

## 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



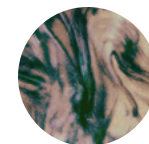
8B: Liberty & Equality



8C: Science & Science Fiction



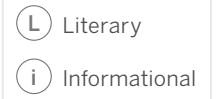
8D: Shakespeare's  
Romeo & Juliet



8E: Holocaust:  
Memory & Meaning



8F: The Space Race Collection



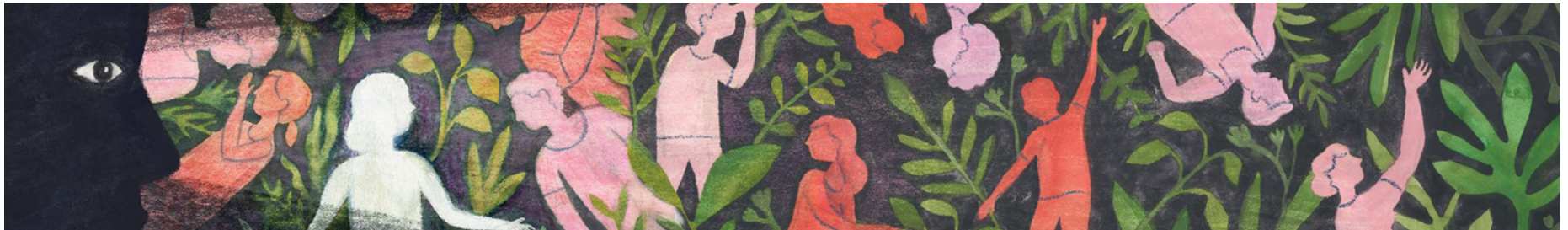
# 8A: Perspectives & Narrative

SUB-UNIT 1 • 1 LESSON

SUB-UNIT 2 • 9 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 10 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 5 LESSONS



Students learn to read like writers: to pay attention to the craft of writing and the moves a good writer makes to shape the way the reader sees a scene or feels about a character. Students read closely to discover how the authors use key narrative writing skills to convey their ideas.

## TEXTS

- Excerpt: *Going Solo* by Roald Dahl
- “Fish Cheeks” by Amy Tan
- “My Mother’s Garden” by Kaitlyn Greenidge



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●●●●● QT: 890L–1080L

●●●●● QL: 3

●●●●● RT: 3

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

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

**Writing workshops:** Practice narrative writing techniques modeled in mentor texts and respond with constructive comments to peers’ writing.

**Meet the author:** Watch and discuss videos of Kaitlyn Greenidge, author of “My Mother’s Garden.”

### TOPIC & THEME

The craft of narrative

### READING

Notice the impact of an author’s craft and structure.

### WRITING

Write a narrative about a childhood memory.

### TEXT FEATURES

WWII memoir and contemporary coming-of-age, first-person narratives



# 8B: Liberty & Equality

SUB-UNIT 1 • 2 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 14 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 2 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 3 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 5 • 5 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 6 • 5 LESSONS



Students explore the powerful words of a range of Americans who lived through the Civil War to discover how their work influenced history.

## TEXTS

- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* by Frederick Douglass
- *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Ann Jacobs
- *The Boys' War* by Jim Murphy
- *A Confederate Girl's Diary* by Sarah Morgan Dawson
- The Gettysburg Address
- The Declaration of Independence
- Excerpt: John C. Calhoun's speech to the US Senate, 1837
- "Song of Myself" by Walt Whitman



(i) (L)

●●●●● QT: 900L-1500L

●●●●● QL: 5

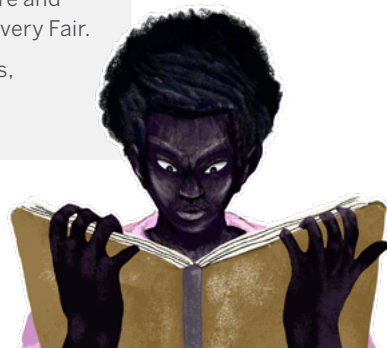
●●●●● RT: 4

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

**Integrate media formats:** Analyze Chadwick Boseman's performance of the opening of Douglass's narrative.

**Speech writing:** Use mentor texts to prepare and deliver an abolitionist speech at an Anti-Slavery Fair.

**Quest:** Explore personal testimonies, songs, photographs, and other Emancipation-era documents.



### TOPIC & THEME

The meaning of "all men are created equal"

### READING

Evaluate the argument and specific claims in a narrative text.

### WRITING

Analyze how authors use language to make a case for liberty and equality.

### TEXT FEATURES

Complex rhetorical styles, 19th-century language and syntax

# 8C: Science & Science Fiction

SUB-UNIT 1 • 17 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 2 • 5 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 6 LESSONS



Using different presentations of the *Frankenstein* story, students wrestle with two of the text’s central themes: the ethics of scientific exploration and the importance of human compassion.

## TEXTS

- *Gris Grimly’s Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and Gris Grimly
- *Frankenstein, 1818 Edition* by Mary Shelley
- “The Tables Turned” by William Wordsworth
- Excerpts: *The Innovators* by Walter Isaacson
- “Frankenstein (1931) A Man-Made Monster in Grand Guignol Film Story”
- “All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace” by Richard Brautigan
- Excerpt: **Genesis 2**, Revised Standard Version
- “Prometheus,” from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin
- “Debate on the Frame-Work Bill, in the House of Lords” by Lord Byron

(i) (L)

●●●●● QT: 980L–1540L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 4

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

**The creature in your own words:** Draw on graphic novel illustrations to tell the story from the creature’s perspective.

**Archetype analysis:** Compare and contrast passages from *Frankenstein* with excerpts from Genesis and “Prometheus.”

**Debate:** Argue central questions about whether the creature deserves a mate and which character deserves more sympathy.

### TOPIC & THEME

Creators vs. creations

### READING

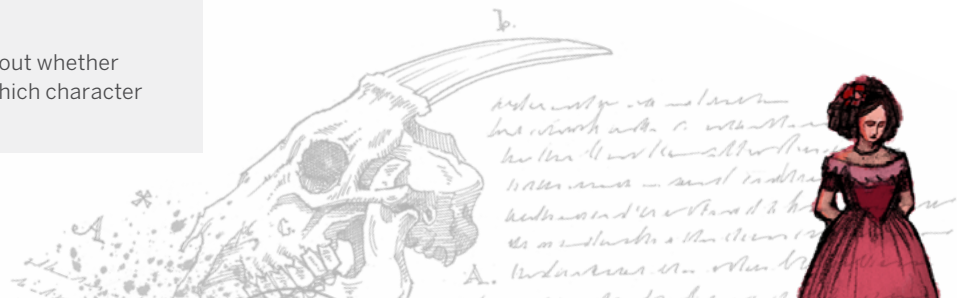
Apply abstract concepts to an author’s portrayal of a character.

### WRITING

Argue opposing claims about a character and resolve the contradiction.

### TEXT FEATURES

Archaic language, mythological and biblical allusions, Gothic text in graphic form



# 8D: Shakespeare’s Romeo & Juliet

SUB-UNIT 1 • 16 LESSONS    SUB-UNIT 2 • 5 LESSONS



*Romeo and Juliet* combines romance and action, offering students a dramatic, interactive dive into Shakespearean English and the world of the Bard.

## TEXTS

- *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
- “Annabel Lee” by Edgar Allan Poe
- “Harlem” from *Street Love* by Walter Dean Myers



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●●●●● QT: N/A

●●●●● QL: 5

●●●●● RT: 3

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

**Recite Shakespeare:** Memorize and perform the prologue to *Romeo and Juliet*.

**Extend the metaphor:** Analyze Shakespeare’s use of figurative language and create new metaphors for Romeo to praise Juliet.

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



### TOPIC & THEME

Introduction to Shakespearean themes and language

### READING

Connect characters’ development to a conceptual framework.

### WRITING

Choose between contradictory positions and support claims with text evidence.

### TEXT FEATURES

Drama with Elizabethan language, inverted syntax, extensive figurative language



# 8E: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning

SUB-UNIT 1 • 1 LESSON

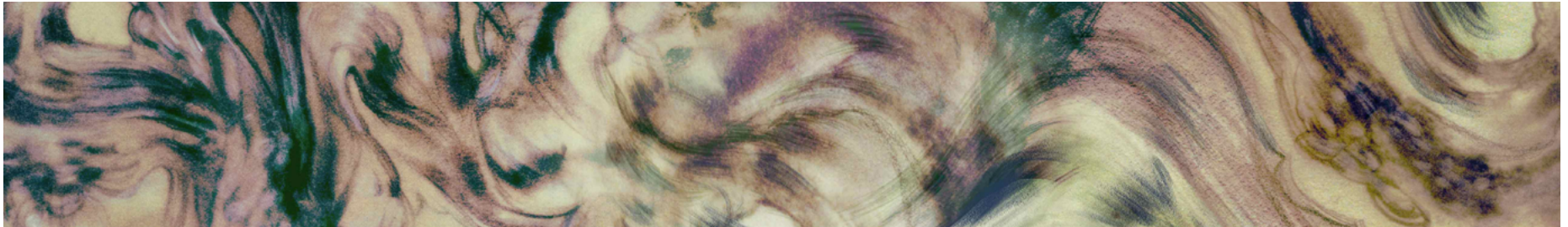
SUB-UNIT 2 • 3 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 3 • 4 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 4 • 5 LESSONS

SUB-UNIT 5 • 1 LESSON

SUB-UNIT 6 • 5 LESSONS



Students explore memoir and primary source materials and examine key questions raised by the Holocaust. The materials present events from different perspectives—those of perpetrators, survivors, victims, bystanders, and witnesses.

## TEXTS

- “**I Cannot Forget**” by Alexander Kimel
- Excerpt: ***A Child of Hitler*** by Alfons Heck
- Excerpt: ***Shores Beyond Shores*** by Irene Butter
- “**Jesse Owens’ Olympic Triumph**” by Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Ebony*
- Excerpts: ***Maus I: A Survivor’s Tale: My Father Bleeds History*** by Art Spiegelman
- Excerpts: ***Night*** by Elie Wiesel
- “**‘100,000 Hail Hitler’: The Opening Ceremonies of the 1936 Olympics**” by Frederick T. Birchall, *The New York Times*
- “**‘Helene Mayer, Fencing Champ, Says She’ll Try for the Olympics,’**” from *Jewish Daily Bulletin*

(i) (L)

●●●●● QT: 800L–1200L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 5



ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS	TOPIC & THEME	READING	WRITING	TEXT FEATURES
<p><b>Remembrance poems:</b> Read and write poems on the theme of remembrance.</p> <p><b>Propaganda analysis:</b> Analyze anti-Semitic propaganda and other techniques that Nazis used to turn Germany against its Jewish citizens.</p> <p><b>Meet the author:</b> Use video interviews with survivor Irene Butter to reflect on what we can learn from the Holocaust.</p>	<p>The influences and responses to the Holocaust</p>	<p>Synthesize multiple accounts to develop understanding and empathy.</p>	<p>Analyze the impact of propaganda and explain the response to unfolding events.</p>	<p>Poems, articles, memoirs, graphic novel, portrayals of sensitive content</p>



# 8F: The Space Race 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 dramatic story of the Space Race offers students a rich research topic to explore as they build information literacy skills, learn how to construct research questions, and conduct research.

**TEXTS**

- **“In Event of Moon Disaster”** by William Safire
- Excerpt: **“Sputnik”** from *Rocket Boys: A Memoir* by Homer Hickam
- **Memorandum for the Vice President** by John F. Kennedy
- **“Buzz Aldrin on His Lunar Home, the Eagle”** by Marc Myers, *The Wall Street Journal*
- Excerpt: **“Dreaming of a Moonage”** from *Moondust* by Andrew Smith
- **President Kennedy’s Address at Rice University**, September 12, 1962
- **“What the Moon Rocks Tell Us,”** by Kenneth F. Weaver, *National Geographic*
- Excerpt: **“Life on Mars to Become a Reality in 2023, Dutch Firm Claims”** by Karen McVeigh, *The Guardian*
- Excerpt: **“And a Dog Shall Lead Them”** from *A Ball, A Dog, and a Monkey* by Michael D’Antonio
- Excerpt: **“You Are Here”** from *Pale Blue Dot* by Carl Sagan
- **“Katherine Johnson: Trailblazer and Brilliant Mathematician”**

(i) (L)

●●●●● QT: 870L–1490L

●●●●● QL: 5

●●●●● RT: 4



**ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS**

**Role-play:** Research an astronaut or cosmonaut and write blogs from their perspective.

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

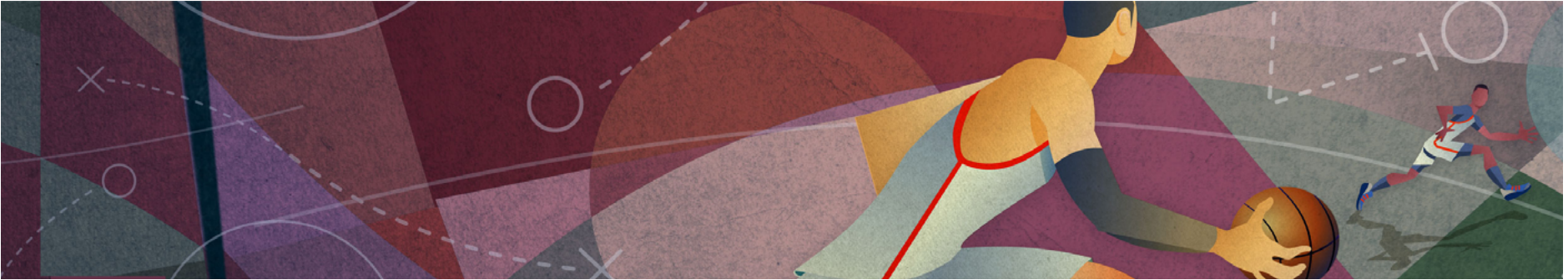
**TOPIC & THEME**  
 The successes and sacrifices of space exploration

**READING**  
 Compare and contrast perspectives on a topic.

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

**TEXT FEATURES**  
 Speeches, images, primary and secondary source documents

## Poetry in America: Grade 8



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, Ed Hirsch's poem "Fast Break" describes the action of a fast break in a basketball game, extending both the motion and the emotion in content and form. Students consider the interpretations of NBA players such as Shaquille O'Neal (appearing in embedded videos) to first enjoy how the poem mimics the pace and action of a fast break before exploring how this vivid description operates as an elegy. Students then experiment with elements of "Fast Break" to create their own poem centered around a favorite activity.

In Sub-unit 2, 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 lives. (This sub-unit is made available across grades 6–8).

In Sub-unit 3, students consider the complicated relationship between an unnamed speaker and his garden in Jamaal May's poem "I Have This Way of Being." Students dig through the language of historical allusion connecting the poem to a tradition of African American slave narratives while also analyzing the poem's formal elements—its beautiful imagery, musical sounds, and symmetrical couplets—which suggest feelings of pride, agency, and hope. Students then write a poem about an activity they engage in, considering how it reflects aspects of their personalities.

QL: 3



RT: 2



#### 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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- "Fast Break" by Ed Hirsch, L/P
- "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden, L/P
- "I Have This Way of Being" by Jamaal May, L/P

### Sub-units and # of lessons

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- SU1: "Fast Break" (3 lessons)
- SU2: "Those Winter Sundays" (3 lessons)
- SU3: "I Have This Way of Being" (3 lessons)

