

William and Mary

Navigator

Underrunners
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Introduction

This Navigator is a collection of questions and activities intended to support group or independent study of the novel, *Underrunners*. It is one of a series of Navigators developed by the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary as an interdisciplinary resource with a primary focus on language arts.

Novel studies should encourage advanced readers to develop their skills at analyzing and interpreting literature and nonfiction through structured questions and activities that highlight themes and concepts, interdisciplinary connections, and real world issues contained within the books.

What are the goals of the Navigator?

The Navigator addresses the following learning goals:

- To develop analytical and interpretive skills in literature.
- To develop understanding of selected literary themes.
- To develop linguistic competency through vocabulary and study of language use.
- To develop skills in written and oral communication.
- To develop higher level thinking and reasoning skills in language arts.
- To develop research skills.

Who is the audience for the Navigator?

This Navigator is intended for readers in the intermediate grades, 3-6.

How should the Navigator be used?

The Navigator may be used as an instructional tool by a teacher or as an independent study guide by a student or group of students. The central intent is for teachers to use the Navigator to support a study with a group of students, selecting questions and activities to assign as desired, given the context. However, teachers may also choose to make the Navigator available to students at a learning center, with expectations specified for students as to which items they should complete.

The Navigator incorporates several types of questions related to the novel. Some of these, identified as “while you read” questions, are specifically intended to be used for reflection and prediction as students progress through the novel. Other questions are intended for response after the reader has completed the novel, while still others may be answered either during or after reading. All of the questions on pages 7 – 9 of the Navigator may be used for writing and/or discussion.

Additional activities beyond the discussion and reflection questions appear on pages 10 – 15 of the Navigator. Some of these activities support further development of the language arts skills identified in the goals, while others provide interdisciplinary connections and research applications.

What are the prerequisites for students using the Navigator?

Students using the Navigator should be able to read the resources independently and should be familiar with the literary and reasoning terms utilized in questions. In addition, students will be asked to complete activities that utilize several specific teaching/learning models: the **Literature Web**, the **Hamburger Model for Persuasive Writing**, and the **Vocabulary Web**. If these terms and models are new to students, teachers may wish to conduct mini-lessons on them either prior to or during use of the Navigator. Some guidance for using the teaching models is provided below.

The Literature Web

The Literature Web is a model designed to guide interpretation of a literature selection by encouraging a reader to connect personal response with particular elements of the text. The web may be completed independently and/or as a tool for discussion. Recommended use is to have students complete the web independently and then share ideas in a small group, followed by a teacher-facilitated debriefing. The web has five components:

- **Key Words:** interesting, unfamiliar, striking, or particularly important words and phrases contained within the text
- **Feelings:** the reader's feelings, with discussion of specific text details inspiring them; the characters' feelings; and the feelings the reader infers the author intended to inspire
- **Ideas:** major themes and main ideas of the text; key concepts
- **Images and Symbols:** notable sensory images in the text, "pictures" in the reader's mind and the text that inspired them, symbols for abstract ideas
- **Structure:** the form and structure of the writing and how they contribute to meaning; may identify such features as use of unusual time sequence in narrative, such as flashbacks, use of voice, use of figurative language, etc.; style of writing

The Hamburger Model for Persuasive Writing

The Hamburger Model uses the familiar metaphor of a sandwich to help students construct a paragraph or essay. Students begin by stating their point of view on the issue in question (the top bun). They then provide reasons, or evidence, to support their claim; they should try to incorporate at least three supportive reasons (the "patties"). Elaboration on the reasons provides additional detail (the "fixings"). A concluding sentence or paragraph wraps up the sandwich (the bottom bun).

The Vocabulary Web

The Vocabulary Web is a tool for exploring words in depth. It asks students to investigate a single word in detail, finding its definition, synonyms and antonyms, and etymological information. With this information, students then identify "word families," or other words using the same meaning-based stems as the original word; and they provide an example of the word, which may be a sentence or analogy using the word, a visual or dramatic representation, or another creative form.

In addition to the models discussed here, Navigator developers also used Paul's (1992) Elements of Reasoning in preparing questions and activities. This model for critical thinking emphasizes the following eight elements: *issue, purpose, point of view, assumptions, concepts, evidence, inferences, and implications or consequences*. Teachers may wish to introduce these terms to students, using a familiar issue such as something being discussed in the school or community; teachers should then encourage the use of the terms and the model in approaching problems and issues.

The Navigator also contains research assignments that are issue-based and connected to the novel. Students should be encouraged to explore multiple points of view and use human and organizational as well as print resources in their investigations of these real-world issues.

Several resources are listed at the end of the Navigator that may be useful to students and teachers in exploring these models further.

How long does the Navigator take?

Duration of study depends on teacher preference and number of activities and questions assigned.

How does the Navigator address standards for language arts?

The Navigator was designed with an eye to addressing key standards for language arts identified by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association (1996) as well as

standards from several state-level education departments. Specifically, the Navigator reflects standards in the following areas:

Standards Emphases	Navigator
- Use of strategies to understand, interpret and evaluate text	- Provides the student with an organizer for interpreting text (the Literature Web) and guiding questions to support understanding and critical analysis
- Use of writing strategies and writing process elements	- Provides writing prompts, a writing model, and emphasis on steps of the writing process
- Use of spoken and written language for particular audiences and to accomplish particular purposes	- Incorporates activities for writing and speaking that emphasize persuasive, reflective, informative, and narrative communication
- Knowledge of vocabulary, language structure, and language conventions and analysis of how they are demonstrated in text	- Encourages in-depth word study of advanced vocabulary, including emphasis on etymology and usage of words
- Research on issues and areas of interest, with emphasis on utilizing a variety of technological and informational resources to gather data, interpret results, and communicate findings	- Provides several issue-based research assignments for students, emphasizing data collection from print, non-print, and human resources; analysis and synthesis of data; and written and oral communication of findings
- Participation as members of literacy communities	- Encourages discussion within and beyond the classroom about the specified text and invites similar exploration of other texts
- Emphasis on reading a wide range of literature selections to build understanding of the human experience	- Encourages in-depth study of the specified text as well as comparisons to other selected works; suggests specific titles for further reading

How should the Navigator activities be assigned?

Teachers should specify expectations for students around number and type of activities and questions to be completed, as well as expectations for quality of work. Teachers may choose to assign Navigator questions and activities using a combination of required and optional items. Several sample organizations of assignments appear below.

Sample 1 (Teacher-led emphasis):

- Teacher-led discussion of higher-level questions; 1-3 questions assigned for journal response.
- Required assignments: Literature Web, persuasive essay OR book review, one Vocabulary Web, one research assignment
- Choice assignments: student choice of THREE remaining activities
- Oral presentation of one completed piece

Sample 2 (Small-group emphasis):

- Small-group discussion of higher-level questions, with 4-5 questions completed in writing for teacher review
- *Group* assignments: concept map OR setting activity, two Vocabulary Webs, one research assignment with group presentation
- *Individual* assignments: Literature Web, persuasive essay OR book review, student choice of TWO remaining activities

Sample 3 (Individual emphasis):

- Written responses to student choice of 2-3 discussion questions per category
- Required assignments: one research assignment; student choice of THREE additional activities, of which one must be a completed writing piece; oral presentation of one assignment

How should the Navigator activities be assessed?

Teachers should assess student progress based on the quality of individual products and achievement toward the goals of the Navigator.

Question responses should be assessed based on demonstration of insight and ability to use text to support inferences. Writing activities should be assessed based on clarity and insight, and may also be assessed for writing style and mechanics as desired. Oral presentations of completed work should be assessed based on coherence, content, and clarity of the presentation. Teachers may provide rubrics for students related to the required assignments or work with students to develop rubrics for assessment.

Completed Navigator activities should be collected into a folder for assessment, and final assessment may include self-evaluation by the student.

The chart below demonstrates how the Navigator activities support the identified goals:

Alignment of Assignments and Activities to Navigator Goals

	Anal/ Interp Skills	Literary Themes	Ling. Comp	Writ/ Oral Comm.	Think/ Reas Skills	Research
Discussion/ Writing Questions	X	X		X	X	
Literature Web	X	X			X	
Persuasive essay on concept	X	X		X	X	
Adventure Story		X	X	X	X	
Concept map	X	X		X	X	

Vocabulary Web			X	X		
Interview/ Action Research	X	X		X	X	X
Word collection			X	X	X	X
Health Research				X	X	X
Science research				X	X	X
Book comparison	X	X		X	X	X

What additional resources are required to use the Navigator?

Most of the activities in the Navigator require only the novel itself and regular classroom supplies. Vocabulary activities will require the use of a good dictionary that includes etymological information on words. Recommended dictionaries are *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* and the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*. Interdisciplinary and research activities may require additional supplies and access to library and Internet resources. The *Guide to Teaching a Language Arts Curriculum for High-Ability Learners* (Center for Gifted Education, 1998) provides guidance in the use of the literature, persuasive writing, and vocabulary study models used in the Navigator as well as other guidelines for language arts with high-ability populations.

A listing of additional resources and suggestions for further reading appears at the end of the Navigator.

NOTE: Page numbers used in the Navigator refer to the Puffin Books paperback edition of the text, ISBN: 0-14-036869-8.

Technological Connections

Several opportunities for technological connections and development of technical skills are incorporated in the Navigator. Based on the resources available in your classroom or media center, consider the following uses of technology:

- Access to the Internet for research projects. Key web sites are listed in the resources section.
- Use of word processing and/or publishing software for writing assignments.
- Use of presentation software for presenting research findings and completed activities.
- Use of *Inspiration* or similar for creation of concept maps.

Synopsis

Tris, a boy from a single-parent home who lives with his father, and wishes for his mother to return. He checks the mailbox everyday for a letter from her. His father seems distant and Tris resents his father's new girlfriend. To cope with his situation Tris and his make-belief friend play in the underrunners (small caverns) by his home. One day while walking from school Tris meets Winola, a girl from the local orphanage, who is trying to break free and avoid her father finding where she is located. Winola digs and conceals a hole under the fence of the orphanage to use as her secret escape. Winola and Tris meet daily. Winola wiggles from under the fence when no one is looking and she and Tris have their own make believe adventures. However,

Winola's father is watching them through binoculars, waiting for the perfect time to capture Winola and take her home, though he isn't allowed to see her. One day, Winola's father finally makes his move. He kidnaps Tris and Winola after shooting at Tris' father. Through the kidnapping and interactions with Winola, Tris learns important lessons about family, himself, and life.

Higher-Level Questions for Discussion and Writing

While You Read...

- Who is Selsey Firebone? How do you know? (chapter one)
- What does the following sentence mean? “Out would come Selsey and Winola to inhabit this other place, the same but different, rather like that other reflected world the tide left behind.” (p. 37)
- Why do you think Tris remembered and described Dearie Tyrone instead of his mother? Explain your answer. (p. 52)
- On p. 75, Winola says “I’m riding. I’m riding freedom.” What does she mean by that?
- Explain what Winola means when she says, “All the people who are nice to me are trying to make me over so that they feel okay about things themselves.” (p. 104)
- Why do you think Winola doesn’t tell Orson where her mother is located? (chapters 11 & 12) What clues in the story help you with your answer?
- Why was Tris changing his mind about his dad and Victoria? (pp. 117-120) Explain your answer using evidence from the story.
- When Winola was sitting at Orson’s table, she was thinking about the following statement: “She had tried running from a dangerous place to a safe one. Instead, she had run from safety into danger.” (p. 142) Explain how that statement is true. Use examples from the story.
- Why didn’t Tris open the package from his mother after he had been looking for a letter from her every day since she left? Explain you answer. (p. 160)

Exploring the Story

- How does the author use foreshadowing in the novel? Give specific examples.
- What details does the author provide to create the atmosphere of the novel setting? How does the setting contribute to the meaning of the story?
- Could the story have the meaning and impact if the setting were different? Explain your answer.
- Which event in the story is the most important to the plot? Justify your answer.
- The author use descriptive and figurative language throughout the novel. Make a list of specific examples with page numbers. Explain how the language the author uses contributes to the reader’s understanding of the plot. Be specific.
- Explain the significance of the title, *Underrunners*. Use examples from the novel.
- Do you agree with the statement “Fortune favors the prepared mind.”? (p. 142) Why or why not?
- Explain the irony of events starting in chapter twelve through the end of the novel.

Meeting the Characters

- How would the story be different if Selsey Firebone was not included? Explain your answer.
- How does Tris change throughout the course of the novel? What internal and external factors influenced those changes?

- Some people say opposites attract. Is this statement true of Tris and Winola? Why or why not?
- Why do you think the author referred to Tris' dad as Randall throughout the story?
- What are the similarities and differences between the underrunners and Tris? Winola? Orson? Who do you think is most like an underrunner? Why?
- How did Tris' perspective change throughout the novel? Justify your answer using examples from the text.
- Do you think the character of Orson was important to the plot of the story? Why or why not? Justify your answer.

Understanding the Ideas

- How is the theme of choice revealed throughout the novel? Explain the implications and consequences of at least three character's choices.
- How does the author show the relationship between the concepts of reality and imagination throughout the novel? Use examples from the novel to support your answer.
- Do you think the story is more about hope or perspective? Explain your answer using examples from the story.
- Why do you think Tris had an imaginary friend at the beginning of the story but not at the end? Explain your answer.
- Explain how the following statement contributes to the meaning of the story: "Every single thing's got an underrunner" he complained. "So has life" sighed Randall. "Great on the surface and spooky underneath." (p. 63).
- Did the events in the story change the characters or did the characters' points of view toward the same events change? Explain your answer using examples from the novel.

Connecting to You

- Tris was waiting for a special letter from his mom in the "letter-box". Is there ever a time you were waiting for a special letter or package? Explain your feelings while waiting for the letter or package. How did you feel after the package arrived? Compare and contrast your feelings to the feelings of Tris before and after the letter from his mother. How are your feelings similar and different?
- Which character in the novel are you most like? Why?
- On p. 38 Tris says he doesn't want visitors and he's glad when they leave. Was he telling the truth or just making excuses because he didn't have anything in common with his schoolmates? Do you prefer to be by yourself or with friends? Explain your answer.
- Throughout the book each of the characters were dealing with consequences of events in their life. Explain a significant event that happened in your life (positive or negative). What are the consequences and implications of that event? How do those consequences impact other people? The future?
- By the end of the novel, Tris began to change his mind about Victoria. What led to his awareness? Have you ever changed your mind about someone? If so, why? What led to you changing your mind?

Differentiated Activities for Gifted Learners

- Select a pivotal chapter from the novel. Complete a Literature Web about that chapter. Draw the web below on your paper, and fill in responses to each of the bubbles, using the questions as a guide:

Key Words: What were some words and phrases in the novel that were especially interesting or important?

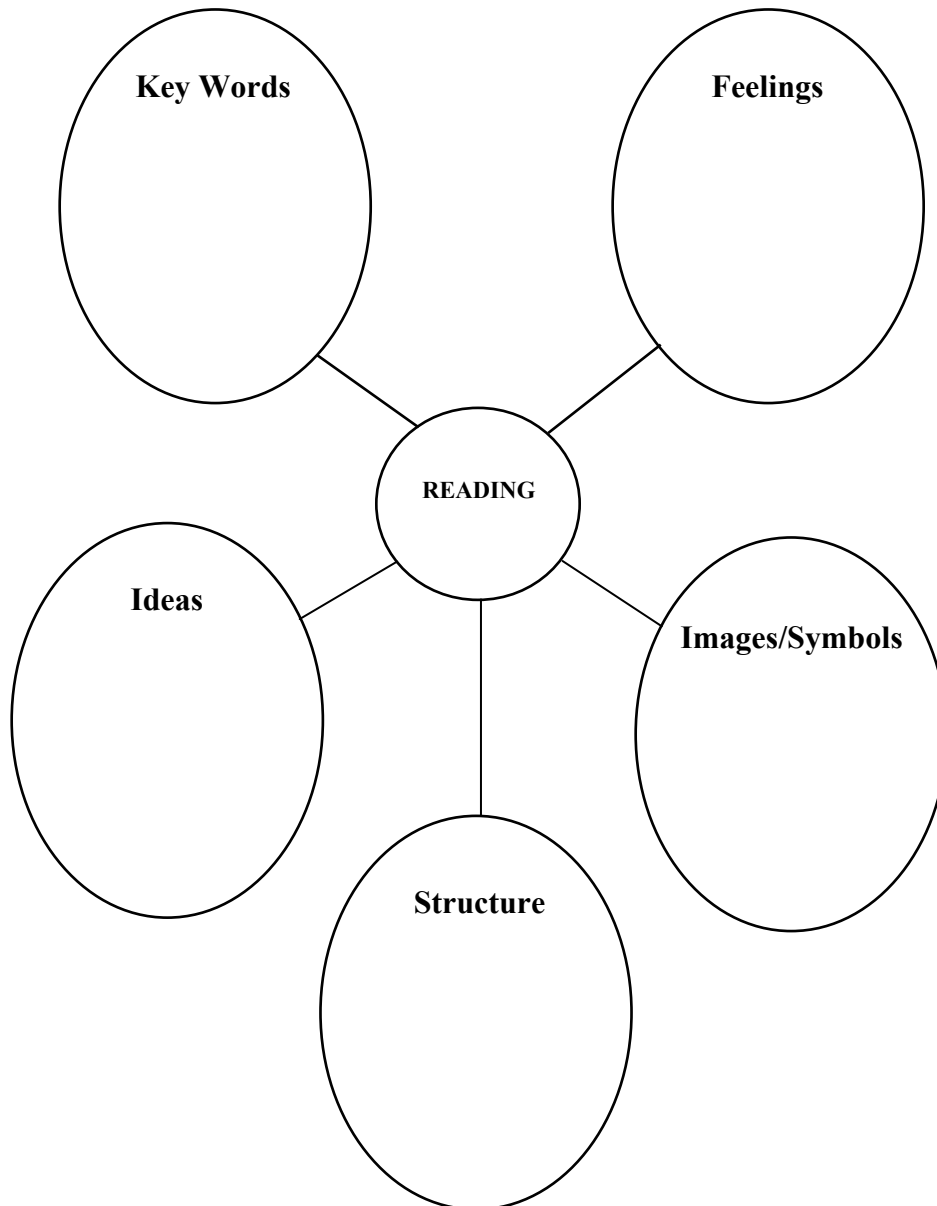
Feelings: What feelings did you have reading this novel? What feelings did the characters have? How were those feelings expressed?

Ideas: What was the main idea or theme of the novel? What other major ideas and concepts were important? What message was the author trying to give about those ideas?

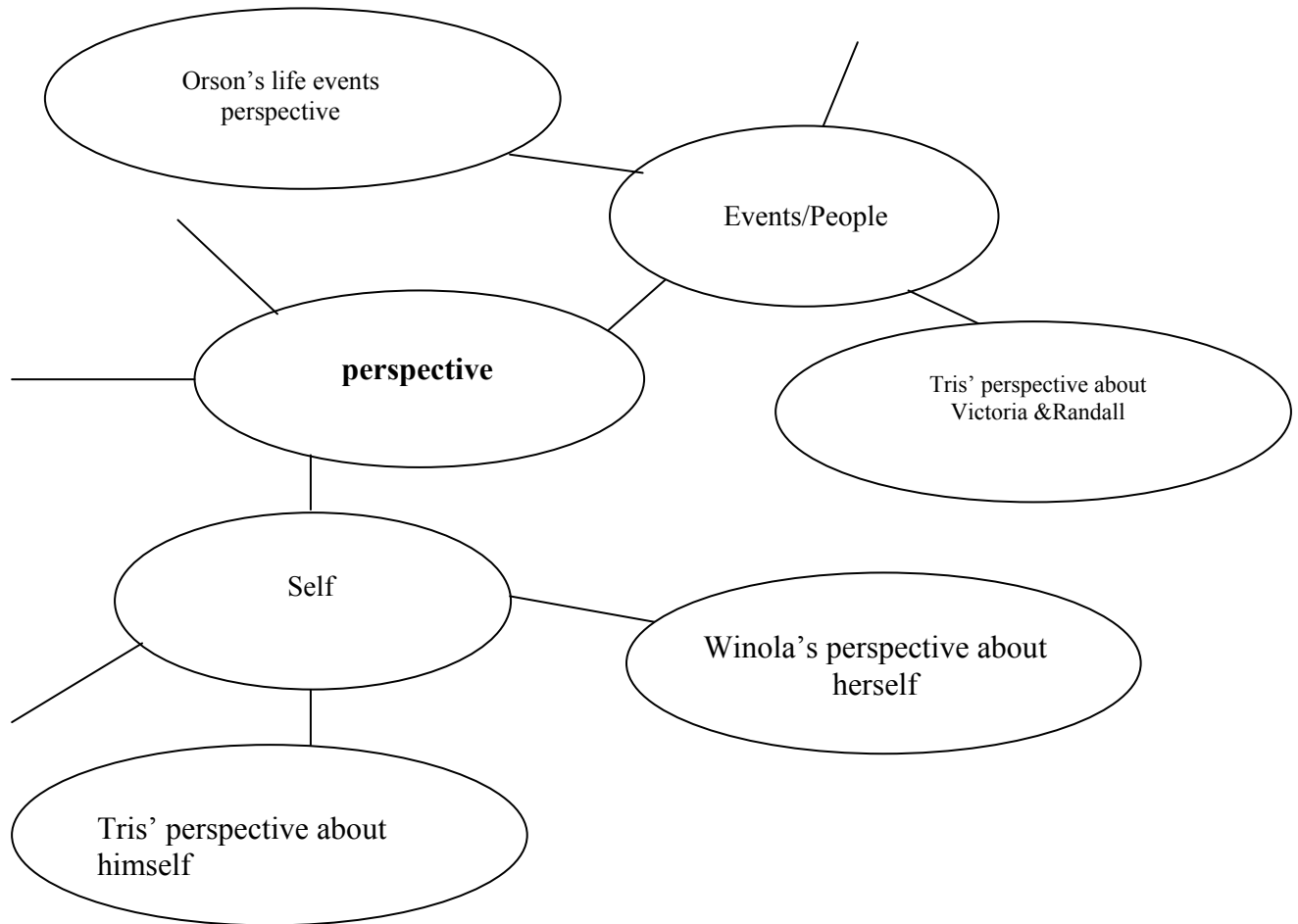
Images/Symbols: How did the author use description and imagery in the novel? What sensory images came to your mind? How did the author use symbols?

Structure: What type of writing was this? What literary and style elements did the author use? How did the structure of the writing contribute to the meaning of the novel?

LITERATURE WEB



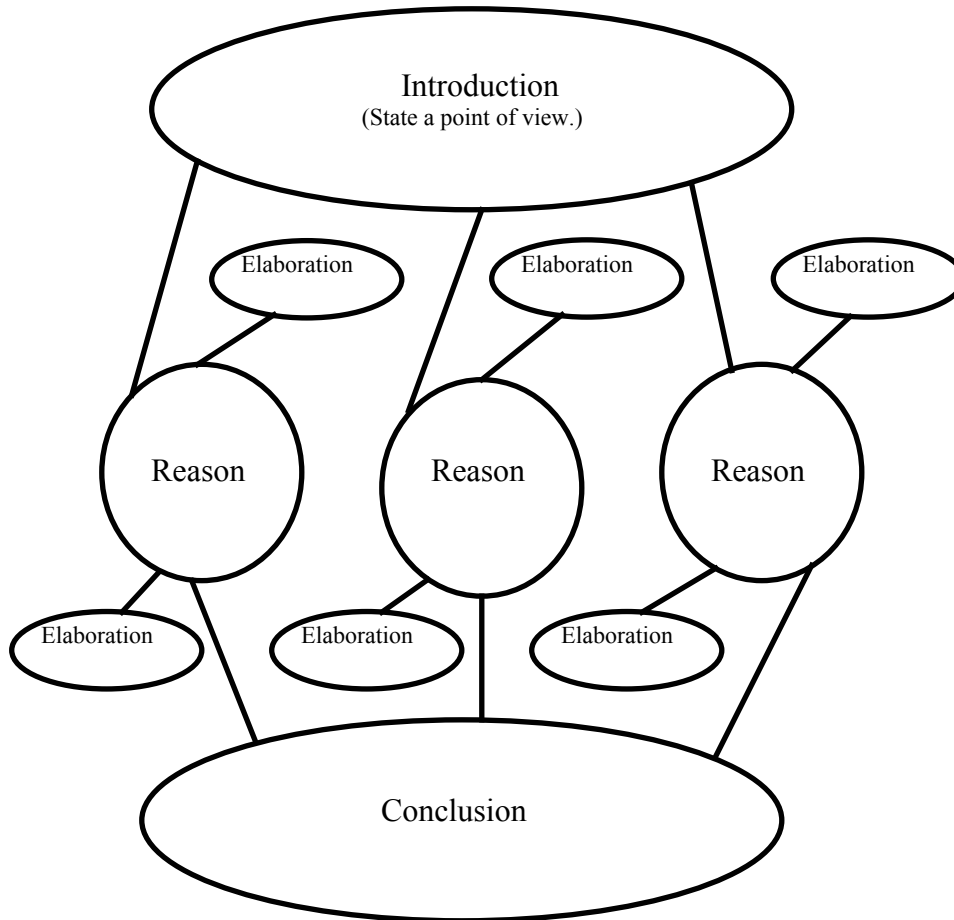
- Create a concept map to demonstrate how one of these ideas is explored in the novel: *perspective*, *change*, *hope*, *reality*, or *imagination*. Use specific characters and events from the novel to demonstrate how the concept is developed. Then write at least two generalizations you can make about the concept. A sample concept map on perspective is started for you below.



- Tris' imaginary friend was Selsey Firebone. Have you ever had an imaginary friend? Write an adventure story about a time you had an imaginary friend or what you would do if you did have one. What was your friend's name? What did you do together? When did your imaginary friend go away? Use the novel as a guide in writing your story. Include descriptive words, conversation, and a problem and solution. Follow the writing process as you create your story and revise it.

THE HAMBURGER MODEL FOR PERSUASIVE WRITING

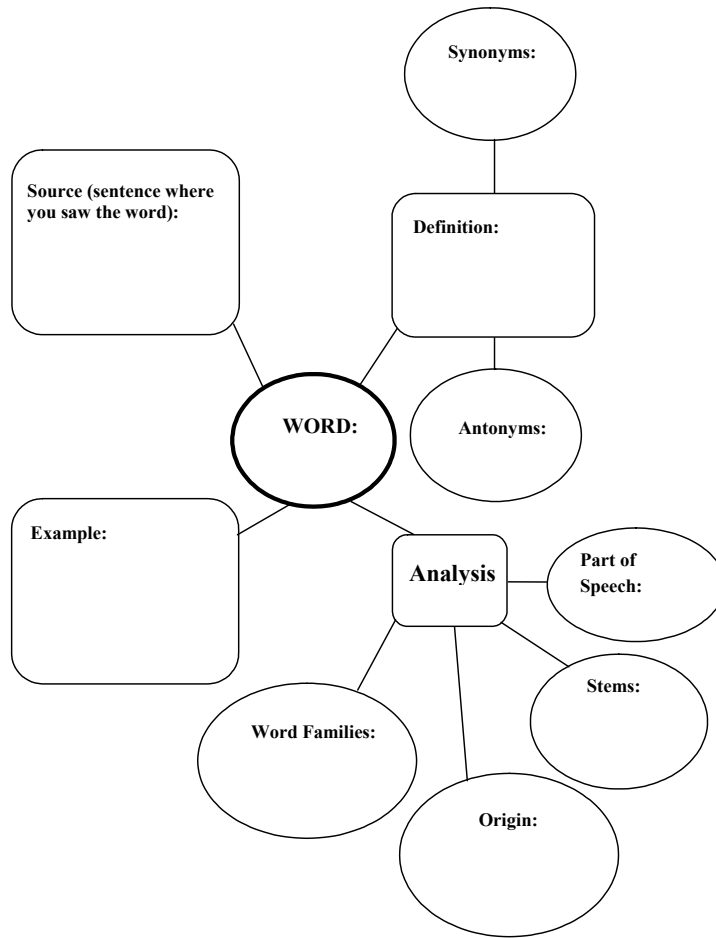
Use the Hamburger Model as a guide to help you organize your responses to the following activity.



- Is it better to live in an imaginary world or in reality? Write a persuasive essay to justify your answer. Use the hamburger model as a guide.

VOCABULARY WEB

Use the Vocabulary Web as a guide to help you organize your responses to the following activity.



- Do a “word study” of one or more of the vocabulary words from the novel (listed below). Find out the definition of the word, synonyms and antonyms, and word stems and origin. Then find at least three other words that use one or more of your word’s stems, and create an example to explain your word (a sentence, an analogy, a visual representation, etc.) Use the Vocabulary Web to organize your responses.

apologetic (p. 37)	apprehension (p. 69)	antihistamine (p. 47)
lavatory (p. 38)	catapulting (p. 67)	hoisted (p. 113)
navigating (p. 39)	devastated (p. 46)	indignantly (p. 56)
radical (p. 40)	inquisitively (p. 56)	ominous (p. 158)
rasping (p. 42)	scuffled (p. 42)	sedately (p. 121)
reprovingly (p. 27)	trundling (p. 121)	

Interdisciplinary and Research Connections

- The story focuses on the underrunners off the New Zealand coast. Research the origin of underrunners. Describe how they are formed, where they are most predominate, and why they form. Based on your research, decide whether the story details about underrunners are realistic. For example, are underrunners really big enough for children to walk around? Create a poster or power point presentation to explain your findings. Use pictures, maps, and descriptive language to aid in your presentation on underrunners.
- Winola was placed in a children's home and had contact with social workers. What does a social worker do? What are some of the reasons children are placed in a children's home instead of with their parents? Are the events in Winola's life common in your community? What are the biggest problems facing children in your community? What can you do about it? Interview a social worker to find out answers to the questions listed above and at least four more of your own questions. What impacted you most about the interview? Are there solutions or steps a community can take to help children in your area? Create a brochure or other product approved by your teacher to relay your findings and potential solutions.
- Victoria calls Tris "Ratty". Tris finally realizes he's like the rat from the book *Wind in the Willows*. Read *Wind in the Willows*. Compare and contrast the rat to Tris. Was Victoria correct in her comparison? Why or why not? Are there other characters in *Wind in the Willows* that are similar to the characters in *Underrunners*? Design T-charts or Venn diagrams to compare and contrast the different characters in the two books. Share your findings with your class through an oral presentation.
- Winola said that cooked food wasn't as good for a person because cooking "takes out the spirits". What does she mean by that? Is there any truth to that statement? Find out if cooking food is more nutritious or less nutritious. Are there certain foods that must be cooked and certain foods that should be eaten raw? (Peruse the Internet, gather books from the library, and interview a nutritionist to find answers.) Create a nutrition guide of various food categories and whether or not those foods should be cooked or eaten raw. Include sample menu recommendations and justification. Distribute the guide to your classmates and the school cafeteria cooks.
- Tris doesn't understand why the children's home, Featherstonehaugh, is pronounced "Fan-shaw". Are there words in your area that are pronounced differently than they are spelled? Create a list of "weird" words that are spelled differently than they are pronounced. Do you notice any patterns in your list? Do people from other areas pronounce the same words differently than you do? Are those words in the dictionary? What was the origin of the word? Write at least three generalizations about your list of words based on your findings.

Resources

Teacher resources

- Baskin, B. H., & Harris, K. H. (1980). *Books for the gifted child*. New York: Bowker.
- Boyce, L. N. (1997). *A guide to teaching research skills and strategies in grades 4-12*. Williamsburg, VA: Center for Gifted Education.
- Center for Gifted Education. (1998). *Guide to teaching a language arts curriculum for high-ability learners*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

National Council of Teachers of English & International Reading Association. (1996). *Standards of learning for the English language arts*. Urbana, IL: Author.

Paul, R. (1992). *Critical thinking: What every person needs to survive in a rapidly changing world*. Rohnert Park, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking.

VanTassel-Baska, J., & Little, C.A. (Eds.). (2003). *Content-based curriculum for high-ability learners*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

For further reading – some other books or authors you might enjoy

The Changeover by Margaret Mahy
Dangerous Spaces by Margaret Mahy
The Catalogue of the Universe by Margaret Mahy
Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame
Novels by Paul Fleishman
Novels by Gary Paulsen

Useful web sites

<http://nova.bsuvc.bsu.edu/~00mevancamp/litterms.html> (webpage on the elements of literature)

<http://www.virtualsalt.com/litterms.htm> (a glossary of literary terms)

<http://www.m-w.com> (Merriam-Webster Dictionary site)