

Culturally Responsive Lesson Plan

*Romeo and Juliet: Exploring personal connections
with the text*

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Topic: *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare : Exploring personal connections with the Text

Grade Levels: 9th Grade

Content Area(s) Addressed: Literature and Composition; Theatre Arts; Technology; History

Rationale for Using this Lesson: The main characters in *Romeo and Juliet* are teenagers who struggle against parental authority. A study of the times and discussion of societal and parental expectations can help students understand why Romeo and Juliet reacted secretly to their parent's demands and note how this tragedy could have been avoided. Through a series of journal responses students will choose song lyrics to make connections to events in each Act (Interpretation). Students will choose a topic to research and create a tangible artifact to present to the class (Student Choice-Multiple Intelligences). Students will also review the cultural relevance of *Romeo and Juliet*, making connections to their own lives and experiences.

Background Information:

What makes William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* a must read for all teenagers? William Shakespeare recreates Arthur Brooke's poem, "The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet" in a five act play about the tragic love story of two teenagers whose destiny strives to mend their parents' feud. The quest to find love, the struggle with parental authority, and crossing society's barriers are all timeless themes that reach people of all ages and backgrounds.

Shakespeare (1564-1616) is considered one of the most famous English writers of all time. He wrote 154 Sonnets and 37 plays. His works are published in his *First Folio*, a collection put together by his friends seven years after his death. He lived during the English Renaissance for most of the Elizabethan Era and later, during King James I's reign. The bubonic plague decimated about one third of the population in his home town of Stratford-upon-Avon and theatre underwent profound changes at that time. The first permanent playhouse was built in

1576 by an actor named James Burbage. Later in 1599, Shakespeare built The Globe, an open air theatre, in which his company, The King's Men, performed most of his plays. Because women were not allowed on stage, men and young boys performed all of the roles. (Source: *Language of Literature*, Glencoe)

Shakespeare drew most of his plots from European stories that had been translated into English. *Romeo and Juliet* was probably based on an Italian romance. There is no clear indication within the play of the time setting, but it seems to be around 1200 or 1300. In history, rival noble houses existed within that time frame, and their actions disturbed the local peace. People were divided, and a lot of jealousy and tyranny existed. In the play wealth, culture, rivalry, and enmity are all displayed, reflecting this historical time frame.

The time that passes within the play is very clear. Only five days go by from the opening street fight to the death of Romeo and Juliet. On Sunday morning, the brawl in the town square occurs; that same night Romeo meets Juliet at the Capulet feast, and they declare their love for one another. On Monday afternoon, Friar Lawrence marries the couple; later in the day, Romeo kills Tybalt. On Tuesday, Romeo flees from Verona to Mantua, the Capulets announce Juliet's engagement to Paris, and she drinks the magic potion that makes her appear to be dead. On Wednesday, Juliet's body is discovered and taken to the Capulet tomb. On Thursday, Romeo hears of Juliet's death, hastens back to Verona, and commits suicide in her tomb. When Juliet awakens later in the day and finds him dead, she stabs herself. The play ends on Friday morning. (Source: <http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/romeo4.asp>)

Learning Objective(s):

Students will analyze Shakespeare history, language, motifs, and universal themes in *Romeo and Juliet* in order to determine cultural relevance within the text.

Time Required: 4 weeks for the whole unit

Standards: NCTE/IRA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Materials:

KWL Chart

Understanding Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama outline

*Student – Parent Survey

Power points for William Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet*

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet the Graphic Novel: Plain Text by John McDonald et al.

In Touch With Shakespeare handout

In Touch With Shakespeare rubric

Song lyrics for: “The Power of Love” by Huey Lewis and by Celine Dion; “Love Story” by Taylor Swift ; “Closer” by Ne-Yo; “The Banishment” by Prong; “Beat It” by Fall Out Boys; “White Wedding” by Billy Idol; “What’s Love Got to do With It” by Tina Turner

Article “Father kills daughter who wanted out of arranged marriage” from www.wsbtv.com

Video clip “Muslim women seek right to marry” from www.CNN.com

**Gathering Evidence of Cultural Relevance handout

**Components of Cultural Relevance Review

**Cultural Relevance Review Guidelines

**Checklist for Cultural Relevance Review

**Cultural Relevance Essay-Model

**Cultural Relevance Rubric

Audio Editing hand out

Access to www.vozme.com

Computer availability and Student internet accessibility

Sources for materials:

*(<http://www.teachersfirst.com/winners/romeo.pdf>)

**(<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/assessing-cultural-relevance-exploring-1003.html?tab=3#tabs>)

Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) movie

Activity Procedures: Activities will proceed as time is allowed. This plan is designed for 90 minutes blocks, five days a week.

Day one: 1. Explain the KWL chart for Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, and Elizabethan Drama and help students create one on their own paper.

2. Students contribute their prior knowledge to the class and question uncertainties.

3. Collect the KWL charts and hand out Understanding Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama outline to begin the background notes for the unit.
4. Use power point 1 “William Shakespeare” to introduce the unit and discuss the outline. Explain that the outline will help them understand key points about the play and will be used as a reference in future discussions and written work.
5. Distribute the Student – Parent survey *(<http://www.teachersfirst.com/winners/romeo.pdf>). This requires about 30 minutes to discuss and give students time to answer the questions in class. Students should return it within two days for discussion and comparison of parent and student expectations.

Day two: 1. Complete outline from day one using Power point 2 “Romeo and Juliet”.

2. Hand out In Touch with Shakespeare and discuss expectations. Place students in small cooperative groups before they choose the task they wish to complete.
3. Allow students to read the choices and select one. Clarify any misunderstandings or confusion about the project.
4. Give students time to plan how they will accomplish the tasks they chose.

Day three: 1. Check the Student – Parent surveys. Chart the responses for the class to see. This gives students a focus as they read: the parent – child relationship.

2. Allow students to browse Act 1 in the text and review stage directions, characters, and side notes.
3. Assign character roles or let students volunteer for parts in Act I. All students, at some point, will read from the text. As the play progresses, some students will volunteer for more parts.
4. Begin reading. Decipher the Prologue and discuss sonnet structure, iambic pentameter. Stop the reading about six minutes before the bell to review what happened and check their understanding.

Day four: 1. Before continuing with Act I, hand out the song lyrics to “The Power of Love” (both versions) and play the songs. Explain that there are two interpretations of the same theme and that they will have to choose one song to connect to the Act I in their journal. (purpose for reading)

2. Finish reading Act I.
3. Give students time to discuss which song they think relates most to the Act.
4. Students write in their journal to support their song choice with evidence from the text.

5. Collect lyrics and journals to check that they understand how to respond for future journals.

Day five: 1. Take students to computer lab to research the topic for their group project.

Day six – seven: 1. Begin class by handing out song lyrics and playing “Love Story” and “Closer” to set the purpose for Act 2.

2. Review the parts for Act 2 and post student readers. Begin reading (while questioning and explaining significant moments throughout).
3. Give students time to discuss the Act and the song they believe has a closer connection to the text.
4. Students write in their journal (same as day four).

Day eight: 1. Take students to computer lab to build artifacts and / or type a draft of the individual reports. They will turn in a rough draft of their report on day ten.

Day nine – ten: 1. Repeat days six – seven using lyrics to “Beat It” and “The Banishment” to connect to Act 3.

2. Collect rough drafts of the written portion for the group project.

Day eleven - twelve: 1. Return rough drafts and check progress of student artifacts due on day thirteen.

2. Repeat days six – seven using lyrics to “White Wedding” and “What’s Love got to do With It” to connect to Act 4.

3. Students will read from the *Romeo and Juliet The Graphic Novel: Plain Text (American English)* by John McDonald, et al.

Day thirteen: 1. Students present projects.

Day fourteen – fifteen: 1. Students read Act 5 and discuss outcome and possible preventative measures.

2. Students read article “Father kills daughter who wanted out of arranged marriage” from wsbtv.com and watch video clip “Muslim women seek right to marry” from CNN.com
3. Students discuss pros and cons of arranged marriages and right to choose marriages.

Day sixteen: 1. Distribute Cultural Relevance Review handouts (Gathering Evidence of Cultural Relevance handout; Components of Cultural Relevance Review; Cultural Relevance Review Guidelines; Cultural Relevance Essay-Model)

2. Discuss and explain the Cultural Relevance Review essay.
3. Apply the Gathering Evidence handout to the article from day fourteen. Walk through steps with students.
4. Give students time to apply handout to *Romeo and Juliet*.

Day seventeen – twenty: 1. Give students time to work on drafting the review using the Components of Cultural Relevance Review and Guidelines.

2. Turn in rough draft to check understanding.
3. Return checked draft and allow time to revise using Checklist for Cultural Relevance Review.
4. Take to computer lab to type revisions and distribute Cultural Relevance Rubric and Audio Editing handout for self-editing on www.vozme.com. Students must have ear buds or head phones.
5. Students print a copy of revision and partner up to peer-edit for grammar and content.
6. Take students on last day to computer lab for finalizing drafts.
7. Students submit the Cultural Relevance Review final draft with process drafts and Cultural Relevance Rubric for teacher evaluation.
8. Watch the 1996 version of *Romeo + Juliet* and chart the differences between the movie and the text.

Evaluation/Assessments:

1. Each student will submit 3 out of 5 personal response journal for review. Journals will be evaluated using the Text to Text Rubric.
2. Each student will complete a choice assignment from In Touch with Shakespeare and present with a group to showcase knowledge of Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama. Assignments will be evaluated using the In Touch with Shakespeare Rubric.
3. Each student will complete a Cultural Relevance Review for *Romeo and Juliet*. Essays will be evaluated using the Cultural Relevance Rubric.

Modifications:

1. Allow extra time for written responses.

2. Print materials for research project.
3. Accept fewer journal entries for full credit.
4. Instead of writing a journal at the end of each Act, allow room for debate or oral discussion of text to text connections.

Pre-Reflection:

This unit normally takes a few weeks to get through. It gives students an opportunity to read, write, discuss, and view all angles of *Romeo and Juliet*. There are many other aspects to the study of this play such as figurative language, interpretation of scenes, and understanding Shakespeare's use of time that are not noted in this plan.

Post Reflection:

This unit is heavy with writing. Other hands-on activities such as making friendship cards with verses from the play, designing creative license plates / name plates for characters, and interpreting and re-enacting significant scenes from the play can engage students more creatively. However, these activities will not shorten the length of the unit. I think the In Touch with Shakespeare project affords those opportunities to students in a timely manner.

KWL for William Shakespeare, Elizabethan Drama, and *Romeo and Juliet*

What do I know?	What do I want to know?	What did I learn?

Text to Text Rubric

Content	1 pt	3 pts	5 pts	Total
Reference to song	Student may or may not mention the song choice and artist with reference to lyrics but no support.	Student discusses the song choice and artist with some reference to lyrics and some support of ideas.	Student discusses the song choice and artist with reference to specific lyrics and explanation of use.	
Reference to Romeo and Juliet	Student mentions action in R and J but makes no clear connection to lyrics.	Student specifies action in R and J and makes connection to lyrics but does not support connection.	Student makes a clear connection between the lyrics and the action in R and J with explanation of reasoning.	
Organizational structure	Student's thoughts lack organization in form and sentence structure.	Student's thoughts are somewhat organized and may contain some errors in sentence structure.	Student's thoughts are well-organized and may contain few to no errors in sentence structure.	

- I. The Age of Shakespeare
 - A.
 - B.
 - C. King James (Queen E's cousin) took over and became direct patron of the King's Men, Shakespeare's theater company.
- II. The Rise of Prestigious Playhouses
 - A.
 - B. Actor James Burbage built England's first permanent playhouse in 1576.
 - C.
- III. Theatrical Conventions
 - A.
 - B. Instead of scenery, Shakespeare used language to create the illusion of setting.
 - C.
- IV. Shakespeare's Life
 - A.
 - B.
 - C. Shakespeare retired in 1610 and died in 1616. Seven years later, his friends published the First Folio, a collection of his works that helped to preserve his work.
- V. Reading Shakespeare
 - A.
 - B. His plays are written in blank verse (no rhyme) but have a rhythm called iambic pentameter.
 - C.
- VI. Romeo and Juliet
 - A. It is about young lovers coming into conflict with parental authority.
 - B.
 - C.

VII. Drama Terms

A. Drama:

B. Playwright: one who writes a dramatic script

C. Stage directions: explain how characters should speak, move, and behave; printed in italics and enclosed in brackets

D. Scene:

E. Act: a larger part of a play that contains two or more scenes; they help to advance the plot

F. Dialogue:

VIII. Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

A. Comedy: a lighthearted play, often funny and represented by a white flag

B. Tragedy:

C. Shakespearean Sonnet:

D. Iambic pentameter: a line of poetry that includes 5 meters (2 syllables each);
ie. *Two households, both alike in dignity,*

In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,

E. Blank verse:

Fact: Shakespeare wrote 37 plays, some have 104,000 lines! 7% are rhyming;
65% are blank verse; 28% are prose (stories)

F. Foil:

ie. Benvolio and Romeo

G. Tragic flaw: a downfall that results from outside forces or from the character's own flaws

H. Comic relief:

- I. Soliloquy:
 - J. Aside: a comment made by a character that is heard by the audience or another character but not the characters onstage
- IX. Figures of Speech
- A. Simile: a comparison between two unlike things using like, as, than, resembles, etc.
 - Ex.
 - B. Metaphor: a comparison between unlike things
 - Ex.
 - C. Alliteration: the repetition of beginning sounds
 - Ex.
 - D. Assonance:
 - a. Ex. My words like silent raindrops fell,
 - E. Personification: giving human qualities to an animal, object, or idea
 - a. Ex.
 - F. Paradox:
 - a. Ex. A love-hate relationship, opposites attract
 - G. Onomatopoeia: sound words
 - a. Ex. Buzz, snap, boing
 - H. Oxymoron:
 - a. Ex. Burning cold; screaming whisper; numbing pain
 - I. Pun:
 - Ex. Prisoners like the period best of all punctuation marks, since it comes at the end of a sentence.
 - Ex. Trust your calculator. It's something to count on.
- X. Vocabulary
- A. prologue
 - B. dignity
 - C. mutiny

- D. star-crossed
- E. hinds
- F. pernicious
- G. wield
- H. quarrel
- I. adversary
- J. tyranny
- K. propagate
- L. transgression
- M. disposition
- N. beseech
- O. bondage
- P. lamentable
- Q. banishment
- R. apothecary
- S. reconcile
- T. abhor
- U. enmity

Criteria

Correctness: _____ / 20

The project information is accurate.

Eye appeal; _____ / 10

The project is colorful and creative.

Neatness: _____ / 10

The project is neatly put together, legible, and looks like a final product.

Completeness: _____ / 10

The project fulfills all of the requirements for the task.

Creativity: _____ / 10

The student enhances the basic content of the project with a new or enhanced perspective.

Research: _____ / 10

All research notes are included with project.

Written piece: _____ / 10

The written portion of the project is grammatically correct and well-developed.

Sources: _____ / 10

All sources used are listed in a MLA style bibliography (alphabetical order).

Choose one of the following individual tasks to complete as part of your group project. Discuss your choice with your group. Each member of the group must choose a different task, unless the every member of the group chooses the group performance.

The projects will be presented on April 13. You are responsible for each component of your chosen task. However, you will designate a “leader”, a “time monitor”, and a “group manager”.

Roles

Leader = responsible for the overall group performance. This person must make sure that the group completes each task and is prepared for presentation.

Time monitor = responsible for due dates. This person must make sure that each member of the group is on task and turns in what is required in the process for review.

Group manager = responsible for monitoring progress. This person will record what each member has completed throughout the process and report to the teacher.

TASKS

1. COSTUME BOOK

Research costumes from the Elizabethan Era. Find 5 different styles (male and/or female) that are represented in the play. On each page, include the picture, the name of the character that wore it, the Act and Scene it appeared in, and one paragraph describing the costume details and design. Document your sources in an MLA style bibliography on the last page of your book.

2. THE GLOBE THEATRE BLUEPRINT

Research the history and use of The Globe. Find pictures of the exterior and interior structure. Draw a blueprint of The Globe. Label all significant parts. Write a two page typed report of your research. Document all sources used in an MLA style bibliography.

3. DESIGN 5 SCENES

Research set design and costumes used in Shakespeare’s theatre. Use poster, posters, diorama, or other creative method to depict 5 different scenes from the play in chronological order. Label each scene (Act, scene). Write a ½ page typed description of each scene. Document all your sources in an MLA style bibliography.

4. PUPPET SHOW

Research puppet design, costumes, and set design from the Elizabethan Era. Choose a scene from the play and create a puppet show based on the scene. You may use the American English version of the text. Create a stage for your puppets and dress your puppets in costume. Type the script you choose with reference to Act and Scene. Document all your sources in an MLA style bibliography.

5. GROUP PERFORMANCE

Choose a scene from the play that involves at least 3 people. Research the main event in the scene as it happened during Elizabethan times. (ie. Jousting for Act 1 scene 1 or Act 3 scene 2; masquerade ball for Act 1 scene 5, weddings for Act 4 scene 3, etc.) The group must transpose the scene making it relevant to today and act it out. All participant must memorize the lines. Each member must also

write a 1 – 2 page typed report explaining the research for the scene and connect it to the modernized version the group selected. Document all of your sources in an MLA style bibliography.

6. COMIC BOOK

Research comic book styles. Create a comic book that shows all five acts in the play. Focus on the significant parts of each act and illustrate them in your book. Label each act and scene as you illustrate them. The book must be colored neatly and each act must contain at least nine slides. Write a typed summary of each act to accompany your comic book. Document all of your sources in an MLA style bibliography.

7. BOARD GAME

Research different board game designs, instructions, game pieces, etc. Research any information about Shakespeare or Romeo and Juliet that will help in the creation of the game. Create a board game that tells the story of or informs the players about Romeo and Juliet. Type your instructions using one of the styles your researched. Decorate and design your game with details relevant to the play. Document all of your sources in an MLA style bibliography.

8. SONG PERFORMANCE

Research song lyrics that relate to Romeo and Juliet. Choose two songs to explain and write about in a 1 – 2 page typed essay. Write your own original song and perform it in class. Document all of your sources in an MLA style bibliography.

9. PAPER QUILT

Research quilt designs and stitching from the Elizabethan Era. Illustrate 12 – 16 scenes from the play represent a common theme. On each quilt patch include a fully illustrated scene and a caption that includes the act, scene, and quote. Your design should be colorful and represent a design pattern of the time. Write a one page paper explaining your quilt design and the common theme. Document all of your sources in an MLA style bibliography.

Preliminary Sources for research:

(<http://www.kn.att.com/wired/fil/pages/webromeoankr.html>); (<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/>); (<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/theatre.htm>)

Cultural Relevance Rubric

	3	2	1
Characters	The character(s) in the text are very much like me and my family. The character(s) would fit in well.	The character(s) in the text have some similarities to me and my family; but there are also many differences.	The character(s) in the text are not at all like me and my family. The character(s) would not fit in well at all.

Experiences	I have had experiences exactly like the one(s) described in this story. The events matched my experiences well.	I have had some experiences like the one(s) described in this story; but I have had different experiences as well.	I have not had experiences like the one(s) described in this story. The events are unlike my own experiences.
Place (Setting)	I have lived in or visited places just like those in the story. The setting was familiar to me.	I have lived in or visited places that were similar in some ways to those in the stories; but there were definitely differences.	I have never lived in or visited places just like those in the story. The events took place in a location that was not familiar to me.
Time (Setting)	The events in the text could take place this year. They happen in the present.	Some of the events in the text could take place this year, but others either took place in the past or future.	The events in the text could not take place this year. They either take place at some point in the past or the future.
Main Character's Age	The main character(s) in the text are very close to me in age.	Some of the main characters in the text are very close to me in age while others are not.	The main character(s) in the text are not very close in age to me.
Main Character's Gender	The main characters in the text are the same gender as I am.	Some of the main characters in the text are the same gender as I am.	The main characters in the text are not the same gender as I am.
Languages	The characters in the text communicate like me and my family. They talk, read, and write like us.	Some of the characters in the text communicate like me and my family. Others do not talk, read, and write like us.	The characters in the text do not communicate like me and my family. They do not talk, read, or write like us.
Frequency	I read, view, or listen to texts just like this one very often.	I sometimes read, view, or listen to texts just like this one.	I never read, view, or listen to texts just like this one.

Gathering Evidence of Cultural Relevance

1. **Characters:** As you compose your review of the text, explain the reasons that the characters are different from or similar to you and your family.

2. **Experiences:** How are the experiences in the story different from or similar to your own experiences? In your review, be sure to explain why and how the experiences compare to your own.

3. **Place (Setting):** What aspects of the places in the story were different from or similar to those that you have lived in or visited? In your review, you can talk about the comparisons and how they affected your understanding of the story.

4. **Time (Setting):** How do the events in the text compare to events that take place in the present? Which events in the text tell you whether the story could take place in the present?

5. **Main Character's Age:** How can you tell the age of the main character(s)? What details in the text make it obvious to you?

6. **Main Character's Gender:** Note the number of characters who are the same gender as you are. How many characters in the text are not the same gender as you?

7. **Languages:** What examples in the text show that the characters do or do not talk, read, and write like you do?

8. **Frequency:** What other texts have you read, seen, or listened to that are similar to this one? What texts have you read that are different? Which of the items in the rubric do they have in common with this text?

Components of Your Cultural Relevance Review

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introductory paragraph usually includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bibliographic information about the text (adapt these options for the specific kind of text you are reviewing): • title
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name of the author, performer, director, or producer of the text • publisher or distributor • place and date of publication • thesis, your opinion of the cultural relevance of the text
BODY PARAGRAPHS	<p>The body paragraphs generally include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a brief summary of the text • For fiction: details on characters, setting, and plot. • For nonfiction: explanation of the main points. • very concrete material that supports your opinion of the cultural relevance of the text, including these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • characters • experiences/events • setting (place and time) • age and gender of main character(s)
CONCLUSION	<p>The conclusion should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the main points you have made. • leave the reader with a clear and memorable impression of the text you have reviewed.

Checklist for Cultural Relevance Review

Does the review include complete bibliographic information for the text?	Yes No
Does the review give a clear and powerful statement of the writer's opinion of the text's	Yes No

cultural relevance? In other words, does the thesis express the writer's opinion clearly and strongly?	
Does the review summarize the important points of the work? • For fiction: consider plot, character, setting and theme • For nonfiction: consider focus and factual information	Yes No
Is quoted and/or paraphrased material included to support the points and reactions toward the work?	Yes No
Does the review include details on each of the following areas: • character(s) • experiences/events • setting (place and time) • age and gender of the main character(s)	Yes No Yes No Yes No Yes No
Have all details on cultural relevance from the text been checked carefully for accuracy?	Yes No
Does the conclusion review the main points? Is the cultural relevance of the reviewed text clear?	Yes No
Does the text use a firm and assertive style? Does the opinion seem strong?	Yes No
Has the review been carefully proofread? Have all errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics been corrected?	Yes No

Model Cultural Relevance Essay

Cultural Relevance of *¡Sí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can*

When I read *¡Sí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can* by Diana Cohn (Cinco Puntos Press, 2002), I thought about walking on the picket line with my father during

the teacher's strike here in Detroit. Many of the things that the main character felt were emotions that I have felt also recently. *iSí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can* is a culturally relevant story for me because the characters and their experiences were very much like people and events from my own life.

iSí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can tells of a janitors' strike in Los Angeles. The main character is Carlitos, a young boy whose mother works as a custodian. She doesn't make enough money to support her family, so Carlitos is very worried when she tells him the custodians will go on strike. He wants to help, and joins the demonstrations with students from his classroom just like I did with my father.

Carlitos and the other characters in the story are Latinos. The story is told in both Spanish and English, so I can read the story easily in words just like I use with my family at home. Even in the English sections of the story, the story uses words like *abuelita*, *Mamá* and *Papá*. Even little details in the story were like specific things from my own life. The characters eat *los burritos*, *las paletas*, and *los churros*. The students in Carlitos' classroom are much younger than I am, but they work together and learn about things like I did when I was younger. They even learn about Cesar Chavez! My life is not exactly like Carlitos' life, but the story includes lots of things that I can identify with.

iSí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can is culturally relevant for me. This true story has characters whose experiences are much like those of other Latinos who live in cities. The setting and the age of the main character are different from my own, but there were enough similarities that this book was easy to relate to. Any student who wants to know more about what it's like to be in an average Latino family in the city should read this book!

Name: _____ Date _____



TeachersFirst.com Perfect Mate: Student Form

In Act I Scene 2 of Romeo & Juliet, Lord Capulet, Juliet's father, and Paris, cousin to Prince Escalus who wants to marry Juliet, discuss the marriage. In many cultures marriages are arranged by parents with little or no input from the bride and groom. In this scene Capulet tells Paris:

My will to her consent is but a part.
And she agreed, within her scope of choice
Lies my consent and fair according voice.

So, Lord Capulet at least is telling Juliet's suitor that she must also consent to the marriage. Of course, we found out that Juliet didn't want to marry Paris. She has fallen in love with the son of her family's arch-enemy, Lord Montague.

Have you ever dated or even expressed an interest in a guy or girl that your parents disapproved of? If so, you should have some empathy for what Romeo and Juliet are going through in this play.

If you had to list the traits (physical, personality, etc.) of your perfect mate, what would they be? Try to be as specific as you can be.

Now, get behind the Eight Ball and try to figure out what traits your parents would list if they were choosing the perfect mate for you. Again, try to be specific.

REMEMBER! Don't let your parents see your list until they have done theirs on the other side.

Please have both sides of this survey completed and with you in class.



Perfect Mate: Parent Form

Dear Parent(s):

We are reading Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" in English class and I would appreciate your taking the time to complete this survey.

As you may remember from your own high school English class, the play centers on two young people who fall in love. Their parents, however, are enemies and make the relationship impossible for Romeo and Juliet. On the other side of this sheet I have asked the students to list traits THEY would want in a "perfect mate." Now, I'm going to ask you to do the same, without having looked at their lists first. Naturally, you're welcome to read what they said after you've answered the questions. Confused? I hope not. If you are, do what I do when I make an assignment that I don't understand: Ask your child what I meant.

Thanks for your help in completing this project.

What traits (physical, personality, etc.) would you think your son or daughter would look for if searching for the perfect mate for himself or herself?

Now, what traits would you consider most important if you were choosing the perfect mate for your son or daughter?

Parent Signature: