

Week Thirteen: Grapes of Wrath and Pronouns

Weekly Focus: Analysis
Weekly Skill: Setting

Lesson Summary: This week students will read a selection from the novel *Grapes of Wrath*, as they continue their exploration of the essential question “What is the relationship between strength and adversity?” They will then consider “setting” as an element of story and work to analyze its use in this passage. Finally, students will continue their study of pronouns with an emphasis on editing for pronoun agreement.

Materials Needed: Projector and Internet, Dust Bowl Video, Grapes of Wrath Excerpt, Pronoun Handout, Antecedent Introduction handout, Antecedent Exercise 1, G.O.W. Grammar, Paragraph Handout

Objectives: Students will be able to...

- Define and write about “setting” as an element of story
- Practice reading, analyzing, and responding critically to a literary passage in the form of a paragraph
- Correctly identify pronouns in a sentence
- Practice editing sentences for correct pronoun-antecedent agreement

Common Core Standards Addressed: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3](#)

Notes: This week students will be focusing on the Analyzing step of the CARE model. Explain this to them as they work to analyze the setting of the *Grapes of Wrath* excerpt. Discuss how and why analyzing a particular element of a story, such as setting, helps students move beyond the first step of Comprehension to a more holistic and deeper understanding of a piece.

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Activities:

Warm-Up/Review: Creative Writing

Time: 30 minutes

Emotions: This week's creative writing will be a paired activity. Have students work with a partner. Give them this situation: you are filming a movie. However, at this point, you have yet to decide where each scene should be set. All you know are the emotions that you want the audience to feel when they see a particular scene. As an example, tell them about the opening scene, which you've already completed. For that scene, you wanted the audience to start out by feeling happy, so you set the scene in a bright, sunny meadow (feel free to elaborate on this). Now, you are going to give them three new emotions/scenes to be filmed. With their partner, have each class-member decide, as the film directors, where the scene will be set. Students should choose the location and then describe it, being as specific as possible. Give students a few minutes after you announce each scene/emotion to write. After the final emotion, have the class share their setting choices.

- 1) Scared
- 2) Sad
- 3) Peaceful

Reading and Short Answer Activity:

Time: 70 minutes

- 1) Discuss the term "setting." What makes up a setting? Why are settings important? What can we learn about a character from a setting? Come up with a definition for the term as a class and have students write this in their notes.
- 2) Give students a brief introduction to the Dust Bowl time period and show the video clip.
- 3) Hand-out *Grapes of Wrath* Excerpt. Read together, explaining that this is only an excerpt from the first chapter of a longer novel.
- 4) Because this excerpt is the first thing that a reader encounters when reading Steinbeck's novel, we know that it is important. Steinbeck really wants us to pay attention to the setting. In small groups, have students analyze the setting by answering the small group questions together.
- 5) Have students work individually to write a paragraph answer to the short answer question (20-30 minutes). Pay specific attention this week to Supporting Details. If time, model an answer with the students' help that includes supporting details from the paragraph.
- 6) Share

Grammar Activity:

Time: 60 minutes

Warm-Up: If you feel comfortable, have one or two students choose a sentence from the reading that they find interesting and write it on the board. As a class, try to break the sentence down into a simple sentence, identifying the subject and verb. You may also want to discuss the structure of the sentence (dependent clause, independent clauses, parts of speech, etc.) further. Be sure students understand that not everyone will understand everything that you are discussing, and that this exercise is only meant to begin to familiarize students with terms and sentence elements that we will continue to discuss in-depth later in the semester.

Review: Review what a pronoun is (if a student was absent last class, give him/her the pronoun

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handout). Together, come up with a few sentences to discuss the reading using pronouns from the pronouns handout.

Introduction: Introduce students to pronoun antecedents. Hand-out Antecedent Introduction handout and go over together. Hand-out Antecedent Exercise 1 and go through a few examples together. Leave the rest uncompleted for homework.

Practice: Have students complete the Grapes of Wrath Grammar worksheets on their own or in pairs. Go over together.

Sandboxing: Have students choose two or three sentences in their own writing that include pronouns. Then, have them underline the pronoun and circle the antecedent. Do both agree in number? If not, have students correct their writing.

Wrap-up: Final Discussion

Time: 10 minutes

Have students sit together in a circle as a class and, based on their reading and writing today, as well as their personal experiences, answer this question: "How does being faced with an adverse environment change a person?" Remind students to take notes on the discussion if they'd like and to save all their notes and writing from class, as they will be asked to write a longer, formal response at the end of the unit about the essential question: "What is the relationship between strength and adversity."

Extra Work/Homework:

Have students complete the rest of Grammar Exercise #1 worksheet.

Have students check-out and read the rest of Grapes of Wrath (or watch the movie) and write a one page review of it to share with the class.

Differentiated Instruction/ELL Accommodation Suggestions	Activity
Have Beginning students work to identify pronouns only	Grammar
If a student is struggling to answer the short answer question, have them instead write a paragraph simply describing the setting.	Writing

Online Resources:

- 1) [The OWL at Purdue: Pronouns](#)
- 2) [Setting](#)

Suggested Teacher Readings: TBA

**The Grapes of Wrath
(1939)
Chapter 1
John Steinbeck**

To the red country and part of the gray country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth. The plows crossed and recrossed the rivulet marks. The last rains lifted the corn quickly and scattered weed colonies and grass along the sides of the roads so that the gray country and the dark red country began to disappear under a green cover. In the last part of May the sky grew pale and the clouds that had hung in high puffs for so long in the spring were dissipated. The sun flared down on the growing corn day after day until a line of brown spread along the edge of each green bayonet. The clouds appeared, and went away, and in a while they did not try any more. The weeds grew darker green to protect themselves, and they did not spread any more. The surface of the earth crusted, a thin hard crust, and as the sky became pale, so the earth became pale, pink in the red country and white in the gray country.

In the water-cut gullies the earth dusted down in dry little streams. Gophers and ant lions started small avalanches. And as the sharp sun struck day after day, the leaves of the young corn became less stiff and erect; they bent in a curve at first, and then, as the central ribs of strength grew weak, each leaf tilted downward. Then it was June, and the sun shone more fiercely. The brown lines on the corn leaves widened and moved in on the central ribs. The weeds frayed and edged back toward their roots. The air was thin and the sky more pale; and every day the earth paled.

In the roads where the teams moved, where the wheels milled the ground and the hooves of the horses beat the ground, the dirt crust broke and the dust formed. Every moving thing lifted the dust into the air: a walking man lifted a thin layer as high as his waist, and a wagon lifted the dust as high as the fence tops, and an automobile boiled a cloud behind it. The dust was long in settling back again.

When June was half gone, the big clouds moved up out of Texas and the Gulf, high heavy clouds, rain-heads. The men in the fields looked up at the clouds and sniffed at them and held wet fingers up to sense the wind. And the horses were nervous while the clouds were up. The rain-heads dropped a little spattering and hurried on to some other country. Behind them the sky was pale again and the sun flared. In the dust there were drop craters where the rain had fallen, and there were clean splashes on the corn, and that was all.

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A gentle wind followed the rain clouds, driving them on northward, a wind that softly clashed the drying corn. A day went by and the wind increased, steady, unbroken by gusts. The dust from the roads fluffed up and spread out and fell on the weeds beside the fields, and fell into the fields a little way. Now the wind grew strong and hard and it worked at the rain crust in the corn fields. Little by little the sky was darkened by the mixing dust, and the wind felt over the earth, loosened the dust, and carried it away. The wind grew stronger. The rain crust broke and the dust lifted up out of the fields and drove gray plumes into the air like sluggish smoke. The corn threshed the wind and made a dry, rushing sound. The finest dust did not settle back to earth now, but disappeared into the darkening sky.

The wind grew stronger, whisked under stones, carried up straws and old leaves, and even little clods, marking its course as it sailed across the fields. The air and the sky darkened and through them the sun shone redly, and there was a raw sting in the air. During a night the wind raced faster over the land, dug cunningly among the rootlets of the corn, and the corn fought the wind with its weakened leaves until the roots were freed by the prying wind and then each stalk settled wearily sideways toward the earth and pointed the direction of the wind.

The dawn came, but no day. In the gray sky a red sun appeared, a dim red circle that gave a little light, like dusk; and as that day advanced, the dusk slipped back toward darkness, and the wind cried and whimpered over the fallen corn.

Excerpt taken from:

http://instruct.westvalley.edu/kelly/Distance_Learning/History_17B/Readings/Steinbeck_Grapes.htm

Small Group Questions:

- 1) What details do we know about the setting? List as many as you can.

- 2) What kinds of adversity do you think the characters in this novel might expect to face?

- 3) Sometimes, a setting becomes so important that it almost becomes a character in a book. If this setting was a person, what kind of person would he or she be (old, young, ugly, pretty, tired, etc.)? Describe this person.

Individual Short Answer Question

Directions: Answer the question below. Your answer should be in the form of **one full paragraph** with a topic sentence, supporting details, and a conclusion. You may wish to use the paragraph handout to help you organize your thoughts.

Question: Last week we talked about a story's "tone." A tone is the emotion or mood of a story. Do you believe that Steinbeck's description of the opening setting sets a **hopeful** or **hopeless** tone for the rest of the novel? Use examples from the passage to support your opinion.

(The first sentence is started for you. Notice that the wording of this topic sentence is taken directly from the question. You may choose to start your very next sentence with "First" or "For example.")

John Steinbeck's description of the opening setting sets a _____ tone for the rest of the novel.

PRONOUNS

Pronouns: Pronouns are words that take the place of proper or common nouns in a sentence.

Personal	Possessive	Relative	Reflexive
<p>Personal pronouns are used in place of a common or proper noun.</p> <p>Example: <i>She</i> is going to school at the library.</p> <p>I me he she it him her you we they them</p>	<p>Possessives show ownership.</p> <p>Example: This is <i>her</i> notebook.</p> <p>his hers its yours ours theirs</p>	<p>A relative pronoun links two pronouns into one complete thought or statement.</p> <p>Example: <i>Travonda</i> is a student <i>who</i> passed her Writing test.</p> <p>who whose that which whoever whichever whatever whom what</p>	<p>Reflexives are used when the object of the sentence is the same as its subject. Each personal pronoun has its own reflexive pronoun.</p> <p>Example: <i>I</i> did not want to hurt <i>myself</i>.</p> <p>myself yourself himself herself ourselves themselves</p>

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement (Introduction)

WHAT IS A PRONOUN?

A pronoun takes the place of a noun and sometimes refers to a noun.

Example #1

He is riding a bike through the park.

Reasoning: The word "he" is a pronoun because it takes the place of a person (e.g., John, David, Stephen).

Example #2

The weather is great today; let's make the most of it by going to the beach.

Reasoning: The word "it" is a pronoun because it refers to the weather.

WHAT IS AN ANTECEDENT?

An antecedent is a noun to which the pronoun refers. It usually goes before the pronoun ("ante" means before).

Example #1

Even though the party was fun, it was crowded.

Reasoning: "It" is the pronoun because it refers to the noun "party." And "party" is the antecedent because "party" is the noun to which "it," the pronoun, refers.

Example #2

People often like parties because they get to see old friends.

Reasoning: "They" refers to "people" and is, therefore, the pronoun. "People" is the antecedent because "people" is the noun to which "they" refers.

HOT GRAMMAR TIP

When you check your own sentences to determine if the pronouns agree with their antecedents in both number and person, look first for what the antecedent is. Then match the antecedent with a pronoun that is consistent in number (if the pronoun is singular, the antecedent should also be singular. Then identify the person of the antecedent (first, second, or third person) and then match the pronoun in person.

WHAT IS PRONOUN-ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT?

Pronoun antecedent agreement is when the pronoun agrees in number (referring to singular or plural) and person (referring to first, second, or third person) with its antecedent.

Example #1 (Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement - Number)

When an employee does not agree with their boss's decision, the employee should not support that decision.

Reasoning: This sentence contains an antecedent and a pronoun. Since the antecedent (employee) is singular and the pronoun (their) is plural, the pronoun disagrees with the antecedent, thus containing a pronoun-antecedent agreement error. You can correct this in one of two ways: either make both the pronoun and antecedent singular, or make both the pronoun and antecedent plural.

Example #1 (Corrected)

When an employee does not agree with his boss's decision, the employee should not support that decision.

Example #2 (Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement - Person)

Everyone should make their own decision.

Reasoning: This sentence contains an antecedent (everyone) and a pronoun (their). Since the antecedent is third person and singular (everyone), the pronoun (they) should also be third person and singular; instead, "they" is third person and plural.

Example #2 (Corrected)

Everyone should make his or her own decision.

Taken from the OWL at Purdue: depts.dyc.edu/learningcenter/owl/

Grapes of Wrath Grammar

Directions: 1) Underline the pronouns in the following paragraph. **2)** Note whether these pronouns are singular or plural by placing an "S" or a "P" next to them. **3)** Finally, circle the antecedents.

The wind grew stronger, whisked under stones, carried up straws and old leaves, and even little clods, marking its course as it sailed across the fields. The air and the sky darkened and through them the sun shone redly, and there was a raw sting in the air. During a night the wind raced faster over the land, dug cunningly among the rootlets of the corn, and the corn fought the wind with its weakened leaves until the roots were freed by the prying wind and then each stalk settled wearily sideways toward the earth and pointed the direction of the wind.

Directions: Replace the missing word with the correct pronoun. Pay careful attention to the antecedent to make sure that it agrees in number with the pronoun. Circle the antecedent of the pronoun you are writing.

- 1) Gophers and ant lions crawled, and _____ movement started small avalanches.
(its, their)
- 2) And as the sharp sun struck day after day, _____ burnt the fields.
(it, they)
- 3) Each leaf tilted downward, as _____ strength was lost.
(their, its)
- 4) The brown lines on the corn leaves widened and _____ moved in on the central ribs.
(each, they)
- 5) The weeds grew darker green to protect _____.
(itself, themselves)
- 6) The weeds frayed and edged back toward _____ roots.
(its, their)
- 7) The men in the fields looked up at the clouds and sniffed at _____.
(it, them)

HOW TO WRITE A PARAGRAPH

The Topic Sentence should tell your reader what your paragraph will be about. The topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph.

Supporting Details help explain your main idea to your reader. You may do this through:

- Stories from your own life
- Facts, quotes, or examples from an article you've read or research you've done

You should include 3-4 supporting details.

Your last sentence restates your topic sentence using different words. It should sum up what you just told your reader.

TOPIC SENTENCE:

SUPPORTING DETAILS:

SD 1:

SD 2:

SD 3:

SD 4:

CONCLUSION:
