

College Guild
PO Box 6448 Brunswick, Maine 04011

Sampler

~ Stormy Weather ~

Unit 2 of 6

Literature

Weather is everywhere in literature:

- * In Jon Krakauer's memoir, *Into Thin Air*, about climbing Mt. Everest, a blizzard is one of the main characters;
- * in the mysteries of Stephen King and the adventures of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*, darkness, wind, fog, and thunderstorms create the moody atmosphere necessary to scare the reader;
- * its symbolism makes memorable titles, like Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, and striking names, like Thunderhead, the children's book about a wild stallion;
- * and it has introduced all ages to the succinct beauty and power of poetry -- don't most school children still read Robert Frost's *Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening*? (See Appendix 1).

Keeping the example of *Thunderhead* in mind, if **you** were a creative writer:

1. What kind of animal might be named for:

lightning --
fog --
clouds --
ice --
a tornado --

Why did you choose that animal?

(Example: An animal named after an earthquake could be a dinosaur because of its huge stomping feet.)

2. What kind of weather might you use to name:

a hamster --
a pit bull --
a poodle --
a lion --
a turkey --

Explain the connection.

(Example: Sleet could be used to name a porcupine because if can feel like needles against your skin.)

3. What is one of your strongest memories (good or bad) of a certain kind of weather?

Now it's time for you to be one of the great authors contributing to the body of literature with references to weather!

4. Finish all of the following sentences:

"It was a dark and stormy night..."

"Holding out a large bouquet of lilacs, Joshua..."

"As the first flakes of snow swirled in the air..."

"Margo yelled to Eric to bring her a glass of lemonade, but..."

Different kinds of weather also make great symbols for...well, you tell us!

5. After each weather monster listed below, write three words which describe it and distinguish it from the others:

avalanche --

forest fire --

hurricane --

flood --

earthquake --

blizzard --

tornado --

volcanic eruption --

6. From the eight weather phenomena, pick two that could symbolize some part of your life and explain why you chose them.

(Example: Someone could pick earthquake and avalanche for his life because he has poor balance and falls down a lot.)

The Elements

The amount of water your yard gets when you have four inches of rain is NOT the same as when you have four inches of snow. See Appendix 2. Because of this, rain and snow have different advantages and disadvantages.

7. What is the biggest danger in floods? In blizzards?

8. Pretend you're a journalist and write a news story about some kind of weather.

9. Write a poem about what you like about rain or snow.

The two most common measurements of temperature are Fahrenheit and Centigrade. Most European countries use Centigrade, where 0 degrees is the freezing point of water. In the United States, we use Fahrenheit, where 32 degrees is the temperature at which water freezes. When a temperature is given in Centigrade, we have to use a formula to convert it to a temperature that we understand: **F = 9/5C + 32**

The easy one is for the point where water freezes - 0 degrees Centigrade. Multiply 0 x 9/5 which ends up equaling...0. (Multiplying anything by 0 is 0.) Then add 32 and you have 32 deg. F!

For 10 deg. C? Multiply 10 x 9/5 = 90/5 = 18. Then add 32 (18 + 32) = 50 deg. F.

10. If you are told the temperature is 45 deg. C, is this hot? How hot?

11. Name 3 places you might be if the temperature is over 90 deg. C.

12. Do you enjoy hot or cold weather more? Why?

Temperature is used to characterize people, places and things, conveying an atmosphere or personality. Hot and cold, for example:

It was a cold room -- white walls, gray carpeting and upholstery; even the pictures on the wall were colorless.

The dancer is really hot!

13. Write two sentences (using the ones above as examples) where temperature conveys an atmosphere or personality.

In prison, there may be a lot of hot tempers and cold steel.

14. What is a good way for prisoner to cool down his temper?

15. What do you think is the best way for officers (and the best policy for administration) to cool down a hot situation involving inmates?

16. How can a prisoner avoid letting the cold atmosphere make him a cold person?

Poems & Songs

Weather images and the weather changing with the seasons has always been fodder for poets and song writers. Often the weather/season analogy is used to symbolize love or lost love, for example -- *Let It Snow, April in Paris, May Time, Autumn in New York, Summer in the City, See you in September, Autumn Leaves, Winter Wonderland*, and virtually every song done by the Beach Boys.

17. Pretend you are a songwriter; make up a title for a song about each of these seasons:

Autumn --

Winter --

Spring --

Summer --

18. Now pick your favorite one. What is the song about? What kind of music would your song be set to?

(Example: autumn -- your song could be titled "Pumpkin Patch" because fall is your favorite season and Thanksgiving is your favorite holiday. It could be set to folk music.)

In Appendix 1 is a well-known poem by Robert Frost, an American poet who frequently wrote about New England. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" paints a wonderful picture of winter in this part of the country.

19. Why do you think the narrator stopped "...without a farmhouse near / Between the woods and frozen lake..."?

20. Robert describes the woods as "lovely, dark and deep". Pick a season, time of day, and weather, and describe the woods at this time.

Seasons

Different kinds of weather have always been known to affect people's moods and even their health. For example, allergies and "SAD" (Seasonal Affective Disorder) can seriously impair a person's ability to function for a whole season. Decreased amounts of sunlight cause people with SAD to become depressed, irritable, tired, or reclusive, so winter's short days and long nights are dreaded. On the other hand, the arrival of spring is agony for those with pollen allergies; many have to avoid going outside and struggle to breathe.

21. Do you enjoy spending time outdoors (if you get the chance)? Explain why or why not.

22. Would you like to be able to spend more time outdoors? What health benefits do you think it would bring, if any?

23. During which season do you think people are the most healthy and why?

24. Describe a place in the sun and fresh air where you would most like to be.

Complete (at least) two of the following four:

Draw a picture of the place you chose above.

Write down ten words that describe it.

Write a rhyming two-line poem about it.

Does thinking about your perfect place make you feel better or worse? Why?

In addition to sunlight and fresh air, many foods are closely associated with a season and with keeping healthy.

25. Name three foods associated with each season.

26. Pick a season. Write a menu for the day (three meals plus a snack), which includes all of your favorite foods.

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

**Appendix
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Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.



The White Stuff

Frozen solidity is only one way in which ice presents itself. Another form is snow. If you're young in age or young at heart, snow is sparkling, white fluff, perfect for skiing, sledding, snowballing, and snowmen. On the other hand, if both you and your heart are pushing middle age, snow is a sloppy, slippery menace that makes you late for work, tired from shoveling, guilty from not shoveling, and anxious for spring. But invited

or not, snow comes as a manifestation of one of the basic meteorological processes.

Even if you don't like them in crowds, you can't deny the beauty of individual snowflakes. Each one is a delicate, feathery ice sculpture, fashioned by nature with geometric precision that surpasses the artistry of man. These six-sided or six-pointed figures are the result of crystalline growth on the molecular triangle of H_2O . Sometimes they are small and comparatively dry; sometimes they are large and moist; no two are ever alike. The dry, flaky ones weigh so little in comparison with their size that they seem to float downward like leaves, rather than falling steadily. They have probably fallen through very cold, very dry air. The larger, soggy flakes have probably fallen through comparatively moist air, collecting or colliding with companion snowflakes on the way down. When such flakes are tossed about in turbulent air, they may grow into little pellets or miniature snowballs. These pellets, called *graupel*, are quite delicate, and sometimes they collapse when they hit the ground.

A layer of dry snow may be so flaky that an accumulation ten inches thick may hold the moisture content of only one inch of rainfall. On the other hand, an inch of rain may be the equivalent of only two or three inches of wet snow. Among seasoned snowball manufacturers, this latter kind is referred to as "good for packing."

While a snow squall can, and frequently does, turn into a mixture of snow and rain and then to just rain, precipitation never begins as rain and turns to snow. The "rain turning to snow" forecast actually means that it will rain and afterward it will snow.

Any heavy snowstorm is frequently, but incorrectly, called a *blizzard*. Meteorologically a blizzard must consist of gale-force winds, temperatures of zero or below, and blowing, drifting, powdery snow. This type of snow often blows up from the surface, interfering with visibility.