

LATINO AMERICANS

500 YEARS OF HISTORY

St. Thomas University Library & John C. Favalora Archive and Museum

Lesson Plans for Language Arts / Creative Writing

Lesson Overview:

Exploring images from the exhibits *La Virgen de la Caridad: Images from the Diaspora*, *Latino Americans: Cuban Experiences in Miami* and *Miami: A Multicultural Hispanic Community*, this lesson encourages students to explore a historical black-and-white photograph as a foundation for writing a short work of historical fiction. Specifically, students will engage the elements of the photograph for creation of characters, plot, conflict, setting, and theme.

Grades: 7-12 (Content maybe adapted for grades 4-6)

Materials:

1. Access to the St. Thomas University Library and John C. Favalora Archive & Museum exhibits, *Latino Americans: Cuban Experiences in Miami*, and *Miami: A Multicultural Hispanic Community*, either by field trip or Internet access.
2. Access to online research databases from the University Library: Access World News, ProQuest Central, Academic Search Premier, Britannica Online, New York Times, and the Latin American & Caribbean Search Portal as well as access to the digital copies of *The Voice* and *La Voz*.
3. Video clips from *Latino Americans: 500 Years of History*.

Lesson Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate the use of characters, plot, conflict, setting, and theme in a short work of historical fiction.
2. Students will engage in secondary research using online research databases and historical newspapers to make their short stories historically accurate.

3. Students will use correct American English grammar, spelling, and punctuation in their short stories.

Lesson Procedures:

Foundational Activity: Introduce students to the genre of historical fiction. Have a discussion about historical fiction. Ask the students to make a list of how historical fiction is different than another genre of fiction, such as science fiction. In what ways is writing historical fiction harder than the other genre? In what ways is it easier? Have the students identify the five major elements of a story: characters, plot, conflict, setting, and theme.

Activity Two: Show the students the exhibits *La Virgen de la Caridad: Images from the Diaspora*, *Latino Americans: Cuban Experiences in Miami*, and *Miami: A Multicultural Hispanic Community*. Have each student select one photograph as the basis for their short work of historical fiction. Ask them to share which photograph they have selected and explain why it was chosen. Identify people in the photograph as possible characters. Ask students to describe the setting in the photograph, and ask them to come up with ideas for a conflict, plot, and theme for a story.

Activity Three: Explain to the students the importance of historical detail in historical fiction. Discuss how to use sources to give works of historical fiction strong, accurate historical details. Demonstrate how to login to and conduct research in the databases Access World News, ProQuest Central, Academic Search Premier, Britannica Online, New York Times, and the Latin American & Caribbean Search Portal, accessible on the University Library website: <http://web.stu.edu/AZ/tabid/3721/Default.aspx> . Student will need their student IDs and passwords from St. Thomas University. Demonstrate how to access freely available digital copies of *The Voice* and *La Voz*: <http://library.stu.edu/ulma/va/3005/> and <http://library.stu.edu/ulma/va/3004/>.

Activity Four: Discuss the entire writing process with the students: pre-writing, drafting, editing and revising, and publishing. When the works of historical fiction are due, allow time for the students to share their work with their selected photographs.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did writing a work of historical fiction impact the creative writing process?
2. Did you feel constrained by the need to make your work historically accurate?
3. Did you find that researching your topic and working from a single photograph fueled your creativity by giving you ample material to work from?
4. Has the experience inspired you to read historical fiction or experiment further with writing historical fiction?

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