

Allusion: Lesson Plan

Topic	
An allusion is, put simply, a reference. It's almost always an indirect reference but it can be direct. The important element of an allusion is that it acts as a passing comment - what is being referenced is never fully described.	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Public Speaking 	30-45 minutes
Video link:	
https://academy4sc.org/topic/allusion-i-understood-that-reference/	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
<p>By the end of this lesson, students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the term allusion. • Explain the purpose of using allusions. • Identify and use allusions in their work. 	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
N/A	
Materials Needed	
Worksheet	
Before you watch	
<p>Quick write Give students 2-3 minutes to make a list of what they think are the most famous or well known books or stories of all time (in all of human history)</p> <p>As a class: The teacher should ask for a few items off the student's list. There will likely be allusions between these works. The teacher should call attention to this. For example, <i>Hamlet</i> has several Biblical allusions in it. "That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the</p>	



knave jowls it to the ground, as if 'twere Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder!" (*Hamlet*, 5.1.34). Ask students if they can spot references between two works, and what they are.

After listing a few examples, discuss why these references might have been used. What do they achieve? What effect do they have on the scene in particular or the work as a whole? For example, the reference to Cain killing Abel helps further establish the tragic tone of *Hamlet*. Furthermore, it paints a vivid picture of the knave dashing the skull upon the ground with vehemence and disgust.

While you watch

1. Define Allusion
2. What is the purpose of making a reference or an allusion?

After you watch/discussion questions

1. When might it be effective to use an allusion? When might it be detrimental to use one?
2. How often do you think you encounter allusions in works (literature, poetry, movies, tv)?

Activity Ideas

1. Complete corresponding worksheet
2. Have students identify allusions in a book they are currently reading
3. Have student incorporate an allusion into a piece of writing they are currently working on

Sources/places to learn more

1. Glucksberg, Sam. "Beyond Literal Meanings: The Psychology of Allusion." *Psychological Science*, vol 2, issue 3, 1991, pp 146-152. Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.1991.tb00122.x.
2. Irwin, William. "What Is an Allusion?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol 59, issue 3, Summer 2001, pp 287-297.
3. Machacek, Gregory. "Allusion." *PMLA*, vol 122, no 2, Mar 2007, pp 522-536. Doi: 10.1632/pmla.2007.122.2.522. ISSN:0030-8129.