

Poetry Detectives

"Invocation" by George Ella Lyon is so rich, and so full of passion and masterful technique that it demands to be studied closely. But don't be scared! In this activity, we will help you become a poetry detective and show you how to study a poem closely, so you can savor every single word.

Directions: Read the poem and then follow the prompts. Write your answers on a separate piece of paper.

pen, open poem. ←..... **1.** In what way does a pen "open" a poem?

paper, pave the way.

ink, give me inklings

in your dark tongue ←..... **2.** What is the dark tongue?
what to say.

letter, let me draw you
out to shape us,
close to hold.

word, breathe me onward
into mysteries untold. ←..... **3.** What mysteries is the author referring to?

sound, sing me deeper
where the soul is so inclined
that if pen open poem,
poem will open
heart and minds.

←..... **4.** How do poems open hearts and minds?

This Poem Is Alive!

In the poem "Invocation," George Ella Lyon asks for writing help from the tools of poetry—pen, paper, ink, and words—as if they were alive, like people. Writing about objects or animals as if they were human is called **personification**, and it can make a poem or story exciting and alive. In this activity, you will learn more about personification and how to use it in your own writing.

Directions: Fill in the blanks below and then write your own poem.

1. Find three examples of personification in "Invocation." Think about them, and write how you think the human actions make the objects seem different. We've done the first one for you.

1. O paper, pave the way

The paper can make space for the poem to begin. Like a
construction worker paving a long street, the paper will
remove all the clutter and lay a foundation.

2. _____

3. _____

2. Now write three original sentences using personification.

Write Now!

Choose one of your original sentences and expand upon it to write your own poem on a separate sheet of paper.

Secrets From Great Writers!

THIS MONTH'S SECRET: SIMILES AND METAPHORS

Similes and metaphors are both ways of describing something by comparing it to something else. The difference: a simile includes the words "like" or "as." A metaphor does not. In his story "The Spider Woman," author Burkhard Bilger uses both similes and metaphors to make his descriptions come to life. In this activity, you will practice using them.

Directions: Read each statement and answer the corresponding questions.

1. Spiders are the X-men of the animal world.

Is this a simile or a metaphor? How can you tell?

What does it mean?

Write a metaphor of your own that expresses the same idea.

2. She moves with a spring in her step, like a cheerleader.

Is this a simile or a metaphor? How can you tell?

What does it mean?

Write a simile of your own that expresses the same idea.

A-MAZING Facts & Opinions

"The Spider Woman" is full of interesting facts, or true statements, about spiders. It also contains tons of opinions, or beliefs, as well (like spiders are scary!) In this activity, you will try to tell the difference between these two types of statements.

Directions: Read each bubble below and decide which are facts and which are opinions. Then circle all the bubbles that contain facts. Draw a line through the maze, connecting each bubble that contains a fact. You'll know you've done the activity correctly when you reach the spider!

Start

She had on tennis shoes, jeans, and a faded blue T-shirt.

The spiders seemed to be everywhere.

She did not look like a spider hunter either.

Greta Binford is 41 years old.

"It's just too easy."

Their fangs are too small . . .

Spiders have a bad reputation, largely undeserved.

She specialized in arachnology.

She moves with a spring in her step, like a cheerleader.

Something was not quite right in the basement of Goodwill.


. . . it's helpful to remember . . .

They simply don't see the point . . .

Loxosceles laeta is a cousin of the brown recluse.

. . . spiders have many fine qualities.

Still, some spiders can kill.



Bite victims sometimes look as if they have serious burns.

Some people aren't even sensitive to the toxins.

Spiders are the X-men of the animal world.

Binford had 30 live spiders in her vest.

. . . a harmless orb spider spins its glorious web. . .

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading & Thinking

Exploring the facts and ideas in a nonfiction article will help you understand it better.
Use this organizer with any of the nonfiction pieces you find in *Storyworks*.

TITLE

AUTHOR

READING FOR INFORMATION

This article is mainly about _____.

The main events of the article take place in _____ (name a location).

The year or time period is _____. Some important people mentioned in the article are

_____.

Here are some facts I learned from this article (Write at least four):

_____.

Put a star (*) by the facts you wrote above that are important in explaining what the article is about.
Put an X by the facts that you find really interesting. (Some facts might have both a star and an X.)

The facts with a star are important because

1. _____

2. _____

The facts with an X are interesting because

1. _____

2. _____

Continued

Reading & Thinking

 page 2**MAIN IDEA**

The main idea of this story is _____

Here are some details that support the main idea:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Another idea presented in this story is _____

Here are some details that support that idea:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

I think the author wrote this article because _____

I think the author expresses the viewpoint, or opinion, that _____

I agree/disagree (circle one) with the author's viewpoint because _____

Continued

Reading & Thinking

 page 3**CONNECTIONS**

Here's how this article relates to (fill in at least one)

Something else I read: _____

_____.

Something else I know about: _____

_____.

Something in my own life: _____

_____.

RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

Would you recommend this article to a friend? Why or why not?

Expectations vs. Reality

In Carolyn Meyer's story "Car Trouble," each character wants his or her vacation to be a certain way, but these hopes, or expectations, turn out to be different from what actually happens! In this activity, you will compare what the characters expect with what really happens.

Directions: Read "Car Trouble" and fill in the chart.

| | What the characters expect | What really happens |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| MUM | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| DAD | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| JOE & ERIN | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |

Write Now!

How do you think the characters in "Car Trouble" feel about the outcome of their trip? Do you think they preferred what actually happened over what they had expected? On a separate piece of paper, write a well-organized paragraph answering this question. Explain your answer by using your notes from above.

My Route 66 Roadmap

Have you ever had a family vacation that went awry like Joe and Erin's? Do your parents' ideas about what would be fun ever clash with your own? In this activity, you will think about how Erin and Joe's experience connects to your own.

Directions: Answer each question in the blanks below.

1. In what way did Joe and Erin's vacation not go according to plan?

2. Describe an experience from your life that somehow connects to Joe and Erin's.

3. In what ways are Joe and Erin's ideas about their vacation different from their parents'?

4. Describe a time in which you and your parents had different ideas about how to spend a vacation.

Continued ►

My Route 66 Roadmap, page 2

5. What experiences did Joe and Erin have as they were welcomed by people from a culture different from their own?

6. Describe an experience in which you learned about a new culture.

7. What did Joe, Erin, and their parents learn on this vacation? How might these lessons affect their plans for a future vacation?

8. Describe something new that you learned on a vacation or a class trip.

Write Now!

Using a separate piece of paper, choose your favorite example above and write a story about the time you had an experience similar to Joe and Erin's. Use details like those in Carolyn Meyer's story and specific examples from your own life.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading & Thinking

Writing about the basic elements of a story can help you remember and understand it. Use this organizer with any of the fiction pieces in *Storyworks* to help you achieve a better understanding of it.

TITLE

AUTHOR

CHARACTER

The main character's name is _____.

Some words to describe the main character are (provide at least three) _____

Some examples that show what the main character is like are _____

Another character's name is _____.

His/her relationship to the main character is _____.

Some words to describe this character are _____

Some examples that show what this character is like are _____

Another character's name is _____.

His or her relationship to the main character is _____.

Some words to describe this character are _____

Some examples that show what this character is like are _____

Reading & Thinking page 2

SETTING

The location of the setting is _____.

The time period of the setting is _____.

The atmosphere, or feeling that the setting creates, is (i.e., rich, poor, strange, comfortable, scary, friendly, etc.) _____.

PLOT

These are the main events that happen in the story at the

Beginning: _____

Middle: _____

End: _____

The main conflict of the story is _____.

The climax, or point at which the conflict comes to a peak, is _____.

The conflict is resolved when _____.

Reading & Thinking page 3

LANGUAGE

The story is told by (a narrator, the main character, someone else) _____.

The story has a lot of dialogue/a little dialogue/no dialogue. (Circle one)

The language in the story is (i.e., humorous, serious, simple, complicated)_____.

LITERARY DEVICES (OPTIONAL):

Give examples below of some literary devices from the story:

Metaphors _____

Similes _____

THEME

What are one or two big ideas you think the author wanted you to get from the story?

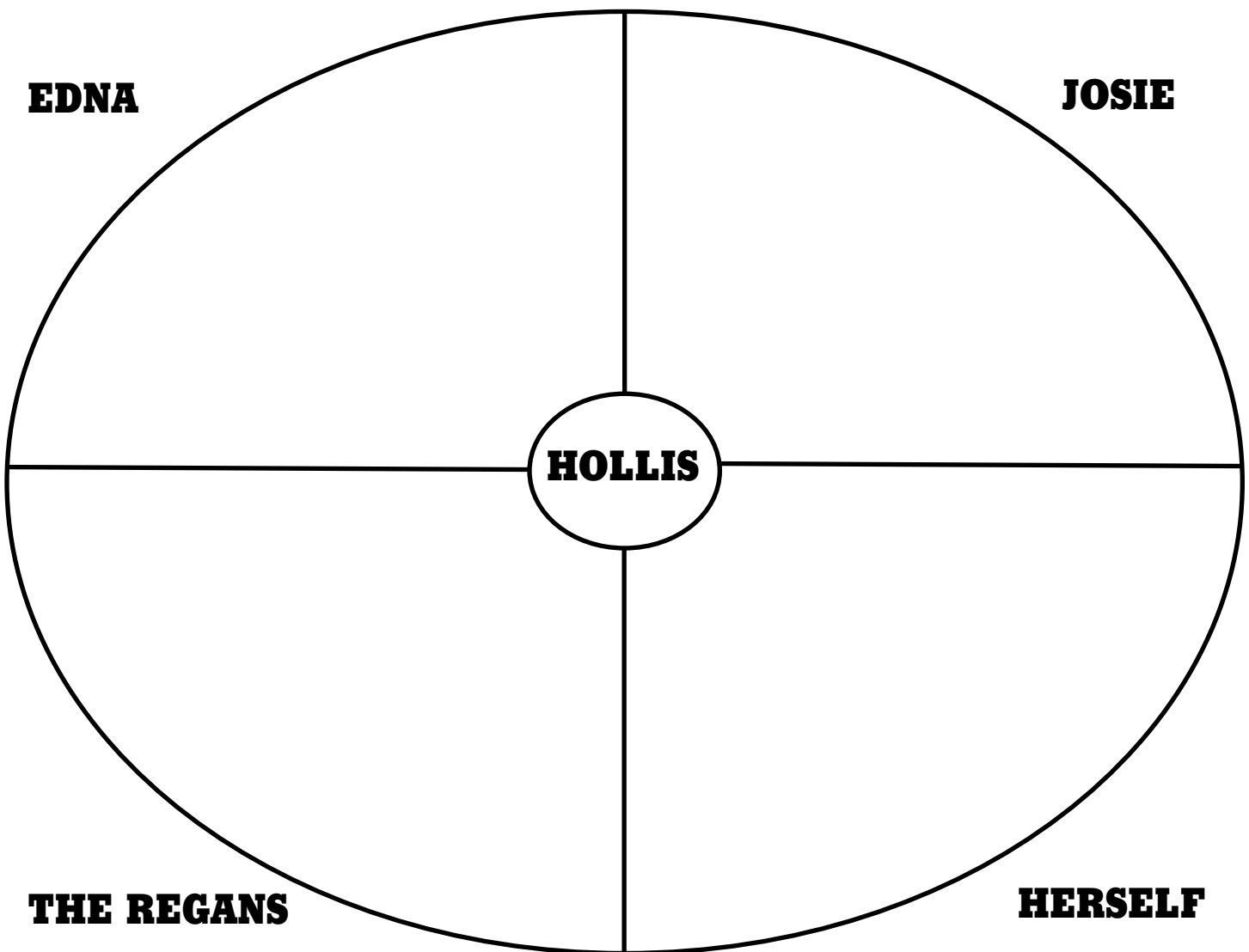
RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

Would you recommend this story to a friend? Why or why not?

Making Connections

How do you learn about characters? One way is to consider their relationships with the people around them. In this activity, you will consider how Hollis Woods relates to the people around her, how they relate to her, and what these relationships tell you about Hollis.

Directions: In the sections below, describe Hollis's relationship to each person listed. Tell how Hollis treats each person and how they treat her, and how in each case these relationships help Hollis change and grow during the play.



Write Now!

Now, on separate piece of paper, write about one of Hollis's relationships and what it tells you about Hollis herself. In particular, tell how this relationship helped Hollis grow and change during the course of the play.

Where on the Timeline?

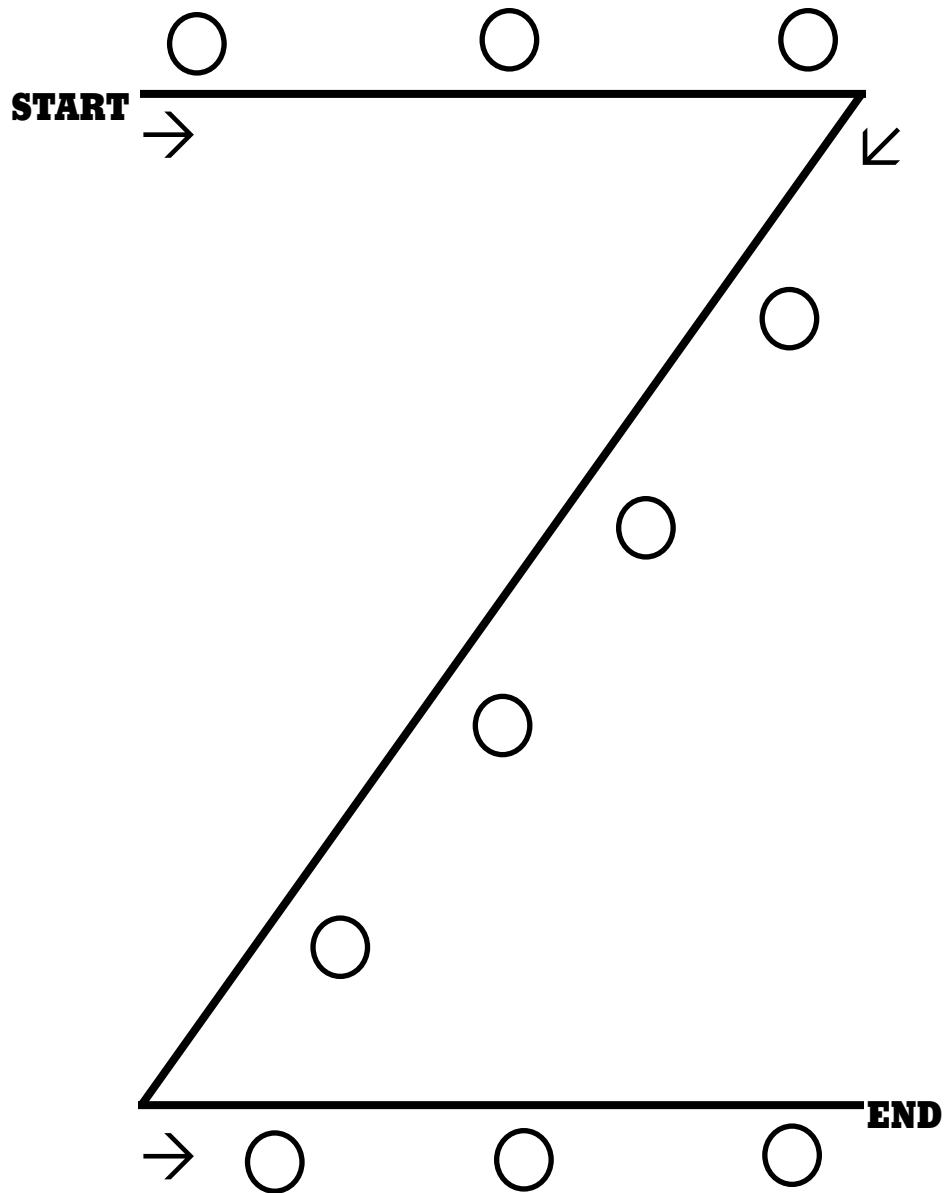
Pictures of Hollis Woods is an action-packed play, but you might find the story confusing because of all the flashbacks (moments when the plot *flashes back* to something that happened in the past). Figuring out the order in which big events in the play take place will help you gain a better understanding of what the story is actually about.

Directions: Read the list of big events in the box to the left.

Then, place a number in each oval on the timeline to the right in the order in which they happened.

EVENTS

1. Hollis and Josie run away.
2. Hollis meets the Regans.
3. Josie and Hollis go to the ocean to paint.
4. Hollis spends the summer with the Regans at their cabin.
5. The Regans want to adopt Hollis.
6. Hollis leaves the Regans.
7. The Regans adopt Hollis.
8. Steven crashes the truck.
9. Hollis meets Josie.
10. Edna decides to take Hollis away from Josie.



Between the Lines

To **infer** something is to draw a conclusion by looking at the facts. You might not have all the facts, but enough to make a judgment. The trick is to look very carefully at the information you do have and then try to draw a conclusion. In this activity, you will be making inferences from dialogue from *Pictures of Hollis Woods*.

Directions: Read each line or series of lines of dialogue, and then answer the corresponding questions. Make sure to have the play *Pictures of Hollis Woods* handy so that you can refer to it for more information.

1. HOLLIS: I was always trouble for somebody (Prologue)

What does this tell you about Hollis? What does she think of herself?

How do her thoughts about herself change by the end of the play?

2. JOSIE: I'd like to show you one of my favorite places. . . wait, isn't it a school day?

HOLLIS: Uh . . . no. There's no school today. (Scene 3)

What is really going on here? How does it signal that there might be a problem with Josie?

3. JOSIE: Oh, you have a wonderful eye. (Scene 3)

HOLLIS: You have a wonderful eye too.

JOSIE: We have four wonderful eyes.

What does this tell you about the relationship between Josie and Hollis.

What does it tell you about Hollis's feelings for Josie?

Write Now!

Choose one of the questions above and turn your answers into a well-organized paragraph, using details from the play to support your ideas.

Seeing a Poem

Each line in "Mad" creates an image. Thinking about each image can help you figure out the poem's meaning. In this activity, you will think about what the images in "Mad" mean to you.

Directions: Fill in the columns below. We did the first one for you.

| What Naomi Wrote | What I See | What This Means to Me |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. I got mad at my mother so I flew to the moon. | A kid flying on a rocket to the moon | When people get mad, they want to escape. Also, maybe the rocket is propelled anger. |
| 2. My mother stood in the front yard like a pin dot searching for me. | | |
| 3. Then I whistled and she tipped her head. | | |
| 4. It gets cold at night on the moon. | | |
| 5. My mother sent up a silver thread for me to slide down on. | | |

What Happens When You Get Mad?

In her wonderful poem "Mad," Naomi Shihab Nye equates the experience of being mad at her mother with flying to the moon, and then returning to her mother's open arms. How do you feel when you get mad at a family member or friend? What image comes to mind that best describes this feeling? In this activity, we will help you write your own poem about that very subject.

Directions: Read "Mad" again. Then fill in the blanks below with your own ideas, using Naomi Shihab Nye's poem as your guide. Copy your finished poem onto a separate piece of paper.

MAD by _____
Your name here

I got mad at my _____
Name a person you've recently been mad at.

so I _____.
What do you do when you're mad at this person? Where do you go?

I could still see _____
Describe what you see.

Provide a supporting detail.

My _____
What does this person do when you're mad at him or her?

like a _____
Pick a simile that best describes this image.

searching for me.

He/She _____
Describe what this person does next.

He/She _____.
In different words, restate what he or she does.

Then I _____ and he/she _____.
Describe what you do to get his or her attention. Tell what he or she does in response.

It feels _____
Describe how it feels in the place that you go when you're mad at this person.

My _____
What does this person do to make you feel better?

for me to _____.
How does this help you return to him or her?

He/She knows me so well.

He/She knows I like _____.
Name something you like.