

Classroom Lesson Plan 4

Facilitating Discussion

Teacher: Tanya Schnabl, Sherburne-Earlville Middle School, Sherburne, New York

Grade Level: Sixth

Topic: Government limits on individual freedom

Materials Needed:

- Class set of *Among the Hidden*
- Sticky note pads for each student
- Writer's notebooks
- Assorted art supplies
- Internet access for students (optional for "Investigation of China's 'One Child' Policy" activity)
- Teacher Tools:
 - Overhead slide: Response, Analysis, and Reflection
 - Some Facts: China's "One Child" Policy
 - Internet Research Activity for China's "One Child" Policy With Suggestions for Assessment
 - Possibilities and Assessment Suggestions for "The Quiet World"—Write Your Own Poem
 - Role-Playing Directions for *Among the Hidden* and Assessment Suggestions
 - Assessment and Evaluation: Some Useful Principles
- Student Activity Sheets:
 - Internet Research Activity: Investigation of China's "One Child" Policy
 - Class set of "The Quiet World"
 - "The Quiet World"—Write Your Own Poem
 - Creating an Advertising Poster
 - Advertising Poster Evaluation Rubric
 - Final Project Choices for *Among the Hidden*

Background Information:

The literature and extension activities in this lesson are connected thematically as students examine issues related to government limits and individual rights in a number of different ways. Class discussion will focus on questions such as:

- How much control should the government have over the lives of its citizens?
- What would life in the United States be like if certain restrictive laws were imposed?
- Would it be possible for the United States to adopt a "two child" law as projected in *Among the Hidden*?

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- Is it ever right for a citizen to break a law knowingly?
- What helps people make ethical decisions?

The two literary texts will be contextualized by study and discussion of China's "one child" policy. Students are expected to generate discussion questions which they write on sticky notes as they read. Discussion occurs in small groups or as an entire class. Regular entries in a writer's notebook add further support to students' developing literary envisionments. The range of activities students engage in (reading, writing, speaking, listening, art-work, role-playing) is designed to allow students to display competence and understanding in a number of ways.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- read and enjoy literature.
- discuss literary texts in small groups and as an entire class.
- develop deeper understandings of the literature through discussion and support activities.
- prepare for discussions by generating questions and writing them on sticky notes.
- link information about real-world situations (China's "one child" policy) to literary texts.
- examine and analyze character motivations.
- practice taking positions on ethical questions and presenting those positions to the class in various formats.
- use and evaluate Internet search engines.
- create original products that demonstrate understanding of the literature as well as of the ethical questions the literature poses.

Expected Products From Lesson:

- Regular entries in writer's notebook
- Regular sticky-note questions
- Report on China's "one child" policy. See the Teacher Tools and Student Activity Sheets related to the "one child" policy.
- Position poster on possible "two child" policy in the United States. The Student Activity Sheets "Creating an Advertising Poster" and "Advertising Poster Evaluation Rubric" may help teachers as they design this activity for their students.
- Character skit and presentation to class. The Teacher Tool "Role-Playing Directions for *Among the Hidden* and Assessment Suggestions" can help teachers guide students in this activity.
- Original poem based on "The Quiet World." For suggested ways to guide students in this activity, see the Teacher Tool "Possibilities and Assessment Suggestions for 'The Quiet World'—Write Your Own Poem."

Instructional Strategies Implemented:

- Student questioning
- Collaborative discussions
- Exploratory journal writing
- Teacher facilitation, guidance, and feedback
- Dramatic presentation of ideas
- Artistic presentation of ideas
- Research skills

Collaborative Structure of Class:

Students work individually, in pairs, in small groups, or as an entire class depending on the purposes and needs of a particular activity. Desk groupings are fluid; furniture is rearranged as needed.

Lesson Procedures/Activities:

Classroom activities vary daily and include the following:

- Reading silently or aloud
- Listening to oral reading
- Writing journal entries and/or questions about the literature
- Discussing the literature
- Discussing ethical issues and relating them to the literature
- Creating art projects related to the literature
- Creating dramatic projects related to the literature
- Writing poetry based on the literature

Follow-Up or Culminating Activities:

Students will choose a mode of communication presented in this lesson—a poster, a dramatic skit, or a series of original poems—and create a project that focuses on a key issue, character, or event presented in *Among the Hidden*. See the Student Activity Sheet “Final Project Choices for *Among the Hidden*” for ideas.

Alternately, they might choose another book, either from the list of paired texts (see Teacher Tools: “Text Pairings”) or one approved by the teacher and present it to the class in a Booktalk. In addition, they will each create a three-point assessment rubric based on their project choice and modeled on the one used for their poster project. In conference with the teacher, they will use that rubric to evaluate their projects.

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Assessment:

Students may be assessed on a daily basis through:

- original questions
- participation, and
- writers' notebook entries.

The following activities might receive holistic or scaled evaluation (see the Teacher Tool "Assessment and Evaluation: Some Useful Principles" for a detailed explanation of holistic and scaled evaluation).

- Internet research report
- Persuasive poster
- Original poem

The final project on *Among the Hidden* receives a scaled evaluation.