# E-LITERATURE PROJECT - A Self-designed Activity Integrating ICT and English 

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## a brief guide to teachers of english


#### Abstract

ARGUMENT I developed this activity after much struggling to find a way of introducing British and American literature to upper-intermediate and advanced English learners in my classes. While their high proficiency in English was a strength, their reluctance to literary enterprises was a drawback, so I needed something to motivate them to read and approach literary texts, not in the traditional, more academic way, but in an enjoyable manner.


The activity is based on group-work, a set of literary works suggested by me and agreed on with the students. It can cover a whole school-year, with a clearly set schedule for all the activities, including the presentations of the final products. It has proved to be a success with my students and some of my colleague teachers were willing to try it, too.

The task was made clear from the very beginning: to make a PowerPoint presentation based on a literary work including the Graphic Organizers in pdf. format available on www.scholastic.com .The students had to use a minimum of 10 slides out of the 20 available, to which they could add as many as 10 slides of their own design to allow for originality and creativity. The presentation had to highlight the plot, the characters, the theme and the message of the literary work and focus less on the biography of the writer and the time when the book was published, unless these two aspects were considered to be relevant for the understanding of the message. The maximum time allocated to the presentation was 25 minutes.

My purpose in this activity was to encourage critical thinking, information transfer and collaborative learning, to develop presentation skills, encourage creativity and using English to approach sociocultural issues biased by literature, along with using ICT for a task-based activity.

The RESOURCES we used:

- A list of literary works by well-known writers, one literary work for each 4/6-member group in class, available either as paper books or online reading.
- A list of useful websites to make the texts more accessible:
- http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp
- http://www.academicinfo.net/englit.html
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/
- http://www.literature-study-online.com/resources
- http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/online.htm
- http://www.britannia.com/arts/literature/
- http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/
- http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/
- http://www.gradesaver.com/classicnotes/titles/
- The Graphic Organizers downloaded free as pdf. files from the official Scholastic site, which were made available for word-processing by the students themselves - this was something I learned from them in terms of using computer software.
- A set of checklists, some designed by me and others downloaded from www.intel97/education.com to help planning, timing and assessment
- Basic computer software: PowerPoint, Microsoft Office Word, Acrobat Reader, Real Player, available on any students' computer
- For the final product presentation we used a laptop and a video-projector

The STAGES of the activity:

1. Introducing the activity to the students: task, final product, resources, goals and eliciting their suggestions
2. Forming the student groups: in most cases, they made their own choices, but sometimes I felt the need to suggest other ' alliances' to ensure the group members can have different contributions according to their potential and learning style; but the final decision belonged entirely to the students themselves
3. Agreeing on the set of texts
4. Appointing a group for each text
5. Electing a leader for each group: mostly by students, but my suggestions were welcomed, too
6. Deciding on the deadlines for presentations: the last English class, the last week every month - 1 group/ month
7. Deciding on Teacher Feedback on the work in progress : bimonthly formal conferences, regular use of e-mail communication, informal guidance at the end of each class
8. Deployment of the work in groups, as conducted by the group leaders and feedback as planned (either at students' home, on their PCs or in the computer lab, if it can be arranged for); students organize their work entirely on their own, but can always ask for my/ their peers' advice or support
9. Monthly presentations (this is a set format, so I will use the Present Simple to allow for more applicability): the first part of the session should be a lead-in activity and an introduction of the topic by the teacher, followed by the presentation itself, during which:

- all the group members participate in the presentation, sharing roles throughout, as decided by the group (we even had a mini-play to illustrate The Catcher in the Rye, and the impact it had on the class audience was amazing)
- the class organized in assessing groups has to perform different tasks, making notes for peer-assessment, using the checklists and the mark-sheets
- I make my own notes for teacher feedback
- no interruptions are allowed during the presentation, unless the group performing the presentation want to include some interaction with the audience (for example, the Clues handout, at which moment members of the audience, most of whom have not read the book, are asked to make predictions, after being given some clues- this is an excellent trick to keep them focused and engaged )
- after the presentation:
a. our primary focus is on the literary content of the presentation, the message and the ideas the group managed to convey, therefore we often extend the presentation in a discussion on the most relevant aspects related to the literary text- usually starting from
a short fragment as a quote which the students and I have previously agreed on during the feedback along the project making, OR focus on: key-concepts, character traits, dilemmatic situations, comparisons between values and attitudes nowadays and in the past etc. - the decision is made according to the topic of the unit we are studying or the peculiarities of the literary work under discussion
b. the group leader gives feedback on the activity of the group throughout the project, referring to the activity of each member, the strengths and weaknesses he/ she could identify, the problems they encountered and the solutions they found, the things they most enjoyed/ disliked about the book and their activity etc. - feedback from the other group members (on the book, the group activity and the group leader) is included
c. the students in the audience give their feedback on the presentation, allowing the project group members to bring their own arguments for the choices they made, respond to criticism and enjoy praise; my role in this part is that of a facilitator and peace-maker in case the arguments get too heated, but most often students are open to criticism if it is well- supported
d. I finally give my own feedback on the activity of the group throughout the project, starting with and insisting on the positive aspects related to the presentation, to the way the students in the audience responded to the task they had for peer-assessment and their conduct during their colleagues' performance; I think this is the best moment to give/ ask for feedback related to the technologies involved and identify, with the whole class, ways of making better use of technology; this is the moment when we can include feedback on the language and set priorities for the next grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation activities; we should not forget that our focus in such an activity is not language itself, but the way in which language is used to perform a task
e. as a follow-up, I usually think of a piece of home assignment related to the literary text, usually a writing task or note-making for a discussion in the next class, a simulation etc., depending on the impact the book had on the class.

The BENEFITS of this activity are obvious and my experience makes me recommend it for high-school students with a good level of English and some literary skills either previously acquired in the English class or in Romanian/ other national literature classes.

It is a comprehensive approach which makes room for many concepts and activities:

- It promotes authentic learning and materials
- It develops communicative competence and collaborative learning
- It integrates ICT both as a resource and as a tool
- It combines formal and informal learning in and out of school
- It allows learning across the curriculum
- It favours three-way (formal and informal) communication: teacher-student-peers
- It enables higher-order thinking and inquiry-based learning
- It raises awareness of public accountability
- It motivates students
- It develops learning strategies and critical thinking
- It integrates skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, along with computer skills, time management skills, organizational skills, assessment skills, presentation skills; therefore it prepares high-school students for academic life and the labour market.

The following presentation slides and assessment grids can offer a picture of the activity, along with some guidelines for effective PowerPoint presentations for further use included here:

## Hints for a successful presentation:

- Plan carefully
- Do your research
- Know your audience
- Time your presentation
- Practice your presentation
- Speak comfortably and clearly


## Effective PowerPoint Slides

- Use design templates
- Standardize position, colors and styles
- Include only necessary information
- Limit the information to essentials
- Content should be self-evident
- Use colors that contrast
- Be consistent with effects, transitions and animation
- Too many slides can lose your audience


## Text guidelines

- Generally no more than 6 words a line
- Generally no more than 6 lines a slide
- Avoid long sentences
- Larger font indicates more important information
- Font size generally ranges from 18 to 48 point
- Be sure text contrasts with background
- Fancy fonts can be hard to read
- Words in all capital letters are hard to read
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms
- Limit punctuation marks


## Clip Art and Graphics

- Should balance the slide
- Should enhance and complement the text, not overwhelm
- No more than two graphics per slide.

Although it may seem time-consuming and intricate, it is an enjoyable activity for both students and teachers and it can be adapted for lower classes, too. It is perfectly manageable provided the teacher sets realistic goals, gives clear instructions and explanations, sets time and format constraints, keeps motivated and alert, motivates students, gives reliable advice when needed, assigns the appropriate roles and transforms every project session into prior
knowledge to build on to the next stage in a logical continuum. In fact, there is nothing different from the way any class should be managed!

## I. ASSESSMENT GRIDS

## A. MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

TEAM NAME:

## Written Content

| $\square$ | We used a storyboard to organize our thoughts. |
| :--- | :--- |
| $=$ | We have a title slide that clearly states our topic. |
|  | We included the names of everyone in our group. |
| $=$ | Information is correct. |
|  | Sources are cited. |
| $\square$ | We have listened to suggestions from the teacher or a friend. |
|  | We addressed the Essential and Unit Questions. |

## Layout and Design

|  | The words on our slides are easy to read. |
| :--- | :--- |
|  | Graphics enhance our presentation and are easy to see. |
|  | The have animation effects that enhance the presentation. <br> presentation. <br> All transitions work properly. |
|  | Pictures have a caption. |
|  | There is enough time to read and see everything on the slides. |

## Mechanics

| $\square$ | There are no mistakes in mechanics. |
| :--- | :--- |
| $\square$ | Words are spelt correctly. |

## Resources

| $\square$ | We used books, magazines, or the computer to find information. |
| :--- | :--- |
|  | We looked at maps and drawings to find information. |
|  | We made a list of things we planned to use in the project. |

## Technology

|  | We each took turns navigating on the computer (using the mouse, typing, inserting graphics and <br> photos, etc.) |
| :--- | :--- |
|  | We were able to do research on the Internet using the online encyclopedia and visiting recommended <br> Web sites. |
| $\quad$ | We have all practiced presenting our project using eye contact and an expressive voice. |
|  | We remembered to save our work to the desktop folder. |

## B. TEAM LEADER'S MARK SHEET for team members' contribution

TEAM NAME: $\qquad$
DATE:
TEAM LEADER: $\qquad$

| $\underset{\substack{\text { crit } \\ \text { Nb. }}}{ }$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { STUDENT/ } \\ \text { Team } \\ \text { member } \end{gathered}$ | $\underset{\substack{\text { Basic } \\ \text { assignt by } \\ \text { hine beam } \\ \text { leader }}}{ }$ | EVALUATION CRITERIA(MAX. 2p each) |  |  |  |  | $\begin{gathered} \text { FINAL } \\ \text { MARK } \\ \ldots . .10 \end{gathered}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | RESEARCH WORK/ TEXT EDITING | MEETING DEADLINES | ATTITUDE | TEAM WORK | SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION |  |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## C. TEAM MEMBERS' MARK SHEET

## for the team leader's contribution

TEAM NAME: $\qquad$
DATE:
TEAM LEADER:

|  | ASSESSOR/ | EVALUATION CRITERIA ( MAX. 2p EACH) |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Planning | OrGANISING | MONITORING | motivating | SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION |  |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## D. CLASS MARK SHEET FOR STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

TEAM NAME:
DATE: $\qquad$

| ( Crt | $\begin{gathered} \hline \text { STUDENT/ } \\ \text { Team } \\ \text { member } \end{gathered}$ | evaluation Criteria (max. 2p each) |  |  |  |  | $\underset{. . . .10}{\text { final mark }}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | PRONUNCIATION | vocabulary | GRAMMAR | fluency | Interaction |  |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## E. CLASS MARK SHEET FOR MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATIONS

|  | $\begin{gathered} \text { TEAM } \\ \text { NAME/ } \\ \text { LITERARY } \\ \text { WORK/DATE } \end{gathered}$ | EVALUATION CRITERIA ( MAX. 2p EACH) |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\begin{aligned} & \text { Crt. } \\ & \text { Nb. } \end{aligned}$ |  | accuracy | research | $\underset{\text { MANAGEMENT }}{\text { TIME }}$ | Persuasiveness | information TRANSMITTED | $\begin{aligned} & \text { FINAL } \\ & \text { MARK } \\ & \ldots . . . / 10 \end{aligned}$ |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## F. SPEAKING MARK SHEET - for teacher's use

| Crt. <br> Nb. | Student |  <br> Vocabulary <br> 2.5 p | Discourse <br> Management <br> 2.5 p | Pronunciation <br> 2.5 p | Interaction <br> 2.5 p | Final mark <br> $\ldots . / 10$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## ASSESSOR'S NOTES:

$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

## II. SAMPLE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

The following pages show the slides in a PowerPoint group presentation of J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye.

## III. GRAPHIC ORGANISERS

- $\quad 20$ graphic organisers to be used by students



## Setting Stage



## Story Map



## Setting Comparison



Rye Kids Date: October, 2006

Book Title: $\qquad$ The Catcher in the Rye Author: $\qquad$ J.D. Salinger

## Follow halne Clues



## Timeline

Holden's story begins on the Saturday following the end of classes at the Pencey prep school in Agerstown

Back in the dormitory, Holden is irritated by his unhygienic neighbor Ackley, and by his own roommate, Stradlater which is going to have a date with Jane Gallagher, Holden's ex -girlfriend. Furthermore Holden attacks Stradlater and he decides to go to Manhattan sooner.

Holden goes downstairs to the Lavender Room and sits at a table. Afterwards he flirts with three women in their thirties and fells "half in love" with the blonde one.

The next day he arranges a date with Sally Hayes Meanwhile he tries to call Jane Gallagher and he also looks for his sister in the central park. Next he goes to the Museum of Natural History.

He calls Carl Luce, a young man who had been Holden's student advisor at the Whooton School. The reason for calling him is to draw him into a conversation about sex, but Carl gets really annoyed and leaves early.

Holden calls his former English teacher, Mr. Antolini , who tells him that he can come to his apartment. They discuss about his expulsion and about the future. Then Holden leaves from this place in a hurry because he finds Mr. Antolini
ment when he awakens. stroking his forehead the moment when he awakens.

Phoebe arrives, carrying a suitcase full of clothes and asking Holden to take her with him. He refuses and Phoebe gets angry. To make her smile again he buys her a ticket and watches her ride it.

He is being expelled after failing the exams this also being the fourth school he attends, but he is not scheduled to return home to Manhattan until Wednesday. He visits his elderly history teacher, Spencer, to say goodbye but he becomes annoyed.

As soon as he arrives there he gets in a cab and asks the cab driver where the ducks in Central Park go when the lagoon freezes. Holden has the cab take him to the Edmond Hotel, where he checks himself.

Maurice, the elevator operator at the Edmont sends Sunny, a prostitute to Holden's room after he agreed on this. After she leaves she returns demanding another 5 dollars. Maurice punches Holden for not wanting to give the sum of money.

Holden and Sally go to the play then to Radio City to ice skate. During their meeting Holden explains to Sally his unhappiness, and actually urges her to run away with him to Massachusetts or Vermont and live in a cabin. She refuses and leaves.

Next he ends up sneaking into his own apartment building and waking his sister, Phoebe. He tells her all the truth and also his fantasy of being "the catcher in the rye," a person who catches little children as they are about to fall off of a cliff.

Holden goes to Phoebe's school and sends her
a note saying that he is leaving home for
good and that he wants to meet her at
lunchtime at the museum.

Watching his sister he becomes very happy. He ends his narrative here, telling the reader that he is not going to tell the story of how he went home and got "sick." He plans to go to a new school in the fall and is cautiously optimistic about his future.

## Story Train

What happened first? What happened next? What happened last?


## Plot Diagram

Holden's encounter with Sunny, the end of his date with Sally and his departure from Mr. Antolini's climax apartment

Holden's many attempts to interact with other people as an adult, or to retreat from them as a child

Holden is a student at
Pencey Prep School, irresponsible and immature


## Character $\sqrt{ }$ Sheet and Traits List

事

## Name: <br> Tifle:

## Character Traits <br> Catcher in the rye...

1. Does the character seem real to you? YesNol_」
2. Do the character's actions fit what you know of him/her? Yes No -
3. This character is: $\qquad$ _ flat (stays the same)

$\square$
round (changes)

| adventurous | friendly | prettr | adventurous, active, curious, |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| awesome | fun-loving | quiet | creative, considerate, dreamer |
| artistic | gentle | reh | creative, considerate, dreamer |
| athelic | generous happy | respectful | funny, energetic, friendly, |
| beautifua | numble | sad |  |
| brave | hostile | sloppry |  |
| bold | honest | serlous | generous, intelligent, independen |
| bossy | intelilgent | successful |  |
| cheerful curious | indepencient inventive | shy short | inventive, respectful, thoughtful |
| crective | a leader | smart |  |
| courageous | lazy | stucious |  |
| Considerate | messy | selfish | unselfish, deep, sensitive, |
| caring a dreamer | mischievious mean | simple tall |  |
| dalnty | neat | trestworthy |  |
| dangerous | nasty | thoughitful | cynical |
| exciting | nice | unselfish |  |
| entertaining | nosy | warm |  |
| energetic | operi | witty |  |
| funny | poor proud | wild wonderful |  |

## Character Comparison Sheet

'The Catcher in the Rye' by J.D. Salinger
Title and Author


Holden and Phoebe are as close as brotherhood enables them-to be.- Apart from loving each other to the point of almost reading each other's thoughts, they share interests and talents, as they are both attracted by and good at English. The cause of their very good relationship is Holden's admiration for Phoebe's innocence and his patience with her.


## Venn Diagram



## Problem \& Solution Diagram

## Problem

As his thoughts about the Museum of Natural History demonstrate, Holden fears change and is overwhelmed by complexity. He wants everything to be easily understandable and eternally fixed.

Holden invents a fantasy that adulthood is a world of superficiality and hypocrisy ("phoniness"), while childhood is a world of innocence, curiosity and honesty.

Event \# 1

He imagines childhood as an idyllic field of rye in which children romp and play; adulthood, for the children of this world, is equivalent to death-a fatal fall over the edge of a cliff.

Event \# 2

Holden has built a cynical psychological armor around himself to protect himself from the complexities of the world.

## Resolution




... I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff-I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all.




## Character Comparison Sheet

## Name:

Title and Author


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## 我 <br> Character $\sqrt{ }$ Sheet and Traits List



## Name：

Title：

1．Does the character seem real to you？
Yes 」 Nol」
（Please explain on back）
2．Do the character＇s actions fit what you know of him／her？Yes - No - （Please explain on back）

3．This character is： $\qquad$ flat（stays the same）
（round（changes）


## MSCHOLASTIC

## FOLLOW THE CLUES



## Purpose

Making and then confirming or revising predictions helps readers to stay fully engaged in a story. As readers develop this skill, they use clues from the story and their own lives to predict how characters will behave and how key problems in the story will be solved. This organizer helps students identify clues in a story that will help them make reasonable predictions.

## How to Use the Organizer

Introduce the Follow the Clues organizer by asking how detectives go about solving mysteries. (They look for clues and draw conclusions from the clues.) Discuss how readers also use clues to help them make sense of what they are reading. Encourage students to predict how a story they are currently reading will end or how a major problem in the story will be solved. Suggest that they write their predictions on the door labeled "prediction." As students read, encourage them to record clues that either support or refute their prediction. If necessary, allow students to revise their predictions to reflect the clues they have found in the text.

## Examples

## Primary Grades

While reading Ira Sleeps Over aloud, a first-grade teacher asked her students to predict whether or not Ira would want to take his teddy bear on a sleepover. As she read the story aloud, she asked students to suggest clues from the book that helped them make their predictions.


## Intermediate Grades

A fourth grader chose Stone Fox as an independent reading book. During reading conferences, the teacher asked him to predict the ending of the story. The student then completed the graphic organizer by filling in clues as he read. After he finished the book, he reviewed the clues and evaluated his prediction with the teacher.


## MSCHOLASTIC

Name: $\qquad$ Date: $\qquad$

Book Title: $\qquad$ Author: $\qquad$

## Follow the Clues

Can you predict what will happen next? Write the clues on


## MSCHOLASTIC

## Cyclical


http://teacher.scholastic.com


## WHAT'S THE MAIN IDEA?



## Purpose

The fishbone organizer helps students recognize that nonfiction articles and expository writing contain a main idea and supporting details. As they isolate specific information to record on the organizer, students make decisions regarding its relevance, thereby increasing their understanding that not all text is of equal importance. Students who are writing essays or articles can use the graphic during prewriting to ensure that their work contains a main idea and to help them develop a structure for their piece.

## How to Use the Organizer

After reading an article, have students determine the main idea and write it on the spine of the fish. Then encourage them to write the details that support the main idea inside the divisions made by the other bones. Students who wish to use the graphic organizer to plan their own writing can begin with the main idea or record facts first, which may lead them to the development of a main idea.

## Examples

## Primary Grades

After reading an article from their weekly news magazine, second graders helped their teacher complete the What's the Main Idea? organizer on an overhead transparency.


## Intermediate Grades

A small group of fourth graders used What's the Main Idea? to organize an article they were composing for the school newspaper.

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## MSCHOLASTIC

## Organizational Outline



## MSCHOLASTIC

## Plot Diagram



## M S C H O L A S T I C

## Overlapping Concepts


http://teacher.scholastic.com

## Plot $\sqrt{ }$ Sheet and Conflict List



Name:
Title:

1. Did you feel like you were part of the story? Yes $\square$ No $\square$ (Please explain on back)
2. Were you able to guess what was going to happen at the end? Yes $\square$ No (Please explain on back)
3. What do you think was the best part of the story?

## Main Problem

## Character's Goal

## Resolution

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M S CHOLASTIC

## Problem \& Solution Diagram

Name:
Book Title:


Great Graphic Organizers To Use With Any Bookl Scholastic Inc.

## MSCHOLASTIC

Sequence of Events


# MSCHOLASTIC Setting Comparison 

Name:
Title:


Great Graphic Organizers To Use With Any Book! Scholastic Inc.

## M S C H OLASTIC

## Setting Stage



Description:

Ms C HOLASTIC

## Story Map



## M. SCHOLASTIC

Name:
Title:

## Story Train

What happened first? What happened next? What happened last?


Description:

## Timeline



## MSCHOLASTIC

Venn Diagram


