



ELA Virtual Learning

English 218 Introduction to Literature

Lesson: April 14, 2020



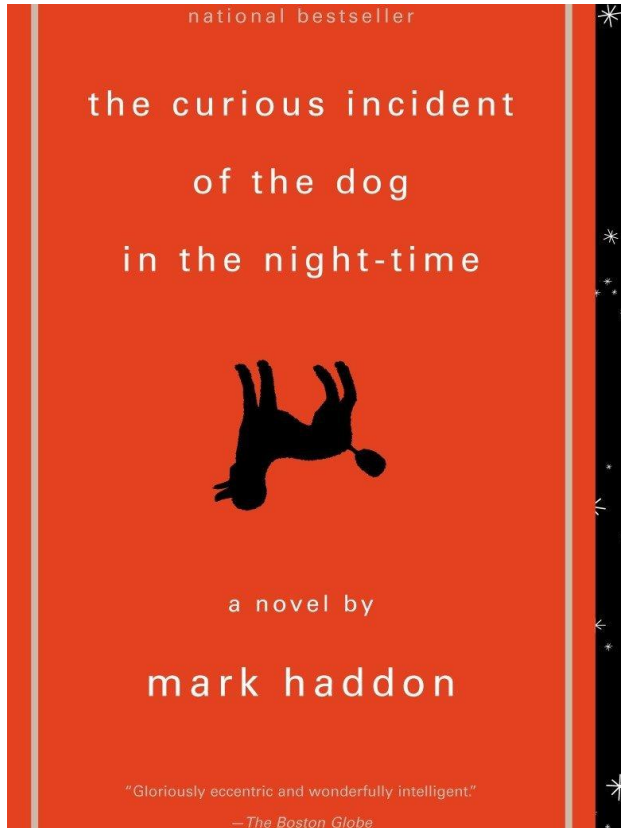
English 218 Introduction to Literature

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Objective/Learning Targets:

- Discuss and analyze literary works by using critical reading and thinking skills.
 - Interpret visual elements of a text and draw conclusions from them.

Bell Ringer:



In the reading assigned yesterday (pages 61-75), Christopher undertakes a major journey. Describe your response to his decisions involving this journey.

****Start a document to record your response to this and the work which follows on later slides.**

Learn

Previously, it was discussed how an author could use visual elements to help establish the tone of a piece of literature. Another notable use of visual elements is to extend and add to characterization. Mark Haddon uses graphics, tables, footnotes and other visual elements in *curious incident* to help the reader understand Christopher's unique way of thinking. For example, on page 63, Christopher reasons how to find the train station.

“I knew that the train station was somewhere near. And if something is nearby you can find it by moving in a spiral, walking clockwise and taking every right turn until you come back to a road you've already walked on, then taking the next left, then taking every right turn and so on, like this (but this is a hypothetical diagram, too, and not a map of Swindon): **<refer to the graphic in the novel>**”

And that was how I found the train station, and I concentrated really hard...”

In between those lines is a graphic of how the layout of the town would look to Christopher (sorry, but it would not copy to put here). This helps the reader accept the idea that Christopher could find the train station by himself, despite his limitations.

Learn...cont.

Think back to the illustrations used in children's books. The purpose of those is mostly to clarify what the characters would look like, to truly "show" the reader the characters as they move through the story. The difference here is that mature readers do not need to be shown what the character might look like; the reader needs to understand Christopher's way of thinking, as a young man on the autism spectrum, as many readers do not have direct experience with a person like Christopher. Haddon uses many forms of visual elements to facilitate that understanding.

As with tone, Haddon also employs bolded text to illustrate something important or surprising to Christopher, such as **Super Super Good Day** (13). Look back through the current reading and note the uses of bolded text throughout. In this book, the author is very fond of using this visual element. Consider why that might be the case.

Practice: Read and Write

- Use the pdf of this wonderful novel to continue your reading - pages 76-90 - then respond to the prompts which follow. The pages are the numbers associated with this pdf, as indicated at the top.
- [Mark Haddon The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time](#)

After reading the assigned pages, respond to the following:

1. In this reading, Christopher undertakes a surprising journey. Describe two ways in which this fits his character as we know him so far, and two ways in which it does not fit his character. Include at least one text example.
2. Explain why, in this novel, the visual elements are important in the characterization of Christopher. Include at least one text example.

Response Criteria

(Answers will Vary)

- Check your written response to make sure it meets the following criteria:
 - **Did you write in complete sentences?**
 - **Did you use standard conventions (spelling, punctuation, grammar)?**
 - **Did you answer the questions?**

Sample Appropriate Response:

Bellringer - Responses will vary, but should address the student's reaction to Christopher's choice to leave Swindon and go to London to find his mother. For example, one might express surprise that he would be so bold to take on such a journey on his own. One might also feel dismay, wondering how he can possibly navigate what must be a long journey all on his own. It was also surprising that he asked Mrs. Alexander to watch his pet. A text example could be, "And I said, "No. I can't come inside. Will you look after Toby for me?" (61).

Questions: responses will vary. On the following slides are examples of a good response. Remember all conventions and MLA format when writing.

Examples of Quality Responses

1. Christopher's decision to leave Swindon and travel to London to find his mother could be seen within his characterization so far, when one considers that he is a young adolescent who is very intelligent. He shows the ability to think and reason well, and he has shown he can visualize places and directions well.

On the other hand, that decision seems to go against what the reader knows about him so far. We know he does not like strangers or to be touched, for example, and it is hard to imagine traveling by train and going to a large city without talking to strangers or being touched.

Examples of Quality Responses, cont.

“Talking to strangers is not something I usually do. I do not like talking to strangers. This is not because of Stranger Danger, which they tell us about at school, which is where a strange man offers you sweets or a ride in his car because he wants to do sex with you. I am not worried about that. If a strange man touched me I would hit him, and I can hit people very hard” (16).

We also know he is often overwhelmed by his environment and can react by rolling up in a ball on the ground, and doing what he calls “groaning” (3). “I rolled back onto the lawn and pressed my forehead to the ground again and made the noise that Father calls groaning. I make this noise when there is too much information coming into my head from the outside world” (3). Train stations and big cities contain many sounds and a lot of movement, which can be overwhelming to anyone, much less Christopher.

Examples of Quality Responses, cont.

2. In this novel, the visual elements are important to the characterization of Christopher because of his unique way of looking at and responding to his environment. Many readers are not familiar with anyone on the autism spectrum, specifically someone with Asperger's Syndrome. Also, individuals on the spectrum can be very different from one another. Understanding the character of Christopher and how/why he would make the decisions he makes and react to the environment in the way he does could be difficult; it may also simply not be believable. Using the graphics, the visual maps and the bolded elements put the reader into the mind of Christopher, which makes him come alive as a person and makes his behavior easier to accept. One visual element Haddon uses are footnotes. Since Christopher is the "author" of the story of Wellington (and his own story), he adds footnotes to explain various things.

Examples of Quality Responses, cont.

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In the art class we do art, but in the first morning class and the first afternoon class and the second afternoon class we do lots of different things like Reading and Tests and Social Skills and Looking after Animals and What We Did at the Weekend and Writing and Maths and Stranger Danger and Money and Personal Hygiene. (72)

In this footnote, he explains further something about his daily schedule, which also demonstrates his often-divergent thinking.

Resources to Further Understanding

[Just Like You - Autism](#), by Just Like You Films, is a video produced in connection with Autism Society: The Heartland. The video contains many first-person testimonials by people on the spectrum. It really shows well - up-close with “real” people - some of the experiences and feelings of people with some form of autism. I hope you will watch it.