

UNIT 9

The Scholarship Jacket

Martha Salinas (Born in 1949)

Students Learning Outcomes:

On the completion of this unit, the students will be able to:

- recognize and use appropriate transitional words.
- recognize the author's purpose and point of view and their effects on the text.
- illustrate use of prepositions of position, time and movement and direction.
- recognize and use appropriate conventions (format, style, expressions).
- identify the speaker or narrator in a selection.
- write an extended narrative incident.
- create and deliver group / class presentations.

Pre-reading:

- What idea comes to your mind after reading the title "The Scholarship Jacket?"

The small Texas school that I attended carried out a tradition every year during the eighth grade graduation; a beautiful gold and green jacket, the school colors, was awarded to the class valedictorian, the student who had maintained the highest grades for eight years. The scholarship jacket had a big gold S on the left front side and the winner's name was written in gold letters on the pocket.



My oldest sister Rosie had won the jacket a few years back and I fully expected to win also. I was fourteen and in the eighth grade. I had been a straight A student since the first grade, and the last year I had looked forward to owning that jacket. My father was a farm laborer who couldn't earn enough money to feed eight children, so when I was six I was given to my

grandparents to raise. We couldn't participate in sports at school because there were registration fees, uniform costs, and trips out of town; so even though we were quite agile and athletic, there would never be a sports school jacket for us. This one, the scholarship jacket, was our only chance.

In May, close to graduation, spring fever struck, and no one paid any attention in class; instead we stared out the windows and at each other, wanting to speed up the last few weeks of school. I despaired every time I looked in the mirror. Pencil thin, not a curve anywhere, I was called "Beanpole" and "String Bean" and I knew that's what I looked like. A flat chest, no hips, and a brain, that's what I had. That really isn't much for a fourteen-year-old to work with, I thought, as I absentmindedly wandered from my history class to gym. Another hour of sweating in basketball and displaying my toothpick legs was coming up. Then I remembered my P.E. shorts were still in a bag under my desk where I'd forgotten them. I had to walk all the way back and get them. Coach Thompson was a real bear if anyone wasn't dressed for P.E. She had said I was a good forward and once she even tried to talk Grandma into letting me join the team. Grandma, of course, said no.

I was almost back at my classroom's door when I heard angry voices and arguing. I stopped. I didn't mean to eavesdrop; I just hesitated, not knowing what to do. I needed those shorts and I was going to be late, but I didn't want to interrupt an argument between my teachers. I recognized the voices: Mr. Schmidt, my history teacher, and Mr. Boone, my math teacher. They seemed to be arguing about me. I couldn't believe it.



I still remember the shock that rooted me flat against the wall as if I were trying to blend in with the graffiti written there.

"I refuse to do it! I don't care who her father is, her grades don't even begin to compare to Martha's. I won't lie or falsify records. Martha has a straight A plus average and you know it", That was Mr. Schmidt and he sounded very angry. Mr. Boone's voice sounded calm and quiet.

"Look, Joann's father is not only on the Board, he owns the only store in town; we could say it was a close tie and —"

The pounding in my ears drowned out the rest of the words, only a word here and there filtered through. "... Martha is Mexican ... resign ... won't do it" Mr. Schmidt came rushing out, and luckily for me went down the opposite way toward the auditorium, so he didn't see me.

Shaking, I waited a few minutes and then went in and grabbed my bag and fled from the room. Mr. Boone looked up when I came in but didn't say anything. To this day I don't remember if I got in trouble in P.E. for being late or how I made it through the rest of the afternoon. I went home very sad and cried into my pillow that night so grandmother wouldn't hear me. It seemed a cruel coincidence that I had overheard the conversation.

The next day when the principal called me into his office, I knew what it would be about. He looked uncomfortable and unhappy. I decided I wasn't going to make it any easier for him so I looked him straight in the eye. He looked away and fidgeted with the papers on his desk.

"Martha", he said, "there's been a change in policy this year regarding the scholarship jacket. As



you know, it has always been free." He cleared his throat and continued. "This year the Board decided to charge fifteen dollars – which still won't cover the complete cost of the jacket."

I stared at him in shock and a small sound of dismay escaped my throat. I hadn't expected this. He still avoided looking in my eyes.

"So if you are unable to pay the fifteen dollars for the jacket, it will be given to the next one in line."

Standing with all the dignity I could muster, I said, "I'll speak to my grandfather about it, sir, and let you know tomorrow." I cried on the walk home from the bus stop. The dirt road was a quarter of a mile from the highway, so by the time I got home, my eyes were red and puffy.

"Where's Grandpa?" I asked Grandma, looking down at the floor so she wouldn't ask me why I'd been crying. She was sewing on a quilt and didn't look up.

"I think he's out back working in the bean field."

I went outside and looked out at the fields. There he was. I could see him walking between the rows, his body bent over the little plants, hoe in hand. I walked slowly out to him, trying to think how I could best ask him for the money. There was a cool breeze blowing and a sweet smell of mesquite in the air, but I didn't appreciate it. I kicked a dirt clod. I



wanted that jacket so much. It was more than just being a valedictorian and giving a little thank you speech for the jacket on graduation night. It represented eight years of hard work and expectation. I knew I had to be honest with Grandpa; it was my only chance. He saw me and looked up.

He waited for me to speak. I cleared my throat nervously and clasped

my hands behind my back so he wouldn't see them shaking. "Grandpa, I have a big favor to ask you," I said in Spanish, the only language he knew. He still waited silently. I tried again. "Grandpa, this year the principal said the scholarship jacket is not going to be free. It's going to cost fifteen dollars and I have to take the money in tomorrow, otherwise it'll be given to someone else." The last words came out in an eager rush. Grandpa straightened up tiredly and leaned his chin on the hoe handle. He looked out over the field that was filled with the tiny green bean plants. I waited, desperately hoping he'd say I could have the money.

He turned to me and asked quietly, "What does a scholarship jacket mean?"

I answered quickly; maybe there was a chance. "It means you've earned it by having the highest grades for eight years and that's why they're giving it to you." Too late I realized the significance of my words. Grandpa knew that I understood it was not a matter of money. It wasn't that. He went back to hoeing the weeds that sprang up between the delicate little bean plants. It was a time consuming job; sometimes the small shoots were right next to each other. Finally he spoke again.

"Then if you pay for it, Martha, it's not a scholarship jacket, is it? Tell your principal I will not pay the fifteen dollars."

I walked back to the house and



locked myself in the bathroom for a long time. I was angry with grandfather even though I knew he was right, and I was angry with the Board, whoever they were. Why did they have to change the rules just when it was my turn to win the jacket?

It was a very sad and withdrawn girl who dragged into the principal's office the next day. This time he did look me in the eyes.

"What did your grandfather say?"

I sat very straight in my chair.

"He said to tell you he won't pay the fifteen dollars."

The principal muttered something I couldn't understand under his breath, and walked over to the window. He stood looking out at something outside. He looked bigger than usual when he stood up; he was a tall gaunt man with gray hair, and I watched the back of his head while I waited for him to speak.



"Why?" he finally asked. "Your grandfather has the money. Doesn't he own a small bean farm?"

I looked at him, forcing my eyes to stay dry. "He said if I had to pay for it, then it wouldn't be a scholarship jacket", I said and stood up to leave. "I guess you'll just have to give it to Joann." I hadn't meant to say that; it had just slipped out. I was almost to the door when he stopped me.

"Martha – wait."

I turned and looked at him, waiting. What did he want now? I could feel my heart pounding. Something bitter and vile-tasting was coming up in my mouth; I was afraid I was going to be sick. I didn't need any sympathy

speeches. He sighed loudly and went back to his big desk. He looked at me, biting his lip, as if thinking.

"Okay. We'll make an exception in your case. I'll tell the Board, you'll get your jacket."

I could hardly believe it. I spoke in a trembling rush. "Oh, thank you sir!" Suddenly I felt great. I didn't know about adrenaline in those days,

but I knew something was pumping through me, making me feel as tall as the sky. I wanted to yell, jump, run the mile, do something. I ran out so I could cry in the hall where there was no one to see me. At the end of the day, Mr. Schmidt winked at me and said, "I hear you're getting a scholarship jacket this year."

His face looked as happy and innocent as a baby's, but I knew better. Without answering I gave him a quick hug and ran to the bus. I cried on the walk home again, but this time because I was so happy. I couldn't wait to tell Grandpa and ran straight to the field. I joined him in the row where he was working and without saying anything I crouched down and started pulling up the weeds with my hands. Grandpa worked alongside me for a few minutes, but he didn't ask what had happened. After I had a little pile of weeds between the rows, I stood up and faced him.



"The principal said he's making an exception for me, Grandpa, and I'm getting the jacket after all. That's after I told him what you said."

Grandpa didn't say anything, he just gave me a pat on the shoulder and a smile. He pulled out the crumpled red handkerchief that he always carried in his back pocket and wiped the sweat off his forehead.

"Better go see if your grandmother needs any help with supper."
I gave him a big grin. He didn't fool me. I skipped and ran back to the house whistling some silly tune.

About the Poetess

Marta Salinas (1949)

Born in Coalinga, California, and received a degree in creative writing from the University of California at Irvine. "The Scholarship Jacket" is one of the several short stories, which has been published by Salinas in journals and collections.



Reading and Thinking Skills

1. Answer the following questions.

- i) What tradition was followed by the small Texas school every year during the eighth grade graduation?
- ii) Describe the scholarship jacket awarded to the class valedictorian?
- iii) Why was Martha given to her grandparents to raise?
- iv) Why couldn't Martha participate in sports at school?
- v) What were Martha's history and math teachers arguing about?
- vi) What was the change in policy regarding the scholarship Jacket?
- vii) Why did the school change the policy regarding the award of the scholarship Jacket?
- viii) What did her grandpa say when Martha told him about payment to be made for the Jacket?

- iii) What is your opinion of the principal of the school?
- iv) What would be your reaction if you had been deprived of a justly earned award?

2. Mark the sentences as true or false.

- i) The small Texas school awarded a scholarship Jacket to the class valedictorian every year. ☐
- ii) Martha did not hope to get the scholarship jacket. ☐
- iii) Martha was a very dull student. ☐
- iv) Martha's father was a farm laborer. ☐
- v) Martha was called "Beanpole" and "String Bean" in school. ☐
- vi) Martha's teacher, Mr. Schmidt favored her to get scholarship jacket. ☐
- vii) The Board decided to charge fifteen dollars for the scholarship jacket. ☐
- viii) The principal finally decided not to award the scholarship jacket to Martha. ☐
- ix) Martha's history teacher was happy that the scholarship Jacket would be awarded to her. ☐
- x) Martha was too glad to get the scholarship Jacket. ☐

3. Choose the correct answer.

- i) Every year, the small Texas school carried out:
 - (a) a competition
 - (b) a tradition
 - (c) a football match
 - (d) a debate contest
- ii) The winner's name was written in gold letters:
 - (a) in the pocket
 - (b) inside the pocket
 - (c) on the pocket
 - (d) on the collar

- iii) Martha couldn't take part in sports because:
 - (a) her parents were poor
 - (b) her parents were out of the town
 - (c) her parents were rude
 - (d) her parents disliked sports
- iv) Mr. Schmidt favored Martha because:
 - (a) she had a straight B plus average
 - (b) she had a C plus average
 - (c) she had an A average
 - (d) she had a straight A plus average
- v) Martha's grandfather said if she had to pay for it:
 - (a) then it wouldn't be a scholarship Jacket
 - (b) then it would be a prize
 - (c) then it would be a scholarship Jacket
 - (d) then it wouldn't be a scholarship

The Speaker or Narrator in a Story

The speaker or narrator in a story is a person who tells the story. In the story, "The scholarship Jacket", the narrator is the author "Martha Salinas". The author uses the pronouns "I, me, my, we, us, our" as a first person point of view.

Author's purpose and point of view

When an author / poet writes something, he/she has a purpose.

Following are some purposes for writing:

(a)	To entertain:	For this purpose, the author has a funny or an unusual story to tell.
(b)	To inform:	For this purpose, the author tells us about a thing, animal or place in order to give us information.

(c)	To express an opinion:	For this purpose, the author expresses his/her opinion about a thing or an animal etc. For example: Eagles are proud birds.
(d)	To Persuade:	The author writes because he or she wants us to do something.

Activity

Re-read the story "Scholarship Jacket" and identify the narrator and author's purpose by giving examples from the text.

Transitional Words

Transitional words are words or groups of words that connect ideas. They help readers follow the chronological order.

Following are some transitional words:

Time	Sequence	Period of Time
in 1977	first	for five years
on Tuesday	second	in the summer
in the morning	next	last week
at noon	then	for five days
ten years ago	finally	for few moments

Activity

Work in groups of five to ten students. Re-read the story "The Scholarship Jacket" and identify transitional words and discuss the chronological order of events in the story.

Personal Narrative

A personal narrative is a story about real events that happened to the author.

Following chart shows features of a personal narrative.

Personal Narrative	
Characters	Real people in the author's life
Events and problems	Events and problems in the author's life.
First person point of view	The pronouns I, me, we and us.

Activity

As you read "The scholarship Jacket", observe the events and problems occurred in the author's life. Have you ever had similar experiences? Write down your personal narrative consisting of three to four paragraphs.

Grammar

Prepositions

A preposition is a word that shows how a noun or a pronoun is related to other words in the sentences.

Prepositions can show the following relationships of nouns or pronouns with other words in the sentences.

1. Position: Words which tell us the actual location of objects are known as prepositions of position.

e.g. between, among, on, upon, above, over, below, under etc.

2. Time: Prepositions of time express a specific time period or the actual time a certain thing takes place.

e.g. in, at, after, later, ago, before etc.

3. Movement and Direction: Prepositions of movement or direction are used to show movement from one place to another. They are most often used with verbs of motion and are found after the verb.

e.g. to, towards, through, into, across, over, along etc.

List of Prepositions of Position

Between and among

Between

Between is a position which separates two things.

- Used in the middle of two objects or locations.

e.g. My office is between my college and home.

Among

Among denotes to the belonging of a thing or a person to a group.

- Used when comparing with more than two.

e.g. She is tallest among the three siblings.

On and upon

On

On refers to the things touching and are above something.

e.g. The cat is on the table.

Upon

Upon refers to that denotation in which one is at motion while other is at rest.

e.g. The leopard jumped upon the deer.

Above and Over

Above

Above means to denote the sense of an object being vertically higher than other thing in which both are not in contact.

e.g. The parachute jumper is flying above the clouds.

Over

Over denotes something covering higher.

e.g. There is a bridge over the river.

Below and under

Below

Below denotes something lower than other things and are not in contact with each other.

e.g. Questions are given below the text.

Under

Under denotes object being exactly below or vertically down and are not in contact.

e.g. My brother is sitting under a tree.

Across and through

Across

Across refers to the opposite side of something.

e.g. There is a mango tree across the river.

Through

Through refers to the sense of crossing from something.

e.g. He went out through the window.

Beside and near

Beside

Beside refers to the sense of next to something / someone.

e.g. She is sitting beside the teacher.

Near

Near refers to the sense of nearby.

e.g. His office is near his apartment.

Opposite to and by

Opposite to

Opposite to gives the sense of other side.

e.g. The bank is opposite to the Government College.

By

By refers to the sense of next to something/somebody.

e.g. There is a small jug by the bed.

In front of and behind

In front of

In front of gives the sense of facing something.

e.g. There is a cupboard in front of my fridge.

Behind

Behind gives the sense of something at the back.

e.g. The teacher is standing behind me.

At and in

At is used to indicate a location or position as in time or on a scale or in order.

e.g. At the beginning of the year, children are informed about the rules and regulations of the collage.

In

In is used with the larger area.

e.g. I live in Germany.

Prepositions of Time

After / Later

Use after + phrase, and use later alone (at the end of a sentence or phrase).

e.g. I'll call you later.

I'll call you after I get home from work.

You can say "later + time period" to refer to an unspecified time in the future, for example:

e.g. I'll finish the project later this week.

We'll go on vacation later this year.

Never end a sentence with "after". Instead, you can use "afterwards"

e.g. "Did you go straight home after the baseball game?"

"No, we went out for drinks after." (Incorrect)

"No, we went out for drinks afterwards." (Correct)

Ago / Before

Use ago to talk about past times in reference to the current moment.

Use before to talk about past times in reference to another moment in the past.

e.g. He taught English language ten years ago.

The train had arrived before we reached the station.

By / Until

Use by for one specific event that will happen before a certain time in the future. Use until for a continuous event that will continue and then stop at a certain time in the future.

e.g. Please send me the information by Monday.

He's staying in Karachi until the 30th.

During / While

Both during and while mean that something happens at the same time as something else.

Use during + noun.

e.g. She cried during the movie.

Use while + subject + verb, or while + gerund.

e.g. She cried while she was watching the movie.

She cried while watching the movie.

From... to / till / until

We use from + to / till / until to define the beginning and end of a time period.

e.g. The museum is open from 8 AM to 4 PM.

Naeem will be on vacation from tomorrow until next Friday.
I studied English from 2001 till 2004.

On / In / At

Use in for centuries, decades, years, seasons, and months:

e.g. In the 18th century, In the 1960s, In 2001, In the summer, In October

Use on for days:

e.g. On Friday, On March 15th, On my birthday, On the weekend

Use at for times:

e.g. At 3:30, At noon, At quarter past four.

Be careful with morning, afternoon, evening, and night.

e.g. In the morning, In the afternoon, In the evening, At night

Past / To

We can use these prepositions with minutes in relation to the hour:

e.g. 3:50 = Ten to four, 6:15 = Quarter past six

For / Since

For is used for a period of time, and since refers to a specific point in time.

e.g. I've been waiting for three hours.

I've been waiting since ten o'clock.

As soon as / as long as

As soon as means "immediately after another event."

e.g. We'll call you as soon as we arrive.

As long as means "for the period of time" or "on the condition that":

e.g. I stayed awake for as long as I could. (period of time)

I'll take the job as long as I have the freedom to work from home a few days a week. (condition)

Activity

Work in groups of five to ten students. Prepare a class presentation on "The use of Prepositions". Select one kind of prepositions and explain in your own words before the class.

Prepositions of movement and position

To/towards

The preposition to indicates movement with the aim of a specific destination, which can be a place or an event.

e.g. I'm travelling to France tomorrow.

I've never been to a football match.

Note that up to is often used to express movement to a person.

e.g. He came up to me and asked me what the time was.

The preposition towards indicates movement in a particular direction.

She was carrying a suitcase and walking towards him.

Through and into

The preposition through refers to movement within a space which can be thought of as three-dimensional.

e.g. They couldn't get the new sofa through the door.

Through usually suggests movement across an entire space, from one side of something to another.

e.g. He cut through the wire.

The preposition into refers to movement from the outside to the inside of a three-dimensional space.

e.g. We got into the back of the car.

Across, over and along

The prepositions across and over are used to talk about movement from one side of a place to another. They usually refer to movement in

relation to places which can be thought of as two-dimensional, such as surfaces (a lawn) or lines (a river).

e.g. I'll jump over the wall and open the gate.

How are we going to get across the stream?

Over also functions as a preposition expressing position. It often has a similar meaning to the preposition above.

e.g. There was a mirror above/over the sink.

In and on as prepositions of movement

The core function of the preposition in is as an indicator of the position of something in relation to the three-dimensional space that surrounds it.

e.g. They were having a picnic in the park.

However, in can also be used to express movement towards the inside of a container, place or area:

e.g. Can you put the milk in the fridge?