

Case Study: Will

Literacy Learner Analysis

TE846

June 26, 2013

Background and Reason for Project Focus

Literacy is an important component in education and the world around us. We use literacy skills in all that we do each and every day from communicating to finding our way around. Literacy is not only just reading and writing, but can be found in all content areas. For example, in math, literacy can be described as finding meaning and reading the symbols in an equation. Many students struggle with literacy at all levels and this can have detrimental effects on all areas of their life due to the fact that literacy is found everywhere. Motivation plays a huge part in students' literacy skills. As stated by Gambrell, Malloy, and Mazzoni (2011), "motivation often makes the difference between superficial and shallow learning and learning that is deep and internalized...Students need both the *skill* and the *will* to become competent and motivated readers" (p. 22). In many cases if students are not motivated and engaged, they will struggle and in some cases fall behind in their literacy skills.

Home and Family

Will is 13, in 7th grade and reads at a grade 7.3 reading level assessed using aimsweb and STAR testing. He is a white, male from a small town in mid-Michigan. His parents are very well educated; his mother is the district's Librarian and Instructional Technologist and has 3 masters' degrees. His father is a small business owner and has a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University. He has one older sister who is going to be a junior in high school next fall. Even though Will's mother has a high level of education, she does not enjoy reading for pleasure. Will's sister does not read very often either unless it is for school. Will does not enjoy reading and therefore does not read very often at home and is also struggling with comprehension.

Emotional Climate and Literacy History

Will does pretty well with his literacy skills. He does not read quickly, but does well when he reads. When asked, Will said he did not like to read out loud. He does not enjoy writing and wrote on his writing survey that he was an “average writer for [his] age.” He is a good writer but sometimes struggles with longer writing assignments and prefers short writing assignments. Will reads slowly and does not read much outside of class. Will understands the importance of being a good writer as a necessity as an adult. Although Will does well with his literacy skills, he does not enjoy reading or writing.

When Will was younger and learning to read, his parents would read to him at home but they do not do this anymore now that he knows how to read. Will attended Catholic school until he was in the 6th grade and said that he “learned how to write in elementary school in English class.” Both parents have college degrees but do not enjoy reading when they do not have to. Will’s mother does not enjoy reading unless it is required for her job or classes. Through reading and writing inventories Will shared that he liked to read and write only when it was something that sparked his interest. I used Will’s interests to help develop each lesson – in this case I was considering the interests of the student, one of the best practices for motivating students to read (Guthrie, 2011, p. 177-178).

Tests and Summary of Results

I used reading (Appendix C and D) and writing (Appendix E and F) inventories to find out what Will’s thoughts were about reading and writing and where his areas of interest are. I kept his interests in mind as I constructed the lesson plans I would use.

Will was assessed with aimsweb and STAR testing before the lessons were given to find his reading and comprehension levels and these levels were used as a guideline in developing each lesson.

Will was given a pre-test on both stories; *The Secret* and *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* by having him write a journal entry that described his feelings on living in space that connected to *The Secret* and what it would be like to be a soldier during the Civil War that connected to *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh*. I wanted him to experience a basic introduction to the background and themes that are connected to each time period – the future and the Civil War. These pre-tests assessed previous knowledge relevant to the story as “Prior knowledge is the foundation upon which new meaning (or learning) is built” (Gambrell, Malloy, and Mazzoni, 2011, p. 25) This allowed me to evaluate where Will was at when it came to certain themes and adapt lessons in order to help Will make the connections to the story – even when they may not be very easy to identify.

For the post-test, I had Will complete a series of multiple choice questions for *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* and a series of short answer questions for *The Secret*. I felt that these assessment instruments were necessary due to the fact that the first lesson dealt with multiple choice questions that would demonstrate reading comprehension at a basic level and the short answer questions used for the second lesson would demonstrate a more sophisticated level of comprehension that demonstrated different levels of understanding that would give me a much closer understanding of where he would stand regarding his comprehension. This assessment could only be completed by having the student express their thoughts about the story through short answer and personal ideas.

The Drummer Boy of Shiloh pre-test journal entry asked the student to describe what it would be like to be a soldier during the Civil War. The aim of this assignment was to have the student associate the event with the fear experienced by the young soldiers like Joby in the story. Will's journal entry is as follows:

Question: *What would life be like for a soldier during the Civil War? How do you think they felt before they went into battle? Why would they feel that way?*

Will's Response:

"It would be scary going into violent battle. A soldier knows that he could die and he wants to get back to his family. The soldier might also be disappointed that he was fighting soldiers from his own country."

The Drummer Boy of Shiloh post-test assignment included multiple-choice questions. After Will read the story he was then expected to answer a series of multiple choice questions to display his comprehension for the key themes symbolized and demonstrated throughout the text. I wanted to start him with a simple multiple choice style to get an idea of how the author identified themes and important ideas from the story before moving on to a more difficult selection with short answer questions. Will was able to answer all of the multiple-choice questions correctly. Most importantly, he identified the central themes of fear, personal courage, and "the heart of the army" symbolism correctly.

The Secret pre-test journal entry asked Will to describe what it would be like to live in space. The goal of this section was for him to see that we take a lot of natural resources for granted compared to the scarcity of resources while living on the moon – an idea that Arthur C. Clarke would explain during the story. The journal also helped

me to identify if he thought it would be a great experience to live on the moon, or if he did not think it would be special. Will's journal entry is as follows:

Question: *What would life be like on the moon? How would it differ from living on Earth?*

Will's Response:

"Life would be very different on the moon. Everyone would always have to wear a space suit. This would make everyday things eating, showering, and getting dressed very hard. Unlike life on Earth you could not go to the park and see all of the different animals. Every were on the moon is the same. On Earth, you can go places and see different landscapes. You would also have to get used to the lower gravity. Life on the moon would not be fun."

The Secret post-test short answer questions were designed to see how Will would handle a much more complicated message compared to *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh*. The questions were designed so he could see a number of themes and ethical dilemmas experienced by the main character that worked as a journalist. Among a number of things the short answer questions were meant to explore scarcity, overpopulation, and the problems that a society experiences when humans have exhausted the natural resources of the Earth and begin competing for a better life on another world where simple existence is a miracle. Above all, he needed to explore an ethical dilemma and explain what choice he would make if he were the journalist in the story. Will did a good job with this assignment. He understood the basic themes and dilemmas presented during the story, but he could have gone a little farther when it came to explaining his reasoning for writing about the secret on the moon and the characters' emotions.

Lesson Plans

(Full Lesson Plans – Appendix A and B)

	<p>Objectives: Students will read and analyze <i>The Drummer Boy of Shiloh</i> by Ray Bradbury. The lesson's focus will be on comprehension and new vocabulary and the identification of key plot points and the overall themes of the short story.</p> <p>Common Core</p> <p>RL 8.2 RL 8.3 RL 8.4</p>	<p>Instructional materials</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I-pad or other research materials about the Civil War 2. Copy of the story <i>The Drummer Boy of Shiloh</i> 3. Comprehension questions 4. Short answer essays. 5. I-pad/dictionary for looking up words 	<p>On-going assessment</p> <p>The student must successfully answer the list of comprehension question and be able to identify the necessary themes while also making personal connections to their own life.</p>
<p>Comprehension/ Vocabulary</p> <p>June 10, 2013</p>	<p>Objectives: Students will read and analyze <i>The Secret</i> by Arthur C. Clarke. The lesson's focus will be on comprehension and new vocabulary and the identification of key plot points and the overall themes of the short story.</p> <p>Common Core</p> <p>RL 8.2 RL 8.3 RL 8.4</p>	<p>Instructional materials</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copy of the story <i>The Drummer Boy of Shiloh</i> 2. Comprehension questions 3. Short answer essays. 4. I-pad/dictionary for looking up words 	<p>On-going assessment</p> <p>The student must successfully answer the list of comprehension question and be able to identify the necessary themes while also making personal connections to their own life.</p>

Reflections

The assignments and assessments allowed me to make a professional evaluation of the student's comprehension because he is going into the eighth grade and the district he attends requires him to read and analyze the two selected stories at the beginning of his academic year. The assessments are those used by the current curriculum plan for his language arts course and would indicate a satisfactory performance when they are answered correctly.

The reading instruction made a meaningful contribution by identifying how to select assignments based on the student's personal preferences. For instance, Will was exposed to "historical" and "classic" short stories that were connected to time periods that aim at a young man's imagination, but require him to go a little further and analyze how the characters feel and what kind of decisions they should make. I feel that it was a smart move to select these stories based on his conversations with me that are documented in this paper. For instance, Will has a great love of adventure and the future and the idea of reading a complicated story based in space and in the future allowed him to read about something he found fascinating through previous science courses and extra activities at home such as building with Lego blocks that dealt with adventures in outer space. When a student struggles with reading and making attachments to literacy they need to be challenged to see the connections to their own lives and their imaginations to see that reading and writing can actually be fun when it deals with something they love. This is a direct connection to Guthrie's (2011) idea that relevance is a best practice in motivating students (p. 183-184). I feel that Will did much better with *The Secret* because of the space background, but the history associated

with *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* was not as exciting to him. In short, I did not see his eyes light up when I mentioned the Civil War as they did when I mentioned living on the moon. The instruction I offered allowed him to take an adventurous background and dive into the themes and ethical dilemmas that he may not have experienced if he found the basic setting of the story as boring.

In order to allow him to be successful during the lesson he was sitting next to me in order to help him with any ideas or words he may have struggled with. I think it helped him through my constant reassurance because he was exposed to literature with settings that stirred his imagination, but due to the fact that they were “older” styles of writing he may have been intimidated and easily distracted if I wasn’t there to guide him through difficult parts. I also focused on vocabulary by having Will identify words that he did not know as he read through each story. We would discuss the meaning in the text and look up words if he needed more of an explanation of the meaning of the word. “Vocabulary impacts comprehension” meaning that comprehension will be greater if the student understands the meaning of the words they are reading (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011, p. 74). These teaching methods are extremely well received by students due to the fact that the students are able to “take on” a challenging style of literature and find something enjoyable that they did not think would be at first impression.

The critical moments and choices involved in the two lessons rested with the styles of questions asked while also having Will reach beyond his current comfort zone of writing and reading. For example, he had to answer multiple-choice questions for the first story, *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* that introduced him to the ideas of themes,

symbolism, and ideas that forced him to think beyond the surface of the story and think about topics while thinking about those ideas. The multiple-choice questions and discussion prepared him for the complicated short answers in *The Secret*. The other important part of the lesson was produced by the journal writing exercise that allowed him to be introduced to the theme of the story while placing him in the situation and allowing him a connection to the characters during the story.

I believe that the instructional goals were reached for both stories. The evidence rests in the short answer questions of *The Secret*, especially when Will understood why the scientists behaved the way they did and were afraid of spreading the news of the longer lifespan on the moon. In addition, Will's understanding of the human need to explore, the way scientific fact is incorporated into science fiction, and the ethical dilemma faced by the journalist demonstrate a satisfactory comprehension. In *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh*, he was able to understand Joby's fear, but also identified Joby's role as "the heart of the army." Ultimately, Will was able to imagine the emotions felt by all of the characters and make the personal connections in order to answer the questions.

In order to improve these lessons I would introduce more materials at the beginning of the lesson. For instance, at the beginning of *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh*, I would have Will watch the first DVD of Ken Burns' *The Civil War* documentary in order to understand the background of the Civil War and the role that young citizens played in the war and have them write a journal entry on the same question. The additional background information would be beneficial for him to understand how Joby felt during the story. The documentary might also grab his attention more than just discussing the

Civil War prior to reading the story. Before Will read *The Secret*, I would have him understand what an ethical dilemma was and a journalist's role in society and why the decision left with the reporter was so important and not as easy to answer as once thought. Overall, these additional resources would allow a closer personal connection to the reading that is needed to improve beyond the surface level of comprehension. Overall, Will demonstrated satisfactory comprehension, but there is still room for improvement with additional introductory sources.

The reading instruction could have been more developmentally appropriate by employing more technology as stated above with the documentary. This would have allowed Will the ability to activate his imagination even more and form a closer relationship with the characters and the problems they were trying to solve. I felt it was necessary for him to begin with the simple story and themes found in *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* and move on to *The Secret*. One story simply dealt with fear and the importance of symbolism during uncertain times while the other story dealt with sophisticated ethical dilemmas and scientific ideas that may have been difficult to understand without first-hand knowledge.

I have discovered that a student must understand the mechanics of a story in order to comprehend what they are reading and writing. The mechanics include vocabulary, theme, setting, background information, and symbolism. For example, Will needed to understand the role that symbolism and the story's themes played in each short story in order to comprehend everything held within the text. Reading is so much more than singular words – students must learn to understand how the combination of words and phrases allows an author to paint a picture and communicate ideas beyond

the surface of the story enabling students to search even further to appreciate the author's message. I believe I was able to do this with Will during his two lessons. Overall, Will learned how to appreciate the hidden meaning of a story, and with additional exposure to similar types of stories his abilities will improve over time.

Recommendations

If I were to compose a "Letter of Recommendation" to the parents it would include the following:

Dear Parents:

It was a joy to work with Will as we explored two short stories in our literature class. Overall, Will is doing an excellent job in class, but I would recommend additional action in a few areas to improve his comprehension as the texts and stories he will read in the future will require additional analytical thought and comprehension. The first strategy must include a daily routine where he reads for fun on topics that he finds interesting and gets him excited about the world around him. For example, Will really enjoyed reading Arthur C. Clarke's *The Secret* because it was set on the moon and described a futuristic world where space travel and moon colonies became a reality. Due to this interest, I would recommend that Will spend time with both fiction and nonfiction dealing with exploration and the future. As he grows older he must begin to challenge himself with stories that are little higher than his current reading level so he can push himself. Another thing that will help Will is to discuss the themes and symbolism found in books that the family is reading together at night. Talk about the character's feelings and emotions while also looking for important lessons found throughout the reading. These exercises will form an understanding that he will employ during his independent reading. Finally, as Will is reading, get in the habit of working on vocabulary and making sure that he understands the words' meanings and definitions. This practice should be practiced in all of his classes including math and science so he works on mastering the "language" of those subjects and works the words into his daily vocabulary.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate in calling or emailing me for help. Again, thank you for the opportunity of working with your son!

Appendix

Appendix A: Lesson Plan #1 for the story *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* by Ray Bradbury

Lesson Plan #1

Date: June 10, 2013

Objective(s) for today's lesson: Students will read and analyze *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* by Ray Bradbury. The lesson's focus will be on comprehension and the identification of key plot points and the overall themes of the short story as well as identifying and learning new vocabulary.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy

RL 8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL 8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

RL 8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Rationale The 8th Grade Curriculum at Owosso Middle School starts the 8th Grade Academic year with a unit based on Short Stories. The goal of this unit is to identify themes while making sure the students connect the plot to sophisticated levels of thought and understanding. Overall, the Short Stories unit focuses the 8th Grade student on themes and prepares them for more complicated novels during the rest of the year.

Materials & supplies needed: This assignment requires each student to have a copy of the story *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* in addition to access to the comprehension questions and short answer essays.

<p><i>Procedures and approximate time allocated for each event</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) (15 minutes) - Introduction to the Civil War and the role that young men in their teens played as soldiers. Ultimately, the historical background necessary to understand the conflict associated between the Union and the Confederacy. 2.) (10 minutes) - Introduce the short story: <i>The Drummer Boy of Shiloh</i> to the students with a brief summary that points out the characters: the drummer boy and the general. While also key points to watch for while reading the story, such as: fear, loyalty, courage, and the role that leadership and experience played on the part of the General. I will also instruct him to stop and circle words that he does not know the meaning of and we will discuss and look up these words. 3.) (35 minutes) - The student will then read the story out loud to me while I observe his reading. Throughout the reading I will stop the student at certain points and ask him questions in order to make sure he understands the setting, the characters and the roles they are playing during the story. This process will continue throughout the story until it is finished. 4.) (10 minutes) - I will then go over the comprehension questions designed for the student that cover the basic plot and the more complicated themes demonstrated throughout the story. 5.) (10 minutes) - Personal Reflection: The student will put himself into the place of the drummer boy and reflect on his emotions and what actions he would take if he faced a similar situation. 	<p>Accommodations: Read passage to student if needed. Give guiding questions to help with comprehension questions if needed. Aid in the looking up of words.</p>
<p><u>Assessment</u></p> <p>The student must successfully answer the list of comprehension question and be able to identify the necessary themes while also making personal connections to their own life.</p>	<p>Accommodations: Read comprehension questions to student if needed. Give guiding questions if needed.</p>

Appendix B: Lesson Plan #2 for the story *The Secret* by Arthur C. Clarke**Lesson Plan #2**

Date: June 17, 2013

Objective(s) for today's lesson: Students will read and analyze *The Secret* by Arthur C. Clarke. The lesson's focus will be on comprehension and the identification of key plot points and the overall themes of the short story as well as identifying and learning new vocabulary.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy

RL 8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL 8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

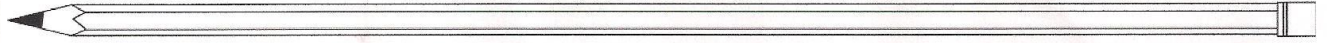
RL 8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Rationale The 8th Grade Curriculum at Owosso Middle School starts the 8th Grade Academic year with a unit based on Short Stories. The goal of this unit is to identify themes while making sure the students connect the plot to sophisticated levels of thought and understanding. Overall, the Short Stories unit focuses the 8th Grade student on themes and prepares them for more complicated novels during the rest of the year.

Materials & supplies needed: This assignment requires each student to have a copy of the story *The Secret* in addition to access to the comprehension questions and short answer essays.

<p><i>Procedures and approximate time allocated for each event</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) (15 minutes) – Discuss travel to the moon and what it would take to live on the moon. 2.) (10 minutes) - Introduce the short story: <i>The Secret</i> to the students with a brief summary that points out the characters. While also key points to watch for while reading the story, such as: fear, loyalty, courage, and the role that leadership and experience played on the part of the General. 3.) (35 minutes) - The student will then read the story out loud to me while I observe his reading. Throughout the reading I will stop the student at certain points and ask him questions in order to make sure he understands the setting, the characters and the roles they are playing during the story. I will also instruct him to stop and circle words that he does not know the meaning of and we will discuss and look up these words. This process will continue throughout the story until it is finished. 4.) (10 minutes) - I will then go over the comprehension questions designed for the student that cover the basic plot and the more complicated themes demonstrated throughout the story. 5.) (10 minutes) - Personal Reflection: The student will put himself into the place of the main character and reflect on his emotions and what actions he would take if he faced a similar situation. 	<p>Accommodations: Read passage to student if needed. Give guiding questions to help with comprehension questions if needed. Aid in the looking up of words.</p>
<p><u>Assessment</u></p> <p>The student must successfully answer the list of comprehension question and be able to identify the necessary themes while also making personal connections to their own life.</p>	<p>Accommodations: Read comprehension questions to student if needed. Give guiding questions if needed.</p>

Appendix C: Reading Attitude Survey



June 3, 2013

Reading Attitude Survey

Directions:

This is a survey that describes how you feel about reading. Please circle the answer that best describes your feelings toward reading.

SD - Strongly Disagree D - Disagree U - Undecided A - Agree SA - Strongly Agree

- P When I have free time, I am more likely to pick up a book than turn on the television.
SD D U A SA
- P One of my favorite pastimes, is walking around a bookstore looking at all the books.
SD D U A SA
- P I like to read but literature is often too difficult to understand and read.
SD D U A SA
- P I only read when I have to.
SD D U A SA
- P I would rather have my teacher tell me what I need to know than read it.
SD D U A SA
- P I have a special spot where I go to read a book.
SD D U A SA
- P I only read magazines and comic books.
SD D U A SA
- P We have a lot of reading material in my home.
SD D U A SA
- P I cannot concentrate long enough to read a book.
SD D U A SA
- P My family never read things while I was growing up.
SD D U A SA



Appendix D: Reading Inventory

Name: [REDACTED] Date: June 3, 2013

Answer the following questions to help me learn about you and about your reading interests.

A. Some activities that I presently enjoy doing are: **(Circle these)**.

B. Some activities that I am interested in trying or watching are: **(Underline these)**

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>jogging</u> | horseback riding | gardening |
| <u>roller skating</u> | <u>tennis</u> | raising animals |
| <u>board games</u> | sewing | showing dogs |
| drawing/painting | listening to music | <u>swimming</u> |
| archery | gymnastics | <u>diving</u> |
| <u>cross-country skiing</u> | ice skating | dancing |
| <u>fishing/hunting</u> | basketball | attending music concerts/shows/raves |
| writing letters | talking to friends | attending theatre |
| writing poems/stories | soccer | watching television |
| acting in plays | <u>golfing</u> | <u>computers</u> |
| carpentry | reading novels | <u>playing card games</u> |
| <u>photography</u> | video games | <u>visiting museums</u> |
| movies | bowling | <u>water skiing</u> |
| <u>downhill skiing</u> | <u>hockey</u> | <u>playing a musical instrument</u> |
| reading newspapers/magazines | volleyball | <u>skateboarding</u> |
| cheerleading | reading nonfiction | <u>snowshoeing</u> |
| reading poetry | <u>track and field</u> | arts and crafts |
| sculpture/pottery | <u>cooking</u> | martial arts |
| <u>backpacking/hiking</u> | singing | <u>canoeing/boating</u> |
| | | playing pool |

C. Other activities that I enjoy or would like to try are:
I would like to try
mountain biking.

D. From the selections I have made above, the three I like the most, in order of preferences are:

- 1) downhill skiing
- 2) jogging
- 3) cross-country skiing

E. One thing that I learned about myself from taking this interest/attitude inventory is:

There are lots of things I want to try.

F. The kind of books I most like to read are: (Circle your three favorite types).

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| poetry | mystery |
| <u>science fiction</u> | fantasy |
| romance | sports |
| nonfiction | science |
| <u>autobiography/biography</u> | historical fiction |
| horror | myths/legends |
| <u>adventure</u> | others _____ |

G. The newspapers I read are:

none

H. The sections of the newspaper I prefer are: (Check your choices).

- | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> sports | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> comics | <input type="checkbox"/> editorials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> news articles | <input type="checkbox"/> other (list) _____ | |

I. The magazines I read are: lego club magazines.

J. Answer each of the following questions briefly.

- 1) I have pets: Yes No
 What kind? I have two dogs and a cat.
- 2) I collect the following things: _____
- 3) I own books: Yes No
 Approximately how many? 30
 I borrow books from the library: Yes No
 Approximately how many each week? _____
- 4) I enjoy having someone read to me: Yes No
- 5) When asked to read aloud I feel: sad, because I do not like to read aloud
- 6) My favourite school subject is: Math
 Reason: I am good at math.
- 7) The best book I have ever read is: The BFG is my favorite book.
 Reason: It kept my interested.

Appendix E: Writing Attitude Survey

WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY

Student's Name:

[REDACTED]

Date: June 3, 2013

Interviewer: _____

Directions: Ask the student the questions and give him/her time to think. Prompt the child to give more detailed answers. Ask the child to explain why or give an example.

How do you feel about writing? I do not enjoy writing.

When and how did you learn to write? I learned how to write in elementary school in English class

What kinds of things do you write at school? We write poetry, summaries, and many other types of writing

What kinds of writing do you do at home? I write very little at home, but when I do it is for homework. I write summaries and answer story problems

Why do you think it's important to be a good writer? Because you may need to write when you have job as an adult.

How do you feel when you are asked to share your writing with others? I don't like to share writing.

How do you feel when others share their writing with you? I feel good when someone shares an interesting story.

How do you feel about yourself as a writer? I feel I am an average writer for my age.

Appendix F: Writer's Profile

WRITER'S PROFILE

FOR
Name [REDACTED] Date June 3, 2013

This writer's profile will help you discover what kind of writer you are. After you complete it, keep it in your writing book. Remember that you will look at it from time to time. Remember everyone writes differently. You must write the way that works best for you and set goals that will improve the writer in you.

Put a check in the box that best describes you and your writing style.

	Sometimes	Always	Never
1. I like to make a list of ideas before I write.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I like to talk about my ideas with a friend before I write.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Drawing a picture helps me get ideas for writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. I like to write about things I have learned.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I like to write about things that have happened to me.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I write out my piece quickly from start to finish, then make changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. It helps to have someone read what I wrote before I make changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. My final version might be very different from my first version.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I like others to see or hear what I wrote.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I like to know what others think about my writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

GO.36.5.a

Put a check next to the statements that describe you.

I like to write

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> quickly. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> slowly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> with noise around. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in a quiet place. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> anytime. | <input type="checkbox"/> at a special time. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> anyplace. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in a special place. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> with a pencil or pen. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> on a computer. |

Write a paragraph about the following:

What I like about my writing I like that my writing
is short and interesting. I do not
get bored if I am reading my story.
I like my writing because it is about
things I like.

Appendix G: Pre-Assessment Journal Entries

June 10, 2013

Journal question

The Drummer Boy of Shiloh

What would life be like for a soldier during the Civil War? How do you think they felt before they went into battle? Why would they feel that way?

It would be scary going into a violent battle. A soldier knows that he could die and he wants to get back to his family. The soldier might also be disappointed that he was fighting soldiers from his own country.

June 17, 2013

Journal question

The Secret

What would life be like on the moon? How would it differ from living on Earth?

Life would be very different on the moon. Everyone would always have to wear a space suit. This would make everyday things eating, showering, and getting dressed very hard. Unlike life on Earth you could not go to the park and see all of the different animals. Every where on the moon is the same. On Earth, you can go places and see different landscapes. You would also have to get used to the lower gravity. Life on the moon would not be fun.

Appendix H: *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* by Ray Bradbury and comprehension questions**The Drummer Boy of Shiloh****by Ray Bradbury**

In the April night, more than once, blossoms fell from the orchard trees and lit with rustling taps on the drumskin. At midnight a peach stone left miraculously on a branch through winter, flicked by a bird, fell swift and unseen, struck once, like panic, which jerked the boy upright. In silence he listened to his own heart ruffle away, at last gone from his ears and back in his chest again. After that, he turned the drum on its side, where its great lunar face peered at him whenever he opened his eyes. His face, alert or at rest, was solemn. It was indeed a solemn time and a solemn night for a boy just turned fourteen in the peach field near the Owl Creek not far from the church at Shiloh.

“ . . . thirty-one, thirty-two, thirty-three . . . ”

Unable to see, he stopped counting. Beyond the third-three familiar shadows, forty thousand men, exhausted by nervous expectation, unable to sleep for romantic dreams of battles yet unfought, lay crazily

askew in their uniforms. A mile yet farther on, another army was strewn helter-skelter, turning slow, basting themselves with the thought of what they would do when the time came: a leap, a yell, a blind plunge their strategy, raw youth their protection and benediction. Now and again the boy heard a vast wind come up, that gently stirred the air. But he knew that it was, the army here, the army there, whispering to itself in the dark. Some men talking to others, others murmuring to themselves, and all so quiet it was like a natural element arisen from south or north with the motion of the earth toward dawn. What the men whispered the boy could only guess, and he guessed that it was: Me. I'm the one. I'm the one of all the rest won't die. I'll live through it. I'll go home. The band will play. And I'll be there to hear it. Yes, thought the boy, that's all very well for them, they can give as good as they get! For with the careless bones of the young men harvested by night and bindled around campfires were the similarly strewn steel bones of their rifles, with bayonets fixed like eternal lightning lost in the orchard grass. Me, thought the boy, I got only a drum, two sticks to beat it, and no shield. There wasn't a man-boy on this ground tonight did not have a shield he cast, riveted or carved himself on his way to his first attack,

compounded of remote but nonetheless firm and fiery family devotion, flag-blown patriotism and cocksure immortality strengthened by the touchstone of very real gunpowder, ramrod, minieball and flint. But without these last the boy felt his family move yet farther off away in the dark, as if one of those great prairie-burning trains had chanted them away never to return, leaving him with this drum which was worse than a toy in the game to be played tomorrow or someday much too soon. The boy turned on his side. A moth brushed his face, but it was peach blossom. A peach blossom flicked him, but it was a moth. Nothing staying put. Nothing had a name. Nothing was as it once was. If he lay very still, when the dawn came up and the soldiers put on their bravery with their caps, perhaps they might go away, the war with them, and not notice him lying small here, no more than a toy himself.

“Well, by God, now,” said a voice.

The boy shut up his eyes, to hide inside himself, but it was too late. Someone, walking by in the night, stood over him.

“Well,” said the voice quietly, “here’s a soldier crying before the fight. Good. Get it over. Won’t be time once it all starts.”

And the voice was about to move on when the boy, startled, touched the drum at his elbow. The man above, hearing this, stopped. The boy could feel his eyes, sense him slowly bending near. A hand must have come down out of the night, for there was a little rat-tat as the fingernails brushed and the man’s breath fanned his face.

“Why, it’s the drummer boy, isn’t it?”

The boy nodded, not knowing if his nod was seen. “Sir, is that you?” he said.

“I assume it is.” The man’s knees cracked as he bent still closer.

He smelled as all fathers should smell, of salt sweat, ginger tobacco, horse and boot leather, and the earth he walked upon. He had many eyes. No, not eyes, brass buttons that watched the boy. He could only be, and was, the General.

“What’s your name, boy?” he asked.

“Joby,” whispered the boy, starting to sit up.

“All right, Joby, don’t stir.” A hand pressed his chest gently, and the boy relaxed.

“How long you been with us, Joby?”

“Three weeks, sir.”

“Run off from home or joined legitimately, boy?”

Silence.

“Damn-fool question,” said the General. “Do you save yet, boy? Even more of a damn-fool, There’s your cheek, fell right off the tree overhead. And the others here not much older. Raw, raw, damn raw, the lot of you. You ready for tomorrow or the next day, Joby?”

“I think so, sir.”

“You want to cry some more, go on ahead. I did the same last night.”

“*You*, sir?”

“God’s truth. Thinking of everything ahead. Both sides figuring the other side will just give up, and soon, the war done in weeks, and us all home. Well, that’s not how it’s going to be. And maybe that’s why I cried.”

“Yes, sir,” said Joby.

The General must have taken out a cigar now, for the dark was suddenly filled with the Indian smell of tobacco unlit as yet, but chewed as the main thought what next to say.

“It’s going to be a crazy time,” said the General. “Counting both sides, there’s a hundred thousand men, give or take a few thousand out there tonight, not one as can spit a sparrow off a tree, or knows a horse clod from a minnieball. Stand up, bare the breast, ask to be a target, thank

them and sit down, that's us, that's them. We should turn tail and train four months, they should to the same. But here we are, taken with spring fever and thinking it blood lust, taking our sulphur with cannons instead of with molasses as it should be, going to be a hero, going to live forever. And I can see all of them over there nodding agreement, save the other way around. It's wrong, boy, it's wrong as a head put on hind side front and a man marching backward through life. It will be a double massacre if one of their itchy generals decides to picnic his lads on our grass. More innocents will get shot out of pure Cherokee enthusiasm than ever got shot before. Owl Creek was full of boys splashing around in the noonday sun just a few hours ago. I fear it will be full of boys again, just floating, at sundown tomorrow, not caring where the tide takes them."

The General stopped and made a little pile of winter leaves and twigs in the darkness, as if he might at any moment strike fire to them to see his way through the coming days when the sun might not show its face because of what was happening here and just beyond.

The boy watched the hand stirring the leaves and opened his lips to say something, but did not say it. The General heard the boy's breath and spoke himself.

"Why am I telling you this? That's what you wanted to ask, eh? Well, when you got a bunch of wild horses on a loose rain somewhere, somehow you got to bring order, rein them in. These lads, fresh out of the milkshed, don't know what I know, and I can't tell them: men actually die, in war. So each is his own army. I got to make *one* army of them. And for that, boy, I need you."

"Me!" The boy's lips barely twitched.

"Now, boy," said the General quietly, "you are the heart of the army. Think of that. You're the heart of the army. Listen, now."

And, lying there, Joby listened.

And the General spoke on.

If he, Joby, beat slow tomorrow, the heart would beat slow in the men. They would lag by the wayside. They would drowse in the fields on their muskets. They would sleep forever, after that,

in those same fields, their hearts slowed by a drummer boy and stopped by enemy lead. But if he beat a sure, steady, ever faster rhythm, then, then their knees would come up in a long line over that hill, one knee after the other, like a wave on the ocean shore! Had he seen the ocean ever? Seen the waves rolling in like a well-ordered cavalry charge to the sand? Well, that was it, that's what he wanted, that's what he needed! Joby was his right hand and his left. He gave the orders, but Joby set the pace! So bring the right knee up and the right foot out and the left knee up and the left foot out. One following the other in good time, in brisk time. Move the blood up the body and make the head proud and the spine stiff and the jaw resolute. Focus the eye and set the teeth, flare the nostrils and tighten the hands, put steel armor all over the men, for blood moving fast in them does indeed make men feel as if they'd put on steel. He must keep at it, at it! Long and steady, steady and long! Then, even though shot or torn, those wounds got in hot blood -- in blood he'd helped stir -- would feel less pain. If their blood was cold, it would be more than slaughter, it would be murderous nightmare and pain best not told and no one to guess.

The General spoke and stopped, letting his break slack off. Then, after a moment, he said, "So there you are, that's it. Will you do that, boy? Do you now know you're general of the army when the General's left behind?"

The boy nodded mutely.

"You'll run them through for me then, boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good. And, God willing, many nights from tonight, many years from now, when you're as old or far much older than me, when they ask you what you did in this awful time, you will tell them -- one part humble and one part proud -- 'I was the drummer boy at the battle of Owl Creek,' or the Tennessee River, or maybe they'll just name it after the church there. 'I was the drummer boy at Shiloh.' Who will ever hear those words and not know you, boy, or what you thought this night, or what you'll think tomorrow or the next day when we must get up on our legs and *move!*'"

The General stood up. "Well, then. God bless you, boy. Good night."

“Good night, sir.”

And, tobacco, brass, boot polish, salt sweat and leather, the man moved away through the grass.

John lay for a moment, staring but unable to see where the man had gone. He swallowed. He wiped his eyes. He cleared his throat. He settled himself. Then, at last, very slowly and firmly, he turned the drum so that it faced up toward the sky. He lay next to it, his arm around it, feeling the tremor, the touch, the muted thunder as, all the rest of the April night in the year 1862, near the Tennessee River, not far from the Owl Creek, very close to the church named Shiloh, the peach blossoms fell on the drum.

1. This story takes place
 - a. Before the battle
 - b. During the battle
 - c. After the battle

2. When he lays under the tree, Joby feels...
 - a. Excited about the upcoming battle.
 - b. Angry that he had to go to war.
 - c. Lonely and nervous.

3. Why is the drummer boy so important?
 - a. The other side won't want to shoot him because he's a child.
 - b. He keeps the rhythm of the soldiers with his drum.
 - c. His drumming distracts the other side.

4. The main conflict of the story is?
 - a. Internal: Joby's fear.
 - b. External: Joby vs. the general
 - c. External: Joby vs. the other soldiers

5. When is the climax of the story?
 - a. When the general orders Joby home
 - b. When Joby finds the drum

- c) When the general tells Joby about the importance of the drummer.
6. Which of the following could be a theme of this story?
- a) Sometimes things that seem to be the least important are the most valuable.
 - b. There is no shame in giving up when you're sure to be defeated.
 - c. Although war is terrible, it is still necessary.
7. Which of the following could be the symbolism of the drum?
- a. The heart of the army
 - b. The senselessness of war
 - c. A musical instrument

Appendix I: *The Secret* by Arthur C. Clarke and comprehension questions

The Secret by Arthur C. Clarke

Henry Cooper had been on the Moon for almost two weeks before he discovered that something was wrong. At first it was only an ill-defined suspicion, the sort of hunch that a hard-headed science reporter would not take too seriously. He had come here, after all, at the United Nations Spaced Administration's own request. UNSA had always been hot on public relations - especially just before budget time, when an overcrowded world was screaming for more roads and schools and sea farms, and complaining about the billions being poured into space.

So here he was, doing the lunar circuit for the second time, and beaming back two thousand words of copy a day. Although the novelty had worn off, there still remained the wonder and mystery of a world as big as Africa, thoroughly mapped, yet almost completely unexplored. A stone's throw away from the pressure domes, the labs, the spaceports, was a yawning emptiness that would challenge humankind for centuries to come.

Some parts of the Moon were almost too familiar, of course. Who had not seen that dusty scar on the Mare Imbrium with its gleaming metal plyon and the plaque that announced in the official languages of Earth:

Luna 2 reached
the Moon - it was
an unmanned
spacecraft launched by
the Soviet Union (Russia)

ON THIS SPOT
AT 2001 UT
13 SEPTEMBER 1959
THE FIRST MAN-MADE OBJECT
REACHED ANOTHER WORLD

Cooper had visited the grave of Lunik II - and the most famous tomb of the men who had come after it. But these things belonged to the past; already, like Columbus and the Wright brothers, they were receding into history. What concerned him now was the future.

When he had landed at Archimedes Spaceport, the Chief Administrator had been obviously glad to see him, and had shown a personal interest in his tour. Transportation, accommodation, and official guide were all arranged. He could go anywhere he liked, ask any questions he pleased. UNSA trusted him, for his stories had always been accurate, his attitudes friendly. Yet the tour had gone sour; he did not know why, but he was going to find out.

He reached for the phone and said: "Operator? . . . Please get me the Police Department. I want to speak to the Inspector General."

Presumably Chandra Coomaraswamy possessed a uniform, but Cooper had never seen him wearing it. They met, as arranged, at the entrance to the little park that was Plato City's chief pride and joy. At this time in the morning of the artificial twenty-four-hour "day" it was almost deserted, and they could talk without interruption.

As they walked along the narrow gravel paths, they chatted about old times, the friends they had known at college together, the latest developments in interplanetary politics. They had reached the middle of the park, under the exact center of the great blue-painted dome, when Cooper came to the point.

"You know everything that's happening on the Moon, Chandra," he said. "And you know that I'm here to do a series for UNSA - hope to make a book out of it when I get back to Earth. So why should people be trying to hide things from me?"

It was impossible to hurry Chandra. He always took his time to answer questions, and his few words escaped with difficulty around the stem of his hand-carved Bavarian pipe.

"What people?" he asked at length.

"You've really no idea?"

The Inspector General shook his head.

"Not the faintest," he answered; and Cooper knew that he was telling the truth. Chandra might be silent, but he would not lie.

"I was afraid you'd say that. Well, if you don't know any more than I do, here's the only clue I have - and it frightens me. Medical Research is trying to keep me at arm's length."

"Hmmm, " replied Chandra, taking his pipe from his mouth and looking at it thoughtfully.

"Is that all you have to say?"

"You haven't given me much to work on. Remember, I'm only a cop; I lack your vivid journalistic imagination."

"All I can tell you is that the higher I get in Medical Research, the colder the atmosphere becomes. Last time I was here, everyone was very friendly, and gave me some fine stories. But now, I can't even meet the Director. He's always too busy, or on the other side of the Moon. Anyway, what sort of man is he?"

"Dr. Hastings? Prickly little character. Very competent, but not easy to work with."

"What could he be trying to hide?"

"Knowing you, I'm sure you have some interesting theories."

"Oh, I thought of narcotics, and fraud, and political conspiracies - but they don't make sense, in these days. So what's left scares the heck out of me."

Chandra's eyebrows signaled a silent question mark.

"Interplanetary plague," said Cooper bluntly.

"I thought that was impossible."

"Yes - I've written articles myself proving that the life forms of other planets have such alien chemistries that they can't react with us, and that all our microbes and bugs took millions of years to adapt to our bodies. But I've always wondered if it was true. Suppose a ship has come back from Mars, say, with something *really* vicious - and the doctors can't cope with it?"

There was a long silence. Then Chandra said: "I'll start investigating. I don't like it, either, for here's an item you probably don't know. There were three nervous breakdowns in the Medical Division last month - and that's very, very unusual."

He glanced at his watch, then at the false sky, which seemed so distant, yet was only two hundred feet above their heads.

"We'd better get moving," he said. "The morning shower's due in five minutes."

The call came two weeks later in the middle of the night - the real lunar night. By Plato City time, it was Sunday morning.

"Henry? . . . Chandra here. Can you meet me in half an hour at air lock five? . . . Good. I'll see you."

This was it, Cooper knew. Air lock five meant they were going outside the dome. Chandra had found something.

The presence of the police driver restricted conversation as the tractor moved away from the city along the road roughly bulldozed across the ash and pumice. Low in the south, Earth was almost full, casting a brilliant blue-green light over the infernal landscape. However hard one tried, Cooper told himself, it was difficult to make the Moon appear glamorous. But nature guards her greatest secrets well; to such places men must come to find them.

The multiple domes of the city dropped below the sharply curved horizon. Presently, the tractor turned aside from the main road to follow a scarcely visible trail. Ten minutes later,

Cooper saw a single glittering hemisphere of rock. Another vehicle, bearing a red cross, was parked beside the entrance. It seemed there they were not the only visitors.

Nor were they unexpected. As they drew up to the dome, the flexible tube of the air-lock coupling groped out toward them and snapped into place against the tractor's outer hull. There was a brief hissing as pressures equalized. Then Cooper followed Chandra into the building.

The air-lock operator led them along curving corridors and radial passageways toward the center of the dome. Sometimes they caught glimpses of laboratories, scientific instruments, computers - all perfectly ordinary, and all deserted on this Sunday morning. They must have reached the heart of the building, Cooper told himself, when their guide ushered them into a large circular chamber and shut the door softly behind them.

It was a small zoo. All around them were cages, tanks, jars containing a wide selection of the fauna and flora of Earth. Waiting at its center was a short, gray-haired man, looking very worried, and very unhappy.

"Dr. Hastings," said Coomaraswamy, "meet Mr. Cooper." The Inspector General turned to his companion and added, "I've convinced the Doctor that there's only one way to keep you quiet - and that's to tell you everything."

"Frankly," said Hastings, "I'm not sure if I care anymore." His voice was unsteady, barely under control, and Cooper thought, Hello! There's another breakdown on the way.

The scientist wasted no time on such formalities as shaking hands. He walked to one of the cages, took out a small bundle of fur, and held it toward Cooper.

"Do you know what this is?" he asked abruptly.

"Of course. A hamster - the commonest lab animal."

"Yes," said Hastings. "A perfectly ordinary golden hamster. Except that this one is five years old - like all the others in this cage."

"Well? What's odd about that?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing at all . . . except for the fact that hamsters live for only two years. And we have some here that are getting on for ten."

For a moment no one spoke; but the room was not silent. It was full of rustlings and slitherings and scratchings, of faint whimpers and tiny animal cries. Then Cooper whispered, "My God - you've found a way of prolonging life!"

"No," retorted Hastings. "We've not found it. The Moon has given it to us . . . as we might have expected, if we'd looked in front of our noses." He seemed to have gained control over his emotions - as if he was once more the pure scientist, fascinated by a discovery for its own sake and heedless of its implications.

"On Earth," he said, "we spend our whole lives fighting gravity. It wears down our muscles, pulls our stomachs out of shape. In seventy years, how many tons of blood does the heart life through how many miles? And all that work, all that strain is reduced to a sixth here on the Moon, where a one-hundred-and-eighty- pound human weighs only thirty pounds?"

"I see," said Cooper slowly. "Ten years for a hamster - and how long for a man?"

"It's not a simple law," answered Hastings. "It varies with the sex and the species. Even a month ago, we weren't certain. But now we're quiet sure of this: on the Moon, the span of human life will be at least two hundred years."

"And you've been trying to keep this a secret!"

"You fool! Don't you understand?"

"Take it easy , Doctor - take it easy," said Chandra softly.

With an obvious effort of will, Hastings got control of himself again. He began to speak with such icy calm that his words sank like freezing raindrops into Cooper's mind.

"Think of them up there," he said, pointing to the roof, to the invisible Earth, whose looming presence no one on the Moon could forget. "Six billion of them, packing all the continents to the edges - and now crowding over into the sea beds. And here -" he pointed to the ground - "only a hundred thousand of *us*, on an almost empty world. But a world where we need miracles of technology and engineering merely to exist, where a man with an IQ of only a hundred and fifty can't even get a job.

"And now we find that we can live for two hundred years. Imagine how they're going to react to that news! This is your problem now, Mister Journalist; you've asked for it, and you've got it. Tell me this, please - I'd really be interested to know - *just how are you going to break it to them?*"

He waited, and waited. Cooper opened his mouth, then closed it again, unable to think of anything to say.

In the far corner of the room, a baby monkey started to cry.

Questions

1. What do you think the three official languages of earth are?

English, spanish, chinese

2. What do you think UT stands for?

Utah

3. What other reasons might Medical Research have for trying to avoid Cooper?

He could spread there bad news.

4. Explain what the author is trying to say about the human need to explore?

We are running out of room on Earth.

5. How does the realistic details of the scientific laboratory set the stage for something fantastic to happen in the story?

Realistic details make it more believable.

6. Does it make sense that reduced gravitational pull would lead to increased life span?

No, your organs are not being pulled down.

7. How does Clarke use facts to make his science-fiction story believable?

150 pounds equals about 30 pounds on the moon.

8. What would you choose? An ordinary life span on Earth or a three times longer one in a Moon colony?

An ordinary life on Earth, because on the moon I could not do the activities on Earth I like to do.

9. Do you think Cooper should write about the secret or hide this information from people on Earth? Why?

I think he should tell people so they can decide where to live.

10. How will this situation affect the new residents of the moon?

More people will want to live in the resider on the moon.

11. How is Cooper's profession important to the story?

If he was not a reporter, he wouldn't be talking to the scientists.

12. Why is Dr. Hastings discouraged?

The reporter was angry at him for not sharing the secrets.

13. How can the secret be interpreted as both good news and bad news?

It is good because people can move to the moon and live longer.
It is bad because the population will increase faster.

14. What hard question does Cooper face once he learns the secret?

To share the secret or not,

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