

Handout 1: Journal Assignments

Complete the following journal assignments when you are instructed to do so by your teacher.

Journal 1: Developing Characters

Answer the following questions in your journals:

- Think about your favorite characters. How do their authors or creators make them so distinctive or appealing?
- Why is it important for characters to be believable and compelling?

Write as many reasons as you can think of in your journals. Be prepared to share them with the class.

Journal 2: A Character in My Life

Follow the steps below to create character studies with your partner.

Telling the Story

1. Think of a true story, in which someone you know is the main character. This person could be a relative, a friend, or someone else from your neighborhood or daily life. The story should show something about the person's character or personality. The story can be from childhood or much more recent, but it should be one you know well and can tell in detail.
2. Before you begin, jot down some notes in your journal to help you tell the story. Your notes should include the parts of the story you have to tell for the story to make sense, as well as details that will make the story and the character come alive for your listener. Include details from all four categories of the character attributes you identified in the previous activity. The story should take no more than two or three minutes to tell.
3. Tell the story to your partner. Answer any follow-up questions your partner may have.

Creating the Character Study

In your journal, create four columns, using the categories of attributes you identified in the previous activity as column headings.

1. As your partner tells his or her story, listen carefully for the attributes of the main character. Write each one mentioned under the appropriate column heading.
2. When your partner finishes the story, ask yourself: *Are there any details about the story that I'd like repeated or clarified?* If so, ask now.
3. Look over the filled-in table. Then write a character study, one or more paragraphs long, in your journal describing the character in your partner's story. Include details to describe the character fully and make him or her come alive for your reader. Share your character study with the class.

Journal 3: Character Video Observation

As you watch the video, focus on what the main character says when he or she appears to be speaking directly to the audience rather than to other characters. Consider the questions below:

- What are the character's attributes? Consider all four categories you established in the first activity.
- What clues does the character give about any problems or conflicts he or she might face later in the show or series? Is there anything the character is unhappy or fearful about? Does he or she have issues with other characters or anything unresolved in his or her past?

In your journal, make a table like this:

Character Attributes	Conflict Clues

Record all the attributes and clues you notice in the video. Be prepared to share this information with the class.

Journal 4: Vocabulary Bank

As you reread the first chapter, focusing on character attributes and conflict clues, look for specific vocabulary that describes and characterizes Antonio. Remember, since the story is told through Antonio's eyes, the language he uses also reveals his character.

- What words does he use to refer to or describe himself, his friends, and members of his family?
- What are the names of places in his life?
- What nouns does he use to name his surroundings? What adjectives does he use to describe them?

Copy all these words and phrases into a section of your journal. Continue to collect vocabulary in this section throughout the unit, as you read the book.

Refer to this Vocabulary Bank as you write your character study, monologue, and dialogue.

Journal 5: Character Study

Write a character study of Antonio that is one or more paragraphs long, drawing on the following sources from your character investigation:

- **Character Attributes table:** Include attributes from all four categories you used in your character studies in Journal 2. You don't need to use every attribute, just the ones you think most strongly characterize Antonio.
- **Conflict Clues table:** Choose two or three of the possible conflicts that you think will be most important in defining Antonio's character.
- **Vocabulary Bank:** Refer to these words or phrases to select accurate and descriptive language for your character study.

Share your character study with the class and listen to the character studies written by your classmates.

- Do they sound the same or are there significant differences?
- If there are differences, what are they?

Talk about why your classmates might have characterized Antonio in different ways.

Hearing a range of character studies will help you solidify your views about Antonio in preparation for writing your monologue.

Handout 2: Unit Overview

Casting a Novel Character

Complex, believable characters are essential to effective storytelling. Characters must have recognizable traits and plausible motivations. But they must also be multi-dimensional—capable of defying expectation and surprising you. To sustain your interest, characters need to grow and change over time, whether in a novel, a play, a movie, or a television series.

In this unit, you will examine what makes a character real, identifying information such as physical appearance and dress, family and cultural background, speech and actions, and personality traits. You will look first at people around you as characters and then explore characterization in a novel, looking at how the author establishes characters and shows their development.

For the unit project, you will imagine that the novel's main character has been cast in a television series. In Part 1, you will write an opening monologue for the series. In Part 2, you will work in a team to write a key scene of dialogue in script form to be used in an episode of the series.

As you carry out the unit activities, you will explore the following questions:

- *How do authors and scriptwriters create believable, multi-dimensional characters?*
- *What roles can monologue and dialogue play in establishing and developing character?*
- *What scriptwriting techniques can I use to bring a character from a novel to life on the screen?*

What You Will Do in This Unit

Probe the sources of characterization. Carry out character research by sharing and examining stories from your own life to identify character attributes in real people.

Discover what gives a character star quality. Identify character information about Antonio, the main character in the novel *Bless Me, Ultima*, and then write a speech introducing Antonio in his own voice.

Track moments of character change. Work with your team to identify key passages from the novel showing character growth and transformation.

Write TV scripts. Examine excerpts from actual movie and TV scripts and use scriptwriting techniques to write a scene for your own TV series based on the novel.

Vocabulary

Aside: In the context of theater and media, this refers to lines spoken by an actor as if to him- or herself or to the audience, which other actors onstage pretend not to hear.

Attributes: Qualities or aspects of a character that distinguish him or her from other characters, including physical appearance and dress, family and cultural background, speech and actions, and personality traits.

Back story: The experiences of a character that occur before the action of the story takes place.

Character: A person or nonhuman actor portrayed in a story, such as a novel, movie, play, or television show. Characters are found in fiction and nonfiction.

Dialogue: A conversation between two or more characters in a literary or dramatic work.

Monologue: A speech by a single person, often used in literature or media to introduce a character or to reveal the character's thoughts. Long, poetic monologues in theater, such as some speeches in Shakespeare's plays, are referred to as soliloquies.

Motivation: The reason or reasons behind a character's actions.

Pilot: A television show produced and taped as a sample of a proposed series, usually the first show in the series.

Script: The written text of a play, movie, television show, or radio broadcast.

Stage directions: The part of a script that tells the characters how to move or how to speak their lines, or describes other action on the stage or set.

Trait: A characteristic feature or quality of a person or thing. While similar to attributes, *character traits* often refer specifically to personality.

Handout 3: Monologue and Dialogue Unit Project

What's in a Word?

Logue comes from the Greek word *logos*, meaning *word* or *speaking*.

Mono- means *one*; *dia-* means *through* or *across*.

Using the root *logos* and the prefixes *mono-* and *dia-*, define monologue and dialogue in your own words.

The Function of Monologue

Writers often use an opening monologue in a film, play, television series, or novel to *establish character*—to convey a lot of information quickly that will help the reader or viewer understand the character and the story better, and to help the reader or viewer identify with the character's point of view.

An opening monologue can convey information about character attributes and about the character's *back story*—what his or her situation is like before the events of the story take place. This opening scene usually also provides clues as to what will happen to the character later in the story. As a reader or viewer, you must remember this back story in order to identify and understand the ways the character might change later on.

Writing Monologues and Dialogues

The unit project, based on the novel *Bless Me, Ultima*, consists of two parts:

- **Part I: Monologue**
Using information in the novel's opening chapter, you will write a monologue spoken in the voice of the main character, Antonio. This monologue will establish Antonio's character and back story, and will become the opening scene for a television series based on the book.
- **Part II: Dialogue**
You will work in teams to select a passage from the novel that shows the evolution of Antonio's character. Your team will then transform the passage into a dialogue, written as a script, which will become part of an episode of the television series.

Assessment Checklist: Monologue and Dialogue Unit Project

Use this assessment to help you write and revise your monologues and dialogues. Make sure to include all the requirements. Your teacher will use this assessment to evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Monologue		Student Comments	Teacher Comments
Attributes. Establishes attributes for the character in all four categories identified in the first unit activity.	15%		
Back Story. Includes elements of back story that offer clues to potential conflicts and problems.	15%		
Structure. Opens the monologue in a way that draws the audience in, and ends in a way that leaves the audience wanting to know more.	10%		
Voice and Language. Presents an authentic and engaging first-person voice, and uses vocabulary appropriate to the character's story.	10%		
Total	50%		

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Dialogue		Student Comments	Teacher Comments
Character Development. Chooses a narrative passage that clearly shows the character's growth or transformation.	10%		
Structure. Captures the main idea and essential action of the narrative passage, giving it a clear beginning and end, and making cuts and changes appropriate to the action.	20%		
Voice and Language. Presents dialogue clearly and accurately, using voices and vocabulary appropriate to the characters.	10%		
Format. Demonstrates proper scriptwriting format, including use of scene headings, indications of action, character names, dialogue, and stage directions.	10%		
Total	50%		

Handout 4: Working in Teams

You will work in a team for activities throughout the unit—first as you gather information for your monologue, then later when you work on your dialogues.

For each activity, each member will be assigned a role to play. These roles may change slightly with different activities. It will be the team's responsibility to make sure that each member makes a productive contribution to the team's efforts.

Below are some possible roles:

Reader: Reads passages containing important information aloud to the team.

Scribe: Records the team's observations or decisions on handouts or separate pages.

Facilitator: Guides team discussion, and ensures that all team members understand the tasks and that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Reporter: Shares the team's findings in any class discussion that follows the activity.

Linguist: Looks up and records definitions of new vocabulary. This person should keep a dictionary handy. For *Bless Me, Ultima*, a linguist with knowledge of Spanish could assist in translating Spanish vocabulary.

Illustrator: Draws pictures or diagrams showing important information or ideas. For *Bless Me, Ultima*, the illustrator could sketch characters or landscapes, or draw simple maps of where Antonio lives.

Depending on the number of people in your team, you may wish to double up on certain roles or leave others out.

Note that there are certain parts of each activity, such as identifying passages, in which all team members participate.

Handout 5: Character Investigation

Work in your team to gather information about the main character for your monologue. You will research two things:

- Character attributes
- Clues in the character's back story that hint at future conflict

Procedure

1. Refer to **Handout 1: Journal Assignments** to begin Journal 4: Vocabulary Bank.
2. Reread the first chapter of *Bless Me, Ultima*, identifying passages that give information about the character Antonio. Look for attributes in all four categories that you identified in the first unit activity.
3. Use the Character Attributes table to record this information:
 - In the first column, write the page number of the passage.
 - In the second column, write the beginning and ending words of the passage with ellipses (. . .) in between. Don't copy the entire passage.
 - In the third column, write the character attribute(s) the passage reveals.
4. Now look at the chapter again, and use the Conflict Clues table to record any information in Antonio's back story that hints at future conflicts or problems. Record information in the first two columns as you did above, and note possible conflicts in the third column.

Character Attributes

Page	Text Passage	Attribute
1	I was almost seven.	
1	My sisters . . . by the door.	
2	He spoke in Spanish . . . Nuevo Méjico.	
2	My mother . . . daughter of a farmer.	
4	And because a curandera . . . my heart turned cold at the thought.	
6	I turned . . . and saw the town of Guadalupe.	
7	My heart sank . . . sick feeling came to my stomach.	
7	I ran to the pens . . . turned her loose.	
7	I sat across the table . . . ate my atole and the hot tortilla with butter.	
8	I knew it was because my three brothers . . . Eugene was the youngest.	

Page	Text Passage	Attribute
10	Every day I had to work in the garden . . . my mother wanted a garden and I worked to make her happy.	
13	I saw in her eyes . . . mother's womb.	
12	"Let it be . . . something between us."	
13	La Virgen de Guadalupe . . . clouds of heaven.	

Conflict Clues

Page	Text Passage	Possible Conflicts
1	From there I was to see . . . my brothers against my father.	
2-3	After I was born in Las Pasturas . . . my father was left to drink alone in the long night.	
3	It takes the young boys overseas . . . my three brothers who were away at war.	
4	It was because Ultima was a curandera . . . tales of evil done by brujas.	
9	Don't speak to me of those worthless Marez and their friends . . . She was the daughter of farmers.	
9	But you will not be like them . . . You will be a man of the people, and perhaps a priest.	

Handout 6: Writing a Character Monologue

Who is Antonio Juan Marez y Luna, and why should we be interested in his story?

Your monologue will answer this question. You have researched the character of Antonio in the first chapter of *Bless Me, Ultima*. Now you are ready to speak in his voice and tell your audience what makes him worth paying attention to.

Write a one- to two-page monologue in the voice of Antonio. Think of your monologue as opening the first episode, or pilot, of a TV series.

Write your monologue.

Your monologue should accomplish four things:

1. Present Antonio as a believable, multi-dimensional character by showing character attributes from all four categories you identified in the opening unit discussion.
2. Establish Antonio's back story, including providing some of the clues to possible conflicts you identified in your character investigation.
3. Draw your audience in at the beginning and end in a way that leaves your audience wanting to know more.
4. Present an authentic and engaging first-person voice, and use vocabulary appropriate to Antonio's story.

Remember, you do not need to tell everything about Antonio's life, just enough to establish who he is, what his life is like, and what might happen in his future. Select only the character attributes and elements of back story that seem most significant to Antonio's character.

Refer to your Vocabulary Bank. Use the kind of language and vocabulary that Antonio would use.

Review your monologue with a partner.

Exchange monologues with a partner. Write feedback in the margins of your partner's paper, answering the following questions:

- Does the information in the monologue accurately reflect the book? If not, what isn't accurate? Does the monologue present a complete picture of Antonio's character?
- How is the monologue organized?
 - Does it draw you right in? If not, how could the opening be more engaging?
 - Does it hold your interest with specific details and back story? If not, what is lacking?
 - Is the ending effective? Does it leave you wondering what will happen next? Would something earlier in the monologue make a stronger ending?
- Does the character's voice sound like Antonio? If not, where does it seem to be inconsistent, and how could it be made more convincing?
- Does the monologue sound like something you might hear in a TV show? How might it be improved for a TV viewer?

I don't remember anything about the first four years of my life. Lots of people have asked me about it, including my mother, my father, and my sister, but I couldn't tell them anything. This monologue is going to tell you why. I was born at 5:04 p.m. on an unseasonably hot afternoon in October. They were playing baseball at Candlestick Park, and if you lived in Northern California at the time, you would have remembered every minute. I was four years old.

I name that as my birth day, because I have no memories of anything that happened before. The events of that day wiped my brain as clean as, well as clean as a piece of paper before the ink makes its first brush strokes. When they found my body, in one piece, under the bridge made by my mother, sprawled over me like a tortoiseshell, and broken into almost as many fragments, the page was empty.

Do you need this here?
You give us all this information later in the monologue.

Jump right into the story here.
Precise information draws the reader in!

Was it an important game?
What teams were playing?

This is intriguing!
We wonder what happened to make people remember.

Very interesting!

Nice use of metaphor.

Writing comments on another student's work.

Revise your monologue.

Use your partner's comments to revise your monologue.

Rehearse and perform your monologue.

Work with a partner to prepare to present your monologue to the class. Take some time to rehearse, making sure that you read with clarity, proper pronunciation, and appropriate emotion. Consult a dictionary if you are unsure how to pronounce any words.

Before you take the stage, try to imagine that you are Antonio:

- What kind of emotion would you be feeling?
- What would your voice sound like?
- Why are you telling an audience your story?

Handout 7: Scene Sketcher

Scriptwriting Team: _____

Brainstorm a list of passages that were significant in the growth of Antonio's character. Choose the two that you believe are the most transformational and would make the most engaging dialogues. Fill in the table below.

Page(s): _____

What happens?

Why is this event significant?

How does Antonio respond?

How does he change or grow?

Page(s): _____

What happens?

Why is this event significant?

How does Antonio respond?

How does he change or grow?

Handout 8: Script Elements and Sample Scripts

You have probably seen many films and heard a great deal of movie dialogue. But have you ever seen the actual scripts that actors use to learn their lines?

This handout presents script excerpts from two popular movies. The stories are very different, but the scripts have many things in common. Each script includes five important elements:

1. **Scene Heading:** A short description of the scene's location and time of day. The abbreviation EXT means exterior, or outside shot; INT means interior, or inside shot.
2. **Action:** The moving pictures that will appear on screen.
3. **Character Name:** The name of the character, which appears before the speech whenever that character speaks.
4. **Dialogue:** The words that the characters speak.
5. **Stage Directions:** The instructions that indicate character movement or expression, sometimes written in parentheses.

Look for these elements as you read the script excerpts aloud. Then use your highlighter to mark and label at least one example of each element on each script.

Excerpt from Titanic, screenplay by James Cameron

99 EXT. TITANIC - DAY

TITANIC STEAMS TOWARD US, in the dusk light, as if lit by the embers of a giant fire. As the ship looms, FILLING FRAME, we push in on the bow. Jack is there, right at the apex of the bow railing, his favorite spot. He closes his eyes, letting the chill wind clear his head.

Jack hears her voice, behind him . . .

ROSE

Hello, Jack.

He turns and she is standing there.

ROSE

I changed my mind.

He smiles at her, his eyes drinking her in. Her cheeks are red with the chill wind, and her eyes sparkle. Her hair blows wildly about her face.

ROSE

Fabrizio said you might be up-

JACK

Sssshh. Come here.

He puts his hands on her waist. As if he is going to kiss her.

JACK

Close your eyes.

She does, and he turns her to face forward, the way the ship is going. He presses her gently to the rail, standing right behind her. Then he takes her two hands and raises them until she is standing with her arms outstretched on each side. Rose is going along with him. When he lowers his hands, her arms stay up . . . like wings.

JACK

Okay. Open them.

Rose gasps. There is nothing in her field of vision but water. It's like there is no ship under them at all, just the two of them soaring. The Atlantic unrolls toward her, a hammered copper shield under a dusk sky. There is only the wind, and the hiss of the water 50 feet below.

ROSE

I'm flying!

Excerpt from Spider-Man, screenplay by David Koepp, based on characters created by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko

INT. PARKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

On TV, professional wrestlers go at it. BEN PARKER, a kindly man in his early sixties, watches from a Barcolounger in the living room of a modest two-story home. On the television, an ANNOUNCER is terribly excited.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

-three thousand dollars, one thousand per minute in the ring, payable ONLY if you survive the full one hundred and eighty seconds!

The front door opens and Peter staggers in.

UNCLE BEN

Hey, Pete. Take a look at the act this joker cooked up. Calls himself Bone Saw McGraw.

PETER

...don't feel well...

UNCLE BEN

What?

MAY PARKER, a frail woman the same age as Ben, appears in the doorway from the kitchen. Both of them seem way too old to be Peter's parents.

AUNT MAY

Hello, dear, how was the field trip. I saved a nice plate for you in the oven, we had pot roast with-

PETER

(heading upstairs)
...not hungry...

AUNT MAY

Where are you going?

PETER

...gotta sleep... everything's
fine...

His bedroom door SLAMS.

AUNT MAY

Is he alright? Does he have the flu?

UNCLE BEN

(waves it off)

He's seventeen.

AUNT MAY

He's depressed.

UNCLE BEN

He's seventeen.

She heads for the stairs, but Uncle Ben takes her arm and stops
her gently.

UNCLE BEN (cont'd)

Don't hover, May. He'll let us know
if he needs help.

Handout 9: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Excerpt from *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

They walked slowly toward the sagging house. Two of the supports of the porch roof were pushed out so that the roof flopped down on one end. And the house-corner was crushed in. Through a maze of splintered wood the room at the corner was visible. The front door hung open inward, and a low strong gate across the front door hung outward on leather hinges.

Joad stopped at the step, a twelve-by-twelve timber. "Doorstep's here," he said. "But they're gone—or Ma's dead." He pointed to the low gate across the front door. "If Ma was anywheres about, that gate'd be shut an' hooked. That's one thing she always done—seen that gate was shut." His eyes were warm. "Ever since the pig got in over to Jacobs' an' et the baby. Milly Jacobs was jus' out in the barn. She come in while the pig was still eatin' it. Well, Milly Jacobs was in a family way, an' she went ravin'. Never did get over it. Touched ever since. But Ma took a lesson from it. She never lef' that pig gate open 'less she was in the house herself. Never did forget. No—they're gone—or dead." He climbed to the split porch and looked into the kitchen. The windows were broken out, and throwing rocks lay on the floor, and the floor and walls sagged steeply away from the door, and the sifted dust was on the boards. Joad pointed to the broken glass and the rocks. "Kids," he said. "They'll go twenty miles to bust a window. I done it myself. They know when a house is empty, they know. That's the fust thing kids do when folks move out." The kitchen was empty of furniture, stove gone and the round stovepipe hole in the wall showing light. On the sink shelf lay an old beer opener and a broken fork with its wooden handle gone. Joad slipped cautiously into the room, and the floor groaned under his weight. An old copy of the Philadelphia *Ledger* was on the floor against the wall, its pages yellow and curling. Joad looked into the bedroom—no bed, no chairs, nothing. On the wall a picture of an Indian girl in color, labeled Red Wing. A bed slat leaning against the wall, and in one corner a woman's high button shoe, curled up at the toe and broken over the instep. Joad picked it up and looked at it. "I remember this," he said. "This was Ma's. It's all wore out now. Ma liked them shoes. Had 'em for years. No, they've went—an' took ever'thing."

The sun had lowered until it came through the angled end windows now, and it flashed on the edges of the broken glass. Joad turned at last and went out and crossed the porch. He sat down on the edge of it and rested his bare feet on the twelve-by-twelve step. The evening light was on the fields, and the cotton plants threw long shadows on the ground, and the molting willow tree threw a long shadow.

Casy sat down beside Joad. "They never wrote you nothin'?" he asked.

"No. Like I said, they wasn't people to write. Pa could write, but he wouldn't. Didn't like to. It give him the shivers to write. He could work out a catalogue order as good as the nex' fella, but he wouldn't write no letters just for ducks." They sat side by side, staring off into the distance. Joad laid his rolled coat on the porch beside him. His independent hands rolled a cigarette, smoothed it and lighted it, and he inhaled deeply and blew the smoke out through his nose. "Somepin's wrong," he said. "I can't put my finger on her. I got an itch that somepin's wronger'n hell. Just this house pushed around' an' my folks gone."

"You remember Muley," Joad said softly to the preacher.

"Who's that?" the advancing man called. Joad did not answer. Muley came close, very close, before he made out the faces. "Well, I'll be damned," he said. "It's Tommy Joad. When'd you get out, Tommy?"

"Two days ago," said Joad. "Took a little time to hitch-hike home. An' look here what I find. Where's my folks, Muley? What's the house all smashed up for, an' cotton planted in the dooryard?"

"By God, it's lucky I come by!" said Muley. "'cause ol' Tom worried himself. When they was fixin' to move I was settin' in the kitchen there. I jus' tol' Tom I wan't gonna move, by God. I tol' him that, an' Tom says, 'I'm worryin' myself about Tommy. S'pose he comes home an' they ain't nobody here. What'll he think?' I says, 'Whyn't you write down a letter?' An' Tom says, 'Maybe I will. I'll think about her. But if I don't, you keep your eye out for Tommy if you're still aroun'.' 'I'll be aroun'," I says. 'I'll be around' till hell freezes over. There ain't nobody can run a guy name of Graves outa this country.' An' they ain't done it, neither."

Joad said impatiently, "Where's my folks? Tell about your standin' up to 'em later, but where's my folks?"

"Well, they was gonna stick her out when the bank come to tractorin' off the place. Your grampa stood out here with a rifle, and' he blowed the headlights off that cat', but she come on just the same. Your grampa didn't wanta kill the guy drivin' that cat', an' that was Willy Feeley, an' Willy knowed it, so he jus' come on, an' bumped the hell outa the house, an' give her a shake like a dog shakes a rat. Well, it took somepin outa Tom. Kinda got into 'im. He ain't been the same ever since."

"Where is my folks?" Joad spoke angrily.

"What I'm tellin' you. Took three trips with your Uncle John's wagon. Took the stove an' the pump an' the beds. You should a seen them beds go out with all them kids and your granma an' grampa settin' up against the headboard, an' your brother Noah settin' there smokin' a cigareet, an' spittin' ladde-da over the side of the wagon." Joad opened his mouth to speak. "They're all at your Uncle John's," Muley said quickly.

"Oh! All at John's. Well, what they doin' there? Now stick to her for a second, Muley. Jus' stick to her. In jus' a minute you can go on your own way. What they doin' there?"

"Well, they been choppin' cotton, all of 'em, even the kids an' your grampa. Gettin' money together so they can shove on west. Gonna buy a car and shove on west where it's easy livin'. There ain't nothin' here. Fifty cents a clean acre for choppin' cotton, an' folks beggin' for the chance to chop."

"An' they ain't gone yet?"

"No," said Muley. "Not that I know. Las' I heard was four days ago when I seen your brother Noah out shootin' jackrabbits, an' he says they're aimin' to go in about two weeks. John got his notice he got to get off. You jus' go on about eight miles to John's place. You'll find your folks piled in John's house like gophers in a winter burrow."

Excerpt from *The Grapes of Wrath* screenplay by Nunnally Johnson based on the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

A DUST STORM, like a black wall, rises into the sky, moving forward. TOM AND CASY are running, but looking back over their shoulders as the DUST STORM nears. Dust rises from the ground to join and thicken the black wall.

TOM AND CASY are seen racing down the road to the cabin, the wind whipping up the dust. The two men smack open the door and slam it shut after them. The screen begins to grow dark as the storm sweeps over the land. It becomes black.

In THE CABIN, it is black too, but the sound is different. In addition to the sound of the wind there is the soft hissing of sand against the house.

TOM'S VOICE

Ma?... Pa?... Ain't nobody here?

(After a long silence)

Somepin's happened.

CASY'S VOICE

You got a match?

TOM'S VOICE

There was some pieces of candle always
on a shelf.

Presently, after shuffling about, he has found them and lights one. He holds it up, lighting the room. A couple of wooden boxes are on the floor, a few miserable discarded things, and that's all. Tom's eyes are bewildered.

TOM

They're all gone—or dead.

CASY

They never wrote you nothing?

TOM

No. They wasn't people to write.

From the floor he picks up a woman's high button shoe, curled up at the toe and broken over the instep.

TOM

This was Ma's. Had 'em for years.

Dropping the shoe, he picks up a battered felt hat.

TOM

This used to be mine. I give it to
Grampa when I went away.

(To Casy)

You reckon they could be dead?

CASY

I never heard nothin' about it.

Dropping the hat, he moves with the candle toward the door to the back, the only
other room of the cabin. He stands in the doorway, holding the candle high.

In the BACK ROOM the scene moves from Tom at the door across the room to the
shadows, where a skinny little man sits motionless, wide-eyed, staring at Tom. His
name is Muley.

MULEY

Tommy?

TOM

(entering)

Muley! Where's my folks, Muley?

MULEY

(dully)

They gone.

TOM

(irritated)

I know that! But *where* they gone?

Muley does not reply. He is looking up at Casy as he enters.

TOM

(to Casy)

This is Muley Graves.

(To Muley)

You remember the preacher, don't you?

CASY

I ain't no preacher anymore.

TOM

(impatiently)

All right, you remember the *man* then.

MULEY AND CASY

Glad to see you again. Glad to see you.

TOM

(angrily)

Now where is my folks?

MULEY

Gone—

(hastily)

—over to your Uncle John's. The whole crowd of 'em, two weeks ago. But they can't stay there either, because John's got *his* notice to get off.

TOM

(bewildered)

But what's happened? How come they got to get off? We been here fifty years—same place.

MULEY

Ever'body got to get off. Ever'body leavin', goin' to California. My folks, your folks, ever'body's folks.

(After a pause)

Ever'body but me. I ain't gettin' off.

TOM

But who done it?

MULEY

Listen!

(Impatiently Tom listens to the storm)

That's some of what done it—the dusters. Started it, anyway. Blowin' like this, year after year—blowin' the land away, blowin' the crops away, blowin' us away now.

Handout 10: Translating from Text to Script

When a scriptwriter develops a TV, movie, or radio script from a work of literature, he or she must take care to use established scriptwriting elements and format. But translating a narrative text into a script is more than just rearranging the words into a different format. Scriptwriters must also make decisions about details of setting, character dialogue, and plot. For example, *The Grapes of Wrath* is more than 600 pages long. If a scriptwriter were to include every detail of Steinbeck's work, the movie would be so long that no one would be able to watch it!

Working in your team, follow the steps below to compare the novel excerpt with the corresponding script and consider the many facets of the scriptwriter's art.

1. First, read just the two novel excerpts. As a team, answer the following questions:

What is the main idea of these passages? Summarize what is happening.

What are the names of the characters present in the scene?

What is the setting of the action?

2. Now, read the script excerpt. Compare main idea, characters, and setting.

What is the same in both?

What is different?

3. Highlight the passages in both excerpts that are the same, or very nearly the same.
4. Look at the highlighted script passages, observing how much of the novel excerpt is not highlighted. The scriptwriter had to make some decisions in adapting the novel as a movie. In the movie, some information that was described in the text will be shown visually instead.

As you answer the following questions, think about how each part of the novel has been translated into the different script elements. Keep in mind that since you cannot know what the scriptwriter was thinking, there are no right or wrong answers.

- Why might the scriptwriter have chosen to change the opening sequence?

- Why do you think the scriptwriter left out or changed some of the details? Give at least two examples of a detail that was left out or changed, and suggest why.

- What do you think are some issues that a scriptwriter has to focus on that may be less important for a novelist?

Handout 11: Developing Your Dialogue

Now you are ready to write your script, based on the passage your team has chosen! As you follow the steps below, you will consider many of the same questions you did when analyzing the novel and screenplay excerpts from *The Grapes of Wrath*. You will also use script elements to write your dialogue in proper script format. Use Handout 8 as a reference.

As you plan your dialogue (steps 1 through 6), you will discuss and make decisions as a team. Each team member will then write a section of the script (step 7). Finally, your team will work together to review another team's script and to finalize your own (steps 8 through 11).

1. Decide on the main idea.

Read over your chosen passage and decide on the main idea. What is the main action you want to capture in your dialogue? Remember to focus on how the scene shows Antonio's growth or transformation.

2. Locate the beginning and end of the scene.

- Turn to the text and find a beginning and an ending for the scene that includes the main action you want to show.
- Select a length for the scene that you think you can develop into an effective dialogue.
- Mark the section on a photocopy or with sticky notes, and write the corresponding page numbers below. ***Don't write in the book unless you own it!***

3. Identify characters or script roles.

Who will your characters be? Write their names below. You do not need to include every character who appears in the passage. If some characters have very minor roles, you may wish to cut them or combine their lines with those of other characters.

4. Describe the setting.

What is the setting? Consider the scene headings in the script excerpts you read. Include the elements that you think are important to the story you are telling. (Some elements to consider are the weather, geographical features, surroundings, date, time of day, and season.)

Use this information to write the scene heading and opening action below:

5. Decide what to keep the same, what to cut, and what to change.

Where there is already dialogue in the novel, you will probably choose to keep dialogue in your script.

A lot of information described or explained in the novel, however, you will be able to show visually. For information conveyed in narrative, decide whether to:

- Change the narrative into dialogue
- Condense the narrative and write it as action or stage direction
- Cut out the information completely

Mark up what you will keep, cut, or change, either on a photocopy or using sticky notes. Remember, the scriptwriter for *The Grapes of Wrath* left out some portions of narrative that did not directly contribute to the main idea of the scene.

6. Divide up the passage.

Divide the scene into sections, so that each team member has a section of equal length.

7. Write the scene.

Translate your section of the passage into a script, using script format to write character names, dialogue, action, and stage directions.

As you write, follow the decisions made by the team in steps 1 through 5.

8. Assemble the finished scene.

When all team members have finished writing, assemble the scene sections in order. Place the scene heading and opening action at the beginning.

9. Read the script aloud.

Take roles to read the scene as a team. Make sure the script makes sense and flows smoothly from section to section. You may need to edit or create transitions between the parts written by different team members.

10. Review dialogues with another team.

With your team, read the other team's script aloud as part of the review. Use the following six questions to guide your feedback:

- Is Antonio's development or transformation clear?
- Does the script have a clear beginning and end?
- Is the setting established?
- Are character roles clearly identified? Do their voices sound authentic and "in character"?
- Are cuts and changes clear and appropriate to the action?
- Has standard script format been followed?

Remember to exercise the feedback skills you used in reviewing each other's monologues, including respecting the work, emphasizing the positive, writing comments neatly, and pointing out only the best illustration for each point.

Write comments in the script margins and a short summary of your recommendations at the bottom of the script or on a separate sheet of paper. Return the script with your comments.

11. Revise dialogue.

Revise your dialogue based on peer review feedback. Each team member should revise his or her section. Then, reassemble the sections of the script in order into a single document. Read the final version aloud with your team, and make any final edits for clarity and flow. Retype the finished dialogue.

Appendix B: Teamwork

Use this assessment to help you assess and improve your teamwork skills.

Criteria	Comments
My Individual Teamwork Skills: As a team member, I . . .	
Listen to my teammates' ideas	
Ask questions of my teammates, in order to help them clarify their ideas	
Actively participate in team discussions	
Contribute my own ideas, and/or piggy-back or build on my teammates' ideas	
Help my team evaluate information, and propose creative solutions	
Communicate my ideas clearly and defend my ideas and opinions, using specific evidence to back up my points	
Respect my teammates and their opinions	
Compromise, when necessary, in order to resolve any conflicts	
Help and offer assistance to other team members	
Do my share of the work	

Criteria

Comments

Our Team's Teamwork Skills: As a team, we . . .

All understood our team's goal

Identified the tasks that we needed to accomplish

Assigned tasks to different team members

Were all clear about what each individual's role and tasks were

Communicated clearly, listened to one another, and resolved disagreements in a nonconfrontational manner.

Planned and scheduled our tasks, and set deadlines for completing them

Met our deadlines