

Unit #5: Overcoming Our Obstacles

10th Grade Language Arts/Mr. Coia

Name: _____ Period: _____

Mon 1/4

- Best of 2015 Lists
- Short film: [The Butterfly Circus](#) (23 mins)
- How does this film address concepts discussed this year? Examples of irony? "Where I'm From" connections?
- Discussion on film's themes
- Beginning a unit on "Overcoming our Obstacles"
- Write #1: "List 20 obstacles that you face in 10th grade (think of physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)."

Wed 1/6

- **Notebook Check #5**
- Writing: "Letter to Your Future Self about Obstacles"
- Watch: *Piece by Piece* (15 min)
- How does the cube act as a symbol for overcoming obstacles?
- Poem: "Sympathy"
- Lesson on marking a text
- Write #2: After our study of the poem, answer this in a paragraph: Why does a "caged bird" sing?
- Conversation Roundtable square

Fri 1/8

- Poem: "Mother to Son"
- Conversational Roundtable square
- Write #3: "Son (or daughter) to Mother" version of the poem (This is from your perspective writing to your parent about obstacles and struggles)
- IC: Typing your poem (20-30 lines)

HW: Type and print "Son (or daughter) to Mother" poem (in the style of Langston Hughes)

Tues 1/12

- SOTW #11: Fragments & Run-ons
- **Poem Due**
- Sharing poems
- Poem: "Speech to the Young"
- What is the effect of repetition?
- Conversational Roundtable square

HW: Type your introductory paragraph to an essay about the main obstacle in your life. (about 100 words. Minimum of **six** sentences.)

Thurs 1/14

- 6 Traits of Writing Review (Ideas/Org)
- Writing Trait Presentation: Word Choice
- Write #4: Writing 1syl story
- Using the typed introduction, improve the word choice.
- "Somebody Wanted But So" sheet

HW: Complete this sheet. **Two** about you, **One** about past stories/poems we've read, **one** fictional, leave **one** blank

Tues 1/19

- SOTW #12: Gerunds
- Writing Trait Presentation: Conventions
- Write #5: My Frequent Problems in Grammar
- Poem: "A Man"; Marking text
- Conversational Roundtable square
- "Somebody Wanted But So" on "A Man"
- Themes sheet
- Essay work: Narrative essay on your main obstacle. Write your major points and topic sentences for the paragraphs

HW: Type updated introduction, topic sentences/major concept for each paragraph (what is the obstacle, how does it hold you back, from what does it hold you back, what must you do to overcome it).

Thurs 1/21

- Writing Trait Presentation: Sentence Fluency
- Write #6: Fixing Your Sentences
- **Typed Outline due**
- Look at typed work to adjust sentences
- Writing conferences/writing time in IC

HW: Type final copy. Print two copies to bring to class

Tues 1/26

- **Narrative Essay Due (two copies)**
- Paper sharing
- Somebody Wanted But So
- **Extra credit presentations** (memorize any of these poems. Must be flawless for credit)
- Practice reading passages for exam

Wed 1/27

- **Semester 1 Exam**

Assignment Descriptions

Notebook and Supply Check #5

You'll need the following for our notebook check **Thursday, 12/3**. Remember, we'll add to this throughout the year to provide you with an orderly notebook. Therefore, you need ALL the pieces to receive credit. No partial credit offered on this.

You need two tabs with the following:

LA Handouts:

- Unit guide #5 (on top)
- Unit guide #4
- Technology marked articles (unit guide 1, p. 9-13)
- Passages on Reading and Thinking Handout (unit 1, p 14)
- 6 Traits Overview sheet
- 6 Traits grading rubric
- "Writing Formally: Thesis Statements and Beyond"
- "How Do I Format My Paper?" handout (unit 1, p. 7-8)
- Class Rules sheet, initialed

LA Classwork:

Notes from lectures, presentations, mini-lessons. Remember you should be taking notes each class period. You will also have at least 25 sheets of loose-leaf paper in your binder, and your pens, pencils, highlighter, etc.

Poetry

We will read and study four poems that relate to our unit theme, "Overcoming Our Obstacles":

- "Sympathy" by Paul Lawrence Dunbar
- "Speech to the Young/Speech to the Progress-Toward" by Gwendolyn Brooks
- "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes
- "A Man" by Nina Cassian

Extra Credit

If you are interested in an extra credit assignment, you can **memorize** and **perform** one of these four poems to the class on **Tuesday, 1/26**. Practice practice practice, as it must be perfect and smooth to receive the credit. "Sympathy," "Mother to Son," and "A Man" are all worth up to 15 points; "Speech to the Young" is worth up to 10 points.

Film

We will watch two short films that connect to our theme on obstacles. *Piece by Piece* and *The Butterfly Circus* are about issues light years apart from each other, but we will use them both to deepen our understanding of our theme of study.

Writing

We will work on writing a **poem** and a **narrative essay**. The poem will be a response to “Mother to Son” by being your voice to one of your parents regarding your obstacles. What would you want your parents to know about your obstacle? Keep it in the style of Langston Hughes. 20-30 lines. Be sure it is on one page for display.

Our narrative essay will address your one main obstacle in life. Look back over the list of 20 or so you created in Write #1. Which can impede your progress toward an important goal in life? Think of the worksheet “Somebody Wanted But So.” Here is the rubric:

.....(I’ll have cut ones for you. This is for your reference).....

Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Per:** _____

“Overcoming our Obstacles” Narrative Essay Grading Rubric

Topic: “Write a narrative essay that records your main obstacle in life. Be sure to address what the obstacle is, how it holds you back, from what does it hold you back, what you must do to overcome it.

--IDEAS

Insufficient 1 2	Adequate 2 3	Good 3 4	Excellent 5
Displays superficial or insufficient information and details on your obstacle	Displays average information and details on your obstacle	Displays clear and interesting information and details on your obstacle	Displays superior, original, and interesting information and details on your obstacle

--WORD CHOICE

Insufficient 1 2	Adequate 2 3	Good 3 4	Excellent 5
The writer struggles with limited vocabulary	The writer attempts creative and colorful language, but still has everyday nouns and verbs. Or, it appears that the writer uses unnatural-sounding words from a thesaurus.	The writer uses a variety of interesting, colorful nouns and verbs that make this paper sound unique.	The writer uses striking words and phrases, lively verbs, and specific nouns.

--Format (margins, spacing, font, header)	0	1	2	5
--Creative Title	0	1	2	
--Global opening and closing	0	2	4	
--Introduction is clear and interesting	0	1	2	3 4 5
--Use one <i>GERUND sentence starter</i> in italics	0	1	2	
--Use two <u>intentional fragments for power</u> underlined	0	1	2	3

NO GRADING SLIP STAPLED TO THE FRONT -5

Total: _____/29

Name: _____ Date: _____ Per: _____

Sympathy BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
 When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
 When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing
 Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
 And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting—
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
 When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
 But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—
I know why the caged bird sings!

Source: *Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (2004)

Name: _____ Date: _____ Per: _____



Langston Hughes (1902-1967) is the poet laureate of African-American experience — a popular writer of the Harlem Renaissance.

MOTHER TO SON BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Per: _____

“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes

Language Arts

Mr. Coia

1. Mark up the text as we have discussed in class last time.

2. What are the pieces of advice she offers?

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

3. In this mini-T Notes chart, contrast the two types of staircases mentioned.

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4. With a dictionary, define *symbol*: _____

5. Explain how staircases are used as symbols. What does each represent?

Crystal Staircase: _____

The Other Staircase: _____

6. Why do you think that the poet uses the image of a staircase for this poem?

Name: _____ Date: _____ Per: _____

Speech to the Young, Speech to the Progress-Toward

by Gwendolyn Brooks

Say to them,
say to the down-keepers,
the sun-slappers,
the self-soilers,
the harmony-hushers,
"Even if you are not ready for day it cannot always be night."
You will be right.
For that is the hard home-run.

Live not for battles won.
Live not for the-end-of-the-song.
Live in the along.

1. Mark up the text as we have discussed in class last time.
2. Explain which character trait is shared by the people mentioned in lines 2-5?

3. What do you think is the meaning of the last stanza?

4. What does the speaker think is at stake, or in danger of being lost, if young people do not follow the advice given in the poem?

Name: _____ Date: _____ Per: _____

A Man by Nina Cassian

While fighting for his country, he lost an arm
and suddenly was afraid:

“From now on, I shall only be able to do things by halves.

I shall reap half a harvest.

I shall be able to play either the tune
or the accompaniment on the piano,
but never both parts together.

I shall be able to bang with only one fist
on doors, and worst of all

I shall only be able to half hold
my love close to me.

There will be things I cannot do at all,
applaud for example,
at shows where everyone applauds.”

From that moment on, he set himself to do
everything with twice as much enthusiasm.
And where the arm had been torn away
a wing grew.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Per: _____

Somebody	Wanted	But	So
Mr. Coia	All students to improve skills in writing and reading	Some did not share his enthusiasm and passion for the written word	He quit teaching English and joined a traveling circus as a part-time juggler and lion tamer.
Write one for you			
Write one for you			
Character from Story 1			
Character from Story 2			
Character from "A Man"			

