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ELA GRADE LEVEL OVERVIEW

GRADE 7

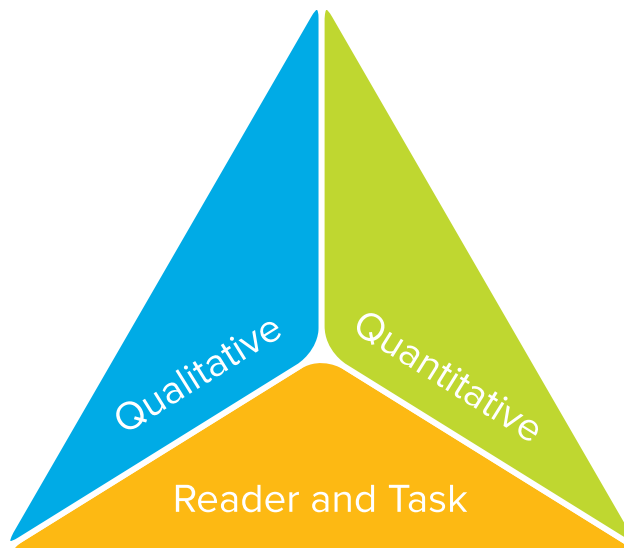


INTRODUCTION | GRADE 7

The Grade 7 Core ELA Units take students through literary and informational texts that explore individuals facing crucial decisions, learning from their responses, becoming a better version of themselves. Unit 1, Conflicts and Clashes, examines how differences can become conflicts. Unit 2, Highs and Lows, focuses on relationships and asks the Essential Question: What do we learn from love and loss? Unit 3, Chasing the Impossible, asks students to consider what makes a dream worth pursuing, while Unit 4, Moment of Truth, asks students to consider the unit’s driving question—How can one event change everything?—by providing a range of texts that examine individuals whose lives changed from one decision, action, or event. Next, Unit 5’s Test of Time asks students to think about why we still read myths and folktales. Finally, students finish up the year with by thinking about society as they address the question “How do we stand out from the crowd?” in Unit 6, The Power of One.

ELA Grade Level Overview Grade 7

Text Complexity



TEXT COMPLEXITY

UNIT 1: CONFLICTS AND CLASHES

Unit Title: Conflicts and Clashes

Essential Question: When do differences become conflicts?

Genre Focus: Fiction

Overview

At the heart of most stories is conflict. In some stories, the conflict might involve an epic clash between good and evil. In other stories, the conflict might be more internal and subdued, but interesting nonetheless because the conflict is relatable or intriguing.

When do differences become conflicts? What do readers learn when they study and analyze the conflicts presented in literary works? How does that help us with our own conflicts?

This unit offers a wide variety of literature for your students to explore these questions while also exploring texts in the unit's genre focus, fiction. The classic short story "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi" by Rudyard Kipling, an excerpt from the graphic novel *Nimona*, and the contemporary classic "Seventh Grade" by Gary Soto serve as examples of the genre focus. Selections such as the poem "Mad" by Naomi Shihab Nye and the teleplay *The Monsters are Due on Maple Street* allow students to read across genres.

Students will begin this unit as readers, and they will finish as writers, as they apply what they have learned about story elements to their own narrative writing projects.

Text Complexity

Grade 7 Unit 1 serves as the starting point for seventh grade students' continued development as critical learners. Though this unit focuses on the genre of fiction, it features both literature and informational texts. With a Lexile range stretching from 510-1010, the majority of the texts in this unit fall between 730L and 960L, a perfect starting point for seventh graders. Additionally, The vocabulary, sentence structures, text features, content and relationships among ideas make these texts accessible to seventh graders, enabling them to grow as readers by interacting with such appropriately challenging texts.

The unit begins with “Rikki-Tikki Tavi,” which is used in the SyncStart unit. Though this text has the highest Lexile, it also has the largest number of lessons supporting it. The length and difficulty of this short story are offset by a collection of skill lessons that teach students the necessary background skills for success in their English Language Arts class. Skills like annotation, context clues, reading comprehension, textual evidence, and collaborative conversations do not just build a foundation for the school year; they also allow students to encounter this text repeatedly using different perspectives, which makes this difficult text more manageable.

Throughout the unit, the students read and analyze a collection of fiction pieces in a common Lexile band. In addition to their shared genre, they also share a thematic link, a focus on conflicts and clashes. These texts present a variety of fictional worlds and formats. The graphic novel *Nimona* features the conflict between two fictional medieval-inspired nights, while the classic Langston Hughes short story “Thank You, M’am” places readers in a nondescript urban setting in the early part of the 20th century. *The Skin I’m In*, “Seventh Grade,” and *Stargirl* have a much more familiar setting: school. The shared thematic and genre link provides students with consistent access and reference points for the texts. Combined with the similar level of text difficulty, students can focus on applying the skills to these texts without drastic fluctuations in reader difficulty.

Two nonfiction selections in this unit showcase more text difficulty: *Woodsong* and “In the Year 1974.” *Woodsong* comes on the heels of students’ intensive study of “Rikki-Tikki Tavi,” and provides a real-world perspective on the natural conflicts of predator and prey. This topical connection helps to offset the increased complexity of the text, as does the writing style of the author. Gary Paulsen describes an interaction between wolves and a deer with vivid descriptions and careful pacing, which can help readers overcome possible difficulties with specific language or a lack of prior knowledge about dog sledding. The use of textual evidence to analyze author’s purpose and point of view highlight the importance of reading complex texts closely and thoughtfully in order to construct meaning. “In the Year 1974” falls on the higher end of the complexity band as well, but that complexity is balanced by its relatability to students’ own experiences, a StudySyncTV episode, and two other texts to read in a comparative grouping.

Two sets of texts in this unit are grouped together for Comparing Within and Across Genres. The skills lessons, close read questions and writing activities for *Stargirl* and “Seventh Grade” ask students to compare and contrast how the setting of a piece of fiction impacts the story. This first comparative task is well suited for two texts on the lower range of text complexity in the unit, and their lower Lexile is made more difficult by the comparison they are asked to make. In a second set of texts, “Mad,” “In the Year 1974,” and “Thank You, M’am” students practice comparative analysis across genres. This second group gives students the opportunity to apply the comparative thinking and writing skills they learned earlier in the unit to more complex texts from different genres.

English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources are developed around two texts, “Ready for Marcos” and “A World Away,” and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels. For ELLs, these texts serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit. Thus, teachers may use the ELL texts in place of or as extensions for “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi,” *Stargirl*, or “Seventh Grade.”

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing Skills lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

After reading texts about conflicts and struggle, students will complete an Extended Oral Project which can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and present a creative scene in the form of a group presentation.

Rikki-Tikki-Tavi

AUTHOR	Name	Rudyard Kipling
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1894
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although much longer than a traditional fable, this story features animal characters who embody human traits. Discuss the purpose of featuring animals rather than human characters to teach a moral lesson. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences are complex, contain some unfamiliar vocabulary words, and include many descriptive details. Remind students to use punctuation clues as they decipher units of meaning. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The setting of colonial India will likely be unfamiliar to many readers. Show India's location on the map, and briefly define colonialism.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1010
	Word Count	5,700
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Annotation, Context Clues, Reading Comprehension, Text Dependent Responses, Textual Evidence, Character, Collaborative Conversations, Short Constructed Responses, Peer Review
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Literary Analysis: In this story, Nag and Nagaina are portrayed as the villains. Do you think that Nag and Nagaina are truly evil, or have they been unfairly cast as villains? Think about how they react to other characters and events in the story. Then, choose a side, and then write a brief response that explains your position. Use both explicit and implicit evidence from the text to support your points.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Performance: Anthropomorphism</p> <p>First, introduce students to the literary term <i>anthropomorphism</i>. Anthropomorphism is when an animal or object takes on human characteristics and performs human functions, like the characters in “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi.” Next place students into small groups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ask all members to draw new animals to play the roles of Rikki-tikki, Darzee, and the snakes. Have each group rewrite the key action in paragraphs 18–36, using these new animals. Ask each group to perform their new scene for the class. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does changing the animals impact the story? How do the physical traits of the animals impact their characters?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	What does it mean to be a hero? What are the qualities needed to be victorious? Rikki-tikki-tavi clashes with a pair of dangerous snakes to protect a family and is celebrated as a hero.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. Have students reread some of the dialogue in the story. Then ask students to identify how the author uses dialogue to advance the plot.

The Wise Old Woman

AUTHOR	Name	Yoshida Uchida
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1965
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Folktales are typically stories passed down from generation to generation. They often teach one or more moral lessons. Encourage students to identify at least one moral lesson as they read. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may not have experiences in their own culture to understand why someone would treat the elderly badly. Remind students that this folktale takes place hundreds of years ago. Things were very different from current times. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult vocabulary may need defining. Remind students to use context clues while reading and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	930
	Word Count	1,947
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Making and Confirming Predictions, Summary, Theme
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: Think about how the farmer’s mother relies on her son. Think about how the village and the young lord rely on the farmer’s mother. What theme is developed through these relationships? Briefly summarize both relationships when providing your analysis. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Research Project: Family Folktales</p> <p>Encourage students to explore folktales or stories connected to their identity. They can talk to parents, grandparents, other relatives, or members of their community who can help them learn more about who they are and where they come from.</p> <p>Ask students to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What objects help tell the story of where you come from? What stories do all of the members of your family or community know by heart? When you think of where you come from, what stories and images come to mind? <p>Group students with 3 or 4 peers to share their stories. To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does your family or community pass down its stories? Why are folktales still relevant in the 21st century?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this Japanese folktale, a good-hearted, honest farmer finds himself in conflict with the cruel lord who rules the village. The farmer’s elderly mother uses her wisdom to protect herself and also help the farmer save the entire village.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Wise Old Woman” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. Have students identify the three challenges posed by Lord Higa. Then explain that these three tasks serve as an example of “the rule of three,” an organizing principle common in traditional storytelling.

Woodsong

AUTHOR	Name	Gary Paulsen
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1990
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paulsen uses complex sentences with multiple phrases and clauses, which may overwhelm students. Provide extra time, reminders to read carefully, and models for breaking complex sentences into constituent clauses. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific terms for dog sledding and for the terrain Paulsen describes (such as <i>tandem</i>, <i>trampoline</i>, <i>snow hook</i>, <i>poplar</i>, <i>bank</i>, and <i>brush</i>) may be unfamiliar to students. Provide students with explanations and/or visual supports for domain-specific vocabulary. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certain animal behaviors may be confusing or unfamiliar to some students. Define and discuss predator and prey behavior.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	940
	Word Count	1,044
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Generating Questions, Connotation and Denotation, Author's Purpose and Point of View
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: In this excerpt from his memoir, Gary Paulsen describes wolves attacking a doe in the forest. He uses many connotations and denotations to detail the experience. What is the author's purpose in telling this story? How did Paulsen's point of view change? Use textual evidence to support your response, including connotations and denotations.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Art: Storyboard</p> <p>When a story is turned into a movie, the process of storyboarding is used to break the story into scenes. Tell students they are going create a storyboard for this passage. Ask students to use Paulsen's detailed sensory descriptions to transform this story into a storyboard, including a minimum of 5 drawings that clearly communicate Paulsen's feelings as the scene unfolds.</p> <p>Students can create their storyboards on paper or use a digital tool.</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was challenging about translating this scene into a storyboard? Was anything lost in translation? Do you think you would respond to this moment the same way that Paulsen responded? Why or why not?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this excerpt from Paulsen's memoir, a battle for survival between a deer and a pack of wolves illustrates the basic conflict of nature: predator vs. prey.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use <i>Woodsong</i> as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. Have students reread the first three paragraphs of the selection. Then ask students to discuss how the beginning hints at what the story will be about and creates interest for the reader to want to keep reading.

Nimona

AUTHOR	Name	Noelle Stevenson
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2015
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The graphic novel format can be used for different genres, such as fiction, nonfiction, fantasy, etc. A fictional graphic novel is similar to a comic book, but the story usually has a more complex plot. Remind students that comics are read in a Z-pattern. Read each page, panel, and dialogue bubble from left to right and top to bottom. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This excerpt does not include any narration. Students must rely only on the illustrations and the characters' words to understand the plot and the characters' traits. Point out that the colors used in the scenes contribute to understanding the sequence. The flashback scenes do not include bright colors. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because this is a graphic novel, readers must link the details from the illustrations and speech to follow the complete story and identify a theme. Remind students to use text, illustrations, and colors to help them make meaning of the text.
	Lexile®	N/A
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	393
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Debate: Imagine that you are either Nimona or Blackheart. As Nimona, you want to convince Blackheart to adopt your changes to his evil plan. As Blackheart, you want to ensure that Nimona follows your rules of battle. Choose the persona of either Nimona or Blackheart and prepare points for a debate to convince the other character to fight according to your style. Use explicit and implicit textual evidence about the characters to support your points.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: What Happens Next?</p> <p>The excerpt from <i>Nimona</i> ends with Nimona and Lord Blackheart planning their revenge on Sir Goldenloin. They debate their plan of attack. Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide what they think will happen next. Use the narrative to reveal details about Nimona's past and what event in her life caused her to be evil. Combine their narrative and artistic skills to write the next chapter of the graphic novel. Students can create their continuations of the story on paper or use an online comic creator tool. To help them reflect, ask students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What details from the original story were most important in creating a new chapter? What were the challenges in telling the story graphically?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this graphic novel excerpt, readers learn the reason for Blackheart's ongoing feud with his nemesis, Sir Goldenloin. Readers are forced to wonder: Who is truly the villain in this conflict?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use <i>Nimona</i> as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of the writer's techniques for developing a fantastical world. Have students identify elements of fantasy and analyze how the author makes fantastical characters seem real.

Stargirl

AUTHOR	Name	Jeri Spinelli
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2000
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may need assistance understanding why the author chose to tell the story of the nonconformist character Stargirl through the eyes of Leo, a boy who is neither geeky nor popular. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are numerous references in the excerpt that may require an explanation. Explain or define words and terms as needed: <i>Heidi</i>, <i>Bo Peep</i>, <i>flapper dress</i>, <i>Indian buckskin</i>, <i>kimono</i>, <i>pioneer dress</i>, <i>trolls</i>, and <i>ukulele</i>. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The novel is written in first-person point of view. Explain that this helps the reader feel closer to the character and relate to his high school experiences, which are universal.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	740
	Word Count	972
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Personal Response
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Personal Response: Leo states, “If we happened to somehow distinguish ourselves, we quickly snapped back into place, like rubber bands.” Explain what Leo means by this observation. How does it apply to him and his classmates? Is it important for individuals to restrict themselves so they can fit in, or should they try to distinguish themselves from others? Make a case for the importance of either conformity or individuality, using Leo’s observations of Stargirl.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Discussion: Stargirl Societies</p> <p>Provide students time to research Stargirl Societies. Then break students into small groups to discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you started a Stargirl Society on our campus, what would be the objectives, norms, and behaviors associated with the society? How do you think a Stargirl Society would be received on our campus? Does our campus need a Stargirl Society? What are the advantages and disadvantages of conformity?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	<p>Stargirl’s bold and unusual choices clash with the norms of high school behavior. Is she for real? What will happen to her in the unforgiving environment of high school?</p> <p><i>Stargirl</i> and “Seventh Grade” portray clashes in a familiar setting—school. Students will consider how the similar setting in these two stories creates dissimilar conflicts for the characters.</p>
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	<p>Students can use <i>Stargirl</i> as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of the writer’s techniques for creating an authentic voice. Have students identify examples of word choice and phrases that help to create the voice of the teenage narrator and convey the personality of the narrator.</p>

Seventh Grade

AUTHOR	Name	Gary Soto
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1995
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author, Gary Soto, is a Mexican American who grew up in California. Soto often depicts his life experiences in his writing. While readers may think that this story is autobiographical, it is not. It is realistic fiction. Explain that realistic fiction often depicts characters who seem like real people involved in events that could happen and seem real. <p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gary Soto never directly states that his purpose for writing this story is to show the importance of taking risks. As students read, they should look for clues in the dialogue and narration that can help them draw inferences about the author's purpose for writing. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main character's actions and experiences have universal implications. They illuminate that the teenage years are when young people experiment with ways to express themselves and find their identity. As students read, have them think about how the characters and the choices they make are similar or different to people students know and the choices they make.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	720
	Word Count	1,894
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Setting, Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	Compare and Contrast: <i>Stargirl</i> takes place in high school, while “Seventh Grade” is set in middle school. Write a short response in which you choose two characters, one from each work of fiction, and compare and contrast how the school setting creates conflict for the characters. Use evidence from the text to support your analysis.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: Future Me</p> <p>Ask students to write a letter to their future selves telling the story of an important moment from the last month of their lives. Remind students to focus their stories on small details and observations as Gary Soto does in “Seventh Grade.”</p> <p>Ask students to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What details do you remember from that moment? What do you remember hearing, saying, seeing, smelling, etc.? How did this moment change you? <p>If you wish, have students handwrite the letters and seal them in a self-addressed stamped envelope that you'll mail to them in a year or two. Alternatively, they can use an Internet service like FutureMe that will email them the letter in the future.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	<p>In this short story, Victor endures a conflict that is familiar to many: his attempts to get his crush's attention lead to some embarrassing situations.</p> <p><i>Stargirl</i> and “Seventh Grade” portray clashes in a familiar setting—school. Students will consider how the similar setting in these two stories creates dissimilar conflicts for the characters.</p>
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Seventh Grade” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. Have students analyze the writer's techniques for incorporating figurative language into narrative writing. Ask students to reread paragraph 62 and discuss how the author uses metaphors to emphasize an important turn of events in the plot.

The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

AUTHOR	Name	Rod Serling
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1960
	Genre	Drama
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street” is a science-fiction teleplay, which is a drama written for television. • Discuss the genre of science fiction with students. Science fiction is not realistic. This gave Serling more freedom to comment on intolerance and prejudice in society. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This teleplay reflects the political situation in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. After World War II, many people feared that the Soviet Union, a Communist country, might start a new war against the United States. • Remind students that paranoia gripped many people who thought that Communists were influencing Americans. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having knowledge of the historical context is essential to students understanding the plot and uncovering the theme. • Remind students to use prior knowledge about the time period to help them identify the theme.
	Lexile®	N/A
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	1,269
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Plot, Dramatic Elements and Structure
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: How does Rod Serling use plot and dramatic elements and structure to convey a message about conflict in society? Write a short response in which you answer this question. Specify one message, and explain how plot and dramatic elements and structure help to convey it. Use textual evidence to support your answer.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Performance: New <i>Twilight Zone</i> Episode</p> <p>Students will use the script “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street” as a model for an original episode of <i>The Twilight Zone</i>.</p> <p>Break students into small groups and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the paranormal activity, futuristic element, or disturbing event involving technology that will drive this episode. • Develop central characters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Who are they? How old are they? How are they connected or related to one another? • Decide on a setting for the episode. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · When and where will the play take place? • Write the episode collaboratively using a shared document. • Assign roles. • Rehearse lines. • Perform for the class.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Rod Serling, <i>The Twilight Zone</i> creator and screenwriter of “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street,” depicts a neighborhood under a paranoia attack. Lights flicker on Maple Street. Cars start on their own. Neighbors turn against anyone suspicious. Consumed by fear of the unknown, one neighbor makes a fatal mistake that cause panic and conflict.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can refer to “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street” as they prepare for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of Rod Serling’s methods for developing characters or plot.

The Skin I'm In

AUTHOR	Name	Sharon G. Flake
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1998
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The short story contains lessons related to self-esteem and identity, colorism and skin-tone bias, and bullying. Encourage students to think through their own experiences with these issues to help them make inferences and analyze the themes in the story as they emerge. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult vocabulary, such as concoction (a mixture composed of different ingredients), may need defining. Remind students to use context clues while reading and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	570
	Word Count	800
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Point of View
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Literary Analysis: In this excerpt of <i>The Skin I'm In</i>, Maleeka confronts how she feels about herself while learning about others' views on self-love and self-acceptance. How is Maleeka's point of view different from those of the other students and Miss Saunders?</p> <p>How does the author reveal and contrast these views? Use textual evidence, including character dialogue, actions, and thoughts, to support your response.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: What does your face say to the world?</p> <p>In <i>The Skin I'm In</i>, Maleeka and her classmates are asked "What does your face say to the world?" Tell students they are going to write a poem or essay or draw a self-portrait to that answers the same question. Let students know that they can volunteer to share their final product with class.</p> <p>Before students draw or write, ask students to reflect on the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What about your face do you like the most? What do you think your face says to the world? What story does it tell? What qualities or feelings does your face project? How does this affect how you interact with others. <p>If time permits, allow volunteers to share their drawings, poems, or essays with the class. Facilitate a brief discussion using some of the questions above.</p>
	Connect to Essential Question	In her acclaimed debut novel, author Sharon G. Flake tells the story of thirteen-year-old Maleeka Madison. Maleeka, uncomfortable with her own appearance, ensures constant bullying and teasing at school. In this excerpt, her teacher, Miss Saunders, shares her own story of self-love and self-discovery. Will Maleeka learn to do the same?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can find inspiration from <i>The Skin I'm In</i> when writing their narrative. Have them reflect on how Maleeka's thoughts are different from those of the other characters, and how conflict would be resolved or created if the characters could all hear each other's thoughts.

Mad

AUTHOR	Name	Naomi Shihab Nye		
	Gender	Female		
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2000		
	Genre	Poetry		
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The poem is written in open verse and includes many examples of visual sensory images. Point out that open verse does not rhyme nor does it have a regular meter. Encourage students to visualize images in their heads or draw pictures. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences may break over several lines. Modeling by reading aloud may help students better comprehend the poem. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may need help understanding that the poem is meaningful because it discusses the shared experiences of caregivers around the world. Facilitate a brief discussion about the importance of caregivers. 		
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A		
	Word Count	92		
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A		
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Personal Response: This poem is about making up with a loved one after getting angry. Write about a time you made up with a family member or friend after a disagreement or fight. What in the poem reminds you of your disagreement or fight? Was anything different? Support your response with evidence from the text.</p>		
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: “Mad”-Lib</p> <p>First, project the “Mad”-Lib prompts onto the board. Have students come up with a word for each of the 18 prompts. Next, have students fill in their words to create a personal poem in the structure of Naomi Shihab Nye’s “Mad.”</p>		
		<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <p>“Mad”-Lib prompts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Emotion Person Verb Place Place Adjective Adjective Noun Verb Place Noun Verb Verb Verb Adjective Color Noun Verb </td> <td> <p>“(1)”</p> <p>I got (1) at (2) so I (3) to the (4). I could still see our (5) so (6) in the distance with its (7) (8). (2) (9) in the (10) like a (11) searching for me. (2) (12) left and right for me. (2), (12) deep and far. Then I (13) and (2) (14) her head. It gets (15) at night on the (4). (2) sent a (16) (17) for me to (18) on. (2) knows me so well. (2) knows I like (17).</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>“Mad”-Lib prompts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Emotion Person Verb Place Place Adjective Adjective Noun Verb Place Noun Verb Verb Verb Adjective Color Noun Verb 	<p>“(1)”</p> <p>I got (1) at (2) so I (3) to the (4). I could still see our (5) so (6) in the distance with its (7) (8). (2) (9) in the (10) like a (11) searching for me. (2) (12) left and right for me. (2), (12) deep and far. Then I (13) and (2) (14) her head. It gets (15) at night on the (4). (2) sent a (16) (17) for me to (18) on. (2) knows me so well. (2) knows I like (17).</p>
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	<p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <p>Does your poem make sense? Why or why not?</p> <p>How do the different types of words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) come together to create rich, complex ideas in poetry?</p>			
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	How can conflicts be resolved between loved ones? In “Mad,” a parent and child are in conflict until the mother makes a move to bridge the gap between them. This selection and the two that follow will help students think about the lessons other generations teach us.		
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Mad” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to imagine ways that the conflict between the speaker of the poem and the mother could have resulted from or could be resolved through the ability of one character to read another person’s thoughts (the source of the conflict for the story that students will write in their Extended Writing Project).		

In the Year 1974

AUTHOR	Name	Oscar Casares
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2005
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This personal essay includes the key elements of a short story. Highlight examples of these elements in order to help students uncover the theme. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be unfamiliar with the place-names and some of the references in the story, such as Tierra del Fuego and hippies. Encourage students to use context clues to identify unfamiliar references and to look up terms and vocabulary in a dictionary or online. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, as well as descriptive phrases in the narration, may require simplifying. Model breaking down complex and compound sentences into their constituent parts. Encourage students to read slowly and monitor comprehension.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	960
	Word Count	2,416
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Personal Response: Do you think it's important to try new things, even if it means going against the practices of your family? What are the potential benefits and drawbacks? Is conflict likely? Write a short response to this question. Use evidence from the text to support your response.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Debate: Growing Up</p> <p>Break the class into two groups to debate this proposition: Children should honor and carry on their parents' culture and ideals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign one group to argue in favor of the proposition and one group to argue against it. Have students prepare for the formal debate by compiling examples and evidence from the stories they've read thus far, other stories they know, and personal examples. When it's time to conduct the debate, consider bringing in an outside panel (e.g., a principal) to judge the winner and explain which evidence swayed his or her decision. <p>To reflect, ask students to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What evidence most effectively proved your group's point? Why?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	The essay "In the Year 1974" describes a clash between two generations. Oscar's parents are set in their ways, but Oscar wants to try new things, like pepperoni pizza. Will pizza divide Oscar's family or bring them together? Students will read this text in preparation for a comparative reading and writing lesson to follow.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use "In the Year 1974" as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to identify the writer's techniques for describing ordinary experiences of family life and explaining their larger significance.

Thank You, M'am

AUTHOR	Name	Langston Hughes
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1958
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The short story is organized so that the changes in the characters are an outgrowth of the setting and are developed over the course of the text. Let students know in advance that the story is constructed to build character development slowly and that it is an open-ended story. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readers must infer Mrs. Jones's and Roger's reasons for acting the way they do from the setting, their actions, and dialogue Let students know to keep an eye out for details that illuminate characters' motivations by paying special attention to setting, actions, and dialogue.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	810
	Word Count	1,334
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Media, Theme
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Compare and Contrast: “Thank You, M'am,” “In the Year 1974,” and “Mad” are about conflicts between young people and older adults. What lessons are learned in each text as a result of these conflicts? Compare and contrast the lesson in “Thank You, M'am” to the lesson in one of the other texts. Remember to support your ideas with evidence from the texts.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Performance: Pay It Forward?</p> <p>Break students into small groups. Ask them to write a short scene based on this premise: Roger, now an old man, walks into his home and catches his neighbor's son stealing his television.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell students they can take the story wherever they want. Perhaps Roger lets the neighbor's son go. Perhaps Roger calls the police. Perhaps something else happens. Whatever happens in the short scene, though, it should help explain to the audience how Roger's childhood interaction with Luella Bates Washington Jones and his life since then influenced his decision. Have each group perform their short scene as a skit for the class.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In “Thank You, M'am” the clash comes early when a teenage boy snatches an older woman's purse. When she drags him home to feed him dinner, readers are left to wonder: is it possible for someone to influence another person to change their ways?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Thank You, M'am” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of the author's methods for expressing theme. Ask students to identify specific character descriptions and plot events that help to reveal themes in the short story.

TEXT COMPLEXITY

UNIT 2: HIGHS AND LOWS

Unit Title: Highs and Lows

Essential Question: What do we learn from love and loss?

Genre Focus: Poetry

Overview

Poetry gives writers the opportunity to express the highs and lows of their emotions and their personal experiences. Readers of poetry gain insight into how others feel and think about some of the deepest experiences in life, the experiences of love and loss.

This Grade 7 unit emphasizes the study of poetry and encourages students to consider the essential question: What do we learn from love and loss?

The unit offers a wide variety of literature for students to explore this question, including both contemporary and classic works. The selections include poems about family relationships, by Aracelis Girmay and Wing Tek Lum, as well as the timeless love poem “Annabel Lee” by Edgar Allan Poe and the classic narrative poem “The Highwayman.”

In addition to poetry, students will read other writing forms, such as the short story “The Walking Dance,” an excerpt from the award-winning young adult novel *Tangerine*, and an excerpt from Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*.

Nonfiction works include the essay “Museum Indians” about the loss of the one woman’s Native American identity in the modern world and an excerpt from *Flesh and Blood So Cheap* about the tragic safety failings and the resultant loss of life during the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. Readers will also learn about the fateful field trip that led Simone Biles to fall in love with her sport and become a world-renowned gymnast in “No Dream Too High.”

Students will begin this unit as readers, and they will finish as critical literary thinkers, as they analyze what they have read and apply their thinking about the essential question to the writing of their own literary analysis essays.

Text Complexity

Grade 7 Unit 2 continues to push students further in their text analysis and critical thinking abilities. The genre focus of this unit is poetry, however there are many fiction selections and three informational texts included. The Lexile range for this unit is more narrow than the previous, at 830-1020. Five poems, most written in open verse, push students outside their comfort zones, both in their topical coverage and formal techniques. The vocabulary, sentence structures, text and poetic features, content and relationships among ideas make these texts accessible to seventh graders, enabling them to progress as thinkers by engaging with such appropriately challenging texts.

The first half of unit 2 exposes students to three poems. The first, “Annabel Lee” by Edgar Allan Poe, introduces students to the unit’s theme and is read along side several skill lessons to support students’ understanding of the genre. “Annabel Lee’s” heavy use of symbolism, line break and difficult vocabulary may prove a stumbling block for some students. The second poem, Teresa Paloma Acosta’s “My Mother Pieced Quilts,” is paired thematically with the essay “Museum Indians.” Aracelis Girmay’s open form poem “Second Estrangement” may challenge readers with its structure, but its universal message about love and loneliness is something all students can relate to. The topical connection and the unit’s genre focus make these texts an appropriate starting point for text comparison skills and genre recognition. Students will work through several skills lesson on poetic elements structure, further establishing the analytical abilities.

Student also read the short story “The Walking Dance” by Marcela Fuentes and informational article “No Dream Too High: Simone Biles” by Alex Schulz. “The Walking Dance” is the same Lexile as “Museum Indians,” however, it is a significantly lengthier selection with alternating narrative points of view throughout. “No Dream Too High: Simone Biles” has the highest Lexile in the unit, but also features multiple text and graphic features and is supported by a skill lesson on central or main idea. The unit’s thematic link of highs and lows further connects these two texts and makes them both grade-level appropriate and accessible to ELLs and advanced students alike.

Written in 1906, the narrative poem “The Highwayman” brings a level of familiarity to students with its linear structure. The poem’s skill lesson on poetic elements and structure emphasizes alliteration while the media skill lesson shows how modern filmmaking techniques can make a poem come alive. Students also read an excerpt from *Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and Its Legacy*. Some students may benefit from a discussion of advanced vocabulary and historical information about 18th century England. The text may also challenge students with its more-than-average use of figurative language (at least for an informational text) and embedded quotation. A skills lesson on informational text structure should facilitate further access to this more challenging text.

The unit concludes with three sets of texts in this unit are grouped together for Comparing Within and Across Genres. In comparing two fiction selections alongside a poem students will analyze how conflict can complicate feelings of love and affection within families. Tangerine will engage many students with its emphasis on sports, though some students may struggle grasping the third person narration and what inferences we can make about the characters in light of that stylistic choice. *A Christmas Carol* may challenge students for several reasons. Because the text was

written in 1834 much of vocabulary and syntax will be unfamiliar to students, who might benefit from a discussion about phrases like “bah! Humbug!” and words such as palpable and impropriety. Additionally, Dickens’ sentences are long and complex and may require students to break them down into smaller parts. The last text in this compare and contrast lesson is “My Mother Really Knew.” Having already completed skills lessons on figurative language and poetic elements and structure, students should have an easy time accessing this poem. These three texts encourage students’ understanding of the poetry genre and the overall theme of the unit, highs and lows.

English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources are developed around two texts, “Deep Water” and “Sarah’s Neighbor,” and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels. For ELLs, these texts serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit. Thus, teachers may use the ELL texts in place of or as extensions for *Tangerine* and “My Mother Really Knew.”

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing Skills lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

After reading texts about love and loss, students will complete an Extended Oral Project which can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and present a literary analysis explaining what they’ve learned about the highs and lows of familial and friend relationships.

Annabel Lee

AUTHOR	Name	Edgar Allan Poe
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1849
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The poem contains complex symbolism and imagery, including images from nature, religious images, and fairy tale images. Provide students with simple, familiar examples of a symbol; for example, a heart can symbolize love and a light can symbolize hope. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stanzas consist of long sentences divided between lines of poetry. The author also uses dashes to break up sentences and emphasize certain ideas and emotions. Remind students that line breaks do not equate with sentence breaks. Relate dashes to bold words and commas, which can let the reader know to emphasize words or pauses. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult vocabulary, such as coveted and sepulchre, may present a challenge for some readers. Practice using context clues for definitions, and provide physical or online reference materials.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	299
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Visualizing, Adjusting Fluency, Poetic Elements and Structure, Figurative Language, Media
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: How did Poe use rhyme, rhythm, and religious allusions to help the reader understand how the speaker feels about Annabel Lee? How did the multimedia version use sound to emphasize these same feelings? Write a short response to this question. Remember to use specific examples from the poem and the multimedia version to support your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Investigation: The Mystery of Annabel Lee’s Identity</p> <p>There is speculation that Edgar Allan Poe wrote this final poem about his wife; however, the exact identity of Annabel Lee is still a mystery.</p> <p>Put students in small groups and ask them to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a close reading of the poem for any details that might reveal the true identity of Annabel Lee. Research Edgar Allan Poe’s life to find out more about his wife. Prepare an argument with a claim, evidence, and a clear explanation about the true identity of Annabel Lee. This argument can be written or presented orally to the class. <p>Follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pair up groups and ask them to share their arguments and discuss the similarities and differences between their findings.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Can love survive beyond death? The speaker in this enduring poem fixates on a lost love in an effort to make it everlasting.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Annabel Lee” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to discuss and take notes on what lessons they can glean from the poem about love and loss. Have students focus on the use of language to express the speaker’s depth of emotion.

My Mother Pieced Quilts

AUTHOR	Name	Teresa Palomo Acosta
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1976
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may not be familiar with quilts or their importance in some families and communities. Provide background knowledge to students about quilts. Tell students that a quilt is a kind of blanket. Patchwork quilts are sewn together from small pieces of fabric or old clothing. Quilts can tell stories and capture important memories. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The poem is free verse and includes many examples of visual sensory images. Explain that some sentence may break over several lines. Explain sensory images by drawing, by defining, or by giving simpler examples. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The poem has no capitalization and limited punctuation. Some students may find it difficult to follow the thoughts. Consider having students read the poem aloud to unlock meaning.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	309
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	Poem: The poem “My Mother Pieces Quilt” is told from the child’s point of view. Write a poem in response to the child from the perspective of the mother.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: Tell Its Story</p> <p>Students will write a narrative inspired by a quilt.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search quilts online. Find a quilt that is unique and visually interesting. Use the details in the quilt to inspire a short narrative. Reference colors, details, and patterns from the quilt in the story. Post the photo of the quilt and the story online. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why did you select the quilt you chose for your story? What about it was interesting or appealing? What elements from the quilt helped you to write your narrative?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Teresa Acosta spent much of her youth watching the women in her family sew. In her poem “My Mother Pieced Quilts,” Acosta describes in verse how her mother would stitch various pieces of fabric into beautiful quilts, each one summoning its own family history, its own panorama of love and loss.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “My Mother Pieced Quilts” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to imagine different ways that family members can communicate love and loss through creating or sharing family heirlooms.

Museum Indians

AUTHOR	Name	Susan Power
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2002
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story contains themes about culture, identity, and the conflict of ownership of cultural artifacts. Discuss Native American history and the controversies surrounding ownership of cultural artifacts in museums. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The essay is a personal reflection and does not follow a standard organizational pattern. Provide students with a graphic organizer so they can write the sequence of scenes in this essay. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The deeper meaning of the essay is connected to the examples of symbolism in the text. Encourage students to make inferences to interpret the figurative language used in the essay.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	850
	Word Count	1,249
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Context Clues, Figurative Language
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Compare and Contrast: Both “My Mother Pieced Quilts” and “Musuem Indians” are about love and family history. Compare and contrast the speakers in the two texts and how they interact with their mothers as well as the way they describe their family history. Include examples of figurative language in your analysis. Remember to support your ideas with evidence the texts.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Research Project: Standing Rock Tribe and Loss</p> <p>The theme of loss is present throughout Susan Power’s autobiographical essay. Ask students to research the Standing Rock Sioux tribe’s battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline and then write a news article or produce a news report on the issue. This news report should focus on what the Standing Rock tribe will lose if the Dakota Access Pipeline is built.</p> <p>Break students into small groups and ask them to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research the Standing Rock tribe’s battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline to ensure they understand the issue and what the tribe stands to lose. 2. Construct an unbiased news report on the issue. 3. Select either writing or video as a means to communicate the issue to the public. 4. Include voices of both Standing Rock tribe members and advocates of the pipeline project to make your news report personal. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did you learn about this issue during your research? Did the outcome of this battle surprise you? Why or why not? What aspects of this battle over the pipeline remind you of Power’s essay?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this autobiographical essay, Susan Power recognizes her mother’s sense of lost identity as she reflects on their shared Native American heritage in the modern world.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Museum Indians” as a focus text for their Extended Writing Project. They can compare and contrast how love and loss interact in the story.

The Walking Dance

AUTHOR	Name	Marcela Fuentes
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2017
	Genre	Fictional
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many characters in this short story. Students may have trouble keeping track of all the characters. • Create a family tree, listing the characters and showing the relationships between them. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This short story takes places in several settings: a family home in San Antonio, on the road to Laredo, in Laredo itself, and then the chapel in Laredo for the funeral service. Students may have difficulty keeping track of the different settings. • Encourage students to take notes about the main events that occur in each setting. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The setting of Laredo contributes to the theme of the importance of family bonds in the story. • Explain that Laredo is near the U.S.–Mexico border.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	850
	Word Count	4,972
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Making Connections, Textual Evidence, Plot
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: How does Marcela Fuentes use plot elements and events such as conflict, turning action, and resolution to convey the theme of this story? Write a short response in which you specify one theme and explain how those plot elements help to convey it. Use textual evidence to support your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: 2 Perspectives, 1 Rite of Passage</p> <p>In “The Walking Dance,” the Herrera family has a rite of passage for men called the Unknown Taco. Typically, a rite of passage is used when an individual leaves one group and joins another (for example, moving from junior high to high school).</p> <p>Break students into writing pairs for this activity. Then ask students to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design their own rite of passage, describe it, and give it a clever name. 2. Develop two characters involved in this rite of passage. 3. Write a narrative describing the experience of completing this rite of passage. 4. Use dialogue to express each character’s point of view. “The Walking Dance” can serve as a mentor text. Point out to students that the author of “The Walking Dance” reveals a lot about Gavin and Carlos by using dialogue to reveal their two perspectives. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you come up with your rite of passage? Was it based on any actual events in your life or totally made up? • How did your team approach the writing of this narrative? Did you each write from one character’s perspective, or did you write the entire piece collaboratively?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this short story, Gavin strives to survive the “Unknown Taco” and, more importantly, to find his place within his wife’s family during a trip to Laredo for a funeral.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Walking Dance” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to discuss and take notes on what lessons they can glean from the story about love and loss. Have students focus on the characters of Gavin, Carlos, and Cookie.

Second Estrangement

AUTHOR	Name	Aracelis Girmay
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2016
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may have difficulty inferring the meaning of higher-level vocabulary, such as <i>estrangement</i>. Tell the students that <i>estrangement</i> can mean “separation” or “no longer being connected.” Ask them to think about the title as “a second separation.” <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may struggle with the author’s use of poetic structure, including line breaks. Remind students that the structure of the line breaks is intentional, and it helps remind the reader to pause slightly and reinforces the meaning of each line. <p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may struggle with understanding the purpose of poetry in general. Students may need help to identify that the purpose of this particular poem is to share insights based on experiencing loneliness.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	91
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Poetic Elements and Structure
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: What do you think is the deeper meaning or message of the poem “Second Estrangement”? How does the poet’s use of poetic structure, such as open verse and line length, contribute to the poem’s deeper meaning? Write a response to this question, using evidence from the poem to support your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: Open-Form Poetry</p> <p>In “Second Estrangement,” the poet recalls the experience of losing a parent in a crowd and realizing too late that the world is not what you think it is. Tell the students they are going to write their own open-form poem. Ask the students to think about a time when they were lost or confused as a child. Then ask them to write a free-form poem relating that experience.</p> <p>As the students are writing, have them think about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you feel as a child when you were lost or confused? What details are important to the story? How can you use the open-form structure to enhance your story? <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can poems represent universal stories or experiences?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Aracelis Girmay has authored many poems that are often brief and revelatory and commonly explore themes of the African Diaspora in its manifold forms. Girmay has been described as having a voice at once distinct, political and beautiful, and one whose poetics illumine that “while life may be fragile and fleeting, the human heart can continue beating despite abuse, injustices, and war.”
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can find inspiration from “Second Estrangement” when writing their literary analyses. Have them reflect on how losing a parent in a crowd affects a child and how that loss reflects an even bigger loss.

No Dream Too High: Simone Biles

AUTHOR	Name	Alex Shultz
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2017
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This text is nonfiction and biographical. Remind students to use text features, like headings and images, to improve comprehension. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This text is not in chronological order. Remind students to pay attention to dates, ages, and other clues to help determine when events occurred. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The diagrams and graphics may confuse some readers. Explain that the diagrams add context to help readers understand how extraordinary Simone Biles and her accomplishments are.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1020
	Word Count	1,665
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Central or Main Idea
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Debate: In this informational text, the author explains that Simone Biles made many sacrifices for the sport she loves. She often had to put gymnastics ahead of everything else. Would you choose a sport and fame over a normal life? What do you think is the better alternative? Prepare points and comments for a debate with your classmates. Use evidence from the text to support your point.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: A Life Well Lived</p> <p>Ask students to reflect in writing about what makes a person great.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you define “greatness”? What qualities make a person great? Whom do you know who exemplifies “greatness”? How would you describe a life well lived? What sacrifices need to be made in order to achieve greatness? What do you feel you would need to accomplish or do in order to face death without fear? <p>As a follow-up activity to the reflection, ask students to write on the board the top three qualities they think make a person great. Alternatively, they can enter the top three qualities in an online word cloud generator so that the class can view and discuss the trends in the words selected. [Note: This activity can be repeated with the names of the people they identified as great.]</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do the repeated words reveal about our view of “greatness”? Do you think great people live their lives with the goal of reaching “greatness”?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	American gymnast Simone Biles overcame a difficult childhood to become the most decorated athlete in the history of her sport. In this profile, author Alex Shultz explores the pressures of great expectations and the many sacrifices Biles has made on the road to glory.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “No Dream Too High” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may compare the differences between Biles’s love and sacrifice to that of other characters in the unit.

The Highwayman

AUTHOR	Name	Alfred Noyes
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1906
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Highwayman” is a narrative poem. The purpose of narrative poetry is to tell a story. • Relate narrative poems to short stories. Narrative poems have story elements such as characters, plot, and setting. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poem is set in 18th-century England. Some students may be unfamiliar with this time period. • Give some historical background to students. For example, explain that highwaymen were roadside robbers on horseback. A few highwaymen became legends, inspiring songs, poems, and stories. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This poem contains words and phrases used in the 18th century. • Define older vocabulary, such as “torrent” and “galleon.”
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	1,001
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Poetic Elements and Structure, Media
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Literary Analysis: “The Highwayman” is a poem full of emotion. Identify places where the mood or feeling of the poem shifts. Then, explain how both the poetic and film elements affect or enhance these changes. What does this say about the poem’s meaning? Write a response to answer these questions. Remember to use evidence from the poem and the film adaptation.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Research Project: Poetic Devices</p> <p>Break the class into four groups, and give each group a poetic device to investigate (for example, repetition, alliteration, metaphor, personification).</p> <p>Ask them to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define their poetic device in terms their peers can easily understand. 2. Identify examples in the poem “The Highwayman” of their poetic device. 3. Find a song that incorporates this poetic device and be prepared to describe the impact of the poetic device on the listener. <p>Allow each group time to present their findings, using visuals such as a poster, a digital presentation, or a video. Have each group play their song and describe why a writer would use this particular poetic device in a poem or song lyric.</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which poetic devices might be more challenging to use? Why? • How did this investigation into poetic devices impact the way you think about word choice in poems and song lyrics?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	What sacrifices are worth making for love? This classic narrative poem explores this question as it tells a powerful story of an ill-fated romance.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Highwayman” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to discuss and take notes on what lessons they can glean from this narrative poem about love and loss. Have students discuss and debate the decisions and actions of Bess and the highwayman.

Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and Its Legacy

AUTHOR	Name	Albert Marrin
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2011
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is figurative language in this text, which is often found in poetry and fiction rather than in informational writing. Remind students that they will need to use a variety of skills to comprehend this excerpt, including visualizing. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The text includes embedded quotations as well as complex sentences with modifiers and subordinate clauses. Remind students to reread carefully and break sentences into smaller chunks to ensure they understand. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author ends by comparing the Triangle Fire to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Students may have difficulty understanding this comparison. Review the events of September 11, 2001, and explain that the Triangle Fire was the worst workplace disaster before then.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	900
	Word Count	1,281
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Structure
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: One result of the tragedy of the Triangle Fire was the call for laws to protect workers. What evidence is there in the text that the health and safety of workers were not adequately protected at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory? How does the author use text structure to make this point? Support your writing with evidence and inferences drawn from the text.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Investigation: The Asch Building Fire</p> <p>At the end of the excerpt from <i>Flesh and Blood So Cheap</i>, Albert Marrin says that the Asch Building “had no damage to its structure.... It was fireproof.” Despite the building being fireproof, 146 people died.</p> <p>Break students into small investigative groups.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create a list of factors that led to the 146 deaths. Research current fire safety regulations for commercial and industrial buildings. Select three factors that led to the death of workers in this fire. Explain how these factors could have been avoided with current fire safety regulations. <p>Then, have students produce, record, and publish a 5-minute exposé that reveals the shocking details of the fire and explains how this tragic event could have been avoided. The exposé should be visually interesting and contain reliable research.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	This nonfiction book excerpt explains how safety issues in a garment factory led to the tragic loss of workers’ lives.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Flesh and Blood So Cheap” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. They may write about how the loss in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory helped teach us lessons about fire and workplace safety.

A Christmas Carol

AUTHOR	Name	Charles Dickens
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1843
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is figurative language in this text, which is often found in poetry and fiction rather than in informational writing. Remind students that they will need to use a variety of skills to comprehend this excerpt, including visualizing. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The text includes embedded quotations as well as complex sentences with modifiers and subordinate clauses. Remind students to reread carefully and break sentences into smaller chunks to ensure they understand. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author ends by comparing the Triangle Fire to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Students may have difficulty understanding this comparison. Review the events of September 11, 2001, and explain that the Triangle Fire was the worst workplace disaster before then.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	990
	Word Count	1,065
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	Personal Narrative: The excerpt from <i>A Christmas Carol</i> depicts a conflict between an uncle and his nephew during Christmas. Write about a time of conflict during a holiday in your own family. Introduce your characters and setting. Then, organize the plot events naturally and logically.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Investigation: The Asch Building Fire</p> <p>At the end of the excerpt from <i>Flesh and Blood So Cheap</i>, Albert Marrin says that the Asch Building “had no damage to its structure.... It was fireproof.” Despite the building being fireproof, 146 people died.</p> <p>Break students into small investigative groups.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a list of factors that led to the 146 deaths. Research current fire safety regulations for commercial and industrial buildings. Select three factors that led to the death of workers in this fire. Explain how these factors could have been avoided with current fire safety regulations. <p>Then, have students produce, record, and publish a 5-minute exposé that reveals the shocking details of the fire and explains how this tragic event could have been avoided. The exposé should be visually interesting and contain reliable research.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In <i>A Christmas Carol</i> , the iconic character Scrooge stubbornly shows more care for money than for the foolishness he sees in family love and affection around the holidays.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Flesh and Blood So Cheap” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. They may write about how the loss in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory helped teach us lessons about fire and workplace safety.

Tangerine

AUTHOR	Name	Edward Bloor
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1997
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This scene describes a conflict between teammates during a high school football game. Prior knowledge about American football and the rules of sportsmanship would help students better comprehend this passage. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The narrator is Erik's brother, Paul. Therefore, readers do not know what Erik or what Erik and Paul's parents are actually thinking. Students will have to make inferences about character motivations based on information provided by the narrator, who is not directly involved in the action of the scene. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students may not be familiar with the football terminology used in the passage.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	830
	Word Count	1,389
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	Personal Response: Think about what makes someone a good teammate and why. Are the football players in this excerpt good teammates? Why or why not? Support your answer with examples from the text as well as your own experiences.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: Payback</p> <p>The excerpt from <i>Tangerine</i> ends with the following line: "I stared out my window at the back wall. Forget it, Dad. Forget it, Mom. Erik can't laugh this off. Erik can't leave this humiliation behind him. Someone has to pay for this. I'm not sure why I'm sure. But I am. Someone has to pay for this."</p> <p>Ask students to write a narrative that continues the story. Remind them to use details from the story to make sure the excerpt flows naturally into their follow-up narrative. Encourage them to consider the following questions before they begin writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is responsible for Paul's embarrassing fall? How will Paul get back at this person and make him pay for what happened to his brother? What punishment is appropriate, given the magnitude of Paul's embarrassment? <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you decide which direction you would take the narrative as you continued the story? What details did you incorporate into your narrative to help it flow from the original story?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this excerpt from <i>Tangerine</i> , Paul Fisher grapples with the false understanding his family holds of his brother Erik. How will the truth reconcile with the perspective of his parents?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use <i>Tangerine</i> as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to discuss and take notes on what lessons they can glean from the text about love and loss. Have students focus on the difference between the narrator's view of his brother's loss on the football field and his parents' reaction.

My Mother Really Knew

AUTHOR	Name	Wing Tek Lum
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1998
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organization may make it difficult for students to identify the theme. Remind students to analyze the structure of the poem to identify the idea expressed or event described in each stanza and to infer how they all fit together. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may struggle to interpret the figurative language events or ideas in the poem. Remind students to make inferences to interpret the figurative language used in the poem and to determine the theme of the poem. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may not understand the author’s references to islands, waves, and hurricanes. Contextual knowledge of Wing Tek Lum’s Hawaiian birthplace will help students to understand the poem’s references.
	Lexile®	N/A
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	162
	Skill Lessons	Compare and Contrast
READER AND TASKS	Close Read Prompt	Compare and Contrast: Compare and contrast the conflicts in the family interactions presented in “My Mother Really Knew” and the other two selections--Christmas Carol and Tangerine. Remember to use evidence from all three texts to support your analysis.
	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Art: Visual Simile for Love</p> <p>At the end of this poem the speaker says, “Love, my mother really knew, was like these islands formed in part by tidal waves and hurricanes and the eruptions of volcanoes, which suddenly appear and just as suddenly go away.”</p> <p>Encourage students to interview a parent or family member about love. Below are questions they can use during their interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you define love? If you had to compare love to something else, what would you compare it to? What loves in your life have been most powerful? <p>After their interviews, students should take what they’ve learned to draw a visual simile for love. Students should share their visuals and explanations in class or online</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What most surprised you from your interview with your parent or family member? Was it challenging to decide on a simile to represent love?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	The speaker of the poem “My Mother Really Knew” has lost his father. He was an angry and stubborn man, but the speaker still expresses love and understanding.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “My Mother Really Knew” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to discuss and take notes on what lessons they can glean from the poem about love and loss. Have students analyze the simile in the last stanza of the poem and explain how it connects to the speaker’s relationship with his father.

TEXT COMPLEXITY

UNIT 3: CHASING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Unit Title: Chasing the Impossible

Essential Question: What makes a dream worth pursuing?

Genre Focus: Argumentative Text

Overview

Why do people chase dreams, even if they seem impossible? What makes a dream worth pursuing? How do optimism and grit contribute to the pursuit of a dream?

This Grade 7 unit emphasizes argumentative writing and encourages students to explore these questions through the reading of a wide variety of literature. The selections convey a range of messages about people overcoming obstacles to create a better life for themselves and their community. For example, in the autobiography *We Beat the Street*, a doctor reflects back on his teacher’s positive influence. Barbara Jordan’s keynote speech at the 1976 Democratic National Convention expresses the ideal that “the American dream need not be forever deferred.” And an article by a physicist argues for robotic instead of human exploration of space in pursuit of the seemingly fantastical dream to one day become galactic citizens.

In addition, this unit features two compelling historical letters with strong arguments including the Grand Council Fire of American Indians writing to the mayor of Chicago about respecting native traditions and Mother Jones writing to Theodore Roosevelt to confront the child labor issue.

After exploring a variety of arguments and writing techniques, your students will write an argumentative essay applying what they have learned to their own argumentative writing. Students will write to persuade your school to add a club, a class, or an activity that would help them pursue a dream.

Text Complexity

Grade 7 Unit 3 finds students pivoting away from narrative texts and looking more closely at argumentative writing. Although the genre focus of this unit is argumentative texts, students will also have the opportunity to read several informational texts and two works of fiction and poetry. The Lexile range for this unit is a broad 480-1140, with most texts residing in the 840-1050 range. Students will most likely be challenged by the specialized vocabulary and

required prior knowledge for many of these texts and could benefit from detailed discussions about these things throughout the unit. The sentence structures, text features, content and relationships among ideas make these selections accessible to seventh graders, encouraging them to dig deeper as readers by engaging with texts of varying difficulty.

The first text in this unit, *We Beat the Street*, falls in the lower range of the Lexile band and is a comfortable starting place for students. It introduces students to the theme of the unit, chasing the impossible, and is read alongside a skill lesson in connotation and denotation. Though students may struggle with some location-specific vocabulary, this is an otherwise accessible jumping off point for the unit's more challenging texts. Students continue to explore the unit's main theme of chasing the impossible through their first argumentative texts, the letter "The First Americans." This text is written at a mid Lexile level. Students complete two skill lessons essential to the analysis of all argumentative texts, summarizing and language, style, and audience.

For the purposes of Comparing Within and Across Genres, we have grouped the nonfiction narrative *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* and the folktale *The People Could Fly*. The excerpt from *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* does not provide students with a full background of Harriet Tubman's life, however this is offset by a StudySync episode and students' own prior knowledge of the Underground Railroad. *The People Could Fly* is a lower Lexile level and is taught with a compare and contrast skill lesson where students consider how authors use and alter history when writing fiction.

The unit's second argumentative text is Barbara Jordan's speech "All Together Now." This speech is also a mid Lexile range and will prepare students to tackle the higher level argumentative texts later in the unit. Students will complete three skill lessons with "All Together Now," including arguments and claims, reasons and evidence, and media. The arguments and claims lesson is supported by a SkillsTV episode and, in the media lesson, students will listen to an audio clip of Jordan's original speech and analyze how her delivery affects the impact of the words and her overall argument.

Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers' Rights, "Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward" and "Letter to President Theodore Roosevelt, July 17, 1903" are an informational text, a poem, and a persuasive letter. These texts are grouped for Comparison Within and Across Genres and students will use them to eventually compare and contrast how the intended audience and purpose affects the writing language and style of each text. *Mother Jones* and "Letter to President Theodore Roosevelt" are both texts about the plight of child workers in the early twentieth century and will require significant background understanding from students. "Speech to the Young" is an excellent poem for asking students to consider an author's purpose and intended audience. In comparing these selections, students will draw on previous engagement with the unit's texts to continue growing in future units. This grouping is followed by a fiction selection, *Before We Were Free*, which is topically related in that it is a story about individuals rising above persecution.

"Machines, not people, should be exploring the stars for now" and "Responses to "Machines, not people, should be exploring the stars for now"" are a higher Lexile pair of argumentative texts that ask students to consider both

sides of a complex argument. Both contain specialized vocabulary and nuanced persuasive techniques that may challenge readers. Students' access to these texts are guided by skills lessons on synthesizing for reading comprehension, Greek and Latin affixes and roots, technical language, reasons and evidence, and compare and contrast.

English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources are developed around two texts, "Taking a Stand" and "School Lunches: Who Decides What Students Should Eat?," and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels. For ELLs, these texts serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit. Thus, teachers may use the ELL texts in place of or as extensions for *Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter For Workers' Rights* and "Machines, not people, should be exploring the stars for now."

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing Skills lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

After reading texts about pursuing goals, students will complete an Extended Oral Project which can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and develop their own arguments for pursuing a particular goal in the form of a debate.

We Beat the Street

AUTHOR	Name	Sharon M. Draper, Sampson Davis, Rameck Hunt, George Jenkins
	Gender	Female / Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2006
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an excerpt from a collective autobiography in which three authors share their childhood stories. While it is nonfiction, it shares many of characteristics of a story. Remind students that dialogue is important in revealing plot elements and character traits. Direct students to analyze the dialogue to better understand the story elements. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary specific to the setting, such as <i>Muhammad Ali Avenue, Newark, New Jersey, Broadway, and Lincoln Center</i>, sets the novel in and near New York City. Remind students to use context clues while reading and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words or terms. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who are unfamiliar with Shakespeare might need additional support understanding his importance and the work mentioned in the text, <i>Hamlet</i>.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	860
	Word Count	1,376
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Setting a Purpose for Reading, Connotation and Denotation
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: In this excerpt from his autobiography, Dr. George Jenkins shares the true story of one of his early influences—a teacher who gave him hope for the future. How did this experience affect Jenkins? Explain how Jenkins uses connotations and denotations to show how this early experience shaped his feelings about school and college.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Performance: People Like That</p> <p>Miss Johnson tells George, “There will always be people like that. . . . [Y]ou can either let them hold you back, or you can ignore them and go on and do your thing.”</p> <p>Put students in small groups and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share a time when someone judged them or put pressure on them to act a certain way. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What happened? Who was involved? How did this person’s judgment or expectations impact you? Did you ignore them or allow them to hold you back? Take their experiences and create a scene in which one person faces the judgment and expectations of others. Rehearse their scene. Perform the scene for the class.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this autobiography excerpt, Dr. George Jenkins describes how his third-grade teacher, Miss Johnson, helps him realize for the first time that going to college is a real possibility.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use the excerpt from <i>We Beat the Street</i> as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to discuss why the children in Miss Johnson’s class were motivated to form a Shakespeare Club. Then have students think about what kinds of school clubs will help them explore their own interests.

The First Americans

AUTHOR	Name	The Grand Council Fire of American Indians Richard Connell
	Gender	N/A
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1927
	Genre	Argumentative
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Grand Council Fire of American Indians wrote this letter to Chicago Mayor William Hale Thompson to challenge his push to revise textbooks to be “100 Percent American.” Lead students to discuss what issues pushed the Grand Council Fire of American Indians to write this letter to Mayor Thompson and why these issues are important to the text. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The format of the letter requires students to understand who is referred to through the rhetorical device of direct address (“you”) as well as understand who the pronoun “we” refers to. Highlight for students that this letter uses rhetorical questions (for example, “If the Custer battle was a massacre, what was Wounded Knee?”) to emphasize the argument that history books should treat Native Americans more fairly. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The letter was written in 1927, when Chicago Mayor William Hale Thompson won re-election by campaigning that American history textbooks show bias in favor of the British. Provide background knowledge to students who may be unfamiliar with historical references (for example, the battle with Custer, Wounded Knee) as well as important Native American chiefs such as Black Partridge and Shabbona.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	900
	Word Count	703
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Summarizing, Language, Style, and Audience
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: Summarize the main points of the letter and explain how the authors’ use of language and style helps to clarify and emphasize the main points. How does the authors’ word choice affect the audience or reader?
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Analysis: Presidential Campaign Slogans</p> <p>Every presidential candidate throughout history has had a unique campaign slogan.</p> <p>Ask student to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research presidential campaign slogans in American history. Select one they think is interesting to investigate further. Research the presidential campaign, time period, and impact of that particular slogan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did the slogan mean? How was it relevant given the time period? What voter concerns did this slogan attempt to address? Did this slogan articulate the presidential candidate’s main focus or goal? Did this presidential candidate win? How did his slogan impact his success or lack thereof? Write the presidential candidate—dead or alive—a letter in which you either praise or critique his particular slogan. <p>Finally, have students form small groups to discuss their findings. Encourage them to use the research questions above to guide their conversations.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this letter, the Grand Council Fire of American Indians asks the mayor of Chicago to respect American Indian culture and avoid letting their memories and dreams vanish.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The First Americans” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. Have students analyze the language, style, and audience of the letter. Then remind students to plan their use of language, style, and audience when they write their persuasive letters.

Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad

AUTHOR	Name	Ann Petry
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1955
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Petry references “Go Down, Moses” and Denmark Vesey. Students may not have the background knowledge to understand the significance of this song and person. Remind students that “Go Down, Moses” was a code used by enslaved people to communicate and that Vesey was a free black man, executed for planning a slave rebellion. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many complex sentences with modifiers and clauses may challenge students. Remind students to read carefully and reread sections that are confusing, in chunks if necessary.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	970
	Word Count	1,026
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Narrative: Write a story of approximately 300 words about a typical day in Harriet Tubman’s life when she was six years old. Generate ideas for your narrative, using these questions: What events might have taken place? What might she have done, heard, seen, and thought about? Base your narrative on details in this passage.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Reflection: Explicit vs. Implicit Lessons Learned</p> <p>Some of the lessons Harriet Tubman learned as a child were explicitly taught and others she “unconsciously absorbed.”</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the terms “explicit” and “implicit.” Divide a paper in half lengthwise. Label one side “Explicit Lessons” and the other side “Implicit Lessons.” Generate a personal list of explicit and implicit lessons learned through life experience. Select one explicit and one implicit lesson to focus on in a written reflection. Write about how the explicit lesson was taught to them and how they learned the implicit lesson. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What happened in each situation? Which lesson has been most powerful as you have aged? <p>Finally, have students form small groups to discuss what they have learned both explicitly and implicitly about life.</p>
	Connect to Essential Question	The excerpt from Ann Petry’s biography describes how a young Harriet gains a glimpse of freedom from a wise enslaved African named Ben. Students will read this text in preparation for a comparative reading and writing lesson to follow.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Extended Writing Project	<p><i>Students can study the excerpt from Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad in preparation for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to review the passages describing Harriet’s father, Ben, and to discuss how word choice helps to convey the author’s thoughts and feelings about Ben. Tell students that when they their argumentative essay, they should carefully choose words and phrases to reveal their thoughts and feelings about their chosen topics.</i></p>

The People Could Fly

AUTHOR	Name	Virginia Hamilton
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1985
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may struggle to understand that the author retells a folktale that was passed down by generations of African Americans. Remind students that storytelling was used as a way to connect enslaved Africans in the United States to African traditions. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may need help synthesizing the elements of this story because it blends fiction with reality. Tell students that this story is a folktale that blends elements of fantasy with the real-life experience of enslaved Africans. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused about the setting; they may not have enough familiarity with life during that time period. Remind them that the Master, Overseer, and Driver characters reflect part of the operation of an American plantation.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	480
	Word Count	656
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Compare and Contrast: Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad and “The People Could Fly” are about similar topics but in different genres. The first is an historical account of slavery in American history. The second is a fictional portrayal of the same topic or theme. How did Virginia Hamilton use historical facts in “The People Could Fly”? What changes does she make and what are the effects? Remember to support your ideas with evidence from the texts.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Art: Graphic Folktale</p> <p>Students will transform the events from this folktale into a graphic story combining text with drawings.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide the story into sections (e.g., Africans captured for slavery, ship ride to the United States, Sarah working in the field with her baby). Create a draft of a storyboard with quick sketches depicting each scene. Select dialogue from the excerpt to include in the graphic story. Decide which scenes need captions. <p>Once students have completed a rough draft of their storyboard, they should take their rough sketches and turn them into a polished graphic story complete with colorful illustrations and text adapted from the folktale. Students can use pen and paper or an online comic creator to create their stories.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	<p>Newbery medalist Virginia Hamilton’s retelling of an African folktale is all about the dream of freedom. For the people enslaved in America, there was little reason for hope, but through folktales like this one, they could at least imagine a day when they might one day be free.</p> <p>Both the biography excerpt and the folktale examine the physical hardships and anguish experienced by enslaved Africans during a tragic period of American history. Students examine how Hamilton uses and adapts historical events by comparing the folktale to Petry’s historical account.</p>
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	<p>Students can use “The People Could Fly” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Have students brainstorm research questions related to the selection. Then show students how to evaluate a research question to make sure that it is not too narrow or too broad for the scope of the research paper assignment.</p>

All Together Now

AUTHOR	Name	Barbara Jordan
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1976
	Genre	Argumentative
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The social and governmental context of this speech may require some background building with students. Discuss with students the history of race relations in the United States to help provide context for Barbara Jordan’s experiences. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan uses argumentative text elements to communicate her message. She presents what she sees as harmful to the nation and suggests improvements. She explores the consequences for different groups. Remind students to focus on key points she puts forth and the reasons and evidence she provides to support her ideas. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barbara Jordan notes that her being a keynote speaker is special. Jordan’s presence is an illustration of hope, and her speech a message of unity and equality. Help students recollect knowledge about race relations in United States history and other figures who have used public speaking as a platform to unify the nation.
	Lexile®	840
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	1,191
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Arguments and Claims, Reasons and Evidence, Media
	Close Read Prompt	Discussion: Write notes to prepare for a collaborative conversation with a partner or a small group to discuss how to bring students in your community together in a positive way. First, establish a clear position by stating the most significant problem you see within the student community. Then provide reasons and evidence that support your arguments and claims. Finally, work together with your partner or group to reach a consensus about what actions students and staff should take to create a stronger student community.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Speech: Delivering on America’s Promise</p> <p>Watch Jordan’s keynote speech at the 1976 Democratic National Convention. Then discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What makes her delivery so powerful? What did you notice about the language she used? How is the experience of watching the speech different from reading it? <p>Then ask students to write a keynote speech (approximately 3–5 minutes) that addresses the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the promise of America today? What challenges do we face as a country that make this promise hard to deliver? What does government need to specifically do to fulfill this promise? <p>Then have students record themselves delivering their speech. Finally have students form small groups to critique speeches, using these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the speech address the questions above? Does the speaker use powerful language to communicate his/her points? How does the delivery of the speech add to or distract from the content?
	UNIT CONNECTION	<p>Connect to Essential Question</p> <p>This excerpt from Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan’s keynote speech at the 1976 Democratic National Convention makes the argument that we should strive to achieve national harmony and unity.</p> <p>Connect to Extended Writing Project</p> <p>Students can use “All Together Now” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. Have students analyze the rhetorical features of the speech. Then remind students to plan their use of rhetoric when they write their persuasive letters.</p>

Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers' Rights

AUTHOR	Name	Judith Pinkerton Josephson
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1996
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This excerpt describes the people, ideas, and events that influenced Mother Jones to take a stand on child labor. It also illustrates the influence she had on other people, ideas, and events once she took action. Prompt students to look for key details that describe or explain these influences and to highlight cause-and-effect relationships.
		<p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judith Pinkerton Josephson uses technical language to give authority to her subject. Students will encounter language used in economics, history, and social studies. Review technical and multiple-meaning words, such as strike, which may pose a challenge for students. Encourage students to use context clues. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mary Harris Jones was a labor leader during a time in which industrial workers—including children—often faced harsh working conditions. Provide background knowledge to students, as they may lack prior knowledge of this period in history, making it difficult for them to put Mother Jones's actions in context.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	930
	Word Count	2,138
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	Personal Response: Do you think Mother Jones was an effective leader? Write a brief response to this question. Remember to cite evidence from the text to support your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Performance: Life as a Textile Worker</p> <p>On the march from Philadelphia to Sagamore Hill, Mother Jones “took along costumes, makeup, and jewelry so the children could stop in towns along the route and put on plays about the struggle of textile workers.” Break students into group and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the lives of young textile workers in the early 1900s. Work collaboratively to develop a scene that portrays a specific challenge faced by young textile workers. Write a script and rehearse the scene. Perform their scene for the class. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What similarities did you notice between scenes? Did any of the scenes teach you something about life as a young textile worker that you did not previously know?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	The biography excerpt describes how Mother Jones rallied a group of child mill workers to march in pursuit of the dream of labor rights. Students will read this text in preparation for a comparative reading and writing lesson to follow.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers' Rights” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of Mother Jones's persuasive methods to write correspondence about a school class, club, or activity that will help achieve their dream.

Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward

AUTHOR	Name	Judith Pinkerton Josephson
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1932
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The title of this poem twice calls the work a speech. Students may wonder why this literary work, which is clearly a poem, is identified as a speech in the title. Engage students in a discussion about why the poet decided to call this poem a speech. Explain how poetry can be used to inspire and engage listeners like a speech. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The poem uses metaphors such as “down-keepers” and “harmony-hushers” as well as unusual phrasing such as “Live in the along” that require interpretation and will challenge students. Review the definition and purpose of a metaphor and other types of figurative language. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may struggle to interpret the meaning of the poem and to make connections from one part of the poem to the next. Reading and discussing the poem line by line may help students make connections.
	Lexile®	N/A
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	49
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	Poetry: Write a poem in response to “Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward” about how it feels to achieve the “hard home-run” that Brooks mentions. Use poetic elements and structure as you craft your poem.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Performance: Spoken-Word Poetry Battle</p> <p>In her poem “Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward,” Gwendolyn Brooks gives young people advice about life.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a life lesson they have learned that has helped them lead a happier life or a life lesson they wish they had learned earlier. Use that life lesson to inspire a poem. Write their own 12-line poems about how to live life. Rehearse their poems in preparation for a spoken-word poetry battle. Assign each student a number, and draw random pairs who will compete against each other in the battle. <p>After each performance, students will anonymously vote for their favorite spoken-word poetry performance to determine a winner.</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was it more challenging to identify a life lesson or write the poem? What did you notice about the strongest performances? What did they have in common? What made them stand out?
	UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question
Connect to Extended Writing Project		Students can use “Speech to the Young” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of Gwendolyn Brooks’s ideas about life’s challenges to write correspondence about a school class, club, or activity that will help them achieve their dream.

Letter to President Theodore Roosevelt, July 17, 1903

AUTHOR	Name	Mother Jones
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1903
	Genre	Argumentative
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author communicates her ideas via a public letter. The letter was published in the newspaper instead of being delivered to the recipient. Its content was widely read. Explain that the letter was meant to persuade the American public to support the cause in addition to convincing the president to act. This may help students understand that the letter has more than one audience and purpose. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author includes several references to both local and national events, problems, and potential solutions. Encourage readers to link these details to understand the author’s main ideas and reason for writing. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be unfamiliar with the history of the textile industry and the struggles its workers, including children, faced. Explain that the letter was written in the early twentieth century. During this time, working conditions were harsh and there were few laws to protect workers.
	Lexile®	1370
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	489
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Language, Style, & Audience, Author’s Purpose and Point of View
	Close Read Prompt	Compare and Contrast: Compare and contrast the intended audience and the purpose in the excerpt from Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers’ Rights, “Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward,” and “Letter to President Theodore Roosevelt, July 17, 1903.” Why did the authors write these texts? Explain how the audience and the purpose of each text impact its style and language.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: A Letter to the President</p> <p>Mary Harris Jones wrote a public letter to President Roosevelt highlighting the harsh conditions experienced by children working in factories. Even though President Roosevelt did not respond to the letter, the letter reached an audience. Students will write a letter to the president about their issue and end it with a call to action.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select an issue they care about. Research their issue to gather facts they can use to write their letter. Use the business letter format to write the President of the United States a letter about this issue. Present the issue clearly, state their position, call the president to action, and explain what needs to be done. <p>Once students complete their letters, pair students so they can provide each other with feedback. Then ask them to print their letters and bring an envelope and stamp to use to send their letters to the White House.</p>
	Connect to Essential Question	<p>Persisting in her dream for labor rights, Mother Jones sent this letter to the president calling for his support.</p> <p>All three selections—a biography, a poem, and a letter—show ways that people confront obstacles between themselves and their dreams. Students will be able to compare and contrast how the intended audience and purpose affects the writing style and language of each text.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Letter to President Theodore Roosevelt” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt some of Mother Jones’s persuasive methods to write correspondence about a school class, club, or activity that will help them achieve their dream.

Before We Were Free

AUTHOR	Name	Julia Alvarez
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2002
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plot structure may confuse readers because the “events” are mostly psychological, not actions. They involve the narrator’s learning the truth about the dictator and her uncle’s involvement in the resistance. Encourage students to draw a plot map to keep track of events and the narrator’s realizations.
		<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This story is set in the 1960s in the Dominican Republic, a year before the assassination of the brutal dictator, Rafael Trujillo, who had controlled the country since the 1930s. Briefly explain the story’s historical background. Encourage readers to infer the dangerous situation the family is in, using this background as well as the narrator’s limited point of view.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	690
	Word Count	1,349
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Setting
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Literary Analysis: Although Papi says, “Everything will be fine” regarding the secret police (SIM), Alvarez describes a feeling of omnipresent terror in the Torre household. Identify and analyze how the setting shows that Papi and the others are afraid and/or have something to fear. Be sure to use textual evidence to support your response.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Art: Trapped Butterflies</p> <p>In this excerpt, the narrator hears her father refer to the “butterflies” while he is on the phone.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research “the butterflies,” or Mirabal sisters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who were the Mirabal sisters? What were they fighting for? Why were they called “the butterflies”? <p>Ask students to take what they have learned from their research about the Mirabal sisters, combined with the details from this excerpt, to create a piece of artwork titled “Trapped Butterflies.” The goal of this artwork is to show the lack of freedom that individuals experienced during Rafael Trujillo’s dictatorship in the Dominican Republic.</p> <p>Invite students to display their artwork in the classroom and/or online.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Julia Alvarez’s novel excerpt explores how a family in the Dominican Republic copes during a time in which government surveillance suspends their freedoms and dreams.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use the excerpt from Before We Were Free as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Have students discuss which countries or cultures they would like to learn more about. Then have them think of different clubs that they could form to explore those cultures. In addition, ask students to imagine what kinds of activities the club members would participate in.

Machines, not people, should be exploring the stars for now

AUTHOR	Name	Don Lincoln
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2007
	Genre	Argumentative
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be unfamiliar with the genre of op-ed, a type of article that expresses the opinion of a writer not affiliated with the publication. Let students know what an op-ed is. Remind them that op-eds often presume background knowledge. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may need help making connections between the author’s opinion and the specific evidence he provides. The author also refutes counterpoints. Model connecting opinions to evidence, and preview rhetorical techniques like refuting counterpoints. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may need assistance understanding domain-specific vocabulary such as “inhospitable” and “interstellar.” Remind students to use a dictionary and context clues to define unfamiliar words.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1140
	Word Count	965
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Synthesizing, Technical Language, Greek & Latin Affixes & Roots, Reasons & Evidence
	Close Read Prompt	Informative: Imagine that you are writing a flier to gain support for America to invest in space technology and exploration. Which points from the article would you include in the flier to persuade your readers? Write the text for this flier, using information from the article and, if necessary, other sources. Use technical language, and include a claim with reasons and evidence to show your audience your stance.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: Humans <i>Should</i> Explore Space</p> <p>In his essay, Don Lincoln, Ph.D, presents the argument that initial explorations of space should be done by robots, not humans. Have students identify Lincoln’s main points and construct an opposing argument in favor of human beings exploring space.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reread Lincoln’s essay and identify all of his main points in favor of robots exploring space. Counter each of Lincoln’s points with a point in favor of human exploration. Conduct research to back up each counterpoint with strong, credible evidence. Write an essay presenting a thorough opposing argument in favor of humans exploring space instead of robots. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which position did you actually agree with? If you agreed with Lincoln, how did you approach generating your counterpoints? What process did you use to find and evaluate the credibility of the information you used to support your points?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this essay, physicist Don Lincoln argues that sending robots instead of humans to space for the time being would best serve the long-term dream of becoming galactic citizens.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Machines, not people, should be exploring the stars for now” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. Have students analyze the rhetorical features of the article. Then remind students to plan their use of rhetoric when they write their persuasive letters.

Responses to “Machines, not people, should be exploring the stars for now”

AUTHOR	Name	StudySync
	Gender	N/A
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2017
	Genre	Argumentative
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused about the purpose of the text; it may be unclear that it is a series of responses. Remind students that the purpose of each response is to either agree or disagree with Lincoln. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused by the genre, because the responses are informal and less structured. Support students as they identify or determine the key argument in each response. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused by how each response connects to the ideas in Lincoln’s article. Support students in tracking how each response connects to ideas in Lincoln’s article.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1050
	Word Count	669
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Discussion: In this informational text, a series of people respond to an argument about how America should invest its money in space exploration. Pretend you are a member of the Congressional budget committee, which helps decide how to spend America’s money, and debate the issue with your classmates. Should the government spend money on manned missions to space, or should they focus on robotic missions? Discuss this question with a group of your peers. To prepare for your discussion, use the graphic organizer to write down your ideas about the prompt. Support your ideas with evidence from the text. You may also reference Don Lincoln’s original essay. After your discussion, you will write a reflection.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Activity: How Strong Are These Responses?</p> <p>Put students into small groups for this activity. Ask each group to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read each of the six responses to Lincoln’s essay. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each response. Rank the six responses in order of weakest (#6) to strongest (#1) and be prepared to defend their ranking. <p>Follow-up activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post numbers 1–6 around the classroom. Read the first response and ask groups to stand next to the number that corresponds with their ranking for that response. This will help students visually understand the similarities and differences in their choices. Ask two different groups to explain their rankings. <p>Repeat for each of the remaining five responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reflect, ask students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What surprised you about the way the class ranked these responses? What made certain responses stronger than others? What were the weaker responses missing?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	This series of responses to Don Lincoln’s article shows a range of agreements and disagreements about how humans should best pursue the dream of space exploration.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Responses to ‘Machines, not people, should be exploring the stars for now’ ” as a model for their Extended Writing Project. Ask students to identify which response they find the most persuasive and which they found the least persuasive, and to explain why. Then remind students to use features of persuasive writing when writing their letters.

TEXT COMPLEXITY

UNIT 4: THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

Unit Title: The Moment of Truth

Essential Question: How can one event change everything?

Genre Focus: Informational Text

Overview

In every great story, there comes at least one crucial event. Moments of innovation, moments of struggle, moments of soaring triumph or crushing defeat form the core of our legends and histories. Recognizing important events and moments will help readers better understand the texts they read and connect the ideas within those texts to their own lives.

This Grade 7 unit focuses on informational texts that dissect the events and moments that shaped the lives of extraordinary individuals. Students learn how a moment can activate a chain of events that result in dramatic change. For example, in *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, William Kamkwamba recalls a moment in a Malawian library that would lead him to build a windmill out of scrap parts. In “The Power of Student Peer Leaders”, students will see how a conversation with a teacher lead Moises Urena on a path to leadership and college.

Students will have the chance to analyze the pivotal moments in the classic short stories “Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut and “The Three Questions” by Leo Tolstoy. They will read Ernest Thayer’s poem “Casey at the Bat” and an excerpt from Viola Canales’ award-winning novel *The Tequila Worm*.

At the end of the unit, students will reflect on the events in these texts to produce an informative essay about the power of moments and key events. Applying what they have learned about informational writing, the students will weave together evidence from three texts to explain how a single moment or key event can change everything.

Text Complexity

In Grade 7 Unit 4 students will continue reading texts with a genre emphasis on informational texts. Throughout this unit students will be reminded of earlier skills by reading fiction excerpts and a poem, while also improving their

ability to analyze several informational texts. The selections in this unit fall in a Lexile band of 710-1270, with most texts residing in the 800-1090 range. Many of the texts in this unit will reinforce the lessons students have learned in previous units, while also illuminating the various ways authors construct informational writing. The featured sentence structures, text features, content and relationships among ideas make these selections accessible to seventh graders, encouraging them to think more broadly as learners by engaging with texts of varying difficulty.

Unit 4 begins with two texts focusing on the topic of baseball that will introduce students to the theme of the unit: a moment of truth. Students may or may not be familiar with the history of this sport and could benefit from a discussion about it before reading. The first text, the poem “Casey At the Bat,” is an approachable starting point for the unit. Some students may struggle with domain-specific vocabulary and recognizing the ballad structure of the poem, but a reading comprehension skill lesson in making inferences and a skill lesson in figurative language, as well as a StudySync TV episode, will aid students in overcoming these challenges. The second text, “Hitting big league fastball ‘clearly impossible,’” is the highest Lexile selection in the unit and sets the tone for the informational text emphasis for the rest of the unit. The subject of this text, baseball, will likely be interesting to many students. Additionally, there is a video on baseball speeds which accompanies the text. Students will further develop informational writing analysis skills by completing a lesson on technical language and media, which may also help students understand the various genres of informational writing available to them.

Throughout the unit, students will read many text selections within a similar Lexile band and relating to the theme of a moment of truth. “Harrison Bergeron” will challenge students with an opinionless narrator but this will be offset by several skill lessons, including a lesson on point of view. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope* will familiarize students with the informational text subgenre of memoir and provide additional access to the text through a skill lesson on textual evidence and informational text elements. The article “The Last Human Light (from *What If?*)” is higher Lexile, but will pull students in with its incorporation of graphic features and a unique structure. Students will further develop their informational text analysis abilities by completing a reading comprehension skill lessons on evaluating detail as well as skill lessons on word meaning, media, and informational text structure. *Barrio Boy* is one of the highest Lexile texts in the unit and may challenge students with its geographical references and spanish language, however a StudySyncTV episode should help students access this text. These grade-appropriate texts work together to build skills necessary for accessing all difficulties of texts in this unit.

For the purposes of Comparing Within and Across Genres, we have grouped *Fever 1793* and *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793*. Although each text rests on either end of the Lexile spectrum for this unit, and occupies different genres, both focus on the 1793 Philadelphia Yellow Fever Epidemic. Students first read *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* and may be challenged with specialized vocabulary. After reading *Fever 1793* students will complete a compare and contrast skill lesson to consider the author used or altered history to craft the story.

Additionally, we have grouped “The Voice in My Head,” “The Three Questions” and *The Tequila Worm*. An informational article, a short story, and a novel excerpt, these texts are in the middle to high Lexile range for the unit. After reading these texts, students will have examined moments in which a person’s outlook is dramatically

changed because of the influence of a mentor. A skills lesson in character and connotation and denotation rounds out this Comparison Within and Across Genres and will prepare students to more fully engage with a wide variety of difficult texts.

English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELL instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources are developed around two texts, “Belles of the Ballgame” and “The Future of Wind Energy,” and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels. For ELLs, these texts serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit. Thus, teachers may use the ELL texts in place of or as extensions for “Casey at the Bat” and The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind.

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing Skills lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

After reading texts about world-changing moments, students will complete an Extended Oral Project which can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and give an informational presentation about a notable person.

Casey At the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic Sung in the Year 1888

AUTHOR	Name	Ernest Lawrence Thayer
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1888
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The poet uses a suspenseful tone and hyperbole to build interest toward an anticlimax. Support students interpreting the language of the poem and connecting the language to the author's purpose. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This poem is a type of narrative poem called a ballad. The poet uses a strict rhyme scheme and long sentences with frequent pauses to create a steady rhythm. Support students in deciphering the narrative and in reading the long sentences. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domain-specific vocabulary, such as “at the bat” and “inning,” may need defining, and the general rules of baseball may need some explanation. Remind students to use context clues in the text, or reference materials such as a dictionary, to help define archaic language and other unfamiliar words.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	574
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Making Inferences, Figurative Language
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: In the poem, Casey is absolutely revered by his fans. How does the poet's use of figurative language reveal the power that Casey has over his fans? Find examples of figurative language in the poem that demonstrate this power.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Perform: Sports Ballad</p> <p>“Casey at the Bat” is the quintessential baseball poem. Students will explore the drama of their favorite sport through poetry.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a sport they enjoy playing or watching. Write a ballad (poem or song) telling a story of hope, drama, bravado, defeat, and humor in the context of this sport. Use short stanzas with rhyming lines, as in “Casey at the Bat.” Record a dramatic reading of their ballad to share. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was your ballad inspired by a specific memory or moment from your childhood? Were the characters in the poem inspired by actual people? How did recording a dramatic reading change or alter the meaning of your ballad.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this classic poem, a baseball team and its ardent fans renew their hope for a comeback win when the team's star player steps up to the plate. Will Casey save the day, or will he fail to get a hit during the most critical moment of the game?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use the poem “Casey at the Bat” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may identify moments in the poem that create a significant impact to write their informational essay.

Hitting big league fastball ‘clearly impossible’

AUTHOR	Name	Paul Recer
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2000
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The text introduces a big idea—baseball—and then breaks down into smaller pieces the concept of hitting the ball to explain the complexity of hitting the ball. Readers may get lost in the details and struggle to grasp the main idea. Point out to students that the last three paragraphs jump back in time to reference the 1880s, as this may be confusing for some readers. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readers must link the details from the text with a general knowledge of baseball to follow the essential idea. Encourage students to visualize the physics and time-dependent aspects in the text to understand it fully.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1270
	Word Count	494
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Technical Language, Media
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Informative: Think about how the media work together to help the audience visualize and understand the difficulty of hitting a major league fastball. How do the text and the video work together to convey information and enhance the meaning of the selection? Write a response to this question. Make sure to use evidence from the text and the video to support your response.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Debate: What Is the Most Challenging Feat in Sports?</p> <p>There is a heated debate about which sports phenomenon is the “hardest thing to do.” Students will take a position and defend it in a formal debate.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a moment in sports that they think is the “hardest thing to do” and build an argument to support their position. Is it a backflip on the balance beam in gymnastics, throwing a Hail Mary pass to win the game in football, hitting a hole in one in golf, or hitting a baseball, as Paul Recer argues? Research their chosen sporting action or phenomenon and collect compelling evidence to prepare for the debate. Construct an argument with a clear claim, evidence, and thorough analysis. Include rhetorical devices to persuade the audience. <p>Once students have constructed their arguments, invite pairs of students to debate. Allow the class to vote for the position they think was most compelling.</p>
	Connect to Essential Question	Major league baseball players have just a brief moment—less than a quarter of a second—to judge the speed and location of an oncoming pitch, yet they can still hit the ball. This informational article and video ask how such a feat is even possible.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use the article “Hitting big league fastball ‘clearly impossible’” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt Paul Recer’s methods of explaining how and why a moment created a significant impact to write their informational essay.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope

AUTHOR	Name	William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2009
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused because the text is an excerpt of a memoir. Remind students that the excerpt gives an account of events that happened to the author when he was younger. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may have difficulty understanding which information is related to his experience and which is quoted from the textbook. Remind students to look for quotation marks and clues like “I read on” to show information is from the textbook. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused by the setting and lack some basic background knowledge about energy. Remind students that the setting is modern-day Malawi and that the sun and the wind can produce energy.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	970
	Word Count	970
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence, Informational Text Elements
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: The author explains that a windmill was “more than just power.” Why is a windmill so important in Malawi? How would a windmill affect the people of Malawi? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Presentation: Understanding How Renewable Resources Work</p> <p>William Kamkwamba harnessed the wind. What green energy source would students like to see harnessed? Challenge students to learn more about how renewable energy sources work.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research a renewable energy source to find out how it works. Use what you learned to build a model or draw a diagram labeling the parts of this renewable energy source. Prepare a short presentation to explain to the class how this specific energy source functions. How does it turn energy produced by nature into energy we can use to power our lives? <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After listening to your peers’ presentations, which energy source or sources seem most promising? Do you think it is possible to completely replace fossil fuels with renewable energy?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	William Kamkwamba was only fourteen years old when he found an old textbook that inspired him to change his life—and the lives of his neighbors—forever. How can a new discovery change everything?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. To help write their informational essay, students may identify a moment that created a significant impact on William Kamkwamba or a moment in which he created a significant impact for himself and his community.

An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793

AUTHOR	Name	Jim Murphy
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2003
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be unfamiliar with the setting of Philadelphia in 1793. Encourage students to visualize the city with its horse-drawn wagons and half-finished buildings. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sentences are long, with extensive use of pronouns. There is little dialogue in the selection because no one knows exactly what people said at the time. Occasionally there will be quotations from written sources, however. Recommend that students pay attention to the antecedents of pronouns so they do not get confused. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be unfamiliar with yellow fever as well as medical terms, such as <i>laudanum</i>, <i>bile</i>, <i>bilious fever</i>, and <i>malignity</i>. Explain that yellow fever is a deadly viral disease spread by mosquitoes and that medical terms should be defined using context clues or a dictionary.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1090
	Word Count	920
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Summary: Notice that the text says that Dr. Rush “worked from early in the morning until late at night” on a number of tasks, including “writing letters and papers.” Physicians often write papers about health-related topics for publication in medical journals. Imagine that you are Dr. Hodge, Dr. Foulke, or Dr. Rush. Summarize for city politicians the health situation in Philadelphia in 1793. What might you say? Write an objective summary introducing the central or main idea and the details that support it, such as facts, definitions, and examples. Be sure not to include your feelings or judgments. Support your writing with textual evidence.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: A Doctor’s Journal</p> <p>After reading <i>An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793</i>, ask students to think about what they’ve learned about yellow fever and use those details to write a journal entry from the perspective of Dr. Benjamin Rush after seeing Catherine and meeting with Dr. Hugh Hodge and Dr. John Foulke to discuss her condition.</p> <p>The journal entry should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore Dr. Rush’s thoughts on Catherine’s condition Consider different treatment options Include information about the humors in the body Reflect on the other similar cases he has seen Draw conclusions from his perspective about what he thinks is causing the yellow fever <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the details from this excerpt help you to write your journal entry? Was there any information you had to look up or research about yellow fever or treatments to complete this journal entry?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	<p><i>An American Plague</i> offers readers a factual look at the 1793 epidemic: the people who tried to save the sick, what caused the plague, and the various remedies that doctors tried. Readers also get a look at how government leaders tried to govern a panicked city. How did this traumatic event in history challenge Philadelphia and the people who lived there?</p>
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	<p>Students can use <i>An American Plague</i> as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt Jim Murphy’s somewhat unusual practice of stating the main idea or controlling purpose of their essay in the final paragraph.</p>

Fever 1793

AUTHOR	Name	Laurie Halse Anderson
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2002
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although this and the previous selection both are about the 1793 yellow fever epidemic, they were not written for the same purpose. Explain that the last piece was nonfiction and all the people described were real and lived at the time. The nonfiction piece was written to inform readers. This piece is an excerpt from a novel and was written to entertain. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This novel excerpt is an example of historical fiction, which mixes real people, places, or events of the past with made-up, or fictional, elements. Encourage students to work on distinguishing what is real in the story from what is fictional. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms such as dowry, scullery maid, and Quaker may require explanation; the types of workers who are missing as the wagon passes the construction area may also be unfamiliar: carpenters, masons, glaziers, plasterers, and painters. Define words as needed, or remind students to use context clues, footnotes, or a dictionary.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	710
	Word Count	1,282
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	Compare and Contrast: An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 and Fever 1793 both describe people reacting to a terrifying disease in their community: yellow fever. Compare and contrast people’s understanding of the disease in the selections. Then explain how people’s understanding of the disease influences their responses. Use evidence from both texts to support your ideas.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Research Project: 1793 Yellow Fever Epidemic in Philadelphia</p> <p>Break students into small groups. Ask them to research the yellow fever epidemic that hit Philadelphia in 1793. Then students will use their research to design a presentation for the class using poster paper or an online presentation tool. Their presentations should answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What caused yellow fever? How was it spread? Why was the disease called “yellow fever”? How did yellow fever affect the human body? Who was at the highest risk of getting yellow fever? How many people died? How long did the epidemic last in Philadelphia? Who is Benjamin Rush and what was his role in the outbreak? What brought an end to the epidemic? <p>Once they’ve finished their presentations, allow each group 5 minutes to present their findings to the class.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In <i>Fever 1793</i> , author Laurie Halse Anderson transports readers back to the city of Philadelphia during a yellow fever epidemic in the summer of 1793. Young Matilda Cook, a survivor of the dread disease, must cope with how she can help others who are now suffering. The best and worst of people are brought out during these trying times. What will Matilda do next? Will this event change her life forever?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can find inspiration from Laurie Halse Anderson’s use of description in <i>Fever 1793</i> as they write their informational essays. Have students look at how Anderson describes events, people, and places in the excerpt.

Harrison Bergeron

AUTHOR	Name	Kurt Vonnegut
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1961
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The third-person narrator does not tell readers what to think about this society. Explain to students that readers have to interpret the meaning of the story based on their own analysis.
		<p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The word “handicap” needs to be defined as it is used in golf and other sports, as an extra requirement given to a better player to make the game more competitive. Remind students that context clues in text or a dictionary can help define unfamiliar words. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be unfamiliar with the Constitution and its amendments. Explain the Constitution is the governing document of the United States, and amendments are additions to it. In 1961, there were 23 amendments. By 2017, there were 27 amendments. The idea that all people are created equal is one of the core values of the United States.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	830
	Word Count	2,189
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Word Patterns and Relationships, Textual Evidence, Point of View
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: Equality is part of the philosophy of American culture. What statement is Vonnegut making about the idea of equality? Explain how Vonnegut uses an omniscient point of view and other details to suggest an implicit and explicit message about equality. Support your writing with evidence from the text.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: The 211th, 212th, 213th Amendments</p> <p>In “Harrison Bergeron” there are 213 Amendments to the Constitution (186 more than the United States has right now). Amendments 211, 212, and 213 were written to ensure that all people were equal.</p> <p>Put students in small groups and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read through the 27 Amendments to the Constitution to understand the style, language, format, and length of the current Amendments. What do the Amendments have in common? Review the details in Vonnegut’s short story about life in 2081. What rules or amendments needed to be in place to make everyone “equal”? Write Amendments 211, 212, and 213. What would they specifically say? How would each Amendment move society towards Vonnegut’s portrayal of life in 2081? <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did you learn about the United States as you prepared to write your own amendments? How do your ideas compare to Vonnegut’s?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	This short story explores a future dystopian government that takes one of America’s core political values to the extreme. What happens during one citizen’s dramatic moment of rebellion against this government’s obsessive quest for equality?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Harrison Bergeron” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may reread the story to identify moments that create a significant impact to write their informational essay.

The Last Human Light (from ‘What If’)

AUTHOR	Name	Randall Munroe
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2004
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This article is an example of informational science writing. The technical language and explanations presented in the article might be challenging for some students. Remind students to read slowly and reread confusing parts. Encourage students to use context clues or a dictionary as needed. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the title, the phrase “human light” means light that uses a human-provided fuel supply. The opening question asks how long that light would last if humans disappeared. Remind students to track the connection of ideas between each section and the central question of the article. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will vary in their understanding of electricity, energy, and other science concepts that underlie this article. Encourage students to share their science knowledge as they discuss the text.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1150
	Word Count	1,529
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Word Meaning, Media, Informational Text Structure
	Close Read Prompt	Informative: Munroe presents information about multiple topics and categories relating to different power sources. How does the author’s organization help readers understand the difficult concepts presented in the text? How do the illustrations and graphic features contribute to your understanding of Munroe’s overall argument and the topic? Write a response to these questions. Make sure to support your response with evidence from the text.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Flipbook: What If?</p> <p>What if? questions can have complicated and ambiguous answers. Students will have the opportunity to generate, research, and answer a What if? question using the medium of a flip book.</p> <p>First, ask your class to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine that humans have disappeared from Earth. Generate their own What if? questions about this new reality. <p>Once every student has generated a What if? question, ask them to fold their papers so the questions are not visible, and then collect the papers.</p> <p>Pair students for this activity. Allow each pair to randomly select a question.</p> <p>Each pair will need to research their question and create a flipbook that answers the What if? question they’ve selected. The flipbook should be composed of pictures that change gradually from page to page, revealing the answer.</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was most challenging about creating a flipbook? What did you learn about your topic that was surprising?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	What would happen if humans suddenly disappeared? Would manmade lights rapidly go out? How long would they continue to shine after that moment? This informational text gives a surprising answer.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Last Human Light” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may adopt Randall Munroe’s methods of explaining how and why a moment created a significant impact to write their informational essay.

The Power of Student Peer Leaders

AUTHOR	Name	David Bornstein
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2018
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be unfamiliar with the genre of op-ed, a type of article that expresses the opinion of a writer not affiliated with the publication. Let students know what an op-ed is. Remind them that op-eds often presume background knowledge. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult vocabulary, such as FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which college students need to fill out to get assistance with college costs) and the high school grade levels (sophomore, junior senior), may need defining. Remind students to use context clues while reading and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1190
	Word Count	1,852
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	Personal Response: Why do you think it's important to have mentors in your life? Write a response in which you answer this question. Use examples from the essay "The Power of Student Peer Leaders" to support your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: Who is your mentor?</p> <p>Students will identify a person in their lives who has had a significant impact on them and consider what they've learned from that person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to think about the most influential person in their lives. Who has challenged them the most? Whose voice do they hear inside their head when they are faced with one of life's many challenges? How has this person impacted their life and the choices they've made? <p>Once they have had time to reflect on people who have influenced their lives, ask students to write this person a letter telling him or her how he or she has impacted their life. Remind students to include specific examples of situations they have faced and how the lessons they've learned from this person have helped them to navigate these moments or challenges. Encourage students to send the final drafts of their letters!</p>
	Connect to Essential Question	In this article, journalist David Bornstein reports on PeerForward, an organization that promotes positive peer pressure and helps young people plan for success after high school. The article features several students, including Moises Urena who credits the organization for putting him on a path to college through mentorship and student leadership.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can find inspiration from "The Power of Student Peer Leaders" for their informational essays. Have students discuss what they think are the important moments in the essay and explain how those moments changed everything for the students involved.

The Three Questions

AUTHOR	Name	Leo Tolstoy
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1885
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Three Questions” is a parable. Like in many parables, the characters of the king and the hermit are universal representations of archetypes instead of any specific historical figures. • Explain to students that, as a parable, the story will build toward teaching the reader a lesson. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolstoy uses complex sentences with multiple clauses and phrases. • Encourage students to paraphrase confusing sentences in their own words to make sure they grasp the sentence’s meaning. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms related to planting, such as bed, spade, and sowing seeds, may present a challenge to some readers. • Remind students that context clues in the text or a dictionary can help define unfamiliar words.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	980
	Word Count	1,563
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	Poetry: Found poetry is created when a writer takes words and phrases from one text and rearranges them in the form of a poem. Write a found poem to reflect the advice given in “The Three Questions.” Remember to use words and phrases from the story.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Perform: One Question. Many Answers.</p> <p>Everyone has burning questions they want answered. This activity gives students the opportunity to identify questions worth asking and design a skit that demonstrates the complexity of answering that question.</p> <p>Put students into groups and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a person of power who interests them. • Generate three questions they think this person would like answered about life. • Design a skit in which different individuals attempt to answer this person’s questions. • Rehearse their skit. • Perform for the class. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does an individual’s perspective impact the way they answer questions? • Do you believe there are any questions that have simple answers? If so, provide an example.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Students will continue to consider the influence of mentors as they read Leo Tolstoy’s short story “The Three Questions” In it, the king saves a man and gains the knowledge he was seeking about what matters most in life.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Three Questions” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. To help write their informational essay, students may identify a moment that created a significant impact on one or more than one character in the text.

The Tequila Worm

AUTHOR	Name	Viola Canales
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2005
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters' motivations and actions may be implied but not explicit. Students may need help inferring implied character details. • Remind students that inferences about ideas in the story may need to be connected. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words such as masa and gobble may need to be defined. • As needed, support students who may need guidance locating context clues in the text. A dictionary can help define unfamiliar words. <p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story contains themes about standing out from the crowd and how one event can create change. • Students may benefit from reviewing character dialogue in the text to analyze the themes.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	800
	Word Count	1,034
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Connotation and Denotation, Character
	Close Read Prompt	Discussion: These three texts relate to the idea of mentorship or role models. Who are mentors in each text? How do they help or change others? Write notes in response to this question to prepare for a group discussion about these three texts.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: Blogging About Food and Family</p> <p>Food is central to family traditions and often tied to a family's cultural roots. Many food bloggers mix storytelling with recipe sharing. This activity encourages students to think about the role of food in their families and write a blog to explore a special dish.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a food or dish that makes them think of their family. • Write out the recipe with a list of ingredients and detailed directions for making the dish or food item. • If possible, make this dish at home, and document the process with photos and/or video. • Write a blog introducing this dish and its significance in their family, including the list of ingredients and detailed recipe. • Publish these blogs for the class. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is food such an important part of many people's family traditions and culture? In what ways does food bring people together?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	In this novel excerpt, Sofia learns how to deal with bullies through the help of Coach Clarke, who tells Sofia during a key moment, "learn to kick with your head instead."
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use <i>The Tequila Worm</i> as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. As they write their informational essay, students may reread the excerpt to identify moments that create a significant impact for Sofia.

Barrio Boy

AUTHOR	Name	Ernesto Galarza
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1971
	Genre	Non-Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recounting his immigrant experience, the author introduces an important central idea: Being an immigrant is a challenge, but it doesn't have to mean forgetting who you are or where you came from. Remind readers that they, too, belong simultaneously to a variety of cultures, or groups (family, school, team, etc.). This explanation may help them grasp this central idea. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spanish terms, such as <i>barrio</i> (neighborhood) and <i>Escuela Municipal Numero 3 para Varones of Mazatlán</i> (Municipal School Number 3 for Boys of Mazatlán), may present a challenge to some readers. Remind students to use context clues while reading, and also to use a Spanish-English dictionary to define unfamiliar words. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographical references, such as San Blas, Mazatlán, Mexico, and Sutter's Fort (in Sacramento, California) may challenge some students. Give students an opportunity to refer to a world map.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1080
	Word Count	1,605
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Elements, Main Idea
	Close Read Prompt	Informative: Think about what this excerpt from <i>Barrio Boy</i> is mostly about. Think about how Ernesto changes from the beginning of the excerpt to the end. What events, individuals, or ideas impacted this change? Then, identify two central or main ideas that are developed over the course of the text. Explain these central or main ideas in your own words. Remember to use textual evidence to support your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Activity: <i>Barrio Boy</i> Comic Strip</p> <p>Students will transform this story of Ernesto's first experience in an American public school into a comic strip.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide the story into sections, and make each section a separate panel. Use the vivid description and detail in the story to create a sequence of drawings that "show" Ernesto's first experiences in school and how he feels about the situations and people he encounters. Use thought bubbles to help the reader understand what Ernesto is thinking and feeling in each panel. Decide which panels need captions. <p>Students can use pen and paper or an online comic creator to create their stories. When students are finished, allow them to do a gallery walk to explore one another's comic strips.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Author Ernesto Galarza's <i>Barrio Boy</i> details his first day of school in America. His family uses an interpreter to understand his new principal. But Ernesto hears the warmth in her voice. In these first moments at school, Ernesto's teachers make him and others like him to feel less like outsiders and instill acceptance in their American classmates.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	If students enjoyed reading this excerpt, encourage them to read the entire book. They may choose moments or events from this book to write about in their informative essay.

TEXT COMPLEXITY

UNIT 5: TEST OF TIME

Unit Title: Test of Time

Essential Question: Why do we still read myths and folktales?

Genre Focus: Fiction

Overview

Every culture has its own myths and folktales, but certain themes are universal. Why do similar stories pop up across cultures and across time periods? Why do people continue to put a fresh spin on old stories? Why are myths and folktales still important to people today? With a focus on fiction, this Grade 7 unit will guide students as they begin to answer these questions.

Starting with *Aesop's Fables*, students will learn how old stories impact readers over time. Later in the unit, an excerpt from *The Hunger Games* and the nonfiction essay “The Classical Roots of *The Hunger Games*” show how one author drew inspiration from antiquity in a contemporary novel. Retellings of classic stories, such as “The Cruel Tribute,” “The Invisible One,” and “Icarus and Daedalus,” show students how storytellers repurpose and reinvent elements from old legends to tell new tales. Students will also read “Perseus” and “The New Colossus,” two acclaimed poems inspired by antiquity. Selections that feature epic journeys and other fairytale and fantasy elements are also included.

At the end of the unit, students will shift from readers to researchers as they plan and write a research paper on a topic of their own choosing. Drawing inspiration from the texts they've read in the unit, students will craft a research question and use primary and secondary sources to answer it. Their answers will guide them toward understanding how myths and folktales still affect readers today.

Text Complexity

Grade 7 Unit 5 finds students finishing the year with a plethora of critical thinking and text analysis skills. After spending two units looking more closely at nonfiction writing, students move back to reading fiction texts in this unit. The theme of the unit is the test of time and features many myths and folktales. The Lexile range for this unit is 750-1270, with most texts falling between 900L and 1100L, an accessible band for the end of the eighth grade year. Additionally, the vocabulary, sentence structures, text features, content and relationships among ideas make these texts accessible

to seventh graders, enabling them to grow as readers by interacting with such appropriately challenging texts.

The first text in this unit is an appropriate one for the theme: *Aesop's Fables*. On the higher end of the Lexile range, this text may be students' first encounter with the genre of folktales, which should be offset by a genre lesson in myths and folktales, a skill lesson in theme, and a close reading lesson with a StudySyncTV episode. This series of lessons sets a strong foundation for the unit.

For the purposes of Comparing Within and Across Genres, we have grouped a selection from the novel *The Hunger Games*, an article "The Classical Roots of 'The Hunger Games'" and a thematically related short story "The Cruel Tribute." Students will almost certainly be familiar with *The Hunger Games* book and film series, and its popularity is a great way to get students to think about how contemporary texts have been influenced by texts from the past. While these three texts all have higher Lexile levels, they are buffeted by a skill lesson in textual evidence and a StudySyncTV episode to enhance understanding and discussion. In comparing these text students will be prepared to consider the theme of the unit and how it relates to future texts they may read in the unit.

Throughout this unit students will read many fairytales, myths, and stories in a similar Lexile band as well as two poems inspired by ancient stories or places. "The Invisible One (Algonquin Cinderella)" will introduce students to a new take on a very well known story. "The Third Elevator" will take students into a land of magic and whimsy, reinforcing the genre of the unit. *The Other Side of the Sky* tells the harrowing tale of a family's escape from Afghanistan, includes a StudySyncTV episode. Before reading the sonnet "The New Colossus," students would benefit from a discussion on the history of immigration to the United States. The poem is supported by skill lessons in figurative language and poetic elements and structure, and will also help prepare students to access the poem "Perseus" later in the unit.

Two texts in this unit, "The Story of Anniko" and "Icarus and Daedalus," are excellent choices for Comparing Within and Across Genre. Both at very accessible Lexiles, after reading each selection students should be able to compare myths and folktales across cultures and time periods. This second group gives students the opportunity to apply the comparative thinking and writing skills they learned earlier in the unit to more complex texts from the same genres.

English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELPS instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources are developed around two texts, "The Legendary Storyteller" and "The Worried Armadillo," and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels. For ELLs, these texts serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit. Thus,

teachers may use the ELL texts in place of or as extensions for “The Classical Roots of the Hunger Games,” *Aesop’s Fables*, and any of the folktale or fairy tale selections in the unit.

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing Skills lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

After reading a nonfiction text about a storyteller and a modern-day fable, students will complete an Extended Oral Project which can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan, develop, and present a group research project about fables and other old stories.

Aesop's Fables

AUTHOR	Name	Aesop (Translated by George Fyler Townsend)
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	ca. 600 BCE
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused by the short length of the fables. Remind students that fables are meant to be quick and simple to efficiently teach lessons. They also often feature talking animals. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The translator of the fables sometimes uses complex sentences with multiple phrases and clauses. Long sentences with multiple sections may overwhelm students and require careful reading. Support students in reading long sentences and encourage them to read the fables carefully. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antiquated titles such as “shepherd,” “cottager,” and “miser” may need defining. Encourage students to use context clues in text or a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1060
	Word Count	808
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Monitoring Comprehension, Theme
	Close Read Prompt	Narrative: Write a fable of your own that demonstrates a clear theme. Use a variety of writing techniques. Make sure to state a lesson at the end of your story as a moral that reflects your chosen theme. In your fable, include animal characters that have human traits.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Activity: Memes with Morals</p> <p>Students will select one of Aesop's Fables to distill into a meme that uses a combination of text and images to cleverly communicate the moral at the heart of the story.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select the fable they want to focus on for this activity. Identify the implicit or explicit moral of the story. Create a meme set in a modern context. Use words and images to communicate the same lesson or “moral” about life. Share these memes with the class. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has technology changed the way people share information and stories? Are the life lessons or morals in Aesop's Fables still relevant in today's technology-rich world?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	This excerpt from Aesop's collection of fables features seven classic animal stories that teach valuable lessons. Why are the morals of these fables still relevant to readers hundreds of years after they were written?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use <i>Aesop's Fables</i> as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Encourage students to generate research questions prompted by the text, such as: Who was Aesop? What was his background, and how did he come to write fables? What other famous fable writers are there in other cultures?

The Hunger Games

AUTHOR	Name	Suzanne Collins
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2008
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readers might not connect Katniss's motherly concern for her younger sister to her decision to volunteer in her sister's place. Encourage students to reflect on Katniss's feelings towards her sister and make predictions about how those feelings may have impacted her decision to take her sister's place.
		<p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meaning of tesserae is not explicit in this selection, and the dictionary definition does not match its use in the novel. (A tessera is a year's worth of grain and oil for one person. In exchange for tesserae, people must add their names more times to the drawing.) Remind students that some dystopian stories use old words in new ways. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may benefit from a discussion about the dystopian setting and its ceremonial reaping, in which youths battle to the televised death. Engage students in a discussion around dystopian settings to identify and provide background knowledge to students.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1000
	Word Count	998
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	Personal Response: Were you surprised that Katniss offered to take her sister's place in the reaping? Write a short response explaining your initial reaction to the last scene of the excerpt. Use evidence from the text to support your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Art: Propaganda Poster for Hunger Games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will create a propaganda poster advertising either the reaping or the Hunger Games. <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine they work in the Capitol and have been asked to design a propaganda poster to generate support for either the reaping or the Hunger Games. Portray the event as something positive and exciting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will this event benefit the country? Why is this event necessary to maintain the general good? Use text, images, symbols, and color strategically. <p>Display the posters around the classroom or online and ask students to go on a gallery walk and provide thoughtful critiques of one another's posters.</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is propaganda used today to influence how we think about specific events?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Suzanne Collins' <i>The Hunger Games</i> introduces Panem, a dystopian society. The government requires its districts to select youths to battle to death. Katniss is shocked that her sister is called to compete. How does <i>The Hunger Games</i> relate to myths and folktales? What can we learn from them? Students will read this text in preparation for a comparative reading and writing lesson to follow.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use the excerpt from <i>The Hunger Games</i> as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may reread the text to generate topic ideas or consider research questions as they begin researching for their project.

The Classical Roots of ‘The Hunger Games’

AUTHOR	Name	Barry Strauss
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2014
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This text has multiple examples of parenthetical statements, using both parentheses and em dashes. Explain to students the usage of these punctuation marks. Be sure to encourage students to try them out in their personal responses.
		<p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words related to cultural anthropology, such as human sacrificial offerings, lore, and rite of passage, may need some explanation. Likewise, words related to governance, such as imperial, provincial, and republican may need explanation. Point out to students that classical, in this context, refers to things relating to ancient Greece and Rome. It should not be confused with the use of classic, as in “classic rock music.” <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may need some explanations regarding Greek and Roman culture. Specifically, they may ask for more context on the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur and on the Roman practice of gladiatorial games. Provide context to students who have not read <i>The Hunger Games</i> or seen the movies.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1270
	Word Count	723
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Personal Response: According to the article, what are some of the story elements and themes that create a story that has “abiding interest”? Think about your favorite books, movies, and TV shows. Write a short response that describes how a modern-day book, movie, or TV show that you enjoy reflects at least one traditional story element or theme identified in the article.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Research Project: Inspired by Mythology</p> <p>Greek and Roman mythology inspired Suzanne Collins, and she based many of her characters on gods, goddesses, and myths. Students will explore a character from <i>The Hunger Games</i> to uncover the mythological inspiration for that person.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a character other than Katniss from <i>The Hunger Games</i> for this research project. Research both character and mythology to discover the inspiration behind this character. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did a god or goddess inspire this character? Does the character’s name connect to some historical detail from Greece or Rome? Do the character’s actions, behavior, weapons, or fate remind you of another story from mythology? Create a character profile that uses both drawings and credible research to show the connections between this character from <i>The Hunger Games</i> and mythology. Present their findings to the class.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	<p>Essayist Barry Strauss discusses origins of Suzanne Collins’s <i>The Hunger Games</i> in “The Classical Roots of <i>The Hunger Games</i>.” Strauss explains that Katniss is inspired by Theseus, from Greek mythology. Her choice of weapon, a bow and arrow, recalls the goddesses Artemis and Diana as well as Amazonian warriors.</p>
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	<p>Students can use “The Classical Roots of ‘The Hunger Games’” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may reread the text to generate topic ideas or consider research questions as they begin researching for their project.</p>

The Cruel Tribute (from Old Greek Stories)

AUTHOR	Name	James Baldwin
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1895
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should not read too much into certain details, such as why a monster with an herbivore’s head should be interested in meat or how Theseus didn’t run out of string in such a large labyrinth. Remind students that myths often contain fantastic and even bizarre elements. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older words such as “valor,” “sojourning,” and “naught” may need defining. Encourage students to use context clues in text or a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1100
	Word Count	3,214
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Compare and Contrast: Compare and contrast a character from “The Cruel Tribute” with a character from the excerpt of The Hunger Games based on what the texts say implicitly and explicitly about the characters. Remember to use evidence from each text to support your claims.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Performance: Tribute Retold</p> <p>Students will work in collaborative groups to transform a section of “The Cruel Tribute” into scenes they can perform. Break students into four groups. Randomly assign each group a section of the text.</p> <p>Ask each group to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take the events from the section they were assigned and reinvent them using the context and characters from a favorite book, television series, or movie. For example, students can use Harry Potter or the Avengers to put a creative spin on “The Cruel Tribute.” Write a script to construct and shape the action in the scenes. Assign roles within the group. Rehearse the scene. Perform the scene in front of the class.
	Connect to Essential Question	In “The Cruel Tribute,” Indiana author James Baldwin retells the myth of Minos, the king of Crete who forces King AEGeus of Athens to sacrifice fourteen youths every spring. But Theseus, the prince of Athens, seeks to end it with the help of Crete’s princess.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Cruel Tribute” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may reread the text to generate topic ideas or consider research questions as they begin researching for their project.

The Invisible One (Algonquin Cinderella)

AUTHOR	Name	Traditional Algonquin (collected by Idries Shaw)
	Gender	N/A
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1975
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author’s purpose for writing may not be clear to students; students may not notice that the author is sympathetic towards Oochigeaskw. Remind students that myths and folktales often teach a lesson, and they should read carefully to find the lesson. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unfamiliar vocabulary, such as wigwam (a hut or tent made by some North American Native peoples) and moccasin (a soft leather shoe, in a style originating among North American Native peoples), may need defining. Remind students to use context clues while reading and also to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student may be confused because the text has both true and fanciful details. Remind students that this is a folktale and its purpose is to convey a deeper meaning or lesson.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	959
	Word Count	1,020
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Generating Questions, Summary, Plot
	Close Read Prompt	Narrative: Write your own version of a Cinderella story using a variety of techniques such as descriptive details and dialogue. Plan out the story to include clear plot events including an inciting incident, a conflict, and a turning point, leading to the resolution of the story.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: Modern-Day Cinderella Story</p> <p>Students will write Cinderella-like tales that reflect a modern scenario but retain some of the classic features of the Cinderella story.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the central characters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is the Cinderella character? How old is she? Is there anything unusual about her? What is her family like? Decide on a setting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When and where does the story take place? Storyboard the events that will take place in the story. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the story begin? What is the central conflict in the story? How does the Cinderella character meet her “prince”? <p>Once students have written their modern-day Cinderella story, they should create visuals (e.g., drawings or collages) to complement the text, similar to illustrations in a children’s book. Then invite students to read their modern-day Cinderella stories for the class.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	“The Invisible One” is an Algonquin folktale that reimagines the classic Cinderella story. In this retelling, an invisible man is destined to marry the woman who proves her worth by seeing him. Why do authors reshape old stories in new ways?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Invisible One” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Have students brainstorm research questions related to the selection. Then show students how to evaluate a research question to make sure that it is not too narrow or too broad for the scope of the research paper assignment.

The Other Side of the Sky

AUTHOR	Name	Farah Ahmed
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2006
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may struggle with medical terminology such as asthma and prosthetic leg, as well as religious words such as namaz and ablutions. Remind students to use context clues while reading and to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The social, geographical, and political history of Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Islamic religious practices referenced in the text may be unfamiliar to many readers. Have students find the countries on a map and briefly discuss the conflicts in the region and the common cultural and religious practices relevant to the text. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may confuse the genre with fiction. Remind students that a memoir is a form of nonfiction and the events the narrator is describing happened to her, in her lifetime.
	Lexile®	850
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	1,382
	Skill Lessons	Textual Evidence
READER AND TASKS	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: What ideas related to survival during the most challenging times are implied by this excerpt? Write a brief response answering this question. Remember to use evidence from the text to support your response.
	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Journal Entries: The Other Side</p> <p>Students will research stories of people who have fled Afghanistan in search of a better life and use one story as inspiration for a series of journal entries detailing the hardships of the person's journey.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research stories of Afghanistan refugees. Select one story that is particularly powerful. Write a series of three journal entries from that person's point of view, detailing his or her experiences escaping Afghanistan. Use the journal entries to explore life in war-torn Afghanistan, explain how this person escaped, identify the challenges he or she faced, and describe the moments of human decency the person encountered on the journey. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did you learn about life in Afghanistan that you didn't know before? Why did you select this particular person's story? What did you find compelling about it?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	This excerpt from a memoir tells about the epic journey taken by co-author Farah Ahmed and her mother as they attempted to flee Afghanistan. Similar to many myths and folktales, the narrator and her mother face impossible odds and tremendous obstacles, but they never give up hope. How can myths and folktales help us understand real-life challenges?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use the excerpt from <i>The Other Side of the Sky</i> as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Have students brainstorm research questions related to the selection. Then show students how to evaluate a research question to make sure that it is not too narrow or too broad for the scope of the research paper assignment.

The Story of Anniko

AUTHOR	Name	Charlotte Blake Alston
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2000
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may need help synthesizing the elements of this story because it blends fiction with reality. Tell students that this story is a folktale that blends elements of fantasy with the real-life experience of Western Africans. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused about the setting; they may not have enough familiarity with life in Senegal. Let them know that Senegalese culture places a high value on storytelling, music, and hospitality. Have students look for these cultural values in the story.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	750
	Word Count	1,088
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Discussion: “The Story of Anniko” is folktale from Senegal. Why do you think it’s important to read folktales from different cultures and times? What can you learn from reading folktales in addition to studying history and informational texts about the same cultures? Write down notes to prepare for a discussion of these questions. Use examples from the text as well as other myths and folktales you have read to support your points.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: The moral of the story</p> <p>This Senegalese folktale teaches us that being different is valuable. Challenge students to write their own folktale with a similar message. Remind them that folktales often have regular people in extraordinary or fantastical circumstances, learning lessons. Place students into small groups to read their stories to one another.</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did changing the setting affect the moral? What insights have you gained about genre and reader expectations based on writing your own story?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Blake Alston’s “The Story of Anniko” is a Senegalese folktale that tells the story of a girl who must travel alone to a distant village after tragedy strikes her own. Originally written in Wolof, an indigenous language of the Senegambia region, this story reflects important and shared values of the Senegalese people. How is this folktale’s message relevant in today’s world? Students will read this text in preparation for a comparative reading and writing lesson to follow.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Story of Anniko” as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. They may re-read the text to generate topic ideas or consider research questions as they begin researching for their project.

Icarus and Daedalus

AUTHOR	Name	Josephine Preston Peabody
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1987
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be unclear which elements are historical and which are fictional. Remind students that myths are meant to explain cultural ideas rather than present an accurate history. Thus, impossible elements, such as people flying with wings of wax and feathers, may be present. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This text contains the names of several places and creatures that are likely unfamiliar to students. Show students a map showing the locations of Crete, Icaria, and Sicily. Preview words such as halcyon, and let students know the connotations. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before the students begin reading, ask them to recall “The Cruel Tribute” from earlier in the unit, and prompt them to connect the labyrinth made by Daedalus to the one inhabited by the Minotaur. Students may need some explanation of Apollo and Cupid, the Greek gods referenced in this text.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1100
	Word Count	722
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Greek and Latin Affixes and Roots, Setting
	Close Read Prompt	Compare and Contrast: Write a response comparing and contrasting the settings of “The Story of Anniko” and “Icarus and Daedalus.” In your response, explain how the different settings influence characters’ actions and plot development. Remember to use evidence from the texts to support your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Game: The Labyrinth</p> <p>Students will use Daedalus’s labyrinth as inspiration for a board game. The goal of the board game is to get Icarus and Daedalus safely through the labyrinth and off Crete.</p> <p>Break students into small groups and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use what they know about Greek mythology to create a board game that incorporates details from “Icarus and Daedalus.” Research Greek mythology, gods, and monsters to gather information they can use in their game. Decide on the format of their game. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the players draw cards or roll dice? What colors, images, icons or pieces will they need? Create their game using art materials in the classroom. <p>Once students have completed their games, spend a class period allowing groups to play each other’s games and provide anonymous feedback on paper or online about what they enjoyed about each game and how each game might be improved.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Author Josephine Preston Peabody retells the myth “Icarus and Daedalus.” Daedalus and his son are unjustly imprisoned on an island by their vengeful king. Daedalus builds wings so he and his son, Icarus, can flee. Daedalus warns Icarus not to fly too close to the sun. During flight, Icarus goes too high, his wings melt, and he drowns.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Icarus and Daedalus” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Have students brainstorm research questions related to the selection. Then show students how to evaluate a research question to make sure that it is not too narrow or too broad for the scope of the research paper assignment.

The New Colossus

AUTHOR	Name	Emma Lazarus
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1883
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The New Colossus” is written in the form of a Petrarchan sonnet, which was made popular by the Italian poet Petrarch in the 1300s. • Preview the rules that govern the structure, rhyme scheme, and meter of the poem. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lazarus uses figurative language to communicate her message about freedom and opportunity for immigrants. The figurative language includes allusions, similes, metaphors, and personification. • Preview and scaffold the figurative language by giving a few simple examples. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lazarus’s allusions to mythology and history may be difficult for students. • Introduce relevant examples from history or mythology. For example, explain that the Statue of Liberty represents Libertas, a Roman liberty goddess. Point out the significance of the Colossus of Rhodes and the comparisons that Lazarus makes between that Greek statue and the Statue of Liberty.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	105
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Poetic Elements and Structure, Figurative Language
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: What does Emma Lazarus want readers to know about the United States? What is the poem’s deeper message or theme about America? Use your understanding of figurative language and poetic structure and elements to determine her message.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Research Project: “Send us your poor”</p> <p>“The New Colossus” paints a picture of America as a refuge for immigrants. Research the process of immigrating to America in the late 19th century. What steps did new immigrants have to take to enter the country? Have students break into groups and share what they found with their classmates.</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this affect your understanding of the Lazarus poem? • How does this compare with what you know about immigrating to America today?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	The poem “The New Colossus” is a sonnet written by American poet Emma Lazarus in order to raise money for the construction of the Statue of Liberty. Lazarus suggests that Lady Liberty is unlike another famous statue of the ancient past. Why does Lazarus call the Statue of Liberty the “new” colossus? How does this statue represent American values?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The New Colossus” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Have students brainstorm research questions related to the selection. Then show students how to evaluate a research question to make sure that it is not too narrow or too broad for the scope of the research paper assignment.

The Third Elevator

AUTHOR	Name	Aimee Bender
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2009
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlike most of the texts in this unit, this story is written by a contemporary writer for a modern audience. Support students in understanding how themes from the author’s fantastical world can be applied to real life.
		<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This story is fanciful and has both normal details and unrealistic ones that may have symbolic meanings. Explain the magical elements in the story as needed. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A character’s motivation and actions may be implied but not explicit. Remind students that they may need to link ideas together to infer how or why the characters change at the end of the story and how this may impact the theme(s) present in the story.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1030
	Word Count	9,234
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Charter
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: Identify a theme or lesson in this text about family, friendship, or a sense of belonging. How do characters actions and the author’s use of fantasy develop this important idea about real life? Remember to use evidence from the text to support and explain your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Writing: Song Lyrics</p> <p>Students will write a song for either the miners or the loggers to sing as they work. The miner’s songs tended to be more repetitive, and the logger’s songs told stories. The songs should include details about the work itself, life in the kingdom, the elevators, and the rigid rules of this make-believe world.</p> <p>Break students into small groups and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide whether to write a song for the miners or the loggers to sing as they work. Reread the story, looking for relevant details or quotes they want to incorporate into their song. Work collaboratively to write their song. Record an audio capture or perform their song for the class.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	The short story “The Third Elevator” introduces students to the informative power of magic realism. Full of humor and absurdity, the story is set in a society with a rigid hierarchy whose classes are separated by three elevators. But when a swan and a bluebird give birth to a cloud, the characters in Aimee Bender’s tale begin to question the rules of their world. How do characters react when confronted with mythical elements?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “The Third Elevator” as inspiration for their Extended Writing Project. Have students brainstorm research questions related to the selection. Then show students how to evaluate a research question to make sure that it is not too narrow or too broad for the scope of the research paper assignment.

Perseus

AUTHOR	Name	Robert Hayden
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1966
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elements of poetry may be unfamiliar to some readers. Students may need help understanding the imagery the poet uses to create a vivid picture of Perseus and what he is feeling. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complex structure of the poem may interfere with students' ability to access meaning. Break down the information in each stanza, focusing students' attention on what is revealed about the character of Perseus in each line. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complex words and phrases in this poem may be difficult for some readers. Encourage students to use context clues to determine the meanings of these and other words. They may also consult general reference materials, both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or to determine or clarify its exact meaning.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	78
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Connotation and Denotation
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: “Perseus” shares with readers the inner struggle of a hero who finds that he is more like his enemy than he realized. How does the author’s word choice show Perseus’s inner conflict and the poem’s meaning? How does the word choice impact the poem’s tone? Write a short response answering these questions. Support your writing with specific examples of connotations from the text.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Art: Capture the moment</p> <p>Robert Hayden uses visual imagery to let the reader know what the scene looks like. Tell students they are going create a visual representation of the moment before Perseus kills Medusa. Ask students to use Hayden’s detailed sensory descriptions to transform this poem into an image. They can choose any aspect of the scene to focus on, but they must portray the tone of the poem in the image they create.</p> <p>Students can create their images on paper or use a digital tool. To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was challenging about translating this scene into an image? Was anything lost in translation? Do you think you would respond to this moment the same way that Perseus responded? Why or why not
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Poet Robert Hayden offers his readers a new perspective on the Greek mythical hero Perseus. Gazing down on the severed head of Medusa, the snake-haired Gorgon, Perseus has a moment of self-reflection and acknowledges his powerful and dangerous “thirst . . . to destroy.” What does this modern poem suggest about heroes?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can find inspiration from “Perseus” when writing their literary analyses. Have students brainstorm research questions related to the selection. Then show students how to evaluate a research question to make sure that it is not too narrow or too broad for the scope of the research paper assignment.

TEXT COMPLEXITY

UNIT 6: THE POWER OF ONE

Unit Title: The Power of One

Essential Question: How do we stand out from the crowd?

Genre Focus: Drama

Overview

Reading has the power to introduce us to memorable individuals. Some of our most cherished stories depict characters and historical figures who chose to stand out from the crowd. This unit presents students with a wide sampling of these figures. In texts written for the page and the stage, readers encounter individuals at odds with their society. Focused on the genre of drama, the texts in *The Power of One* will challenge students to consider what makes individuals unique and the sacrifices individuals make.

The unit begins a science fiction classic, an excerpt from Lois Lowry’s novel *The Giver*, and the play *A Thousand Cranes*, based on the on a true story of a young girl in the years following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Both tell the story of young people who have complicated relationships with society and their own futures. The theme of an individual’s perseverance is further expressed in “Choices,” a poem by Nikki Giovanni that recounts a speaker’s inner struggle to self-define.

Other texts provoke students to consider issues affecting contemporary society. A man struggles to define his place in the autocratic society of North Korea in *Nothing to Envy*. “Reality TV and Society” offers point and counterpoint arguments on the effects of reality TV shows on their viewers. And First Lady Laura Bush makes the case for universal education in “Remarks at the UNESCO Education for All Week Luncheon.”

After learning about a range of inspiring individuals, students will have the chance to put themselves center stage by giving an oral presentation that critiques a literary work or dramatic production of their choice. They will use what they learned from the unit’s texts to develop their own voice and to present their perspective to an audience.

Text Complexity

The last unit of the year finds students once again using their critical thinking and text analysis abilities to enjoy a wide variety of texts. In this unit, students will read a text from nearly every genre they’ve encountered this year;

novel, essay, article, biography, speech, poems, and dramas. The Lexile range for this unit is a broad 710-1360, with most texts falling between 1050L and 1180L, an accessible band for the end of the seventh grade year. Additionally, the vocabulary, sentence structures, text features, content and relationships among ideas make these texts accessible to seventh graders, enabling them to grow as readers by interacting with such appropriately challenging texts.

The Giver, *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*, and *A Thousand Cranes* are grouped together for Comparison Within and Across Genres. *The Giver* is the lowest Lexile selection in the unit and is an accessible starting point for the unit and its theme: the power of one. The text is bolstered by a StudySyncTV episode. The informational text *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea* is higher Lexile than most of the other selections in the unit and may be difficult to students who lack prior knowledge of North Korea. *A Thousand Cranes* is a one act play based on the fictional retelling of the story of Sadako Sasaki, who lived in Hiroshima at the time of its atomic bombing during World War II. The play is supported by skill lessons in character and dramatic elements and structure as well as a SkillsTV episode. In comparing these text, students will be prepared to consider the theme of the unit and how it relates to future texts they may read in the unit.

A second set of texts, Maya Angelou's biographical essay *New Directions* and Nikki Giovanni's poem "Choices" tie directly into the unit's theme and will give students an opportunity to practice their genre recognition skills from earlier units. *New Directions* falls at the higher end of the Lexile range in this unit, and students may benefit from a discussion about race relations in the South in the early twentieth century prior to reading the text. "Choices" is written in open form, but should be accessible to most students since they have had multiple opportunities to analyze this the sub-genre throughout the year.

Students will read a variety of genres and texts within the same theme and Lexile band. An excerpt from the biography *Hidden Figures* is read alongside skill lessons in technical language and author's point of view and is supported by a StudySyncTV episode. The pro/con argumentative text "Reality TV and Society" is made more accessible by skill lessons arguments and claims and compare and contrast. Laura Bush's "Remarks at the UNESCO Education for All Week Luncheon" is a speech that will help students deepen their abilities for argumentative text analysis. Difficulties with specific vocabulary and connection of ideas will be offset by a skill lesson in reason and evidence.

Students will also read two more dramas in unit 6. After reading an excerpt from *The Matsuyama Mirror*, students will analyze how listening to the audio of the play contributes to their understanding of the characters. The last text of the unit, *Cuentos de Josefina (Josephine's Tales)*, will ask students to recognize genre characteristics of both drama and folktales. While the organization of the text may be confusing to some readers, a close read will help them overcome any challenges.

English Language Learner Resources

Lessons in the English Language Learner Resources section offer explicit ELPS instruction. These lessons share a thematic and genre focus with all other lessons in the Core ELA unit.

The twenty ELL Resources are developed around two texts, “The Monsters Backstage” and “Peer Pressure vs. Teenagers,” and an Extended Oral Project. Each text is written at four distinct levels. For ELLs, these texts serve as structural and thematic models of authentic texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section of the unit. Thus, teachers may use the ELL texts in place of or as extensions for *A Thousand Cranes* or *Reality TV and Society*.

ELL lessons modify the routines used with texts in the Integrated Reading and Writing section. Explicit vocabulary instruction is emphasized, and reading and writing Skills lessons focus strongly on language acquisition and reading comprehension.

After reading texts about standing out from the crowd, students will complete an Extended Oral Project which can be used in place of or as an extension to the Extended Writing Project. In this unit, students will plan and present a personal recommendation of an influential book, movie, or piece of music.

The Giver

AUTHOR	Name	Lois Lowry
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1993
	Genre	Fiction
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author presents the dystopian setting in a neutral way. Encourage students to make inferences that will help them form an opinion about the rules of the novel's society. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Giver</i> is a science-fiction novel that takes place in a fictional future society. Explain to students the futuristic elements in the novel. You may need to provide background on dystopian societies or explain the role and purpose of The Receiver of Memories in order for students to understand the excerpt. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary specific to cultural practices in the novel, such as <i>Assignment</i>, <i>newchildren</i>, <i>Ceremony of Twelve</i>, <i>Elder</i>, and <i>Nurturer</i>, may be confusing to readers. Direct students to reflect on whether they have heard these terms (or words like them) before to make connections about what they mean in the context. Define or explain the terms as needed.
	Lexile®	710
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	998
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	Personal Response: What do you think are the positive and negative aspects of living in a society in which each person's future occupation is decided for them? Would you want to live in such a society? Cite evidence from the text to support your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Debate: Sacrificing for the Greater Good</p> <p>In Jonas's community, people sacrifice their freedom and ability to choose to maintain a society without hunger, disease, or poverty. Students will explore what they would be willing to sacrifice for the greater good of society.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the following question: What personal freedoms would you be willing to sacrifice to ensure society didn't experience hunger, disease, or poverty? Build an argument to support their point of view with a clear claim, compelling evidence, and a thoughtful explanation. Be prepared to engage in a debate with a classmate on this topic. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As you considered this question, what personal freedoms did you realize were most important to you? If you are not willing to sacrifice, do you hold any responsibility for the people who are hungry, sick, or poor?
	Connect to Essential Question	Author Lois Lowry's <i>The Giver</i> focuses on a society in which a group of elders select jobs for youths. Jonas worries whether the elders will pick the right job for him. What do they notice when they observe him? Will his role be a good match like his father's? Students will read this text in preparation for a comparative reading and writing lesson to follow.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Extended Writing Project	If students enjoyed reading this excerpt, encourage them to read the entire novel and watch the movie. They may choose this novel or the movie version of it to critique for their Extended Oral Project.

Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea

AUTHOR	Name	Barbara Demick
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2010
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The text structure of the excerpt tells the story of Chang-bo's arrest chronologically, but Barbara Demick stops several times to give information about North Korea. Be ready to provide support as students may have difficulty distinguishing between what is happening in the narrative and what is background information. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The text uses a number of high-level vocabulary words. The author also uses the North Korean terms <i>inminban</i> and <i>kyuch'aldae</i>. Encourage students to reread the sentences that contain these word to look for context clues that explain their meanings. Have students look for context clues as needed or look up words in a dictionary. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The excerpt assumes a familiarity with the geopolitics of contemporary North Korea. Allow students to briefly research issues related to North and South Korea, the Cold War, and Communism to help them better grasp the excerpt.
	Lexile®	1070
Word Count	1,357	
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	N/A
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Personal Response: Imagine that you are Chang-bo, and you want to explain to someone why it is so dangerous to speak freely in North Korea. What would you tell this person? Write a response in the form of brief dialogue between Chang-bo and an outsider, incorporating examples and information from the text.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Research Project: Media Manipulation of Information</p> <p>At Change-bo's job at North Hamgyong Provincial Broadcasting Company, he has access to uncensored news reports. Although the United States does not advocate censorship, the media has the power to manipulate information.</p> <p>Put students into small groups and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select an issue or current event of interest to focus on for this project. Research how different media outlets have reported that event. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the similarities and differences among the way different media outlets portray the issue or event? What biases are present and how do they impact reporting? Design a multimedia presentation to present their topic and findings to the class. Present in front of the class and field classmates' questions. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can you effectively evaluate the credibility of the news you read online or see on television?
	Connect to Essential Question	In <i>Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea</i> , journalist Barbara Demick reveals life in North Korea, where neighbors act as government informants. Demick covers Chang-bo's interrogation after he made a seemingly harmless remark, showing how he and other North Koreans must be careful about speaking out. Students will read this text in preparation for a comparative reading and writing lesson to follow.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Extended Writing Project	If students enjoyed reading this excerpt, encourage them to read the entire book. They may choose this book to critique for their Extended Oral Project.

A Thousand Cranes

AUTHOR	Name	Kathryn Schultz Miller
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1990
	Genre	Drama
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This text presents a biographical account in the form of a drama. Some sections may be confusing unless read aloud with appropriate expression and intonation. Define and review the dramatic elements for students. Read aloud passages you feel may be confusing to students. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused by the storytelling device of the play, in which Sadako is telling her own story and when she dies and is able to continue telling her story with her grandmother. Encourage students to read carefully as they may become confused because the dialogue weaves between past and present. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story is set in Japan in the years following World War II, and students may be unfamiliar with the historical or Japanese cultural references. Explain some of the historical references, including World War II and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	5,576
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Character, Dramatic Elements and Structure
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Discussion: The Giver, Nothing to Envy, and A Thousand Cranes all feature people in complicated societies. What do these three texts suggest about the relationship between the individual and society? To prepare for your discussion, use the graphic organizer to write down your ideas about the prompt. Support your ideas with evidence from the text. After your discussion, you will write a reflection in the space below.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Origami: Folding Cranes</p> <p>Have students decide on a goal. Provide paper and instructions for making cranes. Demonstrate how to fold the cranes. Have students fold the paper into cranes.</p> <p>Display the cranes in the classroom or allow the students to take them home.</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What else can you do to achieve the goal? How will the cranes inspire you to work toward your goal?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Kathryn Schulze Miller, author of “A Thousand Cranes,” tells the story of Sadako Sasaki who was two years old when the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and twelve when she became ill with “radiation sickness” from the bomb. Believing it would help her get well, she hoped to fold a thousand paper cranes. How can one young girl’s story of hope inspire peace around the globe?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	If students enjoyed reading this play, encourage them to choose this work to critique for their Extended Oral Project.

Remarks at the UNESCO Education for All Week Luncheon

AUTHOR	Name	Laura Bush
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2006
	Genre	Argumentative
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first few paragraphs include introductory remarks and expressions of thanks; a statement of purpose and the claim; a description of the problem of illiteracy and efforts made to combat it; a three-part philosophical statement; and finally, closing remarks. Explain that this is a written transcript of a speech. If needed, provide students with a simple outline or list of the speech’s basic components.
		<p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The speech contains global references, such as UNESCO, and references to countries around the world as well as vocabulary related to political science, economics, and education. Encourage students to use context clues or a dictionary to help define unfamiliar words. Encourage any students from countries or regions mentioned in the speech to share their knowledge or personal experience.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1090
	Word Count	1,808
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Reasons and Evidence, Synthesizing
	Close Read Prompt	Argumentative: In “Education for All,” Laura Bush argues that literacy is vital for all children. How does Mrs. Bush use reasons and evidence to support her claims? Be sure to use evidence from the text in your response.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Debate: Is Technology Changing the Definition of Literacy?</p> <p>Laura Bush’s comment about literacy being the “foundation of personal freedom” highlights the role that reading and writing play in shaping a person’s identity and beliefs. Students will consider the role of technology in their lives and build an argument about whether or not the definition of literacy needs to change.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about what it means to be literate and why literacy is important to a person’s freedom and success in life. Consider the impact of technology on literacy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there new skills that people need to be literate, given the presence of technology in our lives? Can you be truly free without the ability to use technology? Where do most people access information? How does this impact literacy? Prepare a formal argument with a clear claim, compelling evidence, and a thoughtful explanation to support their position. Rehearse with a peer. Present their argument for the class.
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	First Lady Laura Bush’s speech during an event celebrating “Education For All Week” discusses the importance of literacy and writing as a foundation for learning. As an educator, Laura Bush explains that every child deserves a teacher and that literacy creates personal freedom.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Education for All” as a mentor text for their Extended Oral Project. They may adopt the speaker’s technique of using reasons and evidence to deliver a well-reasoned and persuasive speech.

Hidden Figures

AUTHOR	Name	Margot Lee Shetterly
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2016
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior Knowledge • The story is set in 1940s and 1950s America. The mathematicians who made calculations for aeronautical engineers were called “computers” and worked in a “computing pool.” • Provide background on engineering and aeronautics research.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genre • This informational text includes many references to individuals, events, and scientific information, which may be challenging for students to track and interpret. • Encourage students to use a graphic organizer to help them to keep track. • Purpose • Students may need background knowledge on why the author choose to highlight the individuals in this text. • Explain to students that the author intends to educate about the achievements of African American women in the sciences.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1050
	Word Count	1,136
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Technical Language, Author’s Purpose and Point of View
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: What is the author’s purpose and point of view in the excerpt from <i>Hidden Figures</i> . How does the author’s use of technical words impact the excerpt’s meaning or tone? Write a response answering these questions using specific examples from the text.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Speech: Tribute to a Hidden Figure</p> <p>The excerpt notes that the women who worked in aeronautical engineering were often anonymous. Only on rare occasions did they receive any credit for their accomplishments. Students will select a field that interests them, such as filmmaking, and investigate the impact women have had in this area.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a field of interest (e.g. medicine, law). • Conduct research to identify a woman who made significant contributions to this field but was not publicly recognized for her work. • Collect information about her accomplishments. • Write a 300 word speech honoring this woman’s work and accomplishments in her field. • Invite students to publish their speeches by reading them for the class or posting them online. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we raise awareness about the role women have played in developing these fields? • How can we encourage women to enter male-dominated fields?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	The nonfiction book <i>Hidden Figures</i> tells the exceptional story of African American women who were trailblazers in the field of mathematics and engineering and whose work helped NASA win the space race.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use <i>Hidden Figures</i> as a mentor text for their Extended Writing Project. As they write their informational essay, students may re-read the excerpt to identify moments in which the women computers create a significant impact.

Miami Dancer Follows Dreams while Planning for the Future

AUTHOR	Name	Mekeisha Madden Toby
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2018
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The article is about dance and choreography, which some students may not be familiar with. Explain that choreography is the sequence of movements that make up a dance. Different styles and genres of dance use different choreography conventions, but most involve combining steps and movements standard to the genre (e.g. ballet, jazz, hip-hop). <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure of the article is broken into several sections with more than one main idea. The sections are connected not by an overarching argument, but by a single subject. Have students use section headings to help guide their reading and to make predictions about the focus of each section. <p>Connection of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a video of a dance performance embedded in the article. Students may need assistance connecting the performance to the rest of the text. Encourage students to synthesize the different media and make connections between the text and the video.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1180
	Word Count	947
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Informational Text Elements, Media, Making Connections
	Close Read Prompt	Debate: The article talks about how Elijah likes both STEM topics and the arts. Which do you think is more important? Is it more important to focus on science and technology or the arts and humanities? Prepare points and comments for a debate with your classmates. Use evidence from the text to support your point.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Game: How would you respond?</p> <p>Put students in groups of 6. Give each group a stack of 12 index cards.</p> <p>Instruct students to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Write a real-life scenario on one index card then write an age between three and their current age on a second card. Mix the scenario cards in one stack and mix the age cards in a second stack. Draw a real-life scenario card and an age card from each stack then act out how you think a child would respond to that situation at that age. <p>Select the “best performance” and have the student who has been selected by each group perform their reaction for the class.</p> <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When do people become more logical and less emotional? What behavior is common for younger children? What does this reveal?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Journalist and cultural critic Mekeisha Madden Toby profiles Elijah Omary Muhammad, one of the finalists for the prestigious National YoungArts Foundation competition. In this profile, Muhammad outlines his work ethic, his inspiration, and his goals for the future—and performs his eye-catching routine.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Miami Dancer Follows Dreams While Planning for the Future” as a mentor text for their Extended Oral Project. IF they enjoyed Elijah’s performance or the article about his work, they can include that in their recommendation.

Reality TV and Society

AUTHOR	Name	Point/Counterpoint
	Gender	N/A
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2014
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argumentative texts often employ specific techniques that readers need to recognize. Preview and discuss techniques: making a claim and supporting it with strong reasons and evidence, acknowledging and refuting opposing claims, and including quotations from individuals perceived to have some expertise on the topic being discussed. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students may not be familiar with a pro/con organization of two articles on opposing viewpoints. Preview the structure and have students use the headings to orient themselves in the text. <p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The text makes reference to specific reality TV shows, such as Survivor, So You Think You Can Dance, and Project Runway, that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Encourage students to use context clues to understand the references, and preview any shows that cannot be understood from context.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	1110
	Word Count	1,151
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Arguments and Claims, Compare and Contrast
	Close Read Prompt	Debate: With your classmates, debate whether reality TV is good or bad for society. To prepare for the debate, write your claim and provide three reasons with evidence to support your claim. Use examples from the text as well as from your own experience and research.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Activity: Design and Pitch an Original Reality TV Show</p> <p>Reality TV is here to stay. Students will work in collaborative groups to develop a concept for a new reality television show.</p> <p>Break students into small groups and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on an original concept for their reality TV show. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the objective or goal of the show? Who would be ideal participants? Do they need any specific talents or life experience? Does the challenge or competition last for a single episode or extend through an entire season? What does the winner get (e.g., money, title, opportunities)? Write a brief description of the reality TV show concept. Create a short (60 second or less) video “pitch” to sell their reality TV show concept to their peers. <p>When all the video pitches are finished, play them and allow the class to anonymously vote for the reality TV show they would like to see produced.</p>
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Two opposing arguments are put forth about the value of reality TV in this point/counterpoint article. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate both arguments while considering the question: Does reality TV show bring out best or the worst in individuals?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Reality TV and Society” as inspiration for their Extended Oral Project. They may select a reality TV show to write a critique about and use the articles as models of how to make a claim supported by reasons and evidence.

The Matsuyama Mirror

AUTHOR	Name	Velina Hasu Houston
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1994
	Genre	Drama
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The play is set in the 1600s in Japan, students may be unfamiliar with Japanese cultural references. Explain that adding -chan to the end of names is a term of endearment for children. <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be unfamiliar with reading drama, where dialogue and stage directions are mixed together and can be confusing. Remind students that the stage directions should be used to help them visualize the setting and characters and to reread carefully if they are confused.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	1,365
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Word Meaning, Media
	Close Read Prompt	<p>Analysis: Listening to a performance of a play is a different experience than reading the script. How do the sound elements affect your understanding of the characters? Use specific examples from the text and from the audio to show how the audio contributes to how you understand the characters.</p>
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Creative Writing: What Happens Next?</p> <p>This excerpt ends with Aiko convinced her mother has returned in the mirror, but it is not the end of the play.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Decide what they think will happen next. Use the narrative to reveal details about Aiko's relationship to her family and her unwillingness to grow up. Combine their narrative and drama skills to write the next scene of the play. <p>When students are done, encourage them to perform or share their new scenes with the class.</p> <p>To help them reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What details from the original story were most important in creating a new scene? What were the challenges in telling the story as a play?
	UNIT CONNECTION	<p>Connect to Essential Question</p> <p>In a time before the discovery of mirrors, Aiko comes of age in the aftermath of her mother's tragic death. Gifted with a "magical" mirror, she sees her own reflection, believing that it is her mother's spirit. Young and determined, what does this story teach us about growing up in trying times?</p> <p>Connect to Extended Writing Project</p> <p>If students enjoyed reading this play, encourage them to choose this work to critique for their Extended Oral Project.</p>

New Directions

AUTHOR	Name	Maya Angelou
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1993
	Genre	Informational
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may be confused by the author’s purpose in telling the story. Ask students why an author might write about a loved one. Encourage students to think about what lesson a reader can learn from hearing Maya Angelou’s grandmother’s life. <p>Sentence Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may struggle with the sentence structure because many sentences are complex and formal. Tell readers that they should pay attention to punctuation to help them discover the author’s style and meaning. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vocabulary reflects the grandmother’s work and the time period. Students may need help with terms such as “iron brazier” and “dinner noon bell.” Remind students to use context clues and to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.
	Lexile®	1360
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Word Count	763
	Skill Lessons	N/A
READER AND TASKS	Close Read Prompt	Personal Response: What does author Maya Angelou think of her grandmother? Why do you think she tells her grandmother’s story? Write a response to these questions. Remember to use evidence from the text to support your response.
	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>In her essay, Maya Angelou tells the reader that “each of us has the right and responsibility to assess the roads which lie ahead.” Students will reflect on their own lives and evaluate the road that lies ahead of them.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on their lives and the road that lies ahead of them. Consider the following questions as they reflect in writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What road are you on? Where does this road lead? How did you get on this road? Was it your choice, your parents’ choice, or the result of something else? Is this the best road for you? Is there another road you have considered exploring? Why is it important to periodically assess the road you are on? How will this practice help you when you get older and have more control over your path?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	The celebrated essayist and poet Maya Angelou writes about her grandmother in the nonfiction text “New Directions.” Set in Arkansas in 1903, this essay depicts Annie Johnson’s efforts to establish an independent life after her divorce. Through Johnson’s experience, readers will gain an understanding of one individual’s determination to overcome the prejudices of the society she lives in.
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	If students enjoyed reading this autobiographical essay, they may choose this essay to critique for their Extended Oral Project.

Choices

AUTHOR	Name	Nikki Giovanni
	Gender	Female
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	1978
	Genre	Poetry
	Access Complex Text Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Students may struggle with understanding the purpose of poetry in general. • Remind students that the purpose of this particular poem is to share insights based on life experience.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection of Ideas • Each stanza expresses a particular idea, and all the ideas are connected. • Encourage students to make inferences in order to understand the connection of ideas.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	120
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Poetic Elements and Structure
	Close Read Prompt	Compare and Contrast: In “New Directions” Maya Angelou tells the story of how her grandmother started a career for herself to support her family. It has an important message about overcoming obstacles and creating a new path for yourself. How does Nikki Giovanni use poetic elements and structure to express a similar message or theme? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Art: Meme—How to Live Life</p> <p>Students will take one of the stanzas in Nikki Giovanni’s poem “Choices” and use it to create a meme about life by cleverly combining text and images.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the stanza they want to focus on for this activity. • Identify the implicit or explicit message about living life that is revealed in this stanza. • Create a meme that combines text and images to communicate this lesson about living life. • Share these memes with the class. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the simple language used in the poem, Giovanni makes some powerful statements about how to live life. Which message was most powerful for you?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Nikki Giovanni’s free verse poem deals with the challenges of confronting our personal limitations. The poet uses form to challenge readers and develop themes of personal accomplishment and perseverance. What does it take to stand out from the crowd?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	Students can use “Choices” as a mentor text for their Extended Oral Project. They may adopt the poet’s technique of using meaningful repetition to create a rhythm that makes the poem flow when it is read aloud and that brings emphasis to important ideas.

Cuentos de Josefina (Josephine's Tales)

AUTHOR	Name	Gregory Ramos
	Gender	Male
QUALITATIVE FEATURES	Publication Date	2016
	Genre	Drama
	Access Complex Text Features	<p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This text presents a folktale in the form of a drama. Some passages may be confusing unless read out loud with appropriate expression and intonation. Define and review the dramatic elements for students. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students might be confused by the storytelling device of the play, in which a story from the past is being told. Encourage students to read carefully as they may become confused because the dialogue weaves between past and present. <p>Specific Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of Spanish words might cause difficulty for students who don't speak Spanish. Define the Spanish language words for students or encourage them to use context clues to discover the meaning on their own.
QUANTITATIVE FEATURES	Lexile®	N/A
	Word Count	3,306
READER AND TASKS	Skill Lessons	Dramatic Elements and Structure
	Close Read Prompt	Literary Analysis: Folktales have wide and lasting appeal because they teach lessons about universal ideas and experiences common across cultures and time periods. Write a response in which you identify a lesson with a universal appeal. In your response, explain how the author uses dramatic elements and structures, such as dialogue and aside, to help teach a lesson or moral.
BEYOND THE BOOK	Beyond the Book Activity	<p>Performance: A Tale of Greed</p> <p>Students will write and perform original tales for the class that teach important lessons about the dangers of greed.</p> <p>Break students into small acting troupes and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work collaboratively to develop modern scenario in which a person's greed has dangerous consequences. Develop their central characters. Incorporate elements of the past into the plot (e.g., folklore, magic, superstition). Assign each character a role, and then write the short play collaboratively with each student writing his/her lines. Include stage directions to guide their movement on stage. Rehearse their parts, including improvised props, costumes, and set pieces, as needed. Perform live or record their performances and play those videos for the class. <p>To reflect, ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What similarities did you notice about the context and consequences of greed in each performance?
UNIT CONNECTION	Connect to Essential Question	Filiberto and Elvira are a young couple at the center of Gregory Ramos's "The Tale of the Haunted Squash," one of the interconnected plays in his work Cuentos de Josefina. In this retelling of a traditional Mexican folktale, the couple finds a way to lift themselves out of poverty, but the deal they make may prove disastrous. How can one couple find their way against the odds?
	Connect to Extended Writing Project	If students enjoyed reading this play, they may choose this literary work to critique for their Extended Oral Project.

ELA Grade Level Overview Grade 7

Writing

OVERALL APPROACH TO WRITING INSTRUCTION

StudySync instructs students on a variety of writing forms that adhere to the Common Core English Language Arts Standards. Each unit of the program exposes students to a different writing form and all of its associated skills and processes, which they practice through unit-specific Extended Writing Projects (EWP). At each grade level, one EWP covers each of the following writing forms: narrative, informative, literary analysis, correspondence, research, and argumentative. Additionally, one unit in each grade contains an Extended Oral Project, where students will create and present a presentation based on the specific requirements the TN ELA standards for that grade.

Explicit instruction in writing is included reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language lessons and activities, all of which are scaffolded to support learners of varying backgrounds and abilities. Writing activities in each unit, from the in-depth EWP to Close Read writing prompts, self-selected writing responses, writer's notebook activities, Blast responses, and other short writing activities explore different aspects of the writing process, giving students a variety of writing practice opportunities to hone their skills and enhance their understanding of each unit's particular writing form.

This application of the writing skills and processes culminates in the Extended Writing Project, which challenges students and holds them accountable for their learning experiences. The Extended Writing Project prompts students to inquire deeply into a unit's theme and essential question by drawing from textual evidence, research, and their own life experiences to develop extended responses in a variety of writing forms specified in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards. Throughout the Extended Writing project, students evaluate and assess Student Model examples that connect to the modes of writing in each unit. Lessons push students to effectively express themselves and rely on text evidence as a basis of support for their ideas.

Students have a myriad of opportunities to enrich their writing, including immersion in specific academic vocabulary, peer review and revision, and group discussion and collaboration. They explore different formats of presenting and publishing the finished works that represent their best possible writing efforts in the program.

Writing Task Chart

	UNIT 1: Conflicts and Clashes	UNIT 2: Highs and Lows	UNIT 3: Chasing the Impossible
Essential Question	When do differences become conflicts?	What do we learn from love and loss?	What makes a dream worth pursuing?
Writing Form	Narrative	Literary Analysis	Argumentative
Extended Writing Project Prompt	Imagine a world where people can know what others are thinking. What conflicts would cease to exist in that world? What new conflicts would arise? Write a story about a conflict that exists because it's possible to know another person's thoughts.	Think about the main characters, narrators, or speakers in the texts from this unit. Choose two or three selections from the unit and write a literary analysis that shows the different types of lessons learned about love and loss. In your analysis, be sure to present an argument in which you explain what lesson each character, narrator, or speaker learns and how love or loss helps them learn this lesson.	If you had the option of adding a club, a class, or an activity to your school, what would it be and why would it be worth including? Think about why you would like it added to your school's offerings. Why is this club, class, or activity important to the school? How would other students benefit from this addition? Write an argumentative essay to convince your teachers or school leaders to establish this new club, class, or activity. In your essay, present your argument with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
EWP Mentor Texts	Thank You M'am; Woodson; Stargirl; Rikki-Tikki-Tavi	Flesh and Blood So Cheap; What do we learn from love and loss? (Big Idea Blast); Museum Indians; Tangerine; The Walking Dance	The First Americans; Letter to President Theodore Roosevelt; All Together Now
EWP Process Steps	Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish	Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish	Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish
Writing Skills	Organize Narrative Writing, Story Beginnings, Descriptive Details, Narrative Techniques, Narrative Sequencing, Conclusions	Thesis Statement, Organize Argumentative Writing, Reasons and Relevant Evidence, Introductions, Transitions, Style, Conclusions	Thesis Statement, Organizing Argumentative Writing, Reasons and Relevant Evidence, Introductions, Transitions, Style, Conclusions
Grammar Skills	Basic Spelling Rules I, Main and Subordinate Clauses, Simple and Compound Sentences	Adjective Clauses, Noun Clauses, Complex Sentences	Adverb Clauses, Compound-Complex Sentences, Basic Spelling Rules II

	UNIT 4: Moment of Truth	UNIT 5: Test of Time	UNIT 6: The Power of One
Essential Question	How can one event change everything?	Why do we still read myths and folktales?	How do we stand out from the crowd?
Writing Form	Informative	Research	Oral Presentation
Extended Writing Project Prompt	Think carefully about the question above. Then, choose three texts from this unit and explain how one moment or event had a significant impact on a character, an individual, or other events in that text. Identify the moment or event that changed everything and explain how and why it had such an impact.	Identify a research topic and write a report about that topic using an informative text structure. In the process, you will learn how to select a research question, develop a research plan, gather and evaluate source materials, and synthesize and present your research findings.	Prepare an argumentative presentation convincing your classmates to read or see a favorite literary work, film, or dramatic production. Be sure to include a clear thesis statement. In your reasoning, explain why this work is important and what made it entertaining, educational, or inspirational. Include evidence from at least three reliable sources. One source should be your recommended work itself and one should include diverse media formats, including video, audio, graphics, and print or digital texts. Research focuses could include the work's deeper message, historical or cultural significance, genre, or information about the author or director.
EWP Mentor Texts	Short and Sweet (Blast); Last Human Light; Hitting big league fastball 'clearly impossible'; The Power of Student Peer Leaders; Heroes of Science (Blast)	The Classical Roots of 'The Hunger Games'	Center Stage (Blast)
EWP Process Steps	Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish	Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Publish	Plan; Draft; Revise; Edit and Present
Writing Skills	Thesis Statement, Organizing Informative Writing, Supporting Details, Introductions, Transitions, Conclusions, Style, Precise Language	Planning Research, Evaluating Sources, Research and Notetaking, Critiquing Research, Paraphrasing, Sources and Citations, Print & Graphic Features, Using a Style Guide	Evaluating Sources, Organizing an Oral Presentation, Considering Audience and Purpose, Communicating Ideas, Reasons and Relevant Evidence, Sources and Citations
Grammar Skills	Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers, Commas Between Coordinate Adjectives, Commonly Misspelled Words	Participial Phrases, Gerund Phrases, Infinitive Phrases	Economy of Language, Noun Clauses

 **WRITING**

UNIT 1: CONFLICTS AND CLASHES

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 7, Unit 1 focuses on narrative writing. Students probe the unit’s essential question—When do differences become conflicts?—as they write an original narrative. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write about a conflict that would exist in a world where people could hear other people’s thoughts. The unit’s selections about experiencing conflicts and clashes provide a context for students, and the multiple pieces of fiction in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to analyze and emulate. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. At each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student’s writing changes and improves over time.

The skill lesson on Organizing Narrative Writing teaches concepts specifically called out in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards, while additional skill lessons on Story Beginnings, Descriptive Details, and Narrative Techniques focus on characteristics of the narrative writing genre and help students to develop their unique voices. Revision lessons lead students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in the TN ELA standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing is not confined to the EWP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. In the Independent Read “In the Year 1974,” students are asked to write a reflection about the importance of trying new things, while the prompt for “Mad” asks them to write a personal narrative about a time they made up with a loved one after a disagreement. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with texts in the unit. After students read “Seventh Grade,” they use the techniques from the Compare and Contrast skill lesson to analyze how the school settings in “Seventh Grade” and “Stargirl” creates conflict for the characters. Students also analyze the use of dramatic elements and structure to create suspense in “The Monsters are Due on Maple Street.”

Other writing tasks allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about graphic novels and radio dramas, as well as offering them the opportunity to choose their own self-selected reading. Writer’s notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer’s notebooks, students write to think, reflect, and practice skills they’re learning. In the skill lesson for Organizing Narrative Writing, students practice by creating a quick story about five items in the classroom, and in the Narrative Techniques lesson, they practice writing a short piece of dialogue using characters from a movie, TV show, or book. In each Close Read, students write to reflect on the text before they engage in a collaborative conversation and write their short constructed response.

 **WRITING****UNIT 2: HIGHS AND LOWS**

Literary analysis is the focus of the Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 7, Unit 2. The unit’s essential question—What do we learn from love and loss?—will guide students as they write a literary analysis. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write a literary analysis that shows the different types of lessons people learn about love and loss throughout the unit. The texts in this unit are tied together by the theme of love and loss and ground students understanding of each selection. The multiple genre texts in the unit mentor students’ understanding so they can analyze and recognize essential genre characteristics. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student’s writing changes and improves over time.

Skill lessons on Thesis Statements and Organizing Argumentative Writing teach concepts specifically called out in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards, while additional skill lessons on Reasons and Relevant Evidence, Introductions, and Conclusions focus on characteristics of the argumentative writing genre of literary analysis and help students develop their unique claim. Students receive directed revision instructions for altering their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in the TN ELA standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Students have opportunities to develop their writing skills outside the EWP. All Independent Read and Close Read lessons culminate in a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. In the Independent Read “My Mother Pieced Quilts,” students are asked to write a poem in response to a child from the perspective of a parent, while the prompt for “Tangerine” asks them to write a personal response about what makes someone a good teammate and why. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with those texts. After students read “Museum Indians,” they use the techniques from the Compare and Contrast skill lesson to explore the conflicts in the family interactions. Later in the unit, students analyze the poetic elements and structure in the poem “The Highwayman.”

There are several writing tasks throughout the unit that allows students to write in other genres and for different audiences. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about museum artifacts and research links, as well as offering them the opportunity to choose their own self-selected reading. Writer’s notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer’s notebooks, students write to think, write to reflect, and write to practice skills they’re learning. In the skill lesson for Organizing Argumentative Writing, students write a mock argument convincing

a friend to watch a TV show, and in the Reasons and Relevant Evidence lesson, they practice by creating a dialogue convincing another student to join a club. In each Close Read, students write to reflect on the text before they engage in a collaborative conversation and write their short constructed response.

 **WRITING****UNIT 3: CHASING THE IMPOSSIBLE**

In Grade 7, Unit 3, the Extended Writing Project (EWP) focuses on argumentative writing. Students will write an argumentative essay related to unit’s essential question: What makes a dream worth pursuing? The prompt for this EWP asks students to write an essay convincing the school to establish a chosen new club, class, or activity. The unit’s selections about pursuing dreams provide a thematic connection for students, and the argumentative selections in the unit provide examples and techniques students can analyze and recreate. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in an argumentative writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student’s writing changes and improves over time.

Skill lessons on Organizing Argumentative Writing teach concepts specifically called out in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards, while additional skill lessons on Reasons and Relevant Evidence, Introductions, and Conclusions focus on characteristics of argumentative writing and help students develop their unique claim. We walk students through the writing process as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Students will do plenty of writing in addition to the EWP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. In the Independent Read “Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers’ Rights,” students are asked to write a personal response to the question “Was Mother Jones an effective leader?,” while the prompt for “Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward” asks them to write a poem about how it feels to achieve the “hard home-run” that Brooks mentions. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with those texts. After students read “Letter to President Theodore Roosevelt, July 31, 1903,” they use the techniques from the Compare and Contrast skill lesson to think about instances when they are trying to change things for the better and have to deal with others who do not believe in their cause. Earlier in the unit, students will analyze how writers use specific word choice and style to impact meaning and tone in “The First Americans.”

Students are given multiple opportunities to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about how technology has changed the art of the argument and research links, as well as offering them the opportunity to choose their own self-selected reading. Writer’s notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for

low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer’s notebooks, students write to think, reflect, and practice skills they’re learning. In the skill lesson for Organizing Argumentative Writing, students outline an argument convincing a friend to go to a favorite restaurant. In the Conclusions lessons, students write an alternative conclusion to the mentor text “Machines, not people, should be exploring the stars for now.”

In each Close Read, students write to reflect on the text before they engage in a collaborative conversation and write their short constructed response.

 **WRITING****UNIT 4: MOMENT OF TRUTH**

The Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 7, Unit 4 focuses on informative writing. Students explore the unit’s essential question—How can one event change everything?—as they write an informative essay. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write an informative essay explaining how one moment or event had a significant impact on a character, an individual, or other event in three chosen texts. The unit’s selections about moments of truth provide a context for students, and the informational text selections in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to synthesize and attempt. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the informative writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student’s writing changes and improves over time.

Skill lessons on Organizing Informative Writing teach concepts specifically called out in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards, while additional skill lessons on Thesis Statements, Supporting Details, and Introductions, and Conclusions focus on characteristics of the informative writing genre and help students develop their unique structure. Revision lessons guide students as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing extends beyond the EWP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. In the Independent Read “The Three Questions,” students are asked to write a poem by taking words and phrases from the story and rearrange them in the form of a poem, while the prompt for “The Power of Student Peer Leaders” asks them to write a personal response about why it’s important to have mentors in life. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with those texts. After students read the informational text “An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793,” they use the techniques from the Compare and Contrast skill lesson to a fictional text about the same topic. Later in the unit, students will explore media, including print and graphic features, and informational text structure in the essay “Last Human Light.”

Other writing tasks in the unit allow students to write in other contexts and for other purposes. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about why short-form video is such a popular format for news, as well as offering them the opportunity to choose their own self-selected reading. Writer’s notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer’s notebooks, students write to think, reflect, and practice skills they’re learning. In the skill

lesson for Organizing Informative Writing, students practice by writing an autobiographical essay and in the Precise Language lesson, they reflect on a time when domain-specific language has helped them understand a science or mathematical concept. In each Close Read, students write to reflect on the text before they engage in a collaborative conversation and write their short constructed response.

 **WRITING****UNIT 5: TEST OF TIME**

Research writing is the focus of the Extended Writing Project (EWP) in Grade 7, Unit 5. The unit’s essential question—Why do we still read myths and folktales?—will guide students as they write a research paper. The prompt for this EWP asks students to write a research paper exploring a chosen research topic inspired from the unit’s texts. The selections in this unit ask students to think about the test of time, providing a context for students. The informational text selections in the unit serve as example texts for students to criticize and imitate. Over the course of the EWP, students engage in the research writing process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student’s writing changes and improves over time.

The skill lesson on Planning Research teach concepts specifically called out in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards, while additional skill lessons on Evaluating Sources, Research and Notetaking, Sources and Citations, Critiquing Research, Paraphrasing, Print and Graphic Features, and focus on the characteristics of the informative writing genre and help students develop their research paper. Students revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety, by being led through a series of skill lessons. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Student writing is not confined to the EWP. Each Independent Read and Close Read lesson culminates with a writing or speaking prompt in which students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text. In the Independent Read “The Hunger Games,” students are asked to write a short response explaining their reaction to the last scene of the excerpt, while the prompt for “The Classical Roots of The Hunger Games” asks them to write a short response describing how a modern-day book, movie, or TV show reflects a traditional element or theme in the article. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with those texts. After students read “Icarus and Daedalus,” they use the techniques from the Compare and Contrast skill lesson to think about how different settings influence characters’ actions and plot development. Later in the unit, students will explore character in the short story “The Third Elevator.”

We have included other writing tasks in the unit for students to write in other genres and contexts. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions about critical reviews, as well as offering them the opportunity to choose their own self-selected reading. Writer’s notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing. In their writer’s notebooks, students write to think, write to reflect, and write to practice skills they’re learning. In the skill lesson

for Research planning, students create a list of research questions for an autobiography of an admired figure, and in the Print and Graphic Features lessons, students complete an online search for print or graphic features and write a brief reflection explaining why they are effective. In each Close Read, students write to reflect on the text before they engage in a collaborative conversation and write their short constructed response.

 **WRITING****UNIT 6: THE POWER OF ONE**

In Grade 7, Unit 6, instead of completing an Extended Writing Project, students work on an Extended Oral Project (EOP). Throughout the unit students will have the opportunity to practice presentation skills via a variety of lessons and activities as they answer the unit’s essential question— How do we stand out from the crowd? The prompt for this unit’s EOP asks students to present a critique of a literary work, film, or dramatic production and then make a recommendation to the class based on their critique. The unit’s selections about the “power of one” provide a context for students, and the multiple genre texts in the unit serve as mentor texts for students to engage with and match. Over the course of the EOP, students engage in the presentation process with specific lessons for planning, drafting, revising, editing, and presenting their work. During each of these process steps and in the skills lessons throughout, students will follow the progress and development of an on-grade-level Student Model to see how another student’s writing changes and improves over time.

Skill lessons on Organizing an Oral Presentation and Active Listening teach concepts specifically called out in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards, while additional skill lessons on Communicating Ideas and Considering Audience and Purpose focus on characteristics of the presentation genre. Turn and Talk activities and StudySync TV episodes further model how students should continue creating a presentation and express their ideas orally. We walk students through the presentation planning process as they revise their drafts for clarity, development, organization, word choice, and sentence variety. Targeted Grammar Skill lessons instruct to the specific grammar skills identified in the Common Core English Language Arts Standards. After each skill lesson, students have the opportunity to practice, using created student writing, authentic texts, and their own work.

Students have many chances throughout the unit to practice their oral presentation skills. Whereas in the EWP Independent Read and Close Read lessons culminate in a writing prompt, in the EOP students reflect on the text or apply the skills they have learned in conjunction with that text by orally presenting their ideas. In the Independent Read “The Giver,” students must participate in a collaborative conversation before writing a personal response based on that exchange, while after reading “New Directions” students write a literary analysis after a group discussion. Close Read prompts specifically ask students to conduct a focused analysis using the skills taught in conjunction with those texts. To learn the particulars of crafting an oral argument, they read the speech “Remarks at the UNESCO Education for All Week Luncheon.” After reading the poem “Choices,” students use the techniques from the Compare and Contrast skill lesson to understand how authors use different structures and genres to express ideas about a similar topic and message. Later in the unit, students analyze debate structures after reading “Reality TV and Society.”

We have included other oral presentation and speaking tasks in the unit for students to further develop their abilities to verbally express themselves. Blasts throughout the unit allow students to practice sharing their opinions

about a play that teaches something about the real world, all achieved through student turn and talk activities. Writer's notebook activities in Blast, Close Read, and Writing Skill lessons provide students with the opportunity for low-stakes, ungraded writing with an emphasis on sharing their ideas orally. In the skill lesson for Organizing an Oral Presentation, students practice presenting their opinions about a favorite movie or TV show, and in the Considering Audience and Purpose lesson, they write a reflection about the aspects of public speaking that make them nervous or confident. In each Close Read, students always engage in a collaborative conversation and turn and talk activities.



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