

## UNIT PLAN: HISTORICAL FICTION AROUND THE WORLD

**SUBJECT:** English Language Arts

**GRADE LEVELS:** 8-10

**TIMEFRAME:** 1 week

**INSTRUCTIONAL TEXTS AND RESOURCES:**

“The Negro Leagues” (Achieve3000)

*Fences* by August Wilson (Act 1 Scene 3)

[World Literature Database](#)

[World Historical Gazetteer](#)

### LEARNING GOALS OF UNIT

By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Define and describe the characteristics of fiction, historical fiction, and historical texts
- Utilize online resources to select global historical and historical fiction pieces
- Collaborate with peers to research and develop a presentation that compares and contrasts historical fiction with historical piece

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

**CC.1.3.9-10.A**

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CC.1.3.9-10.E**

Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it and manipulate time create an effect.

**CC.1.3.9-10.F**

Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7-8.9**

Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7-8.1**

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7/8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

## LESSON SEQUENCE OUTLINE

### DAY 1: Introduction to Local Historical Fiction - Pittsburgh, PA

To introduce this unit, students should spend time defining historical fiction and brainstorming its purpose. The first days' lesson uses historical and fictional texts set in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to have students think about the essential questions before broadening them to a global scale through their group projects later in the week. If possible, consider comparing and contrasting historical and fictional texts from your current location to connect the content to students' personal lives.

| TIME/STRUCTURE          | ACTIVITY  |
|-------------------------|---|
| 5 min<br>Individual     | <p><b>MOTIVATING ACTIVITY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will independently respond to the following prompt:</li> </ul> <p>Write 2-3 sentences that answer the following questions: Why do you think we study history? What about literature? In your opinion, which is more important?</p>   |
| 5 min<br>Pairs          | <p><b>Pair-Share/Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will be asked to share their answers to the warm-up with a peer, then share out to the group.</li> </ul>   |
| ~15 mins<br>Whole group | <p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share the lesson's learning objectives</li> <li>- Assess student's understanding of historical fiction and fiction. Provide clarification if necessary. Provide examples of popular historical fiction pieces or have students brainstorm examples.</li> </ul> <p><b>Text Reading:</b></p> <p>"The Negro League" Achieve3000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read text aloud as a group or in small groups.</li> <li>- If necessary, pause to ask comprehension questions.</li> </ul> <p><i>Fences</i> by August Wilson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Provide background:</b> <i>Fences</i> by August Wilson is a play set in Pittsburgh, PA that follows the story of Troy Maxson, a man who once dreamed of becoming a professional baseball player, but was deemed too old when the Major Leagues began admitting Black athletes. Bitter over his missed opportunity, Troy creates further tension in his family when he squashes his son Cory's chance to meet a college football recruiter. (Source: Google synopsis)</li> <li>- Assign roles and read scene between Cory and Troy, OR watch the movie- Act 1 scene 3 (4-5 minutes)</li> </ul> |
| 10 min<br>Small groups  | <p><b>Small Group Compare/Contrast</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will be divided into small groups and assigned to team Similarities or team Differences. Have each group find at least 4 similarities/differences between the two texts.</li> </ul>  |

## LESSON SEQUENCE OUTLINE

### DAY 1: Introduction to Local Historical Fiction - Pittsburgh, PA

To introduce this unit, students should spend time defining historical fiction and brainstorming its purpose. The first days' lesson uses historical and fictional texts set in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to have students think about the essential questions before broadening them to a global scale through their group projects later in the week. If possible, consider comparing and contrasting historical and fictional texts from your current location to connect the content to students' personal lives.

| TIME/STRUCTURE | ACTIVITY   |
|----------------|--|
|                | <p>Sample guiding questions to display:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What makes these two texts similar? What makes them different?</li> <li>- What information did I learn from these texts?</li> <li>- What kind of language did the authors choose, and how does it shape each text?</li> <li>- What emotions were evoked by reading each text?</li> </ul> <p>- A representative from each group will be asked to place their team's sticky notes on the appropriate poster.</p>  |
| ~10-15 min     | <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How might Troy feel reading "The Negro Leagues"? How would his lived experience influence his perception of the text?</li> <li>- How did the author of the fictional story change or enhance real history?</li> <li>- Why do you think authors choose to write historical fiction rather than just history?</li> <li>- What purposes does historical fiction serve? How might historical fiction have an emotional effect?</li> </ul> <p><b>Extra time:</b></p> <p>Imagine you are writing a piece of historical fiction about yourself. What kind of text would you write (a play, a novel, a comic)? What real events from your life would you change and what would you keep the same?</p> |

### DAY 2: Global Historical Fiction – Exploring the database

Using the foundation built by the discussions yesterday, students should spend day 2 thinking about historical fiction from a global perspective. Utilizing online databases and other resources, students should work on developing media literacy skills to begin selecting a region or historical event to focus on for their final project presentations.

| TIME/STRUCTURE      | ACTIVITY  |
|---------------------|---|
| 5 min<br>Individual | <p><b>MOTIVATING ACTIVITY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will independently respond to the following prompts:<br/>"How would you define 'culture'? How does culture influence what we read, watch, and listen to?"</li> </ul> |

**DAY 2: Global Historical Fiction – Exploring the database**

Using the foundation built by the discussions yesterday, students should spend day 2 thinking about historical fiction from a global perspective. Utilizing online databases and other resources, students should work on developing media literacy skills to begin selecting a region or historical event to focus on for their final project presentations.

| TIME/STRUCTURE                     | ACTIVITY  |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <p>5 min<br/>Pairs</p>             | <p><b>Pair-Share/Discussion:</b><br/>- Students will be asked to share their answers to the warm-up with a peer, then share out to the group.</p>   |
| <p>~20-25 mins<br/>Whole group</p> | <p><b>Introduction to Online Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spend time walking students through the features of the World Historical Gazetteer and the World Literature Database. Focus on developing media literacy skills (how to select effective keywords to search, how to verify credible sources, exploring topics by category, etc.)</li> <li>- Allow students time to independently explore each website. Consider providing guiding questions for them to answer on their own or in pairs.</li> </ul> <p>For example, if students have read Olaudah Equiano’s narrative: “Using the World History Gazetteer, find one of the locations related to Equiano’s narrative and describe the history of its name.”</p>  |
| <p>20 min<br/>Small groups</p>     | <p><b>Introduction to Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divide students into small groups (2-4) and introduce the final project. This project has been intentionally left open-ended to customize depending on the needs of each class, but here are some suggested guidelines:</li> <li>- In small groups, select a region or major historical event from around the world to develop a presentation on. Using a similar structure from yesterday’s class, your group will select two texts: one piece of historical fiction and one purely historical piece.</li> <li>- Create a presentation (PowerPoint, Google Slideshow, Website demonstration, video, etc.) that 1. Introduces your classmates to the culture from which your texts come and 2. Compares and contrasts historical fiction and a historical text from the same time period with the purpose of identifying what creative liberties authors of fiction take to use or alter history and why.</li> </ul> <p>Depending on your students, you may choose to provide more detailed structural guidelines for this project (time limits, number of required sources, etc.)</p> |

### **DAYS 3-5: Global Historical Fiction – Final Project work**

Allow students several class periods to work on their group presentations. These days should be structured as workshop time, allowing for students to ask questions and brainstorm with their teacher and other groups. Before the final presentation day, it may be beneficial to have each group check-in with the teacher for a few minutes to ensure things are working smoothly.

On the day of the final presentations, allow time for questions and answers from each group. For a more immersive and interactive experience, encourage students to share other forms of art from their selected regions (food, music, dress, film, etc).