Sex, Choice, and Dystopia

Conceptual Unit Plan for The Handmaid’s Tale, A Clockwork Orange, and Brave New World

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Context

This 10-week unit is intended for use with 12th-grade students in an AP English course, either Literature or Language and Composition; I will indicate throughout where there are opportunities to modify and adapt the tasks to particularly suit either of the classes. The unit is centered around dystopian novels, with a specific focus on those that situate their critique at least in part in people’s (especially women’s) bodies and their sexuality. The plan for this unit (sequence of texts, ideas, etc.) progresses in a way that is designed to scaffold students’ understanding of the overarching concept, developing strategies for inquiry that are increasingly more complex.

Rationale

There are two main educational purposes for the use of this conceptual unit. The first—by which I do not mean to imply the primary—is to develop students’ understanding of subtle and advanced rhetorical strategies that can be applied both to literature and nonfiction. Dystopian texts are dependent upon an author’s meticulous development of setting, slow revealing of progressively more information to the reader, and careful use of language that is at once ironic and sincere, ambiguous and overt. My intent in focusing on dystopian novels is to highlight these dualities and help students to apply them in their own work, fiction or otherwise.

The second purpose of this unit is to explore the way in which women’s bodies and sexuality are used as a rhetorical site of critique, and to extend that understanding to examine our society at large. The intent is to problematize underlying conceptual norms of the power structures that define gender and sexuality. By grounding this discourse in texts of both masculine and feminine perspectives, I intend to take a feminist approach to literature and society that is accessible to students of all genders, allowing everyone to reevaluate their own place in and complicity with the patriarchy. This reflection is crucial to adolescents who are coming into their own as adults.

This unit is designed in such a way that will support my personal priorities as an English teacher, and therefore very heavily emphasizes student writing. Because of the quantity of writing assignments, students should be told to focus their efforts on the final phase assessments and not as much on the writing that they do throughout each phase. The purpose of the latter is more to have them become accustomed to churning things out, and may be left very rough. My reasoning for this is that writing a lot very quickly is a practical skill that will help students both in standardized testing and throughout their academic careers. I also believe that this frees them from the notion that in writing one must always strive for perfection; rather, writing can be see as more expressive and fluid. Finally, steady and measured production of writing inherently makes students more comfortable with the process.

Enduring Understandings

- Ambiguity can prove a point as effectively as clarity.
- People’s bodies are sites of political and philosophical discourse.
- Sex can be used to assert or undermine power.
- The ability to choose is a right intrinsic to all people.
- Music, literature, and art are essential components of humanity.
Essential Questions

- What rhetorical purposes does ambiguity serve (in content or language itself)?
- What rhetorical purposes do dystopian novels serve?
- What are the rhetorical components of dystopian novels?
- In what ways do people resist or subvert authority?
- How do happiness and freedom accompany or contradict one another?
- To what degree should a government control its constituents’ lives?
- What role do patriarchal structures play in women’s lives?
- What presence do women have in literature?
- How are people’s bodies used as sites of discourse and critique?
- How does sex define and/or demonstrate power differentials?

Skills and Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Take a drafting approach to their writing in which they focus on consistent, measured “quantity” rather than “quality.”
- Take an intensive writing process approach to their writing in which they focus on multiple drafts, crafting clear, thoughtful arguments.
- Draw meaningful connections between multiple texts and everyday life, using those connections in turn to enhance their understanding of each individual text.
- Ground philosophical speculation and debate in fictional and nonfictional texts alike.
- Examine literature as a site of subversion.

Texts

Primary Texts:

Supplementary Materials:
Phase I: The Handmaid’s Tale

I have selected *The Handmaid’s Tale* as the first book in the unit for a variety of reasons. First, it is in many ways the most accessible of the three primary texts: the language is simpler, the themes are more obvious, and the author’s project is clear. This book therefore serves as an excellent entry point both rhetorically and ideologically, and, because it is so overt in its treatment of women and their sexuality, will ground further discussions in that vein when they arise more subtly in the other texts.

**Week 1**
- **Readings**: “Harrison Bergeron”; *The Handmaid’s Tale* Chapters 1–17
- **Areas of focus**: characteristics of dystopian texts; patriarchal structures; division of women’s roles and bodies; use of ambiguity
- **Sample activity**: In-class analysis of “Harrison Bergeron”, directed towards a cursory understanding of some techniques of dystopian novels, including slow revelation of truth, tragedy, suffering, the tension between safety and happiness, etc. Characteristics that students identify will be charted and posted in the room throughout the unit, to be added to as they discover others.

**Week 2**
- **Readings**: *The Handmaid’s Tale* Chapters 18–33
- **Areas of focus**: means of subversion and resistance; carving out space; narrator’s “reconstruction” and (un)reliability; slut-shaming and culpability
- **Sample activities**:
  - Connections between slut-shaming in The Handmaid’s Tale and real life (see full lesson plan below).
  - Ranking sites of resistance. The purpose of this activity is to explore the small ways in which Offred and the other Handmaids are able to resist the system and “carve out space” for themselves in their everyday lives. As a class, students should develop a list of these actions, and then chart on the specific pressures which each action resists, e.g., the Handmaids’ use of butter as makeshift lotion resists the system’s decree that they not concern themselves with their personal appearance. The class should then debate and rank the relative efficacy of each of these sites of resistance.

**Week 3**
- **Readings**: Finish *The Handmaid’s Tale*; “Haunted by The Handmaid’s Tale”
- **Areas of focus**: complicity in wrongdoing; finding agency through sex; gradual clarification of history/circumstance; Atwood’s overall project
- **Sample activity**: The focus of this activity is for students to explore the idea that Offred empowers herself through sex. Students should brainstorm a list of Offred’s sexual acts throughout the novel, as objectively and without judgment as possible, e.g. “she has sex with Nick” rather than “Serena pressures her to have sex with Nick.” Students should then break into small groups and create a T-chart in which they take each item from the list and describe it in an empowering or disempowering light. They should also attempt to
come to some sort of a conclusion as a group about Offred’s power or lack thereof in these circumstances, although there is likely to be marked dissension.

Assessments

Throughout Phase I:
• *Bi-weekly blog posts from the point of view of different characters.* At the book’s outset, each student will be assigned a character from the book. As the class reads, they must blog about the novel from that character’s point of view. Blog posts should demonstrate more than just a summary of the plot—they must include internal reflection about the character’s perspective on his or her life. Because of the necessity to assign multiple students the same character, students will be divided into groups that represent one of each character for their posts. Posts should be about one page in length and will be due Tuesdays and Fridays.

Phase I Final Assessment (choose one):
• *Visual art and process piece.* Because *The Handmaid’s Tale* is rife with symbolism through vivid imagery, it lends itself well to representation by visual art. Students may choose to create a work of art that expresses their understanding of said symbolism, highlighting what they think are important visual details from the book that add to the author’s project. Additionally, they must write a two- to three-page explanation of their work that details—specifically and citing the text—why they chose to represent the novel in the way they did.

• *Speculation of the novel’s audience.* The narrator in *The Handmaid’s Tale* explicitly addresses a “you” in her “reconstruction” of events. Students may choose to write a five- to seven-page piece that explains who they think that “you” might be and why. They must ground their speculation in specific examples from the text, but there is a great deal of room for creative interpretation. As a result, this assessment might take many forms: a creative piece from the audience’s point of view; a continuation of Offred’s story in which she makes her audience explicit; or simply a standard analytical essay.
Phase II: A Clockwork Orange

While the “dystopian” nature of A Clockwork Orange is sometimes (and I believe rightly) called into question, it exhibits many of the same characteristics of other dystopia novels, including those that are particularly relevant to this unit as a whole: the tension between safety, freedom, and happiness, but with a different spin; the importance of choice in a person’s life; and the use of people’s physical bodies for philosophical discourse. It comes second in this unit because of its relative linguistic and argumentative complexity, and because its hyper-masculine perspective requires that students be preemptively well-grounded in feminist ideology before approaching A Clockwork Orange using that framework.

Note: the progression of this phase depends on students “finishing” the book without the final chapter that was excluded from the first American edition, adding it after a few days of class. This will be easier to control if students are given copies of the novel that do not include the final chapter. If these are unavailable, though, it is important to stress to students that they not preemptively finish the book.

Week 4
- **Reading:** Part I, A Clockwork Orange
- **Areas of focus:** Nadsat and language use; narrative voice; ultraviolence as a form of hyper-masculinity; women as objects
- **Sample activities:**
  - *Nadsat translation* (for Language classes): Students will be given a paragraph written in Standard English—either an excerpt from another text or a paragraph of the teacher’s own writing, at the teacher’s discretion—and asked to translate it into Nadsat. They should start by working on their own and then in pairs to finalize their work.
  - *Narrative voice* (for Literature classes): In small groups and working on chart paper, students should come up with a visual representation (T-chart, Venn diagram, mind map, etc.) comparing Offred and Alex’s narrative voices. Among the issues they address should be tone, reliability, perspective, omniscience or lack thereof, and relationship to the reader.

Week 5
- **Reading:** Part II – Part III Chapter 6, A Clockwork Orange
- **Areas of focus:** people’s right to choose; ambiguity of the “bad guys”; the “I” and the “You”; music
- **Sample activity:** Fishbowl to discuss who the “bad guys” are in the novel: Alex and his droogs, the government and scientists, or the resistance movement of which the writer is a part. Students should identify the primary vilifying characteristics of each group before beginning: violence in Alex’s case and control/Machiavellianism in the case of the scientists and resistance movement. In their discussion, students should also address the idea that the scientists and resistance movement may be two sides of the same coin.

Week 6
- **Reading:** Part III, Chapter 7, A Clockwork Orange
• **Areas of focus:** last chapter not published in original American edition; Burgess’s overall project and the ambiguity thereof; whether Burgess is the author in his own text, and what the implications would be

• **Sample activities:**
  - *Debate* (see full lesson plan below).
  - *Socratic seminar regarding the final chapter* (to take place after the debate).

  Questions for students to address should include:
  - Why might the chapter have been omitted from the original American edition?
  - How does the chapter affect your understanding of the novel’s message?
  - Would you have preferred the book to end at Part III, Chapter 6? Why?
  - What does Alex’s character development suggest about the issues we have discussed in the unit so far, especially regarding the importance of a person’s right to choose?

  Students should be given the questions in advance of the discussion so that they can prepare examples from the text to support their assertions in class.

### Assessments

Throughout Phase II:

- **Weekly literary analysis essays.** These essays should be about three pages in length and address the following prompts:
  - How does Burgess’s language affect your reading of the novel? (Week 4)
  - What do you think drives Alex’s urges for ultraviolence? (Week 5)
  - Which eventuality is worse: ultraviolence or lack of free will? i.e., what constitutes Alex being “cured”? (Week 6)

  For Language classes, the first of these three prompts may be expanded upon and fleshed out in greater detail, possibly serving as a final phase assessment.

Phase II Final Assessment (choose one):

- **Comparative essay.** Students may choose to watch Stanley Kubrick’s film adaptation of the novel and write a paper of approximately five to seven pages comparing the two pieces. In the paper, students should address questions such as the following:
  - What does each text emphasize? Deemphasize? Why?
  - How does the message of each piece change based on the author’s/director’s artistic choices?
  - What is lost in the translation from book to movie? What is gained?
  - Which piece more closely represents your personal view?

- **Persuasive essay.** Students may choose to write a persuasive essay of approximately eight to ten pages in which they argue the relative merits of choice and violence as addressed in *A Clockwork Orange*. They should include an analysis of Burgess’s view and how it relates to their own. Students need not feel constrained to a black-and-white view of the issue, but they must do more than simply describe the pros and cons of each alternative, i.e., they must take a clear stance of some kind.
I chose to include *Brave New World* in this unit partly because of its canonical status, intending to problematize its place in our current societal context. My primary motivation for its inclusion, though, is that as a text in and of itself it is much more complex and ambiguous than the other primary texts—which is also why I made it the final text of study. Especially in terms of people’s bodies and sexuality, the novel’s argument is complicated and fraught with what might potentially be seen as contradictions, e.g., the tension between the natural yet grotesque aging process and the unnatural yet beautiful preservation of youth. *Brave New World* is also unique in that, unlike many dystopia novels, the characters technically have a choice as to how they live their lives. This facet of the fictitious society greatly deepens the idea of what it means for a person to have “choice.”

**Week 7**

- **Reading**: Chapters 1–8, *Brave New World*
- **Areas of focus**: happiness vs. freedom; individualism vs. collectivism; the role and function of soma (possibly in comparison with religion); racism
- **Sample activity**: Have students free write in response to the Karl Marx quote, “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.” Huxley portrays soma as a bad thing, but religion as an essential component of humanity. Either in small groups or in pairs, students should evaluate the theoretical parallels between religion and soma, identifying both similarities and differences. This can be evaluated either by coming up with a brief presentation of their findings to the class, or, if time is short, turning in their results at the end of class.

**Week 8**

- **Reading**: Chapters 9–13, *Brave New World*
- **Areas of focus**: slut-shaming and sex-negativity; absence of women from narrative; role of art, music, and literature in society; what it means to be “savage”
- **Sample activity**: Compare Beethoven’s role in Alex’s life to Shakespeare’s role in John’s. Discuss the following:
  - How do these art forms play into the characters’ lives?
  - How do they work in terms of the authors’ arguments?
  - What do they say about the role of art in humanity at large?
This discussion should be grounded in students first being divided into three groups in which they brainstorm about and chart each individual topic, citing examples from the text to refer to in their dialogue.

**Week 9**

- **Reading**: Chapters 14–18, *Brave New World*
- **Areas of focus**: people’s ability to choose; futility of characters’ actions; conclusion; Huxley’s overall project
- **Sample activity**: Analysis of different characters’ choice and choices (see full lesson plan below). This lesson should be done after students have read the entirety of the novel.
Assessments

Throughout Phase III:
  
  * Weekly literary analysis essays. For Phase III, there are only two of these, so that students have more time for their final phase assessment. These essays should be about three pages in length and address the following prompts:
    o How are collectivism and individualism portrayed in the novel? What are the relative merits of each? (Week 7)
    o What does it mean to be “savage” and how is sexuality a factor? (Week 8)

Phase III Final Assessment (choose one):
  
  * Short film—group project (dependent upon availability of resources). In small groups, students should choose a scene from the novel, write a screenplay, and produce a short film adaptation. In presenting their film to the class, students should give a brief explanation of their artistic choices, especially in how they choose to portray John and Lenina. Note: If students do not have access to video cameras and editing software through the school, this assessment may be done as a play rather than a movie, although the teacher should complicate the assignment in some way to increase its rigor. For example, students could be required to write up alternative artistic choices they had considered and explain why they eventually ruled them out in favor of others.

  * Analysis of Huxley’s views and their relative merits. To modern readers, some of Huxley’s ideas still seem progressive (especially regarding consumerism), but some of his ideas are markedly outdated, especially in the context of the critical theory applied throughout this unit. Students should write an essay of approximately eight to ten pages in which they problematize Huxley’s work in terms of its racism, sexism, and/or sex-negativity. Students’ theses should take a stance on the extent to which Huxley’s views are a) grounded in acceptable assumptions about humanity and b) relevant to today’s society. Students should also evaluate their own positionality with respect to these issues.
Final Unit Assessment

Week 10 should be used as a chance for students to explore the relationships between all three primary texts, directing their attention towards recognizing rhetorical and thematic patterns. This week is also set aside for catch-up, further exploration of any topics that have arisen over the course of the unit, and preparation of final assessments.

For the final unit assessment, students will have three options:

1. **Monologue with process reflection/explanation.** The student selects an excerpt from any of the three primary texts to memorize and perform as a monologue. This would likely work best with *The Handmaid’s Tale* or *A Clockwork Orange*, because those are in the first person, but extracting dialogue from *Brave New World* is also a possibility. In preparing the monologue, the students must consider:
   a. What excerpt they choose and why they feel it is representative of the text
   b. How the overall project of the book plays into their interpretation and performance
   c. How their performance serves to elaborate on the text in an insightful way
   d. What about the text is easy or difficult to integrate into a monologue

   In addition to preparing the monologue, students must write a three-page paper in which they address the above considerations and reflect upon their process.

2. **Critique of societal issue of student’s choosing.** In writing their critique, students must employ rhetoric that is similar to that which is used in the primary texts, i.e. making their critique by presenting oppositional ideas in a way that is subtly subversive. The students must be careful, though, not to cross the line into ridicule in their satire; the critique should not be comedic but rather grounded in ambiguity, as in dystopia novels. (Students who choose this option will first read “A Modest Proposal” as an example of drifting too far into satire.) The critique should be approximately five pages in length.

3. **Synthesis of the idea of “choice” in the primary texts.** For this assessment, students will examine the authors’ presentation of choice in the three primary texts and then draw their own conclusions about the nature and importance of choice in society. Before coming to their own opinion, they should address such issues as:
   a. What choice is and is not available to the characters in each of the books
   b. What each author stresses as the effects of a lack of choice (positive or negative)
   c. What conclusions the authors reach about the nature of choice
   d. How the texts shed light on one another

   The synthesis essay should be approximately eight pages in length.

Each of these assessments offers students a different way to interact with the texts: the monologue is theatrical and kinesthetic while still being grounded in the novels; the critique gives students who excel at writing a chance to push themselves to use new rhetorical skills; and the synthesis allows students to showcase advanced levels of literary analysis. Note that the critique is particularly well-suited to Language classes, while the synthesis is more effective for Literature classes. Depending on the teachers’ goals and how much they want to direct the class, they can easily assign only one of these assessments rather than offer a choice.
# Lesson Plan 1: Slut-Shaming 101

| EUs | People’s bodies are sites of political and philosophical discourse.  
|     | Sex can be used to assert or undermine power. |
| EQs | - What role do patriarchal structures play in women’s lives?  
|     | - How are people’s bodies used as sites of discourse and critique?  
|     | - How does sex define and/or demonstrate power differentials? |

| Aims | - What is slut-shaming? Where do we see it in our everyday lives?  
|      | - How does slut-shaming manifest itself in *The Handmaid’s Tale*?  
|      | - What are the potential outcomes of slut-shaming as we see it in our own lives and in *The Handmaid’s Tale*? |

| Objectives | Students will be able to question cultural assumptions about what it means to be a “slut.”  
|            | Students will be able to recognize the tension between “sexy” and “slutty” in our culture.  
|            | Students will be able to relate their world experience to *The Handmaid’s Tale* and draw upon its relevance to further clarify the book. |

| CC Standards Met | - RL.11–12.1  
|                 | - RI.11–12.1, RI.11–12.7  
|                 | - SL.11–12.1, SL.11–12.2, SL.11–12.4 |

| Do Now | Write the word “slut” on the board. Ask students to free write about the word: what they know about it, what they associate with it, etc. |

| Class Discussion 10 min. | Discuss students’ free writes as a class and map out key ideas from their responses on the board.  
|                         | Open up the discussion after students have shared from their free writes. What trends do they notice? What assumptions have been made in their reflections?  
|                         | If the subject has not naturally arisen, introduce the idea of tension between “sexy” and “slutty.” |

| Group Activity 10 min. | Divide students into small groups and give each group a stack of magazines and a large piece of chart paper. Students will:  
|                       | - Create a large T-chart with “slutty” on one side and “sexy” on the other, on which they will cut and paste pictures from magazines that they think fit into either category.  
|                       | - Come up with a brief group presentation for their chart in which they give a rationale for their choices. |
| Group Presentations | Students’ groups present their T-charts and rationales.  
| - Rather than interrupt—which will likely be tempting—students who are not presenting should make notes of thoughts or disagreements they wish to express later in class. The immediate goal is to take it all in. |
| **Reading** | **10 min.** |
| - Introduce the context for the birth of SlutWalk.  
| - Pass out the “Why” section from the SlutWalk Toronto website for students to read on their own. |
| **Class Discussion** | **15 min.** |
| - Point students to pages 71–2, where Janine is made to confess that she is to blame for her rape, and 119–120, where Offred’s mother is seen protesting. Give them a moment to review before beginning discussion.  
| - Class discussion should be grounded in the following:  
| - The students’ initial assumptions about the word “slut”  
| - The process of sorting “slutty” and “sexy” and the challenges it posed (i.e., it’s a fine line and depends on context)  
| - Questions and comments students have for other groups  
| - How students think pages 71–2 and 119–20 relate to the topic  
| - Where else they see slut-shaming and/or a critique thereof in *The Handmaid’s Tale*  
| **Exit Slip** | - Take a couple minutes at the end of class to deliberately cool down the discussion.  
| **Extension** | - Ask students to continue to look for instances of slut-shaming in their lives and in the text as they finish up reading *The Handmaid’s Tale*.  
| **Differentiation for SPED/ELL Students** | - This topic can be highly emotional and sensitive and therefore may prove challenging for some SPED students; it would be beneficial to set up an “ouch/oops” discussion system for classroom discussion (if a student is offended, he or she can simply say “ouch” and choose to explain if desired; the offender simply responds “oops”, with the understanding that no offense was meant).  
| - If ELL students are not familiar with the word “slut” and its connotations, the initial discussion will provide them with a framework for the rest of the class period. Because the magazine activity is so visual, it will help scaffold their understanding. |
### Lesson Plan 2: A Clockwork Debate

| EUs | - The ability to choose is a right intrinsic to all people. |
| EQs | - How do happiness and freedom accompany or contradict one another?  
- To what degree should a government control its constituents’ lives? |
| Aims | - What constitutes “good” and “evil” in *A Clockwork Orange*?  
- What is more important: Alex’s right to free will, or the public’s right to protection from his ultraviolence? |
| Objectives | - Students will be able to debate the resolution: “Alex’s right to free will trumps the public’s right to protection.” |
| CC Standards Met | - RL.11–12.1, RL.11–12.2, RL.11–12.5, RL.11–12.6  
- SL.11–12.1, SL.11–12.3, SL.11–12.4, SL.11–12.6 |
| Do Now 10 min. | - Write the debate resolution on the board. Have students free write, either agreeing or disagreeing, for five minutes.  
- Give students five more minutes to look up examples from the text that support their initial free write. |
| Debate Preparation 10 min. | - Assign students to two teams for the debate. The format is relatively informal: the teacher will serve as judge, and the two sides will each have an opening and closing statement, alternating points in between.  
- Give students time to prepare their arguments and rhetoric.  
- Circulate, making sure that students are grounding their arguments in textual evidence and that all students will be prepared to speak. |
| Debate 25 min. | - Teams have two minutes each for their opening statements.  
- Subsequently, teams will take turns making and responding to arguments. Each student must speak at least once, or else that team will automatically lose.  
- The teacher should keep a tally of points on the board, scoring as follows: 1 point for a clear, sensible statement; 2 points for a well-spoken argument that refers to the text; and 3 points for an outstanding argument that cites a specific quote or passage.  
- Teams have two minutes each for their closing statements. |
| Discussion 10 min. | - As a class, discuss the debate.  
- What went well in preparation? in practice?  
- Were students on the side they personally agreed with? If not, how was that challenging? Did they find that their views changed at all?  
- What did they think was the strongest argument from the opposing team? Why? |
| Exit Slip  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 min.</th>
<th>- Students cast their votes for the most accomplished debater with a brief rationale. The winner is exempt from the first writing assignment in Phase III (but don’t mention that in advance).</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extension Activity</td>
<td>- Suggest that students make notes from their experiences and thoughts from the debate, since they might serve them in their final unit assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation for SPED/ELL Students</td>
<td>- The extensive prep time will allow all students to adequately prepare at least one point to make during the debate, drawing support and ideas from their peers.</td>
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**Lesson Plan 3: Character Choice & Agency**

| EUs                                                                 | - The ability to choose is a right intrinsic to all people.  
|                                                                   | - People’s bodies are sites of political and philosophical discourse.  
|                                                                   | - Music, literature, and art are essential components of humanity.  |
| **EQs**                                                            | - How do happiness and freedom accompany or contradict one another?  
|                                                                   | - To what degree should a government control its constituents’ lives?  
|                                                                   | - How are people’s bodies used as sites of discourse and critique?  |
| **Aims**                                                          | - What choices do the characters in *Brave New World* make?  
|                                                                   | - To what extent do their choices assert agency?  |
| **Objectives**                                                    | - Students will be able to chart different characters’ choices in *Brave New World*.  
|                                                                   | - Students will be able to use these flowcharts as the foundation for a discussion on the nature of choice and its relationship to agency.  |
| **CC Standards Met**                                              | - RL.11–12.2, RL.11–12.3  
|                                                                   | - RI.11–12.1  
|                                                                   | - SL.11–12.1, SL.11–12.2  |
| **Do Now**                                                       | - Give students extensive time to free write reflecting on the novel’s conclusion. Ask them to consider in particular whether they think John’s suicide solved his problems and why. If not, what alternatives did he have to choose? Which would be preferable?  
| 10 min.                                                          | - Break students into small groups and assign each one a main character from the novel. Be sure to briefly demonstrate the assigned task on the board rather than just explain, since students are working towards a visual project.  
|                                                                   | - Each group should create a flowchart that depicts the character’s primary choices and turning points, as well as the alternatives that they did not choose at any given moment.  
|                                                                   | - The branches of the flowchart should include brief explanations as to the reasons for and effects of each choice.  |
| **Silent Conversation**                                           | - Give students a chance to circulate to the different charts, adding their own ideas and reflections, as well as contradicting any things they find to be inaccurate.  
| 10 min.                                                          | - As a class, discuss students’ findings.  
|                                                                   | - What did they conclude about their own characters’ choices and agency?  
|                                                                   | - What overall trends did they notice among the characters?  |
| **Discussion**                                                    | - As a class, discuss students’ findings.  
| 20 min.                                                          | - What did they conclude about their own characters’ choices and agency?  
|                                                                   | - What overall trends did they notice among the characters?  |
- What do these individual choices say about the way the novel’s society is constructed?
- Highlight the book’s ending and come back to students’ responses from the Do Now. What does John’s decision to kill himself accomplish (or not)? Consider this both from the viewpoint of the character’s life and the author’s rhetoric.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exit Slip</th>
<th>5 min.</th>
<th>- As a class, rank characters’ agency, based both on the power they have and the efficacy of their choices.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Extension Activity</td>
<td>- Suggest that students make notes from their experiences and thoughts from the class, since they might serve them in their final unit assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Differentiation for SPED/ELL Students | - The flowchart will be helpful to SPED students in giving them a concrete framework with which to organize their ideas.  
- Group work and the silent conversation will give ELL students an opportunity to frame their thoughts and vocabulary in order to actively participate in the full-class discussion and ranking. |