

CROSSING JORDAN

by Adrian Fogelin

**Unit Plan Developed by
Tammy Williams
English Teacher, Gadsden County**

Rationale: It is imperative for students to gain a perspective on historical, literary, and personal change within their cultural surroundings and communities. Therefore, this unit will enhance students' understanding of the historical and social developments that have occurred within their communities/nearby communities.

UNIT OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will analyze character through the elements of characterization.
2. Students will research expression in the art of haiku.
3. Students will be able to identify symbolism as it is used in the text.
4. Students will research and establish the setting of the novel.
5. Students will identify figurative language within the text.
6. Students will research major figures of the Civil War.
7. Students will gain an understanding of the African American religious value system.
8. Students will use the art of persuasion to demonstrate point of view.
9. Students will research and construct a genogram of their family units.
10. Students will use context clues for vocabulary expansion.
11. Students will use the interviewing process as a form of research.
12. Students will gain a complete understanding and usage of the skills comparison and contrast.
13. Students will utilize the Bill of Rights to analyze and synthesize race relations during a particular time period.
14. Students will analyze their personal value systems through a values auction.
15. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the use of irony through an analysis of a newspaper article.
16. Students will recognize sequence in an autobiographical text.
17. Students will create and write dialogue made from inferences within a text.

18. Students will use characterization to develop a fictional character.
19. Students will learn to write biographical accounts.
20. Students will use inference and conclusion to create a talk show as well as complete a reading guide.
21. Students will analyze theme and symbolism through the creation of a fence.
22. Students will demonstrate a complete understanding of friendship and prejudices through a slide tape or photo montage while highlighting the ambience of a non-prejudice community.
23. Students will be able to identify and use figurative language in reading and writing.

WEEKS ONE AND TWO:

Lesson One: GOOD NEIGHBORS MAKE GOOD FENCES

Journal: A fence is a barrier that keeps people from exiting as well as entering. Think about the type of fences “barriers” that you put up in your daily life to separate yourself from others. In your journal, explain these barriers through the use of example.

A. Students will respond orally to the words “prejudice” and “racism” written on the board.

1. Questions to ask: How are prejudice and racism related? Are they related?
2. When have you had difficulty separating the two? Have you ever had a prejudice against something/someone? Have you experienced racism?

B. Class will read chapter one orally.

C. Students will share their journals with the class as well as respond to the statement made in chapter one “good fences make good neighbors.”

D. Persuasive Argument Activity- Students will form into groups of four. Each group will be given an index card with an argument that explains why people put up different barriers in life. Each group will discuss and generate ideas for persuasion and write an argument defending their position.

Example: Criminal backgrounds should be reviewed before neighbors are accepted into the community.

***Each group will present their arguments to the class and a discussion will relate each argument to the symbol of “the fence.”

E. Homework: Read chapter two.

Lesson Two: THE RIDDLES OF A GENERAL

A. Students will be given background information on the Civil War and its southern

generals.

B. Research project (four days to complete)-Students are to create a riddle about the southern generals mentioned in chapter one. Each student will be assigned a general and they are to find three sources in the media center that have background information on the chosen general. Only one source can be an encyclopedia. After reading the source material, students are to create a 12-line riddle with clues about this person. Riddles will be published within the classroom and students will guess the generals and the significance behind why Miss Liz named her cats after the generals. Students will create a works cited page and turn in two copies of their riddles with a cover page.

C. Students will analyze the use of spoken words in chapters two that symbolize prejudice and racism. The class will review proverbs or phrases that state the importance and power of a spoken word. Students will then create their own proverbs for the following opposing forces that addresses the danger of the negative and the effects of the positive.

1. Cruelty vs. kindness
2. Curses vs. compliments
3. Judgment vs. compassion
4. Prejudice vs. acceptance
5. Ignorance vs. education
6. Aggression vs. peacefulness

*** Will be shared aloud and linked to chapters one and two

D. Teacher will walk students through the classical form of the haiku through the use of an outline that initiates student involvement.

E. Students will compose three haikus from the following images: a favorite place (Cass enjoyed Miss Liz's home), a favorite feeling (Cass enjoyed out-running peers), a favorite sight (Cass enjoyed her spot behind the rose of Sharon).

F. Homework –Read Chapter 3.

Lesson Three: GOSPEL: A SOUND OF RELIEF

A. Students will listen to the gospel spiritual “Crossing over Jordan” and write in their journals a response to the following: Nana Grace sings this spiritual as she paints the fence that separates her from her neighbors’ home. How does “crossing Jordan relate to the fence?

B. The teacher will discuss with students the compensatory beliefs African Americans had about religion (values that they still possess today) as well as the biblical story about the crossing of Jordan. Also, an analysis of the Negro National Anthem will be used to convey a more meaningful view of compensatory beliefs.

C. After this discussion, students will be required to revise their journal writing and

share answers with the class.

D. Chapter four will be read orally in class (character analysis).

E. The class will discuss the use of figurative language in the novel as well as review all forms of figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole).

F. Students will create graphic organizers that analyze Cass, Jemmie, Lou Anne, and Miss Liz using the following elements: appearance, personality, background, motivation, relationships, conflict, change. ***organizers will be displayed in the hallway.

Lesson Four: WAKULLA SPRINGS

A. The class will take a trip to Wakulla Springs and discuss the book around the lake in a picnic setting.

1. PG. 17-“That made me think of the fence....track.”

2. Stereotypes/prejudging

3. Mothers’ attitudes toward daughters

4. Mammy figure in African American History (Chapters 3&4)

5. Discuss Conflict-Activity:

Students will begin drafting a narrative that centers around the major theme in the novel.

Directions: Think back to a time when you had a conflict with a friend, family member, co-worker, etc. Use the following plot to write your narrative: Decide what the cause of the conflict that you will be writing about. Name your characters and describe what they are like. Show what happened between them by using first person from one of the character’s points of view (i.e. Cass is telling this story). Decide how the conflict was resolved. Show what the result of this resolution was on each of them and upon others.

***Drafts(2 days to complete) Final drafts (1 week to complete)

Lesson Five: JANE EYRE (this lesson will be used with each chapter in the novel)

A. Students will be given excerpts from Jane Eyre that have been read by Jemmie and Cass. Teacher will give background on Jane Eyre as well as a plot summary. Also, students will watch the excerpts from the 1996 version of the movie and record in their journals the vocabulary terms used by the Cass and Jemmie.

B. Each group will create a skit using one of the vocabulary words and present it to the class.

C. Teacher will give a lesson on context clues (practice exercises will be included).

D. Students will create a learning log of vocabulary terms unfamiliar to them in chapters 1-4. They will define the terms through the use of context clues and a

dictionary if needed.

E. Words for each chapter will be logged on the bulletin board from students' logs and beginning with chapter one, the class will log two synonyms and antonyms for the terms posted.

F. Read chapters five and six for homework.

Lesson Six: GENOGRAM

A. Students are to research their family histories as far back as they possible can and create a genogram of their families.

B. Teacher will explain the concept of a genogram/family tree and provide a copy of her family's genogram.

C. Step-families may be included in the genogram to show specific relationships.

D. Each genogram should be completed on posterboard with an explanation of each relationship or how a relationship came to be.

E. Students will create mock families from their classmates and illustrate to the class the closeness of family members in each family.

Lesson Seven: THE CHALLENGES OF BEING DIFFERENT

A. Students will create a photographic quilt that displays pictures of their lives and race-relations (chapter 6).

B. Students are required to interview and photograph community members and leaders who provide an array of information about race-relations in different eras of American History (teacher will provide students with a list of interviewing questions; however, students are not limited to these question).

C. From their interviews, students can create a poem, a brief essay, or a series of proverbs about the person they interviewed.

D. The photographs and writing excerpts will be placed on laminated links of construction paper and placed (glued) on links of cloth to create a class quilt of historical significance. (7 to 10 days to complete)

Lesson Eight: CHOCOLATE MILK

A. Students will be introduced to guest speakers-track athletes at FAMU and FSU

B. The guest speakers will discuss the aspects of running track with the students as well as personal background information.

C. Question and answer session.

D. The class will view the 1996 Olympic games-track meets. Peer groups will freeze the characters of Jemmie and Cass. Each group will select a scene from the chapters 1-6 and role play it as if they were the characters themselves and present the role play

to the class.

1. Students will create a simple sketch of their scene onto a large sheet of paper.
2. Members of the groups will explain sketches to the class (including minor characters).
3. Groups will then become their sketches.

Lesson Nine: VALUES

Journal: Values are the epitome of our lives. Our thoughts, actions, and reactions are based off of the values we possess. Think about the values you possess in life. In your journal discuss the things you value most in life. Explain your answer.

- A. Students will create fake money that totals 30,000.
- B. Teacher will conduct a values auction and auction off to students certain values that are present in the novel as well as others. Students will purchase values according to their beliefs.
Example of values for auction: education, religion, wealth, life, family, etc...
- C. Read and discuss chapters 7 & 8 orally, identifying certain values expressed in the chapters.
- D. Students will complete a character change reading guide (Cass, Jemmie, Nana Grace).
- E. Homework: Read chapter 9.

Lesson Ten: ONE RACE-THE HUMAN RACE

- A. The Bullet Exercise (Sequencing):
 1. Imagine that you are a bullet in the gun of a trigger. You have just come in contact with racism. You are currently lying in the chamber of the gun. You are so angry, you are about to be fired. What thoughts rush through your mind as the gun takes aim?
 2. The gun is fired! You shoot out! What are your reactions? How does your body feel as you hurtle through the air with the wind rushing by you?
 3. You are now just a few feet from your target—the heart of the racist. What are you thinking about as you get closer and closer to your target?
 4. How would you feel if you hit the racist and he/she died?
- B. Students will view “Eyes on the Prize”-The Emmet Till story.
- C. Students (peer groups) will create comparison/contrast graphics that compare Till with Jemmie’s father (their situations).
- D. Students will present organizers to the class.
- E. Homework: Read chapter 10.

Lesson Eleven: THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Journal: The Bill of Rights is a legal document that offers protection to American citizens. Think about the Bill of Rights that you are familiar with and how they offer

protection for you in your daily life. In your journal, discuss how you, an American citizen, are protected by the Bill of Rights.

A. Students will be given a review of the Bill of Rights and the freedoms described in the Amendments to the constitution: speech, press, peace, assemblies, religion, due process, life, liberty, property, trial by jury, and freedoms from cruel or unusual punishment, self-incrimination, unreasonable searches and seizures, and slavery or involuntary servitude unless a law was broken.

B. The class will brainstorm aloud examples of rights to freedom, denials of freedom, and perceptions of freedom held by characters in Crossing Jordan and scenarios/scenes viewed in “Eyes on the Prize.”

C. Students will be given the following essay topic and will write for 45 minutes:
Writing Situation: When considering one’s own rights and struggles for personal freedom, one must look at history for an answer.

Directions for Writing: Think about Cass and Jemmie’s parents’ responses to their friendship. In an essay, discuss how growing up in the 60’s deprived Jemmie’s mother of her Bill of Rights and how history has taught Cass’s father (a poor white man) to be ignorant and deny others of their Bill of Rights.

Lesson Twelve: IRONY

A. Guided Reading procedure for chapters 11 & 12.

1. Peer groups will use graphic organizers to illustrate what was remembered from the text.

2. Sample questions: Although Cass and Jemmie have been separated physically, how do they maintain their close friendship? Why would one say that Cass and Jemmie have a salubrious friendship? Why isn’t Cass’s father gregarious?

B. Introduce students to the concept of irony.

1. Practice exercises for irony.

C. Students will find examples of dramatic and situational irony and share with the class.

D. Homework: Bring in a newspaper article that has an example of dramatic or situational irony and discuss the irony present in the article in a brief summary.

Lesson Thirteen: THE CONCEPT OF DIALOGUE

A. Students will read silently a biographical excerpt from Literature and Language on Wilma Rudolph.

B. Students will complete a “Recognizing the Sequence” guide in which they will place events from the excerpt in order.

C. The class will read aloud chapter 13 and discuss the events as well as compare/contrast Cass, Jemmie, and Wilma Rudolph.

D. Students will be given instructions on how to create a puppet show (dialogue) that will consist of conversation between Jemmie, Cass, and Jane Eyre based off of the notes that were exchanged between Cass and Jemmie and Cass's vision of meeting the orphan Jane.

E. Students will formulate into groups and begin planning their puppet show (1 week allotment).

Lessons Fourteen and Fifteen: RECREATING THE PAST

A. The class will read chapter fourteen aloud and discuss the events that occurred.

1. Discuss the significance of the fence in this stage of the novel.
2. Discuss the importance of friendship.
3. Discuss breaking family rules to stand up for what you believe in.

B. The class will take a trip to the cemetery housed at the back of the school and will complete the following assignment:

1. Locate an interesting tombstone and read the engraved labels placed on it.
2. Pay close attention to family lots, engraved words, and the appearance of the tomb site.
3. Take notes on what you notice and write down/brainstorm ideas about the name (person) on the tombstone. ***You may want to record whether or not the tomb is plotted with others or if it sits alone, etc.
4. Try to feel what the person's life was like by looking at the time period in which he or she was born/died, their last names (family names), and by the appearance of their tombstone.

C. Homework: Create a character sketch (Guidelines will be given) of the person listed on the tombstone you visited.

Lesson Sixteen: BIOGRAPHY

Journal: Throughout life, there is one significant event that a person will always remember. Think about an important event that occurred in your life. In a journal writing, discuss one event that you would want people to always remember after your demise.

A. Students will be introduced to the concept of writing a biography.

1. Students will view a videotape of interviews on the life of homeless people recorded at the Tallahassee Homeless Shelter (created by me and two classmates).
 - a. Students will be given a revelation of the lives of the interviewees.

B. Students will create an outline for their biographies (names on tombstones).

C. Groups will work on puppet shows.

D. Class will read and discuss chapter fourteen (Jemmie's and Cass's relationship is just as solid as the fence that divides their homes).

WEEKS FIVE AND SIX:

Lesson Seventeen: THE TALK SHOW

Journal: Imagine harm being brought to one of your younger siblings because of your irresponsibility. How would you feel? Think about a time when you injured a sibling, friend, cousin, etc because of your negligence. In your journal, expound upon this event and explain your reactions and emotions.

A. Class will read and discuss chapter 15 “The Heat Prostration.”

Discussion:

1. Lou Anne’s irresponsibility
 2. Mr. G’s concern for Missy
 3. Cass’s behavior
 4. Mrs. Lewis’s concern and reaction vs. past behavior
 5. Mrs. Bodine’s response to Mrs. Lewis caring for her child
 6. Crossing Jordan/how does Missy’s illness help the families cross Jordan?
- B. Students will be placed in groups of six to plan a talk show. Cast members for the panel will include: talk show host, Cass, Mr. & Mrs. Bodine, Lou Anne, and Mrs. Lewis. Students are to create a talk show scene in which the incident in chapter 15 (Missy’s heat prostration) is the subject of the show.
- C. Talk shows will be presented to the class (1 to 2 days for planning).

Lesson Eighteen: INFERENCE AND CONCLUSION

A. Students will receive a review or introduction to the skill of inference.

1. Practice exercises will be used to reinforce the skill.
- B. Students will make inferences from the titles of chapters 16 and 17 and the class will orally discuss what the chapters may be about.
- C. Students will read chapters 16 and 17 silently.
- D. Students will complete a three-level reading guide

Example:

1. Check those statements which you feel represent the author’s intended meaning for chapters 16 and 17 (are any reasonable inferences or conclusions?).
 - a. Life is a bowl of strawberries
 - b. Irresponsibility brings about responsibility
 - c. A true friendship overcomes all obstacles
 - d. Ignorance is the best teacher
 - e. Change is difficult
 - f. Determination is the best key
 - g. One can never admit when he/she is wrong
2. Check the items that explicitly represent some of the important details and actions

in chapters 16 and 17.

- a. Lou Anne and Mrs. Bodine’s stay at the hospital
 - b. The Bodine’s talk with Lou Anne about Missy’s misfortune.
 - c. The creation of Cass and Jemmie’s dolls.
 - d. Mr. Bodine offering Nana Grace assistance with the house.
 - e. Mrs. Lewis offering Mr. Bodine a glass of lemonade.
 - f. The conversation about the desegregation of schools between Nana Grace and Mr. Bodine.
 - g. Mrs. Bodine and Mrs. Lewis’s conversation about serving as maids
 - h. Jemmie and Cass practicing for the race
 - i. Lou Anne winning a savings bond for being the prettiest baby in Tallahassee.
 - j. The doctors and nurses support of Jemmie.
 - k. The neighborhood support of Cass.
 - l. Cass’s reluctance to ask her parents for a new pair of shoes.
 - m. Mrs. Bodine’s support of Cass; donation of her coupon jar.
 - n. Andy’s trip to the library with Jemmie and Cass.
 - o. Mrs. Lewis sponsoring of Cass with a new pair of shoes.
3. To apply what you read means to take information and ideas from what you have read and connect it to what you already know by making an inference. If you think any of the statements below can be supported by ideas from the text or your life, place a check next to the statement. Be sure to justify your answers with examples.
- a. Pride is your worst enemy.
 - b. Life is what you make it.
 - c. The expected is always the unexpected (irony).
 - d. To come of age means to accept others as well as yourself for who they are.
 - e. Chocolate Milk is more than a running team; it is an everlasting friendship.
 - f. Chocolate Milk’s friendship is stronger than the fence that divides their homes.
 - g. Crossing Jordan means to overcome prejudices for yourself and the sake of others.

Lesson Nineteen: FENCES

A. Students will create fences that bring people together or attract others.

1. Excerpts from August Wilson’s *Fences* will be read by the class and a discussion will follow about how Troy put up a variety of emotional fences in his life to compensate for his feeling of lost manhood. Also, the discussion will compare Mr. Bodine to Troy and the types of emotional fences put up by them to keep “reality” out.

B. Supplies: Science poster boards, markers, construction paper, pictures, etc.

1. Students must create an attractive fence that doesn’t completely hide two neighboring houses.

2. Two little girls from different ethnic backgrounds need to be present in the drawing

or families of opposite races enjoying each other's friendship.

3. The drawing must have a theme, a community name (students may use their own communities) and a description of the neighborhood per se the racial make-up of the community, the social class of the community, and the relationship among the neighbors.

4. Two class periods will be allotted for this activity.

Lesson Twenty: ADRIAN FOGELIN

A. Adrian Fogelin will be invited to the classroom to do an oral reading for the final two chapters, 19 and 20.

B. A question and answer session will be held.

C. Background information on the creation of the novel, character analysis, etc.

D. Students will present fences to Mrs. Fogelin.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

— Students will be given a thorough review along with their learning logs on the novel. A test will be formulated in the FCAT format for students to take at the end of the unit.

— Students are required to keep a learning log on every chapter in the book and learning logs will be due every Friday throughout the unit.

— For every consecutive 4 chapters, vocabulary will be introduced and discussed through the plans highlighted in Lesson 5 (teacher will pull out terms, especially those terms used by Cass and Jemmie from Jane Eyre, from each chapter to use in vocabulary development along with the terms students also denote in their learning logs).

FINAL PROJECT: (1 WEEK TO COMPLETE)

Students will formulate into groups of four and create a slide tape or photo montage of their different communities.

Directions:

Using original photography from town or country locations, create a slide tape (if powerpoint is available) or a photo montage (mosaic) of each group member's community as a representation of Quincy, Florida. Select appropriate background music for the presentation and passages from the novel that demonstrate friendship and a non-prejudice community. Stress the dominant aspects of the community.

Benchmarks addressed during this unit:

LA.A.1.4.1 LA.A.1.4.2 LA.A.1.4.3 LA.A.1.4.4 LA.A.2.4.1 LA.A.2.4.2
LA.A.2.4.4 LA.A.2.4.6 LA.A.2.4.5 LA.A.2.4.8 LA.B.1.4.1 LA.B.1.4.2
LA.B.1.4.3 LA.C.1.4.1 LA.C.1.4.2 LA.C.1.4.3 LA.C.1.4.4 LA.C.2.4.2
LA.C.3.4.2 LA.C.3.4.3 LA.C.3.4.4 LA.C.3.4.5 LA.E.1.4.3 LA.E.1.4.5
LA.E.2.4.1 LA.E.2.4.2 LA.E.2.4.3 LA.E.2.4.6 LA.D.2.4.1 LA.D.2.4.2
LA.B.2.4.4