

8A: Perspectives & Narrative

Texts

Going Solo by Roald Dahl

“Fish Cheeks” by Amy Tan

“My Mother’s Garden” by Kaitlyn Greenidge

Introduction to the Texts

Roald Dahl’s memoir *Going Solo* is focused on Dahl’s young adult years. During World War II, he joined Britain’s Royal Air Force and was sent to fight in Greece. Dahl took part in a dangerous air battle above the large city of Athens.

In “Fish Cheeks,” Amy Tan describes a Christmas Eve dinner she had with her family when she was fourteen. She was anxious when her parents invited the family of their minister to join them. She had a crush on the minister’s son and was worried that he would not like the food that her Chinese family was serving. After the meal, Tan’s mother told Tan that she should not be ashamed of her Chinese culture.

In “My Mother’s Garden,” Kaitlyn Greenidge speaks about the anger she felt during a social studies class at her private high school. In the class, students from wealthy families complained about poor people who receive help through welfare. Welfare is financial help, such as food stamps, that poor people get from the government. Greenidge writes about growing up in a family that received welfare.

Background and Context

Roald Dahl and World War II

Roald Dahl is a famous children’s author who lived during the 1900s. One of his most famous books is *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. It was made into two popular movies. He also wrote *James and the Giant Peach*, *The BFG*, and *Matilda*.

During World War II, Germany was trying to take over all of Europe. One of the countries that Germany attacked was Greece. Britain tried to help people in Greece fight the Germans. Roald Dahl was in the British Royal Air Force. The air force is the part of an army that fights with planes. There are two types of planes that fight battles: fighters and bombers. Fighters shoot guns at other planes and at people on the ground. Bombers drop bombs on important targets, such as factories and ships. Dahl’s squadron was made up of fighter planes called Hurricanes. A squadron is a group of planes that fights as a team.

Amy Tan

Amy Tan is also a famous author. Her book *The Joy Luck Club* is one of the best-known works of Asian American literature. It was made into a popular movie.

Tan’s parents emigrated from China. After they arrived in the United States, they joined a Christian church. Each Christian church is led by a minister. One of the minister’s most important jobs is leading the religious service every Sunday.

Kaitlyn Greenidge

Kaitlyn Greenidge discusses welfare. There are different kinds of welfare, including food stamps, free health care, and payments to people who cannot work because of serious disabilities caused by injuries or diseases.



8B: Liberty & Equality

Texts

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave by Frederick Douglass

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs

The Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln

The Boys' War by Jim Murphy

A Confederate Girl's Diary by Sarah Morgan Dawson

Introduction to the Text

Narratives: Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland. Although it was against the law, his slaveholder's wife taught Douglass to read. As a teenager, he had to work in the fields under a brutal overseer. After five years of abuse and humiliation, he managed to escape to the North. Frederick Douglass worked closely with President Lincoln to make sure that enslaved people would be freed by the war.

In Massachusetts, Douglass went to work for a group of abolitionists, people who wanted to end slavery. He became known as a great anti-slavery speaker. Douglass told his story across the North and Midwest. Some did not believe he had truly been enslaved and had escaped. As a response, he published his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Later, he published an anti-slavery newspaper and served as an advisor to President Lincoln. After the Civil War, Douglass held several public offices. He remains one of the most important human rights leaders in American history.

Harriet Jacobs was also born into slavery. She escaped as a teenager, hoping to find freedom for herself and her two young children. She spent seven years hiding in an attic of a friend's house before she escaped to New York, where she finally met her children again. Jacobs joined the abolitionist movement. In 1861, she published her memoir, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Her book was a rare early account of the violence against women in slavery.

Costs of the War

Some 2.3 million soldiers fought in the Civil War. Almost one-third of them were killed. It was the deadliest war in U.S. history. *The Boys' War* by Jim Murphy tells the stories of child soldiers from the North and South using letters, diaries, and photos. *A Confederate Girl's Diary* tells the story of Sarah Morgan Dawson, a girl from a white Louisiana family torn apart by the war.

The Gettysburg Address

Perhaps the most famous piece of Civil War literature is the Gettysburg Address. President Lincoln gave this speech in November 1863 at the dedication of a soldiers' cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The whole speech has only 271 words and lasted only two minutes, but President Lincoln's forceful words have remained powerful for generations as a reminder of the soldiers' sacrifice and the need for a unified nation.



8C: Science & Science Fiction

Texts

Gris Grimly's Frankenstein by Gris Grimly (graphic novel)

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

"The Tables Turned" by William Wordsworth

Debate on the Frame-Work Bill by Lord Byron

"Ada, Countess of Lovelace," from *The Innovators* by Walter Isaacson

Introduction to the Texts

Frankenstein

In 1816, a teenager named Mary Shelley went on vacation with some friends. One night, they challenged each other to write ghost stories. Shelley had read about experiments with a new discovery, a form of energy called electricity. She wondered if it were possible to bring dead people to life using electric current. Before long she had written not just a story but an entire novel. She called the novel *Frankenstein* and published it in 1818. Her novel tells the story of a scientist, Victor Frankenstein, who builds and gives life to a monster and quickly regrets it. The book raises many questions about good and evil. It warns the reader what can happen when people act like gods.

Some people think of *Frankenstein* as one of the first horror novels in English. Others think it is the English-speaking world's earliest science fiction story. Still others say it is a Gothic novel, a story that combines fiction, horror, and sometimes romance. *Frankenstein* has been adapted many times in different ways. The story has also been the subject of several movies. Artists such as Gris Grimly have created graphic novels based on *Frankenstein*. These filmmakers and artists use Shelley's story, but they also make it their own.

Ada Lovelace

The origins of the computer go back to the early 1800s. In 1822, English mathematician Charles Babbage began to develop plans for a machine that could calculate the answers to math problems. Later, Babbage worked with another mathematician, Ada Lovelace, to create an even more powerful machine called the "Analytical Engine." Babbage and Lovelace could not actually build these machines because the materials and equipment of the time were not good enough. Still, their ideas were used by the people who later developed and built modern computers.

The Frame-Work Bill and "The Tables Turned"

Not everyone in England liked the changes of the early 1800s. Some laborers lost their jobs because new machines could do the work of many people. These workers reacted with violent protests called riots. During some of these riots, people destroyed the machines. The government passed a law called the Frame-Work Bill that stated that people who destroyed these machines could be put to death. Romantic poet William Wordsworth did not like all the changes either. In his poem "The Tables Turned," he encouraged people to go outside and enjoy nature rather than learning about art and science only from books.



8D: Romeo & Juliet

Text

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Introduction to the Text

The Bard

William Shakespeare is often called the best playwright of the western world. His nickname was “The Bard” and he was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon in England. As a child, Shakespeare learned to read and write at school. He also studied Latin and translated works of literature, philosophy, and history. As an adult, Shakespeare drew inspiration from old literature for his playwriting. Shakespeare’s history plays are about real historical figures, even though some details are invented. His tragedies and comedies combine parts of legends, ancient Greek and Latin texts, and the literature of his own time. Shakespeare died in 1616, but his plays have been entertaining audiences for 500 years.

Romeo and Juliet

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare’s most famous tragedies. In this play, two families (the Montagues and Capulets) are bitter enemies, yet Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet fall in love. The play, published in the late 1590s, was likely inspired by a long poem published in 1562 that told a similar story. Since then, the tale of Romeo and Juliet has been adapted into countless movies, musicals, plays, operas, novels, a ballet, and even a symphony.

Background and Context

Elizabethan England

Queen Elizabeth I ruled England from 1558 to 1603. She ruled during a period called “the Renaissance.” The Renaissance was a time of cultural and artistic achievement that affected much of Europe. Writers like Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, and Christopher Marlowe created poetry and drama during this time. Queen Elizabeth herself even wrote some poetry.

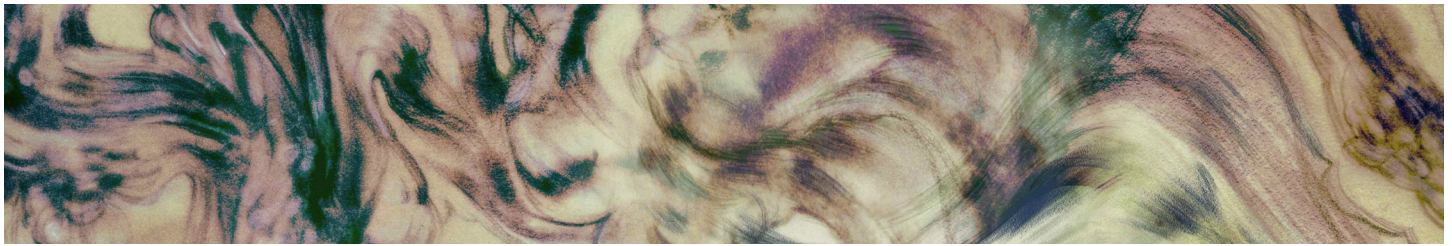
Many people in Elizabethan England faced challenges, though. The population grew quickly. Rich people made a lot of money while poor people struggled. Poverty, disease, and food shortages made daily life difficult. However, even the poor could sometimes afford to visit theaters to see plays, such as *Romeo and Juliet*.

Word Count: 309

Keywords

William Shakespeare
drama
tragedies

Elizabethan England
Queen Elizabeth I
Renaissance



8E: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning

Texts

“I Cannot Forget” by Alexander Kimel

Shores Beyond Shores by Irene Butter

A Child of Hitler by Alfons Heck

“100,000 Hail Hitler” by Frederick T. Birchall

“Helene Mayer, Fencing Champ,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency

“Jesse Owens’ Triumph over Time and Hitlerism,” *Ebony* magazine

Maus I by Art Spiegelman

Night by Elie Wiesel

Introduction to the Texts

In Alexander Kimel’s poem “I Cannot Forget,” the speaker remembers the horrors of the Jewish ghetto. A ghetto was a part of a city where German Nazis kept Jews before they were sent to concentration camps. The Nazis were the people who ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945. A concentration camp was a type of large prison. Some of these camps had buildings called gas chambers, in which large numbers of people were killed with poison gas.

In the passage from *Shores Beyond Shores*, Irene Butter tells about being a young Jewish girl in Germany in 1936 and 1937. The Nazis began to take businesses away from the Jews. A friend of the author’s brother was beaten up just for being Jewish.

In *A Child of Hitler*, Alfons Heck describes being in a part of the Hitler Youth. This was a group that all boys in Nazi Germany had to join. They had to promise to be loyal to the leader of Nazi Germany, Adolf Hitler. They also sang songs about Hitler.

The three texts “100,000 Hail Hitler,” “Helene Mayer, Fencing Champ,” and “Jesse Owens’ Triumph over Time and Hitlerism” tell about the 1936 Summer Olympic games in Berlin, Germany. “100,000 Hail Hitler” describes the ceremony that began the games. “Helene Mayer, Fencing Champ” describes a German Jewish woman who competed for Germany in fencing. Fencing is a sport in which people fight with swords. “Jesse Owens’ Triumph over Time and Hitlerism” tells about an African American athlete who won several medals in running and jumping competitions.

Maus I is a graphic novel that uses animals to tell the story of the Holocaust. Author Art Spiegelman draws Jewish people as mice and German Nazis as cats.

In the passage from his memoir *Night*, Elie Wiesel describes his first night in a concentration camp when he was 15. A poem he wrote about that night at the camp is included.



Background and Context

The Holocaust

The word “Holocaust” is used to describe the mass murder by Nazi Germany of Jews and other ethnic groups during World War II. About 6 million Jews and several hundred thousand people of the Romany ethnic group were killed. Other victims included people living in Poland and the Soviet Union.

Adolf Hitler

Adolf Hitler was the leader of the Nazis. He became the head of the German government in the early 1930s. At that time, Germany was suffering from serious economic problems. Hitler blamed Germany’s problems on Jewish people. Hitler had described his plan for Germany in a book called *Mein Kampf*, which means “my struggle” in German.

Word Count: 502

Hitler’s Aryan Race

Hitler believed that the ancestors of Germans were a superior race called the Aryans. He described this white race coming to Europe from India. He said they had blond hair and blue eyes and that Jewish and Roma people were non-Aryan and inferior to the Aryans.

The Star of David

The Star of David is a six-pointed star, a symbol of the Jewish religion. Beginning in 1939, the Nazis required all Jews in German territories to wear a badge in the shape of the Star of David to set them apart from non-Jewish people.

Keywords

ghetto	Nazi	Star of David
Holocaust	Adolf Hitler	concentration camp
	Aryan	

Sources

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Background and Context

The Early 1800s

England changed dramatically between the years 1800 and 1830. That's when many people went from agricultural work, or farming, to industrial work in factories. Cities became larger and more industrialized. Scientists invented and built batteries, engines, and more. Even the arts were changing. The early 1800s marked the beginning of the Romantic movement, a style that valued nature, emotions, and the individual. And, as a result, England in 1830 was very different from England in 1800.

Word Count: 482

Keywords

factories	electricity	riots
Romantic	Gothic	

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Background and Context

Slavery and the Civil War

In the early 1800s, the Northern and Southern states in the United States grew apart. Unlike the industrial North, the South had plantations: large farms that grew sugar, cotton, and tobacco. These plantations relied on the unpaid work of enslaved black people. Many white Southerners felt that slavery was needed for their economy. However, growing numbers of Northerners wanted to abolish, or put an end to slavery. In 1860 and 1861, 11 Southern states decided to secede from the United States and form their own government, the

Confederate States of America. The Civil War began in April 1861, when the Confederacy attacked a Northern fort in South Carolina.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. In it, he declared an end to slavery in the United States. After many fierce battles during the Civil War, the Confederates surrendered in April 1865.

Word Count: 543

Keywords

plantations
abolish

secede
abolitionists

memoir

Sources

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Word Count: 509

Keywords

air force
squadron

minister

welfare

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