# Follow, Follow, Follow: Conforming to Society

## Task 1:  Resolving Family Conflict

### Activity 2:  Resolving Family Conflict Through Short Stories

**Directions:**

Select and read one short story from the list below.  As you read, you will determine how literary devices, plot structure, and conflict influence the meaning of the story.  After reading, complete all parts of the activity.

Choose one of the following short stories:

- "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut
- "The Veldt" by Ray Bradbury
- "Raymond's Run" by Toni Cade-Bambera
- "Eveline" by James Joyce

**Literary Devices**

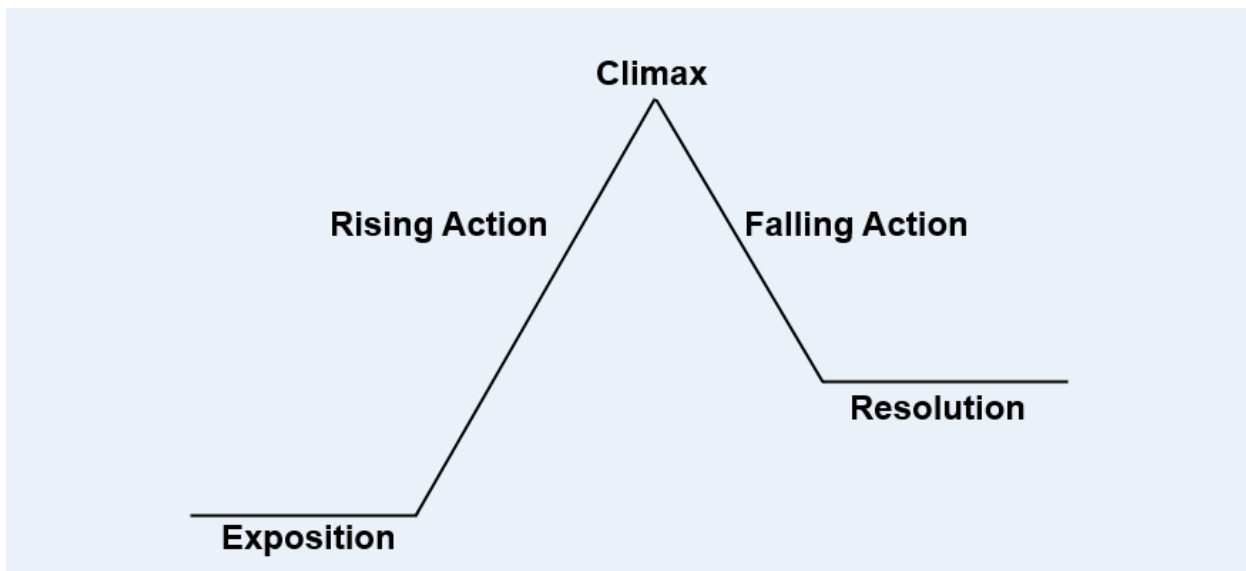| Author | Kurt Vonnegut | Title | "Harrison Bergeron" |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  In 2-3 sentences, describe how the opening paragraphs reflect the mood of the story. ||||
| Answers will vary. Ex: The futuristic tone and the concept of equality that is repeated creates a mood of conformity. The government provides legislation to support that conformity and enforces it as well. ||||
| 2.  In 2-3 sentences, describe the author's tone throughout the story. ||||
| Answers will vary. Ex: Throughout the story, the author develops a satirical and sarcastic tone, specifically indicated by the dialogue between the mother and father.  There is a great deal of irony and hyperbole that propels the theme of the story. ||||
| 3.  In 1 sentence, summarize the theme of the story. ||||
| Answers will vary. Ex: The theme is injustice; when all people are equal, there is inherent injustice. ||||

| Author | Ray Bradbury | Title | "The Veldt" |
|---|---|---|---|

| 1. In 2-3 sentences, describe how the opening paragraphs reflect the mood of the story. |
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| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: The futuristic story opens with a mood that promotes an automaticity to life that allows people to become complacent if not even lazy. Individuality is lost due to reliance on technological advancements. |

| 2. In 2-3 sentences, describe the author's tone throughout the story. |
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| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: The author's cautious tone provides a warning to the audience about utilizing too much reliance on technology in an attempt to simplify life. The result of this automaticity is that people lose their effectiveness in dealing with all aspects of life, especially their interpersonal relationships. |

| 3. In 1 sentence, summarize the theme of the story. |
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| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: Misplaced trust in technology leads to the downfall of society. |

| Author | Toni Cade-Bambera | Title | "Raymond's Run" |
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| 1. In 2-3 sentences, describe how the opening paragraphs reflect the mood of the story. |
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| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: The mood in the opening of the story demonstrates a paradox for the speaker. She claims that she has limited responsibilities because of the things her parents do for her, yet she has an enormous responsibility in taking care of her brother Raymond. |

| 2. In 2-3 sentences, describe the author's tone throughout the story. |
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| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: The speaker exemplifies a sense of self-pride throughout the story. She, as a tomboy, is outspoken and tough. She doesn't behave like other kids her age and demonstrates qualities of leadership. In the end she has an epiphany about her brother Raymond's worth. |

| 3. In 1 sentence, summarize the theme of the story. |
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| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: Everybody has strengths; sometimes you need to work harder than others to succeed, but it is rewarding regardless. |

| Author | James Joyce | Title | "Eveline" |
|---|---|---|---|

| 1. In 2-3 sentences, describe how the opening paragraphs reflect the mood of the story. |
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| Answers will vary. Ex: The short opening provides a mood of exhaustion.  The audience can sense that there a tiredness that comes not only from her inactivity, watching out the window, but something greater weighing on her mind. |

| 2. In 2-3 sentences, describe the author's tone throughout the story. |
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| Answers will vary. Ex: There is a dark and contemplative tone throughout the story as weighty issues consume the energy of the main character. The story demonstrates the pitfalls of a dilemma between a past with her family and a future with her love. She has confusion over a decision she needs to make, and in the end, she is satisfied with her decision even though it is not in her best interest. |

| 3. In 1 sentence, summarize the theme of the story. |
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| Answers will vary. Ex: Sometimes we choose what is best for others over what is best for ourselves. |

**Plot Structure**

Write 1-2 sentences to identify and summarize the events of that part of the plot.  Be sure to note any specific details relative to each part of the plot.

| "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut |
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| **Exposition:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what is learned about characters in the opening of the story. |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: We learn that George and Hazel Bergeron's 14-year old son Harrison has been taken away. We can infer that it was a government action because Harrison has too many above-average characteristics. |
| **Rising Action:** In 1-2 sentences, describe the major events of the story that have drawn you into the story. |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: George and Hazel are watching a television show with ballerinas and having a conversation that explains the handicaps within society to make everyone equal. The reader can tell that George has more handicaps than Hazel to help the reader understand the underlying premise. The reader then learns that they will be watching their son. |
| **Climax:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what happens to determine the turning point of the story. |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: George and Hazel watch their son revolt against the government and ultimately die. |
| **Falling Action:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what action occurs as a direct result of the climax. |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: Through government-aided handicaps, George and Hazel forget what they just witnessed, the execution of their son. |
| **Resolution:** In 1-2 sentences, describe how the characters have stayed the same or changed. |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: George and Hazel remain puppets of the government, unaffected by the tragic events of their son and unable to overcome their handicaps to independently think about retribution. |


| "The Veldt" by Ray Bradbury |
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| **Exposition:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what is learned about characters in the opening of the story. |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: The main characters, George and Lydia Hadley, are having a conversation about a notable change in their children's nursery, part of an automatized house. The entire house, which could also be considered a character, takes care of the families' every need. |
| **Rising Action:** In 1-2 sentences, describe the major events of the story that have drawn you into the story. |
| Answers will vary. |

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| Ex: The house becomes the antagonist as it wears away the family's ability to take care of its own needs. The nursery becomes a surrogate parent for the children. The children are upset with their parents and the suspense builds as the tension grows between the children and the parents. |
| **Climax:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what happens to determine the turning point of the story. |
| Answers will vary. Ex: The parents decide to turn off the house and lock the nursery. The children revolt but the house is "killed." |
| **Falling Action:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what action occurs as a direct result of the climax. |
| Answers will vary. Ex: The father brings in an outside expert to analyze their situation, and a psychologist points out that the family needs self-reliance to rectify the self-centered, spoiled tendencies. The children whine and beg for one last chance to go into the nursery. They persuade their mother for one last opportunity. The father temporarily returns the power to the house. |
| **Resolution:** In 1-2 sentences, describe how the characters have stayed the same or changed. |
| Answers will vary. Ex: The children lure their parents into the nursery where they have created lions that will eat their parents. The parents are killed and the psychologist returns to the children, eating a picnic lunch, seemingly unaffected. |

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| "Raymond's Run" by Toni Cade-Bambera |
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| **Exposition:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what is learned about characters in the opening of the story. |
| Answers will vary. Ex: The young female protagonist, identified as Squeaky, is responsible for caring for her mentally challenged brother Raymond. She is independent, confident, practical and fiercely competitive, unaffected by peer pressures. She will also protect her brother at any cost, as he is often the brunt of other children's taunts. |
| **Rising Action:** In 1-2 sentences, describe the major events of the story that have drawn you into the story. |
| Answers will vary. Ex: The main character is training for a May Day race that she wins every year. She is confident in her ability to continue this streak. The audience also learns that she is distant from other female companions, nor does she interact well with others due to her defensive attitude. |
| **Climax:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what happens to determine the turning point of the story. |
| Answers will vary. Ex: Squeaky sees her brother running along side the fence and he is keeping up with her. She simultaneously wins the race and discovers that her brother has kept up with her. |

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| **Falling Action:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what action occurs as a direct result of the climax. |
| Answers will vary. |
| Ex: The main character discovers that her gift may be her ability to coach her brother. She allows herself the possibility that others might win the race, and she loses interest in the notion of winning. She recognizes that she has lots of individual talents, but running can now be something for Raymond. |
| **Resolution:** In 1-2 sentences, describe how the characters have stayed the same or changed. |
| Answers will vary. |
| Ex: The main character realizes that everyone has a gift and it's important to celebrate others' strengths. Even people with disabilities have talents and can be successful. |

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| "Eveline" by James Joyce |
| **Exposition:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what is learned about characters in the opening of the story. |
| Answers will vary. |
| Ex: Eveline, the protagonist, is contemplating an important and life-altering decision. |
| **Rising Action:** In 1-2 sentences, describe the major events of the story that have drawn you into the story. |
| Answers will vary. |
| Ex: The main character weighs the pros and cons of her life-altering decision of staying at home with her family or leaving with the man she loves. It appears that there is more benefit to leaving than to staying. |
| **Climax:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what happens to determine the turning point of the story. |
| Answers will vary. |
| Ex: She decides not to get onto the boat with Frank, her lover. |
| **Falling Action:** In 1-2 sentences, explain what action occurs as a direct result of the climax. |
| Answers will vary. |
| Ex: Frank is desperately trying to change her mind and convince Eveline to leave with him despite the fact that she has clearly made her decision. |
| **Resolution:** In 1-2 sentences, describe how the characters have stayed the same or changed. |
| Answers will vary. |
| Ex: She refuses to recognize her love as he leaves, acting detached from him to protect her emotions. |

**Conflict**

Identify and explain two examples in which an individual is pitted against a belief or value held by the society around him or her.

*We have provided one example from each story, but there are further examples that students could potentially provide.*

| "Harrison Bergeron" | |
|---|---|
| Write a specific example of man vs. society conflict | Explain how this example demonstrates the man vs. society conflict |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex:  Harrison is trying to eliminate his government-imposed handicaps to become an individual. | Harrison is trying to become an individual instead of acting and thinking the way the government wants him to act and think.  Harrison's behavior is juxtaposed to the rest of society, and especially his parents, who want him to conform like everyone else. |
| "The Veldt" | |
| Write a specific example of man vs. society conflict | Explain how this example demonstrates the man vs. society conflict |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: Society has accepted an over-reliance on technology.  The parents and the psychologist realize that technology has made them ineffective and attempt to change. | In an attempt to end the cycle of over-reliance on technology, the parents revolt against the societal norms of lifestyle automaticity.  The attempt is in vain as their children will not accept this potential change. |
| "Raymond's Run" | |
| Write a specific example of man vs. society conflict | Explain how this example demonstrates the man vs. society conflict |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: Raymond is treated poorly by others in society due to his handicap. | Society does not believe that Raymond can be successful in his abilities, but due to the main characters' involvement, he overcomes perceived societal limitations. |
| "Eveline" | |
| Write a specific example of man vs. society conflict | Explain how this example demonstrates the man vs. society conflict |
| Answers will vary.<br><br>Ex: The female main character struggles with the societal expectation that she is responsible for fulfilling her mother's role in caring for the family. | Society's expectation is that she would sacrifice her own happiness to care for her family, as was her promise to her dying mother. She forfeits love and the potential for beginning her own family to keep her promise. |