

# S-Subject Matter Artifact 1

## Life is a Bowl Full of Cherries

*Just watch out for the pits!*



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Project 1  
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### Where I'm From

I am from oak trees of Tehachapi, from Del Monte and Libby's.  
 I am from the brick house on a silent road, filled with fruit trees, cackling chickens and milk goats, with a roaring fire in a pot-belly stove.  
 I am from Southern California, land of avocados, oranges and Tehachapi apples.  
 I am from field grasses, poppies, Indian paint brush, blue-bells and rolling hills.  
 I am from homemade pies and water sports, from Jarvis', Handy's and Parkinson's.  
 I am cut from the work hard and play hard cloth of pioneers.  
 I am from "you are my sunshine" and "I love you"; the songs my Grandma crooned whenever we had tears.  
 I am from camping and fishing; beach volley ball and love for God, family and country.  
 I am from Utah and Idaho pioneers, who came from England, Ireland and Scandinavia, seeking freedom, a future for their family and embodied self-sacrifice and honesty.

### UP

"Up toward the sky"  
 The meaning is clear and concise.  
 But then the two-letter word wakes up.  
 Its grasping tentacles stirring up trouble:  
 we open up a store in the morning only to close it up at night.  
 During the day we follow up, write up reports,  
 try to measure up and move up in rank.  
 Topics come up – which compel some to speak up.  
 We call up our friends, think up excuses;  
 to fail is to give up, to try is to get up.  
 Lovers break up, then kiss and make up.  
 Class clowns cut up, but hopefully wise up and grow up.  
 To be dressed is one thing, but to dress up is special.  
 We work up an appetite;  
 warm up leftovers and clean up the kitchen,  
 brighten up a room,  
 open up a drain when it is stopped up,  
 fix up a car, lock up a house.  
 When it threatens to rain, we say it's clouding up.  
 When the sun comes out, we say it's clearing up.  
 When it doesn't rain, things dry up.  
 After a storm things are often messed up.

It is no wonder foreigners are mixed up –  
 the meaning of up is entirely up to you.  
 Now my time is up, so I'll wrap it up by shutting up.

### **Fun and Games Assonance and Alliteration**

On a humdrum day a big-wig Father with his lovey-dovey Wife and namby-pamby Son and eager-beaver Daughter zigzag into the local wheeler-dealer to buy a Jeepers-creepers.

The namby-pamby Son wants a hot-shot with wi-fi to play the boogie-woogie – and *check out* the ring-a-ding, this is no flim-flam, no siree! This is a respectable jingle-jangle for this hoity-toity family.

Eager-beaver Daughter spies a real whipper-snapper, a hodge-podge of knick-knacks, no riff-raff would drive that!

The lovey-dovey Wife is an eensy-weensy wishy-washy about the mish-mash, but after an itsy-bitsy, haggle-battle with the wheeler-dealer, Father says “okey-dokey.”

The children chitter-chatter with glee and run pell-mell into their new whim-wham. “Stop that slip-slop!” orders Father (he can be a fuddy-duddy) “We will have no silly-willies ruining the bric-a-brac in this tip top Cadillac.”

Now if you enjoyed this entire mumbo-jumbo and verbal fiddle faddle with tid-bits of shilly-shally the flibber-gibber who wrote it, thanks you!

### **Motherhood: the Second Oldest Profession**

Motherhood is the biggest *on the job training* program existing today. Everything is in the child's favor; he's little, he's cute, he's cuddly and he cries. One ambitious day my very smart and helpful toddler, CJ and I, attempt to paint the trim in the nursery a soft peach, before the new 'edition' arrives. Opening the quart size can, my son takes one look at it and insists, “Yogurt, yogurt.”

“No honey, it is paint,” as I carefully, with my paint cup in hand, step up the ladder.

“Yogurt.”

“Paint sweetie,” as I spread it on the crown molding.

The next moment I hear, “yuk, yuk” and up comes lunch, with a little bit of paint.

I cook food and someone eats it. I make beds and someone wrinkles them up again. I scrub floors and someone tracks mud on them. The employment benefits are mind boggling; it never ends. I mutter under my breath, “It is the best of times; it is the worst of times, its only time you've got- use it wisely.”

When CJ enters kindergarten, his teacher asks to see me. She begins the meeting by telling me, “He verbalizes during class, has micro-moments of attention span, periodically engages in excursions up and down the classroom, and has no other viable goals other than to socially engage in minding other people’s business.”

“Are you telling me he is goofing off?”

“You are correct.”

When he is in second grade, his teacher tells me “Your son has challenged our group management skills, our academic expectations, and our sense of efficacy with his declining attention span, which at this time does not occupy a position of authority.”

“So, he is goofing off?”

“You are correct.”

In fourth grade, CJ’s lack of attention and social work among his peers reaches an all time high; medication is now becoming the only option. I brought the maverick home, where his schooling would continue. In one week I understood the problem. He is bored and needs to be challenged. And challenge him I did. He started college level math classes at age eleven, graduated high school at fourteen and then became a full time college student.

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Christmas is a magical time for children. The thought of Santa bringing just the perfect gift on that enchanted morning; a *good* mother must take their children to see Santa. I thought it all out: if I go to the mall just when it opens, and we are the first ones in and the first ones out, I think I can do this all by myself. By now the children to mother ratio is three to one and another one on its way in a few months. CJ hangs on to one back pocket—check, Alicia hangs on to the other—check, carrying eighteen month old Amber—check. So far, so good, we waddle in to the mall to see Santa. At 10 am the mall is basically empty, and we are first in line. I set Amber down to straighten my back, an elf asks if I would like pictures; one would be great. I reach for Amber’s hand and she is gone. CJ and Alicia are still hanging on to my back pockets. She was just here; the elf and I began to frantically search. Another elf watches CJ and Alicia, while we dart, I waddle, in and out of the neighboring shops. Where can she be? The mall is practically vacant. Who could have taken her? Security locks all the exiting doors and sends out the ‘Amber alert’: “lost: little toe-head girl not yet two, wearing a navy blue jumper, name is Amber” Choking back the hysteria I silently plead, “please Heavenly Father just let me find her.” As we scurry back and forth, a security guard notices a little girl with her arm draped over a kneeling reindeer sitting peacefully under an evergreen pine tree on the backside of Santa’s display. Amber? He brings her to me, I burst into tears; not even able to choke out an audible “Thank you.” Sobbing, I grab Amber, Alicia and CJ and head to the car, it is 10:30am and I am exhausted.

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Motherhood is an art—the art of never making a mistake. For my youngest son, Chad’s third birthday, we went tripping off to Wet-n-Wild for a day of water slides and sun. Alicia, who was seven, was hesitant, no, resistant to going down a spiraling slide.

“Alicia, I promise you I will be right at the bottom and catch you. I promise. Your face won’t even touch the water. I promise. Have I ever let you down? I promise. I will be right here to catch you, prrrromise.” Moving into position to catch the reluctant but trusting child, she lets go, whipping down, “toot-toot” the life guard’s shrill whistle blows, “Uh, ma’am, you cannot be under the slide, you must swim at least six feet away - no, no exceptions, ma’am, move aaaway

from the slide. Splash!” Alicia drops a least five feet under and comes up sputtering, choking, and begins to wail the moment she has air. It is still known as ‘the day mom almost drowned Alicia.’

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Every now and again parents need a night out, well at least an afternoon, not just anyone can bathe, read and tuck children in, so an afternoon is ideal. Finding Julie Andrews flying around with an umbrella willing to babysit for a buck a head isn’t that easy. I finally settle on a neighborhood boy who seems responsible and will be able to have fun with our oldest son, after all the girls are like raising stuffed teddy bears and Chad is just a shadow to whatever the others are doing. My husband and I head out, an afternoon with no one to feed, dress, wipe, or referee. After a quick lunch we head back to the house – forgot my temple bag. The house is completely quiet. Walking out to the backyard, we find the trampoline pulled over to and partially under the patio roof. The children and babysitter, all five, have climbed out the boy’s window onto the patio and are jumping off the roof on to the trampoline. Maybe a male babysitter who says “make my day” might have been a better idea.

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In our family we work like Helen B. Happy—except for Chad. He is the typical youngest child who gets away ‘with murder’ when house or yard work is on the line. Chad manages to duck out and then magically reappear once the work is all done. After the other children’s constant complaining about Chad’s work ethic, I am determined that he is not going to get away with this anymore. This particular Saturday we are spring cleaning the entire house, closets, floors, walls, windows, and Chad *is* going to pull his fair share. All morning I keep on him: Chad vacuum, Chad move these boxes to the garage, Chad wash this wall, Chad clean these windows, Chad, Chad, Chad. He is hopping all morning. Finally I was down to my last job, mopping the kitchen floor. Alicia and I move the table out onto the patio, and I decide to have a little fun with Chad. I have been yelling his name all morning, he’s primed. From the kitchen I let out a “you are gonna get it” scream, “Chad! Get down here right now, Mister!” He comes running down the stairs in a terrified panic, “Whaat – what mom?” In the meanest, authoritative voice I say, “*Where’s* the kitchen table?” pointing to the empty kitchen floor. He looks, fear fills his face, and starts to stammer, “I . . . I didn’t do it . . .” My shoulders start to shake as I try to hold in the laugh, and then he realizes he’s been had, we both collapse together trying to hold each other up as we laugh, until we can’t stand up. And then we laugh some more.

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My hobby is dust; I can let the dust collect until it becomes the perfect shade of gray ash, evenly layered on all surfaces. Collecting dust is not all bad; it can even have its advantages. Case in point, in our living room sits a baby grand piano. The lid over the strings and sound board is propped open, doing its job, collecting dust. One day my virtuoso child is about to practice, when another angelic child took our two guinea pigs, put them in the piano and closes the lid. Needless to say, a chase ensued with both children forgetting about the guinea pigs. The next evenings practice: “klunk, klunk, oh the guinea pigs!” By then the damage is done, puddles and droppings everywhere. The professionals are called in; is the sound board ruined? Nope! The dust is so thick that it absorbed everything. The piano is saved. I have a deep appreciation for dust.

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Traveling gives the family the opportunity to get reacquainted with one another. An

opportunity to ask deep profound philosophical questions such as: “Mom, what hair color do they put on the driver’s license of bald men?” During one such trip the family traveled to Provo, Utah for a family reunion. It was decided that a hike through Timpanogos Cave was just the answer to give Great Grandma a break from all the grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The tickets were bought for the next morning. The forecast: a perfect day. We are all up early, dressed – done, breakfast – done, jackets – check, head count – where’s CJ?

“CJ, why didn’t you come when we were all calling you?”

“I dunno.”

“Why is your face all red?”

“I dunno.”

“Your hot, when did this happen? Are you sick? At breakfast you were perfectly normal. Where’s a thermometer?”

“ 105! He’s burning up! Should we take him to the E.R? What have *you* been doing?”

“Nothin.”

“Do you feel sick? When did you start to feel sick? How did this happen? Fifteen minutes ago you were perfectly normal – answer me!”

“I dunno. Really Mom, I’m perfectly fine, nothing’s wrong, *really* Mom trust me, and it’s nothing. I am perfectly fine.”

With the group waiting, a quick deliberation decided that CJ would stay home with Great Grandma and we would take him to the E.R. when we returned if he still had a high fever. When we returned, surprise, surprise, his fever is gone! He is a perfectly normal looking and feeling ten year old boy. It was a few years later we were sitting around talking that the children confessed that CJ had bit into a red berry from the pyracantha bush. And they *all* knew why he had a high fever.

“Why, that is just criminal! Not to tell me the truth of the matter. I was worried sick! Why you, you deserve to have your picture at the Post Office for not telling your mother the whole truth – why that is as good as a lie.”

“Mom, why *do* they put pictures of criminals up in the Post Office? What are we supposed to do, write to them?” It is always best to change the subject when being cornered for a crime. The moral of the story: whatever Mom and Dad *don’t know* won’t hurt *you*.