Comparing Characters and Making Textual Inferences
(Time to complete: 3 class periods)

Essential Question: How are the three women in these stories alike? Different? What kind of societies do they live in? How do you know?

Lesson Objectives: By the end of the lesson, students will have:

- Developed and applied specific close-reading and comprehension strategies, including note-taking, questioning, and predicting
- Built social text analysis skills by discussing personal responses and opinions about a text they have read
- Developed critical thinking skills by evaluating the relationship between the historical period of the stories and the roles of female characters
- Analyzed and compared the problems, motivations, and interactions of the women characters in the stories

Indiana English/Language Arts Standards Addressed:
9-10.RL.1, 9-10.RL.2.1, 9-10.RL.2.2, 9-10.RL.2.3, 9-10.RL.3.1, 9-10.RL.3.2

Materials:
- “The Revolt of Mother” by Mary Wilkins Freeman (copies for each student)
- “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (copies for each student)
- “A Jury of Her Peers” by Susan Glaspell (copies for each student)
- Chart paper & markers/chalkboard & chalk/whiteboard & dry erase markers
- Compare/contrast graphic organizer handouts
**Procedure:**

1. I will introduce idea that in literature, not everything about a character or situation or setting is explicitly stated outright. Often, readers must make inferences based on clues in the text. I explain that we will practice and explore this by reading three short stories written by women, about women.

2. Students will each have a copy of “The Revolt of Mother,” either a handout packet or in the literature anthology text. We will all take turns reading from the text, and students will make notes about any questions, suspicions, or predictions that occur to them as we are reading.

3. When we’ve finished, we will discuss the notes students have made, and I will make some notes from our discussion on the board or chart paper. I will ask students to specifically consider what they think the role of women is in the society that Mother belongs to and ask them to support their thinking with evidence from the text.

4. We will move on to “The Yellow Wallpaper,” and will read together in the same way as in #2 above. (We will be interrupted by the end of the class period in the middle of this text. We will continue reading where we leave off in the next class session.)

5. Repeat #3 above.

6. Repeat #2 and #3 above with “A Jury of Her Peers.” (This should take us to the end of the second class period.)

7. Having read all three texts, we will now as a class compare the characters and problems addressed in each one. Using the compare/contrast graphic organizer, we will together make notes of what we discover and discuss, making sure to include textual citations to support our claims.

8. I will ask students to spend the remainder of the period in small groups (2-4) researching the role of women in America at the end of the 19th century, when these stories were written and take place. **Closure and reflection:** They will each have to write a short paragraph (“exit slip”) explaining to me their findings and whether or not their predictions about society from the texts were correct and why.
**Assessment:** Students will be informally assessed by their exit slip, graphic organizers, and participation in class discussion. More **formal assessment** will come in conjunction with the **extending activity**, in which they will write a compare/contrast paper about two of the three stories (their choice). They will be asked to explore how the main characters of those stories are similar and different, with regard to society’s expectations for them at the time. They will be required to cite evidence from the texts they choose and reference at least 4 different research sources that examine the historical context of the stories. This will be assigned at the beginning of the class period following this 3-day lesson.