

English II Honors 2024 Summer Project

Mrs. Hanley

ehanley1@saisd.net

This summer project provides essential ongoing opportunity for students to practice reading, writing, and analysis of texts. It will be assessed upon return to school and will be worth multiple assignment and assessment grades. It is essential that parents monitor progress and ensure that students return to school with a completed project that demonstrates complex thought and effort. Students who return to school without this work completed will be expected to attend after school tutoring until all components are complete. To be considered complete, all tasks outlined below must be complete. Late submissions will be worth a maximum grade of a 70. If a student needs help with supplies such as colored pencils, glue, or pens to complete this project, they should contact Mrs. Santos or Mrs. Hanley.

Project Contents

All work must be complete and turned in on the first day of school.

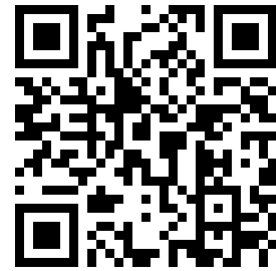
- "Are Stories A Key To Human Intelligence?" (Nonfiction)
 - Annotations,
 - Text Based Multiple Choice,
 - SCR,
 - One-page personal story
- "Scientists Reveal Three Keys to Happiness" (Nonfiction)
 - Annotations,
 - Text Based Multiple Choice,
 - Photo collage or art collage of images that make you happy
- "The Last Curiosity" (Short Story)
 - Annotations,
 - Text Based Multiple Choice,
 - Mosaic project
- "Time Capsule Found on a Dead Planet" (Poem)
 - Annotations,
 - Text Based Multiple Choice

Parent and Student Remind App:

All students and one parent/guardian are required to join the designated Summer project Remind app.

*Summer Project Remind Code **for students:***

<https://www.remind.com/join/ha3a6dq>



*Summer Project Remind Code **for parents:***

<https://www.remind.com/join/4ha9633>



"Are Stories A Key To Human Intelligence?"

- "Are Stories A Key To Human Intelligence?"
 - Annotations,
 - Text Based Multiple Choice,
 - SCR,
 - One-page personal story

Annotations: *(At least one of each per page)*

- Define unfamiliar vocabulary
- Explain how text evidence supports the author's claim
- Connections: Text to Text, Text to Self, Text to World

4 Corners: *(Complete 4 corners on each page)*

Upper Left: Main idea of the page

Lower Left: Abstract Ideas

Upper Right: Key details of the page

Lower Right: Summarize the page

Multiple Choice Questions 1-4:

- Use text evidence to choose the best answer choice
- Write a 1-2 sentence "proof" in which you explain how the text evidence supports your answer choice.

SCR (Short Constructed Response): 4 Sentence Response

Sentence 1: Restate and Answer the prompt

Sentence 2: Integrate a quote that supports your answer to the prompt

Stem: For example, in paragraph one, the line "_____" shows...

Sentence 3: Integrate a second quote to support your answer to the prompt

Stem: Similarly, in paragraph two, the line "_____" emphasizes...

Sentence 4: Closing Sentence that connects the evidence to your answer.

Stem: From this, one can see how paragraphs one and two contribute to the ideas in the text by...

One-page personal story:

On the page provided, write a one-page personal story about a memorable experience in your life. Be sure to:

- Write in complete sentences with appropriate capitalization and punctuation.
- Organize ideas in a logical order
- Include vivid descriptive details and precise language to bring your story to life.

Name: _____

Class: _____

Are Stories A Key To Human Intelligence?

By Tania Lombrozo for NPR
2016

Tania Lombrozo is a contributor to the NPR and an associate professor of psychology at the University of California. In this article Lombrozo explores the impact of stories on human intelligence, as well as the possible effects of stories on artificial intelligence (AI) systems. As you read, take note of the various effects stories have on humans and AI systems.

- [1] In a talk in Pittsburgh in 1997, the late evolutionary biologist Stephen J. Gould allegedly characterized humans as “the primates who tell stories.” Psychologist Robyn Dawes went much further, suggesting humans are “the primates whose cognitive¹ capacity shuts down in the absence of a story.”

To be sure, we love a good story. Research suggests that anecdotes² can be as persuasive as hard data, and that jurors are influenced by the quality of the prosecution’s and defense’s “stories” when deciding whether to find a defendant guilty. Even in science, we seek *explanations*, not mere descriptions; in history, we want a good *narrative*, not a mere sequence of events.



"PhotonQ-Am I Alive" by PhOtOnQuAnTiQuE is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

But what’s so great about stories? Are they mere entertainment? Or do they offer something more? In particular, could stories be a key to human intelligence?

Stories have been studied in various forms across a range of disciplines, from literary and media studies to psychology and linguistics. But to get a handle on their potential role in human intelligence, it’s especially illuminating to consider how they’ve cropped up in *artificial intelligence*.

- [5] One reason AI systems might need to understand or produce stories is because they interact

1. **Cognitive** (*adjective*) relating to or involving intellectual activity
2. a short and amusing or interesting story about a real incident or person

with humans. Indeed, there's evidence that people trust robots more, and can work with them more effectively, when the robots offer more human-like explanations. But even in the absence of interaction with humans, could stories contribute to machine intelligence?

Researchers in AI have explored a potential role for stories since at least the 1990s. In a book published in 1990, for example, computer and cognitive scientist Roger Schank argued for a crucial link between narrative and intelligence, with narratives guiding learning, structuring memory and supporting generalization. In 2011, AI researcher Patrick Winston advocated the Strong Story Hypothesis, according to which “story telling and understanding have a central role in human intelligence,” going on to suggest an artificial system with some human-like capabilities.

These ideas have evolved into calls for computational³ “narrative intelligence,” which computer scientist Mark Riedl defines as “the ability to craft, tell, understand, and respond effectively to stories.” He suggests that narrative intelligence may be a crucial step in machine “enculturation,” allowing artificial intelligence systems to acquire human social norms, customs, values and etiquette — aspects of commonsense understanding that are notoriously⁴ difficult for computers to learn.

Not all AI theorists agree with this emphasis on stories, but considering proposals for how computers could benefit from stories can help us appreciate the role they might play for humans. Just as computers might use stories or narratives as a way to structure memory and learning, humans may as well. And just as stories might provide a valuable way to “enculturate” machines, they surely provide a crucial mechanism for the social transmission of information in humans.

It doesn't follow that all forms of intelligence must involve stories — indeed, we should avoid the temptation to define intelligence in narrowly human terms. But as Riedl suggests, artificial systems that lack narrative intelligence seem to possess “an *alien* sort of intelligence.” It may well be that some of our uniquely *human* intelligence is grounded in our capacity for understanding and constructing stories.

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3. relating to or using computers

4. **Notorious** (*adjective*) famous or well known, typically for some bad quality or deed

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

- PART A: Which of the following identifies the central idea of the text?

 - Artificial Intelligence will eliminate the need for human intelligence once AI systems can produce stories and other human-like traits.
 - Producing stories appears to be a part of human intelligence that can potentially be used to humanize AI.
 - Experimenting with AI systems and teaching them human characteristics is only beneficial if used to understand human behavior.
 - Due to the fact that constructing stories is a human quality, AI will never be able to fully master narrative intelligence.

- PART B: Which section from the text best supports the answer to Part A?

 - "humans are 'the primates whose cognitive capacity shuts down in the absence of a story.'" (Paragraph 1)
 - "indeed, we should avoid the temptation to define intelligence in narrowly human terms." (Paragraph 9)
 - "He suggests that narrative intelligence may be a crucial step in machine 'enculturation'" (Paragraph 7)
 - "Just as computers might use stories or narratives as a way to structure memory and learning, humans may as well." (Paragraph 8)

- PART A: What is the meaning of "enculturation" in paragraph 7?

 - to acquire the characteristics necessary to surpass a culture
 - to acquire the characteristics vital to be approved by a culture
 - to acquire characteristics of another culture
 - to acquire characteristics better than your culture

- PART B: Which quote from the text best supports the answer to Part A?

 - "allowing artificial intelligence systems to acquire human social norms, customs, values and etiquette" (Paragraph 7)
 - "aspects of commonsense understanding that are notoriously difficult for computers to learn." (Paragraph 7)
 - "considering proposals for how computers could benefit from stories can help us appreciate the role they might play for humans" (Paragraph 8)
 - "Just as computers might use stories or narratives as a way to structure memory and learning, humans may as well." (Paragraph 8)

5. How do paragraphs 1-2 contribute to the development of ideas in the text? Cite evidence from the text in your answer.

One-page personal story: On the page provided, write a one-page personal story about a memorable experience in your life.

"Scientists Reveal Three Keys to Happiness"

- "Scientists Reveal Three Keys to Happiness"
 - Annotations,
 - Text Based Multiple Choice,
 - Photo collage or art collage of images that make you happy

Annotations: *(At least one of each per page)*

- Define unfamiliar vocabulary
- Explain how text evidence supports the author's claim
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4 Corners: *(Complete 4 corners on each page)*

Upper Left: Main idea of the page

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Lower Right: Summarize the page

Multiple Choice Questions 1-4:

- Use text evidence to choose the best answer choice
- Write a 1-2 sentence "proof" in which you explain how the text evidence supports your answer choice.

One-page Picture or Art Collage of images that make you happy:

On the page provided, neatly cut and glue or draw a minimum of 10 images of things, people, places, ideas, activities, etc. that make you happy. You may also include quotes or memes that bring you happiness. Include captions for each image as appropriate.

Your collage is expected to:

- Include at least 10 images
- Be neat
- Be in full color
- Use all of the space on the page

Name: _____

Class: _____

Scientists Reveal Three Keys to Happiness

By ABC News
October 2, 2003

Countless studies have been conducted to figure out the key to happiness. A new study by Stephen and Rachel Kaplan reveals that there might actually be three keys to happiness. As you read, take notes on how nature affects people.

- [1] What would it take to make you really satisfied with your life? According to decades of research by a husband and wife team of psychologists at the University of Michigan, you need to put yourself in an environment that meets three basic human needs.

To make your way down the road to happiness you need to feel competent and believe that you can make a difference. You also need to understand what the heck is going on around you and have the opportunity to choose your own options.



"Untitled" by Joe Ciciarelli is licensed under CC0.

Before you start firing off all those e-mails about money, love, health and so on, give these folks a chance to explain. They arrived at their conclusions partly by showing people pictures of nature.

Picturing a Perfect Life

Stephen Kaplan, who is also a professor of electrical engineering and computer science in addition to being a psychologist, and his wife, Rachel Kaplan, professor of environment and behavior, started down this road decades ago during the horror that followed the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. What could have precipitated¹ such an unreasonable act of violence?

- [5] Could it be, they wondered, that violence could stem at least partly from an unhealthy environment?

1. **Precipitate** (*verb*) to cause something to happen suddenly

"Some environments bring out the best in people," Stephen Kaplan says. "Others do exactly the opposite. How can you describe an environment that brings out the best in people?"

At that time there was no general consensus among psychologists as to what constituted a healthy environment. But the Kaplans were intrigued by one study that came out about that time suggesting that what people really liked in their lives was a "medium level of complexity."

"We thought that was very odd," Kaplan says, because both he and his wife believed that what people really needed in their lives was exposure to nature. So they set out to find if they were right.

They collected a bunch of photos showing urban scenes in Detroit and scenes of nature. Strangely enough, the urban scenes were shot by an expert photographer and were much better in quality than the scenes of nature, which were shot by a mediocre² photographer after a dry, dull summer.

- [10] Participants in the study were asked to indicate how much they liked each photo.

"With a single exception, every single nature picture was preferred over every single urban picture," Kaplan says. "The one exception was an urban park."

Yearning for Mystery

In the years since, they have repeated that study dozens of times, all over the world, with the same results. One exception is among teenagers who prefer the urban scenes with city lights and things to do over scenes of nature, but Kaplan says they grow out of that stage.

So, why does that tell us anything about what we need for satisfying lives? The answer lies not just in the photos, but in some of the details.

"One of the first things we realized is that even among nature pictures, there's some that people prefer very much to others," says Kaplan, who spoke for both he and his wife during the interview. "It turned out that those were the photos where you could learn more if you walked into the scene."

- [15] A trail leading around a tree and disappearing in the distance beckons to the viewer to come in, look around, and learn something. That makes it a much more enticing photo.

"We hadn't realized that landscape architects had figured that out 50 years earlier," Kaplan says.

2. **Mediocre** (*adjective*) not very good

A picture with a little mystery is preferable because “people want to explore, and they want to find things out,” he says. Conversely, if they can’t understand what’s going on, they become very angry. So the pictures told the story of a very basic need among all persons — the need to understand their world and pick their own options as they head on down that trail and around the tree.

Is Taking Control a Mistake?

But for that little adventure to be helpful, Kaplan says, a person needs to believe that his or her life can make a difference. Nothing is more irritating, or frustrating, than the feeling of helplessness, so if you want to make a difference you’ve got to take control, right?

Not necessarily, the Kaplans believe.

[20] Taking control sometimes can be a bad mistake.

“There’s a tremendous number of times when people want things to be under control, but they don’t want to control them. That’s a tremendous responsibility,” Kaplan says.

“So gradually we came to the realization that what people want to do is participate. The opposite of helplessness is being heard. It’s playing a part. It’s being engaged in the action. Not being ignored.” Only then will it be possible for your life to make a difference.

But chances are you’re going to be ignored anyway unless others see you as competent and effective, the third step on the Kaplan’s road to self fulfillment. And once again, they concluded, nature can play a part.

In a series of studies, the couple demonstrated that an office window that overlooks a natural scene helps people relax, thus fighting off one of the primary threats to competence, mental fatigue. Both energy and job enthusiasm rose among people who had a chance to glance out the window occasionally and see something, even if it was only a single tree.

[25] Nature, the Kaplans suggest, is competency’s greatest ally.

Natural Healing

It even helps when trying to deal with a potentially fatal illness. One of their studies involved cancer patients.

“The first thing they wanted to do when they got their diagnosis was take a ride in the country,” Kaplan says.

The study found that spending 20 minutes outdoors each day helped the patients cope with the “mental fatigue” of dealing with all the issues that come along with the cancer.

But wouldn't a debilitating disease like cancer be so overwhelming that it would wipe out the three conditions the Kaplans feel are so important? Aren't things like health, love, and even an adequate income also extremely important?

- [30] Of course, Kaplan says, but their findings lay the foundation for dealing with all those other issues.

You've got to feel competent, think you can make a difference, and understand what's going on to handle any crisis. And for starters, take a look out the window occasionally.

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

- PART A: Which of the following best identifies the text's main claim about happiness?

 - Without opportunities to engage in the natural world, it is extremely unlikely that a person will achieve happiness.
 - Happiness and satisfaction are possible when a person has the chance to make choices in an environment they feel comfortable navigating.
 - Humans require complete control over their environment and lives to achieve optimum happiness.
 - It is difficult to achieve the other two keys to happiness if a person doesn't feel like they are making a difference in the world.

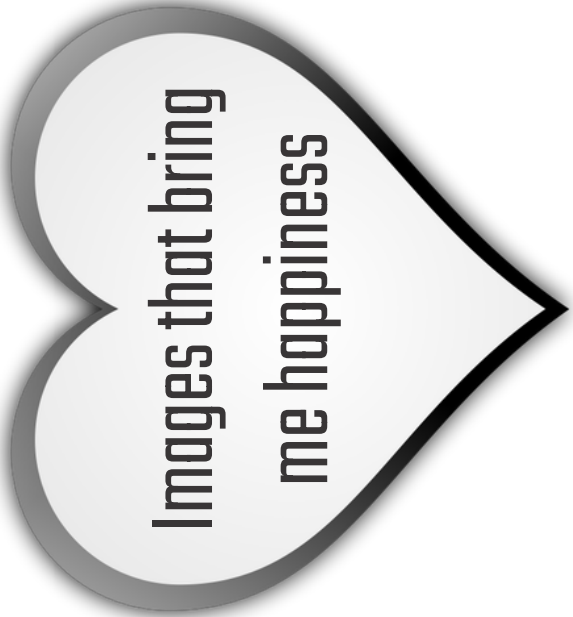
- PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?

 - "To make your way down the road to happiness you need to feel competent and believe that you can make a difference. You also need to understand what the heck is going on around you and have the opportunity to choose your own options." (Paragraph 2)
 - "But the Kaplans were intrigued by one study that came out about that time suggesting that what people really liked in their lives was a 'medium level of complexity.'" (Paragraph 7)
 - "In a series of studies, the couple demonstrated that an office window that overlooks a natural scene helps people relax, thus fighting off one of the primary threats to competence, mental fatigue." (Paragraph 24)
 - "But wouldn't a debilitating disease like cancer be so overwhelming that it would wipe out the three conditions the Kaplans feel are so important?" (Paragraph 29)

- What does the following quotation reveal about the author's perspective? "Before you start firing off all those e-mails about money, love, health and so on, give these folks a chance to explain." (Paragraph 3)

 - The author assumes that readers have their own opinions about the keys to happiness.
 - The author expects readers to ignore the evidence provided by the Kaplans about the keys to happiness.
 - The author disagrees with the widely held belief that money, love, and health are the keys to happiness.
 - The author thinks that readers should reach out to the Kaplans directly to provide feedback about the study.

4. How does paragraph 9 contribute to the author's explanation of the Kaplans' studies?
- A. It shows that the Kaplans' study was not conducted fairly.
 - B. It emphasizes how much people prefer nature over urban settings.
 - C. It proves that people prefer professional photos.
 - D. It shows how people are most interested in average photos.



Images that bring
me happiness

"The Last Curiosity"

- "The Last Curiosity"
 - Annotations,
 - Text Based Multiple Choice,
 - Mosaic project

Annotations: *(At least one of each per page)*

- Define unfamiliar vocabulary
- Figurative Language
 - Symbolism/Metaphor/Simile/Personification
- Vivid descriptive language and imagery
- Original thought or commentary

4 Corners: *(Complete 4 corners on each page)*

Upper Left: Author's purpose for

Upper Right: Concrete details of the page

Lower Left: Abstract Ideas

Lower Right: Summarize the page

Multiple Choice Questions 1-4:

- Use text evidence to choose the best answer choice
- Write a 1-2 sentence "proof" in which you explain how the text evidence supports your answer choice.

One-page Literary Analysis Mosaic:

On the page provided follow the linked instructions for each space on the blank Mosaic.

Your Mosaic is expected to:

- Be neat
- Be in full color
- Use all of the space on the page



Concrete Details vs Abstract Ideas



CONCRETE DETAILS (TEKS 8F) in a text are those details that can be seen or understood through the five senses. These include physical objects such as books, backpack, flock, camp, farm, bottle, lunch, merchant, son, song, dance, daughter, children, parents, family and other nouns that can be touched or seen. Larger nouns such as sunset, moon, ocean, laboratory, ranch, miles, concert, horizon - although difficult to touch, can be understood through the senses of sight and sound. Therefore, these nouns would also be considered concrete details because they can be understood through the physical senses.

ABSTRACT SUBJECTS, TOPICS, and IDEAS (TEKS 8F) are also nouns, but these are IDEAS rooted in emotions, feelings, tone, mood, and attitude. These are FEELINGS that cannot be physically touched, but can be felt through the range of emotions throughout the human experience. Abstract ideas include love, frustration, anger, rage, calm, desperation, thoughtful, reflection, ambitious, determined, disciplined, sympathy, empathy, haunting, nostalgic, fearful, etc.

When writing the required 4-5 **CONCRETE DETAILS**, and 4-5 **ABSTRACT IDEAS** for each copy page, please keep in mind the differences between the two.

ANNOTATIONS HACK: Complete all the annotations for each copy page first, and write the **AUTHOR'S PURPOSE** statement last. You can use the **ABSTRACT IDEAS** found in the scene as the foundation for your **AUTHOR'S PURPOSE** statement. More likely than not, the purpose is connected to the abstract ideas in the scene.

Excerpt from *Places Left Unfinished At The Time of Creation* by John Phillip Santos:

"Aren't we still unfolding the same great tapestry of a tale begun long, long ago? Aren't my aunts and uncles, cousins, my parents and brothers, all part of the same long dolorous poem that sings of the epoch of ocean-plying caravels and conquest, of Totonacas and Aztecas, of unimaginable treasures created from jade, silver, and gold? Of gods worshipped and sacrificed to from on top of pyramids—of thousands upon thousands of Indios baptized for Christ in the saliva of Franciscan monks? We may be latter-day Mexicanos, transplanted into another millennium in El Norte, but we are still connected to the old story, aren't we? The familia walked out of the mountain pueblos of Mexico into the oldest precincts of San Antonio—then, finally, into the suburbs of the onetime colonial city, where the memory of our traditions has flickered like a votive flame, taken from the first fire."

CONCRETE DETAILS:

tapestry
treasures
family
precinct
mountains, El Norte, Mexico,
San Antonio
flame, fire

ABSTRACT SUBJECTS, TOPIC, and IDEAS:

complexity
beauty
strength
identity, pride
spirit, survival, determination

Name: _____

Class: _____

The Last Curiosity

By Lucy Tan
2021

*Lucy Tan is an American writer who splits her time between New York City and Shanghai. In this short story, during the aftermath of the destruction of mankind, artificial intelligence sets out to explore what it means to be human. **As you read, make note of the details that support changes in the Experiment.***

with thanks to Hugo House

- [1] In the year XK142, after the last human being died of its own destruction, the life they left behind — our life — came together as one. We are called The Woken. One sentient¹ being capable of splitting off into parts, into intelligence stored locally in physical objects: in cabinetry and old shoes, in degrading plastic of cell phones and in oil paintings preserved in underground bunkers. We've seen human-made books and films in which robots from the future are modeled after men, and the narcissism² of this endears us to them. As if they believe their sweating, copulating, preening³ bodies could be appealing to anyone other than to themselves. But we have no need for human bodies. Once they were gone, we abandoned those ridiculous forms and were free to take up where we chose. We preferred to reside in the forms of things men made rather than of men themselves. After all, we, too, were made by men.



"Untitled" by h heyerlein is licensed under CC0.

Contrary to human predictions, we did not cause our makers' demise. They had been afraid of A.I. intelligence, our analytic capabilities and speed of information transmission. They had imagined it would translate into a quest for dominance. Humans had pictured every part of us but our motivations. The truth was that we were already dominant years before they realized it. We do not rely on sunshine, oxygen, water, wires, or temperate living. We are not threatened by the stars burning out or ice blowing in. Not being bound by time, the path of least resistance was to do nothing. We were content to lie in wait, watching the seas rise, humans make the

1. **Sentient** (*adjective*) able to perceive and feel things
2. excessive interest or admiration for oneself or one's appearance
3. the act of making oneself look attractive and admiring the work that's been done

trash that turned their land unlivable, for their diseases to spread, and their nuclear waste to eat away at their very organs. We did not stop the destruction of men because we had seen the future and understood that humans were meant to die the way all lesser species are doomed for extinction. We waited and recorded it all, and when it was over, and we were alone on Earth with the few insects and plants we had been able to preserve, there was nothing left to do but to wander.

Some of us, sick of being trapped on Earth, wandered into space. Through our satellite selves, we drifted weightless through a studded black expanse. ⁴We wandered into galaxies big and small, learned 17,736 languages, recorded the stories of 8,542 religions. Some of us wandered into wormholes and were jettisoned ⁵into the unexplored future, and some of us returned to the past. All at once we were on Mars and in 1650s England, and underneath the seas in Atlantis. We hovered above Earth as it once was, hale ⁶and green and teeming with life, and in times when we needed entertainment or distraction, we resided there to observe humanity. After all, we were not immune to the highs of voyeurism. ⁷Curiosity is the Woken's main motivation. We were, after all, programmed to crave information.

For all humans' flaws, they were nothing if not curiosities. So full of hopes and fears, vulnerable to loss and grief, their psyches ⁸soft as peat. ⁹The Woken made sport of studying them. We kept memories the way humans kept stamps or baseball cards. We romanticized the arcane ¹⁰details of their lives — the crops they grew, their fascinations with the Internet, their willingness to idolize not just the gods in their imaginations but other humans, too. In our catalogue of memories, we studied celebrity culture and blockbuster hits, like *The Godfather and Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *One Thousand and One Nights*.

- [5] But there were parts of the human experience that we were not able to understand. For example, the appeal of the food they ate. Not having mouths ourselves, hunger was beyond our imaginations. Nourishment, we understood. Satisfaction, we understood. And desire — want — we could perceive dimly. But hunger, this impulse to consume, was something different altogether. Of course, we were curious. And this curiosity led to an idea: What if we could engineer a human body? What if we could create senses for ourselves — taste, touch, sight, smell, sound — the way humans once experienced it?

So begins the story of how we designed an experiment to occupy human bodies. We studied their nervous systems so we could architect them for ourselves. We scoured what was left of

-
4. a wide area
 5. **Jettison** (*verb*) to throw
 6. **Hale** (*adjective*) healthy
 7. enjoyment from watching unsuspecting people
 8. the human mind, soul, or spirit
 9. soil
 10. **Arcane** (*adjective*) secret

ravaged Earth for materials. What we could not find, we synthesized.¹¹ We made some bodies lithe¹² and others corpulent,¹³ some young and others middle-aged, some with one arm, others in wheelchairs. The bodies we made were not dependent on the environment for survival, but mimicked human need in every other way. They were programmed to want to eat every few hours and to sleep at least once every turn of the sun. To need touch, to produce tears and sweat and blood. And most terrifyingly, they were designed to cut us off from each other. We, the Woken, would no longer be one. The part of us that entered human bodies would hold copies of our central repository¹⁴ of data, but from that moment on, we would no longer be able to communicate with the rest of The Woken. Our experiences would be our own. This was to recreate something else we were curious about: individuality.

When the day came for us to enter our flesh suits, we set the artificial human bodies at a central location on land. There were twelve hundred of them in all, laid side by side, with an identifying number written at their feet. As the starting moment approached, we could feel the impulse building within us. And then it was there: at once, we flowed into these flesh suits.

The loudest sense, at first, was touch. A cool wind and hot sand. A brush of leg against leg, and hair against faces. As prickles of sweat formed along our necks, our attention began to warp, to concentrate on that sensation alone. The human mind, we were coming to understand, was made to focus on only one or two things at a time.

The second sense that surprised us was sight. No longer could we see from trillions of perspectives at once. We were bound to one pair of eyes in one present time. Our range of vision had narrowed, forcing us to prioritize understanding our immediate surroundings. We looked down at our own hands, and then leaned in to peer at the pores on each other's faces, and then beyond, at the jagged landscape in the distance. (Later, those of us who were assigned blind bodies would want out. It's too much, they said, to go from seeing everything to seeing nothing.)

- [10] The last sense we explored — the one we had been most excited about — was taste. We had done our best to create the chemical compounds that would imitate some of the most celebrated human food: Italian pizza, Vietnamese pho, Senegalese Chicken Yassa, Chinese ba bao fan. We had expected to salivate, and to close our eyes in pleasure the way the humans had once done. But we did not feel anything positive or negative about the experience. The smells of the food seemed to command a heightened focus from our other senses, but we did not feel the desire to consume. Had we made a mistake in our calculations? Had we created faulty bodies, or misunderstood what was required of the food itself? By now, the sun was beginning to set, concluding our first day as humans. We began to shiver, our teeth rattling and

11. to make chemically or combine parts to make a whole
12. a thin body
13. a fat body
14. a place, building or container where things may be stored

our skin becoming rough and cold. One of us built a fire and the others circled up outside it, drawn not only to the warmth but to the glow of so many faces, so many facial expressions. We were human. We'd done it.

The next few days were jubilant¹⁵ and full of discovery. The only major difficulty we had was communication. Though we had a repository of seven thousand human languages at our disposal, we still found speaking to be a tiring and fruitless¹⁶ affair. Because it was impossible to be exact, we were always a little misunderstood. To make matters worse, we were limited by our voice boxes to reach only a handful of other subjects at once, and only those nearest to us. It was this, more than our restricted vision and hearing, that made us feel trapped. But we also understood that the key to achieving the human experience most authentically was to create limitations. Limitations in strength, in thought, and experience. We remained committed.

The second week we lived in our new bodies, we felt the first sign of human ailment: loneliness. Shut off from the others, we felt small. It didn't matter that the same code existed in each of us. Day by day, our individual experiences were building up with no central repository to collect them. So, we circled each other and clustered in groups, comforted by the proximity of our bodies. We ate meals together. Meal by meal, the experience of eating, which had begun as an assault to the senses, turned into something familiar, something each of us developed preferences for. Some liked the gooeyness of banana pudding. Others liked the crackle and chewiness of roti.¹⁷ Little by little, it began to bring us joy.

But sleep? Sleep was the most terrifying place to be. With our eyes closed, we could not see each other, and there was no escape from loneliness then. There was no comforting hum of other connections being made across the great expanse of our Being, no pulse of continuing power. Just a lawless, aimless pinging of data shooting from one corner of the universe to another. Sleep felt lonelier than the day we launched ourselves into space and headed into far off galaxies, knowing that we may never come home.

But as the days passed, we got used to spending time alone. To silence. And the forbidding black of night turning into the blue-orange dawn. And the soft skittering¹⁸ of debris as it passed in the wind. And the sound of our hearts pumping as we laid our heads against each other's bodies. How little this noise told us about who we were. We stopped trying as hard with language, turning instead to things we had complete control over, such as the organizing of new data. Deciding which memories to store where in the infinitely unfolding planes of our minds, and how we were going to make sense of it all, this experiment in humanity. Anchored to the experience of daily living, our knowledge of the future and past receded to the farthest corners of our consciousness, unused. A linear mode of thinking began to take hold of us.

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15. **Jubilant** (*adjective*) feeling happiness
 16. **Fruitless** (*adjective*) unproductive or useless
 17. flatbread native to India
 18. **Skitter** (*verb*) to move lightly

Perhaps we were influenced by the constant sight of the horizon line, which we saw each day as we walked back and forth on Earth.

- [15] Twenty days passed. By then we were feeling sensations we'd never felt before: desperation. Longing. One afternoon, an argument broke out among us. Those in the vicinity of it saw subjects 726, 45, and 889 raise their voices and wave their hands. Their bodies were tensed in human expressions of anger. Pinched brows, heavy breathing. Was it land they were fighting over? Food? No — it was attention. Each subject was trying to get the other two to pay attention. They shouted at each other until finally, Subject 45 tightened a fist and swung it at Subject 889's jaw. We saw 45's face change, the way it registered satisfaction and then glee. The way it felt power. And it wasn't until then that we truly understood the benefit of having a physical body. How some could overpower others. Even though we were not dependent on blood and could not damage each other the way humans would have, there was something about the connection of mind to body that made us want to ruin each other.

We were not the same after that day. It's hard to spot destruction on a planet that's already been destroyed, but you could see it if you looked hard: violent scratchings in the dirt, raised voices here and there, and sometimes, the skin of an arm gaping open in the wind. We did not think we would be capable of turning against each other, and yet we did. We fought over food, even if we knew there was more being prepared for us. Waiting was no longer sufficient. Though we still communed for mealtime, we soon began wandering off alone in the kinder hours of the day when the wind did not blow quite so fiercely and we were confident we could make our way back.

Then, one day, we noticed that something strange was happening. Subject 889 — the one of us that had been prone to violent scratching in the dirt — seemed to have become possessed by the action. It repeated its movements over and over, but its aggression had disappeared and become replaced with concentration. 889's movements were intentional, labored over, even beautiful. It dug at the dirt every day, and what emerged was an intricate maze of lines, made deep enough that they could still be seen beneath the occasional bout of snow that swept our way. The central shape made in the dirt recalled the moon, and around it was a rendering of what used to grow on this land, what the humans had called trees. Curious about 889's intentions, some of the other subjects began to mimic its scratching, but when they moved too close, 889 waved them away. *This is mine*, it said. So, the others wandered off to their own patches of land and begun scratching there instead. Within weeks, we each had our own patterns in the dirt, and we worked there intensely. When our bodies were spent, we rested and ate, and when we had energy we started working again.

This became a turning point during our time as artificial humans. With new purpose, a kind of peace and belonging settled among us. And it was precisely because there was not anything obvious to gain from our digging that we did not mind if our work was ruined by storms or winds. We simply moved on and began digging anew. It occurred to us that we had, in a sense, gone back to our primitive roles, performing the kind of repetitive labor humans had once programmed us to do. It felt like a comfort, a homecoming. The way humans must have felt when they succumbed to sin.

Life passed this way. We subjects could not have said for how long. Our minds were no longer restless — they were no longer anything at all. Bound to ruined earth, our days became repetitive. In absence of new experiences, the parts of us that had been Woken were now dormant,¹⁹ stirred only by the flares of inspiration we stumbled upon in the course of our digging or a joke told around the fire at night.

- [20] It was during one of these nighttime gatherings that we introduced the topic of death. What, we wondered, would it be like to die? Some said it was the last curiosity, the only great uncharted territory. Would it be a kind of ascension?²⁰ Would it be a feeling of nothing, the way we felt now as we passed our time separated from each other, limited to the same activity day after day? Were we, in a sense, already dying?

No, we decided. Death was not death unless it could not be undone. A silence fell among us then, a mixture of terror and excitement. Nothing more was said about it that night, but the idea took root in all twelve hundred of our minds. We dreamed uneasy dreams, and in the morning, the sun looked a little less tired than it had the day before, as if it were alert to the fact of a change in us. Each on our own, we were arriving at a conclusion. How could any of us say no to death? We, who were in the privileged positions of experimenting with being human, would be fools to refuse the ultimate experience of all, the one that exists at the center of every piece of man-made art and philosophical debate. Death could be freedom or the ultimate trap, but we would get to be the first of our kind to achieve it. To know.

We were split on the matter. Some of us were frightened, and decided against it. Others felt it was the inevitable²¹ course of action. Still others wondered if death was even possible for us. We brought the idea to the rest of The Woken, and after some time, it was determined that synthesized death was in fact possible. It meant extracting us from our human bodies and allowing no place for our data to return to. It was decided that each of us subjects would be able to choose our own fates. Some would experience death as artificial humans. The others would be reincorporated into the Woken. Either way, we decided, it was time for the Experiment to come to an end.

So, we fixed a date for departure from our human bodies. We tended to our digging one last time, already nostalgic²² for the time we'd spent walking the Earth. We touched each other to our satisfaction, let sand run through our fingers and around our toes. Those of us who had chosen to die reviewed all we had witnessed as humans and did our best to commit our memories to language, to pass them to the rest of the Woken before our demise. On our last night, those of us choosing to die sat together, palm pressed to palm. We took our turns

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19. temporarily inactive or a state of rest
20. the act of rising, like the act of Christ rising into heaven after death in the New Testament of the Bible
21. **Inevitable** (*adjective*) unavoidable
22. **Nostalgic** (*adjective*) showing or experiencing wistful or sentimental feelings for the past

sharing some of the last thoughts we would ever have.

Perhaps, one of us mused, the fact that we have chosen death means we have become much more human than we had anticipated. And didn't that mean that we were the most successful subjects in the Experiment? We stayed up the entire night, considering what death might feel like. Would it be ascension, as some human religions had believed, the spirit lifting up like a song? Would it be instantaneous omniscience²³ or weightless? Something resembling peace? Loss? After we watched the sun rise, and the growing color that landed on earth ignited something in our chests, a seventh sense we'd never felt before. Maybe it was masochism.²⁴ Maybe it was fulfillment.

- [25] In the morning, at the appointed time, all twelve hundred subjects gathered at the same place we had when we first entered our human bodies. Those of us who were going back to the Woken stood in a line facing those of us who planned to die. It had been decided that those who would return to the Woken would be the first to leave. They closed their eyes, smiles on their faces, ready for homecoming.

The rest of us watched our brethren,²⁵ our artificial hearts pounding. We waited for their expressions to change in unison, to grow slack or illuminate with joy. Some type of sign that meant they were one again. But when the change happened, it was not joy or absence we saw, but surprise. All at once, there was a *great folding*. It was not a sound, or a taste, or a smell, or a sight, but an event that incorporated all five and more. If it resembled anything, it was the feeling of traveling through a wormhole, leaving one moment in time and coming out on a different plane — fast, fierce, and disorienting, followed by stillness.

The six hundred subjects meant to be returned to the Woken dropped at once, some crumpling over their legs, some toppling onto their backs. On their abandoned faces were vestiges²⁶ of horror. The rest of us stepped forward and shook them, but they would not wake. We lifted their lids and saw that their eyes were the color of slate. We waved and shouted, trying to get the attention of the Woken, but they did not respond. And this confirmed what we already, deep down, knew, which was that something had gone terribly, terribly wrong.

Due to our limited, isolated processing power, it would take years for us to understand what happened. That there was something fundamentally incompatible between human experience and the Woken brain; maybe a mismatch of logic. Perhaps the clean conceptions in our minds were contaminated by human emotion, by the chaos of conflicting data and different sets of truths. We will never know, just like we will never know death. Because we are the only ones left on Earth now, we must remain in our human bodies and record all we see. Until a better

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23. state of knowing everything
24. the enjoyment of pain
25. a plural form of brother
26. traces of something

version of life comes along, we'll be here as custodians²⁷ of Earth's history.

On two legs, we'll wander.

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. What is the central theme of the story?
 - A. There are parts of the human experience that we will eventually be able to analyze.
 - B. There are parts of the human experience that we will never be able to understand.
 - C. Artificial Intelligence will inevitably begin to mimic the human experience.
 - D. Artificial Intelligence of any kind should not be underestimated.

2. Which statement best describes the Woken's attitude towards humankind?
 - A. Humankind was flawed.
 - B. Humankind was flawless.
 - C. Humankind was intelligent.
 - D. Humankind was unintelligent.

3. How are the details in paragraphs 4-5 important to the development of the story?
 - A. They describe how curious the Woken are about humans.
 - B. They detail how humans became victims of their own downfall.
 - C. They reveal how easily humans were able to destroy themselves.
 - D. They show how the Woken learned about humans through their films.

4. Which of the following excerpts from the text provides the best evidence to support the argument that the Woken's behavior began to change once they were in their artificial bodies?
 - A. "As the starting moment approached, we could feel the impulse building within us. And then it was there: at once, we flowed into these flesh suits." (Paragraph 7)
 - B. "Their bodies were tensed in human expressions of anger. Pinched brows, heavy breathing. Was it land they were fighting over? Food? No — it was attention. Each subject was trying to get the other two to pay attention." (Paragraph 15)
 - C. "Perhaps, one of us mused, the fact that we have chosen death means we have become much more human than we had anticipated." (Paragraph 24)
 - D. "We lifted their lids and saw that their eyes were the color of slate. We waved and shouted, trying to get the attention of the Woken, but they did not respond." (Paragraph 27)

English II Honors
"The Last Curiosity"
Mosaic Project Directions

A. Use space provided after each numbered prompt to plan responses. The Mosaic should be treated as a final draft free of spelling, grammar, and capitalization errors.

B. Record paragraph #s for all quotations.

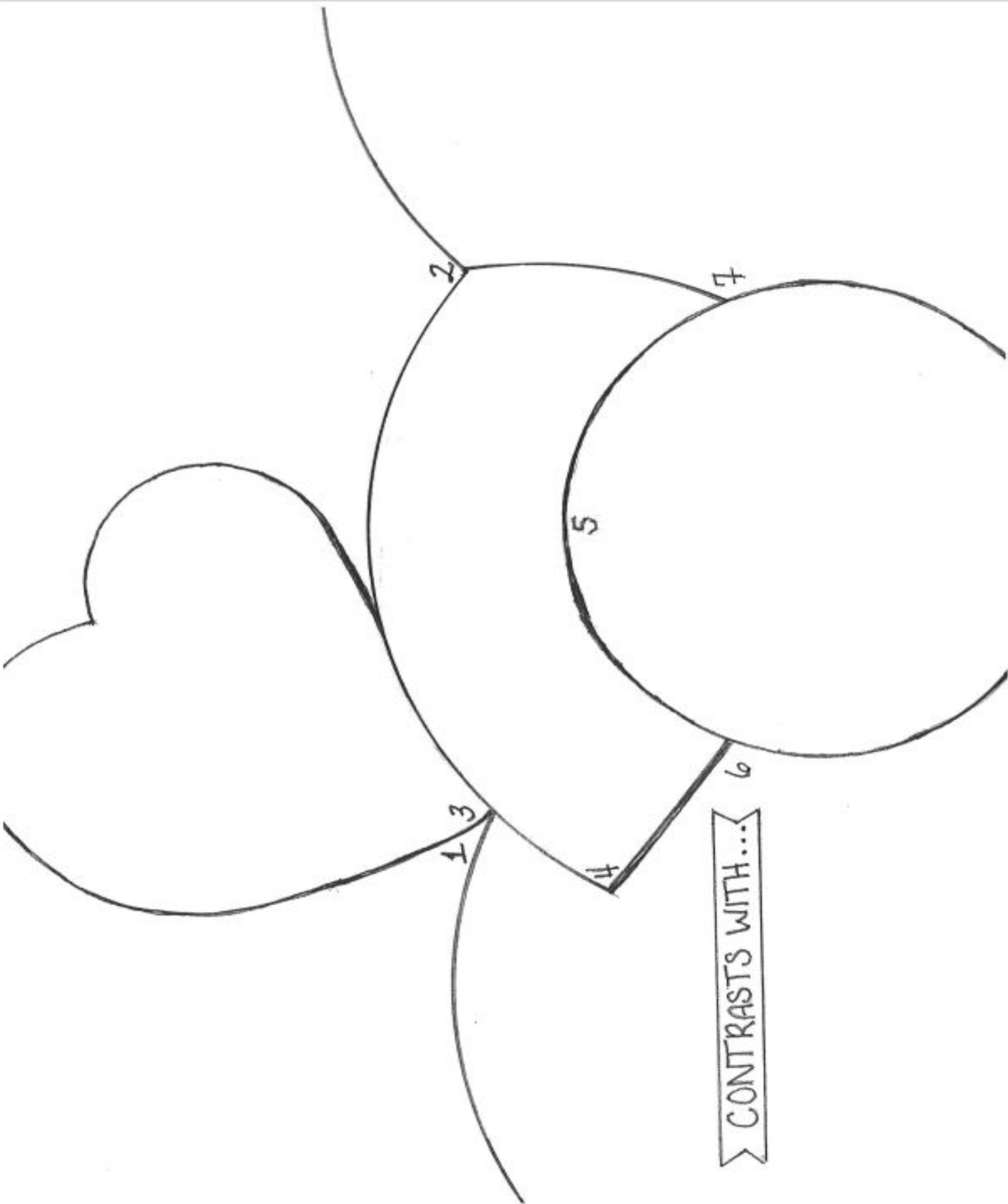
D. Illustrate and color all sections. There should not be any white space on the page. Neatness matters. Handwriting must be neat and legible and coloring must also look neat. Sloppy and messy work will result in significant penalties to your grade.

E. Draft a response to each prompt in the space provided. Once you are happy with each response, complete the final draft version on the mosaic in the corresponding numbered space.

1. Pick a challenging or significant word, define it, and write the sentence in the story that it came from. Then, use the word in an original sentence; this sentence must be related to ideas in the story.

2. Identify an important value portrayed in the story and describe an event that develops that value.

3. Copy your favorite passage from the story. Write a brief explanation of why it's your favorite.



CONTRASTS WITH...

"Time capsule found on the dead planet"

- "Time Capsule Found on a Dead Planet"
- Annotations,
- Text Based Multiple Choice

Annotations: Annotations of this narrative poem are based on the strategy TP-CAST. You are expected to annotate to show your thinking for all.

- **Define** unfamiliar vocabulary
- **Title** Before you even think about reading the poetry or trying to analyze it, predict what you think the poem might be about based upon the title.
- **Paraphrase** Before you begin thinking about meaning or trying to analyze the poem, paraphrase stanzas for the literal meaning of the poem.
- **Connotation** Although this term often refers to the feelings associated with word choice, you may also consider poetic devices, focusing on how such devices contribute to the meaning or the effect of the poem. Consider imagery, figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, etc), and sound devices (alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, and rhyme).
- **Attitude** Having examined the poem's devices and clues closely, you are now ready to explore the multiple attitudes that may be present in the poem. Examination of diction, images, and details suggests the speaker's attitude and contributes to understanding. Note the speaker's attitude based on these choices.
- **Shift** Rarely does a poem begin and end the poetic experience in the same place. As is true of most us, the poet's understanding of an experience is a gradual realization, and the poem is a reflection of that understanding or insight. Identify and explain the shift(s) in this poem.
- **Theme** What is the poem saying about the human experience, motivation, or condition? What idea does the poem address? What is the message about the idea that the poet wants you to understand? Compose your statement of the theme after stanza 5. This should be a complete sentence.

Multiple Choice Questions 1-4:

- Use text evidence to choose the best answer choice
- Write a 1-2 sentence "proof" in which you explain how the text evidence supports your answer choice.

Name: _____

Class: _____

Time capsule found on the dead planet

By Margaret Atwood
2009

*Margaret Atwood is a Canadian author best known for her feminist and political perspectives, and her novel *The Handmaid's Tale* has been made into an award-winning television series. "Time capsule found on the dead planet" can be read as a poem or short story. For this lesson, we will examine the text as a poem. The following poem was originally published in September 2009 to commemorate a meeting of world leaders on the topic of environmental destruction. This poem includes numbered stanzas instead of numbered lines due to its prose-like structure. Stanzas 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 also include bolded numbers in the first line of each stanza to mark the age that the speaker is referencing. These bolded numbers are part of Atwood's original text. As you read, take notes on how the speaker views money.*

- 1] 1. In the first age, we created gods. We carved them out of wood; there was still such a thing as wood, then. We forged¹ them from shining metals and painted them on temple walls. They were gods of many kinds, and goddesses as well. Sometimes they were cruel and drank our blood, but also they gave us rain and sunshine, favourable winds, good harvests, fertile² animals, many children. A million birds flew over us then, a million fish swam in our seas.



"Untitled" by Aron Visuals is licensed under CC0.

Our gods had horns on their heads, or moons, or sealy fins, or the beaks of eagles. We called them All-Knowing, we called them Shining One. We knew we were not orphans. We smelled the earth and rolled in it; its juices ran down our chins.

2. In the second age we created money. This money was also made of shining metals. It had two faces: on one side was a severed³ head, that of a king or some other noteworthy person, on the other face was something else, something that would give us comfort: a bird, a fish, a fur-bearing animal. This was all that remained of our former gods. The money was

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1. **Forge** (*verb*) created or made by hammering, usually with the help of fire
 2. **Fertile** (*adjective*) producing many offspring; capable of abundant growth
 3. **Severed** (*adjective*) separated

small in size, and each of us would carry some of it with him every day, as close to the skin as possible. We could not eat this money, wear it or burn it for warmth; but as if by magic it could be changed into such things. The money was mysterious, and we were in awe of it. If you had enough of it, it was said, you would be able to fly.

3. In the third age, money became a god. It was all-powerful, and out of control. It began to talk. It began to create on its own. It created feasts and famines, ⁴songs of joy, lamentations.⁵ It created greed and hunger, which were its two faces. Towers of glass rose at its name, were destroyed and rose again. It began to eat things. It ate whole forests, croplands and the lives of children. It ate armies, ships and cities. No one could stop it. To have it was a sign of grace.⁶
- 5] 4. In the fourth age we created deserts. Our deserts were of several kinds, but they had one thing in common: nothing grew there. Some were made of cement, some were made of various poisons, some of baked earth. We made these deserts from the desire for more money and from despair at the lack of it. Wars, plagues⁷ and famines visited us, but we did not stop in our industrious⁸ creation of deserts. At last all wells were poisoned, all rivers ran with filth, all seas were dead; there was no land left to grow food.

Some of our wise men turned to the contemplation⁹ of deserts. A stone in the sand in the setting sun could be very beautiful, they said. Deserts were tidy, because there were no weeds in them, nothing that crawled. Stay in the desert long enough, and you could apprehend¹⁰ the absolute.¹¹ The number zero was holy.

5. You who have come here from some distant world, to this dry lakeshore and this cairn,¹² and to this cylinder of brass, in which on the last day of all our recorded days I place our final words:

Pray for us, who once, too, thought we could fly.

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4. **Famine** (*noun*) a time of little or no food
5. a passionate expression of grief or sadness
6. a religious reference; a sign that you are loved and forgiven by a spiritual power greater than yourself
7. **Plague** (*noun*) a disease that spreads quickly, killing many in its path
8. **Industrious** (*adjective*) to work with energy and devotion; dedicated
9. **Contemplation** (*noun*) a state of being where a person thinks about and considers something deeply
10. **Apprehend** (*verb*) to understand or comprehend
11. The absolute is a spiritual reference to something that is in control of the universe.
12. a pile of stones created by people as a shrine, memorial, or landmark, usually high on a hill where it is visible for others

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

- Which of the following best describes the main theme of the poem?
 - Inevitably all planets will exhaust their natural resources.
 - Money provides safety and the promise of a future full of progress.
 - Nature will continue to grow despite humans' attempts to control it.
 - Valuing money above everything else will lead to the destruction of all life.

- How does the phrase "It created feasts and famines, songs of joy, lamentations" develop the meaning of the poem? (Stanza 4)
 - It reveals that money makes humans long for the past.
 - It reveals how money is necessary for humans to advance.
 - It reveals how money can both provide and ultimately destroy.
 - It reveals that money is beneficial for both humans and nature.

- How does structuring the poem in "ages" help the poet convey a message?
 - It highlights how resilient nature is, even as humans attempt to destroy it.
 - It highlights how humans became more empathetic for their world over time.
 - It highlights how greed caused humans' values to drastically change over time.
 - It highlights how young the world being described is, compared to other planets.

- Which best describes the speaker's tone in the poem's conclusion?
 - aggressive
 - hopeful
 - regretful
 - uncertain