



Teacher-to-Teacher

Video Series

for Secondary Educators

TITLE: Reading the Movies: Another Approach to Teaching Critical Thinking Skills and Writing

PRIMARY SUBJECT AREAS: Reading and Responding, Writing, Using Information Resources, Literature as a Record of Life Experiences and Critical Thinking (English Language Arts Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7)

GRADE LEVELS: 11-12 (adaptable to higher and lower grades)

OVERVIEW: “Reading the Movies: Another Approach to Teaching Critical Thinking Skills and Writing” utilizes elements of film to analyze character, action, and theme in the 1994 movie *Quiz Show*. Through classroom discussion, journaling, and a multi-paragraph critical essay, the lesson also encourages students to make personal connections and real life applications as they view movies and television critically as well as for entertainment.

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 7 days

LOUISIANA CONTENT STANDARDS:

<http://www/DOE/assessment/standards/ENGLISH.pdf>

Standard One: Students read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials, using a variety of strategies for different purposes.

ELA-1-H2: analyzing the effects of complex literary devices (e.g., figurative language, flashback, foreshadowing, dialogue, irony) and complex elements (e.g., setting, plot, character, theme, mood, style) on selection

ELA-1-H3: reading, critiquing, and responding to extended, complex written, spoken, and visual texts

Standard Two: Students write competently for a variety of purposes and audiences.

ELA-2-H1: writing a composition of complexity that clearly implies a central idea with supporting details in a logical, sequential order

ELA-2-H2: using language, concepts, and ideas that show an awareness of the intended audience and/or purpose (e.g., classroom, real-life, workplace) in developing complex compositions

- ELA-2-H3: applying the steps of the writing process, emphasizing revising and editing in final drafts
- ELA-2-H4: using narration, description, exposition, and persuasion to develop various modes of writing (e.g., notes, stories, poems, letters, essays, editorials, critical analyses, logs)
- ELA-2-H5: recognizing and applying literary devices (e.g., figurative language, symbolism, dialogue) and various stylistic elements (e.g., diction, sentence structure, voice, tone)

Standard Three: Students communicate using standard English grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and handwriting.

- ELA-3-H2: using the grammatical and mechanical conventions of standard English
- ELA-3-H3: spelling accurately using strategies and resources (e.g., glossary, dictionary, thesaurus, spell check) when necessary

Standard Five: Students locate, select, and synthesize information from a variety of texts, media, references, and technological sources to acquire and communicate knowledge.

- ELA-5-H1: recognizing and using organizational features of printed text, other media, and electronic information (e.g., parts of a text, citations, endnotes, bibliographic references, microprint, laser discs, hypertext, CD-ROM, keyword searches, bulletin boards, e-mail)
- ELA-5-H2: locating and evaluating information sources (e.g., print materials, databases, CD-ROM references, Internet information, electronic reference works, community and government data, television and radio resources, audio and visual materials)
- ELA-5-H3: accessing information and conducting research using graphic organizers, outlining, note taking, summarizing, interviewing, and surveying to produce texts and graphics
- ELA-5-H4: using available technology to produce, revise, and publish a variety of works
- ELA-5-H5: citing references using various formats (e.g., parenthetical citations, endnotes, bibliography)

Standard Six: Students read, analyze, and respond to literature as a record of life experiences.

- ELA-6-H4: analyzing various genres as records of life experiences

Standard Seven: Students apply reasoning and problem solving skills to reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing.

- ELA-7-H1: using comprehension strategies (e.g., predicting, drawing conclusions, comparing and contrasting, making inferences, determining main idea)

- ELA-7-H2: problem solving by analyzing, prioritizing, categorizing, and evaluating; incorporating life experiences; and using available information
- ELA-7-H3: analyzing the effects of an author's life, culture, and philosophical assumptions and an author's purpose and point of view
- ELA-7-H4: distinguishing fact from opinion, skimming and scanning for facts, determining cause and effect, generating inquiry, and making connections to real-life situations across texts

GLEs Addressed:
Grade 11-12

2. Analyze the significance of complex literary and rhetorical devices in American, British, or world texts, including:
 - apostrophes
 - rhetorical questions
 - metaphysical conceits
 - implicit metaphors (metonymy and synecdoche) (ELA-1-H2)
3. Draw conclusions and make inferences about ideas and information in complex texts in oral and written responses, including:
 - fiction/nonfiction
 - drama/poetry
 - public documents
 - film/visual texts
 - debates/speeches (ELA-1-H3)
8. Analyze in oral and written responses the ways in which works of ancient, American, British, or world literature represent views or comments on life, for example:
 - an autobiography/diary gives insight into a particular time and place
 - the pastoral idealizes life in the country
 - the parody mocks people and institutions
 - an allegory uses fictional figures to express truths about human experiences (ELA-6-H4)
9. Demonstrate understanding of information in American, British, and world literature using a variety of strategies, for example:
 - interpreting and evaluating presentation of events and information
 - evaluating the credibility of arguments in nonfiction works
 - making inferences and drawing conclusions
 - evaluating the author's use of complex literary elements, (e.g., symbolism, themes, characterization, ideas)
 - comparing and contrasting major periods, themes, styles, and trends within and across texts
 - making predictions and generalizations about ideas and information
 - critiquing the strengths and weaknesses of ideas and information
 - synthesizing (ELA-7-H1)

10. Identify, gather, and evaluate appropriate sources and relevant information to solve problems using multiple sources, including:
 - school library catalogs
 - online databases
 - electronic resources
 - Internet-based resources (ELA-7-H2)
11. Analyze and evaluate the philosophical arguments presented in literary works, including American, British, or world literature (ELA-7-H2)
12. Analyze and evaluate works of American, British, or world literature in terms of an author's life, culture, and philosophical assumptions (ELA-7-H3)
13. Analyze information within and across grade-appropriate print and nonprint texts using various reasoning skills, including:
 - identifying cause-effect relationships
 - raising questions
 - reasoning inductively and deductively
 - generating a theory or hypothesis
 - skimming/scanning
 - distinguishing facts from opinions and probability (ELA-7-H4)
14. Develop complex compositions, essays, and reports that include the following:
 - a clearly stated central idea/thesis statement
 - a clear, overall structure (e.g., introduction, body, appropriate conclusion)
 - supporting paragraphs organized in a logical sequence (e.g., spatial order, order of importance, ascending/descending order, chronological order, parallel construction)
 - transitional words, phrases, and devices that unify throughout (ELA-2-H1)
15. Develop complex compositions on student- or teacher-selected topics that are suited to an identified audience and purpose and that include the following:
 - word choices appropriate to the identified audience and/or purpose
 - vocabulary selected to clarify meaning, create images, and set a tone
 - information/ideas selected to engage the interest of the reader
 - clear voice (individual personality) (ELA-2-H2)
16. Develop complex compositions using writing processes such as the following:
 - selecting topic and form (e.g., determining a purpose and audience)
 - prewriting (e.g., brainstorming, clustering, outlining, generating main idea/thesis statements)
 - drafting
 - conferencing with peers and teachers

- revising for content and structure based on feedback
 - proofreading/editing to improve conventions of language
 - publishing using available technology (ELA-2-H3)
17. Use the various modes to write complex compositions, including:
 - definition essay
 - problem/solution essay
 - a research project
 - literary analyses that incorporate research
 - cause-effect essay
 - process analyses
 - persuasive essays (ELA-2-H4)
 18. Develop writing/compositions using a variety of complex literary and rhetorical devices (ELA-2-H5)
 21. Apply standard rules of sentence formation, including parallel structure (ELA-3-H2)
 22. Apply standard rules of usage, for example:
 - avoid splitting infinitives
 - use the subjunctive mood appropriately (ELA-3-H2)
 23. Apply standard rules of mechanics and punctuation, including:
 - parentheses
 - brackets
 - dashes
 - commas after introductory adverb clauses and long introductory phrases
 - quotation marks for secondary quotations
 - internal capitalization
 - manuscript form (ELA-3-H2)
 24. Use a variety of resources (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses, glossaries, technology) and textual features, (e.g., definitional footnotes, sidebars) to verify word spellings (ELA-3-H3)
 34. Select and critique relevant information for a research project using the organizational features of a variety resources, including:
 - print texts (e.g., prefaces, appendices, annotations, citations, bibliographic references)
 - electronic texts (e.g., database keyword searches, search engines, e-mail addresses) (ELA-5-H1)
 35. Locate, analyze, and synthesize information from a variety of complex resources, including:
 - multiple print texts (e.g., encyclopedias, atlases, library catalogs, specialized dictionaries, almanacs, technical encyclopedias, and periodicals)
 - electronic sources (e.g., Web sites or databases)
 - other media (e.g., community and government data, television and radio resources, and audio and visual materials)(ELA-5-H2)

36. Analyze the usefulness and accuracy of sources by determining their validity (e.g., authority, accuracy, objectivity, publication date, coverage) (ELA-5-H2)
37. Access information and conduct research using various grade-appropriate data-gathering strategies/tools, including:
 - formulating clear research questions
 - evaluating the validity and/or reliability of primary and/or secondary sources
 - using graphic organizers (e.g., outlining, charts, timelines, webs)
 - compiling and organizing information to support the central ideas, concepts, and themes of a formal paper or presentation
 - preparing annotated bibliographies and anecdotal scripts (ELA-5-H3)
38. Write extended research reports (e.g., historical investigations, reports about high interest and library subjects) which include the following:
 - researched information that supports main ideas
 - facts, details, examples, and explanations from sources
 - graphics when appropriate
 - complete documentation (e.g., endnotes or parenthetical citations, works cited lists or bibliographies) consistent with a specified style guide (ELA-5-H3)
39. Use word processing and/or technology to draft, revise, and publish various works, including:
 - functional documents (e.g., requests for information, resumes, letters of complaint, memos, proposals), using formatting techniques that make the document user friendly
 - analytical reports that include databases, graphics, and spreadsheets
 - research reports on high-interest and literary topics (ELA-5-H4)
40. Use selected style guides to produce complex reports that include the following:
 - credit for sources (e.g., appropriate parenthetical documentation and notes)
 - standard formatting for source acknowledgment (ELA-5-H5)

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES:

<http://www.louisianaschools.net/DOE/LCET/curric/k12stand.pdf>

Technology Communication Tools (*Communication Foundation Skill*)

Students use telecommunications to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts and other audiences.

Technology Productivity Tools (*Resource Access and Utilization Foundation Skill*)

Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and promote creativity.

Technology Research Tools (*Linking and Generating Knowledge*) Foundation Skill)

Students use appropriate technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources. Students use technology tools to process data and report results. Students evaluate and select new information resources and technological innovations based on the appropriateness to specific tasks.

Social, Ethical, and Human Issues (*Citizenship Foundation Skill*)

Students understand the ethical, cultural, and societal issues related to technology. Students practice responsible use of technology systems, information, and software. Students develop positive attitudes toward technology uses that support lifelong learning, collaboration, personal pursuits, and productivity.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

Social Studies (American History), Sociology, and Psychology

OBJECTIVES:

1. The learner will comprehend, interpret and respond to film as literature.
2. The learner will make connections between two genres, film and a novel (or film and a Shakespearean play).
3. The learner will apply critical thinking skills to comprehend and analyze film.
4. The learner will apply steps of the writing process to a topic that connects to real life experiences of a young adult.
5. The learner will utilize technology to access information and to publish work.

MATERIALS:

Film *Quiz Show* (1994, directed by Robert Redford), student journals, 3x5 cards to be used for entrance and exit cards, handouts (See Reproducible Materials)

TECHNOLOGY CONNECTION:

Hardware: Computer laboratory with Internet access, television

Software: Microsoft Word

Web Sites: <www.galenetgalegroup.com>

LESSON PROCEDURES:

Opening

Day 1:

1. Introduce topic with prompt connecting assignment to prior knowledge/prior lesson. Ex.: We read and discussed *The Scarlet Letter* (or *Macbeth*) in which one of the themes was the effect of

shame and guilt on an individual's life. Think about the events in that work and our findings and discussions. Then discuss the following topic with your group and write a daily journal entry to be presented to the class: *News today often includes details of scandals in which prominent public figures are involved. Think about people in our community, state, or nation who have "made the news." How does our society regard these people after they have been shamed publicly? What are the immediate and long-range effects? Does this also happen in the high school environment? Explain.* Group will compose one response to be presented to the class.

2. Cooperative group work. Present to class. Class response and discussion of each presentation.
3. Introduce film to be viewed and related assignment included on handout (entitled "Quiz Show: Reading a Movie") to be passed out prior to viewing. Discuss objectives and expectations with students, explaining the possibilities that films offer for critical thinking and analysis.
4. View opening of the film. Discuss setting, mood, tone, and main characters.
5. Complete Exit Card: *Television was beginning its "boom era" in the 1950's. Is it as important in the average American household today as Redford depicts it in the film?*

Development

Day 2:

1. Introduce lesson with a brief review of characters and actions in portion of film viewed yesterday. Pose the following question: *Why do you suppose a college professor like Charlie Van Doren would want to be on a television quiz show? What does this imply about the "power" of television?*
2. View film. At the end of class, discuss the issue of selecting "winners" and "rigging the contest" for the sake of entertainment. Was this wrong? What was the entertainment industry's argument?
3. Complete Exit Card: *What do you think regarding the "right and wrong" of the issue?*

Day 3:

1. Complete entrance card on the following topic: *What do you think director Robert Redford's message was in his critically acclaimed movie Quiz Show? Share writings.*
2. Finish final segment of movie. Discuss.
3. Journal Entry:
Think about the events in the film and compare what happened to Charles Van Doren to what happened to Hester in *The Scarlet Letter* (Macbeth). They both made choices that affected their lives forever. Now consider their punishment. Address the following question with

your group and write a daily journal entry to be presented to the class: *Compare the punishment of Charles Van Doren and Hester Prynne (Macbeth). Whose was worse? Support your ideas.* Students volunteer to share ideas with the class.

Day 4:

1. Review names of main characters, places, and action. Review and discuss assignment on handout (Day1).
2. Begin in-class essay in computer laboratory. Goal for the day is to complete brainstorming and rough draft. Begin peer review (Use Peer Review Rubric).

Closing

Days 5-7:

1. Report directly to lab. Complete rough draft if not completed.
2. Begin peer review. After peer review discussion between reviewers and teacher, students revise/rewrite final copy.
3. Students submit final copy along with all drafts, brainstorming, and Peer Review Rubric.

REPRODUCIBLE MATERIALS:

Quiz Show: Reading a Movie Handout
Cooperative Group Activity Rubric
Entrance/Exit Card Teacher Checklist
Journal Response Checklist
Peer Review Rubric
Final Draft Rubric

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES: Assessment is ongoing, from the formative assessment of the daily activities to the summative assessment, the final draft of the written composition. (See Reproducible Materials for copies of rubrics/checklists.)

Day 1:

Cooperative Group Activity Rubric
Entrance/Exit Card Teacher Checklist

Day 2:

Entrance/Exit Card Teacher Checklist

Day 3:

Entrance/Exit Card Teacher Checklist
Journal Response Checklist

Day 4:

Peer Review Rubric

Days 5-7:

Final Draft Rubric (See *Teachers' Guide to Statewide Assessment for ELA* for rubric used in the scoring of state writing assessment.)

EXPLORATION AND EXTENSION:

The film offers a myriad of opportunities for classroom study/activities. It is a film rich in topics, from the effect of the scandal on Van Doren to the effect of television on the individual's concept of reality and truth. A possible topic is as follows: Access [Galenetgalegroup](#) to find additional information on the television industry in the 1950's, as well as other societal issues. It's an interesting period in our history! Look also for critical reviews on Redford's film. There are some great ones!

RESOURCES: *Reading the Movies*, published by NCTE; *Macbeth*, for Grade 12; *The Scarlet Letter*, for Grade 11

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Quiz Show: Reading a Movie

This is a great film and a “fun” assignment -- you’ve been wanting to watch a movie! So -- here’s the plan -- we will view this movie, discuss, and then write an essay. It will be in-class essay, so don’t worry about extra work! The more you write -- the better you write!

Assignment: View critically the movie *Quiz Show*, making notes of names of main characters, important action, use of color imagery, music -- even specific quotes that the characters make which you think are significant. You will use this in your essay. Enjoy the movie, but pay close attention too. It’s a great movie based on an actual event and addressing some really critical societal issues. This is the type assignment you might be given in a history, sociology, or English class in college. Take notes in your binder.

Introductory Paragraph: I drafted a sample intro paragraph to give you an idea of some of the issues addressed in this movie.

Director Robert Redford makes a serious indictment against American society and its values in *Quiz Show*, the 1994 film based on the late 1950’s scandal of the popular, highly rated quiz show "Twenty-One." The movie, which tells the story of contestants who unfairly win money and fame, addresses more than just the issues of the power of television and the role government should play in regulation of the industry. Rather, *Quiz Show* is a severely critical view of postwar American culture and society. It questions the values of an era that is foolish enough to accept fantasy as truth and "to believe everything they see on a television screen," and it looks closely at Americans' obsession with money and material things. In this movie the American Dream of "a new and perfect life in a new and perfect world" is corrupted by a lust for money, as well as bigotry against those who are different. An excellent picture of America during this troubling period, *Quiz Show* can be viewed as an accurate assessment of what was really happening -- to the country and to Americans. The movie can be analyzed from several points of emphasis; of particular interest is . . .

Lights out! Enjoy the Movie!

Cooperative Journal Activity Rubric

Journal topic:

News today often includes details of scandals in which prominent public figures are involved. Think about people in our community, state, or nation who have “made the news.” How does our society regard these people after they have been shamed publicly? What are the immediate and long-range effects? Does this also happen in the high school environment? Explain.

1. Content

Answers all questions

Provides support with specific examples

1 2 3 4 5

2. Analysis

Uses higher order thinking skills

Addresses the “why” and the “how”

1 2 3 4 5

3. Connections to real life

Links to personal experiences

1 2 3 4 5

4. Presentation

Facilitates critical response

Encourages further analysis in class conversation

1 2 3 4 5

Members of Group:

Peer Review Rubric

Author reviewed by Reviewer

Brainstorming sufficient/incomplete thoughtful	1	2	3	4	5
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Introduction ho-hum or WOW! thesis statement	1	2	3	4	5
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Content addresses topic sufficient support	1	2	3	4	5
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Organization logical, coherent paragraph development transition	1	2	3	4	5
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Mechanics/Usage format font spelling consistent tense verb-subject agreement	1	2	3	4	5
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Comments