Literary Element *(page 37)*

**Conflict**

**The Summer People** SHIRLEY JACKSON

Almost all fictional stories include conflict. Conflict is some form of a struggle between opposing forces in the story. It is this tension that keeps readers interested in the story. As you read “The Summer People,” you interpreted on your own how the story ends, even though Shirley Jackson left the ending ambiguous. Some readers like to have conflicts resolved within the story and are uncomfortable with the feeling of being left “hanging” by the author.

Imagine that you have been asked to complete the story “The Summer People.” Complete the resolution of the conflict to bring the story to a logical conclusion. Your conflict resolution can be either for an *external* conflict, between the character and an outside force, or for an *internal* conflict, in the minds of the characters. It could also be a combination of the two types.

**ACTIVITY**

**Directions** Use the following as an organizational guide for your writing:

(1) **Introduction:** Continue the story from the Allisons holding hands and waiting. You should conclude that minor conflict.

(2) **Body:** Create a final major conflict that will have to be resolved to end the story. This conflict should include whatever internal or external forces are affecting the Allisons.

(3) **Conclusion:** Write the climax of your story and the final resolution to tie up loose ends.

_________________________________________________________________

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_________________________________________________________________
Reading Strategy (page 37)
Responding to Plot

The Summer People  SHIRLEY JACKSON

When reading fiction stories, you should notice that events happen in a certain order, or sequence, in the plot. Paying close attention to story sequence helps you understand what you are reading.

ACTIVITY A

Directions The sentences below are out of sequence. Place the following events in the correct order by numbering them from 1–10 with the earliest event beginning numbered “1” and the latest event numbered “10.”

1. Mr. Babcock tells them they will have to pick up their own order. _________
2. The phone is dead. _________
3. The department store circular arrives. _________
4. The car will not work. _________
5. Vera explains the significance of the open window. _________
6. A letter arrives from the children. _________
7. The radio goes out. _________
8. The Allisons find out they cannot get any more kerosene. _________

ACTIVITY B

Directions Recall how you responded to each of the events of the story by filling in words to express how you felt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No more kerosene</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from the children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead phone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car not working</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreboding about the storm coming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut telephone lines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding hands and waiting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selection Vocabulary Practice (page 37)
The Summer People SHIRLEY JACKSON

Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>precarious</td>
<td>adj. uncertain or unpredictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vague</td>
<td>adj. unclear or undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acutely</td>
<td>adv. very perceptively or discerningly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>erratically</td>
<td>adv. in an irregular or unpredictable way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvident</td>
<td>adj. wasteful or unthrifty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXERCISE A  Words in Context
Write the word from the word list that completes each sentence.

1. The salesman’s pay was so _________ that he was often unable to pay his bills.
2. Since Shanika was driving _________, she was pulled over by the police.
3. Amare was _________ about where he had been that evening.
4. Orlando was more _________ than most in his spending habits.
5. Kim’s family was _________ aware of all of her after-school activities.

EXERCISE B  Antonyms
Antonyms are words that have opposites or nearly opposite meanings. Using the list of words above, write an antonym of each of the following words:

1. thrifty _________
2. secure _________
3. systematically _________

EXERCISE C  Responding to the Selection
Pretend that you are Mr. or Mrs. Allison as he or she is portrayed in “The Summer People.” Write a letter to your children explaining your situation and telling them how you feel about it. Express your predictions for what is going to happen next or what your plans are.