



F I R E F L Y
Literary Style & Imitation



FALL 2010

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OVERVIEW

WHAT IS FIREFLY?

Firefly is a serial designed to help students develop the distinctive, intangible elements of controlled creativity in academic writing. As much as possible, it is self-explanatory in order to be unobtrusive to a classroom's regular curriculum. The curriculum aid is made up of a warm-up introductory section and four chapters. The first two chapters have famous prose and poetry pieces the students are to analyze and imitate, eventually sending their own work to the *Firefly* editors. The third chapter is a miscellany of long and short models that stress invention and creativity, also for the students to imitate and submit. The fourth chapter is the "Challenge Chapter," where the student reads the collection of short stories from a single author and then endeavors to write a short story (of reduced length) that retains the model author's idiosyncratic pith and style. Each submission receives two evaluations, one on how well it meets the assignment and the other on how much artistic merit or potential it has. The best work will be published in Open Latch Publication's *Pinwheel* magazine, an online publication whose purpose is to showcase meritorious student work.

DESIGN & EXAM COPIES

The pdf is designed to be used primarily as an on-screen document. However, if a printed copy is desired, the pdf is designed to be printed front and back on 8 x 11" copier paper. The white space on a page is purposeful, serving to de-clutter the page so the content presented can be visually grasped more efficiently.

SUBMISSION OF WORK TO THE EDITORS

Teachers can elect to have their students submit up to 10 submissions during the course of the semester. The editors will accept only the work that makes a serious attempt to meet the requirements. Once a work is accepted, the editors evaluate it twice, each time on a scale of 1 through 10. The first evaluation is on how well the piece fits the basic structure of the model followed. The second evaluation is on the artistic merit of the piece, independent of the model. Teachers who want to know the scores of their students' evaluations should email the editors at fireflyeditors@gmail.com to request the information (only names and scores will be provided). The best submissions will be published electronically in an open-access end-of-year issue of *Pinwheel*, which is posted on the Open Latch Publications website (www.openlatch.com).

The *Firefly* editors can accommodate teachers who wish their students to submit work according to a **custom schedule**. Please email the editors a copy of your schedule so that we can hold your students accountable to the deadlines. If the editors receive no notice of a custom schedule for submissions, the following **default schedule** will be followed. Teachers who choose to use a custom schedule should make sure to make their students aware of the chosen deadlines and to stress that no late work will be accepted for any reason.

Fall Schedule (DEFAULT VERSION)

15 Sep: 1 prose piece and 1 poetry piece (following models of Ch. 1), submitted as an email (not an attachment) to the editors at fireflyeditors@gmail.com. See p. 19.

10 Oct: 1 prose piece and 1 poetry piece (following models of Ch. 2), submitted as an

- email (not an attachment) to the editors at fireflyeditors@gmail.com. See p. 31.
- 10 Nov:** 3 pieces (following models of Ch. 3), submitted as an email (not an attachment) to the editors at fireflyeditors@gmail.com. See p. 49.
- 5 Dec:** Anytime on or before this date, the “Challenge Chapter” assignment.

Spring Schedule (DEFAULT VERSION)

- 1 Feb:** 1 prose piece and 1 poetry piece (following models of Ch. 1), submitted as an email (not an attachment) to the editors at fireflyeditors@gmail.com. See p. 19.
- 1 Mar:** 1 prose piece and 1 poetry piece (following models of Ch. 2), submitted as an email (not an attachment) to the editors at fireflyeditors@gmail.com. See p. 31.
- 5 Apr:** 3 pieces (following models of Ch. 3), submitted as an email (not an attachment) to the editors at fireflyeditors@gmail.com. See p. 49.
- 5 May:** Anytime on or before this date, the “Challenge Chapter” assignment.

COST

The cost of the *Firefly* pdf is \$15. This cost covers all student/editor interaction.

ORDERING & REFUND POLICY

All orders are to be placed at the Open Latch Publications website. To find the ordering page, go to www.openlatch.com, click the “Textbooks” menu tab, and use the PayPal to-buy buttons on that page, situated underneath the individual curriculum aids.

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“ My name is Jonathan Smith. My school is Villanova University. I have dropped English 205 and am requesting a refund. I have mailed my schedules and am giving OLP permission to view my official class schedules. The registrar’s email is xxxxxxxx@xxxxx.edu”

IMPORTANT NOTES TO STUDENTS

Please read!

FIRST, thank you for purchasing this pdf. We are able to keep the price fairly low because we avoid binding and printing costs by issuing pdf texts, and when we deliver your text electronically, we bypass the bookstore venue, which may mark up the cost of texts by as much as 20 to 40%. BECAUSE WE ARE WILLING TO PUBLISH A COMPUTER FILE AND TO DELIVER IT VIA EMAIL, WE RUN THE RISK OF LOSING PROFITS DUE TO FILE SHARING. WE ASK THAT YOU DO NOT COPY THIS DOCUMENT TO ANYONE OTHER THAN YOURSELF. To do so may be a simple “click and send” process on your part, but for us, it represents a significant loss of legitimate income. Many of our editors are part-time college instructors. A large part of the profit from our sales goes directly to them, and in many cases, they use it to supplement retirement and/or medical insurance plans. Thank you for your help in this matter.

SECOND, *Firefly* has assignments you can submit to the editors. Your teacher may request you to do one or more of these assignments. You do not have to notify the *Firefly* editors of your intention of doing an assignment. Simply work out the assignment, and when you are done, send it to the editors at fireflyeditors@gmail.com for grading. Upon sending work to the editors, you will receive a set email reply letting you know that your email was received by the editors.

You may submit your work anytime, but you will not receive an evaluation or a score until the due date of the assignment has passed. Because everything submitted to the editors is graded individually and by an editor (nothing is graded automatically by computer), it may take up to ten days for you to receive feedback on your work.

These assignments are fully explained in the above “Overview” section, and they are to be done according to one of two possible schedules—the default schedule set by the editors (see the current dates by clicking the “Schedule” tab at the “Textbooks” page at www.openlatch.com) or a custom schedule designed by your teacher. Please pay careful attention to the schedule. All assignments must be submitted by 11:59 pm of the due date or earlier. No late work will be graded.

NOTE: Only students who have purchased the pdf can submit assignments.

THIRD, you may want to set up a new Gmail email box to make the process of submitting work easier. Gmail has many formatting features which will help you when you have to underline, highlight, or italicize items. Also, a separate email box may help organize your work and keep track of upcoming assignments or revision work you are asked to do. Go to www.gmail.com and click on the “Open a New Account” button. The process of setting up a new email box is surprisingly easy. Just don’t lose your new user name and password! (We recommend you send this information to yourself in an email addressed to your usual email box.)

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Warm Up Exercises

WARM UP EXERCISE 0

This is an example page. Your teacher may ask you to turn in the warm-up pages after this.

Name: Jane Doe Smith

Class/Section: Eng 211, sec. 17

Date: 6/13/2009

Passages from Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre (published 1847)

“A distant bell tinkled: immediately three ladies entered the room, each walked to a table and took her seat; Miss Miller assumed the fourth vacant chair, which was that nearest the door, and around which the smallest of the children were assembled: to this inferior class I was called, and placed at the bottom of it.”
(from Ch. 5)

~

“While disease had thus become an inhabitant of Lowood, and death its frequent visitor; while there was gloom and fear within its walls; while its rooms and passages steamed with hospital smells, the drug and the pastille striving vainly to overcome the effluvia of mortality, that bright May shone unclouded over the bold hills and beautiful woodland out of doors.” (from Ch. 9)

~

“The morning had been a quiet morning enough—all except the brief scene with the lunatic: the transaction in the church had not been noisy; there was no explosion of passion, no loud altercation, no dispute, no defiance or challenge, no tears, no sobs: a few words had been spoken, a calmly pronounced objection to the marriage made; some stern short questions put by Mr. Rochester; answers, explanations given, evidence adduced; an open admission of the truth had been uttered by my master; then the living proof had been seen: the intruders were gone, and all was over.” (from Ch. 26)

~

“He had not kept his promise of treating me like his sisters; he continually made little, chilling differences between us, which did not at all tend to the development of cordiality: in short, now that I was acknowledged his kinswoman, and lived under the same roof with him, I felt the distance between us to be far greater than when he had known me only as the village schoolmistress” (from Ch. 34)

List some things these passages share:

- *There are a lot of semicolons and colons.*
- *Each passage is just one sentence but it is several lines long.*
- *The first three read as if they are newspaper reports. Events are listed one after the other with a lot of detail.*
- *Some parts of the passages are wordy (the last passage says “which did not at all tend to the development of cordiality” but this just means the character did things that were unfriendly).*
- *There are a lot of words like “which” and “while”.*
- *Three of the four passages have something to do with close-knit groups of people, like families.*

WARM UP EXERCISE 1A

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

Passages from Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book (published in 1894)

“The monkeys called the place their city, and pretended to despise the Jungle-People because they lived in the forest. And yet they never know what buildings were made for nor how to use them. They would sit in circles on the hall of the king’s council chamber, and scratch for fleas and pretend to be men, or they would run in and out of the roofless houses and collect pieces of plaster and old bricks in a corner, and forget where they had hidden them, and fight and cry in scuffling crowds, and then break off to play up and down the terraces of the king’s garden, where they would shake the rose-trees and the oranges in sport to see the fruit and flowers fall.” *(from the tale “Kaa’s Hunting”)*

~

“He paddled and scrambled about by his mother’s side and learned to scuffle out of the way when his father was fighting with another seal, and the two rolled and roared up and down the slippery rocks. Matkah used to go to sea to get things to eat, and the baby was only fed once in two days, but then he ate all he could and threw upon it. The first thing he did was to crawl inland, and there he met ten of thousands of babies of his own age, and they played together like puppies, went to sleep on the clean sand, and played again.” *(from the tale “The White Seal”)*

~

“It was a dark night when Hathi and his three sons slipped down from the jungle, and broke off the poles of the *machans* with their trunks, and they fell as a snapped stalk of hemlock in bloom falls, and the men that tumbled from them heard the deep gurgling of the elephants in their ears. Then the vanguard of the bewildered armies of the deer broke down and flooded into the village grazing-grounds and the ploughed fields, and the sharp-hoofed, rooting wild pig came with them, and what the deer left the pig spoiled, and from time to time an alarm of wolves would shake the herds, and they would rush to and fro desperately, treading down the young barley, and cutting flat the banks of the irrigating channels.” *(from the tale “Letting in the Jungle”)*

~

“He wanted to go into the *quaggi*, the Singing-House, when the hunters gathered there for their mysteries, and the *angedkok*, the sorcerer, frightened them into the most delightful fits after the lamps were put out, and you could hear the Spirit of the Reindeer stamping on the roof, and when a spear was thrust out into the open black night it came back covered with hot blood.” *(from the tale “Quiquern”)*

List some things these passages share:

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WARM UP EXERCISE 2A

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

Passages from René Descartes's A Discourse on Method (published in 1637, translated by John Veitch in 1912)

“But like one walking alone and in the dark, I resolved to proceed so slowly and with such circumspection, that if I did not advance far, I would at least guard against falling.” *(from Part 2)*

~

“I commenced with the simplest and most general truths, and that thus each truth discovered was a rule available in the discovery of subsequent ones. Nor in this perhaps shall I appear too vain, if it be considered that, as the truth on any particular point is one, whoever apprehends the truth, knows all that on that point can be known. The child, for example, who has been instructed in the elements of arithmetic, and has made a particular addition, according to rule, may be assured that he has found, with respect to the sum of the numbers before him, all that in this instance is within the reach of human genius.” *(from Part 2)*

~

“And, just as in pulling down an old house, we usually reserve the ruins to contribute towards the erection, so, in destroying such of my opinions as I judged to be ill-founded, I made a variety of observations and acquired an amount of experience of which I availed myself in the establishment of more certain.” *(from Part 3)*

~

“And in truth, I am quite willing it should be known that the little I have hitherto learned is almost nothing in comparison with that of which I am ignorant, and to the knowledge of which I do not despair of being able to attain; for it is much the same with those who gradually discover truth in the sciences, as with those who when growing rich find less difficulty in making great acquisitions, than they formerly experienced with poor in making acquisitions of much smaller amount.” *(from Part 4)*

~

“Their fashion of philosophizing, however, is well suited to persons whose abilities fall below mediocrity; for the obscurity of the distinctions and principles of which they make use enables them to speak of all things with as much confidence as if they really knew them, and to defend all that they say on any subject against the most subtle and skilful, without its being possible for any one to convict them of error. In this they seem to me to be like a blind man, who, in order to fight on equal terms with a person that sees, should have made him descend to the bottom of an intensely dark cave.” *(from Part 6)*

List some things these passages share:

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WARM UP EXERCISE 3A

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

Passages from J. Hector St John De Crèvecoeur's Letters from an American Farmer (published in 1782)

"I wish I could be acquainted with the feelings and thoughts which must agitate the heart and present themselves to the mind of an enlightened Englishman, when he first lands on this continent. He must greatly rejoice that he lived at a time to see this fair country discovered and settled. He must necessarily feel a share of national pride when he views the chain of settlements which embellish these extended shores." *(from Letter 3)*

~

"There is no wonder that this country has so many charms, and presents to Europeans so many temptations to remain in it. A traveler in Europe becomes a stranger as soon as he quits his own kingdom; but it is otherwise here. We know, properly speaking, no strangers; this is every person's country; the variety of our soils, situations, climates, governments, and produce, hath something which must please every body. No sooner does an European arrive, no matter of what condition, than his eyes are opened upon the fair prospect; he hears his language spoken, he retraces many of his own country manners, he perpetually hears the names of families and towns with which he is acquainted; he meets with hospitality, kindness, and plenty, every where." *(from Letter 3)*

~

"Ye poor Europeans, ye, who sweat, and work for the great; ye, who are obliged to give so many sheaves to the church, so many to your lords, so many to your government, and have hardly any left over for yourselves; ye, how are held in less estimation than favourite hunters or useless lap-dogs; ye, how only breath the air of nature, because it cannot be withholden from you." *(from Letter 3)*

~

"It is pleasing to hear some of them tracing a father's progress and their own through the different vicissitudes of good and adverse fortune. I have often, by their fire-sides, traveled with them the whole length of their career, from their earlier steps, from their first commercial adventure, from the possession of a single whale-boat, up to that of a dozen large vessels!" *(from Letter 6)*

~

"My ears were stunned with the roar of its waves, rolling one over the other, as if impelled by a superior force to overwhelm the spot on which I stood. My nostrils involuntarily inhaled the saline vapours which arose from the dispersed particles of the foaming billows, or from the weeds scattered on the shores. My mind suggested a thousand vague reflections, pleasing in the hour of their spontaneous birth, but now half forgotten, and all indistinct." *(from Letter 8)*

List some things these passages share:

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WARM UP EXERCISE 4A

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

Passages from Francis Parkman Jr's The Oregon Trail (published in 1849)

“Soon after leaving this party, we saw, stretched on the right, the forests that follow the course of the Missouri, and the deep woody channel through which at this point it runs. At a distance in front were the white barracks of Fort Leavenworth, just visible through the trees upon an eminence above a bend of the river. A wide green meadow, as level as a lake, lay between us and the Missouri, and upon this, close to a line of trees that bordered a little brook, stood the tent of the Captain and his companions, with their horses feeding around it; but they themselves were invisible.” *(from Chapter 2)*

~

“We were late in breaking up our camp on the following morning, and scarcely had we ridden a mile when we saw, far in advance of us, drawn against the horizon, a line of objects stretching at regular intervals along the level edge of the prairie. An intervening swell soon hid them from sight, until, ascending it a quarter of an hour after, we saw close before us the emigrant caravan, with its heavy white wagons creeping on in their slow procession, and a large drove of cattle following behind. Half a dozen yellow-visaged Missourians, mounted on horseback, were cursing and shouting among them; their long angular proportions, enveloped in brown homespun, evidently cut and adjusted by the hands of a domestic female tailor.” *(from Chapter 6)*

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“The whole face of the country was dotted far and wide with countless hundreds of buffalo. They trooped along in files and columns, bulls, cows and calves, on the green faces of the declivities in front. They scrambled away over the hills to the right and left; and far off, the pale blue swells in the extreme distance were dotted with innumerable specks.” *(from Chapter 7)*

~

“When I turned down the buffalo path, the prairie seemed changed; only a wolf or two glided past at intervals, like conscious felons, never looking to the right or left. Being now free from anxiety, I was at leisure to observe minutely the objects around me; and here, for the first time, I noticed insects wholly different from any of the varieties found farther to the eastward. Gaudy butterflies fluttered about my horse's head; strangely formed beetles, glittering with metallic luster, were crawling upon plants that I had never seen before; multitudes of lizards, too, were darting like lightening over the sand.

I had run to a great distance from the river. It cost me a long ride on the buffalo path, before I saw, from the ridge of a sand-hill, the pale surface of the Platte glistening in the midst of its desert valleys, and the faint outline of the hills beyond waving along the sky. From where I stood, not a tree nor a bush nor a living thing was visible throughout the whole extent of the sun-scorched landscape.” *(from Chapter 7)*

List some things these passages share:

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WARM UP EXERCISE 5A

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

Passages from Charles Dickens's Martin Chuzzlewit (published in 1843-1844), The Old Curiosity Shop (published in 1840-1841), and Nicholas Nickleby (published in 1838)

“Come in!” cried Mr Pecksniff—not severely; only virtuously. ‘Come in!’ An ungainly, awkward-looking man, extremely short-sighted, and prematurely bald, availed himself of this permission; and seeing that Mr Pecksniff sat with his back towards him, gazing at the fire, stood hesitating, with the door in his hand. He was far from handsome certainly; and was drest in a snuff-coloured suit, of an uncouth make at the best, which, being shrunken with long wear, was twisted and tortured into all kinds of odd shapes; but notwithstanding his attire, and his clumsy figure, which a great stoop in his shoulders, and a ludicrous habit he had of thrusting his dead forward, by no means redeemed, one would not have been disposed (unless Mr Pecksniff said so) to consider him a bad fellow by any means. He was perhaps about thirty, but he might have been almost any age between sixteen and sixty: being one of those strange creatures who never decline into an ancient appearance, but look their oldest when they are very young, and get it over at once.” (*from Martin Chuzzlewit, Chapter 2*)

~

“When he came back Kit was at his heels. Kit was a shock-headed, shambling, awkward lad, with an uncommonly wide mouth, very red cheeks, a turned-up nose, and certainly the most comical expression of face I ever saw. He stopped short at the door on seeing a stranger, twirled in his hand a perfectly round old hat without any vestige of a brim, and, resting himself now on one leg, and now on the other, and changing them constantly, stood in the doorway, looking into the parlour with the most extraordinary leer I ever beheld.” (*from The Old Curiosity Shop, Chapter 13*)

~

“Mr. Squeers’s appearance was not prepossessing. He had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favour of two. The eye he had was unquestionably useful, but decidedly not ornamental, being of a greenish-grey, and in shape resembling the fanlight of a street door. The lank side of his face was much wrinkled and puckered up, which gave him a very sinister appearance, especially when he smiled, at which times his expression bordered closely on the villainous. His hair was very flat and shiny, save at the ends, where it was brushed stiffly up from a low protruding forehead, which assorted well with his harsh voice and coarse manner. He was about two or three and fifty, and a trifle below the middle size; he wore a white neckerchief with long ends, and a suit of scholastic black; but his coat sleeves being a great deal too long and his trousers a great deal too short, he appeared ill at ease in his clothes, and as if he were in a perpetual state of astonishment at finding himself so respectable.” (*from The Old Curiosity Shop, Chapter 4*)

List some things these passages share:

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WARM UP EXERCISE 1B

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

RUDYARD KIPLING’S STYLE

For this exercise, please refer to the above four passages from Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book* (see Warm-Up Exercise 1A).

1) Describe the average length of Kipling’s sentences.

2) Read a few of Kipling’s sentences out loud. Describe how the sentences sound.

3) What words does Kipling repeatedly use to connect different parts of long sentences with each other? What punctuation marks does Kipling use to connect/separate sentences?

4) Examine the actual content of these passages. Is there some sort of theme (or situation or event or focus) that is common to, say, at least two passages? Three passages? Describe it.

5) Comparing Kipling’s passages to the other passages in the Warm-Up Section, what idiosyncrasies can you see in Kipling’s passages? This is to say, what elements in his form or content are unique to Kipling’s passages?

6) Try to write a passage similar to the Kipling ones you’ve read. Make up the characters and content, but reproduce the characteristic Kipling style.

WARM UP EXERCISE 2B

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

RENÉ DESCARTES’S STYLE

For this exercise, please refer to the above four passages from René Descartes’s *A Discourse on Method* (see Warm-Up Exercise 2A).

1) Describe the average length of Descartes’s sentences.

2) Read a few of Descartes’s sentences out loud. Describe how the sentences sound.

3) What words does Descartes repeatedly use to connect different parts of long sentences with each other? What punctuation marks does he use to connect/separate sentences?

4) Examine the actual content of these passages. Is there some sort of theme (or situation or event or focus) that is common to, say, at least two passages? Three passages? Describe it.

5) Comparing Descartes’s passages to the other passages in the Warm-Up Section, what idiosyncrasies can you see in Descartes’s passages? This is to say, what elements in his form or content are unique to Descartes’s passages?

6) Try to write a passage similar to the Descartes ones you’ve read. Make up the characters and content, but reproduce the characteristic Descartes style.

WARM UP EXERCISE 3B

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

J. HECTOR ST. JOHN DE CRÈVECOEUR’S STYLE

For this exercise, please refer to the above four passages from Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer* (see Warm-Up Exercise 3A).

1) Describe the average length of Crèvecoeur’s sentences.

2) Read a few of Crèvecoeur’s sentences out loud. Describe how the sentences sound.

3) What words does Crèvecoeur repeatedly use to connect different parts of long sentences with each other? What punctuation marks does he use to connect/separate sentences?

4) Examine the actual content of these passages. Is there some sort of theme (or situation or event or focus) that is common to, say, at least two passages? Three passages? Describe it.

5) Comparing Crèvecoeur’s passages to the other passages in the Warm-Up Section, what idiosyncrasies can you see in Crèvecoeur’s passages? This is to say, what elements in his form or content are unique to Crèvecoeur’s passages?

6) Try to write a passage similar to the Crèvecoeur ones you’ve read. Make up the characters and content, but reproduce the characteristic Crèvecoeur style.

WARM UP EXERCISE 4B

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

FRANCIS PARKMAN JR'S STYLE

For this exercise, please refer to the above four passages from Parkman's *The Oregon Trail* (see Warm-Up Exercise 4A).

1) Describe the average length of Parkman's sentences.

2) Read a few of Parkman's sentences out loud. Describe how the sentences sound.

3) What words does Parkman repeatedly use to connect different parts of long sentences with each other? What punctuation marks does he use to connect/separate sentences?

4) Examine the actual content of these passages. Is there some sort of theme (or situation or event or focus) that is common to, say, at least two passages? Three passages? Describe it.

5) Comparing Parkman's passages to the other passages in the Warm-Up Section, what idiosyncrasies can you see in Parkman's passages? This is to say, what elements in his form or content are unique to Parkman's passages?

6) Try to write a passage similar to the Parkman ones you've read. Make up the characters and content, but reproduce the characteristic Parkman style.

WARM UP EXERCISE 5B

Name: _____ Class/Section: _____ Date: _____

CHARLES DICKENS'S STYLE

For this exercise, please refer to the above four passages from Dickens's work (see Warm-Up Exercise 5A).

1) Describe the average length of Dickens's sentences.

2) Read a few of Dickens's sentences out loud. Describe how the sentences sound.

3) What words does Dickens repeatedly use to connect different parts of long sentences with each other? What punctuation marks does he use to connect/separate sentences?

4) Examine the actual content of these passages. Is there some sort of theme (or situation or event or focus) that is common to, say, at least two passages? Three passages? Describe it.

5) Comparing Dickens's passages to the other passages in the Warm-Up Section, what idiosyncrasies can you see in Dickens's passages? This is to say, what elements in his form or content are unique to Dickens's passages?

6) Try to write a passage similar to the Dickens ones you've read. Make up the characters and content, but reproduce the characteristic Dickens style.

Chapter 1

Instructions: Read the short prose pieces and the poetry. Develop a sense of the way the author puts his or her words together. Then write a similar piece closely imitating that writer. For example, notice how often John Earle (in the character sketches below) starts his sentences with the personal pronoun *he* or a form of the pronoun. Notice also how Earle will most often use a simple subject + verb pattern up front in his sentencings. Imitate this if you chose to write a character sketch. (Hint: Keep a good collegiate dictionary at hand or use dictionary.com and thesaurus.com.)

Use your own material. The character sketches are on a child and an antiquarian, or a collector of antiques. Perhaps you will choose to write on a bus-driver, a deli cook, a McDonald's clerk—the options are endless. More's anecdotes rely heavily on a Catholic framework, but yours can illustrate any general fact of human life that you wish. Do keep the general theme and feel of the writing, however. Both Earle's and More's pieces are humorous, but Keats's poetry speaks of the frailty of human life. His poetry is serious, and the sound of his poetry reflects that seriousness. If you decide to write an imitation piece on Keats, chose a topic that lends itself to seriousness, and then strive to generate that characteristic sound in your own sonnet. Emily Dickinson's pieces are also quite profound, but they are shorter (the individual lines are), and they have a different feel to them from Keats's work. Try to capture that same feel if you choose to write a poem in Dickinson's style. The same can be said of the other authors included in this issue.

Unless your teacher has suggested that you follow another schedule, you must submit one prose piece and one poetry piece by the deadline for Ch. 1 listed in the "Overview" section of the pdf. Submit your work to fireflyeditors@gmail.com as an email (please, no document attachments). Your email must list:

- 1) Your name
- 2) Your teacher's name
- 3) The name of the model author you are imitating
- 4) Your work (entered into the email text field as an email)
- 5) A statement verifying that the work is original to you

Prose Models (Earle, More, Bierce, Pepys)

John Earle's Character Sketches (from *Microcosmography*, ca. 1633)

"A Child"

A child is a man in a small letter, yet the best copy of Adam before he tasted of Eve or the apple; and he is happy whose small practice in the world can only write his character. He is nature's fresh picture newly drawn in oil, which time, and much handling, dims and defaces. His soul is yet a white paper unscribbled with observations of the world, wherewith, at length, it becomes a blurred note-book. He is purely happy, because he knows no evil, nor hath made means by sin to

be acquainted with misery. He arrives not at the mischief of being wise, nor endures evils to come, by foreseeing them. He kisses and loves all, and, when the smart of the rod is past, smiles on his beater. Nature and his parents alike dandle him, and tice him on with a bait of sugar to a draught of wormwood. He plays yet, like a young 'prentice the first day, and is not come to his task of melancholy. All the language he speaks yet is tears, and they serve him well enough to express his necessity. His hardest labor is his tongue, as if he were loath to use so deceitful an organ; and he is best company with it when he can prattle. We laugh at his foolish sports, but his game is our earnest; and his drums, rattles, and hobby-horses, but the emblems and mocking of man's business. His father hath writ him as his own little story, wherein he reads those days of his life that he cannot remember, and sighs to see what innocence he has out-lived.

“An Antiquary”

He is a man strangely thrifty of time past, and an enemy indeed to his maw, whence he fetches out many things when they are now all rotten and stinking. He is one that hath that unnatural disease to be enamored of old age and wrinkles, and loves all things (as Dutchmen do cheese), the better for being moldy and worm-eaten. He is of our religion, because we say it is most ancient; and yet a broken statue would almost make him an idolater. A great admirer he is of the rust of old monuments, and reads only those characters where time hath eaten out the letters. He will go you forty miles to see a saint's well or a ruined abbey; and if there be a cross or stone foot-stool in the way, he'll be considering it so long, till he forget his journey. His estate consists much in shekels, and Roman coins; and he hath more pictures of Caesar than James or Elizabeth. Beggars cozen him with musty things which they have raked from dunghills, and he preserves their rags for precious relics. He loves no library but where there are more spiders' volumes than authors', and looks with great admiration on the antique work of cobwebs. Printed books he contemns, as a novelty of this latter age, but a manuscript he pores over everlastingly, especially if the cover be all moth-eaten, and the dust make a parenthesis between every syllable. He would give all the books in his study (which are rarities all) for one of the old Roman bindings, or six lines of Tully in his own hand. His chamber is hung commonly with strange beasts' skins, and is a kind of charnel-house of bones extraordinary; and his discourse upon them, if you will hear him, shall last longer. His very attire is that which is the eldest out of fashion and you may pick a criticism out of his breeches. He never looks upon himself till he is gray-haired, and then he is pleased with his own antiquity. His grave does not fright him, for he has been used to sepulchers, and he likes death the better, because it gathers him to his fathers.

“A Young Man”

He is now out of nature's protection, though not yet able to guide himself; but left loose to the world and fortune, from which the weakness of his childhood preserved him; and now his strength exposes him. He is, indeed, just of age to be miserable, yet in his own conceit first begins to be happy; and he is happier in this imagination, and his misery not felt is less. He sees yet but the outside of the world and men, and conceives them, according to their appearing, glisten, and out of this ignorance believes them. He pursues all vanities for happiness, and enjoys them best in this fancy. His reason serves not to curb but understand his appetite, and prosecute

the motions thereof with a more eager earnestness. Himself is his own temptation, and needs not Satan, and the world will come hereafter. He leaves repentance for gray hairs, and performs it in being covetous. He is mingled with the vices of the age as the fashion and custom, with which he longs to be acquainted, and sins to better his understanding. He conceives his youth as the season of his lust, and the hour wherein he ought to be bad; and because he would not lose his time, spends it. He distastes religion as a sad thing, and is six years elder for a thought of heaven. He scorns and fears, and yet hopes for old age, but dare not imagine it with wrinkles. He loves and hates with the same inflammation, and when the heat is over is cool alike to friends and enemies. His friendship is seldom so steadfast but that lust, drink, or anger may overturn it. He offers you his blood today in kindness, and is ready to take yours tomorrow. He does seldom anything which he wishes not to do again, and is only wise after a misfortune. He suffers much for his knowledge, and a great deal of folly it makes him a wise man. He is free from many vices, by being not grown to the performance, and is only more virtuous out of weakness. Every action is his danger, and every man his ambush. He is a ship without pilot or tackling, and only good fortune may steer him. If he scape this age, he has scaped a tempest, and may live to be a man.

Thomas More's Moral Anecdotes (adapted from *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*, ca. 1534)

“The Man Who Had a Plan against Death”

They tell of one that was wont always to say that all the while he lived he would do what he lust, for three words when he died old should make all safe enough, these three words being “God save me” by way of confession. But then so happed it that long ere he were old his horse once stumbled upon a broken bridge. And as he labored to recover him, when he saw it would not be, but down into the flood headlong needs he should fall, in a sudden fright and before he could think of what he was to say, he yelled out in his falling—“Devil take all!” And there was he drowned with his three words ere he died, whereon his hope hung all his wretched life.

Moral: *Live a proper life now, and don't count on a future repentance to make things right.*

“The Wolf's Confession to Father Reynard the Fox”

When Father Reynard received the gluttonous wolf's confession and heard that the wolf was so great a ravener that he devoured and spent sometime so much victual at one meal as the price thereof would well keep some poor man with his whole family fed for a week, then he prudently reproved that point in the wolf and preached him a process by which he should never pass the value of sixpence at one meal, to which the wolf made solemn promise. It happened to the wolf, then, as he walked prowling for his gear about, he came where a man had in a few days before cast off two old lean and lame horses, so sick that no flesh was there left upon them. And the one, when the wolf came by, could scant stand on his legs, and the other already dead and his skin ript off and carried away. And as he looked upon them suddenly, he was first about to feed upon them and whet his teeth on their bones. But as he looked aside he spied a fair cow in a close, walking with her young calf by her side. And as soon as he saw them, “he sighed and said

unto himself, "Alas, wicked wretch that I am, I had almost broken my penance ere I was aware of it. For yonder dead horse, because I never saw no dead horse sold in the market, I cannot devise what price I should set upon him. But in my conscience I set him far above sixpence, and therefore I dare not meddle with him. But yonder peevish cow seemeth unto me in my conscience worth not past four pence, and my conscience cannot serve me for sin of my soul to appraise her calf above two pence; and so pass they not six pence between them both. And therefore them twain may I well eat at this one meal and break not my penance at all." And so thereupon he did, without any scruple of conscience.

Moral: *You can always find a way to do what's wrong.*

"The Carpenter Who Would Crucify Himself to Follow Christ's Example"

Once a foolish carpenter got it into his head to copy Christ in every way possible. Thus he convinced himself that he needed to be crucified on Good Friday. His good wife, not wanting to lose her husband to such a frantic fantasy, would not in vain plead against his distracted mind, but well and wisely put him in remembrance that if he would die for Christ as Christ died for him, it were then convenient for him to die even after the same fashion. And that might not be by his own hands, but the hand of some other. For Christ killed not himself. She offered him that for god's sake she would secretly crucify him herself upon a great cross that he had made. Whereof he was very glad, but she reminded him that Christ was first bounded to a pillar and beaten, and afterward crowned with thorns. Whereupon, when she had by his own assent bound him fast to a post, she left not beating with holy exhortation to suffer so much and so long, that ere ever she left beating him and unbound him, she asked him nevertheless that she might put on his head, and drive it well down, a crown of thorn that she had wreathed for him. But he said he thought this beating was enough for that year! He prayed God forbear him of the remnant of his oath till Good Friday came again. But when it came again the next year, then was his lust past.

Moral: *Pain convinces a fool faster than reason.*

Ambrose Bierce's Definitions (from *The Devil's Dictionary*, ca. 1911)

Editor's Note: If you choose this model to imitate, pick a letter of the alphabet, come up with 20-25 words that begin with that letter, and provide witty definitions for those words. Alphabetize your own definitions.

ABASEMENT, *n.*

A decent and customary mental attitude in the presence of wealth or power. Peculiarly appropriate in an employee when addressing an employer.

ABATIS, *n.*

Rubbish in front of a fort, to prevent the rubbish outside from molesting the rubbish inside.

ABDICATION, *n.*

An act whereby a sovereign attests his sense of the high temperature of the throne.

ABDOMEN, *n.*

The temple of the god Stomach, in whose worship, with sacrificial rights, all true men engage. From women this ancient faith commands but a stammering assent. They sometimes minister at the altar in a half-hearted and ineffective way, but true reverence for the one deity that men really adore they know not. If woman had a free hand in the world's marketing the race would become graminivorous.

ABILITY, n.

The natural equipment to accomplish some small part of the meaner ambitions distinguishing able men from dead ones. In the last analysis ability is commonly found to consist mainly in a high degree of solemnity. Perhaps, however, this impressive quality is rightly appraised; it is no easy task to be solemn.

ABNORMAL, adj.

Not conforming to standard. In matters of thought and conduct, to be independent is to be abnormal, to be abnormal is to be detested.

ABRUPT, adj.

Sudden, without ceremony, like the arrival of a cannon- shot and the departure of the soldier whose interests are most affected by it. Dr. Samuel Johnson beautifully said of another author's ideas that they were "concatenated without abruptness."

ABSTAINER, n.

A weak person who yields to the temptation of denying himself a pleasure. A total abstainer is one who abstains from everything but abstention, and especially from inactivity in the affairs of others.

ABSURDITY, n.

A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one's own opinion.

ACADEME, n.

An ancient school where morality and philosophy were taught.

ACADEMY, n.

[from ACADEME] A modern school where football is taught.

ACCOMPLICE, n.

One associated with another in a crime, having guilty knowledge and complicity, as an attorney who defends a criminal, knowing him guilty. This view of the attorney's position in the matter has not hitherto commanded the assent of attorneys, no one having offered them a fee for assenting.

ACCORDION, n.

An instrument in harmony with the sentiments of an assassin.

ACCUSE, v.t.

To affirm another's guilt or unworth; most commonly as a justification of ourselves for having wronged him.

ACHIEVEMENT, n.

The death of endeavor and the birth of disgust.

ACKNOWLEDGE, v.t.

To confess. Acknowledgement of one another's faults is the highest duty imposed by our love of truth.

ACQUAINTANCE, n.

A person whom we know well enough to borrow from, but not well enough to lend to. A degree of friendship called slight when its object is poor or obscure, and intimate when he is rich or famous.

ADDER, n.

A species of snake. So called from its habit of adding funeral outlays to the other expenses of living.

ADHERENT, n.

A follower who has not yet obtained all that he expects to get.

ADMINISTRATION, n.

An ingenious abstraction in politics, designed to receive the kicks and cuffs due to the premier or president. A man of straw, proof against bad-egging and dead-cattling.

ADMIRAL, n.

That part of a war-ship which does the talking while the figure-head does the thinking.

ADMIRATION, n.

Our polite recognition of another's resemblance to ourselves.

ADMONITION, n.

Gentle reproof, as with a meat-axe. Friendly warning.

ADORE, v.t.

To venerate expectantly.

ADVICE, n.

The smallest current coin.

AFFIANCED, pp.

Fitted with an ankle-ring for the ball-and-chain.

Samuel Pepys's Diary (ca. 1890)

Editor's Note: Pepys is famous for his revealing, comically (dis)honest accounts of his daily activities. The sheer humanness that exudes from his journaling is paralleled by few. If you choose to imitate Pepys, pick out common elements or characters that these entries share and then put them into one entry that is at least 15 lines long (about the size of the 7 September 1662 entry below). Among other things, be sure to have Pepys mention what he had for dinner, what he did for an evening's entertainment, and what he thinks of his wife's idea or comment.

Sunday 2 June 1661

(Whitsunday). The barber having done with me, I went to church, and there heard a good sermon of Mr. Mills, fit for the day. Then home to dinner, and then to church again, and going home I found Greatorex (whom I expected today at dinner) come to see me, and so he and I in my chamber drinking of wine and eating of anchovies an hour or two, discoursing of many things in mathematics, and among others he showed me how it comes to pass the strength that levers have, and he showed me that what is got as to matter of strength is lost by them as to matter of time. It rained very hard, as it hath done of late so much that we begin to doubt a famine, and so he was forced to stay longer than I desired. At night after prayers to bed.

Wednesday 5 June 1661

This morning did give my wife 4*l.* to lay out upon lace and other things for herself. I to Wardrobe and so to Whitehall and Westminster, where I dined with my Lord and Ned Pickering alone at his lodgings. After dinner to the office, where we sat and did business, and Sir W. Pen

and I went home with Sir R. Slingsby to bowls in his ally, and there had good sport, and afterwards went in and drank and talked. So home Sir William and I, and it being very hot weather I took my flageolette and played upon the leads in the garden, where Sir W. Pen came out in his shirt into his leads, and there we staid talking and singing, and drinking great drafts of claret, and eating botargo and bread and butter till 12 at night, it being moonshine; and so to bed, very near fuddled.

Tuesday 2 December 1662

Before I went to the office my wife and I had another falling out about Sarah, against whom she has a deadly hate, I know not for what, nor can I see but she is a very good servant. Then to my office, and there sat all the morning, and then to dinner with my wife at home, and after dinner did give Jane a very serious lesson, against we take her to be our chamber-maid, which I spoke so to her that the poor girl cried and did promise to be very dutifull and carefull. So to the office, where we sat as Commissioners for the Chest, and so examined most of the old accountants to the Chest about it, and so we broke up, and I to my office till late preparing business, and so home, being cold, and this night first put on a wastecoate. So to bed.

Sunday 7 December 1662

(Lord's day). A great snow, and so to church this morning with my wife, which is the first time she hath been at church since her going to Brampton, and Gosnell attending her, which was very gracefull. So home, and we dined above in our dining room, the first time since it was new done, and in the afternoon I thought to go to the French church; but finding the Dutch congregation there, and then finding the French congregation's sermon begun in the Dutch, I returned home, and up to our gallery, where I found my wife and Gosnell, and after a drowsy sermon, we all three to my aunt Wight's, where great store of her usuall company, and here we staid a pretty while talking, I differing from my aunt, as I commonly do, in our opinion of the handsomeness of the Queen, which I oppose mightily, saying that if my nose be handsome, then is her's, and such like. After much discourse, seeing the room full, and being unwilling to stay all three, I took leave, and so with my wife only to see Sir W. Pen, who is now got out of his bed, and sits by the fireside. And after some talk, home and to supper, and after prayers to bed. This night came in my wife's brother and talked to my wife and Gosnell about his wife, which they told me afterwards of, and I do smell that he I doubt is overreached in thinking that he has got a rich wife, and I fear she will prove otherwise. So to bed.

Tuesday 9 December 1662

Lay long with my wife, contenting her about the business of Gosnell's going, and I perceive she will be contented as well as myself, and so to the office, and after sitting all the morning in hopes to have Mr. Coventry dine with me, he was forced to go to White Hall, and so I dined with my own company only, taking Mr. Hater home with me, but he, poor man, was not very well, and so could not eat any thing. After dinner staid within all the afternoon, being vexed in my mind about the going away of Sarah this afternoon, who cried mightily, and so was I ready to do, and Jane did also, and then anon went Gosnell away, which did trouble me too; though upon many considerations, it is better that I am rid of the charge. All together makes my house appear to me very lonely, which troubles me much, and in a melancholy humour I went to the office, and there about business sat till I was called to Sir G. Carteret at the Treasury office about my Lord Treasurer's letter, wherein he puts me to a new trouble to write it over again. So home and late