

Teacher's Guide

Aligned to the Common Core State Standards

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Table of Contents

- 3 Notes to the Teacher
- 3 Directions for Pre-Reading Activity
- 4 The Benefactor: Contestant Application





Discussion Questions

- 5 Episode 1: Pages 4 40
- 7 Episode 1: Pages 40 59
- 8 Episode 2: Pages 61 85
- 9 Episode 2: Pages 85 112
- 10 Episode 3: Pages 114 137
- 11 Episode 3: Pages 137 161
- 13 Episode 4: Pages 164 192
- 15 Episode 4: Pages 192 214
- 17 Episode 5: Pages 216 238
- 18 Episode 5: Pages 238 258
- 20 Episode 6: Pages 260 276
- 21 Episode 6: Pages 276 313



End-of-Novel Writing

23 Writing Contest: Challenging the College Admissions Process



24 Language Arts Common Core State Standards

Notes to the Teacher

The activities and handouts in this Teacher's Guide are meant to supplement your students' reading of *The Benefactor* by Erin Fry. You are free to use the pages as you'd like and to copy them for your students. You are also welcome to share them with colleagues.

Erin Fry and Nicole Boylan have both spent many years in the classroom. They have also worked for several educational publishers, writing curriculum and assessment. Their passion is creating curricula that is pedagogically sound, standards-aligned, and engaging for students. They hope you enjoy this guide and welcome your feedback at their website: http://curriculumspecialists.blogspot.com/.

Summary

These eight high school seniors come from different walks of life, with different problems and different hopes and dreams. But they have one thing in common: they need a scholarship to college. And they're ready to battle seven other contestants on a reality TV show to get it. There's:

Mei, a budding artist with a secret disability;

Henry, not in it for the money but for the chance to follow his true dream;

Lucy, a tough Texan from a new kind of family;

Tyrell, an injured football star with a sick sister at home;

Sam, a musician with no family to fall back on;

Allyson, a devout Christian with a good reason to pray;

Cassidy, a beauty with a secret; and

Hiroshi, a varsity swimmer who left behind his true love. But only one contestant can win on *The Benefactor*. Who will take home the big prize?

Directions for the Pre-Reading Activity SL.9-10.1; SL.9-10.6

- The day before you plan to introduce this book, make enough copies of The Benefactor: Contestant Application for all of your students.
- 2. Explain to your students that they have the opportunity to apply for a reality show in which they could compete for a full-ride scholarship to any college in the country. They would not have to take SATs, fill out applications, or write essays. But they would have to win this competition.
- 3. Ask how many students are interested. For those students who raise their hands, give them an application form and time to fill it out. For those who don't, ask them to write a short essay explaining why they are not interested, including what their future plans are.
- 4. Collect all the applications, as well as the essays from the students choosing not to compete.
- 5. Place all the applications in a pile and shuffle them. Randomly pull out eight of them and read those names aloud. Tell them that they have been chosen as the competitors on *The Benefactor*. Explain that they will be flown to southern California where they will compete against one another in difficult challenges for the next three weeks.
- 6. Ask those eight students, How do you feel about this opportunity? How do you feel about your chances of winning? Could this change your life?
- 7. Now ask those students who weren't chosen, How do you feel? Knowing that you still have to go through the whole application process and someone in here will not, are you resentful? Do you think that a competition like this is a fair substitute for the college application process?



The Benefactor

Contestant Application

In order to be considered by the producers of *The Benefactor*, you must complete this entire application and verify that all information is true. If you are contacted, you will then be asked to submit a short video, and provide a little more background information about yourself, including a few photos and references.

First Name:	Last Name:
Birth Date:	
Have you ever been on television before? (If yes, ple	ease explain.)
In 50 words or less, please provide a short bio of you what your believe are your strengths and weaknessed	urself, including your hobbies, your likes and dislikes, and es.
What is the last thing you've read?	
In 25 words or less, how do you define success in lif	fe?
How would winning this competition and receiving a life?	full-ride scholarship to the college of your choice change your
If you don't win this competition, what are your college	ge or career plans after high school?
What matters more to you: success, loyalty, integrity	v, or power? Why?
On a scale of 1 to 10, how competitive are you? Pro	wide an example from your life to illustrate this
on a scale of 1 to 10, now competitive are you? FIO	mustrate triis.
Your signature here verifies this information to be true	uthful to the best of your knowledge:



Episode 1: Pages 9 - 40

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Describe the purpose of the reality show, *The Benefactor*, including who the competitors are and what they are competing for. Why do you think a show like this might appeal to high school seniors?
- 2. What is your first impression of the Benefactor—the man who has created the show? Cite at least two pieces of evidence from the text to support your opinion.

Examining Text Structure RL.9-10.5

- 4. The author has chosen to narrate this story from alternating third person points-of-view. Why do you think she chose this over first person point-of-view? What are the advantages to telling the story this way? The disadvantages?
- 5. Each character's section begins with a time and location stamp. What do you think is the purpose of this? How does this add to the "reality show" feel of the book?
- 6. Instead of having one main character, there are eight—nine, if you count the Benefactor. In what ways will this make this story different from traditional stories that have one main character? How might this affect your experience as a reader?

Determining Theme RL.9-10.2

- 7. Read the opening quote by John Jay on page 8. In your own words, summarize the meaning of this quote.
- 8. Why do you think this quote was included?
- 9. This quote, plus the goal of the competition, clues readers into one of the themes of this book. In a short paragraph, identify what you think this theme is and use examples from the book to discuss how the author is already developing it.



Getting to Know the Characters RL.9-10.1, RL9-10.3

These first pages are the author's way of introducing all eight contestants to the reader, and providing enough background on each one that readers can start to form opinions about each. Much like when we meet new people in real life, we immediately begin to form impressions of these eight teenagers and even start to root for—or against—some of them.

Fill in the chart below to describe some of your first opinions of these teens. Then, choose a passage from each section that you think best illustrates that character. Finally, rank them from one to eight on whether you think they have the best shot (#1) or the worst shot (#8) of winning this competition.

Character	At Least Three Descriptive Words That Sum Up Your First Impression of This Character	Specific Passage from Text (with page #) That Illustrates This Character's Personality, Background, Beliefs, or Motivations	Your Rank (from 1 to 8) of This Character's Chances of Winning
Cassidy McGowan (p.16-20)			
Tyrell Young (p. 20-22)			
Henry Stone IV (p. 22-26)			
Mei Zhang (p. 26-28)			
Sam Michaels (p. 28-31)			
Hiroshi Yamamura (p. 32-34)			
Lucy del Castillo (p. 34-37)			
Allyson Murphy (p. 38-40)			



Episode 1: Pages 40 - 59

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Why do you think the Benefactor chose this challenge to start off the competition? What different skills or qualities do you think it highlights in the competitors?
- 2. Of the four teams, whose strategy for getting into Disneyland do you think the Benefactor admired the most? Provide at least one passage from the book to support your answer.
- 3. Some would argue that Mei's and Allyson's "win" was unfair. Others might say they were simply playing the game. What do you think?

Examining Text Structure RL.9-10.5

- 4. The novel is divided into six Episodes. Why is that an especially effective structure for this particular novel?
- 5. A **cliffhanger** is a type of plot device in which an ending of a chapter or section is strangely abrupt. Whatever problem the main characters are facing is left unresolved so that suspense is created, leaving the readers asking, "What will happen next?" The cliffhanger plot device ensures readers will keep reading to find out what happens.
 - a. How is the ending of Episode 1 a cliffhanger?
 - b. Is it an effective ending? In other words, does it create enough suspense to keep the reader's interest?
 - c. Of the two characters who could be sent home, who do you think the Benefactor will choose to eliminate? Why? Cite at least one example from the story to support your answer.

Discovering a Character: the Benefactor RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.3

- 6. What seems to be the Benefactor's motivation for creating this competition for the teenagers?
- 7. What new information do we learn about the Benefactor in this section?
- 8. Why do you think he has such an interest in the contestants?



Episode 2: Pages 61 - 85

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

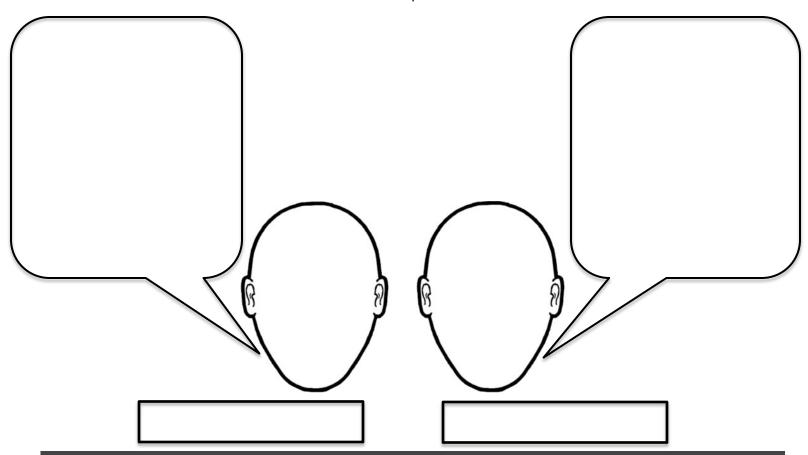
- 1. Why do you think the Benefactor eliminated who he did? Do you agree with his decision? Why or why not?
- 2. What are the living arrangements for the contestants for the duration of the competition? Do you think these arrangements will affect the game? If so, in what way?
- 3. The four guys seem to make an alliance on page 84. Do you think this alliance will last? Why or why not? Give 1-2 examples from the text to support your answer.

Evaluating Characters RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.3

As the novel progresses, the reader has the opportunity to get more familiar with each of the contestants and, in addition to forming opinions about each, can begin to weigh their chances of winning the contest.

Choose one of the four guys and one of the thee remaining girls who you think have demonstrated certain qualities that might make them more likely to win. Write the name of the guy under the left outline and the girl under the right outline. Sketch in physical features to show what you think that contestant might look like.

Then, in the speech bubble, write two sentences from their point-of-view explaining why they believe they are top contenders to win *The Benefactor*. Make sure to use examples and details from the book.





Episode 2: Pages 85 - 112

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Why do you think the Benefactor chose this challenge for the competitors? What different skills or qualities do you think it highlights?
- 2. What challenge does Mei have in this competition? How does it impact her chances of winning? How does she try to compensate for it?
- 3. What do you think causes Henry's meltdown? How might this affect his chances in the competition?
- 4. Who do you think will be eliminated this round? Why?

Discovering a Character: Mei RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.3

The reader gets to know Mei quite a bit more in this Episode. We learn about her character's weaknesses, but we also see her battle with her fears and insecurities. In the boxes below, find three passages from the book that reveal something about Mei. Copy each passage and the page number. Then, write down a descriptive word for Mei (i.e. timid, worried, insecure, etc.) that this passage exemplifies.

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:



Page #: Passage:



Episode 3: Pages 114 - 137

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Why do you think the Benefactor eliminated who he did? Do you agree with his decision? Why or why not?
- 2. Who is most of Henry's anger directed against? Why?
- 3. Explain why you think Cassidy keeps landing in the bottom two. Why do you think she still in the competition?
- 4. Some possible alliances and friendships are starting to form: Cassidy and Sam; Cassidy and Allyson; Hiroshi and Tyrell. Pick one and argue in a few sentences why you think it's beneficial or detrimental for those two contestants to team up.

Discovering a Character: Henry RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.3

Henry is a complex character. In the boxes below, find three passages from the book that reveal something about Henry. Copy each passage and the page number. Then, write down a descriptive word for Henry (i.e. timid, worried, insecure, etc.) that this passage exemplifies.

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:



Page #: Passage:



Episode 3: Pages 137 - 161

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Why do you think the Benefactor chose this challenge for the competitors? What different skills or qualities do you think it highlights?
- 2. Why does Sam choose to help Henry? Do you think it is a wise decision?
- 3. Why do Tyrell and Hiroshi struggle so much with this task?
- 4. Do you think Allyson's method of completing this challenge is fair? Why or why not?
- 5. How does this challenge show a new side of Sam?

Analyzing Text Structure: Flashback RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.5

A **flashback** is a scene that interrupts the narrative, or story, to tell about an event that happened before the story occurred. Flashbacks allow an author to give the reader background information on a character, as well as to create tension or contrast.

Turn to page 141 and reread the flashback that starts with the passage, "His dad never said a whole lot, actually" and that ends on page 142 with the words "the uncertainty of any more seasons."

- 6. What do we learn from this flashback about Tyrell's relationship with his dad?
- 7. What is the mood (or feeling) of this flashback? Remember that mood is the general feeling of a certain scene and is usually described by an adjective like anxious, relaxed, upbeat, or gloomy. Copy one passage from this flashback that made you choose that adjective.

Turn to page 157 and reread the flashback that starts with the passage, "For so many months . . ." and that ends with the words "to pay off already."

- 8. What do we learn from this flashback about Allyson's life back home?
- 9. What do you think is the purpose of this flashback? In other words, why does the author go into such detail instead of simply saying something like, "Allyson thought about her dying mom back home and knew she couldn't give up"?



Analyzing a Character: Hiroshi RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.3

Hiroshi, though reserved and quiet, lets the reader see some of his motivation for doing this competition. In the boxes below, find three passages from the book that reveal something about Hiroshi. Copy each passage and the page number. Then, write down a descriptive word for Hiroshi (i.e. timid, worried, insecure, etc.) that this passage exemplifies.

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:

Page #: Passage:

Descriptive Word:



Page #: Passage:



Episode 4: Pages 164 - 192

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Why do you think the Benefactor eliminated who he did? Do you agree with his decision? Why or why not?
- 2. Why is the chancellor upset with the Benefactor?
- 3. Does Henry's violent reaction when he learns about his father surprise you? Why or why not?
- 4. Should Allyson team up with Tyrell? How would it benefit her? How might it hurt her?
- 5. Why do you think Cassidy is reluctant to tell Sam the truth?

Analyzing a Character: Cassidy RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.3

We've gotten to know Cassidy, not only from her own thoughts and admissions, but also through the eyes of Sam and even Allyson. In the boxes below, find three passages from the book that reveal something about Cassidy. Copy each passage and the page number. Then, write down a descriptive word for Cassidy (i.e. timid, worried, insecure, etc.) that this passage exemplifies.

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:



Page #: Passage:



Examining Suspense RL.9-10.5

Suspense is the intense feeling of anticipation a reader goes through while waiting for the outcome of an event in a story. Authors can create suspense by adding tension, increasing the pace of the story, or by foreshadowing events to come.

One of the best ways to create suspense, however, is to withhold information from readers and sometimes characters.

At the beginning of this Episode, the Benefactor makes it clear that he has an announcement for the contestants that will affect the outcome of the game for one of them.

- 6. As a reader, how does this create suspense?
- 7. How did this news create suspense and tension for each of the contestants?
- 8. How might reading this section have been different if you, as the reader, had known what the Benefactor was going to announce, but the characters had not?
- 9. All of the contestants (except maybe Sam) were surprised by the Benefactor's announcement, since they had convinced themselves that it concerned each of them personally. Were you surprised by his announcement? Why?



Episode 4: Pages 192 - 214

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Why do you think the Benefactor chose this challenge for the competitors? What different skills or qualities do you think it highlights?
- 2. Whose strategy for this challenge do you think the Benefactor would admire the most? Why?
- 3. Do you think Cassidy should trust Alex Ginsberg? Why or why not?
- 4. Who do you think will be eliminated this round? Why?

Writing a Summary RL.9-10.2; W.9-10.9

Each of the remaining four contestants has now survived a lot to get to this point. Choose one of the four contestants left in the competition: Allyson, Tyrell, Sam, or Cassidy. Write a letter from that contestant's perspective to a friend or relative back home. In your letter, summarize the highlights of the competition so far, including the challenges, your living conditions, and your impressions of the other contestants. Your letter should:

- · include a proper greeting and closing.
- · have more than one paragraph.
- include specific details from the story.
- be free of grammatical and spelling errors.

Determining Word Meanings RL.9-10.4

Read each sentence from *The Benefactor*. Use the context of each sentence, and a dictionary if necessary, to determine the meaning of the underlined word. Write that definition in the blank. Then, complete the final comprehension question or task.

	"The Benefactor suspects you'll need far more than <i>luck</i> to succeed in today's challenge. You'll need resourcefulness, persistence, and <u>audacity.</u> " (p. 194)			
	Audacity most likely means		·	
	Someone who has audacity might			
	a. challenge a long-standing law.	b. have a lot of friends.	c. get good grades in school	
2.	She glanced around. There was, of cours	se, a cameraman a <u>discreet</u> distance a	way filming everything. (p. 214)	
	Discreet most likely means			
	If you did something discreetly, the people around you might			
	a. be angry at the disruption.	b. enjoy the comical entertainment.	c. not even notice.	



Analyzing a Character: Allyson RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.3

Allyson has changed a great deal since the beginning of the competition. In the boxes below, find three passages from the book that reveal something about Allyson. Copy each passage and the page number. Then, write down a descriptive word for Allyson (i.e. timid, worried, insecure, etc.) that this passage exemplifies.

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:

Page #: Passage:

Descriptive Word:



Page #: Passage:



Episode 5: Pages 216 - 238

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Were you surprised by this Elimination? Do you think it was fair? Why or why not?
- 2. Do you think Cassidy's anger at Sam on page 228 is justified? Why or why not?
- 3. Why do you think the Benefactor is becoming so invested in the competition? Predict what that might mean for the competitors.
- 4. Do you think Sam's concern for Cassidy is wise in regards to his success in the game? Why or why not?

Analyzing a Character: Sam RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.3

Sam reveals a lot about himself in this Episode. In the boxes below, find three passages from the book that reveal something about Sam. Copy each passage and the page number. Then, write down a descriptive word for Sam (i.e. timid, worried, insecure, etc.) that this passage exemplifies.

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:



Page #: Passage:



Episode 5: Pages 238 - 258

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Why do you think the Benefactor chose this challenge for the competitors? What different skills or qualities do you think it highlights?
- 2. Of the three contestants, who is the only one who actually figures out how to do the task on their own? Does this surprise you?
- 3. What was the Benefactor's relationship with his dad? Cite at least one passage from the text that illustrates this relationship.
- 4. Why do you think Cassidy decides to help Tyrell? Do you think it is a smart thing to do? Why or why not?

Writing an Argument W.9-10.1

The author doesn't reveal, at the end of Episode 5, who is in danger of going home, but one could infer from the fact that Cassidy has given away her game ticket and received her Dodgers ticket, that she is probably safe. Assuming then that either Sam or Tyrell might be eliminated, write a plea to the Benefactor in which you try to persuade him to keep one of them. You can choose to argue for Sam or Tyrell (but not both), and your argument must:

- · clearly state why you think this contestant deserves to stay in the competition.
- · include specific details from the story.
- be free of grammatical and spelling errors.



Examining Word Choice and Tone RL.9-10.4

The challenge of having so many different characters telling a story is that each of them must have a distinctive voice and point-of-view. Even though the story is told in third-person, each character's narrative must still sound different than every other character.

Reread the following passages below. Without looking in your book, decide which character's voice is being represented. In other words, who is thinking or saying the words. Write their name in the blank. Then, look up the page number to see if you are correct.

Finally, try to come up with a word to describe this character's overall tone in this passage. For example, you might describe a character's tone as angry, flippant, gullible, frightened, hardened, etc.

1.	He freaking hated baseball. Baseball was a sissy sport. (p. 250)
	Character: Tone:
2.	He'd failed. And he'd done it miserably and publicly Like a pathetic loser. (p. 115)
	Character: Tone:
3.	At least when he was in his worn secondhand shirts and the shorts he made by cutting off his frayed jeans, he could pretend that he hadn't let go of that scrappy, soulful part of himself that allowed him to survive without parents, money, or guidance for seventeen years. (p. 169)
	Character: Tone:
4.	But mostly, she'd just felt satisfaction that she'd finished the thing without having to rely on anyone else. Not a single other person. (p. 223)
	Character: Tone:
5.	So why did this feel like sitting in physics class when Mr. Leung talked about vector components and [her] brain elt as if someone was running it through a meat grinder? (p. 91)
	Character: Tone:



Episode 6: Pages 260 - 276

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Were you surprised by this Elimination? Do you think it was fair? Why or why not?
- 2. Of the two remaining contestants, who do you think deserves to win more? Why?
- 3. In 1-2 sentences, summarize the argument the Benefactor makes to Chancellor Bingham. Is it a valid argument? Why or why not?
- 4. What does the Benefactor reveal about his father's death? What might we infer about the connection between his father's death and the Benefactor's involvement in this competition?

Analyzing a Character: Tyrell RL.9-10.1; RL9-10.3

Tyrell has revealed himself and his past in bits in pieces over the past Episodes. In the boxes below, find three passages from the book that reveal something about Tyrell. Copy each passage and the page number. Then, write down a descriptive word for Tyrell (i.e. timid, worried, insecure, etc.) that this passage exemplifies.

Page #: Passage: Descriptive Word:

Page #:
Passage:

Descriptive Word:



Page #: Passage:



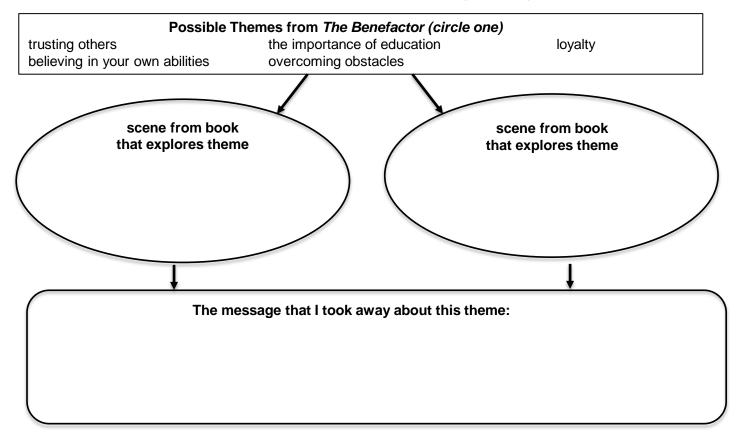
Episode 6: Pages 276 - 313

Interpreting the Text RL.9-10.1

- 1. Why do you think the Benefactor chose this challenge for the competitors? What different skills or qualities do you think it highlights?
- 2. Why do you think the Benefactor chose to bring back the two competitors he did?
- 3. Does Hiroshi's response to Tyrell's apology surprise you? Why or why not?
- 4. What does Cassidy risk by telling Sam about Faith? Do you think she made the right decision?
- 5. How do you feel about who won the competition? Did that person deserve it? Explain your answer using justification from the book.
- 6. Were you surprised by the winner's offer at the end? Why or why not?

Examining a Theme of a Novel RL.9-10.2

The Benefactor touches on a few key themes. Some of these themes were intentional, developed and well thought-out by the author Erin Fry. Other themes may have arisen from *your* interpretation of the novel and represent your takeaway from the book. Think about the themes of this novel. Then choose a theme (you can pick one from the box below or use one of your own) and complete the graphic organizer.





Examining Primary Source Quotes RL.9-10.2, RI.9-10.5

Each of the six episodes begins with a quote. Reread each of the quotes below and summarize what it means in your own words. Then, since you have now read the entire story, think about how each of these quotes relates to the overall story and message of the book.

Quote	Explanation of quote in your own words	Summary (in 1-2 sentences) of how this quote relates to the overall message or story
"[N]othing should be left undone to afford all ranks of people the means of obtaining a proper degree of it, at a cheap and easy rate." –John Jay, 1785		
"Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living." –John Dewey, 1897		
"We need intellect, and there is no reason why we should not have it together with character; but if we must choose between the two we choose character without a moment's hesitation."—Theodore Roosevelt, 1895		
"In 2010, about 74 percent of young adults with a bachelor's degree or higher were employed full time, compared with 65 percent of those with an associate's degree, 55 percent of high school completers, and 41 percent of those without a high school diploma or its equivalent."—National Center for Education Statistics		
"[I]t is characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things."—Henry David Thoreau, 1906		
"The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived, and dishonest—but the myth—persistent, persuasive, and realistic."—John F. Kennedy, 1962		



Writing Contest:

Challenging the College Admissions Process

W.9-10.2a-f

Today's college admissions process is complicated, stressful, and exhausting for the thousands of high school seniors who must juggle their high school courseloads and activities while filling out applications, writing essays, tracking down people to write letters of recommendation, and taking SATs.

The process works, but could it be improved?

The guy doling out the scholarship money in *The Benefactor* would argue that valuable qualities go undetected in the current process—qualities such as ingenuity, leadership, loyalty, passion, and diligence. He would also argue that these qualities are essential to success in college and in all of life.

THE TASK: Create a new challenge for an upcoming season of *The Benefactor*. Your challenge should highlight a skill or quality that you think is important to success AND it should be clever, engaging, and allow for only one winner.

Write a proposal to the Benefactor in which you describe your challenge, argue why you think it's valuable, and identify what skills and qualities it highlights. Your proposal should be between 400 and 800 words. You will be judged on creativity and originality (50%); how well you completed the task (25%); and your writing ability (25%). All decisions are final.

THE SPECIFICS: This contest is open to readers ages 10 to 18 who live in the United States.

Essays should be submitted in English at a maximum of 800 words, formatted to print double-spaced on 8½-by-11-inch paper. Essays exceeding this length or handwritten will not be considered. If submitted by e-mail, we prefer that you send the essay in a .doc or .pdf format.

Also be sure to include your name, address, age, birthdate, and a phone number in the body of the e-mail and on any copies or attachments of the essay itself.

Essays must be received by July 1, 2014 by midnight EST to be considered for a prize.

THE PRIZES: One Grand Prize Winner will receive a \$200 Amazon gift card to use on books for school (or really whatever you want!) A First Place winner will receive a new Kindle Paperwhite. Grand Prize, First Place, and five Second Place winners will receive signed copies of *The Benefactor*.

Language Arts Common Core State Standards

Grade Level	Reading of Literature	Reading of Informational Text	Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language Conventions
Grade 8	RL.8.1 RL.8.2 RL.8.3 RL.8.4 RL.8.6	RI.8.5	W.8.1 W.8.2a-e W.8.9	SL.8.1 SL.8.6	L.8.4a,d
Grades 9-10	RL.9-10.1 RL.9-10.2 RL.9-10.3 RL.9-10.4 RL.9-10.5	RI.9-10.5	W.9-10.1 W.9-10.2a-e W.9-10.9	SL.9-10.1 SL.9-10.6	L.9-10.4a,d