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Queens Academy High School English Program of Studies

Man's Inhumanity to Man Curriculum

Philosophy

Theme

The topic of the course is **Man's Inhumanity to Man**. The following examples of understandings and essential questions may be used as models to plan thematic units.

- a. Suggested enduring understandings
 - i. Many factors influence the development of man's behavior.
 - ii. One's past experiences, especially in youth, help shape one's outlook on life, and one's outlook on life, influences one's interpretation of literature.
 - iii. Individuals can act in a responsible manner on various levels: personal, familial, social and choose to accept or reject responsibility.
 - iv. Individual decisions do affect other people.
 - v. Denial of atrocities occurs in society and it is the responsibility of man to make it public.
 - vi. Literature can provide a record of the past and help one realize one's role and responsibilities as a member of society.
 - vii. Writing can help one to make decisions and help one to change society.
 - viii. Language and literature help us understand and face the challenges that await us in a diverse and changing world.
- b. Suggested essential questions
 - i. What are my responsibilities as a literate student, family member and citizen?
 - ii. How do our values shape our lives?
 - iii. How will my decisions in adolescence affect the rest of my life?
 - iv. Why do humans engage in human cruelty?
 - v. How is the reading of literature and the written response to it a way for one to understand human nature?
 - vi. What are the legacies of slavery?

- vii. What can I learn from texts and writers about man's struggle with the effects of absolute power?
- viii. How can language and literature help us understand and face the challenges that await us in a diverse and changing world?

Reading

Students will read one **full-length text** per book period—or its equivalent. Although **vocabulary instruction** is required, each teacher will devise his or her own approach.

During marking period 1, students will read one of the Marking Period 1 selections below. The texts should be related to the course theme and should, ideally, be connected to the required writing assignments for the marking period: a literary analysis essay, a speech project and an I-Search Paper.

During marking period 2, students will explore the touchstone text *Night* in the context of the course theme.

During marking period 3, students will participate in Literature Circles or Book Clubs. Literature Circles are student-led discussion groups. Students should, at this point, be using journals (or literature logs) in lieu of role sheets. The journal entries should raise interesting questions about the reading, make connections to students' lives and to the world, discuss important ideas conveyed through the reading, analyze the literary elements (characters, point of view, etc.) and techniques used to convey those ideas and relate the reading to the theme of the course. Journals should be informal in tone and flexible enough for students to include a variety of responses to their reading, including illustrations and creative writing.

Ideally, a Literature Circle session will consist of the following components:

- 5-10 minute mini-lesson
- 20-30 minute small-group discussion
- 5-10 minute planning and reflection

In defining Literature Circles in his 2nd edition of *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups*, Harvey Daniels offers these 11 key ingredients.

1. Students *choose* their own reading materials.
2. *Small temporary groups* are formed, based on book choice.
3. Different groups read *different books*.
4. Groups meet on a *regular, predictable schedule* to discuss their reading.
5. Kids use written or drawn *notes* to guide both their reading and discussion.
6. Discussion *topics come from the students*.
7. Group meetings aim to be *open, natural conversations about books*, so personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions are welcome.
8. The teacher serves as a *facilitator*, not a group member or instructor.
9. Evaluation is by *teacher observation and student self-evaluation*.
10. A spirit of *playfulness and fun* pervades the room.
11. When books are finished, *readers share with their classmates*, and then *new groups form* around new reading choices.

The unit on Literature Circles will conclude with a presentation and portfolio. Each group will introduce its book to the class in creative fashion, i.e. skit, collage, song, etc. And each student will submit a portfolio of completed work (copies or journal entries and evaluations) with a cover letter introducing that work and reflecting on the experience as a whole.

Reading Texts

Titles

Comments

- **Marking Period 1: Whole Class Text**
 - *Hiroshima*
 - *Things They Carried*
 - *Child of the Dark*
 - *Lord of the Flies*
 - *Anne Frank*
 - *Hamlet*

- **Marking Period 2: Touchstone Text**
 - *Night*

- **Marking Period 3: Literature Circle Texts**
 - *Slave: My True Story*
 - *Sold*
 - *The Rules of Survival*
 - *Tears of a Tiger*
 - *Crank*
 - *Before I Die*

Writing Texts

- (Class sets available upon request)

Writing

The **Man's Inhumanity to Man** curriculum, and the English curriculum in general, will be writing intensive. We want students to understand that writing is a process, to become proficient in many kinds of writing, and to realize that writing can help them to learn.

Students will understand that writing is a process. Prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading strategies will be reinforced, as well as the following six qualities of good writing: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, conventions and presentation. Teachers are expected to model good writing and to improve student writing through shared and guided writing activities. Peer review will be practiced regularly, particularly for major writing assignments, and revision will be encouraged and expected. Thus, teachers are expected to use a **writing workshop model**.

Students will also come to understand that writing can help them to learn. They will continue to explore their thinking and extend their knowledge through writing. Thus, they will be expected to apply to

their own writing these and other strategies: summarizing, analyzing, close reading, generating vivid imagery, questioning, making connections, inferring, interpreting, synthesizing, note taking, using figurative language and evaluating. They will keep a **reading log or journal** to record their reactions to their reading of literature. They will use the school writing rubric to peer-review and self-assess their writing. To facilitate this process and to familiarize students with technology, teachers will encourage students to type their work. To become more critical and self-reflective, students will be required to maintain a **portfolio** of their writing and to periodically submit their portfolio with written reflection for assessment.

To **build the students’ proficiency in many kinds of writing**, teachers will promote student ownership. They will more often than not provide students with choices, although whole-class writing assignments are appropriate at times. Teachers will encourage and nurture writing that exhibits a strong sense of voice and creativity, even when the assignment is analytical in nature.

The substantive writing assignment for Man’s Inhumanity to Man will be the I-Search Paper.

To build students’ capacity to write well, teachers will assign **at least 600 words of writing a week**, and they will provide students with time to write in the classroom daily.

Grading of writing assignments is informed by what Jonathan Saphier calls the belief in “effort-based ability,” or “the belief that students can do rigorous academic work at high standards, even if they are far behind academically and need a significant amount of time to catch up.” Each course has a minimum pass grade for writing assignments:

English Course	Minimum Pass Grade
Identity	3
Coming of Age	3
	3
Man’s Inhumanity to Man	4
Literature and Justice	4
The American Experience	4
Transitions	4

Only assignments meeting the minimum pass grade will be accepted. Assignments not meeting the minimum standard are given a “Not Yet” grade and specific feedback for improvement. “Not Yet” assignments must be revised and resubmitted for credit. Teachers may help students who receive “Not Yet” grades or refer them to LSS for one-to-one tutoring. Even students who meet the minimum standard must be encouraged to revise and resubmit their writing for a higher grade. All students should be aware of this grading policy.

During marking period 1, students will be

- informed of the **grading policy** mentioned above
- introduced to the journal and portfolio requirements and expectations.
- re-introduced to the concept of plagiarism, to the school writing rubric and to **the Daily Tutoring Period**
- assigned the following major writing assignment:

- **Literary Analysis Essay.** For this particular essay, students will write an essay explaining how the meaning of a text is revealed through the plot, the setting, the characters, the imagery, the language, the themes or some combination of these. In other words, they will write an essay developing an interpretation that is supported by an analysis of a text's literary elements and techniques. The assignment will be graded using the school writing rubric with a minimum pass grade of 4.

During marking period 2, students will be

- assigned the following major writing assignment:
 - **Speech Project.** For this project, students will
 - **Analyze at least one speech.** Explore the rhetorical devices used by speechwriters, and write and deliver their own speeches. Students will perform a close reading of speeches to find how they persuade. Students can examine how the speaker is appealing to his or her audience, what evidence is put forth to support the speaker's point, how strong that evidence is and how well the stylistic choices made by the speaker work.
 - **Critique at least one speech.** For this essay, students will listen to a speech and write a critique. Ideally, the speech should be related to the course theme. Students will analyze the purpose, form and content of the speech. Furthermore, they will study the techniques used to convey the speaker's message and the effectiveness of the speech at communicating that message to its intended audience.
 - **Write and deliver at least one speech.** Students will write a speech and deliver it. The speech will have a specific purpose (inform, persuade, entertain, etc.), a particular occasion (a eulogy, an acceptance speech, a speech of introduction, a speech to present a gift or an award, etc.) and a specific audience. They will then deliver the speech, which will be evaluated by the teacher and the class for its effectiveness. The written speech will be graded using the school writing rubric with a minimum pass grade of 4.

During marking period 3, students will be

- assigned the following major writing assignment:
 - **I-Search Paper.** This is the major writing assignment for the term. Students will research and write about a topic that is of interest to them. They will interview people knowledgeable about the topic, conduct library research, write a paper based on that research and revise multiple times based on peer review and teacher feedback. In *The I-Search Paper*, Ken Macrorie recommends dividing the paper into the following four sections:
 - What I Knew (and didn't know about my topic when I started out).
 - Why I'm Writing This Paper. (Here's where a real need should show up: the writer demonstrates that the search may make a difference in his or her life.)
 - The Search (story of the hunt).
 - What I Learned (or didn't learn. A search that failed can be as exciting and valuable as one that succeeded).

The assignment will be graded using the school writing rubric with a minimum pass grade of 4.

MK PD	Type of Writing	Evaluation Method*	Minimum Pass**
MP 1	Literary Analysis Essay	School Writing Rubric	4
MP 2	Speech Project	School Writing Rubric	4
MP 3	I-Search Paper	School Writing Rubric	4

* Tailor-made rubrics (rubrics specific to the writing task) may be substituted for the school writing rubric provided they are designed to be superior assessment tools.

** Any assignment not meeting the minimum standard specified is incomplete and must be resubmitted for credit. Recommend that the student LSS during period zero. Students should be encouraged to revise and resubmit their writing for a higher grade even if they meet the minimum standard.

Homework

Students will be assigned 30 minutes of homework, including reading and writing, on a daily basis. The homework should be both meaningful to and engaging for the students. It will be collected, assessed, and returned promptly.

Grading

Students will know the English Department's official grading policy and teachers will abide by the department guidelines when determining grades. Each teacher will have on file a signed student/teacher contract that specifies the grading policy:

- Classwork
- Major Writing Assignments, Exams and Projects
- Homework*

* Students who complete homework assignments are rewarded for doing so. According to the grading policy, students may receive up to _____ additional points on their report card for consistently doing their homework.