

Vicksburg Community Schools Proposal Form with Guidance

Please review VCS General Guidelines for Program Review and Proposal Development prior to completion of this form. Send completed *Proposal Form* and supporting documents to the Curriculum office by March 1st.
Note: The first page of this form is the cover sheet and proposal checklist for use as you edit or create your final draft to ensure each section has the required information. The proposal request form begins on page 3.

Title of Proposal: Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut

Proposal Author(s): Dan Ouellette

Department and Curriculum Area: English 4

Building: Vicksburg High School

Committee Members: Dan Ouellette, Margo Staunton, Kathy Forsythe, Chris Kosiba, Matt Hawkins

❖ This proposal is for:

- Textbook and other teaching resources (*requires planned pilot process as part of the proposal request*)
- New courses or course revisions
- Full program or curriculum area reviews
- Program or curriculum area modifications
- Supplemental Instructional/Intervention Resource

❖ Proposal Background & Overview – Write a narrative that includes:

- Relevant background/history.
- Problem or other basis for the proposal (i.e. student needs, etc.).
- Reasons for making the change.
- Targeted School Improvement Goals

❖ Complete Description of Proposed Change(s):

- List all major changes, components and/or strategies of the proposal.
- Give rationale for each change (base the rationale on research or best practice information).
- Include new course/textbook title, course/textbook replaced, credit, and prerequisite(s).
- Attach the current content expectations, course outline, and/or general syllabus.

❖ Implementation Plan

- Give a full explanation of the implementation timeline, action items, and responsibilities for implementing.
- Itemize, in detail, all proposal costs. Include 1st year costs and a budget to maintain the proposal after implementation. Include resource needed to support change. (texts, soft/hardware, web-based license, consumables, training, substitute cost for training, equipment, personnel). **Include attachment if needed.*

❖ Anticipated/Expected Impact

- Explain the anticipated proposal outcomes. Describe how the proposal will impact students, staff, and the instructional program. Include expected gains in student success. Include how this proposal articulates with other courses/levels in this subject area & across the curriculum.

❖ Proposal Evaluation Plan and Student Achievement

- Explain how this proposal will be evaluated, the timeline used, what data is to be collected (survey results, national, state, district, or classroom assessments), and how the evaluation will be reported.
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Dates of Anticipated Review and Action: DSISC 3/20/20

BOE April 20, 2020

Principal's Signature(s): Ali M

(To be completed by Director of Curriculum and Instruction upon receipt of proposal.)

Date Received: 2/27/20

Comments on proposal:

RESPONSE:

- Need more information: _____
- Need to consult with:
 - the building principal(s) affected by this proposal
 - curriculum area chairperson
 - Other: _____
- Proceed as outlined in the proposal - *pending available funds*

Gul Van Dapp
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

3/10/20
Date

[Signature]
Director of Technology

4/29/20
Date

Proposal Background & Overview:

Proposal History and Background.

In English 4, *Huckleberry Finn* has been taught for a very long time - as long as any VHS English teacher can remember. There has always been a struggle to address the racism presented in the novel, especially the use of one particular racial epithet. In the most recent years, we've developed a unit exploring satire, using *Huck Finn* as the center focus. This has allowed us to address the prolific use of the word while explaining that Twain's entire purpose was to ridicule the racism that is so prevalent in the novel.

Over the past few years, however, we have spoken with several students who have indicated their discomfort with the use of the word, and it's become more and more difficult to justify using the book in class.

This has not been an easy decision to reach. We all recognize the literary value and cultural importance of the book - Twain changed American literature with this novel. But there are other options that will allow us to teach the satire unit but that won't make our students feel badly about themselves while reading an assigned book.

Kurt Vonnegut has written several satirical novels; however, many of them are not necessarily school appropriate. *Cat's Cradle* is a complex, interesting novel that will allow us to ask our English 4 students to think deeply about a variety of social and cultural issues while they explore the role satire plays in those issues. Additionally, this novel is more contemporary than most of the high school English curriculum, which allows our students to have a more varied experience overall.

We are convinced that this change will allow us to further raise the rigor of our expectations in English 4. We will continue to meet the essential standards that we have identified, and we will continue to work toward continuous school improvement, as always.

This change will allow us to continue to work toward our School Improvement goals:

Goal #1: All students in Vicksburg Community Schools will be proficient in all core curricular areas.

Strategy 1.1.1: All teachers will implement Tier 1 instruction in ELA and math with fidelity.

Strategy 1.1.2: All teachers will implement essential instructional practices.

Complete Description of Proposed Change(s):

Major changes, components or strategies of proposal.

We propose to simply retire *Huckleberry Finn* and replace it with *Cat's Cradle*.

The language in *Huckleberry Finn* presents some challenges that are unnecessary for our goals and standards. This has become increasingly evident over the past several years, and we've reached a "tipping point," and can no longer justify the novel's use to some of our students.

Most of the satire unit will remain intact. We will simply substitute *Cat's Cradle* for *Huck Finn*.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>New Textbook Title/Instructional Resource</i>	<i>Previous Textbook/Instructional Resource To Be Replaced</i>
12	<i>Cat's Cradle</i>	<i>Huckleberry Finn</i>

- Content Standards: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>
- Current Course Syllabus attached

Implementation Plan:

a. Implementation strategies

Timeline	Action	Person(s) Responsible
Summer 2020	Create literary analysis materials during summer curriculum work day	Dan Ouellette, VHS English Dept.
Fall 2020	Create literary analysis materials	Dan Ouellette, VHS English Dept.
Winter 2021	Implement new novel with department-developed support materials	Dan Ouellette

b. Proposal Costs

Description	Number Needed/ Cost per Unit	Total Cost	Funding Source
Materials <i>(add rows if needed)</i>			
<i>Cat's Cradle</i>	140 books @ \$13.60/book	\$1904	General Fund
Professional Learning/Summer Curriculum Work			
Summer Curriculum Work	\$105 x 1 day x 1 person	\$105	General Fund
Total Costs	\$ 1904.00		

Anticipated/Expected Impact:

Proposal outcomes

We expect to see that all of our students are more engaged in the unit and none of our students are affected by the prevalent use of a racial epithet and a negative - albeit complex - portrayal of African-American characters. This change will allow all of our students to focus on the intended learning without being distracted by these other issues in *Huckleberry Finn*.

We expect that our teachers will feel more comfortable with the material and feel better about no longer making some students uncomfortable in our classes.

We expect that - overall - this change will strengthen our entire English curriculum.

Proposal Evaluation Plan and Student Achievement:

Evaluation and assessment

We intend to implement this change for all sections of English 4. This change will be evaluated by paying close attention to our students' "buy-in" and to their general attitude toward the new novel compared with past experience with *Huckleberry Finn*. Student achievement is expected to remain high, and possibly improve if some students are less put off by the material.

We will use a combination of formative and summative assessments to ensure that our students learn and understand the thematic unit and continue to have a rigorous academic experience in English 4.

Ultimately, the success of this change will be evident in how all of our students feel about themselves in our classrooms.

English 4 Syllabus
Mrs. Kosiba
2019-2020

Welcome to your senior year, your last year as a student at VHS, and of course, your *best* year!

The focus of English 4 will be on reading, writing, listening and speaking skills related to current issues. Writing will include descriptive, narrative, and persuasive, as well as some in-class writing. College application essay writing will also be addressed. Reading will be assigned from a variety of genres: novels and plays—including *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, *No Exit* by John Paul Sartre, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain— as well as short stories, nonfiction essays, and poetry. The movie “Dead Poets Society” will also be shown to use with our work with rhetorical devices. There will also be a strong focus on vocabulary development, rhetorical devices, and voice and style in writing.

Quarter Breakdown:

First Quarter, 1st Semester
(September 3 – October 31):

- Introduction to class
- Focus on learning and using rhetorical devices in writing
 - Speech writing
- “Dead Poets Society”
 - Persuasive letter/Poetry
- college application essays

First/Second Quarter
(November 1 – January 23):

- Existentialism/*Hamlet* unit:
 - Reading *The Myth of Sisyphus*, *The Stranger*, *No Exit*, *Hamlet*
 - Definition and narrative essays
 - Instruction using primary/secondary sources, MLA works cited.

Third Quarter, 2nd Semester
(January 27 – April 1):

- Satire/*Huckleberry Finn*
 - Quick writes/writer’s notebook
 - Persuasive writing
 - HF project

Fourth Quarter
(April 13 – May 21):

- *The Great Gatsby*
 - Reading and analyzing novel
 - Quick writes
 - Persuasive writing
- senior writing/research project

What you will need for class:

1. I highly recommend keeping a binder or folder to use for English 4 only, maintaining neat and organized work. This binder should house all work for this class as to eliminate leaving work in the classroom or losing it. I will not save work left on the floor, under desks, or anywhere else. You are responsible for keeping track of your work.
2. A one-subject notebook is needed to be used as a writer's notebook. We will be doing a lot with these – warm ups, quick writes, poetry, reading response, vocabulary, etc.
3. Pens, pencils, paper, highlighters. Please bring your own supplies to class each day.

Student expectations and classroom policies

Responsibility

- Be in your seat prepared for class when the bell rings. We will start the class period each day with a writing prompt.
- Please be on time! **Tardies will count, tardies will accumulate, and tardies will have consequences! 3 tardies=detention, 4=ASBP**
- Bring required materials to class—textbook, pen/pencil, English binder/folder, paper, and planner.
- Complete quality assignments when due. Late work will be docked points each day it is late, no credit after one week.
- Students are always expected to participate in class. Sleeping or placing one's head on the desk is not acceptable.
- *Plagiarism will not be tolerated on any assignment!* Violations will result in student handbook policy consequences.

Respect

- Respect others and their opinions, don't interrupt or engage in side conversations.
- Respect Mrs. Kosiba – quiet down when asked, do your best work, participate in class, don't use your phones in any way unless instructed.
- Respect school property and Mrs. K's stuff– *don't draw on desks, don't mess with whiteboard, don't leave trash on the floor, when you borrow something return it, etc.*

Homework

Assignments will be given as appropriate. Due dates will vary depending upon the assignment. Late assignments will lose credit after one-week.

- All homework assignments will be due at the beginning of the class and will include name, date, and class period for full credit. If I don't know who did it, I can't give credit.
- If absent, the assignment is due the day of return. Students are responsible for finding out assignments and promptly completing them.
- Homework assignments will be completed individually. Assignments identical to others will result in no credit for all involved parties.

Subsequent violations will result in student handbook policy consequences. Group assignments will be completed and signed by all members of the group.

Late Policy

- Homework assignments turned in after the due date will be given half credit.
- For essays and other assessments, submitting work on the due date will receive full credit.
- If turned in within one week, partial credit will be capped at 85%. Essays and other assessments submitted one week after the due date will be graded at half credit or 50%.

Cell Phone Policy

- Unless otherwise indicated on your class agenda, phones are to be put away as soon as you enter the room.
- Please consider placing your phone inside your backpack or turning off all notifications so that you are not distracted by your device. Make note of your classroom clock's location, and feel free to obsessively check this instead ☺
- If you use your phone during class, it will be taken and placed in the main office—there will be no warnings or grace period.
- You are welcome to charge your phone, but please ask your teacher beforehand as to the best location for this (many of our outlet strips are taxed and prone to damaging electronics).

Assessment

Assignments for reading and writing will include quizzes, tests, writing prompts, quick writes, and formal essays.

Students will be graded according to the following criteria:

Writing/Assessments - 80%

Class participation, responsibility, daily work, and homework – 20%

If your grade drops below passing, phone calls or emails will be made to your parents/guardians. Remember – you need this class to graduate!

If you or your parents ever have any questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me in my classroom at 321-1209 or email me at ckosiba@vicksburgschools.org.