

Ghost Stories (Halloween)

Grade Level: 9-12 grades

Subject/Content: English/Short Story Writing

Summary of Lesson: Students read examples of scary short stories, write their own, and share them

Focus Questions: What place do short stories about the supernatural and ghosts have in the cannon of literature?

Resource(s): *LitFinder*

Procedures:

1. Have students use the school library to research Ambrose Bierce.
2. Share highlights of Bierce's life and career, focusing on his supernatural writings, with students.
3. Instruct students to search for "Ambrose Bierce" using *LitFinder*.
4. Have the students choose three of Bierce's supernatural/ghost stories to read and study.
5. Focus the students' study of the short story on what classifies it as "supernatural" or "ghost" story.
6. Discuss with students the merits of this genre. Specifically, why humans are fascinated with such tales?
7. Instruct students to write their own supernatural/ghost story. If needed, review the elements of a story: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
8. Once students have finished taking their pieces through the writing process have them publish to each other. This can be done on Halloween, sitting in a circle, with all of the lights off, except for the eerie glow of a flashlight illuminating their faces as they read.

Steps/Activities by Student(s):

1. Use the school library to research Ambrose Bierce.
2. Search for "Ambrose Bierce" using *LitFinder*.

3. Choose three of Bierce's supernatural/ghost stories to read and study.
4. For each story read answer the question, "What classifies this as a "supernatural" or "ghost" story?"
5. Discuss the merits of this genre. Specifically, why humans are fascinated with such tales?
6. Write your own supernatural/ghost story. Include the elements of a story: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution
7. Share your story with your peers.

Outcome: Students will study the supernatural writing genre and discuss its relevance. They will also write and publish their own supernatural/ghost story.

Related Activities: Students and teacher compile all student-authored stories, bind them, and share them with the middle school(s) in their district.