

THE “COMFORT” COMPANION
(a teacher’s resource guide)
by author Carolee Dean

Based on her young adult novel
“Comfort”

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Introduction

The purpose of *The Comfort Companion* is to provide a resource for teachers interested in incorporating the young adult novel *Comfort* into the classroom curriculum. The philosophy that guides the organization of the material presented here could be used for any piece of literature to create a classroom resource that recognizes the uniqueness of each student's strengths and ability levels. Theoretical perspectives originate primarily from Howard Gardner (1993), the Harvard education professor who originated the "Theory of Multiple Intelligences" and from L.A. Vygotsky (1978) the Russian psychologist who developed the idea of the "zone of proximal development."

Gardner (1993) discusses a variety of human intelligences including musical, bodily kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Gardner (1993) recognizes "many different and discrete facets of cognition, acknowledging that people have different cognitive strengths and contrasting cognitive styles." Instructors interested in incorporating Multiple Intelligence activities into their curriculum will find activities throughout the guide that address these various areas. Additional activities are suggested in the Multiple Intelligences section.

Vygotsky (1978) defines the "zone of proximal development" as the distance between a child's independent abilities and his "potential" under adult guidance. For this reason, writing activities in the *Companion* range in difficulty from simple (creating a brief character epitaph) to complex (writing a theme paper, biographical sketch, or persuasive paper). For students who require support in organizing the content of a theme paper, Response Journal Exercises for each chapter correspond to the theme paper topics (see section on Theme Paper Topics). Creative opportunities are also provided for writing humorous poems.

Because of the large number of objectives addressed, as well as the varied levels of challenge, the *Companion* is appropriate for grades 7-12. Instructors may modify the number and difficulty of activities to meet their individual classroom needs. The multiple choice section of the Final Test is appropriate for grades 7-12. For grades 10-12 the Open-Ended Questions and Essay Questions may be added.

Goals and objectives focus on English, Language Arts, and Reading benchmarks from the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) District and State Standards as well as the criterion for the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). For a complete listing of objectives and their corresponding activities, please refer to the "Goals and Objectives" section at the end of the text. The activities that correspond to each objective have also been listed.

Practice Quizzes and the Final Test were modeled after the format used in the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) with some modifications. The content of the

Final Test was derived directly from the Practice Quizzes so that the quizzes could be used as study guides.

For instructors interested in incorporating the CHARACTER COUNTS!SM Program into their curriculum, specific activities have been suggested in that section.

Information about the character arc/journey is taken from Vogler (1992). Vogler's book, which is based on the work of Joseph Campbell, is a frequently used text for screenwriters.

About the Author

Carolee Dean was born in Bellflower, California. At the age of 15 she moved with her family to Lubbock, Texas where her father attended preaching school. Just before her senior year her father took a preaching job in Happy, Texas (population 600) and the family relocated there.

While a senior at Happy High School, Dean's journalism teacher encouraged her to participate in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Competitions. Like Kenny in *Comfort*, Dean was a state alternate in the area of poetry interpretation. Because of her involvement with the UIL, Dean was awarded a college scholarship and received a bachelor's degree in music therapy from West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas. She later received her Master of Science Degree in Communicative Disorders from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

Dean has worked with children, adolescents, and adults in a variety of settings including a head trauma rehabilitation hospital, a psychiatric hospital, and the public schools. While working with the public schools she participated in the Wrinkle Writing Project (a collaboration between local schools and the University of New Mexico Theatre Department.) The project focuses on using creative drama to encourage students to write.

Dean is a speech-language pathologist who currently lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico with her husband and three children. She started writing at the age of twelve when she began playing the guitar and composing songs. In addition to novels and songs, Dean enjoys writing poetry, plays, screenplays, and non-fiction educational material. Dean offers a variety of presentations for both teachers and students and is available for school visits and educational workshops. *Comfort* is her first novel.

Pre-reading Activities

Read Daddy's song on page 86 and discuss the theme of "Comfort."

What mood does the jacket art convey?

Prepare a Response Journal for future writing activities.

The Response Journal

COMFORT is the story of one young man's journey in becoming a writer. The purpose of the Response Journal is to help students along on their own journey of becoming a proficient writer. Their written responses to the Response Journal questions will help them in organizing their thoughts for later theme papers as well as in analyzing and synthesizing what they read. For information about the type of journal that many professional writer's keep see:

Cameron, Julia. *The Artist's Way*. New York: Putnam, 1992.

Procedure:

- Create a Response Journal using a three ring binder or spiral notebook. Make a cover that shows what brings you Comfort.
- For each chapter, write the Response Journal Exercise and Number at the top of a blank sheet of paper. Take five minutes to write down everything you can think of regarding the subject. Keep your pen moving even if you don't think you have anything important to write. Just write whatever comes to mind.
- Be sure to use a fresh piece of paper for each writing exercise so that these can be reorganized later for theme papers.

Chapter by Chapter Guide

Chapter One

Discussion topic 1A: Conflict between characters is used to create tension throughout the novel. Discuss the conflict between Mama and Kenny in this first chapter.

Discussion topic 1B: Discuss the two meanings of the word “hardship” as it is used in chapter one. Discuss the two meanings of the word “Comfort.” What other ideas are suggested by these two words. Talk about the difference between denotative meaning (literal meaning) vs. connotative meaning (the ideas suggested by words or phrases).

Supplementary Activity #1 – DRAMATIC READINGS

Response Journal – Exercise #1

Write down everything you know about Mama and Kenny and the conflict between these two characters.

Chapter Two

Discussion topic 2A: Discuss the conflict between Kenny and Todd in this chapter.

Discussion topic 2B: What is Mama’s plan for Daddy? Predict some possible outcomes of her meddling in his singing career.

Discussion topic 2C: The development of Kenny’s voice is an important theme throughout the novel. Discuss the difference between his home voice and his school voice. Discuss how we all change our voices (tone, vocabulary, level of formality) depending on the situation and who we are talking to. Give examples.

Supplementary Activity #2: MY VOICE IS CHANGING

Response Journal – Exercise #2

Think briefly about your interactions over the past month. Did anything significant happen? Did you have a fight, receive a lecture, or confide a secret? Write down what happened as if it were a scene in a book. Did your voice change during the interaction? Describe?

Chapter Three

Discussion topic 3A: Talk about how the theme of voice continues to develop in this chapter. On pg. 23 we see how Kenny suppresses his voice when he says, “I wanted to tell her to go jump in the deep fryer, but I’d learned long ago not to start battles I had no chance of winning.”

Throughout the novel Kenny struggles with expressing his feelings and alternately concealing them. Part of his character arc centers on finding his voice as a writer/poet/person.

Discussion topic 3B: On page 14 Kenny says that “words have power.” What does the word “Dallas” symbolize? What are the denotative and connotative meanings of the word “Dallas?”

Discussion topic 3C: In his book “The Writer’s Journey” Christopher Vogler talks about character development in terms of the character’s “journey.” In “Stage One” (Vogler, pgs. 97-114) we see the character in the ordinary world, which in Kenny’s case would be the café and school. In “Stage Two” Vogler says that the character receives a “Call to Adventure.” In Kenny’s case, his call to adventure arises when Cindy encourages him to participate in the poetry interpretation competition. Vogler calls the third stage of the journey “Refusal of the Call.” In this stage the character may refuse, hesitate, or avoid the challenge. Throughout the novel, Kenny will struggle mightily with the “call” to become a poet. Discuss his reluctance when Cindy asks him to read “Invictus” aloud.

Response Journal – Exercise #3

Write down everything you can think about regarding Kenny’s reluctance to read the poem aloud in front of Cindy. Why does he sign up for the poetry interpretation competition in the first place? How does he respond to the news of a second category? Why is he intimidated by Cindy’s reading?

Chapter Four

Discussion topic 4A: On pg. 26 as Kenny speaks of Suzie, he says, “She still wore that fresh-glazed, excited look of someone who things they are somebody before they realize they’re nobody. I had that look when I used to play football.” What does this quote tell us about Kenny’s internal state and how he feels about being forced to give up football?

Discussion topic 4B: What is Mama trying to accomplish by telling Hank from the lumberyard that Daddy already has a job?

Supplementary Activity #3: TRIANGLES

Response Journal – Exercise #4

On page 30, When Mama tells Kenny to go out after Daddy to keep him from driving without a license and violating his parole, how does Kenny feel about having to choose between staying in the café with his “crazy mama,” or going outside after his “crazy daddy.” Does he express his inner frustration or does he conceal it? Explain?

Chapter Five

Discussion topic 5A: Daddy says he went to the liquor store to pay back Smitty. Do you believe him? Do you think he had any other motives?

Discussion topic 5B: What does the word “Kerrville” symbolize?

Discussion topic 5C: How does Daddy feel about prison? Does that seem like a normal response? Explain.

Discussion topic 5D: Predict what might happen as a result of Kenny sneaking out with Cindy?

Response Journal – Exercise #5

Describe what Kenny does to the car at the junkyard. Is he expressing his feelings or concealing them. Explain. Why does expressing his feelings scare him?

Chapter Six

Discussion topic 6A: Subtext refers to “underlying or implicit meaning” (Webster’s) or the “words under the words” as the poet Naomi Nye would say. Read page 49 (last paragraph)-50 and discuss the possible words under Cindy’s words. What does Kenny think underlies what she’s saying? What do you think?

Discussion topic 6B: In his book “The Writer’s Journey” Christopher Vogler talks about the fourth stage of the character’s journey as “Meeting with the Mentor (Vogler, pgs. 137-146). How does Cindy act as a mentor to Kenny in chapter six? Where does she take him? What effect does this have on Kenny?

Discussion topic 6C: Predict what Kenny might say to get out of the trouble he’s in with Mama when she discovers he’s snuck out (p. 51)

Supplementary Activity #4: POETIC PARODY

Response Journal – Exercise #6

In chapter six, important changes take place regarding Kenny’s feelings about poetry after the poetry slam. Write down what happens and explain the internal change in him. What role does Cindy play?

Chapter Seven

Discussion topic 7A: What happens to make the dynamics of the triangle between Kenny, Cindy, and Todd shift at the end of this chapter? What effect does Cindy’s decision have on this triangle?

Discussion topic 7B: Discuss Kenny’s panic attack during the second poetry reading. How does this parallel what happened to Daddy in Kerrville?

Discussion topic 7C: In his book “The Writer’s Journey” Christopher Vogler talks about the fifth stage of the character’s journey as “Crossing the First Threshold” (Vogler, pgs. 149-155). The hero responds to the “Call to Adventure” from stage two and takes the first big step on his journey. What is Kenny’s “First Threshold” on his path to become a poet? How does it turn out? At the end of chapter seven is he more committed to his course or less committed?

Discussion topic 7D – Exercise #7

On page 57 Daddy intercedes in the conflict between Kenny and Mama and gets her to agree to let Kenny go to the district UIL competition in Johnson City. What do his actions tell us about Daddy's character? How does he manipulate Mama? What effect do Daddy's actions have on Kenny's feelings about his father?

Supplementary Activity #5: THE POETS OF COMFORT

Response Journal – Exercise #7

Describe what happens during Kenny's panic attack at the poetry competition.

Chapter Eight

Discussion topic 8A: Describe what happens in the scene between Kenny and his mother just before the basketball game. Does Kenny express his feelings or conceal them? Explain.

Discussion topic 8B: On page 69 Kenny feels guilty for planning on running away when he realizes how hard his mother is working to keep the café running all night. Then on pages 77-78 Jake confronts Mama about her motives for opening a café when it's obvious that she doesn't like to cook. What does their discussion reveal about Mama's true motives? Discuss the contradiction between the idea that Mama is sacrificing everything for her husband's career and the realization that her hidden motives are actually quite selfish.

Response Journal – Exercise #8

In your opinion, is Mama a self-sacrificing martyr, a ruthless opportunist, or a little of both? Write a description of Mama that includes what you believe is her internal emotional state.

Chapter Nine

Discussion topic 9A: Discuss how the sequence of cause and effect results in the confrontation between Todd and Kenny at the café.

Discussion topic 9B: At the end of chapter nine Kenny says, "... I had no idea just how much trouble Todd was going to be." Predict what kind of trouble Todd might cause later in the story.

Supplementary Activity #5 – GENRE MANIA

Supplementary Activity #6 – FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING

Response Journal – Exercise #9

In chapter nine Kenny continues to struggle with whether or not to express his feelings or conceal them. Describe what he does to express his feelings during the confrontation with Todd in the café and the resulting outcome. Do you think what happens will encourage Kenny to express his feeling more or do you think he'll be more inclined to conceal his feelings in the future?

Chapter Ten

Discussion topic 10A: Read paragraph one and identify where the author uses sentence fragments. How does the author's use of grammar and punctuation affect the way the paragraph sounds when read aloud? Why do you think authors are allowed to deviate from standard rules of grammar when students are not?

Discussion topic 10B: On page 93 Cindy asks, "Kenny, why can't all the boys be like you?" This is a rhetorical question because she doesn't really expect an answer. Discuss the various types of questions people ask and the functions of these questions (i.e. yes/no questions, wh-questions.) Is what Cindy says really a question or is it actually a statement? Restate her question as a statement to find out what the connotative meaning might be.

Discussion topic 10C: Discuss the denotative and connotative meanings of the word "It." Discuss ways an individual can take personal responsibility when someone tries to talk them into doing something they are uncomfortable with.

Discussion topic 10D: Predict what course Kenny's relationship with Cindy will take. Give reasons to support your predictions.

Discussion topic 10E: Read the author's description of south central Texas on page 94. Discuss the impact of the small town setting on the character's job opportunities, place in the community, and involvement in school. How would time and place affect the characters if the author had chosen to set the story in a big inner city or an eighteenth century village?

Response Journal – Exercise #10

Describe the town/village/city where you live including as much detail as possible. Pretend you are writing your description for someone who has never visited your town.

Chapter Eleven

Discussion topic 11A: In his book "The Writer's Journey" Christopher Vogler talks about the sixth stage of the character's journey as "Tests, Allies, Enemies" (Vogler, pgs. 157-165). In this stage the hero goes through a series of tests, trials and challenges. Allies and enemies emerge who will either help the hero on his journey or create obstacles. Discuss the types of "tests" Kenny has gone through since "Crossing the First Threshold" at the Johnson City district meet. Who are his allies? Who are his enemies? Are there any characters that slip back and forth from allies to enemies? This stage continues until chapter 17 so continue to be aware of tests as they arise.

Discussion topic 11B: On page 101 Kenny contrasts his school voice with his thinking and talking voice. Discuss how he changes his voice to be appropriate for the intended audience.

Discussion topic 11C: Compare and contrast Kenny’s perception of his poetry reading vs. Cindy’s perception of him as revealed in their discussion on page 107. Discuss how our perception of ourselves is not always the same as other people’s perceptions of us.

Response Journal – Exercise #11

On page 106 Kenny has another panic attack. What he wants to do most is to run. Write down everything you can think of regarding the theme of running and how it pertains to both Kenny and his father.

Chapter Twelve

Discussion topic 12A: Overall some very serious things happen in this chapter. Cindy reveals that her father has beaten her. Then she tells Kenny that she loves him. Also, Todd reveals that Cindy is pregnant and asks Kenny for money to help her get an abortion. The chapter starts; however, with a somewhat comic scene between Jake and Mama regarding the “Elvis” shirt, and the scene with Cindy is broken up with Kenny falling backward onto the milk crates and Cindy laughing at him. Discuss the author’s use of comic relief to break up the tension throughout the novel. Give other examples from the text.

Discussion topic 12B: What does Cindy hope to gain on page 114 by telling the people in the café that her father gave her a black eye? Do you think this will be effective? Why or why not? What else could she do?

Response Journal – Exercise #12

Cindy tells Kenny that she loves him. Then he finds out that she is pregnant with Todd’s baby. Describe the roller coaster of emotions that Kenny goes through in this chapter in regard to his relationship to Cindy.

Chapter Thirteen

Discussion topic 13A: On page 122 Kenny says that some kids are terrified of school, but for him it’s the one place he feels safe. Have a class debate on school safety. Is your school safe? Are U.S. schools safe in general? What effect do the media have on our perceptions of school safety?

Discussion topic 13B: On page 129 Kenny says “Maybe you make your luck or maybe you find it, but we’d never been any good at either.” Predict whether or not the family’s luck will turn. Give reasons to support your predictions.

Discussion topic 13C: On pages 122-123 Mrs. Peterson discusses how Robert Frost used his surroundings to create mood and atmosphere. Give examples of how Dean used the setting of a humid, rainy Texas afternoon to create a mood and atmosphere in this chapter that parallels Kenny’s sense of despair.

Response Journal – Exercise #13

In this chapter Kenny gives Todd the money for Cindy’s abortion. Make a list of Cindy’s contradictory behaviors throughout the book.

Chapter Fourteen

Discussion topic 14A: What important test, trial, or challenge takes place during this chapter? Who are Kenny’s allies? Who are his enemies? In Native American legends, a shape shifter represents an animal or person who can change form. In literature and film, this term is sometimes used to describe a person who changes from an ally to an enemy or vice versa. Describe Daddy’s contradictory behavior as he sometimes appears to be on Kenny’s side but at other times only cares about his own interests.

Discussion topic 14B: Discuss the effect of the triangle of conflict between Kenny, Mama, and Daddy on the level of dramatic intensity in this chapter. Imagine the scene with the liquor bottle being played out between only two of these characters (Kenny and Mama, Kenny and Daddy, Daddy and Mama). What effect would it have had this scene if the author had involved only two characters in the conflict?

Discussion topic 14C: Discuss how Kenny suppresses his voice and conceals his emotions in the scene on pages 139-146. When he finally sits down and writes the poem at the end of the chapter, this represents a major shift and a huge step in his journey of becoming a poet. Discuss the importance of this shift and how Kenny has finally found a way to express his feelings and use his voice.

Response Journal – Exercise #14

Describe Daddy’s contradictory behavior as he shifts between acting as an enemy and an ally.

Chapter Fifteen

Discussion topic 15A: On page 152 Kenny poses several possible reasons why Mama would go visit Smitty. Why do you think she went to visit him?

Discussion topic 15B: In this chapter minor characters begin to take an important role. Discuss the roles of Smitty and Suzie. Discuss the character triangles between Mama, Kenny, Smitty, and Kenny, Suzie, Cindy.

Discussion topic 15C: On pages 162-163 Kenny admires Suzie’s courage in standing up to her father and speaking her mind, something Kenny struggles with throughout the book. What effect does her behavior have on the way Kenny deals with his mother on page 163?

Response Journal – Exercise #15

Describe the important roles Smitty and Suzie play in this chapter.

Chapter Sixteen

Discussion Topic 16A: Read Kenny's poem aloud. What mood does it convey? How does it relate to your personal experience? What are your impressions of the poem?

Discussion Topic 16B: On page 174 discuss the author's use of sarcasm when Daddy says; "There ain't no jobs in this town unless they decide to let me run for sheriff and I don't see that happening any time soon."

Discussion Topic 16C: On page 177 what does Kenny say is so ironic about liars? Do you agree?

Supplementary Activity #8: PULL A POEM OUT OF A HAT

Response Journal: Exercise #16

On page 171 Suzie says "Your words have power, Kenny. They can give people hope, and courage, and confidence. And they need that." How is Suzie, a minor character, starting to play a major role?

Chapter Seventeen

Discussion topic 17A: In his book "The Writer's Journey" Christopher Vogler talks about the seventh stage of the character's journey as the "Approach to the Inmost Cave" (Vogler, pgs. 167-179). In this stage of the journey the hero prepares for the Supreme Ordeal (the ultimate test that shows us what the hero is really made of). Discuss what events take place in chapter seventeen as Kenny approaches the hour he plans to run away.

Discussion topic 17B: Why is Smitty so sarcastic on page 183?

Discussion topic 17C: On page 188 Kenny realizes that there is no way to win in the triangle he's in with Mama and Daddy. How have his parents put him in a no-win situation?

Discussion Topic 17D: Predict what will happen when Kenny tries to leave town.

Supplementary Activity – Countdown

Response Journal – Exercise 17

Smitty, a minor character, plays a major role in this chapter. Describe the effect that his sudden appearance at the café has on the family?

Chapter Eighteen

Discussion Topic 18A: How is the Maya Angelou poem "Caged Bird" symbolic of Kenny's situation?

Supplementary Activity #10: HOW TO BECOME A CAREER CRIMINAL

Response Journal – Exercise #18

On page 199 Kenny and Daddy realize that Mama’s motivation to make Daddy into a country-and-western singer is purely selfish. Discuss how Mama tries to disguise her selfish motives as virtue on page 193.

Chapter Nineteen

Discussion topic 19A: In his book “The Writer’s Journey” Christopher Vogler talks about the eighth stage of the character’s journey as the “Supreme Ordeal” (Vogler, pgs. 181-1201). In this stage of the journey the hero must face his strongest opposition. In Kenny’s case this comes from within as he tries to decide which “road” or “bus” to take; whether to become a criminal or a poet. Discuss Kenny’s internal conflict as he stands at this crossroad.

Discussion topic 19B: Look back at Daddy’s song on pages 86-87 and Daddy’s conversation with Kenny on page 198 about the man in prison who killed himself just before he was supposed to make parole. How do the song and the story foreshadow Daddy’s death?

Discussion topic 19C: What do you think Daddy’s real purpose was in trying to rob the liquor store for a second time? Give reasons to support your answers.

Discussion Topic 19C: Discuss how the author uses the technique of interspersing lines of poetry with Kenny’s internal dialogue on pages 201-203. Then, on page 205 the author introduces character names followed by a period with a brief description of each of the three character’s reaction to the shooting. The purpose is to create the same effect as a series of shots in a movie or screenplay. Discuss how these devices increase the tension in this chapter of crises.

Response Journal – Exercise 19

Discuss the theme of running. What makes Kenny decide to stop running? What is Daddy running from when he tries to Rob the liquor store?

Chapter Twenty

Discussion topic 20A: In his book “The Writer’s Journey” Christopher Vogler talks about the ninth stage of the character’s journey as the “Reward” (Vogler, pgs. 203-214). In this stage of the journey the hero has survived death (either literal or figurative). In a way, Daddy’s death reminds us that Kenny has overcome death by rejecting the path that leads to destruction. After the crises the reward may come in the form of a celebration, an opportunity to take possession of a treasure, self-realization, an elixir, or an epiphany. Discuss what form you think Kenny’s “reward” takes?

Discussion topic 20B: In his book “The Writer’s Journey” Christopher Vogler talks about the tenth stage of the character’s journey as “The Road Back” (Vogler, pgs. 217-225). This is when the hero rededicates himself to the journey. How does Kenny rededicate himself to the journey of becoming a poet?

Discussion topic 20C: Discuss your impressions of Mama going over to Smitty's to clean up Daddy's blood. What do her actions reveal about her character?

Discussion topic 20D – Exercise #20

Read the passage on page 212 where Mama gives directions for what she wants written on Roy's tombstone. Read the parallel scenes where Mama says Daddy's name will end up in platinum (page 85) and in lights (page 181). Discuss the irony of where Daddy's name finally ends up.

Supplementary Activity #11: TOMBSTONE

Response Journal – Exercise #20

Describe how Kenny feels when he realizes that he can't go around his fear of performing and that his only real choice is to walk through it (p. 221).

Chapter Twenty-One

Discussion topic 21A: In his book "The Writer's Journey" Christopher Vogler talks about the eleventh stage of the character's journey as the "Resurrection" (Vogler, pgs. 227-244). This serves as the climax of the story. Not to be confused with the earlier crises, the climax represents the final challenge. It's called the resurrection because it represents a rebirth or fundamental change in the hero. What fundamental change or rebirth takes place in Kenny when he decides to read his poem aloud at the competition and then discovers that Mama has heard it?

Discussion topic 21B: In his book "The Writer's Journey" Christopher Vogler talks about the twelfth and final stage of the character's journey as the "Return with the Elixir" (Vogler, pgs. 247-261). The hero returns from his ordeals and trials with a powerful elixir or potion with healing properties that he shares with the tribe or village. This is sometimes referred to as the denouement (tying up of loose ends). One of Kenny's rewards is the first place medal and the letter he hides Crisco can but his true elixirs are his poetry and his increased understanding of "Comfort." Discuss how he shares these "gifts."

Response Journal – Exercise #21

On pages 226-227 Kenny reads his poem aloud at the UIL competition. Then on page 228 Kenny realizes that he has opened the gate of his emotions, but anger has not consumed him as he originally feared might happen. Describe how Kenny feels when he is finally able to express his emotions.

DRAMATIC READING – Supplementary Activity #1

Try this new twist on the old idea of reading aloud. Have students prepare scenes/segments of the book and perform them as dramatic readings.

Procedure:

- A teacher or student should demonstrate what is expected from a dramatic reading by reading chapter one aloud.
- Listen to segments of various books on tape (those read by a single narrator) and discuss how the narrator uses voice tone to change characters, convey emotional states, and foreshadow danger or indicate suspense. Discuss what other information is conveyed simply by changes in voice.
- Discuss the importance of stage presence (posture, facial expression, eye contact, and attitude).
- Demonstrate the difference between good and poor voice projection.
- Assign sections of the book to students. Now it is time to **PREPARE, PRACTICE, AND PERFORM.**

PREPARE... PRACTICE... PERFORM your dramatic reading!

Before beginning write down the chapter, page number, and a 2-5 word description of the section you will be reading:

PREPARE:

Vocabulary:

- 1) Read your assigned section of the book COMFORT. Write down any words if you are unclear of the meaning or don't know how to pronounce them. Look them up in the dictionary. Write down the pronunciations and definitions. If you feel certain of the meanings and pronunciations of all the words, then choose the top three most difficult words in the text. Look those up and write down their pronunciations and definitions. These will be used to create a class vocabulary list.

Character:

- 2) Write down all the characters that appear in SCENES with dialogue. You will need to create a voice for each of these characters. Write a brief character description along with some ideas of how to change your voice to represent each character.

PRACTICE:

Syntax:

- 3) Practice reading aloud by yourself and reread any sentences that give you difficulty until you are comfortable with the flow of the sentence. If you still have difficulty, ask a teacher or parent for assistance.

Oral Presentation:

- 4) Practice your reading at least three times: once alone in front of a mirror, once at home with family or friends, and once in the classroom with a peer.

PERFORM

- 5) Give your dramatic reading focusing on the techniques discussed in class.

DRAMATIC READING SECTIONS

Reading Sections:

Student's Name:

Kenny gets a hardship license: Chapter 1: Pages 1-4	
The "Welcome Home Roy" party: Chapter 2: Pages 5-12	
The Dallas Fund: Chapter 3: Pages 13-17	
Cindy reads "Invictus": Chapter 4: Pages 18- 24	
The Liquor Store: Chapter 4: Pages 25-31	
The Junkyard: Chapter 5: Pages 32-39:	
* Kenny sneaks out: Chapter 5: Pages 40-41	
** The poetry slam: Chapter 6: Pages 42-47 (excluding the last line of dialogue)	
* The drive home: Chapter 6: Pages 47 (starting with the last line of dialogue)-51	
Changes at the café: Chapter 7: Pages 52-57	
The district UIL competition: Chapter 7: Pages 58-66	
The basketball game: Chapter 8: Pages 67-74 (end with the line that reads "He'd gotten all fixed up...")	
* Waiting at the café: Chapter 8: Pages 74 (start with "Back at the café...") – 78	
** Todd and Cindy arrive: Chapter 9: Pages 79-87 (to the end of the song)	
** Confrontation with Todd: Chapter 9: Pages 87 (starting with "The boys giggled...") – 91	
*** Cindy confides in Kenny: Chapter 10: Pages 92-96	
The regional competition: Chapter 10: Pages 97-101 (ending with the second to the last paragraph)	
Kenny takes fourth place: Chapter 11: Pages 101 (starting with the last paragraph)-109	
The kiss: Chapter 12: Pages 110-116 (ending with the line that reads "Grandpa Harris...")	
Todd wants money: Chapter 12: Pages 116 (starting with "I finally stood up...") – 121	

* The photograph: Chapter 13: Pages 122-125 (ending with the line that reads “She smiled back...”)	
The phone call: Chapter 13: Pages 125 (starting with “I looked out the window...”) – 131	
The poetry assignment: Chapter 14: Pages 132-138 (ending with the line that reads “Thanks a lot...”)	
/ Southern Comfort: Chapter 14: Pages 138 (starting with the line that reads “Daddy left...”) – 146	
The visit to Smitty’s: Chapter 15: Pages 147-152 (ending with the line that reads “In her mind...”)	
/ The wedding party: Chapter 15: Pages 152 (starting with the line that reads “When I pulled up...”) – 163	
**Kenny’s poem: Chapter 16: Pages 164-171 (ending with the line that reads “I felt a surge of purpose)	
**Kenny speaks out: Chapter 16: Pages 171 (starting with the line that reads “When I got to the café...”) – 177	
Smitty and Roy: Chapter 17: Pages 178 – 186 (all but the last line)	
Mama finds the money: Chapter 17: Pages 186 (starting with the last line) – 193	
Kenny’s escape: Chapter 18: Pages 194 – 200	
** The shooting: Chapter 19: Pages 201 – 209	
** The aftermath: Chapter 20: Pages 210 – 217 (ending with the line that reads “Believe in me... Please... Just once.”)	
** “Kindness”: Chapter 20: Pages 217 (starting with “I hurried into the kitchen.”) - 223	
** The state competition: Chapter 21: Pages 224- 230	

MY VOICE IS CHANGING – Supplementary Activity #2

Break up into pairs and role play the following situations to demonstrate how we all change our “voice” depending on the needs of the given situation:

- A policeman gives a woman a speeding ticket.
- The principal tells a father his son is going to be suspended
- A girl borrows her mother’s favorite dress without permission and rips it. Now she has to tell her mother.
- A mother asks her son if she can borrow fifty dollars to help pay the electric bill because she has lost her job.

Ask for volunteers to perform their role plays in front of the class. Discuss how you can tell the difference between characters based on voice. What are some of the differences between the voice of Mama, Kenny, Daddy, Jake, and Todd?

POETIC PARODY – Supplementary Activity #3

Parody – a humorous or satirical imitation of a serious piece of literature or writing.

1. Use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the poems “The Road Less Traveled” by Robert Frost and “Two John Deere Tractors” by Carolee Dean.
2. Discuss Dean’s use of parody in chapter six.
3. Write your own parody on “The Road Less Traveled” or choose one of the other poems in COMFORT as a model for a humorous or satirical imitation.

“Two John Deere Tractors”
by Carolee Dean

Two John Deere tractors diverged into
A yellow haze.
One went out to plow the wheat.
And one went out to plow the maize.
Being a farm boy, long I stood.
Thinking I should follow.
Instead I walked back to the house.
Watched Oprah, then Geraldo.

THE POETS OF COMFORT – Supplementary Activity #4

In chapter seven (page 55) Kenny is reading a biography on the poet William Ernest Henley when he discovers that Henley was a good friend of Robert Louis Stevenson and that Stevenson based his one-legged pirate Long John Silver character on Henley. Use the internet, an encyclopedia, or other reference to research one of the poets discussed in the novel, COMFORT. Write down the name of the poet, three interesting facts, and your source below.

Name of the poet:

Three interesting facts:

Source:

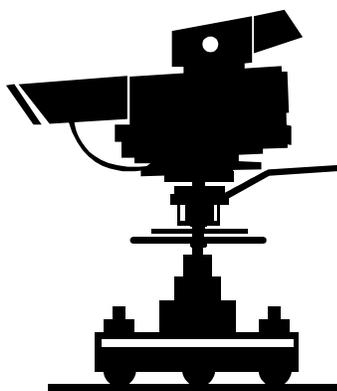
GENRE MANIA – Supplementary Activity #5

THE SONG: Read aloud Daddy’s song on page 86. Discuss how the theme of “Comfort” is reflected in the song on page 86 as well as in the novel as a whole. Use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast the genres of “song lyrics/poetry” vs. “the novel” as vehicles for expressing the theme of “Comfort.”

THE SCREENPLAY: Read the first five pages of Dean’s screenplay. Discuss how films and novels differ as art mediums. Use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast the beginning of the novel with the beginning of the screenplay. Why do you think Dean left out the scene about getting a hardship and started the screenplay with the football game (something mentioned only briefly in the book)? Discuss movie versions of books that are familiar to the class. Compare and contrast.

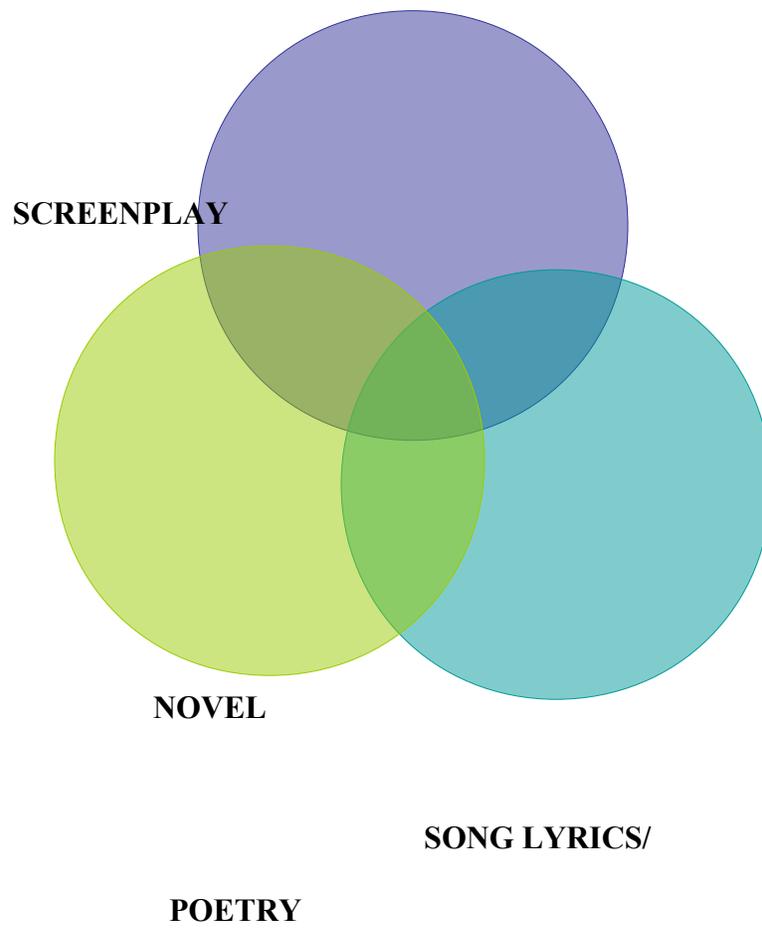
BRAINSTORM: What are some other possible genres that could be used to express the theme of “Comfort?”

DISCUSS: Talk about the limitations and possibilities of each of the genres discussed and the effect that genre has on shaping a theme or topic.



YOU’RE THE SCREENWRITER: Choose a scene from the book and write it in screenplay format. Think about what you might like to add or take out of the book version to create a dramatic and visual scene appropriate for the big screen.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST



THE SCREENPLAY

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

A semi-truck moves down a rainy highway that runs through the Texas hill country. It passes a sign that reads, "WELCOME TO COMFORT, TEXAS -- HOME OF THE FIGHTING BOBCATS." The semi pulls into "ROY'S PLACE," a truck stop cafe.

INT. CAFE -- NIGHT

MAGGIE WILLSON, 34, a plump woman in a too-tight leather skirt and knee-high black boots, stands on a ladder in the dining room hanging up a sign that reads, "WELCUM HOME ROY."

On the floor beneath the ladder sits ROY JR., 3, an obese child wearing nothing but a diaper and a pair of cowboy boots. He licks the chocolate from a donut.

BACK IN THE KITCHEN, KENNY WILLSON, 15, a scrawny teenager in bad need of a haircut, hides a tub of dirty dishes under the sink.

Kenny runs through the dining room on his way to the front door.

MAGGIE

Did you finish those dishes?

KENNY

Yep.

He runs out the front door into the night.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

Kenny runs down the two lane highway toward the stadium lights of the Comfort High School football field. He has holes in his jeans and the loose sole on his left shoe flaps with each step creating a SLAP, SLAP, SLAP rhythm that beats in time with the rain.

KENNY (V.O.)
I learned to run early in
life.

EXT. HOUSE -- DAY -- A FLASHBACK

KENNY, age 5, looks up from his sand box to see a semi-truck lop up over the curb and land in the front lawn on top of his bike.

ROY WILLSON, Kenny's father, 25, drunk, staggers out of the cab of the truck and heads toward Kenny who watches in fear.

Kenny drops his sand toys and runs in the opposite direction.

KENNY (V.O.)
With a drunk daddy it pays to
be fast.

INT. HOUSE -- DAY -- ANOTHER FLASHBACK

KENNY, age 8, sits in the kitchen banging on a set of pots and pans. A woman's shoe comes flying out of nowhere and hits the wall above Kenny barely missing his head.

KENNY (V.O.)
With a sober mama, you gotta
be even faster.

INT. SCHOOL GYM -- NIGHT (PRESENT)

Kenny runs into the locker room. COACH RYAN, 30'S, holds out a football jersey.

COACH RYAN
Come on, come on.

EXT. SCHOOL -- NIGHT

In full gear, Kenny runs toward the open door of the moving bus. A dozen of his team mates lean out the windows cheering him on and yelling at the top of their lungs.

TEAM MATES

Run Kenny!

Kenny makes a daring leap and jumps through the open door onto the steps. The bus moves from the school to the stadium up the hill.

KENNY (V.O.)

But I wasn't the only person
in the family who ran from
their troubles.

EXT. KERRVILLE FOLK FESTIVAL -- DAY -- ANOTHER
FLASHBACK

Roy, 31, drunk, staggers to the microphone up on a large, outdoor stage. He faces the audience and nervously strums his guitar. He opens his mouth to sing and a deep BELCH comes out. The audience laughs and jeers. Roy looks out at them in mortification, drops his guitar and runs.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD -- NIGHT (PRESENT)

Kenny catches a long pass and runs like lightning through the DEFENSIVE BACKS on the other team. He's thin and short compared to the defense but he leaves them in the dust as he sprints toward the goal. His short legs move like the nimble fingers of a speed typist.

IN THE STANDS, CINDY BLACKWELL, 17, a pretty senior, jumps to her feet as she watches Kenny.

CINDY

Run Kenny!

Next to her, Cindy's sister, SUZIE BLACKWELL, 15, jumps up and snaps a photo of Kenny.

SUZIE

Run Kenny!

Flanking the girls on either side sit their parents BUDDY and MARTHA BLACKWELL. Buddy, stocky, late 40's with a USMC tattoo on his forearm, sneers at his wife, Martha, early 40's, a thin, nervous woman with too much makeup and

too much hair. They remain seated arguing AD LIB in the b.g.

The rest of the adult CROWD is made up of an interesting combination of REDNECKS and white collar PROFESSIONALS.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The boys run out of the locker room after half time. Coach Ryan motions them all to gather around him. The team members form a huddle, still jogging in place.

COACH RYAN

Remember what I told you.
We're down by fifteen points.
It isn't enough to be mean.
It isn't even enough to be
fast. You have to know what
you want.

(yelling)

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT?

TEAM MATES

Yes sir!

Kenny looks up at the bleachers at Cindy who's waving a Bobcats flag.

KENNY

Yes sir!

EXT. FIELD - LATER

TODD ANDERSON, 17, the beefy quarterback, kisses the football and holds it up for Cindy. He yells into the stands.

TODD

This one's for you, Baby.

Cindy blows a kiss to Todd. Todd shoots the ball in a spiral toward Kenny. He catches it but the ball nearly knocks him off his feet. It sends him staggering backwards, but he keeps his grip on it. Turns, sprints toward the goal.

The offensive guards and defensive tackles butt heads, creating clumps of bodies out on the field that Kenny has to leap over like a series of hurdles. A massive pileup forms just in front of the goal. Kenny is running too fast. He can't change direction to go around it.

KENNY

Oh no!

Kenny closes his eyes and jumps, sailing through the air until he hits something solid with a THUD! The whistle blows, signifying the end of the game. The crowd ROARS.

Kenny opens his eyes and looks around, surprised to find that he has cleared the dog pile and landed in the end zone. Todd Anderson lifts Kenny to his feet.

TODD

I knew you could run, Kenny.
I didn't know you could fly.

The team members collectively lift Kenny above their shoulders and parade him around the field. He beams. It doesn't get any better than this.

KENNY (V.O.)

Yeah, I could run. So
running was naturally what I
turned to when my life ended
up in the toilet.

INT. CAFE -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie finds the tub of dirty dishes under the sink and yells in anger.

MAGGIE

Kenny!

Roy Jr. hides in a cupboard.

INT. SCHOOL -- DAY

Maggie, Kenny, and Coach Ryan sit at a table in the conference room. No one smiles. Kenny stares at the floor, breathing hard. The look in

his eyes reveals suppressed anger and bitter disappointment.

COACH RYAN

But Mrs. Willson, Kenny is the only Freshman to make the Varsity team. He's one of our top players. We need him.

MAGGIE

And I need him -- to work at the cafe. His daddy's getting out of prison in two weeks.

COACH RYAN

Then maybe Mr. Willson can help out.

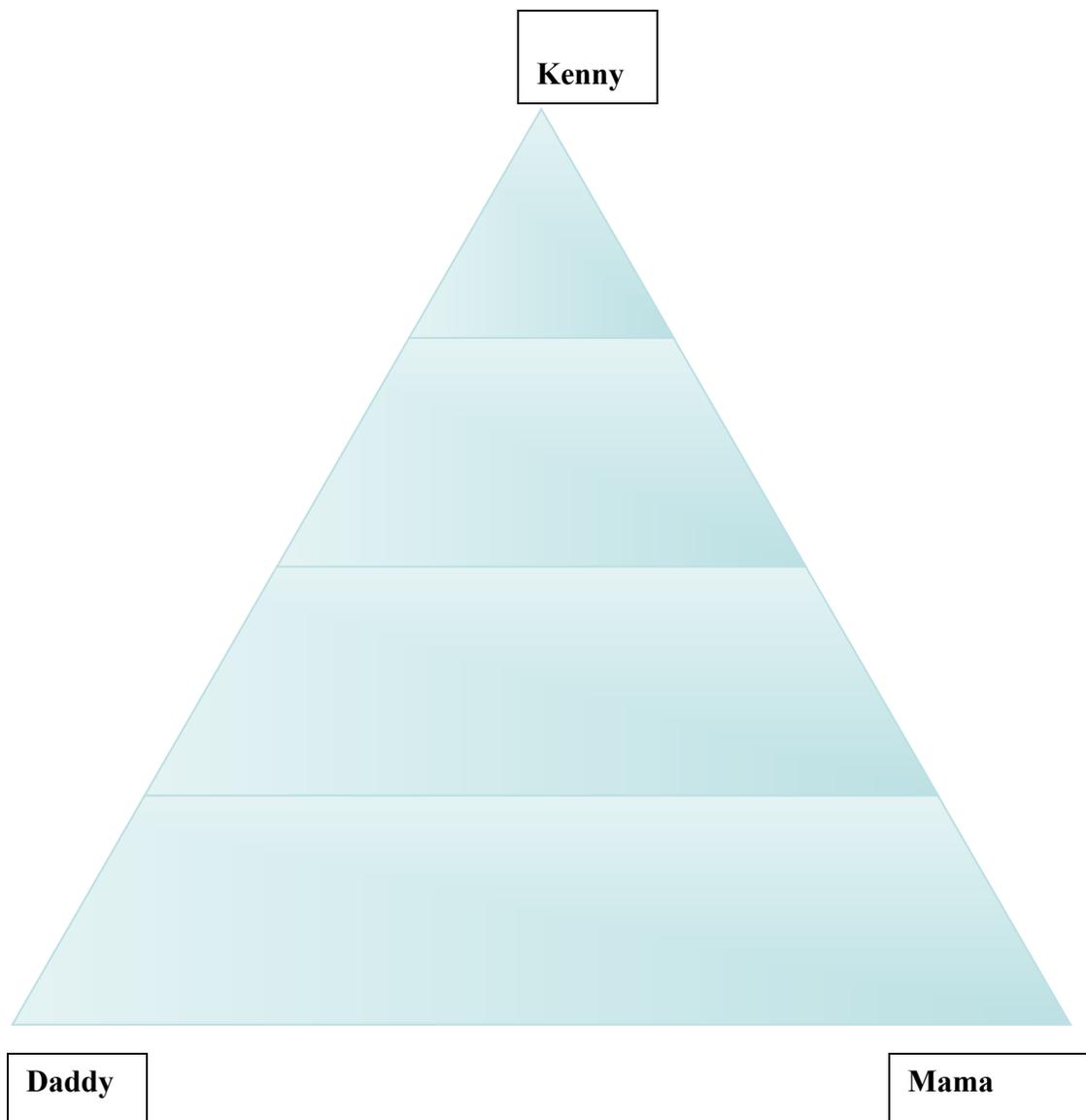
MAGGIE

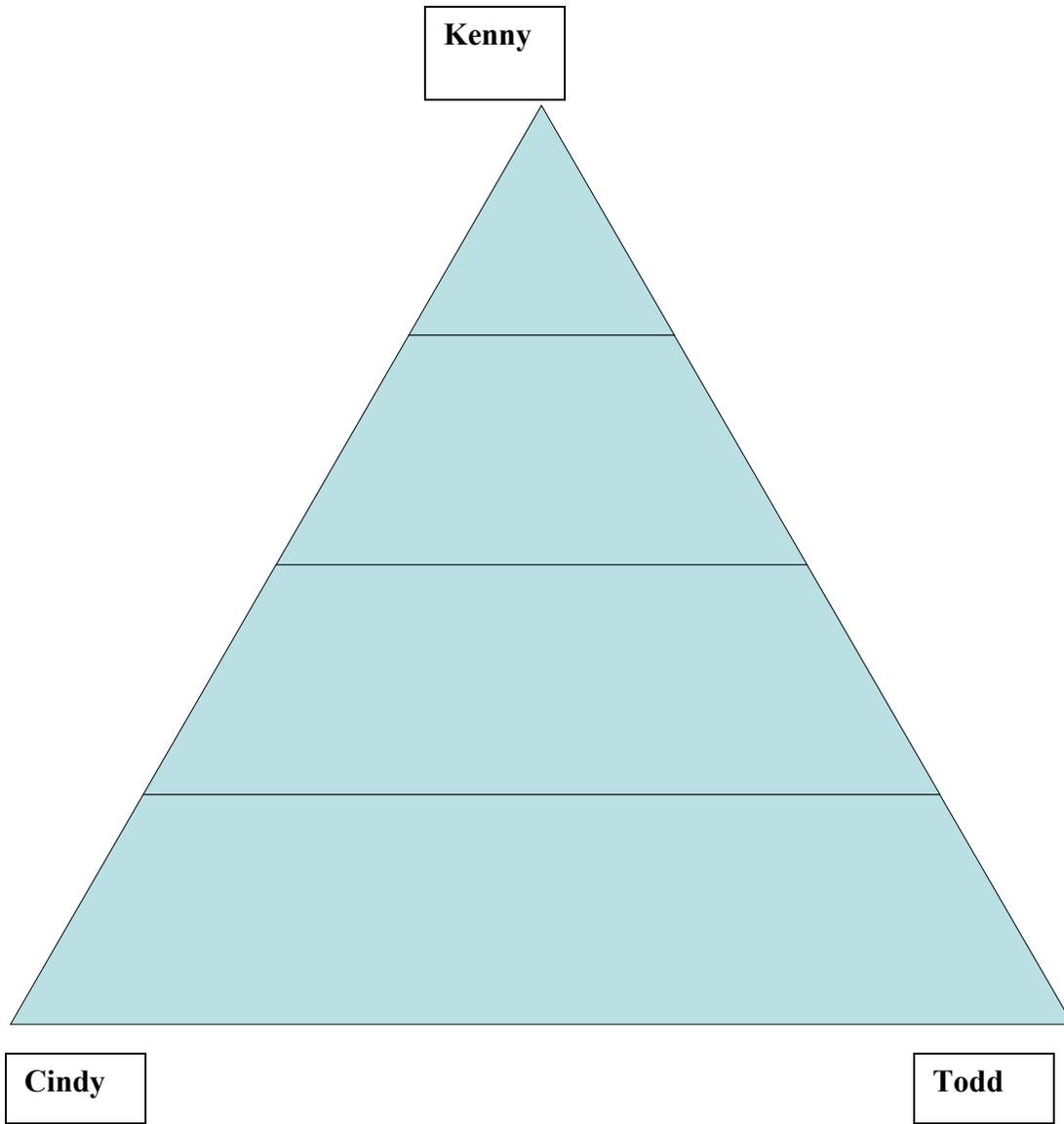
Roy Willson's one and only job is to sing.

Maggie jumps up and snatches her purse, signifying the end of the conversation.

CHARACTER TRIANGLES – Supplementary Activity #6

Write a sentence about the role that each character plays in the triangle of conflict in the story. Think about the characters in terms of their goals and inner motivations. Add information to the triangle as the story progresses.





FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING – Supplementary Activity #7

Chapter 9 is filled with examples of figurative language such as similes and metaphors. For each figurative expression below, choose the answer that best depicts the true meaning.

- 1 (p. 79) “The night dragged on like cold molasses.”
 - A The night was dark.
 - B Time seemed to move very slowly.
 - C The situation was sticky.
 - D The evening was unseasonably cold.

- 2 (p. 79) “...Mama could watch Daddy like a hawk hovering over a snake as it slithers through the grass.”
 - A Mama planned to kill Daddy.
 - B Mama wanted to teach Daddy to fly.
 - C Mama was watching Daddy closely because he was untrustworthy.
 - D Mama liked to watch Daddy sing.

- 3 (p.79) “The roads seemed to lead everywhere. My life led nowhere.”
 - A Kenny’s secret wish was to become a trucker.
 - B Kenny was planning to hitchhike to Dallas.
 - C Kenny was lost out on the highway.
 - D Kenny’s life seemed to lack direction and possibility.

- 4 (p.80) “I’d lay in bed listening to him holler, sometimes until midnight, plugging my ears with cotton balls and cursing my daddy for conveniently getting himself thrown in jail, where I was sure he was snoring away as peacefully as a hibernating bear.”
 - A Daddy’s sleep was not disturbed by concerns over his unmet responsibilities.
 - B Daddy slept a lot in the winter.
 - C Daddy had a snoring problem.
 - D Daddy had a sleeping pill addiction.

- 5 (p. 86) “Cindy kept looking at me as if she was a puppy in the back of a dogcatcher’s truck.”
 - A Cindy looked car sick.
 - B Cindy looked like a dog.
 - C Cindy was a great catch.
 - D Cindy looked trapped.

<p>Find five more figurative expressions in chapter 9 and write them on the back of this page. Discuss their meanings with the class.</p>

PULL A POEM OUT OF A HAT – Supplementary Activity #8

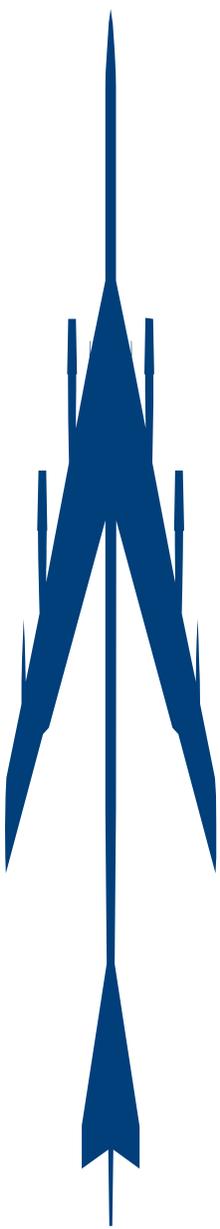
Using the list of terms from the book, put the nouns in one hat and the adjectives in another. Students randomly choose one word from each hat to create an original poem title.

Adjectives	Adjectives	Nouns	Nouns
Anonymous Pg. 1	Chocolate Pg. 8	Felony Pg. 1	Penitentiary Pg. 1
Compulsive Pg. 8	Historic Pg. 32	Courthouse Pg. 1	Anomaly Pg. 8
Spiteful Pg. 33	Nervous Pg. 33	Guitar Pg. 8	Catastrophe Pg. 12
Dilapidated Pg. 36	Poetic Pg. 36	Competition Pg. 18	Disaster Pg. 31
Crazy Pg. 38	Repressed Pg. 38	Emporium Pg. 32	Animosity Pg. 36
Ridiculous Pg. 38	Energized Pg. 41	Shack Pg. 40	Vermin Pg. 40
Scrawny Pg. 41	Secluded Pg. 42	Slam Pg. 43	Poetry Pg. 46
Sequined Pg. 44	Preliminary Pg. 58	Logic Pg. 56	Café Pg. 67
Fictitious Pg. 59	Magnetic Pg. 50	Football Pg. 69	School Pg. 70
Cardiac Pg. 62	Conscientious Pg. 67	Bobcats Pg. 73	Comfort Pg. 87
Beautiful Pg. 71	Bottlenecked Pg. 77	Swine Pg. 95	Stomach Pg. 95
Famous Pg. 81	Styrofoam Pg. 82	Alternate Pg. 97	Tractor Pg. 98
Platinum Pg. 85	Obnoxious Pg. 86	Translation Pg. 101	Punctuation Pg. 106
Exasperated Pg. 87	Dangerous Pg. 87	Soul Pg. 106	Interpretation Pg. 107
Hallucinating Pg. 93	Pretend Pg. 101	Truck Pg. 107	Notebook Pg. 107
Petrified Pg. 105	Terrified Pg. 105	Pirate Pg. 108	Hope Pg. 108
Paralyzed Pg. 105	Ostentatious Pg. 111	Callous Pg. 123	Scheme Pg. 124
Pretentious Pg. 111	Affected Pg. 111	Concoction Pg. 132	Phlegm Pg. 132
Preposterous Pg. 120	Invincible Pg. 124	Clientele Pg. 134	Establishment Pg. 147
Adjectives	Adjectives	Nouns	Nouns

Incriminating Pg. 139	Pathetic Pg. 144	Coronary Pg. 149	Linoleum Pg. 149
Oppressive Pg. 124	Preoccupied Pg. 134	Hysteria Pg. 142	Candidate Pg. 148
Nitroglycerin Pg. 149	Cardiac Pg. 149	Fragments pg. 149	Amends Pg. 150
Inebriated Pg. 154	Disposable Pg. 158	Chauffer Pg. 151	Conspirator Pg. 155
Brawny Pg. 160	Peppermint Pg. 153	Photographer Pg. 158	Carnation Pg. 158
Belligerent Pg. 176	Frantic Pg. 178	Nuptials Pg. 159	Appendage Pg. 159
Agitated Pg. 179	Metal Pg. 101	Philosophy Pg. 161	Promotionals Pg. 162
Cold Pg. 186	Caged Pg. 187	Hostility Pg. 174	Cologne Pg. 176
Red Pg. 192	Potential Pg. 195	Adrenaline Pg. 178	Errand Pg. 179
Frivolous Pg. 196	Frayed Pg. 197	Criminal Pg. 183	Representative Pg. 183
Resourceful pg. 197	Decent Pg. 199	Sarcasm Pg. 183	Jail Pg. 183
Wooden Pg. 199	Innocent Pg. 201	Shame Pg. 186	Zombie Pg. 188
Caged Pg. 201	German Pg. 202	Corndogs Pg. 180	Pizzas Pg. 180
Dark Pg. 203	Emergency Pg. 208	Establishment Pg. 195	Proprietors Pg. 195
Tragic Pg. 209	Satin Pg. 211	Addiction Pg. 197	Virtue Pg. 199
Dandy Pg. 211	Strange Pg. 213	Words Pg. 196	Funeral Pg. 210
Divine Pg. 213	Frozen Pg. 214	Metaphor Pg. 212	Headstone Pg. 212
Magical Pg. 214	Surprising Pg. 215	Melody Pg. 216	Dreams Pg. 219
Extreme Pg. 216	Guilty Pg. 217	Rules Pg. 220	Fear Pg. 221
Massive Pg. 218	Borrowed Pg. 221	Kindness Pg. 222	Sorrow Pg. 223
Desolate Pg. 222	Genuine Pg. 224	Voice Pg. 222	Friend Pg. 223
Lost Pg. 227	Insignificant Pg. 227	Heart Pg. 227	Truce Pg. 228

COUNTDOWN – Supplementary Activity #9

In chapter 17, it's Thursday, the night of Daddy's big performance, the night Kenny's school mates depart for the UIL competition, and the night Kenny plans on running away. Create a timeline for Thursday illustrating the events of the day, what happens, and when.



7:00 a.m. Mama wakes up Kenny and tells him to watch Roy junior

HOW TO BECOME A CAREER CRIMINAL

Supplementary Activity #10

On page 194 Kenny says, “I always wondered how a person decides to become a criminal. It wasn’t exactly something you chose when career day came around at school.”

Working individually or in small groups, make a list of five events in chronological order that lead up to Kenny’s decision to commit a robbery. Try to go back as far as you can for the first event.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

TOMBSTONE – Supplementary Activity #11

Roy Dan Willson
1967-2002
Loving Husband and Father
And the Best Damn Country-and-Western Singer
That Ever Lived



Imagine that one of the other characters in the novel has died. Create a tombstone for them in the space below including:

1. Name
2. Date of birth and death
3. A brief epitaph
4. An image that represents their character

Multiple Intelligence Activities

Verbal/Linguistic: Create your own poetic parody (supplementary activity #3).

Logical/Mathematical: Keep a log tracking the amount of money in Kenny's "Dallas Fund." Write down the amount of each "deposit" and "withdrawal." How much is left at the end of the book?

Create a Time Line for the events of that fateful Thursday when Kenny plans to run away (see supplementary activity #9).

Visual/Spatial: Make posters depicting scenes from the book and display them around the classroom (Thanks to Laura Jackson and Laura McGowan of Valley High School for this activity).

Work individually or in groups to create a visual map depicting each of the twelve stages of the "Hero's Journey." Write down the heading of each stage along with a picture showing what happens during that part of Kenny's journey. For more information see the *Comfort Companion Chapter-by-Chapter Guide* and/or Vogler, Christopher. *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters*. Studio City: Michael Wiese Productions, 1992. ISBN# 0-941188-13-2

Body/Kinesthetic: Act out the scenes below in small group pantomimes without speaking or making any sound (this should look like a scene from TV with the sound turned off). When you're done, see if the other students in the class can guess which scene from the book your pantomime came from.

Pages	Characters	Scene
1-4	Mama, Kenny, Police Officer	Mama and Kenny drive to the courthouse in Boerne to get him a driver's license.
21-23	Cindy, Kenny, Mama	Kenny is embarrassed when Mama yells at Cindy for reciting a poem up on Daddy's stage.
35-39	Kenny, Daddy	Kenny beats up the Chevy at the Comfort Junkyard
42-44	Kenny, Cindy, Waitress, Referee, Billy Bob, Carmelita, Ring Girl	Kenny and Cindy attend the poetry slam in San Antonio
153-155	Kenny, Suzie	Suzie meets Kenny out by the dumpster and tells him Cindy has married Todd
155-158	Mama, Kenny, Todd, Cindy, Mr. Blackwell, Mrs. Blackwell	Kenny waits on the "wedding party" and takes their photograph.
207	Kenny, Roy, Jake, Smitty, Frank Bergman, Molly Boswell, Tony Boswell	Just before he dies, Daddy asks Kenny to take care of Mama.

Musical: Watch an episode of “Austin City Limits” and discuss it with the class. Why do you think the author chose this particular show to use in the novel?

Interpersonal: Create a school-wide open mic poetry coffee house. Invite local poets, teachers, and students to read their original poems.

Have a “Comfort Cuisine” potluck serving food from “Roy’s Place” such as honey buns, corn dogs, frozen pizzas, pop tart sandwiches, etc. (Thanks to Laura Jackson and Laura McGowan of Valley High School for this activity).

Intrapersonal: Kenny says on page 122 “... for me, school was the one place I felt safe, the one place I could relax and let down my guard.” In your Response Journal, describe a place where you feel safe and explain why.

Naturalistic: Research the connection between alcohol and blood sugar. Many alcoholics consume large amounts of sugar when going through detox. How does Roy junior’s chocolate addiction parallel his father’s alcohol addiction?

Dr. Howard Gardner, a professor of education at Harvard University, teaches that there are many different types of learners with many varied learning styles. His theory of multiple intelligences suggests that students respond best to the learning environment when information is presented through a variety of avenues that address the various intelligences. For more information about his theory check out the following:

Gardner, Howard. Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. New York: Basic, 1983

Gardner, Howard. Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice. New York: Basic, 1993.

Gardner, Howard. Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century. New York: Basic, 2000.

CHARACTER COUNTS!SM Activities

Character Counts is a collaboration between schools, communities, and nonprofit organizations that teaches the Six Pillars of CharacterSM: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship.”

Trustworthiness: Throughout the story, Kenny steals from his mother and plans to run away. Then, when trying to work up the courage to rob a gas station, he experiences extreme inner conflict as he contemplates his two paths on pages 201-203. He experiences a fundamental shift in character when he chooses the poetry competition over running away to Dallas. Read the Robert Frost poem, “The Road Not Taken” in class and discuss Kenny’s “Two Roads.” Predict how his life might have turned out if he had taken the other path.

Respect: Discuss Daddy’s contradictory behavior. After returning from prison he desperately wants to regain his families respect by finding a job but he doesn’t try very hard to stay sober. He doesn’t admit that the liquor bottle belongs to him (p. 142) and he makes excuses for why he’s drinking again (p. 144). Make a list of the things Daddy does to gain Kenny’s respect (i.e. getting Mama to let him go to Johnson City). Make another list of the things Daddy does that make him lose Kenny’s respect.

Responsibility: In Chapter Ten Cindy tells Kenny how Todd pressured her into having sex with him. As a result, she gets pregnant and gives up her opportunity for a college education. Talk about the rewards and costs of standing up for yourself and taking self-responsibility in the face of extreme peer pressure. See Discussion Topic 10C

Fairness: On pages 185-187 Roy pays Smitty back the money he stole from him but Smitty does not believe this is fair reimbursement for the pain and trauma he has suffered. Many people in the judicial system disagree about criminal’s rights versus victim’s rights. Have a classroom debate on the subject.

Caring: Read the Naomi Shihab Nye poem “Kindness” on pages 221-223. Analyze the poet’s definition of what kindness means and discuss how Kenny is saved by simple acts of kindness. What acts of kindness do we take for granted? Name three simple acts of kindness that you can perform over the next week. Act on them, then write about what happened in your response journal. Write your own poem about kindness.

Citizenship: On page 202 Kenny realizes for the first time that he doesn’t really want to run from Comfort. What he wants is to be a “real and true” part of the town. Discuss how Kenny’s place in his community gives him strength in his time of crises. Make a list of the people in his community who offer him encouragement throughout the story. See Discussion Topic 10E

CHARACTER COUNTS! And the Six Pillars of Character are service marks of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics.
www.characatercounts.org.

THEME PAPER TOPICS

Write a five paragraph essay on one of the following. You may use your Response Journal entries to help organize your ideas.

1) Discuss how the author uses conflicts between characters to create tension throughout *Comfort*.

Response Journal – Exercise #1

Write down everything you know about Mama and Kenny and the conflict between these two characters.

Response Journal – Exercise #12

Cindy tells Kenny that she loves him. Then he finds out that she is pregnant with Todd’s baby. Describe the roller coaster of emotions that Kenny goes through in this chapter in regard to his relationship to Cindy.

If you have completed Supplementary Activity #6 on Character Triangles, use it to help you discuss triangles of conflict.

2) Discuss the changes that take place in Kenny as he learns to express his feelings and his voice rather than always suppressing his emotions.

Response Journal – Exercise #4

On page 30, When Mama tells Kenny to go out after Daddy to keep him from driving without a license and violating his parole, how does Kenny feel about having to choose between staying in the café with his “crazy mama,” or going outside after his “crazy daddy.” Does he express his inner frustration or does he conceal it? Explain?

Response Journal – Exercise #5

Describe what Kenny does to the car at the junkyard. Is he expressing his feelings or concealing them. Explain. Why does expressing his feelings scare him?

Response Journal – Exercise #9

In chapter nine Kenny continues to struggle with whether or not to express his feelings or conceal them. Describe what he does to express his feelings during the confrontation with Todd in the café and the resulting outcome. Do you think what happens will encourage Kenny to express his feeling more or do you think he’ll be more inclined to conceal his feelings in the future?

Response Journal – Exercise #21

On pages 226-227 Kenny reads his poem aloud at the UIL competition. Then on page 228 Kenny realizes that he has opened the gate of his emotions, but anger has not consumed him as he originally feared might happen. Describe how Kenny feels when he is finally able to express his emotions.

3) Discuss the changes that take place in Kenny regarding his confidence as a performer.

Response Journal – Exercise #3

Write down everything you can think about regarding Kenny’s reluctance to read the poem aloud in front of Cindy. Why does he sign up for the poetry interpretation competition in the first place? How does he respond to the news of a second category? Why is he intimidated by Cindy’s reading?

Response Journal – Exercise #6

In chapter six, important changes take place regarding Kenny’s feelings about poetry after the poetry slam. Write down what happens and explain the internal change in him. What role does Cindy play?

Response Journal – Exercise #7

Describe what happens during Kenny’s panic attack at the poetry competition.

Response Journal – Exercise #20

Describe how Kenny feels when he realizes that he can’t go around his fear of performing and that his only real choice is to walk through it (p. 221).

4) Discuss how the author uses the theme of *running* throughout *Comfort* to contrast Kenny with his father.

Response Journal – Exercise #11

On page 106 Kenny has another panic attack. What he wants to do most is to run. Write down everything you can think of regarding the theme of running and how it pertains to both Kenny and his father.

Response Journal – Exercise #19

Discuss the theme of running. What makes Kenny decide to stop running? What is Daddy running from when he tries to Rob the liquor store?

5) Discuss the important roles that minor characters play in *Comfort*.

Response Journal – Exercise #15

Describe the important roles Smitty and Suzie play in this chapter.

Response Journal: Exercise #16

On page 171 Suzie says, “Your words have power, Kenny. They can give people hope, and courage, and confidence. And they need that.” How is Suzie, a minor character, starting to play a major role?

Response Journal – Exercise #17

Smitty, a minor character, plays a major role in this chapter. Describe the effect that his sudden appearance at the café has on the family?

6) Examine the patterns of contradictory behavior in Mama, Daddy, and Cindy.

Response Journal – Exercise #8

In your opinion, is Mama a self-sacrificing martyr, a ruthless opportunist, or a little of both? Write a description of Mama that includes what you believe is her internal emotional state.

Response Journal – Exercise #13

In this chapter Kenny gives Todd the money for Cindy's abortion. Make a list of Cindy's contradictory behaviors throughout the book.

Response Journal – Exercise #14

Describe Daddy's contradictory behavior as he shifts between acting as an enemy and an ally.

Response Journal – Exercise #18

On page 199 Kenny and Daddy realize that Mama's motivation to make Daddy into a country-and-western singer is purely selfish. Discuss how Mama tries to disguise her selfish motives as virtue on page 193.

BIOGRAPHY

Write a biographical sketch on one of the poets mentioned in *Comfort*. You may want to use your research from Supplementary Activity #4 “The Poets of *Comfort*.”

PERSUASIVE PAPER

Research the liquor laws in your state and then write a persuasive paper on one of the following topics:

- 1) What should be the legal drinking age?
- 2) At what point should a person with a history of driving-while-intoxicated charges lose their license?
- 3) How close should liquor establishments be allowed to schools?
- 4) What charges should be brought against drunk drivers who kill people in automobile accidents?

PRACTICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 1-5

Directions: for each question, circle the letter that represents the best answer.

- 1** (p. 1) Why does Mama want Kenny to get a hardship driver's license?
- A Because she's tired of driving him to school.
 - B So he can run errands for the café.
 - C So he can drive Daddy to his AA meetings.
 - D So he'll have a state issued ID.
- 2** (p. 4) What does Kenny feel is his true hardship?
- A His family and the café
 - B His driver's license
 - C School
 - D His dreams
- 3** (p. 12) What is at the heart of Mama's scheme?
- A She plans to leave Daddy.
 - B She wants to buy a bigger café.
 - C She's starting a mail order business.
 - D She wants to make Daddy into a famous country and western singer.
- 4** (p. 14) What does the word *Dallas* symbolize for Kenny?
- A Big city traffic
 - B Major League Football
 - C Freedom and escape
 - D The Texas fashion industry
- 5** (p. 20) Why does Cindy tell Kenny that William Ernest Henley would be a good poet for the "Diversity and the Human Experience" category?
- A He was English.
 - B He was dead.
 - C He overcame personal tragedy as a child when he had his leg amputated.
 - D He knew Robert Louis Stevenson.
- 6** (p. 31 & 34) What does the word *Kerrville* symbolize for Kenny?
- A Small towns
 - B Disaster and failure
 - C Poetry
 - D The Kerrs
- 7** (p. 35) Where do Kenny and Daddy go after they leave Smitty's Liquors?
- A Back to the café
 - B To the Smokehuas Sausage Palace
 - C To the Comfort Emporium
 - D To the Comfort Junkyard
- 8** (p. 33) What was Daddy supposed to be doing right before he robbed the liquor store?
- A Visiting Maggie in the hospital
 - B Working at the lumberyard
 - C Singing at the Kerrville Folk Festival
 - D Working at the café

PRACTICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 1-5 continued

9 (p. 34) Who came to get Kenny after his father was arrested?

- A Jake, the sheriff
- B Mama
- C Cindy
- D A social worker

10 (p. 41) Where is Cindy taking Kenny?

- A To San Antonio
- B To Dallas
- C To Kerrville
- D To the moon

BONUS: In the space below, write a paragraph describing the triangle of conflict between Kenny, Mama, and Daddy.

PRACTICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 6-10

Directions: for each question, circle the letter that represents the best answer.

- 1** (p. 47) When Billy Bob recites a poem about being fat when he was a kid it reminds Kenny of—
- A Roy Junior
 - B Jake
 - C Todd
 - D himself
- 2** (p.46 & 61) Billy Bob’s poem “Two John Deere Tractors” is a parody on the Robert Frost poem “The Road Not Taken” that begins with the words—
- A *Don’t call me woman*
 - B *She walks in beauty*
 - C *Out of the night that covers me*
 - D *Two roads diverged in a yellow wood*
- 3** (p. 54) Complete the following analogy to compare Daddy’s musical failure at the folk festival with Kenny’s panic attack at the district UIL competition: Daddy’s experience in Kerrville parallels Kenny’s experience in _____
- A Comfort
 - B Boerne
 - C Johnson City
 - D Welfare
- 4** (p. 65) What word does Kenny use in place of *rough* to describe Todd?
- A *athletic*
 - B *serrated*
 - C *smooth*
 - D *ragged*
- 5** (p. 77) What is Mama’s real motivation for owning a café?
- A She wants to get rich.
 - B She loves fast food.
 - C She wants Roy to have a safe place to sing.
 - D She can’t find another job
- 6** (p. 70) What does Mama want Kenny to do when he turns sixteen?
- A Get an official driver’s license
 - B Quit school
 - C Join the army
 - D Learn to play the guitar
- 7** (p. 79) The simile *the night dragged on like cold molasses* means –
- A the night was dark
 - B time seemed to move slowly
 - C the situation was sticky
 - D the evening was unseasonably cold
- 8** (p. 79) What is Kenny really saying when he makes the analogy that *The roads seemed to lead everywhere. My life led nowhere?*
- A he wants to be a trucker
 - B he’s lost
 - C he’s planning on hitchhiking to Dallas
 - D he feels as if his life lacks direction and possibility

9 (p. 85) When Mama tells the trucker about Daddy and says, “Look for his name cause one of these days you’ll be seeing it in platinum,” platinum symbolizes—

- A musical success
- B money
- C a new sign for the café
- D jewelry

10 (p. 94) Kenny compares south central Texas to New Orleans because of what similar qualities?

- A Lush green vegetation and music
- B Dust storms
- C Flat farmland
- D Dry, parched heat

BONUS: In the space below, write a paragraph describing the town of Comfort.

PRACTICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 11-15

Directions: for each question, circle the letter that represents the best answer.

- 1** (p. 105) What adjectives does Kenny use to describe how *nervous* he is?
- A *petrified, terrified, paralyzed*
 B *happy, jubilant, excited*
 C *secure, confident, sure*
 D *tired, lazy, unmotivated*
- 2** (p. 107) When Kenny fears that he has done poorly at the poetry reading, Cindy encourages him by telling him that he has –
- A passion
 B good posture
 C a nice speaking voice
 D an exceptional vocabulary
- 3** (p. 111) What synonym does Kenny use to explain what *ostentatious* means?
- A *ugly*
 B *alarming*
 C *old-fashioned*
 D *pretentious*
- 4** (p. 114) What does Cindy hope to gain by telling the people in the café that her father punched her in the face?
- A She hopes to shame her father so he won't hit her again.
 B She wants Kenny to feel sorry for her.
 C She wants to embarrass Todd.
 D She's trying to create a scene
- 5** (p. 130) Why is the date of the *Austin City Limits* show a conflict?
- A It's the same night that Kenny is supposed to leave for the state UIL competition.
 B It's the same night as Roy's "Welcome Home" Party.
 C It's Kenny's birthday.
 D It's the night of the Sadie Hawkins dance.
- 6** (p. 129) The author doesn't tell us why Daddy can't leave the county to perform on television but there is a reason implied by Daddy's situation. What is it?
- A He doesn't have a driver's license.
 B Leaving town would violate his parole.
 C He's afraid of big cities
 D He'll get drunk if he leaves the café
- 7** (p. 135) In the following statement "The Plan and the memory of the Kiss were all I had to hang onto," Why does the author capitalize the words *Plan* and *Kiss*?
- A To emphasize the importance of these words to Kenny
 B Because these words originate from the German language
 C Because they are both nouns
 D Because they are poem titles

8 (p. 139-140) When Kenny finds the bottle of Southern Comfort in the Crisco can he knows that –

- A someone is eating too much saturated fat
- B Mama is hiding the fact that she doesn't know how to cook
- C Daddy is drinking again
- D someone is stealing their groceries

9 (p. 150) Why does Smitty keep a rifle on a shelf behind the cash register?

- A He was afraid to come back to work after Daddy robbed him.
- B It's almost hunting season.
- C He's waiting for a permit.
- D His wife won't let him keep it at home.

10 (p. 161) Why doesn't Jake intervene at first in the conflict between Suzie and her father?

- A He's off duty.
- B He believes families should work out their own problems.
- C He's not carrying a gun
- D He's afraid of Buddy Blackwell

BONUS: In the space below, write one paragraph describing an ally of Kenny's. Write another paragraph describing one of his enemies.

PRACTICE QUIZ – CHAPTERS 16-21

Directions: for each question, circle the letter that represents the best answer.

- 1** (p. 166) Kenny is an alternate for the poetry interpretation competition. This means that the only way he can compete at state is if—
- A** he tries harder next year
 - B** one of the students who placed first through third does not compete for some reason
 - C** he challenges the decision of the judges
 - D** he bribes the judges
- 2** (p.170) Mrs. Peterson says Kenny’s poem moved her because—
- A** he used impressive vocabulary words
 - B** his style reminded her of Byron
 - C** he sounded like Robert Frost
 - D** he spoke from his heart
- 3** (p. 177) What does Kenny say is the ironic thing about liars?
- A** They make people feel bad for not believing Them.
 - B** They actually tell the truth 90% of the time.
 - C** They tell good stories even if most of them aren’t true
 - D** They mostly tell lies to avoid hurting people’s feelings.
- 4** (p. 188-189) What is the evidence that Mama has snapped?
- A** She’s ordered far too many frozen pizzas.
 - B** She gets upset when she discovers Kenny has stolen money from her.
 - C** She continues acting as if Daddy is going to sing when he’s made it clear that he has no intention of doing so.
 - D** She doesn’t notice when Daddy breaks the guitar.
- 5** (p. 196-197) Even though it is confined in a cage, Maya Angelou’s “Caged Bird” symbolizes the importance of—
- A** jail
 - B** music
 - C** freedom
 - D** family
- 6** (p. 197) What is Daddy’s cologne hiding?
- A** The smell of liquor
 - B** The fact that Daddy hasn’t bathed in three days
 - C** The smell of grease
 - D** The smell of fear
- 7** (p.201) What image does the author use to parallel the idea of the two buses leaving town?
- A** Two roads diverging in a yellow wood
 - B** Two caged birds
 - C** Two black pits
 - D** Two dead poets

8 (p. 211) What simile does Mama use to describe heaven to Roy junior? She says heaven is like—

- A a palace with pearly gates
- B a café that never has to be cleaned
- C a fancy prison with lots of parties
- D an all night food buffet that never ends

9 (p. 229) Why does Kenny put his first place medal in a Crisco can, the same place Daddy hid his liquor?

- A He knows Mama won't look there because she won't be interested in his success.
- B This foreshadows that Kenny will develop a drinking pattern later in life
- C There was no more room under the bathroom sink.
- D He didn't want Roy junior to find it.

10 (p. 229) What does Mama do with the café after Daddy dies?

- A She turns it into a pancake house.
- B She sells it.
- C She burns it.
- D She rents it out.

Bonus: In the space below, write a one paragraph character sketch of Mama.

FINAL TEST – CHAPTERS 1-21

Directions: for each question, circle the letter that represents the best answer.

- 1 (p. 1) Why does Mama want Kenny to get a hardship driver's license?
- A Because she's tired of driving him to school.
 - B So he can run errands for the café.
 - C So he can drive Daddy to his AA meetings.
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- A the night was dark
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- D the smell of fear
- 24 (p.201) What image does the author use to parallel the idea of the two buses leaving town?
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- B Two caged birds
- C Two black pits
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- 25 (p. 211) What simile does Mama use to describe heaven to Roy junior? She says heaven is like—
- A a palace with pearly gates
- B a café that never has to be cleaned
- C a fancy prison with lots of parties
- D an all night food buffet that never ends

FINAL TEST -- OPEN-ENDED ITEMS (answer 1 of the 4 at the bottom of this page)

1. Describe the town of Comfort and explain the impact of setting on plot and character development. Support your answer with evidence from the book.
2. Describe the triangle of conflict between Kenny, Mama, and Daddy. Discuss how the author uses character triangles to intensify the conflict throughout *Comfort*. Support your answer with evidence from the book.
3. Compare and contrast one of Kenny's allies with one of his enemies. What is it about each character's behavior that distinguishes them as either an ally or an enemy? Support your answer with evidence from the book.
4. Write a character sketch of Mama including her contradictor behavior, her selfish motives, and her abuse of Kenny. Use examples from the text. What is it about Mama that makes her character so memorable?

FINAL TEST -- WRITTEN COMPOSITION (use a separate sheet of paper to write an essay on one of the following)

1. Write an essay explaining why extra-curricular activities are an important part of the school experience.
2. Write an essay discussing the effects of peer pressure on students' lives.
3. Write an essay discussing the importance of good role models.
4. Write an essay discussing the effect of pressures at home on school performance.

Answers to Worksheets and Quizzes

“Figuratively Speaking” worksheet

- 1 B
- 2 C
- 3 D
- 4 A
- 5 D

Practice Quiz chapters 1-5

- 1 C
- 2 A
- 3 D
- 4 C
- 5 C
- 6 B
- 7 D
- 8 C
- 9 A
- 10 A

Practice Quiz chapters 6-10

- 1 A
- 2 D
- 3 C
- 4 B
- 5 C
- 6 B
- 7 B
- 8 D
- 9 A
- 10 A

Practice Quiz chapters 11-15

- 1 A
- 2 A
- 3 D
- 4 A
- 5 A
- 6 B
- 7 A
- 8 C
- 9 A

10 B

Practice Quiz chapters 16-21

- 1 B
- 2 D
- 3 A
- 4 C
- 5 C
- 6 A
- 7 A
- 8 C
- 9 A
- 10 A

Final test

- 1 C
- 2 A
- 3 C
- 4 B
- 5 C
- 6 A
- 7 D
- 8 C
- 9 B
- 10 C
- 11 B
- 12 D
- 13 A
- 14 D
- 15 A
- 16 A
- 17 A
- 18 A
- 19 B
- 20 B
- 21 A
- 22 C
- 23 A
- 24 A
- 25 C

Goals and Objectives- Many of the goals and objectives listed here were taken directly from the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) District and State Standards as well as the criterion for the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Writing Purposes (See the Response Journal and the Theme Paper Ideas for all writing objectives in addition to the activities listed below).

- Write in a variety of forms including persuasive forms (logical argument, expression of opinion) personal forms (response to literature, reflective essay) and literary forms (poems).
- Write to entertain such as to compose a humorous poem (Supplementary Activities 3 and 8)
- Use specific sensory details with a purpose
- Organize ideas/collect ideas around a central theme for later use in papers
- Write in a voice and style appropriate to audience and purpose
- Convey thoughts, feelings, and ideas in written form
- Provide relevant and convincing reasons to support an argument

Writing Processes

- Use prewriting strategies

Writing Inquiry/Research

- Use writing as a study tool to clarify and remember information
- Analyze strategies that writers use
- Compile information from primary and secondary sources (Supplementary Activity 4)
- Compile written ideas into reports, summaries, or other formats

Reading Vocabulary

- Rely on context to determine meanings of words (Supplementary Activity 1 and 8)
- Identify the relation of word meanings in:
 - synonyms/antonyms (Practice Quizzes)
 - connotation/denotation (Discussion Topic 1B, 3B, 6A, 10C)

Reading Comprehension

- Read and understand analogies (Practice Quizzes)
- Improve the students' ability to draw upon his/her own background to provide connections to texts (Discussion Topic 16A, Response Journal Exercise 2)
- Analyze text structures such as:
 - Compare and contrast (Discussion Topic 7B, Supplementary Activity 3 and 5)
 - Chronological Ordering (Supplementary Activity 9)
- Draw inferences such as conclusions, generalizations, and predictions (Discussion Topics 2B, 5D, 6C, 9B, 10D, 13B, 17D).
- Use study strategies such as note taking (Discussion Topics) and using study-guide questions (Practice Quizzes)
- Recognize a variety of question types including rhetorical, yes/no, and wh-questions (Discussion Topic 10B)

Reading/ Literary Concepts

- Recognize the theme (Pre-reading Activity, Response Journal Exercises 11, 19)
- Analyze the effect of setting on plot and character development (Discussion Topic 10E)
- Critically analyze characters
 - Analyze characters' traits and motivations (Discussion Topics 2B, 4B, 5A, 8B, 12B, 15A, 20C).
 - Analyze characters' voice (Discussion Topics 2C, 3A, 8A, 14C; Supplementary Activity 2; Response Journal Exercises 3, 4, 5, 9, 21).
 - Describe and analyze the development of plot in terms of the main character's arc/journey (Discussion Topics 3C, 6B, 7C, 11A, 17A, 19A, 20A, 20B, 21A, 21B).
 - Understand internal character states (Discussion Topics 4A, 5C, 11C; Response Journal Exercises 6, 8, 12).
 - Analyze the cause/effect cycle of character interactions/ how one character's actions influence reactions in other characters (Discussion Topics 9A, 15C)
- Identify basic conflicts and triangles of conflict as well as how they are addressed and resolved (Discussion Topics 1A, 2A, 7A; Supplementary Activity 3; Response Journal Exercises 1, 12).
- Recognize and interpret figurative language such as metaphor and simile (Supplementary Activity 6)
- Understand literary forms such as comic relief (Discussion Topic 12A)
- Recognize and interpret literary devices such as foreshadowing (Discussion Topic 19B) and symbolism (Discussion Topics 3B, 5B, 18A)
- Recognize sarcasm (Discussion Topics 16B, 17B)
- Identify contradiction (Discussion Topics 8B, 14A; Response Journal Exercise 14), irony (Discussion Topics 16C, 20D), and parody (Supplementary Activity 4)
- Recognize the distinguishing features of genres (Supplementary Activity 5)
- Compare and contrast the presentation of similar themes across genre to explain how the selection of genre shapes the theme or topic (Supplementary Activity 5)
- Analyze the relationship between major and minor characters (Discussion Topics 15B, 16B; Response Journal Exercises 15, 16, 17)
- Analyze how themes in literature reflect contemporary issues (Persuasive Paper Topics)
- Explain ways in which a writer may have been influenced by life experiences.
- Recognize how an author makes stylistic choices to convey a message or set a mood (Discussion Topics 10A, 13C, 14B, 19C)

Reading Fluency

- Read aloud in selected texts in ways that both reflect understanding of the text and engage the listeners (Supplementary Activity 1)

-

Listening and Speaking (See Supplementary Activity 1 and the Discussion Topics for all Listening and Speaking Objectives)

- Make relevant contributions in conversations and discussions
- Use discussion with peers as a way of understanding information
- Use effective verbal and nonverbal strategies such as pitch, tone of voice, posture, clear enunciation, inflection, and eye contact

- Make valid interpretations of literary texts (enhance students' understanding of character as it is conveyed through dialogue and action)
- Listen to proficient, fluent models of oral reading
- Present dramatic interpretations of stories
- Narrate experiences that offer scenes and incidents located effectively in time and place
- Use appropriate level of formality in speaking according to topic, audience, and purpose (Discussion Topic 11B; Supplementary Activity 2; Response Journal Exercise 2)

Viewing

- Improve the student's ability to evaluate the role of media in forming opinions (Discussion Topic 13A)

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For additional guides or to send comments/suggestions, write to:

Carolee Dean
P.O. Box 94412
Albuquerque, NM 87199-4412