Facing Fear

“Do one thing every day that scares you.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt
In this collection, you will explore how people experience fear and how fear affects the brain and the body.

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

After reading this collection, you will have the opportunity to complete two performance tasks:

- In one, you will present a response to one of the selections from the collection.
- In the second, you will write an informative essay about a fear using information found in selections from the collection and your own research.

**ACADEMIC VOCABULARY**

Study the words and their definitions in the chart below. You will use these words as you discuss and write about the texts in this collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Related Forms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>evident</td>
<td>easily seen or understood; obvious</td>
<td>evidence, evidently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor</td>
<td>someone or something that has an affect on an event, a process, or a situation</td>
<td>factorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indicate</td>
<td>to point out; also, to serve as a sign or symbol of something</td>
<td>indication, indicator, indicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>similar</td>
<td>alike in appearance or nature, though not identical; having features that are the same</td>
<td>similarly, similarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specific</td>
<td>concerned with a particular thing; also, precise or exact</td>
<td>specifically, specifics, specification</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Graham Salisbury (b. 1944) was born in Pennsylvania but grew up in Hawaii. Growing up with a distant mother and without a father, who was killed in World War II, Salisbury lacked guidance. His characters explore choices similar to those he faced—making and keeping friends and learning honesty and courage. Their struggles, like Salisbury’s, also take place in a Hawaiian setting. Among his many writing awards are the Boston Globe/Horn Book award and a School Library Journal Best Book of the Year award.

When Vinny and three others dropped down into the ravine, they entered a jungle thick with tangled trees and rumors of what might have happened to the dead boy’s body.

The muddy trail was slick and, in places where it had fallen away, flat-out dangerous. The cool breeze that swept the Hawaiian hillside pastures above died early in the descent.

There were four of them—Vinny; his best friend, Joe-Boy; Mo, who was afraid of nothing; and Joe-Boy’s haole girlfriend, Starlene—all fifteen. It was a Tuesday in July, two weeks and a day after the boy had drowned. If, in fact, that’s what had happened to him.

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1 ravine (rә-vēn´): a deep, narrow valley made by running water.
2 haole (hou´lē): in Hawaii, a white person or non-native Hawaiian.
Vinny slipped, and dropped his towel in the mud. He picked it up and tried to brush it off, but instead smeared the mud spot around until the towel resembled something someone’s dog had slept on. “Tst,” he said.

Joe-Boy, hiking down just behind him, laughed. “Hey, Vinny, just think, that kid walked where you walking.”

“Shuddup,” Vinny said.

“You prob’ly stepping right where his foot was.”

Vinny moved to the edge of the trail, where the ravine fell through a twisted jungle of gnarly trees and underbrush to the stream far below. He could see Starlene and Mo farther ahead, their heads bobbing as they walked, both almost down to the pond where the boy had died.

“Hey,” Joe-Boy went on, “maybe you going be the one to find his body.”

“You don’t cut it out, Joe-Boy, I going . . . I going . . . ”

“What, cry?”

Vinny scowled. Sometimes Joe-Boy was a big fat babooze. They slid down the trail. Mud oozed between Vinny’s toes. He grabbed at roots and branches to keep from falling. Mo and Starlene were out of sight now, the trail ahead having cut back.

Joe-Boy said, “You going jump in the water and go down and your hand going touch his face, stuck under the rocks. Ha ha ha . . . a ha ha ha!”

Vinny winced. He didn’t want to be here. It was too soon, way too soon. Two weeks and one day.

He saw a footprint in the mud and stepped around it.

The dead boy had jumped and had never come back up. Four search and rescue divers hunted for two days straight and never found him. Not a trace. Gave Vinny the creeps. It didn’t make sense. The pond wasn’t that big.

He wondered why it didn’t seem to bother anyone else. Maybe it did and they just didn’t want to say.

Butchie was the kid’s name. Only fourteen.

Fourteen.

Two weeks and one day ago he was walking down this trail. Now nobody could find him.

The jungle crushed in, reaching over the trail, and Vinny brushed leafy branches aside. The roar of the waterfall got louder, louder.
Starlene said it was the goddess that took him, the one that lives in the stone down by the road. She did that every now and then, Starlene said, took somebody when she got lonely. Took him and kept him. Vinny had heard that legend before, but he’d never believed in it.

Now he didn’t know what he believed.

The body had to be stuck down there. But still, four divers and they couldn’t find it?

Vinny decided he’d better believe in the legend. If he didn’t, the goddess might get mad and send him bad luck. Or maybe take him, too.

Stopstopstop! Don’t think like that.

“Come on,” Joe-Boy said, nudging Vinny from behind. “Hurry it up.”

Just then Starlene whooped, her voice bouncing around the walls of the ravine.

“Let’s go,” Joe-Boy said. “They there already.”

Moments later, Vinny jumped up onto a large boulder at the edge of the pond. Starlene was swimming out in the brown water. It wasn’t murky brown, but clean and clear to a depth of maybe three or four feet. Because of the waterfall you had to yell if you wanted to say something. The whole place smelled of mud and ginger and iron.

Starlene swam across to the waterfall on the far side of the pond and ducked under it, then climbed out and edged along the rock wall behind it, moving slowly, like a spider. Above, sun-sparkling stream water spilled over the lip of a one-hundred-foot drop.

Mo and Joe-Boy threw their towels onto the rocks and dove into the pond. Vinny watched, his muddy towel hooked around his neck. Reluctantly, he let it fall, then dove in after them.

The cold mountain water tasted tangy. Was it because the boy’s body was down there decomposing? He spit it out.

He followed Joe-Boy and Mo to the waterfall and ducked under it. They climbed up onto the rock ledge, just as Starlene had done, then spidered their way over to where you could climb to a small ledge about fifteen feet up. They took their time because the hand and footholds were slimy with moss.

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1. **decomposing** (dĕ’kam-pôz’ĭng): starting to decay and fall apart.
Starlene jumped first. Her shriek echoed off the rocky cliff, then died in the dense green jungle.
Mo jumped, then Joe-Boy, then Vinny.
The fifteen-foot ledge was not the problem.
It was the one above it, the one you had to work up to, the big one, where you had to take a deadly zigzag trail that climbed up and away from the waterfall, then cut back and forth to a foot-wide ledge something more like fifty feet up.
That was the problem.
That was where the boy had jumped from.
Joe-Boy and Starlene swam out to the middle of the pond. Mo swam back under the waterfall and climbed once again to the fifteen-foot ledge.
Vinny started to swim out toward Joe-Boy but stopped when he saw Starlene put her arms around him. She kissed him. They sank under for a long time, then came back up, still kissing.
Vinny turned away and swam back over to the other side of the pond, where he’d first gotten in. His mother would kill him if she ever heard about where he’d come. After the boy drowned, or was taken by the goddess, or whatever happened to him, she said never to come to this pond again. Ever. It was off-limits. Permanently.
But not his dad. He said, “You fall off a horse, you get back on, right? Or else you going be scared of it all your life.”
His mother scoffed and waved him off. “Don’t listen to him, Vinny, listen to me. Don’t go there. That pond is haunted.” Which had made his dad laugh.

But Vinny promised he’d stay away.

But then Starlene and Joe-Boy said, “Come with us anyway. You let your mommy run your life, or what?” And Vinny said, “But what if I get caught?” And Joe-Boy said, “So?” Vinny mashed his lips. He was so weak. Couldn’t even say no. But if he’d said, “I can’t go, my mother won’t like it,” they would have laughed him right off the island. No, he had to go. No choice.

So he’d come along, and so far it was fine. He’d even gone in the water. Everyone was happy. All he had to do now was wait it out and go home and hope his mother never heard about it.

When he looked up, Starlene was gone.

He glanced around the pond until he spotted her starting up the zigzag trail to the fifty-foot ledge. She was moving slowly, hanging on to roots and branches on the upside of the cliff. He couldn’t believe she was going there. He wanted to yell, Hey, Starlene, that’s where he died!

But she already knew that.

Mo jumped from the lower ledge, yelling, “Banzaiii!” An explosion of coffee-colored water erupted when he hit.

Joe-Boy swam over to where Starlene had gotten out. He waved to Vinny, grinning like a fool, then followed Starlene up the zigzag trail.

Now Starlene was twenty-five, thirty feet up. Vinny watched her for a while, then lost sight of her when she slipped behind a wall of jungle that blocked his view. A few minutes later she popped back out, now almost at the top, where the trail ended, where there was nothing but mud and a few plants to grab on to if you slipped, plants that would rip right out of the ground, plants that wouldn’t stop you if you fell, nothing but your screams between you and the rocks below.

Vinny’s stomach tingled just watching her. He couldn’t imagine what it must feel like to be up there, especially if you were afraid of heights, like he was. She has no fear, Vinny thought, no fear at all. Pleasepleaseplease, Starlene. I don’t want to see you die.

Starlene crept forward, making her way to the end of the trail, where the small ledge was.
Joe-Boy popped out of the jungle behind her. He stopped, waiting for her to jump before going on.

Vinny held his breath.

Starlene, in her cutoff jeans and soaked T-shirt, stood perfectly still, her arms at her sides. Vinny suddenly felt like hugging her. Why, he couldn’t tell. *Starlene, please.*

She reached behind her and took a wide leaf from a plant, then eased down and scooped up a finger of mud. She made a brown cross on her forehead, then wiped her muddy fingers on her jeans.

She waited.

Was she thinking about the dead boy?

She stuck the stem end of the leaf in her mouth, leaving the rest of it to hang out. When she jumped, the leaf would flap up and cover her nose and keep water from rushing into it. An old island trick.

She jumped.

Down, down.

Almost in slow motion, it seemed at first, then faster and faster. She fell feetfirst, arms flapping to keep balance so she wouldn’t land on her back, or stomach, which would probably almost kill her.

Just before she hit, she crossed her arms over her chest and vanished within a small explosion of rusty water.

Vinny stood, not breathing at all, praying.

Ten seconds. Twenty, thirty . . .

She came back up, laughing.

*She shouldn’t make fun that way,* Vinny thought. It was dangerous, disrespectful. It was asking for it.

Vinny looked up when he heard Joe-Boy shout, “Hey, Vinny, watch how a man does it! Look!”

Joe-Boy scooped up some mud and drew a stroke of lightning across his chest. When he jumped, he threw himself out, face and body parallel to the pond, his arms and legs spread out. *He’s crazy,* Vinny thought, *absolutely insane.* At the last second Joe-Boy folded into a ball and hit. *Ca-roomp!* He came up whooping and yelling, “*Wooo! So good! Come on, Vinny, it’s hot!*”

Vinny faked a laugh. He waved, shouting, “Naah, the water’s too cold!”
Now Mo was heading up the zigzag trail—Mo, who hardly ever said a word and would do anything anyone ever challenged him to do. *Come on, Mo, not you, too.*

Vinny knew then that he would have to jump.

Jump, or never live it down.

Mo jumped in the same way Joe-Boy had, man-style, splayed out in a suicide fall. He came up grinning.

Starlene and Joe-Boy turned toward Vinny.

Vinny got up and hiked around the edge of the pond, walking in the muddy shallows, looking at a school of small brown-backed fish near a ginger patch.

Maybe they’d forget about him.

Starlene torpedoed over, swimming underwater. Her body glittered in the small amount of sunlight that penetrated the trees around the rim of the ravine. When she came up, she broke the surface smoothly, gracefully, like a swan. Her blond hair sleeked back like river grass.

She smiled a sweet smile. “Joe-Boy says you’re afraid to jump. I didn’t believe him. He’s wrong, right?”

Vinny said quickly, “Of course he’s wrong. I just don’t want to, that’s all. The water’s cold.”

“Naah, it’s nice.”

Vinny looked away. On the other side of the pond Joe-Boy and Mo were on the cliff behind the waterfall.

“Joe-Boy says your mom told you not to come here. Is that true?”

Vinny nodded. “Yeah. Stupid, but she thinks it’s haunted.”

“She’s right.”

“What?”

“That boy didn’t die, Vinny. The stone goddess took him. He’s in a good place right now. He’s her prince.”

Vinny scowled. He couldn’t tell if Starlene was teasing him or if she really believed that. He said, “Yeah, prob’ly.”

“Are you going to jump, or is Joe-Boy right?”

“Joe-Boy’s an idiot. Sure I’m going to jump.”

Starlene grinned, staring at Vinny a little too long. “He is an idiot, isn’t he? But I love him.”

“Yeah, well . . .”

“Go to it, big boy. I’ll be watching.”

Starlene sank down and swam out into the pond.

*Ca-ripes.*
Vinny ripped a hank\(^4\) of white ginger from the ginger patch and smelled it, and prayed he’d still be alive after the sun went down.

He took his time climbing the zigzag trail. When he got to the part where the jungle hid him from view, he stopped and smelled the ginger again. So sweet and alive it made Vinny wish for all he was worth that he was climbing out of the ravine right now, heading home.

But of course, there was no way he could do that.

Not before jumping.

He tossed the ginger onto the muddy trail and continued on. He slipped once or twice, maybe three times. He didn’t keep track. He was too numb now, too caught up in the insane thing he was about to do. He’d never been this far up the trail before. Once he’d tried to go all the way, but couldn’t. It made him dizzy.

When he stepped out and the jungle opened into a huge bowl where he could look down, way, way down, he could see their three heads in the water, heads with arms moving slowly to keep them afloat, and a few bright rays of sunlight pouring down onto them, and when he saw this, his stomach fluttered and rose. Something sour came up and he spit it out.

It made him wobble to look down. He closed his eyes. His whole body trembled. The trail was no wider than the length of his foot. And it was wet and muddy from little rivulets of water that bled from the side of the cliff.

The next few steps were the hardest he’d ever taken in his life. He tried not to look down, but he couldn’t help it. His gaze was drawn there. He struggled to push back an urge to fly, just jump off and fly. He could almost see himself spiraling down like a glider, or a bird, or a leaf.

His hands shook as if he were freezing. He wondered, Had the dead boy felt this way? Or had he felt brave, like Starlene or Joe-Boy, or Mo, who seemed to feel nothing.

Somebody from below shouted, but Vinny couldn’t make it out over the waterfall, roaring down just feet beyond the ledge where he would soon be standing, cascading past so close its mist dampened the air he breathed.

*The dead boy had just come to the ravine to have fun,* Vinny thought. Just a regular kid like himself, come to swim

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\(^4\) hank (hăngk): a coiled or looped bundle of something, such as rope or yarn.
and be with his friends, then go home and eat macaroni and cheese and watch TV, maybe play with his dog or wander around after dark.

But he’d done none of that.
Where was he?
Inch by inch Vinny made it to the ledge. He stood, swaying slightly, the tips of his toes one small movement from the precipice.

Far below, Joe-Boy waved his arm back and forth. It was dreamy to see—back and forth, back and forth. He looked so small down there.

For a moment Vinny’s mind went blank, as if he were in some trance, some dream where he could so easily lean out and fall, and think or feel nothing.

A breeze picked up and moved the trees on the ridge-line, but not a breath of it reached the fifty-foot ledge.

Vinny thought he heard a voice, small and distant. Yes. Something inside him, a tiny voice pleading, Don’t do it. Walk away. Just turn and go and walk back down.

“. . . I can’t,” Vinny whispered.
You can, you can, you can. Walk back down.
Vinny waited.
And waited.
Joe-Boy yelled, then Starlene, both of them waving.
Then something very strange happened.
Vinny felt at peace. Completely and totally calm and at peace. He had not made up his mind about jumping. But something else inside him had.

Thoughts and feelings swarmed, stinging him: Jump!

Jump! Jump! Jump!

But deep inside, where the peace was, where his mind wasn’t, he would not jump. He would walk back down.
No! No, no, no!

Vinny eased down and fingered up some mud and made a cross on his chest, big and bold. He grabbed a leaf, stuck it in his mouth. Be calm, be calm. Don’t look down.

After a long pause he spit the leaf out and rubbed the cross to a blur.

They walked out of the ravine in silence, Starlene, Joe-Boy, and Mo far ahead of him. They hadn’t said a word since he’d come down off the trail. He knew what they were thinking. He knew, he knew, he knew.

At the same time the peace was still there. He had no idea what it was. But he prayed it wouldn’t leave him now, prayed it wouldn’t go away, would never go away, because in there, in that place where the peace was, it didn’t matter what they thought.

Vinny emerged from the ravine into a brilliance that surprised him. Joe-Boy, Starlene, and Mo were now almost down to the road.

Vinny breathed deeply, and looked up and out over the island. He saw, from there, a land that rolled away like honey, easing down a descent of rich Kikuyu grass pasture-land, flowing from there over vast highlands of brown and green, then, finally, falling massively to the coast and flat blue sea.

He’d never seen anything like it.

Had it always been here? This view of the island?

He stared and stared, then sat, taking it in.

He’d never seen anything so beautiful in all his life.

COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION  With a small group, discuss how Vinny’s feelings and behavior are influenced by the boy’s tragic death. Refer to events in the story to support your ideas.
Describe Stories: Character and Setting

Like real people, characters have personalities, drive, and life-changing events. To describe characters in terms of how they appear in stories, you can use these terms:

- **Character traits** are the qualities shown by a character, such as physical traits (tall, brown eyes) or expressions of personality (kind, anxious).
- **Character motivation** is the reason or reasons a character acts, feels, or thinks in a certain way.
- **Character development** is how a character changes throughout a story.

Think about your impressions of the characters in “The Ravine.” What traits and motivations does Vinny exhibit throughout the story?

In a story like “The Ravine,” the setting is a key factor in the events of the story and how the characters react to it and each other. The setting is the time and place in which the action occurs. The time can be a particular time of day, season, year, or historical period. The place can be an outside location, a room, a building, or a country.

Setting can affect characters by influencing their values, beliefs, and emotions or by affecting the way they live and interact with other characters. What impact does the setting have on Vinny?

Make Inferences

Readers often make inferences to figure out something an author has not explained. An **inference** is a logical guess that is based on facts and one’s own knowledge and experience. To support your inference, you may need to **cite evidence**, or provide examples and quotations from the story. For example, you can make an inference about Vinny and Joe-Boy’s friendship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence from the Story</th>
<th>My Own Knowledge</th>
<th>Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Joe-Boy is Vinny’s “best friend.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Joe-Boy teases Vinny about finding the body.</td>
<td>Sometimes friends tease each other in a friendly way, but this teasing does not seem kind.</td>
<td>They may be friends, but Joe-Boy is not especially nice to Vinny.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing the Text

**Summarize** Review lines 38–65. In your own words, describe what Vinny knows about the dead boy. Explain his thoughts and feelings about this past event.

**Draw Conclusions** Review lines 71–100. What are some examples of language the author uses to describe the setting? Why is the setting important to the story?

**Cite Evidence** Reread lines 110–132 and think about what the author wants us to understand about Vinny. What words would you use to describe Vinny’s character traits?

**Make Inferences** Before jumping, the characters perform certain rituals. Reread lines 163–206 to review how they prepare to jump. What inferences can you make about the characters’ feelings and their reasons for these rituals?

**Analyze** Consider Vinny’s feelings and actions throughout the story. How is Vinny different by the end of the story? How is he the same?

**Critique** Review the story’s ending in lines 319–339 and examine the descriptions the author provides. Do you think the ending makes the story more powerful? Why or why not?

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**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**Writing Activity: Informative Essay** Write a two- or three-paragraph essay to compare and contrast the character traits of Vinny and Joe-Boy.

- Introduce your topic by briefly describing the characters and their relationship to each other.
- Next, tell about how their character traits are different. Use examples from the text to support your ideas.
- Then indicate the character traits that the boys share or that are similar. Include evidence from the text.
Critical Vocabulary

gnarly  rivulet  cascade  precipice

Practice and Apply  With a partner, discuss the following questions. Then work together to write a sentence for each vocabulary word.

1. Which vocabulary word goes with twisted? Why?
2. Which vocabulary word goes with edge? Why?
3. Which vocabulary word goes with trickle? Why?
4. Which vocabulary word goes with pouring? Why?

Vocabulary Strategy: Using Context Clues

When you encounter an unfamiliar word in your reading, one way to figure out the meaning is to use context clues. Context clues are hints about the meaning of an unknown word that may be found in the words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that surround that unknown word. Look at this example:

And it was wet and muddy from little rivulets of water that bled from the side of the cliff.

To figure out the meaning of rivulets, look for clues in the surrounding words and ideas in the sentence. The sentence says that the rivulets of water “bled” from the cliff. This helps you imagine water flowing from the cliff in the same way that blood flows from a cut or scrape on your arm; the blood looks like a running stream. Combining this image with the word “little,” you can imagine that rivulets might be little streams. Then use a dictionary to confirm your guess: A rivulet is “a small brook or stream.”

Practice and Apply  Reread “The Ravine” and find the following words. Look at the surrounding words and sentences for clues to each word’s meaning. Fill out a chart like the one shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Context Clues</th>
<th>My Guessed Definition</th>
<th>Dictionary Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>winced</td>
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<td>scoffed</td>
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<td>parallel</td>
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</table>
Language Conventions: Recognize Variations from Standard English

Writers often use words in dialogue that vary from Standard English to bring their characters to life. Writers may also use dialect to convey information about a community in which a character lives. Dialect is a form of language that is spoken in a particular region by the people who live there. In “The Ravine,” the author uses the following sentences to give his characters an informal and conversational voice.

“Shuddup,” Vinny said.
“You prob’ly stepping right where his foot was.”
“Hey,” Joe-Boy went on, “maybe you going be the one to find his body.”

Stopstopstop! Don’t think like that.

Notice the informal spelling of Shut up and probably in the first two sentences. These variations indicate informal speech patterns that many people use every day. The phrase “maybe you going be the one” is an example of incorrect grammar that can be a part of dialect. In the last sentence, the words Stopstopstop are run together to indicate the urgency of Vinny’s thoughts. A character’s way of speaking can help you better understand that character.

Practice and Apply Read the sentences and identify the variations from standard English. Then rewrite each sentence to show that you understand what is being said.

1. “S’up, Denise? How’s it goin’?” asked Claire.
2. Jake did not want to answer. He shrugged his shoulders. “I dunno,” he mumbled.
3. I refuse. I quit. I will never ever go back to that sad old place again.
4. “Gimme a break!” scoffed Tina. “I saw ya there with Jill, ya liar!”
5. I was just hangin’ out with some friends at the mall. We weren’t lookin’ for no trouble. Know what I’m sayin’?
Margaret Peterson Haddix (b. 1964) dreamed about writing novels as a child. Her interest in writing was sparked by her father’s imaginative tales; however, she did not think she could support herself writing stories. She worked as a newspaper reporter after college but never gave up her dream. Eventually, Haddix quit her job and began working on her first novel. Haddix has now written more than a dozen young adult novels.

**Fine?**

Short Story by Margaret Peterson Haddix

**SETTING A PURPOSE** As you read, pay attention to the clues that help you understand how Bailey feels and thinks about her life.

“Contrary to popular opinion,” the MRI **technician** says, “this is not a torture device, it was not invented by aliens, and it does not enable us to read your thoughts.”

Bailey looks doubtfully at the huge machine in front of her. She has already forgotten what MRI stands for. Does that mean there’s really something wrong with her?

“Just joking,” the man says. “But you wouldn’t believe the questions I get. This won’t be a problem for you at all unless . . . you’re not claustrophobic, are you?”

“No,” Bailey says. But she has to think about the question. Wearing a hospital gown, sitting in a wheelchair, she has a hard time remembering what and who she is. Bailey Smith, sophomore at Riverside High School, all-around ordinary kid.

*But I won’t be ordinary if that machine finds something awful in my brain . . . .*
“Good,” the technician is saying. “Because I have to admit, some people do go a little nutso in there.” He’s a short man with glasses; he seems amused that some people might not enjoy his precious machine.

“Bailey will be fine,” Bailey’s mother says firmly from behind the wheelchair.

“Mom,” Bailey protests, shorthand for “Mom, you’re embarrassing me,” “Mom, you’re bugging me,” “Mom, you’re driving me crazy.” Bailey has said that word that way a thousand times in the past couple of years: When her mother said she shouldn’t let her bra straps show. When her mother thought people went to homecoming with dates. When her mother asked why Bailey didn’t like Hanson’s music anymore. The complaint “Mom” was usually so perfect at conveying Bailey’s thoughts. But it sounds all wrong in this huge, hollow room.

“Well,” the technician says, “time to get this over with.” Bailey lies down on a narrow pallet sticking out of the machine like a tongue. The technician starts to pull a covering over her head, then stops.

“Almost forgot,” he says. “Want to listen to the radio while you’re in there?”

“Okay,” Bailey says.

“What station?”

Bailey starts to say Z-98, the station everyone at school listens to, the only station Bailey ever turns on.

“Country 101?” the technician teases. “Want to hear cowboys crying in their beer?”

“No,” Bailey says. She surprises herself by deciding, “Something classical.”

As soon as she’s in the tube, Bailey regrets her choice. All those throbbing violins, those crashing cymbals—Bailey knows next to nothing about classical music and cares about it even less. The slow, cultured voice of the announcer—“And now we’ll hear Mozart’s finest concerto, at least in my humble opinion”—could drive anyone crazy. Or nutso, as the technician had said.

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1 pallet (pāl´ēt): a bed-like platform, sometimes covered with padding or cloth.
“All right,” the technician’s voice comes over her headphones. He’s in the control room, but he sounds a million miles away. “Hold very still, and we’ll get started.”

There’s a noise like the clip-clop of horses’ hooves—not real horses, but maybe a mechanical kind someone might create if he’d never heard real ones. The noise drowns out the classical music, and in losing it, Bailey realizes why she asked for it in the first place: She knew she’d never have to listen to it again. If she’d chosen Z-98, some song she liked might be ruined for her forever. She could imagine hearing an Ace of Base song six months from now and thinking, That’s the song that was playing the day they found out about my brain tumor—

But if there’s a tumor, will I even be alive six months from now?

Something catches in Bailey’s throat and she has to swallow a cough.

Silly, she chides herself. Nobody’s said anything about a tumor. The only real possibility the emergency room doctor mentioned, ordering all these tests, was a stroke, which was too ridiculous to think about. Old people had strokes. Bailey is only sixteen.

Maybe they’ll just find out I made the whole thing up.

But she hadn’t. Her arm had gone totally numb, right there in algebra class. She hadn’t been able to feel the pencil in her fingers. And she hadn’t been able to see right, she hadn’t been able to hear much—Mr. Vickers’s raspy voice had seemed to come at her through a tunnel. Still, she might not have said anything about it if Mr. Vickers hadn’t called on her to go work a problem on the board.

“I can’t . . . ,” she tried to say, but she couldn’t seem to make her brain think the words right, she couldn’t get her mouth to move. She tried to stand up but fell down instead. Mr. Vickers had Paula Klinely take her to the nurse, the nurse called her mother, and now she’s in an MRI tube listening to the clip-clop of fake horses.

The clip-clopping stops and the violins come back.

“You moved,” the technician says over the headphones with the same tone of exaggerated patience as the classical music announcer. “We’ll have to do that one again. The less you move, the quicker we’ll be done.”
“I’m sorry,” Bailey apologizes, though she’s not sure he can hear her. If she’s going to die at sixteen, she wants people to remember her as a nice person. She can imagine people giving testimonials at her funeral: *She was always so good, so kind to animals and people alike.* Her best friend, Allison, could *reminisce*, *And if she found a spider indoors, she was always very careful about carrying it outside instead of killing it.* She hopes Allison would remember to say that. Maybe this technician would even come to the funeral.

*I never get close to the patients,* he might say. *I view everyone as just another brain scan. But here was a kid who was always so gracious and noble. She knew she was dying, but she was always concerned about other people. She always asked about my family, my pets, my—*

Bailey can’t think what else the technician might be impressed by her asking about. She decides he should break down in sobs at that point.

The clip-clopping starts again. Bailey concentrates on not moving. She’s very glad the MRI can’t read her thoughts.

When the MRI is finally done and the technician pulls her out of the tube, Bailey scans his face for some expression—of pity, maybe, or better yet, boredom.

“Well?” she says.
“What?” he asks, looking down at the controls that lower her pallet.

“What did you find?” she asks, forgetting that she is supposed to be acting like she cares more about his dog than her life.

“Oh, I’m not allowed to discuss results with patients,” the technician says. “Your doctor will review everything and then talk to you.”

He’s less chatty now. Does that mean anything?

Bailey climbs back into the wheelchair—something else that’s ridiculous, because isn’t she perfectly capable of walking now? The technician pushes her out to the waiting room, where Bailey’s mother is intently reading Golf Digest. To the best of Bailey’s knowledge, Bailey’s mother has never played golf in her entire life.

“Well?” Bailey’s mother asks. But she directs the question to Bailey, not the technician. “Are you all right?”

“I’m fine,” Bailey insists.

Bailey’s mother lays her hand on Bailey’s shoulder, something she never would have done under normal circumstances. Bailey doesn’t pull away.

The technician is on the phone.

“They have a room ready for you now,” he reports. “An aide will be by in a few minutes to take you up there.”

He leaves, and Bailey and her mother are alone.

“Do you really feel okay?” Bailey’s mother asks. “You haven’t had another . . . episode?”

“No. I’ve just got a little headache,” Bailey says. But it’s just the edge of a headache—nothing Bailey would mention if she weren’t in the hospital. “Do I really have to stay all night?”

“That’s what the doctor said. They can’t schedule the other tests until tomorrow. And—” Mom stops and starts over.

“Look at it as a chance to play hooky. To avoid biology class.”

She smiles brightly at Bailey, and Bailey resists the urge to retort, “I’d rather dissect frogs than die.” But she realizes she’d said exactly the reverse only a week ago in the school cafeteria: “I’d rather die than dissect a frog.” She remembers the exact moment she spoke the words: Sunlight had been streaming in the window behind Allison, grease was congealing on the school lunch tacos, all her friends were laughing.

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1 dissect (di-sēkt’): to cut apart or separate into pieces, especially to study more closely.
Oh, God, did I bring this on myself? Bailey wonders. I didn’t really mean that. God, I’ll dissect a billion frogs if you want me to. If you let me live. But she knows from TV disease-of-the-week movies that bargaining with God never works.

“Mom, what do you think is wrong with me?” Bailey asks, and is amazed that the question comes out sounding merely conversational. She wants to whimper.

Mom keeps her smile, but it seems even less genuine now. “I’m no doctor,” she says. “But I think you blacked out because you skipped lunch to do your history report. That’s all.”

“I had a candy bar,” Bailey says.

“My point exactly,” Mom says, and laughs, and Bailey feels much better. Mom wouldn’t dare criticize Bailey’s eating habits if she thought something was really wrong.

Would she?

Bailey’s room is in the main part of the hospital, not the pediatric wing, a fact that worries Bailey’s mom.

“Are you sure?” she asks the aide who is skillfully maneuvering Bailey’s wheelchair past several carts of dinner trays. “She’s only sixteen. Don’t they—”

“Listen, lady, I just go where they send me,” the aide responds. He’s a thin man with sallow skin and a dark braid hanging down his back. Bailey can’t decide if he would have been considered cool or a scuzz in high school. Probably a scuzz if he ended up as a hospital aide. Then she decides she shouldn’t think things like that, not if she wants people to remember her as a nice person.

The aide is explaining to Mom that lots of kids have checked in lately; the pediatric wing is full. He makes it sound like a hotel everyone wants to stay at.

“But if she’s not in the pediatric wing, I can’t spend the night with her,” Mom frets.

“Nope. Not according to what they tell me,” the aide agrees.

They arrive at the door of Bailey’s room. At first glance Bailey thinks the mistake is even bigger than Mom feared: She’s been given a bed in a nursing home. The room is crowded with people at least a decade or two older than Bailey’s own grandparents. Then Bailey realizes that only one of the old people is actually in a bed. The rest are visitors.
“Coming through,” the aide says, only barely missing knocking down one man’s cane and another man’s walker.

"Oh, look, Aunt Mabel’s got a roommate,” someone says. “Won’t that be nice.”

But they’re all looking back and forth from Bailey to her mother, obviously confused.

“She fainted,” Bailey’s mother announces. “She’s just in for a few tests.”

It’s a cue for Bailey to say, once more, “Mom!” This time she keeps her mouth shut and her head down.

The old people nod and smile. One woman says, “She looks just like my granddaughter. I’m sure she’ll be fine,” as if the resemblance could save Bailey’s life. Another woman adds, “You know those doctors. They just don’t want to get sued.”

As Bailey silently climbs from the chair to the bed she sees that her mother is smiling back at the old people, but the corners of her mouth are tighter than ever.

A nurse appears and whips a curtain between Bailey’s bed and the old people. The aide fades away with a strange little wave, almost a salute. That one hand gesture makes Bailey want to call after him: *Wait! What happens to most of the people you wheel around? Do they die?*

But the nurse has begun asking questions.

“I know some of these won’t apply to you,” she apologizes, “but it’s hospital policy . . . .”

Bailey can’t help giggling at “Do you wear dentures?” and “Do you have any artificial limbs?” The nurse zips through the questions without looking up, until she reaches “Do you do recreational drugs?”

“No,” Bailey says. They asked that in the emergency room, too.

“Are you sure?” The nurse squints suspiciously at Bailey. “Yes,” Bailey says. “I have never done drugs.” She spaces the words out, trying to sound *emphatic*, but it comes out all wrong.

“My daughter,” Bailey’s mother interjects, “has never taken anything stronger than aspirin.”

It’s true, and Bailey’s glad it’s true, but she wants to sink through the floor with humiliation at her mother’s words.

How can she care about humiliation at a time like this? Someone comes and takes ten vials of blood from Bailey’s arm. Someone else starts what he calls an IV port on the back

**emphatic**

(ĕm-fā′tĭk) *adj.*

If something is *emphatic*, it is expressed in a definite and forceful way.
of Bailey’s left hand. It’s basically a needle taped into her vein, ready for any injection she might need. Someone else takes her blood pressure and makes Bailey push on his hands with her feet, then close her eyes and hold her arms out straight.

“Good,” the man says when Bailey opens her eyes.

_I did that right? So I’m okay?_ Bailey wants to ask. But something about lying in a hospital bed has made Bailey mute. She can barely say a word to her own mother, sitting two feet away.

“Visiting hours are over,” the man tells Mom in a flat voice.

“But my daughter—,” Mom protests, and stops, swallows hard. Bailey is stunned. Mom is never at a loss for words.

“Shes only sixteen, and—”

“No visitors after five. Hospital policy,” the man says, but there’s a hint of compassion in his voice now. “We’ll take good care of her. I promise.”

“Well . . . ” Still Mom hesitates. She looks at Bailey. “I know the Montinis didn’t really want to take Andrew overnight, they were just being nice, and with your dad away . . . ”
Andrew is Bailey’s younger brother, seven years old and, everyone agrees, a pure terror. Bailey’s dad is away on a business trip. Mom couldn’t even reach him on the phone from the emergency room. Bailey can’t see why Mom is telling her what she already knows. Then Bailey understands: Mom is asking Bailey for permission to leave. *They’re going to make you leave anyway,* Bailey wants to say. *What do you want me to do?* But it’s strange. For a minute Bailey feels like she’s the mother and her mother is the daughter.

“But as soon as her mother is out the door, Bailey wants to run after her, crying, “Mom-mee! Don’t go!” just like she used to do at preschool, years and years and years ago.

Once they’re alone together, Bailey’s roommate, Mabel, gets gabby.

“Ten days I’ve been lying in this hospital bed,” she announces, speaking to the TV as much as to Bailey. “First they say it’s my kidneys, then it’s my bladder—or is that the same thing? I forget. Then there’s my spleen—”

Bailey can’t imagine lying in any hospital bed for ten days. She’s already antsy, after just two hours. The sheets are suffocating her legs. She hated that spring in junior high when she signed up for track and Mom made her finish the whole season. But now she longs to run and run and run, sprints and relays and maybe even marathons.

*I’ve never run a marathon. What else will I never get to do if I die now?*

Bailey is glad when Mabel distracts her by announcing joyfully, “Oh good, dinner.”

An aide slides a covered tray in front of Mabel and one in front of Bailey.

“We didn’t know what you wanted, ’cause you weren’t here last night,” the aide says accusingly.

Bailey lifts the cover. Dinner is some kind of meat covered in brown gravy, green beans blanched to a sickly gray, mashed potatoes that could pass for glue, gummy apples with a slab of soggy pie dough on top—food Bailey would never eat in a

---

*magnanimously* (māg-nān′-ə-mōs-lē): to do something in a courageous, kind, unselfish way.
million years. And yet, somehow, she finds that she can eat it, and does, every bite.

See? she wants to tell someone. I'm healthy. So healthy I can eat this slop and not die.

Beside her tray is a menu for the next day. Bailey studies it as carefully as a cram sheet for some major final exam. Hospital Food 101, maybe. If she were still here for dinner tomorrow night, she’d have a choice of meat loaf or fried chicken, chocolate cake or ice cream.

But of course she won’t be here tomorrow night. Because they’re going to find out, first thing tomorrow, that there’s nothing wrong with her.

She hopes.

The aide comes back for Bailey’s tray.

“You didn’t fill that out,” she says, pointing at Bailey’s menu.

“I’m just here overnight. I don’t need to—,” Bailey protests.

“Fill it out anyway,” the aide orders.


It doesn’t matter. If she’s still here tomorrow night, she knows, she won’t be hungry.

The aide glances out Bailey’s window. “Man, look at that traffic,” she moans.

Bailey looks up, puzzled, and the aide has to explain: “Rush hour.”

It’s five forty-five. Bailey is stunned that the rest of the world is going on outside this hospital room. She is stunned to realize that she should be at marching band practice, right now, with Mr. Chaynowski ordering them to do a final run-through of “Another Opening, Another Show,” before marching back to the school, packing up her clarinet, joking with her friends.

It’s too weird to think about. She’s actually glad when Mabel flips on the local news.

Three hours later Bailey is ready to scream. She can’t stand the TV. It’s into sitcoms now, old-lady ones Bailey never watches. Bailey has never noticed before, but on TV everyone smiles all the time. Everyone laughs at everything.

How dare they?
Searching desperately for something to distract her, Bailey notices her backpack, cast off in the corner. She pulls out her algebra book.

She is a normal sixteen-year-old. Sixteen-year-olds do homework on Tuesday nights.

Bailey missed the end of class, when Mr. Vickers assigns the homework, but he always assigns the odd problems. She takes out a pencil and paper, and imagines what Mr. Vickers will say on Thursday: Bailey, good to have you back. Remember to make up the homework.

Bailey will use her airiest voice: Oh, it’s already done. Here.

And he’ll stare in amazement.

Why, Bailey, he’ll say, admiration creeping into his voice. You’re such a conscientious student.

Mr. Vickers is straight out of college, and a real hottie. Lots of girls have crushes on him.

Why, there you were on the verge of death, he might say.

And you still—Bailey doesn’t want to think anymore about what Mr. Vickers might say. The numbers swim in front of her eyes.

The phone rings. Mabel answers it and grunts disappointedly, “It’s for you.”

Bailey picks up her phone.

“Oh, Bay-ley!” It’s Allison.

Bailey is suddenly so happy she can’t speak. She grins as widely as someone on TV.

“Bailey?” Allison asks. “Are you all right?”

“I’m fine,” Bailey says. But she’s not happy anymore. Allison’s voice is all wrong, and so is Bailey’s. She can’t seem to make her words come out right.

“Well,” Allison says, and stops. It strikes Bailey that Allison doesn’t know what to say either. Allison—who usually talks so much she could get a speeding ticket for her mouth.

“What’d you think? That I was going to be the dead person in the yearbook for our class?” Bailey jokes desperately. Their yearbook came out last week, and Allison had gone on and on about how every year the senior class had someone die, usually in a car wreck, and that person got a whole page of the yearbook dedicated to him. Last year the dead person was the head cheerleader, so there were lots of pictures. Allison and Bailey and their friends had spent an entire lunch period

conscientious (kənˈsha̱nsəs) adj.
If someone is conscientious, that person is very careful and thorough.
imagining what a memorial page might say for everyone in their class.

“Imogene Rogers, world’s biggest airhead, floated off into outer space . . . John Vhymes, biggest show-off, thought he had a better idea for running heaven than God does . . . Stanley Witherspoon, died two years ago but nobody noticed until now . . .”

It had been funny last week. It isn’t now. Bailey hears Allison inhale sharply. Bailey tries to pretend she didn’t say anything.

“So what happened after I left?” Bailey asks. “Anything good?”

“Everyone was just talking about you,” Allison says. “Do you know what’s wrong yet?”

Suddenly Bailey can’t talk to Allison. She just can’t.

“Listen, Al, some nurse is coming in in a minute to take my blood pressure. I’ll call you later, okay?”

It isn’t really a lie. They’re always coming in to take her blood pressure.

Allison hangs up. Bailey hopes Mabel’s hearing is as bad as her kidneys.

Bailey is surprised that she can fall asleep. She’s even more surprised when they wake her up at 6 A.M. for an electrocardiogram.

“But my mom—,” she protests groggily.

“They don’t want to test your mom’s heart,” the aide says. “They want to test yours.”

Bailey is climbing into the wheelchair when the phone rings.

“Oh, Bailey,” her mother’s voice rushes at her. “They said you were already up. I was just getting ready to come down there, but something awful happened—the car won’t start. I called Triple A, but it’s going to be an hour before they get out here. I’m looking for someone to give me a ride or loan me a car. . . . I am so sorry. This is incredibly bad timing. Are you okay?”

It’s easiest for Bailey to say automatically, like a robot, “I’m fine.”

“I’ll get there as soon as I can,” Mom assures her.

“I know. That’s fine,” Bailey says. But the words have no meaning anymore.
Down in the EKG room they put cold gel on Bailey’s chest and the technician runs a probe along Bailey’s rib cage. Even though the technician is a woman, Bailey is embarrassed because the probe keeps running into her breasts.

“Um-hmm,” the technician mutters to herself.

Bailey knows better now than to ask what the “Um-hmm” means. She can’t see the TV screen the technician peers into. The technician pushes harder and harder on the probe, until it feels like an animal trying to burrow between Bailey’s ribs. Bailey can’t help crying out.

The technician looks up, surprised, as if she’d forgotten that Bailey is an actual human being, capable of feeling pain.

“Sorry,” she says, and pushes the probe down even harder.

*I am just a body here,* Bailey thinks. *Nobody here knows or cares that I’m nice to animals and small children, that I do my homework on time. That I’m a person.* She wants to say something to make the technician really see her, but the longer Bailey lies on the cold table in her hospital gown, the more she feels like all her personality is leaching away. She is just a body.

Is that what it’s like to die?

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4 probe (prōb): a small device or instrument used to gather information.
Another technician in another room repeats the procedure—the cold gel, the hard probe—on Bailey’s neck and shoulders, checking out the blood vessels that lead to her brain.

This woman talks constantly—about her kids, her garden, her diet—but it’s not like she’s really talking to Bailey. Even when the woman asks a direct question, “Have you ever heard of a geranium growing like that?” the woman doesn’t stop long enough for Bailey to answer.

Bailey is crying, and the woman doesn’t even notice.

Bailey thinks she’ll have to dry her tears and wipe her eyes before she sees her mother. She can’t wait to see her mother. She wants Mom to think about all these horrible things so Bailey doesn’t have to. She wants Mom there to remember what Bailey is really like, so Bailey can remember how to act normal.

But when Bailey gets back to her room, there’s only a message. Mom’s stuck in traffic.

“Bailey is standing on the edge of something awful, balanced between two possible futures.”

Mom left the number for the Montinis’ car phone, but Bailey doesn’t call it. She turns her head to the wall so her roommate won’t see, and lies in bed sobbing silently. She’s not sure if she’s crying about the stalled traffic or the painful probe or the shame of having made jokes about dead people in the yearbook. Or the fact that whatever made Bailey faint yesterday might also make her die. It really could happen, Bailey thinks. People die of terrible diseases all the time. There’s no reason that it shouldn’t happen to me.
For the first time Bailey realizes none of her fears have been real before. When she imagined the MRI technician speaking at her funeral, the memorial page in the yearbook, Mr. Vickers's response to her devotion to algebra, even her personality leaching away, it was just a fantasy to her. Role-playing. A game.

But Bailey is standing on the edge of something awful, balanced between two possible futures. On one side is the life she’s always known: homework and marching band and jokes with Allison and groans at her mother. Health. A future just like her past. And on the other side, over the cliff into whatever her illness is, is more time in hospital beds, more technicians seeing her innards but not really seeing her, more time crying alone. And maybe—death. Bailey longs fervently for her normal life back. In her mind it positively glows, an utterly joyous existence. Ordinary never looked so good.

But it’s not her choice which future she gets.

“Hello?” someone calls tentatively.

Bailey pauses to hide the evidence of her crying before she turns. But, strangely, she’s not crying anymore.

A man pulls the curtain around her bed, to give some privacy from her roommate.

“I’m Dr. Rogers, your neurologist,” he says. “I’ve looked at all your test results, and—”

Bailey’s heart pounds. She can barely hear him for the surge of blood in her ears. She feels dizzier than she felt yesterday, when everyone said she fainted.

“Shouldn’t my mom be here to hear this?” Bailey asks.

“She’s coming soon.”

Dr. Rogers looks at his watch.

“No. I can’t wait.”

He’s treating me like I’m a grown-up, Bailey marvels.

But the thought has an echo: Grown-up enough to die.

“This is a classic case,” Dr. Rogers is saying. “I’m surprised nobody caught it yesterday. They still would have wanted the tests, just to be sure. . . . What you had was a migraine headache.”

A headache? Not a stroke? Not a tumor? As soon as Dr. Rogers has said the inoffensive word, all the possibilities Bailey feared instantly recede. She’s a million miles away from that frightening cliff now. Of course she isn’t going to die.
How silly she’d been, to think she might. How silly, to think he’d tell her she was dying without her mother there.

Dr. Rogers is still talking, about the link between chocolate and migraines, about how common migraines are for young girls, about how it was perfectly normal for Bailey to get the symptoms of a migraine headache before her head even began to hurt. But Bailey barely listens. She’s thinking about getting her ordinary life back—ordinary life with maybe a headache every now and then. Bailey doesn’t care—her head barely even hurt yesterday. She doesn’t expect a mere headache to change anything at all. She waits for the glow to fade from her view of her ordinary life, and it does, but not entirely. Even with headaches she has a pretty good life.

Bailey’s mother rushes into the room just then, apologizing right and left.

“Doctor, you must think I’m a terrible mother, not to be here at a time like this. What did you find out? Please tell me—it was just a fluke, right?”

“Mom,” Bailey protests, in humiliation, with perfect emphasis.

The complaint never sounded so wonderful before.

**COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION** Being hospitalized and waiting to hear about her test results is an emotional experience for Bailey. With a partner, discuss the events that take place during her stay. How does each event help you understand more about Bailey’s thoughts and feelings?
Describe Stories: Plot and Suspense

Stories, such as “Fine?”, follow a pattern called a plot, which is the series of events in the story. At the center of a good plot is a conflict. A conflict is a problem or struggle between opposing forces that triggers the action and events. Most plots have the following stages:

- **Exposition** provides background and introduces the setting and characters. The conflict is also introduced at this stage.
- **Rising action** includes events that develop and intensify the conflict.
- The **climax** is the story’s most exciting part and a turning point for the main character.
- **Falling action** eases the tension, and events unfold as a result of the climax.
- The **resolution** is the final part of the plot and reveals how the problem is solved.

To keep you involved and excited about the plot, a writer will often create suspense. Suspense is a feeling of growing tension and excitement that makes a reader curious about what will happen next in a story. At the start of “Fine?”, you learn about the story’s conflict—Bailey is in a hospital undergoing tests—and you want to find out more.

Explain Point of View

In literature, the narrator is the voice that tells the story. A writer’s choice of narrator is known as point of view.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Person Point of View</th>
<th>Third-Person Point of View</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The narrator is a character in the story.</td>
<td>The narrator is not a character in the story but more like a voice that tells it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The narrator uses the pronouns <em>I, me,</em> and <em>my</em> to refer to himself or herself.</td>
<td>The narrator uses the pronouns <em>he, she,</em> and <em>they</em> to refer to the characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The narrator tells about his or her thoughts and feelings, but does not know what other characters are thinking and feeling.</td>
<td>A narrator called <em>third-person omniscient</em> knows what ALL the characters think and feel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A narrator called <em>third-person limited</em> knows the thoughts and feelings of just one person, usually the main character.</td>
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Think about the following questions to help you analyze point of view:

- How does the author’s choice of point of view affect the story?
- What does the choice of narrator help you learn about characters and events?
Analyzing the Text

1. **Identify**  Reread lines 1–15. Identify the point of view of the story. Explain how you can tell which point of view is being used.

2. **Infer**  An external conflict is a character’s struggle against an outside force. An internal conflict takes place inside a character’s mind. Go back through the story and record examples of the internal and external conflicts that Bailey faces.

3. **Draw Conclusions**  Review lines 333–357. What does this passage tell you about Bailey’s character?

4. **Evaluate**  Reread the conversation Bailey has with her friend Allison in lines 371–395. How does the scene add suspense to the plot?

5. **Analyze**  The plot of “Fine?” centers on Bailey’s fear of what her illness is. Go back through the story and make a list of important events. Label each event to identify what happens at each stage of the plot—exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Explain how each event fits its plot stage.

6. **Connect**  Reread lines 22–31 and 521–527. Explain why the author repeats Bailey’s complaint. What does the author want you to know about Bailey at the end of the story?

7. **Analyze**  How would the story be different if Bailey was the narrator? Name a detail that Bailey might leave out and explain why.

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**Writing Activity: Narrative**  The story “Fine?” presents Bailey’s thoughts and feelings about her impending diagnosis. Write a one- or two-page narrative that describes the situation from Bailey’s mother’s point of view.

- Think about and decide whether you will tell the story using first- or third-person point of view.
- Follow the actual story; do not change the events or plot.
- Include relevant details that Bailey shares with her mother.
Critical Vocabulary

**technician**  **reminisce**  **emphatic**  **conscientious**

**Practice and Apply**  Complete the sentences with words that show that you understand the meaning of each vocabulary word.

1. We are going to have a TV **technician** come to our house because . . .
2. I like to hear old Uncle Al **reminisce** because . . .
3. The jury foreperson read the verdict in an **emphatic** voice because . . .
4. I am very **conscientious** when I do my chores because . . .

**Vocabulary Strategy: Greek Roots**

You can often determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word by examining its root. A **root** is a word part that contains the core meaning of the word. For example, **tech** comes from a Greek root that can mean “art,” “skill,” or “craft.” You can find this root in the word **technician** and use its meaning to figure out that **technician** refers to someone who has a specific skill.

**Practice and Apply**  The Greek root **tech** is found in a number of English words. Choose a word from the web that best completes each sentence. Use your understanding of the root’s meaning as well as context clues to figure out the meaning of each word.

1. The artist has a special _______ that she uses to create her sculptures.
2. The audience wished that the scientist would use plain English instead of _______ to explain her latest invention.
3. Raul likes to be the first to purchase the latest _______ in computers.
4. The suspected thief was released from jail because of a _______.

Fine?  35
Language Conventions: Commas and Dashes

Commas can make the meaning of sentences clearer by separating certain words, phrases, or clauses. Commas can be used to set off nonrestrictive elements. A nonrestrictive element is a phrase or clause that can be removed from the sentence without changing the sentence’s basic meaning. Notice how commas are used in the following sentence from the story “Fine?”

The only real possibility the emergency room doctor mentioned, ordering all these tests, was a stroke . . .

If you remove the phrase ordering all these tests, the basic meaning of the sentence is still clear.

Like commas, dashes can also be used to set off nonrestrictive elements. Dashes are used most often when the nonrestrictive element indicates a more abrupt break in thought. Notice how dashes are used in this example from the story.

The slow, cultured voice of the announcer—“And now we’ll hear Mozart’s finest concerto, at least in my humble opinion”—could drive anyone crazy.

Using commas and dashes to set off nonrestrictive elements helps to communicate meaning and information clearly. Look at the examples from the story again. If the commas and dashes were not included, the sentences would be confusing and difficult to follow.

Practice and Apply  Use commas or dashes as indicated to set off the nonrestrictive element in each sentence.

1. The concert tickets I just bought them yesterday were expensive and nonrefundable. (dashes)

2. Mr. Jackson who moved here from Texas was introduced to us as the new principal. (commas)

3. Nola’s voice never loud to begin with dropped to an airy whisper in the library. (commas)

4. Sharon eyed the sunrise deep red clouds and wispy flares of pink through the dining room window. (commas)

5. Our agreed-upon rule is that the drummer not the guitarist or the keyboardist is responsible for making sure the entire drum kit makes it to the show. (dashes)
Maya Angelou (1928–2014) was born Marguerite Annie Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri. Though a childhood trauma led her to stop speaking for five and a half years, Angelou grew up to pursue a career as a singer and actor. She later turned to writing as her main form of expression, and in 1970, her best-selling autobiography I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings made her an international literary star. She is widely admired as a fearless and inspiring voice.

SETTING A PURPOSE As you read, think about the images and ideas that the poem brings to your mind.

Shadows on the wall
Noises down the hall
Life doesn’t frighten me at all
Bad dogs barking loud
Big ghosts in a cloud
Life doesn’t frighten me at all.

Mean old Mother Goose
Lions on the loose
They don’t frighten me at all
Dragons breathing flame
On my counterpane
That doesn’t frighten me at all.

\(^1\) **counterpane**: a bedspread.
I go boo
Make them shoo
I make fun
Way they run
I won’t cry
So they fly
I just smile
They go wild
Life doesn’t frighten me at all.

Tough guys in a fight
All alone at night
Life doesn’t frighten me at all.

Panthers in the park
Strangers in the dark
No, they don’t frighten me at all.

That new classroom where
Boys all pull my hair
(Kissy little girls
With their hair in curls)
They don’t frighten me at all.

Don’t show me frogs and snakes
And listen for my scream,
If I’m afraid at all
It’s only in my dreams.

I’ve got a magic charm
That I keep up my sleeve,
I can walk the ocean floor
And never have to breathe.

Life doesn’t frighten me at all
Not at all
Not at all.
Life doesn’t frighten me at all.

COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION  With a partner, discuss what the poem’s main message might be, based on the images, words, and phrases in it. Why do you think the poet wrote this poem?
Analyze Structure

“Life Doesn’t Frighten Me” is a lyric poem. **Lyric poetry** is a poetic form in which a single speaker expresses his or her thoughts and feelings. Lyric poetry can take many different forms and can address all types of topics, including complex ideas or everyday experiences.

Similar to a narrator in fiction, a **speaker** in poetry is the voice that “talks” to the reader. The speaker may be the poet or a fictional character. Even if a poem uses the pronouns I or me, it does not mean that the poet is the speaker. Clues in the title and in individual lines can help you determine the speaker and his or her situation.

To analyze the speaker in a lyric poem, ask yourself:
- Who is speaking? How do I know?
- What ideas does the speaker want to communicate? Why?

Poets use structure and poetic elements to create mood, express ideas, and reinforce meaning in their work. Most poems are meant to be heard, not just read. A poem’s sounds are as carefully chosen as its words. The following elements are often present in lyric poetry as well as other forms of poetry.

| **A stanza** | is a group of two or more lines that form a unit in a poem. |
| **Repetition** | is a technique in which a sound, word, phrase, or line is repeated. |
| **A rhyme scheme** | is a pattern of rhymes at the ends of lines. A rhyme scheme is noted by assigning a letter of the alphabet, beginning with a, to each line. Lines that rhyme are given the same letter. |
| **A couplet** | is a rhymed pair of lines. |

As you read a poem, either silently or aloud, look at and listen to its different elements. Ask yourself:
- How does repetition add to the poem’s meaning or emphasize its ideas?
- What patterns can I find in the poem’s rhyme scheme? What rhythms do they add to the poem?
- What sounds are emphasized in the poem’s rhyme scheme? Why might this be?
Analyzing the Text

Cite Text Evidence Support your responses with evidence from the text.

1. Infer  Review lines 1–9 and lines 37–40. What conclusions can you draw about the speaker’s age and personality?

2. Analyze  Examine and identify the different rhyme schemes the poet uses. What general statement could you use to describe the poem’s rhyme scheme?

3. Draw Conclusions  Reread lines 1–21. Which scary things are clearly imaginary? Which are possibly real? What effect does this variety of things create in the poem?

4. Evaluate  Read aloud lines 1–24. Notice the change to couplets and shorter line lengths in the third stanza. What effect does this change have on your reading?

5. Synthesize  Explain how the structure of the poem and the repetition of the line “Life doesn’t frighten me at all” help convey the meaning of the poem. Do you think the speaker of the poem is truly not afraid? Why or why not?

PERFORMANCE TASK

Speaking Activity: Response to Literature  Different people can read the same poem aloud in very different ways. Prepare an oral reading of all or a part of “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me.”

- Every person finds his or her own meanings in a poem. Review the poem and write a statement that summarizes its meaning to you.
- Next, practice reading the poem aloud. At first, focus on the different rhythms, repetition, and sounds.
- Try giving different “personalities” to your reading until you find one that you like.
- Practice until you can read the poem smoothly. Then read it aloud to a small group.
The roller coaster hesitates for a split second at the peak of its steep track after a long, slow climb. You know what’s about to happen—and there’s no way to avoid it now. It’s time to hang onto the handrail, palms sweating, heart racing, and brace yourself for the wild ride down.

**What Is Fear?**

Fear is one of the most basic human emotions. It is programmed into the nervous system and works like an instinct. From the time we’re infants, we are equipped with the survival instincts necessary to respond with fear when we sense danger or feel unsafe.

Fear helps protect us. It makes us alert to danger and prepares us to deal with it. Feeling afraid is very natural—and
helpful—in some situations. Fear can be like a warning, a signal that cautions us to be careful.

Like all emotions, fear can be mild, medium, or intense, depending on the situation and the person. A feeling of fear can be brief or it can last longer.

**How Fear Works**

When we sense danger, the brain reacts instantly, sending signals that activate the nervous system. This causes physical responses, such as a faster heartbeat, rapid breathing, and an increase in blood pressure. Blood pumps to muscle groups to prepare the body for physical action (such as running or fighting). Skin sweats to keep the body cool. Some people might notice sensations in the stomach, head, chest, legs, or hands. These physical sensations of fear can be mild or strong.

This response is known as “fight or flight” because that is exactly what the body is preparing itself to do: fight off the danger or run fast to get away. The body stays in this state of fight-flight until the brain receives an “all clear” message and turns off the response.

Sometimes fear is triggered by something that is startling or unexpected (like a loud noise), even if it’s not actually dangerous. That’s because the fear reaction is activated instantly—a few seconds faster than the thinking part of the brain can process or evaluate what’s happening. As soon as the brain gets enough information to realize there’s no danger (“Oh, it’s just a balloon bursting—whew!”), it turns off the fear reaction. All this can happen in seconds.

**FEAR OR FUN?**

Some people find the rush of fear exciting. They might seek out the thrill of extreme sports and savor the scariest horror flicks. Others do not like the experience of feeling afraid or taking risks. During the scariest moments of a roller coaster ride one person might think, “I’ll never get on this thing again—that is, if I make it out alive!” while another person thinks, “This is awesome! As soon as it’s over, I’m getting back on!”

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**activate**

(əkˈta-vətˈ) v. To activate something means to cause it to start working.

**trigger**

(trigˈər) v. To trigger something means to cause it to begin.
Fears People Have

Fear is the word we use to describe our emotional reaction to something that seems dangerous. But the word “fear” is used in another way, too: to name something a person often feels afraid of.

People fear things or situations that make them feel unsafe or unsure. For instance, someone who isn’t a strong swimmer might have a fear of deep water. In this case, the fear is helpful because it cautions the person to stay safe. Someone could overcome this fear by learning how to swim safely.

A fear can be healthy if it cautions a person to stay safe around something that could be dangerous. But sometimes a fear is unnecessary and causes more caution than the situation calls for.

Many people have a fear of public speaking. Whether it’s giving a report in class, speaking at an assembly, or reciting lines in the school play, speaking in front of others is one of the most common fears people have.

People tend to avoid the situations or things they fear. But this doesn’t help them overcome fear—in fact, it can be the reverse. Avoiding something scary reinforces a fear and keeps it strong.

People can overcome unnecessary fears by giving themselves the chance to learn about and gradually get used to the thing or situation they’re afraid of. For example, people who fly despite a fear of flying can become used to unfamiliar sensations like takeoff or turbulence. They learn what to expect and have a chance to watch what others do to relax and enjoy the flight. Gradually (and safely) facing fear helps someone overcome it.

Fears During Childhood

Certain fears are normal during childhood. That’s because fear can be a natural reaction to feeling unsure and vulnerable—and much of what children experience is new and unfamiliar.

Young kids often have fears of the dark, being alone, strangers, and monsters or other scary imaginary creatures. School-aged kids might be afraid when it’s stormy or at a first sleepover. As they grow and learn, with the support of adults, most kids are able to slowly conquer these fears and outgrow them.
Some kids are more sensitive to fears and may have a tough time overcoming them. When fears last beyond the expected age, it might be a sign that someone is overly fearful, worried, or anxious. People whose fears are too intense or last too long might need help and support to overcome them.

**Phobias**

A phobia is an intense fear reaction to a particular thing or a situation. With a phobia, the fear is out of proportion to the potential danger. But to the person with the phobia, the danger feels real because the fear is so very strong.

Phobias cause people to worry about, dread, feel upset by, and avoid the things or situations they fear because the physical sensations of fear can be so intense. So having a phobia can interfere with normal activities. A person with a phobia of dogs might feel afraid to walk to school in case he or she sees a dog on the way. Someone with an elevator phobia might avoid a field trip if it involves going on an elevator.

A girl with a phobia of thunderstorms might be afraid to go to school if the weather forecast predicts a storm. She might feel terrible distress and fear when the sky turns cloudy. A guy with social phobia experiences intense fear of public speaking or interacting, and may be afraid to answer questions in class, give a report, or speak to classmates in the lunchroom.

It can be exhausting and upsetting to feel the intense fear that goes with having a phobia. It can be disappointing to miss out on opportunities because fear is holding you back. And it can be confusing and embarrassing to feel afraid of things that others seem to have no problem with.

Sometimes, people get teased about their fears. Even if the person doing the teasing doesn’t mean to be unkind and unfair, teasing only makes the situation worse.

**What Causes Phobias?**

Some phobias develop when someone has a scary experience with a particular thing or situation. A tiny brain structure called the **amygdala** (pronounced: uh-mig-duh-luh) keeps track of experiences that trigger strong emotions. Once a certain thing or situation triggers a strong fear reaction, the amygdala warns the person by triggering a fear reaction every
time he or she encounters (or even thinks about) that thing or situation.

Someone might develop a bee phobia after being stung during a particularly scary situation. For that person, looking at a photograph of a bee, seeing a bee from a distance, or even walking near flowers where there could be a bee can all trigger the phobia.

Sometimes, though, there may be no single event that causes a particular phobia. Some people may be more sensitive to fears because of personality traits they are born with, certain genes they’ve inherited, or situations they’ve experienced. People who have had strong childhood fears or anxiety may be more likely to have one or more phobias.

Having a phobia isn’t a sign of weakness or immaturity. It’s a response the brain has learned in an attempt to protect the person. It’s as if the brain’s alert system triggers a false alarm, generating intense fear that is out of proportion to the

1 genes (jenz): the parts of cells that give a living thing its physical characteristics and make it grow and develop; a person’s genes come from their parents and other blood relatives.

immaturity (im’a-tyôr’a-tē) n.
Immaturity is the state of not being fully developed or grown.
situation. Because the fear signal is so intense, the person is convinced the danger is greater than it actually is.

**Overcoming Phobias**

People can learn to overcome phobias by gradually facing their fears. This is not easy at first. It takes willingness and bravery. Sometimes people need the help of a therapist\(^2\) to guide them through the process.

Overcoming a phobia usually starts with making a long list of the person’s fears in least-to-worst order. For example, with a dog phobia, the list might start with the things the person is least afraid of, such as looking at a photo of a dog. It will then work all the way up to worst fears, such as standing next to someone who’s petting a dog, petting a dog on a leash, and walking a dog.

Gradually, and with support, the person tries each fear situation on the list—one at a time, starting with the least fear. The person isn’t forced to do anything and works on each fear until he or she feels comfortable, taking as long as needed.

A therapist could also show someone with a dog phobia how to approach, pet, and walk a dog, and help the person to try it, too. The person may expect terrible things to happen when near a dog. Talking about this can help, too. When people find that what they fear doesn’t actually turn out to be true, it can be a great relief.

A therapist might also teach relaxation practices such as specific ways of breathing, muscle relaxation training, or soothing self-talk. These can help people feel comfortable and bold enough to face the fears on their list.

As somebody gets used to a feared object or situation, the brain adjusts how it responds and the phobia is overcome.

Often, the hardest part of overcoming a phobia is getting started. Once a person decides to go for it—and gets the right coaching and support—it can be surprising how quickly fear can melt away.

**COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION** Fears and phobias are related, but they are quite different in some ways. With a partner, use evidence from the text to discuss these differences. Which response can be useful? Which one can be harmful, and why?

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\(^2\) therapist (thér’a-pist): a person who is skilled in treating mental or physical illness.
Cite Evidence

To support analysis of any text that you read, you need to be able to cite evidence, or provide specific information from the text. Evidence can include details, facts, statistics, quotations, and examples. The chart shows different ways to cite evidence from an informational text such as "Fears and Phobias."

After reading “Fears and Phobias,” imagine that you came to the conclusion that when we are afraid, our bodies respond in many ways. To support your conclusion, you could cite lines 18–25 as examples from the text.

Analyze Structure

Text features are design elements such as boldface type and headings that highlight the organization and important information in a text. You can use text features to get an idea of the topics in a text. They can also help you locate particular topics or ideas after reading. Text features include:

- A heading is a kind of title that identifies the topic of the content that follows it. Headings often appear at the beginning of a chapter or article.
- A subheading is a kind of title that usually indicates the beginning of a new topic or section within a chapter or article. A subheading helps you identify the main idea of the text that follows.
- A sidebar is additional information that is usually set in a box alongside or within an article.

Analyze text features by asking yourself these questions:

- What text features does the text include?
- Which features help me preview and locate main ideas in the text?
- How does information under a particular heading fit into the whole text? What important ideas does it contain?
Analyzing the Text

Cite Text Evidence Support your responses with evidence from the text.

1. Cause/Effect Events are often related by cause and effect: one event brings about the other. The event that happens first is the cause; the one that follows is the effect. Reread lines 18–38. Examine the text and identify examples of cause-and-effect relationships.

2. Cite Evidence What causes phobias? Cite evidence from the text that explains where phobias come from.

3. Draw Conclusions Review lines 132–162. What factors are important in helping people overcome phobias? Explain whether the author believes it is worthwhile to try to overcome phobias and why.

4. Compare Explain how a fear is different from a phobia. Identify examples of each that the author presents.

5. Interpret What additional information does the sidebar provide? How does it add to your understanding of the article?

6. Analyze Use the headings in “Fears and Phobias” to examine the main ideas the author presents. In your own words, describe the way the author orders the information.

PERFORMANCE TASK

Writing Activity: Summary Write a summary of “Fears and Phobias.” A summary is a brief retelling of a text in your own words. You should cover only the main ideas and most important details. Your summary should be no more than one-third the length of the original text.

- Review the article to identify the main ideas.
- Introduce the summary by writing a topic sentence that explains the main purpose of the article.
- Tell what a fear is, what a phobia is, and how they are different. Cite evidence from the text.
- Conclude your summary by telling why the article is useful or important.
Critical Vocabulary
activate      trigger      turbulence      immaturity

Practice and Apply  Answer each question and explain your response.

1. Which of the following is an example of activate? Why?
   unplugging a computer  pressing the power button on a computer

2. Which of the following is most likely to trigger an allergy? Why?
   getting stung by a bee  watching a movie about bees

3. Which of the following involves turbulence? Why?
   a canoe trip on a quiet lake  a canoe trip on a rushing, rocky river

4. Which of the following is an example of immaturity? Why?
   explaining why you are upset  crying when you don’t get your way

Vocabulary Strategy: Prefixes That Mean “Not”

A prefix is a word that appears at the beginning of a base word to form a new word. Many prefixes that mean "not" come from Latin, the language of ancient Rome. One example is the vocabulary word immaturity (im + maturity). To figure out the meaning of a word that contains a prefix and a base word, follow these steps.

- Think of the meaning of each word part separately.
- Use this information as well as context clues to define the word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in-</td>
<td>not; in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mis-</td>
<td>not; incorrectly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-</td>
<td>not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un-</td>
<td>not; opposite of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice and Apply  Use the prefixes in the chart and context clues to help you determine a meaning for the boldface word in each sentence.

1. Not having Sunday hours at the library is inconvenient for people who work during the week.

2. The group agreed that their protest would be a nonviolent one.

3. Being late to the party was unintentional; we were stuck in traffic!

4. The careless reporter misquoted the mayor’s remarks.
Language Conventions:
Subjective and Objective Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun or another pronoun. Personal pronouns take different forms, or cases, depending on how they are used in a sentence. A pronoun in the subjective case is one that is used as the subject of a sentence. A pronoun in the objective case is one that is used as an object of a verb or preposition. Here are some examples from “Fears and Phobias.”

Subjective Case: \textit{It is programmed into the nervous system.}
Objective Case: \textit{Fear helps protect us.}

Pronouns can also be singular or plural in number. This chart shows the singular and plural forms of the subjective and objective case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subjective</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>she, he, it</td>
<td>her, him, it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pronouns can be misused, especially in compound subjects and objects. Use a subject pronoun if the pronoun is part of a compound subject. Use an object pronoun if the pronoun is part of a compound object.

Practice and Apply Choose the correct pronoun to complete each sentence.

1. Carlos took swimming lessons to help (him, it) overcome a fear of deep water.

2. When some people experience extreme fear, (you, they) may feel sick or dizzy.

3. I do not like small spaces. Being in an elevator makes (her, me) very anxious.

4. Danielle and Ramon explained how (he, they) use breathing exercises to help stay relaxed.

5. Leia and (I, me) are sometimes teased about our fears.
As you read, focus on the science facts that explain why some people are afraid of speaking in public and how this fear may be overcome.

The Fear  Some of us are fine with the idea of standing in front of huge crowds of people. But others would happily bungee off a 200-foot bridge, or dive into a shoal of circling sharks, rather than experience the sheer terror of facing an audience. Shoved out onstage, or to the front of a class, people like this will quite literally lose their voice. The mouth may open, but the words won’t come out. They just stand there gaping like helpless goldfish pulled out of water, their weak limbs quaking with fear, feeling like they want to run, hide, or cry. If that sounds like you, then you are one of the world’s many, many sufferers of glossophobia—the fear of speaking (or trying to speak) in public.
The Reality

Glossophobia is amazingly common—there are usually at least four or five kids in every grade who have it, and it’s very common in adults too because you generally don’t “grow out” of glossophobia. It takes help or practice to get over it. This is because it’s basically a type of social phobia—a fear of being watched, judged, or sized up by other people (especially strangers, and especially large numbers of them).

So where does it come from, and what use is it? I mean, if fear of the dark, heights, and dangerous animals helped keep our ancestors from being ambushed, what good is a fear of speaking to people? Wouldn’t being able to speak to big groups have helped those early humans to communicate? The ones who were best at it, you’d think, could become chiefs, kings, and emperors. If speaking is that useful, what is this fear trying to protect us from? Being booed and pelted with rotten vegetables if we do badly?

Well, the answer is—nothing, really. There’s no real danger involved in speaking to people. But the action of standing there and being watched can trigger a much older and more useful fear—the fear of being surrounded, threatened, and attacked by other people.

Throughout the animal world, and especially in primates (the group that includes humans, gorillas, and chimpanzees), staring at someone is a signal of fighting or aggression. Even when we chat with people we trust and like, we don’t stare them down while we talk. Instead, we shift the focus of our eyes around the other person’s face—from their eyes to their mouth and nose and back again—and we glance away every so often during the conversation. (If you don’t believe me, try it with a friend. Sit close to each other and just stare while you talk, without looking away, for one minute. You’ll probably find you both start to feel really uncomfortable very quickly!) All of this helps to break up the eye contact, and reassures each person that the other is still friendly. Without it, a long burst of eye contact feels like the buildup to a fight.

Now multiply that one staring pair of eyes by thirty, and you have some idea of why standing up to speak in front of a class can feel so unnerving. Multiply it by 500 or 1,000, and you see why it takes a lot of confidence to be onstage in a packed theater. Even though the audience is (probably)

ambush (āmˈbōsh) v. Some animals ambush their prey by hiding and then attacking as the prey comes near them.

aggression (ə-grēshən) n. Angry, violent behavior or action is called aggression.

confidence (kənˈfīdəns) n. A person who has confidence believes in his or her abilities or ideas.
friendly, the sensation is like being surrounded by an angry tribe, and all your brain wants to do is get you out of there. So that’s what it prepares you to do. The “fight-or-flight” system kicks in, making your heart rate increase, your breathing tight and rapid, your muscles tense, and your guts feel queasy\(^1\) (as blood is directed away from them). The whole time you’re trying to speak or perform, your brain is saying, “OK—any minute now we make a run for it, right? Get ready . . . readyyy . . . readyyyyyyyyyy . . .”

For some people, this feels quite thrilling. But for glossophobics, it’s absolutely terrifying.

But if you think about it, there really is nothing to be afraid of this time. Unlike the fear of water, heights, and the dark, there’s no real danger present at all. Even if you speak or perform really badly, it’s not like the audience is going to kill you—the worst response you’ll get is silence, booing, or rotten fruit and veggies. None of these are pleasant, but none of them can actually harm you either.

Happily, this also makes glossophobia a perfect example of a fear you can beat with simple practice. Since there’s no real danger, it’s much easier to work up from speaking to one, to two, to ten, to thirty people. Believe it or not, you can go from stage-phobic to star performer in no time!

**The Chances**

The odds of being killed by a classroom or theater full of people just because you’re speaking to or performing for them? Zero. Unless you’re really, really bad . . .

No, really—it’s zero. Just kidding.

**The Lowdown**

The fear of being “in the spotlight” is extremely common and, to those who suffer from it, extremely powerful. But it’s also extremely easy to work through, given a bit of effort. Since there’s no real danger involved, it’s just a matter of convincing your brain that you don’t need the “fight-or-flight” system to kick in when you’re speaking or performing before people. How do you do that? Practice!

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\(^1\) *queasy* (kwē’zē): nauseated; sick to your stomach.
There are lots of ways of working through your fears and building your confidence before audiences. The most direct (and powerful) way is to join a school, church, or community speaking group, where you can be coached on how to give speeches. At first, you may practice alone or with one or two people. Then, as you get more confident, you can work up to larger and larger groups, until before you know it you’re speaking to whole school assemblies, church congregations, or community groups! The best thing is that in many cases you get to talk about whatever you want, whether it’s “Ten Ways to Make a Better World” or “My Love of Dinosaurs.”

If that doesn’t sound like any kind of fun, then you can get experience with speaking in front of audiences without speaking directly to them. In acting or debating clubs, you can practice talking to small groups of people while being watched by an audience, but without having to look straight at them. Plus the act of concentrating on your lines or on the argument will help distract you from the many watching eyes. When you get really good at it, you might even forget the audience is there!

And if you really can’t imagine speaking in front of crowds at all, then you can work up to it (or at the very least gain a lot more confidence) by trying other types of performance instead. Ever wanted to dance? How about play guitar, or sing? Learning a performing art of any kind will help you get over your fears of an audience if you eventually take it to the stage.

So if you’re one of the world’s many perform-o-phobes, don’t worry—the “treatment” for it may turn out to be the most fun you’ve ever had. The prescription looks like this: take a handful of guitar, acting, or dance lessons, rock a roomful of people with your mad new skills, and call me in the morning!

distract
(dı-strākt′) v. To distract is to pull attention away from something or someone.

COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION With a partner, discuss the facts and ideas that explain glossophobia and why it is a fear that people must work at overcoming.
Determine Central Idea

In informational text, the central idea, or main idea, is the most important idea that an author of a text wants you to know about the topic. You can look for the central idea of the entire text and you can look for the central idea in each paragraph.

The topic sentence of a paragraph states the paragraph’s central idea. In informational text, the topic sentence is often the first sentence in a paragraph. However, it may appear anywhere in the paragraph. Sometimes the central idea is not directly stated but implied, or suggested by details. To identify an implied central idea, you need to examine the details to determine what the writer intends.

To find the central idea, follow these steps:
- Identify the specific topic of each paragraph or section.
- Examine all the details the author includes.

Ask what idea or message the details convey about the topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stated Central Idea</th>
<th>Implied Central Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lines 87–97: Central idea at the beginning of a paragraph</td>
<td>Lines 48–61: Implied central idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines 13–19: Central idea at the end of a paragraph</td>
<td>People who have glossophobia when speaking in public experience increased heart rate, rapid breathing, and queasiness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Determine Details

Supporting details are words, phrases, or sentences that tell more about the central idea. Facts, opinions, examples, statistics, and anecdotes are all supporting details that writers may use depending on the type of writing.
- A fact is a statement that can be proved.
- An opinion is a statement that expresses a person’s beliefs, feelings, or thoughts. An opinion cannot be proved.
- An example is a specific instance that helps to explain an idea, such as a personal story or experience.
- A statistic is a fact that is expressed in numbers.
- An anecdote is a short account of an interesting incident.

Reread lines 87–97. Ask yourself these questions:
- What is the central idea of this paragraph?
- What details, such as facts and examples, support the main idea?
Analyzing the Text

**Cite Text Evidence** Support your responses with evidence from the text.

1. **Interpret** Reread lines 1–12. What words and phrases does the author use to create a vivid image of glossophobia? Explain why this description is important.

2. **Infer** What is the central idea of lines 20–33 in “In the Spotlight”? Explain why this is an important idea in the article.

3. **Draw Conclusions** Reread lines 34–47. Explain why the experiment the author proposes is valuable to the reader.

4. **Analyze** The author states that glossophobia is “. . . extremely easy to work through, given a bit of effort” (lines 80–82). What examples support this idea? List one fact and one opinion about this idea.

5. **Summarize** What is the central idea of “In the Spotlight”? Explain how each section of the article supports this central idea.

6. **Evaluate** The author uses an informal, humorous writing style. What examples in the text show this style? Tell why the author probably used this style here and how well you think it works.

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**Writing Activity: Letter** Imagine that you are an advice columnist. Answer a letter from a reader who would like advice on how to cure glossophobia.

- Review “In the Spotlight.” Identify the main ideas about curing glossophobia.
- Decide which suggestions you will advise the reader to use.
- Create an alias, or a fake name, for the reader you are responding to.
- Read your letter aloud to a partner to see if it is clear and helpful.

**myWriteSmart**
Critical Vocabulary

ambush  aggression  confidence  distract

Practice and Apply  Answer each question and explain your response.

1. Which situation is an example of an ambush?
   a. a person who is hiding suddenly jumps out
   b. a dog runs out from a yard to greet someone walking by

2. Which situation shows aggression?
   a. a friend gives you a pat on the back
   b. a dog growls at someone walking by

3. Which group shows confidence?
   a. a debate team that is eager to begin a contest
   b. a marching band that decides not to be in a parade

4. Which of these would be a way to distract someone?
   a. waiting quietly while the person talks to someone else
   b. waving at a person who is giving a speech

Vocabulary Strategy: Suffixes That Form Nouns

A suffix is a word part that appears at the end of a root or base word to form a new word. Some Latin suffixes, such as -ance, -ence, and -ant, can be added to verbs to form nouns. If you can recognize the verb that a suffix is attached to, you can often figure out the meaning of the noun formed from it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ance, -ence</td>
<td>the act of, the condition of, the state of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ant</td>
<td>one that performs or causes an action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, -ence is added to confide to make confidence. One meaning of confide is “to tell in secret.” Confidence means “trust or the act of confiding.”

Practice and Apply  Identify the verb in each underlined word. Use context clues to define the noun. Use a dictionary to confirm your definitions.

1. The performance was sold out in only one hour.
2. We celebrated my uncle’s emergence as a great writer.
3. Mrs. Lowenstein is the attorney for the defendant in the trial.
4. She won her case because an informant testified at the trial.
Language Conventions: Possessive Pronouns

Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns or other pronouns. Personal pronouns change form to show how they function in a sentence. A possessive pronoun shows ownership. Here are some examples from “In the Spotlight”:

Instead, we shift the focus of our eyes around the other person’s face—from their eyes to their mouth and nose and back again . . .

In this sentence, both our and their are examples of possessive pronouns. Both are used to indicate ownership: our refers to the subjective pronoun we, and their refers to the “other person.”

The chart shows possessive pronouns in either singular (one person) or plural (more than one person) form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Use Before Nouns</th>
<th>Use in Place of Nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>my</td>
<td>mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>your</td>
<td>yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>her, his, its</td>
<td>hers, his, its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>our</td>
<td>ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>your</td>
<td>yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>their</td>
<td>theirs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice and Apply  Complete the sentences with the correct possessive pronoun. Remember that pronouns must agree with the noun they refer to in number, gender, and person.

1. The team felt confident; they felt _______ chances of winning were high.
2. Jenna was worried; _______ fear of heights made riding the roller coaster scary for her.
3. Kevin and I worked together on that project. That project is _______.
4. I speak next week. I need to practice _______ speech.
5. The dog pressed _______ face against the window.
Background  The study and science of fear involves the work of many scientists over many years. These scientists have explored exactly how the body deals with fear as a nervous impulse. They have conducted research and used computer-generated brain imaging to study activity in the brain. Their work has revealed different brain structures, paths, and cells that help to explain fear and how the whole body responds to the fear alarm.

**SETTLING A PURPOSE**  “Fear is a full-body experience.” This is how the website Goosebumps! The Science of Fear introduces its topic “Fear and the Brain.” This website includes a collection of videos, articles, and images that covers several aspects of how the body, especially the brain, processes sensory information (what we see, hear, feel, smell, touch) and alerts us to what might be harmful to us.

The section of the website titled “Wired for Fear” provides information on the specific areas and cells of the brain that activate our responses to scary situations. This web page includes a video that you can access to watch an animated version of how the brain processes fear reactions. As you watch the video, note how these pathways connect to the brain’s threat center and show why fear can be a good thing. Write down any questions you have during viewing.
AS YOU VIEW  As you view the animated video, consider how the information is presented. Notice how the video introduces and explains new terms and ideas using text, sound, and visuals.

Consider how the use of these three elements helps you understand the scientific terms and ideas presented. As needed, pause the video to make notes about what impresses you or about ideas you might want to talk about later. Replay or rewind so that you can clarify anything you do not understand.

COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION  With a small group, discuss how the brain pathways of our body’s fear response work. What new ideas or information did you learn about fear and the brain from the video? Cite specific terms and segments from the video and tell what you learned from them.
Like other media, the video “Wired for Fear” was created for a specific purpose. The purpose, or intent, of any video or form of media is usually to inform, entertain, persuade, or express the feelings or thoughts of the creator. In meeting the purpose, the creator uses words as well as visual and sound elements to convey information.

Visual elements that can be used in animated videos include:

- **Stills**: images that are motionless, such as illustrations or photographs. In “Wired for Fear,” a still of an illustration of the brain is used to point out where the amygdala is located.
- **Animation**: the process of creating images that appear to move and seem alive. Animation can be created through drawings, computer graphics, or photographs. For example, the hiking scenes in “Wired for Fear” are an animation cycle of drawings.

Visual elements can help viewers understand technical terms, which are the words and phrases used in a particular profession or field of study. For example, by showing the amygdala as a kind of master computer that processes information, the animated model in “Wired for Fear” helps viewers better understand the amygdala and what it does. Using light to highlight brain pathways is another way that the video’s visuals help to explain the content in a memorable way.

Sound elements include what you hear in a video:

- **Music**: sounds created by singing, playing instruments, or using computer-generated tones. Music is often included in videos to create a mood.
- **Narration**: the words as well as the expression and quality of voice used by the narrator. In “Wired for Fear,” the narrator uses emphasis and expression to connect the words to the visuals being shown.

To interpret visual and sound elements in a video, ask questions such as the following:

- Does the video use stills or animation? What purpose do they serve? How do they aid my understanding of the topic?
- How does the music match the video’s topic or content? How does the music create or add to a mood?
- What does the narration add to the video?
Analyzing the Media

**Cite Text Evidence**
Support your responses with evidence from the media.

1. **Summarize** What situation does the hiker face in “Wired for Fear”? Describe how the video explains what the hiker experiences.

2. **Cause/Effect** Review the sequence that uses the animated model. What are some ways our bodies respond when the amygdala senses danger? What parts of the brain activate these responses?

3. **Infer** Explain the title “Wired for Fear.” Why does the video use flashing lights and graphics that show movement in the animated model of how the brain processes potential danger?

4. **Integrate** Describe the music and narration used in the video. In what ways do they support the purpose of the video?

5. **Critique** Think about the purpose of this video. Consider the techniques that are used to support the information presented. Do you think “Wired for Fear” is an effective informational video? Why or why not?

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**Media Activity: Podcast** Create an audio recording for a podcast movie review of the video “Wired for Fear.” You can work alone or with a partner.

- Focus on a few elements of the video that particularly impressed you. Include both positive and negative impressions that you think are relevant. Write notes about these impressions.
- Explain how each element you have chosen clarifies the topic, using examples from the video. Present ideas for additional information that could be included in this type of video. Write notes about these elements and examples.
- Use your notes to create an outline or draft of your podcast review.
- Create the recording of your review alone or with a partner, using a conversational approach. Share your review with a larger group.
Present a Response to Literature

People in the literary works in this collection have to face a fear. Look back at these texts and share your response to one of them. Explain your understanding of the text’s meaning and convince others that your interpretation is valid.

A successful response to literature

- Includes a clear thesis statement
- Provides background information
- Provides a variety of evidence to support the thesis
- Ends by restating the thesis
- Uses effective verbal and nonverbal elements

Choose a Topic Which literary work from the collection interests you most? Re-read it, studying it closely for details. Choose a text with at least one literary element that is important to your understanding of the work as a whole.

Develop a Thesis Draft a thesis statement, or controlling idea, that sums up the main point you will make in your response. The thesis statement should clearly identify your purpose and explain one literary element of the text, such as character, conflict, or theme.

Gather Evidence Use the annotation tools in your eBook to find evidence from the text to support your thesis. Save your evidence to myNotebook, in a folder titled Collection 1 Performance Task. Try to include various kinds of support, such as direct quotations, paraphrased lines, details, and examples.

"Fine?"

“Go on,” she says magnanimously. “I’ll be fine.”
But as soon as her mother is out the door, Bailey wants to run after her, crying "Mom-mee! Don’t go!"
This passage shows how Bailey is trying to be brave and grown-up but is still very frightened.
Consider Purpose and Audience  How can you explain your interpretation of the text? What evidence will convey your ideas to your audience? Keeping your purpose and audience in mind will help you maintain the right tone and include the right information.

Draft Your Response  Write out your response to the literary work you have selected. As you draft your response, keep the following in mind:

- The introduction should state the title and author of the work, clearly explain the thesis, and provide any necessary background information.
- In the body, discuss your main ideas. Each idea should include evidence that supports the thesis. Explain what each piece of evidence shows.
- Restate the thesis in the conclusion and give an overall impression or insight into the work.

Language Conventions: Modify to Add Details

Adverbs are words that modify, or describe, verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They provide details about time, place, manner, and cause. Read the following passage from “The Ravine.”

“Vinny watched, his muddy towel hooked around his neck. Reluctantly, he let it fall, then dove in after them.”

Notice how the adverb “reluctantly” tells more about how Vinny lets the towel fall. Look for places where you can add details about the time, manner, place, or cause of an event.

Practice Your Response  Read your response to literature aloud. Practice using verbal and nonverbal elements to engage the audience. You can write cues on the text of your presentation about the verbal and nonverbal elements you plan to use in presenting your ideas.

- Show enthusiasm through your voice so your audience will feel enthusiasm for your response.
• Grab your audience’s attention by using the pitch of your voice for emphasis.
• Speak more slowly than you do in conversation, to help listeners understand you. Pause to let important points sink in.
• Look audience members in the eye. Use gestures and facial expressions to show your feelings and add emphasis.

**Evaluate Your Response** Have your partner or group of peers review your planned response. Use the following chart to revise your draft.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Tips</th>
<th>Revision Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did I include the author and title of the literary work in my introduction?</td>
<td>Highlight the author and title.</td>
<td>Add a sentence or phrase naming the author and title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does my introduction have a clear thesis?</td>
<td>Underline the thesis. Highlight the literary element and your main point about it.</td>
<td>Add a sentence that clearly states the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the main ideas clear? Does each main idea support the thesis?</td>
<td>Highlight each main idea.</td>
<td>Revise the body of your response so that the main ideas are clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is each main idea supported by evidence?</td>
<td>Underline each supporting detail, example, or quotation.</td>
<td>Add details, examples, or quotations to support ideas. Explain the significance of each piece of evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did I use adverbs to provide details about time, place, manner, or cause?</td>
<td>Underline all adverbs that provide details.</td>
<td>Add adverbs to provide details about time, place, manner, or cause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does my conclusion restate the thesis?</td>
<td>Highlight the restatement.</td>
<td>Add a restatement of the thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Share Your Response** Finalize your response and choose a way to share it with your audience. Consider these options:

• Present your response as a speech to the class.
• Record your response as a webcast.
## PERFORMANCE TASK A RUBRIC
### RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas and Evidence</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The introduction clearly states the thesis.</td>
<td>• The ideas and evidence are organized logically throughout the speech.</td>
<td>• The response reflects a formal style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The response includes insightful interpretation of the text.</td>
<td>• Verbal and nonverbal elements effectively emphasize main points and hold the audience’s attention.</td>
<td>• Standard English is used appropriately throughout the response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All background information appropriate for the audience is included.</td>
<td>• Relevant evidence supports the thesis.</td>
<td>• Sentence beginnings, lengths, and structures vary and have a rhythmic flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relevant evidence supports the thesis.</td>
<td>• The conclusion effectively summarizes the thesis.</td>
<td>• Grammar and usage are correct.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RATING 4
- The introduction states a thesis.
- The response includes interpretation of the text.
- Some background information is included, but some details are left out.
- Most evidence supports the thesis.
- The conclusion restates the thesis.

### RATING 3
- The introduction identifies a thesis, but it is not clearly stated.
- The response includes little interpretation of the text.
- Several background details are included, but important information is omitted.
- The evidence is not always clear or relevant.
- The conclusion includes an incomplete summary of the thesis.

### RATING 2
- The introduction is confusing and does not state a thesis.
- The response includes no interpretation of the text.
- Background information is missing.
- The thesis is not supported by evidence.
- The conclusion is missing.

### RATING 1
- A logical organization is not used; ideas and evidence are presented randomly.
- Verbal and nonverbal elements are not used to emphasize main points, or their inappropriate use detracts from the response.
- The style is inappropriate.
- The use of standard English is minimal.
- Repetitive sentence structure and fragments make the response hard to follow.
- Many grammatical and usage errors change the meaning of ideas.
Write an Informative Essay

In “Fears and Phobias” and other lessons in this collection, you learned about fear. Now use the texts you have read and your own research to write an informative essay about a fear.

A successful informative essay

- provides an introduction that catches the reader’s attention and clearly states the topic
- logically organizes main ideas and supporting evidence
- includes evidence such as facts, definitions, examples, and quotations
- uses appropriate transitions to connect ideas
- provides a conclusion that supports the topic

Mentor Text  Notice how this introduction from “In the Spotlight” catches the reader’s attention and also states the topic.

“Some of us are fine with the idea of standing in front of huge crowds of people. But others would happily bungee off a 200-foot bridge . . . rather than experience the sheer terror of facing an audience. . . . If that sounds like you, then you are one of the world’s many, many sufferers of glossophobia—the fear of speaking (or trying to speak) in public.”

Determine Your Topic  Review the selections in the collection. Choose the fear that you want to learn more about.

Gather Information  Jot down important facts, examples, and definitions, including

- what causes this type of fear
- what happens to our bodies in response to this fear
- what methods can be used to overcome this fear

Do Research  Use print and digital sources to find additional definitions, information, and quotations from experts.

- Search for little-known facts. Make sure facts are credible.
- Cite real-life examples of people living with this fear.
**Consider Your Purpose and Audience**  Think about who will read your essay and what you want them to know.

**Organize Your Ideas**  Create an outline to organize your ideas in a logical sequence. Make sure each idea follows from the previous idea and leads into the next idea.

1. Use Roman numerals for main topics.
   A. Indent and use capital letters for subtopics.
      1. Indent and use numbers for supporting facts and details.
      2. Indent and use numbers for supporting facts and details.

**Write Your Essay**  Review your notes and your outline as you begin your draft.

- Begin your introduction with an unusual comment, fact, quote, or personal anecdote.
- Develop your main ideas with supporting facts, details, examples, and quotations from experts.
- Use transitions such as *in addition to* and *also* to connect ideas.
- Include website links and visuals, such as charts, graphs, or photos, to add depth to your essay.
- In your conclusion, restate your main idea and summarize supporting details and facts.

**Language Conventions: Connect Ideas**

The use of a lot of simple sentences in your writing can make it hard to understand how details are connected. Two other sentence structures can help you clarify ideas. A **compound sentence** consists of two or more independent clauses joined together. A **complex sentence** consists of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.

In the following paragraph from “Fears and Phobias,” a dependent clause is added to the first sentence and an independent clause is added to the second sentence.

“Like all emotions, fear can be mild, medium, or intense, depending on the situation and the person. A feeling of fear can be brief or it can last longer.”

Look for places where you can use compound and complex sentences to make your ideas clearer and your writing smoother.
**Review Your Draft** Have your partner or a group of peers review your draft. Use the following chart to revise your draft.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Tips</th>
<th>Revision Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does my introduction grab readers’ attention?</td>
<td>Highlight the introduction.</td>
<td>Add an interesting fact, example, or quotation that illustrates the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does my introduction clearly state the topic?</td>
<td>Underline the topic sentence.</td>
<td>Add a sentence that clearly states the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are my main ideas organized in a clear and logical way?</td>
<td>Highlight each main idea. Underline transitions.</td>
<td>Reorder ideas so that each one flows easily to the next. Add appropriate transitions to connect ideas and clarify the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I support each main idea with evidence?</td>
<td>Underline each supporting fact, definition, example, or quotation.</td>
<td>Add facts, details, examples, or quotations to support ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I use compound and complex sentences to make relationships between ideas clear?</td>
<td>Underline each compound and complex sentence.</td>
<td>Combine some simple sentences to form compound and complex sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does my conclusion support the topic?</td>
<td>Highlight the conclusion.</td>
<td>Add a statement that summarizes the main ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Create a Finished Copy** Finalize your essay and choose a way to share it with your audience. Consider these options:

- Present your essay as a speech to the class.
- Record your essay as a news report and share it on a school website.
### PERFORMANCE TASK B RUBRIC

#### INFORMATIVE ESSAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas and Evidence</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • The introduction is appealing, is informative, and catches the reader’s attention; the topic is clearly identified.  
  • The topic is well developed with clear main ideas supported by facts, details, definitions, examples, and quotations from reliable sources.  
  • The conclusion effectively summarizes the information presented. | • The organization is effective and logical throughout the essay.  
  • Transitions logically connect related ideas. | • A consistent, formal writing style is used throughout.  
  • Language is strong and precise.  
  • A variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences is used to show how ideas are related.  
  • Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are correct.  
  • Grammar, usage, and mechanics are correct. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas and Evidence</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • The introduction could be more appealing and engaging; the topic is clearly identified.  
  • One or two important points could use more support, but most main ideas are well supported by facts, details, definitions, examples, and quotations from reliable sources.  
  • The conclusion summarizes the information presented. | • The organization of main ideas and details is confusing in a few places.  
  • A few more transitions are needed to connect related ideas. | • The writing style is inconsistent in a few places.  
  • Language is too vague or general in some places.  
  • Sentences vary somewhat in structure.  
  • Some spelling, capitalization, and punctuation mistakes occur.  
  • Some grammar and usage errors are repeated. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas and Evidence</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • The introduction is only partly informative; the topic is unclear.  
  • Most important points could use more support from relevant facts, details, definitions, examples, and quotations from reliable sources.  
  • The conclusion is unclear or only partially summarizes the information presented. | • The organization of main ideas and details is logical in some places, but it often doesn’t follow a pattern.  
  • More transitions are needed throughout to connect related ideas. | • The writing style becomes informal in many places.  
  • Language is too general or vague in many places.  
  • Compound and complex sentences are hardly used.  
  • Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are often incorrect but do not make reading difficult.  
  • Grammar and usage are often incorrect, but the writer’s ideas are still clear. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas and Evidence</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • The introduction is missing or confusing.  
  • Supporting facts, details, definitions, examples, or quotations are unreliable or missing.  
  • The conclusion is missing. | • The organization is not logical; main ideas and details are presented randomly.  
  • No transitions are used, making the essay difficult to understand. | • The style is inappropriate for the essay.  
  • Language is too general to convey the information.  
  • The use of too many simple sentences makes the essay monotonous and choppy and the relationships between ideas unclear.  
  • Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are incorrect and distracting throughout.  
  • Many grammatical and usage errors change the meaning of the writer’s ideas. |