LESSON PLAN

At Heaven's Gate

GRADES	TIME	READING LEVEL
9+	50 min	3

Lesson flow



5 min

Opening Hook

- Begin with a brief discussion about what makes a story moral. Ask students to share their thoughts on the importance of morals in stories.

15–20 min

Story Exploration

- Read "At Heaven's Gate" aloud. Pause at key moments to elicit reactions and thoughts from students on the characters and their actions.

15 min

Analysis Exercises

- Divide students into small groups to discuss the moral implications of the story. Each group will identify specific passages that highlight the absurdity of the woman's situation in relation to her social status.

10 min

Application/Reflection

- Ask students to reflect on their own experiences where they felt moral decisions were influenced by societal perceptions. Have them write a short paragraph summarizing their thoughts.

5 min

Assessment Strategy

- Conclude with a quick quiz or exit ticket where students must write down the moral of the story and one example of how it relates to real life.

STORY OVERVIEW

- **Title and Moral/Theme**: At Heaven's Gate - The story satirically suggests that social status and affiliations can overshadow one's moral transgressions in the eyes of judgment, highlighting the absurdity of societal values.
- **Plot Summary**: In this satirical short story, a woman arrives at the gates of Heaven seeking entry after having committed grave sins. She becomes increasingly anxious as she confesses her crimes, but her fate hinges on her lack of membership in a particular social group, leading to a humorous yet poignant commentary on societal values.
- **Key Characters**:
  - **The Woman**: Represents individuals who may try to justify their wrongdoings based on social standing.
  - **Saint Peter**: Embodies the gatekeeper of morality, who ironically prioritizes social status over moral integrity.

LESSON FUNDAMENTALS

- **Learning Objectives**:
  - Students will identify the central moral theme of the story.
  - Students will analyze the character motivations and societal implications.
  - Students will discuss how the story reflects on contemporary moral dilemmas.
  - Students will create their own moral story inspired by the themes presented.
- **Discussion Questions**:
  1. What does the story suggest about the relationship between social status and morality?
  2. How does the author use humor to convey a serious message?
  3. In what ways can we see similar attitudes in today's society?
- **Required Materials**:
  - Copies of "At Heaven's Gate"
  - Whiteboard and markers
  - Notebooks for students
  - Art supplies for extension activities

✓ Original text available on the story page.