


## Literary Arts Department Grade 9 Summer Assignment 2021-2022

**Courses: Introduction to Literary Genres, Introduction to Film, and Character Development** (You do not have a summer assignment for Introduction to the Spoken Word, but feel free to practice speaking in front of people or stuffed animals:)

The following assignments all center around the ways that the different elements of different genres contribute to characterization. 1 and 2 will go toward your **Intro to Lit. Genres** grade, 3, will go toward your **Intro to Film** grade, and 4 will go toward your Character Development grade.

1. Read David Sedaris's short memoir "Let It Snow," which you can find here:  
 **Let It Snow** Answer the following questions:
  - a. Which character catches your attention the most? Why? Be specific.
  - b. Which character do you empathize/sympathize with the most? Why? Be specific.
  - c. What kind of relationship do the kids seem to have with their mom? Give examples.
  - d. What kind of relationship do the kids seem to have with each other? Give examples.
  - e. Did Sedaris make you care about these characters? Why or why not?
  - f. What might you take from this story when you write your own characters?
2. Read Nikki Giovanni's poem "Cotton Candy on a Rainy Day," which you can find here: <https://voetica.com/voetica.php?collection=2&poet=658&poem=6770>. Answer the following questions:
  - a. How does the symbol of cotton candy on a rainy day help to define the place the speaker is in her life as well as her emotional state?
  - b. Have you ever used an object to help convey an abstract characteristic in your own writing. If so, what was the object and what characteristic did you convey. If not, how might you consider using this technique in your writing?
  - c. Pretend the speaker of this poem is a character you are going to be using to write a short story, play, or screenplay. Write a character synopsis using specific details from the poem.
3. For **Introduction to Film (9)**, please choose **one** of the following films to examine:

**a. My Neighbor Totoro, Hayao Miyazaki (1988)**

My Neighbor Totoro is a 1988 Japanese animated fantasy film written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki and animated by Studio Ghibli.

**b. Paddington 2, Paul King (2017)**

Paddington 2 is a 2017 live-action animated comedy film directed by Paul King and written by Paul King and Simon Farnaby.

**c. 12 Angry Men, Sidney Lumet (1957)**

12 Angry Men is a 1957 American courtroom drama film directed by Sidney Lumet, adapted from a 1954 teleplay of the same name by Reginald Rose.

As you view the film, please take notes - these will not be collected, and are meant as “stream of consciousness” points to help with your later writing.

**ASSIGNMENT:**

**Choose a character from the film.** Characterization is the filmmaker’s method of developing the character so that we understand what they are like.

Now, **choose a Film Element.**

- Camera Placement
- Composition
- Sound Design
- Music
- Location
- Color
- Costumes
- Hair and Makeup
- Lighting

For more information on Film Elements:

<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/mise-en-scene-elements/>

Then, write, writer! What did you notice about the character? What did you notice about the Film Element you chose? How does the Film Element you chose tell us about the character? For instance, since there is very little dialogue in Disney’s “WALL-E,” the film relies more on a variety of camera shots, lighting, and sound to tell the story and create meaning.

One to two pages of your thoughts and opinions should suffice, to be uploaded to the

CLASSROOM dropbox the first week of school.  
Mr. Mensher

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4. Now that you have looked at characterization in three different genres, it's time to create your own character. I want you to:
  - a. Think about your all time favorite character. The character can be from a book, TV show, film, etc. List a few things about what makes the character so amazing and how you can use this character to help you with your own characters.
  - b. Begin to craft your own character by writing for thirty minutes without stopping. It doesn't matter if you don't have a clear idea for a character; the point is to get as many ideas down as you can. This freewrite can be completed as bullet points, paragraphs, or even as a character speaking to you in his/her/their own voice. The most important thing is that you keep writing!
  - c. Now, use this character sketch template to begin to flesh out your new character. It is okay if you can't fill out every single box, but fill out most of them:  
[https://fictionfoundry.alumni.columbia.edu/character\\_sketch\\_template](https://fictionfoundry.alumni.columbia.edu/character_sketch_template).
  - d. Be ready to talk to me about your character:)

If you have any questions, email Mrs. Liemberger at [kliemberger@charterarts.org](mailto:kliemberger@charterarts.org).