

Lawn Boy – Classroom Lesson Plan

Includes Virtual Author Interview

Book Synopsis

Lawn Boy by Jonathan Evison is a contemporary novel that follows Mike Muñoz, a young man of Mexican American descent navigating economic hardship, class barriers, and identity in suburban America. After turning a small landscaping job into a growing business, Mike confronts questions about ambition, systemic inequality, race, masculinity, and the myth of the American Dream. The novel blends humor and social commentary while examining privilege, entrepreneurship, and personal agency.

Banned / Challenged Status

Lawn Boy has been widely challenged and removed in some school districts due to brief references to sexuality and mature language. Critics argue that certain passages are inappropriate for students. Supporters emphasize that the novel addresses systemic inequality, race, and economic struggle, and that isolated excerpts do not reflect the broader thematic focus of the work.

Essential Questions

- How does economic inequality shape opportunity?
- What myths surround the concept of the American Dream?
- How does humor function as social critique?

Lesson Objective

Students will analyze how contemporary fiction critiques economic and social systems and evaluate how character perspective shapes understanding of class and identity.

Lesson Structure (60 Minutes)

- Warm-Up (5 minutes): What factors influence economic mobility?
- Direct Instruction (15–20 minutes): Examine narrative voice and social satire. Define key terms: socioeconomic status, systemic inequality, satire, agency.

- Guided Practice (15 minutes): In pairs, analyze a scene where Mike confronts economic barriers. Synthesis Question: How does the novel complicate the idea that hard work alone guarantees success?
- Independent Practice (15 minutes): Choice-based analytical or reflective writing (see below).
- Exit Ticket (5 minutes): Identify one example of social commentary in the novel.

Independent Practice Options

- Option A: Analyze how entrepreneurship is portrayed in the novel.
- Option B: Compare the novel's depiction of class to a current social issue.
- Option C: Write a reflective paragraph on ambition and identity.

Creative Interpretation Option

- American Dream myth vs. reality comparison chart
- Character growth timeline
- Satirical advertisement critiquing economic inequality

All creative responses must include an artist statement citing specific textual evidence.

Reader Impact + Student Voice

- Why might this novel provoke debate?
- How does representation of working-class experiences influence perspective?
- What does the novel suggest about systemic barriers?
- How can literature foster economic awareness?

Intellectual Freedom Connection

Discuss why books addressing class, race, and sexuality are sometimes challenged. Writing Prompt: Should schools include contemporary novels that critique economic systems? Support your reasoning with textual evidence.

Author Interview

Author interview provided by UNBAN COOLIES.
Visit: <http://www.youtube.com/@unbanCOOLIES>

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