

Teaching Example:
Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption (Bryan Stevenson)



Chapter 14: "Cruel and Unusual" (pp. 256-74)*

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Plot Summary of the Chapter:

Joe Sullivan was just thirteen years-old when he was sentenced to death due to false testimony and statements. He never really stood a chance because of his family's history and skin color. Even in prison, Joe is treated unfairly and develops a serious illness. However, Bryan Stevenson tries to get him out of prison with the help of similar cases and is successful in the end.

Overview of Lesson Design:

Phase / Teaching Activity / Impulse	Material
<p>Introduction: The students paraphrase the meaning of the two words 'cruel' and 'unusual'. Furthermore, one half of the class draws something about the word cruel and the other half draws something about the word unusual. They should then explain what is cruel or unusual about their drawing.</p>	Worksheet 1
<p>Activity: The students work closely with the text focussing on Joe Sullivan's behavior and how this possibly connected to his experiences and his environment. Material for students with different language proficiency (<i>Differenzierungsangebot</i>) is provided as well.</p> <p>Comparison: The students revise and compare their expectations from the beginning with what they just read. This is done in plenum.</p> <p>Transfer phase: The students classify what they have read into a larger thematic context. They discuss the text against the background of racial profiling and the American legal system.</p>	Chapter 14 (pp. 256-74) Worksheet 2
<p>Homework: As a creative writing task the students are asked to write a diary entry from Joe Sullivan's perspective.</p>	Worksheet 2

Target Competence(s): *Funktionale kommunikative Kompetenz (Leseverstehen), Text- und Medienkompetenz*



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*Based on: Stevenson, Bryan. 2020. "Chapter Fourteen: Cruel and Usual", in: *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. London: Scribe Publications, pp. 256-74.