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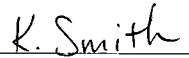
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ABSTRACT

Based on Bram Stoker's novel "Dracula," this lesson plan presents activities designed to help students understand that some fictional literary characters become so famous that they enter popular culture in other forms (movies, games, toys); and that working on a product such as a game often demands collaborative effort. The main activity of the lesson involves students working in small groups to develop a board game based on "Dracula." It includes objectives, materials, procedures, adaptations, discussion questions, evaluation methods, extension activities, annotations of suggested readings and web links, vocabulary, and related academic standards and benchmarks addressed in the lesson plan. The lesson plan also contains a description of a video clip related to the lesson, comprehension questions related to the video clip, and answers to those comprehension questions. (RS)



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TITLE OF LESSON PLAN:

Dracula

LENGTH OF LESSON: Two class periods

GRADE LEVEL: 9-12

SUBJECT AREA: Literature

CREDIT: Summer Productions, Inc.

OBJECTIVES: Students will understand the following:

1. Some fictional literary characters become so famous that they enter popular culture in other forms—movies, games, toys.
2. Working on a product such as a game often demands a collaborative effort.

MATERIALS:

For this lesson, you will need:

 The novel *Dracula*

Sheets of cardboard, oak tag, or some other stiff material to be decorated as game boards and to be cut up into cards for the games

Pairs of dice for each group

Multiples of various small objects—buttons, coins, bottle tops, and so on—for students to use as playing pieces

Markers to decorate game boards

Old magazines to cut up for illustrations on game boards

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PROCEDURE:

1. Encourage students to name favorite board games.
2. Discuss with your students features that are common to board games:
 - A starting point and an ending point
 - Playing pieces
 - Dice or a wheel with spinner
 - Cards with directions
 - Places on the board that if landed on provide a shortcut or force backward movement for a playing piece
3. Proceed to discuss with students the ways in which the story *Dracula* can be viewed in terms of a board game:
 - How do the characters in *Dracula* “advance”?
 - What obstacles get in the way of the novel's characters' progress?
 - What gives the novel's characters strength? What weakens the novel's characters?
 - What symbols in the novel can be used in some way—if only for decoration—in the board game?
 - How does Bram Stoker's story end? What alternative endings can students conceive of?
4. When the discussion is complete, organize students into groups, and give each group the assignment to create an illustrated game board, game pieces, and written rules for its version of The Dracula Game. Students will work with the materials listed in Materials.
5. When the games are still in a draft stage, have each group run a product test by explaining the work-in-progress to another group and asking for feedback. Then the groups should go on to revise their games.
6. When the games are finished, so to speak, ask each group to give an oral presentation on how the product reflects the assignment. Then rotate the games around the room so that groups play one another's games.
7. Finally, conduct a class discussion in which students evaluate the pros and cons of the games they've reviewed.

ADAPTATIONS:

Instead of dividing the class into groups, let all the individuals in the class work as one large group with you as group leader.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What elements of the gothic genre are found in *Dracula*? Consider characters, conflicts, setting, tone, and symbols.
2. Describe Dracula as a simple tale of good versus evil. Which characters or ideas does Stoker depict as “good”? Which does he depict as “evil”? How do these characters and ideas conflict within the story?
3. What did Dracula represent within the context of Stoker's story? Explore the question in the context of the following assertion: Dracula is all things to all people.
4. Evaluate the effects that Dracula has on the various characters he encounters in the story. How does he bring out their best and most noble instincts? How does he bring out their worst or least attractive qualities?
5. What is the significance of blood in *Dracula*? What is its value to humans? To the vampire? Explore the literal and symbolic meanings of blood in the story.
6. Explain some ways Dracula remains an icon in today's popular culture. Compare and contrast the different ways Dracula is portrayed in movies, television, and other books. Is Dracula's power as a symbol increased or diminished when he is “rewritten” into new texts?

EVALUATION:

You can evaluate the students in terms of collaboration, oral presentation, and class discussion(s).

COLLABORATION

Make notes about student participation, cooperation, and ability to compromise.

ORAL PRESENTATION

Use the following three-point rubric:

Three points: highly organized oral explanation of the game; very clear articulation

Two points: organized oral explanation of the game; mostly articulate presentation

One point: disorganized oral presentation; unclear speech

CLASS DISCUSSION

Make notes about students' willingness to volunteer but not monopolize the discussion.

EXTENSION:

Count Darwin: A Time Line

Note that Dracula has been called a shape-shifter because he can change into various animals. Explain that some scholars believe that in depicting Dracula as a shape-shifter, Bram Stoker was drawing on Charles Darwin's theory of evolution—specifically, the idea that all species, including humans, evolved from earlier animals. With this idea in mind, work with your students to create an illustrated time line that traces Dracula's evolution throughout the novel. Label each shape he assumes with a short student-composed description.

When the time line is complete, discuss the transformations further:

- Do the transformations reflect evolutionary history? That is, do the shapes Dracula assumes become more advanced as the novel progresses?
- Is there some other pattern to Dracula's changes?
- What comment, if any, does Bram Stoker seem to be making about evolution?

Live from Transylvania: A News Report

Ask your students to write a radio news report of Dracula's death. Direct them to begin their stories with a one-paragraph lead that summarizes *who, what, where, when, why, and how* Dracula is killed. Each subsequent paragraph in the rest of the report should contain descriptive adjectives; students might build these paragraphs around details taken directly from the book. Encourage students to include interviews of police and community leaders as well as of the novel's other characters who can provide eyewitness testimony—quotations that reflect the characters' motivations and biases. They can also include reports from England and Transylvania. Finally, advise them that to make their news reports balanced, they should include what others know or suspect about Dracula's own point of view. They might even want to create a character to defend and explain Dracula's behavior.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Vampire: The Complete Guide to the World of the Undead

Manuela Dunn Mascetti. Penguin Books USA, Inc., 1992.

This intriguing and wonderfully artistic book on vampires explores their history and myths, as well as the presence of Dracula throughout world history.

Dracula: Between Tradition and Modernism

Carol A. Senf. Twayne Publications, 1998.

Why has the myth of Dracula remained popular around the world since *Dracula's* publication in 1897? This book delves into that question and explores Dracula's place in history and in the modern world.

WEB LINKS:

Dracula's Homepage

Extensive links dealing with Dracula.

<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~emiller/>

Terrific Web Sites....

Nice site from Eastchester Middle School with a link to an electronic version of Dracula listed under "writers."

<http://www.westnet.com/~rickd/kids/english.html#Writers>

Dracula's castle

Visit and view where Vlad the Impaler is said to have lived briefly and learn about his life.

<http://www.draculacastle.com/index.html>

Vlad Dracula: An intriguing figure in the fifteenth century

Read the story of Vlad the Impaler.

<http://members.aol.com/johnfranc/drac05.htm>

Dracula

Nice hyperlinked electronic version of Dracula.

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/People/rgs/drac-table.html>

VOCABULARY:

alienation

A withdrawing or separation of a person or a person's affections from an object or position of former attachment.

Context:

After being rejected by her friends, the girl was overwhelmed with a feeling of alienation.

anxiety

Painful or apprehensive uneasiness of mind, usually over an impending or anticipated ill.

Context:

Dracula's persistence in attacking Mina filled John with anxiety.

appropriation

Taking for one's own use.

Context:

Popular culture's appropriation and distortion of Dracula's image would have enraged Bram Stoker.

contagion

A contagious disease.

Context:

The deadly contagion wiped out an entire population.

exotic

Strikingly, excitingly, or mysteriously different or unusual.

Context:

The unfamiliar people appeared exotic to John.

icon

Emblem; symbol.

Context:

Dracula has become an icon representing evil.

mundane

Characterized by the practical, transitory, and ordinary.

Context:

Eating the same meal three times a day can become very mundane.

transfusion

The process of transfusing fluid into a vein or artery.

Context:

The accident victim is in dire need of a transfusion.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS:

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject Area: language arts

Standard: Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of literary texts.

Benchmarks:

Benchmark: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, supernatural tales, satires, parodies, plays, American literature, British literature, world and ancient literature, the Bible).

Benchmark: Understands historical and cultural influences on literary works.

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject Area: language arts

Standard: Demonstrates competence in the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.

Benchmarks:

Benchmark: Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas (e.g., stimulates the imagination of the reader, translates concepts into simpler or more easily understood terms).

Benchmark: Uses a variety of techniques to provide supporting detail (e.g., analogies, anecdotes, restatements, paraphrases, examples, comparisons).

Benchmark: Uses a variety of techniques to convey a personal style and voice.

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject Area: language arts

Standard: Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the reading process.

Benchmarks: Identifies and analyzes the philosophical assumptions and basic beliefs underlying an author's work.

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject Area: historical understanding

Standard: Understands the historical perspective.

Benchmarks: Analyzes the influences specific ideas and beliefs had on a period of history and specifies how events might have been different in the absence of those ideas and beliefs.

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© Video Information and Comprehension Questions

The logo for 'The Return of Dracula' features the words 'THE RETURN OF' in a smaller, white, serif font above the word 'DRACULA' in a larger, bold, white, serif font. The text is set against a black rectangular background.

Video Description

Learn how new technology, Darwin's explosive theory of evolution, and spreading blood diseases like syphilis threatened to alter Victorian sensibilities and became fuel for Bram Stoker's provocative horror story.

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TITLE OF VIDEO:

Dracula

VIDEO COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which elements of *Dracula* are hallmarks of traditional gothic literature?
2. What concerns of the English people of the time are captured in the story of *Dracula*?
3. How do the two main settings in *Dracula*—England and Transylvania—symbolize the story's conflict between good and evil?
4. Why do the blood transfusions given to Lucy fail to save her life?
5. How does the story of *Dracula* illustrate the concerns the English people had about immigration at the turn of the century?
6. Into what shapes can *Dracula* transform?
7. How do the men in the novel finally kill *Dracula*? Why might the method of his death seem surprising to modern readers?
8. Is *Dracula*'s story really over at the end of the novel?

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Dracula

VIDEO COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. Which elements of *Dracula* are hallmarks of traditional gothic literature?

The fight of good versus evil, the power of darkness, the melodramatic tone, the presence of the supernatural, and the characters' internal psychological anguish are all hallmarks of traditional gothic literature.

2. What concerns of the English people of the time are captured in the story of *Dracula*?

Victorian repression, the spread of communicable diseases, the changing role of women, the theory of scientific evolution, and massive immigration into England.

3. How do the two main settings in *Dracula*—England and Transylvania—symbolize the story's conflict between good and evil?

England is portrayed as a virtuous, safe place, which conflicts strongly with the depiction of Transylvania as dark, imposing, and mysterious.

4. Why do the blood transfusions given to Lucy fail to save her life?

Lucy is infected with Dracula's blood, which causes the vampire's disease. The transfusions of new blood fail to save her because every night Dracula drains every drop she receives.

5. How does the story of *Dracula* illustrate the concerns the English people had about immigration at the turn of the century?

The influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe into England in this time period raised concerns about pollution of pure British bloodlines.

6. Into what shapes can *Dracula* transform?

Dracula can transform into whatever shapes suit his purpose, including a bat, fog, or human.

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7. How do the men in the novel finally kill Dracula? Why might the method of his death seem surprising to modern readers?

The men in the novel kill Dracula with a bowie knife. This may seem surprising to modern readers familiar with the myth that vampires can be killed only with a stake through the heart.

8. Is Dracula's story really over at the end of the novel?

Although Dracula is killed before the end of the novel, at least one of his victims—Mina—lives on, so one could speculate that Dracula lives on through her.

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