

Conflict Comprehension & Analysis Activity

USING MUADDI DARRAJ'S
"GYROSCOPES"



Nouvelle ELA

CONFLICT ACTIVITY

Using Susan Muaddi Darraj "Gyroscopes"



Comprehension & Analysis

by Danielle & Carina @ Nouvelle ELA

CONFLICT: "Gyroscopes"

PURPOSE	<p>"Gyroscopes" by Susan Muaddi Darraj is a fictional short story about Layla, an Arab-American student who navigates heavy feelings as she confronts racism at school.</p> <p>This short story serves as an effective tool for teaching how conflict impacts a text.</p>
MATERIAL	<p>"Gyroscopes" – this provided link may require you to sign up for Common Lit, which is a free educational resource that I HIGHLY recommend and use frequently. You can opt to find it through another free means with a quick online search.</p>
OBJECTIVE(S)	<p>Students will determine and analyze how conflict impacts character development and theme (RL.9-10.3).</p>
SUGGESTED LESSON	
BELL RINGER (7-10 min)	<p>Use the corresponding bell ringer prompt included in this resource (access the editable version here). This includes a mini-introduction to the literary element and a quick practice for students to apply their learning of this literary element as they read the short story.</p> <p>Optional: Have students share and discuss with a partner or in small groups.</p>
	<p>Conduct a first read of the short story. You can read this aloud as a class, listen to the audio reading aloud, have students read in pairs, groups, or independently. You know your students best.</p> <p>Complete the worksheet* and have students work through their literary analysis. This can be completed as a guided practice, a group analysis, or independent practice.</p>

Suggested ~50-minute lesson plan outline included complete with extension ideas, standard(s), and linked materials.



There are **SIX different types** of **literary conflicts**.

TYPE OF CONFLICT	EXAMPLE OF CONFLICT	EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL?
Character vs. Self	In the fast food shop, Ben found money on the floor and struggles deciding whether to use it towards his own dinner or turn it in.	Internal

Read the scenario below, then decide which **type of conflict** is portrayed.

With signs and a staged walkout, Esmeralda, a high school junior, protests her school's dress code policy because of the gendered bias towards her and other female students.



A. Character

B. Character vs. Society

C. Character vs. Nature

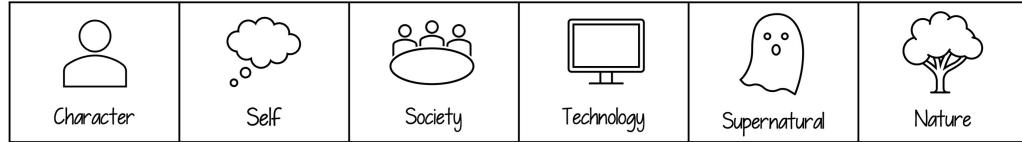
Includes an editable bell ringer activity that introduces the literary element & provides students with a guided practice opportunity



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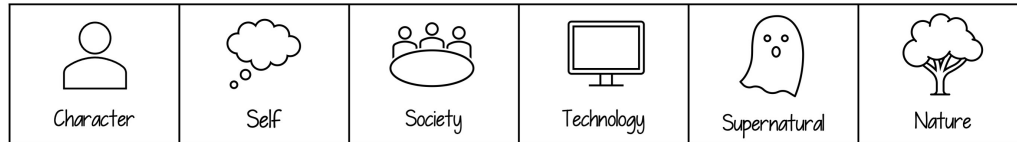
CONFLICT: "Gyroscopes"

Instructions: Using the key below, draw the icon you feel represents the two conflicts in "Gyroscopes." Inside the first icon, cite a quote that represents the conflict. Then, analyze the significance of the quote in the second icon.



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Quote

I'm just the
I've always
group, and
pushed

vs.

Layla is filled with doubt about the importance of her voice and feelings. She worries that if she continues to speak out against the play, she will further isolate herself from her peers.

"Who am I, anyway?"

I'm just the nerd who builds scenery. And I've always been on the fringe of the group, anyway. It would suck to get



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Students read the short story, then analyze quotes for conflict types.

Suggested answers included.

CONFLICT: "Gyroscopes" →

There are many "right" answers to the following questions, so it's all about how you support your ideas. Use evidence from the short story, other texts (i.e. novels, movies, songs, etc.), and your own experiences to support your claims.

1. In paragraph 85, Layla's mother shares an analogy and a rhetorical question—a question meant to make a point rather than to get an answer: "'It's like someone stepping on your toes and not moving off. Do you have to really explain how the pressure is causing you pain?'" What does this analogy communicate about the impact of racist stereotypes?

Answers will vary. A possible answer might mention how this analogy communicates that, despite it being difficult to explain or justify, it doesn't mean the stereotypes or racism do not have a negative impact that can be felt by those who belong to the targeted community.

2. Why is it important to continue speaking out against stereotypes and racism, even if it feels like others might not be listening?

Answers will vary. If students are struggling, ask them to think of historical figures who spoke against racism even when their voice was silenced (i.e. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.).

you experienced a conflict. What type of conflict was it? Why? How did you
conflict?



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Includes optional short response questions:

- Text-to-text
- Text-to-world
- Text-to-self
- Drawing prompt