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Imagine That!

Developing Fantasy Role-Play in the Language Arts Classroom

Author(s)

Grades: 6-8, 9-12
Subjects: Language Arts

Interdisciplinary Connections

Overview of Lesson Plan: In this lesson, students use prototypical fantasy themes to create an original role-playing game and cast of characters based on their own community.

Review the Academic Content Standards related to this lesson.

Suggested Time Allowance: 45 minutes

Objectives:

Students will:
1. Explore the importance of characters in Dungeons and Dragons and other role-playing games.
2. Learn about the new movie "Dungeons and Dragons" by reading and discussing the article "'Dungeons and Dragons': After D and D, You May Need R and R."
3. As a class, create the outline for a role-playing game based on their own community.
4. In groups, create character profiles for the game.
5. Write a dialogue between two of the characters from the game.

Resources / Materials:
- student journals
- pens/pencils
- paper
- classroom board
- copies of the article "'Dungeons and Dragons': After D and D, You May Need R and R."

Related Article
'Dungeons and Dragons': After D and D, You May Need R and R
By A. O. SCOTT

(Click to Article.)
Activities / Procedures:

1. WARM-UP/DO NOW: In their journals, students respond to the following prompt (written on the board prior to class): "If you could choose to be a character from any book or movie, who would you choose and why? How does your chosen character impact the plot and the other characters in the book or movie?" After 5-10 minutes, have some students read their journals aloud. As a class, discuss Dungeons and Dragons and how it offers people the opportunity to role-play fantastical and magical characters. Discuss the appeal of this and other role-playing games.

2. As a class, read the article "'Dungeons and Dragons': After D and D, You May Need R and R," focusing on the following questions:
   a. What is Dungeons and Dragons?
   b. According to the article, what are some archetypes upon which Dungeons and Dragons is based?
   c. How does A.O. Scott describe the special effects in the movie?
   d. According to the article, why was the movie shot in Prague?
   e. Which line of dialogue does A.O. Scott cite to show the low quality of the script? Why do you think he chose this line?
   f. What is the main conflict in the plot of the film?
   g. What phrase is used to advertise the film? How does A.O. Scott use this phrase to criticize the film?

3. Create a class role-playing game set in a mythical city that parallels the real one in which the students live. Have the class choose a name for their mythical city and create a map, including at least five key locations where action might take place (examples are a pizza shop, a school, a forest, etc.). The class should also brainstorm possible characters that might be included in the game, keeping in mind the types of characters usually found in such games (examples are an Evil Sorcerer Mayor, or the Wizard of the Pizza Shop). Avoid a sensitive situation by having students create prototypical characters and not ones based directly on actual people in the community. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4. Each group creates a character profile of one of the characters discussed in class. The profile should consist of a brief description of the character, the character's strengths and weaknesses, and an illustration of the character complete with the character's mode of dress and special weapons or other articles that might assist him or her throughout the game.

4. WRAP-UP/HOMEWORK: Write a dialogue between two of the characters created by your class. Use a prototypical fantasy game conflict (such as the battle over the rod in the "Dungeons and Dragons" movie,) and set it in one of the key locations chosen in class. Keep in mind A.O. Scott's criticism of the dialogue in the movie Dungeons and Dragons, and try to make your dialogue more realistic and compelling than the examples from the article.
Further Questions for Discussion:
-- What do you think A.O. Scott is trying to achieve by using parentheses throughout the article?
-- What is the overall tone of A.O. Scott's review? How does he reveal his opinion of the movie?
-- Do you think that role-playing games are a healthy outlet for the imagination? Do you think such games can have a negative effect on a person? How?
-- Do you play or know people who play interactive role-playing games over the Internet? Do you think this is more or less exciting than playing these games on a board with a live group of people all in the same room?

-- Are there certain modes of dress or behaviors that accompany being a player of games such as Dungeons and Dragons? Do the players of these games develop distinct social groups? If so, why do you think this is the case?

Evaluation / Assessment:
Students will be evaluated on completion of the journal entry, participation in class discussions, creation of a character profile, and completion of a dialogue between two of the characters created in class.

Vocabulary:
virtual, fantasy, sci-fi, jargon, grok, tedium, adherents, sorcery, murky, clotted, understatement, provocation, vexation, mages, antagonists, pontificate, raiment, conviction, plucky, mayhem

Extension Activities:
1. With a partner, perform the dialogue you wrote for homework for the class. Prepare the appropriate costumes and props based upon the profiles created for each character.

2. Movies based on books often do not live up to the expectations and imaginations of readers. This is especially true for movies based on fantasy books where elements like magical spells and mythical creatures are commonplace. Based on A.O. Scott's criticism of the "Dungeons and Dragons" film, predict whether the Harry Potter film, expected to be released within the year, will impress or disappoint movie-goers who have already read the book.

3. Read a fantasy novel by J.R.R. Tolkien. Write a movie pitch for a film version of the novel. Describe who you would cast the main roles and why, and how you would successfully recreate the fantasy world depicted by Tolkien on screen.

4. It is often difficult to differentiate between the literary genres of fantasy, science fiction, legend, and myth. Create a dictionary of terms defining each genre and explaining how each one differs from the others.
Interdisciplinary Connections:
Global History
-Research fantastical creatures from different cultures. Create a poster with an illustration and short description of each creature, including the culture from which it originates. (Some examples of fantastic and/or mythical creatures from various cultures are the Loch Ness Monster, Chupacabra, Big Foot, and Aswang.)
-Compare and contrast the themes and characters found in Arthurian and other Medieval legends (such as Sir Gawain and the Green Knight or Beowulf) to those in Dungeons and Dragons. Create a chart displaying your findings.

Journalism- See the movie "Dungeons and Dragons" and write your own movie review. Refer to A.O. Scott's review by supporting or refuting his claims regarding the film.

Mathematics- The Dungeons and Dragons game uses numerical values to assess a character's strengths and weaknesses. These values are initially chosen by rolling special dice with differing numbers of sides. Learn about how this process works and create a chart showing the various attributes chosen by this method, and the average number expected for each attribute when dice are rolled.

Social Studies- As A.O. Scott mentions in the article, an entire sub-culture has developed around fantasy and role-playing games. Research this culture and write a short (2-3 page) essay describing its development and characteristics since the introduction of Dungeons and Dragons in the 1970's.

Other Information on the Web

Dungeons and Dragons (http://www.seednd.com/) is the official movie site from New Line.

Academic Content Standards:
This lesson plan may be used to address the academic standards listed below. These standards are drawn from Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education: 2nd Edition and have been provided courtesy of the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning in Aurora, Colorado.

In addition, this lesson plan may be used to address the academic standards of a specific state. Links are provided where available from each McREL standard to the Achieve website containing state standards for over 40 states. The state standards are from Achieve's National Standards Clearinghouse and have been provided courtesy of Achieve, Inc. in Cambridge Massachusetts and Washington, DC.

Grade 6-8
Language Arts Standard 1- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process. Benchmarks: Uses a variety of prewriting strategies; Uses a variety of strategies to draft and revise written work; Evaluates own and others writing; Uses style and structure appropriate for specific audiences and purposes; Writes narrative accounts; Writes in response to literature

Language Arts Standard 6- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of literary texts. Benchmarks: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres; Identifies specific questions of personal importance and seeks to answer them through literature; Understands the effects of the author's style on a literary text; Understands that people respond differently to literature

Grades 9-12
Language Arts Standard 1- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process. Benchmarks: Uses a variety of prewriting strategies; Uses a variety of strategies to draft and revise written work; Uses a variety of strategies to edit and publish written work; Evaluates own and others writing; Writes compositions that fulfill different purposes; Writes fictional, biographical, autobiographical, and observational narrative compositions; Writes descriptive compositions; Writes in response to literature

Language Arts Standard 6- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of literary texts. Benchmarks: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres; Understands historical and cultural influences on literary works; Relates personal response to the text with that seemingly intended by the author

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About Imagine That. In this song Kevin Gates talks about his struggles, before he was famous. He then talks about how his life has changed since he got famous. He is living lavishly. The intro he is talking to his kids, and wife, telling them to be strong while he is in jail serving his 2 year sentence. "Imagine That" Track Info. Written By JMIKE, Mad Max & Kevin Gates. Release Date September 22, 2017. Imagine That is a sweet surprise of a film that goes some way to restoring Murphy's reputation. August 14, 2009 | Rating: 3/5 | Full Review| Chris Hewitt (UK). Empire Magazine. Murphy at least tries to stay in character rather than overdoing the silly voices and physical knockabout, but maybe the material was so blah that he felt it wasn't worth the effort. August 14, 2009 | Rating: 1/5 | Full Review| Trevor Johnston. Time Out. Imagine That Quotes. There are no approved quotes yet for this movie. Movie & TV guides. Share this Rating. Title: Imagine That (2009). 5.6/10. Want to share IMDb's rating on your own site? When Evan is in his house the first night that he has Olivia, she comes out of her bedroom and goes to sleep on the lounge chair in the same room Evan is working. When Olivia first gets on the lounge her slippers are near the foot of the lounge. A couple of clips later you will see them near the head of the bed.