

Deal with the Devil

Robert Johnson and Faustian Bargains

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	150
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	3 periods

Essential Question

What would convince someone to sacrifice something dear to them? What role do deals (Faustian bargains) play in literature and pop culture?

Summary

In this lesson, students explore what a Faustian bargain is and examine examples in literature and pop culture. Students read, watch, listen, discuss, and write an argument as they work through the concept and its lasting legacy.

Snapshot

Engage: Students participate in a "Four Corners" activity making difficult choices.

Explore: Students listen to two versions of "Crossroads" and "CUS & Discuss" their observations.

Explain: Students read two articles about Robert Johnson and Faustian Bargains and complete an H-Chart.

Engage 2: Students watch a "Mean Girls" trailer and discuss pop culture examples and motivations.

Extend: Students brainstorm and write an argumentative essay.

Evaluate: Students reflect using the strategy "How Am I Feeling? What Am I Thinking?"

Standards

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

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 12)

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

12.3.W.3: Compose argumentative essays, reviews, or op-eds that:

- introduce precise, informed claims
- include a defensible thesis
- acknowledge counterclaims or alternate perspectives
- organize claims, counterclaims, and evidence in a logical sequence
- provide the most relevant evidence to develop balanced arguments, using credible sources
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision
- use style and tone that suits the audience and purpose

Attachments

- Crossroads Lyrics Handout—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.docx
- Crossroads Lyrics Handout—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.pdf
- Crossroads Lyrics Handout—Deal With the Devil.docx
- Crossroads Lyrics Handout—Deal With the Devil.pdf
- Faustian Bargain—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.docx
- Faustian Bargain—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.pdf
- Faustian Bargain—Deal With the Devil.docx
- Faustian Bargain—Deal With the Devil.pdf
- Four Corners Labels - Deal with the Devil.docx
- Four Corners Labels - Deal with the Devil.pdf
- Lesson Slides-Deal with the Devil .pptx
- Paired Text H-Chart—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.docx
- Paired Text H-Chart—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.pdf
- Paired Text H-Chart—Deal With the Devil.docx
- Paired Text H-Chart—Deal With the Devil.pdf
- Persuasive Argument Handout Part 1—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.docx
- Persuasive Argument Handout Part 1—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.pdf
- Persuasive Argument Handout Part 1—Deal With the Devil.docx
- Persuasive Argument Handout Part 1—Deal With the Devil.pdf
- Persuasive Argument Handout Part 2—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.docx
- Persuasive Argument Handout Part 2—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.pdf
- Persuasive Argument Handout Part 2—Deal With the Devil.docx
- Persuasive Argument Handout Part 2—Deal With the Devil.pdf
- Stories of the Crossroads—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.docx
- Stories of the Crossroads—Deal With the Devil - Spanish.pdf
- Stories of the Crossroads—Deal With the Devil.docx
- Stories of the Crossroads—Deal With the Devil.pdf

Materials

- Lesson slides (attached)
- Four Corners labels (attached; print 1 set)
- Crossroads Lyrics handout (attached; 1 per student)
- Paired Text H-chart handout (attached; 1 per student)

- “Stories of the Crossroads” article handout (attached; half class or class set)
- “Faustian Bargain” article handout (attached; half class or class set)
- Persuasive Argument (parts 1 and 2) single-sided handouts (attached; 1 set per student)
- Pens/pencils

10 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Preparation

Prior to lesson, print provided **Four Corners** labels and attach to 4 different areas of the classroom. Suggestion: laminate the set and use for future similar activities.

Present the lesson using the attached **Lesson Slides**.

Display **slides 3** and **4** to introduce the essential question and learning objectives.

Display **slide 5** and introduce students to the Four Corners strategy. Use **slides 6-8** to facilitate the activity. Read the "Outcome" and "Deals" for each slide and give students time to decide which deal they will make. After they move to their selected corner/deal, ask them to discuss with their group why they chose the deal they did; then, ask them to discuss with a different group and present justifications for their decision. Repeat for **slides 6-8.** Afterwards, ask students to sit down and ask: *What do we notice about making hard decisions?*

10 minutes

Explore

Pass out the attached **Crossroads Lyrics** handout. Go to **slide 9** and introduce students to the CUS & Discuss strategy. Explain that they will first use the handout to read and annotate each song; then listen to each song. Encourage students to make additional notes as they listen. Watch/listen to each version of the song using **slides 10** and **11**. Discuss as a class what everyone noticed or wrote down. Ask students: 1) *How does the change in music genre influence the message of the lyrics?* 2) *How does the historical context influence the message of the lyrics*?

Robert Johnson version:

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=GsB_cGdgPTo

Cream version :

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=PE9HvSdcaL4

Teacher's Note: Alternative Activity

Another annotating strategy instead of CUS and Discuss is the Snapchat Annotation strategy (unhide **slide 12**) which uses a Google doc to display student answers.

25 minutes

Explain

Pass out the attached **Paired Text H-Chart** handout to all students. Then pass out the attached "**Stories of the Crossroads**" handout to half the class and the attached "**Faustian Bargains**" to the other half of the class. Display **slide 13** and explain that each student should select a partner who has a different article from the one they have. Use the Jigsaw strategy to learn more about the Faustian bargain and Robert Johnson's role in continuing this tradition. Give students time to work through the activity.

Afterwards, share-out as a group. Ask students: *What is a Faustian bargain? How did Robert Johnson illustrate his bargain?* Each group should share what they created in the middle section of their H-chart.

The definition of a Faustian bargain is: "a pact whereby a person trades something of supreme moral or spiritual importance, such as personal values or the soul, for some worldly or material benefit, such as knowledge, power, or riches" (Brittanica). When students share out, make sure what you hear aligns with the definition. If you don't see them hitting the main points, unhide **slide 14** and review the following ideas:

1. A Faustian bargain requires a person give up their morals for something worldly.
2. They make this bargain with a knowingly "evil" power.
3. What they surrender is more valuable than what they obtain.

Explain to students that on the following day they will examine Faustian bargains in pop culture. Have them start brainstorming about ideas about where they have seen this bargain on TV, in movies, etc.

Teacher's Note: Reading Level and Scaffolding

The attached "**Stories of the Crossroads**" article is at a lower reading level compared to the other article. Assign to students as you see fit.

Visit this link for more information about Faustian bargains, including a more detailed definition and examples.

Remind students about literary tropes and archetypes. *If students need an introduction to or further support in understanding tropes and/or archetypes, consider reviewing these literary elements using the LEARN resource*: Locating Archetypes in Pop Culture, Literature, And Life

This may be a good place to stop for Day 1 of instruction.

15 minutes

Engage 2

On Day 2, remind students what a Faustian Bargain is. Share your own example of a Faustian Bargain in pop culture or use the example on **slide 15**. Watch the “Mean Girls” trailer and ask students to pay close attention to the deal the main character, Cady makes and why.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=oDU84nmSDZY

After watching the clip, move to **slide 16** and ask students to share ideas about why Cady participated in the bargain. Write responses on the slide in the space provided. Ask students if they have any questions.

Next, display **slide 17** to brainstorm about more current examples of the Faustian Bargain in the Disney movies presented. Ask how the examples displayed show these characteristics. Brainstorm with students about what motivates each character to want to make/take the deal.

80 minutes

Extend

Move to **slide 18**. Have students work with an Elbow Partner and write 3 other pop culture examples that haven't already been discussed in class on a separate sheet of paper. Ask each pair to stand and share 1 idea from their list. Write their ideas either on the white board, on a new slide, or on a Google doc. As their ideas make it to the board, have them sit down.

Advise students that they will be writing a persuasive paper convincing the character they have chosen to either take or not take the bargain. They are welcomed to choose an idea from the board or something else. Pass out the attached **Persuasive Argument** handout and ask students to choose their own pop culture character example to write to. Explain the handout using **slides 20** and **21**. Highlight how they should see this as a conversation with the character.

Remind students that they will be writing in MLA format using third person. To know what kinds of evidence will convince the chosen character, they will need to first understand the character's motivations and desires (see Part 1 of handout). Then, once the students understand why the character might choose to make this deal, they can move on to Part 2 and figure out how to convince them to take it or not. Give students time to fill out both parts of the Persuasive Argument graphic organizer before asking them to write their persuasive argument.

The rest of class will be spent writing.

Teacher's Note: Examples and Scaffolding

It's up to you whether or not students can use examples from the class discussion to write about or whether there can be duplicates. **Slide 19** provides a list of pop culture examples that you can unhide if you wish to give students some ideas. Alternatively, you could have students walk around the board and write their ideas all at once, then review a few examples and cross out duplicates.

There are 2 different options when it comes to printing off the Persuasive Argument handout. You may print it off double-sided or single-sided. If students need to be able to see what they wrote for Part 1 more easily, then printing single-sided may be best.

If students need a reminder on MLA, review the K20 lesson "Making Sense of MLA."

This may be a good place to stop for Day 2 of instruction. Remind students that on the following day will be a full writing day, so they need their graphic organizers. Day 3 will continue the Extend in giving students more time to write.

10 minutes

Evaluate

On Day 3, no matter where students are in their writing, have them stop near the last 10 minutes of class. Display **slide 22** and share the instructional strategy How am I Feeling? What am I Thinking? Pass out sticky notes to each student. Ask them to answer the questions from the slide on their sticky note and place it on a designated wall as they are leaving.

Resources

- 1951Fidel. (2012, Oct. 16). Cream Crossroads [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/PE9HvSdcaL4
- Encyclopedia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). *Faustian bargain*. Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Faustian-bargain
- K20 Center. (n.d.). CUS and discuss. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/162
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Four corners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/138
- K20 Center. (n.d.). How am I feeling? What am I thinking? Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/187
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Jigsaw. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/179
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Locating archetypes in pop culture, literature, and life. LEARN. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lesson/383
- K20 Center. (n.d.). "Making sense of MLA." Lesson. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lesson/2138
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Paired texts h-chart. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/132
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Snapchat annotation. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/181
- Music Making Manifesto. (2012, Mar. 7). Robert Johnson Cross Roads - Cross Road Blues Song and Lyrics [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/GsB_cGdgPTo
- Rotten Tomatoes Classic Trailers. (2017, November 15). Mean girls (2004) trailer #1: Movieclips Classic Trailers. YouTube. https://youtu.be/oDU84nmSDZY