

***The Pearl* by John Steinbeck**

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 8

Summary

A young Indian man and his family struggle to save their son's life after a scorpion bite. The Indian, a pearl diver, finds a very valuable pearl and tries to sell the pearl to save his son's life and better his family. Only then does he find himself becoming very greedy and engrossed with the notion of being wealthy and powerful. The journey to sell the pearl and gain possessions ultimately leads to the death of his son and the loss of all he had.

Connection to the Curriculum

The Pearl is a timeless novel dealing with many themes pertinent to young adult's lives. Materialism, greed, selfishness, community, family and other themes are developed through the novel. Literary devices including symbolism and metaphor can be examined at length, offering new and deeper ways of reading and thinking of texts. Discussions of multi-culturalism, bias, and stereotypes can also easily be drawn from the text, and social studies connections are clear through the topics of oppressed peoples and cultures.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2 – The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.3.5 – The student determines the meaning of words or phrases using context clues from sentences or paragraphs.

1.4.10 – The student identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical and persuasive texts.

1.4.12- The student uses prior knowledge, content, text type, and text features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.

1.4.13- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after the reading of the text.

1.4.17 – The student compares and contrasts varying aspects (e.g., characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints) in one or more appropriate-level texts.

1.4.20- The student identifies and describes the author's purpose (e.g., to inform, to give directions, to entertain) and basic techniques the author uses to achieve that purpose.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of major and minor characters (e.g. their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and explains how those aspects influence characters' interactions with other characters and elements of the plot, including resolution of the major conflict.

2.1.2- The student identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and explains the importance of the setting to the story or literary text.

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor events related to the conflict in a story (e.g., crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution) and explains how one event gives rise to another.

2.1.4- The student understands aspects of theme (e.g. moral, lesson, meaning, message, author's ideas about the subject) and supports with implicit and/or explicit information from the text.

2.1.5- The student understands the use of literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback).

2.2.8 – The student compares and contrasts customs and ideas within literature representing a variety of cultures.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The text can be difficult to understand due to the large quantity of symbolism. Students who take the time to understand the cultural and social significance that the novel provides will be richly rewarded with an incredible reading experience

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities