

The Chrysalids:

Introduction

Summary	This lesson introduces students to science fiction and dystopian/post-apocalyptic literature. In addition, it ensures that we all start on the same page: we will review important terms and concepts, and review what the unit will look like (its assessment as well).
Objectives	Students will leave this lesson with an understanding of what they expect a speculative novel to look like. They will make predictions about <i>The Chrysalids</i> based on the cover(s), a description of the novel, and what they know about the premise.
Outcomes Met	<i>SCOs</i> 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 7.7: Explore ways texts reveal and produce ideologies, identities, and positions
Materials	Bring in all dystopian/post-apocalyptic books from home for manipulative purposes. Covers can be examined, etc.
Pre-Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Have definitions of terms from <i>After</i> ready <input type="checkbox"/> IPP prep <input type="checkbox"/> Make PPT on Wyndham/the Cold War
Plan	
Warm-Up (0.5 classes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Put the terms “dystopian” and “post-apocalyptic” on the board. Have students brainstorm words linked to either term, novels/television series/movies that may be either dystopian or post-apocalyptic.2. Using student-generated terms, create a definition. Put up the definition from the foreword to <i>After</i>. Why do they think this type of literature is so popular right now? What is the point of writing speculative fiction?

3. Break students into groups. Each group will be assigned a dystopian/apocalyptic novel/movie to look up on their phones or on the computers. They will briefly describe the text to their classmates *as well as* explaining the historical period and/or the message (Wikipedia should help them here). Good examples include: *The Hunger Games*, *The Walking Dead*, *1984*, *Brave New World*, *Resident Evil* series, *The Matrix*, *Portal* series, *Fallout* series, *Bioshock*. Why was this novel written/movie or game created/? What is its purpose? What is its central anxiety?

Main Act
(1 classes)

1. **Info-dump:** John Wyndham and the Cold War; tensions of the time, Wyndham's contemporaries. (See PPT for more)
2. **Writing Prompt:** There is a global nuclear war. Vast stretches of land are left blackened and lifeless; cities are hollowed husks, empty except for the irradiated creatures that crawl through abandoned buildings. In remote areas, small communities survive, but each day is a battle for life. There is no electricity. You find one of these communities two hundred years after the fall-out. What are the cultural guidelines? How has surviving a disaster changed this group of people? Explain as though to someone from the pre-war past what this new world is like. Think of *The Hunger Games* or *The Walking Dead* for help, if needed.
3. Once students have completed their predictions, put several covers for *The Chrysalids* up on the board. Have students think about their writing prompt responses in relation to the name of the novel, its description, and the cover. They can write an additional paragraph detailing how (and if) their perceptions have changed.
4. Why do they think *The Chrysalids* was written? What will its message be?

Conclusion
(0.5 class)

1. Hand out the portfolio description. Write the timeline on the board for discussion. Is this reasonable? Is the test at a good time for them? *Remind students that they will need to keep everything they complete (writing prompts, etc.) for their reflective portfolio.*
2. Assign students to their reading groups (if this isn't done already). Ensure each group has a hand-out.

Assessment

Informal assessment: Students will generate ideas in small groups and student engagement can be monitored in this way. Students will also respond to writing prompts and will be encouraged to draw connections between the novel and other cultural products. Everything students produce will be moving toward the reflective portfolio.

Adaptations

For IPP: Student will be placed in a group with academically strong peers, as per program-planning. She will also be given a different hand-out for the writing prompt (see attached document) that utilizes the POW+WWW strategy. She will be asked verbally and individually about how her perceptions have changed by viewing the covers.

Extensions

If the lesson wraps up early, we can begin reading aloud.

**Research/
Resources**

“Introduction.” Terri Windling and Ellen Datlow. *After: Nineteen Stories of Apocalypse and Dystopia*. New York: Hyperion, 2012. ix-xi.

Writing Prompt: Lesson One

There is a global nuclear war. All the cities you know are destroyed. Farm lands are burnt. The only animals that live in the forests have mutated beyond recognition. In remote areas, small communities survive, but each day is a battle for life. There is no electricity. **Imagine that two-hundred years have passed and a small group of people have survived.** What are the rules for living there? How are these people different than people today?

Respond to this prompt by **imagining a character in this setting and thinking of a story.** You don't need to write this today, but you will eventually make the ideas you list below a piece of postcard fiction (a story short enough to fit on a postcard -- it only needs to be a few sentences!).

You can write from the perspective of someone from today (all of the things they miss, how nothing is the same) or from the perspective of someone who lives in the small village (what life is like, how they survive).

Pick your idea (what are things like after nuclear war? how have people changed?):

Organize your notes:

Now	In the Future

Say more:

Who is the main character?

When does the story take place?

What does the main character do?

What happens then?

How does the story end?

How does the main character feel?
