Unit Overview
This unit is comprised of four activities for 11th grade English and AP English Language and Composition courses:

1. A close reading and stylistic/rhetorical analysis of Hernan Cortés’s “Second Letter to Charles V” (included in this document: teacher instructions, reading, student worksheets)

2. Templo Mayor WebQuest (see link on Web site)

3. Poetry assignment, linking poetry from Aztec times to modern poetry and song lyrics (PowerPoint can be downloaded from Web site)

4. A Vision of Literature, media-based assignment using technology to understand literature (included in this document: teacher instructions, student handouts)

This series of activities was designed to enhance the reading and understanding of Hernan Cortés and his invasion of Tenochtitlán. The final assessment for this project is the essay written in response to the following prompt: How does Hernan Cortés’s style of writing convey the Spaniards’ attitude toward the Aztecs and their way of life?

Once students have completed the activities, they will be able to answer this question with ease. Not only will they have studied Cortés’s words, they will have a thorough understanding of the Aztec culture as well. Please use all activities when working with this project.
# Course Standards and Skills

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, English III - Grade 11**

Reading selections from *The Language of Literature American Literature 11th grade (LL)*

### Weekly Standards—highlighted text

### Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

| 1A,B; 2C; 3A,B; 4A,B,D,E,F; 6B,E,F; 7A,C,D,E,F,G,H; 8A,B; 9A; 10A,B; 11A,B,C,D,E,F; 12A,B,C; 13C; 14C; 15B,F; 17E; 18A,C; 19A,B; 21A |

### Objectives

**TLW**

- Understand/recognize author's purpose
- Understand & appreciate sacred song/folktale/short story/personal narrative
- Appreciate use of repetition
- Recognize author's use of conflict
- Make inferences
- Understand the structure of a personal narrative
- Examine how audience influences author
- Use text organizers
- Understand and appreciate historical chronicle
- Examine primary sources
- Analyze details
- Draw conclusions
- Understand & appreciate an autobiography

### Reading/Critical Thinking/Literary Devices/Skills

**Focus:**

- **Early Beginnings**
  - Creation myth, song, folktale (trickster tale), cause & effect, characterization, irony, short story, conflict, inferences, personal narrative, setting, understanding structure, historical narratives, audience, text organizers, primary & secondary sources, summarizing, details, conclusions, autobiography, author's purpose

### Literary Selection

*Choose from:*

- "Of Plymouth Plantation"/chronicle pg. 77
- "Women and Children First: The Mayflower Pilgrims"/related reading pg. 91
- "The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano"/slave narrative pg. 93

- Hernán Cortés: “Second Letter to Charles V”

- Novel Reading: *The Scarlet Letter*

### Writing/Research

*Choose from:*

- Reflective essay
- Resume Writing
- Argumentative essay

- Research: Early Explorers
- Voyage of the Pilgrims
- Description of place

### Listening/Speaking

- Oral story telling pg. 32

### Viewing/Representing

- Art (Diego Rivera)
- Art appreciation (Diego Rivera)

### Enrichment

- Grammar Review as needed:
  - Parallelism
  - Passive Voice
  - Subordination Techniques
  - Quotations with ellipsis points *LL* pg. 64
- Sentence crafting-parallelism *LL* pg. 991
- BK English: Persuasive Essay Ch. 9 pg. C408
Excerpt from the “Second Letter to Charles V” (1520)—Hernan Cortés

**AP English Language & Composition**

Teacher Overview

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Overview: Hernan Cortés’s “Second Letter to Charles V”
This lesson revolves around the stylistic and rhetorical analysis of Hernan Cortés’s “Second Letter to Charles V,” written in 1520. This excerpt, in conjunction with the study of William Bradford’s “Of Plymouth Plantation,” becomes a comparative study to give students knowledge and understanding of literature from their textbook and literature connected to their culture. Part of the Puritan unit discussed in my AP Language class focuses on the religious plight of the Puritan movement to Salem, Massachusetts. The students study, in depth, Puritan religion and first encounters with the Indians of America; however, the perspective of the Indians in American history has always been somewhat of a mystery.

In the study of American history through literature, one of the first passages students are given is an excerpt from William Bradford’s “Of Plymouth Plantation.” This passage portrays the trials and tribulations of the journey to a land unknown to the Puritans. The purpose of this lesson is to explore the similarities and connections of the Puritan/Indian first meeting with the first meeting of Hernan Cortés and the Aztec Indians of Mexico during the 1500s.

Lesson Introduction
I write this introduction to provide insight into why I am so passionate about teaching and what I, as a learner myself, can offer students in my community or any other community I teach. This is a guide to how and why I devote so much of my time and energy to the students and community with whom I work. Let’s face it: part of my reality is having a classroom of students who come from broken homes, are first-generation Americans, and have uneducated families. I am aware of the tribulations my students face because, as a Hispanic woman, I have faced them as well. The students in my classroom range in age from 16-21 and although they have a broad range of experiences, culture to them is eating “tortillas,” speaking Spanglish, and attending a *quinceañera* as the social event for the weekend. As an English teacher, I consider myself fortunate to have a broad array of resources dealing with language, arts, and history to develop an understanding of culture through literature. Many of my colleagues focus predominantly on Hispanic culture in the classroom because they feel that this is the only thing our students can comprehend; I, on the other hand, feel that my students need to be exposed to much more. I do foster learning about Hispanic culture. However, I do not direct learning to facilitate what is comfortable for my students but rather to address what is challenging. This allows my students to become well-versed in a view that expands beyond our borderland and comfort zone. Exposure is key; exposure is critical. For my students to be successful in all endeavors, whether raising a family in Brownsville, Texas or working on Wall Street, the literature I present will help them broaden their horizons. This is my responsibility; this is my role. Considering the background of my students, comparing American history and literature to the history and literature of their ancestry can help foster connections to challenging literature—thus, this lesson.
Reading for Rhetorical Devices
This lesson will provide a review for most students who were in a demanding Pre-AP English class. The passage’s simple language and syntactical patterns, plus Cortés’s use of so many rhetorical devices, make it an ideal vehicle for teaching style analysis while providing a description of Aztec society. The handouts for students include the “Student Activity” and the excerpt from Cortés’s letter.

One of the terms introduced in this lesson is parallelism. Teachers should teach the chapter called “Parallelism” in Prose Style concurrently with this lesson.

The Cortés passage is rich in rhetorical devices, some of which are discussed below. Students will eventually study all of these devices—in two ways. First they will become more sensitive to the way authors use these devices to create a certain effect in their writing. Then they will learn to use these devices in their own writing to “write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers” (from College Board’s description of an AP Language course).

Following is an in-depth discussion of some of the rhetorical devices:

I. Beginning sentences with a coordinating conjunction
   • “But not to be prolix in describing what relates to the affairs of this great city…” (paragraph 14)
   • “For, as I have already stated, what can be more wonderful than a barbarous monarch…” (paragraph 15)
   • “But as nearly as I have been able to learn, his territories are equal in extent to Spain itself…” (paragraph 15)

   Cortés begins several sentences with a coordinating conjunction to give the sense that he is telling a story, adding details about the Aztec empire laid before him. Cortés uses many compound sentences, employing coordinating conjunctions within the sentences. The prose is straightforward and rather plain, befitting a people who saw God’s hand in everything that happened to them and praised Him even for their trials. Cortés begins new sentences with coordinating conjunctions for the practical reason that he has combined so many independent clauses with coordinating conjunctions that he is obliged to begin another sentence. For example, look at the next to last paragraph in “The First Encounter,” third and fourth sentences: “And when they descended from the litters, he took one of them in his hand, and held it until he reached the place where he was going. So many and various were the ceremonies and customs observed by those in the service of Moctezuma, that more space…”

   Cortés does use some dependent clauses, which provide complexity, but overall the effect is of a simple narrative; this effect is compounded by the plain and unadorned diction.

II. Use of participial phrases
   • “...surrounded on all sides by lofty and rugged mountains” (paragraph 2)
   • “...including two lakes...” (paragraph 2)
   • “...being navigated by boats more than fifty leagues round” (paragraph 2)
A student alert to syntax will note that the participial phrases and participles in this long sentence create a unique rhythm and sound. Employing these participles frees Cortés from the necessity of using personal pronouns. By using participles, Cortés can relate the events without putting himself in a dominant place in the story, producing a humble tone to his prose.

III. Use of passive voice
These sentences appear in the third paragraph:
This great city of Temixtitlan [Mexico] is situated in this salt lake, and from the main land to the denser parts of it, by whichever route one chooses to enter, the distance is two leagues. There are four avenues or entrances to the city, all of which are formed by artificial causeways, two spears’ length in width...

Passive voice affords a way for the subject to disappear and the emphasis to be placed on what happened to the people, not the people themselves or the narrator, Hernan Cortés. The use of this device indicates a sense of humility in Cortés.

IV. Use of parallelism
Cortés uses so many parallel elements that almost every sentence contains parallelism. Because his sentences are frequently long, many sentences contain several examples:
Thus they have an idol that they petition for victory in war; another for success in their labors; and so for everything in which they seek or desire prosperity, they have their idols, which they honor and serve. (paragraph 12)

Student Practice with Rhetorical Devices
Students can further practice analyzing Cortés’s style by recasting some of his sentences into their everyday language. For example, here is the first sentence of the second paragraph of the passage:
Before I begin to describe this great city and the others already mentioned, it may be well for the better understanding of the subject to say something of the configuration of Mexico, in which they are situated, it being the principal seat of Moctezuma's power.
Here is the sentence recast:
Moctezuma has established an empire surrounding him of great treasures, but before I begin to tell of these glorious treasures, I should explain the set up of the city itself.

Here is the first sentence of the eighth paragraph:
Among these temples there is one which far surpasses all the rest, whose grandeur of architectural details no human tongue is able to describe; for within its precincts, surrounded by a lofty wall, there is room enough for a town of five hundred families.
Here is the sentence recast:
I am in awe of the great structures before me whose immensity is far beyond compare and which could house hundreds of people between huge walls.

Students should determine how the effect is different in both sentences and note the specific diction and syntactical changes they made.
In your study of American history through the literature of Americans, one of the first passages you studied is an excerpt from William Bradford’s “Of Plymouth Plantation.” This passage depicts the trials and tribulations of the journey to a land unknown to the Puritans. The passage presents an image of what and with whom the Puritans came into contact upon arrival in the New World. This New World, vast and mysterious, provided shelter, food, and a new beginning for the Puritans. In your study of American literature, you have also studied Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Scarlet Letter and Arthur Miller’s, “The Crucible.” The purpose of this lesson is to explore the similarities and connections of the Puritan/Indian first meeting with the first meeting of Hernan Cortés and the Aztec Indians of Mexico.

**Imperative Question:** Why study the literature of Mexico in an American Literature course?

**Answer:** This lesson is an account of a personal history and an insight into a time period which we celebrate every year at Thanksgiving. However, you haven’t studied how the situation of the Puritans connects to the heritage of your ancestors. This comparative literature study is a guide to the distant past. Fortunately, some of you have traveled to Mexico City and have seen the ruins of the Templo Mayor and understand what Hernan Cortés saw upon his arrival at the massive city of Tenochtitlán. After working with the style and voice of William Bradford, you have encountered several rhetorical devices important to the analysis of any passage on the AP exam. As in William Bradford’s “Of Plymouth Plantation,” this passage contains several rhetorical devices that make it an ideal vehicle for learning style analysis while providing a description of the Aztec empire.

As you study this passage by Hernan Cortés, you will learn how to interpret and answer the following question: **How does Hernan Cortés’s style of writing convey the Spaniards’ attitude toward the Aztecs and their way of life?**

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**What is style?**

In *A Handbook to Literature*, 7th edition, Harmon and Holman define style: “Style combines two elements: the idea to be expressed and the individuality of the author….Just as no two personalities are alike, no two styles are exactly alike. A study of styles …will include…diction, sentence structure and variety [syntax], imagery, rhythm, repetition, coherence, emphasis, and the arrangement of ideas.”

In *Prose Pieces: Essay & Stories*, Hoy and Diyanni say this about style: “This special sense of the word *style* suggests more than the shape of one’s sentences or one’s penchant for various writing strategies; it suggests as well a *writer’s intimate relationship with the words themselves*—the inseparable connection between a writer and thought itself.”

Think of it like this: an author’s style is his/her unique way of writing. It involves the particular way an author uses figurative language, imagery, diction, details, and syntax to get a point across.
The Cortés passage is rich in rhetorical devices. The fact that Cortés uses these particular devices in his writing is called his **style**. Below are some of the devices Cortés uses in his writing. You will eventually study all of these devices—in two ways. First you will become more sensitive to the way authors use these devices to create a certain effect in their writing. Then you will learn to use these devices in your own writing.

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You can first practice analyzing Cortés’s style by recasting some of his sentences into your own everyday language. You may find that you will have to write several sentences to his one. Try rewriting the first sentence of the second paragraph passage:

*Before I begin to describe this great city and the others already mentioned, it may be well for the better understanding of the subject to say something of the configuration of Mexico, in which they are situated, it being the principal seat of Moctezuma's power.*

Your rewrite:

Now rewrite the first sentence of the eighth paragraph:

*Among these temples there is one which far surpasses all the rest, whose grandeur of architectural details no human tongue is able to describe; for within its precincts, surrounded by a lofty wall, there is room enough for a town of five hundred families.*

Your rewrite:

What specific and syntactical changes did you make? How is the effect different in each sentence?

You will now look at six devices that Cortés uses to create his particular **style** of writing. For each device, quote properly from the passage.

I. **Beginning sentences with a coordinating conjunction**

Here is one example from the first paragraph:

“But your Majesty may be assured that if there is any fault in my relation, either in regard to the present subject....”
Find three more examples.
1.  
2.  
3.  

II. Use of participial phrases

Here is an example from the very first sentence:
“...as well as the other cities appertaining to his realm:....”

Find three more examples of participial phrases. (Hint: Look at the second sentence of the second paragraph.)
1.  
2.  
3.  

III. Use of passive voice

In passive voice, the subject does not act; it is acted upon.

Example: The student prepared the manuscript. (active voice)
The manuscript was prepared by the student. (passive voice)
The student isn’t doing anything in the second sentence; he/she is being acted upon.

You can easily spot passive voice because it always uses some kind of is verb plus a past participle:
The chord was struck by the choir.
The mother was shocked by her child’s behavior.
The sandwich is eaten by the boy.

An indiscriminate use of passive voice can reveal weak sentence construction. However, there are legitimate uses for passive voice. It is useful when the doer of an action is unknown and thus cannot appear as the subject of the sentence or when the doer is not important enough to appear as the subject: Her new car was stolen right out of her garage.
It is sometimes useful simply because the active voice would produce an awkward sentence: During the wreck his right leg was broken in two places.

Passive voice is frequently used in the prose of bureaucrats to evade responsibility for their actions. It has been decided that your job must be terminated takes the boss right out of the picture.

(Adapted from Prose Style: A Contemporary Guide, Robert Miles, Marc Bertonasco, William Karns, editors.)
Look at this sentence:

*Among these temples there is one which far surpasses all the rest, whose grandeur of architectural details no human tongue is able to describe; for within its precincts, surrounded by a lofty wall, there is room enough for a town of five hundred families.*

Underline the words in this sentence that indicate the use of passive voice. Edit this sentence, changing to active voice.

Find two other sentences using passive voice.
1. 
2. 

IV. Use of parallelism

Parallelism is one of the chief means by which writers can achieve eloquence. Words or groups of words that are grammatically the same are joined—this is the definition of parallelism. Parallelism is characteristic of Hebrew poetry, being notably present in the Psalms, as in this example:

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The Heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament sheweth his handiwork.
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Unfortunately, apprentice writers generally fail to take advantage of parallelism. It is an easy device to use in your own writing and easy to detect in the writing of others. Parallelism can be made up of only two equal elements—two words, phrases, or clauses. Here is a sentence from Madeleine Doran, *Something About Swans*:

“Shakespeare’s noblest characters express sentiments of *patriotic or personal* [parallel adjectives] honor which to young modern ears sound *flamboyant or unconvincing.*” [parallel adverbs]

Parallelism can also be used to join more than two elements and elements that are opposite rather than the same. In later lessons, you will learn other types of parallelism such as antithesis, balanced sentences, triplet or triad, extended parallelism, parallel sentences, and anaphora.

(Adapted from *Handbook to Literature and Prose Style.*)

Cortés uses so many parallel elements that almost every sentence contains parallelism, and because his sentences are frequently long, many sentences contain several examples.
First paragraph: “In order, most potent Sire, to convey to your Majesty a just conception of the great extent of this noble city of Temixtitlan, and of the many rare and wonderful objects it contains; of the government and dominions of Moctezuma, the sovereign: of the religious rights and customs that prevail and the order that exists in this as well as the other cities appertaining to his realm: it would require the labor of many accomplished writers, and much time for the completion of the task.” The prepositional phrases and nouns create an orderly, thoughtful listing of what Cortés witnessed.

Find at least four other examples of parallelism.
1.
2.
3.
4.

V. Use of diction
Diction—the connotation of the word choice; the meaning suggested by a word; or a word’s power to produce a strong reaction in the reader.

What words does the author choose? Why did the author choose those particular words?

Examples: thin vs. gaunt
happy vs. ecstatic
Joel was dumb vs. Joe was a primate with a brain the size of a pea

“...what can be more wonderful than a barbarous monarch, as he is, should have every object found in his dominions imitated in gold, silver, precious stones, and feathers...”

Here Cortés begins to express his biased views of Moctezuma and his empire. The diction he chooses paints a picture of a greedy barbarian who, as leader of millions, hoards treasures from his lands.

Find at least four other examples of diction. Explain the significance of word choice to the overall tone of the work.
1.

2.

3.

4.
VI. Use of imagery

What is imagery?
An image is a literal and concrete representation of a sensory experience or of an object that can be known by one or more of the senses. The image is a distinctive element of the language of art by which experience in its richness and complexity is communicated....The image is, therefore, a portion of the essence of the meaning of the literary work, not just decoration....The qualities usually found in images are particularity, concreteness, and an appeal to sensuous experience or memory—an appeal that seems to work best through specifically visual images.

Imagery in its literal sense means the collection of images in a literary work....Patterns of imagery, often without the conscious knowledge of author or reader, are sometimes taken to be keys to a deeper meaning of a work.

(From A Handbook to Literature, Harmon and Holman.)

Cortés’s audience in the 1500s were accustomed to hearing someone speak or read a text and imagining the scene in their minds. So Cortés’s vivid imagery of the Aztec empire would have affected the king profoundly. Knowing that his audience had never actually seen this immense empire, Cortés created a tangible, real, concrete place for his audience to fix in his mind.

In the fifth paragraph, Cortés describes the Aztec city square as “embracing the necessaries of life” and describes the goings-on of a profitable market square as a place for “wrought and unwrought stone, bricks burnt and unburnt, timber hewn and unhewn…” Cortés continues with his description of his discovery of the maguey plant, “which is superior to sweet or new wine” where the Aztecs “extract sugar” to make such glorious elixirs.

Now you have identified six devices of language that Cortés used in this passage:

1. beginning sentences with coordinating conjunctions
2. participial phrases
3. passive voice
4. parallelism
5. diction
6. imagery

Remember that the way an author uses language is called his/her style. It is not enough, however, to merely identify strategies an author uses. You must connect these strategies to the author’s purpose, to the tone and/or the theme. Remember the question you read at the beginning of this lesson: How does Hernan Cortés’s style of writing convey the Spaniards’ attitude toward the Aztecs and their way of life?
This question, worded much like one you would see on the AP Language exam, is asking two things of you:

1. What is Hernan Cortés’s style of writing? (In other words, what rhetorical devices does he use to get across his point, and how does he use them?)
2. What is the Spaniards’ attitude toward Aztecs and their way of life?

The bigger and more difficult question is #2. Coming up with an answer calls upon your close reading skills, your ability to infer, and your critical thinking ability. You must get this part right, or it won’t matter how well you can catalog the rhetorical devices you find.

When you encounter an unfamiliar passage, before you begin finding the devices, you should read to understand what the Spaniards’ attitude seems to be toward the Aztecs. Obviously we have already found the devices in this lesson. To help you determine the Spaniards’ attitude, fill in these blanks:

The Spaniards felt ____________________ and ____________________ toward the Aztecs.
(You may not be able to reduce your thought to one word. It’s fine to reword this sentence to say, “The Spaniards felt that the Aztecs….”)

The Spaniards felt ____________________ and ____________________ towards the Aztec way of life.

Now you’re ready to connect the Spaniards’ attitude to the author’s style.

a. Go back to the section on beginning sentences with coordinating conjunctions and read all the examples. Now write a sentence or two which explains why Cortés may have chosen to begin sentences this way.

b. Go back to the section on participial phrases and read all the examples. Now write a sentence or two which explains why Cortés may have chosen to use participial phrases. How do the participial phrases reveal his and the Spaniards’ attitude to the Aztecs and their way of life?

c. Go back to the passive voice section and reread the examples. Now write a sentence or two which explains why Cortés may have chosen to use passive voice. How does the use of passive voice reveal his (and the Spaniards’) attitude toward the Aztec empire?

d. Go back to the parallelism section and reread the examples. Now write a sentence or two which explains why Cortés chose to use parallelism in some sentences. How does the use of parallelism reveal his attitude toward the Aztecs and their way of life?
e. Look at the diction and imagery sections. Now write a sentence or two that explains why Cortés may have chosen to use these particular figures of speech. How do these figures of speech reveal his and the Spaniards’ attitude toward the Aztecs and their way of life?

Assume that this prompt is on the AP exam in May (note: it won’t be.) Pretend you have never read “Excerpt from Second Letter to Charles V.” You have 40 minutes to both read the passage and write an essay with these directions: How does Hernan Cortés’s style of writing convey the Spaniards attitude toward the Aztecs and their way of life?

Below, write only the introductory paragraph. You should not take more than five minutes to write the paragraph, especially with all the preparatory work you have done. Make sure you address both tasks in the directions.
Hernan Cortés: Excerpt from “Second Letter to Charles V” (1520)

IN ORDER, most potent Sire, to convey to your Majesty a just conception of the great extent of this noble city of Temixtitlan, and of the many rare and wonderful objects it contains; of the government and dominions of Moctezuma, the sovereign: of the religious rights and customs that prevail, and the order that exists in this as well as the other cities appertaining to his realm: it would require the labor of many accomplished writers, and much time for the completion of the task. I shall not be able to relate an hundredth part of what could be told respecting these matters; but I will endeavor to describe, in the best manner in my power, what I have myself seen; and imperfectly as I may succeed in the attempt, I am fully aware that the account will appear so wonderful as to be deemed scarcely worthy of credit; since even we who have seen these things with our own eyes are yet so amazed as to be unable to comprehend their reality. But your Majesty may be assured that if there is any fault in my relation, either in regard to the present subject, or to any other matters of which I shall give your Majesty an account, it will arise from too great brevity rather than extravagance or prolixity in the details; and it seems to me but just to my Prince and Sovereign to declare the truth in the clearest manner, without saying anything that would detract from it, or add to it.

Before I begin to describe this great city and the others already mentioned, it may be well for the better understanding of the subject to say something of the configuration of Mexico, in which they are situated, it being the principal seat of Moctezuma's power. This Province is in the form of a circle, surrounded on all sides by lofty and rugged mountains; its level surface comprises an area of about seventy leagues in circumference, including two lakes, which overspread nearly the whole valley, being navigated by boats more than fifty leagues round. One of these lakes contains fresh and the other, which is the larger of the two, salt water. On one side of the lakes, in the middle of the valley, a range of highlands divides them from one another, with the exception of a narrow strait which lies between the highlands and the lofty sierras. This strait is a bow-shot wide, and connects the two lakes; and by this means a trade is carried on between the cities and other settlements on the lakes in canoes without the necessity of traveling by land. As the salt lake rises and falls with its tides like the sea, during the time of high water it pours into the other lake with the rapidity of a powerful stream; and on the other hand, when the tide has ebbed, the water runs from the fresh into the salt lake.

This great city of Temixtitlan [Mexico] is situated in this salt lake, and from the main land to the denser parts of it, by whichever route one chooses to enter, the distance is two leagues. There are four avenues or entrances to the city, all of which are formed by artificial causeways, two spears' length in width. The city is as large as Seville or Cordova; its streets, I speak of the principal ones, are very wide and straight; some of these, and all the inferior ones, are half land and half water, and are navigated by canoes. All the streets at intervals have openings, through which the water flows, crossing from one street to another; and at these openings, some of which are very wide, there are also very wide bridges, composed of large pieces of timber, of great strength and well put together; on many of these bridges ten horses can go abreast. Foreseeing that if the inhabitants of the city should prove treacherous, they would possess great advantages from the manner in which the city is constructed, since by removing the bridges at the entrances, and abandoning the place, they could leave us to perish by famine without our being able to reach the main land, as soon as I had entered it, I made great haste to build four brigatines, which were soon finished, and were large enough to take ashore three hundred men and the horses, whenever it should become necessary.

This city has many public squares, in which are situated the markets and other places for buying and selling. There is one square twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded by porticoes, where are daily assembled more than sixty thousand souls, engaged in buying and selling; and where are found all kinds of merchandise that the world affords, embracing the necessaries of life, as for instance
articles of food, as well as jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, precious stones, bones, shells, snails, and feathers. There are also exposed for sale wrought and unwrought stone, bricks burnt and unburnt, timber hewn and unhewn, of different sorts. There is a street for game, where every variety of birds in the country are sold, as fowls, partridges, quails, wild ducks, fly-catchers, widgeons, turtledoves, pigeons, reed-birds, parrots, sparrows, eagles, hawks, owls, and kestrels; they sell likewise the skins of some birds of prey, with their feathers, head, beak, and claws. There are also sold rabbits, hares, deer, and little dogs [i.e., the chihuahua], which are raised for eating. There is also an herb street, where may be obtained all sorts of roots and medicinal herbs that the country affords. There are apothecaries' shops, where prepared medicines, liquids, ointments, and plasters are sold; barbers' shops, where they wash and shave the head; and restaurateurs, that furnish food and drink at a certain price. There is also a class of men like those called in Castile porters, for carrying burdens. Wood and coal are seen in abundance, and braziers of earthenware for burning coals; mats of various kinds for beds, others of a lighter sort for seats, and for halls and bedrooms.

There are all kinds of green vegetables, especially onions, leeks, garlic, watercresses, nasturtium, borage, sorrel, artichokes, and golden thistle; fruits also of numerous descriptions, amongst which are cherries and plums, similar to those in Spain; honey and wax from bees, and from the stalks of maize, which are as sweet as the sugar-cane; honey is also extracted from the plant called maguey, which is superior to sweet or new wine; from the same plant they extract sugar and wine, which they also sell. Different kinds of cotton thread of all colors in skeins are exposed for sale in one quarter of the market, which has the appearance of the silk-market at Granada, although the former is supplied more abundantly. Painters' colors, as numerous as can be found in Spain, and as fine shades; deerskins dressed and undressed, dyed different colors; earthen-ware of a large size and excellent quality; large and small jars, jugs, pots, bricks, and endless variety of vessels, all made of fine clay, and all or most of them glazed and painted; maize or Indian corn, in the grain and in the form of bread, preferred in the grain for its flavor to that of the other islands and terra-firma; patés of birds and fish; great quantities of fish—fresh, salt, cooked and uncooked; the eggs of hens, geese, and of all the other birds I have mentioned, in great abundance, and cakes made of eggs; finally, everything that can be found throughout the whole country is sold in the markets, comprising articles so numerous that to avoid prolixity, and because their names are not retained in my memory, or are unknown to me, I shall not attempt to enumerate them.

Every kind of merchandise is sold in a particular street or quarter assigned to it exclusively, and thus the best order is preserved. They sell everything by number or measure; at least so far we have not observed them to sell anything by weight. There is a building in the great square that is used as an audience house, where ten or twelve persons, who are magistrates, sit and decide all controversies that arise in the market, and order delinquents to be punished. In the same square there are other persons who go constantly about among the people observing what is sold, and the measures used in selling; and they have been seen to break measures that were not true.

This great city contains a large number of temples, or houses, for their idols, very handsome edifices, which are situated in the different districts and the suburbs; in the principal ones religious persons of each particular sect are constantly residing, for whose use, besides the houses containing the idols, there are other convenient habitations. All these persons dress in black, and never cut or comb their hair from the time they enter the priesthood until they leave it; and all the sons of the principal inhabitants, both nobles and respectable citizens, are placed in the temples and wear the same dress from the age of seven or eight years until they are taken out to be married; which occurs more frequently with the first-born who inherit estates than with the others. The priests are debarred from female society, nor is any woman permitted to enter the religious houses. They also abstain from eating certain kinds of food, more at some seasons of the year than others.
Among these temples there is one which far surpasses all the rest, whose grandeur of architectural details no human tongue is able to describe; for within its precincts, surrounded by a lofty wall, there is room enough for a town of five hundred families. Around the interior of the enclosure there are handsome edifices, containing large halls and corridors, in which the religious persons attached to the temple reside. There are fully forty towers, which are lofty and well built, the largest of which has fifty steps leading to its main body, and is higher than the tower of the principal tower of the church at Seville. The stone and wood of which they are constructed are so well wrought in every part, that nothing could be better done, for the interior of the chapels containing the idols consists of curious imagery, wrought in stone, with plaster ceilings, and wood-work carved in relief, and painted with figures of monsters and other objects. All these towers are the burial places of the nobles, and every chapel in them is dedicated to a particular idol, to which they pay their devotions.

Three halls are in this grand temple, which contain the principal idols; these are of wonderful extent and height, and admirable workmanship, adorned with figures sculptured in stone and wood; leading from the halls are chapels with very small doors, to which the light is not admitted, nor are any persons except the priests, and not all of them. In these chapels are the images of idols, although, as I have before said, many of them are also found on the outside; the principal ones, in which the people have greatest faith and confidence, I precipitated from their pedestals, and cast them down the steps of the temple, purifying the chapels in which they had stood, as they were all polluted with human blood. In the place of these I put images of Our Lady and the Saints, which excited not a little feeling in Moctezuma and the inhabitants, who at first remonstrated, declaring that if my proceedings were known throughout the country, the people would rise against me; for they believed that their idols bestowed on them all temporal good, and if they permitted them to be ill-treated, they would be angry and without their gifts, and by this means the people would be deprived of the fruits of the earth and perish with famine. I answered, through the interpreters, that they were deceived in expecting any favors from idols, the work of their own hands, formed of unclean things; and that they must learn there was but one God, the universal Lord of all, who had created the heavens and earth, and all things else, and had made them and us; that He was without beginning and immortal, and they were bound to adore and believe Him, and no other creature or thing.

I said everything to them I could to divert them from their idolatries, and draw them to a knowledge of God our Lord. Moctezuma replied, the others assenting to what he said, that they had already informed me they were not the aborigines of the country, but that their ancestors had emigrated to it many years ago; and they fully believed that after so long an absence from their native land, they might have fallen into some errors; that I having more recently arrived must know better than themselves what they ought to believe; and that if I would instruct them in these matters, and make them understand the true faith, they would follow my directions, as being for the best. Afterwards, Moctezuma and many of the principal citizens remained with me until I had removed the idols, purified the chapels, and placed the images in them, manifesting apparent pleasure; and I forbade them sacrificing human beings to their idols as they had been accustomed to do; because, besides being abhorrent in the sight of God, your sacred Majesty had prohibited it by law, and commanded to put to death whoever should take the life of another. Thus, from that time, they refrained from the practice, and during the whole period of my abode in that city, they were never seen to kill or sacrifice a human being.

The figures of the idols in which these people believe surpass in stature a person of more than ordinary size; some of them are composed of a mass of seeds and leguminous plants, such as are used for food, ground and mixed together, and kneaded with the blood of human hearts taken from the breasts of living persons, from which a paste is formed in a sufficient quantity to form large statues. When these are completed they make them offerings of the hearts of other victims, which they sacrifice to them, and besmear their faces with the blood. For everything they have an idol, consecrated by the use of the nations that in ancient times honored the same gods. Thus they have an idol that they petition for victory in war;
another for success in their labors; and so for everything in which they seek or desire prosperity, they have their idols, which they honor and serve.

This noble city contains many fine and magnificent houses; which may be accounted for from the fact, that all the nobility of the country, who are the vassals of Moctezuma, have houses in the city, in which they reside a certain part of the year; and besides, there are numerous wealthy citizens who also possess fine houses. All these persons, in addition to the large and spacious apartments for ordinary purposes, have others, both upper and lower, that contain conservatories of flowers. Along one of these causeways that lead into the city are laid two pipes, constructed of masonry, each of which is two paces in width, and about five feet in height. An abundant supply of excellent water, forming a volume equal in bulk to the human body, is conveyed by one of these pipes, and distributed about the city, where it is used by the inhabitants for drink and other purposes. The other pipe, in the meantime, is kept empty until the former requires to be cleansed, when the water is let into it and continues to be used till the cleaning is finished.

As the water is necessarily carried over bridges on account of the salt water crossing its route, reservoirs resembling canals are constructed on the bridges, through which the fresh water is conveyed. These reservoirs are of the breadth of the body of an ox, and of the same length as the bridges. The whole city is thus served with water, which they carry in canoes through all the streets for sale, taking it from the aqueduct in the following manner: the canoes pass under the bridges on which the reservoirs are placed, when men stationed above fill them with water, for which service they are paid. At all the entrances of the city, and in those parts where the canoes are discharged, that is, where the greatest quantity of provisions is brought in, huts are erected, and persons stationed as guards, who receive a certain sum of everything that enters. I know not whether the sovereign receives this duty or the city, as I have not yet been informed; but I believe that it appertains to the sovereign, as in the markets of other provinces a tax is collected for the benefit of the cacique.

In all the markets and public places of this city are seen daily many laborers waiting for some one to hire them. The inhabitants of this city pay a greater regard to style in their mode of dress and politeness of manners than those of the other provinces and cities; since, as the Cacique Moctezuma has his residence in the capital, and all the nobility, his vassals, are in constant habit of meeting there, a general courtesy of demeanor necessarily prevails. But not to be prolix in describing what relates to the affairs of this great city, although it is with difficulty I refrain from proceeding, I will say no more than that the manners of the people, as shown in their intercourse with one another, are marked by as great an attention to the proprieties of life as in Spain, and good order is equally well observed; and considering that they are barbarous people, without the knowledge of God, having no intercourse with civilized nations, these traits of character are worthy of admiration.

In regard to the domestic appointments of Moctezuma, and the wonderful grandeur and state that he maintains, there is so much to be told, that I assure your Highness I know not where to begin my relation, so as to be able to finish any part of it. For, as I have already stated, what can be more wonderful than a barbarous monarch, as he is, should have every object found in his dominions imitated in gold, silver, precious stones, and feathers; the gold and silver being wrought so naturally as not to be surpassed by any smith in the world; the stone work executed with such perfection that it is difficult to conceive what instruments could have been used; and the feather work superior to the finest productions in wax or embroidery. The extent of Moctezuma's dominions has not been ascertained, since to whatever point he dispatched his messengers, even two hundred leagues from his capital, his commands were obeyed, although some of his provinces were in the midst of countries with which he was at war. But as nearly as I have been able to learn, his territories are equal in extent to Spain itself, for he sent messengers to the inhabitants of a city called Cumatan (requiring them to become subjects of your Majesty), which is sixty leagues beyond that part of Putunchan watered by the river Grijalva, and two hundred and thirty leagues
distant from the great city; and I sent some of our people a distance of one hundred and fifty leagues in
the same direction.

All the principle chiefs of these provinces, especially those in the vicinity of the capital, reside, as I have
already stated, the greater part of the year in that great city, and all or most of them have their oldest sons
in the service of Moctezuma. There are fortified places in all the provinces, garrisoned with his own men,
where are also stationed his governors and collectors of the rents and tribute, rendered him by every
province; and an account is kept of what each is obliged to pay, as they have characters and figures made
on paper that are used for this purpose. Each province renders a tribute of its own peculiar productions, so
that the sovereign receives a great variety of articles from different quarters. No prince was ever more
feared by his subjects, both in his presence and absence. He possessed out of the city as well as within
numerous villas, each of which had its peculiar sources of amusement, and all were constructed in the
best possible manner for the use of a great prince and lord. Within the city his palaces were so wonderful
that it is hardly possible to describe their beauty and extent; I can only say that in Spain there is nothing
equal to them.

There was one palace somewhat inferior to the rest, attached to which was a beautiful garden with
balconies extending over it, supported by marble columns, and having a floor formed of jasper elegantly
inlaid. There were apartments in this palace sufficient to lodge two princes of the highest rank with their
retinues. There were likewise belonging to it ten pools of water, in which were kept the different species
of water birds found in this country, of which there is a great variety, all of which are domesticated; for
the sea birds there were pools of salt water, and for the river birds, of fresh water. The water is let off at
certain times to keep it pure, and is replenished by means of pipes. Each species of bird is supplied with
the food natural to it, which it feeds upon when wild. Thus fish is given to the birds that usually eat it;
worms, maize, and the finer seeds, to such as prefer them. And I assure your Highness, that to the birds
accustomed to eat fish there is given the enormous quantity of ten arrobas every day, taken in the salt
lake. The emperor has three hundred men whose sole employment is to take care of these birds; and there
are others whose only business is to attend to the birds that are in bad health.

Over the polls for the birds there are corridors and galleries, to which Moctezuma resorts, and from which
he can look out and amuse himself with the sight of them. There is an apartment in the same palace in
which are men, women and children, whose faces, bodies, hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes are white from
their birth. The emperor has another very beautiful palace, with a large court-yard, paved with handsome
flags, in the style of a chess-board. There are also cages, about nine feet in height and six paces square,
each of which was half covered with a roof of tiles, and the other half had over it a wooden grate,
skillfully made. Every cage contained a bird of prey, of all the species found in Spain, from the kestrel to
the eagle, and many unknown there. There was a great number of each kind; and in the covered part of the
cages there was a perch, and another on the outside of the grating, the former of which the birds used in
the night time, and when it rained; and the other enabled them to enjoy the sun and air. To all these birds
fowls were daily given for food, and nothing else. There were in the same palace several large halls on the
ground floor, filled with immense cages built of heavy pieces of timber, well put together, in all or most
of which were kept lions, tigers, wolves, foxes, and a variety of animals of the cat kind, in great numbers,
which were fed also on fowls. The care of these animals and birds was assigned to three hundred men.
There was another palace that contained a number of men and women of monstrous size, and also dwarfs,
and crooked and ill-formed persons, each of which had their separate apartments. These also had their
respective keepers. As to the other remarkable things that the emperor had in his city for his amusement, I
can only say that they were numerous and of various kinds.

He was served in the following manner: Every day as soon as it was light, six hundred nobles and men of
rank were in attendance at the palace, who either sat, or walked about the halls and galleries, and passed
their time in conversation, but without entering the apartment where his person was. The servants and attendants of these nobles remained in the courtyards, of which there were two or three of great extent, and in the adjoining street, which was also very spacious. They all remained in attendance from morning until night; and when his meals were served, the nobles were likewise served with equal profusion, and their servants and secretaries also had their allowance. Daily his larder and wine-cellar were open to all who wished to eat or drink. The meals were served by three or four hundred youths, who brought on an infinite variety of dishes; indeed, whenever he dined or supped, the table was loaded with every kind of flesh, fish, fruits, and vegetables that the country produced. As the climate is cold, they put a chafing dish with live coals under every plate and dish, to keep them warm. The meals were served in a large hall, in which Moctezuma was accustomed to eat, and the dishes quite filled the room, which was covered with mats and kept very clean. He sat on a small cushion curiously wrought of leather. During the meals there were present, at a little distance from him, five or six elderly caciques, to whom he presented some of the food. And there was constantly in attendance one of the servants, who arranged and handed the dishes, and who received from others whatever was wanted for the supply of the table.

Both at the beginning and end of every meal, they furnished water for the hands; and the napkins used on these occasions were never used a second time; this was the case also with the plates and dishes, which were not brought again, but new ones in place of them; it was the same also with the chafing dishes. He is also dressed every day in four different suits, entirely new, which he never wears a second time. None of the caciques who enter his palace have their feet covered, and when those for whom he sends enters his presence, they incline their heads and look down, bending their bodies; and when they address him, they do not look him in the face; this arises from excessive modesty and reverence. I am satisfied that it proceeds from respect, since certain caciques reproved the Spaniards for their boldness in addressing me, saying that it showed a want of deference. Whenever Moctezuma appeared in public, which is seldom the case, all those who accompanied him, or whom he accidentally met in the streets, turned away without looking towards him, and others prostrated themselves until he had passed. One of the nobles always preceded him on these occasions, carrying three slender rods erect, which I suppose was to give notice of the approach of his person. And when they descended from the litters, he took one of them in his hand, and held it until he reached the place where he was going. So many and various were the ceremonies and customs observed by those in the service of Moctezuma, that more space than I can spare would be required for the details, as well as a better memory than I have to recollect them; since no sultan or other infidel lord, of whom any knowledge now exists, ever had so much ceremony in his court.

Introduction: A Vision of Literature
The English curriculum has assumed the role of educating students through the various arts. Therefore, this project, which uses digital cameras, incorporates audio and visual media. The photographs produced will be used to strengthen the ties between literature and personal experiences. The output is seen through the use of a slideshow.

Photographs can add life to the words of an author. The cameras will be used to depict scenes of rebellion, awe, historical connections, and cultural connections (critical themes presented in the literature studied in the classroom). The objective of the assignment is to create a presentation that portrays the students' understanding of character, mood, and setting from the literature studied and research performed in and out of class.

At times students lack a broad background from which they can derive ideas to create elaborative writing samples. Allowing them not only to read the literature but also to validate their interpretations helps student become aware of how literature and life mirror each other. By using a variety of technology tools, the students realize the importance and power of the written word.

The availability of technology in schools can be limited due to lack of funding, few resources, and inadequate support. The camera is a vital tool that has been used by many teachers and serves as an empowerment tool for students. Sylvia Charp, editor of Technological Horizons in Education, states, "Putting pictures in documents lets students use their own pictures in learning; enhancing their interest and making work more fun" (Interactive multimedia, 1996). Students who are involved in the learning process (creating the structure and pace) have a positive attitude towards learning as well as developing a responsible role in their learning environment (Anglin 369).

The students of today are exposed to many different viewpoints shared by their parents, teachers, television, radios and general environment. Students who have an emotional attachment to the
subject matter presented will internalize the information, thereby creating authentic learning. Without this involvement, students will not see the importance and validity of the material being presented to them (Anglin 370).

Students often look for the easy route or a quick fix when it comes to their studies. Homework today is almost unheard of, and assigning extensive projects are received with grumbles and sneers. Being that our students spend most of their time watching television, playing video games, and listening to the radio, the difficulty lies in stimulating the imagination of students whose thoughts and ideas have been clouded by the MTV era. These same students are placed in an Advanced Placement course, and although considered the crème of the crop, their ability to write elaborative essays is still limited. The teacher must find ways to stimulate the minds of these young students who need to pass the AP exam for college credit.

The critical need addressed by using cameras involves the student as primary caretaker of learning. Because their imaginations are limited, the camera enables the student to view the world through their personal vision and not through the eyes of a creative director of a television program. Through a lens a student can create an image that depicts emotion, scenery, and plot. These three characteristics are essential to the English learner. Without these tools, the student has a limited base from which they can derive ideas for their writing.

As an AP English teacher, I want my students not only to identify with the characters we read about, but also to explain who the characters are in their writing. The camera allows students to extend their ideas with a tool that is familiar and useful in an educational setting.

Lesson Overview

Duration of Assignment: 3 Weeks

Before pursuing this project, students participated in active reading during class time. The students read “Of Plymouth Plantation,” “The Crucible,” The Scarlet Letter and “Excerpt from the Second Letter to Charles V.” All deal with the theme of destruction, religious persecution, hate, death, and the unknown. After having read all of the assignments, students will be grouped into groups of 5–6. Before giving the assignment, review and discuss the murals painted by Rivera as a guide for the assignment to follow. A copy of the student’s assignment page is included below.

Each group assigns a primary photographer in charge of taking nine pictures with any type of camera. Students must work together to find appropriate locations to take the pictures. After a period of one week, the pictures are taken to a nearby developer for processing (the pictures are to be produced in a picture disk as well as in print).

Once the students have a chance to view their pictures, they will find quotes from the stories that portray the essence of the photo. The students are also required to find a song that coincides with the meaning of the story (they may use any of the songs from the 25 Greatest Protest Songs by VH1 studied with our Poetry through Culture assignment). As soon as all materials are gathered, students will use the computer lab and PowerPoint to put everything together. The
students prepare a slideshow to present their quotes along with their pictures. Each presentation of pictures, quotes, songs, and a question-and-answer session should last about 30 minutes.

**Assessment**
The students are assessed on the basis of preparation, group participation, and presentation. Each lab session as well as the roles of each student in the group are recorded in the teacher's record. The presentation itself will include all materials presented to the class and teacher. These are: lyrics of song typed up, copy of the pictures, and typed quotations from the story. All students who participate are given credit for participation in the group activity. All group members who follow guidelines receive full credit.

It is impossible to know for certain if the use of technology has created a lasting impression on students, but I have noticed that during discussions over literature the students are livelier and their responses are now deep-rooted instead of skimming the surface. Personally, I feel that the students have learned how to appreciate art and literature in a different way.

**Bibliography**


These paintings were executed by Diego Rivera after the Mexican Revolution and Civil War that lasted from 1910 until 1924. Rivera created a vision of Mexico that effectively communicated the new, revolutionary, national identity to a largely illiterate public. Rivera was an active member of the Communist party during most of his adult life, even hosting Leon Trotsky when he came to Mexico as an exile. Rivera's wife, Frida Kahlo, had a notorious affair with Trotsky. Even though Rivera was a well-known and politically active Communist, he lived in great luxury, painting for the rich and famous when government contracts and commissions from big capitalist corporations ran out. Rivera's work has done much to shape the modern Mexican self-image. Nevertheless, the images he painted on the walls of the National Palace, very much in the public domain, are powerful works of art that portray the great Aztec capital with some accuracy.

The mural shown here lies on the walls of the National Palace of Mexico City. Diego Rivera depicts a scene of what the Aztec capital looked like when Hernan Cortés came to conquer the Aztec Empire.

The following quotes come directly from Cortés’s letter to King Charles V. Compare these words with the details of the mural painted by Rivera.

"This great city of Tenochtitlán is built on the salt lake, and no matter by what road you travel there are two leagues from the main body of the city to the mainland. There are four artificial causeways leading to it, and each is as wide as two cavalry lances. The city itself is as big as Seville or Córdoba. The main streets are very wide and very straight; some of these are on the land, but the rest and all the smaller ones are half on land, half canals where they paddle their canoes. All the streets have openings in places so that the water may pass from one canal to another. Over all these openings and some of them are very wide, there are bridges...

"There are, in all districts of this great city, many temples or houses for their idols. They are all very beautiful buildings.... Amongst these temples there is one, the principal one, whose great size and magnificence no human tongue could describe, for it is so large that within the precincts, which are surrounded by very high wall, a town of some five hundred inhabitants could easily be built. All round inside this wall there are very elegant quarters with very large rooms and corridors where their priests live. There are as many as forty towers, all of which are so high that in the case of the largest there are fifty steps leading up to the main part of it and the most important of these towers is higher than that of the cathedral of Seville..."

See the map drawn by Hernan Cortés below.
Introduction: We are going to embark on a new visionary adventure. Through “Of Plymouth Plantation,” “The Crucible,” The Scarlet Letter and “Excerpt from the Second Letter to Charles V,” we are going to see how our perceptions shape the literature that we read. Hopefully we can answer the questions: Is what we are reading worth my time? How does this literature affect me? Does literature change my view of what is going on around me?

Groups: Students will be placed in groups of 5 to 6 members. You will be able to choose your own partners. All group members will be responsible for the final output (presentation), which will be viewed in three weeks. The grade for this project will count as a formal and very important test grade. Please choose your group members wisely. This is a serious project for serious people.

Assignment: Each group will be responsible for taking nine pictures of visions of the community that depict what we are reading in class. You can take individual quotes from the story and create a visual image, or you can take a picture of an object, person, or place that connects to what we are reading in class. When finished, your group will identify quotes from the story that coincide with the picture itself. We will place the pictures into a PowerPoint slideshow. During the slideshow, each member of the group will be responsible for reading the quotes that match the pictures on the screen. Your group will also be responsible for choosing a song to coincide with your pictures and quotes. This musical interlude can be played during your presentation or after. You must have the lyrics to the music typed out for each individual member of the class (if you turn them in early enough, I can make copies). Along with the visual show, you will be responsible for turning in a copy of the pictures, the quotes (typed with a maximum 14 font), and the song lyrics. This hard copy will be turned into me the day of your scheduled presentation. This is only a preliminary agenda, please be advised that changes can and will occur! Good Luck!!