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 Part One- Reflecting On Being A Language Learner  
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Language is a very important aspect of my life. I talk—a lot; whether it is in person, with my friends or via social media. I have ‘language’ that is used in certain situations and with specific people. I consider myself well versed in the languages that I do speak. My family, friends and the music and movies that I am interested in all influence the language that I speak.  
 My first language is English. I speak this with my friends and family, at home, in school, at work and predominately throughout the day. I also speak Twi, one of the official languages of Ghana, West Africa. My parents were born and raised there and taught my siblings and I the language at home. My parents did not speak it as much with me as I was growing up so I am not as fluent as my siblings. I acquired more of the language in my late teens when I had more Ghanaian friends who spoke it. I also used to be able to speak Mandarin and Spanish fluently but my lack of usage has made me store it away somewhere in my brain.  
 English is my first language and it is what my parents spoke to me at home. I attended elementary and secondary school here so I continued to learn English. Now as a university student I realize that although I speak English I speak different kinds of ‘English’ to different people. Often when I speak to my mother and other people who’s first language is not English I tend to speak slower. I also annunciate my words and generally use much simpler words and shorter sentences when I speak or write to them. I do this because often my parents would complain about my siblings and I speaking too fast and them not being able to understand all of what we were saying. I also noticed that many English language learners would also look like they did not fully understand the things I was saying. So I’ve adopted this technique when speaking to certain people. It’s very automatic for me I do not even think about speaking that way I just do it.  
 I also use quite a bit of mainstream slang [as comic relief or satire] when speaking to my friends. This is influenced by the Black-Canadian community, which many of my friends belong to. This consists of using a lot of abbreviated and popular words of the moment. These words change often and are usually started and spread on social media sites. Also, [Hip-Hop] songs . I didn’t realize that speaking that way was, in a way, its own language until a friend and I were speaking this way amongst someone who wasn’t familiar with the culture and they had no idea what we were talking about.  
 Many people would assume that because I was born and raised in Canada that my English should be near perfect. However, growing up with parents who spoke English as an additional language meant that I was influenced by their version of English. When I was younger I would say and write sentences that grammatically didn’t make sense. This was straightened out very quickly and I learned the difference between my parent’s version of English and the English I should be speaking outside of the house. As I grew older this was still an issue for me as I was now pronouncing certain words incorrectly because of how I heard them at home. Even today I’m still learning that some of the words I say I pronounce incorrectly.  
 In a school and professional setting I tend to speak softly [not quietly] when communicating with peers or professors. I tend to this because I feel like speaking softer and clearer controls the conversation and atmosphere. Also I find it to be easier to ask the students to do something, like quiet down or pay attention, if I project my voice louder but maintain its softness. Also school has expanded my vocabulary but not my speaking vocabulary. I’ve learned many terms and words through my years of school; however most of them are not words that I use in non-academic conversations. However, I do notice that the books I read do contribute to my social vocabulary quite a bit.  
 Overall my language is very varied. I sometimes mix words from other languages in my English sentences when speaking casually with people. I speak a simplified English with some and social media influenced English with others. When transitioning through all my stored English language I am unaware of the transition because I am so used to doing it.

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 Part Two-Exploring Key Concepts  
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 Part Three- Lesson Plans  
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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject:** English Honors  **Unit:** Gothic Literature | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Grade:** 8 | **Time**: 60 mins |   **Date:** TBA |

**Block:**  2-1  **School:** Walnut Grove Secondary

**Big Idea/ Question for the Lesson:** How to dissect/ break down a poem. Provide steps to which students can apply to a poem to help break it down into sections so that it is easier to read and comprehend.

**Objectives (Students Will Be Able To):**

-Categorize a poem **-**Write a poem using specific targets   
**-**Identify literary devices in their peers poems

**Materials/ Equipment needed:**

🡪 Visuals: Picture of “10 Facts” [See attached]  
🡪 Text(s) ‘Nicholas Was…’ ‘Dark Sonnet’ by Neil Gaiman

🡪 Photocopies of ‘How To Dissect A Poem

**PROCEDURE**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time Needed** | **What The Teacher Says/ Does** | | **What The Students Do** | **Materials** |
| 5-7 mins  10 mins  15- 20 mins                           20 mins | **Warm Up- (Hook)** Show picture of “10 facts” on overhead projector/ computer  **Intro:** Ask students how they could have read this better and not have been tricked/fooled (write down their suggestions)  **HANDOUT HTDAP W/S**  **Practice:** Introduce 5 ways to dissect a poem: (while working through ‘Nicholas Was’ as a class)  1) Read the poem ‘closely’  2) Does it rhyme? If it does what is the rhyme scheme?  3) Underline literary devices: alliteration, simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, imagery, personification.  4) Identify the format (what kind of poem is it?), free verse, lyric, haiku, tanka, quatrain)  5) Analysis: What do **you** think it means? (There is no wrong answer, poems can be interpreted many different ways)  POSSIBLY THE END OF THE LESSON  **HANDOUT ‘DARK SONNET’**  **Activity:** Instruct S.s to dissect the poem ‘Dark Sonnet’ by themselves. | | Reading “10 facts” from the projector  Giving suggestions about how they could have read this better.  Students can jot down notes on their worksheets and aid the teacher in dissecting the poem.  Students will dissect the poem. | 10 facts Visual  ‘Nicholas Was Poem’ on overhead and HTDAP W/S |
| **Conclusion:** | | Assign the dissection of ‘Dark Sonnet’ for homework | | |
| **Evaluation:** | | **Formative:** Student responses as we work through 1-5 of dissecting a poem. **Summative:** Homework assignment | | |
| **Extensions:** | | If a student finishes early they can silently read for the remainder of class. | | |
| **Adaptions:** | | Review of literary devices if students aren’t remembering them | | |
| **Reflections:** | |  | | |
| **Plan B** | | Dissect two poems together as a class for more practice. | | |

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**5 Ways To Dissect A Poem**

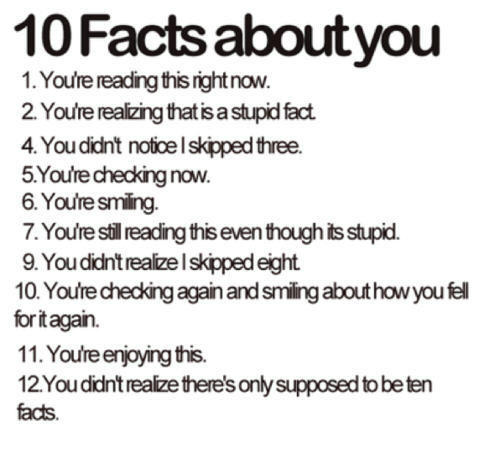
#1. Read the poem **closely.**

#2. Does it rhyme? If it does what is the rhyme scheme?

#3. **Underline** literary devices: alliteration, simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, imagery, personification..

#4. Identify the format (what kind of poem is it?), free verse, lyric, haiku, tanka, quatrain)

#5. **Analysis:** What do you think it means? What is the author trying to tell his readers? (Remember, there is no wrong answer; poetry is very interpretive).

**Visual:**  
  


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| **Subject:** English Honors  **Unit:** Gothic Literature | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Grade:** 8 | **Time:** 60 mins |   **Date:** TBA |

**Block:** 2-1  **School:** Walnut Grove Secondary

**Big Idea/ Question for the Lesson:** What makes gothic literature ‘gothic?’ What happened in “The Graveyard Book?” Does the novel meet the checklist requirements?

**Objectives (Students Will Be Able To):**

🡪 Identify and list elements of gothic literature  
🡪 Make connections between the text and gothic themes  
🡪 Recall major events and themes from ‘The Graveyard Book’

**Materials/ Equipment needed:** 🡪 Gothic Literature Checklist

**PROCEDURE**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time Needed** | **What The Teacher Says/ Does** | | **What The Students Do** | **Materials** |
| 30 mins  8-10 mins  20 mins | 🡪 Debrief ‘The Graveyard Book’ Elicit responses from the Ss (What happened next… why did he do that? Etc.)  🡪 Introduce Gothic Literature Checklist  🡪 Go through the checklist and identify the connections to the Graveyard book as a class | | 🡪 Provide responses of their understanding of the book.  🡪 Read/ Follow along    🡪 Provide responses about the connections between the book and the checklist | T.G Book      G.L.C. Handout  G.L.C. Handout + book |
| **Conclusion:** | |  | | |
| **Evaluation:** | | **Formative:** Student responses to debriefing of ‘The Graveyard Book’ and connections to the Gothic Literature Checklist **Summative:** To be completed after the next lesson | | |
| **Extensions:** | | Form small groups and make connections between Frankenstein the movie and the Gothic Checklist. | | |
| **Adaptions:** | | Teacher led discussion about the connections between the checklist and The Graveyard Book. | | |
| **Reflections:** | |  | | |
| **Plan B** | | Start discussing Frankenstein | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject:** English Honors  **Unit:** Gothic Literature | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Grade:** 8 | **Time:** 60 Mins |   **Date:** TBA |

**Block:** 2-1  **School:** Walnut Grove Secondary

**Big Idea/ Question for the Lesson:** What are the similarities/differences in the novel ‘The Graveyard Book’ & the movie ‘Frankenstein?’

**Objectives (Students Will Be Able To):**

🡪 Compare two works that they have studied

🡪 Identify the differences and similarities in the two works  
🡪 Create a written comparison using the discussion to aid them

**Materials/ Equipment needed:**None

**PROCEDURE**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time Needed** | **What The Teacher Says/ Does** | | **What The Students Do** | **Materials** |
| 15-20 mins    20-40 mins | **🡪**Elicit student responses about sim./diff between the novel and the book (Make a list on the board).   🡪 Assign written comparison of The Graveyard Book & Frankenstein (Gothic Themes) | | 🡪 Provide opinions about the sim./diff. between the novel and the book  🡪 Start working on their written comparison assignment |  |
| **Conclusion:** | |  | | |
| **Evaluation:** | | **Formative:** Ss responses about the sim./diff. between the novel and the book.  **Summative:** Written Comparison Assignment | | |
| **Extensions:** | | None | | |
| **Adaptions:** | | Create a list of possible ideas on the board for Ss. to pick from | | |
| **Reflections:** | |  | | |
| **Plan B** | | Give the Ss. possible ideas that they could use for their assignment. (Ex: Compare main character in The Graveyard Book, Bod, to Frankenstein) | | |

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 Part Four- Deeping Understanding  
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The article ‘Five Half Truths About Classroom Management’ by Joshua M. Englehart has a few good points that can aid English teachers, as well as teachers from all disciplines, in their classroom. His main thesis is that teacher’s classroom managements skills are often rooted in the teacher[s] own beliefs and assumptions based on their experiences. His article aims to shed light on 5 of these beliefs and assumptions and clarify the reality of these assumptions while suggesting ways to improve them. His article is intended for teachers and provides ways that they can implement these practices into their own. However, the classroom management half-truths that he uses are supported by research that was conducted many years ago, only three of his sources are recent (2008-2010). It seems like his article could be based on his own bias as he mentions that he was a schoolteacher and principal for many years.  
 In regards to his 5 classroom management half-truths I have some opinions. The first one ‘You Have To Be A Good Manager Before You Can Be A Good Teacher’ is something I agreed with. I felt this way because I realize that in an English classroom you would need to provide students with more activities that can engage them so that they aren’t given ample time to goof off. It also isn’t ideal to give them excessive amounts of material to read because they may get distracted or struggle with that one activity for such a prolonged time. Also ELL students may have difficulty with such a task.  
 In his second point ‘Different Things Work For Different People’ he mentions a term called ‘withitness.’ I think this applies to more than just student behavior. In an English classroom it’s important to realize that yes, different things work for different people and all students have different ways of learning. It’s difficult to make a lesson plan that caters to the need of each individual student so allowing them to have more creative freedom in their assignments is ideal to supporting individuality and different learning needs. Also to expand his term of ‘withitness’ I think it should include the teacher’s awareness of not only what the students are doing but what they are capable of doing. Some students [ELL] could appear like they are understanding everything but they may be having difficulty in other areas. Paying attention to student’s participation in class, the work they hand, how they communicate with the teacher and other students are all important along with their behavior. Teachers should have a ‘withitness’ throughout every aspect of the classroom.  
 In his this point ‘Managing Student Behavior Just Boils Down To Clearly Communicating And Consistently Enforcing Boundaries’ I agreed with what he stated. The only thing I wanted to add is that some students such as English Language Learners may not verbally understand the rules or if it’s written down somewhere they may also have difficulty with it. Teachers need to be aware of this as well.  
 The fourth point ‘It’s All About Relationships’ is very important to having a healthy, well managed classroom. The only thing that I thought should have been mentioned was the fact that many English classrooms have students with different cultural backgrounds. Students from some cultural backgrounds may find a relationship with their teacher to be inappropriate because they see them as an authority figure. Whereas some students may think that their teacher dislikes them because they don’t have the type of relationship that they are accustomed to. It’s important to communicate with students that come from places outside of Canada and find out what their teacher-student relationship history has been like. There also the case of some Communications classes that often have students with behavior or learning diagnosis. Some of these students may be opposed to having any form of relationship with their teacher. This point is ideal but is not easily obtained and can be ruined very quickly. Gaining a student’s trust and maintaining a relationship is not as easy as he makes it sound.  
 For the final point ‘Not Much Can Be Done With Changing The Behavior Of Kids Who Aren’t Taught To Act Right At Home’ I absolutely agreed with him on this one; especially the point about cultural differences. I think it’s important to remember that in any English or Communications classroom being aware of the cultural differences can go a long way.**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
 Part Five- Reflections & Goal Setting  
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One of the things that I learned, that I also found to be the most important, is about student’s academic capital. Before taking this class I never thought about the social and cultural capital that students bring to the classroom. I’ve always looked at their knowledge and especially their linguistic capital. I realize now just how important all four aspects are to the student’s learning.  
 I also found the term “Bricks & Mortar” to be very memorable. It stuck in my mind because I did my first learning jigsaw on Chapter 2 (which I thought was a great exercise that I’d like to use in my own classroom one day) and the term has been stuck in my head. However I’ve expanded it’s meaning from just content specific vocab and academic terms. I feel like bricks and mortar can be applied to almost anything. If you’re teaching a student about essay structure you could start with perfecting the paragraph and show students how to connect them to make an essay.

The final thing that I’ve learned are activities to do in the classroom. I have a notebook set aside that I take to all of my classes and jot down ideas for things that I could use in the classroom. I’ve come across so many useful ideas and have even had the opportunity to try a few of them during the short practicum and Bridging Tuesdays. One thing specifically that I tried was ‘Anticipation Chats’ (from Text Discussion Activities in Chapter 7 of Zwiers). The students were much more engaged when I asked them what they thought could happen next. It also showed me just how imaginative and creative the class I was working with was.  
 The next step for me in my teaching is being more descriptive in my directions. When I say descriptive I don’t necessarily mean details as I feel like I verbally provide enough of that already. I want to make sure no student in the class is unaware of what I’m asking them. I feel like providing more visual directions (writing on the board along with verbal directions) could be helpful for ELL students. I also plan on communicating with students more about their past classroom experiences to find out if they were previously taught outside of Canada and to avoid any barriers in the future that could permit because of their previous education.   
 One question that I still have is pertaining to allowing ELL students to speak their own language in the classroom. Previously I would set aside a certain time period in the class (once the activity started, after Warm Up and Practice) that the students could communicate with their classmates in Mandarin if they needed to. Most students didn’t abuse this it was primarily for the students who’s English levels were extremely low and couldn’t entirely follow along with my direction. However I’ve been hearing that many schools don’t allow students to speak another language in the classroom. I’m still unsure if whether or not giving them time to speak their language is beneficial. Another question that I have is about lesson plans. Both of my Student Advisors say that they don’t make lesson plans, one of them doesn’t even use unit plans. Many of my colleagues have also said that their SA’s don’t use lesson plans either. I wondered if ‘going with the flow’ and not having a detailed lesson plan is unfair to the student’s learning in any way?