Title of Unit: History in Hip Hop: Plot/Character Development and Allusion

Period of History: 1980s-present; historical references vary

Grade Level: 11

Subject Focus: Reading

Reading Theme of Unit: On FSA, students are required to evaluate the craft and structures (and facets thereof) utilized by authors within their writing. In order for students to be able to evaluate these facets of classical literature, they must first make a connection to what those facets are. Throughout various genres of music, but especially in hip hop, allusions to literary and historical characters allow authors/artists to develop their characters and ideas more thoroughly. Using these allusions as a jumping-off point, we will focus on the structures that are used in developing both the plot and the characters within various genres of texts.

Goal: Students will evaluate the allusions used within various genres of music, and will compare/contrast the characters/events mentioned through the synthesis of various articles.

Infusion Point: Historical and literary references made by many African American artists seek to educate younger generations on the events and people of the past, as well as influential people today.

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards:

LAFS.910.RI.2.5
Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

LAFS.910.RI.3.7
Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

LAFS.1112.RL.2.5
Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
LAFS.910.RL.3.9
Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

LAFS.1112.RI.3.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Objectives:
Students will be able to evaluate the use of allusions and references in a text by building background knowledge and making connections to other literary texts.

Students will evaluate the author’s text structure and development using a comparison of multiple articles on the same topic.

Students will create their own allusion/reference using multiple texts.

Cultural Concept/Information
Oftentimes, modern musicians allude (or refer) to historical and/or literary figures and events in order to develop the plot and characters in their songs. These musicians infuse their songs with history in an effort to inform and educate listeners, as well as to make a comparison by capitalizing on the well-known references mentioned. Such comparisons lose their emphasis if listeners do not stop to acknowledge and evaluate their impact. Therefore, we will look not only at the allusion present in modern music, but also use those references as a jumping-off point to help in the process of synthesizing and comparing sources on a common topic.
Timeline

1980s William Wesley begins networking through the shoe store where he worked as a teenager

1990s William Wesley connected with Michael Jordan

2000s William Wesley seen with some of the top names in sports and music

2015 Drake released “Back to Back”

Technological resources:

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

• Allusion: indirect or passing mention of a historical or literary character, event, or place

• Characterization: how the author develops or reveals details about a character within a text

• Reference: direct or explicit mention of a historical or literary character, event, or place

• Synthesis: taking information from multiple sources and using those sources together to form one new idea

• Text Structure: how the author organizes information within a text in order to develop the main idea/plot/characters
RECOMMENDED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Day 1

Subject: Reading  Title: Introduction to Allusion and Characterization

Grade: 11  Time required: 45-50 minutes

Benchmarks:

LAFS.910.RL.3.9
Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

Key Terminology:
Allusion
Characterization
Reference
Synthesis
Text Structure

Objectives:
1. Students will pre-assess their current knowledge of allusions and references using Bell Work Quick Check.
2. Students will define allusion and references using Cornell Notes.
3. Students will evaluate how the use of an allusion or a reference develops the plot and/or characters within a text.

Pre-lesson:
Bell Work: Students will complete the Allusion Quick Check as a pre-assessment. Give the students 5 minutes to identify the allusions within the examples and then attempt to explain the purpose of each. Remind them that it is a pre-assessment, and so it is okay to guess.

Lesson:

Tie-In: Discuss what character development is. If students seem unclear, you may use the attached Plot and Character Development Cornell Notes as a reminder.

(Optional) Do a Rally Robin in groups of four to share out ways we characterize people in real life. Teacher can write some of the examples shared on the board. Have students direct their attention to the list collected. Inform students that authors give us details so that we can characterize literary characters in the exact same way.

Explicit Instruction: Have students complete the CLOZE copy of the Character Development/Allusion Cornell Notes. Discuss the topic with them as they complete the notes, as well as the examples of allusions and references provided at the bottom. This is a good opportunity to note that we tend to use allusion and reference interchangeably, though technically one is direct and the other indirect.

Have students complete their own summary on the notes page about what character development and allusion are, as well as why they are important to readers.

Segway into the William Wesley synthesis piece using the excerpt from Drake’s “Back to Back,” Have students identify three allusions/references within the short Drake excerpt (William Wesley/Lethal Weapon/Michael Jordan). Focus students in on the William Wesley reference. Similar to how we use context clues to figure out unknown words, we can use context clues to figure out references with which we may not be familiar. The follow-up question requires students to evaluate the effectiveness of the reference. Have students share with a shoulder partner whether they believed the reference was effective in developing Drake’s characterization of himself in “Back to Back.”

• If effective, what inferences can we make from the reference and its context?
• If ineffective, what would help us as readers to better understand the characterization?
Post Lesson:

Tomorrow, we will be looking at how we as readers can take ownership of a text by digging in further into its references and allusions. If we don’t know what something is or means, we have to question the text and use our research skills to figure it out. We will start with the inferences we can draw from the text and then look to build our background knowledge using outside texts in order to synthesize meaning for ourselves.

Before you leave, revisit your Bell Work. Have students go back to their bell work quick check and make any changes they need to their responses.

Materials Needed:
Bell Work Quick Check
Cornell Notes (Teacher and Student CLOZE Copies)
Drake “Back to Back” Excerpt Handout

Assessment:
Cornell Notes Summary
Pre-Assessment Quick Check and Corrections
“Back to Back” Evaluation Tool

ESE/ESOL Strategies:
CLOZE Notes
Graphic Organizer on Notes
Collaboration
Consider inserting sentence starters into Evaluation Tool

References:
“Back to Back”, Drake

Allusion Examples in Rap

I’m full strength like a Cyclops’s eye drops,
I got support like high-tops.
– Ugly Duckling, Left Behind.

“The side lines is lined with casualties
Who sip the life casually, then gradually become worse
Don’t bite the apple, Eve” –Jay-Z

“Now who’s the boss? Not Tony Danza.” –Malik B of the Roots

“Coming from the deep black like the Loch Ness,
now bring apocalypse like the Heart of Darkness.” – Talib Kweli

“My rep grows like the nose of Pinocchio,
Just because I’ve mastered the art of braggadocio.” -Akrobatik

“This is the point of no return and nobody can stop it
Malcolm Little when he knelt before Elijah Muhammad
The comet that killed the dinosaurs, changing the earth” –Immortal Technique

“Tonedeff’s slays giants,
as if my legal name’s David.” -Tonedeff

“But now we’re facing more poverty,
It’s the most we’ve seen since 1993.
We need to turn this thing around: Michael Vick,
But a recession could be headed for a double dip.”

Allusion Examples in Shakespeare and Other Literature

Note: You can basically find allusion on every page of Shakespeare. We dare you. Open up a Shakespeare book, point to a random page, and see if you can find the allusion.

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Toward Phoebus’ lodging. Such a wagoner
As Phaeton would whip you to the west
And bring in cloudy night immediately. – Romeo and Juliet

“Virgil, who believed that the apiarist Aristaeus could spontaneously generate new bees from the rotting carcass of a cow, was closer to a truth about origins than all the revered old books.” -Salman Rushdie

Allusion Reference

“All my exes live in Texas like I’m George Strait”

Lil Wayne refers to country music star George Strait, who had a classic country song titled “All My Exes Live in Texas.”
Days 2-3

Subject: Reading  Title: Allusions and References; Synthesis

Grade: 11  Time required: 1:30-1:40

Benchmarks:

LAFS.1112.RI.3.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Key Terminology:

Synthesis

Objectives:

1. Students will compare and contrast the depiction of individuals/events alluded to within modern texts, using a graphic organizer to synthesize multiple texts.

2. Students will evaluate how the format/genre of a text impacts how the plot and/or characters are developed.

Pre-lesson:

Bell Work:

Choose one of your friends and describe them. In your description, include at least one comparison to another person.

Lesson:
Tie-In: Yesterday, we discussed characterization and how authors oftentimes reference or allude to other people—whether it be people alive now, historical figures, or literary characters. For your bell work, you described a friend of yours. Look at your description. Does your characterization include a helpful reference? Remember how we looked at Drake’s “Back to Back.” We used context to make the reference more effective. Remember that you may not always know who the person is to whom an author or artist is referring. We have to build background knowledge in order to build understanding.

Model: Drake gave us a reference to William Wesley. We figured out a couple of very vague details about him based on the Drake excerpt. Today, we will look at how we use research and synthesis to really give a reference or an allusion, meaning.

Complete a Think-Aloud of the Puzzle Piece Synthesis Graphic Organizer, as you walk students through the GQ Vault blurb on William Wesley.

Read the article blurb aloud and complete the first puzzle piece with four things you discovered from the article.

Pause and instruct students that they will read their article and report their four pieces of information to group members.

As a group, brainstorm with the class what background knowledge ties in to the information attained. Fill that background knowledge into the second puzzle.

Then, come up with a gist statement that ties together the information from the text, as well as the background knowledge the group came up with.

Collaboration: Jigsaw texts to students.

Students should be in groups of three, with each reading a different one of the three texts.
As they read, students should be marking the text, underlining any parts of the text that help characterize William Wesley.

After reading, students will complete the first puzzle, based on their respective articles.

Students will share with their group mates what they read by reporting four pieces of information for the first puzzle piece of their article column.

Once each group member has shared, students will share background knowledge that connects to the information in puzzle piece #1 for each article.

Groups will compose one gist statement for each article.

Post Lesson: Student will write their own character analysis of William Wesley, based upon the Jigsaw activity.

Materials Needed:
Articles
Jigsaw Handout
Model Text
Puzzle Piece Model

Assessment:
Character Analysis

ESE/ESOL Strategies:
Modify article/provide excerpt
Collaboration
Character Analysis Frame
References:


“Is This the Most Powerful Man in Sports?” (http://www.gq.com/story/william-wesley-worldwide-wes-nba-basketball)

“Who is World Wide Wes?” (http://mentalfloss.com/authors/bud-shaw)

“Dajuan Wagner chases hoop dreams, 8 years after last NBA game” (http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nba/2014/12/26/dajuan-wagner-comeback-injuries-where-are-they-now/20813137/)
In the space below, describe William Wesley and the type of person you consider him to be. Use evidence from the texts to justify your opinion.

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
Is This the Most Powerful Man in Sports?

BY ALEX FRENCH

June 20, 2007 8:00 pm

In the NBA, all roads lead to one man, whom you’ve probably never heard of: William Wesley—a.k.a. Worldwide Wes—the most connected, most discreet, most influential man on and off the court

Auburn Hills, Michigan, November 2004. William Wesley, a middle-aged mortgage broker, runs onto the court to shield Ron Artest from a uniformed police officer wielding a can of pepper spray. Artest’s teammates are trading haymakers with fans; coaches and referees are struggling to restore order. The mortgage broker lunges forward and throws his hands in the cop’s face, and in the next instant, Pacers teammates Austin Croshere and Reggie Miller rush to restrain Artest. Through a tempest of tossed soda and popcorn, Wesley moves on to shepherding the Pacers’ Jermaine O’Neal on the court. Once in the tunnel, O’Neal breaks free, but Wesley wraps him in a bear hug and drags him to the locker room.

Two years later, when I ask Reggie Miller about Wesley’s presence on the court, he’ll say: “What the hell is he doing out there in the middle of all that? I mean, what is he doing? He has no business out there! He injects himself into the middle of everything!”

Others weren’t quite so surprised to see William Wesley—or Wes, as he’s known—in the middle of the fray. “At any given time, if you look at any sporting event, there’s a very good chance you’re going to see Wes,” says NBA analyst David Aldridge. Over the years, Wes has been spotted hugging Jerry Jones on the field after a Cowboys Super Bowl win, high-fiving University of Miami football players after a national championship win, and embracing Joe Dumars after the Pistons won the NBA Finals. He’s been spotted sitting next to Jay-Z at the NBA All-Star Game, with Nike czar Phil Knight at the Final Four, and trolling the sidelines of Team USA practices in Las Vegas and Japan. “People who really know Wes,” says superagent David Falk, Wes’s longtime friend, “know that he’s one of the two or three most powerful people in the sport.”

In his March 2005 ESPN “Page 2” column, the well-known basketball writer Scoop Jackson wrote, “I believe Phil Knight is the most powerful man in sports next to Wes Wesley.” Eight months after Jackson’s column, New Jersey-based basketball journalist Henry Abbott mounted an obsessive open-source investigation on his blog, TrueHoop, that brilliantly illustrated how, if you look closely at the various forces at work in basketball at every level of the sport—the AAU programs that funnel players to college programs, the agents looking to land players as early as NBA rules allow, the shoe companies, coaches, franchise owners, front-office executives, players—it eventually dawns on you that they have one thing in common: William Wesley.
So why have you never heard of him? Whenever I told journalists, players, agents, and NBA executives the subject of this article, the common reaction was an amused chuckle and then "Good luck." Very few people, even Wes's friends, are able to describe his role. Chicago Sun-Times writer Lacy Banks recalls his confusion upon meeting Wes twenty years ago: "I thought he worked for the Secret Service or the FBI or the CIA. Then I thought he was a pimp, providing players with chicks, or a loan shark or a bodyguard or a vice commissioner to the league. "The few people who know what Wes is really up to aren't talking. And that's the way Wes likes it.

Many of the stories circulating about Wes are sensationalistic: He was a guest at Frank Sinatra's funeral. He worked as an operative for his close friends Bill and Hillary Clinton. Spike Lee is planning a movie about his life. Of all the rumors, the movie seems to make the most sense, because the story of how William Sydney Wesley, the child of a middle-class family from southern New Jersey, turned himself into Worldwide Wes is such a perfect realization of the modern American dream—full of old-fashioned wheel-greasing, hustling, and social climbing—that it feels like it was written for the big screen.

The story begins in the early 1980s at Pro Shoes, a lunchbox-sized store in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, that serviced hoops stars from all over the Delaware River Valley—from local high school stars to 76ers like Darryl Dawkins and Doug Collins. William Wesley, age 16, was the preternaturally suave salesman who knew all about the clientele. He knew the pro players from TV, and he knew the high schoolers from bumping shoulders with them on the court—there was Leon Rose, the crafty point guard from Cherry Hill East, and those two juggernauts from Camden named Billy Thompson and Milt Wagner.

"Wes was my best friend," Wagner says. "My whole career, he followed me everywhere I went."

In 1981, Milt headed to Louisville, where he made three trips to the Final Four and won a national championship. In 1987, when Milt went on to the Los Angeles Lakers, Wes was there, too, taking it all in, learning that young men, as they make the transition from college to the NBA, have needs. "If a player needs a custom-clothing designer, Wes can help you with that," Banks says. "Need a hairstylist who knows how to do complicated cornrows? Wes can do that."

In 1989, Kenny Payne, one of Milt's former Louisville teammates, introduced Wes to fellow 76er Rick Mahorn, who in turn gave Wes a job as the doorman at his Cherry Hill nightclub, a favorite bump-and-grind spot for Philly's pro athletes. It wasn't long before Wes was running the place.

Recalling that early period, 2 Live Crew front man Luther Campbell tells me, "My claim to fame is that I took Wes on his first flight on a jet. We went to the NBA All-Star Game, we went to the University of Miami games, we went everywhere. We were at a Mike Tyson fight in Atlantic City, and Wes took me back into the casino vault! With the
money! You only get to go back there if you’re an employee or you’re one of the boys. I said, ‘Oh, my God! Who the hell are you, Wes? What’d you do?’ And Wes said, ‘I just know everybody.’ “

Wes’s big break came in the late 1980s or early 1990s, when Milt Wagner put him in a room with Michael Jordan. Jordan ended up giving Wes a job at his basketball camp. After that, according to Lacy Banks, “Wes just popped up out of nowhere. You’d see him in locker rooms, courtside at games, in the hotels, restaurants, everywhere. “By late 1993, Wes had taken up residence in Chicago. Being close to Jordan and the Bulls was good for business.

Chicago is where Wes became friends with, among others, the Clintons, Phil Knight, and Reebok exec Tom Shine. He made allies in the media, providing inside information and facilitating interviews with difficult-to-reach stars, and he gained a reputation as a trustworthy adviser/fir for at-risk athletes. “I know of a particular NBA player who got into a staggering gambling situation, “says Shine. “The people this guy lost money to, they were not nice guys. Wes saved him from getting killed. “

In 1997, when Allen Iverson was arrested for possessing marijuana and a concealed weapon, Wes stepped in to clean up the mess. According to Reebok executive Que Gaskins, Iverson’s constant companion during that period, “After Allen got in trouble, Wes called to check in on us and make sure we had the right resources and the right people to get in touch with. He was very close with Billy Hunter [head of the National Basketball Players Association] and wanted to make sure that if Allen wanted his voice heard, he and Billy had a conversation.”

Numerous sources also told me that Wes played a significant role in mediating peace between Iverson and his coach, Larry Brown. One well-circulated anecdote tells of Wes urging A.I. over speakerphone to quit bitching and get his ass to practice. Coaches around the league took notice of the sway Wes had with players. "Put it this way, "says Cleveland Cavaliers coach Mike Brown. "If I have a problem and I need an outside influence, I know I can call him. We talk all the time. “

In 2001, Wes’s godson and Milt’s son, Dajuan Wagner, was the consensus best high school basketball player in the world. If Dajuan had entered the NBA draft after his junior year at Camden High, he might have been the number one pick. But Wes persuaded him to let the NBA wait and spend a year or two playing for John Calipari at the University of Memphis. The deal came with plenty of strings attached: Wes made it clear to Calipari that Dajuan was more inclined to sign with a school that also gave a free ride to his best friend, Arthur Barclay, an all-state player who’d been passed over because of poor test scores. (Done.) Then Milt, despite lacking a college degree, was hired to be Memphis’s head of basketball operations. When news of the deal leaked out, the media crucified Calipari, painting it as nothing more than legalized graft. Wes answered accusations that something shady had gone down, saying, “Man, I’ve heard
the second-guessing. It's simple: Juanny needed to improve his defense and prove that he can play on the next level. Coach Cal can help him do that. What do I have to gain by him going to Memphis?"

Wes had been managing Dajuan's career since the boy was 11, and so when it came time for Dajuan to head to Memphis, Wes went along. After only one season—in which Dajuan averaged twenty-one points a game—Calipari called Milt and Dajuan into his office. "I tore up Dajuan's scholarship in front of him to make sure he understood he wasn't coming back," Calipari says. Dajuan was ready for the NBA. The Cavaliers selected him in the first round of the 2002 draft, and as Dajuan made his move from college to the pros, Wes was there to ease the transition. In his first year, Dajuan was among NBA rookie leaders in scoring, assists, and minutes played.

Who Is World Wide Wes?

2  Share

Bud Shaw

IMAGE CREDIT:

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

A 2007 GQ Magazine article on 45-year-old William Wesley asked, "Is this the most powerful man in sports?"

That's a stretch. But in the new NBA, where superstars are flexing muscles like Mixed Martial Arts fighters, the Summer of LeBron James seemed at times like the Summer of William Wesley, otherwise known as "World Wide Wes" -- which very well could be the greatest nickname going.

(Former NBA player Jalen Rose claims to have given Wesley his name. His latest name anyway. Wesley first answered to "Fresh Wes" when he was putting spanking new basketball shoes on the feet of athletes at a Cherry Hill, N.J., store called Pro Shoes.)

Not since Keyser Soze in The Usual Suspects has one man/myth cast such a shadow -- real or imagined -- over the proceedings as Wesley has recently.

Example: Louisville coach Rick Pitino told ESPN that for anyone courting LeBron James it would "probably be smart to have a relationship with William Wesley."

The well-dressed man moving through the crowd in Miami that greeted LeBron James' private jet the night he flew from "The Decision" on ESPN to his new life with the Miami Heat. Yep. World Wide.
"Uncle" to NBA stars such as James, Chris Paul, and dozens more. That's World Wide Wes.

The guy pictured shielding Ron Artest from harm on the court during the infamous Pacers-Pistons brawl at The Palace in 2004? That's him, too.

NBA analyst David Aldridge told GQ, "At any given time, if you look at a sports event, there's a very good chance you're going to see Wes."

And so the litany of Wesley sightings: hugging Jerry Jones after a Cowboys' Super Bowl win, sitting next to Jay-Z at the NBA All-Star game, with Phil Knight of Nike at the Final Four, hanging in Greenwich, Conn., with James earlier this month for the worst hour in sports programming history, in various locales with Team USA.

Brian Windhorst, my colleague at The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, attended the World Championships in Japan in 2006. Team USA execs had clamped down on distractions. They adopted a bunker mentality. No players' families. No entourages.

"Nobody," Windhorst said. "Except...there was Wes."

THE MOST INTERESTING MAN IN THE (SPORTS) WORLD

In the GQ article, writer Alex French doesn't quite pin down whether Wesley was a guest at Sinatra's funeral (one story says he was) or his legitimacy as a reported friend of the Clintons (another story). But he captures the Wes Experience with an anecdote involving Brazilian star Leandro Barbosa's trip to the United States in hopes of positioning himself for a NBA career.

Barbosa found himself in Cleveland that night at a Cavaliers' game, then shortly after in Wesley's car. The former shoe salesman/mortgage broker/all-around-go-to-guy impressed the young player by dialing up Michael Jordan on speaker phone (he got Jordan's voice mail) then Jay-Z (who was with Beyonce working a late night in the studio).

Who was this guy, Barbosa wondered?

No one has spent more time on that question than basketball writer Henry Abbott. One New Year's Eve night a few years ago, Abbott was struggling to come up with a resolution. Wesley popped to mind. Abbott pledged to find out as much as he could about William Wesley over the next calendar year.

OK, so it wasn't a pledge to help end world hunger. But he's a basketball writer, not a rock star.

And it beats my annual resolution to go to the gym once every January.

The abbreviated version of Abbott's findings paint the picture of a man who works the margins between players, teams, shoe companies and the entertainment industry. The more relationships he fosters, the more valuable he becomes.
As Abbott wrote, "The basic goal of the investigation was to find out what he did for a living."

Short answer: um, uh...everything?

THE RISE OF FRESH WES

Wesley met a number of Philadelphia athletes while working at Pro Shoes in Cherry Hill and as a doorman for a nightclub owned by former Pistons and Sixers player, Rick Mahorn.

Growing up in South Jersey, he also became best friends with high school basketball sensation Milt Wagner and followed him to Louisville, where Wagner appeared in three Final Fours. Through Wagner, the NBA world opened even more to Wesley, who met Jordan and worked at Jordan's basketball camp.

In 1993, he partnered in a Chicago nightclub frequented by Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman. Rodman told ESPN this about Wesley: "No one knows what he's delivering, no one knows what he's doing, no one knows what he's got." He also said before Wesley earned Jordan's trust Wes "used to kiss more ass than anybody back in the day."

Abbott found players, team executives and others reluctant to talk about Wesley on the record. That helps Wesley fit the Winston Churchill line about Russia. A riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.

When Milt Wagner's son, DaJuan, was looking for a college, Wesley sought out Memphis head coach John Calipari because of the coach's reputation for dealing honestly with players on whether turning pro was to their benefit. DaJuan Wagner spent one year at Memphis before Calipari told him he was ready for the NBA draft.

WORKING FOR NOBODY. AND EVERYBODY.

Wesley became a representative for coaches, doing their bidding for jobs behind the scenes, while building trust with players. The players Abbott contacted repeated one theme. Wesley was always there to help. He never asked for anything. Abbott concluded that in the world of the young, rich, black athlete being pulled in a thousand different directions, what Wesley offered -- friendship, trust and seemingly endless contacts -- was greatly valued.

No relationship did as much for Wesley as his friendship with Jordan. Through Jordan, Wesley met a teenage sensation already headed for the cover of Sports Illustrated under the title, "The Chosen One." LeBron James was 15 when he met Wesley. In the GQ story, James called Wesley his "role model."

A long-time friendship with sports agent Leon Rose has greatly benefited the agent in acquiring players. Wesley helped deliver James to Rose. Creative Artists Agency (CAA)
of Hollywood brought Rose's business under its umbrella a few years ago and soon CAA represented James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh.

Wesley, not unexpectedly, has called his role "overblown" in published interviews. He says his power is a "myth."

But agent David Falk has been quoted saying Wesley is one of the two or three most powerful people in sports. Falk told GQ, "Leon Rose doesn't have any clout. Wes has clout."

Wesley worked to get head coach Larry Brown to Detroit after the firing of Rick Carlisle. Brown was hired in a whirlwind. Wesley had the ear of Cleveland Cavaliers' owner Dan Gilbert and pushed for the hiring of head coach Mike Brown in 2005.

Wrote GQ's French, "Working for nobody allows him to work for everybody."

THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

In the days leading up to LeBron James' decision, Maverick Carter, a high school buddy of James and head of his marketing "team," made a point to tell the New York Times that Wesley would not influence James' decision.

The comment became evidence to some of a rift between James' camp and Wesley. But it's since been suggested that perhaps Wesley wanted to be seen as bringing Swiss neutrality to the table to protect his other interests. Somebody was bound to be upset with James' decision. Worldwide Wes didn't want the fallout to land on him.

Rift? He was in Greenwich for James' one-hour special. And there he was getting off the plane with James in Miami.

Not too many days later, a report claimed New Orleans point guard Chris Paul would tell management he wanted a trade to go pursue a title despite having two years remaining on his deal.

Yahoo sports columnist Adrian Wojnarowski calls Wesley a "full service middle man," orchestrating deals for players and coaches. He claims Wesley has been trying for months to pull the strings on a deal for Paul, who is even more determined to improve his lot now that his best friend, James, is part of a stacked team in Miami.

The NBA recently issued a strict tampering warning, specifically naming a player (Paul) for the first time.

Even if the Olympic experience is responsible for bringing James, Wade and Bosh together -- and it wasn't Wesley directly convincing James to leave Cleveland for the Heat -- no one doubts Wesley's "player" credentials.

Jordan long ago retired. Wesley is still going strong working with another generation of NBA superstars.
Lacy Banks, a Chicago sportswriter covering Jordan's Bulls, told GQ that back then he thought Wesley worked for the "Secret Service, the FBI or the CIA."

Now everybody knows it's CAA. Not that the job description is much different.

Bud Shaw is a columnist for the Cleveland Plain Dealer who has also written for the Philadelphia Daily News, San Diego Union-Tribune, Atlanta Journal-Constitution and The National. You can read his Plain Dealer columns at Cleveland.com, and read all his mental_floss articles here.

Dajuan Wagner chases hoop dreams, 8 years after last NBA game

Tim Casey, Special for USA TODAY Sports4:59 p.m. EST December 26, 2014

(Photo: 2002 photo by Mark Duncan, AP)

BURLINGTON, N.J. — For the first time in seven years, Dajuan Wagner played in a professional game last month, suiting up for the Philadelphia Spirit of the American Basketball Association.

Hundreds of fans packed the small gym at Life Center Academy, 30 miles from Wagner's hometown of Camden, N.J., where he's been called "Messiah" since childhood. Posters were taped on the glass windows outside declaring "Dajuan Is Back!"

Wagner didn't disappoint. Facing admittedly inferior players who weren't too interested in defense, he scored 36 points and made 13 of 17 field goals in the Spirit's 154-150 loss. The 6-foot-2 guard showed he still has the offensive skills that were apparent early in his rookie season with the Cleveland Cavaliers, before injuries and illness derailed his once promising career.
LeBron James builds on his kingdom

After being selected sixth overall in the 2002 NBA draft, Wagner appeared in 103 NBA games, the last coming on Nov. 11, 2006. He spent the next fall playing in Poland but sustained a torn labrum, returned to New Jersey and spent the last few years raising his two children and occasionally competing in recreation leagues. But the 31-year-old says he’s healthy and prepared to make one last attempt at an improbable comeback.

He’s taking it slow. He’s played limited minutes in two other ABA games and doesn’t know how much longer he’ll compete before moving on to a higher level. He’s hoping to sign with a team overseas next summer, possibly in Europe or Puerto Rico, and then potentially play in the NBA Development League.

"I ain't chasing (the NBA)," Wagner said. "It don't matter. But if the chance comes, I'll look into it and see."

Wagner first thought about returning more than a year ago. William Wesley, Wagner’s godfather and a well-connected figure in the basketball world, approached skills trainer Guy Ikpah in the summer of 2013 and asked him to work with Wagner.

"(Wesley) said it was a project that was near and dear to his heart, like a special project," Ikpah said. "When Wes gives you a job, you've kind of got to do it, kind of see it to completion."

Ikpah has spent four days each week with Wagner at a gym Wagner owns in Cherry Hill, N.J. At first, Wagner wasn’t in shape and could only last 15 minutes, but the sessions soon expanded to more than an hour. Wagner also trains with strength and conditioning coach Chad Hallett. He weighs 205 pounds, five more than during his NBA days.

"This is the best I've seen him," said Hallett, who has trained Wagner off and on for the past five years. "He's definitely determined, the most determined guy I've ever seen."

Despite his long layoff, Wagner remains a legendary figure in his home state. Camden High School recently named its court after him, as the nation’s top recruit as a senior. He remains New Jersey’s all-time leading scorer with more than 3,400 career points, including 100 in one game. In his lone season at Memphis under John Calipari, Wagner averaged 21.2 points per game and left little doubt he was ready for the NBA.

Before his rookie season with the Cavaliers, he was hospitalized for nearly two weeks with a bladder infection, sat out training camp and missed the first 14 games of the regular season. When Wagner returned, Coach John Lucas inserted him in the starting lineup. Wagner scored at least 25 points in six of his first 11 games and averaged 13.4
points, but his season was cut short when he tore the meniscus in his right knee in March 2003.

That June, the Cavaliers drafted LeBron James and envisioned him pairing with Wagner to form one of the league's top young duos. But as James excelled, Wagner endured a series of ailments, including another knee injury, an inflamed liver and pancreas, dehydration and gastroenteritis.

"I followed Dajuan (through) all of his career in high school," Lucas said. "I knew exactly who he was and thought he'd do exactly what he was going to be able to do in the league. He just had to get a chance to get healthy."

Wagner sat out the 2005-06 season after being diagnosed with colitis and having his colon removed. During the recovery process, his weight dropped to 160 pounds. In September 2006, he signed with the Golden State Warriors, but he experienced dizziness and other issues and only played one regular season game before the team bought out his contract.
"The basketball part was always easy," Wagner said. "I know if I would've been healthy, it would have been a different story. That's the only thing you think about. When I was on the court, I was effective. I'm not saying the NBA's easy, but I ain't have no problem with it. I could play with 'em."

Wagner hasn't had any injuries for the past two years, and he's more committed than he's been in a long time. On a few occasions, he's called Ikpah at 2 or 3 in the morning and asked him to meet in the gym for a workout.

"We joke about it," Ikpah said. "But I feel like he'd get off the bench and average 12 points for an NBA team right now."
Day 4

Subject: Reading  Title: Comparing the Methods of Characterization

Grade: 11  Time required: 50 minutes

Benchmarks:
LAFS.910.RI.2.5
Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

LAFS.910.RI.3.7
Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

Objectives:
Students will evaluate the effectiveness of an author’s development by comparing multiple texts on the same topic.

Pre-lesson:
Bell Work: Write a one-sentence summary of your William Wesley article from yesterday.

Lesson:
Tie-In: Think about the article you read yesterday. Each of your articles was different, and yet they were all on the same topic. Each developed the characterization of William Wesley. Today, you will work with your same Jigsaw groups, but will look not at the topic, but at the format (the text structure) of your article.
Students will return to same groups as the previous day. They will re-read the text with the purpose of identifying which type(s) of text structures the author utilizes. Have students circle words that demonstrate the relationships being described within the text.

Students will report back to their group mates, and complete the Text Structure Handout.

Post Lesson:
Students will complete an exit slip quick write: What organizational pattern do you think would be most beneficial to readers for the purpose of characterization? Why?

Materials Needed:
Articles
Text Structure Handout
Cornell Notes (Optional)

Assessment:
Text Marking
Handout
Quick Write

ESE/ESOL Strategies:
Collaboration
Sentence Starters
Choose article purposefully
References:
“Is This the Most Powerful Man in Sports?” (http://www.gq.com/story/william-wesley-worldwide-wes-nba-basketball)
“Who is World Wide Wes?” (http://mentalfloss.com/authors/bud-shaw)
“Dajuan Wagner chases hoop dreams, 8 years after last NBA game” (http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nba/2014/12/26/dajuan-wagner-comeback-injuries-where-are-they-now/20813137/)

Text Structure Comparison

In the text boxes below, identify the article title, organizational pattern, and key words that helped you to identify that pattern. Under the signal words, provide three reasons each why that text structure is good and bad for characterization. Once you and your group mates have completed this information for the three respective articles, share the information summary. Then, as a group, decide which organizational pattern you believe is best for characterization. Use specific examples from the text to explain your response on the back of this sheet.
Day 5

Subject: Reading  Title: Improve and Create an Effective Reference

Grade: 11  Time required: 50 minutes

Benchmarks:

LAFS.1112.RL.2.5

Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Objectives:

Students will be able to characterize an individual within a song or literary text by adding in a reference/alliteration within the text.

Students will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of their characterization by explaining how the reference/allusion develops their characters.

Pre-lesson:

Bell Work: Look at the excerpt of Drake’s “Back to Back” that we referenced earlier this week. Take five minutes to add to Drake’s reference, in order to make the characterization more effective.

Lesson:

Tie-In: This week, we have spent a lot of time looking at how authors develop their characters. We’ve done that by looking at Worldwide Wes, stemming from the reference Drake makes to him in “Back to Back.” Today, you will prove you know how best to develop a character (including the use of alliteration/reference,) by taking a song of your choice and revising it to include better character development. You may change the organizational pattern to whichever text structure you think best suits the purpose of the author. Once you have revised your song, complete the Characterization Evaluation.
Independent: If possible, have students in reach of either computers or phones to help them with the independent assignment. If computers cannot be secured, have them complete the research portion for homework, and come to class with their lyrics in hand and reference person already in mind. Students will revise songs. Students may need to use computer or phone to find lyrics, if they did not bring them in.

Post Lesson:
Collect student revisions and evaluations.

Materials Needed:
Song Revision Rubric
Lyrics
Characterization Evaluation

Assessment:
Revision
Characterization Evaluation

ESE/ESOL Strategies:
Allow students to use song of their choice

References:
“Back to Back” Excerpt
Song Revision Rubric

_____ Brought song lyrics (as assigned for homework)
_____ Song lyrics included at least one character
_____ Song lyrics are school-appropriate
_____ Revisions do help to improve character development
_____ Alliteration/reference aligns with intended purpose

Characterization Evaluation Rubric

_____ Student explains why they made the revisions
_____ Student evaluates whether the revisions accomplish the intended purpose
_____ Student evaluates how much more effective the characterization is, thanks to changes
Bibliography


