



DOCTRIVA LEARNING

The Crisis of a Content Creator

Teacher Guide

Introduction:

The Crisis of a Content Creator is an activity built around a story of the same name. The story itself is an updated version of “The Romance of a Busy Broker” by O.Henry. Rather than being set in the early 1900’s and involving a stock broker, stenographer, and clerk, this version is set in contemporary times involving two content creators and a cameraman. In the original, the main character is distracted by the mechanics of the stock market. In this version, the character is so involved in his online life that he misses his real one.

Standards:

This activity covers the following core competencies found in CCSS, TEKS (Texas), and most state frameworks:

6th Grade: Character & Plot Analyzing how characters respond and change as a plot moves toward a resolution. (CCSS RL.6.3; TEKS 6.7B)	7th Grade: Interactions Analyzing how interactions between characters influence the development of the plot. (CCSS RL.7.3; TEKS 7.7B)	8th Grade: Irony & Theme Analyzing how use of irony or structure creates effects. (CCSS RL.8.6; TEKS 8.8C)
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Sub Guide & Specific Instructions

The Crisis of a Content Creator-Substitute file is a guide for leading the activity and a double-sided report form (two pages) for feedback. If you have the chance, review this so you can give any specific instructions for your particular classes. If you don’t or can’t, the sub will have a general guide to help him or her make it through the period. The substitute guide includes several accessibility features including a QR code to a YouTube video with the text being shown and read.

If you have more specific instructions for the substitute, please send them. Some possible notes include:

- Will the activity be done on paper, online, or a combination of both?
- Should students work individually, in groups, or a combination under certain parameters?
- There are some leveling options in the activities. Do you want to restrict any of those options?
- Are there other resources (extra paper) available?
- Should the sub use a report form different from the one that is included?
- Are there helpful students in each class or a helpful teacher nearby?

Activity Overview:

Parts 1 and 2 are about reading and annotating the story. These annotations are used in the literacy analysis of Part 3. There are three options based on 6th, 7th, and 8th grade standards. Part 4 has a brief student Self-Evaluation and a rubric you can use to quickly grade the activity.

Assessing and Grading the Work

The following holistic rubric is designed for quick, meaningful grading. Focus primarily on the quality of the ideas in the Analysis (Part 3) when determining the base grade. Use your judgement to determine values between the performance levels.

Level	Descriptor	Grade
Exemplary	Insightful claim with specific textual evidence; reasoning clearly explains how the evidence connects to a broader understanding of character, contrast, or irony	100
Proficient	Clear claim with relevant textual evidence; reasoning connects evidence to the prompt in a logical way	90
Developing	General claim with some evidence; reasoning is present but doesn't fully explain the connection between evidence and claim	80
Beginning	Vague or missing claim; evidence is absent or not connected to a claim; response describes the story rather than analyzing it	70

Adjust the base grade up or down a few points if you feel the annotation work (Part 2) or the quality of the actual writing in Part 3 warrant it. Use your community standards and expectations when determining adjustments. This includes students who list rather than write responses.

The following is an AI-generated set of anchor responses to help demonstrate how different proficiency levels may appear. They are focused on Option 2, but the principles apply to all three options. Real student work will vary.

Level 4: Exemplary (100)

"Maxwell and Leslie and Pitcher exist in completely different emotional realities. While Maxwell spirals into increasingly desperate schemes — proposing a carriage ride, then an MMA cage — Leslie and Pitcher respond with telling silence. They wear 'the expressions of people watching a train wreck in slow motion,' which shows they understand exactly how disconnected Maxwell has become. The emotional gap in the studio isn't just about Maxwell's bad ideas. It's about the fact that he can't see what everyone around him clearly can — that his obsession with saving the channel has cost him his ability to read the room, or apparently, remember his own wedding."

Why this fits: Makes a clear claim that extends beyond the prompt into broader meaning. Uses specific textual evidence accurately. Reasoning explains what the evidence reveals about character, not just what it describes.

Level 3: Proficient (90)

"Maxwell is frantic and desperate while Leslie and Pitcher are calm and sad. When Maxwell proposes the surprise proposal video, Leslie doesn't look for a ring — she looks at Pitcher instead. Pitcher shrugs and gives Leslie 'a sad expression.' These reactions show that both of them understand that Maxwell's plan is a bad idea, but Maxwell is too focused on his channel to notice. His motivation to save his following blinds him to the fact that the people in the room are clearly uncomfortable with what he is doing."

Why this fits: Clear claim with two pieces of evidence used accurately. Reasoning connects evidence to Maxwell's motivation but stays close to the surface of the prompt without extending to broader meaning.

Level 2: Developing (80)

"Maxwell wants to make a big video to get more followers but Leslie and Pitcher don't seem happy about it. Leslie looks at Pitcher instead of Maxwell when he tells her his plan. They are both quiet. Maxwell doesn't notice that they are unhappy because he is too busy thinking about his channel. He keeps coming up with new ideas even when they don't make sense."

Why this fits: General claim is present and the response identifies relevant moments, but the reasoning doesn't explain what the reactions mean or why they matter. Evidence is referenced but not analyzed.

Level 1: Beginning (70)

"Maxwell was trying to plan a proposal video to get more views. Leslie and Pitcher were in the room with him. Leslie looked tired and Pitcher had a sad face. Maxwell kept interrupting people and pacing around. He was really focused on his online stuff. At the end Leslie told him they were already married."

Why this fits: Describes the story rather than analyzing it. No clear claim. Evidence is absent or incidental. The emotional gap identified in the prompt is not addressed.

The key differentiator between levels is visible in the movement from retelling at Level 1, to identifying at Level 2, to connecting at Level 3, to extending at Level 4.

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