

***The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane (Published by Bantam Classics)**

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts III

Summary

During the Civil War, Henry is a young, rookie soldier who joins the Union Army with the fearful hope of fighting in battle. When he finally gets the opportunity, he passes his first test, but with the return of the Confederates, he panics and runs. Henry gets hit in the head by the butt of a gun, giving him his “red badge of courage,” which he passes off as a sign of bravery. Aware of his own ability to face the fury of war, Henry has a new confidence and fights heroically. The book ends with the relief of the end of the battle and the dawn of another battle to come.

Connection to the Curriculum

This novel contains several motifs and themes that require closer inspection by the reader and the ability to transfer thinking about these ideas from a literal to a metaphorical way. Finding these underlying messages and ideas is an imperative part of a student’s experience with literature. Crane’s use of poetic language and dramatic irony places *The Red Badge of Courage* in a category for higher-level readers and evaluators of literature. Deciphering the main character’s motives and connecting the subconscious to reality in the story line develops a stronger reader and critical thinker. This novel demonstrates a new era in American Literature; in so doing, the student will be able to see what values have been retained, what philosophies are still intact, and what rhetorical effects still echo in 20th Century American literature. The work is full of examples of Crane’s command of descriptive language and his analysis of human psychology. Study of this novel reinforces the concept of Realism which is integral to the study of American Literature.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students will read fluently. 1.3- The students will expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text.

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4.7- The student identifies characteristics of narrative texts.

1.4.9- The student uses prior knowledge, content, and text type features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.

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 will use information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.17- The student analyzes and evaluates how an author’s style and use of literary devices work together to achieve his or her purpose for writing text.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student identifies and describes different types of character and analyzes the development of characters.

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.

2.1.5- The student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates the use of literary devices in a text.

Writing:

3.1- The student writes effectively for a variety of audiences, purposes, and contexts.

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

The topic of war results in mild violent images in the text. The novel includes Biblical allusions including the presence of a Christ-like figure. It ultimately reveals the author’s condemnation of war.

AP Connections

This novel provides a link to the canon of classics beneficial not only for the AP test that incorporates non-fiction questions but also beneficial for the college-bound reader. Close readings of the text provide insight into the rhetorical devices (irony, imagery, tone, syntax, diction) of Stephen Crane’s narrative. The novel has been referenced on the AP Literature exam.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities