

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Favorite Summer Activity: \_\_\_\_\_  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade English – Summer Assignment

Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade year in ELA is going to explore how *choices we make have an impact on others* through the reading and writing of fiction and nonfiction texts. Our first unit will be about narrative writing and how as readers, and as writers, we can understand how narrative elements enhance a story. Please read through the instructions and if you have any questions, please email me at [lindseysh@spokaneschools.org](mailto:lindseysh@spokaneschools.org). I should have email access and availability most of the summer.

For your summer assignment, **please read the two short stories in this packet**. For each short story, you will identify one to two narrative elements from the list below that the author uses to convey their theme or message. Then answer the analysis questions after each story. Afterwards, you will have an opportunity to brainstorm your own narrative on a plot diagram.

Narrative Element	Definition
Characterization	The methods a writer uses to develop characters, for example, through descriptions, actions, and dialogue
Figurative Language	Imaginative language that is not meant to be interpreted literally (simile, metaphor, alliteration, personification, etc.)
Imagery	The verbal expression of sensory experience; descriptive or figurative language used to create word pictures; imagery is created by details that appeal to one or more of the five senses
Sensory Details	Words or information that appeals to one or more of the five senses
Theme	A writer's central idea or main message

## Suggestion... Summer Reading!?

Also, please continue to read other things that interest, excite, and push you this summer. Here is a great checklist of other genres and topics to explore if you are interested. If you haven't tried some of these genres/styles, then give them a chance this summer! Now is a great time to explore other types of literature that you haven't experienced in the past.

Happy Reading!

- A non-fiction book
- A graphic novel
- A book that takes place in a different country
- A science fiction book
- A book on a topic you know nothing about
- A biography (bonus if you then compare it to an autobiography of the same person!)
- A book that contains a sport/activity you love
- A book about a historical event that interests you
- Listen to any audiobook
- A book from a fantasy series
- A book of short stories
- A historical fiction book
- A book that's been made into a movie
- A mystery book
- A book by someone who looks different than you

**Directions: While reading, highlight/underline and label at least one narrative element (characterization, figurative language, imagery, sensory details, theme) that you notice the author using.**

### **The Scholarship Jacket by Marta Salinas**

The small Texas school that I attended carried out a tradition every year during the eighth-grade graduation; a beautiful gold and green jacket, the school colors, was awarded to the class valedictorian, the student who had maintained the highest grade for eight years. The scholarship jacket had a big gold S on the left front side and the winner's name was written in gold letters on the pocket.

My oldest sister Rosie had won the jacket a few years back and I fully expected to win also. I was fourteen and in the eighth grade. I had been a straight A student since the first grade, and the last year I had looked forward to owning that jacket. My father was a farm laborer who couldn't earn enough money to feed eight children, so when I was six, I was given to my grandparents to raise. We couldn't participate in sports in school because there were registration fees, uniform costs, and trips out of town; so even though we were quite agile and athletic there would never be a sports school jacket for us. This one, the scholarship jacket, was our only chance.

In May, close to graduation, spring fever struck, and no one paid any attention in class; instead we stared out the windows and at each other, wanting to speed up the last few weeks of school. I despaired every time I looked in the mirror. Pencil thin, not a curve anywhere, I was called "Beanpole" and "String Bean" and I knew that's what I looked like. A flat chest, no hips, and a brain, that's what I had. That really isn't much for a fourteen-year-old to work with, I thought, as I absentmindedly wandered from my history class in the gym. Another hour of sweating in basketball and displaying my toothpick legs was coming up. Then I remembered my P.E. shorts were still in a bag under my desk where I'd forgotten them. I had to walk all the way back and get them. Coach Thompson was a real bear if anyone wasn't dressed for P.E. She had said I was a good forward and once she even tried to talk Grandma into letting me join the team. Grandma, of course, said no.

I was almost back at my classroom's door when I heard angry voices and arguing. I stopped. I didn't mean to eavesdrop; I just hesitated, not knowing what to do. I needed those shorts and I was going to be late, but I didn't want to interrupt an argument between my teachers. I recognized the voices; Mr. Schmidt, my history teacher, and Mr. Boone, my math teacher. They seemed to be arguing about me. I couldn't believe it. I still remember the shock that rooted me flat against the wall as if I were trying to blend in with the graffiti written there. "I refuse to do it! I don't care who her father is, her grades don't even begin to compare to Martha's. I won't lie or falsify records. Martha has a straight A plus average and you know it." That was Mr. Schmidt and he sounded very angry. Mr. Boone's voice sounded calm and quiet.

“Look, Joann’s father is not only on the Board, he owns the only store in town; we could say it was a close tie and...”

The pounding in my ears drowned out the rest if the word’s only a word here and there filtered through. “... Martha is Mexican... resign... won’t do it...” Mr. Schmidt came rushing out, luckily for me went down the opposite was toward the auditorium, so he didn’t see me. Shaking, I waited a few minutes and then went in and grab my bag and fled from the room. Mr. Boone looked up when I came in but didn’t say anything. To this day I don’t remember if I got in trouble in P.E. for being late or how I made it through the rest of the afternoon. I went home very sad and cried into my pillow that night so grandmother wouldn’t hear me. It seemed a cruel coincidence that I had overheard that conversation.

The next day when the principal called me into the office, I knew what it would be about. He looked uncomfortable and unhappy. I decided I wasn’t going to make it easier for him so I looked him straight in the eye. He looked away and fidgeted with the papers on his desk.

“Martha,” he said, “there’s been a change in policy this year regarding the scholarship jacket. As you know, it has always been free.” He cleared his throat and continued. “This year the Board decided to change fifteen dollars—which still won’t cover the complete cost of the jacket”.

I stared at him in shock and a small sound of dismay escaped by throat. I hadn’t expected this. He still avoided looking in my eyes.

“So if you are unable to pay the fifteen dollars for the jacket, it will be given to the next one in line.” Standing with all the dignity I could muster, I said, “I’ll speak to my grandfather about it, sir, and let you know tomorrow.” I cried on the walk home from the bus stop. The dirt road was a quarter of a mile from the highway, so by the time I got home, my eyes were red and puffy.

“Where’s Grandpa?” I asked Grandma, looking down at the floor so she wouldn’t ask me why I’d been crying. She was sewing on a quilt and didn’t look up.

“I think he’s out back working in the bean field.”

I went outside and looked out at the fields. There he was, I could see him walking between the rows, his body bent over the little plants, hoe in hand. I walked slowly out to him, trying to think of how I could best ask him for the money. There was a cool breeze blowing and a sweet smell of mesquite in the air, but I didn’t appreciate it. I kicked at a dirt clot. I wanted that jacket so much. It was more than just being a valedictorian and giving a

little thank you speech for the jacket on graduation night. It represents eight years of hard work and expectation. I knew I had to be honest with Grandpa; it was my only chance. He saw me and looked up.

He waited for me to speak. I cleared my throat nervously and clasped my hands behind my back so he wouldn't see them shaking. "Grandpa, I have a big favor to ask you" I said in Spanish, the only language he knew. He still waited silently, I tried again. "Grandpa, this year principal said the scholarship jacket is not going to be free. It's going to cost fifteen dollars and I have to take the money tomorrow, otherwise it'll be given to someone else." The last words came out eager rush. Grandpa straightened up tiredly and leaned his chin on the hoe handle. He looked out over the field that was filled with the tiny green bean plants. I waited, desperately hoping he'd say I could have the money. He turned to me and asked quietly, "What does a scholarship jacket mean?"

I answered quickly; maybe there was a chance. "It means you've earned it by having the highest for eight years and that's why they're giving it to you" too late to realize the significance of my words. Grandpa knew that I understood it was not a matter of money. It wasn't that. He went back to hoeing the weeds that sprang up between the dedicated little bean plants. It was a time consuming job; sometimes the small shoots were right next to each other. Finally he spoke again.

"Then if you pay for it, Marta, it's not a scholarship jacket, it is? Tell your principal I will not pay the fifteen dollars."

I walked back to the house and locked myself in the bathroom for a long time. I was angry with grandfather even though I know he was right; and I was angry with the Board, whoever they were. Why did they have to change the rules just when it was my turn to win the jacket?

It was a very sad and withdrawn girl who dragged into the principal's office the next day. This time he did look me in the eyes.

"What did your grandfather say?" I sat very straight in my chair. "He said to tell you he won't pay the fifteen dollars."

The principal muttered something I couldn't understand under his breath and walked over to the window. He stood looking out at something outside. He looked bigger than usual when he stood up; he was a tall gaunt man with gray hair, and I watched the back of his head while I waited for him to speak.

"Why?" he finally asked. "Your grandfather has the money. Doesn't he own a small bean farm?"

I looked at him, forcing my eyes to stay dry. “He said if I had to pay for it, then it wouldn’t be a scholarship jacket,” I said and stood up to leave. “I guess you’ll just have to give it to Joann.” I hadn’t meant to say that; it had just slipped out. I was almost to the door when he stopped me.

“Martha—wait.”

I turned and looked at him, waiting. What did he want now? I could feel my heart pounding. Something bitter and vile tasting was coming up in my mouth; I was afraid I was going to be sick. I didn’t need and sympathy speeches. He sighed loudly at me, biting his lip, as if thinking.

“Okay, darn it. We’ll make an exception in your case. I’ll tell the Board, you’ll get your jacket.”

I could hardly believe it. I spoke in a trembling rush. “Oh, thank you sir!” Suddenly I felt great. I didn’t know about adrenalin in those days, but I knew something was pumping through me, making me feel as tall as the sky. I wanted to yell, jump, run the mile, do something I ran out so I could cry in the hall where there was no one to see me. At the end of the day, Mr. Schmidt winked at me and said, “I hear you’re getting a scholarship jacket this year. His face looked as happy and innocent as a baby’s but I knew better. Without answering I gave him a quick hug and ran to the bus. I cried on the walk home again, but this time because I was so happy. I couldn’t wait to tell Grandpa and ran straight to the field. I joined him in row where he was working and without saying anything I crouched down and started pulling up the weeds with my hands. Grandpa worked alongside me for a few minutes, but he didn’t ask what had happened. After I had a little pile of weeds between the rows, I stood up and faced him.

“The principal said he’s making an exception the jacket after all. That’s after I told him what you said.”

Grandpa didn’t say anything, he just gave me a pat on the shoulder and a smile. He pulled out the crumpled red handkerchief that he always carried in his back pocket and wiped the sweat off his forehead.

“Better go see if your grandmother needs any help with supper.”

I gave him a big grin. He didn’t fool me. I skipped and ran back to the house whistling some silly tune.

## Questions for The Scholarship Jacket

**Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Please use details from the text to support your answers.**

1. What makes the principal suddenly change his mind at the end of the story? How do you know?
2. Martha overhears and then engages in several conversations in this story. How does each conversation move the story forward?
3. What do you think the author learned as a result of this event? Why? Which of your own personal experiences has helped to teach you a similar lesson?

## Why Couldn't I have Been Named Ashley by Imma Chilike

**Directions: While reading, highlight/underline and label at least one narrative element (characterization, figurative language, imagery, sensory details, theme) that you notice the author using.**

“Ashley!” exclaimed Mrs. Renfro, and simultaneously three heads whipped around at attention towards the **perturbed** teacher. At the same time, all three Ashleys proudly replied, “Yes, ma’am?”

When I was a fourth grader, I remember sitting in class that day just before the bell rang for dismissal. I remember thinking of all the names in the world, how I could have possibly been stuck with such an alien one. I thought about all the popular kids in the class. I figured that I wasn't popular because of my weird name. I put some things together in my mind and came up with a **plausible** equation: COOL NAME = POPULARITY. The dismissal bell rang. As I mechanically walked out to catch my ride, I thought to myself, “Why couldn't I have been named Ashley?”

I was born, on July 7th, 1986 ,at Parkland Hospital of Dallas, Texas. I was the first American-born Nigerian in both of my parents' families. I was my parents' first joy, and in their joy, they gave me the name that would haunt me for the rest of my life, Immaculeta Uzoma Achilike.

The first time I actually became aware of my name was on the first day of first grade. I went to school loaded with all my school supplies and excited to see all of my old kindergarten friends. I couldn't wait to see who my new teacher was.

As I walked into the classroom, all my friends pushed up to me, cooing my name: “Imma, Imma I missed you so much.” The teacher walked in with the attendance sheet. She told everyone to quiet down so she could call roll. Before she started, she said something I thought would have never applied to me. She said, “Before I call roll, I apologize if I mispronounce anyone's name” with a very apologetic look on her face. She looked down at the attendance sheet, paused for a minute, and then looked up with an extremely puzzled look on her face. I remember thinking that there was probably some weird name before mine; although, my name was always the first name to be called in kindergarten. Suddenly, my palms started sweating and then she began to hopelessly stutter my name, “Im-Immaculet Arch-liki, I mean, Achei. . . .” Here, I interrupted. My ears burned with embarrassment and droplets of perspiration formed on my nose. “Did I say it right?” she said with the same apologetic look on her face. Before I responded, the laughs that the other kids in class had been holding back suddenly exploded, like a **volatile** vial of nitroglycerin, into peals of laughter. One kid thought it was so funny his chubby face started turning red and I could see a tear gradually making its way down his face. I found myself wishing I could sink into the ground and never come back.

I hated being the laughingstock.

I never really recovered from the shock of that day. From that day forward, the first day of school was always my most feared day. I didn't know what to do; all I could do was to tell my teachers, "I go by Imma."

I felt so alone when all the other girls in my class had sparkly, pink pencils with their names printed on them. You know, the ones they sell in the stores along with name-**embossed** sharpeners, rulers and pencil pouches. Every year I searched through and rummaged around that rack at the store, but I could never find a pencil with my name on it.

The summer of my seventh-grade year, my family and I took a vacation tour "home" in Nigeria, where my parents were born. My cousin and I were playing cards, talking girl talk, and relating our most embarrassing moments. Each tried to see whose story could top whose. I told one story of how I wet the bed at a sleepover, and she told me how she had farted in class during a test. That was a hoot. Then, I told her the story of how I was laughed at because of my weird name. I thought it was pretty funny, but she didn't laugh. She had the most serious look on her face, then she asked me, "Immaculeta Uzoma Achilike, do you know what your name means?" I shook my head at her and that's when she started laughing. I thought she was making fun of me, and as I started to leave she said: "Immaculeta means 'purity', 'Uzoma' means 'the good road' and . . ." Having heard her words, I stopped walking away and turned around in amazement. What does Achilike mean?" I asked. After a long pause she calmly said, "Achilike means 'to rule without force.'" I was astonished and pleased. I never knew what my name meant.

My name is Immaculeta Uzoma Achilike. I am the daughter of first-generation Nigerian immigrants. I am the daughter of hardworking and brave parents. My name means "to rule without force." My grandfather was a wealthy man of generous character. When I say my name in Nigeria, people know me as the granddaughter of a wealthy man of generous character. They know me by my name. There my name is not embossed on any pencil or vanity plate. It is etched in the minds of the people.

My name is Immaculeta Uzoma Achilike.



## Questions for Why Couldn't I Have Been Named Ashley

**Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Please use details from the text to support your answers.**

1. Over the course of the text, the narrator has two distinctly different reactions to her name. How are they different? Which details in the story tell you how the author feels?
2. Find an example of visual sensory language used in paragraph 4. How does this language make the incident more vivid?
3. How does the author choose to begin the narrative? What is the author's purpose in beginning the narrative this way?

**Directions:** Using the plot diagram on the back of this sheet, plan out your own narrative. This could be a nonfiction narrative about a memory from school that stands out to you or a fiction narrative about a student starting middle school for the first time. Just like the authors of the stories you just read, you want to make sure you pick a memory that you remember a lot of details about or make sure your fiction narrative has a clear conflict and resolution.

**3. Climax**  
When does the main character face their problem? This is the turning part of the story... things will never be the same for the character.



**2. Rising Action**  
What events happen after the exposition and before the climax?  
Discuss 2-3 important events.



**4. Falling Action:**  
What happens immediately after the climax? Discuss 2-3 important events.



**1. Exposition**  
Who are the main characters in the beginning of the story?  
  
What is the setting in the beginning of the story?  
  
What is the mood?

**6. Conflict**  
What is the major problem in the story?  
  
Protagonist vs. Antagonist

**5. Resolution:**  
What happens at the VERY end of the story?



# Plot Diagram

**Theme:** What is the message/lesson the author wants the reader to remember? Should be a sentence not one word.

3. Climax

**Your Name:**

2. Rising Action

4. Falling Action:

6. Conflict

1. Exposition

5. Resolution:

# Plot Diagram

Theme:

