

Grade 6

When students enter middle school, they should already have a solid foundation in literature and other subject areas and should be able to read and write fluently. If their schools have used the Common Core curriculum maps for K-5, students begin sixth grade with a strong background in mythology, folktales, and fables from around the world; classic and contemporary fiction and poetry; and literary nonfiction related to historical and select science topics. They are able to write short essays in which they articulate a central idea and support it with examples from texts. In sixth grade, students take their knowledge to a new level as they begin to explore deeper and subtler themes. While reading *Peter Pan* and its prequel versions at the start of sixth grade, students consider the question “How can we learn from characters and the authors who wrote about them?” Later in the year, they study folklore; consider aspects of courage; read literature, first-hand narratives, and informational texts about heritage and immigration; learn about the elements of a mystery story; read about flying from literary, historical, and scientific perspectives; and more. Throughout the units, they study morphology and etymology, building their own dictionaries of words that they have investigated. Students write in a variety of genres, including responses to literature, reflective essays, and stories. They use graphic organizers to lay out their ideas and plan their essays. They participate in class discussion and art enrichment activities; practice reading literature expressively; and deliver presentations. By the end of sixth grade, they are ready to study literature with complex and challenging themes.

Grade 6 Units

- **UNIT 1** I Won't Grow Up
- **UNIT 2** Folklore: A Blast from the Past
- **UNIT 3** Embracing Heritage
- **UNIT 4** Courageous Characters
- **UNIT 5** Figure it Out
- **UNIT 6** Winging It

Grade 6 Unit 1**I Won't Grow Up**

This first six-week unit of sixth grade starts off the year with reflections on childhood—from literature to poetry to student experiences.

Overview:

Students build upon books read in fifth grade, and explore the theme of “growing up.” Students read the original and prequel versions of the popular story, *Peter Pan*. They have the opportunity to listen to one of the books on tape, compare and contrast the written and audio presentations, and extend this comparison to the Broadway musical version. Students read biographies about and interviews with the respective authors of the various versions to examine how life experience influences all authors. After reading and discussing elements of effective prequels, students attempt to write their own prequel to another well-known story in order to see just how challenging writing one can be. This unit ends with an open-ended reflective essay answering the essential question.

Essential Question:

How can we learn from characters and the authors who wrote about them?

Focus Standards:

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

- **RI.6.1:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RL.6.7:** Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, poem, or drama to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
- **W.6.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- **SL.6.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.6.1 (a):** Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- **SL.6.1 (b):** Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- **L.6.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- **L.6.1 (a):** Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).
- **L.6.1 (b):** Use intensive pronouns (e.g., *myself*, *ourselves*).

Student Objectives:

- Read and compare the original *Peter Pan* to its prequel, *Peter and the Starcatchers*.
- Compare and contrast the text of a story, such as *Peter and the Starcatchers*, to its audio version.
- Research authors through biographies, autobiographies, and copies of interviews; present findings to the class.
- Write a variety of responses to literature, poetry, and informational text.
- Write narratives (specifically, a prequel).
- Perform scenes from stories read for classmates.
- Participate in group discussions

Suggested Works:

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

Literary Texts

Stories

- "Eleven" (Sandra Cisneros) (E)
- *Peter Pan* (J.M. Barrie)
- *Peter and the Starcatchers* (Dave Barry, Ridley Pearson, and Greg Call)
- *Peter and the Shadow Thieves* (Dave Barry, Ridley Pearson, and Greg Call)
- *When I Was Your Age, Volume Two: Original Stories about Growing up* (Amy Ehrlich, ed.)
- *The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups* (David Wisniewski)
- *James and the Giant Peach* (Roald Dahl)
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Roald Dahl)

Audiobooks

- *Peter Pan* (BBC Radio Presents) (Random House Audio)
- *Peter and the Starcatchers* (Audiobook CD) (Brilliance Audio)
- *James and the Giant Peach* (Audiobook CD) (Puffin Books)

Poems

- "Past, Present, Future" (Emily Bronte)
- "A Birthday" (Christina Rossetti) (EA)

Informational Texts

Biographies

- *J.M. Barrie: The Magic Behind Peter Pan* (Susan Bivin Aller)

Autobiographies

- *Boy: Tales of Childhood* (Roald Dahl) (EA)

Articles

- “Peter Pan’s early years” (Bob Minzesheimer, *USA Today*, 9/1/2004)
- “Prequel to Peter Pan fills in the blanks with fun” (Sue Corbett, *Miami Herald*, No Date)

Additional Resources

- “Classic story flies in many forms” (A Peter Pan timeline) (Bob Minzesheimer, *USA Today*, 9/1/2004)

Art, Music, and Media

Music

- Moose Charlap and Carolyn Leigh, “I Won’t Grow Up” (1954)

Note: This song is from *Peter Pan* the musical, and the version in which Cathy Rigby sings the part of Peter is recommended.

Media

- *Peter Pan* (Cathy Rigby version) (2000)
- *James and the Giant Peach* (1996)
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1971)
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005)

Sample Activities and Assessments:

Literature Response

As you read the original and prequel versions of *Peter Pan*, take notes about the following in your journal:

- Setting
- List of characters and traits
- The character’s internal responses and external behaviors to events in the story
- The events that lead up to climax, and, ultimately, the character’s development
- “I Won’t Grow Up” – What does Peter Pan do to live up to these famous words?

Be sure to write down the page numbers of relevant information, or mark your book with Post-It notes, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. You will be given an opportunity to talk through your ideas with a partner prior to class discussion. (RL.6.1)

Literature Response

Discuss the elements of setting (e.g., time, place, environment) with your classmates. Find examples of how time, place, and environment are used in *Peter Pan*. Write your ideas on a Post-It note before sharing ideas as a class. After the class discussion, look back in the text to find specific examples of how J.M. Barrie described Neverland, and even how he described the Darling’s home in England. Create a three-column chart (one column for each element of setting) in your journal. (RL.6.1, RL.6.3)

Literature Response

Create a character map of one of the characters from *Peter Pan*, citing specific examples from the text. As a class, we will compare and contrast similarities and differences in how the characters develop over the course of a story, and discuss how we learn from characters—either through examples or non-examples of behavior. (RL.6.1, RL.6.3)

Class Discussion

In *Peter and the Starcatchers*, Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson took a well-known book, *Peter Pan*, and wrote about what happened before the events that took place prior to it. How do Barry and Pearson connect this story to the original? What elements and details are kept and which ones are spared? Your teacher may ask you to first write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner prior to discussing as a class. Be sure to write down the page numbers of relevant information, or mark your book with Post-It notes, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. (SL.6.1a,b, RL.6.1, RL.6.6)

Narrative Writing

Write a prequel to *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl. What elements of the original are important to maintain in creating a prequel? What elements of setting (e.g., time, place, environment) will you include? Be sure to stay true to the original characters and open with an exciting scene in the way that *Peter and the Starcatchers* began (see above). (RL.6.3, W.6.3a, b, c, d, e, W.6.4, L.6.1a, b)

Literature Response/Essay

How is listening to *Peter Pan*, *Peter and the Starcatchers*, or *James and the Giant Peach* as an audiobook similar to/different from reading the book? Which do you prefer? Why? Write an argument to support your preference in your journal. (RL.6.7, W.6.1a, b, c, d, e, L.6.1a, b)

Dramatization/Fluency

Choose a scene from one of the books read that you find humorous or touched you in some way. Work with classmates to present the scene as a dramatic reading. (SL.6.6)

Informational Text Response/Essay

What did you learn about the authors from the biographies/autobiographies and/or interviews that you didn't know before? How much of the author's experience do you "see" after learning more about him/her? You will have the opportunity to exchange ideas with a partner prior to writing your essay. Cite specific information from the texts we've read. (RI.6.1, L.6.1a, b)

Poetry Response

How is the treatment of "growing up" similar and different in the poems and the prose we've read? Write your ideas down in your journal prior to class discussion. (SL.6.6)

Literature Response/Media Appreciation

What does the phrase "I won't grow up" mean to you? Based on the lyrics from the musical version of *Peter Pan*, what does growing up mean to Peter? Does this song include all aspects of growing up? Do you want to grow up? Your teacher may ask you to first write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner prior to discussing as a class. (RL.6.1a, b) (Note: Alternately, you may watch the "I Won't Grow Up" scene from the movie and then discuss.) (RL.6.7)

Word Study

Keep an index card file of words studied while reading *Peter Pan*. Keeping the words on index cards will help you when we sort words by prefix, suffix, root words, meaning, spelling feature, etc. Can you select a word and find its root? How do prefixes and suffixes affect the part of speech and spelling? (Note: This will be an ongoing activity all year long.) (L.6.4a, b)

Class Discussion [questions that build on texts read in grade 5]

- Compare and contrast the character of Wendy Darling in *Peter Pan* with Alice in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. How are their experiences in a fantastic land similar? Different? How does the fact that these characters are female affect their fantastic experiences?
- Eternal youth is a common theme between *Tuck Everlasting* and *Peter Pan*. Would you like to remain young forever? Why or why not? Cite specific passages or events from *Peter Pan* or *Tuck Everlasting* to support your claim. (SL.6.1a, b)

Reflective Essay

Write an essay response to the essential question ("How can we learn from characters and the authors who wrote about them?"). Prepare it for publication. Be prepared to make an audio recording of your essay and upload it as a podcast on the class webpage for this unit. (W.6.9a, b, W.6.4, L.6.1a, b, L.6.2a, b)

Terminology:

- character development
- character traits
- elements of setting: place, time, environment
- interviews
- prequel

Grade 6 Unit 2**Folklore: A Blast from the Past**

This six-week unit focuses on what folklore (myths, legends, and tall and pourquoi tales) reveal about world cultures—including our own.

Overview:

Students can choose myths and legends from a variety of sources: the ancient Greek or Roman civilizations; Russian society; Viking, Eskimo, or Latin American cultures; or other cultures of the students' choice. In addition, students read informational text, listen to music, and examine art from the myth's or legend's country of origin. Class discussions should focus on the fact that folklore provides a limited view of a culture, that it's important to research and find out more about the country before making sweeping generalizations about it. The goal of this unit is not only for students to find commonalities across this genre, but to discover countries and cultures other than our own. The culminating project is an open-ended reflective essay response to the essential question.

Essential Question:

How is folklore simultaneously revealing and limiting?

Focus Standards:

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

- **RL.6.3:** Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- **RI.6.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
- **W.6.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- **W.6.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
- **SL.6.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.6.1 (c):** Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
- **SL.6.1 (d):** Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
- **L.6.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 6 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- **L.6.4 (a):** Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- **L.6.4 (b):** Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *audience, auditory, audible*).

Student Objectives:

- Read, compare, and contrast myths, legends, and tall and pourquoi tales from a variety of countries/cultures.
- Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another.
- Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
- Write a narrative (myth, legend, tall tale, or pourquoi tale).
- Compare and contrast the reading a story, such as *Just So Stories*, to its audio version.
- Perform a scene from a myth or legend for classmates.
- Conduct research on a country of choice, and integrate that knowledge with folklore from the same country.
- Participate in group discussions.

Suggested Works:

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

Literary Texts

Stories

Greece/Ancient World

- *Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the 'Iliad'* (Rosemary Sutcliff) (E)
- *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* (Bernard Evslin)
- *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and the Olympians: Book 1* (Rick Riordan)
- *Women Warriors: Myths and Legends of Heroic Women* (Marianna Mayer and Heller Julek)

Rome

- *Roman Myths* (Geraldine McCaughrean and Emma Chichester Clark)

Vikings

- *D'Aulaires' Book of Norse Myths* (Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire)

Inuit-Eskimo

- *Tikta'Liktak: An Inuit-Eskimo Legend* (James A. Houston)

Latin America

- *Golden Tales: Myths, Legends, and Folktales from Latin America* (Lulu Delacre) (Note: This title also includes informational text.)

General

- *Favorite Folktales from Around the World* (Jane Yolen)
- *The Firebird and Other Russian Fairy Tales* (Arthur Ransome)
- *Just So Stories* (Rudyard Kipling) (EA)
- *Cut from the Same Cloth: American Women of Myth, Legend, and Tall Tale* (Robert D. San Souci, Brian Pinkney, and Jane Yolen)
- *American Tall Tales* (Mary Pope Osborne and Michael McCurdy) (EA)

Poems

- "Twelfth Song of Thunder" (Navajo, Traditional) (E)

Audiobooks

- *Just So Stories* (Rudyard Kipling) (Harper Collins)
- *The Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and the Olympians: Book 1* (Rick Riordan and Jesse Bernstein) (Listening Library)

Informational Texts**Informational Text****Ancient World**

- *The Usborne Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of World History* (Jane Bingham)

Greece

- *The Hero Schliemann: The Dreamer Who Dug For Troy* (Laura Amy Schlitz and Robert Byrd)
- *Greeks Internet Linked* (Illustrated World History) (Susan Peach, Anne Millard, and Ian Jackson)
- *You Wouldn't Want to be a Slave in Ancient Greece!: A Life You'd Rather Not Have* (You Wouldn't Want To...Series)(Fiona MacDonald, David Salariya, and David Antram)

Rome

- *Romans: Internet Linked* (Illustrated World History) (Anthony Marks)
- *You Wouldn't Want to Live in Pompeii! A Volcanic Eruption You'd Rather Avoid* (You Wouldn't Want To...Series) (John Malam, David Salariya, and David Antram)
- *You Wouldn't Want to be a Roman Soldier!: Barbarians You'd Rather Not Meet* (You Wouldn't Want To...Series) (David Stewart and David Antram)

Vikings

- *First Facts about the Vikings* (Jacqueline Morley)
- *Vicious Vikings* (Horrible Histories TV Tie-in) (Terry Deary and Martin Brown)
- *You Wouldn't Want to Be a Viking Explorer!: Voyages You'd Rather Not Make* (You Wouldn't Want To...Series) (Andrew Langley, David Salariya, and David Antram)

Inuit-Eskimo

- *The Inuit* (Watts Library) (Suzanne M. Williams)
- *Building an Igloo* (Ulli Steltzer)

Latin America

- *Golden Tales: Myths, Legends, and Folktales from Latin America* (Lulu Delacre) (Note: This title also includes folktales.)

- *Aztec, Inca, and Maya* (DK Eyewitness Books) (Elizabeth Baquedano and Barry Clarke)
- *Beneath the Stone: A Mexican Zapotec Tale* (Bernard Wolf)
- *The History Atlas of South America* (MacMillan Continental History Atlases) (Edwin Early, ed.)
- *First Americans: Story of Where They Came From and Who They Became* (Anthony F. Aveni and S.D. Nelson)

Sample Activities and Assessments:

Graphic Organizer

As you read a variety of myths and legends, keep track of the following information in your journal:

- Characters
- Country of origin
- Problem (that can't be solved)
- Setting
- Title
- Hero (who comes to solve the problem or explains the mystery)
- Ending
- Characteristics unique to this country's folklore

Your teacher may ask you to share your responses with a partner before class discussion. Be sure to write down the page numbers of relevant information, or mark your book with Post-It notes, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. (RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.3)

Class Discussion

Be prepared to compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events across stories, drawing on specific information from the stories read by you and your classmates. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d, RL.6.2, RL.6.3)

Class Discussion

How does *Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad* by Rosemary Sutcliff provide insight into Greek civilization? Discuss insights into characters from this story, plot developments, and society in general. Your teacher may ask you to write your own responses in your journal and share it with a partner before class discussion. (RI.6.4, SL.6.1a, b, c, d, RL.6.1)

Informational Text Response

After reading folklore from a particular country, choose informational text about the country/culture of origin to read. What does the informational text tell you about a country/culture that folklore does not? Write your thoughts in your journal, and share your ideas with a partner. (RI.6.2, RI.6.4)

Literature Response

Outline how the plot of a myth, legend, tall tale, or pourquoi tale of choice unfolds in a series of episodes by creating a comic strip of key events. Be sure to include the characters, and how they respond or change as the plot moves towards the "happy ending." Make note of page numbers each box refers to so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion, if needed. (RL.6.3)

Class Discussion/Venn Diagram

What are the similarities and differences you notice among myths, legends, tall tales, and pourquoi tales? Your teacher may ask you to write your own responses in your journal and share it with a partner before

class discussion. After class discussion, create a Venn diagram in your journal that outlines the similarities and differences among three of the types of folklore. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d, RL.6.9)

Narrative Writing

Write your own myth or legend. As discussed in class, myths and legends were written to explain their surroundings (often before scientific explanations were found). Follow the “typical” pattern (see below), but also build upon your insights from the graphic organizer in the first activity.

- Explanation of the setting
- The problem
- The failure to solve the problem
- The hero comes along
- He/she has a plan
- The solution is found
- Conclusion (usually a “happy ending”) (W.6.3a, b, c, d, e, W.6.4, W.6.5, L.6.1a, b, c, d, L.6.2a, b)

Dramatization/Fluency

Choose a scene from one of the myths or legends read that you feel are the most revealing about that culture. Work with classmates to present the scene as a dramatic reading. (SL.6.6)

Art Appreciation

Find art pieces that portray the characters or culture(s) about which you read. How does knowing the “story behind the character” give you a deeper insight into the artwork? Your teacher may ask you to write your own responses in your journal and share it with a partner before class discussion. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d, RL.6.3)

Literature Response/Media Appreciation

How is listening to *Just So Stories* as an audiobook similar to/different from reading the book? Which do you prefer? Why? Your teacher may ask you to write your own responses in your journal and share it with a partner before class discussion. (RL.6.7)

Word Study

Keep an index card file of words studied while reading various myths, legends, tall tales, or pourquoi tales. Keeping the words on index cards will help you when we sort words by prefix, suffix, root words, meaning, spelling feature, etc. Did you find words you recognize that are from the country/culture of the folklore read? How can word origins, or etymology, affect our understanding of the words? (Note: This will be an ongoing activity all year long.) (L.6.4a, b, RI.6.4)

Research Report/Reflective Essay/Multimedia Presentation

Conduct research on a country from which you read folklore. How does knowing information enhance your understanding of the folklore from that country? What information did you only learn from research? Talk with a classmate to share ideas. Then, drawing on informational text as well as folklore we’ve read, write an essay response to the essential question (“How is folklore simultaneously revealing and limiting?”). Add examples of this in a multimedia format and present it to the class. (W.6.7, W.9a, b, W.6.4, L.6.1a, b, c, d, L.6.2a, b)

Terminology:

- pourquoi tale
- plot
- oral tradition

- photographic essay
- etymology

Grade 6 Unit 3

Embracing Heritage

In this eight-week unit, students continue to read stories and informational text and discuss what they each reveal about our own country: the United States of America.

Overview:

"Remember, remember always that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists." -Franklin D. Roosevelt

America has been described as "a melting pot" or "a tossed salad" because a variety of individuals who have come to America from around the world have made our country rich in ideas, traditions, and customs. Except for the Native Americans, everyone has immigrated—or has ancestors who have emigrated—from another country. People have come, and continue to come, to America to seek freedom and opportunity. Students read from a variety of texts and discuss the fact that while many voluntarily immigrated, others came involuntarily. Many who came to America have had to overcome racism and prejudice, and students discuss how we should be tolerant of each other's similarities and differences. This unit culminates in a "Generations Project," in which students consider the perspectives from different generations within a family to show how we are shaped by the experiences we have and the people we encounter. In addition, students create an individual semantic map of the phrase "embracing heritage" in order to represent visually their understanding of this phrase. A component of this project is an open-ended reflective epilogue that answers the essential question.

Essential Question:

How can we learn to appreciate our similarities and differences through literature?

Focus Standards:

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

- RL.6.6: Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator in a text.
- RI.6.3: Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
- RI.6.9: Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

- W.6.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- W.6.5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- SL.6.3: Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
- L.6.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 6 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- L.6.4 (c): Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- L.6.4 (d): Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

Student Objectives:

- Define the word “heritage” and review the word “culture” (from grade 5).
- Read a variety of historical fiction and nonfiction about immigrant experiences.
- Analyze multiple accounts of immigration and describe important similarities and differences in the details they provide.
- Interview family members.
- Conduct research on countries from which family members immigrated.
- Write opinion papers on America as the “land of opportunity.”
- Write and perform poetry or songs for classmates.
- Begin defining relationships between words (e.g., migrate, immigrate, emigrate, etc.).
- Participate in group discussions.

Suggested Works:

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

Literary Texts

Stories

- *One More River to Cross: The Stories of Twelve Black Americans* (Scholastic Biography) (Jim Haskins) (EA)
- *As Long as the Rivers Flow: The Stories of Nine Native Americans* (Scholastic Biography) (Paula Gunn Allen and Patricia Clark Smith)
- *Esperanza Rising* (Pam Munoz Ryan)
- *Project Mulberry* (Linda Sue Park)
- *Weedflower* (Cynthia Kadohata)
- *Escape from Saigon: How a Vietnam War Orphan Became an American Boy* (Andrea Warren)
- “On Discovering America” (Pearl S. Buck) (*Survey Graphic Magazine*)
- *One Eye Laughing, the Other Eye Weeping: The Diary of Julie Weiss, Vienna, Austria to New York, 1938* (Dear America Series) (Barry Denenberg)
- *Something About America* (Maria Testa)
- *Journey of the Sparrows* (Fran Leeper Buss)

- *Behind the Mountain* (First Person Fiction) (Edwidge Danticat)
- *An Indian in Cowboy Country: Stories from an Immigrant's Life* (Pradeep Anand)

Lyrics

- "Coming to America" (Neil Diamond)

Informational Texts

Informational Text

Easy Books for Building Background Knowledge

- *Coming To America: The Story of Immigration* (Betsy Maestro and Suzannah Ryan)
- *If Your Name Was Changed at Ellis Island* (If You[r]...Series) (Ellen Levine and Wayne Parmenter)

General

- *A History of US: Reconstructing America 1865-1890* (Book 7) (Joy Hakim) (EA)
- *How People Immigrate* (Scholastic, A True Book) (Sarah De Capua)
- *Immigrant Kids* (Russell Freedman)(EA)
- *New Kids in Town: Oral Histories of Immigrant Teens* (Scholastic Biography) (Janet Bode)
- *First Crossing: Stories about Teen Immigrants* (Donald R. Gallo)

Genealogy

- *Through the Eyes of Your Ancestors: A Step-by-Step Guide to Uncovering Your Family's History* (Maureen Alice Taylor)
- *Do People Grow on Family Trees?: Genealogy for Kids and Other Beginners, The official Ellis Island Handbook* (Ira Wolfman and Michael Klein)

Informational Text (Read Aloud)

- *Colors of Freedom: Immigrant Stories* (Janet Bode)

Sample Activities and Assessments:

Class Discussion

What is meant by the word "heritage"? Which elements does one look for when learning about a culture? Write your ideas down on a Post-It note and "Give one, get one." (*Teacher Notes: "Culture" was discussed and defined in Grade 5, but you may want to review it. Answers to the elements of heritage may include: something that is passed down from previous generations, a tradition, our family members' culture, etc.*) Let's create a class chart of elements to look for, and we will look to find examples in texts read during this unit. We will also continue to add to this list as we gain additional insights during this unit. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d)

Class Discussion

How do the stories from this unit provide insight into the immigrants' experience? How are their stories alike? Different? Cite specific information from the text read to justify your response. Did the story turn out as you expected? Why or why not? Your teacher may ask you to write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner before class discussion. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d, SL.6.3, RL.6.1)

Literary Response

After reading one of the immigrant stories, respond in your journal to this James Arthur Baldwin quotation (from the character's point of view): "Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go." Be sure to cite specific examples from the text to justify your response. (RL.6.1, RL.6.6, L.6.1a, b, c, d, L.6.2a, b)

Research/Travel Brochure

Conduct research on a country from which an immigrant you read about left, drawing on several sources (e.g., print, digital, video, multimedia, etc.). Write a report or create a travel brochure that entices people to visit that country he/she came from. For the travel brochure, what should visitors learn that would increase understanding of how we are similar to and different from people of that country? Work with peers to get feedback and improve your report or brochure. (W.6.7, RI.6.7, RI.6.9)

Genealogy/Multimedia Generations Project

As a way for you to personalize immigrations stories, you are encouraged to learn about the countries from which your family immigrated. Interview three family members (or family friends) from different generations for this project, asking questions about significant aspects of their respective childhoods and growing up. The purpose of this project is to get perspectives from different generations within one family to show how we are shaped by the experiences we have and by the people we encounter. You will share what you learn in a multimedia format with the class, and upload it to class webpage to facilitate sharing with family members far away. (RI.6.3, RI.6.7)

Class Discussion

Analyze various accounts of immigrant experiences, then identify and distinguish among facts, opinions, and reasoned judgments presented in texts. How do these sources combine to give you a better picture of the immigrant experience than informational text or literature alone? Your teacher may ask you to write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner before class discussion. Be sure to write down the page numbers of facts and opinions or mark your book with Post-It notes so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. (RI.6.3, RL.6.9, RI.6.8, SL.6.3)

Essay

People have been immigrating to the United States for more than 200 years. Even today, there are people who immigrate to America. Do you think the reasons for current immigration are more alike or different from those who immigrated 200 years ago? Write your position on a Post-It note, and discuss your preliminary ideas with classmates. Then, research and compare the reasons people immigrated 200 years ago to the reasons people immigrate today. Then, individually write your argument about whether the reasons are more similar or different. (W.6.1a, b, c, d, e, W.6.4, W.6.5, RI.6.8)

Dramatization/Fluency

Write a poem or a song for two voices about an immigrant's experience. The poem should be modeled after *Joyful Noise* by Paul Fleischman (read in fifth grade), and the song modeled after Neil Diamond's lyrics about "Coming to America." The song or poem should accurately reflect information historical (or present-day) information. Work with classmates to present the song or poem as a dramatic reading. (SL.6.6)

Word Study

Keep an index card file of words studied while reading about immigrant experiences. Keeping the words on index cards will help you when we sort words by prefix, suffix, root words, meaning, country of origin, spelling feature, etc. Just as we can trace the path of our ancestors, we can trace the path of words. Choose some words and trace back from modern-day uses of the words to their historical origins (e.g., culture, heritage, immigration, emigration, immigrant, endowment, lineage, racism, tolerance, legacy, ancestry,

etc.) (Note: This will be an ongoing activity all year long.) In addition, you will create an individual semantic map of the phrase “embracing heritage” in order to represent visually your understanding of this phrase.(RL.6.4, L.6.4a, b, c, d)

Reflective Essay

Write an essay response to the essential question (“How can we learn to appreciate our similarities and differences through literature?”). Prepare it for publication. Be prepared to make an audio recording of your essay and upload it as a podcast to accompany your Genealogy/Multimedia Generations Project (see above). (W.6.5, W.6.9a, b, L.6.1a, b, c, d, L.6.2a, b)

Terminology:

- epilogue
- legacy
- lore
- realism
- traditional literature

Grade 6 Unit 4**Courageous Characters**

In this six-week unit, students select a fictional story with a courageous character and pair it with related informational text from the same historical time period.

Overview:

Students can choose stories about a variety of circumstances in which people acted with tremendous courage: in times of slavery, instances of shipwrecks, or during the days of unfair child labor practices. Students recognize that acts of courage may have an everlasting effect on others. In this unit, students have the opportunity to refine their definition of courage by examining how characters—real and fictional—grow from the obstacles they overcome. After reading about outwardly courageous people, students consider quiet acts of courage, and class discussions reveal the importance of those people who often remain unnoticed or behind the scenes. Students examine how language and vocabulary enhance the reader’s experience, cite specific passages of text to justify their thoughts, and critically examine the artistic licenses often taken in historical fiction. The culminating project for this unit is for students to write and publish their own stories of courageous characters.

Essential Question:

How are acts of courage revealed in literature and informational text?

Focus Standards:

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

- **RL.6.9:** Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
- **RI.6.2:** Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions and judgments.
- **W.6.1:** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- **W.6.6:** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.
- **SL.6.2:** Interpret information presented in diverse formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
- **L.6.3:** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Student Objectives:

- Define “courage.”
- Read a variety of literature and informational text about challenging events and experiences.

- Compare and contrast stories with courageous characters.
- Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
- Perform a favorite scene from *The People Could Fly* or other story for classmates.
- Read informational text to provide a historical context for the setting of a story with courageous characters.
- Write an opinion paper about a challenging event studied.
- Continue defining relationships between words (e.g., courage, courageous, courageousness; conviction, convince, etc.).
- Participate in group discussions.

Suggested Works:

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

Literary Texts

Stories

General

- *The Power of Light: Eight Stories for Hanukkah* (Isaac Bashevis Singer and Irene Lieblich) (EA)
- *Fire from the Rock* (Sharon M. Draper)
- *War Comes to Willy Freeman* (James and Christopher Collier) [easier to read but excellent]
- *Baseball Saved Us* (Ken Mochizuki and Dom Lee) [easier to read but excellent]

Slavery/Overcoming It

- "The People Could Fly" (Virginia Hamilton and Leo and Diane Dillon) (E)
- *Free at Last!: Stories and Songs of Emancipation* (Doreen Rappaport and Shane W. Evans)

Asia

- *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks* (Katherine Paterson and Leo and Diane Dillon) (E)
- *Sign of the Chrysanthemum* (Katherine Paterson and Peter Landa) (EA)
- *Kira-Kira* (Cynthia Kadohata)
- *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* (Ji-Li Jiang)
- *Under the Blood-Red Sun* (Graham Salisbury)

Shipwrecks

- *SOS Titanic* (Eve Bunting)
- *Timothy of the Cay* (Theodore Taylor)
- *Shipwreck Season* (Donna Hill)

Child Labor

- *Uprising: Three Young Women Caught in the Fire That Changed America* (Margaret Peterson Haddix)
- *Lyddie* (Katherine Paterson) (EA)
- *Counting on Grace* (Elizabeth Winthrop)
- *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* (Francisco Jiménez)
- *Iqbal* (Francesco D'Adamo)

Poems

- “If” (Rudyard Kipling) (EA)
- *Lives: Poems about Famous Americans* (Lee Bennet Hopkins and Leslie Staub)
- “Casabianca” (Felicia Dorothea Hemans)

Informational Texts

Informational Text

General

- *Kids with Courage: True Stories About Young People Making a Difference* (Barbara A. Lewis)

Slavery/Overcoming It

- *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* (Ann Petry) (E)
- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (Frederick Douglass) (E)
- *Rebels Against Slavery: American Slave Revolts* (Patricia C. and Frederick L. McKissack)
- *Leon’s Story* (Leon Walter Tillage and Susan L. Roth)
- *Many Thousand Gone: African Americans from Slavery to Freedom* (Companion to *The People Could Fly*) (Virginia Hamilton and Leo and Diane Dillon)

Asia

- *Samurai: Warlords of Japan* (High Interest Books) (Arlan Dean)
- *Life in Ancient Japan* (Peoples of the Ancient World) (Hazel Richardson)
- Text about the Cultural Revolution (forthcoming)

Shipwrecks

- *A Night to Remember: A Classic Account of the Final Hours of the Titanic* (Walter Lord) (E)
- *You Wouldn't Want to Sail on the Titanic!: One Voyage You'd Rather Not Make* (You Wouldn't Want To...Series) (David Evelyn Stewart, David Salariya, and David Antram)
- *Exploring the Titanic: How the Greatest Ship Ever Lost—Was Found* (Robert D. Ballard)
- *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance* (Jennifer Armstrong)

Child Labor

- *Kids On Strike!* (Susan Campbell Bartoletti)
- *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor* (Russell Freedman and Lewis Hine) (EA)

Informational Text (Read Aloud)

- *Up Before Daybreak: Cotton and People in America* (Deborah Hopkinson)

Art, Music, and Media

Music

- Spirituals
- Traditional, possibly Wallis Willis, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”
- Traditional, “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen”
- Find additional spirituals here: <http://afgen.com/spirituals3.html>
- Traditional, “Cotton Mill Girls” (as sung by Michèle Welborne)

Sample Activities and Assessments:

Class Discussion

What is meant by the word “courage?” Look up the word in a dictionary (in print or online) and write your ideas down on a Post-It note. (*Teacher Note: Answers may include the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, or sorrow.*) Let’s create a class word map of the word “courage.” As you find examples of courage in texts read during this unit, write them on Post-It notes and add them to our word map. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d)

Literary Response

While reading one of the stories about a courageous character, keep notes in your journal about:

- What obstacles does he/she overcome and how does he/she does it?
- How does the protagonist respond to different events?
- What/who is the antagonist?
- Does the character grow in the novel, or was he/she always “courageous”?
- What does the protagonist learn about him/herself?

You may have the opportunity to share your ideas with a partner before class discussion. Be sure to write down the page numbers of relevant information, or mark your text with Post-It notes, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. (RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RI.6.8)

Class Discussion

How do the stories from this unit provide insight into the courageous characters? How are their stories alike? Different? Cite specific information from the text read to justify your response. (RL.6.9, SL.6.1a, b, c, d, RL.6.1)

Literature Response

Create a Venn diagram in your journal of a courageous character compared with a non-courageous, or cowardly, character. The differences between courageous and cowardly characters seem obvious, but are there ways in which these characters are similar? Discuss your insights with a partner. (RL.6.1, RL.6.3, RL.6.6)

Journal Response/Start a Blog

Does courage always require overt acts of bravery? What are other ways of thinking about courageous characters? Read about this blog: <http://athousandcheeringstrangers.weebly.com/index.html> and this blog post: <http://mothereseblog.com/2010/05/10/random-acts-of-courage/>. Write your ideas in your journal and share them with a partner. Then, work with classmates to create your own class blog about unrecognized courageous characters, either in literature or real life. (RI.6.8, W.6.4, W.6.9a, b)

Dramatization/Fluency

Choose an emotional passage from a story we’ve read that exemplifies a character’s courageousness. Work with classmates to present it as a dramatic reading. After the reading, ask your classmates to point out language that enhanced meaning, conveyed style, and helped achieve a feeling of strong emotion. (SL.6.6, RL.6.4, L.6.5a, b, c)

Literary Response

After reading one of the stories with a courageous character, write about how the character had “the courage to follow his/her convictions.” What were his/her convictions? What was the challenge faced by following them? Be sure to cite specific examples from the text to justify your response. (W.6.9a, RL.6.3)

Informational Text Response

Read a variety of stories and interviews from the same time period (i.e., Titanic survivors or slaves, or children who worked during the Depression, etc.). How are their accounts similar? Different? Why would accounts of the same event vary? Trace and evaluate the specific claims in a text, and decide if they are sound and if there is sufficient evidence to support the claims. Write responses in your journal, and share with a partner who read about the time period. (RI.6.5, RI.6.6, W.6.8, W.6.9a, b, RI.6.8, SL.6.2)

Fact or Fiction Graphic Organizer

Historical fiction gets its name from the idea that the story is based on true events, but the author is free to modify events to make a good story. Read informational text about the historical setting behind the story read, and create a T-chart or Venn diagram in your journal outlining historical facts and historical fiction from the story. Cite specific information from the texts read, or mark your book with Post-It notes, to justify your response. (RL.6.9, RI.6.2, RI.6.5, RI.6.6)

Oral Presentation

Choose a story from *The People Could Fly* to read, summarize, and present to the class. Part of the presentation should include the meaning of the story, the qualities of the courageous character, and how the dialect affects the story. (L.6.3a,b, L.6.1e, SL.6.6)

Essay (Option 1)

Survivors from the *Titanic* reported that musicians on the ship played music to keep the passengers calm as the crew loaded lifeboats. None of the band members survived the sinking. A newspaper at the time reported, “The part played by the orchestra on board the Titanic in her last dreadful moments will rank among the noblest in the annals of heroism at sea.” Do you think this was an act of courage? Why or why not? Write an argument that supports your claim based on what you learned about your own courageous character. Include clear reasons and relevant evidence from texts read. (W.6.1a, b, c, d, e, SL.6.4, RL.6.4, W.6.4)

Essay (Option 2)

The poem “Casabianca” by Felicia Dorothea Hemans was based on a true incident. In your opinion, was she courageous or crazy? Write an argument that supports your claim based on what you learned about your own courageous character. Include clear reasons and relevant evidence from texts read. (W.6.1a, b, c, d, e, SL.6.4, W.6.4, L.6.2a, b)

Word Study

[Continuing etymology activity from third unit] Keep an index card file of words studied while reading about courageous characters. Keeping the words on index cards will help you when we sort words by prefix, suffix, root words, meaning, country of origin, spelling feature, etc. Focus on words that help describe the overt and quiet courageousness of characters and historical figures. (e.g., bravery, conviction, oppression, etc.) (Note: This will be an ongoing activity all year long.) (RI.6.4, RL.6.4, L.6.4a, b, c, d)

Class Discussion

One reason for storytelling, art, and music is to help people to push through sorrow and pain. Choose selections from this unit and talk with a partner about if and how the character from your story would find comfort in this creative form of expression. (SL.6.1, SL.6.4)

Reflective Essay

Write your own essay of an exemplary courageous character. Include some graphics or visuals that demonstrate the setting (either historical or present day), and publish it so that others can enjoy it. Write an introduction that answers the essential question: "How are acts of courage revealed in literature and informational text?" (W.6.6, W.6.4, W.6.3a, b, c, d, e, L.6.1a, b, c, d, L.6.2a, b, SL.6.6)

Terminology:

- antagonist
- character development
- protagonist

Grade 6 Unit 5

Figure it Out

In this four-week unit, students have the opportunity read classic and contemporary mysteries, make sense of nonsense poems, and solve riddles and math problems

Overview:

Students are asked to articulate their basis for predictions, describe why and when they revise those predictions, and share the strategies they use to solve a variety of problems. Divergent approaches to similar problems are encouraged, followed by analysis of why students chose a particular strategy to try. Students delve deeply into examining language and vocabulary specific to mysteries and problem solving. They examine how understanding of these words is key to uncovering connections made in texts. The culminating activity for this unit is for students to write an essay response to the essential question.

Essential Question:

How are strategies for solving math problems similar to and different from strategies for solving mysteries?

Focus Standards:

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

- **RL.6.5:** Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
- **RI.6.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
- **W.6.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- **SL.6.4:** Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- **L.6.5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Student Objectives:

- Read and solve a variety of mysteries, nonsense poems, riddles, and math problems.
- Compare and contrast mystery stories by a variety of authors.
- Distinguish between explicit clues and inferences drawn from the text.

- Articulate strategies used when solving problems (i.e., highlighting key information) and when figuring out mysteries (i.e., refining predictions as each chapter is read).
- Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
- Recite poetry for classmates.
- Compare and contrast the experience of reading a mystery to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version.
- Use new vocabulary associated with mysteries in written responses.
- Participate in group discussions.

Suggested Works:

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

Literary Texts

Stories

Math

- *The Westing Game* (Ellen Raskin)
- *G is for Googol: A Math Alphabet Book* (David M. Schwartz and Marissa Moss)

Mysteries

Precedent

- *The Mysterious Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Arthur Conan Doyle)
- *Three Act Tragedy* (Agatha Christie)

Contemporary

- *39 Clues* series (Rick Riordan)
- *The Mysterious Benedict Society* (Trenton Lee Stewart and Carson Ellis)
- *The Name of this Book is Secret* (Secret Series) (Pseudonymous Bosch)
- *Chasing Vermeer* (Blue Balliet and Brett Helquist)

Poems

- "Jabberwocky" (Lewis Carroll) (E)
- *Math Talk: Mathematical Ideas in Poems for Two Voices* (Theoni Pappas)
- *Poetry for Young People: Edward Lear* (Edward Lear, Edward Mendelson, ed., and Laura Huliska-Beith)
- *Poetry for Young People: Edgar Allan Poe* (Edgar Allen Poe, Brod Bagert, ed., and Carolynn Cobleigh)

Audiobooks

- *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Arthur Conan Doyle) (Anthony Boucher)
- *The Essential Agatha Christie Stories: Agatha Christies Best Short Sleuths Crack Twenty-Two Famous Cases* (Agatha Christie) (BBC Audiobooks America)
- *39 Clues Book 1: The Maze of Bones* (Rick Riordan) (Scholastic Audio Books)

Informational Texts

Informational Text

- *The Number Devil: A Mathematical Adventure* (Hans Magnus Enzensberger and Rotraut Susanne Berner, and Michael Henry Heim, trans.) (E)
- *Go Figure!: A Totally Cool Book About Numbers* (Johnny Ball)
- *The \$1.00 Word Riddle Book* (Marilyn Burns and Martha Weston)

Picture Books

Problem Solving in Math

- *Math-terpieces: The Art of Problem Solving* (Greg Tang and Greg Paprocki)
- *Grapes of Math: Mind-Stretching Math Riddles* (Greg Tang and Harry Briggs)

Art, Music, and Media

Art

- Illustrations from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (Chris Van Allsburg)
- Balthus, *The Mountain* (1936-37)
- Balthus, *The Living Room* (1942)
- Balthus, *The Street* (1933-35)
- Balthus, *Solitaire* (1943)

Sample Activities and Assessments:

Class Discussion

How do we make sense of nonsense poems, such as “Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll? How do you figure out what words mean when they don’t really exist? How are clues provided in the text structure, repetition, or content of the poem? Your teacher may ask you to write your ideas down in your journal and share them with a partner before class discussion. *Optional follow-up activity:* Write your own nonsense poem and see if classmates can make sense of it. (RL.6.4, SL.6.1a, b, c, d)

“Deduction or Induction?” T-chart Graphic Organizer

As you discuss how you solve mysteries and math problems, classify your approach as inductive or deductive.

- When do you use inductive reasoning? When do you use deductive reasoning? Why?
- Where would you put each of these problem-solving approaches (e.g., Acting it out, roleplaying, drawing a picture, making a list, working backwards, making educated guesses and checking how they work, drawing a web of facts, events, and characters, etc.)?
- What strategies do your characters use (e.g., Reynis, Kate, Sticky, and Constance from *The Mysterious Benedict Society*)?

Your teacher may ask you to write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner before each section of the class chart is filled in. Be sure to make notes of page numbers with relevant information so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. (RL.6.5, RI.6.4)

Class Discussion

More often than not, there is more than one way to solve a (math) problem. What did you learn about inductive and deductive reasoning? How does hearing your classmates articulate their thinking increase your understanding of problem-solving? (SL.6.1a, b, c, d, SL.6.4)

Math Connection

Ask your math teacher if you can solve the “Painted Cube Problem” in math class, or solve some math problems from *The \$1.00 Word Riddle Book* by Marilyn Burns or found online. Write in your journal about the thought process used to solve these problems, and use this experience to add to the graphic organizer (listed above). (RI.6.4, RI.6.5, W6.4)

“Just the Facts” Graphic Organizer

Since you and your classmates are reading different mysteries, keep track of this information in your journal, or mark your book with Post-It notes, to facilitate class discussions:

- Title and author of your mystery
- Each character’s name, his/her traits, and his/her role in the mystery
- List of clues, including page numbers on which they are found
- Make and revise predictions (Since mystery stories continually evolve, it is important to make predictions and return to them each time new evidence is found.)
- Solution

Your teacher may ask you to write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner before class discussion. (RI.6.4, RI.6.5)

Literature Response: *The Westing Game*

The clues provided to the heirs are mostly words from the song “America the Beautiful” taken out of order. When rearranged, they notice the missing parts spell out the name of an heir—but this is actually a red herring. Select your own song, change around the order of the lyrics, delete some words or letters, and see if your classmates can solve *your* mystery. (RL.6.5, W.6.2a, b, c, d, e, f)

Literature Response

Select a pivotal passage or scene from the mystery you are reading. How does this scene fit into the overall structure of the text? How does it contribute to your understanding of the plot? Write your thoughts down in your journal. Re-evaluate your claim at the end of the book. Do you still think that passage was critical to the solution? Why or why not? Talk with a partner to justify your answer, and cite specific details from the text. (RL.6.5, W.6.2a, b, c, d, e, f, SL.6.4)

Literature Response/Essay

How is listening to a mystery, such as *The Mysterious Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, as an audiobook similar to/different from reading the book? Which do you prefer? Why? Write an argument to support your preference in your journal. (RL.6.7, W.6.1a, b, c, d, e, L.6.1a, b, c, d, e)

Dramatization/Fluency

Choose your favorite poem from this unit to present to the class using appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. (Alternately, you can write your own poem based on a poem read in class.) After the reading, ask your classmates to point out figurative language, word relationships, and/or nuances in word meanings. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d, L.6.5a, b, c)

Word Study

Keep an index card file of words studied while reading mysteries, riddles, and math problems (e.g., alibi, evidence, sleuth, suspect, victim, witness, red herring, investigator, hunch, motive, etc.) Keeping the words

on index cards will help you when we sort words by prefix, suffix, root words, meaning, spelling feature, etc. (Note: This will be an ongoing activity all year long.) (L.6.4a, b, c)

Write a Mystery

After reading and discussing mysteries in class, try to write your own that incorporates the new vocabulary words learned in this unit. Talk your ideas through with a partner, but don't give away the ending! See how long you can keep your reader engaged without giving away the resolution. If desired, work with a partner to edit and strengthen your writing, and publish your mystery on a class webpage. (W.6.3a, b, c, d, e, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.6, L.6.1a, b, c, d, e, L.6.2a, b)

Art Appreciation (Option 1)

What types of "problems" do artists and musicians face? How do they solve them? Discuss the answer to this question in relation to the art and music presented in this unit, and write about it in your journal. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d)

Art Appreciation (Option 2)

Compare the work of Balthus to the illustrations in *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg. What are the differences you notice between fine art (Balthus) and illustrations (Van Allsburg)? How are the looks of these two artists similar? Different? Select a painting by Balthus and write a mystery based on what happened before or after the scene depicted in the painting. (SL.6.1a, b, c, d, SL.6.4)

Reflective Essay

In this unit, you have read mystery books, made sense of nonsense poems, and solved riddles and math problems. Answer the essential question in essay form: "How are strategies for solving math problems similar to, and different from, strategies for solving mysteries?" Cite specific examples from texts read to justify your response. (W.6.2a, b, c, d, e, f, W.6.9a, b, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.6, L.6.1a, b, c, d, e, L.6.2a, b, SL.6.4)

Terminology:

- alibi
- deductive reasoning
- evidence
- inductive reasoning
- inference
- investigator
- mystery
- problem solving
- red herring
- sleuth
- suspect
- victim
- witness

Grade 6 Unit 6**Winging It**

In this final six-week unit of sixth grade, students read *Dragonwings* by Lawrence Yep, compare this novel to biographies of aviators, and read about the science and history of flight.

Overview:

Reading *Dragonwings* helps students recall class conversations that incorporate the themes from this year: flying (from *Peter Pan*), reading folklore, embracing heritage, courageous characters, and “figuring it out,” as well as being an effective springboard for a conversation about people’s dreams. The goal of this unit is for students to apply all their reading, writing, speaking, and listening strategies, and skills learned up until this point in the year. The year culminates with a multimedia project on the science of flight, and making connections to how people worked to make their dreams of flying come true.

Essential Question:

How do literature and informational text reveal why people dream of flying?

Focus Standards:

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

- **RL.6.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- **RI.6.6:** Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
- **RI.6.7:** Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
- **W.6.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- **SL.6.5:** Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) to visual displays in presentations to clarify information.
- **L.6.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Student Objectives:

- Read a variety of fiction and nonfiction about flight and dreams of flying.
- Compare and contrast literature with biographies of aviators with original videos.
- Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
- Conduct research on an aviator of choice.

- Compare the experience of reading a text to watching it performed live.
- Perform an original skit about aviators and science of flight for classmates.
- Publish a multimedia presentation, including relevant information from multiple print and digital sources.
- Participate in group discussions.

Suggested Works:

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

Literary Texts

Stories

- *Dragonwings* (Lawrence Yep) (E)
- *First to Fly: How Wilbur and Orville Wright Invented the Airplane* (Peter Busby)
- *Flight* (Robert Burleigh)

Poetry

- *I Am the Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices* (Paul Fleischman)

Picture Book (Used as an introduction to this unit)

- *A is for Airplane: An Aviation Alphabet* (Mary Ann McCabe Riehle)
- *The Airplane Alphabet Book* (Jerry Pallotta)

Informational Texts

Biographies

- *Sterling Biographies: The Wright Brothers: First in Flight* (Tara Dixon-Engel)
- *Wilbur & Orville Wright: Taking Flight* (Stephanie Sammartino McPherson)
- *The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane* (Russell Freedman)
- *Charles A. Lindbergh: A Human Hero* (James Giblin)
- *William Boeing: Builder of Planes* (Sharlene Nelson)
- *Amelia Earhart (DK Biography)* (Tanya Stone)
- *Up In the Air: The Story of Bessie Coleman* (Philip S. Hart)

General Nonfiction

- *Flying Free: America's First Black Aviators* (Phillip S. Hart)
- *Fantastic Flights: One Hundred Years of Flying on the Edge* (Patrick O'Brien)
- *Black Eagles: African Americans in Aviation* (James Haskins)
- *Strange And Wonderful Aircraft* (Harvey Weiss)

Science

- *The Simple Science of Flight: From Insects to Jumbo Jets* (Henk Tennekes)
- *Flight: Discover Science Through Facts and Fun* (Gerry Bailey)

Sample Activities and Assessments:

Introductory Activity/Class Discussion

Your teacher will read *A is for Airplane: An Aviation Alphabet* by Mary Ann McCabe Riehle and/or *The Airplane Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta to the class. How can picture books give you background information about topics that may be new to you? Were you surprised by the amount of information within an alphabet book? Talk with a partner about the answers to these questions, then write your own response in your journal. (RI.6.6, RI.6.7)

Literature Response

As you read *Dragonwings*, keep a journal that specifies:

- The characteristics of Moon Shadow and Windrider that enable them to overcome obstacles
- The obstacles that they face
- Their internal responses and external behaviors to these obstacles
- The events that lead up to climax, and, ultimately, the characters' growth

After reading the novel, the class will create an alphabet book summary as a class, so keep a list of ideas for each letter in your journal. (W.6.9a, b, RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RL.6.5, RL.6.10)

Journal Entry/Figurative Language

After reading chapter 3 (where Windrider recounts his dream of being the physician to the dragon king), mark the text with Post-It Notes in places where Yep's uses imagery, alliteration, metaphors, similes, and personification. Share your ideas with a partner before class discussion. As a follow-up, write about your own dreams using similar types of figurative language. (L.6.1a, b, c, d, e, L.6.5a, b, c)

Graphic Organizer/Literary Response

As a class, keep a class chart of the aviators studied with the following categories. At the end of the unit, this information will be used to make comparisons and generalizations about people who are passionate about aviation, either as a hobby or a career.

- Aviator's name
- Obstacles he/she faces
- Why he/she is famous
- What was a turning point in his/her life that led him/her into aviation
- What did you learn about this person that surprised you?

Your teacher may ask you to write your own responses in your journal and share it with a partner before each section of the class chart is filled in. Be sure to make notes of page numbers with relevant information, or mark your text with a Post-It Note, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. (W.6.7, W.6.8, W.6.9b, RI.6.6, RI.6.10)

Class Discussion

Talk about the aviators studied. How are their stories alike? Different? What traits do they have in common? Cite specific information from the text read to justify your response. Write a summary of the class discussion in your journal. (L.6.1a, b, c, d, e, R.16.9)

Essay

"Success is not a destination, it's a journey." Write an essay response to this quote from the perspective of the aviator you studied. Would he/she agree with this phrase? Why or why not? Cite specific details from

your research. You may have the opportunity to talk about your ideas with a partner prior to writing, and then work with the same partner to revise and edit your paper after the first draft. Be prepared to record yourself reading your essay as a podcast. (RI.6.7, W.6.1a, b, c, d, e, RL.6.10, RI.6.10)

Drama, Drama, Drama

Work in small groups to create and present short skit about the principles of flight and/or an aviator you learned about from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources in science class. Try to include the idioms about flying learned in this unit. Write the script paying careful attention to capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and word choice. Your classmates will compare the experience of watching you present with the written version and will talk about what is different between seeing it “live” and “reading” it. (RI.6.7, W.6.7, L.6.2a,b, RL.6.10, RI.6.10)

Poetry Performance

Choose your favorite poem from *I am Phoenix* and present a dramatic reading to the class. (Alternately, write your own poem for two voices about flight, and present that to the class with a classmate.) (RL.6.2, SL.6.6)

Reflective Multimedia Presentation

Create an informative/explanatory multimedia presentation in which you respond to the question, “How do literature and informational text reveal why people dream of flying?” Cite specific details from your research, such as videos of flights or interviews with aviators. Compare the information from primary source documents with the secondary sources (biographies) read. Use a variety of words (from Word Study) learned and studied throughout the year. Work with peers to revise, edit, and present your research in a multimedia format to the class. (RI.6.7, W.6.2a, b, c, d, e, f, SL.6.5, L.6.3a, b, L.6.6, W.6.6, W.6.8, W.6.10, RL.6.10, RI.6.10)

Terminology:

- figurative language
- idioms, such as:
 - “fly in the face of”
 - “fly off the handle”
 - “flying by the seat of your pants”
 - “flying colors”
 - “when pigs fly”
- imagery
- literary techniques: rhyme scheme, meter, metaphor, simile, alliteration, onomatopoeia
- memoir
- personification