

A Brave New World?

Nicole Flores

S. Weir Mitchell Elementary School

Overview

Rationale

Objectives

Strategies

Classroom Activities

Annotated Bibliography/Reading List/Resources

Appendices

Overview

In my experience, science fiction has, been an under-utilized genre of literature within the School District of Philadelphia. Because the District places greater emphasis on non-fiction passages, science fiction is rarely used to teach literacy skills. Although this emphasis is understandable given the new demands of the Common Core, students are short-changed of an entire world of literature. Science fiction, like most fictional genres, can allow students to demonstrate comprehension skills as it also challenges student's views of society and the future. This unit will compare excerpts from "The Giver" and "Parable of the Sower". It will focus on the main characters in both texts, especially their descriptions of futuristic societies. Students will analyze each excerpt, looking for key points, then compare them and create their own science fiction-a version of the future based on the key elements discussed.

Rationale

The Giver (TG), by Lois Lowry and *Parable of the Sower* (POS) by Octavia Butler are two acclaimed works chosen for this unit because of their contrasting interpretations of the future.

In TG, the main character Jonas, grows up in a perfect utopian world. There are no colors, no extreme emotions and no memories beyond their generation. Everything in the Community is controlled and decided by a Committee of Elders. Obedience and conformity are expected and enforced. Deviance leads to one being "released" into Elsewhere. The exact definition of Elsewhere is never explained, but because those who are sentenced there are never seen again, it is a place that Jonas and the rest of the community members learn to avoid. In this Community, children have their occupations

or Assignments, bestowed upon them at the ceremony of Twelves. Jonas, because of his unique ability, is singled out to be the receiver of memory from the Giver. These two alone know of the war, pain, fear, joy and love of the past. For Jonas, it eventually becomes too much and he leaves home to take his chances in Elsewhere (Hipple and Maupin 2).

This narrative is in stark contrast to “POS”. In this *dystopian* novel, “the world is falling apart”. The main character, Lauren, lives in Robledo, a small town in California in the year 2025. The world at this point has been reduced to one that exacerbates many of the issues that we deal with presently. Water is scarce and sold at a premium, the streets are full of homeless, jobless, drug-addicted rapists and murderers. In order to survive, one must be armed at all times, hire security or live in communities that are walled and separated from the city at large. Lauren has the power of hyperempathy (the ability to share the pain of others) which sometimes is a hindrance, but wisdom from her father and determination help her to transcend the turmoil and press on to build a better life (Phillips 3).

These novels offer many points of similarity and a great deal of contrast. Both of these novels can be used beyond this unit for other higher order reading concepts for students who are mature enough for the material. This unit, being taught at a fifth grade level, only uses excerpts that are or can be sanitized.

Another purpose for the selection of these passages is to introduce students to complex reading material, also emphasized in the Common Core, as they practice grade level skills. This gives students exposure to higher level texts and familiarity if/when these novels are reintroduced at higher grade levels.

Objectives

The objectives for the unit will be as follows:

- Students will gain a deeper understanding of literature, specifically science fiction.
- Students will apply a variety of comprehension skills to the science fiction passages.
- Students will be able to connect their readings to themselves and their lives.
- Students will create a science fiction based narrative using themes and ideas from the literature in the unit.
- Students will create an artifact that reflects the ideas of their narrative.

Common Core Standards

Standard 1.3.5.B:

- Identify and analyze the characteristics of different genres such as poetry, drama and fiction
- Make inferences and/or draw conclusions based on information from text.
- Cite evidence from text to support generalizations.

Strategies

Students will perform much of this unit individually or working with a partner. Students will first closely read sections of science fiction based literature with the teacher. Close readings will allow for a greater understanding of the literature. This style of modeling/guided practice involves dissecting a short reading into small chunks (lines or paragraphs). Each of these chunks are then analyzed and questioned by teacher and students based on the skills being taught.

Students will then complete activities in which they will review reading skills such as comparing/contrasting, cause and effect and inferencing.

The culminating activity will be students working with a partner or individually to create their own futuristic society. This society will be described in a narrative involving at least one main character and will be presented with an artifact designed by the students that relates to their story.

This unit is intended to complement our school's pre-existing reading curriculum (Journey's Common Core), which has very little science fiction representation. The anticipated time for this unit is a two-week block after winter break or after state testing.

Classroom Activities

Lesson Plan #1

Unit Introduction

“The Giver” Part I

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to the elements of the science fiction genre.
- Students will analyze excerpts for inferences, contrasts and comparisons, and general comprehension.

Materials:

1. Excerpts from *The Giver* pp. 1-2, 5-6, 83-84
2. A notebook to record reading and writing activities or *The Giver* graphic organizer from Appendix A.
3. Highlighters (optional)

Plans:

1. Introduction/ Model (20 minutes)

- a. Teacher asks students what they know about the general elements of science fiction and have students complete a brainstorming web of their ideas as a class.
- b. Teacher will complete their definition and make sure to emphasize the fact that: the genre involves some element of science or technology; that it is set in the future, space or a different world; it must be somewhat believable; and have human elements in order to be considered true science fiction.
- c. Teacher will adjust the class web accordingly, adding or deleting entries to make it accurate.
- d. Teacher will create a poster to display the components of the definition during the duration of the unit.
- e. Teacher introduces the basic premise of *The Giver*. They are told that this is a story in which people are shielded from real emotion, they have choices taken away and are assigned the roles they will have in their community. One person in this world knows the history of mankind, along with the pain and the sorrow that it brought.
- f. Teacher asks students if they think this world would be better or worse than their life now and why. Students will discuss this with a partner or small group.
- g. Teacher lets students know that they will be closely reading the excerpt. They will be reading small sections at a time, analyzing what is being read and creating inferences about the setting and characters.
- h. Teacher will then give students an overview of the unit- letting them know that they will do the same for excerpts from Parable of the Sower, then compare the two passages and create their own futuristic world using these stories as inspiration.

2. Guided Practice (15min)

- a. Students are given their copies of *The Giver* excerpts, along with highlighters if they are being used.

- b. Teacher reads p. 1 and 2 aloud and stops frequently to make and ask students about the information the author is giving us about the main character and the setting and to make inferences.
 - c. Teacher allows students to discuss their findings, inferences and evidence to support them with a partner or small group.
 - d. Students share out what they have discovered. Students should note the characteristics of Jonas (possibly anxious, curious, obedient) and the setting (things are controlled with rules, the community is very strict, “releasing” is a punishment). Items should be suggested if not brought up, the brief summary provided in the Rational can be used to supplement any information needed that is not included in the excerpts.
 - e. Information gathered will be added to student’s notebooks or filled in on The Giver graphic organizer.
4. Independent Practice (30 minutes)
(This may be split into two periods or have part of it assigned for homework.)
- a. Students will read pp., 5-6, 83, 84 individually, with a partner or small group. Students will gather information on the type of society that exists in this novel based on the information read (for example, everything is regimented and scheduled, feelings are discussed at dinner, students are labeled, learn and travel according to age not grade, society was changed to accommodate what was “best” for society, etc.) the benefits and disadvantages of a society like this and how it is similar to and/or different from how they live now. Information is recorded in student’s notebooks or graphic organizers.

5. Wrap up (5 minutes)

- a. Students will share out the information they have collected.

Lesson Plan #2
“The Giver” Part II

Objectives:

- Students will analyze excerpts of *The Giver* for inferences, contrasts and comparisons, and general comprehension.
- Students will understand what characteristics make *The Giver* science fiction.

Materials:

1. Excerpts from *The Giver* pp. 20, 24 and 31.
2. A notebook to record reading and writing activities or The Giver graphic organizer from Appendix A.
3. Highlighters (optional)

Plans:

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Teacher asks students what they remember from the previous lesson.
- b. Teacher lets students know they will continue the style of the previous lesson and continue to learn more about Jonas and what society is like in *The Giver*.

2. Model/Guided Practice (10min)

- a. Students are given their copies of *The Giver* excerpts, along with highlighters if they are being used.
- b. Teacher reads p. 20 aloud and asks students what information the author is giving us about the main character and what inferences can be made about him.
- c. Teacher allows students to discuss their findings, inferences and evidence to support them with a partner or small group.
- d. Students share out what they have discovered. Students should note characteristics of Jonas (he is different from everyone else because he has light eyes, he is special in some way). Items should be suggested if not brought up.
- e. Information gathered will be added to student's notebooks or filled in on *The Giver* graphic organizer.

4. Independent Practice (30 minutes)

- a. Students will read pp. 31 and 24 individually, with a partner or small group. Students will gather information on the type of society that exists in this novel based on the information read. For example, what happens to Roberto? what do you think "releasing" is? Why does it happen? What do you think the change is that happens with the apple, since we know Jonas' eyes are different (he is able to see it in color, the world is seen by everyone else in black and white) They are also asked what to record the benefits and/or disadvantages of a society like this and how it is similar and/or different from how we live now based on their new information. Students will also note what elements of science fiction they were able to find in what they read. Information is recorded in student's notebooks or graphic organizers.

5. Wrap up (5 minutes)

- a. Students will share out the information they have gathered.

Lesson Plan #3

“Parable of the Sower”

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to and closely read excerpts from *Parable of the Sower*.
- Students will analyze excerpts of *Parable of the Sower* for inferences, contrasts and comparisons, and general comprehension.

Materials:

1. Excerpts from *Parable of the Sower* pp. 1, 11 and 21 (Kindle Version). Depending on teacher and student’s comfort level, the first paragraph of p. 11 may be removed or blocked out of the page before being distributed.
2. A notebook to record reading and writing activities or *Parable of the Sower* graphic organizer from Appendix B.
3. Highlighters (optional)

Plans:

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- a. Teacher asks students what they remember from the previous day’s lesson.
- b. Teacher lets students know they will be doing similar work with a different story.
- c. Teacher introduces the basic premise of *Parable of the Sower*, as everyone reads p. 1. (A girl named Lauren, who feels and shares other’s pain due to a drug that her mother was addicted to, lives in the year 2025. Lauren lives in a small town in California that is now so dangerous, that their community is walled in to protect them from dangerous drug addicts and homeless that run the streets).
- d. Teacher asks students if they think this society is better or worse than our society now and why? This question can be asked again after further reading.
- e. Students will record their opinions in their notes or graphic organizers.
- f. Teacher lets students know that they will be closely reading the excerpt. They will be reading small sections at a time, analyzing what is being read and creating inferences comparisons and conclusions about the setting and characters.

2. Model/Guided Practice (10min)

- a. Students are asked to look at p. 11, and given highlighters if they are being used.
- b. Teacher reads the page starting with “ And we’re in Robledo...”.
- c. Teacher asks students to, along with p.1, determine what the setting is, how it changed, who the main character is and what is known about her (not much at this point, but information will be added).
- d. Students will add the information to their Parable of the Sower graphic organizer.

4. Independent Practice (10 minutes)

- a. Students will read p. 21 individually or with a partner (any objectionable sentences should be blacked out) and continue to fill in their graphic organizer to add information about the setting of the passage and inferences they can make based on this information.

5. Wrap up (5 minutes)

- a. Students will share out the information they have recorded.

Lesson Plan #4 **“Parable of the Sower” Part II**

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to and closely read excerpts from *Parable of the Sower*.
- Students will analyze excerpts of *Parable of the Sower* for inferences, contrasts and comparisons, and general comprehension.
- Students will determine ways in which *Parable of the Sower* fits into the science fiction genre.

Materials:

1. Excerpts from *Parable of the Sower* pp. 22, 25, 59 (Kindle Version). Sentences may be blacked out if they are deemed inappropriate, please view before passing out/copying.

2. A notebook to record reading and writing activities or Parable of the Sower graphic organizer from Appendix B.
3. Highlighters (optional)

Plans:

1. Introduction (15 minutes)

- a. Teacher asks students what they remember from the previous day's lesson.
- b. Teacher lets students know they will be doing similar work with a different part of the story.
- c. Teacher lets students know that they will be closely reading the excerpt. They will be reading small sections at a time, analyzing what is being read and creating inferences and conclusions about the setting and characters.

2. Model/Guided Practice (10min)

- a. Students are asked to look at p. 22. Students are given, highlighters if they are being used.
- b. Teacher reads the page and asks students what they think a "Window Wall television" probably is.
- c. Teacher asks students what information can be added to their notes/graphic organizers about the setting. Students discuss, then add the information.

4. Independent Practice (20 minutes)

- a. Students will read pp. 25 and 59 individually or with a partner (any objectionable sentences can be blacked out before distribution) and continue to fill in their graphic organizer to add information about the setting and the main character of the passage.
- b. Students will compare this reality with our present day in their graphic organizer/notes.
- c. Students will also check off what elements of science fiction this passage shows us.

5. Wrap up (5 minutes)

- a. Students will share out the information they recorded.

Lesson Plan #5

The Comparison

Objectives:

- Students will compare and contrast the present, Parable of the Sower and The Giver using a graphic organizer.

Materials:

1. All excerpts from *Parable of the Sower* and *The Giver* used in this unit.
2. Student notes used to record previous data or graphic organizers used from previous lessons.
3. A notebook to record current activities or the comparison graphic organizer from Appendix C or C2.

Plans:

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Teacher asks students what they remember from the previous day's lesson.
- b. Teacher lets students know they will be using the information they have gathered to compare the two versions of the future shown in the passages used in this unit along with the present day (** This lesson can be differentiated by only requiring that two things be compared, the two passages or the student's own life with one of the passages using a two bubble Venn diagram.**).

2. Model/Guided Practice (5min)

- a. Students are given their copies of the excerpts from the passages.
- b. Teacher reviews the settings and main characters of the two passages with the students.
- c. Teacher shows a large version of a three bubble Venn Diagram on the front board or a poster and explains how similarities and differences are recorded.
- d. Teacher gives an example of information that would go into one or two of the sections. For example, "POS", *The Giver* and present day all involve humans interacting with each other on some level, "POS" and *The Giver* both have main characters that have a special power/ability, both have settings that are altered versions of the world we know now (one to benefit humans, the other as a result of human carelessness).

4. Independent Practice (20 minutes)

- a. Students will work with a partner or individually to complete the graphic organizer with at least 3 items in each section (this number can be adjusted based on skill levels).

5. Wrap up (5 minutes)

- a. Students will share out their findings.

Lesson Plan #6
A Brave New World

Objectives:

- Students will create their own futuristic world based on ideas from *Parable of the Sower* and *The Giver*.

Materials:

1. All excerpts from *Parable of the Sower* and *The Giver* used in this unit.
2. Student notes used to record previous data or graphic organizers used from previous lessons.
3. A notebook to record current activities or the literary element organizer from Appendix D.

Plans:

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Teacher asks students what they remember from the previous day's lesson.
- b. Teacher lets students know they will now be creating their own science fiction world using ideas from the passages discussed.
- c. Teacher lets students know they will first complete a graphic organizer to plan out their story based on ideas from "POS" and *The Giver*.

2. Model/Guided Practice (5min)

- a. Teacher replicates the elements of the graphic organizer on the front board or on a poster that can be seen by the class.
- b. Teachers thinks out loud about what his/her story is going to be about using the passages for ideas. For example, "I think my story will be about a girl who can

create water. My story will take place in the future, in Philadelphia, which will be a place where there is a severe shortage of water because of pollution. The problem will be that this girl, Janice, is kidnapped and the city begins to die. It will be solved when Janis' best friend uses clues to track down where she is being kept. She is then freed and the city is saved. I used elements of 'Parable of the Sower' in for my story."

- c. Teacher fills in graphic organizer accordingly to record his/her ideas.
- d. Teacher checks off the elements of science fiction that his/her ideas cover. As many elements should be included as possible.
- e. Students are encouraged to brainstorm ideas with a partner for their own stories.

4. Independent Practice (10 minutes)

- a. Students will complete their graphic organizer or notes individually or with a partner to have an outline of their stories.

5. Wrap up (5 minutes)

- a. Students will share out their ideas.

Lesson Plan #7

A Brave New World Part II

(This lesson may take 2-3 days, based on student's level of story creating and how involved their artifact is.)

Objectives:

- Students will create their own futuristic world based on ideas from *Parable of the Sower* and *The Giver*.
- Students will create an artifact from their new world based on their story (examples are a mini newspaper, a coat of arms, something invented or used during their time period, etc.)

Materials:

1. All excerpts from *Parable of the Sower* and *The Giver* used in this unit.
2. Student notes used to record previous data or graphic organizers used from previous lessons.
3. Teacher created literary element graphic organizer from the previous day's lesson.
3. Writing paper.
4. Any supplies being used for the student's artifacts.

Plans:

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Teacher asks students what they remember from the previous day's lesson.
- b. Teacher lets students know they will now be creating their own science fiction world using their graphic organizers or notes.
- c. Teacher lets students know they will then create an artifact from a list of ideas supplied by the teacher.

2. Model/Guided Practice (5min)

- a. Teacher displays the elements of the graphic organizer on the front board or on a poster that can be seen by the class from the previous day.
- b. Teacher uses the ideas on it to begin a story, giving students ideas on how to start theirs as he/she writes.
- c. As the beginning to the story is completed, students are reminded that details need to be filled into their original ideas so that they have a complete story.
- d. Teacher then chooses an artifact to complete from the list supplied (this may be done once the writing is completed).
- e. Teacher discusses how the artifact relates to their story, how it will be constructed and what supplies will be used to create it.
- d. Students are encouraged to brainstorm details for their story ideas (and later ideas for their artifact) with a partner.

4. Independent Practice (Will vary)

- a. Students will complete their stories and then their artifacts

5. Wrap up (Will vary)

- a. Students will present their story to the class with a summary or complete reading of their narrative, the elements of science fiction that their story contains and their artifact.

Annotated Bibliography/Reading List/Resources:

Annotated Bibliography:

1. Hipple, Ted, and Amy Maupin. "What's Good About the Best?" *The English Journal* 90.3 (2001): 40-42. National Council of Teachers of English. Web.
This article analyzes the three Newberry Award winners from the 1990's, *The Giver*, *Out of the Dust* and *Holes* for what makes them great young adult novels.
2. Phillips, Jerry. "The Intuition of the Future: Utopia and Catastrophe in Octavia Butler's "Parable of the Sower"" *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* (2002): 299-311. Web.
The argument that a writer's purpose is not just to reflect the atrocities of mankind, but to "throw it a lifeline" is explored through "Parable of the Sower".
3. Readwritethink.org.
<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson927/SciFiDefinition.pdf>
This pdf details a definition of science fiction.

Student Reading List (books needed for the unit):

1. Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Sower*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993. Electronic (Kindle).
2. Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993. Print.

Resources Need/Classroom Materials:

In order to complete this unit, you will need:

- Writing Paper
- The graphic organizers in the Appendix of this unit or notebooks for students to write out the information themselves.
- Highlighters (optional)
- Excerpts from *The Giver* pp. 1, 2, 5, 6, 20, 24, 31, 83, 84.
- Censored excerpts from *Parable of the Sower*, the Kindle Version (please check before packets/copies before they are distributed so that any inappropriate lines are blacked out) pp. 1, 11, 21, 22, 25, 59.
- Materials such as construction paper, glue scissors, etc. that may be needed for students to create an artifact from their world.

Appendix A

Name _____ Date _____

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Main Character _____	Facts (from the Passage)	Inferences (based on those facts)
The Setting (and other story elements)	Facts (from the Passage)	Inferences (based on those facts)
	Your Opinion (Is this place better or worse than how you live now?)	Why?
Does this story fit into the science fiction genre? Yes or No (Based on your checks)	<input type="checkbox"/> This story is believable <input type="checkbox"/> There are human elements <input type="checkbox"/> There is science or technology involved.	<input type="checkbox"/> This is set in the future, in space or on a different planet. <input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Notes:		

Appendix B

Name _____ Date _____

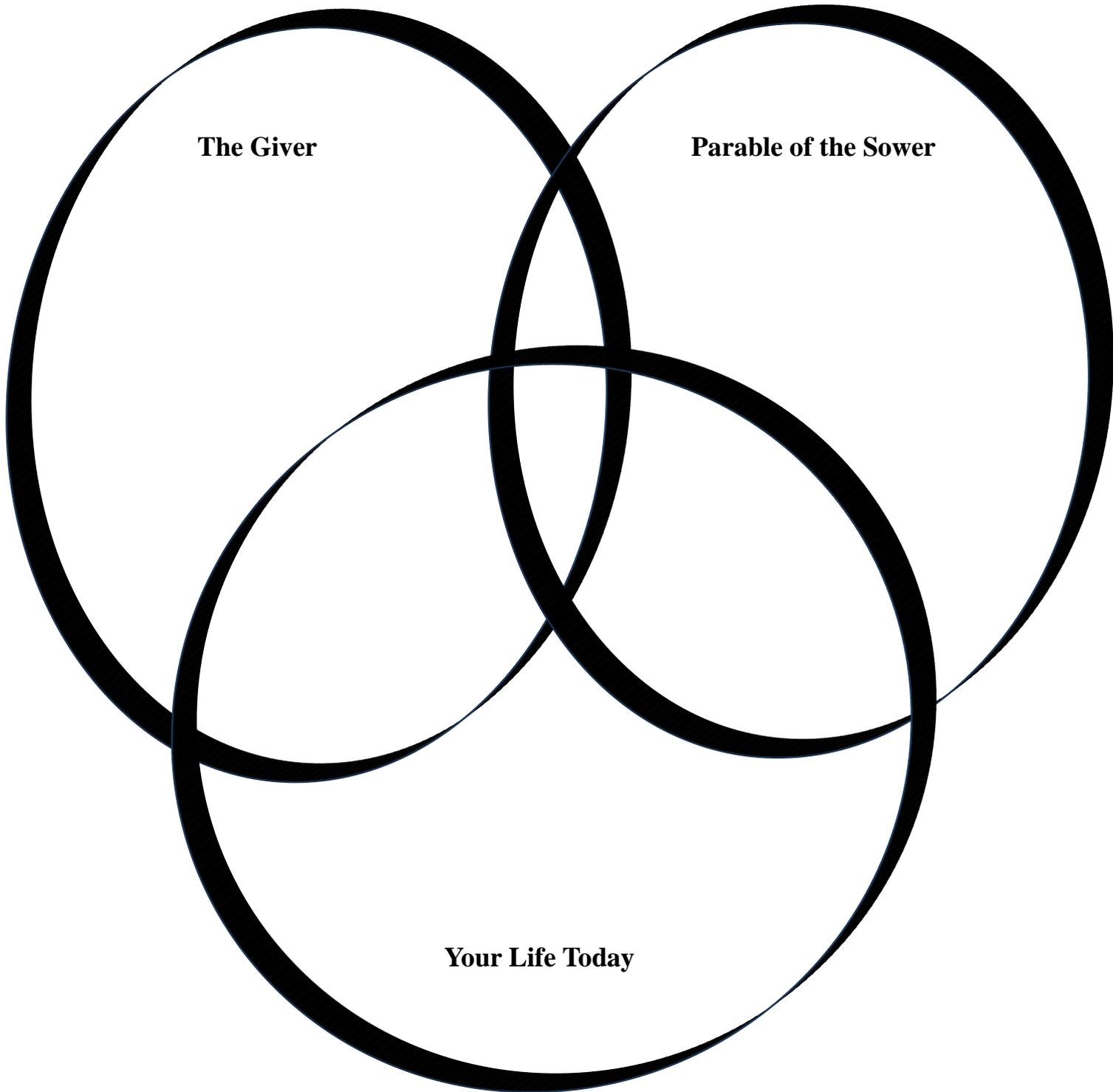
Parable of the Sower by Octavia Butler

Appendix C

Main Character _____	Facts (from the Passage)	Inferences (based on those facts)
The Setting (and other story elements)	Facts (from the Passage)	Inferences (based on those facts)
	Your Opinion (Is this place better or worse than how you live now?)	Why?
Does this story fit into the science fiction genre? Yes or No (Based on your checks)	<input type="checkbox"/> This story is believable <input type="checkbox"/> There are human elements <input type="checkbox"/> There is science or technology involved.	<input type="checkbox"/> This is set in the future, in space or on a different planet. <input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Notes:		

Name _____ Date _____

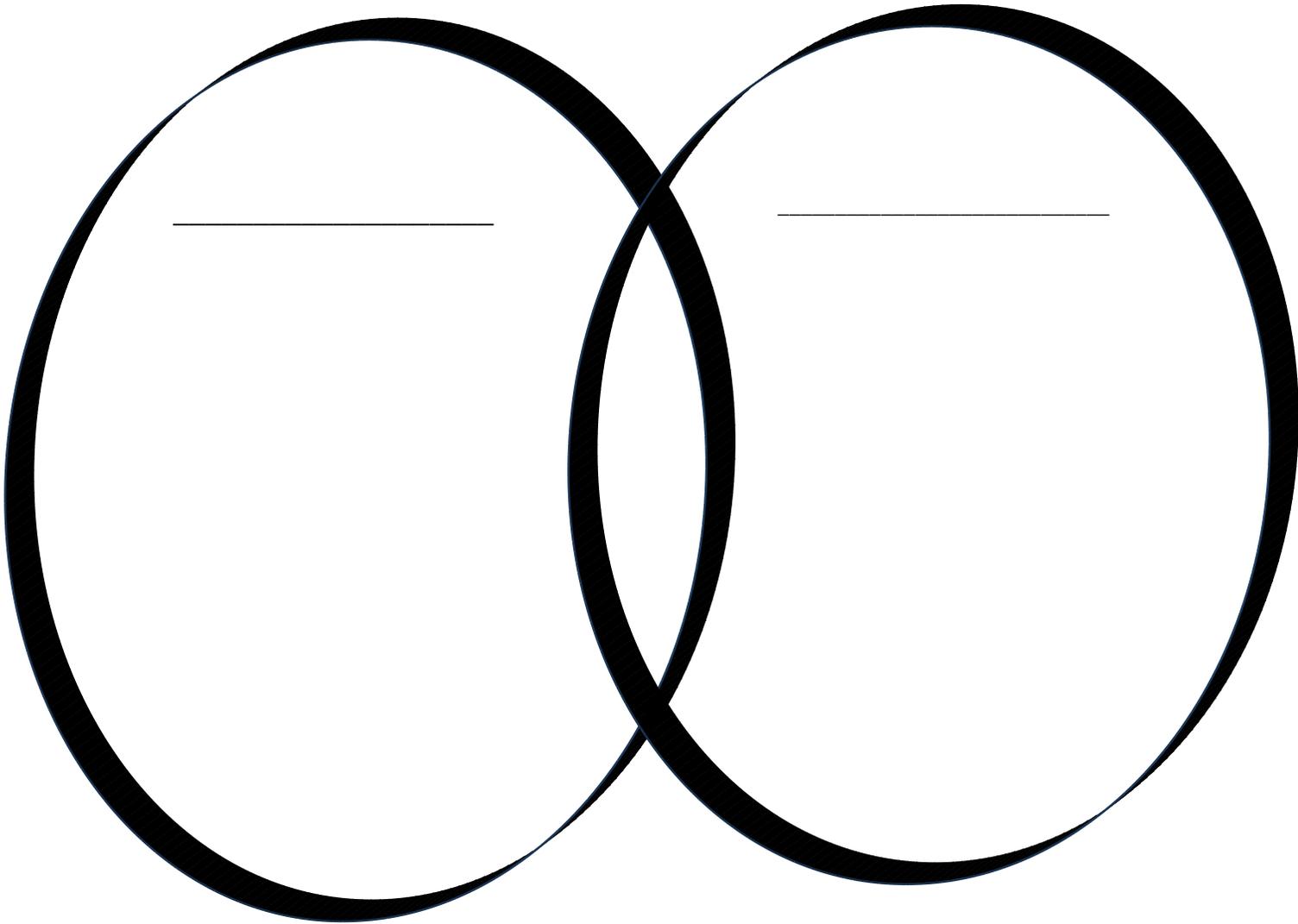
The Comparison



Appendix C2

Name _____ Date _____

The Comparison



Appendix D

Name _____ Date _____

Literary Elements Graphic Organizer For Your (Brave) New World

Title	
Main Character(s)	
Setting	
Beginning (Including the main problem in your story)	
Middle	
End (Including the solution to your story's main problem)	