

Literature Circle Activity

By Rick Vanderwall

Overview

Literature circles are a reading response activity widely used in current language arts classrooms. Students are divided into discussion groups of three to five students. Each member of the group is assigned a specific role to fulfill during the discussion. Artifacts of the fulfillment of that role are an expectation of the activity. 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, directions can be found at the following Web Site: <http://www.studyguide.org/lit%20circle%20handout.htm>

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Discuss part one of *To Kill A Mockingbird* and related readings
- Organize, write, and present one of five discussion roles
- Respond to the presentations given by fellow students during the discussion

Skills attained:

- Close reading of the text of *To Kill A Mockingbird* and related readings
- Analysis of *To Kill A Mockingbird* in the broader context of the Jim Crow system

Materials Needed

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

The Lesson

Anticipatory Set

Introduce the concept of a literature circle and the five roles included in this particular activity. A practice run of a discussion could be done if students are unsure of how to proceed. If you are unfamiliar with literature circles and how they work, directions can be found at the following Web Site: <http://www.studyguide.org/lit%20circle%20handout.htm>.

- I. Discussion Director
- II. Passage Master
- III. Summarize
- IV. Recorder
- V. 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, chapters nine through eleven.
4. Following the activity collect the literature circle role report sheets

5. Discuss the success of the project and how the process could improve.

Assessment

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

___ Did the student complete the role as described in the job description?

___ Is the content of the role report high quality?

___ Is the report neat and legible?

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**To Kill A Mockingbird Literature Circles Activity
Discussion Director Job Description and Report Form**

Job Description: Develop a list of no more than three questions that your group can discuss which are thought provoking and are relevant to the reading assignment. It is your job to make sure that all members of the group get to talk.

Name: _____

Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion: _____

Discussion #: _____

Passage from the book: page ____ to page ____

List your discussion questions below:

1.

2.

3.

To Kill A Mockingbird Literature Circles 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 be 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 surprising/startling; confusing (something you wonder if other people "got"); descriptive writing: figurative language, strong verbs, etc. (identify literary devices); important (maybe a clue, foreshadowing?); controversial event (elicits different opinions from group members)

Name: _____

Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion: _____

Discussion #: _____

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:

Question 2:

Question 3:

**To Kill A Mockingbird Literature Circles Activity
Connector Master Job Description and Report Form**

Job Description: It is your job to connect this passage of *To Kill A Mockingbird* to the real world of the Jim Crow system. Try to find at least three connections for the passage.

Name: _____

Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion: _____

Discussion #: _____

Passage of the book: page ____ to page ____

Connection One:

Connection Two:

Connection Three:

**To Kill A Mockingbird Literature Circles Activity
Summarizer Master Job Description and Report Form**

Job Description: It is your job to summarize the discussion that results from each question. Write neatly and read back your summary after the discussion to assure accuracy. Use the back of the paper if you need more room.

Name: _____

Circle Name: _____

Date of Discussion: _____

Discussion #: _____

Passage of the book: page ____ to page ____

Discussion Summaries:

Question 1:

Question 2:

Question 3: