Day 4 ELA Sessions

Attending to Language, Craft and Structure

Grades 4-5
### A Continuum Of Learning: Reading Standards

Reading Standard 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Reading for Literature</th>
<th>Reading for Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area.</td>
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<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.</td>
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## Language Standard 3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

| Grade 4 | a. Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.*  
|         | b. Choose punctuation for effect.*  
|         | c. Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion). |
| Grade 5 | a. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.  
|         | b. Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems. |
| Grade 6 | a. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.*  
|         | b. Maintain consistency in style and tone.*  

The Craft and Structure Standards (4-6)

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<tr>
<th>Standard 4: Vocabulary in Context</th>
<th>Reading Literature</th>
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<th>Standard 5: Analyzing Structure</th>
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<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.</td>
<td>Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.</td>
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<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.</td>
<td>Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.</td>
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<th>Standard 6: Point of View and Purpose</th>
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<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.</td>
<td>Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.</td>
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<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Describe how a narrator’s or speaker’s point of view influences how events are described.</td>
<td>Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.</td>
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Craft and Structure Questions

• Read the texts and answer the questions, thinking about WHAT these questions are generally about (Vocabulary in context? Structure? Point of view or purpose?)

• Code each question with a specific GRADE LEVEL STANDARD (4-6), thinking about what specific characteristics make that question that standard and that grade level.

The Story of Chocolate
by Katie Daynes

1 A thousand years ago, chocolate was a big secret. Only a few people drank it and nobody ate it.

2 The first chocolate drinkers were farmers who lived by the rainforest in Central America.

3 The rainforest was a jungle full of tropical plants, wild animals, and creepy crawlies. It was also home to the small cacao tree that grew strange, bright pods.

4 Monkeys knew all about the pods.

5 They liked to break them open and suck out the sweet, white pulp.

6 Then they spat out the bitter beans that were in the middle. If a bean landed on an earthy patch of forest floor, it grew into another cacao tree.

7 One day, a farmer copied the monkeys and tasted a pod. “Yum!” he cried, sucking the pulp. “Yuck!” he added, spitting out a bean. Soon everyone was sucking pulp and spitting beans.

8 But then, some villagers noticed a delicious smell, drifting up from a pile of rotting beans.

9 Over the next few months, the farmers discovered a way to capture this smell by turning the beans into a drink.

10 They let the beans rot for a few days under banana leaves . . . then put them out to dry in the hot sun.
Next, they roasted the beans over a fire... ground them into a paste... and stirred in water and spices. They called their new drink *chocol haa*. It tasted very bitter, but they liked it.

To avoid hiking into the jungle for pods, the farmers planted cacao trees in their own fields. The farmers were members of a huge group of people called Mayans. Before long, *chocol haa*—or chocolate—was an important part of Mayan life.

Hundreds of years later, the chocolate secret spread, first to a fierce group of Central American people called the Aztecs and then to Spanish explorers who fought and conquered the Aztecs.

The Spanish took the chocolate secret back home to Europe. But they decided the drink tasted better hot and with lots of sugar.

Soon people across Europe were talking about chocolate. But the method of turning cacao beans into chocolate paste hadn’t changed much from Mayan times. It took hard work and a long time. Unless they were rich, most people drank chocolate only as a special treat.

It wasn’t until inventors came up with the steam engine that things changed.

Factories were set up, and suddenly, lots of goods could be made more easily—including chocolate.

Before long, the drink had stopped being just a handmade treat for the rich.

Gradually, chocolate makers discovered ways to turn chocolate paste into solid bars. They learned how to make smooth, creamy milk chocolate.

They began making chocolates in all shapes and sizes.

They mixed chocolate with other scrumptious ingredients.

Today, you can buy chocolates almost anywhere in the world, and they’re nothing like the Mayans’ bitter drink.

When the Mayans first caught a whiff of roting cacao beans, they knew they had found something exciting. But they had no idea how popular chocolate would become.

Mayan Chocolate

Want to know what spicy Mayan chocolate tasted like?

Stir \( \frac{1}{2} \) teaspoon of cinnamon and a pinch of cloves or chili powder into a cup of hot chocolate or chocolate milk.

How does the author organize this article?

A by showing the effects of chocolate on people around the world
B by comparing and contrasting different ways of eating chocolate
C by describing events connected to chocolate in the order they happened
D by presenting the problem with making chocolate and then giving the solution
Yasmeen’s Turn
by Carol Fraser Hagen

Yasmeen squirmed at her desk. She felt sweat beads forming along her neck.

Mrs. Cross, Yasmeen’s third grade teacher, announced, “Boys and girls, you have been learning about world customs. Be ready to share one of your family’s customs, tomorrow.”

After school, Yasmeen dragged her backpack along, thinking about the day’s assignment. “I’m the only Indian student in my class,” she thought, “what will everyone think about my family’s customs?”

At home, Yasmeen moped through the kitchen door. Her heart fluttered when she saw her amma, her mother, busily crushing henna leaves.

“How was school today?” her amma asked, in her soft Indian accent.

“Fine,” Yasmeen said. She dropped her backpack and slid into a kitchen chair.

“Ready for Eid-ul-Fitr tonight?” Amma smiled.

Yasmeen shrugged. Normally, she’d be tickled with excitement inside when her aunts, uncles and cousins came to celebrate the end of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic year. This holy month is observed with prayers and fasting during daylight hours.

Yasmeen slid down further in her seat. She twirled a strand of her long hair around her finger, while Amma crushed more leaves into a powder. “What am I going to share tomorrow?” Yasmeen wondered.

Later, Yasmeen explored the house, trying to find an idea for her assignment. She found her abba’s Koran. She flipped through the worn pages of her father’s leather-bound book. Maybe I’ll take this to school, she thought.

But then she shook her head. The Koran isn’t a custom. She carefully laid down the holy book. Anyway, Abba would never let me take it to school.

A beautiful salwar kameez hung on Amma’s bedroom door. Salwar kameez is a long-sleeved shirt and baggy pants, with a thin, silky shawl. All three are ornately decorated with sparkling beads, sequins and colorful embroidery, in a variety of colors. The colorful sequins and beads on Amma’s dress and shawl glistened. Tonight, Amma would wear her new dress to the party.

Maybe I’ll wear my salwar kameez to school. Wrong! Everybody might laugh at me. Tears filled Yasmeen’s deep brown eyes as she tried to figure out what to share.

Yasmeen walked into the kitchen. Leaning in the doorway, she wiped a tear from her cheek.
She watched Amma stir henna powder into a smooth paste, adding lemon juice and tamarind water. Amma then filled cones with the henna paste, to be used at the party.

Yasmeen coiled her hair around her pinkie. I’ll ask Tahira. She’ll know what I can share, she thought.

“I have to share a family custom tomorrow,” Yasmeen said, peeking into her older sister’s bedroom. Her eyes explored the top of Tahira’s dresser. It overflowed with sparkling earrings and necklaces. Mixed among the other jewelry, golden bangles shimmered.

“Show some jewelry,” Tahira suggested, jangling several shiny bangles on her wrist.

“I guess,” Yasmeen said, tugging at strands of her hair. “Except, everybody wears jewelry.”

That night at the party the aroma of herbs from the henna filled the living room. All the girls and ladies in their glittering dresses gathered around the sofa to visit and have their hands painted with mehndi (henna paste).

It was Yasmeen’s turn. With a cone of henna paste, Amma painted tiny flowers, paisley designs, and intricate patterns on Yasmeen’s hands.

Seconds later, Yasmeen sat straight up. “That’s it,” she blurted out, “Mehndi!”

At school the next day, Yasmeen waited for her turn to share. Her face didn’t blush. She didn’t even feel hot. I’m not nervous anymore, she thought. With a wide smile, Yasmeen stood before the class.

“On special Muslim holidays,” Yasmeen explained, “it’s an Indian tradition to paint women’s hands with intricate mehndi designs. Last night, my mother painted my hands.” Yasmeen proudly displayed the delicate curly cues, tiny flowers, and paisley patterns on her hands. Yasmeen also held up a bowl of crushed henna leaves and a henna-filled cone, for the class to see. Yasmeen then described how her mother prepared henna paste.

“Could you paint a mehndi design on my hand?” Mrs. Cross asked.

Yasmeen felt herself gasp at Mrs. Cross’s question. Her mouth opened and stayed open as classmates held out their hands. “Me, too! Will you draw on my hands, too?”

“And mine!”

“Mine, too!”

Yasmeen’s feet danced her home, her hands waving in the air to lead the way. The spicy scent of tamarind and henna filled her nose. “Amma! Amma! You will never believe what happened today.”
In paragraph 3, what does the phrase “dragged her backpack along” suggest about Yasmeen?

A  She is nervous about the upcoming holiday.
B  She treats her possessions carelessly.
C  She is in an unhappy mood.
D  She carries heavy books.

What is the most important way that paragraphs 13 and 14 develop the story?

A  They show the process of making henna paste.
B  They provide additional details about the setting.
C  They present a hint about how the problem will be solved.
D  They provide information about the characters’ appearance.

In paragraph 25, the narrator explains that Yasmeen “felt herself gasp” to show that Yasmeen feels

A  surprised by the teacher’s response
B  nervous about what will happen next
C  confused by her classmates’ requests
D  afraid to tell her parents about what happened
Sarah's grandfather is a retired marine biologist. Today he and Sarah are going to release a tiger shark that is tied to the side of the boat.

Excerpt from
Swimming with Sharks
by Twig C. George

1 “You're serious, aren't you?” Sarah asked. “What will happen?”

2 “If we're lucky, he'll stay around long enough for us to get in and watch him leave.” He watched his granddaughter closely. Joe Santos had been swimming with sharks for many years as part of his work. He had never felt he was in any danger. But he was no fool and knew there were always risks when you were near any wild animal. And sharks were not just “any animal.”

3 Sarah looked carefully at the shark again. She knew from her grandfather that the stories about sharks as killers who ate anything in their path were wrong. She knew it, but she wasn't sure she really believed it.

4 Sarah felt so . . . bare and . . . unprotected next to the shark with all his senses, his knifelike teeth and his rough, thick skin. Then again, this was a chance to get closer to a tiger shark than almost any other person in the entire world! And he was a big tiger shark at that! She looked at her grandfather. He knew more than anyone about sharks. He would never put her in danger. Well, not dangerous danger.

5 “I'll get ready,” said Sarah, scared but determined. “I have my snorkeling things in my bag.” Her grandfather flashed her another rare smile. Immediately he was back to business.

6 “This is what we'll do,” he said in his matter-of-fact voice. “I'll take out the hook. Then I'll release the rope on his tail and get in the water. You slip off the back of the boat behind me. If the shark comes toward us, just stay calm and don't wave your hands or feet in front of him. He's tired now and won't bother us if we move
slowly. It's perfectly natural for you to be scared. You need to pay attention to those feelings. If you feel you need to get out, slowly take off your flippers and use the step on the back of the boat. I'll help you. It's better to leave than to panic. All set?"

7  
“Yes, Granddad,” Sarah croaked. She was excited and scared. Her insides felt queasy.

8  He released the shark and slid after it into the water. Still aboard the boat, Sarah was shaking. Her arms and legs felt weak. As she looked at the water, her teeth started to chatter. Sarah thought about all the times she had worried about sharks when she dove off a boat or through a wave. Now she knew a shark was below her. A big shark. The kind of shark that many people called a “floating garbage pit” because it could eat almost anything—nails, boards, people, you name it.

9  Sarah shook her head and looked down. Granddad was in the water and the “garbage pit” hadn't eaten him.

10  “Come now or he'll be gone,” her grandfather urged quietly.

11  Sarah was ready. She slipped off the back of the boat behind him. All of her experience swimming in the bay paid off—she hardly made a ripple. Reaching out, she grabbed her grandfather’s hand. They floated on the ocean surface, bobbing up and down in the waves.

12  The tiger shark rested on the bottom not ten feet from them. In an effort to forget how scared she was, Sarah tried to imagine how it would feel to be the shark. The lateral lines that ran down her sides would feel pressure and vibrations around her—like reaching out with long, invisible hands. She would feel the two people above. She would feel the boat and the reef ahead of her. She would see clearly the world around her. She would smell the scents of the sea and perhaps wonder in some sharklike way at the scent of the humans above her. She would hear the waves slapping against the boat and the fish nibbling on the coral.

13  Sarah watched as the shark’s gills pumped and his eyes focused. His specialized pores tuned in to the Earth’s magnetic fields. The big tiger shark took in all the information he could using each of his senses. Then he located himself on the planet and slowly moved toward deeper water.

14  Sarah was no longer scared. The shark's behavior hadn't frightened her. When her grandfather signaled that they should follow the shark, she swam forward fearlessly.

15  After a few minutes the shark's movements quickened. Sarah and her grandfather stopped at a respectful distance. An instant later the giant that had seemed to fill the sea was gone. He had vanished. There was nothing left but the brilliant blue water of Florida Bay as far as they could see.
How does paragraph 5 relate to paragraph 4?

A  Paragraph 5 explains why Sarah feels helpless in paragraph 4.
B  Paragraph 5 shows how Sarah is brave even though she is afraid in paragraph 4.
C  Paragraph 5 explains why the grandfather is concerned about Sarah in paragraph 4.
D  Paragraph 5 reveals how the grandfather keeps Sarah out of the danger described in paragraph 4.

In paragraph 7, the word “croaked” shows that Sarah

A  does not want the shark to notice her
B  does not want to scare the shark away
C  has difficulty getting the words out
D  wants to hide her feelings

How does paragraph 12 contribute to the rest of the story?

A  It shows the reason for the change in a character.
B  It gives important details about the story’s setting.
C  It gives new details about the shark’s condition.
D  It shows why people are able to get close to sharks.
The California Gold Rush started in 1848 after gold was first found near Sacramento, California. It lasted through 1855. Many prospectors, or people hoping to become wealthy by finding gold, made the trip. These prospectors were also called forty-niners because so many of them came to California in 1849.

Rushing West

by Joan Holub

1. There were three main ways to get to California from the eastern United States. Each way was hard and dangerous. In 1848 and 1849, about forty-one thousand people went by sea in 697 ships. About forty-eight thousand went overland.

2. Going overland was the cheapest way. To stay safe, travelers formed groups called wagon trains. Trails were rugged, so wagons pulled by oxen went slowly. If you walked, you could keep up with the wagons. But your shoes wore out fast, and your feet would get awfully sore.

3. Wagons crossed rivers, prairies, deserts, and steep mountains on the trip. West of Ohio, the country was mostly unsettled. There were no people or houses for many miles around.

4. It took seven months to get to California from East Coast cities such as New York. Two other major starting points were the Missouri cities of St. Joseph and Independence. From the Midwest, the trip was two thousand miles long and took five months. The Oregon, California, and Santa Fe Trails were the most popular wagon routes to the West.
Most overland travelers made it to California if they stayed on schedule. They had to leave Missouri by the end of April in order to make it through the Sierra Nevada mountains before winter came. Otherwise, they might get trapped in the snow.

Many “overlanders” faced plenty of problems. Like accidents and snakebites. Or running out of food and water. Or broken wagons and injured oxen. Cholera was caused by drinking water polluted by bacteria. It killed 1,500 travelers in 1849.

Prospectors who could afford it went to California by sea. They paid fares of $200 to $1,000. Going by ship was faster than traveling by wagon train.

There were two main sea routes from the East Coast. Both usually sailed southward on the Atlantic Ocean from New York or Boston.

The longer route went around Cape Horn. That’s at the southern tip of South America. From there, ships sailed north on the Pacific Ocean to San Francisco. This route was almost 15,000 miles long. It usually took five or six months to complete the journey. Fast clipper ships like the Flying Cloud could make the trip in three months. But there weren’t enough of them to take everyone who wanted to go.

The shorter sea route (only 5,300 miles) went down the Atlantic coastline only as far as the Isthmus of Panama. The isthmus was a fifty-mile-wide strip of land connecting North America and South America. The east coast of Panama is on the Atlantic Ocean. Its west coast is on the Pacific.

At the isthmus, passengers got off their ships. They went forty miles up Panama’s Chagres River in wooden canoes. Then, they traveled on mules through a jungle to Panama City on the Pacific side. There were wild animals such as crocodiles and monkeys in the jungle. Panama is near the equator. It was hot and humid. Some travelers caught diseases such as malaria and yellow fever from mosquitoes.
If all went well, the trip across the isthmus took only six weeks. However, prospectors might have to wait weeks in Panama City before a ship would arrive that was bound for San Francisco.

Today, traveling by ship often means enjoying a floating vacation. But life aboard a ship in the 1840s and 1850s was very different. The food had bugs and mold. The drinking water wasn’t always clean. Sometimes ships ran out of both before the trip was over. There were rats on board. If passengers were injured or sick, they were on their own. There might not be a doctor to help them. There were terrible storms, especially near Cape Horn. Some ships sank.

Still, ships left for California almost every day in 1849. Shipping companies advertised all around the world for passengers. This fueled gold fever in faraway places such as China, Australia, and Europe. But the ads didn’t mention the problems passengers would face on the voyage.

Many prospectors kept diaries and sent letters home. A man named S. Shufelt, who sailed from New York to California in 1849, wrote in a letter to his cousin, “I have left those that I love as my own life behind & risked every thing and endured many hardships to get here, & I want to make enough to live easier & do some good with, before I return.”

Like all forty-niners, he hoped his struggles would pay off. In gold!

Why is the letter included in paragraph 15 of “Rushing West”? Use two details from the article to support your response.
Tom is spending the summer on his aunt and uncle's farm. He misses his friend Petie, so he writes letters to Petie describing events on the farm.

Excerpt from *The Midnight Fox*

by Betsy Byars

1 I had just finished writing this letter and was waiting for a minute to see if I would think of anything to add when I looked up and saw the black fox.

2 I did not believe it for a minute. It was like my eyes were playing a trick or something, because I was just sort of staring across this field, thinking about my letter, and then in the distance, where the grass was very green, I saw a fox leaping over the crest of the field. The grass moved and the fox sprang toward the movement, and then, seeing that it was just the wind that had caused the grass to move, she ran straight for the grove of trees where I was sitting.

3 It was so great that I wanted it to start over again, like you can turn movie film back and see yourself repeat some fine thing you have done, and I wanted to see the fox leaping over the grass again. In all my life I have never been so excited.

4 I did not move at all, but I could hear the paper in my hand shaking, and my heart seemed to have moved up in my body and got stuck in my throat.

5 The fox came straight toward the grove of trees. She wasn't afraid, and I knew she had not seen me against the tree. I stayed absolutely still even though I felt like jumping up and screaming, "Aunt Millie! Uncle Fred! Come see this. It's a fox, a fox!"

6 Her steps as she crossed the field were lighter and quicker than a cat's. As she came closer I could see that her black fur was tipped with white. It was as if it were midnight and the moon were shining on her fur, frosting it. The wind parted her fur as it changed directions. Suddenly she stopped. She was ten feet away now, and with the changing of the wind she had got my scent. She looked right at me.

7 I did not move for a moment and neither did she. Her head was cocked to one side, her tail curled up, her front left foot raised. In all my life I never saw anything like that fox standing there with her pale golden eyes on me and this great black fur being blown by the wind.

8 Suddenly her nose quivered. It was such a slight movement I almost didn't see it, and then her mouth opened and I could see the pink tip of her tongue. She turned. She still was not afraid, but with a bound that was lighter than the wind—it was as if she was being blown away over the field—she was gone.
Still I didn't move. I couldn't. I couldn't believe that I had really seen the fox.

I had seen foxes before in zoos, but I was always in such a great hurry to get on to the good stuff that I was saying stupid things like, "I want to see the go-rillillas," and not once had I ever really looked at a fox. Still, I could never remember seeing a black fox, not even in a zoo.

Also, there was a great deal of difference between seeing an animal in the zoo in front of painted fake rocks and trees and seeing one natural and free in the woods. It was like seeing a kite on the floor and then, later, seeing one up in the sky where it was supposed to be, pulling at the wind.

I started to pick up my pencil and write as quickly as I could, "P.S. Today I saw a black fox." But I didn't. This was the most exciting thing that had happened to me, and "P.S. Today I saw a black fox" made it nothing. "So what else is happening?" Petie Burkis would probably write back. I folded my letter, put it in an envelope, and sat there.

I thought about this old newspaper that my dad had had in his desk drawer for years. It was orange and the headline was just one word, very big, the letters about twelve inches high. WAR! And I mean it was awesome to see that word like that, because you knew it was a word that was going to change your whole life, the whole world even. And every time I would see that newspaper, even though I wasn't even born when it was printed, I couldn't say anything for a minute or two.

Well, this was the way I felt right then about the black fox. I thought about a newspaper with just one word for a headline, very big, very black letters, twelve inches high. FOX! And even that did not show how awesome it had really been to me.

How are paragraphs 2 through 6 important to the structure of the story?

A They describe the setting and the main characters.

B They describe an event that is later repeated.

C They explain why the fox is in the field.

D They introduce a problem into the plot.
Two Days With No Phone
by Sarah Jane Brian

Experts worry that teen texting is out of control. Could you give up your phone for 48 hours? Our brave volunteers did.

Instead of sleeping, Kenny Alarcon, 16, often texts with his friends through the night. “You get an urge,” explains the teen, who lives in the Bronx in New York City. “When I get a text, I’m itching to respond to it even if I want to sleep.”

Franchesca Garcia, a high school senior from Providence, Rhode Island, has also felt the need to stay constantly connected. We asked how many texts she sent and received each day. “I don’t know . . . maybe 1,000?” she answered. “It’s too many to count.”

It probably won’t surprise you that teens are texting more than ever before. Some experts are worried about how all that texting is affecting teenagers’ lives.

Teens in Trouble?

One concern is that students might not learn correct grammar and spelling if most of the writing they do is made up of text messages. Some people also worry that because teens text so much, they don’t spend enough time talking with others face-to-face. That could be hurting their relationships with friends and family.

Plus, all that texting (and time on social media) takes away from hours that could be spent studying, exercising, pursuing a hobby, or just relaxing.

Dr. Elizabeth Dowdell is a professor at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. She says that many people expect to be able to access anyone or to be accessed by anyone at any time. “It’s very appealing, especially to a middle or high school student,” she explains. “The problem is, there’s no downtime.” And people need downtime—especially when it comes to sleep.

Sleep Texting

Both Franchesca and Kenny told us that they wake up several times during the night to text. Kenny even sleeps with his phone beneath his pillow.

Dr. Dowdell says that it’s common for teens’ sleep to be interrupted by texts. Sometimes teens even send texts filled with nonsense words when they don’t wake up all the way. She has been studying this trend, which she calls “sleep texting.”
Why is sleep texting a problem? "Adolescents need a solid 8, 10, even 11 hours of sleep to really function and to think clearly," reports Dr. Dowell. If they regularly lose sleep, she adds, teens may start having trouble in school. They may become grumpy, angry, or depressed. A lack of sleep can lead to weight gain and even obesity. That's because many people turn to junk food for quick energy when they are tired.

The 48-Hour Challenge

According to Dr. Dowell, teens need to learn that they can—and should—turn off their phones sometimes. So we decided to have Kenny and Franchesca do an experiment.

These were the rules: No phone for 48 hours. No computer or Internet either, unless it was for schoolwork. No Twitter, no Instagram.

Would these two teenagers be able to do it?

"I think I'm going to feel really isolated," Kenny worried. Franchesca was nervous but brave. "I'm excited for the challenge," she said. "I don't know what's going to happen."

Kenny and Franchesca handed their phones to their mothers for safekeeping. The challenge was on.

The Results

We caught up with Kenny and Franchesca after 48 phone-free hours. "Wow, it was pure torture," Kenny joked. But though life with no phone wasn't easy, he admitted "it had benefits."

Sure, Kenny missed his friends, and he was sad at times. But he also felt relief from the constant texting. "Sometimes it's teenager drama, people gossiping," he explained. "I felt less stressed because I didn't have to be involved."

Instead of texting, Kenny went to the gym and caught up on schoolwork. The first night, he told us, "I slept for 18 hours!" He also spent time sitting with his family and talking. Kenny's mom helped him with homework for the first time in two years. Said Kenny, "I felt closer to my parents."

Franchesca had an even happier result when she put away her phone. "I loved it!" she said. "I was going to the gym and hanging out with friends and playing basketball. I had a wonderful experience." She slept better too.

Franchesca decided to continue the experiment for a while. "I think I'll be so much smarter and healthier," she explained. "Everybody in the world should try it."

Kenny doesn't plan to give up his phone again. But he now knows that he can live without it. Said the teen, "It was a reality check."

How does the author organize paragraphs 15 through 20?

A by describing the events of the experiment in the order that they happened
B by explaining the goals and directions of the experiment
C by showing the reasons for doing the experiment with the two teens
D by comparing the effects that the experiment had on the two teens
## Inside the Reading Brain, Part 2

**Question**

How are paragraphs 2 through 6 important to the structure of the story?

| A | They describe the setting and the main characters. |
| B | They describe an event that is later repeated. |
| C | They explain why the fox is in the field. |
| D | They introduce a problem into the plot. |

**What Does a Student Need to Know and Be Able to Do?**
Rebecca Skloot

Rebecca Skloot needs little introduction to most readers of The Open Notebook: Her book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* has been a bestseller since its publication in February 2010, and she has toured the U.S. and Europe almost constantly since then talking about the book and the many issues of race, science, and privacy it raises. She’s also been interviewed many times as well. Here she talks with TON guest contributor David Dobbs about two particularly writerly issues the book raises: structure, and the use of the writer as character:

You’ve been interviewed to death about this book, so I’ll limit this to two areas readers of *The Open Notebook* might be interested in: one is structure and the other is your decision to put yourself in the book and how you handled that.

That’s good. I honestly think that structure is one of the most important tools in writing, yet it’s not something that people often pick apart and really get obsessed with.

Did you carry your concern about structure into this project, or was it something you developed as you wrestled with it?

No, I came to the book already fixated on structure. I did my MFA in nonfiction at the University of Pittsburgh, and Lee Gutkind, who was one of my professors there, taught a readings class where he constantly harped on structure. Every class, the first exercise we had to do with every piece we read was map out the structure. The first day of class we read an essay in class and his first question when we were done was, “What’s the structure of this piece?” We had no idea what he meant. And he wouldn’t tell us. He would just push us and push us, and people would randomly guess things … They’d say, “It’s a profile.” He’d say, “No, that’s not a structure.”

Eventually it clicked for me when he walked me line-by-line through a piece he’d written and said, See how the piece starts here, then goes back in time here, then forward in time here, but always comes back to that same story I started with, which is actually in chronological order? The story was about a veterinarian facing tough decisions about whether to euthanize various animals; it did jump around in time a lot, and included sections of exposition, or facts—like the history of the field, or whatever—that weren’t part of the narrative, but when you pulled the essay apart it became clear that the structure was just a day in the life of this vet going from one patient to the next. From that point on, I started obsessively mapping out the structures of everything I read. When I started teaching I made my students do the same thing. Any student who has ever studied with me would think, “Ugh. Structure, structure, structure; that’s all she talked about.” My philosophy is, once you understand what structure is, then you can talk about characters and narrative arcs and how to fill in the story. But for me, structure can just completely make or break something.

What are some key teaching pieces you used?

I always use John McPhee’s “Travels in Georgia” because it’s such a brilliant structure. Once you figure it out, it’s so basic. But it’s really hard to see it at first. When you say to people, “Read this thing and tell me how it’s structured,” they just can’t. But once you really pick it apart you see he starts in the middle of the story, then he goes forward for a while, then loops back around so by the middle of the piece you’re back at the point where you started, then you continue forward. He’s so subtle and graceful with the structure that few readers even realize they’ve looped back around to the point where the story started because he doesn’t hit you over the head with it. He calls it the lowercase e structure, and once you learn to recognize it you see it everywhere—in so many great stories, books, movies.
Are there other writers or books who have been particular models for you, structure-wise?

When I was working on my book, I knew very early on that I wanted it to be a disjointed structure that told multiple stories at once and jumped around in time between different characters. If you learn the story of the HeLa cells by itself, it’s a very different story than if you learn it alongside the story of what happened to Henrietta and her family as a result of those cells. Each story takes on a different weight when you learn them at the same time.

Plus, if I had just told the story from the beginning—“Henrietta Lacks was born … blah, blah, blah”—nobody would have known why they should care who Henrietta was. Then Deborah, Henrietta’s daughter, would have appeared about halfway through the book and the focus of the story would have suddenly shifted completely to her, since she’s really the main character of the book in many ways. Then a few hundred pages later I would have appeared as a character out of nowhere. It would have all been very disjointed and disorienting and wouldn’t have worked.

The other thing I knew was that I wanted my book to read like a novel but be entirely true. That to me is the definition of Creative Nonfiction. So instead of reading nonfiction books as models, I turned to fiction. As soon as I realized I had to structure the book in a disjointed way, I went to a local bookseller, explained the story to her and said, Find me any novel you can find that takes place in multiple time periods, with multiple characters and voices, and jumps around a lot. So she did. Some of the most helpful books early on for me were Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café, by Fannie Flagg; Love Medicine, by Louise Erdrich; As I Lay Dying, by William Faulkner; Home at the End of the World and The Hours, by Michael Cunningham. I read a long list of similarly structured novels that all proved helpful in some way or another: The Grass Dancer, by Susan Power; How to Make an American Quilt, by Whitney Otto; Oral History, by Lee Smith. I also read a lot of important African American authors to immerse myself in their voices, cultures, history: Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Maya Angelou, Alex Haley, Ida B. Wells, W.E.B. Du Bois, Toni Morrison, Edward P. Jones, Albert French …it’s a long list.

In a way you have to claim the right to do certain things fairly early in a book, or you can’t do it. In this case you had to claim the right to go backward and forward in time. You wait a while to get you in there—you don’t appear until page 67. But that’s early enough.

Right. This relates to the famous line from Checkov: “If in Act I you have a pistol hanging on the wall, then it must fire in the last act.” You need to set the reader up early for the story that follows while not introducing extraneous stuff that isn’t related to the plot.

In this case, since I knew the book was going to be a braid of three narratives (the story of me and Deborah; the story of Henrietta and the cells; and the story of Henrietta’s family), I needed to introduce all three strands of the braid up front, so I wouldn’t lose readers later. Doing that lets readers know what to expect and gives you license to play with the structure and timeline because you’ve prepared them for it. I spent a lot of time working and re-working how I’d handle introducing all three stories up front since there were so many things to squeeze in.

How do you get all those into the beginning of the book?

In a way there are three beginnings to this book because there are three different narratives. The prologue introduces the “me” side of the narrative where I write in first person. Then right after that I have that one little page in Deborah’s voice, to get her firmly in there. I struggled with that. I knew she had to be in the beginning of the book so you’d know she was going to be a main, strong character. I made countless attempts at that using different scenes from late in the story (for a while the book started with the scene of her seeing her mother’s cells for the first time, which is now part of the climax of the book in the third section). But none of that worked because it detracted too much from the real beginning: the moment Henrietta walks into the hospital for the first time in 1951. Eventually I realized readers just need to hear Deborah’s voice enough at the start to know there’s something big coming from this person later on that we’ll come back to.
Back to the larger structure. You start at 1950, and you pop back to 1920, and then essentially you come back to mid-century, end of century, mid-century, end of century, mid-century, end of century. And you progressively spend more time around 2000, and at a certain point it becomes more the story of you and Deborah, once you have the backstory established. How did you plot these time shifts?

I actually mapped it all out with index cards. The one chronological story that goes throughout the book is the story of me and Deborah. That’s totally chronological, never jumps around in time. Having one chronological story helped anchor the structure so I could jump around with the other stories more, because you always came back to that one straightforward narrative.

As I said earlier, I saw the structure of the book as a braid, with three stories that wove and wove and wove. But at a certain point the three strands of the braid became one and the narrative was just a straightforward chronological story from that point. That happens on page 231 with the sentence, “That reporter was me.” That’s the moment that all three of the narratives come together, and then it becomes just one. There’s no jumping back in time after that.

**The story of you and Deborah is the one with the most classic narrative tension—there’s a suspense about what will happen.**

It’s a road-trip—a journey where everybody gets transformed. I thought a lot about that element of narrative tension and how structure can help build the suspense. I learned quite a bit about that from novels, but even more so from movies. My boyfriend is an actor, writer, and director, and he started saying, “You should be watching movies because this jumping-around structure is one of the most standard movie structures.”

So I started watching a lot of movies structured like that and eventually found my way to “Hurricane,” about Hurricane Carter, the boxer. As I was watching it, I just freaked out because after the first few scenes I realized, *Oh my God, this is the structure of my book.* Three narratives braided together, a journey, etc. So I story-boarded that whole movie frame-by-frame on color-coded index cards (one color per narrative thread). I’d already mapped my own book out using the same three-colored index card scheme, and I’d mapped out a structure, but it wasn’t working. After I mapped out “Hurricane” I spread the cards out on a bed and put my book’s index cards on top of them, lining up the colors, to see how the film was braiding differently than I was. I immediately realized the problem with my structure was that it didn’t move around in time fast enough. That was the big lesson I learned from movies: that to make this kind of structure work, it has to move quickly. You can’t linger too long in any one time period or you lose the momentum of the other two.

**How many designs did you try but throw out?**

Oh man … From the very first version I wrote to the first version I considered a first draft, I probably went through easily 15 different structures. And that doesn’t count the many times I revised it after that: I’m a heavy re-writer. Once I had a first draft done, I rewrote it completely at least six times before my editor had to pry it out of my hands. I could have kept rewriting it forever. There isn’t a single paragraph from the first draft that made it into the final book without being rewritten. I’d bet money that there isn’t a single sentence from the first draft in the finished book.

**This will give comfort to others who are struggling.**
Graphic Organizer Reflecting Text Structure
Writing Prompt:
Based on your knowledge and the text you have reread, write a paragraph that describes the qualities of someone who takes a stand.
## Analyzing a Craft and Structure Lesson (Grade Level ____, Name of Lesson ________________)

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<td>How is the lesson framed for students?</td>
<td>What are the specific questions students are asked?</td>
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Standards Institute

Day 4 ELA Grades 4-5

28
Lessons as Models

To get a sense of Craft and Structure Lessons, refer to unbounded.org:

- Grade 4 Module 4 Unit 1 Lesson 5: Rereading and Summarizing "Order in the Court..."
- Grade 4 Module 4 Unit 1 Lesson 8: Comparing Firsthand and Secondhand Accounts...
- Grade 4 Module 4 Unit 3 Lesson 3: How Text Structures Support Ideas

- Grade 4, Module 3B, “Considering Perspectives and Supporting Opinions: Perspectives on the American Revolution.”
  - Unit 1: Lessons 7,8,9
  - Unit 2: Lessons 1,2,4
  - Unit 3: Lessons 1,2,3

- Grade 5, Module 1, “Becoming a Close Reader and Writing to Learn: Stories of Human Rights”
  - Unit 1: Lessons 2,3,4,9
  - Unit 2: Lessons 6,7,13
  - Unit 3: Lessons 2,6,7
### Optional Lesson Planning Template

#### Lesson Name

#### Lesson Time

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**Description:**

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**Text:**

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