

# Language Arts Lesson One:

## Humanity Working With and Against Nature

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify the role of nature in literature and compare/contrast this role with man's role in nature.

NEVADA READING STANDARDS 2, 4  
NEVADA WRITING STANDARD 5

**Time:** One one-hour class to introduce; and varied amounts of class time to discuss literature since reading is done outside of class.

**Materials:** journals, water collage, two class sets of relevant novels, construction paper, scissors

**Teacher Note:** If you would like to do a shorter unit, a list of appropriate picture books for older students is included in the Resources section of this unit.

### Procedures:

A. Distribute an anticipation guide to students with the following statements:

1. Water is a valuable resource.
2. Humanity can and must try to control water and water sources.
3. Water is a force of nature that cannot be controlled by humans.
4. Water is more powerful than humans are.
5. Humans who try to control nature only end up exploiting it through pollution.

Students will write whether they agree or disagree with each statement, based on their prior knowledge.

B. As a class, discuss each item on the anticipation guide. Without giving the teacher's view of the statement, lead the discussion so that students must choose one side of the statement and back up their position. Then introduce the topic of the struggle with and cooperation between humanity and water.

C. Allow students to choose from one of two books. The two books should represent contrasting depictions of the positive interactions with water and the struggle against water as a force of nature. Possible pairs of books are Moby Dick versus The Old Man and the Sea (high school) and Hatchet versus The Island of the Blue Dolphins (middle school).

A list of appropriate shorter books is included in the Resources section of this unit.

- D. As students read, they should keep a double-entry journal. The left side is used for noting excerpts of the book that deal with water. The right side is to comment upon those excerpts.
  
- E. Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast elements of water and nature as discussed in each novel. This is an activity that could take one class period. From this class period, students could construct their own expanded Venn diagram, using several pieces of paper (see instructions following this lesson).

## **Directions for Expanded Venn Diagram**

1. Fold a piece of construction paper and several sheets of white paper in half lengthwise.
2. Staple closely along the fold to hold the white papers inside the construction paper cover.
3. Make two even cuts perpendicular to the fold, starting from the loose bottom. Space the cuts along thirds of the paper. Do not cut all the way through the fold.
4. Label each third with Venn diagram components, allowing space for two areas of contrast and one of comparison.
5. Use the white pages inside the booklet for creating Venn diagrams about specific topics.