French 5H/Français 205 Summer Assignment



Cher/Chère_____,

Bienvenue à la classe de Français 205 au lycée de Clarence conjointement avec ECC. J'ai hâte de *(eager to – much safer than trying to use the adjective « excité »)* travailler ensemble. Le titre official de ce cours est "Introduction to French Literature" et nous lirons une grande variété de textes venants de plusieurs périodes et plusieurs pays francophones.

Pour être bien préparé, s.v.p. faites les activités suivantes avant le premier jour de classes en septembre.

_____√ **Gather together the verb cards you made last year as well as any notes on grammar to use as a reference for the upcoming school year**. While we will study some new points and do some review on some things already learned, grammar will NOT be the main focus this year. Instead, you will have the chance to apply what you've learned while you share your thoughts and ideas about what we read. There will be graded in-class writing days when you may reference these items, so you'll be glad that you've got them together and ready. ☺

_____√ **Read the attached short story "The Necklace"** (known as ***La Parure*** in French) by Guy de Maupassant. The very first text we will do together this Fall is this short story in French and it is not a simple reading. By becoming familiar with the story itself in English, you will be prepared to understand what you are reading in French.

_____√ **Fill out a "Flesh Out a Character" sheet for Mathilde Loisel, Monsieur Loisel, and Madame Forestier**. You will fill out a total of 3 sheets in English. Take the time to do a great job. While you will turn these in to Madame on the first day of classes, once you get them back, hold onto them as a great resource for studying for the final exam. (Note: there will be significantly less info to write on Mme Forestier's sheet, but a lot to say about Mathilde Loisel…)

_____√ **On the backs of the character sheets, answer 3 questions in English from the end of the reading**. Please choose 3 tasks from either 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 or 8. (Please do NOT use questions 4 or 5) – Please put one response per page. Each response should contain a minimum of 75 words and should cite examples from the text. You will also turn these in to Madame on the first day back.

Of course, anything you do over the summer to improving your French skills will help immensely in this upcoming endeavor. So while nothing has to be turned in for the list below, please consider spending some time doing some activities in French. Some recommendations:

- online activities at ***quia*** or ***quizlet*** (and it can be from any teacher, not just CHS)
- practice conjugating a variety of verb tenses at ***conjugemos*** on the web
- find French videos on youtube – there is a lot out there with subtitles in English
- try switching the default language to French on software programs/apps that you use already
- on your mobile device, explore language learning apps for French – there are a lot of fun games and entertaining things for you to do while you're waiting for something else

AND if you find something really fun and interesting, let other classmates know and shoot me an email at mwilliams@clarenceschools.org. We can all learn together☺

À bientôt (les vacances passent vite…),

Madame Williams

In A Nutshell

THE NECKLACE INTRODUCTION 

"**The Necklace**" (in French, "La Parure") is perhaps the most famous short story by French author Guy de Maupassant. It's been called *Madame Bovary* in miniature, and tells the tale of a dissatisfied middle-class woman whose dreams of wealth and glamour end in disaster. Maupassant first published it (in French) on February 17, 1884 in a daily newspaper called *Le Gaulois*, where he worked as an editor.

So just who, you ask, is this guy, Guy, with the hard-to-pronounce French name? (By the way, it's roughly "Gee du Mow-pass-on" – with the "g" at the beginning sounding like the "g" in "goat," and the "n" at the end having that French nasal sound). As it turns out, he's a big deal. Maupassant is the father of the French short story. Some would even say that he is the father of the *modern* short story (or at least one of the fathers). Though he didn't invent the short story genre, he perfected it, popularized it, and greatly expanded his audience's understanding of what could be done with it. It helped that he wrote some three hundred short stories, all mostly between 1880 and 1890.

Maupassant was also famous for his use of the twist endings. Guy didn't invent that either, and he certainly didn't use it in every one of his stories. But when he did use it, he was good at it, and it was he, more than anyone else, who made the twist ending big.

We mention that because "The Necklace" has the most famous of all of Maupassant's twist endings – which is also why it's his most famous short work. Though he was already well-known in France by the time he wrote it, in the English-speaking world his initial fame rested largely on this little jewel of a story. It was a particular hit with Americans, who couldn't get over how cool the ending was. In fact, the story led to something of a twist-ending fad in popular literature. It wasn't too long before the U.S. produced its own version of Maupassant, O. Henry, whose story "*Gift of the Magi"* may have the *other* most famous twist ending of all time.

Why Should I Care?

Think of Mathilde Loisel as the 19th century Paris version of the "desperate housewife." She's middle class with a kind husband. But she's cooped up in the house all day with *nothing* to do, and her days are marked with boredom beyond belief. Her only way out of dealing with it is to live in a fantasy world of glamour, wealth, and beautiful people.

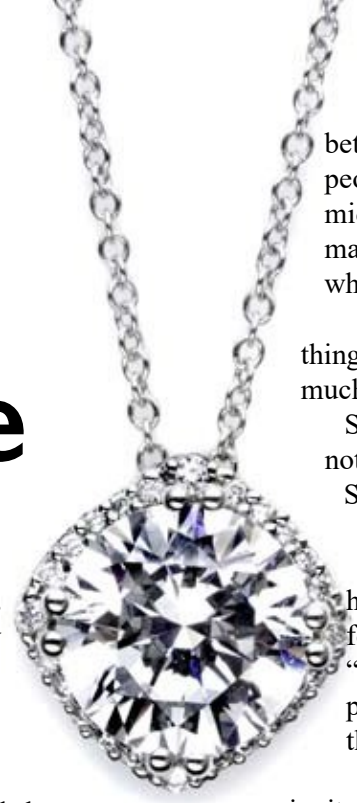
Does that situation really seem all that far-removed from today? In many ways, the figure of the dissatisfied housewife is just as relevant now as it was then. Just like Maupassant's contemporaries, we're still fascinated by it; perhaps because we're troubled by it. Why else would a show actually called *Desperate Housewives* be so popular? And can't we all relate in some way to Mathilde's desire to live a more exciting, glamorous life, even if we can only do it in daydreams?

You also won't find a more perfect encapsulation in story form of an experience we can *certainly* all relate to: the "if I hadn't lost that one thing!..." experience. That's right, if you think losing something once ruined *your* day, just wait until you see what happens to Mathilde. It's painful to read about, yes, but sometimes it's good to have a reminder of just how badly chance can ruin your life.

Finally, if you like interesting plots and crafty endings with a twist, they don't get much more classic than this one. Plus the story's just five pages. Give it a shot! (adapted from www.shmoop.com)

The Necklace

By Guy de Maupassant



She was one of those pretty, charming young creatures who sometimes are born, as if by a slip of fate, into a petty official's family. She had no dowry, no expectations, no way of being known, understood, loved, married by a rich and distinguished man; so she let herself be married to a minor civil servant at the Ministry of Education.

She dressed plainly because she could not dress well, but she was unhappy as if she had really fallen from a higher station, since with women there is neither caste nor rank, for beauty, grace and charm take the place of family and birth. Natural ingenuity, instinct for what is elegant, a supple mind are their sole hierarchy, and often make humble girls the peers of the grandest ladies.

Mathilde suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born to enjoy all delicacies and all luxuries. She was distressed at the poverty of her dwelling, at the worn walls, at the shabby chairs, the ugly curtains. All those things, of which another woman of her rank would never even have been conscious, tortured her and made her angry. The sight of the little Breton peasant girl who did her humble housework aroused in Mathilde despairing regrets and bewildering dreams. She thought of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry, illumined by tall bronze candelabra, and of two great footmen in knee breeches who sleep in the big armchairs, made drowsy by the oppressive heat of the stove. She thought of long reception halls hung with ancient silk, of dainty cabinets containing priceless curiosities and of little coquettish perfumed reception rooms made for chatting at five o'clock with intimate friends – famous, sought-after men whose attentions all women long for.

When she sat down to dinner, before the round table covered with a tablecloth in use three days, opposite her husband, who uncovered the soup tureen and declared with a delighted air, "Ah, a good beef stew! There's nothing better...," she thought of dainty dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestry that peopled the walls with ancient personages and with strange birds flying in the midst of a fairy forest; and she thought of delicious dishes served on marvelous plates and of the whispered gallantries that elicit sphinx-like smiles while guests nibbled the pink flesh of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no proper wardrobe, no jewels, nothing. And those were the only things that she loved – she felt she was made for them. She would have loved so much to please, to be envied, to charm, to be sought after.

She had a friend, a former schoolmate, who was rich, and whom she did not like to go to see anymore because she felt so sad when she came home. She would weep for whole days at a time from sorrow, regret, despair, and distress.

Then one evening her husband arrived home with a triumphant air, holding a large envelope in his hand. "There," said he, "there is something for you." She tore the paper quickly and drew out a printed card which read, "The Minister of Education and Madame Georges Ramponneau request the pleasure of the company of M. and Mme. Loisel at an evening reception at the Ministry on Monday, January 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table crossly, muttering, "What do you wish me to do with that?"

"Why, my dear, I thought you would be glad. You never go out, and this is such a fine opportunity. I had great trouble getting it; everyone wants to go. It is very select, and they are not giving many invitations to clerks. All the officials will be there."

She looked at him with an irritated glance and said impatiently, "I haven't a thing to wear. How could I go?"

He had not thought of that. He stammered, "Why, the blue dress you go to the theater in. I think it's lovely on you."

He stopped, distracted, seeing that his wife was weeping. Two great tears escaped from the corners of her eyes and rolled slowly toward the corners of her mouth.

"What's the matter? Oh, what's the matter, Mathilde?" he answered.

By a violent effort she conquered her grief and replied in a calm voice, while she wiped her wet cheeks, "Nothing. Only I have no gown, and, therefore, I can't go to this ball. Give your card to some colleague whose wife would be better dressed than I."

He was in despair. "Come, let us see, Mathilde. How much would it cost, a suitable gown, which you could use on other occasions – something very simple?"

She reflected several seconds, making her calculations and wondering also what sum she could seek without drawing an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from this economical government clerk. Finally, she replied, hesitating, “I don’t know exactly, but I think I could manage it with four hundred francs.”

He grew a little pale because that was just the amount he had put aside to buy a rifle and treat himself to a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre, with several friends who went to shoot larks there on Sundays. But he said, “Very well. I will give you four hundred francs. But do try to get something really nice.”

The day of the ball drew near and Madame Loisel seemed sad, uneasy, anxious, even though her frock was ready. Her husband said to her one evening, “What is the matter? Come, you have seemed very strange these last three days.”

And she answered. “I hate not having a single jewel, not one stone, to wear. I shall look so dowdy. I would almost rather not go at all.”

“You might wear natural flowers,” said her husband. “They’re seen as very stylish at this time of year. For ten francs you can get two or three magnificent roses.”

She was not convinced. “No. There’s nothing more humiliating than to look poverty-stricken among a lot of rich women.”

“Wait, you silly thing!” her husband cried. “Go look up your friend, Madame Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her well enough to do that, don’t you think?”

She uttered a cry of joy, “True! I never thought of it.”

The next day she went to her friend and told her of her distress. Madame Forestier went to a wardrobe with a mirror, took out a large jewel box, brought it back, opened it and said to Madame Loisel, “Choose whatever you like.”

She saw first some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian gold cross set with precious stones, of admirable workmanship. She tried on the ornaments before the mirror, hesitating, unable to bring herself to take them off, to give them back. And she kept asking, “Haven’t you any more?”

“Why, yes. Look for yourself; I don’t know what you like.”

Suddenly, she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart throbbed with overwhelming desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it snuggly round her throat, outside her high-necked dress, and was lost in ecstasy at her reflection in the mirror.

Then she asked, hesitating, filled with anxious doubt, “Will you lend me this, just this one?”

“Why, yes, certainly.”

She threw her arms round her friend’s neck, kissed her passionately, then fled with her treasure.

The night of the ball arrived. Madame Loisel was a great success. She was more beautiful than any other woman present, elegant, graceful, smiling and wild with joy. All the men looked at her, asked her name, sought to be introduced. All the Cabinet members wished to waltz with her. The Minister himself even noticed her.

She danced with rapture, with passion, intoxicated by pleasure, forgetting all in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness comprised of all this homage, admiration, these awakened desires and of that sense of triumph which is so sweet to the heart of a woman.

When she was ready to leave the party, it was nearly four o’clock in the morning. Her husband had been sleeping since midnight in a little deserted anteroom with three other gentlemen whose wives were having a wonderful time.

He brought her wraps so that they could leave and put them around her shoulders – the plain wraps from her everyday life whose shabbiness jarred with the elegance of her evening gown. She felt this and wished to escape so as not to be remarked by the other women, who were enveloping themselves in costly furs.

Loisel held her back, saying, “Wait a minute. You’ll catch cold outside. I will call a cab.”

But she did not listen to him and rapidly descended the stairs. When they reached the street, they could not find a carriage, searching in vain for one, shouting after the cabmen passing at a distance.

They went toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold. At last, they found one of those ancient night carriages which, as though they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day, are never seen round Paris until after dark. The cab took them to their dwelling in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly they mounted the stairs to their flat. For her, it was all over. And he was thinking that he had to be at the Ministry by ten.



She removed her wraps before the mirror so as to see herself once more in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. The necklace was gone; there was nothing around her neck.

Her husband, already half undressed, said, “What’s the matter?”

She turned toward him in a frenzy. “The...the...necklace – it’s gone!”

He got up, thunderstruck.

"What did you say?...What?...Impossible!"

And they searched the folds of her dress, the folds of her wrap, the pockets, everywhere. They didn't find it.

"You're sure you had it on when you left the ball?" he asked.

"Yes, I remember touching it in the hallway of the Ministry."

"But if you had lost it in the street we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes, probably. Did you take his number?"

"No. And you – didn't you notice it?"

"No."

They looked at each other in utter dejection. At last, Loisel put on his clothes. "I shall go back on foot," he said, "over the whole route, to see if I can find it."

He went out. She sat waiting on a chair in her ball gown, without strength to go to bed, overwhelmed, without any fire, without a thought.

Her husband returned about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to police headquarters, to the newspaper offices to offer a reward; he went to the offices of the cab companies – in a word, wherever there seemed to be the slightest hope of tracing it.

She spent the whole day waiting, in a state of utter hopelessness before such an appalling catastrophe. Loisel returned at night with a hollow, pale face. He had discovered nothing.

"You must write to your friend," he said, "that you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. That will give us time to decide what to do."

She wrote at his dictation.

By the end of the week, they had lost all hope. Loisel, who had aged five years, declared, "We'll have to replace the necklace."

The next day they took the case in which it had been kept and went to the jeweler whose name was found within. He consulted his books.

"It was not I, madame, who sold that necklace," the jeweler said. "I must simply have furnished the case."

Then they went from jeweler to jeweler, searching for a necklace like the other, trying to recall it, both sick with grief.

In a fashionable shop near the Palais Royal, they found a diamond necklace they decided was exactly like the other. It was worth 40,000 francs. They could have it for 36,000 francs.

They asked the jeweler to hold it for them for three days, and they stipulated that he should take it back for 34,000 francs if the other necklace was found before the end of February.

Loisel possessed 18,000 francs which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

He did borrow, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, a hundred here, fifty there. He signed promissory notes, took up ruinous obligations, dealt with usurers and all the race of lenders. He compromised all the rest of his life, risked signing a note without even knowing whether he could meet it; and, frightened by the trouble yet to come, by the black misery that was about to fall upon him, by the prospect of all the physical privations and moral tortures that he was to suffer, he went to buy the new necklace, laying upon the jeweler's counter 36,000 francs.

When Madame Loisel returned the necklace, Madame Forestier said to her in a faintly waspish tone, "You could have returned it a little sooner; I might have needed it."

She did not open the case, as her friend had feared she might. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought, what would she have said? Would she not have taken Madame Loisel for a thief?

Thereafter, Madame Loisel came to know the awful life of the poverty-stricken. She bore her part, however, with unexpected fortitude. The dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their servant and they changed their lodgings, renting a garret under the roof.

She came to know all the heavy household chores, the loathsome work of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, wearing down her pink nails on greasy casseroles and the bottoms of saucepans. She washed the soiled linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she dried upon a line; she carried the slops down to the street every morning and carried up the buckets of water, stopping for breath at every landing. Dressed like a working-class woman, she went to the fruiterer, the grocer, the butcher with her basket on her arm, bargaining, outraged, contesting each sou of her pitiful funds.

Every month they had to meet some notes, renew others, obtain more time. Her husband worked evenings, making up a tradesman's accounts, and late at night he often copied manuscript for five sous a page.



And it went on like that for ten years.

After ten years, they had paid everything, including the usurious rates and the compound interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become the woman of impoverished households – strong and hard and rough. With frowsy hair, skirts askew and red hands, she talked loud while washing the

floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window and she thought of that thrilling evening of long ago, of that ball where she had been so beautiful and so admired.

How would things have turned out if she hadn't lost that necklace? Who could tell? How strange and fickle life is! How little it takes to make or break you!

Then one Sunday, having gone to take a walk along the Champs Elysées to refresh herself after the labors of the week, she suddenly perceived a woman who was leading a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

Madame Loisel started to tremble. Should she speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that she had paid the debts, why shouldn't she tell the whole story?

She approached her friend.

"Hello, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be familiarly addressed by this plainly dressed woman, did not recognize her at all and stammered, "But, madame, I do not know...You must have mistaken..."

"No. I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry. "Oh, my poor Mathilde! How you've changed!"

"Yes, I've been through some pretty hard times since I last saw you and I've had plenty of trouble – and all because of you!"

"Because of me? What do you mean?"

"Do you remember that diamond necklace you lent me to wear to the ball at the Ministry?"

"Yes?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back."

"No, I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. You can understand that it wasn't easy for us, for us who had nothing. At last it is ended, though, and I am very glad."

Madame Forestier stopped short.

"You say you bought a diamond necklace to replace the other one?"

"Yes. You didn't even notice then? They really were exactly alike."

And she smiled, full of a proud, simple joy.

Madame Forestier, profoundly moved, took Mathilde's hands in her own.

"Oh, my poor, poor Mathilde! Mine was false. It was worth five hundred francs at the most!"

Questions

On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions. To receive credit, you must write complete, thoughtful sentences.

1. Did Mathilde Loisel deserve the punishment she received? Explain your answer.

2. Some readers believe that the ten years of hard work changed Mathilde's spoiled nature and made her a better person. Give two pieces of evidence that support this position.

3. Other readers argue that, although Mathilde matured during this time, she wasn't completely transformed. Give two pieces of evidence from the end of the story that show Mathilde is still not a completely mature person.

4. Give two examples of personification from the story. Write down the full sentences in which the personified elements exist.

5. Give two examples of alliteration from the story. Write down the full sentences in which the alliterative elements exist.

6. The story's ironic ending is part of what makes this tale so famous. The author, however, gives a few hints about the tragic twist. Look back over the story and find an element of foreshadowing. Paraphrase this element of the story and then explain why you believe it is a good example of foreshadowing.

7. Closely examine the passage at Madame Forestier's house when Mathilde discovers and borrows the necklace. What symbolic elements are being used here by the author? Explain.

8. To what degree is Mr. Loisel also to blame for the misery he endures. Dig deep into your analysis of this character.

Name:
Period:

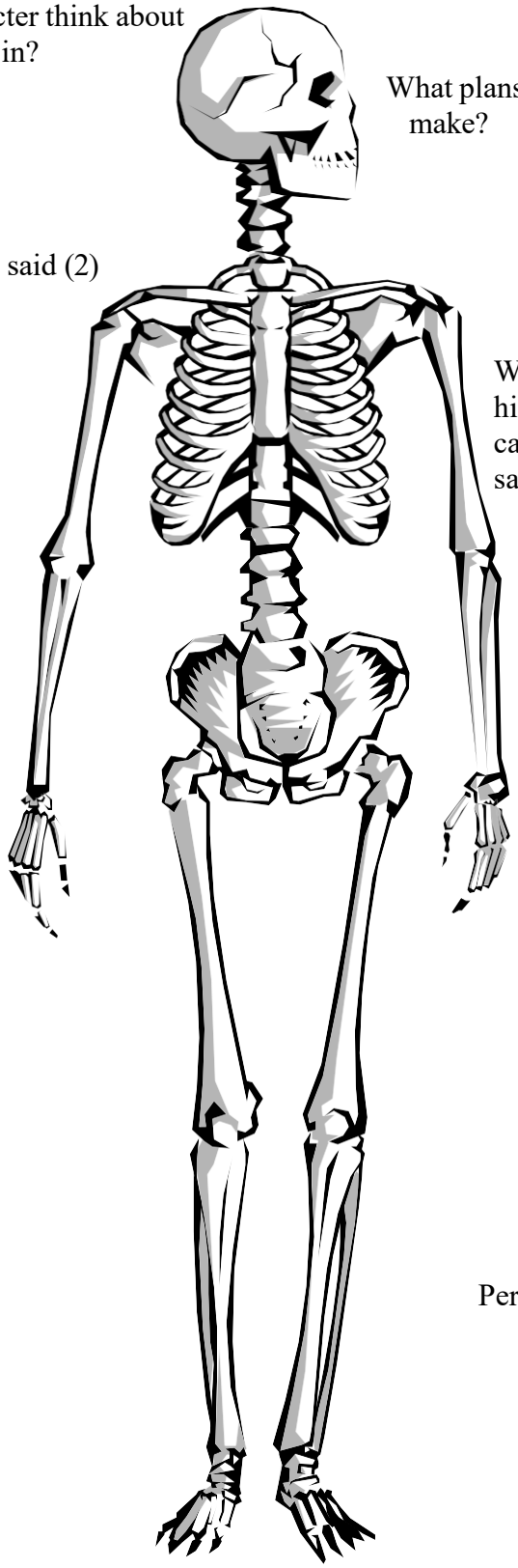
Fleshing out a character

What does this character think about the society s/he lives in?

What plans does this character make?

Important things s/he said (2)

What is at the heart of his/her personality that causes him/her to act and say what he/she does?



What s/he did

What s/he tried to do

Personality strengths

Personality weaknesses

NOM_____

Please answer **<u>one</u>** of ***The Necklace*** questions below in English and circle its number 1 2 3 6 7 8

Name:
Period:

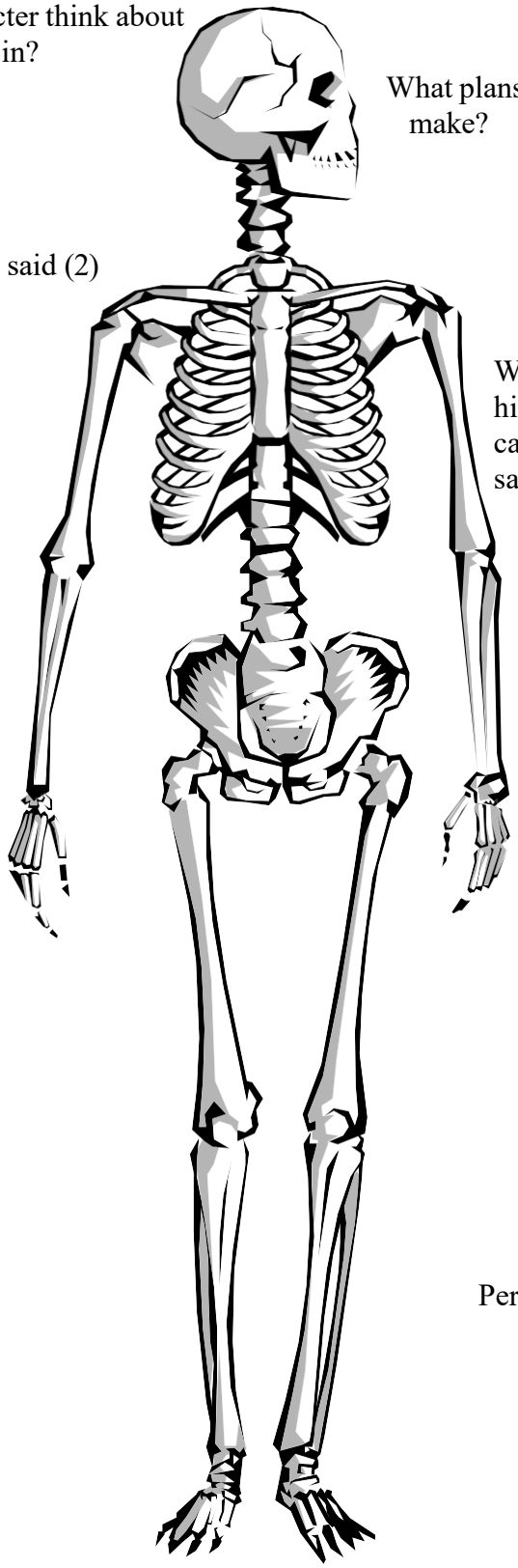
Fleshing out a character

What does this character think about the society s/he lives in?

What plans does this character make?

Important things s/he said (2)

What is at the heart of his/her personality that causes him/her to act and say what he/she does?



What s/he did

What s/he tried to do

Personality strengths

Personality weaknesses

NOM_____

Please answer **<u>one</u>** of ***The Necklace*** questions below in English and circle its number 1 2 3 6 7 8

Name:
Period:

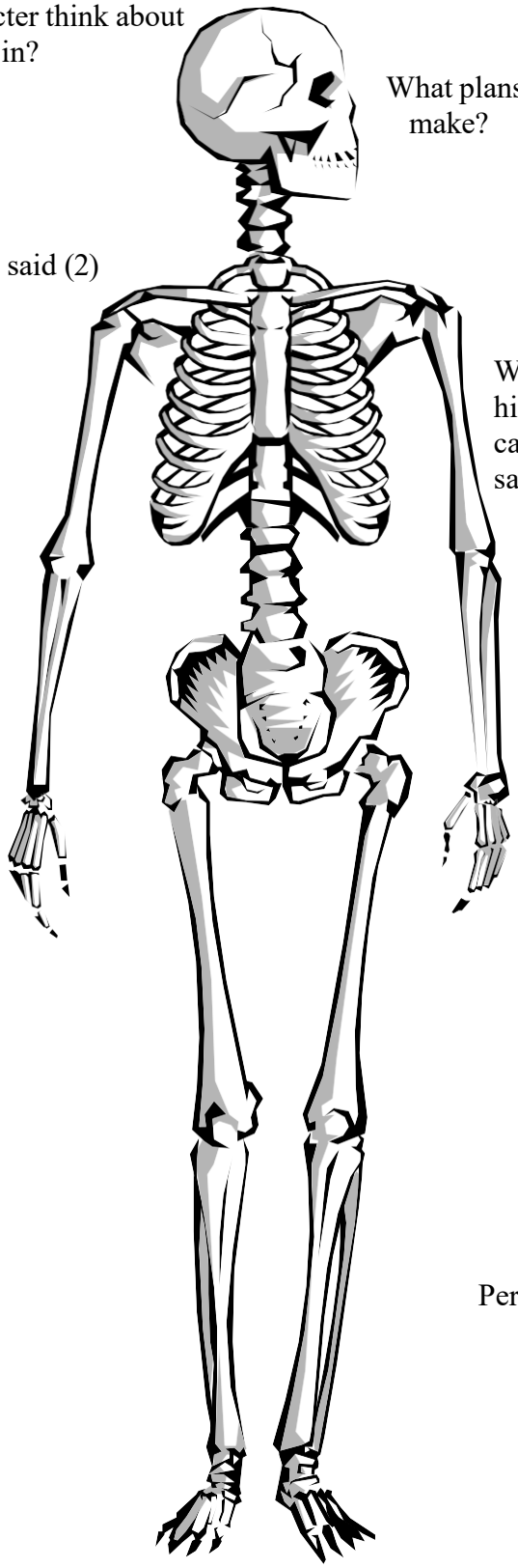
Fleshing out a character

What does this character think about the society s/he lives in?

What plans does this character make?

Important things s/he said (2)

What is at the heart of his/her personality that causes him/her to act and say what he/she does?



What s/he did

What s/he tried to do

Personality strengths

Personality weaknesses

NOM_____

Please answer **<u>one</u>** of ***The Necklace*** questions below in English and circle its number 1 2 3 6 7 8