

8th Grade: Unit 1 Topic 1: The Identity of Others**Essential Questions:**

- What are the forces that shape our identities as we grow up?

Suggested Pacing: 30 days

Background: In seventh grade, students studied how people are motivated by different desires, both positive and negative. They also learned about how different life experiences can connect people. This task will deepen their understanding of these topics by encouraging them to think about the ways people, with their different desires and experiences, can influence each other.

Task: Students will engage in a read-aloud of the novel Tight by Torrey Maldonado as well as read their own book club book, paying special attention to how the protagonist's behavior is influenced by the other characters in the story. While reading, they will participate in a set of mini-lessons focusing on making inferences, selecting strong text evidence, identifying character traits, and examining cause and effect relationships. At the end of their reading, they will use the skills they practiced to examine their own identities and consider the forces that have personally shaped them. They will write a personal narrative describing how a person has influenced their life in a positive or negative way.

Purpose: The purpose of this task is to encourage students to think deeply about how identity is developed both in themselves and in others. They will think critically about how people become who they are and feel empathy and compassion for people who are different from themselves. They will also deepen their ability to think critically about texts, examining the characters and relationships within a story to reach a deeper understanding of the themes and ideas present.

Getting Started:

Display the chart paper from the entry task and remind students of their previous discussion about the forces that influence identity. Explain that now we will be focusing on one specific influence: other people.

Gather students together and discuss some different ways that people might influence each other. They could share examples from their own lives, from movies/TV shows/books, or from hypothetical situations they imagine. Record their thinking in their own words and keep this displayed in the classroom for reference throughout the unit.

Introduce Tight by Torrey Maldonado, and explain that we will be reading a novel together that explores a friendship between two kids. Tell them we will be paying special attention to how the main character, Bryan, is influenced by his friends and family throughout the story.

Next, introduce the standards wall for the first part of the unit. Explain that as we begin reading Tight, we will also be practicing how to make logical inferences and cite text evidence.

The reading of Tight will be throughout the unit of study. For 10 minutes every day you will read with students in a read-aloud, posing a question about Brian and identity for students to ponder in their reader's notebook. Students



should keep a dialectical journal - Tight on one side and their book club book on the other. They should also be afforded time to read and time to journal in class while the teacher confers with readers and checks comprehension and understanding.

For information on conferring and how to conduct conferences, use [this guide to plan](#).

Use the Getting Started time to schedule a conference with each child while they are reading their own books after the read-aloud of Tight. This initial conference will help you to get to know students as readers. Keep notes for each student as you meet with them.

Tight	Book Club Title
Quotations, thoughts, ideas related to Brian's identity	Quotations, thoughts, ideas about how my book parallels Brian

After a few days, have students prepare a sticky note with their thoughts about what identity is. Then have them add their sticky to a piece of chart paper with the word "IDENTITY" written in the center. Take time to discuss the different stickies and why there are so many differing ideas about what identity is.

*Note: When indicated in the mini-lessons, we will update our standards wall to reflect the skills of identifying character traits and cause and effect relationships. At this point, teachers should briefly introduce the next set of skills to students and connect them to the essential question of the unit.

Making Meaning:

Read Chapter One of Tight aloud with students. Explain that their purpose for reading is to try and identify some character traits for the main character, Bryan. Students can jot down their findings on a sticky note or in a reader's notebook as they follow along with the teacher.

After reading, make a "map" of Brian. This can be completed on chart paper or digitally with students. On the left side of the paper, list several character traits for Bryan, along with text evidence to support them. On the right side of the page, list some predictions that students can make about the story based on those traits, pictured at right. ([PDF version of Map](#))

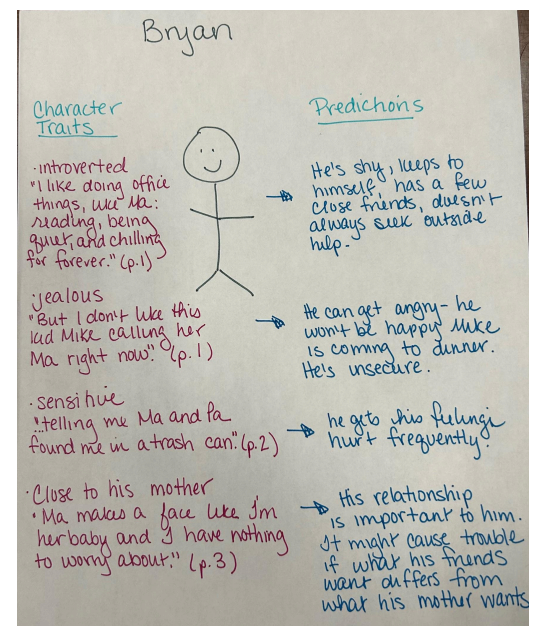
After the map is complete for Bryan, instruct students to create a map for the main character of their book club novel in their reader's notebook. Students will meet in their book clubs to discuss their maps and add ideas.

Explain that over the next several weeks, we will continue to read Tight and their book club text to think about the way the characters influence each other. We will also complete some mini-lessons and activities that will give us the skills we need to become stronger readers.

Investigation:

Mini-Lessons will focus on:

- Explicit vs. implicit text evidence
- Inferences
- Selecting the strongest text evidence
- Using CER to write a response to a text
- Character traits
- Cause and effect relationships
- Identifying key moments in a story



Throughout each mini-lesson, students will have the opportunity to practice the skills they are learning on their own using their reading from *Tight* and their own book club novels. They will also meet regularly in groups to work collaboratively and discuss their findings.

Each mini-lesson is structured around the essential question for the unit, with discussion points and assignments continually asking students to reflect on how the characters in the text influence each other and change over time. Students will use their reading notebook (physical or digital) to capture their thoughts. See the complete unit file for details.

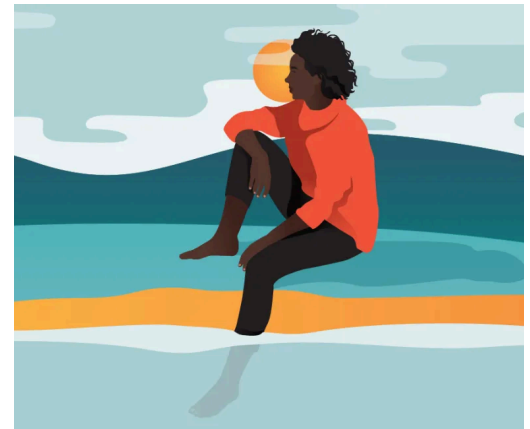
Use the [Unit 1 Quick Reference Guide](#) for links to lessons and specific information when planning.

Unit 1 Quick Reference Sheet	
Official Links:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8th Grade RI.A Scope and Sequence • 8th Grade Curriculum 	
General Information	
Essential Question for Unit 1: What are the forces that shape our identities as we grow up?	
The unit is divided into two topics. Each topic addresses a different answer to the essential question. The two topics are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Influence of Other People • The Influence of Children's Literature 	
There will be a project assigned at the end of each topic. The two projects are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a personal reflection describing how another person has helped to shape your identity in a positive or negative way. (End of topic 1) • Create a picture book that encourages young readers to develop positive traits. (End of topic 2) 	
The main skills we will be focusing on throughout the unit are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citing text evidence • Inferences • Character traits • Key moments in a story/cause and effect relationships • Theme • Narrative writing 	

Create and Produce:

After finishing *Tight* and their own book club novels and analyzing how the protagonists are influenced by their friends and families, students will reflect on their own lives and write a personal reflection of at least one page describing how another person has influenced their self identity. This reflection should contain a detailed description of the person who influenced their identity and a thorough explanation of that person's impact on their lives.

The teacher will introduce the assignment to students using the instruction sheet and teacher exemplar linked below. As students write, the teacher will guide students through the steps of the writing process, confer with students, and pull small groups as needed to work on different writing skills. Use the [conference for readers' guide](#) to help aid students in small groups.



- [Personal Reflection Instructions](#)
- [Personal Reflection Brainstorming Sheet \(optional\)](#)
- [Personal Reflection Editing/Revising Checklist](#)
- [Personal Reflection Example](#)

Communicate and Present:

Two options are listed below. Teachers should select the option that works best for their students and their teaching style.

Option 1: Have students create a six word memoir version of their reflection on an index card and display around the classroom for a gallery walk or [create a Padlet](#) to share electronically.

Option 2: Students will share their writing within a small group and select a few volunteers to share with the whole class.

Reflection:

After reading *Tight* and their own book club novels, writing their own personal reflection, and sampling the work of their peers, students will write a reflection in their reader's notebook answering the following prompt:

- Describe some ways that people influence the identity of others. Include both positive and negative examples from the work we have done in this unit. What can people do if they find themselves being influenced in a negative way?