

Lesson 3
Born in Soweto: Inside the Heart of South Africa



Karmin Tomlinson, Oregon City High School



Introduction: In this lesson students create a visual representation of a character from a novel written about post-apartheid Soweto, South Africa.

Objectives: At the completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

1. Analyze character background by studying a chapter from Born in Soweto.
2. Demonstrate the importance of specific characterization by creating a visual representation of a main character from a South African novel.
3. Describe their literary character through narrative.
4. Analyze the impact of township living on black South Africans in post-apartheid Soweto.

Suggested Grade Levels: 9-12

Time: One to two 50-minute class periods plus homework

Suggested Subjects: World Literature, Humanities, Global Studies, and World History

Materials:

- ◆ Entire novel or selected chapters of *Born in Soweto: Inside the Heart of South Africa*, by Heidi Holland. Penguin Books, 1994, ISBN #0-14-023336-8.
- ◆ Butcher paper or large sheets of construction paper
- ◆ Realia
- ◆ Magazines
- ◆ Markers, paint, chalk, crayons
- ◆ Cut-out letters
- ◆ Rubber cement, glue/glue gun, stapler, tape

Instructional Procedures:

1. Group students into three or four person teams. Read the complete novel or specific chapters. [Note to Teacher: If assigning specific chapters, group students ahead of time and assign each group the preface, a different chapter and a character.] Next, determine and then announce an appropriate due date.

Chapter 1 — Dawn (George Resenga)

Chapter 2 — Getting Even (Reggie Nithoba)

Chapter 3 — Crisis in the Classroom (Murphy Morobe)

Chapter 3 — Crisis in the Classroom (Bongi Mkhabela)

Chapter 4 — Nomsa's Marriage (Nomas Matlala)

Chapter 5 — Red Alert (Givin Ngema)

- Chapter 6 — Saturday (Jimmy Ntintili)
- Chapter 7 — Mama Mabala (Mama Mabala)
- Chapter 8 — African Magic (Dr. Bonna Sara Mashele)
- Chapter 9 — The Money Game (Revelation Xaba)
- Chapter 10 — Maids and Madams (Violet Motlhasedi)
- Chapter 11 — Died in Soweto (Caps Poonee)

2. Provide sufficient time for students to discuss their respective chapters and characters.
3. Instruct teams to create posters about their particular character from their assigned chapter. Have them include the following:
 - A. A memorable quote that says a great deal about the character.
 - B. A picture that brings the character to mind. Students may draw one.
 - C. A gift (attached to the poster) that would be suitable and pleasing to the character.
 - D. Five words to describe the character.
 - E. Lastly, make sure the character's name and the novel's title appears in some form on the poster.

[Note to Teacher: The group has 30 minutes to produce a masterpiece to share with other class members. Encourage students to stretch the bounds of their creativity as well as to give a memorable portrait of their character. Some suggested ways to go beyond the limits of a piece of butcher paper or construction paper are to change the outside shape of the paper; hang things on the paper; add a third dimension (have things stick out), use color; use paste-ons; use markers or crayons, or paint or chalk or cut out letters, etc. or use several sheets of butcher/construction paper.]

4. Hang posters in order in the classroom. Ask each group to summarize their chapter and describe their character.

Assessment:

1. Presentation and poster
2. Writing assignment: List five generalizations about the challenges of living in Soweto, South Africa during the post-apartheid era. Which challenge do you feel is the most formidable to overcome? Why? Which challenge do you feel is the easiest to overcome? Why? Give examples from the novel.