

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY:
A course for adult education programs

Jessica Hatzidakis
Goffstown High School
August 20, 2005

August 20, 2005

Dear friends,

The attached documents are designed with students who “hate” to read in mind. I designed this elective because the genres of science fiction and fantasy are not given the time and attention they deserve at Goffstown High School and many other institutions, yet they are often the stories that self-proclaimed “non-readers” choose to pick up in their free time. Why not give them credit for it?

You may disagree. You may say, “These are not books ‘non-readers’ will try. These are not discussions in which adult education students will participate. These are not activities that will benefit adult education students.” To you, I say, try it with an open mind and ask your students to do the same. The novels and assignments included here require students to question their values, to reevaluate how they make decisions, and to appreciate what they have and the contributions they can make.

On a more practical, less philosophical note, please keep in mind that this class was designed for high school-age students to fit the greatest percentage of students I encounter in our adult education program. The grade they earn is important to them, sometimes for pride but more often for credit. Therefore, several of the quizzes included here are to ensure that they are doing the reading homework. If you find that your students are consistently completing their reading requirements, you should feel free to discard the quizzes or use them to guide discussions. In this case, I have strived to change the content of their experience in English class as opposed to the format in hopes of turning these adult education students back into day students. We can help them to realize that they can be successful in the type of environment where they have known only failure.

I look forward to hearing how you have made this class your own. Please share with me any ideas that you have for the improvement and implementation of this course material.

Many thanks and good luck,

Jessica Hatzidakis

Jessica Hatzidakis
English Teacher
Goffstown High School
jhatzidakis@goffstown.k12.nh.us

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Student Expectation Sheet	4-5
Fifteen-Week Plan Book	6-8
Class Final Essay Assignment	9
The Princess Bride Teacher Introduction	10
The Princess Bride Freewrite Questions	11
The Princess Bride Final Essay Assignment	12
The Gunslinger Teacher Introduction	13
The Gunslinger Reading Comprehension Quiz Questions	14-16
The Gunslinger Reading Comprehension Quiz Answers	17-18
The Gunslinger Final Essay Assignment	19
Ender's Game Teacher Introduction	20
Ender's Game Freewrite Questions	21-22
Ender's Game Map of Battle School Activity	23
Ender's Game Technology Webquest	24
The Handmaid's Tale Teacher Introduction & Notes	25-26
The Handmaid's Tale Historical Webquest	27
Blindness Teacher Introduction	28
Blindness Reading Comprehension Quiz Questions	29-30
Blindness Reading Comprehension Quiz Answers	31-32
Blindness Reading Group Guide	33-34
Blindness Creative Writing Assignment	35
Blindness Final Essay Assignment	36

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

Science Fiction and Fantasy are two genres that require a willing suspension of disbelief to be enjoyed and appreciated. Writers mix and match aspects of these distinct genres to create amazing tales of super technological feats and magical powers as the result of advanced genetic engineering, wars with aliens who possess amazing telekinetic powers and worlds where communities are stricken and saved by unpredictable and unstoppable diseases. Science Fiction and Fantasy are predictions of the future and romanticism of the past. It is the place where we accept the illogical as logical, the unreasonable as reasonable, and open our minds to a plethora of possibilities.

Essential Questions & Concepts:

1. Where do Science Fiction and Fantasy literature fit into our education?
2. How do our choices today affect the world of tomorrow?
3. What role will current technologies play in the future?
4. Can reading be fun, worthwhile, and educational at the same time? ☺

Course Objectives:

1. Students will develop their reading, thinking, and writing skills, using materials from the genre of science fiction and fantasy.
2. Students will develop the ability to foresee the consequence of an action into the future, realistically or unrealistically.
3. Students will improve their knowledge of research strategies, using a variety of sources according to their research questions and purposes.

Activities:

1. Students will read the assigned novels and write literature responses on a regular basis.
2. Students will utilize and improve their research and writing skills through several unit projects.
3. Students will be required to participate in class debates and discussions regarding, specifically, the essential questions and concepts for the course.

Reading List:

The reading selections for this course will be taken from the list below. They are presented here with summaries to assist you in your reading pursuits.

The Princess Bride, by William Goldman

Hysterically funny, The Princess Bride is a fantastic story of love, giants, Miracle Men, pirates, evil, shrieking eels, ROUSes (Rodents of Unusual Size), and the Man in Black. It was turned into a great film in the late 1980s.

The Gunslinger, by Stephen King

This is the first part of the story of Roland of Gilead, known as the Gunslinger, in his chase for the man in black and the Dark Tower. It is fantasy, a story of time travel, parallel universes, and good ol' cowboy ideals of good and evil. The Gunslinger is the first of seven novels in the Dark Tower series.

Ender's Game, by Orson Scott Card

The Earth was barely able to defend themselves against the Formics, a bug-like alien species, the last time they attacked. It has been determined that we must destroy them before they are able to attack again. Since the last battle, mankind has been attempting to genetically engineer the perfect commander. Enter Ender Wiggin. The story follows Ender's journey through Command School as he is trained, along with hundreds of hopefuls, to be the one to save human kind from the Buggers. Ender's Game is the first in a series of four. There is also a companion series of four novels that begins with the novel Ender's Shadow.

The Handmaid's Tale, by Margaret Atwood

This is a dystopian vision of our future, a place where women fall into several categories, one being Handmaid, essentially a surrogate mother for the wealthy who are unable to conceive. A Handmaid has no rights and, if she is unable to conceive, is declared an Unwoman and sent to the Colonies (toxic waste sites) to live the rest of her short life. The Handmaid's Tale is often referred to as feminist, dystopian science fiction.

Blindness, by José Saramago

A strange white blindness ravages a community. Those struck by it are housed in an abandoned insane asylum with no nurses or assistance because those that can see are afraid of catching it. The story is told by the doctor's wife, who is not afflicted by the blindness but lies to stay with her husband. Blindness is very clearly written as a commentary about society and an absolutely amazing book. Saramago won the Nobel Prize for literature.

**SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY
 PLAN BOOK**

Note: These activities are designed for a fifteen-week, one-credit course that meets once a week for three hours.

Date	Activity	Homework	Assignment Links
	If possible, assign first third of novel to be read before first class.		
WK 1	<p><u>The Princess Bride</u> Introduce class final essay. Begin with a freewrite question and go from there. Introduce the final essay assignment for this unit. Discuss some possible topics for the assignment.</p>	Finish second third of <u>The Princess Bride</u>	Class Final , The Princess Bride Freewrite Topics , The Princess Bride Final Essay Assignment
WK 2	<p><u>The Princess Bride</u> Introduce another freewrite question and discuss. Watch half of the film, The Princess Bride. If you have time, discuss the reason for the differences between the film and the novel.</p>	Finish <u>The Princess Bride</u>	The Princess Bride Freewrite Topics
WK 3	<p><u>The Princess Bride</u> Introduce another freewrite question and discuss. Finish the film and discuss the reason for the differences between the film and the novel. Discuss the final essay question and possible topics. Begin reading <u>The Gunslinger</u> out loud together.</p>	Finish first half of <u>The Gunslinger</u> . Finish <u>The Princess Bride</u> final essay.	The Princess Bride Freewrite Topics , The Princess Bride Final Essay Assignment
WK 4	<p><u>The Gunslinger</u> Collect <u>The Princess Bride</u> final essay assignment. Give quiz to check for reading comprehension. Allow the use of the text if students brought it with them. Discuss the answers and the events surrounding the quiz questions. This should help to answer any questions that the students had about the plot from the previous week's reading. Introduce the final essay question for this unit and discuss. Read more aloud.</p>	Finish <u>The Gunslinger</u> .	The Gunslinger Quiz , The Gunslinger Quiz Answers , The Gunslinger Final Essay Assignment

WK 5	<p><u>The Gunslinger</u> Give quiz to check for reading comprehension. Allow the use of the text if students brought it with them. Discuss the answers and the events surrounding the quiz questions. Discuss the final essay question and some possible answers. Begin reading <u>Ender's Game</u> together.</p>	<p>Finish first third of <u>Ender's Game</u>. Finish <u>The Gunslinger</u> final essay.</p>	<p>The Gunslinger Quiz, The Gunslinger Quiz Answers, The Gunslinger Final Essay Assignment</p>
WK 6	<p><u>Ender's Game</u> Introduce freewrite question and discuss. Complete Map of Battle School activity. Introduce Technology webquest.</p>	<p>Finish second third of <u>Ender's Game</u>.</p>	<p>Ender's Game Freewrite Questions, Map of Battle School Activity, Ender's Game Technology Webquest</p>
WK 7	<p><u>Ender's Game</u> Introduce freewrite question and discuss. Work in class on Technology webquests.</p>	<p>Finish <u>Ender's Game</u>.</p>	<p>Ender's Game Freewrite Questions, Ender's Game Technology Webquest</p>
WK 8	<p><u>Ender's Game</u> Work in class on Technology webquests.</p>	<p>Prepare Technology presentation, handouts, and papers. Read first third of <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u>.</p>	<p>Ender's Game Technology Webquest</p>
WK 9	<p><u>The Handmaid's Tale</u> Present technology projects to class. Collect technology handouts and essays. Discuss the first third of <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u>. Ask students about the validity of the situation depicted in the novel. Introduce the final project, a webquest addressing the historical events associated with the novel.</p>	<p>Read second third of <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u>.</p>	<p>Ender's Game Technology Webquest, The Handmaid's Tale Webquest</p>
WK 10	<p><u>The Handmaid's Tale</u> Discuss the previous week's reading, addressing the ideas stated in the unit introduction. Work on <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u> historical webquest.</p>	<p>Finish <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u>, including the historical notes!</p>	<p>The Handmaid's Tale Unit Introduction (notes), The Handmaid's Tale Webquest</p>

WK 11	<p><u>The Handmaid's Tale</u> Discuss conclusion of novel, particularly the historical notes and their purpose. Work on <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u> historical webquest.</p>	Complete webquest assignment for <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u> . Read the first third of <u>Blindness</u> .	The Handmaid's Tale Webquest
WK 12	<p><u>Blindness</u> Check for completed essays for <u>The Handmaid's Tale</u> in proper electronic collection bin. Give quiz to check for reading comprehension. Allow the use of the text if students brought it with them. Discuss the answers and the events surrounding the quiz questions, utilizing the reading group guide questions if necessary. Introduce the Creative Writing assignment and brainstorm some ideas for the piece.</p>	Finish the second third of <u>Blindness</u> .	Blindness Quiz, Blindness Quiz Answers, Blindness Reading Group Guide, Blindness Creative Writing Assignment
WK 13	<p><u>Blindness</u> Give quiz to check for reading comprehension. Allow the use of the text if students brought it with them. Discuss the answers and the events surrounding the quiz questions, utilizing the reading group guide questions if necessary. Work on the Creative Writing assignment. Introduce final essay assignment.</p>	Finish Creative Writing assignment. Finish <u>Blindness</u> .	Blindness Quiz, Blindness Quiz Answers, Blindness Reading Group Guide, Blindness Creative Writing Assignment, Blindness Final Essay
WK 14	<p><u>Blindness</u> Collect Creative Writing assignments. Give quiz to check for reading comprehension. Allow the use of the text if students brought it with them. Discuss the answers and the events surrounding the quiz questions, utilizing the reading group guide questions if necessary. Work on final essay assignment.</p>	Work on <u>Blindness</u> final essay assignment.	Blindness Quiz, Blindness Quiz Answers, Blindness Reading Group Guide, Blindness Final Essay
WK 15	<p><u>Blindness</u> Finish final essay assignments, due by the end of class. Work on final essay.</p>	Submit final essay electronically by predetermined due date.	Blindness Final Essay, Class Final

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Class Final

Please address one of the questions below in a four to five-page essay. It should contain at least three quotes, be typed, double-spaced, and include a Work Cited section using MLA format.

1. Why did the authors of this semester's novels choose to present their stories in the genre of science fiction and fantasy? How did their choice affect the message presented in their work?
2. Why aren't more science fiction and fantasy stories present in high school and adult education curricula? How could they be used to positively contribute to the educational experience?

PAPER RUBRIC

- 95+ Article is well written, organized, and of appropriate length. It contains no grammatical or spelling mistakes. It appears to have been edited carefully. It contains textual support in the form of quotes and is textually accurate. It is obvious that the student spent a great deal of time and effort to complete this assignment.
- 85 Article is well written, organized, and of appropriate length. It contains few grammatical and/or spelling errors. It appears to have been edited. It contains textual evidence and is textually accurate. It is obvious that the student worked hard on this assignment.
- 75 Article is poorly written and contains several grammatical and/or spelling errors. It has not been edited, nor does it contain textual evidence. It appears that the student spent little time on this assignment.
- 65- Article is poorly written and does not complete the assignment. It contains many grammatical errors, no textual support, and has not been edited.

Science Fiction & Fantasy
The Princess Bride, by William Goldman

The Princess Bride has been my favorite movie since I saw it in the theatres when I was ten years old. The novel is an interesting mix of fantasy and satire, enormously funny, and uses one of my favorite literary techniques. Goldman claims that he is simply editing a “fun parts” version of the novel originally written by S. Morgenstern, the famous Florinese author. Where is Florin, you ask? It exists only in the imagination of its creator, William Goldman. Careful readers of the novel will identify the hints dropped by Goldman along the way to this effect but many students, particularly those taking this course through the adult education program, do not read with the attention required. It is great fun to go back through the novel with them and identify the hints that they missed. Suddenly, they look at the book in a whole new light.

This is a nice way to start the semester. It is a funny satire about writing and storytelling but it is also a traditional fairy tale/fantasy story. It has elements of more popular types of stories (William Goldman has made most of his money writing scripts, including Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid) while being fiercely intellectual in its commentary at the same time. Therefore, it can be enjoyed at a variety of reading levels. Enjoy!

Science Fiction & Fantasy
The Princess Bride, by William Goldman
Freewrite Questions

These are some questions that can be used any way you like to jump-start discussions. I like to write one on the board and have students respond to them in writing for ten to fifteen minutes at the start of class. This helps them to collect their thoughts. Then I will begin the discussion by asking students about what they wrote.

1. In which genre would you categorize this book and why?
2. How does the story change or benefit from having the Morgenstern text within the Goldman text?
3. How does Goldman parody historical time in The Princess Bride?
4. What is the use of having Goldman's biographical/publishing-related information as part of this story?
5. Can you find anything significant in the names of the characters and countries? Does this in any way change the way we read the text?

Here are some freewrite questions regarding the film:

1. How does the film differ from the novel? What makes those changes necessary?
2. Do these changes affect the nature of the story? How?
3. What part of the author's message or social commentary is lost in the change of medium from print to film?

Science Fiction & Fantasy
The Princess Bride, by William Goldman
Final Essay

Please address one of the questions below in a four to five-page essay. It should contain at least three quotes, be typed, double-spaced, and include a Work Cited section using MLA format.

1. Who, ultimately, is the hero/heroine of this story, or is there one at all? Explain your answer.
2. Is The Princess Bride a satire? If so, of what? What message does the author intend?

PAPER RUBRIC

- 95+ Article is well written, organized, and of appropriate length. It contains no grammatical or spelling mistakes. It appears to have been edited carefully. It contains textual support in the form of quotes and is textually accurate. It is obvious that the student spent a great deal of time and effort to complete this assignment.
- 85 Article is well written, organized, and of appropriate length. It contains few grammatical and/or spelling errors. It appears to have been edited. It contains textual evidence and is textually accurate. It is obvious that the student worked hard on this assignment.
- 75 Article is poorly written and contains several grammatical and/or spelling errors. It has not been edited, nor does it contain textual evidence. It appears that the student spent little time on this assignment.
- 65- Article is poorly written and does not complete the assignment. It contains many grammatical errors, no textual support, and has not been edited.

Science Fiction & Fantasy
The Gunslinger, by Stephen King

Because of the complexity and maturity of the language used in this novel, I have found it a great place to work on reading comprehension. The attached quizzes, completed using their book, may seem to request minute details. The purpose is to make students slow down and read for comprehension rather than to get through their homework. These quizzes could be taken in class, sent home, or posted online. The quiz questions are in order and cover the entire novel. Please separate them into two quizzes, depending on where you end the reading homework assignments.

Without these quizzes, I have found that students have a hard time getting into this story. It is a great story to read aloud together because it is relatively short and many students, particularly men, really get into it. My husband was a self-identified “non-reader” until he found me with this book four years ago. Now he averages a novel a week. He’s also managed to finish the remaining 2500+ pages of the Dark Tower saga in there somewhere and read all six of the Harry Potter books. I have seen students latch on to this book in the same way. Be sure to set aside a great deal of time to read aloud during this unit to avoid frustration with the vocabulary.

One discussion topic of particular interest is the moral choices Roland makes and his morality, in general. Another is King’s use of Good and Evil, which ties intimately with Roland’s moral values. Is Roland Good or Evil? Is the man in black Good or Evil? In the end, this is the question students must answer in their final essay.

WARNING: As I stated, students seem to really enjoy this novel. However, they do not feel that way when you start. This is because the language is very complex. Help students over this hump by reading aloud with them!

Science Fiction & Fantasy
The Gunslinger, by Stephen King
Reading Comprehension Quiz Questions

1. What is the name of the honky-tonk in Tull?

2. What song does the gunslinger hear coming from the honky-tonk?

3. What does the gunslinger order for his meal?

4. What does the bartender request in exchange for information about Nort and the man in black? _____
5. What did the man in black order at the bar?

6. What is the man in black's name?

7. What does Kennerly mean when he says that the gunslinger's mule is threaded? _____
8. From where does the gunslinger remember Sheb?

9. What is the name of the woman preacher?

10. From which direction did the woman preacher come to Tull?

11. What does she claim the man in black called the gunslinger?

12. What is the gunslinger's name?

13. How many people does the gunslinger kill in Tull?

14. Who does the gunslinger meet at the way station?

15. What does the gunslinger do to the person he meets there?

16. How did this person die?

17. What was the name of the company that made the water pump?

18. What does the gunslinger find in the wall of the cellar?

19. What did the speaking-demon say to the gunslinger?

20. What is the "good man's" name?

21. What is the gunslinger's last name?

22. By what other name is Marten known?

23. What does Cort give the gunslinger and Cuthbert to take to the execution?

24. "When traitors are called heroes," what has happened?

25. What does it mean when it says that the gunslinger had become a matricide?

26. Who dies in Roland's dream?

27. What is the other name Roland uses to refer to the oracle in the stone circle?

28. What breaks the spell of the oracle?

29. What drug does Roland take?

30. What is the number of the gunslinger's fate, according to the oracle?

31. What is the name of the demon that has infested the young, dark-haired man in Roland's prophecy?

32. What does the oracle prophesize about Jake's future?

33. What does Roland promise the oracle in exchange for her prophecy?

34. What was the name of Roland's homeland?

35. What lives in Hax's kitchen now?

36. What does Jake propose right before they encounter the man in black for the first time?

37. What is the nickname for the Sowing Night Cotillion?

38. What was Roland's mother's name?

39. What does Jake discover underground?

40. What does Roland find written on the pump?

41. What is the consequence for losing to Cort?

42. What is Roland's weapon of choice?

43. How does Cort defend against this weapon?

44. What does Roland get if he bests Cort?

45. What does Roland hear being played after he loses his virginity?

46. What do Roland and Jake find as they travel on the handcar?

47. How do they trap Roland and Jake?

48. What does Roland pick up in the "subway"?

49. How does Jake die?

50. What are Jake's last words?

51. How does the man in black read Roland's future?

52. What does the man in black demand during Roland's hypnosis?

53. What does the man in black call the vision he gave Roland?

54. Who must Roland meet before he can get to the man in black's king?

55. What is another name by which Roland knew Walter, the man in black?

56. The man in black tells Roland that he possesses what power?

57. What is the number that the man in black associates with this power?

58. Where has this number been mentioned before?

59. How much does Roland age during his palaver with the man in black?

60. What is the last thing Roland says aloud in the novel?

Science Fiction & Fantasy
The Gunslinger, by Stephen King
Reading Comprehension Quiz Answers

1. What is the name of the honky-tonk in Tull? **Sheb's**
2. What song does the gunslinger hear coming from the honky-tonk? **"Hey Jude"**
3. What does the gunslinger order for his meal? **Three hamburgers and a beer**
4. What does the bartender request in exchange for information about Nort and the man in black? **Sex**
5. What did the man in black order? **Whisky**
6. What is the man in black's name? **Walter O'Dim**
7. What does Kennerly mean when he says that the gunslinger's mule is threaded? **Not mutated**
8. From where does the gunslinger remember Sheb? **Mejis**
9. What is the name of the woman preacher? **Sylvia Pittston**
10. From which direction did Sylvia come to Tull? **From the desert**
11. What does Sylvia claim Walter called the gunslinger? **The antichrist**
12. What is the gunslinger's name? **Roland**
13. How many people does Roland kill in Tull? **39 men, 14 women, 5 children = 58 people**
14. Who does Roland meet at the way station? **John "Jake" Chambers**
15. What does Roland do to the person he meets there? **Hypnotizes him to learn of his past**
16. How did this person die? **Hit by a 1976 Cadillac**
17. What was the name of the company that made the water pump? **North Central Positronics**
18. What does Roland find in the wall of the cellar? **A jaw bone**
19. What did the speaking-demon say to Roland? **"While you travel with the boy, the man in black travels with your soul in his pocket."**
20. What is the "good man's" name? **Farson**
21. What is Roland's last name? **Deschain**
22. By what other name is Marten known? **Farson**
23. What does Cort give Roland and Bert to take to the execution? **Bread to put under Hax's shoes**
24. "When traitors are called heroes," what has happened? **"Dark times have fallen."**
25. What does it mean when it says that Roland had become a matricide? **He killed his mother**
26. Who dies in Roland's dream? **Susan and Jake**
27. What is the other name Roland uses to refer to the oracle in the stone circle? **a succubus**

28. What breaks the spell of the oracle? **the jaw bone found at the way station**
29. What drug does Roland take? **mescaline**
30. What is the number of the gunslinger's fate, according to the oracle? **Three**
31. What is the name of the demon that has infested the young, dark-haired man in Roland's prophecy? **Heroin**
32. What does the oracle prophesize about Jake's future? **He is Roland's gate to the man in black**
33. What does Roland promise the oracle in exchange for her prophecy? **Sex**
34. What was the name of Roland's homeland? **New Canaan**
35. What lives in Hax's kitchen now? **Slow mutants**
36. What does Jake propose right before they encounter the man in black for the first time? **That they go back or else Roland will have to kill him**
37. What is the nickname for the Sowing Night Cotillion? **Commala, word for rice**
38. What was Roland's mother's name? **Gabrielle Veriss**
39. What does Jake discover underground? **A railroad/a handcar**
40. What does Roland find written on the pump? **AMOCO Lead-free**
41. What is the consequence for losing to Cort? **Exile**
42. What is Roland's weapon of choice? **David the hawk**
43. How does Cort defend against this weapon? **Hits himself in the face to get the hawk**
44. What does Roland get if he bests Cort? **Guns**
45. What does Roland hear being played after he loses his virginity? **"Hey Jude"**
46. What do Roland and Jake find as they travel on the handcar? **Slow mutants**
47. How do they trap Roland and Jake? **By putting rocks on the track so they have to stop**
48. What does Roland pick up in the "subway"? **a bow and a quiver of arrows**
49. How does Jake die? **Falls from the railroad tracks**
50. What are Jake's last words? **"Go then. There are other worlds than these."**
51. How does the man in black read Roland's future? **Tarot cards**
52. What does the man in black demand during Roland's hypnosis? **That he forget about the Tower, give up**
53. What does the man in black call the vision he gave Roland? **The universe**
54. Who must Roland meet before he can get to the man in black's king? **The ageless stranger**
55. What is another name by which Roland knew Walter, the man in black? **Marten**
56. The man in black tells Roland that he possesses what power? **Drawing**
57. What is the number that the man in black associates with this power? **Three**
58. Where has this number been mentioned before? **The Oracle**
59. How much does Roland age during his palaver with the man in black? **Ten years**
60. What is the last thing Roland says aloud in the novel? **"I loved you, Jake."**

Science Fiction & Fantasy
The Gunslinger, by Stephen King
Final Essay

Please address the question below in a four to five-page essay. It should contain at least three quotes, be typed, double-spaced, and include a Work Cited section using MLA format.

Is Roland good or evil? Please define each term in your own words and then address how and where Roland fits.

PAPER RUBRIC

- 95+ Article is well written, organized, and of appropriate length. It contains no grammatical or spelling mistakes. It appears to have been edited carefully. It contains textual support in the form of quotes and is textually accurate. It is obvious that the student spent a great deal of time and effort to complete this assignment.
- 85 Article is well written, organized, and of appropriate length. It contains few grammatical and/or spelling errors. It appears to have been edited. It contains textual evidence and is textually accurate. It is obvious that the student worked hard on this assignment.
- 75 Article is poorly written and contains several grammatical and/or spelling errors. It has not been edited, nor does it contain textual evidence. It appears that the student spent little time on this assignment.
- 65- Article is poorly written and does not complete the assignment. It contains many grammatical errors, no textual support, and has not been edited.

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Ender's Game, by Orson Scott Card

Ender's Game is a novel that is becoming more widely read in public schools. If any of your students have read the novel, consider having them read Ender's Shadow instead. They will be able to participate in the discussions and debates because Ender's Shadow is a companion novel, not a sequel, and therefore deals with many of the same events and issues.

I have included here a few examples of debates you could facilitate in your classroom. I have not included here regulations for those debates because most teachers have their own format. However, if you do not, please be advised that this is something you must think about carefully before inviting students to debate in your classroom.

Debate – Should children be subjected to such treatment (Battle School) in the name of “saving the world”?

Debate – Is fascism ever justifiable, as in the case of the IF and the Hegemon?

There are also a couple of interesting projects attached to this novel. One requires the students to practice their reading comprehension by creating a two or three-dimensional map of the Battle School, as depicted in the novel. It's amazing how different these maps can look while remaining textually accurate. The second requires students to do a bit of research on a technology of their choice. Students are attracted to this project because they are able to research an area that is of interest to them. I, too, find it enjoyable because I learn so much. Every time I try it, new innovations are being explored and researched by my students. The project requirements are presented in the form of a webquest, allowing students to access the project from any computer.

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Ender's Game, by Orson Scott Card
Freewrite Questions

These are some questions that can be used any way you like to jump-start discussions. I like to write one on the board and have students respond to them in writing for ten to fifteen minutes at the start of class. This helps them to collect their thoughts. Then I will begin the discussion by asking students about what they wrote. Another way to use these is to have students complete them at home or in an on-line journal. This way, the conversation has a chance to develop in a way that it just can't with time constraints.

Chapter 1: What does it mean to "submerge himself in someone else's will?" (1)

Chapter 2: Explain what it seems to mean for Ender to be born a "Third." Show whether this is a negative or positive fact to: his parents, his brother, Peter, his sister, Valentine, and his classmates.

Chapter 3: Discuss Ender's family. What do you think of his brother, Peter, and sister, Valentine? How do you think Ender's parents are portrayed? Was their reaction to Ender being taken away realistic?

Chapter 4: Does the threat to Earth justify the Battle Schools?
Why does Graff single Ender out? Was there another way to get the job done by acting in a different way toward the children?
Explain the following quote from chapter 4: "Isolate him enough that he remains creative – otherwise he'll adopt the system here and we'll lose him" (27). Your answer should include the terms: isolation, creative, adopt, and lose.

Chapter 5: Why are there so few girls in Battle School?

Chapter 6: What is the purpose of the game that Ender plays in his free time? What is the purpose of all the games at Battle School? Do the games do what they are intended to do?

Chapter 7: As of page 73, Ender is seven years old. Do you find yourself forgetting that these are small children you are reading about? Why does Card choose to use young children as the main characters in the story?
Would you consider this a Young Adult book or an Adult book? Why?
We learn in this chapter that there is a question of whether it is OK to sacrifice the well being of a child in order to save the world. What, exactly, does Ender have to sacrifice? How do you think he is being trained to save the world?

Chapter 8: Colonel Graff offers Ender this piece of advice upon arrival at Battle School: "There's only one thing that will make them stop hating you. And that's being so good at what you do that they can't ignore you" (Card 35). Does Ender take this advice? Is it a good thing for him?

Chapter 9: Why have people abandoned the practice of celebrating birthdays?

Chapter 10: Why does Ender treat Bean the way that he does? Did it work on Ender when Graff did the same thing?

Chapter 11: Did the commanders give Ender an army that they thought were the best or the least likely to succeed? What makes you think that?

Chapter 12: Explain the meaning of the nightmare Ender experiences regarding Stilson.

Chapter 13: "'Every time, I've won because I could understand the way my enemy thought... I'm very good at that. Understanding how other people think'" (238). According to Ender, compassion for your enemy is the best way to defeat your enemy. How could this advice be applied to today's circumstances?

Chapter 14: "There is no teacher but the enemy" (262). How are Mazer Rackham and Ender alike?

Chapter 15: What is the author's warning to the present day? Do you feel that this is something that we face in our present day?

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Ender's Game, by Orson Scott Card
Map of Battle School

Please create a map of the Battle School. Your map should be supported by textual evidence (please attach quotes to final product) and have a key. There are 100 points possible.

PROJECT RUBRIC

- 95+ Map is clear, concise, and includes an easy-to-use key. Textual support is included for the majority of aspects displayed on final product. Work Cited is included and properly formatted using MLA format.
- 85 Map is clear, concise, and includes a key. Textual support is included for many aspects displayed on final product. Work Cited is included and properly formatted using MLA format.
- 75 Map is hard to decipher. Textual support is included for many aspects displayed on final product. Work Cited may or may not be included or has several mistakes.
- 65- Map is hard to decipher and may or may not included a key. Textual support is not included. Work Cited may or may not be included or has several mistakes.

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Ender's Game, by Orson Scott Card
Technology Webquest

The unit project for Ender's Game is presented in the form of a webquest, at <http://www.instantprojects.org/webquest/titlelist.php?AuthorID=830>. It asks students to address the following essential questions:

- What currently exists regarding this technology?
- In the near or distant future, what advances are plausible?
- What would the repercussions of such advances be?

The task is described as follows:

“Ender's Game, by Orson Scott Card, offers a variety of proposed technologies, some that now exist and some that still do not. Your task is to research the latest strides made in a technology presented in Ender's Game and share that information with your classmates. Topics may include, but are not limited to, genetic engineering, cloning, stem cell research, "big brother" monitoring, space or other forms of travel, responsive video games/virtual reality, the Internet, etc.

“In partners, please prepare a 2-5 minute presentation that addresses the essential questions listed in the introduction as they apply to your chosen technology. Your presentation should be aided by the use of a **PowerPoint presentation** with at least ten slides, one being a Work Cited slide with at least four entries, and a **handout for the audience members**. You will also be expected to submit a 3-4 page (including Work Cited) **individual research paper** detailing the information you present.”

The webquest site includes a “Process” section, where I have included hyperlinks to sources on a variety of technologies, including space and space travel, genetic engineering and human cloning, the future of cars, “Big Brother” monitoring systems, virtual reality, as well as hyperlinks to Google and the Librarian’s Index to the Internet (www.LII.org), and an “Evaluation” section, where I have included rubrics for both the presentation and the paper.

The “Conclusion” section asks students to take action based on their new knowledge. Who knows? Perhaps you’ll find your hands full of future world-changers.

Science Fiction & Fantasy
The Handmaid's Tale, by Margaret Atwood

According to the author, “[The Handmaid's Tale] is an imagined account of what happens when not uncommon pronouncements about women [A woman's place is in the home... women prefer the company of other women] are taken to their logical conclusions. History proves that what we have been in the past we could be again.” (Visit http://www.randomhouse.com/resources/bookgroup/handmaidstale_bgc.html to learn more about the novel's origins and plausibilities from Atwood herself.)

I ask the students to think about the above quote and determine what their version of the “logical end” for such statements would be. How do they differ from Atwood's? Do they believe her suggestions to be unreasonable? At the above website, Atwood suggests that all of the events in her novel have occurred at one time or another in history. Are the values and attitudes the novel conveys present in today's society?

Visit http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~brians/science_fiction/handmaid.html for great discussion and journal questions.

In order to understand Atwood's purpose, the historical context in which it was written must be understood. Again, Atwood's interview, see link above, will provide some insight there.

What's going on when Atwood wrote the novel:

Visit <http://www.legacy98.org/timeline.html#1981> for the complete timeline of historical events affecting women in the early 1980s when The Handmaid's Tale was written. Here are a few:

1981 The U.S. Supreme Court rules that excluding women from the draft is constitutional.

Kirchberg v. Feenstra, 450 U.S. 455, 459-60 (1981), overturns state laws designating a husband “head and master” with unilateral control of property owned jointly with his wife.

1984 In Roberts v. U.S. Jaycees, 468 U.S. 609 (1984), sex discrimination in membership policies of organizations, such as the Jaycees, is forbidden by the Supreme Court, opening many previously all-male organizations (Jaycees, Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions) to women.

The state of Mississippi belatedly ratifies the 19th Amendment, granting women the vote.

Hishon v. King and Spaulding, 467 U.S. 69 (1984): The U.S. Supreme Court rules that law firms may not discriminate on the basis of sex in promoting lawyers to partnership positions.

1986 In *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 477 U.S. 57 (1986), the U.S. Supreme Court held that a hostile or abusive work environment can prove discrimination based on sex.

1987 *Johnson v. Santa Clara County*, 480 U.S. 616 (1987): The U.S. Supreme Court rules that it is permissible to take sex and race into account in employment decisions even where there is no proven history of discrimination but when evidence of a manifest imbalance exists in the number of women or minorities holding the position in question.

Jump into this one. The students are astounded by the coincidences between the novel and history once the first one is pointed out to them. Then they start finding them everywhere.

Science Fiction & Fantasy
The Handmaid's Tale, by Margaret Atwood
Historical Webquest

The unit project for The Handmaid's Tale is presented in the form of a webquest, at <http://www.instantprojects.org/webquest/titlelist.php?AuthorID=834>. It asks students to consider the following:

“Look at what has happened in the world around you and decide if the events in the novel are, in fact, realistic. Does Atwood's representation of events accurately portray what has happened and, as is so often said about history, what is bound to be repeated? If so, what can we do to prevent it?”

The task is described as follows:

“Your task is to compare two events in the novel, [The Handmaid's Tale](#), by [Margaret Atwood](#), with their historical counterparts. For example, is there a relationship between the way handmaids and Afghan women under the Taliban are treated? Is there a relationship between how gender traitors and abortion doctors in the novel and opponents of fascist regimes are treated? Then, decide for yourself if the events represented in the novel are realistic based on your research. If so, what is Atwood's warning and how can we prevent her prediction from coming true?”

“Please present your argument in the form of a four to five-page essay, including a Work Cited page with the novel and at least three other sources cited. Your essay should include at least three quotes from multiple sources. Submit the final product electronically by the due date given in class.”

The webquest site includes a “Process” section, where I have included hyperlinks to sources on a variety of events, including the mistreatment of women throughout history, religious persecution, and fascism and fascist states, as well as hyperlinks to Google and the Librarian's Index to the Internet (www.LII.org), and an “Evaluation” section, where I have included a rubric for both the paper.

The “Conclusion” section asks students to take action based on their new knowledge. Who knows? Perhaps you'll find your hands full of future world-changers.

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Blindness, by José Saramago

Another one of my favorite books, Blindness can be a slow read because of the lack of punctuation. It is also generally the students' favorite. Because of this, I save it for last, building up to this great climax of a book. I have included here a reading group guide, taken from Barnes & Noble's webpage, to help focus discussions. I have also included quiz questions, again to check reading comprehension. Please distribute the quiz questions as they fit your reading assignments.

The two writing assignments associated with this unit are very different from each other. One is a creative writing assignment and the other is analytical. Encourage students to focus on detail in their creative writing piece. This is a type of writing where, unfortunately, high school and adult education students are not given much practice.

Please forewarn students of the rape scene so that they are not startled by it. It is graphic. Perhaps an interesting discussion would center on Saramago's need for such a graphic scene. Do your students find that it contributes or detracts from the novel?

This novel is a great way to end the class. Discuss the uses of science fiction and fantasy writing. Why do writers choose to present their stories through this genre? What part of their message might be lost if their story was not presented in this way?

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Blindness, by José Saramago
Reading Comprehension Quiz Questions

Name: _____

1. Where did the first "victim" become blind?

2. Who is the narrator of the story?

3. Who are the first five internees?

4. How many "rules" are read to the internees over the loud speaker?

5. Who was the first person to die in quarantine?

6. Who got the spade from the soldiers for the purposes of burying the dead?

7. Where did the girl with the dark glasses become blind?

8. When does the doctor's wife say that she became blind?

9. What did the army colonel do when he turned blind, per his own recommendation?

10. Approximately how many people arrived in the last delivery of blind people?

11. What did the old man with the eye patch have with him when he arrived in quarantine?

12. What was stolen?

13. What does the "rogue" leader possess that keeps the rest of the internees in line?

14. What are the internees made to pay to the "rogue" ward?

15. What did the doctor's wife find in her bag?

16. What do the women do when it rains?

17. What is the occupation of the man now living in the first blind man's flat?

18. What was the girl with the dark glasses' neighbor clutching in her hand when she died? _____
19. What does the girl with the dark glasses leave as a message for her parents?

20. With whom does the man with the black eye-patch fall in love?

21. What did the doctor's wife find in the doorway to the basement of the supermarket? _____
22. What was strange about the art in the church?

23. What happens at the end of the story?

24. Who is the first to experience this?

25. What is the doctor's wife's fear at the end of the novel?

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Blindness, by José Saramago
Reading Comprehension Quiz Answers

1. Where did the first "victim" become blind? **In his car, at a stoplight**
2. Who is the narrator of the story? **the optometrist's wife**
3. Who are the first five internees? **the first blind man, the doctor and his wife, and the thief, girl with dark glasses**
4. How many "rules" are read to the internees over the loud speaker? **Fifteen**
5. Who was the first person to die in quarantine? **the thief**
6. Who got the spade from the soldiers for the purposes of burying the dead? **the doctor's wife**
7. Where did the girl with the dark glasses become blind? **in a hotel bed with a "client"**
8. When does the doctor's wife say that she became blind? **as her husband is climbing into the ambulance**
9. What did the army colonel do when he turned blind, per his own recommendation? **He committed suicide**
10. Approximately how many people arrived in the last delivery of blind people? **200 people**
11. What did the old man with the eye patch have with him when he arrived in quarantine? **a radio**
12. What was stolen by the rogue internees? **Food**
13. What does the "rogue" leader possess that keeps the rest of the internees in line? **a gun**
14. What are the internees made to pay to the "rogue" ward? **They must exchange sex with the women**
15. What did the doctor's wife find in her bag? **a pair of scissors**
16. What do the women do when it rains? **bathe and wash their clothes outside**

17. What is the occupation of the man now living in the first blind man's flat?
a writer
18. What was the girl with the dark glasses' neighbor clutching in her hand when she died? keys
19. What does the girl with the dark glasses leave as a message for her parents?
a lock of hair
20. Who does the man with the black eye-patch fall in love with? the girl with the dark glasses
21. What did the doctor's wife find in the doorway to the basement of the supermarket? a load of bodies
22. What was strange about the art in the church? all the artworks' eyes were covered
23. What happens at the end of the story? everyone's sight returns
24. Who is the first to experience this? the first blind man
25. What is the doctor's wife's fear at the end of the novel? that she will go blind

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Blindness, by José Saramago
[Reading Group Guide](#), BarnesandNoble.com

1. What is Saramago's purpose in presenting the doctor's wife as the only person not afflicted by the white blindness? In what ways, and in what stages, does she grow in terms of both political and moral authority? What roles does she assume? How may we explain, in particular, her assumption of responsibility as guide and protector? Why does she experience a feeling of intense, unbearable loneliness at just that moment when the others begin to regain their sight?
2. What is the purpose of Saramago's use of proverbs, folk sayings, and clichés throughout the novel? How does the characters' new reality affect their former habits of expression and create new habits of expression? What are the implications of the narrator's later comment that "if sayings are to retain any meaning and to continue to be used they have to adapt to the times"?
3. As the white blindness spreads, the Minister of Health decides on the necessity of quarantine "both from the point of view of the merely sanitary aspects of the case and from that of the social implications and their political consequences." What "social implications" and "political consequences" do you think the minister has in mind? What social and political consequences does the quarantine itself have?
4. Waking to her second day in the mental hospital, the doctor's wife thinks, "what fragile walls we'd make" against our enemies. What "fragile walls" are erected, demolished, or made useless by the blindness? What fragile walls in your life and community would be threatened by a catastrophe similar to the white blindness?
5. "The whole world is right here," the doctor's wife says to her husband on the morning of their fourth day in the hospital. In what ways does the mental hospital contain "the whole world"? To what extent may we read *Blindness* as a commentary on the excesses and horrors of the world of the twentieth century?
6. What meanings can we attribute to the white blindness? To what extent does it represent ignorance, political ineptitude, the absence of personal and social morality, and the failure of imagination? What other meanings can you suggest? How does the "harsh, cruel, implacable kingdom of the blind" differ, if at all, from our everyday world?

7. Why does Saramago provide no names for his characters and their city and country? What are the effects of this namelessness?
8. In what ways do the central characters' experiences lead them to a new kind of interdependence and, at the same time, a new awareness of the human potential for selfishness and cruelty? How do both contribute to the emergence or re-emergence of tenderness and love?
9. What pattern emerges in respect to the breakdown of order and of the various systems that we all take for granted - civic, social, political, and so on? How do individuals, identifiable groups, and institutions of authority contribute to that breakdown? How does the structure of society itself alter to fit a world in which virtually everyone is blind?
10. How do the women in the novel differ from the men in their attitude toward the blindness and the resulting conditions of life? What moral, emotional, psychological, and imaginative capacities do the women possess that the men lack?
11. Variants of the phrase "when the beast dies, the poison dies with it" recur in the novel. And we are told that "the mind suffers delusions when it succumbs to the monsters it has itself created." What beasts and monsters, actual and delusional, are the subjects of this novel?
12. In response to the newly interned old man's report on conditions outside the hospital, the doctor comments, "Perhaps only in a world of the blind will things be what they truly are...People, too, no one will be there to see them." In what ways might this be true, and to what degree?
13. At the very end of the novel, the doctor tells his wife: "I don't think we did go blind, I think we are blind, Blind but seeing, Blind people who can see, but do not see." What does he mean? How is this judgment related to the first blind man's report to the doctor that his going blind was "More like a light going on"?
14. How does the novel illustrate the doctor's wife's observation that "what is right and what is wrong are simply different ways of understanding our relationships with others"?
15. One reviewer has noted that *Blindness* conveys, "the disturbing notion... that full humanity is achieved only through suffering." Do you agree or disagree with this statement, in respect to both Saramago's novel and actual life? Which characters achieve a fuller humanity because of their suffering?

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Blindness, by José Saramago
Creative Writing Assignment

Blindness is narrated by the doctor's wife, the only one who can see. What are the other victims thinking and feeling throughout this ordeal? Select one of the major events from the plot to recreate from another character's perspective in 2-3 pages. Creative writing requires careful attention to detail, in the case of this story, attention to sounds and touch, to make the reader experience the story rather than just read it.

PAPER RUBRIC

- 95+ Paper is well written, organized, and edited. Ideas are well developed and work is descriptive. Previous drafts are included and show significant changes and improvements. There are no grammatical or spelling errors. Student used class time wisely and showed great effort.
- 85 Paper is well written, organized, and edited. Ideas are clear and concise but could use more development. Previous drafts are included that clearly document changes and improvement of story. There are few grammatical and spelling errors. Student generally used class time wisely. It is apparent that the student put significant effort into his/her writing.
- 75 Paper is underdeveloped and needs more work. Ideas are unclear. Previous drafts may or may not be included. Drafts do not show development. There are several grammatical and spelling errors. Student misused class time and appeared to put little effort into his/her writing.
- 65- Paper is unclear, does not complete the assignment, and/or is unorganized. Previous drafts are not included. There are many grammatical and spelling errors. Student wasted class time and put little effort into his/her writing.

Science Fiction & Fantasy
Blindness, by José Saramago
Final Paper

Blindness "is an allegory for not being able to see. What exactly it is we should see, what Saramago -- with all his years as a man and a writer and having lived through dictatorship and revolution -- fears we cannot see, is present in the writing, present abundantly, but it is not to be paraphrased" (Andrew Miller in the *New York Times*, October 4, 1998).

What does Saramago think we are missing, according to this novel?
What are we as a community, as a society, overlooking? How are we all blind? How is the presentation of this message made more effective through the author's choice of genre?

Answer the above question in a two to three-page essay. You must have at least three quotes from the novel. Please be sure to include a Work Cited at the end for the novel.

PAPER RUBRIC

- 95+ Article is well written, organized, and of appropriate length. It contains no grammatical or spelling mistakes. It appears to have been edited carefully. It contains textual support in the form of quotes and is textually accurate. It is obvious that the student spent a great deal of time and effort to complete this assignment.
- 85 Article is well written, organized, and of appropriate length. It contains few grammatical and/or spelling errors. It appears to have been edited. It contains textual evidence and is textually accurate. It is obvious that the student worked hard on this assignment.
- 75 Article is poorly written and contains several grammatical and/or spelling errors. It has not been edited, nor does it contain textual evidence. It appears that the student spent little time on this assignment.
- 65- Article is poorly written and does not complete the assignment. It contains many grammatical errors, no textual support, and has not been edited.