



# ELA Virtual Learning

## English 218 Introduction to Literature

Lesson: April 15, 2020



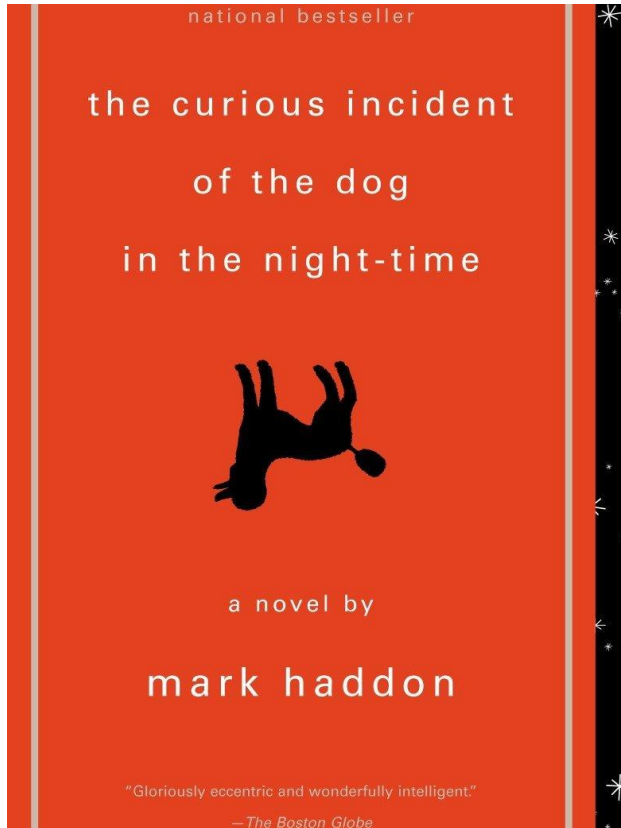
# English 218 Introduction to Literature

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## **Objective/Learning Target:**

- Discuss and analyze literary works by using critical reading and thinking skills.

## Bell Ringer:



In the reading assigned yesterday (pages 76-90), Christopher finishes his difficult journey and arrives at Mother's house. What do Mother's reactions and Mr. Shears' reactions tell you about those two characters?

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

# Learn

Characterization has been discussed in our class quite a bit for this novel, but mainly the characterization of Christopher. He is the protagonist of this novel - the character who drives the action. Readers often think of characters in the context of protagonist, antagonist and supporting or minor characters, but there are other types of characters. Some writers and analysts further delineate characters by the role they play; for example, the deuteragonist is the “sidekick” of the protagonist and a stock character is a kind of stereotyped side character (maybe part of a group or mob) who helps keep the action going.

In this novel, there are few characters: Christopher, Father, Mother, Mrs. Shears, Mr. Shears, Siobhan, Mrs. Alexander and stock characters such as the police. Who, then, is the antagonist?

To learn more about antagonists, read this information on [Masterclass](#), including the four types of antagonists, and take notes in your notebook for the assignment to follow.

# Practice: Read and Write

- Use the pdf of the novel to do any re-reading and review necessary to respond to the prompts which follow. If you can help it, do not yet finish the book. We will do that soon enough.
  - [Mark Haddon The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time](#)
1. After reading and careful consideration of the types of characters and types of antagonists, identify and describe the antagonist of *curious incident*. Justify your answer with explanation and text examples (at least two).
  2. At this juncture (and definitely before reading the remainder of this book), who would you award “Parent of the Year” - Father or Mother - and why? By the way, in case it was not clear, that term is in quotation marks to denote sarcasm. Which parent is simply the worst? Support your answer with explanation and at least two text examples.

# 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 thoughts about Mother and Mr. Shears. For example, Mother reacted with shock and surprise, but did not immediately show happiness. This seems to show her as a shallow character with little genuine concern for her son. Mr. Shears reacted with anger, showing him to be a selfish man who does not want his life complicated by an unwanted adolescent.*

*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. The antagonist of this novel is somewhat arguable. Some say it is not a “who”, though one could say it is Christopher, himself. Readers often think of an antagonist as the “bad guy”; however, the antagonist is simply the opposer of the protagonist. One could argue that to be Father, since he lied to Christopher about Mother’s death, killed Wellington and tried to stop Christopher from writing his book. One could argue it is Mr. Shears, since he essentially took Mother out of Christopher’s life, leading to much of the conflict. Neither of those characters are the antagonist, though, because their roles are more complex than opposition and their opposition does not sustain throughout the novel. The antagonist is autism. Autism is ever-present in this book and creates much of the conflict for Christopher, though ultimately he does triumph, learning to use it more than fight it.

# Examples of Quality Responses, cont.

Much of the conflict in Christopher's life is either caused by or compounded by characteristics related to autism. Christopher is actually a very strong, intelligent young man; he could do just about anything in life, if he were not hampered by problems with social skills and communication related to his autism. An example can be seen in his interaction with the policeman, following the discovery of the dead dog.

“The policeman said, “I am going to ask you once again...” 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. It is like when you are upset and you hold the radio against your ear and you tune it halfway between two stations so that all you get is white noise and then you turn the volume right up so that this is all you can hear and then you know you are safe because you cannot hear anything else” (4).



# Examples of Quality Responses, cont.

Were it not for his autism, in this situation Christopher might have been able to simply explain to the officer what he had seen and done.

The effects can be seen throughout the book, such as in the train station. “Then he said, “The lady at the café says you’ve been here for 2½ hours, and when she tried talking to you, you were in a complete trance” (68). Due to his trouble with strangers, crowds and overwhelming noise, Christopher was not able to properly ask for the help he needed to find his way.

2. This can be answered either way, because both parents made serious mistakes with their handling of Christopher. “Parent of the Year” (worst) goes to Father, because at the beginning of it all, he lied to his son and told him his mother was dead. This is simply unforgivable, even with his reasoning.

# Examples of Quality Responses, cont.

Father even tried to explain it as an accident, which is not even possible.

“Then he said, “It was an accident.”

Then he was silent again.

Then he said, “I didn’t know what to say... I was in such a mess... She left a note and... Then she rang and... I said she was in hospital because... because I didn’t know how to explain. It was so complicated. So difficult. And I... I said she was in hospital. And I know it wasn’t true. But once I’d said that... I couldn’t... I couldn’t change it. Do you understand... Christopher...? Christopher...? It just... It got out of control and I wish...” (52).

Despite Christopher’s autism, he should have been told the truth about his mother, which would have paved the way for a reconciliation later; Father clearly did not want that, since he was very bitter at her leaving.

# Examples of Quality Responses, cont.

There are other reasons, such as Father's short-tempered ways with Christopher, which even led to him hurting his son. "But Father interrupted me and grabbed hold of my arm really hard. Father had never grabbed hold of me like that before. Mother had hit me sometimes because she was a very hot-tempered person, which means that she got angry more quickly than other people and she shouted more often" (37). During that same episode, and at other times, he also cursed at Christopher in the harshest terms.

Though Mother made huge mistakes herself, Father gets the sarcastic "Parent of the Year" award for being the worst parent of the two.

\*\*\*Your response can name Mother for this, as long as you support your answer.

# 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 am posting this again, in case you did not get around to watching it. It really shows some of the personal struggles of people with autism.