... a self-contained student writing unit, complete with instruction, guidelines, activities, and writing space.

WRITE SOURCE®
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Checklist: **Responses to Literature**

This checklist will help you keep track of the assignments in this unit. Check the box next to each assignment as you complete it.

**Due Date**

☐ Responder Warm-Up: What’s the Big Idea? (page 4)
☐ Reacting to the Reading (page 7)

**PREWRITING: Planning Your Writing**

☐ Choosing a Work of Literature and Identifying Its Theme (page 10)
☐ Supporting Your Theme with Details (pages 12-13)

**WRITING: Connecting Your Ideas**

☐ Starting Your Response to Literature (pages 16-17)
☐ Developing the Middle Part (pages 18-19)
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☐ Evaluating Closing Paragraphs (pages 24-25)
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☐ Using Specific Verbs (pages 30-31)
☐ Punctuating Titles of Literary Works (page 32)
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☐ Using a Checklist (page 36)
☐ Writing the Final Copy (pages 37-40)

**Extension Activities**

☐ Additional Reading and Responding to Literature (page 44)
☐ Reflecting on Your Writing (page 45)
☐ Preparing for a Writing Test (page 46)
"No one can hope to write really well if he [or she] has not learned how to . . . make out a theme in a literary work."
—John Gardner, author of *The Art of Fiction*

Responses to Literature

"Love conquers all."
"Only the strong survive."
"Crime doesn’t pay."
These statements are themes you may have found in stories or novels you have read. A theme is a statement that a work of literature makes about life or human nature.

Authors rarely state themes directly. Instead, they use their characters’ thoughts, feelings, words, and actions to reveal the theme. However, it is important to recognize that the theme of a novel is not the same thing as the subject of a novel. The subject is what a story or a novel is about. For example, the subject of the novel *Speak*, by Laurie Halse Anderson, is Melinda Sordino’s terrible freshman year. The theme, however, expresses the human quality Melinda shows at the end: It is better to do the right thing than it is to hide.

In this unit, you will be asked to write about the theme of a work of literature. You will need to reread a favorite novel or story to find clues that point to the theme. Of course, different readers will identify different themes, even for the same work of literature. Your goal will be to state a theme that you can support with details from the literature.
Responding Warm-Up: **What's the Big Idea?**

All forms of creative writing—stories, novels, poems, plays, and scripts for movies or television programs—have an important underlying idea or message. This idea or message is the theme. The theme expresses a truth that readers or viewers can recognize. Below are some examples of themes. (Notice that the themes are stated as complete thoughts.)

- **Love conquers all.**
- **Might does not make right.**
- **Honesty is the best policy.**
- **Loyalty is more important than success.**
- **Good guys always win.**
- **The world needs more heroes.**
- **Everybody loves a winner.**

Choose a theme from the list above, or think of one of your own. Then choose a television show or movie that you have seen that explores this theme. Use the space below to begin freewriting about the theme. Use your own paper if you need more room.

1. The title of the show or movie is ____________________________________________

2. I think the theme of ________________________________________________________

   fits the show or movie because ______________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

3. I think the theme is true because in my own experience ________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

Next Step: Meet with two classmates and share your answers. If you are familiar with one another's shows or movies, compare your ideas about what the themes are.
Reading a Sample Discussion of Theme

The sample response to literature discusses the theme in Laurie Halse Anderson’s *Speak*. The notes in the left-hand margin identify the key parts of the essay.

**Too Quiet**

Why does that kid sit by herself in the lunchroom and not talk to anyone? What’s in her head? These are the questions people ask themselves about someone who doesn’t “belong.” The main character in *Speak*, by Laurie Halse Anderson, refers to herself as “Outcast,” but she doesn’t seem to know why she doesn’t fit in at school. Through Melinda Sordino’s thoughts, readers share her** wickedly** funny insights into high school life. Anderson reveals the theme of *Speak* as Melinda slowly realizes that the way to overcome difficulties in life is to face them and do what is right rather than to withdraw.

Melinda has friends, good grades, and a positive outlook on life. That all changes after “the party.” Before school starts in the fall, Melinda goes to an underage drinking party attended by older students. When the party gets out of control, she calls the police. After this she is unable to look at herself in the mirror, doesn’t do her school work, and seeks small, enclosed spaces—even taking over an unused janitor’s closet as a hiding place at school. While she is lonely and

**VOCABULARY**

**wickedly** Mischievously
struggles with her everyday life, she also shares the hilarious observations of a bright girl who is on the outside of high school life looking in. Melinda identifies the "Marthas," a group of perky, perfect girls who "like rules too much." There are also the typical teachers like the ultra-cool rebellious art guy, the sports-hating English lady with big hair, and Mr. Neck, who forces his worldview on his students.

Melinda has an awful freshman year as she struggles to make sense of her inability to relate to others or understand herself. She feels that she has to find a way to work through her isolation and that she needs "to speak." In a surprising revelation, readers find out why she calls the police. She courageously faces the reason publicly. By helping others to see a disturbing truth, she begins to heal herself. Melinda is not trying to be different; she has been shattered by something horrible. The book certainly shows that people need to face their own problems, but more importantly, this story gives insight into why some people suffer silently. People who are not troubled or lonely must seek to understand those who are.

**Vocabulary**

**revelation** A discovery of hidden truth
Reacting to the Reading

Answer the following questions about the sample response to literature.

• What author, book, and character are discussed in the response to literature?

• What theme does the writer identify in the first paragraph?

• What information about the theme does the writer provide in the middle paragraphs?

• Based on the details from the novel that the writer provides in the middle paragraphs, do you agree with the writer's choice of theme?

• Do you agree with the writer's conclusion that *Speak* has a lesson for today's readers? Why or why not?

Next Step: Team up with a classmate to compare your reactions. How are your responses to the last two questions similar or different?
Evaluating: Understanding the Traits of an Effective Response to Literature

This rubric will help you understand the traits found in an effective response to literature. Use the rubric to help you write your own response and as a final checklist for your completed writing. You can also use this rubric to evaluate your classmates’ finished responses. (Your teacher will give you a point scale to use for final evaluations.)

Assessment Rubric

---

**STIMULATING IDEAS**

*The response...*

- focuses on the thoughts, feelings, words, or actions of a specific character in a story or a novel.
- shows how the character reveals the theme.

**LOGICAL ORGANIZATION**

- begins by identifying the work of literature, its author, and its theme.
- presents details in an easy-to-follow manner.

**ENGAGING VOICE**

- uses the present tense except for quotations or recounted actions.
- shows an understanding of the story or novel.

**ORIGINAL WORD CHOICE**

- includes specific verbs and nouns.

**EFFECTIVE SENTENCE STYLE**

- flows smoothly from one idea to the next.

**CORRECT, ACCURATE COPY**

- observes the basic rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- follows the format suggested by the teacher.

*Comments:*
Prewriting
Planning Your Writing
Prewriting Choosing a Work of Literature and Identifying Its Theme

Every work of literature has a theme (a statement about life or human nature). Choosing a novel or story that you have read and enjoyed recently will help you write an effective response.

On the lines below, list the books and stories that you have read recently.

............................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................
............................................................................................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Love</th>
<th>Isolation</th>
<th>Respect</th>
<th>Ambition</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>Greed</td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add other ideas or concepts to the list above. Then choose one idea that relates to a novel or story you listed at the top of the page. Form a theme statement for that book or story by completing the following sentences:

- The novel/story .................................................................................................................................
  deals with the idea of ............................................................................................................................

- One possible theme of the novel/story .................................................................................................
  is that .....................................................................................................................................................
  .................................................................................................................................................................
  .................................................................................................................................................................

Next Step: Keep in mind that your statement of theme may change as you gather details from your novel or story.
**Prewriting** Gathering Details That Support Your Theme

Now that you have written a statement of theme, you need to find details that support the theme. Look for clues to the theme in a specific character's thoughts, feelings, words, and actions.

Review the notes and comments below made by the writer of the sample response on pages 5-6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character at the beginning of the novel/story</th>
<th>Character in the middle of the novel/story</th>
<th>Character at the end of the novel/story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melinda is an outcast in her high school. She feels different from others, but she doesn’t know why.</td>
<td>Melinda hides in a janitor’s closet and doesn’t speak. Her funny observations about others don’t help her understand what’s wrong.</td>
<td>Melinda takes a risk in helping others avoid what has nearly ruined her life. She is praised for her courage and no longer hides.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What does the character learn from his or her experiences?  
   *Melinda learns that there is nothing wrong with her. Her feelings of isolation are caused by what has happened to her.*

2. How does the character change over the course of the novel or story?  
   *Melinda changes from a self-doubting girl to a happy high school student.*

3. What does the character do, say, or think that fits the theme?  
   *She makes other students aware of a danger in their midst.*
Write the theme of your novel or story. (See page 10.) Then review your novel or story for details that support the theme. Complete the chart below, noting the main character’s actions, words, thoughts, or feelings. Then answer the questions that follow.

The theme is ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character at the beginning of the novel/story</th>
<th>Character in the middle of the novel/story</th>
<th>Character at the end of the novel/story</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. What does the character learn from his or her experiences?

2. How does the character change over the course of the novel or story?

3. What does the character do, say, or think that fits the theme?

**Next Step:** With a classmate, review your notes on pages 12-13. Do your notes support your theme? If not, work with your partner to revise your statement of theme. Then write it below.

The theme of the novel/story ........................................................................................................ is that

....................................................................................................................................................
Prewriting Learning About the Structure of Responses to Literature

Exploring the theme of a work of literature is like writing a persuasive essay. Your statement of theme is similar to an opinion based on your reading. Your goal is to provide details from the literature that support the theme. The graphic below shows the basic parts of a response to literature (an analysis of theme).

Essay Structure

- The **beginning** introduces the work of literature, names the author, and gives background about the story. It describes an important character and then states the theme. (See page 16.)

- The **middle** presents details from the story that support the theme statement. Each paragraph focuses on a different part of the theme. Ideas are presented in the order of their importance. (See page 18.)

- The **ending** restates the theme and connects it to real life. (See page 20.)

Transition Words and Phrases

Here are some words that you can use to link reasons and supporting details in responses to literature.

- again
- finally
- in conclusion
- likewise
- along with
- for instance
- in fact
- most importantly
- also
- for this reason
- in the same way
- next
- another
- in addition
- lastly
- similarly
Writing
Connecting
Your Ideas

Prewriting
Writing
Revising
Editing
Publishing
The beginning of your response to literature should name the work of literature, its author, and its main character. It should also include a statement of the theme. (See the underlined sentence in the sample.) Try to get your reader’s attention by making the beginning interesting. Start with a quotation or with an interesting detail or comment.

**Sample Beginning Paragraph**

The simplest but greatest truths often appear in stories based on real life. Francisco Jiménez’s autobiographical novel Breaking Through proves that point. The novel is the sequel to the award-winning The Circuit, and Breaking Through continues the story of young Francisco. He is now a teenager in California in the late 1950s. Years before, he and his family entered the United States illegally to work in the fields. Frankie lives in two worlds that threaten to tear him apart. He is constantly pulled between his Mexican heritage and his desire to be American, between his love for his family and his hope for an education, and between his respect for his parents and his respect for himself. Francisco needs balance, and his struggle to get that balance establishes the primary theme of the book: balance is the key to making it through adolescence.

Use the space below to write the beginning of your response to literature. If you don’t like the way your first beginning turns out, try one or two more versions on the next page.
**Next Step:** Meet with a classmate and review each other's beginnings. If you wrote more than one beginning, put a star next to the one you like best.
Writing Developing the Middle Part

The middle part of your response to literature should provide details that support your theme. Each paragraph should focus on one element of the theme and the details that support it.

Sample Middle Paragraph

Francisco feels great pride in both his Mexican heritage and the American culture he lives in. He works hard to balance the two. He loves his mother's traditional Mexican cooking, but he asks her to make bologna sandwiches so that other kids won't tease him at lunch. He enjoys singing traditional Mexican folk songs but is thrilled by American rock and roll. When he imitates Elvis Presley for his class, he is teased and cheered at the same time. He feels deeply angry when he learns that the Anglo parents of his classmates won't let their daughters go out with him and his brother. Rather than turn away from his heritage, however, Francisco sees the benefits of both worlds. Being a Mexican has taught him to work hard and to have faith. Being an American has taught him to dream big. By embracing both parts of his world, Francisco succeeds in graduating from high school and starting college.

Write your middle paragraphs below and on the page that follows. Remember to focus each paragraph on a different part of the theme. Present these paragraphs in the order of their importance. Begin with the most important, or end with it.
The ending of your response to literature should restate the theme and make a connection between the story and real life. Remember, one of the reasons people read stories and novels is to make connections between their own experiences and a writer's ideas. Be sure to include that connection in your conclusion.

**Sample Ending Paragraph**

At the end of the novel, Francisco leaves for college. For years, he has juggled his two cultures, his family and his friends, his respect for his father, and his need to leave home. Francisco finally reaches adulthood. Although the story is set in a specific time and place, the story of Frankie's teenage years shows the importance of balance in one's life. He shows that you can work and play hard, can value both family and friends, can make some mistakes, and can still succeed. These are lessons we all can benefit from learning.
Next Step: Meet with a classmate to discuss your endings. Choose the one that best restates the theme and makes a connection with real life.
After you finish pages 16-21, write a complete copy of your first draft. Do your writing on your own paper and store your work in the back pocket of this booklet. Keep the following tips in mind as you complete this copy.

**Drafting Tips**

1. **Write on every other line and on only one side of your paper.** Having plenty of space will make revising much easier. (If you use a computer, be sure to double-space.)

2. **Keep your writing as neat as possible,** but don’t stop to recopy just to make your draft look better. Concentrate on ideas, not neatness.

3. **Keep your purpose and audience in mind.** You’re trying to clearly state and support the theme of a novel or short story for your classmates.

4. **Feel free to add new ideas that come to mind as you write your draft.** After all, writing is a process of discovery.

5. **Notice any parts you may want to change.** You can make these changes later when you revise.

6. **Remember: A first draft is your first look at a piece of writing.** You may rewrite parts of your draft three or four times before they sound just right.
Revising
Improving
Your Writing
The closing paragraph in a response to literature should restate the theme of the novel or story and make a clear connection between the literature and real life. These two parts of your conclusion tie your response together and give the reader something to think about.

Review each of the following closing paragraphs. Put a check (✓) next to the paragraphs that both restate the theme and make a connection for readers. For paragraphs that you think are not effective, explain your reasons on the lines provided. The first one has been done for you.

✓ 1. By the end of the play Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare shows that young love can be a powerful yet dangerous force. The love between the two teens first tears their families apart but in the end brings them together again. Love also makes the young lovers' lives both thrilling and miserable. Hundreds of years later, the play still fascinates readers young and old. Experiencing first love through Shakespeare's words and imagination is something that never goes out of style.

2. Harper Lee's novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, is a great American novel. It tells the story of a young girl who grows up in the South in the 1930s. What it has to say about prejudice is still worth considering today.

3. Mary Shelley's novel Frankenstein shows the theme that too much ambition can be dangerous and even deadly. Dr. Frankenstein nearly destroys his whole family because he wants to use science to create life. I recommend this book to people who enjoy scary stories.
4. The theme of Theodore Taylor's novel *The Cay* is that underneath their skin, people are the same. Even though the two characters in his novel—a young, blind white boy and an older black man—are very different, they help each other during a crisis. *The Cay* offers readers a valuable lesson about why people need to overcome prejudices about others' backgrounds and ages.

5. Paul Zindel's funny novel *The Pigman* is about two kids and an older man whose wife has died. The novel follows their friendship until Mr. Pignati dies. The novel could have been written today. It shows teenagers as they really are.

**Next Step:** Carefully review the closing paragraph in your own response to literature. Does it restate the theme and make a connection between the literature and real life? Have a classmate review your closing. If you are not satisfied with it, use the workspace below to write a new ending.
Peer Responding

Your teacher may want you and a classmate to react to each other's writing by completing the response sheet below.

Response Sheet

Writer's name: .................................  Responder's name: .................................
Title:...............................................................................................................................
I like ... ..........................................................................................................................
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I would change ... ............................................................................................................
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Strong words, phrases, and ideas in the writing: ............................................................
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Revising Using a Checklist

Use the following checklist or the assessment rubric (page 8) to help you review and revise your first draft. Make as many changes as needed so that your response to literature contains the best ideas and details.

### Revising Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Revising in Action

When you revise, you improve the ideas and organization in your first draft. You can make improvements by adding new ideas, crossing out unnecessary ideas, rewriting unclear ideas, and reordering out-of-place ideas. See the example changes below.

An unnecessary idea is dropped.

Information is moved.

An idea is made clearer.

---

*The Cay* describes how a young American boy and an older Caribbean man survive being shipwrecked and stranded on a deserted island. The book was written in 1969. It is a novel by Theodore Taylor. More than an adventure, *The Cay* is a story about people who learn to care about others who are different from themselves. The theme of the novel is stated by one of the characters: "I true think which means that people are human beings, whatever their skin color beneath d'skin is all d'same." The novel shows that it often takes a while for people to understand this.
After you finish pages 24-27, write a complete copy of your revised first draft. Do your writing on your own paper and store your work in the back pocket of this booklet. Keep the following tips in mind as you complete the revised copy.

**Revising Tips**

1. **Write on every other line and on only one side of your paper.** This will make editing much easier. (If you use a computer, make sure to double-space.)

2. **Keep your writing as neat as possible,** but don’t stop to rewrite just to make your draft look better. Concentrate on ideas, not neatness.

3. **Focus on ideas that need to be changed.** Add, cut, reorder, and rewrite different parts as needed.

4. **Take your time.** You can’t make the best changes all at once.

5. **Pay special attention to peer responses.** Your peers may notice ideas that need to be clearer—especially if your peers are not as familiar with the book as you are.

6. **Save your first draft** so that you have a record of the changes you have made.

**Adding a Title**

At some point in the process, you need to write a title for your response to literature. The title should hook your reader and introduce your opinion. Here are three guidelines to follow:

- **Use strong, colorful words.**
  Master the Balance Beam of Life, *not* Teens Need Balance

- **Give the words rhythm.**
  What Scout Finds Out, *not* Scout Learns About Life

- **Be imaginative.**
  Too Quiet, *not* Melinda Makes a Change
Editing
Checking for Style and Correctness
**Using Specific Verbs**

Specific, direct verbs tell readers exactly what action is happening. When writing about literature, it is easy to use forms of *be, get, and have*. However, these verbs are often vague, and they may make sentences sound boring if used too often. Your writing will be more interesting if you use specific verbs. They act like little hooks that catch the reader’s attention. Read the two examples below.

**Nonspecific verbs:**

The *Call of the Wild* is the story of a dog named Buck. He is a survivor in terrible circumstances. As a result, he is changed into a strong leader and gets the respect of the pack.

**Specific verbs:**

The *Call of the Wild* tells the story of a dog named Buck. He survives in terrible circumstances. As a result, he changes into a strong leader and earns the respect of the pack.

**HINTS:**

- Sometimes a noun or an adjective following the verb will give you a clue about the verb to use. *(Note: If you want to use a completely different word for your verb, a thesaurus can help you find words with similar meanings.)*

  “Buck gets into fights” becomes “Buck fights.”

- Look for adjectives or participles that follow the verb *be*. You can change them into main verbs.

  “Buck is afraid of men with clubs” becomes “Buck fears men with clubs.”
  “He is changed” becomes “He changes.”

**Underline the nonspecific verbs in the sentences below. Then rewrite the sentences using specific verbs. The first sentence has been done for you.**

1. Harper Lee’s novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, is about the Finch family.

   **Harper Lee’s novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, tells about the Finch family.**

2. The author has the story set in a small town in Alabama during the Great Depression.
3. The book is focused on Atticus Finch's young daughter, Scout.

4. Scout is the narrator of the novel.

5. She is observant and gets to learn a lot.

6. Her father and older brother get her through some serious events.

7. For example, they are worried about a rabid dog.

8. Boo Radley is a character who interests Scout and her brother.

9. Boo Radley doesn't get out of his house much.

10. At the end, some of the townspeople have respect for Atticus Finch.

Next Step: Find sentences in your response that contain vague verbs. Replace them with specific verbs.
Punctuating Titles of Literary Works

Titles of different types of literature are punctuated differently. For example, the titles of longer works, such as novels, plays, and collections of short stories, appear underlined (or in italics on a computer). The titles of short stories and poems are enclosed in quotation marks. See the examples in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Literature</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books (novels, collections</td>
<td>The Call of the Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plays</td>
<td>Romeo and Juliet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short stories</td>
<td>“The Cask of Amontillado”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poems</td>
<td>“Harlem”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>“The Talk”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeches</td>
<td>“Ain’t I a Woman?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters in books</td>
<td>“Haven’t I Made a Difference?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the sentences below, if a title is punctuated correctly, write “C” on the line. If the title is punctuated incorrectly, cross out the errors and write the correct punctuation. The first one has been done for you.

**1.** James Hurst’s story *The Scarlet Ibis* is set in the South.

**2.** Carl Sandburg’s “Fog” is a famous American poem.

**3.** In “Sounder,” a novel by W. H. Armstrong, a boy searches for his dog.

**4.** Nikki Giovanni’s poem *The World Is Not a Pleasant Place to Be* uses the voice of an angry young woman.

**5.** “Poison,” a story by Roald Dahl, became a suspenseful film.

**6.** The *Birds*, by Daphne du Maurier, is another story that became a film.

**7.** Have you ever read Gwen Bristow’s book *Jubilee Trail*?

**Next Step:** Review your corrections with a classmate. Then check your revised writing to make sure that you correctly punctuated the titles of works of literature.
Your main job when editing is to check your revised writing for word choice, style, and sentence errors. See the following examples.

A fragment is corrected.

The Cay starts out as a story of opposites. Phillip is young, American, white, and privileged. Timothy is more than 70 years old. He has lived and worked most of his life in the Caribbean. He has never had any formal education. Even though Timothy has saved Phillip’s life during a shipwreck, Philip remains suspicious of the older man. His mother had told him many times that people of color were different from whites and that he should not trust them.

Editing and Proofreading Symbols

Use the following marks to show where and how your writing needs to be changed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Capitalize a letter.</td>
<td>Lorraine Hansberry wrote <em>A Raisin in the Sun.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>Lowercase a letter.</td>
<td>Her play tells the story of the Younger Family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td>Insert a period.</td>
<td>This play focuses on racial attitudes. It also ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑️ or ☑️</td>
<td>Correct spelling.</td>
<td>Lena Younger, the family leader, is very religious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✈️ or ✈️</td>
<td>Delete or replace.</td>
<td>Lena she makes a down payment on a nice house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▲</td>
<td>Insert a comma.</td>
<td>Her son, Walter Lee, Jr., wants to buy a business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♯ ♯ ♯</td>
<td>Insert an apostrophe or quotation marks.</td>
<td>Walter Lee’s wife hopes for a larger apartment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✎</td>
<td>Insert a question mark or an exclamation point.</td>
<td>What would Beneatha do with the money?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⚫</td>
<td>Start a new paragraph.</td>
<td>The play takes a surprising turn when ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⋯</td>
<td>Switch words or letters.</td>
<td>Walter gets the possible worst news.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When you proofread, you check for errors in punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, and spelling. See the examples below.

A comma is added.

At the beginning of the story, Phillip thinks that people of color are different and could never be a part of his life. His experiences with Timothy change everything for Phillip, however. Not only does Timothy, an elderly black man, save Phillip’s life and teach Phillip how to survive, but Timothy wins Phillip’s respect and gratitude. Timothy changes the way Phillip thinks about human beings and life. Timothy proves that skin color is less important than character and intelligence.

A usage error is corrected.

A spelling error is marked.

Making Editing and Proofreading Changes

Edit and proofread the following response to literature to improve the style and correctness. (Use the editing and proofreading symbols listed on page 33.) The first correction has been done for you. Check off the errors as you correct them.

☐ spelling errors (2)  ☐ word choice (verb) issue (at least 1)  ☐ run-on sentences (1)
☐ usage errors (3)  ☐ sentence fragments (1)  ☐ punctuation errors (2)

Dance Lessons

People often get used to thinking about themselves in a certain way until something challenges them. In the novel “Another Way to Dance” by Martha Southgate, Vicki Harris is an African American girl who loves ballett and thinks about it constantly. However, during a summer of intense ballet instruction, Vicki realizes that what you hope for is not who you are.
Vicki is one of only two black girls in the summer dance program at the School of American Ballet in Manhattan. She works hard to be like the white dancers. Letting her hair grow so that she can pull it back in a bun and eating very little so that she can stay thin. She feels embarrassed on the subway when a few black girls who are wearing baggy clothes and are laughing loudly sit near her. Most of the time her race is not something that Vicki really thinks about she is totally focused on ballet.

Then things start getting complicated. Vicki is close to Stacey, the other black girl in the dance school. Stacey wears an Afro and has her doubts about weather ballet is best for her. Vicki also befriends an African American boy named Michael. He gets angry at any suggestion that white ways are better than black ways. Finally, two ballet-related incidents upset Vicki: She overhears a white girl wondering if Vicki is in the school because of affirmative action, and she goes to Macy's Department Store to get her ballet idols' autograph, but he doesn't even look at her.

Vicki sea's that the world of ballet is not perfect. For the first time, she wanders if she has been shutting herself off from her own people. Talking about ballet, Stacey once said, "I wish there was another way to dance." That comment gets Vicki thinking. Soon students will learn whether they will be asked back for the fall term. Vicki knows that whether she makes the cut or not isn't the most important thing in life. Realizing that life offers many ways to "dance" is the secret to being a whole person.

Next Step: Carefully read and mark your revised writing for any editing and proofreading changes. (Use the editing and proofreading symbols listed on page 33 to mark your changes.)
Editing and Proofreading: **Using a Checklist**

Use the checklist that follows as an editing and proofreading guide. Remember that this step in the process becomes important only after you have revised the ideas in your writing.

[*] It's very easy to miss errors when you edit and proofread, so be sure to ask a teacher, a classmate, or a family member for help.

**Sentence Structure**

- Did I write clear and complete sentences?
- Did I write smooth-reading sentences?

**Punctuation**

- Does each sentence close with an end punctuation mark?
- Did I correctly punctuate the titles of literary works? (page 32)

**Capitalization**

- Did I start all of my sentences with capital letters?
- Did I capitalize the specific names of people and places?

**Grammar**

- Did I use subjects and verbs that agree in number? *(Musicians perform; Lucia dances.)*
- Did I use a consistent verb tense?

**Usage**

- Did I choose the correct word? *(to, too, two)*
- Did I use specific verbs instead of vague ones? (pages 30-31)

**Spelling**

- Did I check for spelling errors?
- Did I use a dictionary or the spell checker on my computer?
After you complete pages 30-36, write a neat final copy of your response to literature on pages 38-40. Then proofread your final copy for errors. Keep the following tips in mind:

**Tips for Handwritten Final Copies**

- Use your best penmanship.
- Write in blue or black ink.
- Write your name, your teacher’s name, the class, and the date in the upper left-hand corner of page 1.
- Skip a line, and center the title on the next line.
- Skip a line, and start your writing.
- Indent the first line of each new paragraph.
- Write your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner of every page after page 1.
- Keep a one-inch margin around each page.

**Tips for Computer-Generated Final Copies**

- Use an easy-to-read font.
- Use a 10- or 12-point type size.
- Double-space throughout your writing.
- Maintain a one-inch margin around each page.

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Responses to Literature 37
Publishing
Sharing the Final Copy
Sending Your Writing Out

What types of writing can I submit to publishers?
Newspapers are interested in essays, editorials, and articles. Some magazines publish stories, essays, and poetry; others publish essays and articles only.

Where should I send my writing?
First consider local newspapers, magazines, and other community publications. For national publications, turn to the Writer’s Market (Cincinnati: Writer’s Digest Books) for ideas. Your school or local library will have a copy of this book.

How should I send my writing?
Writer’s Market will explain that it is wise to write the publishers to request specific guidelines for submitting writing for their publications. Often, you will be asked to include a letter naming the title and the form of your writing (story, essay, article, and so on), a neat copy of your writing, and a self-addressed stamped envelope large enough for returning your writing after it has been read.

What should I expect?
Expect to wait awhile for a reply. Also realize that your writing may not be accepted for publication. In most cases, publishers choose only a few pieces of writing to publish. You may get a rejection letter. Though that sounds disappointing, even a rejection letter can prove helpful because publishers often explain why they did not select your writing for publication.

Submitting Your Writing On-Line

Where do I start my search for on-line publishing?
Start locally. See if your school has its own Web site for student writing. Also ask your teachers if they know of other Web sites that accept student work.

How do I search for these sites?
Use a search engine to find places to publish. Begin your search by entering a keyword phrase such as “submitting writing” or “student writing.” Then check out sites from the list of results.

Does Write Source have a Web site?
Yes. You can visit our Web site at <thewritesource.com>. We suggest places where students can publish on the Net and invite students to submit for publication on our site as well.
Extension Activities
Extension Activity: Additional Reading and Responding to Literature

Respond to a familiar story or novel by answering the following questions.

1. Name the title of the book or story, and identify its main character or characters.

2. Describe the main character in one or two sentences. Give a detail or a quotation from the story to back up your answer.

3. What problem does the character face, and how does he or she solve it?

4. How does the character change or not change by the end of the story?

5. What theme does the author reveal through the characters in the story?
Extension Activity: Reflecting on Your Writing

Reread your response to literature a day or two after you have finished writing it. If possible, read it to someone else, too. Then think about your writing by completing each sentence starter below.

• The best part of my response is . . .

• If I could change one part of my response, it would be . . .

• On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest), I would give my response a score of ___ because . . .

• The next time I write a response to literature, I will . . .
Extension Activity: **Preparing for a Writing Test**

When you take a writing test, you may feel rushed. You will feel more confident if you keep the things you have learned about writing clearly in your mind. Answering the following questions will help you prepare for responding to literature on a test.

1. What is the theme of a work of literature? (See page 3.)

2. Where can you look for details that will support your theme? Why should you look there? (See page 11.)

3. What information should your response include in the opening? (See page 16.)

4. What should you include in the middle paragraphs? (See page 18.)

5. What should you include in the ending? (See pages 20 and 24-25.)