

<a href="#">TAPPP Home Page</a>	<a href="#">TAPPP Mission</a>	<a href="#">4400 Syllabus</a>	<a href="#">4401 Syllabus</a>	<a href="#">4410 Syllabus</a>	<a href="#">4460 &amp; 4470 Syllabus</a>	<a href="#">1999-2000 Schedule</a>
<a href="#">READ 4030 Schedule</a>	<a href="#">Virtual Library</a>	<a href="#">Portfolio Rubric</a>	<a href="#">Unit Rubric</a>	<a href="#">Quality Assurance Contract</a>	<a href="#">Send to Faust</a>	<a href="#">Send to St. Pierre</a>
<a href="#">Send to Sekeres</a>	<a href="#">Send to Smagorinsky</a>	<a href="#">Smagorinsky Home Page</a>	<a href="#">Faust Home Page</a>	<a href="#">St. Pierre Home Page</a>	<a href="#">Links Index</a>	<a href="#">TAPPP Graduates</a>

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### Adventure Unit

#### Rationale:

What could possibly be the rationale behind teaching a unit on adventure? The answer is simple. By teaching a unit on adventure, we hope to foster a desire for reading that will remain with students throughout their high school experience and the rest of their lives. Students often complain of boring curriculum and say that if teachers would focus less on classics and more on interesting stories they would read more. A study done by Jim Cope reveals some of the problems that young people have with reading in school. Cope's study consisted of interviews with 300 seniors in five high schools about their reading habits. One of Cope's subjects supports our belief that students find most high school English curriculum boring. The student says, "I hated to read because I was made to read lame books that I couldn't connect to in any way" (1990). We chose the theme of adventure because it offers a variety of works that we hope students will find interesting.

Our choice in unit topic is not based merely on personal preference. Rather, studies show that the topic of adventure rates high among student interest in reading material. In a paper for the University of Scranton, Dr. Diaz-Rubin reports that in 1993-4, 254 high school students from Pennsylvania responded to a "Reading Preference Checklist." The survey was designed to answer the question, "Are there clearly identifiable topics a teacher can bring into the class in hopes of effectively motivating students to read?" The answer is yes. High school students have specific preferences regarding the topics they would be interested in reading. The results of this study indicate that adventure is the topic most preferred by both male and female students. In separate studies, Strang (1946), Weiss (1982) and Graves (1991) report that "interest in a selection topic is very powerful" in determining student engagement with literature. Graves's study also shows that students are more likely to become involved when they are interested in the topic. In addition, students in his study showed higher comprehension of what they read, and

considered selections easier to read than those they found uninteresting. As mentioned earlier, Cope's study points out complaints students have with curriculum. One subject states that, "I realized that reading could be interesting. I felt like asking my teachers why they didn't give me interesting stories to read earlier" (1990). Thus, we feel that our unit topic will satisfy the complaints of students like those in Cope's study by taking student interest into account, as pointed out in the "Reading Preference Checklist."

Opponents of this unit may argue that the topic of adventure lends itself to violence. However, the works we have chosen contain minimal violence when the context of each work is taken into account (war, for example). The majority of selections fall within the "literary canon," and all are popular selections in high school literature anthologies. While we have chosen works that we feel are interesting enough to spur student interest and participation, we have kept our works within the realm of "commonly selected." Our intent is find a middle ground between student interest and social concern (parents, etc.). Following is a list of materials and a brief description of how each relates to the topic of adventure:

NOVEL: *Lord Of the Flies*; boys stranded on a deserted island, have to fend for themselves in order to survive

SHORT STORIES: *A Good Man Is Hard To Find* (O'Connor); family on a road trip captured by a serial killer

*The Most Dangerous Game*; millionaire hunter turns his guest into his prey

*The Colomber*; a man runs from a shark only to have the shark give him a gift

*The Sniper*; a sniper during the war ends up shooting his brother, deals with morbid adventure of war

Excerpts from *The Odyssey*; hero escapes encounters with Sirens and a Cyclops, among other creatures

POEMS: *Ulysses*, recounts tales of the epic hero

MOVIE: *Indiana Jones* movie, students can vote on 1st or 3rd; chronicles the adventures of an archeologist/college professor on his quest for artifacts

We feel that by teaching a unit on a topic students find engaging, we can reach out to resistant and reluctant readers as well as continue to connect with those that have no opposition to reading. Thus, we feel that our goal of encouraging students to read beyond our classroom is attainable. As Cope's students point out, if teachers would focus on topics that students find interesting, they would read more.

#### Rationale Bibliography

Cope, James R. 1990. "The development of Readers and Nonreaders: Reading Autobiographies of Twelfth-Grade High School Students." Dissertation at the University of Georgia.

Diaz-Rubin, Dr. C. (1995). "Reading Interests of High School Students." *Reading Improvement*,

169-175.

Strang, R. (1946). "Reading Interests." *The English Journal*, 35, 477-482.

Weiss, M.J. (1982). "Children's Preferences for Format Factors in Books." *The Reading Teacher*, 35, 400-405.

**Goal 1:** Students will keep a journal on each text that is read in class.

1. Each journal entry will be one-half page to one page in length.
2. Students will respond in journal at least 3 times per week.
3. The students overall reaction to the work must be included.
4. Students must write about personal experiences that relate directly to the text.
5. Journal will be taken up at the end of each week for grading.
6. Informal writing will be accepted for the journal.

### **Rubric for Personal Journal**

A journal receiving an "A" will:

1. be turned in on time.
2. will have responses which total to no less than three per week.
3. Have entries which include how the text relates to the unit topic of adventure as well as the student's personal reactions to the text.
4. be at least one-half page to one page in length.

A journal receiving a "B" will:

1. be turned in on time.
2. will have responses which total not less than three per week.
3. have entries which include how the text relates to the unit topic and personal reactions but will be less clear than a journal receiving an "A."
4. have entries which may be shorter than one half page.

A journal receiving a "C" will:

1. be turned in on time.
2. have only two entries for the week.
3. Have entries which do not relate the text to the unit topic or to personal experiences.

4. be less than one-half page in length.

A journal receiving a "D" will:

1. not be turned in on time.
2. have less than 2 entries for the week.
3. not include how the text relates to the unit and does not include personal experiences.
4. be less than one-half page in length.

A journal receiving an "F" will not be turned in.

**Goal 2:** Students will produce a children's' adventure book which will be appropriate for elementary school children.

1. Students will be divided into pairs and create an original children's' adventure book.
2. The writing should involve children or animals who are involved in an adventure.
3. Language and illustrations should be appropriate for and easily understood by young children.
4. Book must consist of a title page and at least 20 pages divided evenly between text and illustrations.

**Rubric for Children's' Adventure Book:**

A book receiving an "A" will:

1. be turned in on time.
2. tell a clear and coherent story relating to adventure.
3. be appropriate in subject matter and language for elementary school children.
4. show evidence of a rough draft having been critiqued by peers.
5. have illustrations relating to the story.
6. be bound and presented in book form.
7. be at least 20 pages in length equally divided between illustrations and text.

A book receiving a "B" will:

1. be turned in on time.
2. tell a clear and coherent story but not as well as an "A" book.
3. be appropriate in subject matter and language for elementary school children.
4. show evidence of a rough draft having been critiqued by peers.
5. have illustration relating to the story.
6. be bound and presented in book form.

7. be at least 20 pages in length equally divided between illustrations and text.

A book receiving a "C" will:

1. be turned in on time.
2. stray from the basic elements of plot leaving an unclear and incoherent story.
3. be of appropriate subject matter and language of elementary school children.
4. have a rough draft with no evidence of peer evaluation.
5. have illustrations which relate to the story.
6. be bound and presented in book form.
7. be less than the required minimum in length.

A book receiving a "D" will:

1. be turned in after the specified due date.
2. stray from the basic elements of plot leaving an unclear and incoherent story.
3. be of appropriate subject matter and language for elementary school children.
4. have neither a rough draft nor evidence of a peer evaluation.
5. not be consistent with proposed format.
6. not be presented in book form.
7. be less than the required minimum in length.

A book receiving an "F" will:

1. be turned in after the specified due date.
2. stray from the basic elements of plot leaving an unclear and incoherent story.
3. be of inappropriate subject matter and language for elementary school children.
4. have neither a rough draft nor evidence of a peer evaluation.
5. have no illustrations.
6. not be presented in book form.
7. be less than the required length.

A book not being turned in will receive a grade of 0.

**Goal 3:** To produce a narrative text relating to the unit topic of adventure.

1. The student may either:

- A. Write about a personal experience that relates to the unit theme.
  - B. Create a fictional situation in which the characters are involved in some type of adventure.
2. The narrative must be at least 2 typed, double spaced pages or 4 handwritten pages.
  3. Mechanics within the narrative will not obstruct meaning or clarity.
  4. Students will have one week of class time plus time at home to complete their narratives.
  5. Students will be graded according to the standards set forth by the rubric.

**Rubric for Adventure Narrative:**

A narrative receiving an "A" will:

1. be turned in on time.
2. be at least 2 typed, double-spaced pages or 4 handwritten pages in length.
3. clearly address the unit topic of adventure.
4. have appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage according to the voice of their narrative.

A narrative receiving a "B" will:

1. be turned in on time.
2. be at least 2 typed, double spaced pages or 4 handwritten pages in length.
3. address the unit topic of adventure but not as clearly as an "A" narrative.
4. have appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage according to the voice of their narrative.

A narrative receiving a "C" will:

1. be turned in on time.
2. be less than 2 typed, double spaced pages or 4 handwritten pages in length but more than one typed, double spaced pages or 2 handwritten pages in length.
3. not clearly address the unit topic of adventure.
4. have consistent errors in the use of conventional grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage that disrupt meaning.

A narrative receiving a "D" will:

1. be turned in after specified due date.
2. be less than one typed or two handwritten pages in length.
3. not address the unit topic of adventure.

4. have substantial errors in the conventional use of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage that disrupt meaning.

A narrative receiving an "F" will not be turned in.

## **Introductory Activity**

Day One:

2m: attendance, housekeeping

5m: tool sharpening

10m: Introduction and to discuss the literature that will make up the unit; syllabus will be passed out and class will discuss probable assignments for each reading

10m: discussing grading; any questions about the texts or assignments will be addressed

10m: students will compose a brief autobiography of what they have read, favorite books, how they fell about themselves as readers. They must also describe what they hope to achieve in this class.

10m: discuss some of the books students have read, what they feel like sharing from the autobiography. This is for the teacher to get a sense of how the students feel about themselves as readers and see what they have read.

3m: prepare for departure

Day Two:

2m: attendance, housekeeping

5m: tool sharpening

20m: class splits up into four groups and respond to prompts. Each prompt is a sentence taken from some of the texts that will be covered in the unit. Students will write an adventure story that completes the prompt. These are the sentences the students will receive:

1. (Most Dangerous Game) "Off there to the right-somewhere-is a large island. It's rather a mystery."
2. (Sniper) "Cautiously he raised himself and peered over the parapet. There was a flash and a bullet whizzed over his head."
3. (Odyssey) "The Cyclops bellowed and the rock roared round him, and we fell back in fear. Clawing his face he togged the bloody spike out of his eye, threw it away, and his wild hands went groping."
4. (The Colomber) "That is a colomber. What you see rising from the water and following us is not some object. It is a tremendous, mysterious shark, more clever than man."

20m: groups will present their stories to the class

10m: after every group has presented, the class will discuss the works to be covered. What do they think will happen? Speculate as a class about what each adventure may be like. Specifically discuss The Odyssey as it will be the first text covered.

3m: Prepare for departure. Assign Introduction to The Odyssey for homework.

## Weekly Lesson Plans

Day Three: The students will have read the introduction and synopsis to The Odyssey the night before.

2m: attendance and housekeeping

5m: Tool sharpening

5m: Summary quiz on last night's reading

15m: We will discuss the history of the epic poem and the epic hero. We will also provide background information on Homer and the history of the Odyssey. Students will be given the opportunity to ask questions at this point. Finally, the stories written for the introductory activity will be read aloud in class.

15m: The students will be given this time to read the Cyclops excerpt from The Odyssey.

3m: Prepare for departure

Day Four

2m: attendance and housekeeping

5m: tool sharpening

10m: The students will respond in their logs to a question on the board. Students may choose from the following prompts:

1. Summarize the selection
2. How would you have escaped the Cyclops?
3. Record any questions or comments you have about the selection.
4. What images come to your mind while reading the selection? Describe these in detail.

30m: The students will break into eight groups of three. They will create a visual description or representation of the adventure. They will be given the option of either describing in writing or drawing a picture. The groups will be asked to do the following items:

1. Look up the term "imagery" and each student find an example of imagery within the selection.
2. Tell which words led to the visual image that they have created.
3. Each group member will share his or her finding with the other group members.

3m: Prepare for Departure

Day Five

2m: attendance and housekeeping

5m: tool sharpening

20m: Groups will present their findings from previous day's activity. Which words evoked visual images? How do the images fit into the context of the adventure?

10m: Class discussion

1. What is going on in the story?
2. Are you able to see the action?
3. Does it help to have a mental image or to draw one?

10m: Class time to begin reading "Test of the Great Bow" from The Odyssey. Students will finish reading for homework.

3m: Prepare for departure

Day Six (Week 2)

2m: attendance and housekeeping

5m: tool sharpening

10m: Students will write in their response logs about what has been read thus far. They will continue to summarize, ask questions, make connections, and list words that evoke visual images.

15m: We will show clips from the movie Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves. It will be the scene in which Robin Hood is tested at the archery contest.

15m: Class discussion comparing Odysseus and Robin Hood; what are their goals? What type of adventure is each one on? Name similarities and differences between "Test of the Great Bow" and "Robin Hood." What other heroes do we know of that also had to prove themselves?

3m: Assign homework: "Odysseus and Penelope." Prepare for departure.

Day Seven

2m: attendance and housekeeping

5m: tool sharpening

5m: Students will write in their response logs.

5m: We will answer any questions about last night's reading.

20m: We will give a quiz that will cover the Introduction and the 4 selections from The Odyssey. The quiz will be worth 10 points and will consist of 5 objective questions and a 5 point short answer section. Examples as follows:

1. Who collected the stories that compose The Iliad and The Odyssey?
2. Name one way that Odysseus and his men trick the Cyclops.
3. What are the suitors asked to do in order to court Penelope?
4. Who helps Odysseus in the battle with the suitors?
5. How did Odysseus prove himself to Penelope?
6. Short response: Choose your favorite scene. Describe it and explain your choice. Where does it fit within the context of Odysseus's adventure? How does it relate to the topic of adventure?

10m: We will put the introductory story that was prompted by *The Odyssey* on the overhead. Students will be asked to discuss differences between their story and the actual story. We will then wrap up *The Odyssey* by taking any questions that the students have.

3m: Prepare for departure. Assign *The Most Dangerous Game* for homework

## Day 8

2 min housekeeping and attendance

5 min tool sharpening

10 min put up overhead describing the elements of adventure in the *Most Dangerous Game*; tell students basic story line to evoke interest

30 min allow the students to begin the story in class; must finish for homework

3 min prepare for departure

## Day 9

2 min housekeeping and attendance

5 min tool sharpening

10 min 5 question quiz; non-objective; main purpose of to obtain students' independent thought on the story

15 min journal entry on what the hunted could have done differently to escape or what the student would have done in this situation

10 min sharing some good ideas from journals

5 min ask students to generate three good questions regarding the story to be used for tomorrow's discussion

3 min prepare for departure

## Day 10

2 min housekeeping and attendance

5 min tool sharpening

30 min discuss each student's best question; if students are not willing to share, the teacher will put a journal topic on the overhead

10 min teacher will tell students about the children's book project; they will be asked to form groups and begin thinking about a story line

3 min prepare for departure

## Day 11 (Week 3)

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

40 min students will get in their groups; teacher will pass out materials; students will work on lit. book; teacher will go around to each group for assistance

3 min prepare for departure

## **Day 12**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

40 min students will get in groups and finish up projects; teacher will make sure all are appropriate and meet the specifications

3 min prepare for departure

## **Day 13**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

10 min introduction to Lord of the Flies; discuss author and time period

5 min pass out books

15 min journal response to the prompt: Pretend that you are stranded on an island with five of your friends. You have no supplies and no adult supervision. Plan out your first couple of days.

10 min discussion of journal entries

3 min prepare for departure; assign chapter 1

## **Day 14**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

20 min discuss each character; name some characteristics of each character and how you feel toward them

20 min in their journals, students will choose a character to draw (visualization) and list the descriptions from the chapter that led to this perception

3 min prepare for departure; assign chapter 2

## **Day 15**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

15 min quiz; students will write about what they think happened in the first 2 chapters or chose and scene they feel is important and explain why

10 min discuss as a class what sticks out from chapters 1 and 2, and how they relate to adventure

22 min give students time to read in class

3 min prepare for departure; assign 3-5

### **Day 16 (Week 4)**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

10 min summary quiz

15 min journal topic: how are the people on the island abandoning their civilized ways?

15 min discuss journal topic as a class

3 min prepare for departure; assign 6

### **Day 17**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

10 min teacher will pass around conch shell; only the person holding the shell may speak

20 min teacher will explain about upcoming narrative; teacher will pass out rubric and go over it with students; answer any questions

10 min students will brainstorm ideas

3 min prepare for departure; assign 7; bring 2-3 good questions from chapter

### **Day 18**

2 min housekeeping and attendance

5 min tool sharpening

10 min journal entry: write about a significant in the story and your reaction to it

30 min discuss questions students generated for homework

3 min prepare for departure; assign 8

### **Day 19**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

10 min summary quiz for 7&8

20 min students will revisit drawings done at beginning of book; they will redraw the same character and describe differences; they should be prepared to explain what has happened in the story that caused the change

10 min students who wish to may share their drawings and explain the changes

3 min prepare for departure; assign 9

## **Day 20**

2. min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

20 min students will discuss how the novel is adventurous; what obstacles the characters have faced and overcome; where were they during the action? (visualization)

20 min students will be allowed to read in class

3. min prepare for departure; assign 10-12 over weekend

## **Day 21 (Week 5)**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

4. min tool sharpening

10 min summary quiz over 10-12

15 min we will discuss student generated questions; teacher will have "emergency" discussion topic if needed

15 min students may work on their narratives

3 min prepare for departure

## **Day 22**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5. min tool sharpening

40 min student will continue to work on narratives; class time is used for questions and looking over drafts

3 min prepare for departure

## **Day 23**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

15 min introduction of Sniper; lecture about author, setting, time period

5 min students may ask questions about story

3 min prepare for departure

### **Day 24**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

10 min summary quiz

5 min discuss any questions about quiz

25 min class will divide into groups of 3 and come up with ways this story relates to adventure

3 min prepare for departure; assign Colomber

### **Day 25**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

15 min wrap-up Sniper; discuss elements of adventure as a class; address any questions

10 min summary quiz on Colomber

15 min journal topic

3 min prepare for departure

### **Day 26 (Week 6)**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

10 min teacher explains activity; students will break into groups of three and create a movie poster advertising Colomber

30 min students will work on project

3 min prepare for departure

### **Day 27**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

5 min teacher will remind students that narratives are due in 3 days; answer any questions

35 min begin watching Indiana Jones movie; students who wish to may go to the library to work on their

narrative; take up journals so they can be read while students view the movie

3 min prepare for departure

### **Day 28**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

40 min continue movie; for homework students must write journal entry discussing elements of adventure

3 min prepare for departure

### **Day 29**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

40 min finish movie

3 min prepare for departure

### **Day 30**

2 min attendance and housekeeping

5 min tool sharpening

10 min students will turn in narratives

30 min students and teacher will wrap-up unit; discuss connections between elements of adventure; if visualization activities and question generating were helpful; return journals

3 min prepare for departure