

Learning Outcomes	Topics or Texts	Course Section	Text Type of Task	Title of Task
<p>To examine different forms of communication within the media, focusing on plays inspired by "Another Earth," a 2011 tragedy directed by Mike Cahill, to show an awareness of the potential of a cancer child's personal story for educational, and ideological influence .</p> <p>To show the way mass media use language and image to inform, persuade, or entertain through the use of style and register, choice of content within the screenplay, and the stage directions.</p>	<p>ABC News article, "rave Boy, 12, Calls Halt to Cancer Treatment." http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/abc-blogs/brave-boy-12-calls-halt-cancer-treatment-133202965--abc-news.html</p>	<p>Part 2 Language and Mass Communication</p>	<p>Screen Play of Short Film.</p>	<p>"The Last Days of Happiness."</p>

Article

A 12-year old boy who has battled a rare form of cancer since he was 7 has made a bold decision. He is stopping his treatments so he can go home and be with his family.

Alex Rodriguez is aware of what his decision means. So is his hometown of Shelbyville, Tenn., which has rallied around the boy who is facing such a stark decision with such maturity and good humor. "I had the opportunity to meet Alex this summer," Dr. Tracy Lampley, principal of Harris Middle School told ABCNews.com. "He is a very courageous young man to have a very mature adult outlook on life. It's amazing as a 12-year old he is really able to face the opportunities and challenges that he has in his remaining time."

"He's just a wonderful little boy," Alex's grandmother Carolyn Camacho said. "He's always happy. No matter what he's always happy and he doesn't like to talk about his cancer. It makes him sad and he wants to be happy."

Alex's school and neighbors have been touched by the boy and are trying to make his last days cheerful, raising money for his hospice care and taking care of his bucket list.

Alex has two wishes, to tour the Coca Cola factory in Atlanta, Ga., and go to the indoor water park at the Wilderness Resort in Tennessee. Rodriguez is seeing one of his wishes come true over the weekend. He will be visiting the Coca Cola factory Saturday morning, in a limo, the ride donated by a businessman. Jeffrey McGee, a minister from Edgemont Baptist Church who set up a bank account for donations, is asking stores in the area to cover up their signs with messages to Alex so when he rides through town he can see people supporting him.

Florists in town are putting together blue ribbons for people to hang outside on their mailboxes or street lamps to show their support.

Harris Middle School, where Rodriguez attended sixth grade and Camacho is head custodian, is running a drive called "Ribbons for Alex" where they sell blue ribbons for 50 cents apiece. Money raised from ribbon sales and donations will go towards hospice care for Rodriguez and so far ribbon sales have totaled more than \$1,200.

"Everybody has been so wonderful," Comacho said.

Alex's childhood has been wracked with pain and filled with surgeries and harsh medicine. When Alex was 7 he went to the doctor for his back aches.

"We didn't know what was wrong with him," his grandmother told ABCNews.com.

His family took him to Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt University Medical Center where the doctors diagnosed him with rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare form of cancer. This type of cancer is made up of cells that normally develop into skeletal muscles and is more common in children than adults, according to the [American Cancer Society](#).

"The tumor on his spine was growing so fast, it paralyzed him. He was losing the ability to walk," said Camacho. Alex had surgery on his spine, a bar and two "cages" - cylinder devices in the spine to replace discs - were put into his back. He had to learn how to walk again after the surgery and received radiation as well as chemotherapy.

The treatments worked, but only for two years.

When Alex was in the sixth grade, "He went for all of his scans and tests and they said everything was gone," his grandmother said. "Then two or three months later it came back and it hit him pretty hard." Once the cancer came back Rodriguez again resumed chemotherapy and radiation.

Camacho said he has tumors in his legs, arms, shoulders, near his heart, in his lungs and there may be more. Camacho said that Alex tried everything, but the tumors kept coming back. The only choice left is experimental treatments in Texas, but he does not want to leave home. So Alex made his decision.

"He's been going through a lot since he was 7," said Camacho. "Now he's on a lot of pain medication and hospice is coming in."

McGee estimates after a benefit next week, the donations will total around \$10,000 to help pay for hospice care. He doesn't know how long that care will be needed.

"We don't know what kind of time frame we're in," McGee said.

Donations are being accepted at the Alex Rodriguez Benefit Account, Peoples Bank of Bedford County, 1122 North Main Street, Shelbyville, Tenn. 37160.

Rationale

The ABC article, "Brave Boy, 12, Calls Halt to Cancer Treatment" is an article about a boy named Alex Rodriguez who decides to stay back with his family instead of moving to Texas, where his rhabdomyosarcoma (a type of cancer) can be treated, risking his life. I decided to create an autobiographical screenplay called "The Last Year," of his struggle with cancer.

In order to capture the third person perspective and factual tone of the article, I used a third person narration. I also only used content in the article. However, sometimes, I had to re-arrange the information from the various interviews of the article. For example, instead of having Alex's grandmother say, "We didn't know what was wrong with him," I had Alex's narration say it during the film. I chose the title "The Last Year" in order to emotionally impact the film-watchers and draw them in in a similar fashion to the article's title. The audience will be curious of what the last year is about.

I had to make some visual and emotional assumptions to turn the article, which is very fact based, to a more emotional storyline for the screenplay. In order to accurately portray Alex's narration, I listened to various youtube clips of interviews of him, and read more articles to find his quotes.

The Last Year

Screenplay by Yada Pruksachatkun

INDEX:

INT -Internal set
EXT.- External set

INT. In a black limo

ALEX RODRIGUEZ, 12, scrawny, smiling. A chauffeur is driving next to him.

He is looking out the window, at all the flyers and posters stuck to the stores, with messages of support on them.

Narrator:

There was once a time, when I didn't have to think about bucket lists.
Some say I'm just a little kid in a big world. But the difference with me, is that I know exactly what I want to be. Happy.

CUT TO INT.

Waiting room of Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital,
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Seven year old ALEX, his parents, and his grandmother sit on a bench. His parents are looking at each other worriedly, while his grandmother is comforting ALEX. He is sweating with tears in his eyes.

Grandmother (assuringly)

I'm sure we'll figure out what's hurting you dear.

CUT TO

INT. Waiting room of Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital

Doctor:

Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez, could you please come in to the office?

MR. and MRS. RODRIGUEZ look at each other. Alex looks on, face red, looking straight ahead; bearing the pain.

The DOCTOR shows them the X-ray scans, and points at a tumor.

Doctor (in a grave tone):

I am so sorry. This type of cancer is rhabdomyosarcoma. The growing cells are becoming skeletal muscles, which is why he is becoming paralyzed.

MR. RODRIGUEZ grabs the scan.

CUT TO BLACK

Narrator:

They said it was nothing, that a small surgery would fix it.

SLOWLY FADE TO:

INT. A hospital room

ALEX is lying on an operation table, and the surgeons are putting cylinder devices in his spine.

Narrator:

They put a cage into his back, two cylinder devices in his spine. And then after that, well....

CUT TO:

EXT. Harris Middle School Playground

There are monkey bars on one side of the playground. KIDS are huddled in circles, becoming silent as ALEX hobbles past. ALEX is in crutches, silent, his eyes darting back and forth at his peers.

CAMACHO, school head custodian, tall, wearing a buttoned up shirt, looks on from a building. He turns around, his eyes deep in thought.

CUT TO:

EXT. Harris Middle School Playground

CAMACHO walks up to ALEX, who is sitting on a playground bench.

CAMACHO (cheerfully):
Hey Alex! How are you today?

ALEX (looking up, somewhat surprised):

I'm good, thanks!

CAMACHO (sitting beside him):

We'll get you through this, I promise.

ALEX looks up optimistically, laughs nervously.

ALEX:

I sure hope so (smiling)

CUT TO BLACK

ALEX (narration)

The treatments worked, but only for two years.

CUT TO:

INT. Rodriguez' house, living room

ALEX'S GRANDMOTHER, dark haired, short, is sitting on the sofa with MR. RODRIGUEZ. A doctor's report is spread out on their laps. The fan in the background drowns their voices out.

GRANDMOTHER:

Alex went for all of his scans and tests and they said everything was gone..

MR. RODRIGUEZ looks at GRANDMOTHER puzzledly.

GRANDMOTHER:

All the discs.

MR. RODRIGUEZ

It can't be severe. I mean, it's been gone for two years...

GRANDMOTHER:

Just because something's been gone, doesn't mean it'll never come back.

MR. RODRIGUEZ (voice rising)

But where are we going to get the money for further treatment?
Whe-

GRANDMOTHER hushes him sternly, his mouth clamps shut. They both look at the doorway and see Alex, who runs off.

CUT TO:

INT. Camacho's office at Harris Middle School

CAMACHO, MR. AND MRS. RODRIGUEZ sit on chairs, CAMACHO in front of a desk. The room is glowing with light.

MR. RODRIGUEZ (factually):

The only choice left is experimental treatments in Texas.

CAMACHO:
How serious is his cancer?

MRS. RODRIGUEZ:
It has attacked his legs, arms, shoulders, near his heart, and lungs.

Her bottom lip is quivering. She looks up.

How is fundraising going?

CAMACHO:
We have already raised \$1,200 from the “Blue Ribbons” drive last week, and I have a few more events up my sleeve.

MR. RODRIGUEZ:

\$1,200? ...That’s fantastic!

MRS. RODRIGUEZ (chiming in):
We cannot express how grateful we are...

There are tears in her eyes.

Maybe he’ll even live.

CUT TO:

INT. Living room, Rodriguez household

ALEX is sitting on the sofa, pale and sweating. He is throwing a tantrum, while MRS. RODRIGUEZ stands by the door, stern.

ALEX:

But I don't wanna go to Texas!

MRS. RODRIGUEZ:

It's the only way you will survive!

ALEX:

I want to be happy, to be with my family!

MRS. RODRIGUEZ:

Now, now. Be reasonable here.

ALEX:

Mom! Who went through the chemotherapy, all those surgeries? I did.

(more quietly, giving up)

You won't understand, what it's like to be in a hospital, to have those surgeries. Ma, I'd rather die happy.

MRS. RODRIGUEZ has nothing to say, her lips falter as if she's about to say something, but then she hesitates.

MRS. RODRIGUEZ walks over and crouches down to ALEX'S eye level, stroking his hair.

MRS. RODRIGUEZ:

Do you really want to stay here?

ALEX (without hesitation):

Yes.

MRS. RODRIGUEZ's fingers continue shifting through his hair in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. In a black limo

ALEX looks on from his car. Outside, it starts raining, drops
spewing across the window.

Narrator:

He only had two wishes, before he died. To tour the Coca
Cola factory in Atlanta, and go to the Wilderness Resort water
park in Tennessee.

One more down, one more to go.

A Coca Cola Factory looms over ahead.

CHAFFEUR:

We're here sir.

ALEX:

Thank you.

ALEX nods curtly at the chauffeur. His mother helps him onto
the muddy ground, and holds him up. His arms entwine around
his mother's waist. The pouring rain makes it almost impossible
to see the factory.

Narrator:

And for a time, he was in heaven, in his last year of happiness.

The figures of ALEX and his mother disappears in the white
rain.

CUT TO BLACK

INDEX:

INT -Internal set

EXT.- External set