

THEMATIC UNIT

Related to ELA Prototypes



Theme: **Everyday Heroes**

Suggested for: **Middle School**

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~Thematic Units~

Dear Colleagues:

The purpose of this project was to organize thematic units related to previously published MEAP ELA prototypes using best practices in reading and writing.

These were developed by, **real teachers**, just like you! We worked to make them teacher friendly for easy implementation in your classroom. Teachers from school districts across St. Clair County gathered the material. The units are a representation of what each group of teachers thought was important to your grade level and to the themes in the prototypes.

Every packet includes **THEME RELATED TEXT SETS**. These are titles that can be used in a variety of ways to develop a deeper understanding of themes. We have noted the **PAIRED TEXTS** (look for the #2) and **LISTENING TEXT** (#3) that are included in the prototypes. We also noted the title(s) we used for **FRAYER'S MODEL** (#1).

A **PROFUNDITY MATRIX** was developed for each set of paired texts in the prototype to help in identifying possible themes. The matrix also helps look across text to make cross text connections. Blank copies of this chart are included and can be used in your classroom to help students make connections between other texts.

CROSS TEXT QUESTIONS were written and answered to aid in responding to both the multiple choice questions and the provocative question given in the second writing piece of the ELA MEAP assessment.

Many packets include one or more **WRITING MODELS** for the second writing piece. We suggest you use these before or after student writing to exhibit a well written constructed response.

The **TEACHER SUGGESTION PAGE** is a personal response by the individuals involved in the project. Some contain anecdotes from the use of the material in their classrooms. Others contain a plethora of ideas to implement. We hope these help.

OTHER ACTIVITIES (#4) are poems, plays, articles, reader's theater presentations and related suggestions to further develop understanding of the themes.

It is our sincere hope these packets are useful to you and your students.

Happy reading and writing!

Thematically Related Text Sets – Fairness

CODE	TITLE	AUTHOR
1	The Empty Pot	Demi
1	The Rag Coat	Lauren A. Mills
3	Kate Shelley and the Midnight Express	Margaret K. Wetterer
2 (set 1)	Sarah Emma Edmonds www.pinn.net/~sunshine/shm2002/edmonds.html	
2 (set 1)	Helen Keller – A Remarkable Woman (Reader's Theater) www.lisablaui.com	
2 (set 2)	Angel Island Li Keng Wong's Story http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/asian-american/angel_island/index.htm	
2 (set 2)	A Boy's Journey http://teacher.scholastic.com/immigrat/seymour/chap1.htm	
2 (set 3)	Follow the Drinking Gourd	Jeanette Winter
2 (set 3)	Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt	Deborah Hopkinson
3	Frederick Douglas Speech (audio tape)	Great American Speeches published by Scholastic
3	Patrick Henry Speech (includes audio tape)	Great American Speeches published by Scholastic
4	Encounter	Jane Yolen
4	First Biography Christ	Jan Gleiter and Kathleen Thompson
4	Stone Fox	John Reynolds Gardiner
4	Sarah, Plain and Tall	Patricia MacLachlan
4	A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman	David Adler
4	Little House on the Prairie	Laura Ingalls Wilder
4	Leaving Hunger Behind (play)	Scholastic Read-Aloud Plays

Code Key: <u>Suggested Uses</u>
1 – Frayer's Model
2 – Paired Text
3 – Listening
4 – Others (additional titles)

ELA Prototype Materials

- **Thematically related texts**
- **Fruyer's model examples**
- **Writing from knowledge and experience using narrative strategies**
- **Profundity examples**
- **Cross Text Question examples**
- **Writing in Response to Reading example**

These materials were designed to provide examples of instructional approaches that will help you and your students prepare for the ELA assessment. The examples are all possible answers; they are not to be considered the "right" answers. We wanted to provide examples of other teachers' thinking through Fruyer's, Profundity and cross text questions to help guide you through your own thinking.

The sequence of instruction would be to introduce the theme through using the Fruyer's model of concept attainment. Have students write from knowledge and experience. Think through each reading selection using the profundity scale to create a matrix by which cross text questions can be posed and answered. Examples and blank copies are provided to help you in planning instruction.

Thematically Related Text Sets – Everyday Heroes

CODE	TITLE	AUTHOR
1, 2	Jaime Escalante: Math Teacher	Nancy Lobb
1, 2	Patches	Jeanette Sanderson
3	Unforgettable Courage	Compiled by Reader's Digest
*	A Cold Night in Detroit	Michelle Clayton Bennett www.HeroicStories.com
*	His Courage Shone Brighter	Doru Macovei Joyce S. Limassol www.HeroicStories.com
*	Stories of Heroes Emerge from Iraq	Dan Thomasson www.polkonline.com/stories/040803/opi_herotales.shtml
	It Ain't Worth It	Bill Strout Clayton Bennett www.HeroicStories.com
*	Make a Difference Day Stories	Compilation from USA Weekend http://www.usaweekend.com/diffday/honorees/2003/030427mdday.html#president
*	Move to Montana	Arlo Paulsen Clayton Bennet www.HeroicStories.com

Code Key:

Suggested Uses

1 – Frayer's Model / Brainstorming the Theme

2 – Paired Text

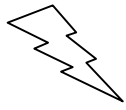
3 – Listening

* – Extension Activities; interchangeable and apply to all text

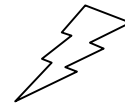
Extension Activities

The following suggestions provide additional ways to use the theme related text:

- Have students do a “Quick Write” on the theme, *Everyday Heroes*. Ask students to write continuously for no more than 5 minutes. They should focus on interesting ideas and make connections between the topic and their own lives. Have students share their Quick Writes in small groups. This activity is a way to help students focus on exploring and developing ideas. The emphasis is on content not mechanics. This entire activity should be completed in 20 minutes.
- Have students complete the Anticipation Guide, “What Makes A Hero.” The purpose of an Anticipation Guide is to activate student background knowledge about the topic. Students are motivated to read to determine whether the text confirms or disproves their opinions. You may choose to have students come back to this activity at the end of the thematic unit to see if their opinions have changed.
- Have students complete “The Importance of Character” activity page. This activity focuses on identifying character traits of heroes and explaining their significance. This activity can be used with any reading selection.
- Have students complete “Who Are Your Heroes” activity page. This brainstorming activity helps students to make personal connections to the theme.
- During reading, have students complete the “Life Lessons” activity page. This activity assists students in determining the story element, of author’s message, and how it relates to their lives.
- Have students read and respond to “Why Only One Hero and Not Many?” Have students generate ideas (individually, with a partner, or in a group) as to how the class can inspire one another to be everyday heroes. Now take it to the next step, and generate ideas for a class project. Have the class vote on one activity everyone will participate in for a “Make a Difference Day” project.
- As an alternative assessment, students will engage in a collaborative project. Have students complete “The Hero in YOU” activity page. Each student will write a personal heroic story, which will be added to the class book, *A Class of Heroes*. This activity is similar to Part 1 MEAP writing.



Brainstorming the Theme



Everyday heroes are...

- People who help others.
- People who make a difference in the lives of others without public recognition.
- People who step up to the challenge in times of need.

Note: Accept all reasonable responses from students that focus on the definition of the theme.

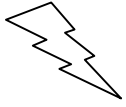
Examples of everyday heroes...

- The firefighters and policemen from 9-11.
- A classmate that stands up for me when I'm being bullied.
- Princess Diana's support of children that were victims of land mines.
- Students who participate in peer tutoring programs.
- My parents for their support and love no matter what I do.
- Teachers like Jaime Escalante (This could be added after reading selection #1).
- Patches the dog that rescued Mr. Scott (This could be added after reading selection #2).

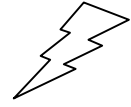
Note: Students should brainstorm events, personal experiences, examples from related text, a person from history, or someone that students know that demonstrate/support the theme.

Circle one example from above that you will write about.

Note: Students select one of the above examples and use as a writing topic. (MEAP Part 1 writing)



Brainstorming the Theme



Everyday heroes are...

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Examples of everyday heroes...

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Circle one example from above that you will write about.

Writing From Knowledge and Experience

The English Language Arts MEAP assessment requires students to write from knowledge and experience. Students may choose the style or genre of writing that suites them best. However, the majority of students choose to write personal narratives. Dr. Elaine Weber, Barbara Nelson, and Ray Woods, the authors of *Profiles in Writing 2002*, have granted us permission to offer you some information from the book. This information may help you instruct students in personal narratives.

These resources will provide you with:

- Description of the four qualities of writing the MEAP assessment used to evaluate student writing;
- A model for creating writing prompts;
- Examples of well written student papers;
- Attributes of writing that commonly appear at this grade level;
- Strategies used by narrative writers; and
- Examples of student papers with the narratives strategies highlighted.

attributes of **writing**

Note

This year the Profiles Project has reorganized the attributes of writing to align with the 4-trait rubric most widely used by Profiles Network members:

Focus on Content and Ideas

Organization

Voice/Style,

and

Conventions.

focus on content

Focus refers to concentration on the content and ideas of the piece of writing and to the development of the content and major ideas with appropriate details, examples, etc.

or gan i za tion

Organization refers to the structure of a piece of writing with logical sequence; beginning, middle, and end; flow; cohesion, coherence, unity, effective leads; transitions and conclusions; sense of wholeness, etc.

Voice/style

Voice refers to the writer's ability/attempts to engage and interest the reader through stylistic elements and techniques such as: descriptive detail, precise word choice, sentence variety, strong verbs, humor, figurative language, personal reflection, etc.

con-ven·tion(s)

Conventions refer to a writer's presentation of a piece of writing through accurate and effective use of writing form including: directionality, spacing, mechanics (capitalization, punctuation), grammar and usage, spelling, etc.

attributes **grade eight**

focus on content

- ✓ focuses and elaborates on one topic
- ✓ elaborates through detail and description
- ✓ develops with creativity and imagination
- ✓ includes insightful presentation of message
- ✓ uses consistent point of view
- ✓ subtly weaves theme
- ✓ expresses point of view
- ✓ includes effective title
- ✓ uses logical effective argument
- ✓ includes complex and realistic character development
- ✓ develops with sensory details

organization

- ✓ organization unifies writing
- ✓ includes strong introduction and conclusion
- ✓ strong lead that engages reader
- ✓ ending links to beginning
- ✓ uses logical sequence of events
- ✓ flow
- ✓ coherent
- ✓ uses transitional devices for progression
- ✓ refined paragraph organization
- ✓ reflective ending

Voice/style

- ✓ compelling voice shows deep personal influence
- ✓ uses emotional appeal
- ✓ “explodes a moment”
- ✓ includes “thoughtshots”
- ✓ meshes creativity with craft
- ✓ uses conversational tone
- ✓ shows depth and complexity
- ✓ brings in reader as part of the story
- ✓ uses humor/sarcasm/understatement
- ✓ builds suspense
- ✓ creates imagery through sensory detail
- ✓ uses figurative language: metaphor, simile, irony, flashback
- ✓ mature word choice
- ✓ uses varied and complex sentence structure
- ✓ effective use of dialogue
- ✓ risk-taking with vocabulary
- ✓ title as double entendre
- ✓ uses hyperbole
- ✓ attention to objectivity
- ✓ uses personally unique tone
- ✓ uses conversational tone
- ✓ uses reflective tone
- ✓ poetic tone
- ✓ uses strong verbs
- ✓ effective use of repetition
- ✓ uses sensory language

con·ven·tion(s)

- ✓ uses standard writing conventions
- ✓ shows control over mechanics
- ✓ uses sophisticated punctuation
- ✓ uses consistent verb tense

grade eight (A Special Place)

My Special Place

As the sun smiles brightly, a cool spring breeze gently ruffles the treetops. I sit lazily, staring up at the azure sky dotted with clusters of fluffy white clouds. Lost deep in a blue ocean of thought, I swing gently back and forth, feeling the tickle of the grass on my bare feet. Welcome to my special spot—the tree swing in my backyard.

The swing hangs from the lowest branch of an ancient maple tree. It has been there as long as I can remember. There were days when I had to be lifted onto the swing by one of my older sisters, since my feet couldn't touch the ground. In those days, the swing simply provided entertainment. Now, I consider it a friend.

I visit my swing on an almost daily basis, if only for a few minutes. It serves as a source of tranquility in a hectic world. When I feel sad, I go to my swing to sit alone and cry. On lazy summer days, I take a glass of iced tea and a good book and spend hours lost in my own world. When I have lots of energy, or feel especially happy, I head to my swing and swing as high as I can, loving the feeling of soaring through the air. When I need to think, or I have an important decision to make, my swing allows me to clear my mind, and concentrate completely on the issue at hand. When I'm very stressed out, I will just stop dead in the middle of whatever I'm doing and head to my swing for 5 minutes. Being able to do that helps me keep things in perspective.

Whatever the reason, I know I can always run to my swing for a while and just be me. Unminded, unobserved, unjudged, I allow myself to simply be, in the presence of a friend. The fact that I can do that is very important to me.

focus on content

- ✓ on topic
- ✓ developed with sensory details

organization

- ✓ organized and flows
- ✓ lead engages reader
- ✓ reflective ending

Voice/style

- ✓ creates imagery through sensory detail
- ✓ describes with sensory and figurative language
- ✓ poetic
- ✓ effective use of repetition
- ✓ uses strong verbs
- ✓ binoculars
- ✓ snapshots

con-ven-tion(s)

- ✓ uses standard writing conventions

strategies used by **narrative writers**

The next step in the Profile process, after selecting the most effective writings and holistically scoring the papers with a rubric, is to identify writing strategies used by the authors of the effective papers. The following list of writers' strategies is a combination of the original list that came from the New Standards Project shared by Sally Hampton and modified by Barbara Nelson to include the writing strategies of Barry Lane. These writing strategies can be taught in focused lessons. It is also a way to talk about narrative writing with students during writing conferences. The list of strategies used by narrative writers follows:

1. forecasting
2. flashback / flash forward
3. foreshadowing
4. compressing - shrink a century
5. naming (specific names of people or objects quantities, number)
6. describing visual details of scenes, objects, or people (size, colors, shapes, feature, dress) binoculars
7. describing sounds or smells of the scene - snapshots
8. narrating specific action (movements, gestures, postures, expressions) snapshots
9. creating dialogues, interior monologues, or expressing remembered feelings or insights at the time of the incident - thoughtshots
10. slowing the pace to elaborate the central moment in the incident - explode a moment
11. using syntax to support meaning
12. creating suspense or tension - explode a moment
13. including the element of surprise
14. comparing or contrasting other scenes or people
15. detailing subjects' routines habits or typical activities - binoculars
16. humor or irony
17. repetition / recurring events, objects, phrases
18. using various characters' voices to narrate a story
19. inserting historical or factual information into a story
20. figurative language - simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration
21. effective lead
22. effective conclusion, ending
23. literary allusion
24. creative, insightful word choice/word order (eg. active not passive voice, strong verbs, interesting or unusual use of or combination of words, etc.)
25. transitions
26. engaging audience intentionally and effectively (questioning, conversational tone)

strategies used by **narrative writers** (cont.)

Eighth Grade

My Special Place

As the sun smiles brightly, a cool spring breeze gently ruffles **personification** the treetops. I sit lazily, staring up at the azure sky dotted with dusters of fluffy white clouds. Lost deep in a blue ocean of thought, I swing gently back and forth, feeling the tickle of the grass on my bare feet. **binoculars, snapshots** Welcome to my special spot – the tree swing in my backyard. **effective lead**

The swing hangs from the lowest branch of an ancient maple tree. It has been there as long as I can remember. There were days when I had to be lifted onto the swing by one of my older sisters, since my feet couldn't touch the ground. In those days, the swing simply provided entertainment. Now, I consider it a friend.

I visit my swing on an almost daily basis, if only for a few minutes. It serves as a source of tranquility in a hectic world. When I feel sad, I go to my swing to sit alone and cry. On lazy summer days, I take a glass of ice tea and a good book and spend hours lost in my own worlds. When I have lots of energy, or feel especially happy, I head to my swing and wing as high as I can, loving the feeling of soaring through the air **figurative language**. When I need to think, or I have an important decision to make, my swing allows me to clear my mind, and concentrate completely on the issue at hand. When I'm very stressed out, I will stop dead in the middle of whatever I'm doing and head to my swing for 5 minutes. Being able to do that helps me keep things in perspective.

Whatever the reason, I know I can always run to my swing for a while and just be me. Unhindered, unobserved, unjudge, I allow myself to simple be, in the presence of a friend. The fact that I can do that is very important to me. **effective conclusion**

Using Profundity in Grades 3-12

To get third through twelfth graders to think about books at the theme level we use an activity that is systematic, based on the Profundity Scale, and dependent upon group discussion. The activity must be presented using the to, with and by format. First the teachers model the entire activity to their students. Next, teachers will share the responsibility of the activity with their students. Then teachers will guide students working in small groups through the use of the activity. Finally, students will independently work in small discussion groups to complete the activity or independently complete the activity. Following are the directions we give to teachers to guide students working in small groups. From these directions you should be able to model and share the activity and to help students move to independent use of this activity. The directions will be followed by some hints to help you do that. Depending upon the age of the student, adjust how much direction is needed.

To prepare for the activity you need the following materials for each small group working on the activity; sets of eight different color markers, large sheets of unlined chart paper: two sheets for the teacher and one sheet for each small group. You will also need a great book. There is a list of thematically linked text at the beginning of this unit. If they are books that you and your students have enjoyed over time they are probably good books with good lessons to be learned.

We are going to demonstrate the use of the activity using the book, *Elmer*, by David McKee. *Elmer* is the story of a patchwork colored elephant. He is always the center of attention until one day he mistakenly gets the notion that the other elephants are laughing at him, not with him. He leaves the herd to find a berry bush that has elephant colored berries. He covers himself in berry juice until he looks like any other elephant. When he rejoins the herd he is unnoticed by the others. He stands there seriously still until he can't stand it any longer and yells, "Booo!" The other elephants think it is a great joke and make the remark that Elmer should have been there to enjoy the joke. In the next moment a rain cloud showers Elmer back to his normal patchwork color. All the elephants think that what Elmer did was his best joke ever and they decide to have a parade each year to celebrate Elmer's best joke. So, every year Elmer comes to the parade looking like a normal elephant and all the other elephants color themselves patchwork.

To begin, hang two sheets of chart paper up where everyone can see them. Devise a way for students to gather the material they need. We usually have them count the number of buttons on their person. The one with the most buttons gets to come up and get the markers and sheet of chart paper. Once everyone is situated in small groups, four to a group seems to be a workable size, and has the materials they need you tell the students to listen for the actions of the main character in the story as you read. Profundity depends on following the actions of one character throughout the story.

Tell the students to listen for the actions of Elmer as you read the story. Remind them that actions are the things Elmer does. Read the story aloud to the class. As a class cooperatively build a list of important actions on the first piece of chart paper. **This list goes along with the Physical Plane: the reader is aware of the physical actions of the character.** Choose the three actions the class feels are the most important being sure that one of them is the turning point of the story (the turning point is often the clearest example of the theme in stories). Then explain that they will be working in co-operative groups, which means we will listen to each person talk and each person will have an opportunity to talk. The person with the most buttons needs to pick up the black marker and draw this shape (a rectangle divided into three equal parts) in the middle of their group chart paper. Then they write one of the three actions chosen by the class in each of the boxes. As they are writing the teacher also draws the boxes and

writes one of the three actions in each of the boxes (on the second sheet of chart paper), as a model.

We always have the students use the markers as their talking sticks. That means when you have the marker in your hand it is your turn to talk and everyone should listen to what you have to say. It is very important to establish this procedure from the very beginning especially if this is the first time the student will be working in cooperative discussion groups. The first student in each group to have a marker is the one with the most buttons on his or her person. We always start there and then have the students exchange the use of the marker by the order they are sitting in, moving clock-wise around the group. So, moving clock-wise around the group the next person needs a red marker to draw a red bubble that connects to the first action box. We are going to use the example for *Elmer* to help explain the next steps. What the group is going to be thinking about is “Why did Elmer think the other elephants were laughing at him?” **This question goes along with the Mental Plane: the reader is aware of the intellectual actions of the character.** The person with the red marker tells why first, then passing the marker clock-wise, everyone gets to share his or her reason why. When everyone is done sharing, the group synthesizes the information and the person with the red marker writes their response in the red bubble. The next person takes a blue marker and draws a blue bubble that connects to the red bubble. What the group is going to be thinking this time is “was it right or wrong for Elmer to think the other elephants were laughing at him and tell why?” **This question goes along with the Moral Plane: the reader is aware of the character in light of an ethical code.** Repeat the process of sharing and writing shared response in the bubble. The next person takes a green marker and draws a green bubble that connects to the blue bubble. What the group is going to be thinking this time is “What did Elmer get from thinking the other elephants were laughing at him?” **This question goes along with the Psychological Plane: the reader is aware of the psychological forces influencing the character.** It is important to remember that Profundity begins with the actions of the character and always goes back to the actions. It is also important to remember that for the third bubble you must stay specific to the action, you can never go beyond the next action. Students repeat this process for the next two actions on their own. As they are working you wander from group to group monitoring the group discussion, giving advice, modeling discussion behavior, prompting for deeper discussion and giving evaluative feedback that students can use to help monitor their own discussion groups.

Next, the teacher explains to the students that they will understand stories and theme better when they attempt to identify with the characters of the story. Every group now turns over their large sheet of chart paper and makes a list of how these are like a character in the story. Think about the ways you are the same as Elmer to make your list. This typically starts out as a list of physical characteristics; such as, we are both animals. Teachers should get students to think deeper by posing situations from the story to consider while they are filling out the chart. One such situation is pointing out that when Elmer was standing with the herd still, quiet and serious, he yelled, “Booo!” If you would do that then you are like Elmer. Teachers want students to see how their thinking is the same as Elmer’s. Do they do the same things as Elmer? Do they think the same things are right or wrong?

An example of the power identifying with characters has in helping students get to the theme level came about one day as while presenting this activity in a third grade classroom in Memphis, Michigan. We walked into the classroom and were immediately able to identify at least one Elmer, in the room. You can always identify the Elmers in classrooms very quickly. He was a very vivacious, very blond boy seated with a group of about 10 students and he was keeping them very entertained as we were preparing for the activity. He did stop long enough to become thoroughly engaged in the activity. However, when we got to the part where they had to think about “Why did Elmer yell, “Booo!” he stood up, threw his arms in the air, in very Elmer fashion, and announced, “Nobody needs to think, I know the answer, Elmer was addicted to attention, just like me!” It was a very easy jump for him to get from that understanding to the theme of “Be true to yourself.”

Go back to the person with the most buttons and have them turn the chart paper back over to the bubbling side. He or she needs to draw a large brown bubble. What the group is going to be thinking about here is “What is the theme of this story?” **This question goes along with the philosophical plane: the universal truth the author is trying to expound.**

Then you finish up the activity by having everyone draw a square and respond to one of the prompts listed on the three ways reading can transform your thinking page. This illustrates to students that universal truths are generative. This step often takes you beyond the theme level to the ideas in action level. Now that you know this to be true what can or are you going to do about it. This is the social action level that is described well by Terri and Randy Bomer in their book, *Reading and Writing for Social Action*, (1999) and by Paula Rogovin in her book, *The Research Workshop, Bringing the World into Your Classroom* (2001).

Here are some helpful hints to help you manage the activity in the classroom. This activity takes a few hours to do with the children so think of creative ways to break it down and spread the instruction over several days. You could do all the red bubbles one day, the blue bubbles the next day and then the green bubbles another day or you could do the first action one day or you could do the first action one day the second action the next day and then the third action another day. We recommend that the book be reread each day before resuming the activity. Since it takes a great deal of time to complete the activity, be sure to select text carefully. The teachers we have worked with always stress that they would never have students complete this activity with a book they themselves had not personally analyzed. They want to make sure they are able to help students through the tough spots and they want to make sure that the theme the students infer is reasonable and justifiable given the evidence in the story.

Here are some helpful suggestions to help you present this activity in a to, with, and by format. When modeling the activity the teacher will do all the talking and will be demonstrating how to draw the boxes and bubbles and how to think about the questions before filling in the bubbles. A time or two of modeling should be enough for most classes. When sharing the activity the teacher will share the talking and thinking about the questions with the students. The teacher still draws the boxes and bubbles and fills them in with synthesized answers. It looks and sounds like this when a teacher is sharing, the teacher draws the red bubble and poses the question, “Why did Elmer think the other elephants were laughing at him?” He or she then asks for responses from several students. The teacher then shares their own response and shows the children how to synthesize the several responses into a statement that can be written into the bubble. The teacher continues to share the talking and thinking until the activity is completed. Again, a time or two of sharing should be enough for most classes. When independently completing the activity, the students are to work alone. The teacher’s job becomes one of facilitator and evaluator. As they are working, you wander from group to group, monitoring discussion, giving advice, modeling discussion behavior, prompting for deeper discussion, and giving evaluative feedback that students can use to help monitor their own discussion groups. The ultimate goal is to have kids either using the Profundity Scale in small discussion groups or individually to understand text at a deeper level.

It is very helpful to repeat this process with a second thematically related book. A book that I often pair with *Elmer* is *Stand Tall Molly Lou Mellon*, by Patty Lovell. The theme of both stories is “Be true to yourself,” however; both characters accomplish this through entirely different means. By repeating the process with thematically related books students can compare and contrast one characters understanding of the theme with the other characters understanding of the theme and with their own understanding of the theme. It also demonstrates to students that theme is inferred. It is the teacher in this case who is inferring the theme of both books, declaring them thematically related and then asking students if they agree or disagree with the theme that the teacher has inferred. To answer that question effectively students will need to

provide clear examples from the text to support their position. Looking at two thematically linked books will lead students to a deeper understanding of both texts.

As mentioned before, our ultimate goal is to have kids either using the Profundity Scale in small discussion groups or individually to understand text at a deeper level. We, hope by, now that it is becoming clear to you how useful the Profundity Scale is in helping students discuss and think about text. Hopefully, students will be able to choose text about which they are curious, get with interested others and successfully start and sustain a discussion group around that text. Hopefully, individual students will have enough experience with thinking this way that it will become internalized and students will think this way about all text. One teacher during a workshop remarked, “Now I have all the questions I need to discuss texts with my students.” She was referring to the questions asked at each plane during the bubbling activity.

Another adaptation was to use the Profundity Scale Matrix as shown on the next page. Teachers should read two thematically linked texts. Then on a greatly enlarged version of the matrix they would lead children through a group discussion about each box of the matrix. You complete the matrix one book at a time. When you have completed the matrix for both books you can then lead discussions that compare and contrast the two characters’ understanding of the theme to your own understanding of the theme. Students then can agree or disagree if the theme of both stories really is the same. Of course, to effectively answer that question, they will need to provide clear examples from the texts to support their position. Using this matrix truly helps students develop a deeper understanding of both texts.

Thematically Related Text Sets

Titles of paired texts	List three important actions of one character	Why did the character act this way?	Was it right or wrong for the character to act this way?	What did the character get from acting this way?	How am I like the characters in this story?	What is the lesson learned from this story?	How has this lesson learned changed the way I think?
<p>"Jaime Escalante: Math Teacher" by Nancy Lobb</p>	<p>Escalante assigns 50 to 100 problems a night.</p> <p>Escalante repeats college in the US.</p> <p>Escalante pushed his students hard.</p>	<p>Escalante wanted to push his students to be the best.</p> <p>Then he can be a teacher in the US and support his family.</p> <p>He saw the ability of his students and he wanted to challenge them.</p>	<p>Right, to encourage students to strive for excellence.</p> <p>Wrong, it was too much work.</p> <p>Right, to allow him to better support his family.</p> <p>Right, students should receive the best education possible.</p>	<p>Escalante was known as a great teacher and his students won many awards.</p> <p>Escalante received a teaching degree at 43.</p> <p>18 of his students passed the AP calculus exam, this as unheard of at Garfield HS.</p>		<p>Determination and compassion can make a difference in the lives of others.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Life's challenges can be overcome with the help of an everyday hero.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Going the "extra mile" leads to great things.</p>	
<p>"Patches" by Jeanette Sanderson</p>	<p>Patches accompanies Mr. Scott to the lake during the storm.</p> <p>Patches pulls Mr. Scott to the surface.</p> <p>Patches pulls Mr. Scott up the hill.</p>	<p>He wanted to tag along.</p> <p>His master had fallen in the water and was injured.</p> <p>To get help for his injured master.</p>	<p>Right, dogs like to be with their masters.</p> <p>Right, dogs are loyal to their masters.</p> <p>Wrong, to put himself in danger.</p> <p>Right, patches acted instinctively.</p>	<p>Companionship</p> <p>Patches rescues Mr. Scott from the water.</p> <p>Patches was named dog hero of the year for rescuing his master.</p>		<p>Determination and compassion can make a difference in the lives of others.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>When we step up to the challenge in times of need we become a hero.</p>	

Thematically Related Text Sets

Titles of paired texts	List three important actions of one character	Why did the character act this way?	Was it right or wrong for the character to act this way?	What did the character get from acting this way?	How am I like the characters in this story?	What is the lesson learned from this story?	How has this lesson learned changed the way I think?
"Jaime Escalante: Math Teacher" by Nancy Lobb							
"Patches" by Jeanette Sanderson							

CROSS TEXT QUESTIONS FOR “ESCALANTE” AND “PATCHES”

Q. Did Escalante and Patches do the same kinds of things? How were their actions different?

A. Escalante became a hero to many of his students, whereas Patches was a hero to only his master, Mr. Scott.

Q. How are their reasons for acting the way they did similar and/or different?

A. They were both motivated by determination and compassion for others. However, Patches concern for Mr. Scott was based on instinct. Escalante, on the other hand, made a deliberate choice to push his students to strive for excellence.

Q. Did Escalante and Patches get the same thing for their actions? Why or why not?

A. They both got what they wanted. Their extraordinary efforts lead to the same conclusion; they were both everyday heroes to others.

Q. If both of the characters learned the same lesson what was the lesson?

A. Determination and compassion can make a difference in the lives of others.

Q. Do you agree or disagree that the theme of these two stories could be “everyday heroes?”

A. We agree.

Related Language Arts Activities:

Before, During and After Prototypes

WHAT MAKES A HERO?

Directions: Read the statements below. Circle the word “agree” or “disagree” next to each statement indicating your opinion.

- | | | |
|--|-------|----------|
| 1. A hero is brave and strong. | Agree | Disagree |
| 2. A hero is caring and thoughtful. | Agree | Disagree |
| 3. A hero is selfish. | Agree | Disagree |
| 4. A hero is never frightened. | Agree | Disagree |
| 5. A hero wants to be rewarded for his or her actions. | Agree | Disagree |
| 6. A hero makes mistakes. | Agree | Disagree |
| 7. A hero is never silly. | Agree | Disagree |
| 8. A hero is dishonest. | Agree | Disagree |
| 9. A hero puts others before himself or herself. | Agree | Disagree |
| 10. A hero stands up for himself or herself. | Agree | Disagree |
| 11. A hero never gets angry. | Agree | Disagree |
| 12. A hero is always a popular person. | Agree | Disagree |

Use your own words to finish the sentence below.
In my opinion, a hero is someone who:

The Importance of Character

Quiet acts of heroism abound in our lives. These acts are just as meaningful as the acts of heroism reported in the news. There are many different kinds of heroes and they have many important and diverse character traits. Select three traits you feel are most important for heroes to possess and explain why you chose these traits. You may refer to the word list below for some heroic character traits, or you can include suggestions of your own.

Heroic trait	Why is important for a hero to possess this trait?
1.	
2.	
3.	

Note: A strong explanation in support of your opinion justifies your choices.

Heroic Character Traits

Selflessness	Courageous	Thoughtful	Hardworking
Caring	Compassionate	Proud	Cooperative
Brave	Resourceful	Strong	Generous
Fearless	Persistent	Self-confident	Direct
Determined	Responsible	Respectful	Charitable
Persuasive	Supportive	Humble	Sincere

Name _____

Who Are Your Heroes?

Directions: Write a few words to complete each statement below.

1. A person who is my hero is

2. This person is my hero because

3. Two words that describe this person are

and

4. One thing the person does that I admire is

5. One way I can be more like my hero is by

Why Only One Hero and Not Many?

From a grateful recipient

Yesterday, I attended a “Hero of the Year” ceremony at Brookdale Middle School. Tom, a student at the school was getting an award for making a difference in the lives of others. Tom got his classmates to donate clothes, books, and toys to give to children in homeless shelters. Tom, an everyday hero, **inspired** his class to get involved in this project. I admire Tom, but I think there shouldn’t be an award to just one “hero” each year. I thought of all the students involved in this project and felt they should all be recognized for their contributions. Their names should have all been read at the ceremony, so we could thank them for their efforts too. It’s not just project leader that should be recognized and given thanks. It’s only right to give everyone the recognition they deserve in making a difference in the lives of others. Because of Tom’s compassion for others, I am looking for ways I can positively impact life at the homeless shelter.

Inspire - to influence someone to do something

Generate ideas on how you can inspire your classmates to be everyday heroes.

How can we be a “Class of Heroes”? Generate ideas for a class project that could be used for “Make a Difference Day”. Share your ideas with the class.

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

*** Select one idea for class participation in “Make a Difference Day”. ***

The Hero in You

We all have what it takes to be an everyday hero. What traits do you have that help you to be an everyday hero?

On a separate sheet of paper, write one page telling about something that you did that was heroic. Your heroic story will be added to the class book, *A Class of Heroes*.

Name _____



Life Lessons



Directions: Read five heroic selections, determine the author's lesson, and how each lesson relates to your life.

Story Title	Author's Lesson	How can you apply this lesson to your life?

From the selections above, which lesson do you feel is most meaningful? Why? _____

A Cold Night in Detroit

Story Editor: Michelle Clayton Bennett Michigan, USA

The night wasn't going so well. I had won two tickets to see the Red Wings play against Phoenix, but my date stood me up, and I wasn't really enjoying myself. It had nothing to do with the game. During the first period break, I decided to walk around the concourse. Near the information stand, I heard a man asking the attendant for help. He had tickets for himself and his three children, but the tickets were in two separate sections. Since there were two empty seats next to me, and I had two seats to myself, I decided to give him my tickets and just go home. I asked the attendant if she could find someone to walk me back to my car. The game was in full swing, and I didn't want to go out to the garage alone and in the dark. She found Gary, who was the head of security for Comerica Park. I had parked my truck in the garage when it was empty. Now it was full, and I became disoriented, and couldn't picture the spot where I had parked. I already felt bad, and that just made things worse. Even though Gary was walking with me, I felt very much alone, and wanted to cry. Gary encouraged me to talk about why I was upset. He told a few jokes and stories, and cheered me up immensely. He remained patient and friendly the entire time it took to find my truck, even though that meant spending 45 minutes in the bitter cold air of an open deck garage. When we finally found my truck, I saw that it was out of gas. Gary walked me down to security and told them about my situation. The man in the security office let me warm up in front of a heater, sent a guard out to get gas, and refused to let me repay him for the gas. He said he wanted to make sure I was taken care of, and not to worry. When the guard returned, he drove me to my truck and stayed with me until the truck started. At that point, I was ready to cry again - but not because I was upset. I was incredibly touched by the kindness Gary and the garage security staff showed me. You see, recently someone told me in a derogative way "You're too nice." Having been raised to treat others with the respect I'd wish to be treated with, sometimes I wonder if people today remember to simply be kind. Having so many people going out of their way to help allowed me to feel I have good company in being kind. Thanks, guys, you saved me from more than just a cold night and a long wait for a tow truck.

www.HeroicStories.com

His Courage Shone Brighter

Story Editor: Doru Macovei Joyce Schowalter Limassol, Cyprus

In one of the winters of the mid-1980s I was in the high school in Focsani, Romania. We had a great teacher named Mr. Craciun, which means "Christmas" in Romanian. He was teaching Romanian literature so well that everybody loved to come to his classes. As you know, that is not really common in high school. At the time, Communist rule was strictly imposed in Romania in one of the most oppressive ways imaginable. One of the ideas of the dictator Ceausescu was to save on everything. This included saving on food and especially on energy. Bread was distributed in many cities by the way of coupons, and in wintertime for many hours the neighborhood was in complete darkness because the power was cut. My high school was teaching already in two shifts morning and afternoon. To save even more power, the high school was required to start the morning classes at 0700 (7:00 a.m.) so the evening classes would finish at 1700 (5:00 p.m.). At that time of the year at 0700 in Romania there was almost complete darkness - but it was strictly forbidden to turn on the lights. Indeed, party officials were checking that this rule would never get broken. All of the high school teachers readily gave in. But when we had our first class with Mr. Craciun at 0700, he entered, looked in the dark at us and switched on the lights. He spoke a single phrase to us from his desk: "One cannot teach Romanian literature without light." And we went on as usual. After some 15-20 minutes the party chief for the school broke in. You can imagine the tall-lighted windows of our class were easy to see. After a few minutes of low-toned talk with our teacher he left. We learned later that day that he had fined Mr. Craciun with the equivalent amount of one month of his already meager wage. At our next lesson starting at 0700, Mr. Craciun walked into our class and nonchalantly switched the lights on without any comment. Remember this was at a time when his entire career and indeed life could be ruined by such an attitude. The Secret Police were everywhere and smaller things were enough to send you to many dreaded places, for at least forced labor. This was indeed the best lesson I got in my whole life. Thank you Mr. Craciun for your wonderful courage, you have taught us to stand up.

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Stories of heroes emerge from Iraq

Story Editor: Dan Thomasson
Former editor: Scripps Howard News Service

Washington - Wars always produce acts of extraordinary heroism, instances when human beings reach down into themselves to find the courage that under normal circumstances they wouldn't even dream of possessing. Maybe it's adrenaline or the will to survive or just the result of faith that sustains them.

Whatever it is, few stories emerging from Operation Iraqi Freedom have touched us like that of two women and a man inextricably bound together forever when we talk about the heroes of this conflict.

The story is made all the more dramatic by the fact that one of the participants is an Iraqi. Technically, one supposes he could be counted as an enemy. But that clearly isn't the case with this kindly man whose seemingly deep convictions about the way people should treat one another have earned him the admiration of all Americans for helping save one of their own and for freeing the bodies of others from an ignominious burial in a foreign land.

The news reports named him only as Mohammed, a 32-year-old-lawyer who, after witnessing the mistreatment of a severely injured Pfc. Jessica Lynch, risked not only his own life, but also the safety of his wife and child to help arrange her rescue from his fellow countrymen. After initially searching out U.S. Marines to tell what he had seen, he bravely agreed to go back to the hospital and make maps that would guide the rescuers. His efforts also resulted in the liberation of American battlefield dead from the same hospital. One of these was Lynch's former maintenance company roommate, Pfc. Lori Piestewa, who became the first American servicewoman killed in this war. Fittingly, if death can ever be described as fitting, Piestewa was the purest of Americans, a Hopi Indian from Tuba City, Ariz.

The rescue brought about by Moham-med and his wife, Iman, who worked at the hospital, came at a time when the end of what was supposed to be a quick affair seemed suddenly to be a lot further off, and homeland morale was beginning to flag as a consequence. The nation was electrified by the vision of American commandos swooping into a fortified enemy stronghold to save one of their own. Even those opposed to this war could feel pride in this accomplishment.

Then the details began to emerge not only about how the mission was conducted, but also about how Lynch and, for all anyone knows, Piestewa deported themselves during the moments before one's capture and the other's death. Lynch, it has been reported, fought valiantly, apparently determined that she would not be taken alive. The 19-year-old West Virginia mountain girl is said to have fired her weapon until the ammunition gave out, killing a number of the enemy in the process. Both of her legs and an arm were fractured and her back injured.

It is easy to believe that Piestewa, if she survived the initial Iraqi attack on her unit, fought with the same determination and indomitable spirit as Lynch -- one that has

sustained her people through more than a century of hardships in a tough land. But whether she had that opportunity is of little consequence. She was a mother of two who did not have to be where she was, but did so because she felt it was her duty. That sacrifice alone is enough. Her brother spoke for us all when he said, "She is our hero. We are going to hold that in our hearts."

This nation's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor, is not given out lightly, nor should it be. Those who have received it are among the bravest in our history, and to present it for anything but the noblest acts would cheapen it. For that reason, a number of Civil War and Indian War recipients, including William F. Cody, had their awards rescinded after investigation.

To my knowledge, no woman has ever won the medal, for obvious reasons. But if the proper investigation proves that the reports about Jessica Lynch's bravery are factual, there should be no question about her eligibility. It is, as we say, a no-brainer. Lori Pieste-wa's valor may be harder to verify, but the very fact she paid the ultimate price should be enough to earn her some form of recognition beyond our gratitude.

As for Mohammed, his wife and their 6-year-old daughter, both the Lynch and Piestewa families will be forever indebted to him. Whatever this nation can do for him should be done without a moment's hesitation, including a personal thank-you from the president of the United States.

Dan Thomasson is the former editor of Scripps Howard News Service.

http://www.polkonline.com/stories/040803/opi_herotales.shtml

It Ain't Worth It

Story Editor: by Bill Strout Clayton Bennett Texas, USA

In 1969, I lost my student deferment and was drafted into the U.S. Army. When I entered basic training in October that year at Fort Benning, Georgia, I was 19 years old and had lived the last seven years in Selma, Alabama - a focal point for civil rights activists during those years. The platoon in my unit had about six white soldiers and 40 black soldiers. I had not associated with many black people; the schools in Selma were still segregated. Because my platoon had a black majority, some of the black soldiers treated the whites the same way whites had always treated them. There were several confrontations. One morning, several of us were in the boiler room of our barracks trying to stay warm before the first formation. One of the black soldiers became angry with me and pulled out his bayonet. We were not allowed to sharpen our bayonets in basic training, so they were intentionally dull. I picked up a shovel to defend myself. I would probably not have been hurt and might have injured or killed him. Another black soldier realized this as well, and told me something that has remained with me ever since: "It ain't worth it." This other soldier could have stayed out of the confrontation, or taken the side of a fellow black soldier, but he didn't. Instead, he took a stand to keep us both out of serious trouble. "It ain't worth it." That's all he said, and those few words changed me profoundly. I don't know if they affected the soldier who pulled the bayonet, but he decided to put his bayonet away and left the room. Ever since then, I have remembered the second soldier's words when I am in a difficult situation. When I can choose between a confrontation and letting something go, I ask myself "Is it worth it?" A few years ago I was able to apply the lesson, and follow that soldier's example. A car in front of me cut off a car in the next lane. Both drivers made agitated gestures at each other. We stopped for a traffic light, and both men got out of their cars and started yelling at each other. When one of the men started moving toward the other, I got out and yelled "Hey! It ain't worth it!" To my surprise, both men looked at me and got back in their cars. If more people asked themselves "Is it worth it?", there would be a lot fewer problems in the world. Of course, there are times when the answer is yes and we have to stand up for what we believe and do the right thing. It is asking the question that makes all the difference.

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Make A Difference Day Stories

USA Weekend's 12th annual Make A Difference Day was held Saturday, Oct. 26, 2002, in partnership with the Points of Light Foundation. Paul Newman and his food company, Newman's Own, which donates all after-tax profits to educational and charitable organizations, fund \$100,000 in national awards.

Golden Key kids are quick studies on caring

Nationwide - Haunted by the homeless at subways, Paul Thomson, 22, and 5 fellow City College of New York members of Golden Key International Honor Society pooled \$230 to feed 100 hungry men, women and children at a shelter. Worried they wouldn't have enough for the 200 who showed up, they snagged food from the school cafeteria. Says Thomson: "When the chef saw we were feeding homeless people, he said, 'I have more dishes of rice for you.' " It was part of an effort in which 3,000 Golden Key students touched the lives of 25,000, working mostly in small groups to feed the homeless, plant trees, and spend time with the sick and elderly. In the Bronx, Yoselin Acevedo of Queens College renovated four "filthy" kitchens at a shelter for homeless AIDS patients. In San Francisco, Christalyn Tan, 22, and six University of California, Davis, members delivered 150 sack lunches on foot to street people. In Detroit, 12 Oakland University students planted 10 trees and eight shrubs in a blighted vacant lot near a planned shelter. Christina Geraci, 20, and five gal pals from the chapter at the State University of New York-Stony Brook danced with 50 veterans at Long Island State Veterans Home. "I don't think I will ever forget the wheelchair conga line," Geraci says, "or when we all sang God Bless America -- and cried."

The \$10,000 Make A Difference Day Award, funded by Newman's Own, will benefit Golden Key International Honor Society.

Encore! Wenatchee, Wash. - On the very first Make A Difference Day, 1,000 volunteers came together in this valley at the request of organizer Margie Kerr and her sister Betsy Tontini, whose Make A Difference mantra was: "It's the unity in community that gets the job done." Volunteers worked on Habitat for Humanity homes, cleaned Riverfront Park, and washed puppies at the Humane Society and recruited Big Brothers and Big Sisters. For their impact and imagination, these volunteers received the first National Make A Difference Day Award. It included a \$1,000 donation that was used to set up a hot line to give volunteer referrals.

And that hot line has been buzzing ever since. So has the Make A Difference Day volunteerism. The Greater Wenatchee Valley received previous "Encore Awards" for outstanding Make A Difference Day efforts in 1995, 1997 and 1998 as well as an "honorable mention" for work in 1994. The extraordinary action continued even after Betsy Tontini died several years ago. Now, Margie plans the day's events with Laurel Helton.

5,000 students learn the true meaning of community Charlottesville, Va. - A mother and daughter spent hours counting \$203 in pennies. An entire middle school taught the community how to conserve water. In all, 5,000 Virginia children -- students from 23 of Albemarle County's 25 schools, representing Charlottesville suburbs and isolated rural communities -- proved the most precious resource on Make A Difference Day. Their month-long outpouring of good fed the hungry, warmed the shivering, and advanced causes such as animal rights and cancer research. Julia Laffond, 11, scrounged hundreds of pennies to drop into a huge jar at Broadus Woods Elementary, which she and mom Laura took to a change-counting machine. The 20,300 pennies bought 10 board games and dozens of knickknacks for lonely nursing home residents on Oct. 26. All 654 students at Walton Middle School created posters, skits, public service announcements -- even coloring books -- to address the area's drought crisis. Students' largesse helped seven senior citizen complexes, an animal shelter, a domestic violence shelter, a food bank, Meals on Wheels and others. In Crozet, Western Albemarle High teamed with Brownsville Elementary to deliver pampering goods to 58 low-income retirees at The Meadows home. Kids entertained elders with classical guitar, bluegrass and even an Elvis impersonator. Molly Jackson, 13, persuaded Henley Middle School peers to join her at an assisted living center. Now, six girls take turns visiting residents twice a week. Says pal Liz Milligan, 14: "They like to remember, and I like listening to them."

The \$10,000 Make A Difference Day Award, funded by Newman's Own, will benefit Albemarle County Schools.

Move to Montana

Story Editor: by Arlo Paulsen Clayton Bennett Utah, USA In September 1973

I was a 20-year-old enlisted man in the U.S. Air Force, and had just completed training at Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois. I'd been reassigned to Malmstrom A.F.B. in Great Falls, Montana. I planned to drive there with my wife Debbie, our 6-month-old daughter Shauna, and our dog and cat. Finances were continually tight; we could get there if we spent no money on motels. We had counted on our deposit refund from our apartment to help. But it rained the day of the inspection; they kept our deposit for spots on the window. We were devastated, as we couldn't stay even long enough to clean the windows again. The landlord's inhumanity filled my mind as I hooked a rented trailer to our small car and we took off. I drove, Debbie kept Shauna on the back seat in a car bed (car seats were rare then), and the dog and cat rode in a cargo area behind. After driving all day the sun was setting over the South Dakota landscape. Suddenly one side of the bumper, to which the temporary trailer hitch was fastened, tore away from the car frame and began dragging on the ground. There was a horrible metallic scream, sparks flew over the top of the trailer, and our dog jumped into the car bed with Shauna, but I managed to stop the car and trailer without further damage. We were stranded in the Badlands. I examined the bumper and hitch in the light from the back of the car. Things didn't look too bad, except we couldn't go anywhere until the bumper was repaired. I unhooked the trailer, bent the bumper upward, and we drove to the next town. On the outskirts of town was a lonely gas station, with a man sitting in front as if he was waiting. We showed him the damage and explained our situation. He confirmed he'd been waiting, as he knew he would have one more customer that night. He welded the bumper back to the car and charged us \$20, which I thought was about half what we owed him. We were thankful - as that left us with \$5 to finish the trip. We drove back, retrieved the trailer, and took off again. The rest of the trip was uneventful and we arrived at Malmstrom A.F.B. as the morning sun was rising. We spent the last of our money on transient housing for one day on base. That afternoon, we looked for a place to rent, but without much hope. Imagine our surprise when a real estate agent agreed to rent a two-bedroom house off base to us. He took just a promissory note, without interest, for the first month, last month, and deposit. This trip proved to us that man's inhumanity to man may be a common theme in life, but even more common is man's compassion for man.

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