

In the book, *In Sunlight or in Shadow/Stories Inspired by the Painting of Edward Hopper*, Lawrence Block has edited short stories based on Hopper's art work from such diverse writers as Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates, and Lawrence himself. Some of the art work utilized may not be suitable for your classroom due to the use of nudes in the pictures. Furthermore, some of the short stories contain language which may also be unsuitable for use in your curriculum. With that said, I have chosen four pictures and their corresponding short stories that I think will work for most teachers. Due to time constraints, this presentation will concentrate on two of the pictures and their corresponding short stories. The other two will be located on my website to give you a wider choice.

The following material is adapted from:

"Outside In: Finding A Character's Heart Through Art - ReadWriteThink." *Readwritethink.org*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/outside-finding-character-heart-922.html>>.

Alienation is an important theme in contemporary literature, and it's an idea that adolescents need to confront in order to fully understand what it means to be a human being in our modern world. This activity, based on the art of Edward Hopper and combined with stories by various writers based on the paintings, allows students to explore the idea of alienation while tapping into their creative talents as they learn to create vivid characters through voice. Students view and reflect on an Edward Hopper painting. Working in small groups, students brainstorm everything they can about a character in the painting. They then write a short story based on the character(s) in the paintings. Those characters may reflect the loneliness that appears to pervade modern society.

Begin with the paintings: Observe, interpret, create

Teacher instructions to students:

1. This session will focus on exploring a couple of Edward Hopper's paintings and considering what Hopper is trying to express in his art.
2. Project the first painting, *Room in New York, 1932*, and ask the students to write down quickly their first impressions of the work. Ask them to consider the overall mood, the use of color, the interplay of light and dark, patterns and textures and what they may represent, the focal point of the painting and how it draws your attention, the illusion of space in the picture, their sense of the situation that is depicted, and so forth.
3. Ask students to share their reactions to the paintings. Generally, students use certain words over and over again, describing Hopper's figures as *sad, isolated, cut off, desperate, distant*.
4. Have small groups of students (2-3) discuss Hopper's use of windows as ways to "see in," but also "to cut off."
5. Guide students to think about Hopper's use of shadows and pools of light.
6. Encourage them to share their ideas about the situations the characters are in, their expressions, their clothing, and their surroundings. (i.e. "the characters seem isolated from each other," "she's leaving home," "he's done something bad and feels guilty," etc.) Often students offer a series of scenarios that reflect characters feeling enormous loss and loneliness.

