

Humpty Dumpty's Great Fall: Examining Power and Greed in *All the King's Men*

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Synopsis

This unit relies almost solely on teaching Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*. It makes no mention nor use of either film adaptation. The unit refers heavily to F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* to help students make connections between literary texts and to help in breaking down Warren's difficult work. It includes background information on Warren and on Huey P. Long (the real-life man after whom Warren's Willie Stark is modeled). Also included are several references to passage that will help students explore the tenets of characterization more closely. A brief explanation of Paideia Seminars and seminar questions for the opening passages of *All the King's Men* is detailed in the unit. Multiple-choice passages are noted and ten questions with answers are provided in the unit. The unit is most appropriate for an honors or AP level course, though any track that readies students for college would work well. A series of objectives grounded in New Criticism are annotated for the reader. The course around which the unit was designed is a high school American Studies course. It is an honors level course with students of varying ability levels.