

## Unit 2: Building a Writing Portfolio

8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts

Mr. Coia

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Remember, dates in parentheses are for White day periods 5 and 6 only. Cross them off if you are a Purple day student.**

### **Tues 9/9**

- Read/Discuss Lewis quotation on reading
- Review Plato, pop culture article
- Mini-Lesson on including quotations
- In-class essay: Pop Culture meets Plato (see possibilities below)

HW: Bring a reading book next class; we'll take the SRI and you'll need something to read when finished

### **(Wed 9/10)**

- Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) test today
- Book check out
- Create writing portfolios to hold all future writing assignments
- Writing: \_\_\_\_\_ *in Five Senses*

HW: Type poem to add to your portfolio; Individual reading for the 25

**Parent Open House  
Thursday, 9/11  
1700-1900**

### **Thurs 9/11**

- Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) test today
- Book check out
- Create writing portfolios to hold all future writing assignments
- Writing: \_\_\_\_\_ *in Five Senses*

HW: Type poem to add to your portfolio; Individual reading for the 25

### **(Fri 9/12)**

- Text selection: "The Clown" LOL 57-63
- In composition book, write to respond to "Personal Connection" p. 57. Include date and topic. Write for 5 minutes.
- Literary Term: Hyperbole/Exaggeration
- Read biography p. 63; read story. Look for hyperboles.
- Complete questions 2-6 on separate paper.
- "Making Judgments" Sheet
- Write three stanzas of a "Where I'm From" poem by either Clifford Slick or Miss Bickle. Try to capture their personality.

HW: Complete character poem if you do not finish in class. Need not be typed.

### **Mon 9/15**

- Text selection: "The Clown" LOL 57-63
- In composition book, write to respond to "Personal Connection" p. 57. Include date and topic. Write for 5 minutes.
- Literary Term: Hyperbole/Exaggeration
- Read biography p. 63; read story. Look for hyperboles.
- Complete questions 2-6 on separate paper.
- "Making Judgments" Sheet
- Write three stanzas of a "Where I'm From" poem by either Clifford Slick or Miss Bickle. Try to capture their personality.

HW: Complete character poem if you do not finish in class. Need not be typed.

**(Tues 9/16)**

- Read/Discuss Lewis quotation on reading
- Review Plato, pop culture article
- Mini-Lesson on including quotations
- In-class essay: Pop Culture meets Plato (see possibilities below)

HW: Individual reading for the 25

**Wed 9/17 (Thurs 9/18)**

- Review "The Clown"
- Text selection: "Painful Memories of Dating" LOL 400-405
- Review literary term: hyperbole
- In pairs, complete questions 1-4 p. 404
- Venn Diagram: What do these two stories have in common?
- Writing: Create a dialogue-only story about one student asking another on a date. You can work alone or in a pair.

HW: Type your dating story with an original title. It should be about one or two typed pages.

**Fri 9/19 (Mon 9/22)**

- Dating Time! We'll act out your stories to test how true they sound.
- Writing: 100 words on love, mom, dad, or school (there's a catch, though!)

HW: Type your 100 words to add to your portfolio

**Tues 9/22 (Wed 9/24)**

- Dating Time! Continued
- Read/Discuss "Mixed Singles" LOL 129
- Read/Discuss "The World is not a Pleasant Place to Be" LOL 225
- Writing: Model a short poem after "Mixed Singles." Pick a sport or activity. For added difficulty, try making the narrator's gender different than your own

HW: Type poem to add to your portfolio

**Thurs 9/25 (Fri 9/26)**

- Dating Time! Continued
- Sharing poetry
- **Unit test on reading selections/terms/concepts**
  - Pop Culture/Plato/Lewis
  - "The Clown" and "Memories of Dating"
  - Literary terms
  - Writing styles

<b>Unit Assignments:</b>	
Pop Culture essay	10 points
_____ in 5 Senses	20 points
"The Clown" story work	30 points
"Dating" story work	30 points
Dating story script	20 points
100 words	20 points
"Mixed Singles" poem	20 points
Unit Test	40 points

**Assignment Descriptions:**

**Pop Culture Meets Plato**

This is an in-class essay that will synthesize two articles. The first is an article regarding current teenage popular culture found in USA Today. The second is a quotation from Plato's Republic. You can choose from a variety of topics on which to write. Find something in which you have something to say.

This is a difficult assignment that will help me to see your writing abilities. It will help me to gauge the writing level of each of you to see what is needed to teach persuasive writing.

Here are some possibilities:

- What criticism would Plato or Lewis give regarding popular culture?
- What does this article say about American society?
- What problems do you see, if any, with a "youth-obsessed culture"?
- Do you agree that "kids have more influence over their parents than vice versa"?
- How does this article indicate that America is improving?

Perhaps you have an idea to explore. Let me know and give it a try!

## **(blank) in Five Senses**

To further our work in making the abstract ideas more concrete, we will take an abstract idea (politics, love, religion, community, knowledge) and describe it through all five of the physical senses. This will be in a poem format, focusing on one sense per stanza. It's a challenging exercise to explain an idea like politics via touch or hearing.

### **Campaigning for My Soul**

Hearing the same promises  
Time and again  
The sound of speeches and  
CNN talking heads delivering fiery sermons  
about the outcome of the other guys winning

My thumb presses the remote to find  
Another channel without the same  
I hold my absentee ballot dearly as a  
Life Preserver as they talk about  
Change within reach  
They can almost touch it

Bulletin boards and bumper stickers  
With the faces of Barak and John  
Commercials, pins, web sites  
I see these guys everywhere  
They are like familiar, old friends  
Who will never leave my house

Both men say that they can smell victory  
Both blame the other for the decay in America  
Both say the other's plan stinks  
Both say they are the party of our country  
Mom's apple pie and the smell of victory  
Fireworks

All this leaves a bad taste in my mouth  
I like debating but not petty arguing  
Perhaps these men should break bread  
Together  
It's amazing what the taste of a  
shared Starbucks coffee and dessert  
Can do to differences  
Political or otherwise

## **Dating Story**

After reading Dave Barry's "Painful Memories of Dating," you'll create your own story consisting only of dialogue about one student asking another on a date. You can work alone or in a pair. Follow a script format for this. Be sure the dialogue is realistic. Include an original title. Your final product will be about 1-2 typed pages.

### **A Lesson of Writing Right Dialogue**

**Steven:** "Here is an appropriate way to write dialogue."

**Martha:** "Of course! I already knew that. I notice that you put our names in bold print, then a colon."

**Steven:** "Then, only one line break between characters."

**Martha:** "OK, but what if I am talkative and my part of the story goes past the edge of the page and my part has to have a second line. Do I put a blank space between those lines?"

**Steven:** "No. Single space those, then skip a line."

## **Standards Addressed: Or, Why We Are Learning This!**

- E1b.3:** draws the text together to compare and contrast themes, characters, and ideas;
- E1b.4:** makes perceptive and well developed connections;
- E1b.5:** evaluates writing strategies and elements of the author's craft.

**E1c:** The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that:

- E1c.2:** relates new information to prior knowledge and experience;
- E1c.4:** makes connections to related topics or information.

**E2c:** The student produces a narrative account (fictional or autobiographical) that:

- E2c.3:** creates an organizing structure;
- E2c.4:** includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character;
- E2c.7:** uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as dialogue, tension or suspense, naming, and specific narrative action, e.g., movement, gestures, expressions;

**E2d.3:** makes use of appropriate writing strategies such as creating a visual hierarchy and using white space and graphics as appropriate;

**E4b:** The student analyzes and subsequently revises work to clarify it or make it more effective in communicating the intended message or thought. Strategies for revising include:

- E4b.1:** adding or deleting details;
- E4b.2:** adding or deleting explanations;
- E4b.4:** rearranging words, sentences, and paragraphs to improve or clarify meaning;
- E4b.5:** sharpening the focus;
- E4b.6:** reconsidering the organizational structure.

## How Do I Format My Paper?

Arthur Stein	←	Your name
10/18/2008	←	Date paper is due
Pop Culture essay	←	What is the name of the assignment?
LA8	←	Class name
Mr. Coia	←	Teacher name
482 words	←	Word count

### **Play-Dough Minds: Plato vs. Popular Teen Culture** ←*always have a creative title*

In his *Republic*, Plato had a higher opinion of children and a higher purpose for childhood. Contrary to producers, advertisers, and performers, Plato saw boys and girls as “young and tender thing[s],” and believed that this part of life is the “most important part.” Childhood, according to Plato, is not important because it presents a lucrative demographic; rather, it is vital because it is the formation of the character of a future man or woman in society. It is important because Plato implies that who we are when we are forty begins when we are four. This is the time in which character is planted and watered. Plato commented that childhood is “a time when character is being formed and the desired impression is more readily taken.” What, then, is the “desired impression” in these times? For advertising conglomerates, it is to sing an annoying jingle, stamp an impressive logo, or a showcase a tanned body for the sole and unscrupulous purpose of selling products. The desired impression occurring on Madison Avenue is fueled by product placement and the bottom line. Plato, however, seems to desire a more virtuous impression for these young minds. [essay not complete]

#### **Format:**

- Double-spaced, unless otherwise stated
- For poetry, use single spacing with blank lines between stanzas.
- No “floating paragraphs” (blank lines between paragraphs).
- 12-point font
- Standard font (Times, Arial, or Helvetica)
- No more than 1-inch margins all around (In Word, go to File→Page Setup→Margins).
- Includes a creative title related to your writing. This is your first introduction to the reader. Make it clever and interesting.

## The Clown (page 57)

# Reading SkillBuilder

### Making Judgments

When you make a judgment or evaluation, you must be able to support it with evidence from the text itself or from your own experience of life. For example, by exaggerating certain details about a person or a situation, a writer can create humor in a story. Therefore, as you read you may need to make judgments about whether the author is exaggerating or not. The chart below lists examples of the author's descriptions. Decide if each is an exaggeration. Then give evidence that supports your judgment.

Example	Exaggeration?	Evidence
1. "the whole hundred or so years that Miss Bindle had taught"	1. <i>yes</i>	1. <i>Nobody could teach for that long. They's be dead.</i>
2. "[Mort] couldn't do arithmetic without counting on his fingers."	2.	2.
3. "rearrange the molecules of your brain to suit her fancy"	3.	3.
4. "about half the size of some of the larger boys"	4.	4.
5. "laugh ourselves sick"	5.	5.
6. "comb it into any shape he wanted"	6.	6.
7. "wild, booming laugh detonated like a bomb"	7.	7.
8. "Miss Bindle's stiletto eyes piercing my living . . . flesh"	8.	8.

## Painful Memories of Dating (page 400)

### Strategic Reading: Literature

#### Humor

Dave Barry uses exaggeration to create humor. Read these examples of exaggeration, then rewrite each statement without exaggeration. You will probably be describing what really happened.

1. Dave spent 82 percent of his time trying to figure out how to ask girls out.

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2. Dave spent the vast majority of 1960 keeping Judy under surveillance.

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3. Dave stayed at least 50 lockers away from Judy.

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4. He thought the ability to talk to girls was a superhuman power, like x-ray vision.

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5. Judy and Dave sat 75 feet apart in the back seat of the car.

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