

Appendix 13.3. Narrative Patterns and Techniques for Stories about Young Adult Long-Distance Runners

Sheet for Notebooks (Format the first two columns as a cardstock bookmark)

| Pattern | Questions That Follow | Why We Ask This Question |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Going It Alone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What leads to the character being alone? • What feelings or thoughts emerge? | When alone, the character has a chance to reflect, to step back, and perhaps to replay situations. What a character does when alone can reveal motivation and feelings and influence action. |
| Running Mates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does running affect the main character's relationships? • Which relationships does the character consider most? Why? | Who a character thinks about, talks about, and interacts with influences what develops. Some relationships might stimulate conflict, while others might be sources of support and comfort. How running plays off of these relationships helps to reveal its role as well. |
| Gaining an Edge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose status or power does the character think or talk about? • How do others influence the main character? • How do status or power affect the main character's running? | The main character may seek to establish a position of power or status in relation to others. Competitive desire often reveals more than just sporting interests, and relationships can be colored by differences of power. How the character handles relationships involving status or power can be revealing. |
| Sensing How You Feel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What bodily sensations does the main character experience? When do they emerge? • What feelings are associated with different bodily sensations? • How does running interact with different sensations the character experiences? | The intense bodily experience of endurance sports provides a window into a character's emotions. While a sensation may be explained realistically (e.g., hunger due to poverty), it may also clue us in to how a character experiences the world spiritually and emotionally. Especially look for patterns in which sensations recur in related moments in the story and consider what concrete sensations might help us intuit about the character. |
| Breaking into the Open | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the main character want to be able to do freely? • What limits the character's choices? • How does running affect the character's independence? | Among the many feelings that affect character and conflict in works about young adult long-distance runners, the desire to gain some measure of independence is one of the most significant. But what independence means to a particular character, and when it emerges as most central to a story, is often distinctive and important to understanding a particular character. Take note of when a character looks for ways to choose his or her own way of doing things and what forces support or inhibit that choice. |

Possible Narrative Techniques

Encourage students to notice both how the writer or director manages the techniques listed below so that readers/viewers follow what is happening and what these communicate about the character and story when they are used. When partners select a technique to focus on, tell them to note every example of its use in the excerpt read or viewed and be prepared to discuss what they noticed.

- Flashbacks
- Internal monologue
- Description/Visual representation of scenes and actions
- Observations about others
- Dialect or language variations
- Sound and music as part of the story's world (or comment on it . . . in the film only)