Objectives

1. Students will read and listen to an excerpt from Voltaire’s *Candide* with the opportunity for extension to the full text.

2. Students will respond to the text through writing and discussion.

3. Practice and reinforce the following Grade 9-10 ELA Common Core Standards for reading, writing, speaking and listening:

   - **READING: LITERATURE** - RL.9-10.1-6, 8-10
   - **WRITING** - W.9-10.1-10
   - **SPEAKING AND LISTENING** - SL.9-10.1-5

Time

130 minutes (with up to an additional 105 minutes of extension possibilities)

Materials

SyncTV Premium Lesson on Voltaire’s *Candide*. The full text of the novel is also freely available on StudySync in a number of formats.

Overview

In this excerpt from the first chapter of Voltaire’s *Candide*, we are introduced to Candide; his mentor, Pangloss; his first love, Cunegonde; and her parents, the Baron and Baroness. We see how Voltaire satirizes society through Dr. Pangloss’s optimistic philosophy that we live in the “best of all possible worlds,” juxtaposed with the moral innocence of Candide, whose abrupt ouster from the Baron’s castle sends him out into the world. Close examination of this excerpt will prepare students to read the whole novel if desired, and to write thoughtful, informed, and textually-rooted responses, consistent with the ELA Common Core Standards for grades nine and ten.
Background (10 minutes)

1. **Watch the Preview (SL.9-10.1-2).** As a group, watch the video preview of the premium lesson. Use the following questions to spur discussion following the preview:
   
a. Is it better to be optimistic or realistic?

b. Is it possible to be too cheerful?

c. What would happen if everyone thought the world was as good as it could be?

Extension (additional 5-10 minutes)

d. **Describe (ELL).** Ask English Language Learners to brainstorm a list of idioms related to optimism. (Examples: wearing rose-colored glasses; seeing the glass as half-full; the light at the end of the tunnel) How does their figurative meaning compare with their literal one? Idioms are especially challenging to when learning any language, so be prepared to help and work with students.

e. **Write Creatively (W.9-10.3).** After listening to the preview, have students think critically about people’s attitudes today. They should look at this as Voltaire did about the shallow self-satisfaction of his time. Have them write a brief satire about whatever attitude they see as an issue causing problems for their main character. If necessary, suggest the risk-taker’s “YOLO” philosophy (you only live once); living a sheltered life; or another example of your choice.

f. **Share (SL.9-10.6).** Ask any students who would like to share their satires to do so. If the students are reluctant to share, you might share your own to help break the ice.

Engaging the Text (110 minutes)

2. **Read the Text (35 minutes)**

a. **Read and Annotate (RL.9-10.1-5, 10).** Have students read the introduction and excerpt from *Candide*. You should give students ample time to read the text and annotate it properly. If the classroom has a projector, you may wish to model good note-taking skills by demonstrating the first one or two annotations as a class. For annotations, suggest that students write a question they have, make a prediction, define a word, or paraphrase something they read. If students are completing this as a homework assignment, ask them to write any questions they have into the annotation tool. These questions are visible to you after the students submit their writing assignments or beforehand if you use the “mimic” function to access the students’ accounts.

Extension (additional 35 minutes)

b. **Listen and Discuss (RL. 9-10.1-4; SL.9-10.1-2).** As a class, listen to the audio reading of the text. Ask students to share how their understanding of the text changed after listening. What additional images came to mind? What words did the author use to develop the setting? Was there anything that stood out more when listening than if they had read silently? Why or why not? Encourage students to write down unfamiliar words or questions they have as they follow along.
c. **Comprehend** *(RL.9-10.1-4)*. Have students complete the multiple-choice questions (in supplementary materials) individually. Collect papers or discuss answers as a class.

d. **Explain** *(ELL)*. Use sentence frames to show basic framing of the story: Candide is the __________________<son> of the __________________<Baron’s sister>. The philosopher Dr. Pangloss is his __________________<teacher> and __________________<mentor>. The Baron sees Candide kissing __________________<Miss Cunegonde> and he __________________<kicks Candide out>.

3. **Watch SyncTV (25 minutes)**

a. **Watch**. Either watch the SyncTV discussion associated with *Candide* as a class or ask students to watch it on their individual computers.

b. **Focus** *(RL. 9-10.2; SL. 9-10.2–3)*. Use the portion of the SyncTV discussion from 1:31 to 2:18 to highlight the satire present in the characterization of Candide as a naive admirer of all things, which is central to the story.

c. **Focus** *(RL. 9-10.2; SL. 9-10.2–3)*. Use the segment of the SyncTV episode from 3:27 to 4:11 to start a discussion regarding the implications of the belief that all in the world is for the best. Is this rational? Why or why not?

d. **Discuss** *(SL.9-10.1-5)*. After watching the model discussion, have a conversation with the class about the ideas discussed in the SyncTV episode that stood out the most. What new thoughts do they have after hearing the students' discussion? Next, divide students into small groups (3-4 students). Move around the room monitoring the groups as students follow the SyncTV episode as a model to discuss some of the following questions:

i. How would you describe the character of Candide?

ii. What do you think about Dr. Pangloss’s philosophy?

iii. Describe the relationship between Dr. Pangloss and the Baron.

iv. Is the Baron justified in throwing Candide out of his home? Explain.

v. Who or what is being satirized in the excerpt?

**Extension (additional 60 minutes)**

e. **Evaluate** *(SL.11-12.1-6)*. Watch the SyncTV episode again (as a whole class if possible). Before watching, assign each of your students one of the students in the episode to follow. Have students examine each of the points that the students in the video make.

f. **Research** *(W.9-10.2, 4, 7-8, 10)*. Have students work individually or in pairs to complete the following assignment:

1. Do some research into the writing of Gottfried Leibniz, one of the philosophers that Voltaire opposed for his defense of optimism. Was Voltaire right to be so annoyed? Why or why not?
4. **Think (10 minutes)**
   
a. **Respond** (*W.9-10.1, 4, 9*). Ask students to read the “Think” questions, watch the corresponding video clips, and respond to the questions, either in class or for homework.

5. **Write (50 minutes)**
   
a. **Discuss** (*SL.9-10.1*). Read the prompt you have chosen for students, and then solicit questions regarding the prompt or the assignment expectations. Whichever prompt you have chosen, make sure students are clear about the assignment’s expectations and the rubric by which they will be evaluated.

   b. **Organize** (*RL.9-10.1-5, 10 and W.9-10.1-2, 5*). Ask students to go back and annotate the text with the prompt in mind. They should be organizing their thoughts and the points they’ll address in their writing as they make annotations. If you’ve worked on outlining or other organizational tools for writing, this is a good place to apply them.

   c. **Write** (*W.9-10.1-2, 4-6, 9-10*). Have students follow the writing process by planning, revising, editing, and publishing their written responses.

   d. **Review** (*W.9-10.4-6*). Use the StudySync “Review” feature to have students complete one to two evaluations of their peers’ work based on your chosen review rubric. Have the students look at and reflect upon the peer evaluations of their own writing. What might you do differently in a revision? How might you strengthen the writing and the ideas?
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Key Vocabulary

1. countenance (n.) – face or facial expression
2. quartering (n.) – coats of arms marshaled on a shield to denote the marriages
3. comely (adj.) – attractive
4. wench (n.) – girl or young woman
5. docile (adj.) – ready to accept control or instruction; submissive
6. consternation (n.) – feelings of anxiety or dismay, typically at something unexpected
7. vivacity (n.) – characterized by high spirits and animation
8. curate (n.) – member of the clergy engaged as assistant to a vicar, rector, or parish priest
9. disposition (n.) – person's inherent qualities of mind and character
10. pensive (adj.) - engaged in, involving, or reflecting deep or serious thought

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Where does Candide live?
   a. In his own house
   b. In the Baron's castle
   c. In Pangloss's cottage
   d. In Paris, France

2. How would you describe Candide's character?
   a. Optimistic and innocent
   b. Pessimistic and angry
   c. Flippant and changing
   d. Wise and tolerant

3. Who is Candide's mentor?
   a. Pangloss
   b. The Baron
   c. The Baroness
   d. Cunegonde

4. What is the significance of the Baron's castle windows?
   a. They allow the Baron to spy on Candide.
   b. They prove that the castle is great.
   c. They prove that the Baron is powerful.
   d. They impress Candide.

5. What is proof of the Baroness's greatness?
   a. Her love for her children
   b. Her dainty manners
   c. Her generosity
   d. Her substantial weight
6. Pangloss believes that all is
   a. better than nothing
   b. just a dream
   c. for the best
   d. indescribable

7. Which is *not* an example of Pangloss’s philosophy?
   a. Feet are made for shoes.
   b. Shoes are made for feet.
   c. A great baron has a great castle.
   d. Pigs are made to be eaten.

8. Seeing Pangloss with the chamber-maid
   a. disgusts the Baroness.
   b. embarrasses Candide.
   c. inspires Cunegonde.
   d. infuriates the Baron.

9. What does the Baron see?
   a. Cunegonde and Candide
   b. Pangloss and the Baroness
   c. His own reflection
   d. The curate and the chamber-maid

10. What happens in the end to Candide?
    a. He goes to the university.
    b. He marries Cunegonde.
    c. He is a larger-than-life hero.
    d. He is kicked out of the castle.

**Answer Key**

1. B  
2. A  
3. A  
4. C  
5. D  
6. C  
7. B  
8. C  
9. A  
10. D
Further Assignments

1. After reading the complete novel, have students look back at the excerpt and discuss the role it plays in the story. What is the function of the beginning of the novel? Does the novel provide a justification for Candide’s optimism? Why or why not? Have students write a persuasive essay about this. (RL.9-10.5)

2. Have students write their own scene for a modern Candide. Instead of satirizing optimism, have students select another dubious modern philosophy to satirize. (W.9-10.3-5)

3. Invite students to research and write a short essay about the impact of Candide on the philosophy of its time. Did Voltaire’s message work? (W.9-10.4-7)

4. After reading Candide, have students write or stage an interview between Candide and the Baron. What would they talk about, when all is said and done? (W.9-10.1–5, SL.9-10.5)

5. Have students apply Dr. Pangloss’s philosophy to modern life in the 21st century, based on the examples of his philosophy in the excerpt. What modern conveniences or accessories are our bodies “made for”? What modern examples of the best of all possible worlds would students include, and why? (RL.9-10.1-6, W.9-10.1-5)

6. Ask students to write a conversation that the Candide might have had with Cunegonde if he had snuck back into the castle the night after he was kicked out. What would they say to one another? After students have written their dialogues, pair them up and have them read their dialogues together, focusing on the ways in which punctuation and words outside the quotation marks inform speech. (ELL)