



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2010 Volume III: Creating Lives: An Introduction to Biography

Biography through the Use of Document-Based Questions

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Overview/Content

What is Chekhov saying about modernity? Why does O'Brien keep bringing up the meaning of storytelling? What is Achebe trying to gain by showing such vastly different versions of masculinity? Not a day goes by in my classroom without a student asking me to explain some overarching theme, literary symbol, or the cultural relevance of a text. Students seek the immediacy of knowing. They usually can find the hints of larger more interesting ideas in a novel, but often struggle with deciding what the explanation is and defending it with evidence. Sometimes it is because students haven't been told what texts mean, but most of the time it is that students haven't been taught how to look at literature analytically and then derive their own meaning from it.

Every year I struggle with getting students to take that leap of faith with their own literary interpretations. It is something I constantly need to work with them on building the tools, skills, and ego necessary for a student to put their all into writing. Throughout the year we work on elements of close reading as a way to unravel a text. As the year progresses, I try to get students to evaluate the patterns of texts and see if they can draw meaning from that. My ultimate goal is the hardest: how do you get students to synthesize what does all of that value mean exactly?

Writing is a very personal instrument, especially for teenagers. I try to allow a lot of space for their voices in writing and am very flexible in their choices for how intricate their arguments may or may not be. My big push in class is evidence. I really try to instill the idea that you can take any possible side of an argument as long as you have enough evidence.

I provide my students with different critical lenses that illuminate texts. For the past two years, my AP English Literature and Composition class has reviewed a variety of literary approaches, including formalist, gender, psychological, and mythological, among others. While I have presented the concept of "authorship," I have not developed a unit focused solely on using biography as an approach to critical thinking. I feel it is an appropriate subject for my class, as a strategy for reading fiction, poetry, and drama (all of which are covered on the AP Exam), while offering insights from both biographical and historical context. Biography is uniquely sensitive to a variety of literary devices: irony, point of view, symbol, tone. In addition, one critical approach will help students understand that each individual's critique of a text is influenced by his or her personal limitations.

Additionally, the topic of biography will augment lessons about main ideas, an author's approach, supporting details, and generalizations/conclusions within texts. My students struggle to recognize which elements of a reading are focus-worthy. They often are challenged when attempting to see similar elements in connections between several different texts. Their culminating project is to create a four to seven paragraph synthesis essay based on documents that have been provided for them answering the question: Who was insert author here>? In order to do this, I have spent a great deal of time gathering documents, creating a question about an author's life, and systematically choosing documents I think students will be able to find correlations between.

For the unit I intend to teach, I have selected nearly 20 solid, comprehensive documents that can be analyzed and used to either support or challenge multiple stances toward Langston Hughes. Using only these documents, I expect students to analyze texts, categorize them, and create a working outline which will finally result in a synthesis essay. By the time they work on this unit they will have read an extensive amount by Hughes and will only need to focus on annotating their texts and carefully analyzing documents provided.

This culminating project will not only reinforce research skills, but will revisit the concept of main idea and supporting details. They will have to decide critically which texts to include or exclude from their project and look for the thread, or through-line, that ties those texts together. By choosing evidence that is important to them, they will write a well-crafted essay, with a clear thesis that is supported by primary and secondary source materials.

Although I envision using this unit for an Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition classroom, I truly believe that all of the lessons in this unit can be adapted for use in a regular or special education course.

Rationale

Most of my students understand the basic concept of biography but have not learned to think of it as a lens through which to interpret a text. Biography is useful in that it is directly linked to literature by the use of rhetorical strategies and narrative tactics in order to create a meaningful story about someone's life. More particularly Hermione Lee's *Biography: A Very Short Introduction* proposes two major metaphors for biography: autopsy (the examination of the human life as an object) and the contrasting image portrait (the capture of existence). Despite the disparity, they share a commonality — the investigation of an individual as subject matter. ¹ Lee defines biography as the story of one person told by another. Students need to learn that biography is not a mere accounting of someone's life in written form; rather, it functions as a narrative form that can be represented through a multitude of media. ²

The creation of this unit comes from a variety of teacher and student needs. As a teacher, I plan to use this unit towards the end of the year. Traditionally, seniors take the AP English Literature exam the first full week of May. At that point in the year, it is hard to capture the cooperative nature of a high school senior. Many times they are checked out and don't value the class after they have taken the test. For me, this unit comes from the need to create something of high interest for my students that will still focus on skills students need as they graduate and attend college. This unit is my last attempt to get my students to recognize patterns between texts, read a variety of sources critically, be able to cite them, create a rational workable thesis, and defend it using well-researched documents by the end of their high school careers. By providing historical

context for the biography and a variety of primary sources for the biographical subject, this unit can be the basis for deep, critical analysis.

Objectives

At New Millennium School of Health we follow the College Readiness Standards (CRS), designed by the American College Testing Program (ACT.org), to help guide our instruction. ³ The college entry exam they provide, the ACT, coincidentally also is one of the four testing requirements for graduation from any Illinois state high school. Since this is also considered to be an exit exam, our teachers are encouraged to scaffold the skills needed to do well on this test. While it seems that at NMSH we are teaching to the ACT, The skills necessary to master for the test are skills necessary to have achievement and success in college. Advanced Placement is considered to be a completely different creature. AP classes, which are designed to the competition college entry exam, the SAT, are looking for different skill sets.

While AP is considered to be a separate entity because it is supposed to be a college-level class, I do believe that the CRS are the skills needed to be college-ready and that the AP exam is an enhanced version of that. For that reason alone, I apply the normal senior curriculum standards to this college-level class. The CRS that I'm going to focus on for this unit are derived from the strands Main Ideas and Author's Approach, Supporting Details, as well as Generalizations and Conclusions. This final product, the synthesis paper, will follow those strands in order to help students locate and find information, seek inferences, and draw upon the facts to create some of their own discoveries.

More specifically the unit is designed to help students develop or enhance the following skills:

Main Idea and Author's Approach

- Distinguish between key concepts and secondary ideas in a text and be able to write a concise summary
- Determine how an inference might change based on additional information (in science, this could mean adding an element that would change the hypothesis)
- Search for clues that suggest the viewpoint from which a text is written and whether that point of view is biases or valid (and discuss what this means)
- Look at rhetorical devices an author or narrator uses to convey their message (i.e. imagery, metaphor, analogy) and discuss effectiveness of these devices

Supporting Details

- Gather and interpret details in a text that support key points (find evidence in text to back up ideas)
- Check inferences against information provided in a text to identify what is and is not supported by the text

- Identify details that support key points.

Generalizations and Conclusions

- Pull together information in challenging texts to make generalizations / conclusions about people or situations
- Use other sources to provide examples or counterexamples to confirm or disprove generalizations

School Background

New Millennium School of Health (NMSH), where I teach, is an urban high school located on the far Southeast side of Chicago at the James H. Bowen campus. The campus was transformed into four smaller schools in 2004 as part of Mayor Richard M. Daley's Renaissance 2010 program. The focus of 2010 is to identify failing schools (absenteeism, low percentiles of meets/exceeds on state exams, etc.) and restructure them into several smaller schools housed under the same building. New Millennium School of Health shares the Bowen campus with three other schools that have relatively the same size student population: Chicago Discovery Academy, Bowen Environmental Studies Team, Global Visions Academy. Each school has its own academic theme. In this case, New Millennium School of Health focuses on pre-health careers. With roughly 210 students, NMSH offers limited classes because of the size of the staff. Outside of the medical focus, we also offer several different classes that the College Board has approved. One in particular is a class I have been teaching for three years, Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition.

Although a high percentage of students are chosen for this class, all Seniors have the option to register for this class. If a student enrolls in this class, AP English Literature and Composition becomes a substitute for Senior English credit and a graduation requirement fulfilling the four English credits needed for graduation. Additionally, it is important to note that currently 99.9% of our students get free and/or reduced lunch and that 23% of our population are categorized legally as special education students.

The Advanced Placement opportunities are seen very differently at NMSH. In the past it was particularly common among high schools to offer AP to only the top students. At NMSH we think of academics in a different way. Most of our students are incredibly bright, but haven't had the means to express their thoughts, ideas, and critical thinking abilities. Most of our students come in with reading levels that are below grade level, but are still very capable of high-level critical thinking activities. Many times it is my job to not only teach basic subject verb agreement, but to also have them understand the allegories in *Pilgrim's Promise*.

The AP English Literature class typically has 25 students in it yearly. I understand that biography, as a specific genre, is not included in the AP Literature Exam; however, it is imperative that students, both in the present and as life-long learners, understand the value of mastering a variety of critical approaches to literature. Having access to alternative assumptions and analytical methods will allow them to be better informed as readers and researchers.

Background Information

It is important to provide my students with a brief background about biography, its origins, and why we will be using it in class.

Francis Bacon, widely known throughout high school science classes as the father of The Scientific Method, was a Renaissance philosopher of sorts. Most of his works revolved around the idea of investigating all things natural. He often chronicled his own thoughts about rhetorical methods in which to know the world. In Bacon's second book, of *Advancement of Learning*, he argues that if more people were open to the world around them, they would be more enlightened by the resource of history. He believed that "narrative is a meter imitation of History" and that "a visible History, for it sets out the image of things as if they were present, and History, as if they were passed." ⁴ Bacon reminds us that historical context plays a part in biography in that it reveals its flaws and ideological agendas. As outlined in Lee's book, Bacon breaks the concept of history into three main segments: chronicles of age, lives, narrations. If we combine historical context, primary source documents, and biographies, he believes that we are creating a whole history and that is what this unit is exactly set out to do.

Biography usually begins with the chronological sequencing of the subject's life between birth and death. Using chronology implies order and growth developing from that organization. That is what creates a narrative life. This kind of standard format of biography can be broken down into three main sections: birth, rising action, death. Birth can be set up to offer insights about the exposition of a subject's life — the part of the work that introduces the characters, setting, and basic situation of the subject's life. Rising action can be seen much like the rising action in a traditional narrative — the part of the story that occurs when conflict is introduced, adding complications and often adding to a reader's interest. Rising action also offers the idea that characters are formed by not only their positive experience, but also their negative ones. Last, chronology ends with death, which can either tie up a biography into a nice package or leave us with endless questions.

Biography is a contested political form even in asking the simple question, what is its purpose? Is it to make sense of life? To entertain? To connect to readers? To provide knowledge and expertise? Biography, by its nature, is a rich text. In the end it is an abstract life based on chronological facts. It is the biographer's responsibility to provide fair interpretations of objectivity. The issue of bias and disclosure challenges texts and a biographer's interpretation of them. Students will work as the chief biographer in Langston Hughes's life.

Why Langston Hughes? Obviously, Hughes has a great body of work that ranges in many different genres of writing. More so, Hughes plays an interesting role as a cultural icon for my students. By the time I have them as Seniors they have already have some access to his work via the Social Science units on the Harlem Renaissance. Additionally, one of this main themes, identity, is one that many high school students can identify with. His life is contextually and historically unique and it acts as a superb text.

The History of Biography

Hermione Lee and Nigel Hamilton are historians of biography and its uses and limitations. While Hamilton has takes a global view of biography, I prefer Lee's focus of on the English biography. ⁵ I will use American authors because that is where my strength lies. While Lee's book is primarily about English biography, her work is of use to me since English biography has been much part of the literary tradition of that culture.

Since the content of this class is geared to be a college level English class, I plan on lecturing on the history of biography. Some of the key points I plan on covering are ur-biographies, hagiography, the skepticism of the Renaissance, and Western biography as a means to explain the history of biography. For purposes of this class, I want my students to understand that biography is the story of someone's life that is factually based and told by someone else. ⁶

Biography also poses some other questions. The idea that biography is fact based can be controversial. Facts are interpretative and at times speculative. When a story is told by someone else it establishes a different perspective. Biographies therefore need to be multilayered with adequate support. Nevertheless that does not mean that biographies are still without flaws.

Strategies - Unit Question - Who was Langston Hughes?

Document Based Question (DBQ)

Historically, DBQs have been used to enhance and test a student's synthesizing skills on the AP European, US, and World History exams. It also has been a featured component on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme exams and was most recently referred to as The Synthesis Essay on the 2007 AP English Language and Composition exam. According to the AP Central, a website run by The College Board as a support system for their exam, "the required DBQ differs from the standard essays in its emphasis on your ability to analyze and synthesize historical data and assess verbal, quantitative, or pictorial materials as historical evidence. Like the standard essays, however, the DBQ is judged on its thesis and argument." ⁷ What makes DBQ interesting is that it isn't confined to a certain format. DBQs use a variety of sources and always touch upon the importance of looking at documents/evidence. For example, the DBQ for the 2010 AP United States History Free-Response Question section: "In what ways did ideas and values held by Puritans influence the political, economic, and social development of the New England colonies from 1630 through the 1660s?" The question then provides the student with 10 documents as possible evidence and support a student can use in their essay. Some examples of documents from the 2010 question include a section from John Winthrop's "A Modell of Christian Charity," a town map of Colonial New England, selected sections of *The Enlarged Salem Covenant of 1636*, a section of one of William Bradford's personal essays; "After the Colonists' Attacked on the Pequot's Mystic River Village," a villager's statement on the education in New England during from 1643, a selection from Roger Williams' "A Plea for Religious Liberty," a selection from Nathaniel Ward's *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam*, a selection from John Cotton's "Limitation of Government," the last will and testament of Robert Keayne, and a section from John Higginson's "The Cause of God and His People in New England." ⁸ I have used something similar to the DBQ in my classroom as it has been seen on the AP English Language and Composition exam — the synthesis question.

Chicago Public Schools has a well vested interest in Advanced Placement classes. It is particularly clear on their website that their goal is to provide high school students with the advantage of taking college level courses, impart an enhanced program of academic rigor, and foster their commitment to academics. ⁹ CPS's interest in AP exams has also been increasingly apparent. In *The Chicago Tribune* article, "As AP Classes Grow, Test Failure Rises," it is evident that the amount of students that have received equity and access to this kind of education has been on the rise. The article states that the number of exams taken by low-income students has risen from 2,689 students in 2001 to 9,291 students in 2006: a 345% increase in 5 years. More

specifically, during that time, there has been a 258% African-American, 239% Latino, and 345% low-income students increase in the administering of these exams. Since there has been a massive shift in the amount of exams taken by these groups, it has greatly effected the percentage of exams passed. This trend has shown a 6% loss in the African-American testing community and an 8% loss in low-income students. ¹⁰

For purposes of this unit I have created my own background essay, selected a variety of sources and provided a framework in which students can answer the question — Who was Langston Hughes?

Close Reading

Close reading is a strategy I like to use with my students because it is one of the fundamental ways to understand texts. This is a skill that isn't so easily acquired and requires much practice and attention to detail. I always stress among students that it is necessary to read texts several times to understand their meaning. I think it is helpful that I often explain to them that as an English teacher I reread texts. The example I give in class are the texts I use. I make it pretty widely know that I have taught juniors and seniors every year that I have been employed. I also explain to them that no matter how many times I have taught a text that I still reread before I start my unit on that text. I also stress the art of annotating. I make sure that students can see my copy of a text or witness me writing in my own text as a way to reaffirm that this is a good skill to have. I strongly encourage my students to use pencil while taking notes because they at the end of the year they sometimes are charged with damage to their texts, but I do model this technique in pen because it is easier for me to read.

Close reading isn't a strategy that you can have students jump right into. By the end of the school year, when this unit will be implemented, it is expected that a student have performed close reading many times and that they are able to do so with the basic understanding that close reading is the most important skill to utilize when reading literature. More specifically it means that students not only understand the text in a basic sense, but also pay attention to the patterns as well as the subtleness of a text. One of the best examples of getting students to think about texts in a multilayered way is the writing website mantx. On their site they refer to these multi-layers as addressing the four types of reading: linguistic, semantic, structural, cultural. ¹¹ While I've seen various check lists in the past that students could follow, these categories are the most comprehensive I've seen. I think of linguistic reading as the most surface-level reading of a text. Questions a student should be asking during this phase are usually "right there" questions, meaning they could point to them "right there" on the paper. Another way to approach linguistic reading is to read a text and be able to describe it. Some basic facts a student should know about these texts are:

- What kind of document are you reading?
- What is the title of the document, date of the document, source, author?
- Are there any unique qualities to the document?

Next, students should address a semantic or cognitive reading of a text. They can do this by addressing the following questions:

- What important facts can I find in this document?
- What rhetorical devices are used and to what end?

- What is the author's tone or attitude towards the text/subject?

The next phase would be looking at a reading analytically or what is called a structural reading. Some questions you might have students ask are:

- What patterns are represented in this text and why are they important?
- How is the document structured and does its form equal or move away from its function?
- What kind of themes are stimulated whether explicit or implicit?

The next step I would take my kids to is a cultural or interpretive reading of a text. Some questions they might answer:

- What story does this document inform me about history?
- What kind of racial or gender construction can be read from this document?
- Is the information presented facts or feelings?

Additionally, I would add my own level of looking at a text and that would be an evaluative one. This is where the formation of a thesis begins. Students can look at the close reading they have done on a text and now based on that they should start asking themselves what about this evidence ties the details of other pieces of evidence together and what is the message they convey?

Note, these are not only the questions your students should be asking. These are brief ideas of what I want my students to get out of a variety of texts. More often than not, I don't use these exact questions. The line of questioning I use usually depends on the medium and the level of student I have. If you are looking for examples of document analysis worksheets, The National Archive Experience has several examples.¹² This website provides pre-made document analysis worksheets for written documents, artifacts, political cartoons, maps, motion pictures, photographs, posters, and sound recordings. The forms on their website are forms that can be filled out online and printed in the classroom. Another good resource is The Library of Congress website. Additionally, they provide a wide variety of teacher analysis guides and tools.¹³ But don't feel limited to these tools. Sometimes it is necessary to create your own tools that combine a lot of the same ideas, and perhaps even a few of your own. You are the expert of your class room; therefore, you know how your students best answer questions. I suggest looking at many examples to create your own tools.

Bucketing

The term bucketing is one that I have borrowed from the DBQ project. Bucketing is a chance for students to group together common threads among their documents. Think of buckets as categories students can place their documents into. Is their common thread culture, economics, art, politics? The list of possible buckets is conceivably never-ending since the unit question is quite vast. This allows for differentiated instruction.

For example, when bucketing I often have students that can automatically see the through-lines and those who simply cannot. I then can ask a student who is having a more difficult time bucketing if we can try to find three documents that have one through-line and write a paper on that versus another student who I can ask to use three different buckets to support one possible thesis. Bucketing is unlimited in its uses and allows for great flexibility with all kinds of students.

Some other suggestions include using the image of the bucket in your classroom. Sometimes I will have students write titles of document on specific slips of paper and physically place them into small cups that are labeled with the through-line that ties them together. Additionally, it is possible to then have the student use

the slips as manipulatives. They can physically move them around on their desk and decide the organization of everything from a paragraph to an essay.

In sum, bucketing is a great organizational strategy for students. If a student is more structured and has the discipline to use a formal outline – so be it. If not, I feel that bucketing can be seen as a flexible differentiation tool.

Socratic Seminar

My students are very opinionated. For this reason, I often rely on the formal setting of the Socratic Seminar. At the beginning of the year, I spend two full class periods discussing the Socratic method and explaining the format in which I choose to run a seminar. Seminars have a few basic qualities: the set-up, the procedure, and the conclusion.

At the beginning of the year students create a name tag, with an appropriate name of their choice. That is their name card for the rest of the year. It must be visible at all times because we often have guests in the classroom. Additionally, we discuss that when we meet we sit in a Socratic circle. Once again, all faces and names need to be visible. If you do not want to participate in the discussion it is completely your choice to sit outside of the circle. I also make sure that students understand that they do have an option of joining the circle. Students can only contribute to a seminar if they are a part of the circle.

Being prepared for a Socratic seminar is one of the single best classroom management strategies. Your job in this circle is not necessarily to be the teacher, but to be a facilitator. As a facilitator, you maintain the safety of the seminar and most importantly let the students take the role of teacher and expert. One trick to make sure that students stay on track is to offer a point system when students reference another participant's comment or to refer back to text. Another rule I have is that points will be taken away if there is any ad hominem language. Seminars can become very personal very quickly, but as long as your students understand the basics and abide by the rules you can have a great discussion about a variety of topics. Another thing you can do to prepare is to have a opening question that is open-ended, has no right or wrong answer, and can briefly be answered with either a yes or a no. I present the question the day before, or at the beginning of a unit. In the case of this particular unit I would restate the question being asked in the DBQ and use Socratic seminar as a way for students to hash-out some of the points that want to argue. Additionally, it is necessary to plan for a variety of follow-up questions. I've had times where a seminar has started with a bang and within five minutes is at a standstill. I can't stress enough the need for teachers to do their homework. Being prepared usually results in a rich Socratic discussion.

Students are often frustrated when the bell rings during a Socratic seminar. That becomes an opportunity for you to have students take what they are excited about and offer a chance for them to write. In reference to the DBQ, I might ask them to write 8-10 sentences on something they completely disagreed with during the seminar or an idea they really admired that someone else provided.

Classroom Activities

Below are three examples of activities you can adapt to your classroom. I strongly suggest walking yourself through the activities themselves as a way to familiarize yourself with the content.

Lesson One - Dissecting the Question

One of the most difficult problems with the AP English Literature and Composition exam is having students understand the Free-Response Questions. Often students don't know how to decipher thoroughly and because of this they end up answering only a portion of the question instead of answering the question fully.

Step One - There are a variety of websites that offer lists of open-ended/free-response questions for the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition exam. I would select several of these questions and cut and paste them in a new document. This document should be one that a student can keep in their binder as a reference. I would use at least five retired prompts (Form B prompts are also acceptable). Using the first prompt I would model identifying the two parts of the question. I usually do this by using a dry-erase board and using black to signify the question, green to signify part one and blue to signify part two. Do this several times with your students.

Step Two - Have students practice this on their own paper for 3-4 of the prompts. They may choose to underline/circle or highlight on their page. Walk around the room and facilitate or answer any questions students may have.

Step Three - Have volunteers go to the board and write out their examples using black, green, and blue markers. Discuss and answer any questions students may have.

Step Four - Have students finish the last prompt on their own.

Step Five - Students should write separate theses for all of the prompts provided.

Lesson Two - On-Line Scavenger Hunt

Students struggle with finding meaningful information on-line. They are often inundated by the ether itself. I suggest using preset search engines that are already linked to a student's desktop.

Step One - Students are given a list of information to locate. Some examples would include:

- What year was Robert Frost born?
- Where did Langston Hughes attend college?
- How did Edgar Allen Poe die?
- What was Nathaniel Hawthorne's most prized work?
- Who is a famous author from Illinois? What are they most famous for?
- Locate a picture of Flannery O'Connor's childhood home.
- Locate correspondence between Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Step Two - Students should make a note of what terms they used in the search engine, what the answer is, and the web address of where they found their answer.

Step Three – Students should generate a couple of their own questions about authors and research them on their own.

Lesson Three - Document Analysis

Document analysis can be an overwhelming task for a student. There are so many aspects of a document to take in and question. For purposes of this lesson students are expected that they will perform basic document analysis.

Step One – Students should form into groups of three to four. They will be given an advertisement from a magazine. Note: all advertisements must be from the same magazine.

Step Two – As a group students should answer the following basic questions:

- What type of document is it?
- Who was the creator of the document?
- What is the main idea of the document?
- What are three facts you can identify?

Student should then report out on their findings to the class.

Step Three – As a group students should answer the following questions:

- Are there any other ideas or products being sold in this ad?
- Who was this ad designed for and how do you know?

Students should then report out on their findings to the class.

Step Four – Students groups should separate and take out a piece of paper. Separately students should answer the following questions on a sheet of paper:

In 8-10 sentences answer the following, based on the report outs from your classmates you have heard a lot about the different kinds advertisements from the same magazine. What magazine do you think these advertisements are from? Explain.

If students are struggling I try to provide them with additional questions they can answer. Some questions for this assignment might be:

- Is this magazine designed for men, women, children? Explain.
- Can you associate an age group with this magazine? Explain.
- Can you associate an ideology with this magazine? Explain.

Bibliography

Resources

American College Testing Program, "Explaining What College Readiness Scores Mean," American College Testing Program, <http://www.act.org/standard>.

This is an all around good resource for those trying to understand the ACT.

Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning: Book Two*, <http://hiwaay.net/~paul/bacon/advancement/book2ch13.html>

This is an interesting text in which discusses Bacon's his own educational theories in his own words.

Stephanie Bancherno, *Chicago Tribune Archive Collections*, "As AP Classes Grow, Test Failure Rate Rises,"

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2007-02-07/news/0702070024_1_low-income-students-exams-tougher-classes.

Although this article is a few years old, it explains the overall increase of AP classes in the Chicago Public School system.

Sean Burke. Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.

This text offers many different avenues for looking at the role of the author in reference to a text.

Chicago Public Schools, "Advanced Placement," Chicago Public Schools

http://www.cps.edu/Programs/Academic_and_enrichment/Pages/AdvancedPlacement.aspx.

This CPS website is very basic and just gives the basic understanding of CPS's goals for Advanced Placement students.

College Board, "A.P. United States History Free-Response Questions 2010," The College Board,

http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap10_frq_us_history.pdf

This is the actual A. P. US History Free-Response Questions from the 2010 exam.

College Board, "A.P. US History: The DBQ," The College Board,

http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/3497.html.

The site gives a brief history of document based questions.

Hermione Lee. *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Lee's book is a short overview of biography told through the historical context of British biographies.

Library of Congress, "Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool," Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>

This site offers a great deal of documents that you can use in your classroom as part of a document analysis lesson.

Nigel Hamilton. *Biography: A Brief History*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Hamilton's book is like Lee's in that it gives an overview. His view, on the other hand, is more of a global one.

Samuel Johnson. *The Rambler*. Electronic Text Center. University of Virginia Library.

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Joh4All.html>.

These are examples of some of the first recorded biographies.

Nigel Hamilton. *How to do Biography*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 2008.

This is a short read that can help you focus your students towards asking the right questions about an author.

mantex, "What Is Close Reading? - Guidance Notes," mantex,
<http://www.mantex.co.uk/2009/09/14/what-is-close-reading-guidance-notes/>.

This site offers a brief overview of close reading as a strategy.

The National Archives Experience, "Lesson Plans and Teaching Activities," The National Archive Experience,
<http://www.archives.gov/nae/education/lesson-plans.html>.

This site offers a variety of documents you can use to teach document analysis.

Arnold Rampersad. *The Life of Langston Hughes: Volume I: 1902-1941, I, Too, Sing America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Rampersad's account of Hughes's life is interesting and can be easily digested by students in small pieces.

Lawrance Thompson. *Robert Frost: The Early Years*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1966.

I also intended on using pieces by Robert Frost and like Rampersad's book I thought this too was easy for students to understand.

Lawrance Thompson. *Robert Frost: Years of Triumph*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1970.

This is a nice book to compare and contrast against *Robert Frost: The Early Years*.

Implementing District Standards (Part I - English) - Appendix A

Sentence Structure and Formation

Revise a phrase that is redundant in terms of the meaning of the entire sentence

Identify and correct ambiguous pronoun references

Use the word or phrase most appropriate in terms of the content of sentence and tone of the essay.

Word Choice

Revise to avoid faulty placement of phrases and faulty coordination and subordination of clauses in sentences with subtle structural problems

Maintain consistent verb tense and pronoun person on the basis of the preceding clause or sentence

***Throughout the year we will be working on Conventions of Punctuation** - use punctuation to set off

complex parenthetical phrases, recognize and delete unnecessary commas based on a careful reading of a complicated sentences (e.g., between elements of a compound subject or compound verb joined by and), use apostrophes to indicate simple possessive nouns, recognize inappropriate uses of colons and semicolons.

- Parts of speech
- Parts of a sentence
- Comma usage
- Punctuation, commas for items in a series
- Punctuation in quotations
- Appropriate comma usage for sentence flow

Implementing District Standards (Part I - Reading) - Appendix B

Main Idea/Author's Intent

Supporting Details

Recognize a clear intent of the author or narrator in uncomplicated narratives.

Locate basic facts clearly stated in a passage.

*Throughout the year we will be working on Meanings of Words - Understand the implication of a familiar word or phrase of simple descriptive language:

- Examine the text and explain the meaning words based on their experiences
- Explain prior knowledge and how it relates to the meaning of words for your students(make connections)

Implementing District Standards (Part IV - ISBE) - Appendix C

Goal 1 - Reading

1.A.5a Identify and analyze new terminology applying knowledge of word origins and derivations in a variety of practical settings.

1.B.5b Analyze the defining characteristics and structures of a variety of complex literary genres and describe how genre affects the meaning and function of the texts.

1.B.5d Read age-appropriate material with fluency and accuracy.

1.C.5b Analyze and defend an interpretation of text.

Goal 2 - Literature

2.A.5a Compare and evaluate oral, written or viewed works from various eras and traditions and analyze complex literary devices (e.g., structures, images, forms, foreshadowing, flashbacks, stream of

consciousness).

2.B.5b Apply knowledge gained from literature as a means of understanding contemporary and historical economic, social and political issues and perspectives.

Goal 3 - Writing

3.A.5 Produce grammatically correct documents using standard manuscript specifications for a variety of purposes and audiences.

3.B.5 Using contemporary technology, produce documents of publication quality for specific purposes and audiences; exhibit clarity of focus, logic of organization, appropriate elaboration and support and overall coherence.

Goal 4 - Listening and Speaking

4.A.5a Use criteria to evaluate a variety of speakers' verbal and nonverbal messages.

4.B.5a Deliver planned and impromptu oral presentations, as individuals and members of a group, conveying results of research, projects or literature studies to a variety of audiences (e.g., peers, community, business/industry, local organizations) using appropriate visual aids and available technology.

Goal 5 - Research

5.A.5b Research, design and present a project to an academic, business or school community audience on a topic selected from among contemporary issues.

5.B.5b Credit primary and secondary sources in a form appropriate for presentation or publication for a particular audience.

Notes/Resources

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5. Nigel Hamilton, *Biography: A Brief History* (Boston, Harvard University Press, 2009).
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http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2007-02-07/news/0702070024_1_low-income-students-exams-tougher-classes.

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<https://teachers.yale.edu>

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