

***Cry, The Beloved Country* by Alan Paton (Published by Scribner)**

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts IV

Summary

Stephen Kumalo is a Zulu pastor who travels to Johannesburg to rescue his sister Gertrude, who has become a prostitute, and to locate his son Absalom, who has not been heard from since he left home. Reverend Kumalo finds Gertrude and moves her and her young child to a new house. His son Absalom has lived in many locations and has several disreputable friends; currently he is accused of being involved in the murder of Arthur Jarvis, a local social activist. Although three men are involved in the murder and Absalom shoots only out of fear, he is the only one convicted and sentenced to hanging. Mr. Jarvis's father James comes for the funeral and tries to discover more about the work that this son was doing in South Africa. He reads Arthur Jarvis's criticisms about the nation that claims to be Christian yet practices few Christian ideals. In the end the elder Mr. Jarvis befriends Stephen Kumalo and decides he must continue the work in which his son had been involved.

Connection to the Curriculum

Cry, the Beloved Country is unique in style and presentation. The book is divided into three parts: the first is told by Stephen Kumalo, the second by James Jarvis, and the third by both Kumalo and Jarvis. The conversation in the novel is without quotation marks, only indicated by – at the beginning of the lines. The story is told as if from a dream, using present tense that makes the story seem distant yet possible. The characters are shallowly developed, only revealed in their responses to the plot of the story. The settings are symbolic, tied to the land and given importance. Fear is a predominate emotion throughout the book. The novel's comment on race and racism is also important, and it invites significant classroom discussion.

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- The students write effectively for a variety of audiences, purposes, and contexts.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

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

1.4.13- The student compares and contrasts varying aspects in one or more appropriate-level texts.

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 their influence on characters and events in the story.

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

Writing:

3- 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.)

This story follows a minister in South Africa. It includes the subjects of inadvertent murder, a prodigal son, and apartheid.

AP Connections

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities