

“ANNIE, BETWEEN THE STATES”

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN RECOMMENDED FOR TEACHERS GRADES 7- 9

A cross-curriculum opportunity for Language Art/English – Social Studies

(Language Arts/English) Use “Annie, Between the States” as a core text and to cross the curriculum to social studies instruction

(Social studies) Use “Annie, Between the States” to create awareness of the impacts of the American Civil War on civilian populations

Note: See the section on “additional activities” following this lesson plan for recommendations including a field trip to the geography referred to in the novel.

For students in grades 7 though 9 in English/Language Arts, use as core text as part of a unit on “historical fiction” or “coming of age” narrative. For students in Social Studies, partner with English/Language Arts instruction and pair with textbook and multi-media representations of the Civil War and the outcomes.

Rationale for using *Annie, Between the States* as a core text. This is a coming-of-age fiction set in Virginia during the Civil War that accurately describes the realities and challenges faced by ordinary Americans. The story of Annie, a teenage girl living on a farm in Virginia at the outbreak of the war, spans the five years of the conflict, and can be taught as a self-standing coming-of-age novel. Of additional value is the presence of references to literary figures popular at the time and their works (including Dickens, Longfellow, Lord Byron, Keats, and others).

The novel presents a rich opportunity for cross-curriculum instruction. The carefully researched narrative employs historical facts culled from primary sources such as journals, letters, and newspapers of the day. These sources informed the author’s portrayal of how war changed the life of the adolescent protagonist, her family, and her community.

Details from American history. The novel will enhance a student’s understanding of historical events, such as the battles of Manassas or Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address,” but furthermore it accurately portrays the daily struggles of civilians in a state where 123 of the war’s 384 major battles were fought.

The novel depicts the constant turmoil experienced by the Virginians in that part of the state: the town of Front Royal changed hands 67 times, for instance, and Winchester changed hands 72 times. Under these circumstances, troops could appear at any time in need of a farm’s horses, or to take grain, chickens, and other provisions to feed the soldiers. Ambushes and skirmishes erupted constantly, often on a farm’s fields, leaving behind trampled crops.

Appearing in the novel are historic figures of the conflict, including Confederate cavalry general Jeb Stuart and ranger John Mosby (the “Gray Ghost”), plus the various Union troops pursuing them. Protagonist Annie Sinclair is herself based on three real-life young women, including Antonia Ford, who was arrested for spying but eventually married the Union officer who escorted her to federal prison. In addition to specific historical details, the novel depicts -- through the reflections of the protagonist -- the divided loyalties and disturbing ethical questions which defined the Civil War.

“Annie, Between the States” will humanize any unit focusing on the political, military, and moral aspects of the Civil War. The novel is a true “living history.”

Objective/SWBAT (Literature):

A unit including this lesson. Students will expand their awareness of how literature – in this case a thoroughly-researched historical fiction – can help the reader understand the impact of war, particularly on civilians. Students will appreciate how historical fiction allows the reader to engage the imagination while simultaneously enhancing understanding of actual events. Historical fiction puts a human face on political movements and important dates.

This lesson. Students will gain awareness and be able to identify various aspects of life in the mid-1800s, as part of the background knowledge needed before reading “Annie, Between the States.”

Objective/SWBAT (Social Studies):

A unit including this lesson. (See objectives for Literature) Students will understand and be able to explain the day-to-day realities of the Civil War period. Further, the student will learn that war has drastic effects: in addition to physical and political impacts, war also affects societal norms, cultural identity, and definitions of morality.

A specific emphasis of the unit would be on war’s human impact. As the author states: “Ordinary people – including children, the elderly, and the innocent -- could die in poorly aimed cannon fire, or in blazes resulting from a battle, or from the diseases armies carried with them. But the survivors of this destruction also could discover unrecognized strength and compassion within themselves. Leaders legislate and order wars, but it is the common man or woman who enacts the sweeping changes through their own sweat and courage.”

This lesson. (See above) Students will gain awareness of and be able to identify various aspects of civilian life as a supplement to instruction involving the Civil War; they will be equipped to apply this supplemental learning to reading “Annie, Between the States” and other texts.

Prior Learning

Students have already read the grade level and curriculum texts associated with the Civil War and are aware of the causes and outcomes of conflict. They are also aware of the essential differences between the cultures of northern and southern Americans at the time. They have a general sense of the impacts of the war on the population of southern Americans, particularly in battle-stricken areas.

Materials

1. A copy of Annie, Between the States for each student.
2. Access to print and electronic sources available in the school’s library (media center)

Advance Preparation:

1. Teacher should work in conjunction with librarian/media specialists to identify sources of text, illustration, examples, etc. for the following areas of interest from the Civil War period:

- a. Reading and language of the Civil War (including popular reading and slang)
 - b. Men's and ladies' dress, for household and formal situations; also, hairstyles
 - c. Foods and cooking of the time (at home and in camp, Northern and Southern)
 - d. Music, from popular songs to great composers
 - e. Games played at the time, both indoors and outdoors
 - f. Medicine and types of medical treatment.
 - g. The growth of photography (portraits and, later, battlefield reporting)
2. Teacher and librarian should set up individual tables for each specific area of interest, containing print materials. Laptops may be made available at each table; if no laptops are available, provide access to one or more desktop computers for students working in pairs and small groups to use.

Lesson Outline for Pre-reading Activity (Plan at least one "block" period.)

1. **Re-establish prior knowledge.** Review recently-learned content, including learning on the root causes of the Civil War, the realities of the conflict, and its consequences. Refer specifically to content from literature and other texts used; refer to classroom activities that enriched understanding of the topic. As much as possible, re-activate understanding of: the early phases of the war with an emphasis on heavily trafficked battle theaters in Virginia; the impacts on day-to-day life for civilians; and the ultimate consequences of war, particularly on civilian life.
2. **Establish set for new learning.** Tell the class that the emphasis for the lesson is on the nature of day-to-day life in the Civil War, with a focus on "the impacts of war on civilian populations. Ask the class to share what they recall from classroom instruction, assigned reading, or learning from previous years. (Support with board work as needed.)

Note: It is important to create the impression that the lesson for the day will involve "serious" study. (Only the teacher and media specialists are to know that the students will enjoy a more activating lesson in a more relaxed environment.)

3. **Introduce activity.** Have students assemble in a common area in the library or media center; announce that sources have been selected in advance to provide a starting point for more specific study. *It is important to sustain the impression that the lesson involves formal study leading to a paper or project.*
4. **Re-introduce activity.** Use librarian or media specialist as a partner to "surprise" students with the true activity for the day, which is learning about "the truly important facts" of Civil War life (see list under "Advance Preparation").
5. Randomly assign students to tables; tell them that the assignments are temporary.
6. **Activity Part 1.** Aided by media specialist, briefly introduce the topic for each table. (Part of advance preparation could be using bookmarks or "stickies" to identify pages of print materials that could be of the most interest.)

Have students read, review, and share materials. Use a short form – half a sheet of paper will do – to record details of interest, including specific pages or illustrations. Allow 10 minutes or more for this phase.

Note: It is essential that the examples chosen to have immediate interest. Some examples:

Some of the **foods and drinks** of the time are very unusual. Recipes included wild animals that most of us don't see at the dinner table any more; there was no refrigeration and even the idea of canning foods was still very new. The lyrics of **popular songs** from the middle of the 19th century are amusingly sentimental and naïve by today's standards...and songs or **dances** like the waltz were considered to be very racy. (Soldiers in well-drilled **musical bands** would entertain themselves by playing across the battlefield in a kind of "battle of the bands.") Women's **dress** required elaborate preparation -- as many as seven layers of clothing were needed for a formal occasion. (Movement and even breathing were severely hampered by the fashion of the time.) **Cosmetics and hairstyles** were radically different – ladies often wore no makeup and men's beards and mustaches could be large and unusual, to say the least. People of the mid-1800s brushed their teeth with the gritty ground-up charcoal of fireplaces and bathed about twice a month. **Medicine** was primitive. There was no anesthesia or penicillin, nor was there aspirin of the type we know now. Amputations and death from fatal infections were commonplace. **Technological innovations** included the use of photography, starting with "tintypes." Students interested in sports will be surprised that **baseball** was invented in the mid-1800s and was played using unusual rules. (It was a popular pastime with soldiers in camps.)

Activity Part 2. Close first table activity by allowing one student from each table to share at least two interesting facts with the whole group. For this part, allow students to visit tables as they wish, reading and reviewing materials, to decide which topic is of the most interest to them. After 10 minutes or so, ask the students to commit to the "topic table" of most interest to them.

Activity Part 3. Tell students that they will continue to work in pairs or small groups to investigate their topic, potentially for a special in-class fair ("Civil War Day"). Explain that there will be plenty of time to develop their contribution for this event; the idea is that they will enjoy themselves and learn at the same time.

Close this series of activities by assembling relevant books or other printed materials on a cart that will remain in the library or media center. Involve students in the choices.

**Return to classroom for introduction the new reading:
Introduce Annie, Between the States by L.M. Elliott.**

1. Explain that the activity they just participated in was a way of preparing for the new novel they will read, Annie, Between the States a "historical fiction" (explain term) by author L. M. Elliott. Prepare students with a brief description of the circumstances at the beginning of the novel — a frightening and very realistic account of what it is like for a battle (in this case, a Civil War battle) to sweep right up to the door.
2. Read aloud from the first chapters. Stop to ask or answer questions, if this is the teacher's preference, and if it helps the students. Encourage students to use context clues to understand new vocabulary – consider using a "vocabulary sheet"
3. Distribute books to students – allow time for silent reading if possible. Students are to take their copy of the book home with them. (See suggestion for an assignment below.)

Homework assignment

1. Encourage students to visit the media center to search the topic of interest from the visit to the media center. Websites containing relevant information may be posted on the author's website: <http://www.lmelliott.com>
2. Students should continue reading the novel through an assigned chapter (the length of the reading assignment is up to the teacher.). Ask students to read with the text and images from author's website in mind. Students should keep a log as they read, listing details the author has selected to make the novel into a historically accurate fiction. The log is a starting point for discussion or activity in the next lesson; it will also supplement understanding of the topics chosen for the tables in the lesson.

Post-reading activity

“THE WORLD OF ANNIE SINCLAIR: VISITING THE TIME AND PLACES OF THE NOVEL”

1. The objective is to visit the actual sites described in the novel, providing reinforcement of the notion that historical fiction truly does involve fact. For students in social studies class, this is an excellent opportunity to understand not just a famous Civil War battles, but the environment in which mid-19th century lived.
 - a. **Travel time and proximity.** All of the sites related to the novel are within a 35-mile radius of Annie's imaginary home near Middleburg, Virginia, a town 40 miles west of Washington, D.C. Teachers located in Northern Virginia, the regions of Maryland located across the Potomac River, and the eastern parts of West Virginia can reach these sites within an hour to an hour and a half. Teachers from elsewhere in Maryland, West Virginia, can reach the sites within two hours. For those in Pennsylvania and North Carolina, more time will be needed (as much as three hours).
 - b. **Primary focus: settings described specifically in the novel.** (See *“Recommended route”* below.) The location of Annie's fictional home – on the Panther Skin Creek River – is just outside of the town of Upperville, a close neighbor to historic Middleburg. The surrounding sites are of great interest and integral to the narrative of the novel.
 - c. **Supplementary focus: The Manassas battlefield.** There is an excellent museum offering interpretation of events of this famous battle area. The battle itself (referred to as the Battle of Bull Run in local history) is the first military engagement described in the novel, starting on page one with wounded soldiers on the front porch of Annie's house. This site is easily accessible and could be a valuable feature of the trip.

Recommended Route and Itinerary

Go west along **Route 50**, a road that was constantly used by Confederate and Union troops to travel to and from the Shenandoah Valley through the **Blue Ridge Mountains** via the **Ashby Gap**. Start at **Mt. Zion Church**, just east of Rt. 15 and 50, where **Mosby** attacked cavalry from New York and Massachusetts who were trying to track him. The church also served as a battlefield hospital and a place to imprison civilian supports of Mosby. Continue west to the historic mill in **Aldie**, where Mosby was almost ambushed, as described in the novel, but instead chased Federal troops, (some of whom tried to hide in the mill's flour barrels).

From Aldie, proceed into the scenic town of **Middleburg**, where markers describing cavalry battles and encampments can be easily found. Students can stand on the central crossroad in town and imagine Mosby on his horse, jeering at the Union troops pursuing him...or they can think of the wounded being brought into town from nearby battles. (*Also of interest:* From this vantage point, students can imagine seeing smoke rising throughout **Loudoun** and **Fauquier** counties as a result of "the burning." Fires from "the burning" were set when Union general **Sheridan** ordered 5,000 Federal cavalymen to torch barns, sheds, grain mills, and crops -- and to confiscate all horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and goats. The intent of this effort was to starve out Mosby and his men. It went on for five days and civilians in the area lost almost everything in the flames.)

Enjoy lunch in a local deli; visit the historic **Red Fox Tavern**. At the tavern, **Mosby** and **Jeb Stuart** met to discuss ways of stopping the cavalry of Union General Pleasanton from crossing Ashby's Gap, where they might discover **Robert E. Lee** and the Confederate army on its way to **Gettysburg**. (*Also of interest:* Later, Stuart's and Pleasanton's horsemen clashed for five days, charging and countercharging in the second largest cavalry battle in the western hemisphere. (**Brandy Station**, also described in *Annie, Between the States*, was the largest). Continue west, passing **Upperville** (near Annie's fictional home) where many safe houses used by Mosby's rangers still stand today. End at the little town of **Paris, Virginia**, a few minutes east of Ashby's Gap. Visit **Sky Meadows State Park** and **Mount Bleak House**, pictured on the cover of the novel, which was once owned by the uncle of Amanda "Tee" Edmonds. Edmonds kept a diary that provided the author with rich background details and inspiration for the character of Annie.

Links of interest to related websites follow:

A general website on Mosby:

<http://www.mosbyheritagearea.org/forteachers.htm>

See a suggested driving tour:

<http://www.mosbyheritagearea.org/SamplerTourSMALL.pdf>

A website for a Mosby museum in Warrenton, west of Manassas

<http://www.mosbymuseum.org/>

Another Mosby site of value to teachers and students is **Fairfax City**. It was here that Mosby kidnapped a federal general from his bed. **The Fairfax City Museum** provides extraordinary Civil War exhibits and information including **Antonia Ford**, another figure of inspiration for Annie. Also in Fairfax is the historic **Blenheim House**, recently opened to the public. Blenheim was occupied by Union troops during the war and still retains drawings and graffiti left by them on walls on two floors of the house

Visit the websites:

<http://www.fairfaxva.gov/MuseumVC/MVC.asp>

<http://www.fairfaxva.gov/MuseumVC/CivilWarInterpretiveCenter.asp>

If there is enough time (an overnight stay is recommended for out-of-state travelers) is **Richmond, Virginia**, about two hours to the south of the sites relevant to the novel. Students can visit the **Museum of the Confederacy** there.

Refer to the website:

<http://www.moc.org/site/PageServer>

Also, there is a battlefield museum in **Petersburg**, just south of Richmond.

Refer to the website:

<http://www.nps.gov/pete/>

“ANNIE, BETWEEN THE STATES”

Suggestions for Activities for Additional Lessons and Out-of-Class Assignments

Language Arts and English: Use these activities to create a unit for curriculum objectives including “elements of the novel” (development of setting, character, conflict, theme, tone, etc.), “rites of passage,” “coming of age,” and the “archetypal hero.” Use to promote critical reading skills, including analysis of character, plot, and theme development. These activities will also promote writing and oral language skills.

Use a graphic organizer to help students identify changes in setting (time and place), characters (physical description and internal conflict), conflicts (problems to be solved by protagonist and other characters), and themes (“lessons learned” by protagonist and other characters). Use individual desk work, pair work, group share among small groups, and independent work outside of class to complete the organizer chapter by chapter.

Write a reader-response log in which the student assumes the role of the protagonist or any main character and uses personal responses to describes events in the form of a diary, including dates, locations, characters, key events, both factual and fictional.

Create a reader-response scrapbook Similar to the “reader response log,” this would include illustrations, old photographs, maps, etc. .

Design and produce a wall display of a map depicting locations described in the novel, including a key which describes the most significant events, both historic and fictional.

Perform “storybook theater” presentations in which small groups are responsible for presenting the complete content of passages or whole chapters. Use independent work and class discussion to identify key “episodes” (involving major conflicts, including responses by the protagonist and other characters which represent “rites of passage” in the context of “coming of age”). Within groups, students self-select roles including director, narrator, characters, and special effects (for sounds or lighting). Students stage presentations in which all words in the selected text – narrative, dialog, and attribution -- are read aloud and the actions are dramatized.

Write a new scene for the novel in the style of the author. Select plot elements that are referred to but not described in detail by the author in the narrative, or ask students to imagine entirely new scenes.