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Module 13

The Story of an Hour – Kate Chopin

MODULE OBJECTIVES

- Understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing.
- Analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about theme and genre.
- Understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction.
- Write expository and procedural or work-related texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes.
- Clarify research questions; evaluate and synthesize collected information.

Overview

Southern Gothic, a facet of American Gothic literature, is unique to the American Southern region. Kate Chopin uses this style in "The Story of an Hour" as she places her characters in the South, thus grounding her stories in setting and Southern traditions. She also explores the inner emotions and desires of her characters, often revealing secret feelings that may shock and surprise readers. Southern Gothic writers use the Gothic style to explore issues in the South such as oppression, race, and in Chopin's case, personal feelings of individual women.

In "The Story of an Hour," readers are invited into the mind of Mrs. Mallard, a newly widowed woman. Her secret thoughts and desires are revealed as she struggles with the news of her husband's death. Surprising as these feelings might be, the tension rises, leading to an unexpected climax.

Research notes and the outline produced in Module 12 will provide the basis for a rough draft of an expository essay. It may be necessary to refine the thesis statement before writing an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. This research paper will also include the correct citation of sources as explained in Module 12.

Lesson 13.1

SOUTHERN GOTHIC LITERATURE

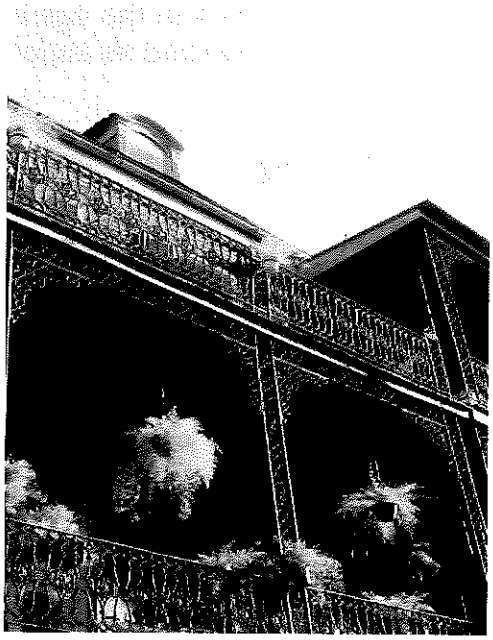
The Southern Gothic movement was an outgrowth of the immensely popular European Gothic literature. This uniquely American and regional literary movement featured Southern writers who used the elements of the supernatural or of unusual events, not to shock audiences but rather to illuminate social conditions. This is certainly the case with Kate Chopin as she focuses on the social role and restrictions of Southern women. Southern Gothic writing included the elements of imprisonment, violence, or an unstable character while also providing a definite sense of place. These stories include specifics to the Southern region and the unique habits of the residents; thus, they are defined by their setting and by the social mores of the area. Using the Gothic framework, racial, social, and class conflicts are explored in this literature.

Many readers are familiar with the works of Southern Gothic writers such as Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, William Faulkner, and Truman Capote, more modern representatives of this sub-genre. Kate Chopin belongs to this group, but she is not as well known because her works did not initially receive literary acknowledgement. Her "Story of an Hour" contains Gothic elements but also reveals the uniquely Southern elements, too. It is an illumination of the married woman's world as a form of imprisonment in the South, and it shows how trapped she feels. She secretly longs for freedom from her marriage, and the thought of being a widow opens up new possibilities for her - possibilities that before were unimagined. Such secrets were part of the Southern Gothic sub-genre, as Southern manners required that only niceties be spoken, that wants and desires must be concealed. With surprising results, Southern Gothic writers illuminate the intense and often hidden emotions of their characters.

Meet the Author

Born Kate O'Flaherty (1850 – 1904), in St. Louis, Kate Chopin grew up speaking both French and English due to the influence of her French-speaking mother. She spent the Civil War in St. Louis, surrounded by supporters of both the Union and Confederate

causes. In 1870, she married Oscar Chopin and moved with him to New Orleans, Louisiana where she entered the world of French Creole society. Between 1871 and 1879, she gave birth to five daughters and one son. Poor business forced a move from New Orleans to Cloutierville, Louisiana in 1879, and in 1882, Oscar died of malaria. Seeking the support of her family and her hometown, Chopin moved back to St. Louis in 1884.



She published her first short story in 1889 in the St. Louis *Post Dispatch*. Chopin's stories, often set in Louisiana, reflect French Creole society and its cultural values of the time. She focused on women characters, in particular, and on Southern traditions. *At Fault*, her first novel, was privately published in 1890, and in 1892, several more short stories appeared in national magazines. She wrote a succession of short stories, including "Desiree's Baby" and "The Story of an Hour," both of which appeared in *Vogue* magazine. In 1894, *Bayou Folk* was published, an anthology of twenty-three short stories. In 1897, the anthology *A Night at Acadie* was published. In 1899, *The Awakening* was published and was widely condemned as being vulgar and morbid. Its conclusion involves the apparent suicide of a rebellious woman who chooses not to embrace the traditional married life that was expected of her. Chopin's literary strength was not fully recognized until the publication of a biography in 1969 by Per Syersted. In it, Syersted reveals the strong realism and moving depictions of Southern women in Chopin's works. She is now recognized as a prominent and significant author in her own right.

Chopin's stories deal with the significance of race and class in post-Civil War Louisiana. "Desiree's Baby" in particular looks at the issue of mixed-race children and the realities of racism that they experienced in the South. As a Southern Gothic writer, Chopin uses the setting of the South and the elements of oppression, superstition, and cultural traditions to discuss and examine the hidden aspects of society. Chopin is also a realist, portraying Louisiana society accurately and critically.

After the poor reception of *The Awakening*, Chopin turned back to writing short stories. She was unable to regain her previous successes, however, and died of a brain

hemorrhage in 1904 at the age of fifty-four. She left behind a legacy of short stories and novels, now recognized as important works in American fiction.

13.1 Activity

Choose one activity to complete:

1. The word "Creole" has several different definitions. Research the term and see if you can find out which groups claimed the title and what the word "Creole" refers to. Where did Chopin fit in? Why do you think she identified with the French Creole culture?

2. New Orleans has produced many famous authors. Research to find writers who claimed New Orleans as their hometown. Why do you think so many writers find New Orleans to be inspiring?

13.1 Review

Multiple Choice

1. Southern Gothic writers used Gothic elements to _____.

   a. shock and surprise their audiences
   b. imitate European Gothic writers
   c. illuminate social conditions or issues
   d. add spark to their stories

2. Southern Gothic writers included elements such as

   a. imprisonment
   b. violence
   c. an unstable character
   d. any or all of the above

3. Chopin drew upon her experience with French Creoles and Louisiana culture _____.

   a. as her setting for most of her stories
   b. as her subjects in the stories
   c. as a framework to comment upon the social and political oppression of women
   d. all of the above

4. Chopin grew up in St. Louis, but she learned _____.

   a. French from her French mother, helping her to communicate with the French Creole culture
   b. Spanish from her father
   c. Spanish from her husband
   d. French during her time in New Orleans

5. Chopin did not start her writing career until after _____.

   a. her move to New Orleans
   b. her return to St. Louis
   c. her marriage to Oscar Chopin
   d. the birth of her last child

6. Chopin received national recognition of her writing and publication in such national magazines as _____.

   a. *Time*
   b. *Life*
   c. *Vogue*
   d. *People*

7. The publication of *The Awakening* turned the literary circle against her because _____.

   a. the writing was considered poor
   b. the main character rejects her traditional role and apparently commits suicide - controversial topics for Victorian society
   c. the novel was not interesting to audiences
   d. it was not of the same quality as her short stories

8. Chopin tackled the issue of race in her story _____.

   a. "Desiree's Baby"
   b. *At Fault*
   c. *The Awakening*
   d. "The Story of an Hour"

9. Chopin was not able to regain her success as a writer before her death, and her works regained popularity only when _____.

   a. her novel was rediscovered
   b. the women's movement embraced her works
   c. a biography revealed the quality of her writing and re-introduced her works to readers
   d. her anthologies were published

10. Chopin not only wrote in a Southern Gothic style, but she also wrote _____.

   a. emotionally and romantically
   b. realistically and critically
   c. sentimentally
   d. with indulgence and fantasy

True/False

11. Kate Chopin drew upon her experiences while living in Louisiana for the setting and subjects of her story.

12. Southern Gothic writers wrote in the same romantic Gothic style as European writers.

13. The elements of violence, imprisonment, and an unstable character are commonly used in Southern Gothic writing.

14. Chopin began her writing career in New Orleans.

15. Chopin was little-known until a biography published in 1969 revealed her literary expertise in both her short stories and novels.

Lesson 13.2

VOCABULARY

1. **veiled** – partially obscured, as if by a figurative veil

   "He made a *veiled* threat towards his enemy, and we could hear the anger in his voice."

2. **forestall** – to exclude; to hinder or prevent

   "In order to *forestall* any concerns we might have, she gave us all of the information up front."

3. **peddler** – one who offers merchandise for sale along the street

   "We purchased fish from a local peddler."

4. **bespoke** – to indicate or signify

   "The fancy dress clothes she wore bespoke the significance of the occasion."

5. **repression** – the prevention of natural and normal expression, activity, or development

   "After years of *repression*, he still had difficulty showing his feelings."

6. **suspension** – temporary withholding

   "There was a *suspension* of response as the audience waited to see what would happen next."

7. **elusive** – hard to comprehend or define

   "The meaning of the quotation remained *elusive* to her."

8. **tumultuously** – marked by violent or overwhelming upheaval

   "The boat rocked *tumultuously* on the rough seas."

9. **exalted** – to elevate by praise or in estimation

   "He *exalted* her with his admiration of her work."

10. **persistence** – continuing on a course despite interference

    "Despite the hardships, he showed amazing *persistence* when finishing the task."

11. **illumination** – the act of making something clear or the state of being clear

    "His *illumination* of the text finally helped me understand it."

12. **elixir** – a medicinal concoction

    "She mixed up an *elixir* to help his sore throat."

13. **importunities** – things that are troublesomely urgent or persistently demanding

    "My mother's *importunities* did not make me work any faster."

14. **unwittingly** – not knowingly

    "He *unwittingly* handed them all of his money, but it was never returned."

13.2 Activity

After learning the vocabulary for "The Story of an Hour," read the story. Look for the Southern Gothic elements Chopin has used, and be prepared to analyze it in the next lesson.

13.2 Review

Multiple Choice

1. A synonym for *forestall* is _____.

    a. hinder or prevent
    b. to be reluctant
    c. to hesitate
    d. to be prepared

2. An *elixir* is a _____.

    a. a magical potion
    b. a medicinal concoction
    c. a mythical invention
    d. a key to happiness

3. The antonym of *elusive* is _____.

   a. difficult to catch
   b. confusing
   c. easy to comprehend or define
   d. slippery

4. To have *persistence* is to be _____.

   a. able to continue despite hardships
   b. willing to give up
   c. able to understand difficult ideas
   d. have faith

5. Another word for *peddler* would be _____.

   a. street vendor
   b. inventor
   c. sales clerk
   d. advertiser

6. If you *repress* your feelings, you are _____.

   a. expressing them
   b. letting them out
   c. holding them inside
   d. ignoring them

7. To do something *unwittingly* is to do it _____.

   a. willfully
   b. with full knowledge
   c. intentionally
   d. unknowingly

8. If an utterance is *veiled*, it is _____.

   a. dressed in a veil
   b. spoken clearly
   c. spoken with its meaning partially obscured
   d. spoken with an entirely hidden meaning

9. An *illumination* is something that is _____.

   a. unclear
   b. made clear
   c. shining
   d. highlighted in a book

10. If a friend is using *importunities*, that friend is _____.

   a. overly persistent
   b. using threats
   c. complacent
   d. enthusiastic

True/False

11. To be *persistent* is to keep trying despite hardships.

12. If you do something *unwittingly*, you do it with full knowledge and intent.

13. To *forestall* someone is to strongly urge them.

14. A *peddler* is a street vendor.

15. A concept is *elusive* if it is easy to grasp and understand.

Lesson 13.3

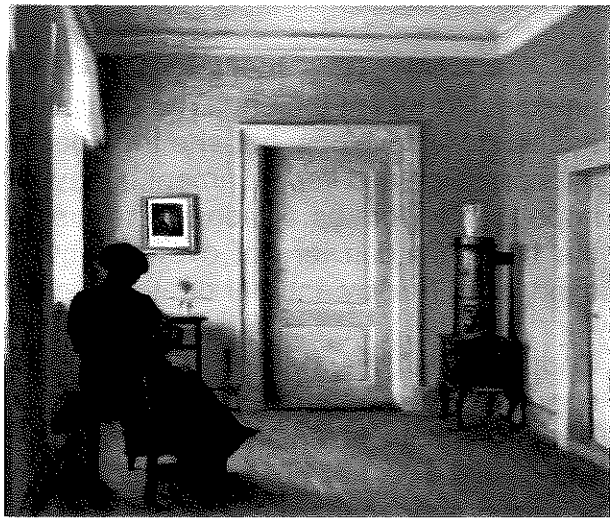
ANALYSIS
THE STORY OF AN HOUR

Although most women would be in shock upon hearing the tragic news of a husband's death, Mrs. Mallard responds with weeping. Great care had been taken in preparing her; a heart condition required it. Thus the story begins, giving readers some insight as to how this widow might deal with her future.

Mrs. Mallard seeks isolation in her room where she sinks into a chair. Chopin then describes this character as young, yet her face is lined from repression. This speaks volumes. Clearly, Mrs. Mallard has been holding back her feelings, as would be expected of a Victorian woman. Displays of emotions were not well regarded at the time. Ladies were expected to behave politely and quietly.

As Mrs. Mallard finally begins to feel, an emotion comes to her; and when it does, she can, at last, express it. She feels free! This is an odd revelation for a new widow. She, quite expectedly, would be preoccupied with the loss of her husband and partner. Yet it is clear that his death brings her a sense of freedom. She admits to herself that she will likely cry again when she sees him in his coffin, for she knows that he loved her. However, she outright welcomes a future that now holds life lived only for herself. This thought brings her great joy, matching the descriptions of the outdoors in spring. Spring is the reawakening of many things gone dormant over the winter. In many ways, Mrs. Mallard has been living dormant, and now she has the opportunity to reawaken.

She has a moment of illumination when she realizes that her husband's imposing will upon her, kind or not, is oppression. His control over her life, even if meant kindly, is still oppression. Yet without him, there is no one to control her, and she is finally free. Though she loved him, love to her has far less meaning than the thought of being in control of her own life; and she loved him only at times. In fact, she believes that this moment of self-realization, this moment of taking control of her life is the strongest stimulus she has ever experienced.



Her sister comes to coax her out of the room. Mistakenly believing that Mrs. Mallard is grieving, her sister does not understand the joy and hope for the future that is growing within. These feelings are contrary to what is expected. Mrs. Mallard's secret thoughts of a life as a widow and joy at being freed are surprising. Most married people would be grieving and dreading the future without their partners. Yet Mrs. Mallard is not.

Mrs. Mallard actually reveals that she had previously been afraid of a long life, but now she hopes for one. She allows her sister to enter, and together they go down the stairs. However, it is at this moment that her husband enters the house, having been away from the scene of the accident. The shock of seeing him, and of losing that hope of a future alone, kills Mrs. Mallard. Her death is mistakenly explained as being due to her weak heart or to the joy of her husband's return; but Chopin has revealed her secret. The shock is not that her husband has returned; it is the shock that she will not be able to live that new life she had imagined. Chopin has cleverly reversed the tragedy – from the loss of the husband to the joy of widowhood to the sudden shock and death of Mrs. Mallard.

Thematic Connection – Gothic and Southern Gothic elements

Though Chopin does not utilize a forbidding setting, she introduces the tragedy and death immediately. Her story begins with a death, followed by the thoughts of Mrs. Mallard. Those thoughts reveal quite the opposite of what is expected. The rising tension is the excitement, and not the grief, that Mrs. Mallard experiences. This sudden conflict and climax of action occurs as her husband arrives, safe and sound. Readers are just as shocked by his return as are the characters, but Chopin adds a final twist. The tragedy turns around, and Mrs. Mallard is dead. Chopin uses high emotions such as grief, shock, joy, and hope; but she crafts an unexpected turn in the end. The character in distress initially turns out to have actual joy as the story develops, but she then becomes the tragic victim. Chopin uses the themes of oppression and imprisonment by revealing Mrs. Mallard's marital prison and her joyful hope for freedom as a widow. The rush of emotions she feels is definitely Gothic, as is the tragic sudden turn of events. She is herself an unstable character, surprising at every turn. Her joy and her death are completely unexpected.

Chopin uses this brief story to illuminate the possibility that marriage could be oppressive for women. She acknowledges the husband's love for his wife, and his kind intentions; but Chopin also recognizes that oppression is still oppression, no matter how kind and loving her husband had been. Mrs. Mallard's life did not belong to her. Only widowhood opened up possibilities for her, and that is snatched away when Mr. Mallard

returns. Yet Chopin's readers are the only ones who know Mrs. Mallard's secrets, and they die with her. Readers have been taken to a secret world where things are not as they seem outwardly. This is key to Southern Gothic literature: surface impressions are not always hidden realities. Chopin's story is a great example of storytelling, surprising at every turn and shocking at the end.

13.3 Review

Multiple Choice

1. When Mrs. Mallard begins to cry, readers expect that _____.

   a. she will cry only briefly
   b. she will continue to cry and miss her husband
   c. she will stop crying and attend to the funeral arrangements
   d. she will faint

2. As Mrs. Mallard realizes that her husband's death brings her freedom, readers find that _____.

   a. she loved him at times
   b. she felt his will oppressing her
   c. she was actually dreading a long life
   d. all of the above are true

3. Mrs. Mallard's sister, Josephine, thinks she is grieving. What signs does she give that she is grieving rather than thinking otherwise?

   a. She cries and screams.
   b. She isolates herself and does not open the door.
   c. She cries inconsolably.
   d. She sits still in shock.

4. Why does the description of the blue sky and signs of spring seem in contrast to the tragedy of the death of Mr. Mallard?

   a. A more somber setting would seem appropriate for a death, such as overcast skies or rain.
   b. Spring seems to imply re-growth and reawakening, not death.
   c. If Mrs. Mallard were indeed mourning and grieving, it is doubtful she would notice the signs of spring.
   d. All of the above

5. How is Mrs. Mallard's marriage a form of Southern Gothic imprisonment?

   a. Mrs. Mallard had to ask permission to do things.
   b. Mrs. Mallard could not leave the house.
   c. Mrs. Mallard was controlled by Mr. Mallard and had to repress her wants and feelings.
   d. Mrs. Mallard was locked in the house.

6. Why does Mrs. Mallard repeat that she is free?

   a. She feels that as a widow, she can live only for herself and not submit to another's will and choices.
   b. She wants to be able to move from her house.
   c. She was held against her will by her husband.
   d. She did not like her husband and is now free to look for another.

7. In the climax, how does Chopin turn the tables on her reader?

   a. Mrs. Mallard really loves her husband and is glad to see him.
   b. The initial news of the husband's death is false, and the widow is the one who dies herself.
   c. Mrs. Mallard dies from joy in seeing her husband is alive.
   d. Chopin shows the reader that Mrs. Mallard was too quick to celebrate.

8. How does the story use Gothic elements?

   a. The story is a tragedy, first of one character, then another.
   b. There are strong emotions such as shock, surprise, grief and even joy, along with the rising tension and a surprise ending.
   c. There is a character in distress.
   d. All of the above.

9. Using the Southern Gothic sub-genre, what social issue does Chopin illuminate?

   a. racial issues
   b. oppression of women
   c. class issues
   d. the differences in social status

10. Richard and Josephine have impressions of Mrs. Mallard. How do their impressions differ from what she really feels?

    a. They see her cry and hide in her room; they think she is sad.
    b. They think she won't come out because she is grieving.
    c. They believe that the shock of seeing her husband alive is due to joy rather than shock that she won't be able to live a free life
    d. All of the above

True/False

11. Mrs. Mallard does not love her husband.

12. When Mrs. Mallard hears the news, she initially cries rather than sit in shock.

13. An emotion sweeps over Mrs. Mallard; and when she identifies it, it is joy in being free.

14. Mrs. Mallard regains her hope toward life upon learning she is a widow.

15. When Mrs. Mallard sees her husband, she is glad to see him but overwhelmed by the shock.

Lesson 13.4

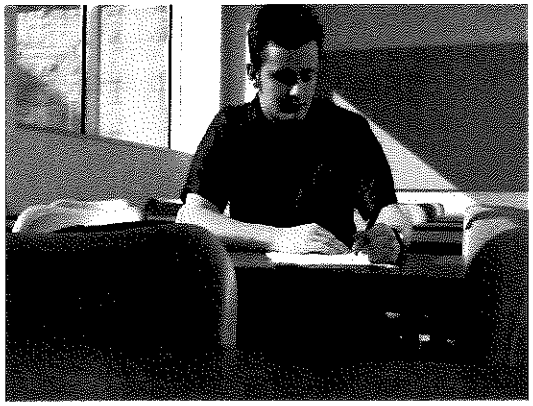
WRITING AN EXPOSITORY ESSAY – ROUGH DRAFT

An expository essay is a common form of writing that analyzes and describes an event, a process, ideas, objects, or written works. It differs from a persuasive essay in that it relies on presenting facts rather than putting forth opinions. Like a persuasive essay, however, the expository essay does follow the assertion of a thesis statement. This thesis statement may define a particular item or event, compare and contrast it with another, or look at cause and effect for that item or event.

Using the thesis statement that you wrote in earlier modules, be sure that you verified that you have enough facts to support your statement in an essay. Using your index cards with facts and quotations and the outline you created for your project, create a rough draft of your research paper. Use the following expository essay format.

Step 1: Write the introductory paragraph

Begin the first paragraph with an interesting fact to grab your audience's attention. This sentence should be connected to the main topic. Start with general ideas and a discussion, and then at the end of the introductory paragraph, add the thesis statement. It should connect to your discussion and should be a logical conclusion for the end of the paragraph. This thesis statement serves as the general idea for the entire paper, and all supportive evidence needs to be connected to it and provide support for it. Modify the thesis statement, if necessary, for clarity.



Step 2: Write three to five body paragraphs

Using your outline and index cards, check sources and evidence to see how many supporting ideas you have. The classic five paragraph essay has three main supporting ideas, one paragraph for each. However, you may find it necessary to include one to two more paragraphs for information that you have found. Each paragraph should be logically linked to the thesis, and one paragraph covers one supporting idea. You should have enough facts for a discussion of each supporting idea, and be sure to tie it into the thesis statement. Be sure to differentiate between facts and theories. Any theories that you suggest or include need to contain evidence to support them, or you need to provide information that explains why a particular theory is not supported.

Step 3: Verify your information

Remember to perform one final check that your evidence is relevant and is directly connected to the main idea. You should have a variety of sources, both primary and secondary, as well as details that illuminate the subject. However, do not overwhelm your audience by filling your paper with minor details. Details support your evidence which is always linked to the thesis statement. Also use a dictionary to verify correct word and term usage.

Step 4: Transitions and Variety

Use a variety of sentence types in your writing. Try to use active verbs and avoid fact-telling. Facts are used only in support of ideas, and your inferences about the topic based on those facts need to be included, too. Use transitions to keep writing smooth, and check the flow of the essay to see that it makes logical sense. If describing an event, try to use chronological order. If describing an invention, start with the inventor and how the idea came about. Use the natural order of your topic to serve as a framework for your writing.

Step 5: Conclusion

The conclusion should not introduce new information. Rather, it should restate ideas in a summary and synthesize that information into a conclusion. Now that the evidence is there, the conclusion should show how the thesis is supported. There should also be a sentence that brings the paper to a logical and satisfying end.

Step 6: Check your citations

Any information that you paraphrased, gleaned from sources, or directly quoted should be cited. Using the MLA format reviewed in Module 12, write the complete citations for each source. You may be using footnotes, endnotes, or a bibliography, depending on your facilitator's directions. Make sure that your citations meet the MLA guidelines.

At this point, you will have created a rough draft for your research paper. In the next module, you will review and polish your draft for either a written or oral presentation. You will critique all parts of the presentation and then present the final product to your facilitator in written or oral format.

13.4 Activity

Now that you have your outline and index cards organized, begin writing your rough draft. Check your thesis statement and refine it if necessary. Follow the steps listed in Lesson 13.4 to create your rough draft. Make sure your citations are noted. In the next module, you will finish and submit your final presentation.

13.4 Review

Multiple Choice

1. The thesis statement in an expository essay can be _____.

   a. defining
   b. comparing and contrasting
   c. examining cause and effect
   d. any of the above

2. The thesis statement should be _____.

   a. clear and concise
   b. general
   c. very specific and narrow
   d. limited in scope

3. Body paragraphs contain _____.

   a. the introduction
   b. only details
   c. the supporting information which is connected to the thesis statement
   d. the conclusion

4. In the body of your essay, each supporting idea needs _____.

   a. citations
   b. one body paragraph
   c. generalities
   d. all of the above

5. Your writing needs to include _____.

   a. transitions and active verbs
   b. the same type of sentence throughout the essay
   c. only the details
   d. only the thesis and general information

6. A well-written conclusion _____.

   a. only restates the thesis statement
   b. introduces new information
   c. repeats the entire essay
   d. states the thesis, concludes the essay with an assertion, and does not introduce new information

7. Citations should include _____.

   a. primary and secondary sources
   b. reliable sources
   c. notation in your paper according to the format your facilitator requires
   d. all of the above

8. Your outline and index cards _____.

   a. help you to organize and order the flow of information
   b. are no longer useful
   c. should be set aside
   d. provide additional information to add

9. A rough draft _____.

   a. is ready to turn in
   b. does not need editing and revising
   c. is only a first draft and will need additional work
   d. can be skipped and a final draft created

10. An expository essay _____.

    a. argues a point
    b. makes only general statements
    c. does not provide specific details
    d. explains, defines, compares, or contrasts

True/False

11. An expository essay is the same as a persuasive essay.

12. All supporting information is connected to the main idea.

13. Essays do not need body paragraphs.

14. A conclusion should not introduce new information.

15. A rough draft should be edited and refined before creating a final draft.

Module 13 At-a-Glance

Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" contains elements of Southern Gothic writing, a unique sub-genre of American Gothic literature. Social issues like race, gender, and class are illuminated in these works. Writers employ such elements as imprisonment,

violence, or an unstable character while revealing the characters' hidden emotions or feelings.

A rough draft of an expository essay is created by using the notes and outline from previous module assignments. This essay includes the thesis statement with all supporting ideas connected to the main idea. The essay also includes introductory and body paragraphs as well as a conclusion.

Module 13 Practice Test

Multiple Choice

1. Southern Gothic writers used Gothic elements to _____.

   a. shock and surprise their audiences
   b. imitate European Gothic writers
   c. illuminate social conditions or issues
   d. add spark to their stories

2. Southern Gothic writers included elements such as _____.

   a. imprisonment
   b. violence
   c. an unstable character
   d. any or all of the above

3. Chopin drew upon her experience with French Creoles and Louisiana culture _____.

   a. as her setting for most of her stories
   b. as her subjects in the stories
   c. as a framework to comment upon the social and political oppression of women
   d. all of the above

4. Chopin grew up in St. Louis, but she learned _____.

   a. French from her French mother, helping her to communicate with the French Creole culture
   b. Spanish from her father
   c. Spanish from her husband
   d. French during her time in New Orleans

5. A synonym for *forestall* is _____.

   a. hinder or prevent
   b. to be reluctant
   c. to hesitate
   d. to be prepared

6. An *elixir* is _____.

   a. a magical potion
   b. a medicinal concoction
   c. a mythical invention
   d. a key to happiness

7. The antonym of *elusive* is _____.

   a. difficult to catch
   b. confusing
   c. easy to comprehend or define
   d. slippery

8. To have *persistence* is to be _____.

   a. able to continue despite hardships.
   b. willing to give up.
   c. able to understand difficult ideas.
   d. have faith.

9. When Mrs. Mallard begins to cry, readers expect _____.

   a. she will cry only briefly
   b. she will continue to cry and miss her husband
   c. she will stop crying and attend to the funeral arrangements
   d. she will faint

10. As Mrs. Mallard realizes that her husband's death brings her freedom, readers find that _____.

   a. she loved him at times
   b. she felt his will oppressing her
   c. she was actually dreading a long life
   d. all of the above are true

11. Mrs. Mallard's sister, Josephine, thinks she is grieving. What signs does Mrs. Mallard give that she is grieving rather than thinking otherwise?

    a. She cries and screams.
    b. She isolates herself and does not open the door.
    c. She cries inconsolably.
    d. She sits still in shock.

12. Why does the description of the blue sky and signs of spring seem in contrast to the tragedy of the death of Mr. Mallard?

    a. A more somber setting would seem appropriate for a death, such as overcast skies or rain.
    b. Spring seems to imply re-growth and reawakening, not death.
    c. If Mrs. Mallard were indeed mourning and grieving, it is doubtful she would notice the signs of spring.
    d. All of the above

13. The thesis statement in an expository essay can be _____.

    a. defining
    b. comparing and contrasting
    c. examining cause and effect
    d. any of the above

14. The thesis statement should be _____.

    a. clear and concise
    b. general
    c. very specific and narrow
    d. limited in scope

15. Body paragraphs contain _____.

    a. the introduction
    b. only details
    c. the supporting information which is connected to the thesis statement
    d. the conclusion

True/False

16. Kate Chopin drew upon her experience living in Louisiana for the setting and subjects of her story.

17. The themes of violence, imprisonment, and an unstable character are commonly used in Southern Gothic writing.

18. A concept is *elusive* if it is easy to grasp and understand.

19. When Mrs. Mallard sees her husband, she is glad to see him but overwhelmed by the shock.

20. An expository essay is the same as a persuasive essay.

Check your answers with those in the Student Answer Key. Review the module if you did not do well. When you feel confident, ask your instructor for your next assignment.

Module 14

The Yellow Wallpaper- Charlotte Perkins Gilman

MODULE OBJECTIVES

- Understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing.
- Analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts.
- Understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction.
- Organize and present ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and the audience.
- Synthesize research into an extended written or oral presentation.

Overview

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, another American Gothic writer, looks into the very secret and personal thoughts and feelings of a nineteenth century woman who experiences a downward spiral into depression. "The Yellow Wallpaper" occurs in an ominous Gothic setting where a tense mood surrounds an unstable and unreliable character in distress. While weaving these Gothic elements into her story, Gilman skillfully reveals social issues that profoundly affected women in the nineteenth century.

Module 14 concludes with the production of the final expository essay for presentation. After revising and proofreading the rough draft, a title page, optional pictures, and a cover can be added. The completed project will then be ready for submission to the facilitator.

Lesson 14.1

WOMEN'S MALADIES AND NINETEENTH CENTURY REMEDIES

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, little was known about many mental disorders, especially a condition known as post partum depression. Due to the tremendous chemical and physical changes the body undergoes during and after pregnancy, some women suffer from depression. When experiencing its most severe form, post partum psychosis, some women are not only anxious and sad, but they also have delusions and hallucinations. Doctors at the time believed that most women's mental disorders were due to mental exertion, whereas men suffering the same symptoms were not treated the same way. Men were believed to be stronger and could cope with the symptoms usually without intervention. Women were commonly given narcotics such as opium, cocaine, and chloroform for everything from depression to headaches. However, some physicians advised against the dangers of narcotics and prescribed a rest cure. The rest cure required women to remain completely inactive, without any mental stimulation such as reading, writing, or even interacting with adults.

Modern medical treatment for post partum depression ranges from medication to hospitalization and requires monitoring to ensure that mother and baby receive on-going treatment until the condition is resolved. In fact, doctors today actively encourage women being treated for depression to seek stimulating activities as well as the support and companionship of others.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" is a fictional story about a nineteenth century woman who suffers from post partum depression. The story is based upon Gilman's own experience with depression; it is widely believed that she suffered from post-partum psychosis. As in the story, the rest cure that was prescribed worsened the symptoms of depression and nearly drove the author into complete insanity.

Meet the Author

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) was born in Hartford, Connecticut. Her father abandoned her family when she was young, leaving her mother to raise two children alone. Gilman subsequently endured frequent moves and attended many different schools. The family struggled financially, and her education suffered due to the many changes. Nevertheless, she was a bright student and studied art which led to her earning a job making greeting cards. In 1884, she married artist Charles Stetson, and they had a daughter the following year.

Gilman suffered bouts of severe depression soon after her marriage, notably after the birth of her child, and her husband persuaded her to consult a famous neurologist, S. Weir Mitchell. He prescribed a bizarre form of bed rest that allowed her no interaction among friends or mental exertion. The isolation and lack of stimulation nearly drove her mad, and she fled the rest cure to friends in Pasadena, California, where she regained

her sanity. She and Walter divorced soon after, and she supported herself and her daughter through a boardinghouse. She wrote about her experience with the rest cure in "The Yellow Wallpaper," published in 1892. In 1893, she published a book of verse, *In This Our World*; and in 1894, she co-edited a women's journal, *The Impress*. She began to travel, lecturing on social issues, particularly economics and women's rights. When Walter remarried, Gilman allowed her daughter to live with him and his new wife. Gilman envisioned more stability for her daughter if she lived with her father. In 1890, Gilman married her first cousin, George Houghton Gilman, though she continued to lecture and travel.

Although she is well known for her fiction, Gilman also wrote nonfiction. One of her widely known works was *Women and Economics*, published in 1898. This was followed by *The Home: Its Work and Influence* (1903) and *Does a Man Support His Wife?* (1915). She was a supporter of women's rights and economic reform, advocating for women's economic independence as well as for the right to vote. She also published a magazine, *The Forerunner*, in which she published essays, opinions, poetry, and excerpts. The total output of the magazine would have filled twenty-eight full-length books.

Gilman lived a contented life until her husband died suddenly in 1934. At about that same time, she discovered she had terminal breast cancer. She moved back to Pasadena to be near her daughter; there she chose to end her life in 1935 rather than die of the cancer. She left a legacy of writings as well as the example of a woman leading an independent life. She never gave up on sharing her views of equality and autonomy for women.

14.1 Activity

Choose one activity to complete:

1. In the nineteenth century, women's mental disorders were often categorized into a single diagnosis, "neurasthenia." Research this term, and determine whether this term is still in use. Is it an actual medical diagnosis? What condition do you think it refers to now?

2. Post partum depression is still an ongoing concern for new mothers. In an effort to raise awareness, some famous celebrities have recently revealed their own struggles with overcoming it. Research post partum depression, and find the names of at least two celebrities who have suffered from post partum depression. How does sharing their stories help other women? Should depression be a private matter or shared with others?

14.1 Review

Multiple Choice

1. Women's mental disorders in the nineteenth century were commonly believed to be caused by _____.

   a. stress
   b. mental exertion
   c. outside influences
   d. work

2. Doctors often prescribed rest cures which involved _____.

   a. taking frequent breaks from work
   b. having no social interaction nor mental stimulation
   c. resting during the day by reading or writing in a journal
   d. doing restful activities

3. Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" was written after Gilman herself experienced _____.

   a. post partum depression
   b. a nervous breakdown
   c. overwork
   d. a friend going through depression

4. Gilman's childhood _____.

   a. was idyllic and peaceful
   b. involved both of her parents
   c. was challenging due to her ill health
   d. was difficult due to her father's abandoning the family and leaving her mother to struggle financially

5. After the birth of her first child, Gilman's husband suggested that she _____.

   a. take a break and hire a nanny
   b. stop working
   c. consult Dr. S. Weir Mitchell about her depression
   d. rest more

6. Following the break-up of her marriage, Gilman began to travel frequently and eventually allowed her daughter to _____.

   a. accompany her on trips
   b. live permanently with her father and stepmother
   c. live at a boarding school
   d. live with her mother

7. In addition to writing fiction, Gilman wrote nonfiction primarily about _____.

   a. economics and social reform, including women's rights
   b. politics
   c. international relations
   d. finance

8. Gilman remarried and lived a contented life until her _____.

   a. second husband divorced her
   b. second husband died
   c. writing career ended
   d. daughter died

9. Upon learning that she had terminal breast cancer, Gilman moved _____.

   a. in with her mother
   b. to hospice care
   c. to Pasadena to be near her daughter
   d. far away from family

10. Due to the nature of her terminal illness, Gilman chose to _____.

    a. refuse medication
    b. continue working as long as she could
    c. end her own life
    d. ignore her illness

True/False

11. In the nineteenth century, mental disorders were treated the same way as they are today.

12. The rest cure was prescribed for sufferers of tuberculosis.

13. Gilman struggled with depression.

14. Gilman wrote nonfiction as well as fiction, and she traveled frequently to lecture on social issues.

15. Modern women do not suffer from post partum depression.

Lesson 14.2

VOCABULARY

1. **felicity** – the quality or state of being happy

   "I have such felicity at just being here with you."

2. **congenial** – pleasant, agreeably suited

   "He was a very congenial person, easy to be around."

3. **draught** – a current of air

   "The old house is full of draughts from the gaps around the windows."

4. **flamboyant** – characterized by waving curves or elaborate and colorful display

   "The costume he wore for Halloween was very flamboyant."

5. **lolls** – to hang loosely, droop or dangle

   "My dog's tongue lolls out of his mouth when he is sleeping."

6. **impertinence** – not restrained or given to insolent rudeness

   "Her toddler often shows impertinence towards her mother."

7. **querulous** – habitually complaining, fretful or whining

   "He spoke to her in a querulous voice, still not wanting to do his chores."

8. **fatuity** – something foolish or stupid

   "I have committed a terrible fatuity by inviting his ex-wife to the wedding."

9. **conscientiously** – meticulously or carefully

   "We conscientiously cleaned the tile after the rainwater flooded the floor."

10. **convolutions** – forms or shapes that are folded into curves

    "The blanket was folded into convolutions on the sofa."

11. **derision** – the use of or object of ridicule and scorn

    "The boys who chased him after school treated him with derision and called him names."

12. **misconstrued** - to misunderstand the meaning of, to take in the wrong sense

    "I am afraid I misconstrued his meaning and thought we were on a date, when he really only wanted a companion for the event."

14.2 Activity

After studying the vocabulary for the story and the background of the author, read "The Yellow Wallpaper." Keep the narration in mind as you read it, noting when you think events are real or imagined. The next lesson will analyze the story, and in particular, the reliability of the narrator.

14.2 Review

Multiple Choice

1. Find the antonym for *congenial* _____.

   a. enthusiastic
   b. unpleasant, not suited
   c. stubborn
   d. convenient

2. A *draught* of air is the same as _____.

   a. a cold blast
   b. a storm gale
   c. a draft of air
   d. an opening where air can get through

3. An antonym for *flamboyant* is _____.

   a. flashy
   b. colorful
   c. understated, plain
   d. fashionable

4. To speak with *impertinence* is to be _____.

   a. polite
   b. rude
   c. impatient
   d. impossible

5. A *querulous* person is one who _____.

   a. whines and complains
   b. asks questions
   c. talks constantly
   d. quarrels

6. A *fatuity* is something _____.

   a. foolish, a folly
   b. fantastic
   c. frightening
   d. flatulent

7. A person who is *conscientious* is a person who is _____.

   a. flighty and unreliable
   b. nervous and worried
   c. concerned with appearances
   d. careful and meticulous

8. *Convolutions* are _____.

   a. forms or shapes folded into curves
   b. twists
   c. tangles
   d. turns

9. To be an object of *derision* is to be _____.

   a. encouraged
   b. teased and ridiculed
   c. guided
   d. praised

10. If something has been *misconstrued*, then the meaning _____.

    a. is understood
    b. has no significance
    c. has been misunderstood
    d. is not important

True/False

11. Wearing *flamboyant* clothes to work at a professional office may result in being fired.

12. You need insulation around doors and windows to keep *draughts* out.

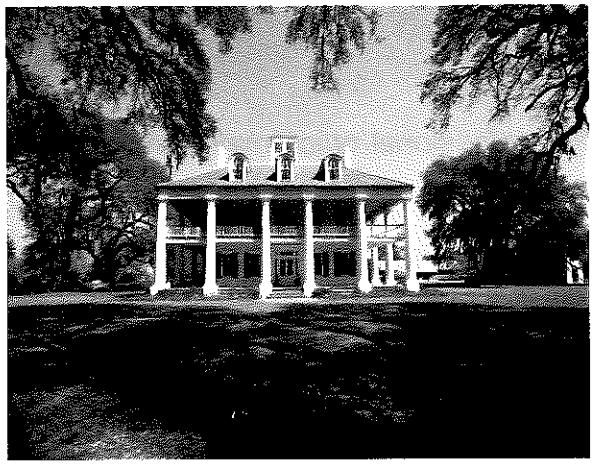
13. To speak with *impertinence* is to use the utmost of courtesy and respect.

14. *Felicity* is the state of being happy.

15. To *misconstrue* something is to fully comprehend it.

Lesson 14.3

ANALYSIS
THE YELLOW WALLPAPER



True to her Gothic roots, Gilman begins by sending her characters to an old mansion, the perfect Gothic setting. Her narrator is immediately suspicious, which sets up foreshadowing of later events. This is contrasted with the character of John, the husband, a doctor who has no belief in faith or superstition. He is so rational that he does not believe his wife is actually ill. Like many people of that time, John believes that his wife is succumbing to hysterics or that she has had too much mental exertion. It was believed that women made themselves ill this way, and the rest cure was meant to relieve their minds.

However, his wife is rebellious. In her secret journal, she dares to disagree. She writes that work, along with stimulation, would actually be beneficial for her. Yet she is deprived of work and of company, the two things she craves. Against her wishes, she is relegated to the nursery of the house. This is indicative of how her husband views her: someone needing to be looked after, someone belonging in a nursery rather than an adult's room. She is treated as one would treat a child.

The narrator continues to struggle with her depression, made worse by the fact that her very own husband does not believe she is actually ill. She reveals that she is nervous around her own baby, a symptom of post partum depression, and that a nanny is caring for him. When she mentions that the wallpaper makes her nervous, her husband believes that it is better for her to overcome her feelings towards it than to replace it.

However, lacking anything else to do, she stares at the wallpaper. She begins to see a figure behind it. Delusions and hallucinations are part of post partum psychosis, the most severe type of post partum depression. She cries and feels tired most of the time, also symptoms of depression. Her husband continues to try to convince her that she has to use her will and self-control to fight the depression and that letting her imagination get the better of her is dangerous. Clearly, he does not understand the nature of depression nor the fact that she cannot overcome this by strength of will. Through her narrator's ordeal, Gilman reveals hidden social issues of the late nineteenth century: the

husband's condescending tone with his wife and his refusal to acknowledge her plight. John blames his wife for not being able to overcome her symptoms, and in doing so, he makes her condition worse.

The psychosis worsens as she sees the figure shaking the wallpaper. To no avail, she tries to convince her husband to leave the mansion, but he will not change their plans. He again tells her to resist fancy or temperament, which he blames for her illness. Failing to find help, the narrator soon believes that she can see the woman from behind the wallpaper. She thinks she sees her creeping along the garden.

At last, the narrator conceives a plan: she determines to take the wallpaper down. She locks the door and throws the key out the window. She says that now she can see many creeping women outside. John discovers that she has locked herself in the nursery and bangs on the door. She tells him where the key is; meanwhile, she has peeled off all the paper she can reach and is creeping around the room. She tells him she has gotten out at last, and that since the paper is gone, she cannot be put back. The narrator identifies herself as the woman behind the wallpaper, revealing at the end of the story that her husband has fainted and that now she has to creep over him every time she circles the room.

Thematic Connection - Gothic Elements

Clearly, Gilman has started well with the setting in an old mansion. She tells the story through the eyes of an unreliable narrator, a woman who is confined for a rest cure. As she begins to hallucinate, she is a character in distress; she believes that women live behind the wallpaper and come outside to creep around the garden. Yet her descent into madness can be medically explained through the post partum psychosis diagnosis, whereupon the depression that can occur after the birth of a child worsens to a state of paranoia and hallucinations. The narrator is convinced that the wallpaper will trap her, that John and Jenny will trap her in it, so she tears it down and creeps around the room in circles.

Like Edgar Allan Poe, Gilman has exposed a world from the perspective of a person descending into madness. No one is behind the paper or creeping in the garden, yet to this character in distress, the figure is real. From a modern viewpoint, it is clear that her depression is not due to her temperament or lack of will, but rather to chemical changes after giving birth. The woman needs better treatment than she is receiving; but because she is a woman, she is not taken seriously. Gilman saved herself from her descent into madness by leaving her rest cure and escaping to a friend who assisted her out of her depression. Gilman wrote the story to reveal how the rest cure actually worsened the condition and that lack of mental stimulation and company drove her into insanity.

In this respect, Gilman is similar to the Southern Gothic writers who used the Gothic elements to comment upon social conditions. Gilman uses her Gothic story to show that some madwomen were driven mad by their "cure." They could have been saved if they had been treated differently. John treats his wife like a child and blames her lack of strength for not overcoming an illness. In this bizarre story, Gilman reveals that women's mental ailments were not taken seriously at the time, therefore putting their well-being at risk. She uses Gothic elements to comment on a social issue.

14.3 Activity

Choose one activity to complete

1. Go to http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/whyyw.html and read the short essay by Charlotte Perkins Gilman titled "Why I Wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper*." Why did she write it? Why would a doctor prescribe such a treatment, if the treatment worsened the condition? What effect did her story have on others?

2. The narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper" clearly descends into madness. Compare and contrast this narrator with Montresor from Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado." What do they have in common? Does either narrator believe that he or she is insane? What proof do you have that they are? How are they different?

14.3 Review

Multiple Choice

1. John does not believe his wife is ill because he _____.

   a. thinks that she has a weak temperament, and she is not using self control
   b. does not believe depression exists
   c. thinks she has something else wrong with her
   d. does not see that she is sick

2. Readers know the circumstances of the story because _____.

   a. the story is told in third person
   b. John tells what is happening
   c. the narrator's secret journal entries are revealed to readers
   d. readers can guess from the action in the story

3. The narrator _____.

   a. feels that resting will help her
   b. knows that John and Jenny are doing the right things for her
   c. disagrees with her treatment and feels that writing and interacting with people would be good for her
   d. knows that she cannot get well

4. When the narrator tells her husband that the wallpaper makes her nervous, he _____.

   a. immediately rips it down
   b. tells her he will make changes later
   c. tells her not to worry about it
   d. scoffs at her and tells her that he will leave it up because she should not give into flights of fancy about it

5. Given nothing to do, the narrator stares at the wallpaper and sees _____.

   a. torn, stained paper
   b. an ugly pattern
   c. a figure shaking the wallpaper
   d. holes in the wall

6. The hallucinations continue, and the narrator soon sees the figure _____.

   a. creeping in the garden
   b. going down the stairs
   c. hiding under the bed
   d. disappearing

7. The symptoms of crying, feeling tired, and having trouble coping with everyday things are _____.

   a. not symptoms of depression
   b. definitely symptoms of depression
   c. symptoms of another illness
   d. signs that she needs to exercise

8. Toward the end of the story, the narrator _____.

   a. devises a plan to rid herself of the wallpaper
   b. continues to see even more figures creeping around
   c. decides that John and Jenny will try to stop her
   d. does all of the above

9. At the climax of the story, John _____.

   a. changes his mind about his wife's condition
   b. finds his wife locked in her room, and he faints when he sees that she has gone mad
   c. takes her away from the house
   d. takes her to another doctor

10. Gilman's story demonstrates _____.

   a. that the mind can play tricks on anyone
   b. how depressed people think
   c. how rest cures are not restful
   d. how depriving someone of stimulation and interaction can cause an already unstable person to go insane

True/False

11. The narrator chooses to take the rest cure and believes it will help.

12. John loves his wife and means well, even if the rest cure is part of the problem.

13. The narrator starts out sane, but she gradually goes insane.

14. The women in the garden are ghosts.

15. The narrator does not believe she is insane.

Lesson 14.4

COMPLETING A RESEARCH PROJECT

This lesson is the fourth and final step in your research project. Now that you have constructed a rough draft, it is time to revise and edit it into a final presentation. To assist you in completing the project, follow these guidelines:

1. **Start with the title**. Does the title adequately identify the purpose of your project, or is it too general, such as "Victorian Art"? Refine the title so that it clearly states the main topic of your paper, such as "Italianate Victorian Homes of 1870-1905."

2. **Examine the introductory paragraph**. Is your thesis statement clear? Does the introduction lead into the thesis statement? Is it clear where the introduction ends and the body paragraph begins?

3. **Look at the body paragraphs**. Does each body paragraph have a topic sentence? Remember, each paragraph explores one supporting idea which is connected to the thesis. Does each paragraph provide clear details that are important to the main idea? Are the body paragraphs too long and detailed (more than approximately eight sentences), or too short (fewer than four sentences)? Add or remove information to keep the paragraphs consistent.

4. **Double-check sources**. Are your sources of information convincing? Do you prove your point? Have you correctly cited any information that was not your own? Have you provided a variety of sources to support the main idea?

5. **Your opinion is clearly stated and supported**. You should be able to express your ideas and demonstrate the variety of sources you used to support your ideas. You should have a valid argument that anticipates counter-arguments and shows evidence in its favor.

6. **Re-read your conclusion**. Have you provided enough support to make your conclusion seem plausible? Have you ended your paper by restating your main idea, and have you written a concluding sentence?

7. **Length and complexity**. Your presentation should not be overly detailed, making it cumbersome to read. However, your presentation should be of sufficient length and complexity to clearly support your main idea; it should adequately develop your argument or assertion, and it should include your supporting details.

8. **Cover the basics and proofread**. Remember to spell check, check your grammar, look for run-on sentences or fragments, and make sure that punctuation is used properly.

9. **Consider having another person read your paper**. Enlist a friend, parent, or teacher to read your work and check for errors, word flow, transitions, and coherence.

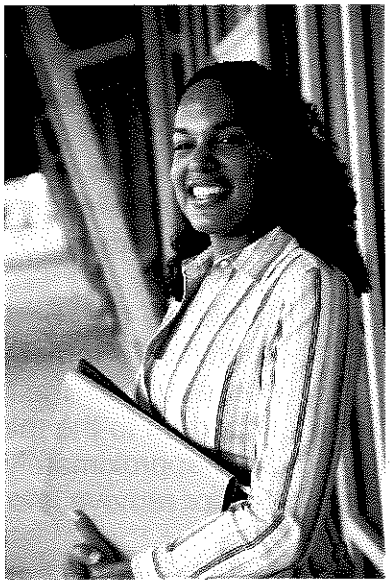
10. **Prepare a title page.** This should include the title of your project, your name, the due date, your class, and teacher's name listed on the front and center of the page.

11. **Prepare a "Works Cited" or "Bibliography"** listing the sources used, alphabetically by last name of the author.

12. **Check the final draft.** It should be unmarked, and typically, it should be in Times New Roman font size 12. If you wish, enclose the presentation in a cover to give it a more formal appearance.

13. **Consider adding a photo or photos to your presentation** as part of the addendum. Make sure each photo is cited for its source, unless you yourself take the photographs.

14. **Congratulations!** Your presentation is ready to be turned in or presented to your facilitator.



14.4 Activity

Use the steps to revise and proofread your final presentation. Make sure you have checked every step, added your title page and/or pictures, and enclose it in a cover if you wish. Turn in your completed presentation to your facilitator.

14.4 Review

Multiple Choice

1. The first item to check in your rough draft is your _____.

   a. name
   b. course name
   c. title of the paper
   d. date

2. Your introductory paragraph _____.

   a. should lead from general information to specific to the thesis statement at the end
   b. should include only general information
   c. should be very specific
   d. does not need the thesis statement

3. Each body paragraph should be checked in order to verify that it includes _____.

   a. the main idea
   b. one supporting idea connected to the main idea
   c. the introduction
   d. your opinions

4. Your opinion _____.

   a. does not matter in an expository essay
   b. should be included and supported
   c. should be the main focus of the paper
   d. is the only focus of the paper

5. Instead of merely restating facts, your research paper should _____.

   a. show evidence to support your assertion
   b. have a variety of sources represented
   c. include a pre-think of a counter argument and have evidence against it
   d. do all of the above

6. Your paper should have sufficient length and complexity to _____.

   a. support ideas without listing facts endlessly
   b. meet the minimum guidelines
   c. only briefly touch on the subject
   d. state and restate every detail

7. It is not necessary to proofread if you _____.

   a. remember to run spell check
   b. rely completely on the computer's grammar check
   c. have your friend check it over
   d. none of the above

8. A rough draft does not need revision if you _____.

   a. have allowed the computer to run a spell and grammar check
   b. wrote the rough draft carefully
   c. have checked all the steps, performed your own proofreading, had a friend check it over, and no changes were needed
   d. write only one draft

9. In finalizing your project for submission, you should add _____.

   a. a title page
   b. additional details
   c. a foreword
   d. a table of contents

10. To add an extra touch of formality, you can _____.

   a. type the title page
   b. enclose your presentation in a cover
   c. staple it
   d. hand in a clean copy for the final draft

True/False

11. Your thesis statement should be supported by a variety of sources.

12. Your research paper only requires that you restate known facts.

13. It is not important to share your opinion in any way or provide facts to support your opinion.

14. Your paper is of sufficient length if it is more than three paragraphs.

15. A final draft needs to include a bibliography.

Module 14 At-a-Glance

American Gothic writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman reveals her own experiences in "The Yellow Wallpaper." Based on the author's personal ordeal with post partum depression, the story exposes the rest cure prescription and its effects on women who endured this course of treatment. Although Gilman was able to escape and recover, her narrator is less fortunate. While addressing nineteenth-century social issues, Gilman weaves Gothic elements through her story: the old mansion as the setting, a character in distress, and the insanity of the narrator as she slowly descends into madness.

A final draft is the last stage in the production of a research project. Revisions and proofreading are necessary to ensure that the presentation is accurate, well organized, and structured before it is submitted to the facilitator.

Module 14 Practice Test

Multiple Choice

1. Women's mental disorders in the nineteenth century were commonly believed to be caused by _____.

   a. stress
   b. mental exertion
   c. outside influences
   d. work

2. Doctors often prescribed rest cures which involved _____.

   a. taking a break from work
   b. having no social interaction nor mental stimulation
   c. resting during the day by reading or writing in a journal
   d. doing restful activities

3. Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" was written after Gilman herself experienced _____.

   a. post partum depression
   b. a nervous breakdown
   c. overwork
   d. a friend going through depression

4. Gilman's childhood _____.

   a. was idyllic and peaceful
   b. involved both of her parents
   c. was challenging due to her ill health
   d. was difficult due to her father abandoning the family and leaving her mother to struggle financially

5. Find the antonym for *congenial* _____.

   a. enthusiastic
   b. unpleasant, not suited
   c. stubborn
   d. convenient

6. A *draught* of air is the same as _____.

   a. a cold blast
   b. a storm gale
   c. a draft of air
   d. an opening where air can get through

7. An antonym for *flamboyant* is _____.

   a. flashy
   b. colorful
   c. understated, plain
   d. fashionable

8. To speak with *impertinence* is to be _____.

   a. polite
   b. rude
   c. impatient
   d. impossible

9. In "The Yellow Wallpaper," John does not believe his wife is ill because he _____.

   a. thinks that she has a weak temperament and she is not using self control
   b. does not believe depression exists
   c. thinks she has something else wrong with her
   d. does not see that she is sick

10. Readers know the circumstances of the story because _____.

    a. the story is told in third person
    b. John tells us what is happening
    c. the narrator's secret journal entries are revealed to readers
    d. readers can guess from the action in the story

11. The narrator _____.

    a. feels that resting will help her
    b. knows that John and Jenny are doing the right things for her
    c. disagrees with her treatment and feels that writing and interacting with people would be good for her
    d. knows that she cannot get well

12. When she tells her husband that the wallpaper makes her nervous, he _____.

    a. immediately rips it down
    b. tells her he will make changes later
    c. tells her not to worry about it
    d. scoffs at her and tells her that he will leave it up because she should not give into flights of fancy about it

13. When working on a research paper, the first item to check in the rough draft is the _____.

    a. name
    b. course name
    c. title of the paper
    d. date

14. The introductory paragraph _____.

    a. should lead from general information to specific to the thesis statement at the end
    b. should include only general information
    c. should be very specific
    d. does not need the thesis statement

15. Each body paragraph should be checked in order to verify that it includes _____.

    a. the main idea
    b. one supporting idea connected to the main idea
    c. the introduction
    d. your opinions

True/False

16. The rest cure was prescribed for sufferers of tuberculosis.

17. Modern women do not suffer from post partum depression.

18. In "The Yellow Wallpaper," the narrator starts out sane, but she gradually goes insane.

19. The narrator does not believe she is insane.

20. In a research project, the thesis statement should be supported by a variety of sources.

Check your answers with those in the Student Answer Key. Review the module if you did not do well. When you feel confident, ask your instructor for your next assignment.

Module 15

Poetry of Sylvia Plath

MODULE OBJECTIVES

- Analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts.
- Understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of poetry.
- Analyze the effects of metrics, rhyme schemes, and other conventions in American poetry.
- Understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text.
- Analyze the meaning of classical, mythological, and biblical allusions in words, phrases, passages, and literary works.
- Use elements of the writing process to compose text.

Overview

Concluding the "Go Gothic" theme, selections by modern poet Sylvia Plath exemplify the use of Gothic elements, especially imagery and themes, to show multiple meanings and deeper feelings. Plath uses death, loss, tragedy, and fear in many of her poems. In "Cinderella," "The Death of Myth-Making," and "Mirror," she tackles loss and fear while using popular fairy tales and myths for her framework. By reworking the familiar tales, Plath shares and shows a different interpretation of these tales.

Plath is not the only modern author who used familiar tales to create new stories. Myths, legends and folktales have continued to inspire and delight audiences due to the creativity of storytellers who add new elements, making the stories relevant for contemporary audiences. At the end of the module, students will choose a modern story, book, film, or poem to compare to a classic tale or myth. By comparing and

contrasting the tale with the modern version, students will examine the reworking of an old story and its fresh appeal to present-day audiences.

Lesson 15.1

CONFESSIONAL POETRY

Confessional poetry is a style of writing that originated in the late 1950s and early 1960s. With his book *Life Studies*, Robert Lowell is credited with starting the movement by revealing a very personal account of his life and his family. Confessional poetry sought to tell a personal story, but it focused on deep inner feelings about formerly taboo subjects such as death, depression, and relationships. Often autobiographical, most confessional poems are written in the first person "I."

Sylvia Plath, along with the poet Anne Sexton, studied poetry with Robert Lowell. Her writing is highly personal and often delves into thoughts of death, tragedy, and even suicide. While confessional poets wrote from a deeply personal place, there was also a great deal of attention paid to the craft and construction of the poem. Plath's poems are tightly constructed with powerful language and sensory images.

Confessional poetry took the personal side of poetry and revealed a deeper, darker view into the minds of the poets. It was considered shocking by some, but many modern poets regularly use confessional poetry. Society is now more open to freely discussing once taboo subjects such as death, trauma, relationships, and inner feelings; thus, modern confessional poetry is no longer shocking.

Thematic Connection

Sylvia Plath's topics, therefore, pull her poetry into a Gothic category. Her images are sometimes shocking, often dark, and the emotions are strong. Her poems express grief, anger, shock, and even surprise. She uses strong imagery, often deathly images, to bring out the emotions in the poem. Her settings, too, have Gothic qualities, from the deep, dark lake of "Mirror" to the elegant castle of "Cinderella." Plath, however, uses the Gothic elements not to shock or surprise, but to bring out inner and often hidden feelings. There is often a duality of what she shows – the surface image and the feelings beneath it - and readers are compelled to look deeper into the words to find the meanings she wishes to express. Many of her poems deal with Gothic themes of death, loss, grief, superstition, myth, and secret longings. Her narrator is often a character in some kind of distress. Whereas Poe and Gilman carry readers along as their narrators sink into madness, Plath creates images and thoughts of even deeper feelings and desires, ones that often have multiple meanings. Her poetry is carefully crafted to represent more than one meaning, and readers reflect their own thoughts and points of view onto the poetry itself.

Meet the Author

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) suffered the childhood anguish of her father's death in 1940. Although distraught over the loss, Plath became an ambitious student. She published poems in high school, leading to the 1950 publication of her first poem in a national periodical, *The Christian Science Monitor.* She entered Smith College in 1950, but in 1953 she experienced severe depression that required medical care. She recovered from that episode and went on to graduate from Smith in 1955.

Plath received the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to study at Cambridge University in England. While there, she met the English poet Ted Hughes, and they were married in June, 1956. She returned to Massachusetts in 1957 to study poetry with Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton. Plath continued to write, and her first collection of poems, *Colossus,* was published in 1960. She returned to England where she gave birth to two children, Nicholas and Freida.

In 1962, however, Hughes left Plath for Assia Gutmann Wevill. Crushed by this loss, Plath wrote some of her darkest poems. These poems would later be published in the collection *Ariel.* She also composed a semi-autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar.* In 1963, during one of the coldest winters on record, Plath took her own life in her apartment in London.

Hughes published her poems posthumously; *Ariel* was published in 1965, followed by *The Collected Poems* in 1981. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1982, the first time the award was given to a poet after death.

15.1 Activity

Choose one activity to complete

1. Visit the official site for the Fulbright Scholarship program. This program is currently available in 155 countries and promotes international educational exchange to increase understanding between cultures. Find three interesting facts about the program or its participants.

2. Sylvia Plath spent her last winter in England during the "Big Freeze of '63." It was one of the coldest winters ever on record, with only two other winters since 1659 registering colder. Visit the website

   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tokDh7MsTMI&feature=related to view BBC Snowy Winter 60s.
   What was remarkable about this particular winter? How cold did it actually get? Have you ever experienced a winter like this?

15.1 Review

Multiple Choice

1. Confessional poetry _____.

   a. seeks to confess a wrong to the reader
   b. does not take a personal point of view
   c. narrates from the personal "I," is often autobiographical, and deals with formerly taboo subjects
   d. deals with sentimental topics such as love and nature

2. Plath uses Gothic elements _____.

   a. such as setting, images, and Gothic topics of death, myth, and loss
   b. to illustrate a more romantic tone
   c. to frighten readers
   d. to illustrate the madness of the narrator

3. Plath began writing early, publishing her first poems when she _____.

   a. was in middle school
   b. was in high school
   c. started college
   d. was a young girl

4. The poetry of Plath often shows _____.

   a. dark images
   b. topics such as loss, death, and tragedy
   c. inner thoughts and double meanings
   d. all of the above

5. During college, Plath suffered from _____.

   a. tuberculosis
   b. influenza
   c. schizophrenia
   d. depression

6. Plath traveled to England to study on the prestigious _____.

   a. Rhodes scholarship
   b. GI Bill
   c. Fulbright Scholarship
   d. Pulitzer Prize

7. In 1962, Plath was traumatized because her _____.

   a. husband left her and their two children
   b. father died
   c. mother had a stroke
   d. son developed pneumonia

8. In England, 1963 marked _____.

   a. twenty years of peace
   b. Plath's Pulitzer Prize
   c. one of the coldest winters in history
   d. Plath's first publication of poetry

9. Ted Hughes published Plath's poems after her death, with *Collected Poems* _____.

   a. setting a new record for copies sold
   b. establishing Plath as a famous writer
   c. winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1982
   d. being her first national publication

10. Before her death in 1963, Plath had also written a _____.

    a. semi-autobiographical novel
    b. play
    c. non-fiction work
    d. biography

True/False

11. Confessional poetry tries to divulge secrets.

12. Plath is most notable for her poetry.

13. When the Pulitzer Prize was awarded in 1982, it was the first time it was awarded to a poet after her death.

14. Plath had to take a break from college to treat her depression.

15. Plath used Gothic elements in her settings, her images, and her topics.

Lesson 15.2

MYTHS, LEGENDS, AND FOLK TALES

Long before stories were written, they were shared in an oral tradition. In every society, there were storytellers who memorized the culture's histories, myths, and legends in order to share them with each generation. **Myths** are stories that supposedly explain a practice, belief of a culture, or a natural phenomenon (such as volcanoes, floods, the birth of the universe, etc.). Myths often include elements of the supernatural, heroes, or ancestors. **Legends** are stories that are based on popularly accepted historical facts, but they are unverifiable and may include great exaggerations. Legends are told as though they are grounded in historical fact, naming real places and possibly real people, and therefore have a more realistic tone than myths. Legends tell a story rather than explain a tradition or belief.

Folk tales encompass the stories told in the oral storytelling tradition. They may include myths and legends, or they may be stories that are told and retold, often with embellishment by the storyteller. Some folk tales seek to teach a lesson and have a moral, and frequently animals are used to illustrate such stories, called **fables**. Other folk tales are purely fictional and happen in fictional lands, such as **fairy tales**. Fairy tales differed from myths and legends; fairy tales neither served to explain a belief nor were they based on historical events or people. Their very structure was designed to be purely fictional, yet the characters share similarities. Often fairy tales include characters that must overcome obstacles in order to reach their goals, and the characters usually triumph in the end; hence the term "happily ever after."

Contrary to popular belief, oral storytelling did not disappear when literacy rates climbed and stories were printed. In many countries, oral storytelling traditions are still preserved, especially in areas where literacy rates are lower. These traditions are important ways for new generations to learn the traditions and beliefs of their culture. Written stories add to the availability of these traditions, and many popular stories are rewritten to reflect more modern values. The fairy tale "Cinderella" has been revised many times, most recently as the popular *The Princess Diaries*. The Biblical story of David and Goliath could be considered a parallel for the movie, *Rocky*, as the unknown Rocky Balboa fights a champion. Changes are made to the original stories to fit the values and customs of the current time and culture, but the underlying basics of these popular tales continue to live on. These tales rely on human interest in hearing stories of downtrodden heroes and heroines who overcome their circumstances to win love, money, fame, or similar goals. These universal values and desires cross cultural, historical, and geographical lines, and parallel story lines are found in almost every

country. The fundamental appeal of these folktales remains. They have not disappeared; they have merely changed form to fit the times.

However, with scientific and technological advances, less emphasis is placed on the creative arts and more emphasis is placed on industry, growth, and technology. Plath fears the loss of stories and myths in her poem "The Death of Myth-Making." Read this poem now and consider her viewpoint on myths and stories. Use this link: http://www.angelfire.com/tn/plath/myth.html

In "The Death of Myth-Making," Plath invites readers to reflect their own thoughts and views onto the poetry. She refers to the two virtues of Reason and Common Sense. Some readers may often consider these to be the opposites of superstition, stories, and omens. Reason appeals to doctors, according to Plath, while housewives and shopkeepers are supposed to have Common Sense. Plath seems to depict these virtues as responding to the devil himself as they capably trim everything to fit their notions of right and wrong. Superstitions, stories, and myths were at one time thought to be the devil's work, and believing in them was likewise the devil's work. In this poem, Plath seems to assert that the devil's presence in the woods (much like Hawthorne's forest) caused everything from miscarriage, to dogs barking, to the housewife unable to do her work.

One interpretation of this poem makes the case that throughout history, Reason and Common Sense have attempted to destroy creative traditions. Fear of stories, myths, and superstitions has actually caused many to be fearful of the creative, of the mystical, and of the inexplicable. Those who covet reason and common sense try to fit everything into neat compartments, identical in every way. Although attempting to remove all uncertainty, Reason and Common Sense cannot create a certain world. Instead, they only cut off its creativity, its variety, the very differences that make the world unique and beautiful. In this poem, Reason and Common Sense appear to act without reason or sense in their effort to apply uniformity. In the world of Reason and Common Sense, great acts of heroism cannot exist, nor dreams or desires, nor fictional worlds, nor things that cannot be explained. Plath seems to declare that such a world is dreary, uniform, and lacks the beauty of what myths provide – creative possibility.

Certainly, individual readers may delve into the poetic words and find multiple meanings, using their own views and experiences to find its substance.

15.2 Activity

Read "Mirror" and "Cinderella" by Sylvia Plath. Use your text or access the poems at http://www.stanford.edu/class/engl187/docs/plathpoem.html. Using what you have learned about myths and stories, look for the elements these poems share with popular fairy tales. Be prepared to analyze the two poems in the next lesson.

15.2 Review

Multiple Choice

1. A myth is a _____.

   a. fictional story set in a fictional place
   b. story that is based on popularly accepted historical events, but they are unverifiable
   c. story that uses animals to present or teach a moral or lesson
   d. story that supposedly explained a practice, belief, or event

2. Legends differ from myths in that _____.

   a. legends do not explain a practice or belief
   b. legends are based around historical events or people
   c. legends use these events or people to seem more realistic
   d. all of the above

3. A fairy tale is a folk tale that _____.

   a. is purely fictional and uses a fictional setting, often with characters that have to overcome obstacles
   b. blends both elements of myth and legend
   c. explains a practice and a belief
   d. is based on historical events

4. When stories were written down, oral storytelling _____.

   a. disappeared
   b. continued, but storytellers did not alter their stories through generations
   c. continued, and stories were told and retold in new ways, even in modern books and films
   d. was almost completely replaced by books

5. Popular tales _____.

   a. are retold with changes to fit a changing society
   b. have not survived through the times
   c. continue only if the story ends happily
   d. must remain the same as they were originally told

6. In considering Plath's poem "The Death of Myth-Making," it is possible to suppose that Reason and Common Sense _____.

   a. are modern ways of thinking that have replaced myths and stories
   b. are the foundations of science and advances in society
   c. could destroy creative thinking, force uniformity, and should not be allowed to wipe out other types of thinking
   d. are the heroes of the poem

7. What does Plath mean when she says that the devil in the woods caused women to miscarry, dogs to whine, and women to stop working?

   a. She means that people would blame everyday negative occurrences on the influence of the devil, and that people fear and blame what they cannot understand.
   b. She feels that all negative things are caused by the devil.
   c. She, like Hawthorne's Goodman Brown, feels that the woods harbor evil.
   d. She shows that Reason and Common Sense will stop evil.

8. Why does Plath call her poem "The Death of Myth-Making?"

   a. She fears that with the growth of modern thinking, traditional stories and more creative ways of thinking will be tossed aside.
   b. She fears that some people will take reason and common sense so far that they will fear and destroy any other way of thinking.
   c. She is concerned that myths, stories, and traditions will be considered evil.
   d. All of the above

9. If myths and stories were to be outlawed, Plath believes that

   a. creative voices would not be heard.
   b. artists and other creative arts would also be vulnerable to being outlawed for the same reason.
   c. we as a society would not prosper or be able to imagine possibilities, as we would be limited to what reason and common sense told us.
   d. All of the above

10. Does Plath see value in myths and stories?

    a. No, Plath is in favor of reason and common sense.
    b. Yes, Plath sees them as harmless entertainment
    c. Yes, Plath feels they have great social value but are misunderstood by modern thinking.
    d. No, Plath feels they encourage the wrong kind of thinking.

True/False

11. The common folktale of the turtle and the rabbit running a race is a fable.

12. Myths were created in many cultures to explain practices and beliefs.

13. Storytellers and oral storytelling disappeared when stories were written down.

14. Fairy tales have remained the same throughout times and cultures, without alteration.

15. Plath feels that modern thinking has the potential to destroy creative thinking and stories.

Lesson 15.3

ANALYSES

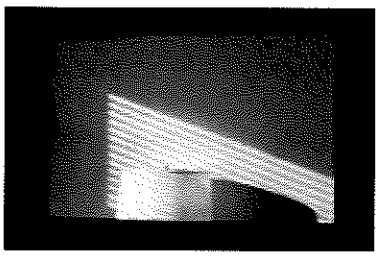
Cinderella

In "Cinderella," Plath initially paints a picture of glamour and beauty. A prince bends to his lovely partner; violins play reels, filling the hall with music while vivid colors swirl through the palace. The red heels, the girl's green eyes, and her hair - a fan of silver - highlight the scene. The descriptions become even more elaborate: the palace of revolving glass, candles reflecting off the walls, the gilded couples, dancing, continuing their lengthy revelries. Suddenly, the girl realizes it is almost twelve o-clock. Up to this point, the poem has been dreamy, magical, enchanted as a fairy tale. Yet here the poem changes. Guilt-stricken, the girl turns pale and clings to her prince. She hears the ticking of the clock.

On the surface, this is the well-known tale of Cinderella. Readers know the magic will end at midnight, and Cinderella must leave. Readers know that she does not want the enchantment to end. This is a Plath poem, however, so readers know that she uses this fairy tale for a purpose. She is not merely retelling a familiar tale. Why is Cinderella guilt-stricken? Why would the ticking of the clock be more than just a disappointment?

Perhaps there is more to the story than just Cinderella leaving the party. Imagine, for example, that the dance represents life. Lives revolve and move quickly, but human beings are bound by mortality. The ticking of the clock could represent the clock of human life, signifying that, at some point, every individual will die. The scene could also represent the fact that no matter how wonderful a part of life may be, all good things eventually end. Amid the beauty and elegance of the palace, it is easy to forget that nothing lasts forever.

Plath's word choice here is unusual – she refers to the caustic ticking of the clock. Caustic is something that corrodes or burns away. Another interpretation could be that the dance and the palace represent the girl's innocence and youth, and the clock will change that innocence as she matures into an adult. She will lose the happiness of youth that will only be replaced by adult burdens.



Mirror

"Mirror" seemingly takes a similar view of the possible loss of youth and fear of growing old. Told from a unique perspective, the narrator is the mirror itself. Through an **anthropomorphic** style, (a non-living object is given thoughts and feelings as though it is alive and human), the

mirror speaks. The mirror expresses its precise reflections, its absence of preconceptions. The mirror means that it judges objectively and reflects only what it sees, things it sees without prejudices like love or dislike. A friend asks, "How do I look?" The reply often is colored by personal feelings. The mirror does nothing of the sort; it has no feelings. It clearly declares that it is only being truthful. Constantly watching the wall it faces, the mirror is separated from it only by darkness and people who pass between the two.

Plath abruptly changes the mirror in the second stanza when it becomes a lake. In the past, in mythology, mirror images were reflected by water. Women bathing would look down and see themselves there. The mirror/lake recounts its relationship with a woman who looks down and searches for her image. The mirror/lake scoffs at the liars, referring to candles and the moon. They reflect soft light; they do not brightly reflect reality. Yet when the mirror-turned-lake reflects the truth, the woman is agitated and cries. Because of the mirror's importance to her, the woman returns each morning only to see that the once-upon-a-time young woman is growing old. The mirror/lake reveals the drowning of a young girl; now the staring woman is growing old, like a terrible fish.

Here again, perhaps, is a retelling of several myths. First, the mirror is somewhat like the magic mirror in "Snow White," revealing the fairest one of all. The evil stepmother, the Queen, is the fairest until she is replaced by Snow White, for the mirror is truthful. Snow White is placed into an eternal sleep as punishment (like drowning the young girl), though she is saved in the end by a kiss.

The second myth is the tale of Narcissus. As told by the poet Ovid, Narcissus is the son of a river god who would live a long life if he did not look at himself. Choosing to reject those who loved him, Narcissus instead fell in love with his own reflection. Unable to look away from his reflection, he died. Both myths share elements with this poem.

As in the poem "Cinderella," Plath refers to lost youth and beauty in "Mirror." The woman is horrified to see an old woman appearing as her reflection. This is similar to the girl in "Cinderella" who is pale and stricken at hearing the ticking of the clock. Both fear the loss of innocence and beauty of youth, and both are frightened of the reminders from the passionless clock and truthful mirror. It is also possible that the loss of youth represents something even greater than the passage of time, a personal tragedy. Possibly, Plath's clock and mirror remind readers that it is impossible to return to those earlier days of youth and innocence, those days before the passage of time.

Thematic Connection

Plath uses images from well-known fairy tales and an ancient myth to tell her own story. Although readers can only imagine the cause of their fear, both the girl and the woman are afraid; both are facing the reality of the clock and the mirror. Both poems use Gothic elements to reveal the inner feelings of the characters. The setting of "Cinderella" is the castle; she is the character in distress; and emotions range from the high of the formal dance to the low of realizing her fate. It is ultimately a tragic poem. "Mirror" does the same, though more subtly. It begins in a mundane setting, the house, and moves to a deep lake where the woman loses her innocence and youth and faces the tragedy of aging and loss. The natural setting of the lake is Gothic and powerful; the woman is the character in distress; and the emotions change from everyday monotony to the tragic. The lake may represent both life (the fish, water) and death (the drowning of the girl, the death of Narcissus). Although Plath's referral to drowning is a figurative one (in "Mirror"), it is a deathlike image, nonetheless.

To find the confessional element in these poems, readers must reflect on the potential meaning for Plath. She lost her father at a very young age, and perhaps she felt that this tragedy, his mortality, stole her innocence and youth. She also may have developed deep fears about growing older and facing her adult life. Two years after writing "Mirror," the poet chose to end her own life. No doubt there are personal elements in both poems for Plath. The themes of tragedy, loss of youth, and loss of life are repeated through many of her poems.

15.3 Activity

1. Look at "Cinderella" and "Mirror." How are these two poems similar? How are they different? Which poem relies more on the tale, and which poem differs the most from the tale?

2. Research the myth of Narcissus. What is the role of the water? Does it do what the mirror does? How does Narcissus' obsession with appearance become his downfall?

15.3 Review

Multiple Choice

1. In Plath's "Cinderella," a dramatic turn in the poem occurs when _____.

   a. she leans against the prince
   b. she hears the ticking of the clock
   c. the dancers stop
   d. the palace begins to revolve

2. What is the significance of the word *caustic* in reference to the caustic ticking of the clock?

   a. *Caustic* is a strong, harsh word, and it means corrosion, burning away, a harsh term after so many poetically beautiful images.
   b. It means that the clock is corroded.
   c. It means that she is burning through time.
   d. It refers to the loud sound of the clock.

3. *Anthropomorphic* means the _____.

   a. mirror changes into a person
   b. mirror is the narrator of the poem, with human-like thoughts and behaviors
   c. mirror morphs from object to human
   d. mirror reflects humans

4. How does the mirror see the woman who looks into it?

   a. It judges her.
   b. It sees her as a young woman.
   c. It reflects exactly what it sees, truthfully.
   d. It sees her aging and tries to change that.

5. What dramatic change happens in "Mirror"?

   a. The mirror transforms into a lake, an older form of a mirror, and changes the poem to an older story, perhaps that of Narcissus.
   b. The mirror, as a lake, has a stronger presence than it does when hanging in a room.
   c. The mirror gains power.
   d. The mirror changes the woman into a fish.

6. As in "Snow White," the mirror _____.

   a. shows the fairest of them all
   b. shows at first the lovely young woman, and then because it is truthful, starts to show the aging woman, who is no longer young and fair
   c. is a tool of a wicked stepmother
   d. is used to destroy the woman

7. Both poems demonstrate feelings of _____.

   a. worry over appearances
   b. concern about no longer being the fairest
   c. loss and tragedy as the mirror and the clock give reminders of what has been lost
   d. happiness

8. Plath's poems incorporate Gothic elements with _____.

   a. her settings of a castle and a lake
   b. her sudden twist in emotions at the end of a tragic feeling, where both women are fearful and experiencing deep emotion
   c. her images of the pale and stricken Cinderella in distress
   d. all of the above

9. Both poems use the myths to _____.

   a. show that women are obsessed with youth and beauty
   b. give each woman a happily ever after ending
   c. create a framework to reveal deeper, darker meanings
   d. avoid creating new characters or scenes

10. Plath's personal life could be reflected through the poems in that _____.

    a. the poems are about women
    b. both poems demonstrate a tragic loss, possibly of youth and innocence
    c. Plath was obsessed with her physical appearance.
    d. Plath felt that women have trouble aging

True/False

11. In Plath's "Cinderella," the ending is not happily ever after.

12. In "Mirror," the woman is frightened and upset to see that she is aging.

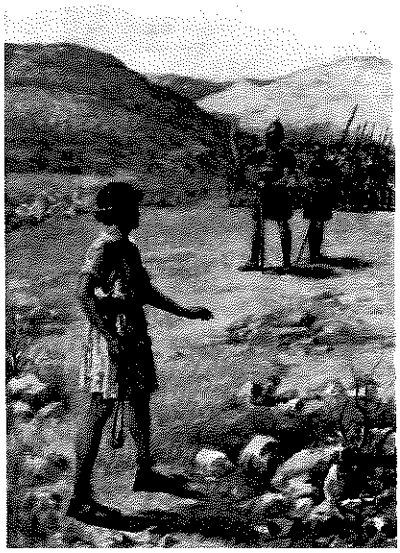
13. The ticking of the clock in Plath's "Cinderella" could symbolize the passage of time toward her mortality or the loss of her youth.

14. The mirror changes to a lake because Plath wanted to show the woman's concern that she looks like a fish.

15. The lake is a more powerful image than the mirror and represents only life.

Lesson 15.4

COMPARING/CONTRASTING POPULAR TALES TO MODERN BOOKS AND FILMS



An examination of Plath's poems reveals that traditional myths and popular fairy tales can be retold as new stories. The advantage of using these well-known stories is that readers know the characters and the plot, but adding a new twist or modern element refreshes the story. Favorite characters like Cinderella continue to appear in revised stories because they are universally appealing. The young woman finding her prince and her happy ending never grow old. Snow White and Narcissus are less popular, perhaps, than Cinderella, but many fairy tales have been reworked and used in modern stories. Even Biblical stories find parallels in modern stories. From *Rocky* to *Mad Max*, audiences delight in seeing the figurative David battle the mythical Goliath and win. Shakespeare's play, *The Taming of the Shrew*, is reworked in the film *10 Things I Hate About You*, and Jane Austen's Emma takes on a Los Angeles setting for the movie *Clueless*. Thus, great stories inspire retelling and reworking of classic themes and characters.

This lesson challenges you to find a modern retelling of a classic story. Select a book, a film, a story, or a poem; then find the classic story that inspired it. Follow the steps listed below to compare and contrast the modern version to the classic story. As an example, "Cinderella" is compared/contrasted to the film, *The Princess Diaries*.

1. Setting: Where is the modern story set? In "Cinderella," the young woman lives with her evil stepmother and stepsisters. In *The Princess Diaries*, the young woman still lives with her mother in a San Francisco loft.

2. Characters: Both Cinderella and Mia, the main character in *The Princess Diaries*, are plain and underdressed. Cinderella lives in poverty, but Mia simply lacks fashion sense. Both have suffered the loss of a dear father.

3. Plot/Conflict: Cinderella, as a maid, leads a pathetic life caring for her stepmother and stepsisters. Cinderella is given a chance to attend the ball and find a husband - thanks to the intervention of a fairy godmother. Mia's life is normal for a teenager who attends school and lives at home. Mia's fairy godmother comes in the form of her grandmother, who just happens to be Queen of Genovia. Mia is given the chance to attend a ball and assume a role as princess. Yet in this modern version, she has the choice to become a princess or not. Cinderella has no other options. Cinderella is transported to her ball by a pumpkin turned into a coach, and Mia drives her classic sports car.

4. Climax: Cinderella hears the clock chime at midnight, and she runs away, leaving a slipper. Mia is torn between her friends and mother in San Francisco and her new life as a princess. She finally decides to go the ball, but she is delayed when her car breaks down. She arrives at the ball although not in the fashion she intended.

5. Resolution: the prince locates Cinderella, thanks to the slipper, and immediately marries her. Mia is embraced as the new princess and decides to try life in Genovia. Interestingly, there is no Prince in this modern version. Mia chooses her destiny, and she becomes a princess based on her own choices rather than marrying into the royal family.

15.4 Activity

Research to find a modern retelling of a story. Use the checklist above as a guide to compare and contrast a popular fairy tale, myth, or folk tale to a modern story. Note the differences and similarities between the old and new stories. Look for changes and updates in the new version of the story. Like Plath, many modern writers retell familiar tales, adding their own original twist and making popular tales new again.

After conducting research and taking notes on your selections, compare and contrast the modern version with the tale. How are the stories similar? How are the stories different? How has the tale been modernized? Which version appeals to you more and why?

15.4 Review

Multiple Choice

1. Myths and tales are retold in modern ways because _____.

   a. audiences already know the characters and plot
   b. the themes of the stories remain universal
   c. the familiar outcome is still appealing
   d. all of the above

2. Modern stories use classic myths or tales as a basis but _____.

   a. often rework and modernize many of the elements
   b. never use the same characters
   c. change only the outcome to fit modern sensibilities
   d. show how those tales are outdated

3. In comparing the setting of a modern story and a tale, _____.

   a. consider whether the story keeps a similar setting
   b. review whether the modern story changes the setting and why
   c. look at why the classic tale's setting might not work in a modern story
   d. do all of the above

4. Modern stories often keep the same characters because _____.

   a. modern audiences are familiar with them
   b. new characters would not work
   c. the original characters could not be improved
   d. the authors do not want to work to change them

5. In modern versions of classic stories, the plot varies because _____.

   a. authors like to make the stories different
   b. modern audiences expect to see how the familiar plot changes in a modern story
   c. the original plots were poor
   d. classic myths and tales had limited plots

6. A more modern climax would need to _____.

   a. consider modern choices and situations
   b. merely follow the same plot as the original tale
   c. change the plot of the story because a classic tale cannot be altered
   d. avoid matching the original tale

7. Fairy tales, folk tales, and myths have been retold, along with _____.

   a. Biblical parables
   b. fables
   c. Shakespeare's plays
   d. all of the above

8. When comparing the classic story to the modern version, _____.

   a. look at each of the story elements
   b. consider only the modern aspects
   c. note only the differences
   d. note only the similarities

9. Though the story is retold, the resolutions may be_____.

   a. identical
   b. modernized to reflect the audience's current values
   c. dramatically different, due to the retelling
   d. any of the above

10. Stories, myths, and fairy tales will likely _____.

   a. lose popularity with the advent of more modern technology
   b. continue to be retold and modernized because the underlying themes still appeal
   c. be replaced by modern stories only
   d. be forgotten as storytelling will lose favor over time

True/False

11. Only fairy tales are retold or reworked by modern authors.

12. Using the same plot and characters, Shakespeare's plays have been retold in modern works.

13. Fairy tales are only for children and have no universal appeal.

14. Only stories and poems use fairy tales and myths as a basis, not films or books.

15. Fairy tales, stories, and myths explore possibilities through their fiction, and their characters share similar desires such as love, money, and happiness.

Module 15 At-a-Glance

Sylvia Plath uses Gothic elements in her poetry, especially her dark themes and powerful images, while exploring strong subjects such as death, loss, and tragedy. In particular, "Cinderella" and "Mirror" focus on the loss of innocence and youth. Both poems take a tragic twist at the end, emphasizing fear and loss for each of the women. These poems may have a personal side because Plath experienced the loss of her father at an early age and grieved deeply for him. She may have used these poems to illustrate her feelings at the loss of her own innocence and youth.

Myths, legends, and tales have continued to appeal to audiences through the years due to their retelling and revisions. Modern versions add twists and current elements that appeal to audiences. A modern story can be compared and contrasted to a myth or tale. By examining the changed elements of a classic story, one can determine its appeal to modern audiences and its continued inspiration for writers.

Module 15 Practice Test

Multiple Choice

1. Confessional poetry _____.

   a. seeks to confess a wrong to the reader
   b. does not take a personal point of view
   c. narrates from the personal "I," is often autobiographical, and deals with formerly taboo subjects
   d. deals with sentimental topics such as love and nature

2. Plath uses Gothic elements _____.

   a. such as setting, images, and Gothic topics of death, myth, and loss
   b. to illustrate a more romantic tone
   c. to frighten readers
   d. to illustrate the madness of the narrator

3. Plath began writing early, publishing her first poems when she _____.

   a. was in middle school
   b. was in high school
   c. started college
   d. was a young girl

4. The poetry of Plath often shows _____.

   a. dark images
   b. topics such as loss, death, and tragedy
   c. inner thoughts and double meanings
   d. all of the above

5. A myth is a _____.

   a. fictional story set in a fictional place
   b. story that is based on popularly accepted historical events, but they are unverifiable
   c. story that uses animals to present or teach a moral or lesson
   d. story that supposedly explained a practice, belief, or event

6. Legends differ from myths in that _____.

   a. legends do not explain a practice or belief
   b. legends are based around historical events or people
   c. legends use these events or people to seem more realistic
   d. all of the above

7. A fairy tale is a folk tale that _____.

   a. is purely fictional and uses a fictional setting, often with characters that have to overcome obstacles
   b. blends both elements of myth and legend
   c. explains a practice and a belief
   d. is based on historical events

8. When stories were written down, oral storytelling _____.

   a. disappeared
   b. continued, but storytellers did not alter their stories through generations
   c. continued, and stories were told and retold in new ways, even in modern books and films
   d. was almost completely replaced by books

9. In Plath's "Cinderella," a dramatic turn occurs when _____.

   a. she leans against the prince
   b. she hears the ticking of the clock
   c. the dancers stop
   d. when the palace begins to revolve

10. What is the significance of the word *caustic* in reference to the caustic ticking of the clock?

    a. *Caustic* is a strong, harsh word, and it means corrosion, burning away, a harsh term after so many poetically beautiful images
    b. It means that the clock is corroded
    c. It means that she is burning through time
    d. It refers to the loud sound of the clock

11. *Anthropomorphic* means the _____.

    a. mirror changes into a person
    b. mirror is the narrator of the poem, with human-like thoughts and behaviors
    c. mirror morphs from object to human
    d. mirror reflects humans

12. How does the mirror see the woman who looks into it?

    a. It judges her.
    b. It sees her as a young woman.
    c. It reflects exactly what it sees, truthfully.
    d. It sees her aging and tries to change that.

13. Myths and tales are retold in modern ways because _____.

    a. audiences already know the characters and plot
    b. the themes of the stories remain universal
    c. the familiar outcome is still appealing
    d. all of the above

14. Modern stories use classic myths or tales as a basis, but _____.

    a. often rework and modernize many of the elements
    b. never use the same characters
    c. change only the outcome to fit modern sensibilities
    d. show how those tales are outdated

15. In comparing the setting of a modern story and a tale, _____.

    a. consider whether the story keeps a similar setting
    b. review whether the modern story changes the setting and why
    c. look at why the classic tale's setting might not work in a modern story
    d. do all of the above

True/False

16. Confessional poetry tries to divulge secrets.

17. The common folktale of the turtle and the rabbit running a race is a fable.

18. Myths were created in many cultures to explain practices and beliefs.

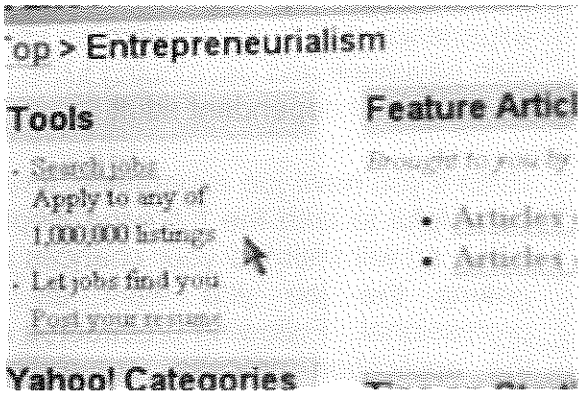
19. In Plath's "Cinderella," the ending is not happily ever after.

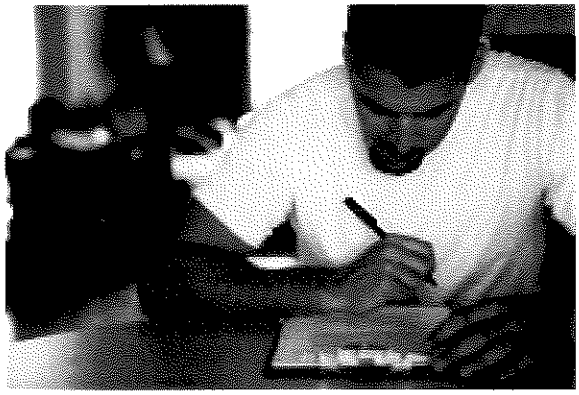
20. In "Mirror," the woman is frightened and upset to see that she is aging.

Check your answers with those in the Student Answer Key. Review the module if you did not do well. When you feel confident, ask your instructor for your next assignment.

Module 16

Writing for the Real World





MODULE OBJECTIVES

- Understand how to glean and use information in procedural texts and documents.
- Write expository and procedural or work-related texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes.
- Write legibly and use appropriate capitalization and punctuation conventions in compositions.
- Spell correctly, using various resources to determine and check correct spellings.
- Use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings.

Overview

For many high school students, entering the real world means finding a good college or job. To do so requires careful research and preparation before completing the application process. Impressive applications lead to interviews and, ultimately, acceptance to a top-notch college or first-rate job. Module 16 offers suggestions for accurately completing applications and for perfecting interview skills.

Many colleges routinely require an essay in the application process; improved personal essay writing skills will be valuable as students venture toward life after graduation.

Lesson 16.1

JOB APPLICATIONS

Applying for and obtaining your first professional job is an exciting experience that leads to earning your own paycheck and developing skills to become an independent adult.

Even if you have job experience, it will be helpful to take the following steps; doing so will improve your chances of getting the job you want as a professional. Following procedures in the application process, completing the application according to instructions, and performing well in a job interview are all very important steps in finding and getting your dream job. Failure to read and follow instructions could result in losing a job or college opportunity.

Nearly all employers require prospective workers to complete a job application. This enables them to review information fairly and to have an objective inventory of information about each applicant. When you begin your job search, ask prospective employers for an application, information on open positions, and general information about the company. This will help you determine where you would like to work, what types of jobs are available, and the potential benefits of working for a company.

When completing a job application, follow these basic guidelines.

1. **Answer each question completely and honestly**. Even if this is your first job, you need to answer each question and provide accurate information. Human resources personnel will be checking your information, and incomplete or dishonest applications will be rejected outright.

2. **Type or print neatly and check your spelling**. Some companies, such as Wal-Mart and Target, have automated computers dedicated to taking job applications, or they have applications available online. Before filling out a computerized application, make sure to have all personal information in front of you so that you can answer each question. Be sure you have spelled your answers correctly.

3. **Ask for help if you need it**. If you do not understand a question, ask the human resources department, your local employment office, or your school counselor for assistance. Don't risk having your application rejected because you did not understand the request and provided the wrong information.

Use this table to prepare yourself for following the typical job application procedures.

Personal Information **Name**	Enter your full name here
Street Address	Enter your residence address
Phone number	Enter your home telephone number and a cell number if you have one. If you have a message system on your phone, be sure that the greeting is appropriate for potential employers to hear.
Are you eligible to work in the United States?	As a U.S. citizen, you are eligible. Ask your family or your school counselor for assistance if you are not a citizen.
If you are under 18, do you have a work permit?	Some states require a work permit for minors. Ask your school counselor if your state requires one.
Have you ever been convicted of a crime?	Answer honestly. If the answer is "yes," mention what type of consequence you served for it and how you have made amends.
Position/Availability **Position applied for**	During your pre-application research, you were to check for open positions. Correctly enter the position you are seeking.
Days available	Be honest here! If you have football practice every weekday, you are not available. List only the days you can consistently work, every week.
Hours available	Do not schedule yourself to work before school or after 8 p.m. You will need enough time to rest and do homework. Do not work more than eight hours in a day, and you should aim to work no more than 20 hours in a week. Being a student is your full-time job; don't commit to more hours than you can handle.
When are you available to start?	If you are ready to work, enter the date you complete the application. If you have to give notice at another job, add at least two weeks.
Education	Since you are a high school student, enter your current school and the date you began attending followed by the date you complete the application.

Skills and Qualifications	List your skills: computer proficiency, writing, filing, stocking shelves. Even as a high school student or as a first-time applicant, you have skills you have developed as a student, as a volunteer, or in an organization such as Boy Scouts.
Employment History	If you have previous employment, list it here. If not, you can list volunteer experience or jobs such as babysitting and lawn mowing
May we contact your employer?	This should always be a yes.
References	It is important here to list non-family members as references. Your coach, a teacher, your counselor at school, your troop leader, or another adult familiar with your character should be your best references. Make sure to ask those people first if they are willing to be a reference for you. Include their correct contact information; don't lose an opportunity simply because your references cannot be contacted!

After completing and turning in your application, ask when you might be notified. Wait until that time period has passed, and then contact the company again. Do not take it personally if you are not initially contacted. Some companies expect that if you want the position, you will follow up on your application. Human resources offices sometimes receive so many applications that they simply file them. Contact the company if you have not been notified of your application's status; mention your application and your interest in working. Ask them if you can schedule an interview. Meeting an interviewer face to face is the next step in the job search process.

16.1 Activity

Choose one activity to complete

1. Practice filling out a job application. Obtain a paper copy of a job application, answer the questions to the best of your ability, and turn this in to your facilitator for review.

2. Find at least three employers for whom you would like to work. Make a list of the reasons you want to work for each one. Decide which employer you feel would be your best choice, and explain why.

16.1 Review

Multiple Choice

1. When looking for a job, you will need to _____.

   a. ask for a job application
   b. find out about open positions
   c. obtain general information about the company and its benefits
   d. all of the above

2. When filling out a job application, you should answer the questions _____.

   a. supplying only limited information
   b. adding a few embellishments
   c. completely and honestly
   d. that you want to answer, skipping the others

3. Your greeting on your home phone and cell phone _____.

   a. should sound cool
   b. should be appropriate for a potential employer to hear
   c. should include music and personal touches
   d. can use your nickname and slang

4. If you are not a United States citizen, you will need to _____.

   a. speak to your parents about your eligibility to work
   b. apply for citizenship
   c. pretend you are a citizen
   d. obtain an exemption

5. If you are under 18, you may need a _____.

   a. passport
   b. visa
   c. work permit
   d. license

6. When you list the days you can work, you should _____.

   a. list all days of the week
   b. list every day, knowing that you probably cannot work them
   c. avoid listing any days you know you cannot work consistently
   d. list only one day a week, and note that you may not be able to make it

7. Your hours available should be _____.

   a. limited to time after school and weekends
   b. any hours you feel like working
   c. every hour the store is open
   d. subject to change based on your social calendar

8. When listing your skills, you should include _____.

   a. the video game you learned to play in one hour
   b. any skills you have that apply to the job, such as filing, working on the computer, serving customers, etc.
   c. skills you don't yet have, but are willing to learn
   d. skills you want to learn

9. If you have no employment history, you can list _____.

   a. babysitting jobs
   b. volunteer work you have completed, such as working at a food pantry or helping with a community project
   c. lawn mowing or similar jobs
   d. any of the above

10. References should be _____.

    a. family members
    b. friends from school
    c. coaches, counselors, teachers, or troop leaders who have agreed to serve as references
    d. your mom

True/False

11. It is acceptable to stretch the truth on a job application.

12. You should list only days and hours you can consistently work.

13. If you have never worked before, you should leave employment history blank, even if you have babysat or mowed the neighbor's lawn every Saturday.
14. If you are under 18, you may need a work permit to get a job.

15. References should be adults other than family members who can verify your character.

Lesson 16.2

JOB INTERVIEWS

After your job application is accepted, the employer may decide to interview you. Through the interview, an employer can meet you face to face and ask questions in an effort to acquaint himself with you as a prospective employee. An interview is a form of screening candidates; it is not a guarantee of a job. This is your opportunity to sell yourself, so appear well-groomed, motivated, and prepared. Following the tips listed below will improve your chances of being hired.

1. **Do your homework**. Just as with school projects, finding a good job requires research. If you did pre-application research, you will already know about the company, its products and/or services, and the specific position for which you are applying. However, before interviewing, it is beneficial to find out the name of the person who will be interviewing you and the job description. Assess your skills that make you the best person for the job; how will those skills make you a definite asset to the company?

2. **Practice**. A formal professional interview might be intimidating, so practice will improve your chances for an impressive interview. Many schools and employment agencies offer free interviewing workshops, and they offer good advice. Some schools will videotape their students so they can see themselves and rate their own performance. If these programs are not offered near you, have a friend or a parent help you practice. This will also help to alleviate any anxiety you have about interviewing.

3. **Dress for the job.** You should wear neat, clean clothes that are appropriate. If you are hoping to get a job working in a warehouse, more casual yet neat clothing is appropriate. If you are hoping to work in an office, think professional clothes such as nice slacks or skirt with pressed shirt or blouse. Your clothes should be clean, neat, unwrinkled, and modest in appearance. Avoid wearing

perfume or cologne, leave the gum at home, and present a work-appropriate appearance with a groomed hairstyle.

4. **Know where to go and what you need.** Check the address beforehand and make sure you know exactly where to go and where to park. Allow for traffic and unforeseen events when planning travel time, and arrive early. Check in for your interview before its scheduled time; these few minutes will allow you to compose yourself before meeting the interviewer. Make sure you have all of the documents or other items that might have been requested from you.

5. **Stay calm and answer questions directly.** The employer is not trying to trick you or make you uncomfortable. The interviewer simply wants to find a reliable and helpful employee. Answer each question and provide the requested information. Avoid adding extra information, and do not turn the interview into a social occasion.

6. **At the end of the interview, make a concluding statement about your ability to contribute.** Because you have assessed your skills before the interview, you should be able to make a brief, well-planned statement at the end of the interview. Without being arrogant, point out your characteristics and skills that will make you an excellent employee.

7. **Thank your interviewer for his or her time.** Be polite and appreciative.

8. **Follow-up on your interview.** It is professional to send a written thank-you note to the interviewer for his or her time. Briefly thank them for the opportunity and mention that you are still interested in the position and would appreciate hearing from them again. It is surprising how few prospective employees remember this step, and it will remind the interviewer of your interest in the job.

16.2 Activity

Choose one activity to complete

1. To practice interviewing, create a list of questions you think your potential employer would ask you. Include specific questions that would apply to the job you are considering. Practice these interview questions with a friend, your counselor, or your facilitator. After practicing your interview skills, submit these questions and answers to your facilitator.

2. With the help of a trusted family member or friend, assess your appearance, then access http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewattire/a/interviewnot.htm. What changes in your appearance would you need to make in order to adhere to the guidelines suggested at this website? Will you be willing to compromise on tattoos, hairstyles, body piercings, jewelry, or attire in order to present a

professional appearance? List changes you would need to make along with reasons you would or would not make them.

16.2 Review

Multiple Choice

1. A job interview is designed to _____.

   a. question you and learn more about your reasons for wanting to work
   b. interrogate you and make you uncomfortable
   c. check to see if you lied on your application
   d. repeat the same questions that you answered on the application

2. To prepare for the interview, you should _____.

   a. just show up
   b. know what position you want and why, know what you have to offer, know what the company does, and know the name of your interviewer
   c. ask your friends
   d. practice saying the same thing at each interview

3. Your appearance should be _____.

   a. the same as you always look
   b. clean, at least
   c. clean, in unwrinkled and modest clothing, and neatly groomed
   d. unique and individual

4. Before leaving for the interview, it will be important to _____.

   a. verify the address
   b. make sure you know how to get there; have reliable information about the location and the company
   c. allow yourself extra time in case of unexpected delays
   d. all of the above

5. When asked questions, you should _____.

   a. avoid answering
   b. add to your answers and be sociable
   c. provide the information requested, but avoid adding too much extra information
   d. answer only questions you feel comfortable about

6. End the interview with _____.

   a. a brief statement about your skills and ability to contribute to the company
   b. walking out
   c. a joke
   d. a social invitation

7. Remember to _____.

   a. thank your interviewer
   b. be polite
   c. be appreciative of the interviewer's time
   d. all of the above

8. After the interview, you should _____.

   a. wait to hear from the employer first
   b. do nothing, they will call you
   c. send a thank-you note
   d. call every day

9. Job interviews are your chance to _____.

   a. sell yourself to the employer
   b. show off
   c. meet and socialize
   d. size up the interviewer

10. Knowledge of the company, the available positions, and how you can contribute shows _____.

    a. you have done your homework
    b. you are interested enough in the company to know specifics
    c. you understand what they do and want to be part of it
    d. all of the above

True/False

11. Once you have an interview scheduled, you do not need to do any type of preparation.

12. It is important to check the address and allow extra time before going to your interview.

13. At the end of an interview, be sure to thank the interviewer for his or her time.

14. Writing a thank-you note after an interview is not professional.

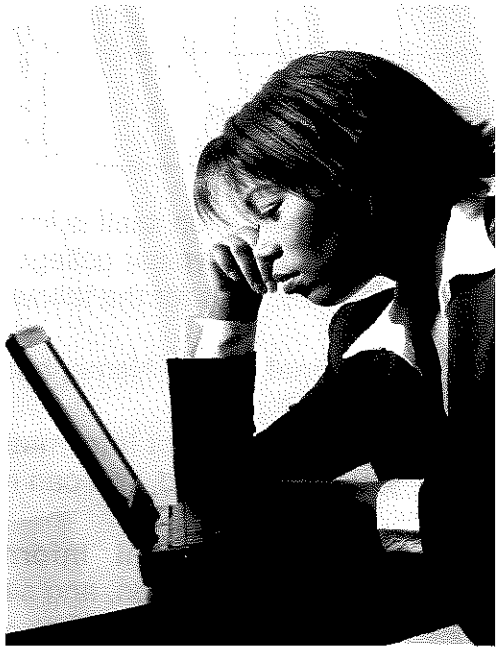
15. Companies will interview you only if they want to offer you the job.

Lesson 16.3

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

A college degree is becoming more and more important to young adults as competition for jobs becomes more intense. Employers have a wider field of applicants and can afford to be more particular. Many entry level jobs now require a college degree, and young adults are better prepared for the competition of today's workplace if they have a degree.

However, the college application process is a long one. Frequently, applications include several confusing elements that will require assistance from your school counselor or parents. There are also online resources that can assist you in filling out the application, collecting the necessary materials, and submitting them. Also, the college admissions offices where you are applying are happy to walk you through the steps necessary to produce a complete application. **The most important step in a college application will always be submitting your full packet prior to the deadline.**



In particular, you may consider looking at the website, The Common Application (https://www.commonapp.org). This website has 350 member colleges, and an application completed through this site can be submitted to your choice of those colleges. Their members are small and large schools, private and public, and include everything from Adelphi University to Yale. If your college choices are members, this site could save a great deal of time and effort.

Parts of a Complete College Application

College Application Form	This form can usually be completed online at the website for the college, or once for Common Application members
College Application Fee	This fee can vary, but the College Board reports that the average fee is $35, nonrefundable. This fee can be waived by applying for and receiving a fee waiver. This can be obtained through the college or on the Common Application website.
High School Transcripts	Request these from your high school counselor who will forward your transcripts directly to the college you choose.

Standardized Test Scores	Many colleges require the SAT or ACT for admission. When registering for the test, request the College Board (the test administrator) to send your scores to the colleges of your choice. If you later decide that additional colleges should have your scores, you can contact the College Board to do so.
Letters of Recommendation	Most private colleges require letters of recommendation from a teacher, counselor, or adult who has knowledge of your academics. Make sure to ask these people well in advance of deadlines. Give them plenty of time to compose and send their letters of recommendation.
Essay	Many private colleges also require a written essay. This should be a well-planned composition that allows the college to get a better understanding of you.
Interview/Audition	Some colleges also require a personal interview or audition. It is your responsibility to arrange this with the admissions office before the deadline.

The college application itself is longer and asks for more personal information than most job applications. A typical college application, such as the one used on the Common Application site, asks for the following information:

1. **Personal Data** – Name, address, birthday, U.S. Citizenship or residency

2. **Address/Contact Information** – make sure to list a permanent address so that if you are accepted, you can receive the letter and information.

3. **Parents' Personal Information/Guardian Information** – name, address, employer, education, and sibling information.

4. **Academics** – High schools attended, programs completed, counselor contact, standardized tests taken, honors received at high school level

5. **Activities** – extracurricular, community, volunteer, family, and hobby. Ideally, you have participated in a range of activities, including community service and clubs or sports at school. Make sure to list each one, particularly if you received an award or recognition.

6. **Short answer** – This is your chance to highlight a particular activity that defines you, especially if you have excelled in it. It is a shorter version of the college essay and should emphasize your enthusiasm for the activity and your achievements in that area.

7. **Personal Essay** – Although the personal essay requirements may vary among colleges, there are common elements that should always be included. Lesson 16.3 includes guidelines for writing a personal essay.

8. **Disciplinary History** – Be honest! Colleges can and will check your school file. If you have a disciplinary history, explain the circumstances as best you can, being objective and humble. Do not be defensive of your actions.

9. **Additional information** – If you have special circumstances, this is your chance to share it. This would include an ailing parent, frequent moves, or difficult circumstances that may have held you back. This is also the opportunity to tell more about other achievements.

10. **Signature and fee** (or fee waiver). This is the final part of the application form.

16.3 Activity

Choose one activity to complete

1. Access the Common Application site. Print a copy of the application form and try filling it out. Submit your completed application to your facilitator.

2. Access your local community college website or visit the admissions office. Obtain a copy of an application, complete it, and submit it to your facilitator.

16.3 Review

Multiple Choice

1. A college application is _____.

    a. a necessary step in the full college application process
    b. an optional step
    c. too tedious to complete
    d. required only by some colleges

2. The application fee is _____.

    a. required to be paid
    b. required to be paid unless you qualify for a fee waiver
    c. optional
    d. only necessary for private colleges

3. You can obtain letters of recommendation from _____.

   a. your parents
   b. your friends
   c. teachers, counselors, or an adult with knowledge of your academic ability
   d. your Aunt Susie

4. Private colleges tend to require _____.

   a. letters of recommendation
   b. a personal essay
   c. an interview
   d. all of the above

5. All colleges require you to _____.

   a. take standardized tests
   b. complete an interview
   c. audition
   d. submit an application, transcripts, and a fee or fee waiver

6. On the college application form, you may be asked _____.

   a. your political party
   b. whether you are a U.S. Citizen or Resident
   c. where you went to elementary school
   d. who your neighbors are

7. The application form will ask for _____.

   a. information about your parents
   b. a list of high schools attended
   c. your personal information and address
   d. all of the above

8. Your disciplinary history _____.

   a. is not recorded on your school record
   b. may be requested and is recorded on your school record
   c. is confidential
   d. has no written record

9. The additional information section _____.

   a. allows you to explain any special circumstances, hardships, or extra achievements
   b. is optional and cannot help your application
   c. is only for people with disabilities
   d. is only for describing additional hobbies

10. The short answer on the application _____.

   a. can be skipped
   b. should include all of your achievements, not just one
   c. should focus on one particular event or achievement
   d. is part of the personal essay

True/False

11. Colleges do not need every part of the college application packet to make it complete.

12. You do not need to submit everything by the deadline.

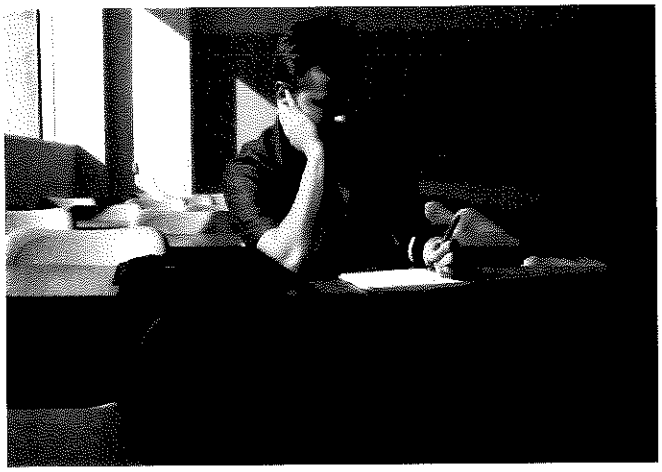
13. It is important to be both honest and complete when filling out your application.

14. Private colleges may require teacher recommendations, a personal essay, and/or an interview.

15. Filling out college applications is too tedious to be worthwhile.

Lesson 16.4

COLLEGE ESSAYS



Although many students may fear the college essay, it allows the most freedom to influence college admissions decisions. In the essay, you can express yourself and share a personal side that is interesting and important. The essay also gives colleges the chance to judge your writing ability, your organizational skills, and your values. A well-written and interesting essay has the potential to take an average student to a higher place on the admissions lists. Similarly, a poorly written and hastily organized essay can lower your chances, despite a good academic record.

Not all colleges require a personal essay. However, if you choose to submit the Common Application, or if the college of your choice requires one, drafting a strong essay is essential. Even if you do not anticipate needing the personal essay, the practice will hone your skills. By the time you apply for college, you may find that you need an essay, and you will already have the skills needed to create one.

The Common Application requires a minimum of 250 words for the personal essay. The College Board suggests no more than 500.

Colleges typically request essays on topics such as the following:

1. **Write about a significant achievement, experience, or event in your life.**

2. **Explore a social issue that has significance for you and explain why.**

3. **Describe a person who has had a profound impact on your life.**

Colleges sometimes offer the option of selecting a topic of your choice. When choosing a topic, find one that allows you to reveal important values about yourself. Don't limit yourself to writing about winning awards or gaining national recognition. Some of the best personal essays have been about failure and learning to overcome obstacles. College admissions personnel are looking for students who not only have good academic records but also those who offer diversity, character, integrity, perseverance, and resilience.

When drafting your essay, consider the following guidelines:

1. **Choose one topic and make a list**. Write down every idea that comes to mind, ensuring that each idea is relevant to your chosen topic.
2. **Select one topic and decide how it affects you**. This is a personal essay. It should reveal your values, strengths, and contributions. The student who wrote about failure also wrote about lessons learned from the experience: how to rethink, retry, and ultimately succeed. It may have seemed like she was writing about a weakness, but in reality she was describing her achievement in overcoming her failure.

3. **Create an introduction**. Because you have practiced creating introductions in previous modules, use those skills to draft a short introduction (remember the word count) and lead to your main idea. Your main idea or thesis statement should connect the topic to you and should reveal a strength about you.

4. **Write the body of the essay**. This is a short essay, so you do not have the freedom to go into great detail. However, you do need to provide a narration of an event or issue, the supporting details of how or why, and their connection to your main idea.

5. **Craft a short conclusion**. Without adding new information, conclude your paper by connecting back to the main idea. Remember that you want to reveal your personal values and strengths through your writing.

6. **Revise and proofread**. Read back through your essay. Revise your sentences as needed; clarify or omit excess information. Proofread carefully for grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Do not rely solely on a computer program for this step.

7. **Have another person check the essay for you**. Utilize a teacher, school counselor, or parent to read your essay and make suggestions. A fresh pair of eyes and a different viewpoint will help you to create a final draft.

8. **Create the final draft**. Make any last changes and print the essay. Congratulations!

16.4 Activity

Choose one of the topics listed in Lesson 16.4 and, following the steps outlined above, write a personal essay. Submit the final draft to your facilitator.

16.4 Review

Multiple Choice

1. The personal essay section of the college application _____.

   a. does not count toward admissions decisions
   b. can help or hurt your application
   c. can be completed quickly and with little thought
   d. can be skipped entirely

2. A typical college application essay is _____.

   a. shorter than 250 words
   b. more than 500 words
   c. between 250-500 words
   d. longer than 750 words

3. Choosing a topic for a personal essay involves picking one that _____.

   a. has personal meaning for you
   b. connects to your values and strengths
   c. demonstrates your interests
   d. all of the above

4. When starting your essay, you should _____.

   a. begin writing the introduction immediately
   b. pick a topic and begin a rough draft
   c. choose the topic that appeals to you and make a list of ideas for that topic
   d. write whatever you want

5. A personal essay for a college application does not need _____.

   a. a main idea or thesis
   b. revising or proofreading
   c. to be a lengthy or overly detailed essay
   d. to have a conclusion

6. Your introduction should _____.

   a. connect to your main idea
   b. be lengthy in background
   c. be written only in general terms
   d. not include your main idea

7. The body of the essay _____.

   a. contains the details that support the main idea
   b. should connect back to the main idea
   c. should include narration of the event or details about the issue
   d. all of the above

8. A conclusion in your personal essay should _____.

   a. be brief and once again connect to your main idea
   b. describe new information
   c. only restate your main idea
   d. include details

9. Before writing your final draft, you should _____.

   a. revise if necessary
   b. carefully proofread
   c. have an adult check it
   d. all of the above

10. The essay you wrote for this lesson _____.

   a. provided experience for writing a personal essay
   b. has no value outside the lesson
   c. does not apply to real college applications
   d. is exactly the same as the research paper you wrote

True/False

11. All colleges require a personal essay with their application.

12. If you decide to use the Common Application or apply to a college that requires a personal essay, knowing how to write one will help with your successful completion of the application process.

13. Short personal essays require large amounts of detail.

14. Personal essays can help or hurt your application.

15. Personal essays should not reveal anything about your character or values.

Module 16 At-a-Glance

The ability to complete job and college applications is a valuable skill, and knowing how to follow established procedures is necessary for successful applicants. Because the job and college application process also frequently includes an interview, it is important to prepare and practice. Sometimes, colleges require a personal essay as part of the admission packet; practice in writing such an essay will better prepare you. Following the guidelines and suggestions from Module 16 will enhance your chances of finding a good job or college.

Module 16 Practice Test

Multiple Choice

1. When looking for a job, you will need to _____.

   a. ask for a job application
   b. find out about open positions
   c. obtain general information about the company and its benefits
   d. all of the above

2. In the job application, you should answer the questions _____.

   a. supplying only limited information
   b. adding a few embellishments
   c. completely and honestly
   d. that you want to answer, skipping the others

3. Your greeting on your home phone and cell phone _____.

   a. should sound cool
   b. should sound professional
   c. should include music and personal touches
   d. can use your nickname and slang

4. If you are not a United States citizen, you will need to _____.

   a. speak to your parents about your eligibility to work
   b. apply for citizenship
   c. pretend you are a citizen
   d. obtain an exemption

5. A job interview is designed to _____.

   a. question you and learn more about your reasons for wanting to work
   b. interrogate you and make you uncomfortable
   c. check to see if you lied on your application
   d. repeat the same questions that you answered on the application

6. To prepare for the interview, you should _____.

   a. just show up
   b. know what position you want and why, know what you have to offer, know what the company does, and know the name or position of the interviewer
   c. ask your friends
   d. practice saying the same thing at each interview

7. Your appearance should be _____.

   a. the same as you always look
   b. clean, at least
   c. clean, in unwrinkled and modest clothing, and neatly groomed
   d. unique and individual

8. Before leaving for the interview, it will be important to _____.

   a. verify the address
   b. make sure you know how to get there and have reliable information
   c. allow yourself extra time in case of traffic delays
   d. all of the above

9. A college application is _____.

   a. a necessary step in the full college application process
   b. an optional step
   c. too tedious to complete
   d. only required by some colleges

10. The application fee is _____.

   a. required to be paid
   b. required to be paid unless you qualify for a fee waiver
   c. optional
   d. only necessary for private colleges

11. You can obtain letters of recommendation from _____.

    a. your parents
    b. your friends
    c. teachers, counselors, or an adult with knowledge of your academic ability
    d. your Aunt Susie

12. Private colleges tend to require _____.

    a. letters of recommendation
    b. a personal essay
    c. an interview
    d. all of the above

13. The personal essay section of the college application _____.

    a. does not count towards admissions decisions
    b. can help or hurt your application
    c. can be completed quickly and with little thought
    d. can be skipped entirely

14. A typical college application essay is _____.

    a. shorter than 250 words
    b. more than 500 words
    c. between 250-500 words
    d. longer than 750 words

15. Choosing your topic for a personal essay involves picking one that _____.

    a. has personal meaning for you
    b. connects to your values and strengths
    c. demonstrates your interests
    d. all of the above

True/False

16. It is acceptable to stretch the truth on a job application.

17. You should list only days and hours you can consistently work.

18. Once you have an interview scheduled, you do not need to do any type of preparation.

19. Colleges do not need every part of the college application packet to make it complete.

20. All colleges require a personal essay with their application.

Check your answers with those in the Student Answer Key. Review the module if you did not do well. When you feel confident, ask your instructor for your next assignment.

Glossary

English III (ENGL 323)

anthropomorphic style	a non-living object is given thoughts and feelings like it is alive and human
bespoke	to indicate or signify
congenial	pleasant, agreeably suited
conscientiously	meticulously or carefully
convolutions	forms or shapes that are folded into curves
derision	the use of or object of ridicule and scorn
draught	a current of air
elixir	a medicinal concoction
elusive	hard to comprehend or define
exalted	to elevate by praise or in estimation
fables	folk tales that seek to teach a lesson and have a moral; frequently, animals are used to illustrate such stories
fairy tales	folk tales that are purely fictional and are crowded with amazing characters, events, and settings
fatuity	something foolish or stupid
felicity	the quality or state of being happy
flamboyant	characterized by waving curves or elaborate and colorful display

folk tales	stories told in the oral storytelling tradition They may include myths and legends, or they may be stories that are told and retold, often with embellishment by the storyteller.
forestall	to exclude, hinder, or prevent
illumination	something made clear
impertinence	not restrained or given to insolent rudeness
importunities	troublesomely urgent, overly persistent in request
legends	stories based on popularly accepted historical facts, but they are unverifiable and may include great exaggerations
lolls	to hang loosely, droop or dangle
misconstrued	to misunderstand the meaning of, to take in the wrong sense
myths	stories that supposedly explain a natural phenomenon or a practice or belief of a culture
peddler	one who offers merchandise for sale along the street
persistence	continuing on a course, despite interference
querulous	habitually complaining, fretful or whining
repression	the prevention of natural and normal expression, activity or development
suspension	temporary withholding
tumultuously	marked by violent or overwhelming upheaval
unwittingly	not knowingly
veiled	partially obscured, as if by a figurative veil

Acknowledgements

English III (ENGL 323)

Module 13

Text Credits

- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/02/
- http://www.katechopin.org/biography.shtml
- www.merriam-webster.com
- www.**westga.edu**/~jmcclain/PowerPoint Presentations/**Southern_Gothic**.ppt

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Module 14

Text Credits

- http://www.scribblingwomen.org/cgwallpaper.htm
- http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/whyyw.html
- http://www.biography.com/search/article.do?id=9311669
- http://www.bookrags.com/biography/charlotte-anna-perkins-gilman/http://www.lsu.edu/faculty/jpullia/postpartum.htm
- www.merriam-webster.com
- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/revise.html.
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- *student with completed project.* www.clipart.com

Module 15

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- http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/11
- http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5650
- http://depts.gallaudet.edu/englishworks/literature/fiction.html
- http://www.pantheon.org/areas/folklore/folktales/folktales.html
- http://www.merriam-webster.com
- http://www.stanford.edu/class/engl187/docs/plathpoem.html
- http://disney.go.com/vault/archives/characters/snow/snow.html
- http://www.pantheon.org/articles/n/narcissus.html

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- *Narcissus.* www.clipart.com
- *David and Goliath.* www.clipart.com

Module 16

Text Credits

- http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobappsamples/a/sampleapp.htm
- http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/interviews/a/jobinterviewtip.htm
- http://www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/the-application/8435.html
- http://www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/the-application/115.html
- https://www.commonapp.org/CommonApp/docs/downloadforms/CommonApp2008.pdf
- http://www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/essay-skills/9405.html

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- *job interview.* www.clipart.com
- *on-line college applicant.* www.clipart.com
- *essay writer.* www.clipart.com