

Lesson: Historical Context in *Dark They Were, and Golden-Eyed*  
Grade: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts  
Time: 50 min

Standard:

**7.RL.9** Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

During this lesson, I wanted to use the historical context of our short story to show how the author altered what really happened and used it in his Science Fiction story. The story is about the Bittering family moving to Mars because of the Cold War. I wanted to show the historical context and how universal the Science Fiction genre can be.

Step by Step:

1. To begin the class, I would ask the students “What year do you think this story was set in?” After a few minutes of discussion, I will tell them that the story was set during the Cold War era. I would explain that many times it is difficult to place when a Science Fiction is set because of the scientific and technological uses in the texts.
2. I would show them a video clip called “Duck and Cover.” This video is a video that they would show students in school about what to do if a nuclear bomb hit.
  - a. I would give them some historical background, telling them that many Americans feared that they would be bombed during the Cold War, and ask them what they knew about the Cold War.
3. We would then look in the text and find the places where we could tell that the short story was written during the Cold War era.
4. Then, I would write their writing prompt question on the board. “If the story was set in 2012, how would it be different? Why would the Bitterings move to Mars if they lived in the year 2012?”

5. After giving them time to write, we would have a discussion, and I would write their answers on the board to make a list.

Reflection:

My students really enjoyed watching the video clip that I showed. They thought it was interesting and had some really good responses to it. I think it was important to show them the historical context because it cleared some things up in the story. They also had some excellent responses to the writing prompt.