Grade 8: Reading Benchmark

Comparative Reading

8.R.3.3: Compare and contrast the use or discussion of archetypes in texts.

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Benchmark Introduction



Benchmark:

Compare and contrast the ways that archetypes are used or discussed in texts.

Definition of Comparative Reading

Comparative reading means to compare and contrast particular elements within two or more texts.

Definition of Archetype

An archetype is a typical version of a character, setting/situation, or symbol that is used repeatedly in literature from various cultures and time periods.

Comparing Archetypes

Readers may compare how similar archetypes are used or discussed in texts in order to...

- explore how an archetype may change depending on historical, cultural, or individual circumstances.
- develop a deeper understanding of each text.

Character Archetypes

Character archetypes include:

- The **hero**
- The **rebel**
- The **innocent**
- The **sage** or **mentor**

Character Archetype Examples

Katniss in *The Hunger Games* series fits **the hero** archetype. Courageous and talented, Katniss fights for what she believes to be right.

Dumbledore in the *Harry Potter* series fits the archetype of **the sage** due to his vast knowledge and his role as mentor to Harry, Hermione, and Ron.

Setting/Situation Archetypes

Setting or situation archetypes include:

- The journey—with trials along the way
- The forest—often used as a refuge, or way to escape from a situation
- The quest—a search for someone or something
- The battle—often between good and evil

Setting/Situation Archetype Example

In *The Lion King*, **the forest** archetype includes the jungle paradise where Simba grows up with Pumba and Timon, away from the rules of the pride.

Symbol Archetypes

Symbol archetypes include:

- The setting sun—often associated with death
- Light—often associated with goodness
- A circle—often associated with unity
- Water—often associated with purification

Symbol Archetype Example

In the legend of King Arthur, Arthur and his loyal knights hold meetings at a round table. The circular table is a symbol of their unity and equality.

Example of comparative use of an archetype

Prometheus in Greek mythology and **Victor Frankenstein** in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* both fit the **rebel** archetype.

Both characters threaten to overthrow the natural order by assuming a role that is usually reserved for a higher power. However, while Prometheus's gift to humans (fire) is understood as a mixed blessing, Victor Frankenstein's creation brings only consequences.

Benchmark Skill Routine



Compare and contrast the use of archetypes

Understand the archetype:

Read closely, highlight, and annotate specific details that reveal the author's use of an archetype.

- The details, images, or actions associated with an archetypal setting or symbol.
- The traits, actions and outcomes, and lessons drawn from an archetypal character.

Compare and contrast the use of archetypes

Examine how the author uses the archetype. Determine what key qualities and message the author associates with their use of the archetype.

Compare and contrast the use of archetypes

Think about it:

Compare and contrast each author’s use of the archetype.

Remember

1. Read closely, highlight, and annotate specific details that reveal the author’s use of the archetype.
2. Determine what key qualities and message the author associates with their use of the archetype.
3. Compare and contrast each author’s use of the archetype.

Benchmark in Action: Example of how to compare and contrast the use of archetypes



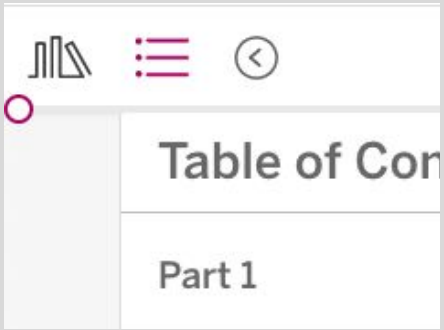
Get ready to read two passages. The first is from *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.



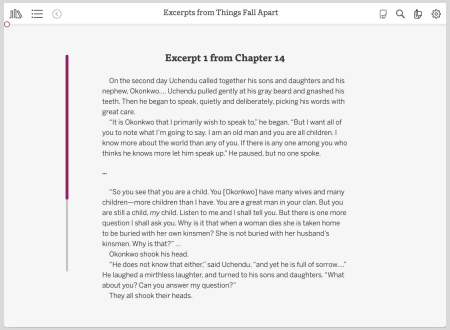
1. Open the Library app.



2. Type “Things Fall Apart” into the search bar. Click on the title of the book to open it.



3. Click on the Table of Contents.



4. Find and go to Excerpt 1 from Chapter 14.

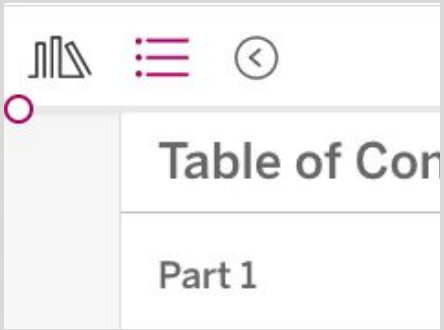
The second passage is from *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.



1. Click the Library app again to open the Library in a second tab.



2. Type “To Kill a Mockingbird” into the search bar. Click on the title of the book to open it.



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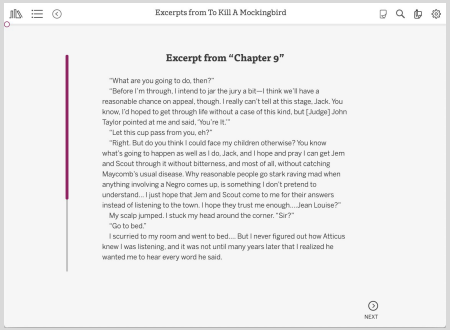


4. Find and go to Excerpt from “Chapter 11.”

Things Fall Apart

Shared Archetype: The sage, who is an expert, mentor, or teacher.

Context for Passage 1: In Nigeria in the 1890s, Okonkwo and his family are banished after the accidental shooting of a neighbor’s son. In this passage, a depressed Okonkwo sits with his concerned elder uncle, Uchendu.

To Kill a Mockingbird

Shared Archetype: The sage, who is an expert, mentor, or teacher.

Context for Passage 2: In this passage, Jem Finch complains to his father Atticus about the racist, morphine addict, Mrs. Dubose, who has sent him a flower in what Jem sees as a cruel joke from beyond the grave.

Read Excerpt 1 from Chapter 14 from *Things Fall Apart*. Read Excerpt from “Chapter 11” from *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

As you read, look for...

- details, images, or actions associated with an archetypal setting or symbol.
- traits, actions and outcomes, and lessons drawn from an archetypal character.
- key qualities and messages the author associates with their use of the archetype.

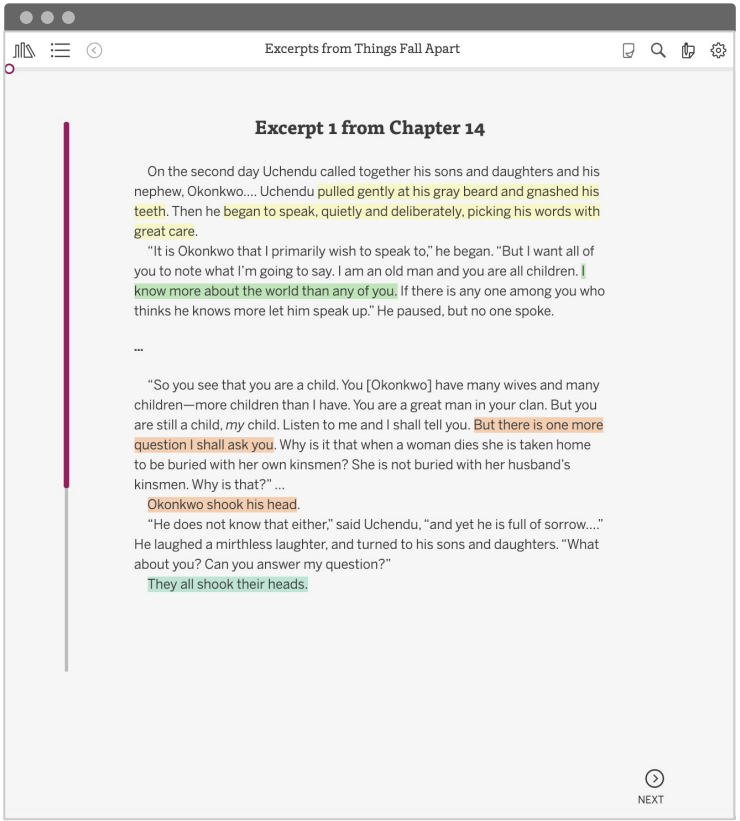
Practice Step 1

Understand the archetype:

Read closely, highlight, and annotate specific details that reveal the author's use of an archetype.

- The traits, actions and outcomes, and lessons drawn from an archetypal character.

Practice Step 1, Passage 1: *Things Fall Apart*



Highlight details in Passage 1 that reveal the author's use of an archetype.

Traits

"pulled gently at his gray beard and gnashed his teeth."
"began to speak, quietly and deliberately, picking his words with great care"
"I know more about the world than any of you."

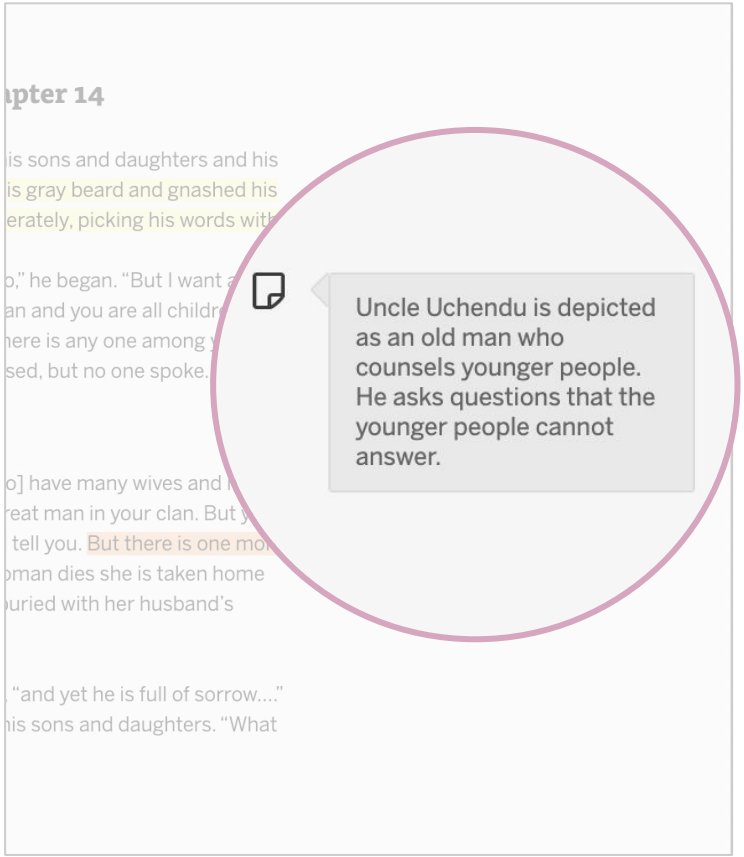
Actions & Outcomes

"But there is one more question I shall ask you."
"Okonkwo shook his head."

Lessons

"I know more about the world than any of you."
"They all shook their heads."

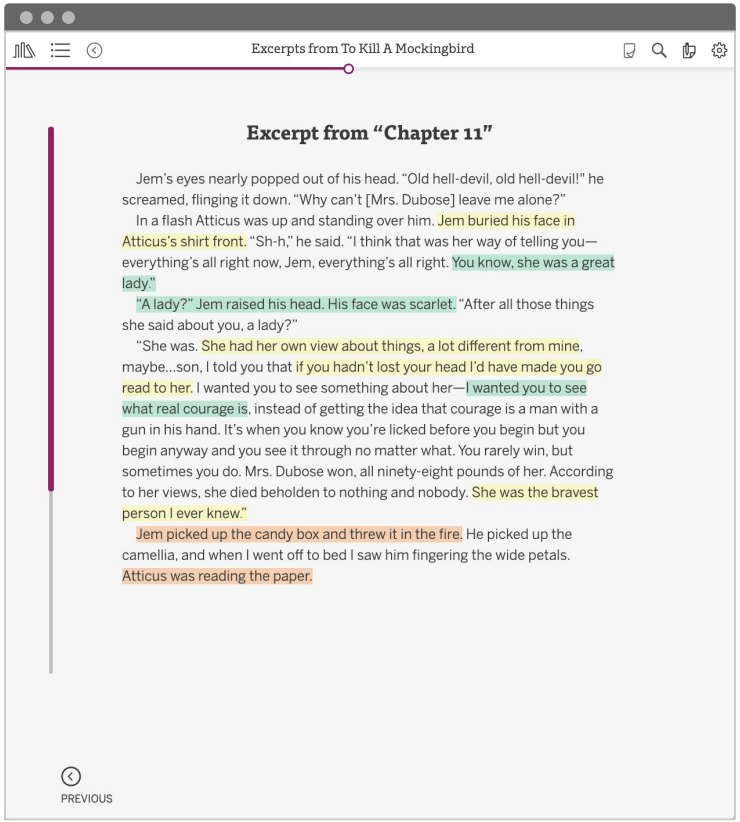
Practice Step 1, Passage 1: *Things Fall Apart*



Annotate to explain what the detail reveals about the archetype.

Uncle Uchendu is depicted as an old man who counsels younger people. He asks questions that the younger people cannot answer.

Practice Step 1, Passage 2: *To Kill a Mockingbird*



Highlight details in Passage 2 that reveal the author's use of an archetype.

Traits

"Jem buried his face in Atticus's shirt front"
"'She had her own view about things, a lot different from mine'"
"'if you hadn't lost your head I'd have made you go read to her.'"
"'She was the bravest person I ever knew.'"

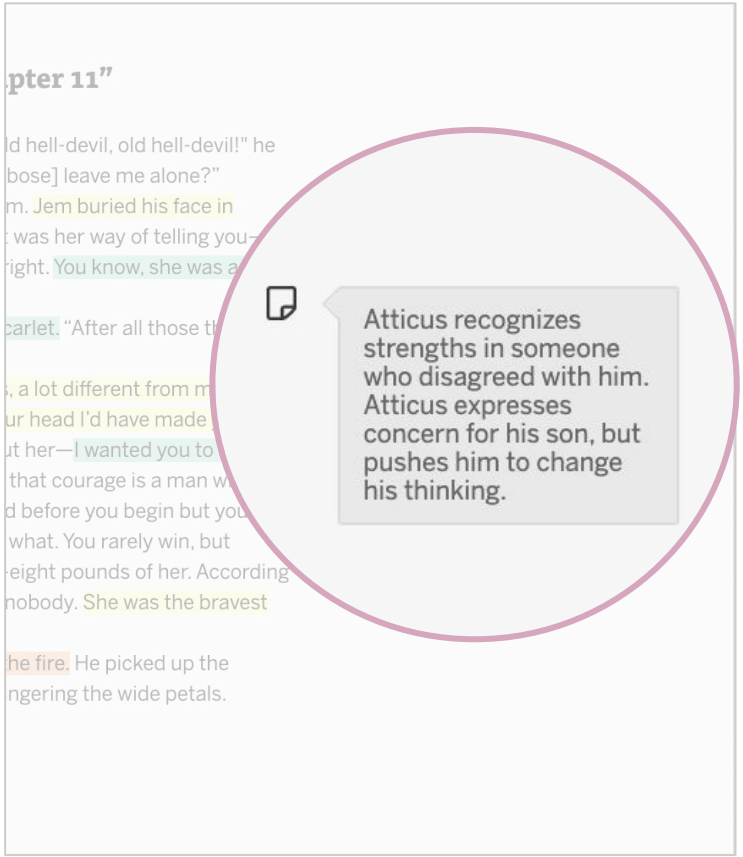
Actions and Outcomes

Jem picked up the candy box and threw it in the fire.
Atticus was reading the paper.

Lessons

"You know, she was a great lady."
"A lady?" Jem raised his head. His face was scarlet.
"I wanted you to see what real courage is..."

Practice Step 1, Passage 2: *To Kill a Mockingbird*



Annotate to explain what the detail reveals about the archetype.

Atticus recognizes strengths in someone who disagreed with him. Atticus expresses concern for his son, but pushes him to change his thinking.

Practice Step 2

Examine how the author uses the archetype. Determine what key qualities and message the author associates with their use of the archetype.

Practice Step 2 Examples:

- Uchendu's age and experience are depicted as providing him with wisdom that younger people do not have. Even a grown man like Okonkwo is respectful and quietly listens to Uchendu's advice.

- Atticus is depicted as compassionate and thoughtful. He can find a lesson about courage even within an unpleasant situation involving a very flawed individual like Mrs. Dubose.

Practice Step 3

Think about it:

Compare and contrast each author’s use of the archetype. What are the similarities and the differences?

Practice Step 3 Examples:

- Both sages are older and more experienced than the people with whom they interact, and each is confident in the lessons they impart to the younger audience.

- Achebe depicts the setting where the sage's experience is respected and his advice is acknowledged as important. Lee depicts the sage as someone who challenges and pushes the thinking of others even when his thinking is not immediately accepted.

Remember

1. Understand the archetype: Read closely, highlight, and annotate specific details that reveal the author’s use of the archetype.
2. Examine how the author uses the archetype: Determine what key qualities and message the author associates with their use of the archetype.
3. Compare and contrast each author’s use of the archetype.

Independent Practice



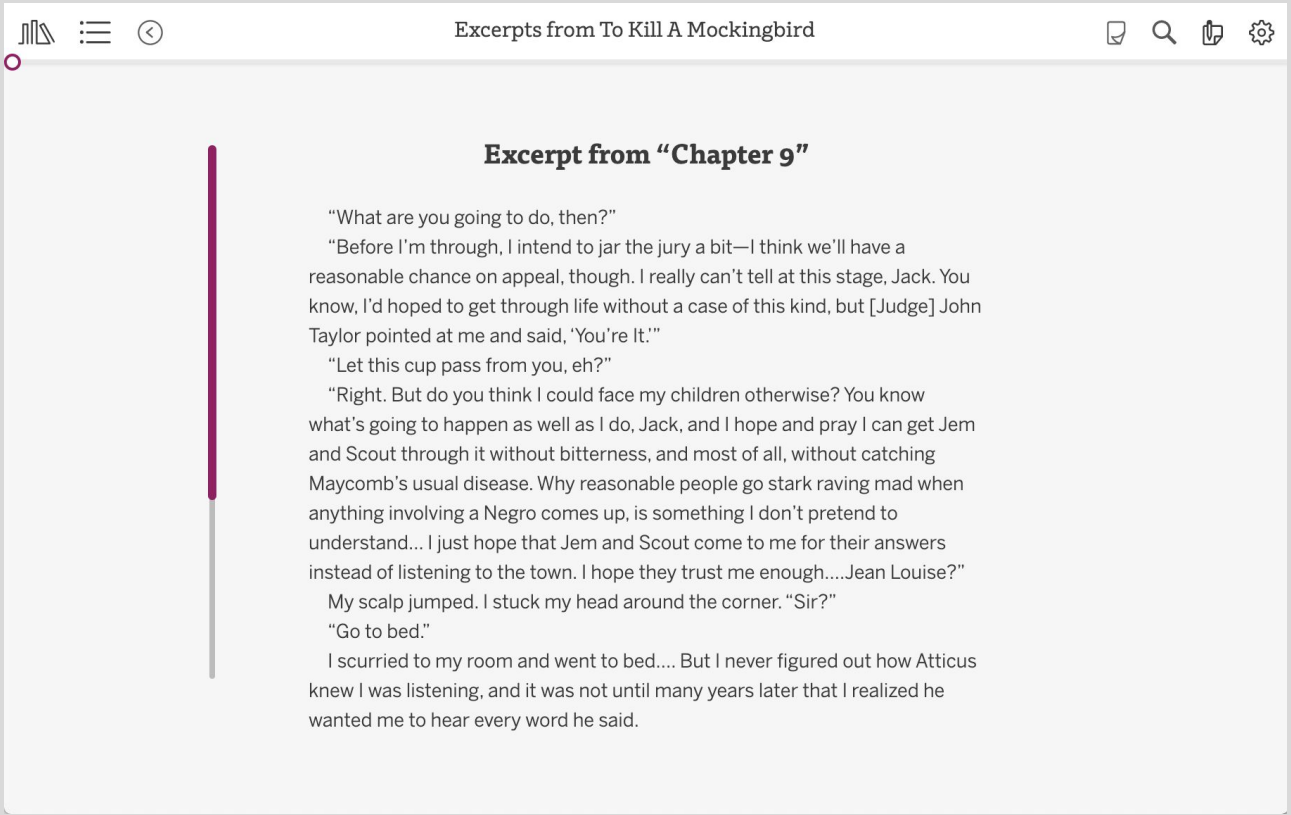
Benchmark:

Compare and contrast the ways that archetypes are used or discussed in texts.

Navigate to and read Excerpt 2 from Chapter 14 in *Things Fall Apart*.



Navigate to and read Excerpt from "Chapter 9" in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.



Things Fall Apart

Shared Archetype: The sage, who is an expert, mentor or teacher.

Context for Passage 3: In this passage, Uchendu offers advice about the motherland and maintaining perspective when it comes to personal suffering.

To Kill a Mockingbird

Shared Archetype: The sage, who is an expert, mentor or teacher.

Context for Passage 4: After agreeing to defend Tom Robinson, Atticus worries about his kids being affected by “the usual disease” of racism. In this passage, Atticus discusses with his brother Jack why he felt he must take the case.

Practice comparative reading with archetypes

Step 1
Read closely, highlight, and annotate details that reveal the author's use of an archetype.

Step 2

Determine what key qualities and message the author associates with their use of the archetype.

Step 3
Compare and contrast each author's use of the archetype.

Check for Understanding



Share and Discuss

1. What are three or four details that reveal each author’s use of the sage archetype?

Share and Discuss

2. What key qualities and message does each author associate with their use of the archetype?

Share and Discuss

3. Compare and contrast each author’s use of the sage archetype.