NEH Hudson River Workshop Lesson Plan 2011

Teacher: Elizabeth Healy

Subject: American Literature

Grade Level: 11th Grade

Summary:
In this lesson students will examine Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* and look at different illustrations/interpretations of the story. This means they will look at the various ways that authors have made sense of and created images of the story. They will practice their own interpretation and discuss that of others.

"A Simple, Good-natured Fellow":
Visual Interpretations of Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle"

Elizabeth Healy
American Literature
Grade 11

Interpret (v): make sense of; assign a meaning to; perform or create a rendition of; represent: create an image or likeness of

Rationale: Rip Van Winkle's character has permeated our cultural history, but has also undergone reinterpretation over the years. In this lesson students will examine the story and look at different illustrations/interpretations. This means they will look at the various ways that authors have made sense of and created images of the story. They will practice their own interpretation and discuss that of others.

Essential Questions: How can the tone of "Rip Van Winkle" and the character of Rip be interpreted? How have artists coped with the before and after images of Rip.

Objectives:

Identify prominent features of diction and syntax of "Rip Van Winkle"
Identify and explain the tone of "Rip Van Winkle"
Interpret the story and the character
Analyze visual interpretations of the story

Materials:
Copies of "Rip Van Winkle" by Washington Irving
Assorted Illustrations of "Rip Van Winkle":
        Darley, Wyeth, Merrill, Rackham, Classics Illustrated….
Final Project/Assessment
Rubrics

Procedure:
I would suggest the following sequence, culminating in the visual interpretation lesson.

Day 1: Diction/Syntax
Begin to read Rip Van Winkle aloud. Ask students to annotate, identifying word choice and sentence style that seem unique. Analyze the Irving's use of diction and syntax. What is his style?

Day 2: Tone
Review the definition of tone and use a sample (perhaps from Nancy Dean's *Discovering Voice*). Then discuss "Rip Van Winkle" and begin to determine possible tones of the story.

Day 3: Visual Interpretation

HW: Begin Visual Interpretation Project

WOD: Interpret (v): make sense of; assign a meaning to; perform or create a rendition of; represent: create an image or likeness of
Ex. I had to interpret her confounding comments before I could decide how to respond.
Ex. The pianist was able to interpret the Chopin with great sensitivity and move the audience with his playing.

DN: Revisit the text of "Rip Van Winkle" – what sections are particularly ripe with imagery or description and call out for interpretation or visualization? Pick at least one and write what attracts you it.

1) Review Word of the day and share student sentences.
2) Select student volunteers to share their passages (via voice, the board, using a laptop computer and highlighting text or with a document camera.)
3) Now introduce the focus of today's lesson – how have various artists interpreted Rip Van Winkle's tone and the character of Rip? How has the matter of Rip's aging been resolved in illustration?
4) Break students into groups per illustration. Each group will have at least one before (sleep) and after of Rip from an edition of the story. Ask students to make observations about the drawing (materials, perspective, style) and create notes about what type of interpretation the artist made of the story. Consider the following questions:
    a. What tone can you infer the artist read in the story?
    b. What type of sympathy did the artist have with the character of Rip Van Winkle?
    c. How did the artist handle Rip's aging?
5) Share: Present images (document camera, laptop and LCD, overhead projector) and have each group share their observations and responses to questions.
6) General observations about the interpretations of Rip Van Winkle.

Assessment:
Students will create an *interpretation* of Rip Van Winkle to manifest their understanding of the story and of the character. They may do this in one of several forms:

- A comic strip or graphic novel of the story that employs point-of-view, composition, perspective, and color to convey the tone and reveal the character
- A storyboard or script that would present a *plan* for filming part of the story complete with script, camera angles, music/score and set/costume notes
- A performance of a scene (solo or ensemble) that uses production elements to reveal the tone and character
- A modern retelling of the story that achieves a comparable tone with up-to-date details

Each project will also include a process narrative that walks the teacher through the choices made in the interpretive project and why these are significant and appropriate. Each part of the project will receive a full 100 pt grade.

Extensions:
- Arrange images into a timeline and look for patterns or development.
- Try to connect interpretations with historical events, issues or artistic styles.
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| Criteria	A	B	C	D
Knowledge of story	Project reveals *detailed* knowledge of the story.	Project reveals a solid understanding of the story.	Project presents a flawed or inconsistent knowledge of the story.	Project presents a confused knowledge of the story.
Interpretation of tone and characters	Project manifests thoughtful interpretation of the *nuances* of the tone and characters with specific details and choices in genre.	Project reveals an understanding of the tone and characters with specific details and genre choices.	Project reveals some understanding of the tone and character in details and genre choices.	Project does not show understanding of the tone and characters.
Use of genre	Project uses genre creatively, varying devices (composition, point-of-view, underscore, blocking, etc.)	Project uses genre well, using several devices throughout the work.	Project uses a few facets of the genre, but could take advantage of the genre more.	Project does not take advantage of genre.
Usage and Mechanics	Usage and mechanics are consistent and correct, with minimal, if any, errors.	Usage and mechanics are consistent and correct, with few errors that have no effect on comprehension.	Usage and mechanics are inconsistent and manifest frequent errors that do not interfere with comprehension.	Usage and mechanics are inconsistent and/or incorrect, with frequent errors that interfere with comprehension.
Creativity, Effort	Project exhibits great creativity, attention to detail and thoroughness.	Project exhibits frequent creativity, attention to detail and thoroughness.	Project exhibits occasional moments of creativity, some attention to detail, but is not thorough.	Project does not show attention to detail or thoroughness.

Process Narrative Rubric

| Criteria	A	B	C	D
Organization	Narrative moves through the process in a coherent, logical way that supports the reader's understanding.	Narrative moves through the process in a coherent, logical way with only a few deviations or confusions.	Narrative moves through the process in a mostly coherent way, but could use refinement, transitions or clarification.	Narrative lacks a clear organization and does not move through the process in a coherent way.
Details	Narrative includes sufficient details that explain the writer's purpose and choices. Details come from the text and the project.	Narrative includes details that explain the writer's purpose and choices, but not enough or not varied enough.	Narrative includes spare details that explain the writer's purpose and choices, but could use development and more.	Narrative includes few details to explain the writer's purpose and choices.
Voice and Tone	Narrative uses a consistent, first person point of view with a tone appropriate to the task.	Narrative uses a consistent, first person point of view, with an appropriate tone – only a few deviations or confusions.	Narrative uses an inconsistent point of view or tone, but makes attempt to be appropriate to the task.	Narrative does not use an appropriate or consistent voice or tone.
Usage and Mechanics	Narrative uses Standard Written English with only a few, minor errors.	Narrative uses Standard Written English with several errors.	Narrative uses Standard Written English with frequent errors.	Narrative does not conform to requirements of Standard Written English

Darley 1:
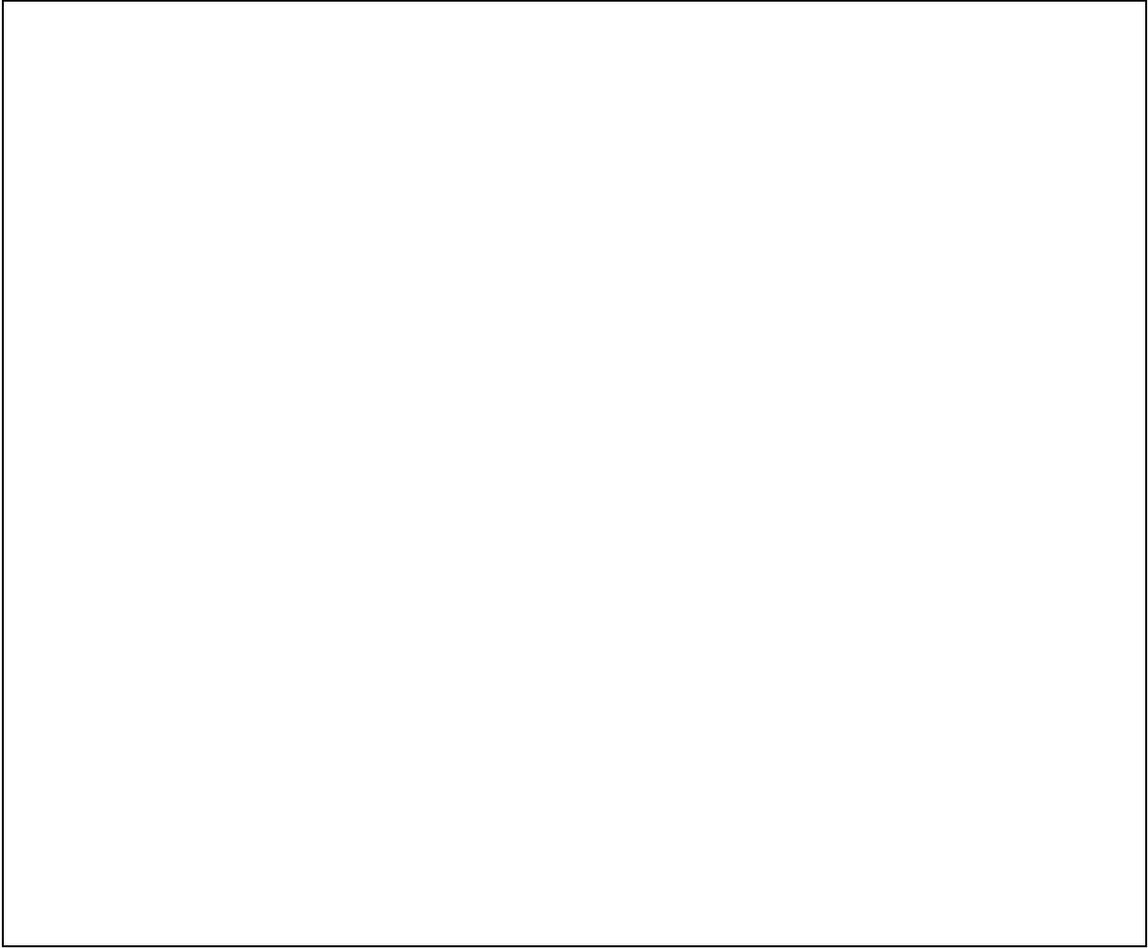
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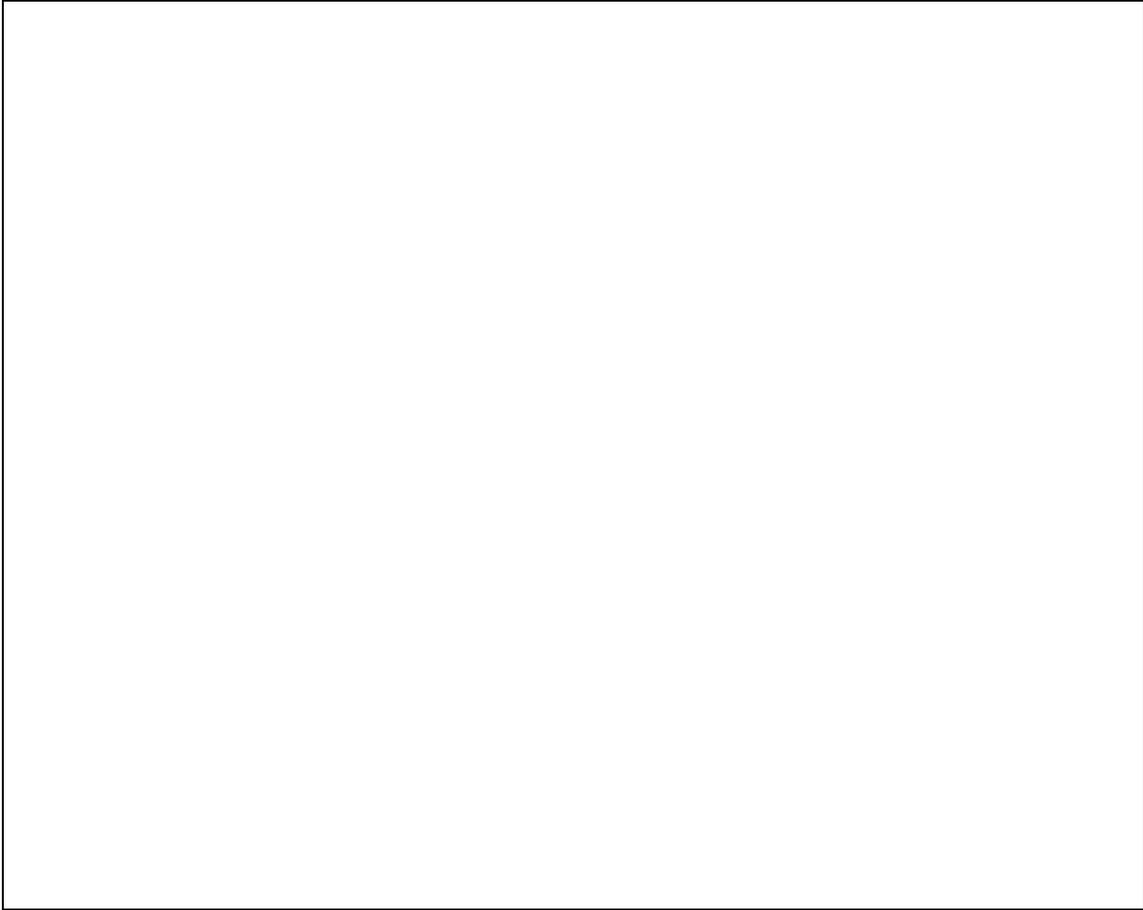
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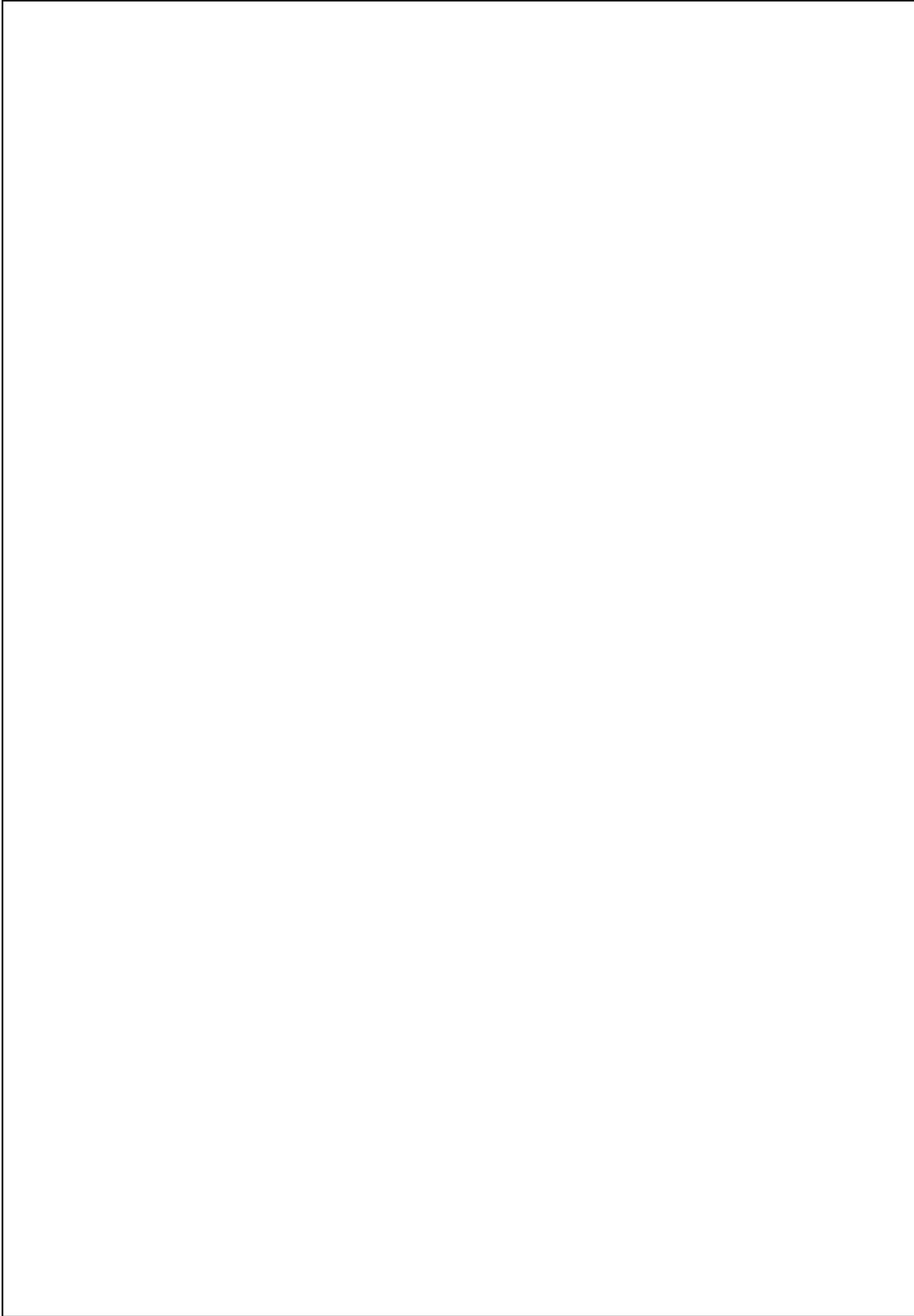
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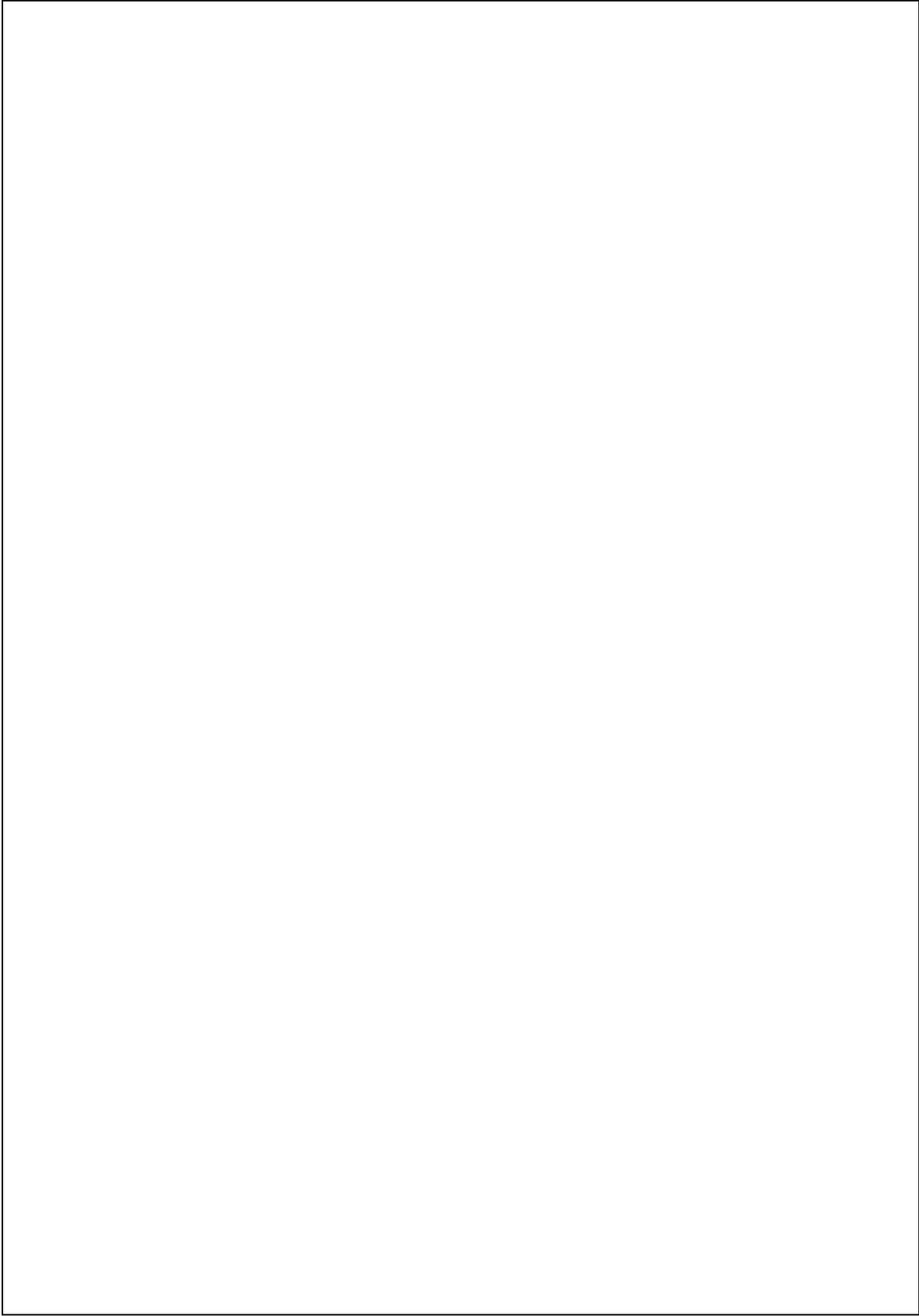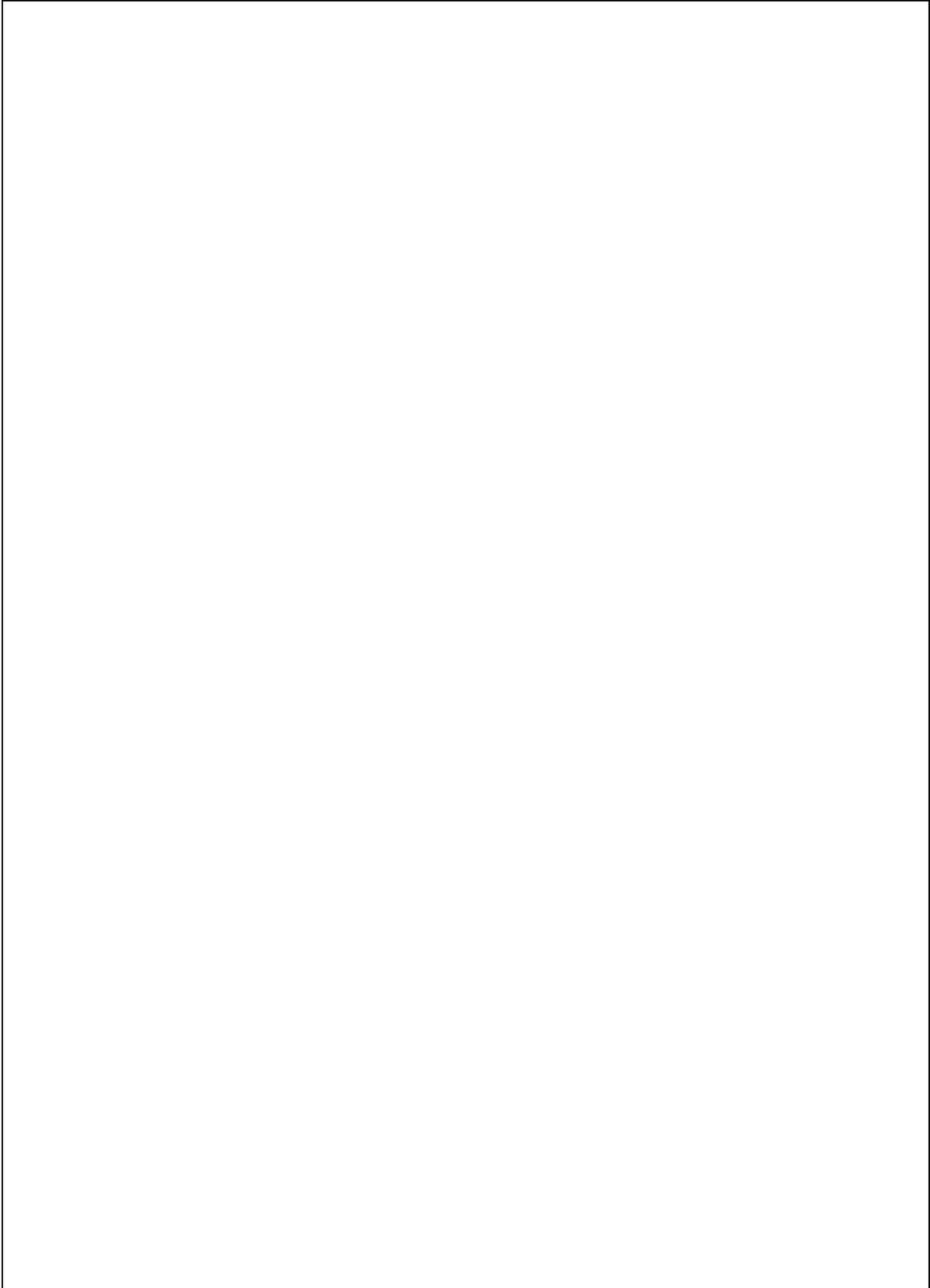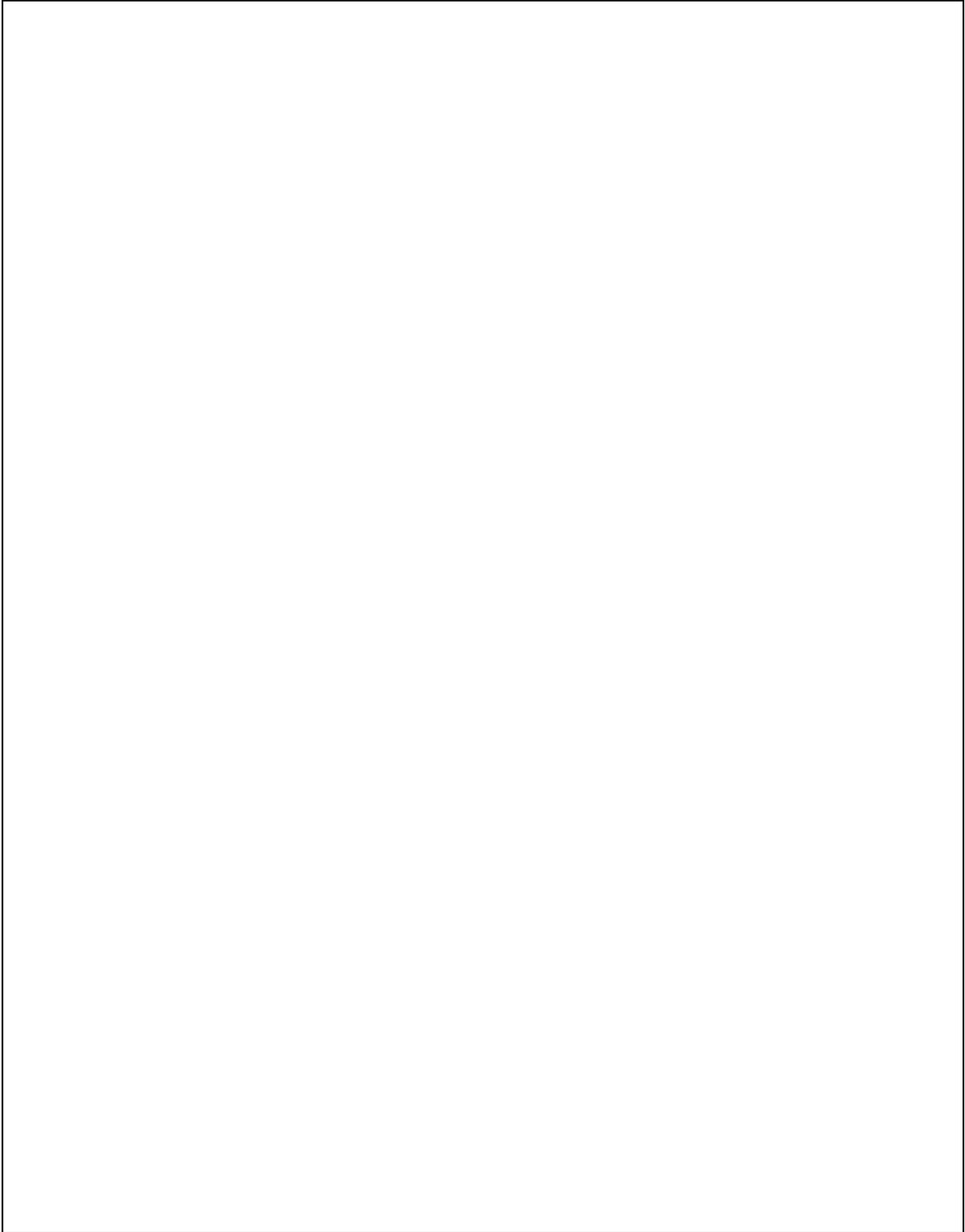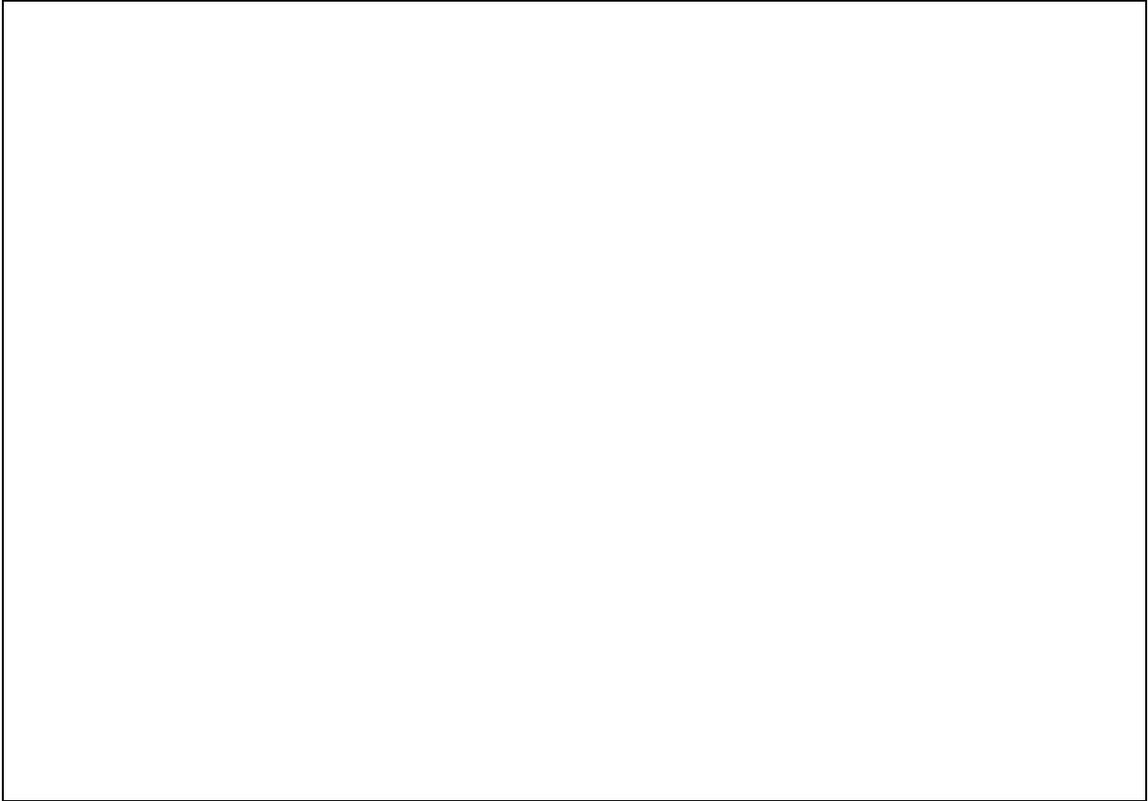
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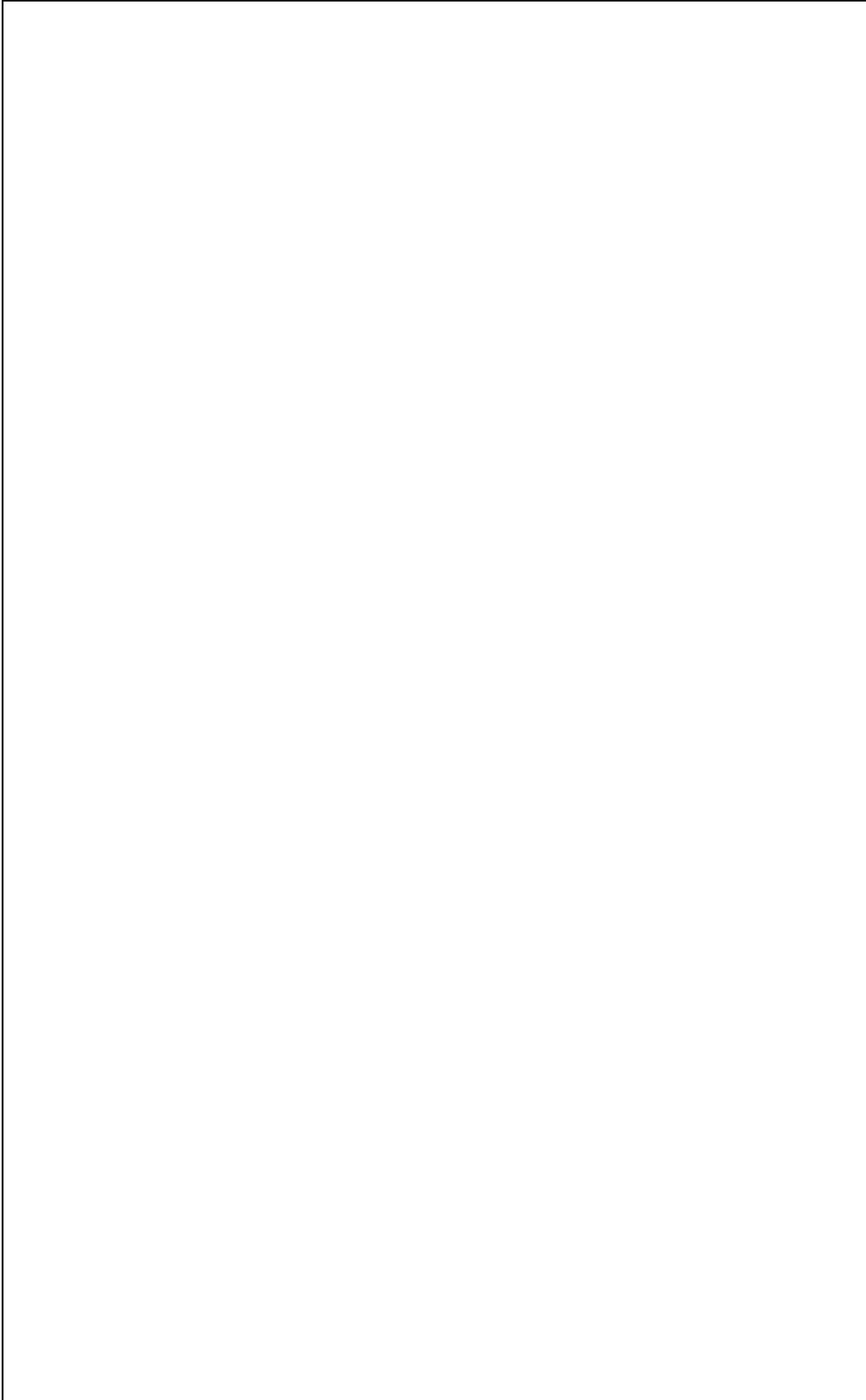
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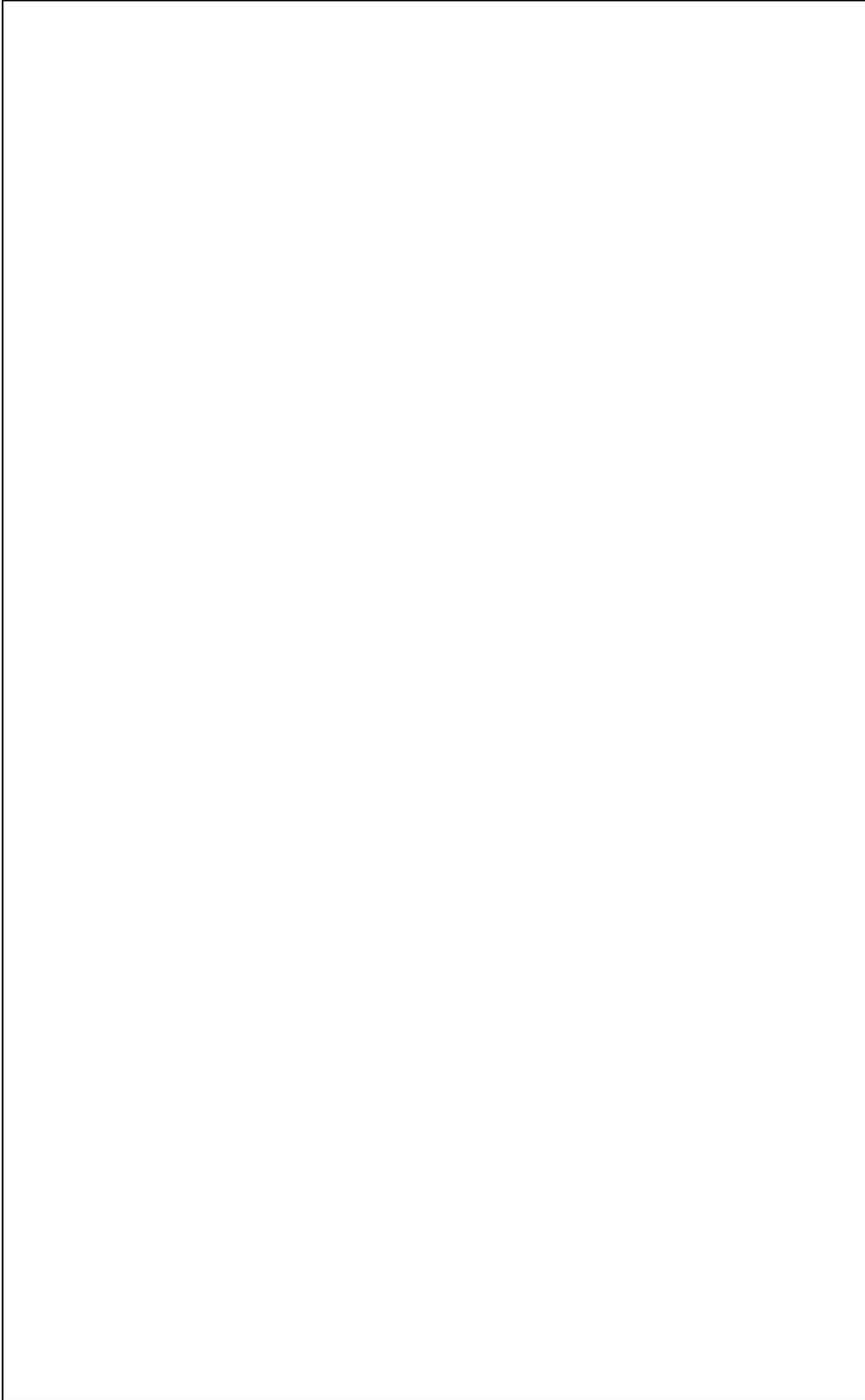
Merrill 1:

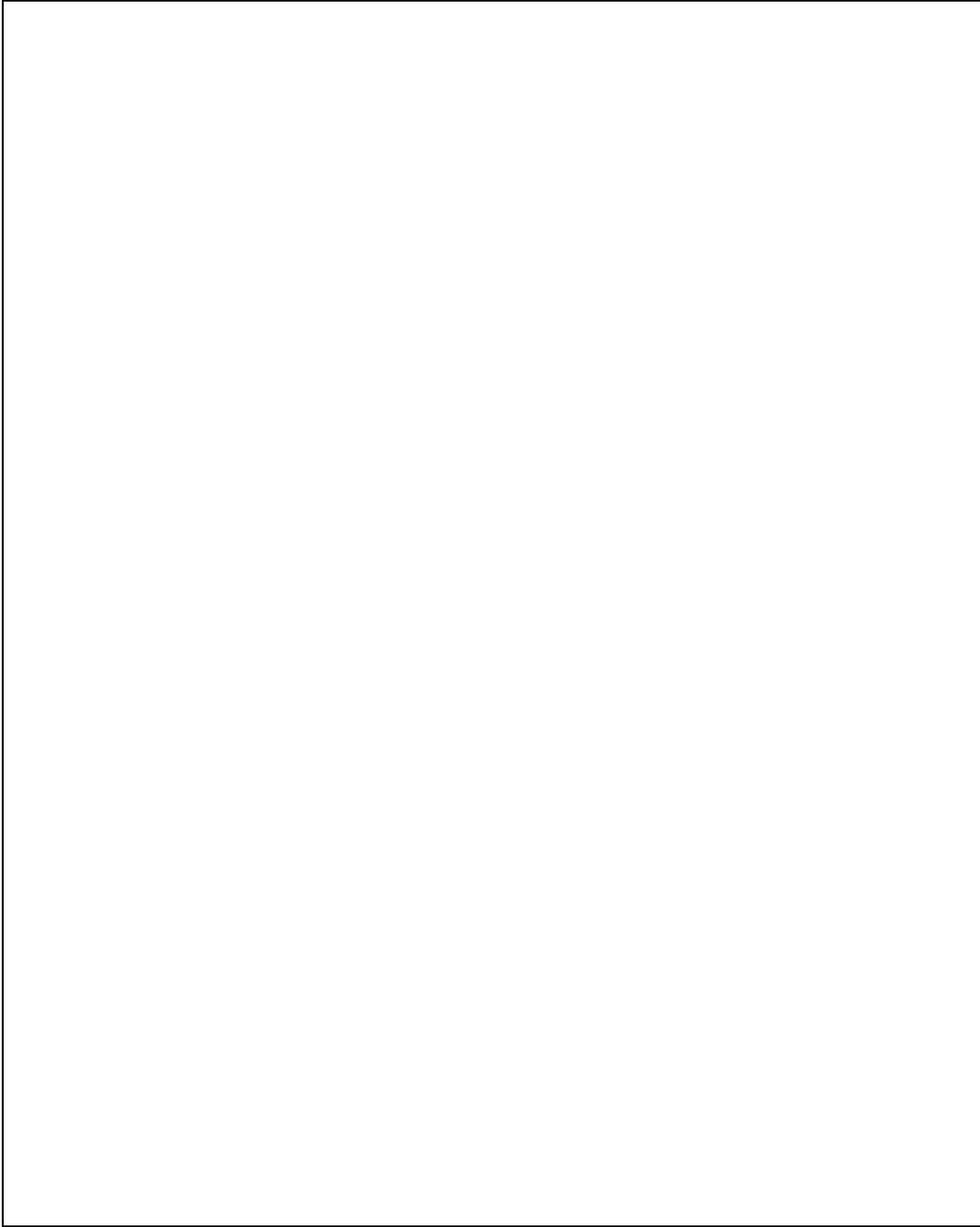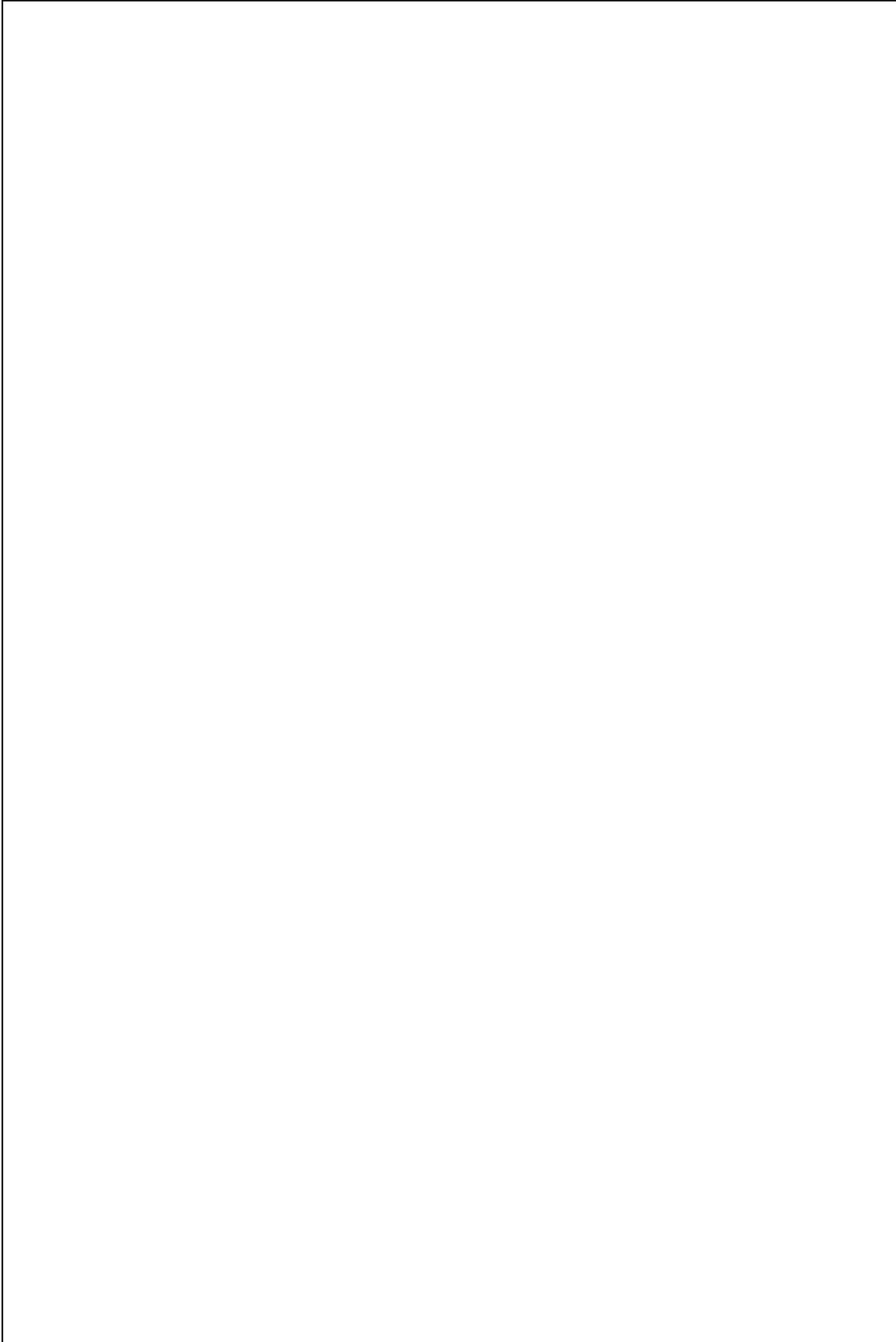Merrill 2:

Rackham 1:

Rackham 2:

Classics 1:

Classics 2:

Sources

Darley, Felix O.C. *Illustrations of Rip Van Winkle; designed and etched by Felix O.C. Darley, for the members of the American Art-Union, 1848*. New York: G.P. Putnam 1849.

Irving, Washington. *Rip Van Winkle*. Classics Illustrated, No. 12 Elliot Publishing Company, 1963.

Merrill, Frank T., illus. *Rip Van Winkle*. By Washington Irving. Boston, S.E. Cassino, 1888.

Rackham, Arthur., illus. *Rip van Winkle*. *Illustriert durch Arthur Rackham*. By Washington Irving. Leipzig: Seemann, 1905.

Wyeth, N.C., illus. *Rip Van Winkle*. By Washington Irving. Philadelphia: David McKay Company, 1921.

Note: several of these images were accessed through the NYPL digital gallery, but unfortunately I cannot figure out how to cite that access.