Ditching the Knowledge-Dump Model
In Favor of WRITING INTENSIVE

Step 1: In class, have students analyze a sample Sparknotes in order to identify how it is designed to help students skate through discussion—and exam questions.

Step 2: Have students craft a project proposal that outlines how they will design and research a study guide for a class text.

Step 3: Use Graff and Birkenstein’s *They Say / I Say* to help students learn to structure a study guide that makes a claim and puts that thesis in conversation with previous research about their text.

Step 4: Have students complete weekly writing mini-assignments throughout the project that demand students complete research processes, drafting, and design work in manageable steps.

Step 5: Guide students through a two-part peer review process that involves written and verbal feedback on each others’ projects.

Step 6: Meet with students individually to offer guidance on the research and writing process.

Step 7: Submit final project!

As a teacher of literature it can be easy to hate Sparknotes...

...they discourage students from doing the reading

...they hide the research that went into creating ostensibly “standard” interpretations of the text

...they teach students that learning is passive

In other words, the seeming antithesis of HIP

But an online study guide **CAN** encourage reading, research, and active learning!

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