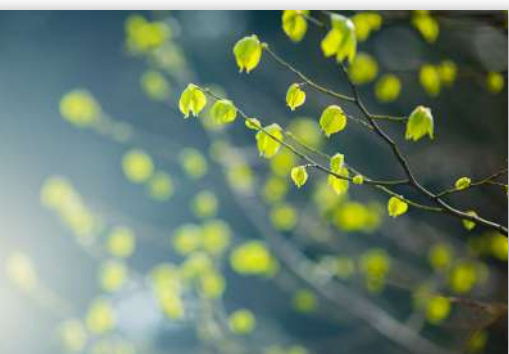




ELA GRADE LEVEL OVERVIEW

An Introduction to StudySync's Thematic Units for Grade 9



Introduction

This Grade 9 Overview contains detailed information about the texts and writing tasks in each unit. Text complexity information is presented alongside writing task expectations, allowing for a macro view of the program, which can be used for review, planning, or clarification about text placement.

The Grade 9 Core ELA takes students through literary and nonfiction texts that explore a variety of themes, perspectives, and experiences.

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Overall Approach to Text Complexity

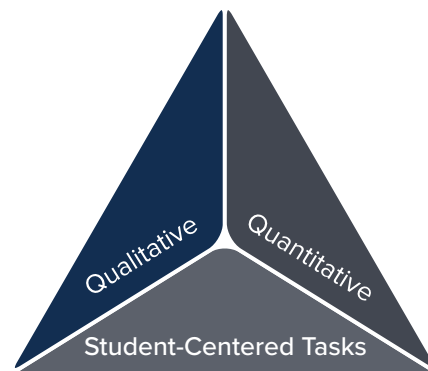
StudySync offers students a wealth of opportunities to interact with high quality texts that span a variety of genres, cultures, and eras. The selections presented in each unit and grade strike an appropriate balance of fiction, poetry, drama, argumentative, and informational texts, consistent with grade-level standards, and offer for analysis complex themes and ideas as well as compelling characters and compelling examples of craft and structure. Students explore topics in-depth through groupings of related selections that address a person, era, idea, or event from multiple perspectives and in multiple text forms.

Reading selections gradually increase in text complexity across units and grades, with challenging texts accompanied by scaffolding to aid students in grasping the full depth of their meaning over the course of a lesson. Students are asked to engage with increasingly sophisticated texts and to engage with more accessible texts in an increasingly sophisticated and deep manner.

Text complexity is determined by a combination of three factors: **quantitative** measures, **qualitative** measures, and **reader and task expectations**.

Quantitative measures refer to measurable factors that can increase a text's difficulty, such as its Lexile score, length, and date of publication.

Qualitative measures refer to structural, linguistic, or contextual elements of the text that make it more or less difficult, such as prior knowledge required or specific vocabulary terms.



Finally, reader and task expectations refer to the ways in which students are asked to interact with the text. All three factors are considered when placing texts in a particular grade or unit. A text with a low Lexile that requires significant prior knowledge and asks students to perform rigorous analysis may be more appropriate for a particular grade than a text with a higher lexile that requires less analysis.

Information about these three factors is provided for every text in the program in the pages that follow.

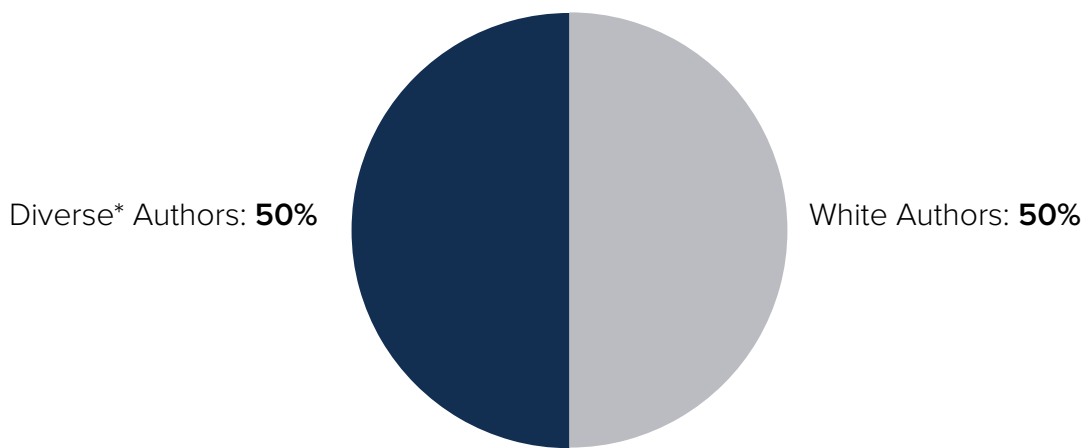


Overall Grade Diversity Representation

Following the scholarship of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, StudySync's table of contents is designed to be reflective of our readers' cultures and experiences and to open windows to cultures and experiences different from their own. To ensure that students have meaningful and immersive reading experiences, we've prioritized the inclusion of Black authors and authors of color as well as female authors for a truly diverse offering of literature.

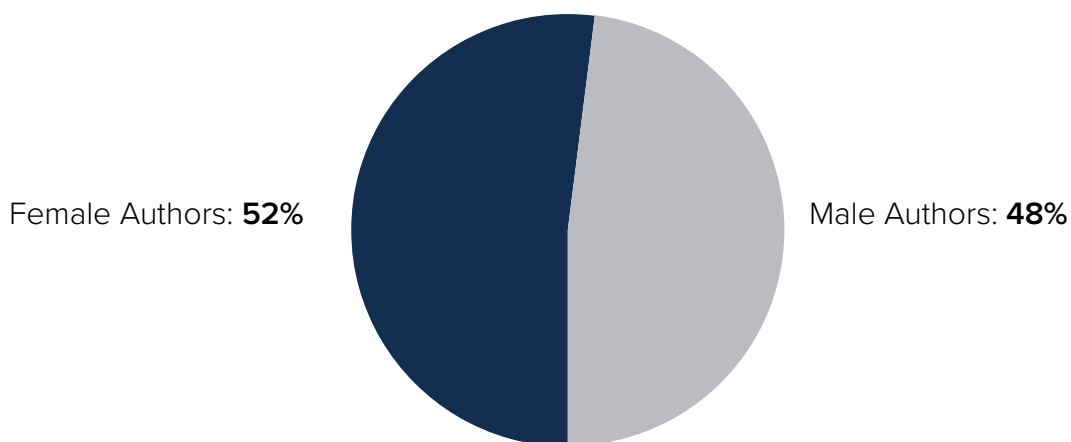
Diversity Representation

Authors with diverse backgrounds make up at least half of StudySync's table of contents. *



Gender Representation

Female identifying authors make up at least half of StudySync's table of contents.



* Author's with diverse backgrounds: Black authors, Native American authors, authors of color, and Jewish authors.



Overall Approach to Writing Instruction

StudySync instructs students on a variety of writing forms that adhere to the state curriculum standards. Each unit of the program exposes students to a different writing form and all of its associated skills and processes, which they practice through unit-specific **Extended Writing Projects (EWP)**. At each grade level, one EWP covers each of the following writing forms: narrative, informational, argumentative, research, and literary analysis. Additionally, one unit in each grade contains an **Extended Oral Project**, where students will create and present a presentation based on the specific requirements of the standards for that grade.

Explicit instruction in writing is included in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language lessons and activities, all of which are scaffolded to support learners of varying backgrounds and abilities. Writing activities in each unit, from the in-depth EWP to Close Read writing prompts, self-selected writing responses, writer's notebook activities, Blast responses, and other short writing activities explore different aspects of the writing process, giving students a variety of writing practice opportunities to hone their skills and enhance their understanding of each unit's particular writing form.



Writing Process: Each unit's Extended Writing Project allows students to practice long-form writing using the steps of the writing process and associated skill lessons.

This application of the writing skills and processes culminates in the Extended Writing Project, which challenges students and holds them accountable for their learning experiences. The Extended Writing Project prompts students to inquire deeply into a unit's theme and essential question by drawing from text evidence, research, and their own life experiences to develop extended responses in a variety of writing forms specified in the standards. Throughout the Extended Writing project, students evaluate and assess Student Model examples that connect to the modes of writing in each unit. Lessons push students to effectively express themselves and rely on text evidence as a basis of support for their ideas.

Students have a myriad of opportunities to enrich their writing, including immersion in specific academic vocabulary, peer review and revision, and group discussion and collaboration. They explore different formats of presenting and publishing the finished works that represent their best possible writing efforts in the program.



Addressing Sensitive Content

Specific StudySync Library items that contain potentially objectionable language have been flagged to ensure that teachers are fully prepared to lead discussion with students around these texts. While these topics and texts can be challenging, with adequate preparation they can yield productive and powerful conversations among students.

The following are recommended for texts that contains sensitive content:

Before class

teacher preparation for introducing sensitive content in the classroom

During class

strategies for productive conversations about sensitive content with students

During the discussion

easy, in-the-moment activities to help students process their thinking, express themselves compassionately, and maintain an effective discussion

After the discussion

strategies to support students in reflection and continued learning beyond the allotted time for classroom discussion

Before Class

It is strongly recommended that you develop a plan to address sensitive topics with your students prior to assigning the text. The following are some suggested steps and activities to help you prepare.

Outcome

Prepare to be an active facilitator.

Suggested Strategies

- Read the text thoroughly and identify any language or content that students may find sensitive or challenging to discuss.
- Consider that the topics that you may believe are controversial or sensitive may not be the same ones that create conflict for your students.
- Construct a clear outcome for the discussions before the lesson (“By the end of the discussion...”)
- Plan how you will work with students to establish a supportive environment for the discussion, and how you will assist them in navigating sensitive content. You may utilize the strategies described below, but these are neither prescriptive nor comprehensive. Your knowledge of your students’ personalities, interests, and needs should guide your choices.



During Class

In order to fully prepare yourself and your students for reading about and discussing sensitive content, it is strongly recommended that you develop a classroom culture and a set of norms that will support challenging conversations, and focus students on discussing the text. The following are some suggested steps and activities to help you collectively prepare.

Outcome

Understand the difference between intent and impact.

Suggested Strategies

- Ask students: Recall a time when someone said or did something that hurt you, and when that person found out they said, “I am sorry, I did not mean to hurt you.”
- If students struggle to recall an instance of this, provide them with a scenario: Imagine a peer hears you participating in class, and approaches you after school. This peer says “Wow, I didn’t think you were that smart!” What would be your reaction? What was this peer’s intent?
- Prompt students to discuss what this experience can teach them about the difference between intent and impact.
- Explain to students that during discussions of sensitive topics, how we say things can matter just as much or more than what we are saying.
- Remind students to be careful of the impact of their words on other people. We also must try to understand the speaker’s intent, especially when their words have a negative impact.

Discussion Norms and Agreements

Establish discussion guidelines that focus on the importance of student input and respect of individual thought.

Suggested Strategies

- As a class, work with students to generate guidelines or present a list of ground rules for the lesson and work with students to accept or modify them.
- To prepare students for co-creating norms or agreements, you could ask:
 - What is difficult about discussing [topic]?
 - What is beneficial about discussing [topic]?
 - What agreements will help address the challenge of discussing this topic while also ensuring the discussion is beneficial?
- Students should feel ownership of the discussion agreements, and express them in their own language. However, it is important to ensure that most of the following suggested guidelines are covered:
 - Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
 - Listen actively with an ear for understanding others’ views.
 - Critique ideas, not individuals.
 - Base all responses in the text, by providing evidence from the text to support your reasoning/opinion.
 - Allow everyone the opportunity to speak and respect those that choose not to.
 - Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
 - Avoid assumptions about any individual or generalizations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their perceived social group.



During the Discussion

While preparation is key, sensitive topics can often generate challenging emotions in the moment. The following suggestions are activities that you can utilize during the class to help your students process their thinking, express themselves compassionately, and maintain an effective discussion.

Observation

Student(s) becoming less engaged and showing a decline in participation.

Suggestion

- **Fist-to-Five:** Have students hold up fingers to express their current level of comfort with the conversation:
 - 0 = I would rather not talk about this topic.
 - 1 = I am very uncomfortable talking about this topic.
 - 2 = I am usually uncomfortable talking about this topic.
 - 3 = I am sometimes uncomfortable talking about this topic.
 - 4 = I am usually comfortable talking about this topic.
 - 5 = I am very comfortable talking about this topic.
- **Stop and Jot:** Have students take a moment to break from the discussion and write down what they are thinking. Taking the time to journal, even for just a couple minutes, can help students focus their thinking and plan what they want to say and how to say it.

Observation

Students hesitating to participate or struggling to respond to challenging discussion questions.

Suggestion

- **Think, Pair, Share:**
 - Write the discussion question on the board.
 - Have students answer the question by free-writing in their journals for three minutes.
 - Have students share their thoughts with a partner.
 - Have students share their thoughts whole-group.
- If students still struggle to participate, ask students to share something interesting that their partner said in their Pair discussion.

Observation

Student(s) expressing a strong reaction to the text or to the discussion.

Suggestion

- Ask students to point to key information in the text, stating their source. You can have students do this individually or as a class. Create a list of the key points of information for the whole class to see. Then, have students distinguish between evaluative statements versus statements of opinion or experience.



Observation

Student(s) expressing confusion about the sensitivity of the text or the discussion.

Suggestion

- Provide a space for students to capture thoughts (Pros/Cons, Agree/Disagree).
- Students may gain understanding through a Circular Response Discussion, where students share their points of view in a circular fashion throughout the classroom. Students should have the option to pass if they would like.
- Ask students to identify information they would like to know to clarify their understanding on questions, opinions, or comments presented, even if that information is not available in the moment.
- Observation: Student(s) struggling to express themselves when a challenging statement, opinion, or idea is communicated.

Suggestion

- Students may benefit from a structure in order to process challenging moments in a discussion:
 - Restate: Have students say in their own words what they think they heard. The act of repetition can often help clarify misunderstandings, and encourage reflection.
 - Count: Have students contemplate for a count to 10. This will allow students to consider their responses carefully.
 - Breathe: Have students take a deep breath before re-engaging in the discussion. This will allow students to consider how best to express their emotions.
 - Empathize: When responding, students should have compassion for the speaker, and challenge the statement instead of the person who said it. This will help maintain a safe classroom environment while also assuming good intentions and seeking to understand.

Observation

Student(s) engaging in a deep discussion while others are ready to move on, or more content needs to be discussed.

Suggestion

- Stoplight: This is an effective strategy for measuring students' comfort with moving on in the conversation, especially after a challenging topic has been discussed. Students can hold up colored pieces of paper, or raise their hands to indicate their position on the stoplight.
 - Green: We can move on.
 - Yellow: We can move on, but I feel some concern about moving forward.
 - Red: I do not want to move on yet.
- Ask students to base all responses in the text. Consider, is there a certain level or type of evidence that you expect students to provide in their reasoning? Be prepared to bring students back to the text to ground the discussion.



After the Discussion

More often than not, discussions around sensitive topics must come to a close before anything is resolved. The following suggestions are activities that you can utilize at the end of a discussion to encourage students to embrace and process this lack of closure.

Suggestion

- Wrap-Up Reflection Questions
 - Ask for student feedback. Consider the following questions:
 - What are the two most important points you learned today?
 - What important questions remained unanswered for you today?
- What did you learn specifically from what someone else said, in relation to the text, that you would not have said or thought on your own?
 - Ask students to reflect:
 - Which discussion norm do you feel was your strength today? How do you know?
 - Which discussion norm do you feel was an area for growth for you today? What could you do to make this a strength next time?
- Do you have any suggestions for how the group can better engage in similar discussions next time?
 - Ask students to journal:
 - What are you thinking that wasn't said today in class?
 - What do you know that others might not?
 - What do you want to learn?
 - What do you want to share?

The Critical Incident Questionnaire

At the end of the day (or week, or unit, or other appropriate time period), set aside 10 minutes for the group to respond in writing to a few specific questions. (This may be especially helpful to do when a class session has been particularly difficult or tense).

- At what moment were you most engaged as a learner?
- At what moment were you most distanced as a learner?
- What action that anyone in the room took did you find most affirming or helpful?
- What action that anyone in the room took did you find most puzzling or confusing?
- What surprised you most?
- Keep all responses anonymous. Collect them at the end of the period. Read and analyze the responses, and compile them according to similar themes and concerns. Report back to the group at the next meeting. Allow time for comments and discussion.





Unit 1

Divided We Fall

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Unit Overview

Unit 1 Title

Divided We Fall

Essential Question:

Why do we feel the need to belong?

Genre Focus

Fiction

Introduction

Deep inside most individuals lurks a desire to belong to a group. The group might be one's family, a circle of friends, a popular clique, a winning team, or a respected profession. The conflict caused by the desire to fit in and the wish to be an individual is a common theme in literature.

Why do we feel the need to belong? Why does it often hurt to feel excluded from the group? What's wrong with being an outsider? Is there value in the outsider's perspective? What risks do outsiders take?

This unit offers a wide variety of literature for your students to explore these questions while also exploring texts in the unit's genre focus, fiction. The classic short story "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant, the short story "Marigolds" by Eugenia Collier, and the short story "St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves" serve as examples of the genre focus. Selections such as the poem "Sure You Can Ask Me a Personal Question" by Diane Burns, the memoir *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech allow students to read across genres.

Students will begin this unit as readers, and they will finish as writers, as they apply what they have learned about story elements to their own narrative writing projects.



Text Complexity

Grade 9 Unit 1 serves as the starting point for ninth grade students' continued development as critical learners. Though this unit focuses on the genre of fiction, it features both literature and nonfiction texts. With a Lexile range stretching from 800–1420, the majority of the texts in this unit fall between 920L and 1120L, a perfect starting point for ninth graders. Additionally, the vocabulary, sentence structures, text features, content, and relationships among ideas make these texts accessible to ninth graders, enabling them to grow as readers by interacting with such appropriately challenging texts.

The unit begins with “Marigolds,” which is used in the SyncStart unit. Though this text is challenging due to its complex main character, whose motivations are difficult to detect without making sophisticated inferences, it also has the most lessons supporting it. The difficulty of this short story is offset by a collection of skill lessons that teach students the necessary background skills for success in their English Language Arts class. Skills such as Interacting with Sources, Context Clues, Monitoring Comprehension, Text Dependent Responses, and Collaborative Conversations do not just build a foundation for the school year; they also allow students to encounter the story repeatedly using different perspectives, which makes the text more manageable. SkillsTV and SyncTV episodes further enhance students' opportunities to engage with the content.

Throughout the unit, students read and analyze a collection of fiction pieces in a common Lexile® band. In addition to their shared genre, they also share thematic links—the sense of belonging and the lengths to which people will go to achieve this elusive sense of belonging. These texts present a variety of fictional worlds and formats. Guy de Maupassant's famous short story “The Necklace,” set in nineteenth-century Paris, explores the disastrous consequences of a young woman's desire to raise her social status, while the contemporary short story “St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves” employs magical realism to examine how the process of civilization imposed by nuns on a pack of young girls raised by werewolf parents has an irrevocable impact on the girls' identities and relationships.

Although they are non-fiction, the self-help book excerpt *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone* and the personal essay “Why I Lied to Everyone in High School About Knowing Karate” use a narrative structure to share stories about the authors' painful struggles to belong in the harsh, competitive environment of high school. Grouped with “St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves,” these texts enable students to compare and contrast a common theme played out in a similar setting across works of different genres. Employing a narrative text structure, the excerpt from the epic poem *Metamorphoses* probes the seething anger and humiliation of the god Jupiter, who has summoned the other gods to discuss the matter of the “snake-footed giants” rising up against



the gods, not conforming to what was the norm. The common themes and structures and the relatable setting shared by “St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves” and these three selections makes them more accessible to students, offsetting complexity in their language and style and Lexiles® at the higher end of the grade band.

Several texts in the unit provide students with more challenging opportunities to explore the unit theme. Diane Burn’s searing “Sure You Can Ask Me a Personal Question” is written in the form of answers to officious but implied questions about the speaker’s Native American ethnicity. This selection is paired with an excerpt from Frank McCourt’s famous memoir *Angela’s Ashes*, which is mainly composed of dialogue but is not signalled as such by the use of quotation marks. Pairing these challenging selections enables students to explore a common theme about how individuals’ identities are sometimes defined by others in simplistic, stereotypical terms and to compare and contrast how language can be used in subtle but powerful ways to convey tone and social criticism. The Skill lesson Language, Style, and Audience, as well as a SyncTV episode, provide students with tools to unpack McCourt’s particularly challenging content.

Also paired are Sara Abou Rashed’s poem “Welcome to America” and Martin Luther King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech, delivered during the March on Washington in 1963. The poem uses repetition to convey a Syrian immigrant’s wish for a better, more peaceful life in the United States in the face of prejudice. King’s speech features a great deal of figurative language, as well as references to other historical documents, and uses a complex and unusual structure to develop its claim. Through the Skill lessons Arguments and Claims and Rhetoric, a SkillsTV episode, and a pairing between the speech and the poem that enables an exploration of the common idea of social injustice, students are provided with support needed to interpret the messages of these works of social criticism. Lecture Notes and Developing Background Knowledge activities also provide students with the information they require to fully understand the historical context of the works.

Finally, the unit is rounded out with Edwidge Danticat’s essay “The Future in My Arms,” in which she relives the events and feelings that she experienced leading up to and following the birth of her niece. Students can apply skills they learned while analyzing King’s speech to examine how Danticat uses evidence to advance her points.



English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources in this section are developed around two texts and an Extended Oral Project. The texts are written at four distinct levels and serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit.

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing skill lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

The Extended Oral Project can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and create a real or imagined narrative that shows how belonging or not belonging in a group affects a person at an important life moment. Throughout these lessons, students will interact with texts and their peers as readers, writers, speakers, and listeners to maximize comprehension and provide multiple access points for every learner.



Marigolds

by Eugenia Collier

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1969

Genre: Fictional

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out that this text is written in the unit genre: fiction. Explain that it is a short story, so the plot unravels more quickly than in a novel, but all major literary elements and plot stages are included.
- Review the genre lesson with students and have them look for fictional genre characteristics as they read.

Organization

- Most of “Marigolds” is a first-person narration told from the adult Lizabeth’s perspective; however, the author includes some dialogue set during Lizabeth’s childhood. Moving between the reflective narration and the flashback dialogue may challenge some students.
- Have students highlight examples of dialogue in the flashbacks and note how they help flesh out the story.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1120

Word Count: 3,770



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Annotation, Context Clues, Reading Comprehension, Text Dependent Responses, Textual Evidence, Character, Collaborative Conversations, Short Constructed Responses, Peer Review

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: Imagine that a grown-up Lizabeth is granted the opportunity to return and apologize to Miss Lottie, explaining why she destroyed the marigolds. Write a narrative that focuses on the dialogue that takes place between these two characters, years after the events described in the story. To prepare, review text details and descriptions of Lizabeth’s childhood world, and her feelings about it and reactions to it, and consider how they influenced her devastating actions.

Beyond the Book

Art: My Symbolic Life

In “Marigolds,” the marigold is symbolic of beauty and hope. What symbols would your students select to symbolize their lives?

Ask students to:

- Think about a poignant moment from their childhoods.
- Identify a symbol that represents or embodies this moment.
- Choose a method for illustrating the symbol to best communicate this moment in their lives.

Share their symbols and explain the deeper meaning behind this symbol.

To reflect, ask students the following questions:

- Were the majority of symbols selected used to represent positive or negative moments?
- Why do you think students selected more positive or negative events to focus on for this activity?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Why are outsiders scorned? What makes groups so suspicious of outliers? Confused by why the town outcast, Miss Lottie, cares so much for her flower garden, Lizabeth and her friends make fun of the old woman. When Lizabeth’s actions ultimately cross the line from mean-spiritedness to cruelty, what has she proven?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from “Marigolds” when writing their narrative. Have them reflect on Eugenia Collier’s characterization of the narrator as they craft their own narrative.



The Necklace

by Guy de Maupassant

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1884

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out to students that this text is written in the unit genre: fiction. Explain that it is a short story, so the plot unravels more quickly than in a novel, but all major literary elements and plot stages are included.
- Review the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit with students and have them look for fictional genre characteristics as they read the story.

Sentence Structure

- Many sentences are long and contain multiple phrases or clauses.
- Suggest that students identify main clauses and then note the additional information provided by accompanying phrases.

Specific Vocabulary

- Much of the vocabulary, such as *changeable* or *paste*, is formal or archaic and may challenge some students.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.



Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 930

Word Count: 2,836

Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Theme

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: At the end of this short story, readers discover along with Madame Loisel that she has labored for ten years, lost her beauty, and declined into poverty to replace what was actually a fake diamond necklace. What does this ironic ending, as well as other plot evidence, suggest about the story's themes? Write a thoughtful response supported by textual evidence and original commentary.

Beyond the Book

Adaptation: Rework for 2018

“The Necklace” was published in 1884, but focuses on issues of social status and material wealth that are still relevant. Students will work collaboratively to update the story for today's audience.

Break students into small groups and ask them to discuss these questions:

- What social classes exist today? How can you tell differences in wealth amongst people? How is jealousy expressed among your peers?
- Then have students rewrite the story for a contemporary teenage audience.

To reflect, ask students:

- How are people's desires, feelings, and reactions today similar to the experience of Madame and Monsieur Loisel?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

A life spent wishing for things you cannot have is a life wasted. When Madame Loisel tries to live the life she wants, the consequences only lead her further from her goal. Was one night in high society worth it?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may adopt some of Guy de Maupassant's methods for structuring a story with a plot twist at the end as they craft their own narrative.



Metamorphosis (Jupiter and Lycaon)

by Ovid (translated by A.S. Kline)

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 8 AD

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Ovid was a Roman poet whose most famous work is *The Metamorphoses*, a narrative poem that includes more than 200 characters and 250 mythical stories that relate events between gods who reside on Mount Olympus and humans and demigods who live on Earth. Originally written in verse form, the poem is one of the most influential works in Western literature.

Genre

- Explain that the word metamorphoses means “transformations,” a reference to the numerous transformations of humans and gods to different forms, such as animals, plants, stones, and stars, that occur throughout the text.
- Difficult vocabulary, such as formidable (causing awe or fear) and indignation (anger aroused by the belief that something is wrong), may need defining.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 667



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: In the excerpt from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Jupiter turns Lycaon into a wolf. Why do you think Jupiter chose to turn him into this particular animal? What is the significance of the wolf? How do you think it represents Lycaon's nature? Evaluate and analyze the significance of this transformation based on the excerpt and what you know about Lycaon. Write a 300–400 word response citing the text and your research.

Beyond the Book

Debate: If I Break The Code Should I Be Punished?

In the excerpt of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Lycaon's punishment comes after defying the norms set by Jupiter and meeting of the gods. Students will take a position, for or against, Lycaon being punished for his crimes of savagery.

Ask students to:

- Decide if they are for or against Lycaon's punishment.
- Use the excerpt of *Metamorphoses*, information from the lecture notes, and their own background knowledge of Greek mythology to come up with their arguments for or against Lycaon's punishment.
- Construct their argument using the evidence and reasoning they have come up with.
- Once students have constructed their arguments, invite pairs of students to debate. Allow the class to discuss which side they believe was more compelling.

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Lycaon experiences the consequences of using trickery and deception rather than conforming to rules of the Gods. This text gives students the chance to consider what happens when you challenge the urge to belong and the consequences of not fitting in and meeting the norms of a group.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Ovid's story-telling technique for their narratives. Ovid tells a story about a transformation: Jupiter turns Lycaon into a wolf that reflects his savage character. Have them work to create an inciting incident that results in a cause and effect relationship between characters.



Braving the Wilderness

by Brené Brown

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2017

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- In an anecdote from her childhood, the author describes the event that led her to feel as if she no longer belonged in her family.
- Tell students that they can figure out the author's purpose by paying attention to how they feel as they read. Do they laugh? Do they feel sympathy? Do they feel as if they learned something?

Genre

- *Braving the Wilderness* is a self-help book that examines the feeling of belonging. However, the excerpt reads like a piece of narrative non-fiction such as might be found in a memoir.
- Help students understand the place and function of this personal narrative within the context of a self-help book.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1000

Word Count: 1,189



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: In this text, the author, Brené Brown, describes an event from her teenage years that forever damaged her relationship with her parents. What event from your life so far might you look back on years from now as having a lasting impact on your personality, your relationships, or your outlook—for better or for worse? Describe the event in a personal narrative that, like Brown’s text, includes a clear setting, a sequence of events, descriptive sensory details, and a reflection on the experience’s significance.

Beyond the Book

Create an Inclusive Group

Brené feels disconnected from her family and new classmates. This feeling of isolation is common, and schools are working to create groups and events to combat this issue.

Ask students to consider the following questions:

- What makes you feel connected at school?
- What makes you feel left out or alone at school?
- What can schools do to foster relationship building?
- After students have had time to discuss the questions above, ask them to think about extracurricular programs, groups, or events that would encourage inclusion on their campus and help all students feel connected.
- Allow students to work in groups to design a program or event to achieve inclusion at their school. Ask each group to pitch their idea to the class. Once all ideas have been shared, have students vote for the best idea. Finally, the winning group will present their idea to school leadership.

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*, the author Brené Brown recalls a life-changing experience of being the new kid at school who tries out for the high school cheerleading squad. Students will read to compare and contrast developing the themes in this selection and in “St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves.”

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Brené Brown for their real or imagined narratives about belonging. Have them work to delve into the emotions Brown felt and how they might feel upon figuring out that they don’t belong.



St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves

by Karen Russell

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2006

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out to students that this text is written in the unit genre: fiction. It is an example of magical realism, in which the world of the story is mainly realistic, but with the addition of magical elements that are treated as natural, such as werewolves. Because it is a short story, the reader must accept the premise without knowing many details about the world in the story.
- Review the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit with students and have them look for specific characteristics of magical realism as they read the short story.

Purpose

- The story may be intended as an allegory of how Native Americans were treated by white culture or, on a more straightforward level, as a coming-of-age story about the sacrifices that must take place in order to grow up and become “civilized.”
- Explain that Navajo children were once taken from their families so they could attend white schools. Ask students to consider what might be lost in the process of becoming “civilized” by the standards of a dominant culture.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 800

Word Count: 6,228



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Compare and Contrast, Allusion

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: The short story “St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves” is a work of fiction and the excerpt from *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone* is a work of nonfiction. Both texts tell a story about the harsh consequences of not fitting into a community or group. Compare and contrast the ways in which the community in each story enhances the conflict faced by the main character and influences the theme.

Beyond the Book

Discussion: The Four Stages of Cultural Adjustment

- Provide students with information about the four stages of cultural adjustment (for example, initial excitement, hostility, gradual adjustment, and biculturalism).
- Put students in small groups and randomly assign a “character category” (for example, characters from literature, movies, cartoon, and reality television).

Ask student groups to:

- Create a chart of the four stages of cultural adjustment.
- Generate examples of characters who fit each stage.

To reflect, ask students:

- What caused the girls in “St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves” to go through the stages of adjustment at different speeds?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The short story “St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves” by Karen Russell, read with the non-fiction narrative *Braving the Wilderness* and Ovid’s narrative poem, *Metamorphoses*, helps students explore the outsider’s perspective. The narrator of “St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves” is the child of werewolves taken by nuns to be raised as a “civilized” human.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may adopt some of Karen Russell’s strategies for developing influential ideas and conflict.



Sure You Can Ask Me a Personal Question

by Diane Burns

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1989

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- This poem is broken into stanzas that are each a different answer to a “personal question.”
- Explain that the narrator addresses a speaker whose words aren’t actually written. The reader must guess what the other speaker has asked based on the speaker’s response.

Prior Knowledge

- The poet addresses various stereotypes about Native Americans.
- Call out and explain some of these stereotypes, such as high cheekbones and majoring in archery. Identify the Native American tribes referenced in the text and provide brief background information about American society’s appropriation of Native American culture, including its art and spirituality, and about the U.S. government’s history of oppression toward Native American people.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 208



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Based on clues in the poem’s language and structure, what attitude does the speaker have toward the personal questions she is asked, and what message does the poet seek to convey to those who would presume to ask such questions?

Beyond the Book

Analysis: Advertisements for Bias

Advertisements reflect more diversity today than they did in the past. Despite efforts to publish advertisements that more accurately depict the American people, prejudices, stereotypes, and biases in advertisements still exist and have the power to influence people’s opinions of others.

Put students in small groups and ask them to:

- Select a pre-1960 advertisement from a newspaper or magazine (e.g., *Life* [magazine]) and a current print advertisement.
- Analyze and discuss different types of bias, such as racial, gender, sexual, class, religious, and cultural bias, evident in each advertisement.
- Create a Venn diagram comparing bias in the two advertisements.
- Share their findings with the class.

To reflect, ask students the following questions:

- What was the most surprising difference between these two advertisements?
- Which types of biases were most evident in each advertisement?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In “Sure You Can Ask Me a Personal Question,” the speaker grows increasingly exasperated by the ridiculous questions people ask her about her Native American heritage. Students will read this selection to compare and contrast how individuals’ identities are defined by others in simplistic, often stereotypical terms.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration for their narratives about belonging from this poem’s exploration of how people can be isolated by stereotypical perceptions of their identities.



Angela's Ashes

by Frank McCourt

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1996

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- The medical vocabulary in this text includes illnesses with which students may not be familiar, such as *typhoid* and *diphtheria*.
- Explain that in the early 1900s, before vaccines were developed to prevent these illnesses, thousands of people died from typhoid and diphtheria every year.

Sentence Structure

- Students may find it challenging to follow the dialogue because it is not punctuated, and the speakers are not clearly identified.
- Suggest that students reread the text carefully and annotate it with speakers' names.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1110

Word Count: 1,397



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Language, Style and Audience

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Although it consists mainly of dialogue, this memoir excerpt contains no quotation marks. How does the author’s use of language and style enable readers to distinguish between the voices of the characters, give those characters personality, and establish a tone? Use original commentary to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Research Project: Typhoid and Diphtheria

In *Angela’s Ashes*, Frank and Patricia suffer from life-threatening diseases. Split students into six groups and assign each group one of the topics below to research.

- Typhoid: causes, risk factors, and prevention
- Typhoid: history including frequency and pattern
- Typhoid: treatment attempts, results, and final cure
- Diphtheria: causes, risk factors, and prevention
- Diphtheria: history including frequency and pattern
- Diphtheria: treatment attempts, results, and final cure

Once topics have been assigned, ask groups to do the following:

- Research their topic and compile relevant information.
- Select a platform to create a multimedia presentation and present to the class.

To reflect, ask students the following questions:

- How does this information impact how you think about life in Ireland during this time?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The memoir excerpt *Angela’s Ashes* by Frank McCourt, read with the poem “Sure You Can Ask Me a Personal Question” by Diane Burns, helps students consider the effects of stereotyping. The narrator of *Angela’s Ashes* recalls the confusion and sorrow he experienced as a child in a hospital under the strict care of nuns, who labeled him according to his disease.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may adopt some of Frank McCourt’s methods for creating distinct voices as they craft their own narratives.



Why I Lied to Everyone in High School About Knowing Karate

by Jabeen Akhtar

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Structure

- The essay uses a nonlinear narrative structure, which may make it difficult for some students to follow the sequence of events.
- Explain that the essay is written from the perspective of an adult author reflecting back on a 10th-grade experience. To explain the experience, the author describes events that took place before 10th grade, not always chronologically.

Purpose

- The title is a clue to the text's purpose: to explain why the author lied in high school about knowing karate. But the essay is more than a personal confession. It also explores the general pressures faced by high school students and the specific ones faced by students from immigrant families.
- Have students annotate the text for clues about the author's purpose.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 920

Word Count: 3,917



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Explanatory: Write an explanatory essay that uses textual evidence to answer the question posed by the title: Why did Jabeen Akhtar lie to everyone in high school about knowing karate? Support your response about Jabeen’s motivations with key details provided throughout the text about her high-school status, previous experiences, pressures, desires, fears, and dilemmas.

Beyond the Book

Mock Trial: Youthful Indiscretion

In “Why I Lied to Everyone in High School About Knowing Karate,” the author publicly confesses to a lie she committed back in 10th grade. Students will enact the “sentencing” portion of a mock trial of her 10th-grade self, assuming the roles of prosecution, defense team, and jury.

Prior to the Mock Trial:

- Have students make a list of all the details that played a role in the author’s decision to lie about knowing karate.
- Have the defense team identify which of those details may be most understandable.
- Have the prosecution identify which of those details may be more difficult to justify.

During the Mock Trial:

- Have the prosecution argue for a “sentence” they feel is appropriate.
- Have the defense team argue for a “sentence” they think is appropriate.
- Ask the jury to deliberate and then share its “sentence.” Have the jury explain which parts of each team’s arguments were made most compellingly

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In “Why I Lied to Everyone in High School About Knowing Karate,” author Jabeen Akhtar describes the complicated motivations that led her to tell the brazen lie referenced in the title. Among other influences, she explores the particular pressure to succeed placed on the children of immigrant families.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from “Why I Lied to Everyone in High School About Knowing Karate” for their narratives about belonging, and the lengths to which people will go and the consequences they might face in order to do so.



Welcome to America

by Sara Abou Rashed

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2016

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- The text assumes prior knowledge of the war in Syria and the prejudice against refugees in general and Muslims in particular in the United States.
- The Lecture Notes and Developing Background Knowledge activity will help address the students' knowledge gaps on such points.

Connection of Ideas

- Rashed's poem "Welcome to America" is intended to assure the American people that, as a Syrian refugee, her dream is their dream. Before students can grasp that point, they need to understand the experiences Rashed has been through that led her to come to the United States.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 459



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: To what extent can Rashed’s poem “Welcome to America” be considered an argumentative piece? What might Rashed’s claim be? What examples of imagery might support her claim? What emotional appeals might she provide to convey her message?

Beyond the Book

Art: Fighting the Stereotype

This poem ends with the line, “I drop poems, not bombs.” As a student, Sara Abou Rashed was asked to change that line, but she refused—and now it is perhaps the most memorable in the piece. Students will create a line that fights a stereotype people might have about them.

Ask students to:

- Generate a list of possible stereotypes others might have about them based on their culture, gender, shelter, and so on.
- Choose one and create a memorable line fighting the stereotype. Use the sentence frame, “I _____, not _____.”
- Using traditional methods or technology, decoratively write the sentence to enhance the message.
- Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which stereotypes were most common among classmates? Why?
- In what ways can people fight stereotypes

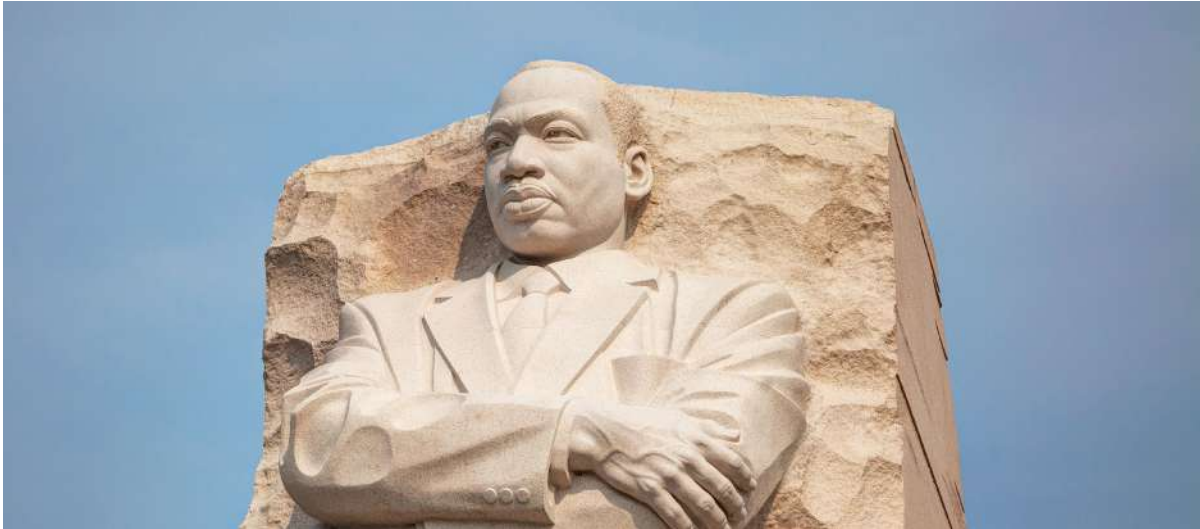
Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In the moving poem, “Welcome to America,” Sara Rashed reassures readers of the transferable qualities of the American dream for refugees. Students will read this selection to compare and contrast how different groups of people encounter injustice because of their ethnic or racial identities.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from “Welcome to America” for their narratives. Have them work to include a detailed personal experience or event that grabs the reader’s attention from the start.



I Have a Dream

by Martin Luther King Jr.

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1963

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- Difficult vocabulary, such as *manacles* (chains), *promissory note* (a document that says you will pay money to someone), *hallowed* (holy), and *gradualism* (gradual rather than sudden change) may need defining.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Connection of Ideas

- MLK ties many different ideas to the struggle for equality.
- Have students annotate examples, such as tying justice for African Americans as a promissory note to the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation, as well as using two songs (“America, the Beautiful” and “Free At Last”), to connect the dream of equality to freedom from oppression.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1140

Word Count: 1,652



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Rhetoric, Arguments and Claims

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: What evidence, appeals, and rhetorical techniques does King utilize to support and enhance his claim that the promises made in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Emancipation Proclamation have not been kept with regard to people of color?

Beyond the Book

Activity: Action Research

In Martin Luther King, Jr.'s historic speech he envisions a future where people enjoy equal rights regardless of skin color and socioeconomic status. Today, there are various groups fighting for justice and equality. As a class, create a list of marginalized groups in the United States. Pair students up and ask each pair of students to choose one group from the brainstormed list.

Ask students to think about:

- How and why is this group marginalized?
- What policies and programs exist to support this group?
- How effective are the current policies and programs? What else can and should be done for this group of people?
- Each pair will create a product to disseminate their message to the intended audience.
Possibilities include:
- Blog post, Viral video, Flyers, Website, Social media account, Advertisement, Series of Pinterest-worthy images, Hosting a meeting

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, read with the poem "Welcome to America" by Sara Abou Rashed, helps students consider what happens when society puts up strict barriers between groups of people. In this famous speech, King argues that African Americans have not received the justice and equality promised by founding documents and that union through civil disobedience to achieve that promise is required.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can draw upon the vivid language of "I Have a Dream" in their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of King's descriptions of discrimination as they craft their own narrative.



The Future in my Arms

by Edwidge Danticat

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2001

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- The author connects the birth of her niece to a message from a friend, wishing that her arms would always be a *repozwa*, a place where a child can rest her head. The *repozwa* functions as a central metaphor in the piece.
- Discuss the meaning of the word *repozwa*, a Haitian Creole word for a sacred place to rest, and how a family can be a *repozwa* for a child.

Organization

- The essay does not present events in a linear fashion, which may make it difficult for some students to follow.
- Encourage students to read the essay slowly in order to grasp meaning, then they can retell it to each other in chronological order.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1400

Word Count: 1,091



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: Write a letter to a sibling, friend, neighbor, or fellow student to whom you are a leader, role model, or caregiver. In the letter, describe how someone’s presence in your life helped you achieve a sense of belonging. Then, describe how you hope to nurture a similar feeling in this other young person by virtue of your support and guidance. As part of your letter, describe how your experiences or hopes parallel Danticat’s.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Cultural Sayings

Danticat shares a Haitian term, *repozwa*, which means “a sacred place” or “a place where a child can rest her head.” Danticat uses the term in connection to her own experiences as an aunt to her brothers’ children—like the parents and other relatives, she will serve as a *repozwa* for her niece and nephew. To better connect with the text, students will search for a cultural saying and reflect on its meaning.

To reflect, ask students:

- How easy is it to identify with various culture’s beliefs?
- How are culturally specific terms created and shared?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In “The Future in My Arms,” author Edwidge Danticat shares the powerful thoughts and emotions she experienced upon the birth of her niece, a moment that led her to reflect on the importance of family and the impact of community in a child’s upbringing.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use ideas in “The Future in My Arms” as they develop their personal or invented narratives about belonging. How do relationships within our extended families help build a sense of community and belonging?



Extended Writing Project

Divided We Fall

Essential Question

Why do we feel the need to belong?

Writing Form

Narrative

Extended Writing Project Prompt

Select a person who identifies as a member of a group. This person may be you or a fictional character whom you invent. Develop a plan for your narrative in which this person faces a conflict because of his or her identity. Include in your plan pivotal moments that show how the group's response affects the resolution of the person's conflict. Use your plan to write your narrative.

EWP Mentor Text

Marigolds

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish

Writing Skills

Organizing Narrative Writing, Story Beginnings, Narrative Techniques, Narrative Sequencing, Descriptive Details, Conclusions

Grammar Skills

Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases, Independent and Dependent Clauses, Spelling Rules



Writing Overview

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 9 Unit 1 focuses on narrative writing. Students probe the unit’s essential question—How does belonging or not belonging in a group affect our sense of self?—as they write an original narrative. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write about a conflict a character faces because of his or her identity and how a group he or she belongs to or hopes to belong to affects the resolution of this conflict. The unit’s selections about conflicts that arise from seeking group membership provide a context for students, and the multiple pieces of fiction in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to analyze and emulate. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. At each of these process steps and in the skill lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student’s writing changes and improves over time.

The Skill lessons Organizing Narrative Writing, Narrative Sequencing, and Narrative Techniques teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards. A revision lesson guides students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence effectiveness. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in the Common Core English Language Arts standards.

Student writing is not confined to the EWP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. The prompt for “Marigolds” asks students to write an imagined narrative about how one character would explain her actions to another, years after the events described in the story, while the prompt for the Independent Read *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone* requires students to write a personal narrative about an event that they believe will have a lasting impact in their own lives.

Other tasks allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to explore science and social studies topics connected to the selections as well as choose and respond in a creative way to their own self-selected reading. Writer’s notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer’s notebooks, students write to think, reflect, and practice skills they’re learning. For example, in every Close Read, students reflect in their notebooks on how the text connects to the unit essential question.





Unit 2

The Call to Adventure

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Unit Overview

Unit 2 Title

The Call to Adventure

Essential Question:

What will you learn on your journey?

Genre Focus

Informational

Introduction

Most of the greatest adventure stories are about a journey. In some cases, the journey is physical. Someone goes out into the world in search of something—a treasure or a truth. In others, the journey is figurative. Someone stays close to home but uses his or her imagination to go on inner journeys and overcome personal obstacles.

What will you learn on your journey? How do real and imagined journeys help us investigate the world and understand ourselves? How does reading about journeys help us prepare for adventures of our own?

This unit offers a wide variety of literature for your students to explore these questions while also exploring texts in the unit’s genre focus, informational. The autobiography *Highest Duty: My Search For What Really Matters* by Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, NASA’s “Apollo 13: Mission Highlights,” and the memoir *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* by Cheryl Strayed serve as examples of the genre focus. Selections such as the poems “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost and “The Journey” by Mary Oliver as well as the short story “Volar” by Judith Ortiz Cofer allow students to read across genres.

Students will begin this unit as readers, and they will finish as writers, as they apply what they have learned about the elements of informational texts to their own informational writing projects.



Text Complexity

Grade 9 Unit 2 continues ninth grade students' development as critical learners. Though this unit focuses on informational texts, it features both literature and other types of non-fiction texts as well. With a Lexile® range spanning 980–1450, the majority of the texts in this unit fall between 1000L and 1200L, giving students an opportunity to stretch their reading abilities. Additionally, the vocabulary, sentence structures, text features, content, and relationships among ideas make these texts accessible to ninth graders, enabling them to grow as readers by interacting with such appropriately challenging texts.

The unit begins with a comparative cluster of three poems: “Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening,” “12” from *Gitanjali*, and “The Journey.” All three poems approach the idea of journeys through complex metaphors. Skill lessons focusing on Poetic Elements and Structure teach students the necessary skills to help them navigate the structure and themes of the texts. In the fictional story “Volar,” the topic of journeys is explored from a different angle as the narrator imagines herself as a superhero with X-ray vision and wishes she could fly away to seek adventure. A skill lesson and a SkillsTV episode on Theme teach students how to detect and understand the larger ideas about life in the text.

As the unit progresses, students read and analyze a variety of informational texts that share complex thematic links—namely overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles to achieve success. “Bessie Coleman: Woman who ‘dared to dream’ made aviation history” tells the story of how Coleman used resourcefulness, daring, and resolve to overcome stereotypes about race and gender and pursue her aviation dreams. Background information provides students with the information they require to fully understand the historical context of the work. In an excerpt from Cheryl Strayed’s memoir, *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*, she must decide how to proceed on this formidable trail after she accidentally knocks one of her hiking boots off a mountain—38 days into her hike. The excerpt is told in a complex, non-linear way, weaving in and out of the past and present. A skill lesson and SkillsTV episode on Author’s Purpose and Point of View and a skill lesson on Informational Text Structure all help students analyze the text. Close Read questions further support these skills.

Two informational texts—“The Art of Choosing” and “Restless Genes”—present theories about the complex motivations behind human impulses. Students are given the opportunity to compare how these texts are structured and organized. Another informational text, “Apollo 13: Mission Highlights,” focuses on the Apollo 13 mission in 1970 when both oxygen tanks in the command module failed, shutting down power and forcing the crew to abandon the mission. The selection gives students the opportunity to explore complex technical vocabulary.



English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources in this section are developed around two texts and an Extended Oral Project. The texts are written at four distinct levels and serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit.

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing skill lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

The Extended Oral Project can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and give an informational presentation about Wilbur Wright's first flight. Throughout these lessons, students will interact with texts and their peers as readers, writers, speakers, and listeners to maximize comprehension and provide multiple access points for every learner.





Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

by Robert Frost

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1922

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Students may have difficulty identifying the poem's meter.
- Tap out the syllables to show that there are four stressed syllables per line in a pattern of unstressed, stressed—which is called iambic tetrameter.

Connection of Ideas

- Students may struggle to identify the theme in such a short poem.
- Advise students to read the poem as if it is a short story and try to locate a conflict.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 107



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: This poem contains the plot of a very short story. Describe the conflict between the speaker’s personal desire and outside pressures and explain how the resolution of this conflict points to a theme in the poem. Provide textual evidence and original thoughts and opinions as support for your response.

Beyond the Book

Photography: Unwind and Unplug

Robert Frost’s poem shares how a man enjoys the slow pace and beauty of the dark woods. Students will reflect on how they take time out of their busy schedules and unplug from technology to enjoy the beauty of life.

Ask students to:

- reflect on the aspects of their lives and daily routines that cause them stress and why it is important to “stop and smell the roses.”
- write a list of ways they enjoy the beauty of life.
- examine the effects of unplugging and enjoying the beauty of life.
- take a series of photographs of their moments of joy, making sure to capture the beauty of nature.
- write a poem set in this place using appropriate figurative language to capture the mood.

To reflect, ask students the following questions:

- Why is it important to escape our busy lives and enjoy life?
- How can we make time to stop and relax every day?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost, read with the poems “12 (from ‘Gitanjali’)” by Rabindranath Tagore and “The Journey” by Mary Oliver, helps students consider how both physical and figurative journeys helps us grow as individuals. In this poem, the speaker pauses for a moment to enjoy a moment of solitude in the woods before obligation compels him to resume his journey.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Robert Frost’s poem for their essays by analyzing the speaker’s journey and the choices he has to make while on it.



12 (from Gitanjali)

by Rabindranath Tagore

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1912

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- The poem features an extended metaphor of a journey through space that students might be confused into reading literally.
- Define extended metaphor as a comparison between two unlike things that continues throughout multiple lines in a poem. Ask students to consider what this metaphor of a journey through space might represent.

Connection of Ideas

- Because the journey described in this poem is metaphorical rather than physical, identifying the theme might be challenging for students.
- Have them reread the last two lines, which describe the journey's end, and think about what has been accomplished.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 144



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: People tend to think of a journey in the context of physical travels from place to place. However, some journeys are abstract—they take place in the mind or in the imagination. What type of journey is explored through the speaker’s descriptions of events in this poem, and what theme does it suggest?

Beyond the Book

Reality Television Show: Winning Life

Rabindranath Tagore’s poem, “12 (from ‘Gitanjali’),” examines a man’s self reflection of his eternal journey. Students will create a reality television pitch where players must compete to “win life.”

Break students into small groups and ask them to:

- Brainstorm pivotal moments in a person’s life journey (for example, birth, death, first job, graduation, a profound historical moment).
- Think through the premise of and format for their reality show.
- Create a catchy title. Decide on the premise of the show. Then write a short synopsis.
- Decide on the number of players and their requirements.
- Nail down specifics: How long is the show? Where will it be set? How will a winner be chosen?
- Create a short presentation and have the class listen to each group’s pitch.
- Allow students time to vote for their favorite reality TV concept.

To reflect, have students:

- Which reality shows encourage players to reflect on their journeys?
- How does pushing oneself through difficult experiences change our perception of life?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The speaker in Rabindranath Tagore’s poem “12 (from ‘Gitanjali’)” reflects on his life-long journey through the figurative wilderness of outer space in order to discover himself. Students will read this selection along with the poems “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” and “The Journey” to compare and contrast the poetic structure and devices used to convey themes about journeys.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use ideas explored in the poem as they write their informational essays about life journeys. Have them identify what the speaker learns from his journey and how he evolves along the way.



The Journey

by Mary Oliver

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1986

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Students may struggle with the poem's structure, given that it is one long stanza with short lines and frequent enjambment, and there is no rhyme or meter.
- Have students read the poem aloud in continuous sentences.

Sentence Structure

- The poem is written in the second person and contains examples of figurative language, the meanings of which will help determine the poem's message.
- Help students paraphrase the meanings of figurative passages. Then substitute I for you in a few lines that you read aloud to show how the substitution changes the effect. Discuss how the use of the second person connects to the poet's message.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 155



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Poetic Elements and Structure

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: Compare and contrast the journeys in these poems, analyzing as you do so how the poets' use of structure, sound devices, and figurative language enhances the development of these journeys. Points of comparison-contrast might include the motivation for the journey, the type of journey taken, and the result of the journey.

Beyond the Book

Art: Representing the Challenge

"The Journey" is a metaphor about life. The wind, night, and branches are symbols representing challenges in life. Students will choose three major challenges in their lives and create symbols to represent these challenges. Ask students to consider the following questions for each challenge:

- Why is this challenge present in your life?
- How are you resolving this challenge?
- How would you describe this challenge?
- How is the challenge changing you?
- Then have students select a symbol that accurately represents each challenge. They should choose an artistic medium and portray these three symbols together, paying attention to color, detail, and relationship between the symbols.

To reflect, ask students:

- Have you learned something important from every challenge you have faced?
- Why do writers use symbols instead of simply using literal language?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poem "The Journey" by Mary Oliver helps readers weigh the risks and rewards of leaving a troubled life behind in order to save oneself. Would readers have the insight and courage to begin once they knew what they "had to do"? Would they be able to ignore the voices of others that attempt to hold them back, crying "mend my life"?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use ideas in the poem as examples for their explanatory essays about how individuals evolve during the course of their journeys. "The Journey" is focused on the process of escaping the forces that try to hold one back and venturing into the unknown, in order to find and "save" oneself.



Leon Bridges on Overcoming Childhood Isolation and Finding His Voice: 'You Can't Teach Soul'

by Jeff Weiss

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2015

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Focus

- The thesis is implied through quotations from Leon Bridges—the subject of the article—which may make the thesis difficult for some students to identify.
- Point out that the article contains several quotations from Bridges that reveal much about him and his music. Guide students to identify common ideas that emerge from these quotations.

Organization

- The article does not follow a linear structure to explore Bridges' life and music career, which may lead to confusion about when in time certain events, such as the opening scene, are taking place.
- Have students label events in Bridge's life in chronological order and discuss why the author chose to present certain events out of sequence.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1080

Word Count: 954



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Media, Informational Text Elements

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: What is the author’s idea about Leon Bridges and his music, and how well is this idea supported through relevant details and evidence? Write an argumentative essay that evaluates the article’s effectiveness according to these criteria. Provide specific textual evidence to support your points.

Beyond the Book

Game: How would you respond?

Put students in groups of 6. Give each group a stack of 12 index cards.

Instruct students to:

- Write a real-life scenario on one index card then write an age between three and their current age on a second card.
- Mix the scenario cards in one stack and mix the age cards in a second stack.
- Draw a real-life scenario card and an age card from each stack then act out how you think a child would respond to that situation at that age.
- Select the “best performance” and have the student who has been selected by each group perform their reaction for the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- When do people become more logical and less emotional?
- What behavior is common for younger children? What does this reveal?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

How did Texas singer, songwriter, and producer Leon Bridges grow from an isolated child into one of the most celebrated new talents on the music scene? In this article, Bridges shares insight about his origins and influences.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “Leon Bridges Overcomes Childhood Isolation and Finds His Voice” in their extended writing project about what we can learn as we journey through life by referencing the unexpected turns of Bridges’ journey.



Highest Duty: My Search for What Really Matters

by Capt. Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger (with Jeffrey Zaslow)

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2009

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out to students that this text is written in the unit genre: informative text. Remind students that autobiographies are types of informative texts that focus on the writer’s whole life.
- Review the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit with students and, as they read the excerpt from *Highest Duty: My Search for What Really Matters*, have them look for informative-text characteristics in general and autobiography characteristics in particular.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may not be familiar with Sullenberger’s stunning 2009 plane landing in the Hudson River, to which he alludes in the sixth paragraph.
- Have students research the 2009 Hudson River plane landing, as directed in the Developing Background Knowledge activity.

Organization

- Students may struggle with the nonlinear arc of this non-fiction narrative text.
- Ask them to consider how each of the events described are connected.



Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 980

Word Count: 1,164

Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Explanatory: Explain how Sullenberger’s evidence supports his thesis that “Both in the air and on the ground, I was shaped by many powerful lessons and experiences—and many people.” As part of your explanation, identify different types of evidence Sullenberger incorporates and how each illustrates the thesis in an engaging way.

Beyond the Book

Screenplay: Future Me

Sullenberger reflects on his decision to be a pilot and recounts his first flight experience. Students will write a screenplay about an exciting day in their dream job.

Ask students to:

- Write a list of dream jobs. Select one of their dream jobs and imagine a day on the job.
- Think about a scenario at your dream job and write a short screenplay.
- Include dialogue and describe character actions in parentheses. Use stage directions to describe the setting.
- Have students rehearse and perform their screenplays.

To reflect, ask students:

- What did you find most interesting about the screenplays presented?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Why do so many of us dream of flying? Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger’s autobiography *Highest Duty: My Search for What Really Matters*, read with the biography of Bessie Coleman and the short story “Volar,” will encourage students to consider how real and imagined flight helps people explore the world, overcome obstacles, and change their perspectives. In this excerpt from his autobiography, Sullenberger recalls the origins of a lifelong passion for flying.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from *The Highest Duty* for their informative essays. Have them work to clearly explain how an event or person can positively impact an outcome.



Bessie Coleman:

Woman who ‘dared to dream’ made aviation history

by U.S. Air Force

Gender N/A

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2012

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out to students that this text is written in the unit genre: informational text. Review with students the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit, focusing on the subgenre of biography.
- Help students identify aspects of a person’s life commonly covered in a biography: birthday, childhood home and family, education, awards, achievements, later life, and death. Students should then identify each of these parts in the biographical article about Coleman.

Prior Knowledge

- To understand how impressive Coleman’s achievements were, students must understand the impact of segregation and of societal expectations for women in general and black women in particular in the early 1900s in America.
- Note that few women at this time received a higher education and that women were expected to marry, raise a family, and work only within the home. Black women who sought to work outside the home faced additional barriers because segregation and prejudice prevented their employment in some businesses.



Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1450

Word Count: 996

Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Explanatory Essay: The end of the article quotes William J. Howell, an African American veteran and writer who claimed, “Because of Bessie Coleman, we have overcome that which was much worse than a racial barrier. We have overcome the barriers within ourselves and dared to dream.” How does the evidence in the article support the fact that Coleman overcame both racial and personal barriers in order to achieve success? Write an explanatory essay supported by textual evidence and original commentary.

Beyond the Book

Timeline: Firsts!

Bessie Coleman was the first African American woman to have a pilot’s license. Students will choose a person from history who was first at something and create a timeline of major events.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm a list of people who were first at something. Students can rely on prior knowledge and/or search for people online.
- In pairs, select one person and research major events that led to this person’s accomplishments.
- Using a multimedia tool, create a timeline of these accomplishments that includes visuals, important dates, and relevant information.

To reflect, ask students:

- What qualities does it take to be first at accomplishing a goal?
- What were some trends you noticed in the timelines?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Bessie Coleman’s biography describes the accomplishments of the first female pilot of African American and Native American descent. Students will read this selection to explore evidence of how Coleman overcame both racial and personal barriers to achieve success.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Bessie Coleman for their essays. Students can write a commentary about Bessie Coleman’s journey to becoming the first African American female pilot.



Volar

by Judith Ortiz Cofer

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2006

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students would benefit from a more complete understanding of the story's setting, which plays an important role in developing the theme.
- Explain that the story is set in a U.S. neighborhood, or *barrio* in Spanish, mostly composed of Latino immigrants who left their countries for better opportunities and who now live in poor, urban areas, isolated from their families back home.

Connection of Ideas

- The title of the story is "Volar," which means "to fly," in Spanish. In order to understand the story's theme, students must understand the role that flight plays.
- As they read, have students annotate all references to flying in the text.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1010

Word Count: 692



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Theme

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Compare and contrast the ways in which the narrator and her mother are characterized, and explain how these characterizations work together to develop the story's theme.

Beyond the Book

Exploration: The American Dream

In “Volar,” the narrator shares her version of the American Dream, which involves changing her physical abilities and features. Students will explore the concept of the American Dream and create a photo story depicting their dream.

Ask students to:

- Discuss what the American Dream means to the narrator and her mother.
- Conduct informal research on the American Dream from the 1950s to today.
- Create a photo story that depicts the American Dream and how it evolved from decade to decade.
- For each of the five decades, include a picture that captures the essence of the American Dream in that decade.
- Under each picture write a short caption that reflects that decade's interpretation of the American Dream.

Share your photo story with the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- How has the American Dream changed? How has the American Dream remained the same?
- Is the American Dream more or less attainable now as compared to the 1950s?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Is escaping reality through flights of fancy a bad thing? In Judith Ortiz Cofer's story “Volar,” a mother and a young girl each dream of flying away from their troubled lives. Students will read this selection to compare and contrast the two characters' thoughts and their responses to reality and analyze how these support the theme.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “Volar” as an example for their Extended Writing Project. In their informational essays, they can explore the journey the narrator takes inside her mind or her mother's unrealized dream of journeying home to Puerto Rico.



Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail

by Cheryl Strayed

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2013

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out to students that this text is written in the unit genre: informational text. Remind students that memoir is a type of informational text that focuses on a specific period in the writer's life and offers insight about its significance—unlike autobiographies, which focus on the writer's whole life.
- Review the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit with students and, as they read the excerpt from *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*, have them look for informational-text characteristics in general and memoir characteristics in particular, including clues that signal the significance of events.

Organization

- Students may struggle with the nonlinear fashion in which events are described in the excerpt.
- Have students annotate the text to number the events in chronological order.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1100

Word Count: 1,252



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Author's Purpose and Point of View, Informational Text Structure

Close Read Prompt

Personal Essay: In a personal essay, describe a time that you, like Strayed, embraced a significant challenge and identify the reasons that drove you to do so. Using Strayed's text as a model, consider how best to structure important events and ideas, and attempt to captivate readers' attention through an engaging style and creative use of language.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Resilience

- Find a quotation about resilience that speaks to you.
- Decide what the quotation means to you and how it applies or can be applied to your life.
- Write a reflection about your quotation that includes what it means and how it can be applied to your life.
- Choose an appropriate platform to share the quotation and reflection with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- Is resilience something you are born with or something you develop over time?
- How do personal struggles test your resilience?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

What happens when things go wrong on your journey? When Cheryl Strayed decides to walk the 2,600-mile Pacific Crest Trail, she is struggling in her personal life and unsure of the challenges that lie ahead. Then she loses a hiking boot, and her journey suddenly gets even more complicated. What does she learn from taking on an extreme challenge?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use the excerpt from *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* as an example in their informative essays, as the author's journey is intended to help her evolve as a human being.



The Art of Choosing

by Sheena Iyengar

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2010

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out to students that this text is written in the unit genre: informational text. Explain to students that self-help texts provide information intended to help readers improve themselves in a particular area.
- Review the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit with students and have them look for genre characteristics of informational texts in general and of self-help texts in particular.

Specific Language

- The text contains some domain-specific vocabulary such as *mariner*, *crevasse*, and *abseiling*, as well as basic content vocabulary such as *mutinous*, *squander*, and *imperative*, with which students may struggle.
- Have students look up and define these terms before reading.

Connection of Ideas

- Identifying the writer's purpose and message is dependent upon connecting the experiences of the two adventurers with each other and then with everyday human challenges.
- Remind students of the title of the excerpt, *The Art of Choosing*, and have them annotate each paragraph of the text to identify how it connects to making a choice.



Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1000

Word Count: 994

Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: Do you perceive survival in difficult situations to be a choice, as the text claims, or simply a natural instinct aided by skill and luck? To prepare for the discussion, write down your thoughts about this question, based on your reading in this unit and prior knowledge, and explain your reasoning.

Beyond the Book

Research: Living to Tell the Tale

In this text, two survivors endure treacherous predicaments to tell their tales. Students will research other people who have survived in the face of insurmountable odds.

Ask students to:

- Research true stories of people who have survived harrowing experiences, seeking answers to such questions as: How did he or she wind up in this predicament? What were some of the key struggles he or she endured? What skills did he or she possess to survive the experience? What lessons about life did the person gain?
- Create and present a multimedia presentation about the person researched.

To reflect, ask students:

- If you were in a perilous situation, what qualities would help you to survive?
- What do the survivalists have in common?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The excerpt from the self-help book *The Art of Choosing* by Sheena Iyengar, read with the science article “Restless Genes” by David Dobbs, helps students consider how much choice humans actually have in the matter of deciding their own fates.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

The Art of Choosing provides examples of how people’s lives are affected by the choices they make during their journeys. Students may consider these examples to write about in their informational essays about journeys.



Restless Genes

by David Dobbs

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2012

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out to students that this text is written in the unit genre: informational text.
- Review the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit with students and, as they read, have them identify informational-text genre characteristics in the essay.

Prior Knowledge

- The article includes scientific terms and facts related to human genetics, migration, and evolution that students would benefit from knowing more about.
- Assign small groups one of the following topics: the human genome, hereditary traits, the DRD4-7R genetic variant, migratory wave, gene surfing. Have them conduct brief research and report their findings to the class.

Organization

- Students may struggle to identify the main idea of the article given the variety of topics included—from Captain Cook’s journey to the upcoming Mars missions to the genetic history of human explorers to the 7R genetic variant.
- After reading each section, have students annotate it to identify key ideas and details. Then have them use these key ideas to determine the main idea.



Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1200

Word Count: 2,855

Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Informational Text Structure, Connotation and Denotation

Close Read Prompt

Compare and Contrast: Compare and contrast the text structure and claims featured in “Restless Genes” and *The Art of Choosing* excerpt. Provide analysis and relevant evidence to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Outside the Box

Reread the following quote from paragraph 23 aloud to students:

“... our big brain and clever hands build a capacity for imagination”

Ask students in small teams to:

- Brainstorm five random objects and write each one on a notecard.
- Once all notecards are collected and shuffled, each team will take a turn drawing a card.
- The object will be shared with the other groups. Groups will have 60–90 seconds to come up with an alternate use of the object chosen.
- The team who drew the card will judge the best alternate use.

To reflect, ask students:

- How difficult is it to come up with other uses for the object?
- How can developing new ideas help us?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The science article “Restless Genes” explains that humans’ desire to migrate and explore may be hardwired into our genetic code. Students will read this selection to compare and contrast features of informational text that appear in it and *The Art of Choosing*.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use the example of Captain Cook from “Restless Genes” as part of their informative essays about individuals who evolve during their journeys.



Apollo 13: Mission Highlights

by NASA Kennedy Space Center

Gender N/A

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1970

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Language

- The text contains various technical terms specific to aeronautics and aerospace that are necessary for comprehension.
- Prior to reading, review the definitions of important technical terms noted in the footnotes, such as *command module* and *psi*.

Connection of Ideas

- The text is structured as “Mission Highlights,” or key issues that needed to be addressed in order to bring the astronauts home safely. Have students highlight each problem and describe in their own words how it was solved.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1120

Word Count: 1,515



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Research: “Apollo 13: Mission Highlights” is written by NASA and includes factual information about critical problems and how they were solved. But how might hearing or reading the voices of the crew themselves deepen understanding of the crisis and its impact? Research the Apollo 13 Flight Journal, available online, to find information about the mission that is not addressed in the Mission Highlights but that provides crucial insight about the events. Summarize your findings, and explain how they deepened your understanding of the Apollo 13 mission.

Beyond the Book

Game: Team Building Exercise

In “Apollo 13: Mission Highlights,” the astronauts and ground team had to keep level heads and work together in order to land safely. Students will create a team-building game that will teach others how to trust each other and work together.

Ask students to:

- Discuss other team-building exercises and games they have played or know about.
- In small groups, create a team-building game in which a group of individuals must function as a cohesive unit and in which members are valued, respected, and focused on a common set of goals.
- Decide on the goals and objectives of the exercise.
- Create and supply the materials and instructions needed.
- Lead the other groups through the team-building exercise.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which group’s exercise encouraged the most communicating as a team?
- Which teams were able to work together the best? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

This informational text, produced by NASA, describes the major problems confronted by the crew of Apollo 13 and the ground team, and how they were creatively solved in order to bring the astronauts safely back to Earth. Readers get a strong sense of how dramatic the mission really was and about the incredible ingenuity and effort it took to achieve a safe and successful return.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may include the Apollo 13 astronauts as part of their Extended Writing Projects, focused on how individuals evolve over the course of a journey.



Extended Writing Project

The Call to Adventure

Essential Question

What will you learn on your journey?

Writing Form

Informative

Extended Writing Project Prompt

From texts in this unit, select two or three individuals who embark on a journey. In an essay, describe these journeys and explain how the individuals evolve from beginning to end. As part of your explanation, develop a thesis to focus your thinking and support it with evidence about what the individuals learn and how their thinking changes even before they reach their destinations.

EWP Mentor Text

Leon Bridges on Overcoming Childhood Isolation and Finding His Voice

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish

Writing Skills

Organizing Informative Writing, Thesis Statement, Introductions, Transitions, Precise Language, Conclusions, Style

Grammar Skills

Colons, Adjective Clauses, Adverb Clauses



Writing Overview

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 9 Unit 2 focuses on informative essay writing. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write about two or three individuals who embark on a journey and to explain how the individuals evolve from beginning to end. The unit's selections about journeys—both literal and figurative—provide a context for students, and the multiple informational texts in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to analyze and emulate. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. At each of these steps, students will follow the development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student's writing changes and improves over time.

The Skill lessons Organizing Informative Writing, Precise Language, and Transitions teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while the additional Skill lessons Thesis Statement, Style, and Introductions and Conclusions focus on characteristics of the informative writing genre. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in English Language Arts standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice the skill using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing is not confined to the EWP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. For example, the prompt for the poetry comparison cluster asks students to compare and contrast the speakers' journeys in these poems. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with texts in the unit. After students read "Leon Bridges on Overcoming Childhood Isolation and Finding His Voice" for instance, students use the techniques from the Informational Text Elements Skill lesson to explain how well the implied thesis of the text is supported by relevant details and evidence.

Other tasks allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to explore science and social studies topics connected to the readings. Writer's notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer's notebooks, students write to think, reflect, and practice skills they're learning. For example, in every Close Read, students first write in their writer's notebooks to reflect on the text before they engage in a collaborative conversation and write their short constructed response.





Unit 3

Declaring Your Genius

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Unit Overview

Unit 3 Title

Declaring Your Genius

Essential Question:

How do you define intelligence?

Genre Focus

Argumentative

Introduction

Popular culture often depicts geniuses as wild-haired scientists with grand ambitions and poor social skills. True geniuses are few and far between, but many people think of themselves as reasonably intelligent human beings.

But what does it mean to be intelligent? Does intelligence only refer to book-smarts? Other than performing well on tests, how else can people reveal their intelligence?

This unit offers a wide variety of literature for your students to explore these questions while also exploring selections in the unit's genre focus, argumentative text. The open letter "An Indian Father's Plea," the excerpts from the theoretical texts *The Singularity Is Near* and *Outliers: The Story of Success*, the Point and Counterpoint essays in the article "The Origin of Intelligence," the researched-based article "The Secret to Raising Smart Kids," and "Convocation Remarks at Harvard University" serve as examples of the genre focus. Other selections, such as the poem "Señora X No More" by Pat Mora, the excerpt from a prose translation of Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey*, and a graphic novel based on the same excerpt from Homer's classic text allow students to read across genres.

Students will begin this unit as readers, and they will finish as writers, as they apply what they have learned about argumentative elements to their own argumentative writing projects.



Text Complexity

Grade 9 Unit 3 continues students' development as critical learners by focusing on argumentative texts. The unit also features both literature and other types of non-fiction texts. With a Lexile® range spanning 740–1400, the majority of the texts in this unit fall between 1160L and 1350L, giving students an opportunity to stretch their reading abilities. The vocabulary, sentence structures, text features, content, and relationships among ideas make these texts accessible to ninth graders, enabling them to grow as readers by interacting with such appropriately challenging texts.

The unit begins with two poems—"from 'The Lost Letters of Frederick Douglass'" and "Señora X No More"—that focus on the power of literacy and its importance for people who have historically been marginalized. Students are given the opportunity to contemplate the ways in which literacy enables people to be viewed as intelligent and helps forge bonds with others. Other types of intelligence are explored in "An Indian Father's Plea," a letter in which the author tries to convince his son's teacher that the boy is not, in fact, the "slow learner" he's been labeled simply because he hasn't been educated in Western ways. The Skill lessons Reasons and Evidence and Informational Text Structure teach students how to analyze and comprehend complex arguments. Another form of intelligence, creativity, is explored in "Georgia O'Keeffe," Joan Didion's account of the famous artist's uphill battle in making a name for herself. Skill lessons and Close Read questions on Context Clues and Author's Purpose and Point of View help students parse the nonlinear structure of the text and the complex conceptual word choices. *The Singularity is Near* steps beyond the realm of human intelligence to discuss the impending singularity, or the point at which computers become more adept at thinking and problem solving, as well as more emotionally intelligent, than humans. As students tackle this abstract idea, they will also be exposed to complex, technical vocabulary. Background information gives students the necessary context to understand the technological aspects of the text.

The classic short story "The Most Dangerous Game" gives students an opportunity to consider intelligence in a different context—a test of wits in a life or death situation in which one man is hunted by another. A skill lesson and a SkillsTV episode on Story Structure, a Skill lesson on Character, and Close Read questions that reinforce these skills all support students as they explore yet another view on intelligence in this demanding and harrowing story.

With "The Origin of Intelligence," students have the opportunity to explore a point/counterpoint structure that tackles the question of whether intelligence is fixed from birth or can be developed over time. The Skill lessons Arguments and Claims, Logical Fallacies, and Summarizing all help students analyze and navigate the debate. Close Read questions reinforce these skills.



Near the end of the unit, students have the chance to compare and synthesize two versions of an excerpt from the same text—the *Odyssey*—in graphic novel and prose forms. As students consider how Odysseus uses intelligence to continually survive a series of mishaps, they will enhance their understanding of character through a skill lesson. The graphic novel version of the story along with a StudySync TV episode help students interpret the more complex prose version of the selection.



English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources in this section are developed around two texts and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels, which serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit.

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing skills lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

The Extended Oral Project can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and present a researched informational presentation. Throughout these lessons, students will interact with texts and their peers as readers, writers, speakers, and listeners to maximize comprehension and provide multiple access points for every learner.



Senora X No More

by Pat Morak

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1991

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Background Knowledge

- In order to better understand the poem's context, students might benefit from an exploration of the title before reading.
- Explain that Señora is a Spanish term that, like Mrs. in English, refers to a married woman, and that people who cannot read or write have traditionally used an "X" to sign their names.

Language

- The poem contains figurative language, such as personification, that students must probe to understand the poem's themes.
- Define figurative language as a class, and then paraphrase the meaning of an example of personification, such as, "My fingers foolish before paper and pen..." Explain that the speaker means that her fingers feel clumsy as she tries to write.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 181



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: How does figurative language such as personification, simile, and metaphor help reveal the intensity of the speaker’s struggle to learn to speak and write in another language?

Beyond the Book

Poem: Always Learning

Pat Mora shares the struggles of learning to read and write in a new language. Students will reflect on a time they learned something new and write a poem describing that experience.

Ask students to:

- Think about a time when they learned something new (for example, how to ride a bike, write an essay, cook a favorite dish, play an instrument).
- Brainstorm specific moments of frustration, failure, and success.
- Write a simile or metaphor for each moment of frustration, failure, and success.
- Compose a poem that details your experiences learning something new.
- Include sensory details and figurative language to bring your poem to life.
- Publish your poem for the class.

To reflect ask students:

- What were some of the common challenges people face when learning something new?
- Why is it more challenging to learn something new as people age?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poem “Señora X No More” poignantly captures the small but meaningful accomplishment of a grandmother learning to write her own name for the first time. Students will read this selection to compare and contrast the different types of intelligence highlighted in it and in “from The Lost Letters of Frederick Douglass” and “An Indian Father’s Plea.”

Connect to Extended Writing Project

As support for their argumentative essays, students can cite the speaker in the poem as an example of someone who exhibits a form of intelligence that should be accounted for in tests—such as perseverance and willingness to embrace a challenge.



from The Lost Letters of Frederick Douglass

by Evie Shockley

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2011

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- To understand references in the poem, readers need background on Douglass and important people in his life.
- Explain that Douglass escaped slavery under the slaveholder Thomas Auld and became an abolitionist, writer, speaker, and statesman. His first wife was African American businesswoman, Anna Murray; his German translator was Otilie Assing; his second wife was his young white secretary, Helen Pitts.

Genre

- Students may be confused about the text's genre.
- Point out that although it was written as a “lost letter” from Frederick Douglass to his daughter Rosetta, it is in fact a poem written by a twenty-first-century African American poet, Evie Shockley. Explain that a trademark characteristic of Shockley's work is that it disrupts poetic norms

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 431



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: What view does Shockley have of Frederick Douglass? Is this fair? Why or why not? Consider the vivid, often charged language Shockley uses to characterize Douglass’s attitude toward his relationships and what this, in turn, suggests about his attitude toward intelligence, literacy, and priorities in life. Refer to the Lecture Notes and conduct further research as necessary to support your claim.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Historical Fiction

Students will conduct research on Rosetta Douglass and write a letter to her father from her perspective.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm a list of questions about Frederick and Rosetta Douglass.
- Conduct research to answer their questions.
- Using a mix of their research and their own creative inferences, assume the perspective of Rosetta and write a fictional letter back to her father.

To reflect, ask students:

- What was challenging about this activity?
- What kinds of sources would have been helpful to have access to?
- How did your research and writing process give you insight into what it might be like to write in the genre of historical fiction?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poem “Señora X No More” read with the poem “from ‘The Lost Letters of Frederick Douglass’” and the open letter “An Indian Father’s Plea,” encourages students to explore contrasting perceptions of what qualities constitute true intelligence—such as high literacy, embracing challenges, understanding the natural world, or persevering in the face of difficulty. According to Evie Shockley’s characterization of Frederick Douglass, it is high literacy and learning, vehicles to freedom, that matter above all.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration “from ‘The Lost Letters of Frederick Douglass’” for their argumentative essay. Have them work to provide relevant evidence and reason to support their ideas in their essay.



An Indian Father's Plea

by Robert Lake-Thom (Medicine Grizzlybear)

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2000

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- In this argumentative letter written to his son's teacher, the author's purpose and message are strongly implied but not directly stated.
- As they read, have students consider the details the writer includes that support the common message.

Prior Knowledge

- Students would benefit from further information about various aspects of Lake-Thom's culture, such as the sweat lodge and ceremonial healing.
- Explain that a sweat lodge is typically a hut in which Native Americans take steam baths to purify and heal the mind, body, and spirit.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1300

Word Count: 2,434



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Author's Purpose and Point of View, Reasons and Evidence, Informational Text Structure

Close Read Prompt

Informational Text Analysis: What specific goals does Lake hope to accomplish by writing to his son's teacher, and how is the structure of his letter carefully designed to accomplish these goals? As part of your analysis, consider what Lake's main claim is, what evidence he uses to support the claim, and how he uses logical, ethical, and emotional appeals.

Beyond the Book

Photography: Keeping My Heritage

In this letter, Lake explains the importance of accepting and honoring each student's unique culture. Students will express, through photography, what they would like their future teachers to know about their culture and identity.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm important parts of your culture, heritage, and identity.
- Identify the aspects of your culture that teachers should know about you in order to honor who you are as an individual.
- Use photography to show the different parts of your culture and identity then write a short caption explaining the importance of each image.
- Share your message with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How does your culture define you?
- How do we know and learn information?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In "An Indian Father's Plea," Lake implores his young son's kindergarten teacher to reconsider labeling the boy a "slow learner." The father eloquently argues that his son, Wind-Wolf, has benefited greatly from receiving a traditional Native American education despite—or perhaps because of—its differences from the U.S. educational system.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use "An Indian Father's Plea" as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of Robert Lake-Thom's methods for making appeals as they present evidence to support their own arguments.



Georgia O'Keeffe

by Joan Didion

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2013

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- Didion uses a nonlinear structure to explore O'Keeffe's life and work: an art gallery visit Didion took with her daughter, a definition of hardness, a description of O'Keeffe's defiance in the male-dominated art world, and O'Keeffe's childhood. Students may need help connecting these ideas to support a message.
- As they read, have students note key ideas from each section and use these key ideas to determine the main idea.

Purpose

- The author's purpose is not directly stated but must be inferred based on text details about Georgia O'Keeffe's unique approach to art and her defiance of norms, which Didion admires.
- Have students look for clues in Didion's language that show how she feels about O'Keeffe.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1170

Word Count: 1,461



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Context Clues, Author's Purpose and Point of View, Technical Language

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: What message does the writer seek to convey about Georgia O'Keeffe as both an artist and a human being when she assigns the word “hard” to O'Keefe's character, and how does the evidence she provides support this message?

Beyond the Book

Speech: Defend Her Statement

In her essay, Didion quotes O'Keeffe as declaring, “Where I was born and where and how I have lived is unimportant. It is what I have done with where I have been that should be of interest.” Students will defend O'Keeffe's statement using three different pieces of her art.

Ask students to do the following:

- Research Georgia O'Keeffe's art online and read about the inspiration and background of each piece of artwork you locate.
- Choose three images that you believe support her statement.
- Write a speech that supports her statement using the three images as examples.
- Present your speech to classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How does artwork take people on a journey of the artist's life?
- Which pieces of O'Keefe's art are her most famous, and why is that so?

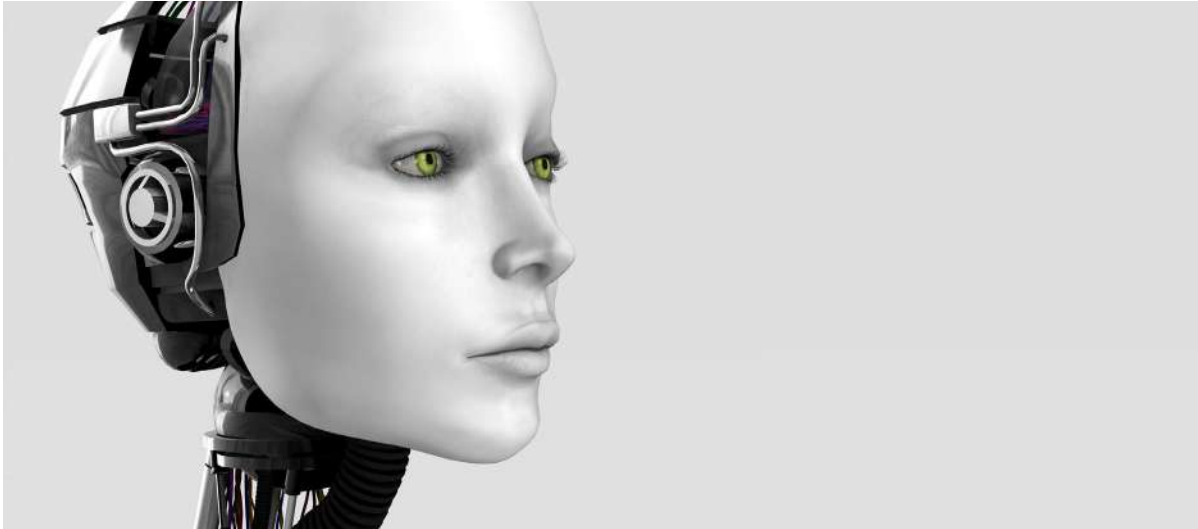
Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Must a gifted artist listen to her critics? In this essay about the American painter Georgia O'Keeffe, Joan Didion describes the obstacles O'Keeffe faced as a young woman with artistic ambitions in the early twentieth century. Didion discusses O'Keeffe's defiance of male teachers, artists, and critics. She explains how O'Keeffe's determination, self-assurance, and work ethic eventually led to her recognition as a genius with a unique style and perspective.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

In their Extended Writing Project, students can refer to Georgia O'Keeffe as an example of a person who displayed strong visual-spatial intelligence, as well as a person who was a powerfully independent thinker. Students may feel that the ideal intelligence test should account for these types of intelligence.



The Singularity Is Near

by Ray Kurzweil

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2005

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out to students that this text is written in the unit genre: argumentative text.
- Review the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit with students. As they read, have them look for characteristics of arguments in general and characteristics of theories in particular.

Purpose

- The author's purpose is to explain the Singularity and its impact on humankind. Students may struggle with this concept because they may take for granted the rapid pace of technological advancements they have experienced as Millennials.
- Have students discuss the effects of rapid technological advances during their lifetimes, and the impact this has had on them.

Vocabulary

- This text uses vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to readers without experience in computer science.
- Some challenging vocabulary that should be discussed before or during reading includes *dystopia*, *utopia*, *singularity*, *black hole*, *law of accelerating return*, and *exponential growth*. Remind students to use context clues and electronic resources to define words they do not know.



Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1350

Word Count: 721

Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: What might be the consequences—both positive and negative—of what the author calls “the Singularity”? Prior to the discussion, write down your thoughts about this question, based on your reading of the text and personal knowledge and experience, and explain your reasoning.

Beyond the Book

Art: Technology Advancement

In this text, technology surpasses human intelligence. Students will create a comic with a dystopian message about the danger of technology.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm possible scenarios in which technology could exceed human abilities and threaten society as we know it.
- Choose one scenario and create a three- or four-panel comic that portrays this dark message.
- Share your comic with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How are technological advancements changing society?
- Should there be restrictions on technological advancement?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Will a future predicted by science fiction really come true? Will computers become smarter than humans in our lifetime? Scientist Ray Kurzweil thinks so. He argues in this excerpt from *The Singularity Is Near* that, in the near future, “the pace of technological change will be so rapid, its impact so deep, that human life will be irreversibly transformed.” He calls this important turning point the “Singularity.” In this excerpt, Kurzweil introduces the basic concepts of the Singularity and the theory of accelerating returns.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

While writing their argumentative essays about factors that intelligence tests should take into account, students can consider issues raised in Raymond Kurzweil’s text about the impact of artificial intelligence on humanity.



The Most Dangerous Game

by Richard Connell

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1924

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- The story begins in the middle of a discussion between two characters whose relationship isn't explained. Students may struggle to understand the characterization and establishment of setting that occurs here.
- Have students annotate the section to compare and contrast Whitney's and Rainsford's attitudes toward hunting and what this reveals about Rainsford's character.

Prior Knowledge

- The text alludes to historical events that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Provide background knowledge about World War I, including the trenches, and about the 1917 Russian Revolution, including its effect on nobles, many of whom lost their homes and were forced to flee Russia or face hard labor or death after the Czar abdicated and the Bolsheviks seized power.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 740

Word Count: 7,952



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Story Structure, Character

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: How does the use of General Zaroff as a supporting character for Rainsford help the author develop the story's themes? As part of your analysis, address how Rainsford's notions about the hunt change from the beginning to the end of the story, as a result of his encounter with General Zaroff.

Beyond the Book

Game: Reality Survival Show

In “The Most Dangerous Game,” a remote, isolated island becomes the scene of a contest for survival. Students will create their own reality television show that involves a contest for survival.

Ask students to do the following:

- Form small groups and conduct informal research about locations around the world that are remote and isolated.
- Create a premise for a reality television show that takes place in this location.
- Write a draft of their reality show concept with a hook designed to grab interest.
- Create a presentation to pitch their idea to the class.
- Allow students to anonymously vote for their favorite show concept.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which pitch had the greatest impact? Why?
- What are the possible dangers of producing a reality television show in a remote and isolated location?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

What happens when men turn against their fellow men for sport? In this classic suspense story by Richard Connell, the wealthy aristocratic General Zaroff chases the most dangerous game—human beings. He relishes hunting a creature that can reason. When the big game hunter Sanger Rainsford washes up on Zaroff's remote island, the hunter becomes the hunted. Will Rainsford's intelligence help him survive?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “The Most Dangerous Game” to connect to their extended writing project about how intelligence should be assessed by analyzing the pros and cons of the intelligences of both Rainsford and Zaroff.



Outliers: The Story of Success

by Malcolm Gladwell

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2008

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Students may confuse this argumentative text with an informative text because Gladwell includes expert opinions and research studies. However, as Gladwell's claim about skills mastery is controversial, this is an important distinction for students to understand.
- Point out that Gladwell's text is a theoretical text. Have students review the Genre lesson at the beginning of the unit to identify characteristics of theoretical texts.

Connection of Ideas

- To support the "10,000-hour rule" of mastery, Gladwell cites several professional research studies. Students may need support in understanding how the design of the studies and their results connect to the theory.
- For each study, have students summarize the results and explain how they would seem to support the 10,000-hour rule.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1080

Word Count: 909



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: Does the text’s argument that success may be more dependent on practice than on natural ability correspond to what you have read, seen, experienced, or believe to be true? In what way is your own perspective on the topic similar or different? Respond to points made in the text with evidence from your reading and personal experience.

Beyond the Book

Debate: Is Talent Innate or Achieved?

Outliers: The Story of Success argues that high achievers are made through hard work and dedication, not necessarily qualities they are born with. Students will research and debate this topic with classmates.

Ask students to:

- Find specific examples of how success was either achieved through practice or innate talent.
- Decide whether they believe talent is innate or achieved.
- Construct an argument with a clear claim, evidence, and thorough analysis.
- Include rhetorical devices to persuade the audience.
- Invite pairs of students to debate. Have the class vote for the most compelling argument.

To reflect, ask students the following questions:

- What were the strongest points from both sides?
- What is necessary for achievement?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Outliers: The Story of Success by journalist Malcolm Gladwell, read with the Point/Counterpoint article “The Origin of Intelligence,” encourages students to form their own opinions about such issues as whether intelligence comes from nature or nurture or whether success is driven more by talent or by hard work. In his book, Gladwell argues that practice is far more important than natural-born talent, asserting that true mastery requires a minimum of 10,000 hours of the former.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Malcolm Gladwell for their essays about how intelligence should be assessed. Students can discuss how practice and preparation can help change someone’s intelligence over time.



The Origin of Intelligence

by Point/Counterpoint

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Students might need to be reminded what an argument is. If so, review the unit's genre lesson and point out features, such as claims, reasoning, evidence, and rhetorical appeals.
- Point out that these essays feature two opposing viewpoints on the same topic. This format is meant to provoke thought and enable the reader to use the information to make an informed decision about the topic.

Structure

- Students may be confused by the structure of the text. Point out that the article presents the Point essay first and then the Counterpoint essay.
- Remind students that the Counterpoint essay presents the opposing view to the Point essay.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1350

Word Count: 1,392



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Summarizing, Arguments and Claims, Logical Fallacies

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: Which argument—Point or Counterpoint—do you find more convincing? Write an argumentative essay that includes a claim about which text makes a better case about intelligence. Support your position by acknowledging evidence, counterarguments, graphic features, and logical weaknesses in the arguments (such as false claims or fallacious reasoning), and use logical, emotional, and ethical appeals to convince your readers that your claim is correct.

Beyond the Book

Investigate: Methods for Raising IQ

These two essays explain opposing views on IQ. Over the past few years there have been many articles and ideas on how to boost a person's IQ. Students will investigate ways to boost their IQ and share the top three.

Ask students to do the following:

- Conduct informal research on different ways a person can raise his or her IQ;
- Choose their three favorite ways and take notes on why these can potentially raise a person's IQ;
- Create a visual of the three activities with a short explanation;
- Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- Do you believe an IQ can be changed over time?
- What is your favorite method for raising an IQ? Do you plan to give it a try yourself?

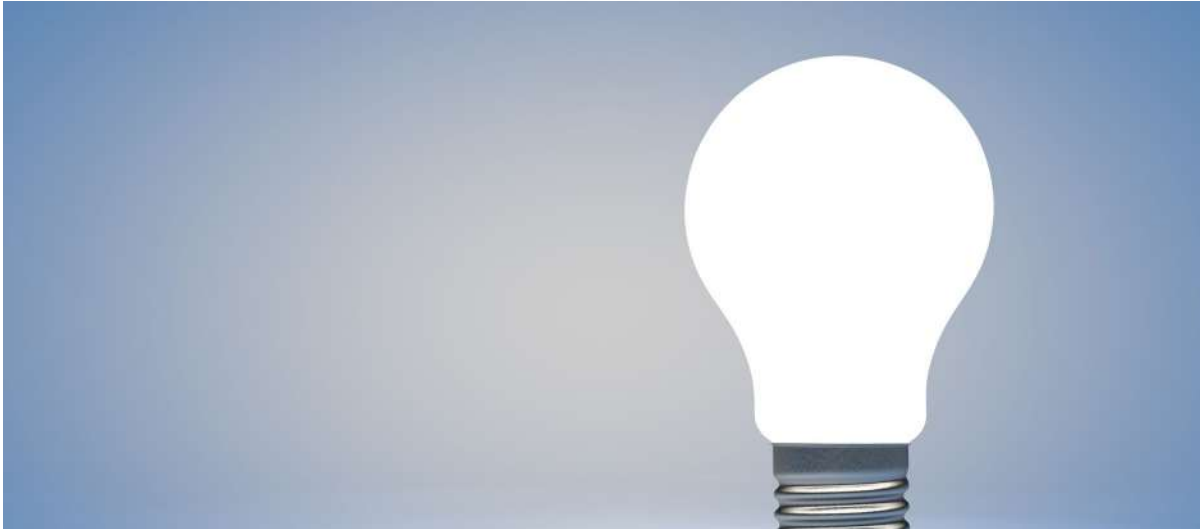
Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

"The Origin of Intelligence" includes a Point essay, which argues that intelligence is most greatly impacted by genetics, and a Counterpoint essay, which argues that intelligence is most powerfully influenced by environment. Students will read this selection to compare and contrast the effectiveness of the research studies used to support arguments in it and in *Outliers: The Story of Success*.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

While working on their Extended Writing projects about what factors intelligence tests should take into account, students can include ideas from the Point essay, which addresses the validity of intelligence tests.



The Secret to Raising Smart Kids

by Carol S. Dweck

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2007

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- The length and complexity of the text may pose a challenge to some students.
- Point out that the headers in the text divide the information and signal to readers the main focus in each section. Encourage students to add their own additional subheads to further break down the information into more digestible pieces.

Connection of Ideas

- Dweck's evidence is made up of various complex research experiments using multiple examples and anecdotes. The connection between these and the thesis may be difficult for students to follow.
- As they read, have students briefly summarize the results of each experiment and note how they reinforce the thesis about the value of a growth mindset.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1360

Word Count: 2,922



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: Analyze how Dweck, an expert in her field, uses empirical, anecdotal, and statistical evidence to support her claim about the secret to raising smart kids. In your analysis, identify an example of each type of evidence from the article.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Varying Mindsets

This text explains the importance of a growth mindset when facing obstacles. Students will create two skits about the same scenario but approach that situation with a growth mindset in one skit and a fixed mindset in the second skit.

Ask students to do the following tasks:

- in small groups, decide on a common obstacle that they have all faced or could possibly face as teenagers;
- brainstorm the scenario with people who have a growth mindset and then how the same scenario would play out if the people had a fixed mindset;
- write out a short script for both sides, exaggerating the mindsets of the people involved;
- practice acting out the same scenario both ways;
- perform the scripts for classmates and discuss the major differences between the two scripts.

To reflect, ask students the following questions:

- How do people with a fixed mindset handle situations differently from those with a growth mindset?
- Are people able to change their mindset? How?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

After formulating their opinions about the source of human intelligence in the previous lesson, students will have an opportunity to read a researched-based article “The Secret to Raising Smart Kids.” In the article, American researcher Carol S. Dweck suggests that people react differently to setbacks in life. She shares her observations that some people persist while others give in to defeat. Dweck argues that these reactions suggest two opposing views of intelligence—that intelligence is innate or “fixed” or that intelligence grows as a result of effort and hard work.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from “The Secret to Raising Smart Kids” for their essays on how intelligence should be assessed. Students can discuss how intelligence changes over time based on our mindsets.



The Odyssey (A Graphic Novel)

by Gareth Hinds

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2010

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- In order to understand the text, students will require background knowledge about Homer's *The Odyssey* and Greek mythology.
- Explain that the *Odyssey* is an epic poem by the ancient poet Homer about Odysseus's ten-year quest to return home to Ithaca after the ten-year Trojan War. Zeus is the leader of the Greek gods, who reside on Mount Olympus. Circe is a nymph; Tiresias is a blind prophet. Clarify that the selection students are about to read is a graphic-novel retelling of the famous epic poem.

Organization

- The organization of the text and images may confuse students who are unfamiliar with comic book format.
- Point out that each panel has a different layout and may or may not contain speech balloons or text boxes for narration. The panels are separated by thick white lines and should be read from left to right, starting with the panel at the top left of the page.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 615



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Correspondence: Can a graphic novel do justice to a work of classic literature, such as the *Odyssey*? Write a letter to your teacher that supports or rejects the idea of using graphic novels to teach classic literature. Support your claim with evidence from this graphic novel and, if relevant, similar graphic novel titles you have read. Address specific characteristics of graphic novels and how these suit or do not suit classic literature. As part of your letter, use logical, ethical, and emotional appeals, and include a counter argument with a concession and a rebuttal.

Beyond the Book

Adaptation: Additional Characters

In this adventure, Odysseus encounters mythological creatures who create obstacles that alter his adventure. Students will add another event to Odysseus' travels by introducing another mythological character to his journey.

Ask students to:

- Choose another Greek god and conduct informal research.
- Decide how this Greek god would interfere with Odysseus' journey and insert an additional page comic into the text.
- Share the comics as a class.

To reflect, ask students:

- Why did you select the god you inserted into the story?
- What did Odysseus learn from this character and their interaction?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The excerpt from the graphic novel *The Odyssey* by Gareth Hinds, read with the corresponding excerpt from Book XII of the Butler translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, helps students synthesize information from the two versions of the story in order to develop a more nuanced interpretation of the characters and events described. Hinds' graphic novel sometimes relies solely on vivid, dramatic illustrations to convey the events surrounding Odysseus's ill-fated visit to Helios's island of the sacred cows.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from *The Odyssey* for their essay on how intelligence should be measured by reflecting on Odysseus's intelligence as a leader versus his crew's intelligence in their decision making.



The Odyssey (Book XII – Butler translation)

by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler, 1900)

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 8th century B.C.E.

Genre: Fictional

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students may be confused by how the same characters featured in the graphic novel version have different names in this translation of Homer's text.
- Explain that this translation of the text uses Roman instead of Greek names for both Odysseus and the gods. Ulysses is Odysseus; Jove is Zeus.

Vocabulary

- There are many words and phrases such as *afield*, *hook and line*, *famine*, *ornament*, *oak-shoots*, *lest*, *mast*, and *keel* that students might not be familiar with in this context.
- Have students use context clues in the sentence to determine the meaning of each word and then confirm it using a dictionary or other resource.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1,350

Word Count: 1,360



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Character, Media

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: Ulysses is often identified as an archetypal warrior hero—a god-like hero who, in stories from cultures throughout history, faces physical challenges and external enemies. But what do you think? Is Ulysses a true hero? Write an argumentative text that answers this question by synthesizing information provided about Ulysses’s character in Homer’s text and in the graphic novel. Aggregate evidence provided through literary devices and techniques, such as dialogue, narration, images, and descriptive details about Ulysses’s thoughts, actions, interactions with other characters, and motivations.

Beyond the Book

Write: Explaining Natural Disasters

In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus’s journey is hindered by disasters created by the gods. Students will choose a natural disaster and write a short myth explaining the occurrence.

Ask students to do the following:

- Discuss as a class different myths and legends that attempt to explain how the world works or why natural occurrences happen.
- Choose a natural disaster and plan a story that explains this event as an act from a god.
- Write the story or create it in graphic form.
- Share the story with the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- Has our understanding of nature and natural disasters negatively impacted our creative storytelling?
- Why do you think myths and legends are shared?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The classic, early twentieth-century Butler translation of Homer’s the *Odyssey* provides Odysseus’s lengthy narrative of the same events depicted in the graphic novel excerpt. Students will read this selection to compare and contrast how the same characters and events are depicted in different versions and to analyze what was lost and gained by converting the text into a graphic-novel format.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use the *Odyssey* as inspiration for their essay on how intelligence should be measured by discussing intelligence as part of the hero archetype. Ask: To what extent do heroes in stories and myths across time and culture rely on their intelligence to defeat enemies and accomplish their goals?



Convocation Remarks at Harvard University

by Michael Johnston

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2014

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Students may benefit from a discussion about what convocation remarks are, who gives them, and what their general content is.
- Explain that convocation remarks are delivered within the individual colleges or departments at a university. The purpose is to celebrate students' achievements and offer advice for the future. A famous or highly accomplished person who is considered to be a role model gives this speech.

Genre

- Students may also benefit from a discussion about how a speaker's notes differ from a formal piece of writing, such as an essay.
- Explain to students that a speaker's notes are intended to be delivered as an oral speech and reflect sentence structures that are more appropriate for oral than for written communication. Point out that a speaker may deviate from or expand on these notes during his or her actual speech.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1320

Word Count: 3,776



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: What role do the three phrases (Right to Know, Power to Decide, Will to Love) as well as the anecdotes Johnston shares, play in terms of the structure, message, audience, and purpose of Johnston's Harvard Graduate School of Education convocation remarks? Explain how they facilitate his argument, citing specific textual evidence in your analysis.

Beyond the Book

Speech: My Enduring Lesson

Michael Johnston shares three enduring lessons he has learned throughout his career as an educator and politician. Students will choose one of the lessons and share a personal story that pertains to the lesson.

Ask students to:

- Choose one of the enduring lessons from the text: the right to know, the power to decide, or the will to love.
- Generate a list of personal connections and stories they have to the chosen lesson.
- Choose one story and write a speech convincing others of the power of the lesson, using their story as a guide.
- Practice and rehearse the speech. Then perform the speech for classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- Is there a lesson that should be added to the three Michael Johnston lays out?
- Which lesson did most classmates connect with and why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

What does it take to succeed? In this speech, former Senator Michael Johnston presents advice to the 2014 graduating class of Harvard's Graduate School of Education in the form of three key phrases—Rights to Know, Power to Decide, and Will to Love—and shares illustrative anecdotes from his experience.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Michael Johnston in their essays about how intelligence should be assessed. Based on these three enduring understandings, how do you think Mr. Johnston would assess students' intelligence?



Extended Writing Project

Declaring Your Genius

Essential Question

How do you define intelligence?

Writing Form

Argumentative

Extended Writing Project Prompt

Based on your reading in this unit and personal experience, identify at least two factors that you think an effective intelligence test should take into account and develop a strong argument in support of them. Remember to state a clear claim and to reinforce your claim with relevant details from the unit texts and your personal experience.

EWP Mentor Text

An Indian Father's Plea

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish

Writing Skills

Thesis Statement, Organizing Argumentative Writing, Reasons and Relevant Evidence, Introduction, Transitions, Conclusions, Style

Grammar Skills

Parallel Structure, Noun Clauses, Semicolons, Basic Spelling Rules II



Writing Overview

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 9 Unit 3 focuses on argumentative writing. The prompt for this EWP asks students to identify at least two factors that they think an effective intelligence test should take into account and develop a strong argument in support of them. The unit's selections exploring different types of intelligence provide context for students, and the multiple argumentative texts in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to analyze and emulate. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. At each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of a Student Model to see how another student's writing changes and improves over time.

The Skill lessons Organizing Argumentative Writing and Reasons and Relevant Evidence teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while the additional Skill lessons Thesis Statement, Introductions, Transitions, and Conclusions focus on characteristics of the argumentative writing genre. A revision lesson guides students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence effectiveness. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in English Language Arts standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice the skill using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing is not confined to the EWP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. The prompt for "The Origin of Intelligence" asks students to make a claim about which text—the point or the counterpoint—makes a better argument about intelligence. The prompt for the poem "from 'The Lost Letters of Frederick Douglass'" requires students to write an argument considering whether the author's attitude toward Douglass is fair. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with texts in the unit. After students read "An Indian Father's Plea," for example, they use the techniques from the Identifying Purpose and Audience and Argumentative Text Structure Skill lessons to write a rhetorical analysis of the text's purpose and structure.

Other tasks allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to explore science and social studies topics connected to the readings as well as choose and respond in a creative way to their own self-selected reading. Writer's notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer's notebooks, students write to think, reflect, and practice skills they're learning. For example, in every Close Read, students reflect in their notebooks on how the text connects to the unit essential question.





Unit 4

The Art of Disguise

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Unit Overview

Unit 4 Title

The Art of Disguise

Essential Question

How do we perform for different audiences?

Genre Focus

Drama

Introduction

While it is true that most people experience some degree of nervousness when speaking in front of an audience, it is also true that every human is secretly an actor who changes roles constantly. Consciously or not, people speak and behave differently depending on the situation in which they find themselves—whether they are introducing themselves to a peer online, hanging out with an old friend, or applying for a job.

How aware are we of our performances in life? What could we learn about ourselves if we paid closer attention to the roles we play and how we play them? Are we being somehow dishonest by adapting to our many roles? Do we have any choice but to play certain necessary parts?

This unit offers a wide variety of literature for your students to examine these questions while also exploring texts in the unit's genre focus, drama. The classic drama *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen, an excerpt from Shakespeare's *Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, and the play *West Side Story* by Arthur Laurents all serve as examples of the genre focus. Selections such as Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem "We Wear the Mask" and Margaret Chase Smith's speech "Remarks to the Senate in Support of a Declaration of Conscience" allow students to read across genres.

Students will begin this unit as readers, and they will finish as writers, as they apply what they have learned about research to their own research reports.



Text Complexity

Grade 9 Unit 4 continues students' development as critical learners. Though this unit focuses on drama, it features other types of literature and non-fiction texts as well. The non-dramatic texts in the unit have a Lexile® range spanning 790–1290. Dramatic works do not have Lexile® scores, but the form and age of some of these texts make them challenging for students. However, the vocabulary, sentence structures, text features, content, and relationships among ideas make these texts accessible to ninth graders, enabling them to grow as readers by interacting with such appropriately challenging texts.

The unit opens with an excerpt from *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, which explains how Americans came to value extraversion over introversion with the rise of public speaking spurred by Dale Carnegie. In keeping with the unit theme, students are given an opportunity to consider how extraversion as a form of public performance rose in popularity. The Skill lessons Summarizing and Informative Text Structure teach students how to analyze and comprehend this complex non-fiction text. Next, students approach the topic of disguise from a different angle in “Remarks to the Senate in Support of a Declaration of Conscience.” In this speech, Margaret Chase Smith responds to Senator McCarthy’s claim that the State Department is “infested” with communists, and states that although the Senate has long enjoyed worldwide respect, it has lately turned into a forum for character assassination. Background information provides students with the necessary historical context, while a skill lesson and SkillsTV episode on Author’s Purpose and Point of View and a skill lesson on Textual Evidence help students comprehend and analyze the text. Close Read questions on these skills and a StudySync TV episode provide further support.

The unit continues with a pairing of an excerpt from Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* and a contemporary version of the story from *Romiette and Julio*. The retelling provides students with a more accessible version of the story, and a skill lesson on Allusions and a SkillsTV episode and skill lesson on Dramatic Elements and Structure help students comprehend and analyze Shakespeare’s classic work. Students are also given the opportunity to examine Media by watching a video performance of the play, which serves to further their understanding of this complex masterpiece. A StudySyncTV episode and Close Read questions that build on the skills presented in the skill lessons provide additional support.

A pairing of two short stories—“The Pose” and “Blues Ain’t No Mockin Bird”—directly address the unit’s Essential Question: How do we perform for different audiences? In “The Pose,” a woman impulsively steps into a display window of a store and pretends to be a mannequin, and in “Blues Ain’t No Mockin Bird,” a family must defend their integrity in the face of



patronizing interlopers who expect them to conform to preconceived notions. This classic story is written in dialect, but Close Read questions and a skill lesson on Connotation and Denotation provide students with the necessary support.

An excerpt from the play *A Doll's House* and two short stories—"A Story of Vengeance" and "The Cask of Amontillado"—form a comparative cluster of texts that explore the dark side of disguise and of people not being what they appear to be. Background information helps students understand the historical context of the play and Edgar Allan Poe's classic story. Skill lessons on Story Structure, Close Read questions, and a StudySync TV episode also provide support for this challenging text.



English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources in this section are developed around two texts and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels, which serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit.

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing Skills lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

The Extended Oral Project can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and present an informational presentation about who they are as individuals and their plans for the future. Throughout these lessons, students will interact with texts and their peers as readers, writers, speakers, and listeners to maximize comprehension and provide multiple access points for every learner.



Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

by Susan Cain

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2012

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The author's purpose is to explain how the Culture of Personality came to be valued in America over the Culture of Character, although this is not evident until the middle of the excerpt.
- Advise students to read the whole passage, track common ideas, and use all of the information within it to identify the author's purpose.

Connection of Ideas

- The text begins with the story of how Dale Carnegie overcame his introversion to lead a public speaking school. The author uses this anecdote to explain a broader cultural shift in the United States, which may be confusing for some students.
- Remind students that the text is not a biography of Dale Carnegie; they should consider how his story connects to a larger point.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1,170

Word Count: 1,400



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Word Patterns and Relationships, Summarizing, Informational Text Elements

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: How does the author present and connect ideas in the text in creative ways to develop and support her thesis about society's transformation from a Culture of Character to a Culture of Personality? Summarize each part of the excerpt and then analyze its purpose and effect, considering in particular how the opening anecdote about Dale Carnegie, the examination of self-help books, and the closing word lists connect to the thesis.

Beyond the Book

Analysis: Reality TV Stars

Susan Cain explains that in the early 1900s, our society switched from focusing on people of strong character to people who were charismatic and possessed magnetic personalities. Students will analyze people from their favorite reality television shows to find out what makes them charismatic.

Ask students to form small groups and ask them to do the following:

- Discuss reality television shows, considering the pros and cons.
- Choose one show and analyze a person from the show.
- Complete a critical analysis of the assigned television star.
- Return to the group and discuss information collected.

To reflect, ask students:

- What are the most “sellable” qualities for reality television stars?
- How important is our outward appearance when meeting people for the first time?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Can an introvert fake it until he or she makes it in an extroverted world? In this excerpt from her book about introverts, author Susan Cain explains how economic and cultural changes in early twentieth-century America produced a nation that places more value on the external rather than on the internal, on personality rather than on character.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can consider the Culture of Personality when analyzing their legend's impact, thinking about the role of a dynamic personality in influencing others.



Remarks to the Senate in Support of a Declaration of Conscience

by Margaret Chase Smith

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1950

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students must have an understanding of the speech's historical context in order to fully understand it.
- Provide background information about Senator Joseph McCarthy and about the activities of the House Un-American Activities Committee. See the Lecture Notes for more information.

Purpose

- Smith's purpose is not directly stated in a single place but strongly implied throughout the speech through her rhetoric.
- Advise students to look for details about problems Smith points out and the actions she would like to see taken to solve these problems.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1240

Word Count: 1,553



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Textual Evidence, Author's Purpose and Point of View, Primary and Secondary Sources

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: How is Smith's rhetoric, or persuasive language, carefully crafted to advance her point of view or purpose? As part of your analysis, identify Smith's logical, emotional, or ethical appeals and the rhetorical techniques she uses; and how they connect to her purpose and audience. Provide textual evidence and original commentary in support of your points and include at least one domain-specific word.

Beyond the Book

Debate: Restricting Speech

In her speech, Margaret Chase Smith tells U.S. senators that they are acting according to a double-standard, verbally attacking outsiders but preventing senators from criticizing other senators on the Senate floor. Students will debate whether free speech should be restricted in certain places.

Ask students to form small groups and decide whether certain places should have the right to restrict or limit speech; select a specific place to focus on for this debate (schools, religious buildings, athletic buildings, etc.); conduct research and construct an argument with a clear claim, evidence, and thorough analysis; make a list of responses to possible counterarguments; and include rhetorical devices to persuade the audience.

Set up a mock debate in the classroom and establish guidelines for the debate.

To reflect, ask students:

- Is our American right to free speech in jeopardy if it is limited in certain places?
- Who made the strongest point? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Senator Margaret Chase Smith performed at high stakes on the national stage when she delivered this speech in the United States Senate in 1950 in order to condemn McCarthyism and call for a return to civility among her colleagues. As Smith shows, knowing your audience and keeping your purpose firmly in mind is the key to any successful political performance.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use Smith's "Remarks to the Senate" in their essays about how a life becomes a legend, addressing Smith's impact on history as a female Republican senator who dared to stand up and condemn the tactics of members of her own party.



Romiette and Julio

by Sharon M. Draper

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2001

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- The text is an excerpt from a young adult novel, *Romiette and Julio*, a modern story inspired by Shakespeare's play *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*.
- Students will require background information about Shakespeare's text and about the characteristics of a retelling. See the Entry Point and clarify that a retelling contains some characteristics of the original text's setting, characters, and plots but may change aspects of these to re-envision the story in a new way.

Organization

- Except for the characters' initial greetings, dialogue is not tagged. Some readers might be confused by the lack of identification.
- Assign roles for the two main characters and have students read the text out loud. Point out that Afroqueen's responses are in bold, while Spanishlover's are Roman.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 450

Word Count: 809



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: Reflect on the origin of one of your most important friendships or other relationships. To what extent was your connection with this person influenced by where (on a team? at school? on the internet?) and how (through face-to-face conversations? phone calls? texts?) you met and got to know one another? In a personal response based on your own experience and evidence from the text, describe how setting and medium affect how self-conscious or how honest we are when interacting with new people.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Virtual Letters

In this text, two teens get to know each other virtually by asking questions and responding in a chat room. Students will write letters to another person for one week.

Set students up with another person who is different from them in a major way (age, race, gender, etc.). For one week, students will write three letters to their partner.

Ask students to do the following:

- Introduce themselves in the first letter. Provide general information about friends, school, hobbies, likes and dislikes.
- Write a second letter, explaining who they are in relation to their family.
 - What expectations does your family have for you?
 - What routines and traditions are common in your family?
- Write the third and final letter, explaining something that defines you (a hobby, a talent, a trait, etc.).
 - What do you enjoy about this part of your life?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In her novel *Romiette and Julio*, Sharon Draper retells Shakespeare's famous play *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. Draper introduces readers to Shakespeare's characters in an online chat room and explores how the mediums in which we meet affect how we present ourselves.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from *Romiette and Julio* for their essays about how a life can become a legend by reflecting on the different means and mediums by which people establish connections with others



.The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet

by William Shakespeare

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1592

Genre: Drama

Access Complex Text Features

Vocabulary

- The Shakespearean English used in this scene will be challenging for some students to comprehend.
- Encourage students to substitute the word *you* for *thou* and *thee* and *your* for *thy* and to read sections of the text out loud if they struggle.

Sentence Structure

- Line breaks often occur at the end of the sentence; however, some sentences encompass 2–5 lines, which might be difficult for students to follow.
- To aid their comprehension, students should break each of these complex, multiple-line sentences into chunks, analyze them, and then put them back together.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 1,645



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Dramatic Elements and Structure, Allusion, Media

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: How do the Royal Shakespeare Company video and the chat room conversation from *Romiette and Julio* use the characters, plot, and dramatic conventions of Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* as a springboard for envisioning the story in a new way? To what extent does each version enhance readers' understanding and experience of the original story? Answer these questions in an argumentative essay that includes brief paraphrases of and detailed evidence from all three selections.

Beyond the Book

The excerpt from *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* and the chat room conversation from *Romiette and Julio* present two different situations in which relationships grow despite differences between the lovers' backgrounds. Students will now create their own adaptations of Shakespeare's story, focusing on modern-day lovers from opposite worlds.

Ask students to:

- Choose a famous couple from history or invent two lovers from different backgrounds.
- Think about how these two people would meet in the present day and what their fate might be.
- Choose the best way to tell this story (a graphic novel, a series of texts, a social-media interaction, and so on) and complete the adaptation.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which artistic medium did you select, and why did you select it?
- What other stories or songs inspired your adaptation?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In the famous balcony scene from Shakespeare's *Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo and Juliet declare their love for each other, although they do so at first without the other's knowledge. What deeper truths do the characters—and human beings in general—reveal when they think no one else is listening, when they let their masks slip?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration for their essays about how a life can become a legend by reflecting on Shakespeare's astonishing ability to convey essential truths about life, love, and human nature.



We Wear the Mask

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1896

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Language

- The syntax and the diction, which includes figurative language, may pose challenges for students.
- Read aloud lines such as “With torn and bleeding hearts we smile, / And mouth with myriad subtleties.” Guide students to use resources to determine the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary and then paraphrase the lines using their own words.

Connection of Ideas

- Students may need help probing the central metaphor of a wearing mask.
- Ask students to consider why people wear metaphorical masks to cover their true selves. Ask students what role these masks play in our ability to navigate the world.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 99



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: “We Wear the Mask” was published in 1896. What universal and particular messages does the poem convey, and in what ways are these messages as—if not more—relevant now than at the time of the poem’s original publication? To support your interpretation of the poem’s messages and relevance, provide evidence from the text, from your knowledge of past and current events, and from your personal experience.

Beyond the Book

Investigate: Extended Metaphors

Dunbar uses an extended metaphor of a mask to represent the way people hide their pain. Students will identify other poems and songs that feature extended metaphors and discuss their findings.

Ask students to pair up and

- locate songs or poems from different decades that contain extended metaphors
- discuss what is being compared, what message the comparison seeks to convey, and what impact the comparison has on readers or listeners
- choose the best way to visually represent this metaphor (for example, painting, collage, video, live performance)
- share the visual representation with the class
- make a class list of things that were compared in the different songs and how

To reflect, ask students:

- What metaphors were repeated across songs and poems?
- How did these metaphors evoke emotions in or establish connections with listeners?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Can a mask be more than a disguise? Can it also be a form of protection? In the poem “We Wear the Mask,” Dunbar describes the plight of African Americans who choose to live behind grinning masks in order to prevent their “tortured souls” from being exposed to a judgmental world.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can connect Dunbar’s “We Wear the Mask” with their extended writing project: How can a life become a legend? Students can write about Dunbar’s impact on the next generation and even future generations of African Americans.



The Pose

by Anwar Khan

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2010

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- Students may struggle to determine the message of this unusual short story.
- Guide students to identify and examine the positive and negative emotions that the main character experiences as she pretends to be a mannequin and subjects herself to the gaze of others.

Prior Knowledge

- Point out that readers may assume that the story is set in India for several reasons: India is the author's homeland. The main character wears a sari, the traditional dress of South Asian women. The main character also imagines that her brother would “drop dead” if he saw the “family's ‘honor’” on public display in a storefront window.
- Discuss as a class what impact the story's setting has on the events described.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 850

Word Count: 1,490



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: The text never quite answers two big questions related to the main character’s psychology: Why does she pretend to be a mannequin for a sustained period of time? and How does the experience affect her? Provide an interpretation of the text that answers both of these questions. How do the main character’s thoughts, actions, and interactions serve as clues about her motivations and about the effects of her unusual experiment? Then, use your answers to identify what theme or message the author might ultimately seek to send about performance and self-image. Identify evidence from the text to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Life Through the Eyes of an Object

In this text, a woman poses as a mannequin and studies the people on the street. Students will write an observation through the “eyes” of an inanimate object.

Ask students to:

- Think of everyday ordinary objects (such as shoes, phones, backpacks, and so on).
- Put yourself in the place of this object. How would you be treated? What conversations would you overhear?
- Write a short description of an hour as this object. Then share with a classmate.

To reflect, ask students:

- What can be learned by observing and listening to others?
- What can be learned by putting ourselves in someone else’s shoes?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In “The Pose,” a short story by Indian writer Anwar Khan, a young woman impetuously poses as a mannequin in the front window of a clothing store. Read with the short story “Blues Ain’t No Mockin Bird,” readers are encouraged to consider the effects of making oneself the object of an audience’s gaze or of having that gaze turned on oneself without permission.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

As they develop their research projects, students can use “The Pose” as a springboard for considering how performing under the public gaze impacts prominent figures.



Blues Ain't No Mockin Bird

by Toni Cade Bambara

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1971

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Language

- The text is written in dialect, which might be confusing for some students to interpret.
- Have students read aloud passages written in dialect and paraphrase their meanings.

Connection of Ideas

- Students may struggle to understand the meaning of the story Granny tells about the man on the bridge and how it connects to her hostility toward the photographers.
- Have students consider what the spectators on the bridge in Granny's story might have in common with the photographers in her yard.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 960L

Word Count: 2,673



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Language, Style, and Audience, Connotation and Denotation

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: How can seizing control over your image be empowering? To prepare for the discussion, write down your thoughts about this question. Consider the impact of style, word choice, and tone on the audience; details that create strong mental images; and other textual evidence in “The Pose” and “Blues Ain’t No Mockin Bird,” and explain your reasoning.

Beyond the Book

Beyond the Book Activity: Reporting Timeline

A young girl and her friends watch her grandparents tell photographers off for being intrusive and unwelcome. Students will create a timeline of news reporting through the decades to illustrate major changes in how we receive our news and how it is reported.

Break up students into groups that represent each decade from 1920 to current.

Ask each decade group to:

- Research news reporting from the decade. What were common news topics? How did the public obtain information? What were the ethics or laws for reporters at the time?
- Record the information learned.
- In order of decade, present the information learned to the class to create a timeline.
- Discuss patterns, trends, and major changes through the years.

To reflect, ask students:

- What ethics are expected of news reporters?
- How has news delivery changed the role of news reporters?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In Toni Cade Bambara’s story “Blues Ain’t No Mockin Bird,” a young African American girl witnesses her grandparents’ confrontation with two young white men who try to film the family and their property without their consent. Students will read the selection with “The Pose” in preparation for a discussion about how seizing control of your own image can be empowering.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

As they develop ideas for their research projects, students can consider the role Toni Cade Bambara has played in encouraging the efforts of African American female writers.



West Side Story

by Arthur Laurents

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1957

Genre: Drama

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- The author has included many clues to reveal the tension of the forbidden love between Tony and Maria. Students should synthesize information, such as Maria's mention of Bernardo and her father, as well as Tony's lack of understanding of her family and culture, to make inferences about the cultural divide that exists as a barrier for the lovers.

Specific Vocabulary

- Some vocabulary may present a challenge to readers. Students who are unfamiliar with the Spanish language may need extra guidance to uncover meaning in Maria's exchange with her parents, who are offstage. Students should also note Tony's unfamiliarity with the language, which heightens the cultural obstacle and overall tension of the lovers' forbidden meeting.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 211



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Dramatic Elements and Structure

Close Read Prompt

Drama: In this play, although it is forbidden and could end in difficulty for them both, Tony calls for Maria at her window to profess his love. What are some other reasons a person might pursue a person or goal although it may be forbidden or difficult? Using your knowledge of dramatic elements and structure, write a scene of dialogue between two people in which one is playing a part to achieve a certain forbidden goal. As part of your script, provide a paragraph of stage directions that explains who the characters are, what role one is playing, and how an actor or actress should speak or act in order to further develop the scene.

Beyond the Book

Podcast: Crossing the Line

In pairs, have students research a person who took the steps to cross a line in a particular field or historical event. Record a podcast in which you conduct a mock interview with this person.

Ask students to:

- Research the person you selected. What field were they in? Why did they want to pursue a career in this field? What resistance did they face? How did they overcome that resistance? Who supported them?
- Develop a list of 10 interview questions.
- Decide who will be the host of the podcast and interviewer and who will “play” this famous person from history.
- Record a podcast in which the interviewer interviews this famous person.

To reflect, ask students:

- If you had to record a podcast in the future, is there anything you would do differently?
- What was most challenging about this podcast?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In this modern day adaptation of Shakespeare’s famous balcony scene from *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, readers explore what happens when two lovers meet without their masks.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from *West Side Story* when writing their informative research paper. Arthur Laurent drew on the hostility between two ethnic groups in New York City during the time he was writing in order to create the tension that surrounds Maria and Tony’s love story. Have students reflect on how historical moments and figures will impact ideas presented in their own writing.



A Doll's House

by Henrik Ibsen

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2008

Genre: Drama

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- The play was written in the nineteenth century. Students may need background on gender roles and other aspects of middle-class Norwegian marriages of the time.
- Explain that married women were expected to raise children and did not commonly work outside of home. Divorce was uncommon. The idea of a woman leaving her children was so radical that when *A Doll's House* was first staged, the actress who played Nora refused to play the final scene as written. Ibsen had to write a different ending that audiences ultimately rejected.

Purpose

- *A Doll's House* is written in the unit genre of drama. The text was described by Ibsen himself as a “modern social tragedy.”
- Review with students the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit and have them look for ways this text demonstrates characteristics of stage plays and of tragedies in general—and of social tragedies and modern tragedies in particular.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 731



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: How does the dialogue in this scene near the end of the play reveal important differences between the attitudes of Helmer and Nora regarding marriage in general and their marriage in particular, and how do these differences help develop the play's themes?

Beyond the Book

Activity: Metaphor About Me

Nora compares herself to a doll living in a doll's house. Students will create a metaphor for themselves that reflects their feelings at this point in time.

Ask students to:

- Discuss, in small groups, the metaphor Nora uses to explain how she feels.
- Generate a list of emotions they feel about their lives at the present moment.
- Choose one emotion and investigate the reasons for it. Why do you feel this way? Why is this emotion so prevalent? Why might it be important to analyze this emotion further?
- Brainstorm comparisons to explain your feelings. Are you a bird whose wings have been clipped? Are you caterpillar about to transition into a butterfly?
- Create a metaphor about your life. Share with a partner and provide feedback.

To reflect, ask students:

- How well did the metaphors express the emotions being felt?
- Were most metaphors expressing positive or negative emotions? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House*, read with the short stories "A Story of Vengeance" and "The Cask of Amontillado," enables readers to explore why individuals pretend to be what they are not. In this excerpt from the end of Ibsen's play, Nora breaks out of the roles her gender has forced her to play all her life in order to discover who she really is.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

After reading *A Doll's House*, students may be inspired to select Henrik Ibsen as a research subject, given the impact his work had on challenging social conventions regarding marriage, motherhood, and the self.



A Story of Vengeance

by Alice Dunbar-Nelson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1895

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- Students will need to make inferences to identify important plot events.
- Remind students that they will need to “read between the lines” and use text evidence in combination with prior knowledge to identify what occurred and why.

Purpose

- One of the author’s purposes may be to convey the negative impacts of seeking revenge against those who wrong us.
- Have students analyze the meaning of the quote at the end of the text, “Vengeance is an arrow that often falleth and smiteth the hand of him that sent it.” Ask them to connect this quote to the quote by Confucius in the Developing Background Knowledge activity.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 900

Word Count: 1,266



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: How does the first-person narration by a complex character, in combination with the non-linear plot device of an extended flashback, help develop the story's themes? Explain in a well-developed essay supported by evidence from the text. As part of your analysis, consider how the text would be different if the story were told in a different way—without a specific listener and without moving backward and forward in time.

Beyond the Book

Discussion: Success or Love

The narrator in this text shares how she faced a choice between success and love, chose love, and when love failed her, chose success and vengeance, ultimately destroying all possibility of love. The text strongly suggests that a life with fame but without love is a misery. But can prioritizing success over love ever be the right choice? Students will argue which is more important: success or love?

Ask students to

- choose whether success or love is more important in life;
- work in groups to discuss, analyze, and create an argument for the chosen side;
- include rhetorical devices and sufficient evidence to support the argument's claims;
- come together as a class and argue the points. Use facts and details to support their position as well as counterpoints to address the opposition's position.

To reflect, ask students:

- Do people have to choose between love and success?
- In what circumstances might people be more likely to have to choose?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Like Nora in *A Doll's House*, Nelson's narrator in "A Story of Vengeance" was forced to play a part for a man, but then she switched to a role of her own making to achieve an end game of her own design. Students will find much to compare in the characters and plots of this story and Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado," both of which revolve around confessions of duplicity and revenge.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may choose Alice Dunbar Nelson as their research subject in order to learn more about her impact on the Harlem Renaissance.



The Cask of Amontillado

by Edgar Allan Poe

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1846

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- The story was written in the nineteenth century and includes many references that may be unfamiliar to students.
- Before students read, review the footnotes as a class in order to define Amontillado, catacombs, nitre, and the Masons. Discuss why catacombs might be a good place to store wine.

Connection of Ideas

- Foreshadowing plays a major role in the plot of this short story.
- Have students make predictions about what will happen to Fortunato, based on details in the text. Then have them reread, identifying which details were actually examples of foreshadowing, or clues to Fortunato's fate.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 790

Word Count: 2,336



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Story Structure, Character, Theme

Close Read Prompt

Compare and Contrast: *A Doll's House*, “A Story of Vengeance,” and “The Cask of Amontillado” all explore how an individual pretends to be someone he or she is not in order to achieve a goal—for good or for ill. Compare and contrast the motivations of the main characters in these stories—why does each play a part, and how does that reason affect his or her characterization?

Beyond the Book

Graphic: Illustrating the Major Point!

In this dark tale, Montresor lures Fortunato into the catacombs below his ancient house and seeks revenge. Students will create a graphic about the theme of the story.

Ask students to:

- determine a major theme in “The Cask of Amontillado”;
- choose three scenes from the text that help develop this theme;
- create a graphic that has three panels for the three chosen scenes. Each panel should have
 - a detailed illustration;
 - dialogue or other details from the text;
 - an explanation for how the scene captures the theme.
- share with classmates and discuss which scenes were used most frequently.

To reflect, ask students:

- How do the characters and events in the story help develop the themes?
- How are themes developed within the excerpts you chose?

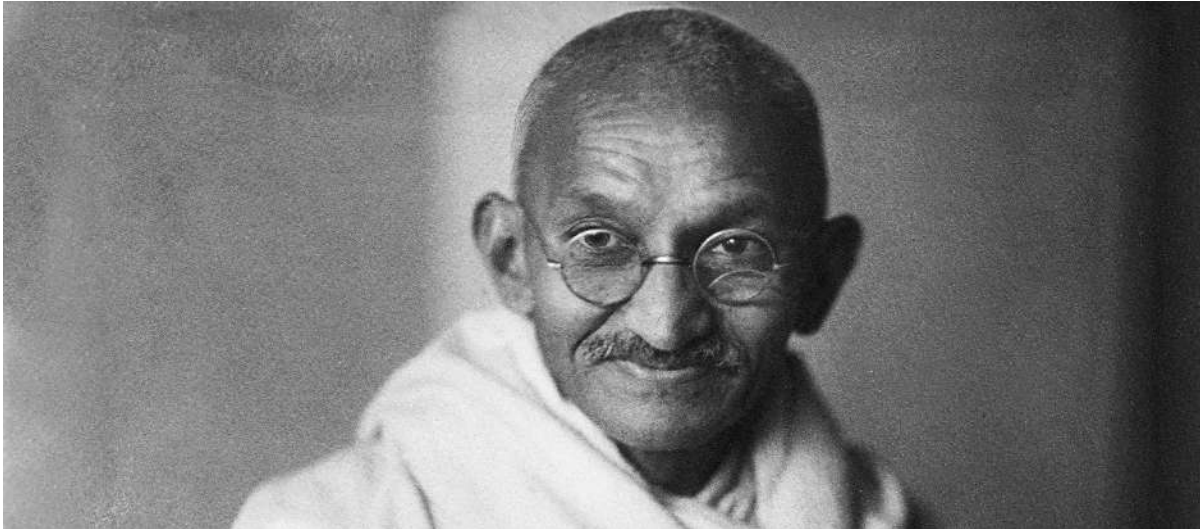
Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “The Cask of Amontillado” is a chilling tale of revenge, built brick by brick. By reading Poe’s story with Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* and Nelson’s “A Story of Vengeance,” students have an opportunity to compare and contrast the characters’ motivations for playing parts that are not their own and the consequences that must be faced as a result.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use Edgar Allan Poe as a research subject for their writing project on how a life becomes a legend.



Eulogy for Mahatma Gandhi

by Jawaharlal Nehru

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1948

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- This text is a eulogy, or speech given to commemorate the deceased. Nehru's purpose is larger, given that he believes India is in a precarious position after Gandhi's death.
- Encourage students to compare and contrast details about Gandhi the person and Gandhi the symbol and use these as clues to determine what Nehru hopes to accomplish through this eulogy.

Language

- Throughout the eulogy, Nehru uses figurative language to describe Gandhi and his influence, which make his points difficult to grasp.
- Select one example of figurative language and identify its literal meaning, such as the description of Gandhi as the sun and his death as the sunset. Examine what ideas this language conveys about how the Indian people feel.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1,290

Word Count: 785



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: In Jawaharlal Nehru’s “Eulogy for Mahatma Gandhi,” how do the language, style, and tone of the eulogy connect to the speaker’s purpose and audience? As part of your analysis, trace the speaker’s use of figurative language to characterize Gandhi and his influence, the present state of the Indian people in the wake of his assassination, and the speaker’s hope for his country’s future.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Museum Box

Jawaharlal Nehru uses a eulogy to memorialize one of India’s most influential people. Students will create a museum box: a box of items that captures the essence of an influential leader and is designed to honor him or her.

Ask students to:

- Choose a person who had a major impact on a country.
- Generate a list of items that represent this person and capture what he or she meant to his or her country.
- Collect the items in a container that has significance, given this person’s life and interests.
- Go on a gallery walk and see if they can guess whom one another’s museum boxes represent.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which person would be most pleased with his or her museum box? Why?
- If someone were to create a museum box for you, what items would be most representative of you?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi’s fellow reformer and India’s first prime minister after independence, delivered this public eulogy not only to memorialize his fallen friend, but also to guide the Indian people in a time of crisis. Readers will explore the dual purpose of this powerful personal and political performance.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from this eulogy for their research projects. Mahatma Gandhi, his influence on other nonviolent movements, and his long-term impact on India would be interesting to explore in their Extended Writing Projects.



Extended Writing Project

The Art of Disguise

Essential Question

How do we perform for different audiences?

Writing Form

Research

Extended Writing Project Prompt

Select a historical figure from the unit whom you would like to know more about. Write a research paper explaining this person's legacy as it relates to the way we read, think, communicate, or protest. As part of your research process, select a research question, develop a research plan, gather evidence from at least three reliable sources in addition to the unit text, and synthesize and present your research findings.

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish

Writing Skills

Planning Research, Evaluating Sources, Research and Note-taking, Critiquing Research, Paraphrasing, Sources and Citations, Print and Graphic Features, Using a Style Guide

Grammar Skills

Conjunctive Adverbs, Absolute Phrases



Writing Overview

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 9 Unit 4 focuses on research. The prompt for this EWP asks students to select a historical figure from the unit whom they want to know more about and write a research report explaining the person’s legacy as it relates to the way we read, think, communicate, or protest. The unit’s selections exploring the art of disguise as it relates to various historical figures provide context for students. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. At each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student’s writing changes and improves over time.

Skill lessons on Evaluating Sources and Research and Notetaking teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while additional skill lessons on Planning Research, Critiquing Research, Paraphrasing, Sources and Citations, and Print and Graphic Features focus on characteristics of the research writing genre and help students gather, evaluate, and synthesize source materials. A revision lesson guides students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence effectiveness. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in the Common Core English Language Arts standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice the skill using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing is not confined to the EWP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. The prompt for “Remarks to the Senate in Support of a Declaration of Conscience” asks students to examine how Chase Smith’s rhetoric is crafted to match her purpose and audience. The prompt for the Close Read *West Side Story* requires students to write a scene of dialogue exploring why someone might pursue something although it may be forbidden. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with texts in the unit. After students read the excerpt from *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*, for example, they use the techniques from the Summarizing and Informational Text Elements skill lessons to write a rhetorical analysis of the text’s organization and effectiveness.

Other tasks allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to explore science and social studies topics. Writer’s notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer’s notebooks, students write to think, reflect, and practice skills they’re learning. For example, in every Close Read, students reflect in their notebooks on how the text connects to the unit essential question.





Unit 5

The Dance of Romance

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Unit Overview

Unit 5 Title

The Dance of Romance

Essential Question:

When is love worth the fall?

Genre Focus

Poetry

Introduction

It seems as if 99.9 percent of all stories, poems, movies, and TV shows are about people falling in love or coping with the loss of it. Usually, it is the obstacles to that love that make each story both unique and fascinating. The lovers might be separated by war, disapproving parents, work obligations, geography, peer pressure, or even death. That the lovers will unite is almost always a given, but what makes us keep reading and watching, perhaps, is the hope that the ending will be a happy one—or if not exactly happy, at least bittersweet.

Why is love such a powerful and universal theme in literature? What do readers get out of reading stories about people falling in love—and losing that love? When is love worth all the potential “falls” that come with it?

This unit offers a wide variety of literature for your students to explore these questions while also examining texts in the unit’s genre focus, poetry. Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 116,” Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “How Do I Love Thee? (Sonnet 43),” Li Po’s “The Song of Changgan,” and Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven” serve as classic examples of the genre focus but are accompanied by contemporary works such as “Dusting” by Rita Dove and “Redbird Love” by Joy Harjo. Selections such as the short stories “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry and “Catch the Moon” by Judith Ortiz Cofer and the informational article “Masters of Love” by Emily Esfahani Smith provide opportunities for students to read across genres. The literary analysis “The Loneliness of Love in Edgar Allen Poe’s ‘The Raven’” serves as an example of the unit writing mode.

Students will begin this unit as readers, and they will finish as writers. They will apply what they have learned from reading poems, stories, and articles about love to writing a literary analysis about the power of love in the unit selections.



Text Complexity

Grade 9 Unit 5 continues ninth grade students' development as critical learners. This unit focuses on poetry, but it features other types of literature and non-fiction texts as well. Although the majority of selections in the unit are poems and do not have Lexile® scores, the selections that do have scores range from 840–1200. The vocabulary, text structures, text features, content, and relationships among ideas make all the texts in the unit accessible to ninth graders, enabling them to grow as readers by interacting with such appropriately challenging texts.

The unit begins by giving students the opportunity to compare two short stories: “The Gift of the Magi” and “Catch the Moon.” The former, a classic O. Henry story, tells the ironic tale of a young husband and wife who sell their most precious belongings in order to pay for Christmas presents for each other, illustrating that love is worth financial hardship. A StudySync TV episode and necessary background information help students engage with the language and theme. In “Catch the Moon,” a teenage boy’s romantic interest in a girl encourages him to give up some self-destructive behaviors and begin to turn his life around. Skill lessons on Story Structure, Point of View, and Theme and Close Read questions that reinforce these skills all help students analyze the story.

Students continue their exploration of love with the contemporary poem “Dusting” and the classic Sonnet 116. A skill lesson on Figurative Language helps students interpret the metaphor of dusting used in “Dusting,” a poem about a woman’s remembrance of a lost love as she cleans a house. Background information about Shakespeare and his sonnets helps students comprehend and analyze the challenging language in Sonnet 116.

In the nonfiction excerpt from *Love in a Headscarf*, students have the opportunity to learn about love through the eyes of a young woman who is preparing to meet a potential match for an arranged marriage. A skill lesson and SkillsTV episode on Language, Style, and Audience, a skill lesson on Author’s Purpose and Point of View, and Close Read questions that reinforce these skills all help students analyze and understand the text. In another comparative grouping, students consider the qualities that help romance turn into a long-lasting relationship, capable of surviving any potential “falls” in the informational text “Masters of Love” and the poem “Redbird Love.” “Masters of Love” encourages students to consider how important kindness and generosity are to forming and maintaining happy long-term relationships. A skill lesson on Poetic Elements and Structures helps students understand the symbolism in “Redbird Love.”

In the final comparative grouping in the unit, students read three classic poems that feature speakers who love passionately but who are affected in different ways by the absence—or imagined absence—of their loved ones. The speaker of “A Song of Changgan” is a woman who



meditates on the different stages of her relationship—from joyous childhood to shy teenage awkwardness to confident maturity—while anxiously awaiting her husband’s return. Students continue to consider the powerful effect of romantic love on a person’s psyche as they read Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s autobiographical sonnet “How Do I Love Thee?” The grouping is capped off with Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven,” in which the memory of the dead Lenore haunts the speaker, just as the raven taunts him into madness. A skill lesson and SkillsTV episode on Poetic Elements and Structure, a skill lesson on Connotation and Denotation, Close Read questions, and a StudySync TV episode all support students as they analyze Poe’s classic poem. The informational text “The Loneliness of Lost Love in Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Raven’” sheds further light on the meaning of the poem.



English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources in this section are developed around two texts and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels, which serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit.

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing Skills lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

The Extended Oral Project can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and present a debate. Throughout these lessons, students will interact with texts and their peers as readers, writers, speakers, and listeners to maximize comprehension and provide multiple access points for every learner.



The Gift of the Magi

by O. Henry

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1906

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- The title and the last paragraph of the text refer to the Magi, with whom students may not be familiar.
- Explain that, according to the Christian Bible, the Magi were three wise men who visited Jesus after his birth, bearing gifts of gold as well as frankincense and myrrh, which are tree resins used to make incense and perfume.

Organization

- The story features two interruptions to the narrative flow of an otherwise linear story: the first is a pause to describe the couple's home, and the second is a pause to describe their most valuable possessions.
- Students should annotate to describe what essential information these pauses provide and discuss the impact of these asides on the reader.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 880

Word Count: 2,059



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Story Structure, Point of View, Theme

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: In the last paragraph of “The Gift of the Magi,” after the ironic twist in which readers learn that Jim sold the watch for which Della sold her hair to buy a chain, O. Henry claims, “Of all those who give gifts these two were the wisest.” But suppose that final paragraph were absent. To what extent might readers’ impressions of the story’s tone and message change or vary? Does including it underestimate readers’ intelligence or inhibit their freedom to interpret the events in different ways? Or does it provide them with useful insight about the writer’s views with which they are free to agree or disagree? Write an essay that argues for or against the inclusion of the final paragraph and why.

Beyond the Book

Investigation: Power of Three

“The Gift of the Magi” is a classic tale of two generous souls who sold their most important possessions to buy something for the other to treasure. The story’s title directs readers to connect the biblical story of the three wise men to this tale. Students will investigate the power of the number three in O. Henry’s text.

Ask students to do the following:

- Reread the story, looking for references to the number three.
- Assemble in small groups to share findings, carefully looking for groupings of three.
- Discuss the author’s intention in referencing the number three throughout the story.
- Share their ideas with the entire class.

Ask students to write a short reflection that identifies the message of this story and analyzes how the author uses the power of three to connect this message to the biblical story of the three wise men.

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Are sacrifices made for love worth it? Thematically linked with Judith Ortiz Cofer’s “Catch the Moon,” this classic O. Henry short story about two newlyweds sacrificing their most precious possessions in order to buy each other coveted Christmas presents ends with an unexpected twist.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use details in “Gift of the Magi” to support their claim about whether love is a gift or a curse. For example, Della and Jim sacrifice the material possessions they most treasure to buy gifts that prove useless as a consequence, which seems like a curse. In doing so, however, they demonstrate the strength of their love for one another, which seems like a blessing.



Catch the Moon

by Judith Ortiz Cofer

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1995

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students may not grasp the references to Shakespeare's classic play *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, as well as the references to Arthur Laurents' twentieth-century musical version of the play, *West Side Story*.
- Call student's attention to references to the *West Side Story* Puerto Rican gang known as the Sharks, as well as the re-creation of the famous balcony scene in Luis's presentation of the hubcap to Naomi.

Connection of Ideas

- Readers may not immediately understand the complexities of the relationship between Luis and his father.
- Students may need additional support to connect the details of Luis's father's life in Puerto Rico and his move to the American barrio where Luis is raised to understand how these cultural differences affect their relationship.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 930

Word Count: 3,453



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Story Structure, Point of View, Theme

Close Read Prompt

Compare and Contrast: Compare and contrast the ways in which gift-giving shapes the characters, plots, and themes in “The Gift of the Magi” and “Catch the Moon.” As part of your analysis, consider the nature of the gifts themselves—what they are; why they are given; how they are obtained; what fees, monetary or otherwise, they require; what they reveal about the giver; and what messages they help convey.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Predicting the Ending

Luis changes his troubled ways when he sees a beautiful girl. Students will continue the story, detailing how Luis’s relationships continue to progress.

Ask students to do the following:

- Generate ideas for how Luis’s relationship with Naomi and his father will continue to change and progress. Some possible questions might include:
 - What will happen if Naomi rejects Luis?
 - What will happen if Naomi agrees to date Luis?
 - What will happen if his father continues to express disappointment in Luis?
 - What will happen if his father rewards Luis for his hard work?
- Write a short piece that continues this story. Then share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- To what extent is a character’s behavior shaped by the actions of others?
- Would you consider Luis to be internally or externally motivated? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Further exploring the connection between love and sacrifice, students will read Judith Ortiz Cofer’s short story about a lovestruck teenager who makes some changes to his life in the name of love. Read with O. Henry’s “The Gift of the Magi,” the story encourages students to ask themselves whether love is worth the sacrifices—both little and big—people make on its behalf.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use details in “Catch the Moon” to demonstrate that love can be a positive force in life, given Luis’s transformation, but also that losing a loved one can be a negative influence, given Luis’s lawbreaking due to repressed grief.



Love in a Headscarf

by Shelina Zahra Janmohamed

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2012

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- The narrator is meeting a young man with whom she might enter into an arranged marriage. Students may not be familiar with the cultural expectations of the narrator's South Asian Muslim family and culture.
- As a class, discuss the normalcy of arranged marriages in many cultures.

Purpose

- The author's purpose is twofold: to entertain with somewhat humorous descriptions of her events in her life and to inform readers about the balance she strives to achieve between her romantic ideals and cultural traditions.
- Remind students that authors can write both to entertain and to inform. Tell them to annotate evidence that might suggest a dual purpose.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 840

Word Count: 1,377



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Author's Purpose and Point of View, Language, Style, and Audience

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: How does the author's engaging style and creative use of language serve her audience, purpose, and message? Explain, using textual evidence and original commentary.

Beyond the Book

Compare and Contrast: Romantic Ideals in Pop Culture

In the excerpt from *Love in a Headscarf*, Shelina Zahra Janmohamed refers to the portrayal of love in fairy tales and rom-coms and how these, along with her cultural traditions, played a strong role in influencing her perception of romantic ideals. Students will identify some pop-culture love stories the author references, examine the romantic ideals they emphasize, and evaluate the appropriateness of these ideals for modern women and men.

Ask students to do the following:

- Identify two pop-culture texts the author references in the memoir excerpt.
- For each text, identify the romantic ideals it celebrates and the messages about love it conveys.
- Discuss and evaluate which of these messages and ideals remains valuable and which might be problematic to today's women and men.
- Come up with a creative way to “rate” these texts based on their treatment of love and display your ratings.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which aspects of romantic pop-culture texts should more modern ones seek to transform?
- Which aspects seem to remain more relevant in the modern world?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Will the person you and your family are preparing to meet become your future spouse? In this memoir excerpt, author Shelina Zahra Janmohamed recalls a visit from a suitor and his family and explores, with both humor and insight, the balance she struggled to achieve between her cultural traditions regarding love and courtship and those perpetuated by Hollywood rom-coms.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may use ideas explored in the excerpt from *Love in a Headscarf* as they write their literary analysis about whether love is a blessing or a curse. For the author, love—and her cultural traditions with regard to love—have been blessings, although not without their complications.



Sonnet 116

by William Shakespeare

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1609

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Students will require background knowledge about the Shakespearean or Elizabethan sonnet form to fully appreciate it.
- Review the genre lesson with students. Point out that “Sonnet 116” is a Shakespearean or Elizabethan sonnet. Help students tap out the stressed syllables and label the rhyme scheme. Show how to read the lines with enjambment as continuous thoughts.

Vocabulary

- The text includes vocabulary that might be challenging for some students, including tempest, impediments, ever-fixed, and writ.
- Encourage students to use context clues to determine word meanings and a print or digital dictionary for confirmation.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 109



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Poetry: “Sonnet 116” claims that “Love is an ever-fixed mark.” But, of course, there are many ways to define love. Write a poem in a structure of your choosing that substitutes your own definition of love for Shakespeare’s. Like Shakespeare, consider beginning with a statement about what love is not, followed by a statement of what it is. Include poetic devices such as figurative language and imagery to make your writing more vivid.

Beyond the Book

Adaptation: _____ is . . .

Shakespeare explains that love is something that endures throughout time. Students will write their own extended metaphor for another enduring emotion, such as jealousy or happiness.

Ask students to

- choose an enduring emotion;
- write a definition of this emotion and then generate a list of items that can be compared to it;
- choose one item and write a contemporary extended metaphor emulating “Sonnet 116”
 - be consistent with the comparison throughout.
 - avoid clichés
 - maintain a consistent tone
- share extended metaphors with partners and receive feedback.

To reflect, ask students the following questions:

- How do metaphors enhance writing?
- Which contemporary piece had a metaphor that enhanced the emotion without becoming a cliché?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The immovable power of love has been a theme in poetry throughout history. In this famous sonnet, William Shakespeare describes love in its most ideal form, not as a brief and passing heat but as a constant—like a lodestar, defying even the most treacherous tempest.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may use details within Shakespeare’s poem as support for their arguments about love’s ultimate effect.



Masters of Love

by Emily Esfahani Smith

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1994

Genre: Non-Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Smith is presenting a researched-based argument on the importance of kindness and generosity in creating stable relationships, in which her argument relies heavily on the work of John and Julie Gottman.
- Help students understand Smith's argument by having them ask and answer questions about the Gottmans' research findings.

Sentence Structure

- Many of Smith's sentences are dense with information and complex in structure.
- Encourage students to break long sentences into shorter chunks and list relevant information in their notes or annotations.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1190

Word Count: 2,769



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Poetic Elements and Structure (Symbolism)

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: After reading the article, do you agree that kindness and generosity are the key factors in determining a lasting relationship? What other factors might be as important in maintaining a stable, healthy relationship? Write down your ideas before discussing with your group. Use evidence from the text and your own experience.

Beyond the Book

Beyond Text to World

Have students consider the fact that the text is a scientific, research-based article about a topic that may not be commonly associated with science: love.

Ask students:

- What is one example in which the author includes scientific data to back up a claim or claims about love?
- Did you find the inclusion of such scientific data to be appropriate, given the topic? Did it make the article's claims more convincing? Why or why not?
- Do the same rules apply to all healthy relationships? How might a critic question the researchers' methods or results?
- Do you think the studies' findings may be applied to other types of relationships, including friendships? Why or why not?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The two selections in this group—an informational text and a poem—consider the qualities that help romance turn into a long-lasting relationship, capable of surviving any potential “falls.” “Masters of Love” encourages students to consider how important kindness and generosity are to forming and maintaining happy long-term relationships.

Students will continue to consider how integral kindness is to committed romantic relationships as they read Joy Harjo's poem “Redbird Love,” about the courtship of two redbirds. In Native American culture, redbirds often symbolize monogamy.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from the “Masters of Love” to describe how love is a blessing when a relationship has kindness and generosity but a curse when it doesn't.



Redbird Love

by Joy Harjo

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2017

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- This poem is a single stanza of 32 lines written in free verse with no rhyme scheme. It also features lines with enjambment, which students will need to read as continuous thoughts to comprehend meaning.
- Have students identify lines that feature enjambment and practice reading them aloud without pauses at the line breaks.

Connection of Ideas

- Readers must make inferences to identify the speaker, setting, events, and larger theme.
- The subject *she* is a female redbird. The pronoun *we* suggests the speaker and someone else are observing events. The patio implies a home setting, which suggests we are partners. Ask students to consider what insights about human love are gained by observing the redbirds.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 169



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Visualizing, Poetic Devices (Symbolism)

Close Read Prompt

Poetry: Several of the poems in this unit, including “Redbird Love,” feature animals whose interactions serve to teach humans important lessons about love. Think of an animal relationship you have observed, read about, or are aware of—between mates, between a parent and baby, between siblings, or between friends. Write a poem in a structure of your choice that reflects on the nature of this relationship. Use symbolism and consider the insight that humans might gain from observing the relationship.

Beyond the Book

Adaptation: Love

Using the Native American symbol for relationships and courtships, Joy Harjo tells the universal story of finding true love. Students will write their own story of finding true love, using a symbol from their culture.

Ask students to do the following:

- Research symbols of love and courtship in their culture.
- Choose one and rework the poem using this new symbol.
 - How will this new symbol impact the sounds, imagery, and other details in the poem?
 - What similar or different messages will the symbol help convey?
- Share the adapted poem with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- Why do different cultures associate love with different symbols?
- Are there symbols that are universal or cross-cultural?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Students will continue to consider how integral kindness is to committed romantic relationships as they read Joy Harjo’s poem “Redbird Love,” about the courtship of two redbirds. In Native American culture, redbirds often symbolize monogamy.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “Redbird Love” as example of how love can be a blessing that gives both animals and humans a sense of purpose, something to seek out and to build a home and a future around.



Dusting

by Rita Dove

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1986

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Point out that this text is written in the unit genre, poetry, and is an example of a narrative poem, in that it tells a story. Students may struggle to identify the sequence of events described in the poem, as most took place in the past and are conveyed through images.
- Have students retell the poem in their own words as a story. Emphasize that there is no right or wrong way to do this because poetry is subjective.

Sentence Structure

- Most of this poem's lines feature enjambment, meaning they continue from one line to the next without pause. There are also various lines that are only one word.
- Have students focus on identifying the continuation of one thought over multiple lines when enjambment occurs. They will also need to be reminded that words that stand alone are being emphasized.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 144



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Poetic Elements and Structure, Figurative Language, Textual Evidence

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: More often than not, the message in poems isn't explicitly stated; instead, readers must rely on a small number of powerful words to interpret meaning, and different readers might interpret the same poem in different ways depending on their life experiences. Analyze the title, character, events, figurative language, and imagery in "Dusting" to offer an original interpretation of the poem's messages about life, love, and the self.

Beyond the Book

Writing: My Past, My Life, My Love

As Beulah dusts, she recalls a fond memory from her past. Students will write about a significant memory from their own lives.

Ask students to

- Brainstorm poignant moments from your past.
 - moments that caused deep emotional responses
 - moments when important realizations were made
 - moments that represented turning points
- Choose the moment you feel to be most powerful.
- Write a short "memoir" of this event, either as a poem or in prose.

To reflect, have students write about the lasting significance of the moments described. In what way did these moments help direct the course of the students' present lives?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Can the memory of love sustain us? In Rita Dove's poeticized retelling of her grandparents' lives, the speaker, Beulah, recalls a past love while performing the simple task of dusting shelves. As Beulah literally dusts off furniture, she figuratively dusts off her memories, making them gleam more brightly than her reality—which is overshadowed, to some extent, by bitterness and regret.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use ideas explored in "Dusting" as part of their literary analysis about whether love is a blessing or a curse. Beulah's marriage seems to have complications, given that she dwells on fond memories of another boy she knew before she was married and that she describes her name after marriage as meaning "Promise, then / Desert-in-Peace."



A Song of Changgan

by Li Po

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: Circa 700

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students may benefit from information about the story's origins and form.
- Explain that this poem was written in China around the year 700, and it was translated from ancient Chinese. The rhyme scheme and meter would be different in the original language.

Purpose

- Students may think that the poet is telling his or her personal story.
- Explain that the poet and speaker in a poem are not always one and the same. In this case, the poet is a man and the speaker is a woman. Ask students to consider why the poet might have chosen to write from the perspective of a female speaker and how this choice connects to the poem's themes.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 265



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: What images, often created through figurative language, are associated with love in different periods and events in the speaker’s life, and what do these images reveal about the speaker’s perspective, psyche, and sense of self?

Beyond the Book

Graphic: The Narrator’s Journey

In this poem, a young lady marries at a young age and her husband leaves for a long journey. She communicates her loneliness throughout the rest of the poem. Students will create a four-panel graphic to illustrate the narrator’s four emotional states (happy, bashful, laughing/confident, fearful).

Ask students to

- Analyze how the narrator felt in each period of her relationship. Pay close attention to important emotional shifts;
- Capture the narrator’s emotional state through illustrations and words in a four-panel graphic. Use graphic novel techniques:
 - Speech bubbles, Emanata (symbols that indicate emotion), Narration, Color and line weight
- Share the graphic with classmates, explaining how it connects to the poem.

To reflect, ask students:

- What strategies are used in graphic novels to express emotion?
- Was the narrator’s emotions conveyed better through poetry or graphic?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The three classic poems in this grouping all feature speakers who love passionately but who are affected in different ways by the absence—or imagined absence—of their loved ones. The speaker of “A Song of Changgan” is a woman who meditates on the different stages of her relationship—from joyous childhood to shy teenage awkwardness to confident maturity—while anxiously awaiting her husband’s return.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Li Po’s poem to show that the speaker’s love is a blessing and a curse because she feels so passionately about her husband, but he has been gone for a long time, which makes her very sad.



How Do I Love Thee

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1850

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- This poem is a Petrarchan sonnet, which originated in fourteenth-century Italy and was named for the poet Petrarch. It has 14 lines and is written in iambic pentameter; however, the rhyme scheme is ABBAABBACDCDCD, rather than ABABCDCEFEFGG.
- Help students identify the meter by tapping out the stressed syllables, and labeling the lines with letters.

Sentence Structure

- Point out that some lines of the poem feature enjambment. Tell students that, despite the rhyme scheme and the iambic pentameter, the sentences of the sonnet continue over the line breaks.
- Remind students that the lines are part of one continuous thought.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 127



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Poetry: Write a sonnet about something you love—a person, a place, an activity, a treasured possession, even a food. Use Barrett Browning’s model in order to enforce the rules of sonnet writing: 14 lines, 10 syllables per line in iambic pentameter, regular rhyme scheme.

Beyond the Book

Research: Differences Among Sonnets

Elizabeth Barrett Brown expresses through a Petrarchan, or Italian-style sonnet, how much she loves her husband, fellow poet Robert Browning. She was likely influenced by Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 116,” written in the Elizabethan or English style. Students will research, identify famous examples of, and compare English-style and Italian-style sonnets to better understand these forms.

Ask students to do the following:

- Form small groups to research the characteristics of English-style sonnets and Italian-style sonnets.
 - What common elements do the two types share?
 - How do they differ?
 - What are famous examples of each type?
- Find other poems that represent each sonnet and explain the features that reveal the sonnet type.
- Share their findings with the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- Why might a poet choose a particular sonnet form over another?
- Do you have a preference? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Students will continue to consider the powerful effect of romantic love on a person’s psyche as they read Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s autobiographical sonnet “How Do I Love Thee?” Like the speaker in “A Song of Changgan,” Browning’s speaker considers the depth of her passion for her husband, a passion that might not only survive her death but perhaps also grow even deeper.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s poem for their essays by arguing that, for Barrett Browning, love is a blessing.



The Raven

by Edgar Allan Poe

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1845

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- This text contains many archaic terms and allusions. Encourage students not to spend too much time on unfamiliar words but to focus instead on the way in which events unfold in this narrative poem. They can identify and research unknown words during their second read.

Genre

- Poe's writing makes heavy use of poetic elements, including meter and various types of rhyme (end, internal, and half), and poetic devices, including figurative language, repetition, and alliteration.
- Discuss the meanings of these terms with students before they read.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 1,078



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Poetic Elements and Structure, Connotation and Denotation

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: What varying themes about the psychological impact of the death or extended absence of a loved one do the three poems in this grouping explore, and how do the poetic elements and structure in each help develop its mood and message? Consider the denotative and connotative meanings of keywords or phrases that convey the psychological state of the speaker in each poem.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Poetry Slam

In “The Raven,” the speaker is driven mad by a bird’s one word response to his questions about a lost love. This lyrical poem has been read aloud by multiple Hollywood stars and continues to be a favorite read-aloud poem. Students will perform this poem in a competition style poetry slam.

Ask students to form small groups of four and do the following:

- Analyze the poem in preparation for reading it aloud. What is the rhythm? When should certain lines be read more quickly? What are they visualizing as they read?
- Practice reading the poem in a way that captures the mood and conveys the narrator’s mental and emotional states.
- Perform their poems for a panel of judges.

Create a panel of three or four judges who will judge each group on fluent reading, effective interpretation, and engaging stage presence. The winning group should be announced to the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- What makes “The Raven” a poem that is read out loud so frequently?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Unlike the speakers in “A Song of Changgan” and “How Do I Love Thee?,” the speaker in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven” knows for certain he will never see his beloved again. The memory of the dead Lenore haunts the speaker, just as the raven taunts him into madness.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “The Raven” in their extended writing project essay about love. The Raven is a physical manifestation of the curse of grief that love can leave behind.



The Loneliness of Lost Love in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"

by Ursula Villarreal-Moura

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Students would benefit from a pre-reading discussion of the genre characteristics of literary analysis.
- Review that literary analysis is a form of argumentative writing in which a writer develops a thesis about a literary work or works and defends it through text evidence, such as direct quotations, summaries, and paraphrases; original commentary; and outside research as necessary.

Vocabulary

- This text requires knowledge of various literary terms, such as stanza, alliteration, and meter.
- Prior to reading, review these terms as a class and identify examples. A stanza is a group of lines of poetry. Alliteration is the repetition of the first sound of each word. Meter is the pattern of the beats in a line of poetry.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®:

Word Count: 732



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: What central claim does the writer make about “The Raven,” and how effectively does her analysis of the poem’s structure and elements, such as sound devices, support this claim? Explain, using details from the text and original commentary.

Beyond the Book

Art: Poe’s Iconic Symbols

Ursula Villarreal-Moura analyzes poetic structure and poetic technique—including the use of symbolism—in Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Raven,” explaining how these devices help develop the poem’s themes. Students will choose three symbols from the poem that develop themes about lost love and loneliness and depict these through art.

Ask students to do the following:

- reread “The Raven” and choose three symbols that represent lost love or isolation;
- reread Ursula Villarreal-Moura’s analysis to understand the power of symbols in Poe’s work;
- create artwork (digital or traditional) that depicts the symbols chosen and reflects how they develop themes about lost love and isolation;
- share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How are messages sent through symbols?
- Which symbols that Poe created have become cliché?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In this literary analysis of Poe’s “The Raven,” author Ursula Villarreal-Moura considers the complex poetic devices Poe used to craft his famous and haunting poem about the maddening effects of lost love.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration in this literary analysis of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven” by expanding upon the writer’s ideas about the agonizing loneliness that individuals may experience after love is lost.



Extended Writing Project

The Dance of Romance

Essential Question

When is love worth the fall?

Writing Form

Literary Analysis

Extended Writing Project Prompt

Consider the readings in this unit and reflect on how romantic love impacts those who experience it. Choose three of the unit texts that explore the influence of love in different ways. In

a literary analysis essay, synthesize the ideas in these texts to arrive at your own argument about love's ultimate effect and explain how that effect is demonstrated in each of the selections.

EWP Mentor Text

The Loneliness of Lost Love in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish

Writing Skills

Thesis Statement, Organize Argumentative Writing, Reasons and Relevant Evidence, Introduction, Transitions, Style, Conclusions

Grammar Skills

Participles and Participial Phrases, Commonly Misspelled Words



Writing Overview

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 9 Unit 5 focuses on argumentative writing in the form of a literary analysis. The prompt for this EWP asks students to choose three of the texts in the unit that explore the influence of love in different ways and then synthesize the ideas in those texts to arrive at their own argument about love’s ultimate effect. The unit’s selections exploring different aspects of love provide context for students, and some of the texts in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to analyze and emulate. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. At each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student’s writing changes and improves over time.

Skill lessons on Thesis Statements and Organizing Argumentative Writing teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while additional skill lessons on Reasons and Relevant Evidence, Introductions, Transitions, Conclusions, and Style focus on characteristics of the argumentative writing genre. A revision lesson guides students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence effectiveness. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in English Language Arts standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice the skill using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing is not confined to the EWP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. The prompt for “The Loneliness of Lost Love in Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Raven’” asks students to analyze the main claim the writer makes about “The Raven” and how effectively her analysis of the poem’s structure and sound devices support the claim. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with texts in the unit. After students read *Love In a Headscarf*, for example, they use the techniques from the Author’s Purpose and Point of View and Language, Style, and Audience Skill lessons to write a rhetorical analysis of how the text’s style and language serve the author’s audience, purpose, and message.

Other tasks allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to explore science and social studies topics connected to the readings, as well as choose and respond in a creative way to their own self-selected reading. Writer’s notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer’s notebooks, students write to think, reflect, and practice skills they’re learning. For example, in every Close Read, students reflect in their notebooks on how the text connects to the unit essential question.





Unit 6

Human Potential

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Unit Overview

Unit 6 Title

Human Potential

Essential Question

How can you help others achieve their goals?

Genre Focus

Fiction

Introduction

We live in a society that prizes goals and celebrates winners. We are, as individuals, constantly encouraged by our teachers, family members, mentors, and public figures, to set big goals and strive to meet them. But there is no roadmap for meeting goals. Each individual and each goal requires taking a unique path.

How can we meet our goals? Is every goal worth trying to meet? What happens if we fail? How do others assist us along the way? What motivates them to help us? What strategies do they use to mentor us, and what makes these strategies successful or unsuccessful?

This unit offers a wide range of literature for your students to consider these questions while also exploring texts in the unit's genre focus, multigenre literature. The epistolary arguments "Letter to My Younger Self" and *Letters to a Young Poet* demonstrate how a mentor (even if that mentor is an older version of oneself!) can provide helpful guidance to someone in a moment of crisis, while the graphic novel memoir *Maus* shows that the comic medium can be used for important, serious purposes, such as to give voice to our elders and record grave historical injustices so that they may never be forgotten. The excerpt from the autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* shows how literary nonfiction can bring an author's past to life in ways that are deeply meaningful to readers in the present, and examples of political fiction or poetry, such as the excerpts from Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Ghanadian writer Ama Ata Aidoo's short story "The Girl Who Can," Megan Falley and Olivia Gatwood's spoken-word poem "Ode to the Selfie," and James Weldon Johnson's poem-turned-song "Lift Every Voice and Sing," show that literature can be used to send powerful social messages and enact needed change.

Students will begin this unit as readers, and they will finish as writers, as they apply what they have learned about human potential to their own oral presentation project.



Text Complexity

Grade 9 Unit 6 continues students' development as critical learners. Though this unit focuses on fiction, it features other types of literature and non-fiction texts as well. With a Lexile® range spanning 890–1350, students have an opportunity to stretch their reading abilities. Students will also encounter graphic novels that challenge them to interact with text and visuals together. The vocabulary, sentence structures, text features, content, and relationships among ideas make all of the texts in the unit accessible to ninth graders, enabling them to grow as readers.

Students begin the unit by comparing two argumentative texts in the form of letters: “Letter to My Younger Self” and an excerpt from *Letters to a Young Poet*. In “Letter to My Younger Self,” David Robinson tells his 18-year-old self that life will be full of challenges, but the most important question to consider is, “Why am I doing this?” Similarly, in “Letters to a Young Poet,” Rainer Maria Rilke urges his reader to consider the reasons behind his ambitions and to look inward. Skills lessons on Identifying Audience and Purpose and Paraphrasing help students analyze and comprehend Rilke’s complex ideas and dense language.

In the graphic novel *Maus*, students learn about the author’s parents’ experiences as young Jews living in Europe during World War II and the Holocaust. Their goal of survival depends on luck and plenty of help from others. Background information, a skill lesson on Informational Text Elements, and Close Read questions all help students navigate the complex content and format of this moving graphic novel. Students go on to explore the negative consequences that can arise from helping someone achieve goals in the classic short story “The Scarlet Ibis,” in which the narrator recalls a childhood episode when he challenges—and helps—his disabled younger brother learn to walk. His motivations are mixed, and the results are ultimately tragic. A skill lesson on Theme helps students determine how the rich symbolism in the story is connected to an overarching message about life.

A comparative cluster of two fictional works and one non-fiction text focuses on the wisdom learned during formative childhood experiences. Two excerpts from Harper Lee’s classic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* show how Scout, a six-year-old girl, learns a valuable lesson from her father, Atticus, about the power of compassion. She then uses what she learns to defuse a violent confrontation. In Ama Ata Aidoo’s short story, “The Girl Who Can,” the narrator begins running and winning races at school despite being teased by her grandmother for her “too thin” legs. Further exploring the complex experiences of young protagonists, students will read a portion of Maya Angelou’s award-winning memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. In this excerpt, young Maya has stopped speaking in response to a traumatic experience. With the help of a kind neighbor, she begins to understand the healing power of language. A skill lesson



and SkillsTV episode on Author's Purpose and Point of View help students understand how Angelou's message and purpose intersect. Close Read questions offer further support and give students an opportunity to compare aspects of all three selections.

In another comparative cluster, students have the opportunity to consider why people often expect girls to act and behave differently from boys as they read Mark Twain's short story "Advice to Little Girls" and the graphic novel *Lumberjanes*. Students are provided with support to help them grasp Twain's complex sentence structures, and a skill lesson and SkillsTV episode on Media as well as a skill lesson on Summarizing help students get the most out of the excerpt from the graphic novel. Close Read questions provide additional support and have students compare the two selections.

How can standing together help us reach our goals? James Weldon Johnson's poem "Lift Every Voice and Sing" conveys an uplifting message—that if we march together, sing together, and stand our ground together, victory can be ours. Background notes along with a skill lesson on Poetic Elements and Structure help students parse the meter and rhyme of the poem. Close Read questions reinforce this skill.



English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources in this section are developed around two texts and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels, which serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit.

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing skill lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

The Extended Oral Project can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and present a monologue to give advice on achieving goals. Throughout these lessons, students will interact with texts and their peers as readers, writers, speakers, and listeners to maximize comprehension and provide multiple access points for every learner.



Letter to my Younger Self

by David Robinson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2016

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- Students may find the text's structure and sequence of events challenging.
- Point out that Robinson's text is structured as a letter, but it is addressed to a younger version of himself, before he became an NBA star. Important life events, such as taking a swim test, hearing music around his grandfather's piano, and learning vocabulary words from his father, are described out of sequence. Have students annotate the text to correctly number the sequence of events.

Connection of Ideas

- During the course of the text, Robinson's Naval Academy swim test evolves from a simple anecdote to a metaphor for his entire life.
- Have students annotate the text each time the swim test is mentioned to analyze how its significance develops.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 770

Word Count: 1,378



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: How does Robinson use language in effective and engaging ways to develop his argument to his younger self—and, in the process, to young readers in the present? In your response, consider such techniques as metaphor, repetition, and sentence structure.

Beyond the Book

Write: A Letter to My Younger Self

David Robinson writes a letter to his younger self, describing how early events in his life will lead to future success. Students will write letters to their younger selves to give advice on how to navigate life.

Ask students to do the following:

- Think of their most significant accomplishment thus far.
- Brainstorm a list of life events, both positive and negative, that led to the accomplishment.
- Emulating Robinson, write a letter to their younger selves, offering advice on how to handle each event so as to achieve ultimate success.

To reflect, ask students to:

- How does the way we handle life experiences impact our overall happiness or success?
- Do negative or positive experiences play a bigger role in shaping our development? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

David Robinson's "Letter to My Younger Self," read with the an excerpt from Rainer Maria Rilke's "Letters to a Young Poet," demonstrate how a wise mentor—even if that mentor is an older version of oneself—can provide critical guidance to a young person in crisis. In "Letter to My Younger Self," professional basketball player David Robinson Robinson sends his 18-year-old self "fair warning about something from the future." Life, he warns, will be full of challenges, but the most important question to consider is, "Why am I doing this?"

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Michael Robinson for their informative presentations about people who helped them develop new skills. Robinson's father and grandfather greatly influenced his development.



Letters to a Young Poet

by Rainer Maria Rilke

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1903

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- The third paragraph of the letter is extremely long.
- Students may benefit from listing the steps Rilke wishes the young poet to take.

Sentence Structure

- The density of the language in each sentence may make it challenging for students to access the text. Most sentences are long and complex and often explore abstract ideas.
- Students should paraphrase each sentence, breaking down long sentences into shorter ones and identifying the literal meanings of figurative language.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 980

Word Count: 1,154



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Author's Purpose and Point of View, Reasons and Evidence

Close Read Prompt

Correspondence: How might Franz Xaver Kappus have reacted to Rainer Maria Rilke's letter? Assume the role of Kappus and write a letter in response to Rilke, describing the thoughts and feelings you experienced as a result of reading his letter. Your letter should summarize sections of Rilke's letter before responding, demonstrate understanding of Mr. Rilke's purpose and message, and be written in an appropriately formal style.

Beyond the Book

Analysis: Accepting Advice

Rainer Maria Rilke offers advice to his protégé Franz Kappus to help him grow and develop as a poet. Students will analyze advice from the text and connect it to their own lives.

Ask students to:

- Identify a piece of advice that Rilke offers Kappus that resonates with you.
- Analyze the advice.
 - What is the goal of the advice offered?
 - How might this advice be relevant beyond poetry-writing?
- Create a slogan or meme with the advice.
- Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- Is there a person in your life from whom you seek advice? If so, who and why do you trust their advice?
- Why is it sometimes challenging to accept another person's advice?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In the first letter from *Letters to a Young Poet*, the collection of Rainer Maria Rilke's epistolary advice to aspiring poet Franz Kappus, Rilke urges his reader to look inward rather than outward and, as Robinson advises his younger self, to carefully consider why he has set himself a particular goal. Students will read this selection with *Letters to a Young Poet* to compare and contrast mentoring styles explored in each.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use *Letters to a Young Poet* on their extended oral project by using Rilke's letter writing style to inspire their letter and/or presentation.



Maus

by Art Spiegelman

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1991

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- The story of Spiegelman's parents is told in a graphic novel format as a continual flashback. In the excerpt students will read, past events are being recalled by Spiegelman's father, Vladek, and shared with Spiegelman.
- Explain that the text is categorized as narrative nonfiction because these are true events that happened to the author's parents during the Holocaust told as an engaging story.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may be unfamiliar with the Holocaust.
- Provide students with background information about the German invasion of Poland during World War II and the history of anti-Semitism in Europe.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 1,255



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Informational Text Elements

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: Art Spiegelman successfully fought to have *Maus* categorized as a work of non-fiction, rather than fiction. Now that you have read a portion of this monumental, award-winning work, defend or challenge the author's claim that this graphic novel should be categorized as non-fiction.

Beyond the Book

Debate: Would This Work as a Movie?

The author, Art Spiegelman, has rejected multiple offers to make a film adaptation out of *Maus*. Spiegelman argues that his work is already in its proper form.

Ask students to:

- Choose a side. Do they support Spiegelman's decision not to turn his work into a film adaptation, or do they believe the novel should be made into a film?
- Once students choose a side, they will work together to create a list of evidence they can use to argue for or against making *Maus* into a film.
- Each group must construct a clear claim, compile solid evidence, and include rhetorical devices to persuade the audience.
- Once the groups are ready, set up a mock courtroom with the teacher as the judge and twelve classmates as jurors. Allow each side to present its case.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which points were most compelling during the mock trial?
- What evidence could have been used to strengthen the arguments on both sides?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In 1991, Art Spiegelman amazed the literary world with the publication of *Maus*, a full-length, genre-bending graphic novel that narrates his parents' experiences as young Jews living in Europe during the World War II and the Holocaust. Their goal of survival depends on luck and plenty of help from others.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Maus illustrates the limited extent to which people are willing to risk their own safety in order to help others. Comparing and contrasting how the Spiegelmans are treated by various characters to whom they appeal for aid may help students gain insight into the way humans can help—or not help—each other when in need.



The Scarlet Ibis

by James Hurst

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1960

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- The story is told from the perspective of an adult reflecting on events from his childhood. The first three paragraphs bounce back and forth in time, which may be confusing for students.
- Ask students to think of times when something prompted memories. Explain that the time of year, between summer and autumn, makes the narrator recall events from his childhood.

Connection of Ideas

- The story centers on the symbolic significance of the scarlet ibis and its connection to the narrator's brother, Doodle.
- Students may need help fully exploring this connection, both during the ibis's death and Doodle's own.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1060

Word Count: 4,965



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Theme

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: In “The Scarlet Ibis,” the narrator reflects, “I did not know then that pride is a wonderful, terrible thing, a seed that bears two vines, life and death.” How is the theme of pride both as a creative and a destructive incentive developed in the story, through the narrator’s characterizations of himself and his brother Doodle? Explain, using textual evidence and original commentary.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Innocent Until Proven Guilty

Brother is plagued with guilt about the passing of his brother. Even though Brother spent time preparing Doodle for school, Brother regrets that he was motivated by pride rather than love. Students will put Brother on trial to decide if he is guilty of Doodle’s death.

Ask students to:

- Break into two groups: those to prove Brother’s guilt and those to prove his innocence.
 - Have students search the text for evidence that supports their objective.
 - Find evidence that may be used by the other side and decide how to refute the information.
- Conduct informal research on the time period and possible illness of Doodle.
- Practice and rehearse the argument.
- Put Brother on trial in front of the teacher, and await the judge’s decision.

To reflect, ask students:

- Should Brother feel guilty about his brother’s death?
- Is there a clear answer to this question?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

When is a challenge too much? Is there a point at which the pursuit of a goal becomes dangerous? In this classic story by James Hurst, the narrator recalls a childhood episode in which he challenges—and helps—his disabled younger brother to learn to walk. His motivations are mixed, and the results are ultimately tragic.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

To prepare for their extended oral projects about individuals who helped them learn new skills, students can explore contrasts between Brother’s motivations and teaching strategies and those of their own, more helpful mentors.



To Kill a Mockingbird

by Harper Lee

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1960

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- A basic description of the characters will aid comprehension of the excerpts.
- Explain that the narrator, Scout, is the daughter of Atticus, a lawyer. Jem is her brother, and Calpurnia is their housekeeper. Mr. Cunningham, Atticus's client and the father of Scout's classmate, Walter, is part of a lynching mob.

Organization

- The text is three passages from two different chapters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Students may struggle to comprehend the connections between the texts.
- Have students analyze the characterization across the three passages to draw conclusions about Scout and Atticus.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 890

Word Count: 1,206



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: According to Scout's teacher, her father, Atticus, has taught her "all wrong." Based on your personal experience and the interactions described in these passages from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, however, what does it mean to be good teacher, and how can a person prove him or herself to be a good student? Network with your group in order to explore these questions, writing down your ideas beforehand.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Varying Points of View

Atticus points out that it is important to see situations from all points of view. Students will reflect on this point and attempt to understand a friend from their point of view.

Ask students to:

- Review what Atticus means when he says, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . ."
- Brainstorm a list of people with whom they struggle to get along or to understand at times.
- Choose one person and consider his or her point of view and the reasons for your differences.
- Write an explanation from the other person's point of view, and share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How hard is it to see a situation from a different point of view?
- Who could really benefit from taking time to understand an alternate point of view? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Excerpts from Harper's Lee classic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, read with Ama Ata Aidoo's short story "The Girl Who Can" and an excerpt from Maya Angelou's autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, will encourage students to explore the wisdom gained during formative childhood experiences—either as a result of or in spite of feedback from adults. The excerpts from *To Kill a Mockingbird* show how Scout, a six-year-old girl, learns a valuable lesson from her father, Atticus, about the power of empathy and then uses what she learns to defuse a violent confrontation.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Atticus and Scout in the project about "How do others influence our development?" by analyzing how Atticus influenced Scout.



The Girl Who Can

by Ama Ata Aidoo

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1997

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- The setting is a village in Ghana, in which the attitudes of older matriarchs might differ from those of mainstream U.S. society, particularly regarding women's roles and education.
- Explain that while some indigenous groups in Ghana are matriarchal, Ghanaian women have traditionally been valued for their ability to bear children. As a result, their education has not been considered to be a priority in some families. However, efforts have been and are continuing to be made to improve the situation of indigenous Ghanaian women.

Connection of Ideas

- The text is narrated by a seven-year-old girl, requiring students to make inferences about the characters and events.
- Have students highlight text where Adjoa is confused or makes child-like observations. Have students use prior knowledge and text evidence to make inferences about the complex attitudes, emotions, and motivations of the adults in Adjoa's world.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 850

Word Count: 2,237



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: In this text, Adjoa’s mother, Maami, is often silenced by Nana (Maami’s mother and Adjoa’s grandmother). Consider if Maami, for once, gathered the courage to fully challenge Nana’s views. Based on inferences made from details in the text, what do you think Maami would say? How would she advocate for her daughter? Write an alternative conversation between Maami and Nana in which Maami is permitted a full voice to argue for her daughter’s welfare.

Beyond the Book

Art: Growth Through Triumphs and Trials

Adjoa has always overheard her mother and Nana say that her legs are too skinny and useless. While at school, Adjoa becomes a top runner and her Nana realizes that her skinny legs are good for something. Students will create a visual metaphor of the trials and triumphs they have faced in their lives.

Ask students to

- Brainstorm a list of trials, or moments when they encountered obstacles.
- Brainstorm a list of triumphs, or moments when they persisted and accomplished goals.
- Select three trials and three triumphs. Create a visual metaphor that distinguishes the trials from the triumphs. Then share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How are the trials and triumphs connected?
- How have these moments shaped your identity?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The narrator of Ama Ata Aidoo’s short story “The Girl Who Can” is a seven-year-old girl who, like Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and young Maya Angelou in the autobiography excerpt, has thoughts and feelings that are far more complex than she can express. After having her “too thin” legs being called out repeatedly by her grandmother, the narrator begins running and winning races at school. Will her achievements change her grandmother’s attitude toward her capabilities—and the capabilities of children and women in general?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “The Girl Who Can” to discuss the ways in which a person from a younger generation can positively affect people from older ones.



I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

by Maya Angelou

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1969

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Explain that *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is an autobiography. Angelou's given name was Marguerite, which she changed as an adult.
- Remind students that autobiographies involve true events and real people, but that they are often written in a literary style.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may benefit from some sensitive background information about why Angelou stopped speaking for a period in her childhood.
- If you judge the information to be appropriate for your students, explain that earlier in the autobiography Angelou describes how she was sexually abused, how she testified in court, how her abuser was killed, and how she stopped speaking as a result of fearing that she had killed a man.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 910

Word Count: 1,398



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Figurative Language

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Based on Angelou's characterization of Mrs. Flowers, her home, and the "lessons in living" she conducts there, what impact did Mrs. Flowers have on Angelou's life, both in the short and long term, and how does this impact connect to Angelou's purpose and message in this excerpt? Explain, using textual evidence and original commentary.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Communication in Social Media

Ms. Flowers explains to Marguerite that the human voice infuses words with meaning. Students will select, analyze, and perform social media messages.

Ask students to:

- Form groups and collect social media messages posted by famous people.
- Analyze the messages and decide on the meaning of each. Discuss the various ways in which each message could be interpreted.
- Choose two messages to perform.
 - Each member of the group should read each message in a way that communicates a different meaning.
 - Use tone, inflection, and varied pacing to convey these different meanings.
- Perform for classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How can the same piece of writing be read by different people as positive or negative?
- What is the best way to prevent messages from being misinterpreted?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In the excerpt from Maya Angelou's award-winning autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, young Maya has stopped speaking in response to a traumatic experience. With the help of a kind neighbor, she begins to understand the healing power of language.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can compare and contrast someone who has influenced their lives with Mrs. Flowers for their extended oral project.



Advice to Little Girls

by Mark Twain

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1865

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- Students may need help identifying the satirical nature of the piece.
- Remind students that the purpose of satire is to poke fun at flaws in human nature or society through humor or exaggeration. In this piece, Mark Twain subverts nineteenth-century stereotypes of proper female behavior and the etiquette books that perpetuated them.

Sentence Structure

- The text contains many complex sentences with challenging vocabulary.
- Students should be encouraged to break down the sentences into smaller parts, paraphrase them, and then restate them to better understand the text.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1230

Word Count: 386



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: What advice about life would you give to someone younger than yourself, based on your reading of the texts in this unit and your personal knowledge and experience? Write an essay that explores this question—either in a straightforward fashion, such one you might use for a college entrance essay, or in a satirical fashion, such as the one Mark Twain employs in “Advice to Little Girls.”

Beyond the Book

Adaptation: Advice for Next Year’s Freshman

- Mark Twain offers humorous advice to little girls about how to behave. Students will write their own advice to next year’s ninth grade students about how to behave now that they are in high school.
- Divide students into groups. Ask each group to do the following:
- Reread Twain’s advice and analyze his word choice. Keep an eye open for the hidden humor.
- Generate a list of rules, norms, and expectations they learned this year that might help next year’s incoming freshman transition more smoothly to high school.
- Choose three rules, norms, or expectations and write a paragraph for each one as advice for next year’s freshman.
- Compile all pieces of advice into one document and share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How might the beginning of your freshman year been different if you had received a letter with advice from a previous freshman?
- What has been the most challenging aspect of freshman year?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Mark Twain’s short story “Advice to Little Girls” and the graphic novel *Lumberjanes* ask students to consider why people have often expected girls to act and behave differently from boys. An American literary icon, Twain uses irony, satire, and humor to draw attention to the often ridiculous restrictions and expectations placed on girls in the nineteenth century.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find use Mark Twain’s “Advice to Little Girls” as a springboard for considering how older mentors—either seriously or with tongue in cheek—can influence young people.



Lumberjanes Vol. 1: Beware the Kitten Holy

by Noelle Stevenson, Shannon Watters, and Grace Ellis (illustrated by Brooke A. Allen)

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2015

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- This graphic novel takes place at an all-girls summer camp whose campers are called Lumberjane Scouts. The story is mostly told through graphic panels, some of which contain only images, which may make following the plot difficult for some.
- Explain that each page should be read from top to bottom and from left to right. Encourage students to describe what is happening out loud.

Vocabulary

- One character refers to famous women when expressing confusion or surprise: “What in the Joan Jett?” and “Oh my Bessie Coleman!”
- Explain that Joan Jett is a pioneer of punk rock music, and Bessie Coleman was the first African American woman to earn a pilot’s license. Discuss with students the empowering messages these references convey to young readers.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 1,377



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Media, Summarizing

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: What makes the graphic novel format an effective medium for exploring the particular characters, setting, and themes in *The Lumberjanes*? Write an analysis in which you summarize key panels in the novel and examine how the text and images work together to tell the story.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Character Badges

In this graphic novel, five girls get in trouble at camp only to find out the head of the camp seems impressed by their adventurous spirits and friendship. Students will work in groups to design individual badges for each girl in this text.

Ask students to:

- Break into five groups, each being assigned a different girl from the text.
- Reread the text, focusing on their assigned character and her traits and particular strengths.
- Create a badge for their character that highlights her accomplishments and what she contributes to the group.
- Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which girl do you identify most with and why?
- Why do you think badging has now become a common way to reward people online?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Lumberjanes Vol. 1: Beware the Kitten Holy, a graphic novel by Noelle Stevenson, Shannon Watters, and Grace Ellis (illustrated by Brooke A. Allen), depicts the adventures of a group of spirited girls who want to earn their Up All Night badge. In facing off with magical and mysterious creatures, the girls explore their own capabilities and are assisted in the process by a uniquely understanding camp director. Students will read this selection with “Advice to Little Girls” to compare and contrast the type of advice bold young women receive from older mentors.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use the excerpt from *Lumberjanes* as a mentor text for their Extended Oral Project, considering how Rosie reacts to the story of the young girls’ adventure.



Pride and Perseverance

by Mekeisha Madden Toby

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- As the article is based on an interview, it contains biographical passages from the writer but also extensive autobiographical dialogue from the subject.
- Have students highlight passages of dialogue and identify what key ideas they express about the subject. Discuss why the writer might have decided to present the information as quotations.

Connection of Ideas

- Even though the main point of the article is to convey information about Adam Irigoyen's life, it contains themes that are applicable to the lives of many young people.
- Have students identify other themes that emerge from the biographical and autobiographical information.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 950

Word Count: 1,261



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: What messages might all young people—not just child entertainers—take away from reading about Adam Irigoyen’s life and career? Identify explicit and implicit messages sent through Adam’s dialogue and other text details that readers can apply to their own lives.

Beyond the Book

Interview: Creativity on the Job

Adam Irigoyen explains that acting is the most creative and fulfilling thing he has done. Students will interview a person in a creative field to discover the positives and negatives associated with their career.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm a list of jobs that require creativity on a daily basis.
- Choose one job and identify a person who performs that job. Write 8 to 10 interview questions that address why the interviewee chose that job, what commitment is required, what benefits and drawbacks are involved, and how the interviewee feels about his or her career choice.
 - When and why did you decide to pursue this career?
 - What are advantages and disadvantages associated with your position?
 - What does it take to succeed in your profession?
 - What do you do when you feel stuck?
- Interview a person in the field. Write a summary of the interview. Then share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- What are similar qualities that are shared among all interviewees?
- Are all the people interviewed fulfilled by the creativity in their career?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In this profile, journalist Mekeisha Madden Toby describes how a rising young actor’s family uprooted themselves and moved from Florida to California to help him pursue his dream. Will he make it or break it? Can he achieve success without his whole family’s help?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Adam Irigoyen’s interview may provide inspiration for students’ oral presentations, given that various people paved the way for Irigoyen’s success as an actor and helped him maintain ties with his community and culture.



Ode to the Selfie

by Megan Falley and Olivia Gatwood

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2016

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- This free-verse poem was written to be performed as spoken-word by Megan Falley and Olivia Gatwood.
- Students might benefit from watching a performance of the poem to improve their comprehension, although you may want to assess whether the unedited content is appropriate for your students.

Specific Vocabulary

- The poem is told in the second person. The poets are speaking to someone who is taking/has taken a selfie, although this may not be immediately obvious to students.
- Facilitate a discussion around who the “you” is to whom the poets are referring and what effect the second-person creates.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 287



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Typically, an ode is a formal poem written to pay tribute to something extraordinary or remarkable. The subject of this poem is therefore striking, as a selfie is not something we usually think of as displaying these qualities. However, what attitude toward and messages about the selfie do the poets seek to convey that renders the selfie worthy of the honor? Consider the style of the poem, the poets' word choice and tone (such as formal, casual, conversational, ironic, sad, humorous, serious) and the intended audience and purpose.

Beyond the Book

Debate: The Selfie—Positive or Negative?

"Ode to the Selfie" sheds new light on selfie culture. This poem explains that taking selfies creates a positive body image. Students will debate whether selfies positively or negatively impact self-esteem.

Ask students to:

- Choose a side. Do they believe taking selfies builds or damages self-esteem?
- Conduct informal research, collect compelling and credible information, and discuss it with group members to build a strong case.
- Develop a clear, research-based argument in support for their position.
- Rehearse and practice speaking about their position with group members.
- Set up a mock courtroom in which each side will present its information and be given time to refute the other side.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which side had stronger arguments? Why?
- How has your personal experience with selfies impacted your position?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In this free verse poem, Megan Falley and Olivia Gatwood explore the meaning of the selfie and reach a surprising conclusion. Based on their work together as part of a poetry slam team, the authors consider how social media can actually empower girls and make them into critical thinkers.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from "Ode to Selfie" about how promoting others' sense of personal beauty can have a positive impact on their self-esteem.



Lift Every Voice and Sing

by James Weldon Johnson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1900

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Explain that the text is a song—specifically, a hymn—written as a poem by James Weldon Johnson and then set to music by his brother, John Rosamond Johnson.
- Discuss the similarities and differences between songs and poems.

Purpose

- Explain that the song has been performed many times in many different ways by many different artists in many different contexts since it was first sung in 1900.
- Discuss how texts, including songs, can transcend their original historical context and remain relevant across decades or centuries.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 241



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Language, Style, and Audience, Poetic Elements and Structure

Close Read Prompt

Research: What have been some major performances of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” over the decades, how have these performances differed in their interpretations of the text, and how has each performance reflected and responded to the climate of American society at the time? Conduct research to find the answers to these questions, consulting a minimum of three sources, and then write an essay about your findings. As part of your essay, address major messages explored in the text. Be sure to give credit for your sources.

Beyond the Book

Game: How would you respond?

Put students in groups of 6. Give each group a stack of 12 index cards.

Instruct students to:

- Write a real-life scenario on one index card then write an age between three and their current age on a second card.
- Mix the scenario cards in one stack and mix the age cards in a second stack.
- Draw a real-life scenario card and an age card from each stack then act out how you think a child would respond to that situation at that age.
- Select the “best performance” and have one student from each group perform their reaction for the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- When do people become more logical and less emotional?
- What behavior is common for younger children? What does this reveal?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

How can standing together help us reach our goals? When James Weldon Johnson’s poem “Lift Every Voice and Sing” was set to music, it became an anthem of the civil rights movement. The poem’s moving language and patriotic imagery convey an uplifting message—that if we march together, sing together, and stand our ground together, victory can be ours.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “Lift Every Voice and Sing” as inspiration for their oral presentations about a person who helped them learn a new skill, considering how the poet and his brother helped their people achieve goals through the creation of this monumental hymn.



Extended Oral Project

Human Potential

Essential Question

How can you help others achieve their goals?

Writing Form

Oral Presentation

Extended Oral Project Prompt

Prepare an oral presentation about a time when someone helped you develop a new skill. Be sure to include a claim that describes your opinion about the experience, details about the approach this person took, what the process of learning from him or her involved, any counterclaims, and how you changed as a result of the experience. As part of your presentation, compare or contrast your experience with those of characters or individuals in unit texts. Consider, too, how you might include diverse media formats, including video, audio, graphics, and print or digital texts, to support your opinion and engage your audience.

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Present

Writing Skills

Evaluating Sources, Organizing Oral Presentations, Considering Audience and Purpose, Communicating Ideas, Reasons and Evidence, Engaging in Discourse, Sources and Citations

Grammar Skills

Verb Phrases, Adjectival and Adverbial Phrases



Writing Overview

The Extended Oral Project (EOP) in Grade 9 Unit 6 guides students as they create an informative presentation. The prompt for this EOP asks students to prepare an informative presentation about how someone helped them develop a new skill. As an extension of this project, students are also asked to write a letter to the person explaining how that person influenced them and thanking them for their impact. The unit's selections exploring human potential provide context for students. Over the course of the EOP, students engage in the process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and presenting. At each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress of a Student Model to see how another student's presentation changes and improves over time.

Skill lessons on Organizing an Oral Presentation and Evaluating Sources teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while additional skill lessons on Considering Audience and Purpose, Communicating Ideas, Reasons and Evidence, Sources and Citations, and Engaging in Discourse focus on characteristics of informational presentations. A revision lesson guides students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence effectiveness. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in English Language Arts standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice the skill using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing is not confined to the EOP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. The prompt for *Letters to a Young Poet* asks students to assume the role of the young poet and write a letter in response to Rilke, describing the thoughts and feelings experienced as a result of reading Rilke's letter. The prompt for the excerpt from *To Kill a Mockingbird* asks students to discuss what it means to be a good teacher and how one can prove him or herself to be a good student. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with texts in the unit. After students read "The Scarlet Ibis," for example, they use the techniques from the Theme Skill lesson to write a literary analysis exploring the theme of pride as both a creative and destructive incentive in the story.

Other tasks allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to explore science and social studies topics and respond in a creative way to their own self-selected reading. Writer's notebook activities provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer's notebooks, students write to think, reflect, and practice skills they're learning. For example, in every Close Read, students reflect in their notebooks on how the text connects to the unit essential question.



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