

Great Books: *The Red Badge of Courage*: Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum Focus: Literature

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

Program Description

Stephen Crane's Civil War novel examines the soldier's worst fear – realizing he is a coward. The book's groundbreaking realism makes it important not only as literature, but also as a window into the life of a soldier during the Civil War.

- I Introduction (13 min.)
 - II. Reality of War (15 min.)
 - III. A New Kind of War Story (14 min.)
 - IV. Crane's Legacy (11 min.)
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Students will understand that authors use personification as a literary tool to convey Study a poem closely for oral presentation.
- Present an oral interpretation of a poem.
- Participate in a panel discussion about a poem and its interpretation.

Materials

- Collection of war poems by Stephen Crane
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

Procedures

1. Inform students that besides *The Red Badge of Courage*, Crane also wrote short, bitter poems about war. Divide students into groups and assign each a different poem. Tell students they will present an oral interpretation of the poem and participate in a panel discussion about the poem and their interpretation of it.

2. Review the fundamentals of oral interpretation of literature below. Then give students time to work in their groups.
 - The group must decide who will read which lines during the presentation. Will only one student read, or two, or all in unison? Will the students share the reading by stanza?
 - Students should mark up the poem to indicate where to pause, place emphasis, and change tone and pacing. Tell students they can make revisions during the rehearsal period.
 - One student should write and read an introduction, including the name of the poem. Where the introduction ends and where the poem begins must be clear to the audience.
 - Advise students to stand when they read, to speak slowly and clearly, and occasionally to make eye contact with the audience.
3. Review the basics of panel discussions about literature:
 - The panel is made up of experts about the author and his or her work.
 - The discussion consists of panel members' remarks and questions and comments from a moderator and other panel members.
 - Students in the audience can ask questions based on fact or opinion.
4. Summarize the moderator's responsibilities:
 - Introduce each member of the panel.
 - Help the audience hear questions and responses by clearly stating each question, directing it to the appropriate panel member, and allowing other members to respond.
 - Call on panelists who indicate they have questions for one another.
 - Note for the audience where panelists agree and disagree.
 - Keep track of the time, eliminating some questions if necessary, to keep the discussion well focused.
 - Open the floor to questions from the audience.
 - Summarize the discussion and thank participants and audience members.
5. Direct the groups to list the questions the moderator will ask the panelists and decide which panelist will take the lead in answering each question. All students should contribute to the list.
6. Before holding the panel discussion, have the class develop a three-point evaluation chart to rate the group's presentation and each student's participation. Include the categories below:
7. Expressiveness of performance
 - Delivery style of performance
 - Familiarity with the poem
 - Clear, easy-to-hear speaking skills
 - Level of participation in panel discussion

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students participated actively in class discussions, small group discussions, and in their group's panel discussion; earned a "3" on the majority of the audience evaluation sheets; delivered an expressive and well-rehearsed performance.
- **2 points:** Students participated in class discussions, small group discussions, and panel discussions; earned a "2" on the majority of the audience evaluation sheets; delivered a somewhat expressive and well-rehearsed performance.
- **1 point:** Students did not participate in discussions; earned a "1" on the majority of the audience evaluation sheets; delivered an incoherent or unrehearsed performance.

Vocabulary

aspiration

Definition: A strong desire to achieve something high or great

Context: Young people with great career aspirations frequently move to a large city.

deprivation

Definition: A state of being needy; lacking the necessities of life or healthful environmental influences

Context: Crane lived among the poor to understand true deprivation.

heinous

Definition: Hateful or shockingly evil

Context: Desertion is one of the most heinous military crimes.

infantry

Definition: Soldiers trained, armed, and equipped to fight on foot

Context: The infantry always bears the brunt of the battle.

legacy

Definition: Something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past

Context: Stephen Crane left a writing legacy to modern reporters.

pivotal

Definition: Vitally important; crucial

Context: The pivotal moment in the novel is when the youth fails and deserts the battle.



Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit link:

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Language Arts – Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts; Listening and Speaking: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association have developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching the English language arts. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>

This lesson plan addresses the following NCTE standards:

- Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, and vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, and people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the [Discoveryschool.com](http://www.discoveryschool.com) Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>



DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How To Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into four parts (see below), indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. Introduction (13 min.)

An overview of the story told by *The Red Badge of Courage* and an introduction to the book's author, Stephen Crane.

II. Reality of War (15 min..)

Crane's struggle to write a meaningful portrayal of street life leads to his idea for *The Red Badge of Courage*; historians and former soldiers discuss the realities of war, including those of the Civil War.

III. A New Kind of War Story (14 min..)

Henry "earns" his red badge of courage and returns to the war. Crane's book is celebrated as a fresh approach to a war story, and he struggles with his newfound fame.



IV. Crane's Legacy (11 min.)

Crane shows us a heroic side of Henry in the last scenes of the book. Later war correspondents share the impacts Crane made on the field of war journalism.

Curriculum Units

1. Overview: A Civil War Story

Pre-viewing question

Q: What were some of the reasons the Civil War was fought?

A: High tariffs on goods, state's rights, Southern secession from the Union, slavery

Post-viewing question

Q: Whose story was Stephen Crane trying to tell in *The Red Badge of Courage*?

A: What of a common soldier, a young farm boy named Henry Fleming.

2. An Author's Beginnings

Pre-viewing question

Q: Why do you think *The Red Badge of Courage* made such a great impact on America?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What set *The Red Badge of Courage* apart from other war stories of its time?

A: It was the first to tell the story of a common soldier rather than a general or commanding officer. It had a level of realism never before seen in war novels.

3. Stephen Crane's Legacy

Pre-viewing question

Q: Why do you think Crane felt he had to go to war once *The Red Badge of Courage* was so widely well received?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What was Crane's contribution to war journalism?

A: Crane painted the small picture; his stories spoke of the common soldier rather than the larger war. He was a part of the action and later war correspondents could no longer justify standing on the sidelines, away from the action, while reporting on war.

4. A Soldier Named Henry

Pre-viewing question

Q: Why was the Civil War considered more intimate than other wars?

A: Soldiers fought against and with people they knew and fought with modern, accurate weapons that had to be used at very close range.



Post-viewing question

Q: What are some of the differences between infantrymen of the Civil War and those of today?

A: Today's infantry is highly trained with scientific methods and effective weapons technology, while Civil War infantry were essentially untrained. Modern soldiers train during times of peace and are taught how to react to any possible situation so that their actions become automatic.

5. Deserting the Army

Pre-viewing question

Q: Why do think a soldier would desert the army?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Why does Henry view desertion as a personal failure?

A: Henry feels that he's betrayed his fellow soldiers. He went into battle thinking himself a hero and, according to his views, heroes do not run away.

6. Henry's Red Badge of Courage

Pre-viewing question

Q: Do you think Henry would have regretted deserting if he had not returned to the war?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Why is how Henry gets wounded perceived with irony?

A: To Henry a wound is a badge of courage. However, he gets wounded while running away from the army, which is not an act of courage. And his wound comes from a deserting Union soldier rather than an enemy during battle.