



Paideia Seminar Lesson Plan



Oh, The Places You Will Go! by Dr. Seuss

Grade/Subject

Upper ES / Social Studies



Ideas, Values:

Beginning and End, Challenge and Change, Decisions, Experience, Growth



Pre-Seminar Content



Launch Activity:

Have students make two timelines (with the help of modeling):

- 1) A 5-to-10 event timeline of their lives so far.
Then...
- 2) A 7-to-12 event timeline of their projected lives.

During the launch, discuss what events in one's life serve as a marker—what makes an event significant? Is there a new beginning with an end? A change in direction? A key decision to be made? An experience that leads to new things? A period of growth?

Inspectional Read:

Distribute the text and ask students to anticipate what they expect this reading to be like? Read the text the first time aloud. Label the text-only parts (as included here) 1-34, noting that part 20 is split between two pages ("Waiting for the..."). (Using the picture book is highly recommended, at least for the initial read and sharing.)

Background Information:

Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel; March 2, 1904 – September 24, 1991) was an American writer, poet, and cartoonist. Seuss published 46 children's books, often characterized by imaginative characters, rhyme, and frequent use of anapestic meter. Seuss was said to be a perfectionist in his work and would sometimes spend up to a year on a book. It was not uncommon for him to throw out 95% of his material until he settled on a theme for his book.

Oh, the Places You'll Go! was first published in 1990, making it the last Dr. Seuss book published in his lifetime. The book concerns the journey of life and its challenges.

Vocabulary:

Provide (or mine students for) definitions for unusual words. This is a good time to discuss poetic license and the difference between new words and whimsical, created words.

(*Travelogue*, *trajectory* are among the words used within this plan that will need to be defined with students.)

Analytical Read:

(Post directions.) Have students mark words and phrases of interest as well as puzzlement. Students should also independently consider each section and what it could represent: *jobs, friendships, school and college, sports, travel*, etc.... Have students use a summarizing word like these for at least 10 of the 34 sections, to get a better feel of what is represented in the text.



Pre-Seminar Process

Define and state purpose for Paideia Seminar.

✧ Describe the responsibilities of facilitator and participants.

✧ Have participants set a Personal Goal.

✧ Agree on a Group Goal.

Seminar Questions

Opening (Identify main ideas from the text.):

- ❖ Based on the big ideas of this story, what could be another title for the text?

Core (Analyze textual details.):

- ❖ According to the text, what might be the biggest challenge in the places you will go? What might be the most fun?
- ❖ “You’ll start happening too” (part 7). What does that mean?
- ❖ Look towards the middle of the text, beginning with part 18 (“You can get so confused”). What do you think is the author’s message about waiting?
- ❖ Why do you think (part 31) the author put “Life’s a Great Balancing Act” in capital letters? Use the ideas within the text to support your response.
- ❖ What do you think is the author’s opinion of getting “mixed up?” What does that mean? Use the text to support your reasoning.

Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas.):

- ❖ What “mountain” will you move?
or
- ❖ How do you know you are “on your way?”

Post-Seminar Process

- ★ Have participants do a written self-assessment of their personal participation goal.
- ★ Do a group assessment of the social and intellectual goals of seminar.
- ★ Note reminders for next seminar.



Post-Seminar Content

★ Transition to Writing:

Students are asked to revisit their initial list from the launch, and add emotions and descriptors to those events, influenced by the text and seminar dialogue.

★ Writing Task:

How is your life like one big journey?

After reading and discussing *Oh, The Places You Will Go!*, write a travelogue of sorts, adding commentary to your life's trip. Pull ideas and actual phrases from the text to match a trajectory of your life - where you have been so far and/or where you think you are going. Choose important events, happened or foreseen, and match those events with ideas, values, and actual sentences from the seminar text. Your audience includes fellow travellers on the journey of life! *Informational or Explanatory/Procedural-Sequential*

(LDC Task#: 16)



★ Brainstorm:

Participants will use the timelines (their "lifelines") they have generated as a starting point and focus on the significance of those events and what they represent.

Structure the Writing:

Allow time for all to revisit the text *Oh, the Places You Will Go!*, and draft/add to their original timeline. Students should be able to make the following link for numerous events on their “lifeline:”

Event — text support/similarity — idea/value represented by event and text support.

These pieces together will add flavor and depth to their lifeline, making it more of a travelogue that represents the journey of life. (Note that articulating the represented idea/value will be a significant challenge for many students. Teach and adjust expectations accordingly.)

First Draft:

Students should revisit the prompt, and all of the scaffolded steps (*Transition*, *Brainstorm*, *Structuring the Writing*) in order to move forward with a first draft.

Collaborative Revision:

Have participants work in pairs to read their first drafts aloud to each other. The reader should make a special note to signify to the listener the links between the event in his/her life (past or future), connection to text, and the idea/value represented. The listener should:

1. Repeat one life event heard
2. Repeat where it is connected to the text, with the part # (1-34)
3. Repeat the represented idea/value

Roles are then switched. Give time for full revisions resulting in a second draft.

Edit:

Once the second draft is complete, have participants work in groups of three-four and this time take turns reading each other’s second drafts slowly and silently, marking any spelling or grammar errors they find. (Have dictionaries and grammar handbooks available for reference.) Take this opportunity to clarify/reteach any specific grammar strategies you have identified your students needing. Give time for full revisions resulting in a third and final draft.

Publish:

Publish the final travelogues, checking first the personal content that students have tackled/envisioned. Be sure to allow time for illustrations, referencing the actual picture book and other resources.

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Seminar text readily available in bookstores/libraries everywhere...it is also printed here without illustration.

Oh, The Places You Will Go! by Dr. Seuss

Congratulations!

Today is your day.

You're off to Great Places!

You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes

You can steer yourself

any direction you choose.

You're on your own. And you know what you know.

And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.

About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there."

With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet,

you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.

And you may not find any

you'll want to go down.

In that case, of course,

you'll head straight out of town.

It's opener there

in the wide open air.

Out there things can happen

and frequently do

to people as brainy

and footsy as you.

And when things start to happen,

don't worry. Don't stew.

Just go right along.

You'll start happening too.

OH!

THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!

You'll be on your way up!

You'll be seeing great sights!

You'll join the high fliers
who soar to high heights.

You won't lag behind, because you'll have the speed.

You'll pass the whole gang and you'll soon take the lead.

Wherever you fly, you'll be the best of the best.

Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.

Except when you don' t

Because, sometimes, you won't.

I'm sorry to say so

but, sadly, it's true

and Hang-ups

can happen to you.

You can get all hung up

in a prickly perch.

And your gang will fly on.

You'll be left in a Lurch.

You'll come down from the Lurch

with an unpleasant bump.

And the chances are, then,

that you'll be in a Slump.

And when you're in a Slump,

you're not in for much fun.

Un-slumping yourself

is not easily done.

You will come to a place where the streets are not marked.

Some windows are lighted. But mostly they're darked.
A place you could sprain both you elbow and chin!
Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in?
How much can you lose? How much can you win?

And IF you go in, should you turn left or right...
or right-and-three-quarters? Or, maybe, not quite?
Or go around back and sneak in from behind?
Simple it's not, I'm afraid you will find,
for a mind-maker-upper to make up his mind.

You can get so confused
that you'll start in to race
down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace
and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space,
headed, I fear, toward a most useless place.
The Waiting Place...

...for people just waiting.
Waiting for a train to go
or a bus to come, or a plane to go
or the mail to come, or the rain to go
or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow
or waiting around for a Yes or a No
or waiting for their hair to grow.
Everyone is just waiting.

Waiting for the fish to bite
or waiting for wind to fly a kite
or waiting around for Friday night
or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle Jake
or a pot to boil, or a Better Break
or a sting of pearls, or a pair of pants
or a wig with curls, or Another Chance.
Everyone is just waiting.

NO!

That's not for you!

Somehow you'll escape
all that waiting and staying.
You'll find the bright places
where Boom Bands are playing.

With banner flip-flapping,
once more you'll ride high!
Ready for anything under the sky.
Ready because you're that kind of a guy!

Oh, the places you'll go! There is fun to be done!
There are points to be scored. there are games to be won.
And the magical things you can do with that ball
will make you the winning-est winner of all.
Fame! You'll be famous as famous can be,
with the whole wide world watching you win on TV.

Except when they don't.
Because, sometimes, they won't.

I'm afraid that some times
you'll play lonely games too.
Games you can't win
'cause you'll play against you.

All Alone!
Whether you like it or not,
Alone will be something
you'll be quite a lot.

And when you're alone, there's a very good chance
you'll meet things that scare you right out of your pants.
There are some, down the road between hither and yon,
that can scare you so much you won't want to go on.

But on you will go
though the weather be foul
On you will go
though your enemies prowl
On you will go
though the Hakken-Kraks howl
Onward up many
a frightening creek,
though your arms may get sore
and your sneakers may leak.

On and on you will hike
and I know you'll hike far
and face up to your problems
whatever they are.

You'll get mixed up, of course,
as you already know.
You'll get mixed up
with many strange birds as you go.
So be sure when you step.
Step with care and great tact
and remember that Life's
a Great Balancing Act.
Just never forget to be dexterous and deft.
And never mix up your right foot with your left.

And will you succeed?
Yes! You will, indeed!
(98 and 3 / 4 percent guaranteed.)

KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!

So...
be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray
or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea,

you're off to Great Places!

Today is your day!

Your mountain is waiting.

So...get on your way!

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