**Assessing *Wuthering Heights* as Representative of its Era**

**Subject area/course**: English/Language Arts, English Literature

**Grade level/band**: 11–12

**INSTRUCTOR PROCEDURES**

1. **Task overview**:

Students read the novel *Wuthering Heights* and analyze the major cultural issues that arise in the novel, including questions of race, class, and gender. Students will write a 3- to 4-page paper that considers the question of how a novel earns the label of “representative” of a particular era. In their consideration of Brontë’s work, students will find issues that would have been of concern for her contemporary readers, and articulate a position on whether or not those concerns remain valid for in modern times by relating this Victorian novel to a contemporary novel.

1. **Prior knowledge required:**

Students should be able to:

* Understand the concepts of race, class, and gender.
* Make connections between texts.
* Gather supporting evidence from a text, or texts.
* Formulate a thesis that is supported by that evidence.
1. **Common Core State Standards aligned to this task:**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/2/) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/4/) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/5/) Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/7/) Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/9/) Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

1. **Time requirements:**

Instructors should give students one to two weeks to read the novel, depending on the students’ capacity for reading. Reading the novel should be done outside of the classroom, preserving time in class for discussions about the reading.

Finally, students should have sufficient time to devise a thesis, marshal their evidence in support of it, and produce a draft. This draft could be work-shopped in small groups for diction, syntax, organization, supporting detail, and use of rhetoric before turning in a finalized draft to the instructor.

1. **Instructor materials to use during administration:**
* Students will need copies of *Wuthering Heights* and a contemporary novel of their choice.
* A critical edition of this novel will include a variety of essays that will help the instructor to articulate the different kinds of readings (feminist, Marxist, post-colonial, etc.) for the students during class discussion.
1. **Instructor procedures during administration:**
* This task is intended for use after a unit on *Wuthering Heights*. Follow your normal schedule for reading this novel, and include your normal assignments on analysis of the text as students read. Avoid assignments or class discussions specifically about critical interpretations of the novel so that students can explore that topic independently in this task.
* Note that the young adult or contemporary fiction should be appropriate for 11th-12th graders, keeping in mind the needs of your students.
* During one or more class sessions, you may serve as moderator for small-group discussions. These small groups could deliberate on specific points that you determine. You may ask a variety of questions regarding the portrayal of race, class, and/or gender. After each discussion, the small groups could report to the class at large.
* Additionally, students may want to compare the elements of the romance between the couples (Catherine and Heathcliff, Catherine and Edgar, Isabella and Heathcliff, etc.). Any or all of these aspects could serve as comparison points with young-adult or contemporary fiction they have read previously.
* On other occasions, students could also brainstorm in small groups to assess the literary qualities of the story: the frame, the narrative strategies, the imagery, the central themes, etc. After students turn in their final essays, they could work in small groups to make a collection of comparisons between *Wuthering Heights* and contemporary books that they have read.
1. **Student support:**

The following suggestions are examples of scaffolding that can be used to meet the diverse student needs within the classroom.

* Provide class time for research on students’ topics.
* Provide definitions of new vocabulary words ahead of time.
* For the final product, all learners will benefit from peer assistance while brainstorming their topics, as well as a peer- or teacher-edit of their papers before final submission.
* Some students will have good research skills, but some will need guidance in the determination of appropriate sources and where to look for them. It is important to spend class time in review of what constitutes an appropriate source in advance of students’ independent work time.
1. **Extensions or variations:**
* Students could present the results of their research to the class via an oral or multi-media presentation.
* If there is a particularly interesting and/or controversial topic, a debate could be organized where students choose sides on the topic and defend their views
1. **Scoring and assessment considerations:**

EPIC developed the *College and Career Ready (CCR) Task Bank Scoring Rubric* to accompany this task. If your school or department uses a standardized rubric that would fit the content and requirements of this task, you may choose to use your existing rubric. The following notes and suggestions are meant to clarify the intent of the rubric and include considerations for the assessment of student work.

* When assigning the task, provide students with the rubric that will be used to score their final product and discuss it as a class.
* Unlike some rubrics, the *CCR Task Bank Rubric* does not predetermine “point values” for the scoring criteria. The rubric thus allow for flexibility with different instructors’ scoring systems and individual determination of the “weight” of each criterion.
* Student work scoring at the *Accomplished* level is considered to be entry-level college work.
* The *Exceeds* category on the rubric provides an example of how a student can go above and beyond the *Accomplished* level. These examples are intended to only be ONE way a work product can exceed expectations and allows room for professional judgment.
* If needed, consider including task-specific criteria as an additional scoring category to the rubric or providing a checklist of requirements for the task.