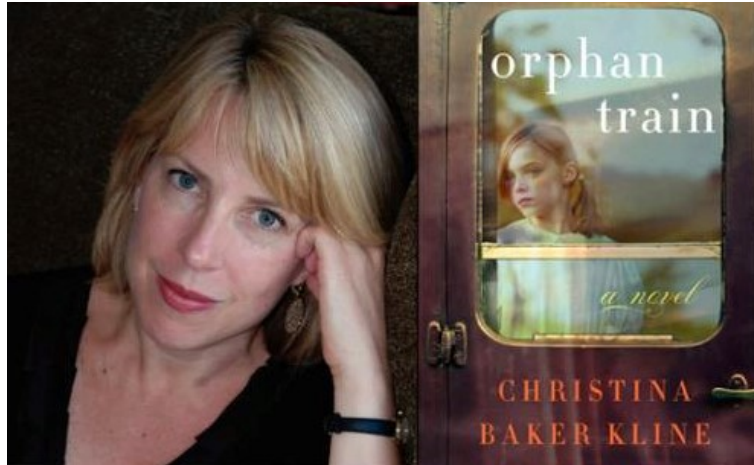


Book title

Orphan Train

Author

Christina Baker Kline



Bibliographic information

Publisher: Mozaik knjiga

Translated to Croatian: Zrinka Budak

2016.

298 str., soft cover

ISBN 9789531418447

Links (adaptations, reviews, full texts etc.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDJx8m5DCL4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Z3djWoTGFU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Z3djWoTGFU>

<http://christinabakerkline.com/news/>

<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/life/books/2014/07/16/orphan-train-by-christina-baker-kline/12679631/>



Theme

The book shows the hard life of an orphan in the United States through two stories: a story of an Irish immigrant called Niamh, who enters into an orphan train in the 30's of the 20th Century and the story of a 17 year old foster kid named Molly, who is from India, placed at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Short summary

Molly has already changes a few foster families, and she is a bit eccentric when it comes to dressing up, she has a hard time fitting in and connecting to peers her own age as well as with older people. Due to a theft attempt of a book she's faced with a conditional sentence where she might be put in a Juvenile Detention Centre, but her boyfriend is able to arrange that she helps a 91 year old lady named Vivian (Niamh) in tidying up her attic. Vivian and Molly connect due to similar lives – Vivian was also an orphan, and reveals to Molly her hard life. Between the years of 1845 and 1929, frequent trains would pass the cities from the East to the country side up in the Midwest and pick up a hundred thousand orphans whose faith was placed in the hands of luck. That's how Naimh changed a few families, went through tough situations, until finally she came into a family that gave her a normal life. Molly, with modern technology, helps Vivian find family member, while Vivial gives love and security to Molly.

Why is the story appropriate for the targeted groups of RSP readers?

- It is written in simple style (both stories are written in I-form, intertwining each other
- Show parts of the American history- orphan trains and the tough faith of kids in a time of crisis, poverty and migration, also bringing up the issue of adoption and child labor, as well as fighting for a better life and judgment towards new nations and cultures.
- Encourages empathy and makes you reflect on the values in your life

What are the distinguished readers interests reflected by this book/story?

The book is based on parts of the American history that is known so little about: trains that transported orphans from one part of America to another, and shows the faith of the kids that were mostly child labor. The book is touching and it shows the lives of two strong women who fight for themselves to have a better life.

Why is this story motivational for the pupils?

The theme and style of writing make this book stimulating for student. Following the life



of Niamh and Molly, the students can think about the faith of other kids and face the problems of today's society. The book also raises awareness to all the things we believe to be normal in today's life.

Is there a historical, political, multi/inter cultural, migrant or similar context recognized in this book/story?

Historical, multi/intercultural and migrant contexts are recognizable.

A part of America's history is presented: immigrants' coming from different countries in search for a better life, only to find out it's not like that, with more misery and poverty.

Also, the relationship towards the kids in the 20th century is described, as well as the trains themselves.

Is there a principle of inclusion reflected in this book/story and does it promotes understanding of cultural diversities and heritage?

Yes, inclusion of immigrants in America, as well as including abandoned kids and orphans in families and the society, as well as in schools in the 21st century.

It encourages the understanding of cultural differences and heritage (ex. Niamh always carries a Celtic cross around her neck which her grandmother gave to her, always looking at peoples reaction to it, as they react to her weird hairstyle. On the other hand, Molly is different due to her looks, and finds problems in her foster families, who do not accept the eating habits.).



METHODOLOGY

Title of Activity

Orphan Train

Description of educational activity

Duration: 2 x 45 minutes

Student Age: 16 – 17

Student Class organization: group work, individual work, frontal work

Lesson goal:

- development to work on the text: kind of narrator and his influence on the reception of the work, the characterization of the characters and the characterization procedures
- recognition of the impact of socio-historical circumstances on the life of the child
- empathy development and critical thinking

Support materials:

- Internet
- Teaching leaflets

Highlights:

- 1 part of the story

Activities:

Reading, interpreting and discussing the text, watching and discussing video clips

I. Activities before reading

- Provide motivation, open students to share their own experiences, group cohesion

The students are divided into groups of four. Each group gets the assignment of defining the concept of home and the concept of family.



Using the dramatic technique of dynamic statues to present their vision of this concept: to show it by movement, by sound, by communion with others. Presentation of the results of the work.

Together watch a clip from the documentary film about the becoming of the Orphan train novel.

Group task: Write the three key information's you think are most important and that impressed you the most. Together comment.

II. Activities during reading.

Students first work independently. They get part no. 1 and a teaching leaflet for focused reading (recognition of the narrator, narrator characterization: distinguishing features from an emotional state, differentiation of objective and subjective time).

III. Common activities after reading.

By linking the clips from the documentary movie and reading the text, the students are preparing to participate in a discussion: they need to choose a side. The teacher makes a statement, and the students choose whether they agree with it or disagree by taking the foreseen places in the classroom. There is also the possibility of "I'm not sure." Students argue their opinions. Students who are not sure after the argumentation can choose their own opinion. The goal of the game is to open a discussion and updating of the issues (claims can be made from the text itself but also the issues it opens).

An example of a claim:

- Orphan's train is a positive attempt to help abandoned, unbridled children.
- People who adopt children have the right to change their name, for their good.
- The care of a nine-year-old over a two-year-old is an overwhelming task.
- Escape from your own country in search of a better life is not a good solution for families. (...)

Evaluation and Assessment Method:

- Teacher Role - Prepare Materials and act as a Moderator
- Evaluation of group work - questionnaire: evaluation and self-evaluation

Students are assessed on the basis of their abilities:

- reading comprehension, recognition of the narrator's type, characterization of the main heroine
- participation in the discussions by expressing their points of view



The Impact of Activity on Reading RSP:

Activities encourage the development of critical thinking, as well as the empathy of the students because of the heartbreaking story. At the same time, they are interested in expanding their own knowledge of the problems encountered in the text and the video clips: the care of orphans, abandoned children, emigration from their homeland.

Connection to curriculum

Class: Freshman or Junior year

Curriculum:

Epics - access to epic work (Freshman year)

Realism - Social Issues (Junior year)

Knowledge:

- the impact of socio-historical opportunities on an individual's life - recognition of social issues
- the elements of epic technique: the narrator, the characterization of the character, the recognition of characterization procedures
- Critical thinking about the world, family, society, migration
- enjoying reading literary literature

Skills:

- collection, selection and evaluation of information
- reading, interpreting and evaluating literary texts

Competence:

- communication competences

Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity

Christina Baker Kline: *Orphan Train*

Mozaik knjiga, Zagreb, 2016.

298 pg., Soft cover

ISBN 9789531418447



PROJECT No - 2016-1-HR01-KA201-022159
Handbook for reluctant, struggling and
poor readers

Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Short description of digital sources

Testimonials and real clips from the orphan trains from documentaries were used in making of the book.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDJx8m5DCL4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Z3djWoTGFU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Z3djWoTGFU>

Results

Expected outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- characterize the character based on the text
- explain the impact of socio-historical opportunities of the child's destiny
- by argumentation they are able to state their opinions and take into consideration opinions of others

Recommendations

Speaking of the tough destiny of abandoned children and orphans in the early 20th century in America, this work allows the development of empathy of the students, while at the same time stimulating them to note the social problems that are still present today as well as their critical observation. The work is shocking, but at the same time positive and optimistic.