



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1981 Volume II: An Interdisciplinary Approach to British Studies

Bridging the Centuries: Teaching the Nineteenth Century English Novel Today

Guide for Curriculum Unit 81.02.08
by Pamela M. Price-Anisman

The Victorian novel is a built-in aggravation for most senior English teachers. Viewed as problematic, the novel is often ignored or, worse, skimmed over with little or no expectation of success. This unit is designed to reintroduce the Nineteenth Century English novel to the classroom teacher. An overview of useful information about the period in relation to our contemporary society is included. Several novels commonly found in New Haven book closets are briefly reviewed in terms of their “teachability.” Suggestions and activities are also included that will aid in convincing students that, perhaps, there is life during (as well as after) a Victorian novel. Another purpose of the unit is to utilize Yale resources; a set of slides for use in the classroom will be gathered from various university collections that will illustrate events and places mentioned in the narrative. It is important that students actually see the worlds they will be reading about. Personal materials (slides, for example) from teacher and/or student journeys to Great Britain would also help to bring the Victorian era closer to today’s classroom. This unit is designed to support any efforts we, as educators, make to teach the classics. Any teacher should be able to use parts of the unit in his or her own curriculum. There is a great deal of room for addition, expansion, or substitution of information about the last century and its fiction.

(Recommended for 9th grade English and 12th Grade Senior English—all levels.)

Key Words

Nineteenth Century England General Literature British Novel

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University
For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>