

Grade 7 English

Oak Meadow Coursebook

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Lesson



A Single Shard: The Relationships between Characters

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Identify synonyms and antonyms.
- Analyze the development of character relationships.
- Provide text-based evidence to support your ideas.

Reading

Begin reading *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park. You will have three weeks during which to read the book. This week, please read chapters 1–4.

Look over the vocabulary and assignments in this lesson before you begin reading *A Single Shard*. That will help you get a complete picture of what you will be doing this week and help you organize your time efficiently.

Vocabulary

Please select 5–8 words from your literature reading. Try to choose words that are the most unfamiliar to you. Based on the context, guess what each word might mean before you look it up. Write down each word in a notebook—this will become your personal dictionary. Include the definition of the word and part of speech. (You can use the same notebook as the one for your Reader’s Journal.)

Each week, you can decide how you would like to practice with your vocabulary words. Please choose one activity from the list below to use with your vocabulary words this week.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Read chapters 1–4 in *A Single Shard*.
- Select vocabulary words to define and use in context.
- Read the grammar sections.
- Complete the grammar exercises.
- Describe the relationship between characters.
- Choose a creative assignment.
- Fill out the writing reflection.

Vocabulary practice activities:

- Use your words in your writing for other assignments this week. Underline or highlight the words that you use.
- Write a short story or paragraph that uses all of the words on your vocabulary list. The paragraph has to make sense!
- Write a song that uses the words in a creative way. Be sure it makes sense, even if it is silly.
- Create your own visual interpretation of each word. This could be done through drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, or collage. Be sure the meaning of the word is clearly expressed.
- Use the words in a paragraph describing a specific scene from the book you are reading.
- Write a poem, a journal entry, or a letter using all your words. The words should be used in context rather than just listed with their definitions.
- Record a short film, speech, or imaginary news cast where you use all the words correctly.
- Write a scene of dialogue between two people. The scene and characters can be based on the book you are reading or can be completely from your imagination. Use each vocabulary word in context in the dialogue.
- Make a foursquare as shown here. Divide your page into four sections. Write the definition in one corner, a sentence in one corner, a picture that demonstrates the meaning of the word in one corner, and a synonym or antonym in the other.

**definition (could
be “official” or in
student words)**

use it in a sentence

**synonym or
antonym**

picture

Grammar Reading

Each grammar section will include selections from the English Manual that you received with your coursebook, and assignments designed to give you practice with the topics. Even if you think you know the topic very well, read each section to refresh your memory and pick up new tips that will strengthen your writing.

This week, please read the following sections:

- Synonyms and Antonyms
- Writing Process
- Writing Styles

Synonyms and Antonyms

Synonyms are words that are similar in meaning. Synonyms help make your writing more interesting, help you develop a larger vocabulary, and give you more options when expressing yourself.

Antonyms are words that are opposite in meaning. Antonyms and synonyms are opposites!

Word	Synonym	Antonym
joyful	ecstatic	depressed
lively	energetic	lethargic
grief	sorrow	joy
shout	bellow	whisper
worried	anxious	calm

The Writing Process

Writing is a process that follows specific steps:

- Brainstorm ideas and create an outline (in your head or on paper) to organize your ideas.
- Write a rough draft that includes all the points you want to include, in the right order.
- Revise your paper to make additions, delete or reword passages that are unclear or off-topic, rearrange text, and refine your wording so you are happy with it.
- Edit your revised draft to correct errors in punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar.
- Proofread your writing to catch any errors in the final version.

Each of these steps are important so let's look at each one separately.

The writing process begins when a writer **brainstorms** ideas to write about, and organizes the ideas into logical order. These ideas are expanded into sentences and paragraphs, and slowly a

rough draft is created. When your rough draft is finished, you know that most of what you want to say is there, in roughly the right order.

Try not to think of a rough draft as “more work,” but rather as the easy, effortless stage where you have the freedom of capturing your thoughts on paper without worrying about spelling or grammar. Many people enjoy cooking and leave the clean-up for afterwards. Consider your rough draft to be the cooking stage (revising and editing are the clean-up phase). Just as you wouldn’t want to let your cooking burn because you were washing dishes, you don’t want to lose good thoughts because you stop along the way to clean up spelling and punctuation.

The next step is to read what you have written to make sure it says what you want it to. Writing requires **revising** your rough draft. Read your paper aloud. This will help you hear how your words are fitting together. Does your paper express your ideas clearly? Does it stay focused on the topic? Have you accidentally left words out or written something in a way that is confusing or awkward? Revising lets you add any additional information, and rearrange paragraphs (or sentences within a paragraph) so that the information flows in a more logical way. Revising your rough draft creates a much smoother version of your paper.

After revising comes **editing**. This is when you go over your work to correct mistakes. Check that all sentences and proper nouns begin with a capital letter. Notice whether you’ve used a variety of sentence lengths. Check your spelling. Is your paper one long paragraph, or have you broken it down so that each paragraph discusses just one main idea? It can help to read your writing aloud to a friend, family member, or even a pet. Your ear can help catch mistakes that your eyes can’t always find. You might have to read your paper more than once to find and repair everything. Take your time with it!

After you are satisfied that you have done your best editing job, rewrite your rough draft into its final version, making all the corrections. If you are writing by hand, use your best handwriting. Finally, **proofread** your final version to check for any last corrections that need to be made.

If you think that it sounds like you’ll have to read your paper over and over before it is finished, you are right. Writers understand that reading what they have written is the only way to improve their work. Writing, reading, revising, reading, editing, reading, and proofing—this is the writing process!

Writing Styles

Writing is a craft, not unlike playing a musical instrument. It can be learned by anyone with a sincere willingness and a desire to invest time and energy.

Just as people dress appropriately to make a good impression in different social settings, so should you gear your style of writing to your audience and situation. You wouldn’t go to a rodeo and a wedding dressed the same way, and neither should you use the same style of writing for a letter to a friend and a research paper.

Formal writing is polite, impersonal, and conventional. Most academic, professional, and business writing is formal. In this kind of writing you must use traditional punctuation, correct spelling, and formal terminology and language. If you are writing an essay that is not specified as a creative writing assignment, it's best to stick with formal writing.

Informal writing is casual and personal. Informal writing is still quite conventional in grammar and usage, though it uses contractions more often and uses vocabulary that seems more consistent with everyday speech. Many speeches, sermons, newspapers, and magazines employ informal writing.

Casual writing tends to be very light. Its goal is to draw readers in and make them feel very relaxed. Personal pronouns, contractions, slang, and language you'd use in everyday conversation is commonly used. Notes to friends, personal journal entries, and some newspaper and magazine columns utilize casual writing. Creative story or poetry writing may be casual if the author is attempting to set a particular tone or mood, or creating a character through colloquial (everyday) use of language.

Books use all of the above styles, depending upon the subject, audience, and the author's intent. Your style of writing in a particular piece should be determined by the same factors: the subject matter, who will be reading it, and what you are trying to accomplish.

Grammar Exercises

1. List one synonym for each of the following words.

small	grief	happy
worried	sick	tired
purchase	answer	kind
courteous	aid	beautiful
short	close	hungry

2. List one antonym for each of the following words.

long	early	cold
ugly	difficult	young
false	light	small
many	slow	cruel
rough	lose	lazy



Talk About It: Discussion

You can learn about different places and time periods by reading historical fiction. Discuss with a friend or family member some things you have learned about the time period and place where Min lives.



Reader's Journal

In this course, you will keep a journal about what you are reading. Some of the lessons will include journal assignments. You can also use your journal for keeping track of daily thoughts, notes, brainstorming, and sketches. Journal writing is less formal, so you don't have to worry about editing and proofreading, and you can use a more casual voice.

Write down your first impressions of this story. Is there something that you like about it (or don't like about it) so far?

Literature Assignments

Complete the following assignments after you have read this week's chapters.

1. Describe the relationship between Crane-man and Tree-ear. Who takes care of whom? Please provide specific examples from the story to support your opinion.
2. Choose one of the following assignments.
 - a. Draw a picture of a scene that you enjoyed from the first four chapters. Choose a scene with a lot of visual details. When you are finished with your drawing, write a caption that explains what is happening in the scene. Please use color and do your drawing on unlined paper.
 - b. Min treats Tree-ear very differently than his wife does. Imagine that you could eavesdrop on a conversation between Min and his wife about whether Tree-ear should be allowed to continue working after his nine days are up. Write the dialogue as you imagine it between these two characters. Don't forget to use proper dialogue punctuation.

Writing Reflection

Take a few minutes to reflect on your current skills as a writer. Consider each question carefully and then circle the answer that best describes your feelings. Be honest in your answers—you won't be graded on this. This is just an exercise to help you recognize ways in which you are improving as a writer. You will repeat this exercise at the end of each semester.

I can express myself clearly in writing.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I like the creative process of writing stories.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I enjoy doing research and writing about what I've learned.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I follow the writing process of revising, editing, and proofreading my writing to make it stronger.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I'm good at finding and correcting my mistakes during the editing and proofreading processes.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Afterward, write down one or two things you'd like to work on as you develop your writing skills.

Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to keep track of how your skills are progressing. Include notes about what you need to work on. You will be developing these skills throughout the year.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Use vocabulary words correctly in context				
Identify synonyms				
Identify antonyms				
Analyze the development of character relationships				
Provide text-based evidence to support ideas				

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

When you have completed this lesson, continue to lesson 2. You will share your work with your Oak Meadow teacher at the end of lesson 2. If you have any questions in the meantime, please let your teacher know.

Lesson



A Single Shard: Values and Ethics

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Use vocabulary words correctly in context.
- Use story details to identify underlying community values.
- Draw parallels between the story and personal experience.

Reading

Continue reading *A Single Shard*, completing chapters 5–9 this week.

Glance over the list of vocabulary words below and try to spot them in your reading. You may also want to read the assignments before you begin your reading; this will help you pay attention to specific elements of the story.

Vocabulary

Here is this week's list of vocabulary words, which are taken from the story you are reading.

- translucent
- garb
- arduous
- tithes
- tunic
- makeshift
- commiserate
- feigned

Write down each word in your notebook (your personal dictionary). Include the definition of the word and part of speech.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Read chapters 5–9 in *A Single Shard*.
- Define vocabulary words and use them in context.
- Identify community values based on story clues.
- Examine an ethical question from different perspectives.
- Choose a project based on celadon pottery.

Use the vocabulary words in context by choosing one activity from the list below (or choose any one of the activities listed in lesson 1).

- Use the words in a paragraph describing a specific scene from the book you are reading.
- Write a poem, a journal entry, or a letter using all your words. The words should be used in context rather than just listed with their definitions.
- Make a foursquare. Write the definition in one corner, a sentence in one corner, a picture that demonstrates the meaning of the word in one corner, and a synonym or antonym in the other.

Assignments

Complete the following assignments after you have read this week's chapters.

1. Tree-ear and Crane-man live very differently than the other villagers. They are also treated very differently because of their status. Based on Tree-ear's interactions with the other characters in the book, what can you figure out about the values in this small village? Please provide examples.
2. In Chapter 6, Crane-man and Tree-ear have a discussion about stealing. Crane-man says that if an idea is taken by "stealth or by trickery," then it is stealing. What do you think? Do you agree? If Tree-ear had told Min about what he saw Kang working on, would you consider that stealing? Use examples from your own life to support your opinion.
3. Choose one of the following assignments to complete.
 - a. Based on what you've read so far, describe the process of making a pot using the methods described in the book. You can do this in writing or by drawing out the different steps and labeling them.
 - b. Make a vase using clay that you can bake in your home oven. Decorate the vase with images from the story.
 - c. Research Korean celadon pottery from the historical time period of *A Single Shard* (you can find more information in the Author's Note at the end of the novel). Create a collage of images you find or draw some yourself and provide captions explaining what each image is.



Up for a Challenge?

Research other unique types of pottery or pottery from other countries. Visit a museum or a pottery artist to learn more about this art form.

Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to keep track of how your skills are progressing. Include notes about what you need to work on. You will be developing these skills throughout the year.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Use vocabulary words correctly in context				
Provide text-based evidence to support ideas				
Use story details to identify underlying community values				
Draw parallels between the story and personal experience				

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

When you have completed this lesson, share your work from lessons 1 and 2 with your Oak Meadow teacher. If you have questions about how to submit your work, see the Parent Handbook and your teacher's welcome letter.

Lesson



Catherine, Called Birdy: Emotions and Predictions

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Demonstrate writing from the point of view of a story character.
- Predict future story events based on plot details.
- Demonstrate the artistic style of illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages.

Reading

Continue reading *Catherine, Called Birdy*. This week, please read the following sections: January, February, March, and April.

Vocabulary

Please select 5–8 words from your literature reading for your vocabulary list this week. Choose words that you don't know and try to guess the meaning, based on the context, before you look them up. Write down the definitions in your personal dictionary. Finally, choose one vocabulary practice activity from the list below or from the list in lesson 1, and use each word in context.

- Write a scene of dialogue between two people. The scene and characters can be based on the book you are reading or can be completely from your imagination. Use each vocabulary word in context in the dialogue.
- Make a foursquare. Divide your page into four sections. Write the definition in one corner, a sentence in one corner, a picture that demonstrates the meaning of the word in one corner, and a synonym or antonym in the other.
- Create your own visual interpretation of each word. This could be done through drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, or collage. Be sure the meaning of the word is clearly expressed.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Continue reading *Catherine, Called Birdy*.
- Choose vocabulary words and use them in context.
- Write in journal form from one character's point of view.
- Make a prediction about what will happen in the story.
- Draw in the style of an illuminated manuscript.



Think About It: Reflection

Our emotions are often connected with our physical health, and are affected by physical ailments we are experiencing. Think about some examples from the story where the emotional and physical health of the characters is related or combined. Think about a time that your emotions were affected by your physical health, or when your physical health was affected by your emotions. How were you able to help yourself feel better?



Talk About It: Discussion

Birdy enjoyed writing in her journal. She found that it was an important outlet for her feelings and a way to reflect on the events of her life. Ask five people you know if they write in a journal, or if they ever have. What reasons do people give for keeping a journal or not keeping a journal?



Reader's Journal

Re-read Birdy's journal entry for February 3rd. In it, Birdy rejects someone based on their physical appearance. Do you think this is fair? Should she have gotten to know more about him first? Write in your journal about a time that you were judged by your physical appearance, or a time that you may have done this to someone else.

Literature Assignments

1. On February 21, Birdy writes about Madame Joana's fortune. Write about what you think her predictions mean. Write your answer in journal form as though you were one of the characters in the story. Use the first-person point of view. Make sure to specify which character is writing the journal.
2. Make your own prediction about what will happen to Birdy, what will come next in the story, or how the story will end. Give a brief explanation of what makes you think this will happen.

3. In the Middle Ages, illuminated manuscripts were drawn with impressive care and patience, using brilliant colors and intricate designs. You might want to find several photos of illuminated manuscripts to get a better idea of this art form. Create a new book jacket for this book, or write a favorite phrase from the book or your initials in decorative script with full color borders in the style of medieval manuscripts.



This page from the Book of Hours shows the floral decoration typical of illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages. (Image credit: National Library NZ)

Up for a Challenge?

The characters in this story display many types of prejudice. In what ways have you seen the issue of prejudice appear in other books and films? Choose one other book or film that features prejudice in some form, and write a description of how this attitude is expressed. What role does it play in the plot or in the motivation of the characters? Compare this to *Catherine, Called Birdy*.

Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Use vocabulary words in context				
Demonstrate journal writing from the point of view of a story character				
Predict future story events based on plot details				
Demonstrate knowledge of the artistic style of illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages				

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

Please share your work from lessons 5 and 6 with your Oak Meadow teacher. Contact your teacher whenever you have questions about the assignments or what to submit.

Lesson



Catherine, Called Birdy: Expressive Language

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Identify examples of analogies, metaphors, and similes.
- Analyze what makes an analogy effective.
- Demonstrate a well-organized paragraph.

Reading

Finish reading *Catherine, Called Birdy*. Make sure to read the Author's Note at the end of the book.

Grammar Reading

Read the following sections:

- Concise Writing
- Analogies, Metaphors, and Similes

Concise Writing

Good writing is concise. Professional writers spend a good deal of time revising their writing to eliminate unnecessary words. Overstuffed phrases and pointless repetitions continually creep into our writing. The only remedy is ruthless pruning as you revise and edit. On occasion, you may wish to use extra words to make a point. This can be very effective, but only if used very sparingly. Below is a list of some of the more common culprits in the war against wordiness.

An **empty modifier** is an adjective or adverb that repeats what is already stated in the word being modified. Here are just a few examples:

end result

final outcome

unexpected surprise

desired goal

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Finish reading *Catherine, Called Birdy*.
- Read the grammar sections.
- Complete the grammar exercises.
- Choose a writing assignment and write two paragraphs.
- Choose a creative project.

Since the result always comes at the end, the outcome is always final, a surprise is always unexpected, and a goal is always desired, you can trim these unnecessary modifiers. The result will be a more succinct and polished piece of writing.

A **surplus intensifier** is a word or phrase that is paired with another word or phrase but adds nothing to the meaning of the first one.

surrounded on all sides

consensus of opinion

at this point in time

quite unique

Like the empty modifier, the surplus intensifier can be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence. Your prose will be more clean and concise.

Clichés

A cliché is an expression that has been used so often it is no longer effective. When a particular phrase has been used by everyone for years, it's time to find something else. Here are some examples of clichés:

fit as a fiddle

fresh as a daisy

right as rain

sick as a dog

across the board

off the top of my head

Clichés often appear in early drafts of writing, but should be deleted during the revision process. Look for more original ways to express your ideas.

There are times when clichés can be used to good effect, but you have to be very careful to use them intentionally (rather than having them sneak into your writing without you realizing it). Since many people use clichés when they speak, particularly people who talk in a folksy, informal style, writers may choose to use clichés in dialogue between certain characters. However, you have to make sure the cliché fits the person speaking and the setting. Use clichés sparingly or they will lose their effectiveness and your character may come across as uninteresting or annoying.

Another writing technique is to twist a cliché around to make it more interesting and original. Saying someone is “as healthy as a horse” is an old, tired cliché, but saying someone is “as healthy as a sick horse” makes it funny and entertaining.

Analogies, Metaphors, and Similes

Analogies, metaphors, and similes are writing techniques that writers use to compare things that are different. These comparisons point out similarities that help emphasize certain qualities. Many writers have trouble understanding the difference between these three techniques, so don't worry if you do, too. The more you work with them, the easier it will be to differentiate between them.

A **simile** points to how two unlike things are like one another. The words *like* or *as* are used in a simile to make the comparison obvious. Here are some examples of similes:

A quiet mind is like a calm lake.

The students were as busy as bees.

A **metaphor** makes the comparison by describing one thing as another very different thing. To say someone is “wet behind the ears” is an old metaphor meaning the person is young and inexperienced; it doesn’t literally mean the person has wet ears. Here are some examples of metaphors:

The kindergarten classroom was a merry-go-round of color.

After the party, the house was a train wreck.

An **analogy** takes the comparison one step further by elaborating on it, usually by referring to something familiar to help clarify something more complex or less familiar. Analogies can use metaphors or similes (or both).

The smog darkened the sky, burying the town under layers of moldy, suffocating blankets.

The playful mood spread until the three dogs became like clowns on the center stage, performing a comedy routine as they grinned at the crowd.

All three literary techniques make comparisons between different things. The subtle differences between similes, metaphors, and analogies are sometimes easier to grasp when the techniques are seen side by side.

Simile: My dreams are like delicate birds

Metaphor: My dreams are delicate birds.

Analogy: My dreams are delicate birds, frantically beating against the cage of my life.

These writing techniques can make your writing more vivid and expressive. However, it’s easy to go overboard, especially with analogies. A poor analogy uses language that doesn’t match the intended result.

Bad analogy: *The dancer lifted her arms delicately and turned her head to the side, like she was sniffing her armpit and wondering whether she remembered to wear deodorant.*

Why it is bad: “sniffing her armpit” does not contribute to the overall impression of the graceful dancer.

Better: *The dancer lifted her arms delicately and turned her head to the side, like a gazelle gazing into the distance, ready to leap across the field.*

Grammar Exercises

1. Find three examples of analogies, metaphors, or similes in your literature reading this week. Copy each one, note the date of the journal entry where you found it, and explain why it is effective or why you think the author used it.
2. Write a bad analogy, analyze why it is bad, and then rewrite it into an effective analogy. (Refer to the example in the English Manual.)

Literature Assignments

1. Choose one of the following writing assignments to complete this week. Write at least two paragraphs. Use informative topic sentences, and organize your ideas in a clear and logical order.
 - a. Compare and contrast Birdy's life with your own life today. Describe one important way your life is different, and one important way it is similar. Use examples from the story in your writing.
 - b. Research the author of *Catherine, Called Birdy*, Karen Cushman. What was her motivation for writing this book? Do you think that she accomplished what she set out to do?
 - c. Choose two quotes from the book that stand out or that you feel are important to understanding the story or a particular character. Explain what you think each quote means and why it is important.
2. Choose one creative project:
 - a. Design a comic strip about Birdy's potential husbands. Be sure to use captions, and create carefully drawn illustrations using details from the story.
 - b. Write a series of five journal entries that Birdy could have written after the story ends. Refer to past events from the story as Birdy describes her life. Remember to try to pay attention to the voice you are using, so that it reflects Birdy's attributes and personality.
 - c. Write or act out a conversation that Birdy may have had with her father about her potential husbands.

Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Identify examples of analogies, metaphors, or similes				
Analyze what makes an analogy effective				
Use informative topic sentences				
Organize ideas into a logical sequence				