

Class Matters* by Correspondents of *The New York Times (Published by Times Books)

Approved for use in Communication Arts II and Honors Communication Arts II

Summary

New York Times correspondents investigated and addressed issues that affect various classes and how each class has a different perception or experience in life. Statistics reveal that the gap is increasing between lower and upper classes as it relates to health, education, religion, etc. Each segment, originally published in the *New York Times* as a series of articles, offers a balanced and empathetic look at an individual or families. *Class Matters* gives the reader an honest, unflinching look at social class distinctions.

Connection to the Curriculum

Class Matters presents readers with case studies of various people from different classes around the United States and the advantages and disadvantages they face. Throughout this book, the *New York Times* correspondents address various issues regarding class: health, marriage, education, religion, etc. This non-fiction book gives teenagers an understanding of how class affects the quality of life. The text includes charts and graphs for students to read and evaluate. *Class Matters* offers students a glimpse into several geographic regions, races, ages and religions. It provides a paradigm in which to place fictional works such as *Ellen Foster* or *Secret Life of Bees*. Additionally, this book offers a broad perspective of the world at large and ultimately confirms the importance of education in American society.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum. 3.2- The students use a writing process that includes preparing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing to produce a written text.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators):

Reading:

1.2.1- The student adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.7- The student identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.8- The student understands the purpose of text features (title, graphs/charts and maps, table of contents, pictures/illustrations, boldface type, italics, glossary, index, headings, subheadings, topic and summary sentences, captions, sidebars, underlining, numbered or bulleted lists, footnotes, annotations) and uses such features to locate information in and to gain meaning from appropriate-level texts.

1.4.10- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

1.4.11- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.14- The student explains and analyzes cause-effect relationships.

1.4.16- The student identifies topic, main ideas, and supporting details.

Literature:

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and its influence on characters and events in the story.

2.2.1- The student recognizes ways that literature from different cultures presents similar themes differently across genres.

2.2.2- The student compares and contrasts works of literature that deal with similar topics and problems.

Writing:

3.3.7- The student writes using knowledge or experience.

3.3.9- The student develops the topic in an enlightening and purposeful way.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The essays in the text originally appeared in The New York Times. Each essay deals candidly with the realities of class differences. The various authors represent many viewpoints in their work.

AP Connections

Although the language of *Class Matters* is straightforward, the themes and findings make readers think about the financial make up of our society. The text gives students experience with short pieces of expository writing that examine one issue from multiple perspectives.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities