

Naturalism Teaching Unit

ENG 335 Big Project Porfolio

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Introduction

For this project, I decided to create a teaching unit around Naturalism. My purpose in creating this unit was for my future use as a teacher. It is common for high school students to study American Literature during their junior year. If I become a high school teacher, it is possible that I may teach American Literature, and it will be nice to have this unit as part of my teaching arsenal.

The first section of this portfolio focuses on my research and justification for teaching Naturalism. The audience I imagined for my researched rationale is my potential future principal who might not know much about Naturalism.

The second section of this portfolio is the unit itself. Included are a background lesson, discussion questions, and the projects and tests. By having the unit planned out, I can take this unit straight into my future classroom.

The “Moving Box” of High School: The Benefit of Teaching American Naturalism in an English Classroom

For those who have made it through high school, it is a common knowledge that those four years of a person’s life are brutal and difficult. Not only does school put a lot of pressure on teenagers, but the entire environment of constant competition among peers is exhausting. The struggles that teenagers face in high school are quite similar to the tenants of Naturalism, a period of American Literature that focused on “the sordid, the unlovely” and the “unplumbed depths of the human heart” (Norris 57, 60). Naturalism focuses on the nitty-gritty, down and dirty parts of life that Realism tends to gloss over. By teaching Naturalism in an English classroom, the teacher will be relating the struggles of teenage life to the literature those students read. Teaching literature from Naturalism authors will help students be competitive in a learning environment, giving them a safe place to use their aggression and take risks in a healthy, creative way, while also making literature that may seem old and out-dated relatable.

Literature from the Naturalism genre focuses on man’s ability to conquer their environment and their success or failure in doing so. The Naturalism period closely coincides with the Realism period, as authors from both periods wrote roughly between 1865 and 1914. However, while Realist authors wrote about the human existence in its day-to-day, mundane activities, Naturalist authors tried to write about the human existence in its struggles and downfalls. These authors focused on “the physical in man’s nature and experience” (Pizer 100). Instead of ignoring the societal and biological struggles that men, and women, face, Naturalist authors faced those struggles head on. This idea of Naturalism came about because these authors started to see life as “a ‘moving box’ of economic and social deprivation” (106). As an example, in his novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane’s main character Henry Fleming compares being in the army to being in that “moving box” and that “it inclosed [sic] him. And there were iron laws of tradition and law on four sides” (Crane 49). This “moving box” is a metaphor for feeling completely governed by the laws and rules of life. Within the Environmental Naturalist writings, such as works by Jack London, the “moving box” that characters feel imprisoned in deals with the laws of Nature and the idea that a person’s surroundings, especially in the wild, untamed, parts of the world, eventually overtake that person because it is the law and way of life.

Ask any average teenager and they will most likely tell you that the “moving box” of Naturalism exists within the hallways of a high school; some may even go as far as to compare high school to the wild, untamed earth that London described in his stories. There are certain social laws and academic laws set forth in high school and a teenager’s popularity and academic success are determined by how well he or she fits under those laws. Rather than ignore this fact, teachers can benefit from using the Naturalistic side of adolescence within the English classroom by focusing on Naturalist texts. Not only will students be reading classic American texts, they will also be able to relate to the texts because they know all about living within the “moving box” typically nicknamed high school.

If teachers use the Naturalism section in a way that accesses both “book-learning” and “hands-on” experiences, students will feel as though their learning experience is not just academic based, but also gives them real world experience. Teaching the works of Jack London and Stephen Crane can give teachers the opportunity they need to bring real-world experiences into the classroom. Although some educators may argue that there is no need for

experiential learning in the classroom, students do need that experience in order to completely learn a concept. Psychologist Leonard Sax writes in his book *Boys Adrift* that students need both a *Kenntnis* side, or “knowledge about a person or a place that you’ve actually experienced,” and a *Wissenschaft* side, or “knowledge learned from books” (28). He says there needs to be “a balance between sitting and standing, a balance between classroom work and field trips” (32) because only having that *Wissenschaft* part of learning “may produce a syndrome analogous to the neglected child” (29). By not having those experiences, students are only learning the method behind the subject, and not the actual experience needed to use that fact based knowledge. Why teach only the text of Jack London’s “To Build a Fire” when teachers can use that story to actually teach students how to build a fire, or have them teach each other basic survival skills. Students may understand Henry Fleming’s feelings about army enlistment if they participate in a battle reenactment. Although some of these students may never actually need any of those skills or ever actually be in the military, they will remember those texts and the themes more when they have had that real-life experience. Giving students the opportunity to act rather than just memorize lets them have a more complete and enriching learning experience.

Teaching Naturalism in an English classroom will help teachers implement competition that some students, mostly boys, need in a learning environment. Looking at a Naturalist text, it is impossible to not see the importance that competition plays on those pages. Characters are constantly trying to outwit and out-best their environment, especially in those Environmental Naturalist texts. The competition between man and nature is prevalent throughout the entire story. This competition in the literature can be relatable to students, as they are living in a very competitive society and go to school in a competitive realm. Students are constantly compared against the each other in the classroom, and within their own social circles. Sax says, “Some kids—both boys and girls—thrive in a competitive atmosphere, even if they often lose. Others wilt and collapse, or withdraw, under the stress of competition” (42). Naturalist stories can help all of these students, because they will be able to see that competition in the stories. Knowing that this competition does exist, and not just in high school, could be comforting to those students who run away from competition, while being a confidence boost for those students who thrive in competition. For the classroom, teachers can use competition in a way that helps the overly competitive have their moment of glory, while helping the under-competitive gain a little bit of that competitive fire. The tricky part comes when trying to implement that competition. Sax says that in order for competition to be appealing to students, there needs to be clear winners or losers and the outcome has to be in doubt, “anybody might conceivably win and anybody might conceivably lose” (45). Teachers can make the activities be more competitive by offering a prize to the winners. Also, by putting students into groups carefully, having a good mix of the over and under competitive, the outcomes of the competition will be in doubt. Not only will students be reading about competition, but they will also have a *Kenntnis* learning experience as well.

When reading Naturalist texts, aggression comes dragging along beside competition. In Naturalist texts, aggression is very present; it is impossible to tell the story of the Civil War, a hunting trip, or a shipwreck without it. Authors of Naturalist texts did not shy away from their descriptions of these brutal events. This aggression, however, can be appealing to at least one gender in the classroom. In Sax’s *Why Gender Matters: What Parents and Teachers Need to Know about the Emerging Science of Sex Differences*, he says that it is pretty much fact that “girls and women relate to violence very differently than boys and men do” (58). Where boys usually run towards that violence, girls tend to run away from it, and pretty quickly as well. It is because of this fact that anything that could seem violent and aggressive in education is taken away. For instance, some schools have banned the playing of games like tag and dodge ball as they are seen as too violent. However, Sax says that taking away those activities could mean that those

students that play those games, most likely boys, will try to find other ways to get their fill of aggressive and violent activities, and it may be in unhealthy ways (64). He says that instead of ignoring boys and not accepting the differences between boys and girls, the differences between boys and girls “should be acknowledged, accepted, and exploited for educational purposes” (63). What better way to exploit that aggression than with the aggressive texts of Naturalism. By having a combination of creative and aggressive, competitive based activities to go along with the texts, teachers can feed to the preferences of both the girls and boys in their class. This will give the healthy environment needed for those aggressive beings, but will also give the creative atmosphere to the unaggressive.

The risks that characters in Naturalist stories face relate to the risks that high school students face every day. Those risks can range from the simplistic, whether or not to wear a certain shirt, to the potentially life changing, whether or not to join a new club. These two examples show the more positive risks that teenagers face, but teenagers also face some very negative and dangerous risks as well, such as drugs, alcohol, and sex. In the Naturalist stories, when characters take risks that are dangerous, it usually kills them, such as with the man in “To Build a Fire.” Seeing the dangerous side of risk-taking could help students see the potential consequences of their decisions. Sax explains that “Risky and dangerous activities trigger a ‘fight or flight’ response that gives a tingle, a charge, an excitement that many boys find irresistible” (42). The fight or flight response is prevalent in Naturalism, such as in Henry Fleming’s decision to fight or flee from the battles he faces in *The Red Badge of Courage*. When teenage students face a risk, they must also make a decision, whether to fight or flee, whether to join that new club, or stick to the regular routine, or whether to have unprotected sex, or decide to wait. Understanding risky behavior and seeing those consequences will be beneficial to those students and give them not only scholarly knowledge, but also useful real-world knowledge.

Teaching Naturalism in the English classroom gives teachers the opportunity to use literature with themes similar to the struggles that their adolescent students face every day within the four walls of the “moving box” of high school. By using the thematic parts of that literature and sculpting activities around that literature, teachers can make those classic stories interesting to their students, while also giving them a complete learning experience, bringing the real-world into the classroom, and making the real-world conquerable.

Works Cited

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Naturalism Texts

As I started my research for this project, I decided to focus my teaching unit specifically to the more environmental or “natural” side of Naturalism. I made this decision because I saw more opportunities for creative projects for my students, and I believe that they would enjoy this part of naturalism compared with the societal side.

When I researched environmental Naturalism, I found two authors that specifically wrote in this style. Therefore, the texts I have chosen are from these two authors, Jack London and Stephen Crane. My proposed plan for these texts is to have three short stories that we read every year, and have two novels set aside and switch which one we read year by year. Below are the short stories and novels I have picked out, their brief summaries and how each relates to Naturalism.

Short Stories:

Crane, Stephen. “The Open Boat.”

Four men are shipwrecked in a lifeboat. Each man has his role aboard the ship: The oiler, Billy, and the correspondent row the boat, the cook bails out the boat, while the injured captain supervises the men and keeps up morale. The men try to find a safe house on an island, but when they start to approach, they realize that it is abandoned. The men decide to stay at sea as long as they can before their boat capsizes. The oiler and correspondent continue to row, despite being exhausted. The captain decides the men should try to go to shore. They row towards the island until the boat capsizes, and then they start to swim. The men make it to the island, but in the process Billy dies. The island turns out not to be abandoned, and the people help the men.

Relates to Naturalism: This short story is about fighting the elements of Naturalism by accident. None of these men chose their environment.

London, Jack. “The Law of Life.”

Old Koskoosh is left behind when his tribe migrates. He is left behind because he is old and weak. Koskoosh decides that this is just a part of the Law of Life, that everything, even a person’s life, is determined by the natural elements. As he sits, Koskoosh remembers times when times were good and bad for his people. He also remembers a hunting trip in which he and Zing-ha went after a moose and almost captured it. Soon Koskoosh hears rustling and he sees the moose and its herd. The herd attacks Koskoosh and he dies.

Relates to Naturalism: This short story shows how indigenous people are dependent on Nature and how it shapes their lives.

London, Jack. "To Build a Fire."

A man and his dog travel through the Yukon in the wintertime. The man has knowledge of surviving within the terrain, but knows that one minor mistake could mean his life. He knows that fire is life in the freezing temperatures. When he falls through thin ice into the freezing water below, he must think quickly and to build a fire and thaw out. But in his hurry, he makes another minor mistake and his fire is put out by melting snow. The man is unable to build another fire, although he tries, and he ends up dying.

Relates to Naturalism: This short story shows how people may have to beat the elements of Naturalism by choice, and that choice can be deadly.

Novels:

Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage*.

Henry Fleming enlists to fight with the Union Army during the Civil War, despite his mother's warnings. At first, Henry's regiment does nothing but sit, waiting for their time to fight. Then his army gets a call to march towards battle. The men complain, saying that they would rather sit and wait for the battle instead of march. Henry eventually faces multiple battles. The first time, he fights, and he realizes that he is just a cog in the wheel and the regiment are individually like animals. The second time he fights, he runs away from the battle. As he walks back to his regiment, he runs into Jim Conklin, a friend who has been badly injured. He stays with Jim until the injured soldier dies. Henry then runs into a tattered soldier who asks Henry where his injuries are. Henry feels guilty and he leaves that soldier to die alone. Henry returns to the regiment and decides to stay and fight the next time. He does fight with the regiment, but they are told by the officers that they did not fight hard enough. Henry and his friend Wilson resolve to fight even harder during the next battle. During that next battle, they see the color guard get hit, and they argue and fight over who should get to be the next color guard. Henry wins, and he finds the chance to prove his bravery by being the new flag bearer.

Relates to Naturalism: This story not only gives instances of social Naturalism, but there are elements of environmental Naturalism as well. Henry finds that the woods fight against him when he runs away. Also, throughout the novel, the soldiers are constantly compared to animals and are described in animalistic ways.

London, Jack. *The Call of the Wild*.

*I have not had the chance to read this novel yet, but I wanted to include it as another possible text to be used.

Proposed Calendar

The following is a proposed calendar for the Naturalism Unit. Discussion questions and explanations for assignments and projects will be given in later sections.

Day One: Background Lecture

-The "Naturalism Background" lesson plan has been designed to start off the unit. This background lecture will help students better understand and interpret the texts we will read.

Day Two: *The Law of Life*

-A short presentation/biography will be given on Jack London (provided in "Tests and Projects")

-Read and discuss Jack London's short story *The Law of Life*. I am starting this unit with this story because the "Law of Life" in the story fits with the characteristics of Naturalism I have given in my background lecture. This text will be a good introduction to the other Naturalism texts.

Assigned Homework: Read *To Build a Fire*.

Day Three: *To Build a Fire*

-A reading quiz will be given at the beginning of class to make sure students read the story.

-If needed, finish up "Law" discussion.

-Discuss "To Build a Fire" with given questions.

-Introduce project: Survival Guides

Days Four-Five: Research Days

-These days will give students an opportunity to research information for their Survival Guide project.

Day Six-Seven: Class work time/Group Presentation Preparation

-Give students time to work in their groups on creating their survival guides. Provide some materials, but if students want something other than what you have, they will need to bring it to class.

-Students will also need to discuss how they want to present their survival skill demonstrations.

-If students finish within a short amount of time, be prepared to lead off presentations early with your demonstration.

Days Eight-Ten: Presentation Days

-Students will present their survival guides and survival skills demonstration.

Assigned Homework (Day 10): Read sections I-IV of Stephen Crane's *The Open Boat*.

Day Eleven: *Open Boat* Day one

-Begin with reading quiz

-Short introduction/biography of Stephen Crane.

-Discuss with discussion questions.

Assigned Homework: Finish reading *The Open Boat*.

Day Twelve: *Open Boat* Day two

- Begin with reading quiz
- Finish discussion of *Open Boat*.
- Rowing activity.

Days Thirteen-Eighteen: Read either *The Red Badge of Courage* or *The Call of the Wild*

- Alternate the novels every couple of years to ensure that students aren't copying from friends or family members.
- Begin each day with a reading quiz.
- Each class will have some discussion about the book so far.

Assigned Homework: Decide how to split up the novels for assigned reading. On Day 15, assign the final exam for the Naturalism section.

Day Nineteen: Final Activity Day for Novel

- For *The Red Badge of Courage*, "protect the flag" game.
- Activities for *Call of the Wild* can be created after novel is read.

Day Twenty (possibly day one of another unit): Final Exam Due

Naturalism Background Lesson Plan and Slide Show

**This section will more than likely follow a Realism unit, and some questions may relate back to that previous knowledge and show the relation to Naturalism.*

Attention Getter:

-Begin lecture with *Man vs. Wild* clip. This clip is like naturalism for our day, and this will get students to wonder what we will be doing for the rest of the unit by using a television show they may be familiar with.

Bulk of the Lesson:

-Use attached power point to lecture about Naturalism. Below are following notes and questions to ask for each slide.

Slide 3: Naturalism, the new Realism?

-Ask students what characteristics they remember about Realism. Some possible answers may be the everyday life of the typical American, mundane and hard parts of life, etc.

-Explain to students that Naturalism builds on these characteristics. Following the Frank Norris quote tell students that Naturalism goes more into the emotions and human behavior that Realism barely reached, that while realism focused on the mundane parts of life, naturalism focused on the tragedies of mundane life.

Slide 4: "Survival of the Fittest"

-To gauge the level of previous knowledge, ask what they know about Darwin's ideas of natural selection and survival of the fittest. Possible answers: some species are more powerful than others and have a better chance of survival. Read the quote by Charles Darwin. Tell students that Naturalists used some of these ideas in their literature, as it related to society and human beings. For example, those in the working and lower classes were at a disadvantage because they had been "naturally selected" and were less likely to survive the struggles of life than those in the upper and middle classes.

Slide 5: Characteristics of Naturalism

-Tell students that the basic premise of Naturalistic literature is seeing how people behave and react in social and natural environments. These behaviors can be determined by biology (fight or flight response, age, gender), economics (class system: upper, middle and lower), and the environment (battling against hard terrains, rural or urban).

-Another premise focuses on characters' extreme emotions, their response to these forces. In Realism, we got very little emotion, where in Naturalism the description of these real, raw emotions almost makes you feel them as well.

-Nature works against the individual. In other words, while the characters try to overcome the environment surrounding them, that environment is overcoming them.

-This last idea and the previous one tie together, because with this idea that Nature is overpowering the characters, it means that their will is subject to that environment. Their lives are determined because of the environment, social or natural, and it usually comes out on top.

Slide #6 and 7: Social Naturalism

*Even though this unit focuses mainly on Environmental Naturalism, a basic knowledge of Social Naturalism should be given, especially because *The Red Badge of Courage* has both social and environmental Naturalism.

-Social Naturalism focuses on characters' struggles in social situations, "natural selection" as it occurs in the "urban jungle." These struggles include the working class situations (factories, bread lines), differences in classes, and the effects of the economy.

-Show students the two pictures on slide #7. The one on the left is a picture of a bread line in New York City. The second is the cover for Stephen Crane's novel *Maggie*. Explain how both of these pictures show the struggles of the working class (economy leads to the need for government support for food, girls led into prostitution to earn money).

Slide #8-9: Environmental Naturalism

-Tell students the clip that was shown at the beginning of the lecture is an example of Environmental Naturalism: survival against the natural elements, where social naturalism focuses on urban settings, environmental naturalism focuses on survival in the wild, untamed parts of the world.

-Characters in these stories are put into hostile situations in nature, and they have to try and survive the forces acting against them.

-Show the picture "The Gulf Storm." Ask students what elements of Naturalism we've talked about so far they can see in the painting (the sharks circling the boat, the waves tipping the boat, the stormy clouds, etc.).

Wrap-up:

-Tell students that we will be focusing on the Environmental Naturalism section for the unit. Just as we used the clip of *Man vs. Wild* as an example, ask students if they can think of any examples from television, movies, or books of Environmental Naturalism (i.e. *Survivor*, *Hatchet*, *The Hunger Games*, *27 hours*, *The Office* "Survivorman" episode is a satirical version of Naturalism).

Naturalism

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrTNjgMWdMM&feature=channel_video_title

Naturalism, the new Realism?

- Naturalist writers were considered to be the “new realists” (Belasco and Johnson 39).
- Author Frank Norris said Realism fiction “confines itself to the types of normal life” and Naturalism is about “the sordid, the unlovely” (57).
 - Realism = mundane, everyday life
 - Naturalism = the tragedy of mundane life

“Survival of the Fittest”

- Naturalist authors based some of their stories from ideas of Charles Darwin.
 - “As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be *naturally selected*” (Darwin 5).

Characteristics of Naturalism

- Naturalists focused on their characters’ reactions in social and natural settings.
 - biological forces
 - economic forces
 - environmental forces
- “The Brute Within”: focused on the powerful emotions within a person
- Nature works against an individual
- Lack of free will (Campbell p. 11-12, 14)

Social Naturalism

- In these literary texts, a character’s struggle with society is shown.
 - Life in the “Urban Jungle”: factories, upper –class society, changing economy.

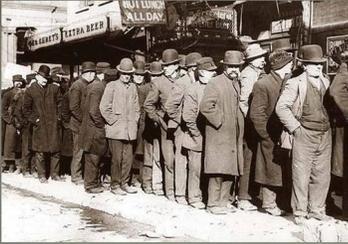


Image source: www.ephemeralnewyork.wordpress.com

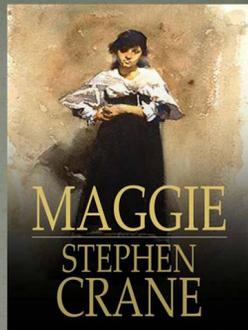


Image source: www.waterstones.com

Environmental Naturalism

- Authors who wrote these texts focused on their characters' struggle against the environment and human nature itself.
- Ultimate Survival Stories: show characters battling against natural elements and hostile settings.



Image source: www.metmuseum.org

"The Gulf Stream" by Winslow Homer (1899).

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- Belasco, Susan and Linck Johnson. *The Bedford Anthology of American Literature*. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2008.
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Author Biography Slide Shows

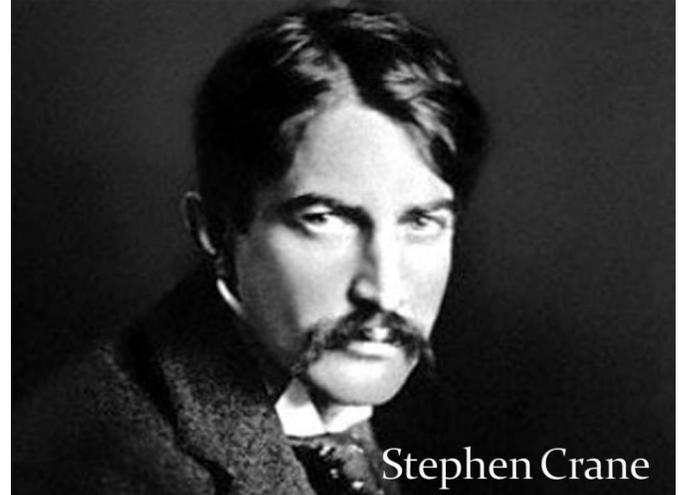


Jack London

- Born John Griffith Chaney in San Francisco in 1876.
- Father was possibly a spiritualist named "Professor" William H. Chaney. Denied that John was his son.
- Mother married Civil War veteran John London, and Jack was renamed John Griffith London.
- Family moved around before settling in Oakland.
- Held numerous jobs as a young boy. With the money he earned, he taught himself how to sell. After finishing the eighth grade he bought a small boat. At seventeen he joined a seal hunting crew for seven months.
- Part of social protestation groups during the depression of 1893. He joined the Socialist Labor Party in 1896.
- Went to Alaska in 1897 during the gold rush to the Klondike.
- First collection of stories, *The Son of the Wolf*, was published in 1900. He soon became one of the highest paid authors in the United States.
- Died in 1916 from renal failure.

Works Cited

- Belasco, Susan and Linck Johnson.
The Bedford Anthology of American Literature.
Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2008.
- Image Source: www.getyourwordsworth.com



Stephen Crane

- Born in Newark, New Jersey, the fourteenth child of Reverend Dr. Jonathan Townley Crane and Mary Helen Peck.
- Family moved around following father's work with the Methodist church. His family settled in Asbury Park, New Jersey after his father died in 1880.
- At the age of 16, began work as a copy boy at his brother's news office.
- Attended the Hudson River Institute and Claverack College, Lafayette College and Syracuse University.
- Contributed to the student paper at Syracuse and as a local correspondent for the *New York Times*. He started writing *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.
- Paid for the publishing of *Maggie* in 1893. Was not as popular as his later works, such as *The Red Badge of Courage* and his poems and short stories.
- Became a war correspondent during the Spanish-American war. He survived a shipwreck which later became inspiration for his short story "The Open Boat"
- Died in 1900.

Works Cited

- Belasco, Susan and Linck Johnson.
The Bedford Anthology of American Literature.
Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2008.
- Image Source: www.poetryfoundation.org

Dicussion Questions

Jack London's "The Law of Life"

1. What is the "Law of Life"? How does it fit in with the characteristics of Naturalism?
2. How is the tribe dependant on nature?
3. Why does the tribe leave Koskoosh behind?
4. Why is the story of hunting the moose significant?

Jack London's "To Build a Fire"

1. Why is the man traveling alone in the Yukon?
2. Who are the boys he keeps referring to?
3. In Naturalist texts, humans are usually compared to animals. How does the man compare and contrast to his traveling companion, the dog?
4. Why are the man and the dog unnamed?

Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat"

1. How does the men's situation in this story compare to the other stories?
2. Why are the men so willing to follow the captain? What does that say about his personality?
3. What are the natural elements working against the men? Why are they dangerous?
4. If you were the captain, would you take the boat back out to sea like the men did, or would you try to swim to the shore with no sign of help?
5. What is the significance of the separation of sections IV and V? Why is it more immediate than the previous separations?
6. Why is the oiler seem to be more willing to row?
7. Why is it significant that the oiler is the only character with a name?
8. The experience in "The Open Boat" is based on an actual experience that Stephen Crane had. Do you think that having that first-hand experience adds more realism to the story?

Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

1. Is Henry's mother really unsympathetic to him going to war, or is she showing her emotions in a guarded way?
2. How is the setting of this novel, a battlefield, an example of both Social and Environmental Naturalism?
3. Why does Henry want to go to war? Are his reasonings altruistic or selfish?
4. What does Henry want to prove to himself?
5. What are Henry's ideas/viewpoints on war? How do they change throughout the novel?
6. How can you compare Henry's reactions to the fight vs. flight response? Darwin's Natural Selection?

7. Why is it significant that Henry compares himself to a squirrel?
8. What is a “red badge of courage”? Why does Henry want one?
9. Why does the tattered soldier irritate Henry? What does he represent?
10. What different animals are Henry and the regiment compared to? Is there a correlation between the event that the animals are related to?
11. Why do the men in the regiment get angry when their officers say they aren’t working hard enough? Why would the officers make those comments? Do you get motivated by negative feedback?
12. By being the new flag bearer, Henry feels as though he is finally able to be a war hero. Is this heroism compared to the other soldiers in the story (specifically those who died)?
13. Does Henry discard his original romantic viewpoints of war by the end of the novel, or is he still a bit deluded?
14. Imagine you were to enlist in the army today. Would your reactions to war be similar or different from Henry? Does age have something to do with those viewpoints?

Jack London’s *Call of the Wild*

*Discussion Questions can be created upon reading.

Projects and Tests

Reading Quiz for “The Law of Life”

1. Why is Old Koskoosh left behind?
2. What is the Law of life?
3. Who is the “craftiest of hunters”?
4. What animal do the hunters try to hunt down?
5. How does nature get the best of Koskoosh?

Reading Quiz for “To Build a Fire”

1. What is a *chechaquo*?
2. How cold is it at the beginning of the story?
3. How many fires does the man successfully build?
4. What is the man’s relationship like with the dog?
5. How does the man die?

Reading Quiz #1 for “The Open Boat”

1. Who all are on the boat, and what are their jobs/positions?
2. Which animal surrounds the boat and is described by the oiler as an “ugly brute”?
3. What happens when they make it to the house of refuge?
4. What is the oiler’s name?

Reading Quiz #2 for “The Open Boat”

1. What do the men in the boat decide to do when they find the house abandoned?
2. Why is it dangerous for the men to continue to be in the boat?
3. Who thinks they are going to drown?
4. Who dies?

Reading Quiz Questions for *Red Badge*

Who thinks the army is going to move?

Why does Henry want to fight in the war?

Who doesn’t like being moved, just to sit and do nothing?

What does Henry start to think about fighting and the army?

Does Henry fight in the first battle?

Does Henry fight in the second battle?

What is one animal that Henry is compared to?

How does Henry rationalize running away from the battle?

How does the landscape react towards Henry?

Why does Henry not want to talk to the tattered soldier?

What is a red badge of courage?

Why is Henry jealous of the dead soldiers?

How does Henry get accepted back into the regiment?

Who helps Henry when he returns to the regiment?

How does Henry fight in the next battle?

What are the officers’ reactions to the soldiers?

How do Henry and Wilson react to the officers’ statements?

Who starts to carry the flag after the color bearer dies?

How many prisoners are there?

What are Henry’s feelings about courage by the end of the novel?

Survivor Assignment:

This assignment will help bring healthy competition into the classroom. Divide class into groups of four. Each group will be given a different terrain/landscape. With this terrain, they will create and present a survival guide and demonstrate a survival skill relative to their terrain. After the presentations, the class will vote on which group's presentation was the best and they will be awarded the title of "Ultimate Survivor." It would also behoove the teacher to offer some sort of prize to go along with that title (extra credit, some sort of treat, maybe a trophy).

Part One: Survival Guides

1. Each group will be given class time for research and put together their guide. The possible terrains for the project are as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| -American Desert | -African Desert |
| -Rainforest/Jungle | -Mountains |
| -Swamp | -Coastal |
| -Tropical/Island | -Great Plains |
| -Grasslands (Africa) | |

2. The survival guides will have the following elements:

- How you got there (choice, accident, etc.)
- Snapshot of terrain
- Types of dangers (animals, plants, landscape dangers)
- Basics: Food, shelter, water, etc.
- Skills you might need specific to your terrain (treatment for snake bites, dust storms, etc.)

-As a group, students will write part a together. Each student in the group will then research one of the remaining parts. Students will then collaborate their research and design a survival skill.

Part Two: Survival Presentation and Skill Demonstration

1. Each group will present their survival guides and demonstrate and teach a survival skill to the class that is unique to their territory. Remind students to be extra creative in order to get their classmates vote for "Ultimate Survivor."

“Open Boat” rowing exercise:

1. For this activity, split the class into groups of four. Before class starts, have measured out on the classroom floor the space within a small boat. Have the students decide within their group who will have what position from the story (two rowers, a bailer, and the captain). Provide some oars and a bucket for each group.

-In each boat, have little scraps of blue paper or something similar for the bailer to take out of the boat; next to each “boat” have another little box for the bailer to transfer the papers to in order to keep the activity from getting messy. Go around the room and continue to put more paper into the boats.

-Have the rowers switch between each other every 5 minutes, and make sure they are constantly rowing during that time.

-Each captain will be the team leader and is responsible for making sure the other group members are on task and keeping up team morale.

2. Have this activity go for 15-30 minutes (possibly while reading passages of the story. Come together at the end and ask what they thought of the experience.

Red Badge activity:

-For a final activity, and depending on what time of the year the story is read, have the students make flour bombs and reenact a battle from the story. Have someone be the flag bearer for both sides, and each side needs to protect their flag bearer. Other possible mediums, water balloons or dodge balls.

Final Exam:

-Instead of a test, students will be asked to write a two-three page response to one of the following two questions:

-Where have you seen elements of Naturalism in your own life (books, movies, school, etc.)

-If you knew you were going out on an expedition, what are five things that you would make sure to take with you?

THE "ULTIMATE"



It's time to decide who in our class would be ultimate survivors when forced to battle against the natural elements. In groups of four, you will be assigned to research a terrain. Your task: figure out the best way for your group to survive this terrain. After each group has presented their survival methods, we will vote as a class to determine which group are the ultimate survivors. Not only will you win bragging rights, but you will also win a special prize. Be creative, have fun and good luck!

PART ONE: SURVIVAL GUIDES

As a group, you will create a survival guide (think Survival 101 or Survival for Dummies). Feel free to add any elements to your guide other than what is in the required list below.

1. The first thing you need to write as a group is a story of how you arrived at your terrain. Maybe it is a class field trip, you were traveling and there was an accident, etc. Write the events that led to you being in your assigned terrain.
2. Next are the parts that must be researched for your survival guide. You must incorporate each of the following into your group's survival guide:

- Snapshot of terrain, what is the landscape like
- Types of dangers (animals, plants, landscape dangers)
- Basics: Food, shelter, water, etc.
- Skills you might need specific to your terrain (treatment for snake bites, dust storms, etc.)

Below are some websites to help you start your research. Don't forget to cite your sources.

- Wilderness Survival: <http://www.wilderness-survival.net>
- Discovery Survival Zone: <http://dsc.discovery.com/survival/>
- Survival Topics: <http://www.survivaltopics.com/survival/the-5-basic-survival-skills>

PART TWO: SURVIVAL SKILLS

1. As a group, come up with one survival skill specific to your terrain that you would like to teach to the class. Prepare as a group to teach that skill with your final presentation. Let me know before hand if you need any specific materials, or if there are any potential hazards to your skill that would prevent us from learning indoors.