

Unit 1: Inspired Writers

4th Grade ELA

49 Class Meetings

Revised June 2026

Essential Questions

- How do experiences shape a writer's voice and perspective?
- How do poets use literary devices to communicate meaning and emotion?
- How can evidence from a text support our interpretations?

Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals

EU 1: Authors use voice and perspective to connect with readers and to provide insight into characters' thoughts and feelings.

- Understand that personal experiences and emotions can be reflected in literature.
- Identify the voice and perspective of the narrator.
- Explore how a perspective influences the way the story is told.
- Experiment with using different voices and perspectives in their own writing

EU 2: Literary devices such as imagery, similes, metaphors, and repetition enhance the meaning and emotional impact of a story or poem.

- Identify literary devices such as imagery, similes, metaphors, and repetition in the poems
- Analyze how the use of literary devices contributes to the meaning and emotional impact of the poems.
- Write poems incorporating literary devices to convey emotions and ideas effectively.

EU 3: Readers develop an understanding of theme by analyzing character actions, experiences, and responses to challenges.

- Determine themes across multiple poems
- Analyze how themes develop throughout *Love That Dog*
- Compare themes between poems and the novel
- Support interpretations with textual evidence

Standards

Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Hercules).

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.5: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.5: Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9: Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.a: Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.b: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.c: Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., *another, for example, also, because*).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.d: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.e: Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.6: With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.8: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information and provide a list of sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.a: Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.b: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.c: Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.d: Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.2: Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud, or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.3: Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

ISAAC Vision of the Graduate Competencies

Competency 1: Write effectively for a variety of purposes.

Competency 2: Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner.

Competency 3: Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team.

Competency 4: Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively.

Competency 5: Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community.

Unit Content Overview

1. Character's thoughts and feelings as presented through the author's voice and perspective

- Recognize the narrator's voice in "Love That Dog" and discuss how it influences the story.
- Analyze Jack's perspective and emotions throughout the novel.
- Identify and discuss the themes and messages in "Love That Dog".

2. Literary devices and the emotional impact of a story or poem

- Define and identify basic literary devices such as simile, metaphor, and imagery in poems.
- Assess the impact that literary devices make on various poems

3. Theme development through character experiences and poetry

- Determine themes in Love That Dog and selected poems using textual evidence.
- Analyze how Jack's actions, experiences, and responses to challenges develop the novel's themes.
- Compare themes and messages across poems and the novel.
- Support interpretations of theme with details and examples from the text.

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Vocabulary and Key Terms: poetry, verse, stanza, rhyme, rhythm, imagery, simile, metaphor, repetition, narrator, perspective, voice, theme, free verse, mood, tone, symbol, alliteration, onomatopoeia, personification, literary device, hyperbole, symbolism, irony, foreshadowing, flashback, oxymoron, idiom, pun

Interdisciplinary Connection:

Humanities

Daily Learning Objectives with *TWPS*

Students will be able to...

- Identify the characteristics of poetry and differentiate between poetry and prose.
 - *How do experiences shape a writer's voice and perspective?*
 - *How do poets use literary devices to communicate meaning and emotion?*
 - *What does it mean to be inspired?*
- Recognize the narrator's voice in "Love That Dog" and discuss how it influences the story.
 - *What words or phrases does Jack use that show his personality?*
 - *How does Jack's voice change as the story progresses?*
 - *How does his voice sound like someone your age might speak or think?*
 - *What details does Jack share that help you connect with his experiences?*
 - *How does his voice reflect his changing relationship with his teacher?*
 - *What parts of the story show how Miss Stretchberry encourages Jack?*
 - *How does Jack's attitude toward poetry change over time? What moments seem to influence this shift the most?*
 - *How does Creech use Jack's voice to make the writing feel real, like a kid is speaking?*
- Define and identify basic literary devices such as simile, metaphor, and imagery in poems.
 - *Can you find examples of imagery, repetition, or other devices in Jack's poems?*
 - *How do these devices contribute to the mood or meaning of his poems?*
 - *Why do you think poets use similes in their writing?*
- Read and respond to poems featured in "Love That Dog," expressing their interpretations and personal connections.
 - *What emotions do you feel when reading _____ poem?*
 - *How can a poet convey feelings through word choice and structure?*
- Analyze Jack's perspective and emotions in the novel, citing evidence from the text.
 - *How does Jack feel about poetry at the beginning of the book?*
 - *Why do you think Jack is hesitant to share his poems?*
 - *What events or experiences influence Jack's feelings about poetry?*
 - *Can you find a specific poem or moment in the book that shows this change?*
 - *How does the way Sharon Creech writes the book, like a series of poems instead of chapters, affect the way you read Jack's story?*
- Identify imagery in selected poems from the book and explain how it enhances emotional expression.
 - *What images come to mind when you read _____ poem?*
 - *How do poets create pictures in your mind with words?*
 - *What do you notice about the way poems can show feelings or ideas with just a few words?*
- Locate similes and metaphors in the text and discuss how they contribute to the meaning of the poems.

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- *How does a metaphor deepen your understanding of the poem's theme?*
 - *How do similes help us picture what the poet is talking about?*
 - *How do similes add emotion or excitement to a poem?*
- Analyze how repetition and rhythm create mood and emphasis in poetry.
 - *Can you think of a poem or song that uses rhyme? How does it sound?*
 - *How does rhythm affect the way we read or hear a poem?*
 - *Why do you think poets sometimes use repetition, rhyme, or unusual line breaks? How does it affect the way you read the poem?*
- Write their own poems using similes, metaphors, and imagery to express emotions or tell a story.
 - *How does Jack's story make you think differently about poetry or about your own writing?*
 - *How can poetry be used to tell stories or share personal experiences?*
- Identify and discuss the themes and messages in "Love That Dog," supporting their ideas with examples from the text.
 - *What important evidence did you find in the reading passage today?*
 - *How does Jack learn to express himself through poetry?*
 - *Why is self-expression important for Jack, and how does it help him grow?*
- Make personal connections to the poems in the book, reflecting on how the themes relate to their own lives.
 - *How can the mood of a poem change how you feel about what is being described?*
 - *In what ways might a poem be more intense or emotional than a prose story?*
 - *What lessons can we learn from Jack's journey about trying new things?*
 - *How might Jack's experiences inspire you to express yourself in new ways?*
- Analyze how Jack's character develops through his poetry and experiences.
 - *How does Miss Stretchberry influence Jack's development as a poet?*
 - *What lessons does Jack learn from her encouragement and support?*
- Compare different poetic styles and techniques used by various poets mentioned in the novel.
 - *What do you notice about the way poems look on the page?*
 - *How do poets use line breaks and stanzas to organize their writing?*
- Reflect on their own writing process and share their poems with the class, discussing the choices they made.
 - *Are there any parts of writing that are difficult for you?*
 - *How do you overcome these challenges and keep writing?*
 - *Have you used similes, metaphors, or imagery in your writing? How?*
 - *How do these devices help enhance your writing?*
- Work in groups to create a collaborative poetry project, demonstrating their understanding of poetic techniques and themes.
 - *What do you think might be fun about writing a poem?*
 - *What might be difficult about writing a poem compared to writing a story?*
- Present their chosen poems to the class, demonstrating expressive reading and interpretation skills.
 - *What qualities do you look for in a poem when deciding which one to share?*
 - *What elements, such as tone and pacing, do you focus on during preparation?*
- Participate in a review game to reinforce their understanding of literary devices learned throughout the unit.
 - *How do literary devices help make stories and poems more interesting?*
 - *Can you give an example of a literary device you've noticed in a book or poem?*

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- Complete an assessment to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts, themes, and literary devices in "Love That Dog."
 - *What do you think the book is mainly about?*
 - *What do you think is special about the way the book is written?*
 - *How does the title reflect the main themes of the story?*

Instructional Strategies/Differentiated Instruction

- Whole group instruction
- Paragraph frames and sentence starters
- Teacher modeling
- Think-write-pair-share and small-group discussions
- Graphic organizers
- Accountable talk
- Homework
- Word walls with visuals (Venn Diagrams)
- Small group instruction
- Visual exemplars with teacher and student critiques
- Text and video chunking
- Spiraling back to guiding questions
- Multiple CFUs
- Close reading with text-dependent questions

EL Differentiation Strategies

- Word Banks and Word Walls with visuals
- TWPS (Think, write, pair, share)
- Pre-reading strategies
- Culturally responsive teaching
- Explicit teacher modeling
- Key vocabulary
- Graphic organizers
- Strategic Grouping
- Non-verbal assessments

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Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Do Now
- Academic Discourse
- Exit Slips
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Completed notes
- Completed graphic organizers
- Homework
 - Performance Task -- “Poetry Changes People”
 - Teacher’s rubric/scoring guide

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Quiz: Literary Devices and Comprehension (EU1, EU2, and EU3)
- IAB
- Unit Task: “Poetry Changes People” (EU1, EU2 and EU3)

Unit Task

Unit Task Name: “Poetry Changes People”

Description: Upon completing the novel *Love That Dog*, students will demonstrate their understanding of theme, character development, literary devices, and author’s message through a multi-text analysis and writing task. Students will read selections from *Love That Dog*, “Love That Boy,” “Dreams,” and a biography of Walter Dean Myers, then explain how writing and poetry can help people grow, express themselves, and overcome challenges. Students must use evidence from multiple texts to support their response.

Evaluation: Teacher’s Scoring Guide

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Unit Resources

- *Love That Dog* by Love That Dog
- Selected poems referenced in *Love That Dog*:
 - Love That Boy
 - The Red Wheelbarrow
 - Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
 - Street Music
 - The Apple
- Additional poetry selections:
 - Dreams
 - The Voice
 - Keep a-Pluggin' Away
- Biography of Walter Dean Myers
- Close Reading Annotation Guide
- Theme Graphic Organizer
- Character Development Tracker (Jack)
- Poetry Analysis Graphic Organizer
- Literary Devices Reference Sheet
- Compare and Contrast Organizer for Multiple Texts
- Theme Across Texts Graphic Organizer
- Literary Analysis Essay Exemplars
- SBAC Brief Write Exemplars
- Poetry Writing Templates
- Author's Note Template
- Google Classroom