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English 10

Summer Packet for Rising Tenth Grade Students

Student Instructions: The schedule below includes the work that you will complete for the next four weeks. All of the resources that you need to complete the activities are included in this packet. The focus of the work that you will complete will be exploring poetry and short stories. These are types of reading and writing that you will be working on when you enter English 10 RELA classes in the fall. Be sure to read all of the directions and documents carefully.

| | Instructional Focus (Topic) | Task | Standard Alignment |
|--------|---|--|---|
| Week 1 | Poetry (Reading and Analyzing Mentor Poems) Read and analyze the themes of three poems in order to use one of these as mentor texts for writing their own poetry. | <input type="checkbox"/> Read each of the mentor poems <input type="checkbox"/> Annotate each poem with your thinking, questions, and ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on the themes presented in each poem <input type="checkbox"/> Select the poem that you will use as a mentor text | RL 9-10.1 RL 9-10.2 RL 9-10.4 SL 9-10.1 SL 9-10.5 |
| Week 2 | Poetry (Creating Original Poetry) Students will create and share their own original poems using one of the mentor texts and its theme. | <input type="checkbox"/> Use mentor texts for inspiration <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm ideas for poems <input type="checkbox"/> Draft poetry based upon theme <input type="checkbox"/> Read your poems to someone for feedback and make revisions <input type="checkbox"/> Share with others | W9-10.3 SL 9-10.1 SL 9-10.5 |
| Week 3 | Short Story (Reading and Analyzing Point of View and Theme) | <input type="checkbox"/> Read each of the mentor short stories <input type="checkbox"/> Annotate each story with your thinking, questions, and ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on the themes and the author’s point of view presented in each short story <input type="checkbox"/> Select the short story that you will use as a mentor text | RL 9-10.1 RL 9-10.2 RL 9-10.4 RL9-10.6 SL 9-10.1 SL 9-10.5 |
| Week 4 | Talk Back to Your Story- Create response to the story you selected as your mentor text | <input type="checkbox"/> Use mentor text for inspiration <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm ideas for your response to the story | W9-10.3 SL 9-10.1 |

Week 1/ Lesson 1 Objective: Students will connect to the value of telling a story through reading and analyzing poetry with different messages about the theme of identity.

Overview: In week one, you will be able to read three different poems, each with a message about the theme of identity. As you read, make notes about what the poet is saying. You may annotate your ideas in the chart below. As you read and think about the poems, decide which one you would like to use as a mentor text that you will think about as you write your own poem in Week 2.

Warm-up:

Why do you think it is important to tell your own story to others? Write your thoughts in the space provided.

Reading and thinking about poems.

Now, let's take a look at three poets and how they reflect the theme of identity. Each of the poets has a different message or insight about one's identity and how it may be used in one's life. See if you can determine what each poet is saying about identity. **Write your ideas as you read and annotate the three poems. You may underline, highlight ideas, and jot down your thinking next to each poem.**

| About the Author | Readings: Annotate each text. | Reflection: My Thoughts, My Reactions |
|---|---|--|
| <p><u>About the Author</u></p> <p>Maya Angelou lived life for 86 years. She was an author, historian, songwriter, playwright, dancer, stage and screen producer, director, performer, singer, and civil rights activist. However, she will probably be remembered most for being one of America's most celebrated poets; for this is where her keen insights about life shine through.</p> | <p><u>Poem #1:</u> A Pledge to Save Our Youth By Maya Angelou</p> <p>Young women, young men of color, we add our voices to the voices of your ancestors who speak to you over ancient seas and across impossible mountain tops.</p> <p>Come up from the gloom of national neglect, you have already been paid for.</p> <p>Come out of the shadow of irrational prejudice, you owe no racial debt to history. The blood of our bodies</p> | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>and the prayers of our souls have bought you a future free from shame and bright beyond the telling of it. We pledge ourselves and our resources to seek for you clean and well-furnished schools, safe and non-threatening streets, employment which makes use of your talents, but does not degrade your dignity. You are the best we have. You are all we have. You are what we have become. We pledge you our whole hearts from this day forward.</p> | |
|--|---|--|

| About the Author | Readings: Annotate each text. | Reflection: My Thoughts, My Reactions |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Cyrus Aldohesa Diaz English Teacher- Greenwich University, Vietnam English Teacher -Asian International School, Vietnam LET Review Lecturer Civil Service Review Lecturer Motivational Speaker Choir Director Online Blogger A poet A writer A philanthropist Singer/ Musician</p> | <p><u>Poem #2:</u> Identity By Cyrus Diaz</p> <p>Look at me, it's not my true identity I have a covert identity, i wonder if you'd ever see, my thoughts, my deeds are all that makes me but something I may do may not describe me.</p> <p>My true identity has fled me, fled me to another</p> | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>to my friends and family my true identity is all that makes me.</p> <p>So lost deep inside if its not for my soul i would[d be lost again my true identity is hard to see.</p> <p>Accept who you are recognize your own beauty identity isn't a need, your identity should be your own a better person you will be known this is me, this is my identity my true identity is all full of beauty.</p> | |
|--|---|--|

| About the Author | Readings: Annotate each text. | Reflection: My Thoughts, My Reactions |
|---|--|--|
| <p>John Clare is “the quintessential Romantic poet,” according to William Howard writing in the <i>Dictionary of Literary Biography</i>. With an admiration of nature and an understanding of the oral tradition, but with little formal education, Clare penned numerous poems and prose pieces, many of which were only published posthumously. His works gorgeously illuminate the natural world and rural life, and depict his love for his wife Patty and for his childhood sweetheart Mary Joyce. Though his first book, <i>Poems</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Poem #3:</u> I Am! BY <u>JOHN CLARE</u></p> <p>I am—yet what I am none cares or knows; My friends forsake me like a memory lost: I am the self-consumer of my woes— They rise and vanish in oblivious host, Like shadows in love’s frenzied stifled throes And yet I am, and live—like vapours tossed</p> <p>Into the nothingness of scorn and noise, Into the living sea of waking dreams, Where there is neither sense of life or joys, But the vast shipwreck of my life’s esteems; Even the dearest that I loved the best</p> | |

Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery (1820), was popular with readers and critics alike, Clare struggled professionally for much of his life. His work only became widely read some hundred years after his death.

Are strange—nay, rather, stranger than the rest.

I long for scenes where man hath never trod
A place where woman never smiled or wept
There to abide with my Creator, God,
And sleep as I in childhood sweetly slept,
Untroubling and untroubled where I lie
The grass below—above the vaulted sky.

EXIT SLIP: Poetry-Write Like: You may choose ONE of the following writing tasks to complete in the space provided.

1) FIRST: Select the poet you would like to write a message to.

NEXT: Consider what you would say in response to this poem. What are your thoughts about the poet's central message or insight and how they developed that message? Why did you select this poem? How did the poet speak to you?

2) Write a poem in the style of the poet you liked the best reflecting the poet's central message on the theme of identity, You may choose your own ideas about why you choose this poet and how his or her writing style spoke to you.

Write your response to the choice #1 or choice #2 in the space provided.

WEEK 2/ Lesson 2 Objective: Students will build understanding of expressing their insights through the creation of their own poetry about their own ideas and insights on the theme of identity as their culminating task.

Overview: This lesson will focus on the creation of your own poetry. As we have learned, poets use words to paint pictures for others about the messages and insights they have on topics. You have insights and ideas about our theme of identity as well. You may be thinking about how to use your own identity to achieve your goals or carve your own story in the world. When we want to start our ideas, one of the best ways is to brainstorm or jot down anything that comes to mind about the topic before we start to draft these ideas into some structure or form. In today's lesson, you will focus on brainstorming your ideas and then drafting your first draft of your poem.

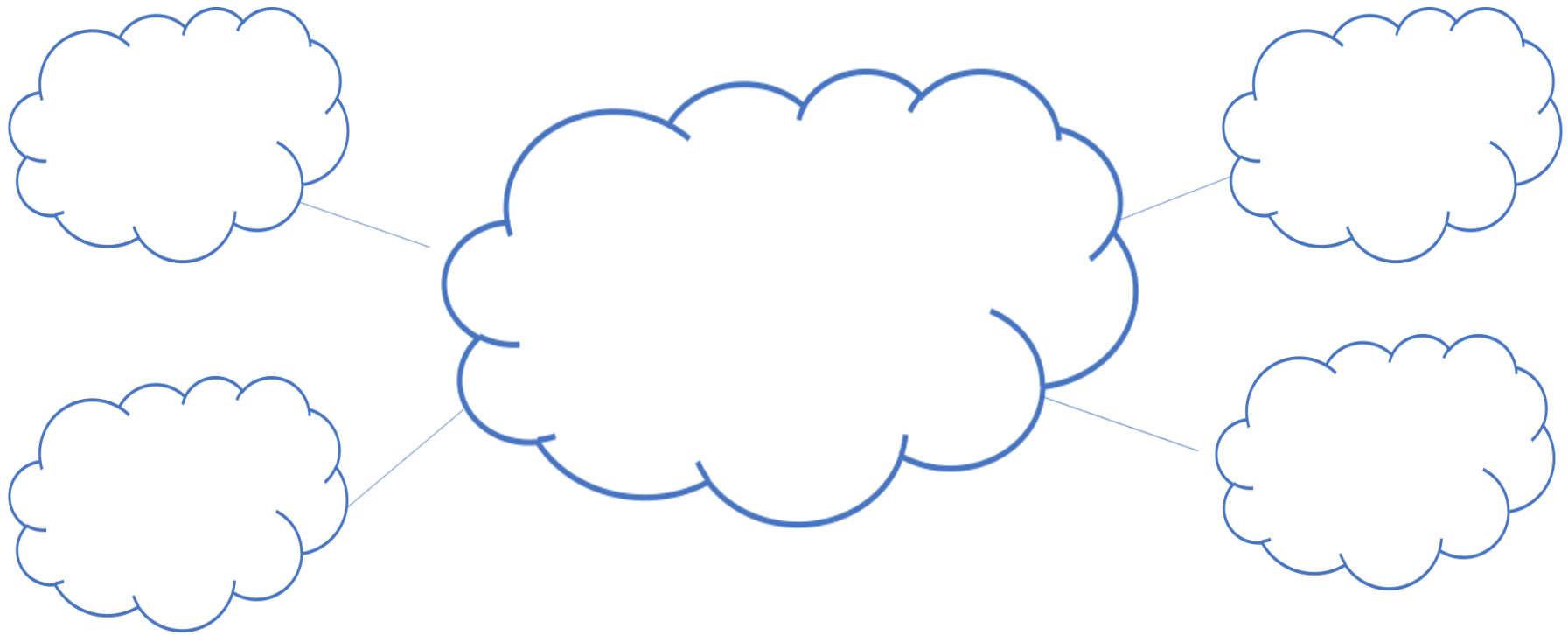
Warm Up:

Using the poem you selected as a mentor poem, jot down some of your ideas about identity that you might use in brainstorming.

Brainstorming:

Now, let's see if we can put some more ideas together around this big theme of identity related to the world that you live in. We will use a graphic organizer to capture these ideas. As you think about your own goals and story, who are the people that you have in your life who can help you, love, you, take care of you and how do they help you with building your identity? You may include yourself in this graphic organizer as well. What places do you think of for help and support? What activities or things do you think about?

Fill in the brainstorm graphic organizer below with all of your ideas about people, places, things, or anything else that is important to you and could be used as ideas for your poem about identity.



DRAFTING

After you have finished your brainstorming ideas, you will start to create the form or structure for your poem. You can decide to make the poem rhyme, use repetition of ideas as we saw our mentor poets do, or use any other form of poetry that you wish. Think about these big ideas:

- a. **How will you show your theme- your big message or insight about your identity you want your readers to come away from your poem?**
- b. **What kinds of patterns, rhymes, or forms will you use?**
- c. **What kinds of word images will you use?**

Write your poem in the space provided.

Close Reading: Give your draft to someone else to read or re-read your poem and think about the following questions:

What is the message or insight (THEME) of the poem? How can you tell?

What word pictures or images are created? Where could more detail be added to help with creating word pictures?

What is the structure of this poem?

Put the responses here and be sure to review these ideas as you make revisions to the poem.

REVISING: Rewrite the poem to add ideas, details, nouns, verbs, adjectives adverbs that make the word pictures more vivid, clear, and more reflective of your theme.

EDITING: BE SURE YOUR LANGUAGE CHOICES, SPELLING, AND PUNCTUATION ARE CORRECTLY USED.

Sharing with Others:

Find one other person close to you- friend or family member to read your final poem to.

WEEK 3/ Lesson 3 Objective: Students will read 2 different short stories that have unique points of view.

Overview: This week, you will be reading two different stories about identity. As you read, think about which of these two stories would be your choice as a mentor text- a story you can read for what it says and how it is written. Then, you will be able to craft your own story that responds to the mentor text you have chosen. You will be able to select how you will respond- write a story, write a short play, write a letter to the author, make a video, etc.

Warm Up:

When you are reading stories about other people, what do you think about as you are reading? Jot down your ideas here:

Story #1: Read this story about what happens when a lawyer and a banker make a bet. You may make notes and write your ideas about what you are thinking as you read.

The Bet By Anton Chekhov

It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one autumn evening. There had been many clever men there, and there had been interesting conversations. Among other things they had talked of capital punishment.¹ The majority of the guests, among whom were many journalists and intellectual men, disapproved of the death penalty. They considered that form of punishment out of date, immoral, and unsuitable for Christian States.² In the opinion of some of them the death penalty ought to be replaced everywhere by imprisonment for life. "I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I have not tried either the death penalty or imprisonment for life, but if one may judge a priori, ³ the death penalty is more moral and more humane than imprisonment for life. Capital punishment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisonment kills him slowly. Which executioner is the more humane,⁴ he who kills you in a few minutes or he who drags the life out of you in the course of many years?"

"Both are equally immoral," observed one of the guests, "for they both have the same object — to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot restore when it wants to."

Among the guests was a young lawyer, a young man of five-and-twenty. When he was asked his opinion, he said:

"The death sentence and the life sentence are equally immoral,⁵ but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life, I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all."

A lively discussion arose. The banker, who was younger and more nervous in those days, was suddenly carried away by excitement; he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man:

"It's not true! I'll bet you two million you wouldn't stay in solitary confinement for five years."

"If you mean that in earnest," said the young man, "I'll take the bet, but I would stay not five but fifteen years."

"Fifteen? Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two million!"

"Agreed! You stake your millions and I stake my freedom!" said the young man.

And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker, spoilt and frivolous,⁶ with millions beyond his reckoning, was delighted at the bet. At supper he made fun of the young man, and said:

“Think better of it, young man, while there is still time. To me two million is a trifle, but you are losing three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you won’t stay longer. Don’t forget either, you unhappy man, that voluntary confinement is a great deal harder to bear than compulsory.⁷ The thought that you have the right to step out in liberty at any moment will poison your whole existence in prison. I am sorry for you.”

And now the banker, walking to and fro, remembered all this, and asked himself: “What was the object of that bet? What is the good of that man’s losing fifteen years of his life and my throwing away two million? Can it prove that the death penalty is better or worse than imprisonment for life? No, no. It was all nonsensical and meaningless. On my part it was the caprice⁸ of a pampered man, and on his part simple greed for money...”

Then he remembered what followed that evening. It was decided that the young man should spend the years of his captivity under the strictest supervision in one of the lodges in the banker’s garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the threshold of the lodge, to see human beings, to hear the human voice, or to receive letters and newspapers. He was allowed to have a musical instrument and books, and was allowed to write letters, to drink wine, and to smoke. By the terms of the agreement, the only relations he could have with the outer world were by a little window made purposely for that object. He might have anything he wanted — books, music, wine, and so on — in any quantity he desired by writing an order, but could only receive them through the window. The agreement provided for every detail and every trifle⁹ that would make his imprisonment strictly solitary, and bound the young man to stay there exactly fifteen years, beginning from twelve o’clock of November 14, 1870, and ending at twelve o’clock of November 14, 1885. The slightest attempt on his part to break the conditions, if only two minutes before the end, released the banker from the obligation to pay him the two million.

For the first year of his confinement, as far as one could judge from his brief notes, the prisoner suffered severely from loneliness and depression. The sounds of the piano could be heard continually day and night from his lodge. He refused wine and tobacco. Wine, he wrote, excites the desires, and desires are the worst foes of the prisoner; and besides, nothing could be more dreary than drinking good wine and seeing no one. And tobacco spoilt the air of his room. In the first year the books he sent for were principally of a light character: novels with a complicated love plot, sensational and fantastic stories, and so on.

In the second year the piano was silent in the lodge, and the prisoner asked only for the classics. In the fifth year music was audible again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him through the window said that all that year he spent doing nothing but

eating and drinking and lying on his bed, frequently yawning and angrily talking to himself. He did not read books. Sometimes at night he would sit down to write; he would spend hours writing, and in the morning tear up all that he had written. More than once he could be heard crying.

In the second half of the sixth year the prisoner began zealously studying languages, philosophy, and history. He threw himself eagerly into these studies — so much so that the banker had enough to do to get him the books he ordered. In the course of four years some six hundred volumes were procured¹⁰ at his request. It was during this period that the banker received the following letter from his prisoner:

“My dear Jailer, I write you these lines in six languages. Show them to people who know the languages. Let them read them. If they find not one mistake I implore you to fire a shot in the garden. That shot will show me that my efforts have not been thrown away. The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all. Oh, if you only knew what unearthly happiness my soul feels now from being able to understand them!” The prisoner’s desire was fulfilled. The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden.

Then after the tenth year, the prisoner sat immovably at the table and read nothing but the Gospel. It seemed strange to the banker that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred learned volumes should waste nearly a year over one thin book easy of comprehension. Theology¹¹ and histories of religion followed the Gospels.¹²

In the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an immense quantity of books quite indiscriminately. At one time he was busy with the natural sciences, then he would ask for Byron or Shakespeare. There were notes in which he demanded at the same time books on chemistry, and a manual of medicine, and a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. His reading suggested a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his ship, and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another.

The old banker remembered all this, and thought:

“To-morrow at twelve o’clock he will regain his freedom. By our agreement I ought to pay him two million. If I do pay him, it is all over with me: I shall be utterly ruined.”

Fifteen years before, his millions had been beyond his reckoning; now he was afraid to ask himself which were greater, his debts or his assets. Desperate gambling on the Stock Exchange,¹³ wild speculation and the excitability which he could not get over even in advancing years, had by degrees led to the decline of his fortune and the proud, fearless, self-confident millionaire had become a

banker of middling rank, trembling at every rise and fall in his investments. "Cursed bet!" muttered the old man, clutching his head in despair. "Why didn't the man die? He is only forty now. He will take my last penny from me, he will marry, will enjoy life, will gamble on the Exchange; while I shall look at him with envy like a beggar, and hear from him every day the same sentence: 'I am indebted to you for the happiness of my life, let me help you!' No, it is too much! The one means of being saved from bankruptcy and disgrace is the death of that man!"

It struck three o'clock, the banker listened; everyone was asleep in the house and nothing could be heard outside but the rustling of the chilled trees. Trying to make no noise, he took from a fireproof safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house.

It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest. The banker strained his eyes, but could see neither the earth nor the white statues, nor the lodge, nor the trees. Going to the spot where the lodge stood, he twice called the watchman. No answer followed. Evidently the watchman had sought shelter from the weather, and was now asleep somewhere either in the kitchen or in the greenhouse.

"If I had the pluck to carry out my intention," thought the old man, "suspicion would fall first upon the watchman."

He felt in the darkness for the steps and the door, and went into the entry of the lodge. Then he groped his way into a little passage and lighted a match. There was not a soul there. There was a bedstead with no bedding on it, and in the corner there was a dark cast-iron stove. The seals on the door leading to the prisoner's rooms were intact.

When the match went out the old man, trembling with emotion, peeped through the little window. A candle was burning dimly in the prisoner's room. He was sitting at the table. Nothing could be seen but his back, the hair on his head, and his hands. Open books were lying on the table, on the two easy-chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner did not once stir. Fifteen years' imprisonment had taught him to sit still. The banker tapped at the window with his finger, and the prisoner made no movement whatever in response. Then the banker cautiously broke the seals off the door and put the key in the keyhole. The rusty lock gave a grating sound and the door creaked. The banker expected to hear at once footsteps and a cry of astonishment, but three minutes passed and it was as quiet as ever in the room. He made up his mind to go in.

At the table a man unlike ordinary people was sitting motionless. He was a skeleton with the skin drawn tight over his bones, with long curls like a woman's and a shaggy beard. His face was yellow with an earthy tint in it, his cheeks were hollow, his back long and narrow, and the hand on which his shaggy head was propped was so thin and delicate that it was dreadful to look at it. His hair was

already streaked with silver, and seeing his emaciated,¹⁴ aged-looking face, no one would have believed that he was only forty. He was asleep... In front of his bowed head there lay on the table a sheet of paper on which there was something written in fine handwriting.

“Poor creature!” thought the banker, “he is asleep and most likely dreaming of the millions. And I have only to take this half-dead man, throw him on the bed, stifle him a little with the pillow, and the most conscientious expert would find no sign of a violent death. But let us first read what he has written here ...”

The banker took the page from the table and read as follows:

“To-morrow at twelve o’clock I regain my freedom and the right to associate with other men, but before I leave this room and see the sunshine, I think it necessary to say a few words to you. With a clear conscience I tell you, as before God, who beholds me, that I despise freedom and life and health, and all that in your books is called the good things of the world.

“For fifteen years I have been intently studying earthly life. It is true I have not seen the earth nor men, but in your books I have drunk fragrant wine, I have sung songs, I have hunted stags and wild boars in the forests, have loved women... Beauties as ethereal¹⁵ as clouds, created by the magic of your poets and geniuses, have visited me at night, and have whispered in my ears wonderful tales that have set my brain in a whirl. In your books I have climbed to the peaks of Elburz and Mont Blanc, and from there I have seen the sun rise and have watched it at evening flood the sky, the ocean, and the mountain-tops with gold and crimson. I have watched from there the lightning flashing over my head and cleaving the storm-clouds. I have seen green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, towns. I have heard the singing of the sirens, and the strains of the shepherds’ pipes; I have touched the wings of comely¹⁶ devils who flew down to converse with me of God... In your books I have flung myself into the bottomless pit, performed miracles, slain, burned towns, preached new religions, conquered whole kingdoms...

“Your books have given me wisdom. All that the unresting thought of man has created in the ages is compressed into a small compass in my brain. I know that I am wiser than all of you.

“And I despise your books, I despise wisdom and the blessings of this world. It is all worthless, fleeting, illusory,¹⁷ and deceptive, like a mirage. You may be proud, wise, and fine, but death will wipe you off the face of the earth as though you were no more than mice burrowing under the floor, and your posterity, your history, your immortal geniuses will burn or freeze together with the earthly globe.

“You have lost your reason and taken the wrong path. You have taken lies for truth, and hideousness for beauty. You would marvel if, owing to strange events of some sort, frogs and lizards suddenly grew on apple and orange trees instead of fruit, or if roses began to smell like a sweating horse; so I marvel at you who exchange heaven for earth. I don’t want to understand you.

“To prove to you in action how I despise all that you live by, I renounce the two million of which I once dreamed as of paradise and which now I despise. To deprive myself of the right to the money I shall go out from here five hours before the time fixed, and so break the compact...”

When the banker had read this he laid the page on the table, kissed the strange man on the head, and went out of the lodge, weeping. At no other time, even when he had lost heavily on the Stock Exchange, had he felt so great a contempt¹⁸ for himself. When he got home he lay on his bed, but his tears and emotion kept him for hours from sleeping.

Next morning the watchmen ran in with pale faces, and told him they had seen the man who lived in the lodge climb out of the window into the garden, go to the gate, and disappear. The banker went at once with the servants to the lodge and made sure of the flight of his prisoner. To avoid arousing unnecessary talk, he took from the table the writing in which the millions were renounced, and when he got home locked it up in the fireproof safe.

“The Bet” by Anton Chekhov is in the public domain.

1. Capital punishment, also known as the death penalty, is a practice whereby a person is put to death by the state as punishment for a crime.
2. A Christian State recognizes Christianity as its official religion.
3. The Latin phrase “a priori” refers to knowledge that does not come from actual experience but rather from deduction or theoretical reasoning.
4. Humane (adjective): having sympathy and compassion for other people
5. Immoral (adjective): going against what is right, proper, or good
6. Frivolous (adjective): not serious in attitude or behavior; not able to think ahead
7. Compulsory (adjective): required; mandatory
8. Caprice (noun): a sudden, unpredictable action
9. Trifle (noun): something of little value, substance, or importance
10. Procure (verb): to get possession of; to obtain by a particular care and effort
11. Theology is the study of religious faith, practice, and experience.
12. Gospels are books written about the life of Jesus.
13. Stock Exchange refers to a place where people buy and sell stocks, which are the ownership elements of a corporation.
14. Emaciate (verb): to cause someone to become very thin
15. Ethereal (adjective): of or relating to the heavens

16. Comely (adjective): pretty, attractive
17. Illusory (adjective): based on or producing an illusion; deceptive
18. Contempt (noun): a feeling that someone or something is not worthy of respect or approval

Story #2: Read this story about what happens when a wife presses the button and her husband chooses not to press the button. You may make notes and write your ideas about what you are thinking as you read.

Button, Button By Richard Matheson

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

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

“We’ll be moving into a nice flat somewhere,” said Mama. “Somewhere on South Park, or Michigan, or in Washington Park Court.” Those flats as the girls and Mama knew well, were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa’s. This was not mentioned now.

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

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

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

The doorbell rang at eight o’clock. “I’ll get it,” Norma called from the kitchen. Arthur was in the living room, reading.

There was a small man in the hallway. He removed his hat as Norma opened the door. “Mrs. Lewis?” he inquired politely.

“Yes?”

“I’m Mr. Steward.”

“Oh, yes.” Norma repressed¹ a smile. She was sure now it was a sales pitch.

“May I come in?” asked Mr. Steward.

"I'm rather busy," Norma said, "I'll get you your whatchamacallit, though." She started to turn.

"Don't you want to know what it is?"

Norma turned back. Mr. Steward's tone had been offensive. "No, I don't think so," she replied.

"It could prove very valuable," he told her.

"Monetarily?" she challenged.

Mr. Steward nodded. "Monetarily," he said.

Norma frowned. She didn't like his attitude. "What are you trying to sell?" she asked.

"I'm not selling anything," he answered.

Arthur came out of the living room. "Something wrong?"

Mr. Steward introduced himself.

"Oh, the — " Arthur pointed toward the living room and smiled. "What is that gadget anyway?"

"It won't take long to explain," replied Mr. Steward. "May I come in?"

"If you're selling something — ," Arthur said.

Mr. Steward shook his head. "I'm not."

Arthur looked at Norma. "Up to you," she said.

He hesitated. "Well, why not?" he said.

They went into the living room and Mr. Steward sat in Norma's chair. He reached into an inside coat pocket and withdrew a small sealed envelope. "Inside here is a key to the bell-unit dome," he said. He set the envelope on the chair-side table. "The bell is connected to our office."

"What's it for?" asked Arthur.

"If you push the button," Mr. Steward told him, "somewhere in the world someone you don't know will die. In return for which you will

receive a payment of \$50,000.”

Norma stared at the small man. He was smiling.

“What are you talking about?” Arthur asked him.

Mr. Steward looked surprised. “But I’ve just explained,” he said.

“Is this a practical joke?” asked Arthur.

“Not at all. The offer is completely genuine.”²

“You aren’t making sense,” Arthur said. “You expect us to believe — ”

“Whom do you represent?” demanded Norma.

Mr. Steward looked embarrassed. “I’m afraid I’m not at liberty to tell you that,” he said. “However, I assure you, the organization is of international scope.”³

“I think you’d better leave,” Arthur said, standing.

Mr. Steward rose. “Of course.”

“And take your button unit with you.”

“Are you sure you wouldn’t care to think about it for a day or so?”

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

“I’ll leave my card,” said Mr. Steward. He placed it on the table by the door.

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

Norma was still sitting on the sofa. “What do you think it was?” she asked.

“I don’t care to know,” he answered.

She tried to smile but couldn’t. “Aren’t you curious at all?”

“No.” He shook his head.

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

“Why won’t you talk about it?” Norma asked.

Arthur’s eyes shifted as he brushed his teeth. He looked at his reflection in the bathroom mirror.

“Doesn’t it intrigue you?”

“It offends me,” Arthur said.

“I know, but” — Norma rolled another curler in her hair — “doesn’t it intrigue you, too?”

“You think it’s a practical joke?” she asked as they went into the bedroom.

“If it is, it’s a sick one.”

Norma sat on her bed and took off her slippers. “Maybe it’s some kind of psychological research.”⁴

Arthur shrugged. “Could be.”

“Maybe some eccentric⁵ millionaire is doing it.”

“Maybe.”

“Wouldn’t you like to know?”

Arthur shook his head.

“Why?”

“Because it’s immoral,” he told her.

Norma slid beneath the covers. “Well, I think it’s intriguing,” she said.

Arthur turned off the lamp and leaned over to kiss her. “Good night,” he said.

“Good night.” She patted his back.

Norma closed her eyes. Fifty thousand dollars, she thought.

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

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

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

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

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

"Yes, Mrs. Lewis," Mr. Steward sounded pleased.

"I'm curious."

"That's natural," Mr. Steward said.

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

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

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

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

"For \$50,000," Norma said.

"That is correct."

She made a scoffing sound. "That's crazy."

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

Norma stiffened. "Certainly not." She hung up angrily.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What does that mean?"

"Let it go," he told her.

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

Arthur stared at her.

"Suppose it's a genuine offer?"

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

Norma looked disgusted. "Murder."

"How would you define it?"

"If you don't even know the person?" Norma said.

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

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

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

"Now you're loading things."

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

"The point is," Norma broke in, "if it's someone you've never seen in your life and never will see, someone whose death you don't even

have to know about, you still wouldn't push the button?"

Arthur stared at her, appalled. "You mean you would?"

"Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur."

"What has the amount — "

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

"Norma, no."

"A chance to buy that cottage on the island."

"Norma, no." His face was white.

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

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

Norma shrugged. "Fine with me."

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

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

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

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

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

"Not what?"

"Selfish."

"Did I say you were?"

"Well" — she gestured vaguely — "last night..."

Arthur didn't speak.

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

"In what way?" His voice was guarded.

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

"Oh."

"I wasn't."

"Norma — "

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

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

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

"What?"

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

"Norma, we will," he said.

"When?"

He stared at her in dismay. "Norma — "

"When?"

"Are you" — he seemed to draw back slightly — "are you really saying — "

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

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

When he'd gone to work, Norma remained at the table, staring into her coffee. I'm going to be late, she thought. She shrugged. What

difference did it make? She should be home, anyway, not working in an office.

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

Reaching out, she pressed it down. For us, she thought angrily.

She shuddered. Was it happening? A chill of horror swept across her.

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

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

She had just turned over the supper steaks when the telephone rang. She picked up the receiver. "Hello?"

"Mrs. Lewis?"

"Yes?"

"This is the Lenox Hill Hospital."

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

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

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

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

The box was empty

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

"Mrs. Lewis?" Mr. Steward asked.

It wasn't her voice shrieking so; it couldn't be. "You said I wouldn't know the one that died!"

"My dear lady," Mr. Steward said. "Do you really think you knew your husband?"

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1. Repress (verb): to stop oneself from doing
2. Genuine (adjective): real or actual; authentic
3. Reach or size
4. In one form of psychological research, doctors study human behaviors by presenting people with a strange situation and seeing how they react.
5. Eccentric (adjective): strange or unusual
6. Impulsive (adjective): acting or done without thinking
7. Authentic (adjective): real or actual; genuine
8. Proposition (noun): offer or plan
9. A region and country in central Africa
10. Contempt (noun): disrespect or disgust
11. Double indemnity is a common offering of life insurance policies. In the case of accidental death of the insured person, the insurance company will pay the survivors twice the face value of the policy.

Stop and Jot: What were some of your thoughts and reflections about this story? Why do you think a person's identity is so important in a person's story? Put your ideas here:

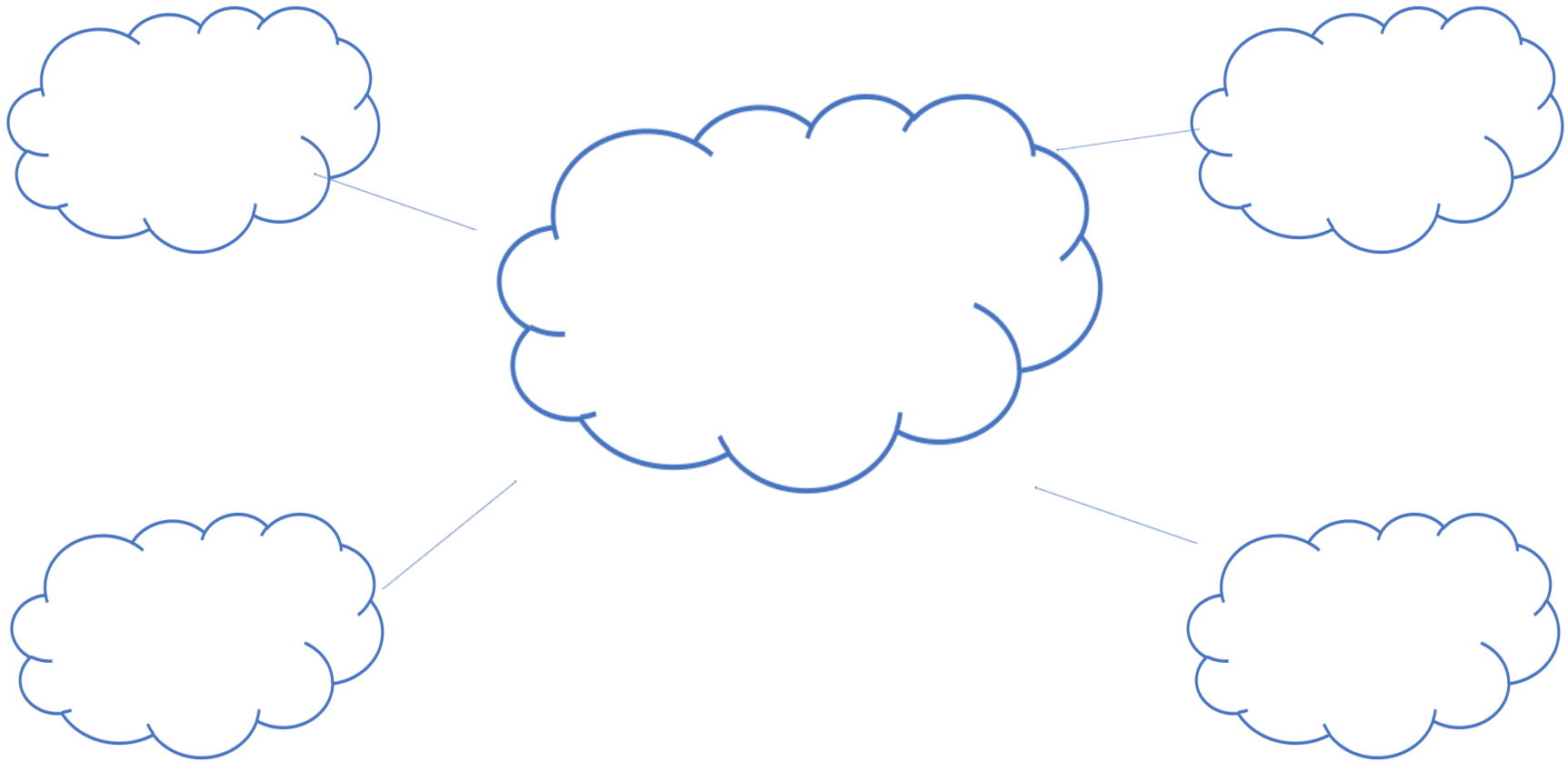
EXIT TICKET: Select the story you want to use as your mentor text and write a message to the author. Consider what you would say in response to this story. What are your thoughts about the author's central message or insights about the theme of identity and how they developed that message? Why did you select this story? How did the writer speak to you?

WEEK 4/ Lesson 4 Objective: Students will build understanding of expressing their insights through the creation of their own stories or other creative responses about their own ideas and insights on the theme of power as their culminating task.

Overview: This lesson will focus on the creation of your own short story. As we have learned, authors use important realizations to develop the complexity of their characters. You may be thinking about how a person's identity shapes their life or how their life shapes who we are or who we become. When we want to start our ideas, one of the best ways is to brainstorm or jot down anything that comes to mind about the topic before we start to draft these ideas into some structure or form. In today's lesson, you will focus on brainstorming your ideas and then drafting your first draft of your short story.

Warm Up: Using the short story you selected as a mentor story, jot down some of your ideas about the theme of identity that you might use in brainstorming.

Brainstorming: Now, let's see if we can put some more ideas together around this big theme of power in our names or where we live. Just as we did when writing our poems, we will use a graphic organizer to capture these ideas. As you think about your own ideas and story, what are moments that you believe have led you to identify your identity? What meaning do you attach to your home and the people living there who helped you find inner strength or self-worth? What activities or things do you think about?



Drafting: After you have finished your brainstorming ideas, you will start to create the form or structure for your short story. Think about these big ideas:

- a. **How will you show your theme- your big message or insight about coming of age that you want your readers to come away from your short story?**
- b. **What kinds of language, characters, and setting will you use?**
- c. **What kinds of imagery will you use?**

Write your short story in the space provided. Use additional paper as needed.

Close Reading: Give your draft to someone else to read or re-read your short story and think about the following questions:

- What is the message or insight (THEME) of the story? How can you tell?
- How are characters developed? Where could more detail be added to help with creating complex characters?

Put the responses here and be sure to review these ideas as you make revisions to the story.

REVISING: Rewrite the short story to add ideas, details, characterization that make the story more vivid, clear, and more reflective of your theme. **EDITING:** BE SURE YOUR LANGUAGE CHOICES, SPELLING, AND PUNCTUATION ARE CORRECTLY USED.

Sharing with Others:

Find one other person close to you- friend or family member to read your final short story to.

