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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1982 Volume I: Society and the Detective Novel

Finding the Key: Detective Fiction for the Developmental Reader

Guide for Curriculum Unit 82.01.01
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Most teachers are quite concerned with the plight of seniors who are still unable to enjoy what they read because of severely limited skills. In this unit, I have attempted to present material that adheres both to the “popular” culture demand and to fairly serious literary standards. For the classroom teacher, a section explaining the value and background of mystery and detective fiction has been included. In addition, several readily available novels have been described that would both interest students and cause them to become more careful readers. As they search for clues, they will be learning to read more closely. The sample lesson plans have been designed to aid the teacher in both a general introduction to detective technique and a more specific introduction to important aspects of particular detective novels. The main value of a unit on detective fiction is that it offers teacher and students a chance to try something different and creative. While still engaging in a significant learning process; students will be starting a new educational phase where they not only understand what they read but also look forward to the experience.

(Recommended for 12th grade Developmental English 4)

Key Words

General Detective Fiction Literature

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