



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

Good-bye Magnum Pi

Guide for Curriculum Unit 82.01.02
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Teachers have long lamented the fact that many students read only when they are given specific reading assignments. Recreational reading appears to be an activity of the past. Unfortunately and predictably this has resulted in low reading scores and an inability to sort through ideas. Most teachers will admit that today's students are prone to "TV-itis." In fact, many students are limited to TV with regard to entertainment. We know that most TV programs are geared to a fifth grade mentality; certainly our students need to be exposed to entertainment of a more challenging nature. Many of us remember an involvement during childhood with Nancy Drew mysteries et al. The serial nature of these books served to "hook" the reader, in many cases for their entertainment value, and we grew as readers as a result. "Good-bye Magnum PI" 's main purpose is to encourage recreational reading among students. The unit provides introductory material on series' heroes and brief summaries of the introductory stories which feature these heroes. Following introductory reading, students are expected to choose a detective with whom they wish to become familiar. (These detectives include Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, Jane Marple, Nero Wolfe, and Travis McGee.) They will then read three novels which employ an aforementioned hero. Ideas for projects which should follow the reading of each novel are included. A creative writing segment (which once again promotes the encouragement of continued recreational reading) concludes the unit.

(Recommended for 9th grade Advanced English I, 10th grade College English II, and 11th and 12th grade General English III, IV)

Key Words

Detective Fiction Literature Heroes Reading Instruction

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