

Lesson Plan: Creative Writing I
Karina Attar, Queens College, CUNY, ELL
Writing about European Literature and Culture: the *Decameron*

Lesson objective(s): Writing in Boccaccio's voice/style

Total estimated time: 75 mins

Additional outcome(s): As with the plot summary, this assignment exposes students to more *Decameron* content they can use in their research paper.

Course work or assignment underway: Creative re-write of one novella's ending

Work and/or reading completed before class: We have discussed the *Decameron*'s "Prologue" as well as novella VI, 1, which illustrates how *not* to tell a story, or how to tell a story badly. We have also read several novellas from the first 3 days of storytelling. And you have already chosen the novella you will re-write.

Sequence of Classroom Activities

1. Viewing of Pasolini's "Andreuccio da Perugia" episode (II, 5) (20 mins)
2. Discussion of creative adaptation and how II, 5 might have ended differently (15 mins)
3. Class discussion of Boccaccio's voice and style: identifying typically Boccaccian plot developments, character types, and turns of phrase (20)
4. In pairs, discuss how you might creatively rewrite the ending to your chosen novella and begin writing some preliminary ideas (20 mins)

Reflection on the lesson's success or alternative approaches:

Lesson Plan: Creative Writing II
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Writing about European Literature and Culture

Lesson objective(s): students practice writing in Boccaccio's voice.

Total estimated time: 75 mins

Additional outcome(s):

Course work or assignment underway: Crafting an alternate ending to a *Decameron* novella

Work and/or reading completed before class: see Lesson Plan: Creative Writing I

Sequence of Classroom Activities

1. In pairs, describe your alternate ending to your partner, as well as its entertainment value and moral lessons; then swap, read, and comment on your drafts. (20 mins)
2. If necessary, revise your alternate ending. (10 mins)
3. Present your alternate ending to the class: read it out loud, then justify your choice of plot developments, as well as its entertainment value and moral lessons. (30 mins)
4. Class wide discussion of creative exercise: how does this exercise enhance our understanding of the *Decameron* and of 14th century narrative prose fiction? How does writing creative fiction help us to be better writers more generally? (15 mins)

Reflection on the lesson's success or alternative approaches:

Lesson Plan: Plot Summary I
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Writing about European Literature and Culture

Lesson objective(s): Students practice summarizing the plot of a *Decameron* novella

Total estimated time: 75 mins

Additional outcome(s): students will have more material for the final research paper.

Course work or assignment underway: Summary of a novella

Work and/or reading completed before class: We have read and discussed the *Decameron* prologue, excerpts from the frame story, and several novellas. We have discussed the *Decameron*'s structure, style, themes, and audience(s). We have all read one new novella and taken bullet point notes on plot and character.

Sequence of Classroom Activities

1. Class wide discussion of the novella we *all* read. (15 mins)
2. Draft a summary of this novella as bullet points/outline. (15 mins)
3. Class wide reading of all “rubrics” summarizing the *Decameron*'s novellas. Discussion of plot details omitted from rubric for novellas we have already read. (20 mins)
4. Select your novella.
5. In pairs, read the first 2 pages of your novella and discuss the narrator's introductory commentary that justifies his/her choice of tale. Also discuss how you anticipate this novella will teach and entertain lovesick ladies (25 mins).

Reflection on the lesson's success or alternative approaches:

If the session is held in a smart classroom, step 2 can be modeled by the instructor, with the students' input, on a projected word document. Step 3 can be done with book in hand or with a projected image of the rubrics. Step 3 could also be enhanced through comparison of Boccaccio's “rubrics” and the Wikipedia summary of the novellas.

Lesson Plan: Plot Summary II
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Writing about European Literature and Culture

Lesson objective(s): students practice peer review and revision

Total estimated time: 75 mins

Additional outcome(s): students will have more material for their final research paper

Course work or assignment underway: Summary of a novella

Work and/or reading completed before class: You have read your assigned novella and written a first draft of the assignment (summarizing the novella's plot). Bring a print out of your draft for peer review.

Sequence of Classroom Activities

1. In your pairs: exchange drafts, mark up any errors, omissions, or extraneous plot details. Discuss with your partner. (15 mins)
2. Discussion: each pair describes to the class one element of their respective drafts they think was successful and one that was not. (20 mins)
3. Revise your summary. (30 mins)
4. Describe your revisions to your partner. (10 mins)

Reflection on the lesson's success or alternative approaches: