Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Rationale:

Most of us grew up reading children’s stories. In addition to aiding in our literacy development, these stories also taught us many social, cultural, moral and even political values. When we read these books as children (and even as adults), we may not be aware of the embedded, and oftentimes, subtle messages that are being conveyed to us. By thinking sociologically about children’s literature, we are more likely to realize that these stories are not merely innocent stories that entertain us; rather, they are important components of our social, cultural, moral and political socialization.

This exercise is intended to get us thinking about how knowledge is constructed through children’s books. As you go through the exercise, you will be challenged to consider what content is appropriate for what age groups and how such content should be conveyed. You will also need to think about the implicit and explicit themes that are contained within children’s books. By understanding children’s stories from a more critical and sociological framework, you will gain insight into one of the mechanisms through which we are socialized to accept the prevailing norms and values of societies.

Instructions:

You may choose to work alone for this assignment or in your groups. Each group/student will write the text of a children’s story based on the issue that is assigned to your group. You should discuss what information about this issue you want to include, as well as how you want to convey this information to the readers. In determining what the content of your story will be, you should identify the age group for which your story is being written. You do not have to draw pictures (although you can). After each group/individuals has written their story, we will read the stories aloud and each person/group will explain the content and style of their story. Please have a group member complete the attached document and staple it to your short story.

Names of your group members:  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You group will be assigned a number that corresponds to one of the issues below. Your task is to write the text of a children’s book based on this issue. Circle your assigned issue here.

1. Slavery in the United States  
2. The events of September 11, 2001.  
3. War  
4. Sexism  
5. Racism  
6. Non-heterosexual family structure  
7. Global Poverty  
8. Poverty in the United States  
9. Immigration  
10. Aging and death

A. To what age group will your book be directed?

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Pre-school (ages 3-5)  
\_\_\_\_\_\_ Early School Years (ages 6-8)  
\_\_\_\_\_\_ Older Children (ages 9-12)

B. Explain why you choose this age group.

C. List 7-10 possible topics related to this issue that you *might* include in the text of your story.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content** | **Complete (5)** | **Generally complete (4-3)** | **Somewhat complete (2-1)** | **Incomplete (0)** |
| Writer uses the appropriate topic and story would socialize a child of the chosen age group. | Writer includes information about topic but not functions of socialization. | Writer leaves out many items associated with topic and does not address socialization. | Writer uses none of the socialization pieces nor do they mention the topic. |
| **Comprehensibility** | **Comprehensible (5)** | **Usually comprehensible (4-3)** | **Sometimes comprehensible (2-1)** | **Seldom comprehensible (0)** |
| Reader can always understand what the writer is trying to communicate. | Reader can understand most of what the writer is trying to communicate. | Reader can understand less than half of what the writer is trying to communicate. | Reader can understand little of what the writer is trying to communicate. |
| **Accuracy** | **Accurate (5)** | **Usually (4-3)** | **Sometimes (2-1)** | **Seldom (0)** |
| Writer uses language correctly, including grammar, spelling, word order, and punctuation. | Writer usually uses language correctly, including grammar, spelling, word order, and punctuation. | Writer has some problems with language usage. Makes story difficult to read. | Writer makes a significant number of errors in language usage. |
| **Organization** | **Well-organized (5)** | **Generally well-organized (4-3)** | **Somewhat organized (2-1)** | **Poorly organized (0)** |
| Presentation is logical and effective. | Presentation is generally logical and effective with a few minor problems. | Presentation is somewhat illogical and confusing in places. | Presentation lacks logical order and organization. |
| **Effort and Creativity** | **Excellent effort (5)** | **Good effort (4-3)** | **Moderate (2-1)** | **Minimal (0)** |
| Writer **fulfills the requirements of the assignment** and **has put care and effort into the process** | Writer fulfills all of the requirements of the assignment. | Writer fulfills some of the requirements of the assignment. | Writer fulfills few of the requirements of the assignment |