Elements of Literature
By Melissa Williamson

Unit 1 – Coming of Age Fiction

Reading Schedule

Peter Pan - J. M. Barrie

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Assignments:

Daily

Keep a daily reading journal. Write a 1- to 2-paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Then answer the questions assigned for each day of the week.

Week 1

- Monday: Who would you choose to identify as the protagonist(s)? Why?
- Tuesday: What is the problem the protagonist(s) is facing?
- Wednesday: Do you still feel your choice from Monday is accurate? Why or why not?
- Thursday: How is the protagonist(s) you chose dealing with the problem of growing up? Do you agree or disagree with the choices they are making?
- Friday: Create your own protagonist. List character attributes they have. Give them a name which reflects these attributes. After choosing a name and making a list, write 1-2 paragraphs about who this character is in personality only.

Week 2

- Monday: Who would you choose to identify as the antagonist(s)? Why?
- Tuesday: What is the problem the antagonist(s) is creating for the protagonist?
Teaching Information

Genre: Coming-of-Age Stories

Genre is the word we use to talk about the category of writing within which a literary work fits. Almost all literature fits within more than one genre. We will focus on a different genre with each unit.

Coming-of-Age stories are an extremely popular genre for older elementary and young-adult fiction. These stories can have any type of setting, be it historical, mythological, or contemporary. These stories will always contain a child-hero who must go through some type of personal experience which will grow them emotionally. Many times, the event is so important that the character appears to leave childhood behind by the end of the work.

Peter Pan is a classic coming-of-age story where the heroine is battling the idea of what it means to grow up. She does not like the idea and is thrilled with the opportunity to travel to a magical place where she would not actually have to get any older. While there are adventures to be had, the overarching theme of the novel is that we all have to move through the seasons of life. It may be uncomfortable or unpleasant at times, but it is the way God created our lives to progress.

Many students in this age are struggling with the same feelings. They know they cannot stop the growing-up process, but it isn’t always something they are excited about. Leaving behind favorite toys or past times may be bittersweet and difficult. Peter Pan explores these feelings and gives the reader permission to keep part of their childhood with them even as they grow.

Literary Element: Character

Possibly the most important aspect of a written work are the characters. Through characters we visualize the scenes played out in our imaginations with emotion. While students are familiar with the idea of characters in a story, they must begin to analyze those characters in a thoughtful way. The first step in this process is identifying them with literary terminology.

The protagonist is the one the story is mostly about or who must deal with the main conflict in the story. The author intends for the protagonist to evoke empathy from the reader. While the protagonist in classic literature is almost exclusively considered the hero or heroine, this is changing in more modern works. Authors are now exploring the traditional villains as protagonists, giving reasons for why they behave the way they do. This shifting of perspective is unique to modern storytelling and reflects the tendency to rationalize sinful behaviors in current western culture.

The antagonist is the person who creates conflict for the protagonist. Traditionally, this would be the story’s villain. The antagonist may be obvious from the start or be a surprise revealed toward
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Week One: Coming-of-Age Fiction and Characters
Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie

Monday:
Read: Chapter 1
Assignment: Write a 1- to 2-paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Who would you choose to identify as the protagonist(s)? Why?

Tuesday
Read: Chapter 2
Assignment: Write a 1- to 2-paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. What is the problem the protagonist(s) is facing?

Wednesday
Read: Chapter 3
Assignment: Write a 1- to 2-paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Do you still feel your choice from Monday is accurate? Why or why not?

Thursday
Read: Chapter 4
Assignment: Write a 1- to 2-paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. How is the protagonist(s) you chose dealing with the problem of growing up? Do you agree or disagree with the choices they are making?

Friday
Read: Finish weekly reading.
Assignment: Create your own protagonist. List character attributes they have. Give them a name which reflects these attributes. After choosing a name and making a list, write 1-2 paragraphs about who this character is in personality only.
Devotional Option

Scripture: Proverbs 22:1

Consider: Why is being known for having good character traits better than wealth and riches?
Week Two: Coming-of-Age Fiction and Characters

*Peter Pan* by J. M. Barrie

Monday

Read: Chapter 5

Assignment: Write a 1- to 2-paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Who would you choose to identify as the antagonist(s)? Why?

Tuesday

Read: Chapter 6

Assignment: Write a 1- to 2-paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. What is the problem the antagonist(s) creating for the protagonist?

Wednesday

Read: Chapter 7

Assignment: Write a 1- to 2-paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Why is the antagonist(s) interested in creating problems for the protagonist?

Thursday

Read: Chapter 8

Assignment: Write a 1- to 2-paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. What is influencing the decisions the antagonist(s) is making?

Friday

Read: Finish weekly reading.

Assignment: Create an antagonist for your protagonist and list their character qualities. Create a name which reflects their character. Write 1-2 paragraphs which tell who the antagonist is in personality only. Do not refer to the protagonist in this writing.

**Devotional Option**

Scripture: Proverbs 24:17 and Proverbs 25:21

Consider: How should we respond when someone who is our enemy is struggling?