7th ELA LEAP Practice
Week 1

1. Complete each day's work. Read the information and answer the Practice Questions on the pages for each day.
2. Read for 30 minutes each day.
3. Complete the reading log on the next page after you read each day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>1 question or prediction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/23/2020</td>
<td><em>The Three Little Pigs</em></td>
<td>1-20</td>
<td>I wonder why the third pig didn’t help his brothers build better houses?</td>
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Name: _____________________________________________________________
Week 1 Day 1
Chapter 1
Features of Literature

This chapter covers the following standards: RL.1, RL.2

Evidence and Inference

Often you will need to analyze what you read in class or in your writing. When you explain what you think a passage means, you need to use evidence to support your ideas. Evidence includes examples and quotations from the passage that back up what you think. Sometimes the evidence is provided clearly in the passage. Other times, you will need to make inferences. An inference is an educated guess based on the information you are already given.

Let's practice finding evidence and making inferences. Read the following passage and answer the questions.

Everywhere we look, all we see are lights, people everywhere, and the hustle and bustle of the city. The holiday season is upon us. Family gatherings, breaks from school, and holiday television specials are all part of this special time of year. For some people, it is a time of excitement and joy. For others, it is a time of stress and unhappiness.

1. Using evidence from the passage, what three examples are part of the special holiday-time of year?
   If you said family gatherings, breaks from school, and television specials, you are correct.

2. What is the inferred central idea of the passage?
   The passage does not directly say what the central idea of the passage is. But there are words that give clues to what the central idea is, such as hustle and bustle, excitement, joy, stress, and unhappiness. These words help the reader make an inference about the central idea. After reading the entire passage, we can infer that the holiday season is a busy time that some people think is fun and exciting, but for others, the holiday season makes them stressed and unhappy.
Excerpt from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain

1. The summer evenings were long. It was not dark, yet. Presently Tom checked his whistle. A stranger was before him—a boy a shade larger than himself... This boy was well dressed, too well dressed on a week-day... He had a citified air about him that ate into Tom's vitals. The more Tom stared at the splendid marvel, the higher he turned up his nose at his finery and the shabbier and shabbier his own outfit seemed to him to grow. Neither boy spoke. If one moved, the other moved—but only sidewise, in a circle; they kept face to face and eye to eye all the time. Finally Tom said:

2. “I can lick you!”
3. “I'd like to see you try it.”
4. “Well, I can do it.”
5. “No you can't, either.”
6. “Yes I can.”
7. “No you can't.”
8. “I can.”
9. “You can't.”
10. “Can!”
11. “Can't!”
12. An uncomfortable pause. Then Tom said:
13. “What's your name?”
15. “Well I'll make it my business.”
16. “Well why don't you?”
17. […]
18. Another pause, and more eying and sidling around each other. Presently they were shoulder to shoulder. Tom said:
19. “Get away from here!”
20. “Go away yourself!”
21. “I won't.”
22. “I won't either.”
23. […]
24. The new boy took two broad coppers out of his pocket and held them out with derision. Tom struck them to the ground. In an instant both boys were rolling and tumbling in the dirt, gripped together like cats; and for the space of a minute they tugged and tore at each other's hair and clothes, punched and scratched each other's nose, and covered themselves with dust and glory. Presently the confusion took form, and through the fog of battle Tom appeared, seated astride the new boy, and pounding him with his fists. “Holler enough” said he. The boy only struggled to free himself. He was crying—mainly from rage.
25. “Holler enough!”—and the pounding went on.
At last the stranger got out a smothered "Enough!" and Tom let him up and said:

"Now that I'll learn you. Better look out who you're fooling with next time."

The new boy went off brushing the dust from his clothes, sobbing, snuffling, and occasionally looking back and shaking his head and threatening what he would do to Tom the "next time he caught him out." To which Tom responded with jeers, and started off in high feather, and as soon as his back was turned the new boy snatched up a stone, threw it and hit him between the shoulders and then turned tail and ran like an antelope. Tom chased the traitor home, and thus found out where he lived. He then held a position at the gate for some time, daring the enemy to come outside, but the enemy only made faces at him through the window and declined. At last the enemy's mother appeared, and called Tom a bad, vicious, vulgar child, and ordered him away.

1. How does the stranger's manner of dress affect Tom?
   A. The finery of the stranger's clothes impresses Tom.
   B. Tom is angered because he thinks the well-dressed stranger is a snob.
   C. Tom is suspicious because the stranger is well dressed on a week day.
   D. Tom is embarrassed because his clothes are shabby looking.

2. According to the passage, why does Tom chase the new boy?
   A. The new boy hits Tom with a stick.
   B. The new boy hits Tom with a stone.
   C. The new boy hits Tom with a brick.
   D. The new boy hits Tom with a broom handle.

3. Why does the new boy hit Tom after the fight?
   A. Tom knocks the coins out of the new boy's hand.
   B. Tom embarrasses the new boy by winning the fight.
   C. Tom will not get out of the new boy's way.
   D. Tom pushes the new boy to the ground.

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The Stranger

Martin spied a man coming toward him on horseback. He was a very old man, with a face wrinkled and tanned by Sun and wind until it resembled a piece of ancient shoe leather left lying for years in some neglected place. His long-matted hair and beard had once been white, but the sooty air in the old man's smoky hut had given them a yellowish tinge, so they looked like dry, dead grass.

4. What can you infer from the passage?
   A. Martin noticed his hands were wrinkled.
   B. The old man does not have electricity in his hut.
   C. The old man was clean-shaven.
   D. Martin liked the old man.
Chapter 1 Features of Literature

5. Which of the following is specific evidence from the passage?
   A. Martin noticed a man riding towards him on a horse.
   B. The old man spends a lot of time outdoors.
   C. The old man does not bathe very often.
   D. Martin felt sorry for the old man.

6. Which of the following details is **not** supported in the passage?
   A. The old man's beard looked yellow.
   B. The old man's face is wrinkled and tan.
   C. The old man's hair is long and matted.
   D. The old man's boots are torn and dirty.

Central Idea

Every story has a central idea. The **central idea** tells you what the story is about. The central idea may be the lesson learned or moral of a story. The central idea is the most important part of a story or paragraph and can often be in the first paragraph of a passage. The rest of the sentences are details that support the central idea. To find the central idea, ask yourself, “What is this passage about?”

Read this passage. Then, answer the question that follows.

*At the Berlin 1936 Olympics, Adolf Hitler planned to show the world that the Aryan (White/Caucasian) people were the dominant race, but African-American Jesse Owens proved him wrong and sealed his place in Olympic history by becoming the most successful athlete of the 1936 Games. After getting his first Olympic gold medal, he spoke the following lines:*

“To those of you who laughed at me, thank you. Without you, I wouldn't have cried. To those of you who couldn't just love me, thank you. Without you, I wouldn't have known real love. To those of you who hurt my feelings, thank you. Without you, I wouldn't have felt them. To those of you who left me lonely, thank you. Without you, I wouldn't have discovered myself. But it is to those of you who thought I couldn't do it; it is you I thank the most, because without you, I wouldn't have tried.”

7. What is the central idea of Owen's speech?
   A. The more people doubted him, the harder Owens worked to become a successful athlete.
   B. He is happy that he won his first gold medal at the 1936 Olympics.
   C. He wants to thank people for supporting and believing in him.
   D. All of the people in Owen's life made him feel lonely and unhappy.

If you chose “A”, you are correct. Yes, in choice “B”, Jesse Owens is happy to win a gold medal at the 1936 Olympic Games, but it isn't the central idea of the passage. Choice “C” isn't the central idea of the
passage because Owens is not thanking people for supporting and believing in him. Choice “D” is not correct because the speech does not say that all of the people in Owen’s life made him feel lonely and unhappy. Choice “A” is correct because Owens is saying that he wants to thank all the people who thought he could not do what he did the most for making him work and try so hard to become a successful athlete.

Supporting Details

Another important skill is identifying the **supporting details** of a piece of writing. Once you know the central idea, you can look deeper into a text to discover details. **Supporting details** are facts, reasons, and examples that support the central idea. Some details are more important than others. For example, when you are reading about an important battle during the American Civil War, the author might include many details. Key details would include the number of soldiers fighting for each side, the strategies of the generals, the location of the battle, and the battle’s outcome. Other details like what foods the soldiers ate and what companies made their rifles might be just as fascinating, but they are minor details. They would not end up in a brief summary of the battle.

Read this passage and the explanation that follows.

**The Mystery of Easter Island**

There are few places on the Earth more mysterious and intriguing than Easter Island. It is one of the most isolated islands in the world, with the nearest country over 2,300 miles away. About 1200 years ago, seafarers from a distant culture managed to land upon its remote shores. Over the centuries that followed, a remarkable society developed in isolation on the island. For reasons still unknown, they began carving giant statues out of volcanic rock. Hundreds of these statues cover the island. Each statue, some over 40 feet tall, has the same appearance: Their stony expressions have no eyes. The statues weigh many tons each, and some wonder how the islanders moved the statues. Why an ancient people carved these amazing statues is still a mystery. Some scientists claim that they carved them for protection. Others claim they were made to honor ancestors. Whatever the reason, the statues of Easter Island continue to fascinate scientists and tourists.

What is the central idea or message of this passage?

The central idea is summed up in the first sentence, “There are few places on the Earth more mysterious and intriguing than Easter Island.” The sentences that discuss the remoteness of the island, the legendary statues, and why the statues were built are the supporting details the author uses to explain why Easter Island is so mysterious and intriguing.

**Central idea** tells you what the story is about. **Supporting details** are facts, reasons, and examples.
Week 1 Day 2
Practice 2: Central Idea and Supporting Details

Hundreds of years ago, people believed in spirits, both good and evil. These people were known as the Celts, and they lived in what are now England, France, and Ireland. The Celts spent all spring and summer growing food to last them through the winter. When it was time to harvest all the food, the Celts held a festival to thank the good spirits for their help. This festival was called Samhain (pronounced sow-en). It was held on the day that marked the end of warm light weather and the beginning of dark cold weather on November 1. As part of the celebration, people wore costumes, told fortunes, ate plenty of good food, and made sacrifices to keep bad spirits away.

Several hundred years later, other beliefs and religions spread to the Celtic lands. The new religion, Christianity, believed that November 1 was a day to honor people who died for their religion. Celtic people understood how November 1 was a good day to honor the good spirits because they had been doing it for centuries. The day became known as “All Saint’s Day” or “All-hallowmas.” The night before the festival day, October 31, became known as “All-hallows Eve” or Halloween.

1. What is the central idea of this passage?
   A. The origin of Halloween and how we celebrate Halloween today came from the Celts and their religious beliefs.
   B. The Celts lived hundreds of years ago in what are now England, France, and Ireland.
   C. The Celts held a festival called Samhain to thank the good spirits for their help with the harvest.
   D. Christians believed that November 1 was a day to honor people who died for their religion.

2. Which sentence from the passage best supports the central idea?
   A. “Several hundred years later, other beliefs and religions spread to the Celtic lands.”
   B. “When it was time to harvest all the food, the Celts held a festival to thank the good spirits for their help.”
   C. “As part of the celebration, people wore costumes, told fortunes, ate plenty of good food, and made sacrifices to keep bad spirits away.”
   D. “Hundreds of years ago, people believed in spirits, both good and evil.”

Being a clown isn’t always about being silly and entertaining kids. Rodeo clowns put themselves in great danger every time they perform. The primary job of the rodeo clown is to protect a fallen rider from the bull by distracting the bull and providing an alternative target for the bull to attack, whether the rider has been bucked off or has jumped off of the animal. These individuals expose themselves to great danger in order to protect the cowboy. They wear bright, loose-fitting clothes
that are designed to tear away, with protective gear fitted underneath. Rodeo clowns require speed, agility, and the ability to anticipate a bull’s next move. Because they work closely with very large, very powerful animals, rodeo clowns are often seriously injured, and, unfortunately, sometimes killed.

3. What is the central idea of this passage?
   A. Rodeo clowns protect riders who fall off or jump off bulls.
   B. Being a rodeo clown is a very dangerous job.
   C. Rodeo clowns have to be able to run fast and distract bulls.
   D. Rodeo clowns are not the kind of clowns who are silly and entertaining.

4. Which sentence best supports the central idea of the passage?
   A. “Being a clown isn’t always about being silly and entertaining kids.”
   B. “The primary job of the rodeo clown is to protect a fallen rider from the bull by distracting the bull and providing an alternative target for the bull to attack, whether the rider has been bucked off or has jumped off of the animal.”
   C. “They wear bright, loose-fitting clothes that are designed to tear away, with protective gear fitted underneath.”
   D. “Because they work closely with very large, very powerful animals, rodeo clowns are often seriously injured, and, sometimes, unfortunately, sometimes killed.”

Theme
Identifying the theme is an important part of understanding literature. The theme is the underlying meaning or message of a work of literature. It is the idea about life that is revealed through some aspect of the story. When reading a work of fiction, you can determine theme by looking for big ideas about life, the world, and human nature. Theme can be stated directly—this means that the author tells you what the message is, like the lesson in a fable by Aesop. Sometimes themes are contained in the lessons that stories teach. Other times, they are simply observations about life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good always wins over evil</td>
<td><em>The Chronicles of Narnia</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Power corrupts</td>
<td><em>Animal Farm</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War forces men to change</td>
<td><em>The Things They Carried</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature works by its own set of laws</td>
<td><em>The Old Man and the Sea</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals must think for themselves</td>
<td><em>Ender's Game</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Generally, the theme is not stated directly, but must be inferred or figured out by the reader. Sometimes in a work of literature, there are ideas that are important but not large enough to be considered a theme. You can think of these ideas as topics. It is important that you are able to distinguish a theme from a central idea. They are not the same. Oftentimes, the theme will present a message or lesson, but a central idea is simply the subject that the work addresses in some way.
Read these passages and the explanations that follow.

Matthew Randall was born into a rich family. He never had to work a day in his life, and he got anything and everything he wanted. His parents were wealthy entrepreneurs who spent the majority of their time traveling all over the world, leaving Matthew behind to be looked after by the hired help.

When Matthew was in the first grade, he got the lead in the school play, but only the housekeeper was in the audience to watch his performance. His parents decided to go to a charity event rather than watch their son's play. When he was ten, Matthew wanted to go to a football game with his father. His father was too busy, so he paid the starting lineups of the Dallas Cowboys and the Miami Dolphins to play a private game of football on the Randall's front lawn. When Matthew was fifteen, he wanted to start a band. His father hired popular bands to play with Matthew every weekend at the family's mansion, though his family was never there.

Matthew became a spoiled brat who expected everyone, including the household staff, his teachers, and his classmates, to cater to his every desire. No one liked him or wanted to be his friend. Matthew was a bitter, lonely boy who wished for a family who cared about him. For the rest of his life, Matthew was surrounded by possessions he didn't appreciate, and he was always bored with his life. Despite his vast wealth, Matthew never found happiness.

What is the theme of the passage?

By reading this passage, it is clear that Matthew has everything a child could possibly want, except for the most important thing: love and acceptance from his parents. He is unhappy and bitter, so one theme is that money doesn't buy happiness. The passage also states that Matthew never had to work for anything that he had, so another theme is that people don't appreciate things they did not work for.

The Dog and the Shadow from Aesop's fables

It happened that a dog got a piece of meat and was carrying it home in his mouth to eat it in peace. Now, on his way home, he had to cross a plank lying across a running brook. As he crossed, he looked down and saw his own shadow reflected in the water beneath. Thinking it was another dog with another piece of meat, he made up his mind to get that dog's meat also. So he snapped at the dog in the water, but as he opened his mouth, the piece of meat fell out. It fell into the water and was never seen again.

The theme, or lesson, of this fable is: when you are greedy, you can lose everything. The central idea, on the other hand, might be the simple fact that dogs will try to accumulate all the food they can.

Theme is the underlying meaning of a work of literature.
Practice 3: Theme

**The Peasant and the Eagle** by Aesop

A Peasant found an Eagle captured in a trap, and much admiring the bird, set him free. The Eagle did not prove ungrateful to his deliverer, for seeing the Peasant sitting under a wall which was not safe, he flew toward him and with his talons snatched a bundle from his head. When the Peasant rose in pursuit, the Eagle let the bundle fall again. Taking it up, the man returned to the same place, to find that the wall under which he had been sitting had fallen to pieces; and he marveled at the service rendered him by the Eagle.

**The Mighty Oak Tree**

Thine outstretched leaves protect my fragile nest
Thine massive arms hold me secure as I rest
Thank you mighty oak for all that do for me
For I am grateful for your strength and hospitality

1. What theme do the two passages share?
   A. People will be rewarded when they are grateful.
   B. People should be grateful for what they have.
   C. People should show gratitude to those who protect them from harm.
   D. People should not sit under walls and climb in trees.

Sam was a student in Mr. Martin's math class. Mr. Martin wasn't too strict about deadlines, and Sam took full advantage of that. He did all of his homework in his other classes. But he never bothered to complete Mr. Martin's assignments, thinking he could work on them later. Math was a subject that Sam had to keep a "C" average for the entire year, or he would have to go to summer school. When the end of the school year came, Sam planned on going to the local water park every day with his friends. However, Sam was told that he failed his math class and would be going to summer school for not turning in his homework. That summer was horrible for Sam. While his friends were off enjoying the waterpark, Sam spent his summer completing all of Mr. Martin's late homework math assignments.
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2. What is the theme of the passage?
   A. Math is a difficult subject for many people.
   B. Do your homework when it is assigned rather than putting it off until later.
   C. Lazy students will always fail their math classes.
   D. People who fail math will have to go to summer school.

   **The Fox and the Grapes** from Aesop
   One afternoon a fox was walking through the forest and spotted a bunch of grapes hanging from
   over a lofty branch. "Just the thing to quench my thirst," quoth he. Taking a few steps back, the
   fox jumped and just missed the hanging grapes. Again the fox took a few paces back and tried to
   reach them but still failed. Finally, giving up, the fox turned up his nose and said, "They're probably
   sour anyway," and proceeded to walk away.

3. What is the theme of this fable?
   A. It's easy to despise what you cannot have.
   B. Never give up hope that things will work out.
   C. Try your best at everything you do.
   D. Always be prepared for any situation.

   As I was racing around my room trying to get ready for school, my sister,
   Stephanie, came charging through the bedroom door.
   "Okay, hand it over, Tyler," Stephanie said.
   "Hand what over?" I asked.
   "Don't play innocent with me. I know you took my money."
   "Sis, I didn't take your money."
   "Well, somebody took the twenty-dollar bill that was on my
   dresser," Stephanie said accusingly.
   "Are you sure it didn't get knocked off your dresser, Sis?"
   "I guess it could have," said Stephanie. "Would you help me find it, Tyler?"
   We went into Stephanie's room and looked everywhere for the missing money. Even though
   I was innocent, Stephanie was sure I took her money. After a ten-minute heated argument, I
   noticed a squirrel with something green in its mouth sitting outside on her window ledge.
   "Hey, Sis, did you leave your window open last night?"
   "Yeah, I did. Why?" said Stephanie.
   "I think I just figured out who took your money," I said laughing out loud.
4. What is the theme of this passage?
   A. Never leave money out in the open.
   B. Sisters and brothers always fight with each other.
   C. Don't accuse someone of something until you have all the facts.
   D. Things always have a way of working out in the end.

**Summarizing**

To **summarize** means to come up with your own words for a condensed version of a passage. This can be a helpful way to remember points. Summarizing is another skill you already know how to use. When describing a story to your friends, you mention the main character, key events, and details you liked or didn't like. When reading, try jotting down a summary of each paragraph in a longer passage. This will help you organize its contents in your mind and provide a guide to finding answers to questions.

Read this passage and the summary that follows.

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**Excerpt from The Negro** by W. E. B. Du Bois

Africa is at once the most romantic and the most tragic of continents. Its very names reveal its mystery and wide-reaching influence. It is the "Ethiopia" of the Greek, the "Kush" and "Punt" of the Egyptian, and the Arabian "Land of the Blacks." To modern Europe it is the "Dark Continent" and "Land of Contrasts." In literature, it is the seat of the Sphinx and the lotus eaters, the home of the dwarfs, gnomes, and pixies, and the refuge of the gods. In commerce, it is the slave mart and the source of ivory, ebony, rubber, gold, and diamonds. What other continent can rival in interest this Ancient of Days?

There are those who would write universal history and leave out Africa. But how can one leave out the land of Egypt and Carthage? ...Yet it is true that the history of Africa is unusual, and its strangeness is due in no small degree to the physical peculiarities of the continent.

With three times the area of Europe, it has a coast line a fifth shorter. Like Europe it is a peninsula of Asia, curving southwestward around the Indian Sea. It has few gulfs, bays, capes, or islands. Even the rivers, though large and long, are not means of communication with the outer world.

How would you summarize this passage? An example would be: Africa has a complex history. It has produced empires, art, resources, and religion, but it also faced slavery. Strangely, some historians don't bother including Africa. Maybe they have misconceptions because Africa's geography isolated it from much of the world for so long.

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Week 1 Day 3
Practice 4: Summarizing

Excerpt from *The Wrath of the Serpent King*

1. Peering cautiously over the huge boulders that lined the rim, Salia detected the shadow of the huge monster as it slithered along the canyon floor. Its evil hisses mixed with devilish laughter sent waves of fear rushing through her body. Leaning over as much as she could, she saw a large fire burning below in the middle of the Serpent King’s lair. On the ground, still unconscious, lay her brother, Acami. He was bleeding. Salia could only hope that he was still alive.

2. Encircling his helpless victim, the Serpent King raised his hooded neck and, glaring down on the sleeping boy, hissed: “Now, you foolish, foolish boy, you shall pay dearly for thinking you could kill me. How dare you enter my lair. How dare you think that a worthless little creature like you had any hope of destroying me.”

3. Terrified, Salia gasped with horror. She knew she had to act. Below her, only a few feet away from where Acami lay, she could see his broken spear. It was fractured, but the sharpened end was still long enough to be used. If she could reach the weapon and thrust it into the heart of the Serpent King before he could strike her, she might be able to kill him. She might be able to save Acami and the rest of her family. But if she failed—if she proved too slow—then she, too, would be devoured.

1. Put these summary sentences in the correct order.
   A. Salia decides to try and kill the Serpent King with the broken spear in order to save her family.
   B. The Serpent King tells Acami that the boy will pay for entering the serpent’s lair.
   C. Salia sees the Serpent King’s shadow slithering across the canyon floor.
   D. Salia sees the broken spear near Acami.
   E. Acami is lying bleeding and unconscious on the floor.

Excerpt from *Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott

1. When Nat went into school on Monday morning, he quaked inwardly, for now he thought he should have to display his ignorance before them all. But Mr. Bhaer gave him a seat in the deep window, where he could turn his back on the others, and Franz heard him say his lessons there, so no one could hear his blunders or see how he blotted his copybook. He was truly grateful for this, and toiled away so diligently that Mr. Bhaer said, smiling, when he saw his hot face and inky fingers:

2. “Don’t work so hard, my boy; you will tire yourself out, and there is time enough.”

3. “But I must work hard, or I can’t catch up with the others. They know heaps, and I don’t know anything,” said Nat, who had been reduced to a state of despair by hearing the boys recite their grammar, history, and geography with what he thought was amazing ease and accuracy.

4. “You know a good many things which they don’t,” said Mr. Bhaer, sitting down beside him, while Franz led a class of small students through the intricacies of the multiplication table.
2. Summarize this passage in 3-4 sentences.

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Chapter 1 Key Term Activity

Fill in the blanks with the correct word.

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<td>theme</td>
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<tr>
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<td>inference</td>
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In this chapter, you learned examples and quotations from the passage that back up what you think or already know are called (1) ___________________. The underlying meaning or point of a story is called the (2) ___________________. The (3) ___________________ tells you what the passage is about. (4) ___________________ means you come up with your own words for a short version of the ideas in a passage. An (5) ___________________ is an educated guess based on what information you are already given. The facts, reasons, and examples that support the central idea are called (6) ___________________.

See the Teacher Guide for the Chapter 1 Review.
Chapter 2
Elements of Literature

This chapter covers the following standards: RL.3, RL.4, RL.6

**Literary Elements**

**Literary elements** are the building blocks of writing. Like the walls of a house, these elements provide the structures that authors use to create a work of literature. Writers introduce you to interesting characters. While getting to know these characters, you follow the plot (sequence of events) that shapes each story you read. Through your reading adventures, you come to understand certain themes (underlying messages) that are a part of the literature you explore. In this chapter, you will look at the literary elements that authors use in their writing.

Elements like setting, plot, and characters work together to create a meaningful story. For instance, an author might develop a story revolving around three contrasting sisters who are raised in a small southern town during the 1950s. They rally together during a crisis that threatens to tear their family apart. The author tightly intertwines the plot, characters, and setting to draw out meaning about southern culture and family bonds. As you read, keep in mind that all literary elements have impact on meaning.

**Setting**

**Setting** is the time and place of action for a literary work. A story may take place in any era—past, present, or future. Also, a story may take place in any part of the world, real or imagined. Smaller aspects of setting might be specific places such as a middle school, the mall, or a baseball field. Setting is very important because when and where the action of a story occurs directly affects other elements in the story. For example, if you read a story with a historical setting, how might the actions and ideas of the characters differ from those in a story set in the present day or in the future?

One way to identify setting in fiction is to look for clues to help you know something about the time period or the place of action. Read the following passage, paying attention to any clues that might help you to know about the setting.
Practice 1: Setting

Excerpt from “Two Friends” by Guy de Maupassant
Paris was blockaded, starved, in its death agony. Sparrows were becoming scarcer and scarcer on the rooftops and the sewers were being depopulated. One ate whatever one could get. As he was strolling sadly along the outer boulevard one bright January morning, his hands in his trousers pockets and his stomach empty, M. Morisson, watchmaker by trade but local militiaman for the time being, stopped short before a fellow militiaman whom he recognized as a friend. It was M. Sauvage, a riverside acquaintance.

1. What is the most likely setting of this passage?
   A. rural community
   B. war-torn city
   C. political gathering
   D. joyful reunion

2. Which words provide the best clues about the time and place?
   A. sparrows, sewers
   B. trousers, watchmaker
   C. blockaded, militiamen
   D. boulevard, riverside

Excerpt from Little Women by Louisa May Alcott
“It’s so dreadful to be poor!” sighed Meg, looking down at her old dress.

“I don’t think it’s fair for some girls to have plenty of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all,” added Amy, with an injured sniff.

“We’ve got Father and Mother, and each other,” said Beth contentedly from her corner.

The four young faces on which the firelight shone brightened at the cheerful words, but darkened again as Jo said sadly, “We haven’t got Father, and shall not have him for a long time.” She didn’t say “perhaps never,” but each silently added it, thinking of Father far away, where the fighting was.

3. What is the setting of this passage?
Week 1 Day 4
The History of the Telephone by Herbert N. Casson

A tall young professor... was desperately busy in a noisy machine-shop in Boston... He was wholly absorbed in the making of a nondescript machine, a sort of crude harmonica with a clock-spring reed, a magnet, and a wire. It was unlike any other thing that had ever been made in any country. The young professor had been toiling over it for three years... and on this hot afternoon in June, 1875, he heard an almost inaudible sound--a faint TWANG--come from the machine itself. His eyes blazed with delight, and he sprang in a passion of eagerness to an adjoining room in which stood a young mechanic who was assisting him.

4. What is the setting of this passage?

Plot
The plot is the pattern of events in a story, including how the story works out. It refers to all the related events that move from the story’s beginning to its end.

In a story, the introduction sets the stage for the events to come. It usually gives details about the setting and characters. In Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, the first two sentences tell us the narrator and point of view: “Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you’d expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn’t hold with such nonsense.” In the first few chapters, the reader learns about the main character (Harry) and the fact that he is orphaned as a baby and sent to live with his aunt and uncle. Readers also learn that Harry is a wizard.

As the plot of a story unfolds, problems, or conflicts, occur between opposing forces. (You will read more about conflicts in the next section.) We see rising action as these various conflicts complicate the lives of the characters. For example, one conflict in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone is shown in the strained relationship Harry has with Professor Snape.

The highest point of action in a story is called the climax. This turning point is usually filled with suspense, as readers want to find out what will happen next as the story reaches a peak. In Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, the climax occurs when Harry, Ron, and Hermione sneak off to find the sorcerer’s stone and must get past the guard dogs and perform dangerous feats in order to solve the mystery of the stone. After the highest point of action, most stories begin to move toward the end. This is called falling action. Major conflicts begin to be solved, and other details of the story are wrapped up.

The resolution is the outcome of a story. Conflict is resolved, and loose ends may be tied up. Some stories, of course, leave questions unanswered. By the end of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, Harry
and his friends solve the mystery of the stone, save Hogwarts from the clutches of Voldemort, and Gryffindor wins the house cup. Harry also learns a little bit about his family history.

A story might contain additional events that advance the plot. A **flashback** is a scene or event that happened before the beginning of a story. It can be a memory, a dream, or a simple retelling of past events by one of the characters. For instance, the entire story of *Moby-Dick* is actually a flashback—a tale told later by the sole survivor, Ishmael.

**Foreshadowing** is a way for an author to provide clues about future events in the plot. For example, an author might use a dark, stormy night or a sudden windstorm to foreshadow that something sinister is about to happen.

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**Practice 2: Plot**

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**Excerpt from The Mysterious Island** by Jules Verne

1. “Are we rising again?” “Are we descending?” “Worse than that, captain! We are falling!” “For Heaven’s sake heave out the ballast!” “Overboard with every weight! …everything!” Such were the loud and startling words which resounded through the air, above the vast watery desert of the Pacific, about four o’clock in the evening of the 23rd of March, 1865.

2. The tempest raged without intermission from the 18th to the 26th of March…whole districts leveled by waterspouts which destroyed everything they passed over, several thousand people crushed on land or drowned at sea.

3. In fact, a balloon …had been taken into the circling movement of a column of air and… beneath the lower point of the balloon swung a car, containing five passengers, scarcely visible in the midst of the thick vapor mingled with spray which hung over the surface of the ocean…

4. No land was in sight, not a solitary ship could be seen. It was necessary at any cost to arrest their downward course, and to prevent the balloon from being engulfed in the waves. The voyagers directed all their energies to this urgent work. But, notwithstanding their efforts, the balloon still fell…The gas escaped without any possibility of retaining it… and soon after midday the car hung within 600 feet of the ocean.

5. It was impossible to prevent the escape of gas, which rushed through a large rent in the silk. By lightening the car of all the articles which it contained, the passengers had been able to prolong their suspension in the air for a few hours…Two more hours passed and the balloon was scarcely 400 feet above the water.

6. At that moment… the voice of a man… was heard. “Is everything thrown out?” “No, here are still 2,000 dollars in gold.” A heavy bag immediately plunged into the sea. “Does the balloon
rise?" "A little, but it will not be long before it falls again." "What still remains to be thrown out?"
"Nothing." "Yes! the car!" "Let us catch hold of the net, and into the sea with the car."

7 This was, in fact, the last and only mode of lightening the balloon. The ropes which held the
car were cut, and the balloon, after its fall, mounted 2,000 feet. The five voyagers had hoisted
themselves into the net, and clung to the meshes.

8 The men had done all that men could do... They must trust to the mercy of Him who rules the
elements. At four o'clock the balloon was only 500 feet above the surface of the water. A loud
barking was heard. A dog accompanied the voyagers, and was held pressed close to his master
in the meshes of the net...

9 Then immediately a loud voice shouted, "Land! land!" But this land was still thirty miles off.
It would not take less than an hour to get to it, and then there was the chance of falling to
leeward. An hour! Might not the balloon before that be emptied of all the fluid it yet retained?

10 It was evident that the balloon could no longer support itself! Half an hour later the land was
not more than a mile off, but the balloon, exhausted, flabby, hanging in great folds, had gas
in its upper part alone. The voyagers, clinging to the net, were still too heavy for it, and soon,
half plunged into the sea, they were beaten by the furious waves. The balloon-case bulged out
again, and the wind, taking it, drove it along like a vessel.

11 At last, two minutes later, it reproached obliquely, and finally fell on a sandy beach, out of the
reach of the waves. The voyagers, aiding each other, managed to disengage themselves from
the meshes of the net. The balloon, relieved of their weight, was taken by the wind, and like a
wounded bird which revives for an instant, disappeared into space.

1. Paragraph 1 is which part of the plot?
   A. the resolution
   B. the climax
   C. the introduction
   D. the conflict

2. The climax of the story occurs
   A. when the balloon lands on the beach.
   B. when the waterspouts damaged homes and buildings.
   C. when the passengers cut the rope cling to the net.
   D. when the balloon begins falling.

3. Paragraphs 4 and 5 are what part of plot?
   A. climax
   B. rising action
   C. resolution
   D. falling action
4. What is the main conflict of this passage?
   A. The passengers have to throw all of their possessions out of the balloon.
   B. The balloon has been damaged by the waterspouts and is falling.
   C. The passengers have to hoist themselves into the net and cling to the meshes.
   D. The balloon is descending too quickly to make it to dry land.

5. Paragraphs 9 and 10 are what part of the plot?
   A. falling action
   B. climax
   C. resolution
   D. conflict

Conflict
The best way to study characters is to observe how they handle conflicts. Conflict is a problem or struggle in a piece of literature. The main conflict in a work is always the struggle the main character faces.

Sometimes a conflict is a problem between two characters. In other cases, characters have problems caused by forces like nature or technology. Then there are conflicts that occur inside the minds of characters, such as a person struggling with memory loss. Let's take a closer look at some of these conflicts.

### Person vs. self

This type of conflict occurs when characters struggle with themselves. They are unsure of an important choice they must make, or they feel tormented by some kind of emotion. This type of conflict is called **internal** because it occurs in the mind of a character.

**Example:** In Linda Crew's *Children of the River*, a Cambodian refugee who moved to America without her family struggles to fit into her new high school while staying true to her cultural roots and family's values.

### Person vs. person

This type of conflict is external. This occurs outside of a character. In this type of conflict, a character has a problem that involves another character. It could be a physical fight or verbal disagreement; it could even be two characters struggling to achieve the same goal.

**Example:** In L. Frank Baum’s *The Wizard of OZ*, Dorothy must defeat the Wicked Witch of the West in order to go home to Kansas.

### Person vs. nature

Also external, these conflicts include natural disaster scenarios like tornadoes, floods, and severe storms. Other examples of person vs. nature conflicts might involve hostile, rugged terrain, such as an arid desert that must be crossed or a steep mountain that must be climbed or a conflict with an animal.

**Example:** In Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*, an elderly fisherman struggles to catch an incredibly large, tough marlin.
Chapter 2 Elements of Literature

**Person vs. environment**

In addition to experiencing problems with nature, characters sometimes face problems in other environments in which they live. Person vs. environment conflicts can include issues with the rules or traditions of their society. This conflict is also known as person vs. society.

**Example:** In Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a fair lawyer defending a falsely accused black man in court stirs up the racial prejudices of his southern town before the Civil Rights Movement.

**Person vs. technology**

These types of conflicts are those that deal with a character struggling against machines or other devices with artificial intelligence.

**Example:** In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, a scientist creates an artificial man in a lab, only for his creation to become a violent, confused “monster.”

**Person vs. supernatural**

This type of conflict features a character set against elements outside of the natural realm. This could include encounters with ghosts, deities, or other mystical experiences.

**Example:** In Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, a girl must rescue her father, who is being held captive by IT, an evil, telepathic brain on a distant planet.

**Person vs. destiny (or fate)**

These conflicts have characters who attempt to break free of the fixed path set before them. This type of conflict is prevalent in Greek and Roman mythology, where the gods often placed fates on characters that could not be changed.

**Example:** In Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*, a boy named Bastian discovers that he, as a human child, is destined to save Fantastica (a parallel magical world) despite his doubts and fears.

### Practice 3: Conflict

Elmer Gardner stood on his front porch watching his puppy, Jasper, chase butterflies around the front yard. The dog was a birthday present from his son, Jacob. To Elmer, Jasper was nothing but a burden and a nuisance. Later that evening as Elmer was reading in bed, he heard Jasper walk through the kitchen and into the living room. Elmer felt guilty and ashamed for making Jasper think he didn’t care about him. Elmer remembered how lonely he was before Jasper came into his life. Yes, the dog got on his nerves sometimes, but he was only a puppy. At that moment, Elmer realized how much Jasper meant to him.

1. What type of conflict is Elmer experiencing in this passage?
   A. person vs. self
   B. person vs. environment
   C. person vs. destiny
   D. person vs. person
One day at school, Mary caught her friend Jennie cheating on a math test. Now, Mary must choose between keeping her friendship with Jennie and doing the right thing and telling the teacher that Jennie cheated on the math test.

2. This passage is an example of which type of conflict?
   A. person versus self
   B. person versus society
   C. person versus character
   D. person versus nature

Grandma is the bravest person I know. She marched right into the city council meeting and demanded that the old, oak tree be saved. She said the oak tree had been standing for hundreds of years, and it would be standing for hundreds of years more. She said the old oak tree was more important than building a new city council parking lot. My grandmother asked the other people at the meeting what they thought. All of the people said they wanted the city council to leave the tree alone. So the city council decided to leave the old, oak tree right where it was.

3. This passage is an example of which type of conflict?
   A. person versus self
   B. person versus society
   C. person versus character
   D. person versus nature

Mark and John are out on the ocean when a large storm hits. After their boat flips over and sinks during the storm, Mark and John begin swimming back to shore. Just when they think that things can't get any worse, they see a shark fin circling them.

4. This passage is an example of which type of conflict?
   A. person versus self
   B. person versus society
   C. person versus character
   D. person versus nature
Week 1 Day 5
1 Marcy and Tim dare each other to go into the old cave outside of town. After entering the cave, they heard a strange noise. It sounded like a high-pitched squeal. Just then, Marcy screamed.
2 “What? Why are you screaming?” Tim asked.
3 “Run as fast as you can,” Marcy said.
4 Marcy and Tim ran as fast as they could out of the cave. They had just gotten in the car when they saw something come out of the cave. It was huge and covered in scales. It had red, glowing eyes and large, feathery wings. It stopped outside of the cave, sniffed the air, and let out a horrible moaning sound.
5 “Marcy, get us out of here now,” Tim yelled.
6 “You got it,” said Marcy.
7 Marcy started the car and drove as fast as she could back to town. They stopped at the police station to report what they saw. Marcy and Tim never went back to the cave again.

5. This passage is an example of which type of conflict?
   A. person versus self
   B. person versus society
   C. person versus supernatural
   D. person versus nature

1 Tim watched helplessly as the baseball sailed past the oak tree in the backyard and crashed through the window. Just then, his mother came running out of the back door.
2 “Tim, what is going on out here?”
3 “Sorry, Mom. I was practicing hitting the ball, and it broke the window.”
4 “Timothy Marcus Johnson! How many times have I told you not to hit the ball near the house?”
5 “Lots of times, Mom. I’m sorry I broke the window. It was an accident.”
6 “I’m sure it was an accident, but you are going to pay to replace that window.”
7 “But how? I don’t have that kind of money.”
8 “You will do extra chores around here to pay it off, like cleaning the gutters, mowing the yard, cleaning out the garage, and painting the front porch.”
9 “But, Mom, that will take forever.”
10 “Tough! Maybe this will teach you a valuable lesson.”
6. This passage is an example of which type of conflict?
   A. person versus character
   B. person versus society
   C. person versus self
   D. person versus nature

Characters
The author creates characters to appear in a literary work. They must reveal their ideas and feelings to each other and to the reader. A character can be a person, animal, or object. The way characters in a story interact (behave) with each other is a big part of telling the story. Through their words and actions, the story comes alive for readers. Sometimes, authors come right out and say what a character is like. Other times, authors reveal characters to readers through narration, dialogue, and actions.

| Description | Description allows an author to tell how characters look, dress, how old they are, and so on. This is just as you might describe a friend to someone. In her book, *Little Women*, Louisa May Alcott includes a paragraph in the first chapter that describes the main characters. She prefices this introduction with "As young readers like to know how people look," we will take this moment to give them a little sketch of the four sisters..."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>Narration is the telling of the story through a speaker. The speaker could be one of the characters or could be an unknown observer. The speaker will tell how other characters feel or think about another character or will describe how they act toward that character. In <em>The Red Badge of Courage</em>, there is an unknown narrator who tells the story through the eyes of a young soldier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Dialogue is conversation between two or more people. People in literature speak to each other as people in your class do. In <em>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</em>, Mark Twain shows the character traits of Huck and Jim through the talks they share while they float down the Mississippi River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>The actions of a character sometimes speak louder than words to show the character's true self. How characters deal with problems also says a lot about them. Do the characters run from difficulty, or do they work through problems? The main characters in O. Henry's &quot;The Gift of the Magi&quot; show their love for each other by placing the happiness of the other before their own. How a character behaves toward others reveals character traits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2 Elements of Literature

Types of Characters

Characters are categorized by how central they are to the story, how well developed they are, and how much they grow over the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protagonist</td>
<td>This is the character who stands out at the center of attention; most of the story revolves around this character, who is usually likeable.</td>
<td>In the fairy tale “Little Red Riding Hood,” the girl called Little Red Riding Hood is the protagonist. The story revolves around her going to visit her grandmother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antagonist</td>
<td>This is the character who creates a problem for the protagonist; generally a character that readers do not like.</td>
<td>In “Little Red Riding Hood,” the Big Bad Wolf is the protagonist. He eats Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother and then dresses in her clothes and waits for Little Red, planning to eat her too. He is an enemy to Little Red Riding Hood and causes problems for her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static</td>
<td>This is a character who doesn't change throughout the story.</td>
<td>In the fairy tale “Cinderella,” the stepmother is a static character. She remains cruel from the beginning to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td>This is a character who changes or grows over the course of the story.</td>
<td>In Charles Dickens’s A Christmas Carol, Ebenezer Scrooge is a dynamic character. He changes from a stingy, mean man to a kind, generous person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>This is a character with few defining traits; often called two-dimensional.</td>
<td>In the Harry Potter book series by J. K. Rowling, Crabbe and Goyle are flat characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round</td>
<td>This is a character with a variety of characteristics that you get to know about; three-dimensional.</td>
<td>In Roald Dahl’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Willy Wonka is a round character.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Be aware that a protagonist can be more than one person. For example, in a story about a town fighting a band of robbers, the entire town could be considered the protagonist. In the same way, antagonists can be numerous—or they can be something other than people. For instance, in A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, the antagonist can be the greed that Scrooge feels until the Christmas ghosts teach him a lesson. Can you think of other examples of protagonists and antagonists from stories that you have read?

Character Traits

Character traits are all the aspects of a person’s behavior and attitudes that make up that person’s personality. Everyone has character traits, both good and bad. Even characters in books have character traits. Character traits are often shown with descriptive adjectives, like patient, unfaithful, or jealous. The old expression that actions speak louder than words is very true when it comes to character traits. You learn about who people are and what their character traits are by watching how they interact with others. This chart lists some common character traits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adventurous</th>
<th>bossy</th>
<th>happy</th>
<th>considerate</th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>serious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>curious</td>
<td>funny</td>
<td>neat</td>
<td>proud</td>
<td>rich</td>
<td>nosy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energetic</td>
<td>hostile</td>
<td>sloppy</td>
<td>loud</td>
<td>respectful</td>
<td>silly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brave</td>
<td>honest</td>
<td>selfish</td>
<td>obnoxious</td>
<td>daring</td>
<td>friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative</td>
<td>sad</td>
<td>successful</td>
<td>unselfish</td>
<td>cheerful</td>
<td>quiet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practice 4: Characters

Read the passage, and answer the questions that follow.

Excerpts from Captains Courageous by Rudyard Kipling

1. The weather door of the smoking-room had been left open to the North Atlantic fog, as the big liner rolled and lifted, whistling to warn the fishing-fleet.

2. "That Cheyne boy's the biggest nuisance aboard," said a man in a frieze overcoat, shutting the door with a bang. "He isn't wanted here. He's too fresh." [...] 

3. "Pshaw! There isn't any real harm to him. He's more to be pitied than anything," a man from New York drawled, as he lay at full length along the cushions under the wet skylight. "They've dragged him around from hotel to hotel ever since he was a kid. I was talking to his mother this morning. She's a lovely lady, but she don't pretend to manage him. He's going to Europe to finish his education."

4. "Education isn't begun yet." This was a Philadelphian, curled up in a corner. "That boy gets two hundred a month pocket-money, he told me. He isn't sixteen either."

5. "Railroads, his father, ain't it?" said the German.

6. Later, Harvey is washed overboard and rescued by some fishermen on a schooner. He wakes up in a cabin on the schooner. A boy his age greets him.

7. "Feelin' better?" said the boy, with a grin. [...] "I've dried your clothes. Guess they've shrunk some," said the boy. "They ain't our style much—none of 'em. Twist round an' see if you're hurt any."

8. Harvey stretched himself in every direction, but could not report any injuries.

9. "That's good," the boy said heartily. "Fix yerself an' go on deck. Dad wants to see you. I'm his son,—Dan, they call me,—an' I'm cook's helper an' everything else aboard that's too dirty for the men..."

10. Like many other unfortunate young people, Harvey had never in all his life received a direct order—He could not see why he should be expected to hurry for any man's pleasure, and said so.

11. "Your dad can come down here if he's so anxious to talk to me. I want him to take me to New York right away. I'll pay him."

1. Which character type is Harvey Cheyne?
   A. protagonist
   B. antagonist

2. Cite evidence from the passage that supports your answer to question 1.
Chapter 2 Elements of Literature

The Last Night of Summer

1. One of my fondest memories of childhood is summer at Gran's. Those were days of endless discovery for me. There was always something new and interesting for me, be it gardening with Gran or rummaging through her quilt-patch box. Evenings were especially memorable. They were a time of calm. It was time for us to gently say goodbye to the day as the night brought its wonders.

2. “Look at that one, Emily,” Gran said. “That's a good-luck elephant.”

3. I studied the cloud that hung above us and listened as Gran pointed out the trunk, tail, and feet in the fluffy-animal cloud. Her voice was like an old woolen blanket, rough and scratchy yet warm and soothing. The air, sensing our need for a new scene, gently pushed the elephant away in search of other animal clouds.

4. That evening, Gran's sigh revealed her deep contentment. I propped myself up on my elbows and looked over at her. She was stretched out on her back, her head resting on a pillow made of her neatly folded jacket. Her eyes shone like the stars she was gazing at. “Let's play connect the stars,” Gran suggested. The effect was that of a velvet curtain sweeping open, unveiling a hidden stage.

5. I settled back down onto the ground and began drawing cars, candlesticks, and camels with the stars. When I finished an elaborate construction of the Statue of Liberty, Gran chuckled. “I'll give you an A+ for creative thinking, but those last three dots aren't really stars.”

6. Before I could protest, my "stars" flickered and the fireflies that had formed Lady Liberty's torch flew away. I wanted to somehow capture the creatures, to demand that they stay suspended over us. I wanted this moment, this feeling to last forever. As if she could read my mind, Gran said, “I will remember this evening forever.”

3. Select the two character types that define Emily's character.
   A. protagonist
   B. antagonist
   C. static
   D. dynamic

Mr. Joe

1. Mr. Joe lived in a fine log cabin that he built on the fertile river valley of Tellico Plains, Tennessee. Mr. Joe, as everyone called him, was a disagreeable, old man who rarely had anything nice to say about anyone. Whenever he went to town, he ignored friendly greetings and complained about everything to anyone who would listen.

2. Mr. Joe lived a lonely life with only his faithful dog, Brutus, and his fiddle for company. On quiet, peaceful evenings, the townspeople could hear Mr. Joe playing his fiddle. They wondered what had made him so mean.

3. Mr. Joe was so mean that farm hands never stayed very long. Instead of being grateful to have help, Mr. Joe criticized everything the farm hands did. Eventually, the farm hands found work on other farms, so Mr. Joe had to do all the work himself. He was a proud man who would never admit he needed help with anything.
4. Mr. Joe is which two characters types?
   A. antagonist and dynamic
   B. protagonist and round
   C. antagonist and static
   D. protagonist and flat

5. After reading the passage, write down some of Mr. Joe's character traits. How does the author describe Mr. Joe?

Activity: Characters

Part A
Using your own paper, write down the titles of two of your favorite books. Then, write down some of the main characters in the books next to each book title.

Part B
List the character types that define each of those characters as being the protagonist, antagonist, static, dynamic, flat, or round. What makes these characters act the way that they do?