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Literature Made Fun!



Inherit the Wind

BY JEROME LAWRENCE & ROBERT E. LEE



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Anticipation Guide

Objectives: Analyzing personal values and beliefs
Anticipating events in the play
Relating to the play

Activity

Before you begin reading *Inherit the Wind*, jot down brief notes to remind yourself of your answers to the questions that follow. Don't worry about right or wrong responses; there aren't any. As you study Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's play based on events related to the Scopes trial of 1925, you would encounter many of these themes. You will find it helpful to know where you stand on these issues.

Consider these facts before you start writing your answers:

- In the last decade of the twentieth century, 5,718 incidents of attempted book banning in the United States were reported to or recorded by the American Library Association (ALA). Research suggests that for each banning challenge reported, as many as four or five go unreported. Authors of the most frequently "challenged" books of the 1990s included Mark Twain, Alice Walker, J. D. Salinger, Maurice Sendak, Harper Lee, Aldous Huxley, Kurt Vonnegut, Stephen King, J. K. Rowling, and Nobel Prize winners John Steinbeck and Toni Morrison. As of the early twenty-first century, book-banning incidents kept pace. Between 2000 and 2005, the ALA reported more than 3,000 attempts to remove books from schools and public libraries.
- As of 2003, about 2.2 percent of American students were homeschooled, for a total of about 1.1 million children, a 29 percent increase since 1999. The National Center for Education Statistics asked parents who home schooled their children why they made the choice to take their children out of public or private schools. The most common response was a concern about inadequate school environments. Other concerns included a desire "to provide religious or moral instruction" or to care for a child with special needs.
- According to a researcher participating in a symposium at the American Academy for the Advancement of Science in 2007, slightly more American adults on average qualify as scientifically literate than do European or Japanese adults. About 28 percent of American adults are currently scientifically literate, but more than 70 percent of American adults would have trouble reading and understanding the science section of the *New York Times*.

How do you think these concerns should be addressed? Be prepared to give reasons for your answers.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I, Scene I**Finding a Good Lawyer: Bert Cates's Letter to the *Baltimore Herald***

Objectives: Writing persuasively in the voice of a character in the play
Understanding character motivation and behavior

Activity

In Act I, Scene I, Bert Cates tells Mr. Meeker the bailiff and jailer that he wrote to “that newspaper in Baltimore” and “they’re sending somebody” to be his attorney.

Pick up Bert’s pen and write a letter in his own style to the *Baltimore Herald*, asking them to hire your defense counsel for your upcoming trial in Hillsboro. Your goal is to persuade strangers running a well-known newspaper in a big city six hundred miles away from your small town to help you and to convince them that your seemingly hopeless case is somehow worth the effort.

What arguments can you think of that Bert could use to convince the publishers of the *Herald* to help him? What points would be most persuasive for the folks at the *Herald*? What would not be of interest or concern to them? What doubts would they have about hiring a lawyer for Bert, and how should he address those doubts? What should Bert expect they would ask of him in return for this assistance, if anything? Be prepared to read your letter aloud in class and to defend your arguments.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II, Scene I

Interviewing a Character

Objectives: Understanding the purposes and format of an interview
Conducting an interview under varying circumstances

Activity

Profiling people in the news has been a staple feature of journalism for many years. For this activity, imagine that you're a journalist in the 1920s assigned to interview one of the people portrayed in *Inherit the Wind*. Take your favorite character, or one who you find particularly hard to understand or even to tolerate, and conduct an imaginary interview with that character.

First, think of how you would approach your subject for an interview. Do some research on the person you will interview and find out as much as you can about him or her. Your main source of information will be *Inherit the Wind*, of course. How would you contact your subject, keeping in mind that you have only 1920s technologies to rely on? If the person you wanted to interview refused at first to talk with you, what would you do next? What ways would you suggest to the people you work for that your publication use to promote this interview?

What format would you suggest for the interview? What questions would you be dying to ask your subject about one of the biggest trials of the century? Which ones would you avoid or phrase with extreme care? What ways would you have to record your conversation with your subject?

Write out your initial request for an interview (whether it is in a letter, or a carefully planned speech for you to deliver in person, or through some other means). Then draft a list of the questions you want to ask, including follow-up ones, easy or "softball" ones, and others meant to get a real scoop for your readers.

Now imagine that you are a reporter for a TV or web news magazine-type show in the present, and that the trial in *Inherit the Wind* took place in the present. How would you this affect your interview? How would you have to do your research, contact your potential subject, and conduct your interview differently? What parts of your job would remain the same? Be prepared to give reasons for your answers.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act III**Writing a Letter**

Objectives: Analyzing a change in a character
Writing from a character's perspective and style

Activity

Rachel's opinions on evolutionism and creationism have changed throughout the course of the play. In the beginning of the play, even though she admires and respects Cates, she thinks he is foolish for breaking the law. In addition, she doesn't fully understand what evolution is, nor does she accept the fact that Cates has critical views of religion.

In Act III, however, Rachel changes her opinion: She has read *Origin of Species*, and even though she doesn't understand or agree with it, she agrees that people have the right to be open-minded and to express ideas that are contrary to those accepted by society.

As Rachel, write an apology letter to Cates for your unwillingness to see his point of view and respect his opinions. Also, include how the trial has changed your perspective.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Arranging a Soundtrack

Objective: Creating a soundtrack for a production of *Inherit the Wind*

Activity

From the very beginning, music was considered an essential part of both the theatergoing and the movie-watching experiences. A great musical score gave the audience vital emotional cues to the plot. Today, movie soundtracks or theater scores are considered a big business all by themselves, and fans can easily pick up a CD of the music to their favorite movies..

Imagine that you are the music supervisor hired to create a soundtrack for either a new movie version of the play or a new stage production of it. You must decide what kind of music to use to create the soundtrack. You can choose music from the 1920's; religious hymns, music from the twenty or twenty-first century or any combination of these.

Make a list of at least four significant dramatic sequences in *Inherit the Wind* that you will need to find music or sound effects for, and match them with songs or other sound you think will work effectively. Then write a brief statement on why you think that sound or song is appropriate.