

Lesson 1: Why the Zombie Apocalypse?

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Grade Level(s)

Grades 8-12

Lesson Overview

Students will research primary documents of the CDC and Pentagon about using the zombie apocalypse as an effective training technique. Differentiated readings are also offered consisting of news articles, and a video. Students will be asked to collaboratively come up with a definition of “zombie” and begin to develop questions for community member interviews. After the reading, research, and discussions, students will step into the role of a Zombie Pandemic Specialist, or ZPS, whose task is to design a prototype to protect their town from the zombie pandemic. They will be doing field work, interviews, and research.

Learning Objectives

Students will engage in close reading and oral collaboration as they research, discuss and define what a zombie is and what implications a zombie pandemic could have on their community. Using the research, students will collaboratively develop questions to pose to different community leaders as they endeavor to empathize with the needs of these leaders in the face of a zombie pandemic.

Preparation

- Preview the differentiated text options. Choose the texts that work best for your students’ needs and make them available so each student in each group has a different text for the jigsaw in Activity 1.
- Divide students into heterogeneous groups of four. For example, one highly skilled, one low skilled, two medium skilled students.
- Review Text #5 and highlight sections that your class may find interesting, especially parts of the text that describe zombie behavior, characteristics, etc. This is also an opportunity to differentiate for rigor by selecting more difficult pieces of the text to display.

Materials and Resources

Provide chart paper for the brainstorming activity

Paper and pencils

Link to video for Activity 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXgxuW9h_i8

Differentiated text options (Take some time to evaluate the rigor of these texts and assign them to students accordingly.):

1. 5 Scientific Reasons the Zombie Apocalypse Could Happen:
http://www.cracked.com/article_15643_5-scientific-reasons-zombie-apocalypse-could-actually-happen_p1.html
2. CNN Pentagon Prepares for Zombie Apocalypse:
<http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/16/politics/pentagon-zombie-apocalypse/>
3. Practical Reasons to Prepare for a Zombie Apocalypse:
<http://www.cnbc.com/2014/06/04/practical-reasons-to-plan-for-a-zombie-apocalypse.html>
4. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2Gixvk7Wj8>
5. The Official “Unofficial” Zombie Ops Plan:
<http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2014/images/05/16/dod.zombie.apocalypse.plan.pdf>
6. Book: *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War* by Max Brooks (Specific chapters could be used for higher level readers. Be sure to check for appropriate content before assigning to students.)

Activity 1: Video and Introduction to the Texts (15 Minutes)

- Show video to the class and have students jot down observations of the behaviors of the “zombies.” Keep these lists for reference for the next activities.
- Project Text #5 for the class. Show the highlighted parts and have students “mine” the text for any more useful information. Have students take notes.
- Have a quick discussion with your students about the implications of a zombie pandemic for their community. Remind students to take good notes in their notebooks. The quality of their projects depends on the quality of their notes.
- Briefly project each of the differentiated texts and quickly have the students infer what they think the article’s central idea could be based on the titles.

Activity 2: Close Reading Jigsaw and Quick Write (15 Minutes)

- Pass out a text to each student in each group. (These should be a different text for each student geared to the reading level of the student.)
- This is a jigsaw activity with each student becoming an expert on their text by reading, annotating the text, writing a summary, and sharing it with their group. The summary should include the theme and support for the theme from the text.

(Quick differentiation options: Change the focus to author's purpose, intended audience, tone, etc.)

Activity 3: Brainstorming (no pun intended): What is a Zombie? (15 Minutes)

- Each group will brainstorm creating a definition of a zombie and sharing it with the class.
- Hold a brief class discussion and create a class unified zombie description and definition that will be used for the purpose of this unit. For instance, the zombie pathogen can be transmitted by a bite. Post the definition in front of the class to be referred to throughout the unit.

Troubleshooting

Be sure to try all technology out before class.

Assessment

Quick journal activities for learning indicators focusing on students' definitions of a zombie and how they came to that definition based on research or personal schema would be a great assessment of conceptual understanding.

Extensions

Students may want to expand their horizons and explore certification from C.E.R.T. Here is a link: <http://www.citizencorps.fema.gov/cc/searchCert.do?submitByZip>

Vocabulary

This is a list of possible vocabulary for the unit. Post a chart sheet with words and definitions at the front of the class so students may incorporate the vocabulary into their writing and discussions. Also add to this list as students encounter unfamiliar words.

- **Emergency Kits:** Items needed for personal survival for at least three days. Emergency kits include food and water, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, flashlight, spare batteries, first aid kit, can opener, local maps, sanitation and personal hygiene items. Emergency kits should be made based on the specific needs of your family. Remember to plan for medication, baby, and pet needs as well.
- **Evacuation:** When conditions become so severe and unsafe that you are ordered to leave your home or disaster area.
- **Infection:** The invasion and multiplication of microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites, that are not normally present within the body.
- **Outbreak:** The occurrence of a large number of cases of a disease in a short period of time.

- Preparedness: Being able to prevent, respond to, and rapidly recover from threats and emergencies.
- Prevention: Precautionary actions to reduce damage and harm to your health and the area around you.
- Quarantine: When those who have been exposed to a contagious disease but who may or may not become ill are kept separate from other people to prevent the further spread of disease.
- Response: The actions taken post-disaster to react to and recover from an emergency. These should be steps toward restoring a normal balance and routine.
- Shelter: A designated safe place. Shelters may include basements or interior rooms with reinforced masonry construction. (The safest place to be depends on the disaster you are facing. A tornado requires shelter in an interior or basement room, whereas a flood shelter is on higher ground away from rising water.)