The Pursuit of Happiness

**Essential Questions**

- What does it mean to pursue happiness?
- How does a writer represent research through multiple texts?

**Unit Overview**

The pursuit of happiness is an integral part of the American Dream and part of the foundation of this country. Many people think that the fulfillment of the American Dream centers on financial success; however, riches are not the path to happiness for everyone. In this unit, you will examine how one person rejected wealth in favor of a different pathway to happiness; you will also look at how others have found enlightenment in everyday experiences. Next, you will research the American Dream and the pursuit of happiness and articulate what that dream means to you and your fellow Americans. After exploring multiple genres, you will craft an authentic voice for yourself, and others, that speaks the ideas and beliefs that are the basic principles and underlying foundations of our independence and freedom as Americans.
Goals

- To analyze and evaluate the structural and stylistic features of texts
- To compose a personal essay that employs stylistic techniques
- To synthesize research into a multi-genre research paper

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Coherence
Genre Conventions
Discourse

The Pursuit of Happiness

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*Texts not included in these materials.
Learning Focus:
The Search for Self

What does it mean to pursue happiness? Do we have a right to pursue happiness at all costs? In *Into the Wild*, the primary text you will study in the first half of the unit, Jon Krakauer explores this very idea, by investigating the life and death of a young man with an adventurous spirit, Chris McCandless.

Non fiction texts such as *Into the Wild* can tell a compelling story as effectively, if not more effectively, than a fiction text. A good biographer uses all the literary elements associated with conveying ideas persuasively and retelling a story well to engage the reader.

Because biography is focused on telling the story of a real person whose experiences are deemed worthy of our attention, the biographer has the burden of making the life chronicled relevant to our own lives.

In this biography, using multiple genres to illuminate his subject, Krakauer investigates the circumstances surrounding the tragic fate of a young man with his heart set on discovering life and uncovering the true meaning of happiness. Based on extensive primary and secondary research, Krakauer presents a meditative account of the events leading up to McCandless’s fate, inviting the reader to evaluate McCandless’s pursuit and at the same time to examine the biographer, Krakauer’s, perspective on events. Just like Krakauer, the reader cannot escape contemplating and evaluating his own beliefs and values associated with the pursuit of happiness as we follow Chris McCandless’s story.
Essential Questions
What does it mean to pursue happiness?

How does a writer represent research through multiple texts?

Unit Overview and Learning Focus
Predict what you think this unit is about. Use the words or phrases that stood out to you when you read the Unit Overview and the Learning Focus.

Embedded Assessment
What knowledge must you have (what do you need to know) to succeed on the Embedded Assessment? What skills must you have (what must you be able to do) to complete the Embedded Assessment successfully?
Review ideas of Transcendentalism and identify the core tenets of this literary movement or tradition.

Work collaboratively with your peers to generate a working definition of Transcendentalism.
Read each passage in order to identify each author’s perspective on the meaning and pursuit of happiness.

_from Walden, by Henry David Thoreau_
…I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live sturdy and Spartan like as to put rout all that was not life…to drive life to a corner and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.

_from Self-Reliance, by Ralph Waldo Emerson_
There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion. … Trust thyself: Every heart vibrates to that iron string…. Great men have always done so and confided in themselves childlike to the genius of their age.

_in the Depths of Solitude, by Tupac_
I exist in the depths of solitude
Pondering my true goal
Tying to find peace of mind
And still preserve my soul
Constantly yearning to be accepted
And from all receive respect
Never compromising but sometimes risky
And that is my only regret
A young heart with an old soul
How can there be peace
How can I be in the depths of solitude
When there are two inside of me
This Duo within me causes
The perfect opportunity
To learn and live twice as fast
As those who accept simplicity

WORD CONNECTIONS
Confide uses the Latin root fid meaning “to trust.” This root is also found in confidence, fidelity, and affidavit.
Quickwrite: What are some of the rules you learned in kindergarten? To what extent are those rules still applicable to life for you today?

1. A precept is a rule, instruction, or principle that guides somebody's actions and/or moral behavior. Consider some of the precepts you have learned over the course of your life that guide your behavior and why they are significant to you. Write them in the graphic organizer below.

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<th>Precepts</th>
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Each spring, for many years, I have set myself the task of writing a personal statement of belief: a Credo. When I was younger, the statement ran for many pages, trying to cover every base, with no loose ends. It sounded like a Supreme Court brief, as if words could resolve all conflicts about the meaning of existence.

The Credo has grown shorter in recent years—sometimes cynical, sometimes comical, sometimes bland—but I keep working at it. Recently I set out to get the statement of personal belief down to one page in simple terms, fully understanding the naïve idealism that implied…

I realized then that I already know most of what’s necessary to live a meaningful life—that it isn’t all that complicated. I know it. And have known it for a long, long time. Living it—well, that’s another matter, yes? Here’s my Credo:

All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate-school mountain, but there in the sand pile at Sunday school. These are the things I learned:

Share everything.
Play fair.
Don’t hit people.
Put things back where you found them.
Clean up your own mess!
Don't take things that aren't yours.
Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
Wash your hands before you eat.
Flush.

Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and
sing and dance and play and work every day some.
Take a nap every afternoon.
When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and
stick together.

Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The
roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why,
but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the
Styrofoam cup—they all die. So do we.

And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you
learned—the biggest word of all—LOOK.

…Think what a better world it would be if we all—the whole world—had
cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with
our blankies for a nap. Or if all governments had as a basic policy to always
put things back where they found them and to clean up their own
mess. And it is still true, no matter
how old you are—when you go out
into the world, it is best to hold
hands and stick together.
Writing Prompt: Emulating Fulghum’s style, on your own paper, draft a personal credo that asserts your precepts about the basic values that contribute to a meaningful life. Try to establish a specific tone, using diction, detail, and syntax. The credo might begin with your perception of life, identify where you learned important precepts, then identify those precepts, and finally offer a reflective closing remark.

Fulghum’s credo is memorable and effective, not just because of the ideas, but because of his syntax.

“Syntax refers to the way words are arranged within sentences. How writers control and manipulate the sentence is a strong determiner of voice and imparts personality to the writing.” Nancy Dean

Some of the elements of syntax are word order, sentence length, and punctuation. Punctuation can reinforce meaning, create a particular effect, and express the writer’s voice. Look at the purpose of three punctuation marks:

- The dash marks a sudden change in thought or tone, sets off a brief summary, or sets off a parenthetical part of the sentence. A dash often conveys a casual tone.
- The colon directs reader attention to the words that follow. It is also used between independent clauses if the second summarizes or explains the first. A colon sets the expectation that important, closely related information will follow, and words after the colon are emphasized
- The ellipsis usually represents words omitted from a quote.

2. Review Fulghum’s text and use the graphic organizer that follows to explore how sentence length and punctuation contribute to his tone or theme. Find specific examples of Fulghum’s sentences that contain the element of syntax listed in the first column. Explain its function in the credo and how it advances the tone or theme of the text. In the last column, use the examples to guide a revision of a sentence in the draft of your credo.

3. After completing the graphic organizer, revise your draft to incorporate revisions of your syntax.
### My Credo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precepts</th>
<th>Examples and Function of Fulghum’s Syntax</th>
<th>Revision of Your Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple Sentence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Compound Sentence with Parallel Structure</td>
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<td>Dash</td>
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<td>Colon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
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</table>
1. The cover of a book serves a crucial purpose: to entice readers to purchase or check out the book. Examine carefully the cover of *Into The Wild*. In the left column, record all the details you observe for each heading provided. In the right column, write why you think the cover designers made these specific choices and the effects of each choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details You Observe</th>
<th>Effect of These Choices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Color</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photographic Image</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Words and Phrases</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Effectiveness of the Cover Design</td>
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</table>
2. List the facts stated on the front cover:

This information is presented in a fairly straightforward way. As you may know, different kinds of publications can present “the facts” quite differently, depending on the slant used to present a particular angle on the story. Jon Krakauer’s first piece of writing about Christopher McCandless was an article for *Outside* magazine. Krakauer wrote that article with a knowledge that his audience, the readers of *Outside*, would be interested in particular aspects of McCandless’s story. For example, Krakauer writes about the terrain of the Alaskan wilderness and the supplies McCandless brought with him, understanding that his audience would be interested in this information.

3. Using just the facts you have read about Christopher McCandless, you will create the headline and lead for an article in a particular kind of publication. First, you will need to determine the target audience for the publication your teacher gives you and the strategies the publication uses to reach that target audience.

- Skim through the publication, examining the kinds of articles, the reading level, and especially the advertisements. Who seems to be the target audience? Consider such factors as age group, gender, level of education, ethnicity, and special interests.
- Organize your observations on a bubble cluster or other graphic organizer on a separate sheet of paper.
- Now look at the headlines of the articles. On your graphic organizer, make notes about the level of diction, the punctuation used, and any other features that you notice.
- Examine the lead, or first paragraph, of several of the articles. If you are going to imitate the style of this kind of publication, what will you need to do?

4. Using the notes you have taken and the few facts you know about Christopher McCandless, on separate paper write the headline and lead for an article in the kind of publication you have examined.
AUTHOR’S NOTE

In April 1992, a young man from a well-to-do East Coast family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. Four months later his decomposed body was found by a party of moose hunters. Shortly after the discovery of the corpse, I was asked by the editor of Outside magazine to report on the puzzling circumstances of the boy’s death. His name turned out to be Christopher Johnson McCandless. He’d grown up, I learned, in an affluent suburb of Washington, D.C., where he’d excelled academically and had been an elite athlete.

Immediately after graduating, with honors, from Emory University in the summer of 1990, McCandless dropped out of sight. He changed his name, gave the entire balance of a twenty-four thousand-dollar savings account to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet. And then he invented a new life for himself, taking up residence at the ragged margin of our society, wandering across North America in search of raw, transcendent experience. His family had no idea where he was or what had become of him until his remains turned up in Alaska.

Working on a tight deadline, I wrote a nine-thousand-word-article, which ran in the January 1993 issue of the magazine, but my fascination with McCandless remained long after that issue of Outside was replaced on the newsstands by more current journalistic fare. I was haunted by the particulars of the boy’s starvation and by vague, unsettling parallels between events in his life and those in my own. Unwilling to let McCandless go, I spent more than a year retracing the convoluted
path that led to his death in the Alaska taiga, chasing down details of his peregrinations with an interest that bordered on obsession. In trying to understand McCandless, I inevitably came to reflect on other, larger subjects as well: the grip wilderness has on the American imagination, the allure high-risk activities hold for young men of a certain mind, the complicated, highly charged bond that exists between fathers and sons. The result of this meandering inquiry is the book now before you.

I won't claim to be an impartial biographer. McCandless's strange tale struck a personal note that made a dispassionate rendering of the tragedy impossible. Through most of the book, I have tried – and largely succeeded, I think – to minimize my authorial presence. But let the reader be warned: I interrupt McCandless's story with fragments of a narrative drawn from my own youth. I do so in the hope that my experiences will throw some oblique light on the enigma of Chris McCandless.

He was an extremely intense young man and possessed a streak of stubborn idealism that did not mesh readily with modern existence. Long captivated by the writing of Leo Tolstoy, McCandless particularly admired how the great novelist had forsaken a life of wealth and privilege to wander among the destitute. In college McCandless began emulating Tolstoy's asceticism and moral rigor to a degree that first astonished, and then alarmed, those who were close to him. When the boy headed off into the Alaska bush, he entertained no illusions that he was trekking into a land of milk and honey; peril, adversity, and Tolstoyan renunciation were precisely what he was seeking. And that is what he found, in abundance.

For most of the sixteen-week ordeal, nevertheless, McCandless more than held his own. Indeed, were it not for one or two seemingly insignificant blunders, he would have walked out of the woods in August 1992 as anonymously as he had walked into them in April. Instead, his innocent mistakes turned out to be pivotal and irreversible, his name became the stuff of tabloid headlines, and his bewildered family was left clutching the shards of a fierce and painful love.

A surprising number of people have been affected by the story of Chris McCandless's life and death. In the weeks and months following the publication of the article in *Outside*, it generated more mail than any other article in the magazine's history. This correspondence, as one might expect, reflected sharply divergent points of view: some readers admired the boy immensely for his courage and noble ideals; others fulminated that he was a reckless idiot, a wacko, a narcissist who perished out of arrogance and stupidity—and was undeserving of the considerable media attention he received. My convictions should be apparent soon enough, but I will leave it to the reader to form his or her own opinion of Chris McCandless.

Jon Krakauer
Seattle
Now that you have read a few chapters of *Into the Wild*, you have caught a glimpse of the enigmatic young man at the heart of the story. Although Krakauer is crafting a work of nonfiction, he employs many of the same techniques used in writing fiction. For example, he allows the reader to get to know Chris McCandless in the same ways that fiction authors use characterization. Write what you know of Christopher McCandless so far; you will add to the chart as you learn more.

**Literary Terms**

**Characterization** is the process by which a writer reveals the personality of a character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary Terms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Characterization</td>
<td>The process by which a writer reveals the personality of a character.</td>
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<tr>
<th>What others say about him</th>
<th>His actions</th>
<th>His appearance</th>
<th>What he said</th>
<th>His thoughts</th>
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1. Define **epigram**:

2. Look at the epigrams that begin Chapter 3 below. Think about the connections between the epigrams and the events and themes in Chapter 3. Fill out the graphic organizer with your ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epigram</th>
<th>Paraphrase the Quote</th>
<th>Connection to Chapter Events or Theme</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Chapter 3: Carthage**  
I wanted movement and not a calm course of existence. I wanted excitement and danger and the chance to sacrifice myself for my love. I felt in myself a superabundance of energy which found no outlet in our quiet life.  
Leo Tolstoy “Family Happiness”  
Passage highlighted in one of the books found with Chris McCandless’s remains | | |
| **Chapter 3: Carthage**  
*It should not be denied... that being footloose has always exhilarated us. It is associated in our minds with escape from history and oppression and law and irksome obligations, with absolute freedom, and the road has always led west.*  
Wallace Stegner, *The American West as Living Space* | | |
3. Read Chapters 4–7. Your teacher will assign you to a discussion group. Your group will take one of the chapters and analyze the connections between the chapter title, the epigram, and the chapter’s events. Write an interpretive statement that sums up your analysis. Then identify and discuss the tenets of transcendentalism that appear in the chapter. Record quotes that illuminate this philosophy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epigram/Chapter Title</th>
<th>Connections to Events/Theme</th>
<th>Interpretive Statement</th>
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**Transcendentalism Quotes**

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4. What is the effect of Krakauer’s use of epigrams from literary works in terms of conveying information and engaging the reader? What is the effect when the epigram is from McCandless’s own writings?

5. Pair-share responses to the unit’s Essential Question: What does it mean to pursue happiness?

**Quickwrite:** On separate paper, reflect on an event and describe a time when you were happy.
One method Krakauer uses to let the reader know Christopher McCandless is by telling stories of people who are in some ways *foils* to McCandless. In Chapters 8 and 9, Krakauer introduces Gene Rosellini, John Mallon Waterman, Carl McCunn, Everett Ruess, and the Irish monks known as *papar*. Re-read their stories and identify how these stories shed light on Chris McCandless.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gene Rosellini</th>
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<td>John Mallon Waterman</td>
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<td>Carl McCunn</td>
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<td>Everett Ruess</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish monks known as <em>papar</em></td>
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What have you learned about Chris McCandless from these stories?
You have probably noticed that Krakauer uses many genres, or kinds of writing, to help him convey who Christopher McCandless was and how his life and death affected the people he encountered. For example, in Chapter 1, Krakauer uses a map, a postcard, an interview with Jim Gallien, and re-created dialogue based on that interview.

1. Review Chapters 2 through 13 and make a list of all the genres Krakauer uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Genres Used</th>
<th>Purpose and Conventions of One Genre</th>
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Quickwrite: Choose one of the genres Krakauer uses, explore why Krakauer may have used that genre, and describe its effect.

Writing Prompt: Think about other material that Krakauer could have included in his book. Then choose two different genres and craft a piece of writing for each genre that could be included in *Into the Wild*. Identify where in the book each would fit. For example, you might write a poem from the point of view of Chris’s yellow Datsun that would fit in Chapter 4, when the reader learns that McCandless abandoned his beloved car. You might also write a dialogue showing McCandless interacting with his co-workers and customers at McDonalds that would tie in with Chapter 5.

Bring an example of each of the genres you have chosen and add them to a class collection of genres.
1. In Chapters 14 and 15, Krakauer answers those who would say that Christopher McCandless had a death wish by providing a compelling narrative of his own Alaskan adventure. Scan the two chapters and complete a Venn diagram to illustrate how McCandless and Krakauer are similar and different.

Quickwrite: Just as Krakauer tells the stories of other adventurers earlier, in Chapters 14 and 15 he tells his own story to shed some light on Christopher McCandless. Based on your understanding of their similarities and differences, what did you learn about McCandless from Krakauer’s own story?

Writing Prompt: In some ways, both Jon Krakauer and Christopher McCandless could be called modern-day transcendentalists. Review your notes on transcendentalism. On separate paper, explain the ways these two men fit the description of the transcendentalists.
A Personal Perspective

When Krakauer describes his own experiences in Chapters 14 and 15, he is actually writing a personal essay. You will be writing a personal essay for Embedded Assessment 1. Most personal essays are structured to include three parts:

**Event or Incident:** The author describes some incident or set of circumstances.

**Response:** The author describes his or her feelings and thoughts concerning the encounter. This is the initial response, without the benefit of reflection.

**Reflection:** The author reflects on the incident. This reflection usually occurs some time after the event or incident. In the reflection, the author will often transition from describing a situation *unique to him or her to a discussion more universal in nature.*

Krakauer’s account of climbing Devil’s Thumb is similar to a personal essay, in that he writes about a significant personal experience in which he learns about his own skills and inner strength. Although you might not have experienced anything as dramatic as a solo mountain climb, you have certainly had experiences that were significant to you. In preparation for Embedded Assessment 1: Writing a Personal Essay, on separate paper list significant experiences of your life and what you learned from each one.
In the *Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Jefferson stated, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” It has a nice ring to it, but what does it mean, exactly? Our country is built on a claim that we all have the right to the “pursuit of happiness.” *Happiness*, however, is an ambiguous term and means different things to different people.

1. Consult a book of famous quotations or find a Web site that lists famous quotations. Use “happiness” as your subject, and choose a couple of quotes that you find particularly insightful. You may add more quotations on your own paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
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<tr>
<td>What does it mean to you?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
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<tr>
<td>What does it mean to you?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. As you read the quotations your classmates selected, locate one that seems to be in opposition to one you selected. Compose a dialogue between the speakers of the two quotations in which they discuss their contradictory views on happiness. Remember to follow the rules for writing dialogue:

- Indent to indicate a change in speaker.
- Put spoken words inside quotation marks.
- Use tag lines (he said, etc.) occasionally to help the reader follow the flow of the conversation.

3. Now that you have read, heard, and written about these quotes on the pursuit of happiness, what new understanding do you have of the term?
4. Krakauer, in Chapter 16, reveals that Christopher McCandless’s definition of happiness appears to have changed over time. Use the graphic organizer below to track the changes in his definition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would Chris have defined happiness?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 1992</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 1992</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence from the Text**

5. Why is the change in McCandless’s attitude toward happiness particularly poignant?
1. It is clear from the interviews Krakauer conducted with the people who encountered Christopher McCandless that he made a lasting impression on many of them. Create a concept map showing all the people McCandless met (and knew) and how his life and death influenced them. Be sure to provide evidence from the text, including page numbers.

2. Re-read what Billie McCandless, Chris’s mother, says at the end of the Epilogue. Do you think most of the people who knew Chris would agree? Explain.
1. Re-read the last paragraph of Chapter 18, this time using a highlighter to mark the text. First, highlight the most descriptive or vivid words Krakauer uses. In the margin, write down any connotations that you associate with these words. Make notes about the effects of these carefully chosen words — what do you think Krakauer wants his reader to think or feel?

2. Next, look for figurative language. What is the effect of the comparison(s)? Again, what do you think Krakauer wants his reader to think or feel?

3. What word describes the tone in this last paragraph?

4. What would have been the reader’s last impression if Krakauer had ended Into the Wild with Chapter 18?

5. Now skim the Epilogue. What is its lasting impression? How is it different from the last paragraph of Chapter 18?

**Literary Terms**

Connotation is the association and emotional overtones of a word that go beyond its literal definition.
Most biographies are written in chronological order, but Krakauer has organized *Into the Wild* differently. As you have been reading, you have been taking note of the major events (including dates) and the chapters in which Krakauer records them. Re-examine those notes to become aware of how the story of McCandless’s life unfolds.

6. Choose three significant events in McCandless’s life, identify where in the book Krakauer records the events, and think about why he chose to record the events at this point in the book, and reflect on the effect of his decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event and Date</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Why Krakauer May Have Recorded the Event at This Point in the Book</th>
<th>Effect of Recording the Event at This Point in the Book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Early in this level, you learned that you can often find a particular slant in writing. In the Author’s Note for *Into the Wild*, Jon Krakauer says, “I won’t claim to be an impartial biographer.” What does Jon Krakauer think about Christopher J. McCandless? Here are some important points to consider:

- Review the structure of the book, using the timeline you have created. Keep in mind that most biographies are written in chronological order. Why does Krakauer organize the story in a different way?

- Review the various genres Krakauer uses. What is the effect of this use?

- Consider the stories of other adventurers, including himself, that Krakauer includes. What point does he make by including these stories?

- Think about the interviews Krakauer conducts. What purpose do they serve?

- Scan the book for instances where it is clear to you what Krakauer’s attitude toward Christopher McCandless is and put a sticky note on those pages.

**Writing Prompt:** What, then, does Jon Krakauer think about Christopher J. McCandless? With careful consideration of all the factors listed, write a thoughtful response, using specific examples from the text to support your opinion.
Before Reading

“I’ve managed to do a lot of things in my life I didn’t think I was capable of and which many others didn’t think me capable of either.”

— Sandra Cisneros

Quickwrite: Write a response to the quote above, using examples from your own life or from your observation.

1. Sandra Cisneros calls her essay, “Turning Straw into Gold: The Metamorphosis of the Everyday.” This is an allusion to the fairy tale “Rumpelstiltskin.” What is the connection between Cisneros’s title and the action of the fairy tale?
During Reading

2. As you read “Turning Straw into Gold: The Metamorphosis of the Everyday,” highlight the things Cisneros turned out to be capable of doing, despite what anyone thought.

After Reading

3. Find and mark each reference Cisneros makes to turning straw into gold. Based on the pre-reading question about the title and your reading, how does Cisneros use this image to enhance the impact of her essay?

4. Go back to the list of significant experiences you created in Activity 5.10. Now that you have seen that even an act as simple as making tortillas can be significant, add to your list. Be sure your list includes anything you have managed to do, whether anyone (including you) thought you could or not.

5. In addition, see if the author’s literary allusion inspires you. Are there any images, comparisons, or allusions that you think you might try using to tie your own essay together? If so, generate a list of possibilities to revisit or thread in later.

Literary Terms

An allusion is a reference to someone or something that is known from history, literature, religion, politics, or some other branch of culture.
When I was living in an artists’ colony in the south of France, some fellow Latin Americans who taught at the university in Aix-en-Provence invited me to share a home-cooked meal with them. I had been living abroad almost a year then on an NEA grant, subsisting mainly on French bread and lentils while in France so that my money could last longer. So when the invitation to dinner arrived, I accepted without hesitation. Especially since they had promised Mexican food.

What I didn’t realize when they made this invitation was that I was supposed to be involved in preparing this meal. I guess they assumed I knew how to cook Mexican food because I was Mexican. They wanted specifically tortillas, though I’d never made a tortilla in my life.

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1 Aix-en-Provence (eks än prō vāns’): City in Southeastern France.
2 NEA: National Endowment for the Arts.
It’s true I had witnessed my mother rolling the little armies of dough into perfect circles, but my mother’s family is from Guanajuato, provincials, country folk. They only know how to make flour tortillas. My father’s family, on the other hand, is chilango, from Mexico City. We ate corn tortillas but we didn’t make them. Someone was sent to the corner tortilleria to buy some. I’d never seen anybody make corn tortillas. Ever.

Well, somehow my Latino hosts had gotten a hold of a packet of corn flour, and this is what they tossed my way with orders to produce tortillas. Asi como sea. Any ol’ way, they said and went back to their cooking.

Why did I feel like the woman in the fairy tale who was locked in a room and ordered to spin straw into gold? I had the same sick feeling when I was required to write my critical essay for my MFA exam — the only piece of noncreative writing necessary in order to get my graduate degree. How was I to start? There were rules involved here, unlike writing a poem or story, which I did intuitively. There was a step-by-step process needed and I had better know it. I felt as if making tortillas, or writing a critical paper for that matter, were tasks so impossible I wanted to break down into tears.

Somehow though, I managed to make those tortillas — crooked and burnt, but edible nonetheless. My hosts were absolutely ignorant when it came to Mexican food: they thought my tortillas were delicious. (I’m glad my mama wasn’t there.) Thinking back and looking at that photograph documenting the three of us consuming those lopsided circles I am amazed. Just as I am amazed I could finish my MFA exam (lopsided and crooked, but finished all the same.) Didn’t think I could do it. But I did.

I’ve managed to do a lot of things in my life I didn’t think I was capable of and which many others didn’t think me capable of either.

Especially because I am a woman, a Latina, an only daughter in a family of six men. My father would’ve liked to have seen me married long ago. In our culture, men and women don’t leave their father’s house except by way of marriage. I crossed my father’s threshold with nothing carrying me but my own two feet. A woman whom no one came for and no one chased away.

To make matters worse, I had left before any of my six brothers had ventured away from home. I had broken a terrible taboo. Somehow, looking back at photos of myself as a child, I wonder if I was aware of having begun already my own quiet war.

3 Guanajuato (gwä nä hwä tô): State in central Mexico.
4 provincials (prō bēn sē ā làs): “Country folk” (Spanish).
5 chilango (ché láng gō): “City folk” (Spanish).
6 MFA: Master of Fine Arts.
I like to think that somehow my family, my Mexicanness, my poverty all had something to do with shaping me into a writer. I like to think my parents were preparing me all along for my life as an artist even though they didn’t know it. From my father I inherited a love of wandering. He was born in Mexico City but as a young man he traveled into the U.S. vagabonding. He eventually was drafted and thus became a citizen. Some of the stories he has told about his first months in the U.S. with little or no English surface in my stories in *The House on Mango Street* as well as others I have in mind to write in the future. From him I inherited a sappy heart. (He still cries when he watches the Mexican soaps — especially if they deal with children who have forsaken their parents.)

My mother was born like me — in Chicago but of Mexican descent. It would be her tough, streetwise voice that would haunt all my stories and poems. An amazing woman who loves to draw and read books and can sing an opera. A smart cookie.

When I was a little girl we traveled to Mexico City so much I thought my grandparents’ house on La Fortuna, Number 12, was home. It was the only constant in our nomadic ramblings from one Chicago flat to another. The house on Destiny Street, Number 12, in the colonia Tepeyac, would be perhaps the only home I knew, and that nostalgia for a home would be a theme that would obsess me.

What would my teachers say if they knew I was a writer? Who would’ve guessed it? I wasn’t a very bright student. I didn’t much like school because we moved so much and I was always new and funny-looking. In my fifth-grade report card, I have nothing but an avalanche of C’s and D’s, but I don’t remember being that stupid. I was good at art and I read plenty of library books and Kiki laughed at all my jokes. At home I was fine, but at school I never opened my mouth except when the teacher called on me, the first time I’d speak all day.

7 colonia Tepeyac (kö lō nē'ä tā pā yāc): District of Mexico City.
When I think how I see myself, it would have to be at age eleven. I know I'm thirty-two on the outside, but inside I'm eleven. I'm the girl in the picture with skinny arms and crumpled shirt and crooked hair. I didn't like school because all they saw was the outside me. School was lots of rules and sitting with your hands folded and being very afraid all the time. I liked looking out the window and thinking. I liked staring at the girl across the way writing her name over and over again in red ink. I wondered why the boy with the dirty collar in front of me didn't have a mama who took better care of him.

I think my mama and papa did the best they could to keep us warm and clean and never hungry. We had birthday and graduation parties and things like that, but there was another hunger that had to be fed. There was a hunger I didn't even have a name for. Was this when I began writing?

In 1966 we moved into a house, a real one, our first real home. This meant we didn't have to change schools and be the new kids on the block every couple of years. We could make friends and not be afraid we'd have to say good-bye to them and start all over. My brothers and the flock of boys they brought home would become important characters eventually for my stories — Louis and his cousins, Meme Ortiz and his dog with two names, one in English and one in Spanish.

My mother flourished in her own home. She took books out of the library and taught herself to garden, producing flowers so envied we had to put a lock on the gate to keep out the midnight flower thieves. My mother is still gardening to this day.

This was a period in my life, that slippery age when you are both child and woman and neither, I was to record in *The House on Mango Street*. I was still shy. I was a girl who couldn't come out of her shell.

How was I to know I would be recording and documenting the women who sat their sadness on an elbow and stared out the window? It would be the city streets of Chicago I would later record, but from a child's eyes.

I've done all kinds of things I didn't think I could do since then. I've gone to a prestigious university, studied with famous writers and taken away an MFA degree. I've taught poetry in the schools in Illinois and Texas. I've gotten an NEA grant and run away with it as far as my courage would take me. I've seen the bleached and bitter mountains of the Peloponnesus. I've lived on a Greek island. I've been to Venice twice. In Rapallo, I met Ilona once and forever and took her sad heart with me across the south of France and into Spain.

---

8 *Peloponnesus (pel ә pә sәs)*: Peninsula forming the southeastern part of the Greek mainland.

9 *Venice (ven' is)*: Seaport in northern Italy.
I’ve lived in Yugoslavia. I’ve been to the famous Nice\(^\text{10}\) flower market behind the opera house. I’ve lived in a village in the pre-Alps\(^\text{11}\) and witnessed the daily promenaders.

I’ve moved since Europe to the strange and wonderful country of Texas, land of Polaroid-blue skies and big bugs. I met a mayor with my last name. I met famous Chicana/o artists and writers and \textit{politicos}.\(^\text{12}\)

Texas is another chapter in my life. It brought with it the Dobie-Paisano Fellowship, a six-month residency on a 265-acre ranch. But most important Texas brought Mexico back to me.

Sitting at my favorite people-watching spot, the snaky Woolworth’s counter across the street from the Alamo,\(^\text{13}\) I can’t think of anything else I’d rather be than a writer. I’ve traveled and lectured from Cape Cod to San Francisco, to Spain, Yugoslavia, Greece, Mexico, France, Italy, and finally today to Texas. Along the way there has been straw for the taking. With a little imagination, it can be spun into gold.

\(^{10}\) \textit{Nice} (nēs): Seaport and resort in southeastern France.
\(^{11}\) \textit{pre-Alps}: Foothills to the Alps, a mountain range in south central Europe.
\(^{12}\) \textit{politicos} (pō lē tē kōs): “Politicians” (Spanish).
\(^{13}\) \textit{the Alamo} (al′ə mō′): Mission in San Antonio, Texas, that was the scene of a famous battle between Texans and Mexican troops in 1836.
A Snowball of Happiness

Writing Prompt: Reflect on a time when you misbehaved as a child and consider how you got caught. Describe the feelings and thoughts you experienced the moment your ill behavior was exposed and reflect on what you learned from the incident.

Essay

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Annie Dillard is best known for her Pulitzer Prize winning work Pilgrim at Tinker Creek. In this chapter from her autobiography, An American Childhood, Dillard leads us running desperately through snow-filled backyards. Like all of Dillard’s writing, this essay shows an unparalleled enthusiasm for life and skill at expressing it.

The Chase

by Annie Dillard

Some boys taught me to play football. This was fine sport. You thought up a new strategy for every play and whispered it to the others. You went out for a pass, fooling everyone. Best, you got to throw yourself mightily at someone’s running legs. Either you brought him down or you hit the ground flat on your chin, with your arms empty before you. It was all or nothing. If you hesitated in fear, you would miss and get hurt: you would take a hard fall while the kid got away, or you would get kicked in the face while the kid got away. But if you flung yourself wholeheartedly at the back of his knees—if you gathered and joined a body and soul and pointed them diving fearlessly—then you likely wouldn’t get hurt, and you stop the ball. Your fate, and your team’s score, depended on your concentration and courage. Nothing girls did could compare with it.

Boys welcomed me at baseball, too, for I had, through enthusiastic practice, what was weirdly known as a boy’s arm. In winter, in the snow, there was neither baseball nor football, so the boys and I threw snowballs at passing cars. I got in trouble throwing snowballs, and have seldom been happier since.
On one weekday morning after Christmas, six inches of new snow had just fallen. We were standing up to our boot tops in snow on a front yard on trafficked Reynolds Street, waiting for cars. The cars traveled Reynolds Street slowly and evenly; they were targets all but wrapped in red ribbons, cream puffs. We couldn't miss.

I was seven; the boys were eight, nine, and ten. The oldest two Fahey boys were there—Mikey and Peter—polite blond boys who lived near me on Lloyd Street, and who already had four brothers and sisters. My parents approved Mikey and Peter Fahey. Chickie McBride was there, a tough kid, and Billy Paul and Mackie Kean too, from across Reynolds, where the boys grew up dark and furious, grew up skinny, knowing, and skilled. We had all drifted from our houses that morning looking for action, and had found it here on Reynolds Street.

It was cloudy but cold. The cars' tires laid behind them on the snowy street a complex trail of beige chunks like crenellated castle walls. I had stepped on some earlier; they squeaked. We could have wished for more traffic. When a car came, we all popped it one. In the intervals between cars we reverted to the natural solitude of children.

I started making an iceball—a perfect iceball, from perfectly white snow, perfectly spherical, and squeezed perfectly translucent so no snow remained all the way through. (The Fahey boys and I considered it unfair actually to throw an iceball at somebody, but it had been known to happen.)

I had just embarked on the iceball project when we heard tire chains come clanking from afar. A black Buick was moving toward us down the street. We all spread out, banged together some regular snowballs, took aim, and, when the Buick drew nigh, fired.

A soft snowball hit the driver's windshield right before the driver's face. It made a smashed star with a hump in the middle.

Often, of course, we hit our target, but this time, the only time in all of life, the car pulled over and stopped. Its wide black door opened; a man got out of it, running. He didn't even close the car door.

He ran after us, and we ran away from him, up the snowy Reynolds sidewalk. At the corner, I looked back; incredibly, he was still after us. He was in city clothes: a suit and tie, street shoes. Any normal adult would have quit, having sprung us into flight and made his point. This man was gaining on us. He was a thin man, all action. All of a sudden, we were running for our lives.

Wordless, we split up. We were on our turf; we could lose ourselves in the neighborhood backyards, everyone for himself. I paused and considered. Everyone had vanished except Mikey Fahey, who was just rounding the corner of a yellow brick house. Poor Mikey, I trailed him.
The driver of the Buick sensibly picked the two of us to follow. The man apparently had all day.

He chased Mikey and me around the yellow house and up a backyard path we knew by heart: under a low tree, up a bank, through a hedge, down some snowy steps, and across the grocery store’s delivery driveway. We smashed through a gap in another hedge, entered a scruffy backyard and ran around its back porch and tight between houses to Edgerton Avenue; we ran across Edgerton to an alley and up our own sliding woodpile to the Halls’ front yard; he kept coming. We ran up Lloyd Street and wound through mazy backyards toward the steep hilltop at Willard and Lang.

He chased us silently, block after block. He chased us silently over picket fences through thorny hedges, between houses, around garbage cans, and across streets. Every time I glanced back, choking for breath, I expected he would have quit. He must have been as breathless as we were. His jacket strained over his body. It was an immense discovery, pounding into my hot head with every sliding, joyous step, that this ordinary adult evidently knew what I thought only children who trained at football know: that you have to fling yourself at what you’re doing, you have to point yourself, forget yourself, aim, dive.

Mikey and I had nowhere to go in our own neighborhood or out of it, but away from this man who was chasing us. He impelled us forward; we compelled him to follow our route. The air was cold; every breath tore my throat. We kept running, block after block; we kept improvising, backyard after backyard, running a frantic course and choosing it simultaneously, failing always to find small places or hard places to slow him down, and discovering always, exhilarated, dismayed, that only bare speed could save us—for he would never give up, this man—and we were losing speed.

He chased us through the backyard labyrinths of ten blocks before he caught us by our jackets. He caught us and we all stopped.

We three stood staggering, half blinded, coughing, in an obscure hilltop backyard: a man in his twenties, a boy, a girl. He had released our jackets, our pursuer, our captor, our hero: He knew we weren’t going anywhere. We all played by the rules. Mikey and I unzipped our jackets. I pulled off my sopping mittens. Our tracks multiplied in the backyard’s new snow. We didn’t look at each other. I was cherishing my excitement. The man’s lower pants legs were wet; his cuffs were full of snow, and there was a prow of snow beneath them on his shoes and socks. Some trees bordered the little flat backyard, some messy winter trees. There was no one around: a clearing in a grove, and we the only players.
It was a long time before he could speak. I had some difficulty at first recalling why we were there. My lips felt swollen; I couldn't see out of the sides of my eyes; I kept coughing.

“You stupid kids,” he began perfunctorily.

We listened perfunctorily indeed, if we listened at all, for the chewing out was redundant, a mere formality, and beside the point. The point was that he had chased us passionately without giving up, and so he had caught us. Now he came down to earth. I wanted the glory to last forever. But how could the glory have lasted forever? We could have run through every backyard in North America until we got to Panama. But when he trapped us at the lip of the Panama Canal, what precisely could he have done to prolong the drama of the chase and cap its glory? I brooded about this for the next few years. He could only have fried Mikey Fahey and me in boiling oil, say, or dismembered us piecemeal, or staked us to anthills. None of which I really wanted, and none of which any adult was likely to do, even in the spirit of fun. He could only chew us out there in the Panamanian jungle, after months or years of exalting pursuit. He could only begin, “You stupid kids,” and continue in his ordinary Pittsburgh accent with his normal righteous anger and the usual common sense.

If in that snowy backyard the driver of the black Buick had cut off our heads, Mikey’s and mine, I would have died happy, for nothing has required so much of me since as being chased all over Pittsburgh in the middle of winter—running terrified, exhausted—by this sainted skinny, furious redhead man who wished to have a word with us. I don’t know how he found his way back to his car.
Personal essays are reflective in nature, which means that the author looks back on an experience that is significant in his or her life, describes the experience and how he or she felt at the time, and then reflects on the importance of that experience. “A View from Mount Ritter” is an example of a reflective personal essay written by a high school student.

**Before Reading**

**Quickwrite:** Describe a memorable experience with nature.

**During Reading**

Mark examples where the author tells how he felt.

**After Reading**

In the margin, identify which part of the essay is *description* of the significant experience. Identify where O’Connor uses words that appeal to the senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell.

What other tools does O’Connor use to show, rather than tell, the event?

Draw a line to indicate where the author shifts from description of the experience to a *reflection* on the significance of it.

What tools does O’Connor use to enhance his reflection?
Two weeks in the Sierras changed my attitude toward life and what it takes to succeed.

by Joseph T. O’Connor

“I hate this,” I thought. We were on our way to the top of Mount Ritter in northeastern California. You would think everyone, near one of the tallest ridges in the Sierra Nevadas, would be in high spirits. But on this particular day the rain fell in torrents. Quarter-size hailstones pelted our protective helmets as thunder echoed through the canyons.

It was the second week of my mountain expedition in California. The first week there had not been a cloud in the sky, but on Tuesday of week two, a dark cover crept in from the west, painting the sunlit, blue sky black. The storm came in so fast we didn't even notice it until our shadows suddenly disappeared.

“Here it comes,” our guide warned. As if God himself had given the order, the heavens opened, just a crack. Huge drops began falling but abruptly stopped, as if to say, “You know what’s coming, here’s a taste.” As we began searching for shelter, a bolt of lightning ripped open the blackish clouds overhead and in unison thunder cracked, leaving everyone’s ears ringing. We were in the midst of a huge July thunderstorm. Ethan, our guide, had said that during the summer in the high Sierras it might rain twice, but when it does, it's best not to be there. Suddenly lightning struck a tree not 20 feet from where I was standing.

“Lightning positions!” Ethan yelled frantically. A little too frantically for my taste. I thought he was used to this kind of thing. As scared as I was, squatting in a giant puddle of water and hailstones, with forks of lightning bouncing off the canyon walls around me, I couldn't help chuckling to myself at the sight of Ethan’s dinner-plate-sized eyeballs as he panicked like an amateur. Soon after the lightning died down some,
we hiked to the shelter of nearby redwoods and put on rain gear. While we prayed for the rain to subside, I watched the stream we stood beside grow into a raging, white-water river. Another expeditioner, Mike, and I were under a full redwood donning our not-so-waterproof equipment when I realized we were standing on a small island.

“Mike! Let’s go!” I yelled, my exclamation nearly drowned out by the roar of water surrounding us and another roll of thunder.

“I’m way ahead o’ ya!” he screamed in his thick New York accent, and his goofy smile broke through the torrents. “Ya ready?”

“Yeah!” I yelled back, and jumped from our island into the knee-deep water. He followed as we slopped through the storm, losing our footing every few feet.

The unforgiving downpour lasted all day and into the night as we stumbled down the rocky cliffs seeking the driest place to set up camp. It was dusk before we found a small clearing in a pine forest, and began what was to be the worst night of my life. We constructed our tents in the dark, fumbling with the ropes with our frozen hands and finishing just as a stiffness like rigor mortis set in. We lay all night, shivering in our wet sleeping bags while rain poured down and a small stream made its way through our tent.

It’s funny how these memories keep coming back to me as if it was just yesterday. All this happened last summer, after my junior year in high school. I had decided to attend a mountaineering program in the Sierras. Two weeks in the back country with no sign of civilization. It sounded exciting and slightly dangerous, and I’ve always been up for a good adventure. I found out on that trip that nature is underestimated. The experience was the most invigorating, fulfilling, stimulating two weeks of my life. For the first time since I could remember, my head was crystal clear. I felt born again, only 2 weeks old. On top of Mount Ritter, 13,000 feet above sea level, I was entranced at the sight of the orange-red sun as it peeked over the glistening peaks far off in the east. Cumulous clouds appeared transparent as they glowed bright red in the morning glory.

The wonder of all I’d experienced made me think seriously about what comes next. “Life after high school,” I said to myself. “Uh-oh.” What had I been doing for the last three years? I was so caught up in defying the advice of my parents and teachers to study and play by the rules that I hadn’t considered the effects my actions would have on me.

“Youth is wholly experimental,” Robert Louis Stevenson wrote. Sure, there will be mistakes, but there will also be successes. I was a confused kid. Everyone — my parents, teacher and coaches — offered suggestions, but I chose to ignore them. I had “potential,” they told me. As a typical teen, I thought I could make it on my own.
I didn’t want any help, and the more people tried to give it the more
distant I grew.

I was the kid who thought he could be perfect at anything without
any preparation.

I was lost in the daydream that I didn’t need to study; I was going to
play professional soccer. My game was good and I thought that practice,
or getting good grades, for that matter, was unnecessary. Stubbornness
and rebellion can be terrible things if they get out of control.

“To get back one’s youth one has merely to repeat one’s follies.” A day
before my awakening on that fateful July sunrise, I would have disagreed
with this quotation from Oscar Wilde. But after recognizing the results of
my own follies for the first time, I thoroughly agree.

This year, my final year in high school, I’ve at last cleared my head
and buckled down. Judging by the past semester, I’m on the right track.
My D average has U-turned into this report card’s three B’s and one A,
landing me on my first Honor Roll. I intend to be on the Principal’s List
after this semester; then I hope to graduate and attend a community
college in northern California, near the mountains, before transferring to
a four-year school.

Thanks to that morning’s conversion, I am a new person. Now, I
know I’ll have to work hard. The sun streaming over the eastern Sierras
wiped out the dark clouds that blurred my vision. Jonathan Harker in
Bram Stoker’s “Dracula” must have felt exactly the same way when he
wrote in his journal: “No man knows ‘till he has suffered from the night
how sweet and how dear to his heart and eye the morning can be.”
Now that you have examined models of personal essays, it is time for you to make a decision about the subject of your own personal essay. Go back to the Activity 5.10 called “A Personal Perspective” and read the list of experiences that you have brainstormed. If any other experiences have occurred to you, add them to the list.

Now think carefully about the experiences you have listed. To produce the kind of reflection that is characteristic of a personal essay, you will probably need to avoid selecting an experience that happened in the recent past. It is difficult to reflect on an experience at first; usually, people need some distance from the event to see it clearly.

Second, it is important that you choose an experience that is significant — an experience that changed you in some way, an experience that taught you something important, or an experience that reveals something about your character. Look over your list and choose an experience that is significant to you and write briefly about it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summarize the Experience</th>
<th>How did you feel at the time of the experience?</th>
<th>Summarize Your Reflection on the Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

If you find that you cannot fully complete any of the columns in the chart, you should consider choosing a different experience about which to write. Share your initial thinking with a partner. Ask your partner to highlight or underline a part of your writing that would benefit from more development. Use this as the basis for writing more about the experience, your reaction to it, and/or your reflection about it.
Writing a Personal Essay

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Brainstorming, Think-Pair-Share, Drafting, Group Discussions

Assignment

Your assignment is to write a multi-paragraph reflective essay about a significant personal experience, being sure to describe the experience and your immediate response to it, as well as to reflect on the significance of the experience.

Steps

1. Throughout the unit you have encountered possible topics through various texts and personal responses. Consider those as a starting point to brainstorm potential topics for this task. Select two or three topics and use a think-pair-share to pick one appropriate for this assignment.

2. Use a prewriting strategy to generate content and explore ideas in regard to the personal experience, your immediate response to it, as well as to reflect on the significance of the experience.

3. Create a rhetorical plan for the essay that considers your purpose, audience, and the organizational structure: event, response, and reflection.

4. Draft your essay to incorporate your ideas within the organizational structure of a personal essay. Consider the following while writing:
   - description of the experience: begin with dialogue, action, a dramatic statement, or epigram.
   - sequence ideas to show the development of feelings and thoughts as the event unfolds
   - reflective commentary that reveals insight

5. Share your draft in your writing group and use the scoring guide as a revision tool. Solicit feedback for revision in areas listed below and revise accordingly.
   - Organizational Structure (e.g., event, response, reflection)
   - Stylistic Elements (e.g., tone, detail, diction, syntax)
   - Coherence of Ideas

6. Read your essay silently and mark the text to identify key words or phrases that capture the essence of your essay. Generate a list of potential titles that connect to marked ideas. Select one that would serve as a meaningful title.

7. Read your draft aloud and edit for grammar, punctuation, and spelling in preparation for publishing.
## SCORING GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>The essay flows in a logical fashion; the reader can easily identify the description of the event and the author's reaction, as well as the reflection. The essay is unified effectively and provides a feeling of satisfaction in the end.</td>
<td>The essay is organized in such a way that the reader can identify the description of the event and the author's reaction, as well as the reflection.</td>
<td>The essay lacks organization, in that the reader may not be able to identify the description of the event, the author's reaction, and the reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of Experience</strong></td>
<td>The description has an intriguing lead that engages the reader in the text. The essay draws the reader into the experience by using details that appeal to the senses.</td>
<td>The essay clearly describes the experience.</td>
<td>The essay may describe the experience, but the description may be sketchy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of Author's Feelings</strong></td>
<td>The essay presents an explicit description of how the author felt at the time of the experience, using carefully chosen words to convey those emotions.</td>
<td>The essay clearly describes how the author felt at the time of the experience.</td>
<td>The essay may describe how the author felt at the time of the experience, but the description may be on the surface level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>The reflection shows a mature and insightful understanding of the significance of the experience to the author.</td>
<td>The reflection reveals the significance of the experience to the author.</td>
<td>The reflection may be irrelevant or may show little understanding of the significance of the experience to the author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Criteria</strong></td>
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Comments:
Learning Focus:

Creative Research

Over the course of your middle or high school experience, you have probably written a research paper or know someone who has. What comes to mind when you think of writing a research paper? Maybe an assigned topic, the tediousness of creating note cards, an outline, strict structure, formal language appropriate to the English Language Arts discourse—language used in a particular context or subject. In this half of the unit, you will use the research skills (i.e., collecting, recording, and synthesizing information) of a traditional research paper; however, you will present ideas creatively with a great deal of freedom via a multi-genre research project.

A multi-genre research project differs from a traditional research paper because the subject necessitates that the writer know and understand the information well enough to assume multiple points of view and present ideas from a variety of angles on the topic. According to Grierson, a professional writer, a reader “approaches multi-genre literature as if it were an exotic fruit—peeling back the layers of the text slowly, taking the time to savor everything as part of the experience of learning together.” The multi-genre research project positions the writer to showcase a range of writing styles, craft, and genre conventions to convey a clear and knowledgeable perspective on an issue, topic, movement, or person of particular interest to the writer.

Consider your study of Krakauer’s Into the Wild as a multi-genre text, which reveals research, both primary and secondary, in order to immerse the reader in understanding a series of events that lead to the tragic fate of a young man. Krakauer’s commitment to cull the right information in order to convey his point-of-view and to help the reader discover the truth about his subject, Chris McCandless, is apparent in the presentation of ideas and research in his text. Think about the kind of research that was conducted in order to write Into the Wild. How does he represent research through a cohesive series of pieces in a variety of genres to convey meaning to the readers?

You will have an opportunity to conduct research on a topic or person of your choice and creatively present your findings in a multi-genre research project.
The Nuts and Bolts of the Multi-Genre Research Project

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Notetaking, Think-Pair-Share

Before Reading
Create a working definition of the multi-genre research project.

During Reading
Read the sample multi-genre research project from the perspective of a writer—what do you notice about the style and craft of the MGR? As you read, follow your teacher’s instructions to annotate the text with your insights and observations.

Think about how this graphic organizer could help organize a multi-genre research project such as the one you are about to read.
Dear Reader,

When first introduced to the Multi-Genre Research assignment, without hesitation, I selected the most prominent American musician ever to take the stage—Luis Armstrong. Armstrong’s commitment to accomplishing his dreams is unsurpassed as he epitomizes what can happen when talent is given an opportunity obtain success. So I thought, no problem—I get to talk about a cultural icon, his relevance to the music industry, and his rise to fame despite adversity—this is going to be easy as counting from one to three. Then, Mrs. Spencer walked us through the “steps of the assignment,” and let me tell you, there were far more than three simple steps.

The journey to create a multi-genre research paper is no small undertaking. It begins with inquiry about a topic of personal interest for which one thinks they are familiar. Upon discussion with peers one quickly realizes that what I know and need to know to accomplish this task will “actually require” a significant amount of research. Thus leads to the next step, a personal favorite, not—research! Research leads to more questions—great. Once you have the information—how do you present it with a creative edge that shares my passion, insight, and wonder? Seems easy, but it was quite the challenge. No great work of art was ever pulled off without a plan, right? Writing the collection of genres presented a labyrinth of challenges and discoveries that led to the ultimate moment of this project—a metaphorical link between genres that would blend my collection of work.

Initially, I attempted to link the genres with significant events from Armstrong’s life—too easy and predictable. The next attempt was to string genres together by popular song lyrics—too hard to get the ideas to flow. Frustrated with how to get my point across, I decided it was time to consult “the boss,” Mrs. Spencer: After an enlightening conference I figured out how to connect the genres—create original song lyrics to make a connection between two musicians, Louis and me. The major similarity between Louis Armstrong and myself, is our passion for music and entertainment. Now, the really hard part, finding a way to thread ideas from research on Louis and myself into a musical composition.

Louis Armstrong did not start off rich and famous; he began at the bottom and worked his way up as I plan to do as well. This is the crux of the American Dream—success through hard work and determination. Talent can go a long way, but unwavering ambition makes dreams come true. As a result, I came up with a nineteen-verse song to reflect our love for music as well as depict the arduous pathway to the limelight. I had to pick a widely recognized melody so that the reader could sing my song lyrics as they transitioned from one genre to the next. Hence, I selected the rap from Will Smith’s “Parents Just Don’t Understand.” The hardest part of the whole piece was writing to a certain beat and rhyme. If one word did not fit into the correct place, then the whole line and even verse would be off. Also, I had to incorporate the idea and purpose of why I was writing the paper: As for my genre pieces, I made sure that they acted as “breaks” within the rap itself by doing things such as placing a diary entry with complete sentences and paragraphs after a couple of verses, or adding a picture to the middle of the paper to ease the eyes. I also included a mock schedule that not only illustrated Armstrong’s rise in popularity, but also served as a rest point from the rap. I hope that the lyrics to my song not only educate you about Armstrong’s American dream, but provides insight into my dream as well.

Sincerely,
Jhoanne Mecija
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The Fresh Prince of Jazz and Myself

The generation of American folk music dates back to as long as one can remember, and since then, has developed and grown into countless different types of music. Throughout the years, there have been hundreds of individuals who have greatly influenced the way music is looked upon; one of those includes the amazing and all time favorite jazz musician Louis Armstrong. He never lost his passion for music as he looked up to his idol Joe “King” Oliver. Louis Armstrong worked from the very bottom and worked to the top to fulfill his American Dream, making him one of the greatest influences in music and role models to young musicians like myself. As for my journey in fulfilling my American Dream in the meantime, I continue to walk, and during it, I break into song...

(To the tune of Fresh Prince of Bel-Air Introduction)
Now this is a story all about how
My life’s compared to the Armstrong in renown
And I’d like to take a minute, yeah that’ll do
To tell you how Louis achieved his dream and how I will too.

From Louisiana, born and raised
On the edge is where he spent most of his days
Sellin’ stuff, runnin’, workin’ all hard
Playin’ his first cornet in the yard.

When I was that age, I was up to some good
Started playing piano in my neighborhood
I got in one little lesson and my mom felt proud
She said, “You’re going to keep playing it and be singing aloud.”

I whistled a few tunes, the ones I would hear,
While piano books said “Beginner” to practice for a year:
If anything I could’ve said, “I quit; no more!”
But I thought, “No, forget it, this—I can’t ignore.”

While cleaning out my room, tired and astray
I found a diary entry written on some random day
Findin’ out, discoverin’, coverin’, all cool,
Wonderin’ if this thing actually came from school, it said:
Dear Diary,

Today was such a tiring day! I woke up to the sharp bites of the cold and absolutely did not want to get out of bed. I prepared for the upcoming day and the new assignments, the quizzes, and new challenges that needed to be taken on.

In first period, choir, my classmates and I listened to the lectures of our teacher, Mr. Hoshi. He ranted on about how he has been doing his job for the upcoming choir show and that we need to do ours, which is actually totally true, but apparently the message just doesn’t seem to get out to all the choir students. Some of the songs that Advanced Girls learned for the holiday show included “Polar Express,” “O Holy Night,” “I Love Christmas,” and “The Prayer.” Being of those people who enjoy music, signing these songs and learning the different styles, beats, and rhythms of them really expanded my music library. Yes, Hoshi might fuss about how some of us don’t know the words to the songs or the choreography to them, but what he says is true. As singers of this program, we should come prepared and learn our parts and words. Even though I have been turned down two times for this show’s solo auditions, I continue to learn. I can be bitter, but I choose not to and to just accept it. I learn from these attempts and they only help me become stronger; especially with the guidance of a teacher like Mr. Hoshi. I can for sure say that I have never had a teacher like him before.

Anyway, the day went on, and I can’t quite say it got better. I had an APUSH quiz, then after school I had to run 20 suicides on the basketball courts for conditioning because my coach is determined to win and make it to playoffs, which I think is possible. At practice, I had major pain from my calves down. All of this conditioning and running has not been good for them lately. After the hard practice, the drive home was soothing and partly relaxing as I listened to one of my CDs play songs that I sing along to. When I arrived home, dinner was the first thing on my mind because after that, I knew I had a pile of homework waiting for me.

As of right now, I’m just taking my homework one at a time. I’ve got some music on to cool me down, to help relax and take my stress away. Sometimes it’s like a factor in escaping the troubles of life. I’ve heard it said that while doing a task that the left side of the brain takes control of, such as homework, the right side of the brain could be enriched at the same time with music in the background. I don’t know if this is true, but I like to think it is just so it gives the mindset that it helps both sides of the brain. Although at times, I have to face turning off my music because I get so caught up with music that it serves as a distraction. Hopefully it won’t be a long night tonight.

Your one and only,

Jhoanne Mecija
When the journey began, it started off real well,
Started making progress and began to excel,
But no—I can’t forget how I started it all
With the touch of a piano and then it’s easy to recall:

And so it Begins

The touch of a piano and sound of a note,
Started it all
As its results weren’t remote.

Days that were spent watching and waiting
No longer existed,
Instead spent learning and contemplating.

A burst of sound fills the air,
Wishing, wondering, willing,
Sending smiles of joy and happiness everywhere.

The sound of music and its enticement,
So luring and yet so comforting,
Serves as an outlet to calm excitement.

Singing came along
As the journey continued,
And with it came the words to a song.

And so it began,
A legend, this star waiting to shine,
Carving her way for a better life plan.

So it remained to be
That her goal in life
Was to live where music held life’s key.
For the King of Trumpets, named and crowned,
Becoming famous wasn’t always sweet and sound
Stressin’ out, messin’, depressin’ at times
Tensin’ some muscles over some crimes

In a couple of days, all returns to good
Hard work and determination as it should
Louis got a lot of money and had more to grow
He said, “I never tried to prove nothing, just wanted to give a good show.”
(Louis Armstrong)

He longed for a debut and when he found one
The papers said “Starring” and his name was bright as the sun
If anything he could say that this ad was rare
But he thought, “No, I like it. It’s time to prepare!”
The Blue Jazz Club Presents

Louis Satchmo Armstrong

The King of Jazz

[Graphical representation of a trumpet player]
As Louis Armstrong’s dream grew and gained
Popularity expanded—he entertained.
Growin’ up, showin’, playin’ it cool
Hittin’ some notes outside of school

When a couple of guys, come up with ideas
Started making articles about this player
He got in one good paper and the crowd was pleased
He said, “I have never felt so honored and joyful at ease.”
The Nuts and Bolts of the Multi-Genre Research Project

The Blues Newspaper

A Great American Figure

IT WAS ON AUGUST 4, 1901 when a great musician had been born into this world. Louis Armstrong, Satchmo, the king of jazz folk music, has left his mark in the American history of music. He serves as an influence to all and inspiration to musicians across the country.

Armstrong was not merely a trumpet player; but took on other roles such as a singer, cornet player, and bandleader. This multitalented man became one of America’s favorite people because of his popular music and style. Mostly known for his style of swing, he then developed this into the form of R&B, rhythm-and-blues. His passion and hard work has come a long way.

As a child growing up, Armstrong was not privileged like most other kids. He had to deal with racism, a lack of education, and living with poverty. Along with other jazz musicians that came from New Orleans, Louisiana, Louis Armstrong had to work to become as successful as he came to be. He was sent to a reform school at the age of twelve, where he began his musical journey as he learned to play the cornet. Along with that, he sold papers and coal and unloaded boats for money. Joe “King” Oliver, Louis Armstrong’s role model, provided him his first real instrument, the cornet, which began his whole career.

Over time, Armstrong became more popular, joining bands from Chicago and making new hits. Of his famous groups included the Hot Five and Hot Seven. Individually, he created the famous songs “What a Wonderful World,” “Hello Dolly,” and “Mack the Knife.” Producer Joe Glaser has even had his bands play for movies including Pennies from Heaven, a 1936 classic film. During his lifetime, Armstrong was published twice in his two biographies, Satchmo: A Musical Autobiography and Swing That Music.

In his last few years on earth, he suffered from heart trouble. He is proof to show that hard work, passion, and dedication pay off. Armstrong, a great musician and heart warming person, passed on July 6, 1971 at New York, New York. Even after his death, his music still lives on in every jazz lover’s heart.
He received a fan mail and when it came here,
The envelope read "For Louis and his Wonderful Year"
If anything he could say he just didn’t have enough time
But he thought, “No, forget it. This doesn’t cost a dime!”

Hi wonderful Fan,

Glad to hear from ya! I love it when I hear that I have made someone’s day or taken their troubles off of their minds. Let me tell you that. Now how could I not reply to such a sweet letter like yours? I am very flattered! And don’t you worry about taking my time away because every spare time I have I just take out my laptop and type away. Brotha, I have one thing to say and it’s that I, Louis Armstrong, am a sucker when it comes to writing!

I really appreciate your support man! That show at the Blue Jazz Club was one of my favorite shows and I’m glad you enjoyed my music. I’ll be on tour for who knows how long, and would sure love to keep in touch! If you’d like, you could come to another concert of mine and see me and Armstrong’s Hot Five! The next show will be at [Waldorf Astoria’s Empire Room] at the big ol’ apple itsef—New York.

Have you read any of my books? You should, they would be a great opportunity for you to learn a little more about me. On my part, I would like to learn more about you by reading what you have to say about yourself. I am a man of my word, born and raised in Louisiana and you’re darn right I’m going to reply with all my might and love to ya! My manager Joe Glaser does so much for me. He says he sends his love and gratitude too. Speak to you soon, buddy. It’s time for me to perform!

Anxiously waiting for your reply,

Louis Armstrong

In a couple of days—fans just couldn’t wait
So he started making plans on occupied dates
He squeezed in one little plan but he needed more in between
So he said, “I need a little schedule to help me keep clean”
When the time was near, the crowd began to cheer
The performance was over, no need to shed a tear
If anything people were amazed to see him play,
Especially before he turned old and hair turned grey.

People wanted to know his personality
His style and his life, and his mentality
Look to his right and there’s a person there!
Standing with a mic. and questions in the air.
Interviewer: It is a great pleasure to be speaking to the king of Jazz himself—Louis Armstrong. How are you tonight?

Armstrong: Well I am doing mighty fine; let me tell you that, Mama.

Interviewer: Now, Mr. Armstrong, we the public has seen so much of you and has heard your music all across the streets of New York, Chicago, and Louisiana. How do you feel when you know that you have accomplished all of this?

Armstrong: It's fantastic! To know that I can share my talents and ambitions to everyone in the world just puts a huge smile on my face.

Interviewer: How did you get this far in your career? Was growing up just a piece of cake?

Armstrong: Oh, no. Growing up was hard. I had to work my way up here. I lived in poverty and had to work countless jobs for money. That is until my idol found me.

Interviewer: Oh? And who was your idol as a child?

Armstrong: The one and only Joe “King” Oliver. The best trumpet player out there, let me tell you. He took his time to mentor me, a fine favor that I feel like I could never pay back with actions. As he moved to bigger dreams, I took his spot on the Kid Ory's band—where my passion and devotion developed strongly.

Interviewer: Now, growing up your fame gradually increased. How did you feel about touring places and leaving home?

Armstrong: Well, you know leaving home isn’t always as dandy as it sounds. Touring, I must say, kept me awake, kept me alive. These different places only add to my experiences as a musician, but I always went on back home; never forgot my roots.

Interviewer: What do you hope to achieve within the next few years?

Armstrong: It’s always nice to become even bigger from where I am today. I’d like to reach number one on those song charts. I’d like to even be played often on every radio station, but only God knows when all white men will come to their senses and end this racial feud that we face. The sound of my music on the radio lifts me to a place where I have never been before; it is like a Heaven for all musicians. I am just as proud as my momma would be when I hear my songs for the public.

Interviewer: You are just heartwarming. Aside from all your business work and music accomplishments, how is your personal life going? Any “special someone” in your life?

Armstrong: To tell you the truth, there has been one special gal in my life, but she’s gone away. The name was Lil, my previous piano player. As time went on, I don’t know what happened really, but it just didn’t work out in the end.

Interviewer: I’m sorry, sir.

Armstrong: Oh, please. Don’t give me your sympathy.
The Nuts and Bolts of the Multi-Genre Research Project

Interviewer: What other areas do you excel in?

Armstrong: If by excel you mean shine and lead, then other than that golden instrument that I rule, I also lead bands, sing, film stars, and sometimes even crack a joke here and there.

Interviewer: My, my. We have a legendary man standing right in front of me! Mr. Armstrong, I would like to thank you with all my will for your time! You are a wonderful, talented, and gifted man. Don't let anyone take that away from you!

Armstrong: Why thank you. I enjoy doing what I do and it is for people like you. My pleasure.

Louis Armstrong, the king and I,
Both have our music and dreams up high.
Though we have our own ways to execute
They will always be there to reach and shoot.

Cypress, California, born and raised
On the playground is where I spent most of my days
Chillin out, maxin’, relaxin’, all cool
Shootin’ some B-ball out side of school

When a couple of songs, they were on my fav.’s list
Started playing loudly amongst the midst
I sang in one part of the song and I didn’t care
Because people can look, judge, or do anything else especially stare

I walk up to the piano ’round seven or eight
Then I yelled to the fans “Hey, how you doin’?”
Look at my kingdom I was finally there
To sit on my throne as the Queen millionaire.

Louis Armstrong sought to entertain, enlighten, and bring enjoyment to those who loved music as much as he did. Armstrong accomplished his dreams through hard work and perseverance fueled by his desire to entertain others. His life’s work defines the essence of American dream, a dream routed in desire that can only come to pass when it is met with dedication to the aft and an attentive commitment to excellence.
Reflective Endnotes

Genre #1: My Diary Entry

The reason for this genre is to show how music plays a part in my life, how I view and use it in everyday life. I write about a few influences and advice that have stuck with me or have stuck out to me throughout my life. I think that this is important in mentioning so that the audience can see my view in music and how I would interpret listening to music and being involved with it. With this shown and given, the audience can then make the connection that the paper’s central topic is about music and how Louis Armstrong and I have our similarities and differences. I started this as the first genre to allow readers to get a feel of how I think.

Genre #2: Poem

This genre is supposed to be a poem about how I discovered my first interests for the piano and singing. It marks the beginning of my journey to my American Dream. This poem is about the irresistible spark of interest that I had when I was a child, and how soon those interests became my talents. I was influenced by my brother, who I would listen to play the piano after a lesson, and my by my dad, who would sing songs on the karaoke machine and dedicate them to my mother. It is important for readers to know where my roots came from.

Genre #3: Louis Armstrong Ad

This genre is an ad for Louis Armstrong to promote a concert or performance by him. It is supposed to give off a message to the public that Louis is becoming more famous and is in popular demand. The grey-scale coloring enhances the ad to make it look more authentic and more appropriate for that time. Plain and simple is a way to get a message across, and this ad was definitely plain and simple. The “King of Jazz” will now be known to the public.

Genre #4: Newspaper Article

The Newspaper Article provides a brief history of Louis Armstrong, his development and achievements during his lifetime. This goes to show that Armstrong is in fact a great influence to music and society. This genre gives plenty of information to understand that he was an important role model and one of the greatest influences in today’s music. I created this genre as a sort of tribute to Armstrong, not only to show the growth of his achievements, but to share the wealth of my knowledge of Armstrong and his success.
Genre #5: Reply to a fan letter

I think that this piece of genre is important because it displays the way Louis Armstrong handled business. I used an example that I found online; it was a letter of acceptance to a publisher for his book. The letter that Armstrong wrote showed exactly how his personality was—funny, joyful, and happy to do business. I tried myself to capture this tone of voice in my Armstrong letter to a fan. It is important to see how Armstrong handled the business part of his job, and it is amazing that he still handled it with such a bright attitude and a thankful tone.

Genre #6: Schedule

This charted schedule lists the places that Armstrong had to go to in order to complete some of his tasks. Its main idea is to display how busy Armstrong was beginning to get. Day after day he had work to do and places to fly out to. With such a busy schedule, it is shown just how popular Armstrong was and his growth as a musician. The chart was meant to be easy to read and attain information from so that it would be easy to understand his popular demand by the people.

Genre #7: Interview

The interview is one of the more important genres. This piece tells Armstrong’s own opinion, history, and life stories given by him. Not only does it display his personality and jolly attitude, but also his hard work to get where he was at that day. I saved it for last to tie everything together. It was quite interesting, and at the same time a somewhat challenge, to pretend like I was Armstrong through the information that I researched. I did not want to lower his image, so I tried to make him seem as bright as possible with all the accurate facts that I have retrieved. This interview is important because it gives so much detail in a way that suits Armstrong when he speaks and tells his life story.
Annotated Bibliography


In the encyclopedia was a short article on Louis Armstrong. I used this as a reference for more information, and just looked back at it when comparing information and also gaining information. Because the article was fairly short, this source was not one of the more important ones compared to the others.


This website provided Louis Armstrong's life story—from his birth, successes, and death. The page focuses on jazz influences and leaders, so it is like their “specialty” to be writing about a man like Louis Armstrong. There are also links that you can click on to listen to some of his songs that were recorded in the 1920’s. I used some of the valuable information given on this site in some of my genres.


This book was used as an example for my own multigenre paper. Jon Krakauer writes about his amazing, once in a lifetime experience on the one and only Mount Everest using different pieces of work, or genres, to help support his text and knowledge. After reading and understanding how he incorporated each genre piece into the writing itself, I learned to grasp the concept of adding my own genres into another piece of my work. This book sets as a perfect example for the multigenre paper.


This website that I found helped with the information that I needed. This website, unlike some of the others, provides a long history of Louis' upcoming stardom and road to becoming famous. It also provided links to other key words if I didn't know what that word was. This was a valuable website and came quite in handy. It also lists the groups that Armstrong were in and which movies he was filmed in.


This was a great example to my genre “Letter to the Fan.” It’s an actual letter that Louis Armstrong wrote to a publisher accepting her proposal. This shows how he handled business. It was quite entertaining to see how he wrote in letters. I tried using the same jolly and joking tone when writing the letter to a fan.

This website contained quotes from musicians all over the world. Of these quotes were one of Louis Armstrong's. I used the one that said "I never tried to prove nothing, just wanted to give a good show." I thought that this quote just showed who Armstrong was, what kind of person he was. He was not only being humble and modest, but enjoying what he does. It fit perfectly into one of the song's beats, so I just had to add it in with my paper.


Wikimedia's website about Louis Armstrong offers numerous subjects about him, such as his early life, early career, music, and his legacy. I was most attracted to the section about his personality. This allowed me to really get to know how Louis was as an individual and what he thought about society and his interests. This was important and useful for me to gain that one-on-one connection in my writing. In my "Letter to the Fan" genre, I copied Louis Armstrong's real signature that this website provided to make the letter seem more authentic and real.


This was another website that provided short information about Louis Armstrong and his achievements during his life. There are bullets that mark his achievements and a short paragraph about his past. This website became useful and important for quick and straight forward, needed information.


I used the picture from this website for the ad genre that I made. I thought that it was a great picture that portrayed his happiness and love for his instrument. This photo makes Louis look like the happiest man on earth, and I chose this picture to use because it gave off a good feeling towards the ad that I made.
After Reading

After discussing how Krakauer’s text, *Into the Wild*, meets the criteria of a multi-genre research project, refine your response to the unit’s essential question: How does a writer represent research through multiple texts?

How has your encounter with the multi-genre research project sample contributed to your understanding of using this approach to study a subject of interest to you?
For Sparky, school was all but impossible. He failed every subject in the eighth grade. He flunked physics in high school, getting a grade of zero. Sparky also flunked Latin, algebra, and English. He didn't do much better in sports. Although he did manage to make the school's golf team, he promptly lost the only important match of the season. There was a consolation match; he lost that, too.

Throughout his youth Sparky was awkward socially. He was not actually disliked by the other students; no one cared that much. He was astonished if a classmate ever said hello to him outside of school hours. There’s no way to tell how he might have done at dating. Sparky never once asked a girl to go out in high school. He was too afraid of being turned down.

Sparky was a loser. He, his classmates…everyone knew it. So he rolled with it. Sparky had made up his mind early in life that if things were meant to work out, they would. Otherwise he would content himself with what appeared to be his inevitable mediocrity.

However, one thing was important to Sparky—drawing. He was proud of his artwork. Of course, no one else appreciated it. In his senior year of high school, he submitted some cartoons to the editors of the yearbook. The cartoons were turned down. Despite the particular rejection, Sparky was so convinced of his ability that he decided to become a professional artist.

After completing high school, he wrote a letter to Walt Disney Studios. He was told to send some samples of his artwork, and the subject for a cartoon was suggested. Sparky drew the proposed cartoon. He spent a great deal of time on it and on all the other drawings he submitted.

Finally, the reply came from Disney Studios. He had been rejected once again. Another loss for the loser.

So Sparky decided to write his own autobiography in cartoons. He described his childhood self—a little boy loser and chronic underachiever. The cartoon character would soon become famous worldwide. For Sparky, the boy who had such lack of success in school and whose work was rejected again and again was Charles Schulz. He created the “Peanuts” comic strip and the little cartoon character whose kite would never fly and who never succeeded in kicking a football, Charlie Brown.
A multi-genre research project consists of creative pieces – poetry, artwork, letters, diary entries, interviews, conversations, newspaper articles, scripts, speeches, email, obituaries, etc.—imaginative writing based on fact. The multi-genre research project begins with interest in the subject. **Coherence** is developed along the way as the writer collects information, interprets it, and considers appropriate genre to creatively represent ideas. Use the graphic organizer below to record information as you conduct research.

**Topic:** Charles M. Schulz  
**MLA Entry:** “Sparky” by Earl Nightengale  

**Melding Fact, Interpretation, and Imagination**

**Research Question:**  
How did Charles Schulz overcome obstacles to achieve his American Dream?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Facts:</th>
<th>Reflection:</th>
<th>Variety of Genres:</th>
<th>Purpose/Rationale:</th>
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<td>Question and comment on the facts presented. Imagine the people, the situation, the events surrounding the research facts.</td>
<td>Consider possible genres to convey the facts and a creative response to the question posed or comment posed. What is the best format for this information?</td>
<td>Note ideas for content to contain within the genre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Literary Terms**

Coherence is the quality of unity or logical connection among ideas.
**Activity 5.20**

**Melding Facts, Interpretation, and Imagination**

**SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES:** Graphic Organizer, Marking the Text, Discussion Groups

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**Topic:** Charles M. Schulz

**MLA Entry:**

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**Melding Fact, Interpretation, and Imagination**

**Research Question:**
How did Charles Schulz overcome obstacles to achieve his American Dream?

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**SpringBoard® English Textual Power™ Level 6**

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**CHARLES M. SCHULZ**

**Biography**

*From Notable Biographies*

**Born:** November 26, 1922  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**  
**Died:** February 12, 2000  
**Santa Rosa, California**  

**AMERICAN CARTOONIST**

Cartoonist and creator of *Peanuts*, Charles M. Schulz was the winner of two Reuben, two Peabody, and five Emmy awards and a member of the Cartoonist Hall of Fame.

**Early life**

Charles Monroe Schulz was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on November 26, 1922, the son of Carl and Dena Halverson Schulz. His father was a barber. Charles loved to read the comics section of the newspaper with his father and was given the nickname “Sparky” after Sparkplug, the horse in the *Barney Google* comic strip. He began to draw pictures of his favorite cartoon characters at age six. At school in St. Paul, Minnesota, he was bright and allowed to skip two grades, which made him often the smallest in his class. Noting his interest in drawing, his mother encouraged him to take a correspondence course (in which lessons and exercises are mailed to students and then returned when completed) from Art Instruction, Inc., in Minneapolis after he graduated from high school.

During World War II (1939–45; a war fought between the Axis: Italy, Japan, and Germany—and the Allies: France, England, the Soviet Union, and the United States), Schulz was drafted into the army and sent to Europe, rising to the rank of sergeant. After the war he returned to Minnesota as a young man with strong Christian beliefs. For a while he worked part-time for a Catholic magazine and taught for Art Instruction, Inc. Some of his work appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and eventually he created a cartoon entitled *Li’l Folks* for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*.

**Creates “Peanuts”**

In 1950 the United Feature Syndicate of New York decided to publish Schulz’s new comic strip, which he had wanted to call *Li’l Folks* but which was named *Peanuts* by the company. In 1950 the cartoon began appearing in seven newspapers with the characters Charlie Brown, Shermy, Patty, and Snoopy. Within a year the strip appeared in thirty-five papers, and by 1956 it was in over a hundred. The *Peanuts* cartoons were centered on the simple and touching figures of a boy, Charlie Brown, and his dog, Snoopy and their family and school friends. Adults were never seen, only hinted at, and the action involved ordinary, everyday happenings.
Charlie Brown had a round head with half-circles for ears and nose, dots for eyes, and a line for a mouth. Things always seemed to go wrong for him, and he was often puzzled by the problems that life and his peers dealt out to him: the crabbiness of Lucy; the unanswerable questions of Linus, a young intellectual with a security blanket; the self-absorption of Schroeder the musician; the teasing of his schoolmates; and the behavior of Snoopy, the floppy-eared dog with the wild imagination, who sees himself as a fighter pilot trying to shoot down the Red Baron (based on a famous German pilot during World War I) when he is not running a “Beagle Scout” troop consisting of the bird, Woodstock, and his friends.

Charlie Brown's inability to cope with the constant disappointments in life, the failure and renewal of trust (such as Lucy's tricking him every time he tries to kick the football), and his touching efforts to accept what happens as deserved were traits shared to a lesser degree by the other characters. Even crabby Lucy cannot interest Schroeder or understand baseball; Linus is puzzled by life's mysteries and the refusal of the “Great Pumpkin” to show up on Halloween. The odd elements and defects of humanity in general were reflected by Schulz's gentle humor, which made the cartoon appealing to the public.

Schulz insisted that he was not trying to send any moral and religious messages in Peanuts. However, even to the casual reader Peanuts offered lessons to be learned. Schulz employed everyday humor to make a point, but usually it was the intellectual comment that carries the charge, even if it was only “Good Grief!” Grief was the human condition, but it was good when it taught us something about ourselves and was lightened by laughter.

**Huge success**

As the strip became more popular, new characters were added, including Sally, Charlie Brown's sister; Rerun, Lucy's brother; Peppermint Patty; Marcie; Franklin; José Peterson; Pigpen; Snoopy's brother Spike; and the bird, Woodstock. Schulz received the Reuben award from the National Cartoonists Society in 1955 and 1964.

By this time Schulz was famous across the world. Peanuts appeared in over twenty-three hundred newspapers. The cartoon branched out into television, and in 1965 the classic special A Charlie Brown Christmas won Peabody and Emmy awards. Many more television specials and Emmys were to follow. An off-Broadway stage production, You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, was created in 1967 and ran for four years (it was also revived in 1999). Many volumes of Schulz's work were published in at least nineteen languages, and the success of Peanuts inspired clothes, stationery, toys, games, and other merchandise. Schulz also wrote a book, Why, Charlie Brown, Why? (which became a CBS television special) to help children understand the subject of cancer (his mother had died of cancer in 1943).
Besides the previously mentioned awards, Schulz received the Yale Humor Award, 1956; School Bell Award, National Education Association, 1960; and honorary degrees from Anderson College, 1963, and St. Mary's College of California, 1969. A “Charles M. Schulz Award” honoring comic artists was created by the United Feature Syndicate in 1980.

**Later years**

The year 1990 marked the fortieth anniversary of Peanuts. An exhibit at the Louvre, in Paris, France, called “Snoopy in Fashion,” featured three hundred Snoopy dolls dressed in fashions created by more than fifteen world-famous designers. It later traveled to the United States. Also in 1990, the Smithsonian Institution featured an exhibit titled, “This Is Your Childhood, Charlie Brown … Children in American Culture, 1945–1970.” By the late 1990s Peanuts ran in over two thousand newspapers throughout the world every day.

Schulz was diagnosed with cancer in November 1999 after the disease was discovered during an unrelated operation. He announced in December 1999 that he would retire in the year 2000, the day after the final Peanuts strip. Schulz died on February 12, 2000, one day before his farewell strip was to be in newspapers. Schulz was twice married, to Joyce Halverson in 1949 (divorced 1972) and to Jean Clyde in 1973. He had five children by his first marriage.

In March 2000 the Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County, California, passed a resolution to rename Sonoma County Airport after Schulz. In June 2000 plans were announced for bronze sculptures of eleven Peanuts characters to be placed on the St. Paul riverfront. That same month President Bill Clinton (1946–) signed a bill giving Schulz the Congressional Gold Medal. In 2002 an exhibition entitled “Speak Softly and Carry a Beagle: The Art of Charles Schulz” was held at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Also in 2002, it was announced that the proposed Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center in Santa Rosa, California, would be completed in August 2003.
Use this organizer to record notes and plans based on a third piece of research.

**MLA Entry:**

**Research Question:**

How did Charles Schulz overcome obstacles to achieve his American Dream?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Facts:</th>
<th>Reflection:</th>
<th>Variety of Genres:</th>
<th>Purpose/Rationale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record pertinent information from the source and include page numbers. Be sure to use quotation marks if it is a direct quote.</td>
<td>Question and comment on the facts presented. Imagine the people, the situation, the events surrounding the research facts.</td>
<td>Consider possible genres to convey the facts and a creative response to the question posed or comment posed. What is the best format for this information?</td>
<td>Note ideas for content to contain within the genre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use a resource that explains how to document sources using the MLA format and record an example, properly citing each of the genres listed below.

**Recording Resources**

Book:

Journal:

Internet:

Interview:

Magazine:

Video:

Others:

After you have shared resources, consider which ones you will use in conjunction with the ones studied as a whole class, and create an Annotated Bibliography that documents and annotates each source in alphabetical order.
Working from the class-generated thesis, collaborate to move through the writing process of composing the body of genres that will make up your group MGR.

**Planning:** Take notes, share prewriting strategies, and consult additional resources as you consider these guiding questions in your planning.

- **Represent ideas:** What is important about this information in relation to the thesis?
- **Genre conventions:** What are essential features and format specific to this genre?
- **Purpose and audience:** What is the purpose of text and who is the target audience?
- **Use of language:** What stylistic techniques address the purpose and audience?

**Drafting:** Each group member will select one of the six different genres from your group brainstorm and individually generate a draft incorporating your planning.
To guide revision, use this peer response form and respond to genres shared within your writing groups.

**Peer Conference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer:</th>
<th>Peer Responders:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus area</strong> requested by the writer:</td>
<td><strong>What works well</strong> (e.g., ideas, genre conventions, stylistic technique, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Define Coherence:

Make a prediction about the role of coherence in a multi-genre research project:

Review the student example on the multi-genre research project. How did the author link one genre to the next and sequence the ideas presented?

With the class, brainstorm a list of possible pathways to link genres and provide transitions for the reader in a multi-genre research project.

In groups, review the list above, and circle three that could work for your multi-genre research project. Now, discuss how each of the three would create a thematic or symbolic connection as well as how to thread it throughout the paper as a **motif** to clarify and unify meaning for the reader.

As you discuss your three options in your group, use the following focus questions as talking points for planning to use each symbolic link.

- How does the option work to advance our thesis?
- How does the option convey meaning to the reader about the topic/theme?
- How does the option connect the research and ideas to one of the following: topic, event, person, place, etc.?
- How does the option sequence our ideas to make our assertion and research clear to our readers?
Use the Creating Cohesion chart below to organize your discussion points about how one genre connects to the next. Plot your ideas on the chart. Evaluate the effectiveness of your metaphor and revise accordingly.

Discuss possibilities for visually representing the thematic strand and sketch initial ideas. After considering all options, create a symbolic visual that conveys meaning to potential readers for your thematic strand and collection of genres.
Introducing and Concluding the Multi-Genre Research Project

Discourse is language and speech, especially the type of language used in a particular context or subject. Often in writing or speech we use language that is specific to a particular audience, purpose, context, and genre. Recall a time in which you changed or altered your discourse. Explain.

**Writing to Inform—Introduction:**

- **Informative:** Explain the relationship between your topic and thesis. Give your reader a context for your topic that addresses the American Dream.

- **Organized:** Identify the metaphor that threads the genres together. Discuss how the paper is organized and provide a pathway for the reader to navigate through your text with ease.

- **Engaging:** Demonstrate your style as a writer as you craft your introduction.

**Writing to Reflect—Conclusion**

- **Say:** What have I said about the topic?

- **Mean:** What does this mean in relation to the American Dream?

- **Matter:** What is the larger significance of the topic and meaning to life in general?
Use the table below to organize your presentation of your multi-genre research project. You may also use this chart as a planning guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of MGR</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Ideas for Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cover Page     | • Original Title  
                 • Symbolic Visuals  
                 • Heading (Name, Date, Period) | |
| Table of Contents | In order of appearance the table of contents provides an overview of sections in the paper. Be sure to include the following on your table of contents: introduction, genre collection, conclusion, reflective end notes, and annotated bibliography. | |
| Dear Reader Letter: (Introduction) | This opening letter provides some background information about your topic to your audience. It also introduces your thesis and how you threaded the collection of genres so the reader knows how to navigate through your paper. | |
| Collection of Genres | The body consists of a collection of genres created to help your reader understand your subject and thesis. This is where the multi-genre aspect of the paper is displayed via a minimum of six different genres threaded together with a metaphor or motif. | |
| Conclusion | What have I learned about the topic from this research project?  
What did you learn about the process from working on this project? | |
| Reflective End Notes | What genres did you include in your writing and why?  
Assemble your Reflective End Notes so that the genres appear in sequential order and contain the following information:  
• Genre #, Title, and Genre Identified  
• Rationale: Explain why this particular genre was selected.  
• Reflection: How are the facts presented in the creative interpretation? | |
| Annotated Bibliography | Provide your list of sources for the research conducted and a brief explanation of how you used that research in your project. Consult the *MLA Handbook* or style manual preferred by your teacher or an online writing lab for instructions on format. | |
Carousel Wheel Reflection
What did you observe that worked well in other MGR papers that you would like to add to your own. Explain.

Reflection on the Multi-Genre Research Process:
What did you learn from the research process from this group project?

How will you use that information to be successful when you create a multi-genre research project individually?
Writing Prompt: Your assignment is to write a multi-genre research project on a person, event, movement, or topic of interest to you as it relates to the American Dream.

Brainstorm a list of potential topics:

Select one and explain why you want to pursue further inquiry into this topic:

KWHL Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you already know about this person/subject?</th>
<th>What do you want to know/learn about this person/subject?</th>
<th>How will you gather data and information about this person/subject?</th>
<th>What are you learning about this person/subject as it unfolds?</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Writing a Multi-Genre Research Project

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Quickwrite, Think-Pair-Share, Mapping, Graphic Organizer, Discussion Groups

Assignment
Your assignment is to write a multi-genre research project on a person, event, movement, or topic of interest to you as it relates to the American Dream.

Steps
1. Choose a prewriting strategy to generate ideas that provide a focus for your topic (person, event, movement, concept, etc.) as it relates to the American Dream. Quickwrite an exploration of your thinking on the topic and identify areas that require further insight—this could be used to focus your research.

2. Think-pair-share your findings to help you consider your ideas, narrow your focus, and generate a research question. Next, draft a working thesis that answers your focus question and that can be used as a guiding factor in your research and multi-genre research project.

3. Conduct research (7-8 primary and secondary sources) to explore all aspects of your thesis. Use the note taking guide from Activity 5.20 to help collect information and plan your ideas. Use resources to assist with documenting your sources correctly in an annotated bibliography.

4. Use the graphic organizer provided to consider which ideas from your research you will include in your paper and choose an appropriate genre to capture the connection between your research, your interpretation, and the creative presentation of ideas. Remember, you will need a minimum of six different genres in your collection.

5. Reflect on research and ideas and brainstorm a list of creative ways to connect the genres via a metaphor or motif (e.g., chapters, seasons, time, movie script, song lyrics, recipes, months of the year, colors in a rainbow, cartoons, visual art images, statistics, expository text, sports rules, etc.). Select an appropriate metaphor and consider how it connects to your thesis, research, genres, and ideas.

6. Assemble your writing pieces in a coherent order using the transitions (e.g., metaphor or motif) you select to guide your reader from one genre to the next.
Writing a Multi-Genre Research Project

7. Meet regularly in writing groups and use the writing process to revise and edit your drafts for the following:
   - Coherence and clarity of ideas presented within the genre
   - Seamless integration of research
   - Appropriate genres to express ideas
   - Appropriate use of conventions
   You might want to use the Peer Response sheet from Activity 5.21 to help focus the feedback from your peers.

8. Use the chart in Activity 5.24 to organize your multi-genre research project. Do not forget to include a thematic link for the entire paper in the form of a metaphor or motif that moves the reader from one genre to the next.

9. Share your drafts within your writing groups and use the feedback provided to revise and refine your work.

10. Re-read your revised draft silently to make final edits in preparation for publishing a technically sound document.

11. Compose a title for your piece by generating a list of possible titles stemming from ideas, topics, or lines from the text. Review and rank your list. Select the most engaging title that captures the essence of your text.
## SCORING GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Multi-genre research project provides an extensive, well-researched response to the essential question. It includes substantial support for the ideas presented about the subject as it relates to the American Dream.</td>
<td>Multi-genre research project responds appropriately to the essential question. It provides adequate support for the ideas presented about the subject as it relates to the American Dream.</td>
<td>Multi-genre research project does not thoroughly address all aspects of the essential question, and/or provide inadequate support for the ideas presented about the subject as it relates to the American Dream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>The multi-genre paper is well-written and consists of:</td>
<td>The multi-genre paper consists of:</td>
<td>The multi-genre paper may or may not consist of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cover page: gripping title and symbolic visual that enhance ideas in the paper</td>
<td>• Cover page: appropriate title with a relevant visual</td>
<td>• Incomplete cover page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction: engages the reader in the topic providing a sophisticated context for the reader</td>
<td>• Introduction: introduces the topic, contains a thesis, and sets the context</td>
<td>• Limited introduction that does not appropriately introduce the topic, contains an unclear thesis, and/or does not adequately explain to the reader how to proceed through the paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Body: skillfully uses complex genres that seamlessly integrate in-depth research and ideas in support of the thesis</td>
<td>• Body: uses five different genres that incorporate research and ideas in support of the thesis</td>
<td>• Body that uses fewer than five different genres and/or does not incorporate research and ideas in support of the thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transitions: uses a sophisticated metaphor to move the reader from one genre to the next</td>
<td>• Transitions: uses a metaphor to move the reader from one genre to the next</td>
<td>• Transitions do not adequately move the reader from one genre to the next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conclusion: provides in depth reflection that brings closure to the paper</td>
<td>• Conclusion: reflects and brings closure to the paper</td>
<td>• Conclusion does not provide sufficient reflection and/or bring closure to the paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thorough annotated bibliography</td>
<td>• Complete annotated bibliography</td>
<td>• Limited or missing annotated bibliography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SCORING GUIDE

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<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Process</strong></td>
<td>Writing shows extensive evidence of thoughtful planning, significant</td>
<td>Writing shows evidence planning, revision, and editing for:</td>
<td>Writing shows minimal evidence of planning and/or effective revision or editing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>planning, significant revision, and careful editing for:</td>
<td>- Coherence / clarity of ideas</td>
<td>- Ideas are unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coherence / clarity of ideas</td>
<td>- Seamless integration of research</td>
<td>- Very little integration of research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seamless integration of research</td>
<td>- Appropriate genres to express ideas</td>
<td>- Genres used are not appropriate to express ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Genres used enhance ideas</td>
<td>- Appropriate use of conventions</td>
<td>- Extensive errors in grammar, punctuation, and conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Solid command of grammar, punctuation, and conventions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Criteria</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
Reflection

An important aspect of growing as a learner is to reflect on where you have been, what you have accomplished, what helped you to learn, and how you will apply your new knowledge in the future. Use the following questions to guide your thinking and to identify evidence of your learning. Use separate notebook paper.

Thinking about Concepts
1. Using specific examples from your unit, respond to the Essential Questions:
   a. What does it mean to pursue happiness?
   b. How can a writer represent the personal experience through multiple texts?

2. Consider the new academic vocabulary from this unit (Coherence, Genre Conventions, Discourse) as well as academic vocabulary from previous units and select 3–4 terms of which your understanding has grown. For each term, answer the following questions:
   a. What was your understanding of the word prior to the unit?
   b. How has your understanding of the word evolved throughout the unit?
   c. How will you apply your understanding in the future?

Thinking about Connections
3. Review the activities and products (artifacts) you created. Choose those that most reflect your growth or increase in understanding.

4. For each artifact that you choose, record, respond, and reflect on your thinking and understanding, using the following questions as a guide:
   a. What skill/knowledge does this artifact reflect, and how did you learn this skill/knowledge?
   b. How did your understanding of the power of language expand through your engagement with this artifact?
   c. How will you apply this skill or knowledge in the future?

5. Create this reflection as Portfolio pages—one for each artifact you choose. Use the following model for your headings and commentary on questions.

---

Thinking About Thinking
Portfolio Entry

Concept:

Description of Artifact:

Commentary on Questions: