| Wall Township Public Schools | Board Approval Date: 8/18/26 |
|---|---|

**Grade 5 ELA**

*The Grade 5 ELA curriculum is organized into six thematic units that integrate literary and informational texts to develop advanced reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills aligned to the 2023 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Throughout the year, students analyze themes, perspectives, text structures, author's craft, and evidence while strengthening vocabulary, grammar, and academic discourse. Writing instruction emphasizes literary analysis, opinion, informational, research, and narrative writing through the complete writing process. Students engage with diverse texts spanning historical fiction, science, history, mythology, and informational topics, culminating in authentic performance tasks that require critical thinking, collaboration, research, and evidence-based communication.*

## Course Sequence & Pacing

| Unit Title | MP/Weeks |
|---|---|
| **Unit 1: Unlocking Confidence**<br>In this six-week unit, students explore how people and characters develop confidence when facing challenges, forming relationships, receiving support, and trying new experiences. Through novels in verse, realistic fiction, autobiographies, informational texts, and a graphic novel, students compare characters' reactions to challenges and identify themes revealed through their actions. The unit culminates in a four-paragraph literary analysis comparing Garvey with another character and explaining how their responses develop a theme. | Weeks 1-6<br>30 days |
| **Unit 2: From Earth to Mars**<br>In this six-week unit, students explore the history, science, and future of space exploration through a variety of informational, historical, argumentative, and science fiction texts. As they examine the contributions of scientists, engineers, and astronauts, students build skills in determining main ideas, summarizing informational texts, analyzing text structure, and evaluating claims supported by reasons and evidence. The unit culminates with students writing a five-paragraph opinion essay that argues whether humans should travel to Mars, using evidence from multiple texts to support their position. | Weeks 7 - 12<br>30 days |
| **Unit 3: Freedom Seekers**<br>In this six-week unit, students explore the experiences of freedom seekers through historical fiction, biographies, historical accounts, informational texts, and multimedia resources focused on the Underground Railroad, maroon communities, and the abolitionist movement. Students analyze how characters' perspectives influence their actions, compare multiple historical accounts, and examine the contributions of individuals who fought against slavery. The unit culminates in a four-paragraph literary analysis essay explaining how the differing perspectives of Homer and Ada in *Freewater* shape the way they interpret and respond to the events around them, supported by direct textual evidence. | Weeks 13-18<br>30 days |

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| **Unit 4: The Beauty of Rot**<br>In this six-week unit, students investigate the process of decomposition and the essential role decomposers and scavengers play in maintaining healthy ecosystems. Through scientific texts, biographies, poetry, visual texts, and realistic fiction, students integrate information from multiple sources to explain how fungi, worms, and other organisms recycle nutrients and sustain life. The unit culminates in a multimedia research presentation in which students explain how either fungi or composting worms contribute to a healthy ecosystem using evidence from multiple texts and an additional research source. | Weeks 19-24<br>30 days |
| **Unit 5: The Hero's Journey**<br>In this six-week unit, students explore the Hero's Journey, a common narrative structure found across fantasy, drama, poetry, and mythology. Through a variety of literary texts, students analyze story structure, character perspective, figurative language, imagery, and theme while comparing how heroes are transformed through their experiences. The unit culminates in students writing an original narrative that follows the Hero's Journey structure and incorporates descriptive language, figurative language, dialogue, and a clear sequence of events. | Weeks 25-30<br>30 days |
| **Unit 6: Cracking the Code**<br>In this six-week unit, students explore how codes, ciphers, and encryption have been used throughout history to protect information, influence historical events, and shape modern communication. Through historical accounts, biographies, arguments, firsthand accounts, poetry, infographics, and expository texts, students investigate the work of codemakers and codebreakers while analyzing reasons and evidence, text structure, theme, and author's perspective. The unit culminates in a five-paragraph opinion essay in which students argue which code studied in the unit had the greatest impact on history, supporting their claim with evidence from multiple texts and at least one research source. | Week 31-36<br>30 days |

# Unit 1: Unlocking Confidence

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Unit 1: Unlocking Confidence**

**Unit Summary:** In this six-week unit, students explore how people and characters develop confidence when facing challenges, forming relationships, receiving support, and trying new experiences. Through novels in verse, realistic fiction, autobiographies, informational texts, and a graphic novel, students compare characters' reactions to challenges and identify themes revealed through their actions. The unit culminates in a four-paragraph literary analysis comparing Garvey with another character and explaining how their responses develop a theme.

## Unit 1 Learning Targets

**NJSLS Grade 5 ELA**

L.WF.5.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing, including those listed under grade four foundational skills.

- A. Avoid fragments, run-ons and rambling sentences, and comma splices.
- B. Maintain consistency in verb tense; place phrases and clauses; choose between adjectives and adverbs.
- C. Ensure agreement between subject and verb and between pronoun and antecedent.
- D. Distinguish between frequently confused words.
- E. Use idiomatic language and choose words for effect; use punctuating for meaning and effect.
- F. Use punctuation to separate items in a series; use commas in a series of phrases or clauses.
- G. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence; use a comma to set off the words yes and no (e.g., Yes, thank you), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., It's true, isn't it?), and to indicate direct address (e.g., Is that you, Emma?).
- H. Spell grade appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

L.KL.5.1. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

- A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
- B. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
- C. Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.

L.VL.5.2. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning academic and domain-specific words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- A. Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- B. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis).
- C. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

L.VI.5.3. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- A. Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context.
- B. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.

C. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words.

RL.CR.5.1. Quote accurately from a literary text when explaining what the text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.CR.5.1. Quote accurately from an informational text when explaining what the text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.CI.5.2. Determine the theme of a literary text (e.g., stories, plays or poetry) and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

RI.CI.5.2. Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

RL.IT.5.3. Analyze the impact of two or more individuals and events throughout the course of a text, comparing and contrasting two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific textual evidence (e.g., how characters interact).

RI.IT.5.3. Analyze the impact of two or more individuals and events throughout the course of a text, explaining the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific evidence in the text.

RL.MF.5.6. Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

RL.CT.5.8. Compare and contrast the authors' approaches across two or more literary texts within the same genre or about the same or similar topics.

W.IW.5.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

A. Introduce a topic clearly to provide a focus and group related information logically; include text features such as headings, illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aid in comprehension.
B. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
C. Link ideas within paragraphs and sections of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).
D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
E. Provide a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented.

W.WP.5.4. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

A. Consider audience, purpose, and intent before writing.
B. Plan appropriately to use specialized, topic-specific language appropriate for the audience, purpose and subject matter.
C. Consider writing as a process, including self-evaluation, revision and editing.
D. With adult and peer feedback, and digital or print tools such as a dictionary, thesaurus, and/or spell checker, evaluate whether the writing achieved its goal and make changes in content or form as necessary.
E. After initial drafting, expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, audience, and style.

W.RW.5.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

SL.PE.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.

A. Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
B. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
C. Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

D. Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

**Interdisciplinary Connections**

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills** *(CLKS)*:

- 9.4.5.CI.1 Use appropriate communication techniques to collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives.
- 9.4.5.CT.1 Evaluate ideas through evidence and reasoning.
- 9.4.5.GCA.1 Work collaboratively to solve problems by contributing individual strengths.

**Computer Science & Design Thinking (***CS & DT***):**

- 8.2.5.ED.1 Explain the steps of the design process to solve a problem.
- 8.1.5.IC.1 Compare the benefits and tradeoffs of collaborating through digital tools.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

***NJSLS Science 2026***

- 5-LS2-1 Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.
- 5-ESS3-1 Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources, environment, and address climate change issues.

***Social Studies***

- 6.1.5.CivicsCM.1 Use multiple sources to describe the characteristics of responsible community members.
- 6.1.5.CivicsHR.4 Describe how actions of individuals and groups demonstrate the values of respect, fairness, and responsibility.
- 6.1.5.HistoryUP.1 Describe the reasons various groups, voluntarily and involuntarily, immigrated to America and how their experiences were different.

**AAPI Connections:**

- The unit includes *How to Make S'mores* by Hena Khan, which portrays the experience of a child adjusting to a new country and culture, providing an opportunity to discuss diverse perspectives and inclusion through literature.

**DEI Connections:**

- Several texts (*Wonder*, *Garvey's Choice*, *Get a Grip*, *Vivy Cohen!*, *How to Make S'mores*) explore identity, disability, belonging, perseverance, empathy, and respecting individual differences.

**Learning Targets**

| **Unit Essential Questions:** | **Unit Enduring Understandings:** |
|---|---|
| • What does it mean to be confident?<br>• How do challenges help people build confidence?<br>• How do relationships influence confidence?<br>• How do characters' actions reveal the theme of a text?<br>• How can textual evidence strengthen literary analysis? | • Confidence grows through perseverance, self-reflection, supportive relationships, and new experiences.<br>• Characters respond to challenges in different ways, and those responses help develop the theme of a text.<br>• Readers use evidence from literary and informational texts to make inferences, determine themes, identify main ideas, and compare characters. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Writers explain ideas clearly by comparing characters and supporting their analysis with textual evidence. |

## Learning Objectives

**Students will be able to:**

- Compare characters and events.
- Compare stories.
- Explain the theme of a literary text.
- Explain the main idea of an informational text.
- Summarize literary and informational texts.
- Make inferences using textual evidence.
- Analyze narrative elements.
- Analyze figurative language.
- Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues and Greek and Latin word parts.
- Gather information from multiple texts.
- Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
- Write explanatory paragraphs.
- Write a literary analysis comparing characters and explaining theme.
- Plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish explanatory writing.

## Vocabulary

| Unit Vocabulary | Key Vocabulary | Academic Vocabulary |
|---|---|---|
| • confidence<br>• develop | • craved<br>• resembles<br>• beaming<br>• seep<br>• settle<br>• pause<br>• extraordinary<br>• stampeding<br>• nudging<br>• accomplish<br>• reassuring<br>• sustains<br>• fierce<br>• momentum | • novels in verse<br>• inference<br>• metaphor<br>• compare<br>• contrast<br>• conjunctions<br>• compound sentence<br>• figurative language<br>• personification<br>• hyperbole<br>• imagery<br>• multiple-meaning words<br>• theme<br>• appositive |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • persevere<br>• audience<br>• inspired<br>• identical<br>• nerve<br>• competitive<br>• defies<br>• distraction<br>• flung<br>• particular<br>• regret<br>• casual<br>• crammed<br>• creative<br>• grit<br>• recital | • paragraph<br>• explanatory paragraph<br>• literary analysis<br>• gist statement<br>• main idea<br>• topic<br>• key details<br>• sentence<br>• subject<br>• predicate<br>• fragment<br>• summarize<br>• topic sentence<br>• sum-up sentence<br>• narrative elements<br>• characters<br>• setting<br>• plot<br>• complex sentence<br>• independent clause<br>• dependent clause<br>• root<br>• allusion<br>• adjective<br>• comparative adjective<br>• superlative adjective<br>• transitions<br>• direct quotation |

## Stage 2: Evidence of Student Learning

**Formative Assessments:**

- Close reading and text analysis activities
- Writer's Craft explanatory paragraph tasks
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Collaborative Discussions
- Process Writing activities (Analyze, Plan, Draft, Revise)
- Teacher observation of discussions and writing
- Vocabulary and language practice

**Summative Assessments:**

- **Unit 1 Assessment**
- **End-of-Unit Writing:** Four-paragraph literary analysis comparing or contrasting how Garvey and another character react to challenges and explaining how their actions demonstrate the theme of the text.

**Common Benchmark Assessments:** iReady Inform, DIBELS 8, iReady Literacy Tasks

## Core Instructional Resources

**Anchor Texts**

- *Garvey's Choice* by Nikki Grimes (Novel in Verse)

**Supporting Texts**

- *Garvey's Choice: The Graphic Novel* by Nikki Grimes
- *"Swing"* by Jane Kuo
- *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio
- *Real Confidence*
- *Finding the Edge* by Karen Chen
- *Believe in Yourself* by Terina Allen
- *Chasing Space* by Leland Melvin
- *How to Make S'mores* by Hena Khan
- *Get a Grip, Vivy Cohen!* by Sarah Kapit

**Instructional Resources**

Unit Media
Writer's Craft lessons
Collaborative Discussion activities
Module 1 Assessment
Module 2 Assessment
Unit 1 Assessment
Process Writing resources
Support & Extend independent reading activities

**Accommodations and Modifications:**
**Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,**
**Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students**

**Suggested Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:**

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Follow All IEP Modifications
- Articulation videos (iReady Teacher Toolbox)
- Classroom Visuals (Vowel Valley, Sound Walls)
- Personal Visuals (ex. Sound Spelling Cards, Articulation Cards, personal sound wall)
- Introduce Key Vocabulary Before Lesson
- Teacher Reads Aloud Daily
- Choral Reading
- Chants, Songs (ex: The Vowel Song on Youtube)
- Small Group Instruction- Guided Reading and Guided Writing
- Use Books On Tape (Listening Center)
- Allow Extra Time To Complete Assignments Or Tests
- Allow Answers To Be Given Orally Or Dictated
- Provide Picture Instructions

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners:**

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Articulation videos (iReady Teacher Toolbox)
- Classroom Visuals (Vowel Valley, Sound Walls)
- Personal Visuals (ex. Sound Spelling Cards, Articulation Cards, personal sound wall)
- Teacher Modeling
- Roleplay
- Simplified Language / Teacher Talk / Thinking Aloud
- Introduce Key Vocabulary Before Lesson (ex: words from the theme Friendship with pictures)
- Picture Directions

**Students At Risk of Failure:**

- Provide Peer Tutoring
- Articulation videos (iReady Teacher Toolbox)
- Classroom Visuals (Vowel Valley, Sound Walls)
- Personal Visuals (ex. Sound Spelling Cards, Articulation Cards, personal sound wall)
- Provide Immediate Praise And Feedback

- Provide High Interest Topics
- Use a strong student as a “buddy”
- Multisensory Instruction (sky writing, sand, bumpy/scratchy paper short vowels)
- Use Audio Books
- Allow Extra Time To Complete Assignments Or Tests
- Work In A Small Group
- One On One Instruction

**Students with 504 Plans:**

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student’s 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way.
Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

- Follow All 504 Modifications
- Articulation videos (iReady Teacher Toolbox)
- Classroom Visuals (Vowel Valley, Sound Walls)
- Personal Visuals (ex. Sound Spelling Cards, Articulation Cards, personal sound wall)
- Provide Picture Instructions
- Small Group Instruction- Guided Reading and Guided Writing
- Allow Extra Time To Complete Assignments Or Tests
- Allowing For Additional Wait Time For Student Responses During Conversations
- Provide Fidget Tools
- Flexible Seating
- Chunk Assignments
- Positive Reinforcement

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students:**

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Encourage Upper Level Intellectual Behavior Based On Bloom’s Taxonomy
- Do Not Always Be Explicit, Allow For Discovery (ex. give students word cards and have them sort the words by looking for their own patterns)
- Group Students According To Ability Or Interest
- Propose Interest-based Extension Activities
- Use Varied Modes Of Pre-assessment And Assessment
- Provide Whole Group Enrichment Explorations
- Provide Options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Teach Cognitive and Methodological Skills
- Use Center, Stations, Or Contracts (ex. roll and read fluency center with short vowel words
- Ask Higher Order Thinking Questions

# Unit 2: From Earth to Mars

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Unit 2: From Earth to Mars**

**Unit Summary:** In this six-week unit, students explore the history, science, and future of space exploration through a variety of informational, historical, argumentative, and science fiction texts. As they examine the contributions of scientists, engineers, and astronauts, students build skills in determining main ideas, summarizing informational texts, analyzing text structure, and evaluating claims supported by reasons and evidence. The unit culminates with students writing a five-paragraph opinion essay that argues whether humans should travel to Mars, using evidence from multiple texts to support their position.

## Unit 1 Learning Targets

**NJSLS Grade 5 ELA**

L.WF.5.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing, including those listed under grade four foundational skills.

- A. Avoid fragments, run-ons and rambling sentences, and comma splices.
- B. Maintain consistency in verb tense; place phrases and clauses; choose between adjectives and adverbs.
- C. Ensure agreement between subject and verb and between pronoun and antecedent.
- D. Distinguish between frequently confused words.
- E. Use idiomatic language and choose words for effect; use punctuating for meaning and effect.
- F. Use punctuation to separate items in a series; use commas in a series of phrases or clauses.
- G. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence; use a comma to set off the words yes and no (e.g., Yes, thank you), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., It's true, isn't it?), and to indicate direct address (e.g., Is that you, Emma?).
- H. Spell grade appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

L.KL.5.1. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

- A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
- B. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
- C. Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.

L.VL.5.2. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning academic and domain-specific words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- A. Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- B. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis).
- C. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

L.VI.5.3. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- A. Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context.

B. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.
C. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words.

RI.CR.5.1. Quote accurately from an informational text when explaining what the text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.CI.5.2. Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

RI.IT.5.3. Analyze the impact of two or more individuals and events throughout the course of a text, explaining the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific evidence in the text.

RI.TS.5.4. Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

RI.PP.5.5. Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent and how that may influence the reader's interpretation.

RI.MF.5.6. Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, animations, or interactive elements on web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

RI.AA.5.7. Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

RI.CT.5.8. Compare and contrast the authors' approaches across two or more informational texts within the same genre or about texts on the same or similar topics.

W.AW.5.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
opportunity to integrate climate change education.

A. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose.
B. Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details from text(s), quote directly from text when appropriate.
C. Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., consequently, specifically).
D. Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.

W.WP.5.4. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

A. Consider audience, purpose, and intent before writing.
B. Plan appropriately to use specialized, topic-specific language appropriate for the audience, purpose and subject matter.
C. Consider writing as a process, including self-evaluation, revision and editing.
D. With adult and peer feedback, and digital or print tools such as a dictionary, thesaurus, and/or spell checker, evaluate whether the writing achieved its goal and make changes in content or form as necessary.
E. After initial drafting, expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, audience, and style.

W.WR.5.5. Establish a central idea about a topic, investigation, issue or event and use several sources to support the proposed central idea.

W.SE.5.6. Gather relevant information from multiple valid and reliable print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, making note of any similarities and differences among ideas presented; and provide a list of sources.

W.RW.5.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a

range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

SL.PE.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.

A. Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
B. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
C. Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
D. Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

**Curricular Connections**

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills** *(CLKS)*:

- 9.4.5.CT.1 Evaluate ideas through the use of evidence and reasoning.
- 9.4.5.CI.1 Use appropriate communication techniques to collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives.

**Computer Science & Design Thinking (***CS & DT***):**

- 8.2.5.ED.1 Explain the steps of the design process to solve a problem.
- 8.1.5.IC.1 Compare the benefits and tradeoffs of collaborating through digital tools.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

**NJSLS Science 2026**

- 5-ESS1-1 Support an argument that the apparent brightness of the sun and stars is due to their relative distances from the Earth.
- 5-ESS2-1 Develop a model using an example to describe ways the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact.
- 3-5-ETS1-1 Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes specified criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.
- 3-5-ETS1-2 Generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on how well each is likely to meet the criteria and constraints.

**Social Studies 2020**

- 6.1.5.HistoryUP.2 Describe how science, technology, and innovation affected the development of the United States.
- 6.1.5.HistoryCC.2 Describe how notable individuals, including women and minorities, contributed to the United States.

**Amistad Connections**

- The unit includes **Katherine Johnson** (*Hidden Figures*), whose work at NASA and perseverance in overcoming racial discrimination provide an authentic opportunity to examine the contributions of Black Americans to United States history and scientific achievement.

**DEI Connections**

- The unit includes biographies of **Katherine Johnson**, who overcame racial and gender barriers at NASA, and **José Hernández**, whose perseverance led him from engineer to astronaut. These texts support discussions of equity, opportunity, perseverance, and the contributions of individuals from diverse backgrounds

## Learning Targets

**Unit Essential Questions:**

- What is the value in space exploration?
- Why do people continue to explore space despite the challenges?
- How have scientific discoveries and technological innovations changed space travel?
- How do authors support claims with evidence?
- How can evidence from multiple texts strengthen an opinion?

**Unit Enduring Understandings:**

- Space exploration has advanced through scientific innovation, perseverance, and the contributions of many individuals.
- Informational texts help readers understand scientific ideas, historical events, and current issues through text structures, reasons, and evidence.
- Authors use evidence to support claims and opinions about complex topics.
- Writers develop effective opinion essays by supporting claims with relevant evidence from multiple sources.

## Learning Objectives

**Students will be able to:**

- Summarize informational texts.
- Explain the main idea and supporting details.
- Compare and explain informational text structures.
- Explain an author's claim using reasons and evidence.
- Compare events across multiple texts.
- Describe point of view and perspective.
- Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues and Greek and Latin word parts.
- Gather and integrate information from multiple sources.
- Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
- Write opinion paragraphs and opinion essays supported with evidence.
- Conduct research using multiple sources.
- Plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish opinion writing.

## Vocabulary

**Unit Vocabulary**

- exploration
- gravity

**Key Vocabulary**

- mission
- orbit
- lunar
- fundamental
- technique
- mastery

**Academic Vocabulary**

- gist statement
- verb
- regular verb
- irregular verb
- main idea

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|---|---|---|
| | • trajectory<br>• calculations<br>• exhilarating<br>• perseverance<br>• engineer<br>• apply<br>• microgravity<br>• aspects<br>• process<br>• astronauts<br>• morale<br>• anticipate<br>• deprived<br>• permanently<br>• temporary<br>• minimum<br>• resemble<br>• lounging<br>• colony<br>• technician<br>• veteran<br>• reassuringly<br>• conceded<br>• briskly<br>• contributing<br>• transport<br>• innovation<br>• miniaturized<br>• automated | • topic<br>• key details<br>• context clues<br>• text structure<br>• cause-effect text structure<br>• sequential text structure<br>• signal words<br>• preposition<br>• prepositional phrase<br>• opinion writing<br>• root<br>• figures of speech<br>• idiom<br>• cause<br>• effect<br>• base word<br>• prefix<br>• suffix<br>• introductory element<br>• compound sentence<br>• complex sentence<br>• argument<br>• claim<br>• reason<br>• evidence<br>• present-tense verb<br>• past-tense verb<br>• future-tense verb<br>• point of view<br>• perspective<br>• first-person point of view<br>• third-person point of view<br>• sequence words<br>• subject<br>• predicate<br>• compound subject<br>• compound predicate |

## Stage 2: Evidence of Student Learning

**Formative Assessments:**

- Close reading and text analysis
- Writer's Craft opinion paragraph activities
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Collaborative Discussions
- Process Writing (Analyze, Plan, Draft, Revise)
- Research project checkpoints
- Vocabulary and language activities
- Teacher observation of discussions and writing

**Summative Assessments:**

- **Unit 2 Assessment**
- **End-of-Unit Writing:** Write a five-paragraph opinion essay explaining why humans should or should not travel to Mars, supporting reasons with evidence from at least two unit texts.
- **Research Project:** Create a poster presenting research about the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, Mary Jackson, or Korolev Crater.

**Common Benchmark Assessments:** iReady Inform, DIBELS 8, iReady Literacy Tasks

## Core Resources and Materials

**Anchor Texts**

- *Packing for Mars* by Mary Roach (Scientific Text)

**Supporting Texts**

- *Race to the Moon...and Beyond* by Andrew Matthews
- *The Path to the Moon* (Timeline)
- *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly
- *A Roadmap to Outer Space* by Kathryn Hulick
- *What Life in Space Is Really Like* by Kathryn Hulick
- *Martian Metropolis* by Meg Thacher
- *The Moon Colony* by Nanette Kalis
- *Ice Hockey on Mars* by Louise Rozett

**Instructional Resources**

- Unit Media
- Writer's Craft lessons
- Collaborative Discussion activities
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Unit 2 Assessment
- Process Writing resources
- Research project materials
- Support & Extend independent reading activities

## Accommodations and Modifications:Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:**

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

Small group/One to one , Additional time

Review of directions, Student restates information, Space for movement or breaks

Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts, Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule

Rest breaks, Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task, Checklists, Immediate feedback

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners**

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts - Personal Glossary - Extended Time - Simplified/Verbal Instructions - Frequent Breaks - Visual learning, including graphic organizers - Use of cognates to increase comprehension - Teacher modeling - Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills - Scaffolding - Word walls - Think-pair-share - Cooperative learning groups

**Students at Risk of Failure**

Home/School Connection

Alternative Assessments - Learning Contracts

Homogeneous Grouping - Supplemental Instruction - Think-Pair-Share by Readiness - Homework Options - Differentiated Online Practice - Leveled Rubrics - Tiered Level of Supports - Tiered Activities - Small Group Instruction - Work Alone Choice - Group Work Choice

**Students with 504 Plans**

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.

504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way.

Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Small group/One to one - Additional time - Review of directions - Student restates information - Space for movement or breaks - Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts - Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule - Rest breaks - Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task - Checklists - Immediate feedback

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students**

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

Homogeneous Grouping - Small Group In-Depth Instruction - Differentiated Online Practice - Alternative Assessments - Pre-Assess to provide Differentiated Instruction to Accelerate Learning

# Unit 3: Freedom Seekers

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Unit 3: Freedom Seekers**

**Unit Summary:** In this six-week unit, students explore the experiences of freedom seekers through historical fiction, biographies, historical accounts, informational texts, and multimedia resources focused on the Underground Railroad, maroon communities, and the abolitionist movement. Students analyze how characters' perspectives influence their actions, compare multiple historical accounts, and examine the contributions of individuals who fought against slavery. The unit culminates in a four-paragraph literary analysis essay explaining how the differing perspectives of Homer and Ada in *Freewater* shape the way they interpret and respond to the events around them, supported by direct textual evidence.

## Unit 1 Learning Targets

**NJSLS Grade 5 ELA**

L.WF.5.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing, including those listed under grade four foundational skills.

- A. Avoid fragments, run-ons and rambling sentences, and comma splices.
- B. Maintain consistency in verb tense; place phrases and clauses; choose between adjectives and adverbs.
- C. Ensure agreement between subject and verb and between pronoun and antecedent.
- D. Distinguish between frequently confused words.
- E. Use idiomatic language and choose words for effect; use punctuating for meaning and effect.
- F. Use punctuation to separate items in a series; use commas in a series of phrases or clauses.
- G. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence; use a comma to set off the words yes and no (e.g., Yes, thank you), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., It's true, isn't it?), and to indicate direct address (e.g., Is that you, Emma?).
- H. Spell grade appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

L.KL.5.1. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

- A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
- B. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
- C. Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.

L.VL.5.2. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning academic and domain-specific words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- A. Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- B. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis).
- C. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

L.VI.5.3. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- A. Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context.

B. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.
C. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words.

RL.CR.5.1. Quote accurately from a literary text when explaining what the text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.CR.5.1. Quote accurately from an informational text when explaining what the text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.CI.5.2. Determine the theme of a literary text (e.g., stories, plays or poetry) and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

RI.CI.5.2. Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

RL.IT.5.3. Analyze the impact of two or more individuals and events throughout the course of a text, comparing and contrasting two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific textual evidence (e.g., how characters interact).

RI.IT.5.3. Analyze the impact of two or more individuals and events throughout the course of a text, explaining the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific evidence in the text.

RI.PP.5.5. Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent and how that may influence the reader's interpretation.

RL.CT.5.8. Compare and contrast the authors' approaches across two or more literary texts within the same genre or about the same or similar topics.

W.IW.5.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

A. Introduce a topic clearly to provide a focus and group related information logically; include text features such as headings, illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aid in comprehension.
B. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
C. Link ideas within paragraphs and sections of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).
D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
E. Provide a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented.

W.WP.5.4. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

A. Consider audience, purpose, and intent before writing.
B. Plan appropriately to use specialized, topic-specific language appropriate for the audience, purpose and subject matter.
C. Consider writing as a process, including self-evaluation, revision and editing.
D. With adult and peer feedback, and digital or print tools such as a dictionary, thesaurus, and/or spell checker, evaluate whether the writing achieved its goal and make changes in content or form as necessary.
E. After initial drafting, expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, audience, and style.

W.RW.5.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

SL.PE.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.

A. Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
B. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

C. Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
D. Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

**Curricular Connections**

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills** *(CLKS)*:

- 9.4.5.CT.1 Evaluate ideas through the use of evidence and reasoning.
- 9.4.5.CI.1 Use appropriate communication techniques to collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives.

**Computer Science & Design Thinking (***CS & DT***):**

- 8.1.5.IC.1 Compare the benefits and tradeoffs of collaborating through digital tools.
- 8.2.5.ED.1 Explain the steps of the design process to solve a problem.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

**NJSLS-Science - 2026**

- 5-LS2-1 Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.
- 5-ESS2-1 Develop a model using an example to describe ways the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact.
- 3-5-ETS1-1 Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes specified criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.

**NJSLS-Social Studies - 2020**

- 6.1.5.HistoryCC.8 Analyze the role of different communities in the abolitionist movement before the Civil War.
- 6.1.5.HistoryCC.9 Evaluate the impact of the abolitionist movement, including the leadership of Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, William Still, and others.
- 6.1.5.HistoryUP.1 Describe how the actions of individuals and groups contributed to historical change.

**Amistad Connection:**

- This unit has a strong and direct Amistad connection. Students examine the institution of slavery, the Underground Railroad, maroon communities, and the abolitionist movement through historical accounts, biographies, informational texts, and historical fiction. Students study the lives and contributions of **Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, William Still**, and other freedom seekers while exploring the experiences of enslaved African Americans.

**DEI Connection**

- Students explore themes of freedom, equality, courage, justice, human rights, resilience, and resistance to oppression through the study of enslaved people, abolitionists, and maroon communities. The unit encourages analysis of multiple perspectives while examining historical inequities and the actions of individuals who fought to expand freedom and justice.

## Learning Targets

**Unit Essential Questions:**

- What does it mean to be free?
- How do different perspectives shape people's actions and decisions?
- How can historical and fictional accounts deepen our understanding of the past?
- Why is it important to examine multiple perspectives?
- How does textual evidence strengthen literary analysis?

**Unit Enduring Understandings:**

- The pursuit of freedom has required courage, perseverance, sacrifice, and the support of others.
- Historical and literary texts help readers understand different perspectives about the same events.
- Characters' perspectives influence their decisions, actions, and responses to challenges.
- Writers strengthen literary analysis by comparing characters and supporting ideas with direct textual evidence.

## Learning Objectives

**Students will be able to:**

- Describe point of view and perspective.
- Compare characters and their perspectives.
- Analyze multiple historical accounts.
- Explain the main idea of informational texts.
- Summarize informational and literary texts.
- Make inferences using textual evidence.
- Analyze figurative language.
- Compare stories and settings.
- Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues and Greek and Latin word parts.
- Gather information from multiple sources.
- Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
- Write explanatory paragraphs.
- Write a literary analysis comparing characters' perspectives.
- Plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish explanatory writing.

## Vocabulary

**Unit Vocabulary**

- Underground Railroad
- abolition

**Key Vocabulary**

- rights
- amendments
- conductors
- participants
- opposed
- reunited
- preserved

**Academic Vocabulary**

- gist statement
- main idea
- topic
- key details
- conjunction
- preposition
- author's perspective

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| | • perils<br>• elderly<br>• assumed<br>• casual<br>• suspicious<br>• presence<br>• station<br>• hesitated<br>• capture<br>• elements<br>• caution<br>• remote<br>• altered<br>• churning<br>• muttered<br>• lodged<br>• trickle<br>• cocked<br>• braced<br>• thicket<br>• gasped<br>• sprang<br>• slithered<br>• amber<br>• trackers<br>• patrols<br>• latched<br>• swell<br>• etched<br>• remember<br>• herbs<br>• quarters<br>• sling<br>• exhale | • account<br>• firsthand account<br>• secondhand account<br>• base word<br>• prefix<br>• suffix<br>• subject<br>• verb<br>• agree<br>• intervening phrase<br>• paragraph<br>• explanatory paragraph<br>• historical fiction<br>• perspective<br>• first-person point of view<br>• third-person point of view<br>• character trait<br>• pronouns<br>• antecedents<br>• figurative language<br>• simile<br>• metaphor<br>• theme<br>• noun of direct address<br>• comma<br>• linking words<br>• phrases<br>• clauses<br>• flashback<br>• setting<br>• mood<br>• personification<br>• character<br>• direct quotation<br>• literary analysis<br>• precise language |

## Stage 2: Evidence of Student Learning

**Formative Assessments:**

- Close reading and text analysis activities
- Writer's Craft explanatory paragraph lessons
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Collaborative Discussions
- Process Writing (Analyze, Plan, Draft, Revise)
- Vocabulary and language practice
- Teacher observation of discussions and writing

**Summative Assessments:**

- Unit 3 Assessment
- End-of-Unit Writing: Write a four-paragraph literary analysis explaining how Homer and Ada's differing perspectives influence the way they discuss what is happening around them in *Freewater*. Students must support their analysis with at least one direct quotation from each character.

**Common Benchmark Assessments:** iReady Inform, DIBELS 8, iReady Literacy Tasks

## Core Resources and Materials

**Anchor Texts**

- *Freewater by Amina Luqman-Dawson (Historical Fiction)*

**Supporting Texts**

- *Liberty and Justice for All* by Emma Margrey
- *All Aboard the Underground Railroad* by Spencer R. Crew
- *William Still's Legacy* by James Oliver Horton
- *The Underground Railroad* by William Still
- *Original Abolitionists* (Video)
- *A Letter to Harriet Tubman* by Frederick Douglass
- *A Woman Called Moses* by Barbara Greenwood
- *North by Night* by Katherine Ayres
- *Eliza's Freedom Road* by Jerdine Nolen
- *The Great Dismal Swamp* by Laura Dershewitz
- *Uncovering the Great Dismal Swamp* (Video)

**Classroom Resources**

- Unit Media
- Writer's Craft lessons
- Collaborative Discussion activities
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Unit 3 Assessment
- Process Writing resources
- Support & Extend independent reading activities

**Accommodations and Modifications:**
**Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,**
**Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students**

- **Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:**
- Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.
- Small group/One to one - Additional time - Review of directions - Student restates information - Space for movement or breaks - Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts - Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule - Rest breaks - Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task - Checklists - Immediate feedback
- **Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners**
- English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.
- Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts - Personal Glossary - Extended Time - Simplified/Verbal Instructions - Frequent Breaks - Visual learning, including graphic organizers - Use of cognates to increase comprehension - Teacher modeling - Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills - Scaffolding - Word walls - Think-pair-share - Cooperative learning groups
- **Students at Risk of Failure**
- Home/School Connection - Alternative Assessments - Learning Contracts - Homogenous Grouping - Supplemental Instruction - Think-Pair-Share by Readiness - Homework Options - Differentiated Online Practice - Leveled Rubrics - Tiered Level of Supports - Tiered Activities - Small Group Instruction - Work Alone Choice - Group Work Choice
- **Students with 504 Plans**
- Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
- 504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.
- Small group/One to one - Additional time - Review of directions - Student restates information - Space for movement or breaks - Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts - Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule - Rest breaks - Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task - Checklists - Immediate feedback
- **Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students**
- It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.
- Homogeneous Grouping - Small Group In-Depth Instruction - Differentiated Online Practice - Alternative Assessments - Pre-Assess to provide Differentiated Instruction to Accelerate Learning

# Unit 4: The Beauty of Rot

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Unit 4: The Beauty of Rot**

**Unit Summary:** In this six-week unit, students investigate the process of decomposition and the essential role decomposers and scavengers play in maintaining healthy ecosystems. Through scientific texts, biographies, poetry, visual texts, and realistic fiction, students integrate information from multiple sources to explain how fungi, worms, and other organisms recycle nutrients and sustain life. The unit culminates in a multimedia research presentation in which students explain how either fungi or composting worms contribute to a healthy ecosystem using evidence from multiple texts and an additional research source.

## Unit 1 Learning Targets

**NJSLS Grade 5 ELA**

L.RF.5.3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words; use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.

L.RF.5.4. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

A. Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
B. Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.
C. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

L.WF.5.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing, including those listed under grade four foundational skills.

I. Avoid fragments, run-ons and rambling sentences, and comma splices.
J. Maintain consistency in verb tense; place phrases and clauses; choose between adjectives and adverbs.
K. Ensure agreement between subject and verb and between pronoun and antecedent.
L. Distinguish between frequently confused words.
M. Use idiomatic language and choose words for effect; use punctuating for meaning and effect.
N. Use punctuation to separate items in a series; use commas in a series of phrases or clauses.
O. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence; use a comma to set off the words yes and no (e.g., Yes, thank you), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., It's true, isn't it?), and to indicate direct address (e.g., Is that you, Emma?).
P. Spell grade appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

L.KL.5.1. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
B. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
C. Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.

L.VL.5.2. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning academic and domain-specific words and phrases based on grade 5

reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
B. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis).
C. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

L.VI.5.3. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context.
B. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.
C. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words.

RI.CR.5.1. Quote accurately from an informational text when explaining what the text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.CI.5.2. Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

RI.IT.5.3. Analyze the impact of two or more individuals and events throughout the course of a text, explaining the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific evidence in the text.

RI.TS.5.4. Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

RI.MF.5.6. Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, animations, or interactive elements on web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

RI.AA.5.7. Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

RI.CT.5.8. Compare and contrast the authors' approaches across two or more informational texts within the same genre or about texts on the same or similar topics.

W.IW.5.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

A. Introduce a topic clearly to provide a focus and group related information logically; include text features such as headings, illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aid in comprehension.
B. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
C. Link ideas within paragraphs and sections of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).
D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
E. Provide a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented.

W.WP.5.4. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

A. Consider audience, purpose, and intent before writing.
B. Plan appropriately to use specialized, topic-specific language appropriate for the audience, purpose and subject matter.
C. Consider writing as a process, including self-evaluation, revision and editing.
D. With adult and peer feedback, and digital or print tools such as a dictionary, thesaurus, and/or spell checker, evaluate whether the writing achieved its goal and make changes in content or form as necessary.

E. After initial drafting, expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, audience, and style.

W.WR.5.5. Establish a central idea about a topic, investigation, issue or event and use several sources to support the proposed central idea.

W.SE.5.6. Gather relevant information from multiple valid and reliable print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, making note of any similarities and differences among ideas presented; and provide a list of sources.

W.RW.5.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

SL.PE.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.

A. Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
B. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
C. Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
D. Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

**Curricular Connections**

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills** *(CLKS)***:**

- 9.4.5.CT.1 Evaluate ideas through the use of evidence and reasoning.
- 9.4.5.RI.1 Use research to examine a topic and communicate conclusions.

**Computer Science & Design Thinking (***CS & DT***):**

- 8.1.5.IC.1 Compare the benefits and tradeoffs of collaborating through digital tools.
- 8.2.5.ED.1 Explain the steps of the design process to solve a problem.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

**NJSLS - Science 2026**

- 5-LS2-1 Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.
- 5-LS1-1 Support an argument that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water.
- 5-ESS2-1 Develop a model using an example to describe ways the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact.
- 3-5-ETS1-1 Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes specified criteria for success and constraints.

## Learning Targets

**Unit Essential Questions:**

- How does decomposition benefit the natural world?
- Why are decomposers and scavengers essential to healthy ecosystems?
- How does integrating information from multiple sources improve understanding?
- How do scientists communicate information using different text structures?
- Why is it important to use credible sources when conducting research?

**Unit Enduring Understandings:**

- Decomposition is an essential natural process that supports healthy ecosystems.
- Decomposers and scavengers recycle nutrients that sustain plant and animal life.
- Readers integrate information from multiple scientific texts and media to deepen their understanding of scientific concepts.
- Researchers strengthen informational writing by gathering, organizing, and citing evidence from multiple credible sources.

## Learning Objectives

**Students will be able to:**

- Integrate information from multiple texts and multimedia sources.
- Make inferences using scientific texts.
- Identify and explain main ideas and key details.
- Compare and analyze text structures.
- Explain figurative language in informational texts and poetry.
- Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues and reference materials.
- Gather and organize information from multiple sources.
- Conduct research using credible sources.
- Cite sources appropriately.
- Summarize scientific information.
- Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
- Create and deliver a multimedia presentation explaining a scientific concept.
- Plan, draft, revise, and publish research writing.

## Vocabulary

**Unit Vocabulary**

- scavenger
- decomposers
- ecosystem

**Key Vocabulary**

- organisms
- nutrients
- bacteria
- biodiversity
- revolting
- cycle
- anaerobic

**Academic Vocabulary**

- gist statement
- relationship
- cause-effect
- sequential
- cause-effect relationship
- sequential relationship
- integrate

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • carcass<br>• larvae<br>• prey<br>• biologists<br>• adapted<br>• habitat<br>• cunning<br>• preservatives<br>• contaminated<br>• pesticides<br>• morel<br>• duff<br>• cauled<br>• mycologist<br>• species<br>• tissue<br>• colonies<br>• toxic<br>• essential<br>• organic<br>• undernourished<br>• transform<br>• superefficient<br>• non-native<br>• probiotics<br>• antibiotic<br>• diverting<br>• intervention<br>• deluge<br>• compost<br>• fertilizer<br>• biodegradable<br>• excavate<br>• archaeologist | • research<br>• sources<br>• search term<br>• credible sources<br>• cause-effect text structure<br>• descriptive text structure<br>• problem-solution text structure<br>• context clues<br>• imagery<br>• key details<br>• main idea<br>• paraphrase<br>• source<br>• text features<br>• topic<br>• sequential text structure<br>• perfect verb tenses<br>• slideshow<br>• synonym<br>• text structures<br>• theme |

## Stage 2: Evidence of Student Learning

**Formative Assessments:**

- Close reading and scientific text analysis
- Writer's Craft informational writing activities
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Collaborative Discussions
- Research project checkpoints
- Process Writing (Analyze, Plan, Draft, Revise)
- Vocabulary and language activities
- Teacher observation of research, discussions, and writing

**Summative Assessments:**

- **Unit 4 Assessment**
- **Unit Research Project**
- **End-of-Unit Writing:** Create a multimedia presentation explaining how either fungi or composting worms contribute to a healthy ecosystem by integrating information from *Rotten*, one additional unit text, and one research source.

**Common Benchmark Assessments:** iReady Inform, DIBELS 8, iReady Literacy Tasks

## Core Resources and Materials

**Anchor Texts**

- *Rotten by Anita Sanchez (Scientific Text)*

**Supporting Texts**

- *Healthy Ecosystems* by Meredith Phillips
- *Jackals: Nature's Cleanup Crew* by Sandra Markle
- *First Morel* by Amy Fleury
- *Adventures of a Mycologist* by Janice N. Harrington
- *Talented Fungi* by Charlene Brusso
- *Stages of a Whale Fall* by Enzo Cruz
- *Living in the Dark* by Cheryl Bardoe
- *The Decomposition of Jack* by Kristin O'Donnell Tubb
- *Working Worms* by Corbie Hill
- *Decomposition Infographic* (Photographs)

**Instructional Resources**

- Unit Media
- Writer's Craft lessons
- Collaborative Discussion activities
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Unit 4 Assessment
- Unit Research Project
- Process Writing resources
- Support & Extend independent reading act

## Accommodations and Modifications:
## Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,
## Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:**

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

Small group/One to one - Additional time - Review of directions - Student restates information - Space for movement or breaks - Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts - Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule - Rest breaks - Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task - Checklists - Immediate feedback

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners**

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts - Personal Glossary - Extended Time - Simplified/Verbal Instructions - Frequent Breaks - Visual learning, including graphic organizers - Use of cognates to increase comprehension - Teacher modeling - Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills - Scaffolding - Word walls - Think-pair-share - Cooperative learning groups, sentence frames

**Students at Risk of Failure**

Home/School Connection - Alternative Assessments - Learning Contracts - Homogenous Grouping - Supplemental Instruction - Think-Pair-Share by Readiness - Homework Options - Differentiated Online Practice - Leveled Rubrics - Tiered Level of Supports - Tiered Activities - Small Group Instruction - Work Alone Choice - Group Work Choice

**Students with 504 Plans**

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.

504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Small group/One to one - Additional time - Review of directions - Student restates information - Space for movement or breaks - Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts - Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule - Rest breaks - Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task - Checklists - Immediate feedback

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students**

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

Homogeneous Grouping - Small Group In-Depth Instruction - Differentiated Online Practice - Alternative Assessments - Pre-Assess to provide Differentiated Instruction to Accelerate Learning

Supplemental Reading - engaging projects

# Unit 5: The Hero's Journey

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Unit 5: The Hero's Journey**

**Unit Summary:** In this six-week unit, students explore the Hero's Journey, a common narrative structure found across fantasy, drama, poetry, and mythology. Through a variety of literary texts, students analyze story structure, character perspective, figurative language, imagery, and theme while comparing how heroes are transformed through their experiences. The unit culminates in students writing an original narrative that follows the Hero's Journey structure and incorporates descriptive language, figurative language, dialogue, and a clear sequence of events.

## Unit 1 Learning Targets

**NJSLS Grade 5 ELA**

L.WF.5.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing, including those listed under grade four foundational skills.

A. Avoid fragments, run-ons and rambling sentences, and comma splices.
B. Maintain consistency in verb tense; place phrases and clauses; choose between adjectives and adverbs.
C. Ensure agreement between subject and verb and between pronoun and antecedent.
D. Distinguish between frequently confused words.
E. Use idiomatic language and choose words for effect; use punctuating for meaning and effect.
F. Use punctuation to separate items in a series; use commas in a series of phrases or clauses.
G. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence; use a comma to set off the words yes and no (e.g., Yes, thank you), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., It's true, isn't it?), and to indicate direct address (e.g., Is that you, Emma?).
H. Spell grade appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

L.KL.5.1. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
B. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
C. Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.

L.VL.5.2. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning academic and domain-specific words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

A. Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
B. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis).
C. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

L.VI.5.3. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context.
B. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.

C. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words.

RL.CR.5.1. Quote accurately from a literary text when explaining what the text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.CI.5.2. Determine the theme of a literary text (e.g., stories, plays or poetry) and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

RL.IT.5.3. Analyze the impact of two or more individuals and events throughout the course of a text, comparing and contrasting two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific textual evidence (e.g., how characters interact).

RL.TS.5.4. Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

RL.PP.5.5. Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described, and how that may influence the reader's interpretation.

RL.MF.5.6. Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

RL.CT.5.8. Compare and contrast the authors' approaches across two or more literary texts within the same genre or about the same or similar topics.

W.NW.5.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

A. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
C. Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
D. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
E. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

W.WP.5.4. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

A. Consider audience, purpose, and intent before writing.
B. Plan appropriately to use specialized, topic-specific language appropriate for the audience, purpose and subject matter.
C. Consider writing as a process, including self-evaluation, revision and editing.
D. With adult and peer feedback, and digital or print tools such as a dictionary, thesaurus, and/or spell checker, evaluate whether the writing achieved its goal and make changes in content or form as necessary.
E. After initial drafting, expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, audience, and style.

W.RW.5.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

SL.PE.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.

A. Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
B. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
C. Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
D. Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

## Curricular Connections

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills** *(CLKS)*:

- 9.4.5.CT.1 Evaluate ideas through the use of evidence and reasoning.
- 9.4.5.CI.1 Use appropriate communication techniques to collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives.

**Computer Science & Design Thinking** ***(****CS & DT****)*:

- 8.2.5.ED.1 Explain the steps of the design process to solve a problem.
- 8.1.5.IC.1 Compare the benefits and tradeoffs of collaborating through digital tools.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

**NJSLS Social Studies 2020**

- 6.1.5.HistoryCC.1 Analyze the contributions of cultures, civilizations, and historical figures reflected in myths, legends, and traditional stories.
- 6.1.5.HistoryUP.2 Compare how different societies have used stories, legends, and traditions to communicate values and beliefs.

**AAPI Connection**

- The anchor text, ***Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*** by **Grace Lin**, is inspired by Chinese folklore and mythology. Students explore literary elements, the Hero's Journey, and themes through a work rooted in Chinese cultural traditions, providing an authentic opportunity to recognize Asian cultural heritage and storytelling tradition

**DEI Connections:**

- The unit includes literature representing diverse cultures and perspectives, including **Chinese folklore** (*Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*), **Greek mythology** (*The Minotaur*), and contemporary fantasy from Nigerian author **Suyi Davies Okungbowa** (*Five Thousand Light-Years to Home*). Comparing these texts helps students recognize how cultures around the world use stories to communicate universal themes of courage, perseverance, and personal growth.

## Learning Targets

**Unit Essential Questions:**

- How is a hero transformed?
- What characteristics define a hero?
- How does the Hero's Journey shape a story?
- How do figurative language and imagery strengthen narratives?
- How do authors develop characters and themes through story structure?

**Unit Enduring Understandings:**

- The Hero's Journey is a universal story structure found across literary genres.
- Figurative language, imagery, dialogue, and descriptive language help develop characters, setting, mood, and theme.
- Comparing literary texts helps readers recognize common story structures and themes.
- Writers use narrative techniques and the writing process to create engaging fictional stories.

## Learning Objectives

**Students will be able to:**

- Explain drama structure.
- Explain poetic structure.

- Explain story structure.
- Explain theme.
- Explain figurative language.
- Summarize literary texts.
- Compare stories and events.
- Describe point of view and perspective.
- Analyze visual and multimedia elements.
- Use context clues and Greek and Latin word parts to determine word meaning.
- Use precise vocabulary, dialogue, and descriptive language in narrative writing.
- Write narrative paragraphs and an original Hero's Journey narrative.
- Plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish narrative writing.
- Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.

| Vocabulary | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Unit Vocabulary**<br>• hero<br>• transform<br>• trial | **Key Vocabulary**<br>• mythology<br>• mentors<br>• alter<br>• sympathetically<br>• tiresome<br>• hesitantly<br>• fierce<br>• invisible<br>• momentary<br>• exceptionally<br>• appeal<br>• fearless<br>• bounding<br>• plight<br>• fiend<br>• fascinated<br>• descend<br>• stealthily<br>• dumbfounded<br>• equation<br>• deduced | **Academic Vocabulary**<br>• gist statement<br>• drama<br>• scene<br>• setting<br>• stage directions<br>• dialogue<br>• modal<br>• root<br>• perspective<br>• interjection<br>• plot<br>• exposition<br>• rising action<br>• climax<br>• falling action<br>• resolution<br>• poetry<br>• rhythm<br>• ballad<br>• line<br>• rhyme scheme |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • engulfed<br>• fruitless<br>• meager<br>• grueling<br>• painstakingly<br>• despaired<br>• shimmering<br>• unreasonable<br>• landscape<br>• malicious<br>• disrupting<br>• cowered<br>• faltered<br>• reflection<br>• grimace<br>• awe<br>• exhaustion<br>• fragrance<br>• gorge<br>• chagrined<br>• bamboo<br>• expectantly<br>• unyielding<br>• translucent<br>• luminous | • stanza<br>• figurative language<br>• simile<br>• metaphor<br>• alliteration<br>• personification<br>• hyperbole<br>• perfect verb tenses<br>• present perfect tense<br>• past perfect tense<br>• future perfect tense<br>• narrative writing<br>• transitional words<br>• phrases<br>• clauses<br>• characters<br>• theme<br>• fantasy<br>• story elements<br>• story structure<br>• context clues<br>• narrative elements<br>• imagery<br>• mood<br>• first-person point of view<br>• third-person point of view<br>• modifier<br>• adjectives<br>• adverbs<br>• descriptive language<br>• character's perspective<br>• base word<br>• prefix/ suffix<br>• visual<br>• visual element<br>• homographs<br>• tag question<br>• noun of direct address |

## Stage 2: Evidence of Student Learning

**Formative Assessments:**

- Close reading and literary analysis
- Writer's Craft narrative writing lessons
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Collaborative Discussions
- Process Writing (Analyze, Plan, Draft, Revise)
- Vocabulary and language activities
- Teacher observation of reading discussions and narrative writing

**Summative Assessments:**

- **Unit 5 Assessment**
- **End-of-Unit Writing:** Write an original Hero's Journey narrative that follows the narrative structure studied during the unit and includes descriptive language, figurative language, and dialogue to develop events and characters' responses to situations.

**Common Benchmark Assessments:**

- I-Ready Inform
- iREady Literacy Tasks
- DIBELS

## Core Instructional Materials

**Anchor Texts**

- *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin (Fantasy)*

**Supporting Texts**

- *The Hero Handbook* by Matt Langdon
- *The Hero's Journey* (Infographic)
- *The Wizard of Oz* (adapted by Frances Mapp)
- *The Monster of the Woods* by Alexandra Alessandri
- *The Minotaur* by Rachael M. Nicholas
- *Five Thousand Light-Years to Home* by Suyi Davies Okungbow

**Instructional Resources**

- Unit Media
- Writer's Craft lessons
- Collaborative Discussion activities
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Unit 5 Assessment
- Process Writing resources (Analyze, Plan, Draft, Revise, Publish)
- Support & Extend independent reading activities

## Accommodations and Modifications:
## Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,
## Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:**

Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

Small group/One to one - Additional time - Review of directions - Student restates information - Space for movement or breaks - Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts - Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule - Rest breaks - Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task - Checklists - Immediate feedback

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners**

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

Pre-teaching of vocabulary and concepts - Personal Glossary - Extended Time - Simplified/Verbal Instructions - Frequent Breaks - Visual learning, including graphic organizers - Use of cognates to increase comprehension - Teacher modeling - Pairing students with beginning English language skills with students who have more advanced English language skills - Scaffolding - Word walls - Think-pair-share - Cooperative learning groups

**Students at Risk of Failure**

Home/School Connection - Alternative Assessments - Learning Contracts - Homogenous Grouping - Supplemental Instruction - Think-Pair-Share by Readiness - Homework Options - Differentiated Online Practice - Leveled Rubrics - Tiered Level of Supports - Tiered Activities - Small Group Instruction - Work Alone Choice - Group Work Choice

**Students with 504 Plans**

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student’s 504 Plan.

504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way. Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

Small group/One to one - Additional time - Review of directions - Student restates information - Space for movement or breaks - Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts - Preferential seating - Follow a routine/schedule - Rest breaks - Verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task - Checklists - Immediate feedback

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students**

It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

Homogeneous Grouping - Small Group In-Depth Instruction - Differentiated Online Practice - Alternative Assessments - Pre-Assess to provide Differentiated Instruction to Accelerate Learning

# Unit 6: Cracking the Code

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Unit 6: Cracking the Code**

**Unit Summary:** In this six-week unit, students explore how codes, ciphers, and encryption have been used throughout history to protect information, influence historical events, and shape modern communication. Through historical accounts, biographies, arguments, firsthand accounts, poetry, infographics, and expository texts, students investigate the work of codemakers and codebreakers while analyzing reasons and evidence, text structure, theme, and author's perspective. The unit culminates in a five-paragraph opinion essay in which students argue which code studied in the unit had the greatest impact on history, supporting their claim with evidence from multiple texts and at least one research source.

## Unit 1 Learning Targets

**NJSLS Grade 5 ELA**

L.WF.5.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing, including those listed under grade four foundational skills.

- A. Avoid fragments, run-ons and rambling sentences, and comma splices.
- B. Maintain consistency in verb tense; place phrases and clauses; choose between adjectives and adverbs.
- C. Ensure agreement between subject and verb and between pronoun and antecedent.
- D. Distinguish between frequently confused words.
- E. Use idiomatic language and choose words for effect; use punctuating for meaning and effect.
- F. Use punctuation to separate items in a series; use commas in a series of phrases or clauses.
- G. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence; use a comma to set off the words yes and no (e.g., Yes, thank you), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., It's true, isn't it?), and to indicate direct address (e.g., Is that you, Emma?).
- H. Spell grade appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

L.KL.5.1. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

- A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
- B. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
- C. Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.

L.VL.5.2. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning academic and domain-specific words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- A. Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- B. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis).
- C. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

L.VI.5.3. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context.
B. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.
C. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words.

RI.CR.5.1. Quote accurately from an informational text when explaining what the text says explicitly and make relevant connections when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.CI.5.2. Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

RI.IT.5.3. Analyze the impact of two or more individuals and events throughout the course of a text, explaining the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific evidence in the text.

RI.TS.5.4. Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

RI.PP.5.5. Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent and how that may influence the reader's interpretation.

RI.MF.5.6. Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, animations, or interactive elements on web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

RI.AA.5.7. Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

RI.CT.5.8. Compare and contrast the authors' approaches across two or more informational texts within the same genre or about texts on the same or similar topics.

W.AW.5.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
opportunity to integrate climate change education.

A. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose.
B. Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details from text(s), quote directly from text when appropriate.
C. Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., consequently, specifically).
D. Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.

W.WP.5.4. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

A. Consider audience, purpose, and intent before writing.
B. Plan appropriately to use specialized, topic-specific language appropriate for the audience, purpose and subject matter.
C. Consider writing as a process, including self-evaluation, revision and editing.
D. With adult and peer feedback, and digital or print tools such as a dictionary, thesaurus, and/or spell checker, evaluate whether the writing achieved its goal and make changes in content or form as necessary.
E. After initial drafting, expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, audience, and style.

W.WR.5.5. Establish a central idea about a topic, investigation, issue or event and use several sources to support the proposed central idea.

W.SE.5.6. Gather relevant information from multiple valid and reliable print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, making note of any similarities and differences among ideas presented; and provide a list of sources.

W.RW.5.7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
SL.PE.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.

A. Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
B. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
C. Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
D. Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

## Curricular Connections

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills** *(CLKS)*:

- 9.4.5.CT.1 Evaluate ideas through the use of evidence and reasoning.
- 9.4.5.CI.1 Use appropriate communication techniques to collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives.

**Computer Science & Design Thinking** *(CS & DT)*:

- 8.1.5.DA.1 Collect, organize, and visually represent data to highlight relationships and support a claim.
- 8.1.5.IC.1 Compare the benefits and tradeoffs of collaborating through digital tools.
- 8.2.5.ED.1 Explain the steps of the design process to solve a problem.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

**NJSLS Science 2026**

- 3-5-ETS1-1 Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes specified criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.
- 3-5-ETS1-2 Generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on how well each is likely to meet the criteria and constraints.
- 3-5-ETS1-3 Plan and carry out fair tests in which variables are controlled and failure points are considered to identify aspects of a model or prototype that can be improved.

**NJSLS Social Studies 2020**

- 6.1.5.HistoryCC.13 Analyze the effects of technological innovations on society and historical events.
- 6.1.5.HistoryUP.2 Describe how science, technology, and innovation affected the development of the United States.
- 6.1.5.CivicsHR.1 Explain how democratic principles influence the development of rules and laws that protect individual rights.

**DEI Connection:**

- Students study the contributions of the **Navajo Code Talkers**, including firsthand and secondhand accounts of their service during World War II. These texts provide an authentic opportunity to recognize the contributions of Indigenous peoples to United States history while examining themes of service, perseverance, cultural identity, and recognition.

## Learning Targets

| **Unit Essential Questions:** | **Unit Enduring Understandings:** |
|---|---|
| • Why do people use coded messages? | • Codes and ciphers have been used throughout history to protect information, influence historical events, and support communication. |

| | |
|---|---|
| • How have codes shaped history and communication?<br>• What makes a code successful?<br>• How do authors support claims with reasons and evidence?<br>• How can evidence from multiple sources strengthen an opinion? | • Authors support claims with reasons and evidence that readers evaluate critically.<br>• Reading multiple informational texts helps readers understand different perspectives about a topic.<br>• Opinion writing is strengthened by using evidence from multiple texts and research sources. |

## Learning Objectives

**Students will be able to:**

- Explain reasons and evidence.
- Explain main ideas.
- Summarize informational texts.
- Compare informational text structures.
- Analyze multiple accounts.
- Analyze an author's perspective.
- Explain figurative language and theme.
- Determine word meaning using context clues and Greek and Latin word parts.
- Gather information from multiple sources.
- Use text evidence to support ideas.
- Write opinion paragraphs and opinion essays.
- Plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish opinion writing.
- Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.

## Vocabulary

| Unit Vocab | Key Vocab | Academic Vocab |
|---|---|---|
| • cryptography<br>• encryption<br>• decryption<br>• intercept | • authenticated<br>• confidential<br>• cybersecurity<br>• prying<br>• exposed<br>• random<br>• variables<br>• corresponding<br>• substitute<br>• objective<br>• replica<br>• revolutionized<br>• telegraph<br>• transcribed | • gist statement<br>• descriptive text structure<br>• compare-contrast text structure<br>• cause-effect relationship<br>• sequential relationship<br>• argument<br>• claim<br>• reason<br>• evidence<br>• introductory element<br>• opinion writing<br>• linking words and phrases<br>• topic<br>• main idea |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • devised<br>• erupted<br>• recruits<br>• fluently<br>• enlisted<br>• recognition<br>• relay<br>• seldom<br>• nourished<br>• courier<br>• precise<br>• configure<br>• covert<br>• jeopardize<br>• vital<br>• clandestine<br>• devastating<br>• invaluable<br>• icons<br>• pictographic<br>• problematic<br>• clarity<br>• informal<br>• infrastructure<br>• generate<br>• infinite | • key details<br>• firsthand account<br>• secondhand account<br>• theme<br>• summarize<br>• problem-solution text structure<br>• verbal<br>• gerund<br>• participle<br>• participle phrase<br>• perspective<br>• modifier<br>• adjectives<br>• adverbs<br>• correlative conjunctions |

## Stage 2: Evidence of Student Learning

**Formative Assessments:**

- Close reading and informational text analysis
- Writer's Craft opinion paragraph lessons
- Module 1 Assessment
- Module 2 Assessment
- Collaborative Discussions
- Process Writing (Analyze, Plan, Draft, Revise)
- Vocabulary and language activities
- Teacher observation of reading, discussions, and writing

**Summative Assessments:**

- **Unit 6 Assessment**
- **End-of-Unit Writing:** Write a five-paragraph opinion essay explaining which code studied during the unit was the most world-changing, using evidence from unit texts and at least one research source to support the opinion.

**Common Benchmark Assessments:** iReady Inform, DIBELS 8, iReady Literacy Tasks

| Core Instructional & Supplemental Materials | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Anchor Texts**<br>• *Crack the Code by Ella Schwartz (Historical Account)* | **Supporting Texts**<br>• *On the Case by Mary Alexandra Agner*<br>• *The Caesar Code (Infographic)*<br>• *Wartime Wires by Anna Levine*<br>• *Mission: Navajo Code by Alysa Landry*<br>• *A Code Talker Talks (Library of Congress)*<br>• *A Code Talker's Legacy by Laura Tohe*<br>• *"Half-Light" by Laura Tohe*<br>• *Codebreaker Elizebeth Smith Friedman by Rachel Kehoe*<br>• *Express Yourself with Emojis by Kelsey Jacobs*<br>• *Leave the Emojis Behind by Marie Richards* | **Instructional Resources**<br>• Unit Media<br>• Writer's Craft lessons<br>• Collaborative Discussion activities<br>• Module 1 Assessment<br>• Module 2 Assessment<br>• Unit 6 Assessment<br>• Process Writing resources (Analyze, Plan, Draft, Revise, Publish)<br>• Support & Extend independent reading activities |

**Accommodations and Modifications:**
**Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners,**
**Students at Risk of Failure, Students with 504s, Gifted & Talented Students**

**Suggested Strategies and Practices that Support Students with Disabilities:**
Students receiving Special Education programming have specific goals and objectives, as well as accommodations and modifications outlined within their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) due to an identified disability and/or diagnosis. In addition to exposure to the general education curriculum, the instruction is differentiated based upon the student's needs. The IEP acts as a supplemental curriculum guide inclusive of instructional strategies that support each learner.

- Follow All IEP Modifications
- Articulation videos (iReady Teacher Toolbox)
- Classroom Visuals (Vowel Valley, Sound Walls)

- Personal Visuals (ex. Sound Spelling Cards, Articulation Cards, personal sound wall)
- Introduce Key Vocabulary Before Lesson
- Teacher Reads Aloud Daily
- Choral Reading
- Chants, Songs (ex: The Vowel Song on Youtube)
- Small Group Instruction- Guided Reading and Guided Writing
- Flexible Grouping
- Use Books On Tape (Listening Center)
- Allow Extra Time To Complete Assignments Or Tests
- Allow Answers To Be Given Orally Or Dictated
- Provide Picture Instructions
- Provide brain breaks
- Use a strong student as a "buddy"

**Suggested Strategies and Practices that Support English Language Learners:**

English language learner (ELL) is a national-origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

- Articulation videos (iReady Teacher Toolbox)
- Classroom Visuals (Vowel Valley, Sound Walls)
- Personal Visuals (ex. Sound Spelling Cards, Articulation Cards, personal sound wall)
- Gesturing
- Teacher Modeling
- Roleplay
- Simplified Language / Teacher Talk / Thinking Aloud
- Introduce Key Vocabulary Before Lesson (ex: words from the theme Friendship with pictures)
- Picture Directions

**Students At Risk of Failure:**

- Home/School Connection
- Articulation videos (iReady Teacher Toolbox)
- Classroom Visuals (Vowel Valley, Sound Walls)
- Personal Visuals (ex. Sound Spelling Cards, Articulation Cards, personal sound wall)
- Provide Immediate Praise And Feedback
- Provide High Interest Topics
- Use a strong student as a "buddy"
- Multisensory Instruction (sky writing, sand, bumpy/scratchy paper short vowels)
- Use Audio Books
- Allow Extra Time To Complete Assignments Or Tests
- Work In A Small Group
- One On One Instruction

**Students with 504 Plans:**

Teachers are responsible for implementing designated services and strategies identified on a student's 504 Plan.
504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids the support they need and covers any condition that limits daily activities in a major way.
Students' accommodations are outlined in their individual 504 plan.

- Articulation videos (iReady Teacher Toolbox)
- Classroom Visuals (Vowel Valley, Sound Walls)
- Personal Visuals (ex. Sound Spelling Cards, Articulation Cards, personal sound wall)
- Provide Picture Instructions
- Small Group Instruction- Guided Reading and Guided Writing
- Allow Extra Time To Complete Assignments Or Tests
- Allowing For Additional Wait Time For Student Responses During Conversations
- Provide Fidget Tools
- Flexible Seating
- Chunk Assignments
- Positive Reinforcement

**Specific Strategies and Practices that Support Gifted & Talented Students:**
It is critical that all teachers are able to recognize a high-ability student who may need more depth and complexity in instruction.

- Encourage Upper Level Intellectual Behavior Based On Bloom's Taxonomy
- Do Not Always Be Explicit, Allow For Discovery (ex. give students word cards and have them sort the words by looking for their own patterns)
- Group Students According To Ability Or Interest
- Propose Interest-based Extension Activities
- Use Leveled Texts And Offer An Advanced Reader Reading List
- Use Varied Modes Of Pre-assessment And Assessment
- Provide Whole Group Enrichment Explorations
- Provide Options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Teach Cognitive and Methodological Skills
- Use Center, Stations, Or Contracts (ex. roll and read fluency center with short vowel words