

Issues in illustrations of Uncle Tom's Cabin and implications of interpretation in adaptation

DOCUMENTS: Eight illustrations from editions of Uncle Tom's Cabin published through the second half of the 19th century.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. Identify techniques of direct and indirect characterization of Uncle Tom in Stowe's written text.
2. Synthesize identified techniques into integrated understanding of Stowe's characterization of Uncle Tom
3. Identify techniques of composition, perspective, line, proportion, and detail present in illustrations of Uncle Tom's rescue of Little Eva.
4. Synthesize identified techniques into successful "reading" of each illustrators' characterization of Uncle Tom.
5. Apply insight gained from the lesson to discussion of issues of interpretation in adaptation, particularly as they apply to the history of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

STRATEGIES

Students will accomplish the instructional objectives by:

1. Locating and analyzing six quotations from the text of Uncle Tom's Cabin that reveal Uncle Tom's character.
2. Writing a brief characterization summary of Uncle Tom based on these passages.
3. Analyzing as a class two illustrations of Uncle Tom sitting with Eva
4. Working in small groups, analyzing the presentation of Tom's character in one illustration of Tom rescuing Eva.
5. Reporting to the class their finding concerning Tom's characterization in the illustration.
6. Comparing and contrasting the characterization presented in the illustrations and evaluating which ones most accurately reflect the character of Tom as Stowe creates it.

OVERVIEW

This lesson will require two days. In preparation for the first class, the students will have completed reading Uncle Tom's Cabin, as well as some discussion of the major themes.

ASSESSMENT

Students will demonstrate their comprehension of the unit concepts by

1. Writing an organized textually supported description of Uncle Tom's character.
2. Participating in oral analysis of how Uncle Tom's character is presented in a given illustration.
3. Successfully completing analysis worksheets.

PRIOR TO THE UNIT

Students will have completed reading Uncle Tom's Cabin. Through discussion of this novel and other readings already completed in the unit- including works by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs – students will have considered the cultural/historical context of the novel. Earlier in the

course, students will also have participated in two assignments that require analysis of visual art as a means of identifying point of view.

DAY ONE

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

How has Stowe characterized Uncle Tom?

What specific techniques has Stowe utilized in this characterization?

MATERIALS

Test of Uncle Tom's Cabin

Worksheet for textual evidence of Uncle Tom's character

OPENING THE LESSON

Begin the lesson by reviewing the stylistic techniques available to an author in creating indirect and direct characterization, including techniques of detail, diction, allusion, point of view, irony, and figurative language. Explain to the students that this lesson will focus on how Stowe has characterized Uncle Tom and how illustrators of the novel have interpreted her characterization.

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students how they would describe Uncle Tom as a character.
2. Direct students to find textual evidence of Uncle Tom's character, recording their evidence on the worksheet provided.
3. Discuss the students' findings. Students will individually suggest quotations for consideration and class will analyze.
4. For homework, students will write and organized, textually supported description of Uncle Tom's character.

DAY TWO

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

How have the illustrators characterized Uncle Tom?

What specific techniques have they utilized in their characterizations?

What in Stowe's original characterization have the illustrators

Emphasized? Minimized? Changed?

What conclusions can we draw about artistic interpretation?

MATERIALS

For class work: Illustrations by Hammatt Billings (1852) and James H. Lowell (1904) of Uncle Tom sitting with Eva.

For group work: Illustrations by Hammatt Billings (1852), George Cruickshank (1852), unidentified illustrator (1888), E.W. Kemble (1891), Eckman (1897), and Nystrom-Stoopendaal (1897) of Uncle Tom rescuing Eva.

OPENING THE LESSON

Begin the lesson by reminding students of the previous work they have completed analyzing visual art. Remind them of techniques that a visual artist employs, including composition, perspective, line, proportion, and detail.

PROCEDURE

- (1) Distribute two illustrations of Uncle Tom sitting with Eva (Billings, 1852 and Lowell, 1904)
- (2) Lead students in analysis of how Uncle Tom's character is portrayed in the two illustrations. Discuss the significance of the differences and similarities. Decide as a class which illustration is most faithful to Stowe's text.
- (3) Divide class into groups of three or four. (Some groups may wind up with the same illustration to analyze, but that is preferable to having larger groups.)
- (4) Direct students to analyze how the illustration they are given characterizes Uncle Tom, recording their findings on the given worksheet.
- (5) Students report back to the entire class on how their illustration characterizes Uncle Tom.
- (6) Lead students in discussion of the differences among illustrations and determination of:
 - a. Which illustration is most faithful to Stowe's text.
 - b. What factors might account for the differences.

WORKSHEET DAY #1

Character Analysis of Uncle Tom Based on Stowe's Text

DIRECTIONS: Locate six quotations that help to characterize Uncle Tom. Find one quotation from each of the chapters given. Select two additional quotations from other chapters of your choice. Identify the stylistic technique Stowe uses in the quotation and explain what trait is revealed.

Quotation	Chapter and page	Characterization technique	Trait revealed

WORKSHEET DAY #2

Characterization of Uncle Tom Based on Illustration of Tom Rescuing Eva.

DIRECTIONS: Explain how the illustrator has utilized each of the aspects of visual art listed and what it reveals.

Illustrator _____

Date _____

Visual technique	Description	effect
line		
composition		
proportion		
perspective		
detail		

****Preceded by various illustrations (need to be scanned)*