

## Grade 6 core units



6A: Dahl & Narrative



6B: Mysteries & Investigations



6C: The Chocolate Collection



6D: The Greeks



6E: Summer of the Mariposas



6F: The *Titanic* Collection



## Grade 7 core units



7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative



7B: Character & Conflict



7C: Brain Science



7D: Poetry & Poe



7E: The Frida & Diego Collection



7F: The Gold Rush Collection



## Grade 8 core units



8A: Perspectives & Narrative



8B: Liberty & Equality



8C: Science & Science Fiction



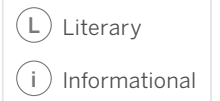
8D: Shakespeare's  
Romeo & Juliet



8E: Holocaust:  
Memory & Meaning



8F: The Space Race Collection



# 6A: Dahl & Narrative

SUB-UNIT 1 • 1 LESSON

SUB-UNIT 2 • 10 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 12 LESSONS

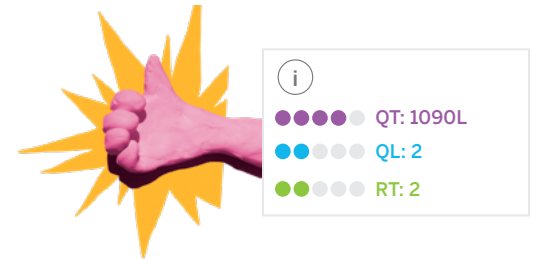
SUB-UNIT 4 • 4 LESSONS



Students begin with narrative writing and then apply their new observational skills to lively readings from Roald Dahl's memoir *Boy*.

## TEXTS

- **Boy:** *Tales of Childhood* by Roald Dahl
- “Choice” from *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai
- Excerpt: *Tony Hawk: Professional Skateboarder* by Tony Hawk with Sean Mortimer
- Excerpt: *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller
- Excerpt: *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett



### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

**Narrative writing:** Use dialogue, details, and description to bring a moment to life.

**Writing workshops:** Respond with constructive comments to peers' writing.

### TOPIC & THEME

The impression of a moment

### READING

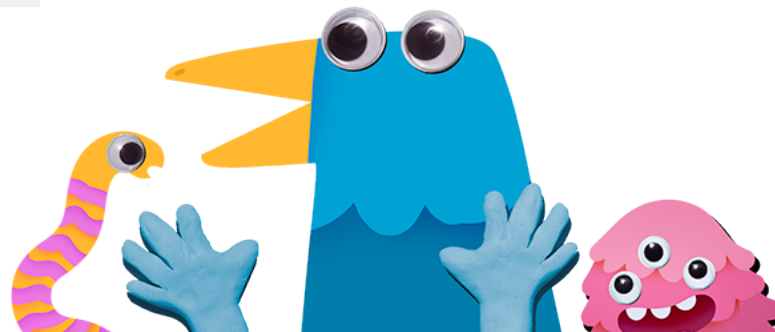
Observe how an author creates a character.

### WRITING

Focus on a moment in the text and develop a unique perspective about it.

### TEXT FEATURES

Memoir with vivid descriptions and 20th-century British slang





# 6B: Mysteries & Investigations

SUB-UNIT 1 • 1 LESSON

SUB-UNIT 2 • 15 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 6 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 5 • 5 LESSONS



Students read stories about yellow fever and Sherlock Holmes, and develop hypotheses by cataloging theories and exploring details and clues.

**TEXTS**

- *The Secret of the Yellow Death: A True Story of Medical Sleuthing* by Suzanne Jurmain
- Excerpt: *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- “The Speckled Band” and “The Red-Headed League” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- “Yellow Fever Circles Brazil’s Huge Cities” by Shasta Darlington and Donald G. McNeil Jr., *The New York Times*

(i) (L)

●●●●● QT: 750L-1170L

●●●●● QL: 3

●●●●● RT: 3

**ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS**

**Evidence evaluation app:** Evaluate the evidence that supports or refutes three competing scientific theories.

**Role-play:** Assume the identity of a medical experiment volunteer and debate the ethics of using human subjects.

**Detective apps:** Investigate clues and draw conclusions about Sherlock Holmes’s detective stories.

**TOPIC & THEME**

Reading like an investigator

**READING**

Assess the credibility of evidence used to support conclusions.

**WRITING**

Explain which trait is most useful to problem-solving investigators.

**TEXT FEATURES**

Detective stories, inductive reasoning, narrative nonfiction of scientific discoveries



# 6C: The Chocolate Collection

SUB-UNIT 1 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 5 • 8 LESSONS



Students conduct independent research to better understand the strange and wonderful roles that chocolate has played throughout history.

## TEXTS

- Excerpt: **Chocolat** by Joanne Harris
- Excerpt: **The Dharma Bums** by Jack Kerouac
- **“Is It Fair to Eat Chocolate?”** by Deborah Dunn, *Skipping Stones*
- **“Pilot Dropped Candy Into Hearts of Berlin,”** *ABC News*
- **“Can Chocolate Be Good for My Health?”** by Katherine Zeratsky, *MayoClinic.org*
- Excerpt: **“Good Harvest”** by Karen E. Lange, *All Animals/The Humane Society of the United States*
- **“Eat More Chocolate, Win More Nobels?”** by Karl Ritter and Marilyn Marchione, *Associated Press*
- Excerpt: **“Prehistoric Americans Traded Chocolate for Turquoise?”** by Christine Dell’Amore, *National Geographic News*
- Excerpt: **“Dark Chocolate: A Bittersweet Pill to Take”** by Mary Brophy Marcus, *USA Today*
- Excerpt: **Appendix C Statement** from *Labor in Portuguese West Africa* by William A. Cadbury
- **Letter from Lord Rothschild to Laurence Fish**
- **“Chocolate”** from *American Smooth* by Rita Dove
- Excerpt: **Act I, Scene Eight** from *Così fan tutte: English National Opera Guide 22*

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●●●●● QT: 860L–1540L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 4

## ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

**Independent research:** Construct research questions and explore online for answers.

**Debate:** Argue for or against including chocolate in school lunches.

**Multimedia presentation:** Create an interactive timeline to illustrate research findings.

## TOPIC & THEME

Facts and stories of chocolate through the ages

## READING

Identify various sources’ perspectives on a topic.

## WRITING

Synthesize information from several sources to develop an argument.

## TEXT FEATURES

Primary and secondary source materials, varied topics and perspectives



# 6D: The Greeks

SUB-UNIT 1 • 6 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 7 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 6 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 5 LESSONS



Using Greek myths, students move from considering the plight of a single character to contemplating broader questions concerning the role people play in the world and the various communities they inhabit.

### TEXTS

- **“Prometheus”** from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin
- Excerpts: ***The Odyssey*** by Homer, translated by E.V. Rieu
- **“Arachne”** from *Selected Tales from Ovid* by Ted Hughes
- Excerpt: ***The Arabian Nights’ Entertainments, “Second Voyage,”*** by Andrew Lang

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●●●●● QT: 870L–1140L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 3



**ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS**

**Quest:** Explore the world of Olympian gods and meet the characters of Greek mythology.

**Performance:** Interpret the text by acting out scenes from Greek myths.

**Myths in your own words:** Reimagine Greek myths by changing perspective, chronology, or key details.

**TOPIC & THEME**  
Man vs. gods in ancient Greece

**READING**  
Analyze what symbolic characters show about human nature.

**WRITING**  
Write about the development of a shared theme in two texts.

**TEXT FEATURES**  
Modern prose retellings of myths and translation of ancient narrative poem



# 6E: Summer of the Mariposas

SUB-UNIT 1 • 20 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 5 LESSONS



Students enact three critical reading moves to practice both the small- and large-scale analyses involved in reading novels.

## TEXTS

- *Summer of the Mariposas* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall
- Excerpt: *The Odyssey*, a graphic novel by Gareth Hinds
- “The Iron Horse” passage from *Enrique’s Journey* by Sonia Nazario
- Excerpt: *The Odyssey* by Homer, translated by E.V. Rieu

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●●●●● QT: 840L–860L

●●●●● QL: 3

●●●●● RT: 4



### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

**Hero’s journey map:** Complete your own map of the hero’s journey in *Summer of the Mariposas*.

**Aztec Lotería cards:** Research Aztec mythology and use *Lotería*-inspired templates to present key figures.

**Meet the author:** Watch and discuss videos of Guadalupe Garcia McCall, author of *Summer of the Mariposas*.

### TOPIC & THEME

The hero’s journey through Aztec mythology

### READING

Trace a character’s arc from the beginning of a novel to the end.

### WRITING

Analyze how specific character traits assist a heroic character on their journey.

### TEXT FEATURES

Latino YA novel incorporating magical realism, Aztec mythology, hero’s journey



# 6F: The *Titanic* Collection

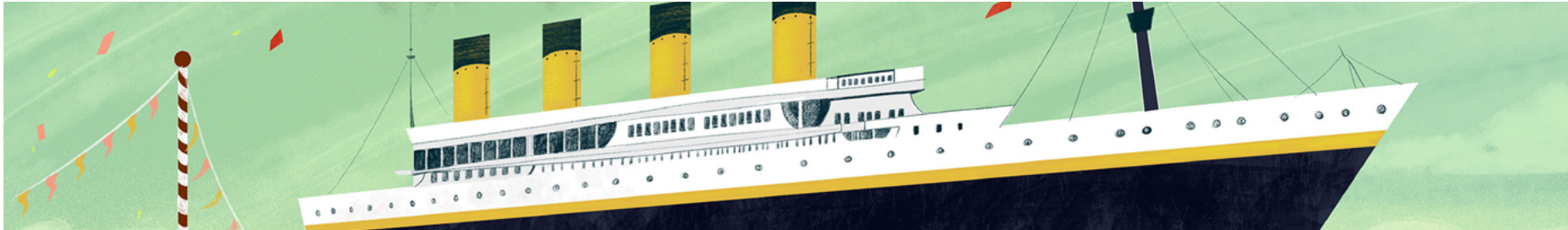
SUB-UNIT 1 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 5 • 8 LESSONS



Students explore primary source documents and take on the role of a passenger from the *Titanic*'s manifest to consider gender and class issues as they research and write narrative accounts from the point of view of the passengers.

### TEXTS

- “**Discovery of the *Titanic***” by *Lapham’s Quarterly* editors
- “**MAY BE WAIFS’ MOTHER. Mme. Navratil of Nice Believes Babies Saved from Titanic Are Hers,**” *The New York Times*
- Excerpt: “**The Iceberg Was Only Part of It**” by William J. Broad, *The New York Times*
- Excerpt: **Chapter 6—“Women and Children First!”** from *Sinking of the Titanic and Great Sea Disasters* by Logan Marshall
- “**Rusticles on Titanic Contain New Iron-Eating Bacteria, Study Says,**” by Jack Philips, *Epoch Times*
- Introduction from *Sinking of the “Titanic” Most Appalling Ocean Horror* by Jay Henry Mowbray, Ph.D., LL.D
- Excerpt: **Chapter 7—“There Is Your Beautiful Nightdress Gone”** from *A Night to Remember* by Walter Lord
- Excerpt: **Testimony of Olaus Abelseth** from United States Senate Inquiry
- **Final Wireless Transmissions Aboard the RMS *Titanic*, April 14, 1912**
- **Untitled Poem** read at the *Titanic* Memorial Dedication in Belfast, Ireland—June 1920, anonymous

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●●●●● QT: 800L–1620L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 4



### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

- Role-play:** Assume the identity of an actual *Titanic* passenger, then research their experience and write a letter from their perspective.
- Socratic seminar:** Engage in student-led discussions about research topics.
- Multimedia presentation:** Create social media passenger profiles and share insights with the class.

### TOPIC & THEME

The lives and experiences of the *Titanic* passengers

### READING

Compare and contrast perspectives on a single event.

### WRITING

Develop a question, conduct research, and create a multimedia project.

### TEXT FEATURES

Compelling artifacts from voyage, including menus, journals, letters, and photographs



## Poetry in America: Grade 6



Amplify partnered with Poetry in America, whose mission is to bring poetry into classrooms and living rooms around the world, to design lessons that combine PIA's "Four Pillar" approach with Amplify's analytic reading pedagogy to build students' engagement and knowledge about poetry. Each three-lesson sub-unit allows students to fully explore a poet's choices around form and language, through observation, analysis, and discussion. Lessons include videos of poets, artists, athletes, and public figures close reading and discussing poems and specific poetic elements. Students have the opportunity to try on the poet's use of language, craft, and structure in creative writing assignments tailored to the targeted poem.

In Sub-unit 1, students work with Richard Blanco's evocative poem "Looking for The Gulf Motel," which recalls a childhood vacation with his Cuban immigrant family. Students use Blanco's discussion of the "mirror effect" to analyze his rich imagery, and end the sub-unit by taking a turn at composing their own "Gulf Motel" poems.

In Sub-unit 2, Coleman Barks's poem "Glad" playfully juxtaposes a young girl's heroics on the soccer field with the imagery and diction of an epic, allowing students to consider how Barks's use of language and the sonnet form helps them understand the poem's commentary on the emphasis on winners and losers in modern sports.

In Sub-unit 3, students consider how Robert Hayden drew on his personal and cultural background to write "Those Winter Sundays," an iconic poem that reflects his roots as a Black American, the Blues musical genre, and the poetic form of the sonnet. Students then use his poem as an inspiration for writing their own ode to an unsung hero in their life. (This sub-unit is made available across grades 6–8).

**Rationale(s) for QL**

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

**Rationale(s) for RT**

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

## Poetry in America activity highlights:

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### Discussions with annotated guides

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

### Video explorations

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

### Creative responses

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

## Core texts

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- "Looking for The Gulf Motel" by Richard Blanco, L/P
- "Glad" by Coleman Barks, L/P
- "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden, L/P

## Core lessons

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- SU1: "Looking for The Gulf Motel" (3 lessons)
- SU2: "Glad" (3 lessons)
- SU3: "Those Winter Sundays" (3 lessons)

