

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller (Published by Simon and Schuster)

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts IV and Communication Arts IV

Summary

Joseph Heller's satirical novel follows the character Ocarina as he bumbles his way through World War II attempting to determine either his sanity or his insanity. While his companions stationed on the small island of Pianosa try to convince him that he is the only one who does not see the value of war, Yossarian somehow suspects that he perceives the war concept differently than his associates. Through satire and a series of mishaps in a wartime setting, Heller is able to address such issues as greed and the attainment of great wealth at the expense of others, the establishment of authority through titles only, and the loss of identity which people experience during periods of crisis.

Connection to the Curriculum

College-bound seniors must be able to read "between the lines" as well as "close read," a technique through which theme is determined not through plot but through a very refined method of reading for information that is not obvious to the average reader. Heller's text is one of the few that allows and requires college-bound seniors to look beyond the events to the meaning delivered through the events. Because it is satire, *Catch-22* allows teachers to instruct on the various elements of satire such as irony, diatribe, invective, lampoon, parody, low and high burlesque. Recognizing such elements in the written word is a sophisticated exercise with which most students at this level have little experience, and reading *Catch-22* enhances this skill abundantly.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 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.

Research: 4.1- The students use effective research practices. 4.2- The students use ethical research practices.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.2.1- The student adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository or satirical texts.

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

1.3.6- The student discriminates between connotative and denotative meanings and interprets the connotative power of words.

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.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student identifies and describes different types of character (protagonist, antagonist, etc.) and analyzes the development of characters.

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

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.)

This satirical work includes the author's indictment of war/military life. His text includes sexual references and profanity associated with the realistic portrayal of war.

AP Connections

Catch-22 has been referenced on the AP Literature exam. In addition, because of its satirical nature, it is often used as a fundamental text in college satire and irony literature and philosophy courses.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:
To be completed during future curriculum development activities