Who Moved My Cheese? For Teens

WebQuest Description: Students read, discuss, and write about Who Moved My Cheese? for Teens by Spencer Johnson, M.D., a parable about life's changes, and how best to benefit from them. By reading the parable, students will learn ways to react positively to inevitable change, and gain insight into their personal decision-making processes regarding changes in their lives, now and in the future.

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

The story is told in parable form and based on Haw's discoveries as he enters into the maze looking for more cheese. There are four characters, two mice (Sniff & Scurry) and two little people (Hem & Haw) and they are all searching through a maze for cheese. The mice, Sniff who sniffs out change early before others are aware of it; Scurry sees what is needed and who acts immediately and the two Little People; Hem who denies and also resists change as he fears it may become worse and Haw who learns to adapt to change and acknowledges that it will lead to something better in his life. The mice possessed simple brains and good instincts, and the little people have more complex brains filled with many beliefs and emotions. Haw's first discoveries was if you do not change you can become extinct. He then contemplates what he would do if he was not afraid. 

Process

Students will: Learn new vocabulary, and use it in their speaking and writing; understand what a parable is and be able to give examples of other parables in literature; explain what an idiomatic expression and be challenged to use them in their writing, and reflect upon the changes in their lives through journal entries and other writing assignments; adapt to change and win by learning from the four characters in the story; talk and write about their personal experiences and reactions to life changing events.

Summary Sheet of Characters, Discussion Questions, Pre-Introduction, Graphic Organizers, Vocabulary, and Unit Introduction 1. Introduction- Day 1 (15-minutes):

Process: Students will use this knowledge to complete the anticipation guide. Present Information – Day 1 (30 minutes): The video "Who Moved My Cheese" &nbsp;will &nbsp;build upon and tap into students prior knowledge, generate questions, and anticipate assumptions. Ample time will be given to the class in order for students to discuss book/video and characters. Discussions will be centered on the group of high school friends and the changes taking place in their lives. The class will also identify the terms parable, metaphor, symbol, and fable using the Graphic Organizer. What does the block of cheese represent in connection to the title of the book? Organize students into study teams – Day 3 (20 minutes): Students will be organized into groups of 4 before watching the 13 minute video on "Who Moved My Cheese". Students will take a 3x5 index card out of the bag with a question pertaining to the meaning of the story, answer the question, and share their response. Students will use the critical vocabulary lists as needed, each student will fill out the Summary Sheet of Characters, and use the critical vocabulary to reflect in their journal, concerning a change that they had no control over and how they felt about it.

4. Assist Teamwork and Study - Day 3 (45 minutes): Students will assume the identity of one of book's character (assign each student with a role). Students will review one Change Event and react in the role of their assigned character. Each group will discuss whether each reaction was true to the character, and the Summary Sheet of Characters can be used for this activity. Students make "Handwriting On the Wall" slogan posters and hang them in the classroom. Students return to Day 2 worksheet and discuss the question, "Would you have reacted differently to your life's changes if you had read this book before those changes? If so, how?" 5. Presentation of final product Day 5 (45 minutes): Students can write a poem, fable, parable, or an essay about how the story affected their personal views about change; which can be presented as a collage of pictures/words depicting their personal cheese, present the problem or change event that is occurring at school or at home. Students' will reflect on the ways that Sniff, Scurry, Hem, and Haw would react to the changes taking place. The final reflection will include the students' personal reactions not to exceed three paragraphs, and their ending of "Who Moved My Cheese". 6. Recognition and evaluation of group and individual efforts }

Day 5(45 minutes): I will compile a checklist for each student with their evaluation of their role in the group and their participation for each day, and a checklist for the group will also be included for self-evaluation. 

Tasks

Students will: Learn new vocabulary, and use it in their speaking and writing; understand what a parable is and be able to give examples of other parables in literature; explain what an idiomatic expression and be challenged to use them in their writing, and reflect upon the changes in their lives through journal entries and other writing assignments; adapt to change and win by learning from the four characters in the story; talk and write about their personal experiences and reactions to life changing events.
Summary for the handwriting on the wall: As students' reflect in their journals about the changes occurring in their lives, they will also begin to notice that changes are taking place in their school as well. The groups of high school students' have been friends since kindergarten and Middle School, but some may have decided to take a different route than others. Some are experiencing drugs, alcohol, teen-age parenting, rebellion, and trying to fit in or find their place in live. Peer pressure will often lead a student down a path of destruction, but can be corrected if they are allowed to express the way they feel about life altering events such as parents divorcing or separating or not having a positive role-model in their life, no father, being raised in a foster home, being raised by grandparents or being raised by someone that is not a family member. Changes are inevitable, but when students learn to accept changes instead of fighting change, that is when learning takes place, and they become better students instead of giving into the in crowd. Peer pressure will often lead a student down a path of destruction, but can be corrected if they are allowed to express the way they feel about life altering events such as parents divorcing or separating or not having a positive role-model in their life, no father, being raised in a foster home, being raised by grandparents or being raised by someone that is not a family member. Changes are inevitable, but when students learn to accept changes instead of fighting change, that is when learning takes place, and they become better students instead of giving into the in crowd.

The sooner students' learn to let go, the easier their transition to embracing the "new cheese", which is a practical application for adults as well. Change Happens They Keep Moving The Cheese Anticipate Change Get Ready For The Cheese To Move Monitor Change Smell the Cheese Often So You Know When It Is Getting Old Adapt To Change Quickly The Quicker You Let Go Of Old Cheese, The Sooner You Can Enjoy New Cheese Change Move With The Cheese Enjoy Change! Savor The Adventure And Enjoy The Taste Of New Cheese Be Ready To Change Quickly And Enjoy It Again They Keep Moving The Cheese.

Teacher Page

All teenagers experience major changes; however, English Language Learners must deal with more than the usual number of changes, and those are sometimes of greater intensity than those of their American peers. Often, they have moved from their home country to the U.S. knowing no English nor understanding the culture. Their families have limited resources, and for these reasons, English Language Learners were introduced to a book about life’s changes, how to cope with them, and make them work for you in positive ways. I feel that all English Language Learners can benefit from reading and discussing “Who Moved My Cheese, for Teens.”

Standards
Title: Who Moved My Cheese? for Teens
North Carolina Curriculum Alignment
Grade 10
Goal 1: The student will react to and reflect upon print and non-print text and personal experiences by examining situations from both subjective and objective perspectives.
Objective 1.02: Respond reflectively (through small group discussion, class discussion, journal entry, essay, letter, dialogue) to written and visual texts by:
• Relating personal knowledge to textual information or class discussion.
• Showing an awareness of one's own culture as well as the cultures of others.
• Exhibiting an awareness of culture in which text is set or in which text was written.
• Explaining how culture affects personal responses.
• Demonstrating an understanding of media's impact on personal responses and cultural analyses.
Goal 4: The student will critically interpret and evaluate experiences, literature, language, and ideas.
Objective 4.02: Analyze thematic connections among literary works by:
• Showing an understanding of cultural context.
• Using specific references from texts to show how a theme is universal.
• Examining how elements such as irony and symbolism impact theme.

English Language Development (2005)
Grade 9–12
Goal 0: Objective 0.01: Develop reading fluency.
Objective 0.01: Use new vocabulary in speech.
Objective 0.01: Demonstrate writing using a wide variety of complex vocabulary, including academic vocabulary and idioms.
Objective 0.02: Identify the main ideas and draw inferences about written text using detailed sentences.
Objective 0.02: Use varying sentence styles and types.
Objective 0.04: Demonstrate comprehension of various literary genres through verbal responses with occasional restatements.
Objective 0.05: Express an informed opinion that is logical and coherent.
Objective 0.08: Interpret and evaluate experiences, literature, language, and ideas.
Objective 0.10: Apply conventions of grammar and language usage.

Common Core State Standards
English Language Arts (2010)
Grade 9-10: L.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. 9-10.L.4.1 Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph)

Reading: Literature
9-10.RL.10 By the end of grade 9 read and comprehends literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend.

Credits
Who Moved My Cheese? for Teens by Dr. Spencer Johnson
Columbia University PPT
Sponsor/mentor-Raquel Wilkins; Reading Specialist for Winston Salem Forsyth County Schools
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Google Images
Jones International University: Masters’s K-12 Curriculum Instruction and Assessment/EDU 428 Literacy II and instructor/professor Dr. Pamela Peak (WebQuest)
Center for American Progress
Jason Bratton- English teacher with Winston Salem Forsyth County Schools
Jay Haley- English teacher with Winston Salem Forsyth County Schools
Stacy Taylor -Spanish teacher with Winston Salem Forsyth County Schools
Rubistar

Other
This is a fun and innovative way of getting students' to appreciate changes, diversity, and life. Asking students to reflect on their own life, their experience in reading a selection for a class assignment, or on an exercise/simulation may lead to their uncovering and confronting previously hidden assumptions. Students’ are often put into different situations, especially when they are the minority, or only one of a few people in similar situations. Who Moved My Cheese? for Teens allow students' to rethink and reflect on values, communicate respect, fairness, foster equal class participation, cultural and social examples, and take the necessary steps to establish an overall appreciation of others. We must provide students with an environment that is conducive to learning, comfortable, and safe; and when we do all of these things we dramatically increase their chance of success. We must constantly show our students' that we value diversity and change, and then model this attitude to our students.