

Lesson Plan: Use of Allegory in Literature

As a **High School English Language** teacher, you can use this lesson plan to teach about the literary device of **allegory** and examine an allegory in climate literature.

This lesson plan will allow you to teach about the usage of allegory as a literary device, its multiple interpretations and its examples in literature. Climate change being an important issue of our times, has spawned climate literature in verse and prose. As part of this lesson plan, your students will analyze a contemporary fairy tale about climate change for its allegorical components.

Thus, the use of this lesson plan allows you to integrate the teaching of a climate science topic with a core topic in **English Language**.

Use this lesson plan to help your students find answers to:

1. What is an allegory? Describe its role in myths and fables.
2. What are the different types of allegories used in English literature?
3. Comment on the use of allegory as a device to communicate about climate change.

About the Lesson Plan

Grade Level: High School

Discipline: English Language, Humanities

Topic(s) in Discipline: Literary Devices, Allegory, Metaphors, Fables, Parables, Types of Allegory

Climate Topic: Introduction to Climate Change

Location: Global

Access: Online

Language(s): English

Approximate Time Required: 40 min

1 Contents

1. Reading (15 min)

An introduction to allegory as a literary device through the ages and brief descriptions of its types and examples in literature.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.britannica.com/art/allegory-art-and-literature>

2. Audio file and Visualization (5 min)

An audio file that introduces an allegory about climate change by the author, a climate scientist at Columbia University and NASA. This allegory will be examined in the ensuing classroom activity. Also, a visualization that depicts the climate fact on which the allegory is based.

The audio file and associated transcript can be accessed at:

<https://www.npr.org/2018/10/20/659122551/a-climate-scientist-on-slaying-the-climate-dragon>

The visualization can be accessed at:

<https://www.wcrp-climate.org/images/news-new/2018/IPCC-SR15-current-and-stabilized-warming.jpg>

3. Classroom Activity (20 min)

The reading of the above-mentioned allegory about climate change and a list of questions for the examination of this text for its allegorical components and interpretations.

The reading can be accessed at:

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/hot-planet/slaying-the-climate-dragon/>

4. Suggested questions/assignments for learning evaluation

- What is an allegory? Describe its role in myths and fables.
- What are the different types of allegories used in English literature?
- Comment on the use of allegory as a device to communicate about climate change.

2 Step-by-step User Guide

Here is a step-by-step guide to using this lesson plan in the classroom/laboratory. We have suggested these steps as a possible plan of action. You may customize the lesson plan according to your preferences and requirements.

1. Topic introduction and discussion

Use the reading, '[Allegory](#)' by Encyclopedia Britannica to introduce the topic of allegory in English Literature. Use the text to define allegory and describe how it has been used in literary texts. Discuss how allegories are an integral part of fables, parables and myths. Use the reading to discuss about the works of writers who have used this literary device in the past. Describe the different types of allegories such as personification and symbolism. Finally, emphasize on the central idea or background information on which the allegories are based.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.britannica.com/art/allegory-art-and-literature>

2. Background information for the allegory to be studied in class

Use the audio file from the report, '[A Climate Scientist On 'Slaying The Climate Dragon'](#)' by National Public Radio, Inc (US), to introduce the author of a climate change allegory (that will be examined in the ensuing classroom activity). In the report, the author Kate Marvel, a climate scientist at Columbia University and NASA, reads a part of the story and explains the allegorical components of it. Use the report to provide your students with the vital background information about human induced global warming. Use the visualization, '[Warming relative to 1850-1900](#)' by World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), to show that global temperatures are rising above the pre-industrial age levels and will continue to rise unless preemptive actions are taken to curb the anthropogenic causes of global warming such as greenhouse gas emissions.

The audio file and associated transcript can be accessed at:

<https://www.npr.org/2018/10/20/659122551/a-climate-scientist-on-slaying-the-climate-dragon>

The visualization can be accessed at:

<https://www.wcrp-climate.org/images/news-new/2018/IPCC-SR15-current-and-stabilized-warming.jpg>

3. Classroom Activity: Examine an allegory on Climate Change

Use the reading, '[Slaying the Climate Dragon](#)' by Kate Marvel in the Scientific American, to analyze an allegory on climate change. Direct your students to read the fairy tale closely and allow enough time for them to make notes about its allegorical elements. Use the notes to initiate a classroom discussion on different aspects of the story. Ask your students to draw parallels between the fairy tale narrative and the real-world scenario by listing all the perceived elements of climate change in the text eg. rising sea-levels, biodiversity loss, and extreme weather events. Finally, facilitate a classroom discussion using the following list of questions to assess student understanding of allegory as a literary device for communicating climate change.

The reading can be accessed at:

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/hot-planet/slaying-the-climate-dragon/>

List of discussion points: (adapted from [Change Reflection Questions](#) by ReadWriteThink.org)

- 1) Who in the text is facing change?
- 2) How does this character respond to change?
- 3) Do other characters provide help or advice for the character that is facing change? What advice do they give?
- 4) What does the character learn about this change?
- 5) In what way is this text a literary allegory?

4. Questions/Assignments

Use the tools and the concepts learned so far to discuss and determine answers to the following questions:

- What is an allegory? Describe its role in myths and fables.

- What are the different types of allegories used in English literature?
- Comment on the use of allegory as a device to communicate about climate change.

3 Learning Outcomes

The tools in this lesson plan will enable students to:

- define allegory
- discuss the use of allegory in English Literature
- describe the different types of allegories used in literary texts
- learn about a key aspect of climate change through an allegory

4 Additional Resources

If you or your students would like to explore the topic further, these additional resources will be useful.

1. Reading; 'A Literary Glossary for Literature and Language Arts'

A teacher's guide to literary devices by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

This can be accessed at:

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/teachers-guides/literary-glossary-literature-and-language-arts#allegory>

2. Teaching Module; 'Exploring Change through Allegory and Poetry'

A lesson plan by ReadWriteThink.org for middle school to understand the use of allegory in literary texts.

This can be accessed at:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/exploring-change-through-allegory-1082.html?tab=4#tabs>

3. Teaching Module; 'Animal Farm: Allegory and the Art of Persuasion'

A lesson plan about the use of allegory in 'Animal Farm', by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

This can be accessed at:

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/animal-farm-allegory-and-art-persuasion>

5 Credits/Copyrights

All the teaching tools in our collated list are owned by the corresponding creators/authors/organizations as listed on their websites. Please view the individual copyright and ownership details for each tool by following the individual links provided. We have selected and analyzed the tools that align with the overall objective of our project and have provided the corresponding links. We do not claim ownership of or responsibility/liability for any of the listed tools.

1. Reading; 'Allegory'

Written by the [Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica](#).

2. Audio File and Transcript; 'A Climate Scientist On 'Slaying The Climate Dragon''

A spoken discussion between [Scott Simon of National Public Radio, Inc \(US\)](#) and [Kate Marvel](#), a climate scientist.

3. Visualization; 'Warming relative to 1850-1900'

By [World Climate Research Programme \(WCRP\)](#)

4. Reading; 'Slaying the Climate Dragon'

Blog by Kate Marvel in the [Scientific American](#).

5. Additional Resources

[EDSITEment by National Endowment for the Humanities](#)

[ReadWriteThink.org](#)