

# 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 with the three instructional shifts called out by the English Language Arts standards. 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

QT = Quantitative measure

●●○○○○ QL: 2

QL = Qualitative measure

●●○○○○ RT: 2

RT = Reader and task measure



## PROGRESSION OF CONTENT AND SKILLS



### 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, archaic, 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

## PROGRESSION OF CONTENT AND SKILLS

### 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; 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; require students to be persistent; make high level of 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

### TOPIC & THEME

The impression of a moment

### 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



●●●●● QT: 1090L

●●●●● QL: 2

●●●●● RT: 2



## 6B: Mysteries & Investigations

### TOPIC & THEME

Reading like an investigator

### READING

Assess the credibility of evidence used to support conclusions

### WRITING

Explain which trait is most useful to problem-solving investigators

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Use an app to identify, organize, and evaluate claims and supporting evidence

### TEXT FEATURES

Narrative nonfiction of scientific discoveries, detective stories, inductive reasoning



●●●●● QT: 750L–1170L

●●●●● QL: 3

●●●●● RT: 3



## 6C: The Chocolate Collection

### TOPIC & THEME

Facts and stories of chocolate through the ages

### READING

Identify various sources' perspectives on a topic

### WRITING

Synthesize information from several sources to develop an argument

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Scavenger hunts, debate, internet research, and media project

### TEXT FEATURES

Primary and secondary source materials, varied topics and perspectives



●●●●● QT: 860L–1540L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 4

## GRADE 6 UNITS



### 6D: The Greeks

#### TOPIC & THEME

Man vs. gods in Ancient Greece

#### READING

Analyze what symbolic characters show about human nature

#### WRITING

Write about the development of a shared theme in two texts

#### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

*Myth World* Quest, write original interpretations of ancient myths

#### TEXT FEATURES

Modern prose retellings of myths and translation of ancient narrative poem

L

●●●●● QT: 870L–1140L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 3



### 6E: Summer of the Mariposas

#### TOPIC & THEME

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

Fishbowl discussions, presentations of research on Aztec mythology

#### TEXT FEATURES

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

L

●●●●● QT: 840L–860L

●●●●● QL: 3

●●●●● RT: 4



### 6F: The *Titanic* Collection

#### TOPIC & THEME

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 multi-media project

#### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Research and role-play a *Titanic* passenger and write from their point of view

#### TEXT FEATURES

Compelling artifacts from voyage (menus, journals), letters, photographs

i L

●●●●● QT: 800L–1620L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 4

# Grade 7 units



## 7A: Red Scarf Girl & Narrative

### TOPIC & THEME

The impact of individual experiences

### READING

Examine the differences between a character's thoughts and actions

### WRITING

Use revision to strengthen elaboration

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Use an app to trace a character's level of hopefulness over the course of a text

### TEXT FEATURES

Memoir of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, historic propaganda images



●●●●● QT: 780L

●●●●● QL: 3

●●●●● RT: 2



## 7B: Character & Conflict

### TOPIC & THEME

Individual dreams, family dynamics, and societal restrictions

### READING

Analyze a character's unconscious motivations

### WRITING

Make thematic connections across genres

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Perform scenes, analyze film, compare historical and fictional portrayals

### TEXT FEATURES

Mid-20th-century African-American drama, memoir, poetry



●●●●● QT: 870L–1400L

●●●●● QL: 3

●●●●● RT: 3



## 7C: Brain Science

### TOPIC & THEME

Brain development and brain disorders

### READING

Synthesize information from multiple texts to develop understanding of a topic

### WRITING

Describe facts, explain concepts, and convince the reader of an opinion

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

*Perception Academy* Quest, discussions to refine conceptual understanding

### TEXT FEATURES

Narrative and informational nonfiction about discoveries in brain science



●●●●● QT: 970L–1310L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 4

## GRADE 7 UNITS



### 7D: Poetry & Poe

#### TOPIC & THEME

Reading like a movie director

#### READING

Evaluate the reliability of a fictional narrator

#### WRITING

Compare and contrast characters' perspectives on a narrative

#### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Use a storyboarding app, debate narrator's sanity, compare film adaptations

#### TEXT FEATURES

American poetry and Gothic literature with unreliable narrators

L

●●●●● QT: 820L–1530L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 3



### 7E: The Frida & Diego Collection

#### TOPIC & THEME

Art as personal and political expression

#### READING

Identify various sources' perspectives on a topic

#### WRITING

Synthesize information from several sources to develop an argument

#### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Descriptive writing, Socratic seminar, internet research, and media project

#### TEXT FEATURES

Paintings, memoirs, articles, letters portraying unconventional artists

i L

●●●●● QT: 910L–1430L

●●●●● QL: 5

●●●●● RT: 4



### 7F: The Gold Rush Collection

#### TOPIC & THEME

The characters and conditions of the California gold rush

#### READING

Explore how circumstances united a diverse group of historical characters

#### WRITING

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

#### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Research one of the key groups in the gold rush and write a gold rush diary

#### TEXT FEATURES

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

i L

●●●●● QT: 1020L–1600L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 4



# Grade 8 units



## 8A: Perspectives & Narrative

### TOPIC & THEME

The craft of narrative

### READING

Notice the impact of author's craft and structure

### WRITING

Write a narrative about a childhood memory

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Write personal narratives, workshop with peers, watch video author interviews

### TEXT FEATURES

WWII memoir and contemporary coming-of-age first-person narratives



●●●●● QT: 890L–1080L

●●●●● QL: 3

●●●●● RT: 3



## 8B: Liberty & Equality

### TOPIC & THEME

The meaning of "all men are created equal"

### READING

Evaluate the argument and specific claims in a narrative text

### WRITING

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

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

*The Emancipation Project* Quest, watch dramatic readings, deliver abolitionist speech

### TEXT FEATURES

19th-century language and syntax, complex rhetorical styles



●●●●● QT: 900L–1500L

●●●●● QL: 5

●●●●● RT: 4



## 8C: Science & Science Fiction

### TOPIC & THEME

Creators vs. creations

### READING

Apply abstract concepts to an author's portrayal of a character

### WRITING

Argue opposing claims about a character and resolve the contradiction

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Write from a character's perspective, debate making creature a partner

### TEXT FEATURES

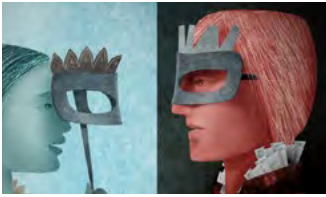
Gothic text in graphic form, archaic language, Biblical and mythological allusions



●●●●● QT: 980L–1540L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 4



## 8D: Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet

### TOPIC & THEME

Introduction to Shakespearean themes and language

### READING

Connect characters' development to a conceptual framework

### WRITING

Choose between contradictory positions and argue with evidence

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Perform scenes from the play, compare filmed performances to text

### TEXT FEATURES

Drama with Elizabethan language, inverted syntax, extensive figurative language

L

●●●●● QT: N/A

●●●●● QL: 5

●●●●● RT: 3



## 8E: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning

### TOPIC & THEME

The influences and responses to Hitler's 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

Image analysis, watch video with survivor, discuss importance of remembering

### TEXT FEATURES

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

i L

●●●●● QT: 800-1200L

●●●●● QL: 4

●●●●● RT: 5



## 8F: The Space Race Collection

### TOPIC & THEME

The successes and sacrifices of space exploration

### READING

Compare and contrast perspectives on a topic

### WRITING

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

### ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Research a cosmonaut or astronaut and write blog entries from their point of view

### TEXT FEATURES

Primary and secondary source documents, poems, and images

i L

●●●●● QT: 870L-1490L

●●●●● QL: 5

●●●●● RT: 4

# 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. Then, students 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. At the end of the unit, students write an essay arguing whether the boys or the adults cause more trouble in the book.



QT: 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

### 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.

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

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

#### Extra texts

- Excerpt from *Tony Hawk: Professional Skateboarder* by Tony Hawk and Sean Mortimer I/LN
- Excerpt from *The Story of My Life* by Hellen 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

### 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 (4 lessons)
- SU5: Dahl & Narrative Reading Assessment

## 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 as Dr. Walter Reed and his team of scientific investigators seek the truth about yellow fever. Reading Sherlock Holmes, students break down deductive observations of a crime scene and read closely to understand how the detective cracks 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.

### 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.

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- *The Secret of the Yellow Death: A True Story of Medical Sleuthing* by Suzanne Jurmain I/H, 1010L\*
- Excerpt from *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson L/S, 750L
- Letter from Mabel H. Lazear to Dr. James Carroll I/H\*
- “Yellow Fever Circles Brazil’s Huge Cities” by Shasta Darlington and Donald G. McNeil Jr. 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

\* Full text provided

### 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 (5 lessons)
- SU6: Mysteries & Investigations Reading Assessment

## 6C: The Chocolate Collection

### Unit summary

In this Collection, students explore primary documents and conduct independent research to understand the strange and wide range of roles that chocolate has played in cultures around the world throughout its long history. Students build information literacy skills and learn how to construct an evidence-based argument. They write a short piece aimed at convincing readers that their favorite kind of chocolate is the best, and then debate whether or not chocolate should be included in school lunches.

Throughout these activities, students learn to develop their positions by identifying and researching 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.

### 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.

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- Excerpt: "Prehistoric Americans Traded Chocolate for Turquoise?" from *National Geographic News* by Christine Dell'Amore 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
- Excerpt: 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?" from *Associated Press* by Karl Ritter and Marilyn Marchione I/S&T, 1310L
- "Can Chocolate Be Good for My Health?" by Katherine Zeratsky, R.D., L.D. I/S&T, 1110L
- Excerpt: "Dark Chocolate: A Bittersweet Pill to Take" from *USA Today* by Mary Brophy Marcus I/H, 1540L
- "Chocolate" from *American Smooth* by Rita Dove L/P, Lexile n/a,



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; require students to be persistent; make high level of inferences; students 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 (8 lessons)
- SU6: The Chocolate Collection Reading Assessment

- Excerpt: Act I, Scene Eight from *Così fan tutte: English National Opera Guide* 22 L/D, Lexile n/a,
- Excerpt: *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris L/S, 860L
- Excerpt: *The Dharma Bums* by Jack Kerouac L/S, 970L
- Excerpt: "The Sweet Lure of Chocolate" by Jim Spadaccini I/H, 970L
- Excerpt: "The Tropics" from *The Story of Chocolate* by National Confectioners Association's Chocolate Council I/S&T, 1110L
- Excerpt: "Good Harvest" from *All Animals* magazine/The Humane Society of the United States by Karen E. Lange I/H, 1190L
- Excerpt: Chapter 7—"Monseigneur in Town" from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens L/S, 1130L

#### 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 explore 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.

“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. In this subunit, students confront the question of how humans should conduct themselves and the line between pride and arrogance. They also consider some of the different layers that authors throughout the centuries have added to Greek myths. At the end of the unit, students write an essay arguing whether characters from two of these myths are destroyed by their pride.



QT: 870L–1140L



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.

### 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.

### 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 \*
- Excerpts from *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 \*
- Excerpt from *The Arabian Nights’ Entertainments*, “Second Voyage,” by Andrew Lang L/S, 1270L

#### Extra texts

- Excerpt from *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus L/S
- Excerpt from “Circe’s Palace” by Nathaniel Hawthorne L/S Excerpt from “The Picture Minerva Wove” by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey L/S

\* Full text provided

### 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 (5 lessons)
- SU5: The Greeks Reading Assessment

#### Quest

- *Myth World*

## 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. The story takes the sisters on a 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 research Aztec mythology: 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–860L



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.

### 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?

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- *Summer of the Mariposas* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall L/S, 840L
- Excerpt from *The Odyssey*, a graphic novel by Gareth Hinds L/S, 940L
- Excerpt from *The Odyssey* by Homer, translated by E.V. Rieu L/S, 1140L
- Excerpt from *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

### Sub-units and # of lessons

#### Core lessons

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

#### Summative assessments

- SU2: Write an Essay (5 lessons)
- SU3: Summer of the Mariposas Reading Assessment

## 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 how to construct an evidence-based argument. 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.

### 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.

### 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
- Excerpt: "Testimony of Olaus Abelseth" from United States Senate Inquiry I/H
- Excerpt: Chapter 7—"There Is Your Beautiful Nightdress Gone" from *A Night to Remember* by Walter Lord I/H, 1120L
- Excerpts from various public domain sources: Final Wireless Transmissions Aboard the RMS *Titanic* I/H
- Excerpt: 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



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; require students to be persistent; make high level of inferences; students 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 (8 lessons)
- SU6: The *Titanic* Collection Reading Assessment

- "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" from *Epoch Times* by Jack Phillips I/S&T, 1350L
- Excerpt: "The Iceberg Was Only Part of It" from *The New York Times* by William J. Broad 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 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. 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 experience of an ordinary young woman. 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 inferring; do not require substantial external knowledge or experience.

### Essay prompt

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

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- *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

### 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 (5 lessons)
- SU5: *Red Scarf Girl & Narrative Reading Assessment*

## 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.

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*. Throughout the unit, students describe the impact of the authors' language, draw conclusions about the characters, and practice the skills of Focus and Use of Evidence that they learned in the introductory unit. This unit then pushes students to use this close textual analysis to notice larger structural moves that the authors make across the narratives.



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 inferring; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

### Essay prompt

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

### 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 \*
- Excerpt from *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

### 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 (5 lessons)
- SU5: Character & Conflict Reading Assessment
- \* Full text provided

## 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.

In *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science*, students trace the events that lead to Phineas’s injury, the extraordinary 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 is 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–1310L



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; require students to be persistent; make high level of inferences; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

### Essay prompt

Compare and contrast Phineas’s behavior and brain to those of an adolescent. (What similarities and differences exist in their behaviors? What similarities and differences exist in their brains?)

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

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

#### Extra texts

- “Sonnet—To Science” by Edgar Allan Poe L/P
- “Demystifying the Adolescent Brain,” by Laurence Steinberg I/S&T
- “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

### 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 (5 lessons)
- SU5: Brain Science Reading Assessment

#### Quest

- *Perception Academy*

## 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 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: 820L–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.

### Essay prompt

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

### 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 \*

#### 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

\* Full text provided

### 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 (5 lessons)
- SU6: Poetry & Poe Reading Assessment

#### Quest

- *Who Killed Edgar Allan Poe?*

## 7E: The Frida & Diego Collection

### Unit summary

In this Collection, students explore primary source documents and conduct independent research to learn about some of Mexico’s most famous and provocative artists, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, an extraordinary couple who lived in extraordinary times. In this unit, students build information literacy skills and learn how to construct an evidence-based argument.

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 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; practice working with descriptive writing; and participate in a Socratic seminar about the complicated issues inherent in the work of Frida and Diego. 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: 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; require students to be persistent; make high level of inferences; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

### 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?

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- Excerpt: “Rockefellers Ban Lenin in RCA Mural and Dismiss Rivera” from *The New York Times* I/H, 1430L
- Excerpt: “Frida Becomes My Wife” from *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* by Diego Rivera I/H, 910L
- “Detroit Industry: The Murals of Diego Rivera” from NPR.org by Don Gonyea I/H, 1150L
- “Letter to Ella and Bertram Wolfe” from *The Letters of Frida Kahlo: Cartas Apasionadas* I/H, 990L
- Excerpt: “Statement by Frida Kahlo” from *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* by Diego Rivera I/H, 910L
- Excerpt: “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
- Excerpt: “Frida Kahlo” from *Smithsonian* by Phyllis Tuchman I/H, 1090L

#### Extra texts

- “To F--” by Edgar Allan Poe L/P

### 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 (8 lessons)
- SU6: The Frida & Diego Collection Reading Assessment

## 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; require students to be persistent; make high level of inferences; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

### 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 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 of 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.

### 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 (8 lessons)
- SU6: The Gold Rush Collection Reading Assessment t

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- Excerpt: “California Culinary Experiences” from *The Overland Monthly* by Prentice Mulford I/H, original version: 1220L, adapted version: 1130L, paraphrased version: 900L
- Excerpt: “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
- Excerpts: Chapter XXVII and Chapter XXVIII from *Roughing It* by Mark Twain I/LN, 1170L
- Excerpt: “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman L/P
- Song Excerpt: “Oh My Darling, Clementine” by Percy Montrose L/P
- Excerpt: Chapter 3—“The Magic Equation” from *California: The Great Exception* by Carey McWilliams I/S&T, 1200L

- Excerpts: Preface and Chapter XI from *Sights in the Gold Region, and Scenes by the Way* by Theodore T. Johnson I/H, 1410L
- Excerpts from July 22–August 10, 1849, *The Gold Rush Diary of Ramón Gil Navarro* by Ramón Gil Navarro I/H, 1020L
- Excerpt: 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
- Excerpt: “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 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.

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. 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: 890L–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.

### Essay prompt

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

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- Excerpts from *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 \*
- Excerpt from *The Glass Castle* by Jeanette Walls I/LN, 1010L
- Excerpt from *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon* by Stephen King L/S, 970L
- Excerpt from *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel L/S, 830L
- Excerpt from *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman L/S, 870L
- Excerpt from *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

\* Full text provided

### 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 (5 lessons)
- SU5: Perspectives & Narrative Reading Assessment

## 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 to capture what is essential about themselves. The central text, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, introduces students to the young Douglass as he moves toward personal liberation, and provides the opportunity for students to analyze Douglass’ potent arguments against slavery. Students then read passages from Harriet Ann Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and examine the striking contrast between her experience and Douglass’s, analyzing how her graceful style and detailed picture of life as an enslaved woman paint a powerful picture of slavery’s human cost. 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, in *The Emancipation Project Quest*, students explore reproductions of primary source documents, spoken testimonies, and period music to assemble big stories and big ideas from dozens of perspectives. After thinking critically about these voices, students are prepared to consider Lincoln’s implied question in his Gettysburg Address: What does America mean by “all men are created equal”?



QT: 900L–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; require students to be persistent; make high level of inferences; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

### 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”?

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- “Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman L/P,
- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* by Frederick Douglass I/LN, 1060L\*
- The Gettysburg Address I/H, 1500L\*
- Excerpt from 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
- Excerpt from Narrative of Sojourner Truth; a Bonds-woman 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 Olive Gilbert I/H, 1420L
- Excerpt from Frances Ellen Watkins speech, “Liberty for Slaves” I/H,
- Excerpt from John C. Calhoun’s speech to the US Senate, 1837 I/H, 1400L

- Excerpt from 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

#### 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

### 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 (5 lessons)
- SU6: Liberty & Equality Reading Assessment

#### Quest

- *The Emancipation Project*



## 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 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 man'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: 980L–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; require students to be persistent; make high level of inferences; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit. Areas of high complexity balanced by scaffolds and engaging activities.

### Essay prompt

Is Frankenstein's creature human?

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- *Gris Grimly's Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and Gris Grimly L/S, 980L \*
- Excerpt from Genesis 2, Revised Standard Version L/S, 840L
- "Frankenstein (1931) A Man-Made Monster in Grand Guignol Film Story" I/H, 1540L
- "Prometheus," from *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin L/S, 870L
- Excerpts from *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
- Excerpt from Letter 8 in *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* by Isabella L. Bird I/LN
- Excerpt from *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

\* Full text provided

### Sub-units and # of lessons

#### Core lessons

- SU1: *Gris Grimly's Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and Gris Grimly (17 lessons)
- SU3: Poetical Science (5 lessons)

#### Summative assessments

- SU2: Write an Essay (6 lessons)
- SU4: Science & Science Fiction Reading Assessment

## 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.

### 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?

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- *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



QT: N/A  
○○○○○

QL: 5  
●●●●●

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 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 (5 lessons)
- SU3: Shakespeare’s *Romeo & Juliet* Reading Assessment

## 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 Hitler’s Holocaust: How do 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, where the government sought to showcase the supposed superiority of the Aryan race. Finally, students read excerpts from *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.

### 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.

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

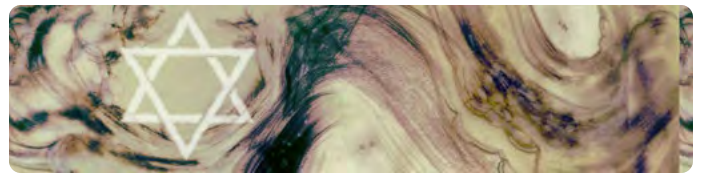
- “I Cannot Forget” by Alexander Kimel I/LN \*
- *A Child of Hitler* by Alfons Heck I/H, 1200L
- “Helene Mayer, Fencing Champ, Says She’ll Try for the Olympics” from *Jewish Daily Bulletin* I/H, 1220L \*
- “100,000 Hail Hitler; U.S. Athletes Avoid Nazi Salute to Him” by Frederick T. Birchall from *The New York Times* I/H, 1220L \*
- “Jesse Owens’ Olympic Triumph” from *Ebony* by Lerone Bennett, Jr. I/H, 1100L \*

- Excerpts from *Maus I: My Father Bleeds History* by Art Spiegelman I/LN, 500L
- Excerpts from *Night* by Elie Wiesel I/LN, 990L
- Excerpts from *Shores Beyond Shores* by Irene Butter I/LN, 660L

#### Extra texts

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

\* Full text provided



QT: 800–1200L



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; require students to be persistent; make high level of 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 (5 lessons)
- SU7: Holocaust: Memory & Meaning Reading Assessment

## 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. 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; require students to be persistent; make high level of inferences; students benefit from the knowledge they have built throughout the unit.

### 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?

### 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 (8 lessons)
- SU6: The Space Race Collection Reading Assessment

### Texts in the unit

#### Core texts

- “The Space Race: An Introduction” by *Lapham’s Quarterly* editors I/H, 1170L
- Excerpt: “Sputnik” from *Rocket Boys* by Homer Hickam I/H, 890L
- Excerpt: “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
- Excerpt: President Kennedy’s Address at Rice University, September 12, 1962 I/H, 1490L
- Excerpt: “A Seagull in Flight” from *Into That Silent Sea* by Francis French and Colin Burgess I/H, 1100L
- Excerpt: “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
- Excerpt: “Dreaming of a Moonage” from *Moondust* by Andrew Smith I/LN, 1080L
- “Buzz Aldrin on His Lunar Home, the Eagle” from *The Wall Street Journal* by Marc Myers I/H, 1000L
- Excerpt: “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
- Excerpt: 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” from *National Geographic* by Kenneth F. Weaver I/S&T, 1290L
- Excerpt: “You Are Here” from *Pale Blue Dot* by Carl Sagan I/LN, 1360L
- Katherine Johnson: Trailblazer and Brilliant Mathematician I/H
- Excerpt: “Life on Mars to Become a Reality in 2023, Dutch Firm Claims” from *The Guardian* by Karen McVeigh 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