

Stage 4 Year 8 unit starter

How many hills have you climbed?

Rationale

This unit is based on the novel *One thousand hills* by James Roy and Noël Zihabamwe which explores the Rwanda genocide of 1994 through the character of Pascal a teenage refugee in Belgium. The narrative includes both his discussion with the school psychologist and his recount of the genocide from 5 years earlier. The novel provides opportunities for students to learn about the power of fiction and character to represent the culture and history of other countries and times focussing on how our own experiences influence our readings and response to texts.

Outcomes

EN4-1A, EN4-2A, EN4-3C, EN4-4B, EN4-5C, EN4-6C, EN4-7D, EN4-8D, EN4-9E

Concept/s

Character: Students understand that characters are constructs that function differently in different types of texts and media. They learn that these character constructs:

- combine with constructs of events and settings to create narrative
- use resources such as description, dialogue, monologue

Representation: Students understand that representations are not natural reflections of the world. They learn that:

- representation positions a responder
- representations may be intentionally objective or subjective

Theme: Students understand that theme reflects or challenges values. They learn that:

- themes are statements about the ideas, explicit or implied, in a text
- themes are reinforced by choice of language and imagery
- themes can highlight social and cultural similarities and differences
- thematic interpretations arise from personal experience and culture

Texts

One thousand hills by James Roy and Noël Zihabamwe (2016), Omnibus Books, Australia.

Focus questions for responding and composing

- Are life representations in narratives, natural reflections of the world?
- To what degree does our personal experience and culture influence our understanding of themes in a text?
- Are characters constructed for a purpose in texts?

Prior knowledge

- Brainstorm knowledge of Rwanda
- Make connections to other historical fiction students have read/ seen

Assessment

- Students write a proposal for a new text based on an historical event and justify their choices focussing on character, representation and theme and purpose, audience and context.

Processes	Lesson Activities	Evidence of learning
<p>Understanding</p> <p>Students analyse texts and in their responding and composing explain information and ideas for particular audiences and purposes. They use their knowledge of texts to make generalisations about how texts work.</p>	<p>Close study of construction of Pascal: descriptive language, dialogue, relationships, thoughts, and actions (Character)</p> <p>Create a knowledge bank of information gained about Rwanda from this text. Explore the language to determine the objectivity/ subjectivity of the content. (Representation)</p>	<p>Character profile</p> <p>Discussion</p>
<p>Engage personally</p> <p>Students respond to and compose texts reflecting their widening world. They identify ways in which their own experiences, perspectives and contexts influence their responses.</p>	<p>Students compare and contrast/ Venn diagram of their own lives beside Pascal's (chores, daily routines, family, religion, friendship, hardships etc.) Students write a considered reflection of the impact of these connections on their reading and the possible intent of the writers. (Character, Representation)</p>	<p>Written reflection</p>
<p>Connecting</p> <p>Through responding and composing student make connections between information, ideas and texts. They compare texts to understand the effects of different choices of language, form, mode and medium for various audiences and purposes.</p>	<p>Students analyse the book cover and make connections with the novel, considering character, theme and representation, purpose and audience. (Character, Representation, Theme)</p> <p>Students make connections with other texts that fictionalise historical events or non-fiction texts to find similarities and differences in the representations. (Representation)</p>	<p>Annotated book cover image</p> <p>Discussion</p>

Processes	Lesson Activities	Evidence of learning
<p>Engaging critically</p> <p>Through responding and composing students explore the different ways texts can be interpreted. They identify ways in which composers position the audience to accept particular views and perspectives and make judgements about these.</p>	<p>Create a list of thematic statements and have students individually decide upon the three strongest. In small groups, students discuss their views and determine the best thematic statement. They then work together to find evidence to support this view from the text. Whole class discussion of views and consensus to follow. (Representation, Theme)</p>	<p>View supported by evidence</p>
<p>Experimenting</p> <p>Students use, adapt or subvert particular textual conventions across modes and media to experiment with a range of meanings and textual concepts.</p>	<p>Students write a discussion between Pascal and the psychologist as he is about to complete his schooling in 3 years' time OR write a letter from Henri to Pascal as an adult, projecting the construction of the characters whilst considering the thematic concerns of the novel. (Character, Representation, Theme)</p>	<p>Writing sample</p>
<p>Reflecting</p> <p>Students begin to personalise their metacognitive processes, identifying their own pleasure and difficulties in responding, composing and learning. They are able to plan and monitor their work, articulate their own learning processes and begin to assess which learning processes may suit them and will suit particular tasks and why.</p>	<p>At the conclusion of the unit, provide students with a list of the teaching and learning activities undertaken with the text, such as teacher reading and discussion, theme ranking collaborative task etc. Ask students to reflect on the successfulness of each and how they developed their understanding/ engagement/ appreciation.</p>	<p>Written personal response Draft and editing</p>

The intention of this unit starter is to illustrate teaching and learning activities for each of the processes.

The processes may be taught in any order to cater for the needs of all learners and further differentiation can be included in your full version of the unit.