

Organizing Literature for Effective Teaching



Approaches to Literature Instruction

Approach	Instructional Purpose	Classroom Management
One book, one class	Attention on issues presented in one work	Emphasis on large group
Novels arranged thematically	Attention on issues from variety of works	Emphasis on small group
Thematic units	Attention to variety of genres and skills	Emphasis on large and small group
One book, one student	Attention on reading interest/ability of each student	Emphasis on individual

One Book, One Class

- Traditional
- Advantages
 - easier planning
 - all students discuss same information
 - whole class moves to analysis at same time
 - easier and consistent evaluation



One Book, One Class



- Disadvantages
 - does not meet the needs of every student
 - developmental
 - reading
 - interests
 - teachers teach to the middle

Novels Arranged Thematically



- **Novels have same themes or issues**
 - variety of reading levels
 - variety of interest levels
 - small group instruction
 - small and large group discussions
- **Student read one book and hear about several others**

Novels Arranged Thematically (Middle School)

Theme	High	Middle	Low
Teen pressure	<i>The Crystal Garden</i>	<i>Driver's Ed</i>	<i>Killing Mr. Griffin</i>
Friendships	<i>Waiting for the Rain</i>	<i>Dangerous Skies</i>	<i>Being Youngest</i>
Prejudice	<i>Under the Blood-Red Sky</i>	<i>North by Night: A Story of the Underground Railroad</i>	<i>Daniel's Story</i>
Strange and Eerie	<i>Whispers from the Dead</i>	<i>A Haunting in Williamsburg</i>	<i>Reef of Death</i>
Survival	<i>Welcome to the Ark</i>	<i>River Thunder</i>	<i>Flash Fire</i>
War	<i>Soldier's Heart</i>	<i>Soldier Boy</i>	<i>My Brother Sam is Dead</i>

Novels Arranged Thematically (High School)

Theme	High	Middle	Low
Environmental Issues	<i>Phoenix Rising</i>	<i>California Blue</i>	<i>Nine Man Tree</i>
Victims	<i>Chinese Handcuffs</i>	<i>The Facts Speak for Themselves</i>	<i>Lena</i>
Illness	<i>Heat</i>	<i>Life in the Fat Lane</i>	<i>Beauty Queen</i>
Love and Sexuality	<i>“Hello,” I Lied</i>	<i>Out of Control</i>	<i>Tenderness</i>
Echoes from the Past	<i>Alicia: My Story</i>	<i>Forbidden City</i>	<i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963</i>
Government Control	<i>After the First Death</i>	<i>The Giver</i>	<i>Don’t Look Behind You</i>
Unusual Circumstances	<i>Fade</i>	<i>The Music of Dolphins</i>	<i>Albion’s Dream</i>

Thematic Units

- A unit
 - Involves all components of language arts
 - Emphasis on integration of skills
 - Similar to whole language
 - Is a vehicle for teaching language arts
 - Emphasis on discovery—students explore topics in unit
 - Curriculum based on experience, involvement, and response
 - Literature not just novels—all genres
 - Allows students to consider various viewpoints



Thematic Unit (example)

- **Objectives (TSW)**
 - Define *friendship*
 - Generate a list of qualities of a friend
 - Investigate the importance of friendship in society
- **Language Arts Objectives (STW)**
 - Develop confidence in writing
 - Revise edit and proofread writing
 - Examine the quality of peers' writing
 - Participate in class discussion
 - Describe the power of language in various forms
 - Personally respond to written text
 - Identify attributes of fictional and nonfictional characters and how they influence others
- **Materials**
 - Novels
 - *Phoenix Rising*
 - *Treasures in the Dust*
 - *Bridge to Terabithia*
 - Short Stories and Poetry
 - “The Beginning of Something”
 - “The Dreamer”
 - “The Cave”
 - “Pastures of Plenty”
 - “Gone Away”
 - *Very Best (Almost) Friends: Poems of Friendship*

Thematic Unit (example)

- **Material (cont.)**
 - **Nonfiction**
 - *Puppies, Cogs, and Blue Northers: Reflections on Being Raised by a Pact of Sled Dogs*
 - *My Life in Dog Years*
 - *Love Ya Like a Sister: A Story of Friendship*
 - **Drama**
 - *Little Old Ladies in Tennis Shoes*
 - *Large Fears, Little Deamons*
- **Activities**
 - Brainstorm the word *friendship*
 - After reading novel, students write biopoems on one character. Then they write a character sketch using the writing process, peer conferencing, and polishing their writing.
 - Students find examples of *friendship* in news print. Compare and Contrast the use of language in news print with that of literature. Answer: How does the writer's purpose influence the language?

Thematic Unit (example)

- **Activities**

- Students identify imagery in novels and use this knowledge in original writing
- Students choose a short story or poem to compare and contrast with the novel. Students use a graphic organizer to generate ideas.
- After reading nonfiction, students discuss how friendship extends to animals
- Students create a dramatic interpretation of their reading and perform it for the class.

- **Assessment**

- During the unit the teacher has many opportunities for assessing student work both formally and informally, including:
 - Participation in discussions
 - Writing process
 - Peer conferencing
 - Biopoem
 - Response to reading
 - Contribution to brainstorming
 - Performance

One Book, One Student



- Best considers the needs of an individual's
 - Interests
 - Development
 - Intellect
- Assessment
 - Traditional book reports
 - Nontraditional book talks
 - Nontraditional book projects

One Book, One Student—Project Ideas

- Meet the author talk show
- Book talk
- Oral reading set to music
- Put a character on trial
- Compose a speech on a national topic from a character's view point
- Written book review (post in the room)
- Letters
 - To authors
 - To friends
 - To one character from another
 - Of advice
 - To the librarian
- Write a story using a secondary character as the main character
- Create a book fair—display
- Persuade class a book should win the “best book” award
- Create a “found poem”
- **Generate your ideas and share with us on line!**