

“The Sneetch and Other Stories,” “The Butter Battle Book,” and “Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories” are © by Dr. Seuss Enterprises and published by Random House Children’s Books.

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1. Project Overview

Often for students, the concept of analytical writing is daunting. They frequently feel that taking a piece of literature and dissecting every little word or phrase is something beyond their capabilities. This is often the case because they are afraid of the literary piece to begin with. If they were working with a story that is in no way intimidating, they could possibly find the analysis far easier than they knew possible.

We have all been raised on the stories of Dr. Seuss. These books taught us to read and fostered our creativity. However, as young children, we often did not fully grasp the depth to which this beloved children's author wrote. By reexamining these stories, we, as adults, find the story of "The Sneetches" to be a lesson on racism, "The Butter Battle Book" is a cautionary tale of a nuclear arms race, and, "Yertle the Turtle" condemns a tyrannical leader. Many of Dr. Seuss' works for older children contain similar messages that help guide the reader along a more ethical and moral path.

If adult learners are presented with familiar literature, stories they have probably read many times (both as a child and, possibly, as a parent), they will be less intimidated to address the story from an analytical direction. By using the same skills required for the analysis of any work, they can deconstruct the Dr. Seuss tale and hone these abilities so that when presented with more advanced literary works, they will be less intimidated.

This project focuses on “The Sneetches” for use as examples, and then allows for the teacher to decide if the class will work from that book only or from “Yertle the Turtle” and “The Butter Battle Book” as well. Depending on the ability level of the group, the teacher may choose to have some students just continue and build upon the examples from “The Sneetches” and complete the project with that text, while having students, who are more comfortable with the skills learned, use “The Sneetches” as a guide while working from one of the other two texts as the source material to write their essays.

The lesson plan is written with in two forms: one using only the Dr. Seuss book as the source material for the essay, and one using the Dr. Seuss book, plus two articles taken from newspapers around the time leading up to the publishing of the book. The second lesson would allow the teacher and students to see some of the historical perspective associated with the books. Two articles are provided for this; however, the teacher may choose to have the students to research further on their own.

2. Lesson: Annotating text

Overview: The first step in writing a literary analysis begins with the text.

Students need to learn to be active readers in general, but particularly when they will be analyzing text for essays. This part of the project helps them learn techniques they can use to annotate the text for use in the essay.

Materials:

Post it Notes

Highlighters (yellow works best)

A pencil (because they can be erased)

Pages 3-5 of the text of “The Sneetches” by Dr. Seuss

Complete copies of “The Sneetches,” “Yertle the Turtle,”

and “The Butter Battle Book” for each student to have one of the books to work from. The students will not need full copies of each book.

Steps:

1. While reading the text, students will highlight the text that seems important. (At first, students will highlight too much or too little. This should work itself out with practice.)

To demonstrate, the teacher would show on page 3 of the text, possible lines to highlight, such as:

“Had bellies with stars.”

“Had none upon thars.”

“You might think such a thing wouldn’t matter at all.”

2. After highlighting, students will write notes in the margins to note why something was highlighted. This could include symbols, explanations, questions, etc.

From the examples highlighted, the teacher might write:

“physical differences” next to the first two lines

and,

“foreshadows problem” next to the last line

3. On the back of the final page of the text (if they are working from photocopies), or inside the front cover (if they are working from books), students will make a list of key facts and the page number on which they appear.

Teacher may show on page 5, with highlighting of text

“Could a Plain Belly get in the game...? Not at all”

and margin note:

“exclusion of those who are different”

On the List of Key facts

“Page 5, physical differences lead to segregation”

4. The students should then work through the rest of the text of their book on their own to complete the annotation of their text.
5. If the teacher decides to use only one of the three recommended texts for the entire project, the students may continue working with “The Sneetches” instead of switching to the other titles.

Wrap up: Explain to students that these skills should be used when reading any text they will have to work with later, be it for an essay, a test, or a project. Also, reinforce that these can be used even with books from the library (just relying more on the Post it Notes than writing in the margins).

3. Lesson: Paraphrasing quotations

Overview: Plagiarism is a serious problem that students need to become aware of before they enter college. It is important for them to learn how to avoid it early in their academic careers. This part of the project will help them develop the skills needed to paraphrase quotations taken from the source. Most students will find this easy because Dr. Seuss writes in such a distinctive style that using their own words won't be a problem.

Materials:

An annotated copy of their text

Copies of the "Paraphrasing Worksheet" located in the "Handouts" portion of this lesson

Steps:

1. Using the Paraphrasing worksheet, have the students select a quote from their annotated copy.
2. The students will then restate the quote from the text using their own words in the "Paraphrase" column. Students should be careful to use their own words and phrases to restate the text. Make sure the students understand that it must be sufficiently different from the original to count as a paraphrase.
3. Next, the students will use the third column of the worksheet to add their opinions and views on the quote. This is their analysis of the quote, their time to explain what they have learned from the passage. They may want to include why this quote is important to the text and why it could be important to their essays.
4. You may want the students to use only one quote per page, or to include two or three or more per page. For convenience sake, several on one page could be good, but for organizing the essay later, it may work better if they were using a new page for each quote.

For example (from page 13 of “The Sneetches”):

<u>Quote</u>	<u>Paraphrase</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>“‘Good grief!’ groaned the ones who had stars at the first. ‘We’re still the best Sneetches and they are the worst. But, now, how in the world will we know,’ they all frowned, ‘If which kind is what, or the other way round?’”</p>	<p>The Sneetches who had stars from the beginning were upset because now the other Sneetches had stars too. They claimed they were “still the best” race, but didn’t know how they were going to tell which was which.</p>	<p>This is an example of what happens when one group feels it is superior to another and becomes angry when the “other” people start behaving or looking too much like the “superior” class.</p>

Wrap Up: It is important for students to realize how important it is to paraphrase properly. I feel that a discussion on plagiarism is important for students early in the research-based essay writing process. In the copy-and-paste world we live in now, it is vital that students understand the concept of Intellectual Property. Many students also don’t realize the possible ramifications of plagiarism; from ‘merely’ an F on the assignment to expulsion from the school, the penalties can be severe. Further, students may also not realize the reason so many professors require their students turn in their essay electronically is because the professors have access to software that scans the work for ‘copy-and-paste.’ It is far easier to catch a cheater in the information age.

4. Lesson: Writing an analytical essay (without additional sources)

Overview: Students will take one of the original texts from the Dr. Seuss list and examine the underlying message of the story. The students will use the paraphrasing worksheets and analytical essay organizer to aid them as they prepare their essays.

Materials:

Original text of the three Dr. Seuss books:

The Sneetches and Other Stories

Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories

The Butter Battle Book

Copies of “Writing an Analytical Essay”

Copies of “Paraphrasing Worksheet”

Copies of “Analytical Essay Organizer”

Copies of “Formatting Your Paper”

Copies of the “Analytical Writing Rubric”

(included in the “Handouts” section)

Steps:

1. Building on the annotating and paraphrasing lessons, the students will apply those skills to the complete text of the chosen book.
2. After they have completed the annotating of the texts, the students will choose a broad statement relevant to the topic for their essays. This thesis is based around the concept of: I will prove_____. They will use this as the foundation for their introductory paragraph.
3. Next, with the aid of the Analytical Essay Organizer, the students will map out what they want to write.

4. Next, have the students write topic sentences for each paragraph. Then, using their texts, notes, and paraphrased quotes, they will explain their main ideas with details, facts, examples, and other supporting evidence.

5. Then, have the students draw their conclusion and restate the main points.

6. Finally, using the Formatting Your Paper handout, explain to the students how to set up their work cited pages and properly format their papers before they begin typing.

7. You may have the students use the Grading Rubric to review their papers to see if they meet the desired criteria.

Wrap Up: This project will probably take a few hours to complete. Students will need both in class and out of class time. You may decide to do this over a few class periods to allow them to ask questions.

5. Lesson: Writing an analytical essay (with additional sources)

Overview: Students will take one of the original texts from the Dr. Seuss list, along with newspaper articles that give a historic perspective on the issue, and examine the underlying message of the story. The students will use the paraphrasing worksheets and analytical essay organizer to aid them as they prepare their essays.

Materials:

Original text of the three Dr. Seuss books:

The Sneetches and Other Stories

Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories

The Butter Battle Book

Copies of the newspaper articles for historical reference

Copies of "Writing an Analytical Essay"

Copies of "Paraphrasing Worksheet"

Copies of "Analytical Essay Organizer"

Copies of "Formatting Your Paper"

Copies of the "Analytical Writing Rubric"

(included in the "Handouts" section)

Steps:

1. Building on the annotating and paraphrasing lessons, the students will apply those skills to the complete text of the chosen book and the newspaper articles.
2. After they have completed the annotating of the texts, the students will choose a broad statement relevant to the topic for their essays. This thesis is based around the concept of: I will prove_____. They will use this as the foundation for their introductory paragraph.

3. Next, with the aid of the Analytical Essay Organizer, the students will map out what they want to write.
4. Next, have the students write topic sentences for each paragraph. Then, using their texts, notes, and paraphrased quotes, they will explain their main ideas with details, facts, examples, and other supporting evidence.
5. Then, have the students draw their conclusion and restate the main points.
6. Finally, using the Formatting Your Paper handout, explain to the students how to set up their work cited pages and properly format their papers before they begin typing.
7. You may have the students use the Grading Rubric to review their papers to see if they meet the desired criteria.

Wrap Up: This project will probably take a few hours to complete. Students will need both in class and out of class time. You may decide to do this over a few class periods to allow them to ask questions.

6. Handouts

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Writing an Analytical Essay with a Primary Source

Using one of the Dr. Seuss texts, write an analytical essay examining the underlying themes with the book. Use quotes from the text to support your argument.

There are two purposes of an analytical essay:

1. Prove that you understand the material, and
2. Show that you can apply this understanding in a way beyond what you've read or heard.

So, as you develop your essay, continue to ask yourself, "What is the deeper meaning of this book, and why does it matter?"

Selected Texts:

The Sneetches and Other Stories

Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories

The Butter Battle Book

Instructions:

1. Using skills from the annotating and paraphrasing lessons, annotate the text looking for the underlying themes within the book.

What is the moral to the story?

What is the message that Dr. Seuss was trying to convey?

What action would Dr. Seuss like you to take after having read the book?

2. After they have completed the annotating of the texts, choose a broad statement that is relevant to the topic for your essays. This thesis is based around the concept of:

I will prove_____.

Use this as the foundation for your introductory paragraph.

3. Develop 3 or more supporting ideas that will help you prove your thesis. You will do this through defining the point in a topic sentence, and then supporting their point with evidence and analysis.
4. Next, with the aid of the Analytical Essay Organizer, map out what you want to write. Put your supporting ideas in order to best prove your thesis.
5. Next, write topic sentences for each of your supporting ideas. In each paragraph, include a quote from the text to support your ideas. Then, using your texts, notes, and paraphrased quotes, explain the supporting ideas with details, facts, examples, and other supporting evidence.
6. Then, draw your conclusion and restate the main points.
7. With the Analytical Essay Organizer complete, write a rough draft of your essay including transitional words and phrases and a variety of sentence types. You'll also want to include "academic" vocabulary to elevate your writing.
8. When you've finished your rough draft, proofread your essay! Try reading it aloud to see if there are words or phrases you stumble over, then make corrects as needed. Double check your punctuation and spelling.
9. Finally, using the Formatting Your Paper handout, type your final draft and set up your work cited page. After you print it out, re-edit it for typos or other possible problems.
10. You may want to use the Grading Rubric to review your papers to see if you've meet the desired criteria.

Writing an Analytical Essay with a Primary and Some Secondary Sources

Using one of the Dr. Seuss texts, write an analytical essay examining the underlying themes with the book. Use quotes from the text, plus evidence from the historical documents included and/or from your personal research to support your argument. Be sure to cite your sources using the MLA style.

There are two purposes of an analytical essay:

1. Prove that you understand the material, and
2. Show that you can apply this understanding in a way beyond what you've read or heard.

So, as you develop your essay, continue to ask yourself, "What is the deeper meaning of this book, and why does it matter?"

Selected Texts:

Set 1:

The Sneetches and Other Stories by Dr. Seuss.

"Government Can Now Back Fight Against Segregation" from the North Adams (Massachusetts) Transcript, 1961.

"Survey Results Show 3-1 Against School Desegregation" from The Rocky Mount Sunday Telegram, 1955.

Set 2:

Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories by Dr. Seuss.

"Gay Vienna Again Becomes the Center of World Anxiety" from The Salt Lake Tribune, 1934.

"Dictatorship's Evils told by Radio Speaker" from Mason City Globe-Gazette, 1937.

Set 3:

The Butter Battle Book by Dr. Seuss.

"Reagan: Soviet Nuclear Edge Bars Freeze" from The Winchester (Virginia) Star, 1982.

"Senate Filibuster Blusters On" from News-Herald, 1983.

" 'News' Shouldn't Surprise Americans" from The Hutchinson (Kansas) News, 1983.

Instructions:

1. Using skills from the annotating and paraphrasing lessons, annotate the text looking for the underlying themes within the book.

What is the moral to the story?

What is the message that Dr. Seuss was trying to convey?

What action would Dr. Seuss like you to take after having read the book?

2. After they have completed the annotating of the texts, choose a broad statement that is relevant to the topic for your essays. This thesis is based around the concept of:

I will prove_____.

Use this as the foundation for your introductory paragraph.

3. Develop 3 or more supporting ideas that will help you prove your thesis. You will do this through defining the point in a topic sentence, and then supporting their point with evidence and analysis.

4. Next, with the aid of the Analytical Essay Organizer, map out what you want to write. Put your supporting ideas in order to best prove your thesis.

5. Next, write topic sentences for each of your supporting ideas. In each paragraph, include a quote from the text to support your ideas. Then, using your texts, notes, and paraphrased quotes, explain the supporting ideas with details, facts, examples, and other supporting evidence.

6. Then, draw your conclusion and restate the main points.

7. With the Analytical Essay Organizer complete, write a rough draft of your essay including transitional words and phrases and a variety of sentence types. You'll also want to include "academic" vocabulary to elevate your writing.

8. When you've finished your rough draft, proofread your essay! Try reading it aloud to see if there are words or phrases you stumble over, then make corrects as needed. Double check your punctuation and spelling.

9. Finally, using the Formatting Your Paper handout, type your final draft and set up your work cited page. After you print it out, re-edit it for typos or other possible problems.

10. You may want to use the Grading Rubric to review your papers to see if you've meet the desired criteria.

Analytical Writing Rubric

Criterion	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Emerging
Organization	Clear organization that is easy to follow and does not stray off topic	Clear organization but strays slightly	Organization is less than clear, or has clear organization but with some digression	Organization is unclear and/or substantially strays off topic
Argumentation	There are clear, strong arguments that go beyond descriptions	Arguments are clear, but maybe weak.	Paper has some arguments but mostly simple description	Paper has few arguments, rarely goes beyond description
Support	Evidence is relevant, supports the argument, and comes from more than one source	Details and facts support the argument, but there may not be enough provided or they are not always relevant	There are some details and facts, but not enough and they lack relevancy	There are few or no relevant facts or details to support the arguments
Grammar	No major errors	One major error or a few minor errors that do not distract from the overall effect	Two or three major errors plus some minor errors that are somewhat distracting	Numerous major and minor errors
Sentence Structure	Sentences use a variety of structures. There are a combination of simple, compound, and complex sentences	Some variety in sentence structure	Little variety of sentences	Mostly simple, single clause sentences.

Vocabulary	Precise, rich, appropriate vocabulary	Generally good vocabulary with some variety and depth of word choices	Limited vocabulary, may not always be precise or accurate	Very limited vocabulary. Incorrect usage
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Formatting Your Paper

Use the following guidelines to help you format your paper and cite your sources.

Page layout

1. Use a standard, easy to read font such as Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman.
2. Use 12-point font.
3. Double space.
4. Use 1-inch margins on all sides.
5. Indent the first line of each paragraph. Do not skip extra lines between paragraphs.
6. In the footer section, number your pages in the bottom, right corner. Do not number the first page.
7. In the header section of the first page, include your name and the date the paper is due. This should be 'right-justified.'
8. Include a work cited page at the end of your paper.

Citations within your paper

To avoid plagiarism, you must cite all sources within your paper. Any information that comes from a source outside of your own head MUST be cited even if you are not directly quoting the original source. This includes information from books, newspapers, magazines, the internet, the television, the radio, or personal interviews.

Examples of citations within the paper

Quotation: “The never invited the Plain-Belly Sneetches.
They left them out cold, in the dark of the beaches” (Geisel, 7).

Paraphrase: The Plain-Belly Sneetches were excluded from activities by the Star-Bellied Sneetches (Geisel, 7).

If the authors name is included in the sentence, it is not necessary to repeat the name in the citation.

Paraphrase: Dr. Seuss gives several examples of how the Plain-Belly Sneetches were excluded by the Star-Bellied Sneetches. (7)

Work Cited Page

A work cited page must be included at the end of your paper. It should include all of the sources that were used within the essay.

1. The page should be titled "Work Cited" and centered at the top of the page.
2. All sources should be listed in alphabetical order by the author's last name. If there is no author, use the title of the article (ignoring *A*, *An*, or *The*).
3. Each entry should use a "hanging indent" format: the first line is at the left margin while all subsequent lines indented one tab.
4. Each entry is single spaced, with a double space between entries.
5. Underline titles of books, magazines, and newspapers.
6. Article titles should be put in quotation marks.
7. Abbreviate all months except for *May*, *June*, and *July*.

Samples of Citations

Books

Author's last name, First name. "Title of the Article." Title of the Book. City of Publication: Publisher, date.

Example:

Geisel, Theodor Seuss. The Sneetches and Other Stories. New York: Random House, 1961.

Newspaper Articles

Author's last name, First name. "Title of the Article." Title of the Newspaper. Date of Publication: page(s).

Example:

Marlow, James. "Government Can Now Back Fight Against Segregation." The North Adams Transcript. May 24, 1961: 6.

9.

Paraphrasing Worksheet

Quote	Paraphrase	Response

Analytical Essay Organizer

Hook:
Thesis (what I will prove):
Background Information:
Supporting Ideas:
Body 1:
Body 2:
Body 3:
Conclusion sentence:
<hr/>
Transition word or phrase
<hr/>
Supporting Idea #1
Detail 1:
Detail 2:
Detail 3:
Quote:
Explanation of quote:
<hr/>
Transition word or phrase
<hr/>

Support Idea #2
Detail 1:
Detail 2:
Detail 3:
Quote:
Explanation of quote:
Transition word or phrase
Support Idea #3
Detail 1:
Detail 2:
Detail 3:
Quote:
Explanation of quote:
Transition word or phrase
Restate thesis:
Summarize your supporting ideas
Body 1:
Body 2:
Body 3:
Closing thought:

