

Nursing Then and Now: Memoirs of Alcott and Whitman

Compare & Contrast Nursing Past and Present

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Grade Level	10th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	150-200 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts, Nursing	**Duration**	3-4 class periods
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition, American Literature		

Essential Question

How do we, as humans, overcome adversity? How has the field of nursing changed from the Civil War to the present?

Summary

In this lesson, students look through the lens of nursing to think about what it means to overcome adversity. Students will read Civil War-era memoirs from Walt Whitman and Louisa May Alcott. They will then compare and contrast the descriptions of nursing in those texts with an account of modern nursing as told from the perspective of a practicing nurse. Using a hands-on activity, students will experience nursing triage and then reflect on what they have learned—both about themselves and the profession of nursing.

Snapshot

Engage

Students create their own definitions of "resilience" and "adversity," including examples, and engage in a Think, Pair, Share activity with a partner and with the whole class.

Explore

Students devise questions about nursing for the ICAP professional using Padlet, and they read and analyze the Alcott and Whitman historical memoirs about nursing.

Explain

Students interview a nurse using the Padlet questions they developed or watch an interview with a nurse.

Extend

Students collaborate as they experience a triage activity led by the school nurse and answer one of the essential questions by writing an informative One-Pager using the Senses of War chart, the excerpts, and their experience during the nurse interview and triage activity.

Evaluate

Students reflect on the lesson using the Mirror, Microscope, Binoculars questions.

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 11)

11.3.R.1: Analyze the extent to which historical, cultural, and/or global perspectives affect authors' stylistic choices in grade-level literary and informational texts.
11.3.R.7: Evaluate how two or more texts address similar themes or topics, using textual evidence to support their claims and inferences.
11.3.W.2: Compose informative essays, reports, or technical writing that:

- objectively introduce and develop topics
- include a defensible thesis
- incorporate evidence (e.g., specific facts, details, charts and graphs, data)
- maintain an organized structure
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision
- establish and maintain a formal style
- emulate literary devices from mentor texts

Attachments

- Hospital Sketches Excerpt—Nursing Then and Now - Spanish.docx
- Hospital Sketches Excerpt—Nursing Then and Now - Spanish.pdf
- Hospital Sketches Excerpt—Nursing Then and Now.docx
- Hospital Sketches Excerpt—Nursing Then and Now.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Nursing Then and Now.pptx
- One-Pager Rubric—Nursing Then and Now - Spanish.docx
- One-Pager Rubric—Nursing Then and Now - Spanish.pdf
- One-Pager Rubric—Nursing Then and Now.docx
- One-Pager Rubric—Nursing Then and Now.pdf
- Specimen Days Excerpt—Nursing Then and Now - Spanish.docx
- Specimen Days Excerpt—Nursing Then and Now - Spanish.pdf
- Specimen Days Excerpt—Nursing Then and Now.docx
- Specimen Days Excerpt—Nursing Then and Now.pdf
- The Wound-Dresser—Nursing Then and Now - Spanish.docx
- The Wound-Dresser—Nursing Then and Now - Spanish.pdf
- The Wound-Dresser—Nursing Then and Now.docx
- The Wound-Dresser—Nursing Then and Now.pdf
- Triage Activity Instructions—Nursing Then and Now.docx
- Triage Activity Instructions—Nursing Then and Now.pdf

Materials

- Devices with Internet access
- Lesson Slides (attached)
- *Hospital Sketches* excerpt (attached; one per student)
- *Specimen Days* excerpt (optional; attached; one per student)
- “The Wound-Dresser” (optional; attached; one per student)
- One-Pager Rubric (attached; one per student)
- Sticky notes for students (purple, yellow, and blue recommended)
- Highlighters for students
- Poster board
- Pens or pencils
- Notebook paper

- Chart paper
- Triage Activity Instructions (two copies, for the teacher and the nurse)
- Gauze (optional)
- Rubber gloves (optional)
- Stethoscopes (optional)
- Medical tape (optional)
- Penlights (optional)
- Automated blood pressure cuff (optional)
- Eye chart (optional)
- Band-Aids (optional)
- Medical tape (optional)
- Telfa dressings (optional)
- ABD gauze pads (optional)
- Fabric sling (optional)
- Alcohol swabs (optional)

15 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Interviewing a Nurse

Prior to teaching this lesson, invite a local nurse to speak with your students about pursuing a postsecondary education in nursing. Ask the nurse to take the students through a triage activity as described in the Explain phase of the lesson as well as answer students' questions. If a nurse is unavailable, you can show the video "ICAP Nurse Educator: Nursing Then and Now" in the Explain phase.

Introduce the lesson by displaying the title on **slide 2** in the attached **Lesson Slides.**

Display **slides 3-4.** Take a couple of minutes to review the essential questions and the learning objectives with your students.

Display **slide 5.** Share the Think, Pair, Share strategy with the students. Instruct the students to take out a piece of notebook paper and write their own definitions of "resilience" and "adversity."

Pair the students to share their answers and devise a common definition. Ask pairs to share their answers with the class.

60 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: "Senses of War" Chart

Before class and to save time, prepare the "Senses of War" chart on a piece of poster board. The chart should include rows with the following three titles: "Looks Like," "Sounds Like," and "Feels Like." Instruct students to add their sticky notes to the chart within the corresponding rows (one color in each). Alternatively, you or a student can write the students' observations as they discuss the text.

Display **slide 6.** Have students go to the ICAP Nursing Questions Padlet using the QR code or Bitly on the slide. Instruct students to write at least two questions they would like to ask a nurse. Remind the students to ask higher-order thinking questions by creating open-ended questions.

Display **slide 7.** Distribute copies of the ***Specimen Days*** **Excerpt** and ***Hospital Sketches*** **Excerpt,** along with highlighters. As you are reading the first text aloud to the students, as a class, complete a Looks Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like chart entitled "Senses of War." Repeat these actions with the second text on the same chart.

Optional: "The Wound-Dresser"

If you would prefer having your students read a shorter work by Whitman in which he includes a riveting account of his experiences as a war nurse, you may distribute copies of **"The Wound-Dresser"** in place of copies of the *Specimen Days* Excerpt.

Display **slide 8.** Direct students to read the text on their own using the Why-Lighting strategy. Students should highlight the parts of the text that remind them of "adversity" and "resilience." Remind students to include why they highlighted passages in the margin of the paper.

Display **slide 9.** Return to the Padlet, and instruct the students to write one or two more questions they would ask a nurse after reading the two texts.

20 minutes

Explain

Teacher's Note: Preparing for the Interview

Provide background information to your students about the nurse before they come to your class, including their name, work location, type of nursing job, education, connection to your school, etc. The visiting nurse should plan to come on day two of the lesson.

Display **slide 10.** Welcome and introduce the visiting nurse. Ask students to introduce themselves to the nurse. Share the ICAP Nursing Questions Padlet with the students. Call on each student to read one question for the visiting nurse. Continue to let students ask questions for half of the class period.

Optional: ICAP Video

If a nurse is unavailable, you can have students watch the video "ICAP Nurse Educator: Nursing Then and Now" instead.

60 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Performing the Triage Activity

At least one day prior to the triage activity, take a few moments to read through the **Triage Activity Instructions** handout. As the handout also includes important instructions for the visiting nurse (indicated by the red text), please make sure to share the handout with the nurse ahead of the activity. Ensure also that the nurse will be able to bring to the classroom some or all of the equipment listed near the top of the handout and in the Materials list of this lesson.

Display **slide 11.** Ask the nurse to give directions for the triage activity.

Display **slides 12–13.** Direct the students to complete a One-Pager on a piece of notebook paper, answering one of the essential questions by reflecting on what they have learned about nursing over the past few class periods. Students should reflect upon the following as they are writing:

- Senses of War chart
- Why-Lighted articles
- Their experience during the interview and triage activity

Provide the students with the **One-Pager Rubric** to guide their writing expectations.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 14**. On pieces of notebook paper, have your students complete the Mirror, Microscope, Binoculars strategy by reflecting on what they have learned about nursing over the past few class periods. Ask students to reflect on the following prompt:

- **Mirror:** How has your thinking changed about the adversity and resilience of nursing professionals over time?
- **Microscope:** Now I can see that nursing...
- **Binoculars:** How is nursing impacted by what is going on in society? What could be done to change the field of nursing?

Collect both the Mirror, Microscope, Binoculars responses and the One-Pagers, and use them to assess student learning.

Resources

- Beers, K., and Odell, L. (2008). Holt Elements of Literature: Essentials of American Literature, 5th Course – Oklahoma Teacher's Edition. Holt Rinehart Winston.
- K20 Center. (2024, May 31). ICAP nurse educator: nursing then and now [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muO4cTC_p2A
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Looks like, sounds like, feels like. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/88
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mirror, microscope, binoculars. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/3020
- K20 Center. (n.d.). One-pager. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/72
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-pair-share. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-lighting. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128
- Whitman, W. (1865). The wound-dresser. CommonLit. https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/the-wound-dresser