

**USING DEPICTIONS OF CHARACTERS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM  
DISORDER IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM**

by

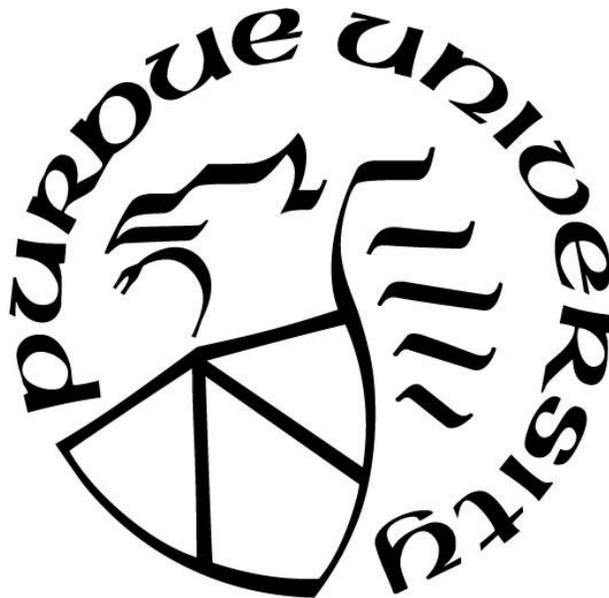
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*Dedicated to my supportive husband, Kenny  
and to all teachers everywhere who wish to make a difference.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF INITIALISMS.....	7
ABSTRACT.....	8
USING DEPICTIONS OF CHARACTERS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM.....	9
Introduction and Background.....	9
Literature Review.....	12
Acceptance and Rejection of Peers.....	12
The Influence of an Inclusive Curriculum.....	13
Vygotsky’s ZPD.....	15
Importance of Literature Circles.....	17
SELECTION OF YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE TEXTS.....	19
Wild Orchid by Beverley Brenna -- 1115L (approx.).....	19
Rain Reign by Ann M. Martin -- 830L.....	20
The Fog Within by Nick Shamhart -- 990L (approx.).....	21
House Rules by Jodi Picoult -- 880L.....	21
UNIT PLAN.....	23
Unit Overview.....	25
Lesson Plans.....	27
Differentiation Guide.....	47
NEXT STEPS.....	48
APPENDIX A. Pre/Post Reading Survey.....	49
APPENDIX B. LITERATURE CIRCLE ROLES.....	50
APPENDIX C. WHAT IS AUTISM WORKSHEET.....	54
APPENDIX D. FINAL PAPER ASSIGNMENT SHEET.....	55
APPENDIX E. FINAL PAPER RURIC.....	56
APPENDIX E. FINAL PAPER OUTLINE.....	57
APPENDIX F. WRITING A THESIS WORKHOP.....	58
APPENDIX G. PEER REVIEW WORKSHEET.....	60
APPENDIX H. ANNOTATING HELPSHEET.....	61

APPENDIX I. STORY ARC WORKSHEET ..... 62  
APPENDIX J. THEME WORKSHEET..... 63  
APPENDIX K. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET ..... 64  
REFERENCES ..... 65

## LIST OF INITIALISMS

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
APA	American Psychiatric Association
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CDC	Center for Disease Control
ELA	English Language Arts
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Education
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
LL/#L	Lexile Level
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MMR	Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (Vaccine)
YAL	Young Adult Literature

## **ABSTRACT**

Autism Spectrum Disorder is an increasingly common developmental disability. Students diagnosed with ASD can be challenging to incorporate into mainstream classrooms due to a lack of understanding and negative attitudes of neurotypical peers towards those students. This thesis aims to address the problem in a unit plan centered on the use of young adult literature with a main protagonist on the Spectrum in the English Language Arts classroom. Specifically, it argues the use of such texts in conjunction with a literature circles unit in providing better understanding and greater acceptance of students with ASD. The unit and lesson plans were written to reflect how Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, Bishop's windows, doors, and mirrors, and the texts students read can influence their thinking and behavior. Using goodreads and local ELA book lists, I selected four YAL texts which portrayed the main character with ASD as they go about their daily lives. These texts were then incorporated into the twenty-lesson unit plan which aims at supporting positive attitudes and acceptance of neurotypical students towards their peers with ASD.

# **USING DEPICTIONS OF CHARACTERS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM**

## **Introduction and Background**

One of the challenges of teaching is learning how to incorporate differences in the classroom. Race, language, country of origin, ability level, and gender, as well as many other traits, all come into play. However, of the many areas discussed in teaching equitably, through my experience I have found disabilities to be the least discussed among them. As educators, we seek to be equitable in the classroom and in our curriculum; however, as disabilities are diagnosed with increasing frequency, our classrooms will play host to a widening range of ability levels. While the term “disability” might evoke an image of the physical, we cannot forget to include developmental. This is perhaps the most difficult to accept and integrate into the classroom due to the social nature involved: simply put, we as human beings gravitate towards others with whom we can easily interact with, and a developmental disability inhibits that interaction. One of these increasingly diagnosed developmental disabilities is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

With 1 in 54 children being identified each year (CDC, n.d. -a), the number of students with ASD is steadily growing. With that growth, people with Autism have been misunderstood as the prevalence of ASD and how it’s diagnosed has been convoluted. Having grown up with adoptive cousins diagnosed with ASD, and having worked as a paraprofessional in primary and secondary schools in general education classrooms, I was able to witness firsthand the social and educational difficulties that come with the diagnosis, even given all the legal and educational supports in place. While some of these difficulties are inherent in ASD and its accompanying learning disabilities, many of the challenges of ASD come with the social implications stemming from the larger culture. While there is a better understanding among educators and medical professionals in terms of people diagnosed with ASD, the misconceptions of ASD, vaccines, and the social-centric nature of the diagnosis has negatively influenced the perceptions of much of the general population about people with ASD, which in turn has negatively influenced the perceptions normative children and youth have about their ASD diagnosed peers, leading to neurotypical people misunderstanding and rejecting their ASD diagnosed peers.

The history of ASD is a complex one, showcasing how scientific misinformation can influence public opinion, creating controversy lasting for decades. Doctor Wakefield published an

article in 1998, falsely claiming that the MMR vaccine caused Autism (Quick & Larsen, 2018; Writers, 2020). His claim sparked a public concern about the link between vaccines and Autism. However, multiple studies have shown that there is no link between the two (CDC, n.d. -c). In addition to the now retracted research by the former Doctor Wakefield (whose license has been revoked due to his false claims), the timing of the diagnosis of Autism is of some concern. Children are typically diagnosed between 18 and 24 months of age, roughly the same timeframe when many of their major vaccines are up to date.

The correlation between vaccine completion and an ASD diagnosis is coincidental. Certain developmental mile markers have to be tested for a diagnosis, which also requires the child to be at a certain age. Due to this correlation, the Journal of the American Medical Association released a study in 2014 in which they tested the influence of vaccines on an ASD diagnosis by gathering data on diagnosed people who had and had not been vaccinated. Their findings support that there is no difference in ASD diagnosis rates between thousands of vaccinated and unvaccinated children (Wessel, 2017).

According to the CDC, ASD is a mentally based developmental disability, manifesting with social, communication, and behavioral challenges and occurring in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Given its cognitive nature, there is often nothing about the physical appearance of people with ASD that separates them from their neurotypical peers. Instead, “people with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from most other people [and]...can range from gifted to severely challenged” (CDC, n.d. -d). Early signs of ASD include lack of eye contact, little interest in others, limited language capabilities (verbal and nonverbal alike), and frustration at changes in routine (CDC, n.d. -e). These signs can be improved with the correct therapy. An additional important note about ASD is that until recently, Autism and Asperger’s were two different, though related, diagnoses. In 2013 the APA moved both Autism and Asperger’s under the ASD umbrella (Society, 2020).

While a better understanding of the medical aspects of ASD is helpful in understanding our diagnosed students, we must also understand the policies impacting their education. In order to properly and equitably educate children with disabilities, several laws and coordinating policies have been put into place. In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) was put into effect, legally guaranteeing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students, specifically those with disabilities. The key here is “appropriate,” which is

determined for each individual student in support of their Individual Education Program (IEP). The goal is to make sure students are supported as needed with all stakeholders involved, including parents as equal partners to educators (Staff, 2020). The student must also be taught in the least restrictive environment (LRE): “As much as possible, children with disabilities must be educated with children without disabilities” (National Research Council, 2001, p. 178). While not specific to students with ASD, these laws and policies protect the right of any student with a disability to be accepted, included, and educated with students without disabilities while also being supported in their disability. Such policies apply across all subject matters, including the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom.

As the student body with ASD increases, we cannot continue to rely solely on the expertise of special education teachers to support students diagnosed with ASD. It falls to general education teachers to make sure these students are included and accepted in the mainstream classroom. One effective way to do so is to incorporate texts centered on people with ASD. As Beckett, Ellison, Barrett, and Shah (2010) state, “[T]he kind of literature to which children are exposed is likely to influence their general perceptions of social life” (p. 373). I argue that this holds true for secondary education students. As instructors in the secondary English Language Arts classrooms, our work and curriculum centers itself around texts. We expect our students to engage with these texts and apply the implications socially. Including texts on people with ASD in the ELA classroom allows students to learn empathy and compassion for their classmates, creating an accepting and inclusive environment for students with ASD.

My interest in students with ASD in the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom lies in how the perceptions of neurotypical students influence the experience students with ASD have in their schooling. This interest is particularly focused on secondary education as identity and social interactions play a major role in the lives of adolescents, which in turn influence the educational experience. As a prospective secondary ELA teacher, I aim to show that Young Adult Literature (YAL) can aid in the understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of students with ASD in the general education classroom and that YAL with an emphasis on people diagnosed with ASD is easily integrated into the curriculum. My work synthesizes research supporting the inclusion of YAL centered on people with ASD and YAL’s influence on mainstream students’ perceptions. The research question driving this thesis is: **How can ASD-centered YAL be integrated into the 9/10th grade ELA classroom through engaging with a Literature Circle based unit plan?**

## **Literature Review**

There is a relatively small body of literature in relation to ASD in secondary education. With the diagnosed student population aging, secondary educators and students alike are in need of learning skills to understand, accept, and include students with ASD in the classroom. In this review I will specify the difference between acceptance and rejection, the effects of an inclusive curriculum to both neurotypical and neuroatypical students, how young adult literature (YAL) can be productively incorporated in the classroom through applying Vygotsky's Social Development theory, and the importance of literature circles.

### **Acceptance and Rejection of Peers**

de Boer and Pijl (2016) researched the acceptance and rejection typically developing students had of their peers with ASD and ADHD. Their findings showcase that accepting and rejecting peers are not clearly related with each other. Rather, they highlight that negative attitudes are highly correlated with rejection (p. 330). They further state that "the goals of inclusive education are often not met for students with challenging behavior. Including students with ADHD and ASD in general secondary classrooms does not automatically lead to acceptance by peers" (p. 331). As underlined in this article, students with developmental disabilities are the most difficult to integrate into the classroom and therefore should be a focus of inclusive classrooms. Furthermore, Maich and Belcher (2012), in an effort to show the increasing influence of peer groups among students as they mature, state that "consequently, children with disabilities may become socially isolated over time even in inclusive classrooms" (p. 206). As such, it is imperative to learn how such classrooms and curriculum are built to create safe and inclusive learning environments. Furthermore, Maich and Belcher synthesize resources for finding disability focused literature and ways of incorporating it into the ELA classrooms. While many of the sources and strategies Maich and Belcher propose are catered toward primary education, the skills, steps, resources, and keys outlined in creating an inclusive classroom and incorporating literature focused on students with disabilities are easily adaptable to secondary education.

## **The Influence of an Inclusive Curriculum**

One of the reasons literature is a focus of the ELA classroom is its power to influence the views and perceptions of the reader. That is exactly what has excited me and many others about the world of books and words and imagination—you can be anyone anywhere, experiencing anything. Books, well-written and openly embraced, help the audience to reach beyond themselves and step into another’s shoes. In short, literature has long been understood to provide readers with windows and doors into the lives of others. While other media also allows for this experience, reading is a solitary act and that experience can become deeply personal, making the learning experience intimate. As Bishop (1990) stated

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author (p. 9).

Including books in the classroom where the main character is diagnosed with Autism gives just such an insight. The feelings, compulsions, and needs of their ASD diagnosed classmates are explained in a way which their classmates might not be able to explain themselves.

Along with the notion of windows and doors comes the idea of mirrors. Books don’t just give us a view and entry into the world of others; they provide us a foundation to further understand our own lives, habits, and circumstances in reference to the text we are reading. This in turn allows us a unique view of ourselves. Bishop underpins this notion in stating

A window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books (p. 9).

Including YAL in the classroom hinged on a key character with Autism likewise provides students diagnosed with ASD an opportunity to not only understand themselves, but see others like them reflected in the media. This allows these students the opportunity to feel more “normal” -- i.e. they are included and accepted into the media and aren’t seen as an outcast who aren’t seen as outcasts on the fringes of today’s society.

While reading stories focused on people with ASD may instill empathy and a deeper understanding from their normative peers (Black & Tsumoto, 2018; Hayn, Clemmons, & Olvey, 2016), without scaffolding and structure, the literature alone can do little to help create inclusive

classrooms. Black and Tsumoto (2018) emphasize the educator's role in an inclusive curriculum in stating, "We hope that teachers will ask critical questions and engage in factual discussions about the portrayals of characters with ASD and other disabilities when reading these and similar novels in middle and high school classrooms" (p. 63). An inclusive curriculum cannot stop at the reading of literature. It must address the issues discussed and embed positive attitudes in the students and teachers alike. "By using inclusion literature, teachers can ease fears born of ignorance...Teachers, with carefully selected inclusion literature, can teach respect for differences and promote positive images of those with disabilities" (Tsumoto & Black, 2015, p. 26) and help further the understanding of neurotypical students' understanding of their neuroatypical peers. Because ELA has a history of relying on classic literature which include stereotypical characters lacking the inclusion aforementioned, there has been a push to include YAL in ELA instruction. In their position statement Resolution on the Need for Diverse Children's and Young Adult Books, (2015) the National Council for the Teachers of English supports this push in stating that "stories matter. Lived experiences across human cultures including realities about appearance, behavior, economic circumstance, gender, national origin, social class, spiritual belief, weight, life, and thought matter."

Pinset (2013), an expert in children's literature research, further supports the inclusion of stories in the curriculum by explaining that

If they are well chosen and well told, the stories [students] hear and the reading which they go on to do for themselves can help them towards an appreciation of their own worth and that of others...Literature is thus a major part of the education of children (p. 22).

Hayne, Clemmons, and Olvey (2016) further demonstrate "the power of YAL to change perceptions," notably when the literature is discussing issues of diversity and ability. Tsumoto and Black (2015) further support the idea of the connection between adolescents and YAL in the ELA classroom in stating that "adolescents may connect better with these novels because the characters are similar in age and face similar conflicts" (p. 26). Connecting with the characters in a novel is one important way in which we learn and grow, and "we can never be sure which character in a book any specific reader may identify with" (Pinset, 1997, p. 24). As students consider the reality of the lives of their peers with ASD, I believe their understanding and empathy will lead to a more accepting and inclusive classroom. It is within the teacher's power to help guide the students in

understanding themselves and others as well as alter stereotypes; the study of inclusive YAL is one such method to do so.

All in all, simply adding literature with a focal point on people with ASD is not an answer to creating inclusive classrooms, particularly in relation to students with developmental disabilities, but rather a means whereby such classrooms can exist. One theorist we can turn to for further aid in effectively incorporating texts in the classroom is Vygotsky. His Social Development theory can give us a look into how students respond to their environment, particularly when looking at his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

### **Vygotsky's ZPD**

In attempting to teach our students not only the skills needed for school but also life, we should consider the ZPD, which Vygotsky defines as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Proper support from the teacher is needed in order for students of all levels to reach their potential developmental level. However, who the “capable peer” is in this situation becomes a more complicated matter. On one hand, the normative peer is the “capable peer” as they are (typically) academically stronger. On the other, the ASD student fulfills that role as they have the life experience to back up the ASD centered text. This dichotomy of “capable peers” is where reading the texts in literature circles comes into play—through literature circles, students can learn both from the teacher and from each other, each playing a key role in the class learning and group discussions respectively.

Vygotsky (1978) further states: “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). Learning and development are interrelated” (pp. 57, 84). Students must learn not only the knowledge intended and needed, but also the necessary skills to interact with others. By providing the text in order for students to come to better understand people with ASD, we are providing a chance for interpsychological cultural development both via the characters in the text and group discussions with students with ASD. These texts are aimed at helping to lay out the daily lives of people with ASD, providing deeper understanding of others. Similarly, as the text acts as a mirror for students with ASD, it provides

the opportunity for intrapsychological development. In order to optimize either inter- or intrapsychological development, the teacher must also facilitate and monitor the discussions in order to support the interactions (Alexander & Fox, 2013, p. 18). Simply put, without proper scaffolding, class or group discussion, and teacher-led learning, simply reading the text will do little for the students. Reflection through interaction is key in creating an impactful learning environment, and teachers must discuss the texts with the students, as well as students with each other, as they would with more traditional texts in the classroom.

Throughout the reading and in-class scaffolding, teachers help move the discussion's impact from interpsychological cultural developments to intrapsychological cultural developments in relation to both normative and neuroatypical peers. Here, we help students shift their own paradigms towards and about people with ASD. The text can already influence students (Beckett et al., 2010); however, teacher involvement in the form of class discussions can help further ingrain the paradigm shifts. In order to effectively facilitate, teachers must first understand their students, their opinions and mindsets, and any preconceived notions they may have in relation to people with ASD. In short, "we must understand the historical, social, and cultural contexts of a child's experiences to truly understand that person's individual development" (Unrau & Alvermann, n.d., p. 67). Without teacher involvement, the influence of the text on students in terms of their attitudes towards people with ASD is not likely to have long-term effects, but rather these changes will remain surface level and create what Morgan, Hall, and Anderson (2018) term cognitive dissonance: when there is conflict between one's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (pp. 263-264). Therefore, teachers must be fully engaged in the reading, class discussions, and other scaffolding they put in place in order to facilitate and guide influential change within students.

In summary, literature can have a profound influence on readers. Because students are more likely to have negative attitudes towards peers with developmental disabilities than their typically developing peers, simply including literature in the classroom focused on ASD is insufficient. Properly scaffolded lessons centered on an applicable text incorporating Vygotsky's Social Development theory, particularly inter- and intra-psychological cultural developments and the ZPD, can help shift student attitudes towards peers with ASD into a positive direction, helping our schools and classrooms come closer to the goal of being supportive and inclusive environments by helping students shift their understanding and attitude towards, accepting and including their peers with ASD.

## **Importance of Literature Circles**

While reading is arguably a solitary act, it often takes discussion to verbalize and solidify one's opinions and experiences. This is one way in which literature circles can be useful in the classroom. Daniels (2002) defines collaborative learning, which is at the heart of literature circles, as "true inquiry in small-group work by designing higher-ordered, student-centered, open-ended activities" (p. 35). This student-led approach to literature provides room and a base for authentic, meaningful conversations in which students can freely express themselves and learn from one another in the classroom without relying on the teacher to provide them with the information. However, it takes work on the part of the teacher to bring students up to the necessary level to work collaboratively in an independent and productive manner. Even so, Daniels continues to support literature circles in that,

from a group dynamics point of view, literature circles are a very well-structured activity, one that we would expect not only to be successful in accomplishing its goal—which is the clear and deep understanding of a book—but also to contribute to the general cohesiveness and productivity of the wider classroom community (p. 36).

This community can be further built as we recognize that literature circles allow for a heterogeneous classroom, providing access, engagement, and participation to students from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds. Furthermore, and perhaps the most compelling reason to use them in discussing ASD centered texts, literature circles provide a solid foundation for students of all ability levels, provided that the texts students can choose from are varied in their scope and difficulty (Daniels, 2002, p. 96).

Literature circles support further discussion and learning in providing students an opportunity to "share their understandings of a topic and bring their mental models of the world into close alignment" (Wells, 1987, p. 194). In order to fully do so, Daniels suggests eleven keys to successfully implement literature circles: students choose their own reading materials; small temporary groups are formed on book choice; different groups, different books; groups meet regularly and predictably; students use notes to guide reading and discussion; discussion topics come from students; open, natural conversation including personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions; the teacher as a facilitator, not group member or leader; evaluation by teacher observation and student self-evaluation; a fun environment; upon finishing, readers share

with their classmates (p. 18). Each of these aspects were kept in mind in creating the Literature Circle lesson plans centered on YAL focusing on ASD.

In my experience working in secondary education as a teacher and paraprofessional, I have witnessed first-hand the struggles of welcoming and including students with Autism in the general education classroom. As the numbers of diagnosed students increase, it is vital that we restructure our classrooms in a way which honors their existence and validates their struggles. We must provide opportunities for neurotypical students to better understand, and thereby accept and include, their classmates. One means of fostering such interactions is through reading and discussing YAL focused on people with ASD. This method of opening and sharing windows, doors, and mirrors will help start the process of exposing our students, classrooms, and communities to people with Autism.

Literature can have a profound influence on readers. While students are more likely to have negative attitudes towards peers with developmental disabilities than their typically developing peers, simply including literature in the classroom focused on ASD is insufficient. Properly scaffolded lessons centered on an applicable text incorporating Vygotsky's Social Development theory, particularly inter- and intra-psychological cultural developments and the ZPD, can help shift student attitudes towards peers with ASD into a positive direction. This in turn helps our schools and classrooms come closer to the goal of being supportive and inclusive environments by helping students accept and include their peers with ASD, thereby providing those diagnosed with ASD with better access to learning and society.

## SELECTION OF YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE TEXTS

The YA literature pool on Autism is becoming ever more expansive, but if we as teachers don't use them, we are neglecting the powerful influence these books can have on readers. To start readers and teachers alike on this increasingly necessary topic, I have selected four YA texts of varying difficulties, lengths, types, and storylines with which to start. This variation allows for differentiating instruction based on reading levels, diverse characters, and the content. My selection process began with gathering suggestions from Drs. Tara Star Johnson and Rose Mason, Purdue professors in English Education and Special Education respectively. Dr. Johnson suggested narrowing down a comprehensive list and Dr. Mason suggested *Rain Reign*, which has been used in local secondary ELA classrooms.

My next step was to search through the *goodreads* list entitled "Autism in Fiction," which contains 279 titles as of the time of this writing. I narrowed down the list by looking for the main character being a secondary education student as well as storylines which I found intriguing with appropriate and accessible content for 9th and 10th grade. Lastly, once selected I read each novel in order to (1) better understand how each portrays ASD and (2) create lessons, activities, and assignments which encompass all the selected texts. Each text is listed below along with their Lexile Levels. Where no LL was given, an approximate LL was assigned based on the appropriate grade levels as determined by the publishers.

### ***Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna -- 1115L (approx.)**

Written as a memoir, this book follows 18-year-old Taylor Simon just after her high school graduation. Due to her Asperger's, she has difficulty with transitions and new situations and therefore fights with her mother when she asks her to move for the summer. Her experiences have taught her not to trust others and to expect to be rejected. She has never had a job, a boyfriend, or any real friends for that matter. This book follows her journey of growth and change as she comes to trust herself and others and begins to understand that the world isn't a place made to exclude her, but rather people have never been taught how to include her.

The heart of this book deals with self-discovery and growing up. While it does follow the experiences of a legal adult, the explanations in this book of how people with Autism deal with

change, the unexpected, and experiences they fear help neurotypical students understand why unforeseen changes in daily schedules upset and at times immobilize their ASD diagnosed classmates. The book begins with a perfect example. After her mother informs her that they will be moving to a different city for the summer, Taylor refuses, upon which her mother replies:

“Why can’t you just do this one thing? You’d like it there if you gave it a chance.” “It isn’t one thing,” I said. “It might be one thing for you, but it’s at least twenty things for me. Twenty new things. We’re talking twenty to one, Mom.” (p. 8)

Taylor goes on to write about what those twenty new things are, which showcases how “just one thing” for some is much more complicated, unwanted, and terrifying for others. While *Wild Orchid* might be the shortest book of the four I have to recommend at 156 pages, it is no less a worthy inclusion to the classroom. The themes in the book as well as its accessibility provide a wonderful reading for all high school grades and would also be easily accessible for junior high. Additionally, it is the only book on this list or that is the first of a trilogy, allowing students to further explore Taylor’s world and come to better understand her life. For further information on the book, the author and her intent, and teaching suggestions please visit Beverley Brenna’s guide on her website (Brenna, 2005).

### ***Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin -- 830L**

This book has been used in classrooms in my geographic area as a way to teach about ASD and has had a wonderful reception. It quickly made its way onto the list when Rose Mason excitedly explained how her son, who typically dislikes reading, raved about this book.

Eleven-year-old Rose Howard is bound by rules and homonyms. Both of these ticks drive not only her life, but the entire story. Notably, a discussion with her teacher in the first chapter foreshadows her decisions later in the book. During one of her classes in which her fellow neurotypical classmates are being disobedient and disruptive, the following conversation occurs between Rose and her teacher:

“‘What’s the difference between making a mistake and breaking a rule?’ I want to know. ‘Making a mistake is accidental. Breaking a rule is deliberate.’” (p. 5)

This strict adherence to rules allows Rose to put her own desires aside simply because it’s not right. This decision puts her at odds with her father who has raised her alone. Her family dynamic is not only nontraditional, but strained by mistrust, a dark history, and tragedy. The

simple Lexile level of the text allows for Rose's voice to shine through and helps to not overcomplicate the themes and storyline in the text. Though ideal for junior high, this book could also be a welcome addition to the high school classroom as appropriate.

***The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart -- 990L (approx.)**

Unlike the other books on this list which focus on a finite period of time, *The Fog Within* follows the main character, Megan Cooper, throughout her life from elementary school through middle-aged adulthood. The text doesn't have smooth transitions between childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, and the book itself is written as if from an adult perspective. It is also the only one on this list that addresses non-verbal Autism. All conversations within the book are other characters talking, while all of Megan's opinions, thoughts, and reactions are only described. This makes for a different read than almost any other fiction.

While the Lexile level doesn't always match the age of the character, it does a good job of explaining some of the characteristics of having Autism, non-verbal or verbal. For instance, the diagnosis of Autism can be an answer to some, but leave others with endless questions. Megan describes it as follows:

What's Autism? Just another word they say around me. When I was four and my parents were so upset about the fog, they said Autism so much I started to think it was a new name for me, "Hi, I'm Megan Autism. Nice to meet you." (p. 10-11)

This idea of being identified by our diagnosis, not by who you are or what you enjoy, is something everyone can appreciate. The combination of bullying and friendship because of her diagnosis also showcases how who and what you are can be both a challenge and a blessing. While this story is unique and Megan's journey is gripping, teachers should also be aware that this book does include some intense swearing at times, including the F word upon multiple occasions. Though used conversationally and generally without aggression, it does make this book a questionable choice for younger grades and in some communities.

***House Rules* by Jodi Picoult -- 880L**

*House Rules* tells the story of 18-year-old Jacob Hunt and his family as they deal with the death of Jess Ogilvy, Jacob's tutor. Thrown into suspicion, Jacob becomes a prime suspect in the case. Already at odds with his family members because of the rigid structure of his life which

influences everyone else, the family is not sure who or what to believe. This book showcases their sacrifices and frustrations. Theo, Jacob's younger brother, is particularly frustrated with the situation, stating:

“I tell my mother we have nothing in common, but my mother insists that will change. I think she's crazy” (p. 18).

A gripping story written as a murder mystery, this book leads the reader through multiple stages and accurately displays the emotions and complexities of family life. One complexity of this book is the unique layout—each chapter switches points of view multiple times, making it ideal for high school but potentially problematic for junior high. While always labeled before the switch, this could cause difficulty for the readers, but it also provides an opportunity to look at each point of view as a whole, allowing students to essentially read five different novels. *House Rules* is also the only book on this list which is also available in large print and audio book formats, which carries a great deal of merit as it allows for greater accessibility to a broader range of readers. Picoult has also provided teachers and readers alike with background information, reading questions, and her own experience writing the book (Picoult, 2010).

## UNIT PLAN

In planning lessons, especially those connected to and catered towards disabilities, we must remember to differentiate our instruction in order to reach every student. Daniels (2002) gives the following guidance in terms of literature circles:

As teachers select sets of books for literature circles, they consider not just topics, authors, and interests but also the reading levels of their students...When a student selects a book, she is putting herself into a temporary, appropriately leveled reading groups...This means that whatever grade you teach, you need multiple-copy sets of books at a wide range of reading levels (p. 96).

Much of the differentiations included in these lessons were reliant on this principle—that student choice allows for self-differentiation. Even so, lessons, assignments, and activities will need to be further adapted in order to fit the individual needs of students in every classroom, including but not limited to the IEPs of students with disabilities. Suggested ways to differentiate each lesson, activity, and/or assignment are found at the end of the unit plan.

I targeted this unit at 9th and 10th grade students in the general education ELA classroom for two reasons: in order to target high school students but also have the greatest impact on the school as these are the youngest students attending and will spend the most time in the school. This twenty-lesson unit revolves around ASD centered YAL literature circles addressing the following essential questions: (1) How does society see (dis)ability? (2) Who advocates for people with disabilities? (3) How does a deeper understanding of (dis)ability influence the way you interact with others? and (4) How does the text influence the way you perceive people with ASD and in what ways have you changed your perceptions of people with ASD?. Each lesson pulls standards from Common Core in order to be broadly applicable and easily adjustable to the standards in each state. Additionally, all lessons briefly summarize the proceedings. Lastly, all resources, texts, and activities are provided, with the exception of the YAL books themselves. This includes assigned chapters for each YAL book, divided up according to the number of lessons and the length of days between each lesson, with the assumption that the course is taught each school day and not on a block schedule.

In order to recognize diversity in the classroom, the inclusion of which makes literature circles a powerful tool for teachers and an invaluable outlet for students, teachers must also understand their students, their opinions and mindsets, and any preconceived notions they may

have in relation to people with ASD. In essence, “We must understand the historical, social, and cultural contexts of a child’s experiences to truly understand that person’s individual development” (Unrau & Alvermann, n.d., p. 67). This can be done through a pre-reading survey, a class discussion, or individual interviews. Each method has its pros and cons, with time being a major factor. With this in mind, both a pre-/post- reading survey as well as class and group discussions were included in the lessons. Additionally, in order to include their understanding and expertise on ASD, some of the lessons include the Special Education teacher as a guest teacher/speaker with the hope that neurotypical students will be able to improve their own understanding and gain insights through their interactions.

I began the unit with a lesson Autism as well as a “Book Café” where students select which YAL they would like to read. The following ten lessons are interspersed with mini-lessons on specific topics and group discussions. It is throughout the course of these lessons that the students will read the book, generally on their own time. In the next seven lessons, students will write their final paper side-by-side with mini-lessons on aspects of their paper. The last lesson gives students the chance to present their book and insights. Each lesson contains specific standards and objectives, anchor texts (including those for specific activities), and a bird’s eye lesson plan description. I chose not to break down the lesson by the minute as I wanted them to be widely applicable to all classrooms, regardless of time allotment. However, in creating the lesson plans I did my best to allow for a 50 minute limit.

## Unit Overview

<b>Unit: Autism/(Dis)Ability Lit Circles</b>				
Lesson 1: What is Autism?	Lesson 2: Book Cafe	Lesson 3: Divide into Group & Get- to-Know-You (Chapter 1)	Lesson 4: Mini-Lesson on Lit Circle Roles & Group Discussion (Ch. 3, 2, 5, 7)	Lesson 5: Mini-lesson on Annotating (Ch. 6, 3, 9, 13)
Lesson 6: Group Review & Discussion (Ch. 8, 5, 13, 19)	Lesson 7: Mini-Lesson on Story/Plot Arch (Ch. 11, 6, 17, 25)	Lesson 8: Mini-Lesson on Identifying Theme (Ch. 13, 7, 21, 31)	Lesson 9: Group Review & Discussion (Ch. 16, 8, 25, 37)	Lesson 10: Mini-Lesson on Character Development (Ch. 18, 9, 29, 43)
Lesson 11: In-Class Reading Day (Finish Novel) (Ch. 22, 10, 33, 49)	Lesson 12: Book Talk	Lesson 13: Introduce Final Paper and Work on Outlines	Lesson 14: First Day on First Draft - Gathering Evidence	Lesson 15: Second Day on First Draft / Mini-lesson on Writing a Thesis
Lesson 16: Final Day on First Draft - Putting it all together	Lesson 17: Mini-Lesson on Peer Reviews	Lesson 18: Peer Review Day	Lesson 19: Final Draft Writing Day- Revising and Finalizing	Lesson 20: Final Paper Due & Class Discussion

<b>Unit: Autism/(Dis)Ability</b>	
<b>Standards</b>	
<p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3</u> Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.</p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2</u> Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1</u> Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p>	
<b>Themes</b>	
Identity Family & social life Dreams & Aspirations	Growing up Trust Ability & Disability
<b>Essential Questions</b>	
How does society see (dis)ability? Who advocates for people with disabilities? How does a deeper understanding of (dis)ability influence the way you interact with others? How does the text influence the way you perceive people with ASD and in what ways have you changed your perceptions of people with ASD?	
<b>Anchor Texts (Lit circles)</b>	
<i>Wild Orchid</i> by Beverley Brenna <i>House Rules</i> by Jodi Picoult (also available in large print and audio book formats) <i>The Fog Within</i> by Nick Shamhart <i>Rain Reign</i> by Ann M. Martin	
<b>Description of Summative Assessment</b>	
Students will take a pre- and post-test on their understanding of, opinions towards, and reactions to Autism and people diagnosed with ASD. Based on their readings and discussions of their text in their lit circles, they will write an analysis paper on their own growth. The open-ended question(s) on the post-test will be their guide to help them outline their essay. They will use quotes from the text to describe their own growth and change in tandem with the growth of the character. The pre- and post-reading survey are used to help guide their thinking and help the teacher analyze and adapt the lesson plans as necessary for future students. The analysis paper will be their true summative assessment. The pre- and post-test will be adapted from Figure 2 of the hyperlinked research <a href="#">article</a> .	

## Lesson Plans

<b>Lesson 1: What is Autism?</b>
<b>Standards</b>
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text.
<b>Objectives</b>
Students will be able to understand what Autism/ASD is with the goal of better understanding classmates and others who are diagnosed with ASD.
<b>Anchor Texts</b>
Pre-Reading Survey (Appendix A) “What is Autism” Worksheet (Appendix F) <a href="https://www.brainpop.com/health/psychologyandbehavior/autism/">https://www.brainpop.com/health/psychologyandbehavior/autism/</a> (video) <a href="https://www.brainpop.com/make-a-map/?topic=/health/psychologyandbehavior/autism/">https://www.brainpop.com/make-a-map/?topic=/health/psychologyandbehavior/autism/</a> (Make-a-Map)
<b>Lesson Plan Description</b>
Students will start with taking the Pre-Reading survey (Appendix A) and submit afterwards. As a class we will watch the video while students fill out the worksheet. They will get another 5 minutes after the video to finish the worksheet. Then they will break into groups of 4-6 to discuss their understanding. After 10 minutes, we will come back together as a class to discuss what they have learned and their answers to the question using the “Make-a-Map” feature. Students will submit their worksheets digitally for review which will allow them to add to their answers as they read their book club books.

## Lesson 2: Book Cafe

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.10: By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range; By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

### Objectives

Students will explore the four different options and by spending time reading the first chapter or two of each book.

Students will decide which two are their top choices in order to be placed in groups.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna

*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult

*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin

### Lesson Plan Description

The classroom will be set up in a cafe-style with appropriate quiet music and mood lighting. Students will have 15 min to spend with each book, rotating on a timer, to give them a taste of what the book is like and to allow them to choose which two books they are most interested in. Their interest will be taken into account to create groups of 4-6 (with multiple groups for a single book as a possibility). The reading level of the students should also be taken into account when creating groups.

### Lesson 3: Divide into Group & Get-to-Know-You

#### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### Objectives

Students will meet their group members and get to know each other.  
Students will read the first chapter of the book together.

#### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna (Ch 1)  
*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult (Ch 1)  
*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart (Ch 1)  
*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin (Ch 1)

#### Lesson Plan Description

Students will be divided into the groups set up for the book club. Students will take time to get to know each other by playing a few get-to-know you games (2 truths/1 lie; would you rather; etc.). After 15 minutes, students will spend the rest of the time reading at least the first chapter. For books with shorter chapters which are an easier read, students will be encouraged to continue reading and/or discuss their first impressions. Students will be expected to read until (X) for next class.

## Lesson 4: Mini-Lesson on Lit Circle Roles & Discussion

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

### Objectives

Students will understand what lit circle roles are and how to use them.

Students will choose roles in their groups.

Students will discuss what they have read using the worksheet from Lesson 1 as a guide.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna (Through Ch. 3)

*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult (Through Ch. 2)

*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart (Through Ch. 5)

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin (Through Ch. 7)

Appendix B-F

### Lesson Plan Description

The students will learn the four different Lit Circle Roles (discussion leader, summarizer, connector, and vocab developer), how to use them in discussion, and how to evaluate the discussion. Following that, they will have a discussion based on the chapters they have read thus far using the different rolls and the worksheet from lesson 1. It's important to note that roles will rotate each time they discuss and that the sheets do not need to be completed until the Book Talk day and will be given class time to complete the sheets.

## Lesson 5: Mini-lesson on Annotating

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

### Objectives

Students will learn what to look for in annotating.  
Students will go through the chapters they have read and use the key elements to annotate their reading so far.  
Students will discuss what they have annotated in groups.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna (Through Ch. 6)  
*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult (Through Ch. 3)  
*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart (Through Ch. 9)  
*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin (Through Ch. 13)  
Appendix K  
CDC website on ASD (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>)

### Lesson Plan Description

Students will get in their groups to read a section of the CDC website on ASD assigned by the teacher. The teacher will then walk the students through an exercise where the methods on the Appendix K sheet will be used to annotate a portion of the site. Students will then apply these principles in annotating another portion of the site together, and again separately. Students will write three questions to be asked during the lesson the following day. Once this mini lesson is complete, students will work independently and/or in groups as they choose to annotate their literature circle book up to where they have read. It will also be explained that students will be expected to continue to annotate their book as they read.

## Lesson 6: Group Review & Discussion

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

### Objectives

Students will have a better understanding of ASD through a mini-lesson from the SPED teacher.

Students will review what they have read up.

Students will use the lit circle assignments, worksheets, and annotations to discuss the book.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna (Through Ch. 8)

*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult (Through Ch. 5)

*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart (Through Ch. 13)

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin (Through Ch. 19)

Appendix B-F

### Lesson Plan Description

The Special Education teacher will start the lesson with a short presentation on ASD, synthesizing what the students discovered last class, also allowing time for a Q&A portion from the students so they can get answers to the questions they wrote the previous class period. The SPED teacher will join the ELA teacher in monitoring the groups for the next portion of the lesson.

Using the literature circle roles and the worksheet from Appendix F, as well as the annotations they have made in their books, students will discuss their book up to the point they have read. The teacher will monitor the groups and help facilitate discussions by rotating among groups, helping answer questions, and observing conversation.

## Lesson 7: Mini-Lesson on Story/Plot Arc

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it, and manipulate time create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

### Objectives

Students will learn the different sections of a story/plot arc.  
Students will identify where their book is in the arc.  
Students will jigsaw between groups to discuss their story arcs.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna (Through Ch. 11)  
*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult (Through Ch. 6)  
*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart (Through Ch. 21)  
*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin (Through Ch. 37)  
Appendix L

### Lesson Plan Description

Students will participate in a mini lesson on the story/plot arc. In groups, students will, to the best of their ability, identify the different parts of the plot they have reached in their text. The teacher will monitor and provide guidance and answer questions as to where they are in the story arc.

## Lesson 8: Mini-Lesson on Identifying Theme

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

### Objectives

Students will learn to identify theme.  
Students will identify the themes in their book.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna (Through Ch. 13)  
*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult (Through Ch. 7)  
*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart (Through Ch. 21)  
*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin (Through Ch. 31)  
Appendix M, Appendix O

### Lesson Plan Description

The teacher will facilitate a mini-lesson on Theme. Using a short story, the teacher will help students learn how to identify theme(s). Students will then identify theme(s) first individually on another short story, then discuss in their lit circle groups. Finally, students will discuss their lit circle texts in their groups and identify themes they see in the text.

## Lesson 9: Group Review & Discussion

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

### Objectives

Students will finish Theme workshop (if needed).

Students will review what they have read up.

Students will use the lit circle assignments, worksheets, and annotations to discuss the book.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna (Through Ch. 16)

*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult (Through Ch. 8)

*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart (Through Ch. 29)

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin (Through Ch. 43)

Appendix B-F

### Lesson Plan Description

If needed, students will be given time to complete any portion of the Theme Workshop from last class period.

Using the literature circle roles and the worksheet from Appendix F, as well as the annotations they have made in their books, students will discuss their book up to the point they have read. The teacher will monitor the groups and help facilitate discussions by rotating among groups, helping answer questions, and observing conversation.

Students will then jigsaw with other lit circle groups and discuss what themes they see so far in their books, finding what is common/different among the different books. Each group will turn in a written sheet outlining the themes for each book and which themes overlap between which books.

## Lesson 10: Mini-Lesson on Character Development

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

### Objectives

Students will be able to identify character traits.  
Students will be able to identify how a character responds to and changes because of the events in a text.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna (Through Ch. 18)  
*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult (Through Ch. 9)  
*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart (Through Ch. 29)  
*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin (Through Ch. 43)  
Appendix N, Appendix P

### Lesson Plan Description

In groups, students will read the short story. The teacher will model finding one or two traits, then students will find an additional five traits in their groups, each filling out the worksheet as they go. The teacher will then model how the character responds to and changes because of the events in the text. In their lit circle groups, students will discuss the traits and character growth they have identified so far in their lit circle texts. As they do so, they will finish filling out the worksheet.

## Lesson 11: In-Class Reading Day (Finish Novel)

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

### Objectives

Students will finish their book.

Students will review what they have read up.

Students will use the lit circle assignments and worksheets to discuss the book.

Students will finalize the lit circle assignment sheets.

Students will answer a prompt about their final impressions of the book.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna (Through Ch. 22)

*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult (Through Ch. 10)

*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart (Through Ch. 33)

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin (Through Ch. 49)

Appendix B-F

### Lesson Plan Description

Using the literature circle roles and the worksheet from Appendix F, as well as the annotations they have made in their books, students will discuss their book up to the point they have read. The teacher will monitor the groups and help facilitate discussions by rotating among groups, helping answer questions, and observing conversation. Students will also make sure all requirements in the Lit Circle Role Sheets are met and will submit the final products at the end of class.

After having finished and discussed the book in their groups, students will do a 100 word write-up with their final impressions of the book. This will help prepare them for their book talk the following lesson as well as prime their brains for their final essay.

## Lesson 12: Book Talk

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

### Objectives

Students will present their book to the class.  
Students will participate in a jigsaw group about ASD and their book.  
Students will complete the post-reading survey.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna  
*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult  
*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart  
*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin  
Appendix B-E  
Post-reading Survey (Appendix A)

### Lesson Plan Description

In their groups, students will use their lit circle role sheets to help them summarize what the book is about. Using their role sheets, the ASD worksheet, and the short write-up from the previous lesson, students will jigsaw with members of other groups to discuss their experiences and how they feel about the book. Each lit circle group will come back together and select one spokesperson to present to the rest of the class. Lastly, students will take the post-reading survey and submit. The ELA and SPED teacher will help monitor all group work, both inter- and intra-group activities.

The SPED teacher will then help moderate the presentation of the books/what the students learned through this process, bringing back to the discussion what the students had talked about/learned from the SPED teacher's first visit. This way, the process is full circle and the discussion should help prepare them for their final essay.

<b>Lesson 13: Introduce Final Paper and Outlines</b>
<b>Standards</b>
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>
<p>Students will understand the requirements for the final paper.</p> <p>Students will brainstorm ideas for their paper.</p> <p>Students will discuss their ideas with classmates in groups.</p>
<b>Anchor Texts</b>
<p>Appendix B-H</p> <p><i>Wild Orchid</i> by Beverley Brenna</p> <p><i>House Rules</i> by Jodi Picoult</p> <p><i>The Fog Within</i> by Nick Shamhart</p> <p><i>Rain Reign</i> by Ann M. Martin</p>
<b>Lesson Plan Description</b>
<p>The teacher will discuss the requirements for the final paper and introduce the outline sheet to be used throughout the next few days. Students will then brainstorm ideas for their outline. Afterwards they will get in groups to discuss their ideas. These groups will be made up of students from each book in order to diversify discussion and to allow for varying viewpoints to what students have been exposed to up to this point.</p>

## Lesson 14: First Draft Day 1 - Gathering Evidence

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### Objectives

Students will use their annotations to help support their topic.

Students will start to fill out the different Points in their outline.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna

*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult

*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin

Appendix B-H

### Lesson Plan Description

Students will work individually or in their groups to help synthesize the information they have from their group work. They will use their brainstorming from the day before to help guide what they are looking for. Students will also then use the information they are gathering to further support their brainstorming and fill out the outline for their final paper. The goal is to find quotes and other requirements for the assignment from their book and class discussions so they already have that information for their paper.

## Lesson 15: First Draft Day 2 - Workshop on Writing a Thesis

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### Objectives

Students will learn to write a cohesive thesis statement.

Students will write a thesis statement for their topic and fill out that portion of the outline.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna

*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult

*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin

Appendix B-I

### Lesson Plan Description

Prior to class, the teacher will set up the Thesis workshop with the materials provided. The teacher will explain the workshop. Students will move individually/in groups of their choice through the stations. The teacher will review each station afterwards and take examples for completed thesis statements. The students will then use the structure they learned in order to write their own thesis statement for their paper.

## Lesson 16: First Draft - Putting it all together (day 3)

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

### Objectives

Students will create their final version of their first draft by putting together all the pieces from the previous two days.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna

*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult

*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin

Appendix B-I

### Lesson Plan Description

Students will use the outline which has been filled out with their gathered evidence and thesis in order to create their official draft. The teacher will monitor, answering questions and providing guidance as needed.

## Lesson 17: Mini-Lesson on Peer Reviews

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

### Objectives

Students will continue working on their drafts.  
Students will learn how to conduct a peer review.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna  
*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult  
*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart  
*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin  
Appendix J

### Lesson Plan Description

Students will continue to work on their drafts for the first half of class. Students will then participate in a mini lesson on peer reviews.

## Lesson 18: Peer Review

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3: Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5: Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

### Objectives

Students will peer review two papers.  
Students will explain their review.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna  
*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult  
*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart  
*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin  
Appendix J

### Lesson Plan Description

In pairs, students will swap papers and review using the techniques learned from the previous class. One pair will be made from members of the same group, the second from members of different groups. The peer review sheets will be returned to the author with their paper during a discussion between the author and the reviewer.

## Lesson 19: Final Draft Writing Day - Revising and Finalizing

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

### Objectives

Students will edit their draft into the final draft using the peer reviews from the previous class.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna

*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult

*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin

Appendix B-J

### Lesson Plan Description

Using their first draft and the peer review discussion the day before, students will edit their papers towards a final draft. The teacher will monitor, answer questions, and provide guidance as needed.

## Lesson 20: Final Paper Due & Class Discussion

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

### Objectives

Students will participate in a class discussion about ASD and their book.

### Anchor Texts

*Wild Orchid* by Beverley Brenna  
*House Rules* by Jodi Picoult  
*The Fog Within* by Nick Shamhart  
*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin  
Appendix B-J

### Lesson Plan Description

The teacher will facilitate a class discussion on what the students learned and how they reacted to the texts through group presentations. Students will be encouraged to use all notes, annotations, worksheets, and their final paper to participate in the discussion. Students will present in their groups discussing the value of the texts they read and any suggestions they have for future students, including keeping or replacing the texts they read. Finally, students will submit their final drafts of their essays.

## Differentiation Guide

<b>Suggestions for Lesson Differentiation</b>	
<b>Lesson 1:</b> Students can verbally answer the survey.	<b>Lesson 11:</b> See lesson 4 accommodations. Students may be assigned a different work count or be allowed to fulfill the assignment orally.
<b>Lesson 2:</b> Students can be read to and/or spend more time at each book station.	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Students may complete summary and answer survey orally.
<b>Lesson 3:</b> Students can be read to; students may have a different chapter goal.	<b>Lesson 13:</b> Students may brainstorm ideas with a partner.
<b>Lesson 4:</b> May be assigned one role the entire time and/or be assigned a limited portion of each role as the roles rotate.	<b>Lesson 14:</b> The number of quotes and other requirements may be altered to fit the students and their IEPs.
<b>Lesson 5:</b> Students may work with a partner instead of separately.	<b>Lesson 15:</b> Students may be assigned partners. Students may answer orally.
<b>Lesson 6:</b> Students may help answer some questions.	<b>Lesson 16:</b> The draft requirements may be altered. The essay may be completed orally.
<b>Lesson 7:</b> Students may work with their para/individually.	<b>Lesson 17:</b> N/A
<b>Lesson 8:</b> Students may work with a partner and have the stories read to them.	<b>Lesson 18:</b> Students may give the review orally and/or only peer review one peer.
<b>Lesson 9:</b> See lesson 4 accommodations.	<b>Lesson 19:</b> See lesson 16 accommodations.
<b>Lesson 10:</b> Story could be read to the student.	<b>Lesson 20:</b> N/A

## NEXT STEPS

With the increasing ASD diagnosed student population, the need has arisen to be more intentional in lesson planning, especially in general education classrooms. With this in mind, I set out to write a unit plan backed by research which would address people with ASD in a format which fits into the general ELA classroom. Relying on Vygotsky's ZPD as well as the research of Beckett, Ellison, Barrett, and Shah (2010) and Daniels (1994; 2002), I created a twenty-lesson literature circle unit plan centered around four YAL texts containing protagonists with ASD.

As my research to this point has been theoretical and based on the research of others, further research would be centered on the implementation of this unit plan in the general ELA classroom. Since lesson plans are meant to be fluid and change according to the needs of the students, this unit should be put into practice; otherwise, it will remain a stagnant theoretical exercise. Using the pre-/post-reading survey, I could collect the data required to assess its effectiveness and make the necessary improvements. Ideally, this implementation, assessment, and improvement process would occur in my own classroom. In the meantime, I plan to share this work with other ELA teachers. One avenue of doing so is contacting Dr. Steve Bickmore who runs the "YA Wednesday" blog where each post is authored by a guest author.

## APPENDIX A. PRE/POST READING SURVEY

Directions: After reading each question circle “Agree,” “Unsure”, “Disagree.”	
1. If I overheard a student making a derogatory remark about another student’s behaviors/habits, I would reprimand the student.	Agree Unsure Disagree
2. Classes that have students with developmental disabilities should make an effort to highlight those students’ strengths.	Agree Unsure Disagree
3. I am familiar with the term “Autism Spectrum Disorder” or “ASD.”	Agree Unsure Disagree
4. I sometimes initially assume that people with developmental disabilities have learning problems.	Agree Unsure Disagree
5. When a student with a developmental disability attends a general education class for the first time, all of the students should be prepared ahead of time so that the students can ask questions and know what to expect.	Agree Unsure Disagree
6. People with developmental disabilities may have many social issues as a result of their condition.	Agree Unsure Disagree
7. Students with developmental disabilities should be allowed to share their story with other students in an effort to increase understanding.	Agree Unsure Disagree
8. I am familiar with the term “developmental disability.”	Agree Unsure Disagree
9. People with developmental disabilities feel ordinary to themselves; it is how other people treat them that make them feel different.	Agree Unsure Disagree

Adapted from: Hayn, J. A., Clemmons, K. R., & Olvey, H. A. (2016). Fostering Inclusion of Disabled Youth Through Young Adult Literature: Action Research with Wonder. *Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature*, 1(2), 64–78.

## APPENDIX B. LITERATURE CIRCLE ROLES

Adapted from Melissa Eddy's literature circle lesson plan resources.

### **Lit Circle Role: Discussion Leader**

Your job is to make sure this discussion procedure is followed when your group meets and keep the discussion on track - if your group gets off track, redirect them quickly!

1. Begin with the SUMMARIZER. Group members will add other important points to the summary, the summarizer will add these to his/her document.
2. CONNECTOR should present second, as they present, connections that the other members of the group mention should be recorded by the CONNECTOR on his/her CONNECTIONS document.
3. VOCABULARY will be presented next, all group members will assist in generating sentences using the words found and the VOCABULARY DEVELOPER will record the sentences on his/her document.
4. 10 EXCELLENT QUESTIONS for further discussion, yes/no questions will not be counted — questions and responses will be recorded here. These questions should examine character motivation, setting, plot, theme, symbols and other literary elements you notice. Do not focus solely on events. Note elements often help you to find good subjects for writing questions.

This document, when submitted, should contain 10 questions for your group to respond to, as well as a brief summary of that response. You can take notes during your meeting and add the group part afterwards in order to speed up the meeting. Please number your questions from 1-10.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

### **Lit Circle Role: Summarizer**

Your job is to prepare a brief summary of the pages/chapters required for this meeting. The other members of your group are depending on you to give the key points, highlights, and the very essence of what you have read. After you write down the key points in chronological order, write

a brief summary (in paragraph form) of the assigned section of the novel. Write your paragraph neatly and clearly, or type it.

8 key points to build your 8-10 sentence summary:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

8-10 sentence summary:

### **Lit Circle Role: Connector**

Your job is to find connections between the pages you are reading for this meeting and the world outside of it. This means you are to connect the reading to your own life; to happenings in school, in the community, or in the world; to similar events in the past or other places and to movies, films, books and television shows you have watched. You will also use this as an opportunity to do some research about people or places or events mentioned in the text. You can include this information only if you give source information for it.

Please include 6 well-researched connections. These should link to actual events in the text and clearly explain, using descriptive details, what the connection involves. If others in your group add more examples or indicate the connection is similar to their own experience, record that information in this document. Quoting from the text may be helpful!

### **Lit Circle Role: Vocabulary Developer**

Your job is to collect words. These can be words you found to be interesting, words used in a way you haven't seen before or words with which you are unfamiliar. Try to pick words that are not in a foreign language and are not place names. You can do this as you read. You will complete this document by including the words, definitions, parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective., etc.), sentence and page from the book and your group will help create a sentence correctly using the word.

You will need to find 8 words and fill out one chart for each to complete this assignment:

Word:	Part of Speech:
Definition:	
Pg # and sentence:	
Group created sentence:	

Word:	Part of Speech:
Definition:	
Pg # and sentence:	
Group created sentence:	

Word:	Part of Speech:
Definition:	
Pg # and sentence:	
Group created sentence:	

Word:	Part of Speech:
Definition:	
Pg # and sentence:	
Group created sentence:	

Word:	Part of Speech:
Definition:	

Pg # and sentence:
Group created sentence:

Word:	Part of Speech:
Definition:	
Pg # and sentence:	
Group created sentence:	

Word:	Part of Speech:
Definition:	
Pg # and sentence:	
Group created sentence:	

Word:	Part of Speech:
Definition:	
Pg # and sentence:	
Group created sentence:	

## **APPENDIX C. WHAT IS AUTISM WORKSHEET**

1. In the past two decades, reported cases of autism have increased more than tenfold. What do researchers give as the most likely cause?
2. In what home situations might a person with autism exhibit behaviors?
3. In what situations at school or in other public settings?
4. How can you respond to someone with autism in these settings to help them feel more comfortable?

Adapted from: Autism. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.brainpop.com/health/psychologyandbehavior/autism/>

## **APPENDIX D. FINAL PAPER ASSIGNMENT SHEET**

Your final paper will be to write an essay on how your perspective has changed about people with Autism through reading your literature circle book and your class discussion with your literature circle group. The documents you gathered as a group throughout the discussions as well as the annotations you made can help inform your essay. We will be working on the essay in class and will have a peer review portion of the essay. Your final essay should include the following:

1. Introduction, conclusion, and thesis
2. At least 3 points supporting your thesis
3. At least one quote from the book for each of your points
4. 2-3 pages double spaced, Times New Roman font
5. Well reasoned thought process
6. The peer reviewed draft submitted with the final copy
7. At least three identified changes based on the peer reviewed draft
  1. These changes can be highlighted or underlined
8. Correct grammar

This should be an evidence-based essay. Lack of evidence from your own life, your group discussion, and the book will result in loss of points. While you may collaborate with your group members, you must write your own essay and use your own annotations. Plagiarism will not be accepted and will result in a 0.

## APPENDIX E. FINAL PAPER RUBRIC

Adapted from Purdue's COM 114 Paper Rubrics

Criteria	Depth of Reflection	Required Components	Structure	Evidence and Practice
Superior	Response demonstrates an in depth reflection on, and personalization of, the themes and/or characters in the text. Viewpoints and interpretations are insightful and well supported. Clear, detailed examples are provided, as applicable.	Response includes all components and meets or exceeds all requirements indicated in the instructions. Each part of the assignment is addressed thoroughly. All attachments and/or additional documents are included, as required.	Writing is clear, concise, and well organized with excellent sentence/paragraph construction. Thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner. There are no more than three spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing.	Response shows strong evidence of synthesis of ideas presented and insights gained throughout the entire course. The implications of these insights are thoroughly detailed, as applicable.
Sufficient	Response demonstrates a general reflection on, and personalization of, the themes and/or characters in the text. Viewpoints and interpretations are supported. Appropriate examples are provided, as applicable.	Response includes all components and meets all requirements indicated in the instructions. Each part of the assignment is addressed. All attachments and/or additional documents are included, as required.	Writing is mostly clear, concise, and well organized with good sentence/paragraph construction. Thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner. There are no more than five spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing.	Response shows evidence of synthesis of ideas presented and insights gained throughout the entire course. The implications of these insights are presented.
Minimal	Response demonstrates a minimal reflection on, and personalization of, the themes and/or characters in the text. Viewpoints and interpretations are unsupported or supported with flawed arguments. Examples, when applicable, are not provided or are irrelevant to the assignment.	Response is missing some components and/or does not fully meet the requirements indicated in the instructions. Some parts of the assignment are not addressed. Some attachments and additional documents are missing or unsuitable.	Writing is unclear and/or disorganized. Thoughts are not expressed in a logical manner. There are more than five spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing.	Response shows little evidence of synthesis of ideas presented and insights gained throughout the entire course. Few implications of these insights are presented.
Unacceptable	Response demonstrates a lack of reflection on, or personalization of, the themes and/or characters in the text. Viewpoints and interpretations are missing, inappropriate, and/or unsupported. Examples, when applicable, are not provided.	Response excludes essential components and/or does not address the requirements indicated in the instructions. Many parts of the assignment are addressed minimally, inadequately, and/or not at all.	Writing is unclear and disorganized. Thoughts ramble and make little sense. There are numerous spelling, grammar, or syntax errors throughout the response.	Response shows no evidence of synthesis of ideas presented and insights gained throughout the entire course. No implications of these insights are presented.

## APPENDIX E. FINAL PAPER OUTLINE

Intro	
Thesis	
Point 1	
Point 2	
Point 3	
Conclusion	

## APPENDIX F. WRITING A THESIS WORKSHOP

### Station Worksheet

(print one per student): <https://qrgo.page.link/f94SN>



### Station 1. Blocks

Thesis statement examples -- write each word of the thesis on a separate LEGO/block/paper -- color is a great way to keep the statements separate. Separate them into piles/boxes in order to keep them organized. The beginning of each sentence can be used as a way to scaffold for students who are struggling or in review (ie “dogs are better pets than cats because...”)

- Dogs are better pets than cats because they help their owners, are loyal, and can easily be trained.
- The Hunger Games is a riveting and educational book because it is full of action and suspense, has believable characters, and is related to subjects like civics.
- Schools should not serve soda at lunch because poor nutrition and high sugar content contributes to lack of motivation and lack of focus.

### Station 2. Map it

Print each thesis statement out and cut it onto a separate strip. Put them all in a bag or box to keep them organized.

- Summer is the best season of the year because there is no school, it is warm enough to swim and play outside, and there is plenty of time to hang out with friends.
- Volunteering is important in middle and high school because service gives students a sense of purpose, positively impacts grades, and can change the way people think about the world.
- The Waterloo Campaign was a disaster for Napoleon because it destroyed the bulk of the French armed forces, exposed Napoleon's personal weaknesses, and dramatically eroded his support among the French people.

- Abraham Lincoln was a great president because of his great compassion, skill as an orator and writer, and ultimately freeing the slaves via the Emancipation Proclamation.
- Soccer is the perfect sport because it is played worldwide, offers a high amount of exercise, and can be played with very little equipment.
- Reading for pleasure improves academic performance by reducing stress, increasing vocabulary, and enhancing memory.
- Students should walk or ride their bikes to school because it promotes physical health, it is good for the environment, and it helps build connections to the local community.

### **Station 3. Thesis Rewrite**

Rewrite Forum: <https://qr.go.page.link/uaACd>



### **Station 4. Thesis CSI**

Evidence pieces: <https://qr.go.page.link/uLT9A>



Adapted from: Tucker, C. (2015, February 10). Thesis Statement Throwdown! Retrieved from <https://catlintonucker.com/2015/02/thesis-statement-throwdown/>

## **APPENDIX G. PEER REVIEW WORKSHEET**

Step 1: Read through the paper without making any corrections, but for understanding. What was your initial impression of the paper? How did the author help you understand their stance? (Write 1-2 sentences).

Step 2: Read through the paper a second time. Underline and label the thesis, the main points, and something you like.

Step 3: How can the author improve their essay? For instance: organization, flow, order of main points, details supporting main points, etc. (Write 1-2 sentences).

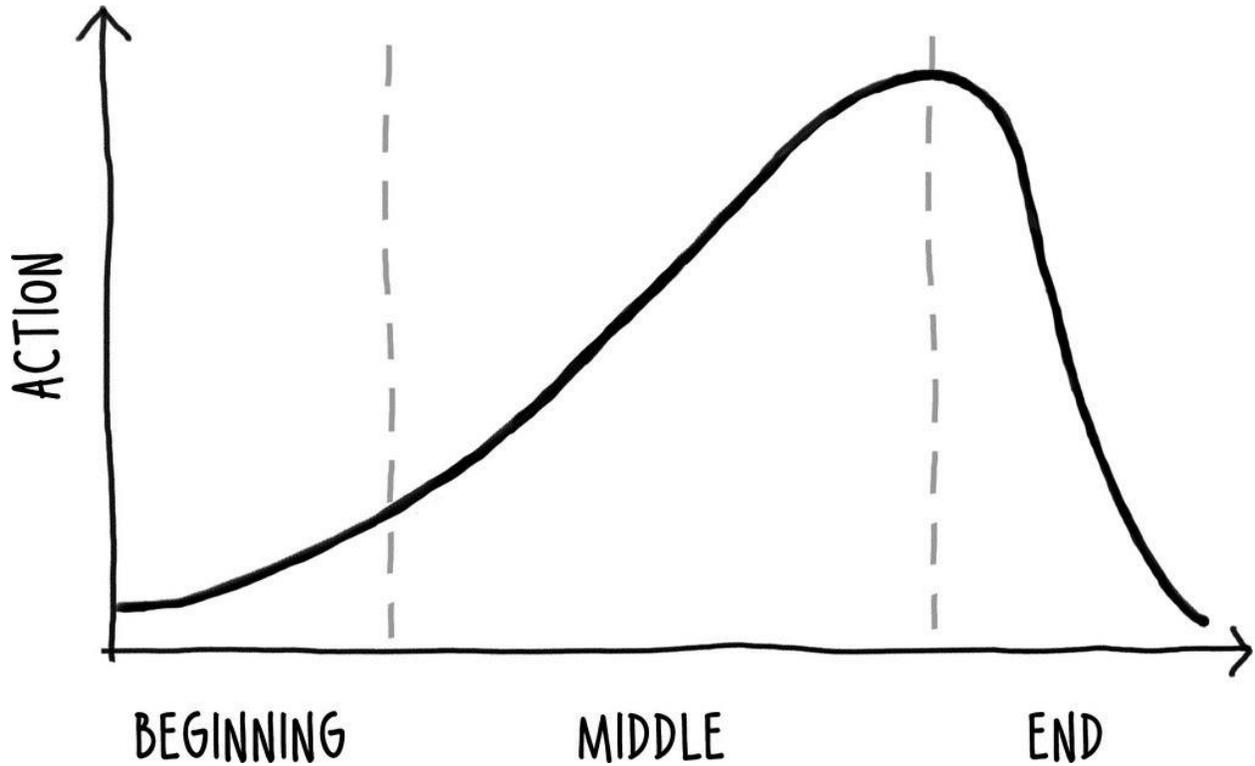
## APPENDIX H. ANNOTATING HELPSHEET

As you work with your text, consider all of the ways that you can connect with it. Here are some suggestions that will help you with your brainstorming:

- Vocabulary—define words or slang; make them real for us; explore why the author would have used those words.
- Make connections to other parts of the book. Don't be afraid to use quotes—just use MLA style.
- Make connections to other visual and graphic material, such as movies; comics; news events; and books, stories, plays, poems, and so on that you have read.
- For visual connections, include the artwork, photo, or drawing in the footnotes (don't just describe it).
- Rewrite, paraphrase, or summarize a particularly difficult part of the text.
- Make connections to your life.
- Give the historical context of situations described.
- Give an explanation of the text for clarity.
- Give an analysis of what is happening in the text.
- Do research on the Internet to see what others are saying about the text.
- Challenge yourself: Find some literary criticism on the author or text.

## APPENDIX I. STORY ARC WORKSHEET

Follow along and label the different parts. On the arc. As you read your lit circle book, identify what sections of the book belong to or signal what section in the story arc.



## APPENDIX J. THEME WORKSHEET

What is the Theme?

A theme is a central message of a story that the author wishes to convey to the reader. A story may have multiple themes.

Directions: Listed below are common themes. Mark the top three themes that relate to the short stories in the appropriate columns. At least two themes must be different between each story. Identify one quote per theme per story. On the back of this sheet, write a paragraph per story describing how your chosen themes relate to the text. Include one quote per short story in each paragraph.

	Short Story 1	Short Story 2		Short Story 1	Short Story 2
Courage			Violence		
Faith			Unhappiness		
Family			War		
Friendship			Death		
Growing Up			Love		
Hope			Identity		
Prejudice			Independence		
Success			Loyalty		
Trust			Forgiveness		
Truth			Hate		

Short Story 1 Quotes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Short Story 2 Quotes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## APPENDIX K. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

Well-written characters are complex and change over the course of the story. List three personality traits and give evidence (what happened in the story) to support each trait.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How these traits change over the course of the text?

What influenced the change(s)?

What lesson can you learn from these changes?

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