**Purpose Practice with the Protagonist**

You recently practiced the Purpose learning target with the 2 + 2 = 4, image analysis, and Beowulf paragraph formatives and recorded your descriptive feedback. Now, we are going to use that feedback to practice Purpose again. First, consult your feedback and record the item you need to work on or remember the most when it comes to practicing “Purpose” (analysis):

When doing this kind of analysis with a text in an essay, your thesis is in the question. When just writing a one paragraph response, your topic sentence is in the question. In other words, the thesis (or topic sentence) you need to find evidence for can be **generated** by basically rewording the question. You are about to read an article about a mass shooting in which the author uses an allusion to *Beowulf*. The writing prompt is, “How did the author use an allusion to make her claim clear?” Even before reading the article, write your thesis (or topic sentence) below:

You thesis (or topic sentence) should sound something like, “The author used an allusion to *Beowulf* to more clearly express her message” because the thesis is in the question. Now, as you read the article, be sure to “talk to the text” to find evidence to support your claim. After gathering evidence, complete the Rhetorical Precis (pree-siss) to write your analysis.

In addition, there are several terms in bold on this document: **generated, unabated, depicts, instigated**, **inept, defiance, reavers, Shieldings**. Use your “Build Vocabulary” skills of context clues, word parts, and parts of speech to determine the meaning to the temporarily unknown words. Show these skills by answering the multiple-choice questions after the article.

# “This Time Grendel Chose Umpqua” *By*[ROBIN BATES](http://betterlivingthroughbeowulf.com/author/admin/)*| Published: OCTOBER 1, 2015*

<http://betterlivingthroughbeowulf.com/this-time-grendel-chose-umpqua/>

Today I run a slightly amended version of the post that I wrote after Dylan Roof gunned down nine parishioners in Charleston’s Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in June, which in turn was a repetition of posts I’ve written on previous mass shootings.. All I’ve changed is Charles Harper Mercer for Roof, Umpqua College for the Charleston church, and President Obama’s response; these changes are in italics and the original article is in regular print. The response didn’t need much updating since President Obama feels acutely that he is repeating himself. Each time he sounds more like desperate King Hrothgar in Beowulf, who is flummoxed by the fact that Grendelian violence continues **unabated**. As I understand Grendel, he **depicts** the blood feuds **instigated** by Denmark’s own resentful warriors that ravaged Anglo-Saxon society. In other words, the violence comes from within, not from without; Grendel is a metaphorical monster for the tension that already existed in the country. Here’s The New York Timesreporting on Obama venting his rage and sense of impotence at our continuing refusal to take concrete steps against our Grendels:

President Obama’s rage about gun massacres, building for years, spilled out Thursday night as he acknowledged his own powerlessness to prevent another tragedy and pleaded with voters to force change themselves. He stated: “So tonight, as those of us who are lucky enough to hug our kids a little closer are thinking about the families who aren’t so fortunate.” “I’d ask the American people to think about how they can get our government to change these laws, and to save these lives and let these people grow up.”

Mr. Obama admitted that he was unable to do anything to prevent such tragedies by himself. And he did little to try to hide the anger and frustration that have deepened as he returns again and again to the White House lectern in the wake of a deadly mass shooting.

And now for the amended version of the post I wrote just three and a half months ago:

**Revised post from June 19, 2015**

I am losing count of all the blog posts I have written about mass shootings since starting this blog six years ago. Today I write about the ten people killed and seven wounded at Umpqua College by a lone gunman.

I feel like the grandmother at the end of Leslie Marmon Silko’s novel Ceremony following another eruption of violence on the reservation. “I guess I must be getting old,” she says, “because these goings-on around Laguna don’t get me excited any more.” She sighed, and laid her head back on the chair. “It seems like I already heard these stories before…only thing is, the names sound different.”

I too go back to a familiar story. Few works of literature capture the social violence that strikes from within as powerfully as Beowulf, especially in its depiction of the resentment-crazed Grendel. If Charles Harper Mercer follows the pattern of previous Grendels, it will emerge that he nursed “a hard grievance” and saw others partying in the Great Hall while he felt left out. Meanwhile, we are like King Hrothgar, helplessly surveying the devastation and feeling **inept** to doing anything about it. It doesn’t matter that we are the most powerful country on earth, just as Denmark was the reigning power in medieval Scandinavia. One hears President Obama’s despair in his remarks:

On Thursday night, Mr. Obama said that given the frequency of mass shootings, people have “become numb to this…“And what’s become routine, of course, is the response of those who oppose any kind of common-sense gun legislation…Right now I can imagine the press releases being cranked out. ‘We need more guns,’ they’ll argue. ‘Fewer gun-safety laws.’…Does anybody really believe that?” he asked, his voice rising. He has been saying versions of this after each mass killing for the past six years.

In Beowulf, the spirit of resentful violence has been operating for twelve years. Here’s how the poet describes Grendel’s reign and the king’s sorrow.

So Grendel ruled in **defiance** of what is right,   
one against all, until the greatest house  
in the world stood empty, a deserted wallstead.  
For twelve winters, seasons of woe,  
the lord of the Shieldings suffered under  
his load of sorrow; and so, before long,  
the news was known over the whole world.  
Sad lays were sung about the beset king,  
the vicious raids and ravages of Grendel,  
his long and unrelenting feud,  
nothing but war…All were endangered, young and old  
were hunted down by that dark death-shadow  
who lurked and swooped in the long nights  
on the misty moors; nobody knows  
where these **reavers** from hell roam on their errands.

In his remarks last June after the Charleston shooting, Obama spoke of his “deep sorrow,” and of “the heartbreak, and the sadness, and the anger.” The poet says that “these were hard times, heartbreaking for the prince of the **Shieldings**.”

None of us knows when and where the next **reaver** of hell will strike. We only know that he will.

1. When the author used the word **generated**, he most likely meant…
   1. created b. generation c. terminated d. reworded
2. When the author used the word **unabated**, she most likely meant…
   1. Unrehearsed b. unrestrained c. underwhelmed d. uncontinued
3. When the author used the word **depicts**, she most likely meant…
   1. categorizes b. hides c. demonstrates d. understands
4. When the author used the word **instigated**, she most likely meant…
   1. intercepted b. intertwined c. indivisible d. initiated
5. When the author used the word **inept**, she most likely meant…
   1. devastated b. intolerant c. indistinguishable d. incapable
6. When the author used the word **defiance**, she most likely meant…
   1. obedience b. righteous c. disregard d. defile
7. When the author used the word **reavers**, she most likely meant…
   1. moors b. evil-doers c. sympathizers d. heroes
8. When the author used the word **Shieldings**, she most likely meant…
   1. Geats b. Hrothgardians c. Grendels d. Beowulfs

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The eight questions below all address the Learning Target “Build vocabulary from context” | | | | |
| Number | Answer | Confidence 1-10, 10 = best, if under 7, list 2nd choice | Record a new, unfamiliar word below that is NOT in bold. Explain its definition & part of speech. Explain which strategy you used to predict the meaning. | | |
| 1 |  |  |  | | |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |
| 8 |  |  |
| **LEARNING TARGET** | 4.0 = 8 Correct & **New Word** | 3.0 = 7-6 Correct & **New Word** | 2.0 = 5 Correct & **New Word** | 1.0 = 4 or less correct | |

**The Structure of a Rhetorical Précis**

*Sentence One*: Name of author, genre, and title of work, date in parentheses; a rhetorically active verb; and a THAT clause containing the major claim or thesis in the text.

*Sentence Two*: An explanation of how the author develops and supports the thesis.

*Sentence Three*: A statement of the author’s apparent purpose, followed by an “in order to” phrase.

*Sentence Four*: A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

Use the word bank below for inspiration for each lettered blank.

**Sentence one (who/what?)**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that

(Author) (A) (Title) (B)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(author’s claim)

**Sentence two (How?)**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ supports his/her \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by

(Author’s last name) (B)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(C)

**Sentence three (Why?)**

The author’s purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in

(D)

order to/so that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(NOT the claim, but WHY the author is making the claim & what he/she wants audience to do/think/feel)

**Sentence Four (To Whom?)**

The author writes with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tone for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with the words \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(E) (Audience)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (words from the text that you copied that show the tone you chose in E)

**Word Bank**- some possibilities

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C | D | E |
| article, book review, essay, column, editorial | argues, argument, asserts, assertion, suggests, suggestion, claims, questions, explains, explanation | comparing, contrasting, telling, explaining, illustrating, demonstrating, defining, describing, listing, citing | show  point out  suggest  inform  persuade  convince | Formal  Informal  Sarcastic  Humorous  Contemptuous  Critical  Optimistic |

Precis Example: Sheridan Baker, in his essay "Attitudes" (1966), asserts that writers' attitudes toward their subjects, their audiences, and themselves determine to a large extent the quality of their prose. Baker supports this assertion by showing examples of how inappropriate attitudes can make writing unclear, pompous, or boring, concluding that a good writer "will be respectful toward his audience, considerate toward his readers, and somehow amiable toward human failings" (58). His purpose is to make his readers aware of the dangers of negative attitudes in order to help them become better writers. He establishes an informal relationship with his audience of college students who are interested in learning to write "with conviction" (55).

**Score yourself on the rubric below and justify your score below the rubric box**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Targets** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| **Purpose** = Did I produce clear writing to accomplish a specific purpose: to persuade, to inform, to analyze, and/or to entertain? | **I can make my** purpose very clear beyond teacher expectations. My reader is completely familiar with my claim in a profound way. | **I can make my** purpose clear consistently. My reader is pretty familiar with my claim. My purpose is apparent and believable. | **I can make my** purpose fairly clear. My reader is somewhat familiar with my claim. Some aspects of my purpose are confusing or unclear. | **I struggle to make my purpose** **obvious.** My reader is not clear about my claim. **I require teacher assistance to clarify a purpose in my writing.** |

**Learner name and score justification:**