WEEK 5 YEAR 12 ENGLISH

LESSON NOTES AND ACTIVITIES

LESSON 58

STRAND: Reading and viewing

SUBSTRAND: Literature Feature/Short Story -A DAY IN THE COUNTRY

LESSON OUTCOME: Read and comprehend the story

SHORT STORY - **A DAY IN THE COUNTRY**

**AUTHOR - Dan Jacobson**

(A story about race relations and the need for values such as tolerance)

**INTRODUCTION**

The story focuses on values related to life in multicultural societies. People often have identities that differentiate them from others. It could be skin color (black/white). It could be ethnicity (Chinese/Hindus).People’s attitude and behavior are often affected by these differences.

Over time, we have been taught to ignore our various differences and treat everyone equally. Values such as tolerance, understanding, respect and consideration have been promoted. However in some places and to some people, there is still a lot of illustrations of prejudice, hatred and segregation.

This story, A Day in The Country, looks at race relations in South Africa between three groups of people - the white Afrikaners, the white Jews and the black Africans. Their actions in the story show differences and also similarities.

Many societies in the world today are now multiracial. The frequency of conflict in these societies point to the fact that the values needed for peace and harmony have not taken root.

What about in Fiji? Do we have the right values for multiculturalism?

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dan Jacobson was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1929. His grandfather had fled to South Africa to escape the persecution of his people in Europe (Jews)

From childhood, Jacobson observed how differently people were treated based on their race, religion and economic status. In South Africa, there were Africans, coloured, whites, Indian and Chinese. Among the Whites were Jews and Greeks. He observed how many of his Jews friends sympathized with the blacks.

Themes that emerged in his writings included race relations, class consciousness, human nature, group mentality, corruption, betrayal, guilt, power and social morality. Jacobson died in 2014.

ACTIVITY : Read the short story , “A DAY IN THE COUNTRY by Dan jacobson.

LESSON 59

STRAND: Writing and Shaping

SUBSTRAND: Literature Feature/Short Story - A DAY IN THE COUNTRY

LESSON OUTCOME : have a sound knowledge of the characters in the story.

**PLOT OF THE STORY**

The narrator, a young Jewish, relates an incident that took place on a Sunday when his family (father, mother, brother, sister)had been returning home after visiting their farm. On their way home, they came across an Afrikaner family tormenting an African child, pretending to put him in the boot of their car. The Jewish family are not amused and drive on. But the narrator could not help saying something bad about about the Afrikaners. The Afrikaner family overtake the Jewish family and one of them yelled out something to the narrator’s family. The narrator’s father takes offence to that and they chase the car. The story is then dominated by the heated accusations between the two families. There is a chance the two families will actually resort to violence. However the situation is avoided, a kind of uneasy resolution is reached and the two families end the confrontation. As the narrator commented, “no blow had been struck, and no one had called anyone a bloody Dutchman or a bloody Jew, so everything was as well as could be expected.”

ACTIVITY : In a paragraph, discuss what the poem is about. Quote lines to support your points.

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LESSON 60

Strand : Reading and Viewing

Substrand: Language Feature/ Short Story: A DAY IN THE COUNTRY

Learning Outcome:

**CHARACTERS**

1. The Narrator - a young Jewish man, who swore at the Afrikaner family from the

safety of their car but did not have the courage to own up to his action.

2. The Narrator’ father - Jewish and sensitive to his identity. He could not stand the

idea of passing comments about him and forces his family to confront the Afrikaner family. He was not afraid to criticize another family.

3. The Afrikaner Family - They act very confidently with the African child, laughing at the child’s fear. The child had run across their car suddenly and to teach him a lesson, they pretend to put him in the boot. The child is terrified. But when confronted by the English speaking Jewish family, the Afrikaner family are not so confident and superior. They struggle to explain themselves in English. Their father tries to explain the situation. He tries to justify their actions and states that one of his sons is a university student and such actions are unbecoming of educated people.

ACTIVITY PARAGRAPH WRITING (5marks)

Choose any character in the story and discuss how his actions in the story displayed one value that may lead to conflict in multicultural societies.

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LESSON 61

STRAND - Writing and Shaping

SUBSTRAND - Literature Features/Short story

LESSON OUTCOME – identify the reasons for the setting of the story.

**SETTING OF THE STORY**

The story is set in South Africa, a country famous for negative race relations between blacks and whites, Nelson Mandela was part of this social system, His becoming the President of South Africa signalled to the world the ending of the injustices black people were subjected to.

From the story also, we are exposed to the various economic differences in the lifestyle of the South African people; the poverty associated with the blacks and the wealth of the whites.

Also part of the setting is the social status of people. When the young African child was being tortured, the adult blacks stood at a distance, observing. One of them made a small move to interfere but fell back. This pointed at the nature of things in this society. Black people kept their place and allowed whites to do what they wanted.

ACTIVITY PARAGRAPH WRITING (5marks)

Explain how suitable the setting of the story is.

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LESSON 62

STRAND - Writing and Shaping

SUBSTRAND- Literature Feature/ Short Story

LESSON OUTCOME - identify the themes in the story and be able to relate

**THEMES AND LESSONS**

This story contains important lessons/thoughts related to social values.

**LESSONS/VALUES/THOUGHTS**

1. Lack of care and sympathy for other people: “the white people seemed quite unmoved,almost lightheartered” - pg 65
2. Disregard for others as a group behaviour:”They were laughing, all of them were laughing.”
3. Shared attitude: “We saw white face after white face, all bared and smile.”
4. Negative behaviour will end when supported: “The game was breaking up. We hope that it was our condemnation that was breaking it up.”
5. Reacting spontaneously to prevent insults: “No one shouts at me like that.”
6. Stubborn attitude - “Now you don’t shout insults at my father.”
7. The young can be more understanding: “For god”s sake Dad, let’s not have a scene!”
8. Years of receiving prejudice can lead to a breaking point - Narrator’s father
9. Examples of racial mis-understanding : Narrator’s father saying to the Afrikaner’s family. “You people make me sick. You’ve got no idea how to behave. But if you think you can go around bullying everybody, you’re mistaken.”
10. Counter arguments about behaviour - From the father of the Afrikaner family, “You’ve got no right to talk like that about my people.”

ACTIVITY PARAGRAPH WRITING (5marks)

Discuss an important lesson you have learnt in the story. Quote lines to support your discussions.

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