

Grade 7 curriculum map

7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative



Unit summary

Students begin with narrative writing to quickly boost their writing production and to learn the foundational skill of Focus. Teachers use this focus on narrative to establish a strong, targeted feedback cycle and to create a vibrant classroom community of readers and writers where diverse experiences and perspectives are at the center of instruction. After exploring the details of how they describe their own experiences and emotions, students pay the same kind of close attention to analyzing the details presented in the unit's core text: Ji-li Jiang's *Red Scarf Girl*, her memoir of growing up during China's Cultural Revolution.

Set against a vast landscape of dramatic events, Ji-li's story makes these society-shaking upheavals feel human-sized by tracing their impact on the experiences of an ordinary young woman. This memoir broadens student awareness of a key moment in Chinese and world history, while connecting this history to relatable themes like adolescents' relationships to authority figures and clashing family and peer loyalties. Students explore how Ji-li Jiang feels increasingly drawn in different directions by a range of conflicting forces: her desire to join the revolution and replace the corrupt old world with a pure new one, her empathy for the people who are damaged and destroyed by this cleansing, her longing to escape the shadow cast by her family's history, and her love for her family. Lessons emphasize Jiang's use of first-person narrative point of view and narrative techniques like dialogue and detail to convey her central ideas. At the end of the unit, students write an essay tracing one way Ji-li changes over the course of her story.



QT: 780L



QL: 3



RT: 2



Rationale(s) for QL

- The subject matter requires some discipline-specific knowledge but references are largely explained
- Primary purpose of texts is clearly stated

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities are typically straightforward or highly engaging; activities often require inferencing; activities do not require substantial external knowledge or experience.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Welcome! (1 lesson)
- SU2: Get Started (12 lessons)
- SU3: *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* by Ji-li Jiang (12 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU4: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

What is one way Ji-li changes over the course of her story?

Vocabulary module

Context Clues

Texts in the unit

Core text

- *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* by Ji-li Jiang I/LN, 780L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens L/S
- "A Boy's Summer Song" by Paul Laurence Dunbar L/P
- Excerpt from *Colors of the Mountain* by Da Chen I/LN

Spanish article

- ¿Sabes que...? "Wuxia, el controvertido género literario chino" by Mónica-Ramón Ríos I/H, 820L–1420L



7B: Character & Conflict



Unit summary

Students analyze characters' responses to conflict and examine how authors use the interactions between characters and events to develop theme and perspective. Students read "Sucker," a short story by Carson McCullers, and *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play by Lorraine Hansberry. Both texts are grounded in a nuanced, deeply compassionate understanding of how families facing hardships can both support and inflict harm on each other, and both provide students with rich opportunities to observe the growth and change of characters whose motivations are often hidden, even from themselves. In addition, the complexity of the characters and dynamics in Lorraine Hansberry's groundbreaking play provides students multiple ways to discuss and analyze issues of individual and cultural identity, familial obligations, and differing notions of success—all through the eyes of family members who pull together in spite of the challenges society places upon them and their own distinct aspirations.

Throughout the unit, students focus on what motivates and challenges different characters, trace literary elements and themes, and analyze how characters use figurative language to convince others of their perspectives. Students also compare the characters' experiences in Lorraine Hansberry's play to Langston Hughes's poem "Harlem" and an excerpt from Hansberry's memoir, *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*. Finally, the immersive Quest—*Black, White and Blues in Chicago*—allows students to explore the lives and characters from *A Raisin in the Sun*, while gaining a deeper knowledge of Black history with an emphasis on Civil Rights-era thinkers and ideas.



QT: 870L–1400L



QL: 3



RT: 3



Rationale(s) for QL

- Levels of meanings and/or theme may be conveyed with some subtlety
- The subject matter requires some literary/cultural knowledge but references are largely explained

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: "Sucker" by Carson McCullers (5 lessons)
- SU2: *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry (16 lessons)
- SU3: Dreams Deferred (2 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU4: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- Character & Conflict Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Describe one way your character changes from the beginning to the end of the play.

Vocabulary module

Connotations and Denotations

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- "Sucker" by Carson McCullers L/S, 870L
- *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry L/D
- "Harlem" by Langston Hughes L/P
- *To Be Young, Gifted and Black: An Informal Autobiography* by Lorraine Hansberry I/LN, 1400L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry L/S
- "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes L/P
- "Dreams" by Langston Hughes L/P

Spanish article

- ¿Sabes que...? "La comunidad intelectual y creativa de Lorraine Hansberry" by Mónica-Ramón Ríos I/H, 820L–1420L



7C: Brain Science



Unit summary

Students explore a series of narrative nonfiction and informational texts that expose the intricate workings of the brain, challenge their concept of what it means to be human, and allow them to consider how their own growing brains are impacted by daily experiences. This unit supports students as they build awareness of their unique cognitive strengths and challenges, and of the ways in which they can exert control over their own learning.

Lessons emphasize the analysis of informational text structures and scientific arguments. In *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science*, students trace the immediate and long-term impact of Phineas's extraordinary brain injury, the remarkable efforts of doctors and scientists to learn from his survival, and the early understanding of brain structure and function that grew from that knowledge. Through readings from *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain*, students add information to their working model of the brain and consider whether and how adolescent behavior may or may not be shaped by their developing brains. In excerpts from Oliver Sacks's book *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, students apply their growing understanding of how the brain functions to modern brain injury cases. Finally, the *Perception Academy* Quest lets students experience daily life with a brain injury and diagnose the region of their brain that is injured based on their symptoms.



QT: 970L–1420L



QL: 4



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- The subject matter requires discipline-specific knowledge or references to other texts
- Texts may include multiple purposes or be stated implicitly

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman (11 lessons)
- SU2: *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain* by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore (5 lessons)
- SU3: *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks (3 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU4: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- Brain Science Unit Reading Assessment

Quest

- *Perception Academy*

Essay prompt

Compare and contrast Phineas's behavior and brain to those of an adolescent.

Vocabulary module

Greek and Latin Roots

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman I/H, 1030L
- *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain* by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore I/S&T, 1310L
- *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks I/S&T, 970L
- The majority and dissenting opinions in *Roper v. Simmons* I/H
- "Demystifying the Adolescent Brain," by Laurence Steinberg I/S&T, 1420L

Extra texts

- "Sonnet—To Science" by Edgar Allan Poe L/P
- "The Brain" by Emily Dickinson L/P
- "Recovery from the Passage of an Iron Bar Through the Head" by John M. Harlow, MD I/S&T

Spanish article

- ¿Sabes que...? "Neuroplasticidad, la capacidad del cerebro para cambiar" by Mónica-Ramón Ríos I/S&T, 820L–1420L



7D: Poetry & Poe



Unit summary

In this unit, students learn a set of visualization techniques to read like a movie director. First, they read poems by D. H. Lawrence, Federico García Lorca, and Emily Dickinson to learn to form mental images while reading. Then, they read three texts by Edgar Allan Poe—"The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Cask of Amontillado," and "The Raven"—and use Poe's meticulous narrative and visual details to create storyboards that help them make their mental images concrete and discover the unreliability of first-person narrators. Students analyze point of view, characters, settings, sounds/soundtracks, and mood to explain the reason for their choices. They also watch thoughtful, animated adaptations of "The Raven" and "The Cask of Amontillado" and compare the movie adaptations to the original texts. After reading these stories, students participate in the murder mystery Quest *Who Killed Edgar Allan Poe?*, where they investigate the crime scene and interrogate characters to find and interpret clues and ultimately solve the mystery. At the end of the unit, students write an essay arguing whether they can trust the narrator of one of the unit's texts.



QT: 800L–1530L



QL: 4



RT: 3



Rationale(s) for QL

- Levels of meaning and theme are multiple, ambiguous, and/or revealed over the course of the text
- Language is generally complex in word usage, level of abstraction and sentence complexity

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Poetry (4 lessons)
- SU2: “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe (7 lessons)
- SU3: “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe (6 lessons)
- SU4: “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe (6 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Argumentative (5 lessons)
- Poetry & Poe Unit Reading Assessment

Quest

- *Who Killed Edgar Allan Poe?*

Essay prompt

Can you trust that the narrator is accurately describing what’s happening in the story or poem? Why or why not?

Vocabulary module

Figurative Language

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- “The White Horse” by D. H. Lawrence L/P
- “The Silence” by Federico García Lorca L/P
- “A narrow fellow in the grass” by Emily Dickinson L/P
- “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe L/S, 820L
- M’Naghten Rule, from *Queen v. M’Naghten* I/H, 1530L
- “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe L/S, 800L
- “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe L/P

Extra texts

- “Chicago” by Carl Sandburg L/P
- Excerpt from “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman L/S
- “The Charge of the Light Brigade” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson L/P
- “A Poison Tree” by William Blake L/P

Spanish article

- ¿Sabes que...? “La literatura de Poe en Argentina” by Mónica-Ramón Ríos I/H, 820L–1420L



7E: The Frida & Diego Collection



Unit summary

In this Collection, students explore primary source documents and conduct independent research to learn about two of Mexico's most famous and provocative artists, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, an extraordinary couple who lived in extraordinary times. Students learn how this iconic couple drew inspiration from Latin American folklore, politics, imagery, and customs.

In each sub-unit, students analyze primary source materials with a goal of building their ability to independently research a topic, generate a question, select and analyze reliable sources, and write using those sources. Students build information literacy skills and use their visual analytic skills to “close read” key paintings. Students learn to determine if a source is reliable and understand the ethical uses of information; construct their own research questions and explore the Internet for answers; compare Frida and Diego's use of descriptive writing to Shakespeare's; analyze the use of figurative language; and participate in a Socratic seminar about the complicated issues inherent in the work of Frida and Diego. As summative assignments, students can synthesize all of the skills they've developed to tackle a culminating research assignment, and/or they can design and plan their own digital collage to showcase and present their unique researched interpretation of the work and legacy of Frida and Diego.



QT: 910L–1430L



QL: 5



RT: 4

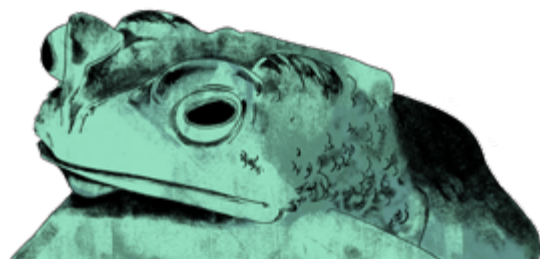


Rationale(s) for QL

- Texts include multiple or intricate purposes
- Language is generally complex in word usage, level of abstraction, and sentence complexity
- The subject matter requires knowledge of discipline or of other texts

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Information Literacy (4 lessons)
- SU2: Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research (4 lessons)
- SU3: Descriptive Writing and Collection Research (4 lessons)
- SU4: Socratic Seminar and Internet Research (4 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Research-based Informative or Argumentative (6 lessons); Multimedia Project (2 lessons)
- The Frida & Diego Collection Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Research Option 1: Informative Essay

Frida Kahlo: The Early Years

Why did Frida Kahlo begin painting? How did this circumstance affect the type of paintings that she did? What did that mean for her long-term career? Write an informative essay about the beginning and development of Frida's artistic work.

Research Option 2: Argumentative Essay, Who has the right to decide what public art should be: the artist or the public?

There was controversy surrounding Diego Rivera's mural *Detroit Industry*. Why did many people object to this work of art? What role does the public play when a work of art is being commissioned for a public space? What role does the artist play? Should Rivera have followed the demands of the public or was he right to follow his artistic instincts?

Vocabulary module

Prefixes and Suffixes

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- "Rockefellers Ban Lenin in RCA Mural and Dismiss Rivera" from *The New York Times* I/H, 1430L
- "Frida Becomes My Wife" from *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* by Diego Rivera I/H, 910L
- "Detroit Industry: The Murals of Diego Rivera" by Don Gonyea from NPR.org I/H, 1150L
- "Letter to Ella and Bertram Wolfe" from *The Letters of Frida Kahlo: Cartas Apasionadas* I/H, 990L
- "Statement by Frida Kahlo" from *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* by Diego Rivera I/H, 910L
- "Life with Frida" from *Frida's Fiestas: Recipes and Reminiscences of Life with Frida Kahlo* by Guadalupe Rivera and Marie-Pierre Colle I/H, 1180L
- "Frida Kahlo" by Phyllis Tuchman from *Smithsonian* I/H, 1090L
- "Sonnet 130" by William Shakespeare L/P

Extra texts

- "To F--" by Edgar Allan Poe L/P

Spanish article

- ¿Sabes que...? "Frida Kahlo y Diego Rivera en Nueva York" by Mónica-Ramón Ríos I/H, 820L–1420L



7F: The Gold Rush Collection



Unit summary

In this Collection, students explore primary documents and conduct independent research to better understand the complex story of the California gold rush. Students build information literacy skills and learn how to construct their own research questions and explore the Internet for answers. They also participate in a Socratic seminar in which they rely on their research to examine the complicated issues inherent in the gold rush story.

Throughout these activities, students conduct research to learn about the wide diversity of people who took part in the California gold rush. They compare and contrast a fictional portrayal with historical accounts and use the information they gather to write narrative accounts from the point of view of a specific person living through this complex and dynamic era. As students reach the end of the unit, they synthesize all of the skills they've developed to tackle a culminating research assignment—part essay, part media project.



QT: 1020L–1600L



QL: 4



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- Texts include multiple or intricate purposes
- Language includes some complex words or usage and/or sentence complexity
- The subject matter requires knowledge of discipline or of other texts

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Information Literacy (4 lessons)
- SU2: Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research (4 lessons)
- SU3: Dear Diary and Collection Research (4 lessons)
- SU4: Socratic Seminar and Internet Research (4 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Research-based Informative or Argumentative (6 lessons); Multimedia Project (2 lessons)
- The Gold Rush Collection Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Research Option 1: Was the gold rush good for the state of California?

Like all things, it depends on how you look at it. Who benefited from the gold rush (remember to consider different populations such as Native Americans and immigrants)? How and why? How did the gold rush affect California in the short term? How did it shape the California we know today? Conduct research and write an argumentative essay that persuades the reader toward your point of view.

Research Option 2: Who was John Sutter? Who was Elsa Jane Guerin?

Choose one of these two famous figures from the gold rush era and start digging. Where did this person come from? Did he or she strike it rich? Has his or her legacy had a lasting impact on the state of California? Conduct research and write an informative essay on one of these fascinating characters from the Old West.

Vocabulary module

Synonyms and Antonyms



Texts in the unit

Core texts

- “California Culinary Experiences” from *The Overland Monthly* by Prentice Mulford I/H, original version: 1220L, adapted version: 1130L, paraphrased version: 900L
- “Letter the Tenth: Amateur Mining—Hairbreadth ‘Scapes, &c.” from *The Shirley Letters from California Mines in 1851–1852* by Dame Shirley I/H, original version: 1600L, adapted version: 1120L, paraphrased version: 510L
- Chapter XXVII and Chapter XXVIII from *Roughing It* by Mark Twain I/LN, 1170L
- “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman L/P
- “Oh My Darling, Clementine” by Percy Montrose L/P
- Chapter 3—“The Magic Equation” from *California: The Great Exception* by Carey McWilliams I/S&T, 1200L
- Preface and Chapter XI from *Sights in the Gold Region, and Scenes by the Way* by Theodore T. Johnson I/H, 1410L
- July 22–August 10, 1849, *The Gold Rush Diary of Ramón Gil Navarro* by Ramón Gil Navarro I/H, 1020L
- Chapter 8—“Good Haul of Diggers” from *Digger: The Tragic Fate of the California Indians from the Missions to the Gold Rush* by Jerry Stanley I/H, 1130L
- “The Toil of Trace and Trail” from *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, L/S, 1120L

Extra texts

- “A Letter from Gold Mountain” from *Good Fortune: My Journey to Gold Mountain* by Li Keng Wong I/LN
- Excerpt from *Murphy, Gold Rush Dog* by Alison Heart L/S
- Excerpt from *A History of US 5: Liberty For All 1820–1860* by Joy Hakim I/H

Spanish article

- ¿Sabes que...? “Migrantes chinos y chilenos durante la fiebre del oro” by Mónica-Ramón Ríos I/H, 820L–1420L

Grade 7 Poetry in America



Amplify partnered with Poetry in America, whose mission is to bring poetry into classrooms and living rooms around the world, to design lessons that combine PIA's "Four Pillar" approach with Amplify's close reading pedagogy to build students' engagement and knowledge about poetry. Each three-lesson sub-unit allows students to fully explore a poet's choices around form and language, both in conversation with each other and with the poets, celebrities, academics, and citizens who appear in embedded videos discussing each poem. Then, students have the opportunity to try on the poet's use of language, craft, and structure in creative writing assignments tailored to the targeted poem.

In Sub-unit 1, Kay Ryan's poem "Carrying a Ladder" conjures up the hilarity, frustrations, and rewards of hauling around a real ladder. Students have fun with these concrete scenarios before diving into the poem's possible figurative meanings, including common adolescent feelings of ambition and self-doubt. Students end by composing their own extended metaphor poem to express something they "carry" with them.

In Sub-unit 2, Emma Lazarus's iconic poem "The New Colossus" allows students to analyze visual symbol, form, and allusion as they consider the different values of the Old World and the New World, and what it means to be an immigrant and an American.

In Sub-unit 3, students consider the personal and cultural background that African American poet Richard Hayden drew on for his iconic poem "Those Winter Sundays," and how those influences are reflected in his language and his adaptation of the sonnet form for this poem about his father. They use his poem as an inspiration for writing their own ode to an unsung hero in their life. (This sub-unit is made available across grades 6–8.)



QL: 3
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RT: 2
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Rationale(s) for QL

- Level meanings and/or theme may be conveyed with some subtlety
- The subject matter requires some literary/cultural knowledge but references are largely explained

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities do not require substantial external knowledge or experience.

Poetry in America activity highlights:

Discussions with annotated guides

Explore each poet's use of sensory details, figurative language, form, and structure.

Video explorations

Watch and discuss videos where poets, celebrities, and academics share their interpretations and analyses of each poem.

Creative responses

Compose poems by experimenting with theme and mimicking each poet's style.

Core texts

- "Carrying a Ladder" by Kay Ryan, L/P
- "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, L/P
- "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden, L/P

Sub-units and # of lessons

- SU1: "Carrying a Ladder" (3 lessons)
- SU2: "The New Colossus" (3 lessons)
- SU3: "Those Winter Sundays" (3 lessons)

