

The similarities of characters in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Our Nig*.

DOCUMENTS : *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe and *Our Nig* by Harriet E. Wilson

FOCUS OF SUBJECT AREA

- The similarities and differences in the characters and conditions of Augustine St. Clare and Jack Belmont.
- The similarities and differences in the characters and conditions of Uncle Tom and Nig.
- The similarities and differences in the characters and conditions of Miss Ophelia and Mrs. Belmont.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Find passages in the two texts in order to compare and contrast the pairs of characters
- Use quotes and inferential reasoning to see and take notes on the similarities and differences of Stowe's and Wilson's figures
- Choose one pair and write a comparison/contrast paper

STRATEGIES

Students will accomplish the instructional objectives by:

- Reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and taking notes on the characters of Augustine St. Clare, Uncle Tom, and Miss Ophelia including quotes
- Participating in classroom discussions and group activities
- Reading selections provided from *Our Nig* and taking notes on the characters of Jack Belmont, Nig, and Mrs. Belmont
- Reviewing the elements of a comparison, contrast paper
- Writing the comparison/contrast paper on one pair of characters using quotes and inferences

OVERVIEW OF LESSON ACTIVITIES

The unit on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* needs approximately a month because of the book's complexity, length, and degree of difficulty my level one 8th graders encounter for the first time. Students are given a reading schedule and expect quizzes and class discussions. Once the unit nears its conclusion, one writing assignment will be to take a stance about whether or not this is a book worthy of keeping on the curriculum. After this part of the unit is completed, the teacher will introduce the book *Our Nig*, give some background material about the author, and present selected

passages about the three characters who will be discussed . Students will come up with similarities and differences between the pairs of characters and we will share them in class. The teacher will review the different ways to write a comparison/contrast paper (grouping similarities and differences, or dealing with specific areas of both characters).

ASSESSMENT

Students will demonstrate their comprehension of the unit concepts by using their notes and the texts to choose one pair of characters to write a comparison/contrast essay.

DAY ONE: Understanding the characters in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

- What do we know about Uncle Tom, Miss Ophelia, and Augustine St. Clare's character and condition from the discussion we have had about them?
- What do we know about Nig, Mrs. Bellmont, and Jack Bellmont from the excerpts provided by the teacher?
- How are the pairs alike and how different?

MATERIALS

- Student copies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- Student copies of teacher selections from *Our Nig*
- Student notes taken during class discussions

OPENING THE LESSON

Begin the lesson with explaining what the expected outcome will be and a rubric for the contrast paper.

PROCEDURE

- Allow the students to work in groups to share information they have gathered about the characters from both books.
- Suggest the students choose the pair they feel they understand the best.
- Have each student begin gathering the information he will need for his paper.
- Assign a homework preparation of lists of similarities and differences of the pair selected.

DAY TWO: Working on a first draft

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

- Do I have enough information to write this paper?
- Do I have appropriate quotes and details to support my position?
- Have I chosen which comparison/contrast format I feel most comfortable using?

PROCEDURE:

- Have individual students volunteer to share one quote that they believe is particularly important to their position
- Allow time for teacher to answer any questions that arise during this step of the writing process.
- Have students write their introductory paragraph reminding them of different beginnings and what the teacher would expect to find in this paragraph.

DAY THREE: (allow several days in between) Handing in of first drafts for teacher input

DAY FOUR: Return first drafts and answer questions

DAY FIVE: Collect final drafts.

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