



# Be Mine A BoomWriter Valentines Day Lesson Plan

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Valentine's Day is just around the corner and you know what that brings – chocolate covered strawberries, heart-shaped Reeses cups, and everyone's favorite – Brach's Conversation Hearts. Ah! What says, "I love you" more than compressed sugar chalk with cheesy sayings on them?

I've used conversation hearts in my mythology class with great results, and it is a lesson that can easily be adapted to fit English, history, and other subjects as well. Here's how we did it. I wanted my students to have a good understanding of the relationship between Zeus and Hera. Here was the prompt: "It's date night for Zeus and his lovely wife Hera. Where would the king of the gods take his beautiful bride? How does it go? Make sure your story shows knowledge of who Zeus and Hera are, as well as at least two references to other Greek myths we read previously. The catch? You must use five heart sayings and you must keep it PG." (I teach high schoolers, so that last part was particularly important!) I then gave my students each a box of conversation hearts (they are very cheap, but you easily buy a large bag of them and just divvy them out for even cheaper).

Each student picked five candies from the box and proceeded to write their story using the groan-worthy sayings on their hearts. Once they used the phrase, they were, of course, allowed to eat the candy. We got several stories of Zeus trying to explain to Hera that he really does love her despite his less than stellar fidelity history.

This prompt is great for getting students thinking about who these gods were and what their attributes were as well. The act of creating a fictional story to go with it reinforces their understanding of who these gods and goddesses are. It could easily be adapted for aid in the understanding of any literature characters (Romeo and Juliet, Gatsby and Daisy, Catherine and Heathcliff), historical figures (Cleopatra and Mark Anthony, Napoleon and Josephine, King Henry VIII and Catherine, King Henry VIII and Anne, King Henry VIII and Jane, King Henry VIII and – well, you get the idea...), or even go crazy in science class and have them try and adequately tell the story of the relationship between gravity and anything with mass or the constant on again, off again relationship of those wacky protons and electrons.

Any course can adapt this to their subject matter if the teacher is creative enough. If a student does it correctly, then they have demonstrated knowledge of who these characters, historical figures, science thingees (that's the right term, isn't it?) are by staying true to their nature. Plus, the potential for funny stories keep the students engaged. Having Lancelot wooing Guinevere with phrases like, "SO FINE" and "CUTIE PIE"? What's not to love?

A great way to extend the learning is to have them write their story on BoomWriter using the Story Writer toolkit. Once students have submitted the story and the teacher has approved five or so that he/she feels has mastered the true nature of the characters, then the students can vote on which one they feel does the best job in capturing the tender/tense/hilariously awkward moment the best. This will give students who maybe did not have the best grasp of these characters five more chances to get to know them better. Once the students have voted, give the winner whatever incentives you use in your class, but really, in the end, one could say they are all winners since they got to eat those delicious candy hearts!

