

**There's No Place Like Home:  
Discovering Our American Home Identity  
ENGL 7408 Unit Rationale  
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## Introduction

The term American literature summons many rote images and ideas. American literature can be works of patriotism and fervor—Longfellow’s gallant, sentimental account of Paul Revere’s ride, for example, or Lincoln’s impassioned appeal to the crowds at Gettysburg are prime examples. American literature, too, tells countless stories of disillusionment and pain, as it traces the tragedy of Ethan Frome, the failure of Willie the salesman, or the wild, gaudy, sinisterly attractive desperation of Gatsby. However, the beauty of American Literature does not necessarily lie in its content, but rather in the diversity of voices that call America home.

Through this unit, I will facilitate an inquiry into the places giving root to these stories. I have designed this unit as an entry point for students to think about the evolution of the American voice as it relates to the home in particular. By reading and discussing two anchor texts—Sandra Cisneros’s *The House on Mango Street* and Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*—students will hear how two adolescent girls develop a “home identity” in non-traditional environments. Throughout my unit, I will use the term “home identity” to refer to a person’s awareness of the place where they feel most comfortable and safe, the place where one has the freedom to grow in their own cultural and social identity. To supplement our discussions, I will rely on the poetry of Anne Bradstreet, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Edgar Albert Guest, Grace Paley, and Terry Wolverton, as well as the short stories “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner and “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker. These additional readings will enhance our awareness of the many meanings tied to the word “home.” After entering a conversation with these texts by using free response journals and a longer narrative essay, and after completing a creative assignment, students will have both a language and a forum for sharing how they

conceptualize home in their cultural context and an appreciation for the diverse homes of America.

## **Texts**

I have chosen anchor texts for this unit based on several criteria. First, I wanted students to interact with longer texts in which the main character obviously depends on a home in the creation of their cultural identity. Second, I wanted to select texts including diverse, non-traditional constructions of home. Although I expect every student to relate to the stories in these texts on some level, they should also encounter ideas or constructions of literal and figurative homes that differ from their own. Third, I looked for texts by American authors of proven literary merit, based on critical acclaim and use in English/ Language Arts curricula in the past. I realize that *The Secret Life of Bees* is a new addition to the usual ELA canon, but its unique format coupled with rich themes of true home and ultimate racial equality make this *New York Times* bestseller by award-winning author Sue Monk Kidd an excellent choice for more reluctant readers. *The House on Mango Street*'s author, Sandra Cisneros, has served as a visiting writer at many universities. Cisneros writes in short, seemingly simple vignettes, but the questions and longings voiced by the Latina narrator Esperanza echo into the experience of any adolescent.

Both *The Secret Life of Bees* and *The House on Mango Street* center on a young female protagonist who learns about home from the position of intense emotional, social, and cultural struggle. Lily Owens, whose journeys Kidd chronicles, escapes from an oppressive home environment to live with three women who teach her about a culture decidedly different from her own. Cisneros's Esperanza copes with her longing for a home outside of what she knows—a small, run-down house in the midst of a poor, Mexican-American neighborhood outside of

Chicago. *Secret Life of Bees*, set in South Carolina during the Civil Rights Movement, may describe a setting more familiar to my Georgia students than a crowded barrio in Chicago, but neither story hinges on what my students will usually encounter at home. Rather, the distance of these narratives will give my students to visit homes they may never see in metro Atlanta, and they will have the opportunity to grow in their understanding and appreciation of the mosaic of cultures thriving in America.

Although the protagonists in both of the novels I have chosen are adolescents, they do confront difficult and sometimes graphic circumstances that require maturity to process. I expect that some of my students, like Lily, have encountered domestic abuse, racially motivated violence, and even accidental homicide. Other students may find Esperanza's descriptions of sexual assault all too familiar to their own juvenile experience. I do not expect all of my students to have encountered these societal horrors by the eleventh grade. However, I do expect my students to approach such themes with appropriate respect for how such issues have affected their peers. I firmly believe that, if my students can discuss the difficult societal issues encountered by Lily and Esperanza with maturity, they will finish this unit having deepened in their intellectual ability to cope with the darker side of human motivation.

Before, and during, our conversation with *The Secret Life of Bees* and *The House on Mango Street*, I will expose students to American constructs of home life through our reading, discussion, and analysis of the poetry of Anne Bradstreet, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Terry Wolverton, Edgar Albert Guest, and Grace Paley. Most of the poems I have selected have themes that will prompt students to think about what they value about their own homes and what they may value in the homes they will construct as young adults. One poem, "Foster Care" by Terry Wolverton, will require students to think about a non-traditional, but fully American,

experience with home life, similar to the images they will encounter in our two anchor texts. In the Georgia Performance Standards for high school American Literature, standard ELAALRL3 requires that “The student deepens understanding of literary works by relating them to their contemporary context or historical background, as well as to works from other time periods.”

The standard also asks the following of our curriculum:

The student compares and contrasts specific characteristics of different genres as they develop and change over time for different purposes (i.e., personal, meditative Colonial writing vs. public, political documents of the Revolutionary era, or replication of traditional European styles [Bradstreet, Taylor] vs. emerging distinctive American style [Dickinson, Whitman] in poetry).

As we read these poems, we will note how the language and poetic structure used to describe home shifts from the colonial writing of Bradstreet to the experimental, iconic lines of Whitman and Dickinson, to the traditional emphasis of Guest, to the more recent voices of Paley and Wolverton. Students will have the opportunity to relate the sentiments and ideas expressed by these poets to their own experience of the American home.

The short stories included in this unit, like the poetry, will enhance and deepen our dialogue surrounding the idea of home and how this idea has evolved throughout American history as recorded in American fiction. Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” will segue into conversation about what homes mean to us as individuals, and the consequences of insular, agoraphobic living—the dependence on home gone awry. Reading Walker’s “Everyday Use” allows students to experience home through the eyes of both a mother and her daughters, with a distinct emphasis on the things in our homes that function as part of our cultural identity.

## Goals

I have designed three unit goals with the belief that these goals will aid students in their synthesis of our discussion of the American home. A free-response journal will serve as a medium for students to converse with the texts they read and as a log to jot down specific details that will help them to construct texts for other goals. An extended definition essay assignment allows students to use observations they have gleaned from our texts to comment on and analyze their own home identity in America, and to draw generalizations from these observations. At the end of the unit, students will translate written language from our texts into a visual representation of one of the American homes they have encountered by creating a “body biography” (Smagorinsky, 2008, p. 37). This final goal asks students to comment on what home means to other people and asks them to decide which specific details make a house a home.

I have chosen to assign a free-response journal and personal narrative writing assignments with the knowledge that some parents would rather their students not participate in personal reflection monitored or encouraged by a public school teacher. My own parents had similar misgivings when I attended public school in Georgia, and I know that their fear of me adopting inappropriate or harmful viewpoints fueled these misgivings. However, I would like to make the distinction between encouragement and indoctrination. I will never ask a student to share any ideas or thoughts they do not feel comfortable sharing, and I encourage parents to routinely ask students about what they are writing and discussing in class. As part of our unit, we will talk about how home can be a safe place to grow in our understanding of our place in society and of our cultural heritage, and I encourage parents to pursue this crucial step in identity formation with their students. However, I believe that each student can enhance their peers’ understanding of the diversity of American society by sharing their personal stories. According

to Hillocks in his book *Narrative Writing* (2007), “The experiences we have are the basis of our dispositions, our worldviews, our characters, our ways of thinking, and our ability to undertake and integrate new experiences. They are, in every meaningful sense, who we are” (p. 1). Hillocks goes on to explain the importance of sharing these experiences through writing:

I believe that writing about an experience allows us to reflect on that experience and helps bring it into perspective as a part of our developing lives and life stories whether the reflection appears in the work or not. Writing about an experience helps transform it from what may appear at the time to be a life-shattering event to a more objective memory that can be viewed in the context of other events and integrated with other experiences to be understood in a different way. (p. 2)

In the context of our unit, free-response journaling and construction of narrative about home identity will give students the chance to share who they have become and who that person is in relation to their surroundings. I would argue that this skill is indispensable as they prepare for the highly individualistic writing required on most college and job applications, and as they solidify their role in their national society.

The home-centered body biography assignment, which I have adapted from a suggestion in Peter Smagorinsky’s *Teaching English by Design*, caters to students who have strong spatial intelligence, as espoused by Howard Gardner (1983). Whereas the other two goals focus on intrapersonal intelligence and rely heavily on a student’s ability to perform introspective tasks, the home biography functions as way for students to exercise creative and artistic skills to synthesize and present concepts they have learned. Students will somehow build a three-dimensional representation of a home discussed in either one of the anchor texts or a home



highlighting features found in several of our supplemental texts. In building these models, they will focus on the physical aspects of the home that represent a deeper understanding of the character's home identity. Because we will spend most of the unit discussing home as a physical space, I believe that having students actually construct a physical space is fitting activity to assess their awareness of the American home as presented in our texts.

### **Why focus on home?**

In the Georgia Performance Standards for ninth through twelfth-grade American Literature, standard ELAALRL2 lists the following expectations for student academic and intellectual growth:

The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of theme in a work of American literature and provides evidence from the work to support understanding. The student: a. Applies knowledge of the concept that the theme or meaning of a selection represents a universal view or comment on life or society and provides support from the text for the identified theme. b. Analyzes and compares texts that express universal themes characteristic of American literature across time and genre (i.e., American individualism, the American dream, cultural diversity, and tolerance) and provides support from the texts for the identified themes.

My unit gives students the opportunity to “identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the theme” of home life using supporting texts that represent diverse representations of this universal theme. In searching for relevant, universal themes in American literature, I stumbled upon the recurring idea of the physical house as representative of a character's social and cultural identity. Because America is our home, it makes sense for students to begin with a discussion of home as the foundation of their understanding of American literature. Most teenage students think that, if

nothing else, they understand their home and the rules and cultural norms therein. In fact, many students begin rebelling against the norms of home life in their adolescent years, and I theorize that this rebellion happens because students have studied their homes to the point where they can make a reasonably intellectual articulation of what they like and dislike. In eleventh grade, students can sense that they will soon have the opportunity to leave the home of their parents and begin creating a home of their own, taking with them the habits and norms of home life they appreciate from their upbringing. However, as they leave their childhood home, they must learn how to adapt to, understand—or at least, appreciate—the differing home identities of friends, roommates, and eventually, spouses. I believe that this unit's focus on the diversity of the American home will provide students with the appropriate language to navigate their assimilation into the wider, national idea of home as they accept and reject preferences and blossom into a new, individual home identity.

Works Cited

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### Goal #1: FRJ—Free Response Journal

To really understand and appreciate a text, it is helpful to measure events in the text against your own experience. You can also learn from the emotions a text evokes within you. To record this process, you will be keeping a free response journal (FRJ) in a composition book. You should allow some or all of the following entry points to enhance your reflection:

- Quotes you notice from the reading—the words that speak to you or say something you deem important
- Art (draw pictures)—if it helps you to picture the scene, draw it out. Or, draw what you think of when you read.
- Words—this assignment does not require you to use correct grammar or complex sentence construction. Rather, I would like you to feel free to write what comes to mind when you read the text.

Be creative. Use whatever formats help you to get your thoughts on paper. These may include, but are not limited to, sketches, diagrams, charts, and timelines (or plot lines). As you engage the text, think about ways the characters feel about their environment. What do they say about their home, and what meaning does their home carry in other areas of their lives?

Please make at least three entries in your FRJ each week. Each entry should address a different thought, or series of thoughts, that arise when you read. An entry should take up no less than two pages in your composition book. Please try to have at least a page and a half of original thought for each entry—quotes from the readings do not count as original thought. If you choose to express your thoughts through drawings or charts, please spend at least a page free writing about these contributions.

I will collect journals at the end of each week and will return them to you at the beginning of the next week.

When you make an entry, write the title of the work you are reading and the work's author at the top of the first page. As you comment on the text, try to write down page numbers for specific examples or quotes you include. This will help you as you work toward other projects and assignments, and it will help you to use specifics as we discuss these ideas in class.

Part of your grade for this assignment will be based on how you use this journal to promote discussion in class. Thus, I will ask you to pick at least one day to share an observation you have written in your journal. We will use your unique observation as a way to enter discussion. As a class, we value what you have to say from your own experience and unique perspective.

Note: I am required to disclose any information you share in your journal that may indicate potential harm to you or another person. If you do not want me to read the content of a page, please draw an "X" at the top of that page.

Rubric for FRJ (to be completed by the teacher at the end of each of the first two weeks of the unit)

**The student completes the required number of entries (3) per week.**

No entries=0 points; 1 entry= 10 points; 2 entries=15 points; 3 entries=25 points

**The student's completed entries reach the required length.**

Never=10 points; Sometimes=15 points; Always=25 points

**The student's completed response shows that they have read the assigned reading.**

Never=10 points; Sometimes=15 points; Always=25 points

**The student engages the reading in creative ways.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Disagree

Strongly Agree

**At some point during the unit, the student uses an example from their FRJ to launch or revive classroom discussion.**

Agree=10 points

## Goal #2: Extended Definition Essay on Home

Over the past few weeks, we have been reading about American people and their homes, as represented by poets, novels, and thinkers of the past and present. You have been recording your personal thoughts about these images in your FRJs, and we have discussed these ideas about homes in your small groups and in our classroom talks. You have also written narratives about times that you have felt at home and the characteristics of your surroundings at that time.

You will now work to construct your own definition of home based on what you have read over the past two weeks. It is up to you to come up with criteria for what makes a home, but I encourage you to use examples from our texts, our discussions, and your FRJ.

Think about how the characters in the story or writer of a work we have read view their home. You may wish to consider the following questions as you look at the texts we have discussed:

- What picture does the author paint of a home?
- How does the character/writer feel about their home?
- How does the character/writer contrast their home with other homes?
- Is home a place of safety for this character? Is it a place where they are challenged?
- How does their view of home differ from the views of other characters in the story?
- How is the author's view of home similar to or different from your view of home? You may wish to use

You will write 3-4 pages explaining your definition of home in a well-organized essay.

Please locate at least 3 quotes from the works we have read to weave into your discussion. These quotations should provide support for your argument and should fit seamlessly with the rest of your paper. When you use a quote for an example, you need to let me know where you found the quote.

For example, if you decide to use a quote from *The House on Mango Street*, you would cite the quote like this:

“quote” (Cisneros [page number here])

If you use a quote from a poem, you will give me the line number instead of the page number.

You may wish to use an **epigraph** at the beginning of your paper to anchor your ideas about home. Find a quote from one of the works we have read that seems to most express how you feel about what home really is. When you write your final draft, you can type this quote at the very beginning of your essay, before you even begin your introductory paragraph. This will give me a better idea of how you plan to define home. Please let me know if you have questions about this process.

Rubric for Goal #2—Extended Definition Essay\*

**Competent (C):**

The student uses conventions of English grammar.

The student has a thesis statement or controlling idea stated in the paper.

The student includes three quotes from their chosen work, cited appropriately (MLA).

The student meets the required page length.

The student includes a discussion of the indicated theme (the student's definition of home based on readings and personal experience).

**Skillful (B):**

The student varies his or her sentence structure often and uses creative vocabulary.

The student lists and expands on evidence found in the text and discovered from his or her personal reflection.

The student uses the quotes he or she has taken from the text to support his or her evidence.

The student has developed his or her ideas within the required page length. Most of the writing is relevant to the controlling idea of the paper, and the student has taken time to develop evidence and include specific details.

The student's discussion of the indicated theme flows throughout the entire essay.

**Distinctive (A):**

The student experiments with sentence and paragraph structure to suit the tone of his or her writing and has an obvious grasp of advanced vocabulary.

The student uses evidence to clearly support his or her thesis or controlling idea. Body paragraphs each contain a single, well-developed piece of evidence.

All of the student's writing is relevant to the controlling idea. The paper is not too long or too short.

The student chooses quotes from the text that clearly advance the reader's understanding of the student's argument.

The student's discussion reflects a firm grasp on their controlling idea throughout the entire paper, and the student uses unique, effective arguments to support this idea. The structure of the paper works well with the nature of the thesis.

\*I have borrowed the rubric structure and headings from the First Year Composition rubric listed on the University of Georgia's English Department website (<http://web.english.uga.edu/newsite/fyc/rubrics/rubrics.html>).

### Goal #3: Building a Home of Your Own

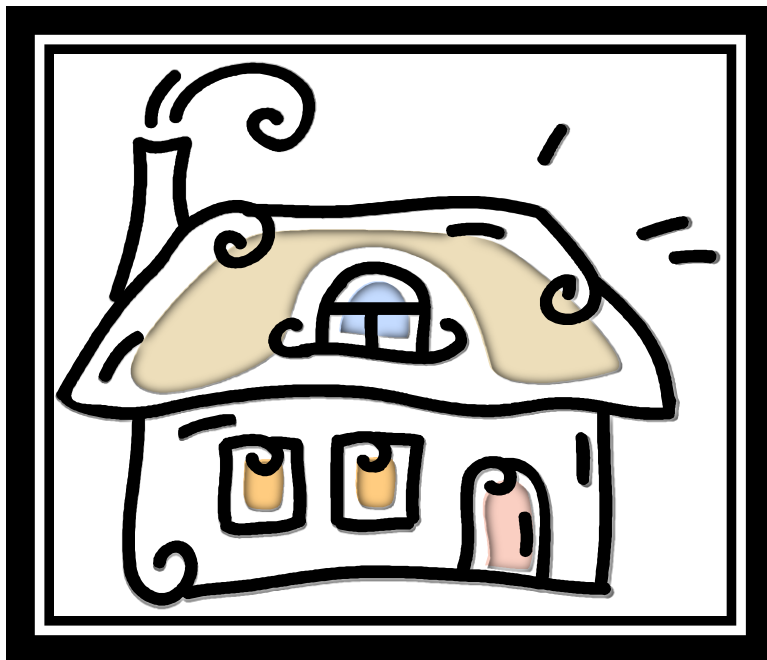
As a class, we have talked about what makes a house a home, and what home may mean to different people in different stages of life.

Your task is to synthesize these observations by re-creating the home of one of the characters we have encountered. You may use any medium you wish, but the home should be 3D in some way. Keep the following criteria in mind as you build the home:

- Your home should somehow incorporate information about the character and their hometown. Use your FRJ if you are having trouble remembering details.
- You should represent and label at least seven attributes of the home and explain why these attributes are important to the character's definition of home. These attributes may include members of the character's family, but at least half of the attributes should be non-human. Compare these attributes to aspects of your own home. Explain any differences or similarities.

Your home does NOT have to resemble a conventional American house. The structure you create must provide (on a teeny-tiny scale, probably) the basic human needs we discussed earlier in the unit.

Be creative! We will have a presentation day for you to share your homes with your classmates. Part of your grade will be based on the creativity of your presentation and your ability to communicate the work you have done with your classmates. Use this time to share how you have approached this project in a unique way.





Rubric for Goal #3: Building a Home of Your Own (rubric to be completed by the teacher)

**The student has created a 3-D representation of a home.**

0 Points

30 points

Disagree

Strongly Agree

**The student has used one of the homes from our texts as the basis for his or her model, and aspects of the home reflect his or her specific choice. The student uses specific details from the text to inform the design of the home.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Disagree

Somewhat Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**The student has used creative materials to build his or her project. The student represents the idea of home in a creative way.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Disagree

Somewhat Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**The student has included and labeled at least seven attributes that make this home a home, according to his or her observation and the observations listed in the text.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Disagree

Somewhat Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**The student can explain why these attributes relate to the home he or she has created, and he or she discusses why these attributes reflect or differ from his or her personal definition of home.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree

Somewhat Agree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**In their presentation to the class, the student uses clear language to describe his or her creation.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

### **Introductory Activity (designed for 90 minute block schedule)**

*Teacher Preparation: Collect and print a picture of a house for every student in the class plus a few extra. Some may be repeated. Make sure that no pictures would potentially offend or cause a student discomfort (for example, a photo of a mobile home may make a student who lives in a mobile home uncomfortable and sets up a potentially offensive conversation). Try to choose iconic or historical photos. Examples of photos are provided following the activity description.*

*Supplies:*

*--Several photographs of homes (enough for the class plus a few extra)*

*--Sheets of butcher paper or giant notepad paper (one for each group)*

*--Markers*

Each student should choose a picture of a house from the pile in the front of the room. Once you have chosen your picture, return to your desk. Study the photograph carefully. What do you notice about the house? What makes this house unique?

After studying the photograph, spend some time (20-30 min.) writing down your thoughts. First, describe what the house looks like. You can discuss colors, architecture, landscaping, and/or building materials. Next, describe the type of person you think would live in this house. You can discuss what you think he or she values based on the outside of the home. Last, write about what you think would make this house a good home.

After you have written these thoughts, take turns in your group presenting your photograph. Explain what you found interesting or unique about the house, what type of person you think would live in this house, and what would make this house a good home. When each person has presented their photograph, work together as a group to develop a definition of the word home based on your observations and thoughts about the photographs. Write this definition on the butcher paper I have provided.

(after presentation of definitions)

Write down your answers to the following questions, then share one of your answers with your group.

1. What do you think is more important, the outside of a house or the inside of a house?
2. What do you like best about your own home?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like someone did not understand how you do things at your house? Have you ever felt uncomfortable while visiting a house besides your own? If yes, why do you think you felt uncomfortable?





















## ***There's No Place Like Home: Finding Our American Home Identity***

### ***Lesson Plans***

**My unit is based on three weeks of class under block scheduling. Thus, I will meet with my students five days a week for 90 minutes each day.**

(Note: For the purposes of this assignment, I have not included my introductory activity, which I would implement on the first day of the unit. I refer to this activity in my plans for Day Two.)

### ***Day One***

(Before class, the teacher will move desks into groups of 3 and 4. For today, the people seated together will function as a discussion group when referenced in the plans.)

3 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping

15 minutes: Students will retrieve their copies of Sue Monk Kidd's novel, *The Secret Life of Bees*. They will read (skim, if necessary) pages 1-8 of the book.

2-3 minutes: The teacher will give a brief overview of what she expects from discussion groups and proper discussion etiquette. Students will have an opportunity during week two to give the teacher feedback on how they feel their discussion groups are working.

15 minutes: In discussion groups, students will list characteristics of Lily's house and her home life that they can glean from the pages they have read. They should consider what kind of home they think Lily has and how the people in her home interact.

10-15 minutes: Students will have the opportunity to share the lists they've made with the entire class. As a class, we will note observations that overlap and observations that seem unique or troubling.

15-20 minutes: The teacher will introduce the concept of Free Response Journals and go over the goal assignment sheet (see goals) with the class. The teacher will provide examples of the range of possible entries (art, poetry, prose, etc.) and proper parenthetical documentation for quotes and paraphrasing (see corresponding handout). She will highlight her policy for reporting any troubling/dangerous student writing.

24 minutes (or the rest of the period): Students will have a chance to begin reading *The Secret Life of Bees* and making their first entry in their FRJs. Students will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the FRJ during this time.

Homework: Students should read the first three chapters of *The Secret Life of Bees* and make their first FRJ entry.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *Were students able to read quickly?*
2. *Did the self-assigned groups work well, or should the teacher step in and make assigned groups?*
3. *Did the students seem receptive to the idea of a FRJ?*

## **Day Two**

(Desks are arranged in small groups of 3 or 4 at the beginning of class.)

3 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

15 minutes: Students will have a small group discussion based on the reading assignment for the previous night. Students should base their discussion on what they wrote in their Free Response Journal. They should each share what they found most surprising or interesting about the first three chapters of *The Secret Life of Bees*.

5-10 minutes: Move all desks into a large circle in the middle of the room. Students will bring their written responses from the questions asked during the Introductory Activity.

20-30 minutes: Circle discussion-- Teacher prompts students to share an insight based on what they wrote in their FRJ. When all students who want to share have done so, the teacher will guide the discussion by referring to the third question from the introductory activity. The teacher will use the following questions to frame discussion based on what the students have already considered in their written response:

1. Why do we feel uncomfortable in other people's houses?
2. What makes us feel at home in other people's houses?
3. Do you think that Lily feels at home? Why, or why not, and where do you see this in the book?

20-30 minutes: Chalk talk on the word "home" – the teacher will write the word "home" on the chalkboard or dry-erase board. She will provide the students with three writing implements. The teacher will explain that students will take turns silently writing comments about home that branch off the word on the board. She will explain that these comments should not be intentionally offensive, and responses can be drawn or written out (Note: teacher should make sure that all students have a clear path to the board. If there are two white boards or

chalkboards, the teacher may split the class into two groups for easier accessibility). The students will spend the remainder of this time chalk –talking.

Remainder of Class: Debriefing of chalk talk. On a large sheet of butcher paper, teacher will list definitions of home that the class as a whole decides to be legitimate and/or provocative.

Homework: Students will read chapters 4-5 of *The Secret Life of Bees*.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *How did discussion groups go today?*
2. *Did moving the desks interrupt the class too much, or were students able to handle the shuffling well?*
3. *Which students seemed comfortable with the circle discussion? Which students were hesitant to get involved?*
4. *Was the chalk talk successful? How would you change this activity to better accommodate your classroom and your students' individual strengths?*

**Day Three**

(Desks already grouped in usual 3s and 4s)

3 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

15 minutes: Small group discussions of last night's reading. Students should ask, "How is Lily's home life changing? What problems has she encountered in leaving her traditional home?"

10 minutes: Whole class discussion based on answers discovered in small group discussion. Students will have the chance to share specific insights from their FRJs.

10 minutes: The teacher will explain that a found poem is a poem created from words in a text that are rearranged to create new meaning. Students will divide into pairs or trios (they will stay with their discussion group if a group of three, but divide if a group of four).

30-40 minutes: Students will work in pairs or trios and use chapters 1-5 of *The Secret Life of Bees* to create a found poem with the main idea of home, identity, or both home and identity.

15-20 minutes: Students will have the opportunity to share their found poems with the rest of the class and listen to their peers' feedback.

Remainder of Period: Students should spend time reading chapters 6-7 of *The Secret Life of Bees* and working in their FRJs.

Homework: Students should finish reading chapters 6-7 of *The Secret Life of Bees*.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *How did discussion groups go today?*
2. *Were students able to share insights from their FRJ? Can you tell whether students are actually writing in their FRJs?*
3. *What did you notice about students' recognition of the term "theme" when they wrote their found poem? Would you do this activity again?*

**Day Four**

(The teacher will have desks arranged in groups of 3 and 4.)

3 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

5-10 minutes: Students should turn to their neighbor and work in pairs, sharing something interesting they have discovered about Sue Monk Kidd's writing style in the first seven chapters.

10 minutes: The teacher will explain that students should take out a few sheets of paper. The teacher will ask students to think of a time when they felt most at home, and then write a narrative (assuming that narrative has been explained earlier in the school year; if not, narrative writing instruction should precede this assignment) about that time. The teacher will explain that students are welcome and encouraged to use dialogue and lots of detail. She will also let students know that they will be sharing these narratives with their group, and that they should be prepared to have each member of the group either bless (give praise), press (suggest improvements), address (suggest improvements in a certain area specified by the writer), or express (explain how the story relates to their own experience) based on the writer's choice (see attached handout).

45 minutes: Students will work on their narratives of feeling at home.

30 minutes: Students will discuss their narratives with their small groups. Students should read at least one paragraph of their narrative aloud to the group and ask the group to Bless, Press, Address, or Express.

Homework: Students should read chapters 8-9 of *The Secret Life of Bees*.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *Did students have too much or too little time to write their narratives?*
2. *Do students understand the term "narrative?"*
3. *Were students receptive of the BPAE model of peer review? What would you change for the next time you implement this model?*

### **Day 5**

(The desks should be arranged in a large circle.)

3 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping

5 minutes: The teacher will explain the concept/ rules behind a fishbowl discussion. The teacher will explain that every student should try to take part.

20-30 minutes: Fishbowl discussion on discrimination in *The Secret Life of Bees*. Driving questions for this discussion will include:

1. Who is discriminated against in the book, and why?
2. How do you define discrimination?
3. What about the discrimination you see in the book angers you?
4. How does discrimination affect whether or not someone feels at home?

15 minutes: De-brief fishbowl discussion. The teacher should ask students what they learned from listening to their peers and ask if they have any questions about situations of discrimination in the text.

5-10 minutes: Students should move their desks back into groups of three or four.

35-40 minutes (the remainder of class): Vocab game—team Balderdash based on SAT prep vocabulary.

**Students should turn in FRJs before they leave class today!**

Homework: Students should read chapters 10-12 of *The Secret Life of Bees*.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *Were any students offended or disrespected during the discussion of discrimination?*
2. *Did students respond well to this vocabulary game? Are they learning the vocabulary?*

## **WEEK TWO**

### **Day 6**

(Desks should be arranged in groups of three and four. The teacher should have access to a television, a DVD player, and the Gina Prince-Bythewood film adaptation of *The Secret Life of Bees* on DVD. She should have already obtained parental permission forms allowing students to watch selected scenes from the film.)

3 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping

5-7 minutes: The teacher will explain that she will be showing the class one part of the movie that illustrates Lily's home with T. Ray. Students should take out paper and a writing utensil and jot down descriptions of the home—both the emotional climate and the physical structure. The teacher will also explain that, because this film has a rating of PG-13, some of the language and activities involved should not be repeated by students in the classroom out of respect.

15-20 minutes: The teacher will show the movie clip as students take notes.

10 minutes: The teacher will pause the movie and have students raise their hands to share their observations of Lily's home. She will then write these observations on a large sheet of paper taped on the wall, and she will give students the chance to share what they think about Lily's home with T. Ray.

2 minutes: The teacher will explain that she will be showing the class another clip from the movie that illustrates Lily's home with the Boatwright sisters. Students should repeat the note-taking process they started earlier.

15-20 minutes: The teacher will show the second movie clip as students take notes.

15 minutes: The teacher will stop the movie and have students raise their hands to share their observations of Lily's second dwelling as depicted by the filmmakers. The teacher will write down the students' observations on a second large sheet of paper taped to the wall. She will then give students a chance to discuss what they think about Lily's second home and how it differs from the first.

10 minutes: The teacher will ask students to retrieve their free-response journals and write about which of Lily's homes seems more like their own home and why.

5 minutes or the remainder of class: Students will fill out the Small Group Discussion 1-week evaluation (see attached).

Homework: Students should read the last two chapters (13-14) of *The Secret Life of Bees*.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *Did students pay attention and take notes during the film?*
2. *Were students willing to share their own observations with the whole class?*
3. *What do the evaluations say about the functionality of small group discussion with current groupings?*

**Day 7**

(The teacher should arrange the desks in groups of three and four.)

3 minutes: Attendance, Housekeeping

10 minutes: The teacher will ask students to spend time discussing the last two chapters of *The Secret Life of Bees* with their groups. Students should share their answer to the question, “If I were Sue Monk Kidd, would I have changed the ending of the novel? If so, how?”

5 minutes: The teacher will pass out copies of the poem “Longings for Home” by Walt Whitman and ask students to retrieve highlighters or pens. The teacher will then read the poem aloud to the class and have students underline words that relate to the speaker’s home as she reads.

10 minutes: The teacher will ask students to give her ideas for a definition of home based on what Whitman has written. She will write these ideas on a white board or a large piece of paper.

5 minutes: The teacher will pass out the poem “House: Some Instructions” by Grace Paley to half of the class and “Home” by Edgar Albert Guest to the other half of the class (all group members should have the same poem). The teacher will then ask students to work with their groups to develop a similar definition of home based on what Guest or Paley has written, depending on the poem assigned to their group. Groups should designate a speaker to share what the group develops in their definition and what parts of the poem made them choose this definition.

10-15 minutes: Students should share their groups’ definitions of home based on these two poems.

3 minutes: The teacher will ask students to retrieve their copy of the short story “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker. She will then explain that students should read through the story silently. When they are finished, or during their reading, they should make notes of

1. Which characters have pride in their home
2. What parts of the home characters cherish or find beautiful
3. What you would have said to Dee had she asked you for the family quilt

in their FRJs.

If students finish early, they should start reading from their copy of *The House on Mango Street*.

30 minutes: Students will have time to read and write in their FRJs

2 minutes: The teacher will ask students to think about one thing in their house that they would take with them to a deserted island. Students will then draw a picture or symbolic representation of this item in their FRJ along with a brief description of its importance.

13 minutes or the remainder of class: Students will draw the item, write, and then share their item and description with their small group.

Homework: Students should read vignettes starting on p.3, p.20, p.25, p. 33, p. 51, and p.76 in *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *Did I give students enough time to read the short story?*
2. *Did students work well in discussion groups today based on information from the evaluations?*
3. *Do students seem receptive to the idea of learning, reading, and writing poetry?*

## **Day 8**

(Desks should be arranged in groups of three and four.)

3 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping

10 minutes: Students will meet with their discussion groups to share which *Mango Street* vignette they liked the most and why.

5 minutes: The teacher will ask students to move their desks into a large circle so that they are all facing one another

20 minutes: The teacher will pass out copies of the article “In Search of a Place to Sleep, and News of Home” (see attached). She will ask students to volunteer to read portions of the article aloud to the rest of the class.

30 minutes: The teacher will lead a discussion about the news article. She will ask each student to answer one of the following questions aloud. She will remind students that they should be respectful of their peers by not talking when their peer talks.

*Questions:*

1. *What was the most disturbing part of this article for you?*
2. *If you knew that a giant hurricane were headed toward your house, would you want to stay or would you want to leave, and why?*
3. *If you had been one of the news reporters covering this story, how would you have reacted to the devastating scenes? What would you say to the people you met?*

5 minutes: Students should move their desks back into original groups of three and four.



10 minutes: The teacher will ask students to silently read the poem “Verses Upon the Burning of Our House- July 10, 1666” by Anne Bradstreet.

10 minutes or the remainder of class: Based on their reading of the Bradstreet poems and the Hurricane Katrina article, students should spend time jotting down thoughts in their FRJ about what they would try to save from their home if they knew it was going to be destroyed.

Homework: Students should read vignettes from *Mango Street* that start on p. 80, p. 83, p. 93, p.95, p.101, and p. 107 and make sure to enter ideas in their FRJs. They should also read Faulkner's “A Rose for Emily” and Terry Wolverton's poem “Foster Care” (see attached poetry).

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *How did students respond to the Hurricane Katrina article? Should I incorporate more news articles into my classroom discussions?*
2. *How did students respond to being asked to read aloud? Which students (if any) seemed uncomfortable with this request?*

## **Day 9**

(Desks should be arranged in groups of three or four. The teacher should have paper and markers available for each desk grouping before students arrive.)

3 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping

10 minutes: The teacher will assign students to groups of three or four (different groups from their usual discussion groups). She will then assign each group one of the *Mango Street* vignettes that the students have read for homework. The teacher will choose vignettes that specifically describe different houses on Esperanza's Mango Street. Each group will use the paper and markers provided to draw a representation of the house described in its assigned vignette. The teacher will also briefly describe the characteristics of a vignette, or (if there is time) prompt students to give suggestions for qualities of a vignette. These qualities should include descriptive language, one scene, and an intense focus on a single character or a few close characters to illustrate a larger idea.

15 minutes: As students read through the vignette and draw their picture, the teacher will set up a makeshift road in the front of the room with colored paper. She will place a sign that says “Mango Street” at one end.

15 minutes: The teacher will have the groups take turns presenting their drawings to the class and placing them on the wall where they think the house should be located based on their reading.

3 minutes: The teacher will ask students to pull out their FRJ and try to mimic Cisneros's style by writing their own short vignette about one of their neighbors or friends. The teacher will encourage students to think about what their neighbor values about their home and make this a focus in their writing.

20 minutes: Students will have time to compose their own vignettes.

20 minutes or until the end of class: Students will participate in a fishbowl discussion of “A Rose for Emily,” “Foster Care,” and *Mango Street* based on their reading from the previous night.

Driving questions for this discussion will include:

1. *What is disturbing about the home in “A Rose for Emily?” What is disturbing about the home described in “Foster Care”?*
2. *How can you tell that Emily's home was important to her?*
3. *Are houses always places of safety? Can they still be called homes if they are not safe for the residents and/or family members?*

Homework: Students should read vignettes from *Mango Street* starting on p.124, p.126, p.130, p. 132, and p. 133.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *Did students work well when placed in different groups?*
2. *How did students respond when you asked them to write their own vignette? Was more instruction on this style needed?*
3. *Should you allot more time for the ending discussion, or is the time allotted sufficient?*
4. *Were students sensitive to the situations of others during their discussion of “Foster*

*Care?"*

### **Day 10**

(Desks should be arranged in groups of three or four. The teacher should make sure to have plenty of markers, old newspapers, cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, scissors, glue, tape, etc. for her students to use, and she should also ask students to bring these items with them to class this day.)

3 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping

10 minutes: Students should spend time in discussion groups sharing their thoughts on which of the vignettes they read shared the most about Esperanza's home, and they should consider why this vignette is particularly revealing.

10 minutes: The teacher will pass out the goal assignment sheets for the Home Biography assignment (see Goals). She will read the project description with students and ask for questions. She will explain that students will have the rest of the class to plan and build their own Home Biography. If they do not finish today, they are welcome to take the projects home and finish them. These projects will be due on day 15.

Remainder of class: Students will work on their Home Biographies with consistent teacher help.

**Students should turn in FRJs before they leave class today!**

No homework assigned.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *How did students work with so much unstructured time?*
2. *Was I involved in the classroom activity, or did I sequester myself behind my desk?*
3. *Do students need more time to discuss Mango Street?*

## **WEEK THREE**

### **Day 11**

(The desks should be arranged in groups of 3-4.)

3 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

5-10 minutes: The teacher will ask students to take out a sheet of paper and will assure them that they are not having a quiz. She will then ask the students to think about all of the homes we have talked about over the past two weeks—Lily's homes with T-Ray and August, Anne

Bradstreet's home, Whitman's home in America, Grace Paley's home, Esperanza's home, Emily's home, the lost homes of people devastated by hurricane Katrina, Maggie and Mama's home in "Everyday Use," etc. They should also consider the narratives they wrote about times when they felt at home or not at home.

The teacher will then ask the students to think about what makes the houses described in these stories and poems homes. The teacher will remind the students to look again at the definitions of home posted on the wall after their chalk talk and after their discussions of poems. On their sheet of paper, they should start listing their own criteria for a home. Next to the criteria, they should list where they came up with that idea—in one of the stories? From the definitions on the wall? From their FRJ?

The teacher will explain that students should list at least 10 criteria for homes based on these sources.

20 minutes: Students will work on their criteria lists.

5-10 minutes: The teacher will pass out the goal assignment sheets for the extended definition essay (see goals). She will go over the assignment sheet with the students and explain that they will be working on this assignment in and out of class for the rest of the week. She will give the students time to ask questions about the assignment.

2-3 minutes: The teacher will pass out a sheet of unlined paper to each student and will make sure that each desk grouping has a set of markers.

10-15 minutes: The teacher will explain that students will be using the paper and markers to create an essay tree. She will use an overhead transparency or slide on a projector screen to demonstrate the parts of Barbara Kamler's tree design (from *Relocating the Personal*). The teacher will explain that each part of the tree will represent a part of their essay. In the trunk, students will write their one sentence definition of home, or they will briefly answer the question, "What is home?" In the thick branches right off the trunk, students will list the criteria of home they have come up with based on this all-conclusive definition. On the twigs and/or leaves that jut off their branches, the students will list exact details to support these criteria claims. These details can be specific instances from the texts they have read for class and/or their FRJs and personal narratives.

30 minutes (or the remainder of class): Students will work to complete their Kamler essay trees. The teacher will be available to answer questions, and students can ask questions of their peers as they work.

Homework: Students should make sure to bring all poems, texts, and an external storage device (flash drive) to class on Tuesday.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *How are students coping with the idea of an essay?*
2. *Were the Kamler trees helpful for students to begin organizing their thoughts?*
3. *Do students understand your plea for specific evidence from texts?*

## **Day 12**

(Teacher should reserve computer lab for this class period if computers are not available for the whole class in the classroom.)

3 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

10 minutes: Once students arrive in class, the teacher will ask students to gather their belongings and head to the computer lab. They should make sure to bring their flash drives, texts, and essay trees.

10 minutes: Students will settle at computer stations in the lab and log on to computers if necessary. The teacher will explain that students will begin writing an essay based on the criteria given on Monday and using their essay trees as guides. They should focus on writing introductory thoughts in a paragraph that leads in to their main definition of home (the trunk) and then write paragraphs with their branches as the topic sentences and their leaves and twigs as supporting details for these paragraphs.

70 minutes or the remainder of class: Students will spend time typing their essays. The teacher will be available for any questions or concerns voiced by students about this process.

At the end of class, students should print out 4-5 copies of what they have completed. They should give one copy to the teacher and have enough copies left for each member of their peer group. They should also save their work to their flash drives or the teacher's flash drive if they do not have one, or they can save their work on the computer's hard drive if the school allows.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *Were students able to make the transition from their Kamler trees to writing an essay?*
2. *What questions did the students ask about their writing? Is there a way I can help them to ask better questions about their writing?*

## **Day 13**

(Desks should be arranged in groups of 3-4 for peer groups. The teacher should have the computer lab reserved for the second half (last 45 minutes) of class.)

3 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

5 minutes: The teacher will ask students to get out the copies of their essays that they printed in the computer lab. She will then explain that students will work in their peer groups to apply the Bless, Press, Address, and Express (see day four) model to each group member's writing, as modeled earlier in the unit with the students' narratives (see day four). Instead of picking just one, students should choose two of these approaches to guide their peers' review of their writing.

35-40 minutes: Students will work on peer reviews guided by the BPAE model. They should take notes on their peers' comments.

5 minutes: Students should gather their belongings and the teacher will take them to the computer lab.

40 minutes or the remainder of class: Students will work to make revisions based on their peers' comments. The teacher will also pass out students' papers with brief comments based on her readings the night before so that they can use her suggestions as they revise.

Students should save their work before they leave the lab and print at least one copy of their essay. At the end of class, the teacher will explain that students will need to turn in a 3-4 page final draft by the start of class on Friday. If they need to do outside work to maintain this deadline, they should do so, but they should bring at least one paper copy of their current work to class on Thursday. She will explain that they will have 30-45 minutes in the computer lab tomorrow.

Homework: Paper revisions if needed.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *How did the BPAE model work this time around?*
2. *Do students understand the notion of revision as separate from editing? Have you made this point clear enough?*
3. *How did students respond to my comments?*

## **Day 14**

(Desks should be arranged in groups of 3-4 for peer groups. The teacher should have the computer lab reserved for the second half (last 45 minutes) of class.)

3 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

5 minutes: The teacher will place the following questions on an overhead transparency or display them on a projector screen, or she will give a copy of the questions to each peer group. These questions come from pp. 388-89 of *Dynamics of Writing Instruction*.

1. *Does the composition have an introduction that catches the reader's interest and presents the concept that will be defined? How does it establish the need for or importance of a definition of the concept?*
2. *Does the introduction present a set of criteria for defining the concept? What are the criteria presented?*
3. *For each criterion listed in #2 above, what example and contrastive example does the writer provide to clarify the criterion?*
4. *Which criteria and/or examples are difficult to understand or confusing? Explain.*
5. *What ways can you suggest to improve any of the criteria or examples and contrastive examples?*
6. *Has the writer has employed a warrant to explain how each example and contrastive example does or does not illustrate the criterion? If warrants are missing or unconvincing, how could the writer provide or improve them?*
7. *How does the writer conclude the composition?*
8. *What part of the composition is clearest or best explained? Why?*
9. *What suggestions can you make for the writer?*

*Students use these questions to guide their critiques and discussions of one another's work. Based on their discussions, they work out a plan to guide each author's revision of his or her extended definition.*

The teacher will explain that students should pair off and exchange papers. Each partner should answer these questions for their peer in writing. These answers do not need to be in complete sentences.

30-35 minutes: Students will work with their partner to answer these questions and talk about their answers with their partner.

5 minutes: Students will gather their belongings and head to the computer lab with the teacher.

40 minutes or the remainder of the class: Students will work to put finishing touches on their essays based on their peer's feedback. At the end of class, they will have the option of printing and turning in a final draft to their teacher. However, if students wish to have more time, they can work on their essays at home and turn them in on Friday.

Homework: Finish essays and home biographies

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *How did students respond to the structured questions as they completed peer review?*
2. *Were students pressed for time as they tried to finish their essays?*

3. *Do students seemed stressed by having both the essay and home biography due the same day?*

**Day 15** (Last day of unit, Home Biographies and Extended Definition Papers Due)

(Desks should be arranged to allow students to have easy access to all parts of the room.)

3 minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

5 minutes: The teacher will explain that each student will have 2-3 minutes to present their home biography.

82 minutes or the remainder of class: Each student will have the opportunity to present the home biography project he or she began on day 10 and worked on outside of class over the past week. The teacher should monitor time to make sure that every student has the chance to present.

If presentations end earlier than expected, the teacher will play vocabulary Jeopardy with SAT prep vocabulary words.

*Teacher Reflection Questions:*

1. *Was it too ambitious to have all students present in the same class period?*
2. *Did students really grasp the idea of the home biography?*
3. *What modifications can you make to this project so that it is even more effective in encouraging students to think about the symbolic aspects of home?*



(TO SUPPLEMENT DAY 8 DISCUSSION)

August 31, 2005

“In Search of a Place to Sleep, and News of Home”

By [KATE ZERNIKE](#) and [JODI WILGOREN](#)

SARALAND, Ala., Aug. 30 - Hundreds of thousands of evacuees from the New Orleans area stranded in overcrowded hotels, motels and makeshift shelters and on highways across much of the South underscored a new reality on Tuesday: an extended diaspora of a city's worth of people, one rarely seen in the annals of urban disaster.

As news spread that the devastated, largely emptied and cordoned-off New Orleans area would not be habitable until at least next week, hurricane refugees gathered in hotel lobbies and shelters around television sets beaming images of their waterlogged city and turned to cell phones and laptops, usually in vain, for information about the homes, relatives and neighbors they had left behind.

Hotels as far away as Houston (350 miles from New Orleans), Memphis (395 miles) and Little Rock (445 miles) were booked, and the American Red Cross had opened more than 230 shelters in schools, churches and civic centers spread through six Southern states.

Many found themselves wandering anew after maxing out credit cards or being forced to leave previously booked rooms.

America Williams, 34, evacuated on Sunday, piling into a sport utility vehicle with her boyfriend and 13 of his relatives - seven of them children. "They just told us to drive, to drive east or west to get as far from the storm as possible," Ms. Williams said. "Our intention was to go to Atlanta, but it was raining so hard we stopped in Birmingham."

After two nights in three \$50 rooms at a motel, the family ran out of money and moved on Tuesday to the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center, where the Red Cross had just opened a shelter. "We're down to our very last," Ms. Williams said. "We came here for some type of assistance, some type of help."

One woman spent much of the day in her car on the side of the highway here in Saraland, just north of Mobile, since her car radio was the most reliable source of information in a region where electricity remained spotty. An extended family holed up at a hotel in Lafayette, La., sent a scouting mission to Baton Rouge in search of rental property in case they remain stranded for weeks.

"We're getting almost a second shift of refugees who are trying to find new spots from the original place where they've come from," said Brady Warner, coordinator of a Red Cross shelter in Baytown, Tex., the second of three to open in the Houston area. "People are very comfortable and very happy, but they'd also really like to go home."

Sandra and Robert Allums, from Metairie, La., said they evacuated on Sunday with just some insurance papers and clothes for a few days. They booked a room at the Hampton Inn here in

Saraland, but with no electricity at the hotel and no cell phone service, they retreated to their car for its air-conditioned comfort and its radio for information. They said local radio call-in shows were the best source of information on the availability of gasoline, water and ice; some were playing audio of television news broadcasts otherwise unavailable because of power failures.

"The biggest fear is the unknown," Mr. Allums said. "We don't know how long before we can get back into our home and our work."

Three generations of the Costa family of Metairie formed a four-car caravan here at 4:30 a.m. Tuesday, leaving the Hampton Inn, where they had taken refuge from the hurricane to begin the 160-mile journey home. But a half-hour into the predawn drive, the car radio crackled with warning that no one would be allowed into the New Orleans area until Monday.

So the Costas resignedly checked back into the hotel - except for one carload, which drove on toward Disney World in Orlando, Fla., in hopes of turning nightmare into adventure. By lunchtime, the Hampton Inn still lacked electricity, so employees prepared a barbecue in the parking lot as the Costas and other guests plotted their next steps.

"We're thinking of moving north; we'll become gypsies or something like that," said one, Heidi Purnell, 50, who went to Wal-Mart for groceries only to find it was out of water. "We've left one disaster for another."

At the Best Western Richmond Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge, 80 miles from New Orleans, some 600 people - plus their pets - were crammed into the 145 guest rooms, many of them helping the short-staffed management move patio chairs from the pool area and serve free meals of cold cuts or spaghetti with breakfast sausage. Garrett Kruithof, the general manager, said one woman offered to give up one of the two rooms her family of four was occupying to make room for another refugee.

At the Red Roof Inn in Memphis, a six-hour drive from New Orleans, all 130 rooms were booked, many of them double-booked for the coming weekend, when the television show "American Idol" is taping in town.

"We don't want to tell anyone they have to check out, because where would they go?" Michelle Williams, the general manager, said. "There is nowhere else to go."

Several families cut back from three rooms to two as they ran out of cash, Ms. Williams said.

At the Hilton Lafayette and Towers, 135 miles northwest of New Orleans, Susan Zimmerman's family fills 23 rooms and has commandeered a conference room, renamed Cousins Headquarters, where they play [Texas](#) hold 'em and the Family Feud board game and gather each afternoon at 5 p.m. around the votive candles they bought at a nearby Wal-Mart to recite the rosary.

Ms. Zimmerman secured the rooms Thursday night in a four-hour online search, and said she has "104.75 people, 3 cats, 13 dogs and 6 birds" staying at the hotel, noting that one cousin is nine

months pregnant. Teenage nephews and nieces were "runners" to make sure each room got word when there was news.

"Today's been a bad day -the more news you get, the worse it gets," Ms. Zimmerman sighed, estimating that half her relatives' homes are submerged.

"My father, his name is Pops, and he's 81, and he broke down today," she said. "He cried. He said, 'I never thought that I would ever see this disaster occur that I've heard about my whole life.' "

Here at the Hampton Inn, Cookie Costas had the essentials - medicine for her husband's rheumatoid arthritis, birth certificates and passports, pictures from her granddaughter's graduation. "But I didn't pack for a week," she said. "We're not prepared for a week."

Similarly, Danny Mirovich brought "four pairs of underwear, four shirts" expecting to be away four days, maximum. But after three nights - the last without electricity - at the Hampton Inn in Tuscaloosa, Ala., 300 miles from his home in Red Ridge, La., a New Orleans suburb, Mr. Mirovich loaded his wife, three daughters and their Irish setter puppy, Rescue, back into the van on Tuesday, bound for Lynchburg, Va., 600 miles northeast.

"At \$100 a night, how long can you stay here?" Mr. Mirovich asked.

"I'm going to go to [Virginia](#) and see my folks and just make a vacation out of it," he said. "I'm going to go sit at my mama's house. If my house is ruined, there's nothing I can do about it."

Ms. Allums said she and her husband were thinking of driving north to find a place cheaper than the \$89 a night they pay here. Still, she said, they are eager to return home to rebuild their lives.

"When someone says the roots are gone, what happens to the rest of the plant?" Ms. Allums said. "It dies. New Orleans is our roots."

Kate Zernike reported from Saraland, Ala., for this article, and Jodi Wilgoren from Chicago. Gretchen Ruethling contributed reporting from Chicago.

*(see Days 4 and 13)*

**BLESS:** When you bless a peer's paper, you let them know where you felt they did a good job of sharing their ideas. Tell your peer something positive about what they have written.

**PRESS:** When you press a peer's paper, you give them constructive criticism. Let your peer know where you think they should improve their communication through what they have written. Focus on content, not grammar or punctuation. Focus on whether your peer's thoughts seem to fit together well, and share whether you think they can add more to a particular idea.

**ADDRESS:** When you address a peer's paper, you respond with constructive criticism to a problem that they bring up. For example, your peer may ask you to look for places in their writing where they should add more detail. You would then read their writing with this problem in mind.

**EXPRESS:** To express, you will make a comment on your peer's writing about how their writing spoke to you as a person. Think about ways that it connects with what you have experienced or learned in life. Share these connections with your peer.

## Small Group Discussion

## Week One Evaluation (see Day 5)

1. What has been helpful about your small group discussions?
2. What has been difficult about your small group discussions?
3. Do you feel as if you would be more active in discussion if you were to work with a different group of students?
4. Do you have anything else to tell me about your small group? If so, write your thoughts here.

**UNIT POETRY****Verses upon the Burning of our House – July 10, 1666**

by Anne Bradstreet

In silent night when rest I took,  
For sorrow near I did not look,  
I waken'd was with thund'ring noise  
And piteous shrieks of dreadful voice.  
That fearful sound of "fire" and "fire,"  
Let no man know is my Desire.  
I starting up, the light did spy,  
And to my God my heart did cry  
To straighten me in my Distress  
And not to leave me succourless.  
Then coming out, behold a space  
The flame consume my dwelling place.  
And when I could no longer look,  
I blest his grace that gave and took,  
That laid my goods now in the dust.  
Yea, so it was, and so 'twas just.  
It was his own; it was not mine.  
Far be it that I should repine,  
He might of all justly bereft  
But yet sufficient for us left.  
When by the Ruins oft I past  
My sorrowing eyes aside did cast  
And here and there the places spy  
Where oft I sate and long did lie.  
Here stood that Trunk, and there that chest,  
There lay that store I counted best,  
My pleasant things in ashes lie  
And them behold no more shall I.  
Under the roof no guest shall sit,  
Nor at thy Table eat a bit.  
No pleasant talk shall 'ere be told  
Nor things recounted done of old.  
No Candle 'ere shall shine in Thee,  
Nor bridegroom's voice ere heard shall bee.  
In silence ever shalt thou lie.  
Adieu, Adieu, All's Vanity.  
Then straight I 'gin my heart to chide:  
And did thy wealth on earth abide,  
Didst fix thy hope on mouldring dust,  
The arm of flesh didst make thy trust?

Raise up thy thoughts above the sky  
 That dunghill mists away may fly.  
 Thou hast a house on high erect  
 Fram'd by that mighty Architect,  
 With glory richly furnished  
 Stands permanent, though this be fled.  
 It's purchased and paid for too  
 By him who hath enough to do.  
 A price so vast as is unknown,  
 Yet by his gift is made thine own.  
 There's wealth enough; I need no more.  
 Farewell, my pelf; farewell, my store.  
 The world no longer let me love;  
 My hope and Treasure lies above.

### **Foster Care**

by Terry Wolverton

Each house smells of strangers:  
 cabbage boiling on the stove,  
 harsh soap at the rim of the sink,  
 starched sheets that scrape  
 against the skin in bed,  
 hard pillows shaped  
 by someone else's head,  
 rotting bananas, sweaty feet and dust.

Each time we come to a new place  
 I try to hide one shirt  
 beneath the mattress  
 just to keep the smell of home.  
 Sometimes they find it,  
 squeeze it through the wringer;  
 hid long enough, the cloth absorbs  
 the air around it, loses its memories.

My brother smells like sour milk,  
 unwashed armpits and the school paste  
 he eats. He cries  
 when they hit us; I never do.  
 Each night I hear  
 his sniffles soak the pillow.  
 Come morning, I grab the damp case,

hold it to my nose and breathe.

## Home

by Edgar Albert Guest

It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home,  
 A heap o' sun an' shadder, an' ye sometimes have t' roam  
 Afore ye really 'preciate the things ye lef' behind,  
 An' hunger fer 'em somehow, with 'em allus on yer mind.  
 It don't make any differunce how rich ye get t' be,  
 How much yer chairs an' tables cost, how great yer luxury;  
 It ain't home t' ye, though it be the palace of a king,  
 Until somehow yer soul is sort o' wrapped round everything.

Home ain't a place that gold can buy or get up in a minute;  
 Afore it's home there's got t' be a heap o' livin' in it;  
 Within the walls there's got t' be some babies born, and then  
 Right there ye've got t' bring 'em up t' women good, an' men;  
 And gradjerly, as time goes on, ye find ye wouldn't part  
 With anything they ever used—they've grown into yer heart:  
 The old high chairs, the playthings, too, the little shoes they wore  
 Ye hoard; an' if ye could ye'd keep the thumbmarks on the door.

Ye've got t' weep t' make it home, ye've got t' sit an' sigh  
 An' watch beside a loved one's bed, an' know that Death is nigh;  
 An' in the stillness o' the night t' see Death's angel come,  
 An' close the eyes o' her that smiled, an' leave her sweet voice dumb.  
 Fer these are scenes that grip the heart, an' when yer tears are dried,  
 Ye find the home is dearer than it was, an' sanctified;  
 An' tuggin' at ye always are the pleasant memories  
 O' her that was an' is no more—ye can't escape from these.

Ye've got t' sing an' dance fer years, ye've got t' romp an' play,  
 An' learn t' love the things ye have by usin' 'em each day;  
 Even the roses 'round the porch must blossom year by year  
 Afore they 'come a part o' ye, suggestin' someone dear  
 Who used t' love 'em long ago, an' trained 'em jes' t' run  
 The way they do, so's they would get the early mornin' sun;  
 Ye've got t' love each brick an' stone from cellar up t' dome:  
 It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home.

## House: Some Instructions



by Grace Paley

If you have a house  
you must think about it all the time  
as you reside in the house so  
it must be a home in your mind

you must ask yourself (wherever you are)  
have I closed the front door

and the back door is often forgotten  
not against thieves necessarily

but the wind oh if it blows  
either door open then the heat

the heat you've carefully nurtured  
with layers of dry hardwood

and a couple of opposing green  
brought in to slow the fire

as well as the little pilot light  
in the convenient gas backup

all of that care will be mocked because  
you have not kept the house on your mind

but these may actually be among  
the smallest concerns for instance

the house could be settling you may  
notice the thin slanting line of light

above the doors you have to think about that  
luckily you have been paying attention

the house's dryness can be humidified  
with vaporizers in each room and pots

of water on the woodstove should you leave  
for the movies after dinner ask yourself

have I turned down the thermometer  
and moved all wood paper away from the stove

the fiery result of excited distraction  
could be too horrible to describe

now we should talk especially to Northerners  
of the freezing of the pipe this can often

be prevented by pumping water continuously  
through the baseboard heating system

allowing the faucet to drip drip continuously  
day and night you must think about the drains

separately in fact you should have established  
their essential contribution to the ordinary

kitchen and toilet life of the house  
digging these drains deep into warm earth

if it hasn't snowed by mid-December you  
must cover them with hay sometimes rugs

and blankets have been used do not be  
troubled by their monetary value

as this is a regionally appreciated emergency  
you may tell your friends to consider

your house as their own that is  
if they do not wear outdoor shoes

when thumping across the gleam of their poly-  
urethaned floors they must bring socks or slippers

to your house as well you must think  
of your house when you're in it and

when you're visiting the superior cabinets  
and closets of others when you approach

your house in the late afternoon  
in any weather green or white you will catch

sight first of its new aluminum snow-resistant  
roof and the reflections in the cracked windows

its need in the last twenty-five years for paint

which has created a lovely design

in russet pink and brown the colors of un-  
intentioned neglect you must admire the way it does *not*

(because of someone's excellent decision  
sixty years ago) stand on the high ridge deforming

the green profile of the hill but rests in the modesty  
of late middle age under the brow of the hill with

its back to the dark hemlock forest looking steadily  
out for miles toward the cloud refiguring meadows and

mountains of the next state coming up the road  
by foot or auto the house can be addressed personally

House! in the excitement of work and travel to  
other people's houses with their interesting improvements

we thought of you often and spoke of your coziness  
in winter your courage in wind and fire your small

airy rooms in humid summer how you nestle in spring  
into the leaves and flowers of the hawthorn and the sage green

leaves of the Russian olive tree House! you were not forgotten

### **Longings for Home**

by Walt Whitman

O MAGNET-SOUTH! O glistening, perfumed South! My South!  
O quick mettle, rich blood, impulse, and love! Good and evil! O all dear to me!  
O dear to me my birth-things—All moving things, and the trees where I was  
born—the

grains,  
plants, rivers;

Dear to me my own slow sluggish rivers where they flow, distant, over flats of silvery  
sands,

or  
through swamps;

Dear to me the Roanoke, the Savannah, the Altamahaw, the Pedee, the Tombigbee, the Santee,  
the

Coosa, and the Sabine;  
 O pensive, far away wandering, I return with my Soul to haunt their banks again;  
 Again in Florida I float on transparent lakes—I float on the Okeechobee—I cross  
     the  
         hummock land, or through pleasant openings, or dense forests;  
 I see the parrots in the woods—I see the papaw tree and the blossoming titi;  
 Again, sailing in my coaster, on deck, I coast off Georgia—I coast up the Carolinas,  
 I see where the live-oak is growing—I see where the yellow-pine, the scented  
     bay-tree, the  
         lemon and orange, the cypress, the graceful palmetto;  
 I pass rude sea-headlands and enter Pamlico Sound through an inlet, and dart my vision  
     inland;  
 O the cotton plant! the growing fields of rice, sugar, hemp!  
 The cactus, guarded with thorns—the laurel-tree, with large white flowers;  
 The range afar—the richness and barrenness—the old woods charged with mistletoe  
     and  
         trailing moss,  
 The piney odor and the gloom—the awful natural stillness, (Here in these dense swamps  
     the  
         freebooter carries his gun, and the fugitive slave has his conceal'd hut;)

O the strange fascination of these half-known, half-impassable swamps, infested by  
     reptiles,  
         resounding with the bellow of the alligator, the sad noises of the night-owl and the  
     wild-cat,  
         and  
         the whirr of the rattlesnake;  
 The mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing all the forenoon—singing through the  
     moon-lit  
     night,  
 The humming-bird, the wild turkey, the raccoon, the opossum;  
 A Tennessee corn-field—the tall, graceful, long-leav'd corn—slender,  
     flapping,  
         bright  
         green with tassels—with beautiful ears, each well-sheath'd in its husk;  
 An Arkansas prairie—a sleeping lake, or still bayou;  
 O my heart! O tender and fierce pangs—I can stand them not—I will depart;  
 O to be a Virginian, where I grew up! O to be a Carolinian!  
 O longings irrepressible! O I will go back to old Tennessee, and never wander more!

### *Relevant American Literature Standards*

**ELAALRL1** The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the structures and elements of American fiction and provides evidence from the text to support understanding; the student:

The student identifies and analyzes elements of poetry from various periods of American literature and provides evidence from the text to support understanding

**ELAALRL2** **The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of theme in a work of American literature and provides evidence from the work to support understanding. The student**

- a. Applies knowledge of the concept that the theme or meaning of a selection represents a universal view or comment on life or society and provides support from the text for the identified theme.
- b. Evaluates the way an author's choice of words advances the theme or purpose of the work.
- c. Applies knowledge of the concept that a text can contain more than one theme.
- d. Analyzes and compares texts that express universal themes characteristic of American literature across time and genre (i.e., American individualism, the American dream, cultural diversity, and tolerance) and provides support from the texts for the identified themes.

**ELAALRL3** **The student deepens understanding of literary works by relating them to their contemporary context or historical background, as well as to works from other time periods.**

The student compares and contrasts specific characteristics of different genres as they develop and change over time for different purposes (i.e., personal, meditative Colonial writing vs. public, political documents of the Revolutionary era, or replication of traditional European styles [Bradstreet, Taylor] vs. emerging distinctive American style [Dickinson, Whitman] in poetry).

**ELAALRL4** **The student employs a variety of writing genres to demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of significant ideas in selected literary works. The student composes essays, narratives, poems, or technical documents.**

