

So Sayeth Thy Blog! Lesson Plan

Title: So Sayeth Thy Blog!		Grade Range: 5-8
Curriculum Area: Language Arts	Concepts and Competencies: Paragraphing, collaboration, essay writing, point of view	Tool: Blogging Web sites
Summary: In this activity, students create and respond to blogs as they read and write about literature. To begin, the class is divided into two teams. Each team brainstorms prompts about the current reading and theme for the other team. The teams then break into pairs to respond to the prompts in their blogs. Students post blog entries in first person as one of the main characters, and respond to other students blogs in their own voices. In a culminating project, students watch a modern-day movie version of the literary work and blog a final movie review essay that compares and contrasts the movie to the original work and provides a movie review.		

Warm-up

- Make sure students have completed the EasyTech lesson **Communicating Online: Blogs** and its prerequisites.
- Provide several blog sites for students to view to get an idea of how they are set up and the type of content that may be presented. Show example sites that show effective paragraphing and good writing skills.
- Using *Romeo and Juliet* (or other desired curriculum appropriate literature), divide the class into two teams to represent two main characters, such as *The Romeos* and *The Juliets*. Throughout the lesson, the teams will brainstorm as a team to create questions or prompts for the other team.
- Divide each team into pairs to work together on student blogs. Each pair will create their own blog as well as respond to classmates' blogs.
- Have some movie reviews on hand to demonstrate when you introduce the culminating project.

Activity

- As the class prepares to read the play out loud, explain that every student will be part of one brainstorming team and one blogging pair. Tell students that each blogging pair will have their own blog in which they will post weekly as their team character using first person point of view.
- During the first week of reading, have students set up their blog sites, including choosing themes and layouts, adding a title, writing a description, and applying access settings.
- Once blog sites are created, begin reading *Romeo and Juliet* as a class. Depending on the pace of the reading, choose a stopping point after a few scenes or after an entire act. Conduct a class discussion around the reading, pose theme-related questions, and answer questions students may have.
- Allow students a class session to work together in their teams to brainstorm prompts for the other team. For example, all *The Romeos* work together as a team to come up with a question or prompt to pose to *The Juliets*, and vice versa. Each team brainstorms questions to pose to the other team based on the prior reading and the other team's character using the *Brainstorming Worksheet*. Teams brainstorm

- questions about the role of the other character, vote on the questions they like best, and then pose the questions to the other team to address in their weekly blog entry.
- After brainstorming is complete, have students write the question on the board and sign up for a team to respond to later.
 - Once the team questions are composed, the teams present their questions to the other team. The teams then break into assigned pairs. Pairs then discuss the prompt and work together to respond to the prompt in their personal blog using first person voice. Remind students to write from the perspective of their team character, respond with examples from the text, use effective paragraphing skills, and keep focus on the prompt.
 - After the weekly blog entries are completed, discuss the questions and responses.
 - Have students refer to the sign up sheet to remind them which pair they will be responding to for the current blogging cycle. Next, have teams comment on the blog of their assigned pair in their own voice. For example, one pair from *The Romeos* team will comment on the blog of the assigned pair from *The Juliets* team, and vice versa.
 - Choose a few blog posts and comments to share with the class, and, as a class, analyze the posts and comments. If time permits, ask for volunteers to share their blogs and responses.
 - Have students continue the brainstorming, posting, and commenting cycle in their personal blogs as the class reads through the play.
 - After the play has been read and blogging response cycles completed, choose a modern-day Romeo and Juliet movie for students to watch. Some examples are, *Romeo & Juliet: Sealed with a Kiss – an animated tale* (2006), *Romeo and Juliet* (1994), and *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (1996). Give students a T-chart graphic organizer to document differences and similarities between the movie and the play as they watch.
 - Using the T-chart organizer, have pairs write and post a multiple paragraph movie review for their blogs. The review should be written in essay format, and should respond to the similarities and differences between the play and the movie as well as give a review of the movie.
 - Have students give short 5-minute movie reviews to their peers. Students can role-play as characters from the play. They can dress up in costume, use props, or speak in character during their movie review. Explain to students that during the review, students must point out at least one major difference and one major similarity between the movie and the play.

Wrap-Up

- After all the blogs and movie reviews are complete, ask students how their understanding of the play and its characters has grown. Review the main themes and discuss the reactions students had to the prompts. You might want to have students post a response in their blogs.
- Contrast communicating on paper verses communicating online in a blog. Have students describe which method they like better and which method they feel may be more effective in communicating to a broad audience. You might want to post a question on the class blog and allow students to add comments about the class blogging experience.

Names _____

Movie Review T-Chart

*As you watch the movie, list the differences and similarities between the play and movie.
Use this chart to complete the movie review essay in your blog.*

Movie: *(Insert Title)*

Play: *Romeo and Juliet*

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Prompt Brainstorm Sheet

Team:

*Choose a **team facilitator** for this brainstorming session and a **recorder** to write down the prompts and questions the team brainstorms. Then, choose the most popular prompt and question(s) to pose to the other team.*

Act and scene(s) or pages: _____

Brainstorm at least 5 prompts and questions for the other team:

Write the final prompts and questions for the other team:

Once the final prompt and questions have been decided, follow your teacher's instructions to pose the question to the other team.

Student Sample: Prompt Brainstorm Sheet

Team: Juliet

*Choose a **team facilitator** for this brainstorming session and a **recorder** to write down the prompts and questions the team brainstorms. Then, choose the most popular prompt and question(s) to pose to the other team.*

Act and scene(s) or pages: Act I, Scene 5

Brainstorm at least 5 questions or prompts for the other team:

How and why did you fall in love with Juliet so quickly?

What happened to your love for Rosaline?

What thoughts were running through your head when you saw Juliet?

Even though Juliet is a Capulet, how come you decided to you still want her love?

Don't you think that maybe you should get to know her first?

Why did you rush into kiss her so quickly? Do you think you should have waited?


Write the final prompts and questions for the other team:

In Act I, Scene 5, Romeo sees Juliet for the first time and admires her from a distance. As Romeo, how are you feeling during this first glance? What thoughts are running through your head? How come you changed your mind about Rosaline so quickly after being so in love with her? Tell us why you think you now have such a strong true love for Juliet.

Once the final prompt and questions have been decided, follow your teacher's instructions to pose the question to the other team.

Student Sample: Blog Entry

Date: February 8, 2008 2:30 pm

Mood: In love 

Prompts and Questions for The Romeos

In Act I, Scene 5, Romeo sees Juliet for the first time and admires her from a distance. As Romeo, how are you feeling during this first glance? What thoughts are running through your head? How come you changed your mind about Rosaline so quickly after being so in love with her? Tell us why you think you now have such a strong true love for Juliet.

Response:

During Act I, Scene 5, many thoughts were running through my head. I thought that I knew what true love was but then I saw Juliet's shining beauty on that fated night. She is the definition of true beauty. She stood out of the crowd like a snow-white dove. You don't come across a beautiful woman like Juliet often. I now believe in love at first sight.

I don't think my heart knew what real love was until now. Rosaline was nothing compared to Juliet. I knew nothing about love until my eyes saw Juliet. All I wanted that night was to be close to her, touch her, and speak with her. The kiss made it all clear to me. Juliet is the woman for me. Even when I learned she was a Capulet, my heart could not tell me no. Juliet will be mine forever. She is my one true love!

Comments: Romeo, Romeo. You gave many good reasons why you fell in love with Juliet that first night, and your love for Rosaline seems like it was never true love. Your description and explanations are believable. We can see why you believe in love at first sight after your fist-hand experience. You explained your feelings well. You might want to add a quote from your meeting to more clearly explain what happened. Your love seems so strong that you leave me with many questions. What will happen next? Do you think your love will last forever? How will your family react when they hear you've fallen in love with a Capulet?

Romeo and Juliet* Blog Assessment*Blog Design**

_____ Blog has been set up, and the layout and theme are applied.

_____ Blog site includes a description, title, and proper access settings.

Blog Posts

_____ Posts are included for each blogging cycle.

_____ Blog posts clearly address the weekly prompts and questions.

_____ Blog posts are written in effective paragraph or essay form and use persuasive writing techniques when appropriate.

_____ Blog posts are written in first person voice and in character.

_____ Blog posts contain examples and terms from the play to support opinions.

_____ Blog posts are free of grammatical and spelling errors; proofreading is evident.

_____ Final movie review contains an introduction, supporting paragraphs, and conclusion and uses effective persuasive writing techniques.

_____ Final movie review blog essay describes at least one main difference and one main similarity between the movie and play, and it reviews the movie.

Blog Comments

_____ Comments are posted for each blogging cycle.

_____ Comments show evidence of critical reading and critical thinking.

_____ Comments provide respectful, appropriate, and valuable feedback.

_____ Effective paragraphing and persuasive writing are used throughout.

Collaboration

_____ Team brainstorms and presents prompts effectively.

_____ Work is evenly divided on the team, and all team members' ideas are heard and respected.

_____ Pair successfully meets goals and solve problems.

_____ Work is evenly divided between both partners in the pair.