**Example Project Plans and Completed Work:** Typing should be in a readable 11-14 pt. font. You do not need to include a plan. Mine are just examples to help you see how I prepared for each paragraph.

**Vocabulary from “Thirteen and a Half”**

**winded** (pg. 1) having difficulty breathing because of exercise, moving quickly or a punch to the stomach

**glamorously** (pg.1) doing something in a way that is very exciting and or attractive

**Mallomars** (pg. 2) a chocolate and marshmallow cookie, somewhat like a S’More

**budgie** (pg.2) the shortened name for a budgerigar, a type of bird that is small and usually light green and yellow in color and commonly kept as a pet

**exotic** (pg.2) very different, strange or unusual

**tragically** (pg.2) the adverb form of tragic which means something that causes strong emotions of sadness

**indicating** (pg. 2) showing or directing attention to by pointing

**whimpered** (pg. 3) made a quiet crying sound

**molting** (pg. 4) to lose hair or feathers and replace it with new growth in the same place

**severely** (pg. 6) very badly, seriously or unpleasantly

**Setting Plan:**

A- Setting Ashley’s house adds to discomfort of a revealed secret.

C- In my house we have a front hall. Ashley’s you’d have to call a lobby. (pg. 1)

E- The narrator does not feel at ease because it’s different than her own home.

C- “I sat alone in the kitchen listening to the clock tick, wondering if I should call my mom and ask her to pick me up early on account of the death of the bird and also since it was getting a little creepy there in Ashley’s humongous kitchen all alone.” Pg. 5

E- Does not feel that she belongs in this situation because both the house and the death are an odd experience.

S- The setting adds to the discomfort of the narrator and reader.

**Setting Paragraph:**

In the story “Thirteen and a Half” a horrible and uncomfortable secret is revealed. The setting, Ashely’s house, contributes to the plot of the story by adding an uneasy mood for the narrator and reader. When the narrator enters Ashley’s house, a mansion she tells us, “In my house we have a front hall. Ashley’s you’d have to call a lobby.”(pg. 1) This allows the reader to feel the narrator’s discomfort because we recognize that the setting feels unfamiliar and uncomfortable. Later the narrator says, “I sat alone in the kitchen listening to the clock tick, wondering if I should call my mom and ask her to pick me up early on account of the death of the bird and also since it was getting a little creepy there in Ashley’s humongous kitchen all alone.” (pg. 5). Here we feel the discomfort because the narrator reminds us that it’s not only weird that the bird has died but the house itself is a little creepy. As you can see, the author uses Ashley’s house to make the reader feel as uncomfortable as the narrator while we discover the secret behind the bird’s death.

**Character Plan:**

A- Narrator is close minded about hanging out with Ashley but becomes open to the possibility of a quirky new friend

C1- “But she asked me over and since I couldn’t think of a good no, I said OK.” (pg.1)

E1- Was reluctant to even go to Ashley’s house

C2- “I’m not really… we’re not that close,” I explained. “I just sit next to her in math.” (pg. 5)

E2- Can admit to at least knowing her but still not willing to call her a friend.

C3- “I don’t really know Ashley that well either—I can’t figure out if she is severely weird or like, the opposite, but, um, I think she really, kind of, loved you.”(pg. 6)

E- Starting to see the good side to Ashley and support her like a friend would.

S- Becomes more open minded to Ashley in spite of their different outlook and way of living.

**Character Paragraph:**

In “Thirteen and a Half” one of the main characters, the narrator changes from someone who is reluctant to offer friendship to someone who is supportive. When the narrator is first invited for a playdate at schoolmate Ashley’s house she says, “But she asked me over and since I couldn’t think of a good no, I said OK.” (pg.1). This shows that in the beginning, the narrator was not seeking a friendship with Ashley and just said yes because she couldn’t say no. Later she tells Ashley’s mom, “I’m not really… we’re not that close,” I explained. “I just sit next to her in math.” (pg. 5) This tells us that the narrator doesn’t have a real connection to Ashley and sees her as a peer rather than a friend. However, by the end the narrator steps up to speak at the bird funeral saying, “I don’t really know Ashley that well either—I can’t figure out if she is severely weird or like, the opposite, but, um, I think she really, kind of, loved you.”(pg. 6) This shows that the narrator has gained some compassion for Ashley and while they may not be fully friends, she’s willing to be open minded and supportive.” As you can see the narrator changes from a close minded person to someone willing to see Ashley with a more open perspective.

**Theme Plan:**

A- Theme: you never know what someone’s life is really like behind closed doors

C1- “Sweet Pea wasn’t actually, well, what you think he is. Or was.” (pg.3)

E1- Ashley had always thought she had one beloved bird but she’d been duped.

C2- “I wish I could chat, but as I said I really have to study. Call me if you and Ashley need anything.” (pg. 5)

E2- No time for a guest, even less time for a daughter

S- Life not so perfect for Ashley so you can’t assume it’s perfect for anyone else.

**Theme Paragraph:**

One theme of “Thirteen and a Half” is that you can’t judge the perfection of someone’s life based on what you see from the outside. For example, Ashley finds out the bird she loved was not really her bird when the mom reveals, “Sweet Pea wasn’t actually, well, what you think he is. Or was.” (pg.3) Ashley seems to have a perfect life with a huge house and a perfect bird but it turns out everything’s not so perfect because the mom has been replacing dead birds for years. Furthermore, the mom seems too busy for her daughter, saying to the narrator, “I wish I could chat, but as I said I really have to study. Call me if you and Ashley need anything.” (pg. 5) If the mom doesn’t have time to entertain a guest, you can only imagine that she has even less time for her own daughter. The story shows the narrator and the reader that you can’t assume someone has a perfect life just because they have a big house and the things they want. There are often secrets hidden inside.

**Opinion Plan:**

A- Enjoyed the text.

Reason 1- Could connect to the narrator

Explanation- Introvert I can understand how uncomfortable in can be in a new situation making friends

Reason 2- Darkly humorous

Evidence- Ashley stared at her mother. “Budgies are more… Sweet Pea was a budgie.” “Not recently.”

“There was more than one replacement?” The mom smiled awkwardly. “Sweet Pea was sort of a series of birds.”

Explanation- I laughed at that part because the author wrote it with such drama from Ashley and dryness from the mom.

Reason 3- Lesson to be open minded because you don’t know what others really experience behind closed doors.

S- I would recommend it.

**Opinion Paragraph:**

I really enjoyed Rachel Veil’s short story, “Thirteen and a Half.” To begin, I felt connected to the narrator. As a shy introvert, I understand how uncomfortable it can be to start a friendship with someone you don’t know who seems quite different than you. Secondly, I enjoyed the somewhat dark humor in the story. For example the passage that reads:

“Sweet Pea was a budgie.”

“Not recently.”

“There was more than one replacement?”

The mom smiled awkwardly. “Sweet Pea was sort of a series of birds.” (pg. 4)

I laughed out loud when I read that because the daughter is so dramatic and the mother has such a dry, matter of fact delivery. I cracked up! Finally, I thought it had a good message of being open minded because you never know what someone’s life is really like behind closed doors. I would definitely recommend “Thirteen and a Half” to other readers.

**Favorite Part Plan:**

Quote page: Page 4

Reason 1: It’s humorously written

Reason 2: I like how she uses dialogue to reveal so much history.

**Favorite Part Paragraph**

“Budgie.”

“Isn’t that the same as a parakeet?”

Ashley stared at her mother. “Budgies are more… Sweet Pea was a budgie.”

“Not recently.”

“There was more than one replacement?”

The mom smiled awkwardly. “Sweet Pea was sort of a series of birds.”

“NO!”

“Honey,” said the mom, leaning toward Ashley. “Some of them were green, some were blue…”

“You said he was molting!” shrieked Ashley. “Get out! Get out of my room! I want to be alone

with Sweet Pea or whoever this is! Get out!” (pg. 4)

I couldn’t choose one word or sentence so I chose this part. I like it because I found it to be the most humorous part of the story because it’s unbelievable that Ashley wouldn’t notice all the different bird. I also like that the author revealed so much about Ashley and her mother just by the way they speak to one another in this section of dialogue.