

A Day's Wait

Short Story by Ernest Hemingway

Is it **BRAVE** *to suffer in silence?*



R3.3 Analyze characterization as delineated through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.

Also included in this lesson: **W1.2** (p. 475), **W1.3** (p. 475), **LC1.4** (p. 475)

KEY IDEA Whether from an injury or a broken heart, everyone suffers at times. Some people try hard to keep their pain to themselves, while others believe it is better to share their thoughts and feelings with others. In "A Day's Wait," a young boy tries to be **brave** while suffering from an illness.

QUICKWRITE Do you consider it an act of bravery to face pain on your own, or does it take more courage for you to open up to other people? In a journal entry, explain your answers to these questions.





LITERARY ANALYSIS: STYLE

Style is a writer’s unique way of communicating ideas. It is often not only what writers say but how they say it that gives stories meaning and makes them memorable. To identify a writer’s style, focus on these elements:

- **Word choice**, or the author’s choice of language. Hemingway strives to use vivid verbs and precise nouns rather than using many adjectives and adverbs.
- **Sentence structure** and variety. In this story, Hemingway often uses long sentences for descriptions and short sentences when characters are talking.
- **Dialogue**, or conversations between characters. Hemingway relies heavily on realistic dialogue as a method of characterization.

As you read “A Day’s Wait,” notice how these elements help create Hemingway’s unique writing style.

READING SKILL: UNDERSTAND DIALOGUE

Characters reveal much about themselves by what they say or don’t say. When reading **dialogue**, note that

- each speaker’s words are framed by quotes
- the line is indented when someone new is speaking

As you read “A Day’s Wait,” keep track of who’s speaking by using a chart like the one shown.

Line	Speaker
“What’s the matter, Schatz?”	narrator

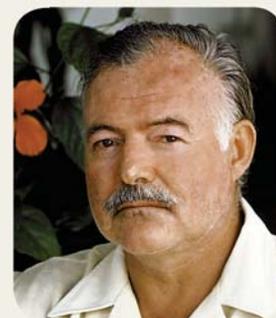
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Each of the boldfaced terms reflects Hemingway’s **word choice** in “A Day’s Wait.” How many of these words do you know? Try to figure out the meaning of each.

1. People were there, but he felt **detached** from them.
2. There is a serious flu **epidemic** this winter.
3. He had **slack** muscles from lack of exercise.
4. It was **evidently** too much for him to deal with.
5. The man observed a **covey** of partridges.

An Adventurous Life

Ernest Hemingway lived a life full of adventure. He was one of a group of writers called the Lost Generation. These writers rejected what they saw as an American focus on acquiring many possessions. Along with being one of America’s most famous writers, Hemingway was a fisherman, a hunter, and a fan of bullfighting. He participated in both world wars. Many of his works are based on his experiences in Europe and Cuba.



Ernest Hemingway
1899–1961

An Influential Style Hemingway and other Lost Generation writers, including F. Scott Fitzgerald and Sherwood Anderson, expressed their ideas in writing styles that were new and different. Hemingway’s writing style, particularly his method of writing dialogue, has influenced many other writers. He is one of the most often imitated writers of the 1900s.

Fact Becomes Fiction Like much of Hemingway’s writing, “A Day’s Wait” is based on actual events in Hemingway’s life. While Hemingway was living in France, his son came down with a high fever and reacted similarly to the boy in the story you will read.



MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more on Ernest Hemingway, visit the **Literature Center** at ClassZone.com.

A DAY'S WAIT

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

He came into the room to shut the windows while we were still in bed and I saw he looked ill. He was shivering, his face was white, and he walked slowly as though it ached to move.

“What’s the matter, Schatz?”¹

“I’ve got a headache.”

“You better go back to bed.”

“No. I’m all right.”

“You go to bed. I’ll see you when I’m dressed.” **A**

But when I came downstairs he was dressed, sitting by the fire, looking
10 a very sick and miserable boy of nine years. When I put my hand on his forehead I knew he had a fever.

“You go up to bed,” I said, “you’re sick.”

“I’m all right,” he said.

When the doctor came he took the boy’s temperature.

“What is it?” I asked him.

“One hundred and two.”

ANALYZE VISUALS

Consider the expression on this boy’s face. What **mood** does it convey?

A DIALOGUE

Reread the dialogue in lines 4–8. Notice that Hemingway does not always tell the reader who is speaking. Use your chart to keep track of the different speakers.

1. **Schatz** (shäts): German term of affection meaning “my treasure,” used here as a nickname.



Downstairs, the doctor left three different medicines in different-colored capsules with instructions for giving them. One was to bring down the fever, another a purgative,² the third to overcome an acid condition. The germs of influenza can only exist in an acid condition, he explained. He seemed to know all about influenza and said there was nothing to worry about if the fever did not go above one hundred and four degrees. This was a light **epidemic** of flu and there was no danger if you avoided pneumonia.

epidemic (ěp'ĩ-děm'ĩk)
n. an outbreak of a disease that spreads quickly among many people

Back in the room I wrote the boy's temperature down and made a note of the time to give the various capsules.

"Do you want me to read to you?"

"All right. If you want to," said the boy. His face was very white and there were dark areas under his eyes. He lay still in the bed and seemed very **detached** from what was going on.

detached (dĩ-tăcht') *adj.* separated; disconnected
detach *v.*

I read aloud from Howard Pyle's *Book of Pirates*;³ but I could see he was not following what I was reading.

"How do you feel, Schatz?" I asked him.

"Just the same, so far," he said.

I sat at the foot of the bed and read to myself while I waited for it to be time to give another capsule. It would have been natural for him to go to sleep, but when I looked up he was looking at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely.

"Why don't you try to go to sleep? I'll wake you up for the medicine."

40 "I'd rather stay awake."

After a while he said to me, "You don't have to stay in here with me, Papa, if it bothers you." **B**

"It doesn't bother me."

"No, I mean you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you." **C**

I thought perhaps he was a little lightheaded and after giving him the prescribed capsules at eleven o'clock I went out for a while.

B STYLE

Reread lines 41–42. Hemingway reveals the narrator through dialogue. What does this tell you about his style?

C DIALOGUE

Use your chart to track the speakers in the dialogue in lines 27–44.

It was a bright, cold day, the ground covered with a sleet that had frozen so that it seemed as if all the bare trees, the bushes, the cut brush, and all the grass and the bare ground had been varnished with ice. I took the young Irish setter for a little walk up the road and along a frozen creek, but it was difficult to stand or walk on the glassy surface and the red dog slipped and slithered and I fell twice, hard, once dropping my gun and having it slide away over the ice. **D**

D STYLE

Do the words Hemingway uses to describe the **setting** convey a positive or negative atmosphere? Explain.

2. **purgative** (pũr'ge-tĩv): laxative.

3. **Howard Pyle's *Book of Pirates***: a collection of tales about real and fictional pirates, very popular when it was published in the 1920s.



ANALYZE VISUALS

How does this painting convey the passing of time?

We flushed a **covey** of quail under a high clay bank with overhanging brush and I killed two as they went out of sight over the top of the bank. Some of the covey lit in trees, but most of them scattered into brush piles and it was necessary to jump on the ice-coated mounds of brush several times before they would flush. Coming out while you were poised unsteadily on the icy, springy brush, they made difficult shooting
60 and I killed two, missed five, and started back pleased to have found a covey close to the house and happy there were so many left to find on another day.

covey (kŭv'ē) *n.* a small group or flock of birds, especially partridges or quail

At the house they said the boy had refused to let anyone come into the room.

“You can’t come in,” he said. “You mustn’t get what I have.”

I went up to him and found him in exactly the position I had left him, white-faced, but with the tops of his cheeks flushed by the fever, staring still, as he had stared, at the foot of the bed.

I took his temperature.

70 “What is it?”

“Something like a hundred,” I said. It was one hundred and two and four tenths.

“It was a hundred and two,” he said.

“Who said so?”

“The doctor.”

“Your temperature is all right,” I said. “It’s nothing to worry about.”

“I don’t worry,” he said, “but I can’t keep from thinking.”

“Don’t think,” I said. “Just take it easy.”

“I’m taking it easy,” he said and looked straight ahead. He was

80 **evidently** holding tight onto himself about something.

“Take this with water.”

“Do you think it will do any good?”

“Of course it will.”

I sat down and opened the *Pirate* book and commenced to read, but I could see he was not following, so I stopped.

“About what time do you think I’m going to die?” he asked.

“What?”

“About how long will it be before I die?”

“You aren’t going to die. What’s the matter with you?”

90 “Oh, yes, I am. I heard him say a hundred and two.”

“People don’t die with a fever of one hundred and two. That’s a silly way to talk.”

“I know they do. At school in France the boys told me you can’t live with forty-four degrees. I’ve got a hundred and two.”

He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o’clock in the morning.

“You poor Schatz,” I said. “Poor old Schatz. It’s like miles and kilometers. You aren’t going to die. That’s a different thermometer. On that thermometer thirty-seven is normal. On this kind it’s ninety-eight.”

“Are you sure?”

100 “Absolutely,” I said. “It’s like miles and kilometers. You know, like how many kilometers we make when we do seventy miles in the car?”

“Oh,” he said.

But his gaze at the foot of the bed relaxed slowly. The hold over himself relaxed too, finally, and the next day it was very **slack** and he cried very easily at little things that were of no importance. ∞

evidently (ěv’ĭ-děnt-lē)
adv. obviously; clearly

SCIENCE CONNECTION



On the Celsius scale, water freezes at 0° and boils at 100°. On the Fahrenheit scale, water freezes at 32° and boils at 212°.

slack (slăk) *adj.* not firm or tight; loose



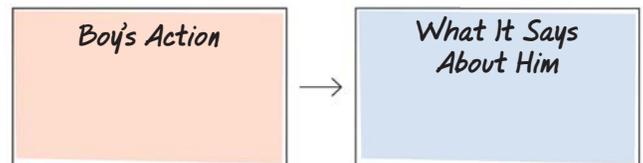
R3.3 Analyze characterization as delineated through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.

Comprehension

- 1. Recall** Why does the boy think he is going to die?
- 2. Clarify** Why does the father spend the afternoon hunting instead of staying with his worried son?
- 3. Summarize** How does the story end?

Literary Analysis

- 4. Understand Dialogue** Look over the dialogue chart you created as you read. At which points do the father and son not seem to understand each other?
- 5. Analyze Characterization** In what ways does the boy show concern for others? Does he reveal his concern through thoughts, words, or actions? Do the narrator's descriptions or other characters' thoughts, words, and actions help you see the boy's concern? Give examples from the text to support your answer.
- 6. Draw Conclusions** Why does the boy cry so much the next day?
- 7. Make Judgments** Do you think the boy's actions show **bravery**? Why or why not? Support your answer with examples from the story. Use a diagram like the one shown to record your support. Use line numbers when referring to parts of the story.
- 8. Identify Style** Reread lines 65–83. Note Hemingway's **word choice**, **sentence structure**, and use of **dialogue**. Why is this passage a good example of Hemingway's style? Explain your answer, using evidence from the passage.



Extension and Challenge

- 9. Creative Project: Drama** Most of this story is told through **dialogue** between the father and son. With a partner, choose one of their conversations to act out. Use details from the scene to accurately portray the characters. Practice on your own, and then present the dialogue to the class.
- 10. Readers' Circle** With a small group, discuss what clues the story gives you about the relationship between the boy and his father. Consider whether this experience is likely to affect their relationship in any way. If so, how?

Vocabulary in Context

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Show that you understand the boldfaced words by deciding whether each statement is true or false.

1. If something is **evidently** true, it has been proven through a series of experiments.
2. A **covey** is a place where birds and small mammals go to spend the winter.
3. An **epidemic** generally affects a large number of people.
4. If you are **detached** from a situation, you are probably not very concerned about it.
5. Tightened muscles around someone's lips and jaw are typical of a **slack** expression.



VOCABULARY IN WRITING

Think of time when you misunderstood something important that someone else said. Write a paragraph describing what happened, using at least two vocabulary words. Here is a sample beginning.

EXAMPLE SENTENCE

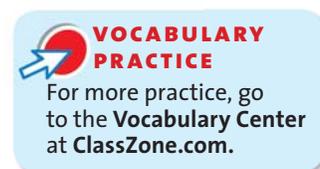
*At camp I thought I heard, "It's time for nights out," but I was **evidently** wrong.*

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: WORDS FOR ANIMAL GROUPS

There are many names for groups of animals. Some, like the vocabulary word *covey*, are used mainly with one or two specific types of animals. Others, like *herd*, are used when describing animals in certain categories, such as large animals that move or feed together (a herd of elephants, a herd of antelope). Knowing the correct word for an animal group can enrich both your reading and your writing.

PRACTICE Match each numbered word for an animal group with the type of animal it is usually associated with. Refer to a dictionary if you need help.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. pride | a. cattle |
| 2. swarm | b. fish |
| 3. drove | c. wolves |
| 4. pack | d. birds |
| 5. school | e. lions |
| 6. flock | f. bees |



Reading-Writing Connection



W1.2, W1.3

Increase your understanding of “A Day’s Wait” by responding to these prompts. Then complete the **Grammar and Writing** exercise.

WRITING PROMPTS	SELF-CHECK
<p>A. Short Response: Evaluate Characterization Hemingway wrote, “A writer should create living people; people not characters.” Does Hemingway create real people in “A Day’s Wait”? Write a one-paragraph response, using the characters’ thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions to support your opinion.</p>	<p>An effective evaluation will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• include a clear position statement• use specific details and examples from the story that support the statement
<p>B. Extended Response: Write a Letter Imagine how Schatz would remember this day 20 years later. Write a two- or three-paragraph letter from Schatz in which he reminds his father about the misunderstanding and how it affected him.</p>	<p>A creative response will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• summarize the events of the story• show an understanding of how the boy felt that day

GRAMMAR AND WRITING

MAINTAIN SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT A **compound subject** is made up of two or more subjects joined by a conjunction, such as *and*, *or*, or *nor*. When you write a sentence with a compound subject joined by *and*, you should usually use a plural verb. When you write a sentence with a compound subject joined by *or* or *nor*, use a verb that agrees in number with the subject closer to it.

Original: Because Schatz is constantly worrying, neither the capsules nor **rest seem** to help him.

Revised: Because Schatz is constantly worrying, neither the capsules nor **rest seems** to help him.

PRACTICE Choose the verb form that agrees with each compound subject.

1. Parents and children sometimes (have, has) a problem communicating.
2. Often, the parents or the child (get, gets) confused about some information.
3. In the story, neither the father nor the boy (realize, realizes) the misunderstanding until later on.
4. Once they understand the problem, the boy and his father (relax, relaxes).

For more help with subject-verb agreement with compound subjects, see pages R65–R66 in the **Grammar Handbook**.



LC1.4 Demonstrate the mechanics of writing (e.g., quotation marks, commas at end of dependent clauses) and **appropriate English usage** (e.g., pronoun reference).

How Hemingway Wrote

Informative Article

What's the Connection?

You've just read a short story by Ernest Hemingway, an author whose style is so distinct and admired that writers often try to copy it. Now you will read an **informative article** that explains how Hemingway approached writing.

Skill Focus: Distinguish Fact from Opinion

An **opinion** is a statement of belief or feeling, such as "I think everyone should read Hemingway's stories." A **fact** is a statement that can be proved, such as "Hemingway wrote 51 stories."

When you read informative articles, it's important to distinguish facts from opinions. If you mistake an opinion for a fact, you run the risk of basing your conclusions on someone's personal beliefs rather than on provable information. The opinions of experts can be good sources of information, but you should always know whether you are reading a fact or an opinion.

As you read Bruce Rettman's article, list the facts in one column and Rettman's opinions in another. Use the tips on the chart to help you distinguish facts from opinions.



Use with "A Day's Wait," page 468.



R2.1 Understand and analyze the differences in structure and **purpose** between various categories of **informational materials** (e.g., textbooks, newspapers, instructional manuals, signs).

R2.6 Assess the adequacy, **accuracy**, and appropriateness of the **author's evidence to support** claims and **assertions**, noting instances of bias and stereotyping.

FACT OR OPINION?

Is it a fact?

Watch Out

- Words and phrases often used to state facts: *the fact that, in fact, indeed, the truth is, and as a matter of fact.*
- The same words and phrases used to state facts *may* be used to disguise opinions as facts.

Can I prove it by

- consulting a reliable source, such as a print or online encyclopedia?
- interviewing a recognized expert in the field?
- checking the statement against what I observe or know to be true?

If the answer is "yes" . . .

The statement is a **fact**.

Is it an opinion?

Watch Out

Words and phrases often used to express opinions: *I think, I believe, perhaps, and maybe.*

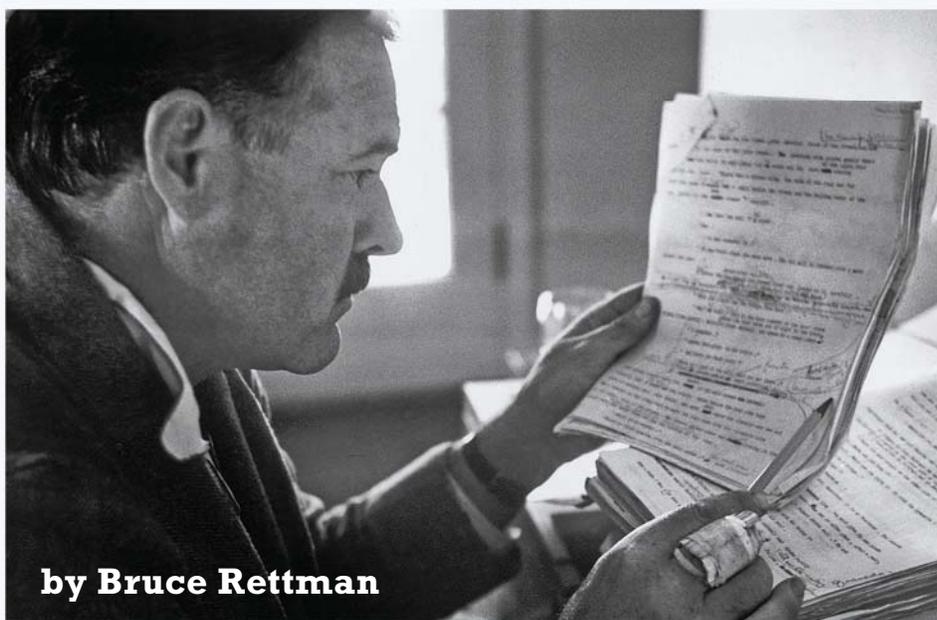
Ask yourself:

- Can this statement be debated?
- Might people disagree with the statement?

If the answer is "yes" . . .

The statement is probably an **opinion**.

How Hemingway Wrote.



by Bruce Rettman

Hemingway is shown here working on a story.

Ernest Hemingway said that the best writing advice he ever got came from the writing guidelines he received as a young reporter working for the *Kansas City Star*. These guidelines began as follows: “Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs. Use vigorous English, not forgetting to strive for smoothness.” Anyone who reads Hemingway’s simple and direct sentences built on strong nouns and verbs—not “extravagant adjectives”—can see that he took those guidelines to heart. **B**

Hemingway’s own advice for becoming a good writer is also informative. “When people talk, listen completely,” said Hemingway to a young writer. “Don’t be thinking what you’re going to say. Most people never listen. Nor do they observe.” In other words, Hemingway advises young writers to write from life, blending fact and fiction. The short story “A Day’s Wait,” for example, is based on an actual time when Hemingway’s first child had a fever.

FOCUS ON FORM
 “How Hemingway Wrote” is an **informative article**, a nonfiction article written to provide information or to explain something about a topic.

INFORMATIVE ARTICLE

Now that you have read the title, what do you think this informative article will explain?

DISTINGUISH FACT FROM OPINION

To check whether the statements in lines 1–16 are accurate, who might you contact or what source might you consult?

So, are you getting a sense of how Hemingway approached writing? Well, there's still more to learn from Hemingway's manuscripts. I've studied them to learn how he wrote his stories. I've paid particular attention to his revisions to see how they changed the meaning of a story. What I've discovered is the surprising fact that his revisions were more often additions than cuts. He added details for clarity and depth. Like a painter, Hemingway added to his canvas until the picture was how he wanted it. From this observation I would suggest that to approach writing as Hemingway did, you could start with the bare minimum and build, going back over your writing to see where details might add interest and clarity. **C**

C DISTINGUISH FACT FROM OPINION

Is the last sentence in this paragraph a fact, an opinion, or an expert's opinion? Give reasons for your answer.

There's another piece of information you need to have to begin to understand Hemingway's approach to writing. In Hemingway's stories, dialogue is very important. For example, in "A Day's Wait," after the doctor takes the boy's temperature, the brief exchange that occurs between the doctor and the boy's father is what triggers the boy's day of suffering:

*"What is it?" I asked him.
"One hundred and two."*

70 At times Hemingway cut his description of a character's thoughts in order to rely more heavily on dialogue.

You might also want to keep in mind Hemingway's other bit of advice to a young writer: "Get in somebody else's head for a change. If I bawl you out, try to figure what I'm thinking about as well as how you feel about it." In other words, try to see every event from all sides.

Now, perhaps, you are ready to start writing stories of your own. Of course, you have to have something to write about. Hemingway's life experiences were a rich source of material. He was a fisherman and a hunter, went to bullfights, and experienced both World War I and World War II. He lived in Europe, Cuba, and different parts of the United States. I'm not suggesting that you need to do similar things. Just embrace life. Then, maybe, after a time—and if you follow all this advice—you can be a successful writer like Hemingway. **D**

D DISTINGUISH FACT FROM OPINION

Which statement in this paragraph might people disagree about?



R2.1 Understand and analyze the differences in structure and **purpose** between various categories of **informational materials** (e.g., textbooks, newspapers, instructional manuals, signs).

R2.6 Assess the adequacy, **accuracy**, and appropriateness of the **author's evidence to support** claims and **assertions**, noting instances of bias and stereotyping.

Comprehension

1. **Recall** Hemingway is known for writing what kinds of sentences?
2. **Clarify** What actual event in Hemingway's life helped inspire "A Day's Wait"?

Critical Analysis

3. **Distinguish Fact from Opinion** Review the facts and opinions you identified in the informative article. Then identify one of each, and explain why you identified it as you did.
4. **Identify Topic Sentences** A topic sentence is one that tells what a paragraph is about. Not all paragraphs have a topic sentence, but when it is present, it is often the first or second sentence in the paragraph. Identify three topic sentences in this informative article.
5. **Evaluate an Informative Article** A strong informative article is easy to follow, interesting, and useful. Would you say that "How Hemingway Wrote" is a strong informative article? Explain.

Read for Information: Create Instructions for Writers

WRITING PROMPT

In the informative article you just read, Bruce Rettman explains how to approach writing as Ernest Hemingway did. Now use these ideas to create a set of instructions for writers. To help explain your instructions, include examples from "A Day's Wait" or Rettman's article.

To answer this prompt, do as follows:

1. Scan Rettman's article to find six things a person can do to approach writing as Hemingway did.
2. Arrange the six directions in a logical order.
3. Illustrate at least two or three of these directions with examples from "A Day's Wait" or Rettman's article.

