



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2007 Volume I: Adapting Literature

War of the Worlds-Multimedia Adaptations

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Film as an instructional genre fits well into my full-inclusion, differentiated-instruction classroom sessions at Alameda Middle School in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The promise that many of my special needs students hold truly blossoms when they are afforded a new learning tool and a creative means for assessing what they've learned. My current unit will look at H. G. Wells' famous 1898 text, *The War of the Worlds*, and the societal times during which it was written. We will listen to the 1938 Halloween Eve radio broadcast of Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre adaptation of the text which managed to petrify the nation. Students will be the judges of how the political times in America set the scene for their gullibility. Two very different cinematic versions of *The War of the Worlds* were released in 1953 and 2005. We'll view them in their entirety. A fourth medium, periodicals, will allow students to read journalistic reports of the fallout from the radio broadcast and reviews of the book, the broadcast, and the two movies.

All necessary background research will be included in this unit for my teaching colleagues. An annotated book bibliography will aid in your selecting which texts you may want to peruse. I afford a selection of teaching strategies and lesson plans which you can accommodate to a vast heterogeneous population of students. They correlate with the content standards for all states. Lastly, assessment techniques will be included for teacher perusal as a measurable means of student success.

(Developed for Language Arts, grade 8; recommended for Language Arts and Social Studies, Interdisciplinary Unit with Language Arts)

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