Gone with the Wind: novel & movie

WebQuest Description: This webquest will give students information about the amazing book
Grade Level: College / Adult
Curriculum: English / Language Arts
Keywords: historic novels, artistic interpretations, literary analysis, conflicts, character motivations, persuasive essay, classic film, modern version
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Introduction

“...nothing else she did have, nothing but this red land, this land she had been willing to throw away like a torn handkerchief only a few minutes before. Now, it was dear to her again and she wondered dully what madness had possessed her to hold it so lightly.”

Published in 1936, Gone with the Wind became an immediate best-seller, bringing first-time novelist Margaret Mitchell an overwhelming amount of critical and popular attention. Awarded the 1937 Pulitzer Prize, the novel was adapted as a film in 1939—an achievement that won ten Academy Awards. A historical romance set in northern Georgia during the drama of the Civil War and Reconstruction years, Gone with the Wind traces the life of Scarlett O'Hara and her relationships with Rhett Butler, and Ashley and Melanie Wilkes. The novel addresses such themes as survival, romantic love, and the societal structuring of gender and class.

Early appraisals of the novel noted its memorable characters and historical accuracy as well as Mitchell's remarkable storytelling ability, though other reviews dismissed the novel as melodramatic and trite. Mitchell drew on her extensive knowledge of Civil War history in order to establish a believable setting for Gone with the Wind, but also spent considerable time fact-checking in the Atlanta Public Library. Biographers and critics have discovered striking similarities between real people in Mitchell's life and characters in the novel, though whether Mitchell intentionally modeled her characters after people she knew is unclear. What remains certain, however, is that her powerful, enduring story of love and survival set in the pre- and postwar South has made Gone with the Wind one of the most popular novels in American history.

We are going to look at two versions of this story: a book and a movie. Your job is to work with both of them and do all your best making the creative analysis of the plot and characters.

Tasks

Dear students, you task is:
1) to explain and justify your literary analysis of the novel, particularly regarding the theme, conflicts, and character motivations
2) to construct creative and artistic interpretations of the novel and its characters with products such as essays, posters, and storyboards
3) to write expressing and persuading.

Process

1) Novel Analysis: review the conflicts which plagued Scarlett’s life. Are they internal or external? Are they resolved or not by the end of the novel? Which conflicts best provide a clear picture of Scarlett’s personality? Look through a list of themes before reading Gone with the Wind. The themes include loyalty, perseverance, pride comes before the fall, and greed. After reading, you should consider which themes are prevalent in the novel.
2) Research: please, find and possibly demonstrate etiquette and manners from the antebellum South. Why were these limitations placed on society? Compare the etiquette and expectations of civilized society from the past to our modern standards. How does Scarlett’s world compare to our modern world in terms of social standards and etiquette, world events, resources, romance, and expectations? Create a bulletin board display comparing the old to the new. Would Scarlett survive according to modern standards?

3) Discussion: after reading the novel, watch the movie from 1939. Then discuss: What are the differences amongst the two? Why did the screenwriter choose to eliminate portions of the novel from the film?

4) Writing:

1. rewrite the ending of the novel for one of the following options: Scarlett marries Ashley, or Scarlett and Rhett reconcile;

2. by the end of the novel, select one theme and argue in an essay how your choice is the best selection for a lesson about life. You should provide textual evidence;

3. write a persuasive essay in favor of Scarlett as the ultimate heroine. Which aspects of her character would you cite? Compare Scarlett’s strengths and weaknesses to Melanie’s strengths and weaknesses. Which is the more favorable character and why? Provide textual evidence to support your claim;

4. write a letter to one of the characters in the novel offering advice on how to deal with one of the many conflicts within the novel. Should students try to coach Scarlett about her love life, or teach Melanie how to toughen up around Scarlett?

5) Group work: divide on groups (3-4 people), then recast actors in a modern version of the classic film. Which parts of the novel would be included in a modern script? How might a director provide a modern twist on this classic novel? Create a story board to propose your modern movie version and include pictures of suggested actors and actresses to play the parts.

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**Evaluation**

For your group work you will be evaluated with additional points according to your engagement with the task, originality, correctness and motivation.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Score</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.Your research</td>
<td>You have done poor and superficial research. Points 5</td>
<td>You have done only half of what you are supposed to do. Points 10</td>
<td>You research is good but you have failed to answer to the questions or have not thought deeply on the solutions offered. Points 15</td>
<td>You have done a thorough research, answered the questions. Points 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.Novel analysis</td>
<td>Topic is not clear and ideas are not consistent or contradictory. 5 points</td>
<td>There is a clear objective but not properly communicated 10 points</td>
<td>The topic is well-expressed and there is a clear train of thought along the analysis. 15 points</td>
<td>Ideas are crystal-clear and straightforwardly communicated. The topic is sound and well-supported. 20 points</td>
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<td>3.Discussion</td>
<td>The language is poor, you have the mother tongue interference, the pronunciation is not correct. 5 points</td>
<td>Your pronunciation is good, but you have the mother tongue interference. 10 points</td>
<td>Your overall speech is good but you lack one of the requirements (rich vocabulary, correct pronunciation, good argumentation etc. 15 points</td>
<td>Your arguments and speech are very well formulated. 20 points</td>
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Well done!

You have done a great job making different projects like novel analysis, essay, moviescript etc. You deserve appreciation. By this webquest, you have practiced your writing skills and learned something new about the famous American story "Gone with the Wind". It has also improved your speaking and reading skills.

**Conclusion**

Classic historic novels like Margaret Mitchell’s "Gone with the Wind" need not sit on the shelf gathering dust. "Gone with the Wind" is one of the interesting American story so your students will explore a vast variety of activities and projects to help them comprehend the complex intricacies of Mitchell's profound novel. With these "Gone with the Wind" activities as your guide, you'll have plenty of time to devote to reading and enjoying Margaret Mitchell’s classic novel with your students. Watching a movie after reading the book is a wonderful way to encourage students to think critically about how each medium presented roughly the same information.

**Standards**

**Credits**

**Other**