

2.3 Literary Exploration Planning Sheets

Complete this page based on the question, “**What is your opinion of the idea that our response to difficult circumstances shapes who we become in the future?**” **Refer to a text (or texts) and a character (or characters) you have studied earlier in this course.** If you would like to refer to the Mai Goda Essay “Still Me Inside” as an ADDITIONAL text, you may, but you must discuss a text from the course.

Once you hand in this assignment, you must wait until you receive a passing mark and feedback from your marker before proceeding to the 2.4 Literary Exploration Essay.

Initial Planning

Suggested Time: 10 minutes

Read the assignment question at the top of the page and write your controlling idea below.

Thesis statement: In the novel, “The Fault In Our Stars” by John Green suggests that once an individual goes through difficult circumstances in life, only then they can see the true meaning of their identity and the level of perseverance it takes to thrive forward in life.

Select a character (or characters) from a text you have studied in ELA 30–2.

Character(s) Chosen:

Hazel Grace Lancaster

Literary Text(s) and Author(s):

The Fault In Our Stars - John Green

Briefly identify details about the character(s) that you intend to use to develop your ideas. Make sure the details associated with this character are relevant to your ideas about the topic question.

Instantly from the beginning, we can see that Hazel is not the typical teenage girl. This is shown in her interaction with her friend Kailtyn and how much contrast they have with each other despite being the same age. From her experience with cancer, a difficult circumstance, it has led her to grow as an individual and show an understanding of what she wants in her life.

Hazel's mindset upon death. Spiritually and Philosophically. At the beginning of the novel, she is very fearful of the impact death will toll upon her family and the people close to her. This fear leads her to be afraid of getting close to anyone because she knows that her death isn't far off and will hurt anyone close to her. She expresses herself as a "grenade". This fear of hers was built when she had close contact with death and overheard her mother saying that if Hazel dies, she would not be a mother anymore.

Through her relationship with Augustus, she started shifting her belief of death slowly as she realizes that Augustus is now the "grenade" when she finds out about his journey with cancer. This slow shift of her mindset starts changing her belief about the consequences of death. Since Augustus is now the "grenade" she isn't sorry that she fell in love with him despite knowing how much it will hurt her after he passes away. She is very grateful for the memories they shared and cherishes them all.

Using Character Transformation in Essay Writing

Refer to the Using Character Transformation in Essay Writing Tutorial to help you complete each box in this handout. Contact your teacher if you would like assistance.

Step 1: Reread your essay question.

What is your opinion of the idea that our response to difficult circumstances shapes who we become in the future?

Step 2: Decode the question.

- Cross off the stem of the question to focus on what it's asking.
- Then circle the keywords.

Example of Decoding:

~~What is your opinion of the idea that our~~ beliefs are influenced by the actions of others?

Your Original Question: What is your opinion of the idea that our response to difficult circumstances shapes who we become in the future?

Now You Try (Decode Question):

Step 3: Rephrase the original question into a simple answer, and write it in the space below.

Example Question: What is your opinion of the idea that our beliefs are influenced by the actions of others?

Step 4: Choose a character who transforms (from a text you have studied in the course). Explain how you could use that character's transformation to answer the essay question.

Example Question: "What is your opinion of the idea that our beliefs are influenced by the actions of others?"

Here's how transformation could be used to answer the question:

Wes Holman from the short story "Long, Long After School" could be used to answer the question because **Mrs. Tretheway causes Wes to transform**. Her **actions** toward him **influenced** the way he thought about himself and helped him **transform** into a strong student who felt worthy of love.

Your Original Question: "What is your opinion of the idea that our response to difficult circumstances shapes who we become in the future?" How could you use transformation to answer the question?

Now You Try (Choose a Character): What character could you use to answer that question? Explain in the space below.

Step 5: Write your thesis using a "because" or "but" clause. Then plug it into the thesis statement formula.

Name the type of text (photo, novel, film, etc.), the title, and the author or text creator.

- o Titles of longer texts should be *italicized* or underlined.
- o Titles of shorter texts should be in "quotation marks."

Formula: In [type of text] [text title], [poet/photographer/filmmaker/etc.] suggests that [thesis statement].

Example Question: What is your opinion of the idea that our beliefs are influenced by the actions of others?

Example Thesis: In the short story "Long, Long After School," author Ernest Buckler suggests that other people's actions can influence or transform our beliefs because they can inspire us to see the best in ourselves.

Your Original Question: What is your opinion of the idea that our response to difficult circumstances shapes who we become in the future?

Now You Try (Write Thesis): In the [insert type of text], [insert title], [insert author] suggests that [insert thesis statement].

Remember: Avoid simply summarizing the plot! Your evidence in each body paragraph should help you prove the thesis.

Introduction	
Hook Use a creative attention getter—short anecdote, quotation from the text excerpt, question, strong statement, statistic, etc.	Hook: “Whenever you read a cancer booklet or website or whatever, they always list depression among the side effects of cancer” (Pg. 1). This is how Hazel introduces her story of cancer in the novel, “The Fault in our Stars”. Hazel doesn’t necessarily believe she has depression as she says that cancer isn’t a side effect of depression, that it’s the fear of dying which is the side effect of depression.
Background Information Introduce the topic and the text/author/character you’ll be discussing. Remember, you must write about a text you studied earlier in the course. Only discuss “Still Me Inside” as an optional and additional text.	This is just 1 example of the afraidness that Hazel carries within herself. The story is about Hazel Grace Lancaster and the journey of her attachment with a boy named Augustus. At the beginning of the story, we find out that Hazel is suffering from depression. Through the advice of her mother and her doctor, Hazel is required to join the cancer support group where she meets Issac, who had a tumor in one eye that had to be removed. As her friendship builds with Issac through the cancer support group, she catches the eye of a teenage boy, Augustus. Augustus is there to support his friend Issac. Augustus approaches Hazel and tells her that she looks like Natalie Portman in V for Vendetta. He invites Hazel to his house to watch the movie together. The two discuss their experiences with cancer, Hazel reveals that she has thyroid cancer. Augustus had osteosarcoma but is cancer-free after having his leg amputated. Before leaving, they both agree to read one another’s book, Augustus gives Hazel The Prince of Dawn, and Hazel recommends An Imperial Affliction. This sparks up their friendship as the story progresses. With her fear of cancer, Hazel is afraid to get close with Augustus because she sees herself as a “grenade” and is afraid that she will hurt anyone close to her after she passes away. As the story develops, Hazel is able to have a character development towards her feelings of death with the help of her relationship with Augustus.
Thesis Statement Copy from previous page.	The novel, “The Fault In Our Stars” by John Green suggests that once an individual goes through difficult circumstances in life, only then they are able to see the true meaning of their identity and the level of perseverance it takes to thrive forward in life.

Body Paragraph #1 – Character <i>Before</i> Transformation
➤ Introduce the character, and explain that character’s difficult circumstance. ➤ Describe the character initially responds to the difficult circumstance, before he or she transforms. ➤ Discuss specific examples from the text that support your point, always showing how the evidence proves the thesis.

Topic Sentence Relate it to the thesis and focus on how the character initially responds to the difficult circumstance <i>before</i> he or she transforms.	Topic sentence: Hazel faces many challenges through her experience with cancer. From the beginning of the story, we find out from her day to day behaviors that she is extremely depressed. She barely leaves the house, she eats a lot, she reads the same book over and over and she spends a lot of time in bed. Through her fight with difficult circumstances, it is immediately obvious that Hazel is not the typical teenage girl.
Supporting Example #1 from Beginning of Text One example in each body paragraph needs to be a quotation from the text with the page number.	Supporting Example 1: We see this towards the exposition of the story. Hazel is very diligent. Despite being 17 she demonstrates strong capabilities of outcasting being old for her age. Her journey of cancer and the thoughts about believing that she doesn't have a lot of time to live, her actions are far older than a typical teenage girl. One of Hazel's defining characteristics is that she wants to lighten up the world with her journey of cancer when she passes away. An example of this is when she first attends the cancer support group, she instantly leads the other people that have experienced cancer to share about how they are winning the fight against cancer. Her intent of focusing on the positives instead of the negatives sets her to understand the severity of her depression. Despite thinking that cancer is not a side effect of depression, she knows that her frequent thoughts about death are causing her to be depressed.
Supporting Example #2 from Text	Supporting example 2: Another example of her response to difficult circumstances shows when she is hanging out with her friend Kaitlin. Hazel doesn't necessarily want to hang out with Kaitlin but ends up doing so anyway to please her mother. When Kaitlyn arrives, we instantly see the disconnection between Hazel and Kaitlyn as the girls have a one-sided discussion about high school relationships as they shop for shoes. Hazel is outdrawn from this communication which reveals that she is way past the life of an ordinary teenage girl. The experiences she has faced with her cancer shift her beliefs of just focusing on what matters and for her, that's creating fulfillment that when she passes away she is not going to hurt anyone close to her.
Concluding Statement Relate the evidence back to the thesis.	Concluding sentence: Hazel's response to difficult circumstances which for her is her cancer has shaped the woman she has become, which is someone that's way past her age. She has lost the typical life of a teenage girl due to her cancer.



Body Paragraph #2—Causes of Character's Transformation

- Explain what causes the character to begin responding to the difficult circumstance in a different way, causing his or her transformation to begin.
- Support your ideas with examples from the text that show the causes of transformation, always showing how the evidence proves the thesis.

Topic Sentence

Relate it to the thesis and focus on what *causes* the character to respond to the difficult circumstance in a new way and begin to transform.

Topic Sentence - As Hazel's relationship with Augustus deepens, she starts becoming more fearful of getting close to him because she believes that she will just end up hurting him after she passes away.

Supporting Example #1 from Text

One example in each body paragraph needs to be a quotation from the text with the page number.

Supporting Example 1: Hazel had a close encounter with death when she was 13. In her near death experience hospital Hazel had heard her mother say that she would not be a mother any longer when Hazel passes away. Hazel is the only child so when her mother expresses those words outside and she overhears it, she takes it deeply to the heart which triggers her fear of getting close to anyone realizing that she would just end up hurting them after she passes away. Hazel uses this as a defense mechanism which shows why she struggles to make friends.

Supporting Example #2 from Text

Supporting example 2: While carrying this fear around with her, she discovers the book, *The Imperial Affliction* and she immediately gets attached to it. The narrator of the book is a girl named Anne who develops blood cancer and just like her, the character in the novel has a close relationship with her mother. Hazel appreciates the narrator's straightforwardness in the face of cancer. The only issue she finds with the book is its lack of conclusion. It ends mid sentence without any character resolution. She finds comfort with the book as she can relate to it. She believes that Anne in the book shares a similar life as her with having a caring mother. Through the lack of ending in the book, Hazel wonders how Anne's mother felt after her death. She feels the need to affirm that everything turns out alright for Anna's mother so that she can convince herself that her parents will be alright after she passes away.

Concluding Statement

Relate the evidence back to the thesis.

Concluding Sentence: This fear of hers motivates hazel's mission to determine what happens to the characters at the end of *An Imperial Affliction*. Her response to difficult circumstances shapes her to start worrying about her parents with the uncertainty of not knowing how they will live after her death.

Body Paragraph #3—Character After Transformation

- ❓ Describe how the character has changed. Explain the outcome of the transformation—who the character “is” at the end of the text.
- ❓ How has the character's new response to the difficult circumstance transformed him or her?
- ❓ Support your ideas with specific evidence from the text that the character has transformed in an important way.

Topic Sentence Relate it to the thesis and focus how the character's new way of responding to the difficult circumstance has transformed him or her.	Topic Sentence: While carrying the fear of the uncertainty of her parents' life after her death, Hazel begins to have a slow transformation about her belief with the help of her relationship with Augustus.
Supporting Example #1 from Text One example in each body paragraph needs to be a quotation from the text with the page number.	Supporting example 1: Throughout the story, Hazel uses her defense towards Augustus trying everything to not fall in with him. As the story progresses she starts falling in love with him without the realization. She starts growing closer to him. An example of this is when Augustus invites her to a picnic. It turns out he's planned an elaborate Dutch-themed picnic where he reveals that he sent a request to a charity foundation that grants wishes of kids with cancer has agreed to grant his; he's taking the two of them to Amsterdam to meet Van Houten. Hazel is thrilled about hearing this, but when he touches her face she feels discomfort as she realizes that she likes him a lot, but is scared to grow closer because she knows she'll end up hurting him after she dies. She compares herself to a grenade as she believes that she can die any day and hurt the people close to her.
Supporting Example #2 from Text	Supporting example 2: During the struggle of growing closer with Augustus, Hazel suffers a serious attack where her lungs fill with fluid and she has to be rushed to the ICU. When she is released after a few days, she finds out that Augustus never left the hospital. This deepens their relationship as Hazel starts to fall in love with him. The two share great experiences in Amsterdam and when they return to Indianapolis, Augustus confesses that he had a body scan which revealed his cancer returned and spread everywhere while she was in the ICU. Hazel realizes that now he is the grenade. This is when she realizes that she is deeply in love with him. Hazel's perspective about her fear changes. When Augustus' cancer reappears, she doesn't feel sorry that she fell in love with him, even though she knows it will immensely hurt her when he dies. Instead, she cherishes all the memories they shared and is extremely grateful for the time they do have together. Augustus dies 8 days later and the final words of the novel indicate the extent to which Hazel grows spiritually throughout her journey.
Concluding Statement Relate the evidence back to the thesis.	Concluding Sentence: After Augustus passes away she realizes the struggle of losing someone they love and instead of being sad over it, she rather takes that time appreciating all the beautiful memories they shared. Through the difficult circumstance of Augustus' death her response shapes her identity as she believes that when she passes away, her parents will cherish the memories they had with their daughter and Hazel learns that our relationships continue, even if we do not.

Conclusion	
Thesis Statement Restate in different words.	Thesis Statement: The ability to find the true meaning of ones' identity and have the level of perseverance it takes to thrive forward

	in life comes through an individual understanding of overcoming difficult circumstances.
Essay Wrap-Up • Reconnect with your intro paragraph. • How has your character helped you explore the topic? • How does this discussion connect with the excerpt from the text or your personal experience, depending on what you discussed in your intro.? • What have you discovered about the topic? • How does it relate to people in society?	Essay wrap up: Hazel Grace had an unfortunate experience through her experiences with cancer. She always carried a fear of what will happen to her parents after her death when she overheard her mother saying she will no longer have a daughter after she dies. Through her interaction with Augustus and sharing great memories with him, she learns the true meaning of the relationships we build carries on forever even if we don't. She develops throughout the story as she realizes that Augustus is now the grenade instead of her when his cancer spreads all over his body. The mission she was on her entire life to know what will happen to her parents after her death gets answered through her relationship with Augustus. Hazel learns from her difficult circumstances to find her true identity and the answer to her life's biggest question.
Clincher Include a quotation, an anecdote, or a strong statement or question to leave the reader thinking.	The clincher: Individuals face adversity their entire life, it's only through these difficult situations we can find the answers towards our success and our true meaning of life. Hazel found the meaning of her fear through her beautiful relationship and journey with Augustus.