

Grade overviews



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Progression of content and skills

The following grade overviews illustrate how the Amplify ELA curriculum has been carefully designed around sets and sequences of compelling texts that support deep engagement. The units target what is most powerful about each text, engaging students in a variety of reading, writing, and speaking and listening activities that put the text at the center of instruction. Over the year, students explore text structures and elements across a broad range of genres—including plays, poetry, memoirs, visual documents, primary and secondary sources, and audio and video performances. Equally important, students develop a broad vocabulary and knowledge of a wide range of subject areas—from classic literature to contemporary literature; from neuroscience to key American thinkers; from modern, seminal drama to Greek mythology.



Path of text complexity

Amplify carefully selects and curates texts with the goal that all students work with increasing independence and proficiency with texts at their grade band level of complexity. To accomplish this goal, Amplify carefully considers three factors in determining the placement of texts within a grade and unit: **qualitative measures**, **quantitative measures**, and **reader and task considerations**.



i = Informational texts

L = Literary texts

●●●●● QT: 820L-1420L

●●●●● QL: 2

●●●●● RT: 2

QT = Quantitative measure

QL = Qualitative measure

RT = Reader and task measure



Quantitative measure ●●●●● QT: 820L–1420L

The **quantitative** measure in purple reflects the Lexile band, based on the Lexile scores of the range of texts within the unit. Lexile scores are based on a measurement of vocabulary word frequency and sentence complexity.

- Band 1—Lexile 450–790
- Band 2—Lexile 770–980
- Band 3—Lexile 955–1155
- Band 4—Lexile 1080–1305
- Band 5—Lexile 1215–1355

Qualitative measure ●●●●● QL: 2

The **qualitative** measure in blue reflects the texts' structural and stylistic complexity (TS); the levels of meaning (LM) or purpose (P); the clarity and complexity of language and sentences (LCC); and the knowledge demands required of the reader to understand the text (KD). At a unit level, this measure also takes into account the inter-textual complexity. The scale is from 0–5, with 5 indicating the highest level of complexity.

	Accessible ●	Moderate ●●●	Complex ●●●●●
TS	 Organized clearly and/or chronologically; plot is linear; poetry has explicit and predictable structural elements	Prose includes multiple storylines or a plot that is somewhat difficult to predict; poetry has some implicit or unpredictable structural elements	Includes more intricate elements such as subplots, shifts in point of view or time, or non-standard text structures
	 Connections are explicit and clear; organization is linear; text features help readers but are not essential to understanding	Connections are implicit or subtle; organization is generally evident and sequential; text features help facilitate comprehension	Connections are often implicit, subtle, or ambiguous; organization exhibits discipline-specific traits; any text features are essential to comprehension
LCC	Language is explicit and literal, with mostly familiar vocabulary; mostly simple sentences	Language is often explicit and literal but includes some academic or archaic vocabulary, or words with complex meaning; some complex sentences with subordinate phrases or clauses	Abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language; archaic and academic vocabulary and domain-specific words; complex sentences with subordinate phrases and clauses
KD	The text explores a single theme; the subject matter relies on little or no discipline-specific knowledge; any references or allusions are fully explained in the text	The text explores several themes; the subject matter involves some discipline-specific knowledge; some references or allusions; the meaning of references or allusions are partially explained	Text explores complex or abstract themes; the subject matter relies on discipline-specific knowledge; text is dependent on allusions or references that require inference and evaluation
LM	One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text	Multiple levels of meaning that are relatively easy to identify; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety	Multiple levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify and interpret; theme is implicit, subtle, or ambiguous and may be revealed over the entirety of the text
P	Primary purpose is narrowly focused, and explicitly stated; the text has a singular perspective	Primary purpose is not explicit but is easily inferred; the text may include multiple perspectives	Text contains multiple purposes, and the primary purpose is subtle, intricate, and/or abstract

Reader and task measure ●●●○○○ RL: 2

The **reader and task measure** in green considers the complexity of the tasks that accompany the texts and the demands that these tasks place on readers. In determining this measure, Amplify considers the placement of texts within a unit, grade, or program; the knowledge demands and the supports put in place to scaffold this knowledge; and the complexity of the key tasks and sequence of steps leading up to those tasks.

Accessible ●

Tasks and activities are typically straightforward or highly engaging; do not require abstract inferencing or substantial external knowledge or experience.

Moderate ●●●

Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Complex ●●●●●

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and draw on the knowledge they have built throughout Amplify; areas of high complexity balanced by scaffolds and engaging activities.

A variety of genres

The Amplify units expose students to a wide variety of text genres and types, identified in this document with the following abbreviations:

LITERATURE

L/S - Story
L/D - Drama
L/P - Poetry

INFORMATIONAL

I/LN - Literary Nonfiction
I/H - Historical
I/S&T - Scientific and Technical



Grade 6 units

6A: Dahl & Narrative



i ●●●●● QT: 1090L
●●●●● QL: 2
●●●●● RT: 2

BIG IDEA

The power of first-person memoir to capture the experiences and emotions of childhood

READING

Observe how an author creates a character

WRITING

Focus on a moment in the text and develop a unique perspective about it

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Respond with constructive comments to peers' writing

TEXT FEATURES

Memoir with vivid descriptions and 20th-century British slang

6B: Mysteries & Investigations



i ●●●●● QT: 750L–1170
●●●●● QL: 3
L ●●●●● RT: 3

BIG IDEA

Investigators' approaches to medical and criminal mysteries

READING

Assess the credibility of evidence used to support conclusions

WRITING

Explain which trait is most useful to problem-solving investigators

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Evidence evaluation app: Evaluate the evidence that supports or refutes three competing scientific theories

Role-play: Assume the identity of a medical experiment volunteer and debate the ethics of human subjects

Detective apps: Use the Caught Red-Handed and Scene of the Crime apps to investigate clues and draw conclusions alongside Sherlock Holmes

TEXT FEATURES

Detective stories, inductive reasoning, narrative nonfiction of scientific discoveries

6C: The Chocolate Collection



i ●●●●● QT: 860L–1540L
●●●●● QL: 4
L ●●●●● RT: 4

BIG IDEA

Facts and stories of chocolate through the ages and across cultures

READING

Identify and compare various authors' purposes and perspectives

WRITING

Synthesize information from several sources to develop an argument

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Independent research: Construct research questions and explore reliable and valid sources online

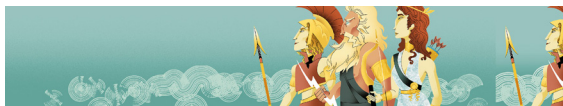
Debate: Argue for or against including chocolate in school lunches

Multimedia presentation: Create an interactive timeline to illustrate research findings

TEXT FEATURES

Primary and secondary source materials, varied topics and perspectives

6D: The Greeks



L ●●●●● QT: 870L–1270L
●●●●● QL: 4
●●●●● RT: 3

BIG IDEA

Humans vs. gods in ancient Greece

READING

Analyze the connections between symbols, characters, and themes in mythology

WRITING

Write about the development of a shared theme in two texts

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Quest: Explore the world of Olympian gods and meet the characters of Greek mythology

Performance: Interpret the text by acting out scenes from Greek myths

Myths in your own words: Re-imagine Greek myths by changing point of view, chronology, or key details

TEXT FEATURES

Modern prose retellings of myths and translation of ancient narrative poem

6E: Summer of the Mariposas



i ●●●●● QT: 840L–1140L
●●●●● QL: 3
L ●●●●● RT: 4

BIG IDEA

The hero's journey through Aztec mythology

READING

Trace a character's arc from the beginning of a novel to the end

WRITING

Analyze how character traits assist a heroic character on their journey

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Hero's journey map: Complete your own map of the hero's journey in *Summer of the Mariposas*

Aztec Lotería cards: Research Aztec mythology and use Lotería-inspired templates to present key figures

Meet the author: Watch and discuss videos of Guadalupe Garcia McCall, author of *Summer of the Mariposas*

TEXT FEATURES

Latinx YA novel incorporating magical realism, Aztec mythology, hero's journey

6F: The *Titanic* Collection



i ●●●●● QT: 800L–1620L
●●●●● QL: 4
L ●●●●● RT: 4

BIG IDEA

The lives and experiences of the *Titanic* passengers

READING

Compare and contrast perspectives on a single event

WRITING

Develop a question, conduct research, and create a multimedia project

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Role-play: Assume the identity of an actual *Titanic* passenger, then research their experience and write a letter from their point of view

Socratic seminar: Engage in student-led discussions about research topics

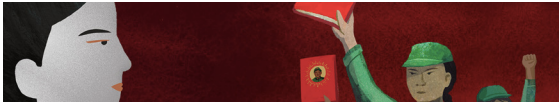
Multimedia presentation: Create social media passenger profiles and share insights with the class

TEXT FEATURES

Compelling artifacts from voyage, including menus, journals, letters, photographs

Grade 7 units

7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative



i ●●●●● QT: 780L
●●●●● QL: 3
●●●●● RT: 2

BIG IDEA

The impact of social and political forces on individual experiences

READING

Examine the differences between a character's thoughts and actions

WRITING

Use revision to strengthen elaboration

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Narrative writing: Use dialogue, details, and description to bring a moment to life

Writing workshops: Respond with constructive comments to peers' writing

Author-led discussion: Watch videos of Ji-li Jiang, author of *Red Scarf Girl*, and discuss the role of propaganda in her world

TEXT FEATURES

Memoir of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, historical propaganda images

7B: Character & Conflict



i ●●●●● QT: 870L–1400L
●●●●● QL: 3
L ●●●●● RT: 3

BIG IDEA

The impact of societal restrictions and racism on individual dreams and family dynamics

READING

Analyze a character's unconscious motivations

WRITING

Make thematic connections across genres

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Performance: Interpret text details by acting out scenes from *A Raisin in the Sun*

Integrate media formats: Compare and contrast film versions of a play with the original script

Quest: Explore the world of mid-20th century Chicago through photographs, speeches, and documents

TEXT FEATURES

Memoir, poetry, mid-20th-century drama about a Black family

7C: Brain Science



i ●●●●● QT: 970L–1420L
●●●●● QL: 4
●●●●● RT: 4

BIG IDEA

Brain development and brain disorders

READING

Synthesize central ideas developed throughout text sections and across text features

WRITING

Describe facts, explain concepts, and use logical reasoning to support claims

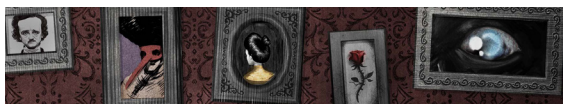
ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Quest: Move through a school day with one of the brain disorders described in Oliver Sacks's book *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat* to learn how these disorders affect perception.

TEXT FEATURES

Narrative and informational nonfiction about discoveries in brain science

7D: Poetry & Poe



L ●●●●● QT: 800L–1530L
●●●●● QL: 4
●●●●● RT: 3

BIG IDEA

Visual storytelling and the art of suspense

READING

Analyze the influence of unreliable narrators

WRITING

Compare and contrast characters' perspectives

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Storyboard app: Use a digital storyboard to visualize different perspectives in "The Tell-Tale Heart"

Debate: Apply a legal definition and argue a narrator's sanity

Integrate media formats: Write a movie review that compares and contrasts an animated adaptation with the original text

TEXT FEATURES

American poetry and Gothic literature with unreliable narrators

7E: The Frida & Diego Collection



i ●●●●● QT: 910L–1430L
●●●●● QL: 5
L ●●●●● RT: 4

BIG IDEA

Art as personal, cultural, and political expression

READING

Analyze how figurative language conveys an author's tone and perspective

WRITING

Synthesize information from several sources to develop an argument

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Creative writing: Compare Frida and Diego's writing to a Shakespearean sonnet and create your own

Socratic seminar: Engage in student-led discussions about research topics

Multimedia presentation: Create a digital collage to present individual insights to the class

TEXT FEATURES

Paintings, memoirs, articles, letters portraying unconventional artists

7F: The Gold Rush Collection



i ●●●●● QT: 1020L–1600L
●●●●● QL: 4
L ●●●●● RT: 4

BIG IDEA

The diverse characters and disparate conditions of the California Gold Rush

READING

Compare and contrast how authors with differing perspectives address related topics

WRITING

Develop a question, conduct research, and create a multimedia project

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Role-play: Assume the identity of a gold rush participant and write a diary from their point of view

Develop information literacy: Evaluate the reliability and credibility of online informational sources

Multimedia presentation: Create an interactive timeline to illustrate research findings

TEXT FEATURES

Primary and secondary source documents, poems, lyrics, maps, and images

Grade 8 units

8A: Perspectives & Narrative



i ●●●●● QT: 830L–1080L
●●●●● QL: 3
●●●●● RT: 3

BIG IDEA

Making sense of individual, cultural, and familial identity within conflicting forces of society

READING

Notice the impact of author’s craft and structure

WRITING

Write a narrative about a childhood memory

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Narrative writing: Use dialogue, details, and description to bring a childhood memory to life

Writing workshops: Practice narrative writing techniques modeled in mentor texts and respond with constructive comments to peers’ writing

Meet the author: Watch and discuss videos of Kaitlyn Greenidge, author of “My Mother’s Garden”

TEXT FEATURES

WWII memoir, contemporary coming-of-age narratives, issues of equity

8B: Liberty & Equality



i ●●●●● QT: 900–1500L
●●●●● QL: 5
L ●●●●● RT: 4

BIG IDEA

The meaning of “all men are created equal”

READING

Evaluate how an author builds an argument in a narrative text

WRITING

Analyze how authors use language to make a case for liberty and equality

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Integrate media formats: Analyze Chadwick Boseman’s performance of the opening of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*

Speech writing: Use mentor texts to prepare and deliver an abolitionist speech at an Anti-Slavery Fair

Quest: Explore personal testimonies, songs, photographs, and other Emancipation-era documents

TEXT FEATURES

19th-century language and syntax, slave narratives, and political rhetoric

8C: Science & Science Fiction



i ●●●●● QT: 840L–1540L
●●●●● QL: 4
L ●●●●● RT: 4

BIG IDEA

Creators vs. creations

READING

Analyze an author’s development of themes

WRITING

Argue opposing claims about a character and resolve the contradiction

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

The creature in your own words: Draw on graphic novel illustrations to tell the story from the creature’s point of view

Archetype analysis: Compare and contrast passages from *Frankenstein* with excerpts from Genesis and “Prometheus”

Debate: Argue central questions about whether the creature deserves a mate and which character deserves more sympathy

TEXT FEATURES

Gothic text in graphic form, archaic language, biblical and mythological allusions

8D: Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet



L ○○○○○ QT: N/A
●●●●● QL: 5
●●●○○ RT: 3

BIG IDEA

The forces of love vs. the forces of hate

READING

Paraphrase Shakespearean English and trace extended metaphors

WRITING

Choose between contradictory positions and argue with evidence

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Recite Shakespeare: Memorize and perform the Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet*

Extend the metaphor: Analyze Shakespeare's use of figurative language and create new metaphors for Romeo to praise Juliet

Integrate media formats: Compare and contrast film versions of a play with the original script

TEXT FEATURES

Drama with Elizabethan language and structures, inverted syntax, extensive figurative language

8E: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning



i ●●●●○ QT: 500L–1220L
●●●●○ QL: 4
L ●●●●● RT: 5

BIG IDEA

The influences of and responses to the Holocaust

READING

Synthesize multiple accounts to develop understanding and empathy

WRITING

Analyze the impact of propaganda and explain the response to unfolding events

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Remembrance poems: Read and write poems on the theme of remembrance

Propaganda analysis: Analyze anti-Semitic propaganda and other techniques that Nazis used to turn Germany against its Jewish citizens

Meet the author: Use video interviews with survivor Irene Butter to reflect on what we can learn from the Holocaust

TEXT FEATURES

Poems, articles, memoirs, graphic novel, portrayals of sensitive content

8F: The Space Race Collection



i ●●●●● QT: 870L–1490L
●●●●● QL: 5
L ●●●●○ RT: 4

BIG IDEA

The successes and sacrifices of space exploration

READING

Integrate information from a variety of sources and perspectives to develop a nuanced understanding of complex topics

WRITING

Develop a question, conduct research, and create a multimedia project

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Develop information literacy: Evaluate the reliability and credibility of online informational sources

Role-play: Research an astronaut or cosmonaut and write blogs from their point of view

Socratic seminar: Engage in student-led discussions about research topics

TEXT FEATURES

Primary and secondary source documents, speeches, and images

Grade 6 curriculum map

6A: Dahl & Narrative



Unit summary

Students begin with narrative writing to quickly boost their writing production, learn the foundational skill of Focus, and become comfortable with key classroom habits and routines they will use all year. Equally important, teachers use this focus on narrative to establish a strong, targeted feedback cycle and to create a vibrant classroom community of readers and writers where diverse experiences and perspectives are at the center of instruction. Students then apply their new observational skills to lively readings from Roald Dahl's memoir *Boy: Tales of Childhood* and learn how to work closely with textual evidence.

Roald Dahl's 1984 memoir describes a childhood filled with contrasts of love and cruelty, mischief and suffering, humor and anguish. All the sensitivity, bravado, and drama of childhood are present, conveyed in the adult Dahl's compact, powerful prose, brimming with sensory detail. Lessons target Dahl's ability to describe a complexity of emotions over the arc of one's experiences and emphasize Dahl's use of language and structure to convey his central ideas. At the end of the unit, students write an essay arguing whether the boys or the adults cause more trouble in the book.



1090L
●●●●●

QL: 2
●●●●●

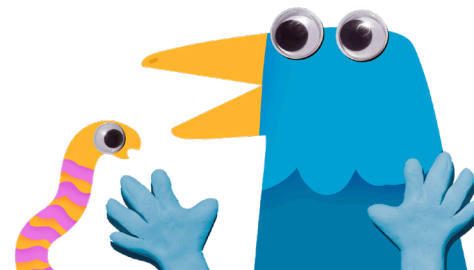
RT: 2
●●●●●

Rationale(s) for QL

- The subject matter relies on little discipline knowledge and/or is fully explained
- Language includes some complex words or usage and/or sentence complexity

Rationale(s) for RT

- Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Welcome! (1 lesson)
- SU2: Get Started (10 lessons)
- SU3: *Boy: Tales of Childhood* by Roald Dahl (12 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU4: Write an Essay: Argumentative (4 lessons)
- Dahl & Narrative Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Who does Dahl describe as causing more trouble: the boys or the adults? Use details from one moment in the book to show who is really causing more trouble.

Vocabulary module

Context Clues

Texts in the unit

Core text

- *Boy: Tales of Childhood* by Roald Dahl I/LN, 1090L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain
- Excerpt from *Tony Hawk: Professional Skateboarder* by Tony Hawk and Sean Mortimer I/LN
- Excerpt from *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller I/H
- Excerpt from *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett L/S
- Excerpts from *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai L/S



6B: Mysteries & Investigations



Unit summary

Students read like an investigator to embark on a multi-genre study into the mesmerizing world of scientific and investigative sleuthing. *The Secret of the Yellow Death: A True Story of Medical Sleuthing* by Suzanne Jurmain and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories take place in the late 19th century, when medical diagnostics and criminal investigations were still evolving into scientific fields.

The lessons based on *The Secret of the Yellow Death* challenge students to grapple with clues, evidence, and scientific data to make meaning and support their own claims as Dr. Walter Reed and his team of scientific investigators collaborate with their Cuban counterparts to seek the truth about yellow fever. Students explore the ethics of the team's experiments and consider how current scientists and health workers approach issues of public health. Students' work with tracing the evidence in *The Secret of the Yellow Death* helps them as they move on to closely read two Sherlock Holmes stories, breaking down observations of a crime scene to understand how the detective breaks seemingly unsolvable mysteries wide open. At the end of the unit, students write an essay explaining which trait is most useful to problem-solving investigators.



QT: 750L-1170L



QL: 3



RT: 3



Rationale(s) for QL

- Language includes some complex words or usage and/or sentence complexity
- The subject matter requires some discipline-specific knowledge but references are largely explained

Rationale(s) for RT

- Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Fever (1 lesson)
- SU2: *The Secret of the Yellow Death: A True Story of Medical Sleuthing* by Suzanne Jurmain (15 lessons)
- SU3: “The Speckled Band” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (6 lessons)
- SU4: “The Red-Headed League” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (4 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- Mysteries & Investigations Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

People—like scientists, detectives, and health workers—take many approaches to solving problems. They may take bold and brave action, work methodically, think carefully and logically, collaborate with others, or try new approaches.

Based on the texts you have read, what stands out to you as one important characteristic to have as a problem solver or investigator?

Include two examples of individuals demonstrating this characteristic in your response.

Vocabulary module

Connotations and Denotations

Texts in the unit

Core texts

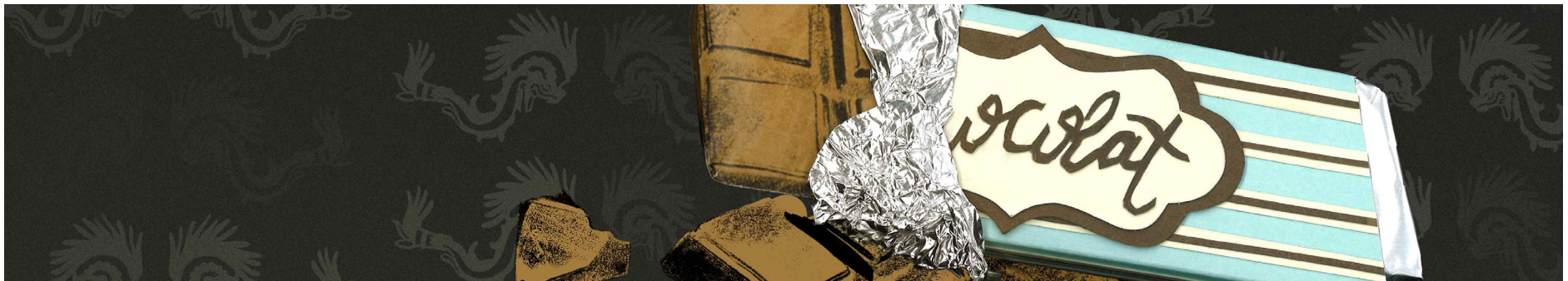
- *The Secret of the Yellow Death: A True Story of Medical Sleuthing* by Suzanne Jurmain I/H, 1010L
- *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson L/S, 750L
- Letter from Mabel H. Lazear to Dr. James Carroll I/H, 1160L
- “Yellow Fever Circles Brazil’s Huge Cities” by Shasta Darlington and Donald G. McNeil Jr. from *The New York Times* I/H, 1170L
- The Hippocratic Oath I/S&T, 990L
- “The Speckled Band” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle L/S, 1090L
- “The Red-Headed League” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle L/S, 1070L

Extra texts

- “See It Through” by Edgar Guest L/P
- Excerpt from “Outwitting Nature’s Greatest Killer” by Mark Johnson, Mark Hoffman, & Devi Shastri I/S&T
- Excerpt from “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne L/S
- Excerpt from “A Mysterious Visit” by Mark Twain L/S



6C: The Chocolate Collection



Unit summary

In this Collection, students explore primary documents and conduct independent research to understand the diverse roles that chocolate has played in cultures around the world. These primary and secondary articles, artifacts, and images cover the 3,700-year history of chocolate and take students on an odyssey from ancient times in Mexico (including the Olmec, Mayan, and Aztec people and their cultures) to current issues in chocolate production (including the movement for better labor practices and reduced habitat destruction). Students build information literacy skills, learn how to craft and answer a research question, and collaborate to draft procedures for and conduct a Socratic seminar. They learn how to construct an evidence-based argument, and use those skills to write a short piece aimed at convincing readers that their favorite kind of chocolate is the best, debate whether or not chocolate should be included in school lunches, and draft a persuasive letter to a local candy store owner.

Throughout these activities, students learn to develop their positions by identifying and researching primary and secondary source documents and constructing explanations and arguments on solid, relevant evidence and information. As students reach the end of the unit, they synthesize all of the skills they've developed to tackle a culminating research project—part essay, part interactive timeline.



QT: 860L–1540L



QL: 4



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- Texts include multiple or intricate purposes
- Language includes some complex words or usage and/or sentence complexity
- The subject matter requires knowledge of discipline or of other texts

Rationale(s) for RT

- Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Information Literacy (4 lessons)
- SU2: Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research (4 lessons)
- SU3: Argumentative Writing and Collection Research (4 lessons)
- SU4: Debate and Internet Research (4 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Research-based Informative or Argumentative (6 lessons); Multimedia Project (2 lessons)
- The Chocolate Collection Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Research Option 1: Chocolate and Slavery

When did slavery become a part of chocolate production? Is slavery still used on cacao plantations today? Write an informative essay about the history of slavery in the production of chocolate.

Research Option 2: Chocolate = Happiness...or Does It?

Can eating chocolate affect your mood? Your brain chemistry? Is it addictive? Study the scientific research on chocolate and determine what experts have found. Research the texts in the Collection and on the Internet to find the information you need. Be ready to make a claim and cite sources.

Vocabulary module

Greek and Latin Roots

Texts in the unit

Core texts

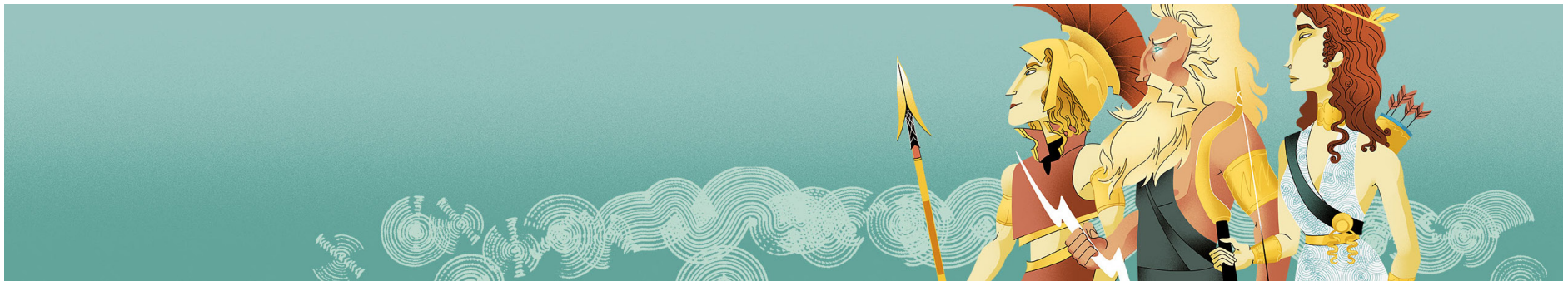
- “Prehistoric Americans Traded Chocolate for Turquoise?” by Christine Dell’Amor from *National Geographic News* I/H, 1360L
- Letter from Lord Rothschild to Laurence Fish I/H, 1120L
- “Pilot Dropped Candy into Hearts of Berlin” by *ABC News* I/H, 1040L
- Appendix C Statement from *Labour in Portuguese West Africa* by William A. Cadbury I/H, original version: 1650L, adapted version: 1410L, paraphrased version: 1050L
- “Is It Fair to Eat Chocolate?” from *Skipping Stones* by Deborah Dunn I/LN, 1020L
- “Eat More Chocolate, Win More Nobels?” by Karl Ritter and Marilyn Marchione from *Associated Press* I/S&T, 1310L
- “Can Chocolate Be Good for My Health?” by Katherine Zeratsky, R.D., L.D. I/S&T, 1110L
- “Dark Chocolate: A Bittersweet Pill to Take” by Mary Brophy Marcus from *USA Today* I/H, 1540L
- “Chocolate” from *American Smooth* by Rita Dove L/P, Lexile n/a,
- Act I, Scene Eight from *Così fan tutte: English National Opera Guide* 22 L/D, Lexile n/a,
- *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris L/S, 860L
- *The Dharma Bums* by Jack Kerouac L/S, 970L
- “The Sweet Lure of Chocolate” by Jim Spadaccini I/H, 970L
- “The Tropics” from *The Story of Chocolate* by National Confectioners Association’s Chocolate Council I/S&T, 1110L
- “Good Harvest” by Karen E. Lange from *All Animals* magazine/The Humane Society of the United States I/H, 1190L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* by Benjamin Franklin I/H
- Excerpt from *Life on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain I/H
- Excerpt from *A History of US 10: All the People Since 1945* by Joy Hakim I/H



6D: The Greeks



Unit summary

Students closely explore and analyze three stories from Greek mythology: “Prometheus”, “Odysseus”, and “Arachne”. Drawing on the routines and skills established in previous units, these lessons ask students to move from considering the state of a single person—themselves or a character—to contemplating broader questions concerning the role people play in the world and the various communities they inhabit. Independent reading assignments provide students the opportunity to explore additional Greek, Roman, and Middle Eastern myths.

“Prometheus” is an excerpt from Bernard Evslin’s book *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths*. This myth raises a number of engaging questions about justice, responsibility, and what it means to be human. Homer’s epic poem “The Odyssey” recounts the story of Odysseus as he makes his journey home from the Trojan War. These lessons challenge students to consider how character traits can be both beneficial and harmful, and what constitutes leadership. “Arachne,” a poem by Ted Hughes, offers a retelling of Ovid’s original tale of the weaver Arachne asserting herself in front of the more powerful Minerva. In this sub-unit, students confront the question of how humans should conduct themselves and the line between pride and arrogance. Each of these myths shows characters debating big questions about human nature, and students examine various perspectives. Students also have the opportunity to write variations of two of these myths, showcasing their own perspectives on the themes of honor and justice. At the end of the unit, students write an essay arguing whether characters from two of the myths are destroyed by their pride.



QT: 870L–1270L



QL: 4



RT: 3



Rationale(s) for QL

- Levels of meaning and theme are multiple, ambiguous, and/or revealed over the course of the text
- Language includes some complex words or usage and/or sentence complexity

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Prometheus (6 lessons)
- SU2: Odysseus (7 lessons)
- SU3: Arachne (6 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU4: Write an Essay: Argumentative (5 lessons)
- The Greeks Unit Reading Assessment

Quest

- *Myth World*

Essay prompt

Using two of the following characters—the humans from “Prometheus,” Odysseus from *The Odyssey*, or Arachne from “Arachne”—answer the following question: Are humans destroyed by their pride? Why or why not? Use your answer to stake a claim about whether or not these characters have been destroyed by their pride. Be sure to support your claim with textual evidence.

Vocabulary module

Synonyms and Antonyms

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- “Prometheus” from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin L/S, 870L
- “Daedalus” from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin L/S, 870L
- “Demeter” from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin L/S, 870L
- “The Odyssey” by Homer, translated by E.V. Rieu L/S, 1140L
- “Arachne” from *Selected Tales from Ovid* by Ted Hughes L/S, Lexile n/a
- *The Arabian Nights’ Entertainments*, “Second Voyage,” by Andrew Lang L/S, 1270L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus L/S
- Excerpt from *A Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys*, “Circe’s Palace,” by Nathaniel Hawthorne, L/S
- Excerpt from “The Picture Minerva Wove” by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey L/S



6E: Summer of the Mariposas



Unit summary

Students read *Summer of the Mariposas* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall, a novel that follows the journey of the Garza sisters into Mexico and back. Students dive into this retelling of “The Odyssey” through a contemporary Latinx lens as they explore sibling and extended-family relationships. Instead of the traditional portrait of an independent male hero, students follow five fully drawn sisters as they work together to take their version of the traditional hero’s journey, fighting their own battles, having adventures, and navigating relationships as they journey to find themselves, each other, and their family. Using the hero’s journey structure and Homer’s “Odyssey” as inspiration, McCall creates a world in which Mexican folklore and Aztec legends are woven into the more realistic experiences of Odilia and her sisters.

Over the course of the unit, students consider how characters change and develop, compare McCall’s retelling to episodes from Homer’s “Odyssey”, contrast the sisters’ fictional journey to the nonfiction account of a migrant boy’s journey, and create a map of this hero’s journey. Students also research Aztec mythology to create their Aztec lotería card for the classroom gallery, explore the symbolism of the mariposa, and participate in fishbowl discussions to collaboratively discuss a central theme of the meaning of family. After completing the novel, students write an essay explaining what allows one of the heroes of *Summer of the Mariposas* to be successful in specific moments.



QT: 840L–1140L



QL: 3



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- Levels of meanings and/or theme may be conveyed with some subtlety.
- The subject matter requires some literary/cultural knowledge but references are largely explained

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: *Summer of the Mariposas* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall (20 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU2: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- Summer of the Mariposas Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

What is a special characteristic or source of strength for one of the Garza sisters? How does this characteristic or strength help her succeed in any two moments of her hero's journey?

Vocabulary module

Figurative Language

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- *Summer of the Mariposas* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall L/S, 840L
- *The Odyssey*, a graphic novel by Gareth Hinds L/S, 940L
- *The Odyssey* by Homer, translated by E.V. Rieu L/S, 1140L
- *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario I/LN, 860L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from "The Boy and the Bayonet" by Paul Laurence Dunbar L/S
- Excerpt from *A Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Minotaur" L/S
- "Mariposa" by Edna St. Vincent Millay L/S



6F: The *Titanic* Collection



Unit summary

In this Collection, students explore documents and conduct independent research to better understand what really happened on the fateful night in 1912 when the *Titanic* sank in the North Atlantic Ocean. Students build information literacy skills and learn what information can be gleaned from research artifacts like menus from the *Titanic*'s first-, second-, and third-class dining rooms; photos and drawings of the ship; transcripts of the final telegraph communications; and newspaper accounts of the sinking and its aftermath. They are each assigned a passenger from the *Titanic*'s manifest and consider gender and class issues as they research and write narrative accounts from the point of view of their passenger. They also participate in a Socratic seminar in which they rely on their research to examine the complicated issues inherent in the *Titanic* story.

Throughout these activities, students learn to tell the difference between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources; determine if a source is reliable; and understand the ethical uses of information. As students reach the end of the unit, they synthesize all of the skills they've developed to tackle a culminating research assignment—part essay, part multimedia project.



QT: 800L-1620L



QL: 4



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- Text structure is generally straightforward and contains features essential to comprehension
- The subject matter requires knowledge of discipline or of other texts

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Information Literacy (4 lessons)
- SU2: Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research (4 lessons)
- SU3: Passport and Collection Research (4 lessons)
- SU4: Socratic Seminar and Internet Research (4 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Research-based Informative or Argumentative (6 lessons); Multimedia Project (2 lessons)
- The *Titanic* Collection Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Research Option 1: Who's to blame for the loss of life on the Titanic?

Research a list of several parties involved in the tragedy. Some options include the Titanic's Captain Smith, the telegraph officers, the *Titanic*'s lookouts, the captain of the *Carpathia*, and the White Star Line's owners and shipbuilders.

Research Option 2: Who were the Titanic orphans?

Write an informative essay detailing the experience of the two young children known as the Titanic Orphans.

Vocabulary module

Prefixes and Suffixes

Texts in the unit

Core texts

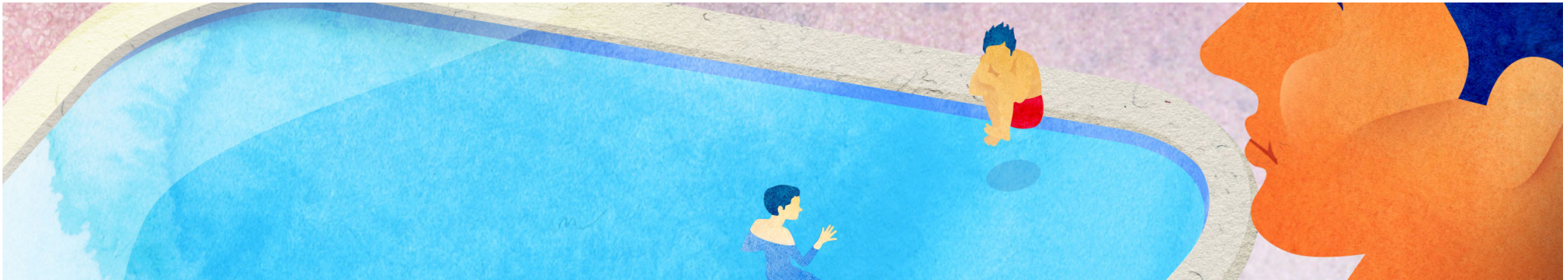
- Introduction from *Sinking of the "Titanic" Most Appalling Ocean Horror* by Jay Henry Mowbray, Ph.D., LL.D I/H, original version: 1500L, adapted version: 1200L, paraphrased version: 1000L
- A Letter from Mary Lines I/H, 800L
- "Testimony of Olaus Abelseth" from United States Senate Inquiry I/H
- Chapter 7—"There Is Your Beautiful Nightdress Gone" from *A Night to Remember* by Walter Lord I/H, 1120L
- Various public domain sources: Final Wireless Transmissions Aboard the RMS *Titanic* I/H
- Chapter 6—"Women and Children First!" from *Sinking of the Titanic and Great Sea Disasters* by Logan Marshall (I/H, original version: 1330L, adapted version: 1270L, paraphrased version: 960L
- Untitled Poem read at the *Titanic* Memorial Dedication in Belfast, Ireland—June 1920, anonymous L/P
- "MAY BE WAIFS' MOTHER. Mme. Navratil of Nice Believes Babies Saved from *Titanic* Are Hers." from *The New York Times* I/H, 1170L
- "Discovery of the *Titanic*" by *Lapham's Quarterly* editors I/H, 1170L
- "Rusticles on *Titanic* Contain New Iron-Eating Bacteria, Study Says" by Jack Phillips from *Epoch Times* I/S&T, 1350L
- "The Iceberg Was Only Part of It" by William J. Broad from *The New York Times* I/H, 1260L
- Letter from the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland I/H, 1620L

Extra texts

- "The Harvest Of The Sea (On the sinking of the 'Titanic')" by Charles Hanson Towne L/P
- Excerpt from the British Government report submitted to US Senate on April 15, 1912: "The Third-Class Passengers" I/H



Grade 6 Poetry in America



Amplify partnered with Poetry in America, whose mission is to bring poetry into classrooms and living rooms around the world, to design lessons that combine PIA’s “Four Pillar” approach with Amplify’s close reading pedagogy to build students’ engagement and knowledge about poetry. Each three-lesson sub-unit allows students to fully explore a poet’s choices around form and language, both in conversation with each other and by viewing the poets, celebrities, academics, and citizens who appear in embedded videos discussing each poem. Students have the opportunity to try on the poet’s use of language, craft, and structure in creative writing assignments tailored to the targeted poem.

In Sub-unit 1, students work with Richard Blanco’s evocative poem, “Looking for The Gulf Motel,” which recalls a childhood vacation with his Cuban immigrant family. Students use Blanco’s discussion of the “mirror effect” to analyze his rich imagery, and end the sub-unit by taking a turn at composing their own “Gulf Motel” poems.

In Sub-unit 2, Coleman Barks’s poem “Glad” playfully juxtaposes a young girl’s heroics on the soccer field with the imagery and diction of an epic, allowing students to consider how Barks’s use of language and the sonnet form helps them understand the poem’s commentary on the emphasis on winners and losers in modern sports.

In Sub-unit 3, students consider the personal and cultural background that African American poet Richard Hayden drew on for his iconic poem “Those Winter Sundays,” and how those influences are reflected in his language and his adaptation of the sonnet form for this poem about his father. They use his poem as an inspiration for writing their own ode to an unsung hero in their life. (This sub-unit is made available across grades 6–8.)



Rationale(s) for QL

- Level meanings and/or theme may be conveyed with some subtlety
- The subject matter requires some literary/cultural knowledge but references are largely explained

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities do not require substantial external knowledge or experience.

Poetry in America activity highlights:

Discussions with annotated guides

Explore each poet's use of sensory details, figurative language, form, and structure.

Video explorations

Watch and discuss videos where poets, celebrities, and academics share their interpretations and analyses of each poem.

Creative responses

Compose poems by experimenting with theme and mimicking each poet's style.

Core texts

- "Looking for The Gulf Motel" by Richard Blanco, L/P
- "Glad" by Coleman Barks, L/P
- "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden, L/P

Core lessons

- SU1: "Looking for the Gulf Motel" (3 lessons)
- SU2: "Glad" (3 lessons)
- SU3: "Those Winter Sundays" (3 lessons)



Amplify Grammar



The Amplify digital Grammar unit enables teachers to assign students self-guided grammar instruction and practice. Sub-units are paired by topic: one covers foundational material on the topic and one contains more advanced and “stretch” material. Middle grade teachers and students share access to the full range of topics and lessons within the Grammar unit, so teachers select the content that best meets their students’ needs while exposing students to key grammar topics for the middle grades. Teachers integrate this instruction into their core instructional pathway using the Amplify Flex Days within the core units. To introduce or review topics with students, teachers use the related lessons or drills on the topic found in Amplify’s *Mastering Conventions* PDFs, also available within this unit.

Core lessons

- Sub-unit 1: What Is a Complete Sentence? (8 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 2: Expanding the Complete Sentence (8 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 3: Understanding the Pronoun (5 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 4: Pronoun Usage: Agreement and Reference (5 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 5: Verb Tense (4 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 6: Verb Moods, Modals, and Voice (4 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 7: Punctuation (2 Lessons)

Printable instructional resources

- *Mastering Conventions One: Grammar and Punctuation*
- *Mastering Conventions Two: Grammar and Punctuation*
- *Mastering Conventions Three: Grammar and Punctuation*
- *Mastering Conventions Four: Spelling*

Grade 6 Beginning Story Writing

Unit summary

In this unit, students get to practice their creative writing skills, learning the elements of storytelling and character development and the importance of vivid language. Students gain a sense of ownership over their writing as they experiment with the impact of their authorial choices on sentences, language, character traits, and plot twist. As students consider how to use these elements to create a story, they also gain tools to help them effectively and incisively analyze a piece of literature.

Students begin with creating a character, observing and recording details, and writing about their characters in mundane situations to make them nuanced and believable. This situational setting allows students to create a secondary character for their own story and develop dialogue. After some explicit instruction about the structure of a story, students pull all their skills together to write a story and practice the most important part of creative writing—revision.

Core lessons

- Sub-unit 1: Creating a Believable Character (9 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 2: Experimenting With a Second Character (10 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 3: Writing a Short Story (5 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 7: Punctuation (2 Lessons)

Novel Guides

Amplify ELA Novel Guides provide middle school teachers with flexible study guides for the books they most want to teach and provide students with lean, targeted instruction that follows the pedagogy in core units. The diverse selection of books in this series presents a range of genres and themes, from mystery to non-fiction and from social justice to identity and courage.

The Novel Guides—housed in the Amplify Library—are designed to be used flexibly and offer suggestions for implementation. Here are two titles that align to the grade 6 topics and skills:

6A: *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson

As your students practice using observational details to focus and develop one narrative moment, this poetic memoir offers a model of how small details convey both experience and emotion.

6E: *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai

As students complete *Summer of the Mariposas*, this memoir of another family's journey offers an opportunity for further discussions about family and heroic journeys.

Grade 7 curriculum map

7A: *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative



Unit summary

Students begin with narrative writing to quickly boost their writing production and to learn the foundational skill of Focus. Teachers use this focus on narrative to establish a strong, targeted feedback cycle and to create a vibrant classroom community of readers and writers where diverse experiences and perspectives are at the center of instruction. After exploring the details of how they describe their own experiences and emotions, students pay the same kind of close attention to analyzing the details presented in the unit's core text: Ji-li Jiang's *Red Scarf Girl*, her memoir of growing up during China's Cultural Revolution.

Set against a vast landscape of dramatic events, Ji-li's story makes these society-shaking upheavals feel human-sized by tracing their impact on the experiences of an ordinary young woman. This memoir broadens student awareness of a key moment in Chinese and world history, while connecting this history to relatable themes like adolescents' relationships to authority figures and clashing family and peer loyalties. Students explore how Ji-li Jiang feels increasingly drawn in different directions by a range of conflicting forces: her desire to join the revolution and replace the corrupt old world with a pure new one, her empathy for the people who are damaged and destroyed by this cleansing, her longing to escape the shadow cast by her family's history, and her love for her family. Lessons emphasize Jiang's use of first-person narrative point of view and narrative techniques like dialogue and detail to convey her central ideas. At the end of the unit, students write an essay tracing one way Ji-li changes over the course of her story.



QT: 780L
●●●●●●●●

QL: 3
●●●●●●●●

RT: 2
●●●●●●●●

Rationale(s) for QL

- The subject matter requires some discipline-specific knowledge but references are largely explained
- Primary purpose of texts is clearly stated

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities are typically straightforward or highly engaging; activities often require inferencing; activities do not require substantial external knowledge or experience.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Welcome! (1 lesson)
- SU2: Get Started (12 lessons)
- SU3: *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* by Ji-li Jiang (12 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU4: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- *Red Scarf Girl* & Narrative Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

What is one way Ji-li changes over the course of her story?

Vocabulary module

Context Clues

Texts in the unit

Core text

- *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* by Ji-li Jiang I/LN, 780L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens L/S
- “A Boy’s Summer Song” by Paul Laurence Dunbar L/P
- Excerpt from *Colors of the Mountain* by Da Chen I/LN



7B: Character & Conflict



Unit summary

Students analyze characters' responses to conflict and examine how authors use the interactions between characters and events to develop theme and perspective. Students read "Sucker," a short story by Carson McCullers, and *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play by Lorraine Hansberry. Both texts are grounded in a nuanced, deeply compassionate understanding of how families facing hardships can both support and inflict harm on each other, and both provide students with rich opportunities to observe the growth and change of characters whose motivations are often hidden, even from themselves. In addition, the complexity of the characters and dynamics in Lorraine Hansberry's groundbreaking play provides students multiple ways to discuss and analyze issues of individual and cultural identity, familial obligations, and differing notions of success—all through the eyes of family members who pull together in spite of the challenges society places upon them and their own distinct aspirations.

Throughout the unit, students focus on what motivates and challenges different characters, trace literary elements and themes, and analyze how characters use figurative language to convince others of their perspectives. Students also compare the characters' experiences in Lorraine Hansberry's play to Langston Hughes's poem "Harlem" and an excerpt from Hansberry's memoir, *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*. Finally, the immersive Quest—*Black, White and Blues in Chicago*—allows students to explore the lives and characters from *A Raisin in the Sun*, while gaining a deeper knowledge of Black history with an emphasis on Civil Rights-era thinkers and ideas.



QT: 870L–1400L



QL: 3



RT: 3



Rationale(s) for QL

- Levels of meanings and/or theme may be conveyed with some subtlety
- The subject matter requires some literary/cultural knowledge but references are largely explained

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: "Sucker" by Carson McCullers (5 lessons)
- SU2: *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry (16 lessons)
- SU3: Dreams Deferred (2 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU4: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- Character & Conflict Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Describe one way your character changes from the beginning to the end of the play.

Vocabulary module

Connotations and Denotations

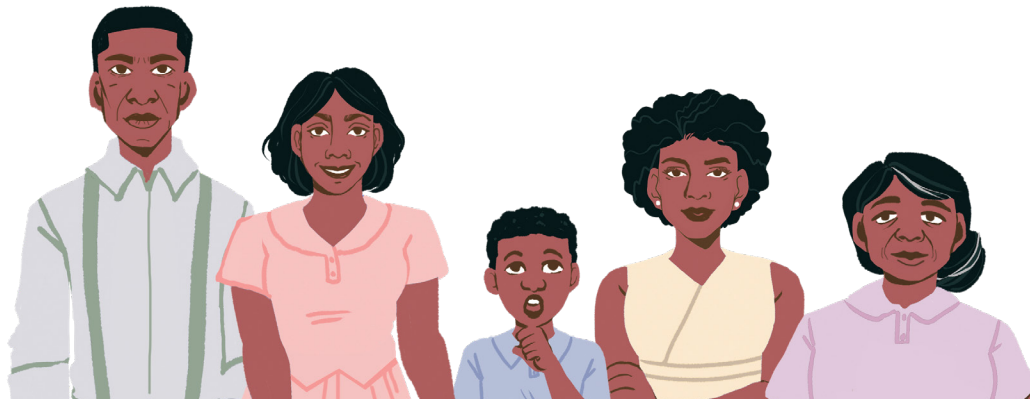
Texts in the unit

Core texts

- "Sucker" by Carson McCullers L/S, 870L
- *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry L/D
- "Harlem" by Langston Hughes L/P
- *To Be Young, Gifted and Black: An Informal Autobiography* by Lorraine Hansberry I/ LN, 1400L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry L/S
- "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes L/P
- "Dreams" by Langston Hughes L/P



7C: Brain Science



Unit summary

Students explore a series of narrative nonfiction and informational texts that expose the intricate workings of the brain, challenge their concept of what it means to be human, and allow them to consider how their own growing brains are impacted by daily experiences. This unit supports students as they build awareness of their unique cognitive strengths and challenges, and of the ways in which they can exert control over their own learning.

Lessons emphasize the analysis of informational text structures and scientific arguments. In *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science*, students trace the immediate and long-term impact of Phineas’s extraordinary brain injury, the remarkable efforts of doctors and scientists to learn from his survival, and the early understanding of brain structure and function that grew from that knowledge. Through readings from *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain*, students add information to their working model of the brain and consider whether and how adolescent behavior may or may not be shaped by their developing brains. In excerpts from Oliver Sacks’s book *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, students apply their growing understanding of how the brain functions to modern brain injury cases. Finally, the *Perception Academy* Quest lets students experience daily life with a brain injury and diagnose the region of their brain that is injured based on their symptoms.



QT: 970L–1420L



QL: 4



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- The subject matter requires discipline-specific knowledge or references to other texts
- Texts may include multiple purposes or be stated implicitly

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman (11 lessons)
- SU2: *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain* by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore (5 lessons)
- SU3: *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks (3 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU4: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- Brain Science Unit Reading Assessment

Quest

- *Perception Academy*

Essay prompt

Compare and contrast Phineas's behavior and brain to those of an adolescent.

Vocabulary module

Greek and Latin Roots

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science* by John Fleischman I/H, 1030L
- *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain* by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore I/S&T, 1310L
- *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks I/S&T, 970L
- The majority and dissenting opinions in *Roper v. Simmons* I/H
- "Demystifying the Adolescent Brain," by Laurence Steinberg I/S&T, 1420L

Extra texts

- "Sonnet—To Science" by Edgar Allan Poe L/P
- "The Brain" by Emily Dickinson L/P
- "Recovery from the Passage of an Iron Bar Through the Head" by John M. Harlow, MD I/S&T



7D: Poetry & Poe



Unit summary

In this unit, students learn a set of visualization techniques to read like a movie director. First, they read poems by D. H. Lawrence, Federico García Lorca, and Emily Dickinson to learn to form mental images while reading. Then, they read three texts by Edgar Allan Poe—"The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Cask of Amontillado," and "The Raven"—and use Poe's meticulous narrative and visual details to create storyboards that help them make their mental images concrete and discover the unreliability of first-person narrators. Students analyze point of view, characters, settings, sounds/soundtracks, and mood to explain the reason for their choices. They also watch thoughtful, animated adaptations of "The Raven" and "The Cask of Amontillado" and compare the movie adaptations to the original texts. After reading these stories, students participate in the murder mystery *Quest Who Killed Edgar Allan Poe?*, where they investigate the crime scene and interrogate characters to find and interpret clues and ultimately solve the mystery. At the end of the unit, students write an essay arguing whether they can trust the narrator of one of the unit's texts.



QT: 800L–1530L



QL: 4



RT: 3



Rationale(s) for QL

- Levels of meaning and theme are multiple, ambiguous, and/or revealed over the course of the text
- Language is generally complex in word usage, level of abstraction and sentence complexity

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Poetry (4 lessons)
- SU2: "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe (7 lessons)
- SU3: "The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allan Poe (6 lessons)
- SU4: "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe (6 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Argumentative (5 lessons)
- Poetry & Poe Unit Reading Assessment

Quest

- *Who Killed Edgar Allan Poe?*

Essay prompt

Can you trust that the narrator is accurately describing what's happening in the story or poem? Why or why not?

Vocabulary module

Figurative Language

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- "The White Horse" by D. H. Lawrence L/P
- "The Silence" by Federico García Lorca L/P
- "A narrow fellow in the grass" by Emily Dickinson L/P
- "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe L/S, 820L
- M'Naghten Rule, from *Queen v. M'Naghten* I/H, 1530L
- "The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allan Poe L/S, 800L
- "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe L/P
- "Sonnet 116" by William Shakespeare L/P

Extra texts

- "Chicago" by Carl Sandburg L/P
- Excerpt from "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman L/S
- "The Charge of the Light Brigade" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson L/P
- "A Poison Tree" by William Blake L/P



7E: The Frida & Diego Collection



Unit summary

In this Collection, students explore primary source documents and conduct independent research to learn about two of Mexico’s most famous and provocative artists, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, an extraordinary couple who lived in extraordinary times. Students learn how this iconic couple drew inspiration from Latin American folklore, politics, imagery, and customs.

In each sub-unit, students analyze primary source materials with a goal of building their ability to independently research a topic, generate a question, select and analyze reliable sources, and write using those sources. Students build information literacy skills and use their visual analytic skills to “close read” key paintings. Students learn to determine if a source is reliable and understand the ethical uses of information; construct their own research questions and explore the Internet for answers; compare Frida and Diego’s use of descriptive writing to Shakespeare’s; analyze the use of figurative language; and participate in a Socratic seminar about the complicated issues inherent in the work of Frida and Diego. As summative assignments, students can synthesize all of the skills they’ve developed to tackle a culminating research assignment, and/or they can design and plan their own digital collage to showcase and present their unique researched interpretation of the work and legacy of Frida and Diego.



QT: 910L–1430L



QL: 5



RT: 4

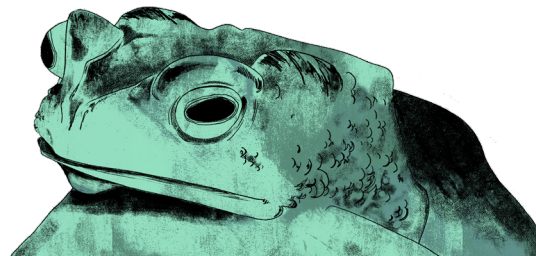


Rationale(s) for QL

- Texts include multiple or intricate purposes
- Language is generally complex in word usage, level of abstraction, and sentence complexity
- The subject matter requires knowledge of discipline or of other texts

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Information Literacy (4 lessons)
- SU2: Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research (4 lessons)
- SU3: Descriptive Writing and Collection Research (4 lessons)
- SU4: Socratic Seminar and Internet Research (4 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Research-based Informative or Argumentative (6 lessons); Multimedia Project (2 lessons)
- The Frida & Diego Collection Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Research Option 1: Informative Essay

Frida Kahlo: The Early Years

Why did Frida Kahlo begin painting? How did this circumstance affect the type of paintings that she did? What did that mean for her long-term career? Write an informative essay about the beginning and development of Frida's artistic work.

Research Option 2: Argumentative Essay, Who has the right to decide what public art should be: the artist or the public?

There was controversy surrounding Diego Rivera's mural "Detroit Industry." Why did many people object to this work of art? What role does the public play when a work of art is being commissioned for a public space? What role does the artist play? Should Rivera have followed the demands of the public or was he right to follow his artistic instincts?

Vocabulary module

Prefixes and Suffixes

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- "Rockefellers Ban Lenin in RCA Mural and Dismiss Rivera" from *The New York Times* I/H, 1430L
- "Frida Becomes My Wife" from *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* by Diego Rivera I/H, 910L
- "Detroit Industry: The Murals of Diego Rivera" by Don Gonyea from NPR.org I/H, 1150L
- "Letter to Ella and Bertram Wolfe" from *The Letters of Frida Kahlo: Cartas Apasionadas* I/H, 990L
- "Statement by Frida Kahlo" from *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* by Diego Rivera I/H, 910L
- "Life with Frida" from *Frida's Fiestas: Recipes and Reminiscences of Life with Frida Kahlo* by Guadalupe Rivera and Marie-Pierre Colle I/H, 1180L
- "Frida Kahlo" by Phyllis Tuchman from *Smithsonian* I/H, 1090L
- "Sonnet 130" by William Shakespeare L/P

Extra texts

- "To F--" by Edgar Allan Poe L/P



7F: The Gold Rush Collection



Unit summary

In this Collection, students explore primary documents and conduct independent research to better understand the complex story of the California gold rush. Students build information literacy skills and learn how to construct their own research questions and explore the Internet for answers. They also participate in a Socratic seminar in which they rely on their research to examine the complicated issues inherent in the gold rush story.

Throughout these activities, students conduct research to learn about the wide diversity of people who took part in the California gold rush. They compare and contrast a fictional portrayal with historical accounts and use the information they gather to write narrative accounts from the point of view of a specific person living through this complex and dynamic era. As students reach the end of the unit, they synthesize all of the skills they've developed to tackle a culminating research assignment—part essay, part media project.



QT: 1020L–1600L



QL: 4



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- Texts include multiple or intricate purposes
- Language includes some complex words or usage and/or sentence complexity
- The subject matter requires knowledge of discipline or of other texts

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Information Literacy (4 lessons)
- SU2: Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research (4 lessons)
- SU3: Dear Diary and Collection Research (4 lessons)
- SU4: Socratic Seminar and Internet Research (4 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Research-based Informative or Argumentative (6 lessons); Multimedia Project (2 lessons)
- The Gold Rush Collection Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Research Option 1: Was the gold rush good for the state of California?

Like all things, it depends on how you look at it. Who benefited from the gold rush (remember to consider different populations such as Native Americans and immigrants)? How and why? How did the gold rush affect California in the short term? How did it shape the California we know today? Conduct research and write an argumentative essay that persuades the reader toward your point of view.

Research Option 2: Who was John Sutter? Who was Elsa Jane Guerin?

Choose one of these two famous figures from the gold rush era and start digging. Where did this person come from? Did he or she strike it rich? Has his or her legacy had a lasting impact on the state of California? Conduct research and write an informative essay on one of these fascinating characters from the Old West.

Vocabulary module

Synonyms and Antonyms



Texts in the unit

Core texts

- “California Culinary Experiences” from *The Overland Monthly* by Prentice Mulford I/H, original version: 1220L, adapted version: 1130L, paraphrased version: 900L
- “Letter the Tenth: Amateur Mining—Hairbreadth ‘Scapes, &c.” from *The Shirley Letters from California Mines in 1851–1852* by Dame Shirley I/H, original version: 1600L, adapted version: 1120L, paraphrased version: 510L
- Chapter XXVII and Chapter XXVIII from *Roughing It* by Mark Twain I/LN, 1170L
- “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman L/P
- “Oh My Darling, Clementine” by Percy Montrose L/P
- Chapter 3—“The Magic Equation” from *California: The Great Exception* by Carey McWilliams I/S&T, 1200L
- Preface and Chapter XI from *Sights in the Gold Region, and Scenes by the Way* by Theodore T. Johnson I/H, 1410L
- July 22–August 10, 1849, *The Gold Rush Diary of Ramón Gil Navarro* by Ramón Gil Navarro I/H, 1020L
- Chapter 8—“Good Haul of Diggers” from *Digger: The Tragic Fate of the California Indians from the Missions to the Gold Rush* by Jerry Stanley I/H, 1130L
- “The Toil of Trace and Trail” from *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, L/S, 1120L

Extra texts

- “A Letter from Gold Mountain” from *Good Fortune: My Journey to Gold Mountain* by Li Keng Wong I/LN
- Excerpt from *Murphy, Gold Rush Dog* by Alison Heart L/S
- Excerpt from *A History of US 5: Liberty For All 1820–1860* by Joy Hakim I/H

Grade 7 Poetry in America



Amplify partnered with Poetry in America, whose mission is to bring poetry into classrooms and living rooms around the world, to design lessons that combine PIA’s “Four Pillar” approach with Amplify’s close reading pedagogy to build students’ engagement and knowledge about poetry. Each three-lesson sub-unit allows students to fully explore a poet’s choices around form and language, both in conversation with each other and with the poets, celebrities, academics, and citizens who appear in embedded videos discussing each poem. Then, students have the opportunity to try on the poet’s use of language, craft, and structure in creative writing assignments tailored to the targeted poem.

In Sub-unit 1, Kay Ryan’s poem “Carrying a Ladder” conjures up the hilarity, frustrations, and rewards of hauling around a real ladder. Students have fun with these concrete scenarios before diving into the poem’s possible figurative meanings, including common adolescent feelings of ambition and self-doubt. Students end by composing their own extended metaphor poem to express something they “carry” with them.

In Sub-unit 2, Emma Lazarus’s iconic poem “The New Colossus” allows students to analyze visual symbol, form, and allusion as they consider the different values of the Old World and the New World, and what it means to be an immigrant and an American.

In Sub-unit 3, students consider the personal and cultural background that African American poet Richard Hayden drew on for his iconic poem “Those Winter Sundays,” and how those influences are reflected in his language and his adaptation of the sonnet form for this poem about his father. They use his poem as an inspiration for writing their own ode to an unsung hero in their life. (This sub-unit is made available across grades 6–8.)



Rationale(s) for QL

- Level meanings and/or theme may be conveyed with some subtlety
- The subject matter requires some literary/cultural knowledge but references are largely explained

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities do not require substantial external knowledge or experience.

Poetry in America activity highlights:

Discussions with annotated guides

Explore each poet's use of sensory details, figurative language, form, and structure.

Video explorations

Watch and discuss videos where poets, celebrities, and academics share their interpretations and analyses of each poem.

Creative responses

Compose poems by experimenting with theme and mimicking each poet's style.

Core texts

- "Carrying a Ladder" by Kay Ryan, L/P
- "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, L/P
- "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden, L/P

Sub-units and # of lessons

- SU1: "Carrying a Ladder" (3 lessons)
- SU2: "The New Colossus" (3 lessons)
- SU3: "Those Winter Sundays" (3 lessons)

Amplify Grammar



The Amplify digital Grammar unit enables teachers to assign students self-guided grammar instruction and practice. Sub-units are paired by topic: one covers foundational material on the topic and one contains more advanced and “stretch” material. Middle grade teachers and students share access to the full range of topics and lessons within the Grammar unit, so teachers select the content that best meets their students’ needs while exposing students to key grammar topics for the middle grades. Teachers integrate this instruction into their core instructional pathway using the Amplify Flex Days within the core units. To introduce or review topics with students, teachers use the related lessons or drills on the topic found in Amplify’s *Mastering Conventions* PDFs, also available within this unit.

Core lessons

- Sub-unit 1: What Is a Complete Sentence? (8 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 2: Expanding the Complete Sentence (8 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 3: Understanding the Pronoun (5 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 4: Pronoun Usage: Agreement and Reference (5 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 5: Verb Tense (4 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 6: Verb Moods, Modals, and Voice (4 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 7: Punctuation (2 Lessons)

Printable instructional resources

- *Mastering Conventions One: Grammar and Punctuation*
- *Mastering Conventions Two: Grammar and Punctuation*
- *Mastering Conventions Three: Grammar and Punctuation*
- *Mastering Conventions Four: Spelling*

Grade 7 Intermediate Story Writing

In this unit, students get to practice their creative writing skills, learning the elements of storytelling and character development and the importance of vivid language. Students gain a sense of ownership over their writing as they experiment with the impact of their authorial choices on sentences, language, character traits, and plot twist. As students consider how to use these elements to create a story, they also gain tools to help them effectively and incisively analyze a piece of literature.

Students begin with creating a character, observing and recording details, and writing about their characters in mundane situations to make them multi-faceted and believable. As students explore the situation, they pay particular attention to their characters' point of view and the perspective this conveys about the setting and action. After some explicit instruction about the structure of a story—particularly the idea of character change and growth—students pull all their skills together to write a story and practice the most important part of creative writing—revision.

Sub-units

- Sub-unit 1: Creating a Believable Character (10 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 2: Experimenting With a Second Character (7 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 3: Writing a Short Story (6 Lessons)

Novel Guides

Amplify ELA Novel Guides provide middle school teachers with flexible study guides for the books they most want to teach and provide students with lean, targeted instruction that follows the pedagogy in core units. The diverse selection of books in this series presents a range of genres and themes, from mystery to non-fiction and from social justice to identity and courage.

The Novel Guides—housed in the Amplify Library—are designed to be used flexibly and offer suggestions for implementation. Here are two titles that align to the grade 7 topics and skills:

7B: *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis

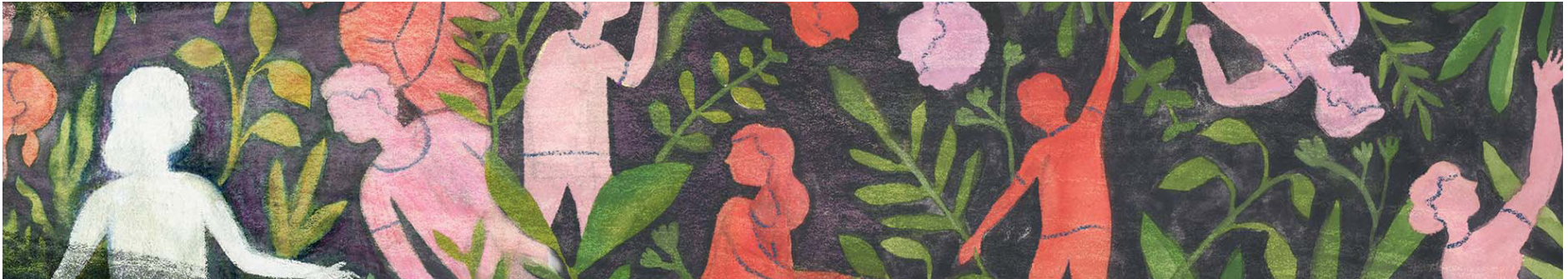
As students consider how characters struggle both together and against each other when faced with challenges, this story of a family trip to visit relatives down South in the summer of 1963 provides a funny, poignant, and complex portrait of two siblings coming of age against the backdrop of the Civil Rights struggle.

7E: *When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago

As students study how Frida and Diego used their art to celebrate their people and culture, Esmeralda Santiago's richly evocative depictions of her childhood island showcase the equal power of writing to evoke time, place, and people.

Grade 8 curriculum map

8A: Perspectives & Narrative



Unit summary

Students learn to read like writers—to pay attention to the craft of writing and the moves a good writer makes to shape the way the reader sees a scene or feels about a character, to stir us up, to surprise us, or to leave us wondering what will happen next. This early focus on the student writer is designed to help place student voices at the center of learning.

In the Get Started sub-unit, students are introduced to the core literacy skills of Focus and Showing, hone their powers of observation and concentration, and practice the fundamental classroom routines of sharing and feedback that draw them into a collaborative community of readers and writers. In the Narrative Writing sub-unit, students study three examples of narrative writing—passages from Roald Dahl’s *Going Solo*, Amy Tan’s “Fish Cheeks,” and Kaitlyn Greenidge’s “My Mother’s Garden”—closely reading each text to discover how the authors use key narrative writing skills to convey their ideas. They also discuss themes of belonging/not belonging as they explore Tan’s and Greenidge’s snapshots of Asian and Black adolescence. Students respond to Writing Prompts that alternate between analytic and narrative writing, and write a short personal narrative about a moment from their childhood. The unit culminates in an essay where students argue whether the mothers in “Fish Cheeks” and “My Mother’s Garden” are role models.



QT: 830L–1080L
●●●●●○

QL: 3
●●●●○

RT: 3
●●●●○

Rationale(s) for QL

- Language is literal and familiar
- Text structure is generally straightforward but often implicit
- Texts may include multiple purposes or be stated implicitly

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Welcome! (1 lesson)
- SU2: Get Started (9 lessons)
- SU3: Narrative Writing (10 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU4: Write an Essay: Argumentative (5 lessons)
- Perspectives & Narrative Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Are the mothers featured in “Fish Cheeks” and “My Mother’s Garden” role models for their daughters? Why or why not?

Vocabulary module

Synonyms and Antonyms

Texts in the unit

Core texts

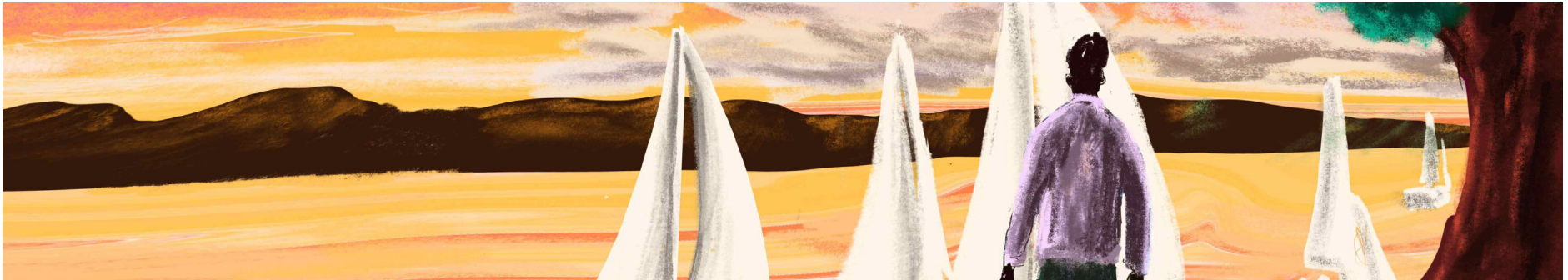
- *Going Solo* by Roald Dahl I/LN, 1080L
- “Fish Cheeks” by Amy Tan I/LN, 890L
- “My Mother’s Garden” by Kaitlyn Greenidge I/LN, 990L
- *The Glass Castle* by Jeanette Walls I/LN, 1010L
- *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon* by Stephen King L/S, 970L
- *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel L/S, 830L
- *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman L/S, 870L
- *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster L/S, 1000L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from *The Bad Beginning* by Lemony Snicket L/S
- Excerpt from *Davy and the Goblin* by Charles E. Carryl L/S



8B: Liberty & Equality



Unit summary

Students study the writings of both famous and lesser-known Americans who were critically, intellectually, and physically engaged in a debate about the meaning of the words “all men are created equal” during the Civil War time period. Each text gives students a different perspective on the American ideal.

Students read excerpts from Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* and try on his poetic form and use of figurative language to capture what is essential about themselves. Frederick Douglass’s powerful voice and abolitionist argument, set forth in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, is the students’ guiding voice as they reflect on, discuss, write about, and debate ideas of equality, opportunity, justice, and freedom. The text introduces students to the young Douglass as he moves toward personal liberation, and provides the opportunity for students to analyze Douglass’s powerful arguments against slavery. Students also read passages from Harriet Ann Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, analyzing how her graceful style and detailed picture of life as an enslaved woman paint a powerful portrait of slavery’s human cost. For teachers who want to bring in additional accounts and perspectives on slavery in the United States, The Emancipation Project Quest contains primary source spoken testimonies, photographs, and period music—many collected as part of the Federal Writers’ Project of the 1930s. Next, students read passages from *The Boys’ War*, which tells the tale of the very young people who signed up enthusiastically to fight on both sides during the Civil War. Finally, after critically examining the voices of all these eyewitnesses to slavery, the abolitionist movement, and the Civil War, students are asked in their unit essay to consider a central argument from Douglass’s *Narrative*, as well as Lincoln’s implied question in his Gettysburg Address: What does America mean by “all men are created equal”?



QT: 900–1500L



QL: 5



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- Texts include multiple or intricate purposes
- Language is generally complex in word usage, level of abstraction, and sentence complexity
- The subject matter requires discipline-specific knowledge or references to other texts

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: “Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman (2 lessons)
- SU2: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass (14 lessons)
- SU3: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs (2 lessons)
- SU4: *The Boys’ War* by Jim Murphy (3 lessons)
- SU5: The Gettysburg Address (5 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU6: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- Liberty & Equality Unit Reading Assessment

Quest

- The Emancipation Project

Essay prompt

Choose one:

How does Lincoln, in the Gettysburg Address, try to change what his readers/listeners believe about what it means to be dedicated to the American idea that “All men are created equal”?

How does Douglass, in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, try to change what his readers believe about what it means to be dedicated to the American idea that “all men are created equal”?

Vocabulary module

Context Clues

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- “Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman L/P
- Gettysburg Address I/H, 1500L
- *The Columbian Orator: Containing a Variety of Original and Selected Pieces Together With Rules, Which Are Calculated to Improve Youth and Others, in the Ornamental and Useful Art of Eloquence* by Caleb Bingham I/H
- *Narrative of Sojourner Truth; a Bondswoman of Olden Time, Emancipated by the New York Legislature in the Early Part of the Present Century; With a History of her Labors and Correspondence Drawn from her “Book of Life”* by Sojourner Truth with Olive Gilbert I/H, 1420L
- Frances Ellen Watkins’ speech “Liberty for Slaves” I/H
- John C. Calhoun’s speech to the US Senate, 1837 I/H, 1400L
- Frederick Douglass’s speech “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” Delivered in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, July 5, 1852 I/H
- *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Ann Jacobs I/LN, 900L
- *The Boys’ War* by Jim Murphy I/H, 1060L
- *A Confederate Girl’s Diary* by Sarah Morgan Dawson I/LN, 1030L
- Declaration of Independence I/H, 1430L
- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* by Frederick Douglass I/LN, 1060L
- “On Woman’s Rights” by Sojourner Truth I/H, 950L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* by Booker T. Washington I/H
- Excerpt from “The claims of the Negro, ethnologically considered: an address before the literary societies of Western Reserve College” by Frederick Douglass I/H
- Excerpt from *The Every-Day Life of Abraham Lincoln* by Francis F. Brown I/H



8C: Science & Science Fiction



Unit summary

Students read *Gris Grimly's Frankenstein*, a graphic novel that adds captivating illustrations to an abridgement of the 1818 edition of Mary Shelley's book. Paired with Shelley's text, Grimly's haunting representations of Frankenstein's creature push students to wrestle with some of the text's central themes: a creator's responsibility for their creation, the role of society in shaping our presence in the world, and the promises and risks of scientific inquiry. Students trace Victor's level of sympathy for his creation throughout the story, rewrite key scenes from the creature's point of view, analyze Shelley's allusions to archetypes in mythological and biblical texts, and debate whether Victor owes the creature a companion. At the end of the unit, after research and debate, students write to determine whether or not Victor's creature should ultimately be considered human.

In the Poetical Science sub-unit, students read two poems, a speech, and excerpts from Chapter 1 of Walter Isaacson's *The Innovators* to compare and contrast the ways in which William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, and Ada Lovelace viewed humanity's relationship with technology. The texts in this unit raise the question: Are we the masters of our machines, or are the machines our masters?



QT: 840L–1540L



QL: 4



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- Text structure contains some sophisticated structural elements
- Language is generally complex in word usage, level of abstraction, and sentence complexity
- Levels of meanings and/or theme may be conveyed with some subtlety

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and draw on the knowledge they have built throughout Amplify; areas of high complexity balanced by scaffolds and engaging activities.

Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

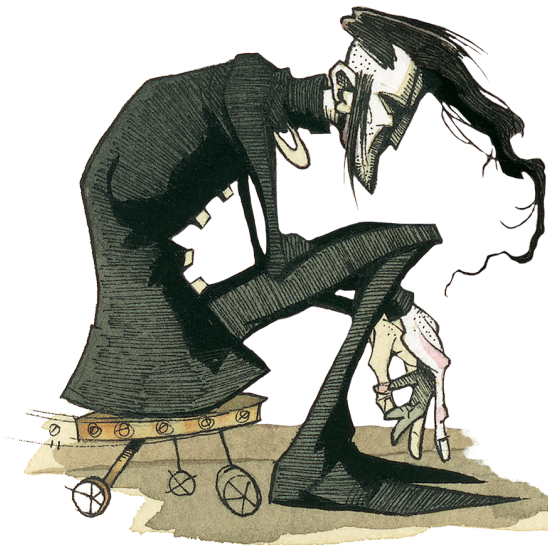
- SU1: *Gris Grimly's Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and Gris Grimly (17 lessons)
- SU3: Poetical Science (6 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU2: Write an Essay: Argumentative (5 lessons)
- Science & Science Fiction Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Is Frankenstein's creature human?



Vocabulary module

Greek and Latin Roots

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- *Gris Grimly's Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and Gris Grimly L/S, 980L
- Genesis 2, Revised Standard Version L/S, 840L
- "Frankenstein (1931) A Man-Made Monster in Grand Guignol Film Story" by Mordaunt Hall from *The New York Times* I/H, 1540L
- "Prometheus," from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin L/S, 870L
- *The Innovators* by Walter Isaacson I/H, 1250L
- "The Tables Turned" by William Wordsworth L/P
- "Debate on the Frame-Work Bill, in the House of Lords" by Lord Byron I/H, 1400L
- "All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace" by Richard Brautigan L/P
- Letter 8 in *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* by Isabella L. Bird I/LN
- "Whiz Kid" in *Steve Jobs: Technology Innovator and Apple Genius* by Matt Doeden I/H, 880L

Extra texts

- "Pygmalion," from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin L/S
- Excerpts from *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* by Walter Isaacson I/H
- Excerpt from *History of US 8: Age of Extremes, 1880–1917* by Joy Hakim I/H

8D: Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*



Unit summary

Students read five excerpts from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The purpose of these lessons is to introduce students to some key elements of Shakespearean English as they close read a small selection of scenes. After students have finished the unit, they will have learned how to spot and follow an extended metaphor, discovered that they can understand Shakespearean English by putting it into their own words, and be better prepared when they study this play (or another Shakespeare play) in its entirety in high school.

Students practice memorizing and reciting lines from the play's famous Prologue over the course of the unit. The lessons provide multiple opportunities for students to stage their own performances and recitations and translate Shakespeare's words into more contemporary language. In several lessons, students focus on the form of Shakespeare's language, particularly the Shakespearean sonnet. At the end of the unit, students write an essay arguing whether the forces of love or hate are responsible for Romeo's death.



Rationale(s) for QL

- Levels of meaning and theme are multiple, ambiguous and/or revealed over the course of the text
- Language is generally complex in word usage, level of abstraction, and sentence complexity

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities often require inferencing; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare (16 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU2: Write an Essay: Argumentative (5 lessons)
- Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Was Romeo's death influenced more by the power of love or the forces of hate? Or was it a combination of both?

Vocabulary module

Figurative Language

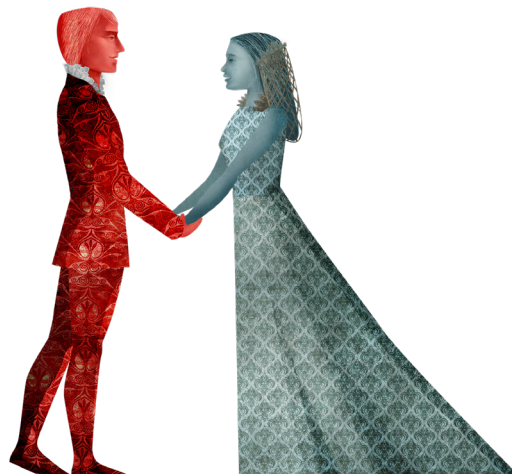
Texts in the unit

Core text

- *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare L/D

Extra texts

- "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe L/P
- "Harlem," the prologue to the book *Street Love* by Walter Dean Myers L/P



8E: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning



Unit summary

Students use a language arts lens and close reading to explore a variety of memoir and primary source materials and dig into two key questions raised by the Holocaust: How does a society and its people become participants (willingly or indifferently) in such an atrocity? And what is the responsibility of those who experienced, witnessed, participated in, or are now learning about these events? The selected materials present events from several different perspectives—those of perpetrators, survivors, victims, bystanders, and witnesses—allowing students to develop a critical understanding of the strategies Nazis used to influence the mindset of a nation, and the human responses to the unfolding of genocide.

First, students analyze “I Cannot Forget,” a poem by Holocaust survivor Alexander Kimel that explores the haunting power of memory. Next, students read from the memoir *Shores Beyond Shores*, in which author Irene Butter describes how her Jewish family’s happy life in Berlin was slowly destroyed as the Nazis came to power. As a counterpoint, students examine passages by Alfons Heck, an Aryan boy who became an enthusiastic member of the Hitler Youth. Students also explore articles and images that show the Nazi propaganda machine in full swing during the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. They analyze how the government sought to showcase the supposed superiority of the Aryan race, and explore how Jessie Owens’s historic performance captivated the German audience and “put the lie” to Hitler’s rhetoric. Finally, students read excerpts from *A Child of Hitler*, *Maus*, and *Night*, where participants and survivors trace the descent into darkness: from Kristallnacht, to the creation of the ghettos, and eventually to the death camps. As students study these writings, images, and videos, they begin to understand the forces that created and drove the Holocaust and the reactions of people caught up in those forces.



QT: 500L–1220L



QL: 4



RT: 5



Rationale(s) for QL

- Texts include multiple or intricate purposes
- Text structure is generally straightforward but often implicit
- The subject matter requires discipline-specific knowledge or references to other texts

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and draw on the knowledge they have built throughout Amplify; areas of high complexity balanced by scaffolds and engaging activities.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Why Remember? (1 lesson)
- SU2: "True" Germans (3 lessons)
- SU3: The Olympic Games of Berlin (4 lessons)
- SU4: Descending Into Darkness (5 lessons)
- SU5: Never Forget (1 lesson)

Summative assessments

- SU6: Write an Essay: Informative (5 lessons)
- Holocaust: Memory & Meaning Unit Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

The Holocaust did not happen overnight. As the Nazis laid the groundwork for what would eventually become known as the Holocaust, they used a number of strategies to isolate, oppress, and control the Jewish population of Europe, and to convince others to go along with their plan.

Choose two of the strategies that stood out to you as you explored this unit. Using examples from the texts and images you analyzed, describe each strategy and the impact it had.

Vocabulary module

Connotations and Denotations

Texts in the unit

Core texts

- "I Cannot Forget" by Alexander Kimel I/LN
- *A Child of Hitler* by Alfons Heck I/H, 1200L
- "Helene Mayer, Fencing Champ, Says She'll Try for the Olympics" from *Jewish Daily Bulletin* I/H, 1220L
- "100,000 Hail Hitler; U.S. Athletes Avoid Nazi Salute to Him" by Frederick T. Birchall from *The New York Times* I/H, 1220L
- "Jesse Owens' Olympic Triumph" by Lerone Bennett, Jr., from *Ebony* I/H, 1100L
- *Maus I: My Father Bleeds History* by Art Spiegelman I/LN, 500L
- *Night* by Elie Wiesel I/LN, 990L
- *Shores Beyond Shores* by Irene Butter I/LN, 660L

Extra texts

- Excerpt from *Hero on a Bicycle* by Shirley Hughes L/S



8F: The Space Race Collection



Unit summary

In this Collection, students explore primary documents and conduct independent research to better understand the space race, a fierce competition between two of the world's superpowers that continued for nearly 18 years. The dramatic story of the space race offers students a rich research topic to explore as they build information literacy skills and learn how to construct their own research questions and explore the Internet for answers. They explore the diverse range of people who fueled this race, from Soviet cosmonauts like Alexei Leonov and Laila the space dog to President Kennedy, American heroes like the celebrated Buzz Aldrin, and the overlooked hero, mathematician Katherine Johnson. Students also participate in a Socratic seminar in which they rely on their research to examine the complicated issues inherent in the history of the space race.

Throughout these activities, students conduct research to develop a deep understanding of this unique international competition. Each student is assigned a cosmonaut or astronaut from the space race era. They research their cosmonaut or astronaut and write entries into their space blog from their person's point of view. As students reach the end of the unit, they synthesize all of the skills they've developed to tackle a culminating research assignment—part essay, part media project.



QT: 870L-1490L



QL: 5



RT: 4



Rationale(s) for QL

- Texts include multiple or intricate purposes
- Language is generally complex in word usage, level of abstraction, and sentence complexity
- The subject matter requires knowledge of discipline or of other texts

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities contain nuance and complexity and require students to be persistent, make high level inferences, and benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.



Sub-units and # of lessons

Core lessons

- SU1: Information Literacy (4 lessons)
- SU2: Scavenger Hunt and Internet Research (4 lessons)
- SU3: Space Blogs and Collection Research (4 lessons)
- SU4: Socratic Seminar and Internet Research (4 lessons)

Summative assessments

- SU5: Write an Essay: Research-based Informative or Argumentative (6 lessons); Multimedia Project (2 lessons)
- SU6: The Space Race Collection Reading Assessment

Essay prompt

Research Option 1: Was animal testing necessary during the space race?

Research and discover what the Soviets and the Americans were trying to understand when they sent animals into space. Was animal testing necessary? Was it fair or moral to send animals into space for research purposes? Could the scientists have found the answers they were looking for without sacrificing animals? If so, how?

Research Option 2: How did Katherine Johnson and the other women who worked with her at NASA impact the space race?

Write an informative essay about Katherine Johnson and the other key women who worked at NASA during the Space Race era. Who were the other key women who worked with Katherine Johnson and what roles did they play? What barriers did they face? How was the space race impacted by their work?

Vocabulary module

Prefixes and Suffixes



Texts in the unit

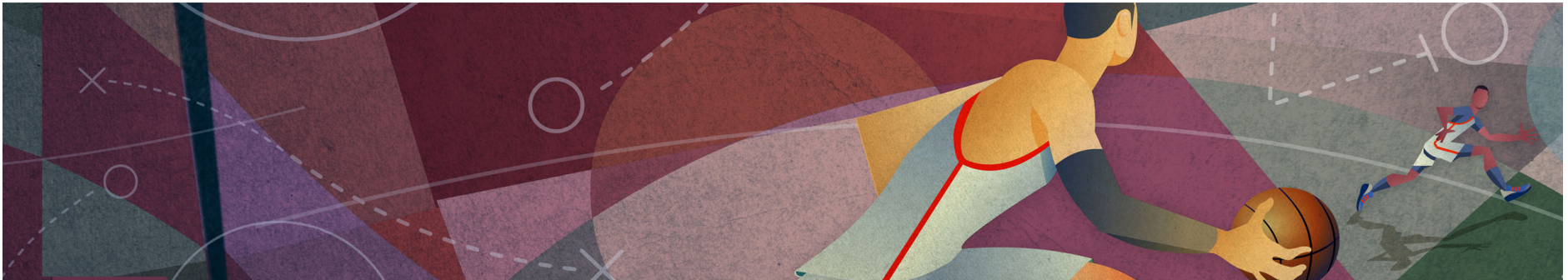
Core texts

- “The Space Race: An Introduction” by *Lapham’s Quarterly* editors I/H, 1170L
- “Sputnik” from *Rocket Boys* by Homer Hickam I/H, 890L
- “And a Dog Shall Lead Them” from *A Ball, a Dog, and a Monkey* by Michael D’Antonio I/H, 1240L
- Memorandum for the Vice President by John F. Kennedy I/H, 960L
- President Kennedy’s Address at Rice University, September 12, 1962 I/H, 1490L
- “A Seagull in Flight” from *Into That Silent Sea* by Francis French and Colin Burgess I/H, 1100L
- “First to Fly” from *Into That Silent Sea* by Francis French and Colin Burgess I/H, 1100L
- “In Event of Moon Disaster” by William Safire I/H, 870L
- “Dreaming of a Moonage” from *Moondust* by Andrew Smith I/LN, 1080L
- “Buzz Aldrin on His Lunar Home, the Eagle” by Marc Myers from *The Wall Street Journal* I/H, 1000L
- “Smooth as a Peeled Egg” from *Two Sides of the Moon: Our Story of the Cold War Space Race* by David Scott and Alexei Leonov with Christine Toomey I/H, 1020L
- Preface from *Flight: My Life in Mission Control* by Christopher C. Kraft, Jr. and James L. Scheffer I/LN, 930L
- “What the Moon Rocks Tell Us” by Kenneth F. Weaver from *National Geographic I/S&T*, 1290L
- “You Are Here” from *Pale Blue Dot* by Carl Sagan I/LN, 1360L
- Remarks by the President at Medal of Freedom Ceremony by Barack Obama (in “Katherine Johnson: Trailblazer and Brilliant Mathematician”) I/H, 960L
- “The nearly forgotten story of the black women who helped land a man on the moon” by Stephanie Merry from *The Washington Post* (in “Katherine Johnson: Trailblazer and Brilliant Mathematician”) I/H, 1030L
- “Life on Mars to Become a Reality in 2023, Dutch Firm Claims” by Karen McVeigh from *The Guardian* I/H, 1330L

Extra texts

- “Stars” by Robert Frost L/P
- Excerpt from *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells L/S
- Excerpt from *A History of US 10: All the People Since 1945* by Joy Hakim I/H

Grade 8 Poetry in America



Amplify partnered with Poetry in America, whose mission is to bring poetry into classrooms and living rooms around the world, to design lessons that combine PIA's "Four Pillar" approach with Amplify's close reading pedagogy to build students' engagement and knowledge about poetry. Each three-lesson sub-unit allows students to fully explore a poet's choices around form and language, both in conversation with each other and with the poets, celebrities, academics, and citizens who appear in embedded videos discussing each poem. Then, students have the opportunity to try on the poet's use of language, craft, and structure in creative writing assignments tailored to the targeted poem.

In Sub-unit 1, Ed Hirsch's poem "Fast Break" describes the action of a fast break in a basketball game, extending both the motion and the emotion in content and form. Students work alongside NBA players like Shaquille O'Neal (appearing in embedded videos) to first enjoy how the poem mimics the pace and action of a fast break before exploring how this vivid description operates as an elegy. Students then experiment with elements of "Fast Break" to create their own poem centered around a favorite activity.

In Sub-unit 2, students consider the personal and cultural background that African American poet Richard Hayden drew on for his iconic poem "Those Winter Sundays," and how those influences are reflected in his language and his adaptation of the sonnet form for this poem about his father. They use his poem as an inspiration for writing their own ode to an unsung hero in their life (this sub-unit is made available across grades 6–8).

QL: 3



RT: 2



Rationale(s) for QL

- Level meanings and/or theme may be conveyed with some subtlety
- The subject matter requires some literary/cultural knowledge but references are largely explained

Rationale(s) for RT

Tasks and activities may contain some complexity, balanced with engaging topics; activities do not require substantial external knowledge or experience.

Poetry in America activity highlights:

Discussions with annotated guides

Explore each poet's use of sensory details, figurative language, form, and structure.

Video explorations

Watch and discuss videos where poets, celebrities, and academics share their interpretations and analyses of each poem.

Creative responses

Compose poems by experimenting with theme and mimicking each poet's style.

Core texts

- "Fast Break" by Ed Hirsch, L/P
- "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden, L/P

Sub-units and # of lessons

SU1: "Fast Break" (3 lessons)

SU2: "Those Winter Sundays" (3 lessons)



Amplify Grammar



The Amplify digital Grammar unit enables teachers to assign students self-guided grammar instruction and practice. Sub-units are paired by topic: one covers foundational material on the topic and one contains more advanced and “stretch” material. Middle grade teachers and students share access to the full range of topics and lessons within the Grammar unit, so teachers select the content that best meets their students’ needs while exposing students to key grammar topics for the middle grades. Teachers integrate this instruction into their core instructional pathway using the Amplify Flex Days within the core units. To introduce or review topics with students, teachers use the related lessons or drills on the topic found in Amplify’s *Mastering Conventions* PDFs, also available within this unit.

Sub-units

- Sub-unit 1: What Is a Complete Sentence? (8 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 2: Expanding the Complete Sentence (8 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 3: Understanding the Pronoun (5 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 4: Pronoun Usage: Agreement and Reference (5 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 5: Verb Tense (4 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 6: Verb Moods, Modals, and Voice (4 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 7: Punctuation (2 Lessons)

Printable instructional resources

- *Mastering Conventions One: Grammar and Punctuation*
- *Mastering Conventions Two: Grammar and Punctuation*
- *Mastering Conventions Three: Grammar and Punctuation*
- *Mastering Conventions Four: Spelling*

Grade 8 Advanced Story Writing

In this unit, students get to practice their creative writing skills, learning the elements of storytelling and character development, and the importance of vivid language. Students gain a sense of ownership over their writing as they experiment with the impact of their authorial choices on sentences, language, character traits, and plot twist. As students consider how to use these elements to create a story, they also gain tools to help them effectively and incisively analyze a piece of literature.

Students begin with creating a believable, multi-faceted character, observing and recording details, and experimenting with narrative point of view, including working with multiple narrators. As students explore the story's rising action, they work with both internal and external conflict to set up the conditions for their characters' change and growth as the story resolves. Students pull all their drafting and thinking together to write a story and practice the most important part of creative writing—revision.

Sub-units

- Sub-unit 1: Creating a Believable Character (10 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 2: Experimenting With a Second Character (7 Lessons)
- Sub-unit 3: Writing a Short Story (5 Lessons)

Novel Guides

Amplify ELA Novel Guides provide middle school teachers with flexible study guides for the books they most want to teach and provide students with lean, targeted instruction that follows the pedagogy in core units. The diverse selection of books in this series presents a range of genres and themes, from mystery to non-fiction and from social justice to identity and courage.

The Novel Guides—housed in the Amplify Library—are designed to be used flexibly and offer suggestions for implementation. Here are two titles that align to the grade 8 topics and skills:

8B: *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas

As students consider Douglass's powerful critique of America's ideals of justice and equity, this novel offers a way to consider how this critique extends to current issues facing American society.

8F: *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly

Students studying America's Space Race will be fascinated by the story of how Black women played such a pivotal role in the success of this endeavor—and how their contributions were almost forgotten.

For more information on Amplify ELA,
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E00206 - Grade Overviews for Oklahoma - Grades 6-8

