

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site



Pre-Visit Lesson: *The Sandburg Spectrum* Grades 9-12

Lesson Length

Multiple class periods

Common Core Standards

Reading for Information Standard

- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. CCSS.ELA.Literacy-RI.9-10.2

Reading Standard for Literature

- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. CCSS.ELA.Literacy-RL.9-10.2

Language Standards

- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. CCSS.ELA.Literacy-L.9-10.1
- Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. CCSS.ELA.Literacy-L.9-10.6

Writing Standards

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. CCSS.ELA.Literacy-W.9-10.2
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically. CCSS.ELA.Literacy-W.9-10.6
- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. CCSS.ELA.Literacy-W.9-10.7
- Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advance searchers effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation. CCSS.ELA.Literacy-W.9-10.8

Learning Targets

- I can synthesize information from various informational sources into a multimedia presentation.
- I can organize information to create cohesion and emphasize well-chosen, relevant and sufficient facts in a presentation format.
- I can conduct a short research project using multiple print and digital sources.

Materials Needed

- To Be or Not to Be activating strategy
- Computer and projector
- Student access to computer lab or laptops, including PowerPoint and Internet access
- Notebook paper and pencils
- Envelopes

Procedure

Activating Strategy

To Be or Not to Be - In groups of 4, students are given an envelope that contains a variety of words and phrases. Students are to empty contents of the envelope, sorting into the categories...To Be a Theme or Not to be a Theme... (see attached form titled To Be or Not to Be).

Teaching Strategy

1. Divide students into 6 groups. Assign each group a “theme” and related question from Sandburg’s life to research. Suggested themes include
 - Early Days and Education: How did Sandburg’s early years as the son of immigrants shape him? What educational and life experiences did he have as a young man?
 - Just the Facts: How did Sandburg, the newspaper reporter, influence public opinion about social ills (e.g. The Chicago Race Riots)?
 - Poet of the People: Who/what are typical subjects of Sandburg’s poetry? How did he earn this nickname?
 - The Boys from Illinois: Explore the connection between Sandburg and Lincoln. Why would Lincoln particularly appeal to Sandburg as a subject for a detailed biography?
 - A Populist in Politics: Sandburg’s politics were no secret—and sometimes proved dangerous. How did Sandburg view the government’s role in addressing social problems? Why might his political activism have seemed controversial?
 - Folk Favorites: Explore Sandburg’s fascination with folktales and folk music culminating in *The American Songbag* and *Rootabaga Stories*. What aspects of his background and character does this fascination reveal?

2. Instruct students to consult multiple websites to gather information, photos, and excerpts from primary documents and/or Sandburg's work to present to the class. Students should assess websites for reliability and validity.
3. Using the resources gathered, each group will create a PowerPoint presentation giving background on their assigned theme and answering the theme-related questions. Teachers should set a minimum number of slides and a suggested time limit for the presentation.
4. Students should cite their sources internally and/or create a more general Works Cited page for the last slide. Photographs also should be credited.
5. While each group presents its Powerpoint, the listeners evaluate the group's presentation and take notes.

Summarizing Strategy

Quick Talk - Teacher will establish a specified time frame (1 – 2 minutes, use a timer to signal when time is up). With at partner, students will summarize their learning regarding the themes within Sandburg's work. Is there a commonality?

Sites and Resources for Students

Penelope Niven, author of Sandburg's definitive biography:

http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/s_z/sandburg/sandburg_life.htm

Sandburg's Radical Politics

http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/s_z/sandburg/radical.htm

Sandburg as a Journalist

http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/s_z/sandburg/journalism.htm

Sandburg and Folk Music/Folklore

<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5816>

Rootabaga Stories: (1922 reprint!)

<http://www.josepherry.net/rootabaga/>

Article on significance

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/article/238530>

To Be or Not to Be...a Theme

In groups of 4, students will sort the contents of the envelope in two groups...

"To Be" or "Not to Be" a Theme

Teacher – make copies for the number of groups you will have (cardstock will be a great option to ensure prolonged use), cut on solid lines and put into an envelope for student use.

Man's inhumanity to his fellow man.	The individualist in revolt against social conformity.
Conflicting loyalties: You're in trouble if you do; you're in trouble if you don't.	Having "absolute power," domination over others.
Love	Hate
Kindness	Evil
Lost	Hazards of passing judgment.
Pride	Finding hope after tragedy.