

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



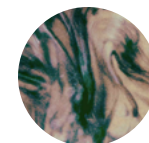
8B: Liberty & Equality



8C: Science & Science Fiction



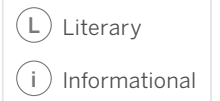
8D: Shakespeare's
Romeo & Juliet



8E: Holocaust:
Memory & Meaning



8F: The Space Race Collection



7A: Red Scarf Girl & Narrative

SUB-UNIT 1 • 1 LESSON

SUB-UNIT 2 • 12 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 12 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 5 LESSONS



Students learn about the history and politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution by focusing on the simpler story of a young woman living through the upheaval.

TEXTS

- *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* by Ji-li Jiang
- Excerpt: *Colors of the Mountain* by Da Chen
- Excerpt: *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
- “A Boy’s Summer Song” by Paul Laurence Dunbar



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● ● ● ● ● QL: 3

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ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

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

Writing workshops: Respond with constructive comments to peers’ writing.

Author-led discussion: Watch videos of Ji-li Jiang, author of *Red Scarf Girl*, and discuss the role of propaganda in her world.

TOPIC & THEME

The impact of individual experiences

READING

Examine the differences between a character’s thoughts and actions.

WRITING

Use revision to strengthen elaboration.

TEXT FEATURES

Historical propaganda images, memoir of the Chinese Cultural Revolution



7B: Character & Conflict

SUB-UNIT 1 • 5 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 16 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 2 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 5 LESSONS



Students analyze characters' responses to conflict and consider the author's development of ideas over the course of a piece of fiction.

TEXTS

- *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- “Harlem” by Langston Hughes
- “Sucker” by Carson McCullers
- Excerpt: *To Be Young, Gifted and Black: An Informal Autobiography* by Lorraine Hansberry, adapted by Robert Nemiroff

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●●●●● QT: 870L–1400L

●●●●● QL: 3

●●●●● RT: 3



ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Performance: Interpret text details by acting out scenes from *A Raisin in the Sun*.

Integrate media formats: Compare and contrast film versions of a play with the original script.

Quest: Explore the world of mid-20th-century Chicago through photographs, speeches, and documents.

TOPIC & THEME

Individual dreams, family dynamics, and societal restrictions

READING

Analyze a character's unconscious motivations.

WRITING

Make thematic connections across genres.

TEXT FEATURES

Memoir, poetry, drama about a Black family in mid-20th-century America



7C: Brain Science

SUB-UNIT 1 • 11 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 5 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 3 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 5 LESSONS



Students explore narrative nonfiction and informational texts that expose the intricate workings of the brain.

TEXTS

- *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman
- Excerpts: *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks
- Excerpts: *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain* by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore
- Excerpts: Majority and dissenting opinions in *Roper v. Simmons*



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●●●●● QT: 970L-1310L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 4

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Mazur discussions: Interact with peers to refine understanding of informational texts.

Role-play: Assume the identity of participants in a self-control experiment and evaluate brain scientists' conclusions.

Quest: Virtually experience a brain disorder detailed in *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*.

TOPIC & THEME

Brain development and brain disorders

READING

Synthesize information from multiple texts to develop understanding of a topic.

WRITING

Describe facts, explain concepts, and convince the reader of an opinion.

TEXT FEATURES

Narrative and informational nonfiction about discoveries in brain science



7D: Poetry & Poe

SUB-UNIT 1 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 7 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 6 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 6 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 5 • 5 LESSONS



Edgar Allan Poe’s texts reward close reading—there is always a lot to notice, figure out, and talk about. These lessons have students examine what they know as readers versus what the narrator is telling them.

TEXTS

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

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●●●●● QT: 820L–1530L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 3



ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Storyboard app: Use a digital storyboard to visualize different perspectives in “The Tell-Tale Heart.”

Debate: Apply a legal definition and argue a narrator’s sanity.

Integrate media formats: Write a movie review that compares and contrasts an animated adaptation with the original text.

TOPIC & THEME

Reading like a movie director

READING

Evaluate the reliability of a fictional narrator.

WRITING

Compare and contrast characters’ perspectives in a narrative.

TEXT FEATURES

American poetry and gothic literature with unreliable narrators

7E: The Frida & Diego 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



The multifaceted lives and works of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera offer students rich subject matter as they examine primary source documents and conduct independent research.

TEXTS

- Excerpt: **“Frida Kahlo”** by Phyllis Tuchman, *Smithsonian*
- **“Detroit Industry: The Murals of Diego Rivera”** by Don Gonyea, NPR.org
- Excerpt: **“Rockefellers Ban Lenin in RCA Mural and Dismiss Rivera,”** *The New York Times*
- Excerpt: **“Statement by Frida Kahlo”** from *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* by Diego Rivera
- **“Letter to Ella and Bertram Wolfe”** from *The Letters of Frida Kahlo: Cartas Apasionadas*
- Excerpt: **“Life with Frida”** from *Frida’s Fiestas: Recipes and Reminiscences of Life with Frida Kahlo* by Guadalupe Rivera and Marie-Pierre Colle

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●●●●● QT: 910L–1430L

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●●●●● RT: 4

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Creative writing: Compare Frida and Diego’s writing to a Shakespearean sonnet and create your own poem.

Socratic seminar: Engage in student-led discussions about research topics.

Multimedia presentation: Create a digital collage to present individual insights to the class.

TOPIC & THEME

Art as personal and political expression

READING

Identify various sources’ perspectives on a topic.

WRITING

Synthesize information from several sources to develop an argument.

TEXT FEATURES

Paintings, memoirs, articles, letters portraying unconventional artists



7F: The Gold Rush Collection

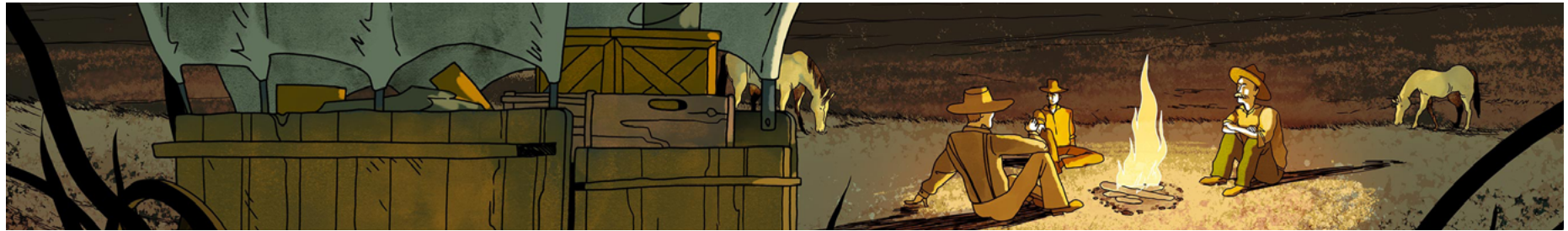
SUB-UNIT 1 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 5 • 8 LESSONS



Students choose from a large collection of primary and secondary sources to conduct research and learn about the diverse people who took part in the California Gold Rush.

TEXTS

- Excerpts: **July 22–August 10, 1849, *The Gold Rush Diary of Ramón Gil Navarro*** by Ramón Gil Navarro
- Excerpt: “**California Culinary Experiences**” by Prentice Mulford, *The Overland Monthly*
- Excerpts: **Chapter XXVII and Chapter XXVIII** from *Roughing It* by Mark Twain
- “**Letter the Tenth: Amateur Mining—Hairbreadth ’Scapes, &c.**” from *The Shirley Letters from California Mines in 1851–1852* by Dame Shirley
- Song excerpt: “**Oh My Darling, Clementine**” by Percy Montrose
- Excerpt: **Chapter 8—“Good Haul of Diggers”** from *Digger: The Tragic Fate of the California Indians from the Missions to the Gold Rush* by Jerry Stanley
- Excerpt: “**Pioneers! O Pioneers!**” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman
- Excerpt from “**The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present**” by David Treuer

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●●●●● QT: 1020L–1600L
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ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Role-play: Assume the identity of a gold rush participant and write a diary from their perspective.

Socratic seminar: Engage in student-led discussions about research topics.

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

TOPIC & THEME

The characters and conditions of the California Gold Rush

READING

Explore how circumstances united a diverse group of historical characters.

WRITING

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

TEXT FEATURES

Poems, lyrics, maps, images, primary and secondary source documents



Poetry in America: Grade 7



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

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

In Sub-unit 3, students consider 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).



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

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

Rationale(s) for RT

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

Poetry in America activity highlights:

Discussions with annotated guides

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

Video explorations

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

Creative responses

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

Core texts

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

Sub-units and # of lessons

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