Activity 1.09b: Wait, There's No Prompt?

Okay, now analyze the text.

...crickets...

Yep, just take your notes and say something profound about Momaday's writing.

...more crickets...

Terrifying, isn't it, to have the freedom to say whatever you want. Well, get used to it, because you won't always have a prompt about the text. So what happens when a teacher or professor just says, "Hey, read this thing and then write some stuff about it?" Some people freeze. Some people plagiarize, but that's not okay. Some people spiral out of control with ideas.

Writing is all about choices, and when you don't have a direction to head in in the form of a prompt, you have to make a bajillion of these choices. We're going to guide you through how to make these choices so that you feel less lost. That's right—we're talking about analytical response papers.

First of all, here are the constraints of your writing: it should be 200–400 words, you should have evidence from the text, and you should explain how the evidence supports your ideas. Other than that, the field is wide open.

Initial Response

Let's start with your response to the text. In a short paragraph or bullet points, jot down your reaction to it. What stuck out to you in the text? What feels like the heart of the text? Any images, any symbols, any descriptions that you latch onto? What do you feel drawn toward? What questions do you have about the text? In the space below, freewrite your reaction. Draw connections between things if you can, and be as articulate as you can while writing quickly. This is not a piece of writing you deliberate over—just vom your ideas all over the paper.

(Ew.)
Narrowing the Scope

Now that you have your very personal and messy response, take that and your very annotated text of On the Way to Rainy Mountain. Reread your response and your annotations, and jot down what it is you have to say (or even what you've already said) about the text. It could be an image that you've teased out of the text, or a relationship, or a characterization of the land or Aho. You might have a question you want to explore, or you might have something to say about mythology and personal anecdotes, or you even might want to address Momaday's reclaiming of his heritage.

Look for where your annotations are the heaviest—this might help you decide what you have to say. Come up with at least two or three ideas that you actually have something to say about and that you think are interesting enough to explore in a paragraph or two. List them here.

Rough Claim and Evidence

Okay, we're narrowing the scope. You have a couple ideas you want to address. Your next task is to come up with a claim for each idea. Let's take a look at an example. If you decide you want to explore the meaning of the land, what are you going to say about it?

Remember, your claim has to be an arguable statement that you work to prove through evidence.

Not a claim: Land is important in On the Way to Rainy Mountain.
Claim: Momaday chooses to write about land because land is sacred to the Kiowa, and because the vibrancy and character of the land reflect his own character.

Write a few claims about the topics you think will be easiest to write about. After each claim, jot down some of the evidence you're going to use to support it. If we go with the claim above about the land, we might make a bulleted list of these points to support it:

The part where Momaday talks about loneliness and how the land is almost divine in the first paragraph
The immensity of the land, in which a persona can get lost; where Momaday describes when the Kiowa stopped and why on page 2328

We're not typing exact quotes here—we're just trying to figure out if there's anything in the text that we can legitimately use to support our claims.

Write down two to three rough claims and the evidence that can support it here.

P.S.: If you start out with three claims and can only find evidence for one or two, that's fine; you've narrowed your topic even further.

Write the Paragraph

Now you've got enough to write your paragraph. You have a rough claim, you have some evidence you can use, so go to it.

Eep.

Okay, you need to accept a couple things—this might not be your best writing because you've expended a lot of energy and time narrowing your ideas. That's normal in this sort of situation. Also, your paragraph doesn't need to be that long, just 200–400 words. That's totally a length you can manage.

We at Shmoop recommend just writing your rough claim and then finding the evidence to support it as best you can. Once you have a draft of a paragraph, you can go back and revise it (because let's face it, no one writes a good rough draft). This is your first reaction paper—you'll do great.

Expository Writing Rubric - 25 Points

Outstanding Proficient Developing Needs Improvement

Evidence / Support
All support is clearly and logically connected to the topic. Examples, evidence, and details are thorough and relevant with effective explanation.

(10)
All support about the main topic is relevant. Examples, evidence, and details are explained.

(9)
Most support is related to the topic. Examples, evidence, or details are given.

(8)
Insufficient examples, evidence, or details. Support may be irrelevant.

(7)
Content Understanding
All content is accurate and analysis is interesting and sophisticated.

(10)
All content is accurate.

(9)
May contain minor errors.

(8)
Major errors.

(7)
Style
Language is clear and interesting. Enhances presentation of information. No errors.
(5)
Language is clear and appropriate to topic. Minor spelling or grammatical errors.

(4)
Language is occasionally unclear, but meaning is generally understandable. Frequent spelling/grammar errors that do not impede comprehension.

(3)
Language use makes writing very difficult to understand. Frequent spelling or grammar errors that impede comprehension.

(2)
Activity 1.13a: Prewriting for a Constructed Response

You've probably written at least one constructed response in your high school career, but we'll give you a refresher anyway. A constructed response is an open-ended prompt that you need to answer in pretty substantial writing. There's no one right answer. (Arg! We feel your pain.)

In a constructed response, you explain something or make an argument about a topic. That's it. Some people call it a constructed response, some call it an extended response, some call it an essay...it's all pretty much the same thing.

The most important thing to start with in constructed response is the prompt. Which is right here.

Several authors you've read in this unit explicitly or implicitly include visions and possibilities of America for its inhabitants. What are these visions for the future, and what is the legacy of these early Americans' hopes and dreams today?

It looks totally insurmountable, but it's not. You just have to break it down. Here's how you go about doing it.

Several authors you've read in this unit explicitly or implicitly include visions and possibilities of America for its inhabitants: You're going look for parts in the text where authors specifically talk about what America should be like (as in the Mayflower Compact) and where they imply what their world should be like (as in Jon Edwards' sermon).

What are these visions for the future: You need to find a few authors (no more than two or three) that have similar or different (your choice) ideas of what America can become. Write about the authors you know the best, the ones where you think you can figure out what they want the New World to look like.

and what is the legacy of these early Americans' hopes and dreams today?: This is where the readings you did for today come in, the ones that explain how early Americans shaped America today.

Now that we've broken down the prompt into a few basic tasks, do your prewriting in the space below. Your prewriting should include answers to questions like these, though you don't have to write them in bullet points:
What visions of America will you talk about?
What is the legacy of these visions?
What authors are you going to use to support your ideas? Pick two or three—in writing, less is usually more.
Which quotes from the text will best support the visions you decide to address? Pick two or three for each source that you use.
Why did you pick these quotes? Jot down a short explanation for each quote you chose and how it supports your claim.
Are you going to use anything from the sources you read today? If so, what?
What's the rough order of your writing—what's going to come first, next, and so on? Why put it in this order?

Teacher Notes
We haven't included this as a specific direction in the assignment because class constructions vary, but you may want to group students to discuss the prompt with each other either in person or through a discussion board. They can help one another understand the explicit and implicit meanings of the texts in order to draw conclusions about, find evidence, etc to get the hamster wheel in the brains going.

Constructed response questions are inherently difficult; students have a much easier time when teachers tell them exactly what to write. When students have more choice in their writing, they struggle more, especially if they're not used to making choices in their writing. We at Shmoop would recommend teaching students how to make choices in their writing, and constructed responses can help do that. Plus, this is a natural step from persuasive paragraphs, building on skills learned in previous lessons to work on all styles of grade-level argumentative writing.

Student answers are going to vary a lot in this particular activity. Because of the nature of prewriting, students should be able to take chances in their thinking. We encourage grading only for participation and having individual conversations with students about questions they have about writing constructed responses.

Here are a few ideas for how students might answer the prompt in their prewriting:
Predestination, self-reliance, self-determination, self-discipline, religious tradition, social equality, spiritualism vs. materialism, hard work, optimism

Students should talk about what these ideas look like today—it’s totally fine to draw in ideas from the modern world

Students will probably provide a wealth of authors, but here are the ideals that can be found in each author:

Columbus: self-reliance

Powhatan: nature, peace, collaboration

De Las Casas: self-discipline, religious tradition, social equality

Smith: self-reliance, self-discipline, hard work

Bradford: self-reliance, self-discipline, social equality

Wigglesworth: predestination, spiritualism, religious tradition

Bradstreet: spiritualism vs. materialism, religious tradition, predestination

Edwards: predestination

Rowlandson: spiritualism vs. materialism, self-reliance, predestination, optimism

This is the point where the students are going to diverge a ton in how they answer the prompt. They should go back to their readings and search for the quotes that are for sure going to support the claim. You may want to model this with an author that students don't choose, or even, for struggling students, an author they decide to use.

After each quote, students should provide a short explanation for how the quote relates to their claim. These, too, will vary, but they should sound a little something like this:

Bradford's words are typical of the values of the early Americans in that they are determined to make their own laws in the colonies and hold every person accountable for the community's survival.

This is variable—some students will want to refer to some of the historical context that they read for class today, but it's not necessary to answer the prompt.

Order is important in writing. Students' main claims should come first (like a road map for where they're going in their writings) and then they will need to decide which order their evidence goes in. You may want to talk through how you make decisions about ordering your own writing so that students see an experienced writer talking about how to make organizational choices.

This is a prewriting activity, so students should not be graded on what they produce; instead, they should be graded on how they work through and tackle the challenging prompt. Moreover, grading for participation allows students to take chances in their writing that they might not have taken otherwise, which is invaluable when learning how to write well.
Differentiation: Some students are really going to struggle with the open-ended nature of the question. The way to overcome these mental obstacles is to model how to break down each step for students. Feel free to model your thinking with the question at hand, or choose another prompt. Even though you might think that modeling would give students too much guidance about what to write, but it's unlikely that students will figure out what you want unless you show them.

Extension: For students who do know how to write constructed responses well, you can have them speed through the prewriting and get started on the response. You might want these students to find more than three quotes, or have them use more than two or three authors. Or, they can do more reading about Puritans—we personally can never get enough.

Standards covered in this activity:
Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

Participation Only Rubric - 10 Points
Outstanding  Needs Improvement

Quality of Participation
Student did the assignment as instructed.

(10)
Student only did part of the activity or assignment.
Activity 2.01: Synthesis of Paintings

Now that you've analyzed the paintings, you're going to take your jumble of notes and pile them together in some sort of synthesis. We're treating all four paintings as one text because they are, in fact, telling a story of the American Revolution—and also of the subjects themselves.

The first thing you need to do is summarize each painting—describe what's happening on the surface of each painting, including the most important details. In other words, if you have to explain the painting to someone who's never seen it before, what would you say? Each summary should be just a couple sentences—don't go overboard.

Washington Crossing the Delaware

The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis

Washington Entering New York

Washington's Farewell to his Officers

Now that you have the summary done, you need to determine what sort of central claim the images are making. We'll give you a bigger hint—what are all the images claiming about Washington?

When someone wants you to figure out two different claims about a text, it helps to think in terms of "yet." So if you need to talk about two claims created throughout the artwork, you'll probably have something like this:
Here's one image of Washington supported by the artwork, yet there's also this other thing that's a little bit in contrast to the first thing.

Why have a yet statement? For one, it forces you to pick two slightly different claims. For another, these two claims have to be somewhat contradictory—and this shows that you as a writer can identify the nuances and complexities in a text.

Write your "yet" statement here.

Now, turn that "yet" into the thesis of a one-or-two paragraph analysis. Open with your "yet" statement, and write all the details from the text that support your "yet" statement. In your second paragraph, get analytical—how do these visual details attest to Washington and his myth?

Go to, young revolutionary!

Expository Writing Rubric - 25 Points

Outstanding       Proficient       Developing       Needs Improvement

Evidence / Support

All support is clearly and logically connected to the topic. Examples, evidence, and details are thorough and relevant with effective explanation.

(10)

All support about the main topic is relevant. Examples, evidence, and details are explained.
Most support is related to the topic. Examples, evidence, or details are given.

Insufficient examples, evidence, or details. Support may be irrelevant.

Content Understanding
All content is accurate and analysis is interesting and sophisticated.

All content is accurate.

May contain minor errors.

Major errors.

Style
Language is clear and interesting. Enhances presentation of information. No errors.

Language is clear and appropriate to topic. Minor spelling or grammatical errors.

Language is occasionally unclear, but meaning is generally understandable. Frequent spelling/grammar errors that do not impede comprehension.
Language use makes writing very difficult to understand. Frequent spelling or grammar errors that impede comprehension.
Activity 5.02: Words, Words, Words

Maybe you saw this one coming: your task is to analyze each section of the text. We'd like your analysis to take three parts:

First, summarize what Garrison is saying. When you create your response, title this section Summary.

Then, identify the specific words that intensify his argument—which ones are strong? Which words have connotations that help his argument? Which words are all about symbol and metaphor? When you create your response, title this section Key Words and Phrases.

Lastly, explain how these words make Garrison's argument more effective. When you create your response, title this section Explanation.

As usual, we've given you an example to help you get started. Take the following excerpt:

During my recent tour for the purpose of exciting the minds of the people by a series of discourses on the subject of slavery, every place that I visited gave fresh evidence of the fact, that a greater revolution in public sentiment was to be effected in the free states -- and particularly in New-England -- than at the south. I found contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen, than among slave owners themselves (Source).

Summary: During my tour advocating for the abolition of slavery, the places in the north I visited were more apt to be pro-abolition than those in the south. In the north, people were more opposed to slavery and less prejudiced.

Key Words and Phrases: "greater revolution," "contempt more bitter," "opposition more active detraction more relentless," "prejudice more stubborn"

Explanation: Garrison indicates that northerners are much more likely to be anti-slavery than slave owners (duh). Since I know "bitter" is usually a bad taste, "contempt more bitter" means that the contempt for slavery is even worse in New England, and since he claims the people he meets oppose slavery, "contempt" must mean and extreme opposition, a strong moral distaste if you will. Garrison also describes northerners as more relentless, which implies an unceasing drive to eradicate slavery. These descriptions place the northerners firmly in the moral right.

Your move for Garrison diction analysis, Shmooper.

"This state of things afflicted, but did not dishearten me. I determined, at every hazard, to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birth place of liberty. That standard is now unfurled; and long may it float, unhurt by the spoliations of time or the missiles of a desperate foe -- yea, till every chain be broken, and every bondman set free!"
"Let southern oppressors tremble -- let their secret abettors tremble -- let their northern apologists tremble -- let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble."

"I am aware, that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation."

"Tell a man whose house is on fire, to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hand of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; -- but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest -- I will not equivocate -- I will not excuse -- I will not retreat a single inch -- AND I WILL BE HEARD. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead."

Oppression! I have seen thee, face to face,
And met thy cruel eye and cloudy brow;
But thy soul-withering glance I fear not now --
For dread to prouder feelings doth give place
Of deep abhorrence! Scorning the disgrace
Of slavish knees that at thy footstool bow,
I also kneel -- but with far other vow
Do hail thee and thy hord of hirelings base: --
I swear, while life-blood warms my throbbing veins,
Still to oppose and thwart, with heart and hand,
Thy brutalising sway -- till Afric's chains
Are burst, and Freedom rules the rescued land, --
Trampling Oppression and his iron rod:
Such is the vow I take -- SO HELP ME GOD!

Expository Writing Rubric - 25 Points
Outstanding    Proficient    Developing    Needs Improvement

Evidence / Support
All support is clearly and logically connected to the topic. Examples, evidence, and details are thorough and relevant with effective explanation.

(10)
All support about the main topic is relevant. Examples, evidence, and details are explained.

(9)
Most support is related to the topic. Examples, evidence, or details are given.

(8)
Insufficient examples, evidence, or details. Support may be irrelevant.

(7)
Content Understanding
All content is accurate and analysis is interesting and sophisticated.

(10)
All content is accurate.

(9)
May contain minor errors.

(8)
Major errors.

(7)
Style
Language is clear and interesting. Enhances presentation of information. No errors.

(5)
Language is clear and appropriate to topic. Minor spelling or grammatical errors.

(4)
Language is occasionally unclear, but meaning is generally understandable. Frequent spelling/grammar errors that do not impede comprehension.

(3)
Language use makes writing very difficult to understand. Frequent spelling or grammar errors that impede comprehension.

(2)
Activity 5.07: Revising and Proofreading

Let's dig in, Shmoopers. Revision is hard work, so we probably shouldn't dilly-dally around. Each step requires its own reading, so get ready to examine and rethink your draft of your analysis of Walker's Appeal.

Step One: Does your essay address the assignment?

Read what you have to do in your essay one more time. Yep, read it again. And carefully. It won't kill you. (Unless you suffer from a rare and lethal ink allergy, in which case you should seek medical attention at once.)

Does your essay match your prompt? In this case that means it has to be an analysis essay and be about something you know a lot about. If it doesn't hit those points, it's time to do a little adjusting.

Step Two: Is the essay a whole? Eliminate holes.

Whoa—homophone alert. Did we really mean to use both spellings/meanings of "hole/whole?" We did indeed.

First, make sure the essay works as a whole. Does every part of the essay belong? Every word, sentence, and paragraph must relate to your thesis. If it doesn't connect back to your thesis, it probably doesn't belong here. Give it a good kick in the pants and tell it you never want to see its face around these parts.

Second, check for holes. Does any idea, paragraph, or sentence seem confusing, unclear, or underdeveloped? (Be honest. If you lie to yourself, you may never be able to trust yourself again.) Fix these problem areas now, while the ideas are still fresh in your mind and you remember what you wanted to say. If you leave them for too long, say, because you decide it's time to take a three-hour break to pass the next couple levels of Gears of War, they might confuse you so much that you'll be forced to give up on them and come up with other ideas. Which totally isn't fair to your original ideas, who will feel like discarded pieces of garbage. They'll be in therapy for years.

Word of warning: this part takes the most amount of time, so set aside a solid chunk of the clock to do this.

Once your head is in the game and you have a good idea of what's happening in your paper, go back and write the introduction to your essay. You might start with a little social or historical context, you could start with a modern-day connection to Walker, or you could start any other way. Except questions.
Please, no questions. If you want some inspiration for what an introduction should look like, check out the Introduction section of Shmoop's Essay Lab. (You're welcome.)

Step Three: Smooth it out.
We wish there were an app for this. Until there is one, we'll have to rely on our poor little brains.

Ah, yes, our brain. The original smartphone.

Any odd sentences? Clunky descriptions? Weird transitions? Now's the time to iron out these wrinkles. Here's a list of suggestions for what might need the ol' iron.

Explanations/commentary. This is probably going to need the most ironing. Starting with "This quote proves that..." makes readers want to vom. No lie. Get a bit more creative. Get a bit more detailed. Get a bit more into your writing and the text. "Walker's categorization of whites as "unjust" and "avaricious" are meant to appeal to his readers who think as he does" is much more interesting. Now we just need to explain why he wants to appeal to these readers...

Transitions. Check over for em-dashes, hyphens, and ellipses. We didn't include those tips on how to partition off your sentences for nothing.

Word repetition. Repeating the same word too close together makes for jarring, clunky sentences: "The environment has been an issue of concern for environmental activists and scientists studying the environment." Gross. Try synonyms instead, or rewording things. Like: "The natural world is, of course, the primary focus for environmentalists and ecologists."

Poorly integrated quotes. This one is a symptom of people just figuring out the whole writing-with-research thing. Your quotes should fit smoothly with your writing. So, instead of: "This paper argues that monkeys are awesome. 'The popularity of monkey stuffed animals is a testament to their cuteness.'" Try something more like: "This paper argues that monkeys are awesome, which is supported by the enduring popularity of monkey stuffed animals." See how the quote is now supporting the writer's claim, rather than standing awkwardly next to it?

Sentence structure repetition. It can also be super easy to repeat the same sentence structure over and over again. Like so: "Unfortunately, that's what happened. The soldiers were defeated. Against all odds, they were losing the war." Shake it up a little bit, guys—vary sentence length and structure.

If your essay makes you want to fall asleep, it might not exactly be a virtual firework display for your reader (even if your reader is your teacher). So make it as interesting as you possibly can, without overusing—or using any—exclamation marks. Droopy eyelids everywhere are counting on you.
Step Four: Proofread it.

A little known fact: most of the sentence-level, grammar mistakes students make in essays are not there because students don’t know that their mistakes are mistakes. They are there because the writer simply hasn’t caught them. Maybe they relied a bit too heavily on ye olde spell check? Your word processing program isn’t foolproof, you know.

There is only one solution. You must take the time to comb through your essay and try to find them. You might also want to get rid of all that dandruff while you're at it. That comb hasn't been rinsed in a while. Check out this

Check out this proofreading guide from Indiana University Bloomington. If you haven’t been there already, you can also put your paper into Shmoop's Essay Lab to walk you through these steps.

Step Five: Read it aloud and do a final check-through.

Your final step is to read your essay out loud to yourself. Funny voice, silly accent, multiple characters—whatever works for you. Embarrassed? Then shut the door and whisper it.

By reading aloud, any final clunky sentences, typos (maybe an extra "the," perhaps you misspelled "public"), and everything in between will trip you up, making it easier to catch them. Better you now than your teacher later.

And then, upload your final version and an audio recording of your read-aloud (hey, we want to make sure you actually did it...right?) below.

Please choose up to 3 files for upload

Teacher Notes
We've planned this activity to thoroughly teach and scaffold revising a paper. Students will both evaluate the reasoning in a nonfiction text and strengthen their papers through a variety of steps, from reading aloud to looking for holes. There's always going to be the kid who turns in the rough draft as the final draft. And there will always be the kid who writes a perfect first draft and doesn't really need to revise it. As frustrating as these situations are, we still think everyone, even these kids, should go through the revision process, which is part of why we required submitting their final read-aloud.

There are a ton of different things to focus on and grade in this particular activity. You might choose, based on the temperature of your class, to focus on deep revisions, restructure, quote integration, commentary, or surface level changes...or something else entirely. It really will depend on your students and what they need.

It's good practice to model each step. You can model with your own writing, or you could ask for students to volunteer their essays so that you can model each step with a student's work, giving them a leg up. (Students love this—trust us on this.)

Now is the time, after the revision, to pull out the big guns—the literary analysis rubric.

Differentiation: Some students will have a difficult time looking at their essays with fresh eyes. It might be beneficial for them to have another student revise or offer revision suggestions on their essay. We'd also encourage you to have one-on-one conferences with each student, even if it's only for three to five minutes. These conferences can give you a lot of insight into your students' thinking and writing, and they can also give them the personal coaching that they need to feel confident in their work.

Extension: Use conferencing or peer feedback to provide extension for students who need more of a challenge, focusing on introduction and conclusion development or sentence complexity in their writing.

Standards covered in this activity:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

Literary Essay Rubric - 100 Points

Outstanding     Proficient     Developing     Needs Improvement

Introduction
Grabs reader’s attention effectively. Presents effective context for thesis, including background and significance of topic.

(10)

Presents topic clearly. Presents some context for thesis, including background. Attempts to discuss significance.

(9)

Presents topic. Includes some background and context. May be trite and unfocused.

(8)

Does not present topic clearly and/or does not contextualize thesis.

(7)

Thesis

Has clear, supportable, and interesting perspective on topic with clear rationale.

(15)

Has clear and supportable perspective on topic with sense of rationale.

(13)

Has supportable perspective on topic.

(11)

Has no evident perspective on topic, or has one that is not supportable.

(10)

Analysis of Text

Creates insightful, meaningful interpretation of texts. Analyzes author’s use of language, structure, and literary elements and how they contribute to larger meaning of text.
(20)
Creates logical interpretation of text. Discussion of author’s use of language, structure, and literary elements mixes analysis and description.

(17)
Creates reasonable but limited interpretation of text. Discussion of language, structure, and literary elements is primarily descriptive.

(15)
Interpretation of text is not reasonable, or discussion of text never extends beyond description.

(13)
Evidence / Support
All support is clearly and logically connected to the topic. Examples, evidence and details are thorough and relevant with effective explanation.

(15)
All support about the main topic is relevant. Examples, evidence and details are explained.

(13)
Most support is related to the topic. Examples, evidence or details are given.

(11)
Insufficient examples, evidence, or details. Support may be irrelevant.

(10)
Organization
Has a logical organizational scheme. Each piece of information flows logically and smoothly to the next.
(10)
Has a clear organizational plan. Information is presented logically with some sense of connection.

(9)
General sense of organizational plan. Information makes sense within it, but transitions are lacking.

(8)
Information appears disconnected or illogical.

(7)
Citation
All citation form is accurate. Goes beyond required integration of sources. Paraphrase and quoting is used effectively.

(10)
All citation form is accurate. All required sources are used. Has examples of both paraphrasing and quoting.

(9)
May contain minor citation form errors. May be missing required source. Direct quotes are over utilized and/or paraphrasing is occasionally inaccurate.

(8)
Major citation errors, or correct form is used, but most of paper is quoted directly. (If paper is plagiarized, it automatically gets a zero in total.)

(7)
Conclusion
Logically and effectively synthesizes information in an interesting way that shows the larger implications of the topic.
(10)
Synthesizes information persuasively and shows larger implications somewhat.

(9)
Restates information with some attempt at showing larger relevance.

(8)
Restates information.

(7)
Style
Language is clear and interesting. Enhances presentation of information. No errors.

(10)
Language is clear and appropriate to topic. Minor spelling or grammatical errors.

(9)
Language is occasionally unclear, but meaning is generally understandable. Frequent spelling/grammar errors that do not impede comprehension.

(8)
Language use makes writing very difficult to understand. Frequent spelling or grammar errors that impede comprehension.

(7)
Activity 6.07b: Formalizing Structure

You have a pretty good idea of how to organize your outline at this point, based on what you submitted in your previous lesson. Now you just have to formalize it a little bit in an outline.

Yes, we know that outlines drive some writers up a wall. But here are all the reasons why outlines are as underrated as character actor John Turturro:

They can prevent your thoughts from devolving into senseless madness. You think you’re smart and producing good writing, and then you go back to read it and it’s game over.

They can organize your arguments and ideas so that the most important points and the supporting evidence for them become clear.

They can reveal gaps in your research. As you make an outline, it'll become clear what sections you need to do a little more research on.

The Structure of an Outline

We've sold the idea, but how do you actually write an outline? And what do they look like?

Outlines are hierarchical arrangements of all the major points and evidence for your research paper. By hierarchical, we mean that bigger ideas are positioned above the lesser, supporting points. The more detailed and specific the outline is, the better your paper writing will go.

Don't believe us? Here's an annotated example of a detailed but short outline on the topic of British environmental history:

A detailed outline using Roman numerals.

What a pretty outline. Each Roman numeral is divided into the topic sentence or main point that the writer plans to discuss in the essay. Then there are sub-points (the "a"s and "i"s) that include either the MLA source citation or an appropriate quotation.

While we're not expecting you to immediately embrace the Roman system (they did, after all, have gladiators back then), here's what your outline should have:

A thesis statement that starts to answer the research question
You took care of this 2 activities ago, but don't copy and paste that Brainstorming drivel here. Thanks to all of your thoughtful research, you certainly have a more refined response by now.

Appropriate divisions of paragraphs into the big Roman numerals (I, II, III, and so on) which serve as topic sentences or main points

Five to eight quotes from the sources (two from the unit, three from your own research) as well as the appropriate in-text MLA citation.

Short explanations of those quotes. This doesn't mean that you can write "This proves my main point," but it does mean that your explanations will be 1-2 sentences, max, not a full paragraph. For an example, take a look at lesson 82a.

This time, your outline needs to be in complete sentences. And once you finish your outline, write a short paragraph below it where you explain why you chose these sources, why you ordered the outline in the way you did, and what you might do differently if you had to do it all over again. (Don't worry. You won't have to.) It should be an expository paragraph of about 100 – 150 words where you walk us through your outlining brainspace.

Then, upload that majesty below.

Please choose up to 3 files for upload

Teacher Notes

Some people think that without the paper-writing, research is worthless. We at Shmoop don't agree. That's why our goal is to simplify the process and break a research project into manageable steps. Hence, the outline, not the research paper; we're interested in teaching the process to narrow the field of inquiry, synthesize sources, and as we said, selected the best choices.

We'd recommend starting with the reflective paragraph students write after they have submitted their outlines. These paragraphs will offer quite a bit of insight (or, they should) regarding points of difficulty and places students found the project easy. It's a good place to look when deciding whether or not you need to reteach any of the discrete skills in this lesson or project.
As for the outline, you'll want to look for the following things as you grade:

Thesis. This should answer the research question that students chose.

Organization. Examine how students have divided their outline into sections and subsections.

Main points/topics. Look at the hierarchy of students' ideas.

Quotations and integration of quotes. Look at the quotes students include, the explanations as to why they included these quotes, and the in text citations.

Differentiation: Have students mimic the direct format of our example outline, going step by step, line by line.

Extension: Students who need extension could include more quotations, but we'd recommend focusing on the explanations of their quotes instead (it's this analysis/explanation that will best serve them in college).

Standards covered in this activity:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

Multiple Source Based Essay Rubric - 25 Points

Outstanding  Proficient  Developing  Needs Improvement

Introduction

Grabs readers' attention effectively. Presents effective context for thesis, including background and significance of topic.

(2)

Presents topic clearly. Presents some context for thesis, including background. Attempts to discuss significance.

(1)

Presents topic. Includes some background and context. May be trite and unfocused.
(1)
Does not present topic clearly and/or does not contextualize thesis.

(1)
Thesis
Has clear, supportable, and interesting perspective on topic with clear rationale.

(4)
Has clear and supportable perspective on topic with sense of rationale.

(3)
Has supportable perspective on topic.

(3)
Has no evident perspective on topic, or has one that is not supportable.

(2)
Analysis of Argument or Issue
Presents multiple perspectives on topic with clear explanation of how they relate to the central argument of paper.

(5)
Presents multiple perspectives on topic with explanation of differences among them.

(4)
Provides basic explanation of multiple perspectives on topic in a way that does not confuse central argument.
Presents only one perspective on topic or presents multiple perspectives in a way that confuses central argument.

Evidence / Support

All support is clearly and logically connected to the topic. Examples, evidence, and details are thorough and relevant with effective explanation.

All support about the main topic is relevant. Examples, evidence, and details are explained.

Most support is related to the topic. Examples, evidence, or details are given.

Insufficient examples, evidence, or details. Support may be irrelevant.

Organization

Has a logical organizational scheme. Each piece of information flows logically and smoothly to the next.

Has a clear organizational plan. Information is presented logically with some sense of connection.

General sense of organizational plan. Information makes sense within it, but transitions are lacking.
Information appears disconnected or illogical.

(1)

Citation

All citation form is accurate. Goes beyond required integration of sources. Paraphrase and quoting is used effectively.

(2)

All citation form is accurate. All required sources are used. Has examples of both paraphrasing and quoting.

(1)

May contain minor citation form errors. May be missing required source. Direct quotes are over utilized and/or paraphrasing is occasionally inaccurate.

(1)

Major citation errors, or correct form is used, but most of paper is quoted directly.

(1)

Conclusion

Logically and effectively synthesizes information in an interesting way that shows the larger implications of the topic.

(3)

Synthesizes information persuasively and shows larger implications somewhat.

(2)

Restates information with some attempt at showing larger relevance.

(2)
Restates information.

(2)

Style

Language is clear and interesting. Enhances presentation of information. No errors.

(3)

Language is clear and appropriate to topic. Minor spelling or grammatical errors.

(2)

Language is occasionally unclear, but meaning is generally understandable. Frequent spelling/grammar errors that do not impede comprehension.

(2)

Language use makes writing very difficult to understand. Frequent spelling or grammar errors that impede comprehension.

(2)
Activity 9.08: The Land and the Words

Chapter 19 is all about the land. In fact, you get a whirlwind history of California and its majestic mountains, fertile valleys, and nude beaches. Or something.

Of course, this chapter is written from a particularly Steinbeckian perspective, and in order to suss out what that perspective is, we're going to zoom in on the nitty-gritty, the nuts-and-bolts: word choice.

Review the first few pages of Chapter 19. You can stop at the paragraph that ends with, "Squatting on their hams they talked of the land they had seen." As you read, jot down any words that have to do with the themes of land and ownership in the space below. There are a lot, so stop yourself when you've reached ten words.

It's time to dust off those connotation/denotation skills. First, it's likely you'll need a refresher, so check out Shmoop's definitions of connotation and denotation in our Literature Glossary.

(Shmoop's favorite memory trick? Denotation starts with d, which should remind you of...a dictionary.)

Then take eight of the words from your list for a closer look. In the space provided, write each word, followed by its denotation and connotation. You are welcome to look these words up in the dictionary for the denotation, and you may need to consider how the word is used to determine the connotation. (Think about times you've said something is "pretty" compared to something "gorgeous." Same essential denotation, but much different compliments.) All denotations and connotations should be written in your own words. Keep 'em short and sweet. There's no need to go overboard here, as we're simply laying the groundwork for Step Three.

Number the box below 1 – 8, and get denotating and connotating.

Here comes the fun part. Take a look at the denotations and connotations you wrote down in Step Two. Are you noticing any themes or patterns emerging? Do the connotations of the words Steinbeck chooses to describe land and ownership hint as his perspective on these issues?
Absolutely.

So, with that in mind, write up an analytical paragraph or two that examines Steinbeck's view on land and ownership in The Grapes of Wrath, using the first section of Chapter 19 as your inspiration. Your finished product should contain at least three examples of connotation from the chapter's selection.

Teacher Notes

When reading a Big Book like The Grapes of Wrath, it can be easy to get caught up in the sweeping plot lines and the sheer magnitude of its themes, but this lesson is designed to help students zoom in and recognize that while this is one of literature's giants, it's also still a novel. And the most important part of a novel—here comes the obvious—is its diction. An author shapes and crafts meaning with the words he or she chooses. The Grapes of Wrath is no different.

We've used this lesson as an opportunity to reinforce connotation and denotation skills while focusing on a specific theme from the novel: land and ownership. Steinbeck has a very specific perspective on this theme, and students should use their knowledge of connotation and denotation to develop an understanding of his views.

There are no write or wrong answers here, but students should note that according to Steinbeck, the history of California has been one of landgrabbing—where newcomers try to take and control land that does not necessarily belong to them. Students might also note the negative consequences of this dynamic—class tension, an increasing income gap, environmental damage, and even ethnic and racial tension.

Steinbeck clearly believes that to own the land, you should be close to it. But economic progress has separated the owners from the land itself ("And the owners not only did not work the farms any more, many of them had never seen the farms they owned."). The Okies, unlike the corporate farm owners, know what it means to have a close relationship with the land, because according to Steinbeck, "A man might look at a fallow field and know, and see in his mind that his own bending back and his own straining arms would bring the cabbages into the light, and the golden eating corn, and turnips and carrots."
In order to get at some of these themes, students might note just how many times Steinbeck uses some form of the word "own," and how it often carries a negative connotation. For him owning the land is nothing like working it. Students might also note his violent verbs—"broke," "growled," "quarreled,"—and his negative adjectives, like "frantic," "feral," and "fierce." His most telling nouns? Words like "industry," "paper," and "serfs." The gist? For Steinbeck, the minute farming became an industry, rather than an individual landowner's endeavor, is the minute everything started to go downhill.

Differentiation: You can pretty easily shorten this lesson by requiring less words—say fifteen for Step One, and six for Step Two? You might also have students write a thesis statement of sorts—rather than an entire paragraph—as their answer for Step Three. It might also prove helpful to walk students through the word-finding process by demonstrating how you might write the connotations and denotations of a few words from the first page—as a demo of course.

Extension: One easy way to lengthen and deepen this lesson would be to incorporate more themes. Students can repeat the process for the theme of inequality, which is also all over these passages. You might also encourage a few of your sharper students to connect this section of the novel to other sections that highlight the themes of land and ownership. And of course, this activity lends itself to a close reading exercise, and students might even use this as a launching pad for a much longer thematic essay.

Standards covered in this activity:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

Expository Writing Rubric - 25 Points

Outstanding  Proficient  Developing  Needs Improvement

Evidence / Support

All support is clearly and logically connected to the topic. Examples, evidence, and details are thorough and relevant with effective explanation.

(10)

All support about the main topic is relevant. Examples, evidence, and details are explained.

(9)
Most support is related to the topic. Examples, evidence, or details are given.

(8)
Insufficient examples, evidence, or details. Support may be irrelevant.

(7)
Content Understanding
All content is accurate and analysis is interesting and sophisticated.

(10)
All content is accurate.

(9)
May contain minor errors.

(8)
Major errors.

(7)
Style
Language is clear and interesting. Enhances presentation of information. No errors.

(5)
Language is clear and appropriate to topic. Minor spelling or grammatical errors.

(4)
Language is occasionally unclear, but meaning is generally understandable. Frequent spelling/grammar errors that do not impede comprehension.
Language use makes writing very difficult to understand. Frequent spelling or grammar errors that impede comprehension.
ANALYSIS: FORM AND METER

Dramatic Monologue

A dialogue is a conversation between two people, but a monologue is just one person talking. ("Mono" means "one"). But "Prufrock" is a "dramatic" monologue because the person talking is a fictional creation, and his intended audience is fictional as well. He is talking to the woman he loves, about whom we know very little except for the stray detail about shawls and hairy arms.

A good dramatic monologue gradually reveals more and more about the person speaking, without them intending to reveal so much. At the beginning Prufrock is just a slightly creepy guy who wants to take a walk. As the poem goes on, we learn about his personal appearance, his love of food and fashion, and his desire to be a pair of crab claws. The impression we get about him is exactly the opposite of the one he wants to give. He wants us to think that he’s a decision-maker, a "decider," if you will, who dresses well and seizes opportunities when they come. But he’s just a big fraud. He never decides anything, and when he misses his big opportunity, he tries to pretend it’s no biggie.

So, the overarching form is the dramatic monologue, but if you look closer at the poem, you’ll find that Eliot is experimenting with all kinds of forms and meters. For example, there are a lot of rhyming couplets, like the first two lines, and the famous verse about the women and Michelangelo.

We think that Eliot is making fun of Prufrock by using this old-fashioned form. The rhyming couplets are sometimes called "heroic" couplets, but our title character is anything but heroic. The rhymes also have a singsong quality that makes them seem childish. He rhymes "is it" with "visit"? Come on. But this is Prufrock’s song, and Eliot is just pulling the strings to make him look bad – quite masterfully, we might add.

Other lines don’t rhyme and sound more like free verse, which has no regular meter. Occasionally we’ll get a couple of lines of blank verse, which have no rhyme but a regular meter, usually iambic pentameter, where an unstressed syllable is followed by an accent. This is the meter that Shakespeare used most often, and Eliot was a huge fan of Shakespeare. Thus, "I SHOULD have BEEN a PAIR of RAGged CLAWS."

Shakespeare also used rhyming couplets in iambic pentameter, and, lo and behold, this is the form we get in lines 111-119, which discuss Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Using Shakespeare’s verse to talk about Shakespeare? T.S., you clever man.