

The Chrysalids:

Setting and Apocalypse

Summary This lesson examines the impact that setting and the way setting is represented in creating dystopian and post-apocalyptic literature/cultural products. By using multiple media types, we will draw parallels and come to better understand generic conventions.

Objectives Students should leave the lesson with a greater appreciation for the generic conventions of post-apocalyptic/dystopian literature and film. They should be able to mobilize these strategies in creative writing.

Outcomes Met *SCOs*

- 7.2: Recognize how artful language and structures of genre and text can influence the reader or viewer
- 7.5: Analyze the merits of language, ideas, and other characteristics of texts and genres
- 8.1: Use writing and other ways of representing to: explore, interpret, and reflect on their own experiences with a range of texts and issues; monitor their language and learning processes and strategies; record and assess their language and learning achievements; express their feelings, and reflect on experiences that have shaped their ideas, values, and attitudes
- 8.3: Make informed choices of language and techniques to enhance imaginative writing and other ways of representing
- 9.2: Create coherent structures in writing and media production: make informed choices of form, style, and content for audience and purposes; use effective strategies to engage the reader or viewer
- 10.4: Demonstrate a commitment to crafting a range of writing and other representations

Materials DVD player, computer, projector, Netflix.

Pre-Work

- Cue up videos
- Select sections to read from multiple dystopian/post-apocalyptic texts

Plan

Warm-Up (0.25 classes) 1. Writing Prompt: *How is setting related to tone across texts? What are the specific implications for speculative (and especially post-apocalyptic/dystopian literature/film)? In other words, is setting essential to post-apocalyptic/dystopian literature or could the same stories take place elsewhere or be accessed in different ways?*

Main Act (0.5 classes) 1. Show the first clip from *The Walking Dead* (Season One, Episode One -- from beginning to opening credits -- 4:30). Discuss the setting, how tone is generated, if the setting plants the seeds for thematic development. Then switch to the opening to *The Road* (first three minutes). How is this different? What similarities can we notice? (There’s a similar silence in the desolate landscape; we get a sense of how things used to be... Immediate sympathy is generated for each lead character).
2. Read the introduction of “The Hunger Games” (p. 3-6). Have students analyze setting again. How does Collins construct a sense of space? How does she make us feel about Katniss right away? Compare this to the first five minutes of the film version. How do these differ? Do we get a better sense of setting in the film or the book?

Conclusion (0.25 class) 1. Have students generate a list of important traits shared by “The Hunger Games,” *The Walking Dead*, and *The Road*.
2. *Writing Prompt:* Pick one of the following words and generate a piece of flash fiction (dystopian/post-apocalyptic ... can use a pre-existing universe such as *The Walking Dead* or *The Hunger Games* or *1984*) that uses setting to create empathy/affiliation based on the word:
Isolation, destruction, control, loss, fear, pain

Assessment Informal. Monitor student engagement and how they translate discussion to creative writing. Collect creative writing pieces at the end of the class to give feedback on.

Adaptations None.

Extensions Students will work on flash fiction if lesson runs short.

Research/ Resources *Bridging English*. p. 131.
The Walking Dead. Season One, Episode One. Netflix.
The Road. Netflix.
The Hunger Games. Print.
--. Netflix.