

Ghostly Narratives

Teacher: Sherry Chappell, Sanford Middle School

Grades: 3-6

Goals/Objectives:

Students will:

- *apply knowledge of Alabama history, folklore, and geography to create a mystery or ghost story.
- *write a narrative, using historical facts and details, as well as imaginary parts.
- *publish narrative, using computer program to include graphics.
- *share narrative in a story-telling session.

Curriculum standards:

Alabama Course of Study (www.alsde.edu/html/sections/)

English Language Arts Grade 4:

- (7) Use literary analysis.
- (9) Choose to read or view a variety of literature representing many cultures, eras, genres, and ideas.
- (12) Apply strategies of a skillful listener.
- (15) Describe cultural similarities and differences through exposure to multicultural literature.
- (17) Compare and contrast story elements and the experiences and feelings of literary characters to students' lives.
- (21) Use the writing process with assistance when composing different forms of written expression.
- (25) Write in a variety of modes to express meaning.
- (26) Organize content of written compositions with attention to basic characteristics.
- (31) Use computers for expression.
- (32) Apply figurative language found in literature to enhance written and oral production of language.
- (33) Organize and present information using a variety of media and student-produced text.
- (34) Exhibit skill in dramatization and other oral presentations.
- (35) Demonstrate facility with oral language for a wide range of purposes.

Social Studies Grade 4:

(10) Describe significant social and educational changes in Alabama during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Discuss cultural contributions from various regions of Alabama that contributed to the formation of a state heritage.

(15) Identify/recognize Alabamians who have made significant contributions to society since 1950.

Information Literacy Objectives. Literacy Partners: A Principal's Guide to an Effective Library Media Program for the 21st Century. (2000) "Appendix B K-12 Information Objectives." (www.alsde.edu/general/LiteracyPartners.pdf)

Grade 4:

Evaluate:

- *compare and contrast information from two or more passages.
- *make inferences about the cause of an event.

Use:

- * read or recite aloud a part of a group performance.
- *use available technologies to produce materials.

Materials/Resources:

The Headless Haunt and Other African-American Ghost Stories by James Haskins

Jeffrey's Latest 13: More Alabama Ghosts by Kathryn Tucker Windham

This Goodly Land: Alabama's Literary Landscape (<http://www.alabamaliterarymap.org>)

This web site includes authors from Alabama counties with links from a map to the authors' names and biographies. Other narratives could serve as examples of narrative writing by Alabama authors.

Gravestone Quotes (<http://www.corsinet.com/braincandy/graves.html>) This web site includes grave epitaphs of famous people.

Pre-lesson Activities:

Read selected stories from above books and other resources. Set the mood by dimming the lights and gathering students on the floor. If available, students may also view video and/or audio recordings of storytellers (Windham) telling ghost stories.

Lesson Activities:

1. Deconstruct one story from each book using an overhead projector. Work on features of the stories:
 - *parts of a narrative (beginning, middle, end)
 - *hook sentence (begins with a question, dialogue, sound effect, etc)
 - *word usage (descriptive words for setting, inferences in dialogue that show characters are scared)
 - *style (words the author uses to scare the reader, sentence variety)
 - *conventions (how author uses punctuation to show characters are scared or signal that something scary is about to happen)
 - *fact/fiction chart to determine what is true and imaginary
2. Brainstorm a list of facts from students' reading about Alabama history that could be developed into a ghost story or mystery. Students may select places or people from the period of time being studied to write about.
3. Students write first draft of story. Upon completion of first draft, peers read and edit writing. They should write at least two positive comments on the paper and two suggestions for improvement.
4. Students write final draft on the computer and include graphics.
5. Students present their ghost story to the class in a story-telling session.

Other Curriculum Connections:

A field trip to a local cemetery would generate ideas for writing. Students can take paper and crayons to make grave rubbings. Making inferences from epitaphs, students can create a story based on the engravings. Students can also survey the data found on the tombstones (gender, dates, etc) and create graphs upon returning to the classroom.

Assessment:

- 1) Writing Rubric to include narrative requirements:
 - clear beginning, middle and end
 - at least five paragraphs
 - hook sentence
 - vivid vocabulary
 - dialogue
 - facts from Alabama history text
 - computer graphics
- 2) Presentation/Listening Rubric