

# Response to Literature: Purpose and Tools

**Purpose:** To write a response to literature essay. The purpose of a response to literature is to state an opinion about a character’s traits, the setting, plot, theme, or moral of the story. Typically, the essay is organized with a brief summary of the story, followed by an opinion that is supported by evidence from the text. Many responses include connections to other stories, the world, or the reader’s own experiences, as well as a personal reflection that reveals how the story impacted the reader.

**Instructional Tools:** A response to literature “at-a-glance” direction chart (see below) with specific directions displayed so students systematically and intentionally learn to write this genre, as well as a bank of transitions specifically for response to literature writing, and a sample 5-paragraph response to literature essay.

**Please Note:** Students should have mastered the *Prove It!* activity before attempting this writing lesson.

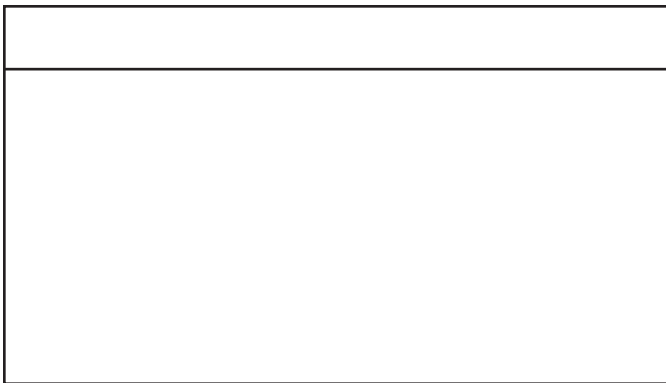
Notice the three different sections of the 5-paragraph essay: Introduction, Body and Conclusion.

5-Paragraph: Response to Literature				
<b>Introduction: Write the Quick Summary and the Thesis Statement.</b>				
<p><b>(GS)</b> The author, _____ Author's Name _____, wrote a/an _____ Genre _____ titled _____ Title of Story _____, which took place _____ Setting: When and Where? _____. In the story, the main character, _____ Main Character's Name _____, _____ Problem or Main Event in the Plot = What did the character do? What happened to the character? _____.</p>				
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<b>Body: Record Page #'s of Evidence. Write: Transitions, Evidence, Analysis, and Connections.</b>				
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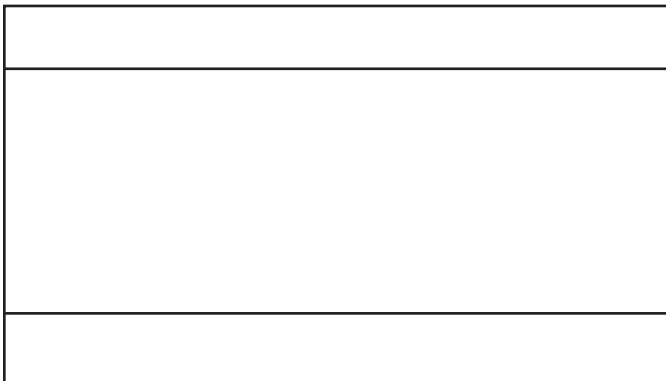
# Response to Literature Writing Lesson



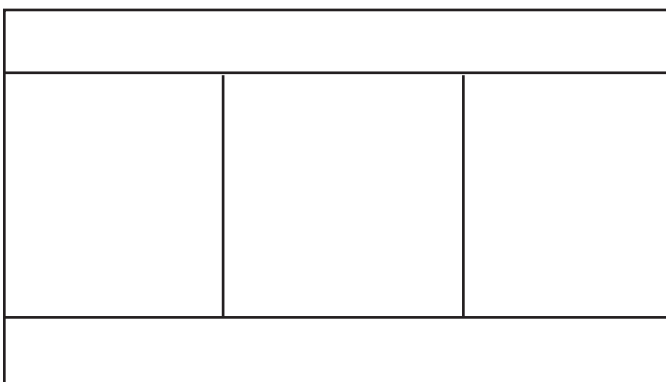
**The 5-Paragraph Essay Organizer:** The teacher models this activity utilizing an overhead transparency of the 5-paragraph organizer or poster-sized laminated organizer. Students write with the teacher on their own organizers. This is not a copying activity. The students will end up with different paragraphs after the essay is completed. To begin the lesson, students either draw a 5-paragraph organizer on 11" X 17" blank paper (see below) or are given a duplicated 5-paragraph brainstorm organizer.



Step 1: Draw a line across the top part of the paper.



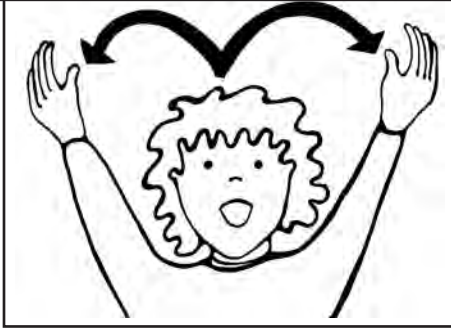
Step 2: Draw a line across the bottom part of the paper.



Step 3: Draw two vertical lines in the middle of the page.

# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

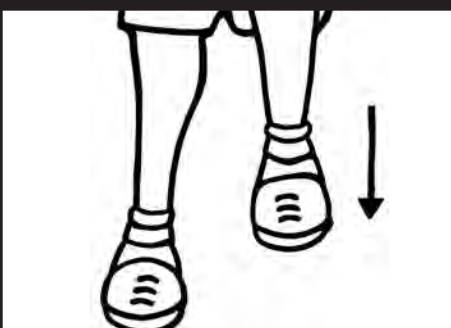
## Introductory Paragraph: Quick Summary (QS) and Thesis Statement (Th)



## Body: Three Main Paragraphs(1-2-3)



## Conclusion (C)



**Suggestion:** Use the physical motions (in pictures above) as an interactive step to review the parts of the chart.

**The 5-Paragraph Essay Organizer:** Follow the steps outlined on this page to teach students the different parts of the 5-paragraph response to literature essay and how to label the parts on their organizers.

**Teacher:** *We are writing a 5-paragraph response to literature, so we need to use the 5-paragraph organizer to record and organize our writing. Look at the organizer (below); it has many parts. The top rectangular box has two circles with a “QS” in the first circle and a “Th” in the second circle (teacher points to the top box on the organizer). The “QS” is for a quick summary of the story we are going to write a response. Before giving an opinion about the story, we need to have good manners by presenting a brief summary of the story to our reader.*

**Teacher:** *The “Th” is for my thesis statement. The thesis statement reveals what the entire essay is about.*

**Teacher:** *The boxes in the middle are for one, two, three main idea paragraphs (1-2-3) about the thesis statement.*

**Teacher:** *Finally, the bottom box is our conclusion paragraph. The conclusion should repeat the thesis statement (using different words), and then end with a reflection.*

**Teacher:** *Now that we know the parts of a response to literature essay, let’s label the circles on the organizer to match these parts. (Teacher and students put the appropriate codes in the circles for a 5-paragraph response to literature essay.)*

(QS)		
(Th)		
(1)	(2)	(3)
(C)		

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
-----------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

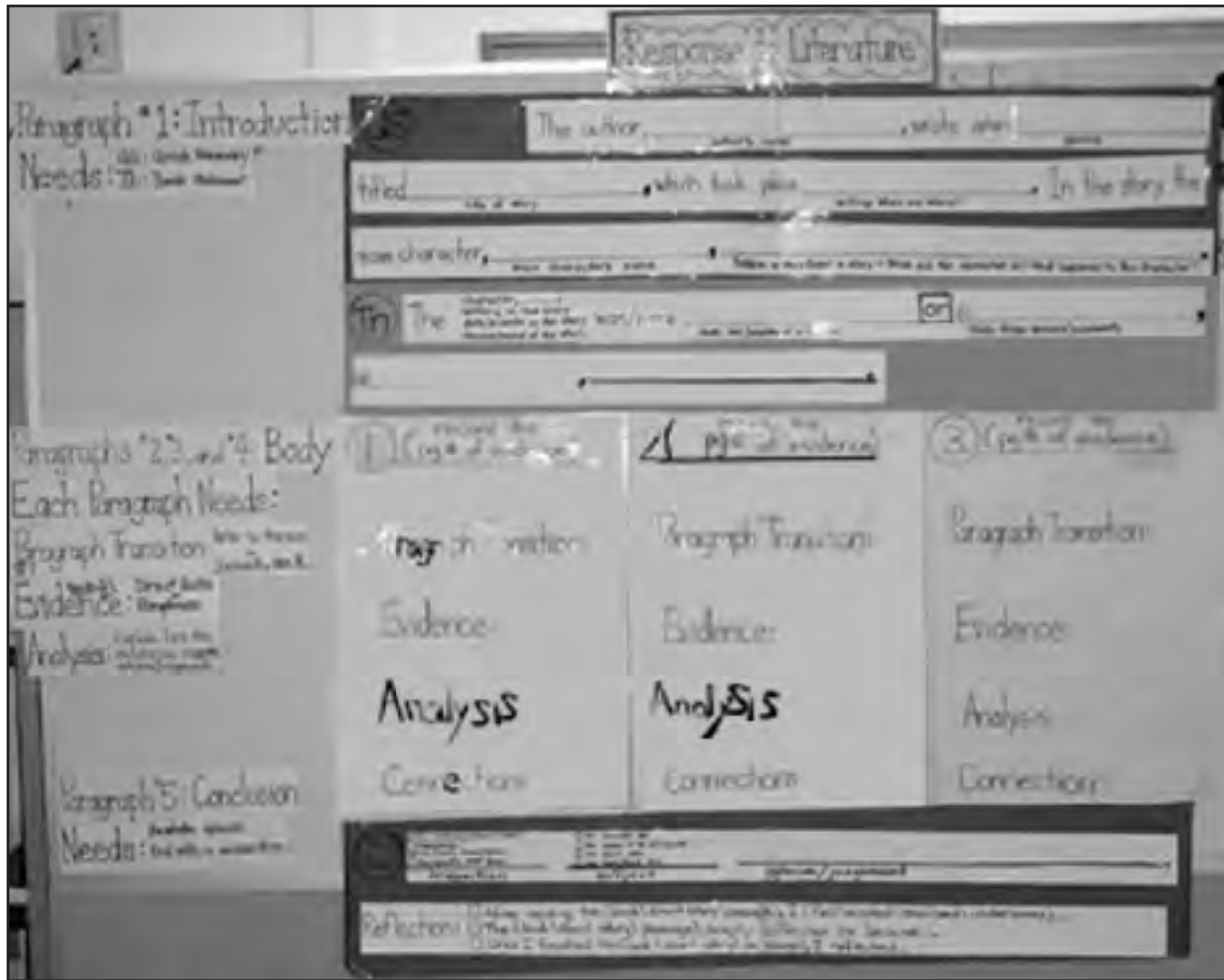
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# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

5-Paragraph: Response to Literature				
<b>Introduction: Write the Quick Summary and the Thesis Statement.</b>				
<p><b>(GS)</b> The author, _____ Author's Name _____, wrote a/an _____ Genre _____ titled _____ Title of Story _____, which took place _____ Setting: When and Where? _____. In the story, the main character, _____ Main Character's Name _____, _____ Problem or Main Event in the Plot = What did the character do? What happened to the character? _____.</p>				
<p><b>(Th)</b> The <input type="checkbox"/> character, _____ <input type="checkbox"/> setting in the story _____ <input type="checkbox"/> plot/events in the story _____ <input type="checkbox"/> theme/moral of the story _____ was/were _____ State: One Opinion/Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> OR <input type="checkbox"/> 1)_____, (2)_____, and (3)_____. State: Three Opinions/Judgments _____.</p>				
<b>Body: Record Page #'s of Evidence. Write: Transitions, Evidence, Analysis, and Connections.</b>				
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**At-A-Glance Response to Literature Direction Chart:** Students utilize this unique chart as a reference to write a 5-paragraph response to literature on their brainstorm organizers.

# Response to Literature Writing Lesson



**At-A-Glance Bulletin Board: Response to Literature Direction Chart:** This teacher-made response to literature “at-a-glance” wall chart (see photo above) was used during Writing lessons. This bulletin board is an exact replica of the at-a-glance chart for response to literature writing. During writing lessons, the teacher was able to use the chart as an easy-reference for the step-by-step writing lesson.

## 5-Paragraph: Response to Literature

**Introduction: Write the Quick Summary and the Thesis Statement.**

**QS** The author, \_\_\_\_\_, wrote a/an \_\_\_\_\_, titled \_\_\_\_\_, which took place \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

Setting: When and Where? \_\_\_\_\_ Main Character's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Problem or Main Event in the Plot = What did the character do? What happened to the character? \_\_\_\_\_.

**Th** The character, \_\_\_\_\_, was/were \_\_\_\_\_.

setting in the story       plot/events in the story       theme/moral of the story

State: One Opinion/Judgment      **OR**      State: Three Opinions/Judgments

**Body: Record Page #'s of Evidence. Write: Transitions, Evidence, Analysis, and Connections.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p>Evidence: Page # _____</p> <p>Paragraph Transition: _____</p> <p>Evidence: Quote/Paraphrase: _____</p> <p>Analysis of Evidence: _____</p> <p>Connection: Self/Text/World: _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p> <p>Evidence: Page # _____</p> <p>Paragraph Transition: _____</p> <p>Evidence: Quote/Paraphrase: _____</p> <p>Analysis of Evidence: _____</p> <p>Connection: Self/Text/World: _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></p> <p>Evidence: Page # _____</p> <p>Paragraph Transition: _____</p> <p>Evidence: Quote/Paraphrase: _____</p> <p>Analysis of Evidence: _____</p> <p>Connection: Self/Text/World: _____</p>
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**Conclusion: Restate the Thesis Statement, then Make a Reflection.**

**C** **Transition**      **Subject**

This convincing evidence proves \_\_\_\_\_

This proves \_\_\_\_\_

This clearly demonstrates \_\_\_\_\_

This specific proof shows \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflection:**  After reading the (book, short story, passage), I (felt, wished, realized, understood)... \_\_\_\_\_

The (book, short story, passage) deeply affected me because... \_\_\_\_\_

Once I finished the (book, short story, passage), I reflected... \_\_\_\_\_

Opinion(s)/Judgment(s) \_\_\_\_\_.

# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

## Introduction

### Step 1: Quick Summary:

Teacher: Our response to literature is about *Chris Van Allsburg's story The Stranger*. I need an introduction, body and conclusion for my entire response to literature essay. The introduction includes a quick summary and the thesis statement. What do I do first? (Quick Summary.)

Teacher: Look at the top section of the response to literature "at-a-glance" direction chart (see below). The top section of the directions displays a simple summary template. A response should have some type of summary as a courtesy to the reader. The reader needs to have a basic understanding of the story.

Students use the template displayed on the summary genre direction chart (below) to write their quick summaries. Although the chart displays one summary template, an additional template (bottom of page) is provided, for students to develop different summaries. These two summary templates include the critical information necessary for a quick summary: author, title, genre, setting, character(s), and plot. (See sample quick summary on next page.)

### Quick Summary Template

<b>The author,</b> _____, <b>wrote a/an</b> _____	
Author's Name	Genre
<b>titled</b> _____, <b>which took place</b> _____.	
Title of Story	Setting: When and Where?
<b>In the story, the main character,</b> _____,	
Main Character's Name	
_____	
Problem or Main Event in the Plot = What did the character do? What happened to the character?	

### Quick Summary: Additional Template

<b>In the</b> _____ <b>story,</b> _____,	
Genre	Title of Story
<b>which took place</b> _____, <b>the author,</b> _____,	
Setting: When and Where?	Author's Name
<b>wrote about</b> _____.	
Character + Plot = What did the character do? What happened to the character?	



# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

## Body

The body of the response to literature essay may have up to three paragraphs. The purpose of these paragraphs is to prove the opinion(s) stated in the thesis. Each of these paragraphs is organized with four specific components:

- 1) A paragraph transition and the topic sentence,
- 2) evidence paraphrased or quoted from the book,
- 3) an analysis of the evidence,
- 4) a background connection.

The topic sentence identifies the opinion being addressed. Evidence is a direct quote or a paraphrase from the text that supports the opinion. The analysis is an explanation of how the evidence supports the opinion. A connection explains how the students relate to the text to their own backgrounds. Does the text remind them of their own experiences, another text, or the world?

**Step 3: Find Evidence:** Students search the story for evidence to prove that the stranger was odd. In the three middle boxes on the organizer (next to the numbers 1-2-3), students write the pages numbers where they found evidence.

<b>1</b> Evidence: Page #306 Paragraph Transition:  Evidence: Quote/Paraphrase:  Analysis of Evidence:  Connection: Self/Text/World:	<b>2</b> Evidence: Page #308 Paragraph Transition:  Evidence: Quote/Paraphrase:  Analysis of Evidence:  Connection: Self/Text/World:	<b>3</b> Evidence: Page #310 Paragraph Transition:  Evidence: Quote/Paraphrase:  Analysis of Evidence:  Connection: Self/Text/World:
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# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

## Body

**Step 4: Paragraph Transitions:** After finding evidence and recording the page numbers of the text, students then need to plan each of the paragraph transitions and topic sentences for the three paragraphs in the body of the essay. A paragraph transition should clearly indicate a smooth transition from the last paragraph to the new paragraph. There are three types of paragraph transitions that work well for a response to literature: Topic Sentence, Refer to Thesis Statement, and Repeat & Introduce.

**Topic Sentence:** To form the topic sentence, students identify the subject of the sentence by asking *who* or *what* are they writing about in the new paragraph. After the subject is stated, they then ask, *What about?* to form the predicate. For example, *Who or What am I writing about? The Stranger's icy cold temperature.* Next, *What about the Stranger? The Stranger's icy cold temperature was one of the first clues to prove he was an odd character.* This topic sentence provides the reader with a clear understanding of the paragraph's content. This is one method the writer may use to transition to a new paragraph.

**Thesis Statement:** Another effective way to transition to a new paragraph is to refer back to the thesis statement. For example, a transition between paragraphs may include a reminder about the thesis and the next reason to support the opinion: *Another reason the Stranger was an odd character was his inability to button his shirt.*

**Repeat & Introduce:** This transition sentence states the main idea of the previous paragraph and introduces the main idea of the new paragraph. For instance, if the previous paragraph's main idea is about the buttons, and the new paragraph sweating, then the student may write: *While the Stranger's difficulty with buttons seemed very unusual, his inability to tire or sweat really made him stick-out.*

<p><b>1</b> Evidence: Page #306</p> <p>Paragraph Transition: <i>The Stranger's icy cold temperature was one of the first clues to prove he was an odd character.</i></p> <p>Evidence: Quote/Paraphrase:</p> <p>Analysis of Evidence:</p> <p>Connection: Self/Text/World:</p>	<p><b>2</b> Evidence: Page #308</p> <p>Paragraph Transition: <i>Another reason the Stranger was an odd character was his inability to button his shirt.</i></p> <p>Evidence: Quote/Paraphrase:</p> <p>Analysis of Evidence:</p> <p>Connection: Self/Text/World:</p>	<p><b>3</b> Evidence: Page #310</p> <p>Paragraph Transition: <i>While the Stranger's difficulty with buttons seemed very unusual, his inability to tire or sweat really made him stick-out.</i></p> <p>Evidence: Quote/Paraphrase:</p> <p>Analysis of Evidence:</p> <p>Connection: Self/Text/World:</p>
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# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

## Body

**Step 5: Record Evidence:** After identifying three pieces of evidence that support the opinion of the essay, the students record it as direct quotes or paraphrases. Choosing to quote or paraphrase their evidence from the text requires students to think critically.

**Direct Quotes:** Choose to use a direct quote only if it consists one-two short sentences, and also if it has the evidence needed to back-up the opinion. The direct quote, capturing the author's exact words from the text, requires quotation marks at the beginning and ending of the excerpt, along with crediting the author. For example:




A key selection of the text that backs up my opinion is when Chris Van Allsburg wrote: "The fellow seemed confused about the buttons and buttonholes."

**Paraphrasing:** Paraphrase when there are many sentences in the passage. Rewrite the passage in your own words.

To paraphrase, identify the most important information in the passage that supports the opinion (The Stranger was an odd character.) for the response to literature. The most important information can be identified by answering the following questions:

- 1. Setting:** When and where is this passage taking place?
- 2. Character:** Who is this passage mostly about?
- 3. Evidence:** What is happening in the passage that can be used for evidence to support the opinion? (The evidence in the example below was to prove that he was odd.)

Example of paraphrasing, using icons and keys words for the paraphrase questions, followed by a written sentence:

<p><b>Setting:</b></p> 	<p><b>Character:</b></p> 	<p><b>Evidence:</b></p> 
<p>When summer turned to fall on a country road, the Stranger was NOT injured after being run over by a truck.</p>		

**Suggestion:** Utilize the response to literature transitions' chart at the end of this chapter for words and phrases that smoothly and cohesively introduce the evidence sentences.

# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

## Body

**Step 6: Analyze the Evidence:** In this part of the essay, students need to provide meaningful explanations of how their evidence (paraphrase or quote) supports their opinion: *The Stranger was odd*. Below the teacher models the meaning of the word “odd”. She then uses this deep understanding of the term “odd” to help with her analysis of her evidence.

**Teacher:** Present the opinion word (odd) to the class. Write it on the board, then ask: *What does it mean to be odd?* In the first circle, draw a stick figure, then state: *To understand what odd means, we need to start with a person (or living thing). An odd person is someone....*

The teacher writes at the top of the circles: *Someone who...* Next, in the second circle the actions of an odd person are identified, then drawn and labeled.

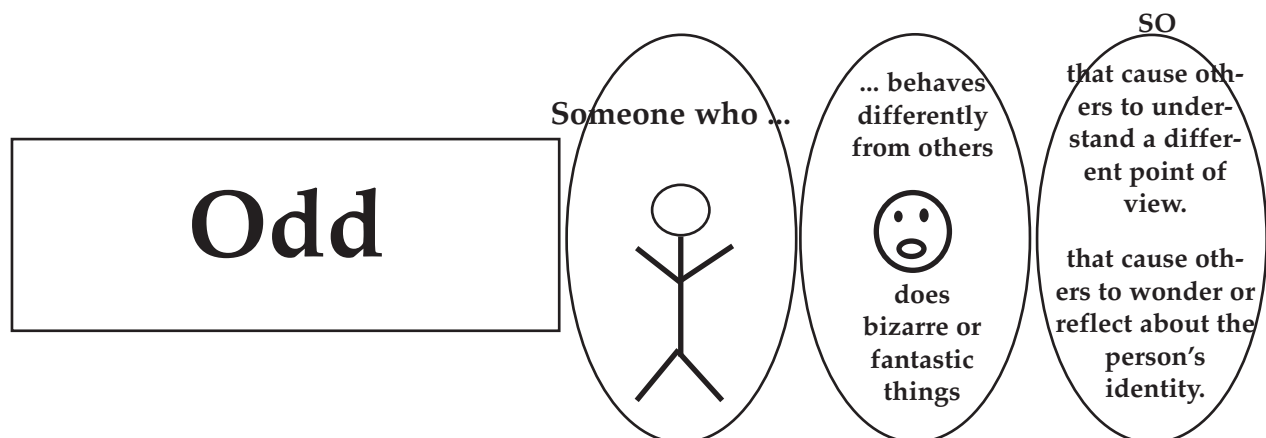
**Teacher:** *Odd behavior is when someone acts or behaves differently from the rest of the group. They stick out because they do bizarre, unusual, or fantastic things.*

Next, above the third circle the teacher writes “SO”, then explains the effects that the odd person’s actions has on others.

**Teacher:** *An odd person behaves differently from others by doing bizarre or fantastic things. This may cause others to see the world from a different point-of-view or cause others to become suspicious or wonder about the person’s identity. Now that we know what odd means, we can refer to this chart to help us analyze and explain why our evidence proves that he was odd.*

The teacher then refers back to the passage about the doctor throwing away a thermometer he thought was broken, but it wasn’t. The Stranger’s temperature was odd, different from what was normal.

**Teacher:** *The Stranger’s temperature was too cold for a human being. I will use my chart (below) to help me explain why this is odd. This is definitely an episode in the story demonstrating how odd and different the Stranger was. The Stranger is someone whose temperature measured too low to be alive. This is a bizarre and fantastic situation. This thermometer causes the reader to wonder and reflect about this different situation, and the Stranger’s identity.*



# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

## Body

**Step 7: Connection:** Students are guided to use their background experiences (self-text-world) to make connections to the text they cited for the evidence. Does this evidence remind you of another book, your own experiences, or events in the world? When a connection is made, students are encouraged to use their connections. This may result in a question, an emotional response, or an idea or new understanding.

**The teacher asks:** *Have I ever forgotten how to do something as simple as buttoning a shirt? (text-to-self connection)? Have I ever read about someone who had difficulty doing simple tasks? (text-to-text connection)? Have I ever seen someone in the world like this? (text-to-world)? I have a text-to-text connection! I read about a man who lost the ability to do everyday activities, which caused others to wonder about his real identity.*

After making the connection, the teacher states: *Now I want to take my connection and use it. I can take my connection to help me ask a thoughtful question, to share an emotional response, or reveal a new idea or understanding. This connection makes me want to ask a question: "Why weren't the Bailey's more concern with this problem? Didn't they think something must be very wrong if a grown man was unable to recognized or use buttons?"*

Students try to make a connection in each of the three paragraphs. Sometimes students don't have a connections for each paragraph, so they leave it blank.

1

Evidence: Page #306

Paragraph Transition: *The Stranger's icy cold temperature was one of the first clues to prove he was an odd character.*

Evidence: This image was created when the author wrote: *"Oh, you can throw that out," he answered. "It's broken. The mercury is stuck at the bottom."*

Analysis of Evidence: *A human being would be dead with a temperature that measured that low on the thermometer.*

Connection: Self/Text/World: *Reminds me of a sci-fi movie. I wonder what would have happened if Mrs. Bailey used the thermometer later?*

2

Evidence: Page #308

Paragraph Transition: *Another reason the Stranger was an odd character was his inability to button his shirt.*

Evidence: *"The fellow seemed confused about the buttons and button-holes."*

Analysis of Evidence: *How is it possible for a grown man not to know what a button is?*

Connection: Self/Text/World: *Reminds me of reports I have read about amnesia. People forget who they are, but remember everyday functions like buttoning a shirt. Why weren't they more concern with this problem?*

3

Evidence: Page #310

Paragraph Transition: *While the Stranger's difficulty with buttons seemed very unusual, his inability to tire really made him stick-out.*

Evidence: *"The stranger never tired. He didn't even sweat."*

Analysis of Evidence: *Mr. Bailey, a farmer used to hard work, was sweating and exhausted, yet the stranger was fresh and full of energy.*

Connection: Self/Text/World: *This reminds me of robot movies about androids that look human but never sleep, eat, or tire. I really felt the love of the Bailey family in this part. They didn't fear the stranger. Instead they treated him kindly.*

# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

## Conclusion

**Step 8: Conclusion:** After recording the evidence, analysis and connections for the body of the paragraph, then the fifth paragraph, the conclusion, is written.

**Teacher:** *The bottom section of the organizer is for the conclusion. The conclusion paragraph includes a restatement of the thesis statement (the opinion or judgement) and ends with a reflection.*

The chart (below) displays a conclusion template to restate the thesis sentence. This template is for students needing more support, while other students only need to know the components necessary for the conclusion to form it independently. After students have developed their conclusions, they then write them down on their organizers. (See samples below.)

## Conclusion Template

### Transition

- This convincing evidence proves
- This proves
- This clearly demonstrates
- This specific proof shows

### Subject

- the character was
- the impact of the setting was
- the events were
- the theme/moral was

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Opinion(s)/Judgment(s)

## Sample Conclusions

**This convincing evidence proves the stranger exhibited many bizarre behaviors and actions because he was autumn, not a man.**

**This clearly demonstrates the unknown man acted oddly, not like a human.**

**This specific proof shows the stranger was an odd character.**

# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

**Step 9: Reflection:** The final part of the response essay is the reflection. The reflection is a careful examination of the essay, its essence. The chart (below) displays some sentence starters to form reflections. These sentence starters are for students needing more support, while other students only need to know the components to form it independently.

**Teacher:** *The last part of your essays are for your reflections. That's when you look back on what you wrote in your papers and ask: "After proving that the character was odd, have I been deeply affected? Do I have any emotions or wishes to share? Have I been enlightened or realized something about myself, the world, or the human condition?"*

Students share their reflections with their partners, while the teacher walks the room, providing feedback and assistance. Sometimes the teacher may write some of the reflections students formulate on the board (see students examples below). After students have developed their reflections, they then write them down on their organizers. (See completed brainstorm organizer on next page.)

## Reflection Starters

- After reading the (book, short story, passage), I (felt, wished, realized, understood)...
- The (book, short story, passage) deeply affected me because...
- Once I finished the (book, short story, passage), I reflected...

## Reflection Examples

After reading the short story, I wished I could treat people without judgement, and only with kindness.

The short story deeply affected me because the Stranger ended up with a family he never had.

Once I finished the short story I reflected on all the times I ignored people if I thought they were too different, or seemed odd. I know that won't happen anymore. Thanks Stranger!

# Response to Literature Writing Lesson

**Completed Organizer:** Below is an example of a completed organizer. From the organizer students will transfer the information to write a 5-paragraph response to literature essay. The next few pages outline the unique oral language component that develops writing from talk, and also a transition chart to assist students needing words or phrase that will smoothly transition their sentences.

**QS** *In the fantasy story The Stranger, which took place in the country at the beginning of fall, author Chris Van Allsburg wrote about a mysterious man who was accidentally run over by Farmer Bailey. Mr. Bailey took the man back to his farm to help him. After that, strange things began to occur.*

**Th** *The character, the stranger, was very odd.*

**1** Evidence: Page #306

Paragraph Transition: *The Stranger's icy cold temperature was one of the first clues to prove he was an odd character.*

Evidence: This image was created when the author wrote: "*Oh, you can throw that out,*" he answered. "*It's broken. The mercury is stuck at the bottom.*"

Analysis of Evidence: *A human being would be dead with a temperature that measured that low on the thermometer.*

Connection: Self/Text/World: *Reminds me of a sci-fi movie. I wonder what would have happened if Mrs. Bailey used the thermometer later?*

**2** Evidence: Page #308

Paragraph Transition: *Another reason the Stranger was an odd character was his inability to button his shirt.*

Evidence: "*The fellow seemed confused about the buttons and button-holes.*"

Analysis of Evidence: *How is it possible for a grown man not to know what a button is?*

Connection: Self/Text/World: *Reminds me of reports I have read about amnesia. People forget who they are, but remember everyday functions like buttoning a shirt. Why weren't they more concern with this problem?*

**3** Evidence: Page #310

Paragraph Transition: *While the Stranger's difficulty with buttons seemed very unusual, his inability to tire really made him stick-out.*

Evidence: "*The stranger never tired. He didn't even sweat.*"

Analysis of Evidence: *Mr. Bailey, a farmer used to hard work, was sweating and exhausted, yet the stranger was fresh and full of energy.*

Connection: Self/Text/World: *This reminds me of robot movies about androids that look human but never sleep, eat, or tire. I really felt the love of the Bailey family in this part. They didn't fear the stranger. Instead they treated him kindly.*

**C** *This convincing evidence proves the character was very odd. Ultimately, the hermit-like man was actually the season fall. Now that's odd! After reading this short story, I wished I could treat people like the Bailey's treated the Stranger, without judgement and only with kindness.*

# Response to Literature Writing Lesson



**Step 10: Talk Like a Writer:** After students record the necessary information on their organizers, they begin to write. Some parts of the organizer were written with complete sentences, so students directly copy those parts onto lined paper, while other sections were more like notes for students to form more sophisticated sentences before writing.

**Please Note:** Each box on the organizer is a para-

graph. Therefore, when students are writing out their essays onto lined-paper each box is a visual signal to indent. It's simple: new box, new paragraph!

To begin writing, students copy the top box of their organizers (quick summary and thesis statement) for the introductory paragraph. Next, the body of the essay, paragraphs two-four, need to be expanded from the notes on the organizer to more sophisticated sentences. In order to generate the higher-level sentences for each of these paragraphs, students buddy talk with their partners. At this point, writing has not occurred, only oral language. If students are unable to orally form flowing sentences for their evidence, analysis, and connections in these paragraphs, then they utilize the response to literature transitions' chart (see next page). To support students, the teacher walks around the room to monitor the language. If language is not sophisticated (academic), then the teacher stops the student(s) and model(s) how to present the proof.

**For example the teacher states:** *Listen to me. I'm going to practice forming sentences using the ideas on my organizer. Notice I am not writing, so I can easily add and change words in my sentences. When I feel I sound like a writer, then I will write them down. Listen to this: "At the beginning of the story, when the doctor left the Bailey's farm, he told Mrs. Bailey to throw out his broken thermometer. He had tried to take the stranger's temperature, yet the mercury stuck on the bottom of the thermometer. This evidence from the text indicates that the stranger is an odd fellow because he doesn't have a normal temperature. The thermometer wasn't broken. The stranger's temperature was correct because he was different, not a normal human being."* Now you try reading your notes.

# Response to Literature Writing Transitions

**Terrific Transitions Chart:** Provides students with a selection of transitions for the various parts of the response: evidence, analysis, connections, and reflections. When students transition in the response, they may find this chart to be helpful resource to build sentences that flow cohesively and coherently.

## Terrific Transitions Card for the Response to Literature

Prove It!  
Evidence

This opinion is supported by the following evidence: " .....".  
A key selection of the text that backs-up my opinion is ".....".  
The author's painted a picture of (opinion),when she wrote: ".....".  
(Opinion) was demonstrated when...

What does  
that mean?  
Analysis

These words and phrases show (opinion) because...  
This supports my opinion because...  
This text is evidence that (opinion) because...  
This clearly reveals (opinion) because...

Connections

This reminded me of...  
The (character, setting, plot or theme) is similar to...  
This passage connects to(my life,another text,the world) because...  
The (character, setting, plot or theme) is just like...

Reflection

After reading the (book, short story, passage),  
I (felt, wished, realized, understood)...  
The (book, short story, passage) deeply affected me because...  
Once I finished the (book, short story, passage), I reflected...

# Response to Literature Writing Lesson



**Step 11: Write:** The students chant back the sentence or sentences after the teacher. The teacher may need to repeat her paragraph sentence-by-sentence, or give another example of the paragraph, depending on each student's ability. Once students practice and present cohesive and coherent paragraphs, they then are ready to write.

**The teacher states:** *Now turn to your buddy, talk like a writer, and tell him or her your paragraph.*

A dramatic increase in language should be noticed. If not, repeat and chant the information again.

**Suggestion:** Some students need to add physical movements to support new language learning as they repeat the teacher's words. Adding movements while practicing language is an extremely effective method to include slower-progressing students.

**Revisions:** During the oral language rehearsal, students revise for sophisticated sentences that smoothly transition. Does their talk sound like writing? Are the students fluently reading their organizers repeatedly to add or change ideas and words in their sentences? Once a student forms a powerful paragraph, then she or he writes it down on lined notebook paper.

The student in the photo is writing the paragraph after successfully talking like a writer. Now he will go back to the organizer and form the language for the next paragraph. Once he sounds like a writer, then he will write it down. (See next page.)

# Response to Literature Writing Example

**Writing Sample:** Below is an example of a student's writing from this response to literature lesson about the short story, The Stranger.

## The Stranger: A Response to Literature

In the fantasy short story The Stranger, which occurred during the beginning of autumn out in the country, author Chris Van Allsburg wrote about a mysterious man who was accidentally run over by Farmer Bailey. Mr. Bailey took the man back to his farm to help the unknown man. After that, strange things began to happen. This character, referred to as the Stranger in the tale, was very odd.

The Stranger's icy cold temperature was one of the first clues to prove he was an odd character. This image was created when the author wrote the doctor told Mrs. Bailey: "Oh, you can throw that out," he answered. "It's broken. The mercury is stuck at the bottom." A human being would be dead with a temperature that measured that low on the thermometer, so the doctor really thought the instrument was broken, but it wasn't! This scene reminds me of a sci-fi movie when strange events begin to happen. This connection makes me wonder what would have happened if Mrs. Bailey used the thermometer, instead of throwing it away?

Another reason the Stranger was an odd character was his inability to button his shirt. This was demonstrated when the author wrote: "The fellow seemed confused about the buttons and buttonholes." How is it possible for a grown man not to know what a button is? The Bailey's should have realized something very strange was happening. This scene reminded me of reports I have read about amnesia. Sometimes people have accidents and forget who they are, and everyday functions like buttoning a shirt. This makes me ask: "Why weren't the Bailey's more concern with this problem?"

While the Stranger's difficulty with buttons seemed very unusual, his inability to tire really made him stick-out. "The stranger never tired. He didn't even sweat." It seems impossible for Mr. Bailey, a farmer used to hard work, was sweating and exhausted, yet the stranger was fresh and full of energy. This reminds me of robot movies about androids that look human but never sleep, eat, or tire. After all these strange events, even something like androids seems possible. What was really amazing is the love of the Bailey family in this part. They didn't fear the stranger. Instead they treated him kindly.

All this convincing evidence proves the character was very odd. Ultimately, the hermit-like man turned out to be the season fall. Now that's odd! After reading this short story, I wished I could treat people like the Bailey's treated the Stranger, without judgement and only with kindness.