The Pursuit of Happiness

Visual Prompt: Most people do things that make them happy. For some people, it’s sports; for others, it may be reading or hanging out with friends. What makes you happy?

Unit Overview

The pursuit of happiness is an integral part of the American Dream and part of the foundation of this country. Many people think that the fulfillment of the American Dream centers on financial success; however, riches are not the path to happiness for everyone. One major alternative for pursuing happiness was offered by the Transcendentalists, people who (partially in response to the Industrial Revolution) valued simplicity, intuition, and nature over the expanding complexities of an increasingly urbanized and modernized society.

In this unit, you will examine how their perspectives still resonate in America, exploring in depth the story of one person who rejected wealth in favor of a different pathway to happiness. After examining the narrative of his experience, you will craft your own narrative, reflecting on how your experiences have shaped you and your values. And finally, after understanding how an author can construct a narrative using many different genres to create a portrait of a person, you will research and craft a multi-genre project on a topic of your choice.
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GOALS:
- To compose a personal essay that employs stylistic techniques
- To analyze and evaluate the structural and stylistic features of texts
- To use a variety of genres to express a coherent theme

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY
- genre conventions

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*Texts not included in these materials.
Learning Targets
• Identify and analyze the skills and knowledge necessary for success on the Embedded Assessment.

Making Connections
What does it mean to pursue happiness? Do we have a right to pursue happiness at all costs? In *Into the Wild*, a biography that investigates the life and death of Chris McCandless, a young man with an adventurous spirit, Jon Krakauer creates a compelling story.

In telling this story, Krakauer uses multiple genres to illuminate the complex nature of McCandless’s character and pursuit of happiness. Using extensive primary and secondary research, Krakauer presents McCandless’s quest for personal freedom and a personal relationship with nature that is part of the soul of American life. As you read and analyze *Into the Wild*, you will also evaluate your own beliefs and values associated with the pursuit of happiness.

Essential Questions
Respond to the questions based on your current knowledge.
1. What does it mean to pursue happiness?

2. How can a writer use/manipulate genre conventions for effect?

Developing Vocabulary
Turn to the Contents page and look at the Academic Vocabulary and Literary Terms. Use your Reader/Writer Notebook to explore the meanings of these terms as you study this unit.

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 1
Closely read the assignment for Embedded Assessment 1.

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

With your class, create a graphic representation of the skills and knowledge you must have to complete the Embedded Assessment. It is important to keep the task in mind as you work through the unit activities.
Searching for Meaning

Learning Targets

• Develop a working definition of Transcendentalism and its key tenets.
• Analyze foundational works of American literature to identify philosophical tenets.
• Explain how the Transcendentalists envisioned the pursuit of happiness.

Before Reading

1. The following excerpt from Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild* quotes a message carved into plywood by the subject of the book, Chris McCandless. As you read it, identify concepts that seem to be central to his world view and create a web of them below the passage.

TWO YEARS HE WALKS THE EARTH. NO PHONE, NO POOL, NO PETS, NO CIGARETTES. ULTIMATE FREEDOM. AN EXTREMIST. AN AESTHETIC VOMAGER WHOSE HOME IS THE ROAD. ESCAPED FROM ATLANTA. THOU SHALT NOT RETURN, ‘CAUSE “THE WEST IS THE BEST.” AND NOW AFTER TWO RAMBLING YEARS COMES THE FINAL AND GREATEST ADVENTURE. THE CLIMACTIC BATTLE TO KILL THE FALSE BEING WITHIN AND VICTORIOUSLY CONCLUDE THE SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION. TEN DAYS AND NIGHTS OF FREIGHT TRAINS AND HITCHHIKING BRING HIM TO THE GREAT WHITE NORTH. NO LONGER TO BE POISONED BY CIVILIZATION HE FLEES, AND WALKS ALONE UPON THE LAND TO BECOME LOST IN THE WILD.

ALEXANDER SUPERTRAMP
MAY 1992
(Into the Wild, 163)

The Pursuit of Happiness

1 aesthetic (adj.): relating to the appreciation of beauty
During Reading

2. The following excerpts are from two of the foundational texts of Transcendentalism in America, a literary and philosophical movement associated with Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and others. It asserts the existence of an ideal spiritual reality that transcends the empirical world and is knowable through intuition. As you read each excerpt, you will discover key concepts and define the values that are central to Emerson and Thoreau’s perspectives.

3. First, as you read the passage from Emerson’s essay, “Self Reliance,” highlight one sentence in each paragraph that seems to best express the main idea of the paragraph. Then, paraphrase the highlighted phrases.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Educated at Harvard University, Ralph Waldo Emerson was the chief founder of the Transcendentalist movement. Fueled by strong optimism and the belief in the importance of the individual, Emerson helped to inspire social reforms in education, slavery, and the rights of women and Native Americans.

Essay

from

“Self-Reliance”

by Ralph Waldo Emerson

1. There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. . . .

2. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

3. Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. . . .

---

2 bestowed (v.): presented as a gift or an honor
3 aversion (n.): strong feeling of dislike
4 A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin\(^4\) of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said today.” Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.” Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythogoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood. . . .

5 The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has got a fine Geneva watch, but he has lost the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so, being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His notebooks impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber;\(^5\) whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom, where is the Christian?

Check Your Understanding

**Writing Prompt:** Choose two or three lines from the “Self-Reliance” excerpt that state a strong opinion. Write a personal response to these lines, reflecting on how they compare with your own beliefs. Be sure to:

- Demonstrate your understanding of the text by summarizing at least one quote from Emerson in your reflection.
- Support your response with details and examples from personal experience.
- Embed your quotation using correct conventions.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Well educated and brilliant, Henry David Thoreau defied expectations to live an uncommon life of reflection and simplicity. As an experiment to reconnect with nature and discover the meaning of life, he lived for two years in a cabin in the woods of Massachusetts. He wrote about his experiences in *Walden*, one of the most well-known works in American literature.

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\(^4\) **hobgoblin** (n.): something causing superstitious fear

\(^5\) **encumber** (v.): to impede or hinder
When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defense against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated\(^1\) with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude\(^2\) from them.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln,\(^3\) and about two miles south of our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground;\(^4\) but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon.

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshiper of Aurora\(^5\) as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of King Tching-thang to this effect: “Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again.” I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer’s requiem\(^6\); itself an \textit{Iliad} and \textit{Odyssey} in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings.\(^7\) There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence\(^8\) in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas\(^9\) say, “All intelligences awake with the morning.” Poetry and art, and the fairest
and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness, they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

4 We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

5 I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartanlike as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

6 Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumbnail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead

10 Memnon: In Greek mythology, the King of the Ethiopians whom Zeus made immortal. Memnon’s statue at Thebes was supposed to emit musical notes at dawn.
11 Spartanlike: The inhabitants of the ancient Greek city-state of Sparta were famed for their courage, discipline, and frugality.
12 sublime (adj.): elevated or lofty in thought or language
13 “glorify...forever”: From the Presbyterian book of beliefs: Westminster Shorter Catechism
14 evitable (adj.): avoidable
reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify.
Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it, as for them, is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the Nation have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether they do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers, and forge rails and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our lives to improve them, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them.

For my part, I could easily do without the post office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote this some years ago—that were worth the postage. The penny post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in the newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all news as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelvemonth, or twelve years, beforehand with sufficient accuracy. . . .

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and

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15 **dead reckoning** (n.): nautical term for a method of positioning a ship without using the more reliable method of astronomical observation
16 **German Confederacy**: in 1815, the first ineffective alliance of German territories
17 **sleepers** (n.): wooden beams to which railway tracks are riveted
relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. . . .

9 Time is but the stream I go-a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebblely with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and forepaws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

After Reading

Writing Prompt: Summarize Thoreau’s criticisms of society. Consider especially paragraphs 6 and 7. Then identify a facet of modern society that Thoreau would object to, and explain why he would find it objectionable. Be sure to:

- Focus on Thoreau’s general ideas, not his specific details, by using a few key quotes to capture his voice and major claims.
- Present his ideas with an objective tone.
- Include one infinitive phrase in your writing.

Language and Writer’s Craft: Antithesis

Thoreau uses syntax for rhetorical impact. Among the syntactical rhetorical devices Thoreau uses is antithesis—the use of parallel, contrasting elements.

Example: “We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us.”

The parts of the parallel sentence express contrasting ideas. The result is an effective and memorable statement. Other famous examples include these:

- It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way. —A Tale of Two Cities, by Charles Dickens
- We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools. —1964 speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. —The Gettysburg Address, by Abraham Lincoln

Using antithesis can help you vary syntax and engage your reader. Write your own sentence or passage comparing two of the three authors (Emerson, Thoreau, McCandless) you have been studying. Use antithesis to express your comparison.
4. Use the 3-column log below to note and compare inferences from the three texts you have examined relative to the meaning of Transcendentalism and the pursuit of happiness. Then mark the log to show connections between ideas expressed in the texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>McCandless</th>
<th>Emerson</th>
<th>Thoreau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Check Your Understanding**

Work collaboratively with your peers to generate a working definition of Transcendentalism and a preliminary list of its key beliefs. Review the notes from each of the texts and explain how the characteristics of Transcendentalism are reflected in each text.
Learning Targets

• Expand knowledge of a subject with primary and secondary sources.
• Investigate for evidence of Transcendentalism’s relevance to American life.

Transcendentalism

1. To deepen your understanding of Transcendentalism, you will work with group members to create a poster depicting Transcendentalism’s key beliefs. Consider the framing questions below, but you may revise, cut, or add to the list of questions based on your initial work with Emerson and Thoreau.

2. Research to answer the following questions regarding the Transcendentalists:
   • What is their view of God?
   • What are their values?
   • How do they define truth?
   • Do they have an optimistic or pessimistic view of life?
   • What are their views of work and worldly success?
   • What is their view of society?
   • Who is their authority?
   • What is their view of education?
   • Do they view man as inherently good, evil, or somewhere in between?

3. Be sure to compile a list of your resources and sources, both for specific quotes and for general ideas. Use a graphic organizer like the one below to collect your information. Each member should use a different source, and all sources should be credible.

Check Your Understanding

4. As a group, construct a poster synthesizing your research.
   • Incorporate common information into your poster.
   • Find specific quotes from sources that best articulate this information.
   • Add visuals to help express the basic beliefs of Transcendentalism.
   • Compare your information. Revise your definition of Transcendentalism to reflect your research and information sharing with peers.
Learning Targets

- Support interpretive claims with textual evidence.
- Collaboratively develop criteria for evaluating how texts treat themes or topics.

Before Reading

1. While the Transcendentalist movement occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century, it fundamentally influenced American thinking by giving expression to many ideas, values, and themes that continue to be explored in literature today. How might Transcendentalism connect to a modern song?

During Reading

2. As you read the poems, mark the texts for ideas that connect to transcendental thinking. How do the following three pieces relate to the core tenets of Transcendentalism?

Poetry

In the Depths of Solitude

by Tupac Shakur

I exist in the depths of solitude
Pondering my true goal
Trying to find peace of mind
And still preserve my soul

5 Constantly yearning to be accepted
And from all receive respect
Never compromising but sometimes risky
And that is my only regret
A young heart with an old soul

10 How can there be peace
How can I be in the depths of solitude
When there are two inside of me
This Duo within me causes
The perfect opportunity

15 To learn and live twice as fast
As those who accept simplicity

After Reading

3. A genre is a style of literature or art with specific characteristics, features, and format. These generalizable characteristics are called genre conventions. What conventions characterize poetry as a broad literary genre? How does Shakur use these conventions in “In the Depths of Solitude”?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Genre conventions are the essential features and format that characterize a particular genre.
Remember the sky that you were born under, 
know each of the star’s stories. 
Remember the moon, know who she is. I met her 
in a bar once in Iowa City. 
5 Remember the sun’s birth at dawn, that is the 
strongest point of time. Remember sundown 
and the giving away to night. 
Remember your birth, how your mother struggled 
to give you form and breath. You are evidence of 
her life, and her mother’s, and hers. 
Remember your father. He is your life also. 
Remember the earth whose skin you are: 
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth 
brown earth, we are earth. 
15 Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have their 
tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them, 
listen to them. They are alive poems. 
Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the 
origin of this universe. I heard her singing Kiowa war 
dance songs at the corner of Fourth and Central once. 
Remember that you are all people and that all people are you. 
Remember that you are this universe and that this universe is you. 
Remember that all is in motion, is growing, is you. 
Remember that language comes from this. 
20 Remember the dance that language is, that life is. 
Remember.
A Light Exists in Spring

by Emily Dickinson

A Light exists in Spring
Not present on the Year
At any other period –
When March is scarcely here

A Color stands abroad
On Solitary Fields
That Science cannot overtake
But Human Nature feels.

It waits upon the Lawn,

It shows the furthest Tree
Upon the furthest Slope you know
It almost speaks to you.
Then as Horizons step
Or Noons report away

Without the Formula of sound
It passes and we stay –
A quality of loss
Affecting our Content
As Trade had suddenly encroached

Upon a Sacrament.

After Reading

Creative/Reflective Writing Prompt: Write an original poem exploring your beliefs about the pursuit of happiness, emulating one of the three poems explored in this unit: use Tupac’s alternating rhyme scheme, Harjo’s imperative mood, or Dickinson’s lyric approach. Be sure to:

• Link to at least one of the Transcendental ideals you’ve identified in this unit.
• Consider the criteria you have identified with your classmates as you craft your text.
• Incorporate the genre conventions of the model you emulate.

Check Your Understanding

Annotate your poem to explain what genre conventions you have used.
Learning Targets

- Identify genre conventions for nature paintings.
- Explore how visual texts can convey Transcendentalist themes.

Before Reading

1. **Quickwrite:** Based on what you now know about Transcendentalism, what sort of conventions of style, content, and/or themes might typify Transcendentalist artwork?

2. As you read the following description of the Hudson River School of painters, from www.askart.com, use the space in the margins to note links to the characteristics of Transcendentalism you identified as you completed your research in Activity 4.3.

The Hudson River School of painters was America's first so-called school of painting and the dominant landscape style until the Civil War. The name derives from a group of 19th-century landscape painters working in New York state. With realistic composition, they depicted romantic views of unsettled areas of the Hudson River Valley especially lakes, rocky gorges, and forests in the Catskill Mountains.

**Thomas Cole** is considered the leader of the movement, which began in 1825 when other artists discovered Cole's landscapes whose loftiness and sense of high drama suggested communication with God through nature. For Cole, and later his followers, the landscape was a sacred place.

Hudson River School adherents included **Asher Durand**, who often did panoramic views in a romantic, semi-realist style, with an underlying mood of serenity and contemplation.

The School is credited with making landscape for the first time a legitimate subject for canvas and for conveying a sense of place that was uniquely American. Although the compositional and stylistic devices were Old World—at least 36 of the Hudson River artists had been trained in European academies—the subject matter infused Americans with the confidence to turn away from European subjects to their own culture.

During Reading

3. With your understanding of Transcendentalism and the Hudson River artists in mind, analyze the following paintings: “The Oxbow,” by Cole and Durand's “Kindred Spirits.” OPTIC is a strategy for analyzing visual texts. You may remember that OPTIC is an acronym for the following: Overview, Parts, Title, Interrelationships, and Conclusion. Use the parts of the chart on the next page to note the elements of each painting that contribute to its thematic meaning.
OPTIC Analysis

**Overview:** Take a first look at the artwork, noticing the subject. Brainstorm some questions about it.

**Parts:** Look closely at the artwork, making note of important elements and details. Consider composition, lighting, framing, etc.

**Title:** Pay attention to the title and any captions.

**Interrelationships:** Look for connections between and among the title, caption, and the parts of the art.

**Conclusion:** Form a conclusion about the meaning of the artwork. Remember the questions you asked when you first examined it: How does the painting evoke or express Transcendentalism? Be prepared to support your conclusion with evidence.

---

**After Reading**

4. Based on these two examples, if Hudson River landscape paintings are considered an artistic genre, what are some genre conventions you would expect other texts of this genre to display? In other words, what are some characteristics they both share that other paintings of this school would also likely share, both in terms of their style and their content?

**Writing Prompt:** Which painting better reflects the beliefs of the Transcendental movement, Durand’s or Cole’s? Write a paragraph that answers this question, using details from the painting and specific information about the movement. Be sure to:

- Introduce a precise claim with a topic sentence that clarifies your position.
- Support your claim with references to the genre conventions you have defined.
- Vividly describe the painting and the details that reflect the Transcendental movement.

**Check Your Understanding**

What conventions most closely link the Hudson River painters to Transcendentalism?
Learning Targets

- Analyze the elements of a credo as a literary genre.
- Apply the conventions of the credo genre when writing a personal credo, using effective syntax and punctuation.

Before Reading

1. Quickwrite: What are some of the rules you learned in kindergarten? To what extent are those rules still applicable to life for you today?

2. A precept is a rule, instruction, or principle that guides somebody’s actions and/or moral behavior. In the graphic organizer below, list some of the precepts you have learned over the course of your life that guide your behavior as well as why they are significant to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precepts</th>
<th>Rationale, Significance, or Reflection</th>
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</table>
During Reading

3. In the following excerpt, Robert Fulghum creates a list of precepts in order to present his credo: his personal statement about life. As you read the credo, consider what the precepts have in common and highlight those that most appeal to you personally.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Fulghum (b. 1937) grew up in Texas. He was a minister for many years before turning to writing, painting, and sculpting. He is the author of several best-selling books that primarily focus on thoughts about how to live a full and happy life. Fulghum has said, “The tragedy of modern man is not that he knows less and less about the meaning of his own life but that it bothers him less and less.”

Nonfiction

Credo from All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten

by Robert Fulghum

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

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

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

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

   - Share everything.
   - Play fair.
   - Don’t hit people.
   - Put things back where you found them.
   - Clean up your own mess!
   - Don’t take things that aren’t yours.
   - Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody.
   - Wash your hands before you eat.
   - Flush.
Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.

Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap every afternoon.

When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.

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

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

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

Think what a better world it would be if we all—the whole world—had cookies and milk about three o’clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if all governments had as a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess. And it is still true, no matter how old you are—when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

After Reading
4. Write responses to the following questions, and then share them with a group of your peers.

• What are your reactions to Fulghum’s credo? What precepts seem to make the most/least sense to you personally, and why?

• If a personal credo can be considered a literary genre, what are some conventions that would characterize this genre (based on Fulghum’s example)?

Writing Prompt: Emulating Fulghum’s structure and conventions, draft a personal credo that asserts your precepts about the basic values that contribute to a meaningful life. The credo might begin with your perception of life, identify where you learned important precepts and what they are, and close with reflective commentary and a related call to action. Be sure to:

• Use the genre conventions you defined above.
• Establish an appropriate tone through your syntax and diction.
• End with a call to action like Fulghum’s.

Check Your Understanding
Annotate your credo to identify the genre conventions you have conformed to in your text.
Writer’s Craft: Revising My Credo

Learning Targets
- Develop stylistic options by analyzing and emulating a writer’s style.
- Develop strategies for revision of future writing.

Language and Writer’s Craft: Review of Syntax

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

Some of the elements of syntax are word order, sentence length, and punctuation. Punctuation can reinforce meaning, create a particular effect, and express the writer’s voice. Look at the purpose of three stylistic techniques that manipulate syntax for effect:
- Simple sentences can create dramatic contrasts with longer sentences and can convey information in tones that vary from blunt to simplistic.
- The dash marks a sudden change in thought or tone, sets off a brief summary, or sets off a parenthetical part of the sentence. A dash often conveys a casual tone.
- The ellipsis usually represents words omitted from a quote or a pause.

Before Reading
1. Fulghum’s credo is memorable and effective, not just because of the ideas, but because of his syntax. How does syntax help create memorable writing?

During Reading
2. Reread Fulghum’s text, this time annotating it for stylistic choices—his syntax and punctuation, in particular—that you find particularly effective. In the My Notes section, explain the effect of the choices.

After Reading
3. Now use the graphic organizer that follows to explore how sentence length and punctuation contribute to Fulghum’s tone or theme. Find specific examples of sentences that contain the element of syntax listed in the first column. For each example, explain its function in the credo and how it advances the tone or theme of the text. In the last column, use the examples to guide a revision of a sentence in the draft of your credo.
ACTIVITY 4.7 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Examples and Function of Fulghum’s Syntax</th>
<th>Revision of Your Sentence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperative Sentence</td>
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<td>Compound Sentence with Parallel Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dash</td>
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<td>Ellipsis</td>
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<td>Polysyndeton</td>
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**Check Your Understanding**

Annotate your revised draft to identify revisions you have made and what the intended effect of these changes is for your reader.
LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Guided Reading, Close Reading, Marking the Text

Learning Targets
• Understand the purpose and conventions of an author’s notes as a genre.
• Explain how authors can use sentence structure for effect.

Before Reading
1. The cover of a book serves a crucial purpose: to entice readers to purchase or check out the book. Examine carefully the cover of *Into the Wild*. Cite at least three design details you observe, and explain why you think the cover designers made these specific choices. What effect(s) do you think they were going for?

During Reading
2. As you read Krakauer’s “Author’s Note,” identify shifts in the point of view (1st person to 3rd person) and between objective and subjective descriptions. Use the margin to label these different types. Be prepared to discuss what you think the purpose of an author’s note is. How does Krakauer structure the note to explain his purpose in writing the book?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Jon Krakauer (b. 1954) started climbing mountains at age 8. He has chronicled his experiences in two best-selling books, *Into Thin Air* and *Into the Wild*. He wrote *Into Thin Air* after a failed expedition to climb Mt. Everest. The book earned him a nomination as one of the finalists for the Pulitzer Prize.

AUTHOR’S NOTE
1 In April 1992, a young man from a well-to-do East Coast family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. Four months later his decomposed body was found by a party of moose hunters.

2 Shortly after the discovery of the corpse, I was asked by the editor of *Outside* magazine to report on the puzzling circumstances of the boy’s death. His name turned out to be Christopher Johnson McCandless. He’d grown up, I learned, in an affluent suburb of Washington, D.C., where he’d excelled academically and had been an elite athlete.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jon Krakauer, Seattle
After Reading
3. Identify some conventions of the Author’s Note.

Language and Writer’s Craft: Informal Spelling and Usage
You may have noticed that some writers use informal spelling and usage. This practice is common in song lyrics. For example, the song “Rocky Mountain High” uses informal spelling.

When he first came to the mountains his life was far away
On the road and hangin’ by a song
But the string’s already broken and he doesn’t really care
Keeps changin’ fast, it don’t last for long

In this example, John Denver uses “it don’t” in place of “it doesn’t.” “It don’t” fits the rhythm and meter of the song better, and it helps create an informal tone. Writers and singers often use informal spelling (here, hangin’, changin’) and usage to make their language sound more colloquial or conversational.

When you are writing for school, you will most often use standard, formal English rather than informal language. (Examples where you might use some informal language include creative writing, dialogue, and the like.)

If you are unsure whether language is informal or what the standard spelling of a word is, you can consult a dictionary or usage guide such as Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary of English Usage or Bryan Garner’s Dictionary of Modern American Usage.

Writing Prompt: Write an analytical text explaining how Krakauer uses structure and style to show his shifting feelings toward his subject, Chris McCandless. Be sure to:
• Begin with a statement that presents your analytical statement and use commentary to link your evidence to your central claim.
• Support your claim with specific evidence from the text.
• Make effective choices for meaning or style.

Check Your Understanding
Based on Krakauer’s example, what are some ways in which writers can manipulate structure for effect?
Learning Targets
- Analyze how a writer uses characterization to develop a portrait of a real person.
- Emulate and apply a writer’s techniques to one’s own writing.

Before Reading
1. Now that you have read a few chapters of *Into the Wild*, you have caught a glimpse of the puzzling young man at the heart of the story. Although Krakauer is crafting a work of nonfiction, he employs many of the same techniques used in writing fiction. For example, he allows the reader to get to know Chris McCandless in the same ways that fiction authors use **characterization methods**. Write what you know of Christopher McCandless so far, citing at least one quote for each method. You will add to the chart as you learn more.
After Reading

2. Based on the details you gathered in the characterization chart, what impression does Krakauer create of McCandless in the first three chapters? Brainstorm a list of different adjectives describing McCandless that stem from Krakauer’s descriptions. Try to select adjectives that carry strong connotations. For each adjective, identify at least one piece of characterization that led to that impression.

Central Claim:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Characterization Evidence</th>
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Writing Prompt: Emulate Krakauer’s use of characterization to create an impression of a real person—perhaps someone from school, popular culture, or current events. As a challenge, do not name the person in your text. Be sure to:

- Select an adjective that describes the person, then choose diction, details, and a structure that will lead your readers to see the person as you do without explicitly stating who it is.
- Incorporate at least two characterization methods from this activity into your text.
- Punctuate dialogue correctly.

Check Your Understanding

Exchange drafts with a peer and annotate his or her text, listing the various characterization techniques used. What impression does the writer create of the subject through these techniques?
Learning Targets

• Analyze an author’s use of epigraphs.
• Understand how writers integrate multiple sources of information to develop their subjects.

Before Reading

1. In literature, an epigraph may serve as a preface, as a summary, as a counter-example, or to link the work to a wider literary canon, either to invite comparison or to enlist a conventional context.

2. Krakauer uses epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter. Look at the epigraphs that begin Chapter 3 below. Think about the connections between the epigraphs and the events and themes in Chapter 3. Fill out the graphic organizer with your ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epigraph</th>
<th>Paraphrase the Quote</th>
<th>Connection to Chapter Events or Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Chapter 3: Carthage**
*I wanted movement and not a calm course of existence. I wanted excitement and danger and the chance to sacrifice myself for my love. I felt in myself a superabundance of energy which found no outlet in our quiet life.*
Leo Tolstoy “Family Happiness”
Passage highlighted in one of the books found with Chris McCandless’s remains | | |
| **Chapter 3: Carthage**
*It should not be denied...that being footloose has always exhilarated us. It is associated in our minds with escape from history and oppression and law and irksome obligations, with absolute freedom, and the road has always led west.*
Wallace Stegner,
The American West Living Space | | |
3. Now consider the epigraphs used in chapters 4–7. Your teacher will assign you to a discussion group. Your group will take one of the chapters and analyze the connections between the chapter title, the epigraph, and the chapter’s events. With your group members, analyze the epigraph(s) for your chapter, connecting it to Transcendentalism and the chapter in the chart below. Fill out the top row of the epigraph before rereading the chapter.

**During Reading**

4. As you read the chapter, mark the text for quotes, details, and other features that reveal the tenets of Transcendentalism that appear in the chapter. Record quotes that illuminate this philosophy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Title Epigraph</th>
<th>Interpretive Statement/Paraphrase</th>
<th>Connection to the Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Connections to Transcendentalism/Emerging Themes:**

**After Reading**

5. With your group members, discuss the effect of Krakauer’s use of epigraphs from literary works in the various chapters. What is the effect in terms of conveying information and engaging the reader? What is the effect when the epigraph is from McCandless’s own writings?

**Check Your Understanding**

Explain different ways writers may use epigraphs for effect in their writing.
Shedding Light

Learning Targets
- Examine how a writer weaves the narratives of multiple characters.
- Understand how to develop a subject through comparisons.

Before Reading
1. One way writers develop their subjects is through comparisons, whether figurative or literal in nature. One such method Krakauer uses to develop his perspective of Christopher McCandless is by telling stories of people who are in some ways foils to McCandless. In Chapters 8 and 9, Krakauer introduces Gene Rosellini, John Mallon Waterman, Carl McCunn, Everett Ruess, and the Irish monks known as *papar*.

During Reading
2. Krakauer says, “Some insight into the tragedy of Chris McCandless can be gained by studying predecessors cut from the same exotic cloth” (85). You will become an “expert” on one of these predecessors; your job is to identify what is revealed about McCandless via your particular comparison. As you read your section, record quotes that reveal what Krakauer’s purpose seems to be in including the comparison in these chapters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person (page #s)</th>
<th>Similarities to Chris</th>
<th>Differences from Chris</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gene Rosellini</td>
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<td>John Mallon Waterman</td>
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<td>Carl McCunn</td>
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</table>
3. In the Author’s Note, Krakauer comments, “Some readers admired the boy immensely for his courage and noble ideals; others fulminated that he was a reckless idiot, a wacko, a narcissist who perished out of ignorance.” Writing in the voice of your assigned person, take a stance on which characterization seems most appropriate. Use details from the person’s experience to develop your claims. Complete a quickwrite in your Reader/Writer Notebook or on separate paper.

4. You will now speak as your assigned person, evaluating McCandless’s values and choices from your person’s point of view.

5. Now that you have examined McCandless through the lens of these other narratives, consider how Krakauer uses them for comparison. Why does he use this strategy for development so extensively? What have you learned about Chris McCandless from these stories? In what ways does he reveal his own biases toward his subject through comparison to his predecessors?

Check Your Understanding

In one sentence, explain why a writer might use a comparison to develop his or her subject.
### Learning Targets
- Analyze and evaluate a writer’s structural choices.
- Understand how authors sequence events to influence and engage readers.

### Before Reading
1. Most biographies are written in chronological order, but Krakauer has organized *Into the Wild* differently. The book begins mere months before McCandless’s death, and over the final four chapters of the book, only one focuses on presenting a third-person narrative of his life. The question is why?

To answer that question, work with your group to chart Krakauer’s structure in the first 13 chapters of the book. Use the template below to format your analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>McCandless's Event(s) and Date(s)</th>
<th>Other Narratives (including Krakauer’s own)</th>
<th>Why Krakauer May Have Recorded the Event(s) at This Point in the Book</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
During Reading
2. With your organizational chart in mind, reread Krakauer’s “Author’s Note.” With your group, make a list of clues in the Note that suggest Krakauer’s rationale for veering from chronological order in his text.

After Reading
3. Based on your notes, revise your chart to add insights regarding Krakauer’s likely intentions in organizing the book as he did.

Writing Prompt: Evaluate Krakauer’s effectiveness at creating a coherent organizational flow in the book. Be sure to:
• Consider how the sequencing of chapters influences understanding.
• Include relevant examples of how Krakauer introduces sources and new details.
• Use at least one quotes from the “Author’s Note” to support your claim.

Check Your Understanding
Explain how organization is linked to a coherent presentation of a subject.
Learning Targets

- Identify and evaluate the effectiveness of the organizational elements of a personal essay.
- Analyze how a writer uses details, events, and character actions to craft an effective narrative.

Before Reading

1. In Chapters 14 and 15, Krakauer breaks from his 3rd person account of McCandless’s biography by inserting a personal narrative essay. Krakauer’s account of climbing Devils Thumb, which presents a significant personal experience in which he learns about his own skills and inner strength, offers a professional model of the personal essay you will be writing in Embedded Assessment 1. Most personal essays are structured to include three essential elements:

   **Event or Incident**: The author describes some incident or set of circumstances.
   
   **Response**: The author describes his or her feelings and thoughts concerning the encounter at the time when it was happening. This is the initial response, without the benefit of reflection.
   
   **Reflection**: The author reflects on the incident. This reflection usually occurs some time after the event or incident. In the reflection, the author will often transition from describing a situation unique to him or her to a discussion more universal in nature.
### During Reading

2. As you reread the following excerpt of Krakauer’s climb, highlight the text with two colors: one for sentences that reveal his responses at the time and a second for those that present reflection on what was learned as a result of the experiences.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon Krakauer (b. 1954) started climbing mountains at age 8. He has chronicled his experiences in two best-selling books: *Into the Wild* and *Into Thin Air*. He wrote *Into Thin Air* after a failed expedition to climb Mt. Everest. The book earned a nomination as one of the finalists for the Pulitzer Prize.

### Literary Terms

**Coherence** is the quality of unity or logical connection among ideas. It is achieved by the clear and orderly presentation of ideas in a paragraph, text, or presentation.

---

1. My suspicion that McCandless’s death was unplanned, that is was a terrible accident, comes from reading those few documents he left behind and from listening to the men and women who spent time with him over the final year of his life. But my sense of Chris McCandless’s intentions comes, too, from a more personal perspective.

2. As a youth, I am told, I was willful, self-absorbed, intermittently reckless, moody. I disappointed my father in the usual ways. Like McCandless, figures of male authority aroused in me a confusing medley of corked hurt and hunger to please. If something captured my undisciplined imagination, I pursued it with a zeal bordering on obsession, and from the age of seventeen until my late twenties that something was mountain climbing.

3. I devoted most of my waking hours to fantasizing about, and then undertaking, ascents of remote mountains in Alaska and Canada—obscure spires, steep and frightening, that nobody in the world beyond a handful of climbing geeks had ever heard of. Some good actually came of this. By fixing my sights on one summit after another, I managed to keep my bearings through some thick postadolescent fog. Climbing *mattered*. The danger bathed the world in a halogen glow that caused everything—the sweep of the rock, the orange and yellow lichens, the texture of the clouds—to stand out in a brilliant relief. Life thrummed at a higher pitch. The world was made real.

4. In 1977, while brooding on a Colorado barstool, picking happily at my existential scabs, I got it into my head to climb a mountain called the Devil’s Thumb. An intrusion of diorite scripted by ancient glaciers into a peak of immense and spectacular proportions, the Thumb is especially imposing from the north: Its great north wall, which had never been climbed, rises sheer and clean for six thousand feet from the glacier at its base, twice the height of Yosemite’s El Capitan. I would go to Alaska, ski inland from the sea across thirty miles of glacial ice, and ascend this mighty nordwand. I decided, moreover, to do it alone.
5 I was twenty-three, a year younger than Chris McCandless when he walked into the Alaska bush. My reasoning, if one can call it that, was inflamed by the scattershot passions of youth and a literary diet overly rich in the works of Nietzsche, Kerouac, and John Menlove Edwards, the latter a deeply troubled writer and psychiatrist who, before putting an end to his life with a cyanide capsule in 1958, had been one of the preeminent British rock climbers of the day. Edwards regarded climbing as a “psycho-neurotic tendency”; he climbed not for sport but to find refuge from the inner torment that framed his existence.

6 As I formulated my plan to climb the Thumb, I was dimly aware that I might be getting in over my head. But that only added to the scheme’s appeal. That it wouldn’t be easy was the whole point.

7 I owned a book in which there was a photograph of the Devils Thumb, a black-and-white image taken by an eminent glaciologist named Maynard Miller. In Miller’s aerial photo the mountain looked particularly sinister: a huge fin of exfoliated stone, dark and smeared with ice. The picture held an almost pornographic fascination for me. How would it feel, I wondered, to be balanced on that bladelike summit ridge, worrying over the storm clouds building in the distance, hunched against the wind and dunning cold, contemplating the drop on either side? Could a person keep a lid on his terror long enough to reach the top and get back down . . .

8 All that held me to the mountainside, all that held me to the world, were two thin spikes of chrome molybdenum stuck half an inch into a smear of frozen water, yet the higher I climbed, the more comfortable I became. Early on a difficult climb, especially a difficult solo climb, you constantly feel the abyss pulling at your back. To resist takes a tremendous conscious effort; you don’t dare let your guard down for an instant. The siren song of the void puts you on edge; it makes your movements tentative, clumsy, herky-jerky. But as the climb goes on, you grow accustomed to the exposure, you get used to rubbing shoulders with doom, you come to believe in the reliability of your hands and feet and head. You learn to trust your self-control.

9 By and by your attention become so intensely focused that you no longer notice the raw knuckles, the cramping thighs, the strain of maintaining nonstop concentration. A trancelike state settles over your efforts; the climb becomes a clear-eyed dream. Hours slide by like minutes. The accumulated clutter of day-to-day existence—the lapses of conscience, the unpaid bills, the bungled opportunities, the dust under the couch, the inescapable poison of your genes—all of it is temporarily forgotten, crowded from your thoughts by an overpowering clarity of purpose and by the seriousness of the task at hand.

10 At such moments something resembling happiness actually stirs in your chest, but it isn’t the sort of emotion you want to lean on very hard. In solo climbing the whole enterprise is held together with little more than chutzpah, not the most reliable adhesive. Late in the day on the north face of the Thumb, I felt the glue disintegrating with a swing of an ax.

11 I’d gained nearly seven hundred feet of altitude since stepping off the hanging glacier, all of it on crampon front points and the pick of my axes. The ribbon of frozen meltwater had ended three hundred feet up and was followed by a crumbly armor of frost feathers. Though just barely substantial enough to support body weight, the rime was plastered over the rock to a thickness of two or three feet, so I kept plugging upward. The wall, however, had been growing imperceptibly steeper, and as it did so, the frost feathers became thinner. I’d fallen into a slow, hypnotic rhythm—swing, swing; kick, kick; swing, swing; kick, kick—when my left ice ax slammed into a slab of diorite a few inches beneath the rime.
I tried left, then right, but kept striking rock. The frost feathers holding me up, it became apparent, were maybe five inches thick and had the structural integrity of stale corn bread. Below was thirty-seven hundred feet of air, and I was balanced on a house of cards. The sour taste of panic rose in my throat. My eyesight blurred, I began to hyperventilate, my calves started to shake. I shuffled a few feet farther to the right, hoping to find thicker ice, but managed only to bend an ice ax on the rock.

Awkwardly, stiff with fear, I started working my way back down. The rime gradually thickened. After descending about eighty feet, I got back on reasonably solid ground. I stopped for a long time to let my nerves settle, then leaned back from my tools and stared up at the face above, searching for a hint of solid ice, for some variation in the underlying rock strata, for anything that would allow passage over the frosted slabs. I looked until my neck ached, but nothing appeared. The climb was over. The only place to go was down.

Less than a month after sitting on the summit of the Thumb, I was back in Boulder, nailing up siding on the Spruce Street Townhouses, the same condos I’d been framing when I left for Alaska. I got a raise, to four bucks an hour, and at the end of the summer moved out of the job-site trailer to a cheap studio apartment west of the downtown mall.

It is easy, when you are young, to believe that what you desire is no less than what you deserve, to assume that if you want something badly enough, it is your God-given right to have it. When I decided to go to Alaska that April, like Chris McCandless, I was a raw youth who mistook passion for insight and acted according to an obscure, gap-riddled logic. I thought climbing the Devils Thumb would fix all that was wrong with my life. In the end, of course, it changed almost nothing. But I came to appreciate that mountains make poor receptacles for dreams. And I lived to tell the tale.

As a young man, I was unlike McCandless in many important regards; most notably, I possessed neither his intellect nor his lofty ideals. But I believe we were similarly affected by the skewed relationships we had with our fathers. And I suspect we had a similar intensity, a similar heedlessness, a similar agitation of the soul.

The fact that I survived my Alaska adventure and McCandless did not survive his was largely a matter of chance; had I not returned from the Stikine Ice Cap in 1977, people would have been quick to say of me—as they now say of him—that I had a death wish. Eighteen years after the event, I now recognize that I suffered from hubris, perhaps, and an appalling innocence, certainly, but I wasn’t suicidal.

After Reading
3. Following style of the personal-essay graphic organizer on page 287, create a web that shows (a) details of the event, (b) examples of Krakauer’s responses at the time of the climb, and (c) his reflections following the failed attempt.

Writing Prompt: Defend, challenge, or refute the following statement: Krakauer is more of a transcendentalist than McCandless. Be sure to:
  • Begin with a clear central claim.
  • Support your response with specific textual evidence from Krakauer’s account of McCandless and/or his personal account in Chapters 14–15.
  • Reference specific tenets of Transcendentalism to logically support your position.

Check Your Understanding
How would creating a web of this type help you to successfully write a personal essay?
Learning Targets

- Analyze a writer’s use of syntactical techniques.
- Apply syntactical techniques from examples to one’s own writing.

Before Reading

1. Like Fulghum, Krakauer’s style is memorable and effective, not just because of the ideas, but because of his syntax.

   Some elements of syntax are word order, sentence length, and punctuation. Punctuation can reinforce meaning, create a particular effect, and express the writer’s voice. Look at the purpose of three stylistic techniques that manipulate syntax for effect: relative clauses, asyndeton, and the colon.

Language and Writer’s Craft: Relative Pronouns and Clauses

Relative pronouns are that, who, whom, whose, which, where, when, and why. They are used to join clauses to make a complex sentence. Relative pronouns are used at the beginning of the subordinate clause and give specific information about the main clause.

Example: This is the house that Jack built.

In English, the choice of the relative pronoun depends on the type of clause it is used in. There are two types of clauses: defining (restrictive) relative clauses and non-defining (nonrestrictive) relative clauses. In both types of clauses, the relative pronoun can function as a subject, an object, or a possessive.

**Defining clauses** open with a relative pronoun and ARE NOT separated by a comma from the main clause.

Example: This is the house that my grandfather built.

**Non-defining relative clauses** (also known as non-restrictive, or parenthetical, clauses) provide some additional information that is not essential and may be omitted without affecting the contents of the sentence. All relative pronouns EXCEPT “that” can be used in non-defining clauses; however, the pronouns MAY NOT be omitted. Non-defining clauses ARE separated by commas.

Example: The house at the end of the street, which my grandfather built, needs renovating.

During Reading

2. Reread Krakauer’s text, this time annotating it for stylistic choices and punctuation, in particular. In the My Notes section, explain the effect of the choices.
After Reading

3. Now use the graphic organizer below to explore how sentence length and punctuation contribute to tone or theme. Find specific examples of Krakauer’s sentences that contain the element of syntax listed in the first column. Explain its function in the credo and how it advances the tone or theme of the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Examples and Function of Krakauer’s Syntax</th>
<th>Revision of a Sentence from Your Credo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relative clause (uses <em>that</em>, <em>which</em>, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asyndeton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check Your Understanding

In the last column, use the examples to guide a revision of a sentence in the draft of your credo.
Reflecting on Life Experiences

Learning Targets

• Analyze a writer’s use of descriptive techniques.
• Apply a variety of techniques to describe events in narratives.

Before Reading

1. **Quickwrite:** Using the photograph you brought, or one provided by your teacher, describe (or craft) a memorable event in your life.

During Reading

2. Personal essays are reflective in nature, which means that the author looks back on an experience that is significant in his or her life, describes the experience and how he or she felt at the time, and then reflects on the importance of that experience. “A View from Mount Ritter” is an example of a reflective personal essay written by a high school student.

3. Use two different colors of highlighter to mark examples where the author tells how he felt (response) and what he learned (reflection). Then draw a line to indicate where the author shifts from description of the experience to a reflection on its significance and the lessons he learned from it.

Essay

**A View From Mount Ritter**

*Two weeks in the Sierras changed my attitude toward life and what it takes to succeed.*

by Joseph T. O'Connor

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

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

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

**Subordinating Conjunctions**

Writers use subordinating conjunctions (e.g., *when*, *although*, *because*, *since*, *while*, *as*, *until*, etc.) to create relationships between clauses in a sentence and to create sentence variety.

Example: The storm came in so fast we didn’t even notice it until our shadows suddenly disappeared.

Example: As we began searching for shelter, a bolt of lightning ripped open the blackish clouds. . .

Combine the following:
1. Mount Ritter seemed like a huge challenge. I was in high spirits.
2. We shivered in our sleeping bags. The rain poured down outside our tent.

**ACTIVITY 4.15 continued**

Reflecting on Life Experiences

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11 “Youth is wholly experimental,” Robert Louis Stevenson wrote. Sure, there will be mistakes, but there will also be successes. I was a confused kid. Everyone—my parents, teacher and coaches—offered suggestions, but I chose to ignore them. I had “potential,” they told me. As a typical teen, I thought I could make it on my own.

12 I didn’t want any help, and the more people tried to give it the more distant I grew.

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

14 I was lost in the daydream that I didn’t need to study; I was going to play professional soccer. My game was good and I thought that practice, or getting good grades, for that matter, was unnecessary. Stubbornness and rebellion can be terrible things if they get out of control.
To get back one’s youth one has merely to repeat one’s follies.” A day before my awakening on that fateful July sunrise, I would have disagreed with this quotation from Oscar Wilde. But after recognizing the results of my own follies for the first time, I thoroughly agree.

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

Thanks to that morning’s conversion, I am a new person. Now, I know I’ll have to work hard. The sun streaming over the eastern Sierras wiped out the dark clouds that blurred my vision. Jonathan Harker in Bram Stoker’s “Dracula” must have felt exactly the same way when he wrote in his journal: “No man knows ‘till he has suffered from the night how sweet and how dear to his heart and eye the morning can be.”

After Reading

Similarly to how writers use a variety of techniques to create characterization, there are four common techniques that writers use to recreate their subjective reaction and feelings when describing experiences.

- Sensory descriptions and specific details
  Example: . . . . squatting in a giant puddle of water and hailstones, with forks of lightning bouncing off the canyon walls around me.

- Using comparisons and figurative language (e.g., metaphors, similes, analogies, hyperbole, etc.) to give a sense of what something looked like.
  Example: I couldn’t help chuckling to myself at the sight of Ethan’s dinner-plate-sized eyeballs as he panicked like an amateur.

- Describing what is NOT there; drawing attention to what is not happening, not present, etc., usually externally, but not necessarily.
  Example: I didn’t want any help, and the more people tried to give it the more distant I grew.

- Noting changes in form or condition, especially in terms of a positive or negative transformation.
  Example: . . . .we didn’t even notice it until our shadows suddenly disappeared.

In the chart on the next page, find at least one example of each technique. Then write a sentence of your own using each technique.
### Reflecting on Life Experiences

#### Descriptive Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imagery: Sensory and Specific Details</th>
<th>O’Connor’s Descriptive Techniques</th>
<th>Krakauer’s Descriptive Techniques</th>
<th>Modify the Examples by Using the Technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The room was dark.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparisons and Figurative Language</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>The mountain was big.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Is Not There</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>The forest was quiet.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in Time or Condition</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>There was no wind.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Check Your Understanding

Exchange drafts of the free writes you wrote at the beginning of this activity. Underline sentences in your peer’s draft that could benefit from revision and rewrite at least two sentences, using different techniques to transform them. Revise your own paragraph, using feedback from your peers. Annotate places where you use the various descriptive techniques.
Making Your Choice

Learning Targets
• Collaboratively select an experience that will be engaging to readers.
• Evaluate how writers use structure for effect in a personal narrative.

Before Reading
1. Krakauer’s Chapters 14–15 and O’Connor’s text both offer examples of personal essays. Create a Venn diagram in your Reader/Writer Notebook to compare the two texts. Consider content, but focus on organization and style in your compare and contrast. In what ways are they similar and different?
2. Now review the Scoring Guide for Embedded Assessment 1. What grade would you give each author, based on the criteria and descriptors? Be prepared to share your answer with the class.

Choosing a Topic for a Personal Essay
Now that you have examined models of personal essays, it is time for you to make a decision about the subject of your own personal essay.

Revisit the list of experiences you generated in Activity 4.14 (you may want to add to or revise your list now), as well as the text you generated in the free write for Activity 4.15. In particular, think of experiences that led to a lesson of some kind, since reflection is a crucial element of the essay.

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

Second, it is important that you choose an experience that is significant—an experience that changed you in some way, an experience that taught you something important, or an experience that reveals something about your character.

3. Review your list and choose an experience that is significant to you and write briefly about it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summarize the experience.</th>
<th>How did you feel at the time of the experience?</th>
<th>Summarize your reflection on the experience.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
4. If you find that you cannot fully complete any of the columns in the chart, consider choosing a different experience about which to write or try telling your experience to a partner, who will take notes on the details and descriptions in your story.

5. Share your initial thinking with a partner. As you do so, ask each other additional questions (Who? What? Where? Why? When?) to provoke each other to expand on the specific details of the event. After sharing with a partner, add details to the first column.

6. With a topic in mind, consider how you might organize your piece. To do so, compare and contrast how Krakauer and O’Connor organized their pieces.

7. Talk with your partner about these different options: Which approach did you like better? Which would be easier? Which would be more sophisticated?

**Check Your Understanding**

Go back through your draft and annotate at least one example of a response and one of a reflection in your text.
Assignment
Your assignment is to write a multi-paragraph reflective essay about a significant personal experience that involves the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals, being sure to describe the experience and your immediate response to it, as well as to reflect on the significance of the experience.

Planning and Prewriting: Brainstorm an event, select the best choice, and plan your structure.
• How will you brainstorm and select an experience that involves the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals (list several and evaluate, discuss possible experiences with a peer, etc.)?
• How will you organize the elements of your experience so there is a clear progression from event to response to reflection?
• What can you “borrow” from examples that you’ve read in this unit to help you plan your writing?

Drafting: Determine how to include the elements of a successful essay.
• How can you provide descriptive details that capture the event and your feelings during that time?
• What techniques from this unit can you use, such as introductory epigraphs, dialogue, and action?
• Does your reflective commentary reveal that you gained some insight from the experience?

Evaluating and Revising Your Draft: Review and improve your work.
• How will you review your pre-writing to ensure that your draft’s structure follows your plan?
• How clearly does your experience connect to the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals?
• What kind of feedback from others, such as peers, will help you to know what needs to be added, removed, or changed?

Checking and Editing for Publication: Confirm that your final draft is ready.
• How will you check for grammatical and technical accuracy?
• How can you use the Scoring Guide to confirm that you are ready to publish the essay?

Reflection
After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this assignment, and respond to the following:
• What sort of creative steps did you take to shape your experience to the structure of a narrative essay? (Experience, Response, Reflection)
• How did connecting your own experience to a larger theme like the pursuit of happiness help you to see it in a new way?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
<td>The essay • details a significant personal experience about the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals • presents an explicit description of how the author felt at the time, using carefully chosen words to convey those emotions • shows a mature and insightful understanding of the significance of the experience to the author.</td>
<td>The essay • includes an experience that involves the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals • describes clearly how the author felt at the time of the experience • reveals the significance of the experience to the author.</td>
<td>The essay • includes an experience, but the connection to the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals may be unclear • may describe how the author felt at the time of the experience, but the description may be on the surface level • attempts to convey the significance of the experience to the author.</td>
<td>The essay • includes an experience, but there is no connection to the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals • does not describe how the author felt at the time of the experience • struggles to convey the significance of the experience to the author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>The essay • flows in a logical fashion; the reader can easily identify the experience, the author’s reaction, and the reflection • is unified effectively and provides a feeling of satisfaction in the end.</td>
<td>The essay • is organized in such a way that the reader can identify the description of the experience, the author’s reaction, and the reflection • connects all elements into a cohesive whole and a clear ending.</td>
<td>The essay • is confusing so that the reader may not be able to identify the significant experience, the author’s reaction, and the reflection • struggles to tie all the pieces together, and may end abruptly.</td>
<td>The essay • lacks organization, description of a significant experience, the author’s reaction, or the reflection • does not tie all the pieces together or provide an ending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Language</strong></td>
<td>The essay • uses diction, syntax, and other stylistic devices that are notable and appropriate for the subject, purpose, and audience • contains few errors in standard writing conventions.</td>
<td>The essay • uses diction, syntax, and other stylistic devices that are appropriate for the subject, purpose, and audience • contains errors in standard writing conventions that are minor and do not interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>The essay • uses diction, syntax, and other stylistic devices less effectively for the subject, purpose, and audience • contains errors in standard writing conventions that interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>The essay • uses diction, syntax, and other stylistic devices simplistically for the subject, purpose, and audience • contains errors in standard writing conventions that seriously interfere with meaning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Targets

• Reflect on key concepts and vocabulary.
• Identify and analyze the skills and knowledge necessary for success on the Embedded Assessment.
• Examine how writers manipulate point of view and style for effect.

Making Connections

As you have learned through Christopher McCandless’s story, Transcendentalism still bears a strong influence on American thinking. But as we have become a more urbanized society, have we lost touch with nature—or merely redefined our relationship with it? As you complete your encounter with McCandless, consider the central role nature plays in his pursuit of happiness. In contrast, what role does it play in your own life? How do you view the natural world?

A multi-genre research project positions the writer to showcase a range of writing styles, craft, and genre conventions to convey a clear and knowledgeable perspective on an issue or topic of interest to the writer. Consider your study of Krakauer’s Into the Wild as a multi-genre text. Krakauer’s commitment to cull the right information in order to convey his point of view and to help the reader discover the truth about his subject, Chris McCandless, is apparent in the presentation of ideas and research in his text. And consider all the different types of texts Krakauer blends together within the book. How does he generate cohesion between the different genres and voices he introduces?

Essential Questions

Based on your study of the first part of the unit, review your answers to the Essential Questions. Would you change them? If so, how?

1. What does it mean to pursue happiness?

2. How can a writer use/manipulate genre conventions for effect?

Developing Vocabulary

Review your vocabulary notes from the first part of the unit. Which terms need further study?

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 2

Closely read the assignment for Embedded Assessment 2: Creating a Multi-Genre Research Project.

Your assignment is to create a multi-genre research project that expresses your research and perspective on a person, event, or movement that emodies the American ideal of the pursuit of happiness.

With your class, create a graphic organizer to list the skills and knowledge you will need to complete this Embedded Assessment successfully.
Before Reading

3. **Quickwrite**: What stylistic contrasts did you notice between Chapter 14–15, 16, and 17? Identify several changes (e.g., in point of view, in verb tense, etc.) and explain why Krakauer may have made such dramatic shifts in narrative approach.

4. In Chapters 16–17, Krakauer reveals that Christopher McCandless’s relationship with nature—and its connection to the pursuit of happiness—appears to have changed over time. Use the graphic organizer below to track the changes in his definition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How might Chris have viewed nature? The pursuit of happiness?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April 1992</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July 1992</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence from the Text</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My Notes
Learning Targets
• Analyze a writer’s use of connotations and inferences.
• Understand how writers can convey subjectivity in nonfiction texts.

Before Reading
1. Reread the last paragraph of Chapter 18, this time using a highlighter to mark the text. First, highlight the most descriptive or vivid words Krakauer uses. In the margin, write down any connotations that you associate with these words. Make notes about the effects of these carefully chosen words—what do you think Krakauer wants his reader to think or feel?

One of his last acts was to take a picture of himself, standing near the bus under the high Alaska sky, one hand holding his final note toward the camera lens, the other raised in a brave, beatific farewell. His face is horribly emaciated, almost skeletal. But if he pitied himself in those last difficult hours—because he was so young, because his body had betrayed him and his will had let him down—it’s not apparent from the photograph. He is smiling in the picture, and there is no mistaking the look in his eyes: Chris McCandless was at peace, serene as a monk gone to God.

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

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

After Reading
4. In preparation for a Socratic Seminar discussion, scan the book for instances where Krakauer’s attitude toward Christopher McCandless is clear to you. Put a sticky note on those pages.
Pre-Seminar Questions:
• What, then, does Jon Krakauer think about Christopher J. McCandless?
• Write one of your own open-ended questions based on the text.

Check Your Understanding
Writing Prompt: What, then, does Jon Krakauer think about Christopher J. McCandless? With careful consideration of all the factors listed and mentioned in the Socratic Seminar, write a thoughtful response that reveals his ultimate bias toward his subject. Be sure to:
• Present a clear central claim.
• Cite examples of structure, content, and style to support your answer.
• Integrate quotes fluently.
Learning Targets

• Explore how genres can explore similar themes through different forms.
• Select multiple genres to convey an idea.

Multiple Genres

You have probably noticed that Krakauer uses many genres, or kinds of writing, to help him convey who Christopher McCandless was and how his life and death affected the people he encountered. For example, in Chapter 1, Krakauer uses a map, a postcard, an interview with Jim Gallien, and re-created dialogue based on that interview.

Before Reading

1. Quickwrite: Identify at least three genres used by Krakauer in Chapter 18. Which is most effectively used to support the tone and theme of the chapter? Explain.

During Reading

2. Review your assigned chapter and make a list of all the genres Krakauer uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Genres Used</th>
<th>Conventions and Purpose of One Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>8</td>
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</table>
After Reading

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

- Conform to the appropriate conventions of your genres.
- Link your pieces to specific scenes in the book.
- Include a range of descriptive and stylistic techniques in your pieces.

Check Your Understanding

After discussing how Krakauer’s text, *Into the Wild*, meets the criteria of a multi-genre research project, refine your response to the unit’s essential question: How does a writer represent research through multiple texts?
Learning Targets
- Define criteria for constructing an effective multi-genre research project.
- Evaluate different organizational options to plan a project.

Before Reading
1. In your group, preview the sample multi-genre research project, and then create a working definition of the project.

During Reading
2. Read the sample multi-genre research project (MGR) from the perspective of a writer—what do you notice about the style and craft of the MGR? As you read, follow your teacher’s instructions to annotate the text with your insights and observations.
   Think about how this graphic organizer could help you analyze and organize a multi-genre research paper such as the one you are about to read and create.

After Reading
3. After you have read and studied the sample multi-genre research project, think about how seeing a project sample contributes to your understanding of using this approach to study a subject of interest to you.
Dear Reader,

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Jhoanne Mecija
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The Fresh Prince of Jazz and Myself

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your one and only,

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

And so it Begins

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Louis Satchmo Armstrong

The King of Jazz

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

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

A Great American Figure

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

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

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

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

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

Hi Wonderful Fan,

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

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

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

Anxiously waiting for your reply,

Louis Armstrong

In a couple of days—fans just couldn’t wait
So he started making plans on occupied dates
He squeezed in one little plan but he needed more in between
So he said, “I need a little schedule to help me keep clean”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity or Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 14, 1936</td>
<td>6:30 PM – 8:30 PM</td>
<td>Performance at the Blue Jazz Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 15, 1936</td>
<td>8:00 AM – 10:00 AM, 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM</td>
<td>Filming of “Pennies from Heaven”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 17, 1936</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>Flight to Chicago, then back home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 18, 1936</td>
<td>10:00 AM – 12:45 PM, 2:00 PM – 4:30 PM</td>
<td>Filming of “Pennies from Heaven”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 20, 1936</td>
<td>6:00 PM – 8:00 PM</td>
<td>Performance at Pixy Star Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 23, 1936</td>
<td>9:00 AM – 9:45 AM</td>
<td>Radio Recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 24, 1936</td>
<td>8:00 PM – 10:00 PM</td>
<td>Concert at Northern Pole Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 27, 1936</td>
<td>9:00 AM – 11:45 PM, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM</td>
<td>Filming of “Pennies from Heaven”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 1937</td>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>Flight to Miami and back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the time was near, the crowd began to cheer
The performance was over, no need to shed a tear
If anything people were amazed to see him play,
Especially before he turned old and hair turned grey.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Interviewer: I’m sorry, sir.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Genre #1: My Diary Entry

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

Genre #2: Poem

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

Genre #3: Louis Armstrong Ad

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

Genre #4: Newspaper Article

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

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

Genre #6: Schedule

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

Genre #7: Interview

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

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

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

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

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

This was a great example to my genre "Letter to the Fan." It's an actual letter that Louis Armstrong wrote to a publisher accepting her proposal. This shows how he handled business. It was quite entertaining to see how he wrote in letters. I tried using the same jolly and joking tone when writing the letter to a fan.
This website contained quotes from musicians all over the world. All of these quotes were Louis Armstrong’s. I used the one that said “I never tried to prove nothing, just wanted to give a good show.” I thought that this quote just showed who Armstrong was, what kind of person he was. He was not only being humble and modest, but enjoying what he does. It fit perfectly into one of the song’s beats, so I just had to add it in with my paper.

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

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

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

Learning Targets

• Evaluate genres and plan a multi-genre research project.
• Identify information relevant to a specific research question.

Before Reading

1. To begin a multi-genre research project you must first decide on a topic—a person, event, movement, etc.—of interest to you, compose relevant research questions, and then do research. For the purpose of modeling, suppose you chose the cartoonist Charles Schulz, and that his personal and professional journey toward the American ideal of the “pursuit of happiness” is your central focus.

Develop a research question that can direct and focus your research on Charles Schulz.

During Reading:

2. Read closely and mark the text to identify textual evidence that supports the research question.

Biographical Sketch

Sparky

by Earl Nightingale

1 For Sparky, school was all but impossible. He failed every subject in the eighth grade. He flunked physics in high school, getting a grade of zero. Sparky also flunked Latin, algebra, and English. He didn't do much better in sports. Although he did manage to make the school's golf team, he promptly lost the only important match of the season. There was a consolation match; he lost that, too.

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

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

4 However, one thing was important to Sparky—drawing. He was proud of his artwork. Of course, no one else appreciated it. In his senior year of high school, he submitted some cartoons to the editors of the yearbook. The cartoons were turned down. Despite the particular rejection, Sparky was so convinced of his ability that he decided to become a professional artist.
After completing high school, he wrote a letter to Walt Disney Studios. He was told to send some samples of his artwork, and the subject for a cartoon was suggested. Sparky drew the proposed cartoon. He spent a great deal of time on it and on all the other drawings he submitted.

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

So Sparky decided to write his own autobiography in cartoons. He described his childhood self—a little boy loser and chronic underachiever. The cartoon character would soon become famous worldwide. For Sparky, the boy who had such lack of success in school and whose work was rejected again and again was Charles Schulz. He created the “Peanuts” comic strip and the little cartoon character whose kite would never fly and who never succeeded in kicking a football, Charlie Brown.

After Reading

3. Write your initial thesis statement that responds to the research question below.

4. A multi-genre research project consists of creative pieces—poetry, artwork, letters, diary entries, interviews, conversations, newspaper articles, scripts, speeches, email, obituaries, etc.—imaginative writing based on fact. The multi-genre research project begins with interest in the subject. Coherence is developed along the way as the writer collects information, interprets it, and considers appropriate genres to creatively represent ideas. Use the graphic organizer that follows to record information as you conduct research.
**Topic:** Charles M. Schulz  
**MLA Entry for a Works Cited Page:** “Sparky” by Earl Nightingale  

### Melding Fact, Interpretation, and Imagination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question: How did Charles Schulz overcome obstacles to achieve his pursuit of happiness?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Facts:</th>
<th>Reflection:</th>
<th>Variety of Genres:</th>
<th>Purpose/Rationale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record pertinent information from the source and include page numbers. Be sure to use quotation marks if it is a direct quote.</td>
<td>Question and comment on the facts presented. Imagine the people, the situation, the events surrounding the research facts.</td>
<td>Consider possible genres to convey the facts and a creative response to the question posed or comment posed. What is the best format for this information?</td>
<td>Note ideas for content to contain within the genre.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Melding Facts, Interpretation, and Imagination

Learning Targets
- Analyze multiple research resources to extract significant information.
- Cite sources correctly.
- Explore, record, and interpret information and represent ideas in creative genres.

Before Reading
1. You have read information and taken notes from one secondary source and considered possible genres to transform the information creatively.

During Reading
2. While reading another secondary source, repeat the process of close reading, recording significant information in answer to the research questions and determining possible creative genres that will show Charles Schulz’s journey. Record your thinking in the graphic organizer below.

MLA Entry:

Melding Fact, Interpretation, and Imagination

Research Question:
How did Charles Schulz overcome obstacles to achieve his pursuit of happiness?

<table>
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</table>
CHARLES M. SCHULZ

Biography

from Notable Biographies

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

American Cartoonist

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

Early life

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

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

Creates “Peanuts”

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

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

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

Huge success

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

8 By this time Schulz was famous across the world. Peanuts appeared in over two thousand newspapers. The cartoon branched out into television, and in 1965 the classic special A Charlie Brown Christmas won Peabody and Emmy awards. Many more television specials and Emmys were to follow. An off-Broadway stage production, You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown, was created in 1967 and ran for four years (it was also revived in 1999). Many volumes of Schulz’s work were published in at least nineteen languages, and the success of Peanuts inspired clothes, stationery, toys, games, and other merchandise. Schulz also wrote a book, Why, Charlie Brown, Why? (which became a CBS television special) to help children understand the subject of cancer (his mother had died of cancer in 1943).

9 Besides the previously mentioned awards, Schulz received the Yale Humor Award, 1956; School Bell Award, National Education Association, 1960; and honorary degrees from Anderson College, 1963, and St. Mary’s College of California, 1969. A “Charles M. Schulz Award” honoring comic artists was created by the United Feature Syndicate in 1980.
Later years

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

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

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

After Reading

3. Using one of the research sources you have found, record notes and plans on an organizer like the one below for the third piece of research.

**Topic:** Charles M. Schulz

**MLA Entry for Works Cited Page:**
Check Your Understanding

Use a resource that explains how to document sources using the MLA format and record an example properly citing each of the genres listed below for a Works Cited page.

Book:

Journal:

Internet:

Interview:

Magazine:

Video:

Others:
Learning Targets

- Examine genre conventions and generate drafts that adhere to them.
- Create genres that blend fact and imagination to support the thesis.

Drafting a Thesis

1. Based on your research, collaborate to revise your working thesis about the life and work of Charles Schulz to create focus for the process of composing the body of genres that will make up your group multi-genre research project.

Planning the Project

2. Take notes, share prewriting strategies, and consult additional resources as you consider these guiding questions in planning what information to include and how the genre will best convey the information:
   - Represent ideas: What is important about this information in relation to the thesis focus?
   - Genre conventions: What are the essential features and formats specific to this genre?
   - Purpose and audience: What is the purpose of the text and who is the target audience?
   - Use of language: What stylistic techniques address the purpose and audience?

Drafting the Genre

3. Each group member will select one of the six different genres from your group brainstorm and individually generate a draft incorporating your planning.
Revising the Draft
4. To guide revision, use this peer-response form to respond to the genres shared by your group members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer:</th>
<th>Peer Responders:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area Requested by the Writer:</td>
<td>What Works Well (e.g., ideas, genre conventions, stylistic technique, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the suggestions provided, I will focus my revision on...

In order to move this section forward, what resources/support will I need?
Learning Targets

- Analyze how a sample project creates thematic coherence among different genres.
- Clarify the thematic connections within one’s own texts.

Connecting the Pieces

1. Review the definition of coherence and then make a prediction about the role of coherence in a multi-genre research project.

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

3. With the class, brainstorm a list of possible pathways to link genres in a multi-genre research project.

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

5. As you discuss your three options in your group, use the following focus questions as talking points for planning to use each symbolic link.
   - How does the option work to advance our thesis?
   - How does the option convey meaning to the reader about the topic/theme?
   - How does the option connect the research and ideas to one of the following: topic, event, person, place, etc.?
   - How does the option sequence our ideas to make our assertion and research clear to our readers?
6. Use the Creating Cohesion chart below to organize your discussion points about how one genre connects to the next. Plot your ideas in your Reader/Writer Notebook. Evaluate the effectiveness of your metaphor and revise accordingly.

7. Discuss possibilities for a visual representation of the thematic strand and sketch initial ideas. After considering all options, create a symbolic visual that conveys meaning to potential readers for your thematic strand and collection of genres.
Learning Target

- Understand and apply the elements of an effective organization to the multi-genre research project.

1. Use the table below to organize your presentation of your multi-genre research project. You may also use this chart as a planning guide.

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

Elements of Effective Organization

Writing to Inform—Introduction
- Informative: Explain the relationship between your topic and thesis. Give your reader a context for your topic that addresses the American Dream of “pursuing happiness.”

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

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

Writing to Reflect—Conclusion
- Say: What have I said about the topic?

- Mean: What does this mean in relation to the thematic focus of the multi-genre research project?

- Matter: What is the larger significance of the topic and meaning to life in general?

Check Your Understanding
What did you learn from the research process from this group project? How will you use that information to be successful when you create a multi-genre research project individually?
Assignment
Your assignment is to create a multi-genre research project that expresses your research and perspective on a person, event, or movement that embodies the American ideal of the pursuit of happiness.

Planning: Take time to plan ideas and structure.
• How will you use the research process to be sure you conduct relevant and sufficient research on your chosen topic?
• What prewriting strategy will help you provide a unifying focus for your exploration of a topic related to the ideal of pursuing happiness?
• What sort of creative ways could you connect your different genres with a metaphor or motif (a place, event, person, movement, season, etc.)?
• Which areas of your topic do you feel ready to address, and which require further insight and perhaps additional research using primary or secondary sources?

Drafting: Combine elements to present your ideas.
• How will you sequence your different pieces into a coherent order that helps to express your ideas?
• How can you make sure that all your elements connect to your thesis?
• How will your reflection show how all your texts help to convey your point of view?
• How can a creative title and a visual that symbolically represents your ideas help to create interest from your audience?

Evaluating and Revising: Make your work the best it can be.
• How can you and your peers support each others’ work and provide valuable feedback? How well does your metaphor or motif transition from one element to the next?
• How can you use the Scoring Guide to help guide your revision?

Checking and Editing: Make sure your work is ready for your audience.
• How can you make sure that your project conveys a full message, including a clear position with supporting evidence?
• How will you check for grammatical and technical accuracy throughout your work?

Reflection
After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this assignment, and respond to the following:
• How did taking the time to address the essential question in so many ways help to further develop your own ideas about the pursuit of happiness in contemporary American life?
## SCORING GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
<td>The project • provides an extensive, well-researched project focused on an appropriate topic • includes substantial information about the subject • skillfully uses complex genres that seamlessly integrate in-depth research and ideas to support the thesis.</td>
<td>The project • provides a well-researched project on an appropriate topic. • provides adequate information about the subject • uses different genres that incorporate research and ideas in support of the thesis.</td>
<td>The project • attempts to respond to the project requirements, but with a weak or uneven focus • provides limited information about the subject • uses fewer than six different genres and/or does not incorporate research and ideas in support of the thesis.</td>
<td>The project • does not thoroughly address the task • provides inadequate information about the subject • uses fewer than two different genres and/or does not incorporate research and ideas in support of the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>The project • employs a creative title and symbolic visual that enhance the topic • engages the reader by introducing the subject and using a sophisticated variety of genres presenting information in creative ways • uses a sophisticated metaphor or motif as a transition to move the reader from one genre to the next • provides in-depth reflection that brings closure to the work.</td>
<td>The project • includes an appropriate title with a relevant visual • introduces the topic and provides a variety of genres to present information • uses a transition to move the reader from one genre to the next • provides a sufficient reflection and brings closure to the work.</td>
<td>The project • includes a generic title or visual that does not connect to the ideas presented • introduces the topic and presents some genres • does not adequately move the reader from one genre to the next • attempts to provide a reflection and bring closure to the work.</td>
<td>The project • does not include a title or visual • does not appropriately introduce the topic and/or does not include a sufficient variety of genres • does not attempt to move the reader from one genre to the next • does not provide sufficient reflection and/or bring closure to the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Language</strong></td>
<td>The project • crafts language that is varied and appropriate, depending on each genre • demonstrates solid command of grammar, punctuation, and conventions.</td>
<td>The project • employs language that is appropriate for each genre • demonstrates appropriate use of conventions with some minor errors.</td>
<td>The project • struggles to adapt language to meet the different expectations of each genre • contains some errors in use of conventions that interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>The project • fails to adapt language to meet the different expectations of each genre • is difficult to follow due to extensive errors in grammar, punctuation, and conventions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>