

Battle of the Villains

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Rationale

As part of the ninth grade curriculum, there are several aspects of reading a novel that are addressed in the standards. I believe there is a way to do this without sticking to the normal routine, but still being able to accomplish the same goals. In this unit, we will compare a contemporary novel with a canonical novel and several short stories. By looking through all of the different sources, students will create a better understanding for reading literature and analyzing texts.

In many units English teachers address the role of the hero in stories. The heroic role is encountered in many books of the canon, but just as common in the books are the villains. Dictionary.com defines a villain as, “a cruelly malicious person who is involved in or devoted to wickedness or crime; scoundrel” (dictionary.com). The villains are rarely addressed in lessons because students usually cannot connect with the characters as well. It is much easier to analyze a character that has a redeemable quality or likeability. However, in many novels students will encounter throughout middle and high school, the main, or one of the main characters is a villain. It is important that students learn how to find a connection to a text in the absence of a saving character. To do this, I will teach more modern and popular texts along with classics in order to associate the themes to later texts the students will read.

For the main novel of the unit, the class will read Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone. Although this text is controversial in some areas, it is a great novel to get students interested in a plot. With all the hype of the novels and movies, many students have heard of Harry Potter but may have only seen the movies. This will be a chance for them to see that even novels that become main stream carry the literary value and aspects of other novels that are typically taught in schools. Before reading the book I will send out a permission slip to parents explaining why we are reading the novel and that we are only looking at it for character analysis and the literary elements; we will not be discussing the magical and religious elements of the book. If a parent still has a problem with this, the student may

have an alternative reading assignment of either The Lord of the Rings or The Chronicles of Narnia which both have the fantasy element of the Harry Potter series and contain a villain.

Teaching Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone will help students analyze several different villains of varying degrees. The main villain is Lord Voldemort. The students will determine for themselves if he is a true villain and to what degree – does he have any motivating factors for being evil? In this book we are also introduced to Professor Quirell, who is being controlled by Voldemort. Students will have the opportunity to compare the villains and decide if Quirell really is a villain if he is not acting from his own control but is still doing evil things. In reading this book and comparing the characters, students will be able to come to their own conclusion of what a villain is and create an extended definition of one.

In comparison to Harry Potter we will also read The Pearl by John Steinbeck. In this novel the main character struggles with becoming greedy without realizing it. However, everyone else around him recognizes the power this pearl has cast over him. Students will be able to use their reference of the villains in Harry Potter and compare them to Kino in The Pearl. Through this students will be able to write a comparison and contrast paper of the two novels in regard to the degree of villainy. Even though these characters are considered villains, some are still likeable characters that possess good qualities as well as the bad. I will show students that not every character is black and white and it is still okay to accept a character with flaws or who is the “villain” of the story. It will also address the question of if every book has a villain or not. Just because a character is not the “good guy” does that make them the “bad guy”?

When we are done with the novels, the students will read a short story titled “The Sniper” by Liam O’Flaherty. In this short story the main character is given an assignment to be a sniper and in the end he is put in a situation of shoot or get shot. He ends up being the shooter and at the end finds out

he shot his own brother. I will pose the question of whether or not he is still considered a villain since he didn't know what he was doing at the time but still committed this evil act. Throughout the story we will also examine the elements of what makes us like or dislike the main character from the beginning. At what point throughout the novels or the story did the students decide the character was evil? The students will take this and in small groups will create their own short story that has a villain. They can make the villain likeable or not, but they must include the aspects we have discussed as a class and be able to classify the villain based on the extended definition they have written.

By doing these lessons, students will be able to better understand character development in stories and be able to use the skills in later novels they read and in their own writing. Developing a character is a difficult part in writing fiction because the reader must have some interest in the character even if the character is a bad person. Students will be able to analyze what they found likeable or intriguing about several different villains and how it changed their perception of the stories. Also, by using a contemporary text as well as a canonical text, students will see that these themes and skills are applied throughout time and still create the same effects on the reader.

Materials

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

The Pearl

"The Sniper"

Goals/Rubrics

Goals:

1. The student will be able to write a well developed comparison/contrast essay between the villains in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone and The Pearl. The essay must include a defense for why each character is considered a villain, describe different and similar personality traits, and compare and contrast the outcome of each villain.

2. The student will be able to write an extended definition of a villain. Students must find at least three different sources to support a clear and concise definition of a villain and how villains are used in literature.

3. The student will be able to create their own short story with a villainous main character. Students must use qualities of a short story after analyzing “The Sniper” and must make sure their main character fits into the extended definition of what a villain is. Students will then be able to analyze other students’ stories and critique them based on the rubric below.

Rubric:

1. Compare/contrast essay –

Category	4	3	2	1
Focus on topic	There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information.	Main idea is clear but the supporting information is general.	Main idea is somewhat clear but there is a need for more supporting information.	The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information.
Support of topic	Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader the important information that goes beyond the outside or predictable.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key issue or portion of the storyline is unsupported.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues or portions of the storyline are unsupported.	Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic.
Accuracy of facts	All supportive facts are reported	Almost all supportive facts	Most or some supporting facts	NO facts are reported OR most

	accurately.	are reported accurately.	are reported accurately.	are inaccurately reported.
Organization	A variety of thoughtful transitions are used. They clearly show how ideas are connected.	Transitions clearly show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety.	Some transitions work well, but connections between other ideas are fuzzy.	The transitions between ideas are unclear or non-existent.
Grammar/mechanics	Writer makes few or no significant errors that distract the reader from the content of the paper.	Writer makes few grammatical errors.	Writer makes many grammatical errors that start to distract the reader from the content of the paper.	Writer makes extensive grammatical errors that make the paper unreadable.

The final score will be multiplied by 5 to get a total score out of 100 points.

2. Extended definition – (2 separate grades)

Category	1	2	3	4
Sources	All sources used for quotes and facts are credible and cited correctly.	All sources used for quotes and facts are credible and most are cited correctly.	Most sources used for quotes and facts are credible and some are cited correctly.	Many sources used for quotes and facts are less than credible (suspect) and/or are not cited correctly.
Sequencing	Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	Details are placed in a logical order, but the way in which they are presented/introduced sometimes makes the writing less interesting.	Some details are not in a logical order, and this distracts the reader.	Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.
Support for topic	Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues or portions of the storyline are unsupported.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues or portions of the storyline are unsupported.	Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic.
Focus on topic	There is one clear, well-	Main idea is clear but the supporting	Main idea is somewhat clear	The main idea is not clear. There is

	focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information.	information is general.	but there is a need for more supporting information.	a seemingly random collection of information.
Word choice	Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, and the choice and placement of the words seems accurate, natural and not forced.	Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words are used inaccurately or seem overdone.	Writer uses words that communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety, punch, or flair.	Writer uses a limited vocabulary that does not communicate strongly or capture the reader's interest. Jargon or clichés may be present and detract from the meaning.

The first grade of the paper will be the total score multiplied by 5 to total a score out of 100.

Category	20	15	10	5
Grammar/mechanics	Writer makes few or no significant errors that distract the reader from the content of the paper.	Writer makes few grammatical errors.	Writer makes many grammatical errors that start to distract the reader from the content of the paper.	Writer makes extensive grammatical errors that make the paper unreadable.

The second grade will be strictly on grammar and will be out of a total of 20 points.

3. Short story –

Category	4	3	2	1
Content	Skillfully combines all story elements around a controlling idea to reveal a thought provoking theme.	Combines story elements around a controlling idea to reveal a thought provoking theme.	Story elements may or may not reveal a controlling idea/theme, overly simplistic.	No clear controlling idea and/or theme.
Plot	Skillfully develops plot line with complex major and minor characters and	Develops a standard plot line with complex major and minor characters and a definite setting.	Provides a minimally developed plot line.	Lacks a developed plot line.

	definite setting.			
Character development	The villain of the story is clearly recognizable and a well developed character. Contains qualities attributed to a villain.	The villain of the story is somewhat recognizable and contains some qualities of a villain.	The villain of the story blends in too much and does not contain qualities defined as a villain.	There is no villain in the story.
Organization	A variety of thoughtful transitions are used. They clearly show how ideas are connected.	Transitions clearly show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety.	Some transitions work well, but connections between other ideas are fuzzy.	The transitions between ideas are unclear or non-existent.
Sequencing	Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	Details are placed in a logical order, but the way in which they are presented/introduced sometimes makes the writing less interesting.	Some details are not in a logical order, and this distracts the reader.	Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.

The final score will be multiplied by 5 to get a total out of 100 points.

Resources:

http://www.sites4teachers.com/links/redirect.php?url=http://www.sandi.net/depts/literacy/rubrics/7_writing.pdf

<http://www.readwritethink.org>

Introductory Lesson

Purpose:

To introduce this unit to the class, we first need to define what a villain is. To do this, students will have a debate of villains from popular comics to determine who the worst villain is. This will get the students ready to really look at the role of the villain the novels and short story we will be reading.

Procedure:

10 minutes – What is a villain? Can you think of any villains everyone might know of? Students will divide into three teams and each be assigned a villain from Superman, Batman or Spiderman. The students will be given background material outlining the story for those who are not familiar with it.

15 minutes – Each group will form a debate for why their villain should be voted most evil. They will address these questions: What evil have they done? What was their intent? Do they ever show remorse? How are they viewed by others? Are all villains necessarily evil?

15 minutes – Each group will get their chance to present their argument, question other arguments and defend their villain. During this time students will be asked to decide for themselves which group posed the best argument and take a vote on which the worst villain is.

10 minutes – We will discuss what students already know about the Harry Potter series and pass out the books.

25 minutes – Read ch.1 (pg. 1-17) silently.

5 minutes – The students will each draw a picture of what the Dursley's house looks like and Harry's room to establish the setting.

10 minutes – We will review the lesson of the day and come up with a new definition of a villain based on what was discussed in class. Assign homework: Finish picture of the setting and read ch.2 (pg. 18-30) Ticket out the Door: Name another villain besides one we have discussed in class.

Daily Lessons

Day 1 - Monday

Introductory lesson

Day 2 - Tuesday

10 minutes – Show setting pictures to class (turn in and hang up around room) and recap summary of ch.2

25 minutes – Read ch.3 (pg 31-45) aloud to class

15 minutes – In small groups debate whether or not the Dursley's can be considered villains

25 minutes – Silently read ch.4 (pg. 46-60)

10 minutes – Journal free-write: What would your reaction be if you found out you were a wizard the way Harry did? Does his home situation affect his reaction?

5 minutes – Assign homework: Read ch.5 (pg. 61-87) and Ticket out the Door (TOTD): turn in journal

Day 3 – Wednesday

5 minutes – List 5 things you can buy or the names of shops in Diagon Alley and turn it in

10 minutes – Discuss villains so far in the book and how they have impacted Harry

30 minutes – Go over an extended definition and how to write them, look at an example

20 minutes – Go over rubric for extended definition, pass out another sample and have each student grade the sample according to the rubric. What was the class average?

20 minutes – Begin reading ch.6 (pg. 88-112)

5 minutes – Assign homework: Finish ch.6 and draw a picture of what you would see when the boat pulls up to Hogwarts. TOTD: What pet would you bring to Hogwarts and why?

Day 4 – Thursday

10 minutes – Turn in pictures and hang them around the wall

20 minutes – Read ch.7 (pg. 113-142) aloud to class

15 minutes – Journal free-write: Do you think being in Slytherin automatically makes you evil? Is being evil caused by nature or nurture?

15 minutes – class debate on nature vs. nurture argument of being evil, must provide examples

15 minutes – read ch.8 (pg. 131-142) silently

10 minutes – In small groups make a list of the actual actions Professor Snape does to show he dislikes Harry.

5 minutes – Assign homework: Read ch.9 (pg.143-162) TOTD: Out of the characters we have met so far, who is the villain and why? Is there more than one?

Day 5 – Friday

10 minutes – Summary quiz: list 5 events that happened in ch.9

50 minutes – In library, begin working on extended definition (must be 2 pages) get sources and print them

25 minutes – In small groups, list the “good” characters of the book. From what you have learned so far about characteristics of villains, do any “good” characters have these traits or the potential to turn into villains? What makes a character “good”?

5 minutes – Assign homework: Read ch.10-12 (pg. 163-214) and continue working on extended definition, due Tuesday. TOTD: List the 3 sources you found for your extended definition.

Day 6 – Monday

15 minutes – Summarize the chapters from homework by drawing at least 4 pictures sequentially with a one sentence summary for each picture.

10 minutes – Journal free-write: What would you see if you stood in front of the Mirror of Erised?

15 minutes – Read ch.13 (pg.215-227) aloud

20 minutes – Work on extended definition and print 2 copies, even if not finished

25 minutes – In groups of 3, trade papers and score them based on the rubric, explain to each person why you would give them the score you did

5 minutes – Assign homework: Read ch.14 (pg. 228-241) and finish extended definition. TOTD: What do you need to fix on your extended definition?

Day 7 – Tuesday

5 minutes – Turn in extended definitions

10 minutes – Journal free-write: Why do you think Malfoy has a negative attitude toward Harry?

25 minutes – Read ch.15 (pg. 242-261) aloud

10 minutes – In small groups discuss how Voldemort has appeared in the book so far. What is his affect on Harry?

35 minutes – Read ch.16 (pg. 262-287) silently

5 minutes – Assign homework: Finish the book, read ch.17 (pg. 288-309) and draw pictures of at least 2 obstacles in the chamber. TOTD: What would be the most difficult challenge for you to get through the chamber and why?

Day 8 – Wednesday

10 minutes – Journal free-write: Why did or didn't you like the book?

15 minutes – Individually, list all of the villains of the book. Is there anymore more villainous than others? Is Quirrell a villain even though he is being controlled by Voldemort?

10 minutes – Go over rules of Socratic Seminar

10 minutes – Finish list of villains and be ready to defend for Socratic Seminar

15 minutes – First circle of Socratic Seminar

10 minutes – Second circle of Socratic Seminar

15 minutes – Were you persuaded to who the biggest villain is? What did you like/dislike about the Socratic Seminar?

5 minutes – TOTD: Who is the most villainous character in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone?

Day 9 – Thursday

5 minutes – Journal free-write: When you think of pearls what do you think of?

50 minutes – listen to The Pearl on tape, ch.1-3 (pg. 5-45) during this students will make a character list including personality traits and descriptive words

20 minutes – In small groups, discuss the characters so far in the novella and draw a picture of each character with 5 words to describe them on each drawing, hang on the wall when finished

10 minutes – Introduce the compare/contrast paper, 2-3 pages

5 minutes – TOTD: What do you think will happen to Kino?

Day 10 – Friday

70 minutes – Finish book on tape and summarize, add to character notes how each character has changed

15 minutes – In small groups, discuss Kino as a villain. Does greed relate to his change in character? Is greed present in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone?

5 minutes – Assign homework: Begin writing compare/contrast essay, due Tuesday. TOTD: Which book did you like better and why?

Day 11 – Monday

60 minutes – In library, work on compare/contrast essay, must have first draft printed

25 minutes – Trade papers with another student and edit the papers, discuss corrections or start making corrections

5 minutes – Assign homework: Finish paper. TOTD: How long do you think it will take to finish your paper tonight?

Day 12 – Tuesday

5 minutes – Turn in papers

15 minutes – Chalk talk, words written on board: Voldemort, Quirrell, Kino

20 minutes – Read “The Sniper” by Liam O’Flaherty aloud

20 minutes – In small groups, discuss whether or not the sniper is a villain. What aspects catch the reader’s attention in the short story? What elements does a short story need?

20 minutes – Go over rubric for short story, 2-3 pages, an illustration and 5 minutes to present

10 minutes – Assign homework: Begin writing story. TOTD: What are some ideas for the plot of your short story?

Day 13 – Wednesday

90 minutes – Finish writing, editing, and illustrating short story. At some point during the class period it must be approved by the teacher. Assign homework: Finish story to begin presentations tomorrow

Day 14 – Thursday

10 minutes – Finish any last minute preparations for presenting, draw names from a hat to determine order of presentations

10 minutes – Pass out rubrics and grading worksheets, each student will critique every student’s story and will take the average grade at the end (including teacher average)

65 minutes – Presentations, 5 minutes each

5 minutes – TOTD: Turn in all scores

Day 15 – Friday

5 minutes – Get out rubrics and order to present

65 minutes – Finish presentations, 5 minutes each

5 minutes – Turn in all scores

15 minutes – TOTD: Journal free-write: What makes a villain? Can you like a villainous character in a book? Does every book have a villain?

Works Referenced

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