

Analyzing, Understanding, and Exploring Literature

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Unit One

Introduction

Welcome to this seventh-grade language arts/literature course. Over the next thirty-six weeks, we will be diving into the world of language arts through reading, writing, and researching, ending with a presentation from the student. Language is important for many reasons. It can help you to become a better reader, writer, thinker, and speaker. Think about how God spoke the world and all creation into existence with His WORDS. The book of Genesis, chapter 1 (KJV), says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. **And God said**, ‘Let there be light: and there was light.’”

Course Syllabus (Objectives and Outcomes):

In this language arts/literature course, you will read a variety of short- and full-length fiction and nonfiction texts, becoming more independent in your ability to analyze themes and structure. Explaining an author’s purpose and using text-based details to support your analyses are skills you will develop in this course. You will learn how to define unfamiliar language and increase your vocabulary knowledge while gaining the skills necessary to become a more confident writer. You will also write an analytical essay. You will compare and contrast two author’s account of the same information using the Gospels. You will learn how to analyze the value and accuracy of primary and secondary sources about the same topic. Throughout this class, you will continue to sharpen your ability to analyze and evaluate works of literature through discussion and written critique. Take note of how the elements of a story interact, how the theme or central idea is developed through a text, and whether the author supports his or her claims with sound reasoning or evidence; this will help you to become a better thinker. At the culmination of this course, you will deliver a presentation, making appropriate eye contact and speaking at the appropriate volume.

The primary texts we will study are:

- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain
- *The Story of My Life*, by Helen Keller

Other selected works we will study are:

- “The Gift of the Magi,” by O. Henry
- “A Horseman in the Sky,” by Ambrose Bierce
- Selections from The Gospels of Matthew and Luke

- Selections from Poetry, American Tall Tales, and Fairy Tales

There will be links provided throughout the lesson plans and in both the Teacher and Student Guides for the reading texts online.

Supplies Needed:

- Reader's Response Notebook (This can be either a spiralbound notebook or a three-ring binder with paper.)
- Pencil/pen/highlighter
- Dictionary and thesaurus
- Access to a computer with Internet

Reader's Response Notebook:

You will need either a spiral notebook or a three-ring binder with paper. As you work through this course, you will be adding to your Reader's Response Notebook. This notebook is a place for you to complete your assignments, take notes about the selections you are reading, and to plan out your presentation toward the end of this class. If you would like, you can add sticky notes in the spiral notebook to divide sections or add subject dividers with tabs to the three-ring binder. Throughout the lessons, the Reader's Response Notebook will be referred to as the notebook.

SchoolhouseTeachers.com note: Parents should closely monitor children's use of YouTube and Wikipedia if you navigate away from the videos and articles cited in these lessons. We also recommend viewing the videos on a full screen setting in order to minimize your students' exposure to potentially offensive ads and inappropriate comments beside or beneath the video.

Week 1: Telling a Story

What is fiction? Some students balk at the prospect of reading fiction during English class, while others devour it quickly. The reality is that there are many good reasons to study fiction, which has interesting characters and plots nurturing our imaginations and creating in us realistic emotions to which we can relate. Fiction enables readers to better understand the human condition and to become more observant of their surroundings. Reading also increases literacy skills so that students become more proficient readers and writers. You will also build your vocabulary. Therefore, it is important to study the purposes, types, and structures of fiction, which are described in this unit. After taking notes, you will be better prepared to read and comprehend the variety of short fiction texts you will study during this unit.

Click on the following link and read the article on fiction. Take notes in the notebook you have set aside for this course. In your notes, define fiction and list the different types of fiction mentioned in this article: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiction>.

Next, we'll learn about the parts of a story. You will become familiar with the "bones" of a story. You will learn about the various types, or genres, of fiction as well as types of characters and the general structure of plot development. After taking notes, you will be able to identify the different "parts of a story" in stories you already know. This information will give you a more sophisticated knowledge of how fiction works.

Carefully review the presentation "Parts of a Story" on the lessons page and write definitions for each part of a story such as the genre, theme, characters and types, plot, conflict, and interactions. In your notebook or here, answer all the questions in the presentation. Next, you need to choose a favorite film or book and, in your notebook, identify the parts of the story:

- Genre - _____
- Theme - _____
- Main characters (protagonist, antagonist) - _____

- Plot development (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) -

- Conflict - _____

- Interactions - _____

SAMPLE