

It's Never Too Late to Apologize

Character Development and Theme in "The Scarlet Ibis"

Daniel Schwarz, Brandy Hackett
Published by *K20 Center*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License

Grade Level	9th Grade	**Time Frame**	150 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	2-3 class periods
Course	American Literature, Composition		

Essential Question

How do characters' states of mind affect their development and the development of the theme in a text?

Summary

This lesson has students connect the theme of regret across poems, songs, nonfiction, and short stories to explore how social-emotional factors can affect character development and theme. Students work independently to write their own apology note as well as write an apology from the perspective of a character from “The Scarlet Ibis.” This lesson includes optional modifications for distance learning.

Snapshot

Engage

Students analyze a poem to determine the author’s purpose in apologizing and discuss this topic with an Elbow Partner.

Explore

Students examine poems in rotating groups to determine what the speaker regrets in each text.

Explain

Students interpret key scenes in a short story to determine how the character’s development affects the theme of regret.

Extend

Students adapt their own version of the poem from the beginning of the lesson, creating a poem that is also an apology.

Evaluate

Students imagine themselves as the main character in the short story "The Scarlet Ibis" and create an apology note, supporting their writing with textual evidence.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

IDT403: Summarize key supporting ideas and details in somewhat challenging passages

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

Attachments

- Apology Note Rubric—It's Never Too Late To Apologize - Spanish.docx
- Apology Note Rubric—It's Never Too Late To Apologize - Spanish.pdf
- Apology Note Rubric—It's Never Too Late To Apologize.docx
- Apology Note Rubric—It's Never Too Late To Apologize.pdf
- Lesson Slides—It's Never Too Late To Apologize.pptx
- SOAPSTone Graphic Organizer—It's Never Too Late To Apologize - Spanish.docx
- SOAPSTone Graphic Organizer—It's Never Too Late To Apologize - Spanish.pdf
- SOAPSTone Graphic Organizer—It's Never Too Late To Apologize.docx
- SOAPSTone Graphic Organizer—It's Never Too Late To Apologize.pdf
- Text Analysis Chart—It's Never Too Late to Apologize - Spanish.docx
- Text Analysis Chart—It's Never Too Late to Apologize - Spanish.pdf
- Text Analysis Chart—It's Never Too Late to Apologize.docx
- Text Analysis Chart—It's Never Too Late to Apologize.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Student devices or writing paper
- "This Is Just to Say" poem (one per student)
- "The Scarlet Ibis" (one per student)
- SOAPSTone Graphic Organizer (attached, one per student)
- Songs/poems for analysis (one per student/group)
- Text Analysis Chart (attached, one per student)
- Apology Note Rubric (attached, one per student)

30 minutes

Engage

Open the **Lesson Slides** and introduce students to the essential question on **slide 3** and the lesson objective on **slide 4**.

Give students a few minutes to read the poem "**This Is Just To Say**" by William Carlos Williams. Display the poem from the poets.org website or provide students with the link or a printed copy.

Display **slide 5**. Have students discuss the questions with an Elbow Partner:

- *What is the speaker apologizing for?*
- *What is his tone?*
- *Does he mean it?*

Ask for volunteers to share out their thoughts with the whole class.

Additional Questions

Other questions you might ask to engage students include: Who is an apology intended for: the person giving the apology or the person receiving it? Why is this important?

30 minutes

Explore

Tell students that sometimes our regrets can be a little more serious than eating someone else's plums. The poems and songs they are going to analyze deal with deeper regrets. They will look at the figurative language in the text to figure out what regret the speaker discusses in each.

Organize students into groups of four. Display **slide 6** and pass out copies of the **SOAPSTone Graphic Organizer**. Briefly preview the SOAPSTone acronym with students.

Assign each group a poem or song. Ask students to use the SOAPSTone prompts to analyze the lyrics in order to figure out what the speaker regrets.

Teacher's Note: Choosing Poems and Songs

Preview and choose which poems and songs you will use with your student groups. We recommend that you provide each group with a different poem/song. Options include: "Regret," by Olivia Ward Bush-Banks; "Dear Past Self," by Isabella Fillspipe; "Hurt," by Johnny Cash; "Fire and Rain," by James Taylor; "Begin Again," by Rachel Platten;

"Begin Again," by Rachel Platten; and "Blank Page," by Christina Aguilera.

Depending on the size of your class and the number of groups you will create, you might not need all of the suggested options. Provide printed copies of the lyrics or share the link so students can view the lyrics online.

Optional: Class Song Analysis

As an alternative, consider choosing one of the songs to play in class and have the class analyze the lyrics.

Use the Three Stray, One Stays strategy to rotate groups so that one group member stays behind to share what was discussed as different people rotate through the group.

Optional: Distance Learning Modification

To make use of this strategy in a synchronous digital session, consider using digital breakout rooms to place students in groups. For an asynchronous digital lesson, consider having students complete the SOAPSTone Graphic Organizer independently and discuss what they have learned through a Padlet discussion or discussion board in the LMS. Download all attachments to use this lesson in your LMS.

30 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 7**. Distribute copies of "**The Scarlet Ibis**" by James Hurst to students, or provide access to the story online, such as via Actively Learn. Distribute copies of the **Text Analysis Chart**. Tell students that as they read the story, they will be analyzing key scenes to draw inferences about when the character feels regret and making notes in their charts. Consider pairing students with their Elbow Partner from earlier in the lesson to read the story and complete the chart.

Teacher's Note: Scenes to Analyze

Possible key scenes to analyze occur in the following paragraphs: paragraphs 1-2; paragraph 5; paragraphs 14-19; paragraph 38; and paragraph 87-end.

After students have read the text, review students' Text Analysis Chart responses as a whole class. During the discussion, pose the following question: *What does the author say about regret in the text?*

Optional: Distance Learning Modification

To make use of this activity in an online or distance learning environment, have students complete their Text Analysis Charts in an application such as Google Docs. You may also consider making this activity a discussion board post to which students can respond directly. Download all attachments to use this lesson in your LMS.

30 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 8**. Come back to the poem "This Is Just to Say." Ask students to write an apology from their own perspective or based on their own life experiences using the poem as a model.

Teacher's Note: Apology Tone

Point out to students the tone of the apology here, noting the speaker's ending of the apology note ("they were so delicious/so sweet/and so cold"), as if to imply that the speaker isn't truly sorry. It seems like the speaker might be rubbing it in the reader's face, making this an ineffective apology. Students might choose to rewrite this apology note to make it more sincere, to write an apology note in the same style as the original about something from their own lives or experiences, or to write a similar apology note, but one that is more sincere, based on something from their own lives or experiences.

If there is time, ask for volunteers to share their apology poems with the class.

Optional: Distance Learning Modification

This assignment could be completed using Google Docs and included in Google Classroom or another LMS.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 9**. Ask students to write another apology. This one will pertain to the characters in "The Scarlet Ibis." The apology should be written to Doodle from the perspective of Brother, using the evidence from the text to support what Brother might say to Doodle, if he could.

Pass out copies of the **Apology Note Rubric** so that students can review the guidelines used to evaluate their work.

When students have finished writing, ask for volunteers to share their apologies with the class.

Optional: Distance Learning Modification

This assignment could be completed using Google Docs and included in Google Classroom or another LMS.

Resources

- Aalmeidah. (2017, Jan. 19). Plum. [Photograph]. Pixabay. https://pixabay.com/illustrations/plum-fruit-fruits-orchard-nature-1992429/
- Actively Learn. (n.d.). https://www.activelylearn.com/
- Aguilera, C. (2012). Blank page. AZLyrics.com. https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/christinaaguilera/blankpage.html
- Bush-Banks, O. W. (1905). Regret. https://poets.org/poem/regret
- Fillspipe, I. (2017, September). Dear past self. *As Us Journal*. https://asusjournal.org/issue-5/isabella-fillspipe-dearnativeyouth-honorable-mention-middlehigh-school/
- Hurst, J. (1960). The scarlet ibis. Actively Learn. https://read.activelylearn.com/#teacher/reader/authoring/preview/816689/notes
- K20 Center (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Google classroom. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/628
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077
- K20 Center (n.d.). Three stray, one stays. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/85
- Morse, O. (2017, June 27). SOAPSTone: A strategy for reading and writing. AP Central - The College Board. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/soapstone-strategy-reading-and-writing
- Platten, R. (2014). Begin again. Song meanings. https://songmeanings.com/songs/view/3530822107859516768/
- Radin, L. (2014, October 10). Scarlet ibis. [Photograph]. https://www.flickr.com/photos/9080018@N07/15321420930
- Reznor, T. (2002). Johnny Cash: Hurt. Genius. https://genius.com/Johnny-cash-hurt-lyrics
- Taylor, J. (1970). Fire and rain. Learn Classic Rock Songs. https://www.kirbysguitarlessons.com/support-files/fire-and-rain-james-taylor.pdf
- Williams, W. C. (1934). This is just to say. The Academy of American Poets. https://poets.org/poem/just-say