



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1986 Volume IV: The Process of Writing

From Comics to Classics

Guide for Curriculum Unit 86.04.05
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“From Comics to Classics” utilizes comic books ranging from Superman to classic short stories, introducing and developing the creative mind. The unit is based on various completed studies from the “New Haven Register” and those completed in the New Haven public schools, which have determined the average reading level of the students. The functional level of the students has been illustrated as one of the lowest in the nation.

My proposal encompasses increased vocabulary skills, creative writing skills and word usage skills by invoking mediums which are fun and exciting as well as intellectually challenging to both the student and the teacher.

This unit intends to increase the student’s functional level by at least 30%.

The reading selections range from a basic reading level for middle school students to a level of difficulty appropriate for college-bound students.

In the first lesson a comic classic is introduced to the pupil and read aloud in class. Following these readings a series of comprehension questions are answered and a vocabulary book is kept each student for use in the future writings.

The second lesson begins in the third quarter. This quarter includes the reading of short stories and comprehension of the main points a story encompasses. The reading of a story is divided so that the student is able to focus on the major components of the story: main point, characters and setting.

Finally, the fourth and final quarter of the year comprises the writing of a comic strip narrative beginning with the development of the characters, villain and hero, and following with the creation of the setting, action, and special vocabulary.

Upon completion of the narratives the students are required to read and evaluate their peers’ work based on a critique scale and to answer various questions which focus on all parts of the narratives as they were written, character development, setting, special vocabulary, action, design and colour of the book, overall appearance, and interest level.

(Recommended for English, Language, Creative Writing, and Language Arts classes, grades 5-8)

Key Words

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