

Grade Descriptions

Grade 7

Students entering seventh grade have read literature from many standpoints: in connection with history, science, and the arts; in pursuit of answers to a question; in consideration of a theme or literary element; and as a way of gaining insights into human existence. In seventh grade, they continue reading texts from different angles. Students read literature from and about the Middle Ages around the world in order to gain insights into character. They consider themes of perseverance and determination in a wide variety of fictional and historical texts. In one unit, Yeats's "Song of Wandering Aengus" leads into a study of the theme of survival in the wild; at the end of the unit, students return to the poem with new understanding. In another, students read science fiction. The units are not limited to their central themes; there are side topics and excursions into related subjects. As in grade 6, students study morphology, etymology, and word history throughout the units, building their own dictionaries of words they have investigated. Students write in a variety of genres, including responses to literature, reflective essays, and stories. In addition, they create multimedia presentations. Students also write research essays about an author they have read and develop their skills of argumentation. 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 seventh grade, they are ready to begin studying complex aspects of literature.

Grade 7 Units

- **UNIT 1** Characters with Character
- **UNIT 2** Perseverance
- **UNIT 3** Determination in Life and in Literature
- **UNIT 4** Survival in the Wild
- **UNIT 5** Science or Fiction?
- **UNIT 6** Literature Reflects Life: Making Sense of our World

Grade 7 Unit 1**Characters with Character**

This first six-week unit of seventh grade starts the year off with reflections on characters from literature and historical time periods.

Overview:

Students build on their knowledge of the medieval time period, first introduced to them as fourth graders. (Note that easy informational and picture books are provided to build quickly the necessary background knowledge for understanding of this unit.) Students have a variety of “Middle Ages” novels to choose from. They take place in Byzantium, England, France, Korea, or Africa; and while the historical time period is secondary to the focus on character development, historical accuracies and creative license are considered. Students discuss how elements of a story interact, practice citing textual evidence, and formalize a process for determining word meanings. This unit ends with an open-ended reflective essay response to the essential question.

Essential Question: *What makes characters in historical fiction believable?*

Focus Standards:

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

- **RL.7.9:** Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.
- **RI.7.1:** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **W.7.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- **SL.7.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 7 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.7.1 (a):** Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- **SL.7.1 (b):** Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- **L.7.4:** 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.7.4 (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.7.4 (c):** Consult general and specialized 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.

Student Objectives:

- Read and discuss fiction and nonfiction texts about the Middle Ages.
- Summarize informational text by creating a comic strip of key events.
- Compare and contrast characters and settings across stories about the Middle Ages.
- Cite textual evidence, especially as it relates to character development.
- Explain the historical context of a story, and how authors make historical fiction believable.
- Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
- Write “Character with Character” narratives that use effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Perform a monologue 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 (Read Aloud/ Introduction to the Middle Ages)

- Favorite Medieval Tales (Mary Pope Osborne)

Stories

- Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village (Laura Amy Schlitz)
- The World of King Arthur and His Court: People, Places, Legend, and Lore (Kevin Crossley-Holland)
- Anna of Byzantium (Tracy Barrett)
- Castle Diary: The Journal of Tobias Burgess (Richard Platt and Chris Riddell)
- The Seeing Stone (Arthur Trilogy, Book One) (Kevin Crossley-Holland)
- Crispin: The Cross of Lead (Avi) (easier to read)
- Adam of the Road (Elizabeth Janet Gray) (easier to read)
- The Midwife’s Apprentice (Karen Cushman) (easier to read)

Medieval Korea

- A Single Shard (Linda Sue Park)

Medieval Africa (Read Aloud)

- Sundiata: Lion King of Mali (David Wisniewski)
- Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta 1325-1354 (James Rumford)

Mali

- Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali (Djibril Tamsir Niane)

Riddles

- Old English Riddles: From the Exeter Book (Michael Alexander)

INFORMATIONAL TEXTS**Informational Text*****Medieval Europe***

- Cathedral: the Story of Its Construction (David Macaulay) (E)
- The Medieval World (Philip Steele)
- Manners and Customs in the Middle Ages (Marsha Groves)
- Joan of Arc (Diane Stanley)
- Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc (Mark Twain)
- Outrageous Women of the Middle Ages (Vicki Leon)
- The Horrible, Miserable Middle Ages: The Disgusting Details About Life During Medieval Times (Fact Finders: Disgusting History series) (Kathy Allen)
- The Middle Ages: An Illustrated History (Oxford Illustrated Histories) (Barbara Hanawalt)
- How Would You Survive in the Middle Ages (Fiona MacDonald and David Salariya)

Medieval Africa

- The Royal Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhay: Life in Medieval Africa (Patricia and Fredrick McKissack)

ART, MUSIC, AND MEDIA**Music**

- Gregorian chants and madrigals

Art

- Arms and Armor from [The Walters Art Museum](#) and [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)
- Byzantine Art: Frescos and mosaics inside domed churches
- Islamic Art: Caucasus textiles
- Gothic Art & Architecture: Notre Dame; Westminster Abbey
- Illuminated Manuscripts: "Hunt of the Unicorn Annunciation" (ca. 1500)

Sample Activities and Assessments:**Introductory Activity (for the year)**

You will be reading a variety of literature and informational texts this year and perhaps even some genres you haven't encountered before. Your teacher will give you a list of twenty genres (such as adventure, historical

fiction, comedy, ancient history, science fiction, fantasy, etc.) from which to select titles. One of your goals by the end of the year is to read books from at least three genres that are new to you. (RL.7.10, RI.7.10)

Informational Text Responses

After reading *The Cathedral* by David Macaulay:

- Outline the major steps involved in constructing a cathedral by creating a comic strip of key events. Be sure to note the page numbers that each box refers to so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion.
- Make a list of new vocabulary words that you learned from this book and that you encounter in other (fictional) texts.

Your teacher may ask you to take notes in your journal of key events and share them with a partner before creating your comic strip. Be sure to note page numbers with relevant information or mark your text with Post-It notes so you can go back and cite the text, if needed. (RI.7.1, RI.7.2, RI.7.4, RI.7.6)

Graphic Organizer

As you read one of the novels that take place in the Middle Ages, take notes in your journal about how the characters are affected by the time period in which they lived. 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. (RL.7.3, RL.7.9, RL.7.1)

- Where was that person's place in the feudal system?
- What was his or her economic status?
- Where did the character live, and why?
- What did the character's parents do, and what does this mean for the character?
- What was that character's context? What was happening in the world?
- What was a typical day like for this person?

Your teacher may give you the opportunity to share your notes with a partner who read the same text, prior to class discussion.

Class Discussion

Compare and contrast characters from the various novels read and discuss how authors accurately portray or alter history. (SL.7.1a, b, RL.7.9)

Literature Response

While reading *A Single Shard*, think about where Tree-ear gets courage for his dangerous mission. Write a response to this question in your journal: "Are characters born brave, or is courage developed by facing fears?" Justify your answer with specific information from the text. (RL.7.9, RL.7.1)

Literature Response

While reading *The Midwife's Apprentice*, think about how a nameless girl becomes a memorable character. Write a response to this question in your journal: "How does an author develop memorable characters?" (RL.7.3)

Narrative Writing

Write your own "Character with Character" story. It can take place during the Middle Ages or in another time period of your choosing. Incorporate elements and techniques learned in this unit. You will have the opportunity to talk with a partner prior to writing the first draft, and again at the end to revise and strengthen your story. Feel free to add visual aids or illustrations to your story once it's complete. Be prepared to publish your story on a class webpage. (W.7.3a, b, c, d, e, L.7.1a, L.7.2a)

Class Discussion

How does reading picture books, such as *Sundiata: Lion King of Mali* by David Wisniewski, increase your capacity for understanding more complex texts, such as of *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*? How does this epic poem capture the mystery of a medieval African king? Write your ideas in your journal prior to class discussion. (SL.7.1a, b, RL.7.2)

Dramatization/Fluency

Choose a monologue or dialogue from *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village* by Laura Amy Schlitz that has a strong character. Work with classmates to present the scene as a dramatic reading. (SL.7.6)

Art/Music Appreciation

Discuss how art and music can provide insight into a historical time period. How is the historical period reflected in the art/music? Write your ideas in your journal prior to class discussion. After the class discussion, you will be asked to select a favorite piece of art and music and research each of them further. (SL.7.1a, b)

Word Study

Where do words come from? How does knowing their origin help us not only to spell the words, but also understand their meaning? This is why we study etymology. Create a personal dictionary of terms found, learned, and used throughout this unit (i.e., chivalry, feudalism, medieval, secular, serf, vassal, etc.). This dictionary will be used all year long to explore the semantics (meanings) of words and their origins, especially those with Greek and Latin roots. (L.7.4a, c)

Reflective Essay

Write a written response to this question based on the novels read and discussed in class: "What makes characters in historical fiction believable?" Cite specific details from texts read. After your teacher reviews your first draft, work with a partner to edit and strengthen your writing. Be prepared to record your essay and upload it as a podcast on the class webpage for this unit. (RL.7.9, W.7.9a, b, L.7.1a, L.7.2a)

Terminology:

- character development
- dialogue
- monologue
- plot
- protagonist
- setting (historical)

Grade 7 Unit 2

Perseverance

This second six-week unit of seventh grade builds upon the study of character by examining those who persevered in a variety of challenging circumstances.

Overview:

Students read an array of novels: one about an orphan in the midst of the Civil War, another about a girl on a whaling ship in 1835, still another about a Latino teen working at the time of Cesar Chavez, to name a few. They read informational texts—about Helen Keller, Geronimo, or Martin Luther King, Jr. Students continue to reflect on the impact an historical time period has on people, but also delve more deeply into the internal and external conflicts that characters encounter and the qualities they possess that help them overcome challenges. Students continue to hone skills learned in the first unit about how characters develop uniquely, based on the context of the plot and setting, and compare their development to the development of ideas in an informational text. This unit ends with an open-ended reflective essay response to the essential question.

Essential Question: *How do characters, real and fictional, use words and actions to demonstrate perseverance?*

Focus Standards:

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

- **RL.7.3:** Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
- **RI.7.2:** Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **W.7.7:** Conduct short research projects from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- **SL.7.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 7 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.7.1 (c):** Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.

- **SL.7.1 (d):** Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.
- **L.7.4:** 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.7.4 (b):** Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *belligerent, bellicose, rebel*).
- **L.7.4 (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 “perseverance.”
- Read and discuss fiction and nonfiction texts featuring characters that demonstrate perseverance.
- Analyze how the setting (historical context) of story or biography shapes the character’s development.
- Discuss authors’ use of literary techniques, such as diction and imagery.
- Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
- Compare and contrast the play, *The Miracle Worker*, to film and other print versions.
- Conduct research on a person of interest, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. or Geronimo, who demonstrated perseverance.
- Create a multimedia presentation that persuades classmates why the person you chose to research is the most determined.
- Write a bio-poem and recite it for the class.
- 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

- *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg* (Rodman Philbrick)
- *The Voyage of Patience Goodspeed* (Heather Vogel Frederick)
- *Jesse* (Gary Soto)
- *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy* (Gary Schmidt)
- *I Rode a Horse of Milk White Jade* (Diane Lee Wilson)
- *Treasure Island* (Robert Louis Stevenson)
- *Ties That Bind, Ties That Break* (Lensey Namioka)
- *The Miracle Worker (and Related Readings)* (William Gibson)

Poems

- “Oranges” (Gary Soto) (E)

Plays

- *The Miracle Worker: A Play* (William Gibson)

Informational Texts

Biographies

- *Dare to Dream!: 25 Extraordinary Lives* (Sandra McLeod Humphrey)
- *African American Firsts: Famous Little-Known and Unsung Triumphs of Blacks in America* (Joan Potter)
- *The World At Her Fingertips: The Story Of Helen Keller* (Joan Dash)
- *The Struggle to be Strong: True Stories by Teens About Overcoming Tough Times* (Al Desetta)
- *Geronimo* (Joseph Bruchac)
- *The Civil Rights Movement in America* (Elaine Landau)
- *Dare to Dream: Coretta Scott King and the Civil Rights Movement* (Angela Shelf Medearis)

Photobiographies

- *Inventing the Future: A Photobiography of Thomas Alva Edison* (Marfe Ferguson Delano)
- *Helen Keller: A Photographic Story of a Life* (Leslie Garrett)
- *Helen's Eyes: A Photobiography of Annie Sullivan, Helen Keller's Teacher* (Marfe Ferguson Delano)

Graphical Autobiography

- *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (Marjane Satrapi)

Art, Music, and Media

Media

- *The Miracle Worker* (1962)

Sample Activities and Assessments:

Class Discussion

What is meant by the word "perseverance"? Look up the word in a dictionary (in print or online) and write your ideas down on a Post-It note. Your teacher will give you the opportunity to "Give one, get one" in order to go beyond the dictionary definition. Let's create a class word map of the word "perseverance." As you find examples of perseverance in texts read during this unit, write them on Post-It notes and add them to our chart. (SL.7.1a,b,c,d)

Graphic Organizer

As you read one of the novels or biographies about characters with perseverance, take notes in your journal about how the characters are affected by the time period in which they lived. Be sure to note page numbers with relevant information or mark your text with Post-It notes so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion.

- During what historical time period does the novel/biography take place?
- Where did the character live, and why?
- What was that character's historical context?
- What role, if any, does the character's family play in his/her outlook on life?
- What obstacle(s) does the character overcome? How?

Your teacher may give you the opportunity to share your notes with a partner who read the same text, prior to class discussion. (RL.7.3, RL.7.1, RL.7.9)

Class Discussion

Compare and contrast characters from the various novels and biographies read. What similarities exist between fictional characters and real people? Can you generalize about the types of experiences that build perseverance? What destroys perseverance? (SL.7.1a, b, c, d, RL.7.9)

Informational Text Response

While reading *Dare to Dream!: 25 Extraordinary Lives* by Sandra McLeod Humphrey, think about how each person has a different limit to which they can be pushed while overcoming the challenges and obstacles they face. Write a response to this question in your journal: "How do expectations affect what one can accomplish?" Justify your answer with specific information from the text. (RI.7.1)

Dramatization/Fluency

Read *The Miracle Worker: A Play* by William Gibson in small groups or as a class. Practice speaking the lines prior to reading the play aloud. Discuss how the play form contributes to its meaning in a different way than the photobiographies. In addition, discuss how the author develops the point of view of different characters. (RL.7.5, RL.7.6, SL.7.1a, b, c, d, SL.7.6)

Media Appreciation

Discuss the similarities and differences between reading about Annie Sullivan, seeing the film version of *The Miracle Worker*, and reading the play. How does reading and watching all three versions give you a better picture of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan than if you only chose one? Write your ideas in your journal. Then, share your ideas with a partner prior to discussing as a class. (RL.7.5, RL.7.7)

Research Essay/Multimedia Presentation

Research a famous person (such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Geronimo, or another person of your choosing) who you think persevered in spite of significant challenges. See if you can find a video clip of him or her speaking on YouTube. Write and present your multimedia report to the class, making a case for why the person you chose is a striking example of determination and perseverance in the face of difficult circumstances. (W.7.1a, b, c, d, e, W.7.7, RI.7.2, SL.7.2, SL.7.5, L.7.1a, b, L.7.2a, b)

Literature Response

Historical fiction, such as *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg* by Rodman Philbrick, is based on true events. Write a response to this question in your journal: "How does the author's style (i.e., word choice) affect the believability of the main character?" Justify your answer with specific details from the text. (RL.7.9, RL.7.3)

Class Discussion

Based on the *Inventing the Future: A Photobiography of Thomas Alva Edison* by Marfe Ferguson Delano, Edison appears to see failures as successes. How can a failure be construed as a success? Write your ideas in your journal prior to class discussion. Then, discuss as a class, citing information from texts read. (RI.7.1, RI.7.2)

Dramatization/Fluency

Write a bio-poem about a character, real or fictional, who you think demonstrate the epitome of perseverance. Present the poem as a dramatic reading. (SL.7.6, RL.7.4)

Poetry/Journal Response

Compare the prose and poetry of Gary Soto. How does the form and use of diction and imagery in "The Orange" compare to the form and use of language in *Jesse*? Write your ideas in your journal and then share ideas with a partner. Revise your journal entry to include additional ideas based on your discussion, if desired. (RL.7.5, W.7.9.a)

Word Study

[Continuing activity from the first unit] Where do words come from? How does knowing their origin help us not only to spell the words, but also understand their meaning? Add words found, learned, and used throughout this unit to your personal dictionary, including synonyms for perseverance (e.g., determination, constancy, relentlessness, obstinacy, tenacity, steadfastness, stalwartness, drive, willpower, etc.) This dictionary will be used all year long to explore the semantics (meanings) of words and their origins, especially those with Greek and Latin roots. (L.7.4a, b, c, d)

Reflective Essay

Write a response to the essential question based on the novels and biographies read and discussed in class: "How do characters, real and fictional, use words and actions to demonstrate perseverance?" Cite specific details from texts read. After your teacher reviews your first draft, work with a partner to edit and strengthen your writing. Be prepared to record your essay and upload it as a podcast on the class webpage for this unit. (W.7.9a, b, L7.1a, b, L7.2a, b)

Terminology:

- biography
- character's conflict: external and internal
- diction
- graphical autobiography
- photobiography
- poetry terms: tone, imagery

Grade 7 Unit 3**Determination in Life and in Literature**

This third, eight-week unit of seventh grade continues building on character analysis, focusing on determined and courageous people in both informational texts and literature.

Overview:

Students read *Anne Frank: The Diary of A Young Girl* as a class, and compare how the diary is similar to and different from the play version by Francis Goodrich and Albert Hackett. In addition, students choose a story with a similar theme, such as *The Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins* or *Z for Zachariah* to provide additional support for how characters' determination is portrayed in literature. Students compare and contrast these stories with informational texts written from a variety of perspectives on World War II. Students focus their reading on in-depth analysis of interactions among individuals, events, and ideas in a variety of texts, comparing the ways in which different authors shape similar stories. This unit ends with an open-ended reflective essay response to the essential question.

Essential Question: *How does real-world determination inform the depiction of determined literary characters?*

Focus Standards:

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

- **RL.7.5:** Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.
- **RL.7.7:** Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).
- **RI.7.3:** Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
- **RI.7.9:** Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.
- **W.7.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- **SL.7.2:** Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

- **L.7.6:** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Student Objectives:

- Define “determination.”
- Read and discuss fiction and nonfiction texts about people, real and fictional, that face conflict.
- Compare and contrast characters from the various novels read.
- Discuss how authors’ use of language, diction, or style of presentation affects the meaning of their stories and makes their styles unique.
- Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
- Explain how knowing the historical context impacts understanding of a story.
- Analyze two accounts of the same event and describe important similarities and differences in the details they provide.
- Compare and contrast *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* in written form to the play and film versions.
- 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

Plays

- *The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play* (Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett) (E)
- *101 Monologues for Middle School Actors: Including Duologues and Triologues* (Rebecca Young)
- Memoir
- *A Friend Called Anne: One Girl’s Story of War, Peace and a Unique Friendship with Anne Frank* (Jacqueline van Maarsen)

Stories

General

- *I Am David* (Anne Holm)

Comparisons to The Diary of Anne Frank

- *Z for Zachariah* (Robert C. O’Brien)
- *Milkweed* (Jerry Spinelli)
- *The Devil’s Arithmetic* (Jane Yolen)

Poems

- *War and the Pity of War* (Neil Philip)

Informational Texts

Biographies *(includes other possible comparisons to The Diary of Anne Frank)*

- *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* (Anne Frank)
- *Anne Frank: Beyond the Diary: A Photographic Remembrance* (Ruud van der Rol and Rian Verhoeven)
- *The Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins: A World War II Soldier, Normandy, France, 1944* (Walter Dean Myers)
- *Night* (Elie Wiesel)
- *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Wartime Sarajevo* (Zlata Filipovic)
- *I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust* (Livia Bitton-Jackson)

Informational Text**World War II**

- *A History of US: War, Peace, and All that Jazz* (Joy Hakim) (E)
- *Ghost Soldiers: The Epic Account of World War II's Greatest Rescue Mission* (Hampton Sides) (advanced)
- *True Stories of D-Day (True Adventure Stories)* (Henry Brook)
- *Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference* (Joanne Oppenheim)
- *Hiroshima* (John Hersey)
- *Fighting For Honor: Japanese Americans and World War II* (Michael L. Cooper)
- *Never to Forget: The Jews of the Holocaust* (Milton Meltzer)
- *Six Million Paper Clips: The Making of a Children's Holocaust Memorial* (Peter W. Schroeder and Dagmar Schroeder-Hildebrand)

Atomic Structure/Atomic Bomb

- *Atomic Structure and Chemical Reactions: Middle Grades and High School* (Nevin Katz)
- *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (Richard Rhodes)
- Speeches
- "Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: Address to Parliament on May 13th, 1940" (Winston Churchill) (E)
- "Declaration of War on Japan" (Franklin D. Roosevelt)

Art, Music, and Media

Media

- *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959) (Screenplay by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett)
- *Anne Frank, the Whole Story* (2001)
- *Paper Clips* (HBO documentary) (2004)
- *Bataan Rescue: The Most Daring Rescue Mission of World War II* (PBS documentary) (2005)

Sample Activities and Assessments:**Class Discussion**

What is meant by the word "determination"? Look up the word in a dictionary (in print or online) and write your ideas down on a Post-It note. Your teacher will give you the opportunity to "Give one, get one" in order to go beyond the dictionary definition. Let's create a class word map of the word "determination." As you find examples of determination in texts read during this unit, write them on Post-It notes and add them to our chart. (SL.7.1a, b, c, d)

Literature Response

In *The Diary of A Young Girl*, Anne writes vividly about her experiences. What is it about the language she uses that offers insights into her character, especially her determination? Write a response to this question in your journal: "What makes Anne Frank a person to whom I can relate?" Justify your answer with specific information from the text. (RL.7.5, RL.7.4, RL.7.6)

Graphic Organizer

As you read one of the fictional stories to compare it to *The Diary of A Young Girl*, take notes in your journal about how the characters have experiences similar to and different from Anne Frank's. Be sure to note page numbers with relevant information, or mark your text with Post-It notes, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion.

- Where did the character live?
- What was that character's context? What was happening in the world?
- What was a typical day like for this person?
- How is the character's experience similar to Anne Frank's?
- How is the character's experience different from Anne Frank's?

Your teacher may give you the opportunity to share your notes with a partner who read the same text, prior to class discussion. (RL.7.2, RL.7.6)

Class Discussion

Compare and contrast characters from the various novels read. Can you generalize about the types of character qualities that lead to determination? (SL.7.1a, b, c, d, RL.7.2, RL.7.5, RL.7.6)

Informational Essay

Analyze various accounts of World War II events from a variety of print and digital resources. In your journal, identify and distinguish among the facts, opinions, and reasoned judgments presented by different people. Include an analysis of the interactions among individuals, events, and ideas, drawing on various accounts from different authors. Include new vocabulary words learned during this unit. (W.7.2a, b, c, d, e, f, RI.7.6, RI.7.9, RI.7.3, L.7.6, W.7.4, L.7.1a, b, c, L.7.2a, b, L.7.3a)

Speech Analysis

Compare the speeches by Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt. How are their messages, diction, and writing techniques similar and different? How do these characteristics contribute to the speeches' meaning? Write your ideas in your journal, possibly in a T-chart or Venn diagram, and share with a partner prior to class discussion. (SL.7.3, RI.7.9, RI.7.6, RI.7.7)

Class Discussion

We have read about Anne Frank and her life within the confines of an attic during World War II. How does knowing the historical context of the diary add to your appreciation of Anne's writing? Why? Write your ideas in your journal and share with a classmate prior to class

discussion. After the class discussion, write a speech where you explain your position and present it to the class. (RI.7.3, RL.7.2, RL.7.6, W.4.4, SL.6.6)

Dramatization/Fluency (Option 1)

Write a dramatic interpretation of Anne Frank's (or someone else's) experience with conflict during the Holocaust; you may focus on interpersonal conflict, intrapersonal conflict, conflict between self and society, or another type of conflict. Your interpretation should incorporate the dramatic elements studied during the drama unit and accurately reflect the information learned in history class. (W.7.3a, b, c, d, e, RI.7.3, W.7.4, L.7.1a, b, c, L.7.2a, b, L.7.3a)

Dramatization/Fluency (Option 2)

Choose a poem from *War and the Pity of War* or a diary entry from one of the books read to present as a dramatic reading. How does the passage you chose reflect the determination of characters during the horrors of war? (SL.7.6, RL.7.2)

Media Appreciation

Discuss the similarities and differences among the book, play, and film versions of Anne Frank's story. What parts were true to the original? What parts were changed? Why do you think the elements that changed were changed? Does it add to the dramatic effect? Why or why not? Write your ideas in your journal and share with a classmate prior to class discussion. (RL.7.5, RL.7.7)

Media Appreciation

Watch the HBO documentary *Paper Clips*, which is about a project started by middle school students to remember the people affected by the Holocaust. How does the format contribute to the meaning/impact? As a class, discuss why it is important to learn from history and pass that learning from generation to generation. (RL.7.5, RL.7.7, SL.7.2)

Word Study

[Continuing activity from the first two units] Just as we can trace the path of our ancestors—some back to World War II—we can trace the path of words. Choose some words learned this year in content classes, and trace back from modern-day uses of the words to their historical origins (i.e., tyranny, assimilation, displacement, genocide, Gestapo, propaganda, internment, smuggle, etc.). Add these to your personal dictionary. (L.7.4a, b, c, d, RI.7.4, L.7.6)

Reflective Essay

Write a written response to the essential question, based on the novels read and discussed in class: "How does real-world determination inform the depiction of characters in literature?" Cite specific details from texts read, not only from English class, but also from history class. After your teacher reviews your first draft, work with a partner to edit and strengthen your writing. Be prepared to summarize your thoughts on two Power Point slides that include visuals. All slides will be combined into a single presentation for posting on the class webpage. (W.7.2a, b, c, d, e, f, W.7.4, W.7.9a, b, L.7.1a, b, c, L.7.2a, b, L.7.3a)

Terminology:

- dialogue
- diction
- documentary
- point of view in narration

- screenplay

Grade 7 Unit 4**Survival in the Wild**

This four-week unit of seventh grade continues the close examination of characters, and examines how setting plays a role in their development.

Overview:

Students read “The Song of Wandering Aengus” by William Butler Yeats and use it as a springboard for discussions of characters’ pursuits of the unknown. Some of the characters in this unit’s literature choose outdoor adventures, while others are suddenly thrust into a situation in which they must survive in the wild. Students compare and contrast character experiences across novels, as well as the points of view in narration, and are encouraged to research the authors behind the stories, many of whom are wilderness survivors themselves. Students analyze the development of the theme of survival across various texts, evaluate nonfiction text structures, and present claims on these findings coherently to their classmates. This unit ends with a review of “The Song of the Wandering Aengus” in order to see how this unit led to deeper understanding of the poem. In addition, students are asked to write an open-ended reflective essay response to the essential question.

Essential Question: *What similarities and differences exist among characters that survive in the wilderness?*

Focus Standards:

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

- **RL.7.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **RI.7.5:** Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
- **W.7.1:** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- **SL.7.4:** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- **L.7.5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Student Objectives:

- Read and discuss novels and biographies about characters, real and fictional, that survived in the wild.
- Analyze the development of characters and themes over the course of texts about survival.

- Discuss how authors use of literary techniques in narration, such flashback or point of view, engage the reader.
- Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
- Write an argument about the importance of reading original versions of stories, such as *The Call of the Wild*, in order to better appreciate abridged versions.
- Conduct research on authors who write about survival in the wild and present findings to the class.
- Compare and contrast *The Call of the Wild* in written form to the film version.
- Write a “survival in the wild” story.
- 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

Poems

- "The Song of Wandering Aengus" (William Butler Yeats) (E)

Stories

General

- *The Call of the Wild* (Jack London)
- *Woodson* (Gary Paulsen)
- *Far North* (Will Hobbs)
- *Incident at Hawk's Hill* (Allan W. Eckert)
- *Black Hearts in Battersea* (Joan Aiken)

Comparisons to The Call of the Wild

- *Touching Spirit Bear* (Ben Mikaelson)
- *The Higher Power of Lucky* (Susan Patron)
- *Call it Courage* (Armstrong Sperry)
- *Hatchet* (Gary Paulsen)
- Other Will Hobbs survival tales, such as *Beardance*

Graphic Novel

- *The Call of the Wild* (Puffin Graphics, Jack London)

Informational Texts

Biographies

- *Jack London: A Biography* (Daniel Dyer)
- *Guts* (Gary Paulsen)
- *Will Hobbs* (My Favorite Writer Series) (Megan Lappi)

Informational Text

- *Into the Ice: The Story of Arctic Exploration* (Lynn Curlee)

Art, Music, and Media**Media**

- *Call of the Wild* (2009)
- *The Call of the Wild: Dog of the Yukon* (1997)
- *A Cry in the Wild* (1990) (movie based on *Hatchet*)

Sample Activities and Assessments:**Introductory Activity**

Read "The Song of Wandering Aengus" by William Butler Yeats. Talk with a classmate about what you think the poem means, both literally and figuratively. Write your ideas down in your journal. We will revisit this poem at the end of the unit to see if our thoughts and ideas have changed. (RL.7.2, RL.7.4, SL.7.5)

Graphic Organizer

As you read one of the novels about survival in the wild, take notes about how the characters are affected by their environment. (Remember, characters that survive in the wild may be people or may be animals!) Be sure to note page numbers with relevant information, or mark your text with Post-It notes, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. (RL.7.2, RL.7.1, L.7.5a,b,c)

- Who is the character you are studying?
- What is a typical day like for this character?
- What challenges did this character face?
- How did this character overcome these challenges?
- What is the "call of the wild"? How does it affect (Buck's) behavior throughout the novel?

Your teacher may give you the opportunity to share your notes with a partner who read the same text, prior to class discussion.

Class Discussion

Compare and contrast characters from the various novels read. Can you generalize about the types of character qualities that enable a person (or animal) to survive in the wild? (SL.7.1a, b, c, d, RL.7.3)

Literature Response

"Anthropomorphism" is defined as giving human characteristics to animal or non-living things (e.g., winds, rain or the sun depicted as creatures with human motivations.) The term derives from the combination of the Greek *anthropos*, meaning "human," and *morph*, meaning "shape" or "form." Find examples of anthropomorphism in stories read, record them in your journal, and discuss how this additional "character" plays a role in the story. (RL.7.3, RL.7.6, L.7.5)

Literature Response

While reading *The Call of the Wild*, take notes in your journal about the roles of John Thornton and Judge Miller. Who, from the novel's point of view, is the better master? Defend your answer, citing specific information from the text. (SL.7.4, RL.7.1, RL.7.3, W.7.1)

Literature Response

Notice the use of flashback in *Hatchet*, and how the past comes into Brian's present through his daydreams, night dreams, and flashbacks. Write a response to this question in your journal: "How does Gary Paulsen incorporate the past into the present?" (RL.7.3)

Literature Response/Writing an Argument

Why is it important to read the original ("full") version of a novel in order to appreciate the abridged (shorter) versions? Read the graphic novel version of *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London and then write a convincing argument for reading the original version, citing similarities and differences between the versions read. You may talk through your ideas with a partner prior to writing your first draft. (RL.7.2, W.7.1a, b, c, d, e, SL.7.4, L.7.5a, b, c, L.7.1a, b, c, L.7.2a, b)

Research Essay

Write a research essay about Jack London, Gary Paulsen, Will Hobbs, or another author of your choice who writes about survival in the wilderness. Present your findings to the class in a coherent presentation. Feel free to add multimedia elements to your presentation. (W.7.7, RI.7.5, RI.7.8, SL.7.4, L.7.1a, b, c, L.7.2a, b)

Media Appreciation

Compare the book, *The Call of the Wild*, to the movie version. Write your ideas down in your journal or mark your text with Post-It notes. Be sure to cite specific similarities and differences between both versions. (RL.7.7)

Word Study

[Continuing activity from the first three units] Choose some words learned this unit and add these to your personal dictionary. Include a section on idioms and figures of speech. Develop groups by synonyms and antonyms. (L.7.4a, b, c, d, L.7.5a, b, c)

Narrative Essay

Write your own "survival in the wilderness" story, incorporating words, techniques, and styles from the novels read and discussed in class. Work with peers to edit and strengthen writing in order to publish it on the class webpage. You may decide to upload it as a blog, a podcast, an iMovie, or another multimedia format of choice. (W.7.3a, b, c, d, e, W.7.4, W.7.5)

Class Discussion

Re-read the first poem read in this unit, "The Song of Wandering Aengus." After this unit of study, describe how your understanding of this poem has changed. What new insights have you gained? Practice reading the poem aloud while emphasizing different words. How does changing emphasis change the meaning of the sentences? Follow the performances with a class discussion about how this poem relates to the theme of this unit: survival in the wild. (RL.7.5, SL.7.6)

Reflective Essay

Write a response to the essential question based on the novels read and discussed in class: "What similarities and differences exist among characters that survive in the wilderness?" Cite specific details from texts read. After your teacher reviews your first draft, work with a partner to edit and strengthen your writing before final publication. (W.7.9a, b, RI.7.8, RL.7.1, L.7.1a, b, c, L.7.2a, b)

Terminology:

- abridged versions
- anthropomorphism
- flashbacks
- foreshadowing
- point of view in narration

Grade 7 Unit 5**Science or Fiction?**

This four-week unit of seventh grade examines the genre of science fiction and related science.

Overview:

Like other genres studied to date, science fiction examines humans' existence and issues, but often approaches characters and experiences in a futuristic manner. Science fiction involves the imagining of ideas and technologies that haven't yet been invented; however, many of them may comport with our current understanding of science and technology. In addition to exploring classic and contemporary works of science fiction, students pair fictional stories with informational text about science and astronomy. Student discussions trace the logic of various storylines, focusing on the believability of the stories read in class. This unit ends with the students' choice of responding to the open-ended reflective question or writing their own science fiction story that answers the question, "What if....?"

Essential Question: *How do authors make science fiction believable?*

Focus Standards:

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

- **RL.7.1:** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RI.7.8:** Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.
- **W.7.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- **SL.7.5:** Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
- **L.7.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Student Objectives:

- Read and discuss science fiction stories and nonfiction science texts about space, robots, and planets.
- Compare and contrast the settings, characters, and unusual circumstances among science fiction stories, and discuss the unique nature of this genre.

- Analyze how a science fiction story evolves over the course of a text, and discuss how this is similar to and different from other novels read.
- Write a variety of responses to literature and informational text.
- Conduct research on an astronaut or science fiction author of choice and present findings to the class in a multimedia format.
- Write a science fiction story.
- 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

"Classic" Science Fiction

- A Wrinkle in Time (Madeleine L'Engle) (E)
- Dune (Frank Herbert)
- The War of the Worlds (H.G. Wells)
- The Invisible Man (H.G. Wells)
- I, Robot (Isaac Asimov)
- Journey to the Center of the Earth (Enriched Classics) (Jules Verne)

"Modern" Science Fiction

- *The Ear, the Eye and the Arm* (Nancy Farmer)
- *My Favorite Science Fiction Story* (Martin H. Greenberg)
- *Eva* (Peter Dickinson)
- *The House of the Scorpion* (Nancy Farmer)
- *Fly by Night* (Frances Hardinge)
- *George's Cosmic Treasure Hunt* (Lucy and Stephen Hawking)

Easier to Read (but excellent)

- *Among the Hidden* (Shadow Children series, #1) (Margaret Peterson Haddix)
- *George's Secret Key to the Universe* (Lucy and Stephen Hawking)

Challenging to Read

- *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Douglas Adams)
- *Ender's Game* (Orson Scott Card)
- *The Collected Stories of Arthur C. Clarke* (Arthur C. Clarke)

Audiobooks

- *A Wrinkle in Time* (Madeleine L'Engle)

Informational Texts

Informational Text

General

- "Elementary Particles" from the *New Book of Popular Science* (E)
- "Space Probe" from *Astronomy & Space: From the Big Bang to the Big Crunch* (Phillis Engelbert) (E)
- *Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream* (Tanya Lee Stone)

Robots (Related to I, Robot)

- *Robo World: The Story of Robot Designer Cynthia Breazeal* (Women's Adventures in Science series) (Jordan D. Brown)

Planets/Stars

- *Beyond Jupiter: The Story of Planetary Astronomer Heidi Hammel* (Women's Adventures in Science series) (Fred Bortz)
- *Summer Stargazing: A Practical Guide for Recreational Astronomers* (Terence Dickinson)
- *Stephen Hawking: Cosmologist Who Gets a Big Bang Out of the Universe* (Mike Venezia)
- *Stars & Planets* (Carole Stott)
- *The Physics of Star Trek* (Lawrence M. Krauss) (advanced)
- Art, Music, and Media

Music

- Gustav Holst, *The Planets* (1914-16)

Media

- *War of the Worlds* (The Mercury Theater on Air, October 30, 1938) (This is Orson Welles's radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds*)

Sample Activities and Assessments:

Graphic Organizer

As you read one of the science fiction novels, take notes about the elements of the story that would classify it as science fiction. Be sure to note page numbers with relevant information so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion.

- What is the setting of the novel?
- Who are the character(s) you are studying?
- What is familiar or believable about these characters?
- What is unusual about the characters' circumstances?
- What is the primary theme of the novel (i.e., good vs. evil)?

Your teacher may give you the opportunity to share your notes with a partner who read the same text, prior to class discussion. (RL.7.1, RL.7.2, RL.7.3)

Class Discussion

Compare and contrast settings and experiences from the various science fiction stories read. How can you begin to generalize about the genre of science fiction from reading your novel? (SL.7.1a, b, c, d, RL.7.1, RL.7.3, L.7.1a, b, c)

Literature Response

While reading *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, take notes in your journal about role of the space/time continuum as an integral part of the novel. How does this continuum contribute to the

fantastic nature of the book? Defend your answer, citing specific information from the text. (RL.7.1, RL.7.4)

Literature Response

While reading *Eva* by Peter Dickinson, take notes in your journal about how the author comments on human beings' impact on the ecology of the earth. Did this book make you think more about this issue? Why or why not? Defend your answer, citing specific information from the text. (RL.7.1, RL.7.2)

Class Discussion

Why doesn't H.G. Wells give a name to his protagonist in *The War of the Worlds*? What is the significance of his anonymity? How does it add to the effectiveness of the story? Write your ideas in your journal and share ideas with a partner prior to class discussion. (SL.7.1a, b, c, d, L.7.1a, b, c)

Research Essay

Write a research essay about an astronaut or science fiction author of choice. Include multimedia components and visual displays. Publish your research on the class webpage, including links to references materials used, and present your report to the class. (W.7.7, W.7.2a, b, c, d, e, f, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.6, W.7.8, SL.7.5, RI.7.1, RI.7.7, RI.7.10, L.7.1a, b, c, L.7.3a, L.7.5c)

Class Discussion

While conducting research on an astronaut or science fiction author of choice, discuss with classmates specific claims made by an author in a text. Is the reasoning "sound" and the evidence "relevant and sufficient" to support the claims? Why or why not? (RI.7.8, RI.7.5, SL.7.1a, b, c, d, L.7.1a, b, c)

Media Appreciation

After listening to the original 1938 radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds*, discuss the following questions:

- Did the radio play hold your attention? Why or why not?
- Which techniques were effective in making the audio "come alive"?
- Were you invested in what happened to any of the characters? Why or why not?
- Does this remind you of any similar stories/broadcasts you have heard? (RL.7.7, SL.7.1a, b, c, d)

Follow up by researching public reaction to the radio broadcast on the night before Halloween, 1938. What effect did the program have on listeners who tuned in late? What would make the broadcast sound believable? Write your ideas in your journal and share ideas with a partner prior to class discussion. (SL.7.3)

Music Appreciation

Each movement of *The Planets* by Gustav Holst is named after a planet of the solar system. All planets, except Earth, are represented. Discuss what makes the music for each planet unique. Take notes of your thoughts in your journal while listening to the music. (SL.7.1a, b, c, d, L.7.1a, b, c)

Word Study

[Continuing activity from the first four units] Choose some words learned this unit and add these to your personal dictionary. (L.7.4a, b, c, d, L.7.5c)

Reflective Essay (Option 1)

Write your own science fiction story that answers the question, "What if...?" Work with peers to edit and strengthen your story before presenting it to the class. Publish it in a multimedia format on the class webpage. (SL.7.5, W.7.3a,b,c,d,e, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.6, W.7.8, L.7.1a,b,c, L.7.3a, L.7.5c)

Reflective Essay (Option 2)

Write an essay response to the essential question: "How do authors make science fiction believable?" Cite specific details from texts read. After your teacher reviews your first draft, work with a partner to edit and strengthen your writing before presenting it to the class. Publish it in written or multimedia format on the class webpage. (RL.7.2, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.6, W.7.8, W.7.9a, b, L.7.1a, b, c, L.7.3a, L.7.5c)

Terminology:

- fantasy vs. science fiction
- common settings for science fiction: in the future, alternate timelines, in outer space
- common themes for science fiction: time travel, alternate histories/societies, body and mind alterations

Grade 7 Unit 6**Literature Reflects Life: Making Sense of our World**

In this final six-week unit of seventh grade, students wrap up their yearlong study of the human condition by examining a variety of genres: fantasy, comedy, tragedy, short stories, and poetry.

Overview:

Although students read from various genres, writing and class discussions focus on how literature can help us make sense of our world. The goal of this unit is for students to apply all the reading, writing, speaking, and listening strategies and skills they have learned up until this point in the year, and also learn to analyze how authors develop the point of view of different characters. As with all other units, this unit ends with an open-ended reflective essay response to the essential question.

Essential Question: *Is literature always a reflection of life?*

Focus Standards:

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

- **RL.7.6:** Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different character or narrators in a text.
- **W.7.1:** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- **SL.7.3:** Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- **L.7.3:** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Student Objectives:

- Read and discuss a variety of genres—fantasy, comedy, tragedy, short stories, and poems—and discuss what these types of literature reveal about life.
- Compare and contrast the settings, characters, plots, themes, and genres across a variety of literature.
- Write a variety of responses to literature.

- Write (and recite for classmates) poetry that uses poetic devices to enhance its meaning.
- Discuss how comedy and tragedy provide insights into human existence.
- Compare novels with their theatrical/film versions.
- 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

- *Home of the Brave* (Katherine Applegate)
- *A Girl Named Disaster* (Nancy Farmer)

Fantasy

- *The Dark is Rising* (Susan Cooper) (E)
- *The Grey King* (Susan Cooper)
- *Peter Pan in Scarlet* (Geraldine McCaughrean)

Classics

- *The Prince and the Pauper* (Mark Twain)
- *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Stories of the Supernatural* (Robert Louis Stevenson)

Comedy/Tragedy

- *Cyrano* (Geraldine McCaughrean)
- *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Edmond Rostand)

Comedy

- *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw* (Jeff Kinney)
- *Letters from a Nut* (Ted L. Nancy)

Short Stories

- *Woman Hollering Creek: And Other Stories* (Sandra Cisneros) (EA)
- *Best Shorts: Favorite Stories for Sharing* (Avi)
- *Little Worlds: A Collection of Short Stories for the Middle School* (Peter Guthrie)
- *American Dragons: Twenty-Five Asian American Voices* (Lawrence Yep) (EA)

Poems

- *I Feel a Little Jumpy Around You: Paired Poems by Men & Women* (Naomi Shihab Nye and Paul B. Janeczko)

Informational Texts

None for this unit

Sample Activities and Assessments:

Graphic Organizer

As you read the novels and short stories from this unit, take notes about the story genre, setting, and characters. Be sure to note page numbers with relevant information, or mark the text with Post-It notes, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion.

- What is the genre of the novel?
- What is the setting?
- Who are the major character(s)?
- Who are the minor characters?
- What is the problem faced by the character(s)? How do he/she/they resolve the problem?
- What is the primary theme of the novel (i.e., good vs. evil)?

Your teacher may give you the opportunity to share your notes with a partner who read the same text, prior to class discussion. (RL.7.1, RL.7.2, RL.7.6, RL.7.10)

Class Discussion

Compare and contrast settings, characters, plots, and themes of the various novels read. (SL.7.1a, b, c, d, RL.7.6, RL.7.2, L.7.3a)

Essay

The human spirit can be defined as a combination of the traits that all human beings have in common. Select three of these traits as they appear in the novels from this unit and discuss the importance of each. Make the case for why you chose the traits you did. Justify your answer by citing specific information from texts read, not only in this unit, but all year long. (W.7.1a, b, c, d, e, W.7.4, W.7.10, SL.7.3, L.7.3a, L.7.5a, b, c, L.7.6)

Literature Response

While reading *The Dark is Rising* by Susan Cooper, take notes in your journal about Will's search for his destiny. Is it organized? Random? Choose a position and defend your answer, citing specific information from the text. (W.7.1a, b, c, d, e, L.7.5a, b, c, L.7.6)

Write a Poem

After reading *Peter Pan in Scarlet* by Geraldine McCaughrean, write a poem about Peter Pan and how he changed in this sequel from the original story. Choose poetic devices that exemplify his traits as a character, his experiences in the book, and/or his approach to life. You may talk through your ideas with a partner before writing your first draft, and ask this classmate to help you revise and edit the final draft. Recite your poem for the class. (RL.7.5, SL.7.6, L.7.3, L.7.5a, b, c, L.7.6)

Literature Response

Why is beauty so highly valued in our society? While reading *Cyrano* by Geraldine McCaughrean, take notes in your journal comparing Christian and Cyrano. Who is a better person? Why? Defend your answer, citing specific information from the text. (W.7.1a, b, c, d, e, RL.7.6, L.7.5a, b, c, L.7.6)

Essay

Is *Cyrano de Bergerac* a tragedy or comedy? Write your position on a Post-It note, and your teacher will divide the class based on everyone's positions. Share ideas with classmates who are of the same opinion. Then write your own essay. Justify your answer by drawing on other stories read this year,

and present your argument to the class. Ask your classmates to analyze your arguments for effectiveness. (W.7.1a, b, c, d, e, W.7.4, W.7.10, SL.7.3, SL.7.4, L.7.3, L.7.5a, b, c, L.7.6)

Literature Response

While reading *The Prince and the Pauper* by Mark Twain, take notes in your journal about what makes Tom Candy and Edward Tudor unique. At the end, choose a character about whom to write a poem, using poetic devices that exemplify the character's traits and development throughout the story. (RL.7.2, RL.7.6)

Class Discussion

In all comedy, there is an element of truth. Discuss some humorous stories, and specify how they provide insights into human character/existence. Write your ideas in your journal and share ideas with a partner prior to class discussion. (SL.7.1a, b, c, d)

Media Appreciation

Compare and contrast a written story with its filmed/theatrical version. Specifically, examine the tools used to produce video, film, or theater (e.g., lighting, sound, color, camera angles) by comparing a written text (i.e., *Cyrano*) to its staged or multimedia version. (Teacher Note: Use select scenes from the 1987 movie *Roxanne*.) (RL.7.7)

Reflective Essay/Word Study

Select a genre studied this year and write a response to the essential question: "Is literature always a reflection of life?" Make sure to include elements that make it apparent to the reader which genre you chose, cite specific details from texts you've read, and use as many words as possible learned in "Word Study" this year. After your teacher reviews your first draft, work with a partner to edit and strengthen your writing before presenting it to the class. Publish it in written or multimedia format on the class webpage. (RL.7.10, W.7.1a, b, c, d, e, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.6, W.7.8, W.7.9a, b, W.7.10, SL.7.3, L.7.3, L.7.5a, b, c, L.7.6)

Terminology:

- comedy
- fantasy
- hyperbole
- irony: verbal, situational, dramatic
- oxymoron
- parody
- plot
- point of view
- theme
- tragedy