



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1999 Volume IV: Detective Fiction: Its Use as Literature and as History

Chocolate and Ice Cream Across the Curriculum

Guide for Curriculum Unit 99.04.05
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Learning across the curriculum is an interactive way to allow students to construct meaning through a variety of problem solving experiences. The use of literature and other resources such as hands on projects and experiments provide students the opportunity to both construct meaning and knowledge by building connections between subjects. Literature provides educational value for content area learning. The literature selection that will be used in my unit is *The Chocolate Ice Cream Sundae Mystery* by Gertrude Chandler Warner. This story is part of Warner's *Box Car Children* series. The characters of the series are four orphaned children, Henry, Jessie, Violet and Benny Alden who live in an abandoned boxcar. In the *Chocolate Ice Cream Sundae Mystery*, the children are working in the oldest ice cream parlor in the town of Greenfield. There's a new owner and things are going well until chocolate ice cream, sundae glasses and whipping cream begin to disappear. It's up to the Alden children to find out who is trying to ruin the ice cream parlor.

This unit divided into five sections. In the first section a synopsis of the story is provided. Also, biographical information about the Gertrude Chandler Warner is presented. Warner's popular series is a reflection of her childhood and love of teaching. This information will provide both teachers and students insight as to how her wonderful stories came about. The second section tells the story of chocolate. Chocolate is pleasure food that is nearly desired by all. Chocolate is not just a desired food but a craved one. It is important to explore the historical, social and scientific aspects of chocolate in order to realize the significance this incredible food in our culture. The third section looks at the story of ice cream. Though ice cream's history is not as rich as that of chocolate, however, this food shares the same irresistible qualities, especially for Americans. Incorporated into the unit is trivia on both chocolate and ice cream that will provide teachers and students a tasty look of these two delicious treats. The fourth section provides the objectives for the unit in each content area. Lastly, lesson plans for language arts, math, science, social studies are presented. Activity sheets are included in this section.

This unit incorporates several approaches that will take this delicious theme across the curriculum. First, a whole language approach will be used to involve students in all forms of communication. Communication skills such as reading, writing, observing, listening, speaking and illustration will be a part of each lesson. Communication skills will be integrated into each lesson. This approach allows language skills to grow when stimulated by interest in the topic.

(Recommended for Special Education, grade 6.)

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