

Literature of the United States of America: Dreams and Destinations

Essential Understandings: *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* addresses issues of ancestry and American identity through the genre of magical realism. Throughout this unit, we will analyze the literary choices the author makes and analyze what the author reveals about ancestry and identity. In order to make sense of what's happening, it is essential to identify the beliefs the authors (and characters) hold and how those beliefs influence their choices. It is also important to review the themes the author presents. The final assessment for the unit is an argumentative essay and research paper, which will analyze literature's place in society as a catalyst for education, understanding, and change.

Essential Questions:

What elements of the past are important to the present?

How do cultural and spiritual beliefs impact people's lives?

How does the author's use of structure help to convey his/her message?

How does literature work within a society to help bring about education/change?

“But if these years have taught me anything it is this: you can never run away. Not ever. The only way out is in.” -Oscar Wao



overview

An author uses many literary techniques to **show** (and **not tell**) a story. Close reading of a text, with a **specific focus on literary techniques** (how the story is told), can help us to uncover an author's intent for writing. Authors may have many hopes for their written words; that they will foster empathy and understanding; that readers will learn from their stories; that their **words will propel social change**. Stories can be important tools for change, understanding the tools authors use will help us to analyze how art and society influence each others' formations. We will practise the following skills:

READING

- **Apply information from one text to another**
- **Research the setting of the text**
- **Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources**
- **Examine and explain alternative perspectives across a variety of sources**

WRITING

- **Construct multiple-paragraph essays that demonstrate synthesis and analysis of complex ideas**

- **Compare and contrast multiple sources and texts**
- **Include voice and style in compositions**
- **Use quotations as evidence to support claims**

LISTENING

- **Practice “active listening” skills when passages are read, or when presentations are given**

SPEAKING

- **Present for group work, socratic seminars. Students will become strong speakers.**
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lessons

- Introduction/study guide/author bio
 - Text connections
 - Part 1: read, analyze, vocab, study questions
 - Part 2: read, analyze, vocab, study questions
 - Vocabulary
 - Review
 - Themes
 - Writing Workshops
 - Rubrics
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group work Due 5/22

Students, in their assigned groups, must choose and complete TWO of the following:

1. Create a comic or other visual representation of the text. Must be more than 1 image/more than 1 page. Write a paragraph summarizing the text, and explaining how the visual relates, or interprets the text.
2. Create a presentation using nonfiction sources to explain the concept of diaspora. Must be at least 5 minutes long, and include original work. You can NOT just cut and paste information into PPT slides. Be original!
3. Using the app “Splice” (or any other media) create a presentation that focuses on some of the common motifs/themes in the reading. Share with the class.
4. Make a video of one of the scenes from the text.
5. Create a game or wordsearch for the class to work on together, could be vocabulary words, analysis of symbols from the book, etc. Must be educational!

6. Identify the symbols/themes from the text. Then, create a modern soundtrack for the story. Explain how the symbols/themes can be seen in the book, and the song. Minimum 7 songs.
 7. Go deeper into one of the settings from the text. You can create a presentation (or performance), or you can present a popular piece from the era.
 8. Come up with another creative idea, and get permission from Ms. L
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individual work

- Persuasive Research Paper- Students will complete a 3 page essay that examines the impact of literature on society. Students will develop a position on the role of literature, it's strengths and weaknesses as an agent for social change. They will improve on properly citing sources, using sources as evidence, quoting properly, making a persuasive thesis, and using multiple sources to form a position. **Due 6/5**
 - Students will complete test preparation for the SAT and ACT exams. In class, participation grade. **Due 4/3,4/17,4/24, 5/1, 5/8**
 - Notebook- In addition to the daily notes taken in class, students will begin a notebook that they will use to make annotations on the independent reading they do each day at the start of class. Students may choose from one of a list of approved supplementary texts, or they may choose their own text, provided they have obtained PRIOR APPROVAL from Ms. Luken. Additionally, some days Ms. Luken will have assigned readings for this notebook. **Due 4/3,4/17,4/24, 5/1, 5/8**
 - Annotated Notes- A summary of the day's lesson/terms, vocabulary words and their definitions, annotations on class readings; also students can choose to engage in personal reflection.
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assessments

Socratic Seminar **5/8**

class readings and additional resources:

The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao Junot Diaz
Alvarez

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Ge6oVjM6M8M>

individual readings--choose one for individual reading and response time--

The Remarkable Reason Men in Iran are Wearing Hijabs:

<http://www.inc.com/melanie-curtin/the-remarkable-reason-men-in-iran-have-started-wearing-hijabs.html>

New Marvel Pilot Features Mexican American Lead:

<http://remezcla.com/film/victor-mancha-hulu-pilot-runaways-marvel/>

Las Patronas:

<http://remezcla.com/lists/culture/las-patronas-mexico-photo-essay/>

It Would Take 228 Years for Black Families to Amass Wealth of White Families:

<http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2016/08/09/it-would-take-228-years-for-black-families-to-amass-wealth-of-white-families-analysis-says/>

Multicultural Britain:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/dabbott_01.shtml

Do Children Still Need to Read the Classics of English literature?:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/education-34341656>

Why the Real Problem isn't #oscarssowhite:

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/23/opinions/oscars-so-gray-seymour/>

Hollywood still 'straight, white, boys' club', finds major diversity survey:

<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/feb/22/major-study-hollywood-endemic-diversity-crisis>

Racist abuse won't stop me from seeking more diversity in children's literature:

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/27/racist-abuse-diversity-in-childrens-literature>

The value of storytelling:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=286225903>

Multicultural Books Offer Diverse Reading Experience:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12093236>

Multiculturalism Explained in One Word HAPA:

<http://www.npr.org/2008/08/18/93690045/multi-culturalism-explained-in-one-word-hapa>

An 11 Year Old's Drive is 1000 Black Girl Books:

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/an-11-year-olds-drive-is-1000blackgirlbooks-1456535514>

“Always Running”

<http://www.csudh.edu/ccauthen/570f15/Rodriguez-Running.pdf>

“Drown”

<https://eng1301blog.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/junot-diaz-drown.pdf>

“This is How You Lose Her”

<http://gerwazy.lo3.wroc.pl/~stasio/tlh.pdf>

“Monstro”

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/06/04/monstro>

The Kite Runner

<http://www.thehazeleyacademy.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/IB-English-The-Kite-Runner-Full-Text.pdf>

The Reluctant Fundamentalist

<https://vusc-english.wikispaces.com/file/view/Moshin+Hamid+-+The+Reluctant+Fundamentalist.pdf>

Identity formation:

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=storied-identities.pdf&site=15>

links

<http://gis.appstate.edu/social-justice-and-human-rights/what-social-justice>

<http://gender.stanford.edu/news/2013/why-literature-matters-social-justice>

Adapted from “The Past Ain’t Going Anywhere” curriculum. Author unknown.