

12th Grade English Unit Plan #5: Post-Colonialism and *The Heart of Darkness*: 6 weeks

Synopsis: In this unit, students will read *The Heart of Darkness* and use Post-Colonial Theory to critique the text.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Unit Snapshot: *The Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad is a book full of contradictory images, twisted symbols, cruelties, and depravities. As such, it does not work to teach a love of reading or literary elements. However, *The Heart of Darkness* is an exceptional novel in its use of language, symbolism, and imagery. This novel can teach students how to close read, how to critique, and how to apply their critique to the vestiges of slavery and colonialism as they affect our world today.

Unit Goals:

- Students will read, analyze, and evaluate *The Heart of Darkness* and connected texts.
- Students will participate in two Socratic Seminars (midpoint and concluding) that will help them develop their thinking
- Students will create a social action project based on the issues in *The Heart of Darkness*.

CCSS:

- **RL. 11-12.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- **RL.11-12.2:** Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **RL.11-12.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

Enduring Understandings:

- When social injustices are occurring, students should understand that they need to critique the system.
- Readers need to thoughtfully critique texts to understand the layers they can uncover.
- Post-colonialism is the study of imbalanced systems.

Essential Questions:

- How does the system of colonization affect the colonized and the colonizer?
- How do we create meaning in an obtuse text?

<p>Students will know...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That colonialism applied oppressive force on indigenous people to obtain resources. • That a symbol introduced in the beginning of the text may have many meanings by the end of the text. • How to write an effective argumentative essay that includes multiple authors' viewpoints • What a Socratic Seminar is and how to use textual evidence to participate effectively in a Socratic Seminar 	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze a very complex text to connect literary elements to the author's purpose. • Discuss and write about post-colonial literary theory. • Document their thoughts in their Journal into the Congo. • Use what they have learned through this text and apply that to a Social Action Project.
<p>Key terms and concepts: Frame Narrative Post-colonialism Symbolism Imagery</p>	<p>Fiction & non-fiction/ Culturally Responsive Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Heart of Darkness</i> by Joseph Conrad • Studio Museum Harlem Class Trip • Black Minstrels' Images • "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness" by Chinua Achebe
<p>Accommodations/Modifications (ELLs & SWDs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic organizers for students as needed • Having draft pre-reviewed by teacher before submitting final essay • Access to a thesaurus and dictionary during writers' workshop 	
<p>Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence</p>	

Performance Tasks: Social Action Project

Directions: The purpose of this assignment is to consider how the issues in the novels we read impact us today and what we can do to mitigate problems and improve our lives and the lives of people in our community.

Issue Statement: This will be the aspect of your project that looks most like a traditional essay. Using evidence from a text (*The Heart of Darkness*, *Beloved*, or the Studio Museum), you will analyze the issue and connect it to something that is happening in our world today.

Proposal: This is where you think through the issue and create a plan. Your proposal may look very different from another student's because it is so highly dependent on what you want to do.

Action Project: This is where you document your project. What did you do?

Impact Statement: This is where you analyze the impact of your project. What went well? What did you accomplish? What are ideas for further action?

Other Evidence:

Formative:

- Read aloud
- Discussions relating to Essential Questions
- Exit slips
- Annotations

Summative:

- Socratic Seminars on themes of *Heart of Darkness* (R1, R2, R4, SL 6)
- Weekly Vocabulary Quizzes (using student generated vocabulary lists)
- Social Action Projects