

To Be or Not to Be... Your Own Star, 2009

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Synopsis

To Be or Not to Be... Your Own Star: Dramatic Inquiries into Science is designed for high school students taking my Earth and Environmental Science course. The main thrust of the curriculum unit will require students to seek knowledge independently through questioning, analyzing, synthesizing, and interacting with peers. These higher-level thinking skills will be applied by utilizing the Paideia Seminar format to empower students and ultimately increase the scientific literacy of my classroom. I have chosen excerpts from two plays surrounding historical scientific conflicts: Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen*, which introduces moral and ethical dilemmas surrounding two scientific colleagues during World War II, and Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's *Inherit The Wind*, which engages concerns of teaching evolution and Darwinism in the classroom. These two texts will assist me in broadening the scope of two areas of science that become difficult for me to introduce and extend: the use of chemistry in the modern world and the origin of the solar system. In this unit, students will also explore environmental racism and justice issues through several pop culture media and art sources. Although this unit only focuses on three areas of science, the course will culminate with a group research project in which the students will choose a dramatic media to portray a scientific issue they have been curious about throughout the semester. Similar to the style of the *Pageant of the Masters* in Laguna Beach, California, students will perform and or display their final projects on stage in the high school auditorium for family and friends of their local community.