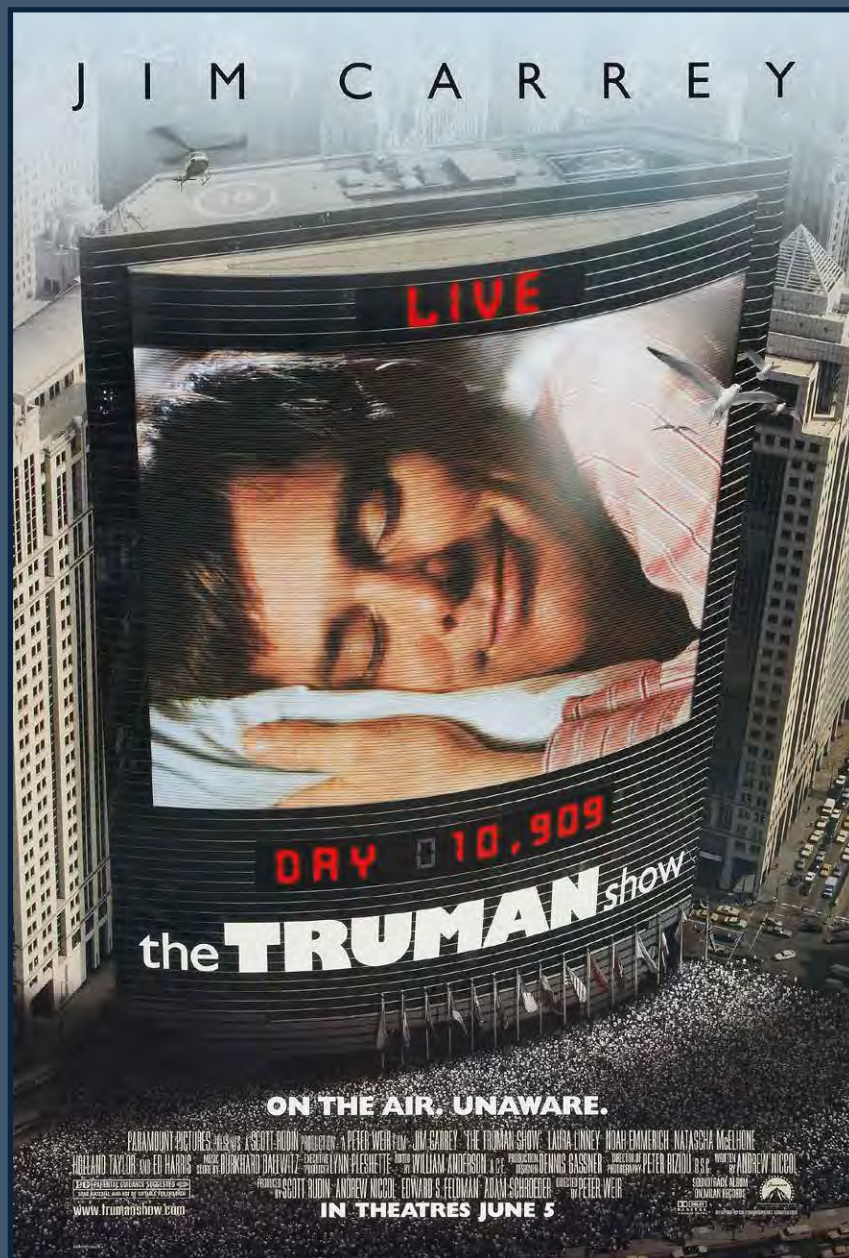


TEACHING GUIDE:

“THE TRUMAN SHOW”



TEACHING GUIDE: THE TRUMAN SHOW



▶ JOSEPH GOLDBERG TEACHING WITH FILM, LLC

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TEACHING GUIDE: THE TRUMAN SHOW

THE TRUMAN SHOW TEACHING GUIDE INTRODUCTION, RESOURCE AND GUIDELINES

Bellringers Teacher Resource 1.....	1
Bellringer 1a Reproducible.....	2
Bellringer 1b Reproducible.....	3
Bellringer 1c Reproducible.....	4
Establishing Setting Teacher Resource 2.....	5
Establishing Setting Reproducible 2.....	8
What's in a Name Teacher Resource 3.....	10
What's in a Name Reproducible 3.....	12
Nice to Meet You Teacher Resource 4.....	15
Nice to Meet You Reproducible 4.....	19
Character Archetypes Teacher Resource 5.....	23
Character Archetypes Reproducible 5.....	25
Situational Archetypes Teacher Resource 6.....	27
Situational Archetypes Reproducible 6.....	29
Close Reading the Frame Teacher Resource 7.....	30
Close Reading the Frame Reproducible 7.....	34
Close Reading the Page Teacher Resource 8.....	36
Close Reading the Page Reproducible 8.....	38
Truman and The Treachery of Images Teacher Resource 9.....	40
Truman and The Treachery of Images Reproducible 9.....	43
Allegory Visualization Teacher Resource 10.....	45
Allegory Visualization Reproducible 10.....	47
The Truman Show as Satire Teacher Resource 11.....	49
The Truman Show as Satire Reproducible 11.....	52
Prison, Power and the Panopticon Teacher Resource 12.....	54
Prison, Power and the Panopticon Reproducible 12.....	57





BELLRINGERS: MOVIE GUIDE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

It may work well to introduce *The Truman Show* only after students have completed (and perhaps even shared out some of their responses as a whole class to) one of the following bellringers first. Additional bellringers may be used in advance of viewing subsequent segments of the film to re-engage students and prime them to consider additional layers of the film. Bellringer #3 is intended for upper levels and expected to take significantly more class time, given the concepts and reading level of the article. Circling back to student responses after watching a segment, or all of *The Truman Show* is highly recommended for any bellringer used so students can reflect on how the concepts raised in them are treated in the film, and especially to see if/how students' thinking has been complicated or possibly changed after first responding to them. Suggested responses are not provided for these bellringers only because the majority of the prompts invite responses based on students' personal experiences and views regarding the accompanying readings.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.3

Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2

Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.



1. Would you rather be well-known and famous, or would you rather be unknown and have privacy?

Discuss the pros and cons of each.



Read the article in The Atlantic “When Kids Realize Their Whole Life Is Already Online,” by Taylor Lorenz (found at <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/02/when-kidsrealize-their-whole-life-already-online/582916/>) and respond to the questions that follow.

2. What kinds of information do you think should require the consent of a child before it is posted online by parents, schools, sports teams and organizations?

Explain your answer.

3. At what age do you think a person should first have a unique digital identity?

Explain your answer.

4. Describe what ‘sharenting’ is and make an argument for how and where the line should be drawn for what parents should or shouldn’t be able to share online about their own children.

5. Should laws be passed in the United States that are similar to the privacy laws in Europe?

Explain your answer.



Read the article in Psychology Today “How Reality Shows Affect Our Lives and Society,” by Dr. Teyhou Smyth (found at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/living-finesse/202204/howreality-shows-affect-our-lives-and-society>) and respond to the questions that follow.

1. Describe the impact that TV and media have on viewers who consume it, according to the article.

2. Describe the multitude of forces other than media that influence people, according to the article.

3. Identify a reality show that you watch and respond to the questions posed in the article:

a. What is the show and what do you enjoy about it?

b. What appeals to you about these characters and their role in the show?

c. Would you make different choices than these characters? If so, why?

d. What values do you embrace in your life that are either abided by or abandoned in this show?

4. After watching *The Truman Show*, and citing specific examples, explain how the characters who watch *The Truman Show* television program are impacted by it.

1. What feelings do you experience when you buy something (not including the things you need for basic survival, etc), or when there is something you want to buy but are not able to?



Read the following article by Kerryn Higgs and respond to the questions below according to the article:
<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210120-how-the-world-became-consumerist>

2. What changes were occurring in the United States around the turn of the 20th Century, and what effect did that have on society's values?

3. What need did business leaders believe was necessary to create in order to solve the problem of overproduction brought on by the enormous powers of mass production?

4. What role did mass media play in the pursuit of training consumers in the "skills of consumption" and to believe they could gain the status of the upper classes? Why was television an especially effective form at achieving this?

5. Thinking of the products you consume or have seen on the market, identify and explain an example of functional obsolescence and an example of psychological obsolescence.

6. Considering the quote in the article by philosopher Herbert Marcuse, would you be able to recognize yourself in your own commodities?



ESTABLISHING SETTING: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

Students may benefit from some supplemental material to recognize the look and feel of the stereotypical 1950s American culture. Sharing short clips found online from popular television shows from that era, and perhaps even contrasting them with short clips from shows of the decades that follow, may be helpful. Discussing how the aesthetics associated with this time period in America gave the appearance of a utopia that was at odds with many social problems and inequities will help, too.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).



INTRODUCTION:

The setting of a story consists of the time and place that it occurs. Setting is very consequential, as it shapes the experiences of the characters. Establishing the setting in a film enables the audience to become immersed in the world of the characters. It also sets the tone of the film and sets up the audience's expectations of what might happen. The production, set, costume, lighting, graphic, and sound designers, as well as the props master, work in collaboration with the film's director, art director, director of cinematography, and producer to establish the visual look and setting of the film.

ESTABLISHING SETTING: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

DIRECTIONS:

The Truman Show establishes a very distinctive setting through the set pieces, costumes, colors, lighting, props and sound. Take a second and closer look at the sequence in the movie from 2:45 5:30, and pay close attention to the details that help establish the setting. Using the pause button frequently may help to respond to the questions below.

1. Being as specific as possible, describe the details of Truman's clothing.

Truman wears a brown, tweed jacket over a striped green shirt with dark, striped tie, and a v-neck yellow sweater, tucked into white slacks.

2. Pause the film at 3:14, just as the light begins to fall from the sky, and again at 3:25, just after it lands. What do you notice about the houses and neighborhood where Truman lives in these two shots? What about the road, and the trees in the background? Anything else worth noting?

The suburban houses feature a variety of pastel colors, but they all conform to a similar quaint style, with immaculately manicured lawns surrounded by white picket fences. The neighborhood features a grid of parallel and perpendicular streets, all paved in brick, and lined by palm trees and streetlights.

3. What sort of world do the clothing, colors, houses, trees, and road suggest? Is it one where you would like to live? **Explain.**

They all work together to suggest a utopian society. There appears to be no poverty or crime, the colors are upbeat and breezy, the brick roads suggest higher costs and meticulous care (compared to blacktop), and every aspect of the location seems to have been thoughtfully planned. The palm trees further hint at a paradise location.

4. What time period do Truman's clothing style and the look of the houses and neighborhood suggest?

Truman's clothes and the neighborhood houses surrounded by white picket fences suggest an aesthetic ideal of the 1950s.

ESTABLISHING SETTING: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

5. After having seen the rest of the sequence, identify what time period you think the movie actually takes place, and provide details for why you think so.

The movie appears to roughly match the time period of its release, in the late 1990s. There are modern cars. However, the computers look dated, and it appears to predate the internet and cell phones, etc.

6. At 4:08, Truman listens to a radio broadcaster who says, “settle back, and let this music calm you down,” as Mozart’s “Rondo Alla Turca” begins to play. Since Truman hears this on the car radio, the music is **diegetic**, meaning it exists in the world of the characters. Seconds later, though, Truman goes about his day, clearly unable to hear the music as it continues to play. The music becomes **non-diegetic**, meaning only the film’s viewers can hear it, and not any of the characters in the story. Close your eyes, listen carefully to the music, and describe its characteristics as specifically as you can below.

Mozart’s music is especially known for its note-perfect precision, and this composition is no exception. This piece is very light and pleasing to the ear, featuring pleasant harmonies. It also has many repetitions and variations of the music’s themes in it.

7. How do the characteristics of Mozart’s music work to establish the setting and life that Truman experiences in the setting and plot of the movie?

As the broadcaster invites him to, the pleasant music is designed to keep Truman calm, and ultimately passive, about his existence within his society. Like the notes in the music, every aspect of Truman’s world has been carefully selected. Truman’s life and daily routine seem to have a very repetitive quality, with relatively minor variations only.



ESTABLISHING SETTING: REPRODUCIBLE 2

The Truman Show



INTRODUCTION:

The setting of a story consists of the time and place that it occurs. Setting is very consequential, as it shapes the experiences of the characters. Establishing the setting in a film enables the audience to become immersed in the world of the characters. It also sets the tone of the film and sets up the audience's expectations of what might happen. The production, set, costume, lighting, graphic, and sound designers, as well as the props master, work in collaboration with the film's director, art director, director of cinematography, and producer to establish the visual look and setting of the film.

DIRECTIONS:

The Truman Show establishes a very distinctive setting through the set pieces, costumes, colors, lighting, props and sound. Take a second and closer look at the sequence in the movie from 2:45-5:30, and pay close attention to the details that help establish the setting. Using the pause button frequently may help to respond to the questions below.

1. Being as specific as possible, describe the details of Truman's clothing.

2. Pause the film at 3:14, just as the light begins to fall from the sky, and again at 3:25, just after it lands. What do you notice about the houses and neighborhood where Truman lives in these two shots? What about the road, and the trees in the background?

3. What sort of world do the clothing, colors, houses, trees, and road suggest? Is it one where you would like to live? **Explain.**

ESTABLISHING SETTING: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

4. What time period do Truman's clothing style and the look of the houses and neighborhood suggest?

5. After having seen the rest of the sequence, identify what time period you think the movie actually takes place, and provide details for why you think so.

6. At 4:08, Truman listens to a radio broadcaster who says, "settle back, and let this music calm you down," as Mozart's "Rondo Alla Turca" begins to play. Since Truman hears this on the car radio, the music is diegetic, meaning it exists in the world of the characters. Seconds later, though, Truman goes about his day, clearly unable to hear the music as it continues to play. The music becomes non-diegetic, meaning only the film's viewers can hear it, and not any of the characters in the story. Close your eyes, listen carefully to the music, and describe its characteristics as specifically as you can below.

7. How do the characteristics of Mozart's music work to establish the setting and life that Truman experiences in the setting and plot of the movie.



WHAT'S IN A NAME? TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

Students should have little difficulty researching and locating the source names of the celebrities that the character names reference, but they are likely to not have much familiarity with them. Supplementing their findings by sharing short clips of Meryl Streep, Marlon Brando, Louis Armstrong and John Coltrane performing may provide more information, context and engagement. This assignment may be a springboard to the biblically-inspired charactonyms in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, if working with that text, too.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.



INTRODUCTION:

Authors sometimes give their characters names that reflect something about the characters' physical or personal characteristics, their motivations, or about their situation, such as their social or societal status, or the type of job they have. These names are called charactonyms.

Example: William Shakespeare famously gave the name Bottom to a character in his comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The name Bottom reflects that character being at the bottom of the social hierarchy, his job as a weaver (since a bottom is a tool that weavers use), and his tendency to be a dreamweaver of sorts. It also foreshadows his magical transformation into a half-man half-donkey, and how he often acts like a bit of a donkey, too.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

DIRECTIONS:

The Truman Show uses charactonyms to subtly reveal things about many of the characters. On the next page, consider the character names, the associations we have with each name, and how that association serves to capture aspects of the character. Remember, some characters have been given two first and last names.

1. Truman Burbank's first and last names reveal two essential aspects of his character. If you divide his first name into two separate syllables, what do they reflect about him? To understand what his last name implies, research online where the city Burbank is located and what it is most known for. Share your findings below and explain how both names capture the protagonist.
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Truman's first name divides into 'True-Man', reflecting that he is the only true, or genuine person in Seahaven since all others are actors/liars. Burbank is a reference to the city of the same name in California, which neighbors Hollywood and is known as "The Media Capital of the World." This name reflects Truman's celebrity status (though) celebrity status (though unknown to him), and the superficial and fake quality of his surroundings, in reference to the same quality of movie-making.

2. As with Truman, dividing Christof's name into two syllables reveals things about his character. What do they indicate about his status in the film and relationship to Truman?
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Christof's name divides into 'Christ of', reflecting his position as the 'Christ of Truman'. This is not to confuse Christof with being a self-sacrificing Christ Figure, but rather his godlike and father/son position in relation to Truman.

3. The name of Truman's supposed best friend, Marlon (whose name outside of his role in the show is Louis Coltrane), also reflects things about his character. First, search online for a 'famous actor named Marlon'. Who did you find, and what style or approach to acting is he famous for? Marlon's 'real' name appears to be the combination of two other famous names. Research online who Louis Armstrong and John Coltrane were. What is unique about the genre they both helped create, and how is that unique quality a skill that the actor who plays Marlon needs to have?
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WHAT'S IN A NAME? REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

The name Marlon references Marlon Brando, considered by many to be the greatest film actor of all time, and known for his method acting approach. Method acting is especially associated with performers not breaking character, even between takes. Marlon's role requires a similar requirement to almost never leave his role. Louis Armstrong and John Coltrane were innovative jazz musicians. Jazz is unique for being highly improvisational. Though Louis Coltrane (aka Marlon) has a basic direction and sometimes receives dialogue from Christof, he must constantly improvise as an actor since what Truman will say or do can never be fully predicted. Like these groundbreaking musicians, Louis Coltrane's lifelong commitment to his part makes him a groundbreaking actor as well.

4. Truman's wife Meryl has a name that also reflects things about her. First, search online for a 'famous actress named Meryl'. Who did you find? Next, take a look back to the opening two minutes of the movie and note how the woman who plays Truman's wife describes her role on the show. How is the commitment required for her role in the show particularly unique?
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*The name Meryl references Meryl Streep, considered by many to be the greatest film actress of all time. She is associated with method acting and known for fully inhabiting the characters she plays, just as the actress who plays Truman's wife does. In fact, when describing her role on **The Truman Show**, the actress who plays Truman's wife says, "There is no difference between a private life and a public life. My life, is my life, is The Truman Show. The Truman Show is a lifestyle."*

5. Though not a character per se, the name of the town where Truman lives essentially functions as a charactonym. Look up the meaning of the word 'haven' and explain how the name for this town uses irony (the opposite of what one expects) to reflect something about its character.
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The word 'haven' means a safe place, or refuge. In the context of the film, the name marks the town as a safe place from the dangers of the sea. Of course this is ironic because the town is a place of deception and danger for Truman, even though he has been conditioned to fear the water as dangerous.



WHAT'S IN A NAME? REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show



INTRODUCTION:

Authors sometimes give their characters names that reflect something about the characters' physical or personal characteristics, their motivations, or about their situation, such as their social or societal status, or the type of job they have. These names are called **charactonyms**.

Example: William Shakespeare famously gave the name Bottom to a character in his comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The name Bottom reflects that character being at the bottom of the social hierarchy, his job as a weaver (since a bottom is a tool that weavers use), and his tendency to be a dreamweaver of sorts. It also foreshadows his magical transformation into a half-man half-donkey, and how he often acts like a bit of a donkey, too.

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2. As with Truman, dividing Christof's name into two syllables reveals things about his character. What do they indicate about his status in the film and relationship to Truman?

WHAT'S IN A NAME? REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

3. The name of Truman's supposed best friend, Marlon (whose name outside of his role in the show is Louis Coltrane), also reflects things about his character. First, search online for a 'famous actor named Marlon'. Who did you find, and what style or approach to acting is he famous for? Marlon's 'real' name appears to be the combination of two other famous names. Research online who Louis Armstrong and John Coltrane were. What is unique about the genre they both helped create, and how is that unique quality a skill that the actor who plays Marlon needs to have?

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5. Though not a character per se, the name of the town where Truman lives essentially functions as a charactonym. Look up the meaning of the word 'haven' and explain how the name for this town uses irony (the opposite of what one expects) to reflect something about its character.



NICE TO MEET YOU! TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

Sharing the film with students via a streaming link would be ideal for students to take second and closer looks at the film to respond to the prompts below with detailed textual evidence. Students will be able to pause, rewind and catch details they otherwise likely overlooked without disrupting the non-stop, overwhelming nature of film. Students may then be directed to use the approach of collecting and connecting evidence for other characters in *The Truman Show* and in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, if working with that text, too.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.B

Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).



INTRODUCTION:

In every story, the author uses a variety of methods to introduce the characters to the audience and reveal who they are, what they are like, and what makes them tick. Together, these methods are known as characterization. **Characterization** is the process by which authors reveal the traits of the characters. There are two basic categories of characterization:

1. **Direct characterization** describes a character explicitly, often through narration. For example, the narrator in a book, or a voiceover in a movie, might directly inform the reader/viewer: "He was a very polite young man."
2. **Indirect characterization** is more subtle, revealing a character through the character's thoughts, words and actions. This approach might reveal what the character is like by describing or showing them holding the door open for a stranger. The reader or viewer may thereby infer that the character is polite.

NICE TO MEET YOU! TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

DIRECTIONS:

Collecting and then connecting evidence of what characters think, say and do allows us to understand the characters and the story much more deeply. Take a second and closer look back at the film to answer the questions below about what Truman thinks, says and does. Then use and connect the evidence to draw inferences about him and the story in the section that follows.

Collecting the Evidence

1. Just before the person Truman believes to be his father appears to drown, what did young Truman ask to do despite a storm approaching?

Truman pleads with his 'father' to go out a "bit farther" (11:54).

2. As a little boy on the beach, what is Truman attempting to do before his father stops him and tells him that he must know his limits?

Truman attempts to climb over the rocks to find out what all of the construction sounds are (1:03:49).

3. What does Truman tell his teacher he wants to be when he grows up?

Truman says, "I'd like to be an explorer, like the great Magellan" (1:04:08).

4. Among the other unwanted pregnancies, why is Truman the baby that is selected to be in the show?

Truman was curious from birth and born two weeks premature, which timed with the casting and airing of the show (1:05:00).

NICE TO MEET YOU! TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

5. When Truman is briefly shown as a baby on the beach, which direction is he walking?

He walks toward the water (1:05:20).

6. Although it first appears to just be a silly moment, what does Truman draw with soap on the mirror, and what does that specific thing suggest about who he is at heart?

Truman draws an astronaut's helmet, which reflects that he is inquisitive and an explorer at heart (1:10:38).

7. What object is on the front of the boat that Truman uses to leave Seahaven, and what does it traditionally symbolize?

An American bald eagle. It is traditionally symbolic of freedom (1:22:17).

8. What is the name of the boat that Truman uses to leave Seahaven, and what is that name most associated with?

It is named Santa Maria. That is the name of one of the ships that Columbus sailed to America (1:23:00).

NICE TO MEET YOU! TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

Connecting the Evidence

9. Based on the evidence you collected, compose a fully developed body paragraph that argues for how Truman Burbank is characterized in director Peter Weir's *The Truman Show*. Begin with an arguable topic sentence, and cite three specific pieces of textual evidence for support. Set up each piece of evidence with a lead-in sentence that first provides context by explaining who was involved, what was going on, and where and when your evidence took place. To achieve strong organization, use a fitting internal transition (ex: similarly, likewise, however, later, consequently) that reflects the relationship (similarity, contrast, chronological, cause and effect, etc) between each of your examples. Finish your paragraph with a conclusion sentence that reflects back on what all of your evidence reveals.
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*In the movie **The Truman Show**, director Peter Weir characterizes Truman Burbank as a natural explorer. In a flashback sequence, Truman is shown as a boy in school when he tells his teacher what he hopes to be when he grows up. Truman tells her that he would "like to be an explorer, like the great Magellan. Later, as a young teenager, Truman goes sailing with his father on the water that he is later conditioned to fear. Despite a storm approaching, Truman begs his father to go out "a bit farther." Finally, as an adult, Truman uses soap to make drawings around the reflection of his face in the bathroom mirror. Truman draws an astronaut's helmet. From early childhood through adulthood, Truman's actions directly and indirectly reveal that he is a natural explorer at heart.*

Post-Writing Discussion

10. How does Truman's characterization impact and drive the plot and themes of the story?
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Truman is naturally an inquisitive person, who is interested in exploring the world beyond his limited experience. Truman is not naturally fearful of the water. Rather, he is actually very comfortable with and drawn to it. Conditioning Truman to fear water and imprisoning him within the confines of the set piece drives a major conflict within Truman, and between Truman and all others (actors playing his family and friends, Christof and the show's production team, and indirectly the audience given their complicity in the show's success). The resolution of the conflicts created by Truman's characterization pitted against the situation he finds himself in contributes to the themes of the film regarding knowledge, reality/illusion, freedom, individuality, ethics, mass media, consumerism and beyond.



NICE TO MEET YOU! REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show



INTRODUCTION:

In every story, the author uses a variety of methods to introduce the characters to the audience and reveal who they are, what they are like, and what makes them tick. Together, these methods are known as characterization. **Characterization** is the process by which authors reveal the traits of the characters. There are two basic categories of characterization:

1. **Direct characterization** describes a character explicitly, often through narration. For example, the narrator in a book, or a voiceover in a movie, might directly inform the reader/viewer: “He was a very polite young man.”
2. **Indirect characterization** is more subtle, revealing a character through the character’s thoughts, words and actions. This approach might reveal what the character is like by describing or showing them holding the door open for a stranger. The reader or viewer may thereby infer that the character is polite.

DIRECTIONS:

Collecting and then connecting evidence of what characters think, say and do allows us to understand the characters and the story much more deeply. Take a second and closer look back at the film to answer the questions below about what Truman thinks, says and does. Then use and connect the evidence to draw inferences about him and the story in the section that follows.

Collecting the Evidence

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2. As a little boy on the beach, what is Truman attempting to do before his father stops him and tells him that he must know his limits?

NICE TO MEET YOU! REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

3. What does Truman tell his teacher he wants to be when he grows up?

4. Among the other unwanted pregnancies, why is Truman the baby that is selected to be in the show?

5. When Truman is briefly shown as a baby on the beach, which direction is he walking?

6. Although it first appears to just be a silly moment, what does Truman draw with soap on the mirror, and what does that specific thing suggest about who he is at heart?

7. What object is on the front of the boat that Truman uses to leave Seahaven, and what does it traditionally symbolize?

8. What is the name of the boat that Truman uses to leave Seahaven, and what is that name most associated with?

NICE TO MEET YOU! REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

Connecting the Evidence

9. Based on the evidence you collected, compose a fully developed body paragraph that argues for how Truman Burbank is characterized in director Peter Weir's *The Truman Show*. Begin with an arguable topic sentence, and cite three specific pieces of textual evidence for support. Set up each piece of evidence with a lead-in sentence that first provides context by explaining who was involved, what was going on, and where and when your evidence took place. To achieve strong organization, use a fitting internal transition (ex: similarly, likewise, however, later, consequently) that reflects the relationship (similarity, contrast, chronological, cause and effect, etc) between each of your examples. Finish your paragraph with a conclusion sentence that reflects back on what all of your evidence reveals.

Post-Writing Discussion

10. How does Truman's characterization impact and drive the plot and themes of the story?



CHARACTER ARCHETYPE: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

This analytical activity may be used on multiple grade levels and may accompany Thomas Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (chapter 14) or *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: For Kids* (chapter 7). The film works to illustrate the concepts in the book, and applying the book's concepts to the film affords deeper understanding of the film. The assignment may be completed individually or in small groups. The teacher should emphasize that comparing *The Truman Show* to biblical characters and stories is unrelated to the personal religious beliefs that any student holds. Rather, it affords far deeper insight into the film by recognizing how other influential stories inform it. Students may next use the same criteria to evaluate the characteristics of Jonas in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, if working with that text, too.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9.A

Apply grades 9-10 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]").

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.



INTRODUCTION:

There are many character, symbolic and situational patterns that repeat over and over again in stories, often with variations, across all different time periods and cultures from around the world. These patterns are known as **archetypes**. In *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, author Thomas C. Foster identifies one very popular archetype that involves characters who share characteristics associated with the biblical Jesus. Such characters are known as Christ Figures. Recognizing these characteristics and characters in a story doesn't ask anyone to subscribe to any religious beliefs. Rather, it allows one to recognize the deeper pattern and consider how it adds meaning in the story.

CHARACTER ARCHETYPE: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

DIRECTIONS:

The most defining characteristics associated with Jesus that Foster instructs to be on the lookout for that might qualify a character as a Christ Figure are listed on the left side of the table below. Keep in mind that the character in question does not need to be aware that they are fulfilling these qualities, not all qualities need to apply for a character to qualify as a Christ Figure, and some qualities might apply only partially or symbolically. Using specific details from *The Truman Show*, provide evidence and an explanation on the right side of the table for each of the characteristics that apply to Truman Burbank. For any that don't apply, explain why not. One has been completed for you.

Christ Figure Qualities	Possible Responses
1. Crucified, wounds in the hands, feet, side, and head	After Truman barely survives the storm that Christof sends to him while on the boat, Truman has a noticeable bruise on his head just above his left eye.
2. In agony	Truman experiences great pain when Christof causes him to nearly drown on the boat. Truman also experiences enormous pain when Christof makes him believe that his father died and Truman was responsible when he was just a boy. Truman is also in agony when he is prevented from being with Sylvia.
3. Self-Sacrificing	Though he doesn't realize it, Truman sacrifices his personal privacy and freedom. This sacrifice benefits Christof and the people who run the show and sell its related products, as well as the audience, who is entertained by watching it.
4. Good with Children	N/A (The family across the street has a child, and there is a child on the bus. Truman does not interact much with either)
5. Good with loaves of bread, fishes, water, and wine	Though Truman has a fear of water for much of his life, he is naturally very good with it. He is shown as a baby walking toward the water. As a boy, he enjoys being out on the boat.
6. Thirty-three years old when last seen	The start of the film indicates that this is day 10,909, making Truman nearly 30 years old. Truman is last seen on the show just shortly after.
7. Works as a carpenter	Partial fit? (Truman has a job as an insurance salesman,
8. Doesn't use fancy modes of transportation (feet or donkeys preferred)	Truman drives an ordinary car. He is sometimes seen walking or riding a bicycle.
9. Believed to have walked on water	After crashing his boat into the outer wall of the set piece, Truman walks on a landing and is framed to make it appear as if he is walking on the surface of the water.
10. Often seen with arms outstretched	Just after appearing to drown from the storm that Christof causes, Truman hangs over the side of the boat with his arms outstretched in the crucifixion pose.

CHARACTER ARCHETYPE: TEACHER RESOURCE

Christ Figure Qualities	Possible Responses
11. Spends time alone in the wilderness	The entire set piece might be considered the wilderness. Though it is not a rural location, there are many predatory characters. In a sense, Truman is alone there since everyone else works together to deceive and exploit him.
12. Tempted by the devil	Once Christof finally speaks directly to Truman, he tempts Truman to stay in the dystopian world he has created for him.
13. Last seen in the company of thieves	Truman is last seen on the TV show with Christof, who has stolen his privacy, his freedom, a natural part of who he is, the person he believed to be his father for years, and for a time Sylvia.
14. Likes to tell stories and parables and uses wise sayings	N/A (Though Truman has a catchphrase that he often repeats, it seems more a spoof of TV tropes than a parable or wise saying).
15. Carried his own cross	Truman handles numerous difficulties and burdens on his own, including his manufactured fear of water, the loss of his privacy and freedom, the apparent loss of his father, and his separation from Sylvia.
16. Dead and buried, but came back to life on the third day	Truman appears to have died by drowning after the boat he ties himself to capsizes from the storm that Christof creates. Seconds later, he appears to be resurrected and comes back to life.
17. Has disciples, twelve at first, although they are not all faithful to him	Truman has many disciples/followers through the viewers of his show. Though they watch him faithfully, most are unfaithful in that by watching, they keep the show's rating high. Truman would not remain imprisoned if the show failed. Some, like Sylvia, are faithful to him in trying to free him, though.
18. Very forgiving	Though Christof has stolen so much from Truman and caused him so much pain, Truman expresses no wish for vengeance. He merely leaves the set with a smile on his face.
19. Came to save an unworthy world	N/A (Although it first appears that Truman's choice to leave the set piece inspires audience members, unworthy since their viewership enabled Truman's imprisonment, to follow his example and leave the bonds of the constructed reality in their own lives, the two garage attendants looking for another show at the very end is a tongue-in-cheek indication that the audience members will return to those lives)



CHARACTER ARCHETYPE: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show



INTRODUCTION:

There are many character, symbolic and situational patterns that repeat over and over again in stories, often with variations, across all different time periods and cultures from around the world. These patterns are known as **archetypes**. In *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, author Thomas C. Foster identifies one very popular archetype that involves characters who share characteristics associated with the biblical Jesus. Such characters are known as Christ Figures. Recognizing these characteristics and characters in a story doesn't ask anyone to subscribe to any religious beliefs. Rather, it allows one to recognize the deeper pattern and consider how it adds meaning in the story.

DIRECTIONS:

The most defining characteristics associated with Jesus that Foster instructs to be on the lookout for that might qualify a character as a Christ Figure are listed on the left side of the table below. Keep in mind that the character in question does not need to be aware that they are fulfilling these qualities, not all qualities need to apply for a character to qualify as a Christ Figure, and some qualities might apply only partially or symbolically. Using specific details from *The Truman Show*, provide evidence and an explanation on the right side of the table for each of the characteristics that apply to Truman Burbank. For any that don't apply, explain why not. One has been completed for you.

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2. In agony	
3. Self-Sacrificing	
4. Good with Children	
5. Good with loaves of bread, fishes, water, and wine	
6. Thirty-three years old when last seen	
7. Works as a carpenter	
8. Doesn't use fancy modes of transportation (feet or donkeys preferred)	
9. Believed to have walked on water	

CHARACTER ARCHETYPE: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

Christ Figure Qualities	Possible Responses
10. Often seen with arms outstretched	
11. Spends time alone in the wilderness	
12. Tempted by the devil	
13. Last seen in the company of thieves	
14. Likes to tell stories and parables and uses wise sayings	
15. Carried his own cross	
16. Dead and buried, but came back to life on the third day	
17. Has disciples, twelve at first, although they are not all faithful to him	
18. Very forgiving	
19. Came to save an unworthy world	
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15. Carried his own cross	
16. Dead and buried, but came back to life on the third day	
17. Has disciples, twelve at first, although they are not all faithful to him	
18. Very forgiving	
19. Came to save an unworthy world	



SITUATIONAL ARCHETYPES: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

This analytical activity can be used on multiple grade levels and can accompany chapter one of Thomas Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* or *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: For Kids*. It may be completed individually or in small groups.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5

Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.



INTRODUCTION:

There are many character, symbolic and situational patterns that repeat over and over again in stories, often with variations, across all different time periods and cultures from around the world. These patterns are known as archetypes. In *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, author Thomas C. Foster identifies one very common situational (or plot) archetype known as a quest, which has five underlying steps. Since the pattern is not always obvious at first glance, being on the lookout for the five steps of a quest pattern listed on the left side of the table below may help you recognize a story that did not first appear to be a quest but structurally is. This will allow you to see the story in a new and deeper way.

SITUATIONAL ARCHETYPE: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

DIRECTIONS:

Using specific details from *The Truman Show*, provide evidence and an explanation on the right side of the table for each of the steps of the quest pattern listed on the right.

Five Steps of a Quest	Possible Responses
1. A Quester: a person who goes on a quest, whether or not he knows it's a quest	Truman sets out on a quest to leave Seahaven and explore the world beyond it.
2. A Place to Go: the location the quester is attempting to go	Truman is trying to go to Fiji.
3. A Stated Reason to Go There: the reason that the quester believes is why they are going where they are going.	Truman is motivated to go to Fiji because that's where he believes Sylvia is, based on the actor who played her father telling Truman that's where she was moving to.
4. Challenges and Trials: the obstacles and difficulties that stand in the way of the quester making it to the place they are trying to get to	Truman faces deception from all the people around him, his conditioned fear of water, a fake traffic jam, forest fire, and nuclear plant meltdown, overbooked airlines, broken down bus, extreme storm, and aggressive dogs, all while being surveilled by thousands of hidden cameras.
5. A Real Reason to Go There: this is different from the stated reason for the quest and involves the quester gaining self-knowledge	Though he succeeds in reuniting with Sylvia, Truman comes to understand that he is not inherently afraid of water, and he is naturally a person interested in exploring the unknown.



SITUATIONAL ARCHETYPES: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show



INTRODUCTION:

There are many character, symbolic and situational patterns that repeat over and over again in stories, often with variations, across all different time periods and cultures from around the world. These patterns are known as **archetypes**. In *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, author Thomas C. Foster identifies one very common situational (or plot) archetype known as a quest, which has five underlying steps. Since the pattern is not always obvious at first glance, being on the lookout for the five steps of a quest pattern listed on the left side of the table below may help you recognize a story that did not first appear to be a quest but structurally is. This will allow you to see the story in a new and deeper way.

DIRECTIONS:

Using specific details from *The Truman Show*, provide evidence and an explanation on the right side of the table for each of the steps of the quest pattern listed on the right.

Five Steps of a Quest	Possible Responses
1. A Quester: a person who goes on a quest, whether or not he knows it's a quest	
2. A Place to Go: the location the quester is attempting to go	
3. A Stated Reason to Go There: the reason that the quester believes is why they are going where they are going.	
4. Challenges and Trials: the obstacles and difficulties that stand in the way of the quester making it to the place they are trying to get to	
5. A Real Reason to Go There: this is different from the stated reason for the quest and involves the quester gaining self-knowledge	



CLOSE READING THE FRAME: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

The short video essay in the first half of the assignment works best for students to first see without responding to questions because it moves fast and students would otherwise miss the visual examples. After watching it as a class, students can answer the questions with access to the video on individual devices so that they can pause and rewind as needed to locate and record answers. The frame analysis in the second half of the assignment could be done with any other frame of the movie. This particular frame was selected for its very visible and accessible illustration of the concepts from the video essay



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.



INTRODUCTION:

When you watch a movie, everything you see tends to look as if it naturally appears the way it does, as if the camera just dropped in on a real, pre-existing world. In actuality, though, the filmmakers make countless decisions to manufacture this appearance so that you might suspend your disbelief and accept what you see on screen as if it were real. Moreover, the filmmakers often carefully arrange all of the elements you see in a shot to communicate the characters and the story. This careful arrangement of the characters, objects, props, set pieces, colors, lighting, and all else in a shot is referred to as **composition**, or, in French, **mise-en-scène**.

CLOSE READING THE FRAME: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

DIRECTIONS:

Use the following link to view a video essay by Andy Lee about some of the compositional techniques that filmmakers use to help tell the story, and answer the questions below about some of the main concepts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq2H8UdyKjk&ab_channel=AndyLee. Then, on the back, apply what you learned by analyzing the filmmakers' compositional choices of a shot from *The Truman Show*.

1. The box within all the information in film gets arranged is called:
the frame .
2. As a rule, our minds and our eyes seek equilibrium and order, which takes the form of a balanced composition
3. Breaking the frame into three vertical sections and three horizontal sections is called:
the rule of thirds .This grid acts as a guide for artists to balance visual elements in the frame.
4. Perfectly balanced and symmetrical shots can often communicate:
rigid order, strict control or formal elegance
5. By breaking the rule of thirds, and denying expectations of balance, filmmakers can create compositional stress , which can communicate characters being weak, different or filled with tension, for example.
6. Deep space composition emphasizes depth by placing significant narrative and visual information on two or more of the three planes of depth (foreground, middle ground, and background) to convey information, mood, and meaning.

CLOSE-READING THE CONTROL ROOM: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

Take a second look at *The Truman Show* from 1:23:22-1:25:07. Pause the film at the start of 1:25:07 and take a closer look at the filmmakers' compositional choices in the image of Christof in the Control Room.

1. To what degree does this image follow the rule of thirds? **Explain your answer.**

This image closely follows the rule of thirds, as characters occupy the right, middle, and left thirds, and characters are positioned in the foreground, middleground, and background. A character is seen working on a device in the bottom third, a conversation between characters occurs in the middle third, and the skyline occupies the top third.

2. To what degree is this a balanced image? **Explain your answer.**

This image has a high degree of balance. While not perfectly balanced or perfectly symmetrical, there is no significant negative space, as characters occupy each third of the shot. Also, Christof is almost perfectly centered.

3. Describe which characters are closest to the camera (foreground), are a little further away (middleground), and are furthest (background).

Christof and one of the producers are closest, Christof's assistants and another producer are a little further away, and two others (presumably lower ranking assistants, as they also have no earpieces and have had no lines previously) are furthest away.

4. What does this use of deep space/focus composition reveal about the characters in this image?

Characters who are closest to the camera and mostly sharply in focus dominate this shot and this part of the story. Christof and the producer battle for power over what will happen to Truman, while the assistants, who appear relatively smaller as a result of being further from the camera and are less in focus, lack power and merely follow Christof's orders.

CLOSE-READING THE CONTROL ROOM: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

5. Identify and explain two other film techniques not covered in the video essay you watched that contribute to who has power in this shot.

The lighting is brightest on Christof and the producer to draw attention to them and reflect their power. Less powerful characters are increasingly cast in shadow behind them. While Christof and the producer are equally close to the camera and have almost equal lighting, Christof's position in the center of the frame distinguishes him as the most powerful, most in control, and the center of attention at this moment in the story. Christof's assistants surround him like a small army, and his costume also hints at this. The double buttons of his jacket are reminiscent of a navy or military uniform jacket, and his hat suggests a crown and the power of a king.

6. Summarize how the filmmakers used compositional techniques to create and communicate meaning regarding the characters and the story in this shot.

The filmmakers composed this image by closely following the rule of thirds to create a very balanced image. Since balanced compositions tend to suggest stability and control, this matches the control these characters have over everything in Truman's life, including the weather, and whether Truman will live or die at this point in the story. Fittingly, the location of this image is the control room. The filmmakers used deep space composition, lighting and centerframing to make Christof appear as the largest, the most well-lit, and the center of everything, which portrays him as the most powerful character in the shot and storyline. Because of the extreme success of his show, Christof has become even more powerful than the producer and is able to overrule him. The compositional choices suggest Christof's power approximates a god's power, in being above everyone else and positioning him as the giver and taker of life.



CLOSE READING THE FRAME: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show



INTRODUCTION:

When you watch a movie, everything you see tends to look as if it naturally appears the way it does, as if the camera just dropped in on a real, pre-existing world. In actuality, though, the filmmakers make countless decisions to manufacture this appearance so that you might suspend your disbelief and accept what you see on screen as if it were real. Moreover, the filmmakers often carefully arrange all of the elements you see in a shot to communicate the characters and the story. This careful arrangement of the characters, objects, props, set pieces, colors, lighting, and all else in a shot is referred to as **composition**, or, in French, **mise-en-scène**.

DIRECTIONS:

Use the following link to view a video essay by Andy Lee about some of the compositional techniques that filmmakers use to help tell the story, and answer the questions below about some of the main concepts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq2H8UdyKjk&ab_channel=AndyLee. Then, on the back, apply what you learned by analyzing the filmmakers' compositional choices of a shot from *The Truman Show*.

1. The box within all the information in film gets arranged is called:

2. As a rule, our minds and our eyes seek equilibrium and order, which takes the form of a

3. Breaking the frame into three vertical sections and three horizontal sections is called:

This grid acts as a guide for artists to balance visual elements in the frame.

4. Perfectly balanced and symmetrical shots can often communicate:

5. By breaking the rule of thirds, and denying expectations of balance, filmmakers can create _____, which can communicate characters being weak, different or filled with tension, for example.

6. _____ emphasizes depth by placing significant narrative and visual information on two or more of the three planes of depth (foreground, middle ground, and background) to convey information, mood, and meaning.

CLOSE-READING THE CONTROL ROOM: REPRODUCIBLE

Take a second look at *The Truman Show* from 1:23:22-1:25:07. Pause the film at the start of 1:25:07 and take a closer look at the filmmakers' compositional choices in the image of Christof in the Control Room.

7. To what degree does this image follow the rule of thirds? *Explain your answer.*

8. To what degree is this a balanced image? *Explain your answer.*

9. Describe which characters are closest to the camera (foreground), are a little further away (middleground), and are furthest (background).

10. What does this use of deep space/focus composition reveal about the characters in this image?

11. Identify and explain two other film techniques not covered in the video essay you watched that contribute to who has power in this shot.

12. Summarize how the filmmakers used compositional techniques to create and communicate meaning regarding the characters and the story in this shot.



CLOSE READING THE PAGE: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

This assignment may work best after completing the Close Reading The Frame assignment, which may afford students a more accessible schema for textual analysis that they can transfer from the screen to the page. Reading about symbolism, seasons and weather in stories in Thomas Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (chapter 9) or *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: For Kids* (chapter 10) before this activity will also help students understand their use in *The Truman Show* and Lois Lowry's *The Giver*.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.



INTRODUCTION:

Take a second and closer look at several moments from Lois Lowry's *The Giver* to examine how her use of diction (a writer's purposeful choice of language, which may contribute to telling the story, communicating ideas, developing characters, and establishing the style, tone and theme of the story) and symbolism create and communicate meaning in the story in ways that parallel how the filmmakers used composition techniques to create and communicate meaning in *The Truman Show*.

CLOSE READING THE PAGE: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

DIRECTIONS:

Respond to the following prompts with as much specificity and development as possible.

1. The opening line is among the most important in a story. According to the opening line of *The Giver*, when does the story take place? What is unusual about how the time of year is described, and why is this description strange given the lines that follow it?

The narrator says that it is "almost December." This means that it is likely November, but the narrator doesn't just say November. This is unusual because the narrator takes such care to use precise language in the lines that follow regarding his feelings.

2. What **connotations** (associations we have with a word; as opposed to **denotation**, which is the dictionary definition of the word) do you have with November (and the fall season)? What about December (and the winter season)? How does nature contribute to the connotations you associate with these two months/seasons?

Fall is often associated with harvest, food and Thanksgiving. It can also be associated with growing old. Nature mimics the aging process, in that the texture of the leaves change (as does the texture of skin), the color of leaves change (as the color of hair changes with age), trees begin to shed their leaves (as many people lose hair with age), and fall is nearing the winter, or end of the year. Though winter can be associated with the happiness of holidays, it is more commonly associated with death. In nature, it is colder and darker, everything appears to die, the trees look skeletal without their leaves, and the start of winter marks the end (or death) of the calendar year. This is similar to how the body grows cold after death, is ultimately reduced to a skeleton, and marks the end of life.

3. Given the associations you have with fall and winter, how does Lowry's diction in line one foreshadow and symbolize what will happen to Jonas and the rest of the story?

The symbolic implication of nearing winter (and winter's association with death) is that Jonas' childhood and innocence are nearing death, since he will soon go through the Ceremony of Twelve, a rite of passage into adulthood. Moreover, he will soon lose his childlike innocence as he discovers the truth about his community, which involves euthanasia. The description of it being "almost December" sets a dark and foreboding tone which foreshadows the deaths that Jonas will experience or witness.

CLOSE READING THE PAGE: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

4. In chapter three, Jonas notices something strange about the apple when he plays catch with Asher. This is the first time he experiences seeing color. What connotations do you have with apples?

Apples might be associated with health ('an apple a day keeps the doctor away', etc), with education (*the traditional of gifting apples to teachers*), the company that sells smartphones and other technology, the poisoned apple from Snow White, and the forbidden apple from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the biblical Garden of Eden. Therefore, apples are especially associated with knowledge and often sin.

5. Given that Lowry did not have Jonas play catch with a ball or an orange, and thinking of the connotations that apples have, explain the symbolic meaning of the apple and how it fits and foreshadows the story that follows.

The apple, which seems to inexplicably change right before his eyes, symbolizes the change that Jonas will soon experience once he gets his assignment in the Ceremony of Twelve. Moreover, the apple marks the beginning of Jonas gaining knowledge about his sinful community. Soon after he will discover that he can tell lies, withhold information, receive memories of color, hunger and war, and the methods, including release, that the community uses to achieve conformity. Jonas is able to gain the knowledge of the evil done in his community that is otherwise forbidden. And similar to the characters in the biblical Garden of Eden, it leads to his departure from his community.

CLOSE-READING THE READING PAGE: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

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5. Given that Lowry did not have Jonas play catch with a ball or an orange, and thinking of the connotations that apples have, explain the symbolic meaning of the apple and how it fits and foreshadows the story that follows.



TRUMAN AND THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

After viewing the interview scene in *The Truman Show* that ends at 1:09:57, the first question prompt below may work well as an exit ticket assignment to complete class, or as a bellringer assignment the following class before viewing further. Alternatively, all prompts below could be given together as one continuous assignment. The culminating assignment may work well as individual or small group work, and may also be adapted as an oral presentation.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.7

Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

1. The host of Trutalk asks Christof why Truman “has never come close to discovering the true nature of his world until now,” and Christof answers that “We accept the reality of the world with which we are presented” (1:06:11). To what extent do you agree that people do this?
Explain and provide examples.

Next, view Belgian surrealist artist Rene Magritte’s 1929 painting called *The Treachery of Images* at <https://www.renemagritte.org/the-treachery-of-images.jsp>. The words in French at the bottom of the painting translate to “This is not a pipe.”

*The text of a piece of art, poem or a story is the surface layer that is directly communicated. The subtext, however, refers to the implied meanings that the audience infers, which adds depth and complexity to the creative work. Respond to the questions below to illuminate the subtexts communicated by *The Treachery of Images* and *The Truman Show*.*

TRUMAN AND THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

2. Considering the tension between the image on the top and the words on the bottom of Magritte's painting (individually, both are directly communicated, surface layers of text), what is the subtext, or implied meaning, that may be inferred by Magritte's work?

While the image at the top of the painting appears to be a pipe, it is of course merely a representation of a pipe, as the words on the bottom suggest. Of course, it is not really a pipe which can be held or smoked. Though that distinction is rather obvious upon momentary contemplation, the painting indirectly invites the viewer to consider how the images we endlessly encounter in everyday life that represent real things are not actually the real things that they represent. Nevertheless, we often end up perceiving those images as the real things.

3. Citing specific examples from the movie, how does the subtext of **The Truman Show** parallel the subtext of The Treachery of Images?

The world that Truman inhabits is filled with images that he perceives to be the real things that those images merely represent, including the moon and sun, friends and family members, and the images of happiness collected in the family photo album, etc.

4. Rewatch the segment of **The Truman Show** from 38:00-39:00. What is the name of the program that the television host introduces as Truman watches TV alone while flipping through the rest of the photo album? On the surface, who does the TV program feature and what sorts of things are they doing?

The upcoming program is called Show Me the Way to Go Home. It follows the Abbott family and their trials and tribulations in Camden Village.

TRUMAN AND THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

5. Before mentioning the name of the family in the program, the television host explicitly identified the subtext that can be inferred from the show's characters and events. What is the implied message (subtext) of the show according to the host, and how is it designed to influence Truman?
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According to the host, this fake show endorses small town life and teaches the viewer that one doesn't need to leave home to discover what the world's all about, and that no-one is poor who has friends. As Truman has recently expressed a desire to "go away" and explore beyond the confines of Seahaven, the implied messages of the show are designed to manipulate and dissuade Truman from trying to leave Seahaven.

Visual Analysis Mini-Project

The television program that Truman watches, the entire movie *The Truman Show*, and *The Treachery of Images* all share at least two subtexts: 1) the countless images we encounter everyday aren't really the things they represent, and 2) those images often communicate subtexts themselves that relate to **ideology** (a system of ideas, values and beliefs), which tend to impact the viewer without them even realizing it. These ideological messages might be on topics such as small town life, discovery and friendship, or infinite other topics, such as masculinity and femininity, race, class, beauty standards, family, patriotism, success, the American dream, and beyond.

DIRECTIONS:

Locate a print advertisement and analyze how the components in the image are used to represent real things, even though they are not really those things, and how effectively that works. Then, identify the subtextual messages that may be inferred from the advertisement and cite specific evidence that lead you to your conclusion. Present your findings through a PowerPoint, Google Slide or Prezi presentation.



TRUMAN AND THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

1. The host of Trutalk asks Christof why Truman “has never come close to discovering the true nature of his world until now,” and Christof answers that “We accept the reality of the world with which we are presented” (1:06:11). To what extent do you agree that people do this? **Explain and provide examples.**

Next, view Belgian surrealist artist Rene Magritte’s 1929 painting called *The Treachery of Images* at <https://www.renemagritte.org/the-treachery-of-images.jsp>. The words in French at the bottom of the painting translate to “This is not a pipe.”

The **text** of a piece of art, poem or a story is the surface layer that is directly communicated. The **subtext**, however, refers to the implied meanings that the audience infers, which adds depth and complexity to the creative work. Respond to the questions below to illuminate the subtexts communicated by *The Treachery of Images* and *The Truman Show*.

2. Considering the tension between the image on the top and the words on the bottom of Magritte’s painting (individually, both are directly communicated, surface layers of text), what is the subtext, or implied meaning, that may be inferred by Magritte’s work?

3. Citing specific examples from the movie, how does the subtext of *The Truman Show* parallel the subtext of *The Treachery of Images*?

4. Rewatch the segment of *The Truman Show* from 38:00-39:00. What is the name of the program that the television host introduces as Truman watches TV alone while flipping through the rest of the photo album? On the surface, who does the TV program feature and what sorts of things are they doing?

TRUMAN AND THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

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The television program that Truman watches, the entire movie *The Truman Show*, and The Treachery of Images all share at least two subtexts: 1) the countless images we encounter everyday aren't really the things they represent, and 2) those images often communicate subtexts themselves that relate to **ideology** (a system of ideas, values and beliefs), which tend to impact the viewer without them even realizing it. These ideological messages might be on topics such as small town life, discovery and friendship, or infinite other topics, such as masculinity and femininity, race, class, beauty standards, family, patriotism, success, the American dream, and beyond.

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ALLEGORY VISUALIZATION : TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

Visual composition is an essential 21st century multimodal skill which requires critical and creative thinking. This activity may be done by hand drawing on a blank hardcopy storyboard template as well. Students should be shown how storyboards are a standard tool that filmmakers use in the process of making movies. Examples may be found at <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/storyboard-examples-film/>. Storyboardthat.com is a very intuitive tool, and this assignment may be easily adapted to modify the number of frames students should compose or to add additional components, such as dialogue boxes, frame labels, or numerous other features available on the platform. This activity may work well after and in tandem with the lesson and concepts from the Frame Analysis activity. Students may be asked to compose their frames making fitting choices in using balanced or imbalanced compositions, deep space composition, and centerframing, etc. First reading about intertextuality in chapter five of Thomas Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* or *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: For Kids* will also help students recognize the interconnectedness of stories. Simply omit step three below if not working with *The Giver*.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9.A

Apply grades 9-10 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]").

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.



INTRODUCTION:

An **allegory** is a story that operates on two levels in which the explicit surface level characters, conflicts, settings and themes also serve to symbolize deeper implicit meanings, which often represent more complex and abstract concepts. One of the best-known allegories is *The Allegory of the Cave*, from book VII of Plato's highly influential work called *The Republic*. *The Truman Show* may also be read as an allegory, with many similarities to Plato's allegory.

ALLEGORY VISUALIZATION : TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1

Read Plato's Allegory of the Cave (available online at https://www.indwes.edu/academics/jwhc/_files/plato_s%20allegory%20of%20the%20cave.pdf). As you read the conversation between the characters Socrates and Glaucon, picture in your mind the settings, characters and situations that Socrates describes. After reading, visualize the pictures in your mind by creating three storyboard frames that represent three basic parts of the story on storyboardthat.com.

Frame 1 will be of the characters and objects inside the cave described on page 1.

Frame 2 will be of the prisoner who is freed, and where he goes, and how he reacts to what he sees, described on page 2.

Frame 3 will be of what happens when the prisoner returns to the cave, as described on page 3.

Step 2

After watching *The Truman Show*, create three storyboard frames relating to the movie on storyboardthat.com.

Frame 1 should represent some part of the story that depicts how Truman is in the same situation as the prisoners inside the cave on page 1 of *The Allegory of the Cave*.

Frame 2 should represent what you envision happens with Truman once he first steps outside of the set piece at the end of the film. What does he see? What does he experience?

Frame 3 should represent what you imagine Truman would do next. Would Truman, literally or symbolically, return to the cave and share his new experiences with others, as the prisoner in Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* did? Would he do something else? What do you think would become of him?

Step 3

After reading *The Giver*, create three storyboard frames relating to the novel on storyboardthat.com.

Frame 1 should represent some part of the story that depicts how Jonas is symbolically in a similar situation to the prisoners inside the cave on page 1 of *The Allegory of the Cave*.

Frame 2 should represent what happens with Jonas once he symbolically experiences a similar thing as the one prisoner when he exits the cave.

Frame 3 should represent what you imagine happens next with Jonas and Gabriel after the novel ends. Do they eventually return to their 'cave'? What happens?



ALLEGORY VISUALIZATION : REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show



INTRODUCTION:

An **allegory** is a story that operates on two levels in which the explicit surface level characters, conflicts, settings and themes also serve to symbolize deeper implicit meanings, which often represent more complex and abstract concepts. One of the best-known allegories is The Allegory of the Cave, from book VII of Plato's highly influential work called The Republic. ***The Truman Show*** may also be read as an allegory, with many similarities to Plato's allegory.

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ALLEGORY VISUALIZATION : REPRODUCIBLE

DIRECTIONS:

The Truman Show

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Frame 3 should represent what you imagine happens next with Jonas and Gabriel after the novel ends. Do they eventually return to their 'cave'? What happens?



THE TRUMAN SHOW AS SATIRE: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

Responding to the first prompt in a small group or whole class setting may be very beneficial to get students started, even if just to generate a couple of topics. The culminating essay argument could be adapted to a PowerPoint, Google slide or Prezi project, or an oral presentation. Introducing short examples of satire from *The Onion*, *Calvin and Hobbes*, or *The Simpsons*, and using the prompts below with them, may serve as excellent rehearsal for analyzing satire in *The Truman Show*.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.A

Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

While *The Truman Show* functions on a surface level as a story about a character who struggles to overcome the many conflicts that he faces, it also functions on a deeper level as a work of satire. **Satire** is a genre and literary device that uses irony, humor, understatement or exaggeration to poke fun at, expose, criticize or ridicule the folly of an idea, viewpoint, practice, custom, tradition, prominent person or societal institution. Satire can range from light entertainment to dark and stinging commentary. To identify and analyze satire in *The Truman Show*, carefully examine the movie's topics, techniques, theme and purpose.

1. **Topics:** What topics are brought up through the setting, characters, symbols, conflicts and plot of the movie?

Privacy, celebrity, advertising, mass media, consumerism, ethics, reality/illusion, etc.

THE TRUMAN SHOW AS SATIRE: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

2. **Techniques:** Identify any examples you can find of the following techniques in the movie as they relate to the topics you identified above (some examples might be more than one technique at the same time):

Techniques	Examples in The Truman Show
Irony	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Truman is unaware of his situation but the audience and viewers are-Seahaven (haven means a safe place or refuge)-Marlon: "Nothing here is fake. Nothing you see is fake."-The posters in the travel agency office that discourage travel-Host of Trutalk to Christof: "We know how jealously you guard your privacy."
Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-It rains only on Truman-Christof's explanation of Kirk's disappearance: "Amnesia."-Truman's mirror soap drawing and playacting-The infiltrators of the show by parachuting or hiding in a gift box
Understatement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-The security guards explain the false elevator: "We're remodeling."-Meryl crosses her fingers in the wedding photo-Christof on Trutalk: "He could leave at any time, if his was more than just a vague ambition."-As a part of the search party, Kirk says. "Truman. It's me, Dad. Let's talk."
Exaggeration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Truman is the first person adopted by a corporation-Instant wall of flames that represent a forest fire-1.7 billion people from 220 countries watched milestone episodes of the show-The show takes place on a set piece so large it is visible from space.

3. **Theme:** Satire goes beyond mere entertainment by communicating a central message regarding the topics it explores. The composer uses all of the elements of the story, including the techniques you identified above, to communicate that message to the audience. Choose the topic from step one above that you think is most prominent in **The Truman Show**, and identify the message that the filmmakers communicate about it in universal terms (ex: if the topic of crime comes up in a story, the message that the composers might be communicating through their story could possibly be that crime doesn't pay. Or perhaps the story's theme might be that some crimes are justified).

THE TRUMAN SHOW AS SATIRE: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show

4. **Purpose:** Now that you have identified the thematic message, identify the filmmakers' purpose in communicating it to the viewer. Are they trying to poke fun at, expose, criticize, ridicule (or something else) regarding the topic their central message touches upon?

The filmmakers are trying to expose how people are manipulated and imprisoned by the mass media that they consume.

5. **Putting It Together:** Combine your responses to the steps above to create a viable, complex thesis argument using the following structure:

[The director's] satirical work [name of work] uses [the techniques you identified in step 2] to [the purpose you identified in step 4] [the theme you identified in step 3].

*Peter Weir's satirical film **The Truman Show** uses irony and exaggeration to expose how people are manipulated and imprisoned by the mass media that they consume.*

6. **Developing the Argument:** Now that you have a sophisticated thesis statement that identifies the filmmakers' techniques, purpose and thematic message, compose a fully developed, tightly organized essay that supports this argument with textual evidence (use your examples from step 2 above).



THE TRUMAN SHOW AS SATIRE: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

While *The Truman Show* functions on a surface level as a story about a character who struggles to overcome the many conflicts that he faces, it also functions on a deeper level as a work of satire. **Satire** is a genre and literary device that uses irony, humor, understatement or exaggeration to poke fun at, expose, criticize or ridicule the folly of an idea, viewpoint, practice, custom, tradition, prominent person or societal institution. Satire can range from light entertainment to dark and stinging commentary. To identify and analyze satire in *The Truman Show*, carefully examine the movie's topics, techniques, theme and purpose.

1. **Topics:** What topics are brought up through the setting, characters, symbols, conflicts and plot of the movie?

Privacy, celebrity, advertising, mass media, consumerism, ethics, reality/illusion, etc.

2. **Techniques:** Identify any examples you can find of the following techniques in the movie as they relate to the topics you identified above (some examples might be more than one technique at the same time):

Techniques	Examples in <i>The Truman Show</i>
Irony	
Humor	
Understatement	
Exaggeration	

THE TRUMAN SHOW AS SATIRE: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

3. **Theme:** Satire goes beyond mere entertainment by communicating a central message regarding the topics it explores. The composer uses all of the elements of the story, including the techniques you identified above, to communicate that message to the audience. Choose the topic from step one above that you think is most prominent in *The Truman Show*, and identify the message that the filmmakers communicate about it in universal terms (ex: if the topic of crime comes up in a story, the message that the composers might be communicating through their story could possibly be that crime doesn't pay. Or perhaps the story's theme might be that some crimes are justified).
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Ex: People are manipulated and imprisoned by the mass media that they consume.

4. **Purpose:** Now that you have identified the thematic message, identify the filmmakers' purpose in communicating it to the viewer. Are they trying to poke fun at, expose, criticize, ridicule (or something else) regarding the topic their central message touches upon?
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6. **Developing the Argument:** Now that you have a sophisticated thesis statement that identifies the filmmakers' techniques, purpose and thematic message, compose a fully developed, tightly organized essay that supports this argument with textual evidence (use your examples from step 2 above)



POWER, PRISON AND THE PANOPTICON: TEACHER RESOURCE

The Truman Show



TEACHER TIPS:

The following question prompts may be used for students to respond to in written form or may be used for small group or whole class discussion. The culminating essay prompt may be adapted to a PowerPoint, Google Slide or Prezi project, or an oral presentation. The teacher may also consider incorporating the original writings of Bentham and Foucault.



STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

DIRECTIONS:

Read the following article by Dino Felluga about the theories of French philosopher Michel Foucault entitled "Modules on Foucault: On Panoptic and Carceral Society" from his Introductory Guide to Critical Theory: <http://www.purdue.edu/guidetotheory/newhistoricism/modules/foucaultCarceral.html> and respond to the prompts below

1. In what ways does the physical environment of the set piece in *The Truman Show* resemble the physical design and its effects of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, as described in the reading? Provide specific examples from the film and the reading.

Seahaven features approximately 5,000 cameras that allow Christof (and the viewing audience) the ability to 'see all' from his position, similar to Bentham's central tower, in the lunar room of the 221st floor of the omni-cam ecosphere (1:02:34). Truman, as a prisoner, cannot see when there is a person in the omni-cam ecosphere (though for most of the film he is unaware that it exists, of course). As a prisoner, Truman cannot interact with anyone who is not a part of his imprisonment (i.e. he and Sylvia are physically kept from one another). Additionally, Truman is

depicted as behind bars in the childhood photos of him in a crib, and more subtly, behind the picket fence each morning when he leaves his house. Moreover, the grid structure of the planned neighborhood where Truman lives not only works in service of creating a Utopian aesthetic, but it also functions to facilitate movement and discourage concealment.

2. How do the design and events of The Truman Show TV program within the movie **The Truman Show** qualify as both of Foucault's concepts of "a culture of spectacle" and "carceral punishment," as described in the reading? Provide specific examples from the film and the reading.
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The physical and emotional punishment that Truman endures is broadcast live throughout the world for all to see as a spectacle of punishment. This form of punishment hits a zenith when Christof creates the storm that nearly drowns Truman. At the same time, Truman's fear of water is perhaps the strongest example of how much he has internalized the discipline that Christof has given him. In fact, according to Christof, "Truman prefers his cell" (1:08:06), which is why Christof believes he doesn't leave.

3. Considering the first of the seven effects of Foucault's notion of the "panoptic machine," explain how the viewing audience of the TV program **The Truman Show** within the movie are both prisoners themselves as well as complicit in the imprisonment and violence that Truman endures. Provide specific examples from the film.
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On one level, the viewing audience has become prisoner to the power of television and the consumerism it pushes. This is particularly exemplified by the man in the bathtub and the security guards who seem powerless to escape the control The Truman Show program has over them and their lives. Indeed, the guards momentarily seem inspired by Truman escaping his prison to escape their own television prison, but in a tongue-in-cheek moment to end the film, they return right back to their 'master' by asking what else is on television. Other characters represent the many millions of people who succumb to the power of product placement advertisements on the show, generating revenues for the show that are equivalent to the gross national product of a small country. Relatedly, the show, and the immoral punishments it visits upon Truman, could never continue if the revenues and viewership dropped off. By watching and buying, the viewers are complicit in the harm done to the innocent Truman. Moreover, some in the Truman-themed bar excitedly take odds that Truman won't survive his escape by boat.

4. **Applying the Concepts:** Select and read one of the articles linked below. Then compose a fully developed, tightly organized essay, supported by textual evidence that applies at least two of the seven effects of Foucault's "panoptic machine" from the bottom of Felluga's article to analyze how your chosen article demonstrates that the panoptic schema has "spread throughout the social body."
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[Beyond San Francisco, More Cities Are Saying No To Facial Recognition](#)
[Your Apps Know Where You Were Last Night, And They're Not Keeping It A Secret](#)
[Hey Alexa, What Can You Hear? And What Will You Do With It?](#)



POWER, PRISON AND THE PANOPTICON: REPRODUCIBLE

The Truman Show

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1. In what ways does the physical environment of the set piece in *The Truman Show* resemble the physical design and its effects of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon, as described in the reading? Provide specific examples from the film and the reading.

2. How do the design and events of The Truman Show TV program within the movie *The Truman Show* qualify as both of Foucault’s concepts of “a culture of spectacle” and “carceral punishment,” as described in the reading? Provide specific examples from the film and the reading.

3. Considering the first of the seven effects of Foucault’s notion of the “panoptic machine,” explain how the viewing audience of the TV program The Truman Show within the movie are both prisoners themselves as well as complicit in the imprisonment and violence that Truman endures. Provide specific examples from the film.

4. Applying the Concepts: Select and read one of the articles linked below. Then compose a fully developed, tightly organized essay, supported by textual evidence that applies at least two of the seven effects of Foucault’s “panoptic machine” from the bottom of Felluga’s article to analyze how your chosen article demonstrates that the panoptic schema has “spread throughout the social body.”

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