

The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl By Ron Hughart
Study Guide By Marsha Ingrao

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California State Standards

History Social Science Grade 11

11.6.3 Discuss the human toll of the Depression, natural disasters, and unwise agricultural practices and their effects on the depopulation of rural regions and on political movements of the left and right, with particular attention to the Dust Bowl refugees and their social and economic impacts in California.

11.6.5 Trace the advances and retreats of organized labor, from the creation of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations to current issues of a postindustrial, multinational economy, including the United Farm Workers in California.

11.8.2 Describe the significance of Mexican immigration and its relationship to the agricultural economy, especially in California.

11.8.7 Describe the effects on society and the economy of technological developments since 1945, including the computer revolution, changes in communication, advances in medicine, and improvements in agricultural technology.

English Language Arts Grades 9-10

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.2 Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim.

3.7.C Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings.

Evaluation and Revision

1.9 Revise text to highlight the individual voice, improve sentence variety and style, and enhance subtlety of meaning and tone in ways that are consistent with the purpose, audience, and genre.

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives:

- a. Narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience.
- b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places.
- c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings.
- d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate temporal, spatial, and dramatic mood changes.
- e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.

2.2 Write responses to literature:

- a. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages.
- b. Analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text.
- c. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and to other works.
- d. Demonstrate an understanding of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.
- e. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.

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Getting Ready to Read A Note to Students

Reading is to learning as food is to living. If you don't like to read, take a break from what you *have* to read, and read something *fun*. If you hate to eat, start with chocolate. If you hate to read, start with *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl*, a success story about a man who didn't like to read. He learned to read, and taught himself many fascinating things. Through his adventures and hard work, he became a reading success story.

In *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl* Hughart does not present his whole life, but records his memoirs or memories of a specific time period and a finite set of events. The book is non-fiction because the stories you read are real rather than fiction. Memoirs told by a single writer should be read objectively, noting that events were selected from memory that may or may not be reliable.

Many people have read *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl* for pleasure. The assumption is that you are reading this for a class. The next pages are filled with activities that will make reading an active process much like playing a game on the computer. In order to graduate from high school, you need to be able to write about what you read. This study guide will teach you strategies that will help you be a better reader and writer.

“Research indicates that effective readers make predictions, organize information and interact with the text. They evaluate ideas they are reading in light of what they already know. They monitor their comprehension, and know how to modify their reading behaviors when they have problems understanding what they read” (Billmeyer & Barton p. 2-3).

Marsha Ingrao
Instructional Consultant
Tulare County Office of Education

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Using the Study Guide A Note to Teachers

The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl follows the 100th anniversary celebration of John Steinbeck, and the collective California reading of *Grapes of Wrath*. As readers across California rediscovered the importance of the “Oakie” migration into California in the late 1930’s, their interest was piqued by a new title, *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl*. Like a good feature story that follows a news story, Ron Hughart’s memoir relates what happened to the children and the grandchildren of the Dust Bowl “Oakies”.

This book has many uses in the classroom as well. Many people in California can identify with the author, and they read it because his experiences match theirs. Counselors might use this book with migrant students as they are considering career choices. Migrant students today face many of the same difficulties that Ron Hughart faced growing up. They can learn through his experiences that personal effort, his personal choice to develop many skills, and his positive self talk took Ron in a direction away from migrant work. Help students catch a broader perspective of life.

History teachers might view this book with a different goal. The “Oakies” that migrated and stayed in California changed the political and social structure of this great state. They left a legacy of ruggedness, determination, and individualism to their children and their children’s children. Ron’s autobiography gives the readers unique insight into the impact of that movement in history. They can compare his writing with fiction and non-fiction works from other immigrants and emigrants into California.

The uses for English teachers are practically limitless. The activities included in this resource are aligned to California English Language Arts Standards. Ron’s history is captivating, and these activities are meant to be springboards for discussion or for helping the students write their own autobiographies.

Teachers using these activities will alter them, and probably create new lessons as the book takes on a life of its own in their classroom. The lessons contained in this publication evolved out of my reading the book along side of the standards. The worksheet activities seemed to jump out from the Standard at me, so I just formatted them on my computer screen. If they are helpful, make them yours. If you have ideas that you want to share with others, e-mail them to me at marshai@tcoe.org.

I hope this helps your students to enjoy the historic *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl*.

Sincerely,

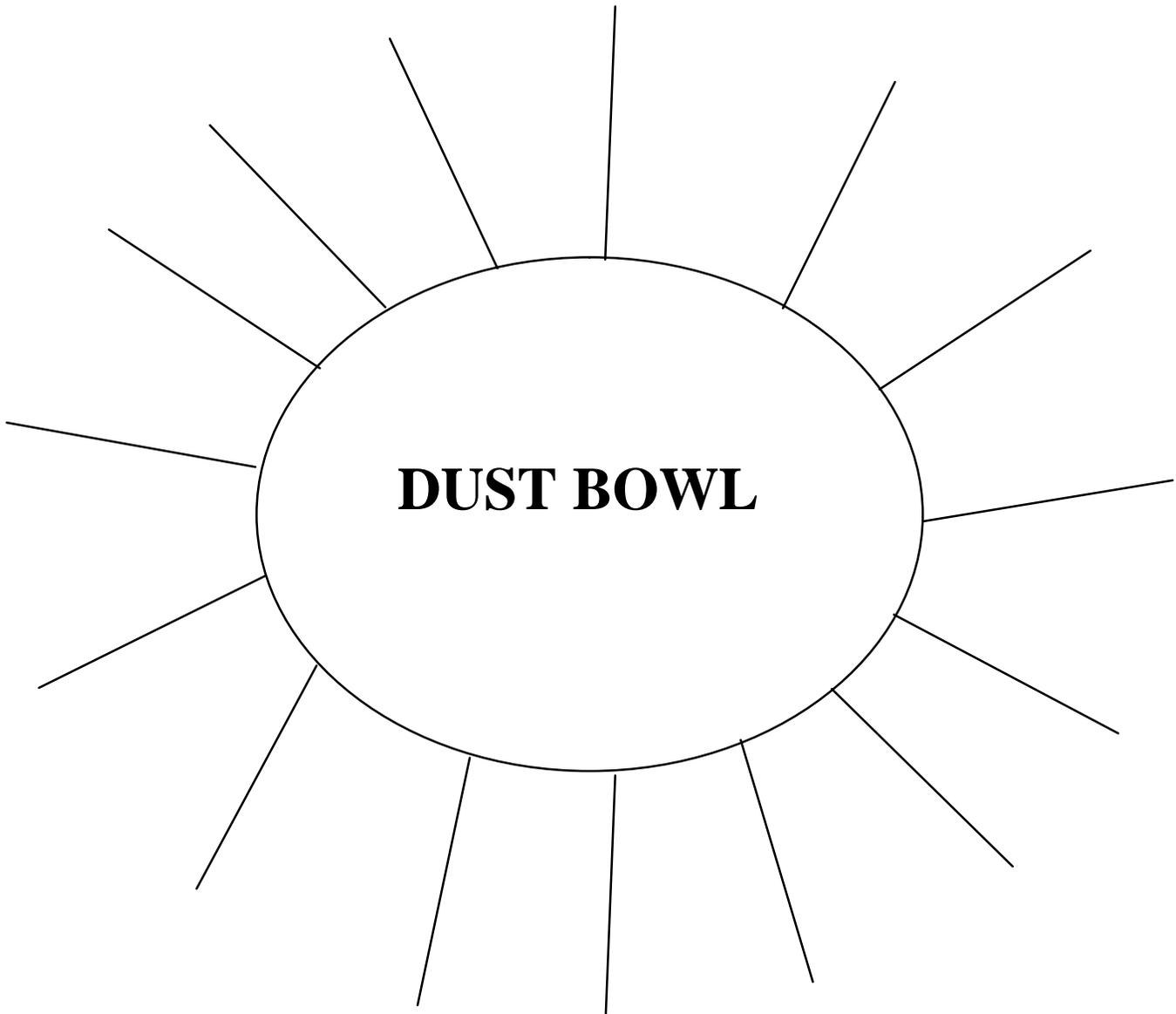
Marsha Ingrao, Instructional Consultant
Tulare County Office of Education

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Title Analysis

California English Language Arts Narrative Analysis Standard 3.7.C
California English Language Arts Writing Autobiographical Narrative 2.1.A
California History Social-Science Standard 11.6.3

Write 10-15 statements or words that pertain to the phrase, "Dust Bowl".



As you read, list references to events or influences pertaining to the Dust Bowl that would indicate the relevance of the title, *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl*.

Overview Activity

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California English Language Arts Write a Response to Literature 2.2.C

Using a post-it and not counting the cover, label each photograph with a number. Fill in the chart below with the number of the picture. Pictures may fit into more than one category per row. For example, picture 3, “Ronnie riding his tricycle that was left behind when leaving for Arizona,” is a person, a place in California and several objects. Why wouldn’t it be a notable event? Write a short essay about the patterns you notice.

Category of Classification	Classifications of Photographs			
Composition	People 3	Place 3	Notable Event	Object 3
Gender	Male	Female	Mixed group	No People
Source of Acquaintance	Family	Friends	School/Work	Other
Time	Before 1955	1955-1970	1971-1985	1986-2000

Overview Activity

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Anticipation Guide

California English Language Arts Writing Autobiographical Narrative 2.1.C

Prove the following statements. Write the page and paragraph number that contains the concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings.

Page & Paragraph	Agree/ Disagree	Statement
		Ron's family was poor, but that was not a major factor in his life.
		Ron knew that people cared about him.
		Ron's family lifestyle was typical of families living in California's Central Valley in the 1950s and 1960s.
		Ron showed strength of character even as a child.
		Ron and his family searched for and found the American Dream.
		Ron reflected the culture of a strong work ethic.

Overview Activity

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Movie Millions

Evaluation and Revision

1.9 Revise text to highlight the individual voice, improve sentence variety and style, and enhance subtlety of meaning and tone in ways that are consistent with the purpose, audience, and genre.

Writing screenplays is one of the **highest paying** jobs a writer can do. In the 1990s, **Joe Esterhaus** made headlines when he earned **\$3 million** for writing *Basic Instinct*. You have decided to turn Ron Hughart's autobiography into a movie. Prepare a treatment, or brief sales pitch, to sell your idea to an agency. Choose either a PowerPoint presentation, or a report format to present your treatment to a prospective producer. Be sure to answer the following questions.

- What genre would it be: romance, drama, adventure, tragedy, or comedy?
- You would not be able to include every story. List which stories you would include to make a 90-minute film.
- Which characters are important enough to include, and whom would you hire to play the parts?
- Based on the stories in the book, what obstacles do you think you would encounter in making the film?

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Market Analysis

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.2 Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim.

3.7.C Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and, settings.

The first edition of *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl* sold out all the copies in the first eight months. Who do you think bought the books? Do you think Hughart had an audience in mind as he wrote? As you read, put a post-it note every place you feel Hughart is targeting a specific age group audience. Copy the sentence that indicates his aiming to reach a specific audience, and give your rationale. Do you think the author is writing to entertain, to teach a lesson, to illustrate a period of history, or for some other purpose?

Target Audience

Age of Audience	Sentence	Page
Intermediate students 8-12 years		
Teens 13-18 years		
Young adults 19 – 29 years		
Adults 30-45 years		
Adults 50-65 years		
Older adults 66 years and up		

Write a book review for Amazon.com targeting the audience you think would most likely purchase this book. Make your review convincing by using quotations from the book.

Overview Activity

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Chapter Two: The Repossession

California English Language Arts Narrative Analysis Standard 3.7.C

Evaluate the influences of the Post Dust Bowl/ Post WWII events and characters that shaped the author’s life. Mark each box with C or E for Character or Event. Write the quotation from the book as evidence. List the page next to the quote. Write additional thoughts after the page. Two examples have been done for you.

Philosophical	Religions	Ethical	Social
C – Irvy “Don’t worry a better life is yours for the taking.” P. 12 Optimism			C - Mom is thin, had polio and false teeth p. 7 date approx 1955. Mom would have been a child during the Dust Bowl. Her parents would have had no money for dental or health care.

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Chapter Three: The Retarded Boy

2.2 Write responses to literature: a. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages.

From reading the title of this chapter, **one might predict that there will be a problem or conflict based on the author's failure in school.** Using the responses or reactions of the author and those close to him, provide evidence that proves or disproves that 1) Ronnie was retarded, and 2) his retardation caused many problems in his life. Skim the entire book for the number of occurrences of the word "retarded." Note the page #, and a quote or description in the box for Ronnie's reaction.

Family Reactions to Ronnie's Failure	Ronnie's Reactions to His Failure
Problems Caused by Ronnie's Failure	

Pretend you are one of Ronnie's family members. Write a letter to the teacher explaining your conclusions about the diagnosis of retardation. Give details that support your conclusions.

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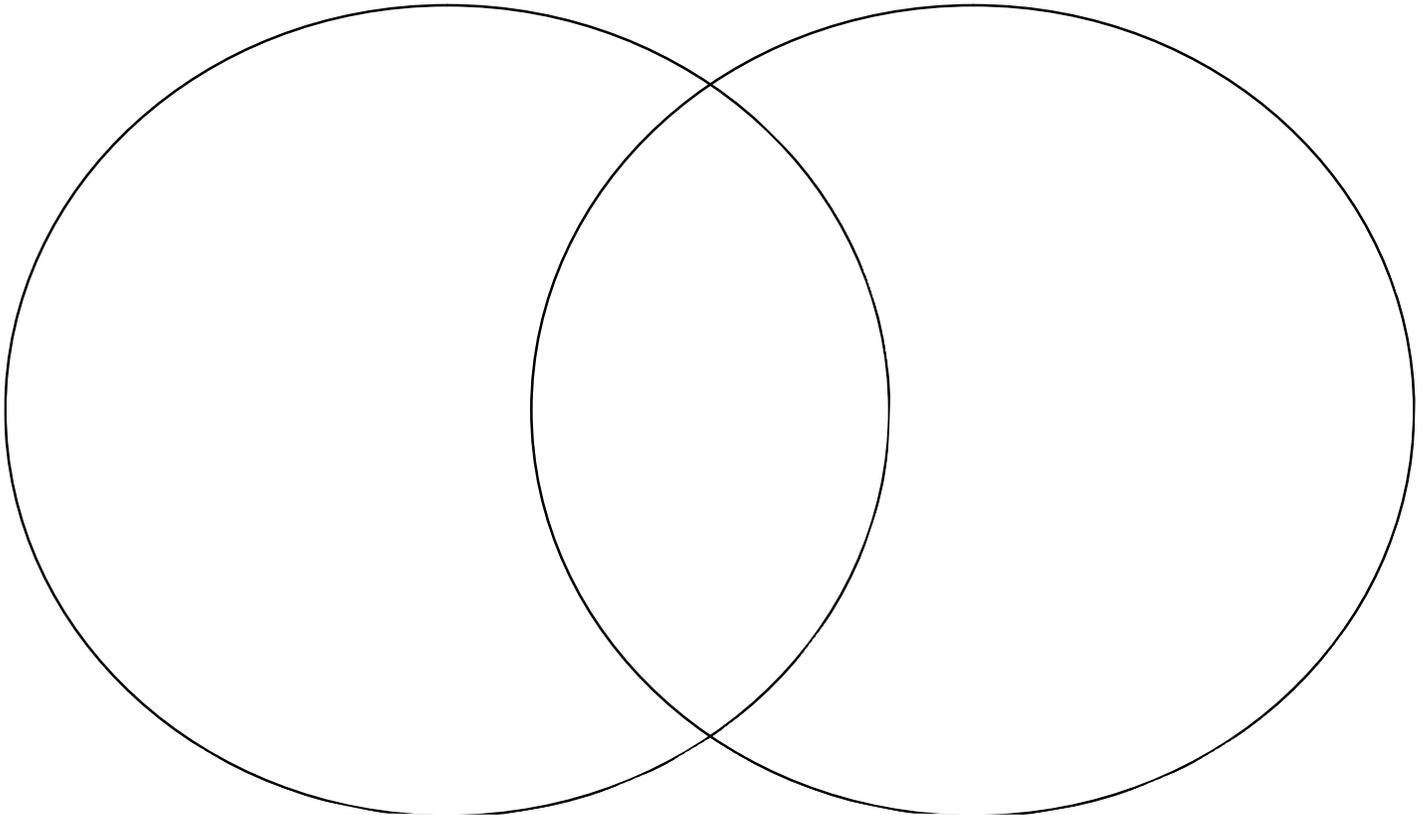
Chapter Three: The Retarded Boy

2.2 Write responses to literature: a. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages.

Compare and contrast character traits of Ronnie's mother and father. List the traits of each person inside the VENN DIAGRAM. If both parents have the same trait, write those traits in the center.

Mom

Dad



Create an icon or symbol in the circle that corresponds to each parent which you think captures Ronnie's relationship with, or feelings for each parent.

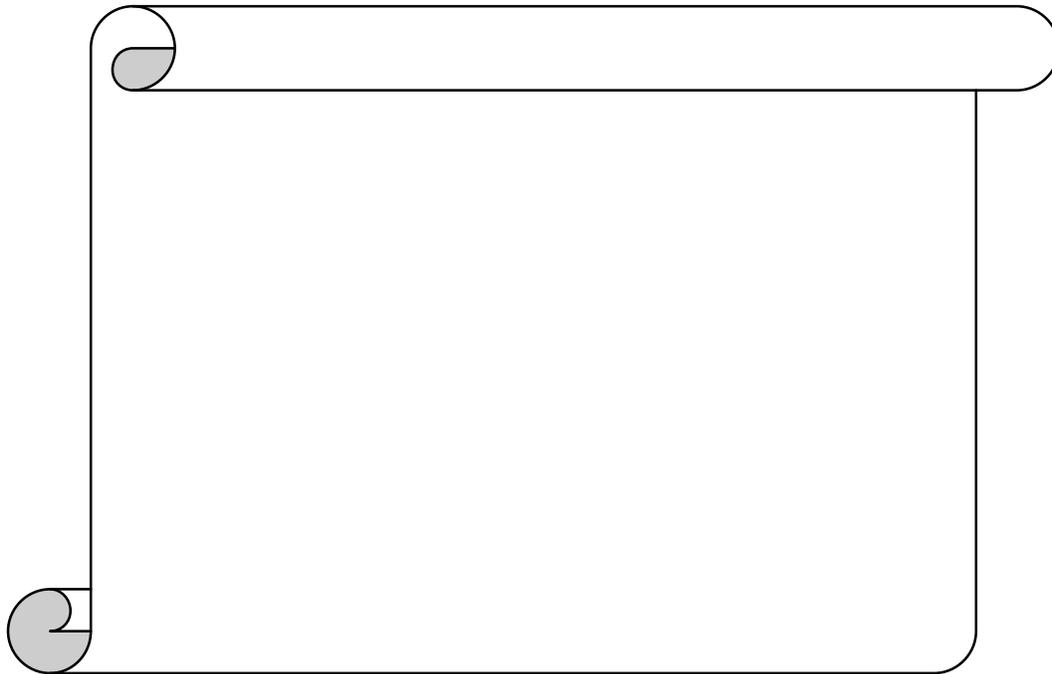
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Chapter Four: Summer Socks

2.2 Write responses to literature: b. Analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text.

During this period in Ronnie's life, problems must have seemed insurmountable. Imagine that you are one of the following persons in 1960. Using the psychology, widespread beliefs, and information available at the time, write a Dear Abby type article to answer one of the following questions. Quotes or references to experts of the time make your work more believable. The website www.hyperhistory.com includes important people and discoveries that were made throughout history. Click on 1951-1970 to learn what was new in Ronnie's time.

- If you were a financial advisor, what would you say to Ronnie's parents to improve their standard of living using what money they have available?
- If you were a nutritionist, how would you advise parents to feed their family with the funds and free food they have available?
- If you were a child psychologist, how would you respond to Ronnie's feelings of guilt expressed on page 47?
- If you were one of the ladies with whom Mrs. Hughart played cards, how would you advise her to manage her troubles?



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Autobiographical Observations

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives:

- d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate temporal, spatial, and dramatic mood changes.
- e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.

Dramatic mood changes occur in the autobiography of Ronnie's life. Put + and – on post-it notes. Put a + post-it next to the positive things he reports and a – next to the negative things he describes. Copy the five most effective the phrases on the chart below. Highlight descriptions of appearances, images, shifting perspectives and sensory details with different colors.

- When and where did the most dramatic mood change take place?
- Did it take place due to changes in time, place, or attitudes within Ronnie or his family members?

+	-

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Chapters Four & Five: Summer Socks & Valley of Hunger

2.2 Write responses to literature: e. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.

Match the following definitions.

Perceived	a. Having more than one possible meaning
Ambiguities	b. Something that is made up of a number of parts that work together, or are hard to understand
Complexities	c. A subtle or slight degree of difference, as in meaning, feeling, or tone; a gradation
Nuances	d. To be aware of something, to realize or understand

In chapters 4-5, find examples of each:

ambiguities	
complexities	
nuances	

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Chapters Four & Five: Summer Socks & Valley of Hunger

Based on the examples of ambiguities, nuances and complexities in these chapters, draw a comic strip depicting one of the incidents Hughart writes about in those two chapters. Your cartoon strip may be funny, political, dramatic, or adventuresome.

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Chapters Six-Nine

English Language Arts Grades 9-10

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.2 Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim.

Ron told about several riding episodes: driving the **Haro bed**, breaking and riding Cricket, and taming the Harley. Pick one of the stories and retell it from the viewpoint of the Haro bed, Cricket or the Harley.

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Chapter 12: The Badger

- c. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and to other works.
- d. Demonstrate an understanding of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.

Choose one of the following activities:

- a. Re-tell one of Ronnie's badger stories from the viewpoint of a group of badgers sitting around in their den talking about humans.
- b. How would a member of the Sierra Club or other environmental group react to the Badger chapter? Draw a cartoon from the viewpoint of the environmentalist.

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Strategic Reading
Vocabulary Development
Prediction List

Directions: 1) Review meanings of familiar words, and make guesses about unfamiliar words or meanings. 2) Combine words from different columns to form simple sentences. What words can you put together in sentences that make sense. Why? 3) From these words predict what the story might be about. 4) After reading the story, look at the lists and identify how the author actually used the words.

Noun singular <i>Names one person, place, or thing</i>	Verb <i>Shows action in the present or the past</i>	Adjective <i>Describes a person, place, or thing</i>	Adverb <i>Describes an action</i>
Porridge (p. 52)	Migrated (p. 23)	Porcelain (p. 84)	Apparently (p. 80)
Davenports (p. 74)	Rummaging (p. 74)	Dilapidated (p. 85)	Tanish (p. 81)
Outhouse (p. 85)	Encapsulated (p. 81)	Dramatically (p. 91)	
Piglets (p. 90)	Suspended (p. 96)	Imperative (p. 95)	
Banks (p. 96)	Spew p. 164	Perforated (p. 95)	
Verbiage (p. 164)	Logged (p. 170)	Vertical (p. 96)	
Ceiling (p. 169)	Firing (p. 185)	Rake (p. 185)	
Orthodontist (p. 171)	Suspended (p. 96)		
Slough (p. 177)			

Ronnie’s orthodontist encapsulated each tooth with a metal sleeve with a perforated slot, which held the wire band.

**Strategic Reading
Vocabulary Development
Prediction Chart**

Directions: As you read each chapter, write any words that are unfamiliar to you in the appropriate box. Before you look the word up, write or draw what you think the definition is. You may read that word again in the chapter. If the word is still a mystery at the end of the chapter, write the definition in the box.

a-b	c	d
e	f	g
h-k	l-m	n-q
ra-ri	ro-ru	s
t-u	v-w	x-z

adapted from the work of Kate Kinsella

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Strategic Reading
Vocabulary Development

Directions: As you read each chapter, you may see some words that have the same root word. This chart will help you learn more words without having to work so hard. Some words will not have forms for all the parts of speech. When you look up a word from your prediction chart, notice if it has other forms.

Noun singular <i>Names one person, place, or thing</i>	Noun plural <i>Names more than one person, place, or thing</i>	Verb <i>Shows action in the present or the past</i>	Adjective <i>Describes a person, place, or thing</i>	Adverb <i>Describes an action</i>
migrant immigrant	Migrants immigrants	Migrated (p. 23)	None	none
meaning	meanings	To mean meaning	Meaningful (p. 23)	meaningfully

adapted from the work of Kate Kinsella

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Strategic Reading
QAR – Question-Answer Relationships

“Right There” questions ask students to respond at the literal level: the words can be found “right there” in the same sentence. **“Right there:** questions begin with words or statements such as: “who is,” “where is,” “list,” “what is,” “when is,” “how many,” “when did,” “name,” “what kind of.” These questions require one right answer. (Billmeyer, Barton. 145) Below are some sample “right there” questions from Chapters One through Three.

1. What kind of troubles did Ronnie face when he was 8 years old?

“Think and Search” question begin with words or statements such as: “summarize,” “what caused,” “contrast,” “retell,” “how did,” “explain,” “find two examples,” “for what reason”.

2. What was the reason the Hughart family went to Arizona in chapter 3?

“Author and You” questions require the reader to answer with information not in the text; however, the readers must read the text to understand the question.

3. What could have been Ronnie’s second grade teacher’s reasons for thinking he was retarded?

“On My Own” questions can be answered with information from the reader’s background knowledge and do not require reading the text.

4. Why was it that Dr. Buckman never billed Ronnie’s parent for his services?

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Strategic Reading
QAR – Question-Answer Relationships

On the line write the type of QAR that is being asked, then answer the question and share your answer with a friend. On a separate paper, write several QAR questions of your own.

_____ 1. Why do you suppose Hughart wrote the book?

_____ 2. In what way or how do the stories relate to your personality?

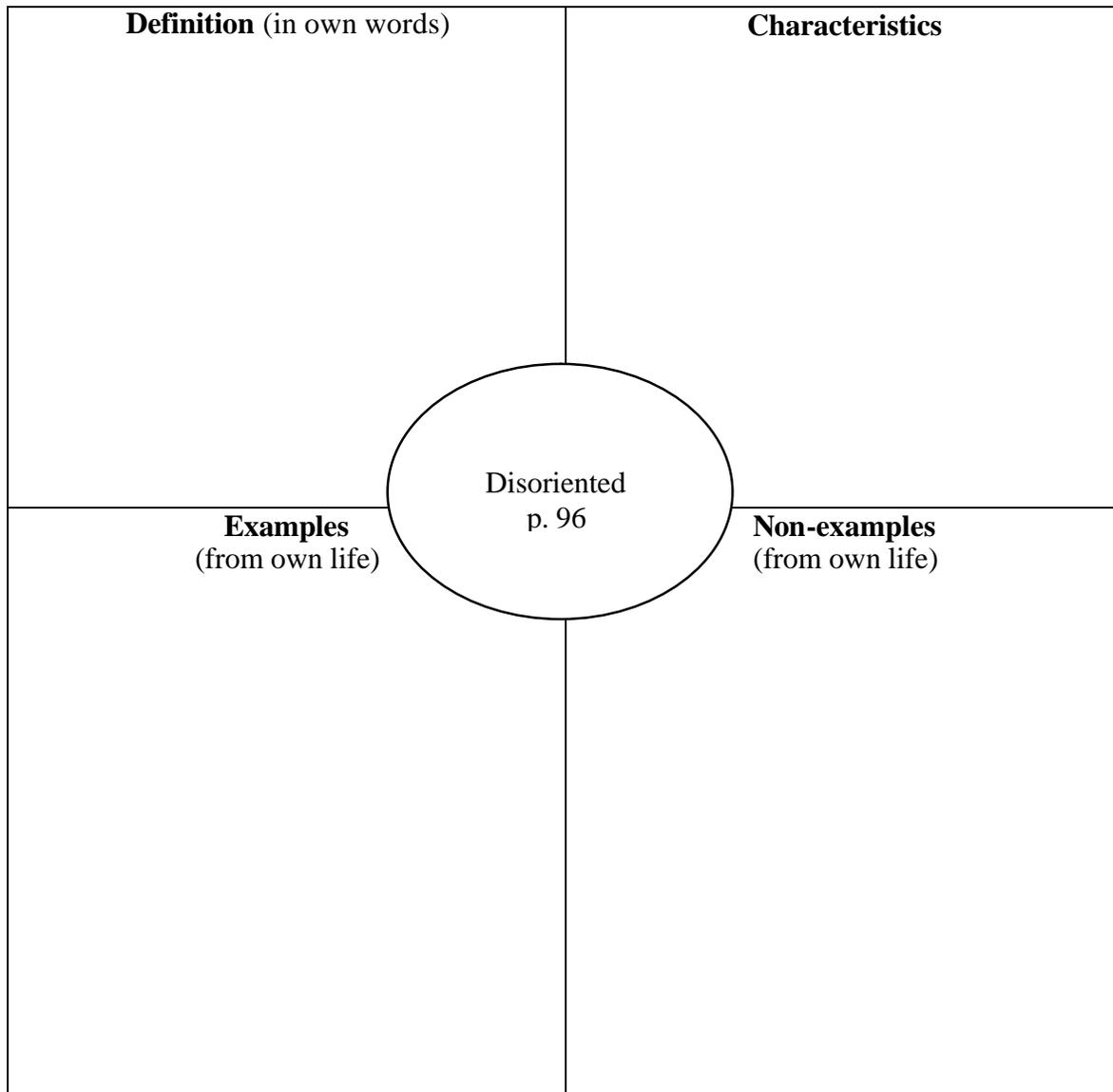
_____ 3. Irvy, the hermit prospector, told little Ronnie that there would be more good days than bad ones. What did Irvy mean by those words?

_____ 4. Little Ronnie became angry when the family car was repossessed. This event marked Ronnie's first recollection. What is your first recollection, and how old were you?

_____ 5. Summarize your favorite story in the *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl*.

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Strategic Reading
Vocabulary Development
Fruyer Model



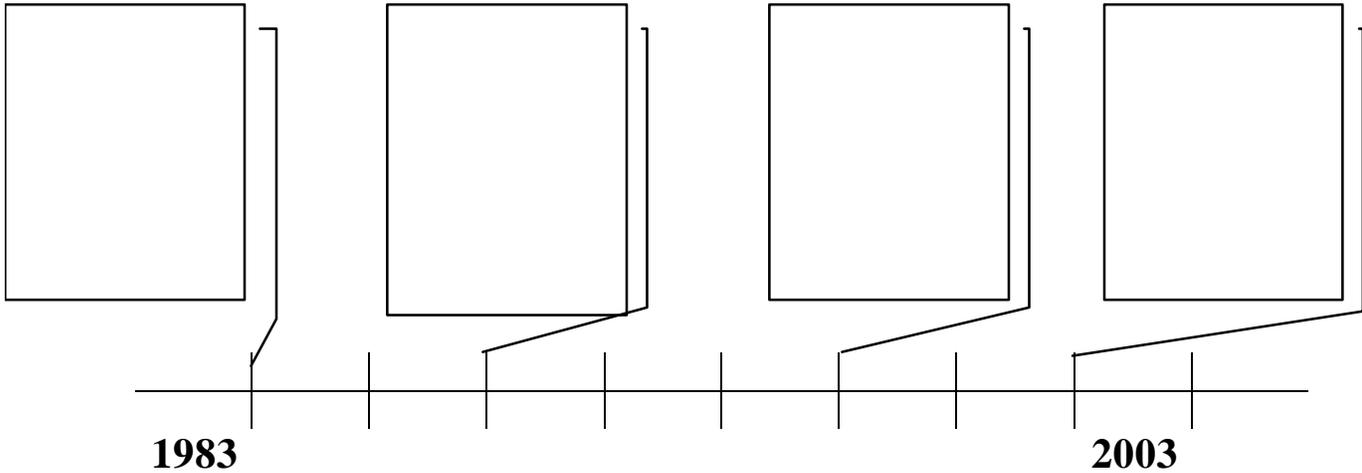
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Autobiographical Preparation

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives:

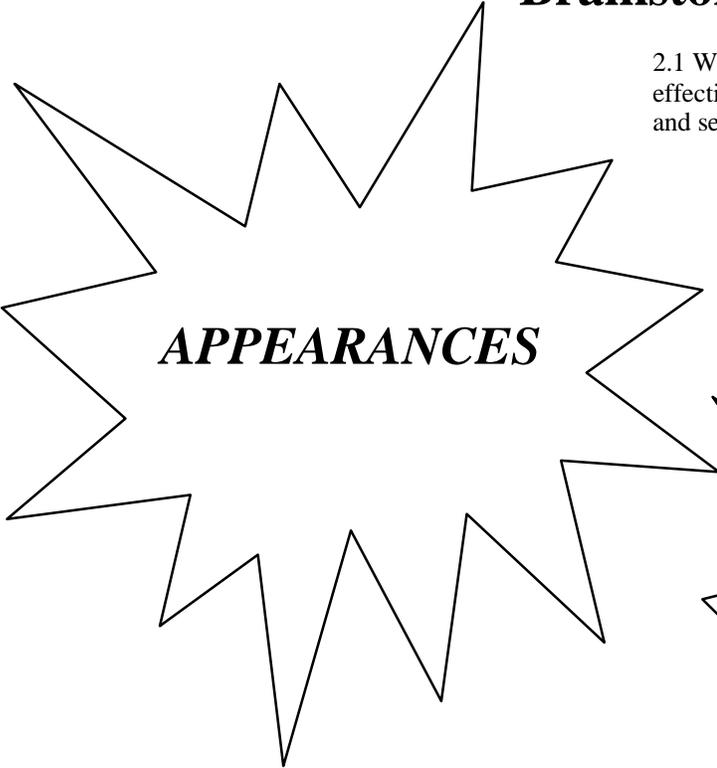
- d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate temporal, spatial, and dramatic mood changes.
- e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.

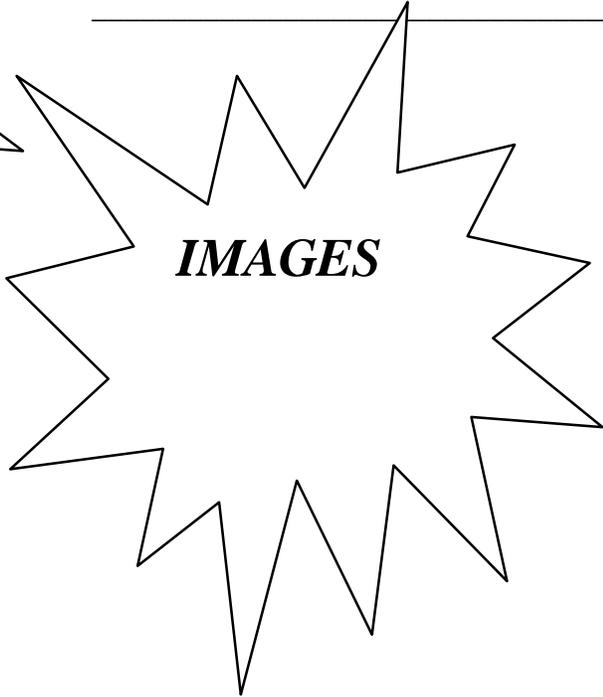
Create a timeline of your life. Include changes in the times, places, people, and mood changes that contribute to the dramatic changes in your life. Go to www.hyperhistory.com to find out what world events have occurred since you were born. Include any events that you think might have had an impact on your life to your timeline.

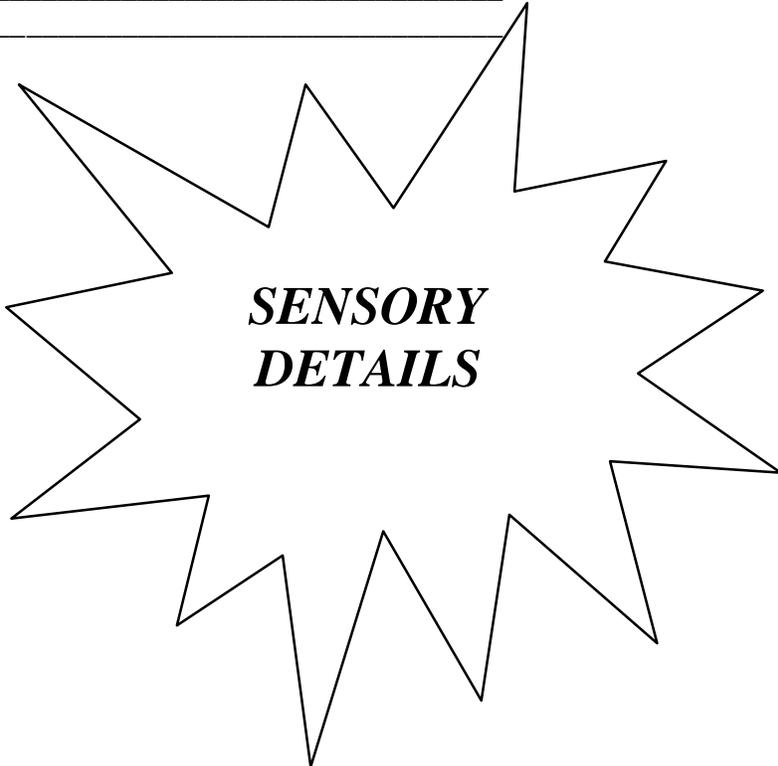


Brainstorm Your Life

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives: e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.







Brainstorm Your Life

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives:

- d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate temporal, spatial, and dramatic mood changes.
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Rural America: Entering the 21st Century

11.8.7 Describe the effects on society and the economy of technological developments since 1945, including the computer revolution, changes in communication, advances in medicine, and improvements in agricultural technology.

Agree or Disagree with the following statements. Read the article by clicking on the United States Department of Agriculture website. Write the paragraph number where you found the answer as you read the article.

<http://www.usda.gov/factbook/chapter4.htm#ruralpopulation>.

_____ Today, rural America comprises 2,305 counties, contains 80 percent of U.S. land, and is home to one-fifth (56 million) of its people.

Paragraph # _____

_____ The share or number of rural workers in low-wage jobs increased in the 1990s. Paragraph # _____

_____ Rural areas did not benefit economically from the economic expansion of the 1990s, with poverty rates falling to 13.4 percent, the highest level since the 1960s. Paragraph # _____

_____ Rural areas lagged behind urban places in median household income, per capita income, and earnings per job. Paragraph # _____

_____ Rural regions of the country survive economically on one or more of three basic assets: (1) natural amenities for tourism, second homes, and retirement; (2) low-cost, good quality labor and land for manufacturing, but also services such as prisons and extended care health facilities; and (3) natural resources for farming, forestry, and mining. Paragraph # _____

Analyze how Ron Hughart's life reflects the changes in the agricultural lifestyle over the last 50 years.