The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams
Harmony Books, New York,, 1979

Concept Analysis

Plot Summary:
The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy opens up with Arthur Dent who is about to get his house torn down by bulldozers, but what he doesn’t know is that Earth is going to be destroyed by a Vogon Constructor Fleet to put in a hyperspace bypass. Arthur was lucky to have an alien friend who was able to hitch hike onto one of the constructor fleet ships and sail through the galaxy with a towel by his side. Arthur meets up with the President of the Galaxy and a girl from Earth. They are trying to find the question to Life, Universe and Everything because the answer is 42. During the book he finds out Earth was created by mice. After exploring the galaxy, he decides not to return to Earth 2 and became a hitch hiker to see the Galaxy.

Organization:
The book is organized by 35 chapters. Within some of the chapters a small asterisk shows next to a word and you can look down at a footnote to find out more information.

Enduring Question:

Do we need a guide to help us in our travels? How come?: While reading the book questions of do we need a guide to help us through out life, or just in traveling around the globe. Would it be nice to have a guide to guide us where we need to go.

How can I find myself, if I was the only one of the human race to have survive?: I kept thinking to myself what would I do if I left the world. Could I survive being alone? If I didn’t have a home to go home too, how would I feel?

A great issue it brings up in the book is, We try to the best for a big group of people but step on the individual. How can we not forgot about the individual?: Arthur did not want his small house
to be demolished. The people of Earth also did not want to die as well, but according to the authorities it just had to go and they did not care. What about them who lose a home/life because we are trying to serve the greater good.

**Issue Related to this Study of Literature:**

**Themes**

**The Reality of Absurdity:** throughout the book random things happen with no meaning or explanation. Very similar to life and what happens. Sometimes we could walking and a black cat jumps from a tree. First we do not know why it happens but we try to give explanations why the cat was in the tree or not.

**How Nature is worked in the book and its Meaning:** Humanity is not the source of meaning but rather a taker of meaning. For example mice actually manipulate scientist to find out how humans act, instead of humans experimenting with them. Dolphins are the second smartest animals on the planet who tried to warn the humans of their impending doom. Even another meaning is the fjords of Norway were created by an alien instead of glaciers.

**What ever you are going to do to Survive: Permanence:** Arthur Dent’s house and Earth have very small meaning to the people who live there in the great scheme of the galaxy. Dent’s house was very small to Earth and Earth was very small to the Galaxy. There is no strong sense of permanent residence.

**How to deal with massive Culture Clash:** This is a major theme because Earth is completely destroyed and Arthur has to thrive in alien cultures. His culture is no more and now he has to try to survive in a galaxy that doesn’t make sense.

**Setting**

There are three majors settings in this book. There are some others but they are small. One is Arthur Dent’s house in Great Britain, the Heart of Gold, and Magrathea. The students will need to know some of the layouts of Earth. Like the Fjords in Norway, some of Great Britain’s landscape of why they want to put a bypass from point A to point B. The outer skirts of Great Britain to help them.
**Point of View**

Third Person. An overlook of what the characters are doing. And the point of view slightly changes where the third person focuses on one person instead of staying on all the people.

**List of Literary Terms taught in 6th-12th Class:**

**Flashback:** The flashback occurs when Arthur tells about a party six months ago when he meets Trillian a woman he liked but Zaphod uses a great pick up line according to trillian, “Want to see my spaceship.” pg 73-74.

**Foreshadowing:** Near the beginning of the book, when they are talking about demolishing Dent’s house there is a prediction that the Earth is going to End from Ford.

**Genre:** Being in the Science fiction field and opening some interesting concepts on what to expect in a science fiction world then an actual story based on Earth by Earth characters.

**Simile:** A great simile is when the book is talking about the best alcoholic drink. The sentence goes like this, “It says that the effect of drinking a Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster is like having your brains smashed out by a slice of lemon wrapped round a large gold brick.” Using this it can help the students describe what a simile is and how we describe an action by something a little less confusing.

**Metaphor:** Some of the Metaphors within the book is how people speak. Instead of using like or as it says “His [the Vogon] voice took on the quality of a cat snagging brushed nylon.” pg 47.

**Symbolism:** As this could mean anything the symbolism that we can use is the answer to the life, universe and everything. We can explain to them what it could mean and what it might mean in the story and then we can expound to other things within the story. Like the name of the
ship, the Heart of Gold. And so forth.

**Dialogue:** Some good places to discuss dialogue is when Arthur and Ford get upon the Heart of Gold talking with Marvin the Robot and Zaphod. How it is used and how sometimes we think someone said something and answer them before they even ask or say anything. The example is when Marvin says, “Life don’t talk to me about life.” pg. 65-66.

**Imagery:** While discussing the simile and metaphor and dialogue we can bring out the imagery the author uses in each instance. So teachers can work with the students on how imagery is portrayed by similes, metaphors and in the dialogue.

**Affective Issues Related to the Work**

One of the major roles in the book is how Arthur is trying to have an identity with no home. He has many different culture smashes and feels he is insignificant to the rest of life. People all always trying to find out who they are.

Another issue within the book is thinking unlogical and trying to understand randomness and how the world can throw many different loop holes in your life and how we should try to react.

The last issue is how we are trying to find out the meaning to life, the universe and everything. Sometimes we will never find out because we do not know what question to ask to find out the answer.

**Vocabulary Issue**

The language is basic and there are no big words but because of the science fiction factor new words and new worlds are created that it would hard for some students to understand. If they blow pass they problem of the new words and understanding the world that has been created, everything else is simple and easy to understand.

**Background Knowledge**

Students will need to know before reading this book is Science Fiction Genre. If they know they are going to read about things that could be. Another good thing to teach is about language and
how some authours try to paint the picture with made-up words to express something.

Implications for Students of Diversity

This story is filled with diversity issue. What if they were the only one left of their culture. Are they going to keep it alive or are they going to completely change? Will they be assimilated into the new culture or become bi-cultural?

Gender Issues

The biggest gender is issue is how Trillian is being treated. She is the woman of the house. She cleans up after Zaphod. She knows how to run everything in the ship. Zaphod is an idiot showing how guys are just big idiots in the world because they just worry about their looks.

Research Issues/Project Ideas

Paper - A great project is a story about how they would react if their world blew up and what culture would they represent and how they would react in a different culture. Or a paper on how to argue to get your house, or the planet, not demolished to help them develop a sense of how a home can control individuality.

Enrichment Resources

Culture Clash Experiment - Having the students go out to a place with a huge culture smash.