In Search of Wonder: Common Core and More

NCBLA Education Resource Guide

Focus:   
Author Chris Crutcher

This education resource guide supplements the presentation made by Chris Crutcher at *In Search of Wonder: Common Core and More*, a professional development day presented by The National Children’s Book and Literacy Alliance, in conjunction with the Perry Ohio School District. Included on these pages are engaging activities and discussion questions based on Ohio Common Core English Language Standards for two of Crutcher’s books: *Period 8* and *Deadline*. We invite you to print and share these materials as needed. This document is formatted so you can print it double sided on 3-hole punch paper and store in a binder. Education resource guides for authors Nikki Grimes, Steven Kellogg, Katherine Paterson, and Tanya Lee Stoneare available at: [thencbla.org](http://www.thencbla.org)

*You know the young people in your own classroom. You know their academic prowess, their study habits, and the level of their literacy skills. You know what resources you have on hand and your students’ capabilities using those resources. You know what your students will find exciting and challenging. Consequently, we present these activities and discussion questions for general use in classrooms and libraries, hoping that you will use your own insightful creativity and sound judgment to shape the ideas, activities, and resources we offer, expanding on them to meet the needs of your students. These materials werecreated by Rachele Alpine, National Board Certified High School Language Arts teacher and YA & MG author; with creative writing exercises supplied by Mary Brigid Barrett, President and Executive Director of The National Children’s Book and Literacy Alliance, author and illustrator.*

**Table of Contents**

***Period 8*** 2

* Summary 2
* Ohio Common Core English Language Standard: Arguments and Discussions 2
* Ohio Common Core English Language Standard: Point of View 6
* Common Core Aligned Discussion Questions 11
* Common Core and MUCH More: Creative Writing Activity 12

***Deadline*** 16

* Summary 16
* Ohio Common Core English Language Standard: Textual Evidence 16

**Chris Crutcher Bio** 21

**Selected Works by Chris Crutcher** 22

**Additional Resources** 22

**Period 8**  
by Chris Crutcher

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**Summary:**In this full-length novel from Chris Crutcher, his first since the best-selling *Deadline*, the ultimate bully and the ultimate good guy tangle during Period 8.

Paul "the Bomb" Baum tells the truth. No matter what. It was something he learned at Sunday School. But telling the truth can cause problems, and not minor ones. And as Paulie discovers, finding the truth can be even more problematic. Period 8 is supposed to be that one period in high school where the truth can shine, a safe haven. Only what Paulie and Hannah (his ex-girlfriend, unfortunately) and his other classmates don't know is that the ultimate bully, the ultimate liar, is in their midst.

Terrifying, thought-provoking, and original, this novel combines all the qualities of a great thriller with the controversy, ethics, and raw emotion of a classic Crutcher story.

**Grade Levels:Suggested for grades 10-12**

**Ohio Common Core English Language Standard:**

**Determine and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.**

**Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.**

**Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues,* building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.**

**Lesson: Socratic Seminar**

**Overview**

In *Period* 8, the characters come together in Mr. Logsdon’s class every day to participate in frank honest discussions. Nothing is off limits in the room and the characters are free to say whatever they want. This lesson mimics Period 8 by using Socratic Seminar as the structure for the discussion. A Socratic Seminar allows students to debate topics found in a piece of literature and asks them to support their views with specific evidence. Students will develop discussion questions over the book and use textual evidence to support their views. This lesson extends the value of a Socratic Seminar by asking students to then create a response over one of the questions talked about during the seminar.

**Preparing for the Socratic Seminar**

In order to prepare for the Socratic discussion, you want to have your students tracking topics throughout the book that are important to them. These topics should then have open-ended questions that the students can pose to the group and discuss.

Examples of sections of the book that have inspired questions to provide to students:

*“Are all men pigs?” she says.*

*“Are all men pigs,” Logs says, scratching his chin. “Preamble to the male Bill of Rights, I believe. But methinks this question is loaded.”*

*“Will a guy screw anything that makes itself available?” (21)*

Question:Are men programmed to cheat?

*“Logs, is there any way for men and women, or boys and girls, to do anything that doesn’t turn sexual?” (177)*

Question: Can boys and girls just be friends?

*Arney asks Paulie if he can date his ex-girlfriend:*

*“What would you think if I started hanging out with Hannah?”*

*The bottom drops out of Paulie’s gut. He doesn’t answer.*

*Arney says, “You guys are done, right?”*

*“Hannah is.”*

*“I know it’d feel kind of funny, but we almost had something going when we were sophomores, back before you guys were-” (105)*

Question: Is it okay to date a friend’s ex?

**Implementing the Lesson**

* Provide the questions ahead of time (this will allow students to write down notes and ideas, so they don’t come to the discussion without anything to contribute).
* Pose questions to the students and allow them to conduct a Socratic Seminar.Refer to “How to Start Using Socratic Seminars” on the next page.
* Tell students to jot down any ideas that they like from their classmates as they are participating in the discussion.
* Have students go back to their seats and select one of the questions that was posed to the group. Have them respond to this question in a well-written response using information both from their discussion with their classmates and from textual evidence in the book.

**Socratic Seminar**

**The goal:** To teach students to think for themselves rather than filling their heads with one “right” answer (with enough practice, students will be able to lead these discussionswith little to no help from the teacher).

The differences between dialogue (a Socratic Seminar) and debate are contrasted in this chart:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Dialogue (Socratic Seminar)** | **Debate** |
| Cooperative | Competitive |
| Multiple sides | Oppositional |
| Shared understanding | Trying to prove a person wrong |
| Listen to understand | Listen to find flaws |
| Accept every opinion | Close-minded attitude |

**How to Start Using Socratic Seminars**

1. Help the students understand the difference between dialogue and debate.
2. Have the students define the skills needed to be an active listener and a good participant in a class dialogue. (It might be helpful to post these somewhere in the room or have the students copy them down.) Refer to the chart above, which contrasts the characteristics of dialogue and debate.
3. Prepare some questions about a topic and have your students answer them for homework or at the start of class. This is the information that will be used to start the dialogue in the Socratic Seminar.
4. Seat students in two circles. The inside circle will be the speakers and the outside circle will be responsible for taking notes.
5. Start with a guiding question that you’ve created for them (in addition to any other questions). This question should be along the lines of an opinion-based question, evaluative (that forces the reader to pick the “most right answer” or rank/rate something). These questions are more subjective and will be used as the first question in the seminar.
6. Have students start a dialogue about the questions they have prepared. You may lead them at first, but you want to get them used to the idea that they are to speak to each other and not to you.
7. The students on the outside should be taking notes during the discussion. They should also be writing down questions they have that can then be asked as follow-up questions.
8. After the students have discussed the topic, you may want to break the kids into pairs or small groups where they debrief about the discussion and compile the note-taker’s notes into information that can be shared out once the class comes together again.

\*This process takes time…both the teacher and student will need practice with how to participate in a Socratic Seminar. It may be rough at the start, but with continued use, it can be a powerful classroom tool.

**Questions**

The following are good questions to guide the Socratic Seminar (to help get deeper responses/thinking):

* What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
* Could you give me an example?
* Where did you get this idea?
* Could you explain your reason to us?
* What would change your mind?
* What is the alternative?
* Can someone see this in another way?

\*Socratic Seminar information was compiled from a presentation given by educator   
Don Mastrobuono.

**Ohio Common Core English Language Standard:**

**Determine the author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view.**

**Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.**

**Lesson: Point of View**

**Overview**

*Period 8* is written from multiple points of view (POV)allowing different characters to come in and out of the story to share their thoughts. This activity focuses on examining POV and reimagining scenes as if they were written by different characters.

**Implementing the Lesson**

* Have students first answer the POV questions on Handout 1and share out their thoughts about the book being written in multiple POVs.
* Students will then select one specific scene from the book that is important to them. They will first write a response about why they picked this scene, how the scene helps to demonstrate what the scene is trying to accomplish in the book. Refer to Handout 2.
* Students will then re-imagine the scene as if it were written from a different point of view. Students will keep the same dialogue, movements, and events, but they will describe it in a different way because of whom they have chosen to retell the scene.
* Students will then switch scenes with other students. They will read the original and newly written scene and evaluate the two describing what scene works the best and why. Refer to Handout 3.
* Students will then evaluate their own scene with the one in their book and write up a reflection comparing the two and discussing what POV they believe works best.Refer to Handout 4.

**Handout 1: POV in *Period 8*  Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

*Period* 8 is written from multiple points of view allowing different characters to come in and out of the story to share their thoughts. Consider this narration and what it may add/detract from the story. Answer the following questions.

1)  How is it beneficial to have multiple characters share their points of view in the book rather than writing in one specific view?   Explain your view.

2)  What are some downfalls to having multiple characters share their points of view in the book rather than writing in one specific point of view?   Explain your view.

**Handout 2: POV in *Period 8*  Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Below Expectations** | **No Evidence** |
| **POV and Perspective** | Student’s scene demonstrates a specific attitude of another character. Student really goes into the head of the character and uses numerous thoughts to help demonstrate his/her perspective. | Student’s scene demonstrates a specific attitude of another character. Student goes into the head of the character and uses some thoughts to help demonstrate his/her perspective. | Student’s scene may demonstrate a specific attitude of another character. Student may go into the head of the character but does not use many thoughts to help demonstrate his/her perspective. | Student uses little to no examples to demonstrate his/her character’s POV. |
| **Mimic of Scene** | Student’s scene includes the same actions and dialogue as original scene. | Student’s scene includes the same actions and dialogue as original scene. | Scene includes most of the same actions/dialogue. | Scene leaves out a lot of the action/dialogue. |
| **Mechanics** | Correct mechanics is used and there are little to no errors. | Correct mechanics is used and there are some errors. | Correct mechanics is used and there are many errors. | There are many errors and the paper is hard to read/understand. |

**Handout 3: POV in *Period 8*  Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Examine the two POVs you have of the same scene. Evaluate the pros and cons of each. Provide specific detail.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Pros** | **Cons** |
| Scene in the book |  |  |
| Scene rewritten by classmate(s) |  |  |

Explain which selection you like better (the one from the book or your classmate’s scene). Use specific details from the pieces to support your choice:

**Handout 4: POV in *Period 8*  Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

What if a scene was written from a different point of view? How could that change the story and the information we learn? Your task will be to choose a scene and narrate it through the eyes of someone else.

Scene that you picked:

Pages that the scene span:

Why did you pick this scene?

Why is this scene important in the book?

How does the point of view help to demonstrate what the scene is trying to accomplish in the book?

**Common Core Aligned Discussion Questions**

* How are women perceived in the novel? Examine the role of a woman in this novel.
* How do different characters view/treat women in this book? Select specific characters and discuss how they are viewed/treated in the novel.
* In a novel, characters often change for good (or worse). What characters changed for the better and what was the transforming moment? What characters changed for the worse, and what was the transforming moment?
* What do you believe is the main conflict in the novel? Define it, discuss how it shapes the book and how it was resolved (or why it wasn’t resolved).
* The title of the book is *Period 8*. Analyze and explain the meaning of this title. Why is it important in the story? Cite specific textual evidence to support your analysis.
* How is setting important to this novel? Analyze specific settings and explain their significance using specific examples as to how they contribute to the overall theme/message of the novel.
* Select one of the main characters. How does he/she change throughout the course of the novel? Trace his/her progression from the start to the end and use specific examples to show his/her transformation.
* Who are the secondary characters in the novel? Explain how each of these secondary characters is important and what they contribute to the novel.
* Identify some major themes or the central idea in the book. Where do we see examples? How does this theme develop throughout the book and how does it affect the outcome? Cite specific textual examples to support your responses. Additional Question: Can you think of any other stories, poems, movies, or songs that have this same theme? Describe them.
* We read books for enjoyment, but sometimes we discover that books can teach us things. What has *Period 8*taught you? Describe in detail.

**Common Core and MUCHMore:**

**Creative Writing Activity**

**Character and Dialogue in Enclosed Spaces**

Chris Crutcher is often cited as a master of realistic characterization and dialogue. This creative writing exercise is inspired by *Period 8* and by *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott. *Bird by Bird* is a highly respected book on the writing process and often recommended by professional writers. If you have a student who is eager to write, and write well, you may want to recommend *Bird by Bird* to him or her.

**Part 1: Place and Situation**

After a discussion of the characters and situations in *Period 8*, divide your class into small groups.

Each small group will be responsible for compiling two lists. The first list is a list of twenty enclosed places or spaces. The list may include everything from the mundane to the fantastic. The second list is a list of urgent situations, dramatic or humorous, that happen in real life. You may want to first demonstrate the “list making” on the board with the whole class offering some ideas. (Decide beforehand if your students can use some, all, or none of the sample items on their lists.) For example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **List #1: Enclosed Places or Spaces** | **List #2: Urgent Situations** |
| Spaceship | Fast moving fire |
| Bus station | Everyone has to pee at the same time |
| Lavatory | Tornado approaching |
| Submarine | All the food has been eaten |
| Pea pod  Cruise ship cabin | A famous rock star or hip/hop artist is in the next room |

Have the small groups brainstorm a wide variety of possibilities for each list. Each student should make a copy of the lists for their personal use.

Once the lists are finished, it is your choice whether or not you would like the groups to share their lists with the class.

The students, either individually or in pairs, mixing and matching, will then pick one item from list one and one item from list two, writing down their choices on a piece of paper.

**Part 2: Characters**

Each student, or pair of students, must create two characters, writing a short profile of characters that fit this description suggested by Anne Lamott in *Bird by Bird*:

**“…you might try putting together two people who more than anything else in the world wish to avoid each other, people who would avoid whole cities just to make sure they won’t bump into each other.”**

Your students should name their characters, write a sketch of their personalities, their quirks, their talents, their gifts, and their histories.

Lamott continues, and please share all of her thoughts with students:

**“….there are people out there in the world who almost inspire me to join the government witness protection program, just so I can be sure I will never have to talk to them again. Take a character whom one of your main characters feels this way about and put the two of them in the same elevator. Then let the elevator get stuck. Nothing like a supercharged atmosphere to get things going. Now, they both will have a lot to say, but they will also be afraid that they won’t be able to control *what* they say. They will be afraid of an explosion. Maybe there will be one, maybe not. But there’s one way to find out.”**

Instead of putting their characters into a stuck elevator, your students will put their two characters into their ENCLOSED SPACE choice, and will have their characters deal with their URGENT SITUATION choice. For example, two characters who cannot stand each other, and may, or may not be polar opposites, may be locked in a lavatory in the middle of a tornado. Or they may be stuck in a cruise ship cabin knowing their favorite rock star is in the next room.

Given those three elements: characters, place, and situation, have your students write a scene in using only dialogue to tell a story.

Continue to share Anne Lamott’s wisdom:

**“In any case, good dialogue gives us the sense we are eavesdropping, that the author is not getting in the way. Thus, good dialogue encompasses both what is said and what is not said. What is not said will sit patiently outside that stuck elevator door, or it will dart around a characters’ feet inside the elevator, like rats. So let these characters hold back some thoughts, and at the same time, let them detonate little bombs.”**

It is your choice whether you would like your students to individually write the scene, or write in pairs with each student writing the dialogue for one of the two characters. You determine the length of the scene. The scene can be dramatic or comedic, or both. It can work as a complete story with a beginning, middle, and ending, or be the prelude to a fuller story. The dialogue should reveal the characters’ personalities. The dialogue can include back story details.

**Dialogue Suggestions from Anne Lamott in *Bird by Bird***

You may also want to share and discuss these dialogue suggestionsfrom Anne Lamott:

* *You’re not reproducing actual speech–you’re translating the sound and rhythm of what a character says into words.*
* *Learn little by little to take someone’s five-minute speech and make it one sentence, without losing anything.*
* *You should be able to identify each character by what he or she says.*
* *Good dialogue gives us the sense that we are eavesdropping…*
* *The better you know your characters, the more you’ll see things from their point of view.*
* *The villain has a heart and the hero has great flaws.*

# More About Dialogue

One simple and highly effective way to get high school students to understand the power of dialogue and its potential to reveal character, and also its power as a story telling vehicle, is to share the *George and Martha* picture book series by James Marshall with your students, taking the time to read the short, humorous stories aloud with the class.

After reading some of the stories, discuss how James Marshall uses inference and humor to reveal character, reveal the relationship between characters, and to propel the story forward. Marshall’s dialogue, written with great skill, is the perfect example of the adage, “show don’t tell.”

These titles are available in your local library and are a tremendous dialogue teaching tool for any level:

***George and Martha***

***George and Martha Encore***

***George and Martha Back in Town***

***George and Martha One Fine Day***

***George and Martha Rise and Shine***

***George and Martha Tons of Fun***

**Part 3: Group Discussion**

After each student has written his or her scene, or each pair of students has written their scenes, break into small groups once again. Each scene should be read aloud in the small groups, with students other than the authors reading the scenes aloud so that the authors can hear their dialogue.

The group, including the authors, should then discuss what works and what doesn’t work in the scene by addressing the following questions—you may want to add your own questions to this list:

* Are the characters interesting? Are they believable?
* Is the dialogue authentic to each character? Could each character be identified by his or her dialogue?
* Are the characters and the dialogue compelling?
* What does the dialogue reveal about each character?
* What does the dialogue reveal about the relationship between the two characters?
* Does the relationship between the characters change over the course of the scene? If yes,   
  how so?
* Is the scene a complete story in itself? Does it have a beginning, middle, and ending?
* Or is the scene possibly part of a larger whole?
* The goal is to keep the reader engaged, to make this scene as interesting as possible. Keeping that in mind, could the scene, the characters, the dialogue be improved in any way? If yes, what could be improved?

Usually, after hearing the dialogue read aloud, authors will want to rewrite their scenes. At least one rewrite is suggested, because good writing is actually rewriting, and more rewriting. If the scenes are good, you may want to have your students expand them into full short stories.

**Deadline**  
by Chris Crutcher

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**Summary:**Ben Wolf has big things planned for his senior year. Had big things planned. Now what he has is some very bad news and only one year left to make his mark on the world.

How can a pint-sized, smart-ass seventeen-year-old do anythingsignificant in the nowheresville of Trout, Idaho?

First, Ben makes sure that no one else knows what is going on—not his superstar quarterback brother, Cody, not his parents, not his coach, no one. Next, he decides to become the best 127-pound football player Trout High has ever seen; to give his close-minded civics teacher a daily migraine; and to help the local drunk clean up his act.

And then there's Dallas Suzuki. Amazingly perfect, fascinating Dallas Suzuki, who may or may not give Ben the time of day. Really, she's first on the list.

Living with a secret isn't easy, though, and Ben's resolve begins to crumble . . . especially when he realizes that he isn't the only person in Trout with secrets.

**Grade Levels:Suggested for grades 9-12**

**Ohio Common Core English Language Standard:**

**Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferencesdrawn from the text.**

**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 techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.**

**Lesson: Rumination Paper**

**Overview**

A rumination paper asks students to identify meaningful quotes that either relate to their lives or are significant to the text and make connections to their lives through a narrative and the independent reading book.

**Preparing for the Rumination Paper**

In order to prepare to write this paper, have your students track quotes as they read *Deadline*. They should pull out a minimum of five quotes that either speak to them in some way or they can relate to. Students should track these on a sheet of paper and include the quote, page number, and a quick explanation about why they selected each quote.

**Brainstorming for the Rumination Paper**

This activity allows students to set the groundwork for their paper in order to prepare to write. Students should use the quotes they have tracked throughout the story to complete this brainstorm. Walk through the following steps with your students, giving them enough time to answer each section (As a teacher, you could even model this to the students by filling out your own brainstorm on an overhead screen).

1. Look at the quotes you have selected in the book. Select one quote/passage that you think is the most important in your book. Rewrite it on a sheet of paper.
2. List specific words or phrases in the quote you selected that jump out or seem significant to you.
3. Take 3-5 minutes to write in detail about why you chose the quote/what drew you to it (use the note you already provided about why you selected the quote and expand on it).
4. Take about 5 minutes to discuss the literary context/analysis of the quote/passage and what the writer might be doing/trying to say.
5. List out moments in your life that this passage reminds you of. (Try to create a list of   
   10-15 moments…think in a broad sense, the relationship doesn’t need to be identical to what happened in the book).
6. Take 8-10 minutes to set up a scene using one of these moments in a narrative form (free write…don’t think about your words, just let them come out without editing).
7. Take 5 minutes to connect your personal writing to the quote and the story as a whole. Write about how these connect.

**Rumination Paper Drafting**

This brainstorm provides the initial draft for the student. All they need to do is flesh out their ideas, expand, and link them together to create their rumination paper.

“The test of literature is, I suppose,   
whether we ourselves live more intensely for the reading of it.”  
~Elizabeth Drew

**Rumination Paper Assignment**

Yourstudents’ final assignment for *Deadline*isto write a two-to-three page rumination paper.

Scenario: You are a supporter of independent reading books, specifically YA literature. Your job is to show others that YA literature has merit and why it is important to the school curriculum. You will show how it can be both meaningful and relevant.

This assignment is an opportunity to lift up a passage that you care about, and to showcase both your critical and your creative writing skills. Here’s what to do:

* Begin with a significant quote that resonates for you in some way. First, approach the passage critically, by giving context, citing parenthetically, and analyzing the passage within the context of the novel. Make a claim and argue how this quote/passage is important to the text overall. Take a paragraph or two to really get into it, citing additional textual evidence when necessary.
* Next, ruminate: in a personal narrative, respond to the line you’ve chosen. What moment or experience in your own life does the line remind you of? Here’s the place to tell the story, one that involves correctly punctuated dialogue, and definitely one that sets a scene and includes vivid details that “show” rather than “tell.”
* Then, end the paper by linking both the quote and your personal story. How do the two relate? Where do we see similarities and connections? Describe this in detail.
* A rubric for assessing your students’ work is provided on the next page.

**Rumination Paper Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Below Expectations** | **No Evidence** |
| **Quote Analysis** | Ideas about the chosen quote are developed logically and thoroughly. Student goes into detail about how the quote is important to the overall text. Ideas are supported with significant evidence and reasoning | Claims and ideas about the chosen quote are developed somewhat logically with some support/evidence/reasoning. Student could go into more detail about how the quote is important to the overall text. Ideas are supported with some evidence and reasoning. | Claims and ideas about the chosen quote are underdeveloped and unsupported. Ideas aren’t supported with any evidence or reasoning. | No Evidence |
| **Quote and Narrative Connection** | Student goes into detail about how the quote and narrative are similar. Ideas are explained in detail. | Student goes into some detail about how the quote and narrative are similar. Ideas are explained but could use more detail. | Student goes into little detail about how the quote and narrative aresimilar. | No Evidence |
| **Plot** | Your plot is clearly developed with a beginning, middle and, end to the story and keeps the reader’s attention | Your beginning, middle, and end are in the story but they are underdeveloped or you are missing a beginning, middle, or end. | Your plot is vague and you may be lacking a beginning, middle, or end. | No Evidence |
| **Setting** | Your setting is vivid and described in detail. The reader is able to place themselves into your setting. You continue to establish setting throughout. | Both parts of setting are evident and easily identified. Setting may not be carried through the entire story. | Setting is lacking a part and/or is not easily identified. | No Evidence |

continued

**Rumination Paper Assessment (continued)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Below Expectations** | **No Evidence** |
| **Character** | Characters are described in great detail both through personality and physical description. The reader can get a sense of the personality of each. | Characters are described but more detail could be revealed to make them more unique. Student may not focus on both traits and physical descriptions. | Characters are not described in much detail. Characters do not seem unique. | No Evidence |
| **Sensory Details** | Student writes a narrative using sensory details to convey a vivid picture of the topic. | Student writes a narrative using some sensory details to convey a picture of the topic. | Student writes a narrative using little sensory details to convey the topic. | No Evidence |
| **Mechanics** | Paper is proofread and contains minimal errors. Student cites correctly. | Paper has some errors, but is still easy to read. Student did not cite correctly. | Student makes many errors and it’s difficult to read and understand. Student did not cite correctly. | No Evidence |

**Chris Crutcher Bio**

Chris Crutcher is an Ohio native.  Well, he was born over Ohio in an airplane on July 17, 1946.  His Air Force pilot father and homemaker mother moved the family to Cascade,Idaho when he was six weeks old.  We like to think he spent his formative weeks here in Ohio!  His father retired from the military after having piloted over 30 missions during WWII.

Chris was active in sports as a teenager, not necessarily due to his physical prowess, but because there was nothing else to do and everyone was needed to play to make a team.  The experiences were great fodder for his later writing career.  From his parents he learned the value of hard work, civic responsibility, the power of learning, a sense of humor, and the frailty of the human spirit.  Not a stellar student, Chris made his way through high school with his sense of humor and charm.  The one classic novel he admits to reading is *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.  Good choice!  Readers can find a bit of Atticus Finch and Jem in the characters in his novels.

Chris graduated from college with degrees in sociology and psychology.  Finding the job market lacking for both degrees, he went back to school to receive his teaching certificate.  That led to over a decade working in schools.  His compassion for students and knowledge of the education system was an invaluable resource for his many young adult novels.  Chris currently works as a therapist and children’s advocate.

According to his website in his personal life, “Crutcher enjoys running, swimming, music and basketball.  He lectures 30 to 40 times a year at schools, universities and conferences across the country and around the world.  He has contributed articles to *Voices from the Middle, Family Energy Magazine, The Signal Journal* and *Spokane Magazine*. He has had short stories published in seven anthologies including *On the Fringe* edited by Donald R. Gallo and *Dirty Laundry* edited by Lisa Rowe Fraustino.  He has also written an adult suspense novel, *The Deep End*, which is currently being adapted as a major motion picture, as are his novels *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*, *Whale Talk*, and *The Crazy Horse Electric Game*.”

Speaking of his website, I encourage everyone to visit[ChrisCrutcher.com](http://www.chriscrutcher.com/)for a fascinating and enlightening glimpse into the man.  His blog featured a discussion on the Dewey Decimal system, research, characters, etc.  Chris personally presents an account of a cancer scare with wit and sensitivity and creates a teachable moment.  His ‘Educators’ link has guides for each of his books.  His website is a great place to get lost in for a few hours and when one emerges you feel like you have spent time with an old friend.

“The American Library Association has named eight of his young adult books, to date, “Best Books for Young Adults,” and four of his books appeared on *Booklist’s* Best 100 Books of the 20th Century, compiled in 2000 – more than any other single author on the list.  Crutcher received the ALAN Award in 1993, the NCTE SLATE Intellectual Freedom Award in 1998, the Margaret A. Edwards Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000 and Writer Magazine’s Writers Who Make a Difference Award in 2004.”

On a personal note, Chris Crutcher’s books have shaped my love of young adult literature with *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes* on my top ten list!  He *gets* teenagers and schools and all the craziness and drama/angst and vulnerability of the age.  His characters are treated with the utmost respect and his readers are happy to be in his world, even if for a short time.

**Selected Works by Chris Crutcher**

*Running Loose* (1983)

*Stotan!*(1986)

*The Crazy Horse Electric Game*(1987)

*Chinese Handcuffs*(1989)

*Athletic Shorts: Six Short Stories*(1991)

*The Deep End*(1991)

*Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*(1993)

*Ironman*(1995)

*Whale Talk*(2001)

*King of the Mild Frontier*(2003)

*The Sledding Hill*(2005)

*Deadline*(2007)

*Period 8*(2013)

**Additional Resources for Education Material   
Using Chris Crutcher’s Books**

Teaching Books.net: <http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?aid=532>

Web English teacher: <http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?aid=532>

Teaching Guide featuring Chris Crutcher (geared toward banned books) through Harper Collins:  
<http://files.harpercollins.com/PDF/TeachingGuides/0060507837.pdf>

Welch English: <http://www.welchenglish.com/authors/Chris_Crutcher.html>

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