

# AP Literature Close Reading Journal

# EXAMPLE

Name: Catherine Cornelius

Text: A Prayer for Owen Meany

Section Read: Chapter 1 – Foul Ball

Due Date: September 3, 2014

<p><b>DESCRIBE BELOW YOUR INSIGHTS ON THIS SECTION</b>  <u>Describe</u>, <u>label</u> and <u>check off</u> at least 3 of the items listed below in relation to this section of the text. <b>BE SPECIFIC!</b> Consider a variety of observations and insights over time (e.g., look at different characters, themes, conflicts, etc.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Structure of Time &amp; Events (Str)    <input type="checkbox"/> Narration/Speaker /Voice (NSV)  <input type="checkbox"/> Setting/Atmosphere (SA)        <input type="checkbox"/> Audience (A)  <input type="checkbox"/> Characterization (C)            <input type="checkbox"/> Style/Diction/Syntax (SDS)  <input type="checkbox"/> Theme (T)                         <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patterns/Motifs (PM)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conflict/Tension (CT)           <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Point of View (POV)</p>	<p><b>WHAT'S YOUR EVIDENCE?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ List abbreviated quotes and page #s</li> <li>✓ Other <u>specific</u> textual justification</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> An abbreviated quote looks like this:  "HAMLET: To be or not to be...all my sins remember'd" [III-I, L56-89] [Act-scene, Line]  OR "As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning...a cold shiver run through him" p. 11</p>	<p><b>SO WHAT? (SIGNIFICANCE/INSIGHT/PATTERNS):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ So what? Why does this matter?</li> <li>▪ What emotional or intellectual insight does this provide the reader?</li> <li>▪ How does this insight connect to others you've made?</li> <li>▪ What pattern(s) does this insight reveal? What meaning does the pattern(s) suggest?</li> <li>▪ How does this develop a larger purpose you see the author intending?</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE: Please choose a variety of the prompts above over time.</b></p>
<p><b>PM</b> – There is a recurring motif of voice or ideas related to speaking/speech. Voice is used to describe OWEN as unique – he speaks in CAPITAL LETTERS indicating shouting or dominance or importance. Tabitha Wheelwright has an almost professional singing voice. She is a member of the congregational choir and the narrator's mother. Owen calls the Catholic's rejection of his parents an "UNSPEAKABLE OUTRAGE."</p>	<p>"I am doomed to remember a boy with a wrecked voice ... he is the reason I believe in God." p. 3 "But this story is really about Owen Meany, about how I have apprenticed myself to his voice." p.20 "...the Catholics had committed an UNSPEAKABLE OUTRAGE – that they had insulted his father and his mother, irreparably." p. 24</p>	<p>Owen seems to have a voice that demands to be heard. It is often described as painful to listen to, wrecked, able to revive the dead. There seems to be a connection between voices and religion. This story has "prayer" in the title. Owen and John attend Sunday school together. John says that Owen is responsible for making him a Christian. John's mother's voice is what makes the choir have soul. There is definitely a pattern of voice being associated with religion or God.</p>
<p><b>CT</b> – There is conflict between the three religious groups and the people who subscribe to a religion (Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Catholics). The Meany's were rejected by the Catholics, The Congregationalists were rejected by Tabitha, Dan, and John, Mrs. Wheelwright and Rev. Merrill resent Tabitha from removing her family from the Congregational Church. Owen seems to resent organized religion in general.</p>	<p>"A PERSON'S FAITH GOES AT ITS OWN PACE," Owen Meany said. "THE TROUBLE WITH CHURCH IS THE SERVICE... WHAT DOES THE STUPID SERMON HAVE TO DO WITH GOD? WHO KNOWS WHAT GOD THINKS OF CURRENT EVENTS? WHO CARES?" p. 25</p>	<p>This idea develops a larger purpose - questioning organized religion. Religion is supposed to bring people together to celebrate some spiritual understanding that focuses on love, kindness, and peace. Instead of bringing people closer to God – Owen says it drives people away from each other and their connection with a higher being. Owen conveys the idea that God has no interest in the petty affairs of mankind. The church creates a barrier between one and one's relationship with God. John says that Owen believed in God more than any other person he knew.</p>
<p><b>POV</b> – The story is told from the perspective of John Wheelwright. John must be saying a prayer for Owen Meany as the title implies. John goes into great detail to describe Owen – his appearance, voice, intellect, family life, love for Tabitha, and friendship. John even states that he envies Owen his belief in God – John had little belief in God.</p>	<p>"You simply had to put your hands on Owen. He was mortally cute; he had a furry animal attractiveness – except for the nakedness of his nearly transparent ears, and the rodentlike way the protruded from his sharp face." p. 31</p>	<p>The term "mortally" indicates deadly – deadly cute. People were attracted to Owen – they had to touch him at their own peril. Owen seems to be larger than life as his voice indicates. He demands attention whether he wants it or not. He evokes a reaction from other people whether positive or negative. There seems to be a calm fearlessness and self-assuredness about him. He is both small and large at the same time. This paradox seems an integral part of him and his powerful presence. Owen is larger than life.</p>

<p><b>EVALUATING YOUR JOURNAL:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MY JOURNAL FOLLOWS DIRECTIONS</li> <li>2. ... IS SPECIFIC</li> <li>3. ... EXPRESSES MY VIEWS CLEARLY</li> <li>4. ... HAS CLAIMS BACKED BY EVIDENCE</li> <li>5. IS COMPLETE</li> </ol>	<p><b>SELF-EVALUATION</b></p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p>	<p><b>TEACHER EVALUATION</b></p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p> <p>X EXCELS   <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD   <input type="checkbox"/> SO-SO   <input type="checkbox"/> BAD</p>	<p><b>TEACHER COMMENTS: THIS STUDENT IS AMAZINGLY INSIGHTFUL! THERE IS SIGN OF GREAT TALENT HERE.</b></p>
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<p><b>RECURRING LITERARY TECHNIQUES</b> <i>Describe</i> (explain author's use of) at least 2 techniques (see list below)</p> <p><b>Figurative language:</b> Irving uses a metaphor to comment on his narrator's story. He describes memory as a monster, a living demonic force that rules a person.</p>	<p><b>WHERE EXACTLY DOES THIS OCCUR?</b> (PAGE #S + PARAGRAPH OR LINE #S) "YOUR MEMORY IS A MONSTER; YOU FORGET – IT DOESN'T...YOU THINK YOU HAVE A MEMORY; BUT IT HAS YOU." P. 36</p>	<p><b>SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS? HOW DOES IT AFFECT READERS?</b> <i>I = Intellectual</i> (causes you to think...) <b>or</b> <i>E = Emotional</i> (causes you to feel...) <i>E - The word monster evokes an emotional response from the reader. Monsters are uncontrollable, impart pain, inspire fear, and are powerful and unpredictable. John is saying that his memory of Owen is in the power of something with a will of its own. His knowledge of Owen is not his; it lives outside of his control.</i></p>
<p><b>FORESHADOWING:</b> THE BASEBALL SEEMS TO BE IMPORTANT. THE CHAPTER IS NAMED "FOUL BALL." IT WAS HIT BY OWEN AND KILLED JOHN'S MOTHER. IT DISAPPEARED. THE POLICE CALL IT "THE INSTRUMENT OF DEATH." JOHN ASSUMES OWEN TOOK IT. HOWEVER THE FOLLOWING QUOTE SEEMS TO INDICATE OTHERWISE.</p>	<p>"I HAD NO IDEA WHO ELSE HAD ATTENDED THE LITTLE LEAGUE GAME -AND WHO HAD HIS OWN REASON FOR WANTING TO POSSESS THE BALL THAT OWEN MEANY HIT." P. 38</p>	<p>I - THE FORESHADOWING SETS UP A MYSTERY. THE READER WONDERS INTELLECTUALLY WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE BASEBALL BESIDES THE POLICE OR OWEN MEANY. THE NARRATOR IS OBVIOUSLY REFLECTING BACK ON WHEN HE WAS ELEVEN. HE INDICATES THAT HE HAS INFORMATION NOW THAT WE DON'T KNOW.</p>

**SAMPLE LITERARY TECHNIQUES:**

- ✓ *Figurative Language* (metaphor, simile, hyperbole, metonymy, personification, understatement, synecdoche, apostrophe, connotation/denotation...)
- ✓ *Voice, persona, satire, irony* (dramatic, verbal, situational)
- ✓ *Style, sentence pattern, tone, mood, atmosphere, ambiance*
- ✓ *Allusion* (historical, literary, social-political, mythological, biblical, etc.)
- ✓ *Key imagery, deliberate contrast/comparison, analogy, symbolism, stereotype, archetype*
- ✓ *Point of view* (1<sup>st</sup> person, 3<sup>rd</sup> person -omniscient -limited -objective)
- ✓ *Foreshadowing, flashback, flash-forward, stream-of-consciousness*

<p><b>AT LEAST 2 QUALITY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:</b></p> <p>1. COULD THE TWO THINGS THAT JOHN DOESN'T KNOW HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH EACH OTHER? (HIS FATHER'S IDENTITY AND THE THIEF'S IDENTITY)</p> <p>2. WHY DOES IRVING PAINT SUCH A PARADOXICAL PICTURE OF OWEN? HIS HEIGHT AND HIS VOICE – SMALL AND LARGE – MAKE NO SENSE. WHY?</p>	<p><b>AT LEAST 1 PREDICTION (OR IMPLICATION) FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS:</b></p> <p>OWEN WILL ATTEND GRAVESEND ACADEMY.</p> <p><i>This prediction is based on... the fact that John's mother was so adamant about it, visited the Meany's to discuss it, and Owen was responsible for her death. Owen's parents will feel guilty enough to allow Tabitha her wish.</i></p>
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**THEME STATEMENT:** ...IS A SPECIFIC CLAIM, OR THESIS, YOU HAVE ABOUT A PARTICULAR PASSAGE OF LITERATURE. MY PASSAGE IS FOUND AT/ON: **PAGE 25**

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START BY IDENTIFYING THE THREE COMPONENTS OF A GOOD **THESIS STATEMENT:**

**X AN IDEA** I SEE THE AUTHOR DEVELOPING IN THIS PASSAGE: **OWEN MEANY WILL TEACH JOHN AND US SOMETHING AMAZING THAT WE MAY BE RELUCTANT TO ADMIT.**

**X A SPECIFIC TECHNIQUE** THE AUTHOR USES TO CONVEY THIS IDEA: **THE AUTHOR EMPLOYS CHARACTERIZATION AND JUXTAPOSITION AS HE PAINTS JOHN AND OWEN AS FOILS.**

**X WHAT GREATER UNDERSTANDING** ("UNIVERSAL" LESSON) DO THE TECHNIQUE AND IDEA CREATE (THEME): **SOMETIMES WE CAN LEARN MORE FROM EACH OTHER THAN FORMAL DOCTRINE CAN IMPART TO US.**

**NOW, COMPOSE A THESIS STATEMENT BELOW WITH ALL OF THESE ELEMENTS**

JOHN IRVING MASTERFULLY JUXTAPOSES TWO FULLY DEVELOPED CHARACTERS IN OWEN AND JOHN; THE TWO ACT AS FOILS FOR EACH OTHER, AS OWEN'S FAITH IN GOD IS UNFLAPPABLE AND JOHN IS OFTEN LOST AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT GOD, THE WORLD, AND HIS PLACE IN IT. OWEN MEANY TEACHES JOHN AND US THAT WE CAN LEARN MORE FROM EACH OTHER ABOUT GOD THAN WE CAN FROM RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE.

**IDEAS FROM THIS JOURNAL I WANT TO USE IN MY NEXT PAPER OR PROJECT:**      **HOW DO PEOPLE GAIN INSIGHT FROM EXPERIENCING EACH OTHER?**