

## **Student Personal Stories: Another Step to Unleashing Lifelong Learning**

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### **Abstract**

Finding ways to increase student engagement is a top priority for many educators. The purpose of this curriculum unit is to use **fables** and the **frame story** to ignite the **motivation** of students and propel them to become **critical readers** and **critical writers** in the **lifelong learning** process. Execution of lessons in the unit moves from building background knowledge using fables and frame stories from **South East Asia and Middle East** as well as the **Canterbury Tales** and concepts from **Animal Farm** to creating and critiquing students' own stories. Then, students participate in activities that will define and provide examples of the frame story. Next, students **analyze** the movement in the frame story by examining the craft and structure of frame stories. Subsequently, students will evaluate frame stories. In the final movement, the students will become both writer and critic as they craft and evaluate their own **personal frame stories**.

### **Key Words:**

Fables, frame story, motivation, critical readers, critical writers, lifelong learning, South East Asia, Middle East, Canterbury Tales, Animal Farm, personal frame stories.

### **Content Objectives**

#### Rationale

"Lack of motivation is a real and pressing problem," asserts "Education" contributor James Marshall Crotty (Forbes Magazine: March, 2013). In his article, Crotty cites a 2003 National Research Council report on motivation that indicates that 40 % of high school students are "chronically disengaged from school." Crotty also references research papers released by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) at George Washington University, which concludes, "schools, teachers, and parents (must) take steps to address (student) lack of motivation." My own experience as an educator tends to substantiate what Crotty, the National Research Council, and the George Washington Center on Education reveal concerning motivation as key to student success. I have found that academic rigor or threats of failing grades alone do not necessarily lead to student achievement. Firstly, what then, can I, as a high school English teacher do to address this fundamental problem of student disengagement? Secondly, how do I help students to learn and love lifelong learning?

To the first question and the issue of disengagement, a set of learning objectives and strategies will be put in place. These objectives have to address analytical and interpretive abilities and how these can be cultivated in students. Also important will be the development of language and vocabulary to enable students to effectively communicate their stories. The second question about how to learn and lifelong learning

will involve close reading of difficult texts and continual telling of stories to keep the traditions alive.

### Background

My seminar as a TIP Fellow is entitled Story-telling from South Asia and the Middle East. From the texts I have read and class discussions I have participated in, several important factors have emerged as significant to my instruction. First, everyone has a story to tell and people love telling these stories. These stories are told primarily to teach or entertain. However, Sarah Worth in her article *Storytelling and Narrative Knowing: An Examination of the Epistemic Benefits of Well-Told Stories* (Worth, 1). argues that stories about unexpected events, amusing, or frightening experiences that people love to tell shouldn't just be told to entertain or merely exchange ideas.

Good storytellers use what she has termed "narrative reasoning." Stories can help develop the storyteller's reasoning capacity to create a memorable story. Stories told badly are easily forgotten according to Worth. Worth concludes that storytellers who "are able to develop the capacity to reason narratively will be able to have a more comprehensive understanding of the human experience." Students will be served well if they are taught to develop the skill of narrative reasoning.

Another important factor gleaned from my Storytelling literature is the fact that there are stories within stories in a community of people. Every community has local stories that exemplify that community's social, ethical, and political issues and the stories told reflect particular aspects of those issues. Worth also noted, stories are dynamic – they change over time. "If a story is really funny, etc., we tell the story repeatedly, embellishing as we see fit, shortening or lengthening it as the circumstances prescribe." Also to support the dynamic nature of stories is the fact that many, many stories begin as oral narratives.

Both the Arabian Nights and the modern short story are believed to have begun in the oral tradition. There are similarities in the story-telling elements across cultures. *The Arabian Nights* and *The Canterbury Tales* share elements of structure for example. Hopefully, training students to become comfortable telling their own stories orally will prepare them to become proficient presenters by the time they have to present the mandatory senior project in their senior year in high school.

A final factor worthy of mention about the literature from my storytelling seminar is the fact that there are universal themes that connect human beings across countries and time. These factors applied to individual student situations should motivate students to become more engaged in acquiring new knowledge about themselves as learners and storytellers.

There is value in recognizing that stories in different cultures will continue to exist. Thus, teachers and story tellers have the opportunity to establish mediums for new audiences as these audiences import or export stories and ideas to frame their own stories. In this way, students are allowed to create their own learning. We know that people learn about the world for different reasons. For example, the Indian epic the *Great Story of the Bharatas* relates an ethnic plethora of frame stories and different experiences "of so-and-

so told by so-and-so". These frame stories relate the experiences of the people of India, but students can have the opportunity to learn about this culture through these stories in a world now where marketplace is very diverse. Also the Sanskrit work the *Panchatantra*, divided into (*The Five Stratagems*), is a collection of animal fables that teach worldly wisdom and give moral advice, the learning is for foolish young princes who learn the affairs of state and moral lessons within less than a year.

*A Thousand and One Nights* also known as *The Arabian Nights* recounts the captivation of a Sultan by the stories told to him every night by a young woman who initially volunteers to be the "sacrificial virgin" to entertain the Sultan at night and then be killed the next day. Shahrazad tells stories to save her life and the lives of other young women from the wrath of a ruthless ruler. She becomes his wife and every night for a thousand and one nights, she narrates a story each night. Sultan Shahryar has been on a revenge on women rampage since he discovered the infidelity of his wife whom he executes. Until Shahrazad, every virgin the Sultan demanded brought to him for his nightly pleasures, would be brutally murdered the next day. Commentators of the history channel documentary of *The Arabian Nights* summarize the Shahrazad's whole experience as an example of a woman telling stories to heal a man and survive in a culture that may not be favorable to women. Certain scholars believe that people appreciate the stories now more than they did originally. For instance, Husain Haddawy in his critical analysis of *The Arabian Nights* says this: "In the nights themselves, tales divert, cure, redeem, and save lives. Shahrazad cures Shahryar of his hatred of women, teaches him to love, and by so doing saves her own life and wins a good man." (Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, p. xiv). Haddawy also notes that the Caliph Haroun al-Rashid finds "wonder" derived from stories told more appealing than "justice or his thirst for vengeance." Haddawy also adds that the king of China "spares four lives when he finally hears a story that is stranger than a strange episode from his own life."

Shahrazad is a representative of all the women storytellers. Although Shahrazad ends up as a character in the story, there is lack of consensus among scholars as to the origin of the stories. The history channel documentary also concludes that the stories in *The Arabian Nights* expose the "fantastic and the bizarre wrapped up in the exotic." These stories provide a universal lens, which depicts the human experience and provide the larger frame for stories. On the other hand, there are local stories. These are the individual new stories such as those that students will create and keep on creating.

In many of the stories in *The Arabian Nights*, tales are told of mysteries and symbols of wonder. The magic lamp of Aladdin is an example of wonders. The magic lamp gives this poor boy Aladdin the chance to become rich and noble. A lesson the audience could be that "it is possible to escape the uncertainties of life and time." Then the mystery of the flying magic carpet. This phenomenon allows the characters and the audience to go places they've never dreamed of at a breakneck speed! It lights the freedom and adventure in all human spirits.

Also a common theme in the stories is the idea that crime does not pay. Good ultimately triumphs over evil. An example of this is *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp*. In this story, Jafar is the representative of evil and Aladdin is the poor beggar boy who

represents good and hope. In spite of the power position Jafar is in, in the end, it is Aladdin who gets the princess and the kingdom while Jafar lives imprisoned in the magic lamp.

*The Panchatantra* is believed by some to be the oldest collection of Indian fables. In the Panchatantra, which has been translated into many languages, the umbrella story is one in which, the narrator Vishnusharma, uses parables with animals to relate stories that teach morals and valuable lessons to the king's three sons. King Amarasakti of Mahilaropya is a great and beloved king, but he is very unhappy. His sadness has been caused by his three "dull" and "foolish" sons ages ranging from 16 to 18 years of age. They were egoistic, ill-mannered, and incorrigible. Content in their position as sons of the king, these young men saw no value in education and their father could not convince them otherwise. It is believed that no other king wanted to give his daughter in marriage to any of these princes because they were ignorant and arrogant. King Amarasakti was understandably depressed. Then one day, a great teacher offered to take on the task of instructing the princes. He promised the education of the princes would last only six months!

The teacher "set about teaching the science of government to the princes under the guise of stories and for that purpose composed the Five Books." Book 1 has stories about *losing friends*, Book 2 tells stories that exemplify the *winning of friends*, Book 3 covers strategies of *war and peace*, Book 4 shares stories about *losing what is gained*, and Book 5 narrates experiences of people who make *hasty actions*.

Book One begins with this quote:

In the jungle lived a lion and a bull,  
with great and ever growing love,  
But by a jackal their love was undone,  
By a traitor consumed with greed.

This demonstrates the gist of the parables and fables that resound throughout Book One. "Beware who your friends are!" *The Monkey That Pulled the Wedge* is a tale of someone who meddles in matters that do not concern him or her. The end result is disastrous. Stories in the five books were not meant for children, but Vishnu uses animals to tell stories to boys transitioning to men. The tales themselves captured the attention of the young men's minds enough for them to learn the lessons intended.

Book Two begins:

Men who are wise and honoured by his friends,  
Although they may lack resources and wealth;  
they quickly accomplish their goals,  
like the crow, turtle, deer, and mouse.

The crow, turtle, deer, and mouse became friends in the forest. In the course of time, the deer got trapped by a hunter. The other three animals devised a plan to rescue the deer

and the deer was released from the entrapment. However, because the tortoise is slow by nature, it got caught by the hunter before it could escape. Again the other three friends hatched a plan a rescue mission once again. The moral of this story is “united we stand; divided we fall.”

Book Three is predicated by the following quote:

In a man you have once antagonized,  
Or in a foe who has become a friend,  
you should never place your trust.  
See how the hideout filled with owls was burnt,  
by the fire buried by crow.

An elder crow hatches a plan to appear to have been thrown out of the Crow colony. By pretending to be all alone, this clever crow gains the trust of the Owl king who invites the displaced crow to the owl colony. The clever crow builds his nest strategically by the entrance to the owl colony. At an optimal moment, the crows who have been alerted by the informant come and burn down the Owl colony. The colony of owls is destroyed because their king is foolish enough to believe the tale of a “crow outcast!”

The opening verse of Book Four is:

When someone gives up something he has gained,  
Fooled by soothing words,  
That fool is deceived just the same way as  
The foolish crocodile by the monkey.

When faced with the choice between the love of his monkey friend or the wrath of a jealousy wife, what is the crocodile to do? The crocodile becomes friends with a monkey and his wife gets jealous. Devising a plan to get rid of the monkey, the wife pretends to be sick and convinces her crocodile husband that the only cure there is for her ailment is the heart of a monkey. The crocodile attempts to get the monkey’s heart, but the monkey realizes what is happening and evades the evil plan. The crocodile loses the friendship he had gained with the monkey. Everyone loses. The monkey and crocodile each lose a friend and the couple loses mutual respect for each other.

Book Five, which is about “hasty actions” begins thus:

When a man comes under the sway of wrath,  
without finding out the true facts,  
He will ere long be parted from his friend,  
like the Brahmin from the mongoose.

In the story of the Brahmin and the Mongoose, the Brahmin’s wife gives birth to son. At the same time, a mongoose also gives birth. Unfortunately, the mother mongoose dies, but the Brahmin’s wife adopts the baby mongoose. The woman nurtures the two “babies”

as though they were both human, except that doubts linger in the back of her mind concerning the innate nature of the mongoose to be a mongoose. One day the Brahmin's wife has to run an errand and leaves the Brahmin in charge. He is careless and leaves their son and young mongoose unattended. A big snake comes in and would have attacked and killed the son except that the mongoose tears the serpent into pieces. The mongoose is proud to have saved his "brother" and anxiously awaits the return of his mother to deliver the good news when she gets home. The wife returns first, notices the bloody mess on the mongoose, and concludes that the animal has killed her son. He punishes the mongoose but later discovers the truth of the matter. She acted in haste.

"To what extent will our students carry the stories of the past into new imaginative worlds of the future?" This question posed in class and inherent in some reading materials started me thinking. I posit that an answer to this question will be, "students will continue past stories into the future to the extent that teachers, families and communities inculcate story-telling skills into students. This, in turn, could help youngsters to infuse their own stories into "existing" stories. The aim is to help students develop the desire to learn and the love of learning. Analysis of social issues across cultures will hopefully lead my students to the awareness of globalization and how knowledge of the world can advance them economically. Major themes should emerge as students direct their own learning at the teacher's facilitation. Students will be required to write theme statements, knowledge that will later be applied as students create their own stories.

Before analysis of the frame story, students will be given the opportunity to research at three frame stories from the Indian, Arabian, and Chinese cultures. This will provide an overview of the typical elements of the frame story.

To introduce the frame story, eleventh grade students will read the **Prologue** to the *Canterbury Tales*. This will be a good place to discuss author's style. Students will be reminded that each storyteller has a voice. As storytellers, students will need to express their voices through stylist features of their stories. Take for instance Chaucer's use of irony in the Prologue to expose each character's faults while demonstrating the character's human side! The Wife of Bath is of nobility status, but exhibits no manners expected of the nobility. She's a "gentle lady without manners"! One specific example of irony can be seen exemplified in this excerpt *from The Wife if Bath's Tale*: The couplet is the notable, too.

Others assert we women find it sweet  
When we are thought dependable, discreet  
And secret, firm of purpose and controlled,  
Never betraying things that we are told.  
But that's not worth the handle of a rake;  
Women conceal a thing? For Heaven's sake!

Students will get into more detail about Chaucer's use of irony when they read the text from *The Wife of Bath's Tale*. The storyteller can also use imagery and figurative language to create vivid images for the reader or audience as he or she uses his or her voice to express certain elements of style. Another example from Chaucer demonstrates the use of imagery and figurative language to introduce characters is noteworthy. From the Prologue, the following description of the Summoner is given:

There was a Summoner with us at the Inn.  
His face was on fire, like cherubim,  
For he had carbuncles. His eyes were narrow.  
He was as hot and lecherous as a sparrow.  
Black scabby brows he had, and a thin beard.  
Children were afraid when he appeared.

Does the storyteller employ his or her own sense of humor to reveal the comic side of life even in the face of grave life circumstances when the unexpected happens? This stylistic feature is used in *Aladdin* as to describe or even attempt to explain the predicament of the beggar boy who finds himself in a ludicrous situation where he unexpectedly finds himself navigating the unknown setting of a palace.

Students will read the *Tale of the Wife of Bath*, which addresses issues of marriage and gender roles. Marriage and gender roles will be compared and contrasted with similar ideas in Indian, Arabian, and Chinese cultures. Also of value will be a discussion of the story-telling elements. Of particular interest are the similar elements in Chinese story-telling and Geoffrey Chaucer's narrative skills in *The Canterbury Tales* namely the "I" narrator and the "inn" setting. Students will then write their own stories.

Clearly, before writing their own stories, a framework for writing will be established. My experience with my students is the fact that they love to talk about themselves. Therefore, the framework will take this fact into account. So, to begin thinking about student stories, one question to ask students is, "What is your passion?" In the first chapter of her book for nonfiction writers, Hertz reiterates various other writers who believe that passion is the driving force to successful writing. "I get my ideas mostly about what I'm passionate about," one author is quoted as saying. Hertz references another writer as stating, "I say follow your bliss and don't be afraid and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be." (Hertz, 4).

Hertz suggests questions be posed to students to spark ideas. Examples of such questions could include the following: What interests you? Answers could be: Going to movies, going to the mall, playing football/basketball/videogames... A follow up question could be: What, about these experiences do you want to understand? Possible answers could include: "I felt frustrated because of crowds." Or "I lost my friends and started panicking." Or "I really enjoyed the company of my friends." Another question could be: "What two or three issues are provocative about the particular activity?"

These activities could then be extended by placing students in small groups. In these groups, the students could build upon their ideas by asking each other to add a different question for the writer to consider. After some content gathering, Hertz further suggests the writer needs to find a focus. "Focus, meaning, the universal message. The one thing you want to say." Finding the focus of a story, Hertz contends, is the hardest part of the writing job. (Hertz, 82). The focus of the story is also the central point. In my experience as a teacher, I have also found that students find it hard to interpret the central theme(s) of a story. Therefore, being forced to contemplate the central theme as a literary element from the writer's perspective could help students gain a better understanding of the concept as readers.

A useful exercise suggests Hertz is to state your narrative's focus in six words naming the specific subject and active verbs without including the word "about."

For example:

*Exploring dominant marriage traditions in India*

*Engaging auditory students through pop music*

In thinking about content objectives, I have adopted Hertz's suggestions about posing questions to generate ideas. In this case, I will use questions to provoke thought concerning merging the big ideas from the storytelling seminar and classroom application. What will be considered here is the question, "How does a move from content to meaning to style allow students to better understand text?" Ms. Schaefer, a high school teacher from New York, demonstrates the answer to the previous question in a video while conducting a class to demonstrate the concepts. In this video, Ms. Schaefer poses questions to check basic understanding of the content. Then she follows that up with questions that check the subtext or deeper meaning of the text and how it connects to the reader. Finally, Ms. Schaefer asks questions that deal with the stylistic features of the text. In the video, Ms. Schaefer handles the questions as applied to a reading text.

Questions are also important for a write preparing to write or create content.

One idea I would like students to ponder is the frame story. Scaffolding questions will be a strategy to introduce the frame story. So a simple question to provoke thought and provide guidance on what should be considered is simply this: *What will my students do about the frame story?* From *The Wife of Bath* from *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer is the selected text to introduce the frame story to students. Analysis of the narrator and the frame structure of a narrative poem could be a good place to start. Various tasks on this analysis should prepare the students to begin thinking about elements of a frame story. The ultimate goal is for students to create their own frame stories within one agreed upon outer frame.

In an attempt to incorporate ideas from the southeast story telling seminar, consideration will be made whether to model the outer frame of my students on *The Panchatantra* (foolish youthful princes who eventually learn and get wiser) or *The Arabian Nights* (a person of power and influence with a challenge that eventually gets solved for the good of all. Other aspects of *The Panchatantra* such as animal characters or adventure and magical aspects in *Arabian Nights* will also be included.

I believe that **storytelling skills** (oral tradition) will be beneficial to many of my students. Many of them already demonstrate interest in spoken word. It is an area to explore. Therefore, the question to focus on here is: *What storytelling skills should my students focus on?* Because of the need for a senior project presentation, **public speaking** is at the top of the list. Public speaking here is defined as any kind of speaking in front of more than one person, not simply giving speeches. The logistics of the presentation tasks will mirror the senior project rubric to be included in the appendix. These activities will be structured and will occur regularly over the course of a semester if not the entire year.

Another important story telling skill for students is a consideration of the **poetic form**. Such elements as rhyme, repetition, alliteration, and assonance are integral elements of the frame story across cultures and therefore should be highlighted for students. Indeed, many of these devices are also found in song; another important aspect of many folktales. Most students love music! Including relevant songs to the curriculum should help with the student engagement piece.

The use of **dialogue** is another aspect of the frame story. For example, characters within a story like the hoopoe ask a question and the narrator responds with a story to answer the questions as is the case in *The Conference of the Birds*. In addition, dialogue can be used to demonstrate the relationship between characters and moves the action in the story forward.

Focus will also be placed on **central themes** in any stories read in class or at home. Of particular interest will be universal themes. *What themes are considered universal?* Some of these are: “resilience, perseverance, and grief.” (Hertz, 20). I would add “love.” These themes would also resonate with my students because more often than not, many students have survival stories to tell. These stories range from physical, psychological, to emotional.

To extend central universal themes, **symbolism** will be examined. Here the goal is to find universal symbols in the frame stories shared both from literary texts and students’ own stories.

Discussion of **gender roles** cannot be avoided given that students will read *The Wife of Bath* as previously indicated. The guiding question here is: *What is the significance to students of discussing gender roles?* While it is clear that traditional gender roles should be considered as well as contemporary discourse about gender issues, students need to focus on gender issues that pertain specifically to them. I cannot help but think about teenage parenting considering that a number of high school students go through this experience before high school graduation. Also important to this discussion is the cultural competence piece about gender roles in the workplace.

Discussion of the *author’s purpose in the frame story (entertain & instruct)* will be necessary. In the frame stories I have read so far, the purpose is both to entertain and instruct. In the case of the Arabian Nights, entertainment preceded instruction. The storyteller had to entertain the king to survive night after night, but in the end lessons were learned. Actually three years later! Did the “crazy” king recover from his serious psychosis? Many morality questions arise from this frame story. Are these questions valid or is this simply a misunderstanding of foreign cultural affairs!

Finally, the use of **figures of speech** such as similes, metaphors, proverbs, hyperbole, imagery in story telling should certainly be raised with students. Imagery is especially relevant because of its powerful images that could be evoked for a deeper comprehension of vocabulary and text interpretation. Students will interpret the use of imagery by employing suggested stems as follows: “Imagery in this text is effectively used because it helps me get a better picture of... or imagery makes me feel...and connects me to the text or the world.” Another example of how students can demonstrate a deeper understanding of the text is by showing how imagery emphasizes or clarifies the author’s tone and thus perhaps reveal the author’s purpose. The figures of speech as well as imagery are the vehicles through which the story comes alive and keeps the audience engaged. Students should be able to make statements such as, “The use of imagery in this text creates mystery or suspense and reveals the author’s attitude, which makes me wonder...” Of course when the student later becomes the story teller, he or she will know his or her audience and therefore should find appropriate imagery and figurative language in order to fully engage the audience.

The identity characteristic such as age, gender, ethnicity, and culture interests.

## **Teaching Strategies**

Strategies that will be employed in the units will include **small groups**. Groups of 2 -4 students provide excellent opportunities for cooperative learning. Within this model, students can work in pairs and also as a small group of four. The sample questions posed in the content objectives outlined in the previous section, discussion in small groups would be ideal. Group work has been proven to inculcate collaboration, problem solving, and interactive learning. Group work rules will have to be established and it may take some time at the beginning to establish norms, but the end results are worth the effort.

**Graphic organizers** are also wonderful tools that aid student learning. Many teachers use graphic organizers for a variety of reasons. One reason is the fact that these information organizers are great for differentiated instruction. In a classroom where students are at different reading levels, graphic organizers can help. Graphic organizers can also enhance the learning to visual learners and hands-on learners. One area where graphic organizers are very helpful is when comparing and contrasting issues and ideas with the Venn-Diagram. Other examples of great graphic organizer are the Prediction-Chart, the T-Chart, the story map to mention a few.

**Quickwrites as DO NOWs** are good strategies to introduce lessons and writing assignments. These often introduce the topic of discussion.

### **Close Reads**

In their book *Pathways to Close and Critical Reading*, Fisher and Frey define close reading as “an instructional routine in which students are guided in their understanding of complex texts.” (Fisher & Frey, 1). Here they describe five major components of a close read. First, the text ought to be short and complex ranging from a few paragraphs to a few pages. Complexity of a text can be measured based on Lexile

Levels, the content (Key Text Features) such as themes, symbolism, style, etc. and Student Needs and Instructional Practices as prescribed by the Philadelphia School District. Second, students must reread the text or parts of the text. As they do this, they will attain more understanding of the text and gain fluency. The second read also helps the students to use textual evidence to support the inferences they make and conclusions they draw using academic language. Third, students are to employ annotation. Underlining, circling, making notes are some common annotation tools they can use. Annotation works as a scaffolding mechanism that forces students to slow down and digest the information they are reading. Fourth, there ought to be collaboration. Students should be able to exchange their ideas about the key points of the text with their peers and teachers through discussion. This is another important scaffold for students to expand their understanding of a text by interacting with each other. Last, students should provide evidence from the text to text-dependent questions. These questions should elicit a broad range of information recall to logical conclusions drawn from the text. A close read is not “a one-and-done-reading. Rather, it is purposeful, careful, and thoughtful.” (Fisher & Frey, 5) When done with fidelity, the close read strategy will compel the reader to examine both the literal and deeper interpretation of the text. That is the ultimate goal of a good reader. Therefore, on the third read of the text helps students to make connections from text to reader and the world.

**Short videos** (10 – 15 minutes) are great hooks to introduce a topic and keep the students engaged. To introduce Chaucer, students will listen to short videos both under 20 minutes and make some notes. (Captions will help students to follow and videos can be paused for notetaking.)

### **Journal entries**

Journals will be used throughout the school year to record ideas for further exploration. For the frame story, journals will be filled with answers to personal questions and students are not obligated to share with whole class.

### **Classroom Activities**

#### **Activity One: The Frame Story and Its Significance**

**Duration** 5 – 7 days (90-Minute block)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it, (e.g. parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g. pacing, flashbacks), and manipulate such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to identify elements of classic storytelling tropes from Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian traditions and contrast them with elements of tropes from Western stories in order to create and critic their own stories.
- Students will be able to watch *Aladdin and His Magic Lamp* in order to analyze, interpret and evaluate elements of fiction to effectively communicate an idea.

**Materials needed**

Chromebook computers

Graphic Organizers to record the necessary research findings

*Aladdin* 2019 Movie/Audio clips of *Arabian Nights/Animal Farm*

Students will find the video clips/facts/definitions of frame story

Cornell Notes fiction and non-fiction organizers

Handout of key points of the research process explained

**Day 1****DO NOW**

Use your graphic organizer Cornell Notes to complete the section labelled: What do I know about *Aladdin and His Magic Lamp*?

Group share

**Guided Practice**

- Watch the first 30 minutes of *Aladdin and His Magic Lamp Movie*, 2019. (Movie not released yet, but should be available by September, 2019.)
- Complete the section labelled Character Notes on your Cornell Notes Fiction graphic organizer. What characters are important in the portion of the video you watched?
- Explain why in the notes section of the graphic organizer.
- What are the key plot points?
- What personal connections do you make to the story so far?
- Brief group discussion
- Share with whole group
- Chart answers for future reference

This process will be repeated as necessary for each portion of the movie the students watch.

**Independent Practice:** (Use information in graphic organizers to complete assignment)

Students will write a paragraph analyzing parallel plots or elements of suspense or surprise presented over the course of the movie with evidence from the movie to support their responses.

**Exit Ticket:**

In your journal record 3 – 5 ideas that were surprising, mysterious, or different from your daily experience.

**Days 2 &3:**

**Objective:** (Same as the previous day)

Finish watching the movie

Complete notes same way as the day before

**Days 4 - 7**

**Objective:**

Students will be able to conduct a short research project to answer questions about frame stories in order to gain background knowledge to better interpret frame stories as well as prepare to write their own frame stories.

- Students get assigned a research area: *The Panchatantra*, *A Thousand and One Nights*, or *Animal Farm*.
- Students are to find a YouTube video for a story from either the *The Panchatantra* or *A Thousand and One Nights*.
- Students will watch the video and record the message communicated. They will share these with the whole group.
- All students research the context of *Animal Farm* and its message and the use of animals.
- Student groups will be assigned an essential question arising from student ideas after initial research on an assigned frame story either *The Panchatantra*, *A Thousand and One Nights*, or *Animal Farm*.
- Discuss findings in whole group.

Make Connections of research to:

- Frame story
- Frame story elements: narrator, characters, figurative language, themes, cultural elements
- Students will complete their Cornell notes graphic organizer to keep in class manila folders.

**Assessment:**

Write a summary of findings on research.

Rubric: Keystone Scoring Guidelines

<https://www.tesd.net/Page/8943>

**Activity Two: Movement in the Frame Story**

**Duration 3 - 4 days**

**Common Core Standards – Literacy 11-12**

1. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events in it, and manipulate time to create an effect.
2. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
3. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and context, choosing flexibility from a range of strategies and tools.
4. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Objectives**

1. Students will be able to analyze, interpret, and evaluate how authors use techniques and elements of fiction to effectively communicate an idea or concept.
2. Students will be able to discuss characters in frame stories and how authors of this literature use the narrative structures to talk about society in terms of politics, morals, and social norms through specific characters.

**Materials Needed:**

- Teacher Prepared material (e.g. 5-Column Chart, Cornell Notes graphic organizer, main idea, etc.)
- The Wife of Bath Text (The Prologue)
- Chart Paper

- Cornell Notes

<https://mrsgodfreysclass.weebly.com/student-success.html>

## **Day 1**

### **Objective:**

Identify and/or analyze the author's intended purpose of a text.

### **DO NOW:**

Using the picture of The Wife of Bath or another woman in the time period, do the following tasks:

- Using the Art Museum T-Chart graphic organizer titled What I See- What It Means, record ten things they see (denotation) and what each means (connotation).
- Answer the question: How does the presentation of the woman in the picture compare with women now to elicit their thoughts about women then and now
- Turn and talk before sharing with whole group
- Record your answers on charting paper to post around the room

### **Guided Practice:**

- Read a non-fiction text that relates to frame stories.
- Use a 3 column T-Chart to closely read this article.
- First read for comprehension. Fill out column 1
- Second read to identify text elements present in the piece such as figurative language, technical vocabulary, etc. and then make inferences. Fill out column 2
- Third read is a close read for analysis – how students connect to the text and the world. Fill out column 3
- Each group will be assigned a portion of the text for the three reads.
- Share out answers with whole group, answers recorded on chart paper to be posted for further reference as needed.

### **Independent Practice**

Write a paragraph in which you explain the author's intended purpose in the text.

## **Day 2**

### **Objectives:**

1. Identify and /or apply a synonym or antonym of a word used in a text.

2. Use context clues to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar, multiple-meaning, or ambiguous words.
3. Make inferences and/or draw conclusions based on analysis of a text.
4. Cite evidence from a text to support generalizations

### **DO NOW (Quickwrite)**

What are the key ingredients of a “good” relationship? Jot down your answers

Turn and talk to a partner

Whole group share

Chart answers (will use as a point of reference later in the unit)

### **Guided Practice:**

from *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue*

1. View video for more context and background, “History’s Mysteries: The Knights of the Camelot.”
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oo54atgRvXA>
3. Can also be found in students’ eBooks and Teacher’s edition *Collections 12* Collection 2 p.76b
4. Discuss Chaucer’s impact on English Literature based on student research findings.
  - Read background on Canterbury Tales (p.77 Collections 12)
  - Use a 3 column T-Chart to closely read this article.
  - First read for comprehension. Fill out column 1
  - Second read to identify text elements present in the piece such as text organization, technical vocabulary, etc. Fill out column 2
  - Third read is a close read for analysis – how students connect to the text and the world. Fill out column 3.
  - Each group will read the short text for the three reads as necessary.
  - Share out answers with whole group, answers recorded on chart paper to be posted for further reference as needed especially new vocabulary.

Use a 5-Column graphic organizer with headings:

Word/meaning/synonym/antonym/suffix (if any). Will record the context of each word (sentence in which the word appears) during reading.

Preview Vocabulary in Prologue to the Canterbury Tales (synonyms, antonyms, suffixes)

Abominably	implore
Bequeath	main
Concede	proves
Contemptuous	rebuke
Cosset	statute
Crone	temporal
Ecstasy	tribulation

**Exit Ticket:** Write 2 – 3 sentences to explain two things you learned in today’s lesson.

**Day 3:**

**Objective:**

Cite evidence from a text to support generalizations

**DO NOW (Quickwrite)**

What is the role of women in your community?

**Close Read**

Lines 1 – 5:

**Underline** any words you don’t know.

**Circle** Underline two phrases you do understand

What figurative language is used if any?

What is the text saying in other words?

Formulate two questions using the **verb identify**.

Your teacher is your final resort!

**Close Read:**

Lines 6 – 20:

**Underline** any words you don’t know. **Circle** 3 big ideas

What figurative language is used if any?

What is the text saying in other words?

Formulate two questions that use the **verb analyze**.

**Discuss** these ideas in your group and make notes on your graphic organizer

**Close Read**

Lines 21 – 30:

**Underline** any words you don’t know.

**Circle** 3 big ideas

What figurative language is used if any?

What is the text saying in other words?

**Whole class share** of text lines 1 – 30.

- Discuss literary elements: characters, irony, poetic devices

- Detailed analysis of the characters and characterization of the narrator and other characters presented in the prologue and how Chaucer depicts them.

### **Independent Practice**

Formulate three questions using the **verbs: create, summarize, predict**. Use each word once. Check questions with peers before final submission. (Teacher will select some of these questions for a class assessment)

### **Activity Three: Students Analyze and Evaluate Frame Stories**

**Duration 5 – 7 days (before assessment)**

Critique other peoples' writing.

Common Core Standards – Literacy 11 – 12.

1. Analyze how an author draws on and transforms themes, topics, character types, and/or other text elements
2. Explain, interpret, compare, describe, analyze, and/or evaluate character (narrator), setting, plot (action), theme, tone, and point of view in a variety of fiction.
3. C.C.3.11 – 12: Evaluate how an author's point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to determine themes
2. Students will analyze story elements: narrator, frame story structure, foreshadowing, draw conclusions
3. Students will be able to evaluate how Chaucer uses irony and other techniques to communicate ideas (reveal the character of the Wife of Bath)
4. Students will be able to support generalizations by citing evidence from the text.

### **Materials Needed**

- *The Wife of Bath's Tale* (see link below)
- Dictionaries
- Notebooks/Journals
- Students can make notes and answer the guided questions provided with the text
- Three Column Chart for three level reading and interpretation.
- Rubrics for group assignments
- Chart Paper for Group Work Ideas

- Teacher Prepared material (e.g. 5-Column Chart, Cornell Notes graphic organizer, etc.)

*The Wife of Bath Text* (The Prologue)

- [mrslivaudais.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/wife-of-baths-tale-pdf-holt.pdf](http://mrslivaudais.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/wife-of-baths-tale-pdf-holt.pdf)

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Read *The wife of Bath*.

### Days 1 - 3

**Objective:** Students will be able to support generalizations by citing evidence from the text.

**DO NOW** (15- 20 minutes) Block schedule

Have you heard the phrase, “battle of the sexes”? This phrase suggests conflict in romantic relationships. One of the parties in the relationship clearly strives to gain the upper hand.

- Refer back to your notes on a previous DO NOW extend your answer as you consider the answer to this question:  
Would you say that in a good marriage, partners are equal or should one of the partners be the decision maker? Explain your answer in 3 – 5 sentences in your journal.
- Discuss medieval romance (3 minutes)
- Group discussion (3 minutes)
- Discuss narrator and frame story (3 minutes)

### DO NOW:

**Journal Entry:** In what 5 ways have you changed since middle school? Do any of these changes include having romantic relationships?

### Guided Practice

- Students will be assigned lines of text in their groups.
- Use three reads organizer to analyze the text.
- Group share
- Chart answers
- Set up reader’s notebook – the interruptions to the main story and the reasons. Use a graphic organizer. A chart.

Divide class into 6 groups of 4 students per group. Assign 110 lines to each group. (Jigsaw method) Assign group roles to each student for a close read:

**Role 1:** Vocabulary Expert: selects words for group to define and study, and then share with the whole class.

**Role 2:** Big Idea Experts: Two students for big ideas (they can split the text at first and then switch as necessary)

**Role 3:** Questioning Expert: student to develop questions for the rest of the class to answer on assigned lines.

**Role 4:** Reporter

Group Sharing: Each group will select a reporter.

(Other suggestions for group roles can be found at the link below 😊)

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/317503842463688723>

**Group Work Rubric:**

Vocabulary selection

Group definitions and/or interpretation

Synonyms and antonyms, prefixes and suffixes as necessitated

Key Ideas to be selected for discussion

Group notes

Questions

5 thought provoking questions on the section assigned and suggested answers for the rest of the class

Present gathered information to class. Class Discussion. Teacher Input

Presentation and discussion of reading selections and group assignments

**Exit Ticket:** How does the author develop the narrator's point of view in *The Wife of Bath*? (Consider word choice (diction), attitude (tone), and irony.)

- Use the half page lines provided, record your biggest Aha moment you got from your reading selection.
- Write 5 – 6 sentences
- (This is your most important insight into the story so far.)
- Turn in the work

### **Days 4 – 7**

**Objective:** Students will analyze the narrator and the frame story structure of a narrative poem in order to make class presentations of their group assignments.

Student presentations of group findings: vocabulary, themes, characterization, questions, and comments

[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson416/OralRubric.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson416/OralRubric.pdf)

### **Final Assessments:**

1. Multiple Choice Test on the selection: Teacher's Resources Collections 12 Grade/11<sup>th</sup> grade

### **Activity Four: Students Become Both Writer and Critic**

**Duration:** 7 - 14 Days:

### **Standards:**

1. **C.C.1.4. 11 – 12 M:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events
2. **C.C.1.4. 11 – 12 N:** Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple points of view, and introducing a narrator and /or characters.
3. **C.C.1.4. 11 – 12 P:** Create a smooth progression of experiences or events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome; provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of a narrative.

### **Objectives:**

1. **Analyze** how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
2. **Create** own stories following the guidelines provided.

### **Materials Needed**

Notebooks

Pencils/erasers

Chrome books

Character traits chart

<https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/reading-worksheets/list-of-challenging-character-trait-words.pdf>

More graphic Organizers

[https://files2.trinity.org/files/27301\\_27400/27361/file\\_27361.pdf](https://files2.trinity.org/files/27301_27400/27361/file_27361.pdf)

Conflict handout

<http://home.d47.org/emmerke/files/2015/05/Fictional-Narrative-Planner-a.pdf>

Manila Folders

### **DO NOW:**

**Definition:** “A story is series of events in which something happens. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The best stories invoke emotion: laughter, tears, gasp in surprise, anger, inspiration...”

- Think of a story that has invoked an emotion stated in the definition of a story above.
- Describe what happened in that story that made you feel the way you did.

### **Guided Practice**

Answer the following questions in your notebook.

1. What five animals could you include as characters in your animal story? Explain why. You may select some from the examples on worksheet provided.
2. If you were one of the characters in your animal story would you be the protagonist or the antagonist? Why?
3. What moral/lesson will the story to communicate?
4. Who will be the main character?.
5. What are 10 characteristics of the main character? (Refer to the character traits handout for extra help if needed)
6. How does the protagonist change from beginning to end of the story?
7. What evidence supports your answer in # 7? (Actions, words, reports from other characters).What the character says, what the character does, and what other characters say about this character to support the character trait. (He or she must be a dynamic character.) This will not only make the story more credible.
8. Select main events in the story

9. What three animals will serve as minor characters in your story?
  10. How do these minor characters relate to the main character?
  11. Are the minor characters going to undermine the protagonist or help?
  12. What are these characters' motivations?
  13. What dialogue will be included in the stories? Who is talking to who?
- Character motives help make the stories more credible.

**Review materials generated so far.**

1. What are the emerging themes/ideas from the students' answers?
2. Can a setting be established that is common to all the stories?
3. Can all the writers gather in "that place?"
4. What is the common purpose that each character is meeting in that place?
5. What are they all seeking? (Peace? Money? New Life? Etc.)

At this point, it should be clear what to include in the **prologue**. Students can work in groups to create 4 – 5 lines to be included in the prologue. Groups will be assigned a specific task/lines to produce.

Students begin to write their own stories.

**Independent Practice**

Create stories

Analyze for content, style, and elements

Evaluate these stories

**Days 1 -14 (Students will be guided through the writing process as they work at individual pace)**

**Objective:**

Students will be able to use the material generated previously in order to write their personal stories using animal characters.

**DO NOW:**

Focus on a question that can help students generate writing material.

**Guided Practice**

Review narrative writing rubric (see below)

## **Independent Practice**

Students will continue writing first drafts, edit the drafts according to the PA Language writing standards i.e. (follow the writing process guidelines until publication.) These stories can then be used in class throughout the year as reference for specific skills as well as a motivation tool.

## **Rubrics**

### **Narrative**

[https://gncufsd.ss8.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_774455/File/For%20Staff/Rubrics/Common\\_Core\\_Rubrics\\_Gr\\_9\\_10.pdf](https://gncufsd.ss8.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_774455/File/For%20Staff/Rubrics/Common_Core_Rubrics_Gr_9_10.pdf)

## **Keystone**

<https://www.tesd.net/Page/8943>

## **Resources**

### **Bibliography for teachers:**

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Wife of Bath*. NeCastro, Gerard, ed. And trans. eChaucer. 2007

This is a version of the Wife of Bath's Tale text. It provides footnotes explaining allusions made in the text.

Chaucer, Geoffrey, and Nevill Coghill. *Collections 12*, edited by Kyleen Beers, Martha Hougen, Carol Jago, William L. McBride, and Erik Palmer, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017, pp. 77c-92k.

The Anthology *Collections 12* is the current School District recommended textbook for 12<sup>th</sup> grade literature. The pages 77c – 92k provide an overview of Collection 2 lessons, the resources for the lessons, key learning objectives, and the texts. Both the Tale of the Wife of Bath and The Pardoner's Tale texts are provided here as well as suggestions for instruction.

Crotty, James M. "40 % Of High School Students Chronically Disengaged from School." *Forbes*, 13 Mar. 2013.

This article refers to studies conducted about education reform and reiterates that student motivation is 'the single biggest determiner of academic success.'

Himmele, Persida, and William Himmele. *Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner*. 2nd ed., Alexandria, Virginia, ASCD, 2017.

This book offers teachers easy to use and proven techniques that the authors ‘hope (will) provide ways to actively and cognitively engage all students in the learning process.’ Copies of this text were provided by The Philadelphia School District to teachers who attended a “Tune Up Tuesday” Professional Development series under the title Total Participation Techniques offered in the fall of 2018.

Bordahl, Viberke. "The Storyteller's Manner in Chinese Storytelling." *Asian Folk Studies*, vol. 62, no. 1, 2003, pp. 65-112. *UTC*, [www.jstor.org/stable/1179081](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1179081). Accessed 30 Sept. 2018.

This article ‘examines the concept of the storyteller’s manner’ in Chinese storytelling. It discusses the divisions of the narratives and stresses how segments are more divided by time such as days, hours not chapters much like the stories in The Arabian Nights are organized by nighttime.

Hertz, Sue. "What's the Big Idea?" *Write Choices: Elements of Nonfiction Storytelling*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press, 2016. 1-22. *SAGE Knowledge*. Web. 23 Mar. 2019, doi: 10.4135/9781483395531.n1.

This book has seven chapters. That book provides guidelines for nonfiction stories, but the information could also apply to writers of fiction. The author suggests ways writers can best engage in their trade from generation of ideas to what form and content to the conclusion of a piece of writing. Some of the ideas from this text will help teachers in their instruction at whatever grade level whether students are writing true or fictitious stories.

Olivelle, Patrick. “*Panchatantra: the book of India’s folk wisdom*.” Translated from the original Sanskrit. *The World’s Classics* Oxford University Press.1997.

*The Thousand and One Nights*, edited by Editors Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 18 Jan. 2019, [www.britannica.com/topic/The-Thousand-and-One-Nights](http://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Thousand-and-One-Nights).

### **Resources for students:**

1. from The Wife of Bath

Poem by Chaucer

Translated by Nevill Coghill (Same text which can be downloaded for students)

[mrslivaudais.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/wife-of-baths-tale-pdf-holt.pdf](http://mrslivaudais.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/wife-of-baths-tale-pdf-holt.pdf)

2. List of animals for students to select characters from

## **Appendix**

### **Animal Character Examples**

Bear: strength, authority

Cow: motherly, productive

Deer: messenger, sensitivity

Dog: security, companionship, loyalty, love

Donkey: stubborn, intelligent

Dove: peace

Fox: cunning, clever, subtle, organized

Goat: balance, peace

Hare: cleverness, trickery

Horse: strength

Lion: power, authority

Mouse: weakness, febleness

Pig: intelligence

Rabbit: prosperity, abundance, act as guides in spiritual tales

Raven: spy

Reindeer: wisdom, cleverness, knowledge

Sheep: followers, loyal, stupid

Tortoise: cautious, slow, wise

Whale: compassion, solitude

(Dictionary.com)

3. Charts and Graphic Organizers
4. Journals/Notebooks (whole group)
5. Keystone Writing Rubric

<https://www.tesd.net/Page/8943>

6. Narrative writing rubric





# What I See- What it Means:

Deconstructing art to find the meaning

## Directions

First, look closely without writing or talking for three minutes. Then record what you see, these are the **denotations**. List out as much as you can, take your time to really look. For each denotation, write what you infer from this detail- what might it mean. These are the **connotations**. The meaning you infer (connotations) must be directly related to what you see (denotations) in the image.

Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Artist \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Observation (Denotations)</b> <i>What do you see?</i>	<b>Interpretation (Connotations)</b> <i>What can you infer based on what you see?</i>
Example- Older woman, young boy	Family relation- grandmother, grandson
Final interpretation of the whole image (ONE sentence summary)-	

What more do you want to know about the artwork?





