



ELA Virtual Learning

English 218 Introduction to Literature

Lesson: April 16, 2020



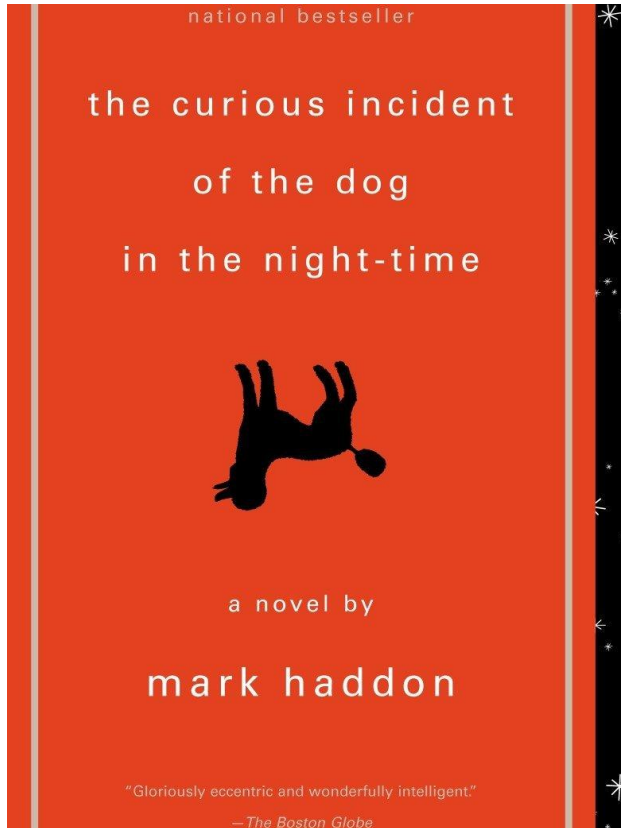
English 218 Introduction to Literature

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Objective/Learning Target:

- Discuss and analyze literary works by using critical reading and thinking skills.
- Analyze the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a text.

Bell Ringer:



In this novel, there is another character we have not addressed - Christopher's pet, Toby. Do you know anything about having a rat as a pet? If not, do a little quick research. Why do you think Haddon chose Toby as a pet for Christopher, rather than a cat or dog, for example?

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

Learn

In our work with short stories, poems and plays, we have discussed theme. To review, theme is the generalization about life, reality, the human condition, etc. that the author illustrates or clarifies in his or her work. It is something the author wants the reader to think about. Theme is a “big” idea or abstract concept - not a moral or lesson, though one can often find those in a theme. Examples of theme include the circle of life, the inevitability of death, power and corruption, etc.

In *curious incident*, a major theme is living with loss. Christopher has lost his mother; Ed Boone lost his wife; even Mrs. Shears lost her dog - and her husband. There are other themes evident in this novel, such as living with autism (or the autistic world vs. the non-autistic world), honesty and truth, etc. What themes have come to mind for you as you read this book?

Learn, cont.

Authors write about what they care about - what stirs passion, what is precious, what makes them happy or angry. The themes they develop reflect these concerns, and as such, may have been done before (almost certainly). Consider, then, how an author creates a theme in a novel in a way that makes people want to read it and makes the reader think about the theme.

The subject for this lesson is how an author develops a theme. We have discussed this some in our reading of short stories, etc. With a novel (or other long work), an author has more opportunity to develop themes and can use more literary devices to impart themes to the reader. In fact, an author can use almost anything in writing, from characterization to setting to symbolism.

Consider Christopher, his characteristics, his challenges and his strengths. When you get to know him, you will begin thinking about one or more of Haddon's themes. The same is true

Learn, cont.

of Father or Siobhan. In the case of Siobhan, think about the unique relationship she has with Christopher - teacher, counselor - and how that affects their ability to communicate - that is a theme.

Conflict in literature refers to the push-pull which occurs between characters, within a character, etc. Conflict development can be part of theme development. Consider the conflict between Father and Christopher - the difficulty of parenting a child with special needs, the struggle of an autistic child to communicate - both are themes.

In summary, theme is developed using many major literary devices: characterization, key plot developments, conflict, setting, symbolism, dialogue, etc.

Practice: Read and Write

- Use the pdf of the novel to finish it! You should have finished through 90, so finish the remaining pages, 91-104.
- [Mark Haddon The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time](#)

Respond to the following, in essay form, using your best scholarly writing and citing text at least twice:

Choose one theme of *curious incident* and discuss how Haddon develops this theme throughout the novel. Address two or more literary devices Haddon uses to develop the theme and cite the text at least twice.

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 Toby, Christopher's pet. Rats are highly intelligent animals which are very trainable. They are generally easy to maintain, quite clean and respond well to gentle human handling. Haddon may have chosen this as Christopher's pet because of those characteristics, in addition to a rat being somewhat symbolic of Christopher. Like him, his pet is somewhat unconventional and misunderstood - and much more intelligent than people realize.

Writing prompt: responses will vary. On the following slide is an example of a good response. Remember all conventions and MLA format when writing.

Examples of Quality Responses

There are various themes which can be addressed by this writing. Attached is one example. The student's response must include a relevant theme, discussion of two or more literary devices (such as characterization) and two or more text citations.

[The Development of the Theme of Parenting a Child with Autism](#)

Resources to Further Understanding

[“What I’ve learned from my autistic brothers”](#) by Faith Jegede Cole is a short TED Talk which reminds the viewer about the gifts which can also be inherent in a person on the autism spectrum. It is only about five minutes long and adds some heartwarming balance to our ongoing consideration of the experience of living with a person on the spectrum. I hope you will watch it; it is sure to make you smile.