

The Eudora Welty Ephemera Prize

High School Lesson Plan

Preparation:

Have students read Welty's story "The Hitch-Hikers."

Have students write a one-paragraph response to the story.

Some Questions for Discussion:

What kind of men do you think are "The Hitch-Hikers" in this story?

What kind of man is the man who picks them up? Why does he stop for them?

What does it mean when "The incident became a story"?

Why doesn't the main character like it to become a story?

What do you think Welty means by raising this issue in her own story of the incident?

Assignment:

Write a 1-3 page personal essay, poem, or story about an incident or about traveling. You may write about an actual incident you know or have read about, or you may write about a fictional one. You may tell the true story or you may change the names and some of the details and make it fiction (or poetry). You may also write it as a personal essay about the experience.

Alternative assignment:

Write a response to "The Hitch-Hikers." You might start from the perspective of one of the characters: consider why they act the way they do in the story, and then write about a character who faces a similar choice.

Optional activities:

Hold a class contest: Let all the students read each other's work and decide together which pieces are the most well-written. Encourage the top students to revise their work based on class discussion and submit it to the contest. (All students are welcome to submit, even if the class didn't pick their work. Our judges might find value that your class overlooked, so encourage everyone to revise and submit!) Holding a class contest might help some students get past the hurdle of submitting to the main contest.

Hold a class debate: do you think that Tom Harris should have picked up these hitchhikers? Would you be willing to do the same thing today? Do you think Sobby should be punished for what he did to the other one? Choose sides and debate both sides to one of these issues.

Talk to your students about writing contests. Many are legitimate, but some are only out to get your money. How can you tell which are legitimate and which are not? See:

<http://contests.about.com/od/conttestscams/qt/poetryscams.htm> or <http://writing-world.com/contests/scams.shtml> Have students find and evaluate some writing contests, including ours. What could we do better? Send feedback to kadunkelberg@muw.edu