

**TRUMBULL HIGH SCHOOL
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
Trumbull, Connecticut**

**Story of Self
GRADE 12
2026**

Curriculum Writing Team

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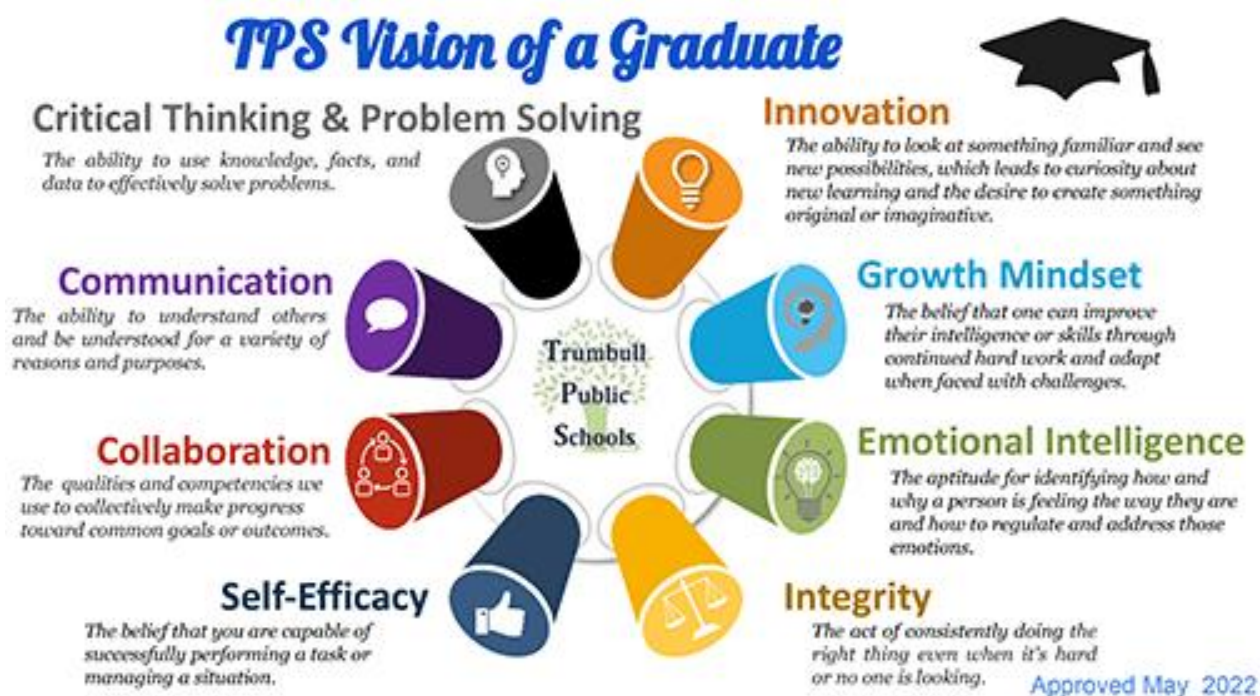
Story of Self
Grade 12
Table of Contents

Core Values and Beliefs	2
Introduction & Philosophy	2
Course Goal	3
Course Enduring Understandings	6
Course Essential Questions	6
Course Knowledge & Skills	7
TPS Vision of the Graduate	7
Course Syllabus	10
Unit 1 - The Hero's Cycle Overview	12
Unit 2-Separation	14
Unit 3 - Initiation	16
Unit 4 - The Return	19
Academic Language	22
Course Credit	23
Prerequisites	23
Assured Student Performance Rubrics	24

The Trumbull Board of Education will continue to take Affirmative Action to ensure that no persons are discriminated against in its employment.

CORE VALUES & BELIEFS

The Trumbull High School community engages in an environment conducive to learning which believes that all students will read and write effectively, therefore communicating in an articulate and coherent manner. All students will participate in activities that present problem solving through critical thinking. Students will use technology as a tool applying it to decision making. We believe that by fostering self-confidence, self-directed and student-centered activities, we will promote independent thinkers and learners. We believe ethical conduct to be paramount in sustaining the welcoming school climate that we presently enjoy.



INTRODUCTION & PHILOSOPHY

This course will explore the concepts and principles that come to create us as individuals. At the core of the course is the premise that we as individuals are a part of a tapestry of human experience that yields who we are in the present. There are many factors, motifs, and themes that have come to influence who we are. Frequently, we are unaware of the influence these forces have on us. The stories and thinking that are contained within the pieces of literature and media within this curriculum serve as mirrors with which we stare back at ourselves and validate our questions and our thoughts about ourselves. They also are windows through which we look at the experience of others seeming unlike ourselves and work to help us gain empathy, as well as discover a perspective we may never have seen or consciously thought of before. The course is designed to focus on individuals who are asking themselves questions about their purpose and their own experiences. It is an exploration of how those two things will influence their future. The goal is to foster critical thinking and independence, as well as strengthen reflective practices in an effort to influence a more diverse thought about a single person's contribution to the world.

Units for this course will be broken down into 4 parts - one introducing Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey as a concept, and the next three breaking down each phase of the journey. Each of these parts will contribute to a written portfolio that students will submit at the end of the course as a summative and culminating assessment called the "Story of Self Portfolio" (details on this below). All of the topics will explore how an individual reacts to and/or engages in:

- The Hero's Cycle as a whole
- Initiation
- Separation
- The Return

While self-discovery and self-awareness are not limited to these four areas, each of the focuses will serve as a thread to bring the course together. Through the process of participation in the crafting of their "Story of Self Portfolios," class discussions, lessons, and activities students will authentically question and explore the elements of their own individuality as well as those of the people that are in their lives.

COURSE GOALS

Reading Literature

- **CCSS.ELA RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.**
- CCSS.ELA RL. 11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- CCSS.ELA RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g. the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- CCSS.ELA RL. 11-12.10 By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Reading Informational Texts

- **CCSS.ELA RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.**
- CCSS.ELA RI. 11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

- CCSS.ELA RI. 11-12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
- CCSS.ELA RI.11-12.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
- CCSS.ELA RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- CCSS.ELA RI. 11-12.10 By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing

- CCSS.ELA W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.2c Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.2e Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- CCSS.ELA W.11-12.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA W.11-12.3a Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- CCSS.ELA W.11-12.3b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.3c Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
- **CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.3d Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.**
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **CCSS.ELA W.11-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience**

- CCSS.ELA W.11-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
- CCSS.ELA W.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCSS.ELA W.11-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening

- **CCSS.ELA SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.**
- **CCSS.ELA SL. 11-12.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.**
- CCSS.ELA SL. 11-12.1b Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- **CCSS.ELA SL. 11-12.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.**
- CCSS.ELA SL. 11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Language

- CCSS.ELA L. 11-12.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- CCSS.ELA L. 11-12.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- CCSS.ELA L. 11-12.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

COURSE ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will understand that . . .

- Reading and analyzing the stories of others (both real and imagined) is an integral part of self-discovery.
- Authors make informed and specific choices within their writing in order to convey purpose so that the reader can forge their own meaning.
- The experiences that we have as individuals are connected to thousands of years of stories in human history.
- The exploration and analysis of others' stories can help us to better understand our own
- People can further develop their sense of self through active and collaborative discussion with their peers.

COURSE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do the universal principles of the Hero's Journey manifest themselves in literature and in life?
- What inspires people to embark on the search for self?
- What are the differing perspectives that exist regarding the meaning or purpose of our existence?
- How can we synthesize literature, film, and other texts with our own experiences and the experiences of those around us to create a better understanding of ourselves?
- How does an individual learn what their capabilities are?
 - Why do we allow ourselves to admit we are incapable of something?
 - Why do we allow ourselves to admit we are capable of something?
 - What are the things that help us open ourselves to achieve our true potential?
- What obstacles must we overcome in order to discover ourselves?
- How do we effectively engage with others when sharing and listening to stories of self?
- In what ways do our relationships with our parents/guardians, friends, and communities shape us as individuals?

COURSE KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

- Students will know . . .
 - The stages and key principles of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey.
 - That these stages and principles manifest themselves in a variety of different ways, both in literature and in life.
 - That despite the universal elements presented by Campbell, no two stories of self look exactly the same.

- That reading and telling the stories of others is essential for better understanding ourselves.
- Students will be able to . . .
 - Read and analyze long-form texts (feature-length films and novels) through the lense of the Hero's Journey.
 - Closely read novels, short stories, and film using a variety of sophisticated annotation techniques.
 - Synthesize their own experiences with those that they come across in texts
 - Engage in collaborative discussions around shared texts and individual experiences.
 - Explore differing perspectives from their own in order to better understand the world around them.
 - Capture their own experiences with the various elements of the Hero's Journey in personal narratives and journal entries.
 - Uncover the stories of those in their community by way of effective interviews and written narratives.

Vision of the Graduate

The Story of Self course purposefully integrates the eight core competencies outlined in Trumbull Public Schools' Vision of the Graduate. These competencies are not treated as abstract ideals, but as real, observable behaviors and mindsets that students develop through reading, writing, discussion, collaboration, and reflective learning experiences.

Vision of the Graduate Competency	How It Is Embedded Throughout the Course
Communication	Structured shared inquiry discussions and formal writing is incorporated into every unit. In Unit 1, students synthesize ideas from <i>The Alchemist</i> and <i>Finding Joe</i> in analytical writing aligned to the department rubric, clearly articulating purpose, audience awareness, and textual evidence. The culminating Story of Self Portfolio requires students to capture another person's voice authentically through long-form interviews and narrative writing, demonstrating precise organization, audience awareness, and active listening.
Self-Efficacy	Self-efficacy is fostered through repeated reflective writing and intellectual risk-taking. In Unit 1, students write a personal Hero's

	Journey reflection, connecting their own experiences to Campbell's framework, participating in discourse even when unsure of their interpretations. The sustained drafting and revision process of the Story of Self Portfolio requires students to set goals, accept feedback, and revise thoughtfully, reinforcing the belief that they can manage complex, authentic tasks successfully.
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	Critical thinking is central to analyzing how universal archetypes manifest across texts and lived experience. In Unit 2, students evaluate rhetorical choices in <i>I Am</i> and generate their own philosophical question about the world, then conduct interviews to test and refine their thinking. This process requires identifying a problem, analyzing multiple perspectives, selecting relevant evidence, and synthesizing conclusions, demonstrating systematic planning, questioning, and evidence-based reflection.
Collaboration	In Unit 3, student-choice book groups analyze texts such as <i>Long Way Down</i> or <i>Maus</i> , assigning roles, synthesizing multiple perspectives, and designing a creative "Mapping Out Initiation" project. Students monitor group dynamics, distribute responsibilities based on strengths, and reflect on collective contributions.
Growth Mindset	In Unit 4, students analyze <i>The Last Lecture</i> and examine how perseverance and reframing obstacles shape identity. Across the semester, students revise journal entries, analytical responses, and narrative pieces, reflecting on how their thinking evolved, demonstrating resilience, adaptability, and openness to feedback.
Integrity	Integrity is reinforced through ethical storytelling and responsible scholarship. In the Story of Self Portfolio, students conduct authentic interviews and are responsible for representing their subjects truthfully and respectfully, capturing voice without distortion. Across analytical writing tasks (e.g., the Unit 1 <i>The Alchemist</i> response), students follow MLA citation guidelines and evaluate source credibility as outlined in CCSS W.11-12.8, reinforcing responsible scholarship.
Innovation	In Unit 2, students design and produce an original documentary project inspired by <i>I Am</i> , synthesizing research, interviews, and personal reflection into a cohesive film or alternative presentation format. In Unit 3, groups create inventive representations (board games, visual maps, multimedia presentations) of the Initiation stage, demonstrating creative problem-solving while remaining grounded in textual evidence.

Emotional Intelligence	Throughout literature circles and shared inquiry discussions, students actively listen, paraphrase peers' ideas, and respectfully challenge interpretations. In the Story of Self interviews, students practice empathy by asking thoughtful follow-up questions, regulating their own reactions, and honoring differing life experiences directly reflecting the district's indicators of empathy, emotional regulation, and respectful conflict resolution.
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COURSE SYLLABUS

Course/Name

Story of Self

Level

Advanced College Prep

Prerequisites

Successful completion of English courses for grades 9-11

Materials Required:

- School-approved electronic device and charger
- Composition notebook to be used as a writer's journal
- Writing implements
- Sticky notes
- Daily agenda pad
- Binder/notebook/folder

General Description of the Course

The focus in this course is to examine how stories and experiences can come to help us find purpose and forge meaning in real life. In this course, the four assured units of study are meant to serve as building blocks; each unit focuses on a stage of the Hero's Journey and builds off of skills and concepts from the previous unit. Students will begin with a foundational study of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey. Then, throughout the semester, they will be asked to closely analyze assigned texts through the lens of Campbell's ideas, participate in collaborative discussions with their peers around those texts and their own lived experiences, write personal narratives and journal entries, and ultimately, interview chosen subjects in an effort to capture their personal journeys in a written portfolio. The goal is for students to gain an understanding of the ways that engaging with literature and the world around them can help them to better understand their own senses of self as they prepare to head into the world outside of Trumbull High School.

Assured Assessments

Teachers may select additional formative or summative activities based on student skills from the following examples or other activities as aligned with Common Core Standards and NCTE.

Summative Assessments:

- *The Alchemist* written analytical response (Unit 1)
- Becoming Shadyac documentary project inspired by "I Am" (Unit 2)
- Mapping Out Initiation project and written reflection (Unit 3)
- *The Last Lecture* written response (Unit 4)
- Story of Self Portfolio (Culminating project)

Formative Assessments

- Personal Hero's Journey written response
- Collected annotations for films watched in class
- Collected annotations for novels and supplemental written texts
- Routine journal checks for daily free-writes
- Initiation in Your K-12 Journey (brief presentation)
- Shared inquiry discussions around *The Alchemist* and book group texts

Course Texts

In order to engage students in a rich and diverse reading and viewing experience, teachers will utilize the course texts/ documentaries (listed below) which are representative of varied voices:

Unit 1 - The Hero's Cycle Overview

- Finding Joe - Directed by Patrick Takaya Solomon
- *The Alchemist* - Written by Paulo Coelho

Unit 2 - Separation

- "I Am" - Directed by Tom Shadyac
- Excerpts of *Life's Operating Manual* by Tom Shadyac

Unit 3 - Initiation

The following novels will be available for student-choice book groups during this unit:

- Fiction

Supplemental Resources

Supplemental Readings:

- Excerpts from *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell
- "The Allegory of the Cave" by Plato
- *Small Wonder Essays* by Barbara Kingsolver

Supplemental Talks/ Speeches

- [Randy Pausch](#) - The Last Lecture
- [Randy Pausch](#) - The Final Farewell
- [Andrew Solomon](#) - How the worst moments of our lives, make us who we are
- [Marc Rober](#) - Super Mario Effect
- [Rita Pierson](#) - Why Every Student Deserves a Champion
- [Simon Sinek](#) - How Great Leaders Inspire Action
- [Sir Kenneth Robinson](#) - Do schools kill creativity?
- [Sir Kenneth Robinson](#) - Changing Educational Paradigms

- [Admiral William H. McRaven](#) - Can One Person Change the World?
- [Travel: The Hero's Journey](#) - Gilad Goren

Any portion of the above listed books to supplement the core class text study

Teachers may select additional readings and materials based on student skills as aligned with Common Core Standards and NCTE.

UNIT 1 THE HERO'S JOURNEY OVERVIEW

Unit Goals

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- **CCSS.ELA RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.**
- CCSS.ELA RL. 11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- CCSS.ELA RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g. the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- CCSS.ELA RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- CCSS.ELA RI. 11-12.10 By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- **CCSS.ELA W.11-12.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.**
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.3c Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCSS.ELA SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA SL. 11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Unit Essential Questions

- What archetypes and patterns can we identify across centuries of storytelling?
- How can we read and annotate closely while still keeping the larger context in mind?
- How can we connect our own lives to the archetypes and structures within the stories that we read?
- Why do we let others admit we are capable/incapable of something? Why do we let ourselves admit we are capable/incapable of something?
- How do we discover purpose in our lives? What are the things that help us achieve our true potential?
- How and why do the external factors in our lives influence our behavior?

Unit Scope and Sequence

In the first unit of the course, students will gain a foundational understanding of Joseph Campbell’s Hero’s Journey. First, they will engage in active viewing notes during a whole-class viewing of the documentary “Finding Joe.” Students will focus on gaining a general understanding of Campbell’s journey and relate it to their own lives, considering the “normal world” in which they exist and what kinds of things can happen/have happened to set them on their personal journeys into the unknown. They will complete a brief written reflection connecting their own lives to the Hero’s Journey as presented in the documentary.

They will then read Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist* as a whole-class text, analyzing its portrayal of Campbell’s ideas. Students will synthesize evidence from “Finding Joe,” *The Alchemist*, and their own lived experiences via a series of small-group of shared inquiry discussions, along with strengthening their close-reading and analytical writing skills. They will have daily opportunities for journaling and personal writing throughout our reading of the text. This unit will end with a summative writing assessment in which students write a fully formulated response to an essential question of their choosing supported by direct evidence from *The Alchemist*.

Unit Assured Assessments

Formative:

- “Finding Joe” Active Viewing Notes: [Click here](#) for example of packet
- *Hero Response*: In 1-1.5 pages (typed, size 12, double spaced) write about how you have experienced the HERO's JOURNEY so far in your life. You can discuss the Hero's Cycle, you can reference where you are on your Heroic Journey so far, etc. The aim is to take the information you gleaned from the documentary and apply it to your life.
- Shared inquiry discussions based on *The Alchemist* around three essential questions:
 - Why do we let others admit we are capable/incapable of something? Why do we let ourselves admit we are capable/incapable of something?
 - How do we discover purpose in our lives? What are the things that help us achieve our true potential?
 - How and why do the external factors in our lives influence our behavior?

Summative:

- In-class written response on *The Alchemist* - [click here for example prompt](#)

Texts and Resources

In the first unit of study, students will participate in whole-class viewings/readings and discussions of the following two texts:

- “Finding Joe” - Directed by Patrick Takaya Solomon
- *The Alchemist* - Written by Paulo Coelho

Supplemental texts may include:

- “The Allegory of the Cave” - Plato
- [“From Kobe to Kyrie, how ‘The Alchemist’ became the book to live by in the NBA”](#) - Vorkunov

Time Allotment: 4-5 weeks

UNIT 2 SEPARATION

Unit Goals

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- **CCSS.ELA RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.**

- CCSS.ELA RI.11-12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
- CCSS.ELA RI.11-12.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
- CCSS.ELA RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- **CCSS.ELA W.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.**
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCSS.ELA SL. 11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Unit Essential Questions

- How can we annotate and analyze an individual's perspective while still keeping our own experiences in mind?
- How can we synthesize a variety of ideas and perspectives in order to form strong responses to philosophical questions?
- What is "wrong" with our world, and what can we do about it?

Unit Scope and Sequence

The second unit of the course will focus on the first stage of Campbell's journey, studying how individuals (real and fictional) experience a separation as they leave the ordinary behind. The core text of this unit will be the documentary "I Am," directed by Tom Shadyac; students will take careful viewing notes in order to analyze how Shadyac's life experiences shaped him along his journey to discover his bliss. Specifically, students will consider the two primary questions that Shadyac poses in his documentary (What is wrong with our world, and what can we do about it?) and develop their own answers.

This unit will also provide opportunities for multimedia creation in the form of a documentary research project. Students will first generate a thoughtful philosophical question about the world around them, in the style of the questions Shadyac asks in his documentary. They will formulate their own initial responses to that question, and then record interviews posing the same question to people in their communities with differing perspectives and experiences from their own - this will represent their own "separation" from their known world. They will synthesize their initial response with the answers generated by their interviews into an engaging film to be presented for the class, ultimately exploring how the perspectives of others can influence their own worldview.

Teachers may choose to allow students to present their findings in an alternative presentable format (slideshow, TED Talk-style lecture, etc.).

Unit Assured Assessments

Formative

- “I Am” Active Viewing Notes ([Click here](#) for example of packet)

Summative

- Becoming Shadyac Interview Project

Texts and Resources

In the second unit of study, students will participate in a whole-class viewing and discussion of the following text:

- “I Am” - Directed by Tom Shadyac

Supplemental texts may include:

- *Life’s Operating Manual* - Written by Tom Shadyac

Time Allotment: 3-4 weeks

UNIT 3 INITIATION

Unit Goals

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- **CCSS.ELA RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.**
- CCSS.ELA RL. 11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- CCSS.ELA RL. 11-12.10 By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

- CCSS.ELA W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.2e Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- CCSS.ELA W.11-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
- CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- **CCSS.ELA SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.**
- **CCSS.ELA SL. 11-12.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.**
- **CCSS.ELA SL. 11-12.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.**
- CCSS.ELA SL. 11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
- CCSS.ELA L. 11-12.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Unit Essential Questions

- What obstacles must we overcome in order to discover ourselves?
- How do we effectively engage with others when sharing and listening to their experiences and interpretations?
- How does observing, connecting, and formally discussing the external factors in the lives of characters/ subjects in a text influence human behavior?
- In what ways do our relationships (with our parents/guardians, friends, and communities) shape us as individuals?

Unit Scope and Sequence

In the third unit of the course, students will be given the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction texts for a literature circles experience. As they read their chosen book, students will analyze and identify the universal elements within Campbell's initiation stage (Challenges, Temptations, Enemies, Allies, and Obstacles) via active annotations and daily check-ins with their book groups. Specific emphasis will be placed on the "dragon," or ultimate obstacle that must be overcome, in each text.

Throughout the unit, students will engage in shared inquiry discussions with other students who are reading different texts than they are in order to analyze the different types of obstacles that individuals face and the ways in which they defeat them. Students will be assessed on their ability to use the annotations they gathered during their reading and group discussions.

This unit concludes with a group project in which students design a creative representation of the Initiation stage experienced by the protagonist of their literature circle novel. Examples of a creative representation may include a poster presentation, slideshow presentation, board game, etc. This group project will be presented to the class. Individually, students will submit a written reflection analyzing the creative choices they made in their creative representation supported by evidence from their literature circles text.

Unit Assured Assessments

Formative:

- Close reading annotations throughout literature circles experience
- Shared inquiry discussions

Summative:

- Mapping Out Initiation Project (collaborative) and written reflection (individual)

Texts and Resources

In the third unit of study, students will participate in student-choice book groups and select from the following fiction and nonfiction texts.

- Fiction
 - *Ishmael* - Written by Daniel Quinn
 - *Long Way Down* - Written by Jason Reynolds
 - *Turtles All the Way Down* - Written by John Green
 - *Deadline* - Written by Chris Crutcher
 - *Maus* - Art Spiegelman
 - *Clap When You Land* - Elizabeth Acevedo
 - *Darius the Great is Not Okay* - Adib Khorram
- Nonfiction
 - *Wild* - Written by Cheryl Strayed
 - *Tuesdays with Morrie* - Written by Mitch Albom

- *Who Says I Can't* - Written by Coach Rob Mendez
- *Into the Wild* - Written by Jon Krakauer
- *Falling Up* - Written by Leslie Odom Jr.
- *Glass Castle* - Written by Jeanette Walls
- *Hey, Kiddo* - Written by Jarrett Krocodka

Time Allotment: 4-5 weeks

UNIT 4 THE RETURN

Unit Goals

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- CCSS.ELA RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA RI. 11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.**
- **CCSS.ELA RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.**
- **CCSS.ELA W. 11-12.2e Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.**
- **CCSS.ELA W.11-12.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.**
- CCSS.ELA SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Unit Essential Questions

- What does it take to follow your dreams?
- Why does an individual abandon a dream?
- What obstacles must we overcome in order to discover ourselves?
- In what ways do our relationships with our parents/guardians, friends, and communities shape us as individuals?

- How do we discover purpose in our lives?

Unit Scope and Sequence

Students will close out the course with a study of Randy Pausch's *The Last Lecture*, focusing on how Pausch is able to find his bliss and complete the Hero's Journey in the last days of his life. This unit will feature a close whole-class reading of the novel, along with a whole-class viewing of the lecture itself. After reading and watching the lecture in full, students will complete a written response analyzing the text through the lens of the Return stage of Campbell's Journey.

Additionally, students will work on their final Story of Self portfolios throughout this unit, conducting long-form interviews with subjects of their choosing and writing narrative pieces that capture their subjects' personal journeys in discovering their sense of self. In preparation for this project, teachers should model what a long-form interview looks like by conducting an interview in front of the class with members of the school community if possible; alternatively, teachers can allow a student to interview them as a model. In addition to submitting their portfolio of narrative pieces, students will also submit a written reflection in which they analyze one of their narratives and explain how it connects to the various stages of the Hero's Journey. The Story of Self portfolio serves as the required culminating experience/exam for the course. The final portfolio grade will apply to the second quarter of the course (whether it falls in the first or second semester) and to the semester exam grade.

Unit Assured Assessments

Formative:

- *The Last Lecture* Active Viewing Guide: [Click here](#) for example of packet
- *The Last Lecture* reading annotations
- Collected rough draft of first portfolio narrative piece

Summative:

- *The Last Lecture* written response
- *Story of Self* portfolio

Texts and Resources

In the final unit of study, students will participate in whole-class viewings/readings and discussions of the following two texts:

- *The Last Lecture* - Written by Randy Pausch
- [*The Last Lecture: Achieving Your Childhood Dreams*](#)

Time Allotment: 4-5 weeks

Final Assessment/ Course Portfolio: (addresses Communication & Growth Mindset)

Story of Self Portfolio

@storyofself

A *Story of Self* is a piece of writing that serves as a snapshot into a quaking moment that is a microcosm of who the author or subject is and what has brought them to this moment of their life. It is designed to be shared on social media, in a blog, or on one page of a piece of paper. Most are a minimum of 300 words, but should not exceed 500. All *Stories of Self* are accompanied by a photograph that is artfully emblematic of the theme of the story that is told.

For this culminating assessment you must compose three *Stories of Self*. ONE will be your own, and the other two will be subjects of your own choosing. In the end, what makes a *Story of Self* special is you do all the writing based on what you gleaned in your long-form interview with the chosen subject -you quite literally get to tell their story.

Your subjects for interviews can be anyone: a relative, stranger, teacher, friend, administrator, etc.). Each entry is written in the first person - so you must capture the voice of your subject.

[CLICK HERE](#) for TWO EXAMPLES - the first is one I created about myself and the other is a former colleague named Kristin Magazine - it is titled.

Guiding Questions for Interviews

Call to Adventure/ Initiation - Significant Experience/ Defining Moment Questions

- Before you describe a significant or defining moment - What makes a moment significant or something that is defining?
- Describe a moment or experience that is important or significant to you.
 - Listen to what the person says, be prepared to ask follow up questions.
- Were there any significant guides or mentors along the way?
- How has this experience or moment helped you grow as an individual?
- What led up to this experience (was it spontaneous, planned?)
- Are you proud of your actions throughout this experience? Explain.
- How has this experience helped you grow as a person and influenced you?

Slaying a Dragon/ Separation - Facing an Obstacle Questions

- Describe one obstacle that you have faced in your life.
 - Why/ how did the obstacle present itself?
 - What were the biggest challenges that you faced?
 - Who helped you along the way? Who hindered your progress?
 - What lessons have you taken away from the experience, if any?
- What has called you to this topic or cause? How are you connected to it?
 - What values move you to take action like that and might also inspire others to similar action?
 - What stories can you tell from your own life about specific people or events that would show (rather than tell) how you learned or acted on those values?

The Spark/ Initiation or Separation - *Forming an Opinion Questions*

- What is one opinion that you have formed in your life that is very important to you?
- Discuss your influences/ mentors.
- What came to create this opinion?
- Why is it such a powerful opinion?
- When faced with someone who doesn't agree with you, how do you handle yourself?
 - Where did you learn this trait or behavior?
- Has this opinion strengthened and/or hurt any of your relationships in your life?
- Do you see this opinion ever changing?

Finding Your Bliss/ Return - *Achieving/ Acquiring an Understanding Questions*

- What is one of the most significant accomplishments you have achieved or are working towards achieving?
- Have you achieved it yet - If yes, how has it impacted your life? If not, what are you doing right now to work towards that goal?
- What makes this accomplishment so significant?
- Why is this accomplishment important to you?
- What do other people stand to learn from your accomplishment

[CLICK HERE](#) for a link to a template for each of your chapters.

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Academic Language: English/literary study of the Hero's Journey requires students to be proficient in the following literary language, much of which they have honed throughout their studies in grades 9-11. High School teachers will continue to have students identify and explain significant examples of these, further deepening student understanding of how these devices and concepts operate to convey meaning in a given text. As students encounter other devices and concepts, they will expand their knowledge; however, knowledge outside of this given list is text-dependent and therefore cannot be listed explicitly:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| ● allusion | ● point of view |
| ● conflict (external and internal) | ● setting |
| ● dialogue | ● simile |
| ● imagery | ● symbolism |
| ● mood | ● theme |
| ● motif | ● tone |
| ● plot | ● rhetorical appeals |

COURSE CREDIT

.5 credit in English.
One class period daily for 1 semester

PREREQUISITES

Successful completion of English grades 9-11

ASSURED STUDENT PERFORMANCE RUBRICS

- Trumbull Public School Vision of the Graduate Rubrics
- Trumbull High School School-Wide Reading Rubric
- Trumbull High School School-Wide Writing Rubric
- Trumbull High School School-Wide Independent Learning and Thinking Rubric
- English Department Writing Rubric
- English Department Speaking & Listening/Shared Inquiry Rubric

Skill Rubric: Communication 9-12 (currently under revision)

Indicator of Attainment	Beginning 1	Meets 2	Exceeds 3	Score
PURPOSE Expresses ideas in alignment with the intended purpose.	Limited demonstration of understanding. Purpose is not identified and/or not fully articulated. Does not or partially expresses ideas in alignment with purpose.	Purpose is identified and articulated but may be occasionally unclear. Expresses ideas with purpose.	Purpose is identified and clearly articulated and enhanced. Clearly expresses ideas in alignment with the intended purpose. Makes connections beyond the intended purpose.	
AUDIENCE Demonstrates an awareness of the intended audience.	Demonstrates little to no awareness of the audience. Language and content is inappropriate and/or ineffective for the audience.	Demonstrates an awareness of the audience. Language and content is appropriate and helps the audience understand the topic/position.	Clearly and consistently demonstrates a complete awareness of the intended audience by connecting to the audience and adjusting as needed. Engages with and responds to the intended audience in a developmentally appropriate manner. Language and content is appropriate and precise which helps the intended audience further understand the topic/position.	
ORGANIZATION Organizes and supports ideas in alignment with the intended purpose.	The organizational structure is not and/or minimally effective for the purpose. The topic/position is not focused and/or minimally supported by details.	Effective organizational structure supports the purpose. The topic/position is focused, well thought out, and supported by accurate and effective details.	Clearly expresses ideas in alignment with the intended purpose. Purpose is clearly identified and connections are made beyond the intended purpose. Substantive and accurate details support and extend the topic/position with exceptional development, specificity, and depth.	
LISTENING Receives and responds to ideas in alignment with the intended purpose.	Limited to no ability to listen to others. Unable to ask relevant questions. Can not paraphrase/restate the message.	Listens to, evaluates, and responds to others. Asks relevant questions. Demonstrates understanding by accurately paraphrasing/restating the message.	Actively listens to, evaluates and responds to others. Asks relevant questions that indicate an interest to learn more and understand further. Demonstrates understanding by accurately paraphrasing/ restating the message and expanding upon the ideas presented.	

SCORING

Beginning: 4 - 6

Meets: 7 - 8 GOAL

Exceeds: 10 - 12

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Skill Rubric: Collaboration 9-12 (currently under revision)

Indicator of Attainment	Beginning 1	Meets 2	Exceeds 3	Score
PLANNING Works effectively with and is receptive to the ideas/contributions of group members.	Does not or lacks a discussion on the strengths of each group member. Does not define group roles.	Assigns roles and defines contributions of those in the group. Suggests ways the group can approach the task.	Assigns roles and defines contributions based upon the unique knowledge, abilities, or interests of those in the group. Plans the approach to the task and anticipates challenges and resolutions.	
COMMUNICATION Thinks with the group and acknowledges multiple perspectives.	Does not or rarely listens to the thinking of the group. Provides little to no feedback.	Utilizes the thinking of the group in order to work toward the completion of the task. Provides feedback.	Synthesizes and expresses the multiple perspectives of the group in order to complete the task. Provides feedback that improves the quality of the task.	
CONTRIBUTION Works with others to complete a task and shares the credit.	Little or no contribution to the task.	Shares work, reviews others' contributions and offers general feedback.	Shares work beyond the individual task, constructively critiques others' contributions, and offers feedback to improve the overall quality of the task.	
REFLECTION Monitors individual and collective contributions of each group member throughout the completion of the task.	Little or no reflection on ways to adjust the group's collaboration process throughout the task/product. Focuses only on individual contributions to the task.	Reflects and suggests individual and/or collective contributions to adjust the group's collaboration process to improve the quality of the task.	Applies relevant and diverse individual and collective contributions to monitor and adjust the quality of the task.	

SCORING

Beginning: 4 - 6

Meets: 7 - 8 **GOAL**

Exceeds: 10 - 12

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Skill Rubric: Critical Thinking/Problem Solving 9-12 (currently under revision)

Indicator of Attainment	Beginning 1	Meets 2	Exceeds 3	Score
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UNDERSTANDING Identifies the problem, question or issue being addressed.	Exhibits limited and/or no understanding of key concepts.	Exhibits an understanding of key concepts.	Exhibits a thorough and accurate understanding of key concepts and can access those concepts from multiple perspectives.	
PLANNING Applies systematic thinking and selects strategies to address the problem, question or issue.	Shows limited to no evidence of a plan, model or strategy to solve a problem.	Shows a plan, model or strategy to solve a problem.	Shows innovative and creative thinking to solve a problem.	
QUESTIONING Analyzes relevant information related to the problem, question or issue.	Unable to or has difficulty questioning and analyzing numerical, written, or visual data and identifying related evidence.	Questions and analyzes numerical, written, or visual data and selects the relevant evidence.	Questions and analyzes numerical, written, or visual data and selects the most relevant and impactful evidence. Describes why different approaches to a problem or situation could yield the same or similar results.	
REFLECTION Makes evidence-based conclusions/solutions and makes adjustments as needed to address the problem, question or issue.	Solution is inadequately supported or supported with minimal evidence, limited analysis of data and relevant information.	Solution is accurately supported by evidence and the student makes conclusions based on appropriate evidence.	Solution is thorough, accurate, and evidence-based. Shows extensive, thoughtful and reflective thinking on how a problem is solved and makes adjustments as needed.	

SCORING

Beginning: 4 - 6

Meets: 7 - 8 **GOAL**

Exceeds: 10 - 12

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DRAFT Self-Efficacy 9-12

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE - GRADES 9-12

Definition: Self-Efficacy is the belief that you are capable of successfully performing a task or managing a situation.

	A secondary student may demonstrate self-efficacy by:	
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Reflective Opportunities	• Asking for extra help to clarify a concept in math class so he/she can complete the homework with success. • Dealing with frustration by taking a deep breath and reminding herself that she can look back at the textbook and go to extra help before the test. • Participating in class discourse despite being unsure of the answer • Tackling new challenges with a positive attitude • Using positive self talk while playing sports even when losing • Entering a new grade and thinks that she will pass all of her classes, even though she struggled in the past. • Setting personal goals and celebrating successes • Confidently participating in class discussions • Willingly accepting feedback from students and peers • Standing up for yourself or a peer after observing name calling	Areas of Growth
	Feedback to Students	
	Goals (growth areas) for Future Learning	

Emotional Intelligence 9-12

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE - GRADES 9-12

Definition: Students exhibit an aptitude for being able to identify how and why they are feeling, and how to regulate and address those emotions.

	A secondary school student may demonstrate emotional intelligence by...	
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Reflective Opportunities	• Showing empathy for others; for example, understanding when a classmate may not be able to complete an assignment at the same level. • Working with classmates cooperatively despite differences. • Using strategies to regulate their own emotions and behaviors and/or helps peers when they are frustrated or sad. • Exercising empathy in a way that spreads joy and positivity through representing the strengths of others or the situation (eg. we have the materials to finish the project or our differences in the team give us strengths to accomplish goals even better than on our own) • Accurately expressing their emotional state when faced with frustration (eg. failing a test, not being asked to the dance) • Talking about conflicts such as deciding on roles in a group in order to respectfully and sensitively find solutions • Encouraging classmates to behave properly for a substitute teacher (showing self-control of their behavior and emotions). • Building relationships despite differences (has friends with different abilities and backgrounds) • Recognizing group dynamics during collaborative tasks and communicating so that roles are distributed with sensitivity (choosing teammates for a sport or project, volunteering for roles, suggesting configurations sensitively) • Accepting responsibility for actions after making a mistake • Honoring classmates in their work together by understanding people have different perspectives and ways of expressing their emotions. • Handling setbacks and adapting when things don't go according to plan. • Following through with commitments showing reliability and trustworthiness with peers and adults. • Demonstrates confidence by volunteering to present materials to a large crowd for the first time.	Areas of Growth
	Feedback to Students	
	Goals (growth areas) for Future Learning	

Integrity 9-12

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE GRADES 9-12

Definition: Integrity is doing the right thing even when it's hard or when no one is looking.

Reflective Opportunities	A secondary school student may demonstrate integrity by... • Showing up on time to class and doing homework in a timely manner • Noticing when another student drops her/his books in the hallway, and helps to pick them up • Returning a wallet that is found in the parking lot with the content intact	Areas of Growth
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	• Helping an individual who is struggling with learning - offers to help with Algebra homework by solving similar problems (peer to peer learning) • Volunteering to help with a service project with the Trumbull Food Bank-creates flyers and collects canned food items with permission from the principal. • Respecting her peer who is wearing a sari • Speaking up when student overhears a peer being teased and/or by privately letting the teacher know what happened/Name calling is hurtful, think before you speak • Advocating for a peer after observing another student calling someone names • Volunteering to help at practice for the Unified basketball team. • Taking pride in their work and behaviors • Using school resources such as WeVideo appropriately; when asked to use it for school assignments and not personal video making, the students only created the science video to document learning. • Dressing and accessorizing in their own style and confidently walking into school regardless of the reactions of others. Be yourself in the face of adversity • Modeling appropriate behavior and ignoring negative?bad? behavior when provoked by others	
	Feedback to Students	
	Goals (growth areas) for Future Learning	

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT WRITING RUBRIC

	Claim/Thesis	Evidence	Explanation	Writing Conventions
Exemplary (4)	Claim is clear, specific, and expresses a complex argument. It opens divergent, insightful understanding of the text.	Convincing evidence (not previously discussed in class/not obvious within the text) supports the claim. Quotes are incorporated seamlessly with appropriate introductory context.	Ideas are insightful and the explanation of thinking demonstrates a clear, thorough, and convincing connection between the evidence and the claim. Explanation thoroughly answers the questions “How do you know?” and “So what?”	Writing demonstrates purposeful organization, clear coherence, and smooth progression of ideas. The writer uses appropriate language for his/her audience and purpose. The piece is free of most errors in grammar and mechanics. Quotes are cited according to MLA style.
Proficient (3)	Claim is clear, specific, and states an arguable interpretation of text.	Evidence (quotes or well-selected paraphrase previously discussed in class/more obvious within the text) adequately supports the claim. Quotes are incorporated with appropriate introductory context.	Ideas are explained adequately and connect the evidence to the claim. Explanation adequately answers the questions “How do you know?” and/or “So what?”	Writing demonstrates adequate organization, coherence, and progression of ideas. The writer uses appropriate but inconsistent language for audience and purpose. Grammatical and mechanical errors are present. Inconsistent use of correct MLA citation.
Progressing (2)	Claim attempts to demonstrate an interpretation of the text but may not be arguable and/or may not be focused on or fully addressed the prompt.	Evidence is present but may not clearly support the claim, may be more focused on repeating the claim rather than supporting it, or may merely reference a plot point. Quotes are not introduced with appropriate context.	Ideas display gaps in thinking or may merely repeat the claim or evidence. Explanation attempts to connect evidence to claim but is inadequate and/or not convincing. Explanation does not answer the questions “How do you know?” and “So what?”	Writing demonstrates limited organization with lapses in coherence and/or progression of ideas. The writer uses informal language for audience and purpose. An accumulation of grammatical and mechanical errors is present. MLA citation is incorrect.
Emerging (1)	Claim is unclear, rooted in inaccuracies, and/or a statement of fact. It does not set up an interpretation for the response.	Evidence is not present or not clearly referenced and/or not relevant to the claim. If used, evidence may simply restate a plot point (summary).	Explanation is not present, may be unrelated to claim and evidence, and/or introduces no new thinking to the response. Explanation may offer discussion about topic(s) that is unrelated to the evidence and claim.	Writing is disorganized and/or unfocused with pervasive errors in grammar and mechanics that interfere with meaning. MLA citation is not used.
(0)	Unacceptable / No Score	Unacceptable / No Score	Unacceptable / No Score	Unacceptable / No Score

SHARED INQUIRY DISCUSSION RUBRIC

	4	3	2	1	0 – unscorable
Involvement	Engagement is highly attentive and effective, responding clearly and directly to the thoughts of others. Involvement is passionate, well-balanced, and coherent. Critical questions advance the conversation, build on the ideas of peers, and offer challenging statements without being argumentative. Discourse is courteous, respectful, and genuinely interested; engagement is tempered with appreciation for a balanced discussion.	Engagement is attentive and active. Ideas are presented and correlate to the thoughts of others. Discourse is responsive, open minded, and respectful without monopolizing.	Engagement is attentive and respectful, marked by attempts to be active in the discussion. Contributions are present but may repeat ideas rather than further the discussion. Ideas are “presented,” rather than discussed, or may struggle to build off of the ideas of others. The conversation may need a greater balance of talking and listening to others.	Full engagement in discourse is not evident, doing little to contribute to the conversation or build off of the ideas of the group. The ideas center around initial responses with little evidence of reshaping ideas based on the discourse. Contributions may confound or derail the discussion.	No involvement in the discussion, demonstrated by being disengaged, silent, or responding inappropriately to the ideas of others.
Ideas and Analysis	Original and insightful questions and comments continually reflect sophisticated comprehension and higher-level thinking. Creative and divergent critical thinking is consistently displayed. Ideas are challenged, bringing the class to a higher understanding of the text and the question at hand.	Questions and comments reflect clear comprehension and higher level thinking. Creative and divergent critical thinking is present. The ideas of others are respectfully challenged during the discussion.	Questions and comments reflect inconsistent higher-level thinking and/or muddled comprehension of the text or the question. Ideas may be one sided or based mainly on superficial observations. Investment of time is in supporting the obvious or rehashing prior class discussions without deepening thought.	Questions and comments may demonstrate only a very literal or misguided comprehension of the text, missing subtleties or nuances that are important. Ideas presented do not assist the group in exploring critical thought or building ideas collaboratively and may, ultimately, hold it back.	Comments, if any, reflect a flawed or incomplete understanding of the text.
Support	Clear and convincing evidence supports each assertion and effectively builds off of the ideas of others. Text evidence deepens analysis and ties directly to a clear and relevant argument. Comments refer to specific pages and/or lines in the text; quotes are read or paraphrased when appropriate, and followed up with explanation of thinking. Exemplary facility with the text is demonstrated.	Direct quotes and specific examples to support inferential ideas are introduced. Comments refer to specific pages and/or lines in the text; quotes are read and/or paraphrased when appropriate. Examples are given and stay on topic. Some facility with the text is demonstrated.	Examples from the text are used at times. Text evidence may be vague, inconsistent, repetitive, or nonessential to the argument at hand. Facility with the text is limited to only quotes prepared beforehand.	Little to no concrete evidence from the text is introduced. Examples are not specific enough, and/or demonstrate a misreading or very cursory reading of the text.	No concrete evidence from the text is utilized.
Preparation	Participation is exceptionally well-prepared. Copious and insightful notes on the reading have been taken and developed. Original and powerful questions have been developed prior to the discussion. All required materials have been brought to class.	Participation is well-prepared. Insightful notes and thoughtful questions have been developed. All required materials have been brought to class.	Required reading, thinking, and questions have been completed. Some notes and questions have been developed prior to the discussion. Some required materials have been brought to class.	Preparation is lacking. The required reading, thinking, or questions may be incomplete or rudimentary. There may be evidence of some preparation, but all materials have not been brought to class.	No preparation is evident.
Reflection	Reflection is insightful, honest, and comprehensive, making specific reference to the discussion and individual preparation, demonstrating how the discussion impacted individual thinking, and demonstrating authentic thinking and a strong desire for self-improvement in future discussions.	Reflection is intelligent, honest, and complete, making a mix of general and specific references to the discussion and individual preparation, demonstrating some authentic thinking and the desire for self-improvement in future discussions.	Reflection is emerging, making mostly general references to the discussion and individual preparation, which may or may not be accurate, demonstrating an attempt at authentic thinking and the recognition of a need for self-improvement in future discussions.	Reflection is confusing, unfocused, and/or sparse, making few references to the discussion or individual preparation, lacking authentic thinking and apparent desire for self-improvement in future discussions.	Reflection is limited and incomplete, making little to no specific reference to the discussion and individual preparation, and devoid of both authentic thinking and the desire for self-improvement in future discussions.