**Animal Farm: The Power of Propaganda**

**Unit Title:** Animal Farm: Literacy is Power

**Subject/Topic Areas:** Animal Farm by George Orwell

**Key Words:** literacy, propaganda, utopia, dystopia, Russian Revolution, allegory, symbolism, rhetoric

**Time Frame:** 3 weeks

**Unit Summary:** Students will explore essential questions related to literacy, power and democracy while reading George Orwell’s allegorical novel *Animal Farm.*  Though writing and reading standards for both fictional and informational texts are covered, this unit primarily focuses on speaking and listening standards. Students will practice their discussion techniques using a variety of strategies and then demonstrate those skills at the end of the unit during the culminating Socratic Seminar. During this unit, students will also find and analyze examples of propaganda, participate in a utopia-creating activity, learn key terms related to the topic, and use assigned strategies to guide their independent reading of the novel and current articles relating to its themes.

**Stage 1: Identify Desired Results:**

**Common Core Standards:**

**RL 1.** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**RL 6.** Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g. satire, sarcasm, irony or understatement)

**RI 1.** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**RI 7.** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem

**W 7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**W 10.** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**SL 1**. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

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| **What essential questions will be considered?** | **What understandings are desired?** |
| * What is literacy? * What is the relationship between literacy and power? * Is it possible to have democracy if all constituents do not have access to education? * What is power? * How do some gain power over others? What enables them to succeed? * What is the relationship between propaganda and power? * Why does propaganda work? * Is Animal Farm a relevant novel for the 21st century reader? * Are utopias possible? | *Students will understand that…*   * Illiteracy makes people vulnerable to propaganda and corruption * Education is a necessity in a democratic society * Propaganda is dangerous; and those who have not been taught to recognize it are more vulnerable to its power * Language has power * Orwell’s allegory specifically targets the Russian Revolution, but its themes are more universal than any specific event from any specific time period |

**What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?**

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| **Students will know…** | **Students will be able to…** |
| * The definition of allegory * Key terms of the unit * Recognize the importance of education in a democratic society | * Recognize and analyze the use of propaganda in Orwell’s novel and other sources * Use textual evidence from fictional and informational text to express their viewpoints in a discussion with their peers * Use strategies to read informational and fictional texts * Communicate their views in a responsive, respectful discussion * Reflect on their performance in discussion |

**Stage 2 – Determine Acceptable Evidence**

**What evidence will show that students understand?**

**Performance Tasks:**

Students will plan, prepare, engage in, give and receive feedback for and write a reflection of their performance in a Socratic Seminar about the essential questions

**What other evidence needs to be collected in light of Stage 1 Desired Results?**

**Other evidence**

**Written Response:** Students maintain a daily reading log

**Quiz:** Daily reading log checks and discussion preparation

**Construction of Questions:**

Students will write different level questions to bring to small group discussion

**Propaganda Analysis – Google Doc:**

Students will find examples of propaganda and add the evidence and links to a Google Doc set up for the class. The student will define the type of propaganda and explain how it fits the definition.

In pairs, students will examine the propaganda used in the national anthems in Animal Farm. They will then look at national anthems used in other countries. They will write a brief summary of their findings, using textual evidence from the anthems.

**Notetaking on Informational Texts:** Students will read informational texts – articles about the connection between literacy and democracy – annotating and taking notes on the author’s stance on the topic as preparation for the Socratic Seminar.

**Student Self-Assessment and Reflection:**

Self-assess your group’s responses to the challenges of other groups. Self-assess your utopia’s organization. (Short written reflection in journal and discussion.)

Self-assess your daily participation in discussion (short written reflection in journal and discussion.)

Self-assess your participation in Socratic Seminar (formal written reflection)

**Stage 3: Learning Experiences –( one complete lesson plan is included with this overview.)**

1. Begin with an anticipation guide that deals with authority, rules, power and propaganda.
2. Anticipation Guide and writing. Four-corners discussion to follow up. Introduce the essential questions and discuss the culminating unit performance tasks.
3. Introduce key terms as needed. Students keep track on their Marzano vocabulary sheets.
4. Discussion of the Russian Revolution. Students read informational texts about leaders of the Russian Revolution in a jigsaw format and discuss. Teach the class about their leader and his role. As we read, try to identify which character is used to portray him in the allegory.
5. Watch video clips of Russian Revolution and discuss. How did the leaders acquire power? What made it possible for them to corrupt power? What were there physical weapons? What other weapons were used? Has this happened to a lesser degree at any other point in history? What is allegory? (Review from Dante’s Inferno.) Why did Orwell chose an allegory? Is it effective? Is this novel still relevant today?
6. As they read, students will complete the herringbone strategy sheet identifying who, what when, why and how or complete an episodic notes. Also write a short personal reaction to the chapter in their logs. They may use these notes during the reading check.
7. Students will also update a character chart to help determine which Russian leader each represents.
8. Silent: Partner discussion: At the beginning of class, students will be asked to take out their notes and using those notes, they should formulate a knowledge based question, and two interpretive question or analytical questions from the reading to ask in their assigned small groups. On a separate sheet, students should write their own responses to the questions using properly cited textual support for their responses, so they can guide students to the text during discussion.
9. Switch questions with another student and write your responses using the text to support your response.

After the discussion: Students write a summary of their discussion. What were the responses to their questions? What were the highlights of the discussion? Share these in small groups.

1. Propaganda Powerpoint and handout. Show types of propaganda on Google Doc. Discuss. Tell students to get with a partner and look for and add examples to the Google Doc. Due dates are scattered so we can present one per day. Students sign up on the calendar. They present. We discuss whether we agree or disagree with the propaganda type and discuss how effective it is. Examples can be old – from World World II posters – or from modern ads.
2. Introduce the “Create a Country” activity. In small groups of their choice, students must come up with a national anthem, flag, and constitution for their country. Students complete a planning guide and then create a poster.
3. Using a gallery walk activity, students then meet with other countries, discuss their policies and write questions to ask later during the whole-class presentation and discussion.
4. Countries present before the class and have to respond to the questions of their peers. A whole class discussion about the problems with utopias will follow. Write to reflect.
5. Written reflection about country project.
6. Continue reading, completing journal and writing different types of questions. Continue student-led small group and teacher-led whole group discussions.
7. Read informational texts – current articles on the connection between literacy and democracy– and take notes. Connect it to Orwell’s theme in journal. Discuss connection.
8. Students continue preparing for Socratic Seminar. Visit the essential questions. Formulate opinions. Find evidence in Orwell’s novel as well as other sources. You must cite those sources. For the relevance question, bring up current events and be able to relate them.
9. Discuss of what the Socratic Seminar is and what the rules are. Discuss what we will be looking for.
10. Choose students to model the Socratic seminar. Give them articles pro and con about cell phones while driving. As they discuss, I will interrupt to point out good techniques they use and also give some strategies for what to do when two people talk at once, how to cite sources verbally, how to keep the flow going and when to introduce new questions. I will also model how to give feedback using the materials provided.
11. Go through the steps to preparing for a Socratic Seminar. Ask for questions. Go over the rubric again.
12. Conduct Socratic Seminars and feedback sessions.
13. Written reflection on Socratic Seminar.