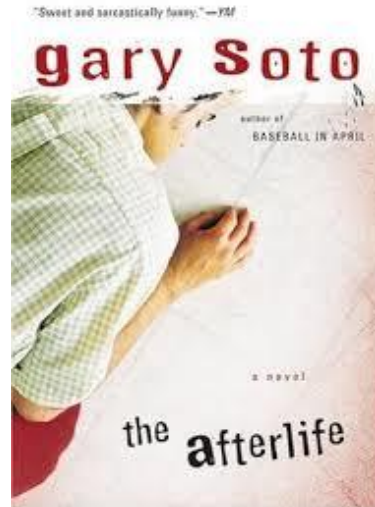


The Afterlife



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Author Soto, Gary

Publisher HMH Books for Young Readers; 1 edition

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Genre Speculative fiction

Synopsis After his murder in the opening chapter, teenaged Chuy tells the story of what it is like for him to be dead, what he observes among the living in his former Fresno neighborhood, and how he alters his ethical choices from those he made while living.

Themes Life after death

Protagonist Male

Note Over the years, these books have been published in multiple editions. The page numbers in your book may be different than the ones on the lesson plan.

More Information www.scu.edu/character



Character Based Literacy Program

Independent Study Lesson Plan

The Afterlife, 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.

The following is a three-week unit based on the novel, *The Afterlife*, written by Gary Soto. Gary Soto was born in Fresno, California (the setting for *The Afterlife*) in 1952. Both of Soto's parents were American born, but their Mexican heritage remained an important part of their home.

The Afterlife's protagonist is Chuy, a young Mexican-American, who is murdered within the first four pages of the novel. He spends the novel observing his friends and family as they learn of and mourn his death, and how differently they react to the loss. He faces the consequences of his actions, follows his murderer, and tries to say good-bye to his loved ones. He meets a few other ghosts and may have even found true love! Chuy's life seems to begin after he dies, but can he hold on to it all, as his ghostly body slowly disappears?

The Afterlife is written from Chuy's perspective, and it is his thoughtful reflections on his experiences that highlight Soto's writing. Chuy's interior monologues shed light onto his emotions and choices.

At the end of the unit, you will be asked to write an autobiographical piece. The lesson contains several suggestions for opening and visual activities. Also laid out are the daily readings, writing mini-lesson, key question(s), key paragraph, and daily prompt. You will need a copy of *The Afterlife* and writing journal/notebook.

At the end of the book, the Spanish/English translations are supplied for you. At the end of the lesson, you will find the final assignment.

What is the *afterlife*?

Where is Fresno, California?

What is the Good Samaritan law?

What do these Spanish words mean?

- rancheras
- borrachos
- papi
- mi'jo
- hijole
- mi carnal
- churros
- cabron
- panaderia
- nalgas
- ese
- menudo
- quegacho
- queasco
- chones
- tonto

What is loneliness?

Word Wall Here are vocabulary words to add to the Word Wall.

pomegranate – 2	suave – 7	carnal – 8	quiver – 8	primo -10
transformation – 10	crocheted – 11	lament – 14	guilt – 14	bishop - 17
ambitious - 24	hunkered -22	sorrowful - 24	pronouncement – 26	pout - 24
deflated -28	intrigue – 33	nonexistent – 33	instinctively – 36	corroded - 37
mimicked – 42	massacre – 42	foe – 42	ventured – 43	skyward - 43

READ

Review Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

Start at the beginning and review the story so far

- mention the setting and main character
- point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

Read Read the selection.

Read pp. 1-48

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important on the 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 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

Change Poster:

Create a Change Requires Effort Chart. This can be a live, online document or an ongoing physical chart you add to over the course of the book.

- Label one column “Changes” and the other side “Effort”.
- During this unit, you should highlight significant changes in the novel and bullet point these changes on the “Changes” column.
- For all of the items in the “Changes” column, describe the effort that was made to create that change. Write the effort in the “Effort” column.
- Keep in mind some of the themes of the novel: life, death, love, forgiveness, grieving, etc.

EXPLORE

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

One possible activity: This is an on-going activity that allows you to explore the types of figurative language used by Soto in his writing. The suggested activity will be repeated frequently during the entire unit.

Note: Objectives of the suggested activity:

- Have an opportunity to explore language that communicates ideas beyond the literal meaning of the words (figurative language).
- Identify the types of figurative language: simile, metaphor, imagery, alliteration, assonance, and repetition.

Introduction: You will find one example of figurative language in today’s reading. You will keep track of the quotation on a sheet of paper or in a notebook, identify the page number where it can be found, state the type of figurative language, what is being compared or what particular image is conveyed (this will be at least two sentences). The following template (example provided) can be used:

Quotation	Type	Comparison/or Image	Meaning
“Angel was my friend on the dance floor, circling like a shark and resembling a shark- he had pointed teeth and hair that stood up like a fin.” Pg 8	Simile	A young man on the dance floor to a predatory fish	A young man has physical features like a shark. He chases the girls as if he were hunting for prey.

Background Knowledge: **Direct Instruction**

• you will need to know or be instructed on the following types of figurative language:

1. Simile = comparison of two unlike things (using like or as)
2. Metaphor = comparison of two unlike things – something is something else
3. Imagery = collection of images
4. Alliteration = repetition of initial consonant sound
5. Assonance: repetition of vowel sounds within words
6. Repetition = repetition of idea, sound, or phrase

Materials:

- Notebook and pen
- *The Afterlife* book

One possible activity:

Descriptive language leaves: you will use rubbings of leaves to record and display the author's descriptive language. *The Afterlife* takes place in the fall and therefore leaves are mentioned many times in Soto's description of the scenes. The leaf rubbings can be used to create a border around the timeline, adding themed décor and putting descriptive writing in an easy to see location, which will help to reinforce the concept of "show, don't tell." You will likely be interested in Soto's many descriptions of blood and other red objects.

Objectives: You will identify descriptive language within the text.

Materials: leaves, crayons in fall colors (yellow, red, orange, brown), plain white copy/printer paper

Directions:

- 1) Place a leaf under a sheet of paper, and rub it with the side, not tip of the crayon. This will leave an imprint of the leaf. You should make several leaves and either tear roughly around their shape or cut them out.
- 2) You should search the text read so far for examples of descriptive language and write one example on each leaf, using a black crayon or marker. You are looking for words and phrases that are examples of "show, don't tell." The leaves can be displayed as the border around the time line.
- 3) Examples you may find: The author describes blood and other red things in many ways. Pomegranate juice, gashes that resembled gills of a fish gasping for air, moon...dented as a hubcap

Another Possible Activity: Discussion Questions

What are the facts?

Literal Questions

Who
What
When

Where How Why
How is the text structured? Structural Questions Setting (when, where, weather) Characters Characterization (description, does, says, are said about) Plot (problem, barriers, resolution) Conflict (nature, self, society, others) Tone (attitude) Mood (atmosphere)
What are the major ideas in the text? Idea Questions Theme Who learns what Value Thoughts
How does the author do what he/she does in the text? Craft Questions Style Effects Writing
How is this work like/unlike other works by this author? Author Questions Text & Context History Impression
How is this work like/ unlike other texts you have read? Literature Questions Analysis Synthesis Basis for comparisons: Element
How does text relate to your life? Life Questions Life questions, problems, decisions Age & development The world vs Your world
What do you think of this text? Evaluate Questions Impression Preference Value Continuity Clarification Conflict Culture Counter-culture
What do you think will happen next? Inference Questions Predictions Tentative conclusions Partial information Anticipation Creating a sense

One possible activity:

Create a postcard: On one side draw the scene of Chuy visiting Angel. On the other side, pretend you are Chuy and write a letter to Angel telling him about your “life” as a ghost. What would you want him to know to help ease his misery?

Another possible activity:

Portrait: Create an Open Mind Portrait of Chuy.

Materials:

- large piece of stiff paper for each character, like 11x17 oak tag
- paper for bubbles with scissors and glue sticks
- markers, crayons, pens, pencils, or paint
- construction or tissue paper, scissors and glue sticks if desired

Step One: create a large head shot of the character

1. Imagine what you think the character looks like from the descriptions in the text as well as your imagination. You can make a list of these details to help you draw the character, if you wish.
2. Decide how much of the character you wish to show: just the head and face? from the shoulders up? from the waist up? the whole person? You might want to include at least the shoulders to include some clothing details. You might want to show the size differences between characters.
3. Draw the characters head shot including the face on the large piece of paper. You could also cut the paper to form the head.
4. Illustrate your portrait with colors, construction paper or whatever will make the character colorful.

Step Two: place cartoon bubbles of character thoughts around the portrait

1. Cut cartoon bubbles out.
2. Write things the character thinks, or says to himself, on each bubble.
3. Put the bubbles up around the portrait.

Step Three: add bubbles as you learn new things about the character

1. Read the story further and identify new things you have learned about the character, or ways the character has changed.
2. Follow step 2 to create and place additional bubbles.

Variations of this Open Mind Portrait

1. You can use this process for any character in the story
2. You can use bubbles for what the character says, says to himself or herself, or does. You could make each of these different colors if you wish.
3. You could add bubbles for what the character learns, or ways the character changes, and use different colors for each.
4. You could use different colors for the beginning, middle and end of the story. Remember in the beginning you are introduced to the setting, the characters and the problems they have. In the middle you learn about the roadblocks to the characters solving their problems, and conflicts occur. In the end of the story those conflicts reach a peak and then resolve with a resolution of the character's problems.
5. You could use different colors for the phases you see in a story or the development of a particular character.

6. Instead of using bubbles you could write the bubble contents on the back of the portrait. You could use any of the variations above with color or print, or create columns or boxes for different categories or phases.
7. You could literally open the head like a hinge and list the contents [as though they were escaping from the space] using any of these variations.
8. You could make an Open Mind Portrait of yourself using any of the above variations.

Variations for Writing

9. You could use the OMP to help write a character sketch, or to help decide what a character might do in a story.

One possible activity:

Create a postcard: On one side draw the scene of Chuy visiting Rachel. On the other side, pretend you are Chuy and write a letter to Rachel telling her about your “life” as a ghost. What would you want her to know to help ease her misery?

Another possible activity:

1g6 setting chart

Fill out the Setting Chart

1. Describe the place where the story takes place in the where box on the chart. This includes the location, geography, scenery and other details about the place.
2. Describe the time period in which the story is taking place in the when box on the chart. Is this a contemporary story, or does it take place in the past or the future? Give details about this past or future time if this is the case.
3. Describe the time of day or day of the week the story begins in the time box on the chart. This box is important if the story of the part you are analyzing takes place in a short period of time.
4. Describe the weather in the weather box of the chart. Is it sunny, stormy, snowing, all of the above, none of the above? Sometimes the weather matters, sometimes not. Sometimes it is critical.

Discussion

Key Questions (pp. 1-10)

1. Why was Chuy primping in the bathroom mirror?
2. What was he really looking forward to that evening?
3. What was Chuy’s intent behind his comment to the guy with the yellow shoes?
4. Why do you suppose the guy with the yellow shoes killed him?
5. Do you think the guy killed Chuy over the comment or do you think it was something else?

6. What was Chuy really disappointed about missing, now that he was dead?
7. What was Chuy's real name?
8. Where was Chuy from? Where did he live?
9. How can the story continue if Chuy is already dead?
10. Describe what happened to Chuy's spirit.

Key Questions (pp. 10-18)

1. Describe Chuy's emotions towards his death.
2. How would you feel if you were Chuy?
3. How does Chuy make his friend and uncle feel his presence?
4. Why do you think he chose these two people?
5. What do you suppose it is like for Angel and Uncle Richard to feel Chuy's presence?
6. Why does Angel feel guilty?
7. Describe Chuy's new abilities.
8. What do you think are the benefits?
9. What do you suppose are the drawbacks?
10. How is Chuy's transition into the afterlife a metaphor for other life transitions?

Key Questions (pp. 18-27)

1. What does Chuy do to help a cholo get out of police harassment?
2. Did Chuy do the right thing by helping the cholo escape the husky cop?
3. How does Chuy penetrate a solid object?
4. Why would Chuy want to send a chill through the living?
5. What purpose would scarring the living do for Chuy?
6. Describe how Chuy helps the police.
7. Do you think it is the right thing for him to intervene?
8. What would you have done if you were the cop that was called to settle the marriage argument?
9. What is a good solution to their problem?
10. How does Chuy show change in today's reading?

Key Questions (pp. 27-42)

1. Who is Angel?
2. What would you say to Angel, if you were Chuy?
3. How does Chuy ground himself?
4. How might Chuy's lack of control make his afterlife difficult?
5. Who is Fausto?
6. How do Fausto and Yellow Shoes know each other?
7. What might yellow shoes signify?
8. Explain the irony of the actual name of Yellow Shoes.
9. In the last section, page 27, Chuy notices a rubber knife "could bring down a child in a pretend death. Kids practicing for the future." Who else in the story had some childhood practice for their future?
10. What experiences in your life have influenced where you are or would like to be?

Key Questions (pp. 42-48)

1. Who is Rachel?
2. Why do you think Chuy visits Rachel?
3. Why do you think Chuy is lonely?
4. Do you think Chuy will feel lonely for the entirety of his afterlife?
5. What other emotions has he been dealing with as he visits his friends and family?
6. How do you think Chuy feels watching his family and friends mourn over him?
7. Why is Chuy's foot disappearing?
8. Do you think Chuy will
9. How has Chuy showed change during today's reading?
10. What do you predict will happen next?

EXTEND

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

Key Paragraph

As I rose out of my body, I realized the pain was gone. But so was my last year in high school. So was the fall dance, my time with Rachel, who was not yet *mi novia*- my girl - but might have been if I could have brought her into my arms and convinced her that I was one marvelous thing. That evening I would have had every chance. After all, I had borrowed my uncle Richard's Honda, which was tricked-out and lowered like a cat, with ten-inch speakers in the panels and clear lights that cut a path on the dark streets. My uncle, only seven years older than me, was a true guy - he had filled up the gas tank for me, vacuumed the floor mats, and run a rag over the dash. He had even replaced the air freshener, a tiny cardboard tree that swayed under the dash when later I took a sharp corner, tires chirping. The wind of those turns helped scent the air with pine.

Writing Prompt

The night was full of promise for a young man. He had a sweet ride, or at least better than his own bike, a good friend, and plans to meet up with a girl. He was *Senior GQ*. Chuy's plans were thwarted by a thug with a knife, who killed him in the bathroom. He was upset about all the things he would miss out on, because there would be no future for him.

Have you even been excited or looking forward to something special (like going somewhere special, a gift, or time with someone), only to have it ruined or not happen? How did you handle it at the time?

Write an argumentative paragraph explaining how to deal with disappointing and unanticipated events. Using your personal example, include three ideas to convince your reader how you best to deal with unexpected circumstances (or how you should have dealt with the disappointing events).

1. Do you think there are ghosts/spirits wandering among us?
2. What do you think happens after death?
3. What type of afterlife do you believe in (reincarnation, heaven/hell, purgatory, etc.)?

Key Paragraph

At my parents' house, there would be others to lament my death at such a young age. Angel, *mi carnal*, would be there, with the cement bags of guilt on his shoulders. *I should have been with him*, he would argue with himself. We could have took the dude! "He would be alive," he would cry, and I would cry in return, "*Chale*, we would both be dead!" In the three fights that I've seen Angel in, he had lost them all. The guy was just a chubby, peace-loving dude.

Writing Prompt

Angel feels terribly guilty for his best friend's death. He feels that he is somehow responsible, because he wasn't there to help defend Chuy. His guilt didn't come from committing a wrong, rather from not preventing one. Guilt can influence people's choices of how they respond and deal with the loss; whether or not they make responsible choices.

When you felt guilty or regretful, either because you truly had committed a wrongdoing or because you hadn't done anything about a situation? Write an argumentative letter to convince those hurt by your wrongdoings to forgive you. Include three reasons why they should forgive you. End your letter with one paragraph of an apology.

1. What would you do if you were able to fly and be invisible?
2. Who would you visit first if you were Chuy?

Key Paragraph

I howled my ghostly breath on the newspaper, and the bits of dirt arranged themselves like a beard on my photo. I was dead, I realized, but I could still have my say. I had influence. For all I cared, the no-good husband was going to get religion, or at least the dishes were going to get done without his old lady getting on his case.

Writing Prompt

With his presence, Chuy helps a lazy husband get motivated to do the dishes and clean up a broken plant. This probably satisfied the wife, at least temporarily.

Write a paragraph about a time when you had a good solution to a problem. Write an argumentative paragraph that proves it was a good solution. Provide three reasons on why your solution was a suitable solution to the problem. Consider the following questions in your paragraph:

- Tell about the problem, who was involved?
- What was your solution?
- How did the whole situation turned out in the end?
 1. Would you intervene in other people's struggles if you were Chuy?
 2. How do you help people today, while you are living?

Key Paragraph

I stepped back. I had so much to tell him, my bro since the first grade. But I had no voice other than the icy chill of my breath. I had no other way to reach him than the vague feeling of touch. But he was aware that I stood in front of him.

Writing Prompt

When someone you care about passes away, or moves, it can be very difficult to say goodbye, to say everything you want to communicate about how much you will miss him/her, the magnitude of the influence he/she has had on your life.

Write an argumentative letter to persuade a family member or friend not to move. Include three reasons why they should stay and at least one reason why they shouldn't move.

Consider the following questions:

- Describe your relationship to this person.
 - Why are they moving?
 - How will their life and your life change after the move?
1. What would you say to your best friend if your spirit was before him/her?
 2. What would you say to your family if your spirit was before them?

Key Paragraph

"Rachel," I said in a pleading voice. I wanted her as my girl. My loneliness was as deep as that mirror. What could I do but feel self-pity because the one life I had was gone?

Writing Prompt

Seeing Rachel is the first time that Chuy feels loneliness and regret about his life ending. Do you think money, food, or drugs can cure loneliness? Write an argumentative paragraph defending your position. Include your opinion on what can cure loneliness. Provide three reasons to support your position.

1. What do you do when you feel lonely?
2. How can you help others not feel lonely?

Character Based Literacy Program

Independent Study Lesson Plan

The Afterlife, 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 the different types of cemeteries?

What is the history behind the song, *Taps*?

What is the difference between revenge and avenge?

How do you talk to someone who is thinking about suicide?

What is the meaning behind the song, "*It's a Small World*"?

Word Wall Here are vocabulary words to add to the Word Wall.

strides - 52	brooded – 50	confessed – 52,53	repent – 52	cringed - 57
exhibition – 61	meager – 62	spectator - 65	possessed - 61	envisioned
crave – 74	squint – 78	churning – 81	hideous – 82	dilapidated - 82
grimaced – 84	gazelles – 87	horizon - 84	eucalyptus – 89, 90	holler - 84
afterlife – 92	hovered – 91	thrashing - 92	outburst – 95	gawked - 99

READ

Review Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

Start at the beginning and review the story so far

- mention the setting and main character
- point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

Read Read the selection.

Read 49-99

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important on the 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 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

Change Poster:

Create a Change Requires Effort Chart. This can be a live, online document (Google Document or Google Spreadsheet) or a physical document that you add to over time.

- Label one column “Changes” and the other side “Effort”.
- During this unit, highlight significant changes in the novel and bullet point these changes on the “Changes” column.
- For all of the items in the “Changes” column, describe the effort that was made to create that change. Write the effort in the “Effort” column.
- Keep in mind some of the themes of the novel: life, death, love, forgiveness, grieving, etc.

EXPLORE

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

One possible activity:

Open Mind Portrait: Make an Open Mind Portrait of Chuy’s grandfather. Use pictures, words, and symbols to show how Chuy feels now about stealing the pennies and lighter from his grandfather. Use pictures, words, and symbols to show what you think the grandfather’s response to the confession would be.

Another possible activity:

4g6 character profile chart

Fill out the Character Profile Chart on Chuy.

1. Write Chuy in the box in the middle of the chart.

2. Think of 4 characteristics or traits that Chuy has. Describe each with a key word or phrase and write it down one of the 4 boxes that surround the name.
3. For each trait, find 2 concrete examples of it in the story. Write each in one of the 2 boxes attached to each trait box. Continue this until you have 2 examples for each of the 4 traits.

One possible activity:

This is an on-going activity that allows you to explore the types of figurative language used by Soto in his writing. The suggested activity will be repeated frequently during the entire unit.

Note: Objectives of the suggested activity:

- allows you an opportunity to explore language that communicates ideas beyond the literal meaning of the words (figurative language).
- you will identify the types of figurative language of simile, metaphor, imagery, alliteration, assonance, and repetition.

Introduction: Find one example of figurative language in today's reading. You will keep track of the quotation on a sheet of paper or in a notebook, identify the page number where it can be found, state the type of figurative language, what is being compared or what particular image is conveyed (this will be at least two sentences). The following template (example provided) can be used:

Quotation	Type	Comparison/or Image	Meaning
"Angel was my friend on the dance floor, circling like a shark and resembling a shark- he had pointed teeth and hair that stood up like a fin." Pg 8	Simile	A young man on the dance floor to a predatory fish	A young man has physical features like a shark. He chases the girls as if he were hunting for prey.

Materials:

- Notebook and pen
- *The Afterlife* book

Another possible activity:

Fill out the Character Interaction Chart for Chuy, Yellow Shoes and Eddie.

1. Choose 3 characters you have profiled and wish to analyze. Fill the name of each character in one of the 3 boxes.
2. Each character box has another character box on each side. On the side of the first character box near the second character box, write down what the first character thinks about the second character, and

how the first character interacts or gets along with, the second character.

3. Then do the same thing for how the second character thinks about and interacts with the first, in the second characters box.
4. Continue doing this until you have filled out each box: the second for the third, the third for the second, the third for the first and the first for the third.

One possible activity:

Descriptive language leaves: you will use rubbings of leaves to record and display the author's descriptive language. *The Afterlife* takes place in the fall and therefore leaves are mentioned many times in Soto's description of the scenes. The leaf rubbings can be used to create a border around the timeline, adding themed décor and putting descriptive writing in an easy to see location, which will help to reinforce the concept of "show, don't tell." You will likely be interested in Soto's many descriptions of blood and other red objects.

Objectives: You will identify descriptive language within the text.

Materials: leaves, crayons in fall colors (yellow, red, orange, brown), plain white copy/printer paper

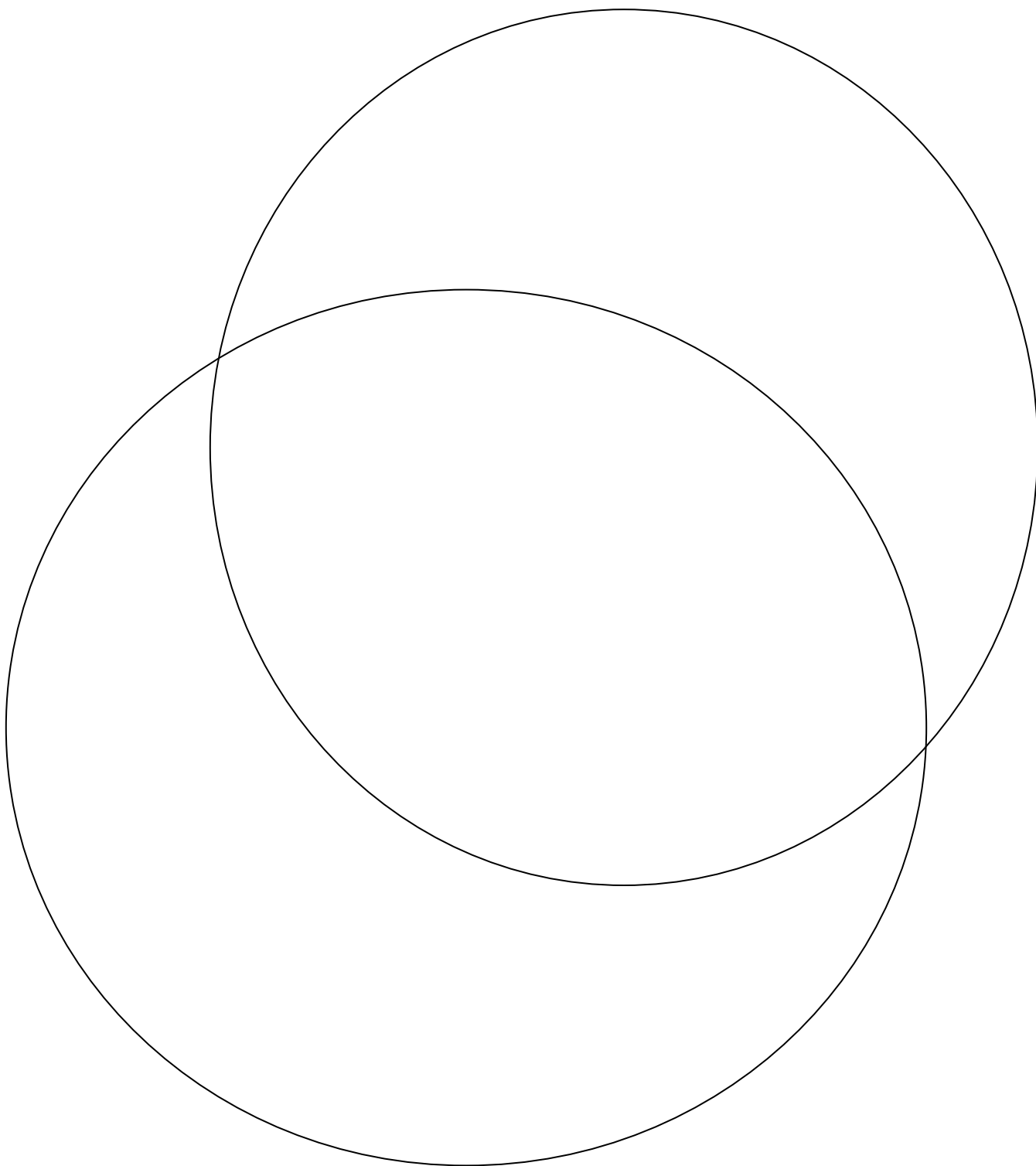
Directions:

1. Place a leaf under a sheet of paper, and rub it with the side, not tip of the crayon. This will leave an imprint of the leaf. You should make several leaves and either tear roughly around their shape or cut them out.
2. You should search the text read so far for examples of descriptive language and write one example on each leaf, using a black crayon or marker. They are looking for words and phrases that are examples of "show, don't tell." The leaves can be displayed as the border around the time line.

Examples you may find: The author describes blood and other red things in many ways. Pomegranate juice, gashes that resembled gills of a fish gasping for air, moon...dented as a hubcap

Another possible activity:

6g6 Venn Diagram Chart to compare and contrast life and the afterlife.



One possible activity:

Character Trait Suitcase: You will create a suitcase out of a card. The cover will look like a suitcase. The inside of the suitcase will contain character traits you would like to have in the afterlife. On the backside, you will explain

how you plan to develop some of the traits you don't have. This activity will begin today and will be completed on day 15.

Objectives:

- You will reflect on your own good qualities
- You will consider where you could use some growth in terms of personality and characteristics and make an action plan for how you can develop these skills.

Introduction:

Day One: Fold a sheet of paper in half, horizontally. On the outside cover, draw a suitcase, so that it fills nearly the entire cover. Decorate it with pictures of places you have been to or would like to visit, e.g. Eiffel Tower, Winchester Mystery House, the beach. On the inside of the suitcase, begin a list of character traits that you would like to have to take with you into your own afterlife. Would you like to be honest? Responsible? Thoughtful? Generous? Punctual?

Day Two: Finish adding traits to the inside of the card. Choose two or three traits from your list, which you would like to improve on. Write a sentence or two about each of those traits detailing how you intend to develop or perfect each of the character traits

Materials:

- paper or oak tag
- crayons, markers
- construction paper
- paste or glue stick
- pencil

Discussion

Key Questions (pp. 49-60)

1. What does Chuy do at the cemetery?
2. What else might Chuy feel guilty about?
3. Why did Chuy steal?
4. Would you consider this event a big deal?
5. Describe how Chuy's family was preparing for his funeral.
6. What is Chuy's family doing with medals and newspaper clippings?
7. What does Chuy's mother try to convince Eddie to do?
8. How is Chuy's mother grieving?
9. What is the purpose of revenge?
10. Do you think Eddie made the right decision? Why or why not?
11. What is the difference between *confess* and *repent*?

Key Questions (pp. 60-73)

1. Why does Chuy visit his high school?

2. How was Chuy's high school mourned his death?
3. How do you think this makes Chuy feel?
4. How do you think his high school friends and teachers remember Chuy?
5. What do you suppose high school had been like for Chuy?
6. Describe the behavior of another guy wearing yellow shoes?
7. Why does he keep seeing guys in yellow shoes?
8. Describe Chuy's memory of him and Eddie.
9. What was on Eddie's doorstep?
10. Who do you think put it there?
11. What do you think it means?
12. How would you respond if you were Eddie?
13. Have you ever felt the self-pity that Chuy did? That notion of "why me?"

Key Questions (pp. 73-84)

1. Why do you think Chuy's mother wants revenge?
2. Why do you think Chuy's mother is unwilling to do it herself?
3. Why do you think Eddie is unwilling?
4. Who is Crystal?
5. What does Chuy teach her?
6. What does it mean to have someone trust you?
7. Why do you think Chuy wanted Crystal to trust him? What would that look like?
8. Why do you suppose he even cared what she thought of him?
9. What did Chuy and Crystal do to Fausto's house?
10. Did Chuy do the right thing to Fausto's house, knowing full well that the bikes would be "restolen" by neighborhood kids?

Key Questions (pp. 84-91)

1. How did Crystal commit suicide?
2. What do you think Crystal's life was like? at home? at high school?
3. What reason could Crystal possibly have for committing suicide?
4. What advice would you give Crystal if you could have met her before her suicide?
5. What do Chuy and Crystal see in the park?
6. Do you think Chuy would have helped the homeless man if Chuy was still alive?
7. Why did Chuy want to help the homeless man?
8. Was there a reward for helping him?
9. Would it help him earn Crystal's trust?
10. Do you think he would feel good about himself because he helped a fellow human? Or is this only a quality human beings have?

Key Questions (pp. 91-99)

1. Describe what Chuy and Crystal find in her car?
2. Why do you think her body has not been discovered yet?
3. How do you think this makes Crystal feel?
4. When did Chuy and Crystal first meet?

5. What has changed since the first met?
6. How were their lives similar and different?
7. Describe the changes happening to Chuy's body?
8. What does the phrase, "Don't burn bridges behind you," mean?
9. Chuy and Crystal save a homeless man from dying of a fever. They took care of him. Have you ever been someone's caretaker or helped someone out of a serious situation?
10. What did that feel like after helping someone in need?

EXTEND

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

Key Paragraph

Grandpa, I'm the one, I confessed in my heart. You know-the lighter, the pennies.

Writing Prompt

Chuy feels guilt or remorse for having stolen the lighter and pennies from his grandfather, even after all these years. He knows he was naughty and shouldn't have stolen them. Chuy offers a sincere apology to his grandfather's grave.

Pretend you are Chuy. Write an argumentative letter to prove to your grandfather that you are sorry for stealing from him. Include three reasons why you were sorry and what you do next time if you had a second change. End your letter with a sincere apology.

1. What do you think is happening to Chuy's ghostly body?
2. What do you think will happen when it is all gone?

Key Paragraph

The kid from my childhood played beautifully. I felt terrible that I couldn't go back in time and try to beat up the bully for him. We could have done it together.

Writing Prompt

Chuy, when he sees the trumpet player at the basketball game who plays taps, wishes that he had helped the kid stand up to a bully. He surmises that, together, they could have taken the bully (although, beating him up, may not have been the most responsible choice). Write about an event in your life when you should have taken action. Did you act, even if it was difficult? Or did you not act, like Chuy?

Write an argumentative letter to persuade your *past* self to act. Provide three convincing reasons explain why you should take the most responsible action.

Consider the following when writing your letter:

- Tell about the circumstances of the event, and what the problem was.
 - Tell what actions you took and what obstacles you faced.
 - What would have been the most responsible action in that situation?
 - Provide three reasons why you chose (or should have chosen) the most responsible action.
1. Did you ever have someone stand up for you when you were being teased or picked on?

2. What do you think you will be remembered for?

Key Paragraph

"Don't be scared," I said in a slow, deliberate manner. I wanted to be understood, trusted.

Writing Prompt

Chuy wanted Crystal to trust him and feel safe with him. He tried to impress her with letting the car drive through him. He tried to be confident, so she would be secure. Another person's trust must be earned. It may or may not come easily, but if broken, takes a long time to mend.

Write about a time when you wanted to be trusted, either by a person (or animal). How did you show and prove your trustworthiness? In an argumentative paragraph, explain how you prove to be trustworthy. Include three ways in which you showed that you were trustworthy. How did the other person respond? Did they eventually trust you?

1. Who do you trust?
2. Do you think you are trustworthy? Why or why not?
3. How can you be more reliable?

Key Paragraph

I stepped back, scared. His ghost was starting to peel away from his body. It started to rise, but I quickly got down on my knees and applied my stumps to cool the man's fever. *Don't die*, I begged. *Please don't die*. I touched his face with my stumps, pulled them away, and applied them again.

Writing Prompt

Chuy came across a sick and dying homeless man in the park, who may not have showered in a long time. Yet, he tried to help the sick man's fever, by sticking the ghostly chill of his stumps (arms) in the man's chest. Chuy tried to help a total stranger. There was no reward or prize for this act. He just did it. Or maybe he did have a reward: the admiration, respect, or love of a girl he wanted to trust him. Or was the act of helping the homeless man its own reward?

In an argumentative paragraph, explain why you think Chuy helped the homeless man. Describe what truly motivated his actions. Provide three reasons to support your position.

1. Describe a time when you helped someone in need.
2. Were you rewarded? Did you do it for the reward?

Key Paragraph

I remember Dad saying that life is a journey that ends in the same place where you begin. He was philosophizing after the Raiders lost a playoff game-the attempted field goal that would have put the team up by one point hit the uprights and bounced left, also bouncing the air out of every Raider fan from Oakland to Los Angeles....

Writing Prompt

Chuy met up with Crystal, as ghosts. But he soon realizes that he had met her, many years ago, when he worked on her family's farm. Of all the farms in Fresno, it had to be hers. What a small world. Chuy's dad says that life brings you back to the same place. What does that mean?

Write an argumentative paragraph **explaining** how the world is a small place. Provide a "small world experience" where you met up with someone from your past or had an interesting connection to another person. What was the connection and how did you discover it?

1. Describe a time when you burned a bridge?
2. What could you have done to prevent it from happening?

Character Based Literacy Program

Independent Study Lesson Plan

The Afterlife, 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.

What is envy?

What is irony?

What does it mean to be a “little fish”?

What does it mean to be homeless?

What is a rosary funeral?

How are some deathbed wishes granted?

What is “*The Inferno*” by Dante?

Word Wall Here are vocabulary words to add to the Word Wall.

manufactured – 101	somber – 103	squawk - 103	envy – 107	battered - 108
pivoted – 116	insulted - 122	envisioned – 119	discreet – 120	bellowed - 123
bawled - 124	mayhem – 125	rosary – 129	segregated – 131	self-pity - 131
festered – 136	gaffed – 137	culprit – 142	injustice -142	giddy - 143
spooked - 147	beckoning - 152	unwittingly – 152	bashful – 156	methodically - 156

READ

Review Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

Start at the beginning and review the story so far

- mention the setting and main character
- point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

Read Read the selection.

Read pp. 99-158

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important on the 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 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

Change Poster:

Create a Change Requires Effort Chart. This can be a live, online document or a physical poster

- Label one column “Changes” and the other side “Effort”.
- During this unit, encourage students to highlight significant changes in the novel and bullet point these changes on the “Changes” column.
- For all of the items in the “Changes” column, describe the effort that was made to create that change. Write the effort in the “Effort” column.
- Keep in mind some of the themes of the novel: life, death, love, forgiveness, grieving, etc.

EXPLORE

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

One possible activity:

Dear Abby Radio Program: You will write advice for Crystal’s problems in the format of a call-in radio advice program.

Objectives of the suggested activity:

- brainstorm solutions to deal with rejection and success
- practice good public speaking skills with a dramatic reading

Introduction: -

You will pretend to be radio talk show announcers who perform a call-in advice program. Crystal has called in and shared her deep concerns about failure and rejection, not being accepted to her favorite universities, and not “making it big.” You will write out your response to Crystal’s plea for advice. The advice should be respectful and encouraging.

Materials:

- Paper and pencil

Discussion

Key Questions (pp. 99-113)

1. Why does Chuy act irrationally when he is in Eric’s car?
2. Where was Eric going in his car?
3. Who is Jason? Who is Eric?
4. Why do you think Crystal was dating two boys?
5. What was Crystal doing with two boyfriends- one with a giant house and one with a house like Chuy’s?
6. How do you think Crystal felt when she was rejected from her first and second choice school?
7. Why do you think she committed suicide?
8. Have you ever been rejected?
9. What was it like for you the first year of middle or high school, compared to the last year of middle school or a later year in high school?
10. How did you change during those years?

Key Questions (pp. 113-123)

1. What does Crystal remember about Chuy?
2. Now Chuy’s body is really disappearing. What is happening to him?
3. How do you think Chuy feels once his arms are gone?
4. Why did Chuy tell Crystal about the cemetery where his grandfather is buried, and where he will be buried, too?
5. Who is Robert Montgomery?
6. How did he respond to becoming a ghost?
7. Describe how Chuy meets Robert’s ghost?
8. How is Robert connected to Crystal?
9. Why does the homeless guy repeat himself when he talks to Chuy?
10. Predict what will happen next.

Key Questions (pp. 123-134)

1. Where does Chuy see Yellow Shoes?

2. Where do you think Yellow Shoes is going?
3. Why does Robert Montgomery want to help Chuy?
4. Why did Robert Montgomery slide into Yellow Shoes' body?
5. What do you think Robert Montgomery will do?
6. Do you think Robert is making a good decision?
7. Chuy's mom really wants Eddie to avenge Chuy's death. How does a mom become so determined on revenge?
8. How has Chuy's mom change since Chuy has died.
9. Do you think Eddie considered revenge seriously?
10. Describe Eddie's character.

Key Questions (pp. 137-147)

1. The garbage men that Chuy rides with have an interesting conversation about their routes. The third guy doesn't talk about his route. What do you think his route is like?
2. What kind of trash does he collect and is it worth anything?
3. How was Chuy's experience at the ball game even better than when he was alive?
4. What did he get to do during this game, that he couldn't have done watching the game on TV?
5. Describe Chuy's disappearing body.
6. Why does Chuy return to Fresno?
7. Who unexpectedly attends Chuy's funeral mass?
8. Do you think Yellow Shoes feels guilty? Why or why not?
9. Do you think Yellow Shoes will turn himself into the police? Why or why not?
10. Do you think Chuy will forgive Yellow Shoes? Why or why not?

Key Questions (pp. 147-158)

1. Do you think Yellow Shoes realized he was at the funeral of the guy he murdered?
2. Did Manuel know the funeral was for the kid he read about in the paper?
3. Describe Crystal and Chuy's ghost bodies?
4. What do you think will happen to them once they completely disappear?
5. What does Chuy regret about his English class?
6. What do you think Chuy learns during his time as a ghost?
7. What do you think Crystal learns during her time as a ghost?
8. What do you think is the major lesson of this book?
9. Describe the last scene of the book.
10. What do you think the afterlife will hold for Chuy and Crystal?

EXTEND

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

Key Paragraph

Crystal fumed. “Don’t you understand? I got rejected!”

Writing Prompt

Crystal has always been the successful over-achieving student. Excellent grades, extracurricular activities, and cheerleading rounded out her resume. But they weren’t enough to get her into Harvard and Stanford. She was accepted to USC. Crystal was devastated that she didn’t get into her first choice schools, so much so that she was willing to kill herself over it.

Write an argumentative letter to Crystal to encourage her to look on the positive side of things. What other things did Crystal have to look forward to in her life? Provide Crystal with three positive aspects about attending USC over Harvard and Stanford.

1. Have you ever felt like the little fish in the big pond?
2. How can you help others feel connected in the *big pond*?

Key Paragraph

His longing was familiar. Crystal suffered from that longing, and I had suffered it, too. Home is what ghosts seek out after they die-it was just natural.

Writing Prompt

Robert Montgomery asks Chuy about going home. They refer to it as a longing they suffer from and say that ghosts go in search of home. But the homeless guy doesn’t have a house or apartment. What does it mean to go home? Is it the place you lived or somewhere else that you felt most comfortable?

Write an argumentative paragraph defending your definition of *home*. Is home simply the place where one sleeps? What is home? Include three reasons to support your answer.

1. What would you want your family/friends to do with your body after you pass (cremated? buried? etc.)?
2. Describe a time when you attended a funeral.

Key Paragraph

The telephone began to ring...*Beep*. Then my mother’s voice in a whisper. “Eddie, you can find him, *mi’jo*. Please find him. I have more bullets if you need more. I’ll see you at the rosary in a little bit.” There was the sound of a television in the background. Then the final prodding. “*Mi’jo*, he loved you a lot. He would do it for you.”

Writing Prompt

Eddie is receiving a lot of pressure from his aunt to find Chuy’s killer. He’s trying to get his own life together and go to school and doesn’t want to get into any more trouble. What makes his predicament more difficult is that his aunt is family, and an authority figure, to whom he should be obedient and respectful. She even attempts to use guilt to convince him to do it (“He loved you a lot. He would do it for you.”).

Pretend you are Eddie. Write an argumentative letter to your aunt convincing her that taking revenge would not be a good solution. Provide three reasons to support your answer that will motivate your aunt to see things more clearly and to keep her from

holding a grudge. End your letter encouraging your aunt to forgive her son's murder and explain holding a grudge only keeps anger within and does not solve any problems.

1. Describe a time when you wanted revenge.
2. What did you do?
3. Do you think you made the responsible choice?

Key Paragraph

A roar burst forth from the soul of every man and woman who wanted to go home winners. They wanted a good memory of the evening, something to say tomorrow at work, "Yeah, I was there last night. Stacked up the Chiefs good." That roar had a powerful spirit to it and it sent me sailing from the coliseum. I rose laughing, rose tumbling like a poorly thrown football, rose and slowly descended into the parking lot. I had seen enough.

Writing Prompt

Chuy had a great time at the Raider game. Seeing them play in person was one of his all-time goals and he was able to fulfill it before his body completely disappeared. Being a ghost made it even better! What is one of your wishes that you wish to fulfill before your death?

Write an argumentative letter to yourself explaining why you should accomplish this wish in the next year. Include reasons why you should accomplish this wish in the next year.

1. Have you ever been to a professional ball game (baseball, soccer, basketball, football)? Compare it to the game Chuy watched.
2. How was it similar to Chuy's experience and how was it different?

Key Paragraph

They say autumn is the color of death, and for Crystal and me, it was true. We were like the tint of fallen leaves, grass burnt by the first frost, and the ashen-colored fog that sometimes rises from the valley floor and smothers our dream. My dream had been to grow up, work a regular job, nothing special, hang out with friends, and be with someone special like Crystal. I received a portion of that dream and felt grateful for it. I loved her like no other. She flew at my side, southward toward what, I now knew, is called the afterlife.

Writing Prompt

Chuy dreamt that he would grow up, work a regular job, hang out with his friends, be with someone special. As the last entry to your autobiography, write about your dreams and wishes for your future. What do you hope to accomplish? How will you measure your success?

Or Snapshot:

See Final assignment at the end.

1. What did you like and dislike about this book?
2. Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

Character Based Literacy Program

Independent Study Lesson Plan

The Afterlife, Final Assignment



Unit: Change Requires Effort

Novel: *The Afterlife* by Gary Soto

Final Assignment: Argumentative Essay

Task: Write an autobiographical essay.

Directions: Over the past three weeks, you have read the novel *The Afterlife* by Gary Soto. In the novel, Soto guides the reader through the experience of Chuy, a Mexican-American Fresno, California native, whose life only really gets interesting once he is dead. In Soto's novel, Chuy wanders invisibly through town, observing his family and friends and how they respond and mourn his death. He meets the ghost of a girl and thinks he has found true love, but can he hold onto it as his ghostly body begins to disappear? Through the story the reader is given insight into Chuy's views through his reflections and commentary on the happenings around him. He shares who he is and what he hopes for through the story.

Review the writing argumentative assignments from the past three weeks. Choose one prompt to expand and write an argumentative essay.

Remember that one paragraph should flow into the next. In order to produce this effect, you may have to re-write some sentences or paragraphs from your daily snapshots. You may also need to add leading or unifying sentences at the beginning or end of paragraphs to aid your reader in following the direction of your essay.

Type your essay.

Spell-check it.

Save it.

Revise your essay.

Save and print again.

If you have a portfolio, place the final autobiographical writing inside the folder.