

Unit Title: Out of the Dust: A look at history through the eyes of literacy characters, expository texts, and research.

Unit Goals: Introduce students to the idea that literature can be used not only for entertainment, but also as a tool for learning about other people, places and time periods as well. Develop student’s understanding that literature evokes a variety of responses and judgments and can be used to study the impact of individual and community decisions, actions, and words.

Course/Grade Level: 8th Grade: ELA/Literacy

Subject/Topic Areas: Characteristics of historical fiction, blank or free verse poetry character motivation, narrative text and strategies, expository texts and media, issues related to students’ lives, the research process, and the writing process.

Designed by: Christie McCarley

Time Frame: 5-6 weeks

School District: _____

School: _____

Brief Summary of Unit (including curricular context and content goals):

In this unit, students will analyze and evaluate the characteristics of historical fiction, blank/free verse poetry, and expository texts and media. They will use facts gathered from research to critique a work of historical fiction based on the merits of its historical data. Students will discuss and determine the effects that physical and relational conditions have on an individual’s motivations and living conditions. After reading expository texts and viewing expository media students will conduct discussion groups centered on cause-effect patterns associated with historical time periods of struggle. They will compose two different types of responses to the literature they read/view. These compositions (poetic and written response to literature) will demonstrate their comprehension of the issues associated with the Dust Bowl and their ability to form judgments (justified with text support) about the literature they are exposed to.

Stage 1: Unpacking the Standards: ELA R1; ELA RC2, 4; ELA W1, 2, 3, 4, ELA C1, ELA LSVI

Big Ideas: demonstrates comprehension, identify genre characteristics, compare themes, characterization, analyzes, plot development, evaluates, stylistic devices, tone and mood, text features, organizational structures, responds, reflects, interprets, multi-media research, questions, clarifies, justifies

To meet the standard, students will understand that...

- Historical fiction includes accurate historical data interwoven throughout the plot, setting, and methods of characterization.
- Authors of historical fiction use stylistic devices to help create an accurate setting, tone, and mood.
- Authors of historical fiction utilize a variety of sources to obtain historical data they properly credit these sources.
- Students' actions, choices, and decisions affect the quality of life for others as well as their own life.
- Good readers formulate responses and judgments about literature as they read/watch.
- Good readers use references to text and personal knowledge to verify, justify, and clarify their responses/judgments.

To understand, students will need to consider such questions as

- How can readers tell when literature is a work of historical fiction?
- What makes some historical fiction better than others?
- How can the words and actions of an individual affect the lives of others?
- How do authors convey character motivations?
- What types of information help support or develop an opinion?

To understand, students will need to

Know...

- Specific content vocabulary: irony theme, blank or free verse, mood, symbolism, pacing, poem cycle, figurative language, conflict (internal and external), justify, interpretive, analytical, evaluative, reflective
- Steps for specific processes: analyze, Connect, compare, apply, draft, revise, Edit, question, clarify
- Specific concepts: narrative text characteristics expository text characteristics, supporting judgments with text examples

Be able to...

- Analyze genre characteristics of historical fiction
- Determine factors that affect
- Connect historical data to literature
- Connect literature to real life
- Respond to literature through a variety of modes
- Compose poetry that expresses or demonstrates the physical and emotional qualities of a particular time period

Compose a response to literature that includes interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective

judgments
Support judgment with textual evidence

Stage 2: Determining Acceptable Evidence

What evidence will show that students understand?

Performance Tasks: Students will compose a poem that expresses the physical and emotional struggles associated with living through the Dust Bowl. Student will identify cause-effect relationships associated with the Dust Bowl and compare them to other historical time periods as well as today's world. Students will compose a response to literature that advances at least two types of judgment (interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective). They will provide examples from text to support and develop their judgments...

Other evidence (quizzes, tests, prompts, observations, dialogues, work samples):

Quizzes	access and evaluate student comprehension of characteristics of historical fiction and narrative text components.
Observation	observe students working individually, partnered, or in small groups, to analyze literature through written text and video observe students individually, partnered, or in small groups as they progress through the writing process
Dialogue	student to teacher dialogues during whole group discussion of narrative and expository texts student to student dialogues during analysis of narrative and expository texts (both student and non-student created texts) student to teacher dialogues during one on one conferencing during the writing process
Work Samples	charts detailing information associated with historical fiction historical data about the Dust Bowl, narrative text strategies, etc. outline detailing information involved in a response to literature in order

Students Self-Assessment and Reflection:

- Reflect on connections between historical and real life events
- Reflect on impact of their decisions, actions, and words
- Self-asses during stages of the writing process (particularly after peer conferencing)

Performance Task Blueprint for Blank Verse Poem and Response to Literature

What understandings and goals will be assessed through this task?

Comprehension of the impact of physical environment

The connection between historical data and historical fiction

Comprehension of stylistic devices (figurative language, sensory details, etc.)

Analysis and interpretations of literature

The use of textual examples to support and develop a judgment about literature

What criteria are implied in the standards and understanding regardless of the task specific?

What qualities must student work demonstrate to signify that standards were met?

- Texts must be engaging
- Poem must accurately express historical data associated with the time period
- Poem must accurately express typical emotions and struggles people of the time period experienced
- Poem must include stylistic devices
- Response to literature must discuss the characteristics and/or effects of the content of the book, Out of the Dust
- Response to the literature must connect the content of the book to real life
- Texts must include text evidence that supports or develops judgments
- Response to literature must be organized in a way that promotes engagement and understanding

What student products and performances will provide evidence of desired understandings?

Student created texts

Small group discussions

Whole and small group evaluation of effectiveness of narrative and expository texts

By what criteria will student products and performances be evaluated?

- Poem includes stylistic devices that communicate the conditions of the Dust Bowl
- Poem includes historical data that corroborates the conditions of the Dust Bowl
- Response to literature communicates the author's voice
- Response to literature demonstrates understanding of literary devices and structure
- Response to literature expresses at least two types of judgment about the book, Out of the Dust with references to texts and real life support
- Poem and response to literature both correctly employ the conventions of American Standard English
- Poem and response to literature both provide evidence of thoughtful and warranted revision and editing to improve content, structure, and detail

Preparing for Teaching and Learning

Suggested Resources:

Books:

Come on, Rain!

(Hesse, Karen. *Come on, Rain!*. New York: Scholastic, 1999.)

Out of the Dust

(Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*. New York: Scholastic, 1997.)

Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp

(Stanley, Jerry. New York: Crown Publishers, 1992.)

VIDEO:

The Dust Bowl

(The Dust Bowl: Sunflower Showcase. ISBN 1-89014-13-2. Sagebrush Video Production, 2001.)

Internet Sites:

www.karenbeil.com/hesse-interview.html

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/authorsandbooks/authors/hesse/bio.htm> (bio, interview)

Prior Knowledge Connections:

- Review students' knowledge of stylistic devices such as figurative language
- Review students' knowledge of characteristics of poetry
- Review students' knowledge of strategies used to engage a reader and provide closure to a written text.

Questions for connection

- What kinds of details help create a mood in real life (like a scary night, a romantic date, etc?)
- What are things you notice or remember about some of your favorite poems?

Note to Teachers

- In the following lesson plans, teacher actions are in bold type and words from the standards are in italics
- Relevant standards and specific elements addressed by each lesson are listed in the corresponding lesson blocks
- ELA 7R2 (understands and acquires new vocabulary is addressed throughout the daily lessons and activities)
- ELA LSV1 (participates in group interactions) is addressed several times within the four week period; space did not always allow for it to be indicated in the corresponding lesson block
- ELA 7C1 (conventions) is addressed during the revision and editing stage of the writing process as well as one on one conferencing during the drafting stage
- The amount of text read daily can be adapted to fit the needs and pacing of your classes
- The use of *Children of the Dust Bowl* can be adapted according to the number of copies you have available. You may choose to share the book, highlight important text and photos, r jigsaw the chapters based on the number of copies you have available.

- Activities that call for grouping or charting responses can be adapted to fit you're the needs and pacing of your class
- Actual delivery time for the unit can also be adapted to fit the needs and pacing of your classes
- You could cover ELA 8R# (reading aloud) by having students select favorite poems from Out of the Dust to prepare and present to the class
- You may find it beneficial to give the students a copy of the response to literature standard and have them evaluate their draft. Have them underline or underline sections of the paper that demonstrate evidence of the standard/elements. Conference with them or have them write commentary on their paper about the quality of the response using the standard as a criteria.

Materials

- The materials found immediately following the lesson plans can be used as (or if) needed. You may choose to use them as transparencies, handouts, etc
- Websites for these materials are usually found at the bottom of the page
- The video, The Dust Bowl, was obtained through an outline bookstore

The tests are just examples of concepts and knowledge stressed within my own experience of teaching this unit. The tests, if used, should be adapted to accommodate the materials, concepts, knowledge covered in your own experience with this unit.