



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2013 Volume II: Interpreting Texts, Making Meaning: Starting Small

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## Interpreting the Literal for the Revelational

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.02.07, published September 2013

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Interpreting the Literal for the Revelational provides theories for interpreting literature, as well as aspects of cognitive science and how we think via analogy and metaphor. I also include my own composite theory about similes, chiefly that since similes are syntactically analogy *and* metaphor, having essences of both *is* and *like* in their nature, they are natural interpreters, the go-betweens and spirit, of *concrete* likenesses and *abstract* differences. The mind of this curriculum is works by literary critics (Frye, Perrine, Brower and Wimsatt), and linguists and cognitive scientists (Lakoff, Pinker, and Hofstadter and Sanders). The heart is literature about children who face loss and the struggle for identity (i.e., *Grisha*, *The Flowers*, *A Child Called "It"* and *The Catcher in the Rye*), following criteria for interpretation set forth by literary critics, and fourfold reading where the first reading is the literal story, the second is metaphorical with the understanding that it is something else, the third is with the question "how does this apply to me," and the fourth is for personal revelations the texts may provide. Collaborative interpretations are for students to problem solve as parents for the children in the literature and, ultimately, for their own future generations.

(Developed for English 3-4 College Prep, grade 10, and Film as Literature [except the literature will be films], grade 12; recommended for English and Humanities, grades 9-12)

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