

Antigone by Sophocles

Approved for use in English II

Summary: Torn between following the new leader’s rules and honoring her fallen brother, Antigone (our main character) defies the powers that be in order to do what is right. As her conforming sister and a chorus of sympathetic citizens watch, Antigone clings to her beliefs and rejects the hollow authority of Creon until the bitter end.

Connection to the Curriculum: *Antigone* draws attention to the difference between divine law and human law. More than any other character in the three Oedipus plays, she casts serious doubt on Creon’s authority. In *Antigone* we see a woman so in need of familial connection that she is desperate to maintain the connections she has, even in death. Students are given a strong female protagonist while they study basic Greek and Roman structures. Cause and effect relationships are studied as a driving force in Aristotelian tragedy.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3: Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.11-12.R.I.2.: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

2.A.5b.: Evaluate relationships between and among character, plot, setting, theme, conflict and resolution and their influence on the effectiveness of a literary piece.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CC.11-12.W.2.b.: Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CC.11-12.R.L.1.: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CC.11-12.W.2.c.: Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) *Antigone* is the third play in the Oedipus trilogy. It is a story of a woman who openly defies a decree because she believes the state law is against God’s law. There are some implied deaths, including suicide in the text associated with war and imprisonment in the plot.

Assessment: Students will complete quizzes and a test over the content and concepts of this play, as well as analyze the theme with supporting documentation. A character analysis essay will be written at the conclusion.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your student’s sophomore English teacher.

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

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Summary:

In 1959 in the small rural community of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family are killed in an attempted robbery. Other than the pursuit of ready-cash in the home, there is no apparent motive for the crime. Few clues are left by the killers. In this “true crime novel,” Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation that eventually leads to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers. The impact on the community is devastating, but the overall impact on the Midwest and the country is enormous.

Connection to the Curriculum:

In Cold Blood emphasizes the skillful manipulation of facts to relate a strong story. The book offers the reader an examination of a tragedy through the author’s diligent researching of both the victims and the perpetrators. Because the setting is western Kansas, a unique perspective of life in a very rural town is offered. Capote’s narrative of the way the townspeople live and think provide the reader with a glimpse of how life can change after a tragedy occurs. Critical thinking is promoted throughout the text, especially on topics such as the powerful plea for clemency, the concept of safety through isolation, the closeness of community, the power and tenacity of law enforcement, and the good even in the most evil of men.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

R.L. 4, 5, 6, 9 and R.I. 3, 4, 5, 6: Students will be able to use strong, textual evidence to analyze texts, as well as determine author’s choices (style, word choices, allusions, point of view, etc.) and analyze their impact on the text at the appropriate level.

Writing:

W 2, 4-6, 9-10: Students will be able to compose an effective informative/explanatory text that draws conclusions through analysis of complex ideas for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Language:

L 2: Students will be able to apply punctuation and spelling rules at the appropriate level.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

This text contains graphic violence in relation to the brutal murders described. It also contains some profanity (including the “n” word). Capote tells the story in a reporter’s style and, therefore, does not spare the reader from the reality or details of the tragedy.

Assessment: Students will complete quizzes and a test over the content and concepts of this novel, as well as analyze the theme and characters with supporting documentation. An analysis of the novel will be completed through the explanation of literary terms as utilized through the text. Students will also be asked to complete a visual depiction of a key scene of their choice with textual evidence from the novel.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your student’s sophomore English teacher.

Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare

Approved for use in English II

Summary:

After defeating the forces of the Roman general Pompey, Caesar returns in triumph to Rome. Fearing that Caesar has ambitions to be king, Cassius and some of the other senators plot to kill him. Ignoring the warnings of his wife and other omens, he goes to the Capitol on the ides of March and is assassinated by the senators, one of whom is Brutus, who has been a friend and supporter. The rest of the play involves the struggle for power between the forces of Brutus and Cassius and of Antony and Octavius, the latter being victorious.

Connection to the Curriculum:

The play is a piece of classical literature that is a part of the collective knowledge of high school graduates. The play serves as a vehicle for analyzing literary elements such as character development, theme, irony, dialogue, and poetic devices. Students benefit from an in-depth exploration of the stage directions and language constructs that drive the action of the play, in addition to a review of Shakespearean theater basics. It offers sophomore students opportunities to analyze persuasive techniques (a critical element in preparation for the state writing assessment) and serves as a means to discuss and evaluate moral issues in light of what is good for the State.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.11-12.R.I.2.: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

2.A.5b.: Evaluate relationships between and among character, plot, setting, theme, conflict and resolution and their influence on the effectiveness of a literary piece.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CC.11-12.W.2.b.: Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CC.11-12.R.L.1.: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CC.11-12.W.2.c.: Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.) The story of Julius Caesar involves battles, death, omens, bloody dreams, and plots for revenge. These are told in typical Shakespearean style.

Assessment: Students will be expected to create a theme analysis essay in addition to daily activities concerning the plot of the play.

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Runaway Jury by John Grisham

Approved for use in English II

Summary:

A juror on the inside and a woman on the outside manipulate a court trial involving a major gun manufacturer.

Connection to the Curriculum: Runaway Jury provides students a modern connection to the courtroom and the importance of jury duty. It deals with the use of justice and how that comes into play in the courtroom and outside of it in the world.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

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Language:

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CC.11-12.W.2.c.: Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

Speaking and Listening:

SL 2, 5: Students will be able to effectively integrate multiple sources of information with diverse media and formats to improve credibility and communicate a clear purpose.

A Note on the Movie: It has some violent and very tense moments, opening with a tragic shooting (off-camera) and describing another. The movie's theme is gun control. Characters smoke and drink (one has a drinking problem) and use strong language. A character attempts suicide. Many of the characters in the movie are ruthless and unethical.

Assessment: A character analysis essay will be written at the conclusion comparing two characters from the movie and/or supplementary materials.

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Life of Pi by Yann Martel

Approved for use in English II

Summary:

Pi Patel's zoo-keeping family is transporting animals from India to Canada. After a shipwreck, Pi is trapped on a 26-foot lifeboat with a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. The two drift for 227 days through shark-infested waters while fighting hunger, the elements, and Pi's overactive imagination. The days blur together as Pi recounts his struggles to survive. Summary modified from <http://www.amazon.com/Life-Pi-Yann-Martel/dp/0156027321>

Connection to the Curriculum:

- Flashback
- Plot structure
- Symbol
- Motif
- POV
- Foreshadowing
- Interior monologue
- Multiculturalism
- Allegory
- Magical Realism
- Ambiguity

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

R.L. 4, 5, 6, 9 and R.I. 3, 4, 5, 6: Students will be able to use strong, textual evidence to analyze texts, as well as determine author's choices (style, word choices, allusions, point of view, etc.) and analyze their impact on the text at the appropriate level.

Writing:

W 2, 4-6, 9-10: Students will be able to compose an effective informative/explanatory text that draws conclusions through analysis of complex ideas for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Language:

L 2: Students will be able to apply punctuation and spelling rules at the appropriate level.

A Note on the Text: The novel deals with the exploration of many different types of religions (Christianity, Hinduism, and Muslim). There is some violence involving animals fight for survival.

Assessment: Students will be expected to participate in weekly literary circles and to complete an essay upon completion of the unit.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your student's sophomore English teacher.

***Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe**

Approved for use in English II

Summary: *Things Fall Apart* is set in Umuofia, a tribal village in Nigeria in the late 1800's. The novel is divided into three parts: the rise of the main character to wealth and power, his family's exile to his motherland, and his difficult return at the end of seven years. Okonkwo, the tragic hero, endures and often conquers battles with his upbringing, his native culture, his status, and his pride in this uniquely structured piece of realistic fiction.

Connection to the Curriculum: *Things Fall Apart* is an African book originally written in English. It presents a rich stylistic portrayal of the novel, using traditional Ibo terms, along with African maxims about life. This book offers a unique perspective for students in that the history is told from an Afro-centric perspective, which requires the reader to view the situations with the missionaries differently than they may have in previous history studies. The novel also encourages extended discussion of cultural diversity and tolerance of an individual's beliefs and tradition rather than immediate judgment and condemnation. *Things Fall Apart* also fosters discussion of gender roles in society. At first glance Achebe may seem to be biased toward the African men; there are, in fact, many times when he criticizes the male behavior and emphasizes what he sees as the important female traits in this culture. In summary, the novel is rich stylistically, culturally, and thematically.

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Writing:

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Language:

L 2: Students will be able to apply punctuation and spelling rules at the appropriate level.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) *Things Fall Apart*, although heavily laden with sadness, is a striking cultural examination. Through its realistic narrative, readers encounter some limited violence including abuse, murder, and ultimately, suicide. These events are part of the realistic look at the life of Okonkwo and the development of the conflict and characters. In addition, there are several references to cultural traditions including spirits and other mystic elements.

Assessment: Students will complete quizzes and a test over the content and concepts of this novel, as well as analyze the theme with supporting documentation. A character analysis project will be written at the conclusion.

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Twelve Angry Men by Reginald Rose

Approved for use in English II

Summary:

In a muggy, drab courtroom, twelve anonymous jurors are called upon to seal the fate of a young boy accused of killing his father. From the opening instructions given by the judge, to the final vote in Act III, readers of this play will encounter an eclectic jury room of characters as they wrestle with a slew of evidence, share passionate views on the justice system, and finally determine what is fair and just in an imperfect system.

Connection to the Curriculum: Twelve Angry Men is an ideal selection for the Mattoon curriculum as it explores the heroic qualities necessary to reconcile people with opposing viewpoints. While determining a young boy's guilt or innocence, the characters in Twelve Angry Men expose their prejudices and fears while attempting to come to a just conclusion. The readers of this play will experience the power language has to influence seemingly unshakeable points of view. The characters in this play are deftly created, and students will marvel at how involved they become in the lives of the characters, the suspense of this story, and the intricacies of determining guilt and innocence.

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A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.) This intense courtroom drama reveals stereotypical beliefs that can get in the way of justice. Readers should be aware that due to the setting, the jury is comprised of all males (as indicated in the title).

Assessment: Students will complete quizzes and a test over the content and concepts of this play, as well as analyze the theme with supporting documentation. A character analysis essay will be written at the conclusion comparing two characters from the text and/or supplementary materials.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your student's sophomore English teacher.