

Elements of Literature

By Melissa Williamson

Unit 1 – Coming of Age Fiction

Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie

Week	One	Two	Three	Four
Monday	Chapter 1	Chapter 5	Chapter 9	Chapter 13
Tuesday	Chapter 2	Chapter 6	Chapter 10	Chapter 14
Wednesday	Chapter 3	Chapter 7	Chapter 11	Chapter 15
Thursday	Chapter 4	Chapter 8	Chapter 12	Chapters 16-17
Friday	Writing Assignment	Writing Assignment	Writing Assignment	Writing Assignment

Teaching Information

Genre: Coming of Age Stories

Genre is the word we use to talk about the category of writing within which a literary work fits. Almost all literature fits within more than one genre. We will focus on a different genre with each unit.

Coming of age stories are an extremely popular genre for older elementary and young adult fiction. These stories can have any type of setting, be it historical, mythological, or contemporary. These stories will always contain a child hero who must go through some type of personal experience which will grow them emotionally. Many times, the event is so important that the character appears to leave childhood behind by the end of the work.

Peter Pan is a classic coming of age story where the heroine is battling the idea of what it means to grow up. She does not like the idea and is thrilled with the opportunity to travel to a magical place where she would not actually have to get any older. While there are adventures to be had, the overarching theme of the novel is that we all have to move through the seasons of life. It may be uncomfortable or unpleasant at times, but it is the way God created our lives to progress.

Many students in this age are struggling with the same feelings. They know they cannot stop the growing up process, but it isn't always something they are excited about. Leaving behind favorite toys or pastimes may be bittersweet and difficult. *Peter Pan* explores these feelings and gives the reader permission to keep part of their childhood with them even as they grow.

Literary Element: Character

Possibly the most important aspect of a written work are the characters. Through characters, we visualize the scenes played out in our imaginations with emotion. While students are familiar with the idea of characters in a story, they must begin to analyze those characters in a thoughtful way. The first step in this process is identifying them with literary terminology.

The **protagonist** is the one the story is mostly about or who must deal with the main conflict in the story. The author intends for the protagonist to evoke empathy from the reader. While the protagonist in classic literature is almost exclusively considered the hero or heroine, this is changing in more modern works. Authors are now exploring the traditional villains as protagonists, giving reasons for why they behave the way they do. This shifting of perspective is unique to modern storytelling and reflects the tendency to rationalize sinful behaviors in current western culture.

The **antagonist** is the person who creates conflict for the protagonist. Traditionally, this would be the story's villain. The antagonist may be obvious from the start or be a surprise revealed toward the end. The antagonist tries to prevent the protagonist from accomplishing their goals. The reader is encouraged to feel animosity toward the antagonist.

The **anti-hero** is a character who exhibits characteristics in direct opposition to a hero figure but is not motivated by negative intentions. The anti-hero may be weak, unintelligent, or silly. Although this character is not intentionally trying to bring harm to the protagonist, they may unintentionally create trouble.

Other characters are still important to the story but are not the central characters. While they may have important events happen to them and may be useful for other analysis, the focal point is still on the protagonist.

While reading the novel *Peter Pan*, students should pay close attention to the characters. It could be argued that both Peter Pan and Wendy are protagonists who choose different paths. While Captain Hook is the obvious antagonist, there are others who could be identified as well.

When approaching any literary work, it is highly beneficial to discuss these questions.

1. Why do you think _____ should be identified as the protagonist? What character qualities do they exhibit?
2. Why do you think _____ should be identified as the antagonist? In what ways are they in conflict with the protagonist?
3. Why do you think _____ should be identified as the anti-hero? What in their behavior gives this impression? How does this contrast with the protagonist?
4. Which of the other characters are the most important to the story? Were there any which you felt were unnecessary?

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Monday

- Read: Chapter 1
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Who would you choose to identify as the protagonist(s)? Why?

Tuesday

- Read: Chapter 2
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. What is the problem the protagonist(s) is facing?

Wednesday

- Read: Chapter 3
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Do you still feel your choice from Monday is accurate? Why or why not?

Thursday

- Read: Chapter 4
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. How is the protagonist(s) you chose dealing with the problem of growing up? Do you agree or disagree with the choices they are making?

Friday

- Read: Finish weekly reading.
- Assignment: Create your own protagonist. List the character attributes they have. Give them a name which reflects these attributes. After choosing a name and making a list, write 1-2 paragraphs about who this character is in personality only.

Devotional Option

Scripture: Proverbs 22:1

Consider: Why is being known for having good character traits better than wealth and riches?

Week Two: Coming of Age Fiction

Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie

Monday

- Read: Chapter 5
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Who would you choose to identify as the antagonist(s)? Why?

Tuesday

- Read: Chapter 6
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. What is the problem the antagonist(s) creating for the protagonist?

Wednesday

- Read: Chapter 7
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Why is the antagonist(s) interested in creating problems for the protagonist?

Thursday

- Read: Chapter 8
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. What is influencing the decisions the antagonist(s) is making?

Friday

- Read: Finish weekly reading.
- Assignment: Create an antagonist for your protagonist and list their character qualities. Create a name which reflects their character. Write 1-2 paragraphs which tell who the antagonist is in personality only. Do not refer to the protagonist in this writing.

Devotional Option

Scripture: Proverbs 24:17 and Proverbs 25:21

Consider: How should we respond when someone who is our enemy is struggling?

Week Three: Coming of Age Fiction

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Monday

- Read: Chapter 9
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Who would you choose to identify as the anti-hero? Why?

Tuesday

- Read: Chapter 10
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. What is the purpose of the anti-hero in this novel? Is this character comical, or does this character create further trouble for the protagonist?

Wednesday

- Read: Chapter 11
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Are there any other characters you would choose to identify as the anti-hero? Why or why not?

Thursday

- Read: Chapter 12
- Assignment: How does the anti-hero interact with the protagonist? How, if at all, does the anti-hero interact with the antagonist? How does the anti-hero interact with the rest of the characters in the story?

Friday

- Read: Finish weekly reading.
- Assignment: Create your own anti-hero for your protagonist. List the character attributes they have. Remember these should be in direct opposition to heroic qualities. Give them a name which reflects these attributes. After choosing a name and making a list, write 1-2 paragraphs about who this character is in personality only. Do not refer to either the protagonist or antagonist you created.

Devotional Option

Scripture: Proverbs 10:14

Consider: What happens to those who consistently speak or act foolishly?

Week Four: Coming-of-Age Fiction

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Monday

- Read: Chapter 13
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Who are the other important characters in the story? Make a list and write a brief sentence about who they are or how they relate to the protagonist and/or antagonist.

Tuesday

- Read: Chapter 14
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Which of the characters from the list you made yesterday are most vital to the story? Why is this so?

Wednesday

- Read: Chapter 15
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. Which of the characters from the list you made on Monday are most unneeded in the story? Why is this so? Do you think they should have been left out altogether? Why or why not?

Thursday

- Read: Chapter 16-17
- Assignment: Write a 1-2 paragraph narration of the important events of the chapter you read. If you could see one of the other characters be more involved in the story, which one would it be?

Friday

- Complete Assessment
- Assignment: Write a short story (1-3 pages) involving the three characters you created previously. You may feel free to add new characters, but be careful not to add too many because of the short length. Take time to explain who the characters are and have them interact with one another. Develop a problem for the antagonist to create for the protagonist and involve the anti-hero in some way.

Devotional Option

Scripture: Proverbs 28:23

Consider: Why is it better to hear truth even if it is painful than it is to hear flattering lies?