Supplement your Novel Study with Minecraft: Education Edition

About the Crate

This Cobblestone Crate, designed for Grade 4-6 teachers, will help you integrate Minecraft: Education Edition (M:EE) activities to supplement your current novel study unit. The activities are general enough that they will apply to any novel you are reading, yet specific enough to meet a variety of curricular expectations. Our team of Cobblestone educators will help guide you and your students through each of the activities, providing options for student reflection and sharing, leaving room for you to determine your own assessment techniques. Although this set of activities is designed for Grade 4 to 6 classes, it can be adapted for other grade levels by modifying the level of difficulty of the tasks.

The 5 Activities included are:

➔ Create your Characters
➔ Creating a Foil with Pixel Art
➔ Assemble a Descriptive Setting
➔ Reflecting with a Book and Quill
➔ Build Battle: Re-create Your Favourite Scene

Guide for Implementation

Plan to begin your novel study the way you always have and then when the timing is right for you, add a dash of Cobblestone Crate to your lesson plan. You may choose to sprinkle the activities throughout the unit or save them all until the end. That's totally up to you.

It is recommended, however, that the activities are completed in order as they build upon each other, but if you don't have time for all 5, no problem! Perhaps consider using the later activities as Extensions, even after the formal novel study unit has been completed.

Refer to the following pages for a detailed description of each activity.

Introduction

Video Length: 8m47s | Suggested Additional Class Time required: none
Suggested Materials (in addition to M:EE): none

In this video, students will meet the team of co-teachers that will be working with them throughout the novel study project and be introduced to the submission form that will allow them to share their thinking. Students will also learn more about each of the 5 activities that will be covered.

Activity 1

Video Length: 24m12s | Suggested Additional Class Time required: 40 minutes
Suggested Materials (in addition to M:EE): Microsoft Word or pen and paper for brainstorming (Word is preferred as it would allow students to copy & paste)

In this video, students will explore the concept of Character and learn more about what a protagonist and antagonist are. After brainstorming some quotes from the protagonist and antagonist in your novel, students will dive into M:EE to learn more about slash commands and how to create NPCs (Non-Playing Characters). Students will then create their NPCs to 'speak' the quotes from the novel through speech bubbles. Students will also learn how to use Boards within M:EE to further explain their thinking.

Activity 2

Video Length: 32:m34s | Suggested Additional Class Time required: 60 minutes
Suggested Materials (in addition to M:EE): Microsoft Word or 20x20 grid paper and coloured pencils for experimenting how their character can look in M:EE (A 20x20 table in Microsoft Word could allow students to change fill colours in the grid)

In this video, students will dive deeper into character development and discover what a foil is and how a foil interacts with its protagonist. Once students have had a chance to discuss who the foil is in their novel or even invent their own character that could be a foil, they will create that character in PixelArt in M:EE. Students will learn how to use the fill command in M:EE and the camera and portfolio features to further show their learning.

Activity 3

Video Length: 16:m14s | Suggested Additional Class Time required: 30-45 minutes
Suggested Materials (in addition to M:EE): Paper or digital thesaurus to search for synonyms, Microsoft Word or pen and paper for brainstorming (Word is preferred as it would allow students to copy & paste)

In this video, students will learn about the traditional five senses and the way a character may experience some of them in addition to the setting of a novel and how it can create and drive the narrative. Students will choose a setting, brainstorm descriptive adjectives as they relate to the character's senses, and place posters to type them out. Students will also build a setting of their choice, and use their descriptive words to express their creation.

Activity 4

Video Length: 19:m52s | Suggested Additional Class Time required: 40-60 minutes
Suggested Materials (in addition to M:EE): Word Processor or Pencil/ Paper for planning, book to gather quotes

In this video, students will define and understand what a safe space is. They will choose a character from their novels and design a safe space for their characters, and add details to their safe space to show they understand their chosen character. Students will also write three journal entries using the Pen and Quill from the perspective of their character talking about how they have felt along their journey and what lessons they have learned. The final step in this activity will have students publishing their rough draft into a book, and then framing it with a lectern in Minecraft, so any visitors to their worlds can read through their journal entries.

Activity 5

Video Length: 15:m24s | Suggested Additional Class Time required: 30-50min
Suggested Materials (in addition to M:EE): Graphing paper to help plan build, Novel to gather quotes/dialogue

In this video, students will put together all of their knowledge and skills they've learned in the previous lessons to have a final build challenge. Students will use tools to build a pivotal or a favourite scene from the novel, in detail. They are encouraged to be creative as they build, adding in Minecraft inventory options like NPCs, Boards or even Redstone if they can. The final step in the activity is to have students describe on a board a detailed explanation of why the scene was vital in the novel or important to them. They are encouraged to take pictures with their camera and export their portfolio so they may share it with their peers.