



Being Mindful of Sadness in "The Scarlet Ibis"

Theme and Characterization



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Published by K20 Center

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Grade Level	9th Grade	Time Frame	150 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	3 class periods
Course	American Literature		

Essential Question

How does a character's state of mind affect their development and the development of the theme in a text?

Summary

In this lesson, students will connect the theme of sadness and mindfulness in both a short-story fiction text and a nonfiction text, to explore the socio-emotional development of characters. This lesson includes optional modifications for distance learning.

Snapshot

Engage

In response to a video, students complete a quick-write prompt, "How do you deal with uncertain times?"

Explore

Students are placed into groups and then given images to analyze using the It's OPTIC-al strategy. Students then share out the overall mood/impression the images create and explain how they came to their conclusions.

Explain

Students read "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst and analyze key scenes for word choice and mood, focusing on the character of Brother and how the audience is made to feel about this character through word choice and mood. Students engage in a whole-class discussion after the reading to discuss the character of Brother.

Extend

Students read an article on how mindfulness changes the way we process sadness and use the Why-Lighting strategy to connect to "The Scarlet Ibis."

Evaluate

Students create a two-voice poster where Brother has a conversation with someone else who can provide him insights/ways to process his sadness. Options for the other character are provided. A rubric

can be used to evaluate the posters.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.3.R.3: Evaluate how literary elements impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:

- setting
- plot structure (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, *in media res*)
- conflict (i.e., internal, external)
- characters (e.g., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization (i.e., direct, indirect)
- point of view (e.g., narrator reliability)
- archetypes

9.3.R.4: Evaluate how literary devices impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:

- figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, symbolism)
- sound devices (i.e., onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance)
- irony (i.e., verbal, situational, dramatic)

9.3.R.7: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics, using textual evidence to support their claims and inferences.

Attachments

- [A Conversation with Brother Rubric—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis - Spanish.docx](#)
- [A Conversation with Brother Rubric—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [A Conversation with Brother Rubric—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.docx](#)
- [A Conversation with Brother Rubric—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.pdf](#)
- [It's OPTICAl Digital Images—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.pptx](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.pptx](#)
- [Processing Emotions Poster—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.pptx](#)
- [Says Matters Chart—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Says Matters Chart—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Says Matters Chart—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.docx](#)
- [Says Matters Chart—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.pdf](#)
- [Self Care Tip Rubric—Being Mindful of Sadness in the Scarlet Ibis - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Self Care Tip Rubric—Being Mindful of Sadness in the Scarlet Ibis - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Self Care Tips Rubric—Being Mindful of Sadness in the Scarlet Ibis.docx](#)
- [Self Care Tips Rubric—Being Mindful of Sadness in the Scarlet Ibis.pdf](#)
- [Text Analysis Chart—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.docx](#)
- [Text Analysis Chart—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.pdf](#)
- [The Scarlet Ibis Text Chart—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The Scarlet Ibis Text Chart—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Two Voices Poster—Being Mindful of Sadness in The Scarlet Ibis.pptx](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- It's OPTIC-al Digital Images (attached; digital version or one per group)
- Text Analysis Chart (attached; one per student)
- Says/Matters Chart (attached; one per student)
- Two Voices Poster (attached; digital version or one per student)
- Processing Emotions Poster (attached; digital version or one per student)
- A Conversation with Brother Rubric (attached)
- Self Care Tips Rubric (attached)
- "The Scarlet Ibis" story (digital version on Actively Learn; one per student)
- "11 Self-Care Tips for Teens and Young Adults" (digital article; one per student)

- Student computers
- Blank paper
- Pens or pencils

30 minutes

Engage

Begin the lesson by reviewing the lesson's essential question on **slide 3** and the learning objective on **slide 4**.

Show **slide 5**. Have students write a timed response using the [Quick Write](#) strategy, to the following prompt: *How do you deal with uncertain times?* After providing three minutes for students to write, ask for volunteers to share out their responses to the whole class.

Show **slide 6** and play the video on mental health counseling. Be sure to click full screen for each video to ensure proper size when viewing.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=UpsQX4nxZUI>

After watching the videos, discuss with students how mental health counseling and therapists can help people deal with uncertain times.

Teacher's Note

Possible answers to "How can mental health counseling help people deal with uncertain times?" could include: Therapy is a safe place for people to talk through their problems with someone who is trained and has experience in helping people process their thoughts and feelings and work on coping skills and behaviors.

Distance Learning Option

To make use of this activity in an online or distance learning environment, have the students write their response in an application like Google Docs or [Padlet](#). You might also consider making this activity a discussion board post to which your students can respond directly. Download all attachments to use this lesson in [Google Classroom](#).

20 minutes

Explore

Show **slide 8**.

Place students in groups. Have each group work collaboratively to analyze **one** of the images in slides 9–13 using the strategy [It's OPTIC-al](#) to determine the overall impression (mood) created by the image. Provide each group with one of the following images and the strategy card to complete the activity.

- **Slide 9** depicts an image titled *Uganda* by Cliffannie Forrester.
- **Slide 10** depicts an image titled *The Old Guitarist* by Pablo Picasso.
- **Slide 11** depicts an image titled *The Church at Auvers* by Vincent van Gogh.
- **Slide 12** depicts an image titled *The Persistence of Memory* by Salvador Dalí.
- **Slide 13** depicts an image titled *Nighthawks* by Edward Hopper.

Teacher's Note

Consider printing **slides 9–13** or provide the **It's OPTIC-al Digital Images** slide deck for student groups to access from their computers.

After the groups have analyzed their assigned images, have each group share out to the whole class their assigned image and the overall impression/mood it creates, explaining how they came to their conclusions.

Distance Learning Option

To make use of this activity in an online or distance learning environment, consider using an image labeling program such as [ThingLink](#) or [Genially](#). This enables students to create labels for an uploaded image and type comment boxes attached to the labels. Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.

40 minutes

Explain

Show **slide 14**. Provide "[The Scarlet Ibis](#)" text to students. Ask students to focus on the emotional state of Brother, the main character, as they read the story.

- *How do you know what he is feeling throughout the story?*
- *How do his emotions change throughout the story?*
- *What do his emotions tell us about the theme(s) in the story?*

After reading, provide a copy of the **Text Analysis Chart** to each student (**slide 15**). Have students complete the chart, looking for key scenes that show Brother's emotions. You may choose to provide these scenes to students.

Teacher's Note

Possible key scenes to analyze:

- Introduction to Doodle (Paragraph 3)
- Brother plans to kill Doodle (Paragraph 5)
- Brother shares Old Woman Swamp (Paragraph 9)
- Brother scares Doodle by showing him the casket (Paragraph 13)
- Brother teaches Doodle to walk (Paragraph 19)
- Doodle buries the Scarlet Ibis (Paragraph 72)
- Brother races home in the rain (Paragraphs 79–80)

20 minutes

Extend

Show **slide 16**. Hand out a copy of **Says/Matters Chart** to each student or have them create the chart on a piece of paper. Tell students they will watch a video and read the article "[11 Self-Care Tips for Teens and Young Adults](#)" in order to make connections between self-care concepts and "The Scarlet Ibis." Instruct them to add anything they find that connects the video and the article to the story and to their chart. **Slide 17** includes a link to the video if you choose to watch it together as a class.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=gEHPTjMv4F0>

After watching the video and reading the article, have students either pair up or place them into small groups to share their charts and discuss the connections they made between the article and the short story.

Distance Learning Option

To use this activity in an online or distance learning environment, consider creating multiple copies of the Says/Matters Chart using Google Docs and assigning a copy to each student. Consider making this activity a discussion board post to which your students can respond directly. Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Teacher's Note

You may choose to use the attached **Two Voices Poster** or the **Processing Emotions Poster** as either digital copies or paper copies for students, or you may choose to have students use a blank piece of paper to create their own posters. Rubrics are provided for this assignment. In the rubrics, you will notice the use of “helpful” and “supportive” as defining criteria of the student assignment. It is possible that a student’s advice within the assignment can be helpful, but the tone or word choice is not supportive, or vice versa. Helping students understand and recognize this key distinction may help them succeed in their assignment goals.

Show **slide 18**. Explain the two options to students for them to show what they have learned about both “The Scarlet Ibis” and mental health. Instruct them to create individual posters, using one of two options. Choose Option 1 (slide 19) or Option 2 (slide 20) from the descriptions below.

1. **Slide 19:** Create a poster where Brother has a conversation with someone else who provides him with some insight into or ways to process his sadness. Choices: Mom, Dad, Aunt Nicey, a friend, or a counselor
. Use the **A Conversation with Brother Rubric** to evaluate this assignment.
2. **Slide 20:** Create a poster providing a specific tip for someone in class who may be having a difficult time processing their feelings. Then, choose a character from the story and write a paragraph explaining how that character can change or add to the purpose stated in the poster. Use the **Self Care Tip Rubric** to evaluate this assignment.

Teacher's Note

Consider placing the posters into a “Self Care Tips” binder and keeping it in your classroom for students to access as needed.

Resources

- Bereson, G. (2019, May 5). 11 self care tips for teens and young adults. The Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds. <https://www.mghclaycenter.org/parenting-concerns/11-self-care-tips-for-teens-and-young-adults/>
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- Hopper, E. (1942). *Nighthawks* [Online image]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nighthawks_\(painting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nighthawks_(painting))
- Hurst, J. (July 1960). *The scarlet ibis*. ActivelyLearn. <https://read.activelylearn.com/#teacher/reader/authoring/preview/816689/notes>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Genially. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2445>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Google Classroom. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/628>
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-Lighting. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128>
- K20 Center. (2021, January 8). *Social Worker - Jessica Schonlau - Zoom Into Your Career* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iD9roYUjBGw&feature=youtu.be>
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- Milne, P. (2011, June 28). *Scarlet ibis* [Photograph]. Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/48307594@N00/6037953333>
- NYU Steinhardt (2014, Oct 2). *What is mental health counseling?* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpsQX4nxZUI>
- Picasso, P. (1904). *The old guitarist* [Online image]. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Old_Guitarist
- Van Gogh, V. (1890). *The church at Auvers* [Online image]. Visual Arts. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_arts