JSTOR LESSON PLAN COMPETITION

Author:
Jenny Nauss, Young Adult Learning Center (Washington, DC)

Bio:
With over twenty years of high school teaching experience in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., Jenny Nauss most recently taught at Maret School, a private K-12 school, where she developed this lesson for her junior/senior Ethics and Literature class. She recently embarked on a new phase of her career in the role of Instructional Manager at the Maya Angelou Young Adult Learning Center, which offers an academic and workforce program for 17-24 year students who are preparing to take the GED.

Contact Information:
The Young Adult Learning Center
Washington, DC
email: naussjk@gmail.com

Project Title: "Frankenstein: Alive and Well Today"

Course: Ethics and Literature (Maret School)

Subjects: English Language Arts, Science, Technology

Grade level: 11-12

Learning objectives:
• Students will understand the difference between a website and online database.
• Students will summarize a challenging article.
• Students will make connections across texts to read a deeper understanding of Frankenstein.

Time estimate for lessons and assignments:
This summative writing project takes eight 50-minute class periods and homework nights (including two weekends). Students wrote during four periods, had a peer review during one, and had mini-lessons about JSTOR and summarizing during the remaining three. This assignment could easily be shortened or made longer by choosing shorter articles or expanding the teaching during the summary portion if students have not been exposed to summarizing challenging texts.

Citations for JSTOR articles:


Notes for Teachers:
The assignment handout (Appendix One) explains the parameters of the this summative assessment. After having read and discussed Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, students choose one scientific article from the list to read, summarize, and connect to a scene in the novel, asking themselves how learning about this topic leads to a new, different, or deeper understanding of Victor Frankenstein, the Creature, or a theme.

If your students have not been taught how to organize a summary of a longer piece of text (over ten pages), you will need to start by teaching this skill and will most likely need to add at least one additional class period for this project. While my students worked on a number of summaries during their sophomore year, we reviewed the skill through a mini-lesson, modeling, and guided practice of a movie review before embarking on this project.

Finally, because my students had limited experience JSTOR, my school librarian used one of the eight class periods to review the difference between a website and database, how to use JSTOR (keyword search, filters, abstracts, citations), and allowed the students time for some hands-on practice.
This project tends to be a favorite of students, especially those interested in pursuing careers in science. During professional development sessions with college professors, I have heard more than one lament the fact that their students don’t know how to summarize complex texts. While I think summarizing is a skill we focus on in elementary school, how much time do we spend teaching and assessing students’ summaries of college-level texts? This project provides just that as well as allows students to make exciting connections across texts, genres, and time periods.
Appendix One:

*Frankenstein: Alive and Well Today*

When nineteen-year old Mary Shelley first conceived of *Frankenstein*, she was engaged in a friendly competition to create an original ghost story. She probably had no idea that her ideas would remain relevant centuries later, and scientists, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and ethicists would reference her work in their own writings. For your *Frankenstein* unit assessment, you will be crafting a different kind of paper, one which asks you to read about a current issue related to a theme in the novel and write about it in three different ways: a summary of an article found on JSTOR, an analysis of one chapter in *Frankenstein* through the lens of the article, and a personal reflection about the ethical questions raised by the article and novel. Each section will consist of multiple paragraphs, and this essay will not include introduction or conclusion paragraphs. Think about it as three “chapters” that address a common theme in different ways.

**The Peer Reviewed Journal Articles:**

You will embark on this intellectual journey by first reading a peer-reviewed article from a critical journal. These are the kinds of resources that you will be using in college, and we will spend some time learning about JSTOR and how to use databases to search for relevant articles. I have pre-selected four articles, all of which reference *Frankenstein* in some way, and you will choose one for this assignment.

NOTE: If you find your own article that isn’t on the list that you are interested in using instead, you must check with me to see if it fits the criteria for this project. It must reference *Frankenstein* in the body of the article (not just the title or bibliography), include a discussion of ethics or present an ethical dilemma, be around 10-15 pages in length, and published in a peer-reviewed journal.

**Essay Sections Guidelines**

**Section One: The Summary**

After reading, annotating, and creating a roadmap of your article, you will write a summary. To review, a summary captures the main idea of the article and is generally much shorter than the original text. It includes only key ideas and omits the details. It may or may not follow the order of the original text. Because you must decide how all of the ideas fit together, writing a summary requires more skill than writing a paraphrase.

**Parameters:**
- Capture the main ideas of your article
- Does not include quoted material from the article unless absolutely necessary
- Three MLA formatted pages

**Section Two: Connecting the Article to a Scene in *Frankenstein***

Section Two is the shortest, although no less interesting and thoughtfully crafted, part of the essay. Now that you have a good understanding of your article and the moral dilemma that it raises, it’s time to connect it to the novel. Select one chapter that helps you to answer the following question: *What new, different or deeper understanding of *Frankenstein* do you have as a result of reading and summarizing _______ (insert article title)?* For example, perhaps the article complicates the idea of responsibility or categorizing the creature. Is he a monster? Is he human? Is he a robot? Does it matter? Perhaps the article makes you think more deeply about the notion of “playing God” or creating a new species of creatures from natural or artificial.

Jennifer Nauss 4
parts. You might consider Victor’s time at university or in Scotland or a conversation with Henry Clerval or the Creature himself. Be creative when choosing your chapter!

**Parameters:**
- One chapter from the novel
- Two paragraphs with contextualized and analyzed quotations from *Frankenstein*. While you may reference your article in this section, you are not expected to quote from it.
- If you do quote from the article, citations must include the author’s last name and page number so the sources are very clear to the reader. Example: (Shelley 12)
- MLA formatted

**Section Three: The Reflection**

In Section Three you finally get to weigh in with your ideas about the topics raised in the article and novel. For this section of your paper, the “occasion” is the ethical dilemma that your article raises. Your reflection makes up the bulk of the paper; you should not summarize the article again because your reader has already read Section One of your essay. Think about the questions the article raises for you, who this dilemma might impact, and why it might be as relevant in 1818 as it is today.

**Parameters:**
- A thoughtful exploration of the issues raised by your article. This section doesn’t seek easy answers! You should use “I” in this section of the essay.
- You may quote from the article and the novel in this section. Citations should include the author’s last name and page number with no comma separating the two. You can include sections of the novel outside of the chapter you analyzed in Section Two if you wish.
- 3-4 MLA formatted pages

**The Critical Articles**

You will choose ONE of the following articles for this project. You can find them on JSTOR.

- “Cloning, Sex, and New Kinds of Families”
  Author: Glenn McGee

- “Genetically Modified Food: Breeding Uncertainty”
  Author: Charles W. Schmidt
  Source: *Environmental Health Perspectives* 113.8 (August 2005): pp. 526-533

- “New Conceptions: Biosocial Innovations and the Family”
  Author: John N. Edwards

- “On Cloning: Advocating History of Biology in the Public Interest”
  Author: Jane Maienschein
Appendix Two:

First Pass Through the Articles
Homework Assignment

The four articles are available on JSTOR, which you can access through the library website. Tonight you will take a first pass through the choices. You don’t need to commit to the article that you will use for your project until the next class period. This assignment should be typed and printed or completed in your notebook. It will be collected in the next class period.

For each article, please complete the following:

1) Find the article on JSTOR

2) Read the abstract (if it has one) and skim the first 1-2 pages of the article. Do not print the article!

3) Scroll through the article looking at any section titles and images to get a sense of the structure of the piece.

4) In your notebook or type:
   a. The title of the article and write a 1-2 sentence summary about what you think the article will be about given what you skimmed.

   b. Write a 1-2 sentence connection to Frankenstein. While the novel is referenced in each article, it doesn’t always appear on the first pages. You should make a guess based on what you looked at so far.

Then…

5) **Bold** the title of the article that most interests to you right now.

And finally . . .

6) Bring the document to class for submission.
Appendix Three:

Reading, Annotating, and Preparing a Roadmap
Homework Assignment

Note: You will submit your annotated article with your final essay, and your annotations will be assessed at that time.

1) Print the article.

2) Review your notes about the definition of a summary and how to write a summary.

3) Read and annotate the article
   Do not shortchange these steps! A close reading and annotations are both essential for writing an accurate summary.

   a. Preview the article by reading the abstract, title, headings, first paragraphs of each section (if there are sections), and conclusion.
   b. Read the article carefully, underlining/highlighting the main ideas only, not the supporting details. As a guideline, you should not highlight more than 20% of the article.
   c. Write the main idea and purpose of each paragraph (or chunk of paragraphs if they are short and closely related) in the margins. This step is required!

4) On an MLA formatted Word Document, write a one-sentence statement that captures the main idea of the article (see How to Write a Summary handout for a sentence starter and vivid verb list). This sentence is 100% in your own words!

   a. Make a “road map” of your summary.
      i. All of the articles for this project are subdivided into sections, each with a title.

      ii. Write a topic sentence that captures the main idea of each section of your article. At this juncture, work in chronological order. You may end up clumping sections together as like categories or changing the order of the material in your own summary. Remember, the main idea of a section might not appear in the first sentence! You need to review the section carefully before writing by rereading your annotations and margin notes. Do not look at the article when you are writing because you will be too tempted to plagiarize.

5) PRINT and staple this assignment behind your article.
Appendix Four:

Name: ___________________________   Date: _______________

Author’s Note

What new, different or deeper understanding do you have about ONE of the following: research using academic journals in general, reading and annotating a challenging article, or summarizing a challenging article?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Which of the three essay sections was the most interesting, revealing, frustrating, challenging, or ___________ (your own word)? Choose one and respond.

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

What is your, “Dude, I’m good!” moment in this essay and why are you choosing this moment?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Please staple your Author’s Note to the front of your essay packet.