

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN FOR A TROUBLED PEACE

Stories of Survival: Using L.M. Elliott’s historical fiction A Troubled Peace to inspire understanding of human struggle in times of war.

For students in grades 7 though 8 in English/Language Arts, pair with core texts such as The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank and Number the Stars by Lois Lowry. For students in Social Studies, pair with textbook and multi-media representations of World War II and the outcomes.

For students grades 8 though 10 in courses of study including English/Language Arts; pair with Night by Elie Wiesel. For students in Social Studies, pair with textbook and multimedia materials.

Rationale for pairing A Troubled Peace with core texts. The novel accurately describes historical events at the close of World War II in France, including brutal reprisals against civilian populations and the return of Holocaust survivors. The novel offers opportunities for extension, such as helping a student imagine what Anne Frank might have experienced had she survived, or what Holocaust survivors like Elie Wiesel faced after release from their captivity. In addition, specific references are made to writers living in Paris at the time, including George Orwell (*Animal Farm*) and Albert Camus (*The Stranger*).

Objective/SWBAT (Literature):

Students will expand their awareness of how literature – in this case a thoroughly-researched historical fiction – can help the reader to understand the impact of war, particularly on civilians. Students will appreciate how historical fiction allows the reader to engage the imagination while simultaneously enhancing understanding of actual historical events.

Objective/SWBAT (Social Studies):

(See objectives for Literature) Students will better understand the challenges faced by surviving populations in Europe at the end of World War II. More broadly, the student will learn that although wars eventually end, they leave behind a legacy of physical, social, economic, moral, and emotional challenges.

Prior Learning

Students have already read the grade level and curriculum texts associated with World War II and the realities of the Holocaust.

Materials

1. A copy of A Troubled Peace for each student.
2. On-line access in classroom with ability to project images on video monitor or screen. (Option: An overhead projector with “zoom” or enlargement technology, if available.)

Lesson Outline for Pre-reading Activity (Plan at least one “block” period.)

1. **Re-establish prior knowledge.** Review recently-learned content, including learning on World War II and its consequences. Refer specifically to content from literature and other texts used; refer to classroom activities that enriched understanding of the topic. Emphasize the destructive consequences of war, both physical and human.
2. **Establish set for new learning.** Tell the class that the emphasis for the lesson is on the impacts of war. Ask the class to share stories they have heard or even direct experiences they have had. For instance, students may know American personnel returning from Iraq or Iran, or have specific accounts of personal experiences from their home cultures outside the U.S.

3. **Perform activity to create context for new learning.** Depending on the classroom population, students may not have direct experience with the human impacts of war. Consider this activity: Individually or in pairs, ask students to pretend that the town or suburb around the school has been devastated by a natural disaster such as a hurricane, flood, or fire. Ask them to consider what problems they think the community would face....and what problems they would face as individuals? Students can create a list of the most severe impacts. If preferred, pairs develop lists and then work in fours to exchange ideas. One student from each group should report out the results. The teacher can list or “web” reported results on the board or on an overhead.
4. **Relate activity to new learning.** Using references to recent classroom study of the outcomes of war, ask students to consider some of the impacts specific to World War II. Use computer to video monitor/projection screen to introduce scenes depicting post-World War II France. Select your own images from available on-line sources and databases, or check the author’s website www.lmelliott.com to select images including still photography or news clips of the time. (Create a PowerPoint in advance if desired.) Ask students to attempt to explain the images in their own words; support students as needed. Help students to relate what they see with their own conceptualization from (3). The teacher can help to make appropriate connections with “real-life” problems faced at the end of war.
5. **Introduce A Troubled Peace by L.M. Elliott.** Explain that this is a sequel to Under a War-torn Sky, a “historical fiction” (explain term) that they may have read, written by the same author. Start with a brief description of Under a War-torn Sky, using your own reading experience or with the support of a media specialist/librarian...or by using information from the author’s website www.lmelliott.com as a reference. Explain that in the new novel, Henry Forester -- the downed World War II bomber pilot who escaped Nazi forces with the aid of courageous French civilians -- has returned home to his family in the U.S. In the opening of the sequel, Henry feels compelled to return to war-scarred France to search for Pierre, a boy who helped save his life. (Offer additional preview to the extent needed.)
6. **Circulate copies of A Troubled Peace.** Use copies to begin reading the first four chapters (30 pages in the first 2009 edition); use sustained silent reading or read-aloud as preferred. To create purpose, ask students to think about the thoughts and actions of the protagonist and the emotional and psychological pain he must face. Ask students to read for clues as to why Henry feels he *must* return to France.

Homework assignment (Assessment)

1. Direct class to www.lmelliott.com to locate text and images familiar from (4) above.
2. Students should continue reading the novel through approximately Chapter 10 (teacher’s preference, depending on grade and reading level). Ask students to read with the text and images from the author’s website in mind. **Students should keep a log as they read, listing details the author has selected to make the novel into a historically accurate fiction. The log can be used as an assessment of learning and as a starting point for discussion in the next lesson.**

A TROUBLED PEACE

Suggestions for Activities for Additional Lessons and Out-of-Class Assignments
(See lesson plan for “Under a War-torn Sky” for a corresponding list of activities.)

Use these activities to create a unit for curriculum objectives including “elements of the novel” (development of setting, character, conflict, theme, tone, etc.), “rites of passage,” “coming of age,” and “the archetypal hero.” Use to promote critical reading skills,

including analysis of character, plot, and theme development. Activities promote writing and oral language skills, and the use of context clues to decode new vocabulary.

Use a graphic organizer to help students identify changes in setting (time and place), characters (physical description and internal conflict), conflicts (problems to be solved by protagonist and other characters), and themes (“lessons learned” by protagonist and other characters). Use individual deskwork, pair work, group share among small groups, and independent work outside of class to complete the organizer chapter by chapter.

Write a reader-response log in which the student assumes the role of the protagonist and describes events and responses in the form of a diary, including dates, location, characters, key events, and personal responses.

Create a reader-response notebook in which the reader incorporates text from the novel, personal responses, and images depicting (as examples) the impacts of WWII on civilians, the return of Holocaust survivors, and the physical damage inflicted on cities and towns of the regions traveled by the protagonist. Students can use images from print and on-line resources available in the classroom, in the school media center, or at home via the Internet. The author’s website can be a source: www.lmelliott.com

Design and produce a wall display of a map depicting the protagonist’s journey, starting with his departure from Virginia to his arrival in France and travels through that country on his quest. Students can work in small groups (four or more) with the responsibility of extracting details from an assigned segment of chapters that describe a phase of the journey.

Perform “storybook theater” presentations in which small groups are responsible for presenting the complete content of passages or whole chapters. Use independent work and class discussion to identify key “episodes” (involving major conflicts, including responses by the protagonist and other characters which represent “rites of passage” in the context of “coming of age”). Within groups, students self-select roles including a director, narrator, characters, and special effects (for sounds or lighting). Students stage presentations in which all words in the text are read aloud and actions are dramatized.

Employ a variety of media to research topics including (as examples) “The Damage Done by War,” “The Struggle of Civilians to Survive,” “Life in Paris in 1945,” “Liberation of Concentration Camps,” and “The End of the War.” Students can use the text of the novel as well as the author’s website and related links to expand their awareness of the people, places, and events described. Use presentation by groups to whole class or have students create learning stations to be “visited” by other students. Encourage the use of maps, costumes, music, books of the period, foods, and other items.

Write a new scene for the novel in the style of the author. Select plot elements that are referred to but not described in detail by the author in the narrative, or ask students to imagine entirely new scenes.

Promote understanding of vocabulary by assigning one or more new vocabulary words to each student; during the reading, students become a “click-able link” similar to those found in on-line texts. Using a “clicker”, students interrupt reading to define the word for the class. All students keep track of vocabulary meanings on a vocabulary worksheet.

Practice use of context clues to decode difficult vocabulary by assigning passages including French words, phrases, and sentences. Students can work in pairs to formulate “translations.” Students with skills in French can be consulted as experts to help construct correct meanings; teachers should be prepared with a translation worksheet to verify results.