

# HUMANITAS INTERDISCIPLINARY THEMATIC UNIT

School: El Camino Real High School

Grade: 10th

Team Members:

Heidi Crocker

Devon Knadle

Melinda Owen

Dean Sodek

Crocker/Owen

Subjects:

English

World History

English

Biology

Art

## THEME/OUTCOMES

Unit Theme: The Courage of Our Convictions: Challenging the Status Quo for Change

**Rationale:** Great transformations in society are often the result of a single voice that challenges our way of thinking. This unit focuses on the ways in which personal transformations, social changes, and scientific revolutions have been brought about by unlikely individuals, through great risk and sacrifice, because of the clarity of their convictions.

**Outcomes for Students:** Through the culminating essay, students will be able to compare works of fiction and non-fiction to examine how subtle personal or great societal transformations are initiated through singular acts of conviction. Students read through Einstein's letter to President Roosevelt to analyze different points of view regarding the development and deployment of the atomic bomb. Students examine the arguments and evidence that Rachel Carson uses to demonstrate how the indiscriminate spraying of pesticides threatens the health of ecosystems. Students detail ways in which art can challenge our way of thinking.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the nature of racism and why does it persist?
- What are the most effective means for countering injustice?
- How has the way a war is conducted changed since the development of nuclear weaponry?
- What compelled Einstein to write his letters to President Roosevelt? Did he feel he made a mistake by doing so?
- How did Rachel Carson's writings forever change the way we view our role in nature?
- What is the role of the artist in society? Give example of art that challenges the status quo.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ESSAY PROMPT

Just as the ancient Chinese proverb teaches that every long journey begins with a single step, great changes in society often start with a single voice that challenges our way of thinking. In an essay, explain how individuals have taken a stand to challenge the status quo in the areas of science, politics, and literature. Why was each person compelled to take action? What risk or sacrifice was involved? What changes resulted from their respective actions? Finally, discuss an opportunity that you have had, or hope to have, to create change in the people or world around you.

*Shared instructional strategies (Cornell Notes, Cooperative grouping, Shared Inquiry, graphic organizers)*

Name: Heidi Crocker & Melinda Owen Subject: English

Focus Standards:

3.12: Analyze how a work of literature is related to the themes of its historical time period.

3.7 Recognize and understand the significance of literary devices.

3.4 Determine characters' traits by what the characters say in narration, dialogue, dramatic monologue, and soliloquy.

(One to two primary standards per subject area. Write abbreviated standard after number.)

Materials:

Readings:

- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- *Letter From Alabama Clergymen*
- *Letter From Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Miscellaneous:

- Chart Paper
- Markers

Various Art Supplies

- Canvas
- Watercolor, acrylic paints
- Pastels
- Watercolor, pastel paper

Activities:

- Using T-charts on poster paper, students find examples of significant characters and explain character traits.
- Using T-charts on poster paper, students identify examples of literary devices and explain their effects.
- Pre-writing, journaling, drafting, and outlining for essay prompt.
- Students will be producing their own work of fine art (w/ accompanying commentary) that tackles a contemporary issue.

The Humanities Connection...

In society, people often have difficulty taking a stand against a perceived injustice for fear of ridicule or reprisal. The English readings emphasize the clarity that some individuals possess during difficult circumstances, and the efforts they take to bring about change in the people around them. Students will also identify examples of hypocrisy and racism in writings of the Civil Rights Era South.

*Civil Rights Era photographs are analyzed as well as works of art that have challenged the status quo*

Name: Devon Knadle Subject: World History

Focus Standards:

10.8 Students analyze the causes and consequences of WWII.

10.9 Students analyze the international developments in the post-WWII world. Include a focus on Japan and how the A-Bomb led to the "Cold War" era.

(One to two primary standards per subject area. Write abbreviated standard after number.)

Materials:

Readings:

Albert Einstein's letters to President Franklin D. Roosevelt

Various Art Supplies

- Canvas
- Watercolor, acrylic paints
- Pastels
- Watercolor, pastel paper

WWII Photograph PowerPoint

Activities:

- Students create a visual depiction of the effects of atomic weaponry and warfare. Projects will serve as commentary on the development, deployment, and consequences of nuclear weaponry.
- Students write a one-page essay taking a position that advocates or discourages the deployment of the first atomic bomb.
- Students will be producing their own work of fine art (w/ accompanying commentary) that tackles a contemporary issue.

The Humanities Connection...

Students will analyze the work of contemporary artists and determine how each work of art is challenging the status quo on specific issues. The work of Sue Coe, will be emphasized.

Students will be producing their own work of fine art (w/ accompanying commentary) that tackles a contemporary issue.

*WWII Era photographs are incorporated into class discussion to illustrate concepts discussed in class.*

Name: Dean Sodek Subject: Biology

Focus Standards:

6B. Students know how to analyze changes in an ecosystem resulting from changes human activity or changes in population size.

6E. Students know a vital part of an ecosystem is the stability of its producers and decomposers.

(One to two primary standards per subject area. Write abbreviated standard after number.)

Materials:

Readings:

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson

Various Art Supplies

- Canvas
- Watercolor, acrylic paints
- Pastels
- Watercolor, pastel paper

Trophic Level Activity:

- Plastic Cups (4 per group)
- 4 buckets (for water)

Video:

*Rachel Carson's Silent Spring*  
(American Experience)

Activities:

- Students draw, color, and label food chain and food web diagrams from a list of organisms they create on a nature walk.
- Students complete lab activity relay races transporting water with leaking cups to simulate the loss of energy across trophic levels.
- Create argument sheets for each chapter of *Silent Spring* to analyze the arguments Rachel Carson develops and the evidence she uses to support her assertions.
- Students will be producing their own work of fine art (w/ accompanying commentary) that tackles a contemporary issue.

The Humanities Connection...

Rachel Carson's writing inspired a paradigm shift that changed the way we view our role in nature. Her writing emphasized the connectedness of all living things and how the careless use of powerful chemicals was wreaking havoc upon nature that could not easily be undone.

*Audubon bird prints, nature photography, and wildlife paintings are examined for perspectives on nature. The work of Sue Coe will be analyzed as art that challenges the status quo with regard to animal rights.*

Name: Crocker/Owen/Knadle/Sodek Subject: Art

Focus Standards:

Analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures.

(One to two primary standards per subject area. Write abbreviated standard after number.)

Materials:

Art Slides

Various Art Supplies

- Canvas
- Watercolor, acrylic paints
- Pastels
- Watercolor, pastel paper

Activities:

**Fine art Project:** Students will be producing their own work of fine art (w/ accompanying commentary) that tackles a contemporary issue.

**Reflection Papers:** Students will write reflection papers based their choice of the following:

- *Guernica* by Picasso
- *Massacre in Korea* by Picasso
- *Third of May, 1808*, by Goya
- *For Slaughter* by Sue Coe
- *Man Followed the Ghosts of His Meat* by Sue Coe

The Humanities Connection...

Students will analyze the work of contemporary artists and determine how each work of art is challenging the status quo on specific issues. The work of Picasso and Sue Coe will be emphasized.

Students will be producing their own work of fine art (w/ accompanying commentary) that tackles a contemporary issue.