

Unit: Playwriting/making, Literacy, Connections

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

Overview

Grades:

E-8 ELL

Class Sessions:

30 Sessions

Teacher:

Genese Lefkowitz

School:

FDR High School

Benchmark:

- Students demonstrate the ability to reflect and think critically about their work
- Students explore personal voice by applying diverse connections of dramatic writing to their original work
- Students work in groups and independently as designers, applying a multi-faceted understanding of design concepts and processes

Big Idea(s) of this Unit

- Building ensemble, class unity
- Create empathy for those around you
- See past the surface of those around you

Project Description

- Students will read excerpts from The Canterbury Tales, design costumes for that prologue and then write their own prologue for a version of the tales about a cross-section of our school.

Instructional Goal

- Students will read and understand "The Canterbury Tales" in order to learn how to look beyond the surface and think critically of the world around them with a view toward unity

Indicators of Student Learning

Students will know:

- Medieval European society, culture, life, and religion
- The tenets of the genre of satire
- How set and costume design inform a character

Students will be able to:

- Appreciate and write a satirical piece
- Critically observe their peers and others in their realm
- Write original work drawn from or inspired by a variety of source materials
- Use research to generate designs in the service of a text

Students will understand that:

- Others around them are more similar to than different from them
- Satire is a powerful way of challenging authority
- Costume design expresses theme and character

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales continued

Overview continued

Pre-Assessment/Planning

- Have I taught these students before?
Yes, I have taught the majority of them previously
- What do students already know and understand about this area of Theater Making?
The conventions of script writing
How playwrights express characterization through dialogue
How to find and interpret subtext
- What skills related to this unit have students already developed?
How to find characterization
How to write in iambic pentameter
How to take clues from text to do visual designs
- What activity might I use as a pre-assessment tool?
Free writing on topics like hypocrisy, cliques, religion, etc
- How will the students' needs be addressed?
Go slowly and use many visuals due to their status as ELLs

Unit Assessment Strategies: What is the evidence of student learning?

Self-Assessment

- Rubric and checklist for the costume design
- Reflective essay at the end of the project

Peer Assessment

- Peer evaluation of their classmates costumes

Teacher Assessment

- Grade designs according to rubric
- Analyze students reflections

Teacher Self-Assessment

- Notes to self over the course of the project
- Reflective essay

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales continued

Overview continued

Learning Experiences	Theater Strands				
	<i>making</i>	<i>literacy</i>	<i>connec- tions</i>	<i>resources</i>	<i>careers</i>
Play improv and theatre games to build team unity	◆				
Look at some professional costume sketches				◆	◆
Research and costume characters in Chaucer's Prologue		◆	◆		
Critique their classmates designs	◆		◆		
Collaborate to write a prologue of their own to reflect their school		◆	◆		
Provide visual designs (such as costumes, sketches, collages and drawings) to accompany their characters		◆			

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales continued

Pre-Planning Assessment:

Assignment

Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales is a SATIRE, a piece of writing which makes fun of those in power. Two areas where people have power over others are religion and politics. Chaucer points out the hypocrisy of these two power structures in the Middle Ages through his character descriptions in the Prologue. To get you started thinking of satire, free write a paragraph about what comes to mind about religion, politics and hypocrisy in today's world.

Student Freewrites:

Ivan

Many religions in this world, some people are trust on them. And some people are not. Believing in the religions is not a bad thing beside people believe not too much. Not too much depending on it. In China, there is a kind of the religion called "Fa-lun Gong", which harms Chinese very much. The leader of this religion, Lee, says this religion can treat any diseases, people do not have to go to the doctor, and people would go to the heaven after they dead, he asked people to do many things that against the humanism. If he is caught in China, he would be shoot by punishment. And he now is in the American, and got a political asylum. Now on the Eighth Avenue, many people who support this religion are using the name of this religion to attack the Government of China. People should not believe the religion very much. The God would bless people who do not do things transgress.

Amanda

Firstly, I think most politicians are hypocritical. For example, if a politician runs in an election, he or she will make some promises for people to get their support. However, when he or she wins the election, the politician does not do what they should and what they promised during the election. Most of them say in one way and do it in another way. Second of all, people have different religions in today's world. Some of them even do not have a religion. Comparing with history, people have more freedom to choose what they believe. It is a huge change, but it will confuse people that who is the real god. Finally, most countries in today's world are republican or democratic. The government will be selected by people, and it will be controlled by people. All the people should have power and responsibilities in the country. Everything should follow the laws that people make. The country should be run with the laws not the government. Therefore, today's world is very different from the world in history.

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales continued

Costume Design Project

Phase One: Costuming the Characters.

Each student will be randomly assigned one of the characters we studied in the Prologue. The first part of your project is to research and create an accurate costume for your character. It must be original work, do not copy something exactly as you see it. Use what you see as a springboard and adapt accordingly.

- Remember all aspects of the character given by the author must be depicted! (For example the Franklin's white beard or the Wife of Bath's gap teeth.) Is your character described as holding/carrying something? It must be included. How about colors?
- Your costume must be historically accurate to time, place, social class, and style. Do online research (hint, put "historical costume" into your browser and follow the links) or use costume books from the school or local library. Be careful about details!

There are several different ways to do this. Choose which ever you like, but they range in difficulty and point value. The easiest, number one, is worth the least while number four gets you extra credit!

- 1 A one dimensional drawing: You may use a model template to draw the costume.
 - 2 A two dimensional drawing: You may use a model template as a base and draw a basic costume, then build it up with appropriate fabric and materials.
 - 3 A three dimensional small scale model: Dress a doll in an appropriate costume.
 - 4 A life-sized model: Dress a friend, classmate or yourself appropriately.
- Remember the little details from hats and hair styles down to shoes and props; it all counts!
 - Lastly, you must include a TYPED full page explanation of your creation. Explain what you got from Chaucer, what you added, and what you adapted from your sources. You must include the bibliographic information on your sources. Remember the proper format!

My character: _____

Costume due date: _____

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales continued

Costume Design Project

Costuming the Characters Check sheet.

Fill out as much as you can before researching. Then adapt as necessary.

Character:

Form:

I) What are the specific details mentioned by Chaucer about how my character looks?

II) What is the _____ of my character?

- area
- social status
- type

III) Specific details: Including colors

- Hairstyle, hat/head covering
- Clothing:
- Shoes:
- Jewelry:
- Props:

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Costume Design Project: Student Work

Val Grysko's Franklin costume doll explanation

Let me start from the top of my Franklin. On his face, as you can see, or as you have noticed (I hope you have done so) I put a blonde beard. I did so because of the line "White as a daisy petal was his beard." Actually, I don't really know what the author meant by white - - blonde or gray. I decided to put blonde since it was easier!

Now, let me explain the way I dressed the body and the legs. I chose this style since the picture I researched. The white sweater or shirt is like underwear, which in the medieval times was white, gray, or pale. I chose brown color for his short-sleeve vest and pants because there were not that many colors. What about boots? I made them black cause it was common (actually it is even now) for men's boots to be dark.

I hope you saw that I made him kind of fat. It is since when the narrator described Franklin, most of the time he spoke about food. For example, "His house was never short of bake-meat pies/Of fish and flesh and these in rich supplies." I gave him a white belt because of the line "His girdle white as morning milk." I also gave him a sword and a purse and I attached it to the belt because of the lines "A dagger and a little purse of silk/hung at his girdle." Indeed, I put the purse in the back since I saw that in a movie.

Ewelina Pietrucha's Pardoner costume doll explanation

In The Canterbury Tales, by Geoffrey Chaucer, the author presents different classes of society in Medieval England. Pardoner is the satiric character from the church. He has long yellow lock hairs, which fall down on his shoulders. He also has big, bossy eyeballs. On his head, he does not have a hood, he has a little cap. In his hood he keeps his money, on his lap. He has metal cross with stones, Pardoner cheats people, that is why he has a lot of money. He has many thing which he considers that in the past they belonged to saint people. For example he has a pillowcase which he claims that it is veil of The Virgin Mary. Also he has pieces of Saint Peter sail. The last thing which he has is glass jar with pig bones. He considers it as saint's relics.

In the Middle Age people from the church like Pardoner we can compare with Benedictine monks. Monks spent most of they time praying or teaching, writing and reading. Monks usually work black shoe made of leather. They often wore plain habits in brown, grey, dark blue, or red colors. The habits were tied with rope belt. They had cross upon a chain around their necks.

Cheng Shi's Plowman life-sized costume description

In The Canterbury Tales, my character was Plowman. Plowman was a nice, honest, and hearted man and he was a serious character, he did what he supposed to do and he helps the poor people a lot. He prays everyday. He take what he earn, he never take more.

First when I try to make the clothes for my character, I had chose a gray color because when I go online to search for plowman in Medieval Ages, England, most of the picture was show the clothes in gray, and gray color had make people look serious and honest. That's why I choose gray color for my character's clothes. For the hat I had search in the internet and it shows that plowman, most of that time, they wear a hat with fur on their head to work in the field. I chose the black color for the hat because the tradition was like that in the Middle Ages.

The patches on the clothes can show that the Plowman was an honest and serious character. It shows he don't want fancy clothes, he had to wear what he had. He was too poor to throw out old clothes. He also shows that the Plowman don't like to show off and he is working hard to save money, not ⁷ spend on clothes. He don't care about his outfit.

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales continued

Costume Design Project: Peer Assessment Assignment

Peer Critique of Classmate's Costume Project

Use the following check sheet to write your critique, which will be in paragraph form.

Student:

Character:

Format:

What Chaucer said about the character:

Three Positive Aspects of the Costume

1)

2)

3)

Three Areas for Improvement

1)

2)

3)

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales continued

Costume Design Project:

Peer Assessment Assignment: Student Work

Student: Elaine

Project: Character, Pardoner

Maker: Ewelina Petrucha

First of all, when I saw the doll of the character, I like the way she presented her character. It looks good and funny. She did a good job because, she does thing what the author and the book shows to her, for example the color of the character's hair, yellow and he wore no hood on his head use hat to instead of. In addition, the character's cloth color and the way she made, it's good. Pardoner is a religious character in the middle age they suppose to wear black and white, but this character did not, so make his characterize satiric. By the way, the jewelry the character wore is good by hand making. The character made by Ewelina is really awesome. The part she needs to improve is she did not show the lines of the book to describe the character. In addition, need more information to show about how the character was a satiric character, because Ewelina did not show that clearly. By the way, the character is not 100 percent hand making, that's little bit disappoint. However, Ewelina did a great job.

Student: Can Cheng

Project: Character, Plowman

Maker: Cheng Shi

The character of plowman from what Cheng Shi describe in Canterbury Tales. She did some good jobs and she also need to improve on the other ways.

First of all, she did a good job with her research in the internet and did the material successfully. In the plowman, she use some silk to make a hat which is nice and special to me. I like the way of what she does with some extra material to add on. She use two tiny piece of silk and knit them up by her hands. She did that because she liked the character very much and she wanted to give him the most responsible wearing. She did the nice job with her knitted. She knitted a big, long and difficult gown to her character and also outstanding of what plowman supposed to have in the Middle Age.

On the other hands, she did not do so well with plowman's hat. I say that because I am not agreeing of what she did. She said the hat supposed to use the fur with the gray color. But she uses the silk with black color. She need to make some special pictures with the symbols with can outstanding the Middle Age. After that, she needs to make the gown with the symbol to show the way he dress in the Middle Age. I think if she can improve with those three ways, then she will make more success with her character plowman.

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Imitative Prologue Writing

Imitative Prologue Assignment:

Choose one of the groups of people you notice in our school. It can be a member of the groups we brainstormed on the board (jocks, Russian divas, Goth boys, security guards etc) or another one of your choosing. Like Chaucer you can choose to make the character serious, comic, or satiric. Write a short poem of AT LEAST 10 lines imitative of Chaucer's Prologue style:

Remember:

- It must be at least 10 lines long
- It must be in AA/BB/CC rhyme scheme
- Each line must have 10 syllables
- It must include strong lines, images, and descriptive language

After writing your poem, generate a visual to accompany it. It can be done in a variety of forms, hand drawn, computer graphic, collage, etc. Remember to show VISUALLY what you expressed in the poem.



Student: Janet Tam
Student Poem: Security Guard

**When people go to FDR High School,
The security guards are look so cool.
Fat, thin, tall, short, there are so many kinds.
They look so serious but they are kind.
Don't be afraid when you are getting lost.
They would like to help you when you get
tossed.
They know the map of school very clear.
They always stay with you very near.
No matter it is gun shoot or a fight.
They can prevent any terrible sight.**