

“Responding to Key Themes in *Of Mice and Men* (Early Lesson)”

- I. Content: Describe **what** it is you will teach. What is the content?

Today is more writing-focused than earlier days this week. Students will use their reading of the homework article “Excerpt from ‘Friendship in an Age of Economics’” to inform a one page personal response entry (a draft of one piece of their final portfolios) in their journals. Students will also complete their first personal participation assessment of the unit. With time, we will engage in a dialogue circle to begin thinking about dynamics of power within friendship.

- II. Learning Goal(s): Describe what specifically students will **know** and **be able to do** after the experience of this class.

Students will take our conversations from the week and begin expressing their ideas in writing, particularly regarding conceptualizations of friendship. They will complete the personal assessment as a reflective element of their in-class contributions, in order to think about ways to strengthen their commentary and questions. Students will connect ideas of friendship to texts outside *Of Mice and Men*.

- III. Rationale: Explain how the content and learning goal(s) relate to your Curriculum Unit Plan learning goals.

This unit puts greater emphasis on speaking and listening skills, since a classroom where the teacher does all the talking represents a particular construct of power. Students are given the opportunity to lead conversations daily, though they may not be used to this model. I will scaffold dialogue circles this unit and ask students to reflect on their own participation so that they can become better speakers and listeners.

- IV. Assessment: Describe **how** you and your students will know they have reached your learning goals.

Students will first engage with reflective self-assessment, by completing the personal participation assessment in their journals. After, students will be writing a draft of a one-page response to an article they read for homework, which I will review. That said, this response is a rough draft. We will work to revise these drafts in the coming weeks.

- V. Personalization and equity: Describe how you will provide for individual student strengths and needs. How will you and your lesson consider the needs of each student and scaffold learning? How specifically will ELL students and students with learning disabilities gain access and be supported?

Today’s mode of writing will probably be unfamiliar, so some struggle is to be expected. I will minimize this by providing some context and tools for students to use. Students have been given a modern interpretation of *Nicomachean Ethics*, where they can still read quotes from the original text, but with a modern flavor. This should assist all students in comprehending the main ideas. I do not feel that students are losing anything with the modern interpretation, since “Friendship in an Age of Economics” is its own text with its own ideas. If anything, this modern text gives students the chance to engage with even more ideas. I will make sure to use visuals

today, including having all instructions on the board and in writing, to help all students access the response questions. Today will be challenging for all students for a variety of reasons. Students on IEPs whom I believe will struggle with the text will receive a copy today that has main ideas highlighted, to facilitate engagement with the main themes.

VI. Activity description and agenda

- a. Describe the activities that will help your students understand the content of your class lesson by creating an agenda with time frames for your class. Be prepared to explain why you think each activity will help students on the path toward understanding.

0:00-0:10 Students will be given their first personal participation assessment, to fill out and pass into me. This is a half-page sheet with two questions about quantity and quality of in-class commentary. When finished and waiting for others, review homework reading.

0:10-0:45 Students will begin formulating a response to the homework reading, an excerpt from "Friendship in an Age of Economics," based on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. My main question, to be put on board and in writing, is asking students to consider which form of friendship George and Lennie seem to possess. Students will write one full page in their journals. This will be a rough draft that we will work with next week. Silent writing. If finished early, review the Word Log entry that I will give to everyone. Students should also be thinking about reviewing text and proofreading this response. I will display an "I'm Done" list of items students can work on after finishing.

0:45-0:52 Give students more time as needed. Get into circle to discuss responses, as well as our movement next week towards ideas of power within friendship.

- b. What particular challenges, in terms of student learning or implementing planned activity, do you anticipate and how will you address them?

I envision the biggest challenge of the day to be getting students to sit silently for about 30 minutes while writing the reflection and response. I will preface the day before that today is writing heavy and that in order to give everyone the best opportunity to write the room needs to be silent. Headphones will not be permitted, which will raise another issue. I will say this the previous day as well, underscoring that during standardized tests, for example, a silent writing period is a necessity. Today will be one chance to practice some of these academic skills.

VII. List the Massachusetts Learning Standards this lesson addresses.

RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.9-10.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze 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.

W.9-10.2.a-b Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (a) Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information

to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. (b) Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.