

Select tools from *Total Literacy Techniques: Tools to help students analyze literature and informational texts.*

By Pérsida & William Himmele, with Keely Potter, (2014) published by ASCD

Figure 2.1 Celebrating Words Bookmark, and Collecting Words Bookmark

Celebrating Words	Collecting Words
<p>As you read, identify words that the author uses to set a tone or mood in this book. Write down the words and the page numbers, and brief notes to help you remember why you picked those words.</p>	<p>As you read, identify new words that you've collected. Write down the words and the page numbers, and brief notes to help you remember what you think the word means. Try to confirm these later, by asking the teacher, using the internet or using a dictionary.</p>

Figure 2.3 Savoring Words- A focus on the author’s word choice

Step 1: Circle the words that stand out to you.

Step 2: Study those words to determine why they stand out. Consider ALL the following possibilities:

- Do the words stand out because they are unexpected? In what way are they unexpected?
- Do the words stand out because of the sound they create? If so, what is the sound?
- Do the words stand out because of the image they conjure? If so, what is the image?
- Do the words stand out because of the rhythm it provides? If so, what kind of rhythm?
- Do the words stand out because of a strong connotation they are associated with? If so, what connotation?

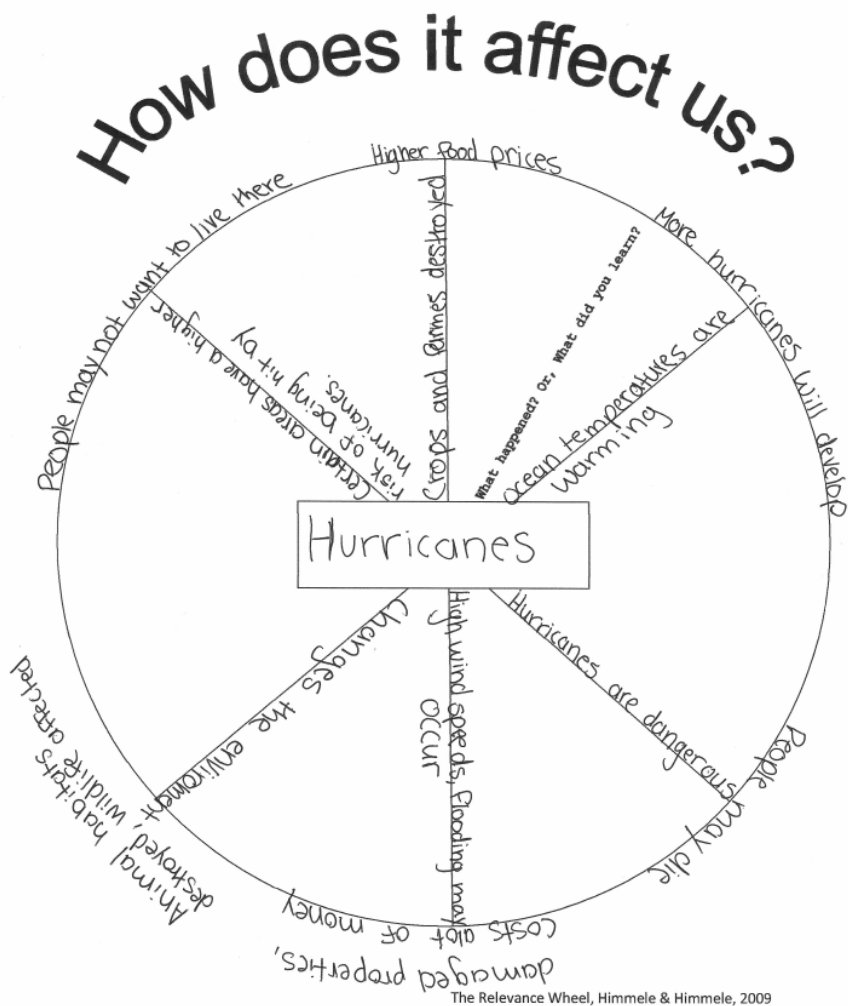
Step 3: If different words were used, what would be lost? (Try substituting words for the circled words).

Step 4: Since these words are used, what idea is suggested or reinforced?

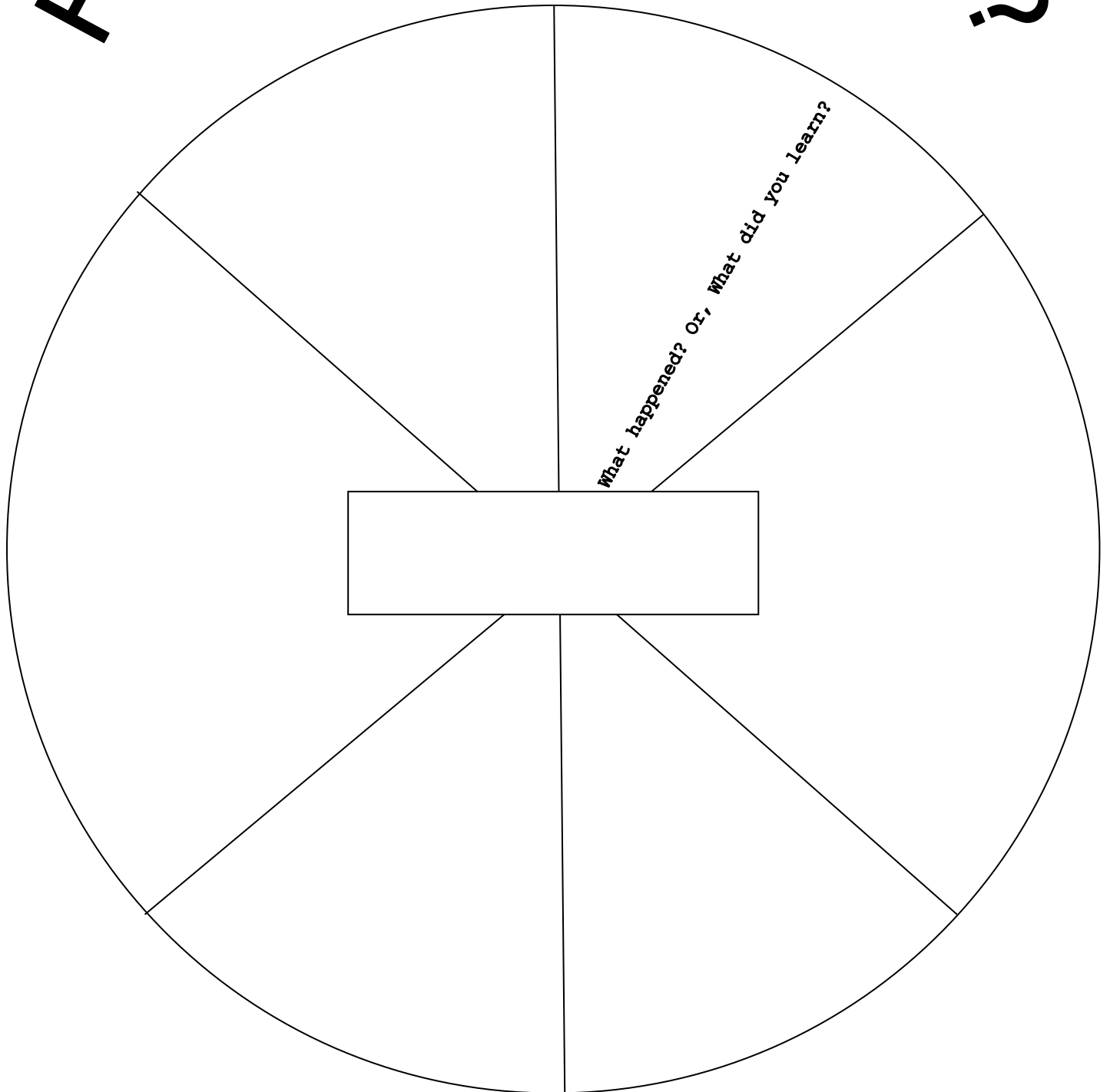
Step 5: What type of figurative language did the author use?

Step 6: Is the figurative language effective? Why? Why not?

Developed by Susan Grammer and Shaun Karli. Used with Permission.



How does it affect us?



The Relevance Wheel, Himmele, P. & Himmele, W., 2009, *The Language-Rich Classroom*, Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Himmele, P. & Himmele, W. with Potter, K. (2014) *Total Literacy Techniques: Tools to help students analyze literature and informational texts*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Figure 3.1 Student-Friendly Higher-Order Thinking Chart

Aiming for Higher Order Thinking

Lower Order Thinking only uses information that has been taught to you. It does not require that you use anything other than what was already given to you in the readings or in other ways by your teacher. It requires that you take what you learned and give it back in the form of identifying or retelling, or applying it in a similar situation to the way it was presented.

1. **Basic Knowing: Involves basic identifying, recalling, or naming something.**

Teacher: Who is the main character?

Student: His name is James.

2. **Basic Understanding: Involves basic retelling of surface understanding**

Teacher: What is the story about?

Student: It starts off with...

3. **Basic Applying: Involves basic showing in the way it was taught to you.**

Teacher: Read this for me. I want to test your application of reading skills as measured by your fluency. (Fluency measures things like how quickly and accurately you read.)

Student: (The student reads the text, while the teacher checks for fluency.)

Higher-Order Thinking uses information that was *not directly taught to you*. Based on what you've been taught, you are now asked to look closely and *view it from different perspectives* (analyze), combine it all and repackage it to *create something new* (combine and create), or *judge it based on what you have learned* (judge and evaluate). The key with higher-order thinking is that you're not just repeating what the teacher told you. With higher-order thinking you are inserting a little bit of your own brainpower into the mix.

4. **Analyze: Involves deeper investigations, and looking at things from various angles.**

Teacher: Tell me about the themes that you see developing?

Student: I notice the themes of fear and friendship. The theme of fear is developed when...

5. **Combine and Create: Involves your taking what you've learned about a topic and combining it to create something that you weren't taught or shown how to do.**

Teacher: Now that we've read and analyzed three Roald Dahl books, I'd like you to create a description of the author's writing style that takes into account the elements that are unique to RoaldDahl's writings.

Student: (The student creates a description of the author's writing style that takes into account the elements, from all three books, that are distinct to Roald Dahl.)

6. **Judge and Evaluate: Involves your making judgments that are *based* on what you've learned.**

Teacher: I'm going to read you a rather negative review of Roald Dahl's writings. I want you to evaluate it based on what you know about his writing style and the content of the books that we've read. Prepare an argument either supporting what was written in the review, or refuting (arguing against) what was written in the review. Be sure to include evidence from what you have read.

Student: (The student writes the response to the review including evidence from what was read.)

By Pérsida & William Himmele, based on Bloom's Taxonomy, Bloom, B. 1956

Figure 3.2 Prompts for Analyzing Literature

Analyzing Literature

Remember: Don't just retell, examine closely, explain why, and cite evidence!

Exploring Interconnectedness

- 1) Discuss some of the Elements of Fiction and how they impact the text or each other (setting, characters, plot, exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, themes, style, symbolism).
- 2) What are the various story lines, and how do they affect each other?
- 3) What is dispensable in this story? What pieces could have been removed without altering the main story? If you had to eliminate a chapter, with minimal harm to the book, which would it be? Why?
- 4) What is indispensable in this story? What pieces were essential to making the story work as it does?
- 5) In what ways might you artistically represent the Elements of Fiction within this story?
- 6) Suppose you were to create a movie about this text. Describe the kind of music or soundtrack that you would use for the various parts. Tell why.

Exploring Characterization

- 7) Which are the most and least interesting characters? Why?
- 8) What makes the characters believable or not believable?
- 9) Whom might the characters represent in real life? Draw connections between the characters and certain personality types in society or in your world.

Exploring Themes & Ideas

- 10) What themes do you see developing?
- 11) How does the author use symbolism to develop the story?
- 12) How does the author use metaphors to develop the story?
- 13) How does the book present us with metaphors of life?
- 14) How are everyday issues reflected in this book?
- 15) What are some of the important life-questions that this text raises?
- 16) What principles might be learned from this text?
- 17) If you were to draw connections between this book and concepts that you have learned in social studies or science, what would those connections be?
- 18) What questions were left unanswered?
- 19) If the author were to write a follow-up text that continued along this theme, what do you believe should be included?

Exploring Author's Voice

- 20) What specific words does the author use to make a case for, and against, certain characters?
- 21) How does the author drop in subtle or not-so-subtle descriptions or events to make you like or dislike a character?
- 22) How does the author set the moods for this story?
- 23) How did the author use words to create settings that made you feel certain ways (safe/unsafe, comfortable/uncomfortable)?
- 24) Make some inferences with regard to what the author's ideal world would look like? What causes you to make those inferences?
- 25) Refer to the more vivid images in your mind. How did the author use language to create the more vivid images in your mind?
- 26) If you were to read this book out loud, what emotions would you give to certain parts? What voices would you use in certain parts? Why?
- 27) What do you know about the author(s)? How does the author live within the text?
- 28) To what other authors would you compare this author? Why?
- 29) How would you characterize this author's style that makes it different than that of other authors?
- 30) Select an excerpt, or piece of text, that you felt was the most interesting or the best worded. What made it the most interesting or the best worded?

By Pésida & William Himmele

Figure 3.3 Prompts for Analyzing Informational Texts

Analyzing Informational Texts

Remember: Don't just retell, examine closely, explain why, and cite evidence!

Exploring Ideas

- 1) What are the issues being raised?
- 2) What questions were left unanswered?
- 3) Why do you believe that this was an important enough concept to include in your curriculum this year? Is its inclusion appropriate? Why/Why not?
- 4) What are the bigger messages being conveyed in this text?
- 5) What were some of the important life-questions that this text raises?
- 6) What principles might be learned from this text?
- 7) If the author were to write a follow-up text that continued along this theme, what do you believe should be included?
- 8) Suppose you were to create a documentary about the concepts in this text. Describe the kind of music or soundtrack that you would use for the various parts. Tell why.
- 9) The really important thing about this set of concepts is...

Exploring Interconnectedness

- 10) How does this issue lead to other issues in life?
- 11) What aspects of everyday life are affected by the concepts in this text?
- 12) For whom are these concepts most important? Why?
- 13) Who might dislike or disagree with what is presented in this text? Why?
- 14) Who do the concepts in this text benefit? How might they benefit from this text becoming widely publicized?
- 15) Whom do the concepts in this text not benefit? How might they be harmed from this text becoming widely publicized?
- 16) Brainstorm all the people or things that are affected by the information contained in this text?
- 17) Say you were to become an expert in these types of concepts, how might they enhance your life?
- 18) What occupations would be open to experts in this knowledge?
- 19) How has history been affected by the type of information contained in this text?
- 20) How have people's personal histories been affected by the type of information contained in this text?
- 21) How are the contents of this text a reflection of the times in which it was written? How does it represent a snapshot of society during a specific timeframe?
- 22) In a hundred years, how do you think this issue might be presented?

Exploring Author's Approach, Voice, or Bias

- 23) What was the author's purpose in writing this text? What other purposes are there?
- 24) How did the author achieve his/her purpose(s)?
- 25) Discuss parts that were creatively worded in order to achieve a specific purpose.
- 26) What do you know about the author(s)? What is the author's bias? How does the author live within the text?
- 27) How would you characterize this author's style that makes it different than that of other authors?
- 28) How did the author set tones, convince, create a sense of urgency, or create moods that enhanced the message of this text?
- 29) Make some inferences with regard to what the author's ideal world would look like? What causes you to make those inferences?
- 30) If you were to read this text out loud, what tone would be used? How does the author "sound" to you? What words or stylistic traits make you think that?

By Pérsida & William Himmele

Name _____ Date _____ **RACE Pre-Write**

Figure 7.1 Basic RACE writing template

R-

A- To do this, FLIP the _____ **[Question]** _____ into a _____ **[Topic Sentence]** _____.

C***Be sure to _____ **[Cite]** _____ all of your quotations, telling who said them and when.

E-

REPEAT STEPS _____ [C] _____ and _____ [E] _____, then conclude.

Template by Katie Fake

Figure 7.2 David Vega’s RACE writing template (*High School*)

Answering the Essay Question / Prompt			
R	Read the Question: Circle the verbs in the prompt. Are you supposed to explain, analyze, compare, contrast, discuss? What aspect of the text is the question asking you to focus on?		
A	Answer the question using a strong topic sentence. Remember to mention the author and title of the reading selection, as well as answer the question.		
C	Cited Example 1:	Cited Example 2:	Cited Example 3:
	Explanation for Ex 1:	Explanation for Ex 2:	Explanation for Ex 3:
E			
<p>Quick Citation Guide: Use a signal phrase: <i>The author claims</i>, “quote.” <i>The character says</i>, “quote.” <i>The narrator/speaker argues</i>, “quote.” Simple Setup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex. In line 17, Stafford writes, “I thought hard for us all.” Ex. In line 17, the speakers states, “I thought hard for us all.” (Notice the comma comes after the signal phrase and the end period goes inside the quotation marks). <p>Setup with Context Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex. Dying in the tall grass, his ankle swollen from the copperhead bite, Herman gasps, “I should have worn my boots.” (Notice the context information precedes the signal phrase, which is followed by a comma.) <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Created by David Vega, South Western High School. Used with Permission.</i></p>			