

Belize

Grades

9+

Author

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Illustrator

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Author Bio

Miranda Morgan is a fourth year student at the University of California, Santa Barbara and a literature and creative writing major within the College of Creative Studies. She has written multiple short stories, nonfiction essays and two full-length original screenplays. Her work has appeared in *Mission and State*, an Investigative Journalism Initiative in Santa Barbara as well as on *Zyzzyyva Magazine's* online blog. She plans to pursue an MFA program in creative nonfiction.

Illustrator Bio

Born in Inglewood, California, Jessica Chrysler grew up in and around the west side of Los Angeles. Her childhood consisted of softball tournaments, coloring books, and raising litters of kittens. A passion for storytelling has led her to illustrate several children's books, including *Cody the Coyote* and the soon to be released *A Word to Rhyme with Orange*. She is an active member of the local artist community and volunteers her time to help others learn about art.

Summary

A young woman recalls a vacation with her family that gave her a glimpse of her father as he wished to be.

Common Core Anchor Standards Addressed

Writing Anchor Standards-Text Types and Purposes

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Research for Building and Presenting Knowledge

- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

READING Standards

Key Ideas and Details

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Craft and Structure

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Academic Vocabulary to Explore

(See vocabulary approach in Appendix A of CCSS.)

Tier Two

Proficiency

Insomnia

Vehemence

Defiantly

Wrenched

Braced

Complementary Lyrics to Introduce BEFORE Reading the Text

(See Warm up Questions below.)

Daughters

by John Mayer

I know a girl
She puts the color inside of my world
But she's just like a maze
Where all of the walls all continually change
And I've done all I can
To stand on her steps with my heart in my hands
Now I'm starting to see
Maybe it's got nothing to do with me

Fathers, be good to your daughters
Daughters will love like you do
Girls become lovers who turn into mothers
So mothers, be good to your daughters too

Oh, you see that skin?
It's the same she's been standing in
Since the day she saw him walking away
Now she's left
Cleaning up the mess he made

So fathers, be good to your daughters
Daughters will love like you do
Girls become lovers who turn into mothers
So mothers, be good to your daughters too

Boys, you can break
You'll find out how much they can take
Boys will be strong
And boys soldier on
But boys would be gone without the warmth from
A womans good, good heart

On behalf of every man
Looking out for every girl
You are the god and the weight of her world

So fathers, be good to your daughters
Daughters will love like you do
Girls become lovers who turn into mothers
So mothers, be good to your daughters too [x3]

Warm-up Questions

(To introduce the story, should be used as a quick write or a journal/reflection piece.)

1. How does the text *Daughters*, by John Mayer, depict the nature and importance of father daughter relationships? Do you agree with this depiction?
2. Has your father ever tried to share his favorite interests with you? What were they? How did it go? (If not a father, choose another male influence such as a grandfather, uncle, or teacher.)

Main Idea for Study

We must treasure our time and experiences together as life moves on.

Possible Themes for Study

- Our parents are not always the heroes we wish them to be.
- Life lessons come from odd places.

- Moments of happiness are sometimes fleeting.

Focus Questions

1. In the short story *Belize*, does the author really know her father? Why or why not?
2. What country would you visit if you could go anywhere right now? Explain your reasons.

(The focus questions can be used for a Socratic Seminar and/or a writing assignment.)

Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the narrator?
2. When does the story take place? Is the narrator telling the story as it happens?
3. Who are the other characters in the story, both seen and unseen?
4. Why does the family go to Belize?
5. What causes the change in the narrator's relationship to her father?

Text-dependent Questions

These questions may be used for Response to Literature writing pieces. They should not be used as comprehension questions. Make sure you analyze the text features.

1. What does the phrase “become of the sea” imply about the narrator's father? Why would she choose to mention this phrase twice?
2. When the narrator mentions that her father “turned inside himself,” what does she mean?
3. The last paragraph mentions how the narrator reminds her sister of who their father was. Why does she do this?
4. What is the role of the mother in the story *Belize*? Is she happy?

Types of Writing – Exercises & Activities

Narrative

1. Write a diary entry for every day the narrator is on her trip.
2. Write a story about your last family vacation or trip.

Descriptive

Write a description of your parent or guardian using similar language to the narrator. Where and when have you seen them the happiest?

Expository/Analytic

1. How does the parental relationship change throughout the short story *Belize*?
2. What does the country of Belize symbolize to the narrator in the short story *Belize*? To her father?

Possible Instructional Approaches

Activity

Choose one parent or guardian to interview. Ask your parent / guardian to tell you about another country (or if they haven't traveled outside of the country, another place they visited) they visited long ago that they are nostalgic about and would like to visit again. Before your interview, devise a set of flexible interview questions in class that are designed to help you learn as much as possible about the place they visited and why it makes them nostalgic. Take detailed notes during the interview.

After your interview, use your notes to write a nonfiction story about what you learned.

Possible interview questions:

- Can you tell me about why you went there?
- Can you describe the place that you went to?
- What language/s do they speak?
- How old were you?
- Can you describe who you went with?
- Tell me about your most vivid memories from the place or experience. What happened?
- Did you ever return? What happened then?
- Do you want to go back again? What would you do for your second trip?
- Can you describe any people who you miss from your experience? Who were they? What made them special or interesting?

Field Trip

Visit the UCLA Center for Oral History Research (or another local oral history project or organization). Learn about what they do, why they do it, and listen to samples of recorded oral histories.

<http://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu>