



Muse Machine 2019 Advanced Teacher Training Seminar-Inspired Lesson Plan

“To Kill a Mockingbird” Rant

Developed by Jamie Lansdale

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New Lebanon, OH

Lesson Plan Summary:

It is sometimes difficult to prompt students to participate in their own learning. By junior/senior year in high school, young people often feel sophisticated enough to take a blasé attitude about assignments. Jamie Lansdale, English teacher at Dixie High School, found a way to inspire her classes to become invested in the characters they read about in her classes. Inspired by her experiences during Muse Machine’s 2019 Advanced Teacher Training Seminar (ATTS), Jamie designed a lesson for her junior level classes that is centered around the characters of a familiar piece of American literature. Having seen the play during ATTS, Jamie was moved to re-examine the ways that her instructional process could be enhanced using the instructional device called the “rant.” Also, during ATTS teachers heard from two very enthused cabaret actors who helped them understand how to get audiences more invested in the performance. All these factors come together in Jamie’s lesson.



Title: “To Kill a Mockingbird” Character Rant

Inspiration: “Cabaret is Me” and “To Kill a Mockingbird” were performances presented for the participants during the Muse Machine’s Advanced Teacher Training Seminar in 2019 in New York City. “Cabaret is Me” introduced the idea of rants – written arguments that use evidence, sarcasm and semantics to make “a mountain out of a molehill” as a way to point out a bigger issue.

OVERVIEW

Summary: After reading the novel “To Kill a Mockingbird,” students will choose a character from the novel and present a rant to the class. This rant will focus on any part of the plot throughout the novel. For example, one student might choose to present Scout ranting about Walter Cunningham and his overindulgence of the syrup at dinner to point out the importance of being a polite host.

Standards:

RL.11-12.2 Analyze literary text development.

RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

RL.11-12.6 Analyze a case in which grasping point of view or perspective requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement) and evaluate the impact of these literary devices on the content and style of the text.

W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.11-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

SL.11-12.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Objectives/Outcomes: After students create their character rant, they will present them to the class. There will be grading rubrics for the creation process, as well as the presentation itself.

Teaching Approach: Lecture, small groups, whole group presentation

Assessment: There will be grading rubrics for the character rant and presentation for each student.



LESSON PREPARATION

Teacher Needs:

- [Character Description Chart](#)
- [Character Rant Key Terms presentation](#)
- [Grading rubric](#)
- Example rant videos (*linked within the Character Rant Key Terms slideshow*)

Helpful Hints: If students have the character description chart completed ahead of time, it will help in the brainstorming process of the character rant. A good overview of how to write a rant can be found at: <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Rant>

Student Needs:

- [Pet Peeves Brainstorm Worksheet](#)
- [Character Description Chart](#)
- [Character Rant fill-in the blank guided notes](#)
- [Character Rant outline](#)
- [Character Rant template \(fillable Google Slides\)](#)
- “To Kill a Mockingbird” novel
- “To Kill a Mockingbird” guided questions answered in previous sessions

Prior Knowledge: Students will have already read the novel “To Kill a Mockingbird,” answered the study guides and completed the Character Description Chart prior to starting the character rant. (If students have completed the character descriptions ahead of time, they can then use that chart to help them choose a character and a particular scene from the novel to create their rant.)

Student Voice: Students will be able to choose their partner for the brainstorming activity/practice prior to the actual presentation. Students will also be able to choose which character he/she will portray for the presentation.

Vocabulary: cabaret, rant, monologue, satire, point of view and verbal irony

EVIDENCE/ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES

Students will produce written outlines and present their character rants in front of the entire class.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will understand that personal expression, storytelling, and emotion, as well as interpretation of one’s tone and point of view, can influence people’s opinions about a given topic. These ideas stem from some of the main themes of the novel: prejudice and racism, appearances vs. reality and courage/bravery.



LEARNING PLAN

Prompt: Referring to the Key Terms slideshow, students will take notes over a brief introduction and review of the definitions of key vocabulary: cabaret, rant, monologue, satire, point of view and verbal irony. Students will watch videos with examples of rants.

Hook: After students watch the example videos and take notes, they will brainstorm pet peeves (*see Pet Peeves Brainstorm worksheet*) and take turns sharing this initial rant with a partner.

Essential Question(s): Why is *how* we say something as important as *what* we say? How does the use of irony or satire impact the persuasiveness of an argument? Why might you choose to use figurative language to express a point of view?

Teacher and Student Performance Tasks:

- Introduce the Character Rant Outline handout.
- Independently, students will outline and write a new rant from the point of view of a character in "To Kill a Mockingbird."
- Students will develop a presentation in Google Slides and deliver a compelling performance of their character's rant in front of the class.

This entire lesson delivery and presentation should take an estimated time of 1-4 days, depending on class size and time given to students to work on the assignment in class.

Final Review: After the lesson is completed, students will be able to explain and give examples of the following terms: cabaret, rant, monologues, satire, point of view, and verbal irony. Students will have to present evidence of knowledge of these terms in their presentation/slide show.

LESSON REFLECTION

After teaching this lesson, I thought it went better than expected. I tried this lesson with my co-taught English 11 class. I incorporated our department writing curriculum for this lesson, so it seemed to be familiar to the students when they were creating their character rants.

Overall, I was happy with the outcome and process of the character rants. Most of the class was quite creative with their topics and ideas. The only part I would consider changing or trying differently is the presentation aspect. I would try this same lesson with a higher-level class of students to see if I could get longer and more analytical character rants. I think that relatively weaker writing abilities may have contributed to why this class's rants were short.

Co-English 11 *TKM* Character Chart

Name _____

Character	Description (STEAL)	Notable Quotes	Chapter, Page #, and Explanation/Significance of Quote	Potential Conflicts or Issues
Scout (Jean Louise) Finch	-Narrator (child) of the story -Represents "Childhood Innocence" -Tomboy -6 years old at the beginning of the novel and ends the novel as 9 year old -Learning to "filter" how she talks to others	"Teach me?" I said in surprise. "He hasn't taught me anything, Miss Caroline. Atticus ain't got time to teach me anything."	Ch. 2; p. 19; Scout is trying to explain to Miss Caroline Fisher (her teacher) that Atticus hasn't taught her how to read because he doesn't have time!	-Scout vs. Boo Radley -Scout vs Maycomb -Scout vs. Aunt Alexandra
Jem (Jeremy) Finch				
Atticus Finch				
Dill (Charles Baker Harris)				
Calpurnia				
Miss Maudie Atkinson				
Boo (Arthur Radley, Jr.)				
Miss Stephanie Crawford				
Aunt Alexandra				
Uncle Jack Finch				
Francis Hancock				
Walter Cunningham				

Co-English 11 TKM Character Chart

Name _____

Mr. Cunningham				
Tom Robinson				
Mrs. Dubose				
Heck Tate				
Mayella Ewell				
Bob Ewell				
Judge Taylor				
Dolphus Raymond				

S peech	What does the character say? How does the character speak?
T houghts	What is revealed through the character's private thoughts and feelings?
E ffect on others toward the character	What is revealed through the character's effect on other people? How do other characters feel or behave in reaction to the character?
A ctions	What does the character do? How does the character behave?
L ooks	What does the character look like and dress? What does this tell us about his/her personality?

To Kill a Mockingbird Fill-in-the-Blank Notes (Character Rant)***Objectives for Character Rant:**

- RL.11-12.2 Analyze literary text development.
- RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama
- RL.11-12.6 Analyze a case in which grasping point of view or perspective requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement) and evaluate the impact of these literary devices on the content and style of the text.
- W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W.11-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- SL.11-12.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

***Key Terms:**

1. rant-an out of control, aggressive ramble from someone who is upset about something; a _____ that is used to satirize some aspect of human nature that the speaker wants to criticize.
2. cabaret-_____
 - a. Cabaret is about the _____ performing and the _____ they are portraying.
 - b. Cabaret is a teaching tool used for self-expression.
 - c. Often times, this artform is entertainment thorough _____.
 - d. The main goal of a cabaret performance is to catch the _____ attention. Make sure your character tells a good story. *Relatable/Emotions

To Kill a Mockingbird Fill-in-the-Blank Notes (Character Rant)

3. satire-the use of humor, _____, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize other people (usually on topical issues like politics)

4. monologue-a long _____ an actor or character gives in a play

5. point of view-a character's _____ in relation to the story being told (first, second and third person) *TKM is told from Scout's POV (first person).

6. verbal irony-when a character _____ one thing, but _____ the opposite.

7. tone-the _____ from the writers toward a particular subject or audience

To Kill a Mockingbird Character Rant Brainstorm

***Directions: Complete the following brainstorm activity to help decide an issue or topic for your rant.**

1. **WHAT** issues or topics really bother you? ***Please choose at least FIVE issues/topics and give examples of each of the FIVE issues/topics.** What would you consider a “pet peeve”? (For example: Mrs. Lansdale’s pet peeve is when other people leave trash in my car! Ms. Kromalic’s pet peeve is when other people talk about themselves in a conversation instead of asking about you!) ***Other issues or subjects could be people who chew with their mouth open, people who are always late, nail biters, line jumping (like at Kings Island), or people who interrupt you while you are talking.**

2. **WHY** does this issue or topic bother you?

3. **WHY** does this issue or topic need to change? How does it impact society, others, the Big Picture?

***To Kill a Mockingbird* Character Rant Brainstorm**

4. Think of someone who might hold the OPPOSITE view on this issue or topic. How might they defend their viewpoint? (For example, Perhaps other people might suggest that I put a trash can or keep a trash bag in my car so they have somewhere to throw their trash away.

5. **HOW** would you argue these points?

To Kill a Mockingbird Character Rant Brainstorm

6. Choose ONE of your own pet peeves and explain it to your partner. Complete the grading rubric for your partner.

***Pet Peeve Grading Rubric:**

3-Consistently-it was perfect all the way through

2-Sometimes-the effort was evident but some parts were unclear.

1-Never/Almost Never-keep working on it.

Criteria	3	2	1
Did your partner explain the pet peeve with at least ONE example?			
Was the explanation and example clear?			
Did the person speak clearly and slow enough to understand?			
Did your partner maintain eye contact when speaking?			

***TOTAL: _____ / 12**

***Who listened to your rant? _____**

To Kill a Mockingbird Character Rant Outline***Character Rant Requirements:**

- List any issues/topics from the novel.
- List which characters are involved in these issues/topics. *Hint: Use your CHARACTER DESCRIPTION CHART.
- Choose a character from the novel.
- Choose a scene from the novel as an issue/topic for your rant. *For example, Scout and people who waste food (Walter Cunningham for instance when he drowns his food in syrup.)
- After you choose a character and an issue/topic from the novel, you must create your rant with the characteristics listed below (complete the outline).
 - Remember, a **rant** is an out of control, aggressive ramble from someone who is upset about something; a monologue that is used to satirize some small aspect of human nature that the speaker criticizes to show its impact on a larger issue/problem in society
 - Rant Characteristics:
 - An issue/topic in which you are passionate.
 - Includes at least **ONE** example with **ONE** explanation.
 - Includes a strong opening that focuses on the rant.
 - Uses verbal irony.
 - Has an effective closing that leaves the listener with something to think about.
- Once your outline is completed, you need to create a slide with your rant so you can present it to the class.

***OUTLINE EXAMPLE 1:**

1. Issue/Topic: How racism affects justice
2. *TKM* Character: Tom Robinson
3. Introduction:
 - a. How will you grab the audience's attention? (What is your main claim?)
Racism is a problem in our courts BECAUSE...
 - b. How will you focus your rant? (Transitions)
4. Body:
 - a. In what order will you present your ideas/examples? (Evidence/Examples)
I was accused of beating and raping Mayella Ewell even though there was no physical evidence.

To Kill a Mockingbird Character Rant Outline

- b. What supporting evidence/details will you use to back them up? (Explanations)

Mayella had asked me to do work for her in the past, and then one day she tried to kiss me and her dad saw it. Now I am in court accused of rape, even though I only have the use of one hand.

- c. How will you include verbal irony into your rant? (Context)

For almost a year, I did odd jobs for her, like cutting wood and carrying it into the house because I felt sorry for her. None of her brothers or sisters seemed to help her, so I thought I would. Then after her father sees her breaking the rules and coming on to me, she accuse me of rape –something I couldn't and didn't do. She's the guilty one, but look who is on trial.

5. Conclusion:

- a. How will you close your rant? (Conclusion/Wrap-up)

I know most of you look at me and think that because I am a colored man, I appear guilty, but remember, we are dealing with the Ewell family in Maycomb county. Compare my character to theirs, not my skin color.

- b. What questions or ideas will you leave your audience with? (Conclusion/Wrap-up)

Look at the evidence. We don't even know Mayella was raped, but we do know she was struck by someone left handed, and I have no use of my left arm. You know who is guilty, so don't convict me.

***OUTLINE EXAMPLE 2:**

1. Issue/Topic: Being a good host

2. TKM Character: Scout

3. Introduction:

- a. How will you grab the audience's attention? (What is your main claim?)

Ever wonder why there are so many judgmental people in the world? Just because other people don't behave how we do does not mean they are wrong or rude or stupid.

- b. How will you focus your rant? (Transitions)

For example

4. Body:

- a. In what order will you present your ideas/examples? (Evidence/Examples)

Walter Cunningham was invited over to dinner at my house one evening and poured syrup all over his dinner.

- b. What supporting evidence/details will you use to back them up? (Explanations)

To Kill a Mockingbird Character Rant Outline

Scout criticized Walter for putting syrup all over his dinner, even though he is a guest in her house.

- c. How will you include verbal irony into your rant? (Context)

I was just trying to show Walter the correct way to eat food – without syrup! He’s just a Cunningham who doesn’t know any better, so I thought it was my job to enlighten him. But then Cal lectured me privately in the kitchen about my manners toward guests – that because he was a guest in my house, I had to let him be himself and do what he does without making fun of him. I was so mad because even though I knew better, Cal said manners don’t let you judge others – no matter how stupid they are!

5. Conclusion:

- a. How will you close your rant? (Conclusion/Wrap-up)

I guess I have silly ways, too, like eating gum I found in a tree, so I guess I have to respect Walter’s ways as well – even if he does spoil a good meal by putting syrup on the whole thing.

- b. What questions or ideas will you leave your audience with? (Conclusion/Wrap-up)

Maybe Walter likes syrup so much or has so little of it at home that maybe he wanted as much as possible, or maybe the food he eats doesn’t taste as good as Cal’s, so he puts syrup on everything. Since he was our guest, I guess I should have accepted his ways instead of fussing at him.

TKM Character Rant

Name



Issue/Topic:

TKM Character:

Rant:

To Kill a Mockingbird

Character Rant Key Terms



TKM Character Rant Objectives:

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Key Terms:

1. rant-an out of control, aggressive ramble from someone who is upset about something; a monologue that is used to satirize some aspect of human nature that the speaker wants to criticize

*Examples of Rick Mercer (a Canadian comedian and political satirist best known for his rants on various topics) Rants:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZsXBo1L9Bk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgUosngyAu0>

Key Terms:

2. cabaret-an artform of storytelling

- a. Cabaret is about the PERSON performing and the CHARACTER they are portraying.
- b. Cabaret is a teaching tool used for self-expression.
- c. Often times, this artform is entertainment thorough song and dance.
- d. The main goal of a cabaret performance is to catch the audience's' attention. Make sure your character tells a good story. *Relatable/Emotions

*Examples of cabaret performances: Mark Nadler

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1TBL0KM7EA>

Key Terms:

3. satire-the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize other people (usually on topical issues like politics)

*Examples of Satire: *The Simpsons*, *South Park*, or *Saturday Night Live*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDxN4c_CmpI

Key Terms:

4. monologue-a long speech an actor or character gives in a play

*Example of a monologue: *The Incredibles*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRlh_w6uRds

Key Terms:

5. point of view-a character's perspective in relation to the story being told (first, second and third person) **TKM* is told from Scout's POV (first person).

*Example of point of view: **Scout**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWwuXEf1q8I>

Key Terms:

6. verbal irony-when a character SAYS one thing, but MEANS the opposite

*Example of verbal irony: “I’m so excited to have three tests to study for tonight! There wasn’t anything else I could be doing this evening!”

Big Bang Theory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MvZLKrNKs8>

Key Terms:

7. tone-the attitude from the writers toward a particular subject or audience

*Example of verbal irony: **Scout meeting Boo Radley for the first time. What tone is created in this scene?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRmIef02Ajk>

To Kill a Mockingbird Rant Presentation

***Presentation:**

	10-8	7-5	4-2	1-0
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.	Student does not seem at all prepared to present.
Content and Comprehension	Shows a full understanding of a worthwhile topic and can accurately answer posed questions by classmates.	Shows a good understanding of a worthwhile topic and can accurately answer most questions posed by classmates.	Shows a good understanding of parts of a mostly worthwhile topic and can accurately answer a few questions posed by classmates.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well and is unable to answer posed questions by classmates. Topic is not worthwhile.
Speaks Clearly	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, and mispronounces no words.	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, but mispronounces one word.	Speaks clearly and distinctly most (94-85%) of the time. Mispronounces no more than one word.	Often mumbles or cannot be understood OR mispronounces more than one word.
Listens to Other Presentations	Listens intently. Does not make distracting noises or movements.	Listens intently but has one distracting noise or movement.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening but is not distracting.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening and has distracting noises or movements.

***Character Rant:**

	10-8	7-5	4-2	1-0
Introduction: 1. Issue/Topic/Subject mentioned. 2. Was your opening engaging and issue/topic/subject engaging? 3. Did you state a MAIN CLAIM and use TRANSITIONS?				
Body: 1. Did you mention at least ONE EXAMPLE/EVIDENCE and ONE EXPLANATION? 2. Are your ideas fully developed? 3. Are your ideas focused/organized? 4. Did you include verbal irony (CONTEXT)				
Conclusion: 1. Did you include a CONCLUSION/WRAP-UP? 2. Did you leave your audience with questions or ideas to think about?				

***Total: _____/70**

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- After you choose a character and an issue/topic from the novel, you must create your rant with the characteristics listed below (complete the outline).
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 - Rant Characteristics:
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- Once your outline is completed, you need to create a slide with your rant so you can present it to the class.

***OUTLINE:**

1. Issue/Topic: people who snitch

2. TKM Character: Dill

3. Introduction:

a. How will you grab the audience's attention? (What is your main claim?)

Do you ever wonder how different your life would be if your best friend didn't snitch on you? it would be totally different because you wouldn't have to question your friendships.

b. How will you focus your rant? (Transitions)

For example

To Kill a Mockingbird Character Rant Outline

4. Body:

- a. In what order will you present your ideas/examples? (Evidence/Examples)

I ran away from home and took a bus to Maycomb. When Jem and Scout found out that I ran away Jem decided to tell Atticus.

- b. What supporting evidence/details will you use to back them up? (Explanations)

Jem told on me because he didn't believe that I could hide in the house without Atticus finding out.

- c. How will you include verbal irony into your rant? (Context)

I told Jem that he was wrong for telling Atticus. I was very upset with him because as a friend, I didn't think he would snitch. I told him about why I ran away from home but he still decided to tell Atticus.

5. Conclusion:

- a. How will you close your rant? (Conclusion/Wrap-up)

After talking to Atticus he made me realize that running away from home wasn't a good idea. But I still think Jem was acting like a little girl for telling on me.

- b. What questions or ideas will you leave your audience with? (Conclusion/Wrap-up)

I ran away from home because I felt like a burden to my parents especially since they never spent time with me.

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- Once your outline is completed, you need to create a slide with your rant so you can present it to the class.

***OUTLINE:**

1. Issue/Topic: Homework
2. TKM Character: Scout
3. Introduction:
 - a. How will you grab the audience's attention? (What is your main claim?)
Do you know why so many kids are tired? Because we get so much homework and stay up all night.
 - b. How will you focus your rant? (Transitions)

For example

To Kill a Mockingbird Character Rant Outline

4. Body:

- a. In what order will you present your ideas/examples? (Evidence/Examples)

Last night Miss Caroline Fisher gave us 3 pages of homework and I was up all night trying to get it done...

- b. What supporting evidence/details will you use to back them up? (Explanations)

When Miss Fisher doesn't give us homework I get sleep and am not tired the next day.

- c. How will you include verbal irony into your rant? (Context)

The homework she gave me was 3 pages long and took me an hour past my bed time.

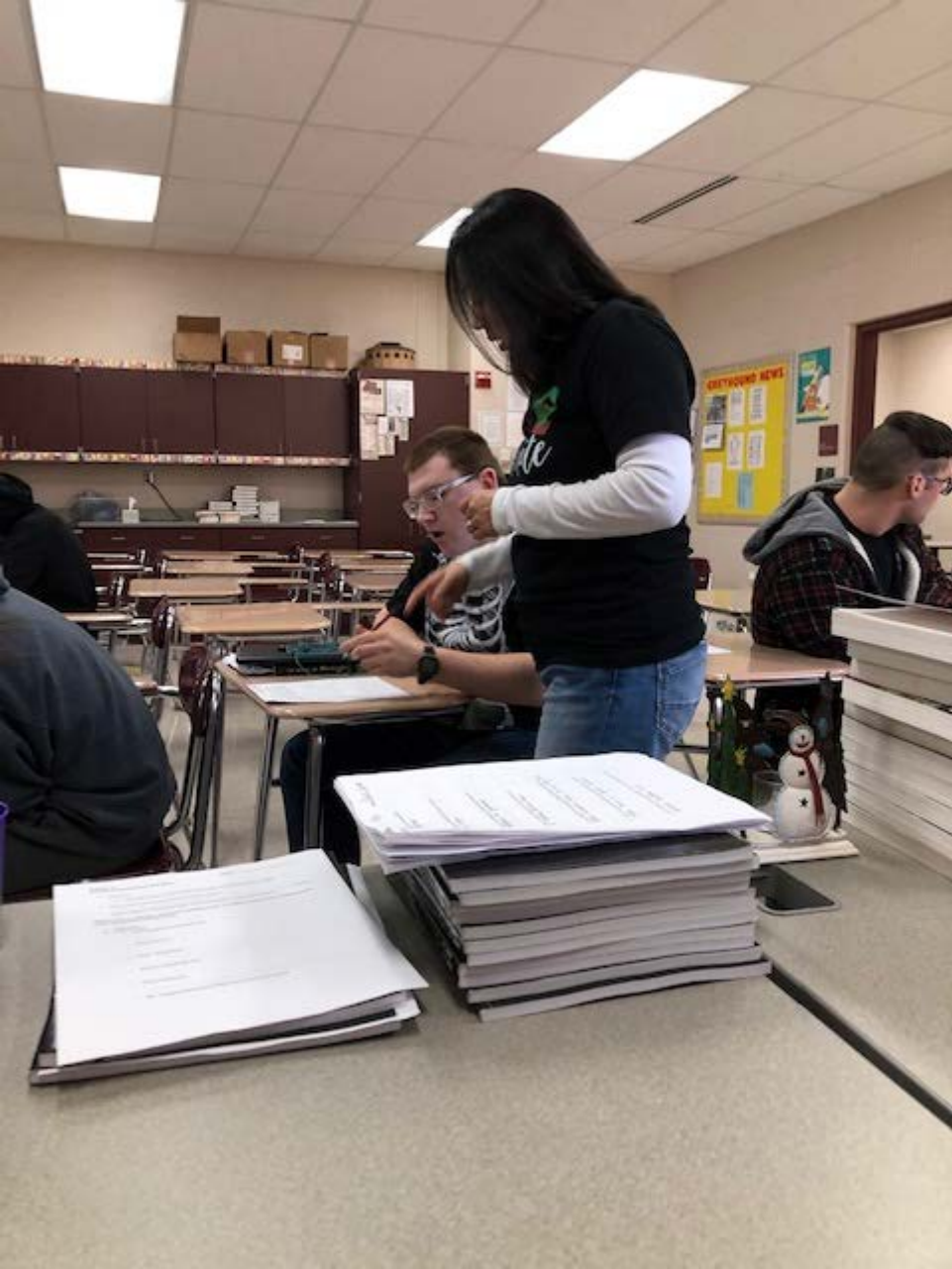
5. Conclusion:

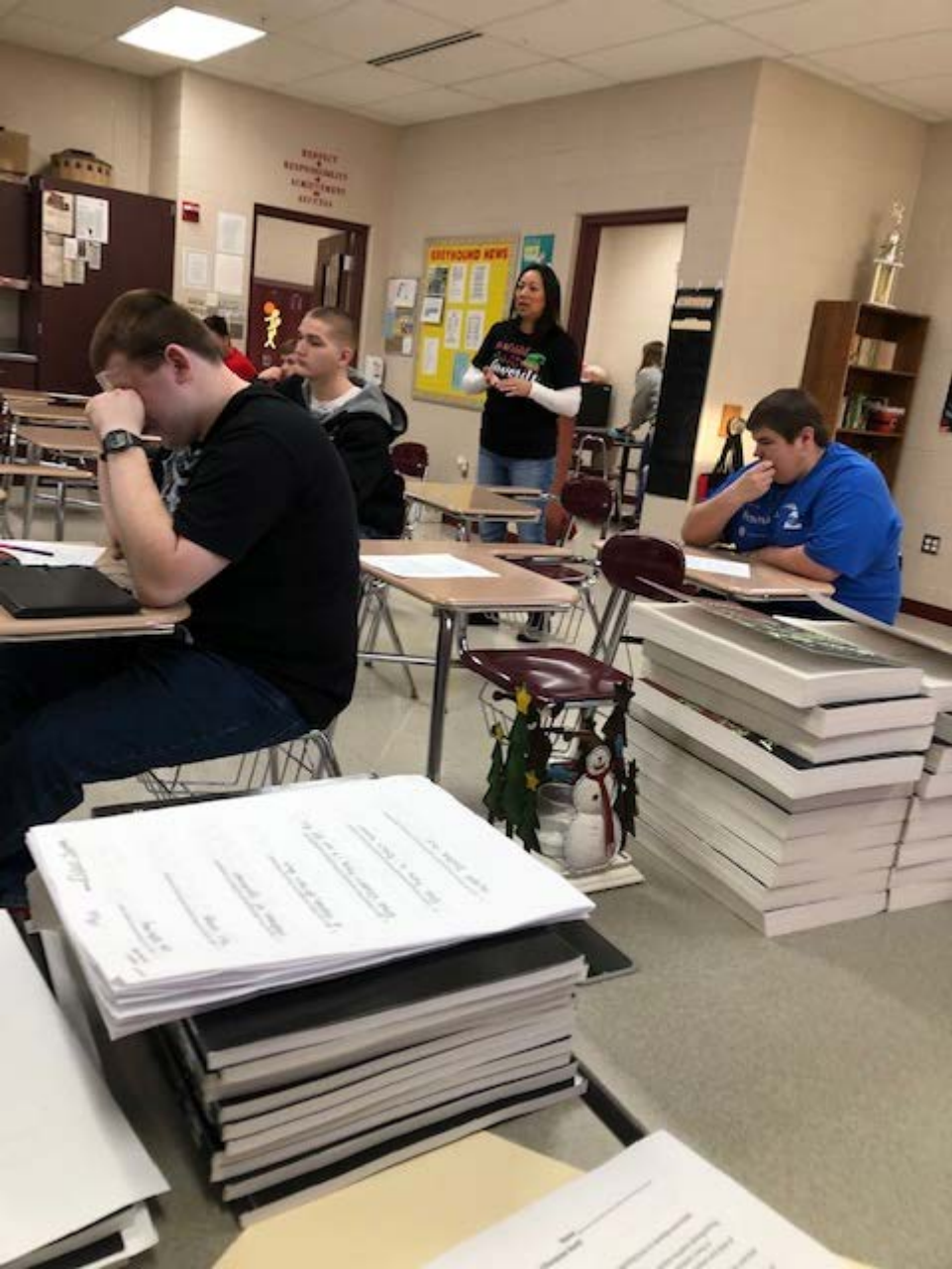
- a. How will you close your rant? (Conclusion/Wrap-up)

Teachers shouldn't have homework for kids and we should just do it in class.

- b. What questions or ideas will you leave your audience with? (Conclusion/Wrap-up)

So if we get the work done in class we will have less tired kids and I won't be up as late.





RESPECT & RESPONSIBILITY
ACROSS THE WORLD
OF STUDENTS

BACKGROUND NEWS