

Transformations

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Table of Contents

Rationale page 3

Goals page 9

Student Handouts and Rubrics page 12

Introductory Activity page 19

Lesson Plans page 21

Rationale

During the early years of high school, students are trying to figure out how they fit into their ever changing worlds. New responsibilities – harder classes, more homework, more extracurricular activities, etc. – have been thrust upon them at the same time that they are negotiating the nebulous teenage years. Not yet adults but no longer children, students struggle to understand where they have come from and whom they want to become. At times, they are shocked to realize things they always believed do not seem to fit in with where they are going. They begin to adapt and decide what they believe as individuals.

I hope to help my students better examine these concerns through literature. By helping them to make connections with different texts in which the main character(s) go(es) through a transformation, a theme my students can relate to, the texts will have more meaning for my students and their lives will be enriched. The texts we examine together will be connected through the common theme of transformation. However, many other relevant topics will be present as well.

It is hard enough for students to mature as they enter high school, and it is even harder to do so when so many people are telling them to do it but so few people are truly talking about it or letting students discuss the difficulties they face. Thus, my students will have opportunities to share personal experiences both with the class and/or privately with me through a journal. Students will not be required to share anything they do not feel comfortable sharing – it is up to each student what he/she talks and writes about in class. The important thing is for students to have the space to talk about issues that are important to them within the context of the texts we are reading.

Some may advocate for a more traditional approach in which students are encouraged to perform a literary analysis of a text. In this way students learn and practice all the skills required for literary analysis and still discuss complex issues without necessarily discussing personal experiences. Some may feel that a classroom is not the appropriate place for students to talk about their personal experiences and that such discussions will take away from discussions about the texts. Furthermore, some may believe that students may discuss things that are too personal and that should not be discussed in the classroom. Again, the fear is that by discussing such personal things focus will be taken away from the text.

Texts have more meaning to students when they are able to make connections with what they are reading. If I do not allow my students to talk and write openly about the ways in which they relate to the texts, my students may not have as much interest and may not find as much significance in the texts. Students may not make connections with the texts if they are not encouraged to do so and are not able to talk through those connections in a safe environment. Thus, by allowing students the freedom to explore and express the ways in which they personally relate to a text, I believe there will be a stronger and deeper focus on the text.

It is important to note that I realize topics concerning sexual or physical abuse, abandonment, suicide, etc. may come up, especially when students are writing in their journals. I will not ask students not to talk or write about these topics as I do not want to limit their discussions. However, students will be informed that any information I receive concerning the topics mentioned above I am legally required to report.

Students will read *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers during this unit. This is a young adult novel that is written in a genre, a movie script, not commonly read in school. Some may question using such a non-traditional novel as the central text for a unit. There are coming of age

novels represented in the canon that others may think should be utilized as a central piece instead. These novels would still encompass the theme of transformation that is the main focus of this unit.

Others may argue for a more traditional text, especially something from the canon, for a few reasons. First, as educators, we always want to ensure that our students are studying high quality material. This is not to say that we should not expose them to inferior quality work; however, something that is of lower quality should be presented as an example of what is to be avoided. It should not be the focus of a unit of study. Additionally, works from the canon are well established. It is important for our students to be exposed to these traditional texts and have these common experiences in the classroom.

The argument about quality is especially concerning. It implies that a text is not of high quality if it does not belong to some elite standard of measure, and too often that measure seems to be simply belonging to the canon. Instead, I want to challenge my students to figure out what makes different kinds of writing bad, good, and superior. Then, I want them to then analyze their own writing and the writing of others – poems, short stories, novels, etc. – to determine its quality. The important thing is that I do not want my students to believe something is good or bad simply because someone else has told them it is that way, and regardless of how they feel about a text, I want them to be able to support their opinion.

As independent readers, we know that a piece of literature does not need to be a member of the canon to be superior work. Contemporary does not immediately mean poor quality. However, in education many argue that our students need to be exposed to only the best pieces of literature. Why expose our students to those works if they are not ready for them yet? Many students are simply unable to make connections with some of the more traditional texts at this

point in their educational careers. This is not a shortcoming of the text, the students, or the teacher; rather, our students may be too disconnected from the texts. As independent readers, how often do we choose not to read a text we do not find a connection with? Why do we not allow our students the same luxury? Why do we consider it a luxury? Instead, as teachers, we should scaffold our teaching and find texts that will have meaning for our students and that meet our needs. When our students can make connections with the texts, they are more engaged and will learn better. Thus, we are not losing anything by waiting to introduce the canon until our students are ready; rather, we gain our students.

During this unit students will work on a project designed to help them delve into who they are. I am not requiring my students to make direct connections to *Monster* or any other text we study during this unit. Instead, the focus will be on their own transformations. I anticipate some will question why I have done this. How can a culminating activity not directly address the works in the unit? What am I testing? Is this simply an art project?

The theme of this unit is transformation. Throughout the unit we will study the transformations that characters go through and use those experiences to begin discussing the ways in which our own experiences can help us relate to the characters. During the project I will ask my students to do more and to deeply examine their own lives and the transformations they have experienced and wish to experience in the future. Thus, students will not need to directly examine the text because we will have already done so as a class. Furthermore, we will have already made connections to the text. The project itself is connected to the text since it is tied to the theme of the unit of study. The purpose of this project is not to further examine the text but to examine how the theme applies to the lives of my students.

Although students will have the option to create artwork, this is not an art project. Students must investigate and synthesize their experiences, analyze their lives, and predict futures. They must synthesize all this information in order to create pieces that depict the meanings they wish to portray. Finally, they must reflect in writing on the work they have done, explaining how their pieces depict their past, present, and future selves (see Who Are You? Project goals and rubrics for more information on this project). Every aspect of this project requires students to utilize their higher-order thinking skills in order to do well.

Additionally, some may question the fact that I am allowing my students so much freedom in the final project. Students will be able to create three pieces from three different genres. This leaves open the option for students to turn in a genre of writing I have not given them direct instruction in. However, I am not grading students in their proficiency concerning those genres; instead I am interested in their originality and creativity with those pieces (again, see Who Are You? Project goals and rubrics for more information).

In this unit, I will be teaching students how to write reflectively. I will begin by scaffolding with their journals. The journals will help students to begin reflecting on their lives. In week four, I will give direct instruction on writing reflectively. Students will build on journal reflection by learning how to reflect on their own work. They will then apply all these skills to their final project in which their reflective writing will be graded for proficiency. The goal is to allow students as much opportunity as possible to be original and creative when creating the three pieces they will reflect on. If I restrict their freedom too much, I am restricting their originality and creativity. I do not need to do that in order to assess their reflective writing.

This unit is designed to engage students and get them thinking at higher levels. This does not mean that I need to lower my standards or use lower quality materials. The key is to meet

students where they are and to use materials that they will be able to find meaning in and that meet my needs. My students are my audience, and I need to make choices that are more likely to engage and interest them. When they are engaged and interested, they are learning the skills and lessons I am teaching them better.

Goals

This unit is designed for my lower track ninth grade students but can easily be adapted to meet the needs of any group of students. I want to provide students with a place where they can safely explore their ever changing ideas and beliefs. My ultimate goal is to get my students engaged with the lessons and talking about the topics. I want them feel that the texts we discuss are relevant to their lives, and I want them to be able to examine their own ideas and beliefs. At no point will I tell any student what to believe nor will it be acceptable for anyone else in the classroom to present his/her beliefs as fact, but I do want every student – myself included – to think critically about his/her beliefs. I want my students to be challenged academically and personally.

I will use three types of assessment to monitor student progress during the course of this unit: discussions, which I have adapted from Melanie Kee's unit on mythology, a journal, and a mini multigenre project, which I have adapted from a project I did for Dr. Bob Fecho. In addition to the overall goals for the unit, I have specific goals for each of these types of assessment.

Discussions

A large portion of class time will be dedicated to discussion, and it is important that these discussions are meaningful. I do not want my students to simply summarize plot while I tell them analysis. I want students to work through their developing ideas and beliefs through the discussions. Furthermore, I want students to feel safe talking about ideas and beliefs that they have not fully developed yet. This is a time for them to ask questions, make observations, and discuss and work through the texts together.

It is important to note that I will participate in classroom discussions, but my role will be the facilitator. I will pose questions and encourage my students to go deeper by responding to their thoughts and ideas with even more questions. When students are having small group or partner discussions, I will walk around the classroom, listening in to make sure students are on task and posing questions to get students thinking more.

My goals for discussions are as follows:

- Have students ask questions, make observations, and think critically about texts in large groups, small groups, and in partners.
- Encourage students to form their own opinions about the texts and be able to support those opinions.
- Help students make connections between the texts and their lives through the discussions.

Journal

The journals will be used in conjunction with discussions. Students will receive a topic to write on each week that will be based on a topic we are about to encounter or a topic we have been struggling with. When I first give the topic, students will have some time to write on the topic immediately. The purpose is to get the students to begin thinking about or continue to work through the topic. We will come back to the journals throughout the week for them to continue working and developing their ideas, so I do not expect them to finish writing in one sitting.

My goals for the journals are as follows:

- Have students begin thinking or continue working through a topic of discussion that is present in the texts.
- Encourage students to connect the topic of discussion to life outside of the texts.

- Encourage students to develop their ideas and beliefs as we continue to work through the topic.

Who Are You? Project

This will be the culminating activity for the unit. Students will need to be able to think critically about the theme and how it relates to their own lives. They will represent their lives through the use of three different genres and will then reflect of the works they have created.

My goals for this assessment are as follows:

- Have students think critically about the theme and how it relates to their lives.
- Have students think critically about their past, present, and future selves.
- Have students represent their past, present, and future selves in unique and engaging ways.

On the following pages are the student handouts explaining these three assessments and the rubrics I will use to grade the students. Students will receive the rubrics at the same time that they receive the handouts explaining the assessments, and we will take some class time to discuss each assignment when it is first given to ensure that everyone understands the directions and expectations.

DISCUSSIONS

A large portion of this class will center on large group, small group, and partner discussion, and it is important that each student participate. During these discussions, every student must remember the ground rules we developed together. I recognize that not every discussion will be interesting to every student, and I also know that sometimes you may not be in the mood to talk. However, I am not excusing you from discussions, and I expect you to participate most of the time.

The goal is to have meaningful discussions in which you think deeply about the different topics. You do not have to have your ideas fully developed before you speak. Instead, I encourage you to work through your ideas and developing beliefs during the discussions. You may hear something you have not considered before, and I want you to be open to considering these things and possibly incorporating them into your own, new ideas. Do not steal ideas, but rather adapt them and make them your own.

At the end of each unit, you will receive one quiz grade for the discussions held throughout the unit. In order to keep track of your contributions to discussions, at the end of a discussion you may be asked to summarize the questions or thoughts you shared. This does not need to be long; two or three sentences will be enough. I am interested in knowing what you thought were the best contributions you made. Please read over the rubric carefully so that you know what you will be assessed on.

Discussion Rubric

	Excellent	On the Right Track	Room for Improvement
Quality <i>Worth 75%</i>	Your comments and questions often add to the discussions and are rarely off topic. Your comments and questions indicate that you are thinking about the topic(s) and are not only repeating what others have said or summarizing information from the text.	Your comments and questions generally add to the discussion and may at times be off topic but are not distracting. Your comments and questions indicate that you are thinking about the topic(s) although at times you may get stuck and repeat other people’s ideas or summarize text without adding a new thought or posing a question.	Your comments and questions may often be off topic and distracting. Your comments and questions may show that you are thinking about topics other than the one currently being discussed or may contain almost exclusively other people’s ideas or text summarization.
Participation <i>Worth 25%</i>	You participate in at least 90% of the discussions.	You participate in 50% to 89% of the discussions.	You participate in less than 50% of the discussions.

Unit: _____

Total: _____ / _____

JOURNAL

You will keep a journal during this unit. Journals must be maintained in the folder I provide. Please do not lose them.

Each week you will receive a journal topic, and you will have time in class to write. You may find that you do not have enough time to fully develop your ideas during the time I provide you with in class when you first receive the topic. That is okay. You will likely have more time throughout the week to work on the journal, for example when you finish another assignment early. You are allowed to take your journal home and work on it there as well.

Journals are due at the end of class, finished or not, every Friday. I will read through them over the weekend and comment on your writing. Although journals will not be graded for grammar, I need to be able to read them. The handwriting needs to be legible, and I should be able to comprehend your content. For example, something like this should be avoided (poor handwriting, very difficult to understand): *U shld not rite 1 intinse after the uder without any encirn for . or spaces or Capital Leters or spelng it can be raly hard to follow wat you are saying without these things dun't you agre especialy wen u r ritng alot of informasion and i know u will all rite alot in ur journals*

To receive full credit, you will need to respond to the given topic for the week. Each topic should be copied into the journal at the top of your response. Your response will need to be thoughtful and your own work. It will need to be at least 200 words. Finally, your handwriting will need to be legible, and I should be able to comprehend your content. Make sure you read through the rubric carefully so that you know what you will be assessed on.

Journal Rubric

	Excellent	On the Right Track	Room for Improvement
Quality of Response	Your response is on topic, is thoughtful, and is original. <i>90-100 Possible points</i>	Your response is on topic and is original. You show some thought, but you may struggle to really consider the topic. <i>74-89 Possible points</i>	Your response is mostly off topic. You did not express your thoughts or ideas effectively. You may not have responded to the given topic, or your response may not be your own work. <i>0-73 Points</i>
Length of Response	Your response is at least 200 words. <i>9-10 Possible points</i>	Your response is between 100 and 199 words. <i>7-8 Possible points</i>	Your response is less than 100 words. <i>0-6 Possible points</i>
Comprehensible	Any errors in grammar and/or mechanics do not detract from the comprehension of the writing. I do not have to reread any phrase or sentence to understand its meaning. <i>9-10 Possible points</i>	Some errors in grammar and/or mechanics detract from the comprehension of the writing. I have to reread a few phrases and/or sentences to understand their meaning. <i>7-8 Possible points</i>	There are many errors in grammar and/or mechanics that detract from the comprehension of the writing. I often have to reread phrases and/or sentences to understand their meaning. <i>0-6 Possible points</i>
Legible	The handwriting is legible. I am able to read the words easily without having to stop and reread any to try and understand what was written. <i>9-10 Possible points</i>	Most of the handwriting is legible. I may have to reread a few words to understand what was written. <i>7-8 Possible points</i>	Most of the handwriting is not legible. I have to reread most of the writing to understand it. <i>0-6 Possible points</i>
Formatting	Proper formatting is done. The given topic is written at the top of the appropriate response. <i>5 points</i>	Not applicable – either proper formatting is done or it is not done.	Proper formatting is not done. The given topic is not written at the top of the appropriate response. <i>0 points</i>

Week: _____

Total: _____/135

WHO ARE YOU? PROJECT

Throughout this unit we have discussed transformation. By now, you may have begun to examine the transformations you have gone through as you have matured. For this project, I want you to take a deeper look at who you were in the past, who you are now, and who you want to be in the future.

This is not meant to be a surface examination. You should take a hard look at yourself and deeply think about your past and present personality. After you consider who you are and how you have matured, you will need to consider where you want to go. Some questions to consider are:

- What makes you happy, sad, or angry?
- What sort of things do you think are fair or unfair?
- What do you love to do and hate to do?
- What kind of people do you like to hang out with, and who would you never hang around?
- What are your beliefs and attitudes about life?
- How are all these things different now from when you were younger?
- Do you want any of these things to change in the future?
- Do you think any of these things *should* change even if you maybe don't want them to?
- What do you want to do with your life? What do you need to do to achieve those things? Are you doing those things now?

Once you have examined who you were in the past, who you are now, and who you want to become, you will need to create at least three pieces. One will represent your past self, another your present self, and a third your future self. You may create more pieces if you like, but you must have at least those three. If you create more than three pieces, I will grade all three and include the best three on your rubric. You will also need to include at least three genres (short story, poetry, song lyrics, drawing, painting, short movie, movie script, journal, etc.). You may use any three or more genres that you choose, but you need to clear them with me first.

After you have created each of your pieces, you will need to write a short reflection on each one. Your reflections will need to explain how your pieces represent your past, present, or future self. Each reflection should be thoughtful, at least 300 words, comprehensible, and legible. You may handwrite or type the reflections, but if you choose to type them they must be typed outside of class. Make sure you tell me which piece you are reflecting on and which self it represents. The reflections will be graded very similarly to a journal entry.

You will receive two test grades for this project. The three pieces you create will count as one test grade, and the reflections on those pieces will count as another test grade. Although the grades are separate, they are linked. Make sure you read through the rubrics carefully so that you know what you will be assessed on.

Who Are You? Project Rubric (Whole Project)

	Excellent	On the Right Track	Room for Improvement
Piece 1	Your first piece is original and creative. It is thoughtful and expressive. <i>18-20 Possible points</i>	Your first piece may lack some originality and creativity. You may have some difficulty expressing your ideas. <i>15-17 Possible points</i>	Your first piece lacks originality and creativity. You may have used someone else's idea. You may have had great difficulty expressive your ideas. <i>0-14 Possible points</i>
Piece 2	Your second piece is original and creative. It is thoughtful and expressive. <i>18-20 Possible points</i>	Your second piece may lack some originality and creativity. You may have some difficulty expressing your ideas. <i>15-17 Possible points</i>	Your second piece, if present, lacks originality and creativity. You may have used someone else's idea. You may have had great difficulty expressive your ideas. <i>0-14 Possible points</i>
Piece 3	Your third piece is original and creative. It is thoughtful and expressive. <i>18-20 Possible points</i>	Your third piece may lack some originality and creativity. You may have some difficulty expressing your ideas. <i>15-17 Possible points</i>	Your third piece, if present, lacks originality and creativity. You may have used someone else's idea. You may have had great difficulty expressive your ideas. <i>0-14 Possible points</i>
Representation of Selves	You past, present, and future self is represented as explained through your reflections. <i>27-30 Points</i>	Two of the three required selves are represented as explained through your reflections. <i>22-26 Points</i>	Only one of the required selves is represented as explained through your reflection(s). <i>0-21 Points</i>
Inclusion of Genres	At least three genres are included. <i>10 points</i>	Only two genres are included. <i>7 points</i>	Only one genre is included. <i>4 points</i>

Total: _____/100

Reflections Rubric

	Excellent	On the Right Track	Room for Improvement
Quality of Reflection	Your reflection is thoughtful and original. You analyze your past and present personality and use the information to inform who you want to be in the future. <i>77-85 Possible points</i>	Your reflection is original. You show some thought, but you may struggle to deeply analyze your past and present personality. You may struggle to determine who you would like to be in the future. <i>63-76 Possible points</i>	Your reflection may show little analysis of your past and present personality. You may lack analysis on who you want to be in the future. You may not have included a reflection, or it may not be your own work. <i>0-62 Possible points</i>
Length of Response	Your responses are at least 300 words each. <i>4-5 Possible points</i>	Your responses are between 150 and 299 words each. <i>2-3 Possible points</i>	Your response are less than 150 words each. <i>0-1 Possible points</i>
Comprehensible	Any errors in grammar and/or mechanics do not detract from the comprehension of the writing. I do not have to reread any phrase or sentence to understand its meaning. <i>4-5 Possible points</i>	Some errors in grammar and/or mechanics detract from the comprehension of the writing. I have to reread a few phrases and/or sentences to understand their meaning. <i>2-3 Possible points</i>	There are many errors in grammar and/or mechanics that detract from the comprehension of the writing. I often have to reread phrases and/or sentences to understand their meaning. <i>0-1 Possible points</i>
Legible	The handwriting is legible. I am able to read the words easily without having to stop and reread any to try and understand what was written. <i>4-5 Possible points</i>	Most of the handwriting is legible. I may have to reread a few words to understand what was written. <i>2-3 Possible points</i>	Most of the handwriting is not legible. I have to reread most of the writing to understand it. <i>0-1 Possible points</i>

Total: _____/100

Introductory Activity

Students will begin this unit with a writing activity for their journals. This will serve two purposes: it will act as an introductory activity for the unit, and it will set up the weekly journal process. I will begin by taking a few minutes (about 13) to explain what a journal is and what my expectations are for this on-going activity. Since this will be my first unit with these students and this is a new type of activity for them, it is important for me to explain the expectations to them. I will pass out the journals. They will then receive their first journal topic which will be handed out on pieces of paper so that everyone can refer to it throughout the period. I have chosen this method because I have a small class and will not have to make many copies, I will be able to avoid spending several minutes writing the topic on the board, and I will not have to turn out the lights for students to read the topic if I were to project it via the overhead. I will take about 2 minutes to clarify any questions about the topic.

Students will have about 10 minutes to write, provided that everyone is engaged in the writing topic. After that, I will ask them to get into small groups of 2-3 students and discuss what they have written for 15 minutes. Each student will then take the remaining class time (5 minutes) to independently write down what his/her most important contribution to the small group discussion was. Two or three sentences will suffice. Students will turn this in.

I will make it clear to the class ahead of time that they are not to divulge any personal information that another student shares while in small groups. However, I know that some students may not feel comfortable sharing what they have written in the small and/or large group. In these cases, I will encourage them to discuss the topic in general. What does it make them think of? What stories do they know of that might work well with this topic? How do they feel about the topic and why? Even if they do not feel comfortable discussing what they wrote, I still

want students to discuss the topic. Although I will not include this information in the journal prompt, I will inform students of this before they receive it.

Their first journal topic will read as follows:

Remember a time that made you think about who you are. What happened? What made this event special? Why did it make you think about yourself? Who did you decide you are? Did you make any changes based on what you realized? If yes, what changes did you make and why? Looking back now, do you wish you had made some changes based on that experience? If yes, what changes and why?

Transformations Unit Lesson Plans

These plans are designed for a 50 minute class period. Additionally, a significant portion of the unit will be spent reading the text in class. As it has been conceived, this unit is currently designed for lower level 9th grade students, and it is standard practice at my school to not give students in the lower levels homework. I will use this opportunity to ensure that my students understand the text as much as each one can. With a basic understanding of the text – its plot, its elements, its narrative devices, etc. – in place, discussion may flourish, thus leading to a deeper understanding of the text.

The unit is designed so that each Monday students will work on a journal topic. The topic is connected to the text overall although we will not necessarily discuss the text at the time. Ultimately, the goal is for the journal to help students begin thinking about ideas that will help them with their formative assessment at the end of the unit.

Every Tuesday and Thursday is dedicated to reading. This is so that we can have more time for discussion activities on Wednesday and Friday. In order to ensure we are able to complete the text, we will have to read some on Wednesdays. However, Friday is dedicated solely to a discussion activity. My goal is to help students synthesize all the read we have done throughout the week. Additionally, although Tuesday and Thursday are reading days, this does not mean we will not discuss on those days. On those days, discussion will be focused around ensuring students understand the text.

It is also noteworthy that the last week is dedicated to working on a project in class. This is also due to the fact that lower level students are typically not assigned homework. I want my students to be successful, and they are not used to having homework on a regular basis. If I suddenly expect them to work on a major project mostly at home, the majority of my students

will not complete it. This assignment is a test grade, and I want to give them every opportunity to do well. It is not acceptable for them to fail simply because they did not do a take-home assignment that I know they have the knowledge and ability to do. I will not put them in that situation.

Week 1

Day One - Monday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

13 mins Introduce Journal Activity

Pass out journal handout, rubric, and journals. Go over expectation. Stress that personal information written in journals will not be shared unless I am legally obligated to share it. Answer any questions.

12 mins Journal writing

Pass out first journal topic. The topic is on a slip of paper to handout to each student so that they may refer to it easily as they write. I have chosen this method because I have a small class and will not have to make many copies, I will be able to avoid spending several minutes writing the topic on the board, and I will not have to turn out the lights for students to read the topic if I were to project it via the overhead. It reads: "Remember a time that made you think about who you are. What happened? What made this event special? Why did it make you think about yourself? Who did you decide you are? Did you make any changes based on what you realized? If yes, what changes did you make and why? Looking back now, do you wish you had made some changes based on that experience? If yes, what changes and why?" Read topic aloud. Clarify any questions about the topic. This process should take about 2 minutes. Instruct students to silently work on their journals for 10 minutes. Give students a warning when 5 minutes remain.

15 mins Small Group Discussion

Students will discuss what they have written in small groups. Inform students that if they do not feel comfortable sharing what they have written, they may discuss the topic in general. During small group discussion, walk around to make sure students are on-task and to ask questions that encourage deeper thinking as needed. Students will already be familiar with small group expectations and procedures from earlier units.

5 mins Wrap-up

Independently each student will write down what was his/her most important contribution to the small group. Students will turn this in.

2 mins Pack up

Day Two - Tuesday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

5 mins Pass out *Monster* and assign reading parts for pages 1-46

40 mins Read pages 1-46

Clarify understanding as needed. Keep track of acronyms and their meaning used

in the novel on the board. If time allows, read ahead.

2 mins Pack up

Day 3 - Wednesday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

10 mins Revisit O'Brien's Speech on pages 25-27

Clarify understanding. Ask the following: "What is O'Brien saying?" "What does she mean?" "How does she feel about Steven?" "What does she seem to think about the crime?" "What sort of things does she not say?"

15 mins Partner Discussion

Instruct students to consider the story from O'Brien's perspective. Write on the board: "How does she feel about what has happened and about Steve? How do you know? Support your answer with evidence from the text." Have students work in pairs to discuss O'Brien's perspective. Inform students that they will be expected to turn in a short response on paper, four-five points, explaining what they think O'Brien is feeling and how they know. This can be in a list format. Inform them that they should spend five minutes discussing and then five minutes working on their written response. Clarify any questions about the assignment. After they begin working, inform them when only five minutes remain, reminding them that they should begin working on their written response at this point.

5 mins Assign reading parts for pages 47-64

20 mins Read pages 47-64

Clarify understanding as needed.

2 mins Pack up

Day Four – Thursday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

5 mins Assign reading parts for pages 65-88

40 mins Read pages 65-88

Clarify understanding as needed. Catch up on reading if needed. If time allows, read ahead.

2 mins Pack up

Day 5 – Friday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping, Remind students to turn in journals

20 mins Large Group Discussion – Assign the crime

Project the images of three people accused of three different crimes varying in severity. Briefly describe the three crimes. Take votes on which crime goes with which person. Have students discuss why they believe each person is guilty of that crime. Stereotypes and first impressions are possible topics of discussion.

5 mins Quick Write

Write the topic on the board. Topic: "Describe a time you were accused of doing something you did not do. What happened? How did you feel? How was the matter resolved?" Instruct the students to write for 5 minutes and that they will share what they have written in small groups.

15 mins **Small Group Discussion**
 As a follow up to the quick write, students will relate what they wrote to the novel, comparing how they felt in their situations to how Steve feels. Students will be asked to keep in mind what they just wrote about. Considering the feelings they just expressed, how do they think they would feel if they were in Steve’s shoes? As students discuss, walk around the room to ensure students are on task. Ask questions to encourage deeper thinking as needed. Students should work in groups of three so that everyone will have an opportunity to share.

2 mins **Pack up**
 As students pack up, they need to list one major contribution they made to their small group discussions to the bottom of their quick writes. They will turn their quick write and contribution into me.

Week 2

Day 1 – Monday:

4 mins **Attendance, House keeping, Pass back journals**

12 mins **Journal writing**
 Pass out the journal topic. The topic is on a slip of paper to handout to each student so that they may refer to it easily as they write. It reads: “Describe a time that someone got the wrong first impression about you. What happened? Why did that person get the wrong impression? What could you have done to have changed the situation? How did things turn out? Where you able to overcome that first impression? If so, how?” Read topic aloud. Clarify any questions about the topic. Be prepared for someone to say they can’t think of anything. Try giving examples: “A personal example for me might be when I got hurt in a car accident in high school but I was also overweight. I was in a wheelchair for two weeks, and some people who met me during that time assumed I was in the wheelchair because of my weight. Their first impression of me was my weight because it was something they could see.” If some students still have trouble getting started, ask them to think about it the other way around. When did they get the wrong first impression about someone else? How did they find out they were wrong? What did they learn from the experience? This process should take about 2 minutes (or more). Instruct students to silently work on their journals for 10 minutes. Give students a warning when 5 minutes remain.

15 mins **Small Group Discussion**
 Students will discuss what they have written in small groups. Inform students that if they do not feel comfortable sharing what they have written, they may discuss the topic in general. During small group discussion, walk around to make sure students are on-task and to ask questions that encourage deeper thinking as needed.

12 mins **Large Group Discussion**
 Move back to assigned seats. What themes emerged in the small group discussions? Did everyone share similar experiences and opinions? What was similar? What was different? Did someone say something you hadn’t thought of before? What was it? Final thoughts?

5 mins **Wrap-up**

Independently each student will write down what was his/her most important contribution to the small and large group discussion. Students will turn this in.

2 mins Pack up

Day 2 – Tuesday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

5 mins Assign reading parts for pages 89-130

40 mins Read pages 89-130

Clarify understanding as needed. Catch up on reading if needed. If time allows, read ahead.

2 mins Pack up

Day 3 - Wednesday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

10-15 mins Chalk Talk

Write “First Impressions” on the board. Students respond to the word on the board. Tell students the ground rules: Only one student may write on the board at a time and that there is no talking during the chalk talk. Responses must be school appropriate. This class will likely only take 10 minutes, but if they are participating appropriately and are engaged, allow it to go for 15 minutes. This activity builds on the journal topic from Monday and should help the students to begin connecting the journal topics to the text.

10-15 mins Large Group Discussion

Discuss the chalk talk. Discussion will depend on the responses students gave. What themes emerged? How does the phrase “first impressions” connect to the novel?

5 mins Assign reading parts for pages 131-148

10-20 mins Read pages 131-148

Clarify understanding as needed. Catch up on reading if needed. If time allows, read ahead.

2 mins Pack up

Day Four – Thursday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

5 mins Assign reading parts for pages 149-195

40 mins Read pages 149-195

Clarify understanding as needed. Catch up on reading if needed. If time allows, read ahead.

2 mins Pack up

Day 5 – Friday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

30 mins Depict a Scene

Students will work in small groups for this assignment. Give instructions before allowing them to move into groups. Students will choose any scene we have read so far. This assignment will be easier if they choose a scene they find meaningful and that has details. They will then draw the scene. Students should include as

much detail in the picture as possible. After 30 minutes, one person from the group will share the picture with the class. This person needs to tell us what scene is drawn and why the group made the choices they did. Why draw those items? Why place them where they are? Why use those colors? If it is in black and white, why choose black and white? What mood did your group want to portray? What from the book helped you make those decisions? These are not the only questions students can consider, but they are a good starting point. The pictures will be turned in at the end of class. This is a small class, so students so work in three small groups. Students will have 5 minutes each to share their work after creating their pictures. As students work, walk around the class to ensure everyone is participating and working appropriately. Assist as needed. Ask questions when appropriate to encourage deeper thinking.

15 mins

Sharing

One student from each group will share the picture they have created. They should keep in mind the questions I posed at the start of class. Remind students when they were. Each group will have 5 minutes to share.

2 mins

Pack up

Week 3

Day 1 – Monday:

3 mins

Attendance, House keeping, Pass out journals

12 mins

Journal writing

Pass out the journal topic. The topic is on a slip of paper to handout to each student so that they may refer to it easily as they write. It reads: “Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Be honest. What will you be doing? Where will you be living? Is it what you want to be doing?” Read topic aloud. Clarify any questions about the topic. Share a personal experience in the hopes that the students will take this topic seriously: “All through elementary, middle, and high school I wanted to be a lawyer. I had the grades for it, and I could argue that the sky was red and convince you of it if I wanted to. But I didn’t realize that law was mostly research, and I hate research. Hate it. With a passion. So my senior year of high school I was left wondering what I was going to do with my life. At some point, I realized that people kept telling me what a wonderful tutor I was. I also realized that at some point I started to like literature and writing. Actually, I loved it. So I went from always imagining myself as a lawyer to realizing my passion was teaching. Law sounds fancy and impressive, but it was a lie. It wasn’t right for me. I want to know what’s right for you.” This process should take about 2 minutes (or more). Instruct students to silently work on their journals for 10 minutes. Give students a warning when 5 minutes remain.

15 mins

Small Group Discussion

Students will discuss what they have written in small groups. Inform students that if they do not feel comfortable sharing what they have written, they may discuss the topic in general. During small group discussion, walk around to make sure students are on-task and to ask questions that encourage deeper thinking as needed.

12 mins

Large Group Discussion

Move back to assigned seats. What themes emerged in the small group discussions? Did everyone share similar experiences and opinions? What was similar? What was different? Did someone say something you hadn't thought of before? What was it? Final thoughts?

5 mins

Wrap-up

Independently each student will write down what was his/her most important contribution to the small and large group discussion. Students will turn this in.

2 mins

Pack up

Day 2 – Tuesday:

3 mins

Attendance, House keeping

5 mins

Assign reading parts for pages 195-234

40 mins

Read pages 195-234

Clarify understanding as needed. Catch up on reading if needed. If time allows, read ahead.

2 mins

Pack up

Day 3 – Wednesday:

3 mins

Attendance, House keeping

20 mins

Small group work – Make an album

Only work on this if we are on time with the novel. If we are very behind in the novel, spend the whole class reading instead. Have students begin brainstorming a soundtrack to accompany the novel. Songs must be school appropriate (no cursing). By Friday, they should have at least five songs, one each for the following: the opening of the novel, the rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the closing of the novel. List those five things on the board. They may not be able to determine all the songs right now, but they should begin thinking about it. They will need to defend their choices to the class. On Friday, they will need to bring either print-outs or hand-written copies of the lyrics for the songs. At the top of the lyrics, students will need to write which section of the novel the song goes with (opening, rising action, climax, falling action, or closing). They will also defend their choices on Friday. Why this song? How does it fit with the novel? How does it fit this section of the novel? This is not the only assignment students will complete on Friday, so they need to come prepared. The class is small, so students should work in three groups. Walk around the room to ensure students are on-task and working appropriately.

5 mins

Assign reading parts for pages 234-253

20 mins

Read pages 234-253

If very behind in reading, read all day rather than work on activity and read.

Clarify understanding as needed. Catch up on reading if needed. If time allows, read ahead.

2 mins

Pack up

Day Four – Thursday:

3 mins

Attendance, House keeping

5 mins

Assign reading parts for pages 253-end (281)

40 mins **Read pages 253-end (281)**
Clarify understanding as needed. Finish book. If there is extra time left over, students may work on in their small groups on the albums. If we did not get to the album activity yesterday but there is time today, start the activity today.

2 mins **Pack up**

Day 5 – Friday:

3 mins **Attendance, House keeping**

15 mins **Small group work – finalize album**

Make final selections for the albums. Remind students they will need to defend their selections. One student from each group will explain why the group chose the songs, how they fit with the novel, and how they fit with the different sections of the novel. Walk around the room to ensure students are on-task and working appropriately.

15 mins **Make an album cover**

Tell students about this at the start of class so that those who are ready may begin. After the soundtrack choices have been made, design an album cover. This can be realistic or abstract, but it needs to be school appropriate. The cover should be informed by the novel and your choice of songs. Students should not move on to this activity until they have finished their song choices. Walk around the room to ensure students are on-task and working appropriately.

15 mins **Share**

Groups will have 5 minutes each to share. What songs did you include and why? What section of the novel do they do with? Why? How did you make your choices? If time allows, share your album cover and what decisions you made when designing it.

2 mins **Pack up**

OR... If albums not started previously

3 mins **Attendance, House keeping**

30 mins **Small group work – make an album**

Have students create a soundtrack to accompany the novel. Songs must be school appropriate (no cursing). They should have at least five songs, one each for the following: the opening of the novel, the rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the closing of the novel. List those five things on the board. They will need to defend their choices to the class. They may use the computers in the classroom (we have three available for student use) to print out lyrics. At the top of the lyrics, they need to write which section of the novel the song goes with (opening, rising action, climax, falling action, or closing). They will also defend their choices on at the end of class. Why this song? How does it fit with the novel? How does it fit this section of the novel? The class is small, so students should work in three groups. Each group will have 5 minutes to share a defend their choices, and one person from the group should share. Walk around the room to ensure students are on-task and working appropriately.

15 mins **Share**

Groups will have 5 minutes each to share. What songs did you include and why? What section of the novel do they do with? Why? How did you make your choices?

2 mins **Pack up**

Week 4

Day One – Monday:

3 mins **Attendance, House keeping**

5-10 mins **Chalk Talk**

On the board write: “Important events in my life”. Remind students that only one student should be at the board at a time and that it needs to remain silent during the chalk talk. The length on the chalk talk will be determined by how engaged the students are, but it will not last longer than 10 minutes.

10-15 mins **Small Group Discussion**

Instruct the students to discuss the things they wrote on the board. Why do they find these events to be important? Are there some events they believe are more important than others? Why? Do we need to agree on the events we each find most important? As the students discuss, walk around the room to ensure they remain on task and to ask questions to encourage deeper discussion as needed. The length of the discussion will depend on how engaged the students are, but it will not last longer than 15 minutes.

20-30 mins **Create a Representation**

Have students work independently to create a representation of an event they each find important in their lives. This does not need to be the most important event in their lives, but the more important it is the easier this assignment will likely be. The representation can be a drawing, a poem, song lyrics, etc. It needs to be school appropriate. If students do not finish, they should work on their piece for homework. However, they will have a few minutes in class tomorrow to put final touches on their pieces.

2 mins **Pack up**

Day Two – Tuesday:

3 mins **Attendance, House keeping**

15 mins **Final Touches on Representation**

Students have 15 minutes to work on the pieces they began working on yesterday. Students need to turn this in at the end of the period. It will be used later in the week, and many students will be likely to lose it if they keep it.

5 mins **Teacher Sharing**

Share a piece I created that represents an important event in my life. Explain how and why it is representative of that important event in my life. Explain any symbols and literary devices that I used. Also explain the choices I made when making the piece. I will allow time for appropriate questions about the piece.

15-20 mins **Small Group Discussion**

Instruct students to discuss their pieces in small groups. What do the pieces represent? How? Why? Remind students to explain the choices they made while designing their pieces. Why did they make them? How do those choices add to

the piece? Students should ask each other questions about their pieces: what does the piece represent? why is that thing important to you? why did you choose it? why do the different parts of the piece represent? etc. Each student needs to share while in the small group. While students are in the small groups, walk around the room and monitor. Make sure students are on task and ask questions to encourage deeper thinking as necessary. The length of the small group discussion time will depend on how engaged the students are, but it will not last more than 20 minutes.

5-10 mins Quick Write

Instruct students to work independently on a quick write. This is a follow up to and builds on the small group discussion they just had. Topic: After discussing your piece with your classmates, what have you learned? Did you realize something about your piece that you hadn't considered before? If you were to redo this piece, would you do it differently? Why or why not? Students will work on this for the remainder of the class. Have students turn in their quick writes as they pack up.

2 mins Pack up

Day Three – Wednesday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

15 mins Large Group Discussion

Ask students, "What is reflection?" They may need some scaffolding: what are you doing when you tell a story to a friend? Sometimes when you tell that story, do you have a realization? Sometimes do you suddenly think of something that hadn't occurred to you before? Maybe you look at the event from another person's point of view for the first time. Could we call this reflecting on that event? Make the connection to reflective writing. End by coming up with some sort of guiding prompt as a class. Make sure the students understand that this is not the only prompt that must be used when writing a reflection, but it is a good place to start. An example: What has this experience taught me? What would I do differently if I had the chance? How has this experience informed future actions or decisions? Etc.

20 mins Reflective Writing Examples – Students should take notes on good/bad reflective writing as we discuss, they will need to be told this

On the overhead, show students examples of good and bad reflective writing that I have created that are reflections on the piece I shared the day before. Start by reading the bad reflection aloud. Do not refer to it as a bad example, refer to it as an example that needs improvement. However, do not inform the students ahead of time that it is the one that needs improvement as they should come to this conclusion on their own. After reading, ask students, "What do or don't you like about this reflection?" Spend most of the time discussing the question, "What can we do to make it better?" The focus is on content, thus both reflections will be grammatically correct. I do not want students to get caught up in technical errors at this point. After discussing the bad example, share the good example. Ask the students, "What do or don't you like about this reflection?" They should have a more positive response to this one. Ask, "What makes this reflection stronger than the last one?" After going over the examples, students will have a few minutes to

being working on their own reflections.

10 mins Begin Working on Reflective Writing

Inform students they will begin writing their own reflections on the piece they created the other day. Remind them to keep in mind what they have learned about reflective writing. Remind them the prompt you created as a class is a good place to start, but they are not limited by it. They may write about more than those questions alone. They have the remainder of the period to work, and they will only have a few minutes in class tomorrow. Inform them they will need to be finished with the reflection tomorrow, so they will need to work on it for a few minutes tonight for homework as well.

2 mins Pack up

Day Four – Thursday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

10-15 mins Continue Working on Reflective Writing

Inform students they only have 10 minutes to work on their reflective writing and then we will move onto another activity. As they work, move around the classroom. If students are on task and need the time, add another five minutes. If students do not need the time and/or are off task, move on to peer-conferencing.

25-30 mins Peer-Conferencing

In pairs, have the students conference on their writing. Tell them they should keep in mind what makes reflective writing strong. Have them take out their notes from yesterday. When they conference, they should start by silently reading the piece. If there is a word or sentence they do not understand, circle it and ask later. Both partners should be reading at the same time. After reading the other person's reflection, on a blank piece of paper, they should write down one thing they liked about the other person's piece and one thing they think he/she can improve upon. They may begin conferencing verbally after they have both had time to write down their thoughts. Tell students all their responses should be based on the things that make strong reflections. Thus, there should not be responses like: "I like that your reflection is short," "I like that you use big words," "I think you can improve the whole thing," or "I can't read any of this." Instead, focus on the reflection: "I like that you thought about how you would have done this piece differently, however I wanted to know more about why," or "I like that you wrote about what you learned about yourself when you made this piece. This sentence was really strong. I could tell that you had really grown some. However, I want to know more about how this is going to affect what you do in the future. I know you've learned from this experience, but I don't really know how it has truly changed you." Remind students to think about the kind of feedback they would want. Tell them that when I peer-conference, I want feedback that will help me improve my writing but that doesn't hurt my feelings. Thus, I always give feedback that I hope will help my peers to improve, but I never say something that is intentionally hurtful. Students will have the rest of the period to conference.

2 mins Pack up

Day Five – Friday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

15-30 mins Work on Final Drafts

Have students take out the reflections they have been working on. Inform them they will revise their reflection today. They should take into account the feedback they received yesterday. In addition, they should consider grammar. Although the grammar does not need to be perfect, the writing should be clear. This means, I should be able to read it without stumbling over words or sentences. Remind students that it often helps to read what they have written aloud. Sometimes, it may look okay on paper, but when you read it aloud, you will realize where you have made a mistake. Tell students if they choose to read their writing aloud to help them revise in class, it is ok. However, they must read quietly, and they should not read any louder than a whisper. Inform students final drafts are due today. They must turn in everything they have done – the piece they created, the rough draft, and the final draft. *Students may have as much time as they need. If they finish quickly, move onto the next activity. If they need the whole period to work, that is fine.*

15-30 mins Share Final Drafts in Small Groups

If students finish the final drafts in time, have them get into small groups to share. They may share the piece they created as well as the reflection that goes with it. However, the focus should be on the reflection.

2 mins Pack up

Week 5

Day 1 – Monday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

13 mins Go Over Project

Pass out project sheet and rubrics. Explain project. Go over expectations. Clarify confusion.

30 mins Work on Project

Students may begin working on projects. They will have all week to work on the projects in class. As they work, walk around the room to ensure students are on task and working appropriately. Provide assistance as needed.

5 mins Pack up

Day 2 – Tuesday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

42 mins Work on Projects

Continue working on projects. As students work, walk around the room to ensure they are on task and working appropriately. Provide assistance as needed.

5 mins Pack up

Day 3 – Wednesday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

42 mins Work on Projects

Continue working on projects. As students work, walk around the room to ensure they are on task and working appropriately. Provide assistance as needed.

5 mins Pack up

Day 4 – Thursday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

42 mins Work on Projects

Continue working on projects. As students work, walk around the room to ensure they are on task and working appropriately. Provide assistance as needed.

5 mins Pack up

Day 5 – Friday:

3 mins Attendance, House keeping

42 mins Work on Projects

Continue working on projects. As students work, walk around the room to ensure they are on task and working appropriately. Provide assistance as needed. If students are finished by the end of the period, they may turn it in. If not, they may finish over the weekend. Projects are due first thing Monday when they come into class. They will not have any more class time to work on the projects.

5 mins Pack up