

Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

Unit Plan for "The War Prayer"

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School: Marceline R-5 School District

City, State: Marceline, Mo.

Mark Twain Teachers' Workshop--July 12, 2019

Hannibal, Missouri

"Political Statements Through Short Stories"

UNIT PLAN for "The War Prayer"	
Concept or Topic: Understanding perspective in a story and situation.	Suggested Grade Level(s)/Course: English 1 - 9th Grade
Subject: Literature Literature/Writing/Social Studies/American History	Suggested Time Frame: 3 days of 45 minute lessons
Objective(s): English I students will use "The War Prayer" and three articles about a current event to write a timed, in-class work, scoring at least 8 out of 10 on the final writing assignment. This will be scored for two points per story-based item successfully compared and contrasted in the final project.	
Common Core State Standards: Language Standards 9-10: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL 1-2,4,6 Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details (1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.)(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.) Craft and Structure (4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative) choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone.) (6. Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.) Language Standards for Informational Text 9-10: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI 1,3-5,8 Reading Standards for Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details (1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.) (3. Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are	

introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.)

Craft and Structure: (4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).) (5. Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: (8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.)

Writing Standards 9-10: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W 1,4,5,9

Text Types and Purposes: (1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.)

Production and Distribution of Writing: (4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)) (5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 9–10 on page 55.))

Research to Build and Present Knowledge: (9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- a. Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).
- b. Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).

Assessments (at least two): In-class writing at the conclusion of the lesson. Venn Diagrams about the news stories completed as a whole class.

Vocabulary (Tiers 2 & 3): Propaganda, Bias, Patriot (denotation and connotation), lunatic (denotation and connotation).

Subject Area Integration: Language Arts--Reading and Writing, History--Current Events

Background Information Required for Unit/Lesson: Background on the chosen current event. This will include the parties involved, organizations, and other major players in the event. Further background on the formal structure of a religious service or ceremony will be discussed. This will include who is allowed to speak, and at what times in the service. This will also include what could happen if someone were to speak out of turn in this environment.

Materials: "The War Prayer" via physical and digital handout, links to three related news articles from three different perspectives. A possible news article set would be as follows, concerning President Trump and a border wall with Mexico:

CNBC: <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/19/trump-wants-to-build-30-foot-high-wall-at-mexican-border.html>

Fox News: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-wants-to-build-30-foot-high-wall-at-mexican-border>

USA Today: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/03/10/trump-border-wall-8-6-billion-more-funding/3123288002/>

Technology: Chromebooks, Smart TV/SmartBoard/Whiteboard

Related Twain Quotes/Passages: "The War Prayer"

Lesson Sequence:

Day 1: (45 minutes)

Hook/Intro: Ask students to talk about experiences where people may see things in different ways.

Teaching of the Concept(s):

1. Perspectives
2. Point of View
3. Bias

Suggested Questions: How does the audience react to the stranger that came into the church and spoke? Why did they have that reaction?

What did you think as the prayers were turned around on the congregation? How would you have reacted?

Learning Activity: Discuss a situation that has happened in real life (the news stories will cover these) and gauge student perspective (if any).

Review/Closure: Go back over the answers to the questions above, and review the key terms discussed.

Day 2: (45 minutes)

Hook/Intro: Review the story from the previous day.

Teaching of the Concept(s):

1. Introduce the first news story that leans to the left or right.
2. Introduce the second news story that leans the other direction.
3. Introduce the third news story that has no or limited bias.

Suggested Questions: What terms showed the bias, or lack thereof, in each of these three news stories?

Learning Activity: Students will engage in classroom discussion about the three articles. Board activity to make a Venn Diagram about the items that each story covers, looking for similarities and differences.

Review/Closure: Review key terms discussed, as well as concepts of the three stories, and the final look at the Venn Diagram.

Day 3: (45 minutes)

Hook/Intro: Discuss the previous two days reading. Lead board activity to discuss how Twain's story and the articles are related. Discuss and review perspective.

Teaching of the concept(s):

This is the day where we have the written assessment of the short unit. Prior to the writing assessment, students will be asked some probing questions to get them thinking.

Questions: How did you react to the news story that you agree with? How did you react to the one you disagree with? How did the crowd react to the stranger in Twain's story? What are your reactions to the news stories and the people in the church? How are they similar and different?

Learning Activity: Students will have 30 minutes to write an essay about how perspective changed the tone of the three news articles, and how the tone of Twain's story comments on perspective. Students must write for at least 20 minutes, and must cite a minimum of five pieces of textual evidence from the given material to justify their points.

Checklist for scoring:

Fact one cited, with proper citation of article or short story: 2 points

Fact two cited, with proper citation of article or short story: 2 points

Fact three cited, with proper citation of article or short story: 2 points

Fact four cited, with proper citation of article or short story: 2 points

Fact five cited, with proper citation of article or short story: 2 points

Total assignment value: 10 points

Review/Closure: When the papers are returned after grading, hold discussion to note the findings of the class.

Homework (for the unit): None

Strategies for Exceptional Students (for the unit): Challenge the exceptional students to find other ways that perspective is lost in social media interactions and other online forms of communication. Have them brainstorm ways to fix these issues and improve communication.

Suggested Follow-Up Activities (for the unit): Analysis of other perspectives in more short stories and news articles to reinforce the concepts taught in this lesson. Some specific items of discussion could be the Civil War, as the Northern and Southern perspectives are vastly different in the areas of the cause of the conflict.