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PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD
CATOLICA
DE VALPARAISO

**The Five Lisbon Roses: Jeffrey Eugenides' *The Virgin Suicides* as a
subject of language learning**

Trabajo de Titulación para optar al Grado de Licenciado en Educación y al Título de
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Introduction

Learning English is nowadays a required aspect of the curriculum in every school in Chile. Therefore the challenge we have, as teachers, is to look for new ways of teaching English and make it appealing for the students.

One of the ways in which English can be taught in the classroom is by using literature. Even though using literature to teach English can be a great resource of learning; it can be also a challenge as most students, especially teenagers, think that reading is something boring because it is not a story of nowadays. Some of the books students have to read were written even centuries before they were born, and they find it hard to make a connection with the way in which these stories are told. To make it more interesting for the students; the teacher should help the students to see the text in a more deep way, and not letting them with just the meaning of the words that is on the surface of the text.

If we think of the benefits of using literature to teach English; Shanta Naik (2011, chap. 12) claims that literature can be used in the English class for 3 main reasons:

1. It is authentic material
2. It encourages interactions. Meaning that it can be used to effectively start discussions and share feelings or opinions among students guided by the teacher.
3. Literature educates the whole person. By examining values in literary texts, teachers encourage learners to develop attitudes towards them. These values and attitudes relate to the world outside the classroom.

Given that the literary works are classified as authentic material that produces a certain text in where the learners can get a grasp of the culture in which the story of the book takes place. This is of great value for developing a better understanding of the cultural aspect needed when learning a second language.

The cultural differences that exist and may appear in their process of learning should be used in the classroom to create an atmosphere of respect and learning. For that purpose the book *-The Virgin Suicides-* by Jeffrey Eugenides has been chosen as the vessel of such important task. *The Virgin Suicides* is the story of “The Lisbon girls” told by the different points of view of a group of boys which become obsessed with them. Literature can be used to overcome prejudices and become a highly motivating challenge when teaching English since it deals with themes such as the love the boys feel for the girls that allows them after the girls are dead, to construct a whole story trying to decipher the girls' mysterious lives and deaths.

This project aims to show the learners that perspective and prejudice are important aspects in the life of every person since they sometimes are a barrier to communicate with others and we should learn to overpass those kinds of obstacles to have a more effective communication and to allow the student to understand that the opinions of other are also important as their own in order to accept the point of view of others. This will be possible by analyzing the different points of view of the narrators of the story and discussing them through different activities during the development of the workshop.

This project is intended for second year high school students as an elective workshop that will allow them to practice their communicative skills in English in a written and oral way.

Literature Review

1. What is literature?

Literature is hard to define. What we all give for a fact is that when we talk about literature we are talking about a written text. According to Terry Eagleton (1983, p. 2) literature “is definable (...) because it uses language in peculiar ways” he adds that “literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech.” So we could say that for something to be literature it has to possess a literary merit.

Following the same directions mentioned above we have to argue that not all “literature” is written in the same way; according to Lewis Turco (1999, p. 9) “the types of writing to be found in literature are called genres; the primary genres are fiction, drama, poetry, and nonfiction,” and all of these genres have also sub-genres. But one important question seems to arise when we start to describe literature following two of the four genres: What is fiction and what is non-fiction in literature? In simple words fiction is writing that is not true or real while nonfiction it is writing that usually is true or real.

For the purposes of this project literature will be understood as a work of fiction that possesses literary merit and will provoke interesting discussions in class given the fact that it reflects on human experience and students will connect with this idea since the same human experiences reflect on literature might reflect their own experiences as human beings.

2. Why teaching English through Literature?

Jonathan Sell (2005) states that literature as a means for teaching literature is useful for two reasons. The first one is for that literature is “motivating material” meaning that given the fact that literature is authentic material it is more interesting for students than a book of exercises. The second reason Sell provides is that literature is “open to interpretation” meaning that every person that reads a book gets a different point of view of the story the books is telling which given the nature of this project is beneficial as it provides an environment of interaction between the students allowing them to share their interpretation of the novel with one another under the guidance of the teacher.

The EFL class is a place for students to learn about the English-speaking countries with the guidance of the teacher and the use of literature. It is also the first step to understand how cultures work in ways that are different or similar from our own. Teaching through literature is an important means to show the students how language learning is built around cultural connections rather than just a grammatical system. This does not mean that this is not important, but more importance is going to be given to how students will be able to communicate their ideas to one another effectively rather than how the grammar around the sentences they produce is made.

Learning through literature will also allow the students to improve their reading skills; help them develop their imagination and their emotional skills because when we read we have to put ourselves in the place of others living a new life through the eyes of someone who is not yourself.

3. What is Young Adult Literature?

The purpose of Young Adult Literature is to cause in the reader a sort of identification. Young Adult Literature has to do with the themes of coming-of-age in a novel. Usually the protagonists of the novels are teenagers that deal with a series of trouble trying to build their own identity as human beings. According to Patricia Campbell (2010, p. 12) the books related to Young Adult Literature often have to deal with themes important for the main character such as drugs, suicides or parents missing for different reasons like their death or their absence in the life main character. This is to try to make the expected reader, which according to Michael Cart (2005, p. 4) are teenagers or young adults up to the age of twenty five, identify with the stories that are presented to them.

The importance of the Young Adult Literature for this project is that it is a genre of literature that can make the students feel more willing to read; such as the obsession “*the boys*” feel for the Lisbon girls. Moreover, the mystery of their lives and deaths would make the students identify with the characters of this story and will generate debate among the students since the book make the reader feel like there is a lot of questions but gives no answers.

4. Contents and Themes

4.1 About the author

Jeffrey Eugenides (1960) is a critically-acclaimed American novelist. Eugenides was raised in Detroit, Michigan and cites the influence of the city and his high-school experiences on his writings. He published the novel *The Virgin Suicides* in 1993, but he grew up in the 60's, but he does not describe exactly where the story of the books takes place. The author describes the feeling that growing up in that part of the American history meant to him and tries to show that sense of national decline in the United States at that time through the descriptions of places in the novel. In 1999, the novel was adapted into a critically acclaimed film directed by Sofia Coppola. With this novel Eugenides asks many questions, but gives no answers leaving that to the reader to answer.

Nowadays, Eugenides is a professor of creative writing at Princeton University. Apart from *The Virgin Suicides* he has also written *Middlesex* (2002) and *The Marriage Plot* (2011).

4.2 Synopsis of the novel

The Virgin Suicides tells the story of the five Lisbon sisters, focusing on the last year of their lives and their eventual suicides. During the year of the suicides, the girls are thirteen (Cecilia), fourteen (Lux), Fifteen (Bonnie), sixteen (Mary), and seventeen (Therese). The story takes place in the 1970's, but is told twenty years after the girl's suicides, by a group of neighborhood boys -now middle-aged men- who are still obsessed

with them. Cecilia is the first to attempt suicide and after Cecilia's death, her sisters gradually try to return to their old lives, but the death of their sister keeps following them. A few months after the suicide their mother allows them, for the first time in their lives, to attend their school's homecoming dance, accompanied by a group of boys. However when Lux disappears the whole night with Trip Fontaine and reappears the next morning, their parents take the decision to take their daughters from school. The girls live imprisoned in their own house for a little while longer, but one night they all commit suicide together. Mary survives, but a little while later she performs a second attempt and this time she succeeds. The girl's parents sell the house and move away soon after their daughters pass, while the rest of the neighborhood goes on speculating about why the girls killed themselves without ever producing a satisfying answer.

The boys try to reconstruct the lives of the Lisbon girls through “evidence” they mention as the novel progresses; but at the same time they say that the memories they have about them are fading away and that every day that goes by is even more difficult for them to be objective about what happened and they are still obsessed trying to know why the Lisbon girls did what they did.

4.3 Genre of the Novel:

The Virgin Suicides is hard to classify in one particular genre. In the novel are traces of different genres such as the memoir, the love story, the detective story and the coming of age story, but it does not belong to any more than to the others. This makes it unique and

interesting for the students since it forces them to come up with their own theories about the lives of the Lisbon sisters.

4.4 Themes embedded in the novel

- **The ordinary:** The novel takes place in an unnamed suburbia in the United States where nothing seems to be out of normal. The series of events that take the readers to the end of the story do not seem nothing out of the ordinary and that is what makes the reader of the story wonder when was the moment when something went wrong and will offer to the students that take this workshop interesting moments in the class when they will be able to discuss and debate what happened to the Lisbon girls.
- **The superficiality of vision:** During the novel all the information that the boys recollect about the Lisbon girls is based in what they can see of the girls. This includes the way they look, the things they do and even the diary of Cecilia that the boys obtained. But they can never go beyond that because they are not able to see the Lisbon girls' thoughts and never get to know what motivated them beyond the doors of the Lisbon's house. This will be useful during the development of the workshop for the students to understand the concept of perspective and will be one of the themes discussed during the development of the workshop.
- **The problem of memory:** Throughout the whole novel the boys are trying to reconstruct the life of the Lisbon girls using the "evidence" they have recollected that they offer to show at the end of the book of memoirs that they are writing. But

the problem with the “evidence” that they have collected, as stated by them, is that as time goes by the things that they have recollected start to fade away either because they decompose or because they do not create the same impact on the boys anymore. This would be useful in the class to show the students that when they try to be objective about something there is always the problem of memory as it is subjective and non-reliable.

4.5 Reasons to teach *The Virgin Suicides*

The Virgin Suicides is a novel that was greatly acclaimed by the critics back there in 1993 when it was published because of its prose, the use of an impossible narrator (the first person plural; the “we”) and that now it is starting to be taught in some schools in the United States as a part of the curriculum. It is a novel that problematizes American culture, especially suburban life where everything is supposed to be perfect.

The Virgin Suicides is a useful source of debate for the students since the author throughout the pages of the novel seems to ask the reader a lot of questions and provide few answers. It is precisely in the mystery around the suicide of apparently happy and perfect girls that we find pedagogical value and relevance of the novel to the objectives of this workshop. The students will be pushed to analyze the novel in a critical way and support their theories about the girls through argumentation.

Sherry Lee Linkon (2011, p. 10) states that students in a story can recognize that “what appears on the surface is never the whole story” and we take the challenges of

literary texts by trying to give answers by ourselves to those questions that might be asked, but not answered.

4.6 Learning English through Literature (*The Virgin Suicides*)

By working with *The Virgin Suicides* the students are expected to understand that there are different points of view when we discuss the same series of events; and that our own perspective and prejudice affect the way in which we understand the things that happen around us. The MINEDUC, as part of the program for this age, states that when junior high school students read a text or a literary text they should reflect upon the different dimensions of human experience, their own and others, taking into consideration our own cultural heritage in the class and other aspects such as the way the story is influenced by the opinions of the narrator. The students should be also able to express their own opinions orally and defend their positions towards the issues at hand.

The objectives of this workshop in terms of language instruction are:

- ✓ To differentiate an opinion from a fact.
- ✓ To communicate their ideas in English and being able to understand the ideas of others.
- ✓ To formulate their own ideas of the book and come up with theories about the book and their own ending for the story.

4.6.1 Perspective and Critical Thinking

Students will read the novel *The Virgin Suicides* and they will analyze it using critical thinking abilities to being able to reason, question, and give their opinions on the themes of the novel with their partner and activities that involve the whole class. Understanding that there are other opinions apart from their own will help the students to foster their critical thinking activities questioning the text and reflecting on what they read. By these means they will be able to understand that there are other opinions that might differ from their own, but being able to defend their position towards the issue.

Judith C. Blackwell, Murray E.G. Smith and John S. Sorenson (2008, p. 16) state that we believe in the things that we do because we are all subject to processes of socialization through which culture is transmitted to us. That includes the experiences we have had. Blackwell, Smith and Sorenson add that our involvement in human social life decisively shapes our views of the world and our position within it. For the purposes of this project perspective will be understood as the way in what we see the things or events that happen around us and how our “understanding of the world” is going to affect our point of view. This will help the students during the development of the workshop because they will be able to defend their ideas, but at the same time respect the ideas from others.

4.6.2 Discussing Prejudice in the classroom

Prejudice is that it is not something logical or based in facts and that it is based in generalization. Prejudice can affect the way in what we see things, our “perspective,” even in the way we understand other people or cultures. Clark Keneth (1988, p. 71) states that

distinct characteristics in the individuals personality may lead to the development of prejudice. A culture that predisposes the individual to develop some form of prejudice would exert to a certain degree on all individuals. For the purposes of this project the concept of prejudice would be taken as how we let our pre-existing points of view affect the way we see others and interact with them.

4.6.3 Why to teach about prejudice and perspective

Discussing the issues of prejudice and perspective deals with two of the four pillars of education that nowadays should be a must for every teacher to try to incorporate in the classroom. This project specifically deals with the “Learning to live together” and the “Learning to be”. Jacques Delors (1994, p. 37) defines them as follows:

- **Learning to live together**, by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence - carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts - in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace.
- **Learning to be**, so as better to develop one’s personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility. In that connection, education must not disregard any aspect of a person’s potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills.

As defined above, as educators, we should include these important aspects in the classroom because we have the mission to educate people and young students to be able to live and interact with others overcoming prejudices in order to develop a better understanding of who we are and how to interact with others in the classroom and life itself. We have to give students these powerful tools to make them more independent and more critical in the way they think always considering the others.

5. The Affective Filter

The affective filter is a theory proposed by Stephen Krashen (1981) in which he proposes that the acquisition of an L2 (second language) is related to the learner's "motives, needs attitudes and emotional state". In other words a learner of an L2 has to feel comfortable enough when learning the second language in order to get the most of the input he or she is receiving. Richard Towell and Roger Hawkins (1994, p. 27) state that when a student is inhibited "the filter is 'high' and prevents a lot of L2 input from being converted into acquired knowledge" and adds that when students feel "less inhibited, the filter is 'lower', allowing a greater proportion of L2 input to be converted into acquired knowledge."

So, in order to lower the affective filter during the development of the elective workshop the students need to know from the first class on that it is an elective course designed for them to practice their abilities in the second language they are studying (English) and that the course is oriented towards what they want to say rather than the way in what they say it so they do not feel ashamed or embarrassed to express their ideas in English.

6. Communicative Approach

For the development of this project and the workshop for the students associated to it the communicate approach has been selected as the method that the activities are going to be based on. According to John Flowerdew and Lindsay Miller (2005, p. 12), the communicate approach is based on the premise that what we do in the classroom should have some real-life communicative value and is for that reason that students will activities in which they will be ask to share their opinions and contrast their reality to the reality presented in the book they are going to work with. For the purposes of this theory students should be encouraged to use all of the resources they have to communicate effectively in the second language with the teacher always trying to encourage their students to get the most out of what they can share with their classmates with the teacher constantly monitoring what the students are saying and giving them positive feedback so they can feel more comfortable when speaking.

Syllabus

1. Target audience

This workshop is intended to second year high-school students who have an intermediate level of English. This workshop has been designed as an elective course; for that reason students need to be fully engaged with the project that is being presented to them. Commitment is required as an important aspect to take into consideration for the students before signing up for this task, for that time they should be in time for the classes; they should engage into class and peer discussions as much as possible; they should bring their questions about the book each class to be discussed when the class starts amongst others.

2. Type of Syllabus

For the purpose of this workshop a task-based syllabus has been chosen. Task-based syllabus focus on the belief that students will successfully learn a target language by carrying a series of tasks in the second language using authentic materials in order to get the most out of it. The syllabus selected will emphasize reading and oral skills, nevertheless the other two skills will be developed as well. David Nunan (1991, p. 279) states that this type of syllabus also allows the students to focus not only in what they are learning, but also on the learning process itself. The author also adds that an important contributing element to the classroom learning are the learner's own personal experiences and since this is an elective workshop in which students are expected to discuss matters such as their own perspective of things that is something to take into consideration. Mainly this workshop

will be focused on analysis and debates in relation to themes presented in the novel; for that reason students will perform activities and tasks individually and in groups to foster critical thinking to establish communication, becoming self-confident and aware of language use.

3. Needs Analysis

A needs analysis was carried out to explore students' opinions on literature and English. Twenty-four second year high school students from Liceo Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, participated in the survey, which contained seven questions.

The data gathered from the needs analysis survey show that English is considered extremely important to the students' needs. A hundred percent of the students consider English important for their future where using English for their studies in the future is the most important reason (58,3%). When asked about their strongest abilities, students answered that speaking in English was their strongest ability (45,8%). When the students were asked about the sources where they get the input of English as a language a 54,2% of the students answer that reading (whether articles on the internet, books or magazines) were the sources they used the most.

Moreover when the students were asked if they understood what they read in English a 58,4% answered that they understood almost always the information presented. When they were presented the idea of learning English using a book 83.4% of the students said that they would like to learn English using a book of mystery (41.7%) and a book in which the main character was the same age as the students are (41.7%) which is of

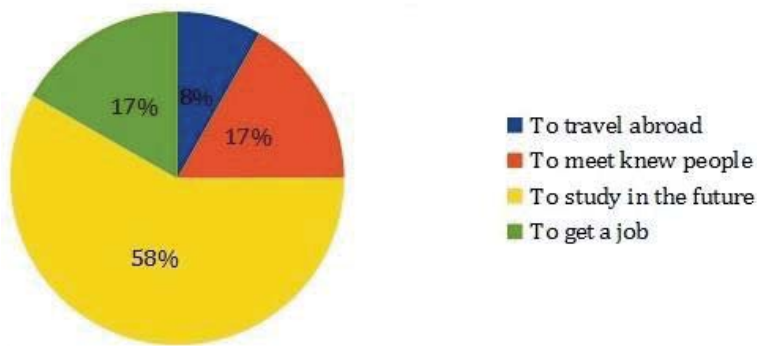
significance since *The Virgin Suicides* is about teenagers that are a mystery to the boys that write the story about them.

When the students were asked if they knew about books that had been turned into movies the majority of them knew about some with Harry Potter (50%) being the book turned into a movie they recognize the most.

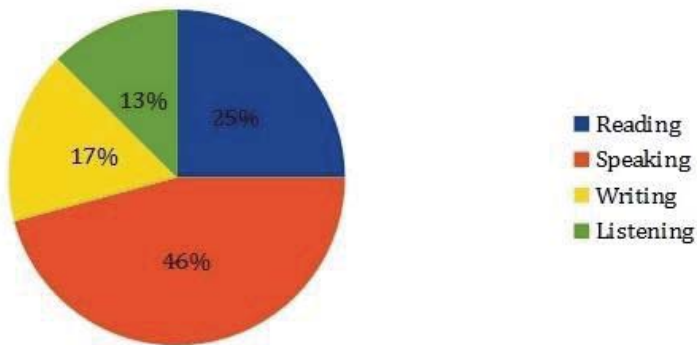
Finally, when the students were asked if they would take part in an elective English literature workshop to practice their skills, 85.5% are likely to take it.

Needs Analysis Questionnaire

1. How do you think English will be useful for you in the future?



2. Which do you think is your strongest ability in English?

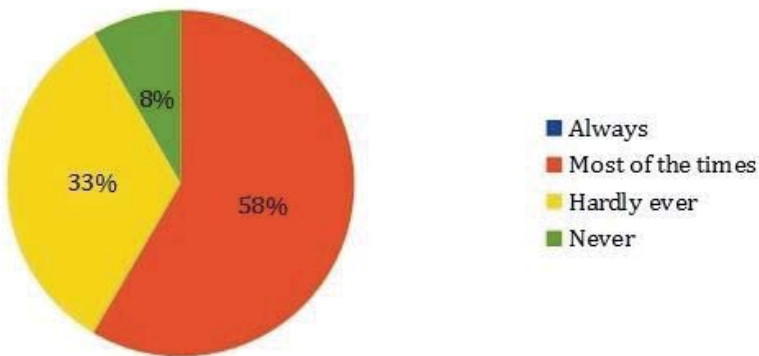


3. Where do you usually learn English from?

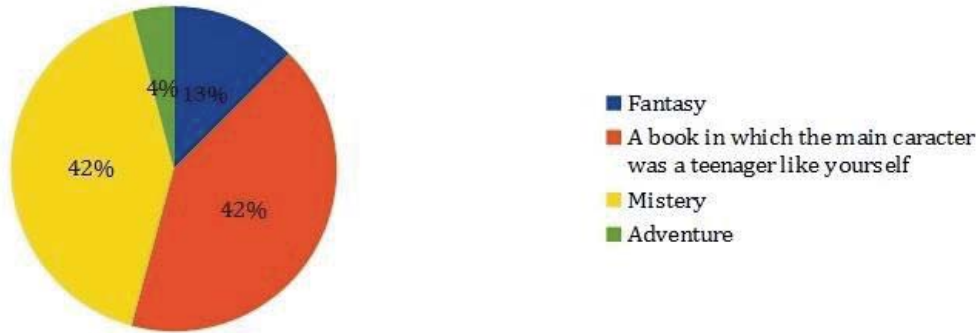


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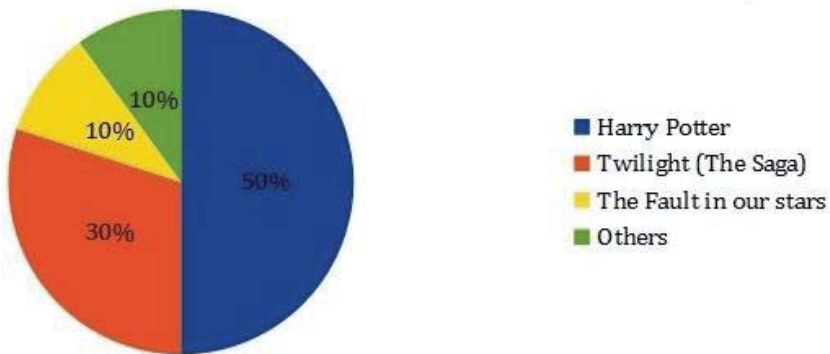
When you have to read texts in English, do you understand what you read?



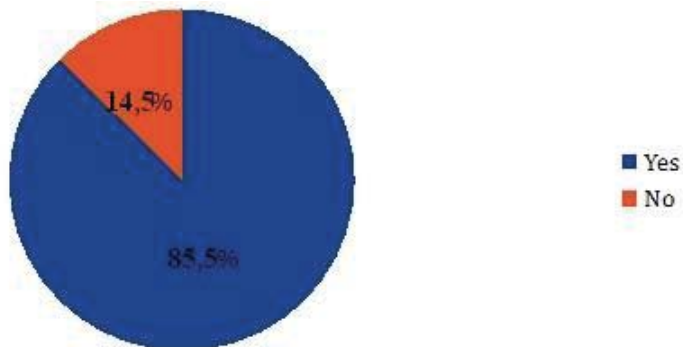
5. If you had to read a book to practice your English skills, what kind of book would you be interesting in reading?



6. Which movies have you seen that are based on a book?



7. Would you take an elective literary workshop based on a book –that also has a movie to understand it better- to practice your English skills?



Workshop Description

Name of the course	The Five Lisbon Roses. An elective workshop based on <i>The Virgin Suicides</i>
Type of course	Elective
Duration	15 sessions
Audience	2 nd year high school students
Class hours	1 ½ hours per week
Teacher	Cristian Guerrero
Contact information	cristian.guerrero.m@mail.pucv.cl

Rationale

The Five Lisbon Roses is an elective workshop oriented toward second year high school students who manage an intermediate/advanced level of English proficiency. Learners will read the book *The Virgin Suicides* and will be every class at the beginning of it asked about aspects of this book and questions they might have. The workshop rather than just working as a comprehension tool to analyze a book will also work as a mean for the students to create an awareness of a second language use and to discover aspects about their own lives that will help them develop a better understanding of who they are and the connections they make with others.

Workshop Organization

This workshop is organized around three learning units which will cover different topics related to the book *The Virgin Suicides* and the concepts of perspective and prejudice. Each unit includes activities such as discussions or debates in which the students will be constantly asked to communicate in the target language. Students will also be exposed to authentic material such as movies, pieces of newspapers, etc., that will be used in class for the students to get a better understanding of the topics discussed.

Course Objectives

General Objective

The students will be able to understand that there are different points of view when we discuss the same series of events and that our own perspective and prejudice affect the way in which we understand the things that happen around us.

Specific Objectives

- ✓ To differentiate an opinion from a fact in order to be able to identify what information is objective and what information is subjective.
- ✓ To understand how perspective and prejudice affect our perception on how we understand the world.
- ✓ To understand the ideas of others.
- ✓ To formulate their own ideas of the book.

- ✓ To create an alternative ending for the story of the book in order to show that they can get in the place of others.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to read and analyze the novel through a variety of assignments. At the end of the workshop students will be able to question how prejudice and the perspective throughout things are seen can affect their own judgment towards others.

Course Policy

Students have to:

- Be regular students of the school.
- Have an intermediate/advance level of English.
- Be committed to the course and eager to participate in class.
- If students do not attend the classes more than three times without medical justification for their absences they will be penalized with the expulsion of the workshop.
- Students have to show respect for the ideas and opinions of others. Showing disrespect for another student or the teacher would mean immediate expulsion from the workshop.

Evaluations

The workshop will be assessed in the following instances:

1. **In-class participation (30%).** The students will be constantly asked to express their own opinions during the class and to share their opinions with the rest of the class.
2. **Stop and check! (30%).** After finishing the novel, students will be asked to engage in an evaluated activity for which they will have to watch the movie *The Virgin Suicides* in which they will compare and contrast the novel and the movie.
3. **Final project: “What went wrong?” (40%).** At the end of the workshop the students will prepare a debate in which the whole class will be divided in two groups that will defend their idea of what went wrong with the Lisbon girls so they decide to commit suicide; supporting their ideas showing aspects of what they have learn about facts, opinions, perspective and prejudice.

Rubrics

In class participation

Name: _____ Date: _____

Criteria	3	2	1	Points
Level of engagement in class	Student share ideas and asks questions more than once per class	Student rarely contributes by sharing ideas and asking questions	Student never contributes by sharing ideas and asking questions	
Listening skills	Student is actively listening when others talk, both in groups and in class.	Student often listens when others talk, both in group and in class	Student does not listen when others talk. Student often interrupts when others speak	
Working with others	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others	Often listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others, but sometimes is not actively listening or responding	Rarely listens to, shares with and supports the efforts of others	
Behavior	Student almost never displays disruptive behavior in class	Student occasionally displays disruptive behavior in class	Student almost always displays disruptive behavior in class	

Total Score:

Grade:

Final Project: What Went Wrong?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Criteria	3	2	1	Points
Preparation	Student shows extensive research on the topic	Student shows basic level of research	Student does poor research on the topic	
Arguments	Arguments are well constructed and follow a main idea, making it credible	Arguments are well constructed, but it does not follow a main idea	Arguments are poorly constructed and do not follow a main idea	
Language	Student uses vocabulary related to the workshop and shows language proficiency	Student sometimes uses vocabulary related to the workshop and their use of the language is almost always good	Student does not incorporate vocabulary related to the workshop in the presentation and use of language is poor	
Extra Support	Student prepares extra aids to enhance the presentation	Student present poor extra support for the presentation	Student does not present extra support	

Total score:

Grade:

Syllabus chart and topics

Units	Lessons	Content	Skills
Unit 1 “The Lisbon girls and the noise that fascinated them”	Lesson 1	- Introduction to the workshop - Activating previous knowledge on literature	Listening, Speaking, Writing.
	Lesson 2	- Difference between facts and opinions	Listening, Speaking, Writing.
	Lesson 3	- Questionnaire Facts and Opinions about the Lisbon girls	Writing.
	Lesson 4	- Who were the Lisbon girls	Listening, Speaking.
	Lesson 5	- Analyzing the boys of the novel (superficiality of vision)	Speaking, Writing.
Unit 2 “The women in disguise”	Lesson 6	- Analysis of the book (i) (characters, narrator, story)	Speaking, Reading, Writing.
	Lesson 7	- Analysis of the book (ii) (themes, comparisons)	Speaking, Reading, Writing.
	Lesson 8	- What’s perspective	Reading, Writing

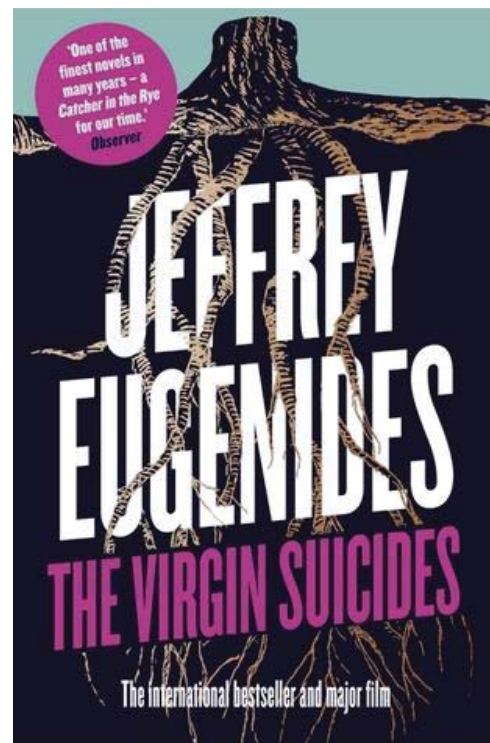
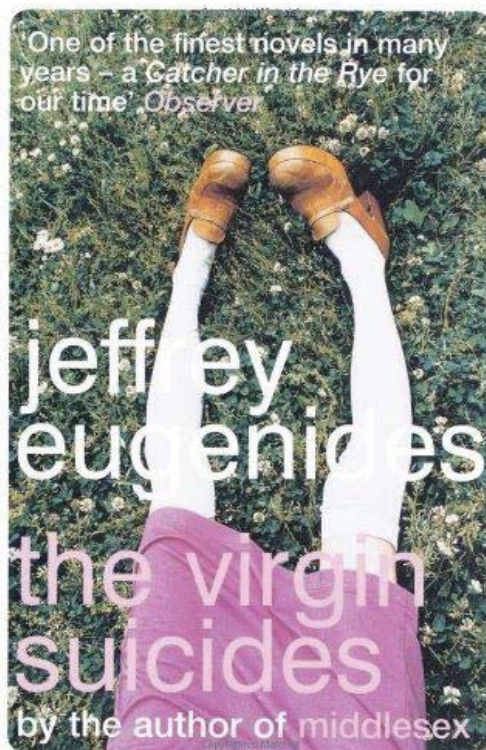
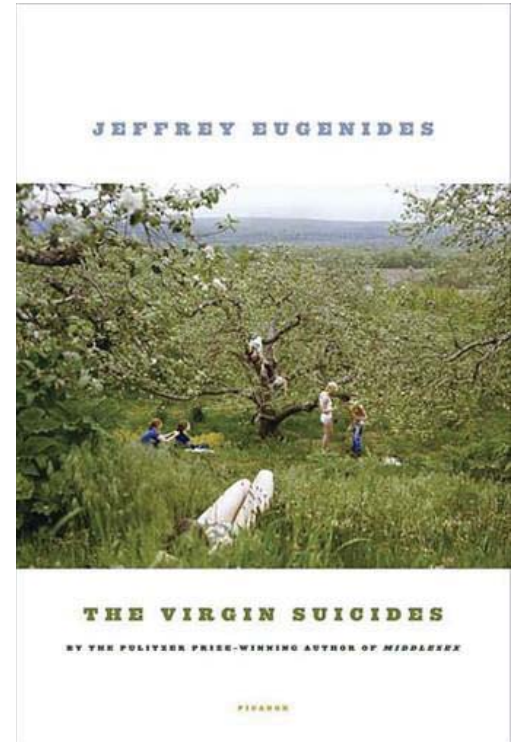
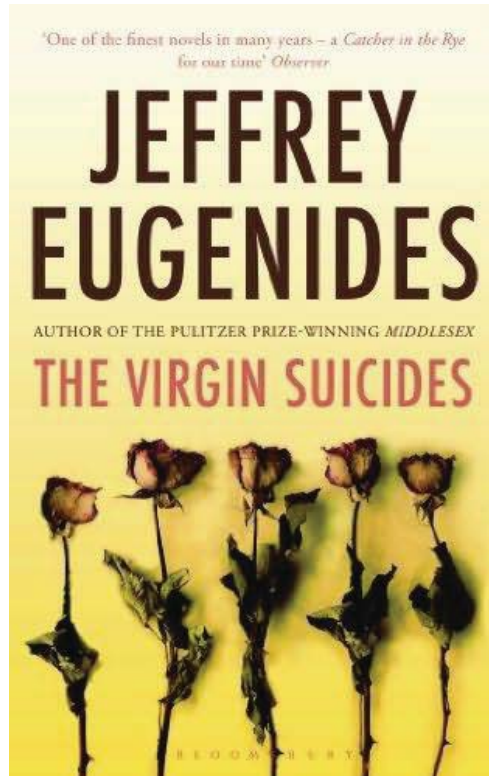
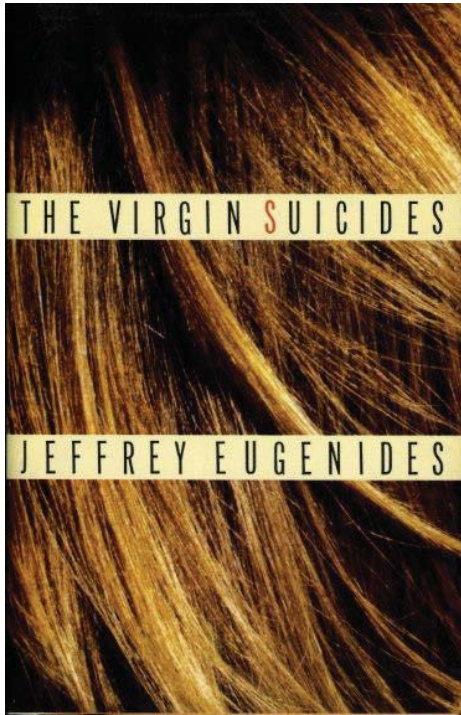
			Speaking.
	Lesson 9	- What's prejudice	Listening, Speaking, Writing.
	Lesson 10	- Watching the movie <i>The Virgin Suicides</i> (i)	Listening.
	Lesson 11	- Watching the movie <i>The Virgin Suicides</i> (ii) - Activity based on the film based on differences between movie and book (stop and check!)	Writing, Listening, Speaking.
Unit 3 "The Five Roses"	Lesson 12	- Cultural Differences (death, suburbia)	Speaking, Reading, Writing.
	Lesson 13	- Guidelines for final project - Preparation for final project	Speaking, Writing.
	Lesson 14	- Final Project	Speaking.
	Lesson 15	- Letting go of the Lisbon girls - Deciding an alternative ending for the Lisbon girls	Reading, Speaking, Writing

Lesson Samples

Date: (Lesson 1)		Level: 2 nd year high school
Skills: Listening, Speaking, Writing.		
Expected Outcomes: Students will be able to activate previous knowledge on literature and show how much they know about it and how they connect the coming of age theme with their reality.		
<u>Introduction</u>	Time	Comments
	5 min	The teacher greets the class. He asks the students if they have had a literary workshop before and if they know what one is.
<u>Core of the class</u>		
Pre-stage	5 min	The teacher activates prior knowledge giving the students a worksheet with different images of the cover of the book <i>The Virgin Suicides</i> and asks them to think about the questions that appear below the images.
	5 min	The students are asked to express their answers to the questions orally. The teacher takes notes of the answers on the board.
While-stage	10 min	The teacher introduces the book <i>The Virgin Suicides</i> and the contents of the workshop to the students using the images of the book covers as examples. He checks the ideas that are on the board. The teacher asks the students why they think the workshop is called “The Five Lisbon Roses”
	10 min	The students are introduced the concept of a coming of age novel, and questions that may appear will be answered by the teacher.
	20 min	The students are asked to work in groups of six and discuss the title of the novel and the relationship between being a teenager and the coming of age theme. Also the students will discuss how these two concepts relate to the present situation they are going through as teenagers and make a poster of it that will be explained to the class and posted to the walls of the classroom.

<u>Closing</u>	15 min	The students will be asked to choose one person from each group that will explain the poster they made to the whole class.
	10 min	<p>The teacher summarizes the class asking the students the main points discussed.</p> <p>The teacher asks the students to read chapter one of <i>The Virgin Suicides</i> for the next class and bring questions that may appear about the book to be discussed in the class.</p>

The Virgin Suicides book covers



Before starting...

What do you think when you see these book covers?

What do you think the book is going to be about?

What feeling do the images evoke?

What does the title of the novel makes you think of?

Do you think it acts as a big spoiler?



Did you know?

The coming of age novel...

A **coming of age** story is all about the hero's journey. It is a journey that takes a young person from naïve to wise, from idealist to realist, from immature to mature and perhaps even from child to adult. The **protagonist's** actual path can vary from story to story. Perhaps he had to go to war, or lost his mother, or experienced extreme injustice or went on some great world-wide adventure.

There will usually be pain and suffering along the way - growing up isn't easy. However, no matter the narrative direction, the result is that the hero grows from his experiences and in some way loses the childhood innocence that helps steer him towards adulthood.

Taken from <http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/coming-of-age-novel-definition-examples-quiz.html#lesson>

Can you name another novel you know that fits the definition of coming of age novel?

Working Project!

Work in groups of four people and make a poster that best represents the coming of age idea in relationship with what's happening to you in your life as teenagers.

For instance you can make a poster that represents the life of one of the members of the groups as the hero of a coming of age story.



Vocabulary corner

Naïve: Too ready to believe someone or something, or to trust that someone's intentions are good, esp. because of lack of experience.

Growing up: To gradually become an adult.

To steer someone towards something: to cause that person to go in a particular direction.

Date: (Lesson 2)		Level: 2 nd year high school
Skills: Listening, speaking, writing.		
Expected Outcomes: Students will be able to differentiate between a fact and an opinion and will be able to support their opinions by giving facts.		
<u>Introduction</u>	Time	Comments
	10 min	The teacher greets the class and asks if there are any doubts or questions that might have appeared after reading the first chapter of the novel. The teacher clarifies doubts that students may have.
<u>Core of the class</u>		
Pre-stage	10 min	Students are asked if they know the difference between a fact and an opinion. The teacher writes on the board the words “FACT” and “OPINION” and writes the most important ideas that the students say under both of the concepts.
While-stage	10 min	The students are shown a video in which the concepts of fact and opinion are explained https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnFnWWAnlkw
	25 min	The students check if the ideas on the board have to do with what has been explained on the video. Then the students are shown two videos about the robot probe Philae from different sources and they are asked to say which one shows facts and which one shows opinions. The students are asked to take notes of the facts and opinions mentioned.
<u>Closing</u>		BBC News: http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-30033331 PBS Newshours: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/scientists-dared-land-comet-score-touchdown/
		The students check with the teacher which source of information shows merely facts and which shows opinions mixed with facts. They will explain why.

	20 min	The students are asked to work in groups of five and make a list with all of the facts about the Lisbon family and the opinions the neighbors had about the family contrasting them to see whether they are real or not.
	10 min	One member of each group is asked to come to the front of the class to read out loud at maximum 3 facts and 3 opinions about the Lisbon family and to explain to the class why they think they agree or disagree with the comments. Students from other groups will be asked to comment on what the student in front of the class has said giving the reasons that support their opinion.
	5 min	<p>The teacher summarizes the class asking the students the main points discussed.</p> <p>The teacher asks the students to read chapter two of <i>The Virgin Suicides</i> for the next class and bring questions that may appear about the book to be discussed in the class.</p>

What can you say about the Lisbon Family?

In a group of 5 write at least 6 different opinions and facts that you can remember from the first chapter of the book *The Virgin Suicides*. Then decide the three more important facts and opinions and how do they differ (if so) and chose member to represent the group and come to the board to share those ideas with the class.

FACTS	OPINIONS

Date: (Lesson 8)		Level: 2 nd year high school
Skills: Reading, Writing, Speaking.		
Expected Outcomes: Students will be able to understand the concept of perspective and apply it.		
<u>Introduction</u>	Time	Comments
	15 min	The teacher greets the class and asks if there are any doubts or questions that might have appear after reaching the end of the book. The teacher clarifies doubts that the students may have.
<u>Core of the class</u>		
Pre-stage	10 min	The teacher writes “PERSPECTIVE” on the board and asks students what they know about that concept and writes the ideas on the board.
	10 min	The teacher then gives the students a worksheet related to perspective. Then he asks the students to try to answer the questions with the help of the partner next to them. After they finish, they will check the answers with the whole class.
While-stage	20 min	The students are asked to read an extract (page 5, chapter 1; Page 39, chapter 1) from the novel <i>The Virgin Suicides</i> in which the diary of Cecilia is interpreted through the perspective of the boys of the neighborhood. The students will be asked to answer questions about the extract.
	25 min	The teacher will divide the class into groups of boys and girls. He will ask the boys to think from the perspective of the Lisbon girls how do they imagine they saw the neighborhood boys. The teacher will also ask the girls to see the Lisbon girls from the perspective of the boys and will ask them why they were so fascinated about them. The groups will sit in front of each other and will confront their perspectives. The boys will explain why the Lisbon girls chose the neighborhood boys as their witnesses and the girls will say why the neighborhood boys were so

<u>Closing</u>	10 min	obsessed with the Lisbon girls. The teacher summarizes the class asking the students the main points discussed.
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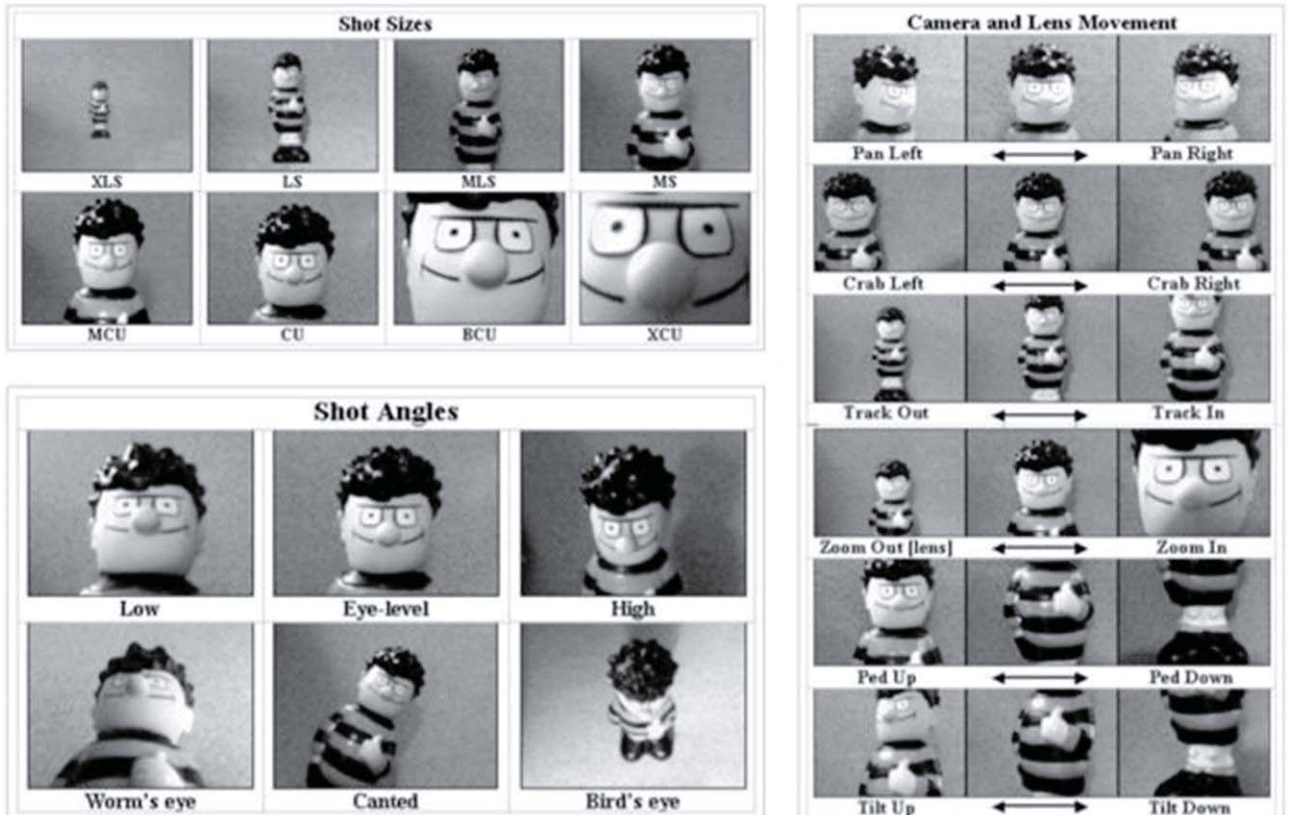
Let's talk about perspective!

Before we begin...

What do you know about perspective? Do you think that we all see the same fact in an equal manner? Why do you think that we all perceive things in a different way?

Look at the pictures below to try to answer the questions above.

Camera Shots, Angles and Movement



Taken from: <http://blogs.swa-jkt.com/swa/10318/taq/camera-angles/>

Let's read!

Extract 1 from *The Virgin Suicides*.

“Dr. Armonson stitched up her wrist wounds. Within five minutes of the transfusion he declared her out of danger. Chucking her under the chin he said, “What are you doing here, honey? You’re not even old enough to know how bad life gets.”

And it was then Cecilia gave orally what was to be her only form of suicide note, and a useless one at that, because she was going to live: “Obviously, Doctor,” she said, “you’ve never been a thirteen-year-old girl.”

- ✓ What do you think Cecilia meant?
- ✓ Why do you think the doctor underestimated Cecilia’s understanding of the world?
- ✓ Do you think that Cecilia would have given a different answer if the doctor would have been a woman?

Extract 2 from *The Virgin Suicides*.

“We become acquainted with the starry skies the girls had gazed at while camping years before, and the boredom of summers traipsing from the back yard to front to the back again, and even a certain indefinable smell that arose from toilets on rainy nights, which the girls called “sewery.” We knew what it felt like to see a boy with his shirt off, and why it made Lux write the name Kevin in purple Magic Marker all over her three-ring binder and even on her bras and panties, and we understood her rage coming home one day to find that Mrs. Lisbon had soaked her things in Clorox, bleaching all the “Kevins” out. We knew the pain of winter wind rushing up your skirt, and the ache of keeping your knees together in class, and how drab and infuriating it was to jump rope while the boys played baseball. We could never understand why the girls cared so much about being mature, or why they felt compelled to complement each other, but sometimes, after one of us had read a long portion of the diary out loud, we had to fight back the urge to hug one another or to tell each other how pretty we were. We felt the imprisonment of being a girl, the way it made your mind active and dreamy, and how you ended up knowing which colors went together. We knew that the girls were our twins, that we all existed in space like animals with identical skins, and that they knew everything about us though we couldn’t fathom them at all. We knew, finally, that the girls were really women in disguise, that they understood love and even death, and that our job was merely to create the noise that seemed to fascinate them.”

- ✓ Why do you think that the boys describe in that way the diary of Cecilia?
- ✓ Do you think that the boys really got to understand the world from the perspective of a girl?
- ✓ From your point of view, how does this extract make you feel?
- ✓ Do you agree with the statement of the boys that the Lisbon girls were “women in disguise”? Explain why.

Date: (Lesson 9)		Level: 2 nd year high school
Skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading.		
Expected Outcomes: Students will be able to understand the concept of prejudice, related to the concept of perspective and apply them both together.		
<u>Introduction</u>	Time	Comments
	5 min	The teacher greets the class and he asks the main points of what they worked with last class.
<u>Core of the class</u>		
Pre-stage	5 min	The teacher asks the students if they know what prejudice is. The teacher writes the main ideas on the board.
	10 min	The students are asked if they know any form of prejudice in the USA or the UK and in Chile. They contrast their ideas. Using the ideas on the board and what's already been discussed the students come up with a final definition of prejudice guided by the teacher.
While-stage	30 min	The students are asked to make groups of 6 students. Every group will be asked to judge Trip Fontain from the perspective of: 1) Lux, 2) The neighborhood boys, 3) The Women Fontaine was with, and 4) The school teachers; giving facts about the life of Trip and opinions that appear on the book about the character as a main reasons of their judgment.
	10 min	One member of each group is designated to come up to the board along with the designated members of the other groups, and they will have to create an image of Trip Fontaine from all the different perspectives and presented to the rest of the class including the particular prejudices every character has about him.
<u>Closing</u>	20 min	After the short exposition of the ideas, the teacher asks the students if they think that all of this information about Trip affected the events that made him act the way he did towards Lux and her final decision to commit suicide, and they discuss their opinions to the whole class and the

	10	teacher. The teacher summarizes the class asking the students the main points discussed.
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Who's this so called Trip Fontaine?

Name of the character's point of view: _____

1- What are the prejudices your character has against Trip and why?

2- What would you say about Trip's attitudes and actions towards the character's point of view you're working with?

3- What did your character do for Trip Fontaine and why?

4- How did your character feel about Trip Fontaine and why?

Date: (Lesson 13)		Level: 2 nd year high school
Skills: Speaking, Writing.		
Expected Outcomes: Students will be able to prepare a debate for the final project of the workshop applying what they already know.		
<u>Introduction</u>	Time	Comments
	10 min	The teacher greets the class and he asks the main points of what they worked with last class.
<u>Core of the class</u>	10 min	The teacher announces that the final project of the workshop is going to be next class and that in that class they are going to be preparing for the final debate “what went wrong?” in relation to why the Lisbon girls committed suicide.
Pre-stage	20 min	The class is asked to separate into 4 groups of 6 people each in which they will discussed one main reason of what went wrong in the lives of the Lisbon girls so they’d decided to commit suicides using the list from unit one with the facts they have been working on.
While-stage	15 min	Each group will write on the board the reason why they think the Lisbon girls committed suicide and will write 3 reasons to support it. The whole class will decide which are the two most important reasons presented, out of the four. Afterwards the class will be divided into two main groups that support one of the two ideas. In case the numbers aren’t even the students will negotiate with the teacher which students stay in a group and which ones go to the other.
	30 min	The groups will prepare the arguments for the next class debate.
<u>Closing</u>	5 min	The teacher checks point by point of the student’s handout if the instructions for the final project are completely understood and tell the students to be ready for next class.

What went wrong?

Instructions for the final project,

- ✓ The final project will consist of a debate that will take the whole class.
- ✓ You will be asked to defend your *thesis* (your opinion on why the Lisbon girls committed suicide) providing evidence to support what you are saying.
- ✓ The class will be divided into two groups.
- ✓ Each team will collaborate in defending their position and you will try to prove that you are right.

Starting the debate.

- ✓ Each group will have 10 minutes at the start of the class to make a presentation about the arguments.
- ✓ The teacher, as the moderator, will start asking questions to both groups.
- ✓ The moderator will ask one group what they think about the opinions of the contrary group. During this time arguments and contra-arguments are required from all members of both groups.

Finishing the debate

- ✓ By the end of the debate, the groups will be asked by the moderator to summarize the main points in favor and against of their arguments given the light of the new evidence that the other group may have pointed out.
- ✓ Each group will expose the reasons to disprove the other group's opinion.

Date: (Lesson 15)		Level: 2 nd year high school
Skills: Speaking, Writing, Reading.		
Expected Outcomes: Students will be able to express their ideas in English and say their goodbyes to the characters of the novel.		
<u>Introduction</u>	Time	Comments
	10 min	The teacher greets the class and he asks if the students brought something that reminds them of the Lisbon girls to the class.
<u>Core of the class</u>	15 min	The teacher will introduce the activity to the students telling them that death is seen in a different way in the English speaking countries, especially in the US. The teacher will give a handout to the students to read.
Pre-stage	15	The teacher will ask the students to make a short paragraph of no more of 300 words in which the students say their goodbyes to the Lisbon girls written from their own perspective of the things.
While-stage	30	The teachers will put an image of the Lisbon girls (from the movie version) in the center of the class as a symbolic grave and will ask the students to come forward and read what they have written and leave the object that remind the Lisbon girls around the picture and tell the class why it reminds him/her about them.
	20	Students will sit around this symbolic grave in group of 6 and will discuss how they think the story should have ended instead of the Lisbon girls committing suicide.
<u>Closing</u>	10	The teacher will finish the class and the workshop by asking the students what they have learned during the past weeks and closes the workshop asking the students why they think the workshop is called “The Lisbon Roses” and what other name they would have come up with.

Letting go of the Lisbon girls

Before we start...

Did you know that in the US they have different funeral services such as memorial services or burial services? Do you know the difference between them? Do you know any other?

Burial Service

Graveside or burial services.

A burial service, conducted at the side of the grave, tomb, mausoleum or crematorium, at which the body of the decedent is buried or cremated at the conclusion.

Sometimes, the burial service will immediately follow the funeral, in which case a funeral procession (the hearse, followed by the immediate family and then the other attendees) travels from the site of the memorial service to the burial site. Other times, the burial service takes place at a later time, when the final resting place is ready.

In many religious traditions, pallbearers, usually males who are close relatives (such as cousins, nephews or grandchildren) or friends of the decedent, will carry the casket from the chapel (of a funeral home or church) to the hearse, and from the hearse to the site of the burial service. The pallbearers often sit in a special reserved section during the memorial service.

According to most religions, coffins are kept closed during the burial ceremony.

Memorial Services

Services when the body is not present.

Increasingly, traditional funerals are being replaced by memorial services. These are often less formal than a traditional funeral, and include such things as eulogies, music and fellowship.

A member of the clergy often participates in these services, usually to open and close the proceedings and offer prayers and brief message of comfort.

Taken from: <http://thefuneralsource.org/trad01.html>

How are funerals traditions in Chile compared with the American ones?

What differences or similarities can you identify?

Vocabulary Corner

Mausoleum: A building in which the bodies of dead people are buried.

Crematorium: A building where people's bodies are burned.

Decedent: A deceased person; a persona that has died.

Hearse: A special car used to carry a body in a coffin, esp. to a funeral.

Pallbearer: A person who helps to carry a coffin at a funeral or who walks beside it.

Attendee: Someone who attends a performance, meeting, speech, funeral, etc.

Casket: A coffin.

Coffin: A long box used to bury or cremate a dead person.

Eulogy: A speech or piece of writing containing great praise, esp. for someone who has recently died.

Clergy: The religious leaders whose job is serving the needs of their religion and its members: priests, ministers, rabbis, etc.

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