

"One Word of Truth..."

ACTIVITY

- Materials**
- "One Word of Truth Outweighs the World"
 - Highlighters
 - Dictionaries
- Purpose**
- To identify appropriate reading strategies for tackling a dense text with complex vocabulary
 - To analyze and make connections to a challenging text
 - To write and revise a response to text

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| 14 | READ ALOUD |
| 9 | MARKING THE TEXT |
| 10 | PREDICTING |
| 16 | SOAPSTONE |
| 5 | GRAPHIC ORGANIZER |
| 9 | SELF EDITING/PEER EDITING |
| 17 | SUMMARIZING/ PARAPHRASING/RETELLING |
| 15 | SKIMMING/SCANNING |
| 6 | GUIDED READING |
| 13 | WRITING PROCESS |

Steps

1. Before attempting to understand Alexander Solzhenitsyn's text, it would be helpful for students to know a little bit about Solzhenitsyn himself. This can be accomplished in a couple of different ways. Students could do an Internet search and locate biographical information about him, or you could provide the information to them. Essential pieces of information for students to have would be Solzhenitsyn's nationality, the subjects about which he wrote, and the price he had to pay in order to be a writer. When students have gained an overview level of understanding of who Solzhenitsyn was, they will be ready to tackle the text.
2. **Read aloud** the first sentence of the text. Point out to students that this is the thesis statement of the article. Discuss the possible meanings of this sentence. Instruct students to make notes in the margins of the text regarding their **predictions** of what Solzhenitsyn was referring to when he said "these frightening times." Also, ask students to comment on the times in which we are currently living. Next, ask students to use the margin to comment on the juxtaposition of "literature" to "partisans and parties."
3. Ask students to re-read the first sentence and to **skim** the remainder of the first paragraph. As they read, tell students to begin the process of diffusing the text. This process includes asking students to **mark the text** by highlighting or underlining unfamiliar words. Then, have students discuss those words with one another and use a dictionary to look up any words they cannot define. Students should note meaningful definitions in the margins of the text. Next, ask students to substitute a word they do know for each unfamiliar word they highlighted. Finally, students should re-read the text with the new words they have substituted. This process will enable students to read for meaning.

"One Word of Truth..."**ACTIVITY (continued)**

4. In addition to unfamiliar words, students may also identify the many strong adverbs that are used in this text. You may discuss the effect that is achieved by the repeated use of these strong adverbs. Follow the same procedure for each of the remaining paragraphs. First, read aloud to students and allow them to note questions they have about the text as you proceed. Next, assist students as they diffuse the text. Last, re-read the text with students and discuss it with them. Direct students to their Student Pages and provide assistance and support as they begin to understand the text.
5. Now have students re-read the text and highlight phrases that are unfamiliar and hard to understand. Students should write a question in relation to each of the difficult phrases highlighted in the margin. Next, students should re-read the text and underline passages they find easier to understand and write a personal reaction to those passages in the margin. Students should share their highlighted and underlined passages, answering questions and stating reactions to the text when possible.
6. After reading the entire text twice and discussing it along the way, assist students as they complete their **SOAPSTone** activity. (SOAPSTone is an acronym for Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, and Tone—a reading strategy that assists students as they analyze a text. See the Student Page for the way SOAPSTone will be conducted for this activity. A **graphic organizer** is provided for students.) After analyzing the text, students may use their analysis as the first step in the **writing process**. Next, ask them to write an expository essay describing "One Word of Truth Outweighs the World." Essays should include **summaries** and explanations of the story, occasion, and other components of the SOAPSTone analysis, along with textual support for those elements.
7. **Peer editing:** Ask students to exchange papers with a partner for feedback and comments. Students may then revise their papers. Ask students to follow Solzhenitsyn's model of using strong adverbs.
8. Invite students to consider the ways Solzhenitsyn describes literature as having great power. Direct students to go back to the text and highlight or underline every instance where the power of literature is mentioned, along with every example of the effects of lies. Finally, ask students to visualize by creating an artistic rendering of the power of literature over the power of lies.

Teacher Reflection

1. What worked well with this series of activities?
2. What might you change about these activities the next time you use them?

"One Word of Truth..."

TEXT

STUDENT
PAGE 22**One Word of Truth Outweighs the World***Alexander Solzhenitsyn*

I THINK THAT WORLD LITERATURE has the power in these frightening times to help mankind see itself accurately despite what is advocated by partisans and by parties. It has the power to transmit the condensed experience of one region to another, so that different scales of values are combined, and so that one people accurately and concisely knows the true history of another with a power of recognition and acute awareness as if it had lived through that history itself – and could thus be spared repeating old mistakes. At the same time, perhaps we ourselves may succeed in developing our own WORLD-WIDE VIEW, like any man, with the center of the eye seeing what is nearby but the periphery of vision taking in what is happening in the rest of the world. We will make correlations and maintain world-wide standards.

Who, if not writers, are to condemn their own unsuccessful governments (in some states this is the easiest way to make a living; everyone who is not too lazy does it) as well as society itself, whether for its cowardly humiliation or for its self-satisfied weakness, or the lightheaded escapades of the young, or the youthful pirates brandishing knives?

We will be told: What can literature do against the pitiless onslaught of naked violence? Let us not forget that violence does not and cannot flourish by itself; it is inevitably intertwined with LYING. Between them there is the closest, the most profound and natural bond: nothing screens violence except lies, and the only way lies can hold out is by violence. Whoever has once announced violence as his METHOD must inexorably choose lying as his PRINCIPLE. At birth, violence behaves openly and even proudly. But as soon as it becomes stronger and firmly established, it senses the thinning of the air around it and cannot go on without befogging itself in lies, coating itself with lying's sugary oratory. It does not always or necessarily go straight for the gullet; usually it demands of its victims only allegiance to the lie, only complicity in the lie.

The simple act of an ordinary courageous man is not to take part, not to support lies! Let *that* come into the world and even reign over it, but not through me. Writers and artists can do more: they can VANQUISH LIES! In the struggle against lies, art has always won and always will.

"One Word of Truth..."

TEXT (continued)

STUDENT
PAGE 23

Conspicuously, incontestably for everyone. Lies can stand up against much in the world, but not against art.

Once lies have been dispelled, the repulsive nakedness of violence will be exposed — and hollow violence will collapse.

That, my friend, is why I think we can help the world in its red-hot hour: not by the nay-saying of having no armaments, not by abandoning oneself to the carefree life, but by going into battle!

In Russian, proverbs about TRUTH are favorites. They persistently express the considerable, bitter, grim experience of the people, often astonishingly:

ONE WORD OF TRUTH OUTWEIGHS THE WORLD.

On such a seemingly fantastic violation of the law of the conservation of mass and energy are based both my own activities and my appeal to the writers of the whole world.

"One Word of Truth..."**ACTIVITY****STUDENT
PAGE 24**

After reading and marking the text, analyze it using the SOAPSTone strategy. Consider each element and write down the appropriate answer for each category.

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| Speaker (Who is the speaker in this text?) | |
| Occasion (What prompted the author to write this text?) | |
| Audience (Who is the intended audience?) | |
| Purpose (State the author's purpose.) | |
| Subject (List the subject being discussed.) | |
| Tone (Describe the author's opinion of the subject.) | |