The Secret Life of Bees

WebQuest Description: Students will explore the themes and relationships in the book through the production of a creative project. They will look at the use of epigraphs for their symbolic meanings throughout the book.

Grade Level: 9-12
Curriculum: English / Language Arts

Introduction

In The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd, the protagonist, Lily Owens, who is just thirteen years old, must deal with issues of growing up without a mother and dealing with an abusive father. In addition, she must grapple with racial prejudices that existed within the culture of the 1960's when she falls for an African-American boy. Finally, she explores the issues of her own religiosity when she goes to live at the beekeeping Boatright house.

According to Wikipedia.org:

In literature, an epigraph is a phrase, quotation, or poem that is set at the beginning of a document or component. The epigraph may serve as a preface, as a summary, as a counter-example, or to link the work to a wider literary canon, either to invite comparison or to enlist a conventional context.

In The Secret Life of Bees, Kidd uses epigraphs from various bee keeping sources. She uses these at the beginning of each chapter, and these become symbolism for the events that occur in the book.

Your project is to use these epigraphs as a way to explore the plot of the book in a creative project that will assist someone who has never read this book before to understand the timeline of events that occur.

Tasks

After watching the videos below, you will create either a 3-D model or a wall mural that explores the essential concepts of the book. Use these videos to create an understanding of the setting and historical context of the story as well as an increased understanding of the business of beekeeping.

Process

1. You will provide a synopsis of the 14 chapters in the book which you will do in fourteen separate "pieces" to your project. Consider the physical objects that appear in the book as well as the beekeeping videos when you decide how you will display your information. Include characters that are introduced in each of the chapters.

2. Each "part" should include the exact epigraph from the beginning of each chapter which Sue Monk Kidd used as a prelude to these individual chapters. Consider how the plot relates to the epigraph. Please include quotes from the book, as necessary, to assist you in your plot summaries. Please use correct in-text citation (MLA format; refer to http://owl.english.purdue.edu/ to refresh your memory on how to do this if you forget!)

3. DO NOT COPY AND PASTE SYNOPSIS FROM SPARK NOTES, scan the chapter and remember to put it in your own words; be brief, and include the key events of each chapter. Each synopsis should be thorough but no more than a single, short paragraph (5-10 sentences).

4. In addition, your project should include the title of the book, the name of the author and a brief (no more than ten sentences) biography of the author.

5. Your project may contain no more than four copied pictures from the internet, the remainder of the project should be your own creative efforts. You may wish to incorporate your own drawings, written work, etc. to capture the "secret life of bees."

6. Include a section of your project that tells at least 5 of the economical, ecological or biological benefits of beekeeping. Watch the videos below for additional information on beekeeping.

7. All written components of the model or mural should be done utilizing Microsoft word and should utilize correct spelling and grammar. Please assure that you write in complete sentences!

8. Your project should be visually appealing, thorough, and should be a representation of twelfth grade work. As this is your final project of the year, and most of you are seniors, please give this your final best effort. We will use the best projects to include in our Middle College video!

Evaluation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Score</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Criteria</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synopsis</strong></td>
<td>Project deviates significantly from the required elements, synopses are weak and less than 5 sentence requirement, characters are not introduced</td>
<td>Project reflects less than the requirements in terms of sections, synopsis length, epigraphs or character introduction</td>
<td>Project has the criteria listed but synopses are less than required sentence length or fail to introduce characters</td>
<td>Project has 14 distinct sections which reflect significant &quot;objects&quot; from the book; Each section has an epigraph and a synopsis of 5-10 sentences. Seven Main characters are introduced in each section</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Has only one or none of the required elements</td>
<td>Contains two of the required elements</td>
<td>Contains three of the four elements</td>
<td>Project contains title of book, Name of author, 5 sentence biography of the author and a works cited is attached to project</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capturing the setting of The Secret Life of Bees</strong></td>
<td>Project refers very little to the social aspects of the 1960's or beekeeping, has fewer than 2 or less beekeeping facts.</td>
<td>Project has only developing concepts regarding the social significance of the 1960's, contains 3 beekeeping facts</td>
<td>Project does capture some of the essence of the book and the 1960's; contains 4 beekeeping facts</td>
<td>Project captures the essence of the book and includes elements both of beekeeping as well as the social context/s of the 1960's; Project has at least 5 facts about the economical, ecological or biological benefits of beekeeping</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual. artistic appeal and effort</strong></td>
<td>Project does not show effort, could have greater artistic appeal, and does not meet the requirements regarding use of Microsoft word, copy and paste or pictures</td>
<td>Project is developing but does not utilize Microsoft word, there are many spelling, grammar and punctuation issues, items are copied and pasted and there are more than the required amount of pictures from the internet. The project could be more visually appealing and artistic and does not reflect 12th grade level work</td>
<td>Project is neat, uses Microsoft word, has minimal grammar and spelling errors, is NOT copied and pasted and has no more 4 internet pictures. Appealing, artistic and generally shows 12th grade level work</td>
<td>Project is neat, uses Microsoft Word, Uses appropriate MLA format when necessary, Utilizes correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, is NOT copied and pasted from websites, contains fewer than 4 internet pictures, is visually appealing, artistic and 12th grade level work!</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Wow, you have looked thoroughly at the components of The Secret Life of Bees. I hope that you enjoyed the book as much as I enjoyed sharing it with you.

As the final component to your book project, create a bee the size of a piece of notebook paper, using complete sentences, explain why or why you would not recommend the book to be used next year at Middle College. Be honest and constructive! Display your bee with the rest of the project!

**Teacher Page**

My advice to any teacher that uses this webquest is to allow the students to be creative while capturing the essence, plot, and time period of the book.

**Standards**

**Credits**

Original webquest by Kim Ghaphery

**Other**