

Common Core Activities for *Rogue Wave*

A Short Story

by Theodore Taylor



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Table of Contents

Title of Activity	Page	Common Core Standards
<p>Prereading activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vocabulary on parts of a sailboat • informational article on rogue waves 	5-6	<p>These activities will help with background knowledge needed for comprehension. CCSS7RL 1, CCSS7RI 1</p>
<p>Close reading questions using first paragraph of story and informational article on rogue waves</p>	7	<p>With this activity, students are required to read an informational article about rogue waves. Then, they are asked to read and reread the first paragraph of the story. Four questions are provided asking them to compare and analyze both the article and the paragraph from the story. After completing this activity, students will have a much better understanding of what a rogue wave is. CCSS7RL1,3, CCSS7RI1, 3</p>
<p>Post-reading handout writer's craft personification</p>	9	<p>This handout will require students to identify personification used in the story. Once identified, students must analyze the personification and explain the author's purpose in using it. CCSS7RL1</p>
<p>Post-reading handout How does the setting impact the plot?</p>	10	<p>This handout requires that the students compare Scoot's setting with Sully's setting during the conflict of the story. Then, students have questions that help them analyze the impact that this setting has on the plot. CCSS7RL3</p>

Post-reading Theme	11	This handout on theme can be used to teach what theme is and how a theme statement can be developed. Non-examples and examples are provided to help students understand. At the end of this lesson, students will develop their own theme statements and find a passage to support their statements. CCSS7RL2
“Rogue Wave” Post-reading multiple choice questions	12	Six multiple choice questions are provided. These questions ask about the point of view, require students to support inferences made, and to analyze how the author develops characters. Students must also use context clues to determine meanings as well. CCSS7RL1,6
Tableau	13	This activity requires students to work in groups to develop a creative tableau and then perform it for the class. A rubric is provided. CCSSW Anchor Standard 4
Answer keys	-	Answer keys are provided for all handouts.

Parts of a Sailboat

galley The kitchen on a boat

companionway The entryway that leads from the cockpit to the cabin

deck The surface covering the hull of a boat

starboard The right side facing forward

stern The aftermost part of a vessel

hull The underbody of a boat

bow The forward part of a boat also called 'the pointy end

mast A pole made from wood, aluminum, or carbon fiber from which a sail is set

bulkhead A vertical partition separating compartments.

porthole A porthole is a circular window on a boat or ship.

bilge The interior of the hull below the floor boards.

keel An extension of the hull that goes deeper into the water and provides stability from heel and sideways resistance to wind



Picture of a galley

A 'rogue wave' is large, unexpected, and dangerous.



A rogue wave estimated at 18.3 meters (60 feet) in the Gulf Stream off of Charleston, S.C. At the time, surface winds were light at 15 knots. The wave was moving away from the ship after crashing into it moments before this photo was captured.

Rogue, freak, or killer waves have been part of marine folklore for centuries, but have only been accepted as a real phenomenon by scientists over the past few decades.

Rogues, called 'extreme storm waves' by scientists, are those waves which are greater than twice the size of surrounding waves, are very unpredictable, and often come unexpectedly from directions other than prevailing wind and waves.

Most reports of extreme storm waves say they look like "walls of water." They are often steep-sided with unusually deep troughs.

Since these waves are uncommon, measurements and analysis of this phenomenon is extremely rare. Exactly how and when rogue waves form is still under investigation, but there are several known causes:

Constructive interference. Extreme waves often form because swells, while traveling across the ocean, do so at different speeds and directions. As these swells pass through one another, their crests, troughs, and lengths sometimes coincide and reinforce each other. This process can form unusually large, towering waves that quickly disappear. If the swells are travelling in the same direction, these mountainous waves may last for several minutes before subsiding.

Focusing of wave energy. When waves formed by a storm develop in a water current against the normal wave direction, an interaction can take place which results in a shortening of the wave frequency. This can cause the waves to dynamically join together, forming very big 'rogue' waves. The currents where these are sometimes seen are the [Gulf Stream](#) and [Agulhas current](#). Extreme waves developed in this fashion tend to be longer lived.

Article from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) website

Rogue Waves

Read the article from the NOAA website about rogues. Then, read the first paragraph of the short story “Rogue Wave” by Theodore Taylor. Answer the following questions.

1. Reread the first paragraph of the story. Which of the following details about the rogue in the story is specifically mentioned in the second paragraph of the NOAA article?

- a. It had traveled almost 7,000 miles.
- b. It traveled at a speed of 20.83 miles an hour.
- c. It was driven by an unusual pattern of easterly winds.
- d. It had already killed thirteen people.

2. Read the fourth paragraph of the NOAA article. Then, reread the first paragraph of the story. Compare what the article says and what the story says. Based on what the article says in the fourth paragraph, why is the information given in the story about the size and speed of the rogue interesting?

3. Reread the section of the article under the heading **Constructive interference**. Then, again, reread the first paragraph of the story to answer the following questions. Did the rogue in the story quickly disappear? _____ Why or why not? Support your answer with a passage from the story that lets you know whether or not it disappeared quickly and an explanation from the article.

4. Read the last section of the NOAA article under the heading **Focusing of Wave Energy**. Do you think this is how the rogue wave in the story was formed? _____ Explain why or why not by using text from the article and story to defend your answer.

Read the second paragraph of the story. Stop and answer the following questions before reading more.

1. What is the Old Sea Dog? _____

2. What is the purpose of the three horizontal hatch boards?

3. At the end of this paragraph, where is Melissa?

Read the third paragraph (lines 17-31).

According to this paragraph, which waves qualify for “sneaker” or “sleeper” status?

What did you learn about rogues from this passage? Make a list of facts in the following box.

Why do you think the author interrupts the story to tell us about rogues?

**“The Rogue Wave”
Post-Reading Activity**

Writer’s Craft ~ Personification

The author chooses to use personification several times in this story. **Underline or highlight the personification in each of the following passages from the story.**

1. *As he was about to complete a northeast tack, Sully’s attention was drawn to a squadron of seagulls diving on small fish about a hundred yards off the port bow, and he did not see the giant wave that had crept up silently behind the Sea Dog.*

2. *Over the next five or six minutes, Sully dove repeatedly, using his feet as a fulcrum and using all the strength that he had in his arms, legs, and back, in an effort to open the doors. The pressure of the water defeated him.*

3. *Boats of the Baba class, built for deep-water sailing, quite capable of reaching Honolulu and beyond, were almost sea-tight unless the sailors made a mistake or unless the sea became angry.*

4. *The water would torture her, then it would drown her. Seawater has no heart, no brain.*

What is the author’s purpose in personifying the sea? What mood and/or emotions concerning the sea does this personification create?

Choose one of the four passages from the boxes, and explain what the personification literally means. Passage # _____

Look over the underlined personification in these passages. On a separate sheet of paper, write a poem about the sea. In your poem, include some of this personification.

Name _____

Textual Evidence Sentence Starters

On page _____, the story states...

The author wrote...

The author states...

An example is...

According to the text...

The passage _____ proves _____

One example that shows this is...

Another example from the text is...

The author shows this by...

Practice Question to complete with your teacher:

Lines 17-36: What details in the story describe the setting? What makes the setting a potentially dangerous place?

Choose **two** of the following questions to answer. Return to the text to support your answers. Make sure you write in complete sentences.

1. Lines 63-67: What inference can you make about Sully's abilities as a sailor? What text evidence supports your inference?
2. Lines 175-185: How might Scoot deal with the situation she is in? What details support your inference?
3. Lines 303-312: What inference can you make about Scoot's abilities? What evidence supports your inference?
4. Lines 339-354: What details increase the suspense in this passage? Explain how these details create tension and excitement for the reader.

Post-reading

How does the setting impact the plot?

The overall setting for this story is on a Baba type sailboat in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. However, once the rogue hits the Sea Dog, the story’s main characters find themselves in two separate settings. One of the settings is inside of the galley where Scoot is trapped. The other is outside of it where Sully desperately tries to figure out how to help his sister. In the following chart, list details about each setting.

Scoot’s setting - Inside the locked galley	Sully’s setting – Outside of the upside-down boat

The conflict of a story is the main problem. What is the main conflict in this story?

Main conflict:

The setting of a story can greatly impact a plot. To help you see just how much the setting impacts the plot in this story, answer the following questions.

If Scoot and Sully were locked in the galley together, what would be different about the plot and the conflict?

If Scoot had not been in the galley when the rogue hit the ship, how would the conflict be different?

Rogue Wave

Theme

Some words from the story that express the big ideas or topics from the novel....

survival, hope, fear, determination

Non-Examples of theme	Example of theme
<p><u>NON-Example:</u> Do not learn to navigate a ship in the ocean because something bad may happen to you. Why is this NOT an effective theme statement?</p> <p><u>NON-Example:</u> <i>Don't underestimate the ocean.</i> Why is this NOT an effective theme statement?</p> <p><u>Non-Example:</u> Sully and Scoot had a great relationship. Why is this NOT an effective theme statement?</p>	<p><u>Example:</u> No matter how bad the situation seems or how outnumbered one may be, there is always hope for survival. Why is this an effective theme statement?</p>

Now, write another theme statement for this story – one in your own words. Then, find one line from the story to support your theme statement.

My theme statement for this story	A passage to support this statement

“Rogue Wave”
Post Reading Questions

Name _____

Date _____

1. What point of view is used to tell this story?
 - a. first person
 - b. third person limited
 - c. third person omniscient
2. How would this story be different if it were narrated by Scoot?
 - a. We would not have known Sully’s struggle and agony in trying to help his sister.
 - b. We would not have known that Scoot was trapped inside the galley.
 - c. We would not have known the description of the Old Sea Dog.
 - d. We would not have known that the ship sank in the end.

He didn’t know whether or not the crazy telepathy was working.

3. What does the word telepathy mean? Use your knowledge of the root –*tele* (far) to help you.
 - a. pounding
 - b. plan
 - c. mind-reading
 - d. predictions
4. Which of the following statements from the story supports the inference that the telepathy may have actually worked?
 - a. *He decided to keep saying it the rest of the day and into the night or for as long as it took to penetrate the hull with words. Skylight! Skylight! Over and over.*
 - b. *The unheard message was compelling – Try the skylight.*
 - c. *Scoot dove twice for the boxy flashlight, found it, and turned it on, suddenly splitting the darkness and immediately feeling hopeful.*
 - d. *Not knowing what was happening below or whether Scoot was trying to escape, Sully was getting more anxious by the moment.*

5. How does the author develop the characters in this story?
 - a. through their actions
 - b. through their thoughts
 - c. through their dialogue
 - d. all of the above

6. There is one paragraph in this story that just has one line. *The mantra kept on.* Find this paragraph. Read the paragraph before it that begins Sully looked at his watch, and read the paragraph after it. What does the word mantra mean?
 - a. diving
 - b. solitude
 - c. repetition
 - d. anger

“Rogue Wave” Post-reading Activity

A **tableau** is a living picture that captures a moment. You will create a group tableau. This means that you will create a frozen scene from this story. You will stand in a line in front of the class and one by one “come to life”, say a line from the story while showing emotion and/or actions that fit that line, and then freeze again. Then, the person beside you will “come to life”, say his/her line and then freeze again until the entire group is done.

Follow the directions below to prepare for your dramatic presentation:

1. Choose some dialogue, a moment, or situation from the story for your group to portray. Make sure you choose a significant passage or line. If you wish, each person in the group may choose his/her own line(s), which do not have to be in the same passage. For example, person one in the group may choose the line, *He swam back to the point of cabin entry, took several deep breaths, and dove. He felt along the hatch boards and then opened his eyes briefly to see that the doors were still closed. She was still inside.* The second person in the group may choose the line, *She was coming out of shock now and fear icier than the water was replacing her confusion.* While these lines are not on the same page, they are still related to the conflict.
2. Once each person in the group has chosen a line or two or three, decide how each person will “come to life” and portray this line. You will memorize the line and say it out loud, but as you do so, you should include facial expressions, and movements or gestures when possible. For example, for the line *He swam back to the point of cabin entry, took several deep breaths, and dove. He felt along the hatch boards and then opened his eyes briefly to see that the doors were still closed. She was still inside* the speaker could make swimming and diving gestures. He/she could say the last line in a panicked voice with serious expression on his/her face.
3. Once everyone in the group has decided on a line, facial expressions, and motions to accompany that line, practice performing the tableau. Everyone in the group should stand frozen. Put your heads down so you are not tempted to smile or laugh. The first person in line will begin by lifting his/her head, saying and acting out his/her line. Once this line has been brought to life, that person will freeze right where he/she is, and the next person will “come to life.”
4. Now, before you perform your tableau for the class, you must first write something for your teacher. 😊 Write a paragraph explaining the significance of your chosen piece to act out. Why did you choose it? What is significant about it? Why is it memorable?

Tableau Rubric

Name: _____

Criteria	Possible Points	Points Earned
Participated effectively with group	20	
Voice was loud enough to be heard by the entire "audience".	20	
Facial expressions and/or gestures were incorporated.	20	
Written analysis was completed with few (if any) errors in conventions.	20	
Written analysis included a thorough explanation of the chosen line.	20	
TOTAL	100	

Rogue Waves

Read the article from the NOAA website about rogues. Then, read the first paragraph of the short story “Rogue Wave” by Theodore Taylor. Answer the following questions.

1. Reread the first paragraph of the story. Which of the following details about the rogue in the story is specifically mentioned in the second paragraph of the NOAA article?

- a. It had traveled almost 7,000 miles.
- b. It traveled at a speed of 20.83 miles an hour.
- c. It was driven by an unusual pattern of easterly winds.**
- d. It had already killed thirteen people.

2. Read the fourth paragraph of the NOAA article. Then, reread the first paragraph of the story. Compare what the article says and what the story says. Based on what the article says in the fourth paragraph, why is the information given in the story about the size and speed of the rogue interesting?

It is interesting because according to the NOAA article, obtaining measurements is rare. The story tells of a storm that was 800 feet in length and 48 feet from bottom to crest.

3. Reread the section of the article under the heading **Constructive interference**. Then, again, reread the first paragraph of the story to answer the following questions. Did the rogue in the story quickly disappear? **No** Why or why not? Support your answer with a passage from the story that lets you know whether or not it disappeared quickly and an explanation from the article.

According to the story, the wave traveled for 7,000 miles. It most likely did not disappear quickly because the waves were traveling in the same direction. The article states, If the swells are travelling in the same direction, these mountainous waves may last for several minutes before subsiding.

4. Read the last section of the NOAA article under the heading **Focusing of Wave Energy**. Do you think this is how the rogue wave in the story was formed? **yes** Explain why or why not by using text from the article and story to defend your answer. **According to the article, extreme waves developed in this fashion tend to be longer lived. The ones in the story traveled for 7,000 miles so we know it was “long lived”.**

Read the second paragraph of the story. Stop and answer the following questions before reading more.

1. What is the Old Sea Dog? **a thirty-foot Baby type sailboat**

2. What is the purpose of the three horizontal hatch boards?

to protect the interior of the boat from water

3. At the end of this paragraph, where is Melissa?

below the deck of the boat in the galley

Read the third paragraph (lines 17-31).

According to this paragraph, which waves qualify for “sneaker” or “sleeper” status?

waves that are 15-25 feet high

What did you learn about rogues from this passage? Make a list of facts in the following box.

- **Rogues have always been around.**
- **They are improbable but possible.**
- **They are unpredictable.**
- **They range from 15-100 feet.**
- **As waters slowly warm, they seem to be happening more frequently.**

Why do you think the author interrupts the story to tell us about rogues?

to help the reader understand what a rogue is and to foreshadow an upcoming rogue

that will hit the Old Sea Dog

**“The Rogue Wave”
Post-Reading Activity**

Writer’s Craft ~ Personification

The author chooses to use personification several times in this story. **Underline or highlight the personification in each of the following passages from the story.**

1. As he was about to complete a northeast tack, Sully’s attention was drawn to a squadron of seagulls diving on small fish about a hundred yards off the port bow, and he did not see the giant wave that had crept up silently behind the Sea Dog.

2. Over the next five or six minutes, Sully dove repeatedly, using his feet as a fulcrum and using all the strength that he had in his arms, legs, and back, in an effort to open the doors. The pressure of the water defeated him.

3. Boats of the Baba class, built for deep-water sailing, quite capable of reaching Honolulu and beyond, were almost sea-tight unless the sailors made a mistake or unless the sea became angry.

4. The water would torture her, then it would drown her. Seawater has no heart, no brain.

What is the author’s purpose in personifying the sea? What mood and/or emotions concerning the sea does this personification create?

The use of personification makes the sea seem alive, cold, and calculated. The sea seems almost monster-like. This creates an eerie and dreadful tone.

Choose one of the four passages from the boxes, and explain what the personification literally means. Passage # 2

It means the water was too strong for Sully to handle.

Look over the underlined personification in these passages. On a separate sheet of paper, write a poem about the sea. In your poem, include some of this personification.

Name _____

Textual Evidence Sentence Starters

On page _____, the story states...
The author wrote...
The author states...
An example is...
According to the text...
The passage _____ proves _____
One example that shows this is...
Another example from the text is...
The author shows this by...

Practice Question to complete with your teacher:

Lines 17-36: What details in the story describe the setting? What makes the setting a potentially dangerous place?

There are a few details in lines 17-36 that describe the setting. According to the passage, the characters are in a boat in the Pacific Ocean. They are fifteen miles off of a desolate Cabo Colnett. The text also describes there being a “brilliant sun” and a “cold light breeze”. The potential of a rogue wave hitting their boat in this secluded part of the ocean makes the setting potentially dangerous. The author shows this by describing rogues as “monstrous out-sized waves”.

Choose **two** of the following questions to answer. Return to the text to support your answers. Make sure you write in complete sentences.

1. Lines 63-67: What inference can you make about Sully’s abilities as a sailor? What text evidence supports your inference?
2. Lines 175-185: How might Scoot deal with the situation she is in? What details support your inference?
3. Lines 303-312: What inference can you make about Scoot’s abilities? What evidence supports your inference?
4. Lines 339-354: What details increase the suspense in this passage? Explain how these details create tension and excitement for the reader.

Sample answer

#1 There are a couple of hints in lines 64-66 that can help the reader make an inference about Sully’s abilities as a sailor. A logical inference would be that Sully is a good sailor because the passage states that Sully had “been around boats, motor and sail, for many of his nineteen years.”

Sample answer

#3 The reader can infer that Scoot is a quick and smart thinker and that she know what to do in a crisis like the one occurring in the story. One example that shows this is line 303, “Scoot remembered that an emergency flashlight was bracketed on the bulkhead above the starboard settee, and she assumed it was waterproof.”

Post-reading

How does the setting impact the plot?

The overall setting for this story is on a Baba type sailboat in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. However, once the rogue hits the Sea Dog, the story's main characters find themselves in two separate settings. One of the settings is inside of the galley where Scoot is trapped. The other is outside of it where Sully desperately tries to figure out how to help his sister. In the following chart, list details about each setting.

Scoot's setting - Inside the locked galley	Sully's setting - Outside of the upside-down boat
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Blackness- Water up to her chin- Everything that was loose scattered about- Engine oil leaking- Oil smell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-He climbs on top of the keel, so he is somewhat out of the water. -He also keeps diving into the ocean to try to figure out how to help his sister. The water is cold.-Night is coming - sun going down-Sound of the "slop of the sea"-Moan of afternoon breeze create eeriness

The conflict of a story is the main problem. What is the main conflict in this story?

Main conflict:

Scoot is trapped inside of the galley, and Sully is unable to help her out.

The setting of a story can greatly impact a plot. To help you see just how much the setting impacts the plot in this story, answer the following questions.

If Scoot and Sully were locked in the galley together, what would be different about the plot and the conflict?

The characters would have shared the same conflict instead of having two different ones. In the story, Sully's main conflict is his struggle to figure out how to help his sister and his helplessness in doing so. If they were together, they could help one another escape. It may have been easier for Sully to break out the window with his strength.

If Scoot had not been in the galley when the rogue hit the ship, how would the conflict be different? **They would both be on upside down hull of the boat, and the conflict would be centered around them waiting to be rescued. Or, one or both of them may have been thrown into the sea and the conflict would center around them reaching safety on the upside down ship.**

Rogue Wave

Theme Some words from the story that express the big ideas or topics from the novel....

survival, hope, fear, determination

Non-Examples of theme	Example of theme
<p>NON-Example: Do not learn to navigate a ship in the ocean because something bad may happen to you. Why is this NOT an effective theme statement? This is not a true statement, and is not the lesson about life that you can take away from this story.</p>	<p>Example: No matter how bad the situation seems or how outnumbered one may be, there is always hope for survival. Why is this an effective theme statement? Because this story is about survival, and the lesson learned is that in the worst of cases, people can survive, this is a good theme statement for this story.</p>
<p>NON-Example: <i>Don't underestimate the ocean.</i> Why is this NOT an effective theme statement? The ocean is powerful in this story, but this is not the main lesson taken from this story.</p>	
<p>Non-Example: Sully and Scoot had a great relationship. Why is this NOT an effective theme statement? This is a true statement, but not a theme statement. Characters' names should not be given in a theme statement, and again, this is not the life lesson taken from this story.</p>	

Now, write another theme statement for this story – one in your own words. Then, find one line from the story to support your theme statement.

My theme statement for this story	A passage to support this statement
<p>Sample: Never give up hope, but instead fight for your survival.</p>	<p>... She pushed with all her strength, and this time the window opened. Almost out of breath, she quickly pushed her body through and the Old Sea Dog released her.</p>

“Rogue Wave”
Post Reading Questions

Name _____

Date _____

1. What point of view is used to tell this story?
 - a. first person
 - b. third person limited
 - c. **third person omniscient**

2. How would this story be different if it were narrated by Scoot?
 - a. **We would not have known Sully’s struggle and agony in trying to help his sister.**
 - b. We would not have known that Scoot was trapped inside the galley.
 - c. We would not have known the description of the Old Sea Dog.
 - d. We would not have known that the ship sank in the end.

He didn’t know whether or not the crazy telepathy was working.

3. What does the word telepathy mean? Use your knowledge of the root *-tele* to help you.

- a. pounding
 - b. plan
 - c. **mind-reading**
 - d. predictions
-
4. Which of the following statements from the story supports the inference that the telepathy may have actually worked?
 - a. He decided to keep saying it the rest of the day and into the night or for as long as it took to penetrate the hull with words. Skylight! Skylight! Over and over.
 - b. **The unheard message was compelling – Try the skylight.**
 - c. Scoot dove twice for the boxy flashlight, found it, and turned it on, suddenly splitting the darkness and immediately feeling hopeful.
 - d. Not knowing what was happening below or whether Scoot was trying to escape, Sully was getting more anxious by the moment.

 5. How does the author develop the characters in this story?
 - a. through their actions
 - b. through their thoughts
 - c. through their dialogue
 - d. **all of the above**

 6. There is one paragraph in this story that just has one line. *The mantra kept on.* Find this paragraph. Read the paragraph before it that begins Sully looked at his watch, and read the paragraph after it. What does the word mantra mean?
 - a. diving
 - b. solitude
 - c. **repetition**
 - d. anger

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Happy Teaching! 😊

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