

Red Letter Journalism: A Teaching Handout

Red Letter Journalism is a creative after reading project designed to follow *The Scarlet Letter*. This is designed to work in a 10th grade honors English class.

Time Frame: This project will last 4 weeks. (According to block scheduling)

Purpose: To provide a fun and creative way for students to deal with the “scandals” and main ideas of the novel.

Process: Students will work in groups which they will be placed in at random. The groups are: the reporters, the illustrators, the advertisers, and the formatters.

The reporters will be responsible for creating lengthy “news” stories about an event/topic/theme in the book that will be chosen at random. They will be responsible for a 2-3 page news article on this topic.

The advertiser’s jobs are to come up with some advertisements for our magazine. These advertisements must be for products that would be used in the time period of the *Scarlet Letter*. They will also be writing articles, but will be letters to the editor as concerned citizens in the time period of the *Scarlet Letter* (1-2 pages) They will need at least five advertisements.

The Illustrators jobs are to provide pictures to go with the groups of articles. The authors of the articles will give them the theme that they are writing on and it is up to the illustrators to come up with illustrations. For their article, they will be writing an opinion column based on their opinions of what is going on in this novel. They will need at least 5 illustrations.

It is the formatter’s job to put together the entire magazine (With some help from me of course!) They will decide what order the articles will go in and which advertisement goes where. They will also be responsible for designing a cover for our magazine. Their shorter article will be a character focus in which they will write an in-depth character sketch on any character of their choosing.

Grammar lessons:

At each day there will be a corresponding grammar lesson to help the students make their writing sound more professional. I will be using exercises out of Harry Noden’s *Image Grammar: Using Grammatical Structures to Teach Grammar* such as: Brush Strokes, Building Character

This project was created by Candace Blankenship. Please feel free to use the ideas found on this handout with credit to me.

Descriptions, and Special Effects In Writing. These grammar lessons are best practice in that they are using writing exercises to actually teach the students grammar. When students can apply the grammar to their own writing, the concept tends to make more sense and students tend to remember it better which is always an English teacher's goal in terms of teaching grammar.

At the end of the project, students will turn in a personal memo stating what his or her job was and what grade they feel they should receive.

Grading: based on 100 points. 50% for the process. 40% for the final product and 10% for the personal memo/participation.