

Unit 3: Digging into Your Destiny

5th Grade ELA

45 Class Meetings

Revised June 2026

Essential Questions

- To what extent do our choices determine our destiny?
- How do conflicts reveal a character's true nature?
- How does using multiple storylines build suspense and develop theme?

Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals

- EU 1:** Authors use conflict to develop characters and advance the plot.
- Identify and analyze character vs. character conflicts.
 - Analyze character vs. nature conflicts.
 - Analyze character vs. self conflicts.
 - Explain how conflict contributes to character growth.
 - Evaluate how conflicts drive the story arc.
- EU 2:** Characters change as a result of their experiences and relationships.
- Analyze Stanley's transformation throughout the novel.
 - Examine how Zero influences Stanley's development.
 - Compare and contrast major characters.
 - Analyze motivations, actions, and consequences.
- EU 3:** Authors use plot structure and interconnected storylines to develop meaning.
- Analyze exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
 - Trace the relationship between the Stanley storyline, Kissin' Kate Barlow storyline, and Elya Yelnats storyline.
 - Examine cause-and-effect relationships throughout the novel.
 - Analyze foreshadowing and flashback structures.

Standards

Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3: Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.5: Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.6: Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.9: Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4 Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4.a: Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4.b: Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4.c: Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3.a: Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3.b: Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3.c: Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3.d: Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3.e: Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 5 here.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.6: 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 two pages in a single sitting.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.10: 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.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.5.1.b: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.c: Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.d: Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.3: Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.

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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. Story Arc and Plot Structure

- Analyze the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution of the novel.
- Examine how Louis Sachar develops suspense through multiple interconnected storylines.
- Trace cause-and-effect relationships that connect events across generations.
- Analyze how plot events contribute to character development and theme.

2. Character Development and Relationships

- Analyze Stanley Yelnats' transformation throughout the novel.
- Examine how Stanley's relationships with Zero, Mr. Sir, the Warden, and the other campers influence his growth.
- Compare and contrast major characters using textual evidence.
- Analyze character motivations, actions, and responses to conflict.

3. Conflict Analysis

- Identify and analyze character vs. character, character vs. nature, and character vs. self conflicts.
- Examine how conflicts drive the plot and contribute to character growth.
- Analyze how characters respond to challenges and adversity.
- Evaluate the role conflict plays in developing the novel's themes.

Vocabulary and Key Terms: Holes, Camp Green Lake, Stanley Yelnats, Zero, Hector Zeroni, Mr. Sir, Mr. Pendanski, The Warden, X-Ray, Armpit, Squid, Zigzag, Magnet, Kissin' Kate Barlow, Sam, Trout Walker, Elya Yelnats, Madame Zeroni, protagonist, antagonist, conflict, character vs. character, character vs. nature, character vs. self, internal conflict, external conflict, plot, story arc, exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, setting, flashback, foreshadowing, cause and effect, prediction, inference, textual evidence, theme, central message, symbolism, symbol, figurative language, irony, fate, destiny, curse, justice, injustice, friendship, loyalty, perseverance, redemption, resilience, courage, survival, responsibility, consequences, choices, relationships, prejudice, discrimination, inequality, transformation, growth, determination, empathy, point of view, narrator, perspective, compare and contrast, comprehension, summary, sequence of events, annotation, yellow-spotted lizards, God's Thumb, onions, treasure chest, lipstick tube, shovel, desert, drought, Camp Green Lake hierarchy, family legacy, interconnected storylines, generational impact, recurring events, literary analysis, theme development, author's craft, suspense, historical context, personal growth, overcoming adversity

Interdisciplinary Connection:

Humanities

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Daily Learning Objectives with *TWPS*

Students will be able to...

- Identify exposition and establish setting.**
 - *Why is Camp Green Lake an effective setting for this story?*
 - *How does the setting create conflict before Stanley even arrives?*
- Analyze Stanley's first major conflict.***
 - *Was Stanley truly responsible for his situation?*
 - *How does Stanley respond when faced with injustice?*
 - *What does this reveal about his character?*
- Analyze character vs. character conflict.***
 - *How does Mr. Sir use power to control the campers?*
 - *Why does Stanley become a target of Mr. Sir's frustration?*
 - *Which character holds the most power at Camp Green Lake? Why?*
- Analyze hierarchy within Camp Green Lake. ***
 - *Why do the boys follow X-Ray?*
 - *How does hierarchy influence decisions within Group D?*
 - *Is Stanley gaining or losing status within the group? Explain.*
- Make inferences about Zero.***
 - *What assumptions do others make about Zero?*
 - *Are those assumptions accurate?*
 - *What evidence suggests Zero is more intelligent than others believe?*
- Analyze friendship as a catalyst for growth. ***
 - *How does Stanley change after helping Zero?*
 - *How does Zero help Stanley become a stronger person?*
 - *What risks do they take for one another?*
- Analyze character vs. nature conflict.***
 - *Which poses the greater threat: the camp staff or the desert?*
 - *How does the environment challenge Stanley and Zero?*
 - *Why is survival such an important theme in this section?*
- Analyze character vs. self conflict.***
 - *What internal struggle is Stanley facing?*
 - *How does Stanley's confidence change throughout the novel?*
 - *What fears must Stanley overcome?*
- Analyze cause and effect.***
 - *Which event seems small now but may become important later?*
 - *How does Stanley's decision to help Zero change the story?*
 - *What chain of events led Stanley to Camp Green Lake?*
- Analyze multiple storylines. ***
 - *Why does Louis Sachar interrupt Stanley's story with flashbacks?*
 - *How are Kate Barlow's experiences connected to Stanley's?*
 - *What clues suggest the storylines will eventually intersect?*

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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

Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

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

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SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Quiz: Story Arc, Conflict, Character Development (EU1, EU2, and EU3)
- IAB
- Unit Task: “Camp Green Lake” (EU1, EU2 and EU3)

Unit Task

Unit Task Name: “Camp Green Lake”

Description: Upon completing the novel, students will demonstrate their understanding of *Holes* by taking part in a Camp Green Lake room transformation. Students will have to write a persuasive paragraph on why they should receive a new camp nickname of their choice, write an explanatory paragraph about how Stanley changed throughout the novel, and respond to a text dependent question about the text.

Evaluation: Teacher’s Scoring Guide

Unit Resources

- *Holes*
- Louis Sachar
- Interactive notebooks
- Story arc graphic organizers
- Conflict tracking charts
- Character analysis organizers
- CER writing templates
- Vocabulary resources
- Google Classroom
- Teacher-created slide deck
- Exit slips
- Theme anchor charts