

Aim: Which words contribute the most to the central idea in an excerpt from Virginia Woolf's extended essay, *A Room of One's Own*?

Do now: Complete the following because, but, so statements:

1. Women are equal to men because _____.
2. Women are equal to men, but _____.
3. Women are equal to men, so _____.

Key Vocabulary Terms:

Explicitly (adv.) – fully and clearly expressed
Implying (v.) – suggesting something indirectly without clearly stating it
Anonymous (adj.) – when someone's name is left unknown or unacknowledged, as in the authors of some books
Excerpt (n.) – a passage or quotation taken or selected from a book, essay, document, etc.
Paraphrase (v.) – to restate or summarize
Objective (adj.) – based on facts rather than feelings or opinions
Heiress (n.) – a woman who inherits or has a right of inheritance, especially a woman who has inherited or will inherit considerable wealth
Escapade (n.) – a reckless adventure or wild prank

Common Core Learning Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4	Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2	Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Meaningful Engagement Activity: After re-reading the following excerpt, provide your Personal Response AND Text-Based Evidence for each question.

Be that as it may, I could not help thinking, as I looked at the works of Shakespeare on the shelf, that the bishop was right at least in this; it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare. Let me imagine, since facts are so hard to come by, what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith, let us say. Shakespeare himself went, very probably,—his mother was an heiress—to the grammar school, where he may have learnt Latin—Ovid, Virgil and Horace—and the elements of grammar and logic. He was, it is well known, a wild boy who poached rabbits, perhaps shot a deer, and had, rather sooner than he should have done, to marry a woman in the neighbourhood, who bore him a child rather quicker than was right. That escapade sent him to seek his fortune in London. He had, it seemed, a taste for the theatre; he began by holding horses at the stage door.

Very soon he got work in the theatre, became a successful actor, and lived at the hub of the universe, meeting everybody, knowing everybody, practising his art on the boards, exercising his wits in the streets, and even getting access to the palace of the queen. Meanwhile his extraordinarily gifted sister, let us suppose, remained at home. She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school. She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil.

1. Paraphrase Virginia Woolf's argument in the first sentence of this excerpt. How does the use of the words "impossible" and "completely" and "entirely" contribute to Woolf's argument?

2. Look at the sentence that begins with, “Let me imagine, since the facts are so hard to come by.” What is Woolf going to imagine in this essay? Why does she need to imagine it?

3. What **escapade** sent Shakespeare “to seek his fortune in London?”

4. What experiences did Shakespeare have in London?

5. Virginia Woolf chooses the words “very soon he got work,” “successful,” “meeting everybody,” “knowing everybody” to describe/explain Shakespeare’s lifestyle. What overall impression do these words convey?

6. Woolf immediately transitions the experience of Shakespeare’s sister with that of Shakespeare’s with the use of the word “meanwhile? What does the word “meanwhile” indicate to the reader? What overall impression does the phrase “she stayed at home,” convey to the reader?

Sentence Types:

1. Using one of the vocabulary terms for the day, create one original **question** (?) about the central idea in Virginia Woolf’s extended essay, *A Room of Your Own*:

2. Using one of the vocabulary terms for the day, create one original **statement** (.) about the central idea in Virginia Woolf’s extended essay, *A Room of Your Own*:

Quick Write Exit Activity (Short Response): Write an objective summary of today’s excerpt and determine a central idea introduced in the text. Cite text evidence to support the central idea you identify.

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- HW:** 1. Review your notes on Virginia Woolf's extended essay, *A Room of One's Own*, **paying specific attention to the central idea of the excerpt from today**
2. Bring in your notes AND copy of the excerpt from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* TOMORROW

Name: _____

Pd: _____

An Excerpt from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Chapter 3 (Pages 48-52)

[1] Be that as it may, I could not help thinking, as I looked at the works of Shakespeare on the shelf, that the bishop was right at least in this; it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare. Let me imagine, since facts are so hard to come by, what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith, let us say. Shakespeare himself went, very probably,—his mother was an heiress—to the grammar school, where he may have learnt Latin—Ovid, Virgil and Horace—and the elements of grammar and logic. He was, it is well known, a wild boy who poached rabbits, perhaps shot a deer, and had, rather sooner than he should have done, to marry a woman in the neighbourhood, who bore him a child rather quicker than was right. That escapade sent him to seek his fortune in London. He had, it seemed, a taste for the theatre; he began by holding horses at the stage door.

[2] Very soon he got work in the theatre, became a successful actor, and lived at the hub of the universe, meeting everybody, knowing everybody, practising his art on the boards, exercising his wits in the streets, and even getting access to the palace of the queen. Meanwhile his extraordinarily gifted sister, let us suppose, remained at home. She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school. She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil. She picked up a book now and then, one of her brother's perhaps, and read a few pages. But then her parents came in and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about with books and papers. They would have spoken sharply but kindly, for they were substantial people who knew the conditions of life for a woman and loved their daughter—indeed, more likely than not she was the apple of her father's eye. Perhaps she scribbled some pages up in an apple loft on the sly but was careful to hide them or set do not go to heaven. Women cannot write the plays of fire to them.

[3] Soon, however, before she was out of her teens, she was to be betrothed to the son of a neighbouring wool stapler. She cried out that marriage was hateful to her, and for that she was severely beaten by her father. Then he ceased to scold her. He begged her instead not to hurt him, not to shame him in this matter of her marriage. He would give her a chain of beads or a fine petticoat, he said; and there were tears in his eyes. How could she disobey him? How could she break his heart? The force of her own gift alone drove her to it. She made up a small parcel of her belongings, let herself down by a rope one summer's night and took the road to London.

[4] She was not seventeen. The birds that sang in the hedge were not more musical than she was. She had the quickest fancy, a gift like her brother's, for the tune of words. Like him, she had a taste for the theatre. She stood at the stage door; she wanted to act, she said. Men laughed in her face. The manager—a fat, loose lipped man—guffawed. He bellowed something about poodles dancing and women acting—no woman, he said, could possibly be an actress. He hinted—you can imagine what. She could get no training in her craft. Could she even seek her dinner in a tavern or roam the streets at midnight? Yet her genius was for fiction and lusted to feed abundantly upon the lives of men and women and the study of their ways. At last—for she was very young, oddly like Shakespeare the poet in her face, with the same grey eyes and rounded brows—at last Nick Greene the actor manager took pity on her; she found herself with child by that gentleman and so—who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?—killed herself one winter's night and lies buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle.

[5] That, more or less, is how the story would run, I think, if a woman in Shakespeare's day had had Shakespeare's genius. But for my part, I agree with the deceased bishop, if such he was—it is unthinkable that any woman in Shakespeare's day should have had Shakespeare's genius. For genius like Shakespeare's is not born among labouring, uneducated, servile people. It was not born in England among the Saxons and the Britons. It is not born to-day among the working classes. How, then, could it have been born among women whose work began, according to Professor Trevelyan, almost before they were out of the nursery, who were forced to it by their parents and held to it by all the power of law and custom? Yet genius of a sort must have existed among women as it must have existed among the working classes. Now and again an Emily Brontë or a Robert Burns blazes out and proves its presence. But certainly it never got itself on to paper. When, however, one reads of a witch being ducked, of a woman possessed by devils, of a wise woman selling herbs, or even of a very remarkable man who had a mother, then I think we are on the track of a lost novelist, a suppressed poet, of some mute and inglorious Jane Austen, some Emily Brontë who dashed her brains out on the moor or mopped and mowed about the highways crazed with the torture that her gift had put her to. Indeed, I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman. It was a woman Edward Fitzgerald, I think, suggested who made the ballads and the folk-songs, crooning them to her children, beguiling her spinning with them, or the length of the winter's night.

[6] This may be true or it may be false—who can say?—but what is true in it, so it seemed to me, reviewing the story of Shakespeare's sister as I had made it, is that any woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at. For it needs little skill in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty. No girl could have walked to London and stood at a stage door and forced her way into the presence of actor-managers without doing herself a violence and suffering an anguish which may have been irrational—for chastity may be a fetish invented by certain societies for unknown reasons—but were none the less inevitable. Chastity had then, it has even now, a religious importance in a woman's life, and has so wrapped itself round with nerves and instincts that to cut it free and bring it to the light of day demands courage of the rarest.

[7] To have lived a free life in London in the sixteenth century would have meant for a woman who was poet and playwright a nervous stress and dilemma which might well have killed her. Had she survived, whatever she had written would have been twisted and deformed, issuing from a strained and morbid imagination. And undoubtedly, I thought, looking at the shelf where there are no plays by women, her work would have gone unsigned. That refuge she would have sought certainly. It was the relic of the sense of chastity that dictated anonymity to women even so late as the nineteenth century. Currer Bell, George Eliot, George Sand, all the victims of inner strife as their writings prove, sought ineffectively to veil themselves by using the name of a man. Thus they did homage to the convention, which if not implanted by the other sex was liberally encouraged by them (the chief glory of a woman is not to be talked of, said Pericles, himself a much-talked-of man) that publicity in women is detestable. Anonymity runs in their blood.

Meaningful Engagement Activity: Answer Key

Paraphrase Woolf's argument beginning with "It would have been impossible." What words does Woolf use in this sentence to emphasize her argument?

Woolf thinks that a woman in Shakespeare's time could not have written his works. The words "impossible" and "completely" and "entirely" create a strong emphasis and make it clear what her argument is.

Look at the sentence that begins with "Let me imagine, since the facts are so hard to come by." What is Woolf going to imagine in this essay? Why does she need to imagine it?

Woolf is going to imagine the life of a sister of Shakespeare's to examine what might have happened to her. She needs to imagine it because there are so few facts available about women in Shakespeare's time.

Ask students to reread the final part of today's excerpt from "He was, it is well known, a wild boy" to "his extraordinarily gifted sister, let us suppose, remained at home" on p. 48 and answer the following questions in their small groups.

What *escapade* sent Shakespeare "to seek his fortune in London?"

His getting a woman pregnant and marrying her.

What is your understanding of the meaning of the word *escapade* from this sentence?

It means "a reckless adventure or wild prank."

Consider drawing students' attention to their application of standard L.11-12.4.a, through the process of using context to make meaning of a word.

Bring the class together to discuss the following questions.

What experiences did Shakespeare have in London?

He quickly got work. He lived at the hub of the universe. He practiced his art. He exercised his wits. He even got access to the queen.

What word choices does Woolf make to explain Shakespeare's lifestyle? What overall impression does this convey?

"very soon he got work," "successful," "meeting everybody," "knowing everybody." It gives the impression of quick success.

How does Woolf immediately contrast the experience of Shakespeare's sister with that of Shakespeare's?

The word "meanwhile" is clear that it is setting up a contrast. It only says, "she stayed at home," which we know means that she didn't go to London.

Exit Ticket: Sentence Types:

Create one original question about the central idea in Virginia Woolf's extended essay, *A Room of Your Own*:

Why wasn't Judith allowed to go to London and study like Shakespeare?

Create one original statement about the central idea in Virginia Woolf's extended essay, *A Room of Your Own*:

Virginia Woolf introduces the central idea of gender roles by contrasting Shakespeare's freedom and opportunities with his fictional sister's confinement at home.

Virginia Woolf constructs the fictional existence of Shakespeare's sister Judith to make it clear that even if a woman was "extraordinarily gifted" (p. 48), she would have "remained at home" (p. 48) while her brother went to school and then London to become a success in theater. Woolf introduces the central idea of gender roles by contrasting Shakespeare's freedom and opportunities with his sister's confinement at home.

Do Now: First, look over today's Aim, HW, NYS Common Core Standards, and Key Vocabulary Terms while considering and/or making note of what we, as a class, will be doing today. Then, after reading the following quote, answer the questions which follow. **“The chief glory of a woman is not to be talked of, said Pericles, himself a much-talked-of man” – Virginia Woolf**

1. What is **EXPLICITLY** being stated within this quote? _____

2. What is Virginia Woolf **IMPLYING** within this quote? _____

3. How can you relate the ideas presented in this quote to your own experiences and/or things you've seen, heard, or read about?
