

This is an older resource which can provide ideas for teaching the Standards for student mastery using *The House of Dies Drear*, but it is aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards before the 2017 revisions and Ohio's State Tests.

<p><b>Course/Grade</b>          Grade 6          Novel Unit—<i>The House of Dies Drear</i></p>	<p><b>Text Type</b>          Narrative (19 days)  <b>Suggested Prompt:</b> After researching the events and the life of a family member through interviews and informational resources, write a narrative that describes an event in that person's life when he/she had experienced conflict. <b>L2</b> In your narrative, explain how your family member handled conflict similarly to or differently from a character in <i>The House of Dies Drear</i>. Establish a storyline with a clear and well-developed purpose, and use sensory images and figurative language to further develop the narrative.</p>
<p><b>Common Core Writing: Text types, responding to reading, and research</b></p> <p>The Standards acknowledge the fact that whereas some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing; other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. Standard 9 stresses the importance of the reading-writing connection by requiring students to draw upon and write about evidence from literary and informational texts. Because of the centrality of writing to most forms of inquiry, research standards are prominently included in this strand, though skills important to research are infused throughout the document. (CCSS, Introduction, 8)</p>	
<p><b>Narrative</b></p> <p>Narrative writing conveys experience, either real or imaginary, and uses time as its deep structure. It can be used for many purposes, such as to inform, instruct, persuade, or entertain. In English language arts, students produce narratives that take the form of creative fictional stories, memoirs, anecdotes, and autobiographies. Over time, they learn to provide visual details of scenes, objects, or people; to depict specific actions (for example, movements, gestures, postures, and expressions); to use dialogue and interior monologue that provide insight into the narrator's and characters' personalities and motives; and to manipulate pace to highlight the significance of events and create tension and suspense. (CCSS, Appendix A, 23-24)</p>	
<p><b>Expectations for Learning</b></p> <p>Although the Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout the Common Core State Standards document. For example, Writing standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research.</p> <p>To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today's curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understanding are embedded throughout the Standards rather than treated in a separate section. (CCSS, Introduction, 4)</p>	

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**Strands: Topics**  
**Standard Statements**

**Reading for Literature: Key Ideas and Details**

**RL.6.1** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**RL.6.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

**RL.6.3** Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

**Reading Literature: Craft and Structure**

**RL.6.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

**RL.6.5** Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

**RL.6.6** Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in the text.

**Writing: Text Types and Purposes**

**W.6.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

- a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

**Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing**

**W.6.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing type are defined in standard 3 above.)

**W.6.5** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

**Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration**

**SL.6.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

**SL.6.5** Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.

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**Language: Conventions of Standard English**

**L.6.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**L.6.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

**Language: Knowledge of Language**

**L.6.3** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

**Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

**L.6.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 6 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

**L.6.6** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

**Instructional Strategies**

- **Novel Overview: *Do not read to students.***

Thomas Small and his family moved from North Carolina to Ohio. They have moved into an historic house that had played an important role in the Underground Railroad. The house is reported to be haunted by two murdered slaves and Dies Drear, the abolitionist, all of whom were murdered by bounty hunters. The house is managed by an historical foundation and cared for by an elderly man, Mr. Pluto. Once Thomas and his family move into the home, mysterious events occur and are meant to scare the Smalls away. Thomas and his father notice unusual traits about Mr. Pluto and become suspicious of him. When they confront Mr. Pluto, they discover the Dies Drear treasure buried in a cave and the plan to scare them and the Darrow family who has been looking for the treasure. Mr. Small and Thomas join Mr. Pluto and his son in a plan to scare the Darrows to prevent them from finding and claiming the treasure. The story ends with the treasure protected and its future is still unresolved. (The author wrote a sequel, *The Mystery of Drear House: The Conclusion of the Dies Drear Chronicle* for the complete resolution to the story.)

**Day One**

- Ask students what they can tell you about the elements of fiction: setting, characters, plot, theme, conflict, and mood.
- Introduce the novel by having the students look at the front and back covers.
- Tell the students the novel begins as the main character Thomas is traveling to his new home in Ohio. Let students read silently Chapter 1 (1 – 12).
- Thomas, the main character, has many questions about the house that the students might have as well. Encourage students to write the questions they have about the novel (character motives, setting, etc.) as they read this and every chapter of the novel. During the course of this novel study, teachers may record these questions for the group. As students read further into the novel, the answers most likely will be discovered. Refer periodically to these questions as the novel is taught. Connect this strategy when appropriate as a comprehension strategy students will use.
- After reading Chapter 1, discuss the author's use of vocabulary to describe the new house. What word would the students use to describe the house? Have them find words (and the corresponding page numbers) in the text to defend their answers. Connect these words to the mood of the chapter.

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- Also briefly discuss the characters who have been introduced to this point.
- **Exit ticket:** Why does the author choose to use a dream sequence at the beginning of the story?

**Portfolio:**

- Explain to the students that they will be writing a narrative essay about a family member during the novel unit. Discuss the timeline for the writing portfolio.

**Day Two**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Ask students to answer the following question: *What are all the ways to find out about a person's character?* Have students share with the whole class or an elbow partner.
- Students read Chapter 2 (13 – 25) independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- During and after reading, continue to record student-generated questions.
- In the discussion about the plot, make sure to reference how special the house is and the legend associated with it.
- Discuss how readers get to know the characters in a novel. Connect this to character development. Explain that there are also major characters and minor characters in a story. **Major characters** are important to the story's plot; **minor characters** are a part of the story, but are not essential to the development of the plot. **Character traits** are the qualities that a character possesses. These traits are expressed as adjectives, i.e., kind, mean, compassionate, or intelligent.
- Give students **Student Handout: The Characters Unfold (appendix 2-3)**. Students will add to this handout as they continue to read the novel. Tell them this handout will also help them when they write their narrative essays. **Note to teacher: The last box on the handout is blank. The character will be added when the students officially met Mayhew Skinner in Chapter 15. Add this name to the list of characters after reading the chapter.**
- As an **exit ticket or formative assessment**, have students select a sentence from the chapter and explain how it helps to define a character.

**Portfolio:**

- Explain to the students they will use the writing process for this assignment. Review all parts of the writing process.
- Consult or read pp. 5 – 10 in *Write Source*.

**Day Three**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Have students write about a time they had experienced some type of conflict with another person. Students can share their responses with an elbow partner.
- Review the key concepts—the characters and the house's role to the Underground Railroad.
- Have students read Chapter 3 (26 – 40) independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- As a class, discuss the definition of a **mystery** by asking student volunteers for characteristics of this genre. Characteristics include but are not limited to the following:
  - usually a fictional narrative story
  - usually involves a mysterious death or a crime to be solved or a treasure to be found
  - usually has a main character who sets out to solve the mystery

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- involves suspense (anxiety or excitement)—the reader must wait to find out what happens
- is a puzzle of some kind to be solved
- has clues to help solve the puzzle
- Discuss with the students events in the novel that can make it classified as a mystery. Have students use evidence from the text.
- This chapter contains many instances of imagery. Point out several passages that use imagery. An example is on page 27 (5<sup>th</sup> new paragraph—read whole paragraph). *At the base of the hill on which the house sat...Thomas noticed a grove a trees, which looked like either pine or spruce.*
- Lastly, discuss how conflict is being used in the novel. Connect this back to the students' quick writes and the portfolio prompt.
- Have students continue to add to **Student Handout: The Characters Unfold (appendix 2-3)**.

**Portfolio:**

- Explain to students they will complete a biographical narrative.
- Consult or read p. 135 in *Write Source*.
- Read the student sample "The Last Reckless Ride" on pp. 136 – 137 of the *Write Source*.
- Introduce and explain the writing prompt and the timeline for the narrative.
- Review *The House of Dies Drear* characters, including Great-grandmother.
- Explain that some memories about particular relatives can be happy, interesting, funny, sad, and so on. Sometimes these memories can pique interest into finding out more information about a particular person.
- As an **exit ticket**, have the students make a list of 3 – 5 relatives who have had an interesting experience or an experience that had some type of conflict associated with it. Next to the person's name, have the students write down the event they want to explore. *Keep this exit ticket for the next day's writing activity.*

**Day Four**

- **Entrance Ticket/ Quick Write:** Distribute **Student Handout: Major Routes of the Underground Railroad (appendix 4)**. Students can work individually or with a partner. Share responses with the class.
- Review the previous day's lesson.
- Assign Chapter 4 (41 – 52) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- As students read, have them continue to generate questions about the text and continue to track character development by adding to **Student Handout: The Characters Unfold (appendix 2-3)**.
- The story events (plot) begin to quicken during this chapter. Discuss Thomas' discoveries and his experience in the tunnel. How do these events affect the mood of the story? Have students find sentences and/or passages to use as evidence.

**Portfolio:**

- Review the writing prompt with the students.
- Referring to the students' exit ticket from the previous day, have students choose one relative about whom they would like to find out more and research his/her background and personal history.
- Model first for students the following assignment for brainstorming information on their topic:

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- Have students create a K-W-L chart on the person they chose. See **Student Handout: K-W-L Chart (appendix 5)**. Students fill out the “What I Know” column with information they already know about the person. Next the students write questions about information they would like to know about their relative in the “Want to Know” column. The information and questions will guide their research. As students find out answers to their questions, they will write answers on the chart. They may also generate more questions during their research. Encourage students to view this as a research tool.
- Refer to Pearson *Literature: Language and Literacy* pp.180 -181 and connect the reading to the writing prompt’s inclusion of conflict.

**Day Five**

- Today’s lesson focuses on a close reading of part of the chapter. Follow the guidelines below.
  - Students read Chapter 5 (53 – 63) independently.
  - Students will annotate text on **Student Handout: *The House of Dies Drear* Close Reading Selection #1 (appendix 6)** and answer all text dependent questions on **Student Handout: *The House of Dies Drear* Close Reading Text Dependent Questions #1 (appendix 7)**.
  - Students should also note any actions, words or thoughts that may be important in the development of the characters on **Student Handout: The Characters Unfold (appendix 2-3)**.

**Close Reading Directions** (taken from [www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org))

**1. Introduce the passage and students read independently.**

Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text instead of getting background knowledge and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend the written words.

**2. Read the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.**

Asking students to listen to *The House of Dies Drear* exposes them to a second reading of the text before they begin their own close reading of the passage. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students who are following along to improve in fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may not be fluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.

**3. Ask the class to answer a small set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.**

As students move through these questions and reread the text, be sure to check for and reinforce their understanding of academic vocabulary in the corresponding text (which will be boldfaced the first time it appears in the text). At times, the questions may focus on academic vocabulary.

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Text Passage Under Discussion	Vocabulary	Text Dependent Questions For Students
<p><b>pp. 55 – 57</b></p> <p>“Thomas, don’t make things up!” his father said sternly.</p> <p>“I’m not, Papa!” There was a lump in Thomas’ throat. He gripped the table and swallowed a few times. He had to find just the right words if ever his father was to believe him.</p> <p>His hands rose in the air. They began to shape the air, as though it were a pretty piece of pine. “It was like no other voice,” he began. “It wasn’t a high voice or a low voice, or even a man’s voice. It didn’t have anything bad in it or anything. I was just in its way, that’s all. It had to get by me and it would have done anything to get around me along that path.”</p> <p>“I forbid you to go into that tunnel again!” whispered Mrs. Small. She was afraid now, and even Mr. Small stared at Thomas.</p> <p>Mr. Small seemed to be thinking beyond what Thomas had told them. “You say you saw nothing?” he asked.</p> <p>“I thought I heard somebody moving,” Thomas said, “but that could have been you all in here. Or maybe it was the kids, come back to scare me.”</p> <p>“Kids?” said Mr. Small.</p> <p>“The Darrow children,” Thomas said. “I mean that youngest Darrow boy and that little girl he calls Pesty, who lives with them although she doesn’t really belong to them. She came riding around the house in her pajamas on this big horse, and M.C. Darrow was hanging on the horse’s tail. He was trying to get the horse to stop, but it wouldn’t, and she was so little, too.”</p> <p>“What in the world...?” said his father.</p> <p>“Thomas, if you don’t stop it!” warned Mrs. Small.</p> <p>“Mama, it’s the truth!” said Thomas. “There were these children, I’m not making it up! I can’t help it if this is the craziest place we’ve ever lived in!”</p> <p>“All right now,” said Mr. Small. “Start over and take it slowly. You say there were children here?”</p> <p>“Yes, they came from around the house just after I found the button and</p>		<p><b>(Q1)</b> How does the legend of the house play a role in what Thomas is telling his father? What sentence(s) in the text make that connection?</p> <p><b>(Q2)</b> Why does the author use the phrase, “a pretty piece of pine” when he describes how Thomas tells of his experience?</p> <p><b>(Q3)</b> When analyzing the text, what inference can be drawn about Mr. Small’s attitude towards Thomas’ experience? What in the text supports that inference?</p> <p><b>(Q4)</b> Why would Mr. Small try to rationalize the Darrow children’s behavior, and what effect does it have on Thomas?</p> <p><b>(Q5)</b> How does Thomas’ description of his experience in the tunnel help develop the plot the story?</p>

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moved the steps.” Then Thomas told all about Pesty, the horse and Mac Darrow. He even managed to make his father and mother understand that the children had been playing with him, toying with him, as if he were the object of a game.

“They weren’t friends,” Thomas said finally. “They let me fall under those steps.”

“No, they weren’t if they did let you fall,” said his mother, “but maybe they didn’t know about that drop down.”

“No,” said Mr. Small, “they probably knew, but I would guess they had no real intention of causing Thomas harm. It was their joke on the ‘new boy’. It wasn’t a very nice joke and it was a joke that might have not worked at all. They were playing with you, Thomas, to find out what you knew. They must have thought you knew more than they did. After all, you came from far away to live in a house that no child in his right mind in these parts would dare enter. I would think that by now you are pretty famous all over town.”

“I see,” said Thomas. “Because I dared go into ‘Mr. Pluto’s tunnel!’”

“Yes,” his father said.

“It wasn’t a human voice I heard,” Thomas said. “It wasn’t alive.”

They all fell silent for a moment. Then Mr. Small asked, “And you’re sure you heard nothing more than that sighing?”

**Portfolio:**

- Now that the students have focused on the person and event of their narrative, they will begin research on that person.
- Review the writing prompt and the previous day’s lesson.
- Review the type of research students will conduct. They will **develop interview questions** for either the person of their narrative or someone who knows that person well.
- Discuss primary and secondary sources. (Consult or read pp. 364 – 365 in *Write Source*.)
- Have the students write 8 – 10 interview questions on their **Student Handout: Relative Interview (appendix 8-9)**. Students can use the 5 W’s (Who? What? When? Where? Why?) and H (How?) to begin their interview questions. Consult or read p. 138 in *Write Source*. Students will have 2 days to interview their subject(s). Encourage students not to ask questions that can be researched or looked up.



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**Day Six**

- **Entrance Ticket/ Quick Write:** Have the students write down 3 – 5 questions about the novel. Have the students share with the class and record the questions. Refer to these questions after reading Chapter 6.
- Assign Chapter 6 (64 – 72) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- Discuss the events in the chapter and determine if any questions from the quick write could be answered.
- As an **exit ticket**, have the students write a summarizing paragraph for the chapter.

**Portfolio:**

- Review the prompt and previous day’s assignment. Tell the students they will refine the subject of their narrative by writing a focus statement.
- Using the LDC Narrative Rubric, go over the “Focus” and “Controlling Idea” indicators and the descriptors for each section. (This rubric may be found in the introduction to the writing portfolio guide.)
- Have the students write a focus (or thesis) statement on **Student Handout: Writing a Focus Statement (appendix 10)**.
- Consult or read p. 35 in *Write Source* about how to write a focus statement.

**Day Seven**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Students do a 1 – 2 minute quick write about everything they know about point of view. Students can share with an elbow partner or with the class.
- Review with students **point of view**, without telling the students the point of view for the story. As students read Chapter 7 (73 – 80), have them find evidence for the point of view that the author uses.
- After reading, discuss the point of view for *The House of Dies Drear*. Have students turn to pages 74 – 75 of the novel and identify the point of view (**third person point of view**) and provide examples of key words or clues that help them identify the point of view. (Answers may include: “Mrs. Small” or “Thomas”—the names of the characters and pronouns such as “they” and “he”.)
- As an exit ticket, students can answer the question: *How does Mrs. Small’s viewpoint of Mr. Pluto differ from Thomas’ viewpoint. What words in the text support each viewpoint?*

**Portfolio**

- Students may still be completing interviews from Day 5.
- To reinforce the concept of interviews as research, log onto the *Columbus Dispatch* website for a sample interview. Search for interviews and choose a recent interview that would interest the students. Project (or print) the interview and have the students read it. Discuss how the interviewer asks questions that require the interviewee to elaborate on the topic.
- Another option is to read the *Columbus Dispatch* article on a Bexley schoolgirl who interviewed Michelle Obama and Jill Biden.  
<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/01/23/first-lady-mrs--biden-seem-like-regular-folks-bexley-girl-says.html>

**Day Eight**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Have students compare one of the characters in the story with someone they know. Students can share with the whole class or with an elbow partner.
- Assign Chapter 8 (81 – 93) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.

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- Discuss how this episode of the plot builds and supports the mystery's plot line.
- **Make a connection now between the novel and the writing prompt.** Students will need to include a comparison of one the characters and a family member. Review their character development charts by doing a small group activity. Divide the class into small groups – a group for each major character. On chart paper, have the group write the character's words and actions--especially as to how he/she has dealt with conflict in his/her life. Share with the class. As each group reports out, have the students add to their own character development charts, **Student Handout: The Characters Unfold (appendix 2-3).**

**Portfolio:**

- Students are now ready to organize their information using an **outline**.
- Tell students they are now ready to tell the story of their relative using their notes, K-W-L chart, interview questions, and other research.
- Discuss the order in which the events will occur. Most biographical narratives will use chronological order.
- Explain to students that their narrative will be told in a story format. Have the students write their focus statement and the details that will develop it on **Student Handout: Graphic Organizer for Narrative Writing (appendix 11)**. If students have more details than the outline allows, have students make their own copy with the additional number of events and details.
- Consult or read p. 139 in *Write Source*.

**Day Nine**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Ask the students to write about a time they couldn't explain something that happened. For instance, a note left in their locker or a practical joke that was played on them. Ask them to write if they ever found out who had done this to them and why it was done. Have students share with the class. After today's reading, connect this writing to the events in the story.
- Assign Chapter 9 (94 – 110) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- Review the characteristics for a mystery. Ask the students to identify and explain in writing 2 – 3 mysterious events that occurred in this chapter. Have them explain how these events affected the plot of the story. Use details from the text to support the claims.

**Portfolio**

- *Due to the large amount of text students will be reading, there is no portfolio writing today.*
- *Remind students to complete their interviews for the portfolio writing.*

**Day Ten**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Have the students write a short paragraph about what the house represents or symbolizes in the story. Students can share with the class or an elbow partner.
- Using *Literature: Language and Literacy* [www.pearsonsuccessnet.com](http://www.pearsonsuccessnet.com) page 140, discuss symbols and symbolism with the students. In the teacher edition sidebar, there is an excellent example of a **think aloud** for what the American flag symbolizes.
- Assign Chapter 10 (111 – 127) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- After reading, discuss the theme or central idea of the story. *What does the church symbolize? What role does the church play in the Underground Railroad?* Have the students answer these text dependent questions and provide support from the novel for their answers.

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**Portfolio**

- *Due to the large amount of text students will be reading, there is no portfolio writing today.*
- *Remind students to complete their interviews for the portfolio writing.*

**Day Eleven**

- **Entrance Ticket:** Review the previous day's lesson by asking students to turn to a partner and summarize the events from Chapter 10.
- Assign Chapter 11 (128 – 141) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- Review characterization. The author uses a new character, Mr. Carr, to give the reader more insight about the Darrows and Mr. Pluto in this chapter. Discuss the conflict these characters have with each other. How does that conflict impact the plot of the novel? Have students cite evidence from the text and page numbers to support their responses.
- Have students continue to add to **Student Handout: The Characters Unfold (appendix 2-3)**.

**Portfolio**

Students will begin to compose their **first draft** of the narratives.

- Make the connection between the novel and the writing prompt by reviewing the previous day's lesson and the students' outlines.
- Students will begin their narratives. Instruct the students to write on every other line of their papers.
- Students will write an introduction to their narratives. Have students refer to **Student Handout: Introductory Paragraph (appendix 12)**. Explain to them that the beginning paragraph invites the reader further into the narrative. Have students try several different ways to begin their stories.
- Consult or read pp. 108 – 109 in *Write Source*.

**Day Twelve**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Have the students pick one of the novel's characters and write 3 questions they still have about them or write new questions. List any new questions on the classroom posters started at the beginning of the novel study. Refer to the posters after reading the chapter.
- Assign Chapter 12 (142 – 150) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- After reading the chapter, discuss the contrasting mood at the beginning of the chapter to the end of the chapter. How does this affect the plot of the novel? How do the events in the chapter contribute to the mystery's suspense? Have students find examples in the chapter. As students report out, have them give page numbers and supporting evidence from the text.

**Portfolio:**

- Students will continue to write their drafts of their narrative essays. Instruct the students to write on every other line of their papers.
- Have the students continue using their outlines to tell their narratives. Each event is one paragraph. Have them add sensory details to the events in their outlines.
- Consult or read pp. 110 – 111 in the *Write Source*.

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**Day Thirteen**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Review the previous day’s lesson by asking students to turn to a partner and summarize the events from Chapter 12.
- Today’s lesson focuses on close reading. Follow the guidelines below.
  - Students read Chapter 13 (151 – 160) independently.
  - Students will annotate text on **Student Handout: *The House of Dies Drear* Close Reading Selection #2 (appendix 13)** and answer all text dependent questions on **Student Handout: *The House of Dies Drear* Close Reading Text Dependent Questions #2 (appendix 14)**.
  - Teacher then leads close reading activities with the passages below.

Text Passage Under Discussion	Vocabulary	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>pp. 153 – 155</p> <p>They found themselves at the edge of a natural clearing and blinded momentarily by bright light. There lay before them a bed of flat rock, rectangular in shape, at the end of which was a cave. The cave mouth had heavy, <b>plank</b> doors. On either side of them were <b>sconces</b>, which held burning torches. The torches flared violently, sending smoke and a yellow glow up into the surrounding trees.</p> <p>In the <b>midst</b> of it, pacing back and forth like a <b>falcon</b> tired of his <b>perch</b>, was Mr. Pluto. He seemed in thought, and wasn’t aware of them watching. He rubbed the back of his neck with one hand; the other was hooked in his belt.</p> <p>Thomas couldn’t quite believe he was seeing Pluto, the cave and those eerie torches, he had so prepared himself for danger and <b>ambush</b>. And something else, Thomas thought. The whole scene was suited for another place and time. Mr. Pluto should have fitted right in, like a bearded pirate perhaps, left in the wilderness by his fellow <b>scoundrels</b>. He should have been a part of these surroundings, Thomas thought. Only he wasn’t.</p> <p>Thomas couldn’t quite catch on to what was wrong, but there was something about Pluto that kept <b>jarring</b> Thomas’ mind.</p> <p>Mr. Small started around the clearing toward Pluto.</p> <p>“Mr. Pluto?” he called. “Pluto? I want a word with you!”</p> <p>Pluto swung around, taking in the whole of the clearing. He must have seen Thomas and Mr. Small coming at him. His own face was in shadow caused by the torches above his head. But</p>	<p><b>scoundrel</b> – a mean or wicked person</p>	<p><b>Close Reading Directions</b> (taken from <a href="http://www.achievethecore.org">www.achievethecore.org</a>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce the passage and students read independently.</li> <li>2. Read the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.</li> <li>3. Ask the class to answer a small set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.</li> </ol> <p><b>(Q1)</b> The author vividly describes the torches in the front of the cave. What connection(s) can be drawn between the torches, the mood of the story, and the setting of this chapter? What details in the chapter support the connection(s)?</p> <p><b>(Q2)</b> What causes Thomas to be concerned with Mr. Pluto fitting in with the surroundings? Explain how this contributes to the suspense of the story.</p> <p><b>(Q3)</b> Explain the feeling the author conveys by using the words “fellow scoundrels.”</p>

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the rest of him was clearly visible. He looked massive, powerful, in the yellow light. Every inch of him recoiled in surprise. Still recoiling, he shrank toward the cave.  
 “Wait!” said Mr. Small. “You wait!”  
 But Pluto was gone. It wasn’t possible a man his age and size could move so quickly, and yet he had. Like fluid pouring itself away, he was gone, leaving only the **gaping** doorway.  
 Thomas remembered the night before, and the way Pluto had lifted him off the ground. Again he thought what he had thought then: No old man anywhere, **lame** or not, could catch him from behind, let alone swing him off the ground.

**recoil** – to fall or shrink back

**(Q4)** What is out of character for the massive, powerful Mr. Pluto’s actions? Why does the author include these actions at this point in the story?

**(Q5)** Interpret the phrase, “...like fluid pouring itself away, he was gone...” How does this phrase support the mood of this chapter? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

**Portfolio:**

- Students will continue to write their drafts of their narrative essays. Instruct the students to write on every other line of their papers.
- Have the students continue using their outlines to tell their narratives. Each event is one paragraph. Have them add sensory details to the events in their outlines.
- Consult or read pp. 110 – 111 in the *Write Source*.

**Day Fourteen**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Describe how Mr. Small or Thomas has changed as the plot of the story develops. Have the students share with their elbow partners.
- Discuss the different parts of a plot. Refer to p. 21 in *Literature: Language and Literacy* [www.pearsonsuccessnet.com](http://www.pearsonsuccessnet.com). Review the plot features using the novel.
- Today’s reading is still part of the rising action of the novel.
- Assign Chapter 14 (161 -174) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- Go over the **Student Handout: The Characters Unfold (appendix 2-3)** and clarify descriptions of Mr. Pluto.
- Discuss how the new description affects the novel’s plotline.

**Portfolio:**

- Students will write a **conclusion** to their narratives.
- Have students refer **Student Handout: Writing a Conclusion for a Narrative Essay (appendix 15)**.
- Have students explore several ways to end their narratives and choose one that best fits their narrative.
- Consult or read p. 112 in *Write Source*.

**Day Fifteen**

- **Entrance Ticket/ Quick Write:** Have the students make a prediction as to who the second Mr. Pluto is. Ask them to give reasons for their predictions. Students can share with an elbow partner or with the class.

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- Assign Chapter 15 (175 – 186) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- Using the **Student Handout: The Characters Unfold (appendix 2-3)**, have the students add **Mayhew Skinner** to the blank box. Students will want to move some descriptions from Mr. Pluto to Mayhew Skinner. Clarify character traits for each.
- Discuss how the new character affects the novel's plot.

**Portfolio:**

- Students **revise drafts for sensory details**.
- Today's writing activities can be done individually or with a partner.
- Have students find 5 sections in their draft to revise using sensory details. Ask students to use their five senses and reread their drafts. As they read, have them mark where they could add a sensory detail. When they have finished rereading, have them add the details using the unwritten lines of their narratives.
- Consult or read p. 115 of *Write Source*.
- Students can also revise for word choice using adjectives (words that describe nouns) and adverbs (words that add meaning to verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs).
- Consult or read p. 120 in *Write Source*.
- If there is time, have students do a pair-share. Students can give each other feedback (suggestions) on their drafts.
- Consult or read pp. 86 – 88 and p. 660 in Pearson's Prentice Hall: *Literature: Language and Literacy* for sensory language and descriptive details.
- Consult or read p. 90 of Pearson to see a student model for adding sensory details to an essay.

**Day Sixteen**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Have the students pick out their favorite word and explain why they chose that word. Have them use it in a sentence. **OR** Have the students find a word from the novel that they learned from their reading. Have them use it in a new sentence to make it their own. Students can share with their elbow partners or with the class.
- The conflict in the story now centers on the Darrows and the rest of the characters. Review the conflict between the Darrows and Mr. Pluto and the Darrows and the Smalls. Discuss the reasons for each. Even though the mystery of ghosts and treasure has been solved, the threat of the treasure being stolen has not been resolved. This is leading up to the climax of the story. Review specifics of the plot with the students.
- Assign Chapter 16 (187 – 198) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.

**Portfolio:**

- Students will focus on **vocabulary** words as they revise their papers. Connect this activity to their quick writes for the day.
- Have them revise their papers for ordinary words and overused words.
- Model how to substitute words or phrases for more complex and interesting words.

For example: *Mary looked in her closet.*

*Mary started rummaging through her closet.*

*I rushed into the kitchen and told my mom Carol's problem.*

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*I burst into the kitchen and blurted out Carol's dilemma.*

- Have students replace the ordinary words for Tier Two (more descriptive and complex, but less frequent) words in their narratives.
- If there is time, have students do a pair-share. Students can give each other suggestions for different vocabulary words.

**Day Seventeen**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Put students into small groups. Have the students generate questions about the legend of the house of Drear. (See pages 16 and 17 for complete legend.)
- Tell students to look for answers to their questions as they read Chapter 17 (199 – 215) independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- Go over the answers to the student-generated questions.
- Give students an index card and ask them to individually answer the question: *To whom should the Drear treasure belong?* Have students cite evidence from the text to support their claim on the index cards. Possible responses could be: Mr. Pluto and son, the Smalls, the Darrows, or the Drear Foundation. If there are two or more different responses, students could be divided into groups and have a quick debate using their index cards to guide them.

**Portfolio:**

- Students will **edit their papers** for spelling, capitalization, and punctuation such as quotation marks, periods, and commas.
- Inform students that they will begin editing their papers.
- Have students check for complete sentences and/or run-on sentences, proper capitalization and punctuation.
- Model for students how to use quotation marks. Consult or read pp. 126 – 127 in *Write Source* for using quotation marks with dialogue or p. 598 for quoting research.

**Day Eighteen**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Have the students anticipate the story climax. Students can share with an elbow partner.
- Assign Chapter 18 (216 – 230) for students to read independently, with a partner, or with the class.
- Review the elements of plot. Discuss the climax and any questions that still need to be resolved.

**Portfolio:**

- Students will finish writing their **final essay**.
- Once students have edited their papers, they may begin to write or type their **final copy**. Do not skip lines this time.
- Encourage students to use legible handwriting or to type their final papers.
- If students used and/or quoted research, have them write the source at the end of their papers. See pp. 399 – 400 in *Write Source*.

**Day Nineteen**

- **Entrance Ticket/Quick Write:** Compare and contrast Thomas' view of Mr. Pluto at the beginning of the novel to his view of Mr. Pluto at the end. Students can share with an elbow partner or with the class.
- Have the students finish reading the novel, Chapter 19 (231 – 244) independently, with a partner, or with the class.

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- Discuss how the main conflict in the story has been resolved.
- Discuss that the novel is a fictional story, but the Underground Railroad was very real. Encourage the students to extend their learning by reading nonfictional accounts of the Underground Railroad and its conductors.

**Publishing Day!**

Have students share their writing with the rest of the class. Try one of the following methods:

- If students have a photograph of their family member, they may want to post the photo with their writing on a poster on a bulletin board.
- Students can combine their writing in a class book.
- Have students take photographs of their narrative essay and of a drawing or photo of their relative, and record the images in moviemaker to make a movie of their narrative essays.

**Instructional Resources**

- *The House of Dies Drear* DVD
- For more information on Virginia Hamilton, the Underground Railroad, and The National Underground Railroad Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, visit <http://www.ohioreadingroadtrip.org/hamilton.html>
- The Paul Laurence Dunbar poem “We Wear the Mask” (Use at end of Chapter 14 in novel.)
- This interactive exploration will give the teacher information that includes slide shows, primary sources, and teachers' guides. [http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory/underground\\_railroad](http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory/underground_railroad)
- Try this brief, interactive tour of the Underground Railroad, from *National Geographic Online*. <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad>
- Virginia Hamilton’s official website: <http://www.virginiahamilton.com/>
- Smartboard lesson on developing vocabulary for character traits. <http://exchange.smarttech.com/search.html?q=character+development>
- *The Mystery of Drear House: The Conclusion of the Dies Drear Chronicle* by Virginia Hamilton
- <http://www.edmodo.com> Teacher resource site

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Strategies for Diverse Learners)**

- The Underground World: An Interactive Journey – <http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/multimedia/interactive/the-undergroundrailroad>
- “Follow the Drinking Gourd”: Songs for Teaching – [www.songsforteaching.com/folk/followthedrinkinggourd.php](http://www.songsforteaching.com/folk/followthedrinkinggourd.php)
- “Follow the Drinking Gourd”: What the Lyrics Mean – [www.followthedrinkinggourd.org/What\\_The-Lyrics\\_Mean.htm](http://www.followthedrinkinggourd.org/What_The-Lyrics_Mean.htm)
- Differentiations for learning styles - <http://www.ncsu.edu/globalbookclub/drear.html>
- Other books that have prejudice as a theme - <http://www.classzone.com/novelguides/litcons/houseof/further.cfm>
- [The Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling](#) (University of Houston) — Includes tutorials, rubrics, software, etc.



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**Professional Articles**

- “When I Stopped Writing on Their Papers: Accommodating the Needs of Student Writers with Audio Comments (Free Access)” by Sara Bauer. *English Journal*, Vol. 101, No. 2, November 2011; <http://www.ncte.org/journals/ej/issues/v101-2>.
- “Teaching Young Adult Literature: Making Magic with YAL” by Jeannette Haskins. *English Journal*, Vol. 101, No. 2, November 2011; <http://www.ncte.org/journals/ej/issues/v101-2>.
- “Finding Voice: Learning about Language and Power” by Linda Christensen. *Voices from the Middle*, Vol. 18, No. 3, March 2011; <http://www.ncte.org/journals/vm/issues/v18-3>.
- “Recognizing a ‘Different Drum’ Through Close-Reading Strategies” by Cynthia A. Lassonde. *Networks*: Vol.11, Issue 1 Spring 2009 [journals.library.wisc.edu/index.php/networks/article/download/.../399](http://journals.library.wisc.edu/index.php/networks/article/download/.../399)
- The Critical Thinking Community. “The Art of Close Reading” <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/the-art-of-close-reading-part-one/509>

**English Language Arts Connections**

Reading	Language	Speaking and Listening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate Common Core Reading (Literary or Informational Texts) standards as students complete research to build and present knowledge. <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate Common Core Language standards as students construct writing in terms of writing conventions, knowledge of language, and acquisition and use of vocabulary. <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate Common Core Speaking and Listening standards as students integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats. <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a></li> </ul>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*House of Dies Drear*  
**APPENDIX**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### The Characters Unfold

Authors use different techniques to describe and develop characters: through their point of view, thoughts, words, and actions. *The House of Dies Drear* is told in third person point of view. We learn about the characters from their thoughts, actions, and words. Using these categories, complete the chart as you read and discover information about the characters.

	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Words</b>	<b>Thoughts</b>
Thomas			
Mr. Small			
Mrs. Small			

Name \_\_\_\_\_

<b>The Characters Unfold, cont'd.</b>			
	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Words</b>	<b>Thoughts</b>
Mr. Pluto			
Pesty			
MC Darrow			
The Older Darrow Brothers			

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Major Routes of the Underground Railroad



**Directions:** Looking at the above map, answer the following questions:

1. Looking at the map, what inferences can be made?

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2. What landforms would hinder or help runaway slaves? Explain your answer.

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---

3. How does this map help the reader understand The Underground Railroad as told in *The House of Dies Drear*?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

### K-W-L Chart

**Directions:** Write your relative's name on the blank below. In the first column, write down everything that you know that pertains to the event and your relative. In the second column, write down questions that you want to know about the event and/or the relative. The last column is left blank until you find out the answers to your questions. When you find the answer, write it in the last column.

Relative's name \_\_\_\_\_

What I <b>Know</b> (about my relative)	What I <b>Want</b> to Know (about my relative)	What I <b>Learned</b> (about my relative)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### ***The House of Dies Drear Close Reading Selection #1 pp. 55 - 57***

**Annotate pp. 55 - 57 as you reread the selection. Go back to the text when you answer the questions.**

“Thomas, don’t make things up!” his father said sternly.

“I’m not, Papa!” There was a lump in Thomas’ throat. He gripped the table and swallowed a few times. He had to find just the right words if ever his father was to believe him.

His hands rose in the air. They began to shape the air, as though it were a pretty piece of pine. “It was like no other voice,” he began. “It wasn’t a high voice or a low voice, or even a man’s voice. It didn’t have anything bad in it or anything. I was just in its way, that’s all. It had to get by me and it would have done anything to get around me along that path.”

“I forbid you to go into that tunnel again!” whispered Mrs. Small. She was afraid now, and even Mr. Small stared at Thomas.

Mr. Small seemed to be thinking beyond what Thomas had told them. “You say you saw nothing?” he asked.

“I thought I heard somebody moving,” Thomas said, “but that could have been you all in here. Or maybe it was the kids, come back to scare me.”

“Kids?” said Mr. Small.

“The Darrow children,” Thomas said. “I mean that youngest Darrow boy and that little girl he calls Pesty, who lives with them although she doesn’t really belong to them. She came riding around the house in her pajamas on this big horse, and M.C. Darrow was hanging on the horse’s tail. He was trying to get the horse to stop, but it wouldn’t, and she was so little, too.”

“What in the world...?” said his father.

“Thomas, if you don’t stop it!” warned Mrs. Small.

“Mama, it’s the truth!” said Thomas. “There were these children, I’m not making it up! I can’t help it if this is the craziest place we’ve ever lived in!”

“All right now,” said Mr. Small. “Start over and take it slowly. You say there were children here?”

“Yes, they came from around the house just after I found the button and moved the steps.” Then Thomas told all about Pesty, the horse and Mac Darrow. He even managed to make his father and mother understand that the children had been playing with him, toying with him, as if he were the object of a game.

“They weren’t friends,” Thomas said finally. “They let me fall under those steps.”

“No, they weren’t if they did let you fall,” said his mother, “but maybe they didn’t know about that drop down.”

“No,” said Mr. Small, “they probably knew, but I would guess they had no real intention of causing Thomas harm. It was their joke on the ‘new boy’. It wasn’t a very nice joke and it was a joke that might have not worked at all. They were playing with you, Thomas, to find out what you knew. They must have thought you knew more than they did. After all, you came from far away to live in a house that no child in his right mind in these parts would dare enter. I would think that by now you are pretty famous all over town.”

“I see,” said Thomas. “Because I dared go into ‘Mr. Pluto’s tunnel!’”

“Yes,” his father said.

“It wasn’t a human voice I heard,” Thomas said. “It wasn’t alive.”

They all fell silent for a moment. Then Mr. Small asked, “And you’re sure you heard nothing more than that sighing?”

Name \_\_\_\_\_

***The House of Dies Drear* Close Reading Text Dependent Questions pp. 55 - 57**

*Go back to the text when you answer the questions.*

**Q1)** How does the legend of the house play a role in what Thomas is telling his father? What sentence(s) in the text make that connection?

**Q2)** Why does the author use the phrase “a pretty piece of pine” when he describes how Thomas tells of his experience?

**Q3)** When analyzing the text, what inference can be drawn about Mr. Small’s attitude towards Thomas’ experience? What in the text supports that inference?

**Q4)** Why would Mr. Small try to rationalize the Darrow children’s behavior and what effect does it have on Thomas?

**Q5)** How does Thomas’ description of his experience in the tunnel help develop the plot of the story?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Relative Interview

Create 8 – 10 questions you want to ask about the event you are writing on your relative. Avoid questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no”. Try using the **5 W’s** (*Who, What, Where, When, Why*) and **H** (*How*) to begin your questions. Write questions that encourage your interviewee to talk about the experience.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Relative Interview, cont'd.

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing a Focus (Thesis) Statement

A good writer has a plan before he begins composing. He studies the writing prompt and then writes a focus statement. This statement will guide his writing in an organized manner.

One way to write a focus (thesis) statement is to first turn the prompt into a question. Then, reflect on the question and answer it. The answer will become a focus statement that addresses the writing prompt and has a controlling idea.

### Example

**Writing Prompt:** Write a narrative describing a time you had to help a friend solve a problem.

**Question:** *When did I have to help a friend solve a problem?*

**Answer:** *I had to help my friend Carol go on our class trip to the Columbus Zoo.*

**Look at the writing prompt:** After researching the events and the life of a family member through interviews and informational resources, write a narrative that describes an event in that person's life when he/she had experienced conflict. **L2** In your narrative, explain how your family member handled the conflict similarly to or differently from a character in *The House of Dies Drear*. Establish a storyline with a clear and well-developed purpose, and use sensory images and figurative language to further develop the narrative.

**Turn the prompt into a question:**

**Write a statement to answer the question. (*This is your focus statement.*)**

Your answer will better organize and develop your controlling idea and will provide your reader with a "guide" to understanding your idea.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Graphic Organizer for Narrative Writing

A graphic organizer will help a writer gather and organize ideas for his/her composition. Once all sections are completed, the writer can then begin drafting his/her narrative.

Fill in the top section with the focus statement of the narrative. Then think of at least 3 events that occur during the narrative. Each event should have 3 or more details describing that event. Finally, the last section wraps up the narrative and restates the focus statement in a different way.

### Introduction/Focus (thesis) Statement:

### Event 1:

- Detail \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail \_\_\_\_\_

### Event 2:

- Detail \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail \_\_\_\_\_

### Event 3

- Detail \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail \_\_\_\_\_
- Detail \_\_\_\_\_

### Conclusion

## Introductory Paragraph

The first paragraph of a narrative should begin with a “hook” to get the reader to be interested in the writing. There are several ways to do this.

**Start in the middle of the action.**

*Sprinting down the block, we barely made it in time for the big yellow bus to whisk us to school.*

**Ask the reader a question.**

*Have you ever known that someone wasn't telling you the truth?*

**Start with someone speaking.**

*“That was the hardest time of my life,” sighed my uncle.*

**Begin with a surprising statement or an interesting fact.**

*My friend never cries.*

**Decide on a hook for your writing and, then, tell a little about the topic. End your introductory paragraph with your focus statement. See the example below.**

*“That was the hardest time of my life,” sighed my uncle. When my Uncle Joe’s dad passed away, he had to quit going to high school and go work down in the coal mines of West Virginia. He was one of seven children and his older brother was already a miner. He was expected to help support his mother and sisters. My uncle was a hard worker, a lot like Gale in the Hunger Games, and he wanted to help his family and still get his education.*

**The paragraph begins with someone speaking. The following sentences tell a little more about the problem, and the last sentence is the controlling idea for the rest of the narrative.**

**Try starting your narrative with one of these ideas.**

## *The House of Dies Drear* Close Reading Selection #2 pp. 153 - 155

They found themselves at the edge of a natural clearing and blinded momentarily by bright light. There lay before them a bed of flat rock, rectangular in shape, at the end of which was a cave. The cave mouth had heavy, **plank** doors. On either side of them were **sconces**, which held burning torches. The torches flared violently, sending smoke and a yellow glow up into the surrounding trees.

In the **midst** of it, pacing back and forth like a falcon tired of his **perch**, was Mr. Pluto. He seemed in thought, and wasn't aware of them watching. He rubbed the back of his neck with one hand; the other was hooked in his belt.

Thomas couldn't quite believe he was seeing Pluto, the cave and those eerie torches, he had so prepared himself for danger and **ambush**. And something else, Thomas thought. The whole scene was suited for another place and time. Mr. Pluto should have fitted right in, like a bearded pirate perhaps, left in the wilderness by his fellow **scoundrels**. He should have been a part of these surroundings, Thomas thought. Only he wasn't.

Thomas couldn't quite catch on to what was wrong, but there was something about Pluto that kept **jarring** Thomas' mind.

Mr. Small started around the clearing toward Pluto.

"Mr. Pluto?" he called. "Pluto? I want a word with you!"

Pluto swung around, taking in the whole of the clearing. He must have seen Thomas and Mr. Small coming at him. His own face was in shadow caused by the torches above his head. But the rest of him was clearly visible. He looked massive, powerful, in the yellow light. Every inch of him **recoiled** in surprise. Still recoiling, he shrank toward the cave.

"Wait!" said Mr. Small. "You wait!"

But Pluto was gone. It wasn't possible a man his age and size could move so quickly, and yet he had. Like fluid pouring itself away, he was gone, leaving only the gaping doorway.

Thomas remembered the night before, and the way Pluto had lifted him off the ground. Again he thought what he had thought then: No old man anywhere, **lame** or not, could catch him from behind, let alone swing him off the ground.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The House of Dies Drear* Close Reading Text Dependent Questions pp. 153 - 155**

**Q1)** The author vividly describes the torches in the front of the cave. What connection(s) can be drawn between the torches, the mood of the story, and the setting of this chapter? What details in the chapter support the connection(s)?

**Q2)** What causes Thomas to be concerned with Mr. Pluto fitting in with the surroundings? Explain how this contributes to the suspense of the story.

**Q3)** Explain the feeling the author conveys by using the words “fellow scoundrels.”

**Q4)** What is out of character for the massive, powerful Mr. Pluto’s actions? Why does the author include these actions at this point in the story?

**Q5)** Interpret the phrase “...like fluid pouring itself away, he was gone...” How does this phrase support the mood of this chapter? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

## Writing a Conclusion for a Narrative Essay



The conclusion for a narrative composition is the resolution of a story. This last paragraph lets the reader know the outcome of the story's problem. The big question, though, is *how* will the author let the reader know?

Try one of these techniques:

**A Final Scene:** End the narrative with the final event of the story.

*While my mother made another lunch, I ran to Carol's house to give her the coat. We ran back to my house, grabbed the lunches, and arrived at the bus stop just as the big yellow bus rumbled to a stop. Carol and I would have no problem enjoying that cold day at the zoo.*

**Dialogue:** Characters have a final conversation.

*"Whew!" breathed Simone. "That was the most terrifying rollercoaster I've ever been on!"*

*"Yeah," giggled Marie. "Let's get back in line!"*

**Image:** Don't tell the reader the character is happy. Show instead.

*The girl skipped over to her mother and gave her a big hug.*

**Personal Reflection:** The narrator thinks back to the time of the event and makes a comment about it.

*Saving the little boy's life changed my life forever.*