

# **Oak Meadow Literature & Composition II Teacher Manual**

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# Lesson 1: A Separate Peace, Chapters 1-4

## Vocabulary

- **capacious:** adj. able to contain a great deal; spacious. *There was a capacious quality at Devon.*
- **rivalry:** n. the act of being in competition with. *Gene and Finny were close without rivalry between themselves.*
- **demotion:** n. relegation to a less important position or rank. *The demotion was a blow to his pride.*
- **connive:** v. to cooperate secretly, especially in wrongdoing. *He didn't have to connive to get his way; he was simply charming.*
- **vindicate:** v. to free from allegation or blame. *Finny could vindicate himself from any situation he found himself in.*
- **inebriate:** v. intoxicate. *There was something inebriating in the suppleness of this feat.*
- **inveigle:** v. to win over by wiles or deception; to trick into doing something. *Finny was going to inveigle his friends into jumping in the river from a tree limb.*
- **beacon:** n. light or guiding signal. *The star was a beacon of hope in the night sky.*

## Comprehension

1. Gene is walking on the far common and on the playing fields at Devon where he had been a student fifteen years earlier.
2. Gene had overlooked the exceptional hardness of the marble stairs while attending Devon.
3. Devon is located in New England. The story begins during the summer of 1942.
4. With great eloquence, Finny rambles on about swimming and sunsets to Mr. Prud'homme. This flow of friendliness and charm again gets him out of trouble.
5. Finny wears a pink broadcloth shirt to dinner as a personal emblem to celebrate the bombing of Central Europe.
6. Looking back, Gene realizes that Finny practically saved his life when Gene lost his balance, but he also realizes that his life would not have been endangered if it had not been for Finny and his challenges.
7. Finny feels that everyone always wins at sports, and that nothing bad ever happens in sports. Absolute good is the perfect beauty. Two athletic awards Finny has won are the Winslow Galbraith Memorial Football Trophy and the Margaret Duke Bonaventure Ribbon.
8. Gene found the waves overpowering while Finny was exhilarated by them and stayed in much longer.
9. Your student's responses may vary, but Gene did go along to the beach and jumped out of a tree at Finny's request.
10. The language does imply that Gene intentionally knocked Phineas off the limb when it's stated that he jounced it.

## **Critical Thinking**

1. The fear that Gene had lived with about the tree disappeared with the passage of time. Though the object of his fear remained the same, his reaction to it had changed.
2. Devon is sometimes called the most beautiful school in New England. The student's responses will reflect an atmosphere that is immersed in tradition and old world charm. Descriptions of a large common (outdoor meeting place), brick and clapboard buildings with shutters, mahogany interiors with high ceilings, a snow-covered landscape, lit fireplaces, etc. will color the student's description.
3. Responses will vary. Phineas is funny, truthful and charming in addition to having an athletic physique (before the accident) and overall good looks. He also has a way of strengthening self-confidence in others, and isn't the least bit afraid to take risks.
4. Gene looks up to Phineas because he does all that Gene feels incapable of doing. After the accident, Gene feels anger and a protective feeling towards Finney. These are possible responses, but your student may have others that should be backed up by examples in the text.
5. Responses will vary. Gene is motivated to excel at academics because he wants to be "even" with Finney. As Gene's strengths are intellectual, and Finney's are physical, he wants to do well in what he is best at so that he won't be considered second best.

# Lesson 2: A Separate Peace, Chapters 5-7

## Vocabulary

- **spectral:** adj. of or resembling a specter or apparition; ghostly. *Finny's clothes gave him a spectral appearance of his former self.*
- **transfixed:** v. held motionless as if impaled. *I pushed open the door and stood transfixed on the threshold.*
- **saline:** n. consisting of or containing salt. *His eyes filled with saline.*
- **sinecure:** adj. an office or position that requires little or no work yet provides an income. *That dean had a sinecure position.*
- **effulgence:** n. a flood of light; radiant splendor. *Emotion filled Gene with effulgence as he neared Finny's house.*
- **curlicue:** n. a fancy twist or flourish. *The student's handwriting was full of curlicues.*
- **prestige:** n. influential status based on success or renown. *There was a prestige attached to having travel adventures.*
- **wayward:** adj. turned or turning away from what is right or proper; willful; disobedient. *The accident put Finny on a wayward path.*

## Comprehension

1. The accident shattered Finny's leg. Dr. Stanpole declares that sports are finished for Finny.
2. When speaking with Dr. Stanpole, Gene breaks down crying for Finny's condition and his own part in it, and because of the doctor's unexpected kindness.
3. Finny has total recall of the accident, and of the fact that he and Gene were standing on the same branch.
4. Finny's canoe trick involved balancing one foot on the prow with arms raised, appearing to transcend gravity.
5. Gene becomes the assistant crew manager.
6. The school was situated between the Naguamsett (ugly, saline and marshy) and the Devon (freshwater with a waterfall, great for swimming).
7. Quackenbush matured faster than his peers and was generally disliked. Most felt there was "something wrong about him."
8. Students participate in the "Emergency Usefulness Policy" by harvesting apples and shoveling snow off of railroad tracks.
9. Brinker Hadley looked athletic but was not; he was busy with politics, arrangements and offices. He was motivated by popularity and power. He was "the hub of the class."
10. Leper is looking for Beaver Dam when Gene finds him touring in the snow.

**Critical Thinking**

1. Finny responds with anger, denial, and threatens to hit and kill Gene when Gene confesses that he jounced the tree limb. Gene isn't convinced that he consciously caused the accident, and he and Finny later refer to the subject as an act of temporary insanity. Student response will vary as to whether Gene intentionally made the limb shake.
2. Gene chooses to be an assistant crew manager instead of playing sports thinking that if Finny can't play neither will he. Phineas is shocked at Gene's decision because he feels Gene will take his place.
3. Quackenbush had called Gene "maimed," and he exploded with the sudden realization that Finny was maimed.
4. Responses will vary regarding the nature of Brinker Hadley's character.
5. Gene decides to enlist as a way of closing the door on the past. Responses will vary as to the promise he sees in enlisting, the most obvious is the chance for him to start anew.
6. Questions will vary.

# Lesson 6: Poetry

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## The Sestina

1. The poem has thirty-nine lines.
2. *Woods, son, water, fish, picture, and mystery* are repeated at the end of each line. The order of the stanzas is:  
  
1: 1 2 3 4 5 6  
2: 6 1 5 2 4 3  
3: 3 6 4 1 2 5  
4: 5 3 2 6 1 4  
5: 4 5 1 3 6 2  
6: 2 4 6 5 3 1  
7: 2 4 1
3. There are 10-18 syllables per line.
4. The poem has seven stanzas. There are six lines per stanza, except for the final stanza which has three lines.

## Questions

1. Using the word “son” implies that it can be anyone’s son rather than someone specific as a particular name would state. A given name would make the poem less universal.
2. Responses will vary. The given local place names add a familiarity that general references would not have.
3. The boy’s crossing is an adventure for him, as he’s interested in exploring. He wonders if they’re there yet, then he asks how many trees are in the woods, and then if he could take a picture. Ask your student to describe a childhood journey from his or her memory in as much detail as is possible.
4. The tone of a poem refers to the spirit or mood of the atmosphere contained in the poem. Responses will vary.
5. The repetition of words in the sestina sets up its own particular rhythm. The words are imprinted in memory, and hence become memory images. Have the student notice how the same word might be a different part of speech in different stanzas (i.e. “picture” is a verb in stanzas two & six, but a noun in the remaining stanzas).
6. Responses will vary. Ask your student to look for distances in space, depth and time and then to report how father and son share the phenomenon. Perhaps the father pictures himself as a son and the son? Encourage your student’s musings and speculations while making sure that they are backed up by what is stated in the poem.

## Writing a Sestina

Writing a sestina can be a challenge filled with discoveries about meaning and language. The sestina consists of six stanzas containing six lines each, and a concluding tercet that is usually unrhymed. With the numbers 123456 representing end words of the initial stanza, and each line representing a stanza, the pattern goes:

123456; first stanza  
615243; second stanza  
364125; third stanza  
532614; fourth stanza  
451362; fifth stanza  
246531; sixth stanza concluding tercet (three lines)

# **Lesson 10: A Process Paper**

Following the guidelines in the syllabus, the student will complete the reading and then write a process paper on one of the topics mentioned in the syllabus.



# Lesson 23: Anthem, Chapters 9-12

## Vocabulary

- **warrant:** n. authorization or order, as by a superior or the law. *There wasn't any warrant that forbade Equality 7-2521 from entering the forest.*
- **impotent:** adj. lacking in power, strength or vigor. *Years of the same daily routine were enough to make one impotent.*
- **sanction:** v. authoritative permission or approval. *The Council's reaction sanctioned his decision to leave.*
- **vindicate:** v. to clear from criticism or blame; to justify. *The woods vindicated them from their former life.*
- **depraved:** adj. morally bad; corrupt. *They now felt their old way of life was depraved.*
- **alms:** n. something (such as money or food) given freely to relieve the poor. *There wasn't any need for alms in those woods.*
- **creed:** n. a set of fundamental beliefs; a guiding principle. *Their creed is based upon reverence for the human spirit.*
- **serfdom:** n. a servile feudal class bound to the soil and subject to the will of his lord. *After finding the books, they discovered they had previously lived in a state of serfdom.*

## Comprehension

1. The Golden One followed Equality 7-2521's footprints through the broken branches.
2. They make a ring of fire and then sleep within it.
3. At sunrise, they cross a chain of mountains, and notice windows reflected in the sun. Their home is a small two-story house with many windows and a flat roof.
4. The manuscripts are not scrolls, but books with odd shapes and leather covers.
5. "I" is the missing word.
6. Equality 7-2521 becomes Prometheus. The name refers to the Greek god who suffered for bringing light to man. The Golden One is renamed Gaea, after the Greek earth goddess.
7. He plans to build an electric fence to keep outsiders out.
8. He wants to make one last visit to the city he left to gather those whose spirits have not been killed, who suffer under the yoke of their brothers.

## Critical Thinking

1. The statements are an assertion of one's own existence, ability to reason, and personal intentions. They refer to facets of our being. Another way of stating this: AM = soul, THINK = mind, WILL = body.
2. Responses will vary. Some may consider that God gave us personal will so that we might have the freedom to act upon our intentions, but the fact remains that it came from God and is thought to be holy.
3. The last two chapters are a celebration of the individual over the masses.
  - a) The ego is the thinking, feeling, and acting self that is conscious of itself as distinguished from all others. Responses will vary as to whether or not this is a "sacred" word.
  - b) Ask your student to consider a reasonable balance between the negation of ego and ego worship, and then elaborate on it.