

Follow, Follow, Follow: Conforming to Society

Task 3: Understanding Power Struggles

Activity 1: Understanding Power Struggles Through Short Stories

Directions:

You will select one short story from the list below. As you read, pay attention to the use of literary devices as well as the structure of the plot and the conflict that exists. After reading, complete all parts of the activity.

Choose one of the following short stories:

- “Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut
- “The Pedestrian” by Ray Bradbury
- “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson

Literary Devices

Author	Kurt Vonnegut	Title	“Harrison Bergeron”
1. After reading the story, describe the author’s tone.			
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.			
2. Provide and explain two examples of imagery found in the short story.			
Direct Quotation		Which sense does this example use?	
Answers will vary. Ex: “Sounded like somebody hitting a milk bottle with a ball peen hammer”		Sound	
“Scrap metal hung all over him. Harrison looked like a walking junkyard.”		Sight	
3. Choose one of the images identified above and explain how it helps the reader understand the story’s theme.			
Answers will vary. Ex: Their handicaps, which are intended to make them equal, lead to injustice. This relates to both of the handicaps described above. In order to be equal, they lose their personal identity and take on the characteristics valued by the government authorities.			

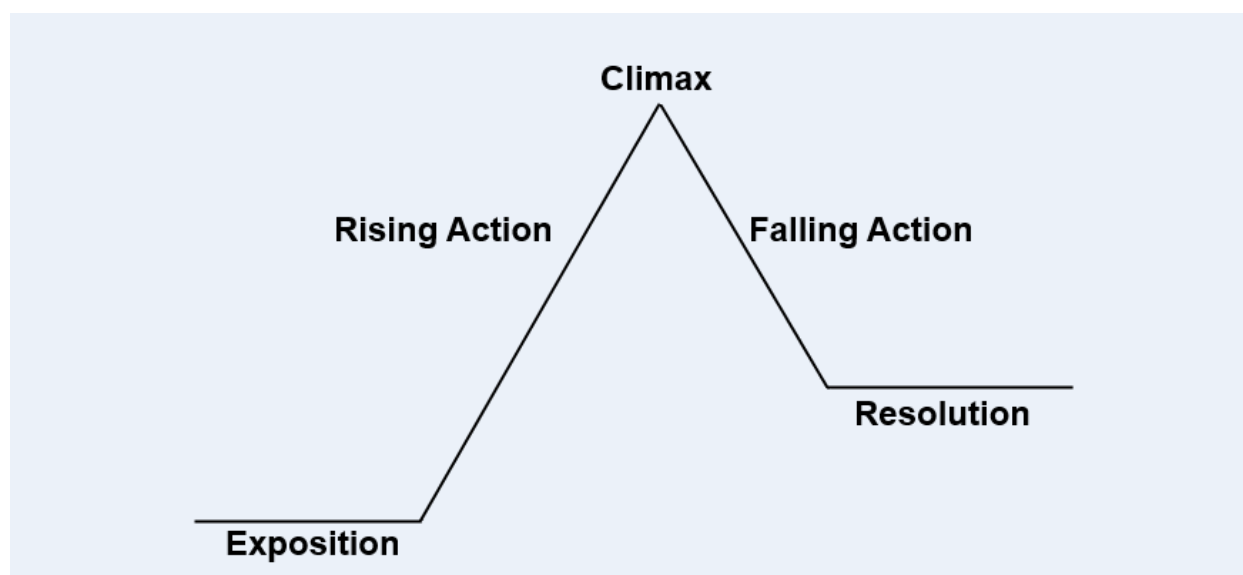
4. Describe one symbol found in the text and explain how it affects the plot of the story.

Answers will vary.

Ex: A prominent symbol is the ballerina mask. The mask symbolizes ugliness, and it severely alters the beautiful woman's true beauty. It influences the plot as the ballerina takes off her mask, which is one of the handicaps to make her equal. It is viewed as an act of defiance and the government kills her as a result.

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

Exposition: In 1-2 sentences, explain what is learned about characters in the opening of the story.

Answers will vary.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 Pedestrian” by Ray Bradbury

Exposition: In 1-2 sentences, explain what is learned about characters in the opening of the story.

Answers will vary.

Ex: Mr. Leonard Meade, the protagonist, enjoys walking outside with no purpose or direction. This activity is frowned upon by the government as people are not allowed to be pedestrians.

Rising Action: In 1-2 sentences, describe the major events of the story that have drawn you into the story.

Answers will vary.

Ex: Mr. Mead is walking and describing the sights he sees on his slow-paced journey. This is problematic because he is not doing what people are supposed to do, conforming to the prescribed activities imposed by the government. Instead, he is thinking about society and life. This is in direct opposition to the wishes of the government.

Climax: In 1-2 sentences, explain what happens to determine the turning point of the story.

Answers will vary.

Ex: Mr. Mead gets arrested despite his claims that he hasn't done anything wrong. The car is a jail cell that arrests him. He is taken to a psychiatric center for taking a walk.

Falling Action: In 1-2 sentences, explain what action occurs as a direct result of the climax.

Answers will vary.

Ex: As the police car drives him to the psychiatric center, he notices that his house is the only one in the entire city that does not have all of its lights on
Resolution: In 1-2 sentences, describe how the characters have stayed the same or changed.
Answers will vary. Ex: He comes to the realization that he is the only non-conformist in the entire city.

“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson
Exposition: In 1-2 sentences, explain what is learned about characters in the opening of the story.
Answers will vary. Ex: The opening of the story sets much anticipation for the seemingly innocent event that is about to transpire.
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 entire town comes together to see the “lottery” in the story. There is discussion of traditions, past events, and anticipation of determining the “winner” of the lottery. Bill Hutchinson, as the head of the household, is determined the winner for his family. His family must then draw to determine the final winner.
Climax: In 1-2 sentences, explain what happens to determine the turning point of the story.
Answers will vary. Ex: Tessie Hutchinson wins the lottery and the audience realizes that winning the lottery does not have the positive connotation we typically think of in terms of winning.
Falling Action: In 1-2 sentences, explain what action occurs as a direct result of the climax.
Answers will vary. Ex: The townspeople begin gathering stones, which identifies the plight of the “winner” of the lottery.
Resolution: In 1-2 sentences, describe how the characters have stayed the same or changed.
Answers will vary. Ex: Tessie Hutchinson is stoned to death for winning the lottery.

Conflict

Identify and explain two examples in which an individual has a conflict with authority.

"Harrison Bergeron"	
Provide specific examples from the text.	Explain how this example demonstrates the man vs. society conflict.
<p>Answers will vary.</p> <p>Ex:</p> <p>1." Harrison and his Empress merely listened to the music for a while – listened gravely, as though synchronizing their heartbeats with it.</p> <p>They shifted their weights to their toes. Harrison placed his big hands on the girl's tiny waist, letting her sense the weightlessness that would soon be hers.</p> <p>And then in an explosion of joy and grace, into the air they sprang!</p> <p>Not only were the laws of the land abandoned, but the law of gravity and the laws of motion as well. They reeled, whirled, swiveled, flounced, capered, gamboled, and spun.</p> <p>They leaped like deer on the moon.</p> <p>The studio ceiling was thirty feet high, but each leap brought the dancers nearer to it. It became their obvious intention to kiss the ceiling.</p> <p>They kissed it.</p> <p>And then, neutralizing gravity with love and pure will, they remained suspended in air inches below the ceiling, and they kissed each other for a long, time.</p> <p>It was then that Diana Moon Glampers, the Handicapper General, came into the studio with a double-barreled ten-gauge shotgun. She fired</p>	<p>In this passage Harrison and his "Empress" act on their own and show passion for each other and dance and excel in their performance. This is unacceptable to the government.</p>

twice, and the Emperor and the Empress were dead before they hit the floor.	
2. "Harrison tore the straps of his handicap harness like wet tissue paper, tore straps guaranteed to support five thousand pounds."	Harrison started to remove the government given controls so that he could be an individual again.

"The Pedestrian"	
Provide specific examples from the text.	Explain how this example demonstrates the man vs. society conflict.
1. "The police car sat in the center of the street with its radio throat faintly humming. . . There was a sigh, a pop. The back door of the police car sprang wide. 'Get in.' 'Wait a minute, I haven't done anything!' 'Get in.'"	Mr. Leonard Mead, the protagonist, is in conflict with government authority because he does not conform to the government rules of staying indoors, watching television and thinking shallow thoughts. His non-conformity gets him arrested.
2. "They passed one house on one street a moment later, one house in an entire city of houses that were dark. . . 'that's my house,' said Leonard Mead."	The main character is in conflict with all of society because he is different. He is alone with no wife or family. He walks and thinks instead of mindlessly watching television. He is the only person in the entire city who does not follow these norms.

"The Lottery"	
Provide specific examples from the text.	Explain how this example demonstrates the man vs. society conflict.
Answers will vary. Ex: 1. "Tessie Hutchinson shouted to Mr. Summers, 'You didn't give him time enough to take any paper he wanted. I saw you. It wasn't fair.'"	Tessie, once realizing a member of her family is about to be selected, rebels against the process of selecting a lottery winner by claiming that her husband wasn't given a fair chance. Although Tessie knows the rules of the lottery, when it becomes personal, she takes issue with the procedures.
2. "'They do say,' Mr. Adams said to Old Man Warner, who stood next to him, 'that over in the	Younger members of this village are willing to considering progressing forward and giving up the lottery. Older members like Old Man Warner

north village they're talking of giving up the lottery."

dismiss these notions as crazy. The tradition exists for the superstition of how well the crops will grow, and there is no willingness to change despite the barbarity of the event.