

Connecting with Literature
GRADE 9

UNIT 1 Defining Moments
Fiction Connection



MIRRORS & WINDOWS

How can the Study
Of Literature Help Me?

WITH
JIM SOTO

UNIT 1 LESSON 1



FOR A WHILE ...

You've probably been wondering, what's the relevance of taking some of the courses you have taken. Why take courses such as: Geometry, History, or Physical Sciences? Well, that's for other teachers to answer. On the other hand, I can tell you why you need to take this course.



IT GREATLY IMPACTS WHO YOU
ARE AND HOW YOU THINK!

Think about that for a while.

NOW, TAKE OUT YOUR NOTEBOOK AND ...

During the next five minutes list five things literature has done for you:

- ✓ as a person, or
- ✓ as a student, or
- ✓ as citizen of this country.

IN ALL HONESTY...

Reading great works takes a lot of effort. Studying masterpieces such as the *Odyssey* or the works of Shakespeare requires more concentration than an X-Men comic book. But, the payoffs can be tremendous.



LET US ...

Consider the benefits that reading great literature can bring to your life. Here are only seven of many ways reading great literature can have a real impact on who you are and how you view the world around you.

I. UNDERSTAND WHAT SHAPES YOUR THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

Your beliefs are based on ideas that developed through the centuries.
What you think are your own ideas most likely come from the great
minds of the past.



CONT...

Consider your thoughts on love, truth, and freedom. Are your ideas your own? Or are your thoughts dominated by cultural influences? Reading the great books, you can see how ideas developed over time and be aware of how they affect you now. You may choose to accept or reject the current way of thinking. But, either way you will become aware that it is a choice and make a decision for yourself.

II. LET A BIT OF GENIUS RUB OFF ON YOU

- ✓ The great books were written by some of the best minds in history. By reading them, your own mind can expand and your thoughts reach new heights.
- ✓ Reading the great books may not turn us into Plato or Einstein, but, their words can bring out our strengths.



III. ESCAPE FROM THE NARROW BOX OF SPECIALIZATION

Becoming an expert on one subject is a wise way to earn a living. But, cutting yourself off from a broader world of knowledge will limit your ability to excel. To succeed in any field, people need a broad understanding of how the world works.

CONT...



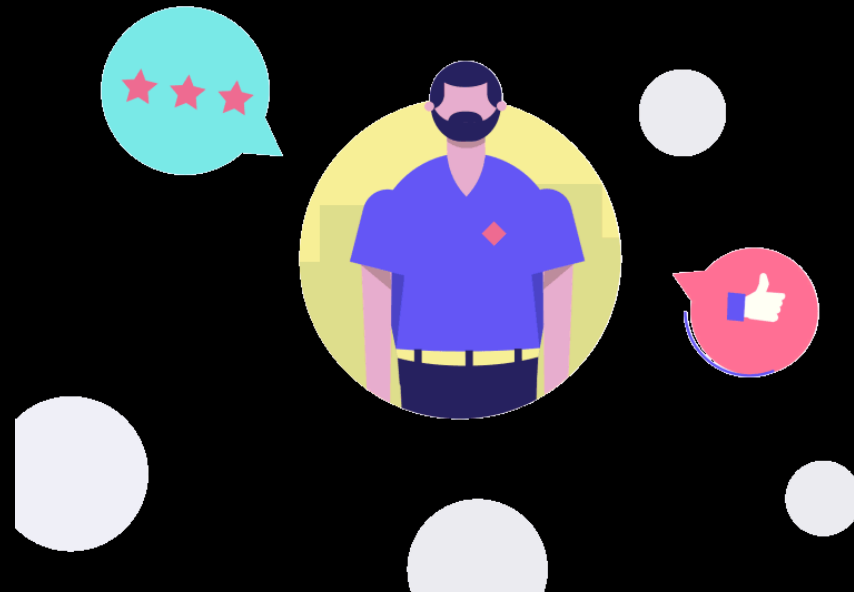
Whether you're planning to become a dentist, a marketer, or a tax lawyer, gaining a broad knowledge of the many subjects covered in the great books will help in your specialization.

IV. IMPROVE YOUR ABILITY TO COMPREHEND

Some of the great books can be a tough read. However, stepping outside of your reading comfort zone can improve your understanding. Once you get through some of the more challenging ones, you'll find it easier to comprehend other works. As a more confident reader, you won't need to shy away from any texts.

V. BE TRULY HUMAN

Reading the great books is about exploring our humanity. Rousseau said:
“It matters little to me whether my pupil is intended for the army, the church, or the law. Before his parents chose a calling for him, nature called him to be a man...”



CONT...

When reading great books, you enter into a discussion of what it means to be a person. Ultimately, ulterior motives such as appearing smart fall to the wayside. You can forget all the blogs, self-help books, and magazine articles that tell you how to improve your life. The great books are the master course in self-development.

VI. FIND YOUR OWN ANSWERS TO LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS

By following themes in the great books, you'll realize that certain subjects are discussed over and over again: "What is our destiny? What is a good life? How can we achieve a good society? How can philosophy, religion, literature, and the fine arts guide us through the mazes of the future?"

CONT...

Reading the great books might not give you an ultimate answer to the big questions. But, they will offer possibilities. By understanding the conclusions of great thinkers about these questions, you'll come closer to the truth.

moment OF
TRUTH

VII. DEVELOP A SPIRIT OF INQUIRY

- ✓ Most people are complacent about their lives, not concerning themselves with the ideas that shaped the world. Reading the great books can help nurture your curiosity to learn more about the world.
- ✓ All the discoveries, thoughts, and ideas of those before us are meaningless unless we explore them.



LET US REFLECT ON THIS...

1. Understanding your thoughts and values
2. An awareness of important ideals
3. Seeing a bigger picture
4. Being more insightful
5. Becoming a better human being
6. Learning important truths
7. Avoiding complacency

DO THESE QUALITIES NOT MAKE US BETTER?!

ASSESSMENT

1. Choosing one of the seven benefits that you find appealing, write a one page paper (no less than 500 words) to explain your choice. Interesting insights, correct formatting, spelling and grammar are expected.
1. You will type and print it and staple in your notbook for the teacher to check.



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