Literary Analysis for Young Gifted Children

Indiana High Ability State Conference
Indianapolis, IN
January 23, 2012
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Agenda:
The Navigator Format

- Overview of Rationale and Design Emphases
- Navigator Components
  - Questioning
  - Differentiated Activities
  - Vocabulary Study
  - Interdisciplinary/Research Connections
- Resources
- Teaching Models
- Review of a Navigator
W&M Navigators: Rationale

- Supplement to language arts project
- Resource for classroom teachers
- Response to student interests and key language arts goals
- Promotion of high-level questions and activities in trade book study

Design Emphases

- Alignment with key language arts goals
- Use of high-level reading materials
- Emphasis on higher-level questions and differentiated activities
- Utilization of specific teaching/learning models
- Flexibility
  - Implementation in multiple settings and grouping models
  - Varied levels and learning styles reflected in activities and questions
Learning Goals

- To develop analytical and interpretive skills in literature
- To develop understanding of selected literary themes
- To develop linguistic competency through vocabulary and language study
- To develop skills in written and oral communication
- To develop higher level thinking and reasoning skills in language arts
- To develop research skills

Criteria for Selecting Literature for Gifted Readers

- Rich, varied, precise, complex, exciting language
- Open-ended, with capacity to inspire contemplative behavior
- Complex, leading to interpretive and evaluative behaviors
- Help build problem-solving skills
- Role models
- Broad-based in form

Baskin & Harris, 1980
Considerations for Multicultural Literature

- General accuracy
- Avoidance of stereotypes
- Authentic, up-to-date, age-appropriate language
- Attention to author’s perspective
- Currency of facts and interpretations
- Concept of audience
- Integration of cultural information
- Balance and multidimensionality
- Accurate and appropriate illustrations

-- Miller-Lachman, 1992

Reading the Book: Key Features to Note

- Key literary elements (character development, plot, setting, author style, etc.)
- Specific opportunities for predictive/reflective questions
- Key concepts/themes
- Specific quotes for analysis
- Vocabulary
- Opportunities for research and interdisciplinary connections
- Evidence of adherence to designated criteria
Developing Questions

- Prepare 5-8 questions (or question clusters) per category
  - While you read
  - Exploring the story
  - Meeting the characters
  - Understanding the ideas
  - Connecting to you
- Maintain challenge level through question emphases and language
  - Use of literary terms
  - Use of elements of reasoning
- Write, revise, revisit

Question Category 1:
*While You Read*

- Predictive questions for completion during reading
- Emphasis on progress of plot, development of characters
- Reference by specific page number or chapter
Sample Questions: *While You Read*

- Why is Wilbur’s escape in chapter 3 such big news on the farm? Why do the other animals try to tell him what to do? (*Charlotte’s Web*)
- What do you infer are the man in the yellow suit’s intentions on p. 21? What evidence supports your inferences? (*Tuck Everlasting*)

**Question Category 2: Exploring the Story**

- Emphasis on key literary elements such as plot, story structure, setting
- Requires reflection back to specific moments in story *after* reading
- Explores overall organization of story
Sample Questions:
Exploring the Story

- In chap. 11, Mr. Zuckerman tells his wife that they have a very unusual pig, and she replies that they have a very unusual spider. Which of the Zuckermans do you agree with, and why? (*Charlotte's Web*)
- The novel begins in summer and ends in the spring. How do the seasons help tell the story? (*Sarah Bishop*)
- Why did the author make the pictures on the cover different from those in the book? What do you think it means? (*The Garden of Abdul Gasazi*)
- In what ways is the ending of the story both happy and sad? What do you predict will happen next? (*Number the Stars*)

Question Category 3:
Meeting the Characters

- Emphasis on specific characters and relationships among characters
- Explores aspects such as point of view and character change over time
- Overlaps with other categories; category 3 zeroes in on character over plot
Sample Questions: *Meeting the Characters*

- How does the main character grow and change across the events of the novel? What are the influences that affect this growth and change?
- In what ways does Charlotte become a leader in the barn? Give specific examples that show how she is a leader and how the other animals think of her that way. (*Charlotte’s Web*)

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Sample Questions: *Meeting the Characters*

- What details can you learn about the characters from how they behave in conversations? For example, why does Miss Honeycutt tell so many anecdotes? (*Everything on a Waffle*)
- What talents does Sal show? How might she develop them further? (*Walk Two Moons*)
- Is Winnie more like her mother and grandmother or more like the Tucks? Justify your answer. (*Tuck Everlasting*)
Question Category 4: *Understanding the Ideas*

- Emphasis on themes and concepts
- Analysis of specific quotes that reflect themes
- Exploration of symbolism

Sample Questions: *Understanding the Ideas*

- What does this story demonstrate about the concept of (family, time, heroism, hope, truth, change, choice, right and wrong, etc.)?
- What does Will mean when he says, “There’s not really any before and after, is there? Everything that matters is outside Time”? (*The Dark is Rising*)
Sample Questions:  
*Understanding the Ideas*

- Why is Solomon happy at the end even if only one of his dreams (to have a cat) came true? (*An Angel for Solomon Singer*)
- What sorts of gifts does Sarah give the family? What gifts do they give to her? Are all of the gifts actual presents that could be wrapped and opened? Explain your answer. (*Sarah, Plain and Tall*)
- Explain what is meant by the comment that “When somebody saves your life, it makes him sort of your property.” (*The Egypt Game*)

**Question Category 5:  
*Connecting to You***

- Relates story events, themes, and characters to students’ own lives
- Supports identification with characters and insight into story messages
- Encourages student voice and preferences
- Maintains connection directly to text
Sample Questions: 
**Connecting to You**

- The colors that best show what Sarah loved about the sea were blue, green, and gray. What colors best represent the things that are important to you in your environment? Why? (*Sarah, Plain and Tall*)
- Compare the two descriptions of joy on pages 80 and 115. Can you recall a moment of unexpected joy in your life? Describe it. (*Everything on a Waffle*)

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Sample Questions: 
**Connecting to You**

- What are some of “the doubts and fears that often go with finding a new friend”? (p. 41) What are some of the things you think about when you first meet someone and start thinking about being friends with that person? (*Charlotte's Web*)
- Have you ever had to give up something that was dear to you? What happened, and how and why did you make the decision you did? (*Number the Stars*)
Literature Web

Key Words: What were some words and phrases in the novel that were especially interesting or important? What words were new to you?

Feelings: What feelings did you get reading this novel? What feelings did the characters have? How were those feelings expressed?

Ideas: What was the main idea of the novel? What other major ideas and concepts were important? What was the author trying to say about those ideas?

Images/Symbols: How did the author use description and imagery in the novel? What sensory images came to your mind? How did the author use symbols?

Structure: What type of writing was this? What literary and style elements did the author use? How did the structure of the writing contribute to the meaning of the novel?
Hamburger Model for Persuasive Writing

Introduction
(State an opinion.)

Reason

Elaboration

Reason

Elaboration

Reason

Elaboration

Conclusion

Sample Persuasive Writing Prompts

- Write a book review on the novel. In your review, state and explain your point of view about the quality of the novel and provide specific details about why you would or would not recommend this book to other students your age.

- Choose one of the following quotes from the novel. Write a persuasive essay in which you discuss whether or not you agree with the statement, using examples from the novel, other books you have read, or your own experiences.

- Create a persuasive essay to argue your point of view on the benefits of imaginary games you create in your mind versus board games or computer games. Include examples from the novel and your own life experiences. (*The Egypt Game*)
Sample Persuasive Writing Prompts

- Charlotte tells Wilbur that it is “a tremendous thing” that he has just been her friend, even though he does not think he has done anything for her. Why is it a tremendous thing to be someone’s friend? Write a persuasive essay to respond to this question. You may use examples from the novel, other books you have read, or your own experiences.

- Each chapter title in Walk Two Moons is carefully chosen and meaningful. Think about the meaning of the titles and how the author uses imagery to appeal to the reader. Choose three chapter titles and write a persuasive essay explaining why you think the author chose them.

Vocabulary Web

WORD:
Source (sentence where you saw the word):
Example:
Analysis
Synonyms:
Definition:
Antonyms:
Part of Speech:
Stems:
Word Families:
Origin:
Concept Study

- Create a concept map exploring how one of these ideas is explored in the novel (e.g., change, hope, time, tradition). Use specific characters and events to demonstrate how the concept is developed. Then write at least two generalizations about the concept.
- Think about how the concept of friendship is explored in *Charlotte’s Web* and other books you have read. Make a chart that compares five good friendships you have seen in books, including Charlotte and Wilbur.

Elements of Reasoning

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-- Paul, 1992
Reasoning in Literature
Adapt to Grade Level

1. **Purpose/Goal**
   - What is the purpose of the poem or story? Why do you think this?

2. **Point of View**
   - What point of view is the poem or story from? Explain why you think this is so?

3. **Implications/Consequences**
   - What are the implications of character behavior at certain points in the story? Give examples that support your answers.

4. **Evidence/Data**
   - What evidence is presented that the central character is motivated by a given emotion? How does the evidence or data contribute to the central issue of the poem or story?

5. **Issue/Problem**
   - What is the central issue of the poem or story?

6. **Inferences**
   - What inferences might be made about the ending of the poem or story based on specific events?

7. **Assumptions**
   - What assumptions does the author make about the concept of change? What in the poem or story led you to your answer?

8. **Concepts/Ideas**
   - What concepts are central to understanding the story? What do you understand about these concepts? For example, what generalizations about the concept of change can be made about the poem or story?

**Other Sample Activities**

- Be a character detective
- Design an advertisement, news article, or TV news report
- Analyze imagery/setting descriptions
- Venn diagrams to compare characters
- Write letters/act out scenes as characters
Interdisciplinary Connections and Research

- Suggestions for additional readings for comparison and other types of analysis
  - Author studies
  - Genre studies
  - Theme studies
- Issue-based research activities tied to novel content
- Extensions to other content areas

Sample Interdisciplinary/Research Activities

- In chapter 5, Charlotte explains to Wilbur how spiders help to control the bug population. Find out more about different kinds of spiders and how they interact with other living things in the ecosystem. Write a persuasive essay sharing what you discovered to help people who say they hate spiders understand these creatures better. *(Charlotte’s Web)*
Sample Interdisciplinary/Research Activities

- Explore American landscape and seascape painting to find pictures of the prairie and pictures of the sea. Choose two or three of each type that you especially like, and share them with the class with an explanation of your choices. Also, create a painting or other visual artwork showing your own vision of the landscapes in the novel. *(Sarah, Plain and Tall)*

Sample Interdisciplinary/Research Activities

- Solomon was not allowed to have a cat or dog, or to paint his walls. Why do some homes have these rules? Contact a real estate office and find out: What homes have these rules? Why are they in place? What homes do not have these rules and why? Make a chart to show your findings. Write a paragraph telling what you can conclude, or learn, from your findings. *(An Angel for Solomon Singer)*
Aligning with Goals

- Consider skills required by each activity
- Prepare chart
- Revisit goals with limited attention
- Prepare assignment structure and assessments to reflect goal attention

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Assignment Options

- Teacher-led emphasis
  - Teacher-led discussion of questions, 1-3 assigned for journal response
  - Required and choice assignments
- Small group emphasis
  - Small-group question discussion, 4-5 completed in writing
  - Group and individual assignments
- Individual emphasis
  - Written response to 2-3 questions per category
  - Required and choice assignments
Keep in Mind

- Variety
- Opportunities for student choice
- Varied levels of questions and activities
- Multiple modes of learning and product development
- Sources of evidence for student learning
- Check resources thoroughly

Key Web Sites

- [http://www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org) (Internet Public Library)
- [http://www.virtualsalt.com/litterms.htm](http://www.virtualsalt.com/litterms.htm) (a glossary of literary terms)
- [http://www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com) (Merriam-Webster site)
- [http://www.cfge.wm.edu](http://www.cfge.wm.edu) (Center for Gifted Education – with sample Navigators)
Reading Resources

- **International Children’s Digital Library**
  [http://www.icdlbooks.org](http://www.icdlbooks.org)
  The goal of ICDL is to create a digital library of more than 10,000 books in at least 100 languages that is freely available to children, teachers, librarians, parents, and scholars throughout the world via the Internet.

- **Storyline Online**
  [http://www.bookpals.net/storyline/index.html](http://www.bookpals.net/storyline/index.html)
  View videos of noted actors reading popular picture books. Sponsored by the *Screen Actors Guild Foundation*.

E-Book Resources

- **Collection of Children’s eBooks Online from NYC Public Library**
  [http://kids.nypl.org/reading/Childrensebooks.cfm](http://kids.nypl.org/reading/Childrensebooks.cfm)

- **Tumblebooks from the NYC Public Library**

- **Library of Congress**
  [http://read.gov](http://read.gov)
Reading Resources

- **Just One More Book! Children’s Book Podcast**
  http://www.justonemorebook.com
  Listen to audio files of children’s book reviews and interviews with authors, illustrators, editors, publishers, teachers, librarians and more.

- **Google Lit Trips**
  http://googlelittrips.org
  Teacher created Google Earth tours based on the actual locations mentioned in a variety of literary works. Site is categorized by according to grade level.

Authors’ Blogs

- http://readergirlz.blogspot.com

- http://madwomanintheforest.com/
  (Laurie Halse Anderson)

  (Mem Fox)

- http://www.bethanyroberts.com/childrensbookauthorsA-Z.htm#-C
Writing

Flickr Writing Prompts

http://www.flickr.com
Writing Sites

- **Young Writers Workshop**

  Young Writers Workshop encourages creativity by providing printable story starters for children in preschool and primary grades.
Other Writing Sites

- **Pixton**
  
  [http://pixton.com](http://pixton.com)
  
  Create your own interactive web comic.

- **Make Beliefs Comix**
  
  [http://www.makebeliefscomix.com](http://www.makebeliefscomix.com)
  
  Students can create their own comic strips on this site that offers animal and human characters with different moods, thought and talk balloons to fill in with words in English or Spanish, and story prompts. After creating their comic strips, students can print them or email them to friends or family.

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Navigators link: