



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2017 Volume I: Adapting Literature

The Power of Stories in Literature and Film

Guide for Curriculum Unit 17.01.06
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Storytelling is the oldest form of transmitting knowledge. Students in the 21st century need to be able to analyze and interpret stories in film as well as written text. In this unit students will analyze and compare four texts which contain embedded stories and magical realism, two narrative structures that can trouble readers but offer extraordinary riches. The central novel of the unit is the award-winning *Kit's Wilderness* by David Almond which alludes to the fairy tale *The Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Andersen, a complex story that is actually taken up at the start of the unit. *Kit's Wilderness* draws on the healing power of stories interwoven with topics of geology and dementia. The central film of the unit is *The Secret of Roan Inish* by John Sayles. A masterful work, it will provide a forum for analyzing cinematography as well as storytelling. Students can compare the use of magical realism and embedded stories in the novel and the film.

Students will then create their own stories, framing a fairy tale within it. They will also choose a novel and compare it to its adaptation.

(Developed for English Language Arts, grade 7; recommended for English Language Arts, grades 6 and 8)

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