CULTIVATING POSSIBILITIES THROUGH LITERACY

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Cultivating Possibilities through Literacy

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This text was compiled on 08/21/2025

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Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in ***Back Matter/Detailed Licensing****.*

1: Introduction

The Golden Eagle

> *A man found an eagle's egg and placed it in the nest of a backyard hen. The eaglet hatched with a brood of chicks and grew up with them. All his life the eagle did what the backyard chickens did, thinking he was a backyard chicken.*
>
> *He scratched the earth for worms and insects.*
>
> *He clucked and cackled.*
>
> *And he thrashed his wings and flew a few feet into the air like the chickens.*
>
> *Years passed and the eagle grew very old. One day he saw a magnificent bird far above him in the cloudless sky. It floated in graceful majesty among the powerful wind currents, with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings. The old eagle looked up in awe, and said 'Who's that?' A neighboring chicken replied, 'That's the eagle, the king of the birds. But don't give it another thought. You and I are different from him.'*
>
> *So, the eagle never gave it another thought; he died thinking he was a backyard chicken.*

The story of *The Golden Eagle*, shared by Anthony de Mello, is an apt metaphor symbolizing how it is possible for us to go through life unaware of our innate potential. We are eagles, but due to conditioning and false perceptions, we believe we are backyard chickens. The story of *The Golden Eagle* is a reminder for us to awaken and challenge our false perceptions and conditionings about the world, ourselves, each other, and even the English language.

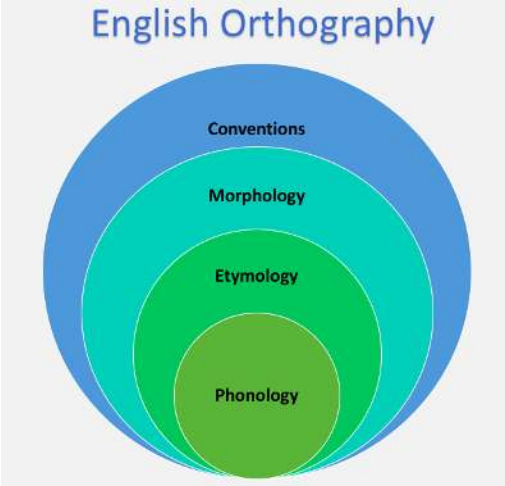
In this guidebook, we hope to nudge you into your own awakening where you begin to challenge your perceptions about yourself, others, the world, and the written English language. As critical literacy educators, our aim is to support you in "reading the word and the world " (Freire, 2008). Towards this goal, we take a critical stance, meaning that we strive to create equitable learning opportunities for you, our students, and when we notice inequitable circumstances, we work to challenge them in order to change or transform them. For example, we noticed that many of our students were unable to afford the expensive textbook for our class; this situation was negatively impacting their success. So, we decided to take action by writing our own book–the guidebook you are reading now–and making it available on a free open access platform. We believe that it is essential for all students to have access to class readings, not just students with financial means. This is just one way we've enacted critical literacy. Critical literacy is a process of seeing and naming injustices in our environment (reading the world) and then using the tools of literacy (the word) to make changes or imagine new possibilities.

1.1 English Orthography

To support you in reading the word so that you too can read both the word *and* the world, we will be learning how the written word, also known as English orthography or the English spelling system, is composed. The composition of the spelling system reflects its main purpose: **English orthography represents the sense and meaning of words.** One of the reasons behind the complexity of English is that the sense and meanings of English words have and will continue to change and evolve over time. As a result, English words can have multiple meanings - they can be polysemous.

However, the spelling system of written English is coherent and logical and is constructed to support your word learning. Within the orthographic system are three interrelated dimensions: 1) **morphology** (the study of a word and its meaningful elements), 2) **etymology** (the study of the history and origin of words and their relatives), and 3) **phonology** (the study of how the sounds of English are represented by letters and combinations of letters). By looking at English orthography through all three dimensions, along with the spelling conventions (the standards that guide English spellings), English words can begin to make more sense to both instructors and students. Presently, you might feel uncertain about the spelling system, but as you journey through this guidebook, you will become more familiar with the system and the terminology. As literacy educators, we had not been aware of the spelling system, and as a result, we held false perceptions about English; we believed that English spellings were crazy and illogical. Unfortunately, we conveyed these misperceptions to our students. In addition, we had been caught up in the middle of a reading war.

1.2 False Perceptions of Literacy



Historically, the literacy field has been dominated by a longstanding "reading war" between two competing approaches to reading instruction. One side advocates for instruction that focuses on learning the sounds associated with letters - this is called phonics instruction. The other side focuses on understanding the meanings of written words within stories - this is known as whole language. While you don't need to know all the details about this war, you should be aware that neither side presents a full and accurate depiction of written English; as a result, there are many words accepted as irregular. Moreover, each side has been preoccupied with finding fault with the other side instead of engaging in self-reflexivity. Self-reflexivity is a key component of critical literacy. Self-reflexivity is the intentional evaluation of ourselves and our experiences to identify places where we can grow and develop. In education, self-reflexivity involves evaluating our instructional practices to identify effective and ineffective practices so we can ensure we employ methods that develop literacy.

As we used reading practices from both sides of the reading wars, we encountered many inconsistencies about the English language that were confusing and for which we could not account. For example, we had learned and taught the rule "when two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking." That means when 2 vowels are next to each other - like the <ea> in the words *each* and *eat* - the first vowel (the <e>) will be what is known as *long* - a long vowel sounds like the vowel letter name <e>. However, we encountered countless words that were exceptions to this rule, such as *earth*, *bear*, *head*, and *break*. In addition, we had no idea why the words *crumb* and *comb* contain a letter <b> and why the word *friend* has a letter <i>. These spellings confused us because we were looking at words from only one dimension of the language - phonology - the study of sound. Without including the history (etymology) or the meaningful word structures (morphology), we were unable to explain to students the rationale for the spellings. As a result, we blamed the inconsistencies on the English language itself. We believed English to be chaotic and illogical; moreover, we conveyed these false perceptions to our students.

Unfortunately for our students, trying to learn a language system without logic or coherence is not only difficult but it is confusing, frustrating, and disempowering. This became apparent to us through a study that Megan, one of the authors of this guidebook, conducted among more than 130 students in her developmental reading classes. More than a third of the students expressed negativity towards their reading and their literacy abilities as shown by the following student responses:

> "Well I know for a fact I am not a good reader so I don't even try."

> " I get so insecure when other people know the meaning of the story and I don't."

> " Frustrating, frustrating has always been my downfall in reading and understanding. If I can't understand the first time I feel like I failed or give up sometimes."

> "My level of confidence in reading is low with the fear of being wrong and not being able to advance further with my reading."

> "Struggling with reading can be both mentally and emotionally exhausting for me."

The negative feelings of fear, frustration, and insecurity do not support optimal conditions for students to learn literacy. In fact, the last student quote directly describes the broader psychological toll of students' struggles. In addition to these negative emotions, the students held misperceptions about the traits of "good readers" and the purpose for reading. For instance, the students were asked to describe the characteristics of a "good reader. Over 37% of students focused on the ability to read quickly and accurately and 70% noted the ability to pronounce words correctly, while many others emphasized the importance of answering comprehension

questions. Within these characterizations, students were predominantly focusing on only one aspect of the spelling system: phonology. Having the capabilities to read or pronounce words quickly and accurately and answer comprehension questions correctly is important; however, none of those abilities fully address the deeper purpose of reading, which is to construct meaning and make sense of texts.

Accordingly, it is possible to read something quickly and accurately and even answer comprehension questions correctly, while still not fully understanding what was read. For instance, you most likely have the ability to accurately read the following excerpt from the song *Waltzin' Matilda*:

> *Once a jolly swagman, camped beside a billabong,*
>
> *Under the shade of a coolibah tree,*
>
> *And he sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled*
>
> *You'll come a-waltzin Matilda with me.*

In addition, you could probably answer the questions, "Who was the character and what was he doing?" Yet without knowledge of what the words *swagman*, *billabong*, and *billy* mean, you probably cannot comprehend or make sense of the song. Thus, pronouncing words accurately and answering comprehension questions do not ensure understanding of a text. It is conceivable that the students attended schools that emphasized practices such as timed readings, reading aloud without practice, and reading passages and answering comprehension questions, all of which could influence students' false perceptions of "good readers."

Even though most students in Megan's study did not articulate that "good readers" can understand words and texts, they tacitly understood that this ability is essential, as demonstrated through their explanations about their own difficulties with reading. Furthermore, students recognized the negative impact that not understanding words had on their comprehension:

> "When I see a word I don't know I end up being blind sighted [sic] and everything that I've come to understand about the passage has vanished."

> "When I encounter unfamiliar words I am not really that confident in trying to figure them out. I feel this way because in the back of my mind I will just think I am wrong so why am I even trying to figure it out."

> "The hardest part of reading for me is the deciphering of words I do not understand. It is just very tough for me to understand how to find out the meaning of words I do not know, and it frustrates me that I do not have a solution as to why."

These statements reveal that students understood the importance of deep word knowledge, especially within their goal of comprehending texts. Moreover, the students noted that they were using limited or ineffective strategies for learning unknown words when reading. For instance, the students shared that when they encountered unfamiliar words, they would sound them out, use context clues or dictionaries, or ask parents or teachers. Some students noted they were not using any strategies at all, and they would completely skip over unfamiliar words or avoid texts that they expected to be too difficult.

1.3 Exploring Alternative Literacy Approaches

In response to our students' negative feelings, limited concepts of reading, and lack of strategies for learning unknown words, as well as our own frustration with not being able to explain countless "irregularities" within the language, we took a self-reflexive stance. We began by asking the following questions: How had our students' beliefs and feelings towards reading been shaped? How did our instructional approaches contribute to students' beliefs and emotions? What could we do differently as educators to better support our students' literacy learning? Having posed these questions, we were motivated to seek alternative, more productive approaches to literacy. Our search led us to the work of Pete Bowers (Bowers & Kirby, 2010). Pete utilizes structured word inquiry (SWI), a scientific approach for investigating English spellings, especially those that seem inconsistent. It was through our study with Pete and SWI that we gained a deeper understanding about the complexity of the spelling system and the interrelationship of morphology, etymology, and phonology. Consequently, as we began our exploration of the English language through SWI, spellings began to make sense. In addition, we were encouraged by the promising research; SWI has been shown to

increase vocabulary learning (Bowers & Kirby, 2010), word reading, and spelling abilities (Devonshire et al., 2013), and integrated strategic reading (Trexler, 2021). With our new understanding of the complexities and multidimensions of English, we transformed our instructional approach to literacy.

Our instruction began by encouraging students to investigate the “hard” or “irregular words.” Students became word scientists, gathering and observing words to look for historical (etymological) evidence of their relationship to other words. They compared these word relatives and observed the similarities and differences in their structure (spelling), meanings (morphology), and pronunciations (phonology). The evidence became the basis for generating hypotheses or inferences about words and their word families. Whenever evidence did not support our inferences, we rejected them and sought out new explanations. For instance, the rule about “2 vowels going walking” occurs less than 50% of the time. When something occurs in less than 50% of cases, it is not logical or scientific, and therefore must be dismissed. This rule is just one of the many misperceptions about the English language that we were now able to challenge and explore.

At the end of only one semester of exploring English through SWI, the students in Megan’s study reported significant shifts in their perceptions of reading, strategies for learning unknown words, and their understanding of English.

> “I thought English was just a language to memorize, but now I think that it is a language I can understand.”

> “This was different from how I learned English before because usually when we wouldn’t know a word we would either be told to look it up on google or check a dictionary. We would take out the prefixes and suffixes of words and find the base but it’s different because we wouldn’t try to find out what all of these [elements] mean and where they come from. I think that a lot of words that we think are so simple actually have a deeper meaning by breaking them down into morphemes which are interesting and make so much more sense as to why the word is spelled the way it is.”

> “Lately I have been challenging myself to not only look up a definition of a word but to use SWI and etymonline has become my best friend. When I was writing my last essay for Developmental English, I researched [etymonline] on words which I was unsure of.”

> “The concept of SWI was foreign to me until I started this class. Every session… has always felt unique and different compared to how I learned English before… I’ve heard of prefixes and suffixes before. However, I can’t quite recall learning about graphemes, morphological or etymological relatives."

> “Reading is the world of comprehension and knowledge. It isn’t based on how to read properly or being fast in reading. It is more than that. Reading teaches us how to study a word’s meaning ...”

By the end of the semester, 44% of the students reported that they were now utilizing morphology and etymology to make sense of unfamiliar words. This was significantly higher than the 9% of students that mentioned the use of prefixes, suffixes, or root words before the semester. Learning the complexity of English through SWI provided students with new tools and strategies to learn unknown words. As students began incorporating etymology and morphological analysis into their reading practices, their emphasis on reading quickly lessened, and by the end of the semester, only 11% of students mentioned speed or pace. Moreover, the students’ emotional responses changed, as 39% of students reported gaining confidence in themselves as readers during the SWI instruction. Their comments reveal this shift:

> “Today’s class, as always, made me feel more intelligent as a student. But, the bigger thing about today’s class that made me feel confident, I feel smarter as a reader. Reading has never been a strong suit of mine. I am pretty aware that I could become better. I just never knew how exactly. While taking tests, I always see a bunch of words, panic, then I guess, then I fail. It is always a series of downfalls when I take tests that involve stories. Now, I feel confident that I might be able to break down those words. Even greater, I might even be able to tell you the root of the word itself.”

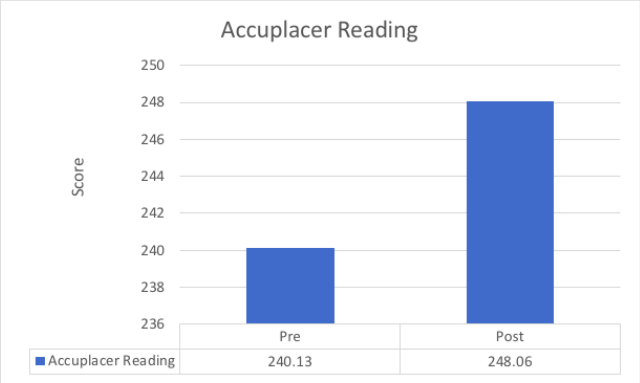
> “This [SWI] gives us a chance to expand our vocabulary by knowing where words come from and what they mean. Some of our words and some of their words could sound and be spelled the same but mean totally different things. Honestly, I feel pretty good about this lesson, it really boosted my confidence level.”

> “Everything I learned today, I feel more confident because I am no longer so afraid of being wrong on this subject, and I understand that I am already beginning to have the best knowledge about these kinds of words, their bases, and roots, and the family that they belong to.”

This newly gained confidence motivated the students’ desire to challenge themselves to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. Since “people who have strong beliefs in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided” (Bandura, 1986, p. 39), this shift reflects a gain in their self-confidence as readers. As instructors, this reminded us that when students’ confidence is built through reliable strategies and accurate representations of the language, we don’t need to make the English language seem “easier”; rather, as this study demonstrated, students in developmental classes rose to the challenge and embraced the complexity because they knew that there was logic to be found. With newly gained confidence also came a revised expectation for literacy development. Whereas students’ initially had an expectation for quick success, SWI reframed that expectation by establishing slower, gradual inquiry and heightened reading resilience in the face of challenges. These positive impacts on students further motivated us to expand SWI instruction among students in developmental reading.

1.4 Guidebook

More specifically, the significant impact that this form of literacy instruction had on Megan’s students inspired us to create this guidebook, which integrates elements of SWI with critical literacy so that this approach can become more accessible to other students and instructors. As we utilized the guidebook in our developmental reading class, we wanted to further understand the impact that the guidebook had on students’ reading growth, so we conducted another research study, the results of which revealed a significant gain in two key literacy areas:



> 1) **Accuplacer Next Generation reading placement test.** This comprehension placement test is administered to all incoming college students. The Accuplacer focuses on four main areas: rhetoric, vocabulary, synthesis, and information and ideas (College Board, 2017). The chart shows students made significant gains from their pre class scores to their post class scores.
>
> 2) **Morphological analysis skills assessment.** Morphological analysis refers to an active process by which students “problem solve meanings of unfamiliar words by applying knowledge of morphological constituents” (Carlisle, 2000). Morphological analysis extends beyond morphological awareness in that students must actively use word structure to determine meaning, as opposed to just possessing awareness of morphemes such as prefixes and suffixes.
>
> These results are especially promising because students made significant and measurable gains in key areas of literacy after ***just one semester with critical SWI instruction*** via this guidebook. Furthermore, the results of our study reinforce the broader research on both SWI and morphological instruction, which also demonstrate gains in vocabulary and comprehension.

1.5 Preview of the Rest of the Guidebook

Throughout this guidebook, we will explore words through the three interrelated dimensions of morphology, etymology, and phonology; we will also examine the conventions of written English– those are the norms or guidelines designed for English

spellings. Engaging in this inquiry process will deepen your understanding of the structure of written English; by extension, this insight will reposition you in relation to the language. For example, instead of having to memorize rules and spellings, you will discover the history and underlying reasons for those spellings. Instead of learning lists of isolated vocabulary words, you will study groups of related words, making it easier for you to understand and remember the words while also supporting you to figure out new unknown words. Throughout this guidebook, you might find that you're surprised by our language-based inquiries, as many of our former students expressed. They thought that a reading class was focused on "just reading." Through this experience with our guidebook, we aim to expand your idea of what reading entails.

The organization and structure of this book provides a gradual pathway into critical literacy and the English language. Our goal is to support you in imagining new possibilities of growth and transformation while equipping you with the tools of literacy to read the word in front of you and the world around you. Within the guidebook are five main sections that will support your critical literacy and English language learning (Hastings & Trexler, 2021). These sections are 1) reading self-reflexively, 2) questioning naturalized views, 3) challenging dominant ideologies 4) generating multiplicity and 5) reinscribing power dynamics. All five sections contain texts of various genres, including memoirs, poems, speeches, short stories, expository passages, reflective narratives, and excerpts from academic articles. Since each genre utilizes language in unique ways and invites you, the readers, to engage with the texts differently, our hope is that this textual variety will support your language-based observations. Furthermore, as we guide and engage you through these texts, we aim to facilitate your own inquiries. We want you to generate your own questions and notice which words or aspects of the language you are curious about. Your interest and curiosity play a central role in this text, just as they play a central role in your own literacy growth. In this way, we can take valuable insight from the story of *The Golden Eagle*. If the eagle had been encouraged to follow his curiosity, he may have recognized the many ways he was mistakenly being conditioned to be a backyard chicken. Moreover, he might have come to know himself better and been able to soar among the magnificent clouds.

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2: Strategies to Guide Comprehension

- 2.1 Introduction

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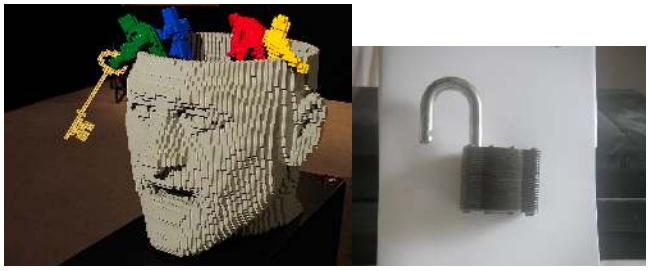

"Dreams unlocked" by glancs CC BY-NC-SA 2.0. "Padlock unlocked" by ☺ Lee J Haywood CC BY-SA 2.0.

These initial readings, strategies, and activities are meant to support you in your learning as you go through the guidebook. Research (Duke & Carlisle, 2011; Hoffman, 2017) demonstrates that avid, engaged readers use a variety of strategies or actions to help them make sense of and retain what they read. For most readers, these actions or strategies are unconscious; however, by learning about these strategies, you can start to become aware and notice your thought processes as you read. This awareness of your thinking is called metacognition. When you are metacognitive, you are conscious of how you are comprehending. You are aware of your depth of understanding and you are aware of when you are confused and don't understand. By identifying your confusion, you can then take active steps to try and remediate or fix the problem. These metacognitive strategies occur in 3 interconnected phases – before reading, during reading, and after reading.

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2.1: Before, During, and After Reading

2.1.1 **Before Reading Strategies**

One of the first steps you can take before you read something is to preview the material. Scan the reading by looking at the textual features– the titles, subtitles, pictures, graphs, or bold words. From the textual features, determine the topic of the reading. Knowing the topic can help you decide whether or not you have any background knowledge or experiences with the subject of the reading. If you have some prior knowledge, the material may be easier for you to understand. Conversely, having no background knowledge can make understanding the reading a bit more difficult; thus, you will want to read more slowly and make sure you are understanding and grasping the message.

? Exercise 1

Practice previewing with the first page of "Literacy as Freedom" from the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Scan the reading and name the text features that support you in determining what the topic is about. **Write those text features here. Do not read the passage as you're scanning.**

SAAM Smithsonian American Art Museum

Literacy as Freedom

As we look upon this young black man reading a Bible, one question that comes to mind is whether or not the subject is an enslaved person. If he is a free man in the North, it would be legal for him to read at this time in 1863. But what if he is not free? Or what if he is a free black man residing in a slave state? The issue of literacy among blacks during the Civil War was a complicated one. Before the 1830s there were few restrictions on teaching slaves to read and write. After the slave revolt led by Nat Turner in 1831, all slave states except Maryland, Kentucky, and Tennessee passed laws against teaching slaves to read and write. For example, in 1831 and 1832 statues were passed in Virginia prohibiting meetings to teach free blacks to read or write and instituting a fine of $10 - $ 100 for teaching enslaved blacks.

The **Alabama Slave Code of 1833** included the following law "[S31] Any person who shall attempt to teach any free person of color, or slave, to spell, read or write, shall upon conviction thereof by indictment, be fined in a sum of not less than two hundred fifty dollars, nor more than five hundred dollars." At this time, *Harpers Weekly* published an article that stated "the alphabet is an abolitionist. If you would keep a people enslaved refuse to teach them to read." There was fear that slaves who were literate could forge travel passes and escape. These passes, signed by the slave owner, were required for enslaved people traveling from one place to another and usually included the date on which the slave was supposed to return. There was also fear that writing could be a means of communication that would make it easier to plan insurrections and mass escapes.

Slave narratives from many sources tell us how many enslaved people became educated. Some learned to read from other literate slaves, while at other times a master or mistress was willing to teach a slave in defiance of the laws. Former slave and abolitionist leader **Frederick Douglass** was taught the alphabet in secret at age twelve by his master's wife, Sophia Auld. As he grew older Douglass took charge of his own education, obtaining and reading newspapers and books in secret. He was often quoted asserting that "knowledge is the pathway from slavery to freedom." Douglass was one of the few literate slaves who regularly taught others how to read. Younger slaves frequently listened outside school houses where their masters' children were learning. Enslaved people who were caught reading or writing were severely punished, as were their teachers. In every instance these slaves and those who taught them undertook a profound risk, which for many was surmounted by the individual's passion, commitment and imagination.

The following are two telling examples of slave narratives that discuss how slaves became literate. This first account is from James Fisher of Nashville, Tennessee, who relayed his story in 1843:

Some features you may have noticed are the following:

- The reference from where the article came: **SAAM Smithsonian American Art Museum**
- The bolded title: **Literacy as Freedom**
- The bolded words **Alabama Slave Code of 1833** and **Frederick Douglass**
- The 2 paintings – the one with a man reading, and the other where a woman is sitting next to a child reading

- Each picture has captions **– one is *The Lord is My Shepherd* and the other is *Sunday Morning***

These are just a few of the different kinds of text features that can be used to preview a text.

Some additional features may include the following:

- Chapter titles
- Illustrations/photographs/graphs/tables/cartoons
- Headings and subheadings
- Bold words/italicized words
- Biographical information on the author
- Pre- or post- questions

? Exercise 2

Now, think about the textual features you noticed and determine what you think this passage may be about. Decide if you have any background knowledge about the topic. Then, **pose a few questions** based on what you would like to learn from the reading. Write your questions based on the text features you noticed here:

By reading with some specific questions in mind, you will enter the passage already thinking about the topic. This is called **"reading with a purpose**." This specific purpose or purposes will help guide your understanding. After all, understanding is the main purpose of reading in the first place!

Perhaps some of the questions your raised included the following:

- What does literacy have to do with freedom?
- What was the Alabama Slave Code and what did the code mean for enslaved people?
- Who was Frederick Douglass?
- What is the man reading? Is it a Bible?
- Is the woman teaching the child to read?

These questions and many others stimulate thinking and can become your purpose for reading.

Summary of Before Reading Strategies
Preview Read titles, subtitles, summaries, pictures, graphs, tables, captions, bold/italicized content
Activate your Background Knowledge Ask: What do I know about this topic? Do I have knowledge or is it completely new?
Pose Questions or Make Predictions Use the information from previewing to form an expectation about the reading.
Set a Purpose Ask: "Why am I reading this? What do I hope to discover and learn?"

2.1.2 During Reading

With some questions in mind, you are ready to begin reading. As you read, there are several strategies you can utilize to help you understand and remember the reading. Before reviewing these strategies, though, think about what you do when you are reading something for school. Do you highlight or underline parts of the reading you find interesting or important? Most students have been taught to underline or highlight text. However, both of these actions are passive and do not actively help you remember or retain what you've read. Moreover, when a topic is new and you do not have much background knowledge, you may get to the end of the passage only to discover you have highlighted the entire passage. That will not be useful to you - unless you have an extremely keen memory.

Annotating the text is a note-taking strategy that is highly useful for processing your thinking and understanding of the text. Annotating the text requires careful reading and ***selective*** underlining or highlighting. For anything you decide to underline or highlight, you will include a note of explanation or add a comment in the margin. Your note or comment should be put into your own words. The idea is not for you to just rewrite what is already written in the text, but for you to restate the idea in your own words and to take ownership of the author's ideas. In the beginning, the process of annotation may be difficult; however, with practice, restating the author's ideas in your own words gets easier. In addition, it is also teaching you the beginning skills of paraphrasing and summarizing.

Now, go back and reread the questions you posed from the article "Literacy as Freedom". Begin to read and annotate the article. If you find answers to some of your questions, note them in the margins. If you learn some new important ideas, underline or highlight them and restate the ideas in your own words. If you find you have some new questions or are unsure of words or ideas, write those down too.

SAAM Smithsonian American Art Museum

Literacy as Freedom

As we look upon this young black man reading a Bible, one question that comes to mind is whether or not the subject is an enslaved person. If he is a free man in the North, it would be legal for him to read at this time in 1863. But what if he is not free? Or what if he is a free black man residing in a slave state? The issue of literacy among blacks during the Civil War was a complicated one. Before the 1830s there were few restrictions on teaching slaves to read and write. After the slave revolt led by Nat Turner in 1831, all slave states except Maryland, Kentucky, and Tennessee passed laws against teaching slaves to read and write. For example, in 1831 and 1832 statues were passed in Virginia prohibiting meetings to teach free blacks to read or write and instituting a fine of $10 - $ 100 for teaching enslaved blacks.

The **Alabama Slave Code of 1833** included the following law "[S31] Any person who shall attempt to teach any free person of color, or slave, to spell, read or write, shall upon conviction thereof by indictment, be fined in a sum of not less than two
hundred fifty dollars, nor more than five hundred dollars." At this time, *Harpers Weekly* published an article that stated "the
alphabet is an abolitionist. If you would keep a people enslaved refuse to teach them to read." There was fear that slaves who were literate could forge travel passes and escape. These passes, signed by the slave owner, were required for enslaved people traveling from one place to another and usually included the date on which the slave was supposed to return. There was also fear that writing could be a means of communication that would make it easier to plan insurrections and mass escapes.

Slave narratives from many sources tell us how many enslaved people became educated. Some learned to read from other literate slaves, while at other times a master or mistress was willing to teach a slave in defiance of the laws. Former slave and abolitionist leader **Frederick Douglass** was taught the alphabet in secret at age twelve by his master's wife, Sophia Auld. As he grew older Douglass took charge of his own education, obtaining and reading newspapers and books in secret. He was often quoted asserting that "knowledge is the pathway from slavery to freedom." Douglass was one of the few literate slaves who regularly taught others how to read. Younger slaves frequently listened outside school houses where their masters' children were learning. Enslaved people who were caught reading or writing were severely punished, as were their teachers. In every instance these slaves and those who taught them undertook a profound risk, which for many was surmounted by the individual's passion, commitment and imagination.

The following are two telling examples of slave narratives that discuss how slaves became literate. This first account is from James Fisher of Nashville, Tennessee, who relayed his story in 1843:

> *I . . . thought it wise to learn to write, in case opportunity should offer to write myself a pass. I copied every scrap of writing I could find, and thus learned to write a tolerable hand before I knew what the words were that I was copying. At last, I found an old man who, for the sake of money to buy whisky, agreed to reach me the writing alphabet, and set up copying. I spent a good deal of time trying to improve myself; secretly, of course. One day, my mistress happened to come into my room, when my materials were about; and she told her father (old Capt. Davis) that I was learning to write. He replied, that if I belonged to him, he would cut my right hand off.*

Artist Eastman Johnson was active in the abolitionist movement in the 1860s, so it is plausible that he read slave narratives that demonstrated the importance of literacy and, specifically, the reading of the Bible to slaves and former slaves. One possible source Johnson might have come across was the narrative of former slave James Curry, published in the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* on January 10, 1840. Curry recalls his quest to learn to read:

> *My master's oldest son was six months older than I. He went to a day school, and as I had a great desire to learn to read, I prevailed upon him to teach me. My mother procured me a spelling-book. (Before Nat Turner's insurrection, a slave in our neighborhood might buy a spelling or hymn-book, but now he cannot). I got so I could read a little, when my master found it out, and forbad his son to teach me any more. As I had got the start, however, I kept on reading and studying, and from that time till I came away, I always had a book somewhere about me, and if I got an opportunity, I would be reading in it. Indeed, I have a book now, which I brought all the way from North Carolina. I borrowed a hymn-book, and learned the hymns by heart. My uncle had a Bible, which he lent me, and I studied the Scriptures. When my master's family were all gone away on the Sabbath, I used to go into the house and get down the great Bible, and lie down in the piazza, and read, taking care, however, to put it back before they returned. There I learned that it was contrary to the revealed will of God, that one man should hold another as a slave. I had always heard it talked among slaves, that we ought not to be held as slaves; that our forefathers and mothers were stolen from Africa, where they were free men and free women. But in the Bible I learned 'God hath made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the earth'.*

Literacy and Faith

For African Americans religion and the Christian church was, and continues to be, a unifying and enduring force within the black community. Faith and freedom were strongly intertwined. Blacks considered emancipation the beginning of their exodus out of bondage, and the Christian church became a primary focus in the lives of African Americans. During Reconstruction, the expansion and prosperity of black churches stood as a symbol of black progress to naysayers who believed the emancipated slaves could not and would not be able to organize and become productive citizens. Church congregations also provided a support system against poverty and outside discrimination and gave hope to the masses that conditions would improve for the formally-enslaved population. Church-affiliated societies and youth groups were created in order to support, instill, and enforce family values and religious ideals. Churches often provided blacks their first taste of civic independence. As self-governing institutions, their administration was tended to by their black parishioners, providing the opportunity for blacks to hold positions of leadership. Perhaps most importantly, churches served as educational institutions by encouraging literacy through the reading of the Bible.

The title of the artwork, *The Lord is My Shepherd*, references a phrase taken directly from the Bible in the **Book of Psalms**. Psalm 23 draws an analogy between a shepherd and his flock of sheep to God and his children, mankind. Eastman Johnson cleverly converts the phrase for use in a contemporary context, suggesting that God, or more likely the Union, will lead the enslaved population out of bondage. This is the likeliest meaning of the picture, but it receives the least attention.

Another theory proposes that perhaps the man is not reading from Psalms, which occurs in the middle of the Bible. Instead, he may be reading a passage from the front of the Bible where one finds the **Book of Exodus** with its powerful message, "let my people go." Union soldier A.B. Randall reported in 1865 that "The Colord [*sic*] People here, generally consider, this war not only; their exodus, from bondage; but the road, to Responsibility; Competency; and honorable Citizenship." That Randall chooses to use the word *exodus* tells us that the parallel between the plight of the enslaved black population and that of the Jews in Egypt was a common, well- known reference. Indeed, parallels can be drawn between Biblical figures and contemporary figures; Pharaoh and Southern plantation overseers, Moses and abolitionist leaders like **Sojourner Truth**, Frederick Douglass, and **Harriet Tubman**.

Relation to the Artwork

Following the cleaning and conservation of *The Lord is My Shepherd*, it was revealed that the blanket the man sits on is blue in color, which makes it possible that the blanket is a United States Army-issued blanket. A resulting theory proposes that this man could be "contraband," a slave who escaped to the North and became allied with the Union army. These slaves were often taught to read by Union soldiers and they in turn taught other slaves to read. The man could also be representative of one of the first members of the United States Colored Troops, an all-black regiment of the Union army formed in 1863, which is the same year this artwork was painted. Regardless of the man's status, to quote American Art museum curator Eleanor Jones Harvey, "the idea of determination, of initiative . . . the idea of taking your future into your own hands becomes a central part of Eastman Johnson's narrative of the American Civil War."

Glossary

Alabama Slave Code of 1833: slave codes (like the 1833 Alabama code) were sets of laws that restricted aspects of slaves' lives to various degrees depending on the state. These codes controlled slave travel, marriage, education, and employment. They also set rights for slave owners.

Book of Exodus: the second book of the Old Testament of the Bible, Exodus describes the plight of the Israelites and their subsequent flight out of Egypt, led by Moses. This story drew comparisons to the plight of African American slaves in the nineteenth century.

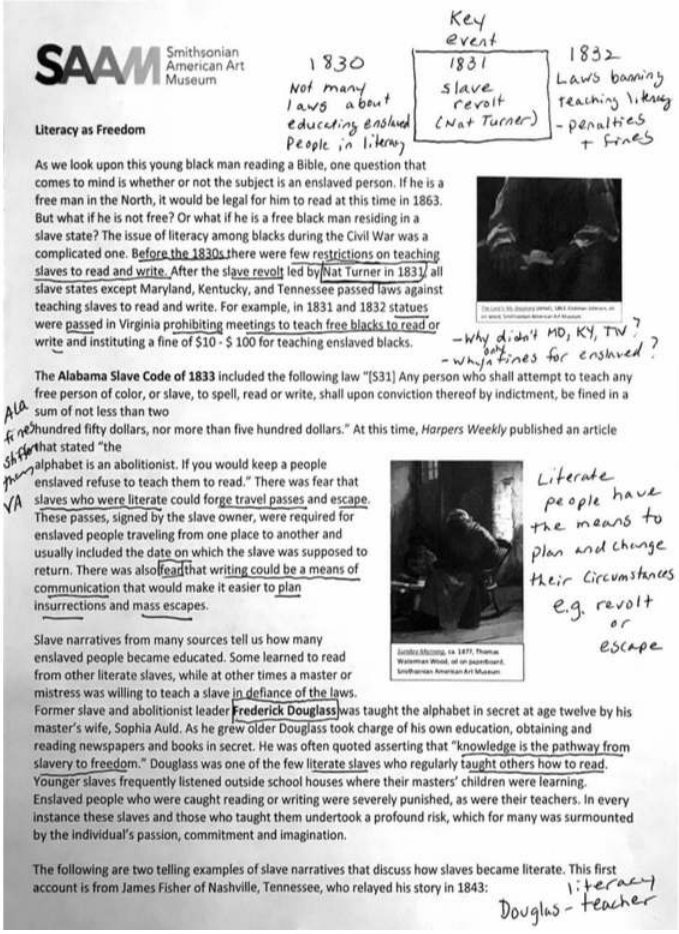
Book of Psalms: a compilation of songs, poems, lyrics, and prayers in the Bible. The subject matter centers on episodes of Israel's history.

Frederick Douglass: (1818-1895) a former slave himself, Douglass was an African American social reformer, abolitionist, writer, and statesman.

Harriet Tubman: (1822-1913) a former slave, she was an African American abolitionist and social reformer. Best known for her association with the Underground Railroad, through which she helped nearly seventy friends and family escape slavery.

Sojourner Truth: (1797-1883) a former slave, she was an African American abolitionist and women's rights advocate. She is best known for her speech, "Ain't I a Woman?," which she delivered at a women's convention in 1851. During the Civil War she recruited black soldiers for the Union Army and collected supplies for the troops.

Below is an example of annotations from the first page of the reading. Your annotations will most likely look different.



SAAM Smithsonian American Art Museum

Key event

1830 Not many laws about educating enslaved People in literacy

1831 slave revolt (Nat Turner)

1832 Laws banning teaching literacy - penalties + fines

Literacy as Freedom

As we look upon this young black man reading a Bible, one question that comes to mind is whether or not the subject is an enslaved person. If he is a free man in the North, it would be legal for him to read at this time in 1863. But what if he is not free? Or what if he is a free black man residing in a slave state? The issue of literacy among blacks during the Civil War was a complicated one. Before the 1830s there were few restrictions on teaching slaves to read and write. After the slave revolt led by Nat Turner in 1831, all slave states except Maryland, Kentucky, and Tennessee passed laws against teaching slaves to read and write. For example, in 1831 and 1832 statues were passed in Virginia prohibiting meetings to teach free blacks to read or write and instituting a fine of $10 - $ 100 for teaching enslaved blacks.

- Why didn't MD, KY, TW?
- why only fines for enslaved?

The **Alabama Slave Code of 1833** included the following law "[S31] Any person who shall attempt to teach any free person of color, or slave, to spell, read or write, shall upon conviction thereof by indictment, be fined in a sum of not less than two hundred fifty dollars, nor more than five hundred dollars." At this time, *Harpers Weekly* published an article that stated "the alphabet is an abolitionist. If you would keep a people enslaved refuse to teach them to read." There was fear that slaves who were literate could forge travel passes and escape. These passes, signed by the slave owner, were required for enslaved people traveling from one place to another and usually included the date on which the slave was supposed to return. There was also fear that writing could be a means of communication that would make it easier to plan insurrections and mass escapes.

Ala fines shifter than VA

Literate people have the means to plan and change their circumstances e.g. revolt or escape

Slave narratives from many sources tell us how many enslaved people became educated. Some learned to read from other literate slaves, while at other times a master or mistress was willing to teach a slave in defiance of the laws. Former slave and abolitionist leader **Frederick Douglass** was taught the alphabet in secret at age twelve by his master's wife, Sophia Auld. As he grew older Douglass took charge of his own education, obtaining and reading newspapers and books in secret. He was often quoted asserting that "knowledge is the pathway from slavery to freedom." Douglass was one of the few literate slaves who regularly taught others how to read. Younger slaves frequently listened outside school houses where their masters' children were learning. Enslaved people who were caught reading or writing were severely punished, as were their teachers. In every instance these slaves and those who taught them undertook a profound risk, which for many was surmounted by the individual's passion, commitment and imagination.

The following are two telling examples of slave narratives that discuss how slaves became literate. This first account is from James Fisher of Nashville, Tennessee, who relayed his story in 1843:

literacy Douglas - teacher

Other strategies you may utilize while reading include the following:

During Reading Strategies
Annotate Key Ideas and Themes Sort out main points from supporting details. Paraphrase and write key points.
Create Mental Images Visualize or picture a movie running through your mind of what is happening.
Use Background Knowledge to Make Connections Link what you are reading to your own experiences (text to self), to other texts, shows, or movies (text to text), and to society (text to world).
Self-Question Ask questions about the information you are reading and search for answers.
Make Inferences Use your background knowledge and text information to draw conclusions, answer questions, and figure out the author's purpose, viewpoint, and underlying themes.
Summarize Stop every 1-2 paragraphs and paraphrase - put the information into your own words.

Use Fix-Up Strategies Identify and note words or ideas that are unclear. o Use word structure – is there a familiar prefix, suffix, base? o Look up unknown words/ideas in dictionary, etymological resource, or Google o Use context clues o Reread and read difficult parts aloud

2.1.3 After Reading Strategies

Once you have read and annotated the reading, think back on your original purpose for reading.

Were you able to answer some of the questions that you had posed? As you read, did you raise and answer new questions? Can you determine what the author's purpose was for writing the text? What new ideas, concepts, and words did you encounter?

After Reading Strategies
Reflect Back to your Purpose What did you hope to learn and what did you learn?
Make Inferences Draw conclusions: Why did the author write this? What were some underlying themes?
Critically Reflect Ask yourself, what did this author want me to believe and why? Who is the intended audience and what impact is the author trying to make? Whose perspectives were present? Whose views were absent? What do I still want to know?
Make a Judgment Evaluate your understanding of what was learned. Did the reading open your mind to a new opinion or perspective? Did you enjoy the reading, why or why not?

As you are reading for your classes, we encourage you to practice using the before, during, and after reading strategies to support your comprehension and engagement with the readings.

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2.2: Inferences

In the previous section, one of the “during” and “after” reading strategies that we examined is the formation of inferences. When readers make inferences, they use their background knowledge and information within the text to draw conclusions, answer questions, and figure out the author’s purpose, viewpoint, and underlying themes.

The process of inferring involves noticing clues within texts. When we examine the spelling of written words, we might notice clues that allow us to generate meaning that extends beyond the word itself, especially regarding the word’s history, origin, and relatives. Just as clues within individual words can be sources of meaning-making, clues within sentences, paragraphs, and broader passages can also expand the meaning that we derive from texts. When we notice details in a text and draw on our background knowledge to interpret possibilities from those clues, we have made an **inference**.

Inferences are an important aspect of reading because much of the meaning that authors convey to us is implied, not directly stated. For example, if your class ends at 3:00, and the students begin packing their belongings at 2:55, the teacher might infer that the students are ready for class to be over. The students implied this through their actions rather than stating it directly. Of course, some texts and genres imply more of the meaning than others. For example, a poem might be more suggestive of meaning than a report. You can think about this in relation to the image of the iceberg below. Only a small portion of the iceberg is visible above the water, and there is a great deal below the surface that isn’t immediately apparent. However, within our goal of perceiving the iceberg in its entirety, that portion below water is essential to grasp the full meaning of texts. To do so, we need to read below the surface.

To form an inference, there are two elements that you will need to utilize: 1) clues within the text and 2) your background knowledge. When texts provide fewer clues to work with, more possibilities seem likely and inferences can seem tougher to form. Likewise, if you have less background knowledge (or schema) on a specific topic, then inferences will also become more difficult. To see how inferences work, let’s examine an example. If you saw your sibling look down at their report card and frown, what do you think might have happened? Note your thoughts below.

? Note Your Thoughts

In this example, what were the clues within the text? One clue might be that your sibling was specifically looking at their report card. As you can imagine, if your sibling was looking at the TV instead of a report card, the inference you form would probably be different. Another clue is that your sibling was frowning. If they were smiling at the report card instead of frowning, then you probably would have formed a different inference. This goes to show that the clues in the text matter. As readers, we are constantly trying to make meaning from the texts we read; therefore, to maximize meaning-making, it is important to be aware of which clues we were picking up on and how we were using them to interpret texts.

The other essential element that you need to form an inference is background knowledge or schema. In the example above, you might have background knowledge in several areas. First, you probably know that a frown is a sign of displeasure, not happiness. Furthermore, you might also know, based on your background knowledge, that a report card indicates your grades in your classes. Imagine, if you had no idea what a report card was, it would be tough to form this inference. Even though we all have more schema on some topics than others, we typically have basic knowledge on most topics. Our schema can be formed by texts we read, formal areas of study, personal experiences, and many other sources. Although inferring is a reading strategy, it is actually a tool for meaning-making that we utilize in everyday life. In fact, inferences are a common cognitive strategy, but we don’t always think about how or why we are forming certain inferences. To gain more awareness of how we use clues and schema within the inference process, try to fill in your thoughts on the situation below:

If you watched your dog run to the front door and start wagging its tail, what do you think might be happening? Note your thoughts below:

? Note Your Thoughts Below

How might your conclusion change if your dog went to the front door and began to growl?'

Although there are many possibilities to explain what could be happening in this situation, some of those possibilities are more likely than others. For example, in the first scenario we might infer that the dog's owner is coming home. Based on the clues in the text, especially the dog wagging its tail while at the front door, it seems that the dog is happily awaiting someone who is coming to the house. In the next scenario, we might infer that a mail carrier is arriving at the door. This is informed by both the clues in the text as well as our schema, which tells us that dogs often bark at mail carriers. However, it is also possible that another stranger is approaching the house. As with any inference, we can only form a reasonable conclusion about the meaning that is being suggested in the text.

To gain a sense for how these everyday inferences work, see if you can fill in the chart below. After reading the sentence, note the clues in the text, your relevant schema, and your inference.

> clues in text + relevant schema = inference

Text	Clues in the Text	Your Background Knowledge	Inference
When I woke up this morning, I looked out the window and saw that the ground was wet.			
Someone at my dinner party asks for seconds.			
My sister and I are the only ones home. The cookie jar, which was full just an hour ago, is now empty.			
The neighbor's house is on fire. The detectives later found gasoline had been poured on the beds.			
The woman put on her boots, hat, coat, and gloves. Then she got her cane and went outside.			

Now that we've gained some practice with everyday inferences, let's apply this knowledge to the flash fiction text below. These short stories, which could be as brief as 25 words or less, leave a lot of the meaning to be inferred by the reader.

"Hero" by Trenton Orris

"They remembered him for the battles he fought in. She remembered him in the rocking chair on the porch at sunset, withered, telling fairy tales.

? Note Your Thoughts Below

How do you interpret this story? Note those interpretations below.

Which details in the text were critical in helping you form these interpretations?

Which relevant schema did you activate to form your inferences?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Reading Self-Reflexively

3.1: Reading Self-Reflexively: An Introduction
3.2: “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,” Chapter 7
3.3: “Learning to Read” -- Frances Ellen Watkins Harper
3.4: “Remembering Artist and Activist Yolanda M. López” -- Tey Marianna Nunn

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3.1: Reading Self-Reflexively: An Introduction

3.1.1 Literacy as Freedom

In the article you read from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, you learned about the power of literacy–how it can be a doorway to freedom and a tool for emancipation. It was after a slave rebellion led by Nat Turner that the people in power recognized the potential of literacy to be used in transformative ways; thus, they enacted laws denying the people enslaved the right to become literate.

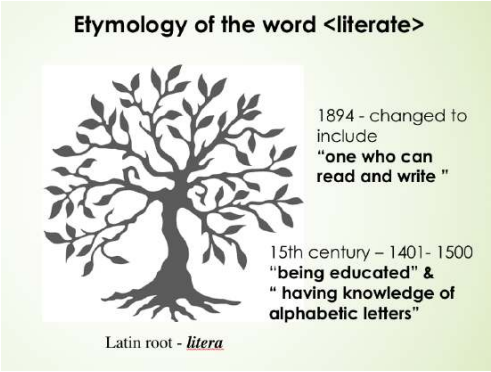
Accordingly, Nat Turner was known for being an intelligent and deeply religious man; he learned how to read and write at a young age. Nat was often seen praying, fasting, and reading the Bible. Because Nat was enslaved, he experienced and witnessed the brutalities of slavery firsthand. He felt called upon by God to organize and lead both enslaved and free blacks in a rebellion against the slave owners. Nat's desire was to put an end to the unjust cruelties and inhumanities of slavery. Nat planned a rebellion and communicated the plan to others in writing. After the insurrection, slave owners and politicians realized how writing was utilized in the plan for retaliation against them. Fear of literate slaves planning future uprisings or forging travel passes for the purpose of escaping to freedom led those in power to enact laws making it a crime to teach slaves how to read in all slave states except for the three. As a result, any person enslaved who was caught reading or writing, as well as those who taught them, were severely punished by fines, imprisonments, or whippings.

In spite of laws forbidding the teaching of reading to people enslaved, multiple slave narratives recount how those people who were enslaved enacted critical processes and became educated. Some learned to read from other literate slaves, and others learned from a master or mistress willing to teach in defiance of the laws. Young children who were enslaved would listen from the outside of school houses where their masters' children were inside learning– all of these people took profound risks. They were enacting **critical literacy** by reading their world: they could see and name the ways in which they were being oppressed and prohibited from learning and they sought out ways to learn.

In this section we'll look a little deeper into literacy and critical literacy, including their origins and their potential to support freedom, opportunity, and social justice for all.

3.1.2 Literacy and Critical Literacy

One way to gain a deeper understanding of a word or concept such as *literacy* is to look at its **etymology**. Etymologies are resources that provide facts about the origin and changes or development of a word or concept. Throughout the guidebook, we will examine words and concepts and learn about the various meanings associated with them as well as look at their histories and origins. Within those etymons or word stories, there is rich information about the past and the present that will support you in learning and remembering words and concepts.



For instance, looking into the etymology of the word *literacy*, we discover that it derived from the word "literate." In the 1400s, the word *literate* entered the English language from the Latin root word *litera* and had a sense and meaning of "being educated" or "having knowledge of alphabetic letters." By 1894, the sense and meaning of the word literate evolved to include one of its present-day meanings - "one who can read and write" (Harper 1). Thus, a person who is literate has the ability to read and write the written word. Being literate also has a sense of being educated. Many English words are polysemous - that means they can have more than one sense and meaning.

3.1.3 Basic Literacy

The creation of the written word is a relatively new invention. About 3,000 years ago, it is believed that the Phoenicians invented the first alphabet. There were other forms of written communication such as cave drawings, cuneiforms, and hieroglyphics, but this was the first alphabetic writing system. The Phoenicians interacted and traded goods and products with the Greeks and the Romans. The Greeks and the Romans began to adapt the Phoenician alphabet to their languages, thus bringing forth both the Greek and the Roman/ Latin alphabets.

Once there were alphabet systems, people began using the alphabetic letters to represent their thoughts and ideas through writing. This was also the beginning of literacy instruction – teaching people how to read and write using the alphabet. In the earliest days

of literacy instruction, it was primarily the rich and the upper classes who had the leisure time to learn how to read and write. But as the Puritans and Protestants left England to gain religious freedom and began arriving on North American lands and forming colonies, they wanted people to have the ability to read the Bible. So young children went to school to learn how to read and write English. After the colonists fought and won their independence from England, the new nation – America–began forming a democracy; thus, there were new and additional reasons for learning to read and write. As an independent country, Americans no longer pledged allegiance to England. Schools continued to teach literacy to support reading the Bible, but schools also began including history lessons and readings to develop patriotic citizens that could participate in the democratic process.

Learning how to read and write is a language process – that means the same areas of the brain that facilitate our ability to speak and understand speech enable us to read and write; however, unlike language, which is learned naturally through exposure and experience with listening and speaking with others, learning to read and write does not usually occur naturally. For most people, it's a learned skill. And like any skill, such as playing a sport or an instrument, some people readily pick it up almost seamlessly, while others need explicit lessons. Regardless of whether you experienced ease or difficulty in learning to read, gaining knowledge about how the English writing system (orthography) works will improve your spelling, vocabulary skills, and reading and writing abilities – all of which help you to communicate and understand.

Thus, reading and writing are meaning-making processes. For example, when you read a book or an article, you, as the reader, are involved in an interaction between yourself and the reading material (the book or article). Someone wrote this material and you are trying to make sense of what it means. To do that, you need to figure out what those groups of letters forming words say (that is decoding) AND you need to determine what those words you just decoded mean (that is vocabulary). You also need to gain an overall understanding of the entire message–that is comprehension. Having the ability to decode and comprehend is only basic literacy. In a democracy, citizens elect other people to represent their interests and ideas. Democracies thrive when educated citizens listen to and read about the candidates running for office to determine what their positions are and what ideas they represent and support. Gaining this valuable knowledge allows us as citizens to make knowledgeable decisions about who would best serve the people and the country. Thus, as citizens, we must read at a deeper level than basic literacy– we must acquire critical literacy abilities.

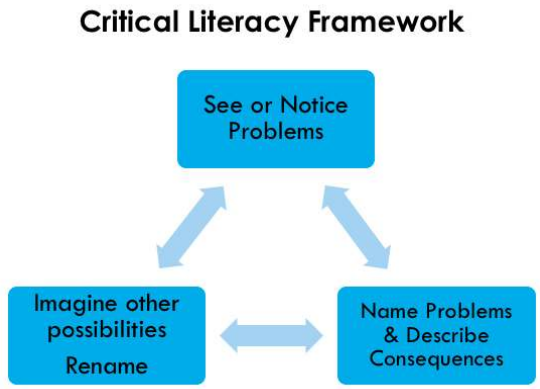
3.1.4 Critical Literacy

Critical readers understand that there is no such thing as neutral reading material; every author writes from a position or perspective and is trying to convey a message. So, critical readers try to figure out the author's position and message. Critical readers also notice positions that are absent and they think about how those other perspectives, if included, might change the message. For instance, in the classic fairy tale "The Three Little Pigs," the story is usually told from the pigs' point of view; by contrast, the wolf is depicted as "big and bad." But Jon Scieszka tells the "true" story when he retells it from the wolf's point of view. In Scieszka's story, the wolf claims that he was only going to the pigs' houses to borrow some sugar. It was his granny's birthday, and he wanted to bake her a cake. Unfortunately, the wolf had a bad cold that caused him to sneeze repeatedly. The wolf insists his story is the true story and that he was framed by the pigs. Now, this is a silly and humorous version of the story, but it's also a fitting story to show that there are many sides to a story, and in most narratives, we probably do not have a complete picture. Have you ever considered that the wolf might have had a logical reason for his actions? Prior to reading Scieszka's story, we had never thought or wondered, "What is the wolf's side of the story?" Thinking about other perspectives and accounts is part of taking a critical stance.

Critical literacy encourages us to think about ideas and perspectives that we might not otherwise consider, and it also encourages us to reconsider ourselves and our reading practices–a process that is called reading self-reflexively.

Critical literacy is an active, continual process that requires reading the world– seeing or noticing problems or issues. As problems or issues are identified, it is important to understand the consequences, especially the way that issues or problems prioritize or privilege some people over others. Once a problem or issue is identified and investigated, the tools of literacy (e.g. reading and writing) can be utilized to make people aware of the problem/issue or enact change and transform situations in ways that bring about equity and fairness.

Paulo Freire was a critical theorist and educator who worked with people living in poverty in Brazil. Many of the Brazilian people were not literate and did not have the right to vote. Freire supported the people by seeing and naming the problem and the consequences of illiteracy. Freire educated the people to become literate so they could then educate others. In addition, they worked towards attaining voting rights. All of these changes empowered the people living in Brazil. Freire advocated for these kinds of



problem posing and problem solving teaching methods.

Freire critiqued the American education system for not fostering critical thinking. Instead of a problem solving curriculum, Freire explained how US schools used a "banking concept" for teaching. According to Freire, the banking concept of teaching includes an "all-knowing" teacher who makes deposits of knowledge into students' minds. Students aren't invited to create learning experiences, nor are the students taught to question and analyze whose knowledge was being studied; instead, students are expected to passively accept, memorize, and recite back the information on a test. Freire believed that this type of instruction stifled student motivation and creativity. Freire advocated for a critical, problem-posing curriculum where students and teachers notice and question everything in their surroundings. Learning to be inquisitive can lead to identifying inequalities, problems, or issues in their lives and communities. Together, students and teachers investigate the issues to determine consequences and then explore new possibilities. According to Freire, unjust societies are characterized by economic disparities between those living in wealth–the "oppressors" –and those living in poverty– "the oppressed."

"Paulo Freire" by ch_stencil is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Freire didn't view the oppressed as "unfortunate" people in need of saving; instead, he believed people who were oppressed could regain their humanity by seeing and naming their problems in their communities and then using the tools of literacy to act and gain freedom from oppression. Paulo Freire invited people to read the word and read the world, as he knew the power that literacy had to transform lives. Freire's ideas for empowering people to challenge the status quo and enact change through voting laws and literacy has been characterized as "radical." Many powerful people mischaracterize Freire as a "Marxist" who wanted to overturn capitalism and make it communism. A "Marxist" is one who ascribes to the political and economic principles of Karl Marx, a German philosopher who critically theorized capitalism and the tensions between economic classes, especially in regard to power and labor. Why might some people in power fear Paulo Freire and misrepresent his message?

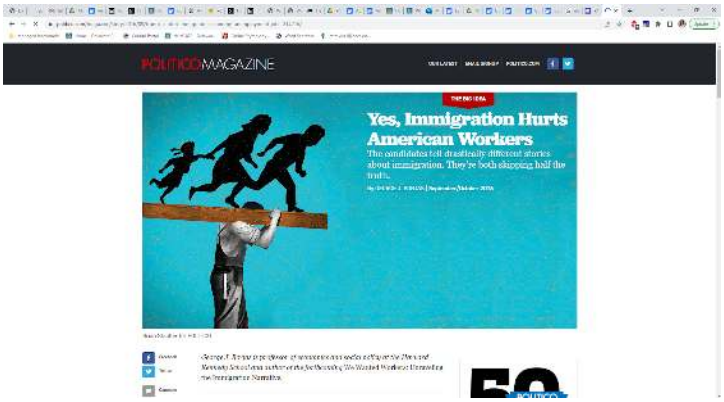
3.1.5 Critical Literacy as Self-Reflexive Reading

Self-reflexivity is "the act of turning back to discover, examine, and critique one's claims and assumptions in response to an encounter with another idea, text, person, or culture" (Qualley, 1997, p. 104). The key aspect here is that self-reflexivity originates in our engagement with "others." The term "other" refers to an entity outside oneself, such as another person, text, artifact, etc. Self-reflexivity is not an automatic reflex or response, such as when you put your hand on a hot stove. By contrast, self reflexivity involves consciously investigating what we believe and how we came to hold that belief.

For instance, a few years ago, during one of our literacy tutoring sessions with a college student, we encountered a text - i.e. graphic - that challenged our assumptions and our reading practices. Our student brought an assigned reading from one of her college classes, the preview of which is depicted here. The text, which focuses on immigration, features a picture of a man holding a wooden beam as three silhouettes run across it. As part of our previewing, this image became the focus of our attention. In our initial reading of the visual text, we decisively identified the man in overalls holding the beam as the immigrant. Only after conducting inquiry into the word *immigration* did we discover from Etymonline that the word originated in 1690 from the Latin root *migratus* with a denotation or primary/first meaning of "change or move." By 1897 the connotation and sense of immigration had evolved to include "not just the place of one's departure, but an impermanent stay or stopping" (Harper). With this new information, we revisited the image. As we reread the image in light of the detonation of "change or move" and the connotation from 1897, we began to question our initial reading, generating these questions: Which individuals in the image were moving? Who was more obviously in motion? Who is the actual immigrant or is it possible that all of the images depict immigrants?

Originally, we wondered if we had misread the image. Though it certainly felt that way at the time, we now see that the value of our questioning wasn't in its rendering a "correct" or "incorrect" reading. The value wasn't even in helping us identify which figure was "the immigrant." Instead, the value exceeded the text itself by leading us to take action as critical self-reflexive readers willing to challenge our own previous assumptions. Moreover, we examined and questioned the role that we play in constructing meaning

and the power that we exercise when we label or read someone as “immigrant.” This awareness is the basis of critical literacy and our ability to “read the word and the world” because it begins to reveal how our continual readings of both texts and people serve to secure their position in relation to others.



The readings in this section– as well as in the other 4 sections–provide examples of people enacting critical literacy ideals, like Nat Turner and Paulo Freire. In both Frederick Douglass’ narrative about his life and Frances Ellen Watkins-Harper’s poem, the authors reveal how people who were enslaved acted critically–that is, they used the tools of literacy to bring about transformation and freedom, whether that freedom was in the mind or freedom of the actual body. As you read the selections in this guidebook, we urge you to try and identify how people are able to see and name injustices and how they actively seek ways to resist oppression or injustice and bring about transformation. All of the readings highlight the interrelated aspects of critical literacy and reading the word and the world.

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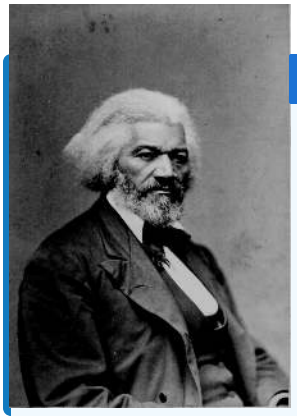
3.2: “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,” Chapter 7



Before Reading and During Reading

? 1.

Write down what you remember about Frederick Douglass from your own background and from the article from The Smithsonian American Art Museum.

? 2.

As you read and annotate chapter VII from his book *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, notice how Douglass was able to read the world around him. Write down specific examples of how he read the world.

? 3.

In his narrative, Douglass recounts his process of gaining some literacy abilities. Take note of how those experiences impacted him personally.

? 4.

In which specific ways did Frederick Douglass act to challenge his oppression and the injustices in his environment?

In this section, read to discover how Frederick Douglass, a former slave, abolitionist, writer, and advocate for racial equality, was able to enact the tenets of critical literacy as he describes his experiences becoming literate in his book *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.*

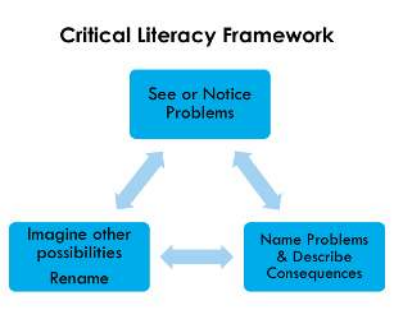
Link to Full Text

Chapter VII *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

? After Reading

After Reading

Use the critical literacy framework to describe how Frederick Douglass enacted critical literacy.



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3.3: “Learning to Read” -- Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

3.3.1 **Before Reading**

? 1. What do you know about the poet Frances Ellen Watkins Harper?

? 2. What does the title of her poem “Learning to Read” make you think of? Reflect on your own experiences.

? 3. Read to find out about Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and her message withing the poem “Learning to Read.”

3.3.2 **Frances Ellen Watkins Harper - 1825-1911**

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was born on September 24, 1825 in Baltimore, Maryland, and raised by her aunt and uncle. A poet, novelist, and journalist, she was also a prominent abolitionist and temperance and women's suffrage activist. She traveled to multiple states to lecture and give speeches about these issues.

In May 1866, she delivered the speech, "We Are All Bound Up Together" at the National Women's Rights Convention in New York, sharing the stage with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. "You white women speak here of rights," she said. "I speak of wrongs."

With Margaret Murray Washington, the wife of Booker T. Washington, Harriet Tubman, and other prominent African American women, she helped found the National Association of Colored Women and served as its vice president in 1897.

She authored numerous books, including the poetry collections *Forest Leaves* (1845) and *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects* (Merrihew & Thompson, 1854), the novel *Iola Leroy*, or *Shadows Uplifted* (Garrigues Brothers,1892), and several short stories. Before marrying Fenton Harper, a widower, with whom she had a daughter, she worked at Union Seminary in Ohio, where she taught sewing.

She died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on February 22, 1911.

3.3.3 **“Learning to Read”**

Very soon the Yankee teachers

Came down and set up school;

But, oh! how the Rebs did hate it,—

It was agin' their rule.

Our masters always tried to hide

Book learning from our eyes;

Knowledge didn't agree with slavery—

'Twould make us all too wise.

But some of us would try to steal

A little from the book,

And put the words together,

And learn by hook or crook.

I remember Uncle Caldwell,

Who took pot-liquor fat

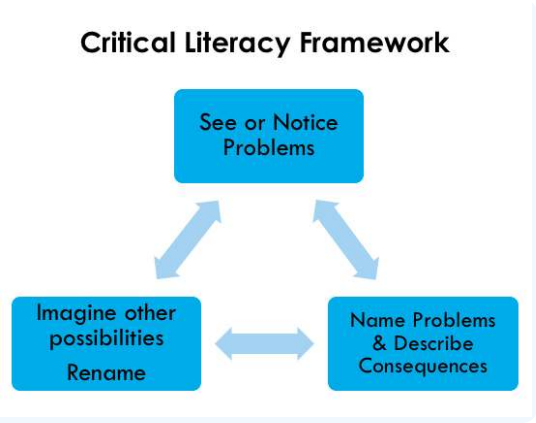
And greased the pages of his book,

And hid it in his hat.

And had his master ever seen
The leaves up on his head,
He'd have thought them greasy papers,
But nothing to be read.
And there was Mr. Turner's Ben,
Who heard the children spell,
And picked the words right up by heart,
And learned to read 'em well.
Well, the Northern folks kept sending
The Yankee teachers down;
And they stood right up and helped us,
Though Rebs did sneer and frown.
And, I longed to read my Bible,
For precious words it said;
But when I begun to learn it,
Folks just shook their heads,
And said there is no use trying,
Oh! Chloe, you're too late;
But as I was rising sixty,
I had no time to wait.
So I got a pair of glasses,
And straight to work I went,
And never stopped till I could read
The hymns and Testament.
Then I got a little cabin—
A place to call my own—
And I felt as independent
As the queen upon her throne.

? After Reading

1. Why do you think Frances Ellen Watkins Harper titled the poem "Learning to Read"?
2. What was Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's message?"
3. What parts of the critical literacy framework do you see in the poem?



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3.4: “Remembering Artist and Activist Yolanda M. López” -- Tey Marianna Nunn

> *“López painted and printed art where we found ourselves reflected. Through her paintings and prints, she transformed and reinterpreted images . . . She also intervened with racist stereotypes like the traditional figure with a sombrero sleeping against a cactus. She even created a film on the topic of Mexican ethnic stereotypes. López turned this traditional imagery on their heads and in doing so, directly addressed societal issues inside and outside her Chicano community.”*

While most of the texts we’ve engaged with in this book have been alphabetic–stories, essays, poems, speeches, etc.--the term “text” is much broader than alphabetics. Instead, it can include compositions such as artwork and other visuals. These types of texts call for the same form of critical and reflexive reading as the other writing that we encounter. To practice this form of reading in response to visual texts, note your initial interpretation of the text below:

3.4.1 Historical Background

This text depicts the “I Want You” Uncle Sam poster, which was created in 1916 by illustrator James Montgomery Flagg and published on the cover of *Leslie’s Weekly* magazine. It was accompanied by the title “What Are You Doing for Preparedness?” Although the United States did not enter World War I until the following year, this text was eventually adapted by the U.S. Army as a poster that included the obvious call to action to join the war efforts. According to Knauer’s (2017) interpretation of the image, “Uncle Sam' points an accusing finger of moral responsibility in a recruitment poster for the American forces during World War I . . . . World War I produced one of the most memorable images in American history: the U.S. Army recruiting poster that depicts a commanding Uncle Sam pointing his finger at the viewer and urging young men to enlist in the war effort.”

Based on both the background information that you have about this text and the visual elements of the image that you can observe, note your thoughts in response to these questions:

? After Reading

1.What is the purpose and the message of this text? How do you know?

2.Which visual elements of the image contribute to that message? Provide examples.

3.Which values does this represent? In which ways is it trying to persuade the viewer?

4.How does this text position you as a viewer/reader? How does it accomplish that?

3.4.2 Art as Social Activism

Now that you’ve viewed and interpreted the “I Want You” Uncle Sam poster, consider the image here, which is a drawing by artist Yolanda López from 1978.

The artwork is titled “Who's the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim?” and was included in the Smithsonian American Art Museum's exhibition *¡Printing the Revolution! The Rise and Impact of Chicano Graphics, 1965 to Now*. Lopez created this drawing in response to the “immigration plan created by President Jimmy Carter” which was current at the time of the text’s production. Based on this brief historical background, make some observations about the text in the space provided below.

? Textual Analysis

1. Which details do you observe in this text? List them.
2. Which features of the text are most striking to you?
3. What do you think the a) purpose and b) message of this text might be?
4. Why might the “I Want You” Uncle Sam poster be an effective text to replicate in order to convey Lopez’ message?

5. How does this text make you feel and how does it position you as a viewer/reader?

Now that you've recorded your own analysis of the visual text, consider Nunn's (2021) interpretation of Lopez' drawing. Nunn notes that the drawing is a play on the "imagery of World War II era broadsides. In this work from 1978, she replaces Uncle Sam with an Indigenous warrior crushing anti-immigration plans. By using patriotic imagery, López argues immigration is a key social justice issue. The central figure addresses the viewer as 'pilgrim.' " How does Nunn's (2021) interpretation of the image compare with your own?

As you know, Lopez's image was created in response to United States' federal policy regarding immigration, which perhaps made the "I Want You" Uncle Sam poster–another text that responded to national issues, specifically war recruitment efforts–an effective choice for the message of this text. In this way, both texts are fundamentally linked to one another. Without knowledge of the "I Want You" Uncle Sam poster, we would lack the necessary background that is required to read Lopez's "Who's the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim?" drawing as a form of social critique and action.

Since Lopez's text was created as a play on the "I Want You" Uncle Sam poster, both visual images need to be analyzed in relation to one another to reach a fuller understanding of their message. The process of intentionally placing texts side by side with one another for the purposes of comparison/contrast is called juxtaposition. Now that you've analyzed each individual text, take a moment to juxtapose the artwork and note your thoughts in the chart below.

	"I Want You"	"Pilgrim"	Both
How does the finger pointing in these texts make you feel as a reader?			
How does each text position you as a reader?			
How do these texts draw attention to a sense of nationalism?			

What problematic or biased assumptions do these texts expose? What do they make you question?			
How do they make you read yourself critically?			

Now that you've engaged in an analytical comparison of these visual texts, consider Nunn's (2021) interpretation, which focuses on Lopez's use of "patriotic imagery," particularly in the form of the Uncle Sam poster, to argue that "immigration is a key social justice issue." As Nunn (2021) explains "The central figure addresses the viewer as 'pilgrim.' " The idea that we, the viewers, are addressed and positioned as "pilgrims" within this text might cause us to pause. Perhaps our engagement with an "other"--in this case, Lopez's drawing–initiates a self-reflexive reading. Are *we* the "pilgrims"? Why might this be a surprising act of naming? What does our surprise tell us about our perspective and ideology?

In her analysis, Nunn asserts that Lopez's text "reclaims the world pilgrim." Not only does the process of reclaiming language support a broader reinscription of power dynamics, but the act of naming is a transformative one. By naming the word around us, including dominant ideologies, we can perceive our realities as problems—problems that invite our engagement towards change (Freire, 2008). Nunn describes the impact that Lopez's text has had on viewers: "This image continues to resonate within Chicano and Latino communities as a powerful statement. It asks who has a right to be part of the United States. 'Pilgrim' is often used to claim who 'first' arrived in the country. However, this work reminds the viewer that Indigenous peoples lived in the Americas before the Pilgrims arrived."

Throughout this section on "Reading Self-Reflexively," we've observed authors engage in self-reflexive reading, as documented through their own writing, and we've also encountered texts that were composed in such ways that invited us to read ourselves reflexively.

Reflection on Section

Now that we've reached the end of this section on "Reading Self-Reflexively" take a few minutes to reflect on the section as a whole.

1. Paraphrase your own understanding of the value of reading self-reflexively.

Again, the process of reading self-reflexively involves "turning back to discover, examine, and critique one's claims and assumptions in response to an encounter with another idea, text, person, or culture (Qualley, 1997, p. 104). As we read ourselves in this way and tend to reflect on the ways our beliefs have been formed, we might begin to become more conscious of what we value and how those values have been shaped. The more awareness we have of our values, the more we can discern how they impact our reading practices and question them in our interpretation of texts. Before moving to the next major section of the book, we invite you to see the "Personal Values" activity to identify and articulate the principles that matter most to you. Based on that activity, note a few of your strongest values below.

The next major section, "Questioning Naturalized Views," will engage you in more ways of thinking that will aid in the broader goals of reading the word and the world self-reflexively.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Questioning Naturalized Views

4.1 Questioning Naturalized Views: An Introduction
4.2: This is Water – David Foster Wallace
4.3: Yusef Komunyakaa- "Praising Dark Places"-- A Reflection by Pádraig Ó Tuama
4.4: "My Curiosity" -- Bridget Magee
4.5: What is Etymology?
4.6: "An Etymological Dictionary of Classical Mythology"
4.7: Noticing and Questioning the Language- A Deeper Dive Into Etymology

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4.1 Questioning Naturalized Views: An Introduction

" 'There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says," 'Morning, boys. How's the water?' And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes 'What the hell is water?' "

–David Foster Wallace, This is Water

This parable from Wallace's commencement address at Kenyon College reminds us that sometimes, "the most obvious, important realities are often the ones that are hardest to see and talk about". Because fish are always surrounded by water, it becomes an accepted, unnoticed aspect of their everyday life. Just like the fish in Wallace's story, we too are surrounded by our own realities, many of which have become so naturalized that we don't even see them, much less question them. But sometimes, the realities that we don't notice are the ones in most need of questioning. (Complete "Questioning Naturalized Views" activity).

? Exercise

Now that you've completed the activity and considered aspects of your own life that have become "naturalized", note a few of the most surprising observations below.

As you reflect on this activity, you might be asking yourself, "Why does this matter? Why do we need to be aware of these aspects of our lives?" While there are many reasons to gain awareness, the most fundamental is this: when something seems "natural", it is at risk of going unnoticed. By extension, the aspects of our lives that go unnoticed can easily become accepted as "just the way things are" (Hinchey, 1998, p. 30). This belief can leave us feeling helpless and disempowered. For example, many school districts require high school students to attend classes at an earlier time than middle and elementary school students. This practice occurs even though most high school students naturally stay up later at night, resulting in less sleep and making it more difficult for them to wake up early in the morning; consequently, students' sleep loss can have detrimental effects on their health and their academics. Since insufficient sleep has been associated with difficulty focusing, this can detract from students' ability to pay attention during morning classes, thereby interfering with their ability to learn (Ming et al., 2011). Despite the research that indicates that early classes do not effectively address high school students' needs (CDC, 2020), this schedule has been an accepted practice for many years. However, more recently, early high school schedules have become the focus of attention and some districts are even changing this practice, particularly by reversing the start times of high school and elementary school students (Dunster et al., 2018). Through this brief example, we can already see how the act of noticing naturalized practices can be the catalyst for imagining other alternatives or possibilities.

When we begin noticing the naturalized aspects of our lives that we have, perhaps, taken for granted, we not only become more aware, but we can begin to raise new questions. In fact, noticing is a precursor to questioning, and questioning is a "profoundly democratic" process (Freire & Faundex, 1989, p. 227). Both of these practices–noticing and questioning–can be utilized together to remind ourselves and others that there is always more than one way to do things, thereby opening us up to new possibilities that better serve ourselves and others.

To see how this process might work in our own lives, let's return to the examples provided in the "Questioning Naturalized Views" activity above. One of the naturalized aspects of our educational system might be the use of a grading system to evaluate student ability and performance. When you entered your college classes, did you assume you would earn a grade for your work? Were you surprised to discover that you would be awarded grades in your courses and on your transcript? If you didn't find yourself completely surprised by this practice or if you assumed that your work would be evaluated, then the traditional grading system

might have become a naturalized aspect of your educational experience. Furthermore, it's possible that you accepted that grading is "just the way education works"--a disempowering idea, especially if we feel that the traditional system of grading isn't serving all students effectively.

However, now that we've begun to notice this system of grading, we can start to question it: Where did this grading scale originate? Who designed it and what was their goal/rationale? Why did it become widely adopted? What do letter grades really represent? How well do letter grades reflect *actual learning*? Who is empowered by a letter grade scale and who is disempowered? Who is systematically disadvantaged by this grading system? Who benefits the most from it? How have some schools explored alternatives and why? How might these alternatives impact student learning, motivation, and attitude?

As you can see, all of these questions were enabled by our observation of the grading scale. The very act of raising questions is a democratic practice because, just as we all share responsibility and authority for shaping legislation and electing government officials, we also share responsibility for our educational system. By raising these questions, we start to participate in shaping that system. Furthermore, the questions that we raised above might generate curiosity and push us to seek answers and imagine new possibilities–all this contributes to knowledge building.

To facilitate your process of noticing and questioning, the rest of this section will include a variety of texts that demonstrate writers' attempts to bring into view that which wasn't visible to us before. In some of these texts, particularly David Foster Wallace's graduation speech, he encourages us to notice and question the nature and focus of our own thoughts. In other texts, such as Bridget Magee's poem, she describes the way her curiosity functions and what it can do to her thinking. Upon analyzing a poem by Yusef Komunyakaa, Pádraig Ó Tuama reflects upon how Komunyakaa's poem pushed him to question the standard metaphors for light and darkness. He questions the possibility that darkness can encompass more than evil or unknowing and whether good things come from darkness. Not only do we need to question our experiences and thinking, but we also need to examine and question our language and all of the many ways that we convey our thoughts, ideas, and experiences. (See "Different Mediums of Expression" Activity). Fundamentally, our language is not neutral; rather, it conveys values, ideologies, and intentions. Through these values and ideologies, some people are advantaged and others are disadvantaged. Therefore, it is important to be aware of how language positions ourselves and others, especially so that we can work towards greater equity. Just as we observe language on a broad or macro level, we also need to investigate more specific, micro elements of the written language. Through these elements, meaning is conveyed. We will begin to engage in this type of analysis through the passages of "What is Etymology?," "An Etymological Dictionary of Classical Mythology," and "Noticing and Questioning the Language: A Deeper Dive into Etymology."

Although the selection of texts in this section might seem disparate, we hope it illustrates the range of possibilities for how this critical literacy practice of noticing and questioning might look. As you read and engage these texts, we've integrated opportunities for you to make your own observations and raise questions, both in response to relevant social issues and in response to the English language itself. In this early section of our book, we hope you generate ideas that can become the foundation for further investigation.

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4.2: This is Water – David Foster Wallace

"This, I submit, is the freedom of a real education, of learning how to be well-adjusted. You get to consciously decide what has meaning and what doesn't. You get to decide what to worship.

Because here's something else that's weird but true: in the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship."

In David Foster Wallace's commencement speech at Kenyon College, he says that the real purpose of education isn't to instill us with the *capacity to think*—something we all possess—but rather, to help us maintain constant awareness that we have the choice of *what to think about*. Have you ever thought about yourself as having a choice over what you think about? Or, do you feel that you do not have a choice in what to think about or pay attention to? David Foster Wallace" by Steve Rhodes is marked with CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Before Reading

Before reading Wallace's full speech, note your thoughts in response to these questions below:

Questions 1 & 2 are activating your background knowledge and question 3 is your purpose for reading.

1. In your opinion, what does it mean to "worship" (See "Worship Inquiry" Activity) and do you agree with the claim that "everybody worships" something?"
2. Reflect on your own life experiences - where does your sense of honor, worthiness, and dignity come from?
3. As you read and listen to Wallace's speech, make note of the ideas that you find most powerful and try to identify his main points:

Link to Full Text

https://fs.blog/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water/

After Reading

After reading Wallace's speech, take some time to reflect on the questions and quotes below. We also encourage you to discuss your thoughts with classmates or others.

1. *Look back at your pre-reading answer to the question "Do you agree with the claim that "everybody worships" something?" After reading Wallace's speech, did your answer to this question change? Why or why not?*

2. *In this speech, Wallace says, "And the so-called real world will not discourage you from operating on your default settings, because the so-called real world of men and money and power hums merrily along in a pool of fear and anger and frustration and craving and worship of self."*

Why do you think that the "real world" won't discourage us from adhering to these default settings? Why does this make the acts of noticing and questioning even more essential? Can you think of any recent examples from your own life when your acts of noticing and questioning seemed to be discouraged?

3. In his speech, Wallace says, *"There are all different kinds of freedom, and the kind that is most precious you will not hear much talk about much in the great outside world of wanting and achieving…. The really important kind of freedom involves attention and awareness and discipline, and being able truly to care about other people and to sacrifice for them over and over in myriad petty, unsexy ways every day."* Do you agree that our society encourages us to focus on "wanting and

achieving”? How does this mindset influence the things we think about and the way we create meaning from our experiences? What might this mindset lead us to overlook?

4. What are you curious to learn or think more about after reading Wallace’s speech?

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4.3: Yusef Komunyakaa- "Praising Dark Places"-- A Reflection by Pádraig Ó Tuama

Quote

"But one of the things I began to learn very quickly was that ultimately, in resolving a conflict with a group of people, you're hoping that a group of people can get to the stage of holding ambivalences and ambiguities with each other, where they can begin to look at things from a different point of view and they can say: We don't know what to do with this, and we're not sure; this didn't work before, but we're going to try something different in the future. That ambiguity, and the capacity to hold that in public with each other, is one of the arts of being human."

--*Pádraig Ó Tuama*

In Pádraig Ó Tuama's reflection on Yusef Komunyakaa's poem "Praising Dark Places," he places ambivalence and ambiguity at the heart of humanity. Instead of aiming for complete agreement, O' Tuama's goal is for people to find acceptance with uncertainty in our relationships with others, but to not let that uncertainty lead us to turn away from those we disagree with. He wants them to be comfortable admitting that they aren't sure about the path forward or about the meaning that they create from experiences.

Before Reading

1) The graphic in the beginning of Ó Tuama's text says that his first lesson was "Beauty can bite." What do you think this means? Note your ideas below.

2) As you read/listen to O'Tuama, note the kinds of things he is noticing about Yusef Komunyakaa's poem and how O'Tuama portrays curiosity.

Link to Full Text

https://onbeing.org/programs/yusef-komunyakaa-praising-dark-places/

As we learned earlier in this guidebook, reflection can be an effective way to create meaning from the texts we read. By allowing ourselves to pause and think deeper about a text, we might notice aspects of it that we didn't initially observe. Here are some questions to guide your reflection. We hope that you explore your thoughts in whichever way they take you.

After Reading: Reflection

1. How has your interpretation of the message "beauty can bite" changed?

2. What kinds of things did O'Tuama notice in this text? Why did those things go unnoticed for quite a long time? What enabled him to make these observations?

3. How was curiosity portrayed in this poem and in O'Tuama's analysis of it? How does this compare with other authors' perspectives on curiosity?

4. In O'Tuama's analysis of Komunyakaa's poem, he notes that "The first thing that comes to my mind when I think of the line *'Beauty can bite' is that he's thinking about how perhaps he might have reached down, out of curiosity, to a scorpion and been bitten back, or almost been bitten back by it. So: beauty can bite. But also, he is lifting something up and exposing these*

> *insects to something that they don't want. So maybe he's the bite."* Think back to the earlier section of this guidebook on self-reflexive reading. How does O'Tuama's conjecture that "maybe *he's* the bite" demonstrate a self-reflexive reading.

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4.4: “My Curiosity” -- Bridget Magee

As we’ve discovered through our engagement with the previous texts, noticing can be a way to generate curiosity and curiosity is a powerful catalyst for learning. When we, the authors, first read the title of Magee’s (2016) poem, we assumed that it would be about the topics and issues that she was curious about. After reading the poem, we realized that our assumption proved to be incorrect. Read on to find out what Magee’s poem suggests about curiosity.

“My Curiosity”

My curiosity

needles me to ask

pokes me to wonder

pulls my thoughts through

my confusion

until I can stitch together

a deeper understanding.

? After Reading

After reading the poem, what do you think that Magee suggests about the purpose of curiosity? How is this similar to or different from your notion of curiosity? In your experience, how has school-based learning encouraged or discouraged your curiosity? Note your thoughts below.

Magee notices several ways that her curiosity functions:

--needles me to ask

--pokes me to wonder

--pulls my thoughts through my confusion

--stitches together a deeper understanding

Since we might not be aware of the nuanced ways that curiosity operates or the impact that curiosity has on our learning, we encourage you to consciously explore the power of curiosity. In the section below, we demonstrate how our curiosity sparked a bigger inquiry. Of course, we want to reiterate that there are *many* other ways that curiosity can operate–McGee’s poem is not an exclusive approach–and that not all inquiries begin or unfold in the same way. We hope our inquiry is an illustration of just one way that curiosity can launch investigation. More specifically, one of the ideas from Wallace’s speech that intrigued us, the authors, was his recommendation to “*Think of the old cliché about ‘the mind being an excellent servant but a terrible master.’* ” With this idea in mind, we utilized Magee’s lens to generate the following thoughts:

How is our curiosity poking us to wonder?

Wonderment – We're fascinated by the claim that "a mind is a terrible master." This is surprising to us since the mind is typically regarded as being in charge, not the body. This also makes us think about the claim that the body will do as the mind tells it. Perhaps this claim isn't accurate. We're also wondering about the idea that the mind is an "excellent servant" because, if the mind really is a servant, then it must be serving *someone* or *something*. In this case, we don't quite know what it serves. Furthermore, it seems odd that Wallace invoked a cliché in his speech. We were taught to avoid clichés because they are so overused– this causes them to lose their powerful effect.

> *How is this needling us to ask?*

Questions – Why is the mind a terrible master? Is it because it can be easily distracted? Is it because it operates from "default settings" that place ourselves at the center of the universe? Why is the mind an excellent servant? Who or what would it serve? Is there accuracy or truth to clichés even though they are overused? What does the word cliché actually mean and where does it come from?

> *What was our confusion?*

Further Inquiry – One of the ways that we embodied Magee's notion that curiosity can pull our thoughts through confusion is by launching more inquiry based on our wonderment and questions. More specifically, we wanted to discover more insight into the mind/body relationship that seems to be relevant to Wallace's cliche. One of the sources we found was a TEDtalk by science writer Jo Marchant (2019). She began her talk with the question "Can our minds heal us?" She says that negative states of mind, like stress, can make us physically ill. However, Marchant also notes that positive mental states, such as feeling positive, cared for, safe, etc., can actually influence the physical symptoms that we feel. This seems like it suggests that the mind might be an excellent master–a contradictory stance to what the cliche asserts.

At this point in our inquiry, we were strictly viewing the saying "*Think of the old cliché about 'the mind being an excellent servant but a terrible master' "* through the lens of the mind/body connection. However, after doing a bit more research, we discovered that there is another way to interpret this. Instead of thinking about it from the binary of mind/body, we can think about it through the lens of two roles that one mind can play. As Terry Veling, a theological educator, writes, "When our mind masters us, we enter all sorts of "terrible worlds"–depression or anxiety, yet also delusional power and egoism. A mastering mind is not what we want, or need.What we need is a 'servant mind' . . . Among other things, a servant mind is a questioning mind, unafraid to be led by the question, unafraid to lose control, unafraid to serve rather than master. What it loses in terms of mastery, it gains in terms of openness and discovery."

> *How does our curiosity stitch together a deeper understanding?*

Understanding –through our inquiry, we've already discovered deeper meaning to both the cliché itself and to Wallace's invocation of it. It seems that there are two mindsets that we can take: focusing on mastering everything or pursuing questions through an open, discovery-oriented approach. As a master, the mind is certain of things. It aims to know everything entirely. This is the kind of certainty that Wallace warns us about. Just as certainties are often wrong, we are not at the center of the universe, as a mastery mindset might lead us to believe. This insight is significant because it adds more importance to the practice of noticing and questioning.

>

> *Your Curiosity*

Now that you've shared in one of our curiosities and observed how it has encouraged a broader inquiry, we invite you to consciously explore the power of curiosity. To do this, see if you can embrace each of curiosity's functions from Magee's poem and utilize it as a way of engaging ideas from David Foster Wallace's speech *This is Water.* (See "Your Curiosity" Activity). As you become more attuned to your own curiosities, take note of the different ways that it guides your learning.

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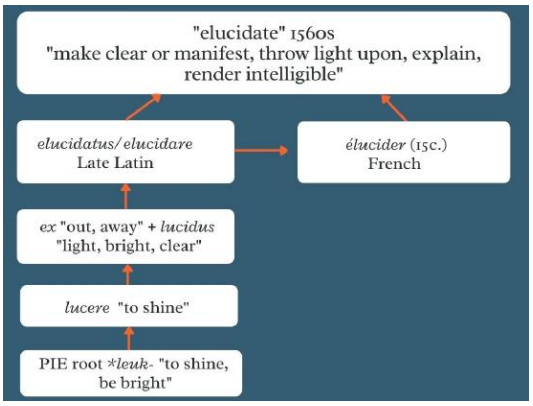
4.5: What is Etymology?

Have you ever thought about the English language and where our words come from? In this section, we will begin to investigate the English language broadly - how spoken languages influenced other spoken languages, and how spoken language evolved into writing. We'll also investigate language more specifically or at a micro level, by looking at how individual words are formed from meaningful word parts or elements that have evolved into current day spellings.

For instance, when you hear the word *Lucifer*, what comes to mind? If you're like us, then you might think of the devil or conjure up other ominous images. This is probably a common association. However, you might be surprised to learn that, in the larger context of language evolution, this is just one connotation. Because we, the authors, have always associated *Lucifer* with Satan or the devil, we were surprised to learn that *Lucifer* is built upon two meaningful elements: <luce>, which means "light or brightness" and <fer>, which has a denotation of "to bring or carry." When we think about *Lucifer* in relation to some other related words such as "elucidate" or "translucent", this meaning of "light" becomes clearer. Historically, *Lucifer* referred to the "morning star or Venus in the morning sky before sunrise" (Harper). This gives us a whole new understanding of where the character Lucifer Morningstar from the Netflix show *Lucifer* derived his name. So how did a word that meant "light-bringing" come to be interpreted as the complete opposite?

The belief that *Lucifer* was the proper name of Satan began with a misinterpretation when the Bible was being translated from Greek to Hebrew: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" [KJV] Because of the mention of a fall from Heaven, the verse was interpreted spiritually by Christians as a reference to Satan, even though it is literally a reference to the King of Babylon (see Isaiah xiv.4)" (Harper).

As you can see, the word *Lucifer* has a lengthy story behind it, and like other words, its meaning has evolved over time. The stories behind words – their history, origin, and true sense - form one dimension of the English language: etymology. As the example of *Lucifer* shows, etymology is not simply a definition that can be found in a dictionary. Rather, etymologies are "explanations of what our words meant and how they sounded 600 or 2,000 years ago" (Harper). The stories and histories of words are found in etymological books or online resources that trace the origins (roots) of a word and explain how words' current spelling and meaning have changed or evolved over time. In etymological resources, we can discover how present-day English words have evolved from various other languages, especially Greek, Latin, and French. In addition English words have also evolved from Old English--a language spoken by the Anglo-Saxons as long ago as 450-1066. The graphic here, focused on the etymology of the word "elucidate," illustrates the type of historical evolution of words that etymological resources can provide. (For more guidance on how to read the Etymonline entries for words like this, see the "Annotate and Note: How to Read Entries from Etymonline" Activity.)



The following reading from Elizabeth Wallis explains how some of our present day English words have evolved from Greek mythological stories.

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4.6: “An Etymological Dictionary of Classical Mythology”

Have you ever considered where English words come from? Have you thought about the possibility that English words have developed through stories and mythologies? These stories, which are part of the history (story) and origin of English words, are provided through etymological resources that reveal how words have changed and evolved over time. Because most dictionaries provide brief and concise reference information, such as word meanings and pronunciations, they omit the fascinating stories behind our words.

In Elizabeth Wallis’ (2019) text “An Etymological Dictionary of Classical Mythology”, she reveals the mythological stories behind many common words in the English language, such as *python*, *Achilles heel*, and *aurora*. Through an examination of these words, among many others, Wallis demonstrates the broader relationship between etymology and Greek mythology. As she says, the “narrative of the tales of gods and men” are woven into the present-day tapestry of the English language.

Although mythological narratives and origin stories shape many common English words, those origins might not be noticeable to us. When we encounter words like *arachnid*, we might not ever think to question where they came from. How did *arachnid* get its name? What is the etymological evolution of this word? Was it influenced by ancient mythology? In Elizabeth Wallis’ excerpt, she offers insight into the answers to these questions by sharing the mythological story of how arachnids got their name.

? Before Reading

Take a moment to preview Wallis’ full text by looking at the textual features and pictures. Pose some questions or make some predictions about the reading. Write those below.

Now, read the excerpt below to seek more insight in regard to your predictions and questions.

4.6.1 **“An Etymological Dictionary of Classical Mythology” by Elizabeth Wallis (December 2019)**

"Arachne...has no equal as a weaver. People say that she must have been taught by Pallas (Athene) herself, but Arachne denies this, and declares that Pallas can come and compete against her, if she wants. If the goddess should prove the better, Arachne declares, she is prepared to suffer any penalty.

An old woman visits her and advises her to reconsider her words -- there is still time to avert the goddess's wrath. Arachne rudely tells her that she has lived too long.... The old woman stands up, her guise of decrepit old age vanishes, and she is revealed as Pallas herself. The contest follows, and Arachne's work is flawless, but she has chosen as her theme the amours of the gods, and the squalid tricks they resorted to when they wanted their way. Pallas is furious at Arachne's mockery: she tears the work to pieces and destroys the loom. Arachne, in despair, tries to hang herself but Pallas' revenge is not quite complete; she turns Arachne into a spider, so that she will spin and weave for ever" (Stapleton 32). And so is created the **arachnid** [NL *Arachnida*, fr. Gk *arachne* spider].

Etymology is a branch of linguistics in which the origin of a word can be traced through its transmission from one language to another, generally by its cognates in an ancestral language. While it is widely known that the Greek and Latin tongues have contributed many words to the English language, through etymological study it is also clear that there are hundreds of words in our vocabulary derived specifically from myths of gods and heroes like the one above. The weaver's tale, found in both Greek and Roman texts, illustrates just how a word might come into the English language from ancient mythology.

In addition to Arachne's story of transformation, there are numerous tales from which we draw words that tell of humans becoming animals, be this change a punishment by a god or gradual acclimatization to the situation in which that person is put.

Several words pertaining to the wolf are derived from the story of Lycaeon, a boastful mortal man who doubts Zeus' identity and is turned into a wolf for attempting to kill the king of the gods. From Lycaeon's name comes the adjective **lupine** [L *lupinus*, fr. *lupus*, Gk *lykos*], brought into English in 1660 to mean "wolfish," and the noun **lycanthropy** [*lykos* wolf + *anthropos* man], which is found in folktales and fiction as "the state of being a werewolf."

A final tale explaining the origin of an animal name is not one of transformation, but one of conquest: "When Apollo finds Delphi [future site of his shrine] and wishes to claim the area as his own, his first duty is to slay the guardian she-dragon. Thereafter, the site is called Pytho, from the Greek verb meaning 'to rot,' because the sun's rays caused the body of the snake to rot" (Griffin, "Apollo at Delphi"). Since 1836, when the word was first introduced into English, any large constricting snake has been called a **python** [L, fr. Gk *Python*, fr. *Pytho* Delphi].

Borrowing from mythology is especially notable in names of some plants and animals. For instance, in the tragic story of Hyacinthus, the handsome youth is loved by the god Apollo, who accidentally kills him with a discus. In memorial, the grieving Apollo grows a new flower, a **hyacinth** [L *hyacinthus* a flowering plant, fr. Gk *hyakinthos*] (1553), from the boy's blood.

A third example is found in the story of Narcissus, who is such a handsome lad that when he first sees his face mirrored on the surface of a pond, he pines for his own reflection. He sits so long at the edge of this pond that he begins to take root, changing finally into a flower -- a **narcissus** [NL, genus name, fr. L, *narcissus*, fr. Gk. *narkissos*]. From this story we also take the adjective narcissistic, telling of a person bearing the egotistical qualities of Narcissus.

There are, in fact, many adjectives in English that originated in legends. For instance, the term **mercurial** is used to describe a person having the qualities of eloquence or ingenuity that the god Mercury, patron of thieves, possessed; **atlantean**, meaning "strong," comes from the name of the strongest god, Atlas; and **jovial** describes an individual of markedly good-humor, named after Jove, an alias for the Roman god Jupiter, parallel to the Greeks' Zeus.

Yet another adjective comes from a tale of mankind's creation: "**Prometheus** championed man.... He stole fire from heaven and brought it back to earth hidden in a fennel stalk where it smoldered long enough to be blown to life again" (Stapleton 183); first seen in 1588, the English adjective **promethean** means "daringly original or creative." Also meaning "creative," as well as "artistic and skillful," is the term **daedal** [L *daedalus*], after Daedalus, the legendary builder of the fantastic Cretan labyrinth.

The Roman goddess of dawn, **Aurora**, along with Boreas, gives her name to the light show seen often in the northern skies, the **aurora borealis** [NL, lit., northern dawn]. Similarly, the southern lights are called the **aurora australis** [NL, lit., southern dawn], for Aurora and Auster. The Greek goddess of dawn, Eos, also provides a well-known word, **east** [ME *est*, fr. OE *east*, L *aurora* dawn, Gk *eos*, *heos*]. The opposite direction, **west** [ME, fr. OE, L *vesper* evening, Gk *hesperos*], gets its name from the Greek god of evening, **Hesperus**. After the **Olympians** defeat the **Titans** at the beginning of time for power over creation, Atlas is punished for his part in the revolt by being forced to uphold perpetually both the heavens and the earth (Barthell 16). From this story comes the word **atlas** [L *Atlant-*, *Atlas*, fr. Gk], which is a collection of maps, as well as the clever name for the first vertebra of the neck -- the point of the shoulders upon which Atlas' mythological burden rests.

"When Achilles was born [to] his mother [Thetis], daughter of the sea god Nereus,...she bathed him in the river Styx to make him invulnerable, holding him by the heel..." (Stapleton 8). The **Achilles tendon** is a strong ligament that joins the calf muscles of the leg to the bone of the heel. Achilles later met his death when he took a blow to that vulnerable portion of his heel where his mother had held onto him, thus giving birth to another phrase, **Achilles' heel**, meaning "a vulnerable point."

Also bearing names alluding to mythology are two well-loved days of the week, **Friday** [ME, fr. OE *frigedaeg*, fr. (assumed) *Frig Frigga* + *daeg* day, prehistoric trans. of L *dies Veneris* Venus' day] and **Saturday** [ME *saterday*, fr. OE *saeterndaeg*, fr. L *Saturnus* Saturn + *daeg* day]. Both are named for Roman deities, as are the months of the year **January** [ME *Januarie*, fr. L *Januarius*, 1st month of Roman year, fr. *Janus*], for the two-faced god of beginnings, **Janus**; **March** [ME, fr. OF, fr. L *martius* of Mars, fr. *Mars*], after the war god Mars; and **May** [ME, fr. OE & L; OF *mai*, fr. L *Maius*, fr. Maia], named for Maia, mother of Hermes.

Delving into mythology for inspiration is nothing new. In fact, most words in our language derived from these ancient tales, other than those dealing with space and space exploration, were brought into English long before the twentieth century. Mythology's influence is in no threat of dying out, either: it is constantly alluded to in science fiction literature and movies, including such familiar series as Star Trek and Wonder Woman, and many terms in this growing pop-culture are derived from these ancient legends.

The word **mythology** [F or LL; F *mythologie*, fr. LL *mythologia* interpretation of myths, fr. Gk], borrowed from the compound of the Greek words *mythos* (story) + *logos* (speech), in itself tells a story of ancient times, as myths were once passed from person to person only through the spoken word. This verbal narrative of the tales of gods and men began the remarkable tapestry of mythology that still remains in the English language today.

? After Reading

1. What did you learn from the text? Did you find any answers to your questions or confirm or disprove your predictions?
2. What most surprised you? Identify some examples to support your thoughts.
3. Based on what you read, explain a) your understanding of etymology and b) its relevance to the present-day English language.
4. Based on your own knowledge of mythology, what other English words or phrases might have mythological stories behind them?

Wallis' etymological dictionary of classical mythology provides insight into words that have mythological origins. However, not all words derive from mythology. All words have origin stories that reveal where they came from, how they were spelled, and how word spelling and meaning has evolved over time. The spelling of present-day English words contains clues to these stories–if we are able to notice and observe the clues, then we can learn a great deal about the background of the word. In this next section, you will discover some of those clues and ways of recognizing and making sense of them.

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"Black spider, Carhart Science building" by ali eminov is marked with CC BY-NC 2.0.x

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4.7: Noticing and Questioning the Language- A Deeper Dive Into Etymology

Have you ever thought that English does not make much sense because some words contain letters that don't represent sounds? Below is a list of words that may seem crazy for just that reason.

Exercise

Look closely at the list of words. What do you notice? Write down some questions about your observations.

two

people

friend

neighbor

island

Some of your questions may be like the following:

- Why is there a <w> in *two*?
- Why is there an <i> in *friend*?
- Why is there an <o> in *people* and why is there an <e> at the end of *people*?
- Why isn't there an <a> in *neighbor* and why is there an <eigh>?
- Why isn't *island* pronounced is-land or spelled *iland?

If your list contains questions similar to those above, then you are like the many people that believe that English should be spelled exactly as it sounds. This belief can be attributed to schools' overemphasis on the phonological dimension of the language, especially in isolation of the morphological and etymological dimensions. As we stated earlier, we also believed and taught that spelling was supposed to represent sound, until we learned that **the main purpose of English spellings is to represent the sense and meanings of words**. To understand spelling more deeply, we must investigate all the dimensions of the system - the morphology and the etymology as well as the phonology. In this section, we will look more closely at etymology - the study of the history of words and their word relatives. We will also see that English spellings include letters that are not representing sound but are showing relationships to other related words. In fact all of the above words have letters in the spelling for just that reason - these unpronounced letters are showing their relationship to other words in the family.

To understand the logical nature of the language, it is important to know that English words come in families and have word relatives, just like people have relatives in their family. Some words have large families with many word relatives, some words come from small families and have only a few word relatives, and some words remain a mystery and we don't know much information about their backgrounds. When we find out about a word's history and family, we can use that information to understand the spelling. The Online Etymology Dictionary at etymonline.com (Harper, 2022) is an excellent resource to learn the history of a word and to discover other words that are related.

As stated above, we were curious to know why the word *two* was written with a <w>. Examining the word through etymology can help us figure out why. The following graphics will provide you with information about how to read an entry from etymonline and how to find word relatives.

Etymonline entry for <two>

Etymonline Entry for <two>

Entry word with the parts of speech
adj. - adjective n. - noun

two (adj., n.)

"1 more than one, the number which is one more than one; a symbol representing this number;" Old English *twa* "two," fem. and neuter form of *twegen* "two" (see **twain**), from Proto-Germanic **twa* (source also of Old Saxon and Old Frisian *twene*, *twa*, Old Norse *tveir*, *tvau*, Dutch *twee*, Old High German *zwene*, *zwo*, German *zwei*, Gothic *twai*), from PIE **duwo*, variant of root ***dwo-** "two."

Two-fisted is from 1774. *Two cheers for* _____, expressing qualified enthusiasm first recorded 1951 in E.M. Forster's title "Two Cheers for Democracy." *Two-dimensional* is recorded from 1883; figurative sense of "lacking substance or depth" is attested from 1934.

Etymonline notes that <two> can be an adjective (adj.) describing how many, such as in the sentence "I have two cavities," or it can be a noun (n.) representing an idea or concept such as in the sentence "I can count by twos."

Etymonline provides the definition or definitions of a word.

Within these quotation marks is the definition(s) of the word.

two (adj., n.)

"1 more than one, the number which is one more than one; a symbol representing this number;" Old English *twa* "two," fem. and neuter form of *twegen* "two" (see **twain**), from Proto-Germanic **twa* (source also of Old Saxon and Old Frisian *twene*, *twa*, Old Norse *tveir*, *tvau*, Dutch *twee*, Old High German *zwene*, *zwo*, German *zwei*, Gothic *twai*), from PIE **duwo*, variant of root ***dwo-** "two."

Two-fisted is from 1774. ***Two cheers for*** _____, expressing qualified enthusiasm first recorded 1951 in E.M. Forster's title "Two Cheers for Democracy." ***Two-dimensional*** is recorded from 1883; figurative sense of "lacking substance or depth" is attested from 1934.

The second paragraph provides additional expressions and meanings for the word *two.* It also provides the dates for when those sayings were recorded in writing.

two (adj., n.)

Dates indicate when these expressions and meanings for two were recorded in writing.

"1 more than one, the number which is one more than one; a symbol representing this number;" Old English *twa* "two," fem. and neuter form of *twegen* "two" (see **twain**), from Proto-Germanic **twa* (source also of Old Saxon and Old Frisian *twene*, *twa*, Old Norse *tveir*, *tvau*, Dutch *twee*, Old High German *zwene*, *zwo*, German *zwei*, Gothic *twai*), from PIE **duwo*, variant of root ***dwo-** "two."

Two-fisted is from 1774. ***Two cheers for*** _____, expressing qualified enthusiasm first recorded 1951 in E.M. Forster's title "Two Cheers for Democracy." ***Two-dimensional*** is recorded from 1883; figurative sense of "lacking substance or depth" is attested from 1934.

After the definition, the entry explains that <two> is derived from Old English. Old English was spoken about 1500 years ago; its spoken and written forms look and sound very different from present day English.

Explains that the word is from Old English

Italic *twa* shows how it was spelled in Old English

two (adj., n.)

"1 more than one, the number which is one more than one; a symbol representing this number;" Old English *twa* "two," fem. and neuter form of *twegen* "two" (see **twain**), from Proto-Germanic **twa* (source also of Old Saxon and Old Frisian *twene*, *twa*, Old Norse *tveir*, *tvau*, Dutch *twee*, Old High German *zwene*, *zwo*, German *zwei*, Gothic *twai*), from PIE **duwo*, variant of root ***dwo-** "two."

Two-fisted is from 1774. ***Two cheers for*** _____, expressing qualified enthusiasm first recorded 1951 in E.M. Forster's title "Two Cheers for Democracy." ***Two-dimensional*** is recorded from 1883; figurative sense of "lacking substance or depth" is attested from 1934.

During the time period of Old English, spelling was not yet standardized, so it was not uncommon for words to have more than one spelling. Moreover, words also had three different forms - masculine, feminine, and neuter. The feminine form of <two> was *twa* and the neuter form was *twegen* as shown in the entry. The use of gendered forms ended during Middle English.

More information about Old English spellings.

During Old English, words had gender forms, masculine, feminine and neuter

feminine form

neuter form

two (adj., n.)

"1 more than one, the number which is one more than one; a symbol representing this number;" Old English *twa* "two," fem. and neuter form of *twegen* "two" (see **twain**), from Proto-Germanic **twa* (source also of Old Saxon and Old Frisian *twene*, *twa*, Old Norse *tveir*, *tvau*, Dutch *twee*, Old High German *zwene*, *zwo*, German *zwei*, Gothic *twai*), from PIE **duwo*, variant of root ***dwo-** "two."

Two-fisted is from 1774. ***Two cheers for*** _____, expressing qualified enthusiasm first recorded 1951 in E.M. Forster's title "Two Cheers for Democracy." ***Two-dimensional*** is recorded from 1883; figurative sense of "lacking substance or depth" is attested from 1934.

As you look at entries from Etymonline, you will usually see words that have asterisks * next to them. These words were not written words; instead, they are believed to be the oral or spoken words that written words derived from. Thus, the asterisk represents the hypothesized word.

Words in entries that have asterisks * next to them

When an asterisk * is next to a word, that word was not a written word; it is believed or hypothesized to be the oral word from which the written word derived.
Words with an * might also have “from Proto-Germanic” or “from PIE” – which means Proto Indo European. In these phrases, the “Proto” means first – and the * means oral.

two (adj., n.)

"1 more than one, the number which is one more than one; a symbol representing this number;" Old English *twa* "two," fem. and neuter form of *twegen* "two" (see **twain**), from Proto-Germanic **twa* (source also of Old Saxon and Old Frisian *twene*, *twa*, Old Norse *tveir*, *tvau*, Dutch *twee*, Old High German *zwene*, *zwo*, German *zwei*, Gothic *twai*), from PIE **duwo*, variant of root ***dwo-** "two."

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Within entries, it is common that the reader will be referred to another word. For instance, the <two> entry directs the reader to “(see twain)”. Twain is in red because it is linked to the twain entry. When you click on the link, the twain entry will provide you with historical information for *twain* and additional etymological information for *two*.

Additional information

Twain derived from the Old English, masculine *twegen*.

twain (n.)
Old English *twegen* "two" (masc. nominative and accusative), from Proto-Germanic **twa-* "two," from PIE root ***dwo-** "two." It corresponds to Old Frisian *twene*, Dutch *twee*, Old High German *zwene*, Danish *tvende*. The word outlasted the breakdown of gender in Middle English and survived as a secondary form of *two*, especially in cases where the numeral follows a noun. Its continuation into modern times was aided by its use in KJV and the Marriage Service, in poetry (where it is a useful rhyme word), and in oral use where it is necessary to be clear that *two* and not *to* or *too* is meant. In U.S. nautical use as "a depth of two fathoms" from 1799.

Harper (2022) informs us that *twain* “outlasted the breakdown of gender” during Middle English. In addition, *twain* was used instead of *two* when it was necessary to clarify that two was not referring to the homophones *to* or *too*. Thus, *two* and *twain* could be used interchangeably. In addition, *two* has the etymological <w> to represent that *two* is related to *twain*. Since t*wain* and *two* were both derived from the Proto Indo European root *-dwo, that lets us know these words are related; that is, they both came from the same oral word.

As both two and twain derived from the PIE *dwo-, when you click on that link, you will find all the other words that are also related to *two* and *twain*.

PIE *dwo-

*dwo-

Proto-Indo-European root meaning "two."

It forms all or part of: anadiplosis; balance; barouche; between; betwixt; bezel; bi-; binary; bis-; biscuit; combination; combine; deuce; deuterium; Deuteronomy; di- (1) "two, double, twice;" dia; dichotomy; digraph; dimity; diode; diphthong; diploid; diploma; diplomacy; diplomat; diplomatic; diplodocus; double; doublet; doubloon; doubt; dozen; dual; dubious; duet; duo; duodecimal; duplex; duplicate; duplicity; dyad; epididymis; hendiadys; pinochle; praseodymium; redoubtable; twain; twelfth; twelve; twenty; twi-; twice; twig; twilight; twill; twin; twine; twist; 'twixt; two; twofold; zwieback.

It is the hypothetical source of/evidence for its existence is provided by: Sanskrit *dvau*, Avestan *dva*, Greek *duo*, Latin *duo*, Old Welsh *dou*, Lithuanian *dvi*, Old Church Slavonic *duva*, Old English *twa*, *twegen*, German *zwei*, Gothic *twai* "two;" first element in Hittite *ta-ugash* "two years old."

As you can see the PIE root *dwo- produced a large family of words; all of these words have a meaning of two, double, or twice. As you look at the words, note which words you are familiar with and write some of those words below.

? Exercise

Which words from the word family *dwo- above are unfamiliar? Write those words below.

When you click on the red words in an entry, you will discover the meaning(s) of the word and its history. For instance, a *duet* is a song that is sung by two people or a performance such as a dance by two people. In our exploration of the word relatives, we were wondering how the word biscuit is connected in meaning to *two*, *twice*, or *double*.

Clicking on the red word *biscuit* provides the explanation. The < bis > means twice and the <cuit >means cooked. A biscuit is cooked or baked two times. The meaning of biscuit is represented in the spelling of the meaningful parts of the word.

When you examine the last two lines of words - from *twain* to *twofold* - what do you observe?

twain; twelfth; twelve; twenty; twi-; twice; twig; twilight; twill; twin; twine; twist; 'twixt; two; twofold;

Do you notice that every one of those words and word parts has <tw>. The words <betwixt> and <between> also have a <tw> in the spelling. Can you feel the /w/ in your mouth when you say those words? In all the words - except for two and twofold - the <w> represents a pronounced /w/. In two and twofold the grapheme <w> is not representing a sound it is representing the relationship that two has with all those other words that have a pronounced <tw>. Thus, it is possible in English words to have a grapheme or letter signifying an etymological or historical relationship to other words from the family. The grapheme <w> in *two* is like a birthmark that shows by sight - not sound - that the word is related to other words from the family.

Similarly, Etymonline explains that the word people came into Middle English from the Norman French in 1300 and was spelled either *peple* or *people*. Middle English was the time period after Old English. In Middle English, just as with Old English, it was not uncommon to have multiple ways to spell words. The reason for different spellings was that the printing press and the dictionary had not yet been invented. Written materials were copied by hand by people called scribes. In Old French <people> was spelled *popl*e and *peupel*. The word <people> derived from the Latin word *populus* meaning "a people, nation; body of citizens; a multitude, crowd, throng," but where the word first originated is not known.

Some relatives of the word ***people*** are *population*, *popular*, *populate*, *population*, *public*, *pueblo*. Just like the <w> in two the grapheme or letter <o> in *people* marks its relationship to words like *popular* and *population*. The grapheme <o> is an etymological marker. In a later lesson, we'll investigate the <e> and the end of people. That is another type of marker that is marking a custom or norm for English writings.

? Practice

The words *friend*, *neighbor*, and *island* all have etymological graphemes (a letter or group of letters) that are unpronounced and mark their relationship to other words in their families. What grapheme or letters do you think may be marking relationships to other words? These letters or graphemes would be the unpronounced or silent letters in the following words.

Before you look up the following words in etymonline, hypothesize which letters are unpronounced? Look at the word relatives from etymonline and try and determine words from the family that also contain those unpronounced letters - write those words next to the word.

friend

neighbor

island

Begin to gather and write down words that you notice from your readings that you think are interesting and that you're curious to learn more about, as those words are a good starting point for you to begin investigating their histories or etymologies.

4.7.1

"Where do Words Come From?" Activity

While etymological markers visibly represent a word's origin and relatives, there are other clues contained within the spelling of present-day English words. When we look at words, we might not notice these clues, but once we're aware of them, it becomes easier to see them inside of many words. While these clues are not considered markers, they still tell us something about etymology. To expand your ability to notice meaningful elements of words, complete the "Where do Words Come From?" Activity.

Now that you've completed the activity, note some observations that you made about English words.

Reflections on Questioning Naturalized Views

Now that we've come to the end of this section on "Questioning Naturalized Views", take a moment to reflect:

1. What have you learned?
2. How have the readings impacted your way of thinking?
3. Paraphrase your own understanding of etymology and how it connects to spelling.
4. what do you still want to know?

As we conclude this section, it is important to recognize that the practices of noticing and questioning are often done in service of broader goals. Since, as Freire (2008) says, "no reality transforms itself" (p. 53), change and transformation depend on the critical intervention of people. In the next section of the guidebook, we'll build on the practice of noticing and questioning by using those observations and questions as the foundation towards change.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Challenging Dominant Ideology

5.1: Challenging Dominant Ideology: An Introduction
5.2: Spelling System: Logical or Crazy and Chaotic?
5.3: “The Butler” -- Katelyn Durst
5.4: “How Phillis Wheatley Beat All Expectations” -- Kovie Biakolo
5.5: “How I Went from Gangster to Geek” -- Jy’Aire Smith-Pennick
5.6: "The Story of an Hour" -- Kate Chopin

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5.1: Challenging Dominant Ideology: An Introduction

Consider the following scenario: You have been assigned to write a paper in one of your college classes. Under which conditions would you expect your professor to accept a paper that was handwritten in crayon on colored construction paper? Note those conditions below:

This is the exact scenario that author Anne Wysocki (2004) presents in her article "awaywithwords." She says that if you couldn't think of any conditions under which you would submit that paper, then for you, the "color of paper and technologies of print typography are like water or stones: things whose natural properties (seem to) necessarily constrain how we can use them. We do not attempt to make soup from stones nor do we imagine early hominids attacking mammoths by throwing water at them" (p. 55).

Here, Wysocki sets up an analogy for us to consider: water and stones are like construction paper and crayon–the natural properties of all of these objects seem to determine how we can and cannot use them. When you think of water, which uses come to your mind? Perhaps you think of drinking, showering, cleaning, swimming, etc. Among the common uses of water, we might not think of it as a weapon used to enact violence–this is largely because the natural properties of water don't seem to lend themselves to that use.

However, water has historically been used as a weapon. Wysocki references some of those instances, such as when police used "high-pressure hoses on 1960s Civil Rights marchers in the southern United States. The lesson is that things can be put to many uses, often neither just nor humane" (p. 55). Therefore, instead of strictly focusing on the natural properties of objects, we must consider the contexts and purposes in which they were used. In this example of the inhumane use of water as a weapon against Civil Rights activists, we might question the following: What does this reveal about the relationship among water technology, law enforcement, and White readings of Black bodies? How can different understandings of material objects - and resistance against objects - facilitate social change?

This analogy allows us to see that if our understanding of water cannot be separated from time and place - if it must be situated within the sociopolitical contexts in which it is used - then the same must hold true for crayons, construction paper, and the materials that we use to compose. The constraints that we perceive in regard to our viable communication materials, many of which are social and historical, must be challenged; if we accept these constraints unquestioningly, then we risk perpetuating "social practices we may not otherwise wish to reproduce" (Wysocki, 2005, p. 56).

Now, let's return to the initial question that you pondered in regard to construction paper and crayon. This might strike you as speculative nonsense, but it raises some important questions: Why are we expected to type academic assignments in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, with one-inch margins? Where did these academic expectations come from? How were they determined? Even more significantly, is there something inherent about construction paper and crayon that makes it unsuitable for sophisticated, intellectual

work? In which other ways does higher education perpetuate limited, exclusionary ideologies of what constitutes “academic”? Who is validated by this exclusionary ideology and who is marginalized or disadvantaged? How can we challenge this dominant ideology?

Of course, the answers to these questions depend upon some familiarity with the word *ideology*. (See “Ideology” Activity). While there are many different ways of defining this term, we use the word ideology to refer to “a system of beliefs, shared by a social group, with the power to evaluate and explain the social world” (Fabiszak et al., 2021, p. 408). Ideologies are powerful because they both encompass our values and shape our worldviews. Ideologies are intertwined in our language-based practices, which means that language also functions as a way of constructing, critiquing, and further transferring them. As we engage in literacy practices—reading, writing, speaking—we can reaffirm, resist, and reproduce ideology. Since language shapes our social lives and institutions, ideology can cast a wide influence on the structures and practices that we encounter on a daily basis. Consider Cornelius Minor’s description of white liberalism: he identifies some of the values that this ideology encompasses, including competition to be viewed as “the wokest” and excessive concern with appearances, especially through purchases, voting, and friendships. Minor says that some people who operate from this ideology cite the fact that they voted for Obama or had friends of Color as evidence of their wokeness. Minor provides this example to illustrate the fact that all ideologies need to be interrogated and challenged.

As one focuses on the meaning of ideology, they often gain a better understanding of the importance of challenging them, especially ones that are dominant. Since there are many different and potentially competing ideologies that individuals and groups bring to texts, interactions, situations, etc., not everyone’s ideology will align. Even more specifically, some ideologies will be privileged or dominant because those in positions of power are able to reaffirm and perpetuate them, while other ideologies will be marginalized or excluded, particularly because they pose a threat to those who have power.

Throughout this section, the diverse collection of texts demonstrates writers’ attempts to challenge dominant ideologies with a close examination of prevalent ideological stances on the written English language. Through a micro analysis of language, we, the authors, push back against dominant ideologies. Similarly, in other texts, writers use language as a form of resistance. For example, in Jy’Aire Smith-Pennick’s essay “Gangster to Geek,” he describes the process of using incarceration as a means through which he challenged his own ideology–an ideology that he describes as a “trap.” In a similar challenge to ideologies that limit or impose traps on ourselves, former DCCC student Katelyn Durst demonstrates how she utilized the memoir genre in her piece “The Butler " to challenge the belief that she wasn’t, nor couldn’t be, a writer.

As we know, ideologies don’t just manifest within individuals; rather, they shape the broader structures in our lives. In Kate Chopin’s (1894) short story “The Story of an Hour,” she depicts a character who struggles to push back against both dominant, patriarchal ideologies and the oppression of institutions like marriage. A glimpse into this ambivalence–of being expected to accept and yet wanting to reject–reminds us that challenging dominant ideologies isn’t simple or easy. Throughout this section, we’ve integrated opportunities for you, our readers, to name ideologies and explore the areas that you feel need to be challenged.

To start this exploration, let’s reflect on our educational and language-learning experiences, both of which are shaped by ideologies. More precisely, what has your spelling instruction entailed? (See “Reflection on Spelling” Activity).

Examining the spelling instruction or approaches you’ve been exposed to through your schooling will provide you with some insight into dominant spelling ideologies. For instance, were you taught to memorize the spelling of words and vocabulary meanings? If memorization was a consistent practice in your learning experiences, then that is a dominant ideology of spelling instruction that can be challenged. We could challenge this belief by drawing on the philosophy of our teacher, Pete Bowers, who frequently reminds us that “we only memorize things we don’t really understand.” When you truly understand a word (e.g. what it means, where it comes from, how it is structured), you will not need to resort to memorization.

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5.2: Spelling System: Logical or Crazy and Chaotic?

As you already know, upon our first introduction to SWI, we, the authors, started to realize just how little we really knew about the language and the way the spelling system works. We were presented with questions such as the following:

> Why does the plural word *papers* end with an <s> but *boxes* end with an <es>?
>
> Why is there an <o> in the word *people*?
>
> Why does *betting* have a double <t>, but *jumping* doesn't contain a double <p>?

These are just a few of the many questions that caught us by surprise. Not only were we unable to answer these questions, but we hadn't even thought about them before.

Do you, our readers, have thoughts or explanations for features such as these, many of which we see and apply daily? If you answered "no", then you're not alone. Many of us – both educators and students alike – have been taught that English is "confusing" and "irregular", with many words that are exceptions and don't follow the rules. This ideological view of the English language can leave us feeling frustrated, confused, and overwhelmed, ultimately making us feel disempowered in our literacy and language learning.

However, what if we told you that the *English language* and *words* are not confusing, rather it's *people* who are confused and lack understanding about them? Read the text below to discover how this might be.

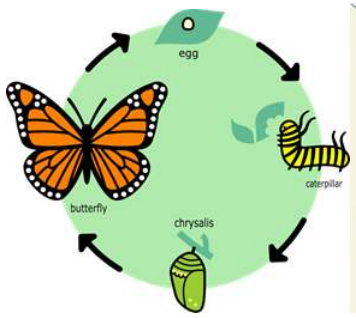
? Before Reading

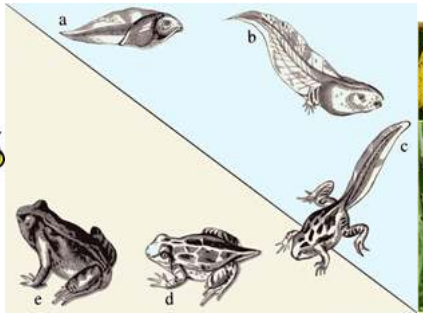
When you hear the word "morphology," what comes to your mind? Note your ideas below.

Even if you've never heard this term before, you probably already have the resources and background knowledge to figure out what it means. Maybe "morphology" reminds you of a "metamorphosis." When animals, such as insects and amphibians, undergo metamorphosis, they change their shape or structure in stages. These changes in structure are visible—tadpoles do not look like frogs, nor do caterpillars look the same as butterflies.

The pictures below demonstrate that process:

The word "metamorphosis" is built on the word-forming element <morph>. This element is derived from the Greek *morphē* and has a denotation of "form or shape."





This same process of metamorphosis that occurs in animals also happens in some of the most well-known superheroes and villains in pop culture. For example, think about the way that Clark Kent "morphs" into Superman or Dr. Banner "morphs" into the Hulk. Both of these individuals undergo changes to their outward shape/structure. Once the metamorphosis is complete, their shape no longer reflects the qualities and features that it used to have.

metamorphosis (n.)

1530s, "change of form or structure, action or process of changing in form," originally especially by witchcraft, from Latin *metamorphosis*, from Greek *metamorphōsis* "a transforming, a transformation," from *metamorphoun* "to transform, to be transfigured," from *meta*, here indicating "change" (see **meta-**) + *morphē* "shape, form," a word of uncertain etymology.

The biological sense of "extensive transformations an animal (especially an insect) undergoes after it leaves the egg" is from 1660s. As the title of Ovid's work, late 14c., *Metamorphoseos*, from Latin *Metamorphoses* (plural).

As stated in the above excerpt from Etymonline, “metamorphosis” focuses on a transformation in shape or form. The morpheme element <meta-> means “change” and the morpheme element <morph> means shape or form--together, they convey a change in form or structure.

It might be evident that insects, amphibians, superheroes, and villains all morph themselves into different forms, but are ordinary people also capable of morphing themselves? Have you ever undergone transformation in any aspect of life? This excerpt from a college psychology textbook suggests that we might be even more familiar with this concept than we thought.

> ***Personal Identity between Philosophy and Psychology: A Perpetual Metamorphosis?***
>
> What is personal identity? What forms its nature? Is there a difference between identity and personality? What makes a “person” an individual, and what exactly is the person? What role is played by character, nature, environment, society, values and destiny in defining and substantiating a personal identity? How do persistence and change in identity coexist within a person? What is the nature of such a “change”? Is it just a natural process? And, are we sure it is a “process”? Which mechanism or force or dynamism determines it? And what is the function of culture, tradition and knowledge in representatively defining who we are and the way in which we understand ourselves, our relationship with others and, in general, the human being?

This excerpt provides some intriguing questions to think about. Based on this title and excerpt, it can be inferred that the authors believe that personal metamorphosis is inevitable. Whether we enjoy change or not, our identities are transforming throughout our lives.

So, while “morphology” might represent a new concept for us, we likely have background knowledge to bring to this term. In the context of the English language, morphology is the study of the structure and form of words. It involves analyzing word structure through morpheme elements, which are the smallest units of meaning (Minkova & Stockwell, 2009).

metamorphosis	morphology	amorphous
morphed	morphing	morpheme
polymorphous	polymorphic	morphological
morphology	metamorphosed	anthropomorphic

Studying the structure of English is essential to understanding the language because the structure holds the key to the meaning. For example, the morpheme <morph> has a denotation of “shape, form.” The word “amorphous” is built on that base element and, not surprisingly, it has something to do with “shape.”. Similarly, the prefix <a-> also has meaning. This prefix means “without.” Finally, the suffix <-ous> makes an adjective from a noun, and means “having, full of, having to do with.” Therefore, by analyzing

the three morphemes that comprise the structure of the word “amorphous,” we can figure out that amorphous is an adjective that refers to something without a shape. Similarly, the picture below is titled “Blued and Amorphous”--an aptly named image because it lacks clear definition to its shape.

Not only can we learn individual words by studying their structure, but we can also learn entire word families. For example, when we learn the base <morph> means “shape, form” then we can trace that meaning across many other related words, such as the following relatives: isomorphic, dimorphism, pseudomorph, metamorphize, and Morpheus.

We may not know the meanings of each of these words, but we know they are all built off of the same base element and have a sense of meaning related to “form or shape.” Regardless of different sounds and pronunciations of these words, the meaning lies in the structure - the spelling. This makes sense when we consider what we’ve already learned—that the purpose of the written language is not to merely represent sound; rather the purpose is to represent meaning, as well as sound and history, to those who already speak the language. By looking at the form or structure of the language, we can gain a better understanding of what words mean and how words function. Morphology is not the only dimension of the English language though. As we have already read, it is one dimension that must be examined in relation to two others: etymology and phonology. Within this section, we will begin looking at words within their word families through morphology, etymology, and phonology. In addition, we will consider English conventions that influence the system of English spellings.

? After Reading

After reading this passage, take some time to reflect on the questions and quotes below. We also encourage you to discuss your thoughts with classmates or others.

1. How can you express your understanding of morphology in your own words?
2. Based on what you read, do you think the spelling system is crazy/chaotic or logical?
3. In which ways did this passage challenge your views on the language?

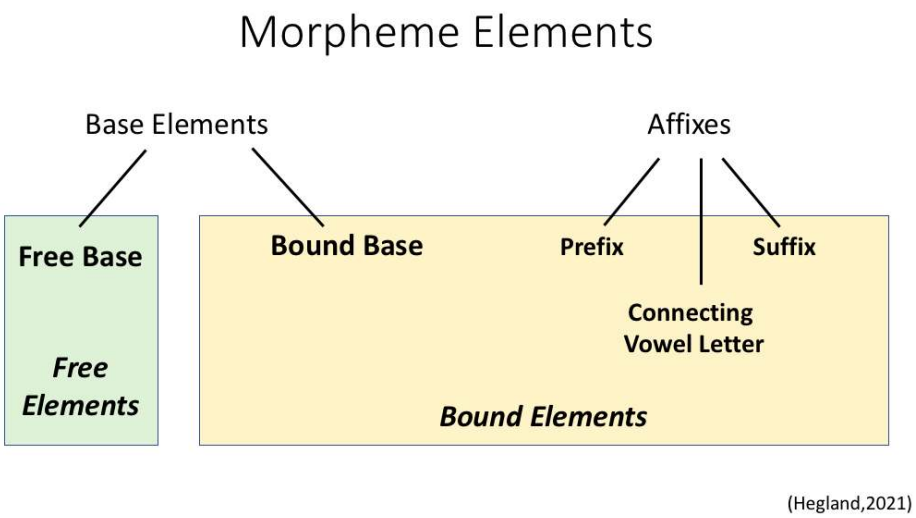
The next several passages within this section will expand and deepen your knowledge of morphology, the inquiry process, and the English spelling system. This level of awareness or consciousness of the language is important for the goal of challenging dominant ideology, and more broadly, moving beyond curiosity to enact sustained inquiry–inquiry that doesn’t necessarily lead to quick, definitive answers, but rather takes time to unfold over longer periods of time.

Morpheme Elements: How Words are Formed

The beginning of this section introduced you to the concept of morphology which is the study of meaningful units or forms in words. We will now begin to examine the different morpheme elements; these are the smallest units of meaningful forms within words. In English, words are stand-alone forms that represent meaning, and they can be used with other words to form sentences and or phrases. Sentences and phrases are one way to describe our thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Even though words are the smallest unit, many English words can be broken down into their morpheme elements. Each meaningful morpheme is sequenced to form words; thus, morphemes are the building blocks for constructing English words.

The morpheme element chart shows the two main categories of morphemes - base elements and affixes. Within base elements - there are two types of bases - free bases and bound bases. Free base elements can stand alone and bound bases need another morpheme element attached or affixed in order to form a word. There are three types of affixes - prefixes, suffixes, and connecting vowel letters. Affixes like bound bases must have another morpheme element attached or affixed in order to form a stand-alone word. Gaining an understanding of morpheme elements and how they are sequenced provides you with the tools and vocabulary for talking about English words and will deepen your understanding about word meanings and how they are structured or constructed.

We will spend a lot of time identifying and defining morpheme elements. As stated in the last section, studying the structure of English and how words are formed with morphemes is essential to understanding written and spoken English; it is the formation or structure that holds the key to the meaning of words.



Base Elements

Every English word is or contains a ***base*** element. The base element is the morpheme unit that holds the main meaning to a word. One thing a base can do is hold up or support a building or a piece of art. In the photo, notice how the base is the foundation holding the sculpture of Martin Luther King Jr. Thus, the base morpheme element forms the *foundation* of a word.

The word <have> is a free base element. It can stand alone as a meaningful element as it does in the following sentence.

> We ***have*** been enjoying wonderful weather on vacation.

Or the free base element <have> can have affixes - bound morpheme elements - prefixes, suffixes, and connecting vowel letters fastened to it, like the bold words below.

> We ***have*** been enjoying wonderful weather on vacation. We are ***having*** such fun. The children have been well ***behaved*** the entire time. Their ***behavior*** has been impeccable!

Whenever you see a morpheme element in brackets - like <morph> or <have> - you do not read the element - instead you spell the letters within the bracket. The reason you spell the element is because when affixes are added to base elements the pronunciation may shift - like in *have* and *behave* - but the spelling will remain consistent.

prefix	base element	suffix

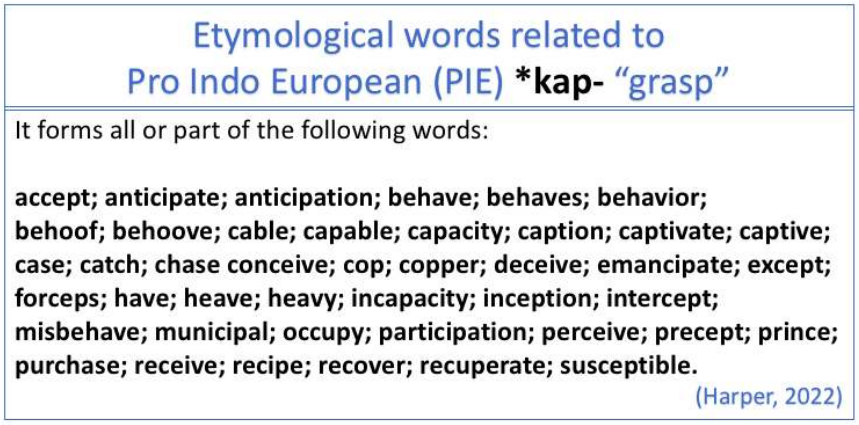
	have	
	have	ing
be	have	ed

Some words also have connecting vowel letters. Connecting vowel letters connect morpheme elements such as in the word *behavior*. The connecting vowel <i> in *behavior* is joining the base element <have> to the suffix <or>.

prefix	**base element**	**connecting vowel letter**	**suffix**
be	have	i	or

Looking at a family of related words in relation to morphology, etymology, and phonology provides insight into the English language system. To begin understanding words and their relatives, we need to investigate the etymology.

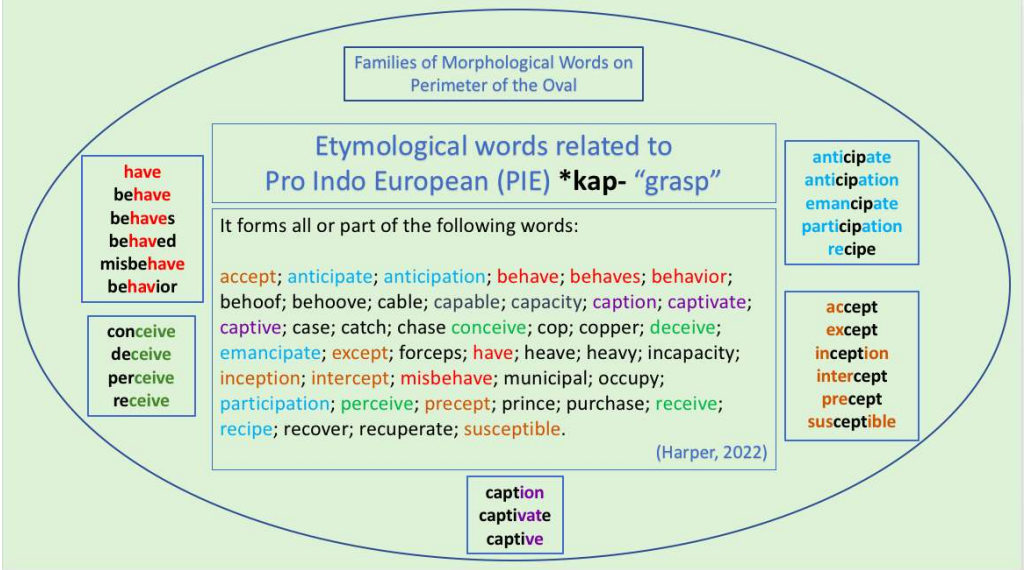
Etymonline explains that the word <have> is a verb that came from the Old English word *habban* with a sense and meaning of owning, possessing, experiencing, or being subject to (Harper, 2022). *Have* derived from the Proto Indo European (PIE) root *kap- with a denotation of “grasp." Looking at other words that derived from PIE *kap- we can see that this is a large etymological word family.



The denotation or the primary meaning of these etymologically related words originates from the PIE “grasp.” So we can look at this family of words and think about each word and its meaning. We can note a trace or hint of “grasping.” For instance, if you *accept* something, you have the ability to take it in or grasp it as it is. If you *anticipate* your vacation, you are able to think about or grasp what the vacation will be like before you actually experience it.

When we look closely at an etymological word family, we can begin to notice words that contain similar spelling patterns. The words with similar patterns are written in similar colored font.

Once we notice similar spelling patterns, we can then sort the words into morphological families. It is by looking at words in their morphological families that we can begin to determine what the base element is and whether there are prefixes, suffixes, or connecting vowel letters present. Below are 5 different morphological families that are etymologically related.



Within these 5 families of words we can examine the spellings to identify base elements and determine if the base element is free and can stand alone or whether the base is bound and has an affix - a prefix or suffix fixed or fastened to the base. (See "Base Element Sort" Activity).

Words formed from a free base	**Words formed from a bound base**
<have>	<ceive> receive, deceive, conceive <capt> caption, captive, captivate <cipe> recipe, anticipate, participate <cept> accept, except, intercept

5.2.1 Affixes

Affixes are bound morphemes combined to the beginning (***prefixes)*** or the end (***suffixes)*** of morpheme elements. Although affixes do not carry the main meaning, they do alter the meaning or change the grammar of a word. For instance, when the <ac-> prefix is joined to the bound base <cept> it forms the word *accept*. The prefix ac- has a sense of "to" and <cept> means grasp or take - thus *accept* means "to take or to grasp." Adding the suffix <-ance> to the word accept creates the word *acceptance*. The word *accept* is a verb and a*cceptance* is a noun. Hence the addition of the -ance suffix changes the grammar of the word from a verb to a noun.

As you read earlier, <have> came from Old English with a sense or meaning of owning, possessing, experiencing, or being subject to. Those senses and meanings are still present in the word *have*. When the prefix <be-> with a connotation of "completely" or

“thoroughly” is added to <have> it constructs the word *behave*. When people *behave*, they have complete control over their conduct. Perhaps you are like us and never noticed that these two common words *have* and *behave* contain similar spellings and are related. Since the <have> in each of those words sound very different, we did not recognize the similar spellings or the similar meanings. When we add another prefix <mis-> with a sense of “bad” or “wrong” to the word *behave*, we create the word *misbehave*. When you *misbehave*, you do not have control over your conduct or perhaps you are choosing to behave in a wrong manner. It is through adding prefixes and suffixes that this morphological family grows.

Examining the morphological relatives of *have* in the table below allows us to see the different morpheme elements as well as a key spelling convention. Spelling conventions are agreed upon procedures for forming and spelling words. In English spelling, there are various spelling conventions that we will address throughout the guidebook. However, there are three specific conventions that may occur when adding suffixes. One of the suffixing conventions occurs with the word *have*. Looking at the words below, can you see what occurs in some of the words when a suffix is added?

prefix	prefix	base element	suffix	constructed word
		have		have
		have/	ing	having
	be	have		behave
	be	have	s	behaves
	be	have/	ed	behaved
mis	be	have		misbehave
mis	be	have	s	misbehaves
mis	be	have/	ing	misbehaving

Did you notice that the words *having*, *behaving*, *misbehaving* seem to have lost the final <e>. What happened to the <e> in those words? To answer that question, you must first understand why there is a single, final <e> in the word *have*. When you say the word - *have* - what sound do you feel in your mouth at the end of the word? You probably feel the /v/. The /v/ is shown by the grapheme <v> in the word have. Thus, the single, final <e> is not representing or showing a sound - it is unpronounced <e> that is marking a convention.

Just like some people in academia made the decision that written papers should be typed using Times New Roman Font with a one inch margin, during the middle ages, scribes (monks who hand wrote books and pamphlets before the printing press was invented) came up with the notion that English words should not end with the letter <v>. As a result, any word that could possibly end with a <v> has a single, final letter <e>, such as in the words drive, give, brave, etc. This <e> in these words will also get replaced when joined with a vowel suffix. Vowel suffixes are any suffix that begins with a vowel letter. The vowel letters are a, e, i,o, u, and usually y.

> drive/+er→ driver give/+er→ giver brave/+ er→ braver
>
> drive/+ing→ driving give/+ing→ giving brave/+est→ bravest

The <e> does not get replaced when joined with a consonant suffix such as the <s> in the word *haves*. The single, final, unpronounced <e> suffixing convention also occurs when adding a connecting vowel letter.

prefix	base element	connecting vowel letter	suffix	completed word
be	have/	i	or	behavior

5.2.2

5.2.3 Morphological Analysis

When we examine words in their morphological families, we can break them into their meaningful parts through a process called morphological analysis. Generally, analysis refers to the process of breaking something down into smaller pieces to examine how each part works on its own and how each part works within the whole. For example, a book could be analyzed through chapters or

a show could be analyzed through episodes. More specifically, morphological analysis refers to analyzing words through their structural elements--morphemes - bases, prefixes, suffixes, and connecting vowels.

To illustrate the morphological analysis process and make our thinking visible, we can create word sums. A word sum shows each morpheme that constructs a word, written out from left to right. The separation between morphemes is illustrated within the word sum through plus signs.

For example, the word would be analyzed through a word sum that looks like this:

> ac + cept → accept

Notice how the prefix <ac-> is identified within the word sum as a separate morpheme from the bound base <cept.> You might have also noticed that this word sum contains an arrow →. That arrow represents the phrase “gets rewritten as.” After the arrow, the word sum shows the complete word with all of its morphemes combined. Often, the arrow is confused with an equal sign, but equal signs and arrows have different meanings. In a word sum, we want to indicate how the morphemes are “rewritten” within the complete word.

For example, the word sum for "having” would look like this:

> have/ + ing→ having

Another reason an equal sign is not used in a word sum is because of suffixing conventions is because as you can see in the above word sum, each side is not equal. We will learn more about these in detail. But you can see that the <e> in <have> is replaced by the <-ing> suffix. When a word ends with a single, final, non-syllabic <e> and is joined by a vowel suffix - such as -ing or - ed, the <e> is replaced by the vowel from the vowel suffix.

When writing a word sum, you should always spell the morphemes aloud, one letter at a time--don't try to pronounce morphemes. This is important because morphemes do not have a pronunciation until they create a word. For instance, pronounce the following pairs of words:

> "have" AND "behave”
>
> “sign” AND “signature”

The words in each pair have different pronunciations, don't they? However, both sets of words share the same base elements: <have> and <sign.> When we focus on pronunciation, we may not notice the similar spellings; therefore, we might not think the words are related. However, both of these sets of words are morphological relatives--that is, they share a similar meaning and base element. As prefixes and suffixes are added to base elements, there is a possibility that there will be a shift in the sound as well. Because of the possibility of pronunciation shifts, it is vital to spell the elements in word sums instead of trying to read them.

As word sums are constructed, each letter must be accounted for. For instance, if you were creating a word sum for the word “instruction,” you might hypothesize the following:

> *in + struc + tion → instruction

While this might seem like a reasonable word sum, it is important to think about what this word sum suggests, namely that <in> is a prefix, <struc> is a base, and <tion> is a suffix. If we attempt to find evidence for each morpheme, we’ll notice that we can find examples of <in-> as a prefix (inside, indoors, etc.), but we cannot find any evidence of <struc> as a base or <-tion> as a suffix. In fact, when you examine the word “instruct,” you’ll find that <struct> must be the bound base:

> in + struct → instruct

This evidence falsifies our original word sum for “instruction.” At this point in our morphological analysis, we would need to hypothesize different word sums that we can find evidence for, such as the following:

>

> in + struct + ion → instruction

? Which evidence can you find for each of the morphemes that is suggested by this word sum?

Evidence for <in-> as a prefix:

Evidence for <struct> as a base:

Evidence for <-ion> as a suffix:

When creating word sums, it's likely that you will generate several possibilities since each one represents a hypothesis about the structure and meaning of the word. Throughout your word inquiry and investigation, you might find evidence that proves one of your initial hypotheses. (See "Word Sum" Activity).

? After Reading

1. As you review the last several passages on the English language, what were the most important ideas that you learned?
2. How might the insights in these texts challenge dominant ideologies about the English language?
3. How does challenging the dominant ideology towards the English language impact your learning?
4. Now that you have some background on the word "ideology," can you initiate your own inquiry into the word? Note what you learn below.

In the previous texts on spelling and morphology, prevalent beliefs about the English language were the focus of our ideological challenge. However, just as beliefs about language and even language itself can be challenged, it can also be the mechanism through which we challenge other dominant ideologies. In the next several texts, writers will demonstrate various ways of using language towards these ends.

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5.3: “The Butler” -- Katelyn Durst

> *"Writing a memoir was a foreign concept to me because I didn’t feel I had a story to tell or was old enough to be writing what in my mind was an ‘autobiography’ style essay.”*

Perhaps you can relate to the sentiment expressed above by former DCCC student Katelyn Durst when she reveals that she didn’t believe she “had a story to tell.” In our experience, we have discovered that Katelyn is not the only one who feels this way; rather, many students do not believe that they have stories worthy of being conveyed through memoirs, nor do they think they have the “natural” ability to be writers and storytellers (See “Storyteller” Activity).

Although we might not realize it, this type of thinking not only disempowers us as writers, but it also discredits our lived experience. Which experiences are “worthy” of being included in published texts? Who makes this decision? How might we challenge this ideology by representing different perspectives and experiences? Furthermore, what do we typically envision when we think of published authors? Why do we believe that some people are “natural writers”? Who evaluates writing and decides what is considered “good writing?”

When we doubt our own worthiness to engage in writing or share our experiences through memoir, we are limited by an exclusionary belief about what it means to be a writer. In the text below, Katelyn Durst challenges this ideology through her memoir “The Butler.” Nearly seven years after having her memoir published in DCCC’s peer-reviewed *Student Writing Journal*, she shares her personal reflection on her writing process, the memoir genre, and the meaning that she creates from this experience.

? Before Reading

In Durst’s reflection, she says, “Rereading some of these powerful moments in our life enables us to bring forth the original power we felt in those moments.” What do you think this means? Note your ideas below.

As you read “The Butler”, note the vivid moments that she includes and how she creates those through her writing.

5.3.1 Reflection on her Experience with Writing

I was never known for my writing and truthfully while I love to read I never admittedly never explored beyond young adult authors in my day to day reading. It wasn’t until I had entered college I truly began exploring different styles of writing and text and expanded my internal library. Writing a memoir was a foreign concept to me because I didn’t feel I had a story to tell or was old enough to be writing what in my mind was an “autobiography” style essay. Once I started writing however, the memories rushed over me and it was such a refreshing experience. I found myself smiling at the memories and exploring ones beyond those expressed in “The Butler”. I think that is the power behind this genre of writing. It becomes a way to bring these memories to life and hold on to them long after your brain begins to forget. It reminds me of *The Notebook* by Nicholas Sparks where the main character Allie writes down all her memories in a journal to be read to her when she can no longer remember on her own. It pulls us back into these special moments giving everlasting life to the feelings that come with them. I still get a rush of emotion over myself when I reread my own essay. I hope that after reading this people will feel inspired to document their own special moments whether it be with those they care about or just life defining moments experienced independently. Rereading some of these powerful moments in our lives enables us to bring forth the original power we felt in those moments. We’re able to share in the love all over again. It’s not about hoping to be published and don’t feel like you’re not capable of writing “something like that”. The power of writing is whatever you put into it and because it’s yours it's enough. I’m so glad I have my own story to sit back and look at and remind me of these moments and to take the time to slow down and appreciate the moments I’m currently experiencing so I can cherish them just as much.

“The Butler”

The windows are down but there’s no wind blowing through my hair right now, and I can smell the pungent odor of the bay. Mimi would actually have to be doing the speed limit for me to even get a small gust, but I am okay with that because it would probably amplify the smell coming in. Most people would be disgusted with the scent, but for me it means we’ve almost reached Wildwood. I’m used to the extended drive down the beach, but Mimi hates taking highways or main roads, so it takes longer than usual. That means that for the past two hours, I’ve been staring at farmland. It sounds worse than it is. I love the view of the beautiful orchards splattered with color from all the fruits and vegetables growing in the fields.

While we drive, Mimi tells me stories of when she was younger and talks about how much everything has changed. She says that the road my mom and I would normally take, Route 347, didn't even exist when my family first bought the house down in Wildwood. She reminisces about when the house was still new—a one story house with red shingle siding and a white roof. The porch has a little gate at the top of the steps to keep all the children inside and away from the street. We're lucky to have a house with its own driveway that leads right to the backyard. When we finally pull the car in, the first thing I notice is our shed that stores all of our beach supplies. When I was growing up, Mimi and my Aunt Anne always called it a "Hoodle," and to this day I'm still not sure if it's a real word. I try to imagine what it would have been like to grow up in the same time period as Mim. Even though that's difficult to do, these car rides together make it seem more real, and they are some of the best times we have together.

As I step off the school bus, I'm immediately greeted with the warm embrace and shining face of the sun. I begin every afternoon the same way, by strolling down Saville Ave. and making a right onto 13th. I can already see the charming rose bush that grows along Mimi's walkway from the top of the street where I stand. I love how on windy days the scent is carried in the wind and overwhelms your senses, even following you into the house. Mimi's house always smelled like fresh flowers with an underlying smell of the Busch Beer that she drank like water. She kept it well stocked in her 1950s style refrigerator. The entire house was decorated with care to reflect Mim's warm and easygoing personality and filled with constant reminders of past times.

As I make my way into the living room, my eyes immediately fall to my favorite part of the house—the china cabinet where all the Hummel dolls are kept. Mimi had a Hummel collection to be rivaled. The cabinet is filled with small children and a family, a woman with a parasol, and my favorite, the butler. He is a handsome figurine with a childlike face and rosy cheeks and stands about ten inches tall. He is dressed as if he is preparing to serve tea to the Queen of England, with a towel draped over his left arm and a bottle of wine in his right. I don't know why but I'm always drawn to his charm. I could spend a whole afternoon staring at the Hummels and coming up with stories behind what they were doing or thinking and where they might be going. I imagine that the family was preparing to go out for a picnic in the afternoon sun and that my butler was getting them ready to be on their way.

Sitting on the sofa, I'm cuddled up with Mimi and a blanket while *I Love Lucy* reruns play on the TV. We spend most afternoons laughing until our bellies ache from Lucy's crazy antics. Today she's making, or at least trying to make, a loaf of bread but it quickly overtakes her kitchen. Thankfully, our kitchen never gets as crazy as Lucy's and soon it's time to begin cooking dinner. We always start by taking out our ingredients first, so I find myself headed towards the cabinets for the dry items and then to the refrigerator. Tonight is one of my favorites—mashed potatoes. Mimi makes the best mashed potatoes you'll ever have the fortune to taste. It always starts out with all the typical ingredients: potatoes, milk, butter, and salt and pepper, but Mim adds a special magic to them that brings a whole new meaning to the term "comfort food." The room is surrounded by a warmth brought from not just the oven but our love of being together. The savory scent of a roast in the oven makes my mouth water, and the toasting bread smells sweet and heavenly. We complement each other, going back and forth arranging food to be prepared, cooked, and plated. I follow Mim's lead and experience in the kitchen, hoping to be as good of a cook as her one day. When we are in the kitchen together, we're able to create more than just meals; we create memories.

When I walk into Mim's house on Christmas Day, I'm immediately transported into Dickens' village. I have a bird's eye view of the beloved town of Tiny Tim and his family, which makes me feel as though I'm soaring through the sky. Small brick houses are decorated for Christmas with tiny wreaths on the doors and candles in the windows. These houses, temporarily rooted on the table, are set up with the miniature characters who are all bundled up in hats and scarfs, as though preparing for a bitter winter. Their choice of clothing makes sense since the town is coated in a layer of glittering fake snow. I'm dressed in my Sunday best and despite knowing what my gift will be, I'm excited to be here celebrating with family. Every year my sisters and I get the same gifts from Mimi: a Christmas card and an American Express gift card. When we were younger, Mim would take the time to think about each of us and our personalities, but she knows that as teenagers, cash is the best gift you can receive. My brother is the exception to this rule. I suppose Mim figures he's still young enough because every year without fail, Timmy gets this year's edition of the Hess truck. The room is filled with the sound of laughter and conversation as we each discuss what "Santa" had brought us earlier in the day. We all joke, enjoy each other's company, and live by the saying, "The present is the best present." We know that we are fortunate to have each other and this time spent together.

As I'm trudging down the hallway towards Mimi's hospital room, I feel like I am walking to the gallows. The walls are whitewashed and I can hear the lights humming. They sound like a swarm of worker bees and look just as harsh. It smells unnaturally clean, like bleach and rubber, and I feel the scent permeate my nose and burn my nostrils just a tinge. The doctor is trying to be comforting but there is no way to be positive in this setting. He tells us that it's pneumonia and then the prognosis worsens because, upon further testing, they find lung cancer as well. It's difficult to see Mim looking so small and frail, being dwarfed by the surrounding machinery and large bed. The doctors inform us that regrettably there isn't much they can do except make her comfortable. However, the comfort comes at a cost; the hospital bills keep growing and eventually we move Mim to a hospice facility.

It brings back a feeling of home with colorful flowers by the bed and a painting of a park bustling with people, but it'll never truly be Mim's. Back at her house, my Uncle Tom begins to sort through her personal items and decides what to save, sell, and trash. Going through her items brings memories of both happy and sad occasions. He found her old engagement ring—an antiqued cushion cut with a halo around it, small but beautiful just like my Mimi. It's no easy task to sort through someone else's life, especially without them there to guide you. What would Mim want most? How can you put a price on people's memories? Do Mim's items lose their value if she can't remember the whole stories behind them? What if she isn't there anymore to cherish them? That August, Mim passed away without ever having seen her home again.

Uncle Tom came by early in the morning with his arms full of gifts and packages that were wrapped brightly with ribbons cascading down like waterfalls and bows bursting off the boxes. It was our first Christmas without Mim, and he came well stocked and prepared for all his nieces and nephews that he would see that day. I was last to receive my gift and it was easily one of the smaller packages. It came simply wrapped with just a plain silver bag with blue tissue paper sticking up out of the top. It was fairly weighted in my hands. I was surprised and couldn't imagine what was inside this tiny bag that weighed so much. Removing the tissue paper and dropping it to the ground, I was able to see clearly, even if just for a moment, through the tears that began to flow; inside the bag was my butler. He had been saved and survived the sorting. I was so surprised and elated to have a piece of Mimi with me, and this wasn't just any memory. It was the most important butler. I had wondered what became of her small townspeople and village, as well as some of her other knick-knacks and beloved decor. The one thing I was most curious about, however, was my butler. Although many of Mim's Hummels had not made it through the sorting process, my favorite managed to survive, and it was going to be mine. With tears still streaming down my face, I felt my chest lift as if a five-pound weight was removed.

Losing someone is always difficult, but sometimes even the smallest of gestures can lessen the brute force of the pain. For me, that small gesture was when my uncle gave me back a part of Mimi. I still feel the heaviness and pressure of losing her, but this lessens the blow. Although I'm unable to spend time with her in the same way I used to, having the Hummel doll gives me a new way to feel close to her. I know that the butler will never cook with me or laugh along to *I Love Lucy*, but having him allows me to go back to when Mim and I could do those things. I believe that through his eyes, Mimi keeps watch over me. Having the butler in my china cabinet gives me a piece of her to hold onto. I often look back to my Hummel and think about all the good times we had together during my afternoons at her house and imagine once more that he's preparing for an afternoon picnic under a rose bush, but this time, it's for me and Mimi.

Katelyn Durst's Bio:

Katelyn Durst is currently enrolled at Montgomery County Community College after transferring from Delaware County Community College. She is currently a Liberal Arts major engaging in a build-your-own degree program with a focus in criminal justice. After completing her prerequisites at community college Katelyn will be transferring to Temple University to complete both her graduate degree as well as her Doctorate of Law. She aspires to aid those in need through family law services as well as providing legal services to the underserved and underrepresented communities.

After Reading

1.Describe the vivid moments that Durst created in her memoir. What effect did they have on you as a reader?

2. Which strategies did Durst use to create these moments?

3. Based on what you observed in this text, what do you think the power of the memoir genre might be? (See "Memoir" Activity).

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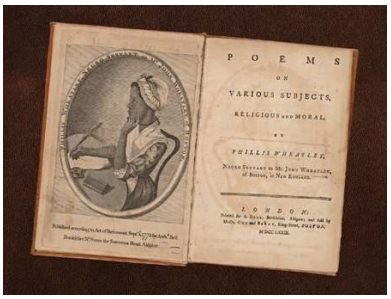
5.4: “How Phillis Wheatley Beat All Expectations” -- Kovie Biakolo

> *“Before Phillis Wheatley published her renowned collection Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral in 1773, she’d had to withstand an interrogation by 18 men deemed ‘the most respectable characters in Boston.’ Their task was to determine whether an enslaved girl, estimated to be about 18 or 19 years old at the time, had in fact written the poems herself, given widespread disbelief that a person like her—African, Black, female, young—could deliver such exquisite words.”*



The quote above from Biakolo’s essay on Phillis Wheatly, part of the *Smithsonian’s* special report on women who shaped history, demonstrates how deeply rooted dominant ideologies can be. As we noted in response to the previous memoir “The Butler,” many of us are plagued by doubts about our own abilities and worthiness to be published authors. As we contemplate where these notions come from and why ideologies surrounding publication and authorship can be so exclusionary, it’s illuminating to extend this inquiry to early historical figures like Wheatly. In doing so, we find similar ideologies at work. That is, Wheatley encountered profound disbelief that a young African girl who was enslaved could have written such powerful poetry. This reality was not possible within the ideological frame of those in power—white, “respectable” men.

? Before Reading

As critical literacy scholar Fairclough (2001) says, communication is “the mechanism of emancipation and the struggle against domination” where unequal power relationships exist (p. 75).

Make a prediction: How do you think that writing, poetry, and publishing can serve as a way of challenging the opinions or beliefs of people that exert control or domination over others? Note your thoughts below.

As you read Biakolo’s text, take note of the following: 1) In which ways is language/literacy used as a form of resistance? 2) Are there any connections you can make between Phillis Wheatley and other authors/texts that you’ve read about in this guidebook?

Link to Full Text

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/phillis-wheatley-beat-expectations-180979249/

? After Reading

1) Throughout Phillis Wheatley’s brief account, language and literacy were utilized as a form of resistance in multiple ways. In which ways is language/literacy used as a form of resistance? Which examples of this did you observe?

2) How did language and identity intersect in Wheatley’s life? What role did language play in shaping her identity? How did she use her literacy skills to create a counternarrative of her ascribed identity?

3) Why do you think that language itself becomes the site of struggle for and against domination? Can you think of any recent examples or current events of this struggle?

As you learned in the text, despite Phillis Wheatley’s intellectual abilities and her proficiency in Greek and Latin, she was not able to find a publisher for her poetry and thus had to search for publication opportunities in Britain. Even after finding a London-based publisher who was willing to review her work, Wheatley was required to provide “proof that she’d written the poems herself.”

Ultimately, it was pressure from the patrons of her poetry that led John Wheatley to emancipate her. Therefore, it could be argued that literacy and language were both sources of domination and liberation for Phillis Wheatley, as has been the case for other authors included in this book. Since language and power are inherently linked, the critical acts of questioning and challenging are needed to interrogate privileged positions, especially in ways that critique the “legitimacy of unequal power relationships . . . and social structures that keep power in the hands of a few” (Hinchey, 1998).

Throughout the next several texts, authors will demonstrate other ways of utilizing language and literacy towards these ends.

Additional Resources on Wheatley

Biographical Information on Phillis Wheatley:

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/phillis-wheatley

Link to Wheatley's poetry:

"On Being Brought from Africa to America"

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45465/on-being-brought-from-africa-to-america

"A Hymn to the Evening"

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poe...to-the-evening

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5.5: “How I Went from Gangster to Geek” -- Jy’Aire Smith-Pennick

> *“Prison forced me to be still and start my **mental metamorphosis.**"*

In Jy’aire Smith-Pennick’s essay, “How I Went From Gangster to Geek,” he describes how prison forced him to be still, and in that stillness, Smith-Pennick experienced a “mental metamorphosis”.

? Prediction

Based on your background knowledge on *metamorphosis*, make a prediction about what a “mental metamorphosis” might entail. Note your prediction below.

Before Reading: Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how gun violence influenced Smith-Pennick’s mindset and ultimately his actions.

Moreover, read to learn how being imprisoned and sitting in silence led to Jy’ aire’s mental metamorphosis and how that transformed him.

Link to Full Text

How I Went From Gangster to Geek | The Marshall Project

After Reading

1. Even though prison supported Jy’Aire’s transformation, he is not advocating for prisons. What do you think Jy’Aire’s main message is?
2. Smith-Pennick says that “I began to see the trap I was living in for most of my life for what it was.” How would you describe the trap that he was living in? Why was this trap so hard for him to see?
3. In his essay, Smith-Pennick says, “But prison didn’t change me; I transformed myself.” How did his time in prison factor into his self-transformation? More generally, how might our setting or environment play a role in our ability to transform ourselves?
4. In going from “a gangster to a geek overnight,” how does Smith-Pennick challenge dominant ideologies about incarcerated people? About education?

As you reflect upon this last question, think about the insights that you took from Smith-Pennick’s essay. Through this essay, we—the authors—began to think more about prison reform and the relationship between incarceration and education. We also questioned our own assumptions about these topics. Smith-Pennick clearly has many lessons to teach us. Consider for a moment – do we typically expect incarcerated individuals to take on the role of teachers? In general, who do we expect to learn from and why? What and whom might be overlooked within this narrow lens? In many ways, Smith-Pennick challenges our own ideologies.

This page titled 5.5: “How I Went from Gangster to Geek” -- Jy’Aire Smith-Pennick is shared under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Megan Trexler and Kathryn Hastings.

5.6: "The Story of an Hour" -- Kate Chopin

> *"She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself, a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: 'free, free, free!' "*

At first glance, our previous author, Jy'Aire Smith-Pennick, and our next author, Kate Chopin, have very little in common. To be sure, the differences between them abound. However, both Smith-Pennick and the main character of Chopin's short story, Louise Mallard, are connected through their sense of entrapment. While one experiences life from within the white brick walls of prison, the other finds herself trapped inside an isolated room, a reflection of her broader life within the confines of an unhappy marriage and stifling social restrictions of late 19th century society.

Through personal transformation, Pennick-Smith and Mallard challenge the dominant ideologies that governed their lives. The following questions call those ideologies forth so that they're more visible: Who is expected and encouraged to pursue their dreams? Who is expected to prioritize others' wishes over their own fulfillment? Who is positioned to live independently and who is forced into dependence? Who *can* and *should be* in control of their futures? The answers to the questions reflect broader ideologies that these individuals challenged in their respective ways.

? Before Reading

Expand your schema: What do you already know about the historical context of the late 19th century? What do you know about Chopin's childhood and early life? How might this context influence her short story?

For more historical context on Chopin's life in the 19th century, visit the links below:

"Kate Chopin: Her Novels and Stories"

https://www.katechopin.org/

"Biography"

https://www.katechopin.org/biography/

Reflect on your background knowledge: What do you think it means to be ambivalent? (See "Ambivalence" Activity.)

Freewrite: Describe a situation when you felt ambivalent.

Make a prediction: How do you think that personal transformation could be a means of challenging dominant ideology?

Set a purpose: As you read Chopin's short story below, pay attention to the nature of Louise Mallard's transformation and the way that her setting influenced that change.

5.6.1 "The Story of An Hour"

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street

below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him--sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhold, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door--you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease--of the joy that kills.

? After Reading

1. In which ways was Louise ambivalent towards her husband's death? (See "Ambivalence" Activity.) How does this reaction reveal Louise's experience of an oppressive ideology?

2. Where do you see powerful metaphors within this text? Can you identify multiple layers of meaning to those metaphors?

3. During Louise's time alone in the room, it states, *"Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will."* What do you think Louise was fighting and why was she fighting it instead of embracing it? What does this tell you about the nature of dominant ideology?

4. In Chopin's text, she writes, *"She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory."* What do you think she triumphed over?

5. How did Louise's isolation in the bedroom play a role in her transformation?

6. Who diagnosed the cause of Louise's death? What influenced their diagnosis?

Reflection on Section

Now that we've reached the end of this section on "Challenging Dominant Ideology," take a few minutes to reflect on the section as a whole.

1. Paraphrase your own understanding of the value of challenging dominant ideologies.

2.How do these authors' challenges build on the previous section on noticing and questioning? How do their challenges move us closer to action?

3. How can language be both liberating and oppressive?

As we move to the next section of this guidebook, we think it's worthwhile to pause and consider the significance of engaging in critical inquiry. Broadly, within our individual and collective processes of making progress and looking ahead, we can only really begin to move forward when we perceive our states of minds "not as fated and unalterable, but merely as limiting—and therefore challenging" (Freire, 2008, p. 85). As we have learned, the acts of noticing and questioning help us to see our realities as alterable and capable of being transformed. Often, the process of transformation begins with a seemingly simple act--naming. By naming the world around us, including dominant ideologies, we can perceive our realities as problems—problems that invite our engagement towards change (Freire, 2008). From this perspective, even if we fall short of enacting challenges in response to dominant ideologies, the process of identifying and naming those ideologies is still an important step. In the next section of the guidebook, we'll build on the practices of noticing, questioning, and challenging by harnessing the power of multiplicity.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Generating Multiplicity

6.1: Generating Multiplicity: An Introduction
6.2: Polysemy
6.3: Morphophonemic
6.4: “Nothing Gold Can Stay” -- Robert Frost
6.5: "Harlem" and "Dreams" -- Langston Hughes
6.6: “The Danger of a Single Story” -- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

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6.1: Generating Multiplicity: An Introduction

Do you believe it is possible for people that maintain different religious, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, and political backgrounds to live together harmoniously within the same society and share equally in political processes? What do you make of the hostility and divisiveness that abounds on social media surrounding issues such as Roe v. Wade, Black Lives Matter, policing policies, mask mandates and Covid vaccinations, climate change, gun control, LGBTQ rights, and critical race theory? Does this hostility and divisiveness lead you to believe that it is nearly impossible for people who hold polar opposite viewpoints to coexist? Issues surrounding a myriad of issues such as Roe v. Wade, Black Lives Matter, policing policies, mask mandates and Covid vaccinations, climate change, gun control, LGBTQ rights, and critical race theory - to name just a few? Does this lead you to believe that it is nearly impossible for people that hold polar opposite viewpoints to coexist? If you agree with the latter, then perhaps you've not heard of pluralism.

Pluralism is a moral ideology or philosophy that values diversity in society and actively seeks out ways to enable people with varying beliefs to live together--to coexist beyond merely tolerating each other. This coexistence occurs through communication and compromise, as people actively engage in dialogue and respond to the needs of the citizens. The goal is to strive towards negotiating solutions that benefit or contribute to the "common good" of society as a whole. Both the Civil Rights Movement and the Environmental Protection Agency are results of various groups seeing and naming inequities and harmful consequences to people and the environment. Consequently, the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts were passed into law and the Environmental Protection Agency was created. These specific examples demonstrate how people with diverse viewpoints can come together and imagine new ways of living together that are more humane and beneficial to all citizens as well as to the planet.

The selections in this section of the guidebook emphasize multiplicity - multiplicity of ideas, poems, and the English language itself. We will begin by looking at how English as a language is both polysemous and morphophonemic. These two foundational concepts not only highlight the rich diversity of the language but they also contribute to multiple ways of knowing and communicating thoughts and ideas through words. Chimamanda Adichie's TED "The Danger of a Single Story" talk reinforces a main aspect of multiplicity in that all stories are incomplete. No single story can capture all of the unique intricacies and different variability within the cosmos and human life experiences. The power of stories is how they can be signposts pointing out and illustrating the myriad alternate possibilities.

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6.2: Polysemy

English is a **polysemous** language. That means a word or a phrase can have multiple senses or meanings. For example, look at the many different meanings and connotations the word <run> can have in the following sentences.

Meanings and connotations of <run>

I am going to run in a marathon.

I would like to run for class president.

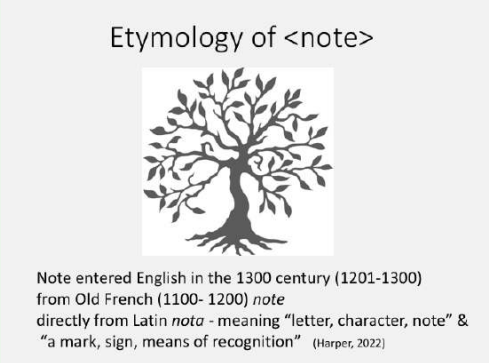
I have a run in my stockings.

I am afraid my red shirt will run in the wash.

I have to run the dishwasher.

The word polysemy is constructed from two Greek elements; <poly-> with a denotation of “many, much, or multi” and <sem> meaning “signs” or “meanings.” Nordquist (2020) notes that it is estimated that over 40% of English words are polysemous and have more than one meaning. For a word to be polysemous, the word's meanings must be derived from the same etymological root.

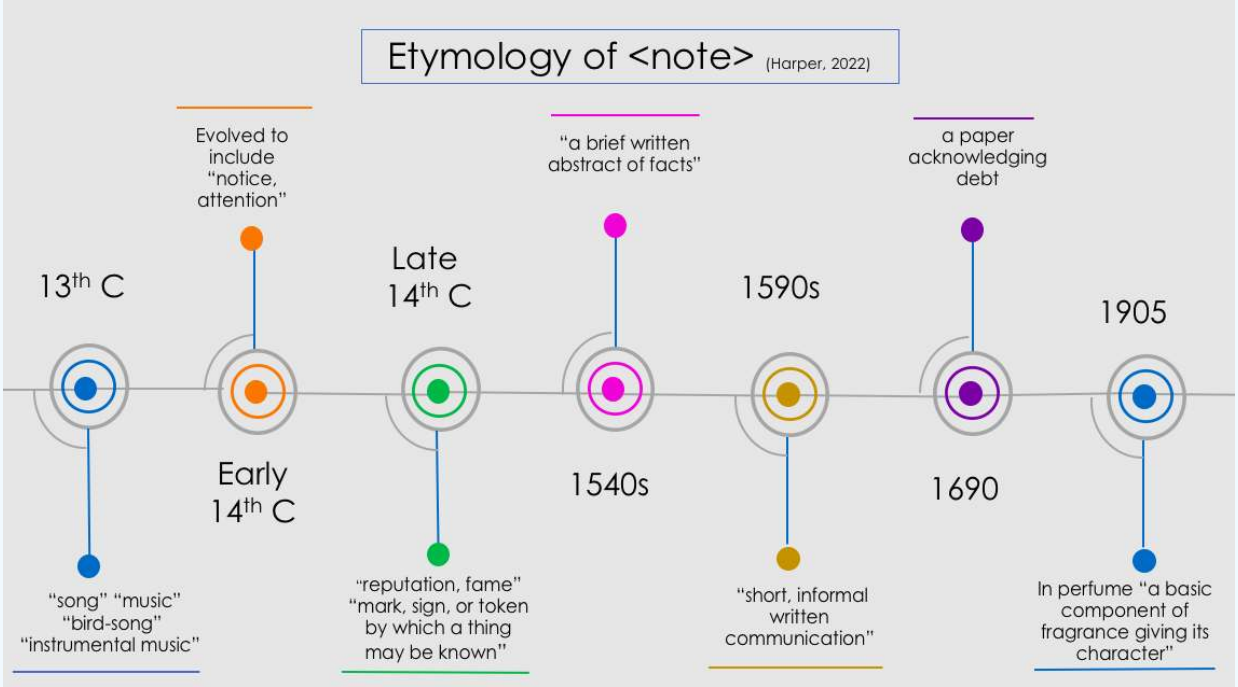
Definition: Term



The etymology of the word *note*; <note> derived from Old French *note* and directly from Latin *nota* with a denotation of “mark, sign, or means of recognition” As <note> entered English during the 13 century the sense and meaning was related to songs and musical notes.

Etymology of <note>

? The graphic in this box shows how the word <note> is polysemous and has evolved over time with multiple senses and meanings.



From the graphic illustrating the evolution of <note>, we can see how *note* is polysemous - from musical notes, to bank notes, to scented notes, to fame and being noteworthy, there are a variety of meanings to this word. (For more guidance on how to read the Etymonline entries for this family, see the "Annotate and Note: How to Read Entries from Etymonline" Activity.)

? Based on what you've learned, make a prediction about how the orthography might embody multiplicity.

Consider the following questions and note your hypotheses below:

Why does the <ea> sound differently in the words "reach" and "react"?

Why does the <ch> sound differently in the words "school" and "cliche"?

Why does the word "two" contain a <w> and why does "people" contain an <o>?

Why is there an <e> on the end of the word "house"?

At this point in your reading, you have likely learned the answers to many of these questions. While there are specific explanations for each of these spellings, the questions collectively illustrate something about the nature of the English orthography. As you probably noticed, the orthography is not solely phonetic, which means that it is not only spelled by the way it sounds. Furthermore, each letter of the alphabet is not strictly associated with one or two sounds. This is because, more generally, the purpose of the orthography is not simply to represent sound. Instead, as you've already learned, the main purpose of English spellings is to represent the senses and meanings of words to people who already know how to speak the language.

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6.3: Morphophonemic

Because the English orthography represents meaning and structure (morphology), sound (phonology), and history (etymology), it has been described as "**morphophonemic**." The word-forming element <morph> refers to "form or shape" and <phone> refers to sound. Even within the word "morphophonemic" the sense of "morphology" comes first and is prioritized over sound. This is because the structure of words must be analyzed before sound, such as in the words "reach" and "react." These two words look similar in that they both have a <ea> in the middle of the words, but they sound differently from one another because "reach" contains an <ea> digraph and "react" has two separate morphemes: the prefix <re> and the base <act>. Thus, <ea> is not a digraph in the word "react." This example illustrates why morphemes must be analyzed before sound can fully be understood, but it also shows how both meaning and sound are represented inside of words.

We can look more closely at some word families to discover how written English represents multiplicity through morphophonemics. More specifically, as Richard Venezky (1999) explains, "the visual identity of meaningful word parts takes precedence over letter-sound simplicity" (p. 198). To preserve the visual identity, morphemes will be spelled the same even though pronunciation may change. For instance, as we saw earlier within the family of words with the base <have>, the words *have*, *having*, *behave*, *and behavior* are all derived from the same historical Proto Indo-European root *kap- with a denotation of "grasp" or "take" (Harper, 2022). As different prefixes or suffixes are affixed to the <have> base, vowel alternations occur. Sorting the words using the International Phonetic Association's (IPA) alphabet allows for "seeing" where the vowel shifts in pronunciation occur.

? Exercise Vowel Alternations for Grapheme <a>

Say the words in each box and listen for the sound represented by the vowel grapheme <a>.
Vowel Alternations for Grapheme <a>

word sums IPA/**æ**/	word sums IPA /**eɪ**/
have / hæv/ have/ + ing → having /ˈhævɪŋ/	be + have → behave /bəˈheɪv/ be + have/+ ing → behaving /bəˈheɪvɪŋ/ be + have/+ ed → behaved /bəˈheɪvd/ be + have/+ i + or → behavior /bəˈheɪvjər/

In the words *have* and *having*, the grapheme <a> shows what is known as the "short a" sound/æ/. In the words *behave*, *behaving*, *behaved*, and *behavior*, the grapheme <a> shows what is known as the "long a" sound /eɪ/. Words written in IPA symbols visually show how the grapheme <a> can represent both /æ/ and /eɪ/.

? Exercise for Vowel Alternations in the <ea> Digraph <please>

In the following family of words built from the word <please>, all the words derived from the Latin root *placere* and have a denotation of "to be acceptable, be liked, be approved." Say the words in each box and listen for the sound represented by the vowel digraph <ea>.

word sums IPA/ **i:** /	word sums IPA /ɛ/
please please /pli:z/ please/ + ing → pleasing /pli:zɪŋ/ dis + please/ +ed → displeased /dɪspli:zd/	please/ + ant → pleasant /plɛznt/ un + please/+ ant→ unpleasant /ənplɛzənt/ please/+ ure→ pleasure /plɛʒər/ please/+ure/+able→ pleasurable /plɛʒərəbəl/

The words written in IPA show that the vowel digraph <ea> can represent both the "long e" /i:/ like in the words *please*, *pleasing*, and *displeased* and the "short e" /ɛ/ like in the words *pleasant* and *pleasurable*.

Not only do written vowels in English represent multiple sounds, but the consonants also represent more than one sound.

? Exercise: Consonant Alternations for Grapheme <s>

In the following family of words built from the base <please>, say the words in each box; listen for the sound represented by the consonant grapheme <s>

word sums IPA / **z** /	word sums I. PA /ʒ/
please /pli:z/ please/ + ing → pleasing /pli:zɪŋ/ dis + please/ +ed→ displeased /dɪspli:zd/ please/ + ant → pleasant /plɛznt/ un + please/+ ant→ unpleasant /ənplɛzənt/	please/+ ure → pleasure /plɛʒər/ please/+ure/+able→ pleasurable /plɛʒərəbəl

The words written in IPA symbols show how the consonant grapheme <s> can represent /z/ as in *please* and *pleasant* and /ʒ/ as in the words *pleasure* and *pleasurable*. There are also additional sounds that the grapheme <s> can represent. In light of this insight into morphophonemics, we can now return to our initial question about how the English language embodies multiplicity. Through its representation of multiple dimensions of the English language–meaning and structure, sound, and history–there is always multiplicity embedded within words. Only by understanding all of those dimensions can we fully make sense of words.

In the next section, we'll further expand our understanding of how multiplicity applies to the English language by examining another one of the three dimensions in greater depth.

6.3.1 Phonology

What do all three of the images above have in common? What does each device allow us to do? If you're still unsure about the commonality among them, it might help to examine the words below. Which similarities do you notice?

- smartphone
- microphone
- saxophone

As you might have guessed, all of these words have the same lexical element: <phone>. This raises another question: "What does <phone> mean?" Today, phones allow us to do most of our everyday tasks, such as video conferencing, banking, shopping, and many other activities. However, the original phone allowed people to hear one another across long distances. This meaning is evident when we examine the structure and origin of the word "telephone."

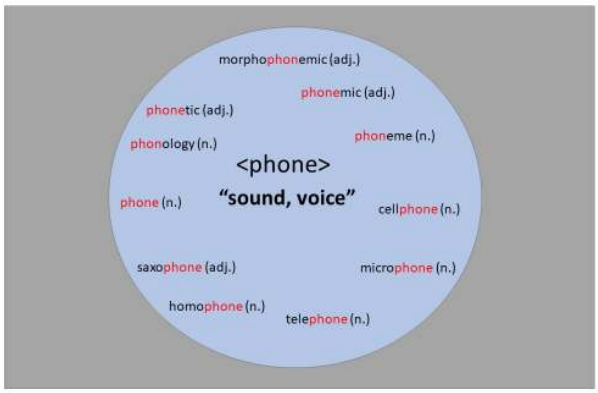
tele + phone → telephone

<tele-> is from Greek and it means "far off, operating over distance"

<phone> means "sound, voice" It comes from the PIE root ***bha-** "to speak, tell, say."

Just as a "telephone" allows us to hear sound across distance, a "microphone" also allows us to hear sounds that we might otherwise be unable to hear. It is formed from the elements <micro-> and <phone>. In the 1680s it referred to an "ear trumpet for the hard-of-hearing", but it could be thought of as an "instrument for augmenting small sounds." As we know, microphones are helpful when trying to be heard by large audiences. Similarly, a "saxophone" comes from the French word *saxophone*, which was named for Antoine Joseph Adolphe Sax, the Belgian instrument maker who invented it.

By analyzing these familiar devices, we can begin to identify the element <phone> within a variety of morphologically complex words, many of which are depicted in the graphic below.



One of the words that is especially relevant to our study of the English language is "phonology." As we learned in a previous lesson, phonology represents the third dimension of our language. **Phonology** refers to the way that sounds represent meaning within a language. **Orthographic phonology** situates sound within an orthography—a system that includes all 3 dimensions and the spelling conventions. As we know, sound exists in service of meaning, so it must be examined within this context.

In the context of our language, there are several important words that are all built on the base <phone>. Although these words might seem similar, they represent different concepts. A **phoneme** is the smallest "distinctive unit of speech". Phonemes are represented by graphemes (a single letter - graph, two letters – digraph, or three letters – trigraph) and phonemes can be represented by more than one grapheme. For example, the phoneme /z/ - the sound like the beginning of zoo or the end of please - can be represented by the graphemes <z> or <s> like in both of those words. Or, the phoneme /eɪ/ - what is known as the long a sound like the beginning of acorn or the end of play can be represented by the graph <a> like in *acorn* or the digraph <ay> like in the word *play* or the digraph <ai> like in the word *rain*. In another example, the letter <c> appears three times in the phrase "Pacific Ocean", but each of those graphemes represents a different phoneme. The first <c> represents the phoneme /s/, the second <c> represents the phoneme /k/, and the third <c> represents the phoneme /ʃ/. These descriptions of certain linguistic features of the English orthography are important because they establish multiplicity - specifically of how phonemes can be represented by multiple graphemes and graphemes can represent multiple phonemes.

? Exercise

Based on what you've read about phonology, do you have any thoughts about how multiplicity is represented within this dimension of the language? Note your ideas below.

In addition to variations in phonemes and graphemes, the sounds in our language are also designed to allow for multiple pronunciations. Consider how you would pronounce the following words: homophone and nativity. The first word, *homophone*, could be pronounced with a long initial /o/ as in the word *home*, indicated by the IPA symbol [oʊ], or it could be pronounced similarly to the /o/ in the word *odd*, represented by the symbol [ɑ]. Neither of these pronunciations is "correct" or "incorrect," rather, they are all acceptable pronunciations that can be explained through the concept of alternation, which refers to predictable and consistent shifts in pronunciation across related words. For example, the related words *nation* and *national* and *nature* and *natural* demonstrate the pronunciation shift that occurs in the initial /a/. The spelling of these words remains consistent to show and preserve the relationship among them, but the phonology varies. This is just one more example of how the English language embraces multiplicity instead of definitive, exclusive notions of correctness.

In the following section, another element of phonology will be explored, particularly within the dimension of multiplicity.

6.3.2 Homophones and Homographs

? Exercise

In the paragraph below from the "Questioning Naturalized Views" section of the book, can you underline the other words that sound like “two”?

"When we look at the word family of <two> we find a very large family. Do you know where you look to find out about a word’s family and history? You need to look it up in an etymology resource - that is a book or online resource that tells you where words came from and what are other word relatives. Some dictionaries will provide that information too."

1. List those words below:

2. What do these words have in common?	3. What is different about these words?

4. Based on your observations of these words, why do you think these words are spelled differently?

5. Based on your previous answer, which parts of our language seem to be related?

As you might have discovered, words like “see” and “sea” sound the same, but they are spelled differently. Words that sound alike but are spelled differently are called **homophones**. You also might have noted that these words have different meanings: “see” refers to vision and “sea” refers to water. Based on our examination of a couple different pairs of words, it seems as though a pattern is forming--words that have different meanings are spelled differently, even if they are pronounced the same way. If we take this observation another step further, we can begin to notice an important relationship within the English language--spelling is connected to meaning as well as to sound.

However, we cannot assume that this is a pattern or convention based on just two examples. Instead, as with all aspects of the language, we must keep searching so that we can understand not just one word, but the whole system that these words are a part of--the orthography itself.

? Exercise

Which other homophones can you think of? Brainstorm some additional words below:

Ex. sea and see

Do you notice any other patterns from looking at these homophones? Which questions do these homophones make you think about?

In the example below, there are not just two or three homophones, but four:

Homophones	rite	right	write	wright
What does each word mean?				
Which languages do these words derive from?				

As you look at your answers in this chart, what patterns do you notice? Which factors contributed to the spelling?

While some words sound alike but are spelled differently, other words are spelled the same way, but may be pronounced differently and have different meanings. These words are called **homographs.** For example, the words below have different meanings and pronunciations even though they are spelled the same.

? Exercise

On the lines below, see if you can generate more than one meaning for each word:

bow _____

bow _____

can _____

can _____

Homophones and homographs might seem tricky to remember at first. If you've ever had trouble recalling the meaning of each of these concepts, you're not alone. However, by applying some of the concepts that we learned earlier in this guidebook, we can figure out the meaning without having to memorize definitions.

If you go back to the previous activity on word formation from the guidebook, how might you break these words down into morphemes? Underline any affixes you see in these words and circle the base.

? Exercise: Complete the chart below by identifying the morphemes and their meaning.

	Affixes/Meaning	Base/Meaning	Word Sum
homophone			
homograph			

Based on your analysis of these words, how do the meaning of the morphemes contribute to the overall meaning of each of these words? Share and discuss your thought process with your classmates.

Now that you've completed the activity, you probably discovered, **<homo->** is a word-forming element that means "same, equal, or like." It comes from Greek *homos*, meaning "one and the same" or "belonging to two or more jointly." If we go back even further, the oldest spoken root is hypothesized to be **sem-* meaning "one, as one, together with."

In the word **homophone**, <homo-> describes the morpheme <phone>, which means "sound." **<phone>** comes from the root **bha* meaning "to speak or tell." When we combine these morphemes, we are able to figure out the meaning of the whole word--a homophone means "same sound" or words that sound the same.

Similarly, the word **homograph** also contains the word-forming element **<homo->**, but it describes the morpheme **<graph>**, which comes from the Greek root *graphos* and means "something written." Therefore, a homograph refers to words that are written the same way. In other words, they have the same spelling or mark.

See the "Homophone and Homograph" Activity for more opportunities to engage with these concepts.

The previous sections have illustrated the way that multiplicity thrives within the English language, not just as a result of it. When we consider multiple perspectives and realities, we can read the word and the world in a way that highlights difference instead of striving for "consensus and conformity" (Lewison et al., 2015, p. 10). In the following sections, you will encounter poems that contain multiple layers of meaning and invite us to hold possibly conflicting interpretations.

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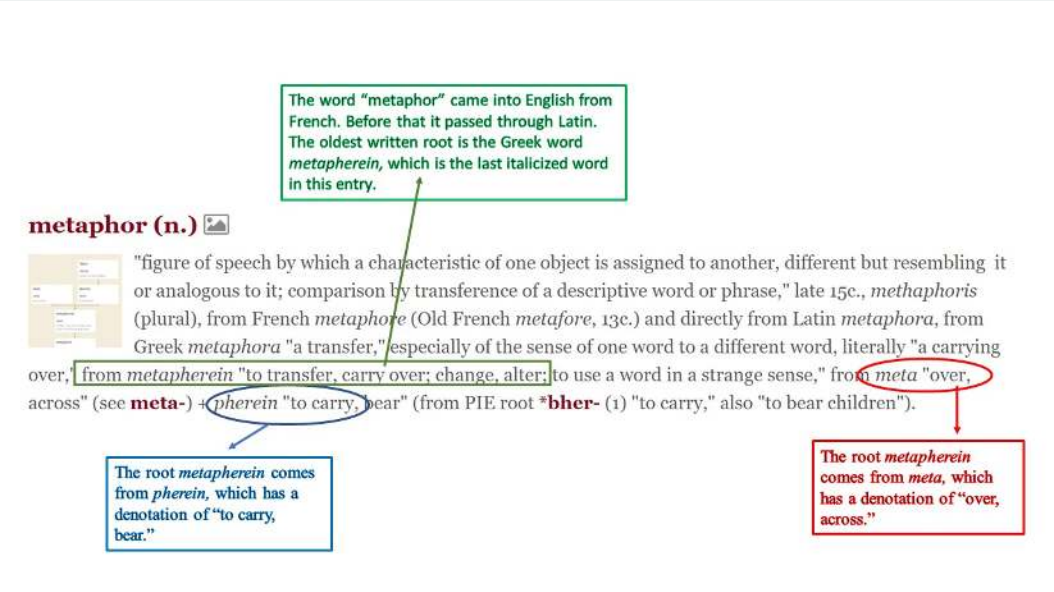
6.4: “Nothing Gold Can Stay” -- Robert Frost

Robert Frost’s poem, like many others, heavily utilizes the concept of metaphor, which refers to “carrying out a change.” Generally, metaphor works by comparing or equating known objects or actions with something that is unknown or to be explained, thereby deepening our understanding of and insight into unknown entities. Furthermore, not only can metaphor be a device for deepening understanding, but it can also offer a distinct and unique way of seeing or thinking about something.

Within a metaphor, as two unrelated things are compared, a specific quality of one person, object, idea, etc. is figuratively carried over to another. For example, if you say that you are “drowning in school work,” those aspects of drowning are being carried over to a different situation--school work-- that is otherwise unrelated to drowning.

So, what is the purpose of using a metaphor like this? One of the effects of using a metaphor is that it encourages readers to think about something familiar to them in a new way or from a different angle. If I never thought about how overwhelming school work can be, then this metaphor would prompt me to consider the way it overwhelms us to the point where we feel that we cannot breathe. For more practice with identifying metaphors, see the “Metaphor Chart” Activity.



As you learn more about the concept of metaphor, we encourage you to notice aspects of the word’s structure, spelling, and sound. Based on your background knowledge, what does the spelling of this word already tell you about its etymological origin? Among the words we’ve already studied, which might be related? To continue this investigation, see the “Metaphor Word Inquiry” Activity.

? Before Reading Exercise

Previewing the Text: Robert Frost titled this poem **“Nothing Gold Can Stay.”**

What does this mean to you?

What does “gold” represent?

"Nothing Gold Can Stay"

Nature’s first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf’s a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day
Nothing gold can stay.

After Reading

In the chart below, lines from the poem are provided in the column on the left. You can work individually or with others to determine the literal meaning of those lines. Next, we encourage you to think beyond the immediate setting or context of the poem to consider what those lines might suggest about other aspects of life more broadly. As you think about what that literal meaning could represent, record your thoughts in the “metaphorical” column on the right.

Text	Literal	Metaphorical
Nature’s first green is gold, Her hardest hue to hold.		
Her early leaf’s a flower; But only so an hour.		
So dawn goes down to day. Nothing gold can stay.		

1.How does this poem represent multiple levels of meaning? Can you identify any examples?

2.How does the multiplicity of meaning within the poem offer us a richer, more complete understanding of the world around us?

3. In Frost’s poem, he says that “Nothing gold can stay.” Can you think of other things in your life that are “gold"? Are these “golds” impermanent or do they somehow remain, unlike Frost suggests?

4.Earlier in this book, we made observations and questioned the areas of our lives that seem “natural.” How does Frost’s poem present other observations of nature? What kind of questions does it raise?

As you read about in the introduction to this section, the juxtaposition of multiple and possibly even contradictory viewpoints can create a productive tension that challenges our assumptions and pushes us to seek deeper understandings. As you read the next couple poems by Langston Hughes, consider the way they relate to that of Robert Frost. Do you notice any similar topics or ways of using language? Which differences do you observe?

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6.5: "Harlem" and "Dreams" -- Langston Hughes

Quote

"The key to Langston Hughes … was the poet's deceptive and profound simplicity. Profound because it was both willed and ineffable, because some intuitive sense even at the beginning of his adulthood taught him that humanity was of the essence and that it existed undiminished in all shapes, sizes, colors and conditions." –*Hoyt W. Fuller*

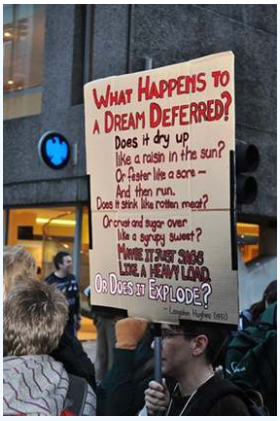
Langston Hughes was an influential author during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, writing short stories, poems, plays, and novels through which he "sought to honestly portray the joys and hardships of working-class black lives, avoiding both sentimental idealization and negative stereotypes" (Poetry Foundation, 2022). At a time when literary critics claimed that most poets were writing increasingly obscure, inward-looking texts, Hughes was doing just the opposite; that is, he was turning outward and attempting to connect with audiences, especially Black readers, through his topics, themes, and language use. Hughes wanted to "tell the stories of his people in ways that reflected their actual culture, including their love of music, laughter, and language itself alongside their suffering" (Academy of American Poets, 2022). Despite Hughes' goal of portraying Black experiences and connecting with readers, he did occlude differences and nuances; rather, he embraced multiplicity on many levels, especially through his own varied work experiences, which included truck farmer, cook, waiter, college graduate, sailor, and doorman at a nightclub in Paris, as well as his travel history, comprised of Mexico, West Africa, the Azores, the Canary Islands, Holland, France, and Italy. Possibly, these experiences factored into his appreciation for all of humanity's shapes, sizes, colors, and conditions, as indicated by the quote above from Hoyt Fuller.

6.5.1 "Harlem" by Langston Hughes

Exercise: Before Reading

Before reading the next poem entitled "Harlem," take a look at the images featured here. Below, make note of your observations about the images.

1. What do you think those details might suggest about the poem? How do those observations shape your predictions about the text?
2. What might the hand and candle symbolize?
3. How would you describe the setting of the image and why might Hughes' poem be used in the situation that is occurring?



"Harlem"

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

? Exercise: After Reading

After reading Hughes' poems, take some time to reflect on the questions and quotes below. We also encourage you to discuss your thoughts with classmates or others.

1.What do you think happens to "a dream deferred"?

2.As we read about in Pádraig Ó Tuama's reflection on Yusef Komunyakaa's poem "Praising Dark Places," one of this goals is for people to be able to hold ambivalences and ambiguities –to look at things from a different point of view and accept not being sure of things. Are there any ambiguities or uncertainties that you experience within the poem?

3.Which words from this text can be explored for deeper understanding?

6.5.2 "Dreams" by Langston Hughes

? Exercise: Before Reading

Before reading Hughes' poem, note your thoughts in response to these questions below:

1.Think about something in your life that you consider to be a dream. What purposes do dreams serve?

2.Dreams can be both individual and shared. Can you think of any shared dreams that both you and others hold?

3.What makes dreams so powerful?

"Dreams"

Hold fast to dreams

For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams

For when dreams go

Life is a barren field

Frozen with snow.

? After Reading Exercise

After Reading: Multiple Perspectives on Dreams

Both of these Langston Hughes' poems– "Harlem" and "Dreams"--address similar topics and issues. How can we strategically put these poems in conversation with one another? One of the ways to put texts in dialogue with one another is to first analyze them individually according to salient elements and then compare and contrast your analysis. The chart below will help guide

you towards that process. Take notes on both poems in regard to the elements listed in the left column and note any significant points of overlap in the middle.

	“Harlem”	Both	“Dreams”
Message: What do these poems say about dreams?			
Language: How do these poems talk about dreams?			
Literary Devices: Which metaphors and similes do these poems include?			
Purpose: Why do you think the message of these poems was conveyed?			
Effect on Reader: What effect did each poem have on you?			

Once you’ve completed your analysis, consider the following questions:

1.When considered side by side, how do these texts offer you a deeper understanding than any one of them could have yielded alone?

2.After putting the texts in dialogue with one another, what did you notice that you might have missed?

3.In your opinion, what is the value of having multiple texts that represent different perspectives or realities?

4.Can you think of any other texts in this book that might be paired or situated in relation to one another?

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6.6: “The Danger of a Single Story” -- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

“Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and malign. But stories can also be used to empower and humanize. I have always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person.”

While the previous authors in this section created multiplicity within single texts through the use of metaphor, Adichie can be viewed as extending this work by addressing multiplicity on the level of stories, people, places, etc. In Adichie’s TED Talk, she says that “single stories” create and reinforce stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they aren’t true, but rather that they’re incomplete. To recognize one another’s full humanity, multiple stories are necessary. We aren’t defined by the worst thing we’ve ever done, nor are we defined by the best. We cannot be reduced to one experience or characteristic. We are complex people, comprised of many stories that play a role in shaping our identity.

Before Viewing

We encourage you to generate some thoughts in response to the questions below before listening to Adichie’s speech. These questions will help you activate relevant background knowledge and set a purpose for listening.

1.What is a stereotype and how does it get perpetuated? (See “Stereotype” Activity).

2. In which ways do you think stories are powerful? What impact can they have?

3.Make a prediction: How do you think a single story might limit a person’s humanity and dignity?

Link to the Talk:

The link below provides access to Adichie’s speech. Just as you would annotate a written text as you read, you should also take notes as you listen. Try to observe any challenges and advantages of engaging an auditory text and observe similarities and differences in your approach to note taking. This awareness might offer you reading strategies for engaging multiple types of texts.

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

After Viewing

After listening to Adichie’s speech, take some time to reflect on the questions and quotes below.

1.Summarize the main message that you took from Adichie’s speech.

2.Our students have often reported that the main message of Adichie’s speech is “to not judge a book by its cover.” However, this does not accurately capture the author’s main point. How does your interpretation of Adichie’s main message differ from this cliche?

3.Towards the end of Adichie’s talk, she says, *“When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.”* How did you interpret this statement? How do you think that rejection of a single story could help us regain paradise?

4. Based on what you learned from listening to Adichie’s speech, how do you think that single stories might limit people’s humanity and dignity? Can you think of any single stories that you have?

5.Adichie says that “The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue but that they are incomplete.” Even if a stereotype or a single story is “true” or accurate, why is it still damaging?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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7.2: “Lift Off” -- Donovan Livingston
7.3: “Literacy Story” -- Jy’Aire Smith-Pennick
7.4: “Ain’t I A Woman?” -- Sojourner Truth

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7.1: Reinscribing Power Dynamics: An Introduction

> *"For generations we have known of knowledge's infinite power.*
>
> *Yet somehow, we've never questioned the keeper of the keys —*
>
> *The guardians of information*."
>
> --*Donovan Livingston, Lift Off*

In Donovan Livingston's convocation address at the Harvard Graduate School of Education's 2016 commencement ceremony, he captured of the duality of education—paradoxically, it can function both as a vehicle to "infinite power" and as an exclusionary mechanism that guards power and information from the masses. As Livingston pointed out, the power of education is not freely accessible to all; rather, it must be unlocked by keys that are possessed by "keepers." This sharp poetic critique, delivered as part of Livingston's longer spoken word poem, raises important questions about the inherent relationship between education and power:

1. Who or what is the "keeper of the keys"?

2. Why is information being guarded?

3. Who benefits from this guarding and who is disadvantaged by it?

4. Why don't we ever question the keeper?

Note your thoughts in response to these questions below:

The hierarchical nature of our educational system, throughout which power is unevenly distributed, has been criticized for perpetuating inequities and disparities instead of addressing them. In fact, Kozol (1985) argued that "public education has not produced unrest or disobedience among the masses; it has . . . been designed to ensure that students, particularly working-class students, are thoroughly schooled in passive compliance, if little else" (George, 2001, p. 94). Perhaps you are wondering why education might be designed to instill "passive compliance"? Why might "working-class" students receive a different form of education from their more privileged peers? While there isn't a simple answer to these questions, Kozol asserts that passive, obedience-focused education prepares students to "accept subordinate roles in society" (p. 95). Similarly, Freire (2008) explains that "the interests of the oppressors lie in 'changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them', for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated" (p. 74). As passivity renders a more docile, adaptable population, the threat of resistance and unrest is quelled, the status quo can be sustained, and those who occupy privileged positions can comfortably maintain power.

This concept of education is troubling, especially because it nullifies many students' capabilities to act as change agents and achieve their goals and dreams, many of which call for intervention in the social and material realities of their lives. So, how can this passive approach to education be changed? How can education, information, and power become more accessible to all students? How can students take back the keys from the hands of the keepers? While there are many ways that students have reclaimed power over their education and attempted to enact broader change to the educational system, language often plays a major role in those efforts. As Peter Elbow asserts, "Many people are now trying to become less helpless, both personally and politically: trying to claim more control over their own lives. One of the ways people most lack control over their own lives is through lacking control over words. Especially written words. Words come at you on a piece of paper and you often feel helpless before them" (p. v). Since language and power are inherently connected, language offers a generative site for broader change. For example, students might create broader audiences and modes of circulation for their texts, utilize their linguistic resources within

academic writing, or engage in word inquiry that brings in all three dimensions of the English orthography—a process that can transform a sense of helplessness when confronted with words.

If we momentarily return to the opening excerpt from Livingston's convocation address, we can see yet another concrete example of a student who has reclaimed power over his words and education. More specifically, Donovan Livingston's original intent was to deliver his spoken word poem during his high school graduation, but that plan was rejected by school officials in favor of tradition. As Livingston explains, "The teacher who was in charge...threatened to take me offstage or cut my microphone when she caught wind that I wanted to incorporate a poem . . . . She wanted it to be traditional. So I complied, but I really wanted to address my class in my most authentic voice." Here, Livingston acknowledges both the hierarchy within the educational system—teachers were the ones who exercised the power to determine the nature of the rhetorical situation—as well as the compliance that was expected of him as a student. Years later, in his Harvard Graduate School commencement ceremony, Livingston was selected to address his class and used that opportunity to deliver the words that he believed the world needed to hear—a reenvisioning of education as a path towards equity. Since Livingston's speech has become published and circulated around the world, the impact of his reclamation has the potential to be far-reaching.

Like Livingston, the authors in the rest of this section demonstrate their ways of reinscribing power dynamics, especially those that govern education. For example, in the rest of Livingston's spoken word poem, he claims the power to redefine education and challenge the limits that others have placed upon it. Just as Livingston repositioned himself and fellow students from passive subjects under the guardians of knowledge and "keeper of the keys" to active participants in their own education, other authors also initiated a similar repositioning. More specifically, Jy'Aire Smith-Pennick, an author who is incarcerated during the time of his writing, transforms himself from within prison, and in doing so, reclaims power over his own life and learning. Furthermore, through his transformation and embrace of learning and knowledge, he challenges his position within an implicit social hierarchy that typically positions incarcerated individuals at the bottom. As you engage with these texts and extend your own language-based inquiries, we hope that you recognize your own position as co-learner with your classmates, instructors, and even with the writers whose stories are featured in this book. True inquiry implies that no one begins with the answer; rather, through the process of seeking deeper insight, we can all experience a sense of empowerment.

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7.2: “Lift Off” -- Donovan Livingston

As you already know, Donovan Livingston’s spoken word poem “Lift Off” was delivered as a convocation address to his peers during Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education commencement ceremony in May of 2016. Through this poem, he sent a powerful message to his audience of future educators about the purpose and nature of education.

? Before Reading

Consider and note your thoughts on the following questions before reading the rest of the speech below:

1.What are your thoughts on the quote from Horace Mann about education?

2.Describe your academic experience in high school classrooms. Based on your experiences, what would you say that the purpose of education is?

3.Why might the author have selected this quote to frame the speech?

4.Based on the title “Lift Off,” and the introductory quote about education, make a prediction about the overall life that the author will seek to communicate through his poem.

Below is a link to the full text and video, followed by an excerpt from the beginning of Livingston’s speech. We encourage you to read and listen to the full version.

Link to Full Text

https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/16/05/lift

“Lift Off”

“Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin,

Is a great equalizer of the conditions of men.” – Horace Mann, 1848.

At the time of his remarks I couldn’t read — couldn’t write.

Any attempt to do so, punishable by death.

For generations we have known of knowledge’s infinite power.

Yet somehow, we’ve never questioned the keeper of the keys — (4)

The guardians of information.

Unfortunately, I’ve seen more dividing and conquering

In this order of operations — a heinous miscalculation of reality.

For some, the only difference between a classroom and a plantation is time. (8)

How many times must we be made to feel like quotas —

Like tokens in coined phrases? —

“Diversity. Inclusion”

There are days I feel like one, like only — (12)

A lonely blossom in a briar patch of broken promises.

But I’ve always been a thorn in the side of injustice.

Disruptive. Talkative. A distraction.

With a passion that transcends the confines of my consciousness — (16)

Beyond your curriculum, beyond your standards.

I stand here, a manifestation of love and pain,

With veins pumping revolution.

I am the strange fruit that grew too ripe for the poplar tree. (20)

I am a DREAM Act, Dream Deferred incarnate.

I am a movement – an amalgam of memories America would care to forget

My past, alone won't allow me to sit still.

So my body, like the mind (24)

Cannot be contained.

As educators, rather than raising your voices

Over the rustling of our chains,

Take them off. Un-cuff us. (28)

Unencumbered by the lumbering weight

Of poverty and privilege,

Policy and ignorance.

I was in the 7th grade, when Ms. Parker told me, (32)

"Donovan, we can put your excess energy to good use!"

And she introduced me to the sound of my own voice.

She gave me a stage. A platform.

? After Reading

1. Which vision does Livingston convey for the role of education in the future?

2. Compare your prediction about the text with Livingston's actual message. What were the similarities and differences?

3. Take a close look at the language that Livingston used in this speech. What made this text so powerful? Identify specific examples.

4. Which literary devices did you notice in this poem? (metaphors, similes, images, symbols, repetition, alliteration, etc.)

5. How did Livingston position himself in regard to education and language? Can you identify any specific examples of how he accomplished this in his text?

6. Go back through the speech and highlight all of the words that you think are complex. These words can become the basis for further inquiry. (See "Lift Off Activity").

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7.3: “Literacy Story” -- Jy’Aire Smith-Pennick

? Note Your Thoughts:

Consider this simple question: Who possesses more power, teachers or students? Note your initial thoughts below.

While the answers to this question will likely vary, it is no surprise that teachers are often perceived as having a great deal of power in the classroom. In many cases, they are the only individuals standing at the front of the class, facing all of the students. In online classes, they are typically expected to initiate the first

communication and they often regulate the nature and pace of dialogue among students. Indisputably, teachers possess a high level of both power and authority by virtue of their institutional position, subject-area expertise, and relationships with students. However, despite the degree and nature of power that is often ascribed to teachers, author Peter Elbow *reinscribes* this typical power dynamic by proposing a “teacherless class.” Through this concept, Elbow aims to “deny something–something that is often assumed: the necessary connection between learning and teaching” (p. vii). As he goes on to explain, “The teacherless writing class is a place where there is learning but no teaching. It is possible to learn something and not be taught. It is possible to be a student and not have a teacher. If the student’s function is to learn and the teacher’s to teach, then the student can function without a teacher, but the teacher cannot function without a student” (p. vii). Not only does Elbow offer a radical alternative to typical classrooms, but he metacognitively points out the power dynamics and assumed relationship that he is intentionally trying to disrupt. Elbow’s concept illuminates the ways in which students wield power–through incidental learning, varied sources of knowledge (personal experience, self-directed study, etc.), and the independence that these conditions grant them. As he says, learning can occur without a teacher, but teaching or educating, which involves guiding, imparting, and leading out, requires a student/audience.

In this next first-person essay, author Jy’Aire Smith-Pennick illustrates the type of denial that Elbow describes. Through his transformation in prison, Smith-Pennick turns his preoccupation with the streets into a thirst for knowledge and learning. This shift did not depend upon a teacher’s formal instruction; rather, Smith-Pennick learned from engaging in dialogue with and listening to several knowledgeable, incarcerated men. In essence, Smith-Pennick participated in a type of “teacherless class.” What makes this even more of an unexpected rewriting of power dynamics is that incarcerated men assumed the position of knowledge and insight–a departure from traditional roles.

? Before Reading: Setting a Purpose

As you read, take note of the following:

1.What kind of questions did Smith-Pennick begin to raise? What prompted those questions?

2. What does Smith-Pennick say about light and darkness?

3. How did Smith-Pennick reclaim power from within prison?

7.3.1 “Literacy Story”

It was October 27, 2017; the day was cold, gloomy and damp. Ironically, the weather seemed to fit just right, considering the fact that this was the day of sentencing - my day of sentencing. Inside of the holding tank there were about five of us waiting to be cuffed, shackled, and hauled off to the prison van, awaiting transportation to the courthouse.

Between the five of us, the ages ranged from 15 to 25. I was 21. The other two adults were 18 and 25. Amongst us was two juveniles (15 and 17) being tried as adults. After about an hour of small talk, I concluded that there were four commonalities in which we shared: all of us were young, black, from the inner city, and facing murder charges.

In all honesty, I found some solace in the fact that we were all to be crucified. Was I wrong for feeling this way? Although not verbalized, it was apparent that those feelings were mutual - a sense of comfort is how I'd best describe it. Some of us went to war

with each other's blocks on the streets. We were enemies. We absolutely hated each other for one reason or another . . . but in that moment - no matter how brief - we had each other. We were enemies of the state.

As time went on, my anxiety began to ascend. The cold, steel bench was uncomfortable and I began to shift from side to side. My thoughts came and went at the speed of light. “How much time would I get? Will the judge agree to the twenty year plea bargain? Is he willing to consolidate my seven year sentence with the twenty years? What about good time? How many days can I earn? Five days a month times 12 equals 60 days a year” I thought maybe if I file for a sentence modification I can be out before I turn 50. Or what about . . . “Smith!” My thoughts were interrupted by the sound of the CO's voice. “Smith, inmate number 00710200” the CO yelled. This time with a hint of irritability in his raspy voice. “Yo” I replied. “Let's go boy, we haven't got all day,” he replied.

When I stepped out of the holding tank, I was escorted to a vacant room. The walls were pearly white and smelled of fresh paint. As I made a quick observation of my surroundings, I was instructed to strip. And even though this wasn't my first time being instructed to do so, it was just as humiliating and dehumanizing as the first time.

After taking off all of my prison issued attire piece by piece, I stood completely naked. Next, I was told to lift my arms and then my scrotum. The CO then instructed me to open my mouth and lift my tongue. Lastly, I was ordered to turn around, lift the bottoms of my feet; then bend over, spread my cheeks, squat, and cough. Now that this horrifying process was over, I could be cuffed, shackled, and placed on the prison van.

The next few hours would be daunting. Not only was I uncomfortable due to the shackles that were virtually cutting off my circulation, but I was trying to come to terms with the fact that this would be the last time that I saw the outside world for a long time, unless I was being transferred to another prison.

After about the first 15 minutes of the ride, conversations ceased. My seat was all the way in the back, closest to the window. I looked at the Halloween decorations on the houses we passed. I observed people out in the real world focusing on the mundane things in life. The windows of the van were tinted. I could see them but they couldn't see me . . . I didn't exist.

By the time we merged with the highway traffic, the weather began to take a turn for the worst. It was raining aggressively. Large raindrops crashed into the window, obstructing my view. I started drifting off into a deep slumber as the country music blared through the speakers. “What Hurts the Most” by Rascal Flatts was playing. I uttered the words to myself, nodding in and out - *“I can take the rain on the roof of this empty house, that don't bother me,”* and I was out like a light.

Suddenly, I was awakened by the van coming to an abrupt halt, causing my head to jerk just a little. Finally, we arrived at the courthouse. The rather large CO exited the vehicle and made his way around to the sliding door and opened it. “Out, everybody let's go,” he said. Once inside, we were instructed to walk down a hallway, which seemed to take forever given the fact that we could only take baby steps due to the shackles around our ankles. At the end of the hallway, there were several cells. The two juveniles were placed in separate cells, per DOC policy juveniles and adults were to be isolated.

The remaining three of us were placed in a holding tank with two steel benches, one toilet, a sink, and a mirror. It smelled like hot urine and misery. Hope was non-existent here. After the CO secured the door, we were ordered to step forward. One by one, we placed our hands in the slot on the door, so that the cuffs could be removed. The shackles remained on, but at least the blood in my hands could begin circulating again.

As I massaged my wrist, I allowed my eyes to scan the walls. They were covered with graffiti. Usually individuals would sign their names along with the "hood” they claim. Others would write RIP on the wall to salute their fallen soldiers who had been gunned down in one of the many domestic warzones in this country, where poverty is concentrated and violence is amplified. I recognized many of these names - some were my friends.

The hours passed by and not a word was spoken amongst the three of us. One guy was rapping to himself. The other guy was pacing the floor, back and forth, obviously nervous. Meanwhile I sat on the steel bench trying to mentally prepare myself for what was to come.

I could hear the CO's keys shaking off in the distance as he walked. Gradually the sound got louder, he was coming! My palms began to sweat; my heart beat accelerated. Who would be first? The answer to my question came sooner than anticipated. Within a matter of seconds, the CO was at the door. “Smitty, you're up” said the CO. I stood up and walked to the door, placing my hands in the slot for the cuffs to be placed back on me once again. Luckily, they weren't unbearably tight this time.

The CO ordered me to step out, and then he slammed the door shut, shaking the handle for reassurance. We made our way down the long dreary corridor. As it came to an end, I was told to turn right. which would place me directly in front of the elevator. The doors opened and I immediately noticed a cage in the back of the elevator. I was placed inside the cage while the officer stayed on the other side. This was it - my crucifixion was about to take place.

When the doors opened the CO unlocked the cage. After exiting the elevator, I was placed in a side room. My stomach began to churn, and my entire body started shaking uncontrollably. Suddenly, I was terrified. Never in my life had I been this afraid. I've stared down the barrel of death before and that feeling didn't come close to this. I took deep breaths to try and regain my composure.

After about ten minutes or so, the CO came to escort me to the entrance of the courtroom. Before he opened the door, I was instructed to lift my hands so that the cuffs could be removed. My hands were shaking uncontrollably, yet again. “Are you alright, man?,” asked the CO with a perplexed look on his face? “Yeah, I'm cool,” I replied. And just like that, I was entering the courtroom.

Upon entry, all I saw was a bunch of white faces looking at me. I scanned the large crowd, searching for my family. I spotted them four rows back from where I was to be seated next to my Public Defender. Walking to my seat seemed to take a decade. I felt like a lion on display at the Philadelphia Zoo. Was I an animal?

Once I made it to my seat, the process began. The judge entered the courtroom and we were all instructed to rise, and then be seated. The judge was a black male in his late 50's. He was tall and slim, with salt and peppered hair. He began rummaging through some paperwork in front of him and then looked up at me, “You have a pretty lengthy record for a young man, Mr. Smith, a repeat offender.” I said nothing. After the prosecutor scolded me a bit, my Public Defender said a few words on my behalf. Next, the judge asked, “Do you have any last words before sentencing?” I stood up and began to speak . . .

“Your Honor, first I would like to say thank you for allowing me to address the court. Secondly, I want to thank my family for their unwavering support in the face of so much adversity. And most importantly,” I turned to face my victim’s family. “I apologize… I apologize for all of the pain you feel as a result of my actions. I will never understand what it feels like for a mother to lose her only child. What I can do is promise you that I will spend the rest of my life trying to atone for my actions. I hope that one day you can find it in your heart to forgive me.”

The judge and I went over the plea, which he ultimately accepted. He sentenced me to 20 years, but refused to consolidate my sentences. The sound of the gavel slamming solidified my fate - 27 years!

The ride back was a somber one. Not only was I mentally exhausted, I was numb. One guy had been pepper sprayed and beaten pretty badly because he punched his lawyer in the face when the judge withdrew his 15 year plea and sentenced him to 39 years. Every so often, he would ask me, “Are we almost there, yet?” He couldn't see as a result of the spray in his face, I was empathetic towards him. The third guy was sentenced to 15 years. And the two juveniles got finished early so they rode back on a separate van.

All I could think about was the time I had wasted running the streets. What did I have to show for it? Not a damn thing! I didn't even have a high school diploma or a GED. I was a complete failure.

When I finally got back to the prison, I was stripped and then placed in a close observation cell, waiting to undergo a psych evaluation. This was standard protocol. After a prisoner is sentenced to 20 years or more, the DOC is required to place you on suicide watch for at least 24 hours. For the remainder of that night, I tossed and turned. How was I going to do all of this time? Am I going to die in prison? Nah, I can't die in here? I thought to myself. It was at that moment, I knew that I had to change.

After the classification process was over, I was transferred to SCI-Chester. I didn't know anybody. This was my fresh start. This new place had so many programs. I signed up for all of them. My favorite was the college Inside-Out courses. In those courses, I met some very intelligent young men. They looked like me, but they spoke with such confidence and eloquence. I had never been exposed to anything like that before . . . incarcerated men - black men - so brilliant. It was extremely impressive and it inspired me to want to learn more.

When the semester came to a close, they kept tabs on me. In the yard we'd discuss black history. I learned that African history and black history are two different subjects. I was given books on grammar and encouraged to write. I was told that the pen is mightier than the sword.

Eventually I was introduced to some elders in the prison who were extremely wise. When they spoke I just listened and asked questions. “What is capitalism?” I said. “Who is Karl Marx?” What does socioeconomic mean?” This was all new to me, and my mind was in a frenzy!

They told me about white supremacy and how it operates in our day to day lives. This led me to further examine the system as a whole. I no longer had an allure for the streets. I was thirsty for knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.

Had it not been for those individuals, I would have still been on a crash-course. Those guys saved my life and for that I am grateful. I now have a sense of purpose. The blindfold had been removed; I could see. It's funny how you tend to find light in the darkest of places.

? After Reading

After reading Smith-Pennick's essay, take some time to reflect on the questions and quotes below. We also encourage you to discuss your thoughts with classmates or others.

1. What *kinds* of questions does Smith-Pennick raise and what observations do these questions help draw attention to? Note some specific examples.

2. At the end of Smith-Pennick's essay, he says that "It's funny how you tend to find light in the darkest of places." Does his perspective reinforce or challenge dominant perspectives on light and darkness, as described in Pádraig Ó Tuama's analysis of Yusef Komunyakaa's poem "Praising Dark Places"?

3. What inspired Smith-Pennick's decision to transform himself in prison?

4. Towards the end of his essay, how does Smith-Pennick describe the other incarcerated men? How does this depiction challenge dominant stereotypes?

5. Through Smith-Pennick's transformation, how does he rewrite his position within traditional power dynamics, especially as they apply to those who are incarcerated?

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7.4: “Ain’t I A Woman?” -- Sojourner Truth

“If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.”

–Sojourner Truth

In the quote above from Sojourner Truth, she literally speaks of turning “the world upside down” and getting it “right side up again.” Through this language, Truth makes the reinscription of power dynamics more concrete than any of our previous authors. Of course, this process of reinscribing power dynamics involves noticing and questioning naturalized views of power and position within the world. When the world is turned upside down, what does that suggest about how the world *should* be? How has our sense of orientation in the world–what is up and what is down–been shaped? Whose interests are served by maintaining the present order and who stands to gain power by uprooting it? Where is our–the readers–place in the world and how are our actions stabilizing it or disrupting it? Through this series of questions, we can see all of the dimensions of critical literacy coming together.

For Sojourner Truth, these types of critical literacy acts defined her life as an abolitionist and women’s rights activist. Born as Isabella Baumfree in New York in 1797 to enslaved parents, she was sold to a slave owner at the age of nine and was sold several more times by the age of 13 (Michals, 2015). Truth was promised her emancipation from owner John Dumont on July 4, 1826, but after he refused to grant her freedom, she decided to leave of her own will, stating that “I did not run off, for I thought that wicked, but I walked off, believing that to be all right.” After New York’s anti-slavery took effect in 1827, Truth gained her emancipation and filed a lawsuit against her previous owner, John Dumont, for his illegal sale of her son. In doing so, she became “the first Black woman to sue a white man in a United States court and prevail.”

Having been influenced by spirituality, Truth became a devout Christian. In 1843, Isabella changed her name to Sojourner Truth, a testament to her sense of purpose–to embark on a journey to preach the gospel, speak the truth, and denounce slavery and oppression. In 1844, Truth joined a Massachusetts abolitionist organization and met abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, thereby initiating her work as an equal rights activist. Although Truth never formally learned to read or write, she dictated the content of her eventual autobiography, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*.

The text below, authored by Sojourner Truth, was delivered at the Ohio Women’s Rights Convention in 1851 as part of her advocacy for the equal rights of Black women. Within her speech, Michals (2015) claims that Truth “challenged prevailing notions of racial and gender inferiority and inequality by reminding listeners of her combined strength (Truth was nearly six feet tall) and female status.” More than a decade after her speech, an account of this rhetorical event was published by abolitionist and convention founder Frances Gage in the N*ational Anti-Slavery Standard*, which was the weekly newspaper of the American Anti-Slavery Society. This organization was founded in 1833 in New York and was led by Frederick Douglass, from whom Truth diverged because she believed that Black men and women should be granted voting rights simultaneously (Michals, 2015). In his account of Truth’s speech, Gage wrote “that Truth used the rhetorical question, ‘Ar’n’t I a Woman?’ to point out the discrimination Truth experienced as a Black woman.”

? Before Reading

Atfer considering this brief historical background of Sojourner Truth, take a moment to reflect on the questions below:

1. Sojourner Truth’s speech is called “Ain’t I A Woman?”, a phrase that is repeated throughout. Make a prediction about why she might pose this question to her audience.

2.Based on your historical background knowledge, describe the power dynamics that were established at the time of Truth’s speech.

3.As you read Truth’s speech, note the ways that she describes her position in society and how her speech rewrites that position.

7.4.1 “Ain’t I A Woman?”

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back , and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

? After Reading

Now that you’ve read Truth’s speech, respond to and discuss the questions below.

1. In the beginning of Truth’s speech, she says, *“I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon.”* What do you think it means for the white men to be “in a fix pretty soon”? Why might this be happening?
2. Truth states,*“That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?”* Why do you think that no one helps her in these ways? What does this say about her position in society?
3. Which women were being treated this way? Why do you think some women were treated differently from others?
3. What do you think Truth’s purpose was for drawing attention to these observations about how she’s treated? Do you think she wants to be helped into carriages and over ditches or do you think she has a different goal?
4. Within Truth’s speech, she points out the following: *“Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman?”* Through these lines, how does Truth rewrite her own position within traditional power dynamics?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Suffixing Conventions

8.1: Introduction to Suffixing Conventions
8.2: Changing y to i
8.3: Doubling the final consonant
8.4: Replacing the single, final, non-syllabic

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8.1: Introduction to Suffixing Conventions

Now that we've reached the end of the guidebook, we wanted to provide you with additional opportunities to explore the 3 suffixing conventions of the English language. As you've already learned, every language has its own set of accepted practices, such as replacing single, final, unpronounced <e> when adding a vowel suffix.

As stated before, many of the conventions came about during the Middle Ages when the scribes made decisions about written English, such as words will not end with the letters <i> <u> or <v>. As a result, procedures such as replacing the single, final <e> and changing the <y> to <i> conventions were put in place to handle these decisions. Knowledge of the 3 following conventions will guide you in spelling and writing.

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8.2: Changing y to i

Y is an interesting letter, as it can be utilized in English words to represent both a vowel or a consonant. Complete the “When is <y> a consonant and When is <y> a vowel?” activity to discover the pattern for when <y> writes a consonant and when <y> writes a vowel.

As stated at the beginning of this section, English words do not end with <i>. As a result, words that could end with <i> have a <y> instead, as in the words *my*, *try*, and *cry*. Digraphs that could be at the end of a word such as <ai> or <oi> are also written with an <ay> or <oy> such as *play* and *joy*. Just as English words do not end with <i>, English words do not retain the letter <y> when adding a vowel or consonant suffix, when this occurs the <y> is changed to <i>.

For instance, examine the word sums for likely and likeliness to see how the <y> changes to <i> when the consonant suffix ness is added to likely.

> like+ly → likely
>
> like+ly/+ness → likeliness

This convention - unlike “replacing the <e> convention works when adding both a consonant suffix and a vowel suffix, such as in the words try and trial - try/+al → trial.

However, if a vowel digraph is at the end of a word such as *play* and *joy*, the <y> in the digraph will not change like in the words *joyful* and *playing*. In the same manner that English words don’t end with <i>, <i> also does not double <ii> in the spelling. Thus if you are adding a vowel suffix that begins with an <i> such as -ing - to a word that ends in <y> and changing the <y> to <i> would result in an ii like in the word try/+ing– *triing, the <y> will be retained - it will not change to <i>. There are some instances when the <y> will not be changed to <i>.

? Exercise

Complete the word sort activity “4 Reasons Not to Change <y> to <i>” to find out what those reasons are.

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8.3: Doubling the final consonant

Have you ever noticed that sometimes when adding a suffix the last letter in the base word will double and sometimes it does not double? For example, when the suffix <-ing> is added to the base <run>, the <n> is doubled to form the word <running.> However, when <-ing> is added to the base <jump>, the <p> is not doubled, resulting in the word <jumping.> The structure of many of the words used in the Robert Frost poem lend themselves to investigating the doubling convention.

? Activity

First, read and enjoy the poem. Then go back to the poem and look at the highlighted words. Can you determine the base words and the prefixes and suffixes?

Examine the words in the charts below and see if you can figure out the patterns for doubling and not doubling.

"Acquainted with the Night"

I have been one acquainted with the night.

I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.

I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.

I have passed by the watchman on his beat

And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet

When far away an interrupted cry

Came over houses from another street,...

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.

I have been one acquainted with the night.

Words not doubled	Word sum	Base word	Pattern from the vowel
walked outwalked	walk+ed out+walk+ed	walk	VCC
looked	look+ed	look	VVC
passed	pass+ed	pass	VCC
unwilling	un+will+ing	will	VCC
interrupted	inter+rupt+ed	rupt	VCC
proclaimed	pro+claim+ed	claim	VVC

Words doubled	Word sum	Base word	pattern from the vowel
stopped	stop(p)+ed	stop	VC

saddest	sad(d)+est	sad	VC
dropped	drop(p)+ed	drop	VC

When a one syllable base word ends with a single vowel and a single consonant (VC) and you add a vowel suffix such as -ing, -ed, -er, -est, the final consonant will double. The words from the Frost poem *stopped*, *saddest*, *dropped* are all examples of this convention. When a base word ends with a vowel and two consonants (VCC) or two vowels and a consonant (VVC), the final letter will not double when adding a vowel suffix.

A group of curious 5th graders in Marybeth Stevens' classroom wanted to understand why the plural of bus is buses and not busses. Read how the students with the help of Marybeth investigated if the word buses was an exception to the doubling convention in her blog "Is this the Right Bus?' https://mbsteven.edublogs.org/2019/12/09/is-this-the-right-bus/

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8.4: Replacing the single, final, non-syllabic

Since it was decided that English words should not end with a <v> or <u>, in instances when a word could end with either of those letters, a letter <e> was inserted– such as in the words *give*, *active*, *unique*, and *clue*. In each of those words the inserted <e> is single and final and it is non-syllabic. A non-syllabic <e> does not represent a phoneme like the single, final <e> in the words *me* or *be*. The <e> in the words *me* and *be* are syllabic - they represent the long e sound. The <e> at the end of the base word *give* and at the end of the -ive suffix in the word *active* are single, final, and non-syllabic. Therefore, when a vowel suffix is added the <e> will be replaced. -e.g. *giver* → give/+er or *activate* → act+ive/+ate. When consonant suffixes or another base word is added, the single, final, non-syllabic <e> is retained - e.g. *uniqueness and clueless*.

Using word sums shows when replacing the single, final, non-syllabic convention occurs.

> have/+ing → having
>
> please/+ed → pleased
>
> an + note/ + ate/ + ion → annotation
>
> be +have/+i+or → behavior

The following list of words demonstrate another reason for a single, final, non-syllabic <e>.

> made
>
> fine
>
> cute
>
> Pete
>
> rode
>
> Notice what happens when the <e> is deleted.
>
> mad
>
> fin
>
> cut
>
> pet
>
> rod
>
> Deleting the <e> not only changes the meaning of the word, but it also signals a change in the sound of the preceding vowel from a long or tense vowel to a short or lax vowel.

In addition, a single, final, non-syllabic <e> has been added to allow for easier reading so that readers do not mistake singular words ending in <s> for plural words. For instance, see the following words and notice how the words might be mistaken if the final <e> was not present.

> moose - moos
>
> tease - teas
>
> please - pleas
>
> dense - dense

Whenever you notice that the final <e> is being replaced with a vowel suffix, you can conclude that the <e> is single, final, and non-syllabic. For more practice identifying syllabic and non-syllabic <e> words, see the Single, Final, Non-Syllabic <e> Activity.

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