*English Instructional Plan – Addressing Themes, Characters, and Motifs in African American Literature*

*[Lesson Duration: Approximately 1-2 weeks.]*

**Primary Strand: 11.4-12.4 Reading**

**Integrated Strand/s: 11.1-12.1, 11.2-12.2 Communication and Multimodal Literacy**

**Essential Understanding:**

* understand characteristics and cultures of historical periods and how the literature reflects those characteristics
* recognize and understand universal characters, themes, and motifs in American literature
* understand how an author’s intent is achieved by the use of context and language

**Essential Knowledge, Skills, and Processes:**

* analyze and critique themes and issues within and across texts related to
	+ political struggles
	+ ethnic and cultural mores and traditions
	+ individual rights, gender equity, and civil rights
* recognize and understand universal characters, themes, and motifs in American literature.
* understand how an author’s intent is achieved by the use of context and language.

**Primary SOL:**

* 11.4c: Discuss American literature as it reflects traditional and contemporary themes, motifs, universal characters, and genres.

**Reinforced (Related Standard) SOL:**

* 10.4j: Compare/contrast details in literary and informational nonfiction texts.
* 11.4a: Describe different contributions of different cultures to the development of American literature.

**Academic Background/Language:**

* Students should have a basic understanding of conference clues, figurative language, characterization, connotation, and authorial purpose.
* Students should be able to use multimodal methods and resources in a digital collage.

## Materials

[Teacher Note: Readings should hinge on the thematic unit questions and should be made up of a variety of texts, i.e. non-fiction, autobiography, fiction, and so on.]

* Recommended reading: *Their Eyes Were Watching* God by Zora Neale Hurston
* Recommended reading: “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr. (available on www.commonlit.org)
* Recommended Reading: “Learning to Read” by Malcolm X
* Recommended reading: “Looking for Zora” or “Everyday Use” (available on [www.commonlit.org](http://www.commonlit.org)) both by Alice Walker
* Recommended viewing: Newscast about the Richmond 34: <https://wtvr.com/2019/02/21/richmond-34-honored-59-years-after-thalhimers-sit-in/>
* On-line journal (Word document), Google Doc, or composition notebook or binder
* Dialectical journal compiling written analysis based on annotations
* Venn diagrams (graphic organizer)

## Student/Teacher Actions: What should students be doing? What should teachers be doing?

* Teacher will review previously read material that covers the universal themes of justice and individuality. (Consider reviewing: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, or *Antigone* by Sophocles). Teacher may provide a direct writing prompt or provoke a classroom discussion on reading material the students have read previously. Consider questions on theme, character, symbolism, and other elements of language or literary devices.
* Students will read and analyze readings (from the list above or teacher choice). Teacher provides students with open-ended, exploratory reading response questions on elements of language or literary devices, including tone, diction, figurative language, and so on. For example, how does the author use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to convey \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? Consider timed writing responses, classwork, or homework for these reading responses.
* Students will complete a dialectical journal (example attached) analyzing how the authors use the elements of language to convey purpose. Teacher should encourage students to note: textual evidence, page number reference, and commentary.
* Using their annotations and dialectical journal, have students – in pairs – complete a compare/contrast Venn diagram. Students will present Venn diagram to the class. Students should note intra-textual similarities, including authorial purpose. Consider dissimilarities among the texts, including different authorial purpose, rhetorical occasions, figurative language, elements of style, and so on.
* Teacher reviews how authorial purpose conveys political struggle, individual rights, or cultural/societal tradition. Consider a class discussion allowing students to use their Venn diagrams and annotations emphasizing how the writers use elements of language to accomplish authorial purpose.
* Students will complete summative assessment as outlined below. Consider individual, partner, or small group work.

**Assessment (Diagnostic, Formative, Summative)**

* As a diagnostic assessment, teacher should circulate around the room during open discussions. Review reading responses from the students to provoke a larger class discussion.
* As a formative assessment tool, students will present their compare/contrast Venn diagrams to the class. Consider individual or partner work for this assessment.
* As a summative assessment, students will create a research-based collage of visual images that figuratively connect a historical example of direct action nonviolent protest to a contemporary example of direct action nonviolent protest. The collage may be digital, drawn, painted, and so on. Students must turn in an expositional essay that explains how the images in the collage reflect contemporary issues.

**Writing Connections:**

* Students will complete a written explanation detailing how the images they chose represent the figurative language, characterization, symbol, and so on, in their selected texts and will support this with textual evidence from their dialectical journal
* Students will complete an argumentative writing task asking them to take a position on a character’s motives or values and support that position with textual evidence from their dialectical journal.

**Extensions and Connections (for all students)**

* Teacher should encourage students to utilize proper grammar, mechanics, spelling, and punctuation for the expositional essay component of the summative assessment.
* Teachers should encourage a synthesis of understanding allowing students to draw connections between a variety of texts and genres, i.e. nonfiction to fiction, article to short story, and so on.

**Strategies for Differentiation**

* Consider partner or small group work with designated roles for diagnostic and formative and summative assessments.
* Consider allowing students to work with a partner on the summative assessment.
* Consider a deadline extension for certain students that need extended time.

*Note: The following pages are intended for classroom use for students as a visual aid to learning.*

***Text Title* Dialectical Journal**

Author:

Student Name:

Class Period:

Write quotes/excerpts from the text in the left column. Indicate page/line number in the center column. Respond to the quote/excerpt in the right column. Focus your entries on the literary and/or rhetorical devices we have discussed throughout the school year thus far. Including but not limited to:

**Indirect characterization**

**Mood**

**Conflict (internal or external)**

**Figurative Language**

**Symbolism**

Provide at least 2 annotations for each literary device. Don’t forget to analyze the purpose/effect of each device. Don’t simply identify it! (That’s the easy part!) You will be using these annotations to:

1. Identify the universal themes in the story
2. Explain how the historical context.
3. How this story compares/contrasts to other stories we have read
4. Show how writing elicits emotions/conveys purpose/develops plot, and so on.

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| Quote/Evidence | page/line # | Analysis (use the list above to help you answer the significance of the device) |
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