

Sample CHARACTER JOURNAL Entries
Example: OLD MAN AND THE SEA
(GRADE 9)

Evidence

Commentary

“He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish” (9). S

Sympathy for the old man, but could he be alone because he is not liked? 84 days—maybe he Doesn’t have any fishing skills... determined—he is still trying to catch.

“The old man was thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck [...]The blotches ran well down the sides of his face and his hands had the deep-creased scars from handling the fish” (10). S

It could just be physical age or he could have many years of experience fishing. Why is Hemingway emphasizing his physical features?

“The old man had taught the boy to fish and the boy loved him” (10). S/M

The boy feels gratitude to the old Man, his teacher. The old man feels responsibility toward the boy. Very simple sentence but big impact on the relationship. Why not use their names?

“There was no cast net and the boy remembered when they had sold it [...]There was no pot of yellow rice and fish and the boy knew this too” (20) M

They both seem to be poor--to be sacrificing, but notice how the boy doesn’t—won’t—mention it. Something seems to be unspoken. The boy has immense respect for the old man.

“‘Que va,’ the boy said. ‘There are many good fishermen and some great ones. But there is only you’ “ (23). M

Respect, respect, respect. The boy admires the old man. He Really seems to look up to the old man, even though he hasn’t caught any fish? Maybe he respects him for the effort and not the result.