



Finding the Truth in Fiction
A Differentiated Approach to Novel Study
 Presented by Judith Geary

Authors

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- Masters in education from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. Continued graduate work in fiction writing and editing.
- Twenty-four years teaching at the university level; seven years editing fiction; authorship of published articles, curriculum and a novel.
- Scenario director and evaluator at international level with Future Problem Solving Program




Aspects of Differentiation



Content


- ✓ Complex and in-depth study of major ideas, problems, and themes
- ✓ Integrating multiple disciplines into the area of study
- ✓ In-depth learning of a self-selected topic within the area of study

Differentiation Process



- ✓ Productive thinking skills that re-conceptualize existing knowledge and generate new knowledge
- ✓ Exploration of changing knowledge
- ✓ Knowledge worth pursuing in an open world
- ✓ Use of appropriate and specialized resources
- ✓ Self-initiated and self-directed learning and growth


Differentiation Environment



- ✓ Develops self-understanding and self-evaluation
- ✓ Stresses higher level thinking skills, creativity, and excellence in performance and products
- ✓ Creates receptive, nonjudgmental, student-centered environment
- ✓ Supports inquiry and independence
- ✓ Encourages students to question and exercise independence
- ✓ Promotes creativity

The Method: Shared Inquiry

- Trains students to identify and answer interpretive questions from the novel
- Illuminates methods of discussion for interpretive questions
- Provides handouts, overheads, and assessment tools



Novel Presentations

Students will ...

- Choose an area connected to a novel for in-depth exploration
- Become an expert in the chosen area
- Present findings

Teachers will ...

- Facilitate choosing an area of expertise to create a novel presentation as an independent study and self-directed task
- Provide handouts, overheads, activities, and assessment tools

Interpretive Questions and Reaction Papers

- Analyze the novel and its meaning through group discussion
- Develop a five-paragraph essay that addresses an issue in the novel that the student finds intriguing or wants to explore in greater depth
- Utilize peer editing
- Provide handouts, overheads, activities, assessment tools, and guidelines

What you need to make it easy

- Tips and strategies
- Teacher and student developed directions
- Rubrics, assessments, letters, and product descriptors
- Strategies and hints
- CD with .pdf and editable files



Traditional & Blueprint

- Questions
 - Factual & discussion
- Discussion Groups
- Activities
- Springboard of ideas
- Shared Inquiry
- Novel Analysis
- Reaction Papers
- Novel presentations



The Novel GETORIX: The Eagle and The Bull



“Excellent Resource”

-- **InfoTech**, the materials selection publication from the NC Department of Public Instruction, & **EvaluTech**, from SREB

Letter from the author




A Note to the Teacher:

ADULT READERS of historical fiction approach the experience with eager anticipation of being led into a world different than the familiar “everyday” life around us.

Middle school students may be familiar with a variety of fantasy worlds -- super-heroes, wizards and witches and celebrities -- yet lack an understanding of how life has changed through history. The main characters of the novel, Getorix and Lucius, idolize the heroes of their own cultural mythologies in much the same way. Asking students to suspend their need for the comfort of the familiar in the same way they do every time they watch a fantasy on television or a movie, or read a fantasy novel, may help them approach the novel with appropriate openness.

Shared Inquiry Types of Questions

- Fact
- Evaluative
- Interpretive



Shared Inquiry Types of Questions: Fact

What does the author say?

- Require recall and have a correct answer that can be found in the reading—an opportunity to self-evaluate comprehension of story.

Getorix has prepared to die on the day of the Roman triumph. How does he rationalize his death as worthwhile?

Answer: He feels if he cannot die in battle, better this than an old man's death before the hearth. He will meet his death with courage and join his father in the Otherworld as a hero. (16)

Shared Inquiry Evaluative questions

*How does the reader feel about what the author says?
Does the reader agree with what the author says?*

- The reader is asked to draw a conclusion. Reader's understanding of the story and personal experiences, values, knowledge, and understanding of history and culture come into play—more than one reasonable answer.

Claudicos leapt with the infant Getorix in his arms from a high palisade into the lake that surrounded their home "... to give the infant courage as an adult, to cleanse his heart of fear." (66) What are some rites of passage from your culture that signify courage or confirm manhood in a young boy?

Shared Inquiry Interpretive Questions

What does the author mean by what he or she says?

- Asks the reader to analyze the author's intentions.
 - More than one reasonable answer
 - Designed for discussion
 - Require in-depth analysis
 - Require documentation within the text to support the reader's answer.

The Interpretive Question: A Question of Inquiry

When Getorix asked Keltus if he was taking him to be tortured, Keltus replied, "It pleased the Roman weasels to think I took you to such a fate—and your father also, in his own, sad way." (23)

What did Keltus mean when he said Claudicos was pleased in his own, sad way?

What makes a suitable interpretive question?

- ✓ It is worthy of public attention.
- ✓ The reader should care about the question.
- ✓ The person asking should not already know the answer. There is not just one answer.
- ✓ The purpose is to discover and understand more clearly what the author meant by examining different viewpoints and evidence.
- ✓ It should be one that is not answered by a close reading of the text. The answer should go beyond the facts.
- ✓ It should be clear, specific and focused.
- ✓ It should send others to the text to find details to support their thoughts on the question. The text should provide clues but not the answer.

Questions of Inquiry

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

- Why did Scrooge have a chance to be forgiven when Marley did not?
- Why did Ignorance and Want appear as two children clinging to the Spirit's legs?
- The last spirit never says a word to Scrooge. What is the power of silence?

Shared Inquiry

- Literature Discussion Groups (3-4 students) meet regularly during novel study
- Interpretive questions developed when reading the novel
- Questions of inquiry—What made you stop and think as you were reading?
- The search for interpretive questions:
 - What readers think
 - How effectively points are proven with details, excerpts, and support from the novel

Students read the novel and search for inquiry questions of their own

Teacher and students compile ...

- A list of their own inquiry questions
- "Points to Ponder" including both teacher- and student-generated questions on the board/overhead
- Selected interpretive questions for each section of the novel during the entire novel study
- A running record of their favorite questions in their journal

Students analyze the questions

- ✓ Which question(s) will give them the most insight into the novel?
- ✓ Which question needs to be answered first? Why?
- ✓ Are there questions that lead to another question?
- ✓ Do some questions encompass several questions or cover several ideas?
- ✓ Are some questions crucial to understanding the author's purpose in writing the novel?

Rubrics, Handouts and Overheads

- Discussion model for shared inquiry
- Expository Paragraph Plan
 - Type 1, 2, 3, and 4 sentences
- How to Answer Essay Questions
- One Paragraph Essay Rubric
 - Draft one
 - Draft two
 - Final checklist and edit for a final copy



Draft 1: One-Paragraph Essay Evaluation

Skill Checklist

- **Organization:** Use type 1, 2, 3, and 4 sentences in your paragraph.
 - Type 1: Restate the question as a statement in the main idea sentence.
 - Type 2: Use details from the novel to explain your ideas clearly
 - Type 3: Add details about the details (examples) to support your answer
 - Type 4: Use a summary or closing sentence
- **Sentence Fluency:** Revise all run-on sentences or fragments.
- **Word Choice:** Avoid slang or dialect such as "gonna" (going to); "could" or "could of" (could have); "like"; "a lot" (many, a great deal of, much, etc.); "maybe"; "kinda" (kind of—this term weakens your ideas so do not use in either form); etc.

In-depth exploration of a self-selected topic within the area of study

- Literature journal for students' responses
- Small group and whole group discussion
- Group ideas and thoughts shared among small groups and with the class as a whole
- Running list of interpretive questions

In-depth answers to an interpretive question that the student deems "worthy of public attention" leading to a five-paragraph reaction paper

Or

Novel Presentations

Novel Study Presentation

- Students volunteer
- Four class novels ... 28 students= 7 students per novel
- Students doing presentations have time to ...
 - Research their topic
 - Discuss ideas with the teacher
 - Work with group members for a group project
 - Plan their presentation
 - Involve other members of the class
 - Create props, quizzes, overheads, or PowerPoint presentations, etc.

Novel presenters ...

- ✓ read the novel and participate in discussion
- ✓ do not take interpretive questions to a final copy format or develop a reaction paper for this novel

Novel Study

- Novel presentations: individual or group
- Each student is responsible for developing and leading a segment of the presentation
- Group presentation ideas:
 - panel presentation
 - role-play, such as a school board meeting or talk show involving characters from the novel
 - re-enactment
 - play inspired by novel
 -
 -

Novel Study: Literary Analysis

- | | |
|---|--|
| Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical background • Influence of history on author's choices | Genre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical fiction • Tragedy/drama |
| Characters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character analysis • Interactions and relationships • Point of view | Author's Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influences • Childhood |
| Motifs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant image(s) • Symbolism | Themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for identity • Coming of age • Bravery vs Cowardice |
| Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrator • Viewpoint(s) • Voice of character | Conflicts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plots and subplots • Internal • Individual vs society |

Novel Study: Historical Context

- | | |
|--|---|
| English/Language Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mythology • Roman & Celtic gods • Latin & Germanic roots of English • Roman education & literature | Science/Technology/Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geometry of the arch & dome • Roman numerals • Transportation on land & sea • Calendar system |
| History/Social Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Republic of Rome – political system • Roman roads & transportation • Human rights: citizenship, women & slaves • Tribes & warring factions • Facts of everyday life: | The Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosaics • Wall paintings & frescos • Encaustic • Theatre: mime & farce |
| | Physical Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games: wrestling, foot races & "tennis" |

Methods of Delivery

- Role play/Character monologues
- Debate
- Teaching a lesson: What difference does word choice make?
- Reenactments
- Character analysis; family tree
- Maps and geography; travelogue
- Computer program/computer game
- Study of architecture and set design
- Documentary
-
- ... or an idea of your choice

Novel Study: Literary Analysis

Name: _____ Novel: _____

Area of Study: _____

Connection to Novel (What in novel led to this investigation? In relationship to the novel, I investigated...) _____

In-Depth Findings (Connections to novel: specialized language; patterns; trends; beliefs; history; format; etc) _____

Props: _____

Audience Participation _____ Quiz: Yes/No

Presentation Style: (Voice, eye contact, body language, preparation, etc.) _____

Closing: (After investigating this topic, I discovered ... I understood ... I realized ... I have learned that ...) _____

Overall Grade: _____

Production Ratings

Rater: _____

Presenter: _____

What really worked in the production? _____

What was your favorite part and why did you like it?? Give examples. _____

What would have made the production more effective for the audience? _____

On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best, rate this production.

1 5 10

|-----|-----|

Presentations: Doing it right

- Include an interactive activity; it makes the audience think and have fun
- Include visuals and graphics
- Include parts where members of the audience read or speak
- Create questions that the audience can discuss
- When using PowerPoint be sure ...
 - fonts can be read
 - colors, graphics, and sounds work
 - contrast between text and background is effective
- Know your topic—talk about it; don't read it
- Ask questions during the presentation, not just at the end

Presentations: Working with Groups

- Have a stage area so groups do not get out of control
- Use pre-selected audience members to share information and quotations from the novel
- Keep control of your audience during interactive activities—Plan ahead!

The "Don't" List

- Don't read from the poster, notes, or PowerPoint slide
- Don't write in paragraphs on overheads or PowerPoint slides—Use bullets and key facts
- Don't do everything—let others read excerpts and make comments; it takes a load off you and it involves others in your presentation

Group Work

- The people in my group were _____
- The person(s) who worked the hardest preparing for the presentation was (were) _____ because _____
- _____
- I was most impressed by _____
- I helped my group by _____
- I feel my grade for group work should be _____ because _____
- _____
- Overall, my group succeeded because _____
- Things we could have worked on _____

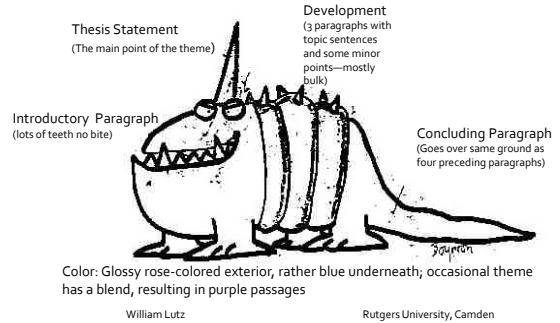
Student Goals for Novel Presentations

- Use a variety of resources
- Put no upper limit on expectations
- Study topic from multiple perspectives
- Extend ideas
- Immerse yourself in the topic and research
- Synthesize, analyze, and evaluate
- Use product alternatives

What do I do with the others?

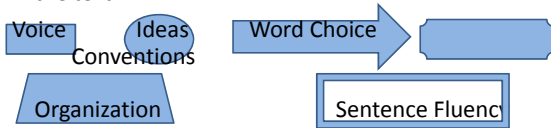
- Students not doing a novel study...
 - Read and discuss the novel
 - Answer questions
 - Take a discussion question to final copy
 - Choose an interpretive question from the novel to write about
 - Draft a five paragraph reaction paper
 - Proofread, peer edit, and take the **reaction paper** to final copy

Reaction to the Novel The Five Paragraph Essay



The Reaction Paper

- Decide on an interpretive question related to *the novel we just completed*. Choose one from the class list or one of your own with teacher approval.
- Examine this question in depth
- Explain and support your viewpoint concerning the inquiry using details, examples, and excerpts from the text.



Teacher Tools: Reaction Paper Checklist

All paragraphs in your paper should be at least 4 sentences long and use Topic 1, 2, 3, and 4 sentences as shown in Expository Paragraph Plan.

First Draft

- ORGANIZATION: Paragraph 1 introduces your thesis statement (main idea) and an overview of the key points the paper will cover
- IDEAS: Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 share details, examples, and excerpts from the novel that explain and support your viewpoint
- VOICE: You are deeply committed to the topic and the writing bears clear imprint of this writer

Second Draft

- IDEAS: Include three or more developmental paragraphs about key points that support your main idea. Incorporate details and examples. Use novel excerpts that prove your point. Be clear and direct: avoid "An example of this ...; I will show you how ...; "This paper is about ...;" etc.
- ORGANIZATION: Concluding paragraph reviews key points and summarizes main points so that the reader understands conclusion with insight into the topic
- CONVENTIONS: Use present tense verbs and third person ("the reader, he, she, or it")

What you need to make it easy

Interpretive novel questions lead to a reaction paper, a quest for truth

- Class generated interpretive novel questions
- Thesis Statement
- Class Thesis Statements
- Reaction Paper Guidelines
- The Effective Concluding Paragraph
- Concluding Paragraph Quiz: True or False
- Proofreading Tips
- Skills Checklist
- Final Draft Checklist for Peer Editing
- Letter to the Author

Putting it all together

Student-directed activities that inspire students to search for what they want to know as well as what we want them to know

Complex issues, deep thoughts, hidden meanings, the ability to read between the lines to discover the author's message, inspiration, and purpose

The answer: Shared Inquiry, Novel Presentations, and Reaction Papers

