

FOR CLASS >> from Lynn Aprill

Thanks to Lynn Aprill for sharing this sample lesson plan based on Common Core Standards.

Workshop Mini-lesson Planning Sheet: Colons and Semi-colons

Essential Question(s)/Teaching Point: (Intention):

What writing techniques can a writer use to communicate the human experience?

How can I collaborate with my peers during the writing process to improve my writing?

How does a writer organize complex ideas effectively when writing?

Common Core State Standards:

- L.9-10.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
- Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.

Learning Target:

I'm able to analyze the uses of the semicolon and colon.

I'm able to use semicolons and colons effectively in my own writing.

Materials needed:

Truman Capote's "A Christmas Memory" [on next page]

Connection:

We have been studying the epic through our reading of The Odyssey. Each adventure in The Odyssey can be take individually as a type of memoir, or story of a particular episode in a person's life.

Today, we are going to study a small section of a memoir by Truman Capote with special punctuation attributes and use it as a model to enhance our new adventure for Odysseus.

Teaching:

Focus Lesson:

To understand how to create a memoir, the teacher will read aloud part of a text by Truman Capote. [next page] As students listen, they should think about how he describes his holiday memory with a relative. Students have already been working on an additional adventure for Odysseus, in which Odysseus once again runs into trouble and learns a lesson.

Guided Instruction:

From Coop by Michael Perry

In the company of our six-year-old daughter Amy, my wife Anneliese and I have recently moved to a farm. I would like to present some sort of grant agrarian charter, but the whole deal is predicated mainly on the idea of having chickens. We are not alone in this: These Troubled Times seem to have precipitated a fowl renaissance. Mail carriers labor under a groaning load of multicolored hatchery catalogs, the latest issue of Backyard Poultry, and perforated containers that peep. Drop the term "chicken tractor" in mixed company and behold the knowing nods. The online world is alive with Subaru-driving National Public Radio supporters trading tips on eco-friendly coop construction and pros and cons of laying mash; my NASCAR-loving brother-in-law tenderly minds a box of chicks beneath a heat lamp in his garage; my biker bar bouncer-turned-Zen Buddhist pal Billy and his wife the certified nursing assistant are building their second backyard coop with an eye toward expanding into "ornamentals." Anecdotal evidence to be sure, and a drop in the Colonel's bucket, but something is afoot. The subject of chickens was raised between my wife and me fairly early in our courtship, and has sustained us. We are enthused by the idea of fresh eggs, homegrown coq au vin, and (at least until butchering day) a twenty-four hour turnaround on the compost. In addition, it is my long-standing opinion that entertainment-wise, chickens beat TV.

Whole Group: Give the students a copy of the Truman Capote text [next page] and the analyzing grammatical attributes chart. [page 19]

Individual: Students will circle all semicolons and colons in the passage.

Whole Group: The analyzing grammatical attributes chart will have the first sentence with a semicolon already filled in. The teacher will lead a discussion allowing students to notice the purpose of the semicolon in that passage.

Collaborative Learning/Active Engagement:

Students will work collaboratively to determine the author's purpose and utility for each of the passages containing semicolons and colons in the mentor text. Student groups will fill selected passages into the grammatical attributes chart and determine the purpose for each use of the semicolon/colon in the text. Teacher will circulate during the discussion to check for understanding.

Link:

So, when you are looking back at your Odysseus' adventure story, you can make deliberate contrasts and connections between your ideas by using semicolons and colons.

Independent Task/Conferring:

Students will go back to their draft of Odysseus' adventure story and find at least three places to rewrite sentences to include semicolons and colons correctly.

Group Share:

Students will then meet with their groups to share and discuss their uses of semicolons and colons and analyze their correct use. Corrections will be made if necessary.

Additional Resources:

Additional modeling, practice, and memoir development can be continued with additional mentor text excerpts, including:

- Night by Elie Wiesel, p. 35 [next page]
- Coop by Michael Perry, p. 2 [below]
- To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee (semicolons and colons everywhere!)

From "A Christmas Memory" by Truman Capote

Imagine a morning in late November. A coming of winter morning more than twenty years ago. Consider the kitchen of a spreading old house in a country town. A great black stove is its main feature; but there is also a big round table and a fireplace with two rocking chairs placed in front of it. Just today the fireplace commenced its seasonal roar.

A woman with shorn white hair is standing at the kitchen window. She is wearing tennis shoes and a shapeless gray sweater over a summery calico dress. She is small and sprightly, like a bantam hen; but, due to a long youthful illness, her shoulders are pitifully hunched. Her face is remarkable - not unlike Lincoln's, craggy like that, and tinted by sun and wind; but it is delicate too, finely boned, and her eyes are sherry-colored and timid. "Oh my," she exclaims, her breath smoking the windowpane, "it's fruitcake weather!"

The person to whom she is speaking is myself. I am seven; she is sixty-something. We are cousins, very distant ones, and we have lived together - well, as long as I can remember. Other people inhabit the house, relatives; and though they have power over us, and frequently make us cry, we are not, on the whole, too much aware of them. We are each other's best friend. She calls me Buddy, in memory of a boy who was formerly her best friend. The other Buddy died in the 1880's, when she was still a child. She is still a child.

"I knew it before I got out of bed," she says, turning away from the window with a purposeful excitement in her eyes. "The courthouse bell sounded so cold and clear. And there were no birds singing; they've gone to warmer country, yes indeed. Oh, Buddy, stop stuffing biscuit and fetch our buggy. Help me find my hat. We've thirty cakes to bake."

It's always the same: a morning arrives in November, and my friend, as though officially inaugurating the Christmas time of year that exhilarates her imagination and fuels the blaze of her heart, announces: "it's fruitcake weather! Fetch our buggy. Help me find my hat."

The hat is found, a straw cartwheel corsaged with velvet roses out-of-doors has faded: it once belonged to a more fashionable relative. Together, we guide our buggy, a dilapidated baby carriage, out to the garden and into a grove of pecan trees. The buggy is mine; that is, it was bought for me when I was born. It is made of wicker, rather unraveled, and the wheels wobble like a drunkard's legs. But it is a faithful object; springtimes, we take it to the woods and fill it with flowers, herbs, wild fern for our porch pots; in the summer, we pile it with picnic paraphernalia and sugar-cane fishing poles and roll it down to the edge of a creek; it has its winter uses, too: as a truck for hauling firewood from the yard to the kitchen, as a warm bed for Queenie, our tough little orange and white rat terrier who has survived distemper and two rattlesnake bites. Queenie is trotting beside it now.

From *Night* by Elie Wiesel

Days went by. In the mornings: black coffee. At midday: soup. By the third day, I was eagerly eating any kind of soup . . . At six o'clock in the afternoon: roll call. Followed by bread with something. At nine o'clock: bedtime.

We had already been in Auschwitz for eight days. It was after roll call. We stood waiting for the bell announcing its end. Suddenly I noticed someone passing between the rows. I heard him ask:

"Who among you is Wiesel from Sighet?"

The person looking for us was a small fellow with spectacles in a wizened face. My father answered:

"That's me. Wiesel from Sighet."

The fellow's eyes narrowed. He took a long look at my father.

"You don't know me? . . . You don't recognize me. I'm your relative, Stein. Already forgotten? Stein. Stein from Antwerp. Reizel's husband. Your wife was Reizel's aunt . . . She often wrote to us . . . and such letters!"

My father had not recognized him. He must have barely known him, always being up to his neck in communal affairs and not knowledgeable in family matters. He was always elsewhere, lost in thought. (Once, a cousin came to see us in Sighet. She had stayed at our house and eaten at our table for two weeks before my father noticed her presence for the first time.) No, he did not remember Stein. I recognized him right away. I had known Reizel, his wife, before she left for Belgium.

He told us that he had been deported in 1942. He said, "I heard people say that a transport had arrived from your region and I came to look for you. I thought you might have some news of Reizel and my two small boys who stayed in Antwerp . . ."

I knew nothing about them . . . Since 1940, my mother had not received a single letter from them. But I lied:

"Yes, my mother did hear from them. Reizel is fine. So are the children . . ."

He was weeping with joy. He would have liked to stay longer, to learn more details, to soak up the good news, but an SS was heading in our direction and he had to go, telling us that he would come back the next day.

The bell announced that we dismissed. We went to fetch the evening meal: bread and margarine. I was terribly hungry and swallowed my ration on the spot. My father told me, "You mustn't eat all at once. Tomorrow is another day . . ."

But seeing that his advice had come too late, and that there was nothing left of my ration, he didn't even start his own. "Me, I'm not hungry," he said.

Punctuation Attribute Analysis Chart

Type of Punctuation	Textual Example	How does the author use this attribute?	Why does the author choose to use this?
• ;	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
	4.	4.	4.
	5.	5.	5.
	6.	6.	6.
	7.	7.	7.

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	6.	6.	6.
	7.	7.	7.