

Literature Circle Activity

By Rick Vanderwall

Overview

Literature circles are a widely used reading response activity in current language arts classrooms. Divide students into discussion groups of three to five students. Assign each member of the group a specific role to fulfill during the discussion. For the activity, you should expect that students demonstrate they have fulfilled their roles. In this case students will be processing a discussion of part one of the novel. If you are unfamiliar with literature circles and how they work, you can find directions at the following website:
<http://www.studyguide.org/lit%20circle%20handout.htm>

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Discuss a part of *Beloved*
- Organize, write, and present one of five discussion roles
- Respond to the presentations by fellow students during the discussion

Skills Attained

Students will be able to:

- Read of the text of *Beloved* and related readings closely
- Analyze *Beloved* in the broader context of the history of slavery and the Jim Crow system

Materials needed:

- Hard copies of all readings
- Literature circle role report sheets

The Lesson

Anticipatory Set

Introduce students to the concept of a literature circle and the five roles, below, in this particular activity. You can do a practice run of a discussion if students are unsure of how to proceed.

1. Discussion Director
2. Passage Master
3. Illustrator
4. Recorder
5. Connector

Procedures

1. Assign the reading passage.
2. Divide the class into circle groups.

3. Hold a literature circle activity immediately after students complete the reading assignment. (Twice during part one. Once during parts two and three of the novel.)
4. Collect the literature circle role report sheets following the activity.
5. Discuss the success of the project and how the process could improve.

Assessment

Literature Circle Rubric

Assign points based on the completed literature circle role report sheets following these guidelines:

- Student completed the role as described in the job description.
- Student attended meeting.
- Student filled out his or her forms completely.
- Student participated in discussions and group activities.
- The content of the role report is of high quality.
- The report is neat and legible.
- The questions written or passages selected are meaningful to the discussion or activity.
- The role report represents the student's best effort.
- The connector provided relevant connections and explained them well.
- The recorder created a complete record of the group's activity.

Beloved Unit Literature Circle Activity
Discussion Director Job Description and Report Form

Job Description: Develop a list of no more than three questions, which are thought provoking and are relevant to the reading assignment that your group can discuss. You may generate your own questions or select from the list your teacher provides. Your job is to make sure that all members of the group get to participate.

Name: _____ Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion _____ Discussion # _____

Passage from the book: page ____ to page ____

List your discussion questions below:

1.

2.

3.

***Beloved* Unit Literature Circle Activity**
Passage Master Job Description and Report Form

Job Description: Locate three short passages from the reading. Reread the passage for the group or ask for a volunteer to read it. Encourage the group to discuss and think about each passage. Passages should contain important things for everyone to notice, remember, or respond to. Select passages that are important in some way. The following are examples of the kind of passages you might choose: selections that:

- Connect with the history of slavery in America;
- Are surprising/startling;
- Are confusing (something you wonder if other people "got");
- Use descriptive writing: figurative language, strong verbs, etc. (identify literary devices);
- Are important (maybe have a clue, foreshadowing?); or
- Contain a controversial event (elicit different opinions from group members).

Name: _____ Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion _____ Discussion # _____

Overall Passage from the book: page ____ to page ____

Passage # 1: page ____ to page ____
I selected this passage because:

Passage # 2: page ____ to page ____
I selected this passage because:

Passage # 3: page ____ to page ____
I selected this passage because: _____

**Beloved Unit Literature Circle Activity
Recorder Job Description and Report Form**

Job Description: Your job is to record who attends the discussion and how they participate.

Name: _____ Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion _____ Discussion # _____

Passage from the book: page ____ to page ____

Group Attendance: List which group members were in attendance at the discussion.)

1. _____ Role: _____

2. _____ Role: _____

3. _____ Role: _____

4. _____ Role: _____

5. _____ Role: _____

Record who responds to each discussion question.

Question 1:

Question 2:

Question 3:

Record who responds to each passage.

Passage 1:

Passage 2:

Passage 3:

Beloved Unit Literature Circle Activity
Passage Master Job Description and Report Form

Job Description: Locate three short passages from the reading. Reread the passage for the group or ask for a volunteer to read it. Encourage the group to discuss and think about each passage. Passages should contain important things for everyone to notice, remember, or respond to. Select passages that are important in some way. The following are examples of the kind of passages you might choose: selections that:

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- Contain a controversial event (elicit different opinions from group members).

Name: _____ Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion _____ Discussion # _____

Overall Passage from the book: page ____ to page ____

Passage # 1: page ____ to page ____
I selected this passage because: