



Dress Rehearsal

Guide for Curriculum Unit 84.05.01
by Rosemary Hamilton

This curriculum unit will trace the rites of passage from the 1940's through the present in literature. My focus will be on "The Catcher in the Rye" although I will concentrate on other novels too; "Summer of 1942" and "A Hero Ain't Nothin But a Sandwich." Supplementary works will be previewed. This unit will be geared for teenagers.

Adolescence proves for many youngsters to be a stressful period in life as they attempt to forge an adult identity and relationships with others. Adolescent sexuality tends to be heavily censured by parents at this stage of life, because of the physiological capacity for reproduction. This is especially true of the girls. Standard injunctions that all sex is evil or that all adolescents are sexually irresponsible fail to contribute toward a healthy and responsible sexuality. On the contrary, they are much more likely to contribute feelings of guilt that may remain with the individual for the remainder of her life. Teen-agers need to be exposed to both fiction and non-fiction on this universal theme of coming of age. This unit attempts to do that.

The parents and grandparents of our students are chronologically younger than we would expect. I want students to realize that they are not alone in their growing pains. In fact the benefit and experience of the older generation is a tremendous resource. By studying these novels young adults may realize the communication gap between generations is not so great.

(Recommended for grades 9 through 12)

Key Words

American Adolescence Literature Twentieth Century Salinger J.D.

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