lessons. EQs are meant to start with recall/review, then develop into thought-provoking questions that hopefully lead to higher-level thinking from students. Listed below are several examples of EQs for this unit. They are designed based on the CCSS, and could be intertwined and used several times, depending on the texts selected.

- What textual elements do authors and readers use to reveal the personalities and motivations of a character or characters in a text?
- What is the difference between primary (major) and secondary (minor) characters, and what roles do each play in a text?
- What are the different ways time is established and/or measured in literature, and what are the signifiers for those ways?
- Is it bothersome for readers when time is not linear in a text?
- How does the setting (time and place) shape the reader's interpretation of the text?
- What is the purpose of an author going back and forth in time with each chapter or section of a text?
- How does setting, specifically time frame, have an effect on conflict?
- How does a cultural time frame have an effect on a text or on the reader?
- How does a shift in structure (time frame) reveal conflict throughout a text?

Strategies/Lessons

- I. *Paideia Seminar* - for use with the poem "Traveling Through the Dark"
- A. Warm Up: In your notebooks, do a free association write on the words 'machine,' 'nature,' 'travel,' and 'time.' (Free association write means that students are allowed to jot down whatever comes to mind. The writing does not have to be organized, and the students do not need to worry about "right or wrong.") Do not share yet. Allow 5-6 minutes for writing.
- B. Guided Practice: Distribute copies of the poem. Ask students what they think it is going to be about. Ask them to look at the structure and the title, particularly the words 'traveling' and 'dark.' Allow free-response answers, acknowledging all opinions. Read the poem aloud to the class; ask students to letter the stanzas (A-E) and number the lines within each stanza (1-4). Discuss any unknown vocabulary. *Depending on the level of your students, you can turn the vocabulary into a mini-lesson if you choose. Words to consider for ESL/ELL students: swerve, "large in the belly," fawn, purred, glare.*
- C. Discussion from warm-up.
1. Share thoughts from free association writing.
 2. Relate warm-up discussion to the poem: Why does the time of day matter? What is the difference between human and nature in this poem? What do you think the main idea is?
- D. Independent Practice: Have students read the poem again, this time silently. After reading, have students make margin notes beside each stanza: 1 - a word or two summarizing or reacting to the main idea of each stanza, and 2 - an observation about the style or literary strategy of the author in each stanza. Then, ask students to put a star beside the one line or phrase they connected with or reacted to the most as they read.

E. Seminar: Begin with a Round Robin in which each student reads his/her starred line. Then, allow for open discussion according to group goals. As Facilitator, point out which lines students mentioned most. Ask thought-provoking questions and allow time for responses.

1. How would you describe the speaker in this poem?
2. What patterns emerge in this poem?
3. What decision would you have made if you were in the speaker's situation?
4. Which lines or phrases depict "man" or "machine?" Which depict "nature," and which show "time?"

F. Closing: Have students do a two-part writing.

1. Write a self-assessment of your personal seminar participation and goals.
2. Respond to these questions: "What if you knew the speaker was a hunter? What if you knew it was a woman? What if you knew he/she was a park ranger? What if the poem had happened in the daylight rather than the dark? Does any of that matter? Does the conflict change if the characters or time frame changes?"

II. *Short Story Analysis/Annotation* - for use with "The Scarlet Ibis"

A. Warm-Up Day 1: On an index card, answer the following questions; use direct or indirect evidence to support your answer - How does an author use symbols and archetypes to help readers connect to the story? What are some different symbols or archetypes that could represent time, specifically the passage of time?

B. Guided Practice: Distribute copies of the story. Read the title - ask for volunteers to discuss "scarlet" (red) as an archetype (danger, blood, love, passion, death...) and to guess what an ibis is. As a class, make predictions as to what the story might be about. (Maybe the ibis dies; maybe there's someone in danger; Maybe someone loses the person they love; etc.) Read the first paragraph aloud. Stop to annotate:

1. What archetypes can you find? (summer, autumn, [bleeding] tree, garden, brown, purple, graveyard) Discuss. How does this change your prediction for the story, if at all?
2. What references to time are in paragraph 1? (seasons, summer, autumn, "been born," five o'clocks, "marked time," dead) What do these references suggest about the story? (Possible discussions - Most of the time references hint to the end of a life or the end of something. If there's an end, then there had to have been a beginning - what could that have been? Is the author going to tell a story backwards? Are we going to experience a flashback in the story, and if so, how does that alter the structure for the reader?) *Again, if necessary, insert a vocabulary lesson for your students.*

C. Independent Practice: Either independently or with a reading partner, continue reading and annotating the story. Stop at the story break that begins with "Once I had succeeded..."

D. Warm-Up Day 2: In your notebook, answer the following question: How important is it to the story that the narrator is the older brother and Doodle is younger? Turn & Talk with a partner about sibling relationships and the roles of older and younger siblings. Share out with the class. (Possible responses may include the importance of the older sibling acting as a role model, the younger sibling learning from the older, parents putting more pressure on one sibling or the other, etc. Point out to students that birth order is related to time, and that sibling relationships change over time. What ‘season’ of life are the brothers in, and how are they being affected by that time of life? Students could mark the time frame in between the brothers’ ages, discuss how the narrator’s life time thus far has been “normal” while Doodle is on “borrowed time” since he wasn’t supposed to live, etc.)

E. Finish the story in small groups. *If you have not discussed timelines in short stories previously, or if students need a review, insert a mini-lesson on timelines and plot. Note the differences between linear and circular time as well as how a story’s plot is structured around time.* Then, complete a circular timeline of the events of the story. Note how the difference in ages of the brothers drives different events in the plot. (For instance: When does the narrator [older brother] realize Doodle is “all there?” How much time passes before the narrator want to teach Doodle to walk? How long does it take for the older brother to grow tired and irritated with his little brother?) Display the timelines in the classroom.

Mini Writing Assessment - before beginning The Night Circus

Choose a narrator, either the speaker in “Traveling Through the Dark” or the older brother in “The Scarlet Ibis,” and trace their journey through time. Begin BEFORE the opening of the text. Think about who the person is; where would he/she be, what would he/she be doing, what kind of life does he/she have, how does he/she live out each day, etc. Then include the time frame of the text. Discuss the character’s personality and motivations as he (or she, if you make the poem’s narrator a woman), moves through the text and interacts with the time frame given by the author. Finally, lead the reader through the narrator’s life in the time immediately following the close of the text. What happens next? How does his/ her life change? Does life move slowly or speed up? How is the narrator’s future affected by the time frame of the text?

III. *Novel Study Reading Folder* - The Night Circus

A. Have students create Reading Folder for the novel. (see Appendix A)

1. List characters inside Reading Folder (I use post-it notes):

a. Front: Hector/Prospero, Celia Bowen, Chandresh Le Fevre, ‘Man in the Grey Suit,’ no-name boy (Marco), Bailey, Caroline, Herr Theissen

b. Back (circus members): Ana, Ethan, Burgess Sisters, Tsukiko, Widget & Poppet, Isobel

c. As we read, make notes on each character. Include any relevant quotes by or about each person.

2. Back cover of Reading Folder: (see Appendix B) Circular timeline -

Because the story is told in a non-linear format, shifting from present to past and back again, the reader can get “lost in time,” so to speak. Use a double-circle to keep up with events as they happen on the pages and in the plot.

Notice where times cross. For instance, since the circus performers age more slowly than other people, how and when might their stories cross with what’s

going on in the world outside of the circus? Also, since some of the performers and circus creators can manipulate time, how are the visitors to the circus and the readers of the novel affected by that?

3. Cornell Notes Charts: Complete a reading chart (see Appendix C) for each reading section. Keep the charts in your Reading Folder. On each chart, you'll provide your analysis and reaction(s) to each reading section.

Reading Schedule/Dates	Part/Pages	Key Notes/Passages
	I - pp. 7-58	introduction of the “game” (p. 23) and “players” (pp. 17-24; 28-35)
	I - pp. 59-116	“Horology” - pp. 87-90 - detailed description of magical clock (*will be used for final assessment)
	II - pp. 119-193	Opening Night (3 parts) - several different perspectives from characters - pp. 119-135
	II - pp. 194-293	Delayed aging of circus performers; Celia & Isobel; Hall of Mirrors; Bailey & Isobel; color archetypes vs. B/W; fortune telling
	III - pp. 297-354	13 year anniversary (why 13?); Marco & Celia - conflict of love or game; the Labryinth
	III - pp. 355-392	Bailey invited to join the circus; murders; more Marco & Celia
	IV - pp. 395-443	True meaning of the “game;” meaning of “reveur”
	IV - pp. 444-487	regrets; aftermath; Bailey saves the circus
	V - pp. 489-512	wrapping up loose ends; what happens next

(See Appendix D for a student example of the reading chart and an option for character notes.)

B. Read “Anticipation” (pp. 1-6) of the novel as a class. Discussion points:

1. color archetypes - Why only black, white, & grey?
2. vague time frame - “nightfall to dawn” - How does this set up the idea that time might be fluid in this novel?
3. How does the author use diction to build suspense?
4. last two lines - repetition of the word “Now” - Is this an instruction or a demand or a suggestion?

C. Discussion Questions: Refer to Reading Schedule - incorporate these discussion questions when appropriate; use for whole group discussion, writing prompts, or small group turn and talk discussions after which groups can share their thoughts.

1. How does the setting of the circus change based on perspective? From the outside, it's full of enchantment and seems delightful, but from the inside it's much more sinister. Discuss the setting as the characters see it and as the reader experiences it.
2. Discuss the ideas of good vs. evil and free will vs. being bound. Which characters in the novel represent these ideas?
3. What is the author's purpose in providing detailed descriptions of the circus in between the novel's chapters? Does it help the reader to experience the circus in present time, as if you're visiting it now?
4. The novel opens with a quote from Oscar Wilde: "A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world." How is this sentiment explored throughout the novel, and could Time be represented through the moonlight and dawn? Who in the novel is a dreamer, and what is his/her punishment for being so?
5. The narrative of the novel shifts from present to past, frequently changing perspective. How effective was this method in regards to revealing conflict(s) throughout the novel?
6. Chandresh is portrayed as a brilliant, creative perfectionist at the beginning of the novel, yet he slowly unravels as the competition advances. Is he a puppet of the game, only used for the venue he provides, or do his contributions run deeper than just a setting? What factors contribute to the unraveling of his character? How is he affected by Time?
7. Celia emphasizes that keeping the circus controlled is a matter of "balance." Marco suggests that the competition is not like a chess game, but rather a balancing of scales. However, both the competition and the circus get disordered at times, leaving both physical and emotional casualties in the wake. Do the readers or characters ever truly experience "balance" in the circus or in the novel, or are both just pendulums constantly swinging from one extreme to the next? Does the circus clock affect the balance?
8. Which character relationships in the novel, particularly within the circus, are healthy and beneficial, even familial, and which are manipulative and selfish?
9. Connecting to your studies on ethics and morals, how do you view the morality of the circus in regards to the performers and developers being unknowing pawns in Celia and Marco's competition? Do Celia and Marco owe an explanation to anyone? Is it immoral to involve the others if they are unaware?

10. It is ironic that Hector lectures Celia about remaining independent and not interfering with her partner, but ultimately, Hector largely influences the outcome of the competition. What is his role in determining the final fate, and where does that fate fall in the circular timeline of the plot?
11. Poppet and Widget are especially affected by the lighting of the bonfire at the beginning of the circus. How does the bonfire serve as an archetype, and how important is it in the timeline of the traveling circus? How crucial are the characters' special gifts to the success of the circus?
12. Celia tells Bailey that he is "not destined or chosen" to be the next proprietor of the circus. He is simply "in the right place at the right time...and care[s] enough to do what needs to be done." Do you agree? Is Bailey truly special and chosen for this role, or is it a simple act of fate? Does being in the right location in space and time simultaneously ever really happen by chance, and did it happen to Bailey?
13. Many of the characters are aware that the circus has made a profound but inexplicable change in their lives, but choose not to question or explore the depths of these changes. Herr Thiessen confirms that, "I prefer to remain unenlightened, to better appreciate the dark." Do you agree with him, or with the other characters who choose to ignore the changes in their lives? Are there inherent dangers that accompany purposeful ignorance? On the other hand, what dangers are present when ignorance is not chosen? Is one choice better or safer than the other? What current, global connections can you make to this idea?
14. At the closing of the novel, readers are led to believe that the circus is still traveling because of the business card Bailey provides. Knowing the impact the circus has had on Bailey, and how time has affected the circus and those involved in it, how do you think the circus would fare in the future under Bailey's control? Would the circus need to evolve to suit each generation, or is it distinctive enough to transcend time?
15. As a reader, what was your favorite part of the circus? Which character would you most want to meet, and which tent would you most want to visit? How do you think the bonfire, or the clock, or the magic in general would affect you?

IV. *Socratic Seminar* - for use after Parts I, II, and III of The Night Circus

- A. Pre-seminar homework: Students should prepare 6-8 open-ended discussion questions based on their notes charts from their Reading Folders.
- B. Select a Discussion Leader for each seminar. Seminars should be student-driven, as was the Paideia Seminar from the beginning of the unit. The difference here is that students allow the discussion to grow beyond the text, making connections to other texts, other curriculums, and other cultures. The purpose is for students to show they understand the text by delving deeper into what they think the author's intentions were with the choices she made. Focus on author's purpose in connection with any other literary element, topic, or theme introduced in the discussion.

C. Allow approximately 30 minutes for each seminar. *A fish-bowl arrangement can be used for differentiation if necessary. Students in the inner circle hold the dialogue, and students on the outer circle take notes for the class to use. The students on the outer circle also write questions or comments for their inner circle classmates to vocalize if they choose.* During the seminar, the teacher should clarify any questions students have, and redirect the conversation when necessary. It's also helpful to take notes on the students' discussion topics.

D. Teacher led reflection: "What I Heard Was..." - Review the seminar discussion for students. Point out the major ideas discussed. Review any questions or concerns from the seminar or selected chunk of reading. Close the reflection by having students predict where the story is going next. What direction might the story take? What might happen to or with the characters? How might Time drive the plot?

Final Assessment

Part I:

From the slow aging of the circus performers to the birth of the twins to the symbolic clock, time is both manipulated and fated in the circus. Using the circus clock - commissioned by Ethan Barris and crafted by Herr Thiessen - as your inspiration, design a clock of your own that represents the "circus" or "game" that is your life. Choose a major element of your life on which to focus - family, school, a passion, etc. - and design your clock for that focus.

You will need a written description and physical representation of the final product. The written description does not have to be in a formal essay; rather, it should be a narrative in which you speak directly to your audience and invite them into your life through this magical clock that controls the selected focus of your life. Also, incorporate the clock from the novel as a point of reference. Use textual evidence where applicable.

Ideas for the physical representation include but aren't limited to:

- a craft model built of whatever items you have around the house
- a painting
- a chalk/pencil drawing
- an old clock that you tear apart and repurpose
- a 3D image designed on the computer

Remember that the circus clock was designed to be "dreamlike," so yours should also reflect an element of fantasy. As you design your clock, answer the following questions:

1. Where does time start and stop in your design? Why? Is it a purposeful choice?
2. How is time marked with your clock? Why? Is it linear? Circular? Reversible? Can you travel back and forth? Is it a 12 hour mark? 24? Less/more?
3. What special functions and controls does your clock have? Why do those things matter?
4. Are there points where time stops or slows down? Where & why? How does that affect the world around you?
5. Is there a scene playing, or being represented, in your clock? If so, what? Why? Are there characters or scenarios that repeat?

Part II:

Using your own opinion as well as the novel as support, discuss how time acts as a character in the novel The Night Circus. You may draw upon other readings, either from class or from your own research, for support as well. How might the game, or the fate of several characters, played out differently had time not been a driving factor? This piece of writing should be in a formal essay and should reflect the Statement of Inquiry for this unit of study: *Time, whether chronological or circular, intertwines with a text as if it were a character and therefore influences how a reader views and accepts the text as a whole.*

MYP Assessment Scoring Guide

Rubric for Part I - Criterion A: Analysing - Students should be able to:

1. analyse the content, context, language, structure, technique and style of text(s) and the relationship among texts
2. analyse the effects of the creator's choices on an audience

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL	LEVEL DESCRIPTOR
0 1–2	<p>The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.</p> <p>The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. provides limited analysis of the content, context, language, structure, technique and style of text(s) <i>and visuals</i> and the relationship among texts/<i>visuals</i> 2. provides limited analysis of the effects of the creator's choices on an audience 3. rarely justifies opinions and ideas with examples or explanations; uses little or no terminology 4. evaluates few similarities and differences by making minimal connections in features across and within genres and texts/<i>visuals</i>.
3–4	<p>The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. provides adequate analysis of the content, context, language, structure, technique and style of text(s) <i>and visuals</i> and the relationship among texts/<i>visuals</i> 2. provides adequate analysis of the effects of the creator's choices on an audience 3. justifies opinions and ideas with some examples and explanations, though this may not be consistent; uses some terminology 4. evaluates some similarities and differences by making adequate connections in features across and within genres and texts/<i>visuals</i>.
5–6	<p>The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. competently analyses the content, context, language, structure, technique, style of text(s) <i>and visuals</i> and the relationship among texts/<i>visuals</i> 2. competently analyses the effects of the creator's choices on an audience 3. sufficiently justifies opinions and ideas with examples and explanations; uses accurate terminology 4. evaluates similarities and differences by making substantial connections in features across and within genres and texts/<i>visuals</i>.
7–8	<p>The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. provides perceptive analysis of the content, context, language, structure, technique, style of text(s) <i>and visuals</i> and the relationship among texts/<i>visuals</i> 2. perceptively analyses the effects of the creator's choices on an audience 3. gives detailed justification of opinions and ideas with a range of examples, and thorough explanations; uses accurate terminology 4. perceptively compares and contrasts by making extensive connections in features across and within genres and texts/<i>visuals</i>.

Rubric for Part II - Criterion C: Producing text - Students should be able to:

1. produce texts that demonstrate insight, imagination and sensitivity *relating to written and visual texts* while exploring and reflecting critically on new perspectives and ideas arising from personal engagement with the creative process
2. make stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating awareness of impact on an audience

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL	LEVEL DESCRIPTOR
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1–2	<p>The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. produces texts that demonstrate limited personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates a limited degree of insight, imagination and sensitivity and minimal exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas 2. makes minimal stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating limited awareness of impact on an audience 3. selects few relevant details and examples to develop ideas.
3–4	<p>The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. produces texts that demonstrate adequate personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates some insight, imagination and sensitivity and some exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas 2. makes some stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating adequate awareness of impact on an audience 3. selects some relevant details and examples to develop ideas.
5–6	<p>The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. produces texts that demonstrate considerable personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates considerable insight, imagination and sensitivity and substantial exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas 2. makes thoughtful stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating good awareness of impact on an audience 3. selects sufficient relevant details and examples to develop ideas.
7–8	<p>The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. produces texts that demonstrate a high degree of personal engagement with the creative process; demonstrates a high degree of insight, imagination and sensitivity and perceptive exploration of, and critical reflection on, new perspectives and ideas 2. makes perceptive stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating good awareness of impact on an audience 3. selects extensive relevant details and examples to develop ideas with precision.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

I have selected one strand from the Common Core State standards: English Language Arts Standards for Writing from which to pull my unit objectives. The major activity of my mini-unit will use, alone or in combination, these standards to give focus to the lessons.

READING - Key Ideas and Details:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1](#)

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

READING - Craft and Structure:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6](#)

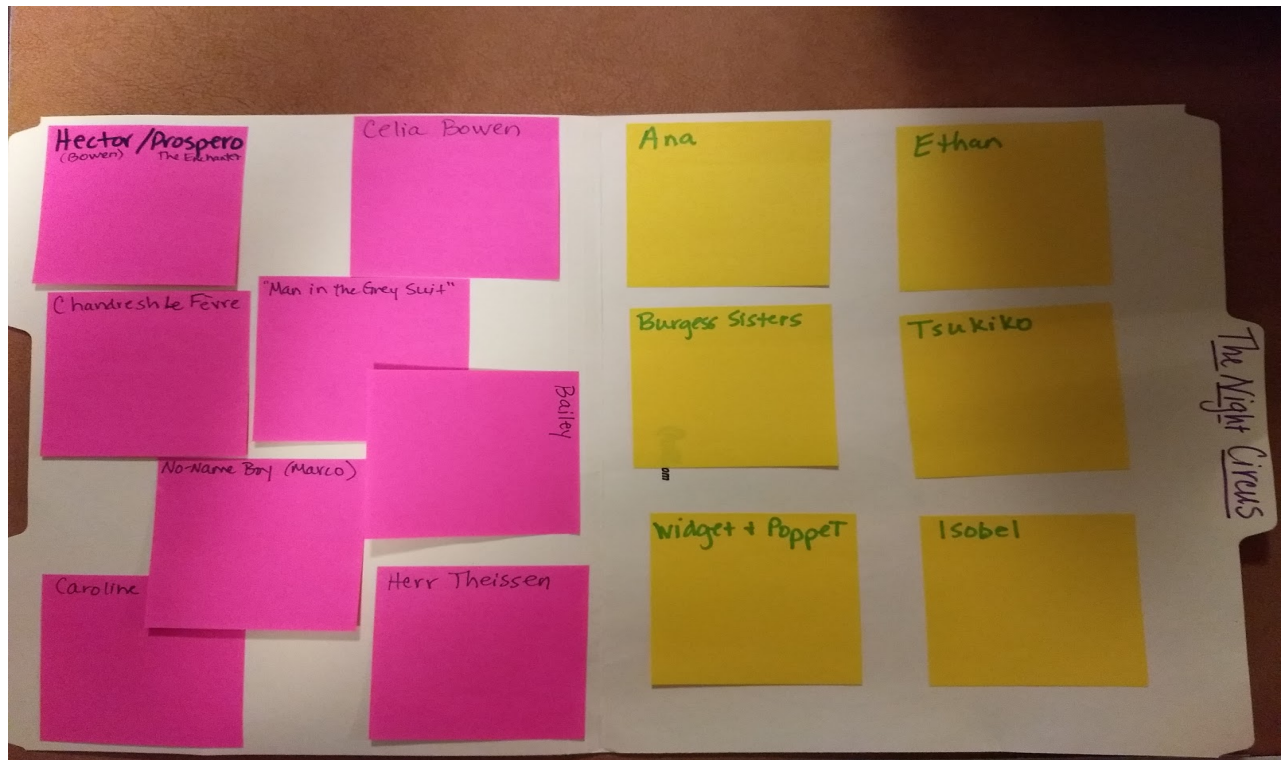
Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

READING - Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

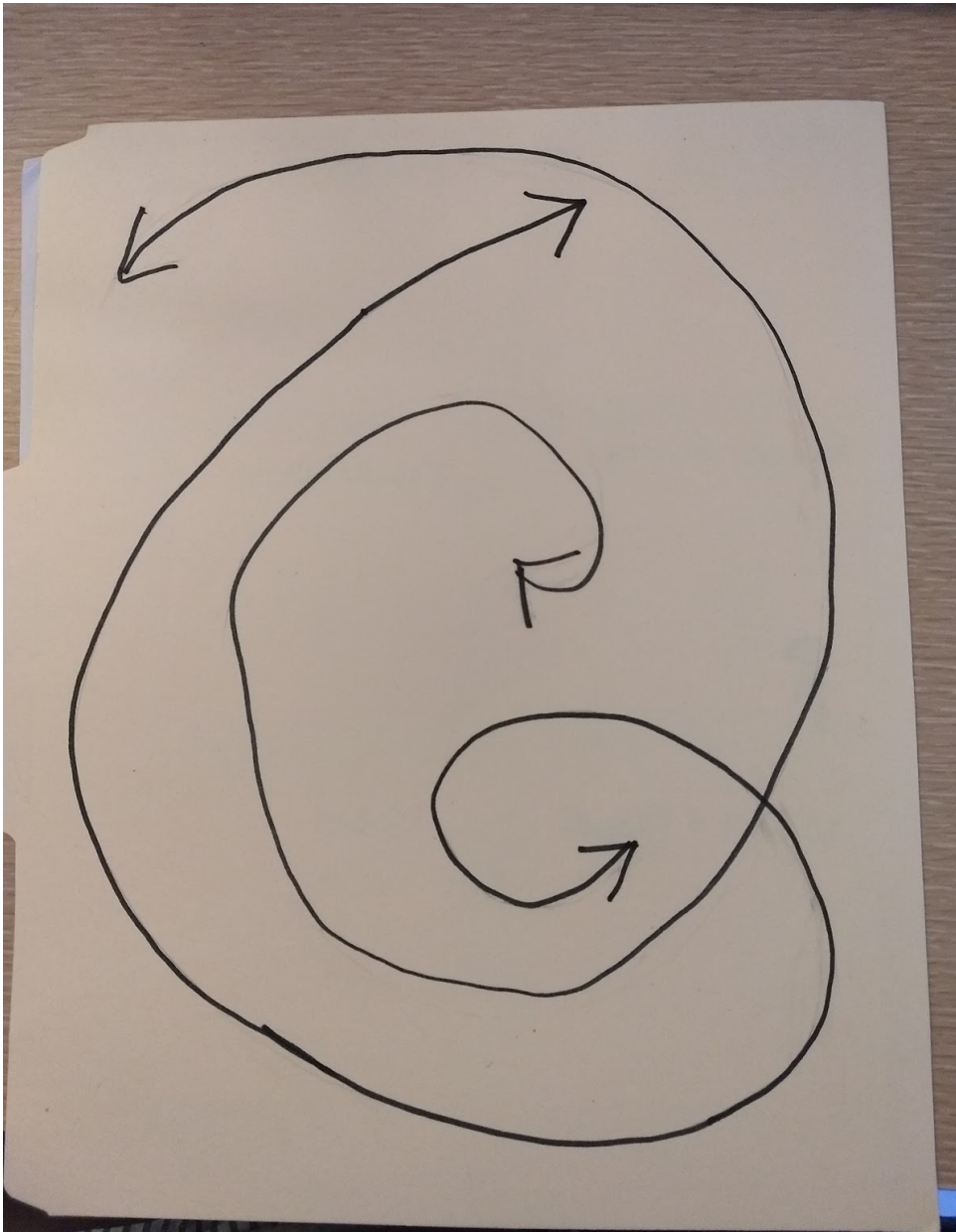
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7](#)

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Appendix 2: Reading Folder Example



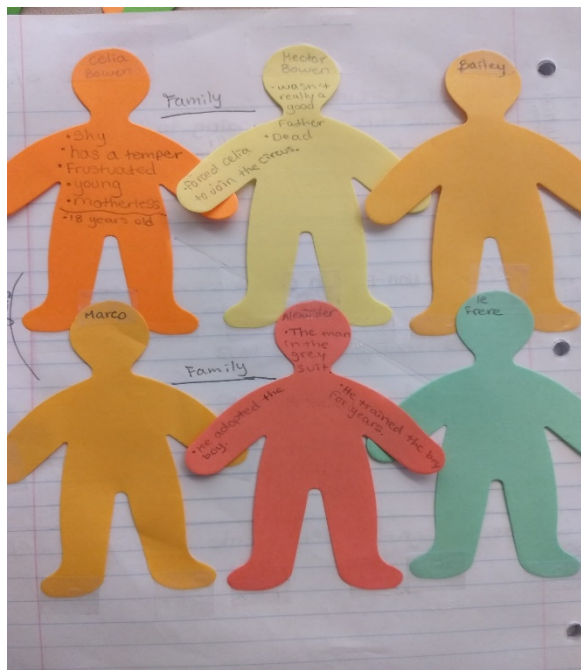
Appendix 3: Circular Timeline



Appendix 5: Reading Chart

<p>date</p> <p>What I/we read today (chapter/pg#)</p>	
<p>• Key events</p> <p>• time frame</p> <p>• new people</p> <p>• etc (X)</p> <p>What I think predict feel wonder question</p> <p>about these</p>	
<p>Summary of today's reading</p>	

Appendix 6: Student Examples



<p>Stratagem</p> <p>London April 1886</p>	
Key events	<p>• Isabel wants to join the circus Marco but marco said no because he said its going to take some convincing to lefevre.</p>
New people	
Questions	<p>• why does Isabel want to join the circus so bad?</p> <p>• Is Marco afraid of celia?</p>
	<p>• Marco was stressed about the circus lefevre told him to go home and celia kept on bothering him about the circus.</p>

Links to Supplemental Readings

1. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/05/20/528778286/a-kingdom-on-wheels-the-hidden-world-that-made-the-circus-happen>
2. <https://www.wixonjewelers.com/education/swiss-watches/watch-movements/>
3. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44744/sonnet-7-how-soon-hath-time-the-subtle-thief-of-youth>
4. <https://poemanalysis.com/how-soon-hath-time-john-milton-poem-analysis/>
5. <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/time>
6. <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/02/04/arts/beating-time-father-that-is.html>
7. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/upshot/the-economic-case-for-letting-teenagers-sleep-a-little-later.html>
8. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-musser/space-time-illusion_b_9703656.html

Resources for Students and Teachers

D'erasmo, Stacey. "The Night Circus - By Erin Morgenstern - Book Review." The New York Times. October 07, 2011. Accessed November 12, 2018.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/09/books/review/the-night-circus-by-erin-morgenstern-book-review.html>.

This book review is an opinion piece, but reading it might help you strengthen your own opinions of the novel. This critic is very thorough and covers many of the topics we will explore in class, such as magic, characterization, time/setting, and conflict. She also makes connections to other texts that you may recognize. This review doesn't contain spoilers and could help you form your own critique without trying too hard to persuade you to believe what the critic believes.

"Erin Morgenstern Answers Your Questions About The Night Circus." Knopf Doubleday. October 09, 2012. Accessed November 12, 2018.

<http://knopfdoubleday.com/2012/10/09/erin-morgenstern-answers-your-questions-about-the-night-circus/>.

With responses to ten questions chosen from readers around the world, you can hear directly from the author. Read about her inspiration for the novel and her writing process. This interview could help you understand more about author's purpose as you read and critique the novel for yourself. There is also a link to Morgenstern's website, which is also a very interesting insight into the author and her thoughts on writing.

Greene, Brian. *The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time, and the Texture of Reality*. Camberwell, Vic.: Penguin, 2008.

From this book, I mostly utilized Greene's ideas from Part II ("The Frozen River - Does Time Flow?") and Part V ("The Future of an Allusion - Prospects for Space and Time") when planning my unit on Time as a personified character. The entire book is very thought provoking, and a little mind blowing, but in terms of a literary focus, it does provide insight as to how Time can be a force that acts upon characters (people) and settings (places).

O'Malley, Megan, Ian Paterson, Janika DeVries, JoDee Craigmile, and Hilary Roberts Grant.

"What's It Like to Work at a Travelling Circus?" Quora. May 2018. Accessed November 12, 2018. <https://www.quora.com/What-is-it-like-to-work-at-a-travelling-circus>.

Although admittedly, I do not know how credible these contributors are, I do think they all provide a interesting responses on what life in a real circus might be like. Reading over this Q&A might provide some insight on how and why our characters in our novel behave, and how their lives are so very different than ours. It is interesting to read these responses and imagine they were written by the characters in the novel. It also would be interesting to try to answer the questions presented as our characters might answer them.

"The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern - Reading Guide." PenguinRandomhouse.com. 2018.

Accessed November 12, 2018. <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/211964/the-night-circus-by-erin-morgenstern/9780307744432/readers-guide/>.

This Reading Guide gives a brief introduction to the novel and contains some of the discussion topics we will cover in class. There are also links to learn more about the author and the novel. At the end of the guide, there are suggested readings for anyone interested in reading more books like this one.

Annotated Bibliography

"Book Bodega: - Book Discussions : Discussion Questions: The Night Circus by Erin Morgenster Showing 1-4 of 4." Goodreads. 2018. Accessed November 02, 2018. <https://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/694182-discussion-questions-the-night-circus-by-erin-morgenster>.

Because *The Night Circus* is a relatively new novel, there aren't many educational resources published for it yet. This site contains questions for discussion from fans, readers, and members of Oprah's Book Club. Some of the questions and the comments from readers do contain spoilers, so I augmented many of the questions before incorporating them into my unit of study. I also used several of these discussion questions to make connections to readings from previous units and to literary elements.

"English Language Arts Standards." English Language Arts Standards. 2018. Accessed August 28, 2018. <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>.

This website is updated often to reflect the changes in state standards. The English II team at my school uses the ELA standards to drive our units of study and our common assessments. The End of Course exam for English II students is also based on these standards of study. On this site, standards are broken down by grade level, and appendices for the key elements of each standard are available.

"MYP Curriculum | International Baccalaureate®." International Baccalaureate®. 2017. Accessed August 28, 2018. <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/middle-years-programme/curriculum/>.

The IBO website is a comprehensive collection of resources for teaching the IB curriculum. The methods of unit planning are applicable in any classroom, however, for teachers who wish to follow a more thematic, global focus. Also, assessment criteria are clearly outlined and explained and can be implemented as rubrics for writing assessments in any classroom.

"North Mecklenburg High." SchoolDigger. September, 2017. Accessed September 14, 2018. <https://www.schooldigger.com/go/NC/schools/0297001248/school.aspx>.

With data compiled from the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Census Bureau and the North Carolina Dept of Public Instruction, School Digger offers an insight into the performance rankings of the schools across any state. While it's best to investigate schools on a more personal level, School Digger is a good place to start for statistics and trends in different schools, counties, and states.

“Paideia Seminar.” Billings, Laura, and Terry Roberts. *The Paideia Seminar: Active Thinking through Dialogue: In the Secondary Grades*. 2nd ed. National Paideia Center, 2008.

The manual offers two approaches for educators to begin investigating the process of dialogue through seminar in the classroom. One is that it is a training manual to use during guided study (such as a workshop) with a Paideia trainer and fellow educators, and the second is as a stand-alone text to use for independent investigation. The manual offers suggestions specifically designed for seminar discussion with secondary learners, which is most helpful, provides several texts appropriate for seminar use, and contains lesson plans ready for use. It is a great tool for teachers who are beginning to explore the idea of using dialogue and student led whole-group discussion in a seminar format. Broken into five sections, this manual allows teachers to choose how little or how much guidance they need in incorporating seminars into their units or lessons.

"Socratic Seminar." Facing History and Ourselves. 2008. Accessed October 23, 2018.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/socratic-seminar>.

Socratic Seminars provide a safe way for students to express opinions without worrying about the technicalities that often hinder their written expression. Students can respond immediately to one another and hear ideas that support and that contradict their own.

Seminars offer a method of open dialogue and student led instruction and encourage depth. This website provides basic instruction for a Socratic Seminar, though there are many ways to differentiate if needed.