

NEH Steinbeck Institute 2013

Teacher/Participant: Daniel Clare
Osborn High School
Manassas City, VA
Unit Suitable for Pre-AP 9th Grade English

UNIT PLAN - Cannery Row

“From the (rock) stars to the (musical) tidepool of your backyard...”

Materials:

John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*
Selections from Steinbeck's *Log from the Sea of Cortez* and *About Ed Ricketts*
John Steinbeck's *The Snake*
Excerpts from Billboard.com, iTunes.com, Rolling Stone Magazine, NY Times, YouTube

Objectives:

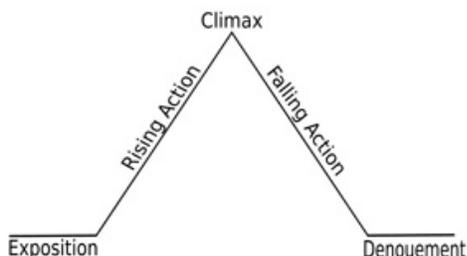
- VA SOL Standard 9.1 The student will make planned oral presentations independently and in small groups.
- VA SOL Standard 9.2 The student will produce, analyze, and evaluate auditory, visual, and written media messages.
- VA SOL Standard 9.4 The student will read, comprehend, and analyze a variety of literary texts including narratives, narrative nonfiction, poetry, and drama.
- VA SOL Standard 9.6 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writings for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- VA SOL Standard 9.7 The student will self-and peer-edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Essential Questions:

- What is John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row* about and how is it related to ecology and marine biology?
- What is the definition of a community?
- What is close reading?
- What is annotation?
- What is "life" in the City of Manassas like?
- What stories have I gathered during my lifetime in the City of Manassas?
- What people, places, and things have impacted me most (the good, the bad, and the ugly!) in the City of Manassas?

Overview:

One of the more difficult aspects of teaching a book like *Cannery Row* to a group of high school students is helping them understand the book's lack of a traditional plot structure. Students have long been taught that good stories are formulaically constructed in accordance with a traditional plot diagram that generally consists of the following components:



While it does have a series of individual narratives that endure throughout the text (and something that vaguely resembles the diagram above), *Cannery Row* functions more like a series of vignettes. As a unified whole, it is difficult for students to articulate exactly WHAT *Cannery Row* is about (the BIG picture). Through a close reading of the preface chapter in *Cannery Row* paired with selections from *Log from the Sea of Cortez*, students will begin to contemplate the non-teleological ramifications of Steinbeck's form. In a sense, the formlessness of the text (and life) IS what it is all about.

To begin our discussion, students will be led through a series of introductory activities, lectures, classmate presentations, and contemplative writings. The overarching lesson and the connecting of the enduring/essential questions will require tremendous scaffolding, but I think the copious front loading will pave the way for truly authentic understanding, critical thinking, fruitful classroom discussion, and an appreciation for *Cannery Row* beyond what might be considered the norm. Students will exercise and develop their critical thinking, close reading, annotation, writing, editing, and presentation skill sets.

Day One: Classroom CD Compilation (part I)

Students are provided with photocopies of the current *Billboard Hot 100* (<http://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100>) and *iTunes Top 100 Singles* (<http://www.apple.com/itunes/charts/songs/>) music industry charts (teacher will explain the function and form of these resources) and highlighters to indicate which songs/artists they are familiar with.

Students will be prompted with the following questions (allocate 10-15 minutes):

- 1) What percentage (0-100%) of the albums from the current *Billboard Hot 100* chart do you recognize?
- 2) How do you explain the popularity of the artists in *Billboard*?
E.g.) Are the artists rated highly on the basis of their musical ability, fashion sense, sex appeal...
- 3) What percentage (0-100%) of the albums from the *iTunes Top 100 Singles* chart do you recognize?
- 4) How do you explain the popularity of the artists on *iTunes*?
E.g.) Are the artists rated highly on the basis of their musical ability, fashion sense, sex appeal...

In a “Think-Pair-Share” activity (allocate 10-15 minutes), students will be asked to co-construct a “How to Become a Rock Star” internet manual (similar to eHow.com, WikiHow.com, about.com - the teacher should provide examples of format) that bases its instructional skill set on the two documents (Billboard / iTunes charts); each student team will need to come up with 10 “bulletpoints for success” and briefly explain, in writing (and complete sentences), why each category is important. For instance, if the students were writing about “How to be Successful in Life,” a list might begin as follows:

- **Do well in high school and college**
Individuals who work hard in high school and college will have built a meaningful foundation for success later in life.
Taking challenging courses that are aligned with one’s personal interests and goals will throw open the doors of opportunity.

During this activity, the teacher will move throughout the room to monitor progress, provide encouragement, and offer feedback.

Students will return to full-class format for discussion. Each pair will be asked to write their “most important bulletpoint” on the board. Once an item has been addressed, other groups will need to offer alternative bulletpoints (no duplicates). As a class, we will dissect each bulletpoint and try to determine, given our data sources, how each point was identified and why.

After group discussion, students will spend time selecting one song (their song does not have to be listed on “the charts”) that each student thinks best embodies their generation and themselves personally (allocate 10-15 minutes). After a student’s song selection is complete, have them write down the lyrics (cellphones and tablets can be useful here for recovering lyrics) or print them out (songlyrics.com, azlyrics.com, etc.) for each student. For homework, have students answer the following questions / attach their lyric sheets:

Student name:

Name of song / artist:

- 1) Why I chose this artist/musician’s song
- 2) The relevance of this song to my generation
- 3) The relevance of this song to myself personally

Day Two: Classroom CD Compilation (part II)

At the beginning of class, have students take out their homework responses. As a warm-up, have students read their song's lyrics individually and complete the following "challenge" on a post-it note or 3x5" index card with their name listed on the back (students are NOT to identify the artist/musician on the card in any way at this point):

- In exactly 15 words, what story does this song transmit to the listening audience? (allocate 10-15 minutes)

Each student will stick their post-it / index card on the board. Again, students are NOT to identify the artist/musician by name..

After every student is finished, students will conduct a "gallery walk" and will take approximately 10 minutes to read through the 15 word story summaries.

The class will then regroup to discuss/choose (based on the condensed stories) the best 10 stories* for inclusion in the class' album.

*best in the sense that the story relates to their generation / themselves individually

Results (names of artists/musicians) of the 10 "best" stories/songs will be revealed to the students - these songs will become the "official" classroom album. Those songs not selected for inclusion in the album will be archived as "b sides" on a separate (but no less awesome!) album.

IN CLASS ACTIVITY / HOMEWORK: Each student will be required to provide a more in-depth written analysis of their personal song selection (regardless of whether their song was chosen for the class' album). Analysis must be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, must include a meaningful introduction, and must answer the following questions:

- 1) What message did the artist/musician attempt to imbed/convey in this song?
- 2) Is this song's meaning immediately obvious to the listener or does it require a second (or third!) listen to understand it?
- 3) Will every listener take away the same meaning (take gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality into account) you did?
- 4) What is the most memorable part of the song (the hook)? What, in your opinion, makes this the most memorable?
- 5) WHY, above all other songs, did you choose THIS song? How/why does this song embody you/your generation?
- 6) Do you view this song as a single or as part of an album?**
- 7) What, in your own words, makes an album great? Is this song part of a great album?**

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE SONG'S LYRICS TO YOUR ANALYSIS PAPER

Day Three: Classroom CD Compilation Part III: The death of radio/video and what “makes” an album?

Students will begin the day by discussing the contents of their compilation mixtape. Were they disappointed or surprised in the results? Why? One song will be listened to (selected by the teacher for “classroom appropriateness”) entirely and the class will analyze the lyrical content in order to discuss plot, tone, mood, literary devices, rhetorical appeals, etc.

The song will then be discussed in relation to the last two questions from the previous class’ homework assignment:

6) Do you “see” this song as a single or as part of an album?

7) What, in your own words, makes an album great? Is this song part of a great album?

Students will read the NY Times article “The Album: a Commodity in Disfavor:”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/26/business/media/26music.html?pagewanted=all>

Teacher leads students through a brief discussion of the internet age’s impact on the music industry and the transition from radio to video to downloadable/streaming formats.

YouTube video: “Internet Killed the Video Star” by the Limousines: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zx5tSmOY_iM

YouTube video: “Video Killed the Radio Star” by the Buggles: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwuy4hHO3YQ>

Ask students “what will “kill” the download/stream?”

Students are instructed to take out their Billboard and iTunes top 100 charts from the previous lesson.

Teacher hands out photocopies of Billboard’s 200 (list of current top 200 ALBUMS) and Rolling Stone Magazine’s 500 Greatest Albums of All Time (alternatively, teacher can simply explore these resources on a SmartBoard or projector to “save trees”). Allow students time to contemplate and respond (in writing) to the following questions:

- 1) What is the correlation between the Billboard Hot 100 and Billboard 200 charts?
- 2) What is the correlation between the Billboard 200 chart and Rolling Stone Magazine’s 500 Greatest Albums of All Time chart?
- 3) Are any of these resources truly objective?
- 4) Which resource do you think is more valuable or important? Why?
- 5) As an artifact, what does the Billboard Hot 100 or iTunes Top 100 say about the state of the music industry today?

For HOMEWORK:

Students select one album from Rolling Stone Magazine’s Top 500 list to research and listen to. Ideally, students will have access to the internet as many of these full albums are available for “free streaming” via YouTube. For example:

Abbey Road by The Beatles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2SBYnLjAJA>

Dark Side of the Moon by Pink Floyd: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fi1sBwV1-tU>

Students answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the name of your album / artist?
- 2) Why did you choose this album / artist?
- 3) What makes this album worthy of inclusion on the “Top 500” list?
- 4) What, specifically, is your favorite song on the album? Why?
- 5) Is there a “hit” on this album? What is it? What makes it a hit?
- 6) Is this album best enjoyed in bits and pieces or in one long sitting?
- 7) Are all of the songs on this album connected? If you take one song out, would it “hurt” the listener?

Day Four: From the (rock) stars to the (musical) tidepool... close reading/listening/viewing skills..

Students will begin the day by taking out their homework and presenting their responses to the last two questions.

Each student will introduce the name of their album, the artist (briefly), and comment on these items from the previous lesson:

- 6) Is this album best enjoyed in bits and pieces or in one long sitting?
- 7) Are all of the songs on this album connected? If you take one song out of the album, would it negatively affect the listener's experience? Why/why not?

After students have reported out to the class, have them address the following new questions:

- 1) When you listen to music, do you usually THINK about what you are hearing (lyrically and/or musically) or do you simply lay back and "take it all in" with minimal participation?
- 2) Do you think, if you tried hard enough, you could hear EVERY instrument on your favorite track of music? Have you ever tried to do this before?

Play Herbie Hancock's song *Chameleon* for your students and ask them to note, and try to identify, each instrument/layer as they hear it: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbkqE4fpvdI>

Have students write down what they like/dislike about this song and briefly discuss their thoughts on the piece.

Chameleon is a song that is composed in several additive layers - each instrument is added to the mix one at a time. This allows for a slow but potent recognition of just how complex seemingly simplistic music, art, literature, video, etc. can be. Many students have probably never slowed down (even listening to their favorite songs!) long enough to contemplate the physical richness of their favorite songs, books, movies, video games, etc. This is a "close listening".

Another Herbie Hancock song that utilizes the same technique is *Watermelon Man*:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bjPIBC4h_8

The following video allows for a "close listening" that demonstrate "layers" in music (in a very visual way):

tUnE-yArDs - Bizzness: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=kzLwWT-DI7M#t=25

After students have finished with the videos / discussion, as them the following questions:

- 1) What does a "close listening" of a song or video provide you with? What do you get out of this sort of listening/viewing experience?
- 2) Have you ever read a book, poem, or short story with this same degree of analytical deconstruction?

After discussion, show students these (or a similar picture) pictures:



Ask students what the picture depicts - what would they expect to see at this location? Have them “deconstruct” the photo. Then, show the following pictures and comment on the surprising diversity of the environment.

Discuss with students the idea of “staying low and going slow...” As students are listening to music or reading books in a scholarly manner, they should pay full attention to the seemingly insignificant details. While we are prone to / trained to immediately tune into the “big picture,” the minutiae of everyday life is often where the true magic lies. Like songs in an album, or chapters in a book, all of the pieces belong to the collective whole and should be regarded as worthy of our attention on some level.

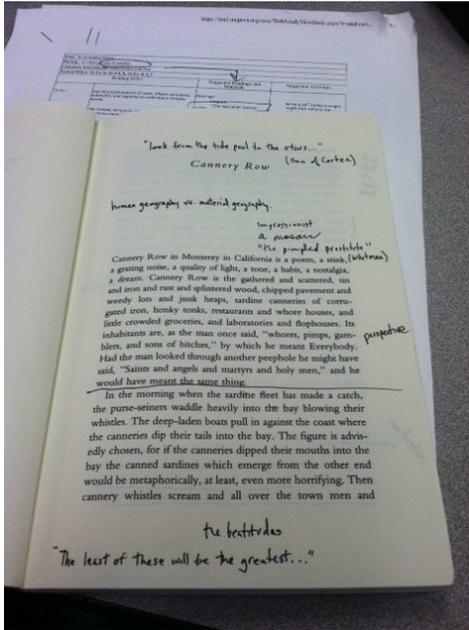
For HOMEWORK, have students read and annotate the preface chapter to *Cannery Row* and write a short summary of the main ideas. Have students complete the following Vocabulary/Diction matrix as well:

1a) The word “ nostalgia ” means:	1b) What other words in the preface suggest the same idea?
2a) The word “ martyr ” means:	2b) What is the effect of the word “martyr” in this sentence?
3a) The word “ grating ” means:	3b) What other words connect to “grating” in this sentence?

NEXT PAGE...

Day Five: Close-reading of the Preface (and a general introduction) to *Cannery Row*, Steinbeck's literary "album" of Monterey's "greatest hits"

Students begin the day by attempting to define **close reading** and **annotation**. What does it mean to conduct a close reading of a text? What does it mean to properly annotate a text? Teacher will ask students to revisit their summary and vocabulary/diction matrix homework. In one sense, this sort of active inquiry (the homework activity) and open participation with the content of a text is what needs to happen every time a student reads. When we conduct **close readings** as a specific exercise, the level of involvement in the dissection of a text must be amplified. What does an annotated text look like?



How does a close reading relate to our "close listening" exercise (Herbie Hancock, etc.)? How does close reading relate to our "close viewing" exercise (tidepool photos, etc.)? Referring back to Hancock's *Chameleon's* additive layer structure, tell students that books, stories, poems, movies, art, and music all share similar creative properties. Just as they discovered the minutiae of voices and harmonies in *Chameleon*, through the act of **close reading**, they will begin to notice much more significance and detail in the literature they read. (15 min).

Teacher will re-read the preface chapter of *Cannery Row* to the class.

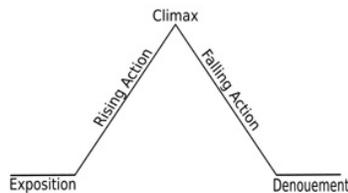
Teacher will explain that this authorial apology is Steinbeck's explanation for his creative process... like liner notes from an album, this provides powerful insight into his creative drive, purpose, and challenges.

Students will specifically contemplate the following quotation and will answer the questions that follow:

"How can the poem and the stink and the grating noise--the quality of light, the tone, the habit and the dream--be set down alive? When you collect marine animals there are certain flat worms so delicate that they are almost impossible to capture whole, for they break and tatter under the touch. You must let them

ooze and crawl of their own will onto a knife blade and then lift them gently into your bottle of sea water. And perhaps that might be the way to write this book--to open the page and to let the stories crawl in by themselves."

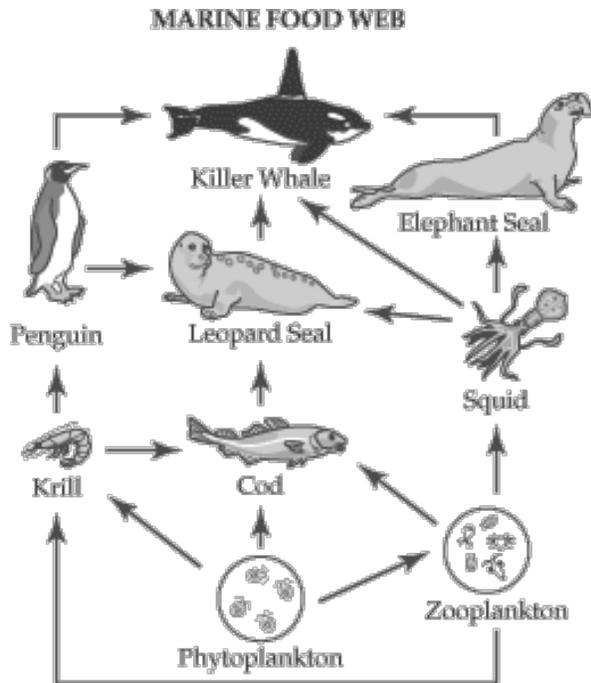
- 1) What is the "meaning of life?" Why is this such a difficult question to answer?
- 2) What are the best parts of being alive? What makes life worth living?
- 3) If you were going to write a book about "your American life," what anecdotes and information would you include?
- 4) Is all of human life lived in this progression (see chart below)?



(15 - 20 minutes)

Teacher will lead a discussion outlining the vignette format of Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*. Like life itself, which the novel emulates, variety, dis/connections, transitions, and chaos "guide" the progression of stories within the novel.

Teacher will project this image on the board / handout this graphic (next page):



Ask students if they have seen this sort of a diagram before--where? What does this food web graphic suggest? If we were to eradicate one of these categories/elements from the web entirely, what would the consequences be? In spite of the killer whale being at the top of the food chain, are the seemingly insignificant phytoplankton any less (or more) important? Why/why

not?

Define the following terms for the students:

Holism:

a theory that the universe and especially living nature is correctly seen in terms of interacting wholes (as of living organisms) that are more than the mere sum of elementary particles.

Teleology:

- a) the study of evidences of design in nature
- b) the fact or character attributed to nature or natural processes of being directed toward an end or shaped by a purpose
- c) the use of design or purpose as an explanation of natural phenomena

Ecology:

a branch of science concerned with the interrelationship of organisms and their environments.

Cannery Row is Steinbeck's attempt to holistically recreate **his** Monterey, California and **his** personal experiences in the place at a specific time. While no depiction of life can be truly all-inclusive, *Cannery Row* is Steinbeck's valiant attempt to capture " a poem, a stink, a grating noise, a quality of light, a tone, a habit, a nostalgia, a dream" for the reader that, to the best of his ability, encapsulates the mystique and vitality of an environment that he loved dearly in his own lifetime. I'd like to imagine that if asked to define life, Steinbeck may very well have responded that "*Cannery Row* is life."

While many of the stories, people, and places recounted in the pages of *Cannery Row* are not overtly connected to each other, Steinbeck chose each episode for a reason. Much like the students' "close listening/reading" of their album from the "Top 500" lists, they will need to decide, over the course of reading *Cannery Row*, why Steinbeck chose to incorporate each vignette into the novel. What is the theme/importance of each story? Why is each vignette important (keeping in mind the relativity of importance)? Think of *Cannery Row* as an album of "greatest hits." What makes each chapter/track a "hit" worthy of inclusion?

For HOMEWORK: students read and annotate the first five chapters of *Cannery Row*. Each student should select five statements/quotes that (a) appealed to them in some way or (b) had questions about / wanted to discuss with the class. The following class period, we will begin discussion with a "Save the Last Word for Me" exercise, so students should come prepared to discuss their quotations in depth. The quality and relevance of their quote selection and their responses to their classmates' input will be graded.

Day Six: Selections from “The Long Valley,” “About Ed Ricketts,” and “The Log from the Sea of Cortez”

Students begin the day with a “Save the Last Word for Me” activity. Each student was required to bring a quote from the previous reading assignment. Students will individually (depending upon class size, teacher may opt to only call on a few students for the sake of time... with classes of 25+ students I will routinely call on 5-10 students per class period) write a quote on the board and allow other students to guide the conversation/discussion until the teacher decides “the last word” must be heard. The student who introduced the quote will provide the class with their “last word,” and will elicit final thoughts (process is graded). This is excellent scaffolding for Socratic Seminars.

In the first five chapters of *Cannery Row*, students will have met several “main” characters (Lee Chong, Mack and the boys, Dora, William the bouncer, the Chinaman, and briefly, Doc. As the action of *Cannery Row* is largely centered around Doc, students will spend this class period getting to know more about Ed Ricketts.

Students will begin the lesson by looking at various pictures of Ed Ricketts and the Pacific Biological Laboratories Building:



After the photo tour, the students will listen to Steinbeck read (audio recording) his short story *The Snake*, which took place inside the Pacific Biological Laboratories building.

Students will discuss (material lovingly pirated from http://as.sjsu.edu/steinbeck/teaching_steinbeck/index.jsp?val=teaching_the_long_valley_major_themes)

The following themes in relation to *The Snake*:

- Empiricism vs. Intuitive Experience
- Morality of Scientific Inquiry
- Deviant Sexuality

After the class discussion of *The Snake*, students will read the first 10 pages from *About Ed Ricketts* (from the appendix of Steinbeck’s *Log from the Sea of Cortez*) to get a more “holistic” depiction of Ed Ricketts. After reading, students will contemplate the following quotes in small groups and will prepare for group presentation on butcher paper and discussion (from selections later in the piece):

“He [Ricketts] felt that any restriction or control of knowledge or conclusion was a dreadful sin, a violation of first principles.” (256 - Penguin Classics edition of *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*)

“We [Steinbeck and Ricketts] thought that there is no creative unit in the human save the individual working alone. In pure creativeness, in art, in music, in mathematics, there are no true collaborations. The creative principle is a lonely and an individual manner.” (257)

“But for all of Ed’s pleasures and honesties there was a transcendent sadness in his love--something he missed or wanted, a searching that sometimes approached panic. I don’t know what it was he wanted that was never there, but I know he always looked for it and never found it. He sought for it and listened for it and looked for it and smelled for it in love. I think he found some of it in music. It was like a deep and endless nostalgia--a thirst and passion for “going home.”” (263)

“Once Ed said to me, ‘For a very long time I didn’t like myself.’ It was not said in self-pity but simply as an unfortunate fact. ‘It was a very difficult time,’ he said, ‘and very painful. I did not like myself for a number of reasons, some of them valid and some of them pure fancy. I would hate to have to go back to that. Then gradually,’ he said, ‘I discovered with surprise and pleasure that a number of people did like me. And I thought, if they can like me, why cannot I like myself? Just thinking it did not do it, but slowly I learned to like myself and then it was all right.’” (273)

Students will contemplate the following questions in relation to their assigned quote:

- 1) What does this quote say about Ed Ricketts as a person? What does he value?
- 2) How does Steinbeck view Ricketts (why did Steinbeck specifically choose this quote?)
- 3) Who does Doc remind you of? Why?

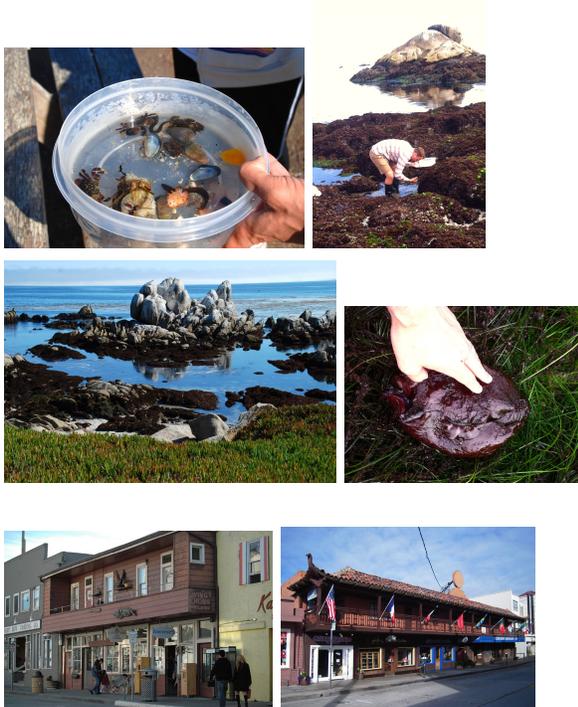
For HOMEWORK:

students read and annotate the next five chapters (5-10) of *Cannery Row*. Each student should select five statements/ quotes that (a) appealed to them in some way or (b) had questions about / wanted to discuss with the class. The following class period, we will begin discussion with a “Save the Last Word for Me” exercise, so students should come prepared to discuss their quotations in depth. The quality and relevance of their quote selection and their responses to their classmates’ input will be graded.

Day Seven: PLACE and virtual tidepools... candy quadrats...

Students begin the day with a “Save the Last Word for Me” activity. Each student was required to bring a quote from the previous reading assignment. Students will individually (depending upon class size, teacher may opt to only call on a few students for the sake of time... with classes of 25+ students I will routinely call on 5-10 students per class period) write a quote on the board and allow other students to guide the conversation/discussion until the teacher decides “the last word” must be heard. The student who introduced the quote will provide the class with their “last word,” and will elicit final thoughts (process is graded). This is excellent scaffolding for Socratic Seminars.

Chapters 5-10 deal largely with specific places and students will begin the lesson with another photo tour of the places they encountered during their reading on the previous night:



Throughout the reading process, students will continue to annotate heavily. Most importantly, students will maintain records of major themes explored in each chapter of *Cannery Row*. To further explore the process of close reading and annotation, teacher will briefly discuss the role of transects and quadrats in marine biology (making connections to the work of Ed Ricketts) and will adapt a version of the “sweet species” lesson found here: <http://www.hawaii.edu/gk-12/opihi/classroom/measuring.pdf>

<http://www.hawaii.edu/gk-12/opihi/images/classroom/>



Students will be given “candy quadrats” with an assortment of candies scattered on the floor.. Teacher will ensure that some “tricky” species variation exists (smaller/larger versions of the same candy, Hershey kisses with different foil typography, raisinetes (are raisins really candy??), etc.) and will have a discussion about “staying low and going slow...” The idea is that students will most likely attempt to blow through the exercise without making specific notations of the various differences between candy types. When students are analyzing a piece of literature they should approach their reading with the same level of discrimination.

Students should be asked the following questions:

- 1) If we are to get the most accurate picture of this ecosystem, where should the quadrat be placed? Why?
- 2) What is a more useful apparatus--quadrat surveying or transept surveying? Why? (have students try both).
- 3) Identify and catalogue all of the candy in your quadrat.

Each student team (teams of 4) will complete a quadrat survey and will present it to the class via projector. The teacher will analyze their results and dispel any discrepancies.

With this same critical eye, students will begin to draft a preface for their own personal *Cannery Row* novel--a project that will continue throughout their reading of *Cannery Row*:

NEXT PAGE...



CANNERY ROW PROJECT - Pre-AP 9th Grade

Materials:

John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*

Objectives:

- The student will develop narrative, expository, and informational writings to inform, explain, analyze, or entertain. (Virginia SOL 9.6)
- The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing. (Virginia SOL 9.7)
- Students will construct a preface and will write two additional "chapters" or vignettes (three chapters total) about their own lives/environment in the tradition of John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*.
- Students will engage in the peer review and peer editing process.
- Students will present original material to their classmates.

Essential Questions:

- What is "life" in the City of Manassas like?
- What stories have I gathered during my lifetime in the City of Manassas?
- What people, places, and things have impacted me most (the good, the bad, and the ugly!) in the City of Manassas?

Overview:

- During the *Cannery Row* unit, students will compose their own "flash fiction" versions of *Cannery Row* (3-5 pages total). Through their interactions with the themes, characters, and places in Steinbeck's work, students will work (through extensive brainstorming, drafting, and peer editing) to create high quality narrative pieces that define their environment to the reader and articulate the themes and forces they feel most powerfully as 9th graders in Manassas City, Virginia. Students will be encouraged to conduct "research" in their communities over the course of the unit as material for their musings.
- Additional focus will be placed on the utilization of grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- Students will be required to "workshop" their stories with their peers during editing sessions.
- Students will be required to create an artistic cover for their flash fiction book.
- Students will be required to present one of their vignettes to the class.

Procedures:

Writing and Composition - 50/100 points

1) **PREFACE** : Using John Steinbeck's preface chapter to *Cannery Row* as a stylistic guide (paying close attention to Steinbeck's

use of tone and diction), students will compose a preface chapter to their own autobiographical story. Teacher should model an example (showing how to emulate style) for the students. Students will turn in their preface drafts to the teacher for approval/grading/revision. Students will begin to plan their stories.

2) CHAPTER 1: Students will compose their first thematically driven short story and will submit this piece to the teacher for approval/grading/revision.

3) CHAPTER 2: Students will compose their second thematically driven short story and will submit this piece to their peer review panel for approval/grading/revision.

Editing and Revision - 20/100 points

1) PEER REVIEW: Students will work in “peer panels” of 3. On designated class days, students will bring their required draft(s) to class with the intention of sharing materials with their colleagues. Students will be expected to provide comments on the narrative in addition to the grammatical and mechanical aspects of the work. Students will be evaluated on the quality of their interactions.

Ideally, students would complete these peer reviews on “Blackboard” style message board system.

2) TEACHER FEEDBACK: Students will receive written and verbal feedback from the instructor in the midst of the assignment (preface and chapter one). Students are expected to address any suggested revisions prior to turning in their final draft.

Artistic Component - 15/100 points

CHOOSE ONLY ONE.

(option #1) COVER: Students create cover art for their flash fiction novel. Original artwork (which may be constructed on a graphics program / platform or hand-done) is the only format acceptable. **No slapdash printouts from Google, people!**

(option #2) SONG: Students write a brief song that captures their feelings about their experience of Manassas City. Song must be played via computer (mp3 or CD) or performed live for the class to enjoy. Lyrics must be transcribed and turned in for full credit.

(option #3) VIDEO: Students create a brief video that creatively illustrates their experience(s) of Manassas City. Video should have audio and must be accessible via YouTube or a flash drive.

Presentation Component - 15/100 points

PRESENTATION: Students are required to present their artistic component,, explain its significance, and will be required to read one portion of their flash fiction collection to the class. All students are expected to provide comments, words of encouragement, questions, etc. at the conclusion of each reading.

Each student will select one component of their collection to be archived into our classroom’s version of *Cannery Row*..

Remaining Reading / Materials

While the culminating project for this unit continues its development, students will continue to engage in the text in 5-chapter blocks. Teacher should continue to lead the class in the following activity (each student should be informally assessed by the end of the novel):

Students begin the day with a “Save the Last Word for Me” activity. Each student was required to bring a quote from the previous reading assignment. Students will individually (depending upon class size, teacher may opt to only call on a few students for the sake of time... with classes of 25+ students I will routinely call on 5-10 students per class period) write a quote on the board and allow other students to guide the conversation/discussion until the teacher decides “the last word” must be heard. The student who introduced the quote will provide the class with their “last word,” and will elicit final thoughts (process is graded).

While the aforementioned project will serve as the principal assessment for this unit (revision, peer editing, final drafting) a formal examination with thematic writing prompts will be given at the end of the unit.