After all the work we have put into our original middle school unit, we are happy to present our final draft with the few revisions we needed to make. Our main focus has stayed the same: character analysis. We believe we have an awesome unit with a number of great highlights and revisions.

A few things we’d like to highlight are our assessment rubric, our morals on the mountain activity, our survivor game activities, and our “moleskine” journals. One aspect of this unit that was challenging, but also very rewarding, was creating a rubric for the final paper. It was great to have practice taking on the role of teacher and having the chance to come up with a thoughtful and applicable rubric for our students’ paper. One of best unit ideas was for our moral on the mountains day. This was such a cool unit because it brought up truly intriguing questions and put the students in the actual context of the story. The survivor game activities were also another one of our favorite aspects of this unit. The highlight of this activity was the “baseball game” because it gave students the opportunity to work together as a team in a fun and hands-on activity. Our final highlight of the unit that we are most proud of is our “moleskine” journals (bell work). We actually took the time to create an example of what we would be giving students and it provides a really good and easy cumulative assessment for the overall bell work.

As far as revision, we really didn’t have to change too much. Honestly, our biggest revision process took place during our planning session. We focused mainly on themes and the books themselves with no other stable “direction.” When we talked with Elizabeth, our visiting student teacher, we realized that our unit needed to have more of a focus on character analysis based on the actual NE state standard assessment. It was great practice to plan our unit around what we may actually use in the
LPS district. Therefore, we reworked our unit to meet this state standard and we think it helped immensely. The only areas that needed any sort of revision for our final draft were our assessment and evaluation sections. Simply, there were some areas that needed to be further clarified and explained. It was easy enough for us in the group to understand what assessments were needed and how they were performed, but if a random reader read this section they would still have some questions on how these assessments actually work. This is important to understand if we ever need to present our lesson to an administrator or leave something behind for a substitute teacher to follow. Clarity is essential.

That being said, it is pretty obvious that the most important aspect of the learning process for our group was creating an entire unit based on an actual NE state assessment standard. This is important because the unit we created is realistic and we could actually use it for our future student teaching experience. It was a much needed taste of reality and gave us an opportunity to see how working with a standard actually feels. We have also learned is how to work together and collaborate ideas. It was great to have the experience of planning a lesson from point A to point B and having colleagues adding advice and awesome new insights. We had a super awesome group and we are excited to present our final work!
I) Unit Rationale

“Our dreams may be in the mountains or in the world around you; they are worth striving for.”
– Conrad Anker, in Mystery on Everest

Throughout our lives, we will all encounter mountains that we must overcome, or in Peak and Tilt’s case, climb to the top. Some may even stretch as high as Mount Everest. This unit is designed to help the students engage with the text, allowing them to not only make connections, but also to juxtapose the novel with their own lives. Whether they are reading Peak, by Roland Smith, or Everest (Part Three: The Climb) by Gordon Korman, the students will reflect upon four essential themes: relationships and their effect on identity, character connection clarifying “our own lives and the choices we make,” maturity, and survival. This unit will satisfy LPS district goals and NE state standards. Peak and Everest are district-required texts in which the students must complete a character analysis as a final assessment.

Peak and Everest contain a wealth of collective themes, motives, and morals which will compel the students to “think differently about the world” (Lipman 87). By the end of this unit, the students will grow in their knowledge and abilities of analysis, reflection, character development, communication, and writing. In order to foster this growth that each student needs, we follow the advice of Kathleen Cushman in Fires in the Middle School Bathroom. Like Cushman, we believe that “when you help middle schoolers experience your subject as not important but compelling and even fun, you show that you understand what they need in order to learn” (56). Our unit is centered around a district mandated requirement (the character analysis), but it will be our role (the role of the teacher) to teach in a multi-faceted way so that we can connect to our multi-faceted students. Throughout our unit, we provide the students with a variety of diverse, creative, and meaningful activities. For example, one activity focusing on character analysis, requires the students to create a Facebook profile page for their selected character. In order to create their profiles, the student must analyze the character’s traits, likes, dislikes, relationships, current status and beliefs, and pinpoint quotes.

The type of work completed throughout this unit balances between working alone, working with a partner, or working with a group of peers co-constructing knowledge. One of the major needs of this unit and of the students will be to create a classroom community. The students will constantly be working together in different “Climbing Teams.” These will include weekly character chats or talking with their mountain peak partners about events in the text. Our goal is to create a seamless unit, simultaneously reaching out to both the Peak and Everest Readers. It is not Peak versus Everest, we will all be on the mountain together. Throughout this unit, the students will embark on an individual journey of self-discovery, survival, and adventure within their own lives, as well as a mutual
exploration of maturity and the importance of interactions and relationships within their communities. Having this unit revolve around inquiry and the idea of a mutual exploration with their peers, the classroom must be converted “into a community in which friendship and cooperation would be welcomed as positive contributions to a learning atmosphere” (Lipman 94). There will be many times in which the students will be working together in pairs or in small groups in order to discover some of the many themes in which this unit focuses on.

In order to grow in their learning, students are also going to need a strong sense of personal relevance. Each year, the classroom is filled with a new group of unique students. Every one of these students will have their own perspectives and personal experiences to share. Because of the rich diversity of themes and the wealth of characters found throughout the novels, the students will be able to identify with many different characters. This will greatly benefit the students when it is time to create their character analysis. Perhaps one student will create a strong connection with Peak, a passionate young man, who illegally climbs skyscrapers and will embark on an extraordinary journey to the top of Mount Everest leading him closer to his family as well as himself. Another student might form a close connection to Sun-jo. Is he Peak’s friend or his enemy? Sun-jo is climbing the mountain for his family, though he continues to help Peak overcome the mountains in his life.

Through the literature of Peak and Everest, we were able to find stories “where characters put aside selfish interests for the greater good… for literature that helps us clarify our own lives and the choices we make… pieces that provoke us to think big thoughts… to help us understand why things are the way they are and to imagine how they could be different” (Christensen165). This unit will allow students to analyze the choices of the characters and reflect on their own similar experiences. Throughout the two novels, characters must overcome family differences, feelings of loneliness, situations with friends and family, and even death. Through their reading, the students will be able to enter into the novel and reflect on their own experiences while climbing Mount Everest.

Like Peak, the students will be given their own “Moleskine Journals” in order to reflect, analyze, and share their own experiences revolving around the “big ideas” of this unit. These journals will guide the students’ thinking, while they read and will contain the majority of their daily bell work. Periodically, the students will be given a question to answer, a scenario to reflect upon, or an activity to complete within their Moleskins. The students will constantly be asked to share their reflections with the class, in order to help students reach a mutual exploration necessary to grow in their learning.

A peak element, to our unit, is the opportunity for students to connect their own lives to the stories they are reading and use literature as a mentor text for their own writing and reflections. Peak and Everest will also provide the students with new horizons filled with mountaintops, conflicts, characters, and literary devices of all shapes and sizes. As the students climb deeper into their novels, they will be able to explore the world around them.
II) Unit Outline

Part A: Pedagogical Orientation/Framework:

Theme Justification

In order to successfully orient a conceptually-driven unit, a number of different types of themes will be considered. The main themes we will be exploring in these texts are adventure, coming of age, human relationships, and working with a specific text. Although there are seven different types of themes (as expressed by *Teaching English by Design*), we believe that these best fit our unit. Our unit is also justified by working with specific texts that fall under the same genre. Through these themes and the specific texts, we will also rationalize the learning of a key strategy; character analysis.

First, this unit satisfies the overall plot themes of adventure, coming of age, and human relationships are present in both of these texts. *Teaching English by Design* states that units focused on a theme create an authentic student interest and generate productive learning. *TED* also tells us that “Students are engaged in integrated inquiry into topics that parallel their social development or that help to lead their development” (118). Therefore, our unit focuses on themes that hold significance for our 7th grade learners. Our students are starting the very real process of growing up and as they prepare to enter high school. A coming of age tale directly reflects the changes they may be going through. Relationships are more important than ever to our students and they will easily relate to the teenage companionship presented in these texts. Adventure and fun also plays a huge role in our students lives and they will be drawn to the thrilling undertaking these texts discover.

Working with a specific text presents a completely different type of theme. Although this is not one of the original “seven types of unit,” we believe there is a case for it to be. It is important to note that the *TED* text mentions “…that topic needs to help students develop frameworks for thinking about issues so that they can think about new situations (including new texts) through that framework” (118). *Peak/Everest* provide just that. First and foremost, they present students with a new situation that they may have never experienced: climbing a mountain. Second, because both texts have been published fairly recently (Peak 2007 & Everest 2002), students will have less familiarity with them. These are two fresh texts that have not been used thousands of times in the middle school system, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Using these specific texts also presents us with the opportunity to work with a piece of Young Adult Literature. *Teaching Young Adult Literature Today* states “teachers can select well-written young adult titles to effectively engage contemporary students in reading, to get them to care about reading, and as a result, to motivate them and to develop more positive attitudes toward reading” (42). *Peak* and *Everest* perfectly meet the growing classroom need for YAL.

These specific texts also satisfy the idea of “genre.” Even though these are two separate texts, they both “employ a predictable, consistent set of codes” (TED 120). Both texts fall under the same genre of what we will call “Mt. Everest adventure text.” Because these texts fall under this same genre, they are perfect to pair together in a classroom that contains students of different reading levels.
Students at a lower reading level will have an easier time reading *Everest* while students with higher reading abilities will find a challenge in reading *Peak*. However, because of their identical genres, both texts will satisfy the same student learning needs.

Our final and most important justification for this unit revolves around our desire to teach students a key strategy: character analysis. *TED* tells us that “having formal strategies for recognizing and interpreting literary codes can be very useful for students in their subsequent reading” (121). Throughout this reading, we will discuss character traits and how these change (or don’t change) in order to help students critically analyze the texts. Students will be able to recognize strengths/weaknesses and how this relates to the overall plot of the story. Utilizing this skill in these texts will give them a context in which to read and help them to formulate questions for further readings (TED 122). Character analysis is an essential skill for any middle school learning to attain and will greatly assist them in their overall understanding of literature.

*Teacher and student “stances”*

Throughout the unit experience, teacher stance will be very important. We hope to orient instructional leadership that will create a pathway of success for our students. Throughout the unit we will focus on implementing an “authoritative” teaching style. Our standards and feedback will be clear and specific. We will be assertive and have high expectations for our students, but will also be fair and listen to what they have to say. Students should see the teacher as the “leader” of their “expedition” through the text. We are their guide and they should feel comfortable enough to come to us if they are ever having trouble or need an answer to a question. Because we are their “leader,” we must also make sure to model proper thinking strategies and behaviors. Student actions should be a direct reflection of our own. Above all, our teacher stance must revolve around engagement and excitement. If we are passionate about these texts, our students will also be passionate.

It is equally important throughout this experience that student participation is carefully oriented. Although we will be the main instructors for this text, students should also be taking an active role in the learning process. We will create a classroom environment that encourages full student participation and requires their daily engagement. Expectations for discussion and participation will not differ between the two texts. Everyone is expected to be involved. Students will be held to high standards for both of the readings. Most importantly, students will be explicitly involved in the actions of a specific character of their text. In order to gain better understanding, students must fully accept this role and produce work that reflects insightful thought. If we as teachers do not orient our students to high levels of action, their understanding will suffer and they will not perform well on the final assessment. They must participate and we must make this apparent if we wish for them to gain full understanding.

*Learning strategies aligned with overarching unit questions and goals*

We will explore a number of learning strategies that align with our overarching essential
questions and goals in order to create successful learning. Our main goal throughout the unit will be
focused around gaining an understanding of character analysis. The strategies will use to accomplish this
will enhance students’ intrinsic motivation, keep them engaged, and provide them with authentic understanding.

Throughout the entire unit, we will center our learning strategies around the idea of character analysis. This goal is the driving force behind our unit. Any tools that we choose to use in our lesson plans will be used in a specific way to aid students in understanding the many levels of character analysis. We will implement projects and daily activities that further student understanding of how to analyze a specific character and why this helps with understanding the story.

In order to accomplish this understanding, we will first aim for students to be self motivated to read the texts rather than search the internet for basic summaries. Before any instruction begins, the teacher must give students compelling purpose to read. This will be accomplished through our introductory lessons and using constant reference to students daily lives. In order to further create genuine readers, we will use daily “bell work” to assess and monitor student reading. This “bell work” will contain activities that can range from a simple reading quiz or to a quick reading response. Students will also be given certain amounts of class time to read the texts in order to truly solidify the importance of really reading the materials.

In order to keep our students involved in these classroom activities, we will place a focus on providing them with engaging materials. We will aim to orient our classroom instruction around our essential questions and overarching goals, but will also take care to make it relatable and exciting for students. Our instruction will vary on a day-to-day basis and we will not rely solely on class discussion groups. Most importantly, in order to keep students engaged, we will take time to show explain the relevance of what they are reading and learning. Putting everything we do into the context of our students lives will create overall more engaged and successful students.

Above all, the learning strategies we use in the classroom will focus on providing students with authentic understandings of the materials. In order to create this understanding, we will focus on a number of tools presented in Understanding by Design. Our first step will be to “clearly frame our goals for ourselves (and colleagues)” (141) and to also explain them to our students. Setting strong essential questions and achievable goals will create better understanding. If students do not understand something, it is our duty as teachers to rework the lesson or provide assistance so they will gain understanding. We do not wish to leave students confused or lost. We want our students to fully understand the material. Any reading tools (ex. sticky notes) our outside texts (ex. news articles) will serve the purpose of deepening student understanding. These learning strategies make up the framework of our lesson plans. Anything we plan will be rooted in our unit questions and our overall goal of character analyzation in order to create a rewarding classroom.

Part B: Materials
Middle School Unit

- **Core texts:**
  - Peak by Roland Smith
  - Everest: The Summit by Gordon Korman

- **Bridge texts:**
  - National Geographic *Mystery on Everest: A photobiography of George Mallory*
  - *10 Amazing Mount Everest Survival Stories* by Shante Cosme

- **Handouts**
  - “Moleskin Journal” - Bell Work packet
  - Extra activities handouts attached to specific lessons

- **Multi-media extensions/supplements**
  - Campfire video
  - Reading music
  - YouTube

- **Secondary sources (design process)**
  - *Teaching English by Design* by Peter Smagorinsky
  - *Understanding by Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe
  - *Teaching Young Adult Literature Today* by Judith A. Hayn and Jeffrey S. Kaplan
  - *Teaching for Joy and Justice* by Linda Christensen
  - Information/binders from student teachers/LPS

- **Supporting Supplies**
  - Poster paper
  - Markers/colored pencils
  - Extra paper
  - Colored note cards
  - Basic classroom materials
Part C: Unit Goals

The text *Understanding by Design* points out that “Deep and transferable understandings depend on framing work around [essential] questions” (106). However, developing these can be a difficult task. Our group, although knowing what direction we wanted to go with the text, went through many potential questions before narrowing it down to the few that we have collected. Because we were dealing with two books, although they are similar, the possibilities were vast. Our first focus was to choose ideas that were especially relatable to the age group we were planning for. At seventh grade, identity is a key component. Nearly every student is questioning their identity in some way, and literature is a great way to approach those discussions. More specifically, we wanted students to explore what can affect identity. These ideas helped lead to our first essential question.

Character analysis was another major focus of our unit, especially since this is the writing prompt students are given in seventh grade for state standard assessment. We wanted students to especially explore one specific character and find ways of relating to them. This led us to the development of our second essential question. We believed Christensen said it best by stating that students should allow characters in texts to “clarify [their] own lives and the choices [they] make” (165). In this way, students are not only moving past the surface of plot into character analysis, but are also taking that comprehension a step further by applying those aspects to their own lives. These ideas help make the text more relatable for readers.

When combining the ideas of identity and exploring the journey of a character, we found maturity to be a large theme throughout the text. Once again, this is a topic highly relevant to students in this age group, as they themselves are learning what it means to be mature. These first three questions are highly relatable for our students, yet each holds their own specific meaning and purpose. They are perfect for our unit.

The other major theme that we felt obligated to include was the idea of survival. For some students, the experience of having to take care of themselves is somewhat unknown. However, it is important to know that some students, even at this age, are already facing these challenges. We know that this would be an interesting dynamic to discuss in the classroom. *Peak* and *Everest* are great books to integrate into such a discussion, as they contain survival stories from characters around the same age as the students. Although the situations are different, the same essential questions can apply.

Once deciding the focus of our themes, we reexamined *Understanding by Design* to make sure our essential questions were fitting the necessary criteria. One major consideration we took into account was that “such questions lead not only to deeper understanding, but also to more questions” (107). We believe our questions fit this model. In addition, the “checklist” was extremely beneficial to our final question decisions. With that being said, here are our four essential questions for our *Peak/ Everest* middle school unit:
1. How do relationships affect identity?
2. How do characters within a story help “clarify our own lives and the choices we make?”
3. What is maturity? What does it mean to be mature?
4. What lengths would you go to survive? How can we justify survival?

By using these essential questions, there are many goals that we wish to accomplish within the classroom. First and foremost, we want students to begin the process of questioning the world around them. Rather than take literary interpretations from others, we want them to explore their own personal relationship with a text. By prompting students with these essential questions, they will be asked to analyze and apply their answers to broader contexts. In doing so, students will also be gaining the knowledge and abilities they need to prepare to meet grade standards. By growing in their aptitudes to analyze, reflect, develop, communicate, and write, they will be able to complete necessary requirements. Our unit is an opportunity to facilitate such development, which is at the core of our rationale behind it.

The first of our specific goals we aim to accomplish comes from our “Bell Work” activities. These are aimed at reinforcing the readings and the literacy of our students based lessons on quick, daily activities. Students will also be assessed daily through informal activities, such as discussion. In this particular unit, the material will be pulled from the text in order to be more relevant to students and give them the aid of the book to provide context if needed. Some examples of these “mini-lessons” are writing prompts, character updates, and diary entries. By guiding students in analyzing a text, they will be able to apply their knowledge both to own writing and the world around them.

Another goal we aim for in this unit is communication between students. This will be brought up in several situations and a number of different lessons. The role of communication in interactions is a key point throughout our daily lessons. Here, different types of communication (such as verbal versus non-verbal) will be examined, including communication through listening. By learning how different aspects affect the ways in which they communicate, students will learn strategies on how to present themselves. In addition, communication will be one of the pillars for the “Survivor” activity towards the end of the unit. Students will learn that teamwork is a key to surviving in a community, and that communication is a main factor in teamwork. Understanding will be assessed informally through various class activities.

Because of the opportune nature of the text and writing expectations at this grade level, exceptional character analysis ability remains a primary goal for our unit. The “Bell Work” prompts helped begin nearly every lesson with a character focus. Furthermore, we created lesson plans and assessments with this emphasis in mind. The core goal of our unit is to aid in students overall understanding of character analysis and our lessons reflect this.

A different type of final assessment we have for this unit is the “Moleskin Notebook.” This is an exciting project that allows the goal of students being creative while sharing how they have applied
lessons from the book to their own lives. Since this notebook contains students’ work over the course of the entire unit, it serves as a constant reference point. They and the teacher can see their development over the course of the text. Most importantly, they can create their own visual representation of the character’s (and their) journey and are able to use that to interpret the essential questions for the unit. Students will learn that although their story may not fit the mold perfectly, it still has a purpose and deserves to be shared. The visual representation fosters creativity, while the writing activities give students an opportunity to communicate their thought process and meaning behind their interpretations. The project will then be assessed based on these goals.

Part D: Assessment and Evaluation

**Summative Assessments:**

Our two major final projects focus on LPS’ requirement of exploring character analysis. These projects will require students to take all of what they have learned and done in the *Peak / Everest* unit and put together a well thought out character analysis. These projects will encompass an expectations for form, as well as serve as opportunities for new learning (Smagorinsky 152).

It is essential for this unit to have an ongoing project for students to be able to do something daily, but also grown over time. The Moleskine Journal Packet is where students will reflect on the unit as a whole and also show the teacher what they have achieved over the course of the unit. This also a project where students can evaluate themselves at the very end. This packet serves as a stepping stone into their final paper.

The other final project is a character analysis paper which is what the LPS District requires of all students to do at the end of this unit. Students will be in direct contact with their character throughout the whole unit and will be engaged with how their character changes for better or worse at the end. The paper is a way for students to explain why they did what they did, support their writing, and reflect on the result of their character (UbD 161).

- **Moleskine Journal Packets:**
  -- Every student will have a journal at the beginning of the lesson for *Peak* by Roland Smith or *Everest: The Summit* by Gordon Korman. Just as the main characters from each novel Peak and Dominic Alexis wrote down their adventures, questions, revelations and hopes for the future, students will have a variety of writing topics in this journal. It will be something they will be able to write in (daily or every other day) and it will be collected at the end of the unit with a completion grade and final grade. The prompts will reflect on characters or situations from *Peak* and *Everest* and how the students react to those events. Other prompts will deal directly with the overarching questions:

  1) *How do relationships affect identity?*
  2) *How do characters within a story help “clarify our own lives and the choices we make?”*
3) What is maturity? What does it mean to be mature?
4) What lengths would you go to survive? How can we justify survival?

The journal will encompass much of what the student has been learning and how the text has influenced their own literary devices and skills. The big idea with this text. It will include “Dear Diary” entries, daily bell work and other writing prompts that will deal more specifically with their character analysis.

-- The journal also accommodates the standards we have set for our 7th graders. It will mainly focuses on:

  = LA 7.1.4.b: Adjust oral or silent reading pace based on purpose, text, difficulty, form and style.
  = LA 7.1.6: Comprehension: students will extract and construct meaning using prior knowledge, applying text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading grade level text.
  = LA 7.1.6.j: Generate and/or answer literal, inferential, critical, and interpretive questions, analyzing prior knowledge, information from the text and additional sources, to support answers
  = LA 7.1.6 o: Respond to text verbally, in writing, or artistically

- **Character Analysis Paper**

  -- Close to the beginning of the unit, students will choose one of the four characters from *Everest* or one of the five from *Peak*. For the rest of the unit, students will pay close attention to the character they have chosen. They will be asked to keep a detailed description of their character’s strengths, weaknesses, and personal changes they have gone through. Students will have the chance to write these details down in their Moleskine Journals as well as making a Character Map with their classmates.

  At the end of the unit, the students are required to write a character analysis paper using the character they have followed. The activities mentioned will help prepare students for analyzing and synthesizing their characters. The farther we go into the unit the more students will build off of their previous knowledge of their characters and then will be able to add new information to what they already know. With the writing aspect, there will be a couple of days where students will have the chance to write certain sections of their paper and then will trade with a partner to edit. Students may use what they have written about their character from their Moleskine Journals to use in their final paper.

  The paper will be graded according to the rubric which will include: an introduction, strengths paragraphs, weaknesses paragraphs, personal changes paragraphs, conventions, transitions, and a conclusion. Students will be given a full week (Week 5) to put their thoughts together and work on their paper. Students will be graded on a 1-4 scale in each section with a total of 24 points.

  -- The paper accommodates the LPS standards set for 7th grade English. The main standards this paper will focus on are:

  = LA 7.1.6b: Identify and analyze elements of narrative text (e.g., character development, setting, plot development, conflict, point of view, theme)
= **LA 7.1.6.1:** Build and activate prior knowledge in order to clarify text, deepen understand, and make connections while reading

= **LA 7.2.1:** Writing Process: students will apply the writing process to plan, draft, revise, edit and publish writing using correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and other standard conventions appropriate for grade level.
# Paper Rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4 - Exemplary</th>
<th>3 - Proficient</th>
<th>2-Gaining Proficiency</th>
<th>1-Minimal Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>- Clearly identifies and explains the selected character in the first paragraph</td>
<td>- Identifies &amp; explains the selected character with a few</td>
<td>- Needs further elaboration</td>
<td>- Unorganized &amp; unclear beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths Paragraphs</td>
<td>- Provides compelling detail &amp; evidence of the characters’ strengths</td>
<td>- Details and evidence provide proficient support</td>
<td>- Poorly incorporates evidence or details</td>
<td>- Lacks essential evidence or support for the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Clearly and logically organized</td>
<td>- Clearly &amp; organized in a few areas</td>
<td>- Organization is choppy, hard to follow</td>
<td>- Unorganized &amp; lacks clear order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meaning is clear, insightful and fluent</td>
<td>- Meaning is clear &amp; fluent</td>
<td>- General or superficial meaning</td>
<td>- Lacks central meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses Paragraphs</td>
<td>- Provide compelling detail &amp; evidence of character’s weaknesses</td>
<td>- Details and evidence provide proficient support</td>
<td>- Poorly incorporates evidence or details</td>
<td>- Lacks essential evidence or support for the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Clearly and logically organized appropriate to the context</td>
<td>- Clearly &amp; organized in a few areas</td>
<td>- Organization is choppy, hard to follow</td>
<td>- Unorganized &amp; lacks clear order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meaning is clear, insightful and fluent</td>
<td>- Meaning is clear &amp; fluent</td>
<td>- General or superficial meaning</td>
<td>- Lacks central meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes Paragraphs</td>
<td>- Shows compelling transformations of the character</td>
<td>- Details and evidence provide proficient support</td>
<td>- Poorly incorporates evidence or details</td>
<td>- Lacks essential evidence or support for the character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Clearly and logically organized appropriate to the context</td>
<td>- Clearly &amp; organized in a few areas</td>
<td>- Organization is choppy, hard to follow</td>
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<td>- Meaning is clear &amp; fluent</td>
<td>- General or superficial meaning</td>
<td>- Lacks central meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>- Few or no mechanical, spelling or grammatical errors</td>
<td>- Minor errors</td>
<td>- Several errors</td>
<td>- Numerous grammatical, spelling, mechanical errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses 3rd person narration correctly</td>
<td>- Few areas out of 3rd person narration</td>
<td>- Writer goes in &amp; out of 3rd person narration</td>
<td>- Writer doesn’t use 3rd person narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Smooth transitions</td>
<td>- Good use of transitions, but could still improve</td>
<td>- Choppy transitions &amp; hard to follow</td>
<td>- Little to none transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>- Clearly states 2 predictions for their character or explains what they have learned</td>
<td>- States 2 predictions or explains what they have learned</td>
<td>- Has 1 prediction or a poor explanation of what they have learned</td>
<td>- Lacks conclusion (none of the requirements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Writer’s feelings &amp; thoughts are apparent, but could elaborate more</td>
<td>- Writer’s feelings &amp; thoughts are apparent, but could elaborate more</td>
<td>- Writer’s feelings &amp; thoughts are sparse</td>
<td>- Writer leaves audience hanging</td>
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**Rationale for Week 5: Final Paper**

Week 5 is set apart for students to have time to process, analyze, synthesize, and explain their character analysis paper. Our main goal is to teach students how to analyze and connect with characters and it also fulfills the districts requirements. We deemed it necessary to include this in our planning because this shows what and how students have learned about focusing on one character throughout the unit. This paper also gives students a chance to take what they have learned from other students as well from being a bigger group who all had the same character. The paper ultimately will show a transfer of what they already know into what they have learned from *Peak* or *Everest*.

At the beginning of each class, we will bring in a model of the particular section we will be working on for that day. For example, if we were scheduled to write the strengths and weaknesses of our character, we would bring in a page or two model showing how to form a thought and then how to defend or elaborate it with examples and explanations from the book.

**Formative Assessments:**

These assessments are to build off of one another in order to get students to their final projects. One goal we had in mind for these assessments was to create a sense of self determination (Smagorinsky 152). Each of these enable students to set goals, pose questions, give reflective answers, and dive deeper into their character’s mind.

All of these activities put together inhibit the Six Facets explained in *Understanding by Design*. It is essential for students to focus on explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge from the very beginning so that students may be comfortable and have full comprehension of all of these facts at the end of the unit.

(The standards we have built up for the final projects are the standards we will be practicing and building upon in our students’ journey with our formative assessments. With each of these assessments, we want students to be able to accomplish each of these standards. Most importantly, we want our students to reveal their understanding of the books, themes, and literary skills through their performance as a whole.)

- **Moleskine Journal Packet (Bell Work)**

  -- The journals will be a daily activity for students to be able to write down what they have learned so far, what questions do they have, or to answer prompts concerning *Peak* or *Everest*. The students will turn these journals at the end of every day for completion points. “The purpose is to think about the literature without worrying about the form your thoughts take” (Jones 153).

  -- Bell Work will be a daily activity at the beginning of class about five to ten minutes to give students a chance to settle in before the daily routine. It is also a way for teachers to take role and get things ready for the lesson. These daily sessions will have students practice simple grammar, meditate on literal or interpretive questions, silent reading, Dear Diary entries (as if they were the characters) etc. all focusing on the book itself. This will not be so much as graded, but it will also be another completion grade. “The purpose is to start kids thinking, not to assess performance” (Jones 140). It will be a good
start to get students asking questions or reflect on what they have read the day before.

- **Reflection Quizzes / Questions**
  -- These reading quizzes are more of an accountability check for students. They will be graded and they will focus on the themes, characters, plots, and other elements from either book. It is a way to “assess for factual information, concepts, and discrete skill” (UBD 153). There will be 4 reading quizzes given after Reading Days. They will help students be able to build essential knowledge and skills for their final projects and journals.

- **Fireside Chat Questions**
  -- These are questions that are going to be left with students in the last ten minutes of their silent reading. When the teacher brings up the Fireside video, this tells students it is time to read their books and be thinking about the “Fireside Chat” question. The question or activity will deal with the reading and theme for that day. This will get students to be thinking at a deeper level and questioning about the characters, plot, themes, and how do these apply to the outside world as well (Friere). It will make students return to what the theme that was discussed during the day and take it into their reading.

- **Character Map Project**
  -- This will be an ongoing activity for students throughout the unit. As students choose their character, they will be then be put with other classmates who have the same character. About midway through the unit, students will have time in class to create a “Character Map”. Students will make a “map” showing the main events that have occurred in their character’s life. These main three - five events will be called “Camps” just how Peak and Dominic had to go from one camp to the next to reach the top. With each “camp,” students will write about why this “camp” is a significant part in their character’s life. The map project will be split into two different days during the unit. Students are required to use examples from the book, give an explanation why they chose the scene, scenario or event, and what they are learning about their character.