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English 7701

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Teenagers and the Law: A Legal Unit Plan

I decided on the topic of teenagers and the law because Georgia had recently added a unit called teenagers and the law to the eighth grade social studies curriculum. Social Studies teachers in our state can barely complete the current curriculum, let alone added to it; however, when I checked the Department of Education for the social studies standards, a message stated that the DOE was revamping the entire social studies curriculum. Even though the unit may be eliminated, the ELA standards require reading across the curriculum and interdisciplinary units (DOE Online).

Additionally, Dale Parnell in *Contextual Teaching Works!* proves that interdisciplinary units help students achieve greater knowledge and higher test scores (253). The National Middle School Association recently completed a study of interdisciplinary units that proves these units increase test scores dramatically in Title 1 schools, like Marietta Middle School (NMSA Online). This approach forced me to use multigenres to support the themes instead of focusing on genre and mentioning a variety of themes.

We will explore the themes of responsibility, motive, and justice. I will use a variety of genres which contain the themes: poetry, fiction, non-fiction, story stories, novels, newspaper articles, and a manual. Some of the questions students will answer: What is justice? Injustice? What are the people's motives when they break the law? Should unjust laws be broken? What is an unjust law? Historically, when have these unjust laws been broken and for what reasons?

When laws are broken, what are the consequences for the individual and society (socially, politically, and economically)? Are the consequences fair?

Last year, I convinced many of the students to consider becoming an attorney specializing in entertainment law after they have completed their NBA or rapping career or as a back-up plan in case the NBA or a music label did not call. My students are primarily poor African-Americans and Latin Americans. It is understandable that they are looking for the “get rich quick” scheme. About of a third of the students - regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender - have failed a grade at some point even though many of those students are VERY smart; About 10% have failed two grades usually because they have attended several schools; our transient rate is over 80%. When an attorney visited my class for career day, the students couldn't stop asking him questions. I was surprised at their excitement; I didn't think my “back-up plan” message had worked. I decided to use it to create the culminating project, performing a mock trial. I did this because I believe, like English Instruction Guru Jim Burke (219), in creating authentic situations for reading, writing, viewing, listening, and speaking instruction. I also like using the five language arts within a unit.

Throughout the entire unit, a minimum of 15 minutes of the daily 97 are devoted to sustained silent reading. Normally, I would require a book review or ABR, but since the mock trial is a class ABR, I will have Accelerated Reader tests, a Marietta City Schools' mandatory assessment, as the students' only assessment of sustained silent reading.

The first week will focus on motive and introducing legal vocabulary, solving of crimes, and the mystery genre. Day one, we will compare and contrast the genres of mystery and horror using Edgar Allan Poe's definitions of both. We will focus on the aspects of a crime and how to

solve a mystery. We will apply this knowledge by solving mini-mysteries on www.mysterynet.com/solveit.

On days two and three, I will introduced legal stems, like jud- means to judge, to the students using Jim Burke's *The English Teacher's Companion's* Vocabulary Cluster (113). We will define motive and analyze the minister's motive in Poe's "The Purloined Letter." Since the purloined letter is never shown to the reader, the students will write, on day three, the purloined letter. We will generate a list of possible situations that could be described in the letter that would motivate the high government official to steal it.

Starting on day four through day nine, I will reintroduce Stephanie Harvey's active reading strategies using an active reading journal I created (20-26). We will apply these strategies to a wide variety of texts. The two poems Mel Glenn's "Who killed Mr. Chippendale?" and Langston Hughes' "Ballad of the Landlord" were chosen because they connect with students. According to Arthur Applebee, teachers need to choose literature for academic and non-academically minded students (61). Glenn's poem reflects the thoughts of high school students. I think my students will relate to the students in the poem. Hughes' poem is easy-to-read and to understand. The renter's plight in the poem also generates opinion on unjust laws. The students must also use the reading strategy of inference to connect to the poem.

After reading "Ballad of the Landlord", we will read parts of Martin Luther King, Jr's "Letters from the Birmingham Jail", which has the similar theme of unjust laws. He argues for breaking unjust laws; he also acknowledges that he must suffer the consequences of his actions. Additionally, King writes about his responsibility to his people. These arguments in this letter are enriched by his use of literary elements, like metaphors and similes, and imagery. We write

about this text in our active reading journals, but later we will revisit this text to look for ways to model the images created in his argument (Noden 69).

The reading strategy mini-lessons end with using the visualization strategy while reading Dave Barry's "Better Education Would Outlaw Stupid Crooks." We will analyze the crimes mentioned and then illustrate one of the crimes or create a new crime committed by stupid criminals. We will also analyze his use of hyperbole as tool to enhance an argument in a courtroom.

On Friday, we will review the structure of the literature circle. The students will be given copies Creative Loafing's "The Blotter." Student will read the crimes described (about a paragraph each) then students will connect, illustrate, question, and analyze the crimes. The literary circle jobs will be vocabulary master, illustrator, questioner, and connector. All the work will be completed in class because most my students will not do homework.

For two days, we will read the Georgia DMV manual using literature circles. The first day we will focus on why the laws were created; the second day, on whether the punishments are just. The mini-lesson for day one will be learning to read a procedure or law; for day two, the mini-lesson will describe the structure of an argument.

We will read O'Henry's "A Retrieved Reformation." During these three days, we will use literature circles while reading the text. Since the character is "regarded as the most important component of fiction" (Orth 23), the mini-lessons will define characterization and apply this knowledge to the story's characters. We will also learn about irony and surprise ending as a literary tool and a tool lawyers use in the courtroom.

The next two weeks will be spent reading aloud *And Then There Were None* aloud. I will use a rubric to grade the students reading using Georgia new ELA standards as a guide.

According to the standards, students must “use phonics and context clues to determine pronunciation and meaning, self –monitoring and self-correcting strategies, and read with a rhythm, flow, and meter that sounds like everyday speech.” (DOE Online). The students will read aloud using the “popcorn” method. If a student doesn’t want to read in class, they can read to me after school.

In this novel, we will examine all the unit’s themes. Our focus will be the individual characters. We will generate a characterization chart to keep track of the characters actions, reactions, descriptions, and dialogue. We will also identify grammar elements in the writing (appositives, adjectives, participles, and action verbs) and apply that grammar knowledge using Noden’s brushstrokes (1-12) to create the characterization chart and the writings for the courtroom.

During the last two days of reading the novel, we will analyze and synthesis Justice Wargrave’s justice using Aiden Chambers “Tell Me” questions (81 – 91) and Janet Richards and Nancy Anderson’s “How Do You Know?” (290-293) questioning strategies. Finally, on Friday, students will create a new character that Wargrave could have lured to the island using the novel as evidence.

For our culminating project, Justice Wargrave will not die at the end of the novel. He will be saved and will stand trial. The practice for the mock trial will take about a week. The first mini-lesson will be describing the structure of a courtroom. That day, that day the students will chose their character during the trial. If more than one student wants a part, they will draw for it. The characters are the judge, 12 jurors, bailiff, courtroom illustrator, courtroom reporter(s), 2 lawyers, defendant, and 11 witnesses. Each part requires the student to research that part through

the book (witnesses, lawyers, judge, news reporters) and through the news, a film, or book that describes the part (juror, judge, lawyer, reporter, bailiff, court reporter, and illustrator).

Just like a real trial the procedures and parts of the trial are scripted. The mock trial will take place in real time. Witnesses, lawyers, and the defendant will rehearse their parts, but they will not be rehearsed together. During this week, I will be helping students individually to prepare for their roles and their trial-related writings.

At the end of the project, each student will turn in some kind of writing related to the trial. The news reporters will write daily newspaper articles, and the courtroom illustrator will draw daily illustrations. The judge, bailiff, jurors, defendant, witnesses, and lawyers will turn in their memoirs. The courtroom reporter will turn the court documents. I will spend the most time with the newspaper reporters because we will not have studied newspaper writing prior to the mock trial.

The students will also be given a performance grade on the mock trial. I will use a rubric that will assess them on areas like attentiveness as an audience member and preparedness as a speaker.

The final week on the calendar may not occur. If there is time, we will view the 1945 film version of *And Then There Were None*. Students laugh at this film. It does not have the same ending. It has a happy ending. Students will write a film review after making a list of questions a movie goer wants to know from a reviewer and learning the structure of a film review. If I am feeling industrious after the project, I may create a newspaper to house all the writings from the trial and film.

I have threw everything and the kitchen sink into this lesson plan. I looked over Larry Johannessen's speech *Ten Important Factors Research Reveals about the Teaching of English* to

make sure that I had not missed anything, and I covered all ten factors. The students are exposed to a wide variety of genres and texts. They are taught active reading and critical thinking strategies. The grammar and vocabulary are taught within the context of the readings and writing. The themes and sub-themes are many and related to the students. Finally, the mock trial allows students the opportunity to “see” why they I have been taught the five language arts and why they are important.

Georgia’s New Standards for Reading and Literature

- a. Identifies the difference between the concepts of theme in a literary work and author’s purpose in an expository text.
 - ✓ Students will identify the differences in purpose between newspaper articles and literary text (novels, poems, short stories, letters)
- b. Compares and contrasts genre characteristics from two or more selections of literature.
 - ✓ Students will create a chart to compare and contrast horror and mystery genres and a chart to compare and contrast poetry, novel, short story, fiction, and non-fiction.
- c. Analyzes a character’s traits, emotions, or motivations and gives supporting evidence from the text(s).
 - ✓ Students will construct a characterization chart of all characters in *And Then There Were None*. Each student was assigned a part in the “Justice Wargrave Case”. Students had to prove how they chose to play the characters parts based on story.
- e. Evaluates recurring or similar themes across a variety of selections, distinguishing theme from topic.
 - ✓ The topics are crime and punishment. The themes will include responsibility, consequences, motive, guilt, citizenship, and justices. Students will analyze and evaluate criminals, crimes, and laws for justice, motive, guilt, responsibility and consequences.
- f. Evaluates the structural elements of the plot (e.g., subplots, parallel episodes, climax), the plot’s development, and the way in which conflicts are (or are not) addressed and resolved.

- ✓ Student will read *And Then There Were None* and create a chart to follow the plot development and conflicts.
 - ✓ Students will use the conflicts from the story to construct a case for a mock trial.
- g. Analyzes and evaluates the effects of sound, form, figurative language, and graphics in order to uncover meaning in literature:
- ✓ Students will analyze hyperbole used by criminals, lawyers. Hyperbole will also be examined in Dave Barry's article.
- h. Analyzes and evaluates how an author's use of words creates tone and mood and provides supporting details from text.
- ✓ Students will identify adjectives that create tone and mood, and we will use exercises from *Image Grammar* to create images in mysteries, newspaper articles, arguments (trial), and film reviews.
- a. Recognizes and traces the development of an author's argument, point of view, or perspective in text.
- ✓ Students will discuss author's view of the characters in *And Then There Were None*, "Who killed Mr. Chippendale", "The Purloined Letter", and "Ballad of the Landlord".
- b. Understands and explains the use of a complex mechanical device by following technical directions.
- ✓ Students will read in the Driver's License Manuel and will reflect and use the information in the Manuel.
- c. Uses information from a variety of consumer, workplace, and public documents (e.g., job applications) to explain a situation or decision and to solve a problem.
- ✓ Students will read the Georgia's DMVS Manuel using literature circles. Each student will have to write about the consequences of poor-decision making and discuss their ideas in literature circles.
- a. Determines pronunciations, meanings, alternate word choices, parts of speech, or etymologies of words.
- ✓ Students will learn stems that are related to the law to help student recognize unfamiliar legal terms. (For example, the prefixes jud- means to guide.)
- b. Determines the meaning of unfamiliar words in content and context specific reading and writing.

- ✓ Students will solve mini-mysteries on the Internet and read about crimes in Creative Loafing's Blotter. I will direct them to decipher the meaning of unknown words based on the context clues.
- a. Using letter-sound knowledge to decode written English and using a range of cueing systems (e.g., phonics and context clues) to determine pronunciation and meaning.
 - b. Using self-correction when subsequent reading indicates an earlier miscue (self-monitoring and self-correcting strategies).
 - c. Reading with a rhythm, flow, and meter that sounds like everyday speech (fluency).
 - ✓ Students will "popcorn" around the room to read *And Then There Were None*, "The Purloined Letter", and Dave Barry's article. If a few students are uncomfortable with reading text aloud in class, I will allow them to read to me after school. Students will receive an oral grade based using a rubric that covers each standard.

Reading Across the Curriculum

- a. Identifies messages and themes from books in all subject areas.
 - b. Responds to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse.
 - c. Relates messages and themes from one subject area to those in another area.
 - d. Evaluates the merits of texts in every subject discipline.
 - e. Examines the author's purpose in writing.
 - f. Recognizes and uses the features of disciplinary texts. (e.g., charts, graphs, photos, maps, highlighted vocabulary)
 - ✓ The themes (motive, consequences, punishment, justice, guilt, responsibility, and citizenry) of this unit connect primary with government and social studies.
 - ✓ Students will read a variety of non-fiction and fiction texts from both ELA and social studies.
- a. Demonstrates an understanding of contextual vocabulary in various subjects.
 - b. Uses content vocabulary in writing and speaking.
 - c. Explores understanding of new words found in subject area texts.
 - ✓ The students will be given a list of Greek and Latin stems that are common in legal and governmental terminology.
- a. Explores life experiences related to subject area content.
 - ✓ Students will read Georgia DMVS and reflect on why the laws exist, if the laws are just, and what the consequence (legally, physically, socially, and economically) are.
 - b. Discusses in both writing and speaking how certain words and concepts relate to multiple subjects.

c. Determines strategies for finding content and contextual meaning for unfamiliar words or concepts.

- ✓ Students will use active reading strategies and stem knowledge to decipher meaning.

Writing

- a. Selects a focus, organizational structure, and a point of view based on purpose, genre expectations, audience, length, and format requirements.
- b. Writes texts of a length appropriate to address the topic or tell the story.
- c. Uses traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).
- d. Uses appropriate structures to ensure coherence (e.g., transition elements, parallel structure).
- e. Supports statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

- ✓ Students will write a variety of genre including newspaper writing, film reviews, personal journals, active reading journals, short stories.
- ✓ All of the students will write one of the following before, during, or after the Justice Wargrave trial using *And Then There Were None* as evidence for their writings: editorial, front page story, memoirs (jury, defendant, witnesses) scripts of testimony (witnesses), speech and questions (lawyers), script (bailiff and judge).
- ✓ I will conference with students concerning a writings structure and conventions.
- ✓ Students will use a variety of strategies to revise and edit their writing.

Listening, Speaking, and Viewing

- b. Asks relevant questions.
- c. Responds to questions with appropriate information.
- d. Confirms understanding by paraphrasing the adult's directions or suggestions.
- e. Displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- f. Actively solicits another person's comments or opinions.
- g. Offers own opinion forcefully without domineering.
- h. Responds appropriately to comments and questions.
- i. Volunteers contributions and responds when directly solicited by teacher or discussion leader.
- j. Gives reasons in support of opinions expressed.
- k. Clarifies, illustrates, or expands on a response when asked to do so.
- l. Employs a group decision-making technique such as brainstorming or a problem-solving sequence (e.g., recognizes problem, defines problem, identifies possible solutions, selects optimal solution, implements solution, evaluates solution).
- m. Develops a plan of action or agenda for written and/or verbal follow-up.

- a. Interprets and evaluates the various ways in which visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, illustrators, news photographers) communicate information and affect impressions and opinions.
- b. Analyzes oral communication by paraphrasing a speaker's purpose and point of view, and asks relevant questions concerning the speaker's content, delivery, and purpose.

- a. Gives oral presentations or dramatic interpretations for various purposes.
- b. Organizes information (e.g., message, vocabulary) to achieve particular purposes and to appeal to the background and interests of the audience.
- c. Shows appropriate changes in delivery (e.g., gestures, expression, tone, pace, visuals).
- d. Uses language for dramatic effect.
- e. Uses rubrics as assessment tools.
- f. Responds to oral communications with questions, challenges, or affirmations.
- g. Uses multi-media for presentations.

- ✓ Students will use literature circles. They will be graded using 6+1 trait rubric.
- ✓ The students will prepare for and perform a mock trial.
- ✓ I will demonstrate, through mini-lessons and viewing, the proper procedures of a courtroom.
- ✓ Students will earn a performance grade using a rubric based on the 6+1 trait model.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Mini: Mystery v. Horror</p> <p>Read and Solve: Mini-Mysteries on www.mysterynet.com/solveit</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Legal Stems</p> <p>Read: "The Purloined Letter"</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Motives</p> <p>Read: "The Purloined Letter"</p> <p>Write: the purloined letter</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Connections (reading strategy)</p> <p>Read: "Who killed Mr. Chippendale?"</p> <p>Write: Active Reading Journal</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Questioning (reading strategy)</p> <p>Read: "Who killed Mr. Chippendale?"</p> <p>Write: Active Reading Journal</p> <p>SSR</p>
<p>Mini: Inferences (reading strategy) Justice v. Injustice</p> <p>Read: "Ballad of the Landlord"</p> <p>Write: Active Reading Journal</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Determining Ideas (reading strategy)</p> <p>Read: "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"</p> <p>Write: Active Reading Journal</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Synthesizing Information (reading strategy)</p> <p>Read: "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"</p> <p>Write: Active Reading Journal</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Visualizing (reading strategy) Hyperbole</p> <p>Read: Dave Barry's article</p> <p>Write: Active Reading Journal</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Review themes/ lit circles</p> <p>Read: "The Blotter"</p> <p>Use lit circles to discuss crime (motive, justice)</p> <p>SSR</p>
<p>Mini: Reading Procedure/Law</p> <p>Read: DMV Manuel</p> <p>Write: Lit circles discuss laws – why created?</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Structure of an Argument</p> <p>Read: DMV Manuel</p> <p>Write: Lit circles – just punishment? opinion/evidence</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Crime Stems</p> <p>Read: "A Retrieved Reformation"</p> <p>Write: Lit circles - characterization</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Characterization (define)</p> <p>Read: "A Retrieved Reformation"</p> <p>Write: Lit Circles - characterization</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Characterization (review)</p> <p>Read: "A Retrieved Reformation"</p> <p>Write: Lit Circles - characterization</p> <p>SSR</p>
<p>Mini: Characterization Chart (create)</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Fill chart – Why going to Indian Island?</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Appositives (identify to characterize – <i>Image</i>)</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Fill chart – descriptive nouns - occupation</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Prediction (reading strategy)</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Who will die and when? (use poem in Ch. 2)</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Adjectives (strong v. weak – <i>Image</i>)</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Fill chart – adjectives</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Participles</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Fill chart - participles</p> <p>SSR</p>
<p>Mini: Action (characterization) Action Verbs</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Fill chart – murder & motive & action</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Reaction (characterization) Action Verbs</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Fill chart – reaction of others to character</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: Dialogue (characterization)</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Fill chart – quotes of characters</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: "How do you Know That?" (strategy - debate)</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Was Justice Wargrave's punishment correct? How do you know that?</p> <p>SSR</p>	<p>Mini: "How do you Know That?" (strategy - debate)</p> <p>Read: <i>ATTWN</i> aloud</p> <p>Write: Create a new character on characterization chart – use knowledge of story for evidence</p> <p>SSR</p>
<p>Mini: Structure of Court room</p> <p>Read: Reread notes, novel</p> <p>Write: part in mock trial using novel, notes,</p>	<p>Mini: Assign and Demonstrate Parts in Mock Trial</p> <p>Read: Reread notes, novel</p> <p>Write: part in mock trial using novel,</p>	<p>Mini: Demonstrate Parts in Mock Trial</p> <p>Read: Reread notes, novel</p> <p>Write: part in mock trial using novel,</p>	<p>Mini: Demonstrate Parts in Mock Trial</p> <p>Read: Practice part</p> <p>Write: rewrite awkward or undocumented work</p>	<p>Mini: Demonstrate Parts in Mock Trial</p> <p>Read: Practice part</p> <p>Write: rewrite awkward or undocumented work</p>

theme as evidence SSR	notes, as evidence SSR	notes as evidence SSR	SSR	SSR
Present Mock Trial Judge, defendant (Wargrave), court reporter, cameraman, illustrator, lawyers, jurors, bailiff, Witnesses SSR	Present Mock Trial SSR	Present Mock Trial SSR	Present Mock Trial SSR	Present Mock Trial Turn in writing assignments Give students performance grade SSR
Mini: Questions a film reviewer answers for film goer Read: ATTWN film Write: notes SSR	Mini: Review questions Read: ATTWN film Write: notes SSR	Mini: Structure of a film review Write: Film Review (rough draft – see handout – 2 paragraphs) SSR	Mini: Read writings aloud to help edit and revise (strategy) Read: film review (aloud to self quietly – maybe in hall too) Write: Film Review (edit, revise) SSR	Mini: Review structure Write: final draft due SSR

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Fiction books contain a made-up story " a story that did not actually happen in real life. These stories are derived from the imagination and creativity of the authors and are not based on facts. The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho, 1984 by George Orwell, Harry Potter Series by J. K. Rowling are some of the examples of fiction books. Nonfiction. Non-fiction or nonfiction books are factual books. Unlike fiction books, they are based on facts and information that can be verified to be true. Some examples of non-fiction books are The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin by Benjamin Franklin, How to Win Friends And Influence People by Dale Carnegie, an encyclopedia, etc. Sometimes you may come across another category named semi-fiction. Do not be confused. Fiction can be defined as: Fiction is a genre that revolves around the things that don't exist or happen in reality. OR. Fiction is writing based on its author's creativity and the imagination that he/she possesses. Some popular fiction genres are: Mysteries. Nonfiction is a category of literature that deals with reality where the author's creativity is in the writing style instead of the story itself. Some popular nonfiction categories are: Biographies. Religion. History. Science. Humor. Fiction Story is created from the author's imagination. Stories are pretend. Animals or objects can talk, wear clothes, have jobs. People in the story can do things people cannot really do. Story might have funny pictures.

33 Theme The theme of a piece of fiction is its message about life. It usually contains some insight into the human condition. In most short stories, the theme can be expressed in a single sentence. In longer works of fiction, the central theme is often accompanied by a number of lesser, related themes, or there may be two or more central themes.

34 Central Idea Nonfiction often conveys a central idea supported by details. Central Idea Detail.

35 Narrator The narrator's perspective is the way he or she sees things.