

# Workshop 1: Who Owns the Novel?

## **Description**

In this video workshop, you will observe several novelists, teachers, and students as they explore the question, “Who owns the novel?” Various teaching styles and approaches will emerge; you may, of course, relate to some more readily than others. As you experience the workshop and prepare for the next one, you will find new ways to energize your own teaching of the novel. Following Workshop 1, you will be able to form your own answer to the question, “Who owns the novel?” and develop a lesson plan that focuses on this question.

# Workshop 1 Timeline

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## Getting Ready

30 minutes

Introduce yourselves to the others at your site, if necessary, and tell them about your favorite novel—what drew you to it and why it is important to you.

In pairs, discuss one of your strategies for introducing novels to students. How effective is it? *(Facilitator: Encourage participants to bring up both successes and problems, and make note of these on newsprint.)*

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## Watch the Video Workshop

60 minutes

### During the Video

Each program will have two 15-second breaks. During each break, a question will appear on the screen. The questions may prompt later group discussion or individual thinking.

First 15-second break. Question on screen: Can you think of ways to engage students in novels using their own creativity?

Five-minute break. ✍ List some social and moral questions raised in a novel you teach. *(Facilitator: Please alert participants when the break is nearly over.)*

Second 15-second break. Question on screen: How does analyzing a novel help students develop personal identity and skills?

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## Going Further

30 minutes

What strategies could you adapt or develop in order to assure student ownership of novels you teach? *(Facilitator: Encourage participants to look for ways to transform texts into other media—drama, music, painting, etc.)*

# For Next Time

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## Homework Assignment

1. Write a lesson plan that helps students explore the question, “Who owns the novel?” Bring a copy for each person in the workshop.
2.  Drawing from your personal experience or from a story from your family, extended family, or the national or ethnic group with which you most identify, jot down notes for the kernel of a novel that you might write.

### SUPPLEMENTAL

3. Go to the “Teachers and Lesson Plans” section of the *In Search of the Novel* Web site, [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/isonovel](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/isonovel). Read Milton Brasher-Cunningham’s lesson plan for teaching *Frankenstein*.
4. In a page or two, expand on the dictum that “We never fully understand something until we hear it in the form of a story.” Provide illustrative examples of things you understand better once you have met them in story form.
5. Develop a lesson plan that centers on a mini-Socratic seminar.

### Preparation for “What’s the Story?”

Consider the following opening lines from three different stories, and prepare to talk about how the point of view and form (diary, epistolary, etc.) establish the story and hook the reader.

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you’ll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don’t feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. (J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*)

The cold passed reluctantly from the earth, and the retiring fogs revealed an army stretched out on the hills, resting. (Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*)

My dear Mother, I have kept you posted as far as Tuesday week last, and, although my letter will not have reached you yet, I will begin another before my news accumulates too much. (Henry James, “A Bundle of Letters”)

# For Next Time

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## Reading Assignment

1. Please refer to the “Who Owns the Novel?” section of Appendix B, and read the text by Jorge Luis Borges.
2. Go to the “Who Owns the Novel?” page on the *In Search of the Novel Web* site, [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/isonovel/](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/isonovel/). Read the “Participants’ Comments and Observations” section.
3. Read Ernest Gaines’s online interview with Bill Ferris, chairman of N.E.H., at [www.neh.gov/publications/humanities/1998-07/gaines.html/](http://www.neh.gov/publications/humanities/1998-07/gaines.html/).