

Lesson Plan A**TITLE**

Ragtime, “Make Them Hear You:” Silent conversations on the importance of telling one’s story

TIME

50 minutes

SETTING

The setting for this unit is a standard academic literature class for 10th Grade. The class consists of twenty-four students, ten girls and fourteen boys. This high school is located in a rural town, middle socioeconomic status. There are three students who receive free or reduced lunch. Most students are on track for their grade level reading, however two students read at above average and five students read two years below grade level. Twenty of the students are Caucasian and speak English. Three students are African American and speak in the African American English Vernacular. One student is fluent in Spanish but has limited English proficiency. He has difficulty writing in English but is working on it. One student has an emotional behavior disorder that makes it difficult for him to stay on task and concentrate in class. One student is diagnosed as legally blind, however still has the ability to read large print text. The district is composed of 97.6% white students, 0.6% Black students, 0% Hispanic students, 1% Asian students, and 0.4% Native American students. 7.1% of the school population is low income, the attendance rate is 94% and the high school graduation rate is 91.5%. The average ACT composite score is 21.0. The average size of a high school class is 16.6.

THEORY INTO PRACTICE BACKGROUND

The National Council of Teachers of English states: “as new technologies shape literacies, they bring opportunities for teachers at all levels to foster reading and writing in more diverse and participatory contexts” (NCTE). This idea largely impacted my lesson plan because I believe it is very important to foster a multimodal education within their learning about English. I think that audio and video really helps engage students into what they are learning and it also helps from content becoming too boring since it is diverse and therefore different from the traditional English lesson. The concept of including a variety of different media literacies in the classroom to aid in reading and writing is so important in developing a well-rounded student. Through the diverse use of literacies, students are able to enhance their listening, reading, writing, and thinking skills. This lesson also was shaped by the idea of loss voice and not speaking out. The importance of being heard relates to Johnson’s theory that, “privilege and oppression exist only through social systems and people’s participation in them. People make systems and their consequences happen through paths of least resistance that shape who people are and how they participate” (Johnson 90). I wanted to be sure that my students started thinking about issues and about the importance of being heard. E.L. Doctorow wrote politically, and it is important for students to understand the situation of society and the privilege that existed in society at the time. The clear difference that exists between the immigrant family and the wealthy families demonstrates the privilege within the novel, and it is my hope to help students see how people respond to this privilege. Through this lesson, I hope to show students how people can speak out and act out in a way to stop their participation against privilege.

Background information that needs to be covered in this lesson is a brief summary of what *Ragtime* is about and the time period in which it takes place. Students should understand that *Ragtime* is a historical fiction and that the parallel plots make political statements. Students should have basic background knowledge about the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, and the problems in industry such as “job seekers riot, storm Ford plants,” and the (New York Times). Students should also have an understanding of the Progressive Era and that progressivism believed that “the problems society faced (poverty, violence, greed, racism, class warfare) could best be addressed by providing good education, a safe environment, and an efficient workplace” (GWU). Resources used in this lesson include audio clips from the *Ragtime Musical*, and passages from the *Ragtime* novel.

The main content material used in this lesson will be a passage from *Ragtime*. Students will read a selected portion of the text that discusses women and having a voice. Students will also listen to audio clips and watch a YouTube video of songs that come from the Broadway musical *Ragtime*. Students will also use their *In The Skin of a Lion* textbooks by author Michael Ondaatje to aid their understanding of immigration within *Ragtime* and help students to draw connections between a variety of texts and mediums.

This lesson is linked to lessons to follow because students will be doing more lessons on *Ragtime* and they will be working on presenting performances to the class to demonstrate their understanding of *Ragtime*. This lesson is also related to lessons to follow because it begins to address the importance of having a voice and being heard, something that students will have to demonstrate throughout their writing for the rest of the year. Students also must work with others, something that is very valuable in the classroom throughout the year.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- extend their ability to actively listen and reflect on what they hear
- begin asking interpretive and critical questions
- make observations and reactions
- create connections between a variety of different sources
- work effectively with a peer on a collaborative task

MATERIALS

- “Silent Conversation” Handout, 25 copies
- Handout with selected passage from *Ragtime*, 25 copies
- Extra blank sheets of notebook paper for conversations to be turned in, 1 pack
- PowerPoint with list of possible discussion questions
- Computer and speakers
- Youtube clips for all three audio selections
- Partner Assignment Sheet

PREPARATION

In order to prepare for this lesson, I will need to have the classroom prepared for when the bell rings. I will have to create a partner assignment sheet to display on the board with each pair for the “Silent Conversation” so as to avoid any confusion or problems when forming into pairs. I will prepare the

computer before students arrive to have the lesson run more smoothly. The PowerPoint with leading questions for the pairs to discuss should be open and assessable to display once the students get into their pairs. The audio clips should be opened and ready to play at the appropriate times throughout the activity. To prepare for any issues that may arise, I should also warn students of the use of one questionable word “cracker” in the clip, “Ragtime (Musical) - He Wanted to Say.”

PROCEDURE

Preparation for Silent Conversation activity (3 minutes)

- Pass out handout with instructions, read as class
- Students are assigned into pairs (partner assignment sheet projected on board)
- Students form their desks into pods facing each other
- Students are to take out 2-3 blank sheets of notebook paper for their silent conversation
- Students should spend about 2 minutes per portion and aim for 4 substantive portions for each clip/reading.
- Tell students that they are going to hold their conversations up until the bell rings and that they are to turn in their conversations with the assignment sheet at the end of the period.

Listen and watch “Ragtime: Prologue” (4 minutes)

- Begin at :26

Silent Conversation (8 minutes)

- Students should spend about 2 minutes per portion and aim for 4 substantive portions for each clip/reading.

Listen to “Ragtime (Musical) - Make Them Hear You” (3 minutes)

Silent Conversation (8 minutes)

- Students should spend about 2 minutes per portion and aim for 4 substantive portions for each clip/reading.

Listen to “Ragtime (Musical) - He Wanted to Say” (3 minutes)

Silent Conversation (8 minutes)

- Students should spend about 2 minutes per portion and aim for 4 substantive portions for each clip/reading.

Read selected passage from Ragtime (5 minutes)

- Students should spend about 2 minutes per portion and aim for 4 substantive portions for each clip/reading.

Silent Conversation (8 minutes)

DISCUSSION IDEAS

- Why is it important to tell one’s story? What does it mean to have a voice? Discuss the importance of communication and story telling.
- How do people identify? How important is one’s identity to one’s story? Why is it important to be part of a group?
- What similarities do you see between *Ragtime* and *In the Skin of a Lion*?
- What do you think prevented him from saying what “he wanted to say?” Why? How is this similar to your reading of *In the Skin of a Lion*?
- What do these clips have to do with power and social standing?
- What was effective in moving towards social change? What could have been more effective?
- What do we learn about differences and similarities among people of all standings?

LANGUAGES ACCOMMODATIONS

For the Spanish speaker student, I will try to have a copy of the novel, *In the Skin of a Lion*, in Spanish. I will also bring a translated version of the *Ragtime* passage. I might try to pair this student with another student in the class who has knowledge of Spanish so any questions that the student cannot figure out to write in English could be addressed through writing Spanish. For the students who speak African American English, I will encourage them to write in Standard English as much as possible, but allow them to write in AAE if it is a more efficient way for them to get their points across. I will not deduct points for writing in AAE, but I will remind these students that they need to communicate effectively with their partners, so not to let their AAE language take over too much of their Standard English use if it will hinder the conversation.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ACCOMMODATIONS

I will have the students who are at lower reading levels work together so that they do not have to feel overly rushed when they are reading and writing with their partner. I will have to make sure that students do not feel overly rushed. I will let these students know that if they cannot get in four salient points, but it is obvious that they are trying as hard with what they do have time to read and write, they can still receive full credit. For the student with an emotional behavior disorder, I will have explained to him this activity before the beginning of class. I will have provided him with the links to the clips to have already watched as well as the passage to read prior to class if he wishes to do so. It is very important that I try to keep everything as stable as normal since schedule and stability is very important to this student. I will also make sure I pair him with a partner that he has worked with and been comfortable with previous to this activity. For the student who is legally blind, I will need to make sure that I have an extra large copy of the novel and print the passages in extra large font. The student can also use an e-book copy of the novel so that he can enlarge the text himself for best readability.

ASSESSMENT

I want students to really focus on their critical thinking, communication, and writing skills during this lesson. To assess these skills, I will collect student's silent conversations and use the rubric included on the assignment sheet. I am looking for critical thoughts and active participation, and each student's contribution to the conversation will be read and assessed to see if they are developing these skills. I will also observe students while they are working in their pairs to formatively assess if they remain on task and pay attention to the audio clips. Throughout the lesson, I will walk around the classroom and monitor student progress and completion of the assignment. I think that it is important that everyone participate in discussion, participation, and listening, and will therefore incorporate all of these into the assessment of the lesson. I will comment on student conversation and return for students to see.

Note: The rubric is included at the end of this lesson plan.

EXTENSION IDEAS

Possible ideas for extension from this lesson include students reading *Ragtime* for an independent reading novel. I could also have an optional screening after school in which we can watch the whole *Ragtime* musical. For any students who really liked engaging in silent conversation with others, these students could start journaling back and forth to a partner from class about any of the readings that they are assigned to do for class and switch journals daily. We could also possibly develop a class blog in which students are free to always voice any comments or questions and other students can answer and ask their own questions to continue a silent discussion among the class as a whole.

SOURCE OF ACTIVITY

I used ideas from my experiences in the classrooms of Hilarie Welsh and Professor Arlette Willis regarding how to teach diverse learners and incorporate differentiated instruction into the classroom. I based the value of group work and varied instructed off my readings of Burke, Weinstein, and Novodorski. The incorporation of "Silent Conversation" into my lesson plan stemmed from an activity completed in Arlette Willis's Curriculum and Instruction classroom.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

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ILLINOIS STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOALS

Knowledge Indicator 5C: The competent teacher knows how to implement effective differentiated instruction through the use of a wide variety of materials, technologies, and resources.

My lesson plan addresses this knowledge indicator through my wide variety of resources used in this lesson. I incorporate audio, video, reading passages, and student writing in order to effectively implement effective differentiated instruction. In this activity, students have the opportunity to listen, read, write, and reflect in order to think critically and analytically about concepts such as immigration and having one's own voices. The varied methods of presentation of information in this lesson aims to be interesting to all and meet the needs of diverse types of learners.

Performance Indicator 11: The competent teacher stimulates prior knowledge and links new ideas to already familiar ideas and experiences.

This performance indicator is met by my lesson plan because it requires students to draw on their previous reading of Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*. I am using *Ragtime* as a supplement to Ondaatje's novel, and students will have to link their knowledge about immigration and their understanding of loss of identity and voice as a base for their understanding of *Ragtime*.

COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1d Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

My lesson plan reflects this Common Core Standard because this activity has students write down their views, understandings, and questions during the Silent Conversation activity. Students are required to thoughtfully respond to their peer's thoughts and engage in conversation with their peer, discussing whether they agree or disagree, and posing more questions or bringing light to connections to one another.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

This standard is addressed by my lesson plan because students will have to support their claims and arguments to their peers throughout this activity. The silent conversation is not able to continue without valid reasoning or evidence. Students engage in an active conversation with one another where they voice their thoughts and display their arguments about their understandings and analysis of the unit themes.

Grading Scale for Silent Conversation:

+	Student contributed more than 4 substantive portions to the "silent conversation" for each
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	topic and thoughts/questions go beyond the requirements.
✓+	Student contributed at least 4 substantive portions of the “silent conversation” for all four topics. Student followed instructions.
✓	Student contributed 3-4 substantive portions for each topic or contributed 4 for only 2-3 of the topics.
✓-	Student contributed 2-3 substantive portions for only 1-3 of the topics.
-	Student contributed less than 2-3 substantive portions for only some of the topics.