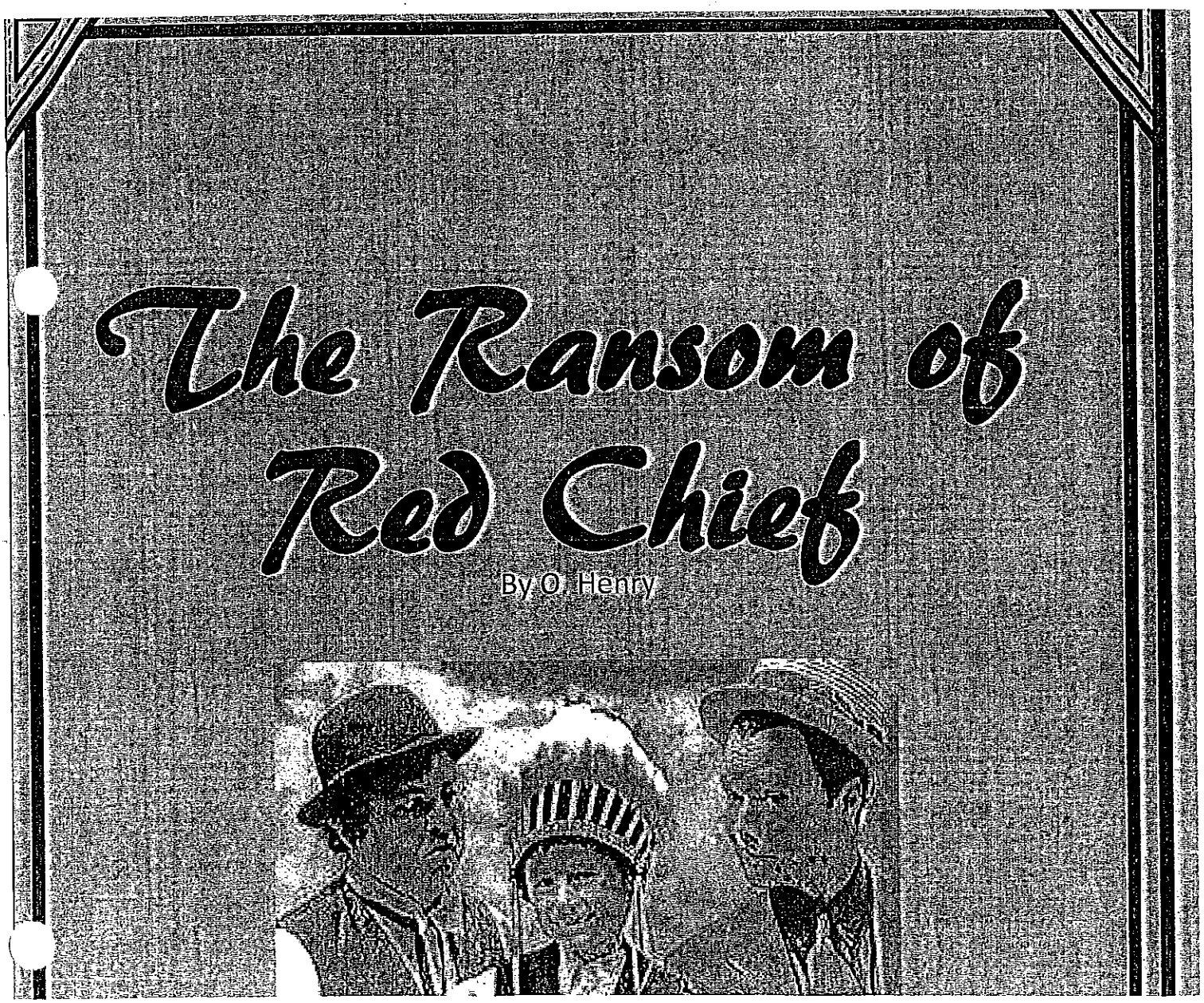
Name _____

Seventh Grade by Gary Soto



Seventh Grade
by Gary Soto

Name_____

DIALOGUE RULES, WORKSHEET, AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT

What is dialogue? It is conversation between characters in a story and is very important to add interest to the piece and to move the plot forward. There are some rules to dialogue, however, that you want to make sure you know.

Dialogue Rules

RULE #1: A direct quotation begins with a capital letter.

Jimmy shouted, "See you at the game!"
"Is it true?" asked Cindy.

RULE #2: When a quotation is interrupted into two parts with words like "he asked" or "the teacher demanded," the second part begins with a lower case letter.

"What are some of the things," Mrs. Baskin inquired, "that make school so much fun?"
"One thing I like," replied Sarah, "is recess!"

RULE #3: When writing dialogue, all punctuation marks at the end of the quotation go inside the quotation marks.

"Let's visit the museum," suggested Samantha.
Jon replied, "Didn't we go there last weekend?"
"But when we did," Beth added, "we didn't see the Ancient Egyptian exhibit."

RULE #4: Do not put a period at the end of a quotation followed by things like *she said, mom asked, he explained*, etc. Use commas, question marks, and exclamation marks but not periods. Periods end sentences.

"My Algebra class is driving me crazy!" Paul yelled.
"That's my favorite class," Becky replied.

RULE #5: Make a new paragraph (indent) when a different person begins to speak.

"Last night, I dreamt that I ate a giant marshmallow," Kevin said.
"Was that anything like the dream you had about eating your way through a mountain of fruit cocktail?" asked Suzy.
"Scarier," Kevin explained. "This time I woke up and my pillow was gone."

OTHER REMINDERS:

-Always make it clear who is speaking in the dialogue.
-Try to avoid using the word "said" repeatedly.

Name_____

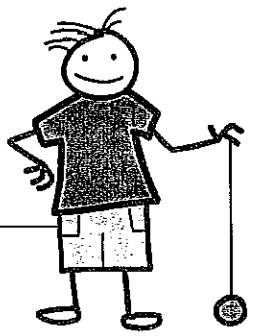
Writing Dialogue Worksheet

Directions: *Please read the following piece. You will rewrite it, correcting the dialogue. Feel free to use the remainder of this side of the sheet and the back of this sheet to rewrite the conversation.* Create a new paragraph for each speaker. You can type this

I love to go to the movies Cameron said but there is nothing good showing at all I know Marcie replied it is crazy how many silly romantic comedies they churn out tell me about it Cameron exclaimed if I see one more stupid Kate Hudson/Matthew McConaughey puke-fest I will personally poke my eye out with an ice-pick and perform my own lobotomy I think that may be a little bit outrageous Marcie pointed out but I can get behind the sentiment my big beef, though, is the atrocious horror movies lately what happened to scaring us rather than grossing us out would you rather go out to dinner tonight Cameron asked sounds like a plan Marcie agreed they left to go to the corner deli, walking arm in arm.

Punctuating Dialogue

Name _____



Correct
~~Rewrite~~ each of the sentences below with correct punctuation and capitalization.
You do NOT need to rewrite.

1. is that a new yo-yo asked pam i have never seen it before

2. no I have had it awhile replied joe i found it underneath my bed

3. i bet you do not know how yo-yos were invented

4. joe answered sure i do they are toys for children

5. no pam said they originated in the philippines

6. right as toys joe insisted

7. they were weapons and toys pam corrected

8. ok well i know what the word yo-yo means

9. pam said so do i tell me and i will see if you are correct

10. well joe said i am pretty sure it means come back

11. that is right pam said

12. it is a toy that has been around for more than 3,000 years joe continued

13. it was not until the 1920s pam added that they were developed in the united states

"Seventh Grade" by Gary Soto

1. On the first day of school, Victor stood in line half an hour before he came to a wobbly card table. He was handed a packet of papers and a computer card on which he listed his one elective[1], French. He already spoke Spanish and English, but he thought some day he might travel to France, where it was cool; not like Fresno, where summer days reached 110 degrees in the shade. There were rivers in France, and huge churches, and fair-skinned people everywhere, the way there were brown people all around Victor

2. Besides, Teresa, a girl he had liked since they were in catechism classes at Saint Theresa's, was taking French, too. With any luck they would be in the same class. Teresa is going to be my girl this year, he promised himself as he left the gym full of students in their new fall clothes. She was cute. And good in math, too, Victor thought as he walked down the hall to his homeroom. He ran into his friend, Michael Torres, by the water fountain that never turned off.

3. They shook hands, *raza*-style, and jerked their heads at one another in a *saludo de vato*[2]. "How come you're making a face?" asked Victor.

4. "I ain't making a face, *ese*[3]. This is my face." Michael said his face had changed during the summer. He had read a GQ magazine that his older brother had borrowed from the Book Mobile and noticed that the male models all had the same look on their faces. They would stand, one arm around a beautiful woman, and *scowl*. They would sit at the pool, their rippled stomachs dark with shadow, and *scowl*. They would sit at dinner tables, cool drinks in their hands, and *scowl*.

5. "I think it works," Michael said. He scowled and let his upper lip quiver. His teeth showed along with the ferocity of his soul. "Belinda Reyes walked by a while ago and looked at me," he said.

6. Victor didn't say anything, though he thought his friend looked pretty strange. They talked about recent movies, baseball, their parents, and the horrors of picking grapes in order to buy their fall clothes. Picking grapes was like living in Siberia[4], except hot and more boring.

7. "What classes are you taking?" Michael said, scowling.

8. "French. How 'bout you?"

9. "Spanish. I ain't so good at it, even if I'm Mexican."

10. "I'm not either, but I'm better at it than math, that's for sure."

11. A tinny, three-beat bell propelled students to their homerooms. The two friends socked each other in the arm and went their ways, Victor thinking, man, that's weird. Michael thinks making a face makes him handsome.

12. On the way to his homeroom, Victor tried a scowl. He felt foolish, until out of the corner of his eye he saw a girl looking at him. Umm, he thought, maybe it does work. He scowled with greater conviction[5].

13. In the homeroom, roll was taken, emergency cards were passed out, and they were given a bulletin to take home to their parents. The principal, Mr. Belton, spoke over the crackling loudspeaker, welcoming the students to a new year, new experiences, and new friendships. The students squirmed in their chairs and ignored him, they were anxious to go to first period. Victor sat calmly, thinking of Teresa, who sat two rows away, reading a paperback novel. This would

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[1] **elective** (n.) - optional course or subject
[2] ***raza*-style. . .*saludo de vato*** - Spanish gestures of greeting between friends
[3] ***ese*** - Spanish word for "man"
[4] **Sibera** - region in northern Asia known for its harsh winters
[5] **conviction** (n.) - belief

be his lucky year. She was in his homeroom, and would probably be in his English and math classes. And, of course, French.

14. The bell rang for first period, and the students herded noisily through the door. Only Teresa lingered, talking with the homeroom teacher.

15. "So you think I should talk to Mrs. Gaines?" she asked the teacher. "She would know about ballet?"

16. "She would be a good bet," the teacher said. Then added, "Or the gym teacher, Mrs. Garza."

17. Victor lingered, keeping his head down and staring at his desk. He wanted to leave when she did so he could bump into her and say something clever.

18. He watched her on the sly. As she turned to leave, he stood up and hurried to the door, where he managed to catch her eye. She smiled and said, "Hi, Victor."

19. He smiled back and said, "Yeah, that's me." His brown face blushed. Why hadn't he said, "Hi, Teresa," or "How was your summer?" or something nice.

20. As Teresa walked down the hall, Victor walked the other way, looking back, admiring how gracefully she walked, one foot in front of the other. So much for being in the same class, he thought. As he trudged to English, he practiced scowling.

21. In English they reviewed the parts of speech. Mr. Lucas, a portly man, waddled down the aisle, asking, "What is a noun?"

22. "A person, place, or thing," said the class in unison.

23. "Yes, now somebody give mean example of a person--you, Victor Rodriguez."

24. "Teresa," Victor said automatically. Some of the girls giggled. They knew he had a crush on Teresa. He felt himself blushing again.

25. "Correct," Mr. Lucas said. "Now provide me with a place."

26. Mr. Lucas called on a freckled kid who answered, "Teresa's house with a kitchen full of big brothers."

27. After English, Victor had math, his weakest subject. He sat in the back by the window, hoping that he would not be called on. Victor understood most of the problems, but some of the stuff looked like the teacher made it up as she went along. It was confusing, like the inside of a watch.

28. After math he had a fifteen-minute break, then social studies, and finally lunch. He bought a tuna casserole with buttered rolls, some fruit cocktail, and milk. He sat with Michael, who practiced scowling between bites.

29. Girls walked by and looked at him, "See what I mean, Vic?" Michael scowled. "They love it."

30. "Yeah, I guess so."

31. They ate slowly, Victor scanning the horizon for a glimpse of Teresa. He didn't see her. She must have brought lunch, he thought, and is eating outside. Victor scraped his plate and left Michael, who was busy scowling at a girl two tables away.

32. The small, triangle-shaped campus bustled with students talking about their new classes. Everyone was in a sunny mood. Victor hurried to the bag lunch area, where he sat down and opened his math book. He moved his lips as if he were reading, but his mind was somewhere else. He raised his eyes slowly and looked around. No Teresa.

33. He lowered his eyes, pretending to study, then looked slowly to the left. No Teresa. He turned a page in the book and stared at some math problems that scared him because he knew he would have to do them eventually. He looked at the right. Still no sign of her. He stretched out lazily in an attempt to disguise his snooping.

34. Then he saw her. She was sitting with a girlfriend under a plum tree. Victor moved to a table near her and daydreamed about taking her to a movie. When the bell sounded, Teresa looked up,

and their eyes met. She smiled sweetly and gathered her books. Her next class was French, same as Victor's.

35. They were among the last students to arrive in class, so all the good desks in the back had already been taken. Victor was forced to sit near the front, a few desks away from Teresa, while Mr. Bueller wrote French words on the chalkboard. The bell rang, and Mr. Bueller wiped his hands, turned to the class, and said, "*Bonjour.*"[6]

36. "*Bonjour,*" braved a few students.

37. "*Bonjour,*" Victor whispered. He wondered if Teresa heard him.

38. Mr. Bueller said that if the students studied hard, at the end of the year they could go to France and be understood by the populace.

39. One kid raised his hand and asked, "What's 'populace'?"

40. "The people, the people of France."

41. Mr. Bueller asked if anyone knew French. Victor raised his hand, wanting to impress Teresa. The teacher beamed and said, "*Très bien. Parlez-vous français*?"[7]

42. Victor didn't know what to say. The teacher wet his lips and asked something else in French. The room grew silent. Victor felt all eyes staring at him. He tried to bluff his way out by making noises that sounded French.

43. "La me vave me con le grandma," he said uncertainly.

44. Mr. Bueller, wrinkling his face in curiosity, asked him to speak up.

45. Great rosebushes of red bloomed on Victor's cheeks. A river of nervous sweat ran down his palms. He felt awful. Teresa sat a few desks away, no doubt thinking he was a fool. Without looking at Mr. Bueller, Victor mumbled, 'Frenchie oh wewe gee in September."

46. Mr. Bueller asked Victor to repeat what he said.

47. "Frenchie oh wewe gee in September," Victor repeated.

48. Mr. Bueller understood that the boy didn't know French and turned away. He walked to the blackboard and pointed to the words on the board with his steel-edged ruler.

49. "*Le bateau,*" he sang.

50. "*Le bateau,*" the students repeated.

51. "*Le bateau est sur l'eau,*"[8] he sang.

52. "*Le bateau est sur l'eau.*"

53. Victor was too weak from failure to join the class. He stared at the board and wished he had taken Spanish, not French. Better yet, he wished he could start his life over. He had never been so embarrassed. He bit his thumb until he tore off a sliver of skin.

54. The bell sounded for fifth period, and Victor shot out of the room, avoiding the stares of the other kids, but had to return for his math book. He looked sheepishly[9] at the teacher, who was erasing the board, then widened his eyes in terror at Teresa who stood in front of him. "I didn't know you knew French,"she said. "That was good."

55. Mr. Bueller looked at Victor, and Victor looked back. Oh please, don't say anything, Victor pleaded with his eyes. I'll wash your car, mow your lawn, walk your dog--anything! I'll be your best student, and I'll clean your erasers after school.

56. Mr. Bueller shuffled through the papers on his desk, He smiled and hummed as he sat down to work. He remembered his college years when he dated a girlfriend in borrowed cars. She

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[6] **Bonjour** – French for "Hello"; "Good day"

[7] ***Très bien. Parlez-vous français?*** – French for "Very well. Do you speak French?"

[8] ***Le bateau est sur l'eau*** – French for "The boat is on the water."

[9] **Sheepishly** (adv.) – in a shy or embarrassed way

thought he was rich because each time he picked her up he had a different car. It was fun until he had spent all his money on her and had to write home to his parents because he was broke.

57. Victor couldn't stand to look at Teresa. He was sweaty with shame. "Yeah, well, I picked up a few things from movies and books and stuff like that." They left the class together. Teresa asked him if he would help her with her French.

58. "Sure, anytime," Victor said.

59. "I won't be bothering you, will I?"

60. "Oh no, I like being bothered."

61. "Bonjour." Teresa said, leaving him outside her next class. She smiled and pushed wisps of hair from her face.

62. "Yeah, right, bonjour," Victor said. He turned and headed to his class. The rosebuds of shame on his face became bouquets of love. Teresa is a great girl, he thought. And Mr. Bueller is a good guy.

63. He raced to metal shop. After metal shop there was biology, and after biology a long sprint to the public library, where he checked out three French textbooks.

64. He was going to like seventh grade.

GARY SOTO
(b. 1952)

Gary Soto has a lot in common with the character Victor Rodriguez. Soto grew up in Fresno and once harvested crops in the fields of California.

Soto began writing while in college. In the fiction and poetry he's written since, he reaches back to the sense of belonging he felt in Fresno. He often writes for young adults, who he knows are also searching for their own community and their own place.

Narrative Diagnostic Assessment
Text: "Seventh Grade" by Gary Soto

1. "Seventh Grade" is a narrative. How is this form of writing different from a persuasive text?

2. Read paragraphs 7-10 (a) Who is speaking? (b) How do you know?

3. What is the theme of the story? Why do you think so?

4. Analyze a character. How do his/her words and actions influence the thoughts and/or actions of another character?

5. What is the author's attitude towards Mr. Bueller as shown through his words and actions?

6. This story is told from whose point of view? Why would the author choose to tell this story using this point of view?

7. How does the author show the readers how much Victor likes Theresa? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

8. What main literacy devices does the author use to give insight into the characters and advance? Provide evidence from the text to support your answer?

9. In paragraph #62, the author says, "The rosebuds of shame on his face became bouquets of love." What are the actions that led to this change of feeling in Victor?

10. Read paragraph #18. The author says that Victor managed to "catch her eye." What is the meaning of this idiom?

11. Read paragraph #54. What does the underlined word, <u>sheepishly</u>, mean? How do you know?

Pre-reading Vocabulary

Directions: Write the definition next to each of the following words. Next, write a sentence that properly uses each word in context.

1. Elective:

2. Scowl:

3. Quiver:

4. Propelled:

5. Anxious:

6. Scanning:

7. Bluff:

8. Sheepish:

9. Plead:

Questions For Thought

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Be sure to proofread your answers and be prepared to share.

1. What is Victor's true motivation for taking French class?

2. What type of face does Michael make when he greets Victor? What can we infer about Michael's character?

3. Among the topics that Michael and Victor discuss is the horror of picking grapes. What can we infer about their lifestyles?

4. During homeroom, what makes Victor think that this may be his lucky year?

5. How does Victor respond when Mr. Lucas calls on him? Why do you suppose he gives this response?

6. Where does Victor go during lunch?

7. Why does Victor raise his hand when Mr. Bueller asks if anybody knows French?

8. Describe what happens as Victor tries to bluff the class into thinking that he knows how to speak French.

9. Why do you suppose Mr. Beuller recalls a time when he dated a girl by borrowing cars? Why doesn't he reveal the truth about Victor's ability to speak French?

10. How does Victor's attitude change after Teresa asks him to tutor her?

Literary Focus

Directions: Answer the questions about the following literary terms.

1. What is an *exposition*? What is revealed in the *exposition* of the story?

2. What is the *complication*? What events build up the story?

3. What are character *motivations*? What is Victor's *motivation* throughout the story?

4. What part of the *plot* is the *climax*? What is the *climax* of *Seventh Grade*?

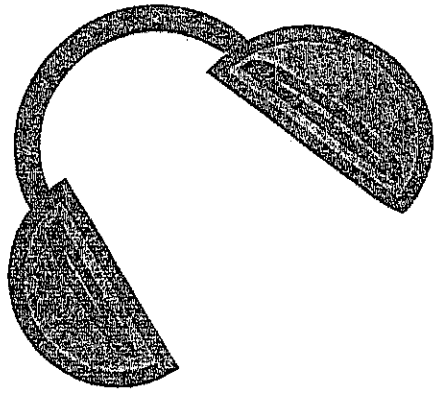
5. What is the *resolution*? How is the story *resolved*?

Critical Thinking

Directions: People often create false impressions to impress others. In Gary Soto's short story *Seventh Grade*, Victor misleads Teresa into thinking that he knows French. What is your opinion of Victor's decision? Do you feel as though he is wrong for misleading Teresa? Why or why not?

Mood

the feeling or atmosphere that is created by a work of literature



Tone

the attitude a writer takes toward a subject, character, or audience

Tone and Mood

Watch out! Tone and mood are similar!!

Tone is the author's attitude toward the writing (his characters, the situation) and the readers. A work of writing can have more than one tone. An example of tone could be both serious and humorous. Tone is set by the setting, choice of vocabulary and other details.

Mood is the general atmosphere created by the author's words. It is the feeling **the reader gets** from reading those words. It may be the same, or it may change from situation to situation.

Words That Describe Tone

Amused	Humorous	Pessimistic
Angry	Informal	Playful
Cheerful	Ironic	Pompous
Horror	Light	Sad
Clear	Matter-of-fact	Serious
Formal	Resigned	Suspicious
Gloomy	Optimistic	Witty

Words That Describe Mood

Fanciful	Melancholy
Frightening	Mysterious
Frustrating	Romantic
Gloomy	Sentimental
Happy	Sorrowful
Joyful	Suspenseful

Read more about it!

Authors set a **TONE** or **MOOD** in literature by conveying an emotion or emotions through words. The way a person feels about an idea, event, or another person can be quickly determined through facial expressions, gestures and in the tone of voice used.

MOOD: (sometimes called atmosphere) the overall feeling of the work

Mood is the emotions that you (the reader) feel while you are reading. Some literature makes you feel sad, others joyful, still others, angry. The main purpose for some poems is to set a mood.

Writers use many devices to create mood, including images, dialogue, setting, and plot. Often a writer creates a mood at the beginning of the story and continues it to the end. However, sometimes the mood changes because of the plot or changes in characters.

Examples of MOODS include: suspenseful, joyful, depressing, excited, anxious, angry, sad, tense, lonely, suspicious, frightened, disgusted

TONE: the way feelings are expressed

Tone is the attitude that an author takes toward the audience, the subject, or the character. Tone is conveyed through the author's words and details. Use context clues to help determine the tone.

In literature an author sets the tone through words. The possible tones are as boundless as the number of possible emotions a human being can have. Has anyone ever said to you, "Don't use that tone of voice with me?" Your tone can change the meaning of what you say. Tone can turn a statement like, " You're a big help!" into a genuine compliment or cruel sarcastic remark. It depends on the context of the story.

Interactive Reading Literature Notebooks
Lesson 22: Mood and Tone Activity I

Mood Words

cheerful	mysterious	sad
hopeful	holy	terrifying
lighthearted	intense	horrific
comical	mournful	morbid
joyful	grotesque	pessimistic
optimistic	dark	eerie
soothing	ominous	chilling
romantic	threatening	dismal
calm	spiritual	depressing
powerful	melancholic	gloomy

Tone Words

sincere	paranoid	hurt
enthusiastic	playful	soothing
honest	pleading	nervous
critical	passive	depressed
ecstatic	proud	disappointed
ironic	serious	aloof
affectionate	suspicious	apathetic
approving	condescending	light-hearted
encouraging	aggravated	objective
scornful	cynical	somber

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Reading Literature Practice & Assess
Lesson 22: Tone and Mood

Name _____

Read each of the short passages below and determine the tone or mood that is demonstrated.

__ 1. Maria stood by the door as the guests arrived for her party. She sneered a bit, noting one woman's dress was rather informal. She sniffed and turned away to avoid looking at another guest and thought, "Why would anyone wear that?" Maria knew that there were few people in town who were as wealthy as she, but she was still disappointed.

Which word best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Arrogant
b. Silly
c. Snobbish

___ 2. More than anything, Sid wanted to settle down in one school and make friends. Since his parents died, Sid had been passed around between aunts and uncles, never getting a chance to call anywhere home. He was a friendly boy with a big heart. He only needed someone to love.

Which sentence best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Joking
b. Sympathetic
c. Excited

___ 3. Richard knew he was smarter than anyone else in the class. It was obvious every time papers were handed back. He was also the best athlete in his grade. Sure, sometimes another student would get a higher grade, or outperform him in some sport, but that was just luck. He had true talent.

Which sentence best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Cheerful
b. Persuasive
c. Arrogant

___ 4. It can't be a coincidence that two days after the money disappeared from the charity collection jar, Bobby started showing up at school with expensive new things. For example, he had a brand new pair of shoes that cost at least $200. Where did he get $200? A week ago he had to borrow a dollar from Diane to get a soda at the convenience store.

Which sentence best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Disappointed
b. Accusing
c. Threatening

___ 5. Poor, poor Tommy. He really can't help that he isn't as good at soccer as the older kids. It's sweet really, because he tries so hard, but just can't run as fast, kick as far, or keep up with the other players in any way. The sooner he realizes he just isn't that good, the easier his life will be.

Which sentence best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Condescending
b. Fearful
c. Sad

___ 6. The new mayor claims she will put in bicycle paths, repair the rundown playgrounds, and fund more computers for the libraries. Some people probably believe her, but every mayor makes big promises. As soon as they are in office, they never follow through. There's no reason to think the new mayor will be any different.

Which sentence best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Joking
b. Cynical
c. Cold

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___ 7. Nadia knew things were going to get better. She was certain she would do well on the next test and bring up her history grade. Once her mom saw how hard she worked, Nadia had no doubt she would allow her to go to the auditions on Saturday. And, once she went to the audition, Nadia was certain she'd get a role in the play. This was just the beginning of a wonderful future.

Which sentence best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Optimistic
b. Desperate
c. Complimentary

___ 8. Mrs. Smith was always very well dressed. Her hair was always styled and she was neat in every way. She was also exceptionally polite and thoughtful. She always had time to say please and thank you, even when she was in a hurry. All in all, Mrs. Smith was an excellent role model for the children she taught.

Which sentence best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Hateful
b. Complimentary
c. Confident

___ 9. It's not fair. Ron gets to do anything he wants to do. Just last night, he asked if he could stay up until 9:00 to finish watching a movie, and Mom said it would be okay. Last week, Mom caught me when I turned on the TV at 11:00 to watch a horror movie, and she yelled at me! She made me so angry, I threw my pillow across the room and slammed my door and then she just yelled at me again.

Which sentence best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Childish
b. Disinterested
c. Boring

___ 10. Things had certainly changed in Bayport. Once it had been a charming seaside village with small shops, well-kept parks, and a friendly town square where everyone gathered. Most of the shops are shuttered now. Where parks once invited children and families to play, there are gravel lots, littered with trash. Things were much better in the old days. If only we could all go back in time.

Which sentence best describes the tone of this passage?
a. Clinical
b. Dramatic
c. Nostalgic

___ 11. The river meandered between its banks, pooling in the shade of hundred year old trees that leaned toward its cool waters. Ambitious frogs hopped from stones along the shore, searching for lunch or sun to warm themselves.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Serene
b. Menacing
c. Dangerous

___ 12. From the balcony a choir sang in perfect harmony, marking the moment when the couple officially became husband and wife. Guests hugged one another and tossed confetti in the air in celebration and Mr. and Mrs. Samson skipped down the aisle and out to their waiting carriage.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Trustful
b. Joyous
c. Suspenseful

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___ 13. The room was lined with tall bookcases, filled with leather-bound books. At the high desk sat a distinguished man in a dark suit who betrayed no emotion. A young man approached the desk and waited patiently for the clerk to acknowledge him. They spoke in hushed, polite tones.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Light-hearted
b. Tender
c. Dignified

___ 14. Where once there had stood a large, prosperous farm, home to hundreds of cows, thousands of chickens, acres of corn and wheat, and one dedicated farming family, there was now a super-store. It was a large white rectangle, surrounded by a black sea of asphalt parking spaces. The cows were gone, the chickens were too, and so were most of the people who remembered when one needed only to walk to the fence to buy a quart of fresh milk or a dozen just-laid eggs.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Hopeful
b. Nostalgic
c. Sympathetic

___ 15. The sky was as grey and lifeless as the ground below. The only movement was the trembling of a tumbleweed in the distance. Not a single bird sang, tweeted, or cawed, and there were no tracks to suggest any living thing had ever wandered across the sand.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Warm
b. Hostile
c. Barren

___ 16. A warm fire crackled in the fireplace, and the chairs gathered around it were plush and oversized. A deep, luxurious carpet greeted cold toes with a comforting embrace, while the huge pillows strewn about the floor suggested it would be okay to stretch out for a while to warm up.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Welcoming
b. Tense
c. Gloomy

___ 17. The room was crowded but completely silent. Several people stared at the clock which ticked loudly on the wall. A few others tapped at their phones nervously, perhaps pretending to be busy to avoid looking at anyone. The door opened quietly and the manager strolled in. Everyone sat up straighter and looked directly at her.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Tense
b. Haunting
c. Cold

___ 18. Mr. and Mrs. Smith sat on the front porch of their modest house. They rocked back and forth as they looked out onto the street in front of them. They were both relaxed after a meal of chili and corn bread, and they enjoyed the cool breeze of the late summer evening. Mr. Smith leaned over and took Mrs. Smith's hand.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Content
b. Depressed
c. Silly

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___ 19. All of the doors out of the room seemed to be labeled "Do Not Enter." How was one to leave the room? The room contained two mismatched chairs. One was a recliner; the other a folding chair. On the wall, a giant television projected what looked like a mirror image of a program with closed captioning. Everything was reflected in reverse. The three people in the room stood nearly motionless. No one could understand what they were supposed to do.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Relieved
b. Confused
c. Embarrassed

___ 20. The majestic mountain reached far above the clouds, so that no one standing on the ground could see the summit. Its jagged cliffs plunged into a deep gorge, carved by rushing water that roared and echoed against the seep rock walls. Ancient trees clung to the slope, laden with pinecones the size of car tires, and bigger than any human had ever seen before.

Which word best describes the mood of this passage?
a. Fear
b. Sarcasm
c. Awe

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The Ransom of Red Chief

By O. Henry

ANALYSIS: ALLUSIONS

When authors refer to other great works, people, and events, it's usually not accidental. Put on your super-sleuth hat and figure out why.

Literary and Philosophical References

King Herod

Bill wakes from Johnny's assault with a slingshot, and tells Sam that "his favorite Biblical character" (39) is King Herod.

Herod was a Roman-appointed King of the Jews who built the walls of Jericho, expanded the Temple mount and rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem, and built his vacation home at Masada. All three of these places fell victim to destruction of, um, Biblical proportions, which gives it an ironic punch considering Bill's current predicament.

However, King Herod is perhaps best known for his section in the Gospel of Matthew: the Massacre of the Innocents. Herod asks the Magi to seek out the new infant King. He lies to the wise men about his intent to worship the child, in hopes of killing the infant before he becomes a problem. After the Magi depart to tell Herod of the child's whereabouts, an Angel appears to Joseph and urges the family to flee to save the child from Herod. This is why Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus fled to Egypt where they stayed until Herod's death. When Herod discovered that the child was gone, he ordered the deaths of all children under the age of two in all of Bethlehem (King James Bible, Matthew 2:13-18). Again, we can pretty much understand Bill's homicidal urge to murder a child, considering... well, you know.

Historical References

Bedlam

"One more night of this kid will send me to a bed in Bedlam." (91)

The Bethlem Royal Hospital, popularly known as "Bedlam," was the first institution dedicated to the treatment of mental illness. It was founded in 1247 in the City of London, England. Early mental treatment was often little more than institutionalized torture. Patients were chained to walls and kept in cages. The hospital itself has relocated several times and has practiced many different philosophies of mental care. It still exists as an absorbed entity along with several other clinics united under the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust, but the name has stuck and today the word "bedlam" refers to general chaos and insanity. For some reason, Bill thought of it at the end of his ordeal with Johnny. Hmmm....

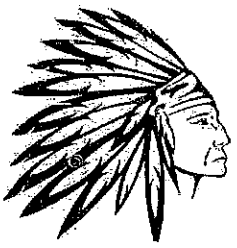
Pop Culture References

"Great Pirates of Penzance!" (87)

This phrase makes a lovely stand in for the four-letter words that Sam might have used otherwise. It refers to a comic opera from Gilbert and Sullivan that first premiered in New York City in 1879. It has become a classic of the genre, thanks to its catchy tunes and general absurdity. It even produced a movie adaptation starring a very young Kevin Kline.

The Ransom of Red Chief Vocabulary List

1. Undeleterious - healthy
2. Fraudulent – fake, deceitful
3. Lackadaisical – lack of interest, indifferent
4. Elevation – height
5. Provisions – food and supplies
6. Stealthy – secretly, sly
7. Sylvan – of and characteristic of the woods/forest
8. Somnolent – sleepy, drowsy
9. Collaborated – worked together
10. Apparition - ghostly figure
11. Aberration – a departure from normal, a strange occurrence
12. Reconnoiter – to examine an area for information
13. Vicinity – neighborhood, locality
14. Peremptory – commanding, decisive, takes priority
15. Surreptitious – secret, sneaky



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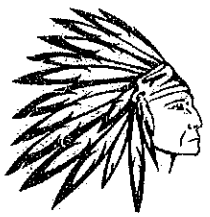
The Ransom of Red Chief
Vocabulary Study Guide

Name_____
Date_____

Directions: Use context clues in the following sentences to help put the correct vocabulary word in the blanks.

1. The disappearing _____ we found in the haunted house made us scream and run for our lives.
2. It was quite an _____ that the temperature hit 90 degrees in the middle of March.
3. I snuck over and took a _____ glance at the competition.
4. In order to discover the enemy positions, James had to _____ and report back his findings.
5. There aren't any major newspapers located in the_____of Summit since it is a small town.
6. The mountains around Summit are not very high in _____.
7. We gathered all our_____and stored them in the camper so we would be prepared for the trip.
8. Sam and Bill _____ with each other on the details of their plan.
9. It was determined that the record of achievements submitted by the applicant were _____.
10. Her _____ attitude made me realize that she had not interest in the subject we were discussing.
11. He looked the picture of health, all because of his _____ eating habits.
12. Having water, food, and shelter was _____ to having unnecessary items like video games and candy.
13. The quiet evening and starry skies made the mood quiet _____.
14. The boy was very _____, and he surprised him from behind.
15. The _____ charm of the log cabin and the surrounding trees fascinated me.



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fraudulent

✓ intended to deceive

*Bill and me had a joint capital of about six hundred dollars, and we needed just two thousand dollars more to pull off a **fraudulent** town-lot scheme in Western Illinois with.*

diatribe

✓ thunderous verbal attack

*We knew that Summit couldn't get after us with anything stronger than constables and maybe some lackadaisical bloodhounds and a **diatribe** or two in the Weekly Farmers' Budget.*

prominent

✓ conspicuous in position or importance

*We selected for our victim the only child of a **prominent** citizen named Ebenezer Dorset.*

Ebenezer" is a prominent ("having a quality that thrusts itself into attention") name, not only because it sounds funny, but also because it's the first name of the miser in Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." This allusion suggests that the plot to squeeze money out of Ebenezer Dorset is doomed to fail. Another allusion is to Stevenson's "Kidnapped"--in which Ebenezer Balfour, also a miser, arranges to have a nephew kidnapped and sold into slavery in order to keep an inheritance.

pesky

causing irritation or annoyance

*Every few minutes he would remember that he was a **pesky** redskin, and pick up his stick rifle and tiptoe to the mouth of the cave to rubber for the scouts of the hated paleface.*

The definition makes the boy sound annoying but easily swatted away. This might be how the narrator Sam wants the situation to look on his end. But Bill, who has more interactions with the boy, would agree with the more serious dangers seen in the Latin root: "pestis" means "deadly contagious disease; a curse, bane."

terrorize

✓ frighten greatly

*That boy had Bill **terrorized** from the start.*

screech

✓ utter a harsh abrupt scream

*He kept us awake for three hours, jumping up and reaching for his rifle and **screeching**: "Hist! pard," in mine and Bill's ears, as the fancied crackle of a twig or the rustle of a leaf revealed to his young imagination the stealthy approach of the outlaw band.*

The word probably has onomatopoeic origins. The example sentence repeats the harsh sound in "reaching" and "screeching" so that the reader or listener (at the beginning of the story, Sam addresses a "you") can hear and feel the pain.

ferocious

✓ marked by extreme and violent energy

*At last, I fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamed that I had been kidnapped and chained to a tree by a **ferocious** pirate with red hair.*

humiliate

✓ cause to feel shame

*ey weren't yells, or howls, or shouts, or whoops, or yawps, such as you'd expect from a manly set of vocal organs—they were simply indecent, terrifying, **humiliating** screams, such as women emit when they see ghosts or caterpillars.*

The tone of this example sentence is both humorous and humiliating. Sam's audience might find the descriptive comparisons humorous, but Bill, as the big, grown man who is being tortured by a small boy, would not. In telling about the humiliation, Sam is also humiliating Bill--possibly to draw attention away from his own cowardly avoidance of the boy.

industrious

✓ characterized by hard work and perseverance

In the other he had the sharp case-knife we used for slicing bacon; and he was industriously and realistically trying to take Bill's scalp, ·cording to the sentence that had been pronounced upon him the ·ening before.

reconnoiter

✓ explore, often with the goal of finding something

Now, you and the Chief get up and cook breakfast, while I go up on the top of this mountain and reconnoitre.

dastardly

✓ extremely wicked

Over toward Summit I expected to see the sturdy yeomanry of the village armed with scythes and pitchforks beating the countryside for the ***dastardly*** *kidnappers.*

The adjective also means "despicably cowardly." This is suggested by the author's developments of the characters and plot. But Sam does not intend this meaning. Even though he chose Summit because he knew that the town does not have the resources to actually hunt them down, he would prefer to be seen as a dangerously wicked man that others would need weapons to fight.

somnolent

✓ inclined to or marked by drowsiness

There was a sylvan attitude of ***somnolent*** *sleepiness pervading that section of the external outward surface of Alabama that lay exposed to my view.*

Both the town and the kidnappers are somnolent. But the sleepy nature of the town is due to its semi-rural location, where nothing much happens, while the sleepy nature of Bill and Sam is due to the boy keeping them up most of the night with his screeching and threats. The contrast implies that the peaceful somnolence of the town could be due to the boy's absence.

peremptory

✓ not allowing contradiction or refusal

Also, I thought it best to send a ***peremptory*** *letter to old man Dorset that day, demanding the ransom and dictating how it should be paid.*

decry

✓ express strong disapproval of

*ain't attempting," says he, "to **decry** the celebrated moral aspect of parental affection, but we're dealing with humans, and it ain't human for anybody to give up two thousand dollars for that forty-pound chunk of freckled wildcat.*

Bill is attempting to sound intelligent with the use of the word "decry" to make his point, but the author uses the word to remind the reader that just before this speech, Bill was tearfully begging Sam to lower the ransom demand.

comply

✓ act in accordance with someone's rules, commands, or wishes

*If you attempt any treachery or fail to **comply** with our demand as stated, you will never see your boy again.*

accede

yield to another's wish or opinion

*These terms are final, and if you do not **accede** to them no further communication will be attempted.*

Compare with "comply"--both verbs connect to submitting to someone else's wish (often in an unhappy, reluctant way). But as the definitions and example sentences show, compliance requires action, while an accession can simply be a passive agreement.

foil

✓ hinder or prevent, as an effort, plan, or desire

*I guess Mr. Bill will help you **foil** the pesky savages.*

scheme

✓ an elaborate and systematic plan of action

*"You'd better keep him interested," said I, "till we get the **scheme** going.*

surreptitious

✓ conducted with or marked by hidden aims or methods

*I bought some smoking tobacco, referred casually to the price of black-eyed peas, posted my letter **surreptitiously** and came away.*

renegade

✓ a disloyal person who betrays or deserts his cause

*"Sam," says Bill, "I suppose you'll think I'm a **renegade**, but I couldn't help it.*

A renegade can also be "someone who rebels and becomes an outlaw." In terms of his relationship to society, Bill is already a renegade, because he uses unlawful ways to make money. But in the example sentence, he is referring to his relationship to Sam and their kidnapping plan, which he had betrayed by trying to send the boy home.

proclivity

✓ a natural inclination

*I'm a grown person with masculine **proclivities** and habits of self-defense, but there is a time when all systems of egotism and predominance fail.*

subjugate

✓ put down by force or intimidation

*None of 'em ever was **subjugated** to such supernatural tortures as I have been.*

depredation

✓ an act of plundering and pillaging and marauding

*ied to be faithful to our articles of **depredation**; but there came a limit.*

cauterize

✓ burn, sear, or freeze using a hot iron or electric current

*On the way he kicks my legs black-and-blue from the knees down; and I've got to have two or three bites on my thumb and hand **cauterized**.*

The verb also means "make insensitive or callous; deaden feelings or morals." This does not apply to the example sentence. If Bill were able to cauterize his heart, he would not need to cauterize his thumb and hand. He is a strong man who could easily hurt the boy if he chose to, but instead, he allows the boy to play with him so roughly that he gets hurt.

brace

✓ prepare for something unpleasant or difficult

*So Bill **braced** up enough to give the kid a weak sort of a smile and a promise to play the Russian in a Japanese war with him as soon as he felt a little better.*

proposition

✓ a suggestion offered for acceptance or rejection

I think you are a little high in your demands, and I hereby make you a counter-proposition, which I am inclined to believe you will accept.

impudent

✓ improperly forward or bold

*"Great pirates of Penzance!" says I; "of all the **impudent**—"*

bedlam

✓ a state of extreme confusion and disorder

*One more night of this kid will send me to a bed in **Bedlam**.*

The Bethlehem Royal Hospital in London is an asylum for the mentally ill. The word "Bedlam" was originally a shortened pronunciation of the place, but it now refers to a general state of confusion and disorder. Bill puns on the asylum's name with his point about a bed. Sam continues the pun by referring to the boy as a lamb. The author might be ending the story with the pun by describing the kidnappers on the lam--where they're not running from the police but from their intended victim.

abstract

✓ make off with belongings of others

*Just at the moment when I should have been **abstracting** the fifteen hundred dollars from the box under the tree, according to the original proposition, Bill was counting out two hundred and fifty dollars into Dorset's hand.*

leech

✓ carnivorous or bloodsucking aquatic or terrestrial worm

*When the kid found out we were going to leave him at home he started up a howl like a calliope and fastened himself as tight as a **leech** to Bill's leg.*

Story Elements

Story Elements

A story has a plot, characters, and setting. The plot needs to have some kind of conflict to create interest in the story unless the story reveals events and the events themselves are the telling of the story.

Recognizing the conflict in the story is part of engaging yourself in predicting and wondering what will happen next. As you enter into the plot you can determine which characters are the protagonists and the antagonists. These are the characters that are in conflict. Some stories have the conflict within the character, as when a story is about one character who must decide what to do and has many options. Thus the plot changes as the choices are made. When the conflict or problem is between characters, one character plays off the actions of the other. The reader must follow closely in order to think with the character.

Describe the conflict/problem in the story.

Story Elements (continued)

A device that a story writer may use in disclosing the plot is foreshadowing. This device allows the writer to drop hints to the reader of what might happen. Again the reader must look for such details. As the plot unfolds, the reader will gain satisfaction if he reads carefully and has discovered these clues and therefore was correct in his predictions.

Find examples of foreshadowing from the story and record them here:

A writer may use a flashback to keep the reader informed as to what the character may or may not do in the story. This is often used at the beginning of a story. The writer puts the character in the present and allows the character to retell a former event or situation in his life. It allows the reader to connect with who the character is and how the character may act in the upcoming events.

Find examples of flashback from the story and record them here:

Story Elements (continued)

At some point in the story there is a climax or deciding moment that lets the reader know how the conflict or problem may be solved. After this is written, the plot is coming to an end. Some story writers leave you "hanging" and wanting to know more about the character. Then the story writer can write a series of books following the initial writing.

What is the climax of the story? Look for a turning point, where the problem or conflict you identified earlier has a solution.

Lesson Wrap-Up: *The Ransom of Red Chief* is a story that ends up quite differently than you would expect in a story about a kidnapping. The kidnappers end up being the victims instead of the boy and his family. The twist in the story, making the opposite true instead of what is expected in a situation, is called irony.

Although the story doesn't leave you hanging at the end, could there be a sequel? Write your ideas for what happens next.

Name _____ Per. _____

Understanding Irony

Irony is a literary device in which words are used to express a contradiction between appearance and reality— in irony, reality is usually the opposite of what it seems. In literature, there are three types of irony:

- **Verbal** irony is when a speaker or writer says one thing but actually means the opposite. For example, when your mom walks into your filthy bedroom and says, "I see you've cleaned your room!" Sarcasm is one type of verbal irony.

  ✓ To find the verbal irony, ask yourself, what is *really* being said? If what the person actually says is not exactly what the person really means, you likely have verbal irony.

- **Situational** irony is when the outcome of a situation is inconsistent with what we expect would logically or normally occur. It is the reverse of what we expect will be or happen. An example of situational irony would be if a thief's house was broken into at the same time he was robbing someone's house.

  ✓ To find the situational irony, ask yourself *what were you expecting would happen* or *what did you expect it to be*? If the situation is something different than what we expect would happen or is the opposite of what you might expect someone would say or do, then it is likely situational irony.

- **Dramatic** irony is when the audience or the reader is aware of something that a character does not know. For example, when Romeo believes Juliet is dead, but the audience knows that she has only been given a potion to sleep.

  ✓ To identify dramatic irony, ask yourself *what did you already know happened or was going to happen*?

Directions: *To practice identifying and labeling the different types of irony, complete the following activity.*

1. If you have a phobia of long words, you must tell people that you are *Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobic.*

   a. Type of Irony: _____

   b. Explain your choice: _____

   _____

2. A rat infestation at the Department of Sanitation

   a. Type of Irony: _____

   b. Explain your choice: _____

   _____

Copyright Secondary Solutions

Name _____ Per. _____

3. Mother: "I see you ironed your shirt."
   Boy: "But I just dug it out of the bottom of the hamper."

   a. Type of Irony: _____

   b. Explain your choice: _____

   _____

4. A person Tweets about how Twitter is a waste of time and energy.

   a. Type of Irony: _____

   b. Explain your choice: _____

   _____

5. In Shakespeare's Hamlet, Hamlet stabs through a curtain thinking his traitorous, murdering uncle is there, only to learn that he actually stabbed and killed the father of the woman he loves, and a man for whom he had the utmost respect and admiration.

   a. Type of Irony: _____

   b. Explain your choice: _____

   _____

6. You comment on the beautiful weather you've been having just five minutes before a tornado rips through your house.

   a. Type of Irony: _____

   b. Explain your choice: _____

   _____

7. In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Elizabeth Proctor lies and tells the investigator that her husband never had an affair (in fact, he had), right before John Proctor publicly declared that his wife never had—and never would—lie.

   a. Type of Irony: _____

   b. Explain your choice: _____

   _____

Extension: In order to fully understand the power of irony, be sure read the short stories *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry or *The Necklace* by Guy De Maupassant!

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Questions For Thought

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Be sure to proofread your answers and be prepared to share.

1. Why do Bill and the narrator need an additional $2000? What can you infer about their characters?

2. What is their plan to get the money?

3. How does the boy respond to the kidnappers? What can you infer about his character?

4. Describe the dream the narrator has. What can you infer about how he feels about his captive?

5. What happens to Bill that breaks his spirit? What affect do you predict this will have on the kidnappers' plans?

6. Why does Sam get up well before sunrise? Why doesn't he want to admit it to Bill?

7. The town seems to not be worried at all about the missing boy. What can you infer from this?

8. Bill is afraid to be left alone with the boy. Why is this ironic?

9. How does Ebenezer Dorset respond to Sam's note? How is his response ironic?

Literary Focus

Directions: Answer the following questions about the following literary terms.

1. What is *situational irony*? Identify an instance of *situational irony* from the story.

2. What is *foreshadowing*? What events helped you to predict the outcome of the story?

3. What is *indirect characterization*? What events helped you to characterize what Red Chief is like?

Critical Thinking

Directions: In "The Ransom of Red Chief" O. Henry creates an example of irony where two kidnappers end up being held hostage by their supposed victim. How would you have reacted to Red Chief if you were in their situation?

ANALYSIS: SETTING

Where It All Goes Down

Alabama, around the town of Summit

The story is set in Alabama, but it's really more about the time than the place. It could be the Wild West or upstate New York or anywhere in between; what's important about it is its "small townness," that kind of Norman Rockwell close-knit community that, for many people, defines what it is to be American.

Naturally O. Henry has his own idea about what these towns are like—the sort of place where a kid like Johnny can run wild—and about how much more knowing they are about life than people sometimes attribute to them. Sam and Bill don't think much of these kinds of towns, full of "inhabitants of as undeleterious and self-satisfied a class of peasantry as ever clustered around a Maypole" (2). More importantly, they think such towns are safe, and "Summit couldn't get after us with anything stronger than constables and, maybe, some lackadaisical bloodhounds and a diatribe or two in the Weekly Farmers' Budget" (3).

They're in for a rude awakening when the town (or at least its most prominent citizen) proves a lot smarter than they thought and ends up taking them for the proverbial ride.

Besides being a statement about the American character, Summit also serves a significant role in the pacing of the story. O. Henry sets up our expectations with the first impressions of the town, then ings them shattering to the ground with the big twist ending. Summit becomes a part of the comedy, confounding what we (and the heroes) think they know, then leaving the two of them (and us by proxy) to wallow in the mess we make. That's a lot of heavy lifting for a throwaway setting in a very short story. It's like the author was really good at what he was doing or something.

ANALYSIS: NARRATOR POINT OF VIEW

Who is the narrator, can she or he read minds, and, more importantly, can we trust her or him?

First Person (Central Narrator)

Authors love the first person—it avoids a lot of narrative backflipping—and this story is no exception. O. Henry tells the story from Sam's point of view. It keeps the language simple, due to the low intellectual capacity of the character, which lets us absorb a great deal of personality in a very small amount of time. O. Henry tends to get to the point in his stories. The first-person narration lets us hit the ground running and not have to worry about describing at least one of the characters to us.

It also allows a wonderful sense of the passage of time, letting the author set up all kinds of gags in the process. Because we're only seeing things from Sam's perspective, the story can surprise us:

I was awakened by a series of awful screams from Bill. They weren't yells, or howls, or shouts, or whoops, or yawps, such as you'd expect from a manly set of vocal organs—they were simply indecent, terrifying, humiliating screams, such as women emit when they see ghosts or caterpillars. It's an awful thing to hear a strong, desperate, fat man scream incontinently in a cave at daybreak. (23)

You can't do that without keeping our POV set firmly on Sam. He even leaves from time to time, sparing us the lugubrious development and letting us revel in the disastrous results.

Not only does it make for great comedy, it also lets O. Henry deliver a slow burn on how the plan is slowly spiraling out of control. The kidnapping does not lapse into disaster with the speed of an earthquake, but rather the steady and relentless fall of a deluge with small things growing steadily worse until the dam finally breaks. "One more night of this kid will send me to a bed in Bedlam," Bill begs (91), a sudden revelation of how much of a catastrophe this has become. The POV lends itself to dramatic pacing as well as flat-out gags, helping to contribute to a very tight narrative.

ANALYSIS: TONE

Take a story's temperature by studying its tone. Is it hopeful? Cynical? Snarky? Playful?

Satirical

While we are trying to decide who the heroes and villains are in this story, our own sense of societal rights and wrongs are fighting against our natural inclinations of classification. Good satire plays on that struggle to decide whose side we are on. We know that Sam and Bill are criminals—they tell us as much when Sam claims "a kidnapping project ought to do better there than in the radius of newspapers that send reporters out in plain clothes to stir up talk about such things" (3). We know that kidnapping a ten-year-old boy is simply not funny... except when that boy holds all the cards.

Johnny should be a victim, "a boy of ten, with bas-relief freckles, and hair the color of the cover of the magazine you buy at the news-stand when you want to catch a train" (4). But he's also living in a world of make-believe. Sam and Bill are not only railroaded by something that comes naturally to a child, but also powerless to show any effective resistance to it. So their behavior, which should be awful, doesn't hurt anyone but themselves. We actually end up feeling a little sorry for them, and even rooting for their efforts. We're going completely against the grain of what we should be feeling, and in the process are able to take a look at our own petty schemes and shortcomings as well. That's the sence of satire, and its effect is certainly not lost in "The Ransom of Red Chief."