

Grade 7 English

Oak Meadow Coursebook

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Catherine, Called Birdy: Emotions and Predictions

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

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

Learning Objectives

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

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

Reading

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

Vocabulary

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

- Write a scene of dialogue between two people. The scene and characters can be based on the book you are reading or can be completely from your imagination. Use each vocabulary word in context in the dialogue.

- Make a foursquare as shown here. Divide your page into four sections. Write the definition in one corner, a sentence in one corner, a picture that demonstrates the meaning of the word in one corner, and a synonym or antonym in the other.
- Create your own visual interpretation of each word. This could be done through drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, or collage. Be sure the meaning of the word is clearly expressed.



Think About It: Reflection

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



Talk About It: Discussion

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



Reader's Journal

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

Literature Assignments

1. On February 21, Birdy writes about Madame Joana's fortune. Write about what you think her predictions mean. Write your answer in journal form as though you were one of the characters in the story. Use the first-person point of view. Make sure to specify which character is writing the journal.
2. Make your own prediction about what will happen to Birdy, what will come next in the story, or how the story will end. Give a brief explanation of what makes you think this will happen.
3. In the Middle Ages, illuminated manuscripts were drawn with impressive care and patience, using brilliant colors and intricate designs. You might want to find several photos of illuminated manuscripts to get a better idea of this art form. Create a new book jacket for this book, or write a favorite phrase from the book or your initials in decorative script with full color borders in the style of medieval manuscripts.



This page from the Book of Hours shows the floral decoration typical of illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages.



Up for a Challenge?

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

Learning Checklist

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

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

For Enrolled Students

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

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Catherine, Called Birdy: Expressive Language

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

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

Learning Objectives

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

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

Reading

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

Grammar Reading

Read the following sections:

- Concise Writing
- Analogies, Metaphors, and Similes

Concise Writing

Good writing is concise. Professional writers spend a good deal of time revising their writing to eliminate unnecessary words. Overstuffed phrases and pointless repetitions continually creep into our writing. The only remedy is ruthless pruning as you revise and edit. On occasion, you may

wish to use extra words to make a point. This can be very effective, but only if used very sparingly. Below is a list of some of the more common culprits in the war against wordiness.

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

end result	unexpected surprise
final outcome	desired goal

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

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

surrounded on all sides	consensus of opinion
at this point in time	quite unique

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

Clichés

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

fit as a fiddle	fresh as a daisy
right as rain	sick as a dog
across the board	off the top of my head

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

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

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

Analogies, Metaphors, and Similes

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

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

A quiet mind is like a calm lake.

The students were as busy as bees.

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

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

After the party, the house was a train wreck.

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

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

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

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

Simile: My dreams are like delicate birds

Metaphor: My dreams are delicate birds.

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

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

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

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

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

Grammar Exercises

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

Literature Assignments

1. Choose one of the following writing assignments to complete this week. Write at least two paragraphs. Use informative topic sentences, and organize your ideas in a clear and logical order.
 - a) Compare and contrast Birdy's life with your own life today. Describe one important way your life is different, and one important way it is similar. Use examples from the story in your writing.
 - b) Research the author of *Catherine called Birdy*, Karen Cushman. What was her motivation for writing this book? Do you think that she accomplished what she set out to do?
 - c) Choose two quotes from the book that stand out or that you feel are important to understanding the story or a particular character. Explain what you think each quote means and why it is important.
2. Choose one creative project:
 - a) Design a comic strip about Birdy's potential husbands. Be sure to use captions, and carefully drawn illustrations using details from the story.

- b) Write a series of five journal entries that Birdy could have written after the story ends. Refer to past events from the story as Birdy describes her life. Remember to try to pay attention to the voice you are using, so that it reflects Birdy's attributes and personality.
- c) Write or act out a conversation that Birdy may have had with her father about her potential husbands.

Learning Checklist

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

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