

A “Look Into” Mr. Sharp’s High School English Classroom

This Look Into contains student use of AI. Always follow and use district-approved AI tools and regulations.

As the bell rings, students enter Mr. Sharp’s classroom and move with purpose. Some gather at small tables, others settle into independent work areas, and a few head to the *resource area* to collect materials. Students return to their groups and distribute physical folders while also opening their digital folders to review their plans for the day.

The class is in the middle of an *Authentic Learning Unit* titled [*A Question of Objectivity*](#). Students are analyzing primary sources to investigate how accurately their textbooks represent the Vietnam War. Their final task is to present their findings to the publisher.

Each student begins by reviewing both their physical and digital materials. Their folders include an *activity list*, their individual schedule, and feedback from Mr. Sharp. The *activity list* offers a range of learning, practice, and application options, including analyzing primary sources, building a timeline of events, comparing accounts, developing interview questions, and preparing for a virtual conversation with a Vietnam veteran. Students use their schedules to plan their time, balancing individual tasks with group responsibilities. Some annotate printed texts, while others organize notes and drafts in their shared digital workspace.

At one table, a group discusses differing accounts of the Tet Offensive, referencing both printed documents and digital sources. Mr. Sharp joins them, listening closely before asking, “How do the authors’ claims compare? What evidence stands out? What criteria are you using to evaluate their reasoning?” As students respond, he captures notes on his *facilitation grid*. After several minutes, he affirms their thinking, reviews their draft interview questions, and suggests they connect with another group to strengthen their work and compare their responses to those from an AI chatbot. He also encourages them to add their names to the *expert board* for interview development.

In another area, a group conducts a live virtual interview with a Vietnam veteran, using their digital notes and prepared questions. Their preparation is evident as they ask focused questions and build on responses. When the interview ends, Mr. Sharp acknowledges their preparation and attention to detail.

Across the room, another group compares multiple primary sources, including printed documents and archived digital texts. As Mr. Sharp listens, he notices that while most students clearly explain how point of view shapes each text, one student needs additional support. He notes this and plans to invite her to an upcoming *small-group mini-lesson*.

Midway through the period, Mr. Sharp conducts the scheduled *small-group mini-lesson*. Students bring both their written notes and digital drafts. At the board, he models two different graphic

organizers and demonstrates how each can help identify the most relevant information for an argument. Students begin sketching ideas in their *Efficacy Notebooks* while also organizing their thinking in their digital drafts. After 10 minutes, they return to their work and apply the strategies.

Throughout the room, students engage with a range of resources—texts, notes, charts, and recorded materials—moving fluidly between physical and digital tools as needed. Conversations are focused, and students shift between individual and collaborative work with a clear purpose.

A schedule posted near the door and in the digital classroom space outlines upcoming learning opportunities, including a whole-group discussion to deepen understanding of argument structure and a review session in preparation for an upcoming assessment.