

Introduction

Our Mutual Friend, written by Charles Dickens, is a rich and engaging topic for an ESL lesson plan. This classic novel provides students with the opportunity to explore important themes such as social class, wealth, and morality through immersive language activities. By delving into the storyline and characters of Our Mutual Friend, students can improve their reading comprehension skills while expanding their vocabulary and language proficiency. The captivating plot and diverse range of characters offer an excellent platform for ESL learners to enhance their English language capabilities in a compelling and thought-provoking manner.

Vocabulary Building

Vocab

Vocab	Definition
Inheritance	property or money passed down from one generation to another
Societal Class	a division of a society based on social and economic status
Morality	principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong behavior
Wealth	an abundance of valuable possessions or money.
Complications	a difficulty or problem that complicates a situation.

Contextual Usage

1. The **inheritance** dispute created significant tension within the family, leading to

heated discussions about property rights.

2. Dickens' portrayal of **societal class** dynamics in the novel provides valuable insights into the struggles faced by different social groups during that era.
3. The characters' decisions often prompt thought-provoking discussions about **morality** and ethical dilemmas.
4. The stark contrast between **wealth** and poverty is a recurring theme in *Our Mutual Friend*, highlighting socio-economic disparities in Victorian England.
5. The **complications** arising from mistaken identities add depth to the storyline, creating an atmosphere of intrigue and suspense for readers.

ESL Warm-up Activity

To kick off the lesson on *Our Mutual Friend*, start with a fun activity called "Character Charades." Write the names of key characters from the novel on separate pieces of paper and place them in a hat or container. Ask students to take turns picking a character and silently acting out traits or actions associated with that character while others guess who it is. This not only familiarizes students with the characters but also encourages them to use descriptive language and non-verbal communication to express their understanding of the story. This engaging warm-up sets the stage for an interactive and immersive learning experience centered around *Our Mutual Friend*.

Main ESL Lesson Activities

Vocabulary Activity: Word Webs

Guide students to create word webs for key terms from the novel. In pairs or small groups, students choose a significant term (e.g., "societal class") and write it in the center of a piece of paper. Then, they brainstorm related words and phrases around it, considering synonyms, antonyms, and associated adjectives. Encourage them to present their word webs to the class for discussion, promoting a deeper understanding of the vocabulary used in *Our Mutual Friend*.

Listening Activity: Character Dialogues

Assign each student a character from the novel and provide them with specific situations or topics related to the storyline. In pairs, students prepare short dialogues between their assigned characters based on these scenarios. This activity not only enhances listening skills but also encourages creativity as students embody their characters' personalities while engaging in meaningful conversations.

Roleplay: Social Class Skits

Divide the class into groups and assign each group a social class depicted in *Our Mutual Friend* (e.g., wealthy merchants, impoverished laborers). Instruct them to create short skits portraying typical interactions within their respective social classes. This hands-on exercise allows students to immerse themselves in the societal dynamics presented in the novel while encouraging collaboration and critical thinking.

Reading and Writing: Reflective Journaling

After reading specific chapters or passages from *Our Mutual Friend*, have students maintain reflective journals where they respond to thought-provoking prompts related to character motivations, plot developments, or moral dilemmas depicted in the text. Encourage them to share their journal entries with peers for insightful group discussions that deepen their comprehension of literary elements while honing their writing skills.

ESL Homework Assignment

Homework Assignment: Literary Analysis

For homework, task students with analyzing a specific character or theme from *Our Mutual Friend*. They can write a short essay discussing their chosen element and its significance in the novel. Encourage them to provide textual evidence to support their analysis, fostering critical thinking and strengthening their comprehension of literary concepts.

Homework Assignment: Vocabulary Expansion

Assign students the task of creating flashcards for 10 new vocabulary words encountered in the novel. In addition to writing the definitions, instruct them to use each word in a sentence that reflects its context in *Our Mutual Friend*. This assignment reinforces vocabulary retention and encourages students to engage actively with language elements from the lesson.

Homework Assignment: Character Reflections

Request students to choose a character from the novel and write a reflective journal entry from that character's perspective regarding a pivotal event or decision within the storyline. This exercise promotes empathy, fosters creativity, and strengthens students' understanding of character development within literature.

Conclusion

Lesson Summary

Throughout this *Our Mutual Friend* ESL lesson, students delved into the captivating world of Charles Dickens' classic novel. They explored themes such as societal class, morality, and inheritance, while expanding their vocabulary and honing language skills through immersive activities.

Reflection and Application

As students reflect on this lesson, they can apply the language elements and literary concepts they've encountered to their overall language development. By engaging with complex vocabulary, analyzing character perspectives, and participating in interactive tasks related to *Our Mutual Friend*, students have not only improved their English proficiency but also gained valuable insights into the nuances of storytelling and societal dynamics. This experience serves as a foundation for further exploration of literature and language in their ESL journey.

Why this topic is great for ESL learning

Engaging and Multifaceted Learning

Our Mutual Friend provides a rich and multifaceted learning experience for ESL students. The themes, characters, and language in the novel offer ample opportunities for vocabulary expansion, language analysis, and critical thinking.

Cultural and Historical Insights

Exploring *Our Mutual Friend* allows ESL learners to delve into the cultural and historical context of Victorian England. This enables them to build a deeper understanding of societal dynamics while broadening their cultural knowledge.

Literary Exploration

Studying *Our Mutual Friend* introduces students to literary elements such as

character development, plot intricacies, and moral dilemmas, nurturing their ability to comprehend complex narratives while refining their language skills.