

<p><b>Course/Grade</b> Grade 7 Novel Unit <i>The Watsons Go To Birmingham</i> - 1963 (1000L)</p>	<p><b>Text Type</b> Narrative Text (19 days) <b>Portfolio Writing Prompt:</b> After reading <i>The Watsons Go To Birmingham</i> - 1963, write a narrative about the bombing of the Birmingham Church from the perspective of one of the victims or the victim's family. Use similes, metaphors, and allusions to develop your work.</p>
<p><b>Common Core Writing: Text Types, Responding to Reading, and Research</b></p> <p>The Standards acknowledge the fact that whereas some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. Standard 9 stresses the importance of the reading-writing connection by requiring students to draw upon and write about evidence from literary and informational texts. Because of the centrality of writing to most forms of inquiry, research standards are prominently included in this strand, though skills important to research are infused throughout the document. (CCSS, Introduction, 8)</p>	
<p><b>Narrative</b></p> <p>Narrative writing conveys experience, either real or imaginary, and uses time as its deep structure. It can be used for many purposes, such as to inform, instruct, persuade, or entertain. Students produce narratives that take the form of creative fictional stories, memoirs, anecdotes, and autobiographies. Over time, they learn to provide visual details of scenes, objects, or people; to depict specific actions (for example, movements, gestures, postures, and expressions); to use dialogue and interior monologue that provide insight into the narrator's and characters' personalities and motives; and to manipulate pace to highlight the significance of events and create tension and suspense. (CCSS, Appendix A, 23)</p>	
<p><b>Expectations for Learning</b></p> <p>Although the Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout the Common Core State Standards document. For example, Writing standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research.</p> <p>To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today's curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understanding are embedded throughout the Standards rather than treated in a separate section. (CCSS, Introduction, 4)</p>	
<p><b>Strands: Topics Standard Statements</b></p> <p><b>Reading for Literature: Key Ideas and Details</b></p> <p><b>RL.7.1</b> Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p><b>RL.7.2</b> Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p><b>RL.7.3</b> Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).</p>	

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**Reading for Literature: Craft and Structure**

**RL.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes or other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or a section of a story or drama.

**RL.7.6** Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

**Reading for Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

**RL.7.7** Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).

**RL.7.9** Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

**Reading for Literature: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

**RL.7.10** By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

**Writing: Text Types and Purposes**

**W.7.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

- a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

**Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing**

**W.7.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**W.7.5** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

**W.7.6** Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

**Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

**W.7.7** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

**W.7.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- a. Apply *grade 7 Reading Standards* to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history”).

**Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration**

**SL.7.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 7 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

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**Language: Conventions of Standard English**

**L.7.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing.

**Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

**L.7.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 7 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

**L.7.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical, and mythological allusions) in context.

**Instructional Strategies**

**Novel Vocabulary:** hostile, incapable, assure, intimidate, emulate, brave, punctual, desperate, hypnotized, tolerate, pinnacle, dispersal, exclusive, grasped, haphazardly, hacked, enhance, patter, swoon, maestro, eavesdropped, grapevine, offended, facilities, frequencies, scolding, whirlpool, electrocuted, fluttered, amended, pervasive, segregation, strove, sit-ins, demonstrations, confrontations

**Day 1**

- Read the **Novel Overview** and **Tie Into Central Question (appendix 2)**.
- Ask students if they can **predict** what the novel may be about. When building background with students, review the focus question: *Does every conflict have a winner?* Ask students to share a time when they or someone they know, have read about, or have seen in a movie, was involved in a conflict that did not clearly have a winner. Ask them to explain why there was no winner.
- Introduce the novel **vocabulary**. Ask students to infer what the words mean by the use of context clues. If this strategy is not successful for them to determine word meaning, students are to look for the words in the dictionary.
- Ask students, “What do you know about the early 1960s?” In small groups, research the time period. Write down key people, events and ideas using **Student Handout: What Do You Know About the 1960s? (appendix 3)**.

**Day 2**

- Students continue research on the 1960s.
- After 20 minutes (approximately), groups present what they have learned about the 1960s while the rest of the class takes notes to add to their handouts.
- **Student handout: Character Analysis (appendix 5)**. Go over the categories students are to look for as they read the novel.
- Preview the novel by looking at the dedications page. Advise students they will be choosing one of the victims or a victim’s family member to focus on during narrative writing. They will be taking the point of view of one of these real-life characters.
- Review point-of-view: **Student Handout: Point of View (appendix 4)**. After brainstorming recent events, students write a paragraph using first person point of view.
- **Exit ticket:** What does this phrase mean: “the toll for one day in one city”?

**Day 3**

- Read Chapter 1: “And You Wonder Why We Get Called the Weird Watsons” (1-19).
- Point out figurative language used, especially on pages 1-2 (similes, metaphors, hyperboles). Why were they used to begin the story?

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- **Formative Assessment:** After reading Chapter 1, students should be prepared to answer and discuss the following questions:
  1. When Byron's lips are frozen to the car mirror, his family members all react differently. Briefly tell how each character reacts to Byron's problem. Why did they react this way?
  2. Give at least three examples of similes and/or metaphors used in Chapter 1, and explain each one. The examples cannot be from pages 1-2.
- Fill out **Character Analysis (appendix 5)**. Not all the columns will be complete at this time. This chart will be used for the first 5 chapters.
- **Exit Ticket:** Which character is the most like you so far? Describe one thing the character has said or done that you would have said or done.

**Day 4**

- Students silently read Chapter 2: "Give My Regards to Clark, Poindexter" (20-31).
- Students then annotate the text passage under discussion (22-25), **Student Handout: Close Read #1 (appendix 6-7)**.
- Teacher or proficient reader reads the text passage again, with students checking their annotations for understanding.
- In small groups, students answer text-dependent questions given to them one at a time. After small group discussion, groups report to the whole class for more discussion before moving on to the next question.

Text Passage Under Discussion	Vocabulary	Text Dependent Questions for Students
<p>Two years ago, Miss Henry took me to Mr. Alums' fifth grade class. Mr. Alums was the toughest teacher in the school and just being in front of him was kind of scary. He looked down at me and said, "Good morning, Mr. Watson. I hope you are in good form today." I just nodded at him because I wasn't sure what that meant. <b>(Q1)</b></p> <p>"Don't be nervous, Kenny," Miss Henry said. "Mr. Alums would like you to read a few passages from Langston Hughes." She handed me a book and said, "You wait here while we introduce you to the class."</p> <p>Man! Some of the time I wished I was as smart as these teachers thought I was because if I had been, I would have dropped that book and run all the way home. If I'd been smart enough to figure out what was going to happen next, I would have never gone into that room. <b>(Q2)</b></p> <p>I stood in the hall looking at the stuff they wanted me to read while Mr. Alums told his class, "All right, I have a special treat for you today. I've often told you that as Negroes the world is many times a <b>hostile</b> place for us." I saw Mr. Alums walking back and forth whacking a yardstick in his hand. "I've pointed out time and time again how vital it is that one be able to read</p>	<p><b>hostile:</b> unfriendly; harsh</p>	<p><b>(Q1)</b> What did Mr. Alums mean when he said to Kenny, "<i>I hope you are in good form today</i>"? Why would he say that?</p> <p><b>(Q2)</b> "<i>If I'd been smart enough to figure out what was going to happen next, I would have never gone into that room.</i>" This technique is called "foreshadowing." Why would the author use foreshadowing before detailing the rest of this event?</p>

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<p>well. I've stressed on numerous occasions the importance of being familiar and comfortable with literature. Today, Miss Henry and I would like to give you a demonstration of your own possibilities <b>in this regard</b>. I want you to carefully note how advanced this second-grade student is, and I particularly want you to be aware of the effect his skills have upon you. I want you to be aware that some of our kids read at miraculous levels."</p> <p><b>(Q3)</b></p> <p>I saw Mr. Alums point the yardstick at someone somewhere in the class and say, "Perhaps you'd like to finish the introduction, I think you know our guest quite well."</p> <p>Whoever he pointed at said, "What? I didn't do nothin'." <b>(Q4)</b></p> <p>Miss Henry waved for me to come in and stand in front of the class. I guess I was too nervous about Mr. Alums to have recognized the voice before, but as soon as I walked into the room, I froze. There in the two seats closest to the teacher's desk in the very first row sat Buphead and Byron! The Langston Hughes book jumped from my hand and the whole class laughed, everyone but Byron. His eyes locked on mine and I felt things start melting inside of me.</p> <p>Mr. Alums slammed the yardstick on his desk and the room got real, real quiet.</p> <p>"Let's see if you find this so humorous after you've heard how well this young man reads. And Byron Watson, if you are incapable of taking some of the fire out of your eyes, I assure you I will find a way to assist you.</p> <p>"If, instead of trying to intimidate your young brother, you would <b>emulate</b> him and use that mind of yours, perhaps you'd find things much easier. Perhaps you wouldn't be making another appearance in the fifth grade next year, now would you, hmmm?" Byron got one more dirty look in at me, then looked down at his desk. <b>(Q5)</b></p>	<p><b>in this regard:</b> concerning this</p> <p><b>emulate:</b> imitate; follow</p>	<p><b>(Q3)</b> <i>"I particularly want you to be aware of the effect his skills have upon you."</i> What effect did Mr. Alums think Kenny's reading would have upon the fifth graders?</p> <p><b>(Q4)</b> <i>"I saw Mr. Alums point the yardstick at someone somewhere in the class and say, 'Perhaps you'd like to finish the introduction, I think you know our guest quite well'."</i></p> <p><i>"Whoever he pointed at said, 'What? I didn't do nothin'."</i></p> <p>Infer what happened during this interchange to cause Mr. Alums to say what he did and Byron to respond the way he did.</p> <p><b>(Q5)</b> What does Mr. Alums think of Byron's abilities?</p>
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<p>Mr. Alums might as well have tied me up to a pole and said, "Ready, aim, fire!" <b>(Q6)</b></p> <p>I read through the Langston Hughes stuff real quick but that was a mistake. Miss Henry said, "Slow down some, Kenneth," and then she took the book from me and handed it back upside down. She had a great big smile when she told Mr. Alums, "When he goes too fast, this slows him down a bit." I read some more with the book upside down and got some real strange looks from the fifth graders.</p> <p>Finally they let me quit. Mr. Alums stood up and clapped his hands and a couple of the old kids did too. Byron never looked at me the whole time but Buphead was giving me enough dirty looks for both of them.</p> <p>"Bravo! Outstanding. Mr. Watson! Your future is unlimited! Bravo!" All I could do was try to figure out how to get home alive. <b>(Q7)</b></p> <p>I didn't even get out of the school yard before Byron and Buphead caught up to me. A little crowd bunched up around us, and everyone was real excited because they knew I was about to get jacked up.</p> <p>Buphead said, "Here that little egghead punk is."</p> <p>"Leave the little clown alone," Byron said. "It's a crying shame, takin' him around like a circus freak."</p> <p>He punched me kind of soft in the arm and said, "At least you oughta make 'em pay you for doin' that mess. If it was me they'd be comin' out they pockets with some foldin' money every time they took me around."</p> <p>I couldn't believe it. I think Byron was proud of me!</p>		<p><b>(Q6)</b> What feeling is Kenny experiencing, according to the sentence: <i>"Mr. Alums might as well have tied me up to a pole and said, 'Ready, aim, fire!'"</i> Explain how you know.</p> <p><b>(Q7)</b> Why does Kenny think something bad is going to happen to him on the way home? Cite evidence from the text that supports your response.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students add information from Chapter 2 to the <b>Character Analysis</b> handout.</li> <li><b>Exit Ticket:</b> Students orally or in writing answer the question: <b>Why does Kenny think that Byron is proud of him?</b></li> </ul>		

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**Day 5**

- Read Chapter 3: “The World’s Greatest Dinosaur War Ever” (32-46). After reading, small groups or partners discuss the meaning of friendship. What are some characteristics of friends? What do friends NOT do?
- As a group, complete **Student Handout: Contrasting Characters (appendix 8)**.
- **Exit Ticket:** Who was the better friend to Kenny? Explain why, using evidence from the text to support your response.

**Day 6**

- Read Chapter 4: “Froze-Up Southern Folks” (47-63). Discuss how understanding cause and effect helps to understand the novel. Discuss how cause can also be thought of as the “motivation” for a character to act in a certain way.
- Complete **Student Handout: Charting Cause and Effect (appendix 9)**.
- **Formative Assessment:** After reading Chapter 4, students should be prepared to answer and discuss the following questions:
  1. According to Byron, why do garbage trucks have wide back doors? What effect does this story have upon Joey?
  2. What discovery does Kenny make about Larry Dunn and how does the discovery change his feelings about him?
- Students add information from Chapter 4 to the **Character Analysis** handout.
- **Exit Ticket:** Explain why you would or would not like to have Byron as your big brother. Use evidence from the text to support your response.

**Day 7**

- Read Chapter 5: “Nazi Parachutes Attack America and Get Shot Down over the Flint River by Captain Byron Watson and His Flamethrower of Death” (64-74).
- Divide class into preselected groups of 4 students. Assign each student a role of Momma, Byron, Kenny or Joetta. Students write out a script of the chapter and reenact the conflict with the matches. Begin with Momma’s story about her house burning down and end with the fifth time Joetta blows out the match. Students should write scripts that emphasize the major events of the chapter. Review the rubric for presentation **Student Handout: Rubric for Chapter 5 Skit (appendix 10)**. Students rehearse scripts for presentation on Day 8.

**Day 8**

- Students rehearse their skits one final time before they begin presentations. Emphasize to students these skits show their comprehension of the actions and motives of the characters in this chapter.
- **Formative Assessment:** Students perform their skits for the rest of the class. While not performing, students evaluate other groups’ performances by using **Rubric for Chapter 5 Skit**.
- Students add information from Chapter 5 to the **Character Analysis** handout.
- **Exit Ticket:** Do you think it was right that Momma tried to burn Kenny? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

**Day 9**

- Read Chapter 6: “Swedish Cremes and Welfare Cheese” (75-85).
- Review internal and external conflict. Have students name conflicts in this chapter and identify if they are internal or external.
- Review similes, metaphors, and hyperboles. Have students find an example of each in this chapter.
- Review mood and tone.
- With a partner, students complete **Student Handout: Chapter Analysis (appendix 11)**.
- **Exit ticket:** Why did Byron create a grave for the bird? Explain, using evidence from the text.

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**Day 10**

- Read Chapter 7: “Every Chihuahua in America Lines Up to Take a Bite out of Byron” (86-99).
- Divide the students into two large groups. One half takes Byron’s point of view about his hair. The other half of the room takes Momma and Daddy’s point of view. Give the students 15 minutes to form their strongest arguments to support their claim with evidence from the text.
- The students conduct an informal debate. Each side is permitted 2 minutes to present their argument and 1 minute each for rebuttal. The students then vote to see which side presented the most compelling evidence for their argument. It is important to stress to students that they are not voting on which side they agree with, but which side presented better evidence.
- **Exit ticket:** There is foreshadowing at the end of Chapter 7. Identify the foreshadowing and predict what might happen, based upon evidence from the text.

**Day 11**

- Jigsaw: Divide the class into groups with each group reading a section of Chapter 8: “The Ultra-Glide!” (100-120). Divide it evenly for the number of students in the class. Provide **Student Handout: Jigsaw for Chapter 8 (appendix 12)** for each group to complete.
- Once all groups have read their section and completed the handout, they present their section to the class in consecutive order. Students take notes on the handout about the parts of the chapter they did not read.
- **Exit ticket:** Explain what the Ultra-Glide is. Compare it to audio technology we have today for our cars.

**Day 12**

- Students silently read Chapter 9: “The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963” (121-137).
- Students then annotate the text passage under discussion (123-125), **Student Handout: Close Read #2 (appendix 13)**.
- Teacher or proficient reader reads the text passage again, with students checking their annotations for understanding.
- In small groups, students answer text-dependent questions given to them one at a time. After small group discussion, groups report to the whole class for more discussion before moving on to the next question.

Text Passage Under Discussion	Vocabulary	Text Dependent Questions for Students
<p>Dad looked at me again to make sure I was understanding. I nodded.</p> <p>“Grandma Sands says it’s quiet down where they are, but we think it’s time Byron got an idea of the kind of place the world can be, and maybe spending some time down South will help open his eyes.”</p> <p>I nodded my head again.</p> <p>“Momma and I are very worried because there’re so many things that can go wrong to a young person and Byron seems <b>bound and determined</b> to find every one of them.</p>	<p><b>bound and determined:</b> strong-minded; resolute</p>	<p><b>(Q1)</b> Kenny does not understand why Byron must go live with Grandma Sands. What reasons does Dad give for their plan?</p>



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<p>“Now, do you really understand why we’re sending Byron to Birmingham?”</p> <p>“I think so, Dad.”</p> <p>“Good, because, Kenny, we’ve done all we can and it seems the <b>temptations</b> are just too much for By here in Flint. So hopefully, the slower pace in Alabama will help him by removing some of those temptations. Hopefully he can see that there comes a time to let all of the <b>silliness</b> go. By’ll be back, maybe at the end of the summer, maybe next year. It’s completely in his own hands now.” <b>(Q1)</b></p> <p>I loved when Dad talked to me like I was grown-up. I didn’t really understand half the junk he was saying, but it sure did feel good to be talked to like that!</p> <p>It’s times like this when someone is talking to you like you are a grown-up that you have to be careful not to pick your nose or dig your drawers out of your butt.</p> <p>“O.K., Dad, thanks.” He smiled again, turned the Ultra-Glide back up and ran his hand over my head.</p> <p>Some of the time when you think about being a grown-up it gets to be kind of scary. I couldn’t figure out how Momma and Dad knew how to take care of things. I couldn’t figure out how they knew what to do with Byron.  <b>(Q2)</b></p> <p>“Dad?”</p> <p>“Hmmm?”</p> <p>“I don’t think I’ll ever know what to do when I’m a grown-up. It seems like you and Momma know a lot of things that I can never learn. It seems real scary. I don’t think I could ever be as good a parent as you guys.”</p>	<p><b>temptations:</b>  attractions; strong urges</p> <p><b>silliness:</b> childishness</p>	<p><b>(Q2)</b> Kenny said that “<i>some of the time when you think about being a grown-up it gets to be kind of scary.</i>” What does he mean? List evidence from the text of times his parents had to make difficult decisions.</p>
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<p>Dad turned the Ultra-Glide back down. “Kenny, do you remember when we used to go on drives and I’d put you in my lap and let you <b>steer</b> the car?”</p> <p>I smiled. “Yeah, does that mean I get to do it on the way to Alabama?”</p> <p>“Sure, but that’s not what I meant. Do you remember how big and scary the car seemed to be the first time you were behind the wheel?”</p> <p>Dad was right. Even though I knew he was watching everything real close it still was scary to steer the Brown Bomber.</p> <p>“Well, that’s what being a grown-up is like. At first it’s scary but the before you realize, with a lot of practice, you have it under control. Hopefully you’ll have lots of time to practice being grown-up before you actually have to do it.” <b>(Q3-4)</b></p>	<p><b>steer:</b> navigate; pilot</p>	<p><b>(Q3)</b> What metaphor does Dad use to explain to Kenny about growing up? Explain how the two things compared are similar.</p> <p><b>(Q4)</b> Write a paragraph to explain how this passage represents a turning point for the book. Use textual evidence to show what new insights Kenny gains.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exit Ticket:</b> Students orally or in writing answer the question: Why did Joey not like the angel Mrs. Davison gave her? Explain, using evidence from the text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Day 13</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 10: “Tangled Up in God’s Beard” (138-148).</li> <li>• Class discussion: What does the metaphor in the chapter title mean? Use textual evidence to explain what it means. What are some of the sensations the family experiences as they are “tangled up in God’s beard”?</li> <li>• <b>Portfolio Writing:</b> Introduce the writing prompt, “After reading <i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963</i>, write a narrative about the bombing of the Birmingham Church from the perspective of one of the victims or the victim’s family. Use similes, metaphors, and allusions to develop your work.” Explain that even though this will have narrative structures (beginning, middle, end, conflict, crisis, etc.), the students will need to research the victims in order to write an accurate narrative.</li> <li>• Students should pick one of the victims from the list on the dedication page of the novel. Begin research on that person using <b>Student Handout: Note Taking Organizer for Birmingham Bombing Victim or Relative (appendix 14)</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Exit Ticket:</b> What is the purpose of Momma’s notebook? Use textual evidence to give examples of information from the notebook.</li> </ul> <p><b>Day 14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapter 11: “Bobo Brazil Meets the Sheik” (149-161).</li> <li>• Divide the class into two large groups. Using textual evidence, one group answers the question “How does Daddy explain how he was able to drive all the way from Michigan to Alabama?” The other group answers the questions, “How does Byron change once he meets Grandma Sands? Why does he change?” After both groups have had a chance to discuss, they share their findings with the other group.</li> </ul>		

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- **Portfolio Writing:** Students research the causes and effects of the Birmingham bombings on the Civil Rights Movement. **Student Handout: Mini-Research (appendix 15).** [In Memory of Four Little Girls](#) is a website that includes multimedia resources, lesson plans, timelines, etc.
- **Exit Ticket:** Students write a short paragraph on each of the group topics. This can also be used as a **formative assessment**.

**Day 15**

- Read Chapter 12: “That Dog Won’t Hunt No More” (162-168).
- **Formative Assessment:** After reading Chapter 12, students answer the following questions:
  1. This chapter introduces a new character, Mr. Roberts. What is his relationship with Byron?
  2. Byron seems to be having a great time. Compare his feelings to how Kenny feels. Use textual evidence to support your response.
- Discuss allusions. Use **Student Handout: Allusion (appendix 16-17)**. Students work with a partner to complete the information about allusions.
- **Portfolio Writing:** For the remainder of the class period, students continue their research.
- **Exit Ticket:** Explain how Mr. Roberts rescued his dog’s life.

**Day 16**

- Read Chapter 13: “I Meet Winnie’s Evil Twin Brother, the Wool Pooh” (169-179).
- Class discussion: In groups, students answer the following questions to prepare for whole group discussion:
  1. What was the Wool Pooh? Cite textual evidence of Kenny’s description of the Wool Pooh. What was it really?
  2. What visions did Kenny see before Byron rescued him?
  3. How is Byron’s reaction to saving Kenny different from the Byron we have seen earlier? Why would his behavior change this way?
  4. Do you think Byron’s change is realistic? Explain, using textual evidence.
- **Portfolio Writing:** Students finish their research from days 13 and 14.
- **Exit Ticket:** Why did Kenny choose to go to Collier’s Landing? Explain his motivation, citing quotes from the text.

**Day 17**

- Read Chapter 14: “Every Bird and Bug in Birmingham Stops and Wonders” (180-190).
- Point out the details of the Birmingham bombing that Kenny experiences. Students take notes to assist them with their narrative.
- **Formative Assessment:** After reading Chapter 14, students discuss:
  1. Why does Kenny go to the church? Who does he think he sees there (besides his family)?
  2. Joetta says she saw Kenny “...laughing and running in front of me.” Explain why that could not have happened.
  3. What is the mood of this chapter? Describe, using evidence from the text.
- **Portfolio Writing:** Using notes from **Note Taking Organizer**, **Mini Research**, and the notes from Chapter 14, students write a rough draft of their narrative.

**Day 18**

- Read Chapter 15: “The World-Famous Watson Pet Hospital” (191-206) and “Epilogue” (207-210).
- Students use information from Chapter 15 and “Epilogue” to revise and edit their narrative writing.
- **Portfolio Writing:** Revising and Editing using *The Write Source* (113-128).

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**Reading and Writing**

**Day 19**

- **Portfolio Writing:** Students complete the final draft of their narrative writing. \*\*For students who have completed this work, show *Four Little Girls* from Spike Lee. (See the link below.) The movie is 1 hour 45 minutes long, so just show pre-selected clips from it for the appropriate length of your class period.

**Instructional Resources**

Classroom set of *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963*

Collection of informational books about the 1960s era (or access to computer lab for internet search on the 1960s)

[SMART board simile/metaphor lesson for review](#)

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/activity/scholastic-bookfiles> (includes background information, lesson plans, and assessments)

[In Memory of Four Little Girls](#) includes multimedia resources, lesson plans, timelines, etc.

[www.pearsonsuccessnet.com](http://www.pearsonsuccessnet.com) *Interactive Digital Path: Unit 1, Writing Workshop: From the Author's Desk* video

*4 Little Girls*, an HBO documentary film, talks with parents and eyewitnesses to the tragic event. Available through the Columbus Metropolitan Library or online at [4 Little Girls movie](#)

The *Write Source* textbook

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Strategies for Diverse Learners)**

Audio version of *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963* (available at Columbus Metropolitan Library)

*Professional Development Guidebook:*

- Anticipation Guide, 38
- Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Chart, 33
- Vocab-o-gram, 40
- Response Journal, 43

Alternate or Enrichment Reading:

*Birmingham Sunday* by Larry Dane Brimner. (picture book), 1190L

*Birmingham, 1963* by Carole Boston Weatherford (poetry)

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**English Language Arts Curriculum**  
**Reading and Writing**

<b>Professional Articles</b>  <a href="#"><i>Peer Response and Students' Revisions of their Narrative Writing</i></a> by Shelley Peterson  <a href="#"><i>Narrative Writing as a Springboard to Expository and Persuasive Writing</i></a> by Barbara J. Radcliffe  <i>Professional Development Guidebook:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Grouping for Struggling Readers</i> by Sharon Vaughn</li> </ul>		
<b>English Language Arts Connections</b>		
<p align="center"><b>Reading</b></p> <p>Incorporate Common Core Reading (Literary or Informational Texts) standards as students complete research to build and present knowledge.  <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a></p>	<p align="center"><b>Language</b></p> <p>Incorporate Common Core Language standards as students construct writing in terms of writing conventions, knowledge of language, and acquisition and use of vocabulary.  <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a></p>	<p align="center"><b>Speaking and Listening</b></p> <p>Incorporate Common Core Speaking and Listening standards as students integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats.  <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a></p>

# *The Watsons Go To Birmingham – 1963*

## Appendix

**Novel Overview:** This novel, written by Christopher Paul Curtis, grew partly out of his own family experiences and historic events that took place during the Civil Rights Movement in America. The Watsons, a Black family (parents and three children) living in Flint, Michigan, are the main characters. Kenny, the ten-year-old narrator, is very sensitive about having a deformed eye and about being very smart in school. Byron, his-thirteen-year old brother, is known as a bully and his parents fear he is turning into a juvenile delinquent. Even though he teases his younger brother a lot, Kenny still admires him. Joetta (Joey) is the only daughter and the youngest. She is often the peacemaker and is very protective of everyone in her family. Momma and Dad (Wilona and Daniel Watson) are strict but fun-loving parents. They work very hard and carefully look after their family by providing firm guidance. Momma misses her family in Alabama and yearns for the hot weather there. On a road trip to Alabama in 1963, the Watsons are delighted to visit their family in the South, but they also experience the real life bombing of the Sixteenth Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Four young girls were killed that Sunday morning. Kenny thought that Joetta was one of them. The plot is highly entertaining and teaches many valuable lessons.

**Tie Into Central Question: Does Every Conflict Have a Winner?** In the novel *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*, both major and minor characters are involved in internal and external conflicts. Some of the more obvious conflicts involve the society as a whole. These are complicated conflicts and it is difficult to tell who might “win” or “lose” these contests. Thus, the question of “Does every conflict have a winner?” is one that is not easily answered in this novel.

At the time of the Watson family’s trip, the South was caught up in a struggle for the basic human rights that became known as the Civil Rights Movement. Although the Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal and the Constitution had been amended after the Civil War to extend the rights and protections of citizenship to Black Americans, changing the law of the land did not always change the way people behaved. In the Northern, Eastern, and Western states, Blacks often faced discrimination, but it was not so extreme and pervasive as in the South. There, communities and states passed laws that allowed discrimination in schooling, housing and job opportunities; prohibited interracial marriages; and enforced segregation by creating separate facilities for Blacks and Caucasians.

The characters and events in this novel are fictional. However, there were many unsolved bombings in Birmingham at the time of the story, including the one that took place at the Sixteenth Avenue Baptist Church on September 15, 1963. Four young girls—Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley—were killed when a bomb went off during Sunday school. These children were just as precious to their families as the Watson children were to their parents.

Despite the danger, the Civil Rights Movement grew stronger, gaining support all over the country. The individuals who supported the movement took great risks to force America to change. Many were injured or arrested; many lost homes, businesses, and even their lives. Black parents permitted their children to attend desegregated schools where they often faced hatred and violence. It wasn’t easy to determine if these conflicts had a clear winner at the time.

## ***What Do You Know About the 1960s?***

**Directions:** Complete the following chart below and prepare for group discussion. 1) List important people from the 1960s. 2) List important events that occurred during the 1960s. 3) List important ideas from the 1960s. 4) Share with a partner. Examples are listed below.

<b>Person(s)</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Ideas</b>
The Beatles	First man on the moon	Racial Equality

1. How does the 1960s setting of the novel affect the mood of the characters in the beginning of the novel?

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# Point of View

**Point of view:** the perspective or vantage point from which a story is told. It is either a narrator outside the story or a character in the story.

The **narrator** is a speaker or a character who tells a story. The narrator's perspective is the way he or she sees things.

**First person point of view:** told by a character that uses the first-person "I". In the first person point of view, the narrator is telling a story and is a character in the story.

**Third person point of view:** the narrator is telling a story from someone else's viewpoint and is not a character in the story.

There are two different types of third person point of view: limited and omniscient.

- Third person omniscient is written as if the narrator is watching all that is happening and knows what each character is thinking. "The teacher proudly read the worksheet to her students and thought to herself, 'I have the smartest students'" is written in third person omniscient.
- Third person limited does not include the character's thoughts. For example, the sentence "The teacher proudly read the worksheet to her students" is written in third person limited.

**You are expected to write a narrative from the perspective of a Birmingham bombing victim or relative. You will use the first person point of view.**

Practice using the first person point of view. Choose a recent tragedy (e.g., Sandy Hook shooting, the Moore, Oklahoma tornado) and write a paragraph as if you had been there. Use first person pronouns (I, me, my, our).

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## Character Analysis

Directions: In the chart below, write information from the text that shows how the author develops each character.

Characters ↓ ↓ ↓	Direct characterization: adjectives the author uses to describe the character	Indirect characterization: actions	Indirect characterization: physical appearance	Indirect characterization: dialogue	This character's private thoughts	Other characters' reactions to this character
Kenny						
Byron						
Joey						

# Close Read #1

from *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* (22-25)

Two years ago, Miss Henry took me to Mr. Alums' fifth grade class. Mr. Alums was the toughest teacher in the school and just being in front of him was kind of scary. He looked down at me and said, "Good morning, Mr. Watson. I hope you are in good form today." I just nodded at him because I wasn't sure what that meant.

"Don't be nervous, Kenny," Miss Henry said. "Mr. Alums would like you to read a few passages from Langston Hughes." She handed me a book and said, "You wait here while we introduce you to the class."

Man! Some of the time I wished I was as smart as these teachers thought I was because if I had been, I would have dropped that book and run all the way home. If I'd been smart enough to figure out what was going to happen next, I would have never gone into that room.

I stood in the hall looking at the stuff they wanted me to read while Mr. Alums told his class, "All right, I have a special treat for you today. I've often told you that as Negroes the world is many times a hostile place for us." I saw Mr. Alums walking back and forth whacking a yardstick in his hand. "I've pointed out time and time again how vital it is that one be able to read well. I've stressed on numerous occasions the importance of being familiar and comfortable with literature. Today, Miss Henry and I would like to give you a demonstration of your own possibilities in this regard. I want you to carefully note how advanced this second-grade student is, and I particularly want you to be aware of the effect his skills have upon you. I want you to be aware that some of our kids read at miraculous levels."

I saw Mr. Alums point the yardstick at someone somewhere in the class and say, "Perhaps you'd like to finish the introduction, I think you know our guest quite well."

Whoever he pointed at said, "What? I didn't do nothin'."

Miss Henry waved for me to come in and stand in front of the class. I guess I was too nervous about Mr. Alums to have recognized the voice before, but as soon as I walked into the room, I froze. There in the two seats closest to the teacher's desk in the very first row sat Buphead and Byron! The Langston Hughes book jumped from my hand and the whole class laughed, everyone but Byron. His eyes locked on mine and I felt things start melting inside of me.

Mr. Alums slammed the yardstick on his desk and the room got real, real quiet.

"Let's see if you find this so humorous after you've heard how well this young man reads. And Byron Watson, if you are incapable of taking some of the fire out of your eyes, I assure you I will find a way to assist you.

"If, instead of trying to intimidate your young brother, you would emulate him and use that mind of yours, perhaps you'd find things much easier. Perhaps you wouldn't be making another

appearance in the fifth grade next year, now would you, hmmm?" Byron got one more dirty look in at me, then looked down at his desk.

Mr. Alums might as well have tied me up to a pole and said, "Ready, aim, fire!"

I read through the Langston Hughes stuff real quick but that was a mistake. Miss Henry said, "Slow down some, Kenneth," and then she took the book from me and handed it back upside down. She had a great big smile when she told Mr. Alums, "When he goes too fast, this slows him down a bit." I read some more with the book upside down and got some real strange looks from the fifth graders.

Finally they let me quit. Mr. Alums stood up and clapped his hands and a couple of the old kids did too. Byron never looked at me the whole time but Buphead was giving me enough dirty looks for both of them.

"Bravo! Outstanding, Mr. Watson! Your future is unlimited! Bravo!" All I could do was try to figure out how to get home alive.

I didn't even get out of the school yard before Byron and Buphead caught up to me. A little crowd bunched up around us, and everyone was real excited because they knew I was about to get jacked up.

Buphead said, "Here that little egghead punk is."

"Leave the little clown alone," Byron said. "It's a crying shame, takin' him around like a circus freak."

He punched me kind of soft in the arm and said, "At least you oughta make 'em pay you for doin' that mess. If it was me they'd be comin' out they pockets with some foldin' money every time they took me around."

I couldn't believe it. I think Byron was proud of me!

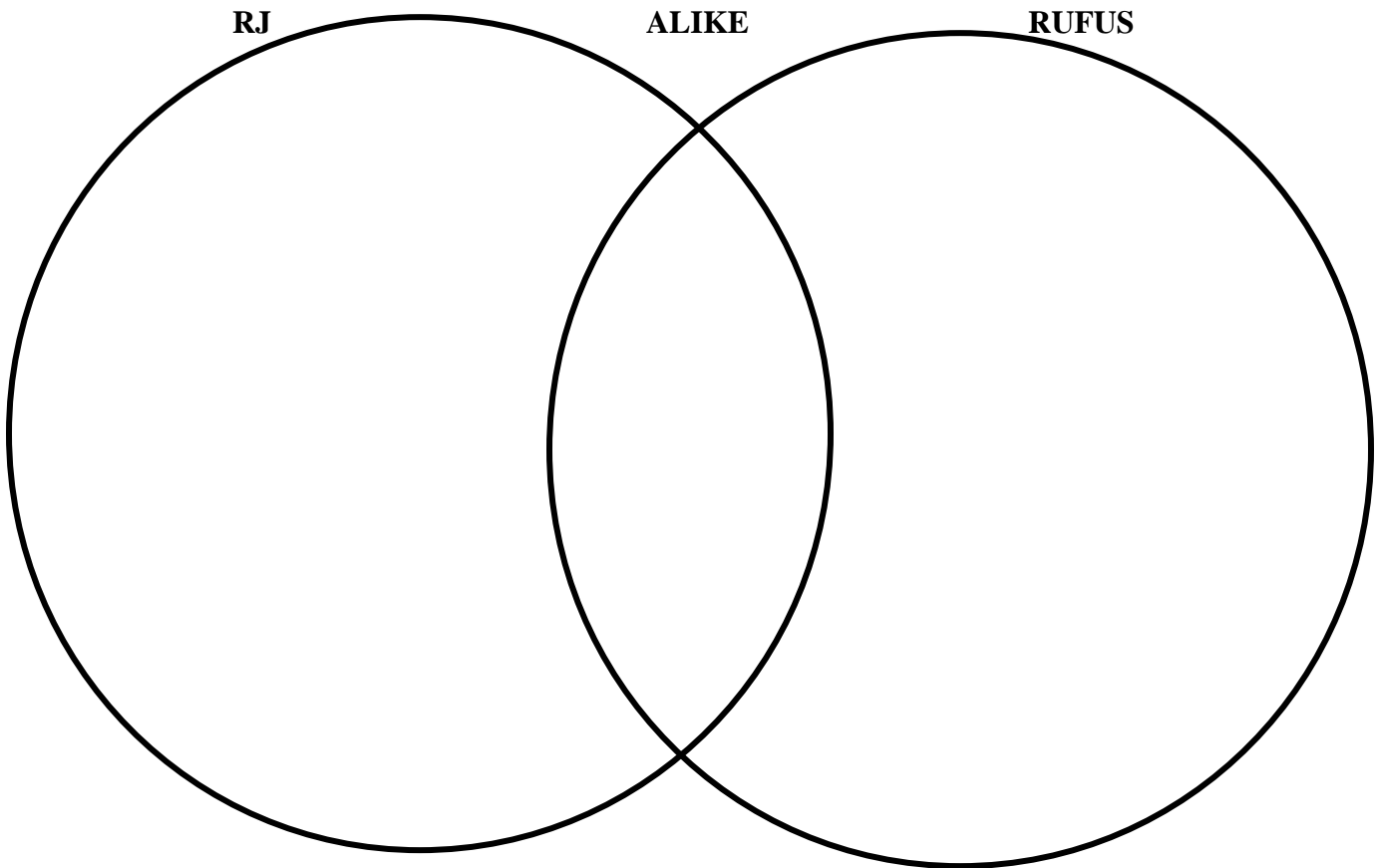
Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Contrasting Characters

### Chapter 3

Chapter 3 deals with friendships that Kenny had. First RJ was his friend, then later he became friends with Rufus. These two characters are very dissimilar and have different relationships with Kenny. Think about how they are the same and different. (Hint: Consider how they think, how they talk, how they treat others, and how they treat each other.)

**In the separate ovals of this Venn diagram, write details from Chapter 3 that show how the friends of Kenny differ. Where the ovals overlap, note some ways in which they are alike.**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Charting Cause and Effect

### Chapters 1-4

A **cause** is what makes something happen. The **effect** is what happens.

Recognizing causes and effects can help you better understand what the events in a novel mean. For example, Kenny wanted a “personal saver” (cause), so he was glad to see two new students get on his school bus (effect).

**Complete the following cause-and-effect chart. It will help you think about what happens in this part of the Watsons’ story, and why.**

CAUSE	EFFECT
RJ and Kenny bury the “radioactive” dinosaurs.	
	Kenny looks at people sideways.
Kenny laughs when Rufus and Cody are teased on the school bus.	
Byron wants Joey to stop whining about wearing heavy winter clothes.	
	Byron makes Larry Dunn “star” in <i>The Great Carp Escape</i> .

## Rubric for Chapter 5 Skit

**Directions:** As you watch another skit performed in class, mark the rubric according to what you observe.

	Needs Improvement 1 point	Developing 2 points	Proficient 3 points	Accomplished 4 points
<b>SCRIPT:</b> Momma's story	Major event not shown	Major event mentioned but not enough (or too much)	Gives the gist of the story	Gives story in detail
Kenny & Momma catching Byron	Major event not shown	Major event mentioned but not enough (or too much)	Major event shown clearly	Major event shown and is true to the book
Asking for matches	Major event not shown	Major event mentioned but not enough (or too much)	Major event shown clearly	Major event shown and is true to the book
Momma in kitchen, Byron frozen	Major event not shown	Major event mentioned but not enough (or too much)	Major event shown clearly	Major event shown and is true to the book
Momma talking to Joetta	Major event not shown	Major event mentioned but not enough (or too much)	Major event shown clearly	Major event shown and is true to the book
Byron runs, Momma catches him	Major event not shown	Major event mentioned but not enough (or too much)	Major event shown clearly	Major event shown and is true to the book
Momma holding matches to Byron	Major event not shown	Major event mentioned but not enough (or too much)	Major event shown clearly	Major event shown and is true to the book
Joetta blows out flame 5 times	Major event not shown	Major event mentioned but not enough (or too much)	Major event shown clearly at least 3 times	Major event shown and is true to the book
<b>PERFORMANCE:</b> Actors know what to do	Actors obviously do not know what to do.	Actors sometime are off task.	Actors mostly know what to do.	Actors act professionally and always know what to do.
Voices and actions loud and clear	Too soft and unable to understand what actors are trying to show	Too soft OR sometimes unable to understand what actors are trying to show	Good volume and it is easy to understand what actors are showing	Easily heard and understood Quality performance

Total points earned (out of 40 possible points) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Students in Skit: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter Analysis

For Chapter 6 of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*

Directions: As you read this chapter, think about the problems that the characters have and how they attempt to solve these problems. Also, pay attention to how the author uses figurative words and phrases. Identify each conflict/problem as internal (I) or external (E). Identify each figurative phrase as a simile (S), a metaphor (M), or a hyperbole (H). Look for phrases that give you evidence of the author's tone or the mood.

Conflict/Problem		
E/I	Describe a conflict in Chapter 6.	Explain the character's attempt to solve the conflict and discuss if he/she is successful.
Figurative Language and Phrases		
S/M/H	Find examples of figurative language or phrases. (Provide page numbers.)	Explain how the author uses these phrases or figurative language to emphasize meaning in the text.
Mood		
Describe the overall mood of Chapter 6.		Cite specific words and phrases that helped you to determine the mood.
Tone		
Describe the author's tone of Chapter 6.		Cite specific words and phrases that helped you to determine the tone.



# Jigsaw for Chapter 8

From *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*

Group members: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Pages you have been assigned to read: \_\_\_\_\_

Characters who appear in your section: \_\_\_\_\_

Short summary of your section (include the most important events and major details). You will be reading this to the class, so make sure you can read it.

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Figurative language used in your section (metaphors, similes, hyperboles):

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The tone or mood of your section with evidence to back up your response:

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A prediction about what might happen next based upon the evidence from your section:

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## Close Read #2

From *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* (123-125)

Dad looked at me again to make sure I was understanding. I nodded.

“Grandma Sands says it’s quiet down where they are, but we think it’s time Byron got an idea of the kind of place the world can be, and maybe spending some time down South will help open his eyes.”

I nodded my head again.

“Momma and I are very worried because there’re so many things that can go wrong to a young person and Byron seems bound and determined to find every one of them.

“Now, do you really understand why we’re sending Byron to Birmingham?”

“I think so, Dad.”

“Good, because, Kenny, we’ve done all we can and it seems the temptations are just too much for By here in Flint. So hopefully, the slower pace in Alabama will help him by removing some of those temptations. Hopefully he can see that there comes a time to let all of the silliness go. By’ll be back, maybe at the end of the summer, maybe next year. It’s completely in his own hands now.”

I loved when Dad talked to me like I was grown-up. I didn’t really understand half the junk he was saying, but it sure did feel good to be talked to like that!

It’s times like this when someone is talking to you like you are a grown-up that you have to be careful not to pick your nose or dig your drawers out of your butt.

“O.K., Dad, thanks.” He smiled again, turned the Ultra-Glide back up and ran his hand over my head.

Some of the time when you think about being a grown-up it gets to be kind of scary. I couldn’t figure out how Momma and Dad knew how to take care of things. I couldn’t figure out how they knew what to do with Byron.

“Dad?”

“Hmmm?”

“I don’t think I’ll ever know what to do when I’m a grown-up. It seems like you and Momma know a lot of things that I can never learn. It seems real scary. I don’t think I could ever be as good a parent as you guys.”

Dad turned the Ultra-Glide back down. “Kenny, do you remember when we used to go on drives and I’d put you in my lap and let you steer the car?”

I smiled. “Yeah, does that mean I get to do it on the way to Alabama?”

“Sure, but that’s not what I meant. Do you remember how big and scary the car seemed to be the first time you were behind the wheel?”

Dad was right. Even though I knew he was watching everything real close it still was scary to steer the Brown Bomber.

“Well, that’s what being a grown-up is like. At first it’s scary but the before you realize, with a lot of practice, you have it under control. Hopefully you’ll have lots of time to practice being grown-up before you actually have to do it.”

# NOTE TAKING ORGANIZER FOR BIRMINGHAM BOMBING VICTIM OR RELATIVE

**Directions:** Complete the organizer below based on what the person would say or do before, during, or after the incident.

\_\_\_\_\_

What the person says	What the person does
Birmingham Victim or Relative	
What the character thinks	What others say about character

## Questions:

1. Cite details from your research that help you describe how the bombing has changed the lives of the people of Birmingham.
2. What simile or metaphor can you use to describe this change in Birmingham? Explain your answer.

## Mini-Research

**Directions:** Conduct a mini-research on the causes and effects of the Birmingham bombing on the Civil Rights Movement. Use primary and secondary sources which connect to the narrative piece. The purpose of the mini-research is to assist you with the development of the conclusion in the narrative and to give you several perspectives of the incident.

Details	Birmingham bombing cause	Effect of bombing
#1		
#2		
#3		

How do the causes and effects of the Birmingham bombing affect the victim or victim's relative you have selected for the narrative?

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Does the conflict in Birmingham cause a change? Justify your response.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

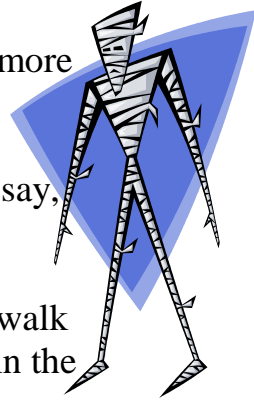
## Allusion

An **allusion** is a reference to someone or something from literature, history, religion, mythology, or another field. Many of the allusions in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* come from "popular culture," such as movies, songs, and television programs.

**Explain the following allusions.** (The first one is done for you. Sometimes more than one meaning is possible.)

1. **Allusion:** When Kenny and Joey wear their winter clothes, kids at school say, "Here come some of them Weird Watsons doing their Mummy imitations."

This **allusion** suggests that being bundled up in heavy clothes makes them walk stiffly, with their arms out. The movie monster called the Mummy walks in the same way.



2. **Allusion:** As Momma plays with Byron's conked hair, she calls him "Bozo," after the television clown.

This **allusion** suggests that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



3. **Allusion:** Grandma Sands laughs "just like the Wicked Witch of the West," the villain of the movie *The Wizard of Oz*.

This **allusion** suggests that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



4. **Allusion:** When Byron meets Grandma Sands, "it was like Dracula (the vampire) and a giraffe, and Byron was all neck."

This **allusion** suggests that \_\_\_\_\_

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5. **Allusion:** Toward the end of the novel, Byron brings Kenny along when he goes to play basketball. Kenny comments that "you didn't have to be Albert Einstein (the brilliant scientist) to figure it out" that Byron threatened the big guys into letting Kenny play.

This **allusion** suggests that \_\_\_\_\_

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