

# Structure and Detail in "A Long Thin Line"

## Summary

This set of lessons extends over a few days. Students read and annotate Ernie Pyle's "A Long Thin Line of Anguish." Students complete a SAYS/DOES graphic organizer, working on summarizing the text, noticing the choices the author makes about use of details, and describing the choices the author makes regarding the structure of the article.

Students complete a SOAPStone handout, identifying subject, occasion, author, purpose, speaker and tone (SOAPStone is a pre-AP/AP strategy). Students develop claims about why Ernie Pyle makes the writing choices he makes. Students write an informal, free-response style assessment about the impact of Pyle's choices.

## Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Reading: Informational Text Standard 1](#)

## Additional Core Ties

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Reading: Informational Text Standard 5](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Reading: Informational Text Standard 6](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Reading: Informational Text Standard 9](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Writing Standard 1](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Writing Standard 9 b.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 a.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 b.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 c.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 d.](#)

## Group Size

Pairs

## Materials

Student copies of an excerpt from Ernie Pyle's ["A Long Thin Line of Personal Anguish."](#)

I use an excerpt which begins with the line "NORMANDY BEACHHEAD, June 17, 1944 -- In the preceding column we told about the D-day wreckage among our machines of war that were expended in taking one of the Normandy beaches" and ends with the line "He barks appealingly to every soldier who approaches, trots eagerly along with him for a few feet, and then, sensing himself unwanted in all this haste, runs back to wait in vain for his own people at his own empty boat." I have attached the website I use as a source.

## Background for Teachers

Teachers should activate student background on World War II, D-day, and the invasion of Normandy beaches.

Introduce the idea of war correspondents/journalists.

Students have a lot of background in these areas, and so I normally just have a quick classroom discussion to activate student WWII schema.

4. You may want to do this lesson after you have done the Classical Appeals and War Speeches lesson available from UEN.

## Student Prior Knowledge

Students need a basic knowledge of World War II, D-day, and Normandy beach invasions.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will cite textual evidence from "A Long Thin Line of Personal Anguish" and will summarize what the text says. Students will determine Ernie Pyle's point of view and purpose in the article, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the work. Students will analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure Ernie Pyle uses in "A Long Thin Line of Personal Anguish." Students will determine whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

## Instructional Procedures

### PART ONE

Pass out student copies of an excerpt from Ernie Pyle's "A Long Thin Line of Personal Anguish."

Model a close reading of the first paragraph of the text. Think aloud and annotate the text to show your thinking. Project the passage as you annotate; students should read along with you, annotating the text as they go.

Instruct students to, on their own, read and annotate the rest of the passage.

When all students have read and annotated the passage, put the students in pairs and pass out the SAYS/DOES graphic organizers.

Read and explain the directions.

### DIRECTIONS:

Turn to your partner. One of you will read the first paragraph. The other student will listen.

Then you should both share your annotations of that paragraph; share what you noticed when you read the text on your own.

Before moving on to the next paragraph, discuss the text and record the information on your SAYS/DOES graphic organizers (each student should complete his or her own graphic organizer).

There are two columns in the graphic organizer - SAYS / DOES. First, record what the author SAYS. Summarize each paragraph. Try to capture, in your own words, what the author is saying. Also, in the SAYS column, record the specific DETAILS that the author chooses to include AND record the details that the author chooses to leave out. Next, record what the author DOES. Focus on the structure (organization) of the passage and the structure of individual sentences and paragraphs. Describe what the author is doing (Example: Pyle is making a list).

Continue working with your partner, reading paragraphs, sharing annotations, and completing the SAYS/DOES graphic organizer.

## PART TWO

Combine student pairs into groups of four and give each student a SOAPStone handout. Explain to students that authors have reasons for the choices they make when writing. The methods an author chooses are determined by subject, occasion, audience, purpose, speaker and tone. Determining the SOAPStone of informational text helps us to comprehend and analyze that text.

Working in groups, students should complete the SOAPStone handouts. They need to record evidence for each part of SOAPStone.

As a class, review SOAPStone for "A Long Thin Line of personal Anguish."

## PART THREE

Model for students how to use SOAPStone and the DOES column from the SAYS/DOES graphic organizer to determine a claim about WHY Pyle makes the choices he makes when writing the article. Model for the class by completing the WHY for the first two or three paragraphs of the passage. Emphasize that you are making CLAIMS about Pyle's choices. There may be more than one correct claim and there may be more than one way to word the same claim.

Give each group three sticky notes.

Groups choose three paragraphs from the passage and three DOES entries and determine a claim about WHY they believe the author chose to do what he did. Groups should refer to the SOAPStone handout and to the DOES column of the SAYS/DOES handout. Groups should record their claims on their sticky notes.

## PART FOUR

Bring the class back together and project the passage. Read the passage, stopping at the end of each paragraph.

Each time you stop at the end of a paragraph, call for sticky claims.

Collect and project the sticky claim(s) and have the group(s) read and explain their claim(s). If no group created a sticky claim for a certain paragraph, develop a claim as a whole class.

Complete the process for the remaining paragraphs of text.

## PART FIVE

Individual students complete a five-minute free response about how Ernie Pyle's choices about structure makes his points clear, convincing, and engaging.

## Assessment Plan

Information about assessing the lesson is included in the instructional procedures section of this lesson.

## Authors

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