

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court Lesson Plan
Mark Twain Teachers Workshop—Mark Twain Museum
July 23-27, 2007—Hannibal, Missouri
Developed by Elizabeth O'Farrell, Bowling Green High School

Novel Title: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

Grade Level: 11 (American Literature)

Time Frame for Lesson: Four class periods (one to introduce the novel, two days in the computer lab, and one day to present the project) during the four weeks given to read the novel and complete the project

Background Information: Our Language Arts II classes (10th-grade English) do a two-month-long unit on King Arthur and the Round Table), so they will not need much background on this particular material. I will re-introduce the concept of the "frame," which we will have discussed earlier as well as the concept of theme in conjunction with the complexity of the novel. Finally, we will take a look at the sociology of Victorian America: progress, technology, social classes, etc. when we deal with the introductory material for the Division and Discovery (Civil War and Westward Expansion) Unit of American Literature.

Literary/Language Arts Focus: satire, irony, analysis, fictive construct, persona, characterization, setting, point of view, and--of course--theme.

State Standards: Missouri Grade-Level Expectations--CA 2, 3 1.6; CA 2,3 1.5, 1.6; CA 2.3 1.5, 1.6; CA 2.3 1.6, 3.5; CA 2 1.6, 2.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.1; VA4

Curriculum Connections: art, music, language arts

Vocabulary: This will be the second project. See the attached assignment sheet.

Materials: Copies of the novel, copies of illustrated manuscripts and medieval illustration, books of political cartoons, CD's and books using medieval instruments and instrumentation, copies of poetic forms--odes, sonnets, etc.

Technological Support: We have a computer lab available to do research, DVD of Quantum Leap

Content Objectives: (Mastery of these objectives is set at 70 percent using rubric provided)

1. The student will describe/recreate the theme
2. The student will define and utilize selected vocabulary from the novel
3. The student will develop musical or artistic themes in the context of the novel
4. The student will formulate and compose two multi-paragraph essays which reflect his understanding of two of the following: the plot, theme, point-of-view, setting, characterization, and language of the novel as well as the concept of frame, the ways in which the novel reflects Victorian American literature, and the humor of Mark Twain. The questions set out by the teacher will be calculated to measure comprehension as well as demonstrate mastery of the essay format taught in this class.

The Lesson:

| Time | Teacher Activity/Questions | Student Activity |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| First Day | | |
| 20 minutes | Hook: Watch 10 minutes of an episode of <u>Quantum Leap</u> and discuss possibilities | Listen and answer questions |
| 10 minutes | Explain the concept of the novel to them, set up the rules of time travel (in Mark Twain), and re-emphasize the concept of a frame. | Listen and ask/answer questions |
| 30 minutes | Read the Preface and Word of Explanation aloud. | Listen and ask/answer questions |
| 25 minutes | Hand out and read through the assignment sheet with the students. Give them final due date and ask them to read the first chapter for the next class period. | Listen and ask/answer questions |
| Second Day | | |
| 30 minutes | Discuss the novel so far, answer any questions, and set out the major themes of the novel | Listen and ask/answer questions |
| Two Weeks Later | Utilize the A+ (computer) Lab to research medieval art or music, poetic forms, comic book construction, other materials | On-line research/Independent practice |
| One Week Later | Allow class time to work on projects. Use internal sources as well--invite art and music teachers into the classroom | Independent practice, ask questions |
| One Week Later--60 minutes | Present projects to class | Individual presentations |
| 25 minutes | Discussion of novel and preview of test items | Ask/answer questions, guided practice |
| Next class period--10 minutes | Review of novel, take test | Ask/answer questions in a formal essay format |
| 70 minutes | Test over novel | Independent examination |
| 10 minutes | Final discussion of novel--link to next author (Ambrose Bierce) and next assignment | Closure |

The time frame may be adapted depending on circumstance and necessity.

Assessment/Evaluation: The project will be graded using a rubric (see attached copy). The evaluation will be based on these areas: completion of assignment; artistry/quality; correctness.

Adaptations/Modifications: For IEP students in a weighted, dual-enrollment course such as this, the only accommodation allowed is to give the student additional time and/or the ability to have the assigned special education teacher read the material aloud to the student--this is obviously allowed. For gifted students, the supplementary material is implied in the assignment itself. Those students may, if they wish, go beyond the assignment or adapt the assignment themselves.

And Now, for Something Completely Different

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court

Assignments and Due Dates

Rather than rounding up the usual suspects inherent in reading a novel aloud, taking quizzes, doing vocabulary sheets, and taking a final test, we are going to be doing something a little out of the ordinary with this novel.

You will be required to read the novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. After today, we will continue with our studies of American Literature in class. It will be your responsibility to read the novel and have it and the projects noted below finished in four weeks, on _____. At that time, you will take an essay exam over the novel. You will have to compose the answers to two essay questions during the time period. You will get a review of the novel and a preview of the types of questions during the unit.

So, what's the difference? While reading the novel, you will have to do two projects. Both of those will be due on the day before the exam. The first is simplicity itself--rather than me giving you a vocabulary list for the novel, you will formulate your own.

You are to make a list of 50 words from the novel which you do not upon first reading, understand. You need to obtain the definitions of those words well enough to use them in this way: devise a minimum of three exercises for other students to use (crossword puzzles, seek and find, acrostics, fill-in-the-blank sheets, etc.) You may use computer programs or websites, which help you to formulate the puzzles in order to do this or you may do these on your own. This does **not** mean that you may find any of the above already done on the Internet or in books and pass them off as your own. That is plagiarism and will earn you a zero.

What's the real difference? Rather than quizzes, study guides, worksheets, or any other typical material assigned for the classroom study of a novel, you are to do a creative project utilizing one of the common themes in this novel. As we have discussed, novelists develop several themes in the course of their novels. You are to follow the development of one of the themes (don't worry--we'll discuss them and explain them during the next class period) and use them to develop a creative project. These are your choices for the types of projects you may do and some ideas for them.

- **Art***

--Illustrate 10-12 scenes from the novel and explain how each illustration demonstrates the theme you chose.

--Draw and write a comic book, which traces the theme you chose through the novel.

--Draw a series of political cartoons, which illustrate the theme you chose through the novel.

*In addition to the artwork, which should be turned in using a folder or a portfolio, you must--in writing--explain your project.

- **Language Arts***

--Transport Hank Morgan to another place and time (2007 Bowling Green, 44 B.C.E Rome, 1941 Pearl Harbor, etc.) and rewrite ten scenes, which tie in to the theme you chose.

--Write a series of poems from the point of view of several characters in the novel and illustrate the theme you chose (mix and match forms--rap, iambic pentameter, odes, sonnets, etc.).

--Write specific scenes of the novel as a screenplay or a play. Be sure those scenes are illustrative of your theme.

*Any of these projects need to be either word processed or presented as an illustrated manuscript. Do not just scribble them on notebook paper. They need to be turned in using a folder or a portfolio.

- **Music***

--Write five protest songs, hooked into one of the themes. You are solely responsible for the lyrics. You may, if you wish, borrow the music, but you must acknowledge the source of the music. Be sure to explain how the songs are illustrative of the theme.

--Score five scenes from the book which are thematically connected--turn in the sheet music, a recording of the music, and an explanation of how the music is connected to the theme.

--Choose five-seven scenes, which illustrate your theme. Then, write medieval ballads to tell the stories of those themes. This time the words and music must be yours.

*Any of these projects must include an explanation of the connection between your material and the theme of the novel. The project must be turned in using a folder or portfolio.

- **Mixed Media or Multi-Media***

--Choose your theme and create a video illustrating the theme using original art and music or utilizing other people's work (photographs, artwork, etc.). Be sure to explain the connection between the video and the theme and credit any work, which isn't yours.

--Choose your theme and create an animated film illustrating the use of that theme in the novel. Be sure to add dialogue and music to the film.

*Be sure to include an explanation of the connection between your work, the theme, and the novel. Turn the material in using a portfolio, a folder, or an 8 1/2 by 11 manila envelope.

On the day in question, each of you will be expected to make a presentation to the class. That presentation needs to include an explanation of your project, showing or reading a portion of the project, and an explanation of the connection of your project to the theme you chose. As always, you may opt out of the public performance part of the assignment, but it will cost you 20 points.

On that day, you will also turn in your vocabulary assignment.

The rubric for these projects and assignments is attached. Read through it carefully.