

English
Grade 8AB



Lesson Plans

"Courage: An Expository Essay"

Subject:
English: 8AB

Level:
Grade 8

Abstract:

In this project, students will discuss the nature of courage and what makes a courageous person. They will conduct research or interviews on self-selected courageous individuals. Using their collected research, students will write expository essay outlines and expository essays, using Microsoft Word on a person living or dead whom they believe embodies courage (such as Michael Jordan, Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King, or Amelia Earhart).

Invitation:

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but the action in spite of fear." How does courage manifest in your life, in the world today? What is courage? When have you shown courage? Who do you admire who is courageous? How would you help someone to be courageous?

Situations:

Where: This lesson will take place in the English classroom to address standards in oral and written language.

When: This lesson can take place anytime during the year. Second quarter is the preferred time as students will be accustomed to classroom systems and routines.

How Long: This lesson will last approximately three to four weeks.

Tasks:

Task 1:

Begin the lesson by presenting the Invitation to students, posing questions about courage. Have students reflect on the quote by Mark Twain: "Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear." Students will use the questions and quote to discuss courage and share their thoughts about various courageous individuals. Keep a running list of names of courageous individuals suggested by students. Have students begin to make a personal list of people they consider to be courageous in their own notebooks.

Task 2:

Tell students their primary outcome in this lesson is the development of an expository essay on one courageous person. Introduce students to the structure of expository essays by distributing the "Handout: Elements of an Expository Essay" attachment. Discuss the key components of expository essays and techniques. Use the pizza outline to discuss the structure of the expository essay. Have students select another topic and create an outline from scratch with them.

Task 3:

Have students select one person from their list whom they believe exemplifies courage. Over a period of two to three days, students will conduct research or interviews as needed to write an outline and powerful expository essay, keeping track of sources. (See the "Step Sheet: Formatting a Bibliography" and "Step Sheet: Formatting an Individual Bibliographic Entry" attachments.) See Tip #6 regarding the management of your class for online research.

Task 4:

When students have completed gathering information about their courageous person, distribute the "Handout: Expository Essay Outline Directions" attachment. Discuss the generic outline with students. Call on individuals to share examples for each section, based on their own courageous persons.

Task 5:

Provide students with the "Template: Expository Essay Outline" attachment. Students will use their notes to complete the outline on their courageous person using Microsoft Word. Use the "Expository Essay Outline Rubric" attachment to determine student readiness to draft their essay. Provide feedback to students using the rubric prior to writing essays.

Task 6:

Provide students with a copy of the "Expository Essay Rubric" attachment. In pairs, have students discuss each category of the rubric so they understand how they will be assessed on this project. Bring the full class together to clarify questions and allow students to comment on the process.

Task 7:

Provide students with ample time to write their expository essays in Microsoft Word, using their expository essay outlines to guide them.

Task 8:

When students have completed their first drafts, have them print two hard

copies, one for themselves and one for a partner. Have pairs of students share their essays with each other, making recommendations for revisions that will make the essays more powerful and clear. Distribute the "Worksheet: Revision Response Guidelines" attachment for students to track their recommendations for revisions. These worksheets can be distributed either as hard copy or provided electronic using Microsoft Word.

Task 9:

When students have completed their suggested revisions with their partners, they will revise their essays using Microsoft Word. Distribute the "Step Sheet: Using an Electronic Thesaurus" attachment to students. Demonstrate the use of the thesaurus and have select five words and choose alternate but appropriate terms.

Task 10:

Distribute the "Step Sheet: Creating WordArt" attachment to students. Demonstrate the use of WordArt and have students create a WordArt title for their essays.

Task 11:

Use the "Expository Essay Rubric" attachment to assess individual essays and provide students with timely feedback on their projects.

Interactions:

Full Class: The teacher will provide introductory activities for the courage lesson, the expository outline and essay process, and demonstrations of using the thesaurus and WordArt as full class activities.

Partners: When working with a partner, students will read essay drafts and respond with revision suggestions. In addition, partners may cooperate in researching the same individual identified as courageous.

Individual: Students will work individually to develop their expository essay outlines and their expository essays. They will also keep individual lists of courageous persons.

Standards:

Reading:

1.3 Use word meanings within the appropriate context and show ability to verify those meanings by definition, restatement, example, comparison, or contrast.

3.6 Identify significant literary devices (e.g., metaphor, symbolism, dialect, irony) that define a writer's style and use those elements to interpret the work.

Writing:

Organization and Focus

- 1.1 Create compositions that establish a controlling impression, have a coherent thesis, and end with a clear and well-supported conclusion.
- 1.2 Establish coherence within and among paragraphs through effective transitions, parallel structures, and similar writing techniques.
- 1.3 Support theses or conclusions with analogies, paraphrases, quotations, opinions from authorities, comparisons, and similar devices.

Research and Technology

- 1.4 Plan and conduct multiple-step information searches by using computer networks and modems.
- 1.5 Achieve an effective balance between researched information and original ideas.

Evaluation and Revision

- 1.6 Revise writing for word choice; appropriate organization; consistent point of view; and transitions between paragraphs, passages, and ideas.

2.3 Write research reports:

- a. Define a thesis.
- b. Record important ideas, concepts, and direct quotations from significant information sources and paraphrase and summarize all perspectives on the topic, as appropriate.
- c. Use a variety of primary and secondary sources and distinguish the nature and value of each.
- d. Organize and display information on charts, maps, and graphs.

Sentence Structure

- 1.1 Use correct and varied sentence types and sentence openings to present a lively and effective personal style.

Grammar

- 1.4 Edit written manuscripts to ensure that correct grammar is used.

Punctuation and Capitalization

- 1.5 Use correct punctuation and capitalization.

Spelling

- 1.6 Use correct spelling conventions.

Listening and Speaking

- 1.2 Paraphrase a speaker's purpose and point of view and ask relevant questions concerning the speaker's content, delivery, and purpose.

Analysis and Evaluation of Oral and Media Communications

- 1.8 Evaluate the credibility of a speaker (e.g., hidden agendas, slanted or biased material).

Assessment:

- "Expository Essay Outline Rubric"

- "Expository Essay Rubric"

Tools:

- Inspiration (or a similar mind-mapping application) may be used to outline their five-paragraph expository essay.
- Mini-lab of computers with online access.
- Microsoft Word.
- An Internet browser.

Project Tips and Alternatives:**Tip #1:**

Allow students ample time to digest the meaning of the courage quote. Refer to it often. Encourage students to cite examples of courage they witness throughout the unit.

Tip #2:

Encourage students to create a cover page that includes a decorative border, art, or photos.

Tip #3:

Select exemplary essays to post on the classroom or school web site.

Tip #4:

A two-day project alternative may include participating in a Webquest in small groups or as individuals. See the resources for relevant Webquests or visit The WebQuest Page at <http://webquest.sdsu.edu/index.html>

Tip #5:

Use the following techniques to facilitate students' online research processes:

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Use the following techniques to facilitate students' online research processes:

- a. Ensure that everyone has a job and a back-up assignment (not necessarily project related).
- b. Require students to come to the research station with several key words or phrases related to their topic.
- c. Set a time limit for online research.
- d. Require students or groups to keep an online journal in which they set a goal and write what they accomplished with their online time.
- e. Provide students with helpful file management tools such as index cards and manila folders with labeled envelopes.
- f. If possible, bookmark a few sites for each topic. Provide all students with access to this bookmark file.
- g. Discourage printing or downloading information. Rather, require students to identify topics and sub-topics. Notes should respond to specific sub-topics (written on index cards).

Tip #6:

If you have not already addressed the following concepts in prior learning activities, you may want or need to find time to use the following lessons:

- "Handout: Lead and Concluding Paragraphs"
- "Handout: Transitional Words and Phrases"

Attachments:

- "Handout: Elements of an Expository Essay"
- "Handout: Expository Essay Outline Directions"
- "Template: Expository Essay Outline"
- "Expository Essay Outline Rubric"
- "Worksheet: Revision Response Guidelines"
- "Expository Essay Rubric"
- "Handout: Lead and Concluding Paragraphs"
- "Handout: Transitional Words and Phrases"
- "Step Sheet: Formatting an Outline in Microsoft Word"
- "Step Sheet: Adding a Border"
- "Step Sheet: Creating a New Document"
- "Step Sheet: Creating Word Art"
- "Step Sheet: Using an Electronic Thesaurus"
- "Step Sheet: Inserting Pictures into Microsoft Word"
- "Step Sheet: Formatting an Annotated Bibliography"
- "Step Sheet: Formatting Individual Bibliographic Entries"

Web Resources – Content:

A list of [linked web resources](#) related to the content of this lesson can be found on the Lesson Page.

Web Resources – Word:

A list of linked web [resources for Word](#) can be found on the Word Resources page.

Assistive Technology:

Please refer to the [Assistive Technology section](#) for information on methods and devices to help ensure that all students have access to the curricula in the least restrictive environment.