

ELA Anywhere Remote Resource

Unit 6E: Reading the Novel



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Reading the Novel

What's special about reading an entire novel? If it were just the big number of pages, people would have stopped reading them long ago. Instead, the best novels pull us into a different world and give us time to really know the people or creatures that live in that world. When you read *M.C. Higgins, the Great*, you'll have time to see M.C. go about his everyday life, hang out with friends, make both stupid and smart decisions, and struggle against big challenges. The more you know about the character, the more you'll want to find out how he will fare at the end.

So, to really enjoy reading this novel, lean in and pay attention. You're allowed to clap when M.C. Higgins does something smart and boo when he does something foolish. Keep track of what you notice, because he may change or you may change your mind about him.

Materials

Your assigned text passages for these lessons can be accessed any of the following ways. Please follow your teacher's instructions on where to complete your reading.

- Print Student Edition
- Print Amplify ELA Grade 6 Anthology
- Digital eReader, accessible via computer or mobile device*

* **Reminder:** You can access this or any book in the Amplify Library by downloading it onto your device for offline reading.

Your teacher may also assign you Solos for some of these lessons. These Solo assignments can be completed any the following ways. Please follow your teacher's instructions on how to complete Solos.

- On paper in a printed version of the Solo activity
- On your mobile device via Mobile Solos
- On your computer using the digital Solo activity

The Student's Mindset

Take academic and social risks.

Write about one thing that grabs your attention.

Read carefully, observe closely, and share what you think.

Show your classmates the impact they are making.

Write with the reader in mind. Read with the writer in mind.



Rules for Writing Prompts

1. Write for 10 minutes.
2. Keep focused on your writing.
3. Try not to get distracted or take breaks.

Rules for Sharing

You'll be asked to share your writing after some activities in these at-home lessons. You can do this in person with someone in your home, or by calling a friend or classmate over the phone!

When you share, be sure to follow these rules:

1. If you are reading:
 - a. Read loudly and slowly.
 - b. When you're done, ask your listener to respond using the Response Starters.
2. If you are listening:
 - a. Wait until the reader has finished to respond.
 - b. Using the Response Starters, tell the reader which details made an impact on you.

Response Starters

1. I liked when you used the word _____ because _____.
2. You created a clear picture of _____ when you wrote _____.
3. When you wrote _____, it helped me see that _____.

Close Reading Practice

During close reading, be sure to read carefully, observe closely, and share what you think using the following practices:

- Identify words or phrases that you notice.
- Make a note that explains what you noticed.
- Discuss your observations with a classmate over the phone, or with someone at home.



Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 1

M.C. Higgins, the Great by Virginia Hamilton



Get comfortable, roll up your sleeves and get ready for M.C. Higgins. While you are reading, he will be climbing around his mountain home, hunting for wild meat, seeing ghosts, wondering whether his friend Ben is a witch, and challenging much of what his father tells him. See what he does and what he thinks about and ask yourself, “What makes him M.C., the Great?”



LESSON 1 OVERVIEW

M.C. Higgins is a boy who proudly thinks of himself as “the Great.” Why? Find out whether you agree.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Close Reading Practice guidelines.

LESSON 1 Working with the Text

Today you’ll start reading a book about a boy named M.C. Higgins. Notice that in the title the author, Virginia Hamilton, calls M.C. “the Great.” You’re going to get to know this boy to see what might be great about him. As you read, you’ll keep track of what you notice about M.C. by listing details from the book that grab your attention.

Read *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 1, paragraphs 1 and 2.

1. List any details or phrases that give you a clear picture of M.C. Higgins in this moment. Include things like what he is doing, where he is, or what he is thinking or saying.

2. Describe one detail that stood out to you.

3. What type of boy do you picture in your head when you read this description?

LESSON 1 Working with the Text

Let's see what else you can find out about M.C. Higgins. Read chapter 1, paragraphs 3–13.

4. List any details or phrases that give you a clear picture of M.C. Higgins in this moment.

5. Describe one detail that stood out to you.

6. What type of boy do you picture?

Read chapter 1, paragraphs 14–24.

7. List any details or phrases that give you a clear picture of M.C. Higgins in this moment.

8. Describe one detail that stood out to you.

LESSON 1 Working with the Text

9. What type of boy do you picture?

Read chapter 1, paragraphs 25–54.

10. List any details or phrases that give you a clear picture of M.C. Higgins in this moment.

11. Describe one detail that stood out to you.

12. What type of boy do you picture?

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 1: *M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton

LESSON 2 OVERVIEW

What if you could keep track of all the things you have said or thought about a particular person? You can—at least in your reading!

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Rules for Sharing, Response Starters, and Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 1 Solo.

LESSON 2 Working with the Text

In the last lesson, you looked for places that gave you a clear picture of M.C. Higgins—what he does, where he is, and what he says and thinks. You wrote about one thing you were noticing or wondering about M.C. Now you'll practice that again.

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 1, paragraphs 64–79.

1. List two or three details or phrases that give you a clear picture of M.C. Higgins in this moment.

2. Choose one of the things you listed under question 1. Explain what this one detail makes you think about M.C., using the following sentence starter:

One thing I notice/wonder about M.C. Higgins is...

Reread chapter 1, paragraphs 126–140.

3. Describe M.C.'s friendship with Ben in one or two sentences.

LESSON 2 Working with the Text

As you read this novel, keep the following things in mind:

- First, focus on what you notice in one passage. Later, you'll connect these ideas.
- Pay attention to distinct details.
- M.C. is not a simple character, so he may have contradictory traits.

Your perspective when reading about a character is just like your perspective when meeting a real person; you can have distinct reactions to characters described in a book.

The key is to begin to connect your individual observations in order to get a clearer picture of the whole.

LESSON 2 Close Read

You should now have about 4–6 notes about M.C. in your Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 responses. And that's just from the first chapter!

Review what you've written about M.C. Pay attention to any connections you can find between the details you noticed. These connections could be moments where:

- M.C.'s actions, thoughts, or feelings are similar.
- M.C. shows a similar character trait.
- M.C. is described in a similar way.

What stands out about M.C., the Great, in chapter 1? Try to think of two moments that seem connected in some way or show something similar about M.C. These can be two moments you noted earlier, or two moments you haven't written about yet.

1. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

LESSON 2 Close Read

2. Write one or two sentences that explain the connection between these passages.

You're going to repeat this process as you read the novel, following these steps to keep track of what you notice:

1. Find one place where something about M.C.'s actions, speech, or thinking really caught your attention.
2. List a few phrases or details from that moment that captured your attention.
3. Describe what you notice about M.C. in that one moment.
4. Begin to connect moments where you notice something similar about M.C. or moments where you notice a change or contrast.

LESSON 2 Writing Prompt

Put a check mark next to the sentence if you can...

- connect two things that M.C. does, says, or thinks.
- connect two things from how he acts on the mountainside.
- connect two places where M.C. was thinking about the mountain.
- connect two places where you had a picture of M.C.'s friendship with Ben.

Rules for Writing Prompts

1. Write for 10 minutes
2. Focus on one idea
3. Use and describe evidence to support your idea

Describe one trait that stands out to you about M.C., the Great, in chapter 1.

When you've finished, share your writing with a classmate, friend, or family member using the Rules for Sharing. Ask them to use the Response Starters to give you feedback.

LESSON 3 OVERVIEW

Would you be the same person if you had grown up in a different neighborhood? Now, think about how living on a mountainside shapes M.C.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Rules for Sharing, Response Starters, and Close Reading Practice Guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 2 Solo.

LESSON 3 Working with the Text

Today you're going to look at M.C.'s setting—Sarah's Mountain (his neighborhood). You're going to think about the qualities of his setting and in what ways the setting is good for him or not good for him.

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 1.

1. For each of the places listed below, write a quote from the text that gives you a clear picture of it or its location.

• **Sarah's Mountain:** _____

• **The Ravine:** _____

• **Kill's Mound:** _____

• **M.C.'s House and Pole:** _____

LESSON 3 Working with the Text

Now you're going to label a map to show where each place is in M.C.'s world.

2. Fill in the blanks in the map, using the four places listed in question 1.



Next, you'll describe what caught your attention about M.C. when you read chapter 2.

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 2.

Try to think of two moments in chapter 2 that seem connected in some way or show something similar about M.C. You can also choose one moment from chapter 1 and one moment from chapter 2, if you see a connection between the two chapters.

3. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

LESSON 3 Working with the Text

4. Write one or two sentences that explain the connection between these passages.

LESSON 3 Close Read

Now that you have a better picture of the setting, you're going to look at two places in the book where M.C. looks out over his setting. As you read each description, pay attention to what he sees on the mountain. Is this a setting that is good for him or not?

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 2, paragraphs 1–21, where M.C. sees and thinks while he is sitting on his pole.

1. Complete the chart below, listing three things M.C. sees or imagines on the mountain in paragraphs 1–21 and identifying whether each description suggests the mountain is a good place for M.C. or not.

What does M.C. see or describe?	Does this description make the mountain seem like a good place for M.C. or not?	How do you know?

2. What does M.C. see with the most detail?

LESSON 3 Close Read

3. In this moment, does M.C. feel comfortable or uncomfortable on Sarah’s Mountain? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Reread chapter 2, paragraphs 118–160, in which M.C. meets and speaks with James Lewis (the Dude), on the top of Sarah’s Mountain.

4. Complete the chart below, listing three things M.C. sees or imagines on the mountain in paragraphs 118–160 and identifying whether each description suggests the mountain is a good place for M.C. or not.

What does M.C. see or describe?	Does this description make the mountain seem like a good place for M.C. or not?	How do you know?

5. What does M.C. see with the most detail?

6. In this moment, does M.C. feel comfortable or uncomfortable on Sarah’s Mountain? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

LESSON 3 Writing Prompt

Put a check mark next to the sentence if...

- you can picture M.C. and Ben swinging on the vines over the ravine.
- you can picture M.C. hunting for rabbits on the mountain.
- you can picture M.C.'s great-grandmother escaping to Sarah's Mountain.
- you can picture the big pile of dirt, rock, and brush—the spoil heap—piled above M.C.'s house.
- you can picture M.C. sitting at the top of his balancing pole, gazing out over the mountain.

Rules for Writing Prompts

1. Write for 10 minutes
2. Focus on one idea
3. Use and describe evidence to support your idea

Does M.C. feel comfortable or uncomfortable on Sarah's Mountain? Describe two or three details to show how he is comfortable or uncomfortable.

When you've finished, share your writing with a classmate, friend, or family member using the Rules for Sharing. Ask them to use the Response Starters to give you feedback.

LESSON 4 OVERVIEW

Find out whether M.C. likes his father—or not.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Rules for Sharing, Response Starters, and Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 3 Solo.

LESSON 4 Working with the Text

In this lesson, you're going to consider what caught your attention about M.C. when you read chapter 3.

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 3.

Try to think of two moments in chapter 3 that seem connected in some way or show something similar about M.C. Keep in mind you can also choose moments from earlier chapters to connect to something you read in chapter 3.

1. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

2. Write one or two sentences that explain the connection between these passages.

LESSON 4 Working with the Text

- 3. What is an idea about M.C. Higgins that you see supported by what he does or says in a couple of different places?

Finding connections between something a character says, does, thinks, or the way a character is described, helps you understand that character’s key character traits.

In a longer book, you will find many details that might suggest the same idea about the character.

For example, you might think the character is a good athlete if they are described as running well in their first race, but you will be more certain if they are described as winning another race later in the book.

Readers also look for contrasting details about a character that show different sides of this character or perhaps show the character changing.

Maybe the character acts very tough and gets into fights at school, but, at home, the character looks after a little brother in a very sweet way. When you put these contrasting moments together, you realize that the character is both loving and tough.

Changes to a character usually happen over time. For this reason, when you look for connections and contrasts, you should begin to look at how your observations about M.C. in an earlier chapter may be similar or different as you begin to read later chapters.

You’re now going to look for two moments in the text that show two contrasting ideas or show a change in M.C. Consider everything you’ve read so far in chapters 1–3. Look for moments when:

- What M.C. does, says, or thinks is very different.
- The way M.C. feels about something or someone changes.
- M.C. acts one way but thinks or feels differently.

- 4. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

LESSON 4 Working with the Text

5. Write one or two sentences that explain the contrast/change between these passages.

LESSON 4 Close Read

In the last lesson, you looked at the ways in which Sarah’s Mountain might be a great setting for M.C. and the ways it might not be a good setting.

Another big part of who M.C. is and how he thinks about his world is his family and friends. You are now going to look at M.C.’s father and how M.C. thinks about him.

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 3, paragraphs 26–39, in which M.C. watches his father, Jones, coming home from work.

1. List any words that give you a clear picture of Jones’s actions.

2. How would you describe Jones’s actions? (athletic, strong, tentative, clumsy, etc.)
Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Now reread chapter 3, paragraphs 26–40, a slightly longer passage, and focus on M.C.’s actions.

3. List any words that give you a clear picture of M.C.’s actions.

LESSON 4 Close Read

4. How would you describe M.C.'s actions? (athletic, strong, tentative, clumsy, etc.) Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

5. In this moment, M.C. and his father appear: (Circle your choice)

- a. similar.
- b. different.

6. Does M.C.'s description of his father make you think that M.C. admires his father, or not?

Jones and M.C. tussle back and forth when Jones arrives home. You're going to look at one small moment from this longer scene.

Reread chapter 3, paragraphs 53–58.

7. If you witnessed this scene, would you say Jones and M.C. are playing or fighting? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

Look at the next part of this scene between Jones and M.C. See if you think it feels like M.C. is having fun and admiring his father in this moment.

Reread chapter 3, paragraphs 64–68.

8. If you witnessed this scene, would you say Jones and M.C. are playing or fighting? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

LESSON 4 Close Read

Reread chapter 3, paragraphs 46–116, the entire scene between M.C. and his father, Jones.

When Macie Pearl watches M.C. and Jones, she says that they were fighting. Jones tells her, “We weren’t fighting.... We were playing.”

9. Which three moments do you think give you the clearest picture of the interaction between M.C. and Jones?

10. What do these details make you think M.C. and Jones are doing in this scene?

11. After reading chapter 3, how do you think M.C. feels toward his father? Circle your choice.

- a. M.C. admires and respects his father.
- b. M.C. is frustrated and angry with his father.
- c. I have a different idea.

It’s okay if you wished you could choose both A and B! Just like real people, well-written characters from books can have complicated emotions.

LESSON 4 Writing Prompt

Put a check mark next to the sentence if you can think of a moment...

- when M.C. felt hurt by his father.
- when M.C. helped his father.
- when M.C. felt that he and his father were similar.
- when M.C. respected his father.
- when M.C. felt his father was not supporting him.

Rules for Writing Prompts

1. Write for 10 minutes
2. Focus on one idea
3. Use and describe evidence to support your idea

M.C. feels both a “sullen anger at his father and an abiding admiration at the same time.” (chapter 3, 115)

Based on your reading, does M.C. think his father is his opponent or his ally?

When you've finished, share your writing with a classmate, friend, or family member using the Rules for Sharing. Ask them to use the Response Starters to give you feedback.

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 1: *M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton

LESSON 5 OVERVIEW

Parents like to give advice, and they want kids to listen to that advice. But, do parents want to listen to their kid's advice?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 4 Solo.

LESSON 5 Working with the Text

Let's see what caught your attention about M.C. in chapter 4!

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 4.

Think of two moments in chapter 4 or in your reading thus far that seem connected in some way or show something similar about M.C.

1. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

2. Write one or two sentences that explain the connection between these passages.

LESSON 5 Working with the Text

You're now going to look for two moments in the text you've read so far that show two contrasting ideas or show a change in M.C. Look for moments when:

- What M.C. does, says, or thinks is very different.
- The way M.C. feels about something or someone changes.
- M.C. acts one way but thinks or feels differently.

3. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

4. Write one or two sentences that explain the contrast/change between these passages.

LESSON 5 Close Read

M.C. Higgins has a lot of different voices in his head, in addition to his own ideas. Today, we're going to think about the types of things Jones tries to tell and show M.C. and the way that M.C. reacts to that voice.

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 1, paragraphs 26–28, when M.C. is remembering the first time he tried to swim the Ohio River.

1. What is Jones doing/saying?

2. What is he trying to teach M.C.?

3. How does M.C. react to what his father does or says?

Reread chapter 3, paragraphs 57–75, when M.C. and Jones are tussling.

4. What is Jones doing/saying?

5. What is he trying to teach M.C.?

6. How does M.C. react to what his father does or says?

LESSON 5 Close Read

Reread chapter 4, paragraphs 45–66, when M.C. talks to his father about the spoil heap.

7. What is Jones doing/saying?

8. What is he trying to teach M.C.?

9. How does M.C. react to what his father does or says?

Reread chapter 4, paragraphs 64–113, when M.C. talks to his father about what they see on the mountain.

10. What is Jones doing/saying?

11. What is he trying to teach M.C.?

12. How does M.C. react to what his father does or says?

LESSON 5 Introducing Personification

Read *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 4, paragraphs 40–42.

Notice how the rain is being described only as rain in this passage—it's not being compared to anything else.

Now read paragraph 43.

Look at the second sentence: “The rain marched down Sarah’s and on across, turning hill after hill the same shade of silver mist clear to the river.”

1. What do you notice about the way the rain is described in this sentence?

In this passage, the author chooses to give the rain a human aspect, like marching. This is called **personification**.

Personification is a figurative language technique where an object or idea is given human traits or characteristics. Authors often do this to make the writing sound more poetic.

Read the last sentence of paragraph 43: “As it had come, clawing through cornstalk, it vanished with the same familiar sound.”

2. What is being personified here?

3. What human trait or characteristic is it given?

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 1: *M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton

LESSON 6 OVERVIEW

Today is a Flex Day. Your teacher decides what happens today based on your work to date. The way in which your teacher helps you today depends on what they have seen in your work.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 5 Solo.

LESSON 6 Flex Day

This is a Flex Day. Your teacher will direct you to respond to a Writing Prompt, complete a Revision Assignment, do a grammar exercise, and/or reread some part of the text.

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 1: *M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton

LESSON 7 OVERVIEW

M.C. may think of himself as a great hunter, but does he put those skills to good use as he tracks the mysterious girl on the mountain?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 6 Solo.

LESSON 7 Working with the Text

Let's see what caught your attention about M.C. in chapter 5.

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 5.

Think of two moments in chapter 5 or in all of the text you've read so far that seem connected in some way or show something similar about M.C.

1. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

2. Write one or two sentences that explain the connection between these passages.

LESSON 7 Working with the Text

You're now going to look for two moments in the text you've read so far that show two contrasting ideas or show a change in M.C. Look for moments when:

- What M.C. does, says, or thinks is very different.
- The way M.C. feels about something or someone changes.
- M.C. acts one way but thinks or feels differently.

3. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

4. Write one or two sentences that explain the contrast/change between these passages.

You have been doing a great job thinking about who this character M.C. is. One thing you have been asking yourself is what are his "great" qualities.

Review the notes you've made about M.C.'s traits and how they connect/contrast throughout chapters 1–5.

5. What is one way in which M.C. is "great"? (What is he good at?)

LESSON 7 Working with the Text

- 6. If someone asked M.C., what would he say about what makes him “great”? (What does he think he is good at?) Make a list.

LESSON 7 Close Read

Now you are going to look at a long scene when M.C. encounters a girl whom he has seen wandering on the mountains for the second time. You’ll get a chance to think about which qualities M.C. shows in this moment, and how it impacts his and your understanding of what makes him great.

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 5, paragraphs 76–156.

In chapter 5, M.C. leaves his home one night to look for the girl in the woods. When Ben realizes that M.C. is trying to find the girl in the woods, he asks “M.C., is it a hunt?” (90). At the start, M.C. says he “pictured a hunt” (92), but at the end of M.C.’s encounter with the girl, M.C. says, “I was only playing!” (154).

- 1. List two or three places in the text where M.C.’s thoughts or actions show that he is hunting.

- 2. List two or three places in the text where M.C.’s thoughts or actions show that he is trying to play.

LESSON 7 Close Read

3. What is your answer to Ben’s question, “Is this a hunt”? Include two or three details to explain how M.C. is hunting or “only playing.”

4. How would you feel if you were the girl? Circle your choice.

- a. If I were the girl, I would feel as though I was being hunted.
- b. If I were the girl, I would know that M.C. was only playing.

Review your answer to this question from the first part of this lesson: What is one way in which M.C. is “great”? (Working with the Text, question 5)

5. Does M.C. display any of the same skills or qualities in this scene? Explain your answer.

Now review your answer to the question: If someone asked M.C., what would he say about what makes him “great”? (Working with the Text, question 6)

Reread chapter 5, paragraphs 148–156—the final moment of M.C.’s encounter with the girl. Pay attention to the things M.C. says or thinks in this scene.

6. As M.C. watches the girl run away, does he feel great? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

LESSON 8 OVERVIEW

Do you ever feel that you are expected to listen to everyone, but no one is listening to each other? M.C. knows that things are changing on the mountain, but how can he decide what to do when everyone has a different opinion?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 7 Solo.

LESSON 8 Working with the Text

It's time to see what caught your attention about M.C. in chapter 6.

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 6.

Think of two moments in chapter 6 that seem connected in some way or show something similar about M.C.

Remember that you can look through your notes from any chapter—you might find a connection between something from chapter 1 and what you just read.

1. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

2. Write one or two sentences that explain the connection between these passages.

LESSON 8 Working with the Text

You're now going to look for two moments in the text that show two contrasting ideas or show a change in M.C. Look for moments when:

- What M.C. does, says, or thinks is very different.
- The way M.C. feels about something or someone changes.
- M.C. acts one way but thinks or feels differently.

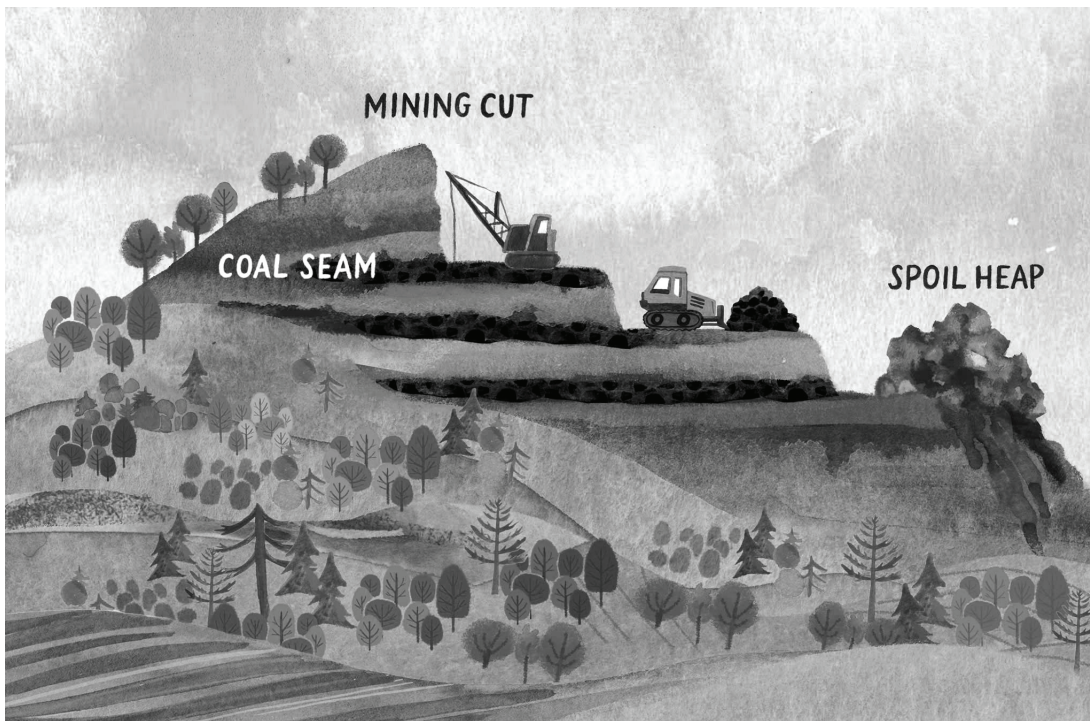
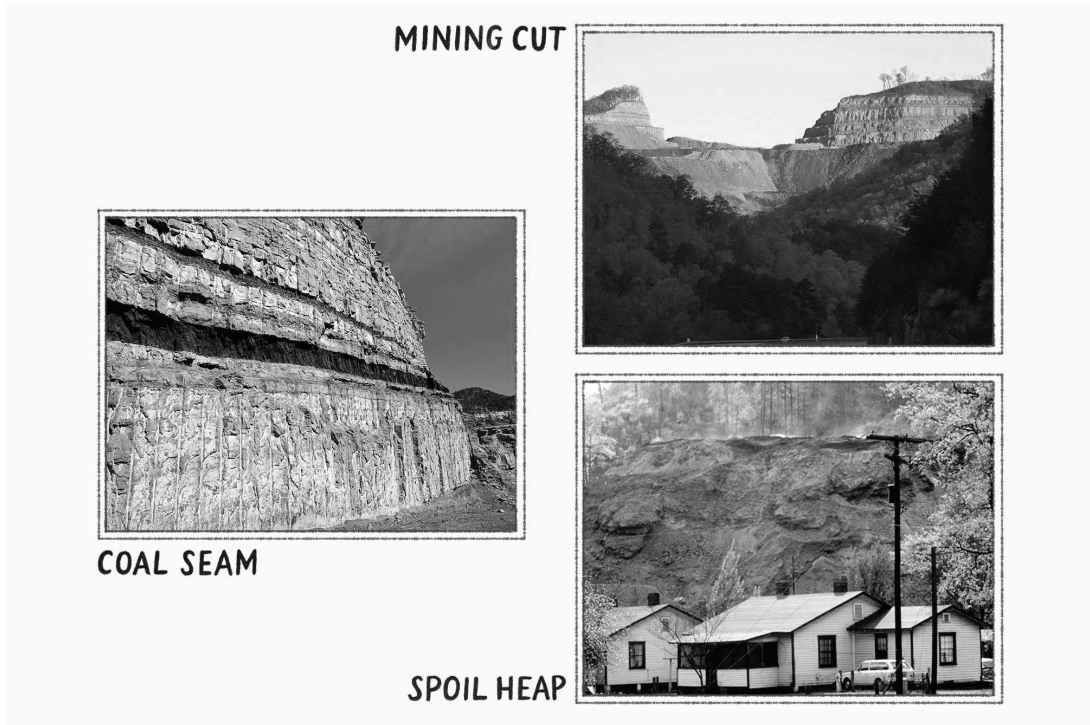
3. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

4. Write one or two sentences that explain the contrast/change between these passages.

LESSON 8 Working with the Text

Now you're going to review some information about strip mining that will help you understand the passages you'll work with in this lesson.



These are images of what mountain strip mining looks like. Though these are not photographs of Sarah's Mountain, Sarah's Mountain has been affected by strip mining.

LESSON 8 Working with the Text

You're going to reread the descriptions of a coal seam, a mining cut, and a spoil heap to create a picture in your mind of what the top of Sarah's Mountain looks like for M.C. Higgins.

Reread the following passages from *M.C. Higgins, the Great*:

- Chapter 1, paragraphs 95 and 100–101
- Chapter 2, paragraphs 2, 102, 117, 120, and 130–148

5. List any words or phrases that describe the following items:

• **Coal seam** _____

• **Mining cut** _____

• **Spoil heap** _____

6. What does M.C. mean when he says that the spoil heap can “cause a landslide. It can just cover this house and ground” (chapter 4, 33)?

LESSON 8 Close Read

There are a number of people trying to tell and teach M.C. Higgins things about the mountain and what he should do.

You are going to look at some of these voices in his head and consider which ones he seems to really think about and listen to.

1. Does M.C. Higgins want to live on Sarah's Mountain? Circle your choice.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Yes and no

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 5, paragraphs 185–210.

2. Describe what Banina is trying to teach or tell M.C. about Sarah's Mountain, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

3. Describe how M.C. reacts, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Reread chapter 6, paragraphs 1–187.

4. Based on what you have read, what would M.C. say if someone asked him to describe James K. Lewis (the Dude)?

5. What would he say if someone asked him to describe his father, Jones?

6. What is Lewis trying to tell or teach M.C. and the rest of the family about the mountain?

LESSON 8 Close Read

7. What is Jones trying to tell or teach M.C. and the rest of the family about the mountain?

8. Does M.C. believe what Jones is saying? Use evidence from the text to explain how you know.

9. Does M.C. believe what Lewis is saying? Use evidence from the text to explain how you know.

*** 10.** At the end of chapter 6, M.C. thinks to himself, “The dude and his father both had pulled him one way and then the other until he no longer knew what was true and what wasn’t” (178). Who would you tell M.C. to listen to as he tries to decide what to do? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

*** = Suggested Writing Prompt**

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 1: *M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton

LESSON 9 OVERVIEW

The story that Banina tells M.C. about the Killburns is strange, but does that mean M.C. should stay away from his friend Ben?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Rules for Sharing, Response Starters, and Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 8 Solo.

LESSON 9 Working with the Text

Let's see what caught your attention about M.C. in chapter 7.

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 7.

Think of either two passages that point to a connected idea, OR two passages that point to a change or contrasting idea about M.C. Higgins.

1. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

2. Write one or two sentences that explain the connection between these passages.

LESSON 9 Working with the Text

Reread chapter 7, paragraphs 1–11.

- 3. What does Banina say to try to convince M.C. to leave his bed and go swimming?

- 4. What convinces M.C. to go swimming? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

- 5. Does Banina tell M.C. to do things in a way that is similar to or different from the way Jones tells M.C. to do things?

You explored M.C.'s parents' advice about the family's future on the mountain in the previous lesson. You also considered how M.C. reacts to what all these people are saying. Today, you will look at something else the family has strong opinions about—M.C.'s friend Ben and his family, the Killburns.

Reread chapter 7, paragraphs 45–47.

- 6. List the rules Banina gives M.C. about Ben and his family.

- 7. In this moment, does M.C. agree with the rules about the Killburns? How do you know?

LESSON 9 Close Read

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 1.

- 1. Does M.C. follow his family's rule about the Killburns? Look back through chapter 1 and write one sentence to explain whether he follows this rule.

- 2. How does M.C. feel about or react to Ben? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

Now you'll explore the story that Banina tells M.C. to convince him that he should do as she says. Reread chapter 7, paragraphs 42–65.

- 3. In 2–4 sentences, summarize the story that Banina tells about the Killburns.

- 4. What is Banina trying to teach or tell M.C. about the Killburns by telling this story?

- 5. Does the story convince M.C. to stay away from the Killburns? Why or why not?

- 6. Does the story convince you that M.C. should stay away from Ben and the Killburns? Circle your answer.

- a. Yes
- b. No

LESSON 9 Writing Prompt

Briefly review what you know about Ben, the Killburns, and Banina's story.

- M.C. thinks of Ben as his “spirit.”
- Ben has helped M.C. out with his traps and knowledge of the Dude.
- M.C. has no memory of Ben or the Killburns trying to hurt him.
- Ben told M.C. that his father tries to heal the mountain.
- The mother has told another story about the Killburns trying to heal.
- M.C. trusts his mother to give him good advice.
- The story is pretty strange—maybe they are witches.

Rules for Writing Prompts

1. Write for 10 minutes
2. Focus on one idea
3. Use and describe evidence to support your idea

For this Writing Prompt, be sure to consider all the text you've read so far, not just chapter 7. Remember that chapter 1 contains moments where M.C. is with Ben in the woods.

Should M.C. listen to his parents and stay away from Ben and the Killburns? Explain why or why not.

When you've finished, share your writing with a classmate, friend, or family member using the Rules for Sharing. Ask them to use the Response Starters to give you feedback.

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 1: *M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton

LESSON 10 OVERVIEW

Today is a Flex Day. Your teacher decides what happens today based on your work to date. The way in which your teacher helps you today depends on what they have seen in your work.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 9 Solo.

LESSON 10 Flex Day

This is a Flex Day. Your teacher will direct you to respond to a Writing Prompt, complete a Revision Assignment, do a grammar exercise, and/or reread some part of the text.

LESSON 11 OVERVIEW

What will M.C. do in order to convince the girl that he deserves to be called “M.C., the Great”?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Rules for Sharing, Response Starters, and Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 10 Solo.

LESSON 11 Working with the Text

In this lesson, you will explore the character of the girl—who she is, why M.C. is so interested in her, and why he decides to take her through the tunnel, something that only M.C. the Great has done before. First, you will investigate the girl and consider what she thinks about M.C. Then you will investigate how M.C. reacts to the girl.

Before you begin, think carefully about whose point of view this story is told from.

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 7, paragraphs 140–144, when M.C. is waiting for the girl to exit her tent.

1. Is M.C. describing the girl or is the girl describing M.C.? Circle your choice.
 - a. M.C. is describing the girl.
 - b. The girl is describing M.C.

Point of view describes whose eyes the reader is looking through when they read a story or a piece of information.

This book is told from M.C.'s point of view. You can read what he is thinking when he looks at the girl, but the book does not describe what the girl is thinking when she looks at M.C. Higgins.

To understand what this girl thinks or feels about M.C., you will need to look carefully at what she says and does around M.C.

Reread chapter 8, paragraphs 1–48.

2. What do you know about the girl? List three details that describe the girl, including:
 - What she does (or doesn't do)
 - A way she is described
 - What she says

LESSON 11 Working with the Text

3. Based on these details, how might you describe her character?

4. How does the girl feel about M.C. and what does she think of him? What are some of the things she says or does that show her thoughts or feelings about M.C.?

5. How does M.C. react to what she says or thinks about him?

Now reread chapter 8, paragraphs 102–127, in which M.C. and the girl have a conversation right after he swims through the tunnel.

6. What are the things the girl says or does that show what she thinks about M.C.?

7. How does M.C. react to what she says or thinks about him?

LESSON 11 Close Read

Now, this girl—new to the area—manages to convince M.C. to take her through the tunnel. How? Why does he listen to a stranger’s voice here? You’re going to read closely to find out.

Remember that Macie has told the girl “Only M.C. can travel it...We ain’t allowed. The kids from town don’t even know there’s a tunnel” (chapter 8, 116).

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 8, paragraphs 135–207.

1. List all of the things M.C. is thinking or feeling as the girl tries to convince him to take her through the tunnel.

2. Do her actions convince you that she will easily make it through the tunnel? Why or why not?

LESSON 11 Writing Prompt

Put a check mark next to the sentence if you can think of a moment...

- when M.C. hesitates about taking the girl into the tunnel.
- when the girl does something to convince M.C. that she can do it.
- when M.C. acts like a leader before entering the tunnel.

Rules for Writing Prompts

1. Write for 10 minutes
2. Focus on one idea
3. Use and describe evidence to support your idea

Explain why M.C. decides to take the girl through the tunnel.

When you've finished, share your writing with a classmate, friend, or family member using the Rules for Sharing. Ask them to use the Response Starters to give you feedback.

LESSON 12 OVERVIEW

M.C. begins his journey with the girl through the tunnel feeling like a leader, but things don't go the way he envisioned. Does he still deserve to think of himself as a leader?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Response Starters, Rules for Sharing, and Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 11 Solo.

LESSON 12 Working with the Text

In this lesson, you will explore the qualities you've identified that make M.C. call himself M.C. the Great. Then you'll decide whether he demonstrates "greatness" when he takes the girl through the tunnel.

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapters 1–9 and your notes on the moments you noticed as you read. Look for evidence of M.C.'s greatness. For example:

- Is he "great" in certain scenarios?
 - Does he have "great" qualities as a family member or friend?
 - Does he have "great" qualities as a leader?
1. Describe one passage or moment in which you think M.C. shows that he is "great" in some way. Be sure to name the great quality that he shows in this moment.

Reread chapter 8, paragraphs 171–176. This passage describes the moment right before M.C. takes the girl through the tunnel.

2. Does M.C. feel great in this moment? Why or why not?

LESSON 12 Working with the Text

- 3. Does M.C. portray the “great” quality you wrote about in your answer to question 1 in this moment? Explain why or why not.

Reread chapter 9, paragraphs 23–45. This passage describes the moment right after M.C. takes the girl through the tunnel.

- 4. What question did M.C. not ask before he took the girl through the tunnel? (Hint: Macie is surprised that M.C. didn't know.)

- 5. Overall, does this description of the outcome of the tunnel trip make you think it was a success? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

- 6. Does M.C. feel great in this moment? Why or why not?

LESSON 12 Close Read

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 9, paragraphs 1–30.

Pay attention to what M.C. does or thinks while he is in the tunnel. Notice the distinction between the writing that's in italics (M.C.'s thoughts) and the writing that's not in italics. Some of the words in italics are almost mental messages to the girl—for example, "*Kick with your feet,*" "*Push off with your hand,*" and "*Girl, don't drown.*"

1. What do the girl's actions show about what happens to her in the tunnel?

2. List two things M.C. does when he realizes that the girl is unable to swim through the tunnel.

3. Do the actions M.C. takes in this moment seem easy or difficult? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

4. Do you think M.C. shows "great" qualities in this moment? Circle your choice.

a. Yes

b. No

5. Does M.C. exhibit the quality you wrote about earlier in this lesson (Working with the Text, question 1)? Explain why or why not.

LESSON 12 Writing Prompt

Try to picture all the events that lead up to M.C. taking the girl into the tunnel. Can you picture the moment when...

- Lurhetta calls M.C. a kid?
- M.C. doesn't want her to see him as a kid?
- M.C. decides to swim through the tunnel?
- the girl speaks to him "as though he were older, showing respect for him" (chapter 8, 118) after he swims the tunnel?
- she convinces him to take her through the tunnel?
- he says that he will be the leader?
- they struggle to make it through the tunnel?

Rules for Writing Prompts

1. Write for 10 minutes
2. Focus on one idea
3. Use and describe evidence to support your idea

Remember that you've closely read the moment when the girl convinces M.C. to take her through the tunnel, the moment when he takes her through the tunnel, and the moment right after they get through the tunnel. You should consider this whole episode as you answer the prompt.

Does this episode of bringing the girl through the tunnel convince you that M.C. deserves to call himself "M.C. the Great"? Explain why or why not.

When you've finished, share your writing with a classmate, friend, or family member using the Rules for Sharing. Ask them to use the Response Starters to give you feedback.

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 1: *M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton

LESSON 13 OVERVIEW

Today is a Flex Day. Your teacher decides what happens today based on your work to date. The way in which your teacher helps you today depends on what they have seen in your work.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 12 Solo.

LESSON 13 Flex Day

This is a Flex Day. Your teacher will direct you to respond to a Writing Prompt, complete a Revision Assignment, do a grammar exercise, and/or reread some part of the text.

LESSON 14 OVERVIEW

When the Killburn men arrive at the Higgins' house on business, Jones is not pleased. Can M.C. begin to treat the Killburns like true neighbors, or will he act according to his father's beliefs?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 13 Solo.

LESSON 14 Working with the Text

During the reading you've done in the past two Solos, there have been some new things happening for M.C.

These are the main events of chapters 10 and 11:

- M.C. brings the girl to his house.
- Jones invites the girl to stay for lunch.
- The girl tells them her name is Lurhetta Outlaw.
- The Killburn men deliver ice and Jones won't allow anyone to touch the icemen.
- Lurhetta is angry at Jones's behavior.
- Lurhetta convinces M.C. to visit the Killburns' homestead—the Mound.
- M.C. remembers visiting the Mound as a child.

In this lesson, you're going to look closely at some of these events to consider whether the things M.C. is doing and the conversations he's having are changing him in some way.

First, you'll look closely at the moment in chapter 10 when the Killburns—the icemen—deliver ice to M.C.'s house while Lurhetta is visiting.

NOTE: If you're confused about the idea of people "delivering" ice, keep in mind that, before electricity, people used blocks of ice to keep their refrigerators cool.

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 10, paragraphs 73–142.

1. How does M.C.'s father act toward the icemen?

2. What does his father try to teach or tell M.C. about the icemen (Killburn men)?

LESSON 14 Working with the Text

3. How does M.C. react?

4. What does Lurhetta try to teach or tell M.C. about the icemen (Killburn men)?

5. How does M.C. react?

At the end of chapter 10, M.C. feels that he has changed and that Lurhetta has made things different for him. The chapter closes with these lines: “She has seen everything. She, the difference. He knew he would never be the same” (161–162).

6. When you read about M.C.'s thoughts and actions during this whole encounter with the icemen, is there evidence that M.C.'s actions or thoughts have changed? Explain your answer.

LESSON 14 Close Read

M.C. has to consider what Lurhetta thinks and says about his family and the way they behave in chapter 10.

Now, you'll look closely at how M.C. reacts to the visit he and Lurhetta make to the Killburns' homestead, the Mound, to see whether you notice any changes in M.C. in chapter 11.

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 11, paragraphs 117–132, in which M.C. decides to visit the Mound.

1. Does M.C. act, think, or speak in a different manner than he has before? Describe any differences you notice. You may use the following sentence starters if they're helpful.

Sentence Starters

M.C. thinks or acts differently in this chapter when he...

This is a change in him because...

I think M.C. listened to Lurhetta instead of his parents because he...

I think he made a good/bad decision to go to the Mound, because...

Reread chapter 11, paragraphs 132–172, in which M.C. enters the Killburns' Mound.

2. Make a list of the things M.C. notices and thinks as he enters the Killburns' Mound.

LESSON 14 Close Read

3. What idea or image stands out most for him when he enters the Killburns' Mound? Write two or three sentences to describe what he discovers.

4. At the end of this chapter, is M.C. glad to be on the Mound? Circle your choice.

- a. Yes
- b. No

5. How do you know? Write down the passage that helped you understand his emotion.

6. What does M.C. discover that he hadn't realized before?

*7. When you think about M.C.'s thoughts and actions in chapter 11 compared to his thoughts and actions earlier in the novel, do you notice any changes? Explain your answer, describing any changes you notice.

LESSON 15 OVERVIEW

Find out what's spinning through M.C.'s mind by the end of his visit with the Killburns.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Rules for Sharing, Response Starters, and Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 14 Solo.

LESSON 15 Working with the Text

Let's see what caught your attention about M.C. in chapter 12.

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 12.

Think of either two passages that point to a connected idea, OR two passages that point to a change or contrasting idea about M.C. Higgins.

1. Write down a few key sentences or phrases from each moment in the spaces below.

Moment One	Moment Two

2. Write one or two sentences that explain the connection between these passages.

3. Are M.C.'s thoughts and actions the same in this chapter as they were in the beginning, or are they changing? Circle your choice.
 - a. Same
 - b. Changing

LESSON 15 Working with the Text

You're going to reread one moment from M.C.'s visit closely to explore how his thinking may be changing or not.

Reread chapter 12, paragraphs 27–43, in which M.C. enters the Killburns' housing compound.

1. List any details that suggest a connection to the way M.C. has felt or acted before.

2. List any details that suggest a contrast to the way M.C. has felt or acted before.

Reread all of chapter 12, which describes the visit to the Killburns. Find one additional moment in the chapter in which M.C.'s feelings or actions show a connection or a contrast to an earlier moment.

3. Describe your moment briefly, noting whether it shows a connection or a contrast.

LESSON 15 Writing Prompt

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 12, paragraph 193 to remember M.C.'s thoughts from the moment he leaves the Killburns at the end of chapter 12.

Put a check mark next to the sentence if you can think of...

- something M.C. saw that made his thinking change.
- something M.C. saw that made him feel that his family was right to be wary of the Killburns.
- a feeling M.C. had about the Killburns that was different from what he had felt before.
- an understanding of the Killburns that was similar to or different than what M.C. thought he knew before.

Rules for Writing Prompts

1. Write for 10 minutes
2. Focus on one idea
3. Use and describe evidence to support your idea

What is one way that M.C.'s feelings or actions change or don't change during his visit to the Killburns?

When you've finished, share your writing with a classmate, friend, or family member using the Rules for Sharing. Ask them to use the Response Starters to give you feedback.

LESSON 16 OVERVIEW

What happens when M.C. realizes that there are no easy answers to life's tough problems?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Rules for Sharing, Response Starters, and Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 15 Solo.

LESSON 16 Working with the Text

In this lesson, you will continue to look at what is changing for M.C. and how he reacts to those changes.

First, you're going to review M.C.'s ideas and expectations at the beginning of chapter 13.

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 13, paragraphs 1–12, which describes Lewis's return visit to M.C.'s house. As you read, pay attention to details that show M.C.'s expectations about Lurhetta and Lewis.

1. What does M.C. expect will happen with Lewis?

2. What does he expect will happen with Lurhetta?

3. Is M.C. happy about the idea of these things happening? How do you know?

LESSON 16 Working with the Text

Reread chapter 13, paragraphs 66–224.

4. What actually happens with Lewis in chapter 13?

5. How does M.C. feel about what actually happens? Use evidence from the text to explain how you know.

6. What actually happens with Lurhetta in chapter 13?

7. How does M.C. feel about what actually happens? Use evidence from the text to explain how you know.

LESSON 16 Close Read

Reference *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 13.

In chapter 6, M.C. tells his siblings, “We’ll leave here, too” (59) and he is convinced that he must take his family off the mountain.

- 1. List details from chapter 13 that help you understand how M.C. is thinking about his life on the mountain now.

- 2. Write one or two sentences describing one thought or feeling M.C. has about his life on the mountain.

In chapter 6, Lewis visited M.C.’s house, recorded Banina’s voice, and spoke with the family about the mountain. Several people were giving M.C. advice. In Lesson 8 (Close Read, question 10), you stated whose advice you thought M.C. should listen to.

- 3. After reading chapter 13, who do you think M.C. should listen to as he decides what to do now? Explain your choice.

- 4. After reading chapter 13, do you think M.C.’s family would have a better life if they left the mountain? Circle your choice.

- a. Yes
- b. No

LESSON 16 Writing Prompt

Put a check mark next to the sentence if you can think of...

- something on the mountain that M.C. loves.
- something on the mountain that M.C. hates.

Describe one thing that M.C. would lose and one thing he would gain by leaving the mountain.

When you've finished, share your writing with a classmate, friend, or family member using the Rules for Sharing. Ask them to use the Response Starters to give you feedback.

Rules for Writing Prompts

1. Write for 10 minutes
2. Focus on one idea
3. Use and describe evidence to support your idea

LESSON 17 OVERVIEW

Your journey with M.C. began with this boy imagining his best day. The journey ends three days later with M.C. experiencing what may be his worst day. Can he still find his greatness?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Review the Close Reading Practice guidelines.
3. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 16 Solo.

LESSON 17 Working with the Text

Think back on everything you've read so far in *M.C. Higgins, the Great*.

1. What is the major problem M.C. faces?

2. What are some ways he thinks he can make his life better?

3. What happens to those ideas?

Virginia Hamilton, the woman who wrote *M.C. Higgins, the Great*, does some interesting things at the end of this novel to give us a clear picture of how M.C. is feeling about all these changes in his plans.

You're going to compare images of M.C. from the start and the end of this novel to see how Hamilton presents M.C. in both places.

LESSON 17 Working with the Text

Reread the following passages.

M.C. in the Forest—Chapter 1

Slipping through the undergrowth, he took one of the paths down the mountainside. Soon he was striding swiftly through piney woods. The leaf bracelets wafted on air as though in flight, as he plunged and wove among the trees.

M.C. was barefoot, wearing carefully ironed blue jeans and a brown, faded T-shirt. The shirt was the color and fit of a second skin over his broad shoulders. Already he was perspiring. But his motions remained lithe and natural, as he moved easily among trees and shade. Pushing through pine boughs, he continued on his errand.

— from *M.C. Higgins, the Great*, by Virginia Hamilton. Chapter 1, paragraphs 16–17

M.C. in the Forest—Chapter 14

Only he couldn't run because of the fog. He had to pick his way down the mountainside. If it had been night, he wouldn't have had any trouble. He knew night paths through the hills as well as he knew them by light. But M.C. was unaccustomed to fog. And when he was through the gully and on the hill path, he had to worry about direction. He lost his bearings when he went faster than a walk. So he held his hands out in front of him, touching branches, bushes. One moment he would be terrified his hands might touch a face; the next, he was certain Great Anger of his imagination followed him.

Wish I did have a dog. Or a gun.
Something out here with me.

Ben? No. Catch him later on Sarah's High. How does he know when I'm coming?

All M.C. had was his keen senses and his knowledge of the paths. Points of undergrowth were visible and they seemed to crowd him. His feet wouldn't move smoothly.

— from *M.C. Higgins, the Great*, by Virginia Hamilton. Chapter 14, paragraphs 48–51

4. What picture do you have of M.C.'s ability to move around the mountain early in the story?

5. What picture do you have of M.C.'s ability to move around the mountain toward the end of the story?

LESSON 17 Working with the Text

Now you'll compare two more images from the start and end of this novel—when M.C. is on top of his pole.

M.C. on the Pole—Chapter 2

Suddenly he was aware of the deep whine of machines in the hills behind Sarah's to the north. He raised his arm so that his hand seemed to slide over the perfect roll and curve of the hill range before him to the south. He fluffed the trees out there and smoothed out the sky. All was still and ordered, the way he liked to pretend he arranged it every day.

The steel town of Harenton looked close enough to touch. He reached for it and pushed and shoved pieces of the town together until he had it just right. He smoothed out the stacks of the steel mill, sweeping them clean of dust and run-off gases. He placed boats in the river. "Now," he said softly, "you're looking good."

— from *M.C. Higgins, the Great*, by Virginia Hamilton. Chapter 2, paragraphs 19–21

M.C. on the Pole—Chapter 14

The hurt of her going pressed in on him, like the thinning fog. High up in the air, he swung his pole in its sweeping arc. He thrust the knife at forming clouds. The fog was lifting far off on the Ohio. So M.C. stabbed the river and cut it in two. He sliced off chimneys of the steel mill, barely visible. And he cried out once as his pole swayed and swooped, chopping up the mist-shrouded town of Harenton.

Never to show me which road to take— why did you leave the knife?

Because I don't live on a mountain.

Thank you for giving it to me.

He could see hills before him fading and returning, not solid or steady at all.

He gouged a hole in the side of one, but he had no anger strong enough for murdering hills. He could feel their rhythm like the pulse beat of his own blood rushing. If they faded never to return, would his pulse stop its beat as well?

— from *M.C. Higgins, the Great*, by Virginia Hamilton. Chapter 14, paragraphs 110–115

6. What is M.C. imagining doing in the first passage?

7. What is M.C. imagining doing in the second passage?

LESSON 17 Working with the Text

Reread chapter 14, paragraphs 48–110.

8. How would you describe M.C.'s state of mind in paragraph 102? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

LESSON 17 Close Read

Virginia Hamilton has given us a very different picture of M.C. at this moment from what we had at the start of the novel. But this is not the end of the story. Now you're going to look at what M.C. decides to do at the end of the story.

Reread *M.C. Higgins, the Great* chapter 14, paragraphs 110–237.

1. What is M.C. doing at the end of the novel?

2. How is M.C. using his knife, and how does it differ from what he has done with knives in other parts of the story?

Throughout the book, M.C. has been listening to and thinking about other people's ideas and opinions about his life on the mountain. You're going to consider whether M.C. builds the wall and decides to remain on the mountain by himself, or whether others help him.

3. Why did M.C. decide to build a wall between his house and the spoil heap, and who influenced his decision?

LESSON 17 Close Read

4. Choose two characters from the list below and write one sentence per character to explain the role they played in M.C.'s decision and/or in the building the wall. Circle the characters you choose.

- Jones
- Lurhetta
- Sarah
- Ben
- Lewis
- Banina

5. What is the same from the beginning to the end of the story?

6. What has changed?

LESSON 17 Close Read

*7. Consider M.C.'s final actions at the end of the book. Is M.C. great at the end of the book?

* = Suggested Writing Prompt

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 1: *M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton

LESSON 18 OVERVIEW

Today is a Flex Day. Your teacher decides what happens today based on your work to date. The way in which your teacher helps you today depends on what they have seen in your work.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
2. Complete the Sub-Unit 1, Lesson 17 Solo.

LESSON 18 Flex Day

This is a Flex Day. Your teacher will direct you to respond to a Writing Prompt, complete a Revision Assignment, do a grammar exercise, and/or reread some part of the text.

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 2

Write an Essay



You've read, discussed and written about what M.C. does, says, and thinks at each stage of his journey. But where did he get to in the end? Many people gave him advice, but who really changed him, and how did he change? Now is your chance to craft all your discoveries into an essay.



ESSAY LESSONS: OVERVIEW

Calendar of Essay Lessons

What you'll be doing to write your essay:

<p>Lesson 1</p>	<p>Step 1: Gather evidence: Identify places in the text where you can see a change in M.C. and identify who influenced that change.</p> <p>Step 2: Make a claim: Summarize the argument you will make in your essay.</p>
<p>Lesson 2</p>	<p>Step 3: Write first body paragraph: Describe and explain the change you notice in M.C.</p>
<p>Lesson 3</p>	<p>Step 4: Write second body paragraph: Describe and explain how your chosen character influenced the change in M.C.</p> <p>Step 5: Revise claim statement: Rewrite claim statement to better suit the arguments in your body paragraphs.</p>
<p>Lesson 4</p>	<p>Step 6: Revise body paragraphs: Describe or explain your evidence further to better support your claim.</p> <p>Step 7: Write introduction: Review the Elements of an Introduction, draft a few leads, then write an introduction to your essay.</p>
<p>Lesson 5</p>	<p>Step 8: Write conclusion: Come up with a good final thought, then write the conclusion to your essay.</p> <p>Step 9: Edit essay: Edit your essay, including correct citation and punctuation of direct quotes.</p> <p>Step 10: Write final copy: Rewrite your essay to create a final copy.</p>

Essay Prompt:

What is one way M.C. has changed since the beginning of the book, and who is one person who influenced that change?

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 2: Write an Essay

LESSON 1 OVERVIEW

At the end of a journey, things should look a little different. Now that you have finished this reading journey, how does M.C. Higgins look different?

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

- Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson

LESSON 1 Introduce Essay Prompt

Sometimes when you get to the end of a long book, there have been some dramatic changes since the beginning.

It may be hard to find dramatic changes in M.C. Higgins's life between the beginning and the ending of the book—he still lives on the mountain with his family, he is still friends with Ben, he didn't leave the mountain with Lewis, Lurhetta didn't stay on the mountain with him.

But as you read, you noticed changes in the way he acts, thinks, and feels.

1. Reflect on all the work you've done in this unit, then make a list of some of the changes you have noticed in M.C.

M.C. had a lot of people trying to tell him lots of different things throughout this book.

2. As you think about the changes you notice, make a list of some of the things others said or did that may have helped M.C. change in some way.

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 2: Write an Essay

LESSON 1 Introduce Essay Prompt

Using the brainstorming you've just done, you're going to spend this sub-unit writing an essay in response to this prompt:

Essay Prompt:

What is one way M.C. has changed since the beginning of the book, and who is one person who influenced that change?

Your essay will include the following elements.

Elements of Your Response to Text Essay

An introduction to the essay and claim. It includes:

- Lead sentence(s)
- Title of the book and author's name
- Claim statement where you state your idea about one change in M.C. Higgins and who influenced that change

Body paragraphs to develop the reasoning and evidence. These should:

- Focus on moments in the reading that support your claim.
- Use two or three pieces of evidence, including direct quotes and descriptions of the key details of your evidence.
- Explain how the evidence connects to your claim (idea).

A conclusion that wraps up the ideas about the claim/argument. It should:

- Restate your claim.
- Share a final thought.

LESSON 1 Gather Evidence

Step 1: Gather evidence

Notice that there are two parts to the essay question—first, what is a change you noticed in M.C. and second, who influenced that change. You’re going to spend some time thinking about each part.

1. Complete the chart below, describing changes you notice in M.C. in column 1 and identifying evidence from one moment that shows this change in column 2. In column 3, write the names of any characters who influenced each change and describe how they influenced M.C. The first row has been completed for you.

Change in M.C.	Evidence that shows the change	Who influences change and how
M.C. realizes that he has learned things from the Killburns.	<p>M.C. sees the hub that Mr. Killburn built and realizes that he thought of the idea for the bridge over the ravine because of Mr. Killburn.</p> <p>M.C. “had taken Mr. Killburn’s idea, changed it a little and given it back to him” (ch. 12, 3).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lurhetta because she makes sure that M.C. goes to the Killburns’: “A threat. A forcing” (ch. 11, 127). 2. Mr. Killburn because he “had had the idea first here on the Mound” (ch. 12, 3).

LESSON 1 Make a Claim

Step 2: Make a claim

Read over the chart you just completed. Decide which change you'd like to write about and circle it. This will form the basis of your claim statement.

Write a draft of the claim statement you will develop in your essay. You may use this sentence starter if it's helpful:

One way M.C. changes is _____. [Character name] influences this change by _____.

Label it Claim Statement.

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 2: Write an Essay

LESSON 2 OVERVIEW

You understand your evidence; now describe to your reader exactly what has changed in M.C.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

- Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
 - Any writing you've completed for your essay in previous lessons and Solos

LESSON 2 Write First Body Paragraph

Step 3: Write first body paragraph

Put a check mark next to the sentence if...

- you have at least two convincing pieces of evidence you can write about for the change in M.C.
- you can think of a clear way your evidence supports your claim.
- you can think of a way to describe key parts of your evidence.

You are going to write two body paragraphs for your essay. Right now you will write just the first one, about a change in M.C. Remember that you should focus on describing one or two key pieces of evidence in this paragraph and explaining how the evidence supports your claim.

When you are explaining a quote, it can be useful to zoom in on one or two words and describe what you notice so that the reader can see which words you are paying attention to and what they mean.

Write your first body paragraph, explaining the change in M.C. Label it "First Body Paragraph." Use textual evidence to support your claim. Remember to describe and explain your evidence and to show how it supports your claim.

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 2: Write an Essay

LESSON 3 OVERVIEW

You've described how M.C.Higgins changed. Now focus on describing who helped him change and how.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

- Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
 - Any writing you've completed for your essay in previous lessons and Solos

LESSON 3 Write Second Body Paragraph

Step 4: Write second body paragraph

Review column 3 of the evidence chart you created in Lesson 1, where you wrote about who influenced each change in M.C.

You may also review your work from earlier in the lesson, where you may have noted how your chosen person influenced change in M.C. Higgins.

Here are some of the possible ways that another person might influence change in M.C.:

- Another character says something that makes M.C. think or act differently.
- Another character acts differently from the way people have acted around M.C. and so makes M.C. reconsider the way he acts or thinks.
- Another character does something that makes M.C. want/not want to be like that person.
- M.C. says or thinks something about another character that shows the person has led him to a new way of thinking or acting.

1. List two or three details that show how your chosen person influenced M.C.

Review your claim statement in Lesson 1, Step 2.

LESSON 3 Revise Claim Statement

Step 5: Revise claim statement

You had the idea of what you would write, but now that you have actually presented and described your evidence, your idea may have changed. For this reason, you will now have a chance to rewrite your claim sentence(s).

Reread your two body paragraphs and think about what you actually wrote about how M.C. changes and how one person influenced that change.

- 1. Write a new claim statement (one or two sentences) that describes the idea you developed in your body paragraphs. If it is useful, you can use the following sentence frame:

One change in M.C. Higgins is _____. [Name of character] _____ influenced this change by _____.

Now reread your old claim statement and decide which one you prefer. It should be the one that best describes the argument you make in your body paragraphs.

- 2. Which claim statement best captures the ideas of your essay? Circle your choice.
 - a. Version 1
 - b. Version 2

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 2: Write an Essay

LESSON 4 OVERVIEW

You've developed your claim, now let's make sure to grab your reader's attention and explain your idea clearly.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

- Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
 - Any writing you've completed for your essay in previous lessons and Solos

LESSON 4 Revise Body Paragraphs

Step 6: Revise body paragraphs

Today, you're going to spend some time revising your body paragraphs.

You'll work on adding more description or explanation to your evidence, or adding new evidence to help support your claim.

This activity is similar to other Revision Assignments you've already done. The goal here is to use evidence to convince your reader that your claim is true.

Reread your essay, paying attention to the evidence you use and describe to support your claim.

1. Underline one or two places where you could add more evidence or describe your evidence more completely.
2. Review the moments from the text connected to the parts of your essay you want to revise. Note any additional details in the text that provide evidence for your claim.
3. For each place you've identified as needing revision, write three or four sentences that present additional evidence or describe your evidence further. You can write them in the space where you wrote your body paragraphs in Lessons 2 and 3.
4. When you're done, compare what you wrote before and after your revision. Do your revisions make your writing more convincing? Circle your choice.
 - a. I prefer my original without revisions.
 - b. I prefer the revised version.
 - c. I would keep some parts of the revised version, but not all.

Unit 6E, Sub-Unit 2: Write an Essay

LESSON 5 OVERVIEW

Wrap-up your essay by leaving your reader with something to ponder.

Prep

Before you begin this lesson:

1. Gather the following materials:
 - Any handouts from your teacher
 - Reading assignment(s) for this lesson
 - Any writing you've completed for your essay in previous lessons and Solos
2. Review the Rules of Sharing and Response Starters.

LESSON 5 Write Conclusion

Step 8: Write conclusion

Now, you will have time to write your conclusion. Use this as a reference when you write your conclusion.

Elements of a Conclusion—Response to Text Essay

1. A restatement of your claim/argument
2. A final thought for your reader to take away
For example:
 - What did you find surprising about M.C.'s change or the person who influenced him?
 - What idea do you have about how M.C.'s life might be different moving forward?

When you restate your claim, go beyond simply repeating what you've already said. Use new and interesting language and add details to give your reader a more complete understanding of your argument.

Final thoughts can be questions or statements. A good final thought is a new idea that flows logically from your essay. It should give the essay an ending that leaves the reader with something more to think about.

1. Reread the essay you have written and consider what final thoughts you have about your ideas or these passages.

LESSON 5 Edit Essay

Step 9: Edit essay

Now you're going to edit your essay, using the Editing Process checklist:

Editing Process

1. Read each part of your essay aloud to yourself, quietly and slowly.
2. Make sure all your paragraphs are in the correct order:
 - Introduction
 - Body Paragraph 1
 - Body Paragraph 2
 - Conclusion
3. Reread and note sentences where the wording doesn't sound like it fits with the sentence before or the sentence after. Revise these sentences or add a sentence in between, so that your sentences flow clearly from one to the next.
4. Reread your essay to correct any errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar that you can find.
5. Make sure you have punctuated and cited your direct quotes correctly, using the Guidelines for Citing and Punctuating a Direct Quote.

Guidelines for Citing and Punctuating a Direct Quote

Add a comma to separate your introduction to the quote and the direct quote itself.

Use double quotation marks to show where the quote begins and ends.

Use single quotation marks around any dialogue within the direct quote.

But, when Lurhetta Outlaw convinces M.C. to visit the Mound, Ben is suddenly the leader. M.C. notices that Lurhetta walks with Ben leading (chapter 12, 42) Ben makes decisions, and M.C. needs to ask Ben questions. When M.C. no longer wants to be on the hub, he must call for Ben's help. "Ben? I want down!" he calls, his cry "Ben?" admitting that Ben is now the one in charge (ch. 12, 39). Also, this time, rather than doing "just like" M.C. says, Ben makes sure that M.C. knows that Ben is in charge of the situation—not M.C. "What's a-wrong? Too high for you?" Ben said, teasing M.C. (chapter 12, 40) when M.C. asks to be let down. Ben's reply shows that, instead of being afraid of upsetting M.C., Ben is teasing him. Instead of letting M.C. be the boss in their friendship, Ben becomes the leader.

Cite the chapter number and paragraph number in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

Only include the end punctuation of your quote if it is a question mark or an exclamation point.

