

The Camp Experience in Literature Curriculum Unit

Objectives: Students will study fiction and narrative nonfiction literary texts to gain a deeper understanding of concentration and labor camps.

Students will make connections between themes in these books and the modern world.

Common Core English Language Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6

Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Materials:

Suggested texts for literature circles:

Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki. *Farewell to Manzanar: A True Story of Japanese American Experience During and After the World War II Experience*. Dell, 1995 (orig. 1972)

Otsuka, Julie. *When the Emperor Was Divine*. Anchor 2003 (orig. 2002).

Sepetys, Rita. *Between Shades of Gray*. Philomena, 2011.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2005 (orig. 1962).

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus I & 2*. Penguin, 2003 (orig. 1986).

Wein, Elizabeth. *Rose Under Fire*. Disney Hyperion, 2013.

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. Hill and Wang, 2006 (orig. 1958).

Other sources:

Elie Wiesel's "The Perils of Indifference Speech." 1999. Found on Commonlit.org

<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/elie-wiesel-s-the-perils-of-indifference-speech>

Video re-enactment of Alzhir Camp in Kazakhstan for wives of prisoners

<https://vimeo.com/168440665>

Images of Gulag Prisoners at Work: NYPL Digital Collections

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/gulag-prisoners-at-work-1936-1937#/?tab=about>

Japanese Internment Primary Source Set from the Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/internment/>

Resources:

K-W-L Chart <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/KWL%20Chart.pdf>

OPTIC Chart

For information on literature circles see *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student Centered Classroom* by Harvey Daniels, published by Stenhouse in 2001.

Procedure:

Week 1

1. Introduce the topics by having the students read Wiesel's "The Perils of Indifference" speech. Discuss: What does Wiesel mean that indifference is worse than hate or anger? What does he suggest we can learn from the many tragedies he mentions?
2. Show the video about the Kazakhstan gulag. Explain that the incident shown in the video is based on a real event. Kazakh children from the nearby villages threw dried cheese balls at the women in the camp. Because the guards thought they were throwing rocks, they didn't punish them. Because of this action, many women were able to get extra protein and calories that may have protected them during the harsh winter in the gulag.
3. Explain that students will be reading novels and narrative nonfiction texts about different camp experiences. Book talk the different books and have students select their top three choices. Make literature circle assignments based primarily on student interest, though you may also want to consider Lexile levels for differentiation.
4. On their first meeting, students will divide their reading between 6 meetings, approximately 2 per week for 3 weeks. You may want to assign students roles to help focus their discussion (available in the resources).
5. Have students complete a K-W-L chart about the specific camp experience they will be reading about.
6. Students should meet to discuss their book two more times.

Week 2

1. Students will meet 2 more times this week.
2. Between literature circle discussions, students will study primary source photographs from the camp experience. Have students use the OPTIC strategy to analyze the photographs and to make connections to their text.
3. Throughout their discussion, each group will maintain a quotation journal (this can be in a notebook or a shared document). Each student will need to contribute at least 10 quotes to the journal that they find meaningful. On one side of the page, they will write down the quote, along with the page number where it is found. The other side will include commentary explaining why they selected it.
4. At the end of the week, do a write around within each group on one or more themes they are finding within their book.
 - a. Each student will have a few minutes to write about one of the themes they have discovered in their chosen text. During the allotted time, students should write

continually, with no talking. They begin their response with the words “Dear friends,” and respond to the prompt “What do you think is the most important theme in this book?”

- b. After most people in the group have about a paragraph written, have them pass their papers to the person next to them. Give students time to read what their partner wrote and will then react to that in writing. No talking.
- c. After a minute or two, rotate the papers again. Now students need time to read both responses. They will then write their own response to their partners’ writings. As before, there is no talking. Give them just a few minutes to do this.
- d. Continue having students read and response until they get their own paper back. Students should read through the responses and highlight areas they feel would be good to discuss.
- e. Now allow students to talk about their writings, using what they have highlighted as their guide to the discussion.

Week 3

1. Students will meet approximately 2 more times in literature circles.
2. Students will also begin work on “Theme Notebooks.” Students will choose a theme from their book. On the first page of their notebook they will write the theme they have chosen. Then they need to include 10 quotes from their group notebook that support their theme, with commentary explaining how this quote supports their chosen theme.
3. Students will also collect 5 other sources from modern life that show this theme is still relevant to us today. These sources ;could be poetry, photographs, music, news articles, advertisements, memes, etc. Along with each source, the student should include commentary that explains why they selected the source.

OPTIC Strategy for Visual Images

O	Write a brief <i>overview</i> of the content of the painting (<i>complete sentences</i>).
P	Look at each <i>part</i> of the image and note details that seem important. These details can be anything: color, figures, textures, scenery, or any other feature that you notice (<i>may use lists/bullet points</i>).
T	Use the <i>title</i> or <i>caption</i> to clarify the subject of the painting.
I	Specify the <i>interrelationships</i> in the painting. In other words, how are the parts related to both one another and to the painting as a whole (<i>complete sentences</i>).
C	Draw a <i>conclusion</i> about the painting as a whole. What is the main idea that the painting offers? (<i>paragraph--5-7 complete sentences--may use TEAR format</i>).