

THE PENCIL TEST
Chapters 1-5 Lesson Plan
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The New York Department of Education Learning Standards and Wiggins and McTighe's *Understanding by Design* have shaped the curriculum for *The Pencil Test*. To make connection of activities to standards explicit, the "Goals" section of the lesson plans borrows language directly from The State Department's Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Though the Goals are stated in terms of NY State Standards, the activities and outcomes are applicable to classrooms nationwide. This curriculum is by no means exhaustive or restrictive. Feel free to incorporate your own ideas, questions, and goals.

Goals for Learners

The Pencil Test's curriculum focuses on reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. By the end of this curriculum, middle and high school learners will be able to read, write, listen, and speak for the following elements:

- Information and Understanding
- Literary Response and Expression
- Critical Analysis and Evaluation
- Social Interaction

Goals for Curriculum

Below are the goals for *The Pencil Test's* curriculum.

- To extend thinking about novel's themes
- To differentiate for various learner styles
- To offer chances for meaningful integration of technology
- To address key English Language Arts and Reading Comprehension Standards
- To provide a platform to discuss race, class, body image, integrity, peer pressure, and other issues
- To offer assignments which can be tailored to a wide variety of resources and settings (e.g. time, space, readiness, goals, etc)
- To provide opportunities for integration with other units of study (e.g. public speaking, dramatic interpretation, historical research, black history, women's history, MLK Day, etc)

USER'S GUIDE

Standards: This section lists the New York Department of Education standards addressed by the lesson.

Goals for this Lesson

Learners will understand...

This section outlines the understandings readers will gain from completing this lesson.

Learners will be able to...

This section lists the skills readers will gain, the work they will produce (productions), and the ways they will be able to exhibit their knowledge upon completion of this lesson.

Activity

- This section outlines things readers will do to uncover understanding and hone skills. Each activity is planned for a 50-minute session. These activities can be modified for longer or shorter sessions.
- In this section, the instructor will see the following icons:
 - ☐ **Display.** This icon accompanies productions that can be displayed. This icon also appears near assessment and feedback that can be displayed.
 - 📖 **Journal.** This icon accompanies productions that can be kept in readers' journals. This icon also highlights feedback that can be given in readers' journals.
 - ★ **Publish.** This icon accompanies productions that can be published. These activities include such productions as poems, blogs, and videos.
 - ✓ **Quick Quiz.** This icon appears next to quiz activities. These activities are optional, simple to administer, and simple to grade. Quick Quizzes can be used primarily to assess learner's comprehension of plot and ability to adhere to the reading schedule.
 - 📎 **Handout.** This icon refers to complementary materials for the lesson. These materials are found in the Appendix and should be used in conjunction with the lesson.

Feedback and Assessment

This section suggests ways to offer feedback and assessment to readers. Included in this section are assignments that can be graded as well as suggestions for types of feedback on non-graded assignments.

Homework

This section lists homework to be completed for the following session.

Notes for Instructors

Differentiating: This section offers suggestions on ways to differentiate activities. In a nutshell, differentiation—which is sometimes called *differentiated instruction*—refers to a method of curriculum planning and instruction that offers learners a wide variety of ways to acquire and display understanding.

Extending: To promote recurrence, this section offers possible extension assignments. These suggestions will help readers track understanding over the entire unit. Additionally, these extension assignments offer ways to differentiate and ways to cater to advanced readers.

Integrating Technology: From video recorders and LCD projectors, to audio recordings and blogs, this section offers suggestions on ways to integrate technology into the lesson.

LESSON # 1
Books and Covers

Standard 3: Learners will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Goals for this Lesson

Learners will understand...

- Close reading text and posing questions can deepen understanding of literature.
- Text, images, and other media contain both explicit and implicit information.

Learners will be able to...

- Draw inferences from visual evidence and relate information to prior knowledge
- Close-read text for implicit and explicit information

Activity

- Divide learners into groups of 3-6 readers. Distribute one copy of *The Pencil Test* to each group with cover facing up. Readers should refrain from reading description of book on the back cover or inside flap.
- In groups, readers make a list of all the things they assume about the book from the cover ✍. To jumpstart thinking, distribute Handout 1 ↗, "Books and Covers." (15 mins)
- Readers record interpretations in reading journals and/or on chart paper. Each group can share its interpretation. (15 mins)
- Read 1st page of text. (20)
 - Readers read the 1st page of *The Pencil Test* silently. Next, ask for a volunteer to read the first page aloud. After reading the first page, ask readers to list as many things as possible that they have learned thus far, in journals (2 mins).
 - Ask readers to list 3 questions that the 1st page of the text prompts them to ask (2 mins)
 - Share both responses as a large group. Make a master list of the responses.
- For the remainder of the session, have readers continue reading text.

Feedback and Assessment

- Instructor's notes from responses ✍

Homework

- Read chapters 1-5 for homework.
- Look up the phenomenon "passing" as it relates to African American history. Write a 1-3 sentence explanation of "passing." ✍

Notes for Instructors

Differentiating: Appeal to visual and kinesthetic learners with a Cover Activity ✍ □: *The Pencil Test* is divided into three parts. After the completion of each part of the novel, readers can produce a cover of the book. After completing each new cover, readers can explain their reinterpretations. They should provide text-based evidence to support their interpretation. At the novel's completion, readers will have produced three covers of the book. Have readers reflect on the ways her/his interpretations evolved with the reading.

Extending: Encourage readers to keep activities and notes about *The Pencil Test* in a journal ✍. Reviewing previous notes will help readers assess the ways they relate to literature and the ways they learn best.

Integrating Technology: If resources permit, consider having readers keep journals in the form of blogs. Blogs can be hosted free on www.blogger.com.

LESSON # 2	
That's Debatable (Chapters 1-5)	
Standard 2: Learners will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.	
Standard 4: Learners will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.	
Goals for this Lesson	
Learners will understand...	Learners will be able to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing text-based evidence distinguishes opinion from analysis. • Providing evidence strengthens persuasive writing and speaking. • There exist different points of view. Values and perspectives shape points of view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate persuasive arguments • Make perceptive and well-developed connections to prior knowledge • Make effective use of language in oral presentation • Express ideas and concerns clearly, respectfully, and effectively
Activity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readers respond to questions from Quick Quiz One ✓ (5 mins) • Readers divide into two groups and consider the following question: Was Kendry justified in lying about her race? Group A will take the pro side of this prompt (arguing that Kendry was justified). Group B will take the con side of this prompt (arguing that Kendry was not justified). • Readers will have 10-15 minutes for data collection and argument construction. Readers should draw on specific examples from history and current events to support assertions. Use Handout 2-A ↗ and 2-B ↗ with this activity. (20 mins) • Debate (25 mins): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If time and resources permit, allow readers to engage in data collection using encyclopedias, the Internet, and other available resources. - After time for data collection expires, seat groups so that they face each other. The speaker for the pro side (Group A) will issue an opening statement (in debates, pro usually begins). Next, the speaker for the con side (Group B) will issue an opening statement. After opening statements, each participant proceeds to present her/his point. Continue down the line with each person refuting the previous opposition argument and then presenting a new point of her/his own. - Be sure to keep time for each group. Allow 1-2 minutes for each reader to present her/his counterpoint. - Take notes and close the debate by restating and affirming strong points made by both groups. 	
Feedback and Assessment	Homework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded Quick Quiz One ✓ • Instructor's comments on bullet points • Instructors notes and grade on explanation of passing ✍ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework: Read summary Nella Larsen's novel, <i>Passing</i> from Handout 4 ↗. Find the title of 3 other books with similar themes • Read chapters 6-10
Notes for Instructors	
<p>Differentiating: Reader's self-election into roles allows differentiation. Consider assigning roles based on your assessment of the readers' interests and readiness. Use Handout 3 ↗ "Debate Format Roles."</p> <p>Extending: For more information about formatting debates, visit The International Debate Education Association's website (http://www.idebate.org/index.php).</p>	

Courtesy of James Guilford. Visit www.jamesguilford.com for more resources, including information about scheduling the author to visit your school, book club, or organization.

✓ QUICK QUIZ ONE ✓

Chapters 1-5

1. The following was hung over the mantel piece:
 - a. A calendar with the caption, "You're a Winner!"
 - b. A picture of Kendry's father
 - c. A picture of Doris and Dr. Higgman
 - d. A placard from Doris's former job
2. Kendry told Dr. Higgman which of the following things:
 - a. That her mother was addicted to drugs
 - b. That she loved all of her friends at Crestman
 - c. That she planned to run away from home
 - d. None of this above
3. Which of the following people were not on the train:
 - a. The black girls
 - b. A woman with a flaring hat
 - c. A teacher from Kendry's former school
 - d. A group of business people
4. Doris told Kendry the following news:
 - a. That she's has managed to sell five houses
 - b. That Kendry's father will be returning
 - c. That there is no Santa Clause
 - d. None of the above
5. True or False: The house into which Kendry and Doris moves is a 2-bedroom flat.
6. True or False: Kendry was least nervous about what she would wear to school.
7. What did Kendry notice about PLD?
 - a. That the school was larger and had more resources than Crestman
 - b. That the school was older and had less resources than Crestman
 - c. That the cars in the parking lot were covered with pollen
 - d. That the teachers never spoke above a whisper
8. What happened after Tandy told Kendry that Kendry was in her seat?
 - a. Kendry said, "Too bad," and rolled her eyes
 - b. Kendry got up and toppled her pencil case in the process
 - c. Tandy forcibly removed Kendry from the seat
 - d. Tandy called Principal Bellews to settle the dispute
9. Tandy thought that Kendry's father was which of the following:
 - a. A lawyer
 - b. A black man
 - c. A teacher at PLD
 - d. Insensitive to poor people
10. What lie does Kendry tell Tandy?
 - a. That she never attended Crestman Prep
 - b. That her father is black
 - c. That her mother is black
 - d. That she has lived in East Atlanta for her entire life

↗ HANDBOUT 2-A ↗

That's Debatable

Was Kendry justified in lying about her race?

As **Group A**, you will take the pro side of this argument. This means you are to defend the following statement: Kendry Clare **was justified** in lying about her race. To mount a persuasive case, you should do the following:

1. Elect a speaker for your group. This person will present a 2-3 minute opening statement outlining the group's main points.
2. Make a list of points that support your argument. Draw on text-based evidence from Chapters 1-5 (or the 12-page excerpt) of *The Pencil Test*, as well as examples for history and current events.
3. Make a list of arguments that the opposing group may present; next, develop counterpoints to these arguments.
4. During the debate, note points made by the opposing group. These will help you to develop impromptu counter argument.

↗ HANDBOUT 2-B ↗

That's Debatable

Was Kendry justified in lying about her race?

As **Group B**, you will take the con side of this argument. This means you are to defend the following statement: Kendry Clare **was not justified** in lying about her race. To mount a persuasive case, you should do the following:

1. Elect a speaker for your group. This person will present a 2-3 minute opening statement outlining the group's main points.
2. Make a list of points that support your argument. Draw on text-based evidence from Chapters 1-5 (or the 12-page excerpt) of *The Pencil Test*, as well as examples for history and current events.
3. Make a list of arguments that the opposing group may present; next, develop counterpoints to these arguments.
4. During the debate, note points made by the opposing group. These will help you to develop your impromptu counter argument.

✓ CHAPTER 1-5 QUIZ ✓

Answer Key

1. A

2. D

3. C

4. D

5. FALSE

6. FALSE

7. B

8. B

9. B

10. C