The Departure

Learning Targets
- Analyze a story for archetypal structure and narrative techniques.
- Draft the opening of an original Hero’s Journey narrative.
- Demonstrate understanding of visual techniques used for effect by illustrating an event.

The Departure
Joseph Campbell describes the first stage of the Hero's Journey as the hero's departure or separation. The Departure Stage consists of three steps: the Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, and the Beginning of the Adventure.

Preview
In this activity, you will read a story about a hero’s departure and begin creating a hero of your own.

Setting a Purpose for Reading
- As you read, think about the stages of a hero’s journey. Put a star next to parts of this story that show the stages of Joby’s journey.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Ray Bradbury (1920–2012) authored the novel Fahrenheit 451, which was first published in 1953. Bradbury called his books fantasy rather than science fiction because he wrote stories that could not happen in real life. Other well-known works by Bradbury include The Martian Chronicles and Something Wicked This Way Comes. Bradbury also authored hundreds of short stories and even wrote and published his own fan magazine.

Short Story
“The Drummer Boy of Shiloh” by Ray Bradbury

1. In the April night, more than once, blossoms fell from the orchard trees and lit with rustling taps on the drumskin. At midnight a peach stone left miraculously on a branch through winter flicked by a bird fell swift and unseen struck once like panic, which jerked the boy upright. In silence he listened to his own heart ruffle away away—at last gone from his ears and back in his chest again.
2. After that, he turned the drum on its side, where its great lunar face peered at him whenever he opened his eyes.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
Focus Standards:
RL.8.3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
W.8.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
W.8.3a: Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
W.8.3d: Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

Additional Standards Addressed:
RL.8.1; RL.8.2; RL.8.4; RL.8.10; W.8.3b; W.8.4; W.8.10: L.8.4a; L.8.4c
3 His face, alert or at rest, was solemn. It was indeed a solemn night for a boy just turned fourteen in the peach field near the "Owl Creek not far from the church at Shiloh."

4 “…thirty-one, thirty-two, thirty-three…”

5 Unable to see, he stopped counting.

6 Beyond the thirty-three familiar shadows, forty thousand men, exhausted by nervous expectation, unable to sleep for romantic dreams of battles yet unfought, lay crazily askew in their uniforms. A mile yet farther on, another army was strewn helter-skelter, turning slow, basting themselves with the thought of what they would do when the time came: a leap, a yell, a blind plunge their strategy, raw youth their protection and benediction.

7 Now and again the boy heard a vast wind come up, that gently stirred the air. But he knew what it was—the army here, the army there, whispering to itself in the dark. Some men talking to others, others murmuring to themselves, and all so quiet it was like a natural element arisen from South or North with the motion of the earth toward dawn.

8 What the men whispered the boy could only guess, and he guessed that it was: "Me, I'm the one, I'm the one of all the rest who won't die. I'll live through it. I'll go home. The band will play. And I'll be there to hear it."

9 Yes, thought the boy, that's all very well for them, they can give as good as they get!

10 For with the careless bones of the young men harvested by the night and bindled around campfires were the similarly strewn steel bones of their rifles, with bayonets fixed like eternal lightning lost in the orchard grass.

11 Me, thought the boy, I got only a drum, two sticks to beat it and no shield.

12 There wasn't a man-boy on the ground tonight who did not have a shield he cast, riveted or carved himself on his way to his first attack, compounded of remote but nonetheless firm and fiery family devotion, flag-blowing patriotism and cocksure immortality strengthened by the touchstone of very real gunpowder; ramrod, Minité ball and flint. But without these last the boy felt his family move yet farther off away in the dark, as if one of those great prairie-burning trains had chanted them away never to return—leaving him with this drum which was worse than a toy in the game to be played tomorrow or some day much too soon.

13 The boy turned on his side. A moth brushed his face, but it was peach blossom. A peach blossom flicked him, but it was a moth. Nothing stayed put. Nothing had a name. Nothing was as it once was.

14 If he lay very still when the dawn came up and the soldiers put on their bravery with their caps, perhaps they might go away, the war with them, and not notice him lying small here, no more than a toy himself.

15 “Well … now,” said a voice.

16 The boy shut up his eyes to hide inside himself, but it was too late. Someone, walking by in the night, stood over him.

1 Shiloh (n.): site of a Civil War battle in 1862; now a national military park in southwest Tennessee

2 Minité ball: a type of rifle bullet that became prominent during the Civil War

romantic: fondly imaginary
helter-skelter: in a confused or disorderly way
benediction: a prayer or blessing

immortality: the ability to live forever

WORD CONNECTIONS

Etymology

In the past, people would test the quality of gold or silver by rubbing a stone across it and analyzing the color of the streak it left. The 15th-century Middle English word touch meant “to test.” so this stone became known as a touchstone. This term is now a metaphor for any method used to test the quality or effectiveness of something else.

SCAFFOLDING THE TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

1. Key Ideas and Details (RL.8.3) What textual evidence in the first paragraph shows that the boy is afraid? Try to hear the sound of a peach stone hitting the skin of your drum as it lay beside you in the darkness. How could that cause a panicly feeling?

2. Craft and Structure (RL.8.4) The word "harvested" is used figuratively in paragraph 10. How do you know it is used figuratively, and why did the author choose this word? What is the boy counting? What is beyond the forms of the soldiers the boy can barely see in the night time? Visually, what would this vast army of soldiers look like?

3. Craft and Structure (RL.8.4) Consult reference materials to find the meanings of “ramrod” and “flint.” Relate these words to the meaning of the last sentence in paragraph 12. How does the sentence convey the boy’s mood? From the opening scene, what is the boy’s...
"Well," said the voice quietly, "here’s a soldier crying before the fight. Good. Get it over. Won’t be time once it all starts."

And the voice was about to move on when the boy, startled, touched the drum at his elbow. The man above, hearing this, stopped. The boy could feel his eyes, sense him slowly bending near. A hand must have come down out of the night, for there was a little rat-tat as the fingernails brushed and the man’s breath fanned his face.

"Why, it’s the drummer boy, isn’t it?"

The boy nodded not knowing if his nod was seen. "Sir, is that you?" he said.

"I assume it is." The man’s knees cracked as he bent still closer.

He smelled as all fathers should smell, of salt sweat, ginger, tobacco, horse, and boot leather, and the earth he walked upon. He had many eyes. No, not eyes—brass buttons that watched the boy.

He could only be, and was, the general.

"What’s your name, boy?"

"Joby," whispered the boy, starting to sit up.

"All right Joby, don’t stir." A hand pressed his chest gently and the boy relaxed.

"How long you been with us, Joby?"

"Three weeks, sir."

"Run off from home or joined legitimately, boy?"

Silence.

"... Fool question," said the general. "Do you shave yet, boy? Even more of a ... fool. There’s your cheek, fell right off the tree overhead. And the others here not much older. Raw, raw, the lot of you. You ready for tomorrow or the next day, Joby?"

"I think so, sir."

"You want to cry some more, go on ahead. I did the same last night."

"You, sir?"

"It’s the truth. Thinking of everything ahead. Both sides figuring the other side will just give up, and soon, and the war done in weeks, and us all home. Well, that’s not how it’s going to be. And maybe that’s why I cried."

"Yes, sir," said Joby.

The general must have taken out a cigar now, for the dark was suddenly filled with the smell of tobacco unlit as yet, but chewed as the man thought what next to say.

"It’s going to be a crazy time," said the general. "Counting both sides, there’s a hundred thousand men, give or take a few thousand out there tonight, not one as can spit a sparrow off a tree, or knows a horse clod from a Minié ball. Stand up, bare the breast, ask to be a target, thank them and sit down, that’s us, that’s them. We should turn tail and train four months, they should do the same. But here we are, taken with spring fever and thinking it blood lust, taking our sulfur with cannons instead of with molasses, as it should be, going to be a hero, going to live forever. And I can see all of this night before the battle? How does describing his drums as “worse than a toy” help convey his mood about the battle to come?

4. Key Ideas and Details (RL.8.3) How did Joby join the army? What is significant about that? How old is Joby? Is he old enough to fight in the Army? Does he have a gun to fight with? What does the general mean when he calls Joby “raw”?

5. Craft and Structure (RL.8.4) Consult reference materials to find the meaning of “drowse.” How does that word choice create a contrast in paragraph 44? What does the phrase “sleep forever” mean? What does the beat of a drum have to do with movement?

6. Key Ideas and Details (RL.8.3) What shift happens in paragraphs 44, 45, and 46? Use textual evidence in your answer. Before the general talks to him, how does Joby feel about his drums? How important does the general think the drummer boy is to the success of the army in battle? Why does the general talk to Joby about the importance of the drum beat?
The general stopped and made a little pile of winter leaves and twigs in the darkness, as if he might at any moment strike fire to them to see his way through the coming days when the sun might not show its face because of what was happening here and just beyond.

The boy watched the hand stirring the leaves and opened his lips to say something, but did not say it. The general heard the boy's breath and spoke himself.

"Why am I telling you this? That's what you wanted to ask, eh? Well, when you got a bunch of wild horses on a loose rein somewhere somehow you got to bring order, rein them in. These lads, fresh out of the milkshed, don't know what I know, and I can't tell them: men actually die in war. So each is his own army. I got to make one army of them. And for that, boy, I need you.

"Me!" The boy's lips barely twitched.

"Now, boy," said the general quietly, "you are the heart of the army. Think of that. You're the heart of the army. Listen, now."

And, lying there, Joby listened. And the general spoke on.

If he, Joby, beat slow tomorrow, the heart would beat slow in the men. They would lag by the wayside. They would drowse in the fields on their muskets. They would sleep for ever, after that, in those same fields—their hearts slowed by a drummer boy and stopped by enemy lead.

But if he beat a sure, steady, ever faster rhythm, then, then their knees would come up in a long line down over that hill, one knee after the other, like a wave on the ocean shore! Had he seen the ocean ever? Seen the waves rolling in like a well-ordered cavalry charge to the sand? Well, that was it that's what he wanted, that's what was needed! Joby was his right hand and his left. He gave the orders, but Joby set the pace!

So bring the right knee up and the right foot out and the left knee up and the left foot out. One following the other in good time, in brisk time. Move the blood up the body and made the head proud and the spine stiff and the jaw resolute. Focus the eye and set the teeth, flare the nostrils and tighten the hands, put steel armor all over the men, for blood moving fast in them does indeed make men feel as if they'd put on steel. He must keep it at, at it! Long and steady, steady and long! The men, even though shot or torn, those wounds got in hot blood—in blood he'd helped stir—would feel less pain. If their blood was cold, it would be more than slaughter, it would be murderous nightmare and pain best not told and no one to guess.

The general spoke and stopped, letting his breath slack off. Then after a moment, he said, "So there you are, that's it. Will you do that, boy? Do you know now you're general of the army when the general's left behind?"

The boy nodded mutely.

"You'll run them through for me then boy?"

7. **Key Ideas and Details (RL.8.3)** How does the general's comment, “Do you know now you’re general of the army when the general’s left behind?” prove to be a decisive moment in the conversation between him and Joby? Up to this point the boy has thought of his drums as a toy, and wishes he had a gun instead. After the general’s speech to him, what is Joby ready to do? How does Joby’s role as the drummer make him “the general of the army”?
“Yes, sir.”

“Good. And maybe, many nights from tonight, many years from now, when you’re as old or far much older than me, when they ask you what you did in this awful time, you will tell them—one part humble and one part proud—I was the drummer boy at the battle of Owl Creek; or the Tennessee River; or maybe they’ll just name it after the church there. ‘I was the drummer boy at Shiloh.’ Who will ever hear those words and not know you, boy, or what you thought this night, or what you’ll think tomorrow or the next day when we must get up on our legs and move!”

The general stood up. “Well then … Bless you, boy. Good night.”

“Good night, sir.” And tobacco, brass, boot polish, salt sweat and leather, the man moved away through the grass.

Joby lay for a moment, staring but unable to see where the man had gone. He swallowed. He wiped his eyes. He cleared his throat. He settled himself. Then, at last, very slowly and firmly, he turned the drum so that it faced up toward the sky.

He lay next to it, his arm around it, feeling the tremor, the touch, the muted thunder as, all the rest of the April night in the year 1862, near the Tennessee River, not far from the Owl Creek, very close to the church named Shiloh, the peach blossoms fell on the drum.

Second Read

1. Key Ideas and Details: What textual evidence in the beginning of the story shows that the boy is afraid?

At the beginning the boy is “jerked upright” by the sound of an unseen peach stone hitting his drumskin, and in that instant his heart is beating so loud he can hear it in response to unexpected panic. RL.8.3

2. Craft and Structure: The word “harvested” is used figuratively in paragraph 10. How do you know it is used figuratively, and why did the author choose this word?

Harvested is usually used in reference to crops bundled on a field. In this case, “harvested” is used as a visual image of the men of the army gathered together in bunches as they sleep in a vast field and await daybreak. RL.8.4
3. **Craft and Structure:** Consult reference materials to find the meanings of "ramrod" and "flint." Relate these words to the meaning of the sentence in paragraph 12. How does the sentence convey the boy’s mood?

A ramrod is the stick used to cram ammunition down the muzzle of a gun, and a flint is a piece of stone used to create a spark to ignite gunpowder. Joby realizes that the soldiers can be comforted and confident in battle because they have such equipment to help them fight. Joby, however, lacks such comfort because he only has a drum and sticks. RL.8.4

4. **Key Ideas and Details:** How did Joby join the army? What is significant about that?

Joby did not join legitimately because at 14, he is too young to join. He ran off and joined up as a drummer boy. He is very young, and as the general says, "raw." He has only been in the army for 3 weeks. He is not ready for battle. RL.8.3

5. **Craft and Structure:** Consult reference material to find the meaning of the word "drowse." How does that word create a contrast in paragraph 44?

"Drowse," meaning "a light sleep" or "half sleep," is used to set up a contrast to the image that the soldiers would "sleep forever" if the drummer boy were to beat the drum slowly. Slow drumming would guarantee the soldiers would die. RL.8.4

6. **Key Ideas and Details:** What shift happens in paragraphs 44, 45, and 46? Use textual evidence in your answer.

The shift occurs as the general impresses the boy with the importance of keeping the men moving quickly in an "ever faster rhythm," "like a wave on the ocean," their hearts beating steadily and quickly to keep "the blood moving fast in them." The general convinces the boy of the importance of his role in the battle. RL.8.3

7. **Key Ideas and Details:** How does the general’s comment, "Do you know now you’re general of the army when the general’s left behind?" prove to be a decisive moment in the conversation between him and Joby?

In this comment the general makes Joby understand his importance to the army. Joby leads the army by keeping the drum beat steady and strong to inspire the men and keep them resolute and focused. RL.8.3
### Working from the Text

8. Summarize the Departure Stage of the Hero’s Journey as it relates to Joby in “The Drummer Boy.” Which stage is Joby in? Embed at least one direct quotation in your summary to strengthen your response.

The Call to Adventure has already occurred when the story begins. The boy, Joby, is now experiencing an internal conflict that characterizes the Refusal of the Call—he wants to be part of the army, but he is afraid because he “has no shield.” He has only a drum, “worse than a toy.” This fear threatens to overcome his courage and commitment to accompany the army in the coming battle. It is at this time that the general comes by and convinces Joby of his crucial role in encouraging the troops and maintaining their courage. Joby is now ready to begin his adventure.

9. Write a main idea statement to express how Joby is now ready to start his journey. How did the author communicate this idea? Provide textual evidence to support your interpretation.

**Theme:**
Joby gains a sense of the importance of his purpose and his role, which helps set the stage for heroism.

**Evidence:**
“He wiped his eyes. He cleared his throat. He settled himself. Then, at last, very slowly and firmly, he turned the drum so that it faced up toward the sky.”

10. Reread a chunk of the text to identify and evaluate the narrative elements listed in the graphic organizer on the next page.
### Activity 1.6 Continued

**Structure: Exposition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>What descriptive detail does the author provide?</th>
<th>How effective is the description?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1862; night before the Battle of Shiloh</td>
<td>Anonymous soldiers; darkness; under a peach tree with blossoms falling</td>
<td>The author effectively portrays the quiet before battle when fears are most likely to reveal themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Character**

| Fourteen-year-old volunteer drummer boy | Alone; has a drum; crying and afraid                                                                 | The reader can clearly imagine the youth and vulnerability of the drummer boy.                    |

**Conflict**

| Internal: fear vs. duty | Crying; contrasts his two sticks to soldiers with guns as being better prepared to go into battle | The reader sympathizes with the boy's sense of his vulnerability; he has only a drum; he has no gun. |

### Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How does the author use each element to develop the story?</th>
<th>How effective is the author's technique?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shadowy; nighttime; the lack of clear visibility is like the boy's need for more clarity of purpose, so he is not overcome by fear</td>
<td>The scene is obscure as is the boy's fear; he hides his fear in the darkness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Dialogue | General's dialogue gives the boy a sense of his importance and purpose | The general's words are inspiring; this is the turning point for the boy. |

| Pacing | The pace is fairly slow, measured, and thoughtful. It is a conversation between wisdom and innocence the night before a battle. | The pacing is effective for a story about a boy experiencing fear and how he is pulled out of his fear. |

### Check Your Understanding

Use your imagination to create an original hero. In the left column (or on notebook paper or in your Reader/Writer Notebook), sketch your image of a hero. Label unique characteristics and give him or her a meaningful name. In the right column, use the prompting questions to brainstorm ideas for a story.

**My Notes**

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### Leveled Differentiated Instruction

**Em** Help students write a narrative sentence about their picture using the sentence frame, [name the hero] is [tell something about the hero].

**Ex** Guide students to write several narrative sentences about their picture. Ask students to write about what the hero looks like and what makes him or her special. Encourage students to use appropriate text organization in their writing.

**Br** Have students write several more detailed narrative sentences about their picture. Encourage students to use appropriate text organization and register in their writing.
ACTIVITY 1.6 continued

11 You may choose to review visual techniques by displaying unfamiliar visuals and asking students to identify the different shots, angles, and colors (related to lighting). Then, ask students to explain how visual techniques are used for effect. Display these visuals (and others) for future reference.

12 As students prepare to illustrate an event from their draft, encourage them to add as many frames as they need to capture the event.

> ASSESS

Review student work to determine the quality of the narrative and the visual. Identify skills that are still at the emerging level (to focus on in future activities), and select student exemplars to share with the class.

> ADAPT

To support learning, provide additional examples of the Departure Stage in narratives. Provide copies of a different example for each stage, at different stations in the room. Form discussion groups, and ask students to rotate through each station, reading, analyzing, evaluating, and taking notes to record ideas for their own narrative. To save time, you could ask each group to become experts on one example and then have groups present their analysis and evaluation to the class.

The Departure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Hero:</th>
<th>(name)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Use these questions to spark ideas.
Is the hero male or female? Young or old? Beautiful or unattractive? Well liked or misunderstood? Conspicuous (obvious) or nondescript (ordinary)?

Setting: (In what kind of place does your hero live? Does he or she live in the past, present, or future?)

Character: (What are the hero’s strengths and weaknesses? Who are the hero’s family and friends? What does the hero do every day? What does the hero want in life? What do others want from the hero?)

Conflicts: (What challenges might the hero experience? How might the hero transform into someone stronger?)

Narrative Writing Prompt

Think about the hero you just envisioned. What might the hero experience in the Departure Stage of his or her journey? Draft the beginning of a narrative using the three steps in this stage (The Call, The Refusal, and The Beginning) to guide your structure and development. Be sure to:
- Establish a context (exposition) and point of view (first person or third person).
- Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use details and imagery to create mood.

Visualize an event in your draft. Use visual techniques to capture imagery, emphasize an important idea, and/or add interest.