**Lesson 1: Introducing The Old Man and the Sea**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson aims to introduce *The Old Man and the Sea* to the students and consider the central themes and motifs used in the text. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Understand the context of *The Old Man and the Sea* and the effect it has on the book
2. Be able to name at least three central themes of the book and explain the way in which these themes are explored and developed
3. Be able to discuss the moral of the novel and discern the author’s feelings about life and human nature from the subtext of the story

**Plan:**

* Begin the class with a general discussion of the book. What did the students enjoy about the book? What did they not enjoy? What was interesting about the way the book was written? Ask the students to note down three things they liked and three things they did not and discuss this as a class
* Discuss the context of *The Old Man and the Sea.* Introduce some facts about the author, Ernest Hemmingway. What details of his life might explain the view he expresses in *The Old Man and the Sea*?
* Watch the video about his life and ask the class to write down three things that offer some explanation of the context of the book
* Touch on the practices of Deep Sea fishing, thinking about how this relates to the literary history this book exists within, thinking about how it continues the legacy of books such as *Robinson Crusoe*
* Discuss how the setting of Cuba frames the book, focusing on the idea of contrasting culture
* Remind students of the concept of a semantic field. Brainstorm what would be in the semantic field encompassed within *The Old Man and the Sea,* what recurring symbols, themes and motifs can they find in the book (i.e. nature, unluckiness, pride, manhood)?
* Ask the students to pick one theme and find two different examples within the book where this theme is explored or developed.
* Explore the themes of luck and fate as a class. Where can they see this theme being explored in the book? Why is it an important idea?
* Facilitate a discussion on what the class think Hemmingway was trying to say with *The Old Man and the Sea.* Thinking about the context of Hemmingway’s life and the literary canon this book exists within, is there a particular message or moral that can be identified?
* Is this book a sad book? Discuss this question as a class

**Homework:** Choose between the two questions below:

What does Santiago mean when he says “a man can be destroyed but not defeated”? Do you agree? Why or why not? Explain your answer with reference to the text and the wider context of the book.

**OR**

What does the sea symbolise within the novel? Explain your answer with reference to the text and the wider context of the book.

**Lesson 2: Exploring Style and Characterisation**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson aims to enable to students to think more broadly about the way in which *The Old Man and the Sea* is written. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Be able to think more deeply about the style the book is written in and why, thinking about the concept of Hemmingway’s distinct “economy of style”
2. Be able to evaluate Hemmingway’s characterisation and the choices he makes
3. Identify how cultural ideas shape the way we interpret this novel and be able to critically evaluate our own assumptions in light of this

**Plan:**

* As a starter activity the students should try to sum up the entire book in one sentence that truly captures the essence of the novel. Do they find this difficult to do with this particular novel? Why might that be?
* Critics have described Hemingway’s style as ‘the iceberg effect’ – because the extreme simplicity masks hidden depths of meaning (like an iceberg, which is mostly hidden beneath the surface of the ocean). **What do the students think this means? Do they agree with this characterisation of Hemmingway’s writing?**
* Remind the class of the passage on page 54, another point at which Santiago is talking to himself. “‘The fish is my friend, too,’ he said aloud … ‘It is enough to live on the sea and kill our own true brothers.’“ What meaning can they find under the surface of this very simplistically written passage?
* **Introduce the class to the phrase “economy of style”. Consider the character names in this light, how does Hemmingway use his character names to suggest things about them?**
* Santiago’s lifestyle is very different from many of our own. Ask the class to work in pairs identifying the ways in which their ways of life reflect and contrast the novel. Focus particularly on these five topics: the environment, possessions, money, relationships and personal goals and ambition. They should then present to the class
* Moving on to characterisation, ask the students to identify qualities that they would expect to find in a hero or heroine. Is Santiago an unlikely hero?
* The class should debate this question. Separate them in half, with half the class arguing he *is* an unlikely hero and half arguing that he *isn’t.* The students should think about this in reference to cultural ideas around success and how our parameters for understanding success may be very different from those held in the novel. Remind the class to try to question their own assumptions about what a good life may look like
* **How is this way of life reflected in the style of the novel? Think about the unique structure of this book and ask the class to discuss the effect of this on how they interpreted the meaning under the surface**

**Homework: Choose between the two questions below.**

**What is Santiago’s fatal flaw/ Achille’s Heel?**Explain your answer with reference to the text and use quotations if you can.

**OR**

*The Old Man and the Sea* is essentially the story of a single character. Discuss the role of Manolin in the novel, is he necessary to the story? Explain your answer with reference to the text and use quotations if you can

**Lesson 3: Close Textual Analysis**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson aims to enable to students to conduct some close textual analysis of *The Old Man and the Sea.* By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Be able to analyse the language used in the novel and the effect it has on the reader
2. Be able to understand how Hemmingway uses symbols and motifs to explore the thematic landscape of the novel
3. Be able to complete a mini exam on the novel, thinking about the key components of literary analysis and how to use them

**Plan:**

* Begin the lesson by watching a short video on Joe DiMaggio. Ask the class what role baseball plays in the novel. What theme does it illustrate?
* Discuss the concept of heroism and manhood, thinking about how Hemmingway appears to expect men to act and behave. Is his idea of manhood over the top?
* Discuss how baseball is one of many symbols and motifs in the text. Explain what a motif is and ask the class to find others used throughout the book. Analyse how this fits into the overall themes of the novel
* Now tell the class they will be completing a mini language analysis style exam. Go over the key components of literary analysis as a class: word choice, literary techniques and structure
* Discuss generally how each of these elements are employed within the book
* Now the class will be given the passage they should analyse and their question: ‘What do you learn about the old man’s feelings about the sea and its creatures here and in one or two other moments in his voyage?’ They should spend fifteen minutes completing this, using the elements of literary analysis and some key pointers on things to consider to help
* The students should give one WWW and one EBI for their work
* As a finishing activity, complete a hot-seating exercise trying to tease out the true feelings of the Old Man. The students should think of questions to ask and then one other student should step into his shoes and answer them
* For the last few minutes of the lesson, facilitate a wider discussion on what they have learnt from *The Old Man and the Sea,* what they think is the most powerful theme or message and why? Do they agree with the essence of what Hemmingway believes about the world?

**Homework:** Choose between the two questions below:

**How does Santiago embody Hemmingway’s ideals for manhood**? Explain your answer with reference to the text and using quotations to back up your answer. Remember to discuss the most important themes of the novel!

**OR**

What genre do you think *The Old Man and the Sea* is? You can do some research on this if you like to help you decide. Explain your answer with reference to the text and using quotations to back up your answer. Remember to discuss the most important themes of the novel!