

Week Twenty-Eight: Georgia O'Keeffe and Possessives

Weekly Focus: Analysis
Weekly Skill: Inference

Lesson Summary: This week students will focus on the skill of "inferring." Students will read an article without a directly stated claim and then be asked to use supporting details and examples to infer the essay's main idea. Students will also review how to form plural nouns and then we be introduced to the rules for creating possessive nouns. Finally, students will have a chance to discuss this unit's essential question, "What does success look like?"

Materials Needed: Projector, Computer and Internet Access, Elmo, Notecards, O'Keeffe Essay, O'Keeffe video, Inference Graphic Organizer, O'Keeffe Possessives, Forming Possessives, Plural Nouns (review), Writing a Paragraph

Objectives: Students will be able to...

- Identify important supporting details in an essay
- Use supporting details to infer a claim
- Identify possessive nouns
- Form possessive nouns
- Critically discuss the essential question

Common Core Standards Addressed: RL.11-12.1, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4, L.6.1e

Notes:

The skill of inference can be difficult to teach. The graphic organizer provided helps explain the distinction between *what someone says* and *what meaning is inferred*.

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Activities:

Warm-Up/Review: Creative Writing

Time: 20 minutes

Have students choose an object in the room. It can be any object. Students must then write a paragraph, describing this object *without naming it*. Encourage students to be as descriptive as possible and to use all five senses in their description. It may be useful to provide an example. When students are finished writing, have them read their descriptions to a partner and see if the partner can guess the object. Finally, remind students that being as detailed and specific as possible in the descriptions they give of objects, events, or people when writing an essay will make them stronger writers. Good descriptive writing creates a mental snapshot for the reader.

Reading and Writing Activity:

Time: 80 minutes

- **Introduction to Georgia O'Keeffe:** Give students a brief background on [Georgia O'Keeffe](#). Next, show them the O'Keeffe video.
- **Critical Reading:** 1) Before you begin reading, explain that this essay is a written snapshot of a person (Georgia O'Keeffe), as created by another writer (Joan Didion). Didion will try to use experiences and descriptions from both her own life as well as the life of O'Keeffe to give the reader the clearest understanding of who O'Keeffe really was in just a couple of pages.

Didion will make a **claim**, or **thesis** about what kind of a woman O'Keeffe was. However, like many essays, Didion's claim is not directly stated. Students will need to **infer** her claim through the details that Didion provides. The skill of being able to infer information, will be one that is necessary for students to pass the GED. 2) Encourage students as they read to be looking for clues to O'Keeffe's personality. What kind of person, according to Joan Didion, was Georgia O'Keeffe?

2) Read through the essay together, having students underline important clues to O'Keeffe's personality as they go through. Stop after each paragraph to discuss one or two sentences that students have chosen to underline as important.

3) After you read, write the three questions below on the white-board or project them on the Elmo and have students discuss them in groups. Go over as a class.

- How were O'Keeffe's paintings different than the men who were painting at the same time as her?**
- Didion uses the word "Hardness" to describe O'Keeffe. What do you think she means by this?**
- What do you think made O'Keeffe a successful artist?**

- **Analyzing the essay:** 1) Hand out the Inference Graphic Organizer. Put one copy up onto the Elmo. Explain to the class that you are going to use this graphic organizer to infer, using quotes from the article, what Joan Didion's claim is concerning the kind of woman Georgia O'Keeffe was. 2) Write the subject (O'Keeffe) together and then, as a class, choose one important quote. Be sure to list who said the quote, O'Keeffe, or Didion. Try to explore together what the quote means. What clues does it give us into O'Keeffe? Write this on the organizer. 3) Have students complete the graphic organizer in pairs or alone.
- **Writing a Paragraph:** After students have finished, have them write one paragraph that

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describes what kind of woman Georgia O'Keeffe was. As evidence, have them use at least one quote from the article. Remind students that a strong paragraph should include a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence. *As an alternate assignment, students may also choose to draw a representation of the kind of woman they believe Georgia O'Keeffe to be, based on this article. If students choose this option, they should also include at least one quote from the article that supports their drawing.*

Break: 10 minutes

Grammar Activity: Introductory Clauses

Time: 60 minutes

Review: Review rules for forming plural nouns. Ask students to spot as many plural nouns as they can in the first page of today's reading. Go over these together.

Introduction: Hand-out Grammar Rules for Forming Possessives. Go over together as a class. As you go through as a class, have students work in groups to come up with a sample sentence for each rule.

Practice: Handout O'Keeffe Grammar and have students complete with a partner or alone. Go over as a class.

Game: If time, project this online [tic-tac-toe possessives game](#) onto a screen or whiteboard. Divide students into two teams (or more if you have time to play more than one game). Have students discuss answers as a group and you, as the teacher, move the arrow to their response. The group to form a tic-tac-toe first wins.

Wrap-up: Essential Question

Time: 10 minutes

Hand out one note-card to each student. On the front, have students write the name of one artist (can be a musician, writer, painter, etc.) whom they believe is successful. Have them flip the card over. Tell them that although there are many people who want to be successful as an artist, not all of them are. Ask students what they believe makes the artist they chose successful. Talent? Dedication? Being willing to do something nobody else does? Have them write their answer on the back of the note-card and then share with a partner.

Extra Work/Homework:

Time:

Have students write an essay answering this question: "How does someone become a successful artist?" Explain to students that an artist may also be a musician, author, etc.

Differentiated Instruction/ELL Accommodation Suggestions	Activity
For the paragraph writing, have beginning students use the "How to Write a Paragraph" graphic organizer. You may also choose to provide the thesis for them.	Paragraph
Encourage Advanced students to return to their Creative Writing for today and to identify 5 nouns. Then have them write 5 new sentences making these nouns possessive.	Grammar

Online Resources:

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- 1) [Georgia O'Keeffe](#)
- 2) [Forming Possessive Nouns Purdue OWL](#)

Suggested Teacher Readings: TBA

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE by Joan Didion



"Ram's Head White Hollyhock and Little Hills", 1935 by Georgia O'Keeffe

Where I was born and where and how I have lived is unimportant," Georgia O'Keeffe told us in the book of paintings and words published in her ninetieth year on earth. She seemed to be advising us to forget the beautiful face in the Stieglitz photographs. She appeared to be dismissing the rather **condescending** romance that had attached to her by then, the romance of extreme good looks and advanced age and deliberate isolation. "It is what I have done with where I have been that should be of interest." I recall an August afternoon in Chicago in 1973 when I took my daughter, then seven, to see what Georgia O'Keeffe had done with where she had been. One of the vast O'Keeffe "Sky Above Clouds" canvases floated over the back stairs in the Chicago Art Institute that day, dominating what seemed to be several stories of empty light, and my daughter looked at it once, ran to the landing, and kept on looking. "Who drew it," she whispered after a while. I told her. "I need to talk to her," she said finally.

My daughter was making, that day in Chicago, an entirely unconscious, but quite basic assumption about people and the work they do. She was assuming that the glory she saw in the work reflected a glory in its maker, that the painting was the painter as the poem is the poet, that every choice one made alone—every word chosen or rejected, every brush stroke laid or not laid down—betrayed one's character. Style is character. It seemed to me that afternoon that I had rarely seen so instinctive an application of this familiar principle, and I recall being pleased not only that my daughter responded to style as character but that it was Georgia O'Keeffe's particular style to which she responded: this was a hard woman who had imposed her 192 square feet of clouds on Chicago.

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“Hardness” has not been in our century a quality much admired in women, nor in the past twenty years has it even been in official favor for men. When hardness surfaces in the very old we tend to transform it into “crustiness” or eccentricity, some tonic pepperiness to be indulged at a distance. On the evidence of her work and what she has said about it, Georgia O’Keeffe is neither “crusty” nor eccentric. She is simply hard, a straight shooter, a woman clean of received wisdom and open to what she sees. This is a woman who could early on dismiss most of her contemporaries as “dreamy,” and would later single out one she liked as “a very poor painter.” (And then add, apparently by way of softening the judgment: “I guess he wasn’t a painter at all. He had no courage and I believe that to create one’s own world in any of the arts takes courage.”) This is a woman who in 1939 could advise her admirers that they were missing her point, that their appreciation of her famous flowers was merely sentimental. “When I paint a red hill,” she observed coolly in the catalogue for an exhibition that year, “you say it is too bad that I don’t always paint flowers. A flower touches almost everyone’s heart. A red hill doesn’t touch everyone’s heart.” This is a woman who could describe the **genesis** of one of her most well-known paintings—the “Cow’s Skull: Red, White and Blue” owned by the Metropolitan—as an act of quite deliberate and **derisive** orneriness. “I thought of the city men I had been seeing in the East,” she wrote. “They talked so often of writing the Great American Novel—the Great American Play—the Great American Poetry. . . . So as I was painting my cow’s head on blue I thought to myself, ‘I’ll make it an American painting. They will not think it great with the red stripes down the sides—Red, White and Blue—but they will notice it.’”



“Cow’s Skull: Red, White and Blue” Georgia O’Keeffe, 1918.

The city men. The men. They. The words crop up again and again as this astonishingly aggressive woman tells us what was on her mind when she was making her astonishingly

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aggressive paintings. It was those city men who stood accused of sentimentalizing her flowers: "I made you take time to look at what I saw and when you took time to really notice my flower you hung all your associations with flowers on my flower and you write about my flower as if I think and see what you think and see—and I don't." And I don't. Imagine those words spoken, and the sound you hear is don't tread on me. "The men" believed it impossible to paint New York, so Georgia O'Keeffe painted New York. "The men" didn't think much of her bright color, so she made it brighter. The men yearned toward Europe so she went to Texas, and then New Mexico. The men talked about Cézanne, "long involved remarks about the 'plastic quality' of his form and color," and took one another's long involved remarks, in the view of this angelic rattlesnake in their midst, altogether too seriously. "I can paint one of those dismal-colored paintings like the men," the woman who regarded herself always as an outsider remembers thinking one day in 1922, and she did: a painting of a shed "all low-toned and dreary with the tree beside the door." She called the act of **rancor** "The Shanty" and hung it in her next show. "The men seemed to approve of it," she reported fifty-four years later, her contempt undimmed. "They seemed to think that maybe I was beginning to paint. That was my only low-toned dismal-colored painting."

Some women fight and others do not. Like so many successful guerrillas in the war between the sexes, Georgia O'Keeffe seems to have been equipped early with an **immutable** sense of who she was and a fairly clear understanding that she would be required to prove it. On the surface her upbringing was conventional. She was a child on the Wisconsin prairie who played with china dolls and painted watercolors with cloudy skies because sunlight was too hard to paint and, with her brother and sisters, listened every night to her mother read stories of the Wild West, of Texas, of Kit Carson and Billy the Kid. She told adults that she wanted to be an artist and was embarrassed when they asked what kind of artist she wanted to be: she had no idea "what kind." She had no idea what artists did. She had never seen a picture that interested her, other than a pen-and-ink Maid of Athens in one of her mother's books, some Mother Goose illustrations printed on cloth, a tablet cover that showed a little girl with pink roses, and the painting of Arabs on horseback that hung in her grandmother's parlor. At thirteen, in a Dominican convent, she was mortified when the sister corrected her drawing. At Chatham Episcopal Institute in Virginia she painted lilacs and sneaked time alone to walk out to where she could see the line of the Blue Ridge Mountains on the horizon. At the Art Institute in Chicago she was shocked by the presence of live models and wanted to abandon anatomy lessons. At the Art Students League in New York one of her fellow students advised her that, since he would be a great painter and she would end up teaching painting in a girls' school, any work of hers was less important than modeling for him. Another painted over her work to show her how the Impressionists did

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trees. She had not before heard how the Impressionists did trees and she did not much care.



At twenty-four she left all those opinions behind and went for the first time to live in Texas, where there were no trees to paint and no one to tell her how not to paint them. In Texas there was only the horizon she craved. In Texas she had her sister Claudia with her for a while, and in the late afternoons they would walk away from town and toward the horizon and watch the evening star come out. "That evening star fascinated me," she wrote. "It was in some way very exciting to me. My sister had a gun, and as we walked she would throw bottles in the air and shoot as many as she could before they hit the ground. I had nothing but to walk into nowhere and the wide sunset space with the star. Ten watercolors were made from that star." In a way one's interest is compelled as much by the sister Claudia with the gun as by the painter Georgia with the star, but only the painter left us this shining record. Ten watercolors were made from that star.

FORMING POSSESSIVES OF NOUNS

To see if you need to make a possessive, turn the phrase around and make it an "of the..." phrase.

For example:

the boy's hat = the hat of the boy
three days' journey = journey of three days

If the noun after "of" is a building, an object, or a piece of furniture, then **no** apostrophe is needed!

room of the hotel = hotel room
door of the car = car door
leg of the table = table leg

Once you've determined whether you need to make a possessive, follow these rules to create one:

1) add 's to the singular form of the word (even if it ends in -s):

the owner's car
James's hat (James' hat is also acceptable. For plural, proper nouns that are possessive, use an apostrophe after the 's': "The Eggles' presentation was good."
The Eggles are a husband and wife consultant team.)

2) add 's to the plural forms that do not end in -s:

the children's game
the geese's honking

3) add ' to the end of plural nouns that end in -s:

two cats' toys
three friends' letters
the countries' laws

4) add 's to the end of compound words:

my brother-in-law's money

5) add 's to the last noun to show joint possession of an object:

Todd and Anne's apartment

Taken from the Purdue OWL online writing lab < <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/621/01/>>

O'KEEFFE POSSESSIVES

Directions: Read the following sentences. For each number, change the omitted word to make it possessive. Write your answers in the blank. Then, write the thing(s) being possessed after the sentence.

- 1) The _____ daughter assumed that every choice made alone betrayed _____
 (author) (one)
 character.

- 2) It was _____ particular style to which she responded.
 (Georgia O'Keeffe)

- 3) A flower touches almost _____ heart.
 (everyone)

- 4) As O'Keeffe painted her _____ head on blue, she thought, "I'll make it an
 American painting." (cow)

- 5) _____ landscapes were inspirational to O'Keeffe and her work.
 (New Mexico)

- 6) O'Keeffe liked a painting of an Arab on a horseback that hung in
 her _____ parlor.
 (grandmother)

- 7) _____ opinions did not bother her.
 (Others)

- 8) O'Keeffe fondly remembered her _____ gun, and how Claudia would use it
 to shoot bottles from the sky. (sister)

- 9) It is clear from _____ essay that she respects Georgia O'Keeffe as an
 artist and woman. (Joan Didion)

Thing (s) Being Possessed?
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

RULES FOR FORMING PLURALS OF NOUNS

1. Most nouns are made plural by adding s. cat - cats dog - dogs
2. Nouns ending in sh, ch, s, or x are made plural by adding es. bush - bushes class - classes church - churches box - boxes (Exception is animal names, which may be the same in the singular and the plural: fish, fox.)
3. Nouns ending in y preceded by a vowel (a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y and w) are made plural by adding s. monkey - monkeys key - keys
4. Nouns ending in y preceded by a consonant (any letter not a vowel) are made plural by changing the y to i and adding es. baby - babies lady - ladies
5. Many nouns ending in f or fe are made plural by changing f or fe to ves. knife - knives scarf - scarves wife - wives
6. Nouns ending in o preceded by a vowel are made plural by adding s. rodeo - rodeos radio - radios
7. Some nouns ending in o preceded by a consonant become plural by adding es. potato - potatoes tomato - tomatoes
8. Many two-word and three-word compound nouns are made plural by adding s to the more important noun. daughter-in-law - daughters-in-law passer-by - passers-by
9. Certain nouns change the vowel or add en. man - men foot - feet ox - oxen goose - geese
10. A few nouns are the same in both singular and plural. deer - deer sheep - sheep
11. Some nouns have no singular form. pants - pants scissors - scissors
12. Letters used as letters (as in "the letter b"), figures used as figures, signs, or words used as words (as in the word orange) are made plural by adding an apostrophe plus s. m - two m's in this word or - three or's in this sentence i; t - Dot your i's and cross your t's

