

Investigations into Literary Humor

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Unit Rationale

Humor is an important communicative tool for adolescents, playing a vital role in both social integration and knowledge acquisition. Studies of how and why young people access humor are illuminating. One study from Indiana University found that “humor [is] an important means for communicating attitudes towards others [...] that its ambiguous nature allows adolescents to convey feelings without being held accountable [...] and to explore sensitive issues like sexuality without having to reveal explicitly the extent of their actual knowledge in this area” (Sanford and Eder, 235). For young people seeking knowledge but lacking the confidence to ask questions directly, humor is a key means by which they construct knowledge about themselves and make sense of their developing role in society.

Humor is a worthwhile genre around which a literature unit might be structured. Designing pedagogic methods for writing instruction is challenging because of the array of personalities in any given classroom. If you can pinpoint one thing that all these students have in common, it’s probably their use of humor, in a wide variety of forms. What I want this unit to accomplish, then, is for students to find their voice as writers by tapping into something they already access socially, their sense of humor. Beginning with a daily writing journal, they will be able to get comfortable with their voice as writers by expressively and narratively chronicling humor as they encounter it in their day to day lives.

Validating this idea that humor is an excellent avenue to take with writing instruction is Thomas Newkirk. He writes, “ I like writers who seem to be working from a base of emotions- indignation, sadness, frustration, amusement- who seem palpably *there* in the writing. And no form of writing shows this attitude more effectively than *humor* (so essential to our emotional well-being, so missing from any state framework)” (Newkirk, 126). Flann O’Brien once wrote

that humor is “the handmaid of sorrow and fear,” and I think that’s incredibly true. Humor is something we access for a variety of reasons- to alleviate suffering, to distance ourselves from oppression, to redeem negative circumstances, to bond with our communities, to inquire.

There is remarkable research being conducted in the field of neuroscience, more specifically Gelotology, that supports the important role humor has for humans, not just socially and psychologically, but physiologically as well. Gelotologists study “the psychological and physiological effects of laughter, and practitioners of positive psychology seek to utilize personal strengths and positive emotions to build resiliency and psychological wellbeing in their clients” (Force). What is very fascinating is that, physiologically speaking, negative experiences have a greater effect on your brain than positive ones do, which is one of the reasons depression is so fierce- the negativity sort of creates a loop that is hard to undo in your brain. “Negative experiences are unavoidable, but reframing or reinterpreting the feedback loop is possible. Redefining negative situations in more positive or humorous terms counters the adverse psychological effects that would otherwise be experienced” (Force). So this unit on humor will not only impel students to write freely and expressibly, but it will have a positive impact on their mental health- something often left neglected, often resulting in profoundly devastating circumstances.

Humor, much like writing is a social activity. Laughter, for instance, is “thirty times more likely to happen in a social context than when alone” (Welsh). Advocating the idea that writing serves a social purpose, that it is more than just a grouping of words a student submits to a single audience (the teacher) for a grade is something that will compel students to want to write, to want to be heard. Peter Smagorinsky writes, “If you focus on form only, then you run the risk of overlooking the social purposes that the form serves...It’s vital, then, to stress the social purposes

of any texts that you evaluate, particularly the ways in which they enable writers to communicate with particular groups of readers” (75). The texts we will be working with will give the students a wide scope of the different audiences they might address. That, coupled with extensive peer evaluation throughout their writing process, will reinforce the notion that the voices they are laboring to understand and make heard have an audience other than their teacher, and that their voice can be powerfully communicative. Humor has a definite and important role in the lives of adolescents, and thus integrating it into the classroom is not only useful for their development as writers, but as individuals.

Text Rationale

A Modest Proposal (Jonathan Swift)

Swift's essay from 1729 will serve as a key text for examining satire in literature. As one of the premiere and enduring examples for satire in Western literature, it is the basis from which modern, popular satire is derived. Students will approach the text without any indication as to its genre and we will be reading it aloud as a class. This approach will allow them to confront the essay with questions and comments that will eventually lead them to defining Satire in their own terms. This text will also serve as an example of argumentative writing- it is well structured with clearly laid out point, examples and counterexamples, and demonstrates a definite awareness of audience. *A Modest Proposal* is a perfect example of how and why satire is used, and will facilitate interesting discussions on its role in modern society. It is seriously effective, very specific type of humor that will broaden my students' idea of what humor is capable of accomplishing.

Life is Beautiful (Roberto Benigni)

I chose this film because it typifies the idea what humor has extraordinary redemptive power. Centering around an Italian family who are sent to a concentration camp during WWII, the film shows how a father (Roberto Benigni) stretches his imagination and creativity to invent a sort of game for his young son during their internment, helping on one level to distract his son from harsh reality, but ultimately to ensure that he stays hidden and safe until they are liberated from the camp. It is a complex film that confronts real world atrocities, which makes it a very useful text for any high school level curriculum. For this unit on humor, I find it indispensable. The manner in which Guido (Roberto Benigni) lives his life, even before the War, is whimsical and inspirational. His optimism, good sense of humor, and willingness to believe that the best things in life (he gets to open his book shop, marries his girl) can be his. He is a testament, in my mind,

that the gift of humor can be harnessed to change your life, and then the lives of those around you. He does, after all, use it to help his son survive the Holocaust.

The Importance of Being Ernest (Oscar Wilde)

Our main text for this unit is Wilde's 1895 "Trivial Comedy for Serious People," which we will read aloud as a class. Building off of what we have discussed with the other texts, we will be able to examine how the play functions not only as a satire, but as a farce, and to what extent the two reinforce one another. It's a genuinely funny play in which the two main characters maintain fictitious personas in order to escape their social obligations- something I think will resonate with my teenage students. One of the main reasons I am excited to use the text is because Wilde is such a clever, witty writer, and I feel that reading aloud, acting it out will provide a new perspective on humor- how it relies of performance to achieve its full effect. Since it is the last big text we will work with, I'm hoping that my students will have become comfortable enough with their voices and personal comedic style to engage fully in the performative reading of the play.

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Investigations into Literary Humor [Working Title]

Goals and Rubrics

One of the goals of this unit is to enable my students to understand the ways in which humor functions in a variety of texts, to analyze its purpose, and determine its effectiveness. The subjective nature of humor demands that students look inward at how humor functions for them personally, but mature in their thinking to examine why humor is effective for specific audiences. Students will be assessed on three projects throughout the unit, an informal journal, a fish bowl discussion, and a final, synthesizing creative piece that springs from the journal assignment.

Goal #1: Personal Journal (sourced from Teaching English by Design, 84-85)

This is a unit long project in which you will maintain a journal about how you encounter humor in your daily life. This assignment requires you to write up to five (5) and no fewer than three (3) entries per week. You will turn in your journals every Friday, and they will be returned to you on Monday. You can write about any aspect of your day where you were personally involved in a humorous episode, or where in the wider world you see evidence of the styles of humor we talk about in class. Please get as expressive and detailed as possible with your entries! The following issues will be factors in the way I grade your journal:

- Your journal does not need to follow the conventions of textbook English. Rather, the purpose is to think about the class without worrying about the form your thoughts take.
- Your writing should be personal. You can write about situations that involve other people, but they also must involve you. If you are writing about an observation of something you encounter, you must explain where you are in relation to the observation.
- Each entry should be a minimum of 250 words. Please date each entry.
- Keep in mind that *I am required to share any thought or suggestions of violence, suicide, substance abuse, or other harmful behavior with school counselors.*

Personal Journal Rubric

A Personal Journal earning an **A** (5 points) will:

- Be submitted on time every Friday.
- Comprise of **five** (5) entries per week
- Meets minimum of word count of 250 per entry.

A Personal Journal earning a **B** (4 points) will:

- Be submitted on time every Friday.
- Comprise of **three** (3) to **five** (5) entries per week
- Meets minimum word count of 250 per entry.

A Personal Journal earning a **C** (3 points) will:

- Be submitted late no more than **one** (1) time.
- Comprise of **two** (2) entries per week
- Not every entry meets the 250 word minimum.

A Personal Journal earning a **D** (2 points) will:

- Be submitted late more than **one** (1) time.
- Comprise of **one** (1) to **two** (2) entries per week.
- Not every entry meet the 250 word minimum.

A Personal Journal earning an **F** (1 point) will:

- Comprise of **Zero** (0) entries.

*The Journals will be graded once a week for six weeks, allowing you to earn up to **30** points for this assignment*

Goal #2- Fish Bowl Discussion on Satire (sourced from Dr. Weaver)

You will be participating in a Fish Bowl Discussion regarding Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. We will be reading this piece as a class, but you will be responsible for further independent analysis of the satire, how it functions, and what it achieves.

Fish Bowl Discussion Rubric

Grade	INNER CIRCLE Criteria	OUTTER CIRCLE Criteria
Excellent (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates excellence preparation through the use of thorough and thoughtful evidence. - Utilizes relevant and analytic textual and experiential examples. - Responds to peers thoughtfully and respectfully, and helps keep inner circle dialogue focused. - Demonstrates ongoing, active involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates keen listening. - Behaves respectfully and maturely.
Good (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates good preparation: familiarity with text is obvious. Able to support claims with evidence. - Offers interpretations and analysis (more than just summary) of discussion. - Demonstrates respect toward peers. - Demonstrates consistent involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates strong listening. - Behaves respectfully and maturely.
Average (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates adequate preparation: is familiar with texts, but unable to support claims with evidence, relying more on personal, anecdotal evidence. - Does not elaborate on ideas, and tends to repeat others claims. - Sporadically involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates lack of close listening. -Often appears preoccupied
Below Average (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Present and not disruptive to discussion. -Demonstrates lack of familiarity with texts and lack of preparation by inability to assert claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates lack of attention. -Body language is disrespectful.
Poor Effort (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Does not participate in discussion and/or very disruptive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Constantly disruptive.

Goal #3- Memoir

The final assessment of this unit requires that you engage in the Personal Journal assignment fully. You will be responsible for selecting three (3) of your journal entries and, with the aide of peer conferencing, workshop your narratives into stories of 3-4 pages in length. These three stories will become and Memoir of your lives over the past six weeks. The following issues will be factors in the way I grade your memoir:

- You must demonstrate an understanding of the different types of humor and comedy we have discusses in class.

- You must demonstrate a thorough understanding of your audience.
- Your narrative do not have to follow the standard conventions of textbook English, but rather demonstrate your voice as a writer.
- You must demonstrate that you have participated in peer conferencing. Along with your final draft, you will be submitting the drafts you worked on throughout the writing process.

Rubric for the Memoir Project

A Memoir earning an **A** will:

- Assignment is turned in on-time.
- Comprised of three (3) narratives.
- Narratives meet minimum page count (3 pages).
- Writing Process drafts are submitted alongside final draft.

A Memoir earning a **B** will:

- Assignment is turned in on-time.
- Comprised of three (3) narratives.
- Narratives meet minimum page count (3 pages).
- Writing Process drafts are submitted alongside final draft.

A Memoir earning a **C** will:

- Assignment if turned in one (1) day late.
- Comprised of one (1) to two (2) narratives.
- Not all narratives meet minimum page count (3 pages).
- Writing Process drafts are incompletely submitted alongside final draft.

A Memoir earning a **D** will:

- Assignment is turned in more than one (1) day late.
- Comprised of one (1) narrative, or an incomplete narrative.
- Narrative does not meet minimum page count (three pages).
- Writing Process drafts are not submitted alongside final draft.
-

A Memoir earning an **F** will:

- Assignment was not submitted.

Introductory Activity

daily lessons are based on a 50 minute class period

Day 1:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

10 minutes- Free writing about someone in your life who you consider funny, providing one to two anecdotes to support you claim. This person could be a family member, friend from school, or someone from your community.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

10 minutes- Discuss and share with your group the individuals you wrote about. Share one or two of the anecdotes and note how your peers react to them. Do they appreciate the humor in similar or different ways, or not at all?

10 minutes- Remaining in your small groups, craft a collective definition of humor and how humor involves itself in your daily life.

10 minutes- Whole class discussion of the definitions of humor. Can we identify any continuities in these definitions? In what ways do they differ? Working together as a class, can we meld and extend these into a singular, working definition?

5 minutes- Summarize thoughts on humor and present our definition of humor. Assign daily writing journals. Dismissal.

Day 2:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

15 minutes- Discuss these two New Yorker Cartoons. What is each cartoon trying to convey and how they use humor to state their message?

10 minutes- Whole class discussion of how the cartoons; comparing, contrasting, and further developing ideas of how the cartoons use humor effectively or ineffectively

10 minute
fol



"I miss the palm tree, too, but at least we can have a refrigerator."

nall groups, but worki
write a caption for it.

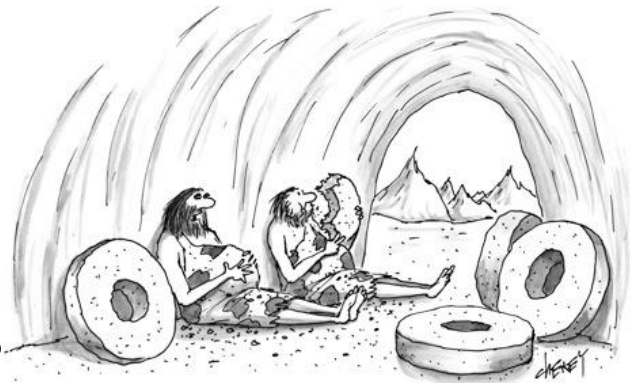


"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

© The New Yorker Collection 1993 Peter Steiner
From cartoonists.com. All rights reserved.



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ile" by R.

poem, as well as favorite lines.

The Crocodile

"No animal is half as vile
 As Crocky-Wock, the crocodile.
 On Saturdays he likes to crunch
 Six juicy children for his lunch
 And he especially enjoys
 Just three of each, three girls, three boys.
 He smears the boys (to make them hot)
 With mustard from the mustard pot.
 But mustard doesn't go with girls,
 It tastes all wrong with plaits and curls.
 With them, what goes extremely well
 Is butterscotch and caramel.
 It's such a super marvelous treat
 When boys are hot and girls are sweet.
 At least that's Crocky's point of view
 He ought to know. He's had a few.
 That's all for now. It's time for bed.
 Lie down and rest your sleepy head.
 Ssh. Listen. What is that I hear,
 Galumphing softly up the stair?

Go lock the door and fetch my gun!

Go on child, hurry! Quickly run!
No stop! Stand back! He's coming in!
Oh, look, that greasy greenish skin!
The shining teeth, the greedy smile!
It's Crocky-Wock, the Crocodile!"

15 minutes- As a group, choose an animal, not a crocodile, and write a poem.

10 minutes- Read poems aloud to the class.

5 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 4:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students. Today we will be focusing on humor in Advertising.

30 minutes- Analyze the following advertisements. They are trying to sell their products with the use of humor. So, how effective are they and why? Who is the audience? If you personally are the audience, how does the ad affect you?

10 minutes- Whole class discussion on the merits of the advertisements?

5 minutes

Day 4



Humor the best way to

3 min

2 min
discus

6 min
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6 min
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15 minutes- In small groups, discuss Steven Colbert's persona. How does he use humor to make fun of serious issues (site specific examples).

10 minutes- Discuss small groups findings as a whole class. Compare and contrast the different reactions to the Steven Colbert clips.

5 minutes- Collect daily writing journals and tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Week 2:

Day 1:

3 minutes- Attendance and pass back daily writing journals.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

10 minutes- In small groups, generate a definition of Satire. What does it function? How is it used? Provide examples of Satire that you have encountered in your lives.

10 minutes- As a class, we will discuss each group's definition of Satire, comparing, contrasting, and synthesizing the definitions in order to come up with a class-wide definition. As a class, we will come up with a list of topics that are often satirized.

15 minutes- Individual writing activity: Picking one of the topics from the list we generated, write a 1/2 page- 1 page satire. Share your pieces with your small group.

7 minutes- One person from each group will volunteer to read their piece to the class.

3 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 2:

3 minutes- Attendance and housekeeping.

2 minutes- Pass out handout on Jonathan Swift for the students to follow along during a brief lecture. (See Appendix for Handout).

15 minutes- I will present a brief lecture on the life on Jonathan Swift and provide a historical context for the time in which he was writing.

3 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

20 minutes- Small group activity: based on what we know of Jonathan Swift's life and work, the students will design a pamphlet cover for "A Modest Proposal", illustrating their expectations of the text, which we will be reading tomorrow during class.

5 minutes- Each group will share their illustrations with the rest of the class.

2 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 3:

3 minutes- Attendance and housekeeping.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

35 minutes- In small groups, read Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal"

7 minutes- Whole class discussion of how "A Modest Proposal" matched or failed to match our classes working definition of Satire.

3 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 4:

3 minutes- Attendance and housekeeping

15 minutes- Present the concept of a "Fishbowl Discussion". With five students in the middle, encircled by the rest of the class, you participate in a discussion of a selected topic. Only the students in the middle may speak, but once they have, anyone from the outer circle may tap in and contribute. At this time, I will also be providing the students with the rubric by which they will be assessed, and the students will be able to give their feedback of the rubric.

25 minutes- The students will engage in a practice "Fishbowl Discussion" on the topic: Should students be required to wear uniforms, or adhere to a dress code, in school?

5 minutes- Whole class discussion on the "Fishbowl Discussion". Clear up any questions before their assessed discussion on Friday.

2 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 5:

3 minutes- Attendance and housekeeping.

2 minutes- Take seats for the “Fishbowl Discussion”.

35 minutes- Fishbowl Discussion on “A Modest Proposal”: How does Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal” fit into or fall short of our definition of Satire, and is it an appropriate genre for political and social commentary. Site specific examples for the text.

5 minutes- Get classroom back in order and collect weekly writing journals. Dismissal.

Week 3:

Day 1:

5 minutes- Attendance and pass back daily writing journals.

15 minutes- I will ask students to think back on an especially difficult time in their lives that they got through using their sense of humor or positive attitude. I will ask them about what *motivated* them to engage with their situations in this manner- was it ease your own circumstance, to ease that of a friend, family member, stranger? Be as detailed as possible, and please note that you will be encouraged to share your writing.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

10 minutes- Share your experiences with your small group.

10 minutes- Whole class discussion of the usefulness of humor in overcoming difficult situations.

7 minutes- Introduce Roberto Benigni and “Life is Beautiful”. I will provide the historical context of the film at this time. We will begin screening “Life is Beautiful” tomorrow, and I would like you to take notes as we watch: What scenes have an emotional impact on you, and what emotion do you feel? Do you feel conflicting emotions simultaneously? Which characters do you relate to and why? How does the use of humor in the film effect the overall tone of the film? These questions should be kept in mind throughout the screening, as they will be the basis of our discussion after we finish the movie.

3 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 2:

5 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

40 minutes- Being screening “Life is Beautiful”

5 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 3:

5 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

40 minutes- Watch “Life is Beautiful”.

5 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 4:

5 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

35 minutes- Finish watching “Life is Beautiful”.

7 minutes- Share impressions of the film.

3 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 5:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

7 minutes- Continuing with “Life is Beautiful”, we will, as a class, develop a list of themes that the film touched on. These themes include: Bravery, Silence, Riddle Solving, Coincidence, Fantasy, Innocence, etc. One we have come up with a good list, we will continue into a small group activity.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

20 minutes- Each groups will be assigned a theme from the list we have put together. As a group, they will identify moments in the film that demonstrate the theme and discuss the scenes’ significance in the film. They do not have to write everything down long-form, but it will be helpful for them to note take as they discuss because they will be presenting their themes to the class.

15 minutes- Each group will present their theme to the class. Questions and comments from the audience will be permitted as time allows.

3 minutes- Collect daily writing journals. Dismissal.

Week 4:

Day 1:

3 minutes- Attendance and pass back daily writing journals.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

15 minutes- Introduce Oscar Wilde’s “The Importance of Being Earnest”. I will be passing out a handout that bullet-points his life and work, and deliver a brief lecture on him.

20 minutes- In your small groups, you will craft a response to the following: Given what you now know about Wilde’s life, can you make an educated guess as to what he means by the

subtitle “A Trivial Comedy for Serious People.” Can we make any predictions as to what might take place in the play?

5 minutes- Whole class discussion of the thoughts they came up with in small groups.

5 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 2:

5 minutes- Attendance and house keeping. Assign actors and actresses to read the roles of “The Importance of Being Earnest”, Act I.

40 minutes- Read Act I

5 minutes- Assign homework: if we did not finish reading Act I during class time, please finish reading it for homework. Dismissal.

Day 3:

5 minutes- Attendance and house keeping. Assign actors and actresses to read the roles of “The Importance of Being Earnest”, Act II.

40 minutes- Read Act II

5 minutes- Assign homework: if we did not finish reading Act II during class time, please finish reading it for homework. Dismissal.

Day 4:

5 minutes- Attendance and house keeping. Assign actors and actresses to read the roles of “The Importance of Being Earnest”, Act III.

40 minutes- Read Act III

5 minutes- Assign homework: if we did not finish reading Act III during class time, please finish it for homework. Dismissal.

Day 5:

3 minutes- Attendance and housekeeping.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

There are nine characters in “The Importance of Being Earnest”: John Worthing, Algernon Moncrieff, Rev. Canon Chasuble, Merriman, Lane, Lady Bracknell, Gwendolen Fairfax, Cecily Cardew, and Miss. Prism. The students will participate in an activity in which they will write character profiles a specific character (each group will be assigned a different character). The Profiles must describe where they live, their family connections, and their activities. The following is a model of the Character Profile each group will create:

Miss. Cecily Cardew, age 18

<p align="center">HOME (where she lives, who lives with her)</p> <p>The Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire. Lives with her guardian, Jack Worthington and her governess, Miss Prism.</p>	<p align="center">FAMILY (immediate and extended)</p> <p>Calls Jack her “uncle” out of respect. Thomas Cardew, deceased grandfather who adopted Jack as a boy.</p>
<p align="center">PLAY (what she does in her free time)</p> <p>Writes in her secret diary. Fantasizes about her imaginary love affair with Ernest. Writes letters to herself pretending to be Ernest.</p>	<p align="center">DAY (activities in her daily routine)</p> <p>Waters flowers. Practices German. Studies Geology, political economy, Walks in the country.</p>

*This activity is sourced from The Penguin Group:

http://www.us.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/the_importance_of_being_earnest.pdf*

30 minutes- Students will work on the Character Profile activity in their small groups.

10 minutes- Students will present their profiles to the class.

5 minutes- Tie up loose ends and collect daily writing journals. Dismissal.

Week 5:

Day 1:

5 minutes- Attendance and pass back daily writing journals.

Continuing with “The Importance of Being Earnest”, the students will engage in an extended, paired writing activity. Bearing in mind that the play is a “Trivial Comedy for Serious People”, each pair of students will pick a trivial event, such as how many cookies to leave out for Santa, and write a dialogue as if it were the more important topic of conversation ever to have been visited. Each pair will be performing their dialogues in front of the class (no props needed).

*This activity is sourced from The Penguin Group:

http://www.us.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/the_importance_of_being_earnest.pdf*

5 minutes- Students break into pairs of their own choosing and arrange for themselves a place in the classroom to work.

35 minutes- Students will work on their “Seriously Trivial” Dialogue project.

5 minutes- Tie up loose ends and re-order the classroom. Dismissal.

Day 2:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

2 minutes- Have the students move seats so that they are sitting with their “Seriously Trivial” dialogue partners from the day before.

10 minutes- The pairs will have this time to make final edits on their dialogues and run through it together before performing,

30 minutes- At this time each pair will be performing their dialogues in front of the class.

5 minutes-Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 3:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

20 minutes- In small groups, think about the ways in which “The Importance of Being Earnest” falls into the category of Farce, how it aims to entertain the audience through situations that are highly exaggerated, extravagant, and therefore improbable.

20 minutes- Each group will present their findings and we will list the evidence on the board. Every piece of evidence asserted is subject to questioning and debate.

5 minutes- Assign homework: tonight I would like you to select another entry from your journal that you would like to elaborate and include in your final Memoir Project. Be prepared to workshop the piece in class tomorrow. Dismissal.

Day 4:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

2 minutes- I will pass out large sheets of paper to each student and instruct them to tape or paste their chosen journal entry onto the center of the piece.

30 minutes- Now, students will work individually elaborating on their pieces in the wide margins of this sheet of paper. They can rewrite sections in the margins, toy with using new words, ask themselves questions, free-associate, etc. The idea is to get as many new avenues of thought related to the piece into the margins.

10 minutes- Students will take the marginalia they've worked on and re-write the piece into a new draft. Both copies should be saved.

5 minutes- Assign homework: tonight I would like you to select another entry from your journal that you would like to elaborate and include in your final Memoir Project. Be prepared to workshop the piece in class tomorrow. Dismissal.

Day 5:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

20 minutes- Each student will take out the journal entry they selected last night in order to expand on the story. They will be examining the following components of their entry: setting and character. Each student will come up with a list of ten words that describe or are associated with the setting and characters (ten words per character). So, for example, if the setting was a mansion you would come up with ten words to describe the mansion. If there are multiple characters, you and your friend Zack, you would come up with ten words for yourself and ten words for Zack.

10 minutes- Now that you have your lists of words, to re-write the story incorporating as much of this new detail as possible.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

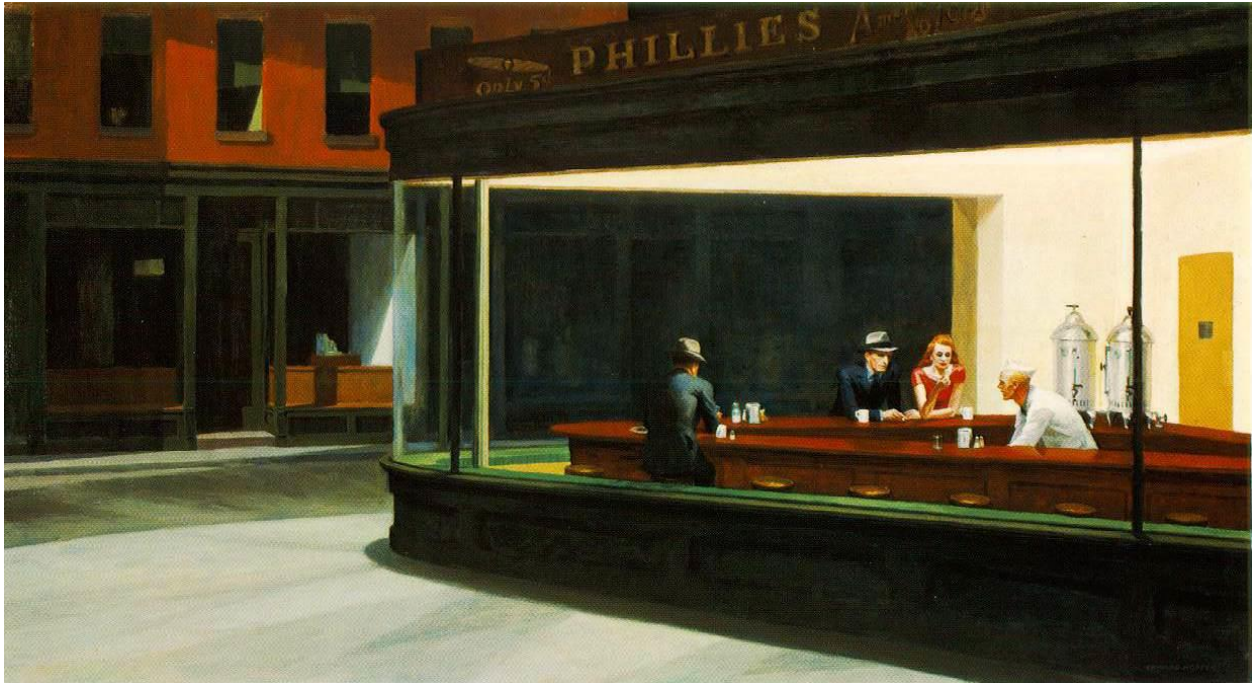
10 minutes- Pass your stories to any member of your group so that everyone has someone else's piece of writing. Review your peer's story by providing one point of Praise, one point of Comment, and one Question. When you are finished, pass their work back to them.

5 minutes- Collect daily writing journals. Assign homework: Continue to revise the two stories we have worked on expanding this week. We will have more class time to work on the third story next week, but you are responsible for polishing and revising as you see fit. Dismissal.

Week 6:**Day 1:**

5 minutes- Attendance and pass back daily writing journals.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.



(Nighthawks, Edward Hopper, 1942)

Working from this Edward Hopper painting, each group will craft a story around the scene depicted. You will provide a name and brief background for each figure and describe how they all relate to one another in this scene. Did they know each other before coming to the cafe? How do they interact? What are they saying to one another, if anything at all? And where are they going to go when they leave the cafe?

25 minutes- At this time students will work in groups crafting their stories.

13 minutes- Each group will share their stories with the rest of the class.

5 minutes- Assign homework. Select another journal entry that you would like to expand on to include in your final Memoir project. We will be workshopping this piece in class tomorrow. Dismissal.

Day 2:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

20 minutes- Each student will take out the journal entry they selected last night in order to expand on the story. They will be examining the following components of their entry: action and dialogue. The students will have to identify the main action of the entry, and they imagine further implications of each action in 3-5 sentences. They will also have to give shape to the dialogue using quotation marks and identify the tone of voice with which the speaker is speaking.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

10 minutes- Pass your stories to any member of your group so that everyone has someone else's piece of writing. Review your peer's story by providing one point of Praise, one point of Comment, and one Question. When you are finished, pass their work back to them.

10 minutes- Students will take this time to discuss the Praises, Comments, and Questions their peer wrote down on their pieces of writing,

5 minutes- Assign homework: Students must come to class tomorrow prepared to conference with me (the teacher) about their Memoir project pieces. Please bring all drafts of the pieces and be prepared to ask questions and receive feedback. Dismissal

Day 3:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

45 minutes- The first half of the class will engage in student/teacher conferences, while the rest of the class either works with a partner on their Memoir pieces or utilizes this time for free reading.

2 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 4:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

45 minutes- The first half of the class will engage in student/teacher conferences, while the rest of the class either works with a partner on their Memoir pieces or utilizes this time for free reading.

2 minutes- Tie up loose ends. Dismissal.

Day 5:

3 minutes- Attendance and house keeping.

2 minutes- Break into small groups of 3-4 students.

25 minutes- Each group will write a three stanza acrostic poem using the words HUMOR, SATIRE, and FARCE that describe what they have learned during this unit on humor in literature and any new perspectives they have gained about how humor functions in their lives as well as in society.

15 minutes- Each group will present their poems to the class.

5 minutes- End of the unit! Collect final Memoir Projects and Daily Journals. Dismissal.

Jonathan Swift

- Born in Dublin, Ireland in 1667.

- He was a famous writer (poems, essays, satire) and Cleric.
- He never published his work under his name, but used pseudonyms such as Lemuel Gulliver, Isaac Bickerstaff, and MB Drapier.
- Attended Trinity College in Dublin and graduated in 1686.
- In 1688, he moved to England because of political troubles in Ireland stemming from the Glorious Revolution, during which King James II of England was overthrown by a members of the English Parliament and William of Orange,
- In 1702, he received his Doctor of Divinity degree from Trinity College, Dublin,
- In 1726, he published Gulliver’s Travels, his famous satire of human nature and society.
- In 1729, he published “A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a Burden on Their Parents or Country, and for Making them Beneficial to the Public.”
- He died in October 1745.

Oscar Wilde

- Born on October 16th, 1854 in Dublin, Ireland.
- His parents were intellectuals in Dublin.
- Wilde became fluent in German and French at an early age.

- He studied Classics at Trinity College, Dublin from 1871-1874, and then again at Magdalen College, Oxford from 1874-1878.
- While at Oxford, he became well known for his role in the aesthetic and decadent movements- he wore his hair long, decorated his room with blue china, lilies, peacock feathers, and art. He entertained his friends lavishly.
- He traveled to America for a year on a lecture tour in 1882.
- He wrote short fiction, essays, novels, and plays.
- He wrote “The Importance of Being Earnest” in 1894, and the play was first performed in London in 1895 at St. James Theater.