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Páginas de Caras: Willa Cather's Characters in the Twenty-First Century

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UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: Páginas de Caras: Willa Cather's Characters in the Twenty-First Century

Grade Level: Eighth grade

Subject/Topic Area(s): English, annotating a text, close reading, analysis of elements of a story, analysis of writer's stylistic techniques, realism

Designed By: Amy Taffet

Time Frame: 6 weeks

School District: Diocese of Dallas

School: Christ the King Catholic School

School Address and Phone: 4100 Colgate, Dallas, Texas 75225; phone: 214-365-1234;

Brief Summary of Unit (Including curricular context and unit goals):

To prepare our eighth grade students for their interdisciplinary eighth grade trip to Taos, New Mexico, students read Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, which narrates the adventures of two priests, Father Latour and Father Valliant, who attempt to evangelize the peoples of New Mexico. To enrich this cross-curricular experience, our initial goal is that the students develop an appreciation for Cather's novel. Not only will they have the opportunity to visit the church, homes, and missions of Cather's characters in Taos while learning about this period in history, science, and religion classes, but also students will be able to witness individuals who risked their lives to share their faith. This will invite students to grapple with the idea of faith and their daily expression of their beliefs as they prepare for Confirmation.

In addition to developing an appreciation for the characters, historical period, and themes in Cather's novel, students will learn to annotate and analyze a text. In class, students will close read and annotate the text for the author's mechanical tools (what is said—elements of a story) and stylistic tools (how it is said—the author's writing style). Students will acquire the essential skill of annotating a text to help them unpack Cather's purpose in writing.

To bring Cather's nineteenth-century characters to life, our eighth graders will collaborate in small groups to create a larger-than-life social media page "Páginas de Caras" (a spinoff of a "Facebook" page) about one main character from *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. Students will create conversations between their character and other characters, form a timeline of the character's experiences, post statements about their opinions and themes, and gather photographs from Taos that the character might have taken (if a camera existed at the time). Students will compile and apply their "evidence" from their annotation and expedition to construct a compelling social media page to bring the character to life in the twenty-first century.

In short, students will acquire the tools to unpack a challenging text and think about the characters and themes within a familiar frame-of-reference, the social media page. The juxtaposition between contemporary technology and Cather's nineteenth century narrative will encourage students to think critically about past and present forms of communication and self-expression.

UbD Template 2.0: Páginas de Caras

Stage 1 – Desired Results		
<p>(2) Reading/Vocabulary Development. Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to:</p> <p>(B) use context (e.g., cause and effect or compare and contrast organizational text structures) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or multiple meaning words;</p> <p>(3) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:</p> <p>(A) infer the implicit theme of a work of fiction, distinguishing theme from the topic;</p> <p>(B) analyze the function of stylistic elements</p> <p>(6) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:</p> <p>(A) summarize the elements of plot development (e.g., rising action, turning point, climax, falling action, denouement) in various works of fiction;</p> <p>(B) recognize dialect and conversational voice and explain how authors use dialect to convey character; and</p> <p>(C) describe point-of view</p> <p>(8) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Sensory Language. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain how authors create meaning through stylistic elements and figurative language emphasizing the use of personification, hyperbole, and refrains.</p> <p>(14) Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to:</p> <p>(27) Listening and Speaking/ Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to give an organized presentation with a specific point of view, employing eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation, natural gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively.</p> <p>(28) Listening and Speaking/ Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate in student-led discussions by eliciting and considering suggestions from other group members and by identifying points of agreement.</p>	Transfer	
	<p><i>Students will independently use their learning to...</i></p> <p>Create a social media page “Páginas de Caras” (a spinoff of a “Facebook” page) for a character in Willa Cather’s <i>Death Comes for the Archbishop</i>. Students will use evidence compiled from annotating a text and apply it to construct a compelling social media page to bring the character to life in the twenty-first century.</p>	
	Meaning	
	<p>Understandings</p> <p><i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The author communicates his message by using elements of a story purposefully to develop the framework for “what is said/happens” in the text. ❖ The author uses stylistic tools to create layers of meaning and reinforce the elements of a story to communicate his message. ❖ Faith is the belief and trust in someone or something without having seen complete proof. ❖ We exercise and develop our faith through the ways we live our lives. We express our faith by our deeds and words. 	<p>Essential Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ How does an author use elements of a story to communicate his message? ➔ How does the author use stylistic tools to communicate his message? ➔ How do you express your faith? Is there a correct way?
	Acquisition	
<p>Knowledge</p> <p><i>Students will know the...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ What are the elements of a story, the mechanical tools of a writer? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Characters: static vs. dynamic; major v. minor; purposeful character development ▪ Setting ▪ Plot Curve: (1) introduction/ problem, (2) rising action, (3) climax, (4) falling action, (5) resolution/conclusion ▪ Conflict: internal vs. external, man vs. man, man vs. society, man vs. nature, man vs. self ▪ Point of View (first person, third-person limited, third-person omniscient) ▪ Mood ▪ Theme-message, social commentary, and context ➔ What is a literary period and how does it influence an author’s writing style? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Genre ▪ Literary Periods: sentimentalism, realism, regionalism, and the way the periods “work” together. <p>Writing/sharing stories allows us to express our ideas, feelings, etc. to <i>connect</i> with others. Literature provides insight into our lives—this insight helps us better understand ourselves and the world around us.</p> ➔ What are the writer’s stylistic tools? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diction ▪ Literary devices: simile, symbol, imagery, etc. 	<p>Skills</p> <p><i>Students will be able to...</i></p> <p>(LOWER-LEVEL USE OF KNOWLEDGE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ What is annotating text? What do you look for? ❖ Identify the elements of a story in short stories; explain the purpose of each element and how the element enhances the story ❖ Identify evidence of the literary period’s influence on the writer’s text ❖ Identify examples of diction and literary devices; explain how an author creates meaning through stylistic tools (diction and figurative language) ❖ Identify the author’s themes or messages for the reader ❖ Close read a text and annotate it while reading for evidence of the author’s mechanical and stylistic tools. <p>(HIGHER-LEVEL SKILLS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ What does annotating a text help me understand? ❖ Apply knowledge from reading, annotating, and “dissecting” a text for author’s mechanical stylistic tools particular to one character and the one theme of faith. ❖ Compile this evidence to create a compelling social media page to bring the character to life in the twenty-first century. ❖ Examine the examples of faith for 	

M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on Heads Up activity in pairs to identify theme. Theme post-it note bar graph activity and assessment; discuss theme and how the Bradbury uses the mechanical and stylistic tools to communicate his message. 	Formative A.
A	<p>4. How does the literary period influence the author’s writing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary Word Wall; define words & present; display on wall. Preassess: What is an author’s writing style? What is a literary period? What is sentimentalism? What is realism? How does the literary period influence the author’s writing? Listen to “If I Die Young” and discuss how it embodies the sentimentalism period. Redefine an author’s writing style Discuss context from Cather’s novel (PowerPoint) Define realist period and predict characteristics of Cather’s novel. 	Formative A.
A, M	<p>5. Why annotate a book?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce DCA groups. Establish team norms, expectations & points system! Preassess main three EQs and discuss. Read a segment from Paul about faith & discuss. Introduce the process of reading Cather’s novel; explain expectations Introduce characters and read summary of prologue; discuss Introduce basic annotation bookmark—for setting, characters; define and review both terms Listen to audio of Book 1: Chapter 1 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate together, stop and discuss as a class. Listen to audio of Book 1: Chapter 2-4—annotate for setting, characters, comments about faith Reading quiz to identify major points and ideas and annotation abilities! Introduce individual jobs—time tracker, setting specialist, friends fan, character master—to students Students review annotations and notes about Book 1 and complete individual jobs for Book 1. (If character has not appeared yet, students select a character and write a message to another character.) 	Formative A.: content & annotation
A	<p>6. How does an author use elements of a story to communicate his message? How does the author use stylistic tools to communicate his message? How do you express your faith? Is there a correct way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce imagery: Use your five senses to describe an object; share; you just painted a picture with your words; this technique is called imagery Read imagery example from Panera Bread bag and discuss use of senses. Listen to audio of Book 2: Chapter 1 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate for character, job, and imagery; annotate and discuss in pairs and as a class. 	Formative A: content & imagery annotation
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess imagery annotation and content Introduce diction: Three Corners: Explain game: left of room is (+); center is neutral; right of room is (-)—call out words and students decide if word is positive, negative, or neutral, and they move to place in room to identify decision. Define diction—the author’s word choice—and discuss more examples (powerpoint) Students are given groups of words to organize from most positive to least positive; stand to identify most positive word in each group; discuss 	Formative A: content & imagery annotation
A, M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to audio of Book 2: Chapter 2 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate for character, job, and DICTION; annotate and discuss in pairs and as a class. Reading quiz/dialectical journal to identify major points, ideas, and diction; then 	Formative A:

<p>T</p> <p>T</p>	<p>compile information to individual role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen to audio of Book 2: Chapter 3 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate for character, job, and comments about faith; annotate and discuss in pairs and as a class. ▪ Vocabulary Word Wall; define words & present; display on wall. ▪ Listen to audio of Book 3 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate individually, stop and discuss in pairs and as a class. ▪ Reading quiz/create a facebook conversation to identify major points, ideas, and annotation, AND INDIVIDUAL JOBS; then compile information to individual role. ▪ Listen to audio of Book 4 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate individually, stop and discuss in pairs and as a class. ▪ Reading quiz/create a facebook conversation to identify major points and ideas; then compile information to individual role. ▪ Vocabulary Word Wall; define words & present; display on wall. ▪ Listen to audio of Book 5 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate individually, stop and discuss in pairs and as a class. ▪ Assess main three EQs and discuss. Faith reflection. ▪ Reading quiz/create a facebook conversation to identify major points, ideas, and annotation; then compile information to individual role. ▪ Listen to audio of Book 6 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate individually, stop and discuss in pairs and as a class. ▪ Reading quiz/create a facebook conversation to identify major points, ideas, and annotation; then compile information to individual role. ▪ Vocabulary Word Wall; define words & present; display on wall. ▪ Listen to audio of Book 7 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate individually, stop and discuss in pairs and as a class. ▪ Reading quiz/create a facebook conversation to identify major points, ideas, and annotation; then compile information to individual role. ▪ Timed writing about faith (Entrance Exam format) ▪ Listen to audio of Book 8 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate individually, stop and discuss in pairs and as a class. ▪ Reading quiz/create a facebook conversation to identify major points, ideas, and annotation; then compile information to individual role. ▪ Listen to audio of Book 9 (give summary to differentiate for lower students before reading); annotate individually, stop and discuss in pairs and as a class. ▪ Reading quiz/create a facebook conversation to identify major points and ideas; then compile information to individual role. ▪ Faith reflection. ▪ Vocabulary assessment ▪ Work day to plan social media poster ▪ TAOS TRIP ▪ Work Days to create social media together ▪ Present posters to the class ▪ Reflect on experience and revisit EQs; discuss. 	<p>content & diction</p> <p>Formative A: content, annotation, individual jobs</p> <p>Formative A: EQs</p> <p>Formative A: content, annotation, individual jobs</p> <p>Formative A: content, annotation, individual jobs</p> <p>Formative A: content, annotation, individual jobs</p> <p>Summative: EQS Summative: vocabulary Summative: character, content, theme, EQs</p>
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