

Unit Plan: Shakespeare

Description and Overview

This unit is designed for a Ninth-Grade English class. The topic will be the works of William Shakespeare with a concentration on: *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *As You Like It* and *Macbeth*. I have chosen these plays, as they are the most often publicly performed of Shakespeare's plays, thus giving the Class the greatest opportunity to attend a play we are reading. While our overall goal will be to gain an appreciation for Shakespeare as a famous writer and thusly understanding/interpreting his dramas, we will use these works to build upon the student's vocabulary, research skills and editing abilities. We will also work in writing groups to help sharpen the students revision and discussion skills. The students will also work in groups to perform chosen scenes, as I believe this is the greatest way to truly understand drama.

Objectives for the class

The students will

- Be able to recognize the elements of a comedy
- Be able to recognize the elements of tragedy.
- Be able to analyze a play's main theme.
- Be able to analyze a dramatic character.
- Be able to work in a group for discussion/editing reasons.
- Be able to identify terms related to the genre. (e.g.) soliloquy, tragic character etc.
- Be able to convert a reading of a play into a performance.
- Be able to literally interpret a play in writing as well as verbally.

Learning activities

1. Through group discussions the students will be introduced to the author; William Shakespeare. This will include explanations as to the general "pulse" of the world at the time Shakespeare was alive and writing. As well as to help to give insight to his influences and inspirations.
2. The students will give mini-performances of each play before it is read. After reading the play they will discuss how their opinions have changed after reading the work as opposed to a single scene. Then at the end of the unit students will work in groups to give a "larger" performance of a play of their choosing.

3. Through group discussions and activities the students will be introduced to the elements of a drama. We will discuss what makes a play a comedy or tragedy. We will also discuss how this definition has changed throughout history.
4. Through group discussions the students will learn how to analyze a play's main theme. We will work on ideas such as; how was the play perceived in its time? Who was the author speaking to? Which social class is he writing to? About?
5. Through group discussions the students will learn how to analyze a character. They will ask; what social class is the character in? And how does this shape the character? What is the character's mentality? What is their motivation?
6. Students will keep journals to generate discussion topics. We will have class discussions as well as focused group discussions. The group discussions will consist of each group being assigned a different subject, which they will write about as a group and then present to the class.
7. With handouts students will gain an understanding of vocabulary words and terms in Elizabethan English. I will initially provide the students with a handout to assist them in their readings, but as a class we will create our own list, which will then be posted in the front of the room.
8. Through conclusion and question papers the students will be able to show their grasp of the material. As well as work through questions that may remain yet unanswered. Students will be encouraged to include quotes from the text as well as citing historical facts where pertinent.
9. The students will use goose feathers, Grocery bags (as parchment) and washable ink to gain an understanding of the difficulties of writing, let alone "creating" in Shakespeare's time.
10. Students will be given time in class to read. I think this gives students the best chance to really focus on their work. It will also help assure that they actually do read it. We will read a little then discuss etc.

Materials and Resources

Copies of *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *As You Like It* and *Macbeth*

Goose feathers

Grocery Bags

Printouts of specific scene's

Folders
The Internet
Dictionary, Thesaurus
Maps, Globe
Washable Ink
Romeo & Juliet video
Macbeth video

Assessment

1. Students will be assessed formally on their writing/editing skills.
2. Students will be assessed informally on their pre-reading performances; imagination and expression will be the focus.
3. Students will be assessed formally on their “choice” group performance. Their ability to interpret and express a scene will be the focus. Students will critique these performances and these critiques will be assessed formally for focus and mechanical errors.
4. Students will be assessed formally on their Conclusion and Question papers. Clarity, focus, mechanical errors as well as ability to express and expand ideas will be key.
5. Students will be assessed formally on their participation in class discussions.
6. Students will be assessed formally on group writing projects.
7. Students will be assessed formally at the end of the unit by test format. They will answer a few questions about Comedy and Tragedy. They will also have a group of essay questions, which they will choose and answer one from.

Unit Outline:

William Shakespeare

I. Introduction

- a. General history of the Author.
 1. When he lived, died. Family Education etc.
 2. How many plays, poems etc he has written.
 3. Examples of the mindset of the world at the time of his writings.
 4. Class divisions and their importance.
 5. The importance of religion in the world.
- b. List of vocabulary words and terms.
 1. Handout on Elizabethan English.
 2. Begin class vocabulary list.
 3. Lesson on listening skills.
 4. Goose Feather writing exercise.
- c. Introduce students to terms related to the genre.
- d. Introduce students to the definitions of a comedy and tragedy.
- e. Show Leonardo de Caprio, Claire Danes version of Romeo and Juliet.

II. Romeo and Juliet

- a. Pre-play performance
- b. Class discussion on expectations of the play.
- c. In class (quite) reading of the play.
- d. Journals
- e. Class discussion/writing on the play.
- f. Play Family Feud Romeo & Juliet game.
- g. Review.
- h. Conclusion and Question paper.

III. As You Like It

- a. Pre-play performance.
- b. Class discussion on expectations of the play.
- c. In class (quite) reading of play.
- d. Journals.
- e. Class discussion/writing on the play.
- f. As You Like It word play.
- g. Review
- h. Conclusion and Question paper.

IV. Macbeth

- a. Pre-play performance
- b. Class discussion on expectations of the play.

- c. In class (quite) reading of play.
- d. Journals
- e. Class discussion/writing on the play.
- f. Macbeth reading/writing exercise.
- g. Review
- h. Conclusion and Question paper.
- i. Watch Macbeth video. Mel Gibson version.

V. The Tempest

- a. Pre-Play performance.
- b. Class discussion on expectations of the play.
- c. In class (quite) reading of play.
- d. Journals.
- e. Class discussion/writing on the play.
- f. Review
- g. Conclusion and Question paper.

VI. Final Performance practice

- a. Students will break into groups and choose a scene to be acted out.
- b. Students will have time to practice in class.

VII. Final Performances

- a. Students will give group performances of selected scenes.
- b. Students will be allowed to read their parts, but can earn bonus points for memorizing their part.

VIII. Unit test

Lesson Plans

Listening Skills

Overview

This lesson will act as a guidance tool to assist students in their listening skills. Many students hear, but don't actually listen.

I. Objectives with pertinent SOLs identified

- After listening to a story, the students will be able to orally explain the conclusion of the story. (9.2)
- Students will be able to list ways that characters in the story relate to themselves. (9.3)
- Students will be able to clarify why they would rather someone read to them or why they would rather read the material themselves. (9.4)

II. Activities

1. I will read a story to the class. This will be an age level appropriate short story. To produce the best results I will choose an entertaining story with many literary twists and turns.
2. I will lead the class in discussion and have them respond in writing to several questions. Examples of the questions would be:
 - a. List the characters in the play.
 - b. How does each character relate to you?
 - c. What did character A tell character B?
 - d. How does the entire story relate to the class?
 - e. Would you rather have something read to you or do you prefer to read it yourself? Why?
3. The class will discuss their answers and draw a few group conclusions. I will collect the responses and they will count toward class participation.

III. Materials

Notepaper
Short story
Pen/pencil

IV. Assessment

1. Students will be assessed formally on their ability to listen to a story and discuss specified topics.
2. Students will be assessed formally on class participation as it deals with discussion input.

Family Feud: Romeo and Juliet

Overview

This activity will give the students an enjoyable way to review specified material in the play.

I. Objectives with pertinent SOLs identified

- Students will be able to answer specific questions about the play; Romeo & Juliet. (9.2, 9.3, 9.4)
- Students will be able to verbally express their knowledge of assigned materials. (9.1, 9.2)

II. Activities

1. Students are separated into two “Family” teams: the Capulets and the Montagues.
2. The teacher, acting as game show host and score keeper asks specific questions based on the play.
3. A bell is passed down each row from student to student. When a question is asked the family member who rings first gets to answer. If they miss the question the other “family” gets a chance to answer. The correct answer will receive the points.
4. The game will continue until all questions are answered.
5. The team with the most points will win.

III. Materials

1. Two bells
2. List of Play specific questions.
- 3.

IV. Assessment

1. Students will be assessed formally on their participation in the activity. They will not be penalized for incorrect answers.

Macbeth: Reading/Writing exercise

Overview

This exercise will use Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to help students realize that the skills they have learned and practiced in the classroom can be applied to all aspects of learning. This will help students realize that reading is an essential "life" skill.

I. Objectives with pertinent SOLs identified

- Students will be able to read and understand "Macbeth". (9.3,9.5)
- Students will be able to apply prediction strategies to what they have read. (9.4)
- Students will be able to make comparisons between characters as they undergo changes. (9.3, 9.4, 9.6)
- Students will be able to apply the themes of "Macbeth" to their own lives. (9.3, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8)

II. Activities

1. Students will discuss the changes that each main character has undergone in the play.
2. Students will examine the motives that led to the changes in each main character. This examination will lead to the discovery of some of the themes of the play; greed disguised as ambition and truth disguised as rationalization etc.
3. After examining historical events and current world affairs, students will write an essay comparing the themes in "Macbeth" to other historical events. Such as the Civil Rights movement, world wars and their own personal struggles.
4. Students will work in groups to edit and revise their works. I will go around to each group, but only interject when called upon.

III. Materials

1. Dictionary, thesaurus
2. Pens/pencils
3. Paper
4. Copies of *Macbeth*

IV. Assessment

1. Students will be assessed formally on their word choice and mechanical errors.
2. Students will be assessed formally on their editing and revision.
3. Students will be assessed formally on their ability to draw comparisons between the characters in the play and their own examples. And develop their thesis.

Introduction: William Shakespeare

Overview

This lesson will serve as an introduction to William Shakespeare. Students will be made aware of his personal and professional history as well as his accomplishments and place in literary history. I want to make the students aware of the fact that authors are often shaped by the world they live in and in turn help to reshape that world.

I. Objectives with pertinent SOLs identified

- Students will understand the effect a writer's environment has on shaping their work.
- Students will know the dates of Shakespeare's life/death.
- Students will be able to identify a comedy/tragedy. (9.5)
- Students will be able to define a sonnet. (9.3)
- Students will gain an appreciation of the difficulty of writing in Shakespeare's time, let alone writing well.

II. Activities

1. I will give the students an overview of Shakespeare's life as well as defining a few of the prominent ideas/concerns of the time.
2. Through group discussion students will gain an understanding of the components that make a play a comedy or a tragedy. I will ask students for their own definitions and then inform them of the historical definitions.
3. I will give a "mini-lesson" on sonnets. As in what makes a sonnet and how to write one.
4. Students will use goose feathers and washable ink to write a sonnet. We will use grocery bags to serve as parchment.
5. Students will display their sonnets around the room.
6. Quiz on Comedy/tragedy and sonnets.

III. Materials

1. Handouts of Shakespearean Sonnets
2. Goose feathers
3. Washable ink
4. Paper grocery bags
5. Tacks to hang sonnets

IV. Assessment

1. Students will be assessed informally on their participation in the goose "quill" exercise.
2. Students will be assessed formally on the components of a comedy, a tragedy and a sonnet.

As You Like It: Word Play

Overview

The students will explore one of the most famous monologues in all of literature; Jaques' "Seven Ages of Man" by using word play. This will be a great way to get them working more deeply with the subject while also improving their verbal skills.

I. Objectives with pertinent SOLs identified

- Students will realize the importance of sounds and shapes of individual words in a monologue. (9.1)
- Students will be able to put "action" into words in a monologue. (9.2)
- Students will improve their vocabulary.

II. Activities

1. I will handout the individually numbered words from the monologue. I will keep going until they have all been used.
2. Students will whisper the words to themselves. I want them to understand the importance of choice of each word. How does the sound of the word make them feel? Where in their mouth is the word formed? What action fits that word?
3. Have each students place their words into any order they choose. I will encourage them to ignore the numbers for now.
4. Each student will put action to their words and act them out.
5. After they have acted out their words have them put them in numerical order. They will read them aloud to the class and the class will echo them.
6. The students will discuss what they believe that the monologue is about.
7. Students will receive a copy of the complete monologue. Class discussion on what they now think it is about.

III. Materials

1. Copies of Jacques' "Seven Ages of Man" speech
2. Individual words in numerical order.

IV. Assessment

1. The students will be assessed formally on their participation in the class activity.
2. Students will be assessed informally on their class discussion of the meaning of the monologue.

Pre-Play performance

Overview

Students will act out an opening scene of a particular play. Some will act and others will direct. They will all take turns. The students who are not acting or directing at the time will free-write as to their ideas about the plot of the play. We will do this before we begin each play.

I. Objectives with pertinent SOLs identified

- Students will understand the importance of stage direction, set and character description in a play.
- Students will be able to interpret and act out specific scenes. (9.1,9.2)

II. Activities

1. Students will first work from a script in which all the stage directions and line numbers are removed.
2. Students will divide the parts for the scene, including trees, rocks, water etc.
3. Students will then pantomime the entire scene. They must include every action in the scene. Students who are not performing at the time will write down comments as to what the group did well and what needed improvement.
4. Students will read their suggestions to the group.
5. Finally each group will “act” out their scene.

III. Materials

1. Copies of opening scene.
2. Pens/ pencils
3. Paper

IV. Assessment

1. Students will be assessed formally on their participation, effort etc. Individual acting skills will not be graded.
2. Students will be assessed informally on their written suggestions.
3. Students will be assessed formally on their ability to interpret the selected scene. Do they understand the point of the scene? Do they allow their performance to show this?

Final Performance

Overview

The key to this lesson is to teach students the importance of visualizing a play as they read it. I want the students to understand that drama is meant to be seen, acted, interpreted not just read.

I. Objectives with pertinent SOLs identified.

- Students will be able to visualize, interpret and express their reading of a selected play.(9.1, 9.2, 9.4, 9.5)
- Students will work as a group to act out a selected scene. (9.1)
- Students will understand the importance of “seeing” a play, even when you can only do so in you mind.

II. Activities

1. Students will form groups and act out a selected scene from one of the plays we have read.
2. We will use class time to practice for and then perform these scenes.
3. This will also act as a visual review for the Unit Test.
4. Students will be encouraged to express their interpretation of the play as to how it relates to them personally, here and now.

III. Materials

1. Copies of selected scene for each member of the group.
2. Any background, props or costumes the students may want to use.

IV. Assessment

1. The students will be assessed formally on their effort for this project. Did they memorize their lines? Did they create their own interpretation?
2. Students will be assessed formally on their understanding of their selected scenes. Did they “get” the theme of the scene? Where they able to express that?

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Note: I didn't know how to acknowledge it but my conclusion and question paper is obviously influenced by your Eng 463 class.