

Part One Directions: Define the academic terms listed below in the context of a Response to Literature.

1. Claim: _____

2. Premise: _____

3. Evidence: _____

4. Justification: _____



Part Two Directions: Compose a well-structured Response to Literature/Literary Analysis Essay that answers the prompt below. The story continues on the back page as well.

Prompt Option 1: What lesson did Althea learn from this dilemma?

Prompt Option 2: What lesson did Flor learn from this dilemma?

“Dishonest Dilemma”

By Michelle Carter

Althea and Flor had been friends since the very first day of 5th grade. They had Homeroom together and began to chat while they waited to sign in and get their schedules. They were soon inseparable and wildly loyal to each other. Althea would always stop what she was doing to help Flor if she asked, and Flor did the same for Althea.

Their 8th grade year was coming to a close, and high school seemed more like a reality than some dream of their future. The girls studied together, Althea helping Flor with her math homework regularly. It was Flor’s weakest subject, and Althea had infinite patience in helping her best friend understand it. “Ooooh!” said Flor one afternoon after finally understanding how the Pythagorean theorem worked. “Thank goodness I have you to explain this to me.”

"No problem. I actually like this geometry unit," Althea said with a smile. The girls quietly continued working on their study guide for the unit exam. After a few moments, Althea heard Flor sigh, and looked up to see her scrolling on her phone, study guide forgotten. Eventually Althea, too, was distracted and the best friends spent the rest of their afternoon giggling and having fun watching videos. The next day was the unit test, and Flor fidgeted in her seat next to Althea. Ms. Newton was passing out the answer sheets.

"You okay?" Althea whispered, noting Flor's bouncing leg.

"I can't do this. I'm not good at math." Flor answered back, nearly in tears.

Althea was worried for her friend, but also knew that Flor would be fine if she just took her time and did the problems carefully. She whispered these words of encouragement to her, and saw Flor take a deep breath once the exam was placed in front of her.

The classroom was seriously quiet. Pencils scratched and erasers squeaked. Althea found the exam fairly easy and breezed through the questions, but was careful to copy her answers. About halfway through, she remembered Flor's anxiety. Althea took a quick peek at Flor, only to find her friend looking at her answer sheet and then quickly bubbling in answers on her own sheet. Althea froze in shock. Her best friend was cheating off her test? How long had she been doing that? Carefully, Althea moved her answer sheet closer to her, and made sure to cover her answers as she finished the last few questions of the test.

The girls handed in their exam after class, and Althea's stomach was in absolute knots over what to do. She didn't want her best friend to fail, but she also didn't want to betray her trust and tell Ms. Newton what she saw. She was so worked up about it that she didn't even eat lunch. Flor noticed and tried to talk to Althea about it. She brushed her off, saying she just wasn't hungry today.

That night, Althea tossed and turned in her bed, guilt chewing up her insides. Althea knew that Flor really wanted to be in the same classes as Althea in high school, and what if this exam changed Flor's grade so much that she was put in a different class next year? Should she confront Flor or tell Ms. Newton what she saw? If Althea confronted Flor, Flor might take it badly. What if she could convince Flor to tell Ms. Newton? Maybe if she convinced Flor to confess, neither one of them would be in trouble. But if Althea told Ms. Newton what happened, and Flor found out, she could lose her best friend over it.

The next day, after a poor night of sleep, Althea knew what she had to do. She found Flor in the cafeteria, eating breakfast. She took a seat next to her.

“Flor, you need to tell Ms. Newton you cheated on the exam yesterday,” Althea said bluntly. She wanted to get this conversation over with, and the only way to do that was to get right to the point.

“What?!” Flor said, color draining from her face. “But you know how bad I am at math. I needed help to pass that exam or we may not have that class together next year!” Flor looked genuinely scared.

Althea calmly explained that while she wanted to help her friend, cheating was not actually helping. Flor eventually understood what Althea was trying to explain and agreed to go speak to Ms. Newton.

Together, as they have always done, the girls spoke to their math teacher and explained what happened. Ms. Newton thanked them for their honesty, but unfortunately that meant that Flor would receive a zero on the exam.

“What?!” Flor said loudly. “But that’s not fair. I’m confessing. I should get another chance!”

Althea felt terrible. Flor stormed out of the classroom, leaving Althea with Ms. Newton. Althea began to cry, worried more about their friendship than any grade she ever received.

“You did the right thing, Althea,” Ms. Newton said kindly. “It may not feel like it now, but you did. She’ll come around. You’ll see.”

Althea wasn't sure, but she hoped Ms. Newton was right. She didn't think she could survive high school without her best friend at her side.

Directions: When writing a Response to Literature, a good way to begin your introductory paragraph is to use a TAG (title, author, genre). Adding adjectives to your TAG can also make it more interesting.

For example: Ray Bradbury is the author of the haunting short story, "All Summer in a Day."



Read the following titles, authors, and genres and create TAGs that could be used at the beginning of a Response to Literature. Make sure to pay attention to whether or not each piece is a novel or a short story.

1. Langston Hughes, "Thank you M'am," short story

2. Tupac Shakur, "The Rose That Grew from Concrete" poem

3. Jeff Kinney, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, young adult novel

4. Louis Sachar, *Holes*, young adult mystery novel

Teaching Claims

instructions for use

Before you can expect students to write claims of their own in a Response to Literature, students need to know what a claim is. In this activity, students review the definitions of statements and claims. We've provided you with detailed responses to review with students on the first page. This will help them further understand the differences between a claim and a statement.

The second page allows students to practice identifying claims and statements and providing reasoning for their choice. We suggest you provide some hand-holding with this activity – possibly even completing it as a class before sending students off on their own with the Claims vs. Statements Sort.

Following your work on these handouts, have students do independent practice or partner work with the Claims vs. Statements Sort. More detailed instructions for use are available for this activity in that .pdf download.

Note: We are including the short story mentioned in this activity. Please have your student read this story before completing the activity, if you think it will be beneficial.

Name _____

Date _____

Before working through the claims vs. statements sort, let's make sure you *really* understand the difference between claims and statements. First, read through the definitions of each below. Then, look at the sentences below and review what makes one sentence a **claim** and one a **statement**.

CLAIM

A sentence that can be argued
Evidence can be found to prove or
disprove the sentence

STATEMENT

The act of stating or declaring
Something that is factual

**CLAIM:**

In "Sweet Feeling of Freedom," by April LoTempio, the narrator successfully escapes Alcatraz because he is smarter than the guards and people running the prison.

What makes this a claim?

- It's arguable. Not everyone would agree that the narrator is able to escape because he is smarter than the guards and others running the prison.
- It can be supported with evidence. Read through the paragraph below to see how this claim can be supported with evidence from the story itself.

STATEMENT:

"Sweet Feeling of Freedom," by April LoTempio, is about a man who successfully escapes Alcatraz by stealing a uniform.

What makes this a statement?

- It simply CANNOT be argued. One quick check on the accuracy of this event will prove the statement correct. End of story.



**Sample Paragraph Arguing the Claim:**

Claim: In "Sweet Feeling of Freedom," by April LoTempio, the narrator successfully escapes Alcatraz because he is smarter than the guards and people running the prison.

The narrator is smarter than the guards and the people running the prison because he carefully observes their behavior and uses it against them. For example, the narrator plans how he's going to acquire all the necessary pieces of a guard's uniform by watching them carefully, as he states, "I knew where they stood and what they looked at. I knew that when Big John was on guard at the laundry room door, I could slip a shirt out of a bag while he lit a cigarette. I knew that if the tall guy with the mustache walked me back to my cell, he would notice a bulge underneath my clothes, but the new guy wouldn't" (LoTempio 2). He makes observations of the guards, getting to know their patterns of behavior over time. This allows him to steal parts of the uniform he needs to look like one of them and escape unseen several months later, proving that the narrator is smarter than the guards and the people running the prison.

SAMPLE ANSWERS

Now, it's your turn. Carefully examine the two sentences below and determine which one is a claim and which one is a statement. On the lines below each sentence explain your reasoning.

 <p style="text-align: center;">CLAIM</p> <p>A sentence that can be argued Evidence can be found to prove or disprove the sentence</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">STATEMENT</p> <p>The act of stating or declaring Something that is <u>factual</u></p>
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“Moving Up,” by April LoTempio, tells the harrowing tale of a girl named May who stands up to bullies and looks out for the new kids at school.

Statement:

It can easily be proven that April LoTempio wrote the short story, “Moving Up.” Even if one has not read the story, a brief search of the plot can confirm what it is about.

In “Moving Up,” by April LoTempio, no matter what the other students say about May’s intentions on the night of the Moving Up Challenge, May demonstrates real bravery.

Claim:

This sentence can be argued. Even if one is not familiar with the story, the phrase, “May demonstrates real bravery” is subjective. Perhaps after reading, one might disagree about May’s bravery.

You may wish to share the paragraph below with students to show how a claim can be proven using evidence from the text.

Possible answer if a student has read the story:

To start with, May is brave because she is willing to take an unpopular stance by opposing the Moving Up Challenge. After she takes embarrassing pictures of the bullies who put her up to the challenge, LoTempio states that May “kept her ears open for any talk about the moving up challenge. Whenever the topic came up, she reassured the new kid with hilarious pictures of the bullies, and she reminded the bullies that if they went through with the challenge, she’d make their pictures famous” (2). May’s bravery in taking an unpopular stand is worth it for the ultimate reward: an end to the moving up challenge for good. May demonstrates her bravery by confidently “completing” the moving up challenge while still honoring her personal values.

ANSWER KEY

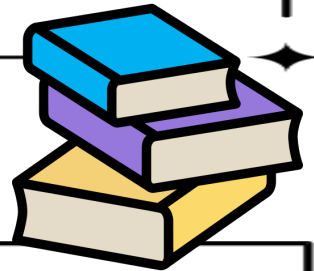
Before you're sent off to write your own introductory paragraph, let's take a look at two examples, so you can see what a strong introductory paragraph should look like. After you read through each example, go back through the paragraph and, with different-colored highlighters/markers, highlight each element of an introductory paragraph – the TAG, summary, and claim. Even though you do not know the prompt that was given, remember that a claim is an *arguable* statement.

**EXAMPLE ONE****TAG****SUMMARY**

In *The Giver*, a dystopian novel by Lois Lowry, a young boy named Jonas is assigned a special job at his Ceremony of Twelve. He is going to be the new Receiver of Memory, who is responsible for keeping the memories of the Community from before the Sameness. This means that Jonas and The Giver are the only ones who know of pain, suffering, and war. But they are also the only ones who are aware of joy, passion, and color. Although this may seem like a special gift, ultimately, having this knowledge is a burden for Jonas. **CLAIM**

**EXAMPLE TWO****TAG****SUMMARY**

The House on Mango Street, by Sandra Cisneros, follows a twelve-year-old Mexican American girl as she adjusts to living with her family in a crowded neighborhood in Chicago. Told as a series of short stories, the novel shows Esperanza maturing over the course of a year as she faces a series of almost too-grown-up problems with her friends and people in the neighborhood. Some of these problems make her desperate to leave Mango Street some day, but she also recognizes how much it has shaped her identity. Ultimately these moments show why her name, meaning "hope" in Spanish, is especially fitting for her. **CLAIM**



Name _____

Date _____

When writing a literary analysis or argumentative essay, it's not only important to find evidence from the text that supports your point of view, but to find the *right* evidence to really solidify your stance.

Below, put a star next to the piece(s) of evidence from the choices that BEST supports each argument or position. For each option, explain why you would or would not include it in a paragraph. Then, write a logical sentence that justifies how one piece of evidence supports the claim.

Claim: Regular sustained silent reading helps improve academic achievement. 

EVIDENCE OPTIONS:	Would you use this evidence? Why or why not?
<p>"Some research shows that regular sustained silent reading does not affect future academic achievement."</p>	
<p>"Teachers' reading practices affect how well they're able to develop engaging curriculum for their students."</p>	
<p>"Scientists studied how well mice performed on aptitude tests after being read to regularly for a month. The conclusion was that the mice did slightly better on the tests than those who were never read to."</p>	
<p>"One hundred teachers studied the effects of regular sustained silent reading (SSR) over the course of 10 years, and consistently found that students performed better on reading and writing assignments in English class than those who did not participate in SSR."</p>	

How does this piece of evidence support the claim? Justify your opinion.



Below, put a star next to the piece(s) of evidence from the choices that BEST supports the claim. For each option, explain why you would or would not include it in a paragraph. Then, write a logical sentence that justifies how one piece of evidence supports the claim. For this practice, some extra information (context) has been provided to help you choose the best evidence to support the claim below.

Claim: In "Moving Up," by April LoTempio, May demonstrates real bravery in taking a stance against the bullies who encourage the dangerous tradition.



EVIDENCE OPTIONS	Would you use this evidence? Why or why not?
<p>"Thoughts of the Moving Up Challenge bounced around May's head like a pinball – sneaking into the abandoned house, taking a picture in every room, not coming out until morning."</p>	
<p>"The truth was, May wasn't really afraid of going into the abandoned house alone for a night. It was more the principle of the challenge that bothered her."</p>	
<p>"She entered the home through a broken basement window. It probably would've been frightening if she wasn't so excited about carrying out her plan."</p>	
<p>"When school resumed in the fall, May made a point of seeking out and befriending any new kids. She kept her ears open for any talk about the Moving Up Challenge."</p>	

How does this piece of evidence support the claim? Justify your opinion.



Directions: Read through the sample Response to Literature for “Coach Ron” below. You have been given an introduction and two body paragraphs, but the conclusion is missing. Your task is to practice writing the conclusion by 1) restating the claim in new words, and 2) summarizing the evidence. **But**, before you do all of this, label all the elements of the intro paragraph (TAG, summary, and claim) and all the elements in the body paragraphs (premise, introduction to evidence, evidence, and justification). This will help you easily identify the claim that needs to be restated and the evidence that needs to be summarized.

**The question for this RTL was:
Is Coach Ron a good coach for Abby?**



“Coach Ron,” a short story written by April LoTempio, is about a talented young gymnast and her coach. Coach Ron is helping 16-year-old Abby train for the 2016 Summer Olympics, and both of them are dreaming for a gold medal. This is especially important to Coach Ron as he is planning to retire after the 2016 games, and Abby desperately wants to make him proud. **Even though it might seem like Coach Ron pushes Abby too hard, he is an incredible coach to Abby.**

First, Coach Ron is more than just a mentor for gymnastics to Abby; he is also a father figure. He cares about Abby as a person when the author states, “He was also very caring, keeping tabs on Abby’s training, her confidence level, her injuries, and even her life balance outside the gym” (LoTempio 1). Coach Ron is like a father to Abby because he cares about her overall well being, not just her skills as a gymnast. This makes him an incredible coach because he understands that for Abby to be a successful Olympic gymnast, she must also be an overall happy and balanced young woman.

Additionally, Coach Ron is very observant and caring of Abby while she’s competing. For example, he notices a slight change in Abby’s routine, and immediately asks her about it when he states, “After your landing, you turned right to salute first, but I know you always turn left first. What’s going on?” (LoTempio 2). Coach Ron notices a seemingly insignificant change to the end of one of Abby’s routines and already knows there is something wrong because of it. This makes him a good coach because he is very aware of his athlete’s body language, taking notice of it immediately and caring about her well-being.

Name _____

Date _____

CONCLUSION

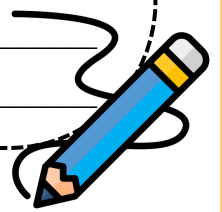


First, restate the claim in different words (this is highlighted in **BOLD** above):

Lined writing area for restating the claim.

Then, summarize the two pieces of evidence in your own words:

Lined writing area for summarizing evidence.



Skylar Scholar

Ms. Granger

English 8

24 April 2023

“The Art Show” Teacher Response to Literature

In April LoTempio’s short story, “The Art Show,” a young narrator explains her worries over her best friend competing against her in the upcoming art show. The narrator writes in her diary about how she is convinced that Keisha, her best friend, is planning on winning the show and outshining the narrator. However, the narrator’s insecure tone in this diary entry demonstrates how unreliable she is in explaining her concerns.

To begin, the narrator assumes the worst of her best friend during a visit to Keisha’s house one afternoon before the show. When the narrator spots a nice dress hanging up in Keisha’s bedroom, she assumes Keisha picked it specifically as her winning outfit when the narrator states, “It was a white dress with blue stripes that would look just perfect with a blue ribbon pinned onto it” (LoTempio 1). Here, the narrator is assuming that her best friend is choosing her clothing based on how it would look with the first place prize. This assumption comes from the narrator’s insecure nature, worried that she could be outdone in the Art Show. This makes her unreliable as a narrator because it’s clear her insecurities are masking the potential truth of the situation.

Additionally, the narrator questions the sincerity of Keisha’s sentiment when she wishes her good luck at the art show. When Keisha smiles and tells the narrator good luck with the submission to the art show, the narrator writes, “Can you believe that? She looked me right in the eye and smiled while she said it! Look, I’ve always liked Keisha, but this is war” (LoTempio 2).

Keisha appears to genuinely care about the narrator's success in the show, but the narrator's insecure nature is causing her to completely misunderstand the conversation. The narrator is immediately assuming Keisha is insincere in her words, and declares "war." This makes her an unreliable narrator because the reader cannot identify with the narrator's suspicions of Keisha as there is no real evidence of her deception.

The narrator's insecurities make her an unreliable narrator as she questions her best friend's intentions regarding the art show. First, she assumes the dress is picked out as a winning outfit, but then also assumes Keisha's good luck wishes are disingenuous when there is no indication that is the case. Unfortunately, the narrator may lose a good friend like Keisha if she continues to let her insecurities get in the way of things.

Name: _____

This handout includes the very basics of MLA formatting. A great website for your reference is owl.english.purdue.edu – you can find extensive MLA information there!



Basics

Times New Roman
12-Point Font
Double-Spaced
Throughout
Indent 1" Margins

Heading

Left-Hand Side of Paper
Your Full Name
Teacher's Name
Class Name
Date (day month year)

Header

Upper Right Corner
Last Name + Page #
Include on first page and each consecutive page



In-Text Citations

Any time you include a quote or a paraphrase in your writing, you need to use a parenthetical citation. You will use the author's last name and page number in the text itself, whether in the introduction of the evidence or in the parentheses. The end mark should go outside the parenthetical citation.

- EX 1:** Dumas describes Dantès as "a fine, tall, slim young fellow of eighteen or twenty, with black eyes, and hair as dark as a raven's wing" (1).
- EX 2:** The author describes Dantès as "a fine, tall, slim young fellow of eighteen or twenty, with black eyes, and hair as dark as a raven's wing" (Dumas 1).

Last Name and page #

Your Name

Your Teacher's Name








Class Name


12 December 2023

Original Title of Paper Goes Here

This is the correct format according to the Modern Language Association (MLA), and it is the standard method for all typed assignments unless your teacher specifically requests an alternate style. Use only white paper, standard size (8 ½ x 11), and print only in black ink. Double-space ALL text, including your name, your teacher's name, the class name, and the date. Speaking of the date, notice the strange format: day, month, and year. You'll also notice where the original title of your paper should go. Do not underline, bold, or italicize your title – just leave it as is.

Utilize these transitional word categories when writing an RTL to help you compose even better transitions between paragraphs and sentences.

	To show time:	first, second, third, later, next, eventually, finally, meanwhile, sooner
	To show place:	above, amid, beyond, nearby, through
	To add information:	furthermore, in addition, for example, equally important, besides
	To explain an idea:	showcasing, specifically, illustrating, for example
	To compare and contrast:	similarly, however, even though, in the same way, on the other hand
	To show a result:	consequently, thus, therefore, hence, in conclusion, finally
	To emphasize an idea:	indeed, most important, above all

To gain more practice utilizing transition words, rewrite the following body paragraph, adding transition words where you think they would be the most effective. For each transition word you include, justify why you chose that word and indicate a specific spot for it. 

Jack's change in attitude is also influenced by his experience helping a stranger in need. An older lady was struggling to get something off a high shelf at the grocery store. Without thinking, he walked over to help her as Carter states, "After handing over the box of noodles, the old woman smiled at him and said, 'Thank you,' in her tiny voice. Jack felt a warmth in his chest and smile spread across his face" (3). Because his attitude was already changing from doing the essay, he didn't even have to think about helping the woman when he saw her struggling. His reward wasn't material, only a smile, and that was enough for him. This demonstrates an additional positive change in his behavior because of this interaction.

