



ESL
SCIENCE
BUSINESS
BILINGUAL
PRESCHOOL
MATHEMATICS
LIBRARY MEDIA
SOCIAL STUDIES
WORLD LANGUAGES
GIFTED & TALENTED
TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
FINE & PERFORMING ARTS
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE
HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

RAHWAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Content Area: English

Course: Language Arts / Honors

Grade Level: 8

This curriculum is part of the Educational Program of Studies of the Rahway Public Schools.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Leslie Septor, Program Supervisor of Literacy

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Subject/Course Title:
**English Language Arts
Grade 8**

Date of Board Adoption:
**September 21, 2021
August 27, 2024**

RAHWAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CURRICULUM

Language Arts, Grade 8

PACING GUIDE

Unit	Title	Pacing
1	Beyond Humanity: Examining the Holocaust Through Night	10 weeks
2	Navigating Identity: <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian</i>	10 weeks
3	Deconstructing Racism in America: <i>Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You</i>	10 weeks
4	Unmasking Darkness: Exploring Fear, Suspense, and the Human Condition through Short Stories	10 weeks

ACCOMMODATIONS

<p>504 Accommodations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide scaffolded vocabulary and vocabulary lists. ● Provide extra visual and verbal cues and prompts. ● Provide adapted/alternate/excerpted versions of the text and/or modified supplementary materials. ● Provide links to audio files and utilize video clips. ● Provide graphic organizers and/or checklists. ● Provide modified rubrics. ● Provide a copy of teaching notes, especially any key terms, in advance. ● Allow additional time to complete assignments and/or assessments. ● Provide shorter writing assignments. ● Provide sentence starters. ● Utilize small group instruction. ● Utilize Think-Pair-Share structure. ● Check for understanding frequently. ● Have student restate information. ● Support auditory presentations with visuals. ● Weekly home-school communication tools (notebook, daily log, phone calls or email messages). ● Provide study sheets and teacher outlines prior to assessments. ● Quiet corner or room to calm down and relax when anxious. ● Reduction of distractions. ● Permit answers to be dictated. ● Hands-on activities. ● Use of manipulatives. ● Assign preferential seating. ● No penalty for spelling errors or sloppy handwriting. ● Follow a routine/schedule. ● Provide student with rest breaks. ● Use verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task. ● Assist in maintaining agenda book. 	<p>IEP Accommodations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide scaffolded vocabulary and vocabulary lists. ● Differentiate reading levels of texts (e.g., Newsela). ● Provide adapted/alternate/excerpted versions of the text and/or modified supplementary materials. ● Provide extra visual and verbal cues and prompts. ● Provide links to audio files and utilize video clips. ● Provide graphic organizers and/or checklists. ● Provide modified rubrics. ● Provide a copy of teaching notes, especially any key terms, in advance. ● Provide students with additional information to supplement notes. ● Modify questioning techniques and provide a reduced number of questions or items on tests. ● Allow additional time to complete assignments and/or assessments. ● Provide shorter writing assignments. ● Provide sentence starters. ● Utilize small group instruction. ● Utilize Think-Pair-Share structure. ● Check for understanding frequently. ● Have student restate information. ● Support auditory presentations with visuals. ● Provide study sheets and teacher outlines prior to assessments. ● Use of manipulatives. ● Have students work with partners or in groups for reading, presentations, assignments, and analyses. ● Assign appropriate roles in collaborative work. ● Assign preferential seating. ● Follow a routine/schedule.
<p>Gifted and Talented Accommodations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Differentiate reading levels of texts (e.g., Newsela). ● Offer students additional texts with higher lexile levels. ● Provide more challenging and/or more supplemental readings and/or activities to deepen understanding. ● Allow for independent reading, research, and projects. ● Accelerate or compact the curriculum. ● Offer higher-level thinking questions for deeper analysis. ● Offer more rigorous materials/tasks/prompts. ● Increase number and complexity of sources. ● Assign group research and presentations to teach the class. ● Assign/allow for leadership roles during collaborative work and in other learning activities. 	<p>ELL Accommodations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide extended time. ● Assign preferential seating. ● Assign peer buddy who the student can work with. ● Check for understanding frequently. ● Provide language feedback often (such as grammar errors, tenses, subject-verb agreements, etc...). ● Have student repeat directions. ● Make vocabulary words available during classwork and exams. ● Use study guides/checklists to organize information. ● Repeat directions. ● Increase one-on-one conferencing. ● Allow student to listen to an audio version of the text. ● Give directions in small, distinct steps. ● Allow copying from paper/book. ● Give student a copy of the class notes. ● Provide written and oral instructions. ● Differentiate reading levels of texts (e.g., Newsela). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shorten assignments. ● Read directions aloud to student.

- Give oral clues or prompts.
- Record or type assignments.
- Adapt worksheets/packets.
- Create alternate assignments.
- Have student enter written assignments in criterion, where they can use the planning maps to help get them started and receive feedback after it is submitted.
- Allow student to resubmit assignments.
- Use small group instruction.
- Simplify language.
- Provide scaffolded vocabulary and vocabulary lists.
- Demonstrate concepts possibly through the use of visuals.
- Use manipulatives.
- Emphasize critical information by highlighting it for the student.
- Use graphic organizers.
- Pre-teach or pre-view vocabulary.
- Provide student with a list of prompts or sentence starters that they can use when completing a written assignment.
- Provide audio versions of the textbooks.
- Highlight textbooks/study guides.
- Use supplementary materials.
- Give assistance in note taking
- Use adapted/modified textbooks.
- Allow use of computer/word processor.
- Allow student to answer orally, give extended time (time-and-a-half).
- Allow tests to be given in a separate location (with the ESL teacher).
- Allow additional time to complete assignments and/or assessments.
- Read question to student to clarify.
- Provide a definition or synonym for words on a test that do not impact the validity of the exam.
- Modify the format of assessments.
- Shorten test length or require only selected test items.
- Create alternative assessments.
- On an exam other than a spelling test, don't take points off for spelling errors.

UNIT OVERVIEW

Content Area: English Language Arts

Unit III Title: Beyond Humanity: Examining the Holocaust Through Night

Target Course/Grade Level: ELA 8th Grade

Unit Summary: This unit delves into the darkest chapter of human history: the Holocaust. Through Elie Wiesel's powerful memoir, *Night*, we'll explore the systematic dehumanization and horrific experiences endured by Jews and other targeted groups. Students will witness the brutality of ghettos and concentration camps, grapple with the loss of innocence and the depths of human cruelty, analyze the impact of propaganda on both perpetrators and bystanders and reflect on the universality of human rights and the importance of "Never Again."

Approximate Length of Unit: 10 Weeks

LEARNING TARGETS

NJ Student Learning Standards:

RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.

RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

- A. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension.
- B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- C. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- D. Use precise language and domain/grade-level- specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- E. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
- F. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.

W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback

to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

W.SE.8.6. Gather relevant information 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.PE.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- 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.
- B. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- C. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
- D. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
- B. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- C. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- D. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills:

9.4.8. CI Creativity and Innovation: Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.

9.4.8. GCA Global and Cultural Awareness: Awareness of and appreciation for cultural differences is critical to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction.

9.4.8. TL Technology Literacy: Some digital tools are appropriate for gathering, organizing, analyzing, and presenting information, while other types of digital tools are appropriate for creating text, visualizations, models, and communicating with others. Digital tools allow for remote collaboration and rapid sharing of ideas unrestricted by geographic location or time.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Standards: Social Studies

6.3.8.CivicsPR.5: Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.

6.3.5.GeoGI.1: Use technology to collaborate with others who have different perspectives to examine global issues, including climate change and propose possible solutions.

6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.g: Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the people living Asia, Africa (Islam), Europe and the Americas over time.

Unit Understandings:

Students will understand that...

- The Holocaust was a systematic and horrific attempt to eradicate entire groups of people.
- Prejudice, discrimination, and unchecked power can lead to unimaginable atrocities.
- Witnessing and remembering past injustices is crucial to preventing future ones.
- Individual acts of courage and compassion can shine a light even in the darkest times.

Unit Essential Questions:

- How can prejudice and discrimination escalate into genocide?
- What are the psychological and physical impacts of living in a war zone or concentration camp?
- How does propaganda manipulate public opinion and justify violence?
- What is the responsibility of individuals in the face of oppression?
- How can we ensure such atrocities "Never Again" become reality?

Knowledge and Skills:

Students will know...

- The rise of Nazism and the events leading to the Holocaust.
- The systematic targeting of Jews and other minority groups.
- The horrors of ghettos and concentration camps.
- The psychological impact of trauma and dehumanization.
- The role of propaganda in Nazi ideology.

Students will be able to...

- analyze primary and secondary sources about the Holocaust
- critically evaluate propaganda techniques
- understand, discuss, and debate complex historical events
- empathize and develop a perspective
- write persuasive arguments about the importance of human rights
- research and present on topics related to the Holocaust

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Assessment:

What evidence will be collected and deemed acceptable to show that students truly “understand”?

- Chapter comprehension quizzes
- Chapter vocabulary quizzes
- Study Guides
- Evidence-based Responses
- Reflections on themes in *Night*
- CommonLit passages and assessment questions
- BHM projects

END OF UNIT ASSESSMENT: Students will read independently from a long or paired text set and answer a combination of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions about the text. Additionally, students will complete a writing task in the following genre:

Literary Analysis Task (W2, W9): After reading passage(s), students will think about the similarities and differences in how the two authors developed the themes in each text. Students will write an essay in which they identify a theme from each text and analyze how the theme is developed using specific details from both selections.

Learning Activities:

What differentiated learning experiences and instruction will enable all students to achieve the desired results?

- Close reading for text evidence and word choice
- Journal about conflicts, symbolism, and themes in *Night*.
- Read and annotate a variety of informational texts.
- Holocaust Webquest and slides shows providing background
- View video footage of the Holocaust and Elie Wiesel.
- Timelines
- Reader response to Essential Questions

<i>RESOURCES</i>

Teacher Resources:

- *Night* by Elie Wiesel (book and PDF)
- “The Enchanted Street” by Monika Kotowska
- “Terrible Things” (allegory) by Eve Bunting
- *Schindler’s List* - opening scene of Jews being removed from their homes and taken to ghettos
- *Cabaret* Hitler Youth song
- The Holocaust Museum Website
- Holocaust Webquest and Study Guide
- CommonLit
- *Night* Themes
- [Quizlet Chapter Vocabulary](#)

Equipment Needed:

- Projector
- Document camera
- Student chromebooks

UNIT OVERVIEW

Content Area: English Language Arts

Unit I Title: Navigating Identity: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*

Target Course/Grade Level: ELA 8th Grade

Unit Summary: This unit explores Sherman Alexie's powerful novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, through the lens of identity. Students will accompany Junior, the protagonist, on his journey navigating the complexities of belonging to two distinct cultures: his Spokane Indian heritage and the white world of Reardan High School. Through his experiences, students will grapple with themes of identity, prejudice, family, and perseverance.

Approximate Length of Unit: 10 Weeks

LEARNING TARGETS

NJ Student Learning Standards:

RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.TS.8.4. Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.

RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

W.IW.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

- A. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension.
- B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- C. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- D. Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- E. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
- F. Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.

W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback

to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

W.SE.8.6. Gather relevant information 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.PE.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- 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.
- B. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- C. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
- D. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
- B. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- C. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- D. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills:

9.4.8.CT.1: Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to a local or global problem, such as climate change, and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are likely to be effective (e.g., MS-ETS1-2).

9.4.8.DC.5: Manage digital identity and practice positive online behavior to avoid inappropriate forms of self-disclosure.

9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect (e.g., 1.5.8.C1a).

9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

9.4.8.IML.2: Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information.

9.4.8.IML.6: Identify subtle and overt messages based on the method of communication.

9.4.8.IML.12: Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.

9.4.8.TL.6: Collaborate to develop and publish work that provides perspectives on a real-world problem.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Standards: Social Studies

6.3.8.CivicsPR.5: Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.

6.3.5.GeoGL.1: Use technology to collaborate with others who have different perspectives to examine global issues, including climate change and propose possible solutions.

6.2.8. HistoryCC.4.g: Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the people living Asia, Africa (Islam), Europe and the Americas over time.

Unit Understandings:

Students will understand that...

- Identity is multifaceted and shaped by various factors such as ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic background, and personal experiences.
- Individuals often navigate multiple identities, which can lead to feelings of belonging and conflict.
- Recognizing and appreciating diverse perspectives is crucial to fostering understanding and empathy.
- Overcoming adversity requires self-awareness, resilience, and a strong sense of self.

Unit Essential Questions:

- How do factors like ethnicity, culture, and community shape our identity?
- What are the challenges of navigating multiple identities?
- How does prejudice and discrimination affect individuals and communities?
- What role does self-acceptance play in overcoming adversity?
- How can we create a more inclusive environment that celebrates diversity?

Knowledge and Skills:

Students will know...

- Readers can learn about courage through the actions and motivations of real people or those of characters in stories.
- Theme is a message about life and human behavior conveyed by an author through characters and conflicts.
- Close reading leads to an understanding of the deeper, more complex meaning of a text.
- Native Americans who live on reservations face serious economic and social struggles.
- Include context in writing to ensure evidence is always clear.
- There is a difference between weak and strong reasoning; how to use explanations to show the relationship between their chosen evidence and their argument.

Students will be able to...

- Articulate the themes of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, as well as, complex short stories.
- Determine how character interactions cause a character to change and contribute to the development of theme.
- Determine how specific incidents or moments in a story lead to its resolution and contribute to the development of theme.
- Analyze how figurative language contributes to a poem's theme.
- Introduce evidence with context and write strong explanations for evidence.
- Compose a full-length literary analysis essay.
- Pose questions and make statements that connect ideas during a discussion.
- Use new academic vocabulary words correctly.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Assessment:

What evidence will be collected and deemed acceptable to show that students truly “understand”?

- ATD Chapter comprehension quizzes
- Vocabulary quizzes
- Evidence-based responses
- CommonLit passages and assessment questions
- Literary essay
- End of Unit Assessment
- **END OF UNIT ASSESSMENT:** Students will read independently from a long or paired text set and answer a combination of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions about the text. Additionally, students will complete a writing task in the following genre:
 - **Literary Analysis Task** (W2, W9): After reading passage(s), students will think about the similarities and differences in how the two authors developed the themes in each text. Students will write an essay in which they identify a theme from each text and analyze how the theme is developed using specific details from both selections.

Learning Activities:

What differentiated learning experiences and instruction will enable all students to achieve the desired results?

- Watch “Man in the Red Bandana” and evaluate hero qualities.
- Whole-class reading and discussions
- Write sentences for vocabulary words.
- Research Native American culture.
- Close reading for text evidence and word choice
- Discuss and respond in writing to essential questions about courage.

RESOURCES

Teacher Resources:

- “The Man in the Red Bandana” ESPN video
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* book and pdf
- “The Terror” by Junot Diaz - This powerful memoir focuses on courageous choices. Díaz describes some of the challenges he experienced as an adolescent and highlights how he finally found the courage to face a group of teenage bullies.
- ["The Dinner Party" by Mona Gardner](#)
- “The Friday Everything Changed” By Anne Hart tells the story of a group of girls who find the courage to ask why girls and boys do not have the same opportunities at their school.
 - [RL.8.2, RL.8.3]
- “Sonnet” by James Weldon Johnson This poem allows students to engage with the idea that it is courageous to choose hope when it might be easier to give into despair.
 - [RL.8.2, RL.8.4]
- “Transcript of Full Joseph McNeil Interview” by Newsday In this interview with Joseph McNeil, civil rights activist and member of the Greensboro Four, students see a real-life example of courage as he

describes his experiences participating in the Woolworth's lunch counter sit-ins during the 1960s and the effect it had on his life.

■ [RI.8.3]

- “The Treasure of Lemon Brown” by Walter Dean Myers In this well-known short story by Walter Dean Myers, a young boy’s attitude toward his father changes after he witnesses the surprisingly courageous actions an old man is willing to take to protect what he treasures most.

■ [RL.8.2, RL.8.3]

- “I look at the world” by Langston Hughes In this poem, the speaker sees the oppression and challenges that have been placed before them. Rather than let this oppression stop them from moving forward, they find the courage to commit to building a better world.

■ [RL.8.2, RL.8.4]

Equipment Needed:

- Projector
- Document camera
- Student Chromebook

UNIT OVERVIEW

Content Area: English Language Arts

Unit II Title: Deconstructing Racism in America: *Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You*

Target Course/Grade Level: ELA 8th Grade

Unit Summary: This unit will use Jason Reynolds' *Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You* as a springboard to explore the deeply rooted issue of racism in America. Students will delve into historical events, analyze different forms of racism, and discuss ways to combat prejudice. Through engaging activities and discussions, students will gain a deeper understanding of racial injustice and become empowered to be antiracist.

Approximate Length of Unit: 10 Weeks

LEARNING TARGETS

NJ Student Learning Standards:

RI.CR.8.1. Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.CI.8.2. Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RI.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.

RI.CT.8.8. Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

W.AW.8.1. Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- A. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
- C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- D. Establish and maintain a formal or academic style, approach, and form.
- E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.WR.8.5. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

W.SE.8.6. Gather relevant information 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.II.8.2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

SL.ES.8.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills:

9.4.8CI Creativity and Innovation: Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.

9.4.8.GCA Global and Cultural Awareness: Awareness of and appreciation for cultural differences is critical to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction.

9.4.8.TL Technology Literacy: Some digital tools are appropriate for gathering, organizing, analyzing, and presenting information, while other types of digital tools are appropriate for creating text, visualizations, models, and communicating with others. Digital tools allow for remote collaboration and rapid sharing of ideas unrestricted by geographic location or time.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Standards: Social Studies

6.3.8. CivicsPR.5: Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.

6.3.5. GeoGL.1: Use technology to collaborate with others who have different perspectives to examine global issues, including climate change and propose possible solutions.

6.2.8. HistoryCC.4.g: Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the people living Asia, Africa (Islam), Europe and the Americas over time.

Unit Understandings:

Students will understand that...

- confronting the legacy of racism in America is essential to building an antiracist America
- Racism is a systemic problem with a long history in the United States.
- Racism manifests in various forms, from individual prejudice to institutional policies.
- Understanding the roots of racism is crucial to dismantling its hold on society.
- Everyone has a role to play in becoming antiracist and promoting equality.

Unit Essential Questions:

- How might learning about the source of racist ideas help you to know the present and yourself?
- How has racism been woven into the fabric of American history?
- What are the different ways racism can show up in our lives?

- How do stereotypes and prejudice contribute to racial injustice?
- What actions can we take to be antiracist and create a more just society?

Knowledge and Skills:

Students will know...

- key events in American history that illustrate the pervasiveness of racism (e.g., slavery, Jim Crow laws, segregation).
- different forms of racism, including overt prejudice, microaggressions, and systemic racism.
- the concept of privilege and how it connects to racial injustice.
- strategies for becoming antiracist, such as speaking out against prejudice and advocating for equality.
- informational text requires that readers notice and analyze the features and structure of a text to understand author's purpose and evaluate effectiveness
- critical readers of informational text look at multiple sources (print, videos, blogs, podcasts, etc.) on the topic they are studying

Students will be able to...

- analyze primary and secondary sources about racism
- critically evaluate historical narratives and identify bias
- discuss complex topics with respect and empathy
- research and present information on issues of racial injustice
- write persuasive essays or create presentations promoting antiracism
- apply close reading strategies to decode the literal and inferential meaning of text
- evaluate the contributions of black people to American culture
- identify forms of systemic racism in our society

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Assessment:

What evidence will be collected and deemed acceptable to show that students truly "understand"?

- The Blue-Eyed, Brown-Eyed Exercise, by CommonLit Staff
- Emmett Till, by Jessica McBirney (CommonLit)
- Booker T. Washington vs. W.E.B. Du Bois, by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois - 1895, 1903 (CommonLit)
- The Blink of an Eye, by Facinghistory.org, 2016 (CommonLit)
- **END OF UNIT ASSESSMENT:** Students will read independently from a long or paired text set and answer a combination of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions about the text. Additionally, students will complete a writing task in the following genre:
 - **Argumentative Essay (W1):** After reading a passage(s), students will write an argument to support their claims with clear reasons and relevant textual evidence, including direct quotations from the passage.

Learning Activities:

What differentiated learning experiences and instruction will enable all students to achieve the desired results?

- Close reading for text evidence and word choice
- Reader response to essential questions
- Independent journaling of personal feelings/reflections in the process of learning/unlearning about race and racism
- Socratic seminar about CommonLit discussion questions

RESOURCES

Teacher Resources:

- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning*- Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
- TC Units of Study: Research Based Argument
- [Stamped Educator's Guide](#)
- [CommonLit Texts For Talking About Race](#)
- [Informational Text Presentation](#)
- [Read Across the Content Areas Wakelet](#)
- [Notice & Note Nonfiction Signposts](#)
- [Kelly Gallagher Article of the Week \(AOW\)](#)
- [AOW 2017-2023 Archive](#)
- [Stamped Educator Guide | Hachette Book Group](#)
- [ProCon.org](#)

Texts that pair well with Stamped for Kids:

Non-fiction:

- "Short History of Nearly Everything" by Bill Bryson (broadens understanding of history and identity)
- "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry" by Mildred D. Taylor (historical fiction about racism in the Great Depression)
- "I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter" by Julia Alvarez (explores racism, sexism, and cultural identity)

Fiction:

- "The Hate U Give" by Angie Thomas (powerful story about racism and police brutality)
- "New Kid" by Jerry Craft (graphic novel dealing with racism and microaggressions)
- "Brown Girl Dreaming" by Jacqueline Woodson (verse novel about growing up Black in the 1960s)

Equipment Needed:

- Projector
- Document camera
- Student chromebooks

UNIT OVERVIEW

Content Area: English Language Arts

Unit IV Title: Unmasking Darkness: Exploring Fear, Suspense, and the Human Condition through Short Stories

Target Course/Grade Level: ELA 8th Grade

Unit Summary: This unit dives into suspense and psychological exploration through chilling stories like, “The Tell-Tale Heart”, “Lamb to the Slaughter,” “Button, Button,” “The Hitchhiker,” and “Ruthless.” Students will analyze suspense techniques, confront characters’ fears, and explore themes like paranoia and good vs. evil as they sharpen their analysis skills through reading, discussion, and writing.

Approximate Length of Unit: 10 Weeks

LEARNING TARGETS

NJ Student Learning Standards:

RL.CI.8.2. Determine a theme of a literary text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RL.IT.8.3. Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot, how ideas influence individuals or events, or how characters influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RL.TS.8.4. Compare and contrast the structure of texts, analyzing how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning, tone and style.

RL.MF.8.6. Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums, including the representation/s or various perspectives of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), as well as what is emphasized or absent in each work.

W.NW.8.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

- A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- C. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
- D. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- E. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

W.WP.8.4. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

SL.PE.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- 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.
- B. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- C. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
- D. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

L.VI.8.4. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
- B. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- C. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- D. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills:

9.4.8CI Creativity and Innovation: Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.

9.4.8.TL Technology Literacy: Some digital tools are appropriate for gathering, organizing, analyzing, and presenting information, while other types of digital tools are appropriate for creating text, visualizations, models, and communicating with others. Digital tools allow for remote collaboration and rapid sharing of ideas unrestricted by geographic location or time.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Standards: Social Studies

6.3.8. CivicsPR.5: Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.

6.3.5. GeoGI.1: Use technology to collaborate with others who have different perspectives to examine global issues, including climate change and propose possible solutions.

6.2.8. HistoryCC.4.g: Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the people living Asia, Africa (Islam), Europe and the Americas over time.

Unit Understandings:

Students will understand that...

- literature gives voice to human issues and social themes that not only relate to specific time periods in history but also transcend both time and place
- judgments about others are based on criteria that come from a variety of perspectives and experiences
- literature allows individuals to reflect on the people, events, and places in their own lives
- fear and suspicion can cause normal, peaceful people (neighbors and friends) to turn on one another
- dire situations can cause people to act out of character

- when people make prejudgments they are often irreversible (Once a thought is put into someone's mind, it is hard to root out)
- when human beings lose self-control, allowing hysteria and paranoia to take control, they are reduced to acting like animals

Unit Essential Questions:

- How do we determine what is right and wrong?
- Do the ends ever justify the means?

Knowledge and Skills:

Students will know...

- how to identify and differentiate the three types of irony
- plays are another form of literature and have distinct text features
- authors use literature as a means of social commentary, e.g., prejudice and the mob mentality are dangerous
- characterization is used intentionally by a writer to convey meaning
- internal conflicts result from external ones
- in plays, stage directions help the reader envision and contribute to mood and tone
- authors of plays use dialogue and stage directions to develop character, establish setting, and convey theme
- authors use foreshadowing to build suspense

Students will be able to...

- notice how differences in point of view create conflict
- analyze how authors use techniques such as situational and dramatic irony to build shock and suspense
- determine how internal conflict reveals theme
- write complete paragraphs with strong opening arguments
- apply close reading strategies to decode the literal and inferential meaning
- journal about interacting voice as they read silently; discuss their responses

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Assessment:

What evidence will be collected and deemed acceptable to show that students truly “understand”?

- Writing Prompt: What motivates people to do bad things? Use at least two texts to support your answer. [W.8.2]
- **END OF UNIT ASSESSMENT:** Students will read independently from a long or paired text set and answer a combination of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions about the text. Additionally, students will complete a writing task in the following genre:
 - **Narrative Writing Task (W3):** After reading a short story or passage from a novel, students will write a continuation of the story describing what they think might happen next. Students should include what obstacles a character may face and what actions s/he will take to overcome them.

Learning Activities:

What differentiated learning experiences and instruction will enable all students to achieve the desired results?

- View TedTalks about irony
- Close reading for text evidence and word choice
- Mood Mapping: Students create a visual representation of the mood as they read, identifying words, phrases, and descriptions that evoke darkness, fear, suspense, etc.
- Suspense Builders: After reading, students identify specific techniques the author used to build suspense (e.g., cliffhangers, foreshadowing, unknown characters).
- Journaling from a Character's Perspective: Students write journal entries from the perspective of a character, grappling with their fears and motivations.
- Comparative Analysis: Students compare and contrast different short stories or plays that explore similar themes.
- Rewrite the Ending: Students rewrite the ending of a story, taking a different approach to resolving the conflict or exploring an alternate outcome.
- Flash Fiction Challenge: Students write a short story (500 words or less) inspired by a specific image, object, or quote related to darkness, fear, or the human condition.
- Create a Dialogue: Students write a dialogue scene between two characters facing a difficult situation that evokes fear or suspense.
- Symbolism Hunt: Students identify and analyze symbols used in the story, considering how they contribute to the themes of darkness, fear, etc.

Teacher Resources:

- CommonLit
- Edulastic
- Newsela

RESOURCES

Equipment Needed:

- Projector
- Document camera
- Student Chromebook