



Middle School Reading & Writing
Sample Lesson # 2
Annotated Cover Page & Student Exemplar

Lesson Name
Tolerance

Writing Category
Primary: Response to Literature
Secondary: Research/Report

Standards Exemplified

Standard 1: The student writes clearly and effectively.

Standard 2: The student write in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes.

Task

In sample lesson #2, Tolerance, students are asked to:

- choose a novel from a specific list of books with a tolerance theme;
- take notes to answer outlined project questions;
- develop complete responses to these questions;
- edit their responses for punctuation and capitalization.

This lesson can be applied to any number of themes being dealt with in your classroom. Loyalty, Honesty, Trust are just a few ideas.

Materials Needed

Set list of questions (included in this document)

Book with a tolerance theme.

Note: This assignment can be tailored to explore any number of values illustrated through literature.

Set List of Questions

Having read Alison Leslie Gold's book, Memories of Anne Frank, the student responded to a set list of questions.

Question 1. Describe the setting.

Question 2. Describe the plot of this story.

Question 3. Describe the major events of the plot

Question 4. Pick a character that is intolerant. Tell about the incident or incidents that show intolerance.

Question 5. Put yourself in this character's place. Why is he or she intolerant?

Question 6. What events in the story cause one of the characters to change his or her attitude?

Question 7. Compare this story to real events either in your life or something you've heard about.

Question 8. What is the major conflict or problem in the story?

Question 9. At the end of the story how does the author resolve the conflict?

Question 10. Often it takes courage to stand up to a situation that is against an individual or group. Tell about a situation you were involved in, witnessed, or read about that demonstrated this kind of courage.

Question 11. What part of the story affected you most? Explain.

Now write your own question and answer it.

Exemplar

Having read Alison Leslie Gold's book, Memories of Anne Frank, the student responded to a set list of questions.

Question 1. Describe the setting.

This story took place during World War II. It starts out within Amsterdam. People were living normal lives doing normal things. Then the war in Germany came into the people's lives. It went from being happy to being miserable. Once the war started, the people in this book lived in the war camps where the Germans sent many Jewish people to live and die. The people lived in terrible conditions. Some were squished two people in little beds. They didn't have enough to eat and they didn't have enough medicine if they got sick. There weren't good bathrooms and you couldn't take a bath. There were bugs that bit you and not much heat in the winter to keep you warm. These were not happy times for many people. The living conditions were terrible. Many people did not survive these war camps.¹

Question 2. Describe the plot of this story.

This story was about a Jewish family. The name of the main character is Hannah. Hannah and her family were from Amsterdam. They have to go and try to live in a war camp during the Second World War, when Germany's Hitler was in power. They had to go to a war camp for Jewish people. This story is not really about Anne Frank, but is written about Hannah, who was best friends with Anne Frank. The family is forced into this war camp and the story tells about their life, and death, in the camp. During the story, Anne Frank is mentioned and seen. Hannah's father, grandmother and her youngest sister died in the story. This is not a happy story.²

Question 3. Describe the major events of the plot

The first theme talks about Hannah and her family when they live normal lives in Amsterdam. The story tells about Hannah and her family and how their lives were not too different from ours today. They went to school and played outside with their friends.

The second theme talks about World War II. This brings a scarier feeling to the story because Hannah is Jewish, and I know about how the Germans treated Jewish people during World War II. This second theme also brings into the story Hannah's mother who died giving birth to a child, Both mother and baby died.

The third theme talks about the war camps. Hannah and her family had to leave their home and all of their things because they are being sent away to a war camp. Anne Frank, who was Hannah's best friend, was thought to be in Switzerland. Hannah was thinking about how lucky Anne was to be in Switzerland. Anne Frank and her family were actually hiding in the secret annex at the time. While in the war camp, Hannah was surprised to find Anne Frank on the other side of a wire fence, Hannah's side of the fence had better supplies of food and medicine, and Hannah could see that Anne and her sister were in pretty bad shape. Hannah tried to throw stuff over the fence to Anne, but other people would shove Anne out of the way and take it from her. Hannah's father died in the war camp.

The fourth theme talks about the end of the war, All of the Jewish people were all examined for diseases and injuries. Hannah saw Anne's father once they were all free, Anne's father told Hannah that he had received a letter that told him that Anne and her sister had died only a few weeks earlier.³

Question 4. Pick a character that is intolerant. Tell about the incident or incidents that show intolerance.

The characters that were the most intolerant were the war camp guards. They treated the Jewish people very badly. One time, the guards were forcing the Jewish people into trailers. If the Jewish people did not go into the trailers quickly enough, the guard would put a gun to their head and shoot them dead. They did not treat the Jewish people as if they were humans. They treated them terribly.⁴

Question 5. Put yourself in this character's place. Why is he or she intolerant?

I think that the guards were intolerant because they had to follow orders, or they might be punished terribly, too. And also, it seemed as if some of the guards enjoyed what they were ordered to do. It seemed as if they really hated Jewish people. If I were in the guards' shoes I might pretend to be all-tough, but really I would be trying to sneak the Jewish people out of the camps without anyone finding out. I would pretend to hate the Jewish people in front of the other guards just so I wouldn't be killed, but I would not kill anyone and I would let the Jewish people know that I was trying to help them escape. I don't understand how anyone could think about being in his or her shoes. They did horrible things that I can't imagine a whole bunch of people agreed with.⁵

Question 6. What events in the story cause one of the characters to change his or her attitude?

This is an event that changed a guard's mind. It was near the end of the war. The Germans were losing. The camps were a terrible place to live and there were many sick and dying people. The children didn't have real toys or sweet things to eat. One of the guards felt sorry for Hannah's little sister Gabby and gave her a cookie. Gabby had been in the camp most of her life and never seen a cookie. Hannah told her to eat it, and she did. That was nice of the guard to give Gabby a cookie. I think that was a big change for a guard to make.⁶

Question 7. Compare this story to real events either in your life or something you've heard about.

I will compare this story to a "Dear America" story that I read.⁷ It was called, "So Far From Home." It was about a young Irish girl, Mary Driscoll, who has to leave her poor family behind in Ireland, and go to America. She was trying to help her family survive and not starve to death. She was trying to save money to bring them to America and to send them money to buy food for the family in Ireland.

This story is similar to "Memories of Anne Frank" because both stories have girls as their main characters and both of the girls are treated badly. No one respects either of these girls. Mary is treated practically like a slave. She works really long hard hours for almost no money. She is bossed around and she is very unhappy. In both of their stories people in

their families died and they were pretty much on their own at young ages.

This story is different from what happened to Hannah because no one was really trying to kill her. She didn't have to wake up every morning wondering if she going to die today. Mary did have a very hard life and it was sad the way that she was treated, but no one was going to come up and kill her! Hannah had to think about her missing and dead family every day. She had to watch people around her die from starvation and sickness. Hannah had a much harder life than Mary.

Question 8. What is the major conflict or problem in the story?

The major conflict in this story was the way that the Germans treated the Jewish people during World War II. They took away their private lives; they made them give up their things, and their freedom. They forced the Jewish people into war camps where they tortured and killed millions of people. The major problem was how Hannah was going to survive this terrible thing.⁸

Question 9. At the end of the story how does the author resolve the conflict?

The only way that this conflict was resolved was for other countries to come into Germany and fight the Germans. The other countries included the United States of America, We knew about the terrible things that Hitler was doing in Germany, and it made us really mad. We knew that what he was doing to other people was wrong, so we went over to Germany to make him stop. The Jewish people were freed from the war camps and their conflict was over...sort of. They still had to go on in life with the terrible⁹ memories of what happened to them and to their families and friends. They had to start their lives over again from the beginning because everything had been taken from them. I don't know if the conflict could ever really end if you had to live through something like that.

Question 10. Often it takes courage to stand up to a situation that is against an individual or group. Tell about a situation you were involved in, witnessed, or read about that demonstrated this kind of courage.

One year there was a boy in my sister's preschool who was bigger and stronger than all of the other kids there. He used to beat everyone up every day. One day, my sister Sarah got really tired of his being a bully and she started defending all the other kids. If this bad boy attacked someone, Sarah would jump into the middle of it and make him stop.

This boy soon hated Sarah more than anyone else in the class and he wanted to make her pay for stopping him. Sarah didn't like him picking on the others and no one seemed to catch him doing the bad stuff, so she decided to do something herself to protect the others. Sarah is very tough, but not mean. She likes to protect others.

One day the boy snuck up behind Sarah with the teacher's scissors raised over his head. He was going to stab Sarah in the back. Luckily, one of the teachers grabbed his arm before he could stab her. Sarah was very lucky that she didn't get killed by this boy. The boy was sent away to a special school so someone could try to help him.

He is back in Sarah's class this year, but I don't think that he hates anyone any more.¹⁰

Question 11. *What part of the story affected you most? Explain.*

The part of the story that affected me most was when Hannah saw Anne Frank's father after the end of the war. Hannah's was Anne's best friend in the whole world and she had thought that Anne had survived just like her. She told Anne's father about seeing Anne at the camps and how they had talked. She told him about throwing stuff over the fence to Anne. Hannah told Anne's father that Anne was still alive. That is when Otto Frank, Anne's father, told Hannah about the notice that he had received telling him about Anne and Anne's sister's death. Hannah was really sad when Otto told her the bad news. It made me think about how I would feel if someone came up to me and told me that a friend of mine was dead.¹¹ I would have a hard time believing it, especially if I had seen them alive recently. I would be really sad knowing that I would never see them again.

Now write your own question and answer it.

Question 12. How would you feel if you were a Jewish child in Germany during World War II?

I would be really scared, and I would be really confused.

It is hard to understand what is happening when you are a kid because people do not tell you everything, and it is hard to understand what is happening when you don't know everything. It would be really scary to be taken away from your home by soldiers with guns. It would be even scarier if you had to be taken away from your mom and dad, too. All of the people crying and screaming would make me even more scared even if I didn't understand what was happening. All of the panic would make me want to run and hide, especially if I was alone without my family.

I wouldn't understand why Germans wouldn't like me anymore. I would be a German too, but now I would be treated differently. I wouldn't understand why I was different than others and why I would deserve to be taken away from my family and killed.

I am glad that I do not have to worry about these things in my life. I know that it is happening in other parts of the world right now and it makes me sad to think about it. Last year's Anne Frank Competition was about "Silence." I wrote a poem called, "I hear through the silence."

It was a poem comparing the horrible things that happened in World War II to some similar things that are happening today. It is sad to think that we can't learn from the mistakes that other people have made. We have to make the same mistakes over again!¹²

Annotations

- ¹ Standard 1: Applies standard writing conventions - correct spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation and capitalization.
- ² Standard 1: Applies standard writing conventions here and throughout this piece.
- ³ Standard 1: Organizes thoughts around a clear beginning, middle and end.
- ⁴ Standard 1: Straightforward answers are appropriate given the purpose of this writing.
- ⁵ Standard 2: The reflective tone of this writing expresses an understanding of the assignment's intent.
- ⁶ Standard 1: This student might be encouraged to use more sophisticated vocabulary to express her complex feelings.
- ⁷ Standard 2: The ability to compare and contrast is a valuable convention when analyzing literature.
- ⁸ Standard 1: Thoughts are organized around a clear beginning, middle and end.
- ⁹ Standard 1: This student often resorts to the word "terrible" to express her feelings about this story. Encourage your students to search for specific rather than general vocabulary.
- ¹⁰ Standard 2: Ability to personalize information demonstrates the understanding important to this form.
- ¹¹ Standard 1: Uses transitional sentences and phrases to connect related ideas.
- ¹² Standard 2: This student confidently presents an analytical response to her reading.