



Adriana's Trigiani's
Viola in Reel Life
Classroom Activities

By Laura Reasoner Jones, NBCT
FCPS School-Based Technology Specialist

Note to teachers: *Viola in Reel Life* is a wonderful story that is both well written and enjoyable. It shows how technology that is readily available for students and teachers can bring literature to life.

Summary

Viola, New York City high school freshman, feels exiled to the flatlands of Northern Indiana when her parents move to Afghanistan for a year to make a documentary film. Enrolled in the all-girl boarding school Prefect Academy, Viola leaves behind her BFFAA (best friend forever and always) Andrew, her best girlfriend Caitlin, and her crush Tag.

But she brings along her dearest possession—her digital video camera. Feeling that she is to be abandoned at Prefect, Viola has vowed to make a video diary of her year in exile.

After adjusting to boarding school life, three unique roommates, dances with the neighboring all-boys boarding school, and infrequent webcam conversations with her parents, Viola meets the biggest challenge of her life. She vanquishes a ghost and creates a masterpiece, making lifelong friends and memories in the process.

Suggested Classroom Activities

Vocabulary — prefect; voiceover; storyboard; atrium; iconic; flashback

Comparing and contrasting similarities and differences — Direct students to compare and contrast the backgrounds, families, interests, and abilities of Viola's roommates.

Developing and sequencing story elements — Ask students to use the resources below to create a storyboard of a chapter or a significant event in this or any book.

<http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/>

<http://www.storycenter.org/resources.html>

<http://electronicportfolios.org/digistory/>

<http://www.teachingteachers.com/>

<http://tech-head.com/dstory.htm>

<http://www.inms.umn.edu/elements/>

Additional Resources

English Classroom Uses for the Digital Camera

<http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~ucfcasio/english.htm>

Graphic Literacy: How to Help Your Students Get the Most Out of Pictures

<http://www.ncrtec.org/tl/camp/graphic/graphic1.htm>

Lesson Plans for Digital Storytelling

<http://www.umass.edu/wmwp/DigitalStorytelling/Lesson%20Plans%20for%20Digital%20Storytelling.htm>

PhotoStory

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/PhotoStory/default.mspx>

- This software is a free and exceptionally powerful tool that is available for download on computers with Microsoft Windows.
- Students can create slideshows of digital pictures and add special effects, soundtracks, and voice narration.