



Lesson 4

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

Canadian Pulp: A Part of Our Cultural Heritage

Synopsis

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.

Specific Expectations

Students will:

- Work with a writing topic of their choice
- Draw from their reading of Canadian pulp fiction, exposition or advertising to synthesize their knowledge
- Consult web based and library based resources as well as the resource material included in *Tales From the Vault*.
- Produce a focused essay dealing with a particular aspect of Canadian pulp writing of the 1940s

Preparation

1. Have student access to the *Tales From the Vault* Website resources available at www.collectionscanada.ca/pulp/index-e.html.
2. Work with a teacher librarian to establish availability of web based and other resources relevant to the topics.
3. If appropriate, book library time and enlist the help of the teacher librarian.
4. Make available copies of Handout 4.1: “Digging in the Pulps: Some Writing Opportunities” and Handout 4.2: Rubric - “Digging in the Pulps: An Opportunity for Writing”.

Time

100-150 minutes

Process

Introduction (20-30 minutes)

1. Depending on the lesson sequence/number of lessons the class has been involved with, review the aspects of Canadian pulp writing and social/cultural aspects of the pulp writing and film industry you have dealt with.
2. Propose that to conclude this part of their study, students will have an opportunity to explore an aspect of Canadian pulp writing culture which interests them.

3. Outline the writing assignment as you would do in the context of your class routines and expectations for essay writing of this kind.

Body of Lesson (75-120 minutes)

1. Give students copies of Handout 4.1 and go over the topic possibilities. Remind students that they will make choices in order to limit or focus a particular topic. They may choose to explore an aspect of Canadian pulp writing culture not represented in the topics. Students can consult with you about such possibilities.
2. If you have booked library time and the help of the teacher librarian, students should receive orientation to the research material available and then be given time in the library to work on their chosen topics.
3. Depending on the time you wish to make available, much of the planning and drafting stages may be completed at home as well as in the library.
4. If time is available, you may wish to establish a peer editing and individual teacher consultation activity as part of the editing and proofreading processes.
5. As part of a peer, self or teacher editing process, make available Handout 4.2, Rubric - "Digging in the Pulps: An Opportunity for Writing" to use as a guideline for expectations.

Conclusion

Set due date and explain evaluation procedures.

Handout 4.1

Digging in the Pulps: Some writing opportunities

Choose one of the following topics to explore – or use them as a starting place for generating your own topic.

1. What do the Canadian pulp stories you have read have in common with tabloid “reality” television and ‘supermarket tabloids’? Do a comparison / contrast. Judge the effectiveness of the 1940s pulp true confession / crime writing referring to the reality TV programs, supermarket tabloids and soap operas popular in your part of Canada.
2. What social and moral values do Canadian pulp stories of the 1940s tend to uphold? What can you conclude is morally and socially important to Canadian pulp writers of that era?
3. Love Gained and Lost: Compare a story like *“Passion Drove Me to Kill”* or *“Les aventures amoureuses d’un ‘lumberjack’”* with a soured relationship story from *True Confessions*, or a similar French or English popular romance pulp magazine.
4. The ‘Frontier Mentality’: Explore the significance of the “Old West” as a setting for Canadian pulp writers. What did the writers of stories like “Decision for Gunplay”, “Badlands Purge”, “Tales of the North West Mounted Police”, “Combats sanglants”, “Le cow-boy au coeur tendre”, and “Le Perroquet des prairies” accomplish?
5. The contemporary media is often accused of ‘mindless sensationalism’. Choose a movie you consider “pulpy” and sensationalistic. Justify your choice using your knowledge of pulp fiction conventions.

6. Canadian writer Margaret Atwood's novel *The Blind Assassin* uses a story-within-a-story technique involving the writing of a pulp science fiction story. Read the novel and explore the nature and purpose of Atwood's use of pulp fiction in her story. (Note: The french title of Margaret Atwood's book is *Le tueur aveugle* - translated by Michele Albaret-Maatsch, Paris: 2003. ISBN: 2264035951)
7. Explore pulp magazines as a Canadian cultural and political phenomenon. Why did the Canadian pulps come to be, why did they flourish, and why did they disappear?
8. Female characters in the pulps – then and now: Compare and contrast the presentation of female characters in Canadian pulp magazines of the 1940s with contemporary tabloid and true confessions pulp publications or movies.
9. If you read French, explore the stories “Les Aventures Amoureuses d'un ‘LumberJack’”, and “Histoire de Cowboys” included in the Tales From the Vault collection. Discuss aspects of plot and character in relation to the conventions associated with pulp story writing.
10. Explore the advertising in Canadian pulp magazines of the 1940s. What does this advertising reveal about the target audiences of these publications as well as social and cultural values and moral sensibilities of the time?
11. You are a social anthropologist living and working in the 22nd century. You have discovered the material included in the **Tales From the Vault** website. You decide to focus on the ‘gallery’ and do a descriptive analysis of what the society that produced these illustrations believed and valued. Things you might consider: roles of women, political conflict, attraction to violence. You might go through the covers included in the ‘gallery’, place them into two or three categories that suggest themselves to you, and write your analysis based on those categories.

Handout 4.2

Digging in the Pulps: An Opportunity for Writing

(Indicate level and mark)

Categories	Level 1 (50-59%)	Level 2 (60-69%)	Level 3 (70-79%)	Level 4 (80-100%)
Ideas/Content <ul style="list-style-type: none">- clear thesis- consistent view-point- appropriate evidence and examples to support thesis- appropriate citations and bibliography				
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none">- clear paragraphing- effective transitions				
Voice <ul style="list-style-type: none">- engaging and interesting- clear understanding of purpose/audience				
Style and Mechanics <ul style="list-style-type: none">- effective word choice- spelling- sentence fluency- punctuation- format				

Comments: