



ELA GRADE LEVEL OVERVIEW

An Introduction to StudySync's Thematic Units for Grade 11



Introduction

This Grade 11 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 11 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

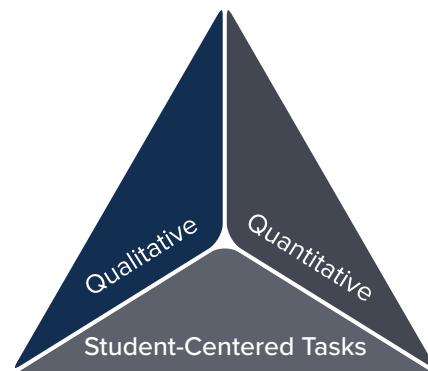
StudySync offers students a wealth of opportunities to interact with high quality texts that span a variety of genres, cultures, and eras. The selections presented in each unit and grade strike an appropriate balance of fiction, poetry, drama, argumentative, and informational texts, consistent with grade-level 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.

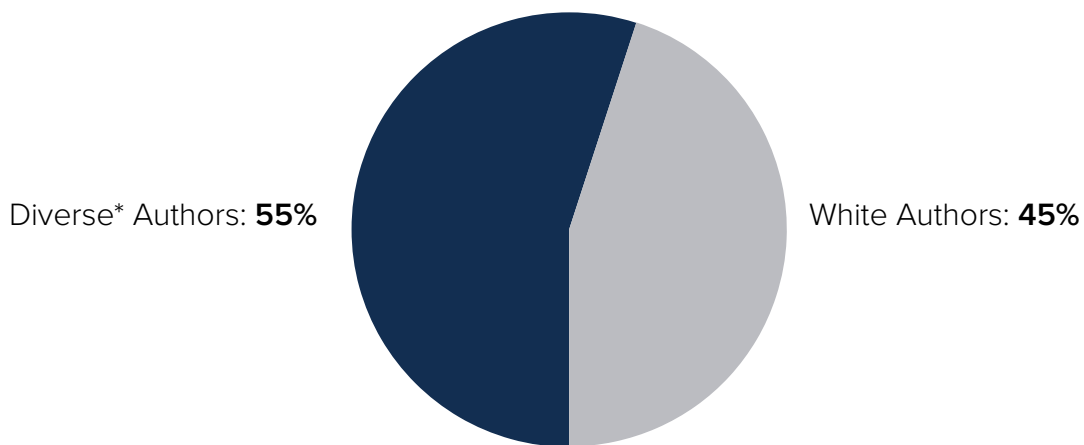


Overall Grade Diversity Representation

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.

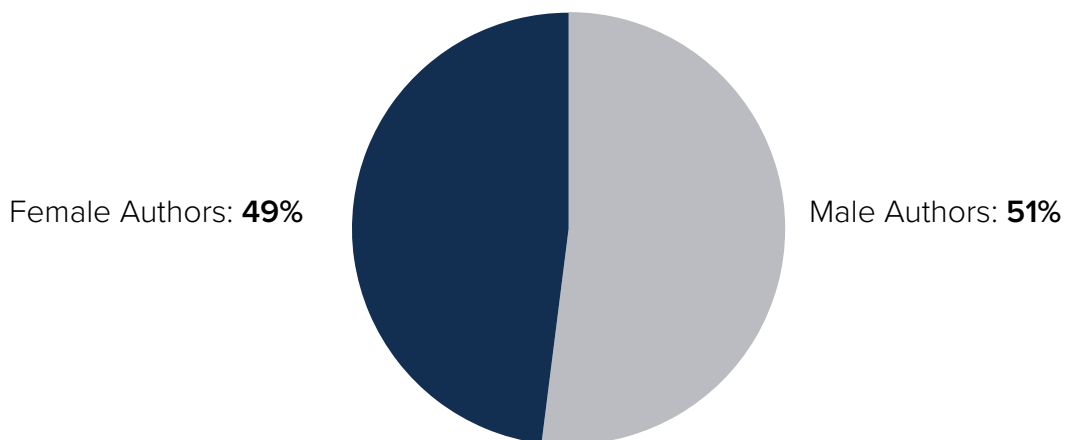
Diversity Representation

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

Breaking Away

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Unit Overview

Unit 1 Title

Breaking Away

Essential Question

How does independence define the American spirit?

Literary Focus

Early America

Genre Focus

Fiction

Introduction

Inspired in part by tenets expressed in the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations, the founding fathers established the United States of America on the principles of equality and the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. From the first days of the United States through the present day, the American spirit continues to be one of independence and sovereignty.

How has independence driven the American spirit throughout the nation's history? What moments in history contradict this spirit? How has the scope of independence evolved in American society?

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 historical documents the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations and the Declaration of Independence lay the foundation on which the United States was founded. Then several literary works of fiction explore the American spirit, such as the classic story "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" and the novel *The Scarlet Letter*. Selections such as *The Namesake*, "Verses upon the Burning of Our House," "On Being Brought from Africa to America," and "Indian Boarding School: The Runaways" 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 11 Unit 1 serves as the starting point for eleventh grade students' continued development as critical readers and learners. Though this unit focuses on the genre of fiction, it also features poetry and nonfiction texts. With a Lexile® range stretching from 960–1470, the majority of the texts in this unit average around 1200, a perfect starting point for eleventh graders. Additionally, the vocabulary, sentence structures, text features, content, and relationships among ideas make these texts accessible to eleventh graders, enabling them to grow as readers by interacting with appropriately challenging texts.

The unit begins with “The Story of an Hour,” which is used in the SyncStart unit. Though this text challenges students through its archaic language and use of irony, it also has the largest number of 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 like Annotation, Context Clues, Reading Comprehension, Text Dependent Responses, and Collaborative Conversations not only build a foundation for the school year; they also allow students to encounter the opening text repeatedly using different perspectives, which makes this complex text more manageable.

Throughout the unit, students read and analyze a collection of pieces in a common Lexile® band. In addition to sharing a Lexile® band, the literature shares the thematic link, each piece focusing on an aspect of defining independence. Though they do not receive a Lexile® score, poems by Phillis Wheatley, Jupiter Hammon, and Louise Erdrich orient students thematically, demonstrating how independence for all in America has been a concern across time and literary periods, while a following Point/Counterpoint informational text encourages students to consider the pragmatics of independence in their own lives. “Point/Counterpoint: Life After High School” offers dueling opinions on post-graduation life and falls on the higher end of the Lexile® complexity band, but that complexity is balanced by its relatability to students' own lives and a Skill lesson that teaches students how to analyze media in context.

The Declaration of Independence, which has a Lexile® of 1470, contains sophisticated rhetorical devices and appeals. Students are supported in their reading with the Skill lessons Author's Purpose and Point of View, Rhetoric, and Primary and Secondary Sources as well as a StudySyncTV episode. This selection is paired with the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations, which not only offsets the increased Lexile® of Jefferson's text but also gives students insight into the pre-Colonial traditions that helped inspire some founding principles of government. The Skill lessons, Close Read questions, and writing activities for the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations ask students to compare and contrast how the authors use distinct text structures to develop ideas about a similar topic.



This task gives students the opportunity to look closely at structural differences between argumentative texts while applying comparative thinking and writing skills to two texts that share a similar genre and purpose.

Students continue their exploration of independence at the roots of American history with *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* and “Verses upon the Burning of Our House” which explore the theme of liberation and renewal through loss, cap the unit’s literary focus on Early America. The next grouping of texts includes Louise Erdrich’s poem “Indian Boarding School: The Runaways,” Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel *The Scarlet Letter*, and Herman Melville’s short story “Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street” take students into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to examine the conflicts that arise when an individual defies societal expectations. The Skill lessons Theme, Figurative Language, and Point of View support students as they analyze Melville’s classic story.

The unit readings close with *The Namesake*, Indian American novelist Jhumpa Lahiri’s exploration of identity issues among U.S. immigrants in the twenty-first century. Although lower than the average Lexile® score, *The Namesake* includes the sometimes complex figurative language of its genre to convey a picture of cultural conflict, struggles to maintain former identities, and the attempts to incorporate traditional ways into a new “American” identity.

Throughout the unit, the shared thematic and genre links provide students with consistent access and reference points for the texts. Combined with the similar level of text difficulty, students can focus on applying the skills to these texts without drastic fluctuations in reader difficulty.



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 Core ELA 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 of the Extended Writing Project. In each unit, students will plan and present a persuasive scene in the form of a dramatic 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.



The Story of an Hour

by Kate Chopin

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1894

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- The events of this story take place in the span of an hour, yet decades of the characters' lives are shown within it.
- Guide students to track plot events and make connections between the characters' present situation and their past.

Prior Knowledge

- This story is set in late-nineteenth-century America, when the majority of women had few freedoms independent of their husbands or fathers.
- Explain that the phrase “powerful will bending hers” refers to women being subservient to men.

Genre

- Point out genre features present in the text such as believable human characters dealing with a realistic problem.
- Point out Chopin's themes of the desirability of independence and its possible conflict with marriage.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 960

Word Count: 1,011



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

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

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: How does the author use story elements such as setting, character development, or theme to develop the plot of “The Story of an Hour”? In your response, evaluate at least two of the story elements used by the author and how they shape the plot. Use evidence from the text to support your analysis.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Situational Irony Skit

Kate Chopin uses situational irony to create surprising twists and turns in “The Story of An Hour.” Students will write, direct, and perform skits that depict an example of situational irony.

Ask students to:

- Break into groups and brainstorm situations that epitomize situational irony.
- Write a skit to bring an example of situational irony to life.
- Rehearse their skits, making sure the situational irony is highlighted.
- Perform the skits for classmates and have the audience explain the situational irony presented.
- After each skit, pause and discuss:
 - What did you expect to happen?
 - What actually happened?
 - What was the impact of this difference on the audience?

To reflect, ask students:

- What effect does situational irony have on a text?
- What did the skits have in common?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

How can one woman find independence hidden inside a tragedy? In this iconic story by Kate Chopin, a woman learns of her husband’s sudden death and has a surprising reaction.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use this story as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may draw on Chopin’s themes of identity and independence for inspiration as they craft their narrative.



On Being Brought from Africa to America

by Phillis Wheatley

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1773

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Explain that the speaker in the poem represents enslavement as “mercy.” Evaluating her message from a contemporary standpoint can be challenging.
- Encourage students to think critically as to why Wheatley may have represented her experience in this way.

Specific Vocabulary

- Difficult vocabulary and allusions to Christianity, such as “redemption” and “Cain” 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: 57



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: Consider the emotions and events described in the poem. In your opinion, what would be an appropriate alternate title to convey the speaker’s perspective and experiences? Why? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Power of Connotation

Many words in the English language have a literal meaning and a connotative meaning. Wheatley uses connotations in her poem to help establish tone to evoke a strong emotional response in the reader.

Ask students to:

- Work in small groups to find at least five words from the poem where the connotations associated with the words create an emotional response.
- Have each group choose one of the words to create a silent performance that highlights the connotation of the word.
- Each group should perform their connotation for the class to see if they can figure out which word is being performed.

To reflect, ask students:

- How do words create an emotional response?
- How important is connotation when communicating with others?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In her poem, “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” Phillis Wheatley reflects on her newfound religion and how religion can unite people across race. She ponders how an enslaved person can find personal freedom through religion.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Wheatley’s poem is autobiographical, drawing on her own life experiences. Have students draw on their own experiences as inspiration for their narratives.



An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatley

by Jupiter Hammon

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1772

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- Hammon makes many biblical references throughout, and students may be unfamiliar with the allusions.
- Students unfamiliar with these biblical references may wish to do some online research.

Purpose

- The poem is a biblical address, using Christianity to guide those who are lost. Hammon uses Wheatley as a representative of others, as he addresses enslaved and free people.
- Students may need support in identifying Hammon's intended audience and tone.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 564



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Compare and Contrast

Close Read Prompt

Compare and Contrast: Citing clear, supporting evidence from both texts, compare and contrast the overall attitude toward religion in each poem. In which ways do the authors agree about religion, and in which ways do they disagree? Then, tell how both poems represent Early American Literature.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Using Poetry to Give Advice

In this text, the speaker uses his poem to directly address Phillis Wheatley. This platform allows Hammon to give her advice, and express his thoughts around how to live a Christian life.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm a list of people they would like to give advice to. These lists can contain people they actually know, as well as politicians, celebrities, etc.
- Once they've created their list, have students select one person, and reflect on the following questions:
 - Why do you want to address this person? What advice would you give this person? How do you want this person to change?
- Then, have them use their reflections to write a poem giving this person advice.
- Their poems should directly address their audience and communicate their attitude towards the audience.
- Have students use figurative language where appropriate and format their poem in stanzas.

Have students share their poems. To reflect, ask students:

- How do writers express their thoughts and feelings in creative ways?
- How do writers use poetry to evoke change?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In his poem “An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatley,” Jupiter Hammon responds to Phillis Wheatley’s “On Being Brought From Africa to America” in a series of religious proclamations and images.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Give students time to reflect on how “An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatley” demonstrates the conventions and characteristics of this unit’s literary focus, Early America, by freewriting in their Writer’s Notebooks.



Life After High School

by Point/Counterpoint

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2017

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The specific purpose of a text influences how a reader interacts with it. Students may need support identifying the purpose of each text.
- Remind students that an author's purpose may be to inform, to explain, to entertain, to persuade, or any combination of these. Point out the types of details included in the texts, such as facts and opinions, and any signal words, such as "best" and "should." Then ask, "What do these details and signal words reveal about why the author wrote this text?"

Specific Vocabulary

- Difficult vocabulary, such as *acclimate* (to slowly become accustomed to new surroundings) and *fundamental* (basic, most essential), may need defining.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1400

Word Count: 1500



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Media

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: Each author chooses to address either the pros or cons of the decision to settle somewhere new or stay close to home after high school. How does each author use both textual and graphic information to support his or her argument? Based on the information provided in each text, which argument do you find more convincing and why? Support your answer with both textual and graphic evidence.

Beyond the Book

Infographic: Where to Live?

Two essays present different cases for living at home or moving out of the family home. Students will create an infographic to help a graduating senior make a decision where to live.

Ask students to:

- Take notes on the benefits and challenges presented in the essays.
- Design an infographic that represents the points made.
 - What data will best illustrate the challenges and benefits for each side?
 - What is the best way to visualize the information and data?
- Create an infographic using multimedia.
- Present the infographic to the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which infographic was the most compelling? Why?
- How important are facts and figures when debating an issue?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Should students stay close to home or set off to pursue opportunities elsewhere after high school? Two students present their cases for each of these options in argumentative essays.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use their close reading of “Life After High School” as an opportunity to think about how desire for independence affects our choices. This may provide some questions to consider as they write their narratives.



Constitution of the Iroquois Nations

by Dekanawidah (Oral Tradition)

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: Circa 1150

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need support to comprehend domain-specific expressions and names in the text.
- Encourage students to use an outside text to look up unfamiliar terms.

Purpose

- The author's intent may be obscured by the unfamiliar language.
- The teacher may need to clarify that the text is nonfiction. Students may need support to focus on the document's purpose.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1360

Word Count: 1,355



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Personal Response

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: Most historians believe the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations inspired the framers of the U.S. Constitution. Whether you are inspired by these same ideals, or by ideals of your own, write a personal response on what you think the laws, ethics, and aspirations of an individual or nation should be. Use evidence from the text and your own experiences to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Speech: Our Constitution

The Iroquois created this oral constitution to establish and maintain peace and unity. Have students create an oral constitution for their community.

Ask students to:

- Choose a facet of their community (e.g., neighborhood, campus, sports team, club, or group).
- Generate a list of fundamental principles needed to govern the group and instill peace and unity.
- Using the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations as a guide, develop a constitution to share with the other members.
- Recite the oral constitution for your classmates or record a dramatic reading.

To reflect, ask students:

- What makes writing a constitution difficult?
- How effective are constitutions at establishing and maintaining peace?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The Declaration of Independence was penned by the founding fathers in 1776, hundreds of years after the adoption of the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations, but both texts provide students with examples of powerful rhetoric. The Constitution of the Iroquois Nations outlines fundamental principles that respected the independence of warring tribes and established a peaceful alliance among them.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations for their narratives about independence. Have them make note of how the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations balances the needs of the individual with the goals of their community.



Declaration of Independence

by Thomas Jefferson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1776

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students may not understand the strained relationship between England and the colonies in the years preceding the Declaration.
- Explain how the colonists protested unfair taxes by dumping tea in the Boston Harbor in 1773. Describe the conflicts with the British soldiers quartered in the colonies and the Battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775.

Sentence Structure

- Students may need support in understanding long sentences and unfamiliar phrasing.
- Remind students to use commas, semicolons, and dashes to find breaks in thought. They can look up unfamiliar words in a print or digital dictionary.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1470

Word Count: 1,339



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

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

Close Read Prompt

Compare and Contrast: The Constitution of the Iroquois Nation and the Declaration of Independence use rhetoric to reveal the author's purpose and point of view. Write a response in which you compare and contrast each text's purpose and the rhetoric used to support it. Then evaluate which rhetorical devices in each text are the most effective by using textual evidence and original commentary to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Research: Justifying Contemporary Movements

The Declaration of Independence signifies the birth of our nation and articulates our country's values and our citizen's rights.

Break students into small groups and ask them to:

- Choose a current event or controversial issue (e.g., racial profiling, immigration, same sex marriage, and sexual harassment, etc.).
- Research the major points and perspectives of both sides of the issue they selected.
- Explore the Declaration of Independence to find statements that might impact decisions about these controversial issues.
- Create a multimedia presentation to present their research to the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- How is the meaning of the statement "all men are created equal" similar to or different from its meaning in the Declaration of Independence?
- How much importance should the Declaration of Independence have in current controversies?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

One of the most important documents in U.S. history, the Declaration of Independence, defines the reasons for separation from British rule and establishes the founding principles of the United States. After reading both, students will have a chance to explain which text uses rhetoric more powerfully and why.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use this text as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of Jefferson's rhetorical devices, such as repetition, as they craft their original narrative.



The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African

by Olaudah Equiano

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1789

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The specific purpose of a text will influence how a reader interacts with the text. In a complex text, the purpose may be more complicated than simply to inform, entertain, or persuade. The author may also have more than one purpose.
- Discuss the author's purpose(s) and how to use elements from the text to identify purpose.

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may not know some vocabulary and context may not provide adequate clues: *consternation* (surprise that leads to worry or confusion), *apprehension* (fear that something bad will happen), *loathsome* (causing hatred or disgust), *avarice* (greed), *atone* (to admit guilt and make amends).

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1210

Word Count: 2,816



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* is both a description of the horrors of The Middle Passage and a passionate argument against slavery. What kind of rhetorical devices and appeals does Equiano use at the end of the last paragraph? How do the descriptions throughout the excerpt lend power to Equiano's ultimate argument that the cruel and inhumane separation of families "adds fresh horrors even to the wretchedness of slavery"? Be sure to support your response with evidence from the text.

Beyond the Book

Research: Abolitionism in North America

After purchasing his freedom, Olaudah Equiano moved to England and became an active abolitionist. Students will research early abolitionists in North America and present their findings to the class.

Divide students into six groups and assign a historical figure (Benjamin Lay, Anthony Benezet, Elizabeth "Bett" Freeman, Benjamin Rush, Moses Brown, and Quock Walker) to each group.

Ask students to:

- Conduct research on the individual given to the group.
- Find primary sources that explain historical events.
- Find text, pictures, interviews, videos, that explain their life and actions.
- As a group, decide on the best way to share the information gathered with the class.
- Share new learning with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- What was the most surprising information learned?
- What are the different tactics that people used to fight slavery?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In this powerful autobiography, Olaudah Equiano recounts his harrowing journey aboard a slave ship after being captured and kidnapped from his homeland. Students will discuss the message of this text as well as the author's use of rhetoric and appeals to build his argument.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Olaudah Equiano for their narratives. Students can work to convey their character's emotions through their use of language.



Verses upon the Burning of Our House

by Anne Bradstreet

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1666

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Poetry may pose a challenge to students. This poem uses a strict structure and terms or words that are no longer commonly used.
- Guide students to paraphrase or rearrange words as needed as they read the poem.

Specific Vocabulary

- Unfamiliar and domain-specific vocabulary, including *repine*, *mouldering*, and *pelf*, may challenge students.
- Encourage students to use context clues to infer the meaning of any unfamiliar words and to use a dictionary to confirm their meaning.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 363



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Analyzing Early American Literature

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: “Verses upon the Burning of Our House” describes the speaker’s resilience after losing her home. Write a narrative about a character who also demonstrates resilience during a time of trial, or write a personal narrative describing a similar experience from your own life in order to create a deeper connection to the themes of the text.

Beyond the Book

Discuss and Write: Modern Values

Societal values combined with our independent values influence how we live our lives. Have students select one possession they own to discuss and write a story revealing its significance.

Ask students to:

- Think about their most prized possession and why they value it.
- Discuss the importance of their possession with classmates.
 - Which object did they select and why?
 - How did the object enter their life?
 - What symbolic value does it hold?
 - Would others think this possession was valuable?
 - Is the value they associate with this possession impacted by their culture or family?
- Write a narrative in which their prized possession is the focus of the story.

To reflect, ask students:

- To what extent does culture or society shape their values?
- How do their modern values compare to Puritan values?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poem “Verses upon the Burning of Our House” recalls the journey Anne Bradstreet went through after a fire destroyed her material possessions. This poem inspires students to think about the freedom they have to gain after losing the familiar comforts to which they have become accustomed.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from the poem for their narratives. Encourage them to consider emotional or spiritual independence as a possible theme to incorporate into their own writing.



The Scarlet Letter

by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1850

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- Students may not understand the way Hester Prynne responds to her punishment.
- Explain that her behavior should be considered in light of different human responses to attempts at shame and punishment.

Genre

- The author uses characters' words and actions to impart a moral lesson, which may be challenging for students to identify.
- Explain that the scarlet letter is used as a symbol first of shame and then of identity.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1360

Word Count: 1,036



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: *The Scarlet Letter* depicts life in a society where Puritan values are the norm. What details about the historical and social setting of this society contribute to the plot and how people in the crowd perceive Hester? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Art: Symbolic Punishment

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne is forced to wear the letter *A* as a symbol of her crime. Her scarlet letter was designed to remind her and everyone else of her crime for the rest of her life.

Ask students to:

- Think of school rules that could be enforced by bringing public attention to them.
- Choose a school rule that is frequently violated. How could this rule be enforced through peer pressure and public attention?
- Design a symbol that represents this “crime.”
- Write a brief explanation of the school rule, the public consequence for violating this rule, and the justification for this punishment. This explanation should be written in a formal tone that can be shared with both parents and students.

To reflect, ask students:

- Is public shaming an effective deterrent for people who commit crimes?
- Why do you think public shaming punishments, like the stocks, are no longer used?
- What factors should be considered to ensure the punishment fits the crime?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The classic American novel *The Scarlet Letter*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, read with the poem “Indian Boarding School: The Runaways” and “Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street,” helps students think about the relationship between social isolation and independence. In *The Scarlet Letter*, students meet Hester Prynne, who is shunned by her community for an unlawful act.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from the setting and characterization of Hawthorne’s novel. Have them include a setting that impacts their character’s independence—or lack thereof.



Indian Boarding School: The Runaways

by Louise Erdrich

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1984

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- The poet uses literary devices, especially metaphors and personification, to reveal the speaker's thoughts and feelings.
- Guide students to track vocabulary that helps convey a tone of being punished.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may be unaware that schools were established to instill European values and culture in Native American children who were forcibly removed from their families.
- Explain that boarding schools were either off-reservation and far from a student's tribe or on-reservation. In both cases, they were run by settlers, not tribal leaders.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 191



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: This poem expresses the significance home and setting have for one's sense of self. Write a narrative about a place, real or imagined, that has been integral to your identity.

Beyond the Book

Research Project: Creating a Digital Museum

This poem examines the experiences of Native American youth, many of whom were coerced into attending boarding schools that sought to forcibly assimilate them into Euro-American culture.

Break students into small groups and ask them to conduct research into these boarding schools. Have students identify 2-3 credible sources that they will include in a digital exhibit.

To focus their research, ask students:

- What were the boarding schools?
- Who established them, and for what purpose?
- What efforts did students make to preserve their culture?
- What primary sources, including photographs, support your responses to these questions?

Have students work together to create a digital exhibition of their findings, such as a blog post, Google site, or multimedia presentation.

To reflect, ask students:

- What did you learn?
- How did your research influence your understanding of this topic?
- After completing this project, what additional questions, ideas, or actions might you want to explore further?

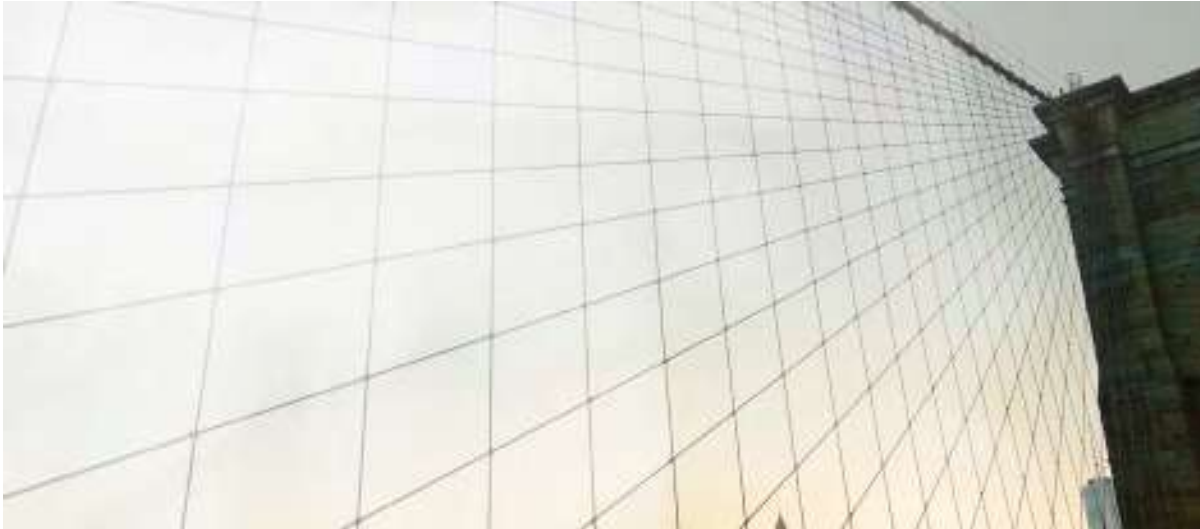
Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In Louise Erdrich's poem "Indian Boarding School: The Runaways," the speaker explores what motivated young Native American students to run away from boarding school and seek freedom. Students will read this selection to think critically about how place influences identity.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from the poem for their narratives. Have them incorporate literary devices such as metaphor into their writing.



Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street

by Herman Melville

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1853

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The story explores ideas about work and isolation. It is set in a Wall Street law office in New York ca. 1855.
- Explain that the narrator is a lawyer who isn't sure how to react to his employee.
- Ask students to consider who the story is about.

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may not know words such as *recondite* (hard to understand), *chancery* (a public records office), and *custom house* (office at a port).
- Remind students to use a dictionary to define unknown words if context does not provide adequate clues.

Sentence Structure

- Many sentences are long and include numerous clauses.
- Have students pay close attention to punctuation, and even read complicated sentences out loud to help with comprehension.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1040

Word Count: 9,920



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Theme, Point of View, Figurative Language

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: How does Melville use a satirical point of view as well as figurative language to develop the themes in the story? Determine at least one satirical critique in the story and one use of figurative language and explain how these literary devices help develop the story's themes. Use evidence from the text to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Bringing the Ordinary to Life

The author portrays ordinary events in an engrossing way to engage readers. Help students understand this process by doing the following:

Ask students to:

- Spend 30 minutes people watching in a location they enjoy spending time at (e.g., a grocery store, the mall, a park)

Collect details of conversations, behaviors, and settings. Note:

- What people are doing and how they gesture and move
- How they react to what is said to or around them
- What social norms are being followed or not followed
- Behaviors that seem humorous, ironic, or exaggerated
- Use their notes to write a story set in a selected location, involving characters based on the people they observed including figurative language and/or satire.
- Communicate the feelings and emotions of the people involved.

To reflect, ask students:

- How do writers express their thoughts and feelings?
- How do writers make the ordinary interesting?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Students will read this selection to consider the effects of personal, social, and professional isolation on personal independence.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can reflect on Melville's story beginning as a way to engage the reader and pique interest.



The Namesake

by Jhumpa Lahiri

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2003

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students will likely be unfamiliar with Indian cultural references and geographic place names. Bengal is a region in the northeast of India, with Calcutta as its major city. Cambridge is an area of Boston, Massachusetts, and site of Harvard University.
- Have students highlight unfamiliar terms or cultural references and use context to infer a possible meaning.

Organization of Ideas

- Events take place before, during, and after the narrator's wedding, and in India and Boston. Students may need assistance with these temporal and spatial shifts.
- Have students identify details of the wedding ceremony in paragraph 6. Then have them find the sentence that shifts the scene from before to after the wedding and from India to Boston.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1130

Word Count: 1,139



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: Jhumpa Lahiri once said, “That’s the thing about books. They let you travel without moving your feet.” Defend or challenge her claim about books using textual evidence from this excerpt of *The Namesake*. Prepare for a discussion with your peers by writing down your stance about this claim as well as your reasoning.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Social Media, the Game Changer

Ashima recalls how she felt when she first met her husband. Students will select a famous couple from literature and recreate their first meeting.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm famous love stories from novels (i.e. Romeo and Juliet, Cleopatra and Mark Antony, etc.)
- Transport one couple into modern times and think about how these two people could have met using social media or a dating app.
- Create dialogue between the couple using a social media platform or dating app.
- Write a short paragraph about their first impressions of each other based on this online conversation.
- Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How is social media changing ancient customs and rituals of marriage?
- Is social media helping or hurting relationships?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The Namesake tells the story of an Indian couple who have immigrated to the United States and struggle with cultural differences. Students will learn further about how individuals strike out and survive on their own.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Lahiri for their narratives. Encourage them to use dialogue and descriptive details to capture a memory and its impact on a character or narrator.



Extended Writing Project

Breaking Away

Essential Question

How does independence define the American spirit?

Writing Form

Narrative

Extended Writing Project Prompt

Write about a character, real or imagined, who feels trapped by circumstance and who wishes to become more independent. Using the skills you have learned in this unit, write a narrative in which a character moves from dependence to independence. Be sure to describe how the character feels limited at the beginning, the decisions the character makes to become independent, and the consequences and responsibilities of this newfound independence. If you choose to write a personal narrative, use the same outline to write about how you or someone you know has achieved independence.

EWP Mentor Texts

Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street, The Story of an Hour

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish

Writing Skills

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

Grammar Skills

Basic Spelling Rules I, Dashes, Commas After Transitions



Writing Overview

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 11, Unit 1 focuses on narrative writing. Students probe the unit’s essential question—How does independence define the American spirit?—as they write an original narrative. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write about how the desire for independence affects our choices. The unit’s selections about attaining independence 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 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.

The Skill lessons Organizing Narrative Writing and Narrative Techniques teach concepts specifically called out in the English Language Arts standards, while additional Skill lessons such as Story Beginnings and Descriptive Details focus on characteristics of the narrative writing genre and help students develop their unique voices. A revision lesson guides students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to 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 discussion prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. In the Independent Read “Verses upon the Burning of Our House” students are asked to write a narrative about a character who demonstrates resilience during a time of trial, while the prompt for the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations asks them to write a personal response on what the laws, ethics, and aspirations of an individual or nation should be. 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 Story of an Hour,” they use the techniques from the Story Elements skill lesson to analyze how literary elements such as settings, characterization, and theme shape the author’s portrayal of plot in the story. Later in the unit, students analyze how Melville uses figurative language and satire to critique individuals and institutions in “Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street.”

Other writing tasks allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about national sovereignty, as well as offering them the opportunity to self-select texts for independent reading and writing. 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. In the Skill lesson Narrative Techniques, students practice by rewriting a scene from one of their favorite books or movies from the point of view of a minor character, and in the Descriptive Details lesson, they practice by writing down a variety of sensory details related to their first memory. In each 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 2

The Highway

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Unit Overview

Unit 2 Title

The Highway

Essential Question

How do journeys influence perspective?

Literary Focus

Transcendentalism and Romanticism

Genre Focus

Informational Text

Introduction

Leaving the comfort and familiarity of our usual surroundings to experience new places can broaden our understanding of the world and our place in it. Whether recounting family road trips or solo travels to other countries, narratives about journeys invite readers along for the ride and offer them an opportunity to witness how a journey can shape, and even change, the way the traveler sees the world. What makes a journey life-changing? What do readers learn by reading about journeys and their impact on travelers' perspectives? What do these stories teach us about ourselves and our society? In this unit, students will think about the theme and essential question as they focus on the literary periods of Transcendentalism and Romanticism, analyzing excerpts from Henry David Thoreau's essay *Walden* and poems by Emily Dickinson. They will also study the genre of fiction while reading excerpts from stories such as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." In addition, the genre focus on informational texts, such as *Mississippi Solo* by Eddy Harris and *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson, will encourage students to consider the effects of life-changing journeys. 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 informative writing projects.



Text Complexity

Grade 11 Unit 2 continues to push students further in their text analysis and critical thinking abilities. Although the genre focus of this unit is informational text, students will also have the opportunity to read an argumentative speech, a screenplay, and poems, as well as two works of fiction. The selections in this unit fall in a Lexile® band of 950–1310. Students may struggle with specialized vocabulary, text and poetic features, and required prior knowledge for many of these texts, but detailed discussions about the themes and ideas examined throughout the unit will aid students in overcoming these challenges. The sentence structures, text features, content, and relationships among ideas make these selections accessible to eleventh graders, encouraging them to dig deeper as readers by engaging with texts of varying difficulty. The first texts in the unit are a pairing of the poem “I never hear the word ‘Escape’” and an excerpt from the novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Both texts explore the essential Romantic theme of freedom. The difficulty of approaching the metaphorical language of Dickinson’s poem as well as the dialect in Mark Twain’s novel is offset by the background conceptual information provided in the Introduction to Transcendentalism and Romanticism lesson which precedes them, as well as a StudySyncTV episode. Skill instruction on Language, Style, and Audience with a focus on syntax will help students unpack the complexity of the dialectic language used in Twain’s text. Together, the two readings provide a clear connection to the unit’s Essential Question—How do journeys influence perspective?—and furnish students with a framework in which to read and analyze the other texts in the unit. This pairing is followed by *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, a travel guide that combines both text and images to relate a message about travel during a specific moment in America’s history while providing a transition from a literary approach to escape to a more tangible and practical view on the topic. The Skill lessons Informational Text Elements, Media, and Word Meaning will develop students’ abilities to analyze informational texts by building the skills necessary for evaluating the various forms of expression.

For the purpose of analyzing American literature within and across literary periods, we have grouped *Walden* with *Mississippi Solo: A River Quest* and “Remarks at the Signing of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965” as the next readings. Comparing the nineteenth-century *Walden* to the contemporary *Mississippi Solo* and “Remarks at the Signing of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965” will allow students to see how diverse expressions of ideas connect to the literary focus, Transcendentalism and Romanticism, and continue to influence literature and culture today. Addressing both the Romantic need for escape and the more pragmatic concerns of project funding, this speech “Remarks at the Signing of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965” by Lyndon B. Johnson will challenge students with its rigorous argumentative text structure and use of counterarguments. The Skill lessons Arguments and Claims and Context Clues as well as a Blast on origins of great human journeys will prepare students to engage



in a focused analysis of the text. Questions requiring dissection of Johnson’s persuasive strategies will support students as they respond to a Close Read prompt which examines Johnson’s use of rhetoric.

“Driving My Own Destiny” and *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration* are two texts that examine the stimulus to journeys to escape certain cultural views and prejudice. The essay “Driving My Own Destiny” is Manal al-Sharif’s explanation of what inspired her radical change from extremist views to supporter of women’s rights in Saudi Arabia. The essay provides students with an entrypoint into the more domestically-related history of rights abuses that spurred the migration of African Americans from the southern United States to northern and western states in the twentieth century. The final cluster of this unit, “Because I could not stop for Death” and “A Good Man is Hard to Find” pairs texts that show students how to analyze literary works of related themes across literary periods and genres. Both Dickinson and O’Connor frame unique, thought-provoking ideas in complex literary language. Students’ rigorous cross-genre comparison of “A Good Man is Hard to Find” is prepared by the Skill lessons Story Structure and Connotation and Denotation, skills which complement the analysis of language in Dickinson’s poem and the notion of a journey’s end. Bringing the readings to a close, the last text in the unit offers students a chance to apply the skills from the unit to a text read independently and to overview the unit’s theme across periods. *Little Miss Sunshine* provides a humorous response to the essential question and focuses on the importance of persistence, unconditional love, and the power of working together to reach a journey’s end. Equally important, the screenplay offers students the opportunity to see the larger view of the theme’s expression in American culture, as well as how Romanticism’s values of individualism and independence still form an essential part of American culture.



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 Core ELA 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 of the Extended Writing Project. In each unit, students will plan and present a persuasive scene in the form of a dramatic 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.



I never hear the word “Escape”

by Emily Dickinson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1891

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need support with understanding the figurative use of seemingly easy vocabulary, such as “quicker blood,” “flying attitude,” and “tug childish.”
- Remind students to think about multiple meanings and the effect of words as they’re reading.

Genre

- Poetry may pose a challenge to students.
- Ask students the following questions: “What ‘rules’ does Dickinson follow? What rules does she break? How does she use metaphor? Why do you think she used poetry to communicate her ideas?”

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 82



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: What do you think the speaker of the poem means by the idea of "escape"? Think about a scenario when you wanted to "escape." How did your feelings compare to the speaker's? Include details from the poem and your own experiences in your response.

Beyond the Book

Interview: What does it mean to “escape”?

Emily Dickinson uses the idea of “escape” in several contexts in her poem. Students will interview someone to discover what their idea of escape is, when they have had to escape something, and how it made them feel.

Ask students to:

- Choose a person to interview.
- Write 5–7 interview questions that will elicit powerful responses.
- Conduct the interview and reflect on the information acquired.
- Partner with another classmate to discuss what you learned from the interview.

To reflect, ask students:

- When is “escape” positive? When is it negative?
- What new ideas did you learn about the concept of “escape”?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poem by Emily Dickinson, “I never hear the word ‘Escape,’” read with an excerpt from Mark Twain’s classic novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* helps students consider how and why individuals sought to escape from the social norms of the time period. In this particular poem, Dickinson describes her reactions to hearing the word “escape.”

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may find inspiration in thinking about the power of freedom for their informational essay describing journeys and what may be learned along the way.



Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

by Mark Twain

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1885

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Sentence Structure

- Huckleberry Finn narrates the story in long sentences that have many clauses and digressions. Students should be supported in understanding complicated and unusual sentence structures.
- Huck's dialect, imperfect grammar, use of slang, and even the spelling used when Huck speaks, reflect who he is—an uneducated, 13-year-old boy from Missouri in the 1840s.

Specific Vocabulary

- Huck's vocabulary includes regionalisms and idiomatic language that may need support. In addition to the vocabulary words *dismal*, *commenced*, *grumble*, and *considerable*, archaic words such as *stretchers* (lies or exaggerations) and *sugar hogshead* (sugar barrel) may need defining.
- Remind students to use context clues or a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 950

Word Count: 1,090



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Summarizing; Language, Style, and Audience

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Summarize the main character's tone towards traditional society. Then, analyze how Mark Twain's choices regarding words and syntax help develop the main character's tone towards traditional society. Support your response with textual evidence.

Beyond the Book

Comic Strip: Bad Habits

Widow Douglas and Miss Watson are raising Huck and trying their best to civilize him. Students will create a comic depicting uncivilized behavior and the widow's reaction.

Ask students to:

- Choose a behavior of Huck's that is deemed uncivilized by the women.
- Create a three or four panel comic depicting the behavior, the reaction of Widow Douglas and Miss Watson, and the resolution.
- Share the comics with classmates and explain why the behavior is considered uncivilized.

To reflect, ask students:

- Are the women being successful at civilizing Huck?
- How are rules of being civilized decided upon?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In Chapter 1 of Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck doesn't enjoy living with the Widow Douglas and longs for the freedom he felt living alone outdoors. Students will read this selection to analyze how Twain uses language and style to develop the narrator's tone towards traditional society.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Chapter 1) to develop strategies for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt Mark Twain's close attention to diction and syntax to capture the appropriate tone, mood, and voice in their informational writing.



The Negro Motorist Green Book

by Victor Green

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1937

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students need to understand the limited rights afforded to African Americans in the United States after the Civil War and before the 1964 Civil Rights Act.
- Remind students, for example, of Rosa Parks, who was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white person in 1955, and the Nashville students who staged sit-ins in 1960 to desegregate lunch counters.

Purpose

- Remind students that the purpose of a text will influence how a reader interacts with the text. The purpose may be more complicated than simply to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- Explain that an author's intentions may be implied. Is the purpose to provide information? Does the author have a perspective to share? How is the author's perspective revealed?

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 8,106



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Informational Text Elements, Media, Word Meaning

Close Read Prompt

Explanatory Essay: How do the media features of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* along with the text elements of the book create a profound new meaning about the relationship between travel and identity? Analyze the effect of viewing the images alongside reading the book, using textual evidence and original commentary to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Writing: The Teenager's Guide

In *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, Green writes a guide for black travelers sharing insight he had gained traveling as a postal carrier on how to successfully travel in segregated America. Students will create an online guide that will help other teens navigate challenging situations.

Ask students to:

- Generate a list of challenging situations teens must deal with in today's world (e.g., social media, college/job demands, sports success, peer pressure.).
- Choose a topic from the list and discuss the aspects of this situation that are challenging.
- Develop specific strategies teens can use to navigate these situations.
- Choose the appropriate tool to create your guide using a mix of media and text
- Complete and share the guide with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How did your personal experience inform your work on this assignment?
- When faced with challenging situations, where do you go for advice and guidance?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Jim Crow America could be a dangerous place for African-American travelers—but with the help of the *Green Book*, created by Victor Hugo Green, African-American travelers could locate specific businesses in every state in the country that were friendly to or owned by African Americans. How did the perspective of the *Green Book* itself change over time, as subsequent editions were published?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use *The Negro Motorist Green Book* as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may use the text to consider the importance of having the freedom to travel as they write their informational essay.



Walden

by Henry David Thoreau

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1854

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- Some nonfiction texts may contain unfamiliar vocabulary and lack adequate context for students to infer the meaning of the terms. These words may be challenging for some readers: *excursion*, *evitable*, *founder*, *rudiment*, *supernumerary*.
- Remind students to use a print or digital dictionary to define unfamiliar words when context does not provide adequate clues.

Purpose

- The specific purpose of a text will influence how a reader interacts with the text.
- Explain that text features can reveal clues about the purpose. Ask students to identify clues in the title and visual. Then ask, “How does Thoreau use multiple examples to explain his purpose?”

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1310

Word Count: 1,206



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: Thoreau writes that “I went into the woods because I wish to live deliberately.” He then goes on to describe what living deliberately means to him—a life away from society and the establishment. After reading this excerpt, do you agree or disagree with his philosophy? Using evidence from the text, as well as your own experiences, write a personal essay in which you explain how you “live deliberately.”

Beyond the Book

Photography: Essentials to a Happy Life

Thoreau shares his thoughts on simplicity and enjoying life. Students will explore what they feel is essential to enjoy life.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm what is essential in their lives focusing on the things that make them the most happy, not on what is needed for survival.
- Choose the top three essentials to living a happy life.
- Take a photo or photos to represent these items that make you the most happy. Write a short caption for each photograph.
- Share the pieces with classmates explaining the symbolism in each photograph.

To reflect, ask students:

- What brings genuine happiness to your life?
- Should happiness be the most important life goal?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

An essay from Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*, read with Eddy L. Harris’s memoir *Mississippi Solo*, and a speech by Lyndon B. Johnson, “Remarks at the Signing of the Highway Beautification Act,” helps students consider the importance of having a connection with nature. In this particular essay, Thoreau recounts his reasons for leaving his comfortable life in Concord to live simply in a one-room cabin on Walden Pond for two years.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration in the narrative nonfiction Thoreau uses to structure his essay. They may choose to use a similar structure in their informational writing, or, like Thoreau, they may elect to focus on how an external journey reflects internal growth.



Mississippi Solo

by Eddy L. Harris

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1988

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- This text may be filled with domain-specific vocabulary that students do not know, and there may not be adequate context for students to infer the meaning of the words.
- Students may need additional support to understand metaphors and similes in this memoir.

Genre

- Students might need to review the genre lesson on informational texts from the beginning of the unit.
- Ask students: What are the unique features of literary nonfiction, such as memoir? How does the writer use these features?

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1100

Word Count: 922



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: Thoreau and Harris each weigh the pros and cons of undergoing a journey versus settling down. Have a discussion in which you compare and contrast the reason(s) each person decides to leave or stay. To prepare for your discussion, write the decision each made, as well as the underlying or implicit motivations and reasons behind that decision. Use textual evidence and original commentary to support your ideas.

Beyond the Book

Writing: My Future Plan

Traveling the Mississippi was something Harris felt he needed to do, despite the concern expressed by his friends and family. Students will write a letter to their parents explaining why they must do something that their parents may not understand or support.

Ask students to:

- Think about something you have always wanted to do or feel you must do.
- Think about why you are motivated to do this and what concerns your parents might have if you pursue this passion.
- Write a letter to your parents explaining why this is so important to you, outline your motivations, and address their concerns. Make sure to note how this will better you moving forward.

To reflect, ask students:

- What does it mean to grow up? When is a person “grown up”?
- Is it necessary to break free from the expectations and hopes of your family in order to develop your own identity?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Mississippi Solo describes the challenges Eddy L. Harris encounters as he prepares to take a solo canoe journey down the entire length of the Mississippi River. Readers have the chance to consider how they might justify a similarly challenging journey to family and friends. Would they be able to resist the call of adventure? What aspirations would such an adventure satisfy? What is to be gained or lost?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration in Harris’s memoir for how to structure their essay. Like Harris, they may elect to focus on how an external journey reflects internal growth.



Remarks at the Signing of the Highway Beautification Act

by Lyndon B. Johnson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1965

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The purpose of a text influences how a reader interacts with the text. In a complex text the purpose may be more complicated than simply to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- Students should understand that a speech may have many purposes. Is the president advocating for preserving the environment? Celebrating a victory? Honoring someone?

Specific Vocabulary

- Difficult vocabulary, such as *dilapidated* (old and in disrepair), *relegated* (assigned to a lower position), *vigilance* (watchfulness), and *objective* (goal or purpose) may need defining.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1250

Word Count: 1,090



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Arguments and Claims, Context Clues

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: President Johnson includes brief, yet detailed, snapshots of his experience with nature as a young boy to help his audience digest his message. Consider the function of these anecdotes. How do Johnson's descriptions of his own relationships with nature work to support his claim? Analyze the effectiveness of Johnson's personal accounts to support his argument, using evidence from the text and original commentary to support your conclusions.

Beyond the Book

Advertisement: The Most Fantastic Place

In his speech, LBJ explained the importance of nature and keeping the environment beautiful. Students will choose their favorite place and encourage others to visit and keep it beautiful.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm a list of their favorite places in nature and select one location to focus on
- Sketch or record details that make it beautiful.
- Analyze different travel brochures.
 - How are the advertisements laid out? What is the picture-to-word ratio? How are they convincing people to visit? What aspects of this location are highlighted in the advertisement?
- Have students create a handout (e.g., brochure, flier, bumper sticker, etc.) encouraging others to maintain the beauty of this location. Share their advertisements with classmates.

Display the handouts. To reflect, ask students:

- Which advertisements were the most enticing and why?
- Do you think advertisements change your interests?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

What happens when the natural beauty of a place has been eclipsed by urbanization and industrialization? How does preserving or restoring the beauty of a place impact the journey through it?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can consider President Johnson's personal accounts of his experiences with nature in this speech as they write about what we learn on journeys in their informational essay.



Driving My Own Destiny

by Manal al-Sharif

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2012

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- The author organizes her essay in a way that differs from typical informational texts. For example, her thesis is not at the beginning of the essay.
- Explain to students that the author uses a chronological structure to address the larger themes of women's rights and of what driving symbolizes for her.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may be unaware that Saudi Arabian women's rights are extremely limited compared to the rights of women in the rest of the world.
- Explain to students that all Saudi women must have a male guardian, must get permission to do almost any major activity, and must use separate entrances and sit in women-only or family sections in public places.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 830

Word Count: 1,030



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Textual Evidence, Informational Text Structure, Word Patterns and Relationships

Close Read Prompt

Explanatory Essay: Manal al-Sharif uses text structure in order to convey a message about driving and what it represents to her. Identify the text structure/s she uses, then analyze how the chosen structure/s relate/s to her purpose for writing “Driving My Own Destiny.” Use textual evidence and original commentary to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Discussion: Is the Internet Brainwashing Society?

Students will discuss their opinions on whether the Internet and social media are guiding or misleading the public.

Ask students to:

- Conduct informal research on Internet use and censorship in other countries.
- Discuss as a group information exchanged worldwide through the Internet.
- Form small groups and find a meme or post on social media where the intent is to get society upset about a situation.
- Share the memes or posts with classmates and discuss who the creator is, who shared it, what reactions were, and how to validate it as correct.
- Discuss the difference between what was collected and shared and Manal al-Sharif’s experience with the Internet.

To reflect, ask students:

- Does the Internet help or prevent falling victim to being brainwashed?
- Should there be censorship of the Internet?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The author explains what inspired her to start a social media campaign called “Drive Your Own Life,” giving an example of how technology impacts one’s journey in life.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can adopt some of Manal al-Sharif’s techniques for using structure to communicate author’s purpose as they craft their own informational essay.



The Warmth of Other Suns:

The Epic Story of America's Great Migration

by Isabel Wilkerson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2013

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- In a complex text, the purpose may be more complicated than simply to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- Tell students that this text blends elements of fiction and non-fiction. Guide them in determining the purpose by asking, “Where should the reader focus? On the characters and their stories, or on the historical information that is embedded in those stories?”

Connection of Ideas

- When reading complex text, the student must make inferences and synthesize information to make connections to information within and outside the text.
- Students may need support in finding common themes in the two separate stories. You may ask, “Why are the characters traveling north? What plans do they have? How do they feel about it?”

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1060

Word Count: 1,078



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Research: In *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Wilkerson relates the tale of three young African Americans who left family and home to participate in the Great Migration. Research the events that helped to launch the Great Migration, and then write a response in which you explain how the two perspectives in the text reflect your research.

Beyond the Book

Interview: Promise of Something Better

In this text, two African Americans participate in the Great Migration in search of a better life. Students will interview someone who has left his or her home in search of a better quality of life.

Ask students to:

- Choose a person who has left a country or town in search of something better.
- Write 5–7 interview questions that will elicit powerful responses.
- Conduct the interview and reflect on the information acquired.
- Partner with another classmate to discuss what you learned from the interview.

To reflect, ask students:

- When is the sacrifice of leaving a home worth the possible dangers or challenges associated with building a new life?
- Can you imagine leaving your home or town in search of a better life?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

This excerpt from the non-fiction work *The Warmth of Other Suns* includes the beginnings of two journeys. Although the Gladney family and George Starling are separated by miles and by years, how are their stories similar?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use this experience of connecting research to text as a mentor assignment when they develop their informational writing.



Because I could not stop for Death

by Emily Dickinson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1890

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Tell students that the specific purpose of a text will influence how a reader interacts with the text. In a complex text, the purpose may be more complicated than simply to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- Prompt students with the following questions: What is Dickinson's perspective? Does her tone reflect her feelings? Is she sympathetic to Death?

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need support to understand metaphors, similes, regionalisms, idiomatic language, and concept words in fiction.
- Have students consider the following questions as they read: How does the poet use irony? How does metaphor communicate the poet's ideas/feelings?

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 106



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Dickinson uses a variety of images to give insight and convey an idea about mortality. Select one image that stands out to you, and interpret how it contributes to the poem’s overall meaning. Use textual evidence and original commentary to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Dramatize the Poem

In this poem, Dickinson speaks of Death as a kind and friendly image, which is in direct contrast with how we are used to death being portrayed. Students will perform a dramatization of the poem.

Ask students to:

- Form small groups.
- Analyze the poem for mood, tone, characters, and meaning.
- Act out the poem.
 - Each student will have a turn at reading part of the poem.
 - As one student is reading, the other students will be acting out the events with appropriate tone.
- After practicing, students will present their performances to the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which performance most effectively communicated the meaning?
- What line or lines were most challenging to perform? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poem “Because I could not stop for Death” and the short story “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” both deal with themes concerning fear and death. In the poem, the speaker describes a carriage ride with Death, personified.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration in “Because I could not stop for Death.” Students can work to choose precise language that adds power and imagery to their informational writing.



A Good Man Is Hard to Find

by Flannery O'Connor

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1953

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- Making inferences and synthesizing information are critical to understanding complex texts. Students may need guidance identifying explicit and implied motivations and actions of the characters.
- Have students discuss how the author reveals the grandmother's personality.

Sentence Structure

- Understanding complicated or unusual sentence structures helps students comprehend the text as a whole. For example, in literary selections, dialogue may contain complex sentence structures.
- Discuss the following questions with students: "What does the grandmother think is important? How do the people around her respond?"

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 940

Word Count: 6,445



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Story Structure, Connotation and Denotation

Close Read Prompt

Compare and Contrast: Compare and contrast the way the short story “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” and the poem “Because I could not stop for Death” use text structure to express and contribute to each text’s overall meaning about death. Provide analysis and textual evidence from both the poem and the short story to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Art: Good vs. Evil

A Good Man Is Hard to Find explores different definitions and perspectives of good vs. evil. Students will depict stereotypes of good and evil in an art project.

Ask students to:

- Discuss different characters from comic books, television shows, movies, games, etc. and discuss the stereotypes associated with good characters versus those associated with evil characters.
- Generate a list of common characteristics of good characters and of evil characters. Discuss the stereotypes and whether or not perception impacts a character’s actions.
- Choose an appropriate artistic medium and create a piece of artwork that displays the characteristics of good and evil.
- Present the artwork to the class and explain your use of color, medium, and symbolism.

To reflect, ask students:

- Are stereotypes of good and evil ever misleading?
- Which type of character are you most drawn to in stories? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In Flannery O’Connor’s 1953 short story, “A Good Man Is Hard to Find,” a family begins a road trip but things take a very dark turn. Students will read both literary works to compare and contrast the tones, themes, and perspectives on death.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can refer to “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” as they prepare for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of Flannery O’Connor’s methods for describing physical and spiritual journeys as they craft their informational essays.



Little Miss Sunshine

by Michael Arndt

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2006

Genre: Drama

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The purpose of a text, such as to inform, entertain, or persuade, impacts how a reader interacts with the work. Complex texts can have multiple or more complicated purposes.
- Guide students to discuss how the author of *Little Miss Sunshine* uses the bus and its breakdown both to entertain and to show more about the characters.

Sentence Structure

- The script format tells directors what action to capture on screen and tells actors what lines to say.
- Discuss with students how the dialogue in a script reveals clues about the story. Ask, “How does the dialogue reveal the relationships between the characters? What do the descriptions of characters’ actions tell us about what the characters are feeling?”

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 824



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: Write an account about a time, real or imagined, when something broke down. What was that experience like? How did those involved respond? Incorporate characteristics of literary texts such as characterization, point of view, setting, plot, and descriptive details in your narrative.

Beyond the Book

Game: Overcoming Family Obstacles

In this excerpt, Olive's family is doing everything they can to ensure that she gets to the pageant on time. Students will create a game of obstacles a family faces on a road trip.

Ask students to:

- Get into small groups and generate different obstacles, the possible and the improbable, that a family might face when taking a road trip.
- Design a game that will take players on a journey of obstacles that they must solve in order to get the family peacefully to their destination. Students must consider:
 - the type of game: board, card, or die
 - equipment needed for the players
 - detailed instructions for players to follow
- Play another group's game.

To reflect, ask students:

- What made the game fun to play?
- What qualities make game instructions easy to follow?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In this 2006 film, the Hoover family overcomes enormous odds as they work toward their singular goal—getting Olive to the “Little Miss Sunshine” pageant in Florida. In the scene excerpted here, the mother and father strategize with a mechanic about their now-broken-down bus while Olive, her grandfather, uncle, and brother look on. How does what happens at the beginning of a journey influence the events to come?

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from *Little Miss Sunshine* for their informational writing. Have students think about how *Little Miss Sunshine* uses the journey as an allegory as they work on their informational essay.



Extended Writing Project

The Highway

Essential Question

How do journeys influence perspective?

Writing Form

Informative

Extended Writing Project Prompt

From non-fiction selections in this unit (including research links in the Blasts), select two or three texts that connect to the idea of being on a journey. Write an informative essay in which you describe the road or the route of the journey in each text, who travels it, and what he or she learns, or might learn, along the way. Be sure to include the personal and cultural importance this journey has and any risks the traveler may have to take.

EWP Mentor Texts

Driving My Own Destiny, Remarks at the Signing of the Highway Beautification Act

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish

Writing Skills

Organize Informative Writing, Thesis Statement, Supporting Details, Introductions, Transitions, Precise Language, Conclusions, Style

Grammar Skills

Active and Passive Voice, Verb Moods, Consistent Verb Voice and Mood



Writing Overview

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 11 Unit 2 focuses on informative writing. Students explore the unit’s essential question—How do journeys influence perspective?—as they write an informative essay. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write an informative essay using evidence from two or three texts from the unit to explain what we learn when we take journeys. The unit’s selections about various kinds of journeys provide a context for students, and the nonfiction selections in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to reflect upon and synthesize as they plan their own essay. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the informative writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During 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.

The Skill lessons Transitions and Precise Language teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while the additional Skill lessons Thesis Statements, Introductions, and Conclusions, focus on characteristics of the informative writing genre and help students develop an organizing structure that serves their purpose for writing. Revision lessons guide students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to specific grammar skills identified in English Language Arts standards. After each Skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using sample student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing extends beyond 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. In the Independent Read *The Warmth of Other Suns* students are asked to research the events that led to the The Great Migration and to compare their research with the perspectives in the text, while the prompt for “I never hear the word ‘Escape’” asks students to compare their own responses to a threatening situation with those of the speaker in this poem. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with those texts. After students read “A Good Man Is Hard To Find,” they use the techniques from the Skill lesson Compare and Contrast to think about how the authors use the setting of a physical journey to express a theme about the meaning of death. Also in the unit, students will explore how informational text structure relates to the author’s purpose in “Driving My Own Destiny.”

Other writing tasks in the unit allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about how journey’s have shaped American society, as well as offering them the opportunity to self-select texts for independent reading and writing. 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. In the Skill lesson Introductions, students practice by writing an introduction to a movie review and in the Thesis Statement lesson, they practice by drafting a thesis for a persuasive letter to their principal. In each 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

No Strangers Here

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Unit Overview

Unit 3 Title

No Strangers Here

Essential Question

How does place shape the individual?

Literary Focus

Realism, Naturalism, and Regionalism

Genre Focus

Poetry

Introduction

Places have their own identity. From our country to our state to our town to our home, each one has a culture it's known for. Where we are, then, affects who we are. The history, social norms, and expectations of the place we live can give us opportunities or limit them.

What makes a place so influential? How have these places influenced who we are? How have they shaped how we view the world and ourselves?

In this unit, students will think about the theme and essential question as they focus on the literary periods of Realism, Naturalism, and Regionalism analyzing excerpts from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo."* They will also study the genre of poetry while reading poems such as "Given to Rust" and "One Today." In addition, nonfiction texts, such as "We Contain Multitudes" and "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" will challenge students to continue to think about the importance of place with a specific focus on the Southern United States.

Students will begin this unit as readers, and they will finish as writers, as they apply what they have learned about analyzing literature to their own literary analysis writing project.



Text Complexity

Grade 11 Unit 3 deepens students' critical thinking and analysis abilities through the study of a variety of poetic forms. Although the genre focus of this unit is poetry, students will also read two short stories, two novel excerpts, and five informational texts.

The Lexile® range for this unit is broader than the previous unit, at 650–1450. In addition to prose, five poems, which are not scored for complexity, challenge students through their variety of forms and topics. Reading strategies in synthesis and generating questions promote students' basic comprehension, while the Skill lessons Figurative Language, Poetic Elements and Structure, and Media include cross-genre analysis to address the complexities of the texts. The instruction helps make the variety of texts accessible to eleventh graders, enabling them to progress as critical thinkers.

Unit 3 begins with readings that challenge stereotypes and examine the ironies embedded in the concept of “home.” The first is “My True South: Why I Decided to Return Home,” an informational text providing an autobiographical account of an African American writer's experience of returning home to Mississippi, a place that she loves despite the state's long history of racial prejudice. Through instruction in Figurative Language and Connotation and Denotation, students access the indirect, metaphorical language the writer uses to illustrate and support her points and the deeper emotional content, while the Skill lesson Reasons and Evidence will help students identify and analyze the writer's claims.

The unit continues with two informational texts that are linked to the previous selection. In posing similar questions on the relationship between home and the outsider, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” also examines why the oppressed defends an oppressor but in a broader, national context, while Zora Neale Hurston's interview collection, *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”* offers a unique firsthand account of the last survivor of the Atlantic slave trade and his surprising gratitude to the United States, for providing him access to the Bible and to a new understanding of religious belief. Close Read questions around the skills Summarizing and Language, Style, and Audience help students process the speaker's vernacular to grasp the content and authenticity of Hurston's historically significant interview.

The Independent Reads *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner and “Flowering Judas” by Katherine Anne Porter demonstrate a variety of literary techniques to relate complex themes about place, love, loss, and identity. These texts are followed by a related critique of the concept of home in another Independent Read, Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Applying reading strategies for monitoring comprehension as well as previous practice with Skill lessons in Theme, Point of View, and Figurative Language will help guide



students through the development of these varied and complex narratives. Presented with stimulating prompts, students are given the opportunity to apply skills in argument, comparison/contrast, and narrative technique in written analyses.

Next, students approach the essential question through readings of three poems, the unit's genre focus. All three are linked by ironic views of home and how it shapes the individual. However, in this grouping of contemporary poems, students will be challenged not only by the aesthetics of the forms but by the unusual conceits the poems embody. While "South" examines psychological exile, acknowledging the ironies and dangers of loving a home that rejects you, "N'em" and "Given to Rust" consider the influence of legend and legacy in identity. In the final poem in this comparative cluster, "Given to Rust," students analyze how its free verse structure is used to simultaneously celebrate individuality and lament life's hardships. Students may find the poetic language challenging but are supported by the Skill lessons Figurative Language and continued practice in Summarizing and Theme.

A combination of poetry and nonfiction follows the previous cluster. In "One Today," the poem delivered at the second inauguration of President Barack Obama, Latino poet Richard Blanco portrays an epic vision of home, in which a diversity of peoples share in the defining of home as a nation united by the common values and ideals. Students will work through the Skill lessons Poetic Elements and Structure and Media, while also applying their understanding of connotation and denotation to analyze the multiple free-verse forms and content of the epic. The essay "We Contain Multitudes" then gives students the opportunity to independently read a critical look at the cultural stereotyping of diverse groups.

The last two selections of the course, *Bartram's Travels* and "The Midnight Zone," provide students with a final look at the essential question, this time through the contrasting lens of the past and present. Seemingly dissimilar, the two texts share a use of imagery and figurative language to describe their natural surroundings, one in the natural primeval lands of eighteenth-century America and the other in a twenty-first century hallucinatory wilderness of the mind. The topical focus and applications of language and devices make these texts an appropriate ending point for the Grade 11 course, in text comparison skills, genre recognition, and analysis of unit theme and focus.



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 of the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will write and deliver a literary analysis in the form of a 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.



My True South: Why I Decided to Return Home

by Jesmyn Ward

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Explain that this selection is narrative nonfiction, not a purely informational text, and the author's intentions may not be stated explicitly.
- The text contains nonfiction information about Mississippi and its history as well as figurative language that expresses the author's emotional relationship to the place. Encourage students to consider why the author chooses to use factual information and figurative language.

Connection of Ideas

- Readers must connect many different ideas drawn from multiple paragraphs about different periods in the author's life.
- Guide students to restate the narrative in their own words in order to ensure they understand key ideas and details.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1350

Word Count: 1,968



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Figurative Language, Connotation and Denotation, Reasons and Evidence

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: In “My True South: Why I Decided to Return Home,” Jesmyn Ward uses narrative nonfiction and figurative language to strengthen her argument that while she is critical of the South, it is her home and is worth fighting for. Identify the reasons and evidence that Ward provides to support her claims. Then, analyze how her use of figurative language throughout the essay serves to strengthen her claim. Use textual evidence to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Community Museum

Have students reflect on the final quote from the text: *We stand. And we build.*

Ask students to:

- Discuss the author's experiences in the text:
- What does the idea of home mean to the author?
- What hope does she have about her home?
- Reflect on what home and community mean to them:
- What is a strength in your local community?
- What is a challenge? How is that challenge being addressed?
- Who or what embodies how your community chooses to "stand" and "build" for future generations?
- Conduct additional research as needed. Then, create a museum exhibit based on your answers. Include a brief placard explaining the meaning of your exhibit.
- Host a classroom museum walk so that students can visit their peers' exhibits.

To reflect, ask students:

- How did exploring your own community help you better engage with the text?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The author, Jesmyn Ward, tells her story of moving back home to Mississippi in this moving essay. Through her reflection, the reader comes to understand how her home has shaped what she values and what she stands for.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Jesmyn Ward for their literary analysis essays. Have them think about the relationship between Ward's home and her identity and how her immediate surroundings affect her.



What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July

by Frederick Douglass

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1852

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- Difficult vocabulary, such as *stolid*, *jubilee*, *bequeathed*, and *sacreligious*, may need defining.
- Encourage students to use context clues and a dictionary when needed to determine the meaning of unknown words.

Sentence Structure

- Students may struggle in extracting meaning from some of Douglass's longer or more complicated sentences.
- Remind students that this is a speech and that Douglass is speaking directly to his audience. Additionally, paying attention to the parallel structure of sentences within a paragraph can help students decipher meaning.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1170

Word Count: 2,054



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Correspondence: Douglass delivered this speech in 1852, over a decade before the abolition of slavery. How do you imagine citizens of the times might have reacted to this speech? What reflections or reservations might they have had? As a person of that time, sitting in the audience, write a letter to a family member describing and responding to Douglass' message. Use specific lines from the speech to support your opinions.

Beyond the Book

Mapping History

Break students into small groups and have them research different key events related to the abolitionist movement.

Ask students to:

- Use online sources or textbooks to research key events in the abolitionist movement.
- For each event, locate where it took place on a map of the United States, and note the year.
- Then, write a brief summary of what event took place and why it was important to the movement.
- Once their maps are complete, have groups share their findings with one another.

To reflect, ask students:

- How would Douglass's speech have been received differently if he had delivered it in a different part of the country?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The text "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" and the excerpt from the book *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"*, both reflect on the pain and trauma experienced by formerly enslaved people in the United States.

In the speech "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?," Frederick Douglass, shines a light on the hypocrisy and brutality of America prior to the 13th amendment.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Douglass's speech for their argumentative literary analysis essays. Encourage students to analyze how Douglass introduces his topic and supports his argument with relevant evidence.



Barracoön: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”

by Zora Neale Hurston

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The specific purpose of a text influences how a reader interacts with the text. In a complex text the purpose may be more complicated than simply to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- Students should understand that a text may have many purposes. Is Hurston seeking to inform people about the injustices of slavery? Honoring Kossula? Celebrating the resilience of the African race?

Sentence Structure

- Students may find it difficult to follow the author’s use of vernacular in her interview with Kossula.
- Remind students to use their comprehension strategies, such as re-reading passages or reading portions of the text aloud as necessary.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 810

Word Count: 1,133



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Summarizing

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: The authors of both “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” and *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”* use writing to shed light as well as offer commentary on the institution of slavery. For each text, summarize what the author wants his or her audience to understand about the inherent brutality of slavery and what content or rhetorical choices the author makes to convey this message. Support your response with textual evidence.

Beyond the Book

Interview: Preserve the past

In this text, the narrator interviews Kossula, one of the last survivors of the Atlantic Slave Trade, in order to preserve his story for future generations. Students will choose a person from an older generation and conduct an interview about an important event that happened in the interviewees lifetime, in order to preserve his or her story.

Ask students to:

- Choose a person from a generation that is older than them to interview.
- Write 5–7 interview questions that will elicit powerful responses.
- Conduct the interview and reflect on the information acquired.
- Partner with another classmate to discuss what you learned from the interview.

To reflect, ask students:

- What is the most important thing you learned from this interview to pass on to future generations?
- Why is it important to preserve the stories and lessons from past generations?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo,”* Hurston shares a series of interviews with Oluale Kossula, one of the last surviving victims of the Middle Passage. Kossula’s accounts of his personal history reveal the impact of place on one’s identity and give further insight into the lasting scars described in “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

Connect to Extended Writing Project

As students think about the relationship between setting and character development in *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo,”* they might consider writing about Kossula as one of the individuals they focus on in their literary analysis essay.



As I Lay Dying

by William Faulkner

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1930

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- The multiple perspectives from which the story is told will influence how students interact with the text and may be confusing to some students.
- Prompt students with the following questions: What information do we learn about Addie through the perspectives of different characters? What background information do we learn about the family due to the multiple perspectives?

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may be unfamiliar with regional words or those more common to the time period such as *adze*, *chide*, *ought*, *reckon*, *miscue*, and *buzzards*.
- Encourage students to use context clues to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words or familiar words used in an unfamiliar context.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1030

Word Count: 1,363



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: What are the pros and cons of telling a story through multiple narrators? Using *As I Lay Dying* as an example, explain whether telling the story from the viewpoints of many characters improves the story or whether the converse is true. Cite specific examples from the text to support your claim.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Dramatize the Poem

As I Lay Dying has been described as a story impossible to be transformed into a film due to the multi-narrative voices within it. Nonetheless, in 2013 James Franco made a film adaptation of the book. Students will rewrite a portion of the novel as a screenplay and present their adaptation in a performance to the class.

Ask students to:

- Form small groups
- Choose the part of the text they want to rewrite as a screenplay
- Pay special attention to how they will ensure their screenplay captures the multiple perspectives within the text
- Assign roles and practice their performance.

After practicing, have students present their performances to the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which performance most effectively demonstrated the multiple perspectives within the text?
- What was challenging about expressing multiple viewpoints within your screenplay?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The excerpt from this famous novel by William Faulkner revolves around the death of the matriarch of the Bundren family, who are poor farmers in Mississippi. Told from the perspectives of multiple characters, each reveals his or her thoughts as Addie lies on her deathbed. The text demonstrates how one's life experiences may be impacted by the place one is from.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may choose to use *As I Lay Dying* as one of their selected texts for their literary analysis essay. Encourage students to think about the different ways that characters in the story are affected by their immediate surroundings.



Flowering Judas

by Katherine Anne Porter

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1930

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The specific purpose of a text influences how a reader interacts with it. In a complex text, the purpose may be more complicated than simply to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- Examining the perspective will help students identify the author's purpose. Ask them: Is the author sympathetic to Laura? Braggioni? How does the author communicate her perspective indirectly?

Specific Vocabulary

- Some vocabulary, such as *sensitive* (easily hurt; ready to take offense), *afflictions* (causes of suffering), *corrupt* (dishonest or dishonorable), and *immaculate* (pure, correct) may need defining to ensure students' full understanding.
- 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: 5,300



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: Porter writes “for a revolutionist should be lean, animated by heroic faith, a vessel of abstract virtues.” What attributes does Porter think make a good leader? Do you agree or disagree with her description of a leader? Write an essay arguing what characteristics you think are crucial for good leaders to have and use evidence from the text to explain whether or not Braggioni has these qualities.

Beyond the Book

Debate: Are Power and Authority a Right?

In “Flowering Judas,” Braggioni is a leader who is ruthless with the power he is given. Students will contemplate how power is awarded and if it is a right of some positions of authority.

Ask students to:

- Contemplate jobs where we give authority in order for them to perform their jobs (e.g., government officials, police officers, doctors).
- Decide whether power and authority are a right for some people.
- In groups, research different ideas and discuss different facts that support your argument.
- Brainstorm possible responses to counter arguments and practice making clear points.

Set up the classroom for a debate. Allow each side time to make their point and time for the opposition to respond to points made. In the end, allow students to vote for a winning side.

To reflect, have students write a short paragraph on their opinion of power and authority.

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

This short story follows Laura, an American expatriate living in Mexico as a member of the revolutionary forces. As Laura’s life in Mexico causes her to reconsider her allegiances and values, readers reflect on how identities evolve due to new experiences and relationships.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “Flowering Judas” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may use their experience analyzing characterization as preparation for their literary analysis in the Extended Writing Project.



Their Eyes Were Watching God

by Zora Neale Hurston

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1937

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- Students must make inferences and synthesize information to make connections to information within the text.
- Students need to connect the analogy used in the first paragraph of the text to the characters' words and actions throughout the text. Students should consider how the townspeople's treatment of Janie connects to the narrator's thoughts on ships.

Sentence Structure

- Students may find it difficult to follow the author's use of quick dialogue, particularly sentences that are written in dialect.
- Remind students to use their comprehension strategies, such as re-reading or reading aloud portions of the text as necessary.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 760

Word Count: 982



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Analyze the first paragraph about ships at a distance. What do the ships represent? What analogy is the author making? How do you see the meaning of the first paragraph playing itself out in the rest of the text? Support your response with evidence from the text.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Spoken Word Poetry Battle

In her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Zora Neale Hurston shows how a person's reputation can define how others see them in the world.

Ask students to:

- Identify a time in which they were judged themselves or judged another person based upon his or her reputation and use that experience to inspire a poem.
- Write their own 12-line poem about how reputations can be positive or negative.
- Rehearse their poems in preparation for a spoken word poetry battle.
- Randomly assign student pairs who will compete against one another in the battle.

After each performance, students will anonymously vote for their favorite spoken word poetry performance to determine a winner.

To reflect, ask students:

- Was it more challenging to identify an experience or write the poem?
- What did you notice about the strongest performances? What did they have in common?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The excerpt from the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* describes Janie, a woman returning home after experiencing personal loss. Janie also has to deal with the neighbors, and the small community gossiping and speculating about what happened to her. Hurston uses Janie's experiences to show how it can be difficult to escape one's home, despite where one might go in the world.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use this experience of explaining an analogy to help them carefully analyze author's word choice and meaning when writing their literary analysis essays. They may also choose to write about Janie as one of their three characters to analyze.



South

by Natasha Trethewey

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2006

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students may not grasp the formative allusion to the Civil War.
- Remind them that the war occurred in the nineteenth century between the North and the South or the “Confederacy” which fought to defend a slavery-based economy and states’ rights.

Specific Vocabulary

- The first half of the poem describes various types of plants that students might not be familiar with (*magnolias, mangroves, gulfweed, palmettos*).
- Support students with these references. Many, like the magnolia, are associated with the South and symbolize it in American literature and culture. Have students highlight unfamiliar terms or cultural references and use context to infer a possible meaning.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 201



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: The E. O. Wilson epigraph written before the poem describes a “psychological exile.” In a discussion with your group, develop and refine a definition for “psychological exile.” Who may have experienced it in the poem? How does the poet’s use of imagery and descriptions contribute to the idea of psychological exile? Prepare for the discussion by writing down your initial thoughts on the prompt along with any textual evidence to support your ideas.

Beyond the Book

Investigation: Exploring the Past

In “South,” the speaker returns to a battlefield in rural Mississippi “where colored troops fought and died.” The speaker is referring to the United States Colored Troops (USCT), which was the military name for troops of black soldiers who fought in the Civil War. The USCT were enlisted primarily in the Union Army.

Break students into small investigative groups to learn more about the USCT.

Ask students to:

- Research the roles of the USCT and find related images from the Civil War.
- Find statistics on these troops such as number of volunteers, birth states, war deaths, and casualties.
- List the battles fought by the USCT in the South, including Mississippi and the Mississippi Delta.
- Search the poem for other references to black soldiers. Use context clues to find and interpret them.

Then, have students produce, record, and publish a 5-minute report on the USCT and its connection to “South.” The report should be visually interesting and contain reliable research.

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poems “South,” “N’em,” and “Given to Rust” are all written by people reflecting on the past. Read together, these three poems provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the individual’s relationship with both place and past and how those relationships shape identity. In “South,” poet Natasha Trethewey walks through scenery of the American South, contemplating the rich but scarring history of the place.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Trethewey for their literary analysis essays. Encourage them to think about the ways that the poet’s immediate surroundings impacted her identity when planning their literary analysis.



'N'em

by Jericho Brown

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2014

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Remind students that poetry that seems simple may be complex. This poem may have multiple purposes and several layers of meaning.
- Prompt students to think about the speaker. Ask: Why does he talk about “they”? How do the sound and rhythm of the poem reflect his feelings?

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need support to understand idiomatic language and metonymies such as *change for money*.
- Help students understand old customs and practices such as hiding money under a mattress and sweating out colds.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 109



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: The poem evokes the way certain people lived in earlier times. What do you know of your own family history or a historical figure? How might their experiences have differed from your own? Write a creative account in a journal entry. Describe a daily routine he or she may have had. Use the poem for inspiration, and be sure to use plenty of descriptive details to bring your journal entry to life.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Dramatize the Poem

In this poem, Brown describes the actions of persons to whom he is related but never knew. Challenge students to perform a dramatization of the poem.

Ask students to:

- Form small groups to analyze the poem for mood, tone, characters, actions, and meaning.
- Act out the poem.
 - Each student will have a turn at reading part of the poem.
 - As one student is reading, the other students will act out the described events, matching the tone and mood of the poem.

After practicing, students will present their performances to the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which performance most effectively showed the relationship between the speaker and “them”? Which performance most effectively dramatized the actions and inferred feelings of “them”?
- What line or lines were most challenging to perform? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poems “South,” “N’em,” and “Given to Rust” are all written by people reflecting on the past. Read together, these three poems provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the individual’s relationship with both place and past and how those relationships shape identity. In the poem “N’em,” poet Jericho Brown explores his own ancestors, their lifestyles, and what we remember of them.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from “N’em” for their literary analysis essays. Encourage students to think about how “they” in Brown’s poem were affected by the time and place in which they lived.



Given to Rust

by Vieve Francis

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2015

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Different genres incorporate various text features or literary devices. Readers need to attend to these features in order to fully comprehend the text. In poetry, an understanding of figurative language will help increase comprehension. Review the definitions and examples of similes, metaphors, imagery, and symbolism.

Specific Vocabulary

- Some vocabulary, such as *giddy* (dizzily excited), *compulsion* (irrepressible urge), *undercurrent* (underlying feeling), *stifle* (to prevent or constrain), and *ruminate* (think deeply about) may need defining to ensure students' full understanding.
- 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: 217



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Figurative Language

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: “Given to Rust,” “South,” and “N’em” each present an individual navigating the connections between the past and the present. Compare and contrast how this idea is presented across each of the poems. Then, analyze how the use of figurative language in “Given to Rust” emphasizes the author’s message regarding this theme. Support your analysis with evidence from the text and original commentary.

Beyond the Book

Art: Power of Words

Vievee Francis’s poem effectively uses the power of words and rich imagery to convey her message. Students will bring to life a line from the poem that captures the essence of the poem’s message.

Ask students to:

- Choose a line from the poem that captures the main message.
- Write the line and illustrate the message and feelings it evokes with visuals and words.
 - Choose the most effective medium for creating the art.
 - Choose colors, spacing, and placement for the text to reflect the mood.
 - Write a few sentences about how this line captures the message Vievee Francis was conveying with her poem.
- Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How many meanings can be found in poems?
- Why is it important to read poems multiple times?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poems “South,” “N’em,” and “Given to Rust” are all written by people reflecting on the past. Read together, these three poems provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the individual’s relationship with both place and past and how those relationships shape identity.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use their analysis of “Given to Rust,” “South,” and “N’em” as an example when writing their literary analysis essay.



One Today

by Richard Blanco

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2013

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- Blanco repeats the idea of “one” throughout the poem. Students may find it difficult to analyze the importance of Blanco’s use of repetition throughout the text.
- Students should closely examine Blanco’s use of repetition at the figurative and literal level in order to understand the poem’s theme.

Purpose

- The poem was written to honor President Barack Obama and the ideas he stands for at his Presidential Inauguration.
- Students should analyze who Blanco’s audience is, and why it would be important to convey the messages of this poem, to this particular audience, and at this particular time.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 575



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Poetic Elements and Structure, Media

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Blanco finishes the poem with the phrase “waiting for us to name it—together.” How does Blanco use language and imagery to build a sense of togetherness? How does he further attain this sense of togetherness in his reading of the poem? Analyze the poetic elements of the text along with Blanco’s reading of the poem and explain how they build a sense of togetherness. Be sure to point to specific examples from the text and the media to support your analysis.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Using Poetry to Characterize a Place

In this text, the speaker uses his poem to address America’s diversity. This platform allows Blanco to characterize the United States and the many people and regions that make up this country.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm a list of places that they might describe in a poem. These lists can contain places they are familiar with or ones they’ve learned about from a distance.
- Select one place from their list, and reflect on the following questions:
 - What about this place makes it special? What imagery would you use to describe this place? What do you want your readers to understand about this place and how can you show this through a poem?
- Use their reflections to write a poem characterizing a place.
- Include sensory details and figurative language where appropriate.

Have students share their poems. To reflect, ask students:

- How do writers express their thoughts and feelings in creative ways?
- How do writers use poetry to transport readers to different times and places?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Poet Richard Blanco penned “One Today” for President Barack Obama’s second inauguration. This poem attempts to capture a typical day in America from sunrise to sunset. Students will have the opportunity to read Blanco’s poem, paying attention to poetic elements and structures, before watching his reading of the poem to analyze his choices of how to deliver it.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can apply skills from their analysis of “One Today” when writing their essays. Have students think about how looking at examples of imagery and structure can help better understand a text’s message.



We Contain Multitudes

by Lauren Groff

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Students may not be familiar with the style of personal essay that Groff writes here.
- As they read, ask students to think about who is Groff's intended audience and what is her purpose for writing.

Organization

- Students may struggle to trace Groff's shifts in attitude towards her subject as she switches between her personal experiences and more general observations or historic events.
- Encourage students to use annotations to summarize Groff's points and trace the development of her claims.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1330

Word Count: 889



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: Groff argues that while the stereotypes about Florida have a "grain of truth in them, it's a grain the size of a speck of sand." Think about a stereotype, whether controversial or commonly held, about a group of people. You can think about something mentioned in Groff's essay, or about another stereotype. Then, write a response in which you argue to what extent this stereotype holds true. Support your argument with examples and reasoning from your own knowledge and experience.

Beyond the Book

Speech: Pitch Your Home in 60 Seconds

Lauren Groff closes her essay with a descriptive reflection on a cherished moment in her new home state. Challenge students to write and deliver an elevator speech—a brief speech that outlines or pitches an idea in the time it takes to travel in an elevator—about what makes their home great.

Ask students to:

- Reread the final paragraph in Groff's essay.
- Think about the aspects of their home that they most love.
- Prepare a 60-second elevator speech that clearly and concisely articulates what makes their home great with descriptive details.
- Practice their elevator speeches with a partner and then present for the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- Was it challenging to communicate what you most love about your home?
- How similar or different were the speeches that your peers gave?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Lauren Groff is one of the millions of people who hail from elsewhere, but have come to settle in Florida. She shares her evolving impressions of the Sunshine State through captivating descriptions in this essay, suggesting that Florida is much more than what meets the eye.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Lauren Groff's experience for their literary analysis essays. Have students think about the different ways that Groff's experience living in a new state affected her understanding of a place.



Bartram's Travels

by William Bartram

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1791

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need support to comprehend domain-specific terms such as *bluff*, *branchiostega*, and *warblings*.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Organization

- The text alternates between very detailed descriptions of the natural world, and less detailed accounts of Bartram's day-to-day activities.
- Remind students to visualize as they are reading to make meaning of the author's detailed descriptions.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1420

Word Count: 1,945



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: Compose your own travelogue with Bartram’s book as your guide. Record your examination of a natural landscape of your choosing, be it as seemingly unspectacular as an abandoned lot or as revered as the Everglades. Record the natural world and your reactions to it, using both scientific and figurative language typical of Bartram’s style.

Beyond the Book

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

In *Bartram’s Travels*, Bartram uses drawings alongside words to make his observations come to life and to teach his readers about nature.

Ask students to:

- Choose a place within their school to observe.
- Sketch a quick drawing of the items and/or people they encounter in this place.
- Include a caption describing what they’ve included in their sketch.
- Get into pairs and share their drawing and observations with their partner.

To reflect, ask students:

- Is it easier to convey information more clearly in drawings or in words?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of using each of these modes of communication?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The excerpt from *Bartram’s Travels* and the short story “The Midnight Zone” both include rich details of Florida’s natural landscape. Read together, these texts provide a unique opportunity to understand how an author’s use of language can create a setting that is either majestic or menacing.

In *Bartram’s Travels*, the naturalist William Bartram explores the Florida coast, taking meticulous notes about what he finds.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from *Bartram’s Travels* for their literary analysis essays. Have them make note of how Bartram uses rich and thoughtful descriptions to elaborate on his relationship with his immediate surroundings.



The Midnight Zone

by Lauren Groff

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- Making inferences and synthesizing information are critical to understanding complex texts. Students may need guidance identifying explicit and implied motivations and actions of the characters.
- Have students discuss how the author reveals the shifts in relationships between the protagonist and her children and spouse and what this reveals about her internal struggle.

Organization

- Although the story unfolds in chronological order, the idea of place, comes up again and again throughout the text. Students may find it difficult to recall details from the beginning of the text, and make connections to ideas unfolding later in the text.
- Discuss the following questions with students: At what point in the story does the plot shift? What occurs after this? How is the plot resolved?

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1180

Word Count: 4,246



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Figurative Language

Close Read Prompt

Compare and Contrast: In both “The Midnight Zone” and *Bartram’s Travels*, the authors use intense imagery and figurative language to describe their natural surroundings. Compare and contrast how each writer’s use of figurative language affects the reader’s impression of Florida’s natural environment. How does each writer’s descriptions of similar landscapes produce different effects on the reader? Support your response with evidence from the text.

Beyond the Book

Exploration: Sensory Walk

Groff’s “The Midnight Zone” is full of sensory details that bring the story to life.

Ask students to:

- Complete a sensory walk through of the story taking notes on uses of rich sensory details.
- Transform the story into a comic strip that relies primarily on detailed pictures to retell the story.
- Use the rich sensory details to create detailed illustrations.

Students can create their comic strip on paper or use an online tool to create and publish their work.

To reflect, ask students:

- How did the sensory walk help you visualize the story?
- What was the hardest part of creating a comic strip of the story?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In Lauren Groff’s short story “The Midnight Zone,” a mother and her two boys are alone camping in the Florida wilderness when she suffers an accident. The author’s captivating descriptions of the protagonist’s natural surroundings require readers to think critically about the balance of power between man and nature.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can apply skills from their analysis of “The Midnight Zone” when writing their literary analysis essays. Have students think about how closely looking at examples of imagery and figurative language can help the reader better understand the relationship between place and the individual.



Extended Writing Project

No Strangers Here

Essential Question

How does place shape the individual?

Writing Form

Literary Analysis

Extended Writing Project Prompt

From texts in this unit, select three individuals. In a literary analysis, examine how these individuals are shaped by and interact with their immediate surroundings. In your analysis, explain how these interactions either give readers a deeper understanding of the characters or give characters a deeper understanding of themselves.

EWP Mentor Texts

What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?, We Contain Multitudes

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish

Writing Skills

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

Grammar Skills

Participles, Gerunds, Infinitives



Writing Overview

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 11, Unit 3 focuses on literary analysis writing. Students explore the unit’s essential question—How does place shape the individual?—as they write a literary analysis. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write a literary analysis in which they examine how three characters from various texts within the unit think about and interact with their environment, and how these interactions support themes of the texts in which the characters appear. The unit selections that show how place shapes the individual provide a source material for students, while informational and argumentative selections serve as mentor texts. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the process of literary analysis writing with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During 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.

The Skill lessons Transitions and Style teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while the additional Skill lessons Thesis Statements, Reasons and Evidence, Introductions, and Conclusions focus on characteristics of the literary analysis writing genre and help students develop an organizing structure that serves their purpose for writing. Revision lessons guide students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to specific grammar skills identified in the English Language Arts standards. After each Skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing extends beyond 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. In the Independent Read *As I Lay Dying* students will argue the pros and cons of telling a story through multiple narrators, while the prompt for *Their Eyes Were Watching God* asks them to analyze an analogy used in the passage. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with those texts. After students read “One Today” they use the techniques from the Skill lessons Media and Poetic Elements and Structure to analyze how the speaker’s use of poetic elements and dramatic reading enhances the poem’s theme. In addition, students will analyze the use of poetic structure as it develops themes in “Given to Rust.”

Other writing tasks in the unit allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about place and individuality, as well as offering them the opportunity to self-select texts for independent reading and writing. 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. In the Skill lesson Transitions, students practice by brainstorming creative and authentic examples of using transitions in writing and in the Conclusions lesson, they practice by composing a conclusion for an editorial about school uniforms. In each 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 4

Living the Dream

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Unit Overview

Unit 4 Title

Living the Dream

Essential Question

What does home mean to you?

Literary Focus

The Harlem Renaissance

Genre Focus

Drama

Introduction

Home is a part of who we are. For some of us, it's where we spend most of our time, learn many of life's lessons, seek comfort and protection, and feel a sense of belonging. For others, home is more elusive—merely an idea, or a longing.

What emotional and physical needs must a place satisfy in order to be considered a home? Is home something you need to “own,” a tangible place? If so, what conflicts arise when a home means different things for the people living there?

In this unit, students will consider the unit's essential question as they focus on the literary period of the Harlem Renaissance, including such poems as “The Old Cabin” and “The Negro Speaks of Rivers.” They will also study the genre of drama while reading excerpts from *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Fences*, and *Boyhood*. In addition, informational texts, such as “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” and “Eat, Memory: Orange Crush” will encourage students to think about the concept of home as they read across genres.

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



Text Complexity

In Unit 4 students will explore a range of texts with a genre emphasis on drama. Throughout this unit students will be reminded of earlier skills as they read fiction excerpts, drama, and poems, while also improving their ability to analyze informational and argumentative texts. The selections in this unit fall in a Lexile® band of 920–1560, with most texts residing in the 1300–1450 range. The featured vocabulary, sentence structures, content, and relationships among ideas make these selections accessible to eleventh graders, encouraging them to think broadly about the meaning of home and the American Dream.

Unit 4 begins with two texts that, when read together, form a cross-genre dialogue about the themes of the unit’s literary focus, the Harlem Renaissance. The first text, the poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes, exemplifies the stylistic elements and major concepts of the Harlem Renaissance. The second text, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” by Zora Neale Hurston, utilizes complex metaphors to convey a message about liberation. While Hurston’s specific purpose for writing and her use of figurative language may prove challenging, students are supported by the Skill lessons Figurative Language and Author’s Purpose and Point of View.

Students will develop their understanding of drama by reading *Fences*. Students may at first overlook the significance of the setting and events, for example, in *Fences*, so Skill lessons devoted to Summarizing and Dramatic Elements and Structure help students recognize the subtleties in, and craft of, dramatic writing. Continuing through the unit, students will read two texts together that may shape their understanding of the complexities of how we define home. “The Old Cabin” by Paul Laurence Dunbar predates the Harlem Renaissance, but Dunbar’s stylistic and thematic choices influenced writers from that literary period. The next selection, picking up on the genre focus as well as the essential question, is Lorraine Hansberry’s classic play *A Raisin in the Sun*. While Hansberry’s work comes after the Harlem Renaissance, her play’s title is taken from a poem by a seminal writer from that period, Langston Hughes. The poem is “Harlem”: “What happens to a dream deferred? / does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?” the speaker asks. Hansberry’s 1950s period drama follows an African American family with a dream of home ownership as they confront housing discrimination. Students are supported in their analysis of the drama by a SkillsTV, a StudySyncTV, and the Skill lessons Dramatic Elements and Structure and Theme.

Next, students will read a complex historical text, “Letter from Chief John Ross,” a Cherokee who questions the U.S. government’s removal of the Cherokee people from their homeland. With the highest Lexile® in this unit, students may need support with archaic words and legal



vocabulary that Chief John Ross uses throughout the text. Lessons on Language, Style, and Audience; Technical Language; and Reasons and Evidence will assist students in building the skills necessary for accessing challenging nonfiction texts.

“Point/Counterpoint: Dream House” engages students in a contemporary issue related to the unit’s thematic focus on the American Dream and the meaning of home. This argumentative text presents two sides of the debate over the importance of home ownership in today’s economy. Analyzing the authors’ messages and engaging with graphic features may present difficulties for some students, but these challenges are overcome by engaging in collaborative conversations and working with peers.

Three classic short stories, “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “In Our Neighborhood,” and “The Yellow Wallpaper” are grouped together based on their common themes concerning homes that are not necessarily what they seem. “The Fall of the House of Usher” has one of the highest Lexile® scores in the unit, and students may need extra support decoding long complex sentences and archaic vocabulary. Similarly, the localized vocabulary and descriptive language of “In Our Neighborhood” will likely require careful reading and additional support for many students. The complexity of “The Yellow Wallpaper” is supported by the Skill lessons Compare and Contrast and Connotation and Denotation.

Next, students will partake in an independent reading of “Eat, Memory: Orange Crush.” They will practice the skill of visualizing while considering the role of memory as it relates to home and family. Finally, students will close the unit by reading *Boyhood*. While the language of this text is not particularly challenging, the accompanying skill lesson challenges students to analyze how the use of media enhances the understanding of another form of fiction—a screenplay.



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.



The Negro Speaks of Rivers

by Langston Hughes

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1921

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- A poet may have more than one intention for writing a poem. Students may need additional support to understand Hughes's different intentions for writing "The Negro Speaks of Rivers."
- Have students independently decide what the intention was for "The Negro Speaks of Rivers." Then, list and discuss students' responses.

Genre

- The poem is written in free verse, without rhyme or meter. That does not mean, however, that the poem lacks form.
- Discuss with students how the poem's construction, rhythm, and energy mimic the movement of a large and mighty river.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 103



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Poetry: Langston Hughes composed this poem when he had just graduated high school, at the age of 17, while crossing the Mississippi River by train outside his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri. He was roughly the age you are now, and was inspired by what he saw and his relationship to the landscape and its history. Think about a view that inspires you. Imagine you are looking out a particular window, at a particular landscape. Now write a poem about what you see and how it influences your sense of self and place. The landscape can be real or imagined, but should be one to which you feel a connection. In your poem, mimic Hughes's use of repetition, historical and geographical references, and first-person point of view.

Beyond the Book

Analysis: Meaning of the Rivers

In this poem, Hughes uses rivers to symbolize the past. Students will explore the places mentioned and discuss what the rivers symbolize.

Ask students to:

- Break into small groups to research the different rivers and locations mentioned in the poem.
- As a group, conduct informal research on the location.
- Analyze and discuss the meaning of the places.
 - Why were those places chosen? What specifically is meant by the location in the poem? What symbolic, cultural, or historical meaning might that location represent?
- Have each group share their analysis with the other groups.

To reflect, ask students:

- Why did Hughes choose rivers to symbolize the past?
- What impact does the use of symbolism have on the reader?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Using the world's ancient rivers as symbols, the speaker in the poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" follows the trajectory of the African-American experience throughout history.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Langston Hughes for their research essay. Have them consider how Hughes's work contributes to gaining greater visibility for African Americans in mainstream culture, how it impacted society, and how his life experiences impacted the work of others.



How It Feels to Be Colored Me

by Zora Neale Hurston

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1928

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The essay is autobiographical—it describes the author’s own life and expresses her opinions and feelings. The title is a strong clue to the author’s purpose.
- The author’s tone and voice offer more clues about her purpose. The essay has many examples of humor and hyperbole, used with great skill, to drive home her points about racial identity.

Connection of Ideas

- Students may need support connecting the experiences the author shares from different points in her life.
- Discuss the first sentence in paragraph 4 and explain that it shows Zora’s understanding of race during her childhood. Connect this experience to her move to Jacksonville when she was 13, when she became “a little colored girl.”

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 920

Word Count: 1,591



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Central or Main Idea, Figurative Language, Author's Purpose and Point of View

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: How do Hurston and Hughes each use figurative language to convey the central ideas of their texts? Determine the central idea or ideas of each text and evaluate how well the author conveys these ideas. Then, describe to what extent figurative language strengthens central ideas, using relevant evidence from the text.

Beyond the Book

Writing: What Defines Me

Despite the social backlash Hurston received for downplaying the severity of past treatment of African Americans, she clearly states she will not let the past define her. Students will write a poem expressing how they have overcome past difficulties and how they define themselves.

Ask students to:

- Think about past difficulties they have faced (illnesses, injuries, loss, financial stress, racism, unhealthy relationships, peer pressure, etc.) and how they worked through those moments.
- Think about the lessons they learned from these difficult moments and how they shaped their identities.
- Write a poem using the first lines of each paragraph from “*How It Feels to Be Colored Me*” as a poetry frame. (I am ... I remember ... The front ... During this period ... But changes came ... etc.)

To reflect, ask students:

- What factors have had the most influence in defining your identity?
- How do different relationships affect your identity?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Ten years before the publication of her most famous novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Hurston made her own declaration of independence with the autobiographical essay presented here, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me.” Students will compare and contrast the concept of home as it is presented in these two texts.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use Zora Neale Hurston’s essay to help build their background knowledge for the Extended Writing Project. Encourage students to research other authors or artists who, like Hurston, were from the South but later moved north leading up to and during the Harlem Renaissance.



Fences

by August Wilson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1985

Genre: Drama

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Frustration born out of a lack of fairness and equity sets the tone for this play. Students may need guidance as they seek evidence for the tone through characters' actions and dialogue.
- Explain how Troy expresses that he wants his son to have a better life than his own. For example, Troy says, "I want him to move as far away from my life as he can get."

Sentence Structure

- Students may need additional support with the unusual sentence structures found within the dialogue.
- Point out that the drama is about an African-American family in Pittsburgh in the 1950s. Dialogue, such as "... you ain't done none of your chores . . ." This is an example of dialect, a form of a language that is used by people from a specific region or members of a social group. Dialects often follow conventions that differ from formal, academic English.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 1,357



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Dramatic Elements and Structure, Summarizing

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Think about the setting and the action in this excerpt from *Fences*. How does the literal action—Troy constructing a fence in the backyard, and enlisting Cory to join him—coincide with what is happening in the dialogue? Analyze how the author uses dramatic elements and structure to develop the relationship between literal action and a deeper meaning supporting your ideas with evidence from the text.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Value Perspectives

This drama highlights the way competing priorities can create conflict in a family. Students will compare their parents' or guardians' perspective and their own perspective on a value.

Explain to students that values are inner standards that cause you to act as you do and the measure you use to judge others.

Ask students to:

- Conduct informal research on different values people may have (e.g. accountability, courtesy, education).
- Choose one of their parents' or guardians' values that is different from their own values. Brainstorm how life would be following this value and how it would be if the value is ignored.
- Create a split collage of magazine cutouts that depict what their lives might look like if they make decisions guided by their value vs. decisions guided by their parents' or guardians' value.

To reflect, ask students:

- How important is your parents' or guardians' opinion of important values?
- Are the values of adults or kids more important?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

What happens when a home becomes a battleground? In an excerpt from the Pulitzer-Prize winning play *Fences*, an argument between a teenager and his father reveals how differing ideas about responsibility and love affect the climate at home.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use *Fences* to prepare for their Extended Writing Project. They may consider the methods August Wilson uses in the play to bring awareness to social issues.



The Old Cabin

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1905

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- The poem is written in dialect, and many of the words are spelled as they are pronounced.
- Students should use the audio function to listen to the voice recording of the text. They may also use context clues, and compare words with similar spelling patterns to identify the words.

Prior Knowledge

- The poem focuses on a formerly enslaved person's memory of experiences in the cabin he or she lived in when enslaved.
- Students may benefit from an overview of the living conditions of enslaved people on Southern plantations.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 290



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Research: Poetry written during the Harlem Renaissance incorporated specific themes and references pertaining to African American history and culture. Research this literary period. Then, write a literary analysis in which you investigate how “The Old Cabin”—written in 1905—prefigures some of the predominant themes and literary characteristics of the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance.

Beyond the Book

Investigation: Creating Character with Dialect

Paul Laurence Dunbar uses dialect in his poem to provide an authentic portrait of character and time period. Students will choose a regional dialect to research.

Ask students to:

- conduct informal research on what dialect is.
- choose a location that has a distinct dialect, but in which English is still spoken (e.g., a region of the United States such as the Cajun regions in Louisiana, England, Ireland).
- research their chosen dialect including listening to audio to answer the following questions and others of their interest:
 - How did this dialect originate?
 - What different groups or languages have contributed to this dialect?
 - What are phrases or colloquialisms that are specific to this dialect and what do they mean?
- Organize their findings into a single presentation slide that includes multimedia as appropriate and present to the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- What are some benefits and drawbacks to authors using dialect in their writing?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The poem “The Old Cabin” by Paul Laurence Dunbar and *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry each highlight the relationships that people have with their homes in different ways. “The Old Cabin” explores the ways in which a home served as a refuge for an enslaved woman.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students may use “The Old Cabin” and Paul Laurence Dunbar as inspiration when they consider the role of art in bringing awareness to social issues.



A Raisin in the Sun

by Lorraine Hansberry

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1959

Genre: Drama

Access Complex Text Features

Sentence Structure

- Students may need additional support with the unusual sentence structures.
- Have students read the dialogue out loud and experiment with phrasing. Spoken rhythms can help them identify sentence structures.

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need more support with regionalisms and idiomatic language of working-class African Americans of the 1950s.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may benefit from an overview of the discriminatory housing policies in Chicago and other cities during the 1950s.
- Explain that restrictive covenants effectively barred black families from buying homes in many white neighborhoods, and the practice of “redlining,” or denying mortgages based on race.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 1,172



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Dramatic Elements and Structure, Theme

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: In both “The Old Cabin” and *A Raisin in the Sun*, the historical setting plays an important role in the development of the texts’ themes. Identify the historical setting of each text. Then, analyze how the setting of each text impacts each text’s themes. Support your response with evidence from the text and your own analysis.

Beyond the Book

Writing: The American Dream

A Raisin in the Sun shares one family’s focus on the American Dream. The play’s title comes from Langston Hughes’s poem “Harlem: A Dream Deferred.” Students will choose a line from the poem to share how their dreams are similar to or different from Hughes’s description of the American Dream.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm what the American Dream means to them. How would they define it in their own words?
- Read Langston Hughes’s poem “Harlem: A Dream Deferred” and discuss the connection with the play title *A Raisin in the Sun*.
 - How does the title reflect the poem? How are the messages similar?
- Think about how their personal dreams are similar to or different from Hughes’s description of the American Dream.
- Choose a line from the poem to create their own poem that explains their dreams and pursuit of ideals, deferred or not.

To reflect, ask students:

- What are obstacles that might interfere with your ability to achieve your dream?
- Is it easier to achieve the American Dream today or was it easier 50 years ago?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In the classic drama, *A Raisin in the Sun*, a black family in Chicago struggles to overcome financial despair in post-World War II America. Read together, the poem and the play will help students explore how the concept of home has changed for African Americans throughout the history of our nation.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use *A Raisin in the Sun* to connect to the Extended Writing Project by researching some of the artists from the Harlem Renaissance who influenced Hansberry’s work.



Letter from Chief John Ross

by John Ross

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1835

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Students may be unsure about how to read a persuasive letter. Start by identifying the speaker's purpose and audience, and then build on that analysis to include diction and tone.
- Point out that the title shows the text is a letter. References to “spurious Delegation” and “pretended treaty” suggest the purpose is to persuade the government to reject the treaty.

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need more support with words that are now considered archaic or with the legal vocabulary that Chief John Ross uses.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words. Help them unpack difficult language, such as “in violation of a special injunction of the general council of the nation.”

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1560

Word Count: 734



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Language, Style, and Audience; Technical Language; Reasons and Evidence

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: Chief John Ross worked to attain rights and respect for his people in the face of oppression by the United States government. In this letter, how does Ross use style, tone, and word choice to achieve his purpose? Evaluate Ross’s use of persuasive language as well as reasons and evidence to convince his audience. Support your response with evidence from the text and your own commentary.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Take a Stand

Chief John Ross fought against overwhelming odds to save his people. Students will select an issue that matters to them and take a stand.

Ask students to think about the following questions:

- What issue angers you? If you could change things, what would you do?
- What communication medium do you think is most effective for taking a stand on important issues?

After students have had time to consider and to discuss the questions above, ask them to:

- Decide on a pseudonym for themselves.
- Select a medium they want to use to take a stand.
- Record a radio show, TV interview, or podcast or write a blog to raise awareness.

To reflect, ask students:

- Do you follow the news and what is happening in the world? If so, how do you normally respond when you hear about something happening in this country or around the world that you disagree with?
- Is social and/or political activism important to you? Why or why not?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

What happens when your home is violently stolen from you? In this letter to the U.S. Congress, the Chief of the Cherokee Nation details the effects of the U.S. government’s seizure of Cherokee lands.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “Letter from Chief John Ross” as a mentor text for their informative research essay. They may adopt some of Ross’s methods for using reasoning and evidence to support their ideas.



Dream House

by Point/Counterpoint

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- The text contains foreign words and phrases, expressions, and domain-specific vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to students. These include *modus operandi*, *raison d'être*, *mortgage*, *equity*, *down payment*, *lease*, *appraisal*, and *closing costs*.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading and use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Purpose

- The author's intent may be obscured by the unfamiliar language. Students may need support to focus on the selection's purpose.
- Clarify that the text is nonfiction. Remind students that the selection has two sections that present opposing arguments.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1320

Word Count: 1,720



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: The authors of the Point and Counterpoint essays make opposing arguments about the importance of owning a home. Which of the two essays do you find more convincing and why? Support your answer with relevant evidence from the text. You may choose to include evidence from graphic features.

Beyond the Book

Photography: The Evolution of the American Dream

In these two essays, the authors argue whether owning a home is part of our national heritage and American Dream. Students will compare their parents' or guardians' views of the American Dream with their own dream.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm what the new American Dream is to themselves and peers.
 - What are the ideals? How is it achieved? What would make everyone happy?
- Interview their parents, grandparents, or guardians about what they think the American Dream is.
- Create a presentation that compares and contrasts their American Dream to their guardians' view.
- Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How does the American Dream evolve over time? What factors or events cause generations to change their views?
- What do you think the youth in 40 years will view as the American Dream?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Why might a home be a symbol of hope? The argumentative text “Dream House” juxtaposes an argument and counterargument for home ownership. This argumentative text gives students the opportunity to explore what role home ownership plays in achieving the American Dream.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “Dream House” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. Have them consider the authors' methods for developing an effective essay as they craft their informative research essays.



The Fall of the House of Usher

by Edgar Allan Poe

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1839

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Sentence Structure

- Students may need additional support with the long and complex sentence structures.
- Review the rhetorical devices hypotaxis and parataxis with students, supplying examples from the text. Tell students to read aloud and highlight the main subject and verb within a clause to help understand the meaning of complex sentences.

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need more support with unfamiliar or archaic vocabulary Poe uses throughout the text, such as *tremulous*, *countenance*, *appellation*, *importunate*, and *bethinking*.
- Remind students to use context clues or to consult a dictionary to determine the meanings of unknown words.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1430

Word Count: 7,069



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Explanatory: In many horror stories and horror movies, a house serves as a symbol and some may even consider it a character. How is the house described in “The Fall of the House of Usher”? What does it symbolize? How does the house itself define the people who live in it? Why are houses that are haunted, dilapidated, or mysterious so common in the horror genre? Support your explanation using evidence from the text and original commentary.

Beyond the Book

Analysis: Edgar Allan Poe Inspires Modern Horror Stories

Edgar Allan Poe used rich sensory descriptions to instill fear in his readers. Students will choose a current horror clip to analyze and deconstruct the symbols used.

Explain to students that in horror films, symbols, pacing, and sensory details are used to intensify mood and to foreshadow events. Many of the typical methods were inspired by Edgar Allan Poe.

Ask students to:

- Choose a horror text or movie clip to analyze horror elements used to create anxiety, tension, and fear.
- Compare how the elements in current works of horror connect with “The Fall of the House of Usher” or other Poe works they know.
- Share with a small group the symbols collected and compare what they each found.

To reflect, ask students:

- Are we conditioned to be frightened of elements used in horror films, or are the symbols used because they are frightening?
- What symbols are used most frequently in horror stories? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In the short stories “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “In Our Neighborhood,” and “The Yellow Wallpaper,” students will further explore the concept of home and the individual. After reading “The Fall of the House of Usher” by Edgar Allan Poe, students will write a short response that demonstrates their understanding of how haunted, dilapidated, and mysterious houses are used as a trope in the horror genre.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can recall the power of syntax in “The Fall of the House of Usher” as they consider the role of writing in bringing awareness to social issues.



In Our Neighborhood

by Alice Dunbar-Nelson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1895

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- A reader must understand how a text is organized in order to find evidence within the text.
- Tell students that the story is organized around two main events with a death in the middle. Have students consider why the author would have chosen to organize the story this way.

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may find it difficult to follow the author's use of antiquated vocabulary such as *denizens*, *domicile*, *unwonted*, *vouchsafed*, and *alighted*.
- Encourage students to use context clues or a dictionary to determine the meaning of unknown words.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1310

Word Count: 2,403



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: This story is built around two central events, a party and a funeral. Write an essay analyzing the relationship between the party and the wake. What are the parallels between them? What are the differences? Why do you think the author chose to concentrate on these two events? Be sure to cite specific examples from the text to support your claims.

Beyond the Book

Writing

Think about the neighborhood where you live and the dynamic between your neighbors. Imagine a situation that might cause drama between your neighbors.

Ask students to:

- Draft a hypothetical text message conversation between two neighbors inspired by “In Our Neighborhood.”
- Include discussion of what causes the drama and how the neighbors plan to resolve the issue.
- Include emojis where appropriate to convey meaning.
- Share your completed conversation with a partner.

To reflect, ask students:

- How difficult or easy was it to think of a situation that might cause drama in your neighborhood?
- How have neighborhood dynamics and gossip changed since Alice Dunbar-Nelson wrote this story? What do you think has caused these changes?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

“In Our Neighborhood,” from Dunbar-Nelson’s first book of stories, *Violets and Other Tales*, is a good example of the author’s sure feel for the ironic nuances of a Southern neighborhood, conveying the concept of home to students in a unique way.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use Alice Dunbar’s story and writing as inspiration for choosing the artist or writer they choose to focus on for their informative research essay.



The Yellow Wallpaper

by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1892

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Connection of Ideas

- When reading complex texts, the student needs to make inferences and synthesize information throughout the text. While reading this text, students may struggle to determine how reliable the narrator is.
- Have students pay close attention to the discrepancies between the narrator's internal thoughts and her external interactions with other characters.

Specific Vocabulary

- Explain to students that they may come across some antiquated words such as draught, piazza, and fancies.
- When students come across such words, they should use context clues or consult a dictionary, as needed.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1390

Word Count: 6,067



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Connotation and Denotation, Compare and Contrast

Close Read Prompt

Compare and Contrast: At the end of the 19th century, themes regarding identity were predominant in American literature. Compare and contrast how each author approaches themes regarding identity in both “In Our Neighborhood” and “The Yellow Wallpaper.” Discuss the ways the narrator in “The Yellow Wallpaper” and the characters in “In Our Neighborhood” attempted to shape or maintain their identities. Support your response with evidence from the text.

Beyond the Book

Podcast: Rest Cures

In the 1800s, women were often prescribed a “rest cure” as described in this story. In pairs, have students research rest cures and the ways in which they were used to oppress women.

Ask students to:

- Research rest cures.
 - How was this treatment developed? When was it used?
 - What were the typical outcomes? Why was it controversial?
- Then, develop a list of 10 interview questions you would like to ask Charlotte Perkins Gilman about her experience having undergone a rest cure.
- Decide who will be the host of the podcast and interviewer and who will “play” Charlotte Perkins Gilman.
- Record a podcast interviewing the author about her experience. Use your research, the story, and knowledge of the author to infer how she might answer each question.

To reflect, ask students:

- Why do you think rest cures are not prescribed as a medical treatment today?
- In what ways do we still see oppression and discrimination in the medical field?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote her best known short story, “The Yellow Wallpaper,” after being ordered by her own doctor to take a “rest cure” to recover from depression. The narrative follows a sickly wife who has grown bored while on bed rest in the nursery room of a rambling mansion.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Encourage students to apply skills from their analysis of “The Yellow Wallpaper” when writing their research essays. Explain that, just as we analyze literary texts, it is important to analyze and evaluate research sources in order to determine their credibility and relevance.



Eat, Memory: Orange Crush

by Yiyun Li

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2006

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The informational text presents a historical snapshot of growing up in China as well as some of the author's personal experiences.
- Help students consider the ways that these contexts, especially the economic context, shape the essay's purpose.

Connection of Ideas

- The author makes comparisons between orange-peel water and her life as a child and between Tang and her dream of a life in the future.
- Guide students through thinking about how the ideas are connected.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1150

Word Count: 1,124



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Drama: In “Eat, Memory: Orange Crush,” the narrator describes the symbolic significance of a beverage. Think of a food, article of clothing, or another common object. Then, write a dramatic scene in which a character reflects upon the symbolic meaning that object has for him or her. Use dramatic conventions and elements, including dialogue and stage directions, in your response.

Beyond the Book

Art: Status Symbols

Yiyun Li reflects on her past and how Tang used to symbolize wealth and power. Students will research and present symbols of wealth from various countries.

Place students in small groups and assign a country to each group.

Ask students to:

- Research what the assigned country values and what its symbols of wealth are.
- Create a poster that illustrates the country’s values and status symbols. Use a mix of written language and visual representation.
- Share the multimedia presentation with the class.
- Discuss which countries are similar and which are different.

To reflect, ask students:

- Is there a universal symbol of wealth?
- What factors make countries value one object over another?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The essay “Eat, Memory: Orange Crush” explores the clash between the old and the new and how cultural traditions can impart the comforts of home, no matter where one is in the world.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from “Eat, Memory: Orange Crush.” Have them look at symbolism used by writers and artists as they formulate a position on their subjects’ contributions to greater visibility for African Americans.



Boyhood

by Richard Linklater

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2014

Genre: Drama

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- The action of the text takes place in more than one scene. Students need to understand how a text is organized in order to find evidence within the text.
- Students may need to have the various settings and time gaps pointed out. They may need support in following from one scene to another.

Sentence Structure

- Students may have difficulty with sentence fragments and other informal language in the dialogue.
- Remind students that rereading, reading aloud, and visualizing the conversations taking place will help them follow the dialogue.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 1,639



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Media

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: Mason struggles to balance his own individuality with what others expect of him. Choose a crucial time from your own life when you felt torn between what you wanted and what others expected of you. Then, write a journal entry describing that experience and how you responded.

Beyond the Book

Art: Advice Meme

In *Boyhood*, Mason receives advice and guidance on life from his dad. Students will create a meme inspired by advice they have been given.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm a list of pieces of advice they have received from adults.
- Choose one to create a meme.
 - What is the message?
 - What was your initial response?
 - What picture would best illustrate the advice?
- Share their memes with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How do memes not only capture the essence of the message, but the reaction of others?
- Which memes illustrated the message best? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In 2014 Richard Linklater released a fictional film covering twelve years of a boy's life using the same actors. In two excerpts from the screenplay, we observe Mason and his Dad in a glimpse at how their relationship has endured and evolved over the years as Mason approaches adulthood.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use *Boyhood* to connect to their Extended Writing Project. They may analyze how Richard Linklater's *Boyhood* was impacted by popular culture and the time period in which he made this movie as they work on their informational research essay.



Extended Writing Project

Living the Dream

Essential Question

What does home mean to you?

Writing Form

Informative

Extended Writing Project Prompt

Choose one to two artists or writers, not included in this unit, from the Harlem Renaissance whom you would like to research. For example, you might research a writer who was born in the South but moved to a Northern city, such as Richard Wright. You might choose to focus on the early life of writer Claude McKay, the career of Paul Robeson, or the success of Ma Rainey. Research your chosen topic, and formulate a position on how your subjects' work contributed to gaining greater visibility for African-Americans in mainstream culture, how it impacted society, or how their life experiences impacted their work. Then, write an informative research essay, using textual evidence and source material to support your ideas.

EWP Mentor Texts

Point/Counterpoint: Dream House

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish

Writing Skills

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

Grammar Skills

Parentheses, Brackets and Ellipses for Omission, Commas for Pause or Separation, Basic Spelling Rules II



Writing Overview

Research writing is the focus of the Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 11, Unit 4. Students explore the unit’s literary period—the Harlem Renaissance—as they write an informative research paper. The prompt for this EWP asks students to choose one or two artists or writers from the Harlem Renaissance and write an informative research paper about how their subject’s work contributed to gaining greater visibility for African Americans in mainstream culture, how their work impacted society, or how their life experiences impacted their work. The unit’s selections from the Harlem Renaissance provide a context for students, and informational selections in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to reflect upon and synthesize as they plan their own essay. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the research writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During 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.

The Skill lessons Evaluating Sources and Print and Graphic Features teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while the additional Skill lessons Planning Research, Critiquing Research, and Sources and Citations focus on characteristics of research writing and help students develop an organizing structure that serves their purpose for writing. Revision lessons guide students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to specific grammar skills identified in English Language Arts standards. After each Skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing extends beyond 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. In the Independent Read “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” students are asked to compose their own poem about a view that inspires them, while the prompt for “The Fall of the House of Usher” asks them to write an explanatory essay analyzing how the House of Usher is used symbolically in the text and why houses, in general, have such symbolic significance in the horror genre. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with those texts. After students read “Letter from Chief John Ross,” they use the techniques from the Language, Style, and Audience skill lesson to analyze the author’s use of style and tone to achieve his purpose for writing.

Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about what home means to them, as well as offering them the opportunity to self-select texts for independent reading and writing. 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. In the Skill lesson Planning Research, students practice by planning a hypothetical research essay about a partner and in the Using a Style Guide lesson, they practice by composing a brief lecture to inform their classmates about how to avoid common style and usage errors. In each 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 5

The Wars We Wage

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Unit Overview

Unit 5 Title

The Wars We Wage

Essential Question

What does it mean to win?

Literary Focus

American Modernism

Genre Focus

Argumentative Text

Introduction

Whether it's a video game between friends, a reality show competition, or a national sports championship, the thrill of winning invigorates both participants and viewers. Everyone loves to win and loves to cheer on the winner—everyone except, perhaps, the loser.

Why are competition and the need to win so influential in American culture? What do readers learn by reading about the ways competition can be beneficial and harmful? What lessons can readers learn from reading about failure?

In this unit, students will think about these questions as they focus on the literary period of American Modernism as they analyze an excerpt from *The Great Gatsby* and the short story “A Rose for Emily.” They will also study the argumentative genre while reading “The Marshall Plan Speech,” “A Plea for the Oppressed,” and “‘These Wild Young People’ by One of Them.” In addition, the dramas *Othello* and *Death of a Salesman* will encourage students to think about competition and winning as they read across literary periods.

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



Text Complexity

In Grade 11 Unit 5 students continue to explore a range of texts with an emphasis on the craft of argumentation. Although the genre focus of this unit is argumentative texts, students will have the opportunity to examine a memoir, a short story, excerpts from a novel and two dramas, as well as numerous informational texts. In this unit students will dive back into skills learned in earlier units by reading non-fiction and fiction texts while also improving their ability to analyze and evaluate complex, argumentative texts.

The selections in this unit fall in a Lexile® band of 920–1550, with most texts residing in the 1240 range. The featured vocabulary, sentence structures, content, and relationships among ideas make these selections accessible to eleventh graders, encouraging students to explore the concepts of competition and success. Students delve into the benefits and dangers of competition while deepening their understanding of failure, the basis of healthy competition that often acts as an incentive to success. Exploring this unit’s readings through the perspective of these concepts will help students make connections as well as construct meaning as they attempt to uncover overarching themes and become more skilled at unpacking an argument by closely examining textual evidence.

Unit 5 begins with a cluster that includes a period essay, a classic Southern short story, and a classic American novel which, when read together, provide students with an introduction to American Modernism, the unit’s literary focus. The essay “‘These Wild Young People’ by One of Them” portrays the generation gap in the opening years of the Roaring Twenties, as seen through the eyes of a “wild” young adult. William Faulkner’s short story “A Rose for Emily” explores themes of isolation, echoing similar societal tensions in his native Mississippi. The third text is an excerpt from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s exploration of wealth and societal change, *The Great Gatsby*, a defining Modernist novel. In their analysis of these texts, students are supported by the Skills lessons Compare and Contrast and Story Elements to guide them in identifying and understanding the formal features of Modernist literature, including the characteristic use of irony, sarcasm, and indirect statement.

Students will continue on to develop their understanding of drama by independently reading an excerpt from the Pulitzer Prize-winning tragedy *Death of a Salesman* which, along with *The Great Gatsby*, questions the concept of the American Dream and challenges readers to examine traditional ideas of success. In exploring the struggle of Willy Loman, students practice using inferences to explore their own ideas of what makes a person successful.

Next, students turn to a very different American text, “The Marshall Plan Speech,” the commencement address delivered by Secretary of State George Marshall at Harvard University. Intended to convince Americans of the importance of the United States’ involvement



and support of the rebuilding of Europe after the devastation of World War II, this address had an enormous impact on Europe's recovery. After an initial reading students will be able to evaluate the key ideas presented in the speech in order to understand Marshall's argument as well as the rhetoric and reasoning he uses to support his position. Students may struggle with background knowledge on World War II and the complexities of technical language but are supported with the Skill lessons Author's Point of View, Informational Text Structure, and Word Patterns and Relationships. Following "The Marshall Plan Speech," students focus on the question of the meaning of winning at a personal level in the independent reading of "40-0," an inspiring essay on overcoming personal adversity to reach goals.

The topic of war and power returns in the next cluster of readings, the fictional memoir *The Moor's Account* and Shakespeare's tragedy *Othello*. Students are guided to analyze character in order to understand the reversals of fortune of the lead characters, Estebanico and Othello, in the respective texts. Skill Lessons in Language, Style and Audience help students analyze each author's word choice and its influence in creating character, while a Media lesson provides a deeper understanding of Othello's famous soliloquy through a variety of media presentations. The next selection, *Hunger: A Memoir of (My Body)*, examines how societal expectations affect the author's self-image, identity, and sexuality, echoing themes from *Othello*.

The paired argumentative texts, "A Plea from the Oppressed" and *Brown v. Board of Education*, address moments in American history which focus on the struggle to ensure freedom and justice for African Americans. Students apply critical thinking skills and research to better understand the influence of social movements in shaping the country. The Skill lesson Reasons and Evidence enables students to identify Chief Justice Warren's claim and evaluate the effectiveness of his argument, while lessons Technical Language and Word Meaning support students in decoding legal terminology. Both readings push students to consider the concept of winning in a broader cultural and national sense.

Following these texts are two independent readings that return students to individual perspectives on winning. "The Immortal Horizon," an article on marathons, includes central ideas around drive, motivation, and endurance as the author discusses what compels people to take on seemingly impossible challenges that push their bodies to extreme limits. The final text in this unit, "You Gotta Beat the Best to be the Best," the story of a young athlete who decides to take action when confronted with failure, inspires students to explore their own entrepreneurial aspirations as well as feel empowered by Rachel Zietz's tenacity, pragmatism, and success.



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.



‘These Wild People’ By One of Them

by John F. Carter, Jr.

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1920

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Carter’s use of sarcasm may confuse readers. Readers may not understand the purpose of Carter’s piece or whom he is addressing.
- Point out to students that the phrase “no doubt” in the first sentence as an example of sarcasm, and explain that it reflects the author’s attitude toward the subject (the older generation)—not the younger generation.

Specific Vocabulary

- Carter uses unfamiliar vocabulary such as *peculation*, *disillusioned*, and *treatise* without adequate context for readers to infer the meaning of the words.
- Help students use print and digital sources to help define unfamiliar words.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1170

Word Count: 2,445



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Argumentative: In this argumentative essay, Carter explains that one of the challenges his generation faces is that they are misunderstood and underappreciated. Write an argumentative essay in which you outline the challenges faced by today's youth. What is the greatest challenge facing today's generation? What can be done to help youth address it? Support your argument with evidence from the texts in previous units, outside resources, or your own experiences.

Beyond the Book

Art: The Generation Gap

In this text, the author discusses the difference in generations and how people are changing. Students will illustrate their views on different generations through art.

Ask students to:

- Conduct informal research on their generation, their parents' generation, and their grandparents' generation.
- What major historical events were/are happening? How were the youth described? How were/are family roles structured? What were/are the typical jobs?
- Create artwork that represents these different generations. For each piece of art, explain the generation's goals and life. Then, share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- What causes the change in different generations?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The essay “‘These Wild Young People’ by One of Them,” the short story “A Rose for Emily,” and excerpts from *The Great Gatsby* will help students explore the different formal features of modernist literature and define how they reflect the experience of having lived through World War I. Read alongside the two fiction texts, “‘These Wild Young People’ by One of Them” provides students a glimpse into the minds of modernist artists and writers and their concerns after World War I.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from John Carter for their argumentative essay. Have them consider what Carter does well in “‘These Wild Young People’ by One of Them,” and how they might change his essay.



A Rose for Emily

by William Faulkner

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1930

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- The sequential division of this text (Parts I through V) may lead students to expect the storyline of the text to follow the same sequential order, which it does not.
- Explain to students that Parts I through V are only a loose organization and that the narrator frequently skips around to different time periods throughout the story.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may be unfamiliar with societal norms during the post–Civil War era in the Southern U.S.
- Provide an overview of societal structures and expectations vis-à-vis women and formerly enslaved people as well as the impact on those who stepped outside those structures and expectations.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1270

Word Count: 3,674



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: William Faulkner’s stories are often told from multiple points of view. “A Rose for Emily” is told from the point of view of unnamed narrators who harbor their own attitudes towards Emily. In a narrative response, rewrite any section of the story from a different point of view: either that of Emily, her father, Tobe, or a character of your own imagination. Be sure to incorporate and modify specific descriptions and dialogue from the text as needed in your alteration of Faulkner’s classic story.

Beyond the Book

Discussion: The Tale of Time

Faulkner’s story jumps around in time to generate mystery as he tells the story of Emily. As the story jumps backward and forward through time, he uses symbols within his text to represent time and also to let the readers understand the crime committed.

Ask students to:

- In small groups, discuss the flash forward and backward events in the text.
- Why is the text written in this way? How does Faulkner help to orient the reader since the story is not told in a linear way?
- Change to another group and discuss what was shared in the previous group. Further discuss what objects, words, and events show the passing of time in the story.
 - How do the symbols represent time? How do the objects in the story provide clues about how and when the events unfolded? How do the objects help to develop the theme and characters?

To reflect, ask students:

- Why did Faulkner focus on time for this story? How does the rose fit into the idea of time?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The short story “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner will expose students to the early work of a foundational American modernist writer. Students will have an opportunity to analyze Faulkner’s use of specific details to build meaning throughout the text.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use “A Rose for Emily” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may think about William Faulkner’s careful word choices and the effect that his words have on a reader as they draft and revise their argumentative essays.



The Great Gatsby

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1925

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- Students may benefit from a discussion of the literary device of foreshadowing.
- Explain that foreshadowing is planting clues to what will happen later in the story. Foreshadowing also prepares readers emotionally for later events.

Sentence Structure

- Students may need support to better understand parts of the text due to sentence density.
- Have students separate complex sentences into clauses, explain each clause, and then identify the person, place, or event to which the clause refers.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1460

Word Count: 1,329



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Literary Periods, Story Elements

Close Read Prompt

Compare and Contrast: At the end of the 20th century, American writers turned to Modernism as a form of expression. Through their writing, they shared their disillusioned view of the world after World War I. Analyze the thoughts, words, and actions of the characters in *The Great Gatsby* and “A Rose for Emily” to compare and contrast how they reflect elements of this literary period. Support your response with evidence from the text.

Beyond the Book

Analysis: Character Sketch

Nick Carraway’s character is revealed through his interaction with Gatsby and other characters. Students will analyze Nick’s interactions and dialogue to draw conclusions about his character traits.

Ask students to:

- Reread the text paying close attention to Nick’s interactions and dialogue. Decide on three character traits Nick displays.
- Find evidence from the text that supports each character trait.
- Write a short paragraph analyzing how each quote reveals a particular character trait.
- Create a visual that illustrates each of the three character traits and present to the class

To reflect, ask students:

- How does analyzing a character’s dialogue and interactions help the reader to understand his or her character?
- Which types of interactions revealed the most about Nick’s character?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald explores the legend of the titular figure and the extraordinary times after World War I. Reading this excerpt alongside “A Rose for Emily” and “‘These Wild Young People’ by One of Them” will provide students with the context to analyze the different ways that authors addressed modernist style and themes.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use *The Great Gatsby* to contemplate the meaning of success for their Extended Writing Project. They may consider how F. Scott Fitzgerald described the effects of class in relation to success as they craft their argumentative essays.



Death of a Salesman

by Arthur Miller

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1949

Genre: Drama

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- The playwright of this dramatic text gives the reader limited details and descriptions about the action.
- Students may benefit from the knowledge that the format of a play focuses on the presentation of dialogue between characters, and that any descriptions and details, known as stage directions, are presented in parentheses.

Connection of Ideas

- Readers must infer Willy's idea of success from his dialogue with Linda.
- Have students work together in a collaborative conversation to discuss the question: "What does Willy Loman's dialogue imply about his idea of success?"

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 459



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: This excerpt focuses on Willy and Biff's conflicting yet rigid, uncompromising ideas of success. Consider the ideas you have read in this text, as well as individuals you admire. In your opinion, what makes a person successful? Provide textual evidence to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Character Analysis

In this text, Linda expresses her views of Willy through conversation and Willy's personality comes through in his responses. Students will choose a character to analyze and will share character traits.

Ask students to:

- Choose either Linda or Willy, and generate a list of character traits.
- Think about the character you chose, and brainstorm answers to the following questions:
 - What is the perfect job for this person?
 - What is the character's greatest strength? Weakness?
 - Who would be a great mentor for this person?
 - How would they act in conflict?
 - What conclusions can you draw based on what the character has said and done?
- Create a visual presentation of the character that includes evidence from the text and explanations of character analysis.
- Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How can character analysis help the reader understand the motives and actions of the character?
- What gave bigger insight to the character; their actions or their reactions?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The Pulitzer Prize-winning tragedy, *Death of a Salesman*, is a somber and penetrating exploration of the dark underbelly of the American Dream. In this text, students will explore the genre of drama and themes of the relationship between society and the individual.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Willy and Biff as they write their argumentative essays. Have them consider Willy Loman's idea of success as they develop their own argument about what it means to win.



The Marshall Plan Speech

by George Marshall

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1947

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Remind them that a persuasive speech is used by a speaker in an attempt to convince an audience to accept his or her argument, or take a specific action.

Prior Knowledge

- Background about World War II: After Hitler invaded Poland, Britain and France declared war against Germany. Japan and Italy formed the Axis Powers with Germany. The U.S. and the Soviet Union joined Britain and France as the Allies.
- In the aftermath of World War II, much of Europe was left physically and economically devastated, while the U.S. enjoyed economic prosperity.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1400

Word Count: 1,540



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

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

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: The Marshall Plan Speech was a rallying cry to America, a call to help Europe rebuild after the devastation of World War II. Write a rhetorical analysis in which you determine how Marshall structures his argument to Americans. Then, evaluate the effectiveness of this structure, as well as the rhetoric and reasoning Marshall uses to persuade his audience of his point of view. Use textual evidence and original commentary to support your response.

Beyond the Book

Analysis: Political Cartoons

This speech outlines plans to help Europe rebuild after the devastation from World War II. Students will find and analyze political cartoons about the Marshall Plan.

Ask students to:

- Pair up and search for a political cartoon about the Marshall Plan.
- Analyze the cartoon and research any information included in it.
 - What symbols are used? How is color used? Are exaggerated characteristics used to make a point? Is there a comparison to help readers understand this complex issue? What labels are used? Is irony used to make a point?
- Write an analysis of the political cartoon, and share it with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- Which cartoons were the most interesting, thought provoking, compelling, or persuasive? Why?
- What techniques do political cartoons use to send messages?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In 1947, Europe was reeling from the devastation of World War II. The same year, Secretary of State George Marshall, delivered a brief commencement address that would have an enormous impact on Europe's recovery. In this text students will examine how history has been shaped by the words of history's heroes.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use "The Marshall Plan Speech" as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Students should consider the responsibilities of winners as presented by Marshall when they consider the benefits and costs of winning.



40-0

by Brittney Griner

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2015

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Review the text features of informational texts. Remind students that images are one way that authors communicate information in a text.
- Give students time to preview the photographs in “40-0” and to discuss how the images reinforce or enhance the text.

Specific Vocabulary

- The text contains domain-specific vocabulary that students may not know.
- Students may benefit from additional support to understand basketball terminology including *guards*, *defenders*, *rebounds*, and *turnovers*.

Prior Knowledge

- This informational text takes for granted at least a general knowledge of the game of basketball.
- Students may be unfamiliar with the game and may need additional support to understand the text.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 550

Word Count: 1,059



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Research: In this article, Brittney Griner explains the sheer dedication and drive necessary to pursue one's goals. Research an athlete, artist, or historical figure you admire. Then, write an essay in which you explain which trait or characteristic helped this person accomplish his or her goals. Support your ideas with relevant textual evidence from your research.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Athlete of the Year

Brittney Griner recounts her perfect season with the Baylor Bears basketball team and remembers the confidence her team, coach, and community had in her. Students will choose an athlete they admire and write an article about this athlete for the local newspaper.

Ask students to:

- Choose an athlete they admire who has an interesting story.
- Conduct informal research on the athlete.
 - What are her or his major accomplishments?
 - What obstacles has he or she overcome?
 - Who has supported her or him?
- Write an article for the sports section of the local newspaper sharing the athlete's personal story, struggles, and triumphs.
- Share with a classmate and receive feedback.

To reflect, ask students:

- What do most successful athletes have in common?
- What events made the news articles more interesting?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In this essay for the *Players' Tribune*, Brittney Griner, one of the most recognizable figures on the University of Baylor's basketball team, describes her team's journey to an undefeated season and the 2012 National Championship.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can draw on Brittney's ability to overcome adversity as they consider how they will define "winning" in their argumentative essays.



The Moor's Account

by Laila Lalami

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2014

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Remind students that *The Moor's Account* is a fictional memoir based on a historical person.
- Help students research the Castilian expedition to the U.S. and find a reference to the real Estebanico.

Specific Vocabulary

- Difficult vocabulary, such as *pestilential* (annoying; also, causing diseases from rodents and other pests) and *itinerant* (traveling from place to place), may need defining.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1110

Word Count: 1,363



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: The narrator feels ashamed when the soldiers launch their raid on the village. Why? Examine the root causes of Estebanico's feelings. What does he have in common with the soldiers? And the villagers? Which group does he feel more a part of and why? Argue your side in a friendly debate with your group. Use examples from the text to support your stance and analysis.

Beyond the Book

Research Project: Florida's Coasts

Break students into small groups and ask them to:

- Choose a historical site on Florida's coasts and conduct your own research into the site.
- Find out who colonized it and how it changed hands until it eventually became a part of the state.
- Then, explain what lasting impact the colonizers or earliest settlers have had on the people or culture there or on Florida as a whole.

To reflect, ask students:

- What did you find out that you didn't know before about this part of Florida?
- To what extent does researching Florida's past help you better understand its present?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The novel *The Moor's Account* by Laila Lalami, and the play *Othello* by William Shakespeare, highlight two different experiences of Moorish men during the 16th century. *The Moor's Account* explores an enslaved man's trek through the wild country that would someday become the United States.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Estebanico for their argumentative essays. The historical Estebanico was a survivor, and eventually gained his freedom. Encourage students to think about how he exemplifies success.



Othello

by William Shakespeare

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1603

Genre: Drama

Access Complex Text Features

Sentence Structure

- Students may need additional support with archaic sentence structures in the dialogue.
- Point out, for example, the use of inversion with adverbs and objects, such as “here” placed after the verb instead of at the end of the sentence or “To you” placed before the subject and verb instead of after them.

Specific Vocabulary

- Archaic vocabulary such as *hitherto* (up until now), *hast* (have), and *thee/thy* (you/your) may need defining.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading and use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words in modern English. Have students check online translators for Shakespearean English whose meanings they cannot guess.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 1,890



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Language, Style, and Audience; Media

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: In *Othello*, the great Moroccan general Othello is brought down by lies. In *The Moor's Account*, Estebanico, an enslaved Moroccan man, survives a dangerous trek through the unknown and eventually escapes to freedom. For both, their ability or inability to judge the people and situations around them causes a radical reversal of fortune. Analyze how each author's word choice helps portray each man's judgment in order to foreshadow the reversal of fortune. Support your response with evidence from the text.

Beyond the Book

Mock Trial: Iago's Defense

Turn your class into a courtroom to try Iago for murder. Have students role play the judge, jury, defense team, prosecution, and key witnesses. Iago and his defense team should plead not guilty by reason of insanity.

During the trial:

- Allow the prosecution to call witnesses and present its case using evidence from the text and other reasonable inferences they can make based on Act I Scene III.
- Have the defense take its turn.
- Allow both sides to present a brief closing argument to the jury.
- Ask the jury to take a few minutes to deliberate and then share its verdict with the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- What made Iago a murderer? What caused his lack of conscience?
- How much responsibility do we bear for causing another's downfall through gossip we spread about them?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In the classic tragedy, *Othello*, a Venetian senator, learns that his daughter has eloped with Othello, a powerful Moorish general in the Venetian army. Read together, the novel and the play will help students explore how themes of war and power have influenced stories throughout history.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from *Othello* when writing their argumentative essays. Have them reflect on Shakespeare's skill with language and deep understanding of the power of words.



Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body

by Roxane Gay

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2017

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- The specific purpose of a text will influence how a reader interacts with the text. In a complex text the purpose may be more complicated than simply to inform, entertain, or persuade. Students may have trouble identifying what the author's primary purpose is.
- Explain to students that the text is autobiographical—it describes the author's own life and expresses her opinions and feelings. The title is a strong clue to the author's purpose.

Connection of Ideas

- When reading complex text, the student needs to make inferences and synthesize information throughout the text.
- Students may need support connecting the experiences the author shares from different points in her life.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 980

Word Count: 578



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Connotation and Denotation

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: The author uses the metaphor of the cage to describe her experience. Why does she use this image? How does her use of words with strong connotations to elaborate on this metaphor convey her feelings? Analyze the author's use of word choice and metaphor throughout the text. Cite evidence from the text to support your analysis.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Body Image Collage

In this text, Roxane Gay expresses her beliefs about the rigidity of beauty standards. Students will make a collage representing the beauty standards that our society promotes.

Ask students to:

- Look through magazine advertisements to find examples of how the media promotes beauty standards.
- Cut out images that you think demonstrate traditional beauty standards and use them to make a collage.
- On the back, explain whether or not you think advertisements should change to reflect more diverse notions of beauty and why. Have students share their collages in pairs.

To reflect, ask students:

- Why do you think advertisements often show unrealistic versions of beauty?
- Do you think advertisements should be required to show more diverse examples of beauty? Why or why not?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Roxane Gay's work centers on the female experience in society, sexuality, identity and privilege. In this excerpt from her memoir, she discusses body image and her struggles with weight and beauty expectations. This excerpt will help students understand concepts of hardship and courage as the author opens up about feeling trapped in her own body.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body* as a model to think about their definition of winning for their argumentative essay. Encourage students to think about how Roxane Gay would define winning given the ideas she shares in this excerpt.



A Plea for the Oppressed

by Lucy Stanton

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1850

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Students may not understand what a commencement address is or why Lucy Stanton makes an anti-slavery appeal at her college graduation.
- Explain to students that Stanton graduated on August 27, 1850, shortly before the Fugitive Slave Act was passed. She used her commencement speech at Oberlin College as a platform to urge the abolishment of slavery.

Specific Vocabulary

- Archaic vocabulary such as *suffrage*, *brethren*, *intemperance*, or *battlement* may need defining.
- Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1000

Word Count: 1,311



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Research: Lucy Stanton argues that in order to achieve peace we must be willing to “plead for the downtrodden of thy own, of every land.” Research ways that world leaders or individuals are trying to achieve peace. For example, topics for research may include the efforts of the United Nations, a social media campaign, or a grassroots movement. Write a response in which you explain how the individual or group is trying to achieve peace using relevant evidence from your research to support your ideas. Explain why their plan is effective and what can be done to make their efforts more impactful.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Commencement Address

“A Plea for the Oppressed” is a powerful example of a commencement address whose purpose is to persuade. Challenge students to craft their own commencement address that aims to persuade the audience to care about a cause of their choosing. Place students into small groups to deliver their addresses to one another.

To reflect, ask students:

- What cause did you choose and why?
- What tactics did you use in order to persuade your audience to pay attention to your cause?
- How did the form of a commencement address affect the way you delivered your message?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The speech “A Plea for the Oppressed” and the U.S. Supreme Court Decision *Brown v. Board of Education* both highlight for students historical moments in African Americans’ struggles against a segregated society. In a “Plea for the Oppressed,” Lucy Stanton implores all facets of society to come together and fight for the cause of abolition.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can use Stanton’s address as an example of an author using her words to fight to “win” a political cause—in this case, abolition. Have them identify what “winning” means for Stanton in the context of this address and what tactics she employs to accomplish this goal.



Brown v. Board of Education

by U.S. Supreme Court

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1954

Genre: Argumentative

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Students might not be familiar with the purpose of this landmark case.
- Explain that in the past, the “separate but equal” doctrine legalized racial segregation of public facilities. However, black schools were not equal to white schools. The plaintiff proved the inequality of segregated schools so that black students could have access to quality education.

Specific Vocabulary

- The legal terminology may be confusing for some students.
- Explain the meaning of words such as *unanimous*, *plaintiff*, *sanction*, and *amendment*. Guide students to use a dictionary or online source to research unknown vocabulary.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1310

Word Count: 654



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Reasons and Evidence, Technical Language, Word Meaning

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: The author of this text uses reasoning and evidence to support his claim reached in the resolution of this case. Identify the author’s claim. Then, evaluate how successful the author’s use of reasoning and evidence is in convincing his audience of this claim. Support your response with evidence from the text.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education*

The legality of “separate but equal” was taken away in this landmark decision, but it wasn’t as easy to implement. Students will analyze pictures of the implementation of the integration of schools.

Ask students to:

- In small groups, find photographs of the implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education*.
- Choose one picture and analyze what is happening.
- Describe what is seen.
- Pay attention to the emotion and expressions.
- Make inferences, based on the time frame, of what is happening.
- Share the group analysis with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How difficult was it to implement *Brown v. Board of Education*?
- How do new laws come to be accepted?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* set the stage for the physical integration of African American and white students. Both of these texts will guide students through an exploration of the African American fight for equality in the United States.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can be inspired by *Brown v. Board of Education* as they formulate their argumentative essays. Encourage them to think about “winning” in broader terms, such as its social, economic, or cultural significance.



The Immortal Horizon

by Leslie Jamison

Qualitative Features

Publication Date 2011

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Remind students that in a complex, narrative nonfiction text, the purpose may be more complicated than simply to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- Leslie Jamison gives an entertaining account of a unique race, and uses the narrative of the race experience to look more closely at such phenomena as shared solitude and crisis of purpose.

Connection of Ideas

- Students may need help connecting key ideas in the text.
- Explain that the author uses details from the race to understand the motivation of the runners. Remind students to annotate details they think are important while they read. After reading, they can review their annotations as they infer the main ideas of the text.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 990

Word Count: 3,284



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Correspondence: This text details the blunt hardships of a race—win or lose. Think about a significant victory or loss in your own life. Then write a letter to a friend, mentor, or confidante relating what you experienced and how it made you feel.

Beyond the Book

Advertisement: The Barkley Marathons

Every year people come from around the country to compete in a grueling race.

Students will create an advertisement that captures the event and mood.

Ask students to:

- Generate a list of the qualities of the race, the benefits of competing, and the appeal of attempting it.
- Choose an audience, rhetorical appeals, and format to create an advertisement that would persuade people to join the race.
- Create the advertisement.
- Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How important is knowing the type of people who would be willing to join the race was in creating the advertisement?
- Which appeals were used most on the advertisements? Why?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In this long-form piece for *The Believer* magazine, Leslie Jamison explores the origins, motivations, and idiosyncrasies of the Barkley Marathons, an extremely brutal race that spans over 100 miles of rugged terrain in Tennessee. This text will push students to answer the question of what drives people to seek out seemingly impossible challenges and to push their bodies to the limits, in the face of long odds and extreme discomfort.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from “The Immortal Horizon” for their argumentative essays. Have students consider the experiences and motivations of the Barkley Marathons’ competitors as they develop their ideas of what success really means.



You Gotta Beat the Best to Be the Best

by Ali Swenson

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Prior Knowledge

- Students who are not familiar with the sport of lacrosse may have some difficulty visualizing portions of the text.
- If needed, allow students to watch a video clip of a lacrosse game or look up pictures of lacrosse equipment before reading.

Organization

- Students need to understand how a text is organized in order to find evidence within the text.
- Point out to students that the text is organized by specific subheadings. Ask students to consider: How does the author's use of subheadings aid in your comprehension of the text?

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1120

Word Count: 1,504



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: Think about an idea for a product or service that you imagine would improve some aspect of your own life. Write a description of that product or service and a plan for how you would make it a reality. Discuss how the product or service would positively affect your life and the lives of others, and describe what resources you would need to execute your plan.

Beyond the Book

Research: Young Inventors

In this text, one teen addresses a problem she sees in the world around her. Students will conduct research on another teen who has changed the world by developing a new product or service.

Ask students to:

- Conduct informal research on a teen who invented a product or developed a service to address a problem.
 - What was the problem the person was trying to address?
 - What product or service did he or she create?
 - How did the product or service address the problem?
- Create a powerpoint to present the answers found throughout the research process.
- Present powerpoints to classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- What qualities must a person possess to invent something new and make their idea a reality?
- Are there any common motivations that people possess when inventing something new?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Apart from being a high school athlete and high achieving student, Rachel Zietz is also the owner of a multi-million dollar company. This informational article outlines Rachel's road to entrepreneurial success from her humble beginnings as a teen frustrated with overpriced lacrosse equipment to being the CEO of her very own company.

Connect to Extended Writing Project

Students can find inspiration from Rachel Zietz for their argumentative essay. Have them consider what makes Rachel successful. In particular, how did she solve problems and react to failure in a way that helped her continue to improve her company?



Extended Writing Project

The Wars We Wage

Essential Question

What does it mean to win?

Writing Form

Argumentative

Extended Writing Project Prompt

Write an essay in which you argue what success really means. What does it mean to “win”? What are the benefits of winning? What are the costs? Write a clear, arguable thesis, and use evidence from at least two texts in the unit to support your argument. You may also draw on relevant personal experiences to support your ideas.

EWP Mentor Text

The Marshall Plan Speech

EWP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Present

Writing Skills

Evaluating Sources, Organizing an Oral Presentation, Considering Audience and Purpose, Communicating Ideas, Reasons and Relevant Evidence, Sources and Citations

Grammar Skills

Writing for Effect, Participial Phrases, Gerund Phrases, Run-On Sentences



Writing Overview

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 11, Unit 5 focuses on argumentative writing. Students explore the unit’s essential question—What does it mean to win?—as they write an argumentative essay. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write an argumentative essay using evidence from at least two texts from the unit to argue what it means to win. The unit’s selections that look at different perspectives on winning and success provide a context for students, and the argumentative selections in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to reflect upon and synthesize as they plan their own essay. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the argumentative writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During 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.

The Skill lessons Reasons and Relevant Evidence and Organizing Argumentative Writing teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while additional Skill lessons, Thesis Statements, Introductions, Conclusions, and Transitions, focus on characteristics of the argumentative writing genre and help students develop an organizing structure that serves their purpose for writing. Revision lessons guide students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to specific grammar skills identified in English Language Arts standards. After each Skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing extends beyond 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. In the Independent Read “‘These Wild Young People’ By One of Them” students are asked to use this text as a model for their own essay about challenges faced by today’s youth, while the prompt for “A Plea for the Oppressed” asks them to research and write about the ways that world leaders are trying to achieve peace. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with those texts. After students read *The Great Gatsby*, they use the techniques from the Compare and Contrast and Story Elements skill lessons to think about the characters in both *The Great Gatsby* and “A Rose for Emily” to emphasize elements of American Modernism in each text.

Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about winning and losing in different contexts, as well as offering them the opportunity to self-select texts for independent reading and writing. 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. In the skill lesson for Organizing Argumentative Writing, students practice by writing an outline for a persuasive essay about the merits of their favorite TV show and in the Introductions lesson, they practice by crafting different types of hooks for an advertisement. In each 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 6

With Malice Toward None

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Unit Overview

Unit 6 Title

With Malice Toward None

How can we attain justice for all?

Postmodernism

Literary Focus

Essential Question

Genre Focus

Multigenre Text

Introduction

Our vision of justice depends on our belief systems, our individual experiences, and the opportunities we have been afforded as well as those which we have been denied. It may be easy to say that we believe in justice for all, but the success of this aspiration depends on many factors, including open communication and the collective willingness to consider alternative viewpoints.

What is the role of literature in attaining justice for all? How can what we learn about other people's experiences from a text inform our understanding of justice?

In this unit, students will think about the theme of justice and the essential question—How can we attain justice for all?—as they focus on the literary period of postmodernism. From the novel *Invisible Man* to the poem “Demeter’s Prayer to Hades,” students will assess the effects of postmodernism on literary content and themes. In addition, they will study the complexities of multigenre literature, or literature that defies easy genre labeling, with the short story “American Horse” and the poem “Gaman.” In addition, nonfiction texts, such as Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” and Abraham Lincoln’s “Second Inaugural Address,” will encourage students to think about the attempts of real-life leaders to achieve justice as they read across time periods.

After an in-depth exploration of a range of texts addressing the issue of justice for all, students will have the opportunity to develop an argumentative oral presentation on a change they believe will result in a more just world. They will use what they learned from the unit’s texts to develop their own voice and to present their perspective to an audience.



Text Complexity

In Unit 6, students continue to synthesize and sharpen analytical reading skills learned throughout the Grade 11 course. The unit theme, *With Malice Toward None*, focuses on the concept of justice as expressed in multigenre text, but the unit also includes fiction, poetry, and nonfiction texts. Students will explore attitudes, ideas, and experiences relating to justice in an excerpt from a novel, three short stories, two political speeches, a legal document, three poems, and a handful of other texts.

The Lexile® range for this unit is much broader than for previous units, at 580–1810, with most texts falling in the 950L to 1400L range. At the close of the course, the breadth of Lexile® range and variety of writing forms provides the opportunity for students to read and interpret a wide variety of texts for their treatment of the Essential Question, *How can we attain justice for all?* Students will investigate a number of language, form, and content perspectives by applying the analytical skills they have learned throughout the course.

The Unit 6 curriculum begins with readings on injustice from the viewpoint of the “outsider” in Ralph Ellison’s ground-breaking novel, *Invisible Man*. The text is paired with the short story “American Horse,” in which a Native American child is faced with the loss of his family by a zealous social worker. Skill instruction in Story Structure helps students identify the authorial choices that both shape meaning and contribute to the aesthetic impact of a fictional work, while a skills lesson in Point of View, demonstrates how to distinguish direct from indirect statement and trains students in the higher skill of identifying satire, sarcasm, irony, and understatement to grasp the subtleties of the language and deeper intent of a passage or work as a whole.

The following poem, “On Listening to Your Teacher Take Attendance,” provides students with the opportunity to further practice these analytical skills. Students may be confused by the use of second person point of view in this poem, but associated questions and activities in the lesson allow them to address this stylistic choice alongside their peers.

Moving from the individual to the historical context, a pair of readings, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Lincoln’s “Second Inaugural Address,” focus on the politics behind national movements working to attain justice for groups who suffer from discrimination. Both texts include archaic and technical language that is likely to be challenging for students, but several Skill lessons support readers in their understanding and analysis of the nineteenth-century formalities of Lincoln’s speech. The Skill lesson Arguments and Claims helps students grasp and evaluate an argument and the reasoning and evidence offered to support it, while the Primary and Secondary Sources lesson illustrates the use of precedent and the ways in which legal and political documents frame language and purpose in the foundations of principle or law.



The three selections that follow are the speech “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” the short story “The Night Before Christmas,” and an article “The Last Ride of Cowboy Bob.” The readings address the question of achieving justice in the multiple contexts of religion, morality, law, and culture not only personally but on local, state, and national scales. Students are asked to examine illegal acts and civil disobedience and their causes. They may be challenged by the highly allusive language and rhetoric of Dr. King’s speech, “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” but are supported by the Skill lessons Central or Main Idea; Rhetoric; and Language, Style, and Audience.

The final cluster of readings includes three selections by women writers. The first is Dalia Rosenfeld’s short story, “The Four Foods,” and two poems, Christine Kitano’s “Gaman” and former poet laureate Rita Dove’s “Demeter’s Prayer to Hades.” Each text is concerned with the consequences of racial and gender prejudice and abuse at the individual and human level. In addition, their use of figurative language, imagery, and devices encourages a cross-genre analysis of the texts. Finally, the unit closes with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s essay, “The Color of an Awkward Conversation,” a comment on injustice in the U.S. from the standpoint of the “outsider.”



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 Oral Project in the Core ELA Unit. In this unit, students will research and write a monologue. 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.



Invisible Man

by Ralph Ellison

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1952

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Students may need to review the genre lesson from the beginning of the unit. Remind students that the novel is a critique of American society.
- Guide students to brainstorm ways that the excerpt could be drawing attention to both the particular and wider challenges and problems within American race relations.

Connection of Ideas

- The violence the narrator commits in the text is brutal, and students may not immediately connect it to the larger purpose of the novel.
- Ask students to think about how the narrator's experience of "being invisible" both provokes the violence and puts an end to it.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 990

Word Count: 1,321



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Discussion: In small groups, discuss *Invisible Man* as a piece of early postmodernism. How is your interpretation of *Invisible Man* influenced by the postmodern elements Ellison uses, such as fragmentation? To prepare for your discussion, write down at least one element of postmodernism you have identified in the text.

Beyond the Book

Writing: Invisible in My Community

An African-American narrator describes feeling invisible because of his race. Using symbolism combined with straightforward language, he expresses his emotions about how he is treated. In groups, students will write a script about what it feels like to be invisible in their own community.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm situations in which they feel invisible at home, school, or in the community (e.g., when surrounded by a group of adults, when someone they like doesn't give them the time of day).
- Choose one example and write a reflection that describes the context and answers the following questions: How does it feel to be invisible? How do the moments when we feel invisible compare to how the narrator in the text feels? What can we do to help others feel seen?

To reflect, ask students:

- What was most challenging about this assignment?
- How did comparing your feelings to the narrator's impact the way you understand his perspective?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* takes a deep dive into the psyche of a man living on the fringes of society. Read alongside "American Horse" by Louise Erdrich, the experimental style of this novel challenges students to consider the effects of racial injustice.

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students can analyze the excerpt from *Invisible Man* as an example of the effects on a marginalized person in a society where there is not "justice for all." Have them identify the effects of an unjust society on the narrator and how the narrator's mindset, in turn, affects the society around him.



American Horse

by Louise Erdrich

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1991

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Students may have difficulty establishing where the author's sympathies lie.
- Explain that historically, Native Americans were often treated unfairly by the government. Tensions developed because Native Americans wanted to govern themselves and make their own decisions while the government tried to exert control over their lives.

Organization

- Students may struggle to follow the sequence of events in the story given the presence of flashbacks.
- Explain to students that a flashback interrupts the chronological order of events in a story to give background or reveal something about a character. In "American Horse," the flashback about a dead butterfly begins with a trigger in the paragraph that precedes it with the description of Albertine's butterfly-shaped buckle.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1000

Word Count: 4,934



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Story Structure, Point of View

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Use your Skills Focus annotations and notes to clarify your understanding of the story structure in both *Invisible Man* and “American Horse.” How does the way that each author structures the story help to develop similar themes about isolation? Use evidence from the text to support your analysis.

Beyond the Book

Activity: Auxiliary Needs

Albertine, a Sioux mother, is trying to keep her little boy, Buddy, with her while the authorities feel that all of his needs are not being met. Students will discuss and present needs beyond the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing.

Ask students to:

- In small groups, discuss needs beyond food, shelter, and clothing (e.g., diplomas, employment, love, medicine, companionship, safety)
- Choose the most important need besides food, shelter, and clothing.
- Conduct informal research to gather information, facts, and stories that will support the importance of this need.
- Create a presentation to argue for this auxiliary need to be a basic need.

To reflect, ask students:

- Why is it difficult to discern needs and wants?
- Who decides what is actually needed in life?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Louise Erdrich’s short story “American Horse” features a fragmented narration that explores the themes of family and motherhood while also addressing the dynamic between Native Americans and law enforcement. Paired with an excerpt from *Invisible Man*, this text raises the question “How do people’s lived experiences complicate their concepts of right and wrong?”

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students can use “American Horse” to prepare for their Extended Oral Project. They may consider the social commentary in the story as they contemplate a change they think would result in a more just society.



On Listening to Your Teacher Take Attendance

by Aimee Nezhukumatathil

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need support to understand the figurative language in the poem.
- Encourage students to visualize the imagery and discuss the use of simile and sensory details with a partner.

Genre

- Students may be confused by the use of the second-person point of view in the poem.
- Discuss with students how writing about sensitive topics in the second person presents a unique perspective of the speaker's experience. This technique draws the speaker and reader together by including the reader in the experience.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 189



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Poetry: Sometimes writing in the second person makes describing painful situations easier because it takes the focus off the speaker. The second person can also be used to give comfort, advice, or instruction to others. Using “On Listening to Your Teacher Take Attendance” as a guide, write a poem in the second person about a real or imagined situation in which the speaker describes personal memories, thoughts, or actions. Be sure to maintain the second-person voice and use figurative language throughout your poem.

Beyond the Book

Activity: My Embarrassing Moment

This poem highlights the feelings of a girl who is uncomfortable in class as her teacher cannot pronounce her name correctly. Students will use lines from the poem to create their own narrative.

Ask students to:

- Choose two lines from the poem that remind them of a time they were embarrassed or felt uncomfortable.
- Write a paragraph or two explaining the event, using figurative language and weaving in the idea from the lines chosen.
- Create a visual that includes the two lines from the poem, their own writing, and an illustration of the event. Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How did you feel while reflecting on your own personal embarrassing story?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Aimee Nezhukumatathil’s poem “On Listening to Your Teacher Take Attendance” uses vivid imagery to call attention to the speaker’s thoughts and feelings upon having her name mispronounced in school. How can unconscious behaviors have a harmful impact? How do people learn defense mechanisms to reduce anxiety or emotional distress

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students can find inspiration from “On Listening to Your Teacher Take Attendance” for their presentation: How can we seek justice? Have them consider how the poem’s subject could be considered an issue of justice.



Civil Rights Act of 1964

by Lyndon B. Johnson (and US Congress)

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1964

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Sentence Structure

- Students may have difficulty understanding the specific language and structure of a congressional bill.
- Explain the structure of a bill to students—numbered sections and lettered and numbered subsections—and the cross-references between subsections.

Specific Vocabulary

- Students may need help with words such as commerce, transient, and exhibition.
- Encourage students to use context clues and, if needed, look up the meaning of words in a dictionary.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1810

Word Count: 737



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Research: The scope and specificity of the places named in this excerpt of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 serve not only to define the broad reach of the new law but also to recognize the particular battlegrounds where the fight for civil rights occurred. Research an event that took place in one of the locations mentioned in this portion of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Then, write about how your research impacts your understanding of the text and the civil rights movement as a whole.

Beyond the Book

Writing: My Civil Rights Act

Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law to ban public discrimination based on race. Students will contemplate current civil rights and create an act designed to support and create laws to protect these rights.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm civil rights that are not as equal as they could or should be.
- Choose one to investigate further.
- Emulating the Civil Rights Act of 1964, create your own civil rights act with at least four major points explained.
- Share with a classmate and receive feedback.
- Use the feedback to make improvements on the document.

To reflect, ask students:

- What work is still needed to achieve equality?
- Which civil rights are the most crucial right now?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Signed into law by U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This historical document marks a landmark success in the civil rights movement.

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students can use the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as inspiration when they develop their argument for a change that would result in a more just world. Have them pay attention to the details and specificity of the language of the law.



Second Inaugural Address

by Abraham Lincoln

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1865

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Students may need support in noticing Lincoln’s careful language and in considering the purpose of both the language and the tone.
- Provide an example of the positive tone and precise words that encouraged people to unite: “. . . let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow . . .”

Sentence Structure

- The sentence structure and phrasing are different from modern speech and may be difficult for some students to understand.
- Help students break long sentences into meaningful parts; for example, “Both parties deprecated war. One of them would make war rather than let the nation survive. The other would accept war rather than let it perish. The war came.”

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1490

Word Count: 699



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Primary and Secondary Sources, Arguments and Claims, Informational Text Elements

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: In his “Second Inaugural Address,” Lincoln acknowledges the horror of the Civil War, the human cost on both sides, and the damage the war has caused the nation. He also very clearly and powerfully takes a side. Identify the claim that is integral to Lincoln’s speech. Then, analyze how Lincoln orders and develops his ideas in order to support his claim. Evaluate how effective Lincoln was in supporting his main argument. Support your response with textual evidence.

Beyond the Book

Art: Word Cloud Speech

Inaugural addresses provide insight into the conflicts and events that the nation faces as a president takes office. In his second inaugural address, Lincoln reflects upon the Civil War and looks ahead to its resolution. Students will create a word cloud out of the inaugural address in order to analyze important issues and ideas of the time.

Ask students to:

- Copy and paste the “Second Inaugural Address” into the generator.
- Choose appropriate colors, design, or other elements if the generator allows it.
- Print the word cloud.
- Study the word cloud and analyze the main message of the speech.
 - Which words are largest? Why? What events, themes, and/or ideas emerged as particularly important? How does his speech reflect the historical period?
- Share your word cloud and your analysis with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How did analyzing the word cloud impact the way you think about this speech? Were there important ideas or issues that you overlooked when you first read the speech?

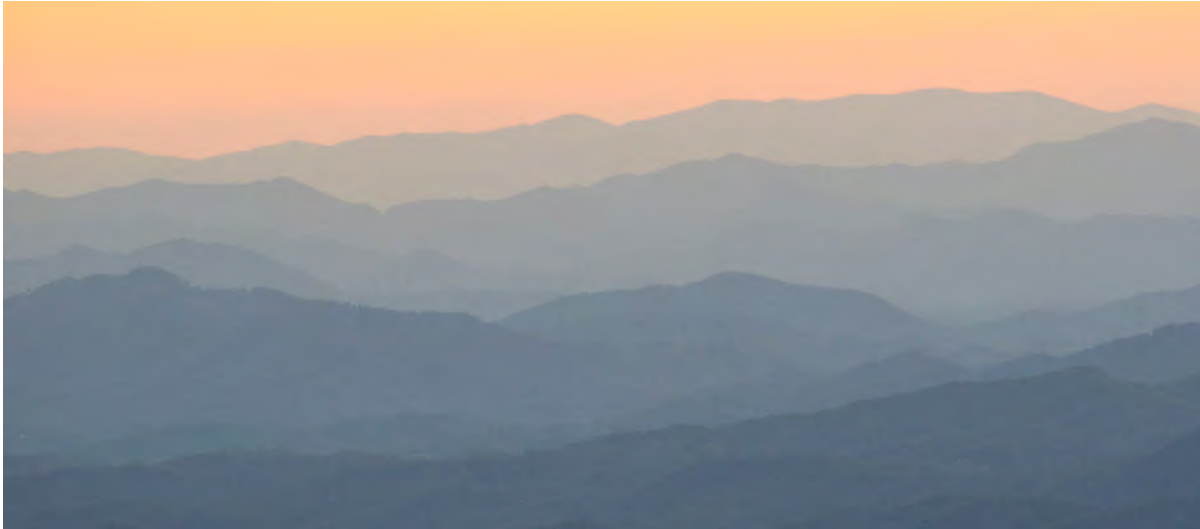
Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Lincoln revisits the dispute at the heart of the Civil War and reiterates his stance on how to achieve peace.

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students may adopt some of Lincoln’s rhetorical devices in order to persuade their audience.



I've Been to the Mountaintop

by Martin Luther King Jr.

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1968

Genre: Non-Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- This speech serves to inspire, encourage, and instruct: calling for unity and undistracted focus while providing specific steps to support the sanitation workers on strike as well as the broader cause of freedom for all.
- Challenge students to identify places in the speech where King is performing each of these functions.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may not be familiar with references to certain stories, terms, and phrases found in the Judeo-Christian Bible: the Exodus story, the Good Samaritan story, terms and phrases such as “new Jerusalem,” and streets “flowing with milk and honey,” or the allusion to Moses with regard to the “mountaintop” and the “Promised Land.”
- Encourage students to look up terms as necessary to improve their comprehension.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 890

Word Count: 4,372



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Rhetoric; Central or Main Idea; Language, Style and Audience

Close Read Prompt

Rhetorical Analysis: What makes rhetoric effective? Identify King’s main idea and purpose in this speech. Then, discuss what aspect of King’s rhetoric is most crucial to convincing his audience of his main idea. Cite examples of rhetoric from the text and explain how it is used to support King’s central idea.

Beyond the Book

Speech: I Wouldn’t Stop There

Martin Luther King Jr. advocated for the peaceful pursuit of civil liberty. His speech addresses issues such as unity, injustice, and obligation. Students will write and deliver their own speeches using the repeated line, “I wouldn’t stop there.”

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm current topics they are passionate about and feel need to be addressed.
- Using the repeated line from MLK’s speech, “I wouldn’t stop there,” write a speech that introduces their issue and rallies support and action.
 - What facts are important for people to know about this issue?
 - What action are you advocating for? What will help persuade people to get behind this cause?
 - What can people do to get involved in pushing for positive change?
- Record their speeches and critique their delivery and content.

To reflect, ask students:

- What makes a speech powerful and engaging?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” at Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee on April 3, 1968. King gave the speech in support of African American sanitation workers and to encourage the community to keep fighting for their freedoms using non-violent measures. This speech highlights a famous example of a peaceful fight for justice.

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students can use “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” as they consider how to most effectively persuade their audience in their Extended Oral Project. They may adopt some of Martin Luther King Jr.’s rhetorical methods as they craft their presentation.



The Night Before Christmas

by Tomás Rivera

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2015

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Remind students that the specific purpose of a text will influence how a reader interacts with the text.
- Ask students the following questions: “What is the author saying about the experience of the Christmas holidays? How does the mother’s anxiety connect with the family’s financial struggles?”

Sentence Structure

- Students may need support to understand complicated or unusual sentence structures, which will help them comprehend the text as a whole.
- As they read, have students analyze how Rivera uses dialogue to reveal his characters. Encourage them to read excerpts of dialogue aloud with a partner.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 780

Word Count: 2,066



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Story Elements

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: How does Tomás Rivera use dialogue to shape what you know about his characters? How does dialogue affect the plot of the story? What insight does the dialogue in this story provide the reader and what is its impact? In a written response, analyze the author’s use of dialogue in his short story “The Night Before Christmas,” and be sure to cite evidence from the text to support your analysis.

Beyond the Book

Performance: Understanding Difficult Situations

Doña María was unable to buy toys for her kids again this Christmas. Her kids overheard the conversation explaining her disappointment and reasoning and while they didn’t fully understand, they went along without bringing it up. Students will think of experiences when children might be forced to accept a difficult situation without fully understanding it.

Ask students to:

- In small groups, choose a scenario where children would have to accept a difficult situation.
- Imagine what happened. How would the children have understood the situation at the time? What are the mixed emotions that they might have experienced?
 - What questions might a child have in this instance?
- Create a short performance that explains the inner conflict a child would have when he or she is confronted with a decision or event without full understanding of it.
- Rehearse the performance and share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How important is it to understand the reason for decisions?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In “The Night Before Christmas,” an immigrant mother struggles to make Christmas special in the face of both financial and mental obstacles. As the story attests, in spite of the common hopes that most American families share, holidays do not look the same in every family.

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students may use their close look at “The Night Before Christmas” as an opportunity to consider the story’s characters and the often marginalized groups that are represented amongst the story’s characters. Students may find inspiration for their Extended Oral Project in thinking about how justice might be procured for members of these groups.



The Last Ride of Cowboy Bob

by Skip Hollandsworth

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2005

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- The purpose of a text influences how a reader interacts with it. In a complex text the purpose may be more than to inform, entertain, or persuade.
- Explain that a text can have more than one purpose. Have students consider the following questions: what information does the author provide about Peggy Jo? What in the text might entertain the reader?

Connection of Ideas

- When reading a complex text the student needs to make inferences and synthesize information throughout the text.
- Encourage students to connect information provided about Peggy Jo's backstory to the information provided about the characteristics of a typical bank robber.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1170

Word Count: 1,215



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Narrative: The fascination of this true crime story revolves around the improbability of the person robbing the banks. Use Hollandsworth's opening paragraphs as a model for your own profile of a criminal who deviates from expectations. Your chosen perpetrator can be notorious, local, or unconvicted. Change names as you see fit. Along with using Hollandsworth's style as a model for setting and action, begin your profile with a description borrowing the syntax from the opening line of the essay: X was, by all accounts, the

Beyond the Book

Writing: Creating a screenplay

Peggy Jo Tallas's life would make a very interesting film. Using the information from the text, create a film script about Peggy Jo's life.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm details from the text they want to include.
- Decide what part of the text they want to turn into a script.
- Work with a partner(s) to create a script for their chosen part. Be sure to include references to the sensory details used in the text.
- Perform the script for the class.

To reflect, ask students:

- What makes some “bad guys” intriguing to society?
- Do you think Peggy Jo chose to become a criminal?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In “The Last Ride of Cowboy Bob,” Skip Hollandsworth tells the story of Peggy Jo Tallas, a woman who was able to rob dozens of banks in the early 90s, dressed as a male cowboy. Reading Tallas's unique story will require students to think about crime, punishment, and justice in a new way.

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students can use “The Last Ride of Cowboy Bob” as inspiration when they develop their oral presentations. Have them think about what types of injustice Peggy Jo might have confronted in her lifetime.



The Four Foods

by Dalia Rosenfeld

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2018

Genre: Fiction

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Some students may mistake this first-person short story for a nonfiction memoir.
- Discuss the benefits and difficulties of reading fiction written from the first-person point of view.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may be unfamiliar with several cultural references in the story including: *shtetl* - small Jewish town in Eastern Europe, Leonard Bernstein - American composer, conductor and pianist, The Alhambra Decree - 1492 order by Catholic monarchs to expel Jews from kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, and 1933–1939 - Nazi decrees limiting the rights of German Jews.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 580

Word Count: 1,448



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Response: Can you relate to the narrator’s misunderstandings with her father? How much has your awareness of cultural or familial traditions been shaped, either actively or passively, by an older generation? Do you differ in the way you interpret those traditions? Are there particular traditions that bring you and your family together? Write a personal response in which you compare and contrast your experiences with those of the narrator and her father in “The Four Foods.” Use personal anecdotes as well as evidence from the text in your response.

Beyond the Book

Beyond the Book; Activity: Webbing Connections

In “The Four Foods,” an adult daughter is trying to find a way to connect with her father. Students will explore their connections with others and with fictional characters.

Ask students to:

- Generate a list of 5 - 7 people who they know well.
- Write the main connection they have with each of the people.
- Generate a list of 3 fictional characters from books who they have connected with in some way.
- Write the main connection they have with each character.
- Create a web with their name in the center. Link to each real and fictional person using the main connection. Prior to creating the web, contemplate how many connections are unique and how many are similar. Share with a group of classmates and receive feedback.

To reflect, ask students:

- Was there a trend of connections with your selected individuals?
- What did you learn about your relationships by analyzing connections?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

The narrator repeatedly attempts to use a shared cultural heritage to form a connection with her father. This story challenges students to examine how people cope with conflict across generations.

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students can find inspiration from “The Four Foods” for their presentations on seeking justice. How does injustice affect individuals and families? What can be done to address this?



Gaman

by Christine Kitano

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2017

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Organization

- Students may struggle to identify the sequence of events mentioned in the poem.
- Explain to students that the poem weaves memories and flashbacks into the speaker's description of being transported to an internment camp for people of Japanese descent during World War II.

Prior Knowledge

- Students may be unfamiliar with the specific historical context of the poem and the events that precipitated the internment of people of Japanese descent.
- Discuss with students events such as the Munson Report, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and the signing of executive orders 9066 and 9102 by President Roosevelt.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 216



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: Analyze how the characteristics of poetry are used to communicate the author's purpose and lend structure to "Gaman." Are the stanzas constructed similarly or do they vary? Who is the speaker? What kinds of sound devices are used? Be sure to cite evidence from the text and specifically address stanzas, line breaks, speaker, and sound devices in your analysis.

Beyond the Book

Discussion: Does Persistence Equal Excellence?

Christine Kitano explores the concept of gaman, or persistence, in relation to the Japanese immigrants in the United States during World War II. Students will gather information to understand the value of persistence.

Ask students to:

- Brainstorm times they faced challenges or obstacles and were persistent. What were the outcomes? Think about how each event made them feel and what they think is important about persistence.
- Form groups of four to discuss whether or not persistence equates to excellence.
 - What are some specific times you persisted to achieve a goal? What were the results?
 - Why do you feel that persistence is important or not important?
 - How can persistence lead to excellence? When does persistence lead to failure?
 - Are there times when persistence is a negative trait?
- Come together as a class to share what the small groups discussed.

To reflect, ask students to write a response on the importance of persistence and whether or not it leads to excellence.

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Christine Kitano's poem "Gaman" reimagines the experience of her grandmother who immigrated to the United States from Japan. Paired with "Demeter's Prayer to Hades" and short story "The Four Foods," this poem motivates students to ponder, "How do people stay hopeful in moments of uncertainty and defeat?"

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students can find inspiration from "Gaman" for their oral presentations. Have them consider the poem's descriptive language and think about how they can use diction in their presentations to persuade their audience.



Demeter's Prayer to Hades

by Rita Dove

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 1992

Genre: Poetry

Access Complex Text Features

Purpose

- Students may struggle with the speaker's seemingly harsh tone to bring focus to the idea of responsibility and its consequences with regard to women's oppression and a patriarchal sense of entitlement.
- Rita Dove's work on an anthology of poetry led her to discover that women began to speak out more for their rights as the twentieth century progressed.

Structure

- "Demeter's Prayer to Hades" is written in free verse. It does not have a regular rhythm or pattern of rhyme.
- Remind students to use the punctuation to understand the poem. Dove uses periods to show the end of a thought. A comma at the end of a line indicates a pause. Dove uses dashes to show breaks in thought.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: N/A

Word Count: 95



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

Poetic Elements and Structure

Close Read Prompt

Literary Analysis: “Demeter’s Prayer to Hades” and “Gaman” both implicitly address the subject of self-knowledge and self-reflection. Analyze how each text addresses this topic. What is each author’s message about self-knowledge or self-reflection? How do the poetic elements and structure of each poem help shape the author’s message? How does the figurative and descriptive language in each poem help reveal the message? Are the messages in the two texts similar or different? How so? Cite evidence from the text in your analysis.

Beyond the Book

Art: Visualize a Line

Dove’s poem powerfully conveys a theme about self-knowledge through the use of poetic devices and imagery. Students will bring to life a line from the poem that captures the essence.

Ask students to:

- Choose a line from the poem that captures the main message.
- Write the line and create a visual, auditory, or performance art representation of the message and feelings it evokes with:
 - visuals and words, such as a collage, painting, or drawing
 - auditory art, such as a soundtrack or spoken word reading
 - performance art, such as a skit or dance
- Then, write a few sentences explaining how your piece represents the meaning of the poem. Share with classmates.

To reflect, ask students:

- How does creating or viewing a visual representation of a poem affect your interpretation of it?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

Rita Dove’s free verse poem “Demeter’s Prayer to Hades” draws upon mythological influences to examine themes concerning maternal love and retribution. Students will read this selection to analyze how the author addresses the subject of self-knowledge in the face of hardship.

Connect to Extended Oral Project

As students prepare for the Extended Oral Project, they may consider the role self-knowledge plays in an individual’s perception of what is just or unjust. Why might self-knowledge be important in deciding where and how to make changes?



The Color of an Awkward Conversation

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Qualitative Features

Publication Date: 2008

Genre: Informational

Access Complex Text Features

Genre

- Opinion journalism presents a specific, subjective argument or opinion. Although opinion journalism may include facts and data, it also uses anecdotal evidence and concrete examples for support.
- Explain that opinion journalism is meant to break down news and challenge readers' thinking but is not a substitute for more objective news reports.

Purpose

- Students may need support to understand the purpose and value of reading an opinion piece.
- Tell students that the purpose of this complex text is to inform readers about how American concepts of race and racism are viewed from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's perspective as a Nigerian woman in America.

Quantitative Features

Lexile®: 1200

Word Count: 842



Reader and Tasks

Skill Lessons

N/A

Close Read Prompt

Personal Essay: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has lived in both Nigeria and the United States and continues to split her time between both places, which gives her a unique vantage point from which to write about race. Choose a topic on which you have a unique vantage point and write a personal essay that describes the topic and how you view it. Why is your perspective unique? How might your experience help others look at the topic in a different light?

Beyond the Book

Writing: We Should Never

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie argues that the word racist has lost its usefulness. Students will select another word they believe has lost its meaning and write an argumentative paragraph explaining and defending their position.

Ask students to:

- Generate a list of words that have lost meaning or become white noise due to overuse or misuse.
- Choose one word and conduct informal research on the word.
 - What is the origin? How is it most typically used? How easy is it to define? How is the word used differently by different groups? How has it evolved over time?
- Write an argumentative paragraph complete with claim, evidence, and analysis expressing why this word has lost its meaning and should not be used.
- Exchange paragraphs with a classmate and provide each other with feedback before editing.

To reflect, ask students:

- What are some reasons words lose their meaning?

Unit Connection

Connect to Essential Question

In this nonfiction text, author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie reflects on her experiences as a Nigerian woman in America in an effort to challenge the ways Americans think about race. “The Color of an Awkward Conversation” blends honesty and humor to persuade readers to reflect on their own behaviors with a critical eye.

Connect to Extended Oral Project

Students may want to think about Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s perspective as they consider a change that would result in a more just world. How do varying perspectives on an issue complicate making change? How do values, idealism, and age affect perspective? How could they hinder change? Help make change?



Extended Oral Project

With Malice Toward None

Essential Question

How can we attain justice for all?

Writing Form

Oral Presentation

Extended Writing Project Prompt

Think of a change, whether in your school or society, that you believe would result in a more just world. Then, develop an argument to support your idea and include rhetorical devices to help persuade your audience. Be sure to include evidence from the texts or outside research and effective visual aids.

EWP Mentor Text

I've Been to the Mountaintop

EOP Process Steps

Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Present

Writing Skills

Planning Research, Evaluating Sources, Research and Note-Taking, Critiquing Research, Paraphrasing, Sources and Citations, Print and Graphic Features

Grammar Skills

Infinitive Phrases, Commonly Misspelled Words, Ellipses for Pause or Separation, Sentence Fragments



Writing Overview

In Grade 11 Unit 6, instead of completing an Extended Writing Project, students work on a culminating Extended Oral Project (EOP). Throughout the unit, students will have the opportunity to practice presentation skills through a variety of lessons and activities as they respond to the unit's essential question, How can we attain justice for all? The prompt for this unit's EOP asks students to think about a change for society that they believe would result in a more just world. Then students will prepare a presentation on why this change should be made, how it should be implemented, and why it would be beneficial.

The unit's selections about the postmodernist world, as well as efforts for attaining justice provide a context for students, and a powerful speech in the unit serves as a mentor text with which students can engage. Over the course of the EOP, students engage in the presentation process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and presenting their work. During 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.

The Skill lessons Organizing an Oral Presentation and Evaluating Sources teach concepts specifically called out in English Language Arts standards, while the additional Skill lessons Considering Audience and Purpose, Communicating Ideas, Reasons and Evidence, Sources and Citations, and Engaging in Discourse focus on characteristics of presentation. Turn and Talk activities and StudySyncTV episodes further model aspects of effective oral presentations. Revision lessons guide students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. In addition, students will learn techniques for integrating media into their presentations. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to specific grammar skills identified in English Language Arts standards. After each Skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing and oral communication extends beyond the EOP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or discussion prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. In the Independent Read *Invisible Man*, students will engage in a discussion with their peers about the text's inclusion of postmodernist elements. Furthermore, participating in collaborative conversations about texts as seemingly disparate as "On Listening to Your Teacher Take Attendance" and Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address" provide students with opportunities to practice communicating ideas orally. The speech "I've Been to the Mountaintop" will give students a model for effective rhetoric, while that selection's Skill lesson Language, Style, and Audience will help students shape their presentations by reflecting on how speakers use language skillfully to engage an audience and achieve a purpose.

Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions. Writer's Notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing and opportunities to share their ideas orally. In the Skill Lesson Persuasive Techniques, students practice by writing a short script for a commercial for a product of their choosing, including at least one appeal to logic, emotion, or ethics. In each 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.



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