



## OBJECTIVES

Students will

- analyze how a key idea is introduced and developed in a text.
- identify and analyze how specific literary devices reveal the author’s purpose.
- write a text-based narrative that uses narrative devices such as dialogue, characterization, and plot to create thematic meaning.
- write an analytical response using textual evidence to support assertions.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

JUDITH MACKENZIE. “An Open Heart.” *Coast to Coast—Canadian Stories, Poetry, Non-Fiction and Drama*. Ed. James Barry. Toronto: Nelcon Canada (An International Thomson Publishing Company), 1995. pp. 208–209.

# Peeling Back the Layers—“An Open Heart” by Judith MacKenzie

Grade 6

## ABOUT THIS LESSON

In order for students to become college and career ready, they must learn to read and comprehend complex texts independently and proficiently. To develop these skills, students must be presented with many opportunities to read and re-read complex, layered texts and be provided strategies on how to deal with these complexities.

This lesson uses an essay by Judith MacKenzie and asks students to read and re-read closely, paying particular attention to specific elements and, using that close reading, to develop an analytical paper on the author’s purpose.

As you lead students through the activities in this lesson, it is imperative to ask Level 2 questions that require students to make inferences and draw conclusions based on the text itself. Students should always be required to defend their assertions with evidence from the text, whether written or verbal.

## TEXT COMPLEXITY

Passages for National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) English lessons are selected to challenge students, while lessons and activities make texts accessible. This excerpt has a readability measure in the sixth grade reading band, with some complex ideas that should be accessible to students with guidance from the teacher. Guided practice with challenging texts allows students to gain the proficiency necessary to read independently at or above grade level.

**COGNITIVE RIGOR**

ELA lessons for NMSI are designed to guide students through a continuum of increasingly complex thinking skills, including those outlined in taxonomies such as the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge Levels. The activities in this lesson include annotating (DOK 1), identifying patterns of language (DOK 2), and analyzing and writing about the author’s use of language to create meaning (DOK 3). Designed activities require students to engage in all levels of thinking identified in Bloom’s.

This lesson is included in Module 1: *Elevating Instructional Rigor*.

**CONNECTION TO COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

The activities in this lesson allow teachers to address the following Common Core Standards:

**Explicitly addressed in this lesson**

- RI.6.1:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.6.2:** Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- RI.6.3:** Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
- RI.6.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
- RI.6.6:** Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
- RI.6.10:** By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band

proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

- W.6.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
  - Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
  - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
  - Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
- W.6.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
  - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

- c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

**W.6.9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- b. Apply *grade 6 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not”).

**W.6.10:** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**L.6.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 6 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- c. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

- d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

**L.6.5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *stingy*, *scrimping*, *economical*, *unwasteful*, *thrifty*).

#### Implicitly addressed in this lesson

**W.6.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

**SL.6.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- b. Follow rules for collegial discussions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
- c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

- d. Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

**L.6.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**L.6.2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- a. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.  
b. Spell correctly.

**L.6.6:** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

### CONNECTIONS TO AP\*

For college and career readiness, students must be able to read and understand as well as write about how authors create meaning through the choices they make. Students must be able to read literary nonfiction with an eye to analysis for both the AP Literature and Composition and AP Language and Composition exams.

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### MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- copies of Student Activity
- easel pad, butcher paper, or a white board
- long and short sentence strips or colored cards (See Teaching Suggestions)
- markers
- masking tape

### ASSESSMENTS

The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:

- prepared discussion
- guided questions
- frame statements
- narrative or analytical essay

## TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Note: Some of the activities in this lesson are not presented in the Student Activity pages. Instructions for how to complete all activities are included below.

**Y**ou may want to have students complete the multiple choice formative assessment for “An Open Heart” before beginning the lesson and then again after the students have completed their study of the passage in order for students to be able to see their own growth. If you do this, have students complete the multiple choice assessment, and then put it away until after the lesson is completed. Don’t discuss the questions with students until after they have taken the assessment for the final time.

Note: The multiple choice questions are designed to be used as a tool to teach students how to read closely and analytically and how to answer complex multiple choice questions; they also serve as a formative assessment to inform instruction. These questions are not designed to be a high-stakes summative assessment.

#### Activity One: Considering Author’s Purpose

Have students read the passage silently. Then, have students pair up and discuss with one another what they think the passage is about and where in the essay they see the author’s attitude changing. They should write a short summary before continuing with the lesson. Discuss the concept of author’s purpose with the whole class, and then have students speculate what they believe the author’s purpose is. You will revisit this activity at several points during the lesson to see if students wish to revise their purpose statement as they move through the lesson.

#### Activity Two: Reading for Understanding

This activity asks Level 1 and Level 2 questions of students in order to increase their understanding of the passage as a whole and lead them to an understanding of the author’s purpose. Have students mark the text that provides an answer or a clue to an answer for the ten reading

comprehension questions. Questions are provided below.

There are several ways to approach this activity, including using the questions to guide a whole-class oral discussion. You also may consider dividing students into cooperative learning groups to complete the questions. One option is to print the questions for each paragraph on a card, and to assign groups specific paragraphs to study. Each group can then become the discussion leader for its designated paragraph.

#### *Paragraph 1*

1. What circumstances caused the speaker’s family to go hungry the year she was eight years old?
2. What does the speaker remember most about that year?

#### *Paragraph 2*

3. What did the speaker understand about her hunger when she was eight?
4. How did going hungry make the speaker feel?
5. Why does the speaker remember the strangers that delivered food even years later?

#### *Paragraph 3*

6. How has the speaker’s life changed?
7. What causes the speaker to change her mind about giving the young man money?
8. How does the speaker feel about giving the young man the money at first?

#### *Paragraph 4*

9. What conclusion does the speaker reach about charity?
10. How did the young man give the speaker a gift?

**Activity Three: Repetition**

Have students complete Activity Three individually, and then discuss answers as a whole class. Focus on Questions 5–6, which ask students to think about how the repeated word “watched” signals or emphasizes the author’s changing perspective about charity.

**Activity Four: Vocabulary and Diction**

This activity combines the study of both the denotative and connotative meanings of words. The words chosen for the vocabulary study are ones that should be part of a core vocabulary for sixth grade or higher.

**Part 1:** Have students complete Part 1 either individually, in pairs, or in small groups. You may need to guide students through the thinking on Part 1 (using context to determine word meanings). When students have finished Part 1, they should check their definitions with a dictionary resource, either print or online.

**Part 2: Teacher-led activity**

This activity helps students begin to notice and recognize patterns in diction as well as connotative values of words.

Make a T-chart either on an easel pad page or on the board. At the top of each of the columns write “Positive” and “Negative.”

- Write the vocabulary word list either on short sentence strips or on the board. Ask students to begin to think about the connotation of each word.
- As a class, discuss each of the words. What are the connections students make with the words? Does the word have a positive or negative connotation?
- Have students write or place the words on the sentence strips on the T-chart in the appropriate column.
- Discuss with students the context of the words in each column. What do the words reveal about the speaker’s attitude? About the purpose?

Negative	Positive
<i>devastating</i> <i>brutal</i> <i>isolated</i> <i>excluded</i> <i>bleak</i> <i>frivolous</i> <i>gullibility</i>	<i>charity</i> <i>abundantly</i> <i>rational</i>
What do these words have in common? <i>Many of these words deal with hunger and its effect on the speaker as a young girl. Some of the words also deal with her doubt about helping the young man.</i>	What do these words have in common? <i>These words deal with the speaker as an adult and her response to helping the young man at Christmas.</i>

Keep this chart visible as students work through the rest of the lesson.

**Activity Five: Details and Diction—Teacher-led activity**

**Part 1:** This activity provides a close reading activity that focuses on how diction and detail reveal author’s purpose. Divide the students into collaborative learning groups of three–four students.

1. On the board or classroom wall, post the following categories:

**Text that reveals the author’s attitude about poverty as a child**

**Text that reveals the author’s attitude about charity when she sees the young man**

**Text that reveals the author’s changed attitude about charity**

2. Pass out long and short sentence strips, or two different colors of sticky notes, to each group. On the long sentence strips or on one designated color of sticky notes, have students write down textual evidence that illustrates the categories for how the author’s attitude about charity changes.

*For example, if a student wanted textual evidence to illustrate **the author’s attitude about poverty as a child**, he or she might write “the pain of hunger is intensified and brutal when you live in the midst of plenty” (lines 14–15) on the long sentence strip or on the designated color of sticky notes.*

On the short sentence strips or on the alternate color of sticky notes, have the students write their inference or conclusion about the author’s attitude, based upon the textual evidence they have chosen. Students should place their inference cards next to their textual evidence.

*For example, a student might write on his or her card that the author felt her experience with poverty was **embarrassing**, because she had so little in an environment of plenty.*

3. Have students post their evidence and inference cards in the appropriate category. Discuss student responses with the whole class, and ask students to explain how they arrived at their inferences.

NOTE: As a scaffolding step, you may decide you want to prepare the textual evidence and/or inference cards in advance, and then have students match the quotes and inferences to the correct category. Suggested quotes are included in the **Answers** section of the **Teacher Overview**.

**Part 2**

4. Print the following words (diction) on sticky notes or note cards and pass them out to students. Have them place the words under the same categories as the textual evidence.

devastating	hungry	pride	pain
isolated	excluded	strangers	hopelessness
amazement	wonderful	charity	gifts
nonjudgmental	brutal	love	open
fool	gullibility	rational	

**Discuss how details and diction reveal patterns related to author’s purpose. Direct students to pay close attention to details and diction that suggest how her attitude changes.**

5. *Have students revisit the purpose statements in Activity One. Ask them to review their original choice to see whether they wish to revise their selection.* Lead students through a careful discussion of author’s purpose. Though MacKenzie touches on most of the purposes listed in Activity One, her main purpose is to explain her position on charity and her feelings about it.

**Activity Six: Writing**

Assign one of the writing options. Based on the students’ experience writing in either mode, provide additional scaffolding, templates, or direction as needed.

Sample scoring guides are included at the end of this Teacher Overview.



# Scoring Guide for Text-Based Narrative

*Not all student essays will fit the scoring guide exactly. Your score should reflect your judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Reward students for what they do well.*

- 6: These papers demonstrate clear and consistent competence although they may have occasional errors. Such papers**
- Clearly and insightfully address the writing task
  - Supply specific, detailed descriptions of narrative elements
  - Are well-developed and well-organized using appropriate sequencing and transitions
  - Are distinguished by an effective style, including descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, effective word choice, and a sense of voice
  - Demonstrate consistent and effective control of standard English grammar and mechanics although they may not be completely without errors
- 5: These papers demonstrate reasonably consistent competence although they will have occasional errors or lapses in quality. Such papers**
- Effectively address the writing task
  - Supply appropriate descriptions of narrative elements
  - Are generally well-developed and well-organized using appropriate sequencing and transitions
  - Are distinguished by descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, and appropriate word choice
  - Demonstrate consistent and effective control of standard English
- 4: These papers demonstrate adequate competence with occasional errors and lapses in quality. Such papers**
- Adequately address the writing task
  - Present some descriptions of narrative elements
  - Are somewhat developed and organized
  - Display limited variety in descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, and adequate word choice
  - Demonstrate adequate control of standard English grammar and mechanics although they may have several errors
- 3: These papers demonstrate developing competence. Such papers may contain one or more of the following weaknesses:**
- Inadequate understanding of the writing task
  - May contain limited or weak description of narrative elements
  - Demonstrate minimal development and/or weak organization
  - Few examples of descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, or effective word choice
  - Contains recurrent errors in grammar and mechanics
- 2: These papers demonstrate some incompetence. Such papers are flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:**
- Narrative not connected to the text
  - Mere summary of the passage
  - Inadequate development, or vague generalizations; confusing or poor organization
  - Almost no examples of descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, or effective word choice
  - Frequent errors in grammar and mechanics that interfere with the reader's understanding
- 1: These papers demonstrate incompetence. Such papers are seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:**
- Only a passing reference to the writing task
  - Unacceptable brevity
  - No attempt to supply elements of plot
  - Consistent lack of organization and development
  - Serious errors in grammar and mechanics
- 0: These papers are completely off-topic or are blank.**

# Analysis of Purpose Scoring Guide

*Not all student essays will fit the scoring guide exactly. Your score should reflect your judgment of the essay's quality as a whole. Reward students for what they do well.*

## **6: These papers demonstrate clear and consistent competence although they may have occasional errors. Such papers**

- Offer an **insightful** analysis of the author's purpose
- Provide **persuasive analysis** of how the author's use of language reveals **purpose/meaning**
- Supply **specific, detailed supporting textual evidence** and are **well-organized**
- Are distinguished by **varied sentence structure, effective word choice, and a sense of voice**
- Demonstrate **consistent and effective control** of standard written English **grammar** and **mechanics** although they may not be completely without errors

## **5: These papers demonstrate reasonably consistent competence although they will have occasional errors or lapses in quality. Such papers**

- Offer a **reasonable analysis** of the author's purpose
- Provide an **effective analysis** of how the author's use of language reveals **purpose/meaning**
- Use **appropriate supporting textual evidence** and are **generally well-organized**
- Contain **some examples of varied sentence structure and effective word choice**
- Demonstrate **effective control** of standard written English **grammar** and **mechanics** although they will not be completely without errors

## **4: These papers demonstrate adequate competence with occasional errors or lapses in quality. Such papers**

- Offer an **adequate analysis** of the author's purpose
- Provide a **satisfactory analysis** of how the author's use of language reveals **purpose/meaning**
- Present **some supporting textual evidence** and show **organization**
- Contain **limited variety in sentence structure and adequate word choice**
- Demonstrate **adequate control** of standard written English **grammar** and **mechanics** although they may have several errors

## **3: These papers demonstrate developing competence. Such papers may contain *one or more* of the following weaknesses:**

- **Inadequate understanding** of the author's purpose
- **Superficial or thin analysis** of how the author's use of language reveals **purpose/meaning**
- **Minimal or inadequate supporting textual evidence** and/or **weak organization**
- Almost **no examples of varied sentence structure** and/or **effective word choice**
- **Recurrent errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or usage**

## **2: These papers demonstrate some incompetence. Such papers are flawed by *one or more* of the following weaknesses:**

- **Little reference** to or **serious misunderstanding** of the author's purpose
- **Little or no analysis** of how the author's use of language reveals **purpose/meaning**, a **misreading** of the text, or **inadequate development**
- **Disjointed or inappropriate supporting textual evidence, vague generalizations** and/or **poor organization**
- **No variety in sentence structure** and/or **simplistic or inappropriate word choice**
- **Recurrent errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or usage**

## **1: These papers lack competence and compound the errors of the 2 papers. Such papers are seriously flawed by *one or more* of the following weaknesses:**

- Only a **passing reference** to the writing task
- **Unacceptable brevity, a complete misreading** of the text, or **padded but vacuous statements**
- **No attempt to supply supporting detail or no organization**
- **Poor sentence structure or incorrect word choice**
- **Serious errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or usage** that **interfere** with the reader's **understanding**

## **0: These papers may contain a few words without commentary, or may just copy the assignment or text.**

**ANSWERS**

Answers for this lesson are subjective and **will vary**. To obtain the maximum benefit of the lesson, ask students to go beyond the expected responses. Some suggested responses are included below.

**Activity One: Considering Author’s Purpose**

**Summary:** The author recounts a story of poverty, hunger, and charity that occurred when she was an eight-year-old. The author goes on to tell of her own experience giving charity and how her experiences in both situations affected her view of charity.

**Author’s Purpose:** The primary purpose of the essay is to explain the author’s change in attitude about charity (option B). Students initially may believe that the article’s purpose is to persuade others to adopt the author’s position or to entertain readers with an anecdote. Allow students to explore these options, as they will be directed at different points in the lesson to revisit their ideas about author’s purpose and revise their statements as needed.

**Activity Two: Reading for Understanding**

*Answers may vary.*

*Paragraph 1*

1. The speaker’s father lost his job (“was blacklisted, accused of communist activities. It meant no work—with a vengeance”) (lines 2–3), and her mother had premature babies (line 4).
2. The speaker remembers her “hunger” most (lines 5–6).

*Paragraph 2*

3. It was unlikely that she and her family would die of hunger (lines 11–13).
4. She felt isolated and apart (lines 15–16).
5. The speaker remembers the strangers because the women were generous, even though it was a “struggle” for them, and they left before their charity could embarrass the family (pride) (lines 20–21).

*Paragraph 3*

6. The speaker has “crafted a life of joy and independence” (line 23).
7. She has a physical reaction to refusing to help the young man (probably because she remembers the Christmas when she was eight) (lines 29–30).
8. At first, the speaker feels foolish for throwing her money away on a man who will “waste” her charity (lines 34–35).

*Paragraph 4*

9. The speaker concludes that charity cannot be a logical transaction, like a bank deposit (line 46), but must be given with an “open and nonjudgmental heart” (line 51).
10. He reminded her of the charity her family received from the women and that love and charity come with no judgments (lines 49–51).

**Activity Three: Repetition**

1. hunger—used seven times (lines 5, 6, 12, 14, and 16)  
Christmas—used seven times (lines 9, 15, 16, 20, 25, 31, and 43)
2. The author repeats the words *hunger* and *Christmas* several times in the essay. This repetition emphasizes the need for charity, especially during a traditional season of giving.
3. The list of food in the groceries delivered by the stranger to her home and the list of food the young man buys when she gives him 10 dollars is repeated: “milk, butter, bread, cheese, and Christmas oranges.”
4. The author uses the exact list to draw a comparison between what happened to her when she was eight and what is happening to the young man. There is no difference in their need for charity.
5. “watched”
6. As the author watches the young man purchase the same type of groceries as were left on her porch when she was a child, she has an

epiphany, or revelation, about charity. The repetition of the word “watch” emphasizes this moment, especially given that the author watches the young man through “poinsettias and the stand-up Santas,” which are the decorative trappings of the season of giving.

#### Activity Four: Vocabulary and Diction

##### Part 1: Definitions

All sentences can be found in the passage on the line number listed with the vocabulary word.

What students think the word means will vary.

The dictionary definitions can be found in any dictionary resource.

The suggested responses for word/ideas around the words are listed below:

2. “could have died” (line 13), “pain of hunger” (line 14)
3. “excluded, set apart” (line 16)
4. “set apart” (line 16)
5. “gray,” “full of sleety rain” (line 17)
6. “spent it on . . . romantic impulse” (line 36)
7. “I was lecturing myself . . . sensible charity” (line 37)
8. “sensible” (line 37), “cannot be treated like a bank deposit” (line 46)
9. “continue to give me, wonderful gifts” (lines 49–50), “open” (line 51)

##### Part 2: Teacher-led activity

Suggested answers are included in the teaching suggestions.

#### Activity Five: Details and Diction

**Part 1:** Students will write the textual evidence/quotations on longer sentence strips or on one color of sticky note. Students will write the inferences, which are included in parentheses, on shorter sentence strips or on a different color of sticky note.

#### Category 1: Text that reveals her attitude about poverty

“I was hungry that year, hungry when I got up,

hungry when I went to school, hungry when I went to sleep.” (line 5) (desperation, fear)

“I was asked to leave school” (line 6)  
(embarrassment, shame)

“I only had boys’ clothes to wear” (line 6)  
(embarrassment, shame)

“The week before Christmas, the power and gas were disconnected.” (line 9) (desperation, stress, shame)

“We ate soup made from carrots, potatoes, cabbage and grain meant to feed chickens.” (lines 9-10)  
(desperation, stress, shame)

“porch was full of groceries” (line 19) (They had groceries only because of a gift from strangers—charity—as a result of their poverty.)

“counting our pennies” (line 26) (cautious, nervous)

“abiding hunger for more than food” (line 16) (Her hunger and her family’s poverty made her long for more than just food—perhaps security.)

#### Category 2: Text that reveals the author’s attitude about charity when she sees the young man

“very pale and carrying an old sleeping bag” (line 28) (She may judge the young man’s appearance as a result of poverty.)

“spare change” (line 28) (judgment—The amount is so little, yet the young man didn’t even have that.)

“luxury money” (line 31) (The speaker did have some extra money, even if it wasn’t much—it was more than the young man had.)

“only 10 dollars” (line 32) (She didn’t have much extra money, even as an adult.)

“amazement” (line 33) (the look she sees once she offers him charity)

“joy” (line 33) (the look she sees once she offers him charity)

“you are a fool” (line 34) (She is angry with herself for “wasting” money on someone she believes will waste it.)

“frivolous romantic impulse” (line 36) (This is how she felt about giving the young, poor man

money—she felt that her charity was not rooted in logic.)

**Category 3: Text that reveals the author’s changed attitude about charity**

“Something hit me like a physical blow” (line 30) (She had a really strong reaction to not helping the young man as a result of her own experiences.)

“charity cannot be treated as a bank deposit” (line 46) (Charity isn’t logical; it’s emotional—one can’t think about it logically or expect anything from it.)

“Like the Magi” (line 48)(Her reference to the Christmas story reinforces her new sense that charity is a gift for both the giver and receiver. She is grateful for the experience.)

**Part 2:** Words that reflect the author’s attitude are listed under each category. Suggestions that explain how the word reveals the author’s attitude are included in parentheses.

**Category 1: Text that reveals her attitude about poverty**

pain (The author lived with emotional pain caused by her poverty.)

isolated (She felt her poverty separated her from others and marked her as different.)

excluded (She felt her poverty kept her from participating in the activities and celebrations around her.)

pride (The author’s family is too proud to discuss their needs. They wanted to keep their dignity intact.)

devastating (Expenses can be devastating as well as can the results of poverty be on a person’s physical and emotional well-being.)

hungry (She lived with hunger because of poverty.)

strangers (Her family had to accept charity from strangers.)

**Category 2: Text that reveals the author’s attitude about charity when she sees the young man**

hopelessness (how she describes the look she sees in the young man’s eyes as a result of poverty)  
gullibility (She thinks she is foolish, and she is upset that she let herself be “tricked.”)

**Category 3: Text that reveals the author’s changed attitude about charity**

nonjudgmental (her conclusion about how charity should be given and received)

wonderful (the look on the young man’s face when he receives the gift; how the author feels after realizing charity should come from an open heart)

gifts (The author realizes that charity is a gift for both the giver and the receiver.)

love (The author understand that charity and love should come from an open heart.)

**Activity Six: Writing**

Scoring guides for both narrative and analytic essays are included at the end of the teacher overview.

**Multiple Choice: Key and Rationales**

1. ANSWER: A

The fact that the speaker’s mother had twin boys has nothing to do with the fact that her father was blacklisted and lost his job. All of the other choices are results of her father losing his job and having no money, including the fact that the speaker was asked to leave school. Even though this didn’t come directly from her father losing his job, she wasn’t able to afford appropriate clothes for school and that was why she was asked to leave.

2. ANSWER: B

The costs of uninsured, premature babies wiped out any money the speaker’s family had after her father lost his job. The costs destroyed their ability to live in the way they had before.

3. ANSWER: D

Though the speaker might have experienced feelings of fear or shame, the best answer is separation because the speaker says that she felt “more and more isolated, excluded, set apart” (lines 28–29).

4. ANSWER: E

See previous.

5. ANSWER: D

The speaker’s deep, abiding hunger for “more than food,” suggests that she feels the need for safety and security as well as something to eat. Though being asked to leave school (answer B) would have caused some feelings of perhaps embarrassment or resentment, being asked to leave doesn’t reveal the emotions that the correct answer does.

6. ANSWER: B

The speaker says “pride being what it was” to indicate that the family was embarrassed by their need for charity.

7. ANSWER: B

When the speaker says “when I got up” (line 9), she is referring to every day that year when she was hungry. Unlike all the other choices, this phrase doesn’t indicate a sequence of the narrative.

8. ANSWER: B

The phrase “count their pennies” indicates that the speaker and her son didn’t have money to waste. They had to be careful how they spent every cent.

9. ANSWER: D

The repetition of the grocery list in Paragraphs 2 and 3 suggests that the speaker’s situation when she was a child mirrors that of the young man.

10. ANSWER: C

The speaker says in lines 64–66 “you are a fool, you know he’s just going up the street to the King’s Hotel and spend it on drink or drugs.”

11. ANSWER: A

The footnote explains the allusion to the Magi, the three wise men.

12. ANSWER: C

The fact that “milk, butter, bread, cheese, and Christmas Oranges” were in the groceries that the two women brought the speaker’s family and the young man buys “milk, butter, bread, cheese, and Christmas oranges” creates a comparison between the two.

13. ANSWER: E

The author, Judith MacKenzie, uses first person to tell the story, but she also refers to herself as “rational Judith” (line 74), which reveals that this is a true story.

14. ANSWER: C

The words “charity,” “give,” “Magi,” “gifts,” and “abundantly” as well as the clause “love and charity come most truly and abundantly from an open and nonjudgmental heart” all suggest generosity.

15. ANSWER: E

See previous rationale.

# Peeling Back the Layers—“An Open Heart”

By Judith MacKenzie

Grade 6

## Activity One: Considering Author’s Purpose

Read the passage carefully. Mark on the passage the moment in which the speaker experiences a change in her attitude. Then, write a short summary of the main ideas.

When I was eight years old, my father, a union organizer in the forties and fifties, was blacklisted, accused of communist activities. It meant no work—  
 with a vengeance. My mother, then in her forties, had twin boys that spring—  
 premature, and in pre-Medicare times you can imagine the devastating costs for  
 5 their care. I was hungry that year, hungry when I got up, hungry when I went to  
 school, hungry when I went to sleep. In November I was asked to leave school  
 because I only had boys’ clothes to wear—hand-me-downs from a neighbor. I  
 could come back, they said, when I dressed like a young lady.

The week before Christmas, the power and gas were disconnected. We ate  
 10 soup made from carrots, potatoes, cabbage and grain meant to feed chickens,  
 cooked on our wood garbage burner. Even as an eight-year-old, I knew the kind  
 of hunger we had was nothing compared to people in India and Africa. I don’t  
 think we could have died in our middle-class Vancouver suburb. But I do know  
 15 that the pain of hunger is intensified and brutal when you live in the midst of  
 plenty. As Christmas preparations increased, I felt more and more isolated,  
 excluded, set apart. I felt a deep abiding hunger for more than food. Christmas  
 Eve day came, gray and full of the bleak sleety rain of a west-coast winter. Two  
 women, strangers, struggled up our driveway, loaded down with bags. They left  
 20 before my mother answered the door. The porch was full of groceries—milk,  
 butter, bread, cheese, and Christmas oranges. We never knew who they were, and  
 after that day, pride being what it was, we never spoke of them again. But I’m 45  
 years old, and I remember them well.

Since then I’ve crafted a life of joy and independence, if not of financial  
 security. Several years ago, living in Victoria, my son and I were walking up the  
 25 street, once more in west-coast sleet and rain. It was just before Christmas and we  
 were, as usual, counting our pennies to see if we’d have enough for all our festive  
 treats, juggling these against the necessities. A young man stepped in front of me,  
 very pale and carrying an old sleeping bag, and asked for spare change—not  
 unusual in downtown Victoria. No, I said, and walked on. Something hit me like  
 30 a physical blow about a block later. I left my son and walked back to find the  
 young man. I gave him some of our Christmas luxury money—folded into a small  
 square and tucked into his hand. It wasn’t much, only 10 dollars, but as I turned  
 away, I saw the look of hopelessness turned into amazement and then joy. Well,  
 said that rational part of my mind, Judith, you are a fool, you know he’s just

35 going up the street to the King’s Hotel and spend it on drink or drugs. You’ve  
taken what belongs to your family and spent it on a frivolous romantic impulse.  
As I was lecturing myself on gullibility and sensible charity, I noticed the young  
man with the sleeping bag walking quickly up the opposite side of the street,  
heading straight for the King’s. Well, let this be a lesson, said the rational Judith.  
40 To really rub it in, I decided to follow him. Just before the King’s, he turned into  
a corner grocery store. I watched through the window, through the poinsettias and  
the stand-up Santas. I watched him buy milk, butter, bread, cheese, and  
Christmas oranges.

Now, I have no idea how that young man arrived on the street in Victoria,  
45 nor will I even have any real grasp of the events that led my family to a dark and  
hungry December. But I do know that charity cannot be treated as a bank deposit.  
There is no best-investment way to give, no way to insure value for our dollar.  
Like the Magi<sup>1</sup>, these three, the two older women struggling up the driveway and  
the young man with the sleeping bag, gave me, and continue to give me,  
50 wonderful gifts—the reminder that love and charity come most truly and  
abundantly from an open and nonjudgmental heart.

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup>Magi—most commonly a reference to the “wise men” in the Biblical story in Matthew chapter 2 who came bearing gifts for the baby Jesus



**Author’s Purpose** refers to the reason an author decides to write about a certain topic. What does he or she want to accomplish—to inform the reader about that topic? To persuade the reader to think a certain way or take an action? To entertain the reader? To explain something? To describe something unfamiliar to the reader?

Now that you have read and summarized the passage, choose ONE of the purposes below. Explain more specifically MacKenzie’s purpose by completing the statement below the purpose you choose.

In “An Open Heart,” Judith MacKenzie’s purpose is

a) \_\_\_\_\_ to persuade readers that giving is better than receiving. MacKenzie wants the reader to \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_ to explain what she believes about charity. MacKenzie wants the reader to understand that charity

c) \_\_\_\_\_ to describe a personal experience involving charity. MacKenzie describes charity by \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_ to entertain readers by telling an interesting story. MacKenzie wants the reader to enjoy \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity Two: Reading for Understanding

Your teacher may provide you with questions to answer about the passage. Follow your teacher’s instructions, and be prepared to share your answers with the class.

### Activity Three: Repetition

**Repetition** refers to the technique of using a word, phrase, sound, idea, or image more than once—usually in order to highlight or emphasize an idea.

1. Go back through Paragraphs 1 and 2 and highlight significant words that are used more than three times. List them below:
2. What does the repetition of these words reveal about the speaker’s circumstances in her early years?
3. What **detail** is repeated in Paragraphs 2 and 3? Write the phrase below:
4. Why do you think the author repeats this detail in Paragraphs 2 and 3?
5. What verbs are repeated in lines 41–44? Write them below:
6. How does this repetition help you understand the change in the author’s attitude?

**Activity Four: Vocabulary and Diction**

**Part 1**

**1. devastating (line 4)**

Sentence in context: *My mother, then in her forties, had twin boys that spring—premature, and in pre-Medicare times you can imagine the **devastating** costs for their care.*

Words/ideas around “devastating” that help me figure out the meaning—*Premature babies are very expensive, so the costs must be very high. The costs could make them poor.*

What I think “devastating” means—*a situation or thing that might ruin something else*

The dictionary definition of “devastating”—*laying waste; destroying; overwhelming*

**2. brutal (line 14)**

Sentence in context: \_\_\_\_\_

Words around “brutal” that help me figure out the meaning—\_\_\_\_\_

What I think “brutal” means—\_\_\_\_\_

The dictionary definition of “brutal”—\_\_\_\_\_

**3. isolated (line 15)**

Sentence in context: \_\_\_\_\_

Words around “isolated” that help me figure out the meaning—\_\_\_\_\_

What I think “isolated” means—\_\_\_\_\_

The dictionary definition of “isolated”—\_\_\_\_\_

**4. excluded (line 16)**

Sentence in context: \_\_\_\_\_

Words around “excluded” that help me figure out the meaning—\_\_\_\_\_

What I think “excluded” means—\_\_\_\_\_

The dictionary definition of “excluded”—\_\_\_\_\_

5. **bleak (line 17)**

Sentence in context: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Words around “bleak” that help me figure out the meaning— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What I think “bleak” means— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The dictionary definition of “bleak”— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. **frivolous (line 36)**

Sentence in context: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Words around “frivolous” that help me figure out the meaning— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What I think “frivolous” means— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The dictionary definition of “frivolous”— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. **gullibility (line 37)**

Sentence in context: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Words around “gullibility” that help me figure out the meaning— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What I think “gullibility” means— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The dictionary definition of “gullibility”— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. **charity (line 37)**

Sentence in context: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Words around “charity” that help me figure out the meaning— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What I think “charity” means— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The dictionary definition of “charity”— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. **abundantly (line 51)**

Sentence in context: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Words around “abundantly” that help me figure out the meaning— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What I think “abundantly” means— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The dictionary definition of “abundantly”— \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which of the words in the list above BEST reveals the main idea of the essay?

Explain your answer.

**Part 2: Whole-class activity on diction**

Your teacher may choose to have you and your classmates participate in an activity that focuses on diction, or word choice, in “An Open Heart.” Follow your teacher’s instructions to complete this activity.

**Activity Five: Details and Diction**

**Diction** is word choice. Authors choose words that have certain associations or feelings attached to them in order to make their attitudes toward the subject clear. For example, a writer might refer to a house as a *hovel*, a *hut*, a *dwelling*, a *home*, a *residence*, or a *mansion*. Each of these words has certain associations for the reader, making the effect of the word a positive or negative one.

**Detail** refers to the things that happen and the factual information that appears in the passage. When an author tells the reader that the main character saw a *purple* butterfly in the garden, the fact that the butterfly is purple is a detail. So is the fact that the character saw the butterfly *in a garden*, and not in a kitchen or a baseball field. So is the fact that the character *saw a butterfly* at all.

Your teacher will lead you through an activity to look closely at how the author uses diction and detail to reveal her purpose.

**Activity Six: Writing****Option 1: Writing a text-based narrative.**

You’ve read Judith MacKenzie’s essay several times now. Think about the young man that the speaker gave the 10 dollars to. In a short narrative in which you create a character, a setting, and a conflict, tell what happens to the young man after he buys the food at the grocery store.

Think about these questions as you develop your story:

1. Where does the young man go after he leaves the store?
2. Who is he buying the food for?
3. What problem does he encounter? Is it an internal struggle or an external one?
4. How does he solve his problem?
5. What kind of person is he that he solves his problem in this way? Make sure you give enough details for his personality to be apparent.
6. Does your story have anything to do with the idea of charity—either the giving or receiving of it?

**Option 2: Writing an analytical essay.**

After reading and analyzing the essay, write a response about how the author uses diction and detail to reveal her purpose. Use the activities you have completed to help you, and be sure to incorporate textual evidence to support your assertion.

Write a thesis statement that answers the question of the prompt above:

*In “An Open Heart,” Judith MacKenzie uses diction and detail to reveal her purpose of*

---

*(state the author’s purpose)*

Find several pieces of textual evidence to support your assertion. List them (including line numbers) on the lines below:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Use the thesis statement and the textual evidence to create your response.

## Multiple Choice—"An Open Heart"

### Grade 6

**Directions:** Carefully read the passage below before choosing the correct answer for each question.

When I was eight years old, my father, a union organizer in the forties and fifties, was blacklisted, accused of communist activities. It meant no work—with a  
 5 vengeance. My mother, then in her forties, had twin boys that spring—premature, and in pre-Medicare times you can imagine the devastating costs for their care. I was  
 10 hungry that year, hungry when I got up, hungry when I went to school, hungry when I went to sleep. In November I was asked to leave school because I only had boys' clothes to wear—hand-me-downs from a neighbor. I could come back, they said,  
 15 when I dressed like a young lady.

The week before Christmas, the power and gas were disconnected. We ate soup made from carrots, potatoes, cabbage and grain meant to feed chickens, cooked on our  
 20 wood garbage burner. Even as an eight-year-old, I knew the kind of hunger we had was nothing compared to people in India and Africa. I don't think we could have died in our middle-class Vancouver suburb. But I  
 25 do know that the pain of hunger is intensified and brutal when you live in the midst of plenty. As Christmas preparations increased, I felt more and more isolated, excluded, set apart. I felt a deep abiding  
 30 hunger for more than food. Christmas Eve day came, gray and full of the bleak sleety rain of a west-coast winter. Two women, strangers, struggled up our driveway, loaded down with bags. They left before my  
 35 mother answered the door. The porch was full of groceries—milk, butter, bread, cheese, and Christmas oranges. We never knew who they were, and after that day,

pride being what it was, we never spoke of them again. But I'm 45 years old, and I remember them well.

Since then I've crafted a life of joy and independence, if not of financial security. Several years ago, living in Victoria, my son  
 45 and I were walking up the street, once more in west-coast sleet and rain. It was just before Christmas and we were, as usual, counting our pennies to see if we'd have enough for all our festive treats, juggling  
 50 these against the necessities. A young man stepped in front of me, very pale and carrying an old sleeping bag, and asked for spare change—not unusual in downtown Victoria. No, I said, and walked on.  
 55 Something hit me like a physical blow about a block later. I left my son and walked back to find the young man. I gave him some of our Christmas luxury money—folded into a small square and tucked into  
 60 his hand. It wasn't much, only 10 dollars, but as I turned away, I saw the look of hopelessness turned into amazement and then joy. Well, said that rational part of my mind, Judith, you are a fool, you know he's  
 65 just going up the street to the King's Hotel and spend it on drink or drugs. You've taken what belongs to your family and spent it on a frivolous romantic impulse. As I was lecturing myself on gullibility and sensible  
 70 charity, I noticed the young man with the sleeping bag walking quickly up the opposite side of the street, heading straight for the King's. Well, let this be a lesson, said the rational Judith. To really rub it in, I  
 75 decided to follow him. Just before the King's, he turned into a corner grocery store.

I watched through the window, through the poinsettias and the stand-up Santas. I watched him buy milk, butter, bread,  
80 cheese, and Christmas oranges.

Now, I have no idea how that young man arrived on the street in Victoria, nor will I even have any real grasp of the events that led my family to a dark and hungry  
85 December. But I do know that charity cannot be treated as a bank deposit. There is

- Because the speaker's father was "blacklisted" (line 3), all of the following occurred EXCEPT:
  - her mother had premature twin boys
  - her father couldn't find work
  - the speaker had to leave school
  - the speaker's family was hungry
  - the speaker had only boys' clothes to wear
- The word "devastating" as it is used in line 8 means
  - powerful
  - destructive
  - medical
  - inexpensive
  - covered
- In the year the speaker was eight years old, her feeling in the week before Christmas was one of
  - fear
  - pride
  - shame
  - separation
  - hopefulness
- The text that best supports your answer to number 3 is
  - "accused of communist activities" (lines 3–4)
  - "with a vengeance" (lines 4–5)
  - "the power and gas were disconnected" (lines 16–17)
  - "I don't think we could have died" (line 23)
  - "I felt more and more isolated" (line 28)
- Which of the following details reveals the emotions the speaker experienced because of her family's poverty?
  - "I was hungry that year, hungry when I got up, hungry when I went to school, hungry when I went to sleep" (lines 8–11)
  - "I was asked to leave school" (lines 11–12)
  - "I don't think we could have died" (line 23)
  - "I felt a deep abiding hunger for more than food" (lines 29–30)
  - "Something hit me like a physical blow" (line 55)

no best-investment way to give, no way to insure value for our dollar. Like the Magi<sup>1</sup>, these three, the two older women struggling up the driveway and the young man with the sleeping bag, gave me, and continue to give me, wonderful gifts—the reminder that love and charity come most truly and abundantly from an open and nonjudgmental heart.

<sup>1</sup>Magi—most commonly a reference to the "wise men" in the Biblical story in Matthew chapter 2 who came bearing gifts for the baby Jesus



6. The family does not later speak of the two women who delivered the groceries MAINLY because they
- A. did not know the women
  - B. were embarrassed by their need for charity
  - C. were concerned that the women knew they were poor
  - D. felt they didn't really need the help
  - E. hated people to gossip about them
7. All of the following phrases are signals as to the order of the story EXCEPT:
- A. "When I was eight years old" (line 1)
  - B. "when I got up" (line 9)
  - C. "week before Christmas" (line 16)
  - D. "Since then" (line 42)
  - E. "Several years ago" (line 44)
8. Which of the following quotes shows that the speaker feels like she needs to budget her money carefully?
- A. "Since then I've crafted a life of joy and independence, if not of financial security" (lines 42–43)
  - B. "We were, as usual, counting our pennies to see if we'd have enough" (lines 47–49)
  - C. "I gave him some of our Christmas luxury money—folded into a small square" (lines 57–59)
  - D. "You've taken what belongs to your family and spent it on a frivolous romantic impulse" (lines 66–68)
  - E. "But I do know that charity cannot be treated as a bank deposit" (lines 85–86)
9. The speaker decides to help the young man MAINLY because she
- A. feels a deep sense of guilt when she sees him begging
  - B. wishes to show her son what charity means
  - C. tries to behave like the two women did years before
  - D. realizes that she was once in the same situation that he is in
  - E. wants to see how he will spend the money
10. The "rational Judith" (line 74) believes that the young man will
- A. purchase groceries with the money she gives him
  - B. rent a room at the King's Hotel
  - C. waste the money on liquor and drugs
  - D. buy frivolous Christmas treats for his family
  - E. give some of the money to another poor person
11. The words "Like the Magi, these three" (lines 88–89) contain an example of
- A. allusion
  - B. metaphor
  - C. hyperbole
  - D. onomatopoeia
  - E. personification
12. The similarity between the speaker's situation as a child and the young man's situation is highlighted by repetition of the words
- A. "I was hungry"
  - B. "Christmas"
  - C. "milk, butter, bread, cheese, and Christmas oranges"
  - D. "women struggling up the driveway"
  - E. "west-coast winter"

13. The author tells her story using the first person point of view MAINLY to
- A. create suspense for the reader
  - B. reveal what other characters are feeling
  - C. make the reader feel sorry for her
  - D. emphasize the hardship she endured
  - E. indicate that this is a true experience
14. The tone of the last paragraph is BEST described as
- A. amazed
  - B. complaining
  - C. generous
  - D. defensive
  - E. awed
15. Which of the following quotes BEST supports your answer to number 14?
- A. "a dark and hungry December" (lines 84–85)
  - B. "charity cannot be treated as a bank deposit" (lines 85–86)
  - C. "no way to insure value for our dollar" (lines 87–88)
  - D. "continue to give me wonderful gifts" (lines 91–92)
  - E. "come most truly. . . from an open and nonjudgmental heart" (lines 93–94)