



Overview

The resource is being field-tested and is subject to revision.

Welcome to classroom resources for **TALES FROM THE VAULT**. The lesson topics included here are suitable for students in the last two years of secondary school and are adaptable to senior English language arts courses, courses in Canadian history and culture, creative writing and media courses, and French language arts courses.

Synopsis

This unit of four lessons involves students with the sensational world of Canadian pulp fiction magazines of the 1940s. The Library and Archives Canada collection of Canadian pulps presents a unique literary and cultural opportunity for students to explore a significant aspect of Canadian and contemporary pulp writing and media culture manifesting itself today in numerous print publications, television series and movies. Using materials from Canadian magazine publications with the curious titles *Stag*, *Sensational Crime Confessions*, *Uncanny Tales*, *Yarns*, *Les Drames de l'amour* and *Le Coucou: Histoire de Cowboys* students will be introduced to the thriving Canadian pulp fiction industry of the 1940s spearheaded by author/editor Thomas P. Kelly, Charles Gamelin and their cohorts in both English and French Canada. Study of the stories themselves will broaden into an examination of specific aspects of contemporary writing and media as well as providing opportunities for students to explore and write on their own and in co-operative learning situations.

Overall Expectations

During this unit students will:

- Utilize the resources that make up the Library and Archives Canada Website, *Tales From the Vault*
- Demonstrate a familiarity with the history and cultural heritage of the Canadian pulp magazine industry
- Conduct focused examination of specific Canadian pulp fiction and non-fiction texts
- Determine the writing and cultural conventions and values underlying pulp fiction as a literary genre
- Engage in pulp fiction formula writing as a literary and cultural exercise
- Explore specific subject and character motifs characteristic of pulp writing: the true confession, crime stories, the sensational expose, the western, romance, irony and the supernatural “gimmick” stories
- Conduct research into a specific aspect of Canadian pulp fiction writing
- Explore gender roles in pulp writing of the 1940s
- Explore and ‘read’ the visual art associated with pulp magazine writing

Note: The unit lessons are not necessarily interdependent or sequential. Teachers may ‘pick and choose’ to best suit their purposes in adapting the material to the needs of English, visual arts, comparative civilization, media studies or French classes. After lesson one, teachers may choose one or more of the remaining lessons which culminate in an individual research / writing project.

Goals and Intended Learning Outcomes

Goals and intended learning outcomes for the specific lessons of this unit are based on and encompass key Canadian senior English language arts and media study curriculum document

statements for reading, writing, viewing, speaking, listening, and literary/cultural study. They do not need to be repeated in any detail here as teachers are familiar with the documents relevant to their teaching context.

English Language Arts 11 and 12, B.C. Ministry of Education (1996), Appendix A: Prescribed Learning Outcomes (Comprehend and Respond, Communicate ideas and Information, Self and Society)

English Language Arts (Senior High), Alberta Learning (2003), Program Outline, pages 12-13

English Language Arts: A Curriculum Guide for the Secondary Level, Saskatchewan Learning (1999)
"Objectives in the English Language Arts"

Senior 4 English Language Arts: Comprehensive Focus: Student Learning Outcomes 1-5, pages 17 – 63, Manitoba: Education, Citizenship and Youth (2000)

English 12 College Preparation: Ontario Outcome Chart: English – Grade 12 College (2000) Writing, Media Studies, Literature Studies and Reading)

Secondary School Curriculum: English Language Arts I-V, Quebec Education, Loisir et Sport (1993), pages 33 and 51-53

Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: Grades 10-12, Nova Scotia Education and Culture (2001), pages 24-33

Major Unit Resource

Tales From the Vault:

Stag: The Men's Magazine, Fall 1941 issue

Yarns: July, 1941 issue

Sensational Crime Confessions: January, 1946 issue

Uncanny Tales, November, 1940 issue

* *Les Drames de l'amour: Les aventures amoureuses d'un LumberJack*

* *Le Coucou: Histoire de Cowboys*

These complete magazine issues are found on the *Tales From the Vault* Website along with additional resources.

Teacher/Student background resources

***Tales From the Vault* 'Table of Contents' links:**

"About *Tales From the Vault*!"

"Introduction"

"Canadian Pulp Industry"

"English Pulp Collection"

"French Pulp Collection"

"Themes"

"Corrupting Morals"

"Decline of the Pulps"

"Effects of the Pulps"

Other Websites:

ThePulp.Net <http://thepulp.net/>
Pulp History (adventurehouse.com) <http://www.adventurehouse.com/history.htm>
Pulp Fiction Central – The Vintage Library
<http://www.vintagelibrary.com/pulpfiction/PulpFictionCentral.php>
Pulpgallery.com <http://home.comcast.net/~pulpgallery/welcome.html>
Arts.mcgill – www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/AHCS/cultureofcities/Gallery1/front.html
Projet=li-que-fasc. Litterature québécoise en fascicules
<http://membres.lycos.fr/liquefasc> (in French only)

Books:

Strange, Carolyn and Tina Loo. *True Crime, True North: The Golden Age of Canadian Pulp Magazines*. Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004

Tovani, Cris. *I Read It, But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*. Stenhouse Publishers, 2000. (for suggested classroom activities)

Primary unit texts by category

Note: Unit texts are categorized for lesson emphases and for student interest and research purposes

“True” Crime and Personal Confessions

“Passion Drove Me to Kill”
“I Was the Moll of the Hot Car Mob”
“A Monster Murdered My Wife”
“Doomed to Die”
“I Was a Gambling Girl”
“Will They Execute My Son?”

“Gripping Tales” – Strange Adventure and the Supernatural

“The Talking Heads” – Part One
“U Day Zaung – An Oriental Mystery”
“The Lover and the Beam: A True Ghost Story”
“Murder in the Graveyard”
“Ghost on the Diamond”
“Murder is a Science”

The Irony ‘Gimmick’ Story

“Sharks”
“The Rescue”
“Defeat of a Champion”
“The Blank Paper Clue”
“Dead Men Do Talk”
“Murder by Night”

Tales of the Old West and Aventures de l’Ouest Canadien

“Decision for Gunplay” Part One
“Badlands Purge”
“Tales of the North West Mounted Police”

“Les aventures amoureuses d’un ‘lumberjack’”
 “Combats sanglants”
 “Santa-Claus et ses pareils”
 “Le cow-boy au coeur tendre”
 “Le Perroquet ses prairies”

Expose

“Reasons for Anger” – Journalism and the Russian Front
 “Telephone Vultures” – The inside scoop on telephone solicitation
 “Trouble Boys” – The ‘enforcers’ of the gambling syndicate
 “Are You Insane?” - Trapped into asylum commitment
 “Is Your Stomach Upset?” – Patent medicines and medical ‘myths’
 “Dear Clara” – A bitter man denounces marriage

Unit Organizer

Lesson	Time	Description of Lesson
1	120-150 minutes	Students will be introduced to the pulp genre and Canadian pulp magazines of the 1940s through examination of pulp titles, defining the boundaries of “pulp writing”, examining pulp cover art and story illustrations, and analyzing the openings of several stories. French language pulp publications out of Quebec of the same period tended to focus on different subject matter, but are central to the Canadian pulp phenomenon.
2	75-100 minutes	Students will work with a basic convention of pulp writing – verisimilitude, or the façade of the ‘true story’. A model for analyzing pulp primary texts for literary and cultural elements will be presented as basis for further group and individual investigation. Six stories from the January 1946 issue of <i>Sensational Crime Confessions</i> and/or “Les aventures amoureuses d’un ‘LumberJack’” from <i>Drames de l’amour</i> will be the focus of textual study. Handout 2.1: A model for the literary and cultural study of pulp fiction Handout 2.2: Evaluation Rubric for a Pulp True Confession Story
3	75-100 minutes	Women are most likely to be portrayed in Canadian pulp magazines of the 1940s as either ‘bad girls’ or victims. Four English stories along with a male-voice monologue, and five French stories will provide an opportunity for students to examine variations on gender stereotyping in pulp stories. Handout 3.1: Writing to Alter a Narrative Point of View
4	75-100 minutes	Students will have an opportunity to choose one of eleven research/writing topics – or to create one of their own – in order to synthesize and apply their knowledge of pulp writing as a literary and cultural phenomenon. Handout 4.1: Digging in the Pulps: Some writing opportunities Handout 4.2: Digging in the Pulps: An opportunity for writing