Name:\_Andrew Martin\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_3/18/21\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” Story Elements Chart 2021

**Objective:** To read F. Scott Fitzgerald’s short story “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” and record significant sentences that align with different story elements.

**Why?** As you read your NCC Novel, we will complete a practice round of the skills necessary to produce a successful persuasive literary paper. We will use a short story for this practice round, so you’ll need to read it and understand it first!

**Directions:**

1. Read the copy of the “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” provided on Actively Learn.
2. Use it to fill in the story elements chart below.
3. Using the ActivelyLearn highlighting feature, label a significant quotation that demonstrates the story elements below:

**Significant quotes**: Say something in an original, vivid and powerful way that is hard to paraphrase, use individual words or phrases you can focus on and analyze further, and relate directly to the point the author is making.

**Significant quotes do not:**  "tell the story" or convey basic information about the text.

* 1. Setting
  2. Character
  3. Conflict
  4. Irony
  5. Symbolism

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| **Element and Definition** | **“The Curious Case of Benjamin Button”** |
| **Plot** – a summary of the main events in the story**.** Includes:   * Exposition * Rising action * Climax * Falling action * Resolution | Describe each area of the plot of “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” by focusing on these 5 parts.   * Benjamin Button is born at 70 years old to Roger Button and his wife * Benjamin tries going to Yale, meets and marries Hildegarde, and joins the army * He then loses interest in Hildegarde * He joins Harvard, but his unaging gives him a disadvantage both in school and in athletics * He dies as a child |
| **Setting** – the time and place of the story. The setting often creates the mood. | Describe the time, place and mood of the story.  The story take place primarily in New Orleans from 1860 to the mid-1900s. The mood seems rather poignant, showing Benjamin gain then lose a normal life. |
| **Protagonist –** the main character in the story, usually, but not always, good. Analyze characters by what they   * Say * Do * Think/feel * Look like * What others say about them | Describe the main character in terms of these 5 attributes. Also consider how these the aspects and their overall personality might change over time.   * At the start:   + He seemed resigned in his “old” age   + He didn’t really care   + Looked like an old man   + Everyone treated him like a kid when he wanted to be treated like the man he was * At the middle   + He was energetic   + Had his wife   + He was the age everyone thought he was, so he was successful   + He was young, but still smart and wise * Near the end   + He looked and acted like a child   + Wanted to be treated like the man that he was, but was instead treated how he looked like   + He ended up losing all of his intelligence, wisdom, and family |
| **Antagonists-**the characters opposing the main character in the story, usually evil.   * Say * Do * Think/feel * Look like * What others say about them | Describe anyone working against Benjamin Button in terms of these 5 attributes.   * His father (at the beginning of his life)   + Treated him like a kid   + Devalued him   + Was uncomfortable with being called father by someone older than him. * His son (near the end of his life   + Treated him like a kid   + Devalued him   + Was uncomfortable with being called son by someone younger than him |
| **Minor Characters-**other characters helping or working against the protagonist. | There are other characters here, though they are not named. Who are they? What do we know about them?   * Yale Professor/students   + Make fun of him for being an old (looking) person trying to attend college * General Moncrief   + Makes Hildegarde uncertain of his marriage * Harvard Students   + Makes him uncertain of himself during his senior year |
| **Conflict** – the problem to be solved.  Person vs. person  person vs. society  person vs. self  person vs. nature  person vs. fate | Identify the applicable types of conflict listed on the left and describe each as they appear in the story.   * Person vs person: in his clashes with his family * Person vs society: because he ages backwards, he clashes with society at the beginning and ends of his life * Person vs fate: halfway through, he realizes that his de-aging won’t stop |
| **Theme –** The overall message about humanity the author is sending through the story. Often times it is a lesson to be learned or a comment on life. | What is the theme? Why do you think that? Are there additional sub-themes as well?   * I think the main theme is age – Benjamin has to deal with how he is treated based on his age, even when he ages backwards. He is even afraid to tell his own wife because he isn’t sure how she’ll react |
| **Satire –** What flawed aspect of society is the author making fun of? | Is this story satirical? What flaw(s) is Fitzgerald exposing? How does he do it? How do you know?   * I think that the story may be partially satirical. Fitzgerald exposes how humans automatically create bias based on people’s appearance. He shows us these biases both through his family and through his multiple tries getting into college. |
| **Symbolism** – an object, event, person or color that represents some other idea. | List and explain at least three symbols and the larger idea they represent.   * College represents Benjamin’s ability to fit in. He is rejected when he’s old because he doesn’t fit in with his age. He then is barely able to compete in college because he is too young. * The Suit that Roger buys Benjamin displays his denial of Benjamin’s condition * The Disguises that Benjamin wears when he is old and when he is young display his Families’ disapproval of his opinions. |
| **Irony –** a discrepancy between what is expected to happen and what actually occurs. | What do we know that the character does not? Or, what do you expect to happen, but doesn’t? List a few examples of dramatic, situational, or even verbal irony.  The main irony is in the beginning of the story when Roger Button doesn’t want to see his son, when normally fathers are very excited. |

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| Other thoughts or observations? | I definitely expected something to happen after Benjamin turned into a baby, but the story just… ended. |