EMC’s team is dedicated to providing English Language Arts teachers with resources that engage, motivate, and challenge their students. We’d love to give you access to three of our Mirrors & Windows English Language Arts program lessons to use in your classroom. Each lesson is targeted at a different grade level and contains everything you need to start using it in class on Monday.

Some of the objectives of our sample lessons include:
- read, interpret, analyze, and evaluate a selection
- develop writing and other language arts skills
- write descriptive introductory paragraphs and a character analysis
- participate in a discussion about the selection
- practice reading assessment by answering multiple-choice and short-answer questions about the selection

Your lesson will include the following resources to ensure successful use in any classroom:
- Lesson Plan (objectives, materials needed, a thorough procedure, etc.)
- Annotated Teachers Edition textbook pages
- Student Textbook pages
- Blackline Study Materials

These lessons are included in EMC’s unique English Language Arts learning platform, Passport®
MIRRORS
Connecting with Literature

WINDOWS

Level II

Free Lesson
LESSON PLAN

Name: ________________________________ Date: ________________

LESSON PLAN

**Literary Element: Understanding Point of View**, p. 140
**Hollywood and the Pits**, p. 141

**Objectives**
Studying this lesson will enable students to
- use reading skills such as analyzing cause and effect
- define point of view and recognize its effect in the selection
- describe how Cherylene Lee establishes mood and tone
- appreciate a story based on the author’s personal experiences

**Guided Reading: Close Reading Model**
**Text Complexity**
- **Reading Level**: Moderate, Lexile 910L
- **Difficulty Consideration**: Two narrative voices
- **Ease Factor**: Familiar themes

**Pacing**
- **Regular Schedule**: 3 days
- **Block Schedule**: 1.5 days

**Before Reading**

**Teach the Feature(s)**
Select from the following resources to teach the feature(s):
- Literary Element: Understanding Point of View, *SE/ATE*, p. 140
- *Differentiated Instruction: Enrichment*, *ATE*, p. 140
- *Differentiated Instruction: Special Needs/Visual Learning*, *ATE*, p. 140
- Fiction Study Guide: Understanding Point of View and Applying Point of View to the Selections, *Meeting the Standards Unit 2*, pp. 2–3

**Preview and Motivate**
Choose from the following materials to preview the lesson and motivate your students:
- Fiction Close Reading Model, *SE/ATE*, p. 8
- Before Reading, *SE/ATE*, p. 141
- Build Vocabulary, *Meeting the Standards Unit 2*, p. 19
- Journal Response, *Meeting the Standards Unit 2*, p. 20

**During Reading**

**Teach the Selection(s)**
Choose from the following resources to teach the selection(s):
- During Reading, *SE/ATE*, pp. 142–151
- Science Connection: Geologic Time, *ATE*, p. 148
- Reading Skills: Monitor Comprehension, *ATE*, p. 145
- Vocabulary Skills: Jargon, *ATE*, p. 148
- Research Skills: Primary and Secondary Sources, *ATE*, p. 149
- Writing Skills: Cause-and-Effect Order, *ATE*, p. 151
- Analyze Literature: Character, *Meeting the Standards Unit 2*, p. 21
**Differentiate Instruction**
Consider the following alternative teaching options to differentiate instruction:

- Reading Proficiency, *ATE*, p. 143
- Special Needs/Auditory Learning, *ATE*, p. 143
- English Language Learning, *ATE*, pp. 144, 146
- Special Needs/Visual Learning, *ATE*, p. 146
- Enrichment, *ATE*, p. 150
- Reading Strategies and Skills Practice: Take Notes, *Differentiated Instruction for Developing Readers*, pp. 13–15

**After Reading**

**Review and Extend**
Use the following materials to review and extend the lesson:

- After Reading, *SE/ATE*, p. 152
- Use Reading Skills: Cause and Effect, *Meeting the Standards Unit 2*, p. 22
- Extend Understanding: Creative Writing, *Meeting the Standards Unit 2*, p. 23
- Media Literacy: Dig for Details, *Exceeding the Standards: Extension Activities*, pp. 5–6
- Subject and Object Pronouns, *Exceeding the Standards: Grammar & Style*, pp. 40–42

**Assess**
Administer the following assessment tool(s):

- Selection Quiz, *Meeting the Standards Unit 2*, p. 24

**Technology Tools**
Enhance the lesson with interactive activities offered in these technology supplements:

- Teacher’s Edition eBook
- Multiplatform Student eBook
- *Meeting the Standards* eWorkbook
- *Exceeding the Standards* eWorkbook
- *Differentiated Instruction* eWorkbook
- *Common Core Assessment Practice* Online
- ExamView® Assessment Suite
- Visual Teaching Package
- ETS Criterion Online Writing Evaluation (Grades 6–12)
- EMC Audio Library
- EMC E-Library
- EMC Media Library
Build Background

Scientific Context The La Brea Tar Pits are a major tourist attraction in Los Angeles, California. They began to form nearly 40,000 years ago, when the area was home to such animals as saber-toothed cats, ground sloths, and mammoths. The “tar” is really asphalt, which seeps out of petroleum deposits. Animals entered a watering hole and were trapped by tar under the water. The remains of the animals churn in the tar.

Reader’s Context How is becoming a teenager like falling into tar? Do parents really remember what growing up is like?

Set Purpose

Before you begin reading, skim the story for unfamiliar terms. Make a list of terms you need to look up.

Analyze Literature

Point of View A story’s point of view reflects the vantage point of the narrator. With the first-person point of view, the narrator is part of the action, but with the third-person point of view, the narrator observes the action. “Hollywood and the Pits” uses both points of view. As you read, think about how the alternating points of view influence the mood, the plot, and your understanding of the main character.

Meet the Author

Cherylene Lee (b. 1954) grew up in Los Angeles, California, and appeared in television shows, movies, and stage plays when she was a child. In college, she studied paleontology—fossils and prehistoric life—and geology—Earth’s structure. Today she writes stories, poems, and plays. She is best known for her plays, including one set at the La Brea Tar Pits called Mixed Messages.

Words in Use

Preview Vocabulary

obsessed, 142
dub, 143
barrage, 143
predator, 149
scavenger, 149

Selection Words

archaeological, 142
immobilized, 144
chauffeured, 144
skewing, 147
perversion, 149
groveling, 150
deposition, 151

Academic Vocabulary

asphalt, 141
petroleum, 141
influence, 141
era, 148
epochs, 148

Preview Vocabulary

ob•ressed (ab’r es’id) v., preoccupied
bar•rage (bar’ jash’), n., outpouring of many things at once
pred•a•tor (pred’ a tar’), n., animal that gets food by capturing and eating other animals
scav•en•ger (skav’an jer’), n., animal that gets food by eating the dead bodies of other animals

Text Complexity

Guided Reading: Close Reading Model

• Reading Level: Moderate, 910L
• Difficulty Consideration: Two narrative voices
• Ease Factor: Familiar themes

Objectives

Studying this lesson will enable students to

• use reading skills such as analyzing cause and effect
• define point of view and recognize its effect in the selection
• describe how Cherylene Lee establishes mood and tone
• appreciate a story based on the author’s personal experiences

Launch the Lesson

Before reading “Hollywood and the Pits,” ask students what they think it would be like to be a child star. What would be the advantages and disadvantages? Would getting older be an advantage or a disadvantage? List advantages and disadvantages on the board. Then, ask students to decide whether or not the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

Use Reading Skills

Analyze Cause and Effect You can keep track of causes and effects in this story by creating a cause-effect chart. As you read, create a cause-effect chart like the one below.
HOLLYWOOD and the Pits

A Short Story by Cherylene Lee

1968, when I was fifteen, the pit opened its secret to me. I breathed, ate, slept, dreamed about the La Brea Tar Pits. I spent summer days working the archaeological dig, and in dreams saw the bones glistening, the broken pelvises, the skulls, the vertebrae looped like a woman's pearls hanging on an invisible cord. I welcomed those dreams. I wanted to know where the next skeleton was, identify it, record its position, discover whether it was whole or not. I wanted to know where to dig in the coarse, black, gooey sand. I lost myself there and found something else.

My mother thought something was wrong with me. Was it good for a teenager to be fascinated by death? Especially animal death in the Pleistocene? Was it normal to be so obsessed by a sticky brown hole in the ground in the center of Los Angeles? I don't know if it was normal or not, but it seemed perfectly logical to me. After all, I grew up in Hollywood, a place where dreams and nightmares can often take the same shape. What else would a child actor do?

“Thank you very much, dear. We’ll be letting you know.”

MY mother would puzzle over her script. The mothers were waiting in a separate room, made no sound when I opened and shut the door.

I only knew that at fifteen I was now being passed over at all these interviews when before I would be chosen. My mother would only talk about me behind my back because she didn’t want me to hear her brag, but I knew that she was proud. In a way I was proud too, though I never dared admit it. I didn’t want to be called a girl child actor when I was three. At fifteen, she has grown too old for the roles she once got easily. While her mother laments the decline in her daughter's acting career, the narrator becomes obsessed by a totally different Hollywood scene—the La Brea Tar Pits. As a volunteer, she digs for fossils of animals that got trapped in the black, gooey sand eons ago. In the process, she realizes that she doesn’t have to be young and adorable to be of value.

1. the broken pelvises, the skulls, the vertebrae. Bones from the hip, head, and spine (backbone)
2. Pleistocene. Geologic epoch that spans 10,000 to 1.6 million years ago

Teach the Model

Summary
The narrator became a Hollywood actor when she was three. At fifteen, she has grown too old for the roles she once got easily. While her mother laments the decline in her daughter’s acting career, the narrator becomes obsessed by a totally different Hollywood scene—the La Brea Tar Pits. As a volunteer, she digs for fossils of animals that got trapped in the black, gooey sand eons ago. In the process, she realizes that she doesn’t have to be young and adorable to be of value.

Analyze Literature

Point of View
Answer: The narrator is part of the action and was a child actor in Hollywood.

Program Resources

Planning and Assessment
Program Planning Guide, Selection Lesson Plan
E-Lesson Planner
Assessment Guide, Lesson Test
ExamView

Technology Tools
Multifaceted Student eBook
Visual Teaching Package
Audio Library
mirrorsandwindows.com

Meeting the Standards
Fiction: Unit 2, Reading Model, pp. 19–24
Differentiating Instruction
Developing Readers, Take Notes, pp. 13–15
I knew what that meant. It meant I would never hear from them again. I didn’t get the job. I heard that phrase a lot that year.

I walked out of the plush office, leaving behind the casting director, producer, director, writer, and whoever else came to listen to my reading for a semiregular role on a family sitcom. The carpet made no sound when I opened and shut the door.

I passed the other girls waiting in the reception room, each poring over her script. The mothers were waiting in a separate room, chattering about their daughters’ latest commercials, interviews, callbacks, jobs. It sounded like every Oriental kid in Hollywood was working except me.

My mother used to have a lot to say in those waiting rooms. Ever since I was three, when I started at the Meglin Kiddie Dance Studio, I was dubbed “The Chinese Shirley Temple”—always the one to be picked at auditions and interviews, always the one to get the speaking lines, always called “the one-shot kid,” because I could do my scenes in one take—even tight close-ups. My mother would only talk about me behind my back because she didn’t want me to hear her brag, but I knew that she was proud. In a way I was proud too, though I never dared admit it. I didn’t want to be called a showoff. But I didn’t exactly know what I did to be proud of either. I only knew that at fifteen I was now being passed over at all these interviews when before I would be chosen.

My mother looked at my face hopefully when I came into the room. I gave her a quick shake of the head. She looked bewildered. I felt bad for my mother then. How could I explain it to her? I didn’t understand it myself. We left, saying polite good-byes to all the other mothers.

We didn’t say anything until the studio parking lot, where we had to search for our old blue Chevy among rows and rows of parked cars baking in the Hollywood heat.

“How did it go? Did you read clearly? Did you tell them you’re available?”

“I don’t think they care if I’m available or not, Ma.”

“Didn’t you read well? Did you remember to look up so they could see your eyes? Did they ask you if you could play the piano? Did you tell them you could learn?”

The barrage of questions stopped when we finally spotted our car.

**Differentiated Instruction**

**Reading Proficiency**

Students may have trouble shifting gears between the narrator’s voice and the nonfiction information on the La Brea Tar Pits. Before students start to read, explain that the writer makes this shift in voice throughout the story. Point out that they can easily recognize the nonfiction text because it is set in italics. Give students time to skim the selection to see this for themselves.

**Special Needs/Auditory Learning**

Students may benefit from hearing the story read aloud. Have students take turns reading aloud passages in the narrator’s voice while you read aloud the nonfiction text.
car. I didn’t answer her. My mother asked about the piano because I lost out in an audition once to a Chinese girl who already knew how to play.

My mother took off the towel that shielded the steering wheel from the heat. “You’re getting to be such a big girl,” she said, starting the car in neutral. “But don’t worry, there’s always next time. You have what it takes. That’s special.” She put the car into forward and we drove through a parking lot that had an endless number of identical cars all facing the same direction. We drove back home in silence.

In the La Brea Tar Pits many of the excavated bones belong to juvenile mammals. Thousands of years ago thirsty young animals in the area were drawn to watering holes, not knowing they were traps. Those inviting pools had false bottoms made of sticky tar, which immobilized its victims and preserved their bones when they died. Innocence trapped by ignorance. The tar pits record that well.

I suppose a lot of my getting into show business in the first place was a matter of luck—being in the right place at the right time. My sister, seven years older than me, was a member of the Meglin Kiddie Dance Studio long before I started lessons. Once during the annual recital held at the Shrine Auditorium, she was spotted by a Hollywood agent who handled only Oriental performers. The agent sent my sister out for a role in the CBS Playhouse 90 television show The Family Nobody Wanted. The producer said she was too tall for the part. But true to my mother’s training of always having a positive reply, my sister said to the producer, “But I have a younger sister…” which started my show-biz career at the tender age of three.

My sister and I were lucky. We enjoyed singing and dancing, we were natural hams, and our parents never discouraged us. In fact they were our biggest fans. My mother chauffeured us to all our dance lessons, lessons we begged to take. She drove us to interviews, took us to studios, went on location with us, drilled us on our lines, made sure we kept up our schoolwork and didn’t sass back the tutors hired by studios to teach us for three hours a day. She never complained about being a stage mother. She said that we made her proud.

My father must have felt pride too, because he paid for a choreographer to put together our sister act: “The World Famous Lee Sisters,” fifteen minutes of song and dance, real vaudeville, 7.

In Las Vegas our sister act was part of a show called “Oriental Ambassadors,” which started my show-biz career at the tender age of three.

The applause sounded like static, sometimes like distant waves.

6. juvenile. Young
Lee Sisters,” fifteen minutes of song and dance, real vaudeville stuff. We joked about that a lot, “Yeah, the Lee Sisters—Ug-Lee and Home-Lee,” but we definitely had a good time. So did our parents. Our father especially liked our getting booked into Las Vegas at the New Frontier Hotel on the Strip. He liked to gamble there, though he said the craps tables in that hotel were “cold,” not like the casinos in downtown Las Vegas, where all the “hot” action took place.

In Las Vegas our sister act was part of a show called “Oriental Holiday.” The show was about a Hollywood producer going to the Far East, finding undiscovered talent, and bringing it back to the U.S. We did two shows a night in the main showroom, one at eight and one at twelve, and on weekends a third show at two in the morning. It ran the entire summer, often to standing-room-only audiences—a thousand people a show.

Our sister act worked because of the age and height difference. My sister then was fourteen and nearly five foot two, I was seven and very small for my age—people thought we were cute. We had song-and-dance routines to old tunes like “Ma, He’s Making Eyes at Me,” “Together,” and “I’m Following You,” and my father hired a writer to adapt the lyrics to “I Enjoy Being a Girl,” which came out “We Enjoy Being Chinese.” We also told corny jokes, but the Las Vegas audience seemed to enjoy it. Here we were, two kids, staying up late and jumping around, and getting paid besides. To me the applause sometimes sounded like static, sometimes like distant waves. It always amazed me when people applauded. The owner of the hotel liked us so much, he invited us back to perform shows for three summers in a row. That was before I grew too tall and the sister act didn’t seem so cute anymore.

Many of the skeletons in the tar pits are found incomplete—particularly the skeletons of the young, which have only soft cartilage connecting the bones. In life the soft tissue allows for growth, but in death it dissolves quickly. Thus the skeletons of young animals are more apt to be scattered, especially the vertebrae protecting the spinal cord. In the tar pits, the central ends of many vertebrae are found unconnected to any skeleton. Such bone fragments are shaped like valentines, disks that are slightly lathed—heart-shaped shields that have lost their connection to what they were meant to protect.

7. vaudeville. Theatrical variety show

HOLLYWOOD AND THE PITS 145
I never felt my mother pushed me to do something I didn’t want to do. But I always knew if something I did pleased her. She was generous with her praise, and I was sensitive when she withheld it. I didn’t like to disappoint her.

I took to performing easily, and since I had started out so young, making movies or doing shows didn’t feel like anything special. It was part of my childhood—like going to the dentist one morning or going to school the next. I didn’t wonder if I wanted a particular role or wanted to be in a show or how I would feel if I didn’t get in. Until I was fifteen, it never occurred to me that one day I wouldn’t get parts or that I might not “have what it takes.”

When I was younger, I got a lot of roles because I was so small for my age. When I was nine years old, I could pass for five or six. I was really short. I was always teased about it when I was in elementary school, but I didn’t mind because my height got me movie jobs. I could read and memorize lines that actual five-year-olds couldn’t. My mother told people she made me sleep in a drawer so I wouldn’t grow any bigger.

But when I turned fifteen, it was as if my body, which hadn’t grown for so many years, suddenly made up for lost time. I grew five inches in seven months. My mother was amazed. Even I couldn’t get used to it. I kept knocking into things; my clothes didn’t fit right, I felt awkward and clumsy when I moved. Dumb things that I had gotten away with, like paying children’s prices at the movies instead of junior admission, I couldn’t do anymore. I wasn’t a shrimp or a small fry any longer. I was suddenly normal.

Before that summer my mother had always claimed she wanted me to be normal. She didn’t want me to become spoiled by the attention I received when I was working at the studios. I still had chores to do at home, went to public school when I wasn’t working, was punished severely when I behaved badly. She didn’t want me to feel I was different just because I was in the movies. When I was eight, I was interviewed by a reporter who wanted to know if I thought I had a big head.

“No you don’t,” my mother interrupted, which was really unusual, because she generally never said anything. She wanted me to speak for myself.

I didn’t understand the question. My sister had always made fun of my head. She said my body was too tiny for the weight—I looked like a walking Tootsie Pop. I thought the reporter was making the same observation.

“She better not get that way,” my mother said fiercely. “She’s not that way.”
like a walking Tootsie Pop. I thought the reporter was making the same observation.

“She better not get that way,” my mother said fiercely. “She’s not any different from anyone else. She’s just lucky and small for her age.”

The reporter turned to my mother, “Some parents push their children to act. The kids feel like they’re used.”

“I don’t do that—I’m not that way,” my mother told the reporter. But when she was sitting silently in all those waiting rooms while I was being turned down for one job after another, I could almost feel her wanting to shout, “Use her. Use her. What is wrong with her? Doesn’t she have it anymore?” I didn’t know what I had had that I didn’t seem to have anymore. My mother had told the reporter that I was like everyone else. But when my life was like everyone else’s, why was she disappointed?

The churning action of the La Brea Tar Pits makes interpreting the record of past events extremely difficult. The usual order of deposition—the oldest on the bottom, the youngest on the top—loses all meaning when some of the oldest fossils can be brought to the surface by the movement of natural gas. One must look for an undisturbed spot, a place untouched by the action of underground springs or natural gas or human interference. Complete skeletons become important, because they indicate areas of least disturbance. But such spots of calm are rare. Whole blocks of the tar pit can become displaced, making false sequences of the past, skewing the interpretation for what is the true order of nature.

That year before my sixteenth birthday, my mother seemed to spend a lot of time looking through my old scrapbooks, staring at all the eight-by-ten glossies of the shows that I had done. In the summer we visited with my grandmother often, since I wasn’t working and had lots of free time. I would go out to the garden to read or sunbathe, but I could hear my mother and grandmother talking.

“She was so cute back then. She worked with Gene Kelly when she was five years old. She was so smart for her age. I don’t know what’s wrong with her.”

“She’s fifteen.”

Grammar Skills

Passive Voice and Active Voice
Remind students that active-voice verbs express ideas more directly than passive-voice verbs. Give them this example:
Passive voice: The fossil was examined by scientists. Active voice: Scientists examined the fossil.

Have students identify the passive verb in these sentences, and then revise each sentence so the verb is active.

1. Hundreds of fossil bones were collected by volunteers.
2. The story of these ancient animals is revealed through a museum exhibit.
3. The saber-tooth cat has been named California’s state fossil.
"She’s too young to be an ingénue® and too old to be cute. The
studios forget so quickly. By the time she’s old enough to play an
ingénue, they won’t remember her."

"Does she have to work in the movies? Hand me the scissors."
My grandmother was making false eyelashes using the hair from
her hairbrush. When she was young she had incredible hair. I saw
an old photograph of her when it flowed beyond her waist like a
cascading black waterfall. At seventy, her hair was still black as
night, which made her few strands of silver look like
shooting stars. But her hair had thinned greatly with age. It sometimes fell out in
clumps. She wore it
brushed back in a bun with a
hairpiece for added
fullness. My grandmother
had always been proud of
her hair, but once she
started making false
eyelashes from it, she
wasn’t proud of the way it
looked anymore. She said
she was proud of it now
because it made her useful.
It was painstaking
work—tying knots into
strands of hair, then tying them together to form feathery little
crescents. Her glamorous false eyelashes were much sought after.
Theatrical makeup artists waited months for her work. But my
grandmother said what she liked was that she was doing something,
making a contribution, and besides it didn’t cost her anything. No

She tried to teach me her art that summer, but for some reason
strands of my hair wouldn’t stay tied in knots.

“Too springy,” my grandmother said. “Your hair is too
young.” And because I was frustrated then, frustrated with
everything about my life, she added, “You have to wait until your
hair falls out, like mine. Something to look forward to, eh?” She had
laughed and patted my hand.

10. ingénue. Inexperienced young woman

Jargon
Jargon is the special vocabulary used by a specific
group or profession. Although writers use jargon to
add authenticity to their work, for readers it can
interfere with comprehension.

"Hollywood and the Pits" contains jargon from the
entertainment industry. To figure out the meaning
of unfamiliar terms or familiar words used in new
ways, students can use context clues. For example,
by using context, they can figure out that take in
the story means "an uninterrupted filming session."

Tell students that if context doesn’t help them
understand a word, they can write it down. Later,
they can find its meaning in a dictionary.
My mother was going on and on about my lack of work, what might be wrong, that something she couldn’t quite put her finger on. I heard my grandmother reply, but I didn’t catch it all: “Movies are just make-believe, not real life. Like what I make with my hair that falls out—false. False eyelashes. Not meant to last.”

The remains in the La Brea Tar Pits are mostly of carnivorous animals. Very few herbivores are found—the ratio is five to one, a perversion of the natural food chain. The ratio is easy to explain. Thousands of years ago a thirsty animal sought a drink from the pools of water only to find itself trapped by the bottom, gooey with subterranean oil. A shriek of agony from the trapped victim drew flesh-eating predators, which were then trapped themselves by the very same ooze which provided the bait. The cycle repeated itself countless times. The number of victims grew, lured by the image of easy food, the deception of an easy kill. The animals piled on top of one another. For over ten thousand years the promise of the place drew animals of all sorts, mostly predators and scavengers—dire wolves, lynxes, coyotes, vultures—all hungry for their chance. Most were sucked down against their will in those watering holes destined to be called the La Brea Tar Pits in a place to be named the City of Angels, home of Hollywood movie stars.

I spent a lot of time by myself that summer, wondering what it was that I didn’t have anymore. Could I get it back? How could I if I didn’t know what it was?

That’s when I discovered the La Brea Tar Pits. Hidden behind the County Art Museum on trendy Wilshire Boulevard, I found a job that didn’t require me to be small or cute for my age. I didn’t have to audition. No one said, “Thank you very much, we’ll call you.” Or if they did, they meant it. I volunteered time one afternoon, and my fascination stuck—like tar on the bones of a saber-toothed tiger.

My mother didn’t understand what had changed me. I didn’t understand it myself. But I liked going to the La Brea Tar Pits. It meant I could get really messy and I was doing it with a purpose. I didn’t feel awkward there. I could wear old stained pants. I could wear T-shirts with holes in them. I could wear disgustingly filthy sneakers and it was all perfectly justified. It wasn’t a costume for a

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Research Skills

**Primary and Secondary Sources**

Tell students that they can use both primary and secondary sources. A primary source is a firsthand account of an event. A journal an archaeologist keeps on a dig would be a primary source. A secondary source is something written by someone who has not directly experienced an event. A magazine article about fossil discoveries could be a secondary source.

Have students identify the following materials as primary or secondary sources of information about fossils.

1. A mystery novel in which an archaeologist is the main character
2. An autobiography by an archaeologist
3. An essay by a student who attended an archaeology camp
4. An encyclopedia article about fossils
role in a film or a part in a TV sitcom. My mother didn’t mind my dressing like that when she knew I was off to the pits. That was okay so long as I didn’t track tar back into the house. I started going to the pits every day, and my mother wondered why. She couldn’t believe I would rather be groveling in tar than going on auditions or interviews.

While my mother wasn’t proud of the La Brea Tar Pits (she didn’t know or care what a fossil was), she didn’t discourage me either. She drove me there, the same way she used to drive me to the studios.

“Wouldn’t you rather be doing a show in Las Vegas than scrambling around in a pit?” she asked.

“I’m not in a show in Las Vegas, Ma. The Lee Sisters are retired.” My older sister had married and was starting a family of her own.

“But if you could choose between…”

“There isn’t a choice.”

“You really like this tar-pit stuff, or are you just waiting until you can get real work in the movies?”

I didn’t answer.

My mother sighed. “You could do it if you wanted, if you really wanted. You still have what it takes.”

I didn’t know about that. But then, I couldn’t explain what drew me to the tar pits either. Maybe it was the bones, finding out what they were, which animal they belonged to, imagining how they got there, how they fell into the trap. I wondered about that a lot.
At the La Brea Tar Pits, everything dug out of the pit is saved—including the sticky sand that covered the bones through the ages. Each bucket of sand is washed, sieved, and examined for pollen grains, insect remains, any evidence of past life. Even the grain size is recorded—the percentage of silt to sand to gravel that reveals the history of deposition, erosion, and disturbance. No single fossil, no one observation, is significant enough to tell the entire story. All the evidence must be weighed before a semblance of truth emerges.

The tar pits had its lessons. I was learning I had to work slowly, become observant, to concentrate. I learned about time in a way that I would never experience—not in hours, days, and months, but in thousands and thousands of years. I imagined what the past must have been like, envisioned Los Angeles as a sweeping basin, perhaps slightly colder and more humid, a time before people and studios arrived. The tar pits recorded a warming trend; the kinds of animals found there reflected the changing climate. The ones unadapted disappeared. No trace of their kind was found in the area. The ones adapted to warmer weather left a record of bones in the pit. Amid that collection of ancient skeletons, surrounded by evidence of death, I was finding a secret preserved over thousands and thousands of years. There was something cruel about natural selection and the survival of the fittest. Even those successful individuals that “had what it took” for adaptation still wound up in the pits.

I never found out if I had what it took, not the way my mother meant. But I did adapt to the truth: I wasn’t a Chinese Shirley Temple any longer, cute and short for my age. I had grown up. Maybe not on a Hollywood movie set, but in the La Brea Tar Pits.

Analyze Cause and Effect

13. natural selection. Process in which individuals and groups best adjusted to the environment survive and reproduce

141 to keep track of causes and effects as they plan and draft their paragraphs. Remind them to use transitions.

At the La Brea Tar Pits, everything dug out of the pit is saved—including the sticky sand that covered the bones through the ages. Each bucket of sand is washed, sieved, and examined for pollen grains, insect remains, any evidence of past life. Even the grain size is recorded—the percentage of silt to sand to gravel that reveals the history of deposition, erosion, and disturbance. No single fossil, no one observation, is significant enough to tell the entire story. All the evidence must be weighed before a semblance of truth emerges.

The tar pits had its lessons. I was learning I had to work slowly, become observant, to concentrate. I learned about time in a way that I would never experience—not in hours, days, and months, but in thousands and thousands of years. I imagined what the past must have been like, envisioned Los Angeles as a sweeping basin, perhaps slightly colder and more humid, a time before people and studios arrived. The tar pits recorded a warming trend; the kinds of animals found there reflected the changing climate. The ones unadapted disappeared. No trace of their kind was found in the area. The ones adapted to warmer weather left a record of bones in the pit. Amid that collection of ancient skeletons, surrounded by evidence of death, I was finding a secret preserved over thousands and thousands of years. There was something cruel about natural selection and the survival of the fittest. Even those successful individuals that “had what it took” for adaptation still wound up in the pits.

I never found out if I had what it took, not the way my mother meant. But I did adapt to the truth: I wasn’t a Chinese Shirley Temple any longer, cute and short for my age. I had grown up. Maybe not on a Hollywood movie set, but in the La Brea Tar Pits.

Analyze Cause and Effect

13. natural selection. Process in which individuals and groups best adjusted to the environment survive and reproduce

At one point, the narrator says, “I didn’t know what I had had that I didn’t seem to have anymore.” Do you ever feel like you’ve changed, but people close to you don’t seem to notice? Why might this be a common feeling?

Use Reading Skills

Analyze Cause and Effect

Answer: She can be messy with a purpose; she doesn’t feel awkward there; she is fascinated by the pits; and she likes the process of learning about the past.

Use Reading Skills

Analyze Cause and Effect

Studying the tar pits has taught her to adapt to change.

writers use cause-and-effect order to help readers understand how events are connected. Often, a single cause will have more than one effect, and a single effect will have more than one cause. Writers use transitions such as because, and so, as a result, and therefore to signal cause-and-effect order.

Have students work in pairs to develop a cause-and-effect paragraph about the changes in the relationship between the narrator and her mother. Students can use a chart similar to the one on page 141 to keep track of causes and effects as they plan and draft their paragraphs. Remind them to use transitions.

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Answer: She can be messy with a purpose; she doesn’t feel awkward there; she is fascinated by the pits; and she likes the process of learning about the past.

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**Review the Model**

**Text-Dependent Questions**

**Find Meaning**

1. (a) She no longer gets parts. (b) She does not understand it very well at first, but her understanding grows over the course of the story.
2. The narrator’s mother shows support, pride, expectations, disappointment, and nostalgia.

**Make Judgments**

3. (a) Students may say the narrator volunteered because she had free time, since she was not getting acting roles. They may also say the narrator liked the pits because the job did not depend on her being young or cute. (b) Many students will note that the narrator does not feel awkward at the tar pits, as she does now at auditions. This gives her a more mature and positive outlook.
4. (a) Young, thirsty animals came to the pits, as did predators and scavengers. (b) Students may say that people are drawn to show business in the same way—and that some could be at risk of getting stuck in something dangerous.
5. Many students will say the narrator enjoys her tar-pit time more because she is comfortable there.

**Analyze Literature**

**Point of View**

Students may say the changes between first and third person help move the action along, or that the third-person segments offer insight into the narrator of the first-person segments. The mood shifts with the point of view. If you wish, ask students to provide text support, such as examples, for their responses.

**Find Meaning**

1. (a) How did the narrator’s experiences at auditions change? (b) How well does the narrator understand why her experiences are different?
2. How does the narrator’s mother act toward the narrator?

**Make Judgments**

3. (a) What inspired the narrator to volunteer at the La Brea Tar Pits? (b) How did volunteering change her outlook on life?
4. (a) What kinds of animals were drawn to the tar pits? (b) How might they resemble people?
5. Which part of her life do you think the narrator has enjoyed the most? Why?

**Analyze Literature**

**Point of View**

Summarize how Cherylene Lee’s use of both first-person and third-person points of view affects the mood and plot of “Hollywood and the Pits.” Make a graphic organizer like this one so you can record your key impressions.

**Extend Understanding**

**Writing Options**

**Creative Writing** Imagine that you are creating a time capsule in your backyard. What objects would you include? Write a journal entry in which you describe these things and your reasons for including them. When you are finished, share your entry with the class.

**Informative Writing** How would you describe this story to a friend? Write a three-paragraph literary response that describes the conflicts the narrator and her mother experience. Identify each conflict as internal or external and use examples from the story. In your final sentences, tell how the plot resolves each of the conflicts. Make certain you summarize the story in a way that maintains logical order.

**Collaborative Learning**

**Infer the Author’s Purpose** In a small group, discuss why the story includes the scientific information on the tar pits. What might the tar pits represent? Take notes on your discussion, and then summarize the group’s thoughts in one or two paragraphs.

**Media Literacy**

**Dig for Details** Use the Internet to find information on an archaeological site in your state. Then write a letter to the site director with two or three questions about the site. For example, ask about the fossils scientists have discovered there.

Go to [www.mirrorsandwindows.com](http://www.mirrorsandwindows.com) for more.

**Rubrics for Writing Options**

You can adapt this as a checklist for students to use as they write.

**Creative Writing**

- Does the entry start with a list of items from a time capsule?
- Does the entry give reasons for students’ choices?

**Informative Writing**

- Does the literary response cover both the narrator and her mother?
- Does the literary response identify conflicts as either internal or external, and use examples from the story?
- Do the last sentences tell how the plot resolves each conflict?
- Does the summary maintain logical order?
Build Background
Scientific Context  The La Brea Tar Pits are a major tourist attraction in Los Angeles, California. They began to form nearly 40,000 years ago, when the area was home to such animals as saber-toothed cats, ground sloths, and mammoths. The “tar” is really asphalt, which seeps out of petroleum deposits. Animals entered a watering hole and were trapped by tar under the water. The remains of the animals churn in the tar.

Reader’s Context  How is becoming a teenager like falling into tar? Do parents really remember what growing up is like?

Set Purpose  Before you begin reading, skim the story for unfamiliar terms. Make a list of terms you need to look up.

Analyze Literature
Point of View  A story’s point of view reflects the vantage point of the narrator. With the first-person point of view, the narrator is part of the action, but with the third-person point of view, the narrator observes the action. “Hollywood and the Pits” uses both points of view. As you read, think about how the alternating points of view influence the mood, the plot, and your understanding of the main character.

Meet the Author
Cherylene Lee (b. 1954) grew up in Los Angeles, California, and appeared in television shows, movies, and stage plays when she was a child. In college, she studied paleontology—fossils and prehistoric life—and geology—Earth’s structure. Today she writes stories, poems, and plays. She is best known for her plays, including one set at the La Brea Tar Pits called Mixed Messages.
when I was fifteen, the pit opened its secret to me. I breathed, ate, slept, dreamed about the La Brea Tar Pits. I spent summer days working the archaeological dig, and in dreams saw the bones glistening, the broken pelvises, the skulls, the vertebrae looped like a woman’s pearls hanging on an invisible cord. I welcomed those dreams. I wanted to know where the next skeleton was, identify it, record its position, discover whether it was whole or not. I wanted to know where to dig in the coarse, black, gooey sand. I lost myself there and found something else.

My mother thought something was wrong with me. Was it good for a teenager to be fascinated by death? Especially animal death in the Pleistocene? Was it normal to be so obsessed by a sticky brown hole in the ground in the center of Los Angeles? I don’t know if it was normal or not, but it seemed perfectly logical to me. After all, I grew up in Hollywood, a place where dreams and nightmares can often take the same shape. What else would a child actor do?

“Thank you very much, dear. We’ll be letting you know.”

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“Thank you very much, dear. We’ll be letting you know.”

1. the broken pelvises, the skulls, the vertebrae. Bones from the hip, head, and spine (backbone)
2. Pleistocene. Geologic epoch that spans 10,000 to 1.6 million years ago
I knew what that meant. It meant I would never hear from them again. I didn’t get the job. I heard that phrase a lot that year.

I walked out of the plush office, leaving behind the casting director, producer, director, writer, and whoever else came to listen to my reading for a semiregular role on a family sitcom. The carpet made no sound when I opened and shut the door.

I passed the other girls waiting in the reception room, each poring over her script. The mothers were waiting in a separate room, chattering about their daughters’ latest commercials, interviews, callbacks, jobs. It sounded like every Oriental kid in Hollywood was working except me.

My mother used to have a lot to say in those waiting rooms. Ever since I was three, when I started at the Meglin Kiddie Dance Studio, I was dubbed “The Chinese Shirley Temple”—always the one to be picked at auditions and interviews, always the one to get the speaking lines, always called “the one-shot kid,” because I could do my scenes in one take—even tight close-ups. My mother would only talk about me behind my back because she didn’t want me to hear her brag, but I knew that she was proud. In a way I was proud too, though I never dared admit it. I didn’t want to be called a showoff. But I didn’t exactly know what I did to be proud of either. I only knew that at fifteen I was now being passed over at all these interviews when before I would be chosen.

My mother looked at my face hopefully when I came into the room. I gave her a quick shake of the head. She looked bewildered. I felt bad for my mother then. How could I explain it to her? I didn’t understand it myself. We left, saying polite good-byes to all the other mothers.

We didn’t say anything until the studio parking lot, where we had to search for our old blue Chevy among rows and rows of parked cars baking in the Hollywood heat.

“How did it go? Did you read clearly? Did you tell them you’re available?”

“I don’t think they care if I’m available or not, Ma.”

“Didn’t you read well? Did you remember to look up so they could see your eyes? Did they ask you if you could play the piano? Did you tell them you could learn?”

The barrage of questions stopped when we finally spotted our old blue Chevy.
car. I didn’t answer her. My mother asked about the piano because I lost out in an audition once to a Chinese girl who already knew how to play.

My mother took off the towel that shielded the steering wheel from the heat. “You’re getting to be such a big girl,” she said, starting the car in neutral. “But don’t worry, there’s always next time. You have what it takes. That’s special.” She put the car into forward and we drove through a parking lot that had an endless number of identical cars all facing the same direction. We drove back home in silence.

In the La Brea Tar Pits many of the excavated bones belong to juvenile mammals. Thousands of years ago thirsty young animals in the area were drawn to watering holes, not knowing they were traps. Those inviting pools had false bottoms made of sticky tar, which immobilized its victims and preserved their bones when they died. Innocence trapped by ignorance. The tar pits record that well.

I suppose a lot of my getting into show business in the first place was a matter of luck—being in the right place at the right time. My sister, seven years older than me, was a member of the Meglin Kiddie Dance Studio long before I started lessons. Once during the annual recital held at the Shrine Auditorium, she was spotted by a Hollywood agent who handled only Oriental performers. The agent sent my sister out for a role in the CBS Playhouse 90 television show The Family Nobody Wanted. The producer said she was too tall for the part. But true to my mother’s training of always having a positive reply, my sister said to the producer, “But I have a younger sister…” which started my show-biz career at the tender age of three.

My sister and I were lucky. We enjoyed singing and dancing, we were natural hams, and our parents never discouraged us. In fact they were our biggest fans. My mother chauffeured us to all our dance lessons, lessons we begged to take. She drove us to interviews, took us to studios, went on location with us, drilled us on our lines, made sure we kept up our schoolwork and didn’t sass back the tutors hired by studios to teach us for three hours a day. She never complained about being a stage mother. She said that we made her proud.

My father must have felt pride too, because he paid for a choreographer to put together our sister act: “The World Famous
Lee Sisters,” fifteen minutes of song and dance, real vaudeville\textsuperscript{7} stuff. We joked about that a lot, “Yeah, the Lee Sisters—Ug-Lee and Home-Lee,” but we definitely had a good time. So did our parents. Our father especially liked our getting booked into Las Vegas at the New Frontier Hotel on the Strip. He liked to gamble there, though he said the craps tables in that hotel were “cold,” not like the casinos in downtown Las Vegas, where all the “hot” action took place.

In Las Vegas our sister act was part of a show called “Oriental Holiday.” The show was about a Hollywood producer going to the Far East, finding undiscovered talent, and bringing it back to the U.S. We did two shows a night in the main showroom, one at eight and one at twelve, and on weekends a third show at two in the morning. It ran the entire summer, often to standing-room-only audiences—a thousand people a show.

Our sister act worked because of the age and height difference. My sister then was fourteen and nearly five foot two; I was seven and very small for my age—people thought we were cute. We had song-and-dance routines to old tunes like “Ma, He’s Making Eyes at Me,” “Together,” and “I’m Following You,” and my father hired a writer to adapt the lyrics to “I Enjoy Being a Girl,” which came out “We Enjoy Being Chinese.” We also told corny jokes, but the Las Vegas audience seemed to enjoy it. Here we were, two kids, staying up late and jumping around, and getting paid besides. To me the applause sometimes sounded like static, sometimes like distant waves. It always amazed me when people applauded. The owner of the hotel liked us so much, he invited us back to perform in shows for three summers in a row. That was before I grew too tall and the sister act didn’t seem so cute anymore.

Many of the skeletons in the tar pits are found incomplete—particularly the skeletons of the young, which have only soft cartilage connecting the bones. In life the soft tissue allows for growth, but in death it dissolves quickly. Thus the skeletons of young animals are more apt to be scattered, especially the vertebrae protecting the spinal cord. In the tar pits, the central ends of many vertebrae are found unconnected to any skeleton. Such bone fragments are shaped like valentines, disks that are slightly lobed—heart-shaped shields that have lost their connection to what they were meant to protect.

\textsuperscript{7. vaudeville.} Theatrical variety show
I never felt my mother pushed me to do something I didn’t want to do. But I always knew if something I did pleased her. She was generous with her praise, and I was sensitive when she withheld it. I didn’t like to disappoint her.

I took to performing easily, and since I had started out so young, making movies or doing shows didn’t feel like anything special. It was part of my childhood—like going to the dentist one morning or going to school the next. I didn’t wonder if I wanted a particular role or wanted to be in a show or how I would feel if I didn’t get in. Until I was fifteen, it never occurred to me that one day I wouldn’t get parts or that I might not “have what it takes.”

When I was younger, I got a lot of roles because I was so small for my age. When I was nine years old, I could pass for five or six. I was really short. I was always teased about it when I was in elementary school, but I didn’t mind because my height got me movie jobs. I could read and memorize lines that actual five-year-olds couldn’t. My mother told people she made me sleep in a drawer so I wouldn’t grow any bigger.

But when I turned fifteen, it was as if my body, which hadn’t grown for so many years, suddenly made up for lost time. I grew five inches in seven months. My mother was amazed. Even I couldn’t get used to it. I kept knocking into things, my clothes didn’t fit right, I felt awkward and clumsy when I moved. Dumb things that I had gotten away with, like paying children’s prices at the movies instead of junior admission, I couldn’t do anymore. I wasn’t a shrimp or a small fry any longer. I was suddenly normal.

Before that summer my mother had always claimed she wanted me to be normal. She didn’t want me to become spoiled by the attention I received when I was working at the studios. I still had chores to do at home, went to public school when I wasn’t working, was punished severely when I behaved badly. She didn’t want me to feel I was different just because I was in the movies. When I was eight, I was interviewed by a reporter who wanted to know if I thought I had a big head.

“Sure,” I said.

“No you don’t,” my mother interrupted, which was really unusual, because she generally never said anything. She wanted me to speak for myself.

I didn’t understand the question. My sister had always made fun of my head. She said my body was too tiny for the weight—I looked
like a walking Tootsie Pop. I thought the reporter was making the same observation.

“She better not get that way,” my mother said fiercely. “She’s not any different from anyone else. She’s just lucky and small for her age.”

The reporter turned to my mother, “Some parents push their children to act. The kids feel like they’re used.”

“I don’t do that—I’m not that way,” my mother told the reporter.

But when she was sitting silently in all those waiting rooms while I was being turned down for one job after another, I could almost feel her wanting to shout, “Use her. Use her. What is wrong with her? Doesn’t she have it anymore?” I didn’t know what I had had that I didn’t seem to have anymore. My mother had told the reporter that I was like everyone else. But when my life was like everyone else’s, why was she disappointed?

The churning action of the La Brea Tar Pits makes interpreting the record of past events extremely difficult. The usual order of deposition—the oldest on the bottom, the youngest on the top—loses all meaning when some of the oldest fossils can be brought to the surface by the movement of natural gas. One must look for an undisturbed spot, a place untouched by the action of underground springs or natural gas or human interference. Complete skeletons become important, because they indicate areas of least disturbance. But such spots of calm are rare. Whole blocks of the tar pit can become displaced, making false sequences of the past, skewing the interpretation for what is the true order of nature.

That year before my sixteenth birthday, my mother seemed to spend a lot of time looking through my old scrapbooks, staring at all the eight-by-ten glossies of the shows that I had done. In the summer we visited with my grandmother often, since I wasn’t working and had lots of free time. I would go out to the garden to read or sunbathe, but I could hear my mother and grandmother talking.

“She was so cute back then. She worked with Gene Kelly when she was five years old. She was so smart for her age. I don’t know what’s wrong with her.”

“She’s fifteen.”

8. order of deposition. Sequence in which layers of sediment are left behind when water flows over an area and then recedes
9. Whole blocks of the tar pit can become displaced. Tar is warm enough to flow very slowly, and whole sections can move from one place to another.
“She’s too young to be an ingénue and too old to be cute. The studios forget so quickly. By the time she’s old enough to play an ingénue, they won’t remember her.”

“Does she have to work in the movies? Hand me the scissors.”

My grandmother was making false eyelashes using the hair from her hairbrush. When she was young she had incredible hair. I saw an old photograph of her when it flowed beyond her waist like a cascading black waterfall. At seventy, her hair was still black as night, which made her few strands of silver look like shooting stars. But her hair had thinned greatly with age. It sometimes fell out in clumps. She wore it brushed back in a bun with a hairpiece for added fullness. My grandmother had always been proud of her hair, but once she started making false eyelashes from it, she wasn’t proud of the way it looked anymore. She said she was proud of it now because it made her useful. It was painstaking work—tying knots into strands of hair, then tying them together to form feathery little crescents. Her glamorous false eyelashes were much sought after. Theatrical makeup artists waited months for her work. But my grandmother said what she liked was that she was doing something, making a contribution, and besides it didn’t cost her anything. No overhead. “Till I go bald,” she often joked.

She tried to teach me her art that summer, but for some reason strands of my hair wouldn’t stay tied in knots.

“Too springy,” my grandmother said. “Your hair is still too young.” And because I was frustrated then, frustrated with everything about my life, she added, “You have to wait until your hair falls out, like mine. Something to look forward to, eh?” She had laughed and patted my hand.

10. ingénue. Inexperienced young woman
My mother was going on and on about my lack of work, what might be wrong, that something she couldn’t quite put her finger on. I heard my grandmother reply, but I didn’t catch it all: “Movies are just make-believe, not real life. Like what I make with my hair that falls out—false. False eyelashes. Not meant to last.”

The remains in the La Brea Tar Pits are mostly of carnivorous animals. Very few herbivores are found—the ratio is five to one, a perversion of the natural food chain. The ratio is easy to explain. Thousands of years ago a thirsty animal sought a drink from the pools of water only to find itself trapped by the bottom, gooey with subterranean oil. A shriek of agony from the trapped victim drew flesh-eating predators, which were then trapped themselves by the very same ooze which provided the bait. The cycle repeated itself countless times. The number of victims grew, lured by the image of easy food, the deception of an easy kill. The animals piled on top of one another. For over ten thousand years the promise of the place drew animals of all sorts, mostly predators and scavengers—dire wolves, panthers, coyotes, vultures—all hungry for their chance. Most were sucked down against their will in those watering holes destined to be called the La Brea Tar Pits in a place to be named the City of Angels, home of Hollywood movie stars.

I spent a lot of time by myself that summer, wondering what it was that I didn’t have anymore. Could I get it back? How could I if I didn’t know what it was?

That’s when I discovered the La Brea Tar Pits. Hidden behind the County Art Museum on trendy Wilshire Boulevard, I found a job that didn’t require me to be small or cute for my age. I didn’t have to audition. No one said, “Thank you very much, we’ll call you.” Or if they did, they meant it. I volunteered my time one afternoon, and my fascination stuck—like tar on the bones of a saber-toothed tiger.

My mother didn’t understand what had changed me. I didn’t understand it myself. But I liked going to the La Brea Tar Pits. It meant I could get really messy and I was doing it with a purpose. I didn’t feel awkward there. I could wear old stained pants. I could wear T-shirts with holes in them. I could wear disgustingly filthy sneakers and it was all perfectly justified. It wasn’t a costume for a

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11. perversion of the natural food chain. Plant-eaters (herbivores) usually greatly outnumber meat-eaters (carnivores); a perversion reverses this relationship.
12. dire wolves. Members of an extinct species of California wolf (Canis dirus)
role in a film or a part in a
TV sitcom. My mother didn’t
mind my dressing like that
when she knew I was off to
the pits. That was okay so
long as I didn’t track tar back
into the house. I started
going to the pits every day,
and my mother wondered
why. She couldn’t believe I
would rather be groveling in
tar than going on auditions
or interviews.

While my mother wasn’t
proud of the La Brea Tar Pits
(she didn’t know or care
what a fossil was), she didn’t
discourage me either. She
drove me there, the same
way she used to drive me to
the studios.

“Wouldn’t you rather be
doing a show in Las Vegas
than scrambling around in a
pit?” she asked.

“I’m not in a show in Las
Vegas, Ma. The Lee Sisters
are retired.” My older sister had married and was starting a family of
her own.

“But if you could choose between…”

“There isn’t a choice.”

“You really like this tar-pit stuff, or are you just waiting until you
can get real work in the movies?”

I didn’t answer.

My mother sighed. “You could do it if you wanted, if you really
wanted. You still have what it takes.”

I didn’t know about that. But then, I couldn’t explain what drew
me to the tar pits either. Maybe it was the bones, finding out what
they were, which animal they belonged to, imagining how they got
there, how they fell into the trap. I wondered about that a lot.
At the La Brea Tar Pits, everything dug out of the pit is saved—including the sticky sand that covered the bones through the ages. Each bucket of sand is washed, sieved, and examined for pollen grains, insect remains, any evidence of past life. Even the grain size is recorded—the percentage of silt to sand to gravel that reveals the history of deposition, erosion, and disturbance. No single fossil, no one observation, is significant enough to tell the entire story. All the evidence must be weighed before a semblance of truth emerges.

The tar pits had its lessons. I was learning I had to work slowly, become observant, to concentrate. I learned about time in a way that I would never experience—not in hours, days, and months, but in thousands and thousands of years. I imagined what the past must have been like, envisioned Los Angeles as a sweeping basin, perhaps slightly colder and more humid, a time before people and studios arrived. The tar pits recorded a warming trend; the kinds of animals found there reflected the changing climate. The ones unadapted disappeared. No trace of their kind was found in the area. The ones adapted to warmer weather left a record of bones in the pit. Amid that collection of ancient skeletons, surrounded by evidence of death, I was finding a secret preserved over thousands and thousands of years. There was something cruel about natural selection and the survival of the fittest. Even those successful individuals that “had what it took” for adaptation still wound up in the pits.

I never found out if I had what it took, not the way my mother meant. But I did adapt to the truth: I wasn’t a Chinese Shirley Temple any longer, cute and short for my age. I had grown up. Maybe not on a Hollywood movie set, but in the La Brea Tar Pits.
**Find Meaning**

1. (a) How did the narrator’s experiences at auditions change? (b) How well does the narrator understand why her experiences are different?
2. How does the narrator’s mother act toward the narrator?

**Make Judgments**

3. (a) What inspired the narrator to volunteer at the La Brea Tar Pits? (b) How did volunteering there change her outlook on life?
4. (a) What kinds of animals were drawn to the tar pits? (b) How might they resemble people?
5. Which part of her life do you think the narrator has enjoyed the most? Why?

**Analyze Literature**

**Point of View** Summarize how Cherylene Lee’s use of both first-person and third-person points of view affects the mood and plot of “Hollywood and the Pits.” Make a graphic organizer like this one so you can record your key impressions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of View</th>
<th>How this influences the plot</th>
<th>How this influences the mood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Person Narrator (Hollywood)</td>
<td>Presents an internal conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-Person Narrator (The Pits)</td>
<td>Presents an external conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extend Understanding**

**Writing Options**

- **Creative Writing** Imagine that you are creating a time capsule in your backyard. What objects would you include? Write a journal entry in which you describe these things and your reasons for including them. When you are finished, share your entry with the class.

- **Informative Writing** How would you describe this story to a friend? Write a three-paragraph literary response that describes the conflicts the narrator and her mother experience. Identify each conflict as internal or external and use examples from the story. In your final sentences, tell how the plot resolves each of the conflicts. Make certain you summarize the story in a way that maintains logical order.

**Collaborative Learning**

**Infer the Author’s Purpose** In a small group, discuss why the story includes the scientific information on the tar pits. What might the tar pits represent? Take notes on your discussion, and then summarize the group’s thoughts in one or two paragraphs.

**Media Literacy**

**Dig for Details** Use the Internet to find information on an archaeological site in or near your state. Then write a letter to the site director with two or three questions about the site. For example, ask about the fossils scientists have discovered there.

Go to [www.mirrorsandwindows.com](http://www.mirrorsandwindows.com) for more.
Build Vocabulary

Replace the underlined word or words with the correct vocabulary word in the box. Rewrite the sentences on a separate piece of paper.

barrage | bewildered | dubbed | ingénue | juvenile | obsessed

1. The tiny mouse nibbled on a crumb while the whiskered **attacker** watched intently, ready to pounce.
2. The **outpouring** of e-mails from fans surprised the young actress.
3. The journalist interviewed the 16-year-old girl who would star as the **inexperienced young woman** in the newest Broadway musical.
4. A **confused** expression crossed my mother’s face as she searched for her car in the crowded parking lot.
5. My little sister was absolutely **preoccupied** with the youngest brother in the popular rock band.
6. Following their elders, the **young** animals in the area approached the watering hole.
7. I **nicknamed** my sister “Biza” because it was easier to say than Elizabeth.
**Journal Response**

Choose one of the following topics to write about on the lines below or in your journal.

1. Think about a time when you realized or were told that you were too old to do something. Write about the experience and about how it made you feel.

2. If you could achieve immediate fame in the entertainment industry, for what would you want to be famous? Describe your imaginary career.

3. What celebrity your age do you most admire? Explain who it is and why you admire him or her.

4. Have you visited an archaeological site? Describe what you saw and if you enjoyed the visit or not. If you could visit any archaeological site in the world, where would you visit? Explain the site and what interesting things you might see there.

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**Hollywood and the Pits**, page 141

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**Hollywood and the Pits**, page 141

**Analyze Literature: Character**

The narrator of “Hollywood and the Pits” draws comparisons between her experience as a child actress and the La Brea tar pits. Analyze each theme on the chart and explain in the appropriate column how the theme relates to the narrator’s acting career and the La Brea tar pits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>The Narrator’s Acting Career</th>
<th>The La Brea Tar Pits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quenching desires</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vulnerability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being trapped</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the passage of time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>studying the past</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hollywood and the Pits, page 141

Guided Reading Questions

As you read the selection, stop at the end of each page and write the answers to the questions below.

Page 143

1. Which office is the narrator leaving? Why?

Page 144

2. Why had the animals gone to the tar pits? What happened when they got there?

Page 145

3. Why are the skeletons of young animals more scattered in the pits than are those of older animals?

Page 146

4. Why did the narrator get so many roles when she was younger?

5. How did the narrator change when she turned fifteen?

Page 147

6. Why is it difficult to interpret past events in the tar pits?

Page 149

7. What does the narrator’s grandmother say that the movies have in common with false eyelashes?

8. What draws the narrator to the tar pits at first?

Page 151

9. What does the narrator learn from the pits?

10. What does the narrator conclude about those animals that “had what it took” and were well adapted?
**Hollywood and the Pits**, page 141

**Reading Strategies and Skills Practice: Take Notes**

**Before Reading: Practice Note-Taking**

You can gain greater understanding of a story if you take notes as you read. When you take notes, you might do one or more the following:

- record details or statements that you think might have importance
- record details that describe a character or the setting
- note important events in the plot, such as those that change a character’s attitude toward the central conflict or toward another character.

These notes are especially useful if you also write down your responses to the details. You can use those responses later when you reflect on the story.

To practice taking notes, read this brief passage:

> It was a perfectly normal day—another day the same as the day before and the day before that and the day before that. The sun shone, the sky was clear blue, and a pleasant breeze meant that Darlene was not too warm in the sun. Darlene yawned and scowled. She was tired of everything being the same. She wished that something interesting would happen.

Use the Practice Response Chart to fill in your response to the key detail noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darlene yawned and scowled.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**During Reading: Take Notes**

Copy the Response Chart on the next page onto another piece of paper to take notes on the selection “Hollywood and the Pits.” In this selection, the narrator describes her own experiences but also includes passages about the La Brea Tar Pits. Use your notes to help you see the connections between these two sets of information. Note that some pages do not have any information about the tar pits. You can still take notes about the narrator’s experiences.

In the second column, you will write down one or two key comments or details from the narrator’s own story. In the third, write down key information about the
tar pits from that page. In the right column, write your response to each note. The chart shows an example.

### Response Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Narrator’s Life</th>
<th>Tar Pits</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>“I lost myself there and found something else.”</td>
<td>Full of bones</td>
<td>The tar pits were important to the narrator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you read the story, continue taking notes. Try to include at least two items from each page.

**After Reading: Reflect on Your Notes**

Review the notes you took. Based on those notes, and your responses, what do you think the narrator learned about herself from the tar pits?

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Discuss your ideas with the rest of the class. Talk about how the strategy of taking notes and recording your responses helped in understanding the selection.

**Fix-Up Strategy: Reread**

Monitor your reading progress. If you are having trouble taking notes, try rereading. The story is divided into several episodes, some of which are separated from one another by text about the tar pits. Read each episode through one time to get a sense of what happens. Then, go back and reread the episode again. As you reread, use these questions to guide your note-taking:

- What new details about the narrator’s life does the episode reveal?
- What does each detail tell me about the narrator’s thoughts and feelings at the time?
- What seems to be the narrator’s attitude toward each detail now?

With these questions in mind, read the story again, taking notes as you go.
**Hollywood and the Pits**, page 141

**Use Reading Skills: Cause and Effect**

Write either the cause or the effect to complete each cause-and-effect relationship. One example is provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The narrator grows tall and matures.</td>
<td>The sister act does not get invited to perform anywhere anymore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fossils are formed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals shriek when they realize they are trapped in the tar pits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The narrator receives many acting roles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filled with fascination, the narrator spends a lot of time at the tar pits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The narrator is unable to emulate the knots that her grandmother makes with her hair.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Extend Understanding: Creative Writing**

The narrator's mother asks her, “You really like this tar-pit stuff, or are you just waiting until you can get real work in the movies?” Imagine that you are the narrator as you respond to the preceding question. Be sure to include examples from the story to support your ideas.

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________
Hollywood and the Pits, page 141

MEDIA LITERACY
Dig for Details

This lesson supports the assignment Media Literacy on page 152 of your textbook.

Get Started

For this assignment, you will use the Internet to research an archaeological site in or near your state. Then you will use what you learned to generate questions about archaeological digs or about the site. Finally, you will write a letter to the site director asking your questions.

Find an Appropriate Archaeological Site

You may need a combination of key phrases including words such as archaeological digs and the name of your state or region. Look through the list of websites your search engine returns. Remember, you are looking for a website about a place where archaeologists find fossilized bones and artifacts that tell about the distant past.

Keep a record of the key phrases you use and the names of websites you visit. Also include the linked websites you explore. This information will be helpful when you revisit a website to check information. Use a chart like the following for your records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Engine Used</th>
<th>Key Words/Phrases Used to Search</th>
<th>Names/Addresses of Websites Explored</th>
<th>Description of Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research and Brainstorm Questions

Explore a website about the archaeological dig you choose to research. As you read, make a list of questions for which you want answers, leaving space between questions for answers. Then you can make notes as you find answers. The website will answer some
of your questions. Choose at least three of the questions that have not been answered by your research. For example, questions might ask how fossils are removed from the site without destroying them or how archaeologists are able to determine the age of a fossil.

Notice and write or print out the name of the director of the archaeological site and the mailing address of the archaeological organization or the e-mail address, if your teacher has given you a choice between writing a letter or sending an e-mail.

**Write Your Letter or E-mail**

Compose your letter or e-mail to the director of the site, using the appropriate format.

**Organizing the Body of Your Letter or E-mail**

The body of your letter or e-mail should contain several paragraphs. Begin by introducing yourself and your interest in the site or organization. Then ask your questions, adding any explanations you feel are needed. Finally, conclude your letter or e-mail by acknowledging the director’s efforts to answer your questions.

Revise and edit your letter or e-mail to correct any errors in the use of language, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. For tips on revising and editing your paper, see the Revise section of The Writing Process, 4.1, in your textbook’s Language Arts Handbook. Hand in your letter or e-mail and record of Internet sites visited for your teacher’s approval before sending the correspondence.

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**Tips for Site Visits**

Locate the home page for the organization. Many sites will list headings such as Programs, Calendar of Events, About Us, Site Map, What’s New, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Explore the FAQs for information most often requested by visitors to the site. This may help you limit your list of questions or think of better questions.
LESSON 12

Subject and Object Pronouns

Personal pronouns are sometimes used as the subjects of sentences. Personal pronouns are also used as the objects of verbs or prepositions.

A subject pronoun is used as the subject of a sentence. An object pronoun is used as the object of a verb or a preposition.

**Examples**

**Subject Pronoun**
- Betty likes to read. *She* often shops at the bookstore.
  (subject of sentence)

**Object Pronoun**
- Suspense novels sometimes scare *her*. (direct object of the verb *scare*)
- Betty's friend sent *her* a suspense novel. (indirect object of the verb *sent*)
- Betty might offer the book to *you*. (object of the preposition *to*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>used as subjects</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>he, she, it</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used as objects</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>him, her, it</td>
<td>them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 1**

Identifying Subject and Object Pronouns in Literature

Identify each of the underlined words as either a subject pronoun or an object pronoun. Write your answers on the corresponding lines below.

My mother looked at my face hopefully when *I* came into the room. *I* gave *her* a quick shake of the head. *She* looked bewildered. *I* felt bad for my mother then. How could *I* explain *it* to *her?* *I* didn't understand *it* myself. *We* left, saying polite good-byes to all the other mothers.

*from “Hollywood and the Pits,” page 141*

Cherylene Lee
Subject and object pronouns are also used in compound subjects and compound objects.

EXAMPLES
Mark and Claire walked quickly down the road.
He and she walked quickly down the road.
(He and she form the compound subject.)

Several flowers along the road looked pretty to Mark and Claire.
Several flowers along the road looked pretty to him and her.
(Him and her form the compound object.)

Use the subject pronoun I and the object pronoun me last when they are part of the compound subject or object.

EXAMPLES
compound subject
incorrect I and Fred decided to climb the mountain.
correct Fred and I decided to climb the mountain.

compound object
incorrect Shelly wanted me and Sidney to finish the brief today.
correct Shelly wanted Sidney and me to finish the brief today.

EXERCISE 2
Understanding Subject and Object Pronouns

Choose the correct subject or object pronoun(s) in parentheses to complete each sentence. Then identify each pronoun as either a subject pronoun or an object pronoun.

1. Fred sent (we, us) to the store to buy milk.
   ________________

2. Julie and (I, me) finished addressing the invitations.
   ________________
3. Because of Kenneth’s incompetence, the boss gave (he, him) a pink slip.

4. Dorian discovered the gold coins and stuffed (they, them) into his bag.

5. Candace, needing a ride, got in the car with (she, her).

6. It is so exciting that they selected (I, me) to be on the game show.

7. How many times have (they, them) tried to rob that bank?

8. (She, her) and (he, him) will be getting married today.

9. (He, him) helped (we, us) hide the evidence before the police arrived.

10. Will you allow (I, me) the honor of introducing you?

**Exercise 3**

Using Subject and Object Pronouns in Your Writing

Write a paragraph recommending to a classmate a story or book that you have recently read. Provide details about the story or book, and correctly use subject and object pronouns in the paragraph.
Hollywood and the Pits, page 141

Selection Quiz

Fill in the Blank

Fill in the blank with the word from the box that best completes each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>predator</th>
<th>barrage</th>
<th>ingénue</th>
<th>bewildered</th>
<th>obsessed</th>
<th>juvenile</th>
<th>dubbed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Even though we risked getting in trouble by our teacher, her ___________________________ behavior in class made us all laugh.
2. The _______________________________ of sympathy helped her accept the death of her grandmother.
3. The actor’s fans were _______________________________ with the details of his personal life.
4. _______________________________ by the announcement, the crowd did not know how to react.
5. Without making a sound, the _______________________________ approached its victim.
6. The clever _______________________________ stole the show with her portrayal of Nancy Drew.

Short Answer

Write your answer to each of the following questions in the space provided.

7. Where does the story take place? __________________________________________________

8. When the narrator was a young performer, what was she dubbed as?

9. What did the scientists discover in the La Brea tar pits?

10. What attributes and talents led the narrator to become a child star?

11. What caused the narrator’s popularity as a performer to decline?

12. How did the La Brea tar pits help the narrator gain perspective on her life?
Hollywood and the Pits, page 141

Lesson Test

Multiple Choice

Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

for Hollywood and the Pits

1. What makes interpreting the record of past events from the study of the La Brea Tar Pits extremely difficult?
   A. the time period
   B. the churning action
   C. the changing climate
   D. the fossils themselves
   E. the narrator’s inexperience

2. Why did the narrator get a lot of roles when she was younger?
   A. She was pretty.
   B. She had a successful sister.
   C. She was very small for her age.
   D. She was able to cry on command.
   E. She had much more talent than other children.

3. The skeletons in the tar pits that are particularly likely to be incomplete are those of
   A. the young.
   B. the old and sick.
   C. herbivores.
   D. carnivores.
   E. animals that died first.

4. Given its use in the following sentence, what does the word choreographer mean?
   “My father must have felt pride too, because he paid for a choreographer to put together our sister act: ‘The World Famous Lee Sisters,’ fifteen minutes of song and dance, real vaudeville stuff.”
   A. a show business arrangement or contract
   B. a person who plans the movements in a dance
   C. a set of detailed directions that tell how to act
   D. a lawyer who specializes in entertainment law
   E. a performance that includes both singing and dancing
5. The narrator says, “I breathed, ate, slept, dreamed about the La Brea Tar Pits.” What does this statement reveal about her?
   A. She was obsessed by the tar pits.
   B. She was a very imaginative teenager.
   C. She wanted to become an archaeologist.
   D. She spent all her time at the La Brea Tar Pits.
   E. She had to work extremely hard at the archaeological dig.

6. Why does the following sentence contain so many details about the location?
   “Most were sucked down against their will in those watering holes destined to be called the La Brea Tar Pits in a place to be named the City of Angels, home of Hollywood movie stars.”
   A. to sound more literary
   B. to emphasize the passage of time
   C. to provide a sense of suspense and mystery
   D. to directly link the La Brea Tar Pits with Hollywood
   E. to tell the reader the exact location of the La Brea Tar Pits

7. Which description best describes the narrator’s mother?
   A. a parent who is more concerned with money than happiness
   B. a pushy stage mom who forced her children into show business
   C. a highly critical parent who is disappointed with her children
   D. a supportive mother who doesn’t understand her daughter
   E. a highly protective parent who doesn’t let her daughter do what she wants

8. Which of the following is not an effect of the order of the story and the intermingling of the italicized sections about the pits with the main story?
   A. The reader has a sense of uncovering bits of information.
   B. The narrator’s life and historical facts are shown to be related.
   C. The link between Hollywood and the La Brea Tar Pits is stressed.
   D. The order creates a feeling of suspense and a desire to keep reading.
   E. The scientific facts provide needed relief from the emotions of the narrator.

9. What do you think is the main reason the narrator liked working in the pits?
   A. She liked to dig.
   B. She could get dirty.
   C. She didn’t have to dress up or perform.
   D. She wasn’t doing what her mother wants.
   E. She was being useful and finding meaning.

10. What is the most important lesson that the narrator learned from the tar pits?
    A. Hollywood is not real.
    B. Time is not important.
    C. You have to adapt to survive.
    D. It doesn’t matter how you look.
    E. She did not have “what it takes” to succeed.
Matching

for Hollywood and the Pits

Choose the best definition or description of each of the following.

A. era  ____  11. animal that eats dead bodies of other animals
B. bewildered  ____  12. plant eater
C. vaudeville  ____  13. puzzled
D. ingénue  ____  14. animal that hunts other animals
E. dub  ____  15. theatrical variety show
F. herbivore  ____  16. inexperienced young woman
G. scavenger  ____  17. largest category of geologic time
H. predator  ____  18. give a nickname

Essay

for Hollywood and the Pits

19. Describe one internal and one external conflict that the narrator of this story faces. How do these conflicts change as the story goes on? Use information from the selection to support your response.