

**TITLE**

Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together: Making connection between characters, places, themes, and events in *In the Skin of a Lion*.

**TIME**

One class period that is 50 minutes long.

**SETTING**

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**

I got the idea for this lesson plan mainly from Jim Burke's book, *The English Teacher's Companion*. While perusing a way to actively get students engaged in discussion about the text we are reading I came across Burke's idea for the "Puzzle Game". Burke strongly advocates for "Collaborative Talk" mainly because "our country's economic future may well depend on such capacities for creative thinking through collaboration with others" (245). Therefore it is best that we start instilling the importance of collaborating with our peers from an early age, along with giving students strategies and tips to make peer collaboration the most effective it can be. In this lesson students play the "Puzzle Game", which allows peers to discuss and come to conclusion together about the important characters, places, themes, and events from the novel. Burke also quotes Jerome Bruner (1986), who explains that "'we have a need to share the objects of our attention with others' (28)." (Burke 241). I would like to believe that I am fulfilling my students desire to share their ideas and opinions with their peers.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Students will collaborate with their peers to make connections inter-textually within *In the Skin of a Lion*.
- Students will practice their collaboration skills by listening to the other students in their group and by sharing their own opinions with the group in a constructive way.

- Students will better understand the complex relationships between characters and ideas in the novel by creating a puzzle web of information.
- Students will synthesize their ideas from the “Puzzle Game” by being able to thoroughly explain their puzzle web and why they made the connections that they did.

## PREPARATION

In order to for this lesson plan to go smoothly, students will need to finished reading up through Book Two: Chapter 1, “Palace of Purification”. In order to prepare for this lesson I will first need to determine what I view as the most important characters, places, themes, symbols, etc. in the novel up to this point. Once I have decided these words I will type them in the computer, print them out, and cut them into large strips. I will need to make enough copies for each group. There will be 6 groups of 4 students each, so I will need to make 8 copies of each word with extras in case students happen to lose one of their words. I also need to bring 8 pieces of butcher paper to class (again with possible extras) for students to create their puzzle web on. I will also need to supply markers and glue sticks for students to glue down the words onto the butcher paper. The following are the words that each group will have to make connections about on their posters:

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Isolation                  | • Clara                    |
| • Industrialization          | • Ambrose                  |
| • Language barrier           | • Alice                    |
| • Communication beyond words | • Love over money and fame |
| • Immigrant workers          | • Blindness                |
| • Patrick                    | • Elena                    |
| • Building the bridge        | • Kosta                    |
| • Machine                    | • Puppet show              |

## PROCEDURE

### *Opening*

I will tell students that we will be doing an activity based on everything that we have read thus far in *In the Skin of a Lion*. This includes reading through Book Two: Chapter 1, “Palace of Purification”. I will tell students that we will be doing a group activity called the “Puzzle Game”. I will explain to students that they will be divided into groups of 4 students each. Each group will receive one piece of butcher paper and multiple strips of paper. Each strip of paper will have a word on it that relates to themes, characters, events, and other significant information from the novel. I will tell students that their task is to arrange the strips of paper on the butcher paper in a way that represents the relationships between pieces of the text. Students will glue the strips of paper to the butcher paper in the best way that they see fit. Students will have to be able to explain the relationship of the words to the class, supporting their reasoning by showing the connections to the web/diagram that they have made with the strips of paper. I will tell students that each group will present their diagrams to the class. After I have explained my expectations to the class I will divide the class into groups by having students count off by 6 to form groups. (10 minutes)

### *Body*

I will tell students that they will have about 15 minutes to work in their groups. I will circulate the room making sure to answer any questions that students may have and making sure that students are on task. I will give students a two-minute warning before we begin the presentations. I will tell

students that each person in the group must talk when presenting. Each group will present their posters to the class. (35 minutes)

### ***Closing***

Once each group has presented I will ask that students make sure all of their names are on the poster and to turn them in to the back of the classroom. I will then ask that students take out a blank sheet of paper to use for an exit slip. On the exit slip I will ask that students write down one interesting connection from the novel that they thought another group made and explained well during their presentation. I will stand at the door to collect students' exit slips when they are dismissed by the bell. (5 minutes)

### **DISCUSSION IDEAS**

Leading questions for during the lesson:

- In what ways is Patrick isolated throughout Book Two: Chapter 1 of *In the Skin of a Lion*? Why or why not do you think Patrick feels lonely? Support your answer with examples from the text.
- What is the significance of Patrick's game where he blind-folds himself and tries to memorize everything in the room? What does this show about his character?
- Why do you think Patrick does not follow Clara when she goes to Ambrose, even though his current profession is to find Ambrose?

Concluding questions for after the lesson:

- What additional words would you include in this activity that I did not include? Why would these additional words be important?
- How do you think Patrick's life will change now that he has come out of a period of isolation? Do you think he will ever revert back to his days of loneliness? Why or why not?

### **LANGUAGE/S ACCOMMODATIONS**

In order to accommodate for the three students that speak African American English they will be allowed to write in their native language, because this is a very informal writing assignment that's purpose is for quick response. I will encourage them to use their best standard English, however I will not take points off for spelling or grammatical errors.

For the student whose first language is Spanish, I will allow him to first write his exit slip in Spanish if he desires, but then I will ask him that he try and translate it into English to the best of his ability. He will be able to utilize his dictionary to help him perform this task and I will give him additional time by allowing him until the end of the day to turn him the exit slip to me.

For all of the students requiring language accommodations they will not be treated any differently than any of their fellow peers during the group activity. This is because when students are working in groups, they will be able to learn from each other and help each other fill in language gaps. I will also give all students the opportunity to include pictures on their posters if they feel that this will be an easier way to better help them express their ideas. When presenting their posters students will be allowed to speak in the language that they feel most comfortable, however I will ask that the Spanish speaker translate a few phrases into English before he presents so that the class will be able to understand his opinions.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ACCOMMODATIONS**

In order to accommodate for the student with the emotional behavior disorder I will take great care to clearly explain the instructions for the class activity and my expectations for all students during the activity. Throughout the duration of the class period, will tell students how much time is left for students to complete the activity so that the student is not surprised or uncomfortable. I will pay close attention to the group that this student is in and make sure that the student continues to stay on task. If I notice the student becoming restless I will give the student a small task to complete to allow the student to momentarily leave the room and cool down. I will also remember to remind that class that everyone should have something prepared to say when they present their posters. This will give the student enough time to prepare something to say so he does not feel overwhelmed when he is in front of the class.

In order to accommodate the student that is diagnosed as legally blind I will make sure to have special print outs of the words so that they are enlarged great enough for the student to see. I will also allow the student to record the presentations on her audio device in case she wants to have notes on the presentations. For the exit slip I will allow the student to either record her answer or she can go to the resource center and have a classroom aide write her answer down for her while she says it.

**ASSESSMENT**

In order to assess students' performance for this lesson, students will receive a grade for the poster that they complete. Each member of the group will receive the same grade for their completion of the poster. A rubric is attached outlining how I will be grading the posters. I will also be collecting the students' exit slips so that I can see that students were paying attention while other groups presented. The exit slips will only be worth class participation points which will be graded by either complete (full 5 points) or incomplete (0 points).

**EXTENSION IDEAS**

- If extra time allowed in the class period I would have had students brainstorm the words to use in the activity instead of me deciding the words in advance before the class period. This would have allowed for students to pull out of the texts the names, events, places, themes, etc. that they thought were most important.
- Another extension idea would be for students to select only one of the themes from the novel and explain why they think it is the most important theme of the novel using evidence from the text to support their answer.

**SOURCE OF ACTIVITY**

I created this lesson plan based off of the idea for this activity from Jim Burke's teaching book. I wanted to incorporate an activity that focused on student collaboration, but also allowed for students to think creatively. This activity encourages students to make connections throughout the novel on their own, which I believe will help students to better remember the important aspects of the novel rather than just having the teacher tell them what they should find important in the text. The students also get to present their connections to the class and by explaining the connections they will also better remember the information which will be helpful when it comes time to take the test.

## RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Burke, Jim. *The English Teacher's Companion: A Complete Guide to Classroom, Curriculum, and the Profession*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008. Print.

“Illinois Learning Standards.” Illinois State Board of Education. Web. 2 Oct 2012.

<<http://www.isbe.state.il.us>>.

Ondaatje, Michael. *In the Skin of a Lion: A Novel*. New York: Knopf, 1987. Print.

“The Standards.” Common Core State Standards Initiative. Web. 2 Oct. 2012.

<<http://www.corestandards.org>>.

## ILLINOIS STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOALS

### *Standard 5 – Instructional Delivery*

Knowledge Indicators—The competent teacher:

5F) knows strategies to maximize student attentiveness and engagement;

I am able to meet this indicator in my lesson plan because I utilize the practice of student collaboration through the use of group work in order to maximize student attentiveness and engagement in the classroom. Rather than having students simply listen to the teacher lecture, students are making a poster with their peers that promotes them to use creativity to form connections between significant events of the novel. Students also will present their posters to the class which will greatly engage students in the class discussion because they are the ones leading it and presenting new ideas.

### *Standard 2 – Content Area and Pedagogical Knowledge*

Performance Indicators—The competent teacher:

2D) evaluates teaching resources and materials for appropriateness as related to curricular content and each student’s needs;

I am able to meet this indicator in my lesson plan because the source of my activity for this lesson plan came from a really great teaching resource that I have found is very helpful in providing me with innovative and effective ideas for lesson plans. I was able to evaluate this resource and apply it in a meaningful way to the content that we are studying in our curriculum. This highlights my ability to adapt materials and resources to benefit my teaching practices.

## COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

I am able to meet this Common Core Standard in my lesson plan because students are given important themes and ideas from the novel that they have to analyze in detail in order to make connections between these themes and other significant characters and events in the novel. This activity also helps students analyze how the themes change throughout the novel and by

completing the character webs students will also be forming summaries of the novel.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1c** Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

I am able to meet this Common Core Standard because in my lesson plan students engage in an activity that has them utilize characters, events, places, etc. to form larger ideas about the novel as a whole. Students are also working in small groups, therefore they are actively incorporating others into the discussion in order to uncover new ideas and come to new conclusions about broader themes in the novel.

## Rubric for “Puzzle Game” Posters

**Group Members:** \_\_\_\_\_

|  | Exceptional<br>(5 points) | Adequate<br>(3 points) | Not apparent<br>(0 points) |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| All of the words are used and clearly visible on the poster.                                   |                           |                        |                            |
| Each group member explains some component of the poster.                                       |                           |                        |                            |
| Students make concrete connections between words.  |                           |                        |                            |
| It is clearly visible that the classroom time was utilized appropriately to create the poster. |                           |                        |                            |
| The poster is easy to follow and legible.  |                           |                        |                            |

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_/25