Discuss It  Do you think competition should be part of everyone’s childhood?
Write your response before sharing your ideas.

You face challenges every day, but learning how to deal with them is part of growing up.
**UNIT INTRODUCTION**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:**

What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHOLE-CLASS LEARNING</th>
<th>SMALL-GROUP LEARNING</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT LEARNING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANCHOR TEXT: MEMOIR IN VERSE</td>
<td>PUBLIC DOCUMENT</td>
<td>NOVEL EXCERPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>from Brown Girl Dreaming</em> Jacqueline Woodson</td>
<td>Declaration of the Rights of the Child The United Nations General Assembly</td>
<td><em>from Peter Pan</em> J. M. Barrie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIA: COMIC STRIP</td>
<td>MAGAZINE ARTICLE</td>
<td>POETRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery of Calvin and Hobbes Comics Bill Watterson</td>
<td>Michaela DePrince: The War Orphan Who Became a Ballerina William Kremer</td>
<td>Oranges Gary Soto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMOIR</td>
<td>ESSAY</td>
<td>SHORT STORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>from Bad Boy</em> Walter Dean Myers</td>
<td>The Boy Nobody Knew Faith Ringgold</td>
<td>Raymond’s Run Toni Cade Bambara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POETRY</td>
<td>SHORT STORY</td>
<td>SHORT STORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid</em> Alma Luz Villanueva</td>
<td>Eleven Sandra Cisneros</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**WRITING FOCUS:** Write a Nonfiction Narrative

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS:** Present a Retelling

**PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT PREP**

Review Evidence for a Nonfiction Narrative

**PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT**

Narration: Nonfiction Narrative and Oral Recitation

**PROMPT:** When did a challenge lead to a triumph?
Unit Goals

Throughout this unit, you will deepen your understanding of the stage of life known as childhood through reading, writing, speaking, listening, and presenting. These goals will help you succeed on the Unit Performance-Based Assessment.

Rate how well you meet these goals right now. You will revisit your ratings later when you reflect on your growth during this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT AT ALL WELL</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NOT VERY WELL</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOMEWHAT WELL</td>
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<tr>
<td>VERY WELL</td>
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<td>EXTREMELY WELL</td>
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</table>

**READING GOALS**

- Read and analyze how authors present ideas and express their points of view in different types of texts.

- Expand your knowledge and use of academic and concept vocabulary.

**WRITING AND RESEARCH GOALS**

- Write a nonfiction narrative in which you develop experiences or events using narrative techniques effectively.

- Conduct research projects of various lengths to explore a topic and clarify meaning.

**LANGUAGE GOAL**

- Correctly use common, proper, and possessive nouns in writing and presentations.

- Use word choice, sentence structures, and tone to develop your voice in your writing.

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING GOALS**

- Engage in collaborative discussions, build on the ideas of others, and express your own ideas clearly.

- Integrate audio, visuals, and text in presentations.
Academic Vocabulary: Nonfiction Narrative

Understanding and using academic terms can help you read, write, and speak with precision and clarity. Here are five academic words that will be useful to you in this unit as you analyze and write nonfiction narratives.

Complete the chart.
1. Review each word, its root, and the mentor sentences.
2. Use the information and your own knowledge to predict the meaning of each word.
3. For each word, list at least two related words.
4. Refer to the dictionary or other resources if needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>MENTOR SENTENCES</th>
<th>PREDICT MEANING</th>
<th>RELATED WORDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reflect</td>
<td>Nathan needs time to reflect on his actions before he apologizes.</td>
<td>reflection; reflective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROOT: -flect- “bend”</td>
<td>2. Sometimes it is better to stop and reflect on your thoughts before expressing your opinion.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>notable</td>
<td>The museum features the famous paintings of many notable artists.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROOT: -not- “mark”</td>
<td>2. The politician’s win in her district was a notable success in her campaign for governor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>contribute</td>
<td>You can contribute to the discussion by voicing your thoughts on the subject.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROOT: -trib- “pay”; “give”</td>
<td>2. John was asked to contribute a short story to the literary magazine, to be published in the next issue.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>Shay and Brooke did not recognize their cousin because he had grown so much since they last saw him.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROOT: -cogn- “know”</td>
<td>2. We recognize our veterans by honoring them with a parade.</td>
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<tr>
<td>memorize</td>
<td>It is difficult to memorize all of the different grammar rules for a foreign language.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ROOT: -mem- “mind”</td>
<td>2. The actors must memorize their lines before the opening night of the play.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Sometimes you just have to laugh,” I tell my daughter, who is having an especially bad day. She’s lost her favorite bracelet, she turned in the wrong homework assignment, and she just found out she would be playing Marshmallow #2 in the class play.

“Oh, you wouldn’t understand,” Sarah says, sulkily.

I ask her if I’ve ever told her the story of the diorama.

“Yes, Dad. More than once,” she says.

That doesn’t stop me. “When I was in the sixth grade,” I say in my storyteller’s voice, “we had to make shoebox dioramas of a scene from American history. I decided to do a wagon train traveling across the Great Plains in the mid-1800s.”

Sarah pretends she isn’t rolling her eyes, but I keep going.

“I wanted it to be great. A diorama to end all dioramas! I wanted to be famous. I wanted to be on the local news. But what I really wanted was to show up Jorge Nuñez,” I say.

“That and I had been in the same class since fourth grade. We were pretty evenly matched when it came to test scores and homework, but for hands-on projects, there was no one like Jorge. He always came up with these unique creations, beautifully conceived and executed. Jorge’s mom and dad were architects, so maybe he had a leg up, but who knows.”

Sarah shrugs in sympathy—which I take as permission to continue. “As soon as I heard Jorge announce that he was making a shoebox diorama of a log cabin, I decided to go one better. I’d
create a fleet of Conestoga wagons in a circle formation around a campfire at dusk, with miniature people and horses and dogs made of pipe cleaners, and children running around playing hoops. It would be a masterpiece. And that’s just how it turned out: a masterpiece! I carried it upstairs to my room and that night I went to sleep with a smile on my face, imagining Jorge’s reaction.”

“Then,” I go on, “in the middle of the night I was jolted awake by a ripping sound. My heart stopped. I felt sick. I know that sound, I thought. There was no mistaking what it was—Lucy was demolishing my masterpiece! You couldn’t even tell what it was supposed to be! I lay there in a stupor of self-pity and the sense that nothing in the world would ever be right again. The dog ate my diorama, I thought, and I pictured myself saying this in class. I pictured the hoots and guffaws and hollers. I pictured my teacher’s puzzled expression as she tried to work out if I was being serious.” I make the expression myself, and Sarah smiles.

“Then I said it out loud: The dog ate my diorama. It was funny, actually. The more I said it, the funnier it got. I started laughing. I laughed until my sides hurt. I couldn’t stop laughing.”

“And then?” Sarah says, knowing what comes next.

“Well,” I say, “I picked up all the pieces and put them in the box and took the whole thing to school. I called it ‘Wagon Train After a Tornado.’ The teacher loved it. Everyone enjoyed my story. I think Jorge was actually jealous.”

Sarah gives a reluctant smile, like she’s supposed to. “So,” she says, remembering that there’s a lesson in there somewhere, “you learned to laugh at bad things. Right?”

I shake my head. “Nope,” I tell her. “I learned that some things aren’t so bad.”

---

**WORD NETWORK FOR CHILDHOOD**

**Vocabulary** A Word Network is a collection of words related to a topic. As you read the selections in this unit, identify interesting words related to childhood, and add them to your Word Network. For example, you might begin by adding words from the Launch Text, such as *sulkily, diorama,* and *homework.* Continue to add words as you complete this unit.

**Tool Kit**

Word Network Model
Summary

Write a summary of “Wagon Train at Dusk.” A summary is a concise, complete, and accurate overview of a text. It should not include a statement of your opinion or an analysis.

Launch Activity

Participate in a Group Discussion
Consider this statement:
You need to overcome obstacles to learn new things.

Prepare for the discussion by thinking about the topic:

• Have you ever faced a challenge that led to success? Do you know someone who has had this experience?
• Does learning new things have to be challenging?

Decide your position, and record a brief explanation.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Form a small group with other students. Then, discuss your responses to the prompt and the questions. When you have finished your conversation, write a summary of the main points you covered. Share your summary with the class.
QuickWrite

Consider class discussions, the video, and the Launch Text as you think about the prompt. Record your first thoughts here.

PROMPT: When did a challenge lead to a triumph?

Title of Text: ___________________________ Date: __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONNECTION TO PROMPT</th>
<th>TEXT EVIDENCE/DETAILS</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL NOTES/IDEAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

How does this text change or add to my thinking? Date: __________

Tool Kit

Evidence Log Model
ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up?

You deal with challenges every day. Some are big challenges, while others are small. Whatever the challenge is, you learn and grow from that experience. As you read, you will work with your whole class to explore the ways that people can learn from and triumph over childhood challenges.

Whole-Class Learning Strategies

Throughout your life, in school, in your community, and in your career, you will continue to learn and work in large-group environments.

Review these strategies and the actions you can take to practice them as you work with your whole class. Add ideas of your own for each strategy. Get ready to use these strategies during Whole-Class Learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen actively</td>
<td>• Eliminate distractions. For example, put your cellphone away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep your eyes on the speaker.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarify by asking questions</td>
<td>• If you’re confused, other people probably are, too. Ask a question to help your whole class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If you see that you are guessing, ask a question instead.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitor understanding</td>
<td>• Notice what information you already know and be ready to build on it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ask for help if you are struggling.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interact and share ideas</td>
<td>• Share your ideas and answer questions, even if you are unsure.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build on the ideas of others by adding details or making a connection.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**ANCHOR TEXT: MEMOIR IN VERSE**

*from Brown Girl Dreaming*
*Jacqueline Woodson*

An author relates her childhood experiences in a memorable new way—through poetry.

**MEDIA: COMIC STRIP**

*Gallery of Calvin and Hobbes Comics*
*Bill Watterson*

For Calvin and his tiger Hobbes, childhood is an adventure.

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**WRITING FOCUS**

*Write a Nonfiction Narrative*

The Whole-Class readings illustrate ways in which young people navigate the challenges of growing up. After reading, you will write a nonfiction narrative about a time when you used your imagination to find a new way to do something.
from Brown Girl Dreaming

Concept Vocabulary

You will encounter the following words as you read the excerpt from Brown Girl Dreaming. Before reading, note how familiar you are with each word. Then, rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>YOUR RANKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>squish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humming</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>twist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twirl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shushes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>feathery</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

After completing the first read, come back to the concept vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

First Read MEMOIR IN VERSE

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete the close-read notes after your first read.

- **NOTICE** whom the story is about, what happens, where and when it happens, and why those involved react as they do.
- **ANNOTATE** by marking vocabulary and key passages you want to revisit.
- **CONNECT** ideas within the selection to what you already know and what you have already read.
- **RESPOND** by completing the Comprehension Check and by writing a brief summary.

About the Author

Jacqueline Woodson

(b. 1964) was born in Columbus, Ohio. She recalls being happiest as a child when she was writing: “I wrote on paper bags and my shoes and denim binders.” A 2008 Newbery Honor winner, Woodson believes that writers need to be honest and to listen to the voices of young people.

Tool Kit

First-Read Guide and Model Annotation

STANDARDS

Reading Literature

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Reading Informational Text

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
from Brown Girl Dreaming

Jacqueline Woodson

BACKGROUND
As a child in the 1960s, Jacqueline Woodson moved with her family from Greenville, South Carolina, to Brooklyn, in New York City. Her memoir Brown Girl Dreaming tells of her childhood experiences growing up in both places. In a memoir, an author recalls important events in his or her life. Brown Girl Dreaming is unique as a memoir because it is written in verse, or as poetry.

brooklyn rain

The rain here is different than the way it rains in Greenville. No sweet smell of honeysuckle. No soft squish of pine. No slip and slide through grass. Just Mama saying, Stay inside today. It’s raining, and me at the window. Nothing to do but watch the gray sidewalk grow darker, watch the drops slide down the glass pane, watch people below me move fast, heads bent.

Already there are stories in my head. Already color and sound and words.

squish (skwihsh) n. spongy, cushioned feeling when walking on a flexible surface
Already I’m drawing circles on the glass, **humming** myself someplace far away from here.

Down south, there was always someplace else to go you could step out into the rain and Grandma would let you lift your head and stick out your tongue be happy.

Down south already feels like a long time ago but the stories in my head take me back there, set me down in Daddy’s garden where the sun is always shining.

* * *

**another way**

While our friends are watching TV or playing outside, we are in our house, knowing that begging our mother to turn the television on is useless, begging her for ten minutes outside will only mean her saying,

No. Saying, You can run wild with your friends anytime. Today I want you to find another way to play.

And then one day my mother comes home with two shopping bags filled with board games—Monopoly, checkers, chess, Ants in the Pants, Sorry, Trouble, just about every game we’ve ever seen in the commercials between our Saturday morning cartoons.

So many games, we don’t know where to begin playing, so we let Roman choose. And he chooses Trouble because he likes the sound the die makes when it pops inside its plastic bubble. And for days and days, it is Christmas in November, games to play when our homework is done, Monopoly money to count and checkers to slam down on boards, ants to flip into blue plastic pants, chess pieces to practice moving until we understand their power and when we don’t, Roman and I argue that there’s another way to play
called Our Way. But Hope and Dell tell us that we’re too immature to even begin to understand then bend over the chessboard in silence, each becoming the next chess champ of the house, depending on the day and the way the game is played.

Sometimes, Roman and I leave Hope and Dell alone go to another corner of the room and become what the others call us—the two youngest, playing games we know the rules to tic-tac-toe and checkers, hangman and connect the dots but mostly, we lean over their shoulders as quietly as we can, watching waiting wanting to understand how to play another way.

* * *

gifted

Everyone knows my sister is brilliant. The letters come home folded neatly inside official-looking envelopes that my sister proudly hands over to my mother.

Odella has achieved Odella has excelled at Odella has been recommended to Odella’s outstanding performance in

She is gifted we are told. And I imagine presents surrounding her.

I am not gifted. When I read, the words twist twirl across the page. When they settle, it is too late. The class has already moved on.

I want to catch words one day. I want to hold them then blow gently, watch them float right out of my hands.

* * *

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In “gifted,” mark the words that are repeated in lines 5–7.

QUESTION: Why has the poet chosen to repeat these words?

CONCLUDE: What effect does this repetition have on the reader?

twist (twihst) v. wind or spin around one another twirl (twurl) v. turn around and around quickly
sometimes

There is only one other house on our block where a father doesn’t live. When somebody asks why, the boy says, \textit{He died.}

The girl looks off, down the block, her thumb slowly rising to her mouth. The boy says, \textit{I was a baby.} Says, \textit{She doesn’t remember him} and points to his silent sister.

Sometimes, I lie about my father. 
\textit{He died, I say, in a car wreck or He fell off a roof or maybe He’s coming soon.}

Next week and next week and next week . . . but if my sister’s nearby she shakes her head. Says, \textit{She’s making up stories again.}

Says, \textit{We don’t have a father anymore.}

Says, \textit{Our grandfather’s our father now.}

Says, \textit{Sometimes, that’s the way things happen.}

uncle robert

Uncle Robert has moved to New York City!

I hear him taking the stairs two at a time and then he is at our door, knocking loud until our mother opens it,

curlers in her hair, robe pulled closed, whispering, \textit{It’s almost midnight, don’t you wake my children!}

But we are already awake, all four of us, smiling and jumping around my uncle: \textit{What’d you bring me?}

Our mama \textit{shushes} us, says, \textit{It’s too late for presents and the like.}

But we want presents and the like. And she, too, is smiling now, happy to see her baby brother who lives all the way over in Far Rockaway where the ocean is right there if you look out your window.
Robert opens his hand to reveal a pair of silver earrings, says to my sister, *This is a gift for how smart you are.*

I want
to be smart like Dell, I want
someone to hand me silver and gold
just because my brain clicks into thinking whenever it needs to but
I am not smart like Dell so I watch her press
the silver moons into her ears
I say, *I know a girl ten times smarter than her. She gets diamonds every time she gets a hundred on a test.*
And Robert looks at me, his dark eyes smiling, asks,* Is that something you made up? Or something real?*

In my own head,
it’s real as anything.

In my head
all kinds of people are doing all kinds of things.
I want to tell him this, that
the world we’re living in right here in Brownsville isn’t the only place. But now my brothers are asking,

*What’d you bring me,* and my uncle is pulling gifts from his pockets,
from his leather briefcase, from inside his socks.
He hands
my mother a record, a small 45—James Brown,¹
who none of us like because he screams when he sings. But my mother puts it on the record player, turned way down low and then even us kids are dancing around—Robert showing us the steps he learned at the Far Rockaway parties. His feet are magic
and we all try to slide across the floor like he does, our own feet, again and again, betraying us.

*Teach us, Robert!* we keep saying. *Teach us!*

* * *

---

1. *James Brown* (1933–2006) American singer and dancer, and founding father of funk music. He is often referred to as the “Godfather of Soul.”
wishes

When he takes us to the park, Uncle Robert tells us,

*If you catch a dandelion puff, you can make a wish.*

Anything you want will come true, he says as we chase the feathery wishes around swings, beneath sliding boards, until we can hold them in our hands, close our eyes tight, whisper our dream then set it floating out into the universe hoping our uncle is telling the truth, hoping each thing we wish for will one day come true.

* * *

believing

The stories start like this—

Jack and Jill went up a hill, my uncle sings.

*I went up a hill yesterday,* I say.

What hill?

In the park.

What park?

Halsey Park.

Who was with you?

Nobody.

But you’re not allowed to go to the park without anyone.

I just did.

Maybe you dreamed it, my uncle says.

No, I really went.

And my uncle likes the stories I’m making up.

. . . Along came a spider and sat down beside her.

I got bit by a spider, I say.

When?

The other day.

Where?

Right on my foot.

Show us.

It’s gone now.

But my mother accuses me of lying.

*If you lie,* she says, *one day you’ll steal.*

I won’t steal.

It’s hard to understand how one leads to the other, how stories could ever make us criminals.
It’s hard to understand
the way my brain works—so different
from everybody around me.
How each new story
I’m told becomes a thing
that happens,
in some other way
to me . . .!

*Keep making up stories,* my uncle says.
*You’re lying,* my mother says.

Maybe the truth is somewhere in between
all that I’m told
and memory.


---

**Comprehension Check**

Complete the following items after you finish your first read.

1. In “brooklyn rain,” what does Woodson’s mother say?

2. In “gifted,” what does the poet hope she will one day be able to do with words?

3. In “uncle robert,” what do Woodson and her siblings want their uncle to teach them?

4. **Notebook** Write a mini-summary (one or two sentences) of each poem in the excerpt from *Brown Girl Dreaming*.

---

**RESEARCH**

**Research to Clarify** Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the excerpt. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned help you better understand an aspect of the memoir?
Close Read the Text

1. This model, from lines 1–6 of “brooklyn rain,” shows two sample annotations, along with questions and conclusions. Close read the passage, and find another detail to annotate. Then, write a question and your conclusion.

   **ANNOTATE:** These phrases appeal to the senses of smell and touch.
   **QUESTION:** Why does Woodson use language that appeals to the senses?
   **CONCLUDE:** These phrases create images for readers of how Woodson experienced the rain in Greenville.

   The rain here is different than the way it rains in Greenville. No sweet smell of honeysuckle. /No soft squish of pine. No slip and slide through grass. /Just mama saying, Stay inside today. It’s raining. /and me at the window. Nothing to do but/watch . . .

   **ANNOTATE:** The word No repeats.
   **QUESTION:** Why does Woodson repeat the word No?
   **CONCLUDE:** The repetition emphasizes the ways in which Woodson’s life in Brooklyn is different from her life in Greenville.

   2. For more practice, go back into the text, and complete the close-read notes.

   3. Revisit a section of the text you found important during your first read. Read this section closely, and annotate what you notice. Ask yourself questions such as “Why did the author make this choice?” What can you conclude?

Analyze the Text

**Notebook** Respond to these questions.

1. (a) List three details from the poems that connect to an aspect of Woodson’s personality. (b) **Make Inferences** What do these details suggest about Woodson as a child?

2. **Speculate** Why do you think Woodson likes to make up stories so much?

3. **Make a Judgment** Woodson’s mother worries that if Woodson lies, one day she will steal. Do you think this is a reasonable concern? Explain.

4. **Essential Question:** What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up? What have you learned about the challenges and triumphs of growing up from reading this selection?
Analyze Craft and Structure

Memoir and Poetry  In a memoir, an author tells a true story of an important time in his or her life. Most memoirs are written in first-person point of view, or from the author’s perspective. The author tells what happened and what he or she thought and felt about it. Memoirs are usually written in prose, or complete sentences and paragraphs. Most also use dialogue to show how people speak and what they are like. In this memoir, Jacqueline Woodson takes a different approach. Instead of prose, she tells her story in a series of poems that include these elements:

- stanzas, or sections, rather than paragraphs
- complete sentences that are broken up into separate lines
- language that breaks certain rules—for example, Woodson sometimes uses sentence fragments and nonstandard capitalization (see the sentence fragment in lines 32–36 of “believing”)

Woodson’s choice to tell her story through poems affects how readers understand it. It allows Woodson to emphasize certain words, phrases, and ideas. She also uses storytelling elements, such as dialogue. This combination of poetry and storytelling helps Woodson immerse readers even more deeply into her childhood world.

Practice

Notebook  Respond to these questions.

1. (a) Identify one example of a private thought or feeling Woodson shares in her memoir. (b) Explain how the use of first-person point of view allows her to share this detail.

2. (a) Identify the sentence fragments in lines 2–3 of “brooklyn rain.” (b) Explain how these fragments help to create a vivid picture of the rain in Greenville.

3. (a) In lines 4–11 of “brooklyn rain,” what word appears on its own line three times? (b) Read the lines aloud. Why do you think Woodson chose to set this word apart in this way?

4. (a) In line 23 of “sometimes,” Woodson’s sister says “Sometimes, that’s the way things happen.” What does this tell you about her sister’s feelings about life? (b) How might the stories of Woodson’s childhood be different if they were told from her sister’s point of view?
Concept Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>squish</th>
<th>twist</th>
<th>shushes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>humming</td>
<td>twirl</td>
<td>feathery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why These Words? These concept words are all examples of **sensory language**, or words that appeal to the five senses: touch, sight, smell, hearing, and taste. In *Brown Girl Dreaming*, Woodson uses these sensory words to create **imagery**, or vivid word pictures. Imagery helps readers understand ideas in a deeper way than plain explanations might allow. For example, the words *twist* and *twirl* help the reader understand Woodson’s difficulty with reading: “the words twist /twirl across the page.”

1. How does the concept vocabulary sharpen the reader’s understanding of Woodson’s feelings?

2. What other words in the selection are examples of sensory language?

Practice

**Notebook** The concept vocabulary words appear in *Brown Girl Dreaming*.

1. Find each concept vocabulary word in the text, and write down the sentence in which it appears. Then, rewrite each sentence without using any sensory language. Make sure the sentence has the same basic meaning. For example, “When I read, the words twist /twirl across the page” might become “When I read, I have trouble following the words.”

2. How did your changes affect the meaning of the sentences? Did removing the sensory language improve your understanding of the concept vocabulary? If so, how?

Word Study

**Notebook** **Onomatopoeia** The concept vocabulary words *squish*, *humming*, and *shushes* are examples of **onomatopoeia**, or words that imitate the sounds they mean. Animal sounds—such as *woof*, *moo*, and *meow*—are other examples of onomatopoeia.

1. Use each onomatopoeic concept vocabulary word in a sentence of your own.

2. Jot down other examples of onomatopoeia that you have come across in your own experience or in the selection.
Conventions

**Common, Proper, and Possessive Nouns** A noun names a person, a place, a thing, or an idea. Here are several types of nouns:

- A **common noun** names any one of a class of people, places, things, or ideas. Common nouns are not capitalized.

- A **proper noun** names a specific person, place, thing, or idea. Proper nouns are capitalized. However, a poet may sometimes choose not to capitalize a proper noun, for effect or for style. For example, Jacqueline Woodson doesn’t capitalize *brooklyn*, even though it is the name of a specific place.

- A **possessive noun** shows ownership. Possessive nouns function as adjectives by modifying a noun or pronoun in a sentence. Most singular possessive nouns end in an apostrophe and the letter *s* (*'s*). An example is *sister’s*. Most plural possessive nouns end in the letter *s* and an apostrophe (‘*s*). An example is *sisters’*.

The chart shows examples of common, proper, and possessive nouns from the excerpt from *Brown Girl Dreaming*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMON NOUNS</th>
<th>PROPER NOUNS</th>
<th>POSSESSIVE NOUNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And my uncle likes the stories I’m making up. (“believing,” line 14)</td>
<td>. . . Robert showing us the steps he learned / at the Far Rockaway parties. (“uncle robert,” lines 33–34)</td>
<td>. . . stories in my head / take me back there, set me down in Daddy’s garden. . . . (“brooklyn rain,” lines 23–24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Read It**

1. In each sentence, mark proper nouns that should be capitalized. Add an apostrophe to possessive nouns where needed.
   a. hopes home in south carolina is very different from ericas home in new york.

   b. jacquelines plans for the weekend include hiking in smith park and calling her grandmother in arizona.

   c. uncle roberts silly songs and dance lessons make us smile and laugh.

2. Reread “brooklyn rain.” Then, mark at least one common noun, one proper noun, and one possessive noun in the poem.

**Write It**

**Notebook** Write a paragraph about the similarities and the differences between Woodson and her sister Odella. Include at least two proper nouns and one possessive noun. Label all common nouns.
Writing to Sources

In *Brown Girl Dreaming*, Jacqueline Woodson tells stories in poem form about specific moments from her childhood. In each poem, she also shares her thoughts and feelings about the moment she describes. The separate poems work together to tell the story of Woodson’s childhood.

**Assignment**

Write a brief poem in which you use Woodson’s memoir as inspiration. Follow these steps:

- Choose a single moment on which to focus. It can be something small or seemingly unimportant. For example, you might write about what you see from your window in the morning, or about eating lunch at school. Then, write a regular prose paragraph in which you describe the moment. Include details that show what the moment looked and felt like.

- Change your paragraph into a poem by applying elements of poetry such as the ones Woodson uses. For example, break up sentences to make poetic lines. Consider repeating important words or setting them on their own lines. You may even play with incomplete sentences or fragments. Try to make the moment you described in your paragraph even more vivid as a poem.

- Once your poem is organized, consider adding dialogue or more descriptive details. Alternatively, you may need to cut some details. Work to make your poem capture the moment and make it fresh and alive for readers.

**Vocabulary Connection**  Consider using several of the concept vocabulary words in your writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>squish</th>
<th>twist</th>
<th>shushes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>feathery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflect on Your Writing**

After you have written your poem, answer the following questions.

1. What was the most challenging part of the assignment?

2. What poetic and narrative techniques did you use in your writing? How did they help you bring your ideas to life?

3. **Why These Words?** The words you choose make a difference in your writing. Which words did you choose to create a vivid picture for your readers?
Speaking and Listening

Assignment
In the last three lines of the excerpt, Woodson questions the differences between the ideas in her head and reality: “Maybe the truth is somewhere in between / all that I’m told / and memory.” Woodson also discusses how her mother often says she is lying. In telling stories, do you think Woodson is lying or just using her imagination? Is there a point at which the use of imagination becomes a lie? Take a position on these questions, and participate in a brief partner discussion in which you express your views. Use examples from the text and from your own experience to support your ideas. After you and your partner talk, regroup with the class and share highlights of your discussion.

1. **Prepare for the Discussion** Decide whether you think Woodson’s use of imagination as a child goes so far it could be considered lying. Then, determine why you feel this way. Note examples from the text and your own experience to support your reasons.

2. **Discuss With Your Partner** Use your notes as you and your partner talk about the issue. Consider the following questions:
   - Do you and your partner agree on your basic position?
   - If so, do you have similar or different reasons and examples that support your position?
   - If not, do the reasons and examples your partner offers change your opinion?

3. **Discuss With Your Class** Begin the class discussion by having each set of partners take turns offering a different idea about Woodson’s use of imagination. Do not repeat an idea that was already introduced by your classmates; try to come up with a new idea even if it was not the one you had originally planned on sharing. Once each set of partners has contributed, discuss the ways in which your ideas are similar and different.

4. **Reflect on the Discussion** After both the partner and group discussions, consider how talking about ideas helped you better understand your own thinking. Did your initial position change as a result of the discussions? Why or why not?
About the Artist

The cartoonist Bill Watterson (b. 1958) is the creator of the popular Calvin and Hobbes comic strip and a two-time recipient of the Reuben Award for Outstanding Cartoonist of the Year. He graduated from Kenyon College in Ohio, and he had his first Calvin and Hobbes strip published at the age of twenty-seven. Watterson fought against the commercialization and merchandising of his comics.

Gallery of Calvin and Hobbes Comics

Media Vocabulary

The following words will be useful to you as you analyze, discuss, and write about the comic strips.

| panel: individual frame of a comic, depicting a single moment | • Panels work together to tell a story.  
• Panels cannot show everything that happens, so readers must use their imaginations to fill in the blanks. |
| --- | --- |
| encapsulation: choice of important scenes to display in each panel | • The layout of the scenes influences the readers’ interpretations.  
• Authors and cartoonists can use size and shape to give more or less weight, or importance, to scenes. |
| speech balloon: display of what a character is speaking or thinking | • The size, shape, and color of the speech balloon can show the emotion of the speaker.  
• Speech balloons can also show emotion or meaning through the use of punctuation marks. |

First Review MEDIA: ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first review. You will have an opportunity to complete a close review after your first review.

STANDARDS

Reading Literature

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Language

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
BACKGROUND

*Calvin and Hobbes* was a highly popular comic strip that ran from 1985 to 1995. It follows the adventures of Calvin, a clever six-year-old with a wild imagination, and his stuffed tiger and imaginary friend, Hobbes. *Calvin and Hobbes* has appeared in thousands of newspapers worldwide and has attracted fans of all ages.
CARTOON 1: Ghosts

CARTOON 2: Do You Like Her?
Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first review.

1. In “Ghosts,” where are Calvin and Hobbes?

2. In “Do You Like Her?” how does Calvin respond when Hobbes asks him whether he likes the new girl in his class?

3. In “Snowman Xing,” why does Calvin’s dad yell to Calvin that he’s late for work?

4. Notebook Write a one-sentence description of each comic strip.
Close Review

Revisit the comic strips and your first-review notes. Write down any new observations that seem important. What questions do you have? What can you conclude?

Analyze the Media

Notebook  Respond to these questions.

1. **Make Inferences** An inference is a conclusion you draw about something that is not directly stated or shown. (a) In “Ghosts,” what do you think happens between the third and fourth panels? (b) What details in the comic support your inference?

2. **Speculate** Why do you think Calvin refuses to answer Hobbes’s questions about the new girl in class? Explain.

3. **Draw Conclusions** What can you tell about the relationship between Calvin and Hobbes? Explain, citing details from the comics that you used to draw your conclusion.

4. **Essential Question:** What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up? What have you learned about the challenges and triumphs of growing up by reading these comic strips?

Media Vocabulary

| panel          | encapsulation | speech balloon |

Respond to these questions.

1. Why might Watterson have included only one panel in “Snowman Xing”?

2. In “Do You Like Her?” how does Watterson indicate that a character is speaking with emotion?

3. In “Ghosts,” some of the panels include dialogue, whereas others do not. Why do you think Watterson chose to have panels without dialogue in this comic strip?
Research

Assignment

*Calvin and Hobbes* was a very popular comic strip, which appeared in newspapers for more than ten years. Conduct research in preparation for a class discussion about what made this comic strip so popular. In your research, look for examples of the comic strip from different years, information about Bill Watterson, and comments by fans in response to the comics.

Conduct Research To prepare for the class discussion, consider these questions, and perform research to answer them.

- What did fans like about the comic strip?
- Why did Watterson create *Calvin and Hobbes*? What were his influences?
- What qualities do you think made the comic strip successful for so long?
- Do you think the comic strip would still be popular today? Why or why not?

As you conduct your research, follow these guidelines.

- Consult multiple reliable sources of information—both print and digital. Ask yourself questions like the ones in the chart to make sure the sources you consult are reliable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN QUESTION</th>
<th>RELATED QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *Does the source have a good reputation?* | • Who is responsible for the information? Is it a person, a publisher, or another organization?  
  • Do people generally agree that the source is trustworthy? |
| *Does the source present solid facts?* | • Does the source present mostly facts or mostly opinions?  
  • If it expresses opinions, does it clearly say so? |
| *Does the source avoid bias—prejudice or an unfair opinion?* | • Does the source ignore any facts that are important?  
  • Does the source twist the meaning of any facts? |

- Jot down relevant details and examples to support your ideas during the class discussion.
- Write down any additional questions that your research raises and that you would like to discuss with the class.

Hold a Discussion As a class, discuss the findings of your research. Keep the following tips in mind:

- Support your ideas by citing specific details from the selection and your research.
- If you are unsure of what other classmates are trying to say, ask questions to help them expand on their ideas.
- Reflect on new ideas that other classmates express, and paraphrase their ideas to confirm your understanding of them. To paraphrase, restate their ideas in your own words.
Write a Nonfiction Narrative

You have read selections in which people use their imaginations in different ways to shape their childhood worlds. In the Calvin and Hobbes comics, a young boy experiences life’s ups and downs with his constant companion and imaginary friend. In the excerpt from Brown Girl Dreaming, Jacqueline Woodson describes how she used her imagination to navigate the challenges of growing up. Now, you will explore this idea by writing a personal narrative in which you tell a story about your own experience with imagination.

Assignment

In the poem “another day,” Jacqueline Woodson’s mother tells the children, “Today I want you to find another way to play.” Write a personal narrative in response to the following prompt:

When did you have to use your imagination to find another way to do something?

For example, perhaps you found another way to play, solve a problem, make a friend, or learn a new skill. In your narrative, tell the story of your experience and reflect on the ways in which using your imagination made things better.

Elements of a Nonfiction Narrative

A nonfiction narrative is a true story. A personal narrative is a true story about the writer’s own life. In a personal narrative, the writer uses the first-person point of view to relate experiences and events.

A well-written nonfiction narrative contains the following elements:

- a conflict or problem
- people who play a role in the events described in the narrative
- a clear sequence of events with transitional words and phrases that show shifts in time or setting
- narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, that help to convey experiences and events in a memorable way
- precise words, descriptive details, and sensory language that show what settings and people are like
- a conclusion that follows from the experiences and events in the narrative

Model Nonfiction Narrative

For a model of a well-crafted nonfiction narrative, see the Launch Text, “Wagon Train at Dusk.”

Challenge yourself to find all of the elements of an effective nonfiction narrative in the text. You will have an opportunity to review these elements as you prepare to write your own nonfiction narrative.
Prewriting / Planning

Focus Your Topic  Reread the assignment. Consider the experience you would like to describe in your narrative. Summarize what happens in your narrative by completing this sentence starter.

I used my imagination to find another way to do something when ____________________________.

Explore Setting  Vivid, specific descriptions of places in your story can help your readers better understand your experiences and insights. Use the chart to write down the places you want to describe. Then, note sensory details you can use to bring those places to life for readers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACES</th>
<th>SENSORY DETAILS (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, sensations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

Gather Details About People and Events  Now that you have thought about the setting of your narrative, gather details about the people and events. To do so, think about these questions:

- **Events**: What events triggered the need for you to use your imagination? What events occurred as a result?
- **People**: Who are the main characters of your narrative? What specific words describe their personalities? How did they respond to the events you are describing?

Study the Launch Text to identify ways in which the writer uses details to make the people, setting, and events come alive.

Identify the Conflict  A successful narrative centers around a clear conflict. Narrow your focus by identifying a specific conflict you will explore in your nonfiction story. To do so, ask yourself these questions:

- What did I want? Why did I have to find another way to get it? Who or what was getting in the way?
- How did using my imagination help me overcome this obstacle?
Drafting

**Organize a Sequence of Events**  Narratives are often organized in chronological order, so that one event leads to the next in the order in which they actually happened. Use the organizer to list the events of your story in chronological order. Fill out the “First” line and the “Next” lines. Add more lines, if necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. First:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Next:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Next:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Next:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Next:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signal Shifts**  Think about places in your story where the sequence of events might be more complicated. Consider these questions:

- Does the story start out in one setting and move to another?
- Does a new person enter the story?
- Does something happen either before or after the main events?

**Time-order transitions**, such as *first, then, next, earlier, and later* can help you establish a clear order of events. **Spatial-order transitions** such as *in front of, in the distance, beyond, and nearby* can help you make settings clearer. Determine which transition words to use, and where in your narrative to use them.

**Write a First Draft**  Use your chronological list as a guide as you draft your story. Add an introduction in which you describe the setting and people involved. Add a conclusion in which you reflect on what the experiences you describe meant to you or what you learned from them.
Author’s Style: Voice

**Voice** A writer's voice is the personality that comes through his or her language. It is the quality that makes your writing sound like you. These literary elements help to create a writer’s voice:

- **Word Choice:** the words a writer chooses
- **Sentence Structure:** the way the writer constructs sentences
- **Tone:** the writer’s attitude toward the subject

**Read It**

This chart identifies some of the elements that create the voice of the author of the Launch Text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vivid Words</th>
<th>jolted awake by a ripping sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Short and Long Sentences           | • *That doesn’t stop me.*  
  • *He always came up with these unique creations, beautifully conceived and executed.* |
| Casual Tone                        | “*Nope,*” *I tell her.* |

**Write It**

Ask yourself the following questions to help develop your voice.

- Am I using words with which I am comfortable, even as I try to stretch my vocabulary?
- Do my descriptions really show how I see things?
- Does my writing seem true and authentic?

Also, make sure to consider your readers by varying your sentence structures. For example, avoid beginning too many sentences with the word *I*. Instead, develop your voice by trying out different types of sentences. The chart shows some options.

**STANDARDS**

**Writing**

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

- d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.

**Language**

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

- a. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

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**Performance Task: Write a Nonfiction Narrative** 35
Revising

Evaluating Your Draft

Use the following checklist to evaluate the effectiveness of your first draft. Then, use the checklist and the instruction on this page to guide your revision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS AND ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>EVIDENCE AND ELABORATION</th>
<th>CONVENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides an introduction that establishes the setting and introduces the people being described.</td>
<td>Effectively uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description.</td>
<td>Is free of grammar and spelling errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents a clear chronological sequence of events that are linked by a variety of transitions.</td>
<td>Uses descriptive details, sensory language, and precise words and phrases.</td>
<td>Uses a variety of sentence lengths and avoids beginning too many sentences with I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a conclusion that follows from the events and experiences in the narrative.</td>
<td>Establishes the writer’s voice through word choice, sentence structure, and tone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revising for Evidence and Elaboration

Add Narrative Techniques Scan your draft and note places where the story seems dull. Bring those sections to life by using dialogue or pacing.

- **Dialogue** refers to spoken conversations in a text. Find explanations in your narrative that would be more exciting as dialogue. Make sure your dialogue accurately reflects what people really said. Use quotation marks to set off dialogue from the rest of the text.

- **Pacing** is the sense of speed with which a story moves forward. Look for places where a series of short sentences would speed up the action. Use longer, descriptive sentences to show a person or setting.

Use Precise Language To write a lively narrative that holds your readers’ interest, avoid vague words and phrases that leave the reader with questions such as What kind? How? In what way? How often? and To what extent? As you review and revise your work, replace vague words with precise words that convey your ideas more vividly and accurately. Here are some examples:

**Instead of...**

- noun: stuff use toys, postcards, t-shirts
- verb: said use exclaimed, shouted, asked
- adjective: nice use friendly, generous, kind
- adverb: slowly use lazily, casually, carefully

STANDARDS

Writing

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.

e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
Editing and Proofreading

**Edit for Conventions** Reread your draft, and correct errors in grammar and word usage. Be sure you have included a variety of sentence types.

**Proofread for Accuracy** As you proofread, make sure that any dialogue is enclosed in quotation marks. Refer to the Launch Text for examples of how to punctuate dialogue.

Publishing and Presenting

Create a final version of your narrative in a digital format. Use a class or school Web site, a class whiteboard, or email to share and comment on other classmates’ narratives. As you comment, consider the ways in which your narratives are similar and different. Remember to be polite and respectful when commenting on the work of others.

Reflecting

Reflect on what you learned as you wrote your narrative. How did writing about a personal experience help you better understand its significance? What was the hardest part of this assignment? What did you learn from reviewing the work of others?
ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up?

Growing up isn’t always easy. Some challenges are difficult to overcome, but learning how to persevere through hardships is a triumph in itself. It is a triumph because every new experience is a lesson learned. You will work in a group to continue your exploration of some of these challenges and triumphs.

Small-Group Learning Strategies
Throughout your life, in school, in your community, and in your career, you will continue to learn and work with others.

Review these strategies and the actions you can take to practice them as you work in teams. Add ideas of your own for each step. Use these strategies during Small-Group Learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare</td>
<td>• Complete your assignments so that you are prepared for group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organize your thinking so you can contribute to your group’s discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate fully</td>
<td>• Make eye contact to signal that you are listening and taking in what is being said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use text evidence when making a point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support others</td>
<td>• Build on ideas from others in your group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Invite others who have not yet spoken to do so.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify</td>
<td>• Paraphrase the ideas of others to ensure that your understanding is correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ask follow-up questions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>•</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PERFORMANCE TASK

PRESENT A RETELLING

After reading the selections, your group will plan and deliver a retelling of the childhood experiences explored in one of the selections. You will enhance your retelling with multimedia.
Working as a Team

1. **Take a Position** In your group, discuss the following question:

   What ideas and experiences about growing up can young people share with one another?

   As you take turns sharing your ideas, be sure to provide reasons and examples. After all group members have shared, discuss the ideas and what they mean to you.

2. **List Your Rules** As a group, decide on the rules that you will follow as you work together. Two samples are provided. Add two more of your own. You may add or revise rules based on your experience together.

   - Everyone should participate in group discussions.
   - People should not interrupt.

   
   
   3. **Apply the Rules** Share what you have learned about growing up. Make sure each person in the group contributes. Take notes and be prepared to share with the class one thing that you heard from another member of your group.

4. **Name Your Group** Choose a name that reflects the unit topic.

   Our group’s name: ________________________

5. **Create a Communication Plan** Decide how you want to communicate with one another. For example, you might use online collaboration tools, email, or instant messaging.

   Our group’s decision: ________________________
Making a Schedule

First, find out the due dates for the Small-Group activities. Then, preview the texts and activities with your group and make a schedule for completing the tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELECTION</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of the Rights of the Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaela DePrince: The War Orphan Who Became a Ballerina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>from Bad Boy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working on Group Projects

Different projects require different roles. As your group works together, you’ll find it more effective if each person has a specific role. Before beginning a project, discuss the necessary roles, and choose one for each group member. Here are some possible roles; add your own ideas.

- **Project Manager:** monitors the schedule and keeps everyone on task
- **Researcher:** organizes research activities
- **Recorder:** takes notes during group meetings
About the United Nations

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization that is made up of 193 member states from around the world. All 193 member states collectively form the General Assembly. The General Assembly meets every year to discuss, address, and make policies that protect fundamental human rights and maintain global peace. One of these policies was to adopt and expand Eglantyne Jebb’s document, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

Declaration of the Rights of the Child

Concept Vocabulary

As you perform your first read, you will encounter these words.

entitled  enactment  compulsory

Base Words

If these words are unfamiliar, look for base words you know. Use your knowledge of the “inside” word, along with context, to determine meaning. Here is an example of how to apply the strategy.

Unfamiliar Word: complimentary

Context: She made complimentary remarks about the tasty food.

Familiar “Inside” Word: compliment, meaning “something good to say about someone or something”

Conclusion: The food was tasty, which is a good thing. Complimentary may mean “expressing good comments.”

Confirm: Use a dictionary to verify the meaning you infer.

Apply your knowledge of base words and other vocabulary strategies to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words you encounter during your first read.

First Read NONFICTION

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete a close read after your first read.

STANDARDS

Reading Informational Text

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Language

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
BACKGROUND
In the late nineteenth century, many countries began to officially recognize that children need special legal protection. The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the United Nations in 1959, is the first major international agreement on children’s rights. It was inspired by the original declaration written by Eglantyne Jebb, a British activist.

1. THIS DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD to the end that he may have a happy childhood and enjoy for his own good and for the good of society the rights and freedoms herein set forth, and calls upon parents, upon men and women as individuals, and upon voluntary organizations, local authorities and national governments to recognize these rights and strive for their observance by legislative and other measures progressively taken in accordance1 with the following principles:

2. The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. Every child, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.

1. accordance (uh KAWRD uhns) n. agreement.
The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities\(^2\) by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.

The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end, special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care\(^3\). The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.

The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.

The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and, in any case, in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security; a child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and to those without adequate means of support. Payment of State and other assistance towards the maintenance of children of large families is desirable.

The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society. The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents. The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be

\(^2\) facilities (fuh SIHL uh tee) \(n.\) buildings designed for a specific purpose.

\(^3\) pre-natal and post-natal care care given to women before and after the birth of a child.
directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavor to promote the enjoyment of this right.

9. The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.

10. The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form. The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development.

11. The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, and in full consciousness⁴ that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

⁴ consciousness (KON shuhs nihs) n. awareness or understanding.

Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read. Review and clarify details with your group.

1. Which children are entitled to the rights this document sets forth?

2. Identify two rights defined or described in this document.

3. According to the document, what should children who are physically or mentally disabled be given?

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the Declaration?
MAKING MEANING

Close Read the Text

With your group, revisit sections of the text you marked during your first read. Annotate details that you notice. What questions do you have? What can you conclude?

Analyze the Text

Notebook Complete the activities.

1. Review and Clarify With your group, reread paragraph 8 of the Declaration. Discuss the kind of education to which all children are entitled, according to the document. What did the UN General Assembly hope education would accomplish for children?

2. Present and Discuss Now, work with your group to share passages from the selection that you found especially important. Take turns presenting your passages. Discuss what you noticed in the selection, what questions you asked, and what conclusions you reached.

3. Essential Question: What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up? What has this text taught you about childhood? Discuss with your group.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Concept Vocabulary

entitled enactment compulsory

Why These Words? The concept vocabulary words from the text are related. With your group, determine what the words have in common. Write your ideas, and add another word that fits the category.

Practice

Notebook Check your understanding of the concept vocabulary words by using them in sentences. In each sentence, provide context clues that hint at the vocabulary word’s meaning.

Word Study

Notebook Latin Root: -puls- The Declaration states that education for children should be free and compulsory. The word compulsory is formed from the Latin root -puls- (also spelled -pel-), which means “push,” “drive,” or “force.” Write a definition of compulsory that shows how the root -puls- contributes to its meaning. Find another word formed from this root. Write the word and its meaning.
Analyze Craft and Structure

Development of Ideas: Structure  The Declaration of the Rights of the Child expresses its ideas using a simple structure. Paragraph 1 explains the purpose and goal of the Declaration. Paragraph 2 explains the scope of the Declaration, or the people and rights that it covers. Paragraphs 3–11 list and describe specific rights.

Practice

Notebook  Work together to answer the questions and complete the activities.

1. Reread paragraph 1. What are the purpose and goal of the Declaration?

2. Reread paragraph 2. Whose rights does the Declaration set forth?

3. Choose three paragraphs from paragraphs 3–11. In the chart, identify the paragraphs you have chosen. List the rights that each paragraph describes. Then, state whether you think the rights are described in a way that is confusing or clear. Explain why.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARAGRAPH</th>
<th>RIGHTS LISTED</th>
<th>CLEAR OR CONFUSING? WHY?</th>
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4. As a group, discuss whether the text is organized effectively. Would the issues being presented have been clearer or more powerful if statistics, charts, or personal stories had been included? Why or why not?

5. Why do you think the United Nations General Assembly organized the information in this way? Discuss with your group. Come to an agreement about at least two reasons. Write them here.
Conventions

Pronoun Case Effective writing involves correct usage of pronouns. A pronoun is a word that takes the place of one or more nouns or other pronouns. Pronoun case is the form a pronoun takes to show whether it is being used as a subject, an object, or a possessive. Writers use pronouns to avoid repetition of nouns in their writing, and the case they use depends on the pronoun’s function in a sentence.

There are three pronoun cases, as shown in the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRONOUN CASE</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Nominative** (or Subjective) Case: names the subject of a verb or is used in the predicate after a linking verb nominative pronouns: I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they | He likes the sound of the train on the tracks.  
They searched online for the article.  
The singers of the duet will be she and I. |
| **Objective Case:** names the direct object of a verb, the indirect object of a verb, or the object of a preposition objective pronouns: me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them | Domingo sent it to Mel.  
Please give me the earrings.  
The cafeteria chefs had prepared a meal for us. |
| **Possessive Case:** shows ownership possessive pronouns: my, your, his, her, its, our, their, mine, yours, hers, ours, theirs | After an hour of running, my legs ached.  
Please stick out your tongue for the doctor.  
Theo works during his summer breaks. |

Read It

1. Mark the pronouns in each sentence. Label the case of each pronoun.
   a. Children are not responsible for their own education.
   b. When a child is born, he or she will be entitled to special human rights.
   c. Children are important, and we protect them from discrimination.
   d. The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

Write It

Notebook Read the example. Notice that the underlined text has been replaced with a pronoun. Do the same for the sentences in items 1–3.

**Original:** The writer of the first declaration is Eglantyne Jebb.

**Revision:** The writer of the first declaration is she.

1. Eglantyne Jebb’s goal was to help children.
2. As a result, Eglantyne Jebb founded an organization.
3. The name of the organization is Save the Children.
Writing to Sources

Assignment
Choose one of the options and write a response. If necessary, conduct brief research to support or develop your ideas. Work with your group to discuss and plan, but do your own writing.

Option 1: Write an informational article that describes the purposes for which the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was written. What do you think the writers wanted to achieve? Make sure readers understand the main ideas of the Declaration by including a summary.

Option 2: Choose two of the rights listed in the Declaration that you feel are most important. Then, write a brief essay in which you explain the reasons for your choices. Why do these rights matter so much? Include details from the text as well as your own opinions and any examples you might find through research.

Project Plan
Before you begin, meet as a group to discuss each student’s choice of project and to share ideas. Go back to the Declaration and work together to clarify any sections that might be confusing. Then, work independently to write.

Finding Examples
Choose passages from the Declaration that clearly support your ideas. Make sure you quote them accurately. Use a chart like this one to keep track of your examples. Remember to include appropriate citations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>IDEA IT SUPPORTS</th>
<th>CITATION INFORMATION</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Present
Organize a brief presentation in which you explain the different main ideas each member of your group expressed. Share your presentation with the class.

STANDARDS
Writing
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

EVIDENCE LOG
Before moving on to a new selection, go to your Evidence Log and record what you learned from the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.
About the Author

William Kremer is a feature writer at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), a major radio, television, and media company.

Michaela DePrince: The War Orphan Who Became a Ballerina

Concept Vocabulary

As you perform your first read of “Michaela DePrince: The War Orphan Who Became a Ballerina,” you will encounter these words.

antagonism  refugee  distraught

Context Clues To find the meaning of an unfamiliar word, look for context clues—other words and phrases that appear nearby in the text. There are various types of context clues that can help you as you read.

Context: Rather than wearing leotards during dance class, she covered herself with sweatshirts.

Conclusion: The girl covers herself with sweatshirts instead of leotards during dance class. Leotards must be another type of clothing. Perhaps they are a type of clothing worn by dancers in particular.

Apply your knowledge of context clues and other vocabulary strategies to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words you encounter during your first read.

First Read NONFICTION

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete a close read after your first read.

STANDARDS

Reading Informational Text
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Language
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
   a. Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
From 1991 to 2002, Sierra Leone went through a violent civil war. During this decade, life in Sierra Leone was extremely dangerous due to a near complete lack of law in the country. Tens of thousands of people lost their lives, and countless families were torn apart. Children who lost their parents during the war became known as “war orphans.”

A professional stage debut is a huge event in the life of any ballerina, but Michaela DePrince’s recent tour of South Africa also marked the end of an extraordinary journey from her childhood as a war orphan in Sierra Leone.

“I got out of a terrible place,” says DePrince. “I had no idea I would be here—I’m living my dream every single day.”

She was born in Sierra Leone in 1995. Her parents named her Mabinty, but after they both died during the civil war, she was sent to an orphanage, where she became a number.
“They named us from one to 27,” she recalls. “One was the favorite child of the orphanage and 27 was the least favorite.”

DePrince was number 27, because she suffers from vitiligo, a condition in which patches of skin lose pigmentation. To the “Aunties” who ran the orphanage, it was evidence of the evil spirit within the three-year-old. She still recalls the fierce antagonism of the women.

“They thought of me as a devil’s child. They told me every day how I wasn’t going to get adopted, because nobody would want a devil’s child,” she says.

Although the other girls in the orphanage were encouraged not to play with her, DePrince formed a close friendship with child number 26, also called Mabinty, who was disliked by the Aunties because she was left-handed.

The pair shared a sleeping mat. At night, when Michaela had bad dreams, her “mat-mate” would soothe her with kind words and stories.

* * *

Her memories of early childhood are fragmentary—moments of piercing clarity which have been reassembled in date order. She believes it was soon after witnessing the killing of her teacher that she stumbled upon something that was to shape the rest of her life—a discarded magazine.

“There was a lady on it, she was on her tippy-toes, in this pink, beautiful tutu. I had never seen anything like this—a costume that stuck out with glitter on it, with just so much beauty. I could just see the beauty in that person and the hope and the love and just everything that I didn’t have.

“And I just thought: ‘Wow! This is what I want to be.’”

DePrince ripped the photograph out of the magazine and, for the lack of anywhere else to keep it, stuffed the treasured scrap in her underwear.

One day, the orphanage was warned it would be bombed and the children were marched to a distant refugee camp. Here DePrince learned that her beloved mat-mate was to be adopted.

An American woman, Elaine DePrince, had come to the camp to adopt child number 26, now called Mia. For a moment, Michaela was distraught because she believed that all the other children would be taken to new homes and she would be left behind.
But abruptly there was a change of plan. When the Aunties told Elaine DePrince that Michaela was unlikely to find another home, she decided to adopt both girls.

Michaela remembers struggling to understand what was happening. She was intoxicated\(^2\) by the American woman with her dazzling blonde hair, but there was something else on her mind too.

“I was looking at people’s feet because I thought: ‘Everyone has to have [ballet] pointe shoes, they have to have pointe shoes because these are people from the US!’”

Not only was Elaine not wearing any pointe shoes, but as Michaela found when she looked through her suitcase that night, she had none in her luggage either.

Her new mother quickly noticed Michaela’s obsession with ballet.

“We found a Nutcracker\(^3\) video and I watched it 150 times,” Michaela says.

When they finally went to see a stage performance, she was able to point out to her mother the places where dancers had missed their steps.

Elaine enrolled five-year-old Michaela in the Rock School of Dance in Philadelphia, making the 45-minute drive from New Jersey every day.

But DePrince remained a shy girl, painfully self-conscious of her vitiligo. “That was all I would think about when I was on stage. I had trouble looking at myself in the mirror,” she says.

Instead of glorying in the glittery tutus and bodices that had drawn her to ballet, she covered herself up whenever possible with turtleneck sweaters.

One day, DePrince asked one of her ballet teachers if she thought her skin condition might hold back her career. The teacher asked her what she was talking about. She hadn’t even noticed the pale patches on her skin—she’d just been watching her steps. That was a significant moment for her.

But, she says, being a black ballet dancer is hard, even in the US. She thinks the problem is that in the corps de ballet—the group of ballerinas who are not soloists—girls are supposed to look the same.

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2. intoxicated (ihn TOK sih kay tihd) adj. overwhelmed and excited.
3. [The] Nutcracker popular ballet with music by the famous Russian composer Peter Illyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893).
“It is a challenge,” she says. “If you look at [ballet] companies you won’t really see any black girls. You might see a mixed-race girl but there are only one or two black soloists in the whole U.S.”

Now 17, DePrince recently completed a tour with the Dance Theater of Harlem, many of whose dancers are African American, or mixed-race.

“I have become more upbeat—I used to be very shy,” she says. “Now I’ve grown up and I’m so happy with the way things are turning out.”

Discuss It  How does viewing this video add to your understanding of the difficulties Michaela faced as a child?

Write your response before sharing your ideas.
Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read. Review and clarify details with your group.

1. Why did the Aunties at the orphanage dislike Michaela?

2. How did Michaela first learn about ballet and ballerinas?

3. How did Michaela finally leave the orphanage?

4. **Notebook** Confirm your understanding of the selection by writing a brief summary of what happened to Michaela after she left the orphanage.

RESEARCH

**Research to Clarify** Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the article?
Close Read the Text
With your group, revisit sections of the text you marked during your first read. Annotate details that you notice. What questions do you have? What can you conclude?

Analyze the Text

1. Review and Clarify  With your group, reread paragraph 17 of the selection. Why do you think Michaela thought that everyone from the United States had to have pointe shoes? What does this tell you about Michaela and her ideas about the United States?

2. Present and Discuss  Now, work with your group to share passages from the selection that you found especially important. Take turns presenting your passages. Discuss what you noticed in the selection, what questions you asked, and what conclusions you reached.

3. Essential Question: What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up? What has this article taught you about challenges that some children face and how they overcome them? Discuss with your group.

Concept Vocabulary

antagonism  refugee  distraught

Why These Words?  The concept vocabulary words from the text are related. With your group, determine what the words have in common. Write your ideas and add another word that fits the category.

Practice

Notebook  Check your understanding of the concept vocabulary words by using them in a paragraph. Include context clues that hint at each word’s meaning. Share and discuss your paragraph with your group.

Word Study

Notebook  Synonyms and Antonyms  One way to better understand a word is to find synonyms, or words that have a same or similar meaning, and antonyms, words that have an opposite meaning. For example, one synonym of antagonism is hostility. One antonym is friendship.

Using a dictionary, determine and verify the precise meaning of antagonism. Then, find two more synonyms and two more antonyms for antagonism in a thesaurus. Write a sentence for each word you find.
Analyze Craft and Structure

Biographical Writing When a nonfiction text tells a story, it is a work of narrative nonfiction. Biographical writing is one type of narrative nonfiction. In biographical writing, an author tells the story of another person’s life. This type of writing has specific features:

- The subject is a real-life person. The work presents facts and actual events from the subject’s life.
- The writer uses direct quotations, or the subject’s exact words, to show his or her thoughts and feelings.
- The writer may describe other people’s views of the subject. He or she may use quotations from people who know the subject well.

Authors of biographies use these elements to develop a portrait in words and to tell the story of the person about whom they are writing.

Practice

Notebook Work independently to answer the questions and complete the activity. Then, share and discuss your responses with your group.

1. (a) What information about Michaela DePrince does the writer include in paragraphs 1 and 2? (b) Why might this information interest readers in her story?

2. Use the chart to identify examples of each element of biographical writing used in paragraphs 2–8. Explain how the author uses each item to add to the reader’s understanding of DePrince.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT OF BIOGRAPHY</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>READER’S UNDERSTANDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual Events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct Quotations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other People’s Views</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. (a) What turning point, or major change, does the author describe in paragraph 10? (b) Why is this moment so important to DePrince? (c) What other moment described in the biography is a turning point in DePrince’s life? Explain your choice.

4. (a) Describe the struggles DePrince faced after she started studying ballet. (b) Cite specific examples of a fact, an actual event, and a direct quotation that help readers understand those struggles.
Conventions

**Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns** A pronoun is a word that takes the place of one or more nouns or other pronouns. Reflexive pronouns and intensive pronouns are forms of pronouns that end with -self or -selves. These pronoun forms look the same, but they function differently within a sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Person</td>
<td>myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Person</td>
<td>yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Person</td>
<td>himself, herself, itself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A reflexive pronoun reflects, or directs, the action of a verb back on its subject. It indicates that the person or thing performing the action of the verb is also receiving the action. A reflexive pronoun is essential to the meaning of its sentence.

An intensive pronoun simply emphasizes the noun or pronoun to which it refers. It usually appears very close to the noun or pronoun it emphasizes. An intensive pronoun can be removed from a sentence without changing its meaning. In the chart, subjects are underlined and pronouns are set set in italics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLES OF REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES OF INTENSIVE PRONOUNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I bought myself a new paintbrush.</td>
<td>I myself chose the paintbrush I wanted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke made himself late for school.</td>
<td>Luke himself should have known better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emil and Maria were mad at themselves for losing the cat.</td>
<td>Emil and Maria themselves searched for the lost cat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Read It**

Mark the reflexive or intensive pronoun in each of these passages from “Michaela DePrince: The War Orphan Who Became a Ballerina.” Then, write whether the pronoun is reflexive or intensive.

1. “That was all I would think about when I was on stage. I had trouble looking at myself in the mirror,” she says.

2. Instead of glorying in the glittery tutus and bodices that had drawn her to ballet, she covered herself up whenever possible with turtleneck sweaters.

**Write It**

Write three sentences about Michaela DePrince’s life using intensive pronouns. Use a different intensive pronoun in each sentence.
Speaking and Listening

**Assignment**

With your group, write and deliver an **oral presentation**. Choose from the following options:

- **Option 1:** Michaela DePrince talks about the difficulties of being an African American ballerina. Conduct research on another African American dancer. Then, prepare and deliver a **personality profile** of the dancer you chose. Compare and contrast his or her experience with DePrince’s. Include descriptive details and a logical sequence of ideas so that the points of comparison and contrast are clear to your audience.

- **Option 2:** Becoming a ballet dancer takes hard work and many years of training. Research to learn about the challenges aspiring dancers face. Then, write and deliver an **informative report** in which you talk about why DePrince’s success is so impressive. Include facts, descriptive details, and ideas that are ordered in a way that will make sense to readers.

**Make an Outline** Creating an outline will help your group organize ideas in an order that makes sense. An outline is a list of the main ideas in your presentation. If your group is doing a personality profile, your ideas will be points of comparison and contrast between DePrince and another dancer. If your group is doing an informative report, your ideas will focus on the importance of DePrince’s success.

Work with your group to create an outline by using the following structure. Write a sentence for each line of the outline.

I. Thesis Statement: ____________________________________________

II. Body of Presentation
   A. First Idea: ____________________________________________
   B. Second Idea: ____________________________________________
   C. Third Idea: ____________________________________________

III. Conclusion (Importance of Ideas): ______________________________

**Practice and Present** Practice your presentation before you deliver it to the class. Use the following tips while delivering your presentation.

- Speak clearly and comfortably without rushing.
- Vary the tone and pitch of your voice to help your audience understand your points and to add interest. Avoid speaking flatly and without emotion.
- Use appropriate and varied body language. Maintain eye contact to keep your audience’s attention.

**GROUP DISCUSSION** If your group cannot agree on which project to complete, work together to resolve the issue so that most of the group is happy. Agree beforehand that everyone will go along with the decision.

**EVIDENCE LOG** Before moving on to a new selection, go to your Evidence Log and record what you’ve learned from “Michaela DePrince: The War Orphan Who Became a Ballerina.”

**STANDARDS**

Speaking and Listening

Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
Comparing Texts
In this lesson, you will read a memoir excerpt and a poem expressing a similar theme. The work you do with your group on this memoir will prepare you to compare it with the poem.

from Bad Boy
Concept Vocabulary
As you perform your first read of the excerpt from Bad Boy, you will encounter these words.

- respected
- desperate
- disgusted

Context Clues To find the meaning of an unfamiliar word, look for context clues—other words and phrases that appear nearby in the text. There are various types of context clues that can help you as you read.

**Context:** Marcus hid the trove of baseball cards he’d collected for many years under his bed.

**Conclusion:** Marcus collected baseball cards for many years and hid them. Perhaps trove means “valuable, hidden collection.”

Apply your knowledge of context clues and other vocabulary strategies to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words you encounter during your first read.

First Read NONFICTION
Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete a close read after your first read.

**STANDARDS**
Reading Informational Text
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Language
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

a. Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
There were two categories of friends in my life: those with whom I played ball and everyone else. Athletes were highly respected in the black community, and boys my age were encouraged to play some sport. I loved playing ball. I would play basketball in the mornings with the boys who were just reaching
their teens, and then stoop ball or punchball on the block with boys my age. Sometimes Eric and I would go down to the courts on Riverside Drive and play there. And I was a bad, bad loser. Most of my prayers, when they weren’t for the Dodgers, were quick ones in the middle of a game, asking God to let me win. I liked other sports as well and even followed the New York Rangers hockey team in the papers for a while until I found out that all the references to ice meant just that, that they were skating on ice. There wasn’t any ice to skate on in Harlem, so I gave up hockey.

With school out and me not having access to Mrs. Conway’s cache of books, I rediscovered the George Bruce Branch of the public library on 125th Street. Sometimes on rainy days I would sit in the library and read. The librarians always suggested books that were too young for me, but I still went on a regular basis. I could never have afforded to buy the books and was pleased to have the library with its free supply.

Being a boy meant to me that I was not particularly like girls. Most of the girls I knew couldn’t play ball, and that excluded them from most of what I wanted to do with my life. Dorothy Dodson, daughter of the Wicked Witch, read books, and I knew she did, but she couldn’t stand me and was more than happy to tell me so on a number of occasions. Sometimes I would see other children on the trolley with books under their arms and suspected that they were like me somehow. I felt a connection with these readers but didn’t know what the connection was. I knew there were things going on in my head, a fantasy life, that somehow corresponded to the books I read. I also felt a kind of comfort with books that I did not experience when I was away from them. Away from books I was, at times, almost desperate to fill up the spaces of my life. Books filled those spaces for me.

As much as I enjoyed reading, in the world in which I was living it had to be a secret vice. When I brought a book home from the library, I would sometimes run into older kids who would tease me about my reading. It was, they made it clear, not what boys did. And though by now I was fighting older boys and didn’t mind that one bit, for some reason I didn’t want to fight about books. Books were special and said something about me that I didn’t want to reveal. I began taking a brown paper bag to the library to bring my books home in.

1. Dodgers Brooklyn Dodgers, an American professional baseball team, which moved to Los Angeles, California, after the 1957 season.
2. cache (kash) n. hidden supply.
3. Wicked Witch Walter’s nickname for Mrs. Dodson, a neighbor he dislikes.
4. vice (vys) n. bad habit.
That year I learned that being a boy meant that I was supposed to do certain things and act in a certain way. I was very comfortable being a boy, but there were times when the role was uncomfortable. We often played ball in the church gym, and one rainy day, along with my brother Mickey and some of “my guys,” I went to the gym, only to find a bevy of girls exercising on one half of the court. We wanted to run a full-court game, so we directed a few nasty remarks to the other side of the small gym. Then we saw that the girls were doing some kind of dance, so we imitated them, cracking ourselves up.

When the girls had finished their dancing, they went through some stretching exercises. A teenager, Lorelle Henry, was leading the group, and she was pretty, so we sent a few woo-woo-woos her way.

"I bet you guys can’t even do these stretching exercises,” Lorelle challenged.

"We scoffed, as expected.

“If you can do these exercises, we’ll get off the court,” Lorelle said. “If not, you go through the whole dance routine with us.”

It was a way to get rid of the girls, and we went over to do the exercises. Not one of us was limber enough to do the stretching exercises, and soon we were all trying to look as disgusted as we could while we hopped around the floor to the music.

They danced to music as a poem was being read. I liked the poem, which turned out to be “The Creation” by James Weldon Johnson. I liked dancing, too, but I had to pretend that I didn’t like it. No big deal. I was already keeping reading and writing poems a secret; I would just add dancing.

5. limber (LIHM buhr) adj. flexible.
Comprehension Check
Complete the following items after you finish your first read. Review and clarify details with your group.

1. What are the two categories of friends in young Myers’s life?

2. Why does young Myers keep his love of reading books secret?

3. What two other secrets does young Myers have?

4. **Notebook** Confirm your understanding of the selection by writing a brief summary.

RESEARCH
**Research to Clarify** Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the memoir?
Close Read the Text
With your group, revisit sections of the text you marked during your first read. Annotate what you notice. What questions do you have? What can you conclude?

Analyze the Text

1. Review and Clarify With your group, reread paragraph 4 of the selection. Why do you think young Myers decides he doesn’t want to fight about books? What does this tell you about Myers and what books mean to him?

2. Present and Discuss Now, work with your group to share passages from the selection that you found especially important. Take turns presenting your passages. Discuss what you noticed in the selection, what questions you asked, and what conclusions you reached.

3. Essential Question: What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up? What has this memoir taught you about childhood? Discuss with your group.

Concept Vocabulary

| respected | desperate | disgusted |

Why These Words? The concept vocabulary words from the text are related. With your group, determine what the words have in common. Write your ideas, and add another word that fits the category.

Practice

Check your understanding of these words from the text by using them in a brief paragraph. Make sure to include context clues that hint at each word’s meaning.

Word Study

Latin Root: -spec- The word respected is formed from the Latin prefix re-, which means “back,” and the Latin root -spec-, which means “look” or “see.” With this information, you can make an inference about the meaning of the word.

Check the exact meaning of respected in a dictionary, and use the word in a sentence. Then, find two other words formed from the root -spec-. Explain how each word you found relates to looking or seeing.
Analyze Craft and Structure

**Central Idea** A central idea is the main message or idea expressed in a nonfiction text. A central idea is always related to the author’s purpose, or the reason that an author writes a text. In most essays, the author states the central idea directly. However, in narrative nonfiction, such as memoirs, the author suggests the central detail through details. To identify the central idea, readers examine the details in a text and then decide what they think the central idea is.

In the excerpt from *Bad Boy*, the central idea is that society wrongly expects boys to act a certain way.

---

**Practice**

Work with your group to complete the following activities.

1. Identify specific details from the excerpt from *Bad Boy* that help build the central idea. Use the chart to capture your notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DETAIL</th>
<th>HOW IT CONNECTS TO CENTRAL IDEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Which detail do you think is most effective in supporting the central idea? Explain your choice.

3. If you were writing a text with the same central idea as *Bad Boy*, what examples or types of evidence would you use as support?
Conventions

**Adjectives and Adverbs** Writers use adjectives and adverbs to make their writing more precise and lively. An *adjective* is a word that describes a noun or pronoun. An adjective answers one of these questions: *What kind? Which one? How many? or How much?* This chart shows examples of adjectives and the questions they answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT KIND?</th>
<th>WHICH ONE?</th>
<th>HOW MANY?</th>
<th>HOW MUCH?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brick house</td>
<td>that judge</td>
<td>one lion</td>
<td>no time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white paper</td>
<td>each answer</td>
<td>several roses</td>
<td>enough sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American cheese</td>
<td>my sister</td>
<td>both brothers</td>
<td>some milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An *adverb* is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. An adverb answers one of these questions: *Where? When? In what way? or To what extent?* This chart shows examples of adverbs and the questions they answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHERE?</th>
<th>WHEN?</th>
<th>IN WHAT WAY?</th>
<th>TO WHAT EXTENT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pushed down</td>
<td>will leave soon</td>
<td>works carefully</td>
<td>nearly won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stand nearby</td>
<td>went yesterday</td>
<td>smiled happily</td>
<td>fully agrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will walk there</td>
<td>swims often</td>
<td>chewed noisily</td>
<td>barely ate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Read It**

Read each of these sentences from the excerpt from *Bad Boy*. Working individually, label each underlined word as an adjective or an adverb. Then, discuss with your group what question each one is answering.

1. *Sometimes* on *rainy* days I would sit in the library and read.
2. The librarians *always* suggested books that were *too young* for me. . . .
3. We wanted to run a *full-court* game, so we directed a *few nasty* remarks to the *other* side of the *small* gym.

**Write It**

Write a paragraph about the excerpt from *Bad Boy*. Include at least four adjectives and four adverbs. Label each adjective or adverb. Then, mark the word it describes or modifies.

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**STANDARDS**

Language

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

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CLARIFICATION

Adverbs that answer the question *In what way?* are called adverbs of manner. Adverbs of manner are easy to recognize because they usually end with *-ly*. Refer to the Grammar Handbook to learn more about adjectives and adverbs.
Comparing Texts

Now, you will read the poem “I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid.” After reading, you will compare and contrast the theme of this poem with that of the excerpt from Bad Boy.

I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid

Concept Vocabulary

As you perform your first read of “I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid,” you will encounter these words.

clenched  stubborn  tenseness

Context Clues  If these words are unfamiliar to you, try using context clues—other words and phrases in nearby text—to help you determine their meanings.

Context: Marta deceptively hid the winning card in her hand until the end, so that no one would suspect she had it.

Conclusion: The word hid and the clause so that no one would suspect she had it tell you Marta is doing something in a secretive way to prevent others from guessing she has the card. Deceptively may mean “in a way meant to mislead others.”

Apply your knowledge of context clues and other vocabulary strategies to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words you encounter during your first read.

First Read POETRY

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete a close read after your first read.
I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid

Alma Luz Villanueva

BACKGROUND
Although the word tomboy was originally defined as “a rude or noisy boy,” it grew to be a label for a girl whose behavior and appearance were not considered to be traditionally feminine. In this poem, the speaker relates her experiences growing up in San Francisco, California, as a self-described tomboy.

I was a skinny tomboy kid who walked down the streets with my fists clenched into tight balls.
I knew all the roofs
And back yard fences,
I liked traveling that way
sometimes
not touching
the sidewalks
for blocks and blocks
it made
me feel
victorious
somehow
over the streets.
I liked to fly
from roof
to roof
the gravel
falling
away
beneath my feet,
I liked
the edge
of almost
not making it.
and the freedom
of riding
my bike
to the ocean
and smelling it
long before
I could see it,
and I traveled disguised
as a boy
(I thought)
in an old army jacket
carrying my
fishing tackle
to the piers, and
bumming¹ bait
and a couple of cokes
and catching crabs
sometimes and
selling them
to some chinese guys

¹. **bumming** getting by asking.
and I’d give
the fish away,
I didn’t like fish
I just liked to fish—
and I vowed
to never
grow up
to be a woman and
be helpless like
my mother,
but then I didn’t realize
the kind of guts
it often took
for her to just keep
standing
where she was.

I grew like a thin, stubborn weed
watering myself whatever way I could
believing in my own myth
transforming my reality
and creating a
legendary/self
every once in a while
late at night
in the deep
darkness of my sleep
I wake
with a tenseness
in my arms
and I follow
it from my elbow to
my wrist
and realize
my fists are tightly clenched
and the streets come grinning
and I forget who I’m protecting
and I coil up
in a self/mothering fashion
and tell myself
it’s o.k.
Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read. Review and clarify details with your group.

1. What gives the speaker a sense of freedom?

2. What does the speaker not want to be when she grows up?

3. Why does the speaker give away the fish she catches?

4. Notebook Confirm your understanding of the poem by writing a brief summary.

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the poem?
Close Read the Text

With your group, revisit sections of the text you marked during your first read. Annotate details that you notice. What questions do you have? What can you conclude?

Analyze the Text

Notebook Complete the activities.

1. Review and Clarify With your group, reread lines 52–63 of the poem. Why do you think the speaker says her mother had “guts”? What does this suggest about the speaker’s family and her life?

2. Present and Discuss Now, work with your group to share passages from the selection that you found especially important. Take turns presenting your passages. Discuss what you noticed in the selection, what questions you asked, and what conclusions you reached.

3. Essential Question: What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up? What has this poem taught you about childhood? Discuss with your group.

Concept Vocabulary

clenched stubborn tenseness

Why These Words? The concept vocabulary words from the text are related. With your group, determine what the words have in common. Write your ideas, and add two more words that fit the category.

Practice

Notebook Check your understanding of the concept vocabulary words by completing the following activities:

- Describe a situation in which someone might have clenched teeth.
- Describe what a person might do if he or she were stubborn.
- Describe what someone might do to relieve a feeling of tenseness.

Share your sentences with your group. Discuss whether each vocabulary word has been used correctly.

Word Study

Notebook Anglo-Saxon Suffix: -ness The speaker of the poem describes waking up with a tenseness in her arms. The Anglo-Saxon suffix -ness means “the condition, state, or quality of being” and changes an adjective, such as tense, into a noun. Find two additional words that end with the suffix -ness. Write a sentence that contains each of those words.
Analyze Craft and Structure

**Theme** The theme of a literary work is the insight or message about life that it expresses. Sometimes, the theme of a literary work is stated directly. More often, it is only implied, or hinted at.

When a theme is not stated directly, readers must use details in the text to draw their own conclusions. To determine an implied theme, group together details that seem connected. Then, try to figure out what message the writer is expressing with those details.

One possible theme of “I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid,” is that being different can be difficult. The poet does not state this theme directly. Instead, she suggests the theme through the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the speaker. She also suggests the theme through the way she organizes the lines of the poem to emphasize certain words and phrases.

---

**Practice**

**Notebook** Work with your group to complete the following activities.

1. Use the chart to list details from the poem that imply the possible theme. Consider details that relate to the speaker’s thoughts and feelings, appearance, and actions.

**POSSIBLE THEME: BEING DIFFERENT CAN BE DIFFICULT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker’s Thoughts and Feelings:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker’s Appearance:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker’s Actions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. With your group, discuss the following questions, and then share your thoughts with the rest of the class.

- What does this poem suggest about the “rules” that govern how a girl or boy should act?
- Does the speaker challenge or break these rules? Explain.
Author’s Style

Figurative Language Language that is not meant to be taken literally is called figurative language. Figurative language often takes the form of a comparison that represents a fresh, new way of looking at something. The chart shows three types of figurative language, along with examples: simile, metaphor, and personification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>simile</td>
<td>He roared through the house like a storm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaphor</td>
<td>He was a storm roaring through the house.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personification</td>
<td>The ocean waves kissed the shores of the sandy beach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Read It

Reread lines 64–87 of “I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid.” In the middle column of the chart, identify one simile and one use of personification. In the right-hand column, write in your own words the literal meaning of each example you found.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>simile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write It

Notebook Write a paragraph that tells a story. Include at least two examples of figurative language in your story—at least one simile and one use of personification. Then, label each example as either simile or personification.
Writing to Compare

The memoir Bad Boy and the poem “I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid” share a central idea or theme: Being different can be difficult. Both texts share insights about being oneself and about fitting in.

Assignment

Write a compare-and-contrast essay in which you analyze the ways in which the memoir and the poem present ideas about how boys and girls are “supposed” to act. Also, discuss similarities and differences in how the form of each text allows those ideas to be presented. Work with your group to analyze the texts. Then, work independently to write your essay.

Prewriting

Analyze the Texts  When you compare two texts, you note how they are alike. When you contrast them, you note how they are different. With your group, compare and contrast the memoir and poem, and make notes in the chart. As you work, consider the major parts of each text, such as structure, word choice, and use of figurative language. For example, you might use one row to compare and contrast word choice in each text and another row to compare and contrast figurative language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>from BAD BOY</th>
<th>I WAS A SKINNY TOMBOY KID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notebook  Answer the questions.

1. What are the advantages of a memoir for expressing ideas?
2. What are the advantages of a poem for expressing ideas?
3. Which text do you think does a better job of expressing ideas about how boys and girls are “supposed” to act? Why?
Drafting

Create an Organizational Plan  Now that you have analyzed the texts with your group, write your essay on your own. First, review the chart you filled in with your group, and choose the information you will use in your essay. Also, consider whether there is any additional material your group may have missed.

Next, think about how you will present your information. Will you write about each selection separately, and then compare and contrast them? Or will you compare and contrast the selections category by category, perhaps starting with word choice in both selections and then moving on to figurative language? Either plan is fine as long as you follow it consistently.

Provide Support  Make sure you support your ideas with examples from both selections. Use quotation marks for examples that you copy word for word, even if they are just phrases. Review each example to make sure it is directly related to the idea you want to express.

Use Transitions  Your essay will read more smoothly if you use transitional words and phrases to show connections among ideas. Some of the most common transitions are shown in the chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>for example</th>
<th>therefore</th>
<th>on the other hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>for instance</td>
<td>as a result</td>
<td>however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specifically</td>
<td>similarly</td>
<td>in contrast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review, Revise, and Edit

After writing your essay, review it and look for ways to improve it.

- Have you discussed how the selections present ideas about how boys and girls are “supposed to” act?
- Have you expressed your ideas clearly?
- Have you used transitions to connect your ideas?
- Have you supported your ideas with details from both selections?
- Did you check your grammar, punctuation, and spelling? Did you correct any errors you found?

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up?

EVIDENCE LOG

Before moving on to a new selection, go to your Evidence Log and record what you’ve learned from the excerpt from Bad Boy and “I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid.”

STANDARDS

Writing

• Write informative/expository texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
  a. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
  c. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

• Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
  a. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literature.
  b. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literary nonfiction.

Language

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

b. Spell correctly.
**Present a Retelling**

**Assignment**
A retelling is a new version of a text that keeps the content recognizable but also changes it. A retelling may show a story from a different perspective or move it to a different setting. Deliver a retelling of the childhood challenges presented in either the magazine article, the memoir excerpt, or the poem from this section. In your retelling, you may wish to refer to one or more of the rights set forth in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Enhance your presentation with media.

**Plan With Your Group**

**Analyze the Text**  With your group, review the texts you have read during Small-Group Learning. Consider the ways in which childhood challenges are presented in each text. Capture your ideas and observations in the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELECTION</th>
<th>CHILDHOOD CHALLENGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of the Rights of the Child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaela DePrince: The War Orphan Who Became a Ballerina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from Bad Boy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Was a Skinny Tomboy Kid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a group, choose one text on which to focus. Then, divide the text into sections, and have each group member focus on a different section. As you plan your retelling, keep this idea in mind: A successful retelling is true to the ideas in the original text but presents them in a way that is new or fresh.

**Gather Evidence and Media Examples**  Reread the text to find the points you wish to emphasize and to figure out where adding media would have the biggest impact. Work as a group to locate video, audio, or images that will clarify your ideas and make your retelling come alive. For example, if you want to make clear for an audience how difficult it was for Michaela DePrince to become a ballerina, you might find a video that shows the sweat and hard work of a ballet class.
Organize Your Ideas  With your group, brainstorm for ways to organize your presentation, including ways to integrate multimedia. Make sure that you think of your audience and organize materials in a way that will make sense to a first-time viewer.

Rehearse With Your Group

Practice With Your Group  Before you present your retelling to the class, practice delivering it as a group. Make sure that each member uses a an appropriate tone. Also, work to make eye contact with viewers, and to speak clearly and loudly so that you can be heard and understood by everyone in the audience.

As you practice your presentation, use this checklist to evaluate the effectiveness of your group’s first run-through. Then, use your evaluation and the instruction here to guide your revision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>USE OF MEDIA</th>
<th>PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ The retelling is true to the ideas expressed in the text the group has chosen.</td>
<td>□ The media are relevant to the ideas expressed in the text the group has chosen.</td>
<td>□ The media are visible and audible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ The retelling expresses the ideas from the text in a way that is new or fresh.</td>
<td>□ The media add interest and contribute new ideas to the spoken portion of the retelling.</td>
<td>□ The transitions between speakers are smooth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Each presenter speaks clearly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fine-Tune the Content  Check to be sure you have emphasized key events in the original text. Also, review details that describe characters and situations. Add descriptive details as needed.

Improve Your Use of Media  Make sure you are using media that add in meaningful ways to your ideas. Also, make sure that all media choices work well with the spoken portions of your presentation.

Brush Up on Your Presentation Techniques  Avoid speaking in a flat, uninterested, or bored tone. Instead, vary your tone and speak with enthusiasm and liveliness.

Present and Evaluate

Remember that you are giving this presentation as a group. Everyone is equally important, and each person represents the entire group. Don’t let your attention wander when other members of your group are giving their parts of the presentation. In addition, give other groups your full attention when they are giving their presentations.
OVERVIEW: INDEPENDENT LEARNING

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up?

Young people have different points of view about growing up. In this section, you will choose one additional selection about childhood for your final reading experience in this unit. Follow these steps to help you choose.

**Look Back** Think about the selections you have already read. What more do you want to know about the topic of childhood?

**Look Ahead** Preview the selections by reading the descriptions. Which one seems most interesting and appealing to you?

**Look Inside** Take a few minutes to scan through the text you chose. Make another selection if this text doesn’t meet your needs.

Independent Learning Strategies
Throughout your life, in school, in your community, and in your career, you will need to rely on yourself to learn and work on your own. Review these strategies and the actions you can take to practice them during Independent Learning. Add ideas of your own for each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a schedule</td>
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<td>Practice what you’ve</td>
<td>• Use First-Read and Close-Read Strategies to deepen your understanding.</td>
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<td>learned</td>
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<td>Take notes</td>
<td>• Record important ideas and information.</td>
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<td>• Review your notes before preparing to share with a group.</td>
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Choose one selection. Selections are available online only.

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<td>Can Wendy convince Peter Pan to grow up?</td>
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<td>Complete your Evidence Log for the unit by evaluating what you’ve learned and synthesizing the information you’ve recorded.</td>
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First-Read Guide

Use this page to record your first-read ideas.

Selection Title: ____________________________

**NOTICE** new information or ideas you learn about the unit topic as you first read this text.

**ANNOTATE** by marking vocabulary and key passages you want to revisit.

**CONNECT** ideas within the selection to other knowledge and the selections you have read.

**RESPOND** by writing a brief summary of the selection.

---

**STANDARD**

*Reading* Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
Close-Read Guide

Use this page to record your close-read ideas.

Selection Title: ________________

Close Read the Text

Revisit sections of the text you marked during your first read. Read these sections closely and annotate what you notice. Ask yourself questions about the text. What can you conclude? Write down your ideas.

Analyze the Text

Think about the author’s choices of patterns, structure, techniques, and ideas included in the text. Select one and record your thoughts about what this choice conveys.

QuickWrite

Pick a paragraph from the text that grabbed your interest. Explain the power of this passage.

STANDARD

Reading Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
from

Peter Pan

J. M. Barrie

About the Author

J. M. Barrie (1860–1937) was a Scottish author and playwright, best known as the author of Peter Pan. Barrie was educated in Scotland but later moved to London, England, where he formed a friendship with the Davies family. The Davies had five playful children who were the inspiration for the Peter Pan stories.

BACKGROUND

Peter Pan, the mischievous boy who never grows up, is one of the best-known characters in children's literature. In this beloved novel, Peter Pan and the Lost Boys live on a magical island called Neverland. Because the Lost Boys are all parentless, Peter brings a young girl named Wendy Darling to Neverland to be a mother figure to the boys.

Chapter 10 The Happy Home

We have now reached the evening that was to be known among them as the Night of Nights, because of its adventures and their upshot. The day, as if quietly gathering its forces, had been almost uneventful, and now the redskins in their blankets were at their posts above, while, below, the children were having their evening meal; all except Peter, who had gone out to get the time. The way you got the time on the island was to find the crocodile, and then stay near him till the clock struck.

The meal happened to be a make-believe tea, and they sat around the board, guzzling in their greed; and really, what with their chatter and recriminations,¹ the noise, as Wendy said, was positively deafening. To be sure, she did not mind noise, but she

¹. recriminations (rih krihm uh NAY shuhs) n. mutual accusations.
simply would not have them grabbing things, and then excusing themselves by saying that Tootles had pushed their elbow. There was a fixed rule that they must never hit back at meals, but should refer the matter of dispute to Wendy by raising the right arm politely and saying, “I complain of so-and-so”; but what usually happened was that they forgot to do this or did it too much.

“Silence,” cried Wendy when for the twentieth time she had told them that they were not all to speak at once. “Is your mug empty, Slightly darling?”

“Not quite empty mummy,” Slightly said, after looking into an imaginary mug.

“He hasn’t even begun to drink his milk,” Nibs interposed.

This was telling, and Slightly seized his chance.

“I complain of Nibs,” he cried promptly.

John, however, had held up his hand first.

“Well, John?”

“May I sit in Peter’s chair, as he is not here?”

“Sit in father’s chair, John!” Wendy was scandalized. “Certainly not.”

“He is not really our father;” John answered. “He didn’t even know how a father does till I showed him.”

This was grumbling. “We complain of John,” cried the twins.

Tootles held up his hand. He was so much the humblest of them, indeed he was the only humble one, that Wendy was specially gentle with him.

“I don’t suppose,” Tootles said diffidently, “that I could be father.”

“No, Tootles.”

Once Tootles began, which was not very often, he had a silly way of going on.

“As I can’t be father,” he said heavily, “I don’t suppose Michael you would let me be baby?”

“No, I won’t,” Michael rapped out. He was already in his basket.

“As I can’t be baby,” Tootles said, getting heavier and heavier and heavier, “do you think I could be a twin?”

“No, indeed,” replied the twins, “it’s awfully difficult to be a twin.”

“As I can’t be anything important,” said Tootles “would any of you like to see me do a trick?”

“No,” they all replied.

Then at last he stopped. “I hadn’t really any hope,” he said.

The hateful telling broke out again.

“Slightly is coughing on the table.”

“The twins began with cheese-cakes.”

2. diffidently adv. bashfully or timidly.
“Curly is taking both butter and honey.”
“Nibs is speaking with his mouth full.”
“I complain of the twins.”
“I complain of Curly.”
“I complain of Nibs.”
“Oh dear, oh dear,” cried Wendy “I’m sure I sometimes think that spinsters are to be envied.”

She told them to clear away, and sat down to her work-basket, a heavy load of stockings and every knee with a hole in it as usual.

“Wendy,” remonstrated Michael, “I’m too big for a cradle,”
“I must have somebody in a cradle,” she said almost tartly, “and you are the littlest. A cradle is such a nice homely thing to have about a house.”

While she sewed they played around her; such a group of happy faces and dancing limbs lit up by that romantic fire. It had become a very familiar scene, this, in the home under the ground, but we are looking on it for the last time.

There was a step above, and Wendy, you may be sure, was the first to recognize it.

“Children, I hear your father’s step. He likes you to meet him at the door.”

He had brought nuts for the boys as well as the correct time for Wendy.

“Peter, you just spoil them, you know,” Wendy simpered.

“Ah, old lady,” said Peter, hanging up his gun.

“It was me told him mothers are called old lady,” Michael whispered to Curly.

“I complain of Michael,” said Curly instantly.

The first twin came to Peter. “Father, we want to dance.”

“Dance away, my little man,” said Peter, who was in high good humor.

“But we want you to dance.”

Peter was really the best dancer among them, but he pretended to be scandalized.

“Me! My old bones would rattle!”

“And mummy too.”

“What,” cried Wendy, “the mother of such an armful, dance!”

“But on a Saturday night,” Slightly insinuated.

It was not really Saturday night, at least it may have been, for they had long lost count of the days; but always if they wanted to do anything special they said this was Saturday night, and then they did it.

“Of course it is Saturday night, Peter,” Wendy said, relenting.

“People of our figure, Wendy!”

---

3. *remonstrated* v. scolded.
4. *simpered* v. smiled with silliness or exaggeration.
“But it is only among our own progeny.”

“True, true.”

So they were told they could dance, but they must put on their nighties first.

“Ah, old lady,” Peter said aside to Wendy, warming himself by the fire and looking down at her as she sat turning a heel, “there is nothing more pleasant of an evening for you and me when the day’s toil is over than to rest by the fire with the little ones near by.”

“It is sweet, Peter, isn’t it?” Wendy said, frightfully gratified. “Peter, I think Curly has your nose.”

“Michael takes after you.”

She went to him and put her hand on his shoulder.

“Dear Peter,” she said, “with such a large family, of course, I have now passed my best, but you don’t want to change me, do you?”

“No, Wendy.”

Certainly he did not want a change, but he looked at her uncomfortably, blinking, you know, like one not sure whether he was awake or asleep.

“Peter, what is it?”

“I was just thinking,” he said, a little scared. “It is only make-believe isn’t it that I am their father?”

“Oh yes,” Wendy said primly.

“You see,” he continued apologetically, “it would make me seem so old to be their real father.”

“But they are ours, Peter, yours and mine.”

“But not really, Wendy?” he asked anxiously.

“Not if you don’t wish it,” she replied; and she distinctly heard his sigh of relief.

“Peter,” she asked, trying to speak firmly, “what are your exact feelings to me?”

“Those of a devoted son, Wendy.”

“I thought so,” she said, and went and sat by herself at the extreme end of the room.

“You are so queer,” he said, frankly puzzled, “and Tiger Lily is just the same. There is something she wants to be to me, but she says it is not my mother.”

“No, indeed, it is not,” Wendy replied with frightful emphasis. Now we know why she was prejudiced against the redskins.

“Then what is it?”

“It isn’t for a lady to tell.”

---

5. progeny (PROJ oh nee) n. children.
6. change v. exchange.
7. primly adv. formally and properly.
8. to about.
“Oh, very well,” Peter said, a little nettled. “Perhaps Tinker Bell will tell me.”

“Oh yes, Tinker Bell will tell you,” Wendy retorted scornfully. “She is an abandoned little creature.”

Here Tink, who was in her bedroom, eavesdropping, squeaked out something impudent.

“She says she glories in being abandoned,” Peter interpreted.

He had a sudden idea. “Perhaps Tink wants to be my mother?”

“You silly ass!” cried Tinker Bell in a passion.

She had said it so often that Wendy needed no translation.

“I almost agree with her,” Wendy snapped. Fancy Wendy snapping! But she had been much tried, and she little knew what was to happen before the night was out. If she had known she would not have snapped.

None of them knew. Perhaps it was best not to know. Their ignorance gave them one more glad hour; and as it was to be their last hour on the island, let us rejoice that there were sixty glad minutes in it. They sang and danced in their night-gowns. Such a deliciously creepy song it was, in which they pretended to be frightened at their own shadows, little witting that so soon

shadows would close in upon them, from whom they would shrink in real fear. So uproariously gay was the dance, and how they buffeted each other on the bed and out of it! It was a pillow fight rather than a dance, and when it was finished, the pillows insisted on one bout more, like partners who know that they may never meet again. The stories they told, before it was time for Wendy’s good-night story! Even Slightly tried to tell a story that night, but the beginning was so fearfully dull that it appalled not only the others but himself, and he said happily:

“Yes, it is a dull beginning. I say, let us pretend that it is the end.”

And then at last they all got into bed for Wendy’s story, the story they loved best, the story Peter hated. Usually when she began to tell this story he left the room or put his hands over his ears; and possibly if he had done either of those things this time they might all still be on the island. But tonight he remained on his stool; and we shall see what happened.

**Chapter 11 Wendy’s Story**

“Listen then” said Wendy settling down to her story, with Michael at her feet and seven boys in the bed. “There was once a gentleman—”

“I had rather he had been a lady,” Curly said.

“I wish he had been a white rat,” said Nibs.

“Quiet,” their mother admonished them. “There was a lady also, and—”

“Oh, mummy,” cried the first twin, “you mean that there is a lady also, don’t you? She is not dead, is she?”

“Oh, no.”

“I am awfully glad she isn’t dead,” said Tootles. “Are you glad, John?”

“Oh of course I am.”

“Are you glad, Nibs?”

“Rather.”

“Are you glad, Twins?”

“We are glad.”

“Oh dear,” sighed Wendy.

“Little less noise there,” Peter called out, determined that she should have fair play, however beastly a story it might be in his opinion.

“The gentleman’s name,” Wendy continued, “was Mr. Darling, and her name was Mrs. Darling.”

“I knew them,” John said, to annoy the others.

“I think I knew them,” said Michael rather doubtfully.

10. *admonished* v. cautioned.
“They were married, you know,” explained Wendy, “and what do you think they had?”
“No.”
“It’s awfully puzzling,” said Tootles, who knew the story by heart.
“Quiet, Tootles. They had three descendants.”
“What is descendants?”
“Well, you are one, Twin.”
“Did you hear that, John? I am a descendant.”
“_descendants are only children,” said John.
“Oh dear, oh dear,” sighed Wendy. “Now these three children had a faithful nurse called Nana; but Mr. Darling was angry with her and chained her up in the yard and so all the children flew away.”
“It’s an awfully good story,” said Nibs.
“They flew away,” Wendy continued, “to the Neverland, where the lost children are.”
“I just thought they did,” Curly broke in excitedly. “I don’t know how it is, but I just thought they did!”
“Wendy,” cried Tootles, “was one of the lost children called Tootles?”
“Yes, he was.”
“I am in a story. Hurrah, I am in a story, Nibs.”
“Hush. Now I want you to consider the feelings of the unhappy parents with all their children flown away.”
“Oo!” they all moaned, though they were not really considering the feelings of the unhappy parents one jot.
“Think of the empty beds!”
“Oo!”
“It’s awfully sad,” the first twin said cheerfully.
“I don’t see how it can have a happy ending,” said the second twin. “Do you Nibs?”
“I’m frightfully anxious.”
“If you knew how great is a mother’s love,” Wendy told them triumphanty “you would have no fear.” She had now come to the part that Peter hated.
“I do like a mother’s love,” said Tootles, hitting Nibs with a pillow. “Do you like a mother’s love, Nibs?”
“I do just,” said Nibs, hitting back.
“You see,” Wendy said complacently, “our heroine knew that the mother would always leave the window open for her children to fly back by; so they stayed away for years and had a lovely time.”
“Did they ever go back?”
“Let us now,” said Wendy, bracing herself up for her finest effort, “take a peep into the future,” and they all gave themselves the twist that makes peeps into the future easier. “Years have rolled by, and who is this elegant lady of uncertain age alighting at London Station?”

“O Wendy, who is she?” cried Nibs, every bit as excited as if he didn’t know.

“Can it be—yes—no—it is—the fair Wendy!”

“Oh!”

“And who are the two noble portly figures accompanying her, now grown to man’s estate? Can they be John and Michael? They are!”

“Oh!”

“See, dear brothers,” says Wendy pointing upwards, “there is the window still standing open. Ah, now we are rewarded for our sublime faith in a mother’s love.” So up they flew to their mummy and daddy, and pen cannot describe the happy scene, over which we draw a veil.”

That was the story, and they were as pleased with it as the fair narrator herself. Everything just as it should be, you see. Off we skip like the most heartless things in the world, which is what children are, but so attractive; and we have an entirely selfish time, and then when we have need of special attention we nobly return for it, confident that we shall be rewarded instead of smacked.

So great indeed was their faith in a mother’s love that they felt they could afford to be callous for a bit longer.

But there was one there who knew better, and when Wendy finished he uttered a hollow groan.

“What is it, Peter?” she cried, running to him, thinking he was ill. She felt him solicitously, lower down than his chest. “Where is it, Peter?”

“It isn’t that kind of pain,” Peter replied darkly.

“Then what kind is it?”

“Wendy, you are wrong about mothers.”

They all gathered round him in affright, so alarming was his agitation; and with a fine candor he told them what he had hitherto concealed.

“Long ago,” he said, “I thought like you that my mother would always keep the window open for me, so I stayed away for moons and moons and moons, and then flew back; but the window was barred, for mother had forgotten all about me, and there was another little boy sleeping in my bed.”

I am not sure that this was true, but Peter thought it was true; and it scared them.

“Are you sure mothers are like that?”

footnote: 11. solicitously (suh LIHS uh tuhs lee) adv. carefully.
“Yes.”

So this was the truth about mothers. The toads!

Still it is best to be careful; and no one knows so quickly as a child when he should give in. “Wendy, let us go home,” cried John and Michael together.

“Yes,” she said, clutching them.

“Not tonight?” asked the lost boys bewildered. They knew in what they called their hearts that one can get on quite well without a mother, and that it is only the mothers who think you can’t.

“At once,” Wendy replied resolutely, for the horrible thought had come to her:

Perhaps mother is in half mourning by this time.”

This dread made her forgetful of what must be Peter’s feelings, and she said to him rather sharply, “Peter, will you make the necessary arrangements?”

“If you wish it,” he replied, as coolly as if she had asked him to pass the nuts.

Not so much as a sorry-to-lose-you between them! If she did not mind the parting, he was going to show her, was Peter, that neither did he.

But of course he cared very much; and he was so full of wrath against grown-ups, who, as usual, were spoiling everything, that as soon as he got inside his tree he breathed intentionally quick short breaths at the rate of about five to a second. He did this because there is a saying in the Neverland that, every time you breathe, a grown-up dies; and Peter was killing them off vindictively as fast as possible.

Then having given the necessary instructions to the redskins he returned to the home, where an unworthy scene had been enacted in his absence. Panic-stricken at the thought of losing Wendy the lost boys had advanced upon her threateningly.

“It will be worse than before she came,” they cried.

“We shan’t let her go.”

“Let’s keep her prisoner.”

“Ay, chain her up.”

In her extremity an instinct told her to which of them to turn. “Tootles,” she cried, “I appeal to you.”

Was it not strange? She appealed to Tootles, quite the silliest one.

Grandly, however, did Tootles respond. For that one moment he dropped his silliness and spoke with dignity.

“I am just Tootles,” he said, “and nobody minds me. But the first who does not behave to Wendy like an English gentleman I will blood him severely.”

12. let us let’s.
He drew back his hanger; and for that instant his sun was at noon. The others held back uneasily. Then Peter returned, and they saw at once that they would get no support from him. He would keep no girl in the Neverland against her will.

“Wendy,” he said, striding up and down, “I have asked the redskins to guide you through the wood, as flying tires you so.”

“Thank you, Peter.”

“Then,” he continued, in the short sharp voice of one accustomed to be obeyed, “Tinker Bell will take you across the sea. Wake her, Nibs.”

Nibs had to knock twice before he got an answer, though Tink had really been sitting up in bed listening for some time.


“You are to get up, Tink,” Nibs called, “and take Wendy on a journey.”

Of course Tink had been delighted to hear that Wendy was going; but she was jolly well determined not to be her courier, and she said so in still more offensive language. Then she pretended to be asleep again.

“She says she won’t!” Nibs exclaimed, aghast at such insubordination, whereupon Peter went sternly toward the young lady’s chamber.

“Tink,” he rapped out, “if you don’t get up and dress at once I will open the curtains, and then we shall all see you in your negligee.”

This made her leap to the floor. “Who said I wasn’t getting up?” she cried.

In the meantime the boys were gazing very forlornly at Wendy, now equipped with John and Michael for the journey. By this time they were dejected, not merely because they were about to lose her, but also because they felt that she was going off to something nice to which they had not been invited. Novelty was beckoning to them as usual.

Crediting them with a nobler feeling Wendy melted.

“Dear ones,” she said, “if you will all come with me I feel almost sure I can get my father and mother to adopt you.”

The invitation was meant specially for Peter, but each of the boys was thinking exclusively of himself, and at once they jumped with joy.

“But won’t they think us rather a handful?” Nibs asked in the middle of his jump.

“Oh no,” said Wendy, rapidly thinking it out, “it will only mean having a few beds in the drawing-room; they can be hidden behind the screens on first Thursdays.”

13. negligee (NEHG luh zhay) n. nightgown.
“Peter, can we go?” they all cried imploringly. They took it for granted that if they went he would go also, but really they scarcely cared. Thus children are ever ready, when novelty knocks, to desert their dearest ones.

“All right,” Peter replied with a bitter smile, and immediately they rushed to get their things.

“And now, Peter,” Wendy said, thinking she had put everything right, “I am going to give you your medicine before you go.” She loved to give them medicine, and undoubtedly gave them too much. Of course it was only water, but it was out of a bottle and she always shook the bottle and counted the drops, which gave it a certain medicinal quality. On this occasion, however, she did not give Peter his draught, for just as she had prepared it, she saw a look on his face that made her heart sink.

“Get your things, Peter,” she cried, shaking.

“No,” he answered, pretending indifference, “I am not going with you, Wendy.”

“Yes, Peter.”

“No.”

To show that her departure would leave him unmoved, he skipped up and down the room, playing gaily on his heartless pipes. She had to run about after him, though it was rather undignified.

“To find your mother,” she coaxed.

Now, if Peter had ever quite had a mother, he no longer missed her. He could do very well without one. He had thought them out, and remembered only their bad points.

“No, no,” he told Wendy decisively; “perhaps she would say I was old, and I just want always to be a little boy and to have fun.”

“But, Peter—”

“No.”

And so the others had to be told.

“Peter isn’t coming.”

Peter not coming! They gazed blankly at him, their sticks over their backs, and on each stick a bundle. Their first thought was that if Peter was not going he had probably changed his mind about letting them go.

But he was far too proud for that. “If you find your mothers,” he said darkly, “I hope you will like them.”

The awful cynicism of this made an uncomfortable impression, and most of them began to look rather doubtful. After all, their faces said, were they not noodles to want to go?

“Now then,” cried Peter, “no fuss, no blubbering; good-bye, Wendy,” and he held out his hand cheerily, quite as if they must really go now, for he had something important to do.

14. draught (draft) n. portion.
She had to take his hand, and there was no indication that he would prefer a thimble.

“You will remember about changing your flannels, Peter?” she said, lingering over him. She was always so particular about their flannels.

“Yes.”

“And you will take your medicine?”

“Yes.”

That seemed to be everything, and an awkward pause followed. Peter, however, was not the kind that breaks down before other people. “Are you ready, Tinker Bell?” he called out.

“Ay, ay.”

“Then lead the way.”

Tink darted up the nearest tree; but no one followed her, for it was at this moment that the pirates made their dreadful attack upon the redskins. Above, where all had been so still, the air was rent with shrieks and the clash of steel. Below, there was dead silence. Mouths opened and remained open. Wendy fell on her knees, but her arms were extended toward Peter. All arms were extended to him, as if suddenly blown in his direction; they were beseeching him mutely not to desert them. As for Peter, he seized his sword, the same he thought he had slain Barbecue with, and the lust of battle was in his eye.
About the Author

Gary Soto (b. 1952) is an award-winning poet and author of children’s books. Much of his work focuses on life in Mexican-American communities and is based on his own childhood as well as his experiences as a young adult. Soto says that writing helps him get his feelings down on paper, where he can see them and reflect on them.

BACKGROUND

Much of Soto’s writing focuses on life in Mexican-American communities based on his own childhood and experiences as a young adult. This poem takes place in the town of Soto’s childhood, Fresno, California, in 1964. During that time, the price of candy was very low—a candy bar would usually cost only a nickel.

The first time I walked
With a girl, I was twelve,
Cold, and weighted down
With two oranges in my jacket.

December. Frost cracking
Beneath my steps, my breath
Before me, then gone,
As I walked toward
Her house, the one whose

Porch light burned yellow
Night and day, in any weather.
A dog barked at me, until
She came out pulling
At her gloves, face bright
With rouge.¹ I smiled,
Touched her shoulder, and led
Her down the street, across
A used car lot and a line
Of newly planted trees,

Until we were breathing
Before a drugstore. We
Entered, the tiny bell
Bringing a saleslady
Down a narrow aisle of goods.

I turned to the candies
Tiered² like bleachers,
And asked what she wanted—
Light in her eyes, a smile
Starting at the corners
Of her mouth. I fingered
A nickel in my pocket,
And when she lifted a chocolate
That cost a dime,
I didn’t say anything.

I took the nickel from
My pocket, then an orange,
And set them quietly on
The counter. When I looked up,
The lady’s eyes met mine,

And held them, knowing
Very well what it was all
About.
Outside,
A few cars hissing past,
Fog hanging like old
Coats between the trees.
I took my girl’s hand
In mine for two blocks,
Then released it to let
Her unwrap the chocolate.
I peeled my orange
That was so bright against
The gray of December
That, from some distance,

Someone might have thought
I was making a fire in my hands.

¹. rouge (roozh) n. reddish cosmetic used to color the cheeks.
². tiered (tihrd) adj. arranged in levels, one above another.
It was one of those hot summer nights in Harlem in 1937. Mother, Daddy, and Uncle Hilliard were talking about their childhood growing up in Jacksonville, Florida. When Uncle Hilliard came to visit we never missed a chance to laugh at his stories. Everything he said was funny. We kids would just cover our mouths and laugh into our hands. As long as we were quiet, Mother would forget it was late and we were still up.

Uncle Hilliard was at the door now saying goodbye. Each of us kids could give him a hug and he’d give us a silver dollar to spend on our vacation.

Soon school would be closed and in a few weeks we’d be going to stay with the Pattersons and their kids in Atlantic City. Barbara and Andrew would spend their silver dollars long before then, but I saved mine in my piggy bank. When Mother needed some...
cash she’d borrow from me, replacing the coins with buttons and washers, though it would be years before I found that out.

“You sure are crazy, Hilliard,” Mother yelled down the stairs at Uncle Hilliard; he’d told my father, “Now don’t you get no uglier till I get back. You need a license now to walk the street.” Daddy just laughed and laughed.

And then the house was quiet. We were getting ready for bed when we heard the superintendent running up the stairs and knocking on every door. “Fire! Fire! Everybody outside!”

Everyone’s doors opened and all the tenants poured into the halls of our tiny five-story apartment building and down the narrow, steep stairs into the street.

It was really late by then, and the streets were empty except for all of us standing there. Some people were wrapped in sheets over their nightclothes. “Thank goodness it’s summer,” Mother said. Hardly anybody was fully dressed.

Soon the fire engines woke up the entire street and people came from everywhere to see where the fire was coming from. But it was only in the basement.

The firemen came with their boots and helmets and big fire hoses, and in no time they put out the fire. Afterward they let my brother Andrew and some of the other boys climb up in the fire truck and try on their firemen’s hats.

The adults gathered in groups and talked softly so that we kids could hardly hear. There was a new little boy among us whom nobody knew. He was Mr. and Mrs. Mullen’s little boy, from the fifth floor.

The superintendent brought him down in a wheelchair. Nobody knew him. Nobody knew he lived there. His mother and father were very quiet people; hardly anyone ever saw them. Mr. Mullen was a night watchman in a warehouse, so he went to work late and came home early. And Mrs. Mullen only came out to buy groceries and go to church on Sunday.

The little boy looked very strange as he sat twisting and turning in his wheelchair and reaching out to the other children, trying to grab their outstretched hands. He attempted to speak, but only grunts came from his mouth.

Some of the tenants remembered hearing strange sounds coming from the Mullens’ apartment, and after that they’d hear “Shh, shh.” Mrs. Potter, their next-door neighbor, said, “I would have never guessed that they had a little boy living there. We all thought that Mr. and Mrs. Mullen lived alone.”

“What’s wrong with him?” one of the neighbors asked his mother. “Is he your boy? Does he live in the building?” another neighbor asked. But Mrs. Mullen didn’t answer. She just kept
looking at her son and he at her. He seemed so happy and she so sad. There were tears in her eyes and his too.

15 The men in the building gathered around the boy’s wheelchair and lifted him up and carried him upstairs. My mother and some of the other mothers put their arms around Mrs. Mullen. “God don’t put no more on us than we can bear, Mrs. Mullen,” my mother said softly. “We understand.”

16 The next day on our way to school we saw that same boy sitting in his wheelchair across the street in the sun. It was Kenneth Mullen, Jr. We knew now that he was six years old and he had never been out in the sun until now.

17 They said he had a disease that made him act funny and talk funny, in grunts and groans. But Mr. Parker, who had a medical degree though he worked in the post office, said he was a smart boy in the mind but his body was sick, and that his disease was called multiple sclerosis and there was no known cure for it.

18 After the fire Mr. and Mrs. Mullen didn’t have to hide their little boy anymore. People in the neighborhood now knew him and loved him too.

19 Everybody going to work and to school stopped by to see him. Just like that, Kenneth Mullen, Jr., was no longer the boy whom nobody knew.
About the Author

**Toni Cade Bambara** (1939–1995) grew up in New York City, where life was tough but rewarding. She loved the city and the lively talk of the streets. Bambara learned she had a gift for capturing the language and struggles of real people, and her mother inspired her to write. “She [my mother] gave me permission to wonder, to . . . dawdle, to daydream,” Bambara once said.

**BACKGROUND**

“Raymond’s Run” takes place in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, where Toni Cade Bambara lived until she was ten years old. The story was published in 1972 as part of Bambara’s first, and most well known, collection of short stories, *Gorilla, My Love*. The collection celebrates the voice and experience of young African American women and their communities.

1. I don’t have much work to do around the house like some girls. My mother does that. And I don’t have to earn my pocket money by hustling; George runs errands for the big boys and sells Christmas cards. And anything else that’s got to get done, my father does. All I have to do in life is mind my brother Raymond, which is enough.

2. Sometimes I slip and say my little brother Raymond. But as any fool can see he’s much bigger and he’s older too. But a lot of people call him my little brother cause he needs looking after cause he’s not quite right. And a lot of smart mouths got lots to say about that too, especially when George was minding him. But now, if anybody has anything to say to Raymond, anything to say about his big head, they have to come by me. And I don’t play
the dozens\(^1\) or believe in standing around with somebody in my face doing a lot of talking. I much rather just knock you down and take my chances even if I am a little girl with skinny arms and a squeaky voice, which is how I got the name Squeaky. And if things get too rough, I run. And as anybody can tell you, I’m the fastest thing on two feet.

There is no track meet that I don’t win the first-place medal. I used to win the twenty-yard dash when I was a little kid in kindergarten. Nowadays, it’s the fifty-yard dash. And tomorrow I’m subject to run the quarter-meter relay all by myself and come in first, second, and third. The big kids call me Mercury\(^2\) cause I’m the swiftest thing in the neighborhood. Everybody knows that—except two people who know better, my father and me. He can beat me to Amsterdam Avenue with me having a two-fire-hydrant headstart and him running with his hands in his pockets and whistling. But that’s private information. Cause can you imagine some thirty-five-year-old man stuffing himself into PAL\(^3\) shorts to race little kids? So as far as everyone’s concerned, I’m the fastest and that goes for Gretchen, too, who has put out the tale that she is going to win the first-place medal this year. Ridiculous. In the second place, she’s got short legs. In the third place, she’s got freckles. In the first place, no one can beat me and that’s all there is to it.

I’m standing on the corner admiring the weather and about to take a stroll down Broadway so I can practice my breathing exercises, and I’ve got Raymond walking on the inside close to the buildings, cause he’s subject to fits of fantasy and starts thinking he’s a circus performer and that the curb is a tightrope strung high in the air. And sometimes after a rain he likes to step down off his tightrope right into the gutter and slosh around getting his shoes and cuffs wet. Then I get hit when I get home. Or sometimes if you don’t watch him he’ll dash across traffic to the island in the middle of Broadway and give the pigeons a fit. Then I have to go behind him apologizing to all the old people sitting around trying to get some sun and getting all upset with the pigeons fluttering around them, scattering their newspapers and upsetting the waxpaper lunches in their laps. So I keep Raymond on the inside of me, and he plays like he’s driving a stage coach which is OK by me so long as he doesn’t run me over or interrupt my breathing exercises, which I have to do on account of I’m serious about my running, and I don’t care who knows it.

Now some people like to act like things come easy to them, won’t let on that they practice. Not me. I’ll high-prance down

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1. *the dozens* game in which the players insult one another; the first to show anger loses
2. *Mercury* in Roman mythology, the messenger of the gods, known for great speed.
34th Street like a rodeo pony to keep my knees strong even if it
does get my mother uptight so that she walks ahead like she’s not
with me, don’t know me, is all by herself on a shopping trip, and
I am somebody else’s crazy child. Now you take Cynthia Procter
for instance. She’s just the opposite. If there’s a test tomorrow,
she’ll say something like, “Oh, I guess I’ll play handball this
afternoon and watch television tonight,” just to let you know
she ain’t thinking about the test. Or like last week when she won
the spelling bee for the millionth time, “A good thing you got
‘receive,’ Squeaky, cause I would have got it wrong. I completely
forgot about the spelling bee.” And she’ll clutch the lace on her
blouse like it was a narrow escape. Oh, brother. But of course
when I pass her house on my early morning trots around the
block, she is practicing the scales on the piano over and over
and over and over. Then in music class she always lets herself
get bumped around so she falls accidentally on purpose onto
the piano stool and is so surprised to find herself sitting there
that she decides just for fun to try out the ole keys. And what do
you know—Chopin’s waltzes just spring out of her fingertips
and she’s the most surprised thing in the world. A regular
prodigy. I could kill people like that. I stay up all night studying
the words for the spelling bee. And you can see me any time of
day practicing running. I never walk if I can trot, and shame on
Raymond if he can’t keep up. But of course he does, cause if he
hangs back someone’s liable to walk up to him and get smart, or
take his allowance from him, or ask him where he got that great
big pumpkin head. People are so stupid sometimes.

So I’m strolling down Broadway breathing out and breathing
in on counts of seven, which is my lucky number, and here comes
Gretchen and her sidekicks: Mary Louise, who used to be a friend
of mine when she first moved to Harlem from Baltimore and
got beat up by everybody till I took up for her on account of her
mother and my mother used to sing in the same choir when they
were young girls, but people ain’t grateful, so now she hangs out
with the new girl Gretchen and talks about me like a dog; and
Rosie, who is as fat as I am skinny and has a big mouth where
Raymond is concerned and is too stupid to know that there is not
a big deal of difference between herself and Raymond and that
she can’t afford to throw stones. So they are steady coming up
Broadway and I see right away that it’s going to be one of those
Dodge City scenes cause the street ain’t that big and they’re close
to the buildings just as we are. First I think I’ll step into the candy
store and look over the new comics and let them pass. But that’s

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4. Chopin’s (shoh pan) Frédéric François Chopin (1810–1849), highly regarded Polish
composer and pianist, known for his challenging piano compositions.
5. Dodge City location of the television program Gunsmoke, which often presented a
gunfight between the sheriff and an outlaw.
chicken and I’ve got a reputation to consider. So then I think I’ll just walk straight on through them or even over them if necessary. But as they get to me, they slow down. I’m ready to fight, cause like I said I don’t feature a whole lot of chit-chat, I much prefer to just knock you down right from the jump and save everybody a lotta precious time.

“You signing up for the May Day races?” smiles Mary Louise, only it’s not a smile at all. A dumb question like that doesn’t deserve an answer. Besides, there’s just me and Gretchen standing there really, so no use wasting my breath talking to shadows.

“I don’t think you’re going to win this time,” says Rosie, trying to signify with her hands on her hips all salty, completely forgetting that I have whupped her behind many times for less salt than that.

“I always win cause I’m the best,” I say straight at Gretchen who is, as far as I’m concerned, the only one talking in this ventriloquist-dummy routine. Gretchen smiles, but it’s not a smile, and I’m thinking that girls never really smile at each other because they don’t know how and don’t want to know how and there’s probably no one to teach us how, cause grown-up girls don’t know either. Then they all look at Raymond who has just brought his mule team to a standstill. And they’re about to see what trouble they can get into through him.

“What grade you in now, Raymond?”

“You got anything to say to my brother, you say it to me, Mary Louise Williams of Raggedy Town, Baltimore.”

“What are you, his mother?” sasses Rosie.

“That’s right, Fatso. And the next word out of anybody and I’ll be their mother too.” So they just stand there and Gretchen shifts from one leg to the other and so do they.

Then Gretchen puts her hands on her hips and is about to say something with her freckle-face self but doesn’t. Then she walks around me looking me up and down but keeps walking up Broadway, and her sidekicks follow her. So me and Raymond smile at each other and he says, “Gidyap” to his team and I continue with my breathing exercises, strolling down Broadway toward the ice man on 145th with not a care in the world cause I am Miss Quicksilver herself.

I take my time getting to the park on May Day because the track meet is the last thing on the program. The biggest thing on the program is the May Pole dancing, which I can do without, thank you, even if my mother thinks it’s a shame I don’t take part and act like a girl for a change. You’d think my mother’d be grateful not to have to make me a white organdy dress with a

6. ventriloquist (vehn TRIHL uh kwihst) dummy routine a comedy act in which the performer speaks through a puppet called a “dummy.”
big satin sash and buy me new white baby-doll shoes that can’t be taken out of the box till the big day. You’d think she’d be glad her daughter ain’t out there prancing around a May Pole getting the new clothes all dirty and sweaty and trying to act like a fairy or a flower or whatever you’re supposed to be when you should be trying to be yourself, whatever that is, which is, as far as I am concerned, a poor black girl who really can’t afford to buy shoes and a new dress you only wear once a lifetime cause it won’t fit next year.

I was once a strawberry in a Hansel and Gretel pageant when I was in nursery school and didn’t have no better sense than to dance on tiptoe with my arms in a circle over my head doing umbrella steps and being a perfect fool just so my mother and father could come dressed up and clap. You’d think they’d know better than to encourage that kind of nonsense. I am not a strawberry. I do not dance on my toes. I run. That is what I am all about. So I always come late to the May Day program, just in time to get my number pinned on and lay in the grass till they announce the fifty-yard dash.

I put Raymond in the little swings, which is a tight squeeze this year and will be impossible next year. Then I look around for Mr. Pearson, who pins the numbers on. I’m really looking for Gretchen if you want to know the truth, but she’s not around. The park is jam-packed. Parents in hats and corsages and breast-pocket handkerchiefs peeking up. Kids in white dresses and light-blue suits. The parkees unfolding chairs and chasing the rowdy kids from Lenox as if they had no right to be there. The big guys with their caps on backwards, leaning against the fence swirling the basketballs on the tips of their fingers, waiting for all these crazy people to clear out the park so they can play. Most of the kids in my class are carrying bass drums and glockenspiels and flutes. You’d think they’d put in a few bongos or something for real like that.

Then here comes Mr. Pearson with his clipboard and his cards and pencils and whistles and safety pins and fifty million other things he’s always dropping all over the place with his clumsy self. He sticks out in a crowd because he’s on stilts. We used to call him Jack and the Beanstalk to get him mad. But I’m the only one that can outrun him and get away, and I’m too grown for that silliness now.

“Well, Squeaky,” he says, checking my name off the list and handing me number seven and two pins. And I’m thinking he’s got no right to call me Squeaky, if I can’t call him Beanstalk.

7. parkees people who are often seen visiting the park.
8. glockenspiels (GLOK uhn speelz) n. musical instruments with flat metal bars that make bell-like tones when struck with small hammers.
“Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker,” I correct him and tell him to write it down on his board.

“Well, Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker, going to give someone else a break this year?” I squint at him real hard to see if he is seriously thinking I should lose the race on purpose just to give someone else a break. “Only six girls running this time,” he continues, shaking his head sadly like it’s my fault all of New York didn’t turn out in sneakers. “That new girl should give you a run for your money.” He looks around the park for Gretchen like a periscope in a submarine movie. “Wouldn’t it be a nice gesture if you were . . . to ahhh . . .”

I give him such a look he couldn’t finish putting that idea into words. Grown-ups got a lot of nerve sometimes. I pin number seven to myself and stomp away, I’m so burnt. And I go straight for the track and stretch out on the grass while the band winds up with “Oh, the Monkey Wrapped His Tail Around the Flag Pole,” which my teacher calls by some other name. The man on the loudspeaker is calling everyone over to the track and I’m on my back looking at the sky, trying to pretend I’m in the country, but I can’t, because even grass in the city feels hard as sidewalk, and there’s just no pretending you are anywhere but in a “concrete jungle” as my grandfather says.

The twenty-yard dash takes all of two minutes cause most of the little kids don’t know no better than to run off the track or run the wrong way or run smack into the fence and fall down and cry. One little kid, though, has got the good sense to run straight for the white ribbon up ahead so he wins. Then the second-graders line up for the thirty-yard dash and I don’t even bother to turn my head to watch cause Raphael Perez always wins. He wins before he even begins by psyching the runners, telling them they’re going to trip on their shoelaces and fall on their faces or lose their shorts or something, which he doesn’t really have to do since he is very fast, almost as fast as I am. After that is the forty-yard dash which I used to run when I was in first grade. Raymond is hollering from the swings cause he knows I’m about to do my thing cause the man on the loudspeaker has just announced the fifty-yard dash, although he might just as well be giving a recipe for angel food cake cause you can hardly make out what he’s sayin’ for the static. I get up and slip off my sweat pants and then I see Gretchen standing at the starting line, kicking her legs out like a pro. Then as I get into place I see that ole Raymond is on line on the other side of the fence, bending down with his fingers on the ground just like he knew what he was doing. I was going to yell at him but then I didn’t. It burns up your energy to holler.

9. periscope n. tube that rises from a submarine to allow sailors to see objects above the water’s surface.
Every time, just before I take off in a race, I always feel like I’m in a dream, the kind of dream you have when you’re sick with fever and feel all hot and weightless. I dream I’m flying over a sandy beach in the early morning sun, kissing the leaves of the trees as I fly by. And there’s always the smell of apples, just like in the country when I was little and used to think I was a choo-choo train, running through the fields of corn and chugging up the hill to the orchard. And all the time I’m dreaming this, I get lighter and lighter until I’m flying over the beach again, getting blown through the sky like a feather that weighs nothing at all. But once I spread my fingers in the dirt and crouch over the Get on Your Mark, the dream goes and I am solid again and am telling myself, Squeaky you must win, you must win, you are the fastest thing in the world, you can even beat your father up Amsterdam if you really try. And then I feel my weight coming back just behind my knees then down to my feet then into the earth and the pistol shot explodes in my blood and I am off and weightless again, flying past the other runners, my arms pumping up and down and the whole world is quiet except for the crunch as I zoom over the gravel in the track. I glance to my left and there is no one. To the right, a blurred Gretchen, who’s got her chin jutting out as if it would win the race all by itself. And on the other side of the fence is Raymond with his arms down to his side and the palms tucked up behind him, running in his very own style, and it’s the first time I ever saw that and I almost stop to watch my brother Raymond on his first run. But the white ribbon is bouncing toward me and I tear past it, racing into the distance till my feet with a mind of their own start digging up footfuls of dirt and brake me short. Then all the kids standing on the side pile on me, banging me on the back and slapping my head with their May Day programs, for I have won again and everybody on 151st Street can walk tall for another year.

“In first place . . .” the man on the loudspeaker is clear as a bell now. But then he pauses and the loudspeaker starts to whine. Then static. And I lean down to catch my breath and here comes Gretchen walking back, for she’s overshot the finish line too, huffing and puffing with her hands on her hips taking it slow, breathing in steady time like a real pro and I sort of like her a little for the first time. “In first place . . .” and then three or four voices get all mixed up on the loudspeaker and I dig my sneaker into the grass and stare at Gretchen who’s staring back, we both wondering just who did win. I can hear old Beanstalk arguing with the man on the loudspeaker and then a few others running their mouths about what the stopwatches say. Then I hear Raymond yanking at the fence to call me and I wave to shush him, but he keeps rattling the fence like a gorilla in a cage.
like in them gorilla movies, but then like a dancer or something he starts climbing up nice and easy but very fast. And it occurs to me, watching how smoothly he climbs hand over hand and remembering how he looked running with his arms down to his side and with the wind pulling his mouth back and his teeth showing and all, it occurred to me that Raymond would make a very fine runner. Doesn’t he always keep up with me on my trots? And he surely knows how to breathe in counts of seven cause he’s always doing it at the dinner table, which drives my brother George up the wall. And I’m smiling to beat the band cause if I’ve lost this race, or if me and Gretchen tied, or even if I’ve won, I can always retire as a runner and begin a whole new career as a coach with Raymond as my champion. After all, with a little more study I can beat Cynthia and her phony self at the spelling bee. And if I bugged my mother, I could get piano lessons and become a star. And I have a big rep as the baddest thing around. And I’ve got a roomful of ribbons and medals and awards. But what has Raymond got to call his own?

So I stand there with my new plans, laughing out loud by this time as Raymond jumps down from the fence and runs over with his teeth showing and his arms down to the side, which no one before him has quite mastered as a running style. And by the time he comes over I’m jumping up and down so glad to see him—my brother Raymond, a great runner in the family tradition. But of course everyone thinks I’m jumping up and down because the men on the loudspeaker have finally gotten themselves together and compared notes and are announcing “In first place—Miss Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker.” (Dig that.) “In second place—Miss Gretchen P. Lewis.” And I look over at Gretchen wondering what the “P” stands for. And I smile. Cause she’s good, no doubt about it. Maybe she’d like to help me coach Raymond; she obviously is serious about running, as any fool can see. And she nods to congratulate me and then she smiles. And I smile. We stand there with this big smile of respect between us. It’s about as real a smile as girls can do for each other, considering we don’t practice real smiling every day, you know, cause maybe we too busy being flowers or fairies or strawberries instead of something honest and worthy of respect . . . you know . . . like being people.
Eleven

Sandra Cisneros

About the Author

Sandra Cisneros (b. 1954) was born in Chicago, Illinois, but her family often traveled to Mexico to visit her grandfather. The frequent moves left her with few friends, so she “retreated inside” herself by reading and writing. Cisneros has won many awards, including the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, known as the “Genius Grant.”

BACKGROUND

Adolescence is the period of time in a person’s life between childhood and adulthood. Many experts believe that adolescence begins at the age of ten. During this time, many adolescents face peer pressure and struggle to understand themselves and their place in the world.

1 What they don’t understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you’re eleven, you’re also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don’t. You open your eyes and everything’s just like yesterday, only it’s today. And you don’t feel eleven at all. You feel like you’re still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven.

2 Like some days you might say something stupid, and that’s the part of you that’s still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama’s lap because you’re scared, and that’s the part of you that’s five. And maybe one day when you’re all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you’re three, and that’s okay. That’s what I tell Mama when she’s sad and needs to cry. Maybe she’s feeling three.
Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That’s how being eleven years old is.

You don’t feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don’t feel smart eleven, not until you’re almost twelve. That’s the way it is.

Only today I wish I didn’t have just eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box. Today I wish I was one-hundred-and-two instead of eleven because if I was one-hundred-and-two I’d have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk. I would’ve known how to tell her it wasn’t mine instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

“Whose is this?” Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. “Whose? It’s been sitting in the coatroom for a month.”

“Not mine,” says everybody. “Not me.”

“It has to belong to somebody,” Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It’s an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It’s maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn’t say so.

Maybe because I’m skinny, maybe because she doesn’t like me, that stupid Felice Garcia says, “I think it belongs to Rachel.” An ugly sweater like that, all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.

“That’s not, I don’t, you’re not . . . not mine,” I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

“Of course it’s yours,” Mrs. Price says. “I remember you wearing it once.” Because she’s older and the teacher, she’s right and I’m not.

Not mine, not mine, not mine, but Mrs. Price is already turning to page 32, and math problem number four. I don’t know why but all of a sudden I’m feeling sick inside, like the part of me that’s three wants to come out of my eyes, only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on my teeth real hard and try to remember today I am eleven, eleven. Mama is making a cake for me tonight, and when Papa comes home everybody will sing happy birthday, happy birthday to you.

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater’s still sitting there like a big red mountain. I move the red sweater to the corner of my desk with my ruler. I move my
pencil and books and eraser as far from it as possible. I even move
my chair a little to the right. Not mine, not mine, not mine.

In my head I’m thinking how long till lunchtime, how long till
I can take the red sweater and throw it over the school yard fence,
or even leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into
a little ball and toss it in the alley. Except when math period ends
Mrs. Price says loud and in front of everybody, “Now Rachel,
that’s enough,” because she sees I’ve shoved the red sweater to
the tippy-tip corner of my desk and it’s hanging all over the edge
like a waterfall, but I don’t care.

“Rachel,” Mrs. Price says. She says it like she’s getting mad.
“You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense.”

“But it’s not . . .”

“Now!” Mrs. Price says.

This is when I wish I wasn’t eleven, because all the years inside
of me—ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one—
are all pushing at the back of my eyes when I put one arm through
one sleeve of the sweater that smells like cottage cheese, and then
the other arm through the other and stand there with my arms
apart as if the sweater hurts me and it does, all itchy and full of
germs that aren’t even mine.

That’s when everything I’ve been holding in since this morning,
since when Mrs. Price put the sweater on my desk, finally lets
go, and all of a sudden I’m crying in front of everybody. I wish I
was invisible but I’m not. I’m eleven and it’s my birthday today
and I’m crying like I’m three in front of everybody. I put my head
don the desk and bury my face in my stupid clown sweater
arms. My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because
I can’t stop the little animal noises from coming out of me, until
there aren’t any more tears left in my eyes, and it’s just my body
shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head
hurts like when you drink milk too fast.

But the worst part is right before the bell rings for lunch. That
stupid Phyllis Lopez, who is even dumber than Felice Garcia, says
she remembers the red sweater is hers! I take it off right away and
give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything’s okay.

Today I’m eleven. There’s a cake Mama’s making for tonight,
and when Papa comes home from work we’ll eat it. There’ll be
candles and presents and everybody will sing happy birthday,
happy birthday to you, Rachel, only it’s too late.

I’m eleven today. I’m eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five,
four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one-hundred-and-two.
I wish I was anything but eleven, because I want today to be far
away already, far away like a tiny kite in the sky, so tiny-tiny you
have to close your eyes to see it.
Share Your Independent Learning

Prepare to Share

What are some of the challenges and triumphs of growing up?

Even when you read or learn something independently, you can continue to grow when you share what you have learned with others. Reflect on the text you explored independently, and write notes about its connection to the unit. In your notes, consider why this text belongs in this unit.

Learn From Your Classmates

Discuss It Share your ideas about the text you explored on your own. As you talk with others in your class, jot down a few ideas that you learned from them.

Reflect

Review your notes, and mark the most important insight you gained from these writing and discussion activities. Explain how this idea adds to your understanding of childhood challenges and triumphs.
Review Evidence for a Nonfiction Narrative

At the beginning of this unit, you wrote your first thoughts about a life experience that might answer the following question:

When did a challenge lead to a triumph?

Identify a real-life experience that illustrates one of your ideas about childhood challenges and triumphs.

________________________________________________________________________________________

Develop your thoughts into a topic sentence for a nonfiction narrative. Complete this sentence starter:

*Although it was challenging when ____________________________,

the end result was a triumph in that ____________________________.

________________________________________________________________________________________

**Evaluate the Strength of Your Details** Do you have enough details to write a well-developed and engaging narrative about real-life events? If not, make a plan.

- Brainstorm for details to add
- Reread a selection
- Other: ____________________________________________________________________________

- Talk with my classmates
- Ask an expert

________________________________________________________________________________________
PART 1
Writing to Sources: Nonfiction Narrative

In this unit, you have read about different challenges and triumphs of growing up. Some of the selections described hardships and confusing changes, whereas other selections described the joys of discovery.

Assignment
Write a nonfiction narrative in which you tell about a real-life experience that answers this question:

When did a challenge lead to a triumph?

The experience may be yours, or it may be that of someone you know. Begin by giving your reader background about the experience. Then, present a natural, logical series of events that shows how a challenge led to a triumph. Conclude by reflecting on the importance of the experience.

Reread the Assignment Review the assignment to be sure you fully understand it. The task may reference some of the academic words presented at the beginning of the unit. Be sure you understand each of the words here in order to complete the assignment correctly.

Academic Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>reflect</th>
<th>contribute</th>
<th>memorize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>notable</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review the Elements of Nonfiction Narrative Before you begin writing, read the Nonfiction Narrative Rubric. Once you have completed your first draft, check it against the rubric. If one or more of the elements are missing or not as strong as they could be, revise your narrative to add or strengthen those components.

STANDARDS
Writing
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
## Nonfiction Narrative Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus and Organization</th>
<th>Evidence and Elaboration</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>The introduction is engaging and introduces the characters and situation in a way that appeals to readers.</td>
<td>The narrative effectively includes techniques such as dialogue and description to add interest and to develop the characters and events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Events in the narrative progress in logical order and are linked by clear transitions.</td>
<td>The narrative effectively includes precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The conclusion effectively follows from the narrated experiences or events.</td>
<td>The narrative effectively establishes voice through word choice, sentence structure, and tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>The introduction is somewhat engaging and clearly introduces the characters and situation.</td>
<td>The narrative mostly includes dialogue and description to add interest and develop experiences and events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Events in the narrative progress logically and are often linked by transition words.</td>
<td>The narrative mostly includes precise words and sensory language to convey experiences and events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The conclusion mostly follows from the narrated experiences or events.</td>
<td>The narrative mostly establishes voice through word choice, sentence structure, and tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>The introduction occasionally introduces characters.</td>
<td>The narrative includes some dialogue and descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Events in the narrative progress somewhat logically and are sometimes linked by transition words.</td>
<td>The words in the narrative vary between vague and precise, and some sensory language is included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The conclusion adds very little to the narrated experiences or events.</td>
<td>The narrative occasionally establishes voice through word choice, sentence structure, and tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>The introduction does not introduce characters and an experience, or there is no clear introduction.</td>
<td>Dialogue and descriptions are not included in the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The events in the narrative do not progress logically. The ideas seem disconnected and the sentences are not linked by transitional words and phrases.</td>
<td>The narrative does not incorporate sensory language or precise words to convey experiences and to develop characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The conclusion does not connect to the narrative or there is no conclusion.</td>
<td>The narrative does not establish voice through word choice, sentence structure, and tone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART 2
Speaking and Listening: Recitation

Assignment
After completing the final draft of your nonfiction narrative, plan and present a recitation, in which you tell the story to classmates.

Do not simply read your narrative aloud. Examine what you have written, and adapt it for a listening audience. Follow these steps to make your recitation lively and engaging.

• Go back to your narrative, and annotate key events or descriptions that you want to emphasize.
• Mark places in the narrative where you intend to slow down or speed up.
• Add transitions as needed, to help a listening audience follow along.
• Use appropriate eye contact. Make sure to speak loudly enough for people to hear you, and pronounce words clearly.

Review the Rubric: The criteria by which your recitation will be evaluated appear in the rubric below. Review these criteria before presenting to ensure that you are prepared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Presentation Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The presentation has an engaging introduction, a logical sequence of events, and a meaningful conclusion.</td>
<td>The speaker maintains effective eye contact and speaks clearly and with adequate volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation effectively includes narrative techniques and a variety of transitions for clarity.</td>
<td>The speaker varies tone and volume to create an engaging presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation effectively includes descriptive details relevant to the story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation has an introduction, a somewhat logical sequence of events, and a conclusion.</td>
<td>The speaker sometimes maintains effective eye contact and speaks somewhat clearly and with adequate volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation includes some narrative techniques and some transitions for clarity.</td>
<td>The speaker sometimes varies tone and emphasis to create an engaging presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation includes some descriptive details.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation does not have a logical sequence of events, and lacks an introduction or conclusion.</td>
<td>The speaker does not maintain effective eye contact or speak clearly with adequate volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation does not include narrative techniques and transitions.</td>
<td>The speaker does not vary tone and emphasis to create an engaging presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation does not include descriptive details.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflect on the Unit
Now that you’ve completed the unit, take a few moments to reflect on your learning.

**Reflect on the Unit Goals**
Look back at the goals at the beginning of the unit. Use a different-colored pen to rate yourself again. Think about readings and activities that contributed the most to the growth of your understanding. Record your thoughts.

**Reflect on the Learning Strategies**

Discuss It  Write a reflection on whether you were able to improve your learning based on your Action Plans. Think about what worked, what didn’t, and what you might do to keep working on these strategies. Record your ideas before a class discussion.

**Reflect on the Text**
Choose a selection that you found challenging, and explain what made it difficult.

Explain something that surprised you about a text in the unit. Which activity taught you the most about childhood? What did you learn?