

Our Game of Thrones

Description This activity intends to foster the students understanding of the specificities of the creative and scientific processes (the latter in the realm of the Social Sciences, namely in History), how they complement and differ from each other. By collaboratively creating a written story – a short historical romance, for example – students also develop their critical understanding about other production processes, like those behind the contents broadcast by the media. Despite the title of the activity, the stories created don't have to be related to *Game of Thrones* or be in the fantasy genre.

The students, in groups of four, are challenged to write collaboratively a medieval-themed story in Wattpad or a blog, with their country's history as a background (the specificities of each country in the Middle Ages). **The stories must be fictional, but their characters and contexts should reflect historical knowledge.** This is the main goal of the activity. And it implies the cooperation between two teachers: one in the area of Language and/or Literature; and one in the area of History.

This is a long-term activity, one that can last most of school year, depending on the teachers' aims. However, we recommend not taking much more than a month between the presentation of the activity and its outcomes.

Tag

- Book
- Media
- TV series
- Writing

Skills

PRODUCCIÓN

- Create and modify written productions
- Use writing software and apps

GESTIÓN SOCIAL

- Collaborate

CONTENT MANAGEMENT

- Manage content dissemination and sharing

Learning areas • Language

Card language • Spanish
• English

Structure

Sessions 4 + 1 (presentation and discussion of the outcomes)

Duration 90' (Variable)

Number of participants 10 - 20 (maximum)

Age • 14-16

Materials

- Pen, paper, pencils
 - Computers, tablets and/or smartphones
 - Internet connection
 - An account on Wattpad (www.wattpad.com) or a collective blog
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Process

Key questions

- Why shouldn't a literary work restrict itself to historical facts to create a compelling narrative? How important is the authors' creative freedom in the production of contents?
- When fictional content is "inspired in actual events" does it mean that it is historically accurate?
- What are the best practices in historiography and scientific research? How important is to choose quality sources?
- What are the specificities of the creative and scientific processes? What are the differences between them? How do they complement each other?

Development

Session 1: Language and Literature and History - 90' x2

In the first of these two classes the activity is introduced and the groups are formed. Each teacher in each class presents the specific purposes of the activity for each subject: in Language and Literature, to develop writing skills and literary knowledge; in History, to understand the Middle Ages.

The main goal is stressed by the two teachers: the stories to be created must be fictional, while reflecting historical knowledge. That is, the plots and characters that are created, although fictional, must be clearly influenced by the historic traits of the social groups and contexts of the country's Middle Ages. For instance, in Portugal, the construction of a story about the Portuguese nobility should pay attention to this class's main historical characteristics as presented by some of the scientific work listed below. Teachers should look for scientific articles that present the main characteristics of the country's Middle Ages. These articles would also enable the students to come into contact with respected academic works. Students are encouraged to make a compelling and entertaining narrative: their stories should go beyond the presentation of facts, and be creative and well written.

The students should do part of the work outside the class. In session 2, they should present the synopsis of their stories and characters, the story plan and the historical base.

Session 2: Language and Literature - 90'

This is a tutorial session that should be held one or two weeks after the first session. The teacher talks with each group and evaluates the work that the students have already done. The teacher advises the students on how to write a compelling narrative, keeping the activity's goals and the third specific question in mind. The students should choose where they are going to publish their story: on Wattpad or on a blog.

Session 3: History - 90'

This is a tutorial session that should be held one or two weeks after the first session. The teacher talks with each group and evaluates the work that the students have already done. The teacher helps the students to properly research and understand the Middle Ages, keeping the activity's goals and the second specific question in mind. The students should choose where they are going to publish their story: on Wattpad or on a blog.

Publishing

The students should publish the final version of their stories one week before their presentations, so that both teachers can read them prior to the final session.

Sesión final - 90'

Los estudiantes presentaran brevemente sus creaciones: los desafíos a los que se han enfrentado, hablaran de lo que más disfrutado hacer y lo que menos, así como hablaran sobre sus conclusiones con respecto a las preguntas clave de la actividad. Es recomendable que para esta sesión estén presentes ambos docentes. Al final de todas las presentaciones, los docentes comentaran las historias creadas, y entre otras cuestiones, analizaran si sus alumnos respondieron correctamente a los objetivos de la actividad. Se animara a los estudiantes a participar en este debate que se genere. Al final, los profesores deberán presentar ejemplos de contenidos ficticios populares y que sean de calidad que, a pesar de estar inspirados en eventos reales, difieran de sus fuentes para crear de manera más eficaz una narrativa convincente. Esta parte de la actividad, debería fomentar el debate sobre la naturaleza de los distintos tipos de contenidos: si bien se puede aprender de todos, en teoría, es crucial reconocer que los contenidos y el conocimiento de las historias no son iguales. Es por ello, que por ejemplo, hay que tener en cuenta que tanto el proceso de producción como los objetivos de un artículo científico y de una película, no son iguales. En este sentido, los alumnos deberán reflexionar sobre el hecho de que hay que tener en cuenta la naturaleza de los contenidos cuando los elegimos para que sean nuestras propias fuentes de información.

Evaluation

La evaluación de los trabajos de los alumnos tendrá en consideración los contenidos creados, pero también su presentación. Durante la presentación, se animara a los estudiantes a reflexionar sobre las preguntas clave presentadas al inicio de esta actividad didáctica. Por lo tanto, se evaluarán tanto los contenidos como las reflexiones sobre las preguntas clave de esta actividad.

References for professors

• Le Goff, J.1992. *The Medieval Imagination*.
Le Goff, J. 1992.*The Medieval World: The History of the European Society*.
"La Edad Media", Encyclopædia Britannica
(<https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Europe/The-Middle-Ages>)

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