**TOPIC: CORRECTING THE GRAMMAR OF OTHERS**

**Discipline**

Language Arts, History

**Grade Level**

6-12

**Type of Activity**

Small Group, Individual, Ongoing, Entire Class, Outside Activity, Editing, Writing

**Objectives**

* Students will identify and correct faulty grammar of characters in *The Grapes of Wrath*.
* Students (in groups) will be able to present their findings and corrections in front of the class.
* Students in the audience will be able to critique the findings/corrections of each group.

**Overview**

Besides students’ usual grammar exercises in English class, they can learn literature-based ways to enhance their grammar capabilities. Students seem to be at their best when they correct the work of others. One of the best ways to complement grammar study in the classroom is to correct the errant grammar of characters in novels.

Obviously, *The Grapes of Wrath* reflected the language and vernacular of mostly under-educated migrant workers in the 1930s; as a result, the novel is rich in non-standard language. Finding examples to “correct” will be plentiful.

**Materials Needed/Preparation**

* Copies of *The Grapes of Wrath*.
* Students’ notebooks.
* If available, an LCD projector to show the students’ typed before and after versions. If an LCD projector is not available, an overhead projector will work, as will photocopies.
* If possible, before the exercise, take a local “grammar walk.” Many local stores, shopping centers, billboards, signs, and the like, have grammatical errors. If the school is close to local businesses, be prepared with the following:
* A “grammar repair” kit with hand-made (typed or handwritten) cut-outs of apostrophes, commas, letters for re-spelling, semicolons, periods, and the like, to place on the signage.
* A camera (cell phone or otherwise) to photograph “before and after” examples of signage.

**Estimated Time**

* The “grammar walk” would take about 2 hours (depending on the location) and would need to be an internal field trip.
* The in-class grammar corrections from *The Grapes of Wrath* are ongoing, and the time spent is up to the discretion of the teacher.

**Procedures**

* In small groups, have students go through the current reading of *The Grapes of Wrath* and correct the errant grammar of most of the characters as they speak.
* The groups can then come to the front of the class and read grammatically errant dialogue from the characters. This would be best done on an LCD projector (using PowerPoint or a Word document on a laptop) or an overhead projector so students can see the bad grammar. Lacking that, groups should inform the audience of the page number from which they will be reading (or pass out photocopies of their corrections).
* The groups will solicit suggestions from the audience and then present their own. Be sure to have students explain why the grammar was poor and how they improved it.

**Post Activity/Takeaways/Follow-up**

* Takeaways
* Students should keep examples of their work in their notebooks. If possible, students should also compile a digital or hand-made scrapbook of all their grammar work.
* Follow-up
* Continue to use this exercise for students’ subsequent work.
* Post Activity
  + Assign the “grammar” walk as a fun homework assignment. Consider accepting submissions throughout the novel unit. Consider holding a contest for the best examples submitted.

**Assessment**

* During the course of the exercise, teachers should monitor the work of the groups and their notebooks. Periodic grammar tests, using uncorrected student examples from *The Grapes of Wrath,* would be highly useful.

**Standards Met**

* Reading Standards for Literature 6-12
* Key Ideas and Details: 1,2
* Craft and Structure: 4
* Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10
* Writing Standards 6-12
* Text Types and Purposes: 1
* Production and Distribution of Writing: 4,5
* Speaking and Listening Standards 6-12
* Comprehension and Collaboration: 1,2
* Language Standards 6-12
* Conventions of Standard English: 1,2
* Knowledge of Language: 3
* Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: 4,5,6
* Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12
* Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 9
* Craft and Structure: 4
* Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6-12
* Production and Distribution of Writing: 4,5
* Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7