

Figure 5.5: Pass the Mic

Title of Work: _____

Brainstorming

1. Choose a character in the text who has very few opportunities to speak, and, even when they do, they lack the opportunity to fully express themselves. Write the name of the character on the following line.

Character: _____

2. Determine why this character is silenced or marginalized in the text. Is it because of their race, class, or gender? Is it the historical time period? What might the author be trying to convey by rendering this character silent?
3. Locate the character's speaking lines in the text and mark the pages with sticky notes, or locate the moments in the text in which the character appears or is referenced.
4. Indicate places in the text in which:
 - Other characters talk about the character
 - The character is present but has very little to say
 - The character's behavior is evident
5. Use this textual evidence to respond to the following prompts and questions.

Prompt	Quotation	Context <i>What's happening in the text, or who is listening?</i>	Significance <i>What does this indicate about your character?</i>
Write at least two quotations spoken by your character that reveal something about them.			
Choose at least one quotation that another character says about your character that reveals something about them.			
What evidence from the book describes an action that suggests something about your character?			

6. Now, move beyond the text and use what you've learned to infer how your character might respond to each of the following questions in the chart provided. Write the character's responses in the first person as you begin to imagine their voice.

Question	Character's Response
What is something you often think about?	
What do you worry about?	
What is one of your most important goals?	
What is one of your most admirable qualities? Explain why you think so.	
What is one of your worst qualities? Explain why you think so.	
What motivates you?	
How do you like to spend your free time?	
Who do you love most in the world?	

Writing the First Draft

Follow these steps.

1. It can be helpful to focus your monologue on one of the following.
 - **Backstory:** What happened in your life before readers meet you in this text?
 - **Perspective:** What is your perspective about another character in the text or a particular conflict or event? Do you strongly agree or disagree with a particular character? Do you think a character is misunderstood by the other characters? Do you think something that occurs in the novel is unfair and needs to be addressed?
 - **Aspirations:** What do you want? What are your hopes for the future?
 - **Regrets:** What do you regret? Is it something about the way you acted or responded to another character in the text? Is it a choice you made that turned out badly?
2. Start a fresh page in your Notebook, and write in the first person to begin developing your character's voice. In the first few lines, your monologue should clearly indicate at what point in the text the character begins speaking. Is it at the beginning? The ending? Is it after a specific moment in the text? (If it's at a specific moment in the text, include the quote that precedes your character's monologue or a statement that expresses the context.)
3. Ensure your character mentions why they are silenced in the text (race, class, gender, historical time period, and so on). You can do this at the beginning of the monologue, or you can thread it throughout.
4. Your monologue should:
 - Include an interesting title that includes the character's name.
 - Sound consistent with how the character is presented in the text.
 - Incorporate two direct quotations spoken by your character.
 - Show evidence of compositional risks, such as use of imagery and figurative language.
 - Demonstrate originality and imagination.
 - Be 1½ or 2 typed, double-spaced pages.