

Basil Heatter - “The Long Night of the Little Boats” - Grade 8

DRAFT – Awaiting review and improvement per the Tri-State quality review rubric

Dunkirk World History unit (1970)

Learning Objective: The goal of the exemplar is to give students practice in reading and writing habits that they have been working with throughout the curriculum, particularly using literary nonfiction text. It was designed originally for use in a middle school Social Studies curriculum, where teaching students to go beneath a surface understanding of historical events is at a premium. Although this exemplar was designed to be used in a middle school Social Studies curriculum, it is appropriate for use in an ELA class as well.

By reading and re-reading the text passage, closely combining classroom discussion about it, and writing about it, students come to an appreciation of the need to (a) re-read, paraphrase, and discuss ideas, (b) come to an accurate basic understanding level of a text, (c) come to an accurate interpretive understanding of a text, and (d) build a coherent piece of writing that both constructs and communicates solid understanding of text.

Rationale: It is critical that students grapple with rich text in the content areas. It is particularly important that students recognize that it is key that they understand what an author is actually saying in the text before they proceed to analysis of that text. The steps in this exemplar, from summary level understanding to analytical/inferential understanding, are intended to help build this habit of mind in students.

The text in this exemplar is relatively long. It is also designed to be used in a classroom that will have a large range of reading levels – typical of public middle schools. For these reasons, the students do not read the text independently before the teacher reads it aloud; rather, the first reading is a supported one. The purpose here is to include *all* students successfully on the initial read, strong and struggling readers alike. By middle school, struggling students are easily discouraged, so it is important to “hook them into success” from the very beginning.

However, throughout the steps of the sequence, students have ample opportunity to read independently and successfully.

Reading Task: *Students will first read the text in a supported context, with the teacher reading aloud while they read/follow silently. They will work closely with several paragraphs, then (with guidance) write a summary of the text, using the author’s focus. This brings them to an accurate basic understanding of the text, which they capture in explanatory writing. After that, using a Focusing Question provided by the teacher, students do more close reading to develop an analytical understanding of the text. With guidance, they capture this understanding in an argument piece of writing.*

Vocabulary Task: *Most of the meanings of words in this selection can be discovered from careful reading of the context in which they appear. Teachers can use discussions to model and reinforce how to learn vocabulary from contextual clues, and students must be held accountable for engaging in this practice. Where it is judged this is not possible, underlined words are defined briefly for students in a separate column whenever the original text is reproduced. At times, this is all the support these words need. At other times, particularly with*

*abstract words, teachers will need to spend more time explaining and discussing them. In addition, for subsequent readings, high value academic ('Tier Two') words have been **bolded** to draw attention to them. Given how crucial vocabulary knowledge is to students' academic and career success, it is essential that these high value words be discussed and lingered over during the instructional sequence.*

Sentence Syntax Task: *On occasion students will encounter particularly difficult sentences to decode. Teachers should engage in a close examination of such sentences to help students discover how they are built and how they convey meaning. While many questions addressing important aspects of the text double as questions about syntax, students should receive regular supported practice in deciphering complex sentences. It is crucial that the help they receive in unpacking text complexity focuses both on the precise meaning of what the author is saying and why the author might have constructed the sentence in this particular fashion. That practice will in turn support students' ability to unpack meaning from syntactically complex sentences they encounter in future reading.*

Discussion Task: *Throughout this exemplar, students are discussing: in pairs, in small groups, in full class discussions. There are two purposes of the "turn and talk" in pairs – first, to make sure all students are actually focusing and talking about the text ("speaking their thinking"); and second, to make sure students actually own the ideas they are working with. Students cannot write what they could not have spoken, and often what they actually did speak; if we want them to write coherently and thoughtfully about the text, they need frequent opportunity to speak those ideas.*

Writing Task: *As noted above, there are two writing tasks, one showing basic understanding (the summary) and one showing analytical understanding (the argument essay). This writing is NOT used as an assessment – rather, it is an essential part of the instruction, helping students both to crystallize their understanding of the text and to write clearly and coherently – this time, and next time.*

Outline of Lesson Plan: This lesson can be delivered in five days of instruction and reflection on the part of students and their teacher, with the option of adding an additional day devoted to peer review and revision of a culminating writing assignment.

Standards Covered: The following Common Core State Standards are the focus of this exemplar: RI.8.1, RI.8.2, RI.8.4, RI.8.6; RH.6-8.1, RH.6-8.2, RH.6-8.6, RH.6-8.7, RH.6-8.10; W.8.1a, W.8.1b, W.8.1c, W.8.1d, W.8.1e, W.8.4, W.8.5; SL.8.1; L.8.4.

The Text: Heatter, Basil. “The Long Night of Little Boats”

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary
<p>1 It was a miracle. Those who were there consider it so, and those who have studied it since are even more convinced. It was a miraculous combination of courage, effort, and good weather.</p> <p>2 The British army lay besieged at Dunkirk in 1940, in desperate trouble. Europe had been overrun by the German <u>armored divisions</u>, and the British had retreated into a tiny pocket on the French coast. Their backs were to the sea. They could go no further. England and safety lay just across the Channel, but might as well have been half a world away.</p> <p>3 Hour by hour the German armored ring closed tighter. The troops were compressed into an ever narrowing area. At last they were on the open beach – hundreds of thousands of them waiting for the end. Overhead, the dive---bombers wheeled. Behind them, the tanks and artillery roared. They turned to fight for the last time, and that was when the miracle began.</p> <p>4 No one knows exactly how it began, how the word was spread, but somehow the message was passed that Englishmen were dying on the beaches of France and that other Englishmen must go to take them off those beaches. Small boats were needed, anything that could float and move under its own power. Lifeboats, tugs, yachts, fishing craft, lighters, barges, and pleasure boats – it was the strangest navy in history.</p> <p>5 They poured out of the rivers and harbors and down toward the coast. Some were frowsy and hung with old automobile tires for fenders, others white and gleaming with polished chromium and flying yacht pennants. There were fishing boats, shrimp catchers, ancient car ferries that had never known the touch of salt water. Some had been built before the Boer War. There were Thames fire floats, Belgian drifters, and lifeboats from sunken ships. There were bright blue French fishing boats and stumpy little Dutch schouts. There were paddle steamers and tugs pushing barges, and flatboats with ancient kerosene engines. Large and small, wide and narrow, fast and slow, they moved in a <u>motley</u> flood down to the shore. Some had registered with the navy and were under navy command. Others had simply come by themselves, tubby little craft used for Sunday picnics on the Thames and laid up for years, somehow gotten underway by elderly gentlemen who had left their armchairs and rocking chairs. Down they came, clogging the <u>estuaries</u>, going off to war.</p>	<p><i>Troops of soldiers in tanks</i></p> <p><i>A great variety</i></p> <p><i>The lower part of a river where it meets the tides of the sea</i></p>

6 There were bankers and dentists, taxi drivers and yachtsmen, old longshoremen and very young boys, engineers, fishermen, and civil servants. There were fresh-faced young Sea Scouts and old men with white hair blowing in the wind. Some were poor, with not even a raincoat to protect them from weather, and others were owners of great **estates**. A few had machine guns, some had rifles and old **fowling** pieces, but most had nothing but their own brave hearts.

7 Off they went at sundown, more than a thousand boats in all. It was a miracle that so many had been able to **assemble** at one place at one time, and even more miraculous that crews had been found for them. But now came the best part of the miracle. The sea, as if **obedient to suggestion**, lay down flat. Ordinarily the English Channel is one of the roughest places in the world – no place at all for a small boat – government but suddenly the wind died and the seas **subsided**, and the little boats went out into a calm night.

8 By the hundreds they poured forth. Coming up behind them, bent on missions of their own, were the warships, destroyers, cruisers, and gunboats, **racketing** full tilt across toward the coast of France. The moon was not yet up, and in the blackness – for no one dared show a light – the destroyers could not see the little boats, and the little boats could not see the warships until the great gleaming bow waves moving at forty knots were right on top of them. But somehow, for the most part, they avoided each other, and the strange armada moved on.

9 The wash thrown out by the big ships was a serious matter for the little boats, and they rocked helplessly in the wake of the warships. It was like being on a black highway with fast-moving traffic and no lights showing. A few were **rammed** and some were swamped, but still they moved on. Behind them, invisible in the blackness, was England. Ahead, glowing **faintly** from burning oil tanks and flaming artillery, lay the coast of France. On one of the little boats, the man at the wheel put his arm around the shoulders of his twelve-year-old son and hugged him in silent encouragement. On another boat, a girl dressed in man's clothes, having thought to fool the inspection officers by sticking an empty pipe in her mouth, now took the pipe out again and stuck it between her teeth to keep them from **chattering**.

10 Suddenly out of the night came dozens of aircraft flares dropped by the German bombers, looking like orange blossoms overhead. They lit up a nightmarish scene: wrecked and burning ships everywhere, thousands of British soldiers standing waist deep in the water holding their weapons over their heads, hundreds of thousands more in snakelike lines on the beaches.

Dock worker

*People who
work for the
government*

*Speed of a
boat, about 50
mph*

*Fleet of
warships*

Through it all, **scuttling** like water bugs, moved the little boats coming to the rescue.

11 As the flares **sputtered** overhead, the planes came in to the attack. The primary targets were not the little boats but the larger ships – the destroyers and transports – but the people on the little boats fought back all the same, firing rifles and rickety old Lewis guns as the dive--bombers screamed down. Exploding bombs and fiery tracers added their light to the unearthly scene. Through it all, the little boats continued to move in to the beach and began taking aboard the soldiers.

12 Those who were there will never forget the long lines of men **wearily staggering** across the beach from the dunes to the shallows, falling into the little boats, while others, caught where they stood, died among the bombs and bullets.

A hill or wind-blown sand

13 The amazing thing was the lack of panic. There was no mad **scramble** for boats. The men moved slowly forward, neck deep in the water, with their officers guiding them. As the front ranks were dragged aboard the boats, the rear ranks moved up, first ankle deep and then knee deep and finally shoulder deep until at last it was their turn to be pulled up over the side.

14 The little boats **listed** under loads they had never been designed for. Boats that had never carried more than a dozen people at a time were now carrying sixty or seventy. Somehow they backed off the beach, remained afloat, and **ferried** their loads out to the larger ships waiting offshore and then returned to the beach for more men.

15 As the German gunners on the coast and the German pilots overhead saw their prey escaping, they **renewed** their efforts. The rain of bombs, shells, and bullets ever greater until the little boats seemed to be moving through a sea of flame. The strip of beach, from Bergues on the left to Nieuwpoort on the right, was growing smaller under the **barrage**, and even the **gallant** rear guard was now being pressed down onto the beaches. The Germans were closing in for the kill. The little boats still went about their business, moving steadily through the water.

16 As the situation became even more desperate, the big ships moved in right alongside the little ones, some **grounding** on the sand and hoping somehow to get off again despite the falling tide. Ropes, ladders, and cargo nets were **heaved** over the sides to make it possible for the **bedraggled** men to **clamber** aboard. Those who were wounded or too weak to climb were picked up by the little boats. Hands slippery with blood and oil clutched at other hands.

Strangers embraced as they struggled to **haul** each other to safety. Now the fight was not only against the Germans but against time as well. The minutes and hours were racing by. Soon the gray light of dawn would be touching the eastern sky, and when it grew light, the German guns and planes could pick off the survivors at their leisure. Every minute counted now; the little boats **redoubled** their already desperate efforts.

17 Orders were shouted but went unheard in that infernal din. The gun batteries shelled without stopping. To the whistle of the shells were added the scream of falling bombs and the roaring of engines, the bursting of antiaircraft shells, machine--- gun fire, the explosions of burning ships, the screaming of the dive---bombers.

18 But all this time, as if in contrast to humanity's **frenzy**, nature had remained calm. All through the spring night, the wind had not risen and the sea had remained flat. That in itself was a factor in the saving of countless lives, for if one of the usual spring gales had come **whirling** through the Channel, rescue would have been far more difficult, if not impossible.

19 All through the long hours, the work went on. The old men and boys who piloted the boats were sagging with exhaustion. There was an endless repetition in what they were doing: pull the men aboard, make the wounded as comfortable as possible, take them out to the larger ships, then return for more. No matter how many times they made the trip, there were still more men, **apparently** endless files of **weary**, stumbling, silent men moving down across the beaches into the water, waiting for rescue.

20 Sometimes the little boats ran out of gas. And sometimes the engine of a boat that had been laid up for years in a boatyard or quiet backwater simply broke down and quit. When that happened, small individual miracles were performed by grease--- stained, sweating, cursing old gentlemen who whacked away in the dark with pliers and screwdrivers at the stubborn metal until some **obstruction** gave and the **asthmatic** engines ground back into life.

21 Meanwhile, invisible in the night sky, another battle was taking place. R.A.F. Spitfires were hurling themselves at 400 miles an hour into the massed ranks of Nazi bombers, scattering them all over the Channel. The fighters flew until they were down to their last pints of fuel and then hurriedly landed, filled their tanks and guns, and took off again. **Flitting** back and forth, silent as bats and deadly as hawks, they fought their own strange war at great cost to themselves and at an even greater cost to the enemy. It was thanks to them that the Germans were never able to mount a fully **sustained** air attack on all the motley craft beneath.

From hell

22 At last the ranks of men on the beach grew thinner. The flood that had once seemed endless was reduced to a trickle. Already the sky was growing light, and soon the little boats would have to scuttle away. None abandoned their position. Steadily they went on with the work. Although every minute lost might mean another life lost, the men on the beach did not panic. Slowly, steadily, silently, responding only to the orders of their officers, the long lines shuffled forward and out into the water toward the helping hands that waited for them on the little boats.

23 The exhausted crews looked toward the beach and saw only a handful of men left – the soldiers of the rear guard, who were still firing at the advancing Germans. With a last quick rush, the men turned and ran for the water. In the gray light of dawn, they could see the little boats bobbing there, waiting for them. The Germans, now seeing the last of their prey escaping, let loose a final **barrage** that turned the waterfront into a hell of flaming metal. But the little boats never **budged**, each waiting calmly for its load of drenched, **gasping** men.

24 And then at long last, with the fires growing pale against the daylight and the dive-bombers sweeping in for the kill, the job was done; the beach was empty of life, and the overloaded fleet turned and chugged home to England.

25 It had been hoped that, with the use of the little boats, some 30,000 men might be rescued. That would have been counted an achievement of sorts. What the little boats actually did was to take off 335,000 men, the best of the British army. Although their equipment was lost, the men were not; at home in England and ready to fight again, they **discouraged** Hitler from any thought of invasion. Many of these same men were to land later in France along with their American allies and drive straight on through Germany to Berlin and so end the Nazi nightmare.

26 The **fortunes of war** always turn on small things, but never before has the **fate** of a great modern nation rested on so ill--assorted, so scruffy, so mixed a bag of strange little boats.

Day One: Instructional Exemplar for Heatter’s “The Long Night of Little Boats”

Summary of Activities

1. The teacher introduces the day’s passage with minimal commentary and students read it independently.
2. The teacher or a skillful student then reads the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.
3. The teacher asks the class to discuss text-dependent questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.

Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>It was a miracle. Those who were there consider it so, and those who have studied it since are even more convinced. It was a miraculous combination of courage, effort, and good weather.</p> <p>The British army lay besieged at Dunkirk in 1940, in desperate trouble. Europe had been overrun by the German armored divisions, and the British had retreated into a tiny pocket on the French coast. Their backs were to the sea. They could go no further. England and safety lay just across the Channel, but might as well have been half a world away.</p> <p>Hour by hour the German armored ring closed tighter. The troops were compressed into an ever narrowing area. At last they were on the open beach – hundreds of thousands of them waiting for the end. Overhead, the dive--bombers wheeled. Behind them, the tanks and artillery roared. They turned to fight for the last time, and that was when the miracle began.</p> <p>No one knew exactly how it began, how the word was spread, but somehow the message was passed that Englishmen must go to take them off those beaches. Small boats were needed, anything that could float and move under its own power. Lifeboats, tugs, yachts, fishing craft, lighters, barges, and pleasure boats-it was the strangest navy in history.</p>	<p>1. Introduce the text and students read independently. Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text, and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend Heatter’s text. It is critical to cultivating independence and creating a culture of close reading that students initially grapple with rich texts like Heatter’s prose without the aid of prefatory material, extensive notes, or even teacher explanations.</p> <p>2. Work closely with the word, “miracle”. Understanding the concept of “miracle” is critically important to this text. It is the author’s key point and will be used when students come to summarize the article.</p> <p>The teacher guides students to note that “miracle” and “miraculous” are both used in the first paragraph, and class re-reads and discusses briefly what this might mean (from prior knowledge, which may be inaccurate, and from context). The teacher then works with a Frayer model template (see Appendix A), beginning with bottom left quadrant, moving to the top left, then top right, and finally to the bottom right. (The bottom two quadrants, examples of “miracle” and non-examples, are especially important, since “miracle” is a word that has lost much of its original meaning due to everyday use. Working with the Frayer model takes time, but for rich concept words that matter to understanding, it’s worth the time it takes.</p>

Text Passage under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>It was a miracle. Those who were there consider it so, and those who have studied it since are even more convinced. It was a miraculous combination of courage, effort, and good weather.</p> <p>The British army lay besieged at Dunkirk in 1940, in desperate trouble. Europe had been overrun by the German armored divisions, and the British had retreated into a tiny pocket on the French coast. Their backs were to the sea. They could go no further. England and safety lay just across the Channel, but might as well have been half a world away.</p> <p>Hour by hour the German armored ring closed tighter. The troops were compressed into an ever narrowing area. At last they were on the open beach – hundreds of thousands of them waiting for the end. Overhead, the dive--bombers wheeled. Behind them, the tanks and artillery roared. They turned to fight for the last time, and that was when the miracle began.</p> <p>No one knew exactly how it began, how the word was spread, but somehow the message was passed that Englishmen must go to take them off those beaches. Small boats were needed, anything that could float and move under its own power. Lifeboats, tugs, yachts, fishing craft, lighters, barges, and pleasure boats-it was the strangest navy in history.</p>	<p><i>Troops of soldiers in tanks</i></p> <p>3. Students read paragraphs 1-3 of text aloud in pairs. Students will have just heard/read the text, so this immediate “second reading” will be, in effect, support by familiarity with the text. Reading aloud in a “one foot voice” with a partner (softly enough so that only someone within one foot can hear) is a useful way to help students pay close attention to the text, which is key for understanding.</p> <p>Oral partner reading is valuable because it forces students to pay close attention to their reading. Close reading is slow and careful, a habit of reading many students do not have.</p> <p>4. Compare the first three paragraphs with the student atlas, map of Dunkirk/English Channel. Draw the scene in text margins. Using a map to place this historical event is important. When reading informational text, it is helpful to students to build the habit of stopping and identifying places/references that are key to the text. When students use the map and the text to draw the setting in the margin, they must re-read repeatedly to make sure they understand the scene - another key skill for students.</p> <p>(Q1) What is going on in the first three paragraphs? Discuss the actual scene to make sure students understand what is happening. If students need information about WWII and the players, give enough information so that this makes sense. This would be a good time to point out that the US was not yet in the war, but that Hitler had already taken over all of Europe except England, so what happened with England was critically important to the world.</p> <p>(Q2) How does the author establish a sense of how desperate the situation is? Have students work in pairs for a couple of minutes to underline words and phrases that establish this sense. These might include “besieged”, “backs to the sea”, “overrun”, “hour by hour”, “waiting for the end”, etc.</p> <p>(Q3) Look at the phrase at the end of paragraph 3, “and that was when the miracle began.” Why do you think the author chose the word “miracle” to describe the events that night? Review the meaning of “miracle” - out of human hands, so wonderful and good as to defy belief (refer back to Frayer model)</p>

Day Two: Instructional Exemplar for Heatter’s “The Long Night of Little Boats”

Summary of Activities

1. Students read the passage out loud in pairs
2. The teacher asks the class to discuss text-dependent questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.

Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>5 They poured out of the rivers and harbors and down toward the coast. Some were frowsy and hung with old automobile tires for fenders, others white and gleaming with polished chromium and flying yacht pennants. There were fishing boats, shrimp catchers, ancient car ferries that had never known the touch of salt water. Some had been built before the Boer War. There were Thames fire floats, Belgian drifters, and lifeboats from sunken ships. There were bright blue French fishing boats and stumpy little Dutch schouts. There were paddle steamers and tugs pushing barges, and flatboats with ancient kerosene engines. Large and small, wide and narrow, fast and slow, they moved in a <u>motley</u> flood down to the shore. Some had registered with the navy and were under navy command. Others had simply come by themselves, tubby little craft used for Sunday picnics on the Thames and laid up for years, somehow gotten underway by elderly gentlemen who had left their armchairs and rocking chairs. Down they came, clogging the <u>estuaries</u>, going off to war.</p> <p>6 There were bankers and dentists, taxi drivers and yachtsmen, old <u>longshoremen</u> and very young boys, engineers, fishermen, and <u>civil servants</u>. There were fresh-faced young Sea Scouts and old men with white hair blowing in the wind. Some were poor, with not even a raincoat to protect them from weather, and others were owners of great estates. A few had machine guns, some had rifles and old fowling pieces, but most had nothing but their own brave hearts.</p>	<p>1. Students read the passage aloud in pairs. This is the second day, so students need to re-read these paragraphs, having listened to and read them for the first time a day ago. This type of re-reading is essential for deep understanding of any complex text.</p> <p>2. Ask the class to answer a small set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate. As students move through these questions and reread the text, be sure to check for and reinforce their understanding of academic vocabulary in the corresponding text (which will be boldfaced the first time it appears in the text). At times, the questions themselves may focus on academic vocabulary.</p> <p>(Q4) Notice how many different types of boats and different types of people are described in these paragraphs. What are the ways they differ? Why does the author spend so much time on these descriptions? What does he want us to understand about this “strange navy”? Students turn and talk in pairs, then discuss as a group. Here, turn and talk is important. It means that every student is engaged in and focused on the text.</p> <p>The teacher should help students to see that these are a great range of people and boats, the shared purpose, the all-out determination to save the soldiers - more effective than saying, “lots of boats and different kinds of people,” for example. Students should understand that this is a democratic moment - everybody involved, everybody making a difference. In contrast to a regular navy, this “strange navy” is spontaneous and diverse and voluntary.</p>

Text Passage under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>7 Off they went at sundown, more than a thousand boats in all. It was a miracle that so many had been able to assemble at one place at one time, and even more miraculous that crews had been found for them...</p> <p>[Read the intervening sentences]</p> <p>...But somehow, for the most part, they avoided each other, and the strange <u>armada</u> moved on.</p> <p>9 The wash thrown out by the big ships was a serious matter for the little boats, and they rocked helplessly in the wake of the warships. It was like being on a black highway with fast---moving traffic and no lights showing. A few were rammed and some were swamped, but still they moved on. Behind them, invisible in the blackness, was England. Ahead, glowing faintly from burning oil tanks and flaming artillery, lay the coast of France...</p> <p>[Read intervening paragraphs.]</p> <p>26 The fortunes of war always turn on small things, but never before has the fate of a great modern nation rested on so ill---assorted, so scruffy, so mixed a bag of strange little boats.</p>	<p>(Q5) What is the author referring to as the “best part of the miracle”? Why is this so significant to the outcome of this event?</p> <p>In pairs or independently, students can refer back to the text and even the map or drawing - they need to see that if the English Channel were rough, the soldiers could never have been rescued. Referring back to the Frayer model of “miracle” will help students see how amazing this phenomenon was.</p> <p>Students re-read the remaining text (paragraphs 9-26) either independently or in pairs, depending on the needs of the class.</p> <p>This seems like a great deal of text to read independently without being broken down into chunks for “close reading questioning.” However, this part of the text will be read closely later in the sequence, with the guidance of the teacher. For now, students are engaged and have a good sense of the story from the previous day and earlier today, and they are ready to come to a basic understanding of the full text. The writing in the next step addresses this.</p> <p>Summary writing. Students will gather notes to a write a summary of the text.</p> <p>Summary writing is an important first-level synthesizing skill in understanding. When students can accurately summarize a text in writing, it means they have understood the author’s main point and key supporting points. The teacher helps students come to the focus of the summary such as, “The little boats’ rescue of the soldiers at Dunkirk in 1940 was a miracle.” Using the summary notes template (see Appendix B), students work, first in pairs, to find evidence for this from the text, then share out in full group. Evidence will include the weather, the outpouring of help, the soldiers themselves, the RAF. It will be important to share these notes, so the teacher can ensure all students understand. They will not be able to write the final essay if they do not have solid, initial understanding.</p>

Fleet of warships

Day Three: Instructional Exemplar for Heatter’s “The Long Night of Little Boats”

Summary of Activities

1. The teacher reminds students of the focus statement that was established yesterday.
2. Students use their notes from yesterday to write a summary independently.
3. The teacher asks the class to discuss text-dependent questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.

Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>1 It was a miracle. Those who were there consider it so, and those who have studied it since are even more convinced. It was a miraculous combination of courage, effort, and good weather.</p> <p>2 The British army lay besieged at Dunkirk in 1940, in desperate trouble. Europe had been overrun by the German armored divisions, and the British had retreated into a tiny pocket on the French coast. Their backs were to the sea. They could go no further. England and safety lay just across the Channel, but might as well have been half a world away.</p> <p>3 Hour by hour the German armored ring closed tighter. The troops were compressed into an ever narrowing area. At last they were on the open beach – hundreds of thousands of them waiting for the end. Overhead, the dive--bombers wheeled. Behind them, the tanks and artillery roared. They turned to fight for the last time, and that was when the miracle began.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Read intervening paragraphs.]</p> <p>26 The fortunes of war always turn on small things, but never before has the fate of a great modern nation rested on so ill--assorted, so scruffy, so mixed a bag of strange little boats.</p>	<p>1. Students turn their notes from yesterday into a complete written summary. The teacher should remind students of the focus statement: “The little boats’ rescue of the soldiers at Dunkirk in 1940 was a miracle.” Students should write the summary independently, while the teacher circulates to help as needed. The teacher should also perform over the shoulder conferences in order to check-in with students.</p> <p>2. Students write a concluding statement (“So what?”) for their summary. After students write the body of the summary, the teacher should conduct a short discussion about why this miracle so important. Being able to answer this “So what?” question is an important and powerful way to conclude summary writing. In fact, much expository writing that students encounter such as op-ed pieces, conclude this way.</p> <p>In order to prepare students to write these statements, the teacher should take students to paragraph 26, where they will find the author’s “So what?”. Words such as “fate” and “fortunes of war” are useful to include in the discussion. They are ‘Tier Two’ words, so they are important to linger over and discuss. After re-reading the final paragraph and discussing its importance to the overall text, students should paraphrase, in their own words, the author’s “So what?” They should start the sentence with, “As the author points out,” in order to credit him with the idea.</p> <p>3. Teacher returns to asking a set of text-dependent guided questions. Now that students understand the miracle that happened, they need to grapple with why it happened. How did shared human values, both on the part of little boat rescuers and soldiers, play a part in the outcome of this event? It is essential for students to understand the concept of “value.” They need to understand that a “value” is a deeply held belief about something for which one cares. By working with examples for their own lives, students will find it easier to recognize and infer the underlying values of patriotism, responsibility, persistence, discipline, and deference to others on the part of the soldiers.</p>

Day Four: Instructional Exemplar for Heatter’s “The Long Night of Little Boats”

Summary of Activities

1. The teacher guides students on taking notes on evidence from text (see Appendix C).
2. Students continue to gather evidence and practice their note-taking skills both in partners and independently.
3. If time permits, the teacher introduces an example essay (see Appendix D), after which students can model their own final essay.

Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>1 It was a miracle. Those who were there consider it so, and those who have studied it since are even more convinced. It was a miraculous combination of courage, effort, and good weather.</p> <p>2 The British army lay besieged at Dunkirk in 1940, in desperate trouble. Europe had been overrun by the German armored divisions, and the British had retreated into a tiny pocket on the French coast. Their backs were to the sea. They could go no further. England and safety lay just across the Channel, but might as well have been half a world away.</p> <p>3 Hour by hour the German armored ring closed tighter. The troops were compressed into an ever narrowing area. At last they were on the open beach – hundreds of thousands of them waiting for the end. Overhead, the dive--bombers wheeled. Behind them, the tanks and artillery roared. They turned to fight for the last time, and that was when the miracle began.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Read intervening paragraphs.]</p> <p>26 The fortunes of war always turn on small things, but never before has the fate of a great modern nation rested on so ill--assorted, so scruffy, so mixed a bag of strange little boats.</p>	<p>1. Teacher introduces note-taking template (see Appendix C) for finding evidence of values in the little boat rescues and in the soldiers being rescued. It is important to explain to students that once they have a focus statement, it is essential to be able to support and prove that statement with evidence from the text.</p> <p>2. Teacher directs students to paragraphs 5 and 6. Students re-read these paragraphs in partners and then take part in a whole class discussion regarding what values show up here. Teacher helps students to see that patriotism, shared devotion to country, and taking responsibility are evident here. Teacher then guides students through the template (see Appendix C) for taking notes on these ideas.</p> <p>Next, the teacher directs students to paragraphs 19, 20, and 22. Again, students re-read the paragraphs in partners. Following this, students try to identify the values in these paragraphs (persistence, resourcefulness) by themselves. Students may need help “naming” these values.</p> <p>Finally, the teacher directs students to the values of the soldiers found in paragraphs 13 and 22. Again, students re-read these paragraphs independently or in pairs and then identify the values (discipline, sense of order, awareness of others’ needs) and take notes on their chart.</p> <p>NOTE: Appendix F provides an even more “guided experience” through the values paragraphs. This may be helpful to do before students are introduced to the notes chart. It’s also important to note that teachers should allow as much time for this note-taking process as necessary. It’s important for students to be orally processing their ideas and constructing meaning with their partners and with the whole class. Being able to find and talk about the evidence in these paragraphs is at the heart of understanding the text, and students will be asked to show their comprehension in the writing assignment. If the next activity has to be moved to the next day, that’s okay.</p>

Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>1 It was a miracle. Those who were there consider it so, and those who have studied it since are even more convinced. It was a miraculous combination of courage, effort, and good weather.</p> <p>2 The British army lay besieged at Dunkirk in 1940, in desperate trouble. Europe had been overrun by the German armored divisions, and the British had retreated into a tiny pocket on the French coast. Their backs were to the sea. They could go no further. England and safety lay just across the Channel, but might as well have been half a world away.</p> <p>3 Hour by hour the German armored ring closed tighter. The troops were compressed into an ever narrowing area. At last they were on the open beach – hundreds of thousands of them waiting for the end. Overhead, the dive--bombers wheeled. Behind them, the tanks and artillery roared. They turned to fight for the last time, and that was when the miracle began.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Read intervening paragraphs.]</p> <p>26 The fortunes of war always turn on small things, but never before has the fate of a great modern nation rested on so ill--assorted, so scruffy, so mixed a bag of strange little boats.</p>	<p>3. Teacher shares an example (see Appendix D) of a writing sample after which students should model their own final essay. This example essay is about the values of a person who stopped to help a young woman fix her flat tire.</p> <p>It is helpful for students to see an example of this kind of writing. By showing them a model, all students will get clear, concrete instruction. Just as a good basketball coach shows students how to do lay-ups before asking them to do it on their own, teachers can help students see what quality writing looks like before asking them to do it on their own.</p>

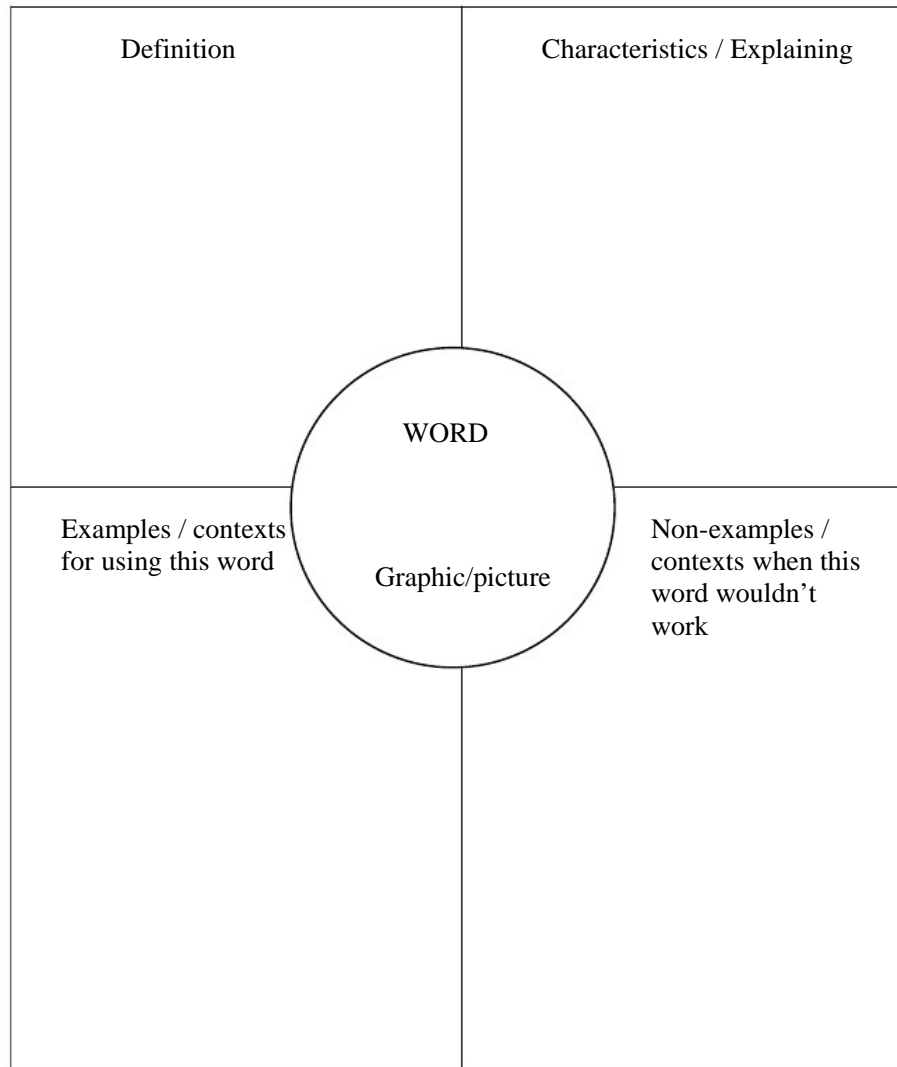
Day Five: Instructional Exemplar for Heatter’s “The Long Night of Little Boats”

Summary of Activities

1. The teacher guides students on using graphic organizer (see Appendix E) to put their thoughts together in essay form.
2. The teacher guides students in writing an introduction from their essay based on the summary they wrote earlier in the sequence.
3. The students write their essays in chunks, using their notes from the day before and the graphic organizer for help.

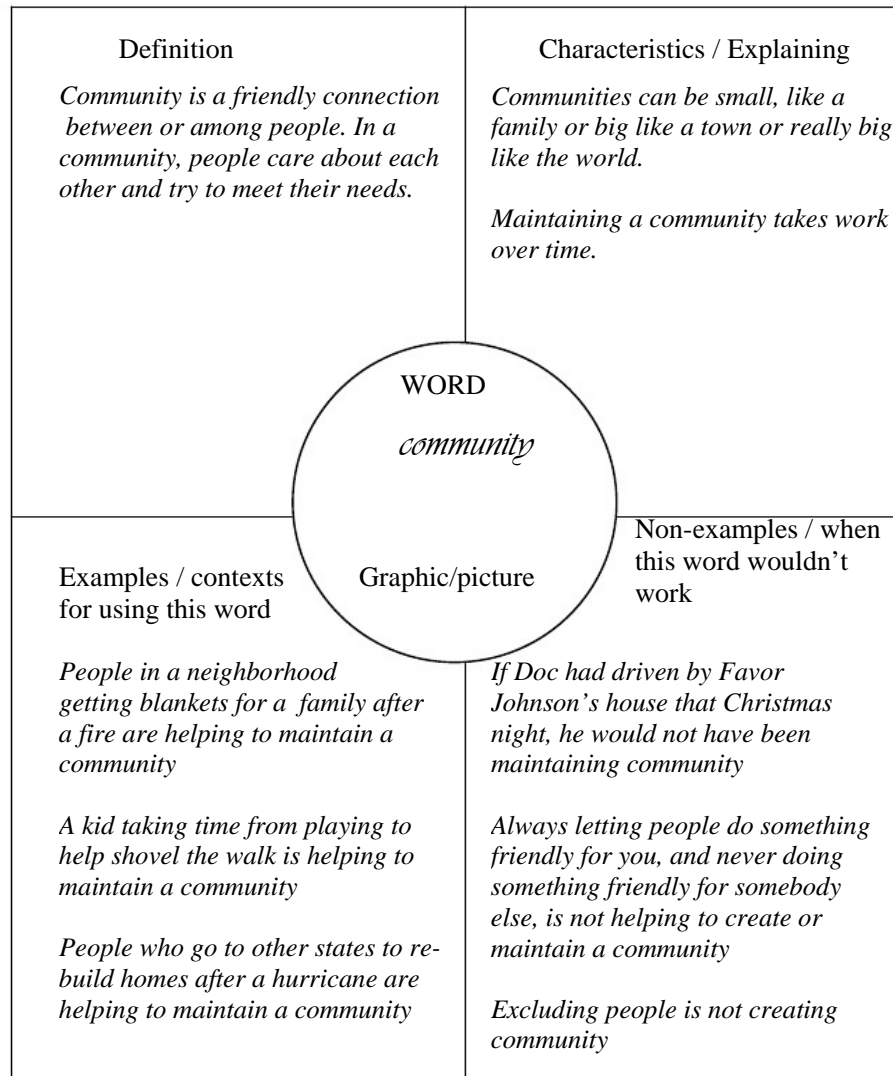
Text under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students
<p>1 It was a miracle. Those who were there consider it so, and those who have studied it since are even more convinced. It was a miraculous combination of courage, effort, and good weather.</p> <p>2 The British army lay besieged at Dunkirk in 1940, in desperate trouble. Europe had been overrun by the German armored divisions, and the British had retreated into a tiny pocket on the French coast. Their backs were to the sea. They could go no further. England and safety lay just across the Channel, but might as well have been half a world away.</p> <p>3 Hour by hour the German armored ring closed tighter. The troops were compressed into an ever narrowing area. At last they were on the open beach – hundreds of thousands of them waiting for the end. Overhead, the dive--bombers wheeled. Behind them, the tanks and artillery roared. They turned to fight for the last time, and that was when the miracle began.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Read intervening paragraphs.]</p> <p>26 The fortunes of war always turn on small things, but never before has the fate of a great modern nation rested on so ill--assorted, so scruffy, so mixed a bag of strange little boats.</p>	<p>1. Teacher introduces the graphic organizer (see Appendix E). This organizer will give students a visual of what their final product will look like, without any of the actual writing have been done. In this way, It gives students a clear sense of where they are going. They have done a great deal of work making sense of the text at this point, and this organizer provides them with a clear map regarding how to put that understanding into an essay form.</p> <p>The teacher should go through the introduction portion together and fill in the focus statement. From here, students use their notes on values to (independently) write their first body paragraph on the values of the little boat rescuers. While this is happening, the teacher should circulate to check in with students.</p> <p>After students have finished their first body paragraph, they should share with a partner and revise as needed. The same procedure should be followed for the second body paragraph on the values of the soldiers.</p> <p>Next, the teacher should lead a “So what?” discussion for the concluding paragraph. They might use the question, “So what does this event show about the importance of values as a force in human history?” Following the discussion on this question, students should (independently) write their concluding paragraphs.</p> <p>Once their drafts are completed, students should read their full essays aloud to two other students. They should provide comments to each other and revise their essays as needed. Like the note-taking process, the writing and workshopping may take more than one class period. Or, it may take less if students do not need the level of guidance provided here. The process is flexible based on the needs of the class.</p>

Appendix A: Frayer Model
Let's REALLY Know This Word!



Appendix A: Frayer Model

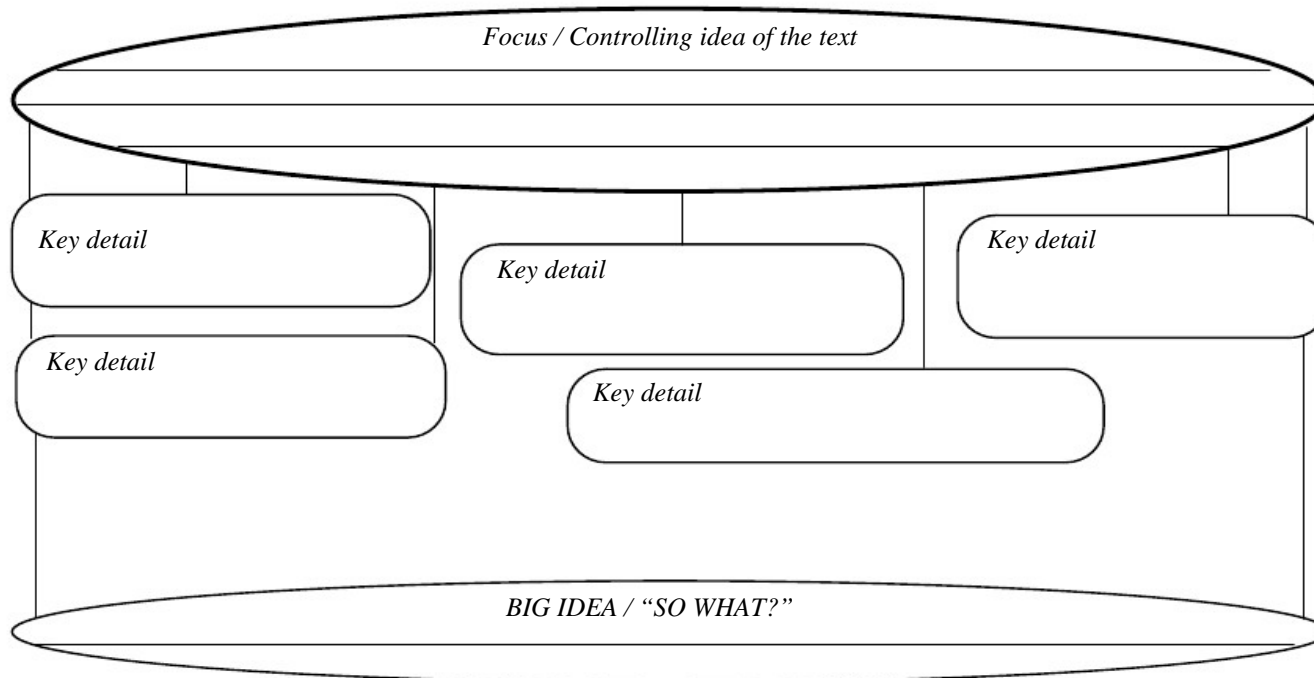
Let's REALLY Know This Word!



Appendix B: Strategic Reading: Writing a Magnet Summary

When you are reading actively, one of the most important things you do is figure out what the point of it is. This means you recognize the focus or the controlling idea of the text. Once you have done that, you have done the hardest work! Still, there is more - you need to figure out what they key details in the text are. Once that is done, you are ready to write notes into a summary paragraph. At that point, you will have gotten a good, basic understanding of the text you are reading.

Title/author _____ *Section/Ch.* _____



Written summary (Make it all make sense!)

DRAFT

Appendix C: Note-taking Template

Focusing Question: How did shared human values, both on the part of the little boat rescuers and the soldiers, play a part in the outcome of Dunkirk?

FOCUS: Both the little boat rescuers and the soldiers held values which played a role in the outcome of Dunkirk.

Little Boat Rescuers		
Value	Evidence from text	Analysis / explanation – how does this evidence show the value? What difference did it make?

Soldiers

Value

Evidence from text

Analysis / explanation – how does this evidence show the value? What difference did it make?

DRAFT

Appendix D: Writing Model

The Great Breakdown of 1995

Human history can be complicated. When we look at any big historical event, we know that it has many causes. Great forces are at work, often all at the same time. The same can be true even of small, more personal events.

It was the fall of 1995. Sarah, aged 23, had just moved to Long Island, New York to go to graduate school. Graduate classes are often held at night so that students can work during the day, so on this particular fall date Sarah was returning to her apartment by way of the Long Island Expressway around ten o'clock at night. The Long Island Expressway is always a busy place. No matter what time of day or night one drives on it, there is always heavy traffic, and it is always speeding right along. As Sarah was whizzing down the highway, she suddenly heard a loud CLUNKETY-CLUNK-CLUNK-CLUNK. At the same time, she felt the car lurch to the side. When she pulled over and got out to look at the car, she realized she had a flat tire. It was a frightening moment for her, to say the least. As it happened, however, luck was with her. Even before a police car could stop to help, a motorist stopped to help.

The motorist could not speak English, but he could see what was wrong with the car. Within moments he had the flat tire off; within ten minutes, the spare tire was on and the car was ready. When Sarah tried to pay him, he simply smiled and waved, then got in his car and drove off.

In this seemingly simple event, we can see that human ideas and values play an important part in human history.

Values reflect what people care about, what people believe in. Those values often drive what people do. In this case, the stranger who stopped to help held values that made a big difference for Sarah! He did not know who she was; he did not even speak English; yet he stopped and fixed her flat tire. Somehow, this stranger cared about helping people. Perhaps she reminded him of his daughter. Perhaps he had been taught as a child to try to help people in trouble. Perhaps he was a generous-hearted soul who enjoyed assisting people. Sarah never knew, because they could not speak the same language - at least, not in words. But his smile as he refused her offers of payment said everything. And his values, what he cared about, turned her car breaking down from a frightening event to one which warmed her heart.

Having a flat tire on the Long Island Expressway may not seem like a significant moment in human history. Yet even in this tiny personal event, we can see that human values, an idea someone held in his heart, made a great difference to the outcome. Perhaps we can see from Sarah's flat tire that human values are a driver of human history.

Appendix E: Essay Graphic Organizer

Title

This is your introduction. It should include the title and author, and a bit of background. Hint: Use your summary!

Many forces came together to make this event happen. One of the most significant was strong human values, both on the part of the little boat rescuers and the soldiers being rescued. Discuss the values of the rescuers in your first body paragraph, using the evidence you compiled in your notes. Then, describe the values of the soldiers in the next body paragraph.

First, let's look at _____

In addition,

So, what does this event show about the importance of values / beliefs as a force in human history?

Appendix F: Close Reading of “Values” Paragraphs

5 They poured out of the rivers and harbors and down toward the coast. Some were frowsty and hung with old automobile tires for fenders, others white and gleaming with polished chromium and flying yacht pennants. There were fishing boats, shrimp catchers, ancient car ferries that had never known the touch of salt water. Some had been built before the Boer War. There were Thames fire floats, Belgian drifters, and lifeboats from sunken ships. There were bright blue French fishing boats and stumpy little Dutch schouts. There were paddle steamers and tugs pushing barges, and flatboats with ancient kerosene engines. Large and small, wide and narrow, fast and slow, they moved in a motley flood down to the shore. Some had registered with the navy and were under navy command. Others had simply come by themselves, tubby little craft used for Sunday picnics on the Thames and laid up for years, somehow gotten underway by elderly gentlemen who had left their armchairs and rocking chairs. Down they came, clogging the estuaries, going off to war.

6 There were bankers and dentists, taxi drivers and yachtsmen, old longshoremen and very young boys, engineers, fishermen, and civil servants. There were fresh-faced young Sea Scouts and old men with white hair blowing in the wind. Some were poor, with not even a raincoat to protect them from weather, and others were owners of great estates. A few had machine guns, some had rifles and old fowling pieces, but most had nothing but their own brave hearts.

a) What do you think the word “poured” means in line 1?

b) How many different types of boats does the author name here?

What do you think he is trying to show with such a variety?

c) In paragraph 6 about the pilots of the little boats, how many different types of people does the author name?

d) Paraphrase the sentence that reads, “Some were poor, with not even a raincoat to protect them from weather, and others were owners of great estates.”

e) Paraphrase the last sentence in paragraph 6.

THINK!! What does the author want us to understand about the *values* of the little boat pilots from these two paragraphs?

19 All through the long hours, the work went on. The old men and boys who piloted the boats were sagging with exhaustion. There was an endless repetition in what they were doing: pull the men aboard, make the wounded as comfortable as possible, take them out to the larger ships, then return for more. No matter how many times they made the trip, there were still more men, **apparently** endless files of weary, stumbling, silent men moving down across the beaches into the water, waiting for rescue.

20 Sometimes the little boats ran out of gas. And sometimes the engine of a boat that had been laid up for years in a boatyard or quiet backwater simply broke down and quit. When that happened, small individual miracles were performed by grease-stained, sweating, cursing old gentlemen who whacked away in the dark with pliers and screwdrivers at the stubborn metal until some **obstruction** gave and the **asthmatic** engines ground back into life.

21

22 At last the ranks of men on the beach grew thinner. The flood that had once seemed endless was reduced to a trickle. Already the sky was growing light, and soon the little boats would have to scuttle away. None abandoned their position. Steadily they went on with the work. Although every minute lost might mean another life lost, the men on the beach did not panic. Slowly, steadily, silently, responding only to the orders of their officers, the long lines shuffled forward and out into the water toward the helping hands that waited for them on the little boats.

f) In paragraph 19, underline the words and phrases that show you how hard these little pilots were willing to work to rescue the soldiers.

Why do you think the author goes into such detail about this hard work?

g) In paragraph 20, what do you think the phrase “small individual miracles” means?

What does this show about the little boat pilots?

h) Paragraph 22 talks about both the little boat pilots and the soldiers. Underline the words and phrases that describe more about what the *little boats pilots* are doing.

i) What do you think the word “abandoned” means?

THINK!! What does the author want us to understand about the *values* of the little boat pilots from these two paragraphs?

13 The amazing thing was the lack of panic. There was no mad scramble for boats. The men moved slowly forward, neck deep in the water, with their officers guiding them. As the front ranks were dragged aboard the boats, the rear ranks moved up, first ankle deep and then knee deep and finally shoulder deep until at last it was their turn to be pulled up over the side.

22 At last the ranks of men on the beach grew thinner. The flood that had once seemed endless was reduced to a trickle. Already the sky was growing light, and soon the little boats would have to scuttle away. None abandoned their position. Steadily they went on with the work. Although every minute lost might mean another life lost, the men on the beach did not panic. Slowly, steadily, silently, responding only to the orders of their officers, the long lines shuffled forward and out into the water toward the helping hands that waited for them on the little boats.

j) Underline the sentence “The amazing thing was the lack of panic.” Paraphrase this sentence.

k) The sentence you just underlined and paraphrased is the author’s topic sentence. In your own words, what details does the author give to show “lack of panic”?

THINK! What *value* of the soldiers is the author trying to show us here?

l) In paragraph 22, underline the words and phrases that tell us about how the soldiers behaved.

m) What do you think the word “shuffled” means?

THINK! What *value* of the soldiers is the author trying to show us here?

Appendix G: Alternate Argument Essay Focusing Question

History is of course driven by more than human values and beliefs, important as these are. In this story of the little boats, the course of history is also driven by geography (the actual topography, the shallow water, the existence of a relatively narrow English Channel separating mainland Europe from England, and perhaps most of all, the calm weather that night at Dunkirk).

For students who can take on more independent and/or enriched work, they can take this on as well for their final essay. In this case, the Focusing Question might be something like, “How did geographical factors, as well as shared human values, both on the part of the little boats pilots and the soldiers, play a part in the outcome of this event?”