

**The University of New Brunswick's**  
**Faculty of Education**  
in partnership with  
**Theatre New Brunswick**  
*presents*



**Teaching Ideas for Navigating TNB's**  
***The Boat***

A play by Ryan Griffith based upon the  
Short Story by Alistair MacLeod

**Created by**

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*The following teaching ideas are not meant to be complete lesson plans. Instead, they are suggested activities that a teacher might consider after having had students attend Theatre New Brunswick's production of The Boat, and/or having read Alistair MacLeod's short story. Each activity is divided into one of 3 Curricular Strands: Speaking/Listening; Reading/Viewing; and Writing/Representing. Some activities are immediate in their structure while others are suggestions for teachers to further develop. Teachers are encouraged to skim-and-scan these suggestions and to modify, develop, and differentiate them to suit individual student needs. Please consider this collection as an opportunity for your students to revisit the play and/or story. Like a 'ticket to the theatre' the following snippets are meant to be invitations to you and your class to Enter, Explore, and Expand upon a powerful story about family, tragedy, and coming of age . . . enjoy!*

*Philip Sexsmith  
UNB Education*

# Strand: Speaking and Listening

## Putting the Feelings of Others Before Your Own: The Talking Circle

[Natasha Quiring]

*The Boat* (both the play and the short story) can evoke many feelings of sadness, disappointment and sacrifice. In a Talking Circle, we will address the question: “Have you ever felt you had to do something—even if it wasn’t what you wanted—to make others happy?” Please remember that a Talking Circle is a safe space and no one speaks when someone is speaking. You can choose not to share as well, although I’d love to hear your stories. Here is an example of what a talking circle looks like: <https://firstnationspedagogy.ca/circletalks.html>

## The Legend of ‘Davy Jones’: Re-enacting When Father Meets the Myth

[Michaila Kyle]

*Davy Jones and his ‘locker’ is a phrase popularly euphemised to denote the death of a seafarer in the vast churning depths of the sea. Basically, those who die at sea are sent to Davy Jones’s Locker (the ocean floor). In some stories, evil and wicked sailors who died at sea were actually locked up in the chest by Davy Jones himself (some considered him to be Satan), and the sailor had to spend eternity trapped in there!*  
(MarineInsight in Maritime History 2016)

At the end of both the story and play it is unclear whether or not the father had fallen or jumped off the boat to his death. If we step beyond ‘what we know’ we can enter a world of mythology and seafaring lore. Imagine that the Father arrives at the ocean floor and opens his eyes to see he is at the entrance to Davy Jones’s locker. Here, he then comes face-to-face with Davy Jones himself! With a partner draft out what the two might say? Create an improvisational scene of the conversation between the two. Rehearse it. Consider if the father fell or did he jump? Why? Get creative! And be prepared to perform your scene for the class. Consult the lore for inspiration if you are unfamiliar with it: <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/davy-jones-locker.html>

## The Unsinkable Jenny Lynn: Parallels with April 1912

[Natasha Quiring]

The story reminds me of the *Titanic* and how life can be so short, and we can be so small, especially on the ocean. Listen to this re-count by a *Titanic* survivor: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD5J43Z9AW>. What parallels can you draw between her experience and the experience of the narrator? What would you do in a situation of distress on the water? Share with an elbow partner. We will address these questions in large group after your elbow-partner discussion. While listening to this recount use the following Graphic Organizer to help you consider the parallels between the narrator and this *Titanic* survivor. [https://www.google.ca/search?q=comparison+contrast+graphic+organizers&biw=2400&bih=1069&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwitsYO3voHSAhVV5WMKHej\\_C4Q\\_AUIBigB#imgrc=OUIbSxHPv2CNpM](https://www.google.ca/search?q=comparison+contrast+graphic+organizers&biw=2400&bih=1069&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwitsYO3voHSAhVV5WMKHej_C4Q_AUIBigB#imgrc=OUIbSxHPv2CNpM):

## Books Can Save Your Life: How Have Books Changed You?

[Norma Leah White]

*“Humans are difficult to predict. We gather up so much data that we keep processing and re-interpreting without even realizing it. Then, suddenly, one little thing can come along and set off a cascade that seemingly came out of nowhere and compels us to move down a path we never would have considered before. Books are a great way to spark thought. And thought, ultimately, is where all real change that people undergo originates.”* (Joseph Reinemann)

In *The Boat* books play a large part in the development of the characters. The plots, themes, and conflicts embedded within these pages allowed the narrator, his sisters, and his father to explore a world other than the one they were born into. His mother; however, does not approve because the exposure to these other lives beyond their fishing community draws her children in, lures them away, and leaves them unsatisfied with their small town life...an unsatisfactory life...a life unfulfilled, just like the father.

What book(s) have you read that have changed your life? What would be different about your life today, if you had not read this book? Do you feel that the things you learned are beneficial? Would you recommend this story/play to others? Why or why not? What did you take away from this text?

## ***Be it Resolved: Debating Issues Within *The Boat****

[Ben McLaughlin]

Conduct a formal debate with a partner based around a question or issue that *The Boat* raises in either the short story version or theatrical version. You may wish to come up with your own debate topic. However, I have provided a few debate prompts for you to consider, as well as a link to a beginner's guide to debating.

Possible debate topics:

- Be it resolved that the father intentionally leapt from *The Jenny Lynn* into the stormy Atlantic thus committing an act of suicide.
- Be it resolved that the theatrical adaptation of Alistair McLeod's *The Boat* is a more superior, memorable, and interesting text than the short story from which it originated.
- Be it resolved that the ending of *The Boat* be forever edited omitting the unnecessary, sensational, and graphic depiction of the Father's dead body.

Remember that your side of the debate should be carefully researched. Students should closely re-read the texts and formulate their arguments before the debate begins. You must defend your side of the debate regardless of whether or not you truly believe in it. For a strong debating resource consult: <http://www.wikihow.com/Debate>. For an excellent modelled high school debate (under 30 minutes) based on abolishing the death penalty check out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjbuhOh3jyU>.

## **Maritime Disasters: Parallel Tragedies at Sea**

[Christopher Collins]

*Does anyone know where the love of God goes  
When the waves turn the minutes to hours?*

*(The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald – Gordon Lightfoot)*

The fishing industry can be one of the most profitable, lucrative professions for those who thrive on hard work and are not afraid of the dangers of open water. However, there are times when the dangers of sailing across open water are well-known. Tragedies involving fishing or transportation vessels make the news more often than we would like to admit, and the impact that these disasters can have on

families can be massive. Not only can loved ones be lost forever, but the ever present danger can create intense anxiety for those who have family members who work on the water.

One of the most infamous maritime disasters is that of the Edmund Fitzgerald, a transport ship that was carrying 26,000 tons of iron ore when it sank in Lake Superior on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1975. Twenty-nine men aboard the ship lost their lives. For more information about this tragedy here is a link to a commemorative article about the disaster: <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/11/09/the-legend-lives-on-sinking-of-edmund-fitzgerald-sank-40-years-ago.html> In the short story *The Boat*, we can see a solemn parallel of tragedy when the narrator's father is found dead at sea.

Listen to the song *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald* by Gordon Lightfoot and make a comparison to the ending of *The Boat*. What are the similarities and the differences? Do you feel that the risks of working on open water are worth the money? Why or why not? You can find the song at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vST6hVRj2A> For an excellent *Similarities and Differences Graphic Organizer* go to this link on ReadWriteThink: [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson275/compc\\_on\\_chart.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson275/compc_on_chart.pdf)

## **The Mother on Trial: In Defence of a Matriarch**

[Ben McLaughlin]

*“Oral argument is one of the most exciting parts of litigation, and only a few lawyers are really good at it...there are no tricks to good oral argument, and the single most-important component of great oral argument is preparation...Preparation is key...If you have done enough, you will be confident behind the podium, and you will rarely be surprised by what happens in the courtroom.” (Sam Glover 2015)*

In both the short story and the play *The Boat*, the character of the mother is depicted in a negative way. Many might argue that she is the story's true antagonist. She does not share the same opinions about education and escaping from the fishing world that her husband does. She is stern and traditionalist in that she wants everything to remain the same. In turn, she isolates both herself and her family from the 'outside' world.

The classroom intends to place the Mother on trial. You have been tasked to be her lawyer. Your job is to write a closing oral defense of the Mother's actions and attitudes throughout the story just as though you had to defend her in court. Build a good case for why the mother acts the way she does within the play and story and present it.

To make your defense sound as realistic as possible you may wish to consult these comprehensive lists of popular legal phrases:

<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/legalguide.pdf> and

<http://www.uscourts.gov/glossary>

For additional help, advice, and modelled exemplars on how to prepare for a closing oral argument in court, check out this site:

<https://lawyerist.com/40693/how-to-prepare-for-oral-argument/>

### ***The Boat Performance Presentation: Tellegami***

*[Alex Green]*

*Tellegami, is a free app that lets you create short animated movies called "Gamis," and it's become one of the most popular production apps in schools all over North America. You can create your own avatars and convert text into dialogue. The opportunities for you to be creative and imaginative in terms of text adaptation is incredible! Get ready to create.*

In groups adapt some of the scenes from the play into a presentation to be staged in front of your class. However, if you are hesitant of speaking in front of the class and if your group wishes, you can also record the scenes and then put them up on the smart board for the class to view as a video. If your group wishes to take this route, they can use Tellegami where you can create an avatar that speaks the dialogue for you. This could be useful for passages where there are long individually spoken parts, such as many of the parts of the narrator. Begin by selecting a portion of the play or story to be dramatized. Script this out so that your 'cast' knows what to say and why they are saying it. Rehearse it and then adapt it to Tellegami. Here is the Tellegami website: <https://telligami.com>

## **An Out-of-This-World Adaptation: *The Boat* Goes Inter-Stellar**

[Natasha Quiring]

See if your teacher can find you a printed copy of Ryan Griffith's adaptation of *The Boat*. Then form a group of 4-5 members. Together, you will select and read a section of the play aloud. Make sure everyone has a role. Once you have mastered your scene, you will perform it in front of the class—with a twist! You can choose to change the era, the genders, etc., while maintaining the ideas of the regular text. For example, you can make Jenny and the father meet on the moon where the father is a well-known astronaut who wants to leave, and Jenny is an alien who wants to stay (this is **just** an example!). Get creative and have fun! Here are some tips on how to impress me with your acting: <http://www.wikihow.com/Act-in-a-Play>.

## **Considering the Role of *Mother*: Debating the Children's Best Interests**

[Ryan Slade]

*"There's no debate about it! Debates are a great tool for engaging students and livening up classroom curriculum. Using debates in the classroom can help students grasp essential critical thinking and presentation skills. Among the skills classroom debates can foster are abstract thinking, citizenship and etiquette, clarity, organization, persuasion, public speaking, research, and teamwork and cooperation. And that's just the beginning!"* (EducationWorld.com)

Let's have a debate! The Narrator's mother wants her children to stay close to home and follow in her family tradition, where the males become fishermen and the females marry fishermen and become their homemakers. Most people probably view her as the antagonist of the story, especially when compared to the Narrator's father. However, is that really a fair depiction of her character? Is the mother really a villain? Splitting up into two teams, we will hold a debate on the following question: "By wanting her children to follow in her family's tradition and trying to prevent them from doing anything else, is the Narrator's mother acting in the best interest of her children?" One team will argue that the mother acts in the best interest of her children, while the other will argue that she does not act in the best interest of her children.



For great tips and ideas as to how to use debating strategies in any of your classes, check out the ideas you can find on the following website: [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/strategy/strategy012.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/strategy/strategy012.shtml)

## Debating a Maritime Livelihood: To Fish or Not to Fish?

[Christopher Collins]

*“Few countries have histories as closely tied to the oceans as Canada. The northern nation has the world’s longest coastline traversing three of the world’s five oceans: the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic. And its history brims with moments that are defined by its relationship to the oceans...”* (Oceana Magazine, 2015)

A debate is a formal, professional discussion on one particular topic. Debates are usually held in government when new laws are being considered, or when certain other situations arise. When debate is taught in Canadian public schools, three methods of debate are typically taught: Public Forum, Cross-Examination, and Canadian Parliamentary.

In order to incorporate debate easily in the classroom, **Public Forum** would be the most ideal format to use so that you and your classmates can become comfortable with the process of debate without overloading on rules and regulations. An introduction to debate is available to you here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_forum\\_debate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_forum_debate)

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Consider this fact: The dangers of fishing on open water are well documented and the profession has claimed many lives. The impact that these tragedies have had on families over the years has been monumental. Debate the following resolution: *“Be it resolved that the fishing industry should be abolished to protect people from the dangers of open water”*. Consider both the story, the play, and any other related information and sources that you can bring into the debate. A good description of Public Forum Debate can be viewed in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxcQbaXDFZw> and a great modelled example of Public Forum Debate can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFFOLNdSOWE>

# Strand: Reading and Viewing

## ***Lights, Camera, Action: Comparing and Contrasting Two Texts***

*[Ryan Slade]*

Let's watch a movie! Over the next 2-3 classes, we will watch *The Grand Seduction*, a film set in a small fishing village in Newfoundland, not unlike the small fishing village that is the setting of Alistair MacLeod's *The Boat*. After reading both versions of *The Boat* and watching *The Grand Seduction*, you will have to work in a team to create a presentation about how the two stories depict rural life (or life in a fishing village). Your presentation should detail both the similarities and differences between the characters and the settings of both stories. You will also be asked to analyze the depiction of rural life in both stories using one of the literary critical theories such as *Marxist Criticism*, *New Historicism*, *Feminist Criticism*, or *Postmodern Criticism*, to name a few. Finally, you are asked to pick a scene from the theatrical adaptation of *The Boat* to act out for the class and a scene from *The Grand Seduction* to play for the class that highlight key differences or similarities in rural life, and then explain why you chose those scenes and how it is that they exemplify the differences or similarities you chose to highlight.

## ***"No, But I Saw the Movie": What's Better the Story or the Play?***

*[Eve Powell]*

*"Never judge a book by its movie"*

*Films are great, but they just don't have the same...inclusion that books have. You're merely an observer: you aren't feeling everything the character feels, aren't reading every single one of their innermost thoughts, all of their doubts and fears and hopes. Films let you observe everything. Books? Books let you feel everything, know everything and LIVE everything. With a book, you can be the hero who kills the demon with one twirl of your blade. You can be the girl who battles cancer, along with all the pain and uncertainty that comes with it. You can be a demigod, you can be an alien, you can be an angel, a god, a villain, a hero. You can be in love, you can hate, you can triumph, you can lose. You can be anything and everything. There are no limits. No restrictions. Nothing is impossible, nothing is out of reach... (The Guardian 2013)*

We have examined both Alistair MacLeod's original short story and Ryan Griffith's dramatic adaptation of *The Boat*. Using a T chart, examine the strengths and weaknesses of each version. Compare your thoughts to those regarding other film/dramatic adaptations or novels or short stories with which you are familiar (For example: *The Hunger Games* novel/film, *Harry Potter* novels/film, *The Lottery* short story/film, etc.).

Take a look at this ongoing blogsite where online book and movie buffs debate the strengths and weakness of each genre. <http://www.debate.org/opinions/are-movies-better-than-books> From your viewing and reading history join in with the debate!

## Lives Dependent Upon the Sea: Commonalities of Small Fishing Towns

[Joshua Davenport]

*“Nearly 95% of the world's fishers are small-scale fishers. These number more than 20 million primary producers plus another 20 million small-scale processors, marketers, and distributors, totaling approximately 40 million people worldwide who are directly employed in the small-scale fisheries sector...Small-scale fishers make important contributions to the rest of humanity. For example, they provide around half of the world's fish catch that is designated for human consumption...whereas around a third of the fish that are caught by large-scale fishers are reduced to fish meal which is used mainly for animal feed...the fishing occupation [worldwide] is closely tied to the fishers' personal and cultural identities...fishing is perceived not merely [as] a means of assuring one's livelihood, but more broadly as a way of life-indeed, a way of life which is vivified by important occupational values and symbols which in turn underscore core aspects of small-scale fishers' individual and cultural identities. Many small-scale fishers are therefore very tenacious in their adherence to the fishing occupation even after it has ceased to be economically rewarding for them...” (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)*

In your groups, look at these images of small fishing towns in:

### Canada

[https://c1.staticflickr.com/1/291/20192383631\\_a5b0c2a7fe\\_b.jpg](https://c1.staticflickr.com/1/291/20192383631_a5b0c2a7fe_b.jpg),

### Vietnam

<https://vietnamtravel.deals/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Cua-Van-Van-Gia-Fishing-Village.jpg>

### Norway

<http://www.placestoseeinyourlifetime.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Hamnoy-Photo-by-Luca-Venturi-980x735.jpg>

### Japan

[http://www.japan-guide.com/community/img/889385\\_330.jpg](http://www.japan-guide.com/community/img/889385_330.jpg)

### Spain

[http://www.spainisculture.com/export/sites/cultura/multimedia/galerias/propuestas\\_culturales/puerto\\_gijon\\_s26096851.jpg\\_1306973099.jpg](http://www.spainisculture.com/export/sites/cultura/multimedia/galerias/propuestas_culturales/puerto_gijon_s26096851.jpg_1306973099.jpg)

What do they have in common? How are they different? What do you imagine life must be like in these villages? Do you think the people that live in these places have common life experiences? Discuss in your groups.

## **Reading the Play: Examples of Intense Imagery in *The Boat***

[Jessie Winsor]

Both the short story and the play employ intense and descriptive forms of imagery. For this task, recollect scenes and moments from both the play *and* the short story in terms of each 'category' of imagery evident. Try to find one example for each type of imagery (*visual, hearing, gustatory, olfactory, and tactile*).

After you have identified an example of each form of imagery be prepared to explain your choices. Consider which type of imagery spoke most to you? Which type was the easiest to connect with for you. For examples of different kinds of imagery visit the following website: <http://fos.iloveindia.com/imagery-examples.html>

As an extension of this activity, you can demonstrate your understanding by responding to imagery artistically. Choose any medium that you are comfortable with. This assignment isn't targeting just painting or drawing – it can also be film, video, collage, sculpture, knitting, sewing, etc.

## **The Art of First Impressions: Creating the Trailer for TNB's *The Boat***

[Christopher Collins]

*"A trailer (also known as a preview or coming attraction) is an advertisement or a commercial for a feature film...The term "trailer"*

*comes from their having originally been shown at the end of a feature film screening. That practice did not last long, because patrons tended to leave the theater after the films ended, but the name has stuck. Trailers are now shown before the film begins.” (from Wikipedia)*

A trailer can be a window into an absolutely amazing piece of media. Typically, they reveal the basis of the plotline, and can make us excited to experience a new movie, play, art exhibition, or album. Sometimes, a trailer can give away too much information and can spoil a piece of media for us before we even see it. On the opposite side of the spectrum, a trailer can give us little information about a piece of media, and can leave us asking questions and wanting more information. Typically, these are the best kinds of trailers.

Theatre New Brunswick will be performing Ryan Griffith’s stage adaptation of *The Boat*, and in anticipation of this play, TNB has released a trailer. This trailer is available to view on YouTube, and has been played over radio stations in the Maritime region.

Watch the trailer for “The Boat”, and pay attention to the following aspects:

- Imagery
- Dialogue
- Tone of Voice
- Point of View

Based on the above aspects, do you feel that the trailer for this presentation is effective at drawing in an audience? Would you want to see this play based exclusively on this trailer? Why or why not? Be sure to explain your answer by connecting to what you viewed while watching the trailer. The trailer can be found at: <https://youtu.be/TO0XvttkWhs>

### **For Your Consideration: Creating a Reading Shortlist for The Father**

*[Eve Powell]*

*The Writers’ Trust of Canada is a charitable organization designed to champion excellence in Canadian writing and to create connections between writers and readers. Not only does the WTC sponsor 10 prestigious national literary awards, but it makes seasonal recommendations to Canadians about what they might consider reading! A shortlist of great books about this great land.*

In the tradition of the Writer's Trust of Canada you are tasked with shortlisting books to add to the Father's library/bedroom. Based on what you can infer about his preferences and personality, write a short recommendation for a novel with which you are familiar to inspire the father to order it along with his next selections. Consult sites with reader recommendations for modelled inspiration such as [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/read-books-and-chill-recommendations\\_us\\_577519eee4b0cc0fa1368e66](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/read-books-and-chill-recommendations_us_577519eee4b0cc0fa1368e66), or <http://www.writerstrust.com/Home/Recommended-Reading.aspx> on how to craft your recommendation.

# Strand: Writing & Representing

## Set Design: Visualizing the Father's Room

[Jessica Agnew, Brittney Bedford, Semia Charfeddine]

The Father's room in both Alistair MacLeod's short story and in Ryan Griffith's adaptation of *The Boat* is mentioned both numerous and descriptively. Repetition is often an indication that something is important! It is an important element of this story as it represents far more than just a space for rest. Create a representation of the Father's room that demonstrates your creativity and individuality. Consider the role of a theatrical set designer; or simply help another reader visualize what your concept is of the Father's room. Here are some formats to consider as well as online resources to help you understand the codes and conventions of each approach: a 3D model in the format of a theatrical set designer, a painting, sculpture, collage, blueprint rendering, or drawing. Refer to the following links for additional support:

- 3D room model - <http://www.roomsketcher.com/>
- How to make a sculpture - <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Sculpture>
- How to make a collage - <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Collage>

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## Designing Spaces: The Father's Room...an Island Unto Itself

[Ryan Slade]

There is a big emphasis placed on the Father's bedroom in both the short story and theatrical adaptations of *The Boat*. This is a very important room in the house. It is like an island unto itself or an entirely different universe. If we were playing the classic Sesame Street game "*One of These Things is Not Like the Others*," the Father's bedroom would be the thing that doesn't belong in the house. Its importance to the story is not only because it is so different than all the other rooms in the house, but also because it is the room that the Mother wants to forbid her children from entering, and the room where each child is changed forever. There is a great power in the Father's room. One could argue that the Father's room is more important than his boat. For that reason, I want you to consider what the room looks like and make it come to life.

- A) Shorter Task: Your task is to draw a picture of the Father's room. When you are finished, get into groups of 4-5 to show your drawing to your classmates and describe your vision of the Father's room to them.
- B) Longer Task: Your task is to create a visual representation of the Father's room either by painting, sculpting or constructing a model of the Father's room. You are not limited to only these methods of visual representation. They are only offered here as suggestions. If you can think of another way to create a visual representation of the Father's room, tell me what it is and I will let you know if you can do it. The goal is to create a visual representation that you would be proud to display. When you are finished, write a brief artist's statement that is about half a page long (no more than a full page). The artist's statement should explain how and why you interpreted the Father's room as you did.

## **From Short Story...To Stage...To Poetry: *The Boat* & Haiku**

[Natasha Quiring]

In Alistair MacLeod's short story *The Boat*, the narrator and his sisters are drawn to the father's magazines and books. Imagine you are the narrator, sneaking into his father's room, only to discover books for the first time. Write a haiku about this euphoric moment. You can feel the old pages, see the worn words and your heart is racing from the adrenaline of disobeying your mother. Be careful! A haiku only has a certain number of lines and syllables (Reminder: Line 1 has 5 syllables, the second line has 7 and the third has 5). You can find exemplars here: <http://www.edu.pe.ca/stjean/playing%20with%20poetry/Hennessey/howtohaiku.htm>

## **A Text-to-World Connection: When City Folk Don't Get Country Folk and Vice Versa**

[Ryan Slade]

Let's listen to a discussion about rural vs. urban life! CBC Radio has many great spoken word programs, including *The 180* with host Jim Brown. We will listen to a 13-minute clip of a recent episode (<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/the180/what-not-to->



[love-about-meryl-streep-s-speech-more-on-ptsd-and-violence-and-reform-politics-not-elections-1.3930068/what-small-town-canadians-and-big-city-canadians-don-t-understand-about-each-other-1.3934460](https://www.google.ca/search?q=research+commentary+graphic+organizer&biw=2400&bih=1069&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewi_n8Khn4HSAhW08oMKHZ7BCTMQ_AUIBigB#imgrc=-xnE9prGQUnIYM)), which explores the differences between small town and big city Canadians. In your Writer's Notebook, you are going to compose a Quick Write response to any of the comments made on the piece regarding questions of values, politics, personal and communal needs, or simply whether rural and urban Canadians understand each other. Use the following Graphic Organizer to organize your thoughts. [https://www.google.ca/search?q=research+commentary+graphic+organizer&biw=2400&bih=1069&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewi\\_n8Khn4HSAhW08oMKHZ7BCTMQ\\_AUIBigB#imgrc=-xnE9prGQUnIYM](https://www.google.ca/search?q=research+commentary+graphic+organizer&biw=2400&bih=1069&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewi_n8Khn4HSAhW08oMKHZ7BCTMQ_AUIBigB#imgrc=-xnE9prGQUnIYM): Note that there is space given for Information/Quotation and more space for the synthesis of your thoughts. That's what is key. As you listen to this broadcast keep in mind the Essential Question being asked of you: What are the differences between small and big city Canadians? Use your Graphic Organizer to help you focus upon a single issue and follow through with a Quick Write in whatever genre best suits your purpose (refer to your Reading Standards Grades 8-12).

## ***The Boat: Stage and Story – a Consideration of ‘Tense’***

*[Ben McLaughlin]*

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### ***What is a Screenplay?***

*“Let’s first start by defining what a screenplay is NOT. It is not a play, and it certainly is not a novel. Unlike the novelist, who has complete freedom to explore any point of view, shift between conscious and subconscious mind, explore a character or a story from multiple perspectives, the screenwriter MUST write in present tense and only what the audience can SEE and HEAR. (The Script Lab)*

*A screenplay is visual. The playwright, on the other hand, doesn’t have to worry about the visual medium. Often the play is simply a handful of characters - or even only one - standing there on a barren stage. Dialogue, Music, Lighting are all part of the stage. High speed car chases, however, belong in the movies.”*

One of the key differences between the play and the short story is how the play is able to depict certain events in the present tense, whereas the short story is written in past tense. You are to take a scene or event described in the short-story version

of *The Boat* and write your own screenplay for that particular scene. Screenplays are written differently than novels. Consult this resource for the very basics of how to write a screenplay, along with some good modelled examples: <https://letterpile.com/writing/A-Beginners-Guide-to-Writing-Scripts-and-Screenplays>

If you are interested in taking your screenplay even further you may wish to get a couple of classmates together and act out a scene you have written. Remember that participating students should consult the resource to gain a good understanding of how to properly read screenplays. If you choose you can use a mobile device or an iPad to film your scene as there are many great (free) applications that allow you to take higher quality videos and add special effects here: <http://appcrawlr.com/ios-apps/best-apps-video-effects>

Another extremely helpful guide in your script writing is an online program that your teacher can subscribe to free of charge. Celtx provides a dynamic online platform ideal for learning the fundamentals of video and film production. You can start a project as a simple screenplay with the script editor, and then take it to a fully realized and ready to shoot production bible with an integrated suite of production management tools. You can write your screen play directly in to Celtx and it will automatically format your script to industry standards.

## **The Dramatic Monologue: Exploring the Mother's Character**

[Brittney Bedford, Semia Charfeddine]

***dramatic monologue*** dra·mat·ic mon·o·logue

1. *a text in the form of a speech or narrative by an imagined person, in which the speaker inadvertently reveals aspects of their character while describing a particular situation or series of events.*

Write a dramatic monologue from the Mother's point-of-view. Be inspired by her raw emotion and strong sense of tradition and family. Try to stick to a tirade (*long angry speech of criticism or accusation*) that you feel best portrays the nature of the Mother. For help writing a monologue, refer to:

<http://www.monologuegenie.com/monologue-writing-101.html>. Also, consider the following points before you write. Take time to conference them in pairs or small group...then begin to craft your piece:

1. As you read the story, or recall TNB's adaptation of it, write down any words or images that you connect to the Mother's character.
2. Write down and recall any phrases that you can imagine the character speaking or thoughts that you can imagine the character thinking.
3. *Why* is the character speaking? *Whom* is the character speaking to? An actor must always search the 'why' of the character to believably portray her onstage.
4. Consider the character beyond the existing story/play. Where is the character now? What is happening to her as you read this prompt?
5. Consider the Mother's back story. Help understand her by inferring and making assumptions about her past based upon what you have read and/or viewed.
6. Rely on your intuition. Consider your feelings – those that surfaced when you watched the play or descended upon you when you read the short story. What other thoughts come to mind when you think about the Mother at this very moment?
7. Consider one, two, or all of these ideas prior to embarking upon writing your dramatic monologue. The Mother is a character of great depth and your monologue needs to attempt to peel back another layer of her character that the reader/audience might have missed the first time.

## **A Monologue: A Father Has One Last Chance to Speak to his Son**

*[Meagan Cross]*

Have you ever had someone close to you pass away? Leaving you feeling empty inside, almost like someone has torn a huge chunk out of your heart and stomped on it? Have you ever done something in life and wondered, "What would they think of this?" "What would they tell me to do" or "Are they proud of me?" The truth is, we lose people who mean the world to us every single day. It all happens so fast, often leaving us with words that we have not said, wishing that we had the time to say them. Similar types of feelings permeate both Allister MacLeod's short story and Griffith's adaptation of *The Boat*.

The narrator's father dies tragically, but how he dies remains a mystery. His son is left behind to take care of the old Jenny Lynn and often wonders if he is doing the right thing. All he wants is to be able to hear his dad's voice one last time to make sure he was doing what he was supposed to do. Your task is to provide this reassurance for the narrator. Create a monologue from the perspective of the father looking down on his son. A monologue is a speech presented by a single character, most often to express their mental thoughts aloud. Picture it. What would you want to hear your departed loved ones say if you got to speak to them one last time? Think about that and apply it to father and son of *The Boat*. If you have not written a monologue before here are some instructions and examples to get you started: <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Monologue>  
[http://www.monologuearchive.com/c/carroll\\_001.html](http://www.monologuearchive.com/c/carroll_001.html)

## Shifting Perspectives: Consider Changing the Point-of-View

[Jessie Winsor]

*Point of view is the angle of considering things, which shows us the opinion, or feelings of the individuals involved in a situation. In literature, point of view is the mode of narration that an author employs to let the readers "hear" and "see" what takes place in a story, poem, essay etc.*

The story of *The Boat* is told from the point-of-view of the only son of a fisherman and his wife. He was the youngest with all older sisters. Stories can change depending upon whose point-of-view is being represented. Every person has a different and unique understanding of events and experiences depending upon the literal angle of their experience. This activity asks you to consider how would this story/play change if it was told from another point-of-view other than the boy's?

For this activity, you will be asked to pick a predetermined section of the short story and to write it from the point-of-view of someone else. It could be written from the mother's point-of-view, the father's point-of-view, one of the daughter's, or even from an invisible third person's point-of-view (in the persona of another fisherman or towns person). If you are in need of further information on point-of-view visit this website: <http://literarydevices.net/point-of-view/>

## The Dramatic Monologue: The Father Speaks Beyond the Grave

[Alex Green]

Let's extend our viewing opportunities by exploring some of cinema's greatest onscreen monologues. Several classic films and books employ the device of a character who narrates from beyond the grave (the novel *The Lovely Bones* and the films *Sunset Boulevard* and *American Beauty*, for example). Write a monologue to be delivered by the father after his untimely demise. Remember to echo the style that Griffith's uses in his adaptation. You can write whatever you wish the character to say, but keep in mind the connections between the speaker and the characters of the son and the mother. Would there be anything you think the father would wish to say? Here is your chance to channel the departed! For inspiration, here is a link to some famous monologues: <http://www.monologuearchive.com>

## Letting *The Boat* Get 'Under Your Skin': Tattooing Your Interpretation

[Meagan Cross]

*Tattooing has long been a way of ceremonial rites and passages in most cultures throughout the world. From Africa's scarification process to the Celt's inking griffins and monsters that were later found on their corpses, tattoos are worn to mark special events, to pay honor or respect, and even to unite body to body with ash remains that are later inked under the skin.*

*Tattoos tell a story and can be written in any language. From symbols depicting cultural images to words and font designs, if you dare to dream it, a tattooist can likely create it and tell your tale on a living canvas. (from What is a Tattoo: The Story Behind Ink)*

Have you ever wanted to get a tattoo, but your parents simply responded (or maybe yelled), "NO!"? Well, here is your opportunity to show these diligent folks of yours that your tattoo will not just be a "glob of ink that doesn't come off". This is where you will prove to your parents that your tattoo will have meaning and even be connected to literature and the stage! I betcha that will get them thinking! In Alistair MacLeod's short story *The Boat* there are many things that hold significance and mean something beyond the literal to various characters (e.g. Jenny Lynn,

books, smokes, order, and socks to name a few). A tattoo is a permanent image, pattern or word on the skin that is created by using needles to put colours under the skin. They are used to represent things, people, places etc. much like the books and the Jenny Lynn do for the story's characters.

Now is your turn to create a tattoo design for yourself that represents something more than the literal. Instead of inking an essay...ink yourself (at least with washable ink!). Based upon your reading and/or viewing of *The Boat* you are to design an original Literary Tattoo. Consider the themes, symbols, images, characters, setting, objects, your personal connections to the text and those that extend from the text to the world! What every you design must have significance for you...it's gotta mean something real. You should create your design on paper and then transfer it to an appropriate part of your body (let's try your arm!). Then show it off and explain each shape, object, and colour choice. If you need help and/or ideas for your design don't fret! Here are some great links to help you out: <http://www.inkgenerator.com/>. You can also try this site: <http://www.freeattoodesigns.org/design-your-own-tattoo.html>

## **The Lost Art of Letter Writing: A Personal Letter of Legacy**

*[Natasha Quiring]*

*A legacy is the story of some one's life, the things they did, places they went, goals they accomplished, their failures, and more. Legacy is something that a person leaves behind to be remembered by. Legacies are pathways that guide people in decisions with what to do or what not to do. By wanting to leave a mark and create a legacy example for people to follow. Martin Luther King Jr. left behind his legacy of positive and selfless actions. Hitler left behind a legacy of negativity, and destruction...Leaving behind a legacy is important no matter who you are. Heroes, villains, and every day people leave behind a legacy that creates meaning in our lives. A grandmother's legacy may be important to her family. This grandmother may leave behind a recipe.*

*Every time that specific recipe is made the memories or legacy of the grandmother would be remembered...(WikiEthica)*

In both the short story and the play, the narrator affirms that his father “cannot swim a stroke.” This is the moment where the narrator realizes his father has gone. What legacy does the father want to leave his son? What do you think the father would say to his son before his passing if he had had the chance? Write a letter from the father’s point of view, describing the legacy he wishes to leave behind. The following website has many examples: <http://www.letterwritingguide.com/>. Don’t be afraid to take your letter in another direction if you’d like! It could be about his legacy, or it could be an apology letter, etc. Really try to feel what the father must have felt before his passing.

## **Writing a Memoir: Looking for Shared Experiences**

*[Christopher Collins]*

A memoir is one of the most vivid ways in which we can see inside the mind of its author. Using detailed sensory imagery, the reader of a memoir should be able to picture themselves alongside the author as they describe a significant event in their lives. A memoir should also contain a reflection; a life lesson that the reader can take away from the reading. Alistair MacLeod’s *The Boat* is a short story that contains a plethora of vivid details and sensory imagery, and if it had been written about one, specific event in the narrator’s life, it could certainly be considered a detailed memoir. Taking the experiences of the narrator into account, we can see the potential areas where a memoir could be written about his experience with a fishing-oriented family. One event in particular is the desire for the narrator and his siblings to leave their home and pursue further education or brighter job prospects. Such a decision is not easy.

Write a short memoir about a time where you left your home town, or a time where a family member had to leave for an extended period of time. How did the experience impact you? What lesson could you provide to your reader about your experience? Be sure to keep your memoir in first-person Point of View, and ensure that you make effective use of detailed, sensory imagery.

Some excellent tips about the process of writing a memoir can be found at: <http://www.rd.com/advice/great-tips-on-how-to-write-your-memoir/> For a great video discussing what sensory imagery is, follow this link:



<http://study.com/academy/lesson/sensory-details-in-writing-definition-examples.html>

## Shifting Setting: Reimagining Time & Place in Griffith's Stage Adaptation

[Michaila Kyle]

*"Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery..."* (Oscar Wilde)

*Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare's most famous love story, unfurls in a dramatic manga setting, in which Verona becomes a street in the highly fashionable Shibuya district of Tokyo. The star-crossed lovers, touching in their youth and innocence, are caught up in a bitter feud between two Yakuza families (Japan's 'mafia') whose rivalry erupts into violence and killing on the streets. Romeo, a rock star, is a Montague who falls in love with Juliet, a Capulet. They defy their parents and consummate their passion in secret. This is a story of love, revenge, violence and tragedy. (Describing Manga Shakespeare, 2007)

Griffith's theatrical adaptation of Alistair MacLeod's *The Boat* powerfully and accurately mirrors the maritime scenes and settings of MacLeod's short story. You have been asked to mount a new production of the play by an avant-garde theatrical company who has challenged you to reconsider its every nuance. You accept the challenge to reimagine and re-write the play with your own twist. You might select a specific scene and rewrite it...OR you can pitch your idea to the artistic producer in a scene-by-scene summary where you carefully elaborate on time, place, and character descriptions. Here is a brief example of how you might approach this task:

*The father is not a fisherman, but the CEO of a major company which his son is destined to inherit. His mother is materialistic in the upper class life, and disowns her daughters when they run off to marry 'beneath' them.*

If you need additional information about style and format for writing a proposal check out this site: <http://penandthepad.com/write-theatrical-proposal-7816334.html>



## Costuming the Characters: Building Upon the Production's Framework

[Norma Leah White]

*Judith Bowden was born in London, England and moved to Canada at the age of eleven. She has an undergraduate degree in Clothing and Textile Design from the University of Manitoba and a Masters in Theatre Design from the University of Alberta. She has been designing set and costumes for the theatre since 1992. Her design work has been seen at the Shaw Festival for the past seven seasons. Judith currently resides in Toronto. (from The Secret Life of Costumes National Arts Centre of Canada)*

Judith Bowden believes that the main job of costume design is to provide physical and emotional support to every actor through the clothing he or she will wear to enhance characterization. The design must provide strong visual support of the story, concept and context of the play as a whole. (from The Secret Life of Costumes National Arts Centre of Canada) “I take my cues from the characters and their surroundings as written in the play, as well as from the stylistic choices of the production. In the same way that an actor builds upon the framework of traits and actions of his or her character in the story, I read what the character does and says for clues about what they might wear. I also need to think about how best to reflect a character's evolution through the development of the story. (from The Secret Life of Costumes National Arts Centre of Canada)

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This is a **Checklist of the Costume Designer's Responsibilities** to the production:

- providing a costume sketch and research material
- providing a working drawing and/or details of cut and fit
- choosing the fabrics, trims, etc. for the garments
- participating in rehearsals to understand how the garment will be used
- adjusting the design if required, to best suit the physique of the actor and the particulars of the character being portrayed
- participating in fittings
- attending tech rehearsals, tech dress and dress rehearsals
- ensuring that the planning is translating well onto the stage; adjusting and refining when necessary.

When viewing a performance or play costumes play a large part in how the audience perceives a character. The characters in TNB's production of *The Boat* are often described and seen as wearing utilitarian clothes that define and exemplify

their roles in this small fishing town. After having read Bowen's outline and checklist of the Costume Designer's production responsibilities you are to design costumes for one of the characters in this play. Consider Bowen's descriptors and checklist. Follow as many steps as you can in the completion of your character concept and design.

Here is link to an online exhibition of the Canadian National Arts Centre's collection of costumes as well as a detailed description of the role of the designer, the process of creating costumes, and the history of costume design ([artsalive.ca/collections/costumes/index.php?lang=en](https://artsalive.ca/collections/costumes/index.php?lang=en))

## **Memoir: Adding Depth to the Characters of 'The Daughters'.**

[Brittney Bedford, Semia Charfeddine]

A memoir is a written factual account of someone's life. It comes from '*mémoire*' which basically translates to *memory* or *reminiscence*. A literary memoir, usually revolves about a specific theme or a part of someone's life. It has a narrative structure (like a story) and for our purpose, it will extend from the story of the boat and its theatrical adaptation. A good memoir focuses upon a specific reflection, event, or place. From this definition alone you can see how perfectly a memoir works as an extension from Alistair McLeod's story.

Pretend you are one of the sisters who has married and moved away from home. The reader/audience only has a surface understanding of the 'daughters', your memoir will act to help us understand them more. Write a memoir detailing your experiences, feelings, attitudes, and reasons for leaving home. Remember, a memoir is a special kind of autobiography, usually involving a public portion of the author's life as it relates to a person, historical event, or thing. The text is about the personal knowledge and/or experiences of the author. For help writing a memoir, check out <https://thewritelife.com/how-to-write-a-memoir/>

## **Building Prior Knowledge: A Day in the Life of a Fisherman**

[Jessie Winsor]

*"Red sky at night, sailors' delight. Red sky at morning, sailors take warning"*

When first viewing this play or reading the short story, many of you will not have the context of understanding what the life of a fisherman and his family is like. It

might be difficult for the viewer/reader to understand the Father's desperate attempt to expose his children to another world, or the Mother's frustration of losing her daughters to the city.

For this activity you are asked to research the normal lives of fishermen and their families. Begin by reading this article written by Richard Gillet who was a fisherman on the Newfoundland and Labrador produced show *Cold Water Cowboys*: [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/richard-gillett/cold-water-cowboys\\_b\\_4944270.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/richard-gillett/cold-water-cowboys_b_4944270.html). In this article, Gillet explains what it was like to grow up as a fisherman. As you read Gillet's article use a Venn Diagram Graphic Organizer to help you organize your thoughts. Compare and contrast the life of a fisherman with your own life – or that of your father or mother. What is the same and what is different? Use this to find parallels between your own experience and the experiences of those characters you have encountered through this story or witnessed on the stage. [http://www.foza.com/post\\_venn-diagram-graphic-organizer\\_21026/](http://www.foza.com/post_venn-diagram-graphic-organizer_21026/)

Once you have read the article and considered similarities and differences and perhaps even what is common, try constructing a version of what you think a 'day in the life' of a fisherman would be like. Try constructing an hour-by-hour timesheet. In paragraph form, explore certain themes: How they might interact with family given the nature of their jobs and the seasonal hours they must commit to. What about their physical and emotional health? What risks are posed by their jobs at sea? What emotions might they be susceptible to? Perhaps you could shape a 'character sketch' of a typical Atlantic Fisherman?

## **Of and From the Sea: The Role of Family in *The Boat***

[Alex Green]

*"Family trees are a genealogical tool which records information from searches into family history. It is intended to give an overview of any given family either as far back as they can be researched or the family name originates. It shows which people belong to the family by adding them on to different 'branches'."*

One of the most powerful themes in *The Boat* is family and the importance of tradition. Create an extensive family tree of the narrator's family using the

following website: <http://www.mackiev.com/ftm/index.html> . Remember that the narrator describes his mother and her people as “*being of and from the sea*”, so the tree should span many generations. To help gain a better idea of what time to begin at you may wish to look at the following website, which detail the genesis of some fishing communities in the Cape Breton area: <http://www.capebretonblueways.com/heritage-coast/view-genealogy/>. This website may also provide some helpful information, as it has a large number of links to the history of families in the Cape Breton area: <http://www.capebretongenweb.com/families.html>. One more thing to consider is that even though you are tracing a lineage of a family that currently lives in Cape Breton that does not necessarily have to always have been the case. An example of this from the most recent website given is the Martell family, who traces their family history all the way back to 1560 in France!

## **Rewriting the Short Story: Shifting Perspective**

[Christopher Collins]

*The Boat* as adapted by Ryan Griffith contains the viewpoints of multiple people from the narrator’s family in the short story. By comparing both the short story and the play, we see that each character has his or her own personality that may not be as heavily present when presented from only the narrator’s point of view. How would the story of *The Boat* change if the perspective was written from one of the other family members instead of just the “son”? Examine the characters from *The Boat* (not including the son) and write a short story from the perspective of another character. For example, you could write about the mother’s experience of wanting her children to stay home instead of travelling elsewhere to live and work. Like both the short story and play, ensure that you use vivid imagery. Reveal the feelings, thoughts, and expressions of the character you have chosen. Ensure that you keep your story in the first person point of view. An excellent guide on point of view can be found at: <https://prezi.com/nnw3bvok7phv/teaching-point-of-view/> and a set of “rules” to follow while writing a short story can be found at: <https://www.thebalance.com/rules-writing-great-short-story-1277281>

## **Theatrical Posters: Putting Bums on Seats**

[Michaila Kyle]

*They're a great way to get bums on seats, of course,  
but the best designs are more than mere adverts. (The Daily Guardian 2007)*

*What makes you want to go and see a play? ...it can be easy to overlook the role that a poster - and the associated promotional material - can play in persuading someone to take a chance on a show. (Natasha Tripney, The Daily Guardian 2007)*

The Broadway Theater League estimates that for a non-musical play the average production cost is 2.5 million dollars. The investment is huge. A play can be ‘cutting edge’ and ‘artistically brilliant’, but if you can’t *put bums on the seats* the production can fail and investors in turn can lose a great deal of money and that’s not good! One of the oldest and most reliable advertisements in theatre is ‘the poster’. Yes, in the age of social media there are other online options to promote plays; however, one can’t overlook the importance of posters in promoting theatre – plus, many of these posters are considered to be works of art in their own right. This is a great site for looking at some of Broadway’s most iconic theatrical posters. Take a look at what makes some of these posters so successful: <https://www.showscore.com/blog/14-of-the-most-iconic-broadway-show-posters>

Imagine that you have been tasked with designing the theatrical poster for Theatre New Brunswick’s new production of *The Boat*. You are to either create the poster ‘traditionally’ or digitally on a device of your choosing. Think about what images and/or symbols from the play should be incorporated in your poster. How will you intrigue a prospective audience, how might you draw them into the theatre when the temptation to stay home and watch Netflix is your greatest competition?

Here are some excellent and exciting resources to help you with this assignment. If you love art just ‘go-for-it’, but if you’d like to experiment a bit with graphic design here are some quick lessons and templates to assist you on your journey. The first allows you to find and/or use your own photographs and images to incorporate in a collection of existing poster templates. Follow each step to create customized poster of your own <https://www.postermywall.com/index.php/g/theatre-posters#>

This next resource is a bit more advanced but certainly not out of the question for those of you with an interest in technology and graphic art. Look at this step-by-step online guide and create away! <http://www.instructables.com/id/How-To-Make-a-Movie-Poster-in-Photoshop/>

The Broadway Theater Development Fund has put together a short but fascinating interview with one of the theatre’s greatest and most successful ‘poster designer’.

Watch this YouTube clip and learn from the master!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uz3jE3aTrD4>

## Writing, Representing & Emojis:

[Ryan Slade]

Everyone loves to use Emojis when they are sending text messages to their friends! Emojis can be used to help you convey your thoughts, feelings and emotions. Theatre is full of thoughts, feelings and emotions. Actors must convey what characters are thinking and how they feel through both their spoken words and their body language. However, since we have only read the script for the theatrical adaptation of Alistair MacLeod's *The Boat*, we have not been able to see and hear the emotions of the characters with our own ears and eyes. Luckily, written words can also convey the thoughts, feelings and emotions of a story's characters. One way that you can show me your understanding of this story is by interpreting the emotions of each character. Working in groups of 4-5, you will explain how every line of dialogue in Ryan Griffith's script should be spoken – with what type of emotion they should be spoken – by selecting an emoji to represent the emotion in the character's voice in each line of dialogue in the play. To do this, go to <http://emojione.com/> and look at all the emojis that are there. As you are reading the play, think about the character's emotions and then go to the website to find an emoji that matches that character's emotions as they are speaking. Select the emoji and then copy and paste it at the end of the character's line of dialogue on the Microsoft Word file of the script that I have given to you. Once you have finished pasting emojis next to every line of dialogue in the script, save your work and e-mail it to your teacher.

## Navigating a Visual Quick Write in 4 Text Forms: *The Boat* as Catalyst

[Alex Green]

*The Quick Write involves being asked a question (or in this case to look at a photograph), being assigned a set amount of time (usually between one to ten minutes), and sharing the responses. Quick Writes promote spontaneity; freedom in writing; writing fluency; and they promote critical thinking and focus.*



Here is a writing challenge for you. Take a close look at this photograph. Examine it carefully. Using the structural format of a Quick Write you are to respond to this visual text in one of four different text forms. If you are feeling risky and want to take some chances, take a stab at experimenting with all of them! Here are your choices: *memoir*, *fictional story*, *poem*, or even a *letter* to the family. As review, here is a list reminding you of what each text form/genre is all about:

***Memoir*** – a historical account or biography written from personal knowledge or special sources. (This could be a personal or even a confessional memoir. Do you, in the shoes of the narrator, feel guilt for leaving your hometown?)

***Fictional Story*** – A deliberately fabricated account of something. It can also be a literary work based on imagination rather than on fact, like a novel or short story. Feel free to experiment with genre types. Can you make a comedy, thriller, or even romance out of this?

***Poem*** – a piece of writing that partakes of the nature of both speech and song that is nearly always rhythmical, usually metaphorical, and often exhibits such formal elements as meter, rhyme, and stanza structure. Feel free to write this in ANY form of poetry, i.e. sonnet, epic, or free verse.

***Letter*** – a written, typed, or printed communication, especially one sent in an envelope by mail or messenger. Types of letters include ones that focus on confession, appreciation, or farewell.

## **A Son & Father's Journal Entries: Two Painful Days at Sea**

*[Norma Leah White]*

*The Wall Street Journal* published an article celebrating the 'journal entries' of Charley Kempthorne. He's not a published author, or famous to anyone outside of this family, friends and community...but, he has kept a journal faithfully for 52

years. He writes between 1,000-3,000 words every single day. If you want to do the math that's about 10,000,000 words or 15 feet of bookshelves when he prints his monthly entries as he has done since 1964! So why the dedication to journal writing? Psychologists agree that writing freely about emotions, secrets or upheaval can be a powerful tonic.

In *The Boat*, the narrator's father is a well read, curious, and intelligent man but one who rarely says what he is truly thinking. Throughout the story we are given clues to just how deeply the father thinks about life, about his family, and about authors like Dostoyevsky, Faulkner and Hopkins. Though there is no mention of a journal, if the narrator's father kept one it would no doubt be filled, page after page, of his innermost thoughts about the life he leads and what he considers his role in life to be. Perhaps it might even hint at his fate.

You have a choice. Either be the narrator (the Son) or take on the persona of The Father. Then, explore the inner most thoughts and 'voice' of your chosen character. Create two journal entries that detail what you were thinking on two critical days in your life: one, the morning of November 21<sup>st</sup>, and the second, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, after being pronounced dead and lost to the sea. Yes, there is a suspension of disbelief here if you assume the role of The Father, but that's okay too...after all, that's partly what theatre is all about! Get writing!

If you need supplementary ideas try out this link and go directly to the exemplar on Personal Journals: <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Journal-Entry>

## **The Final Story: The Father's Obituary**

*[Joshua Davenport]*

***"An obituary is foremost a news story..."***

*Margalit Fox is one of those writers—I'm reluctant to demote her to the rank of mere journalist—whose every paragraph carries an undercurrent of humor. I don't mean one-liners or stand-up jokes, I mean humor, broadly understood. Reading her stuff, you're never more than a few sentences away from an ironic aside or wry observation or the sudden appearance of some cockeyed fact. Rare enough, this Margalit Fox is an obituary writer, and the best writer all around, at the New York Times. She is astonishingly productive. In the last half of July alone, she reported the demise of the inventor of*



*Twister, New York's first professional dog walker, a well-known illustrator of children's books, a Mississippi bluesman, one of Andy Warhol's numberless assistants, a Broadway producer, a singer who popularized the Chock Full o' Nuts jingle, a successful welterweight, a witness at the trial of Emmett Till, the distaff side of the Masters and Johnson sex duo, and an agitator on behalf of world government. Not bad for two weeks' work. No reason you should care, but over the same span, I completed two thank-you notes and a grocery list.*

*An obituary is foremost a news story...It is a bird's-eye summary of family history and a potted biography all in one, and, if the subject is right and the obituarist sufficiently skilled, a kind of primer in an arcane field in which the deceased was immersed but which the reader won't be familiar with ... (Andrew Ferguson – Commentary Magazine, October 2013).*

An obituary is typically a short article in a newspaper that reports on a person's death, along with some information about his or her life, and what the funeral plans might be. Create an obituary for the Father that will appear in a class publication. Be sure to include some information about his life, such as where he was born, what he did for a living, his interests and hobbies, etc. See:

<http://obituaries.telegraphjournal.com/book-of-memories/2832444/william-wallace/obituary.php> for an example.

## **The Final Story: The Father's Eulogy**

*[Joshua Davenport]*

*If you have ever attended a funeral, chances are that you have heard the delivery of an elegy. This speech is often the most memorable part of the service. It might be a daughter's speech about her mom's life or the nephew's series of stories about his Uncle? These stories speak directly to our hearts. They may make us cry, but this group experience will draw the audience together as a community and help to acknowledge the life of a relative, friend or associate that has ended.*

A eulogy is a brief speech given at a funeral about someone who has died. Imagine yourself as the narrator of the story attending the funeral for your father. The duty of delivering the eulogy falls to you. Drawing upon the obituary you wrote earlier, or using some other ideas you may have, stand up before your group and give the

eulogy for your late father. The eulogy that President Obama delivered for Vice President Joe Biden's son may provide you with some ideas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEe6Bnw1w3I>. You might also watch now Prime Minister Justin Trudeau eulogized his father, former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5p4NUJMPAjQ>. Take time to also read the text of this eulogy at: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/jetaimepapa-justin-trudeaus-2000-eulogy/article26923529/>

*"My father's fundamental belief in the sanctity of the individual never came from a textbook. It stemmed from his deep love for and faith in all Canadians and over the past few days, with every card, every rose, every tear, every wave and every pirouette, you returned his love."*

*(from Justin Trudeau's Eulogy for his father)*

## **Twitter Tweets *The Boat*: A Review With 140 Characters**

*[Natasha Quiring]*

You have just arrived back to school from attending Theatre New Brunswick's production of *The Boat*. Take some time to consider what you've seen. Soak it all in. Now it's time to review the play using Twitter. Remember: a "tweet" has 140 characters. The following is a tutorial on writing a "good tweet": <http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/the-perfect-tweet/447086> If you would like a few pointers about writing theatrical reviews here is a good link to explore: <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Play-Review>

## **Memorials: Paying Tribute to Those Lost at Sea**

*[Michaila Kyle]*

*"The sea is like a cruel mistress. You can love her, you can hate her, but you can never trust her."* (Ben Sollee, 2007)

*Remembrance Day, 9-11, the cross, Christmas, Easter, and many more are bigger than life reminders providing a moral, national and spiritual guide to our daily lives. In many ways, they are all memorials. Many argue that without memorials society might move away from the course established by sacrifice and honor. Yet to understand what a memorial truly is we must examine its story and purpose.*

The Father's tragic end in *The Boat* is neither exclusive nor is it an unexpected event in the life of a maritime fishing community. Sadly, a fisherman's 'greatest work related hazard' is being lost at sea. In 2010 CNN reported that commercial fishing was one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States. In an article in MacLean's magazine (2009) The Canadian Transportation Safety Board echoed similar statistics stating simply that...*too many fisherman die*. From 2004-2009 more than 60 fishermen died in accidents involving small fishing vessels (like The Jenny Lynn), that's about one person per month. Clearly, fishermen have one of the most dangerous jobs in our nation.

After the tragedy at sea, the people of the village have decided to create a memorial to the father, and to all fisherman who had been lost to the sea. Using your choice of materials, (paint, pencils, graphics, clay, etc.) create the memorial for the village. Write a brief description and proposal for your memorial explaining your reasoning for the images/symbols you have selected. Also include the inscription that would be written on your memorial.

The following is a link to a fascinating article entitled: *Memorializing a Tragedy* from *The American Psychological Association*, September 2014. This would make a great supplementary read for you. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/09/tragedy.aspx>

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Here is an interesting National Geographic link that takes you on a brief tour of some of the most effective international monuments. Why not look and explore this article for inspiration? <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/city-guides/top-memorial-sites/>

The following is a brief description of a Fishermen's Monument in our home province of New Brunswick. Read about the tragedy that inspired the memorial and follow the link to see a collection of photographs.

### ***The Fishermen's Monument – Escuminac***

The *Fishermen's Monument* is without a doubt the most impressive labour monument in New Brunswick, as well as its most famous. It commemorates the worst work-related disaster ever to have occurred in the province. The tragedy took place on the night of June 19, 1959. That night, 35 fishermen – men and teenagers – disappeared in a violent coastal storm. The event came to be known as the *Désastre*

*d'Escuminac, largely because, back then, the Escuminac wharf (located at the mouth of the Miramichi Bay) was once the centre of fishing activity for several neighbouring communities. (Encyclopédie of French Historical Cultural Heritage in North America)*

For a collection of images of The Fishermen's Monument:

<https://www.google.ca/search?q=The+Fisherman%E2%80%99s+Monument+%E2%80%93+Escuminac&biw=1366&bih=673&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjMxPP4p43SAhXljiQKHVeHBZkQAUIBygC&dpr=1#imgrc=A3hEggTlaxqJKM>

## **When a Picture's Worth a 1000 Words: Adapting the Play to Comics**

[Ben McLaughlin]

*"Adaptation remains one of the trickiest things to pull off in any medium. Embracing and honoring the source material, while making it fit to your new parameters is a balance not everyone can achieve." (Ben Fountain)*

Can you convey the same story that the theatrical version does using pictures instead of words? Recreate the story in a comic strip, graphic novel, or storyboard form. According to old stereotypes, it shouldn't work—a decade ago serious librarians would want nothing to do with the raucous, pulp world of comics. But over the past decade, the graphic novel category has become one of the fastest-growing genres in online and actual bookstores throughout the western world. Your task is to try your best to retell the entire story using as little text as possible. Using the format of 'comic strips', 'graphic novels', or 'story boards' you are to recreate a pivotal moment from the play/short story. If you would like to make your comic strip unique, consider using one of these special templates to structure your project: <https://www.printablepaper.net/category/comics>

Here is a quick tutorial on creating comic strips: <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Comic-Strip>

Here are 2 recommended sites for creating original comic strips and graphic novels. These are followed by mashable.com which outlines 6 additional sites for you to explore depending upon your purpose and technical confidence:

<https://www.pixton.com/> <http://www.storyboardthat.com/comic-maker>  
[http://mashable.com/2010/10/24/create-your-own-comics/#elu5Bn1\\_R8q0](http://mashable.com/2010/10/24/create-your-own-comics/#elu5Bn1_R8q0)

## The Diner: Patrons Adding Atmosphere

[Mireille Savoie]

Minor characters typically have a brief or modest role in a story, but they contribute to the intrigue of the story or the development of main characters. Often, minor characters support the main characters or add value to the evolution of the plot involving the main characters. This might be true of *The Boat* had the story been developed more as a novel rather than a short story and play.

In the very beginning, the narrator describes the Diner he sometimes visits in the early hours of the morning. He mentions the other patrons who sit in the Diner, and the small interactions he has with them. Yes, this is minor...but what could you do with this as a writer? How might you be inspired?

What do you imagine those people were doing in that Diner at that hour of the day? Put your creative writing hat on and help to build a Backstory that isn't there, but could be! Select, invent, or expand upon those background pixelated patrons that have no role in either the story or play. Write a Character Profile. Who is this person? Why is he or she awake that early, and at a Diner no less? Begin with a list of their name, age, gender, job, clothing, etc... Here are a few links to help you better understand how to write a Character Profile: <http://www.novel-writing-help.com/create-character-profiles.html> and <http://www.creative-writing-now.com/writing-character-profiles.html>. You can even sketch the person. This is the first step in building the Backstory (which you can do if you wish). Whet the appetite of your reader by revealing the profile of someone who sits innocently within view of the narrator!

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## Writing a Letter: Saving a Way of Life

[Meagan Cross]

*“Letter writing, unfortunately, has had its day. An envelope with your name and address written by hand and bearing an actual stamp and postmark is one of life’s small pleasures which has been usurped by email and sound bites. The best thing about writing a letter is the thinking involved. Rather than typing out the shortest possible message and hitting “send,” a hand written letter forces one to use complete sentences and even to contemplate word choices.” (Warrene Williams)*

The fishing industry is a huge resource in Alistair MacLeod's short story of *The Boat*. Imagine you are an avid fisherman/fisherwomen/fisherperson like the father in the short story. Catching fish is the only way you and your family are making a living in order to survive. It is your source of food, and it is a long lasting tradition within your family. One day, the provincial government threatens to shut down all fishing operations in Atlantic Canada because it is not making enough money, and it is costing more to keep the operation up and running than it is producing fish to sell for the market. As a result of this, the provincial government introduces a new law that forces all fishermen/women/persons to pay a fee if they wish to continue fishing in the rivers and oceans in order to help boost the industry. Your task is to write a letter to the premier convincing the Department of Natural Resources not to shut down all fishing operations and let fishermen/women/persons continue fishing freely in the rivers and oceans. In your letter, make sure to include a salutation (who the letter is addressed to), state who you are, where you are from, and what fishing does for your family. Lastly, make sure you state why you believe the operation should stay afloat and how fishermen/women/persons should be able to execute the right to fish. <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Persuasive-Letters> <http://www.wikihow.com/Sample/Persuasive-Letter-to-Government>

## Ten Years Later: A Son's Story

[Ryan Slade]

We know that the Narrator of *The Boat* gave up fishing and that he is now, ten years later, a teacher at "a great Midwestern university." What do you think happened to him in those ten years? What might the last ten years of his life looked like? Write a short story that details another pivotal moment in the Narrator's life, one that would have happened between the time that his father disappeared from the boat to the time when he woke up and walked into the all-night restaurant to tell us his story. What is the next story that the Narrator would tell us at 4 a.m. from his seat at the all-night restaurant? For a simple Graphic Organizer on how to get started with your Short Story follow this link: <http://writerswrite.co.za/how-to-outline-a-short-story-for-beginners>

## The Father as Written vs. The Father as Performed: Similarities & Differences

*[Jessica Agnew]*

A story is meant to be read, and a play is meant to be performed. The playwright who, in this case, is adapting a classic Canadian short story is not writing for the audience to see his words. Ryan Griffith knows that the audience doesn't attend his play to read complete details of the story. Instead, he calls upon a dramatic team to help him interpret the story through dialogue, stage direction, stage design, sound, lighting, which all combine to set the story and create a complex and powerful performance.

Chances are you have both read the story and attended the play. For you to fairly discuss each text you need to approach them independently. Unless you are 'reading' the play as a printed text you need to experience the whole presentation as a whole and then allow yourself the opportunity to reflect and break the play into various chunks. Many theatrical elements will affect how you view the stage version of 'the Father', for example. To consider his 'character' the director has added additional elements that might include blocking, lighting, music, soundscapes...and a multitude of dramatic choices made by the actor. In the end, you will walk away with a certain impression and understanding of the character.

The prose version of 'the Father' relies on some of the same basic elements; however, they are imbedded in plot, theme, and what you are able to read 'into' each sentence and paragraph. The end result might be similar to the staged version, but there might be differences as well.

Consider the character of 'the Father'. Consider also the inevitable differences between the two experiences of reading the story and viewing the play. Compare and contrast the two 'versions' of this character. How are they the same and how are they different? Overall, does the character remain consistent in both versions, or are there some changes from the story to the stage? Did you initially feel one way about the character in the short story and then change your mind as you viewed the play? Why do you think the playwright made these changes, if any? If not, why would he choose to keep them the same?



## **An Act of Remembrance: Writing a Father's Eulogy**

[Natasha Quiring]

Sadly, the narrator's father has passed. Imagine you are the narrator and you have been chosen to write his eulogy. What would you say about your father? How has he impacted your life? Your sisters'? Your mother's? Write the eulogy for the narrator's father. What were his values? What memories do you have of him? Base your composition on examples from the text. Here is an example on how to compose a eulogy: <http://www.write-out-loud.com/eulogy-write.html>. Remember: eulogies can be sad, happy, humorous, etc. Try to connect with the narrator and his vision of his own father by using the narrator's account of his childhood.

If you feel inclined why not work with a small group to stage the entire funeral! Select the music. Design the program. Perhaps even create a Stained Glass Window with a sea-inspired theme incorporating existing symbols and images from both the story and play. There are many ways of making stained glass without the glass! Here is a great site that can show you how: <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Your-Windows-Look-Like-Stained-Glass>

## **Gaelic Tunes: Considering the Music behind TNB's *The Boat* [4 Ideas]**

[Meagan Cross, Mireille Savoie, Ryan Slade & Jessica Agnew]

### **[IDEA #1]**

In Alistair MacLeod's short story and Griffith's adaptation, there are examples of Gaelic songs being sung by the father. Gaelic music is one of many types of Celtic music that originates from Ireland and the Scottish Highland. This type of music still remains popular amongst the fishing culture of Atlantic Canada. Gaelic tunes were sung when men rowing boats sang chorally to keep time on the oars. Women fulling cloth (*working with cloth to make it thicker*) sang songs to pass the hours and to keep the movement of the cloth synchronized with one another; and so on. No matter what the task - grinding corn, spinning wool, milking the cow, or churning butter - there was a selection of songs that accompanied the activity and matched the speed at which it was done. Your task is to do this: Find other Gaelic songs that represent one of the characters within the short story. Essentially, tell the story from their point of view by using the Gaelic songs that you find. Get your groove-thing on and start boogying using these websites to get you started: <http://songsinirish.com/> and <http://www.omniglot.com/songs/gaelic/>



### [IDEA #2]

One of the important parts of the father's character, in both the story and the play, are the Gaelic songs that he sings. Click on the following link (<http://www.omniglot.com/songs/gaelic/>). This page has several Gaelic songs embracing many different themes. The Gaelic lyrics are provided as well as an English translation. Most have an audio file as well. Listen to a few of the songs while following along with the Gaelic words, then go back and listen to it again while reading the English lyrics. Is there a difference in hearing the song before and after you understand the words? Do you enjoy the songs even if you don't know the words to it? Are there any languages in your family's history other than English? If so, do you know of any traditional songs in those languages? Do you know the meanings of the songs, or just the tune of it?

### [IDEA #3]

A sea shanty is a traditional Celtic song that is typically about a fisherman's life at sea in Atlantic Canada. This type of song has become part of Atlantic Canada's culture. These songs are characterized by instruments like the violin, accordion, and the spoons. They are typically upbeat and sung with power and passion.

You can find an example of a shanty in the play, as the father sings Gaelic lyrics during the final few scenes of act one. It is called "*Glen Lyon's Lament*." Go on YouTube and find this shanty that Father sings. What do you notice about this song? How is it different from the music you'd hear on the radio today? How is it the same?

Find at least 4 more sea shanties that are popular in Atlantic Canada. You can do a Google search or follow YouTube's recommendations. Besides lyrics about the sea, what are some common themes among these songs? What is common about the way they sound? What other instruments do you hear? Did you listen to songs that were sung in *a cappella*, without any instruments?

Now that you are familiar with sea shanties, write your own. Maintain the musical and lyrical style of the traditional sea shanty, but be as creative as you would like. Perform your song! You can play instruments, slap your thighs, entertain us and show off your song-writing skills. Do not worry about being "good" you are already great!

#### [IDEA #4]

While the theatrical adaptation of *The Boat* is not a musical, there are a few brief moments when the father sings an old Gaelic song, and the daughters sing “*Glen Lyon’s Lament*” at the end of the play. Given that most of the cast must sing, it stands to reason that the casting director would only cast actors with good singing voices. And if the actors have good singing voices, why not have them put that talent on display more often by having them sing more songs?

Imagine for a moment that you were going to adapt *The Boat* to be a musical. Working in a group, find a spot in the script that would be ideal for the actors on stage to break out into song. Now, write that song! Don’t forget that you must be prepared to perform your masterpiece at the end of class. If you are not sure how to write song lyrics or you need some tips because you think you are not good at it, consult some of these websites and YouTube videos for tips and pointers: watch Jonathan Mann “How to Write Lyrics” (<https://youtu.be/-Eow2hUHQyo>) and/or read “How to Write a Song” at Wikihow.com (<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Song>).

If music is not your forte consider creating a proposal for a musical where you list logical places for ‘songs’. Explain what the nature and purpose of the song would be. What would the tempo of the song sound like? Who would sing it? How would the song contribute to the plot and move the story forward? What instrumentals might there be to enhance and underscore certain pivotal moments in the script/story? Create your musical playlist in as much detail as you possibly can, without actually writing or performing the actual songs.

### **The Lost Acts: Finding Additional Scenes to Griffith’s ‘The Boat’**

[Alex Green]

If you’re sitting in a classroom right now, chances are you’ve heard of plays like: *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Midsummer Night’s Dream*...but what about *Double Falsehood*? Okay, perhaps this last title isn’t as familiar but new research suggests that this 1728 play was actually written more than a century before by William Shakespeare. It was a play that might have been ‘lost’ and then ‘rediscovered’ one hundred years later! In the literary world, this would be *the stuff that dreams are made on* (Shakespeare references end here I promise).

The stage adaptation of Alistair Macleod's "The Boat" adds new details, scenes, and dialogue to help better flesh out some of the characters and their histories (An example of this is located in the prologue when Jenny and the narrator's father first meet). In groups of 2 pretend that you have found some "lost pages" from Griffith's adaptation that had to do with the characters from the story. For instance, you could create a scene involving the father sitting secluded in his room right before his final and fateful ride on the boat. Remember to create this activity in the same style as Griffith's play!

### ***There's No Place Like Home: The Good & The Not-So-Good of Home*** **Similarities & Differences**

*[Norma Leah White]*

The small town of Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, seems an idyllic destination for tourists to flock to every summer. To the locals, however, Port Hawkesbury is just their home and many do not understand the appeal to those they consider to be "outsiders". Your task is to create a brochure or poster advertising your hometown that would attract tourists and highlight the benefits of visiting your town – this would be 'The Good'...then, on the reverse of your brochure or poster create a version that details the realities of living in this town...'The Not-So-Good'.

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Make every effort to make this brochure or poster look like it came directly from your local tourism office! You might include: pictures, maps, slogans, "must see" attractions and much more.

Here is a link to the Tourism Prince Edward Island website. It has beautiful pictures, and slogans like: "*add a little island*", and detailed information on what you should do and see while on PEI. What the website does not say is that while PEI is beautiful in the summer it is extremely unpleasant in the winter due to copious storms and impassable roads, especially in small towns. PEI also has fantastic fresh food, but only if you like seafood and potatoes! And the Confederation Bridge, the only way to enter or leave the island, has a \$50 toll. Tourism PEI: [www.tourismpei.com](http://www.tourismpei.com). Here is an excellent link that will guide you through the process of creating a Tourism Brochure on your own: <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Travel-Brochure>

## A Collage: Representing Key Aspects of MacLeod's *The Boat*

[Jamie Carbno]

*from: Destruction and Creation: The Power and Freedom of Collage*  
by Steve Leadbeater

*Perhaps because of its simplicity, collage can be thought of as a naive, purely decorative art form (see decoupage). More than mere cut-and-paste, collages can be powerful, complex pieces that manipulate context and spark imagination.*

*In the early 20th century, the Dadaists used collage techniques in their work provoking the art world and the general public. Reactions to their subversive creativity were severe and sometimes even violent.*

*The idea of collage is not limited to visual mediums. Writers, poets, and musicians have used the "cut-up technique" popularised by beat-era writer William S. Burroughs in the late 1950s and early 1960s, to randomly rearrange their own words and phrases to create new meaning and narratives – often with profound results. Musicians such as David Bowie, Thom Yorke (Radiohead), and Kurt Cobain (Nirvana) have used variants of this technique to push boundaries in their work. So you're in great company if you decide to mix things up and experiment with collage...*

I'm challenging you to represent your impressions of Alistair MacLeod's short story and/or Theatre New Brunswick's production of *The Boat* through the creation of a collage. Think about what Steve Leadbeater describes as a collage...there are many ways you can approach this...not only visual images but words as well. I challenge you to think literally or figuratively when searching for images, shapes, colours, words etc. – consider the story and/or production's impact on you. This is no different than writing a review of the play...only the medium changes. You are not using sentences and paragraphs you are using found images, words and glue. So begin with your heart and mind...consider how *The Boat*, or a scene from Griffith's adaptation, made you feel.

Start by gathering your materials. Remember, this can be anything, think texture, fabric anything that can be adhered to a solid surface. Or, bring in another device

to create a digital collage (<https://www.befunky.com/create/collage/>). Use every ounce of your imagination to create an artistic response to what you have seen and/or read. For even more information and support explore: <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Collage>

## ***The City Mouse and The Country Mouse: Flipping Setting in The Boat*** **Similarities & Differences**

[Ryan Slade]

The story of *The City Mouse and The Country Mouse* is a familiar one to most of us. It's an old story as well. In fact, this tale about a proud town mouse who visits his cousin in the country and then returns the favour by hosting his country cousin back in the 'big city' has been around for centuries. Like most fables, this story teaches us the value of 'home' and that *the grass isn't always greener on the other side* or more formerly that *A modest life with peace and quiet is better than a richly one with danger and strife*.

Alistair MacLeod's *The Boat* is set in rural Nova Scotia. One of the messages conveyed in the story is that there is sadness to leading a rural life and there is joy to leading a city life a theme mirrored in Aesop's 12<sup>th</sup> fable of those infamous mousey cousins! With this comparison in mind, imagine what would happen if we were to flip the script. How would this story look if The Father was a slave to his city job and longed for the peace and simplicity of living in a rural community? In your Writer's Notebook, tell me how this story would be told if there were a sense of sadness to leading a city life and a sense of joy in leading a rural life.

Select any text form that makes sense for you. One suggestion is to write a Journal Entry. Perhaps consider writing your own Short Story. Or even better, what about a Modern Fable where you tackle the same theme with a similar moral? This is a writing activity based on *The Boat* so you need to be the captain of your own ship...whatever genre you choose it's fine with me! If you do want to write and illustrate your own fable, here is a nice online resource to guide you: <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Fable>

## **Sails: Using Imagery and Symbolism to Plot the Boat's Course**

[Natasha Quiring]

Sails can be symbolic of a journey, an adventure, and a passage to another place. In both the short story and theatrical adaptation the nature of 'sailing' is just that. The Boat represents life; journeys (often away from the sea); and the passing of time and its central character. Yet there are many symbols and images embedded within the fabric of this rich text. Take a moment to consider the first symbol that pops into your head after viewing the play or reading the text. Then sketch it out. Use your imagination to give a literal shape to what might be a figurative image or idea. Then, come and collect a piece of fabric. You are to draw and/or stitch and/or paint your image onto this fabric. Then together we will patch together our own class 'sail' to unfurl off the bow of our own classroom. Together we can look at its visual story and sail through the characters, conflict, and themes of this classical Canadian tale.

## **Gender Roles: What are the Hidden Messages in Families?**

[Meagan Cross]

Gender roles are an ongoing issue in Alistair MacLeod's short story *The Boat*. In the story, the mother is the more traditional of the two parents, wanting her son, the narrator, to keep working on the boat with his father instead of going off to school while the daughters stay at home and clean, knit socks, and pick berries. Take a moment to watch the following interview that comedian Jimmy Kimmel conducts with kids about gender roles and the differences between boys and girls <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkTb3Y1CDcA>. After the video, engage in a class discussion with your fellow students. Consider the following questions: Why are boys and girls expected to conform to certain roles in society? What do you think would have happened to the mother in the short story if her son decided to go against the norm and leave for university instead of fishing on the boat? Why was the mother the head of household in the story and not the father? What kinds of messages are parents sending to their kids if they do not approve of their life choices?

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The logo for tnb theatre New Brunswick features the lowercase letters 'tnb' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. To the right of 'tnb' is the word 'theatre' in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. Below 'theatre' is the text 'NEW BRUNSWICK' in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. A dark grey shadow is cast beneath the 'tnb' text, extending to the right and slightly downwards.

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