

A Day No Pigs Would Die by Robert Newton Peck (Published by Random House)

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

Summary

A thirteen-year-old Vermont teen learns difficult lessons about the transition into maturity and manhood. After performing a noble neighborly act, the Shaker youth is entrusted with the care of a young piglet. As his love for the animal blossoms, so does his tolerance for the complex outside world. Faced with the terms of life, death, and acceptance, Robert grows to embrace the family traditions that have been passed down to him.

Connection to the Curriculum

This timeless narrative reveals a young man who is unsure of himself and his role in his Shaker household. It is a touching and realistic portrait of the hardships faced in a rural Vermont community. Peck's work delivers a warm message of religious and humanistic tolerance, allowing readers to see the humanity inherent in us all. Students can examine the themes of friendship and love. The language is accessible to most readers and gives students the opportunity to trace the changes in the main character and examine the depth of characterization.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.3- The students 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. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators):

Reading:

1.3.1- The student determines meaning of words or phrases using context clues from sentences or paragraphs.

1.3.3- The student determines meaning of words through structural analysis using knowledge of Greek, Latin and Anglo-Saxon roots, prefixes, and suffixes to understand complex words.

1.3.4-The student identifies, interprets, and analyzes the use of figurative language.

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

1.4.12- The student establishes purposes for both assigned and self-selected reading.

Literature:

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

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.

2.1.3- The student analyzes and evaluates how the author uses various plot elements (e.g., conflict, crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution, rising action, falling action, subplots, parallel episodes) to advance the plot and make connections between events.

2.1.4- The student analyzes themes, tone, and the author's point of view across a variety of literary works and genres using textual evidence and considering audience and purpose.

2.1.5- The student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates the use of literary devices (foreshadowing, flashback, irony, figurative language, imagery, symbolism, satire, allusion, paradox, dialogue, point of view, overstatement) in a text.

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.

A Note on the Text

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

The text deals with the death of a father and addresses the accompanying sorrow and frustration of the young son. Some scenes with the pigs involve blood and slaughter. The text contains references to religion.

AP Connections

Honors students can connect the novel's themes to other works they have read.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities