

Character Based Literacy Program

Independent Study Lesson Plan

I AM The Cheese, Week 1



PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing



Change Requires Effort Change is possible. Change requires three things; a vision, a plan and effort. It requires changing bad habits to good habits. It requires effort even when I don't feel like working. It requires taking one step at a time.

Is Monument, Massachusetts a real place?

How far is Massachusetts from Vermont?

How long will it take for Adam to ride his bike from Monument to Rutterburg?

Why are some of the conversations recorded in the form of tapes?

How old do you think Adam is?

Word Wall Here are vocabulary words to teach and add to the word wall

warped	omen	momentum	confide	insignificant
anxiety	merely	suspend	confront	vulnerable
wary	stricken	arouse	camaraderie	claustrophobic
isolate	heroine	robust	subdued	antiseptic
seeps	torrent	ravenous	paraphernalia	vague

READ

Read Read the selection

Read 1-67

RESPOND

Timeline List 15-20 of the most important events on your Timeline.

Think about what you read today and begin your timeline

- First, *fix the facts*: who, what, when, where, why
- Then, decide on the most important events and begin your timeline with these.

Over the course of the next week you will be required to read a number of pages. It would be best if you spread the reading out over the next week and not try to do everything at the last minute before your next appointment.

Map Add to ongoing activities like a KWL chart or map: where did the characters go?

- New character information can be added to an Open Mind Portrait.
- An answer can be added to a question from the KWL Chart.
- A new location or change can be added to the map.

EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

Suitcase Bookmark

In this activity, you will make a Suitcase Bookmark. Then you will put themselves in the narrator's position and make a suitcase bookmark that includes the items that you would want to take on a journey like the narrator's. You must choose what you would take in your suitcase and then illustrate those items.

Materials:

- Pieces of stiff paper 6-10 inches wide and 5-10 inches long
- Pencils, pens, crayons, markers
- Construction paper, glue sticks, scissors

You will make a suitcase bookmark of the things that you would want to take with you if you were going on a journey like Adam's. You should first make a list of the things that you would take with you. These items should not include weapons, drugs, alcohol, etc. and should be items that would be important on their journey.

After making a list of important things to bring in your suitcase, you will then make your bookmark suitcase. You will make a bookmark about 6-10 inches wide and 5-10 inches long, and then fold in half. You can then either draw the items that you would take, or you can make them out of construction paper and glue them into the suitcase. The outside of the suitcase should look like a suitcase.

After completing today's reading, you will make the bookmark and begin to draw the objects or make them out of construction paper. You should remember that you are imagining that you are the narrator, and should plan what items you would take according to the narrator's journey.

After completing today's reading, you will finish the illustrations of the objects that you plan to take in your suitcase. You should then write a paragraph describing the objects that you are bringing. You must also explain why you think these objects would be helpful on your journey.

After completing today's reading, you should finish working on your suitcase bookmarks. You should finish drawing and paragraphs explaining why you brought the

items that you have included. You might also want to think about whether Adam should have brought along some of the items that you included in your own suitcases.

Discussion

Key Questions, p. 1-15

1. Why does the narrator ride his bike if he has enough money to take the bus?
2. Why does the narrative change between points of view? Is the “I” on page 1 the same as the “he” on page 7? How do you know?
3. Why do you think the bike is so important to the narrator?
4. What is in Rutterburg? Why was the narrator in Monument?
5. What do you think the narrator’s parents were talking about in the memory?

Key Questions, p. 16-28

1. On page 12, Adam says that he doesn’t like animals because they’re not rational. Does Adam seem rational to you? Why or why not?
2. Do you think that Adam doubts Brint’s intentions in asking him questions about his past? Why or why not?
3. What does it mean when the author says that Adam was “curious about himself”?
4. Why does Adam sing “The Farmer and the Dell”? What does the song represent for him?

Key Questions, p. 29-43

1. On page 30 Adam says that he does not care if feeling better is only an illusion. What does this mean? Why do you think Adam says this?
2. What do you think scared Adam’s father in the woods?
3. Who is Amy Hertz? Why do you think Adam wants to talk to her so badly?
4. Why does Adam stop singing? What does this reveal about the power of the song?
5. Why does Adam feel that he needs to be cunning with the information that he gives out? Why does he feel that he needs to hide things? Does he trust Brint?

Key Questions, p. 43-56

1. Why do you think Adam is so attracted to Amy? Are they similar or different?
2. Why does Adam find it necessary to lie to Amy? Does he just want to impress Amy or does he have something to hide?
3. On page 55 Adam talks about winning and losing? What does Adam have to win or lose?

Key Questions, p. 57-67

1. What might make Adam suspicious? What is he suspicious about?
2. Why are there two different birth certificates? What do you think Adam’s father is hiding?
3. What does Adam’s reaction to his discovery of the birth certificates tell you? Does Adam trust his father? Do you think he should trust his father?

4. Are there any hints that Brint may have other motives than to help Adam? If so, where are those clues located in the text?
5. Predict what you think this novel is about. What do you think is Brint helping Adam to discover?

EXTEND

Write Write a short product from today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Key Paragraph, p. 10

"But he did know. He didn't want to confide the knowledge to the doctor, however. The doctor was a complete stranger and although he seemed sympathetic and friendly, he wasn't entirely comfortable with him. It should have been easy to tell him everything, all his doubts, to get it all off his chest, but he wasn't sure how to proceed. He wondered if he should tell him about the clues" (p. 10).

Writing Task

Write a paragraph arguing either for or against the narrator's use of a bike on his journey. If you were in his situation, would you use a different mode of transportation? Why or why not? Do you think he will make it all the way to Rutterburg on his bike? What does his choice to ride his bike tell you about his character?

Key Paragraph, p. 23-24

"He had stepped outside himself, departed, gone from this place and was outside looking in, watching himself and the doctor, if he was a doctor. He could be a doctor, he had a kindly face although sometimes his eyes were strange. The eyes stared at him occasionally as if the doctor—if that's what he was—were looking down the barrel of a gun, taking aim at him. He felt like a target. That's why he was glad that he could stand aside like this, step out of himself and look back and see the two of them there in the room. He was curious about himself, of course, but he really didn't want to look at himself and so he kept his eyes directed at his questioner, obliterating himself from the view. He hadn't realized he could be so clever, so cunning. And the thought, If I can step outside myself like this, maybe I can go to other places" (p. 23-24).

Writing Task

Write an argumentative paragraph in which you claim that Adam is either a victim of the doctor's severe questioning, or simply receiving help to work through his difficult past.

Why do you think Adam seems to have so many doubts and unanswered questions? Why does Adam seem to distrust Brint? Why does Adam seem curious about his own identity? Support your claim with evidence from the book.

Key Paragraph, p. 30

"He was wary again, on guard, distrustful. Yet he had no reason to distrust Brint, even though he was a stranger. Anyway, he was feeling much better, and he didn't even care if feeling better was only an illusion. Maybe he should tell Brint some of the clues. Not all, but some. He could do it because he felt good, in command. He could

parcel out information as if he were dealing cards, a little at a time. But he would have to be clever, cunning” (p. 30).

Writing Task

Pretend that you are one of Adam’s closest friends. A school bully has been spreading a rumor that Adam is lazy and unmotivated. **Write a letter to the bully that argues on Adam’s behalf, claiming that he is actually very motivated and determined. Describe what you think motivates Adam to keep pedaling, even though he is in pain and is completely exhausted? How do Adam’s family and friends help Adam to push on? Support your claims with evidence from the text.**

Key Paragraph, p. 54

“Adam was amazed at his ability to lie, the way his mind had been quick to invent a new set of circumstances for himself and his parents. But he wondered, why? Why is it necessary to lie?” (p. 54).

Writing Task

Write a paragraph arguing whether or not you feel that Adam’s amazing ability to lie is a good or bad trait to possess. When would that talent help you? When would it hurt you, and the ones you are lying to? Are ‘white lies,’ small untruths that ultimately cause little/no damage, bad? Support your claims with personal experience and evidence from the text.

Key Paragraph, p. 69

“Actually, there was a lot to tell but he didn’t want to speak anymore, he wanted only to say the minimum, to say the words that would satisfy Brint and then go back to his room, to rest and relax. He didn’t want to pick up the burden of remembering any longer. He wanted to coast awhile, float, not let it matter, drift. This is why he hated Brint sometimes. Because he interrupted the sweet drifting. With his questions. His incessant, never-ending questions” (p. 69).

Writing Task

Pretend you are Adam. **Write a paragraph arguing against remembering your past.** Why is it hard for you to remember? Why are you afraid of blankness? What does the blankness represent to you? Do you think that blankness is more terrifying or are the memories that fill that blankness more terrifying? Why or why not? Describe why the sweet drifting appeals to you.

Character Based Literacy Program Lesson Plan

I Am the Cheese, Week 2



PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.



Change Requires Effort Change is possible. Change requires three things; a vision, a plan and effort. It requires changing bad habits to good habits. It requires effort even when I don't feel like working. It requires taking one step at a time.

What are some cultural and historical factors that influence New England?

Is Carver, New Hampshire a real place?

Is Adam close to his parents?

Who is in charge of the witness protection program? Is it part of the government?

What is the witness protection program? What kind of people are part of the witness protection program?

Is Blount, New York a real place?

Word Wall Here are Vocabulary words to teach and add to the word wall

avidly	tormented	triumph	decrepit	imbedded
shroud	portrayal	inhabitant	resolute	decibels
withdraw	soothe	expel	appalled	bleak
enthralled	deception	devout	brooding	docile
detonation	repelled	amateurs	derelict	preceded

READ

Read Read the selection

Read p. 70-141

RESPOND

Timeline List 15-20 of the most important events on your Timeline.

Think about what you read today and begin your timeline

- First, *fix the facts*: who, what, when, where, why
- Then, decide on the most important events and begin your timeline with these.

Over the course of the next week you will be required to read a number of pages. It would be best if you spread the reading out over the next week and not try to do everything at the last minute before your next appointment.

Map Add to ongoing activities like a KWL chart or map: where did the characters go?

EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

Cubing Analysis

This week, you will create Cubing Analyses in order to understand the plot, characters, and structure of the novel. These activities will help gain a better understanding of the novel.

Materials:

- Cubing form 10c12 - Cubing Biography
- Cubing form 5c12 - Cubing the Structure of a Text
- The novel
- Pens, pencils

After completing today's readings, you will begin to work on a cubing biography for Adam. You should use evidence from the text to answer the questions in the six squares.

You will continue to work on a cubing biography for Adam. You should use evidence from the text to answer the questions in the six squares and then cut out the cube and assemble the cube correctly based on directions given in form 2c12.

You will begin to work on cubing the structure of *I Am the Cheese*. In order to cube the various points of view used in the novel, you may want to create multiple cubes. You should pay close attention to the text in order to complete cubes.

You should continue to work on their cubes for the structure of the novel. If you have completed cubes, you should cut out and assemble cubes using form 2c12.

You should finish your cubes for Adam Farmer and for the structure of the novel. You should cut out and assemble all of your cubes based on form 2c12.

Discussion

Key Questions, p. 70-81

1. Why hasn't Adam ever questioned his mother's weekly phone calls?
2. Adam's mother says she feels bad about what has happened. What does she mean?
3. What is Adam retreating from in his conversations with Brint? Why is he trying to retreat?
4. Why does Brint always use the word "suspend"? What does this word mean?

5. Why does Adam keep saying that he should have taken his pills? What might have been the effect of those pills? Why would Adam want to take the pills?

Key Questions, p. 82-96

1. Why do you think it is so hard for Adam to remember his past? Is it easy for you to remember your own past?
2. What causes Adam to lose the hope and courage that he felt after standing up to the bullies in the restaurant? What is sustaining him on his journey?
3. Who do you think Paul Delmonte is?
4. What do you think that it means that Adam describes the man as gray? How does that color make you feel? What are its connotations?
5. What do you think will happen next? What would happen if Adam were injured or if his bike is ruined?

Key Questions, p. 97-113

1. Why do you think Adam refuses to talk to Brint? Has something upset or offended him? If so, what do you think it was?
2. How does Adam describe Mr. Grey? Do you think that there is significance in that name? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think that Adam has become so dependent on Amy to “fill his life”?
4. Why do you think Adam doesn’t confront his parents sooner after he discovers the birth certificates?
5. How has your opinion of Adam changed from the beginning of the novel? How has he changed as a character?

Key Questions, p. 113-126

1. What does Adam’s mother mean when she say that they are “surviving, not living” on page 115? What is the difference?
2. Did Adam do the right thing in asking to hear the truth? Do you think he will be better or worse off? Why or why not?
3. Why is there a chapter break between the “everythings” on pages 118 and 119?
4. On page 120 Adam talks about trying to uncover things that are hidden. Is this what we are meant to do as readers? What do you think?
5. Who is Adam? Is he Adam Farmer or Paul Delmonte? Are they the same thing? Why or why not?

Key Questions, p. 125-141

1. Why does Adam “suddenly” feel like an alien in a world that he used to belong to?
2. Is giving up your identity the same as dying? Does the re-identification help or hurt the Farmers? How and why?
3. Why does Adam seem so concerned with vulnerability? Why does he dislike feeling vulnerable?
4. Why is Adam so disturbed by the man on the balcony?

EXTEND

Write Write a short product from today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Key Paragraph, p. 70-71

"Adam had accepted the explanation without question and the telephone hour became part of the fabric of the household. He figured that his mother had set aside this time of day to complete all her calls to friends (but what friends?), to relatives (they had no living relatives, his father had informed him with regret a long time ago), her committeewomen (his mother was too shy and withdrawn to be active in social or civic affairs). And yet the telephone hour had gone on for so long a time that Adam had never really questioned its purpose or reason" (p. 70-71).

Writing Task

Why hasn't Adam ever questioned his mother's weekly phone calls?

Write a paragraph arguing whether or not it is better to a) refrain from questioning the everyday patterns of life or b) question the things that have become mainstream or commonplace. What can the benefits/drawbacks of either choice be? Is it better to be ignorant and content, or to be informed and left questioning? What do you think will be the outcomes of Adam's search for the truth? Do you think he will gain peace with the information he seeks? Or will it only lead to more questions?

Key Paragraph, p. 88-89

"And I slam down the phone. I don't like to hang up on people but the troublemakers are drifting closer and I have to get out of there. I'm sorry, Amy. I can't even get a telephone number right. I don't deserve you.

The boys are coming closer, slowly but surely and menacingly, and I swing open the door of the booth and grab the bike. I run along beside the bike and then leap upon it. My feet engage the pedals and I pump away. I shoot through a red light and a car blows its horn at me but I am away, leaving Carver behind, leaving the troublemakers behind, but I don't feel brave anymore and my cheeks are wet even though it isn't raining" (p. 88-89).

Writing Task

Do you think that Adam's inability to reach Amy is affecting his attitude and performance on his journey? How would you feel if you were in his situation? **Write a paragraph arguing either for or against Adam's reliance on Amy to soothe/motivate him.** Is his devotion to her worth his reckless behavior on the bicycle?

Key Paragraph, p. 107

"It's possible that you went into retreat because you were getting close to remembering—and there will be pain in the remembering. You realize that, don't you? It's possible that the gray man represents the key and at the last moment you refused to use the key, afraid of what would be lurking beyond the door the key would open" (p. 107).

Writing Task

Why do you think Adam is afraid to remember his past? Are there things in his past that might be painful? Is it better to forget the painful things or to remember them? Why?

Write a paragraph arguing for the importance of memory. Do you think there is any value in trying to remember the past, even if those memories might be painful? What do memories teach us? How do memories shape who we are as people? Would you be a different person if you lost some of your memories? Without our memories, what would our world be like? Is remembering his past important for Adam if he wants to discover who he really is?

Key Paragraph, p. 117

“He knew that by asking the questions he was betraying himself, admitting that he had been spying and eavesdropping. He also knew, deeply and sadly, that there would be things in his life, in their lives, that he hadn’t known before. Maybe that’s why he had delayed the questions from the very beginning. Because he didn’t want things to change. But the questions had been asked now. And he opened his eyes to confront his father” (p. 117).

Writing Task

What does Adam’s mother mean when she say that they are “surviving, not living” on page 115? What is the difference?

Write an argumentative paragraph claiming whether or not Adam and his family are merely surviving or actually living after re-identification. Does living in constant fear make a whole and happy life? Should Adam’s mother be glad that they are at least surviving when their lives could be in danger? Do you think that Adam’s family will ever be able to feel as though they are living instead of just surviving? Why or why not?

Key Paragraph, p. 133

“‘We’re like puppets, you, your mother, and I,’ his father said. ‘As if we had no control over our lives. And now didn’t, of course. Others pulled the strings and we jumped. Sometimes, I think someone with a terrible sense of humor was toying with us. Look at the name they selected for you—Adam. Somebody’s whim, maybe. Adam: new birth, first man. I don’t know. Your mother and I felt helpless but the thought of that bomb and that phone call made me go along. And so we found ourselves in Monument, Massachusetts’” (p. 133).

Writing Task

Why do you think Adam is so protective of the package that he is carrying? Adam leaves the bike, but always makes sure to keep the package with him. What is in the package? Who is it meant for? What does the package represent to Adam? **Write a paragraph arguing either for or against the importance of Adam’s package.** Do you believe the contents of the package are as precious as Adam is making it seem? Why or why not? Do you have something that is special to you in the same way that the package is special to Adam? Is it natural to have an attachment to certain objects?

Character Based Literacy Program Lesson Plan

I Am the Cheese, Week 3



PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.



Change Requires Effort Change is possible. Change requires three things; a vision, a plan and effort. It requires changing bad habits to good habits. It requires effort even when I don't feel like working. It requires taking one step at a time.

Is Brint a doctor?

What is Mr. Grey's job?

How long does it take Adam to reach Belton Falls?

What is transcontinental telegraph and railroad?

What is Pony Express?

Why is the Rest-A-While motel abandoned?

Word Wall Here are Vocabulary words to teach and add to the word wall

predicament	marrow	probes	divulged	forged
alcove	relics	quizzically	muster	massacred
exhilaration	chasm	intimate	stifle	inevitability
seethes	obscene	burlesque	synchronized	subdued
elicit	priority	interrogation	encompassing	terminated

READ

Read Read the selection

Read p. 142-214

RESPOND

Timeline List 15-20 of the most important events on your Timeline.

Think about what you read today and begin your timeline

- First, *fix the facts*: who, what, when, where, why
- Then, decide on the most important events and begin your timeline with these.

Over the course of the next week you will be required to read a number of pages. It would be best if you spread the reading out over the next week and not try to do everything at the last minute before your next appointment.

Map Add to ongoing activities like a KWL chart or map: where did the characters go?

EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

Location Map

This activity will help you understand the details of the plot and of the characters of the novel.

You will plot Adam's journey using a map of the eastern United States and based on information from the text.

Materials:

- Map of the eastern United States
- Pens, pencils, markers, colored pencils
- The novel

After completing reading, you should make a list of the locations that Adam has visited throughout his journey. You should then use a map of the United States and find the locations where Adam has stopped along his journey.

You should continue to plot the locations that are important to Adam's journey. You should also begin to record important events and characters in each location.

After completing reading, you should continue to record information for each location. You should make sure to include important characters and their descriptions for each location.

You should continue to fill in descriptions of places and characters from each location along Adam's journey.

During this meeting, you should change/add information that you might have missed on your own maps. You can also change or add any information on the other projects that you have been working on over the three weeks of this novel.

Discussion

Key Questions, p. 142-157

1. How does Adam say Brint is looking at him? Do you think Adam should be suspicious of Brint? Why or why not?
2. Why does Adam feel as though he is dependent upon Brint? Do you think that this dependence is a good or bad thing for Adam?
3. Does Adam really know his parents? Does he really know himself? Why or why not?

4. Why are the “never knows” so troubling to Adam and his mother? How does this relate to Adam’s frustration with the blankness in his memory?
5. Why has life suddenly become sweet for Adam? Are there any good things that have come from this situation?
6. Why does Adam’s mother resent Mr. Grey? What does he represent to her?

Key Questions, p. 158-168

1. Why does Adam say that his mother is more defiant than his father? Why does this defiance make Adam happy?
2. On page 161, Adam says, “Even if danger didn’t exist, the possibility existed and this was maybe even worse.” What does this quote mean? Do you think that it is true?
3. Are you surprised that Adam was able to get his bike back? Did his behavior seem like his normal character? Why or why not?
4. Does Adam have a stronger relationship with his father or his mother? Why do you think so?

Key Questions, p. 168-183

1. How is Adam’s isolation from others different now than it was before?
2. Why does Adam question his ability to be intimate with anyone again?
3. Why does Brint want to make sure that Adam knows that he needs him?
4. Why does a part of Adam not want to uncover the truth?
5. Why is Adam so troubled by his father’s whispering in their own house?

Key Questions, p. 184-199

1. What does the hotel in Belton Falls represent for Adam?
2. Why does Adam envy the attendant at the service station? How is his life different from Adam’s?
3. If Amy hasn’t lived in Monument for three years, what is going on? How long has Adam been gone?
4. What do you think will happen to Adam and his family?
5. Why do you think Adam reacts so strongly when he finds out that Amy doesn’t live in Monument?

Key Questions, p. 199-214

1. What parts of the story are real? What parts are in Adam’s imagination? What does Adam’s journey represent?
2. Was the crash an accident, or did someone purposely target Adam’s family?
3. Why does the man in the gray pants say that Adam may be useful? Useful for what?
4. Why does Dr. Dupont call Adam Paul?
5. What happens in Tape OZK016?
6. What is going on in the end of the story? What has happened to Adam? What role do the people in the hospital play in Adam’s journey?
7. What is your reaction to the ending? Are you surprised? Or did you see this plot twist coming?

8. How has your perception of the novel changed from the beginning? Is this what you expected the novel to be about?

EXTEND

Write Write a short product from today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Key Paragraph, p. 157

"Suddenly, life became unbearably sweet to Adam. Funny, he had taken the events of his life for granted for a long time, the days and nights passing routinely as if they'd continue forever, but the threat to that life and the routines suddenly made every minute and hour precious. Food had never tasted so good before. He'd stop after school to buy a Mister Goodbar or a Three Musketeers and the candy was more delicious than it had ever been. He also loved his father and mother more and wanted to be with them. When they ate dinner together, he felt a sense of intimacy with them, as if he were more than just a son, more than someone who was told to make his bed and take out the rubbish. He was part of them. Somehow fear had forged love" (p. 157).

Writing Task

Write an argumentative paragraph about whether or not you agree with Adam's outlook on life: "but the threat to that life and the routines suddenly made every minute and hour precious." How can this sense of danger help you appreciate your life more? How can it lead to more stress? Present your claims, support your arguments with your own opinions, provide a counterargument, and finally conclude with a final presentation of your argument.

Key Paragraph, p. 159

"His mother was really the rebel. She often spoke resentfully, almost contemptuously, of Mr. Grey. 'I sometimes think we were too unquestioning, Adam, too naïve. Did your father really have to give up newspaper work? Weren't there any other alternatives?' Adam was delighted to see this defiance. He realized that his mother wasn't the compliant woman he had known before. Although she seldom smiled and sadness clung to her most of the time, she was capable of anger. And deception. One day, she studied Adam's face as if trying to make up her mind about something" (p. 159).

Writing Task

At this point in the book, we have received a lot of information about Adam's father and mother. Who do you think is a better role model for Adam, his mother or his father? What traits do they have that would make them a better role model?

Write a paragraph arguing in favor of who you think would be a better role model: Adam's father or mother. Do you have any role models in your own life? What traits should a good role model embody? Do either of Adam's parents have those traits?

Key Paragraph, p. 182

“His father’s voice was buoyant, eager—and Adam suddenly realized, with a chill, the truth. His father was playing the game, not trusting the walls, acting as if no phone call had been received from Mr. Grey. His face was still haggard and his eyes wary and haunted and the bright enthusiastic voice was a sharp contrast” (p. 182).

Writing Task

Do you think it is easier to hide from the truth or to seek the truth? Which is more beneficial? Do you think that Adam will benefit from seeking the truth, or will it only result in more pain and suffering?

Write a paragraph arguing whether or not Adam should seek the truth. Do you think it is better to tell the truth, even if there is a risk of hurting someone’s feelings?

Key Paragraph, p. 191-192

“Finally, I am across the street, the bike, the package, and me. The grass is soft beneath my feet and I think I have stopped screaming now because everything is quiet. I check my mouth and it’s still open but I am not screaming any longer. I push toward the cabin where my mother and father and I stayed, all together, nice that night, the three of us together. I place the bike carefully against the cabin. I look across the street at the gas station and the attendant is standing there looking at me. The Orphan Annie women is out of the car now and also looking. My mouth is still open and maybe I’m still screaming” (p. 191-192).

Writing Task

Do you think that the three different types of narratives are effective in telling the story? Why or why not? Do you think that Cormier could have told the story better if he used a different structure or did you like the structure that he used?

Write an argumentative paragraph about the structure of the novel. Do you think that the author’s style was effective in communicating what Adam is going through? If not, how could it have been more effective? Support your claims with relevant details and examples from the text.

Key Paragraph, p. 204

“I look for a telephone booth, but I don’t see any. I’m not sure why I want to find a phone booth; in fact, the thought of a phone booth makes me sad. I don’t know why it makes me sad but it does. It opens up a loneliness in me, like a hole, a deep, dark hole. The hole is threatening somehow; if it gets too big it could swallow me up, so I try not to think about it. The medicine always helps me not to think about it” (p. 204).

Writing Task

Why does Adam say, “I am the cheese”? What does this represent? If the song is so important to Adam’s family, what does it mean that Adam is the cheese? Why don’t we hear the whole song until the end of the story? Do you think that Adam is justified in saying that he is the cheese? **Write a paragraph arguing whether or not you believe Adam is correct in claiming that he is the cheese. Support your argument with evidence from the text and also provide your own opinion of Adam’s choice.**

Character Based Literacy Program Lesson Plan

I Am the Cheese,

Final Writing Prompt



Change Requires Effort Change is possible. Change requires three things; a vision, a plan and effort. It requires changing bad habits to good habits. It requires effort even when I don't feel like working. It requires taking one step at a time.

Writing Prompt

Now that you have read the entire novel, completed a map of the story, and analyzed the main characters and themes of the novel, it is time to form your own opinion of Cormier's story.

Do you agree that this novel is a crime novel? Why or why not? If so, what techniques are present in this novel to help keep the tone mysterious? If not, how could Cormier have presented the facts differently? How has your opinion of the novel and the main characters changed as you have read the story?

Write a 5 paragraph essay in which you:

- a) Define what a 'crime novel' is
- b) Claim whether or not you believe the novel can be classified as a crime novel
- c) Present evidence from the text to further your argument
- d) Include a counter-argument and
- e) Conclude your essay with a statement that follows from and supports the arguments you have presented.