

Unit Plan Rationale

The eleventh grade unit that I have created on The Scarlet Letter is a classic plan for a classic novel. I think that it is important that students read classic novels because they help student's make connections across the curriculum. Reading classic novels will not only enhance their understanding of literature, but it will coincide with any American History classes they may be taking. Classic novels provide a cultural glimpse of different eras, a glimpse that they may not be fully exposed to in a fact-based history class.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel neatly fits into the timeline of American History. The novel itself represents a time in early American history and Hawthorne was a successful and prominent figure in mid nineteenth century American. Hawthorne is an author that was not only immensely popular during his lifetime, but has remained a staple of Literature classes since for over one hundred and fifty years.

Unit Goals:

- Examine the themes, symbols and characters in Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter.
- Discover how literature can be a reflection of a time period.
- Use free writes to record personal observations and thoughts about the novel.
- Successfully write a character analysis paper.
 - Cohesion throughout the paper, from introduction to conclusion.
 - Strong thesis statement.
 - Relevant major details with supporting minor details.
 - Textual evidence to support the major and minor details.
 - Correct grammar and spelling.

The goals of this unit coincide with many of the Virginia SOLs. The class will study the contents of The Scarlet Letter, as well as focus on its place in history and the impact that it had in the time that it was published. The students will be able to make connections "among literature, history and culture." (SOL 11.3) This rounded approach to the novel will help the students connect more with the story. This unit will help them understand that novels, particularly classic novels, are often a reflection of their time period, and should be regarded as much more than mere stories.

The daily journal entries and occasional character analysis sheets will be used to encourage students to form their own opinions about characters, and the importance of plot details. The journal entries will almost always be performed as the beginning of the class, so that students' initial opinions will not be tainted by outside influence. The purpose of these journals is for students to generate ideas about specific characters, plot details and themes in the novel. By doing journal entries throughout the unit, the students will continuously be generating ideas for their character analysis paper. When the students begin to write their first drafts, their journals and character analysis sheets will be a great source for them to gather information about the different characters. The main

grading concern that I will have with these assignments is completion: check for completed, minus for not completed.

Much of the novel's discussion will take place in a lecture format. I encourage students to share their opinions during these discussions. It is also vital that they take good notes during these lectures. The notes are good practice for a college life not too far in the future, and they will be excellent sources of information for the character analysis paper.

The students taking this class are still relatively new writers. To accommodate their inexperience, great emphasis has been placed on the revision process. At the end of this unit, students will understand that a paper is not finished after the first draft, or even the second draft. The group revisions will offer the students new viewpoints and fresh ideas, hopefully ideas that they had not thought of. The group work and multiple revisions will also place emphasis on the importance of "correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure and paragraphing." (SOL 11.8)

The unit will allow students to form their own ideas and compare them to the traditional analyses of the book. The unit is also designed to provide ample support for student's struggling with writing the paper. All of the assignments build up to the final paper. At the end of the unit, the student will have many graphic organizers and journal entries to help them gather information about their character. Also, the peer review groups will offer struggling writers multiple suggestions and alternate points of view about the strengths and weaknesses of their paper. At the end of the unit, the students will not only have accomplished an in-depth study of a famous American novel, but will also have successfully finished writing a Character Analysis Paper.

Unit Plan
Focus: The Scarlet Letter
Major Assignment: Character Analysis Paper

Final Assignment: 3-4 page character analysis paper.

Day 1: Novel Introduction.

Homework due: Read Chapters 1-5.

Lesson Plan:

- Discuss: (students will take notes)
 - Who was Nathaniel Hawthorne?
 - Birth, death, friends, and family.
 - Background of Boston, Massachusetts.
 - History of its early religious inhabitants.
 - Weather.
 - What would the town have looked like during the time period of the novel?
- Activity-10 minute journal entry free-write: What do I know about the Puritans?
- Share class' understanding of the Puritans.
- Briefly explain the Character Analysis Paper.
 - Let students know that the unit builds up to this assignment.
 - Encourage students to pay careful attention to the interaction between the three main characters: Dimmesdale, Hester, and Chillingworth.
 - Emphasize importance of recognizing changes in these three characters.
- Homework: Write a ½ page on what you think the novel is going to be about.
 - What do you think about the punishment Hester receives for her crime?
 - Do you find her sympathetic? Do you think that your opinion of her will change throughout the novel?
 - Do you expect to learn who the father is?
 - Will the novel end happily for Hester and her child?

Rationale:

- The students will gain a real life understanding of some people and places discussed in the novel.
- Through knowledge of the author, students will also gain some understanding of the novel's place in American history.

Day 2: Begin discussion of Chapters 1-5.
(Omit: The Custom House Introduction)

Homework due: ½ page on what is the novel going to be about?

Lesson Plan:

- Activity-10 minute journal entry free-write: Describe Hester Prynne.
- Discuss plot details of the first five chapters: (Students will take notes)
 - Who is Hester Prynne?
 - Who is Roger Chillingworth?
 - Who is Reverend Dimmesdale?
- Homework: Read Chapters 6-8.

Rationale:

- The journal entry will allow students to form their own opinions of Hester Prynne, and be a source of information for them when they begin their Character Analysis Paper.
- Discussing these three particular characters is important because they are the three main characters of the novel. Also, it is important that we establish how Hawthorne initially introduces the reader to them, so that any changes in their characters can be noted. Finally, these are the three characters about whom the character analysis paper will be written.
- The Custom House Introduction is omitted because it is lengthy (44 pages) and unrelated to the plot details of the novel itself.

Day 3: Continue discussion of Chapters 1-5, begin 6-8.

Homework due: Read Chapters 6-8

Lesson Plan:

- Activity-10 minute journal entry free-write: Why do you think Hester made her scarlet letter "A" look as it did?
- Class sharing of why the letter looks as it did.
- Continue discussion of Chapters 1-5. (students will take notes)
 - Hester's and Chillingworth's meeting.
 - Why does Hester stay in Boston after her release?
- Homework: Fill out a character analysis sheet for Hester (Provided by instructor.)
 - Describe Hester's physical appearance.
 - What personality traits would you assign to her?
 - Is her refusal to name the father honorable or deceptive?

Rationale:

- The journal entry will allow students to express their opinions about the scarlet letter, and inadvertently about Hester herself.
- The character analysis sheet will, once completed, be a great source of information for the Character Analysis Paper.

Day 4: Discuss Chapters 6-8

Homework due: Character Analysis Sheet.

Lesson Plan:

- Activity-10 minute journal entry free-write: Describe Pearl.
- Discuss: (students will take notes)
 - Pearl's relationship with other children.
 - Hester's chosen profession.
- Homework: Read Chapters 9-13.

Rationale:

- Pearl is a pivotal character in the novel; the journal entry will be a great source for the Character Analysis Paper.
- The students will also be able to compare their initial thoughts about Pearl with the class's observations, and the insights the instructor provides in lecture.

Day 5: Discuss Chapter 9-13.

Homework due: Read Chapters 9-13.

Lesson Plan:

- Activity-10 minute journal entry free-write: Describe Roger Chillingworth.
 - How is he initially received by Boston?
 - How do people's opinions of him change over time?
- Discuss: (students will take notes)
 - Dimmesdale's ailing health.
 - How Hester's place in society changed over the last 7 years.
 - The second scaffold scene, and how it compares to the first scaffold scene.
- Homework: Read Chapters 14-19.

Rationale:

- Roger Chillingworth really reveals his treachery in these chapters. The journal entry about him will allow students to record their initial opinions of him, and refer to them when it is time to write the Character Analysis Paper.
- The scaffold scenes are pivotal points in the novel, by comparing and contrasting them, the students can begin to analyze their significance to the novel.
- Also, the second scaffold scene occurs 7 years after the first. Comparing the two scenes showcases changes that have occurred for Hester, Dimmesdale and Chillingworth. The information will be useful for the character analysis paper.

Day 6: Discuss Character Analysis Paper.

Homework due: Page on the scaffold scenes.

Lesson Plan:

- Introduce the details on the Character Analysis Paper.
 - Hand out assignment sheet and rubric.
 - Go over each sheet as a class.
- Emphasize the significance of the journal entries and other worksheets and notes as sources of information for the paper.
- Discuss:
 - Thesis statements.
 - Main points.
 - Minor points.
 - Creating an outline.
- Take questions.
- If time allows, conduct a free-write.
 - Explain which character you want to write about.
 - Why do you want to write about this character?
- Homework: Read Chapters 14-19.

Rationale:

- The discussion of the novel is nearly half complete. This is a good time to introduce the details of the paper because the students already have some information about the three main characters and can consider which character they will write about over the second half of the novel discussion.
- The students will recognize the importance of the journals and other activities, and will begin to review their notes to help decide which character to chose.

- The journal entry will help the students chronicle Hester's change throughout the novel, and will be a good source of information for the Character Analysis Paper.

Day 7: Discuss Chapter 14-19.

Homework due: Read Chapters 14-19

Lesson Plan:

- Activity-10 minute journal entry free-write: How has Chillingworth's appearance changed throughout the novel?
- Discuss: (students will take notes)
 - Chillingworth's appearance
 - Chillingworth's vendetta against Dimmesdale.
 - Pearl's letter A.
- Homework: Fill out a character analysis sheet for Chillingworth. (Provided by instructor)

Rationale:

- The journal entry will allow students to document Chillingworth's change at this period in the novel.
- The character analysis sheet will test their knowledge of Chillingworth and serve as a useful source for the Character Analysis Paper.

Day 8: Discuss Chapters 17-19

Homework due: Character analysis sheet on Chillingworth.

Lesson Plan:

- Share some of the details of the character analysis sheets.
- Activity-10 minute journal entry free-write: What do you think the Black Man is?
- Discuss: (students will take notes)
 - Hester and Pearl's discussion of the Black Man
 - Hester and Dimmesdale's meeting in the forest.
 - Pearl's reaction to Dimmesdale.
 - Hester and Pearl's decision.
- Homework: Read Chapters 20-24. Begin working on the Character Analysis Paper.

Rationale:

- The journal entry will allow students to record their initial opinions on the Black Man. It will also provide valuable information about Pearl, and serve as a useful source for the Character Analysis Paper.
- Because students are beginning to write their papers, the reading homework has been reduced.

Day 9: Discuss Chapters 20-24.

Homework due: Read Chapters 20-24

Lesson Plan:

- Activity-10 minute journal entry free write: Discuss the significance of all 3 scaffold scenes.
- Discuss: (students will take notes)
 - Dimmesdale's transformation.

- The preparations for leaving.
- The scaffold scene.
- The revelation of the scarlet letter.
- Homework: Bring an outline with a clear thesis statement, and 3 main points.

Rationale:

- The discussion of the novel is coming to a close. Because students are beginning to write their papers, the reading homework has been reduced.
- The final journal entry will tie together the 3 main scenes of the novel, and serve as a source for the Character Analysis Papers.

Day 10: In-class work on Character Analysis Paper. (Meet in Computer Lab)

Homework due: Outline for Character Analysis Paper.

Lesson Plan:

- Discuss:
 - Using quotations.
 - Proper citation.
- Begin or continue working on the paper on the computers.
- Instructor will check over student progress and be available for questions and concerns.
- Homework: Bring 4 copies of 1st draft.

Rationale:

- Allotting the entire class time to working on the papers, will allow students to ask any questions they may have.
- If many students seem to be having the same problems, the instructor can address the issue with the class.

Day 11: 1st Drafts

Homework due: (4 copies) 1st drafts of character analysis paper.

Lesson Plan:

- The instructor will individually check that students have brought a completed first draft of the character analysis paper to class.
- Students will meet in assigned groups of 4 and exchange papers with group members.
- Discuss:
 - Editing:
 - Sandwich comments: positive, negative, positive.
 - Consider paper content first, grammar, and cosmetic issues, second.
 - What to look for when reviewing papers:
 - Clearly states thesis.
 - Main points support thesis.
 - Minor details support main points.
 - Fluid transitions between paragraphs.
 - Does the conclusion relate to the paper, and add further insight, or does it merely reiterate the thesis and major details?
- Share any problems or difficulties that students had with the paper.

- Homework: Read the papers of the members in your group, and make corrections and suggestions.
 - Highlight the thesis statement and the major detail of each paragraph.

Rationale:

- Exchanging and reading other papers will expose students to other writing styles and give them new perspectives on their own ideas.
- The revision discussion will give the students an idea of what to look for when reading other students' first drafts.

Day 12: 1st Group Meetings

Homework due: Edited 1st drafts of other groups members.

Lesson Plan:

- Students will meet in their groups.
- For each person's paper, the other 3 group members will discuss what they liked, and what can be improved.
 - Was the thesis clear?
 - Did the major details support the thesis?
 - Were there good fluid transitions between paragraphs?
 - Did the conclusion make sense and add insight to the paper?
- Homework: Revise the 1st draft.

Rationale:

- Discussing the papers with several people will give the student:
 - An idea of his/her strengths and weaknesses.
 - Some direction for what to revise.
 - A different viewpoint on what they've written.

Day 13: Revisions

Homework due: Revised 2nd draft.

Lesson Plan:

- Brief discussion on the importance of sentence variety.
 - Lack of sentence variety should be avoided.
 - A paper with only simple sentences can be boring and simple to read.
 - A paper with only complex sentences may be difficult to read.
 - Provide examples of how to combine sentences: compound, complex.
- Activity: Students reread their papers, identifying the type of each sentence.
- Homework: Students will continue revisions, varying sentence types if needed.

Rationale:

- The sentence variety activity will help students avoid monotony in their papers.
- After the first revision, students often feel that their papers have reached their peak and require no further revision.
- The sentence variety activity will give students another aspect of their papers to consider for revision.

Day 14: 2nd Group Meeting

Homework due: 2nd Revision

Lesson Plan:

- Students will meet in groups of 3 or 4 according to which character they chose to write about.
- The groups will discuss aspects of their papers with each other, comparing thesis statements and major details.
- Homework: Final Draft.

Rationale:

1. Discussing the papers with people who have also written about the same topic will give the student's a different perspective of the character.
2. Comparing some major details will give the students insight into how other people viewed the character and chose to portray them.

Day 15: Teacher/Student Conferences (Meet in Computer Lab)

Homework due: Final copy of paper.

Lesson Plan:

- Students will meet with the teacher in the original revision groups of four from days 11 and 12. The groups will discuss with the teacher the direction their papers have taken and what final changes they made for the final draft.
- Activity: Evaluation sheet. (To be filled out while not meeting with teacher)
 - What difficulties did you have with the paper?
 - Did you find the peer reviews helpful?
 - Would you have made the same changes to the paper without the peer reviews input?
 - What classroom activities for revision did you like and dislike? Why?
 - Additional comments.

Rationale:

- Meeting with the teacher in groups will give students an opportunity to examine the progress of their paper aloud.
- The reflection sheet will give the students a chance to consider what worked well for them during the writing process.
- The reflection sheet also provides the instructor with feedback on the design of the writing portion of the unit.