

Reading Literature Unit

Burke/Spring 2001

- Overview This unit has several important goals, all of which are based on the state standards. Be sure that each student takes their own notes as you will be graded individually, though you will also be evaluated for your group's work. I expect this unit to take approximately three weeks. By the unit's end, you should know and be able to:
- ❑ Read different types of **literature** organized around a **unifying theme**
 - ❑ Write about this **theme** using details and quotes from the different texts you read to support your **thesis**
 - ❑ Take useful notes that will help you understand and prepare you to write about what you read
 - ❑ Discuss, in groups and with the entire class, your **reading process** and **interpretations**
 - ❑ Write about literature using appropriate **conventions** (e.g., always write in present tense when writing about literature)
 - ❑ Identify the essential components of each **genre** (e.g., plot, theme, character, etc; but also style, tone, voice, devices)
- Step One **Survey** the textbook to familiarize yourself with it. Complete the Textbook Evaluation sheet. In order to expedite this portion, you can complete this portion as a group.
- Step Two Begin your note-making with a list of comments and/or questions about the book and its contents. Look at the title and the contents.
- Step Three Read the foreword. Take notes on the following questions. Be sure to jot down examples in your notes:
- ❑ What **purpose** does a foreword serve?
 - ❑ How is a foreword different from a **preface, introduction, and prologue**?
 - ❑ How is a foreword similar to a preface, introduction, and prologue?
 - ❑ Be specific: What is the author of this foreword trying to accomplish? Why do you think that? What examples can you provide to support your **assertion**?
- Step Four Get into groups of four people. Once your group is set up, skim through the table of contents. Each unit in the book is **organized** around a theme. Decide which unit your group wants to focus on, then sign up for that unit on the white board. *Note: No two groups may study the same unit.*
- Step Five Before you begin reading the poems and stories in the unit, have a discussion about the **theme**. All members should take notes during and after this discussion. If, for example, the unit is titled "The Need to Succeed," you should ask questions like these:
- ❑ What does it mean to "succeed"?
 - ❑ Do we really "need" to succeed?
 - ❑ Why do we feel this need?
 - ❑ What do we need in order to succeed?
 - ❑ How would the world be different if we did not feel this need?
 - ❑ What does success cost us?
 - ❑ If one succeeds does the other necessarily "fail"?
 - ❑ Is succeeding the same as winning?
- Step Six Follow these steps for all of the selections in your unit:
1. Choose the next selection (e.g., the story or poem you will all read next). Give the group an assignment: Example: "Everyone needs to finish this poem and have your initial notes

Reading Literature Unit
Burke/Spring 2001

done by the end of the period,” or “Get this done for homework tonight so we can do the next step tomorrow.”

2. Brainstorm possible meanings and **implications** based on the title or any other clues you might have. (*Everyone should take notes throughout this process*)
3. Read the assigned text.
4. As you read, make notes---ask questions, jot down examples, write observations---about **patterns**, themes, tone, style, point of view, or other aspects of the story that seem important. Consider using one of the following note-making methods we have studied:
 - Reporter’s Notes
 - Cornell Notes
 - Episodic Notes
 - Sensory Notes
 - Interactive Notes
5. Write one perfect paragraph about each poem or story in the unit. In this paragraph you must do the following:
 - Have a clear **topic sentence** that establishes a connection between this poem/story and the theme of the unit.
 - Example:** Success comes in many forms, however, as the story “Good Day for Banana Fish” proves.
 - Write in the **present tense**.
 - Include at least two examples or quotes from the story. These should support or develop the connection between this story and the unit theme.
 - Explain, in separate sentences, how these quotes relate to both the topic sentence and the theme of the unit.

Note: Each student must complete all written assignments and read all texts in the unit.

Step Seven Prepare to run a fishbowl discussion (guidelines forthcoming) about your unit’s theme. A successful discussion will demonstrate your ability to:

- understand and discuss what you read
- develop** and **support** an idea, using examples from different texts
- explain your ideas to others to help them understand your interpretation of the story
- make connections between what you read, the world around you, and your own or others’ lives.

Step Eight Write an essay about a theme in literature. Using the notes you’ve taken, write an essay that explores the theme of your unit (e.g., “the need to succeed”). This essay must:

- be typed, double-spaced, and written in a **12-point serif font** (this document is written in a serif font), with 1.25 inch margins
- be at least three typed pages
- include a properly formatted bibliography page (does not count as one of the three pages!) citing all the different poems and stories in your unit, as well as the textbook itself
- have a properly formatted cover page

Deadlines This paper, complete with drafts and notes will be due on Wednesday February 21st. The discussions discussed in Step Seven will take place the week of February 12th.

Assessment You will receive two grades: one an individual grade based solely on the quality of your final written work; the second one determined by your contribution to the group.