

To Build A Better Textbook:
Developing a Literature Curriculum for Today's Christian Schooling

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Abstract

This thesis explores the educational philosophy and the creative process behind the creation of a new textbook and curriculum. The goal of this new textbook and curriculum is to help persuade high school students to view literature as an avenue of life-long learning. The plan to develop this textbook and curriculum is built on five objectives: a recognition of the need for holistic education, the implementation of differentiated teaching methods, the cultivation of student interest, the reflection of diversity within classrooms, and the integration of modern technology. This plan will be proposed in the creation of a textbook for use in world literature classes in Christian schools as well as in homeschools. The curriculum will tap into new and old learning technologies and include links to notes, flashcards, presentations, study games, and informational videos in addition to the newest learning apps. This inclusion of various learning tools through an intentional integration of technology will make the textbook and curriculum marketable on a large scale.

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In this age of technology, it seems that the written word, particularly in hardcopy form, is becoming more and more obsolete. This generation of students—from toddlers to high school seniors—is quickly adapting to the ever-evolving technologies that surround them. Social media, internet streaming, and blogs—in the form of videos and written posts—have taken precedence over the consumption of published literature. Yet this movement away from traditional reading resources deprives society of a wealth of information that concerns more than a letter grade from a high school teacher. Literature opens a door into other worlds, which are filled with lands, people, cultures, and worldviews that are different from one's own. Characters bring these cultures to life, allowing students to observe humanity and its values from a wide range of perspectives that are worth examining. So, the question is: how does one get this newer generation of students to understand the value of literature in a way that connects its original context to the culture surrounding students, today? And an even bigger question is: how does one accomplish this from a Christian perspective? One launching point is the creation of a world literature textbook with a surrounding curriculum that uses the latest technology to serve the diverse needs of learners and that accurately represents the world around them. This launching point comes in the form of *The Wide World of Literature: A Modern Christian Approach to World Literature*.

On the Importance of Studying Literature

Though humans communicate in many ways, such as "body language" and gestures, the most important forms of communication are reading and speaking—though these may have taken on new forms through technology and social media. One must learn to read, write, and speak effectively and persuasively in order to survive in the competitive and diverse society that now exists worldwide. Therefore, the study of literature is vital for humans to communicate effectively with one another through the use of language and correct grammar. By seeing new words and phrases within a text, one is able to absorb and reproduce them. Grammatical knowledge comes more gradually as the brain makes connections between patterns in word usage and in sentence structure.

Nonfictional literature—such as science or history textbooks—must be studied to gain knowledge of how the universe works or how a country came to be. But why read and study classic or any fictional literature? According to the French literary theorist Roland Barthes, the answer lies in the value of the narrative. He writes, “Narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative” (Sobol, 2004, p. 2). The study of literature—that is, any genre of literature—causes one to consider certain ideas or perspectives, even if only subconsciously, that one may never have considered before. One educator went so far as to say that “*all* experience, including ‘forgotten’ experience, is so stored and that literature helps to recall and reshape this experience” (Shuman, 1981, p. 233). Literature has the power to challenge, build up, break down, and transform one’s foundational beliefs. It can inspire one to contemplate the nature of

humanity, the reason for our existence, and our place in the universe. It can take one on an adventure through a world full of fantasy, nurturing one's imagination and creativity. Then, at the same time, it can allow readers to see ways in which seemingly different cultures are similar, and one may find oneself unexpectedly sympathizing with someone who initially seemed to be on an erring side. Literature satisfies the deep longing for connection that every human has within him or her—the longing to understand and be understood. These are irrefutable facts. The only question left is: “Where did this longing for communication originate?” This is question that literary and educational philosophies should seek to answer.

On Educational Philosophy & the Creative Process

The composition of any textbook or curriculum always flows from the worldview of the writer or editor, which in turn affects his or her educational philosophy. The philosophy behind *The Wide World of Literature* is built on the view of God as Creator and of humans made in His image. That means that all teachers and students have the God-given capacity to learn, to reason, to create, and to communicate their ideas with others. It also means that they are created not just with physical bodies but with minds and souls that need to be nurtured in conjunction with the body. This reality draws attention to the need for education of the student as a whole person.

Holistic Education & Individualized Instruction

In order to implement a holistic approach to education, *The Wide World of Literature* must first address how the student learns. The foundations of learning are predicated on how one recognizes patterns and makes connections between prior

knowledge and the knowledge that he or she is currently discovering. This philosophy is based on the cognitive-interactionist learning model as it is centered on the “nature of the human being as interactive” (Foundations of Christian School Education, 2003, p. 212). According to this model, content is learned through both the teacher’s initial presentation of information and the students’ thinking stimulated by classroom activities and discussion. In addition, students are encouraged to discover truth through a process known as scaffolding, meaning that the knowledge that the students have already accumulated acts as a jumping off point for learning new information. A good textbook should encourage students to connect themes and ideas with which the student is already familiar. Student interest and motivation also play a big part in engaging the learner and should be taken into account when incorporating lessons into a textbook (Beechick, 1982). Each lesson should begin with an activity that motivates the learner; then, the new content or skill can be introduced, followed by a processing activity and a formal or informal assessment (Foundations of Christian School Education, 2003).

Though there are general principles of learning that apply to most students, one must also consider the individuality of students. Because each student has been created as unique, each student has separate and distinct abilities and disabilities that affect how he or she learns in the classroom. Therefore, the students’ methods for perceiving and understanding these patterns or connections are different for all. These distinct methods are called learning styles, which include three dominant categories: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. In order to engage students with each of these different learning styles, teachers must use differentiated teaching methods that incorporate both traditional and

nontraditional instruction techniques. Therefore, the plan for this literature curriculum is to encourage teachers to practice such differentiation. Differentiating instruction simply means that the teacher tailors his or her style of teaching to fit the academic needs of the student. This will allow learners to set up a mental framework more conducive to building connections between various texts to which they are introduced—even those penned in countless eras and locations—which share similar themes, characters, or events. Furthermore, the textbook should provide the materials necessary to guide the teacher in addressing these various learning styles concerning student reading and instruction.

The truly unique thing about *The Wide World of Literature* is its emphasis on nurturing the soul or—as some may call it—the “heart” of the student. The “heart” is what controls the students’ spiritual, moral, emotional, and thought lives as well as their motivations. So, in order to actively engage students in the learning process, one must engage their hearts. This is especially true in teaching literature, because literature can minister to the two basic needs of the heart: the need for God and the need for social connections. Throughout history, authors have sought to express and engage these longings in their readers. A good literature curriculum must use this truth to help students to relate to the diverse set of characters and settings represented within world literature.

Curriculums can achieve this by incorporating the individual needs and interests of the students into instruction. For example, a student who is interested in the value of art might find common ground with Babette from “Babette’s Feast.” Alternatively, students who struggle with their identity in light of bullying might relate to

Piscine Patel from *The Life of Pi*. Now, this should not be the focus in the classroom, but approaching literature through these common interests and values could significantly increase their attention span and participation in class. Furthermore, in a Christian classroom, students can examine these shared interests and values in connection with Scripture. This can happen in various ways, such as through drawing parallels between characters and situations. A teacher could draw comparison between the Biblical narrative of Esther with Shahrazad from *One Thousand and One Nights*. The morality of characters and authors can also be examined. Students should be encouraged to examine works from a Biblical worldview in classroom discussion, written assignments, and creative projects. To help teachers engage their students in this way, *The Wide World of Literature* textbook will offer questions to consider with the introduction of each new piece of literature to provoke critical thinking about the worldviews the text represents. In addition, prompts and suggestions for class discussions, writing assignments, or creative projects will be given at the end of each module.

Engaging students in conversation about their interests, Christian values, and literature may seem tricky, but one major way to encourage this is through journaling. By having students write in their journals on a consistent basis—whether daily or every other day—teachers can help their students to become better writers and thinkers when faced with the topics mentioned. The award-winning writer Octavia Butler urges the following about the importance of writing regularly: “Forget inspiration. Habit is more dependable. Habit will sustain you whether you’re inspired or not” (Burroway, 2015, p. 11). Journaling gets students in the habit of writing, and it allows them to process truths they

have learned from reading or instruction while they write as well. The writing prompts provided in this proposed textbook will be specifically tailored to ensure that students reflect on some aspect of what they are learning from the given texts. For example, prompts may contain significant quotes for student evaluation, allowing them to express their personal thoughts in relation to what they are learning about a specific work, culture, or author. In addition, students can use the material that they have written in their journals as a study tool or as pre-writing to stimulate ideas for their essay or project assignments later in the semester. Either way, the journal prompts will keep their mind on important themes, characters, and narrative elements discussed in class, giving them another level to strengthen their mental scaffolding.

Journaling is also a great way for students to express their creativity. They can respond to the reading and instruction through prose or poetry, and even draw images to process their thoughts. Teachers can allow their students to share these thoughts or possibly have them published in a writing sample volume for the class. Not only does this give students the opportunity to learn and create, but it can also be enormously encouraging to those students who may have low self-esteem. Those that do not consider themselves to be good writers can work on their craft in private without the fear of ridicule. Meanwhile, teachers can review the journals for completion of the assignments and can privately single out certain areas of writing or creativity for which a student seems to have a talent in order to encourage them. Many writers have claimed that they gained their confidence in writing when a teacher praised work that was not completed for a grade but instead for enjoyment. Likewise, journaling takes the pressure off of

writing for a deadline or a specific assignment. Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar can be left for other assignments while students let their imaginations loose on the page. This freedom can produce a more natural response from students that in turn leads to a greater understanding of themes or concepts addressed in the writing prompts provided.

Diversity in Literature

Because all students are uniquely created with diverse interests and cultural backgrounds, the literature studied within language arts curricula should also be diverse. This has never been truer than in America today. According to the 2010 survey by the Educational Demographic and Geographic Estimates (EDGE) group, over a fifth of school-age children in America come from non-English speaking homes, and almost a third of the school-age population is of a non-Caucasian race (“American Community Survey”, 2010). So then, why do most literature curricula in American schools focus on literature that are predominantly of Caucasian origin? The very nature of a world literature curriculum in particular should encourage the selection of texts from a wide range of countries and cultural backgrounds. That is why the goal of *The Wide World of Literature* textbook in regard to diversity is to incorporate literature from different regions and cultures of the world—from ancient Greece to modern day India.

For example, the typical high school English curriculum taught in American schools sticks to the “classic” works from the major European nations such as Great Britain, France, and Russia. However, this concentration only encompasses a small part of the world and “world literature.” For centuries, this view has thrived throughout the

realm of liberal arts education: that only the literatures of those “victorious” nations—which have succeeded in conquering other “inferior” countries—are worthy of study. Therefore, those unlucky “lesser” countries have been left without any say in the formation of the classical world literature canon. Western works like the British piece *Great Expectations* and the French novel *Les Miserables* have held precedence over the equally important voices from those nations that were previously colonized. It has only been within the last century that a field of literary criticism called postcolonialism has been receptive to the forgotten voices that have chosen to speak out against the neo-imperialist views still embraced by many in today’s society. By comparing “classical” European literature with postcolonial works such as *Wide Sargasso Sea* authored by the Dominica-born author Jean Rhys, *The Wide World of Literature* hopes to present a contemporary Christian approach to teaching postcolonial literature and theory.

Even texts that do not particularly agree with the Christian faith are worthy of study. One must remember that not all literature is written from a Christian perspective, and even those authors that do claim to be Christians err in their theology. Therefore, some works may express the values and religious beliefs of another culture that is entirely unfamiliar and maybe even in opposition to one’s faith. However, reading such works allows the reader to contemplate and possibly identify with the viewpoints presented by the author and his or her characters. Truth can still be found in the experiences of the lost. As St. Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*, “Wherever we taste the truth, God is there” (Hollingworth, 2014, p. 308). These perspectives can lend a whole new dimension to how

one sees other people or even how one views God. In *Writing Fiction*, Janet Burroway (2015) explains how reading allows people to expand their view of others in this way:

It is true, I believe, that if literature has any social justification or use it is that readers can identify common humanity in, and can therefore identify with, characters vastly different from themselves in century, geography, gender, culture, and beliefs; and that this enhances the scope of the reader's sympathy. (p. 127)

Students need to have the scope of their sympathy broadened and enhanced by literature. Christians especially must pay attention to the cultures and religions that have existed in the past or are developing in the world around them. They must learn not to be afraid of the differences represented in other cultures but to embrace the truth and the beauty that they can find there. Then, perhaps, they will be one step closer to pointing the people within that culture to the foundation of Truth Himself. A diverse selection of literature can help do just that.

Educational Technologies

The final focus for the creation of *The Wide World of Literature* curriculum is on the integration of modern technology into instruction, study methods, and student assessment. With the rapid advancement of technology, thousands of new learning technologies have been produced and introduced in the classroom. Interactive apps, websites, and software offer unique opportunities for teachers to engage their students by encouraging the use of technology to which this generation has become accustomed. With the production of *The Wide World of Literature*, an online companion will be

created that will provide teachers and students with access to notes, flashcards, presentations, study games, additional texts, and informational videos that may supplement learning in the classroom.

In addition, teachers that elect to use e-textbooks will have direct links to videos and presentations in the margins of their texts. They will also be provided with review games for each reading assignment as well as test reviews for each module. Games can also be designed to help students with note-taking, writing, and reading skills. Once the textbook is ready to be published, a team will be formed to create apps that can be accessed on smartphones and computers that will also make this information available. As technology advances—which it surely will—new apps and games can be retrofitted or created to fit the progressing technological climate. The company that decides to publish this work will of course determine the extent to which these technologies are designed and used. However, there is still much potential here.

Social media opens up another dimension to the use of technology in classrooms. Students and teachers can find and share outside resources to help further their learning. Hashtags on sites and apps like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram can allow students to communicate with words and images—or even popular internet memes—creating an ongoing discussion in response to the various texts they are studying. Teachers can even let students create blogs or online journals to supplement or replace their written ones. In a case study conducted by Chris Campbell (2009) of the University of Notre Dame, it was determined that online journals “improved goal setting ability and the motivation to achieve their goals” in middle school students’ writing in addition to giving them an

exceptional emotional and creative outlet for their thoughts and feelings (p. 104). The incorporation of technology into this curriculum will be sure to grab the students' interests even when the instructional material might seem less exciting.

Diversity through Literature Selection

As mentioned, diversity in literature—especially world literature—has been found wanting in many of the high school textbooks utilized in American schools, today.

Within this next section, a list of texts will be provided and their authors and content will be briefly discussed to provide reasons for why these texts will be included in *The Wide World of Literature*. These texts have been pulled from various genres, eras, and people groups. They have been organized first by continent or region and then by the nationality of their given authors. Together, they represent the diversity this new textbook hopes to achieve. The list of texts below is just a sampling of the kind of texts that would be desirable for *The Wide World of Literature*. This list provides a flexible model for further research, development, and then publication.

North America

Canada. “Death by Landscape” (1990) by Margaret Atwood (1939-). Atwood is an accomplished Canadian writer and critic, winning the Booker Prize once and the Governor General’s Award twice (Atwood, 1991). Her novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, received the first ever Arthur C. Clarke Award given for the best science-fiction novel. This short story is a great example of a typical North American short story. The plot features nostalgic campground adventures and a mysterious disappearance. Readers can explore themes of the loss of life and childlike innocence.

“Joe” by Emily Pauline Johnson (1861-1913). Johnson was born on Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario, the daughter of a Mohawk chief and an Englishwoman. After reading poetry at a literary club in Toronto, she toured under her Native name “Tekahionwake,” as a poet and a performer of her poetry that eloquently captured both her Native and English heritage (“Pauline Johnson,” 2015). “Joe” is a narrative poem that uses descriptive language and imagery to describe a Native boy’s moment in the woods.

Caribbean

Dominica. *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1996) by Jean Rhys (1890-1979). Rhys was born out of the marriage of a Creole woman and Welsh man in the West Indies, and she dwelt there until age sixteen when she moved to England (“Jean Rhys,” 2016). By far her most accomplished work, this short novel details the life of Antoinette Cosway—who one might recognize as the mad wife of Edward Rochester from Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. This work lies between postcolonialism and postmodernism, and it provides a stark contrast to characters featured in the beloved English novel that makes it worthy of reading.

St. Lucia. Selections from *Omeros* (1976) by Derek Walcott (1930-). Born in a land colonized by the British, Walcott was a “black descendant of the slave culture of the Caribbean” with a passion for Yeats and Auden (Paine, 2001, p. 79). He founded his own theater company on the island and began to write plays about its culture. Walcott eventually taught poetry and play writing at Boston University. His *Omeros* is a postmodern version of Homer’s *The Illiad* set mainly in St. Lucia. This will provide a

parallel yet contrasting narrative to sections of the classical epic that students will also read within this textbook.

Central America

Mexico. “Nos han dado la tierra (They gave us the land)” (1953) by Juan Rulfo (1917-1986). Though he only wrote two books, Rulfo was considered one of the greatest fiction writers in Latin America (“Juan Rulfo,” 2016). As one of the last witnesses of the Mexican Revolution, he wrote many stories dealing with the conflicts between landowners and the poor. This short story depicts a gang of poor commoners who are desperately trying to cross a wasteland to get to land promised to them by the government. Not only does this work connect to a major period of strife for Mexico, but it also easily provides a contrast with the Mosaic narrative of the Israelites wandering in the desert.

South America

Colombia. “The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World” (1968) by Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014). Named one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century, Márquez won the Nobel Peace Prize for literature in 1982 for his greatest work, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (“Gabriel Garcia Marquez,” 2016). The short story that will be included within the textbook has just a touch of the “magic realism” for which this author was so famous, and it is a prime example of the humor Márquez elicited from his island stories. The colorful culture and humor represented in this text will remind readers of the small, quaint towns in United States.

Chile. “Poet’s Obligation” by Pablo Neruda (1904-1973). Neruda led an exciting life as a diplomat and novelist. Though he was exiled from his country in 1944, he was able to return in 1953, and he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Literature in 1971(Paine, 2001). This piece explores Neruda’s thoughts on the duties that a poet has to fulfill to his community and consequentially to all mankind. His masterful imagery captures the common man’s desire for freedom of thought and expression.

Africa

Nigeria. “Dead Man’s Path” (1958) by Chinua Achebe (1930-2013). Achebe was known for his unforgiving view of the detrimental effects Western culture had on traditional African customs. He taught as a professor of English at the University of Nigeria, Bard College, and Brown University (“Chinua Achebe,” 2016). This short story addresses how encounters with Western influences conflicts with and changes the culture of a small African tribe. This text can open up debate on the positive and negative effects of pressing Western values onto a native culture.

Ghana. “Liberation” by Abena Busia (1953-). Educated at Oxford, Busia went on to teach at Yale University, Bryn Mawr College and the Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California at Los Angeles. She currently works as an Associate Professor of English at Rutgers State University (Busby, 1992). In her poem, Busia gives voice to the mothers and “powerful women” of Ghana who have been oppressed. This is anchored in the postcolonial thought that will be discussed within the textbook.

Middle East

Afghanistan. Selections from *The Kite Runner* (2003) by Khaled Hosseini (1965). Born in Kabul to a diplomat and a teacher, Hosseini's family found themselves unable to return to his birthplace due to the Soviet Invasion, and so they ended up moving to California where Hosseini eventually became a doctor. After the success of this first novel, he started writing full-time ("Khaled Hosseini," 2016). Like his other works, this novel centers on a boy growing up in Afghanistan in the 1970s. This moving story provides great insight into the culture in Kabul that many Americans have dismissed due to derogatory stereotypes about Afghanistan's Islamic culture, linking the nation to terrorist activity through faulty generalization.

Ancient Persia. Selections from *The Thousand and One Nights* (14th Century) by various unknown authors. These stories have been pulled from many Arabic and Persian narratives, so that they cannot be allocated to any one source or time period (Puchner, 2014). Still, this text is one of the well-known, classical pieces of literature that oftentimes graces the pages of college anthologies. The frame story tells of a young woman that sacrifices her own safety to save her people. In a very Esther-like manner, Shahrazad tells a story to the bloodthirsty king each night in order to convince him to stop his violence. Not only is this text Biblically applicable, but it calls for discussion on extremely relevant social and moral issues such as gender equality and terrorism.

Asia

India. "Imaginary Homelands" (1991) by Salman Rushdie (1947-). As an Anglo-Indian writer, Rushdie has become a controversial character in the religious community

of his native land. Because of his “blasphemous” depictions of Muhammed, the *Qur’an*, and the Muslim faith in *The Satanic Verses*, he had to go into hiding in order to avoid his execution. Still, Rushdie was honored with the Booker Prize in 1981 for *Midnight’s Children* and was knighted in 2007 for his accomplishments (“Sir Salman Rushdie,” 2016). In his essay titled “Imaginary Homelands,” he explores the nature of the borders between nations and peoples and concludes that those who have crossed these cultural and geographical borders are better for it due to the multidimensional insight this experience lends. This is at the very heart of *The Wide World of Literature*.

China. “Losing the Feet” (1998) by Zhong Jufang (?-2005). Not much is known about the writer of this contemporary short story except that he came from Hong Kong. Though this story is about the simple subject of finding a shoe to fit a stinking foot, Jufang’s attention to detail uses this ordinary occurrence to focus on the relationship between a shoe store clerk and his female customer. Though neither of them knows the other’s name, these characters represent that odd relationship in which the customer has to trust in the sales clerk to keep a secret. Though set in China, this situation is reproduced daily on a global scale. This universality makes this text an engaging and discussion-worthy read.

Japan. “Visu the Woodsman and the Old Priest.” This is an ancient Japanese folktale that has been carried through many generations through the tradition of storytelling. The strange tale tells of a simple woodsman who disappeared for three hundred years, because he could not find a balance between work and prayer. This humorous anecdote draws on the importance of time management as well as the value of

faith versus family. Though written long before Washington Irving's famous tale, this story is eerily similar to "Rip Van Winkle" and can be discussed in comparison with its ancient Japanese counterpart.

Malaysia. "My Message" by Cecil Rajendra (1941-). Both a lawyer and a poet, Rajendra is not widely known. Still, his simple, postmodern poetry outlines his mission as a poet. He explains that he does not wish simply to deliver a message but to present a piece of literary art that will move his readers emotionally through its form. Rajendra's dozens of mixed metaphors proclaims that his poems are alive and can speak their own messages with him ascribing one to them. This description of what a poet's duty is can be compared and contrasted with "Poet's Obligation" by Pablo Neruda. Then, students can express their own opinions on what they believe a poet's job to be.

Europe

Denmark. "Babette's Feast" (1950) by Isak Dinesen (1885-1962). With Isak as her penname, Karen Blixen was an author who seamlessly wove together the natural and the supernatural ("Isak Dinesen," 2016). In this short story, she illustrates the beauty of grace from unexpected places, using a simple dinner at the hands of an artist that into a magnificent feast. Blixen contrasts this graceful artistry with the conservative faith of a secluded town, showing that each has its place in God's kingdom. Ultimately, this story reflects one of central themes of *The Wide World of Literature*, because it concludes that beauty, truth, and grace are not exclusive to the conservative Christian worldview. Dinesen's work encourages readers to embrace an Augustinian view of truth.

Classics. Europe is where most of the “classical” works of world literature have emerged in the past. However, what makes a text a classic? According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the adjective “classic” describes something that is “judged over a period of time to be of the highest quality and outstanding of its kind” (“Classic”, 2016). This means that classical works of literature must have been studied and revered by educated society for its great value, making this “classic” label mainly a product of scholarly tradition. For the sake of this textbook proposal, classics will be viewed as widely respected pieces of literature that have been studied within American schools for more than one generation—especially works within this category that have received prestigious awards. Scholars have studied works such as Homer’s *Odyssey* and *Iliad* for ages because of their deep connection to the foundation and development of Western culture. In addition to the two classical works mentioned, the following three works will also be included in *The Wide World of Literature: The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Dante Alighieri’s *The Divine Comedy*, and Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*. Of course, there is not sufficient time within a school year for these works to be read in their entirety. However, significant selections can still be read from them. Though these classical works are older and have been subjected to intense study for years, they remain relevant to society because of their discussion of sinful human nature, morality, and redemption.

Only two European classics will be incorporated fully into this curriculum. The first of these is Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*. This nineteenth-century Russian piece is intensely psychological, and it deals with a wide range of meaningful themes, such as the conflict between grace and the law, as well as between the rich and

the poor. The second classic to be examined is Elie Wiesel's *Night*, a memoir that was first published in 1956. This more modern classic details the true story of Wiesel's experience as a young Romanian-Jew in a Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz. The Holocaust produced an entire subgenre of literature because of its cultural and historical impact. The stories from the men and women who survived this horrific era should never be forgotten, because that will be the first step to this terrible tragedy being repeated. Wiesel's portrayal of his experiences as a young man are both moving and thought provoking as he examines his faith in the face of Nazi cruelty. He was honored as a Nobel Laureate in 1952 for his contribution to literature.

Target Audience & Marketability

There are two main audiences for *The Wide World of Literature*: private Christian schools and Christian homeschool families. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), "private school enrollment in grades 9 through 12 increased from 1.2 million in 1995–96 to 1.3 million in 2011–12" ("Private School Enrollment," 2014). Over one million students are enrolled in private schools, and over 750,000 of those students go to conservative Christian institutions. In addition, a 2007 NCES study states that 1,773,000 students are homeschooled. This study stated that eighty-three percent of parents chose to homeschool their children for religious reasons ("1.5 Million," 2008). That means that a significant number of homeschooling families are in need of textbooks written from a religious point of view. Neither of these groups has financial assistance coming from the government to pay for their textbooks and materials. Therefore, they are looking for resources that possess high educational and

spiritual standards as well as a price tag within their privately-financed budgets. This textbook seeks to meet both of these criteria.

Marketing Plans

There are several ways to market textbooks to these target demographics at a reasonable cost. The first of these marketing strategies is the “no-text textbook.” While this may sound like an oxymoron, it is simply a fancy name for a workbook or literary guide for a tenth grade class in world literature. Teachers and homeschooling parents will be provided with the materials needed to lead discussions, write tests, and assign projects that fit with individual texts. However, the literary texts themselves will not be provided within the book. This allows these target audiences to have the option to buy the texts for reading and study separately at a lower cost. Some texts such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* can even be found for free on the internet. This also allows the publishing company for *The Wide World of Literature* to cut down the cost of including all of these texts within the book, permitting it to be offered at a lower price to the community. This is perhaps the starting point for publication of this textbook. If the demand grows, then the next two marketing plans might come into play.

Another marketing strategy is centered on the classic “package deal.” In this version of the textbook, the publisher either can decide to include the literature within the textbook itself or to create a separate anthology that contains the works discussed in the literature guide. To sweeten this package deal, a third book can be included without adding to the cost of the other two. This book is simply a journal that can easily be

manufactured with the writing prompts for each section of the textbook written on every other page.

The third option for providing a quality, cost-effective textbook is through the use of an e-book—or e-textbook in this case. For those who readily have access to the internet and a computer, tablet, or smartphone, an e-book may seem like the easiest and cheapest option. With no print costs, the price for the textbook can be significantly reduced. However, the students and teachers will still have the advantage of having the online literary texts, guides, and journals all in one place.

The Competition

When compared with contemporary world literature textbooks—especially those exclusively marketed to Christian schools and homeschoolers—the ideas and designs behind *The Wide World of Literature* far exceed the others. On the market today, there is no complete textbook curriculum created specifically for the high school level that has this amount of cultural diversity represented in its literature. Also, because of the focus on providing a quality textbook at a cheaper price, this textbook will also financially beat out what competitors it does have. The widely-used Holt's *Elements of Literature* and TextWord Press' *Implications of Literature* for the tenth grade are both over \$100. A Beka Book, one of the leading Christian homeschool brands, has a world literature textbook for \$33, but it has additional texts and materials that are sold separately, adding over \$50 to its original price. Furthermore, all of these textbooks mentioned are severely outdated in their approach to diversity, technology, and overall design.

A Modern Textbook Designed for Classroom Engagement

Organization. As with the case of most textbooks, *The Wide World of Literature* will offer several “Table of Contents” sections that vary in the organization of the texts. This way, teachers can choose to assign the reading in an order that is conducive to the way these teachers want to build their class. Teachers that prefer to teach from a historical point-of-view might want to teach the works in a chronological order. Other teachers that prefer to teach by theme can follow the “Table of Contents” that groups the texts by the main themes that they address. The final “Table of Contents” will list the literature by region such as the list of countries provided earlier.

Design. Contemporary textbooks have to have a modern design to engage both the students and the teacher. That is why *The Wide World of Literature* will have a fun yet simple, streamlined design to encourage interest but keep students focused on the material as well. This cover shown in *Appendix A* was influenced by the design of old, yellowed letters weary from travel. The fonts are fun and inviting, yet readable. It evokes a sense of adventure, so that the reader immediately knows the literature set before him is guaranteed to take him on a journey.

The Wide World of Literature is a textbook curriculum that seeks to provide a much needed resource for Christian schools and homeschooling families. It is built on a Biblical foundation and supported by scholarly research in the fields of education, literature, and psychology. This basis as well as the textbook’s emphasis on five objectives—recognition of the need for holistic education, implementation of differentiated teaching methods, cultivation of student interest, reflection of diversity

within classrooms, and integration of modern technology—make it unlike any other textbook on the market, today. The classic design and the cost-effective manufacturing strategy makes the textbook available to an extensive audience for a low cost. In short, *The Wide World of Literature* encapsulates everything towards which the American textbook industry is striving and much more.

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Appendix A

Cover Design

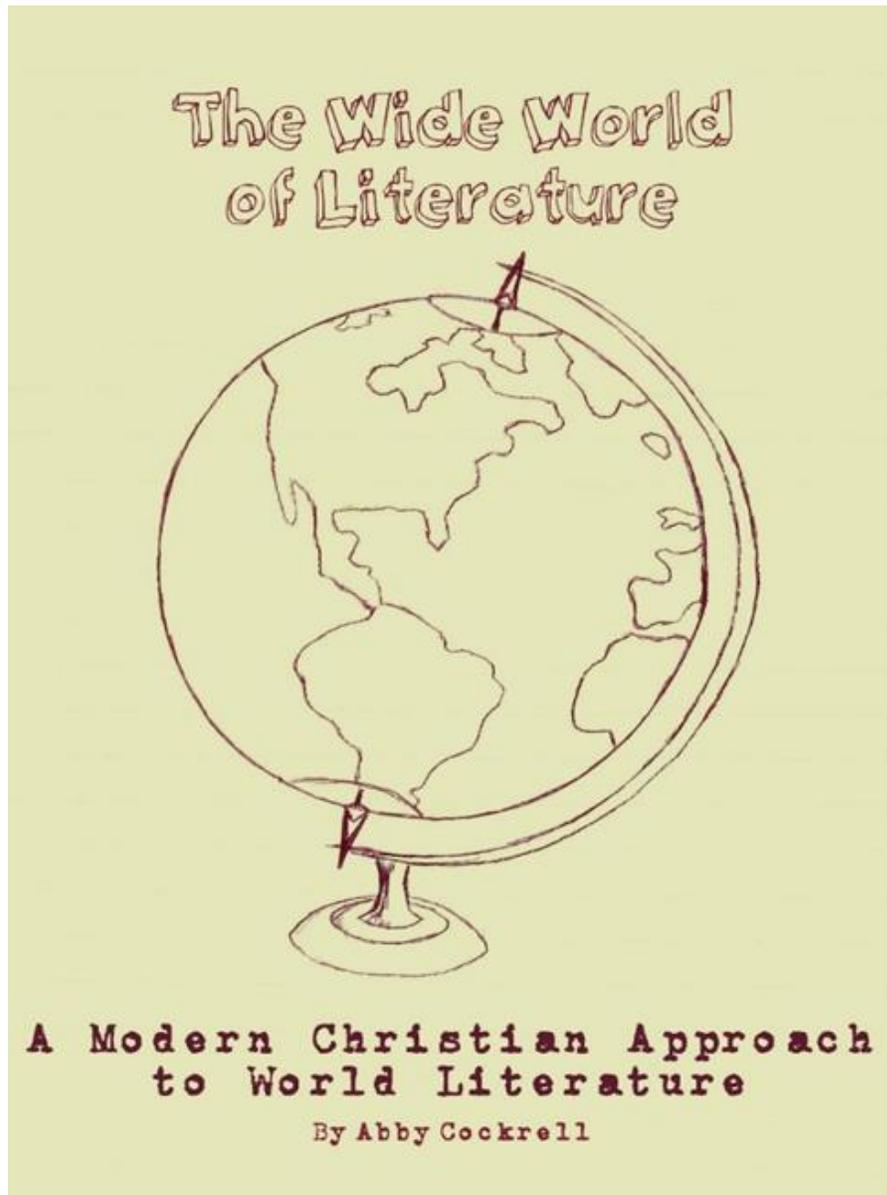


Figure 1. The cover and design concept for the textbook

Appendix B

Sample Curriculum Overview

Table 1. A sample curriculum overview for a module on *Night* by Elie Wiesel

| MODULE #2: NIGHT—ELIE WIESEL (15 Days) | | | |
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| Shorthand Key: J = Journal T = Technology SS = Social Studies GRAMM = Grammar ASSESS = Assessment VOCAB = Vocabulary DIV = Diversity B = Biblical Application COLLAB = Groups A = Art | | | |
| Day # | Reading Assignment & Section Objective | Materials Needed | Instructional Overview |
| 1 | <p>Read “Preface” (pg. X-XVIII) and “Foreward” (pg. XX-XXIV) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Students will begin reading the novel <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel.</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5 elements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • PowerPoint on the Holocaust, Auschwitz, and Elie Wiesel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J: Writing prompt: “What do you know about the Holocaust? What about Auschwitz?” Ask if anyone would like to share a summary of what they wrote. • Introduce novels and how they are different from short stories. Discuss the genre of historical fiction. • Brief lecture given on the author and historical context surrounding the story. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ T/SS: PowerPoint presentation on the Holocaust, Auschwitz, and Elie Wiesel • If time allows, begin reading or have students popcorn read <i>Night</i>. |
| 2 | <p>Read Section 1 (pg. 3-22) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5 elements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Grammar Worksheet • Character Log | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRAMM: Types of sentences reviewed. Practice worksheet on WG pg. 38-39 completed and reviewed in class. • Discussion on the major elements of the story, including the characters, plot, setting, themes, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start the character log worksheet which students will use to keep track of the different characters within the novel. ○ Fill out the first few character’s descriptions as a class using clues from the reading. ○ Write down descriptions of characters’ appearances, actions, speech, personality, etc. • If time allows, begin reading or have students popcorn read <i>Night</i>. • For homework, students should continue working on their character logs while they read. |

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| 3 | <p>Read Section 2 (pg. 23-29) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5 elements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Character Log • Vocabulary List #1 • Notecards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOCAB: Write the list of vocabulary words for this segment on the board, and have students use their dictionaries to make flashcards. • Discussion on the major elements of the story, including the characters, plot, setting, themes, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussion of the new characters added to the character log. ○ Show a map of their journey so far. • If time allows, students can read <i>Night</i> silently. • For homework, students should continue working on their character logs while they read. |
| 4 | <p>Read Section 3 (pg. 29-46) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5 elements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Journal • Character Log • Video on the Holocaust and Auschwitz | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T: Watch a short video on the Holocaust and Auschwitz • J: Writing prompt: “Do you think that you would be able to hold onto your faith if faced with so much death and despair? Would you consider rebelling against the Nazi oppressors?” Ask if anyone would like to share a summary of what they wrote. • Discussion on the major elements of the story, including the characters, plot, setting, themes, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the different reactions that characters have when they get to the concentration camp? • If time allows, begin reading or have students popcorn read <i>Night</i>. • For homework, students should continue working on their character logs while they read. |
| 5 | <p>Read Section 4 (pg. 47-65) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5 elements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Character Log • Grammar Worksheet • Kahoot review game | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRAMM: Transitive verbs reviewed. Practice worksheet on WG pg. 43-44 completed and reviewed in class. • T: Pass out iPads to students and have them access the Kahoot app. Play review game using the app to challenge students to quickly recall elements of the stories read. • Discussion on the major elements of the story, including the characters, plot, setting, themes, etc. • If time allows, begin reading or have students popcorn read <i>Night</i>. • For homework, students should continue working on their character logs while they read. |
| 6 | <p>Read Section 5 (pg. 66-84) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5 elements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Character Log • Journal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J/DIV: Writing prompt: “How important are family holidays/traditions to you? Would you choose to celebrate them in the midst of suffering? Why?” Ask if anyone would like to share a summary of what they wrote. • Discussion on the major elements of the story, including the characters, plot, setting, themes, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SS/B: Discuss the history and the importance of the Jewish holidays mentioned in this section. • If time allows, begin reading or have students popcorn read <i>Night</i>. • For homework, students should continue working on their character logs while they read. |
| 7 | <p>Students will take this time in the school computer lab to work on their book reports.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Lab • Novel for Book Report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T: Student will use this time in the computer lab to work on their book reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The reports are 3 to 5 pages long. ○ They must summarize and analyze the |

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| | | | <p>different elements of their chosen novel, including characters, plot, theme, mood, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students may also take this time to ask the teacher for some help. |
| 8 | <p>Read Section 6 (pg. 85-97) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5 elements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Grammar Worksheet • Character Log | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRAMM: Transitive verbs continued to be reviewed. Practice worksheet on WG pg. 44-45 completed and reviewed in class. • ASSESS: Pop quiz on the reading and grammar lessons from the week. • Discussion on the major elements of the story, including the characters, plot, setting, themes, etc. • If time allows, begin reading or have students popcorn read <i>Night</i>. • For homework, students should continue working on their character logs while they read. |
| 9 | <p>Students will trade their book report drafts with two other students, and each student will critique the other according to the rubric.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Review Rubrics • Drafts of Book Report • Red Pens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss what a good peer review looks like: completed rubric, encouraging comments, constructive criticism, etc. • Go through the rubric to make sure the students understand what each section entails. • COLLAB: Students will trade their book report drafts with two other students, and each student will critique the other according to the rubric. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All of the drafts will be anonymous and given a number which only the teacher and writer will know. ○ Each student must complete the rubric and return it to the teacher who will distribute them later. • If time allows, students can read <i>Night</i> silently. • For homework, students should continue working on their character logs while they read. |
| 10 | <p>Read Section 7 (pg. 98-103) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5 elements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Character Log • Journal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J: Writing prompt: “How would you react if you saw people from the concentration camps pass by on the trains? What sorts of pressures and fears would prevent you from extending aid?” Ask if anyone would like to share a summary of what they wrote. • Discussion on the major elements of the story, including the characters, plot, setting, themes, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ COLLAB: Table groups work together to update their character logs. ○ Note and discuss which characters have survived this long. Why do you think they have survived? • If time allows, begin reading or have students popcorn read <i>Night</i>. • For homework, students should continue working on their character logs while they read. |
| 11 | <p>Read Section 8 (pg. 98-103) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Character Log • Vocabulary Quiz #1 • Completed Book Reports • Oral Presentation Notes • Notecards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASSESS: Students will take Vocabulary Quiz #1 on the words given to them previously. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This quiz will include questions with matching, multiple choice, and short answer options. ○ Those who finish early can read the next story silently while the others finish. • Students will give their oral presentations concerning their book reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each presentation will be 2 to 3 minutes |

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| | <p>elements.</p> <p>Students will give their oral presentations concerning their book reports.</p> | | <p>long.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classmates will provide feedback on notecards. |
| 12 | <p>Read Section 9 (pg. 104-115) of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</p> <p>Given the text, the students will identify, analyze, and discuss the major elements of the story, correctly doing so for 5 out of 5 elements.</p> <p>Students will finish giving their oral presentations concerning their book reports.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Character Log • Oral Presentation Notes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will give their oral presentations concerning their book reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each presentation will be 2 to 3 minutes long. ○ Classmates will provide feedback on notecards. • Discussion on the major elements of the story, including the characters, plot, setting, themes, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss the students' thoughts on the novel. ○ Why do you think it was important for us to read this novel? ○ Did you learn anything special? |
| 13 | <p>Students may work in groups, pairs, or individually to complete either a timeline or a character sketch using information found within the novel.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> • Character Log • Poster Board • Markers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COLLAB/A: Students may work in groups, pairs, or individually to complete either a timeline or a character sketch using information found within the novel. • COLLAB: I can collaborate with the social studies teacher to create this project for our students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Timeline: Students use their notes and the novel to make a timeline of events. They must choose two of the events on the timeline to write one paragraph each about why that event was significant in the story. ○ Character sketch: Students can use their notes, character log, and novel to draw their chosen character. They must write one paragraph describing the character and one paragraph describing the character's relationship to the other characters. |
| 14 | <p>Students will work with their table groups to answer review questions for the test tomorrow.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeopardy SmartBoard Game • Timer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T: Students will be put into their table groups and will participate in a Jeopardy SmartBoard Review game. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ COLLAB: They will work together to answer the review questions within the allotted time. ○ 5 extra credit points for the test will go to the winning team. |
| 15 | <p>Students will take their second test covering the novel <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test #1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASSESS: Students will take Test #2 on the novel <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This test will include questions with matching, multiple choice, and short answer options. ○ There will also be three discussion questions. |

Appendix C

Formative Assessment Instructions: Character Logs

Using the given character log sheets, the student will read the novel *Night* by Elie Wiesel to identify noteworthy characteristics, relationships, events, and quotes by or about ten of the major or minor characters from the story. This will be an ongoing assessment tool that the students will update at the end of each section of the novel. These character sheets will be kept in a binder that the students can decorate and customize as much as they wish. They will also be encouraged to provide illustrations of the characters or events to include in their logs. This assessment helps the teacher to know if the student is reading and comprehending the material. This character log can also be used by the student to study for upcoming tests or to refer when completing projects and papers.

Appendix D

Character Log Sheet

CHARACTER NAME:

DESCRIPTION:

IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS:

TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS:

IMPORTANT QUOTES BY/ABOUT CHARACTER:

Appendix E

Product Assessment Poster Project Instructions

Using their completed character log sheets, the students will create a poster displaying a timeline of important events from the novel. A rubric will be used for grading. The student instructions are listed below.

Student Instructions:

1. You will create a poster displaying at least **10 of the significant events** from within the novel. All events must be cited with page numbers from which they came. Events with dates given in the story must be listed on the timeline.
2. You will also research and provide **five of the major historical events/dates** alluded to in the novel which you will insert into the story timeline. (The beginning of the war, etc.)
3. All events must be accompanied by **a paragraph** explaining how this event was relevant to the story and how it impacted the characters.
4. You must also include **at least seven illustrations and/or pictures** for selected events.
5. Students must **know the information** on the board well enough to answer questions about the events displayed.