

Materials and Lessons for Teaching Close Reading of “The Necklace”

**Created by Megan Pankiewicz,
on behalf of *The English Teacher’s Friend***

Name:

Close Reading and Annotating “The Necklace”

Directions: In the “Annotated Quotes” column, highlight or circle important words, images, or sentences in the quote. In the “Notes – Thoughts – Questions” column, write down observations or insights you have about the quote or any questions presented.

Annotated Quotes	Notes – Thoughts - Questions
<p>She was one of those pretty, charming young ladies, born, as if through an error of destiny, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no hopes, no means of becoming known, appreciated, loved, and married by a man either rich or distinguished; and she allowed herself to marry a petty clerk in the office of the Board of Education.</p>	
<p>She suffered incessantly, feeling herself born for all delicacies and luxuries. She suffered from the poverty of her apartment, the shabby walls, the worn chair, and the faded stuffs.</p>	
<p>She had neither frocks nor jewels, nothing. And she loved only those things. She felt that she was made for them. She had such a desire to please, to be sought after, to be clever, and courted.</p>	
<p>She saw at first some bracelets, then a collar of pearls, then a Venetian cross of gold and jewels of admirable workmanship. She tried the jewels before the glass, hesitated, but could neither decide to take them or leave them. Then she said: “Have you nothing more?”</p>	
<p>She danced with enthusiasm, with passion, intoxicated with pleasure, thinking of nothing, in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a kind of cloud of happiness that came of all this homage, and of all this admiration, of all these awakened desires, and this victory so complete and sweet to the heart of woman.</p>	

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<p>He borrowed it, asking for a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis of this one, and three louis of that one. He gave notes, made ruinous promises, took money of usurers and the whole race of lenders. He compromised his whole existence, in fact, risked his signature, without even knowing whether he could make it good or not, and, harassed by anxiety for the future, by the black misery which surrounded him, and by the prospect of all physical privations and moral torture, he went to get the new necklace, depositing on the merchant's counter thirty-six thousand francs.</p>	
<p>Madame Loisel seemed old now. She had become a strong, hard woman, the crude woman of the poor household. Her hair badly dressed, her skirts awry, her hands red, she spoke in a loud tone, and washed the floors with large pails of water.</p>	
<p>And she smiled with a proud and simple joy.</p>	

FIVE SIGNIFICANT POINTS FROM CLASS DISCUSSION:

Name:
Period:

CLOSE READING OF “The Necklace”

Materials for students:

Copies of the excerpted text; three different colored highlighters; pencil or pen

Materials for instructor:

Overhead projector or document camera

Agenda:

- 1) Distribute copies of text and highlighters to students.
- 2) Explain difference between reading for comprehension and reading for analysis.

Reading for comprehension	Reading for analysis
Focus on understanding story	Focus on investigating writing
Looking at whole picture	Zooming in on tiny pieces
Acting as a reader	Acting as a scientist or detective

- 3) Walk the students through the annotating steps below. Before beginning, tell the students not to worry about being right or wrong; rather, make decisions based on knowledge and gut instinct.
 - a) Highlight words associated with wealth and beauty in pink.
 - b) Highlight words associated with poverty and homeliness in yellow.
- 4) It is up to the instructor whether or not to stop for discussion and sharing after each step of the annotation process. Essentially, the activity should follow the following process:
- 5) After giving students a few minutes for highlighting, the instructor should invite students to share what one thing they have highlighted. This is an excellent opportunity to gauge understanding, engage the entire class, and create a low-stress moment for participation by those students who typically don't share. In some cases the instructor may simply highlight the word and call on the next student, but in other cases a follow question of “Why did you highlight that word?” is necessary and needed to further discussion and promote metacognition.
- 6) Once the shared annotations are marked, the instructor will lead the students in a class discussion of what those annotations reveal. This is the most crucial step. It is not enough for students to identify similes; we want to move them forward in understanding WHY an author uses them – in general and in specific circumstances. Oftentimes students need help finding patterns, but seeing patterns in writing leads to a deeper understanding of a text.

Assessment:

Students can be assessed on their participation during the activity, their annotations on the excerpt, and/or in a follow-up writing activity in which they are asked to explain their analysis in a paragraph or more.

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ANALYZING THE OPENING & CLOSING OF “THE NECKLACE”

In this short story, Guy De Maupassant uses his protagonist to develop his theme. Closely read the two excerpts below and compare how Madame Loisel is portrayed in the beginning and at the end of the story. Annotate the passage, then consider the questions below the excerpts.

Opening	Closing
<p>She was one of those pretty, charming young ladies, born, as if through an error of destiny, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no hopes, no means of becoming known, appreciated, loved, and married by a man either rich or distinguished; and she allowed herself to marry a petty clerk in the office of the Board of Education.</p> <p>She was simple, not being able to adorn herself; but she was unhappy, as one out of her class; for women belong to no caste, no race; their grace, their beauty, and their charm serving them in the place of birth and family. Their inborn finesse, their instinctive elegance, their suppleness of wit are their only aristocracy, making some daughters of the people the equal of great ladies.</p> <p>She suffered incessantly, feeling herself born for all delicacies and luxuries. She suffered from the poverty of her apartment, the shabby walls, the worn chair, and the faded stuffs.</p>	<p>Madame Loisel now knew the horrible life of necessity. She did her part, however, completely heroically. It was necessary to pay this frightful debt. She would pay it. They sent away the maid; they changed their lodgings; they rented some rooms under a mansard roof.</p> <p>She learned the heavy cares of a household, the odious work of a kitchen. She washed the dishes, using her rosy nails upon the greasy pots and the bottoms of the stewpans. She washed the soiled linens, the chemises and dishcloths, which she hung on the line to dry; she took down the refuse to the street each morning and brought up the water, stopping at each landing to breathe. And, clothes like a woman of the people, she went to the grocer's, the butcher's, and the fruiterer's, with her basket on her arm, shopping, haggling over the last sou of her miserable money.</p> <p>....</p> <p>Madame Loisel seemed old now. She had become a strong, hard woman, the crude woman of the poor household. Her hair badly dressed, her skirts awry, her hands red, she spoke in a loud tone, and washed the floors with large pails of water.</p>

Name:

Period:

1) Go back and highlight words dealing with wealth and beauty in pink. Highlight words dealing with poverty and homeliness in yellow. Now look for patterns. What are they? What conclusions can you draw?

2) What do you notice about the sentence structure in these two sections? There is a technique called “Form Follows Function” that writer’s use; FFF means they use sentence structure to imitate or mimic an idea in the text. Where do you notice instances of this technique in these excerpts?

3) Tone is a writer’s attitude toward the writer or speaker towards the subject, the audience, or toward him/herself. What is De Maupassant’s attitude toward Madame Loisel? Does it change or remain the same? Support with textual evidence.

Name:
Period:

Fleshing out a character

What does this character think about the society s/he lives in?

What plans does this character make?

Important things s/he said (2)

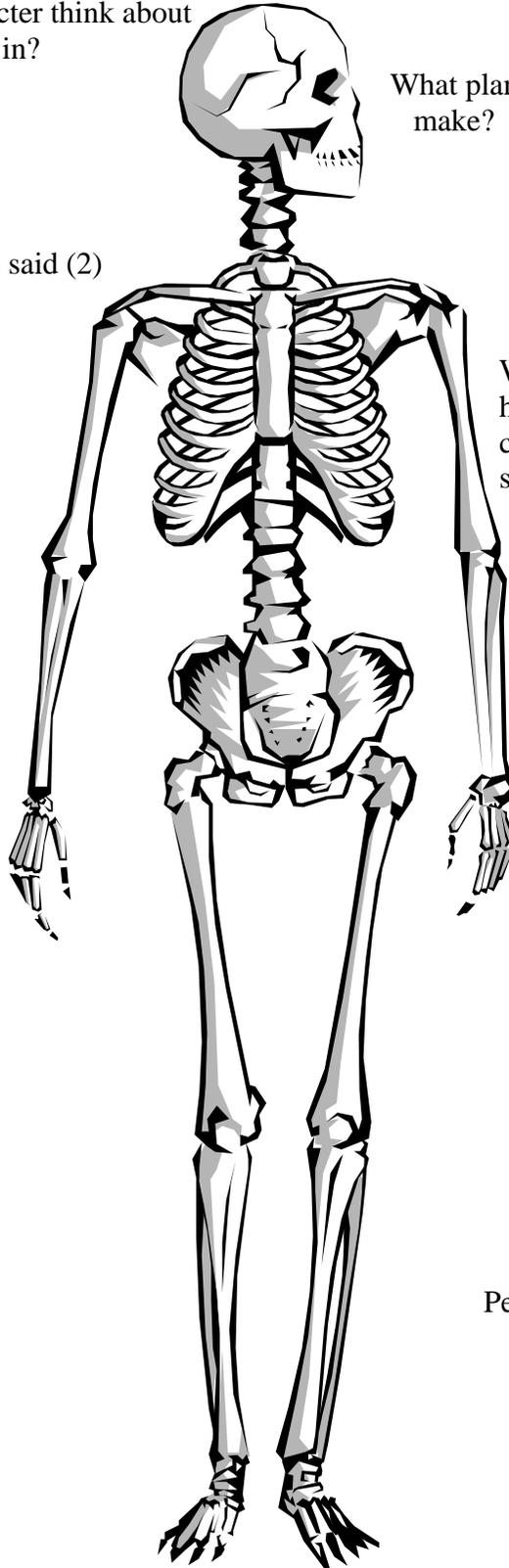
What is at the heart of his/her personality that causes him/her to act and say what he/she does?

What s/he did

What s/he tried to do

Personality strengths

Personality weaknesses



Sample Character Traits

able	demanding	hopeless	restless
active	dependable	humorous	rich
adventurous	depressed	ignorant	rough
affectionate	determined	imaginative	rowdy
afraid	discouraged	impatient	rude
alert	dishonest	impolite	sad
ambitious	disrespectful	inconsiderate	safe
angry	doubtful	independent	satisfied
annoyed	dull	industrious	scared
anxious	dutiful	innocent	secretive
apologetic	eager	intelligent	selfish
arrogant	easygoing	jealous	serious
attentive	efficient	kindly	sharp
average	embarrassed	lazy	short
bad	encouraging	leader	shy
blue	energetic	lively	silly
bold	evil	lonely	skillful
bored	excited	loving	sly
bossy	expert	loyal	smart
brainy	fair	lucky	sneaky
brave	faithful	mature	sorry
bright	fearless	mean	spoiled
brilliant	fierce	messy	stingy
busy	foolish	miserable	strange
calm	fortunate	mysterious	strict
careful	foul	naughty	stubborn
careless	fresh	nervous	sweet
cautious	friendly	nice	talented
charming	frustrated	noisy	tall
cheerful	funny	obedient	thankful
childish	gentle	obnoxious	thoughtful
clever	giving	old	thoughtless
clumsy	glamorous	peaceful	tired
coarse	gloomy	picky	tolerant
concerned	good	pleasant	touchy
confident	graceful	polite	trusting
confused	grateful	poor	trustworthy
considerate	greedy	popular	unfriendly
cooperative	grouchy	positive	unhappy
courageous	grumpy	precise	upset
cowardly	guilty	proper	useful
cross	happy	proud	warm
cruel	harsh	quick	weak
curious	hateful	quiet	wicked
dangerous	healthy	rational	wise
daring	helpful	reliable	worried
dark	honest	religious	wrong
decisive	hopeful	responsible	young

NAME:

PERIOD:

**CHARACTER TRAITS & TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
FOR _____**

CHARACTER TRAIT #1:	
Quote (pg. ____):	Commentary:
Quote (pg. ____):	Commentary:

CHARACTER TRAIT #2:	
Quote (pg. ____):	Commentary:
Quote (pg. ____):	Commentary:

Character Analysis Model - Good

In Ray Bradbury's novel, Fahrenheit 451, Granger functions as a wise old man. He and the other Book People accept (and expected) Montag from the beginning, saying, "Welcome back from the dead, Montag." By acknowledging Montag's previous state of mind and accepting him into the group, Granger acts as the experienced elder who takes a mentee under his wing. After Montag claims he's been "an idiot all the way," Granger reassures him, "We're used to that. We all made the *right* kind of mistakes, or we wouldn't be here." Through Granger's understanding, Montag can feel better about his past errors in judgment.

As an older person, Granger is also a realist. He understands that the Book People are "book burners, too." Granger realizes that incriminatory evidence could possibly destroy the knowledge each runaway contains, so to avoid that conflict, he and the others "read the books and burnt them." He also understands that one individual is not enough to change the world. He tells Montag, "You're not important. You're not anything." Granger understands that the knowledge each person carries is what is important, not the individual body.

Character Analysis – Poor

I think that Montag is a curious person. I think that because he stayed with Clarisse and listened to her the whole time. If he wasn't curious, he wouldn't have stayed and listened to her. Montag is also open-minded. He is open-minded because when Beatty came to his house, Beatty had the 2 hour long lecture about life and books. For example Beatty said "Once, books appealed to a few people here, there, everywhere..." Beatty shows some books caught people's eyes by attention, then everyone wanted it.

Using Highlighters for Close Reading

Overview:

Traditionally, honors or Advanced Placement students comprehend the texts we assign them to read. Our goal is to help students to notice elements of fiction beyond the plot and characters, and to break apart those elements to see what really makes writing function.

Materials:

Photocopy excerpt(s) from fictional texts – one for each student to write on
Several different colored highlighters for each student
Overhead transparency of text or photocopied version for document reader

Directions:

1. Pass out excerpt(s) to students
2. Read through the excerpt once, if new to students
3. Guide students through highlighting different elements (i.e. symbolism, figurative language, syntax, diction, imagery, characterization, etc.)
4. Approach each element one at a time. After each element, ask students to share what they marked and mark elements on an overhead transparency.
5. Once all elements have been marked, ask students to look for patterns or to offer explanations for the purpose or effect of each element. Instruct them to write down their thoughts – this gives all students the time and opportunity to arrive at their conclusions. After the majority of students have written their thoughts, ask for volunteers to share their insights.
6. Follow-up activities might include allowing students to work individually or with a partner on a new passage, or building in a writing assignment whereupon students would write an analytical paragraph or essay.

Assessment:

If this is the first time students have participated in this type of lesson, grade primarily for completion. After they have had practice with close reading, look for insight and complexity of thought and analysis.